

2019 NPLD-Coppieters Campus “Activating the social use of minority languages”



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Eighty language planners, politicians, university researchers and representatives of associations from regions all over Europe gathered in Donostia/San Sebastian (Spain) on 17-18 October 2019 to participate in the second edition of the NPLD-Coppieters Campus. The aim of the two-day meeting was to learn from each other's best practices in the field of language planning to “activate the social use of minority languages” in different spheres of life. The representatives of the Basque Country focused their presentations on the *Euskaraldia* project. Two projects to promote the Catalan language among large companies, (*Emmarca't*) and among small businesses led by newcomers (*Ofercat*), were presented by the Government of Catalonia. Finally, the transmission of Welsh language within families was presented as the focus of the Welsh Language Board project. Below is a summary of the good practices presented during the Campus.

+ See the NPLD-Coppieters Campus Full Programme and presentations abstracts [here](#).

+ See the video-summary of the Campus [here](#).



Participants at the NPLD-Coppieters Campus in Donostia/San Sebastian, October 2019 ©



Activating the use of Basque across society

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Promoted by the Basque Government, *Euskaraldia* is a massive social exercise aimed at modifying the linguistic oral habits of those who speak or understand the Basque language. Participants in the project just need to have a minimum understanding of the Basque language in order to take part in the project, which has the following goals:

- **To extend the use of the Basque language by influencing Basque speakers' linguistic habits.**
- **To break the inertia**
- **To embrace the measures to protect the change of linguistic habits by all kinds of entities that have an influence on society**
- **The activation of society through this collective activity**
- **To promote the articulation of the Basque-speaking groups in each local community**
- **Organisation of agents in favour of the Basque language throughout a unified initiative**

The first *Euskaraldia* took place over 11 days in November-December 2018 and it engaged thousands of people from hundreds of towns all over the Basque Country.

Although the initiative was run simultaneously throughout the Basque Country, it was the local agents who took responsibility for encouraging the dynamics in each town or city and for adapting it to the local sociolinguistic context. The initiative was organised at district, municipal and regional levels, or as an association, community, company or group.

Euskaraldia set the basis for what would become one of the largest coordinated sociolinguistic projects ever undertaken in the Basque Country. There was some curiosity to see if such a large-scale social initiative would be able to influence language-speaking habits, so the research project I. *Euskaraldia ikerketa proiektua* was undertaken as a response.

Researchers from the Sociolinguistics Cluster analysed the project results from a dual perspective: a quantitative one, to describe the impact of *Euskaraldia*; and a qualitative one, to learn about people's opinions about the project. Based on the analysis of both lines, an overall assessment of *Euskaraldia 2018* was possible and greater details on the key factors in the processes of change of linguistic habits were obtained.

+ Information about the *Euskaraldia* project [here](#).

+ Information about the results of the research [here](#).



Activating the use of Catalan in business

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The Directorate-General for Language Policy of the Government of Catalonia promotes the use of Catalan in the socioeconomic sphere through different projects, namely *Emmarca't* and *Ofercat*.

Emmarca't is aimed at promoting the use of Catalan in major brands through marketing strategies. A remarkably high number of people expressed the need to have more products labelled in Catalan. For that reason, research was done to find out more about the most widely purchased brands in Catalonia, as well as the use of Catalan for those brands in different domains such as webs, social media, publicity, customer service or labelling.

Following the results, a set of arguments and promotional material fostering the use of Catalan in this field were created and addressed to CEOs of major brands found in Catalonia.

Today, the *Emmarca't* project is in the phase of being developed at a local level through the *Emmarca't Territorial* project. The goal of this project is to promote the use of Catalan among the main local stores within a given municipality. 120 local stores have been selected for this initial phase and actions related to the promotion of Catalan in signs and panels, telephone customer service, publicity or social media have been developed.

+ More information on *Emmarca't* project is available [here](#).

In Catalonia, small businesses have traditionally been an important economic sector, reflected in the number of establishments (92,711 in 2018). For decades, many of these businesses were managed by Catalan speakers, meaning that the use of this language was predominant. However, two factors have changed this scenario: on the one hand, the change in the productive model has led to a certain decline in the number of this kind of businesses in the last decade (in 2018 there were 6,700 fewer than in 2008); on the other, demographic changes have seen the arrival of thousands of people from all over the world, and they have joined the labour market through the service sector without prior knowledge of the Catalan language. The combination of the two factors—fewer businesses and a bigger foreign population—has clear sociolinguistic repercussions. Thus, while the use of Catalan in small businesses by customers was around 51% in 2003, in 2013 it had fallen to 39%.

Since 2001, the Government of Catalonia has been analysing language use (oral and written) in commercial establishments through the *Ofercat* study. Using four indicators, *Ofercat* provides a scale from 0 to 100 reflecting the presence of Catalan in businesses in a locality. Since 2018, the analysis has led to the '*Ofercat plans*' with the aim of carrying out actions to increase the presence and use of Catalan in businesses that need it to happen.

+ Information on *Ofercat* project is available [here](#).



Activating the use of Welsh in families: intergenerational transmission of the language

It has long been axiomatic in LPLP (language policy and planning) academic literature that ensuring or re-establishing the intergenerational nexus of linguistic transmission is of paramount importance. Joshua Fishman, widely regarded as the 'father' of the sociology of language, has written extensively on this theme, and issued strident warnings on the dangers of concentrating any LPLP efforts on anything which does not directly or indirectly bolster intergenerational transmission of a language.

The NPLD-Coppieters Campus workshop brought together information on current relevant LPLP interventions together with recently published Welsh Government social research into transmission behaviour. The research aimed to examine how parents use Welsh with their children and how the use of Welsh in the home is influenced by various factors. Specifically, the project aimed to answer the following research questions:

What are the conditions that facilitate Welsh language transmission within families, and the conditions that make Welsh language transmission less likely?

What are the conditions that influence patterns of Welsh language use within families with children in the 0-4 age group?

Amongst its many findings, it discovered a culture of widespread intergenerational language 'donation'. This situation occurs where parents who have Welsh language skills and/or had been educated through the medium of Welsh as school pupils held strong, positive emotional regard for the language and, almost without exception, chose the Welsh medium education for their children. However, for many reasons explored in the workshop, they did not generally address their children in Welsh, nor did they make Welsh the vehicular language of the home.

The Welsh Government has several interventions which are aimed at addressing some of these issues, and has declared a policy intention to draft a comprehensive Plan for the Intergenerational Transmission of Welsh to bring to bear the latest thinking from the field of Behavioural Psychology and other disciplines to ensure Welsh becomes the vehicular language of more homes. The workshop illustrated the key pillars of the plan and challenges that it will address.

+ Read the draft national policy on Welsh language transmission and use in families (February 2020) available in its **Welsh** and **English** versions. Consultation period is open from February until May 2020.

+ Information on Welsh Language Transmission and Use in Families reports promoted by the Welsh Government (2017): Executive **Summary** and **Full Report**.



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