

## REPRESENTATION OF ICELANDIC-BASQUE CONTACTS IN A FINNISH NOVEL

Kendra Willson  
Jagiellonian University, Kraków  
[kendra.willson@uj.edu.pl](mailto:kendra.willson@uj.edu.pl)

### Abstract

Finnish author Tapio Koivukari creates in his novel *Ariasman* (2011), based on a historical massacre of shipwrecked Basque whalers in Iceland in 1615, a literary representation of an extinct Icelandic Basque pidgin known from a few lists of words and phrases with roots in the seventeenth century. The brief dialogues in the book given in Basque or pidgin draw on the word lists, knowledge of the modern languages, and Koivukari's imagination. The pidgin phrases used in the book concentrate on a few semantic fields: domestic animals, food, clothing, religion and relationships, largely corresponding to those found in the glossaries. Icelandic names are adapted to Basque phonology and given Basque diminutive endings. Multilingual word play is exploited. Koivukari supplements the vocabulary attested in the word lists with words from modern Basque and other languages known to have been part of the contact situation. This article describes how the book extrapolates from the documented glossaries to create fictional dialogues between Basque and Icelandic speakers, and more generally how it thematizes difficulties and strategies in communication, using imagination to flesh out the dynamics of the historical contact situation.

**Keywords:** Basque; Icelandic; pidgin; historical fiction; whaling; Spánverjavigin

### 1. Introduction\*

The historical novel *Ariasman: kertomus valaanpyytäjistä* (2011) 'Ariasman: an account of whalers' by Finnish author Tapio Koivukari (b. 1959) depicts relations between Basque whalers and Icelandic farmers in north-western Iceland in the early seventeenth century. The book includes some words and phrases in an extinct Icelandic Basque pidgin variety attested in

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\* Thanks to Peter Bakker, Tapio Koivukari and Hanna Lantto for assistance with this paper. Abbreviations used: VG: *Vocabula Gallica* 'French words' or list 1 in Deen (1937, 1991); VB: *Vocabula Biscaica* 'Biscayan words' or list 2 in Deen; KG: *Kátlegar glósur* 'Amusing glosses' or list 3; NLG: *Nokkrar latínu glósur* 'Some Latin glosses' or the fourth glossary (Etxepare and Miglio 2015).

four lists of words and phrases in manuscripts from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, as well as segments in Modern Basque. This paper compares the pidgin and Basque phrases used in the book to those found in the documented glossaries and describes ways in which Koivukari extrapolates from the word lists to represent use of the pidgin among other strategies for communication between Icelandic and Basque speakers. The Basque and pidgin words and phrases that appear in the novel concentrate on a few semantic fields, inspired by the glossaries and thematically relevant for the contacts depicted in the novel, such as animals, food, clothing, religion and relationships. Some lines in the book are taken directly from phrases found in the glossaries. Koivukari normalizes the pidgin somewhat and supplements the vocabulary found in the glossaries with words from Modern Basque, Latin, and other languages known to have been part of the contact situation. Icelandic names are adapted into Basque forms, and multilingual puns, accidental homophones, and misunderstandings are exploited. The novel thematizes communication difficulties and it includes varied representations of multilingual communication and semi-communication. It also includes short passages in Latin, Icelandic, German, Spanish, English and French.

## **2. Basque whalers around Iceland and Basque pidgins in the North Atlantic**

Basque fishermen innovated techniques for whaling in the Middle Ages starting from the eleventh century. Over the course of the Middle Ages, the whalers ventured further afield, reaching Newfoundland by 1520 (on Basque whaling in Labrador and Newfoundland, see inter alia Barkham 1989, 2001, Huxley 1987a). Basque whaling ships began to frequent the waters around Iceland by around 1600; some may have visited as early as 1412 (e.g. according to Gallop 1970: 271), but there is no direct evidence for this (see Bakker 1987: 2). A whaling station at Strákatangi in North-western Iceland appears to have been in use from the early to the mid- or late seventeenth century (Ragnar Edvardsson 2015: 339–340). Basque whaling around Iceland mostly ceased by the early eighteenth century. See Figure 1 for an early map.

Seafaring in the North Atlantic in the Early Modern period led to the emergence of a number of trade languages. Forms of simplified or pidgin Basque were used in communication between Basque whalers and local

residents in both Iceland and Newfoundland in the early seventeenth (Bakker 1988a, b), predating French-based pidgins in Canada (Bakker 1988b: 13). Several Basque loans are attested in the Algonquian language Mi'kmaq (Bakker 1989b), at least two of which (*atlai* ‘shirt’ < Basque *atorra* and *elege* ‘king’ < *errege*) survived to modern times (Bakker 1989c). Judging from the glossaries, the pidgin used in Iceland includes words from Romance languages, English and other languages; some may stem from an English Nautical Pidgin that influenced the development of creole languages around the world (Bakker 1987: 4).



Figure 1. Iceland map of the early 1700s. It says in Dutch: *Anno 1613 by de Biscayers beseylt*, ‘reached by sailing ship by the Basques in 1613’.

### 3. The Basque-Icelandic glossaries

The Basque-Icelandic word lists probably originated during the seventeenth century, but the manuscripts are a bit younger, dating from ca 1700 through the nineteenth century. The four preserved glossaries appear to be independent of each other, which suggests that other such word lists may have been in circulation (cf. Miglio 2008: 7). Images of selected pages from the manuscripts are available on the website of the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies (Basknesk-íslensk orðasöfn). An example is

shown in Figure 2. The glossaries have been analyzed by, inter alia, Deen (1937, 1991), Helgi Guðmundsson (1979), Hualde (1984, 1991), Bakker (1987), Bakker et al. (1991), Oregi (1987), Miglio (2006, 2008, 2011), and Etxepare and Miglio (2015).

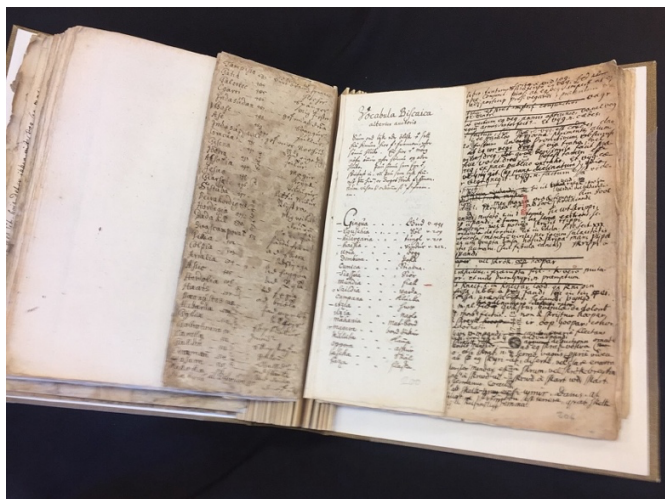


Figure 2. Ms. AM 987 4to in the Árni Magnússon Institute of Icelandic Studies in Reykjavík, open to leaf 200r (*Vocabula Biskaica*). Source: *Wikimedia Commons* ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Basque-Icelandic\\_pidgin\\_Deen.jpeg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Basque-Icelandic_pidgin_Deen.jpeg), accessed 13 December 2024).

The first two glossaries (AM 987 4to 192r – 199v and AM 987 4to 200r – 204v in the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík) were discovered by Jón Helgason, professor of Icelandic, in the Arnarmagnæan library in Copenhagen in the 1920s while he was studying the work of Jón Ólafsson frá Grunnavík. Jón Helgason sent the word lists to the Basque specialist C.C. Uhlenbeck in Leiden. Uhlenbeck's student Nicolaas Deen (on whom see Bakker 2018a, b) produced an edition and commentary as a doctoral dissertation (Deen 1937, Basque translation Deen 1991).

The first glossary (AM 987 4to 192r – 199v in the Árni Magnússon institute for Icelandic studies in Reykjavík), which bears the rubric *Vocabula Gallica* 'French words' (VG), contains 517 items loosely organized by conceptual association, including a list of numerals (464b). The hand looks late seventeenth century. The glossary includes basic vocabulary terms, trade goods, animals, numbers, religious concepts and a few phrases. Most of the Basque nouns appear with the suffixed definite article *-a*. Some

words and phrases are mistranslated, indicating limited mutual understanding. For instance, Basque *laguna* ‘friend, person’ is glossed as *skipsfölk* ‘ship’s crew’ (VG 15) and the phrase *serdahari* = *zer da hori* ‘What is that?’ as *siädu þad* ‘Look at this’ (VG 338) (Hualde 1991: 14).

The second glossary, *Vocabula Biscaica* ‘Biscayan words’ (VB), is preserved only in an eighteenth-century copy by the well-known scholar Jón Ólafsson frá Grunnavík (1705–1789) (AM 987 4to 200r – 204v). It contains 229 words and phrases and 49 numerals, with a similar loose conceptual organization. The contents overlap substantially with those of *Vocabula Gallica*. In some cases, however, Spanish translations are given for Icelandic words for which *Vocabula Gallica* has Basque glosses. *Vocabula Biscaica* also includes a few words from other languages, e.g. *clinke*, glossed as *lýtéd* ‘little’, apparently Dutch (Hualde 1991: 14) (cf. Dutch *klein* ‘little’ + *-ke* diminutive (dialectal); Bakker (1987: 4) notes a parallel in Skepi (Guyanese) Dutch creole *clenk* ‘little’). The part of *Vocabula Biscaica* that has attracted the most scholarly attention is a list of phrases in a pidgin language that appears largely based on Basque, English and Romance (see e.g. Hualde 1984, 1991, Bakker 1987).

The third list (JS 284 8vo 103r–v), in the National Library of Iceland, consists of eleven *kátlegar glósur* ‘amusing glosses’ (KG) in the hand of Sveinbjörn Egilsson (1791–1852). He lists his source as 1685. *Helga Jónsdóttir*; Helga may have been the author or the owner of the lost manuscript. The words Sveinbjörn lists are mainly body parts, along with a couple of everyday objects and verbs:

*Passamana* – *borð* ‘table’  
*Cikumuturra* – *unliður* ‘wrist’  
*Brasa* – *faðmur* ‘bosom’  
*Baso rikunja* – *hægri handleggur* ‘right arm’  
*Bushua* – *handleggur* ‘arm’  
*Udula* – *blóð* ‘blood’  
*Estumaka* – *bringa* ‘breast’  
*Silkhva* – *nafli* ‘navel’  
*Sussura* – *blása þungan* ‘sigh’  
*Goetta* – *þenkja* ‘reflect, consider’  
*Tinta* – *blek* ‘ink’  
(Miglio 2008: 3)

Sveinbjörn ends with *etc.*, which suggests that his source contained more words. He does not name the language.

The fourth word list, with the rubric *nokkrar latínu glósur* ‘some Latin glosses’ (NLG), is part of MS Icelandic 3 92v–93r in Houghton Library at Harvard University. The 145-leaf manuscript is entitled *Eitt litid aaagrip um alslagx gros og steina anaad um merki og planetur og um allar lækn[ingar] anad um þidingar of små legxiur samanskrið[ad] til frodleigs og gaman af Jone a Vass[firdi]* ‘a short overview of all kinds of grass and stones, as well as on signs and planets and all healing, as well as on translations of short lessons compiled for erudition and entertainment by Jón in Vatnsfjörður’. The named compiler has been identified as Jón Arason of Vatnsfjörður (1606–1673) but the manuscript also contains contributions in other hands (as indicated in the Hollis catalogue of Harvard). The physical vocabulary list probably dates from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century (Etxepare and Miglio 2015: 356). Etxepare and Miglio (2015: 356) note that, in addition to misidentifying the language, the copyist incorrectly matches Basque lexical items and glosses in a number of instances; they conclude, “It seems evident that this is a copy of a text containing material that was not remotely familiar to the copyist” (2015: 356). They give a tentative transcription and translation (357–359) of 68 words and phrases. The bulk of the words are nouns connected with food; there are also some pieces of clothing, kinship terms, colors, and the discourse particles ‘yes’ and ‘no’. The phrases are mainly imperative: *Jndasu edam gief m/(er) ad drecka* (NLG 2) ‘Give me (something) to drink’, *Jndasu jatterra gief mier at eta* (NLG 3) ‘Give me (something) to eat’, *Jndasu Amara liadu mier Eda fadu mier streingin(n)* (NLG 6) ‘Give me the rope’, *Jndasunirj syndu mier* (NLG 7) ‘Show me’, *Huna temin kom þu hingad* (NLG 8) ‘Come here’ (357), or questions: *Nola dai fussu hvad heitir þu* (NLG 1) ‘What’s your name?’ (357), *Simbatur hvad kostar það eda hvad viltu giefu mier fyrir það* (NLG 68) ‘How much is that or what will you give me for that?’ (359). Although these phrases are clearly connected with trade, the model appears to be Basque rather than the pidgin exchange formulae seen in VB. Etxepare and Miglio (2015: 360) observe that the spelling is typical for eighteenth and nineteenth-century Icelandic and that the scribe does not appear to be a professional copyist.

As can be seen from the above descriptions, the designations for the language vary among the different glossaries. Some of the word lists seem

to represent Basque, others a mix of languages with many Romance and English words. There are signs that words were misunderstood at the recording stage and that copyists did not know the source language. It may be unclear to what extent those recording the word lists distinguished among different languages or how much later scribes knew about the sources of the words.

The Danish trade monopoly to which Iceland was subject between 1602 and 1786 may have contributed to making knowledge of the languages secret. For Icelanders to trade with the crews of foreign fishing ships was illegal and punishable. The fourth glossary appears in a manuscript that contains other kinds of information connected with “magic” – astronomy and healing herbs. The time of the book corresponds to the period of the most intense witch hunt in the Basque Country (Henningsson 1980, 2004, Machielsen 2024).

Jón Guðmundsson, the author of the most extensive contemporary account of the massacre, was one of the first Icelanders accused of witchcraft under the new Protestant regime (Ólína Þorvarðardóttir 2000: 92–98; Guillou 2004: 243), although he avoided execution by moving away, and the West Fjords, where the whaling station was located and the massacre took place, was the center of witchcraft accusations in seventeenth-century Iceland. It is possible that between the trade monopoly and the ongoing witch hunts, knowledge of Basque came to be associated with secret or occult uses.<sup>1</sup>

#### **4. The massacre of 1615**

Ambiguities of permission and authority are part of the background to the massacre of 31–40 shipwrecked Basque fishermen in 1615 known in Icelandic as *Spánverjavíginn* ‘the slaying of Spaniards’ (Figure 3).

The district magistrate Ari Magnússon from Ögur (1571–1652) had granted a group of whalers permission to operate in the district, but he did not have the authority to do this and risked losing his own position. This

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<sup>1</sup> A partial parallel: Olsen and Bergsland (1943) proposed that some Saami words might have survived in Iceland in the centuries after settlement as “secret” magical words, according to their interpretation of a runic inscription on a wooden spade from *Indriðastaðir*, in west-central Iceland, dating from around 1100. The clever interpretation nonetheless appears likely to be anachronistic, see Willson (2012).



may have motivated him to organize an attack on the whalers after a shipwreck prevented them from leaving for home at the end of the whaling season.



Figure 3. Plaque installed in 2015 to commemorate the 1615 massacre, in four languages. Location: Hólmavík, West Fjords, Iceland. Photo: Peter Bakker.

The events are known primarily from a contemporary account by autodidact Jón Guðmundsson lærði ‘the learned’ (1574–1658) (on whom see Viðar Hreinsson 2018), *Sönn frásaga um spanskra manna skipbroti og slagi* (edition 1950; English translation ‘A true account of the shipwreck of the Spaniards and their slaying’ by Viola Miglio 2015) which is critical of the attack and of the magistrate Ari Magnússon í Ögri who incited it, as well as a narrative poem by Ari’s relative Ólafur Jónsson, *Spænsku vísur*, which valorizes the attackers (edition by Kári Bjarnason 2006, translation ‘Spanish stanzas’ by Óskar Holm 2015). There is also an anonymous poem *Vísur um Ara Magnússon í Ögri* (1928) ‘Verses about Ari Magnússon from Ögur’, preserved in a manuscript from 1676. The historical events leading up to the massacre are summarized in Koivukari and Irujo (2017); they are roughly as in my summary of Koivukari’s novel below, although Koivukari



fills in biographical details for persons about whom little is known, such as the survivor Gartzia, and some more daily interaction among the characters. The massacre, the sources, and their context are analyzed in the contributions to Irujo and Miglio (2015, 2017).

### 5. Tapio Koivukari and *Ariasman*

Tapio Koivukari (b. 1959) is an author and translator in Rauma, Finland. Koivukari (pictured in Figure 4) spent several years in Ísafjörður, in the West Fjords of Iceland, and is married to Icelandic artist Hulda Leifsdóttir. He has worked as an interpreter between Icelandic and Finnish and has translated numerous Icelandic literary works into Finnish. Many of his novels describe rural life in early twentieth-century Finland. He has also written stories and a novel (*Odinnin korppi* ‘Odin’s raven’ 1990) set in Iceland. He holds a degree in theology and has also worked as a teacher of theology and carpentry and as a pastor.



Figure 4. Tapio Koivukari in 2013. Source: <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q16299945> (accessed 12 December 2024).

*Ariasman: kertomus valaanpyytäjistä* (Koivukari 2011) ‘Ariasman: a tale of whalers’ takes place mainly in northwestern Iceland in 1613–1615. A few scenes are set in Donostia (San Sebastián) in the Basque Country. It follows the events leading up to the massacre of 1615. The first part depicts relations between whalers and local residents in the West Fjords in 1613. While the locals initially mistake the approaching ships for English pirates

and evacuate inland, they quickly establish mutually beneficial relations: the whalers set up a seasonal processing station in Iceland and sell whale meat to locals in return for items such as woolen clothing. Such trade is illegal under the Danish trade monopoly. The local magistrate Ari Magnússon is aware that his position is jeopardized by his having given permission to the Basques for their camp which he was not authorized to give. He observes the parallel case of Gísli Þórðarson in Snæfellsnes, who lost his position and property due to a similar overreach (62–66, 197–198, 267).

The second part of the book tells the story of the orphan boy Gartzia from Donostia, who as a cooper's apprentice gets the opportunity to join the crew of a whaling ship. It also depicts the background of Martin de Villafranca, captain of one of the ships. Villafranca's father died on a whaling expedition and never met his son. In Koivukari's version, Gartzia's father also died on an expedition to Newfoundland (107).

The third section of *Ariasman* traces events of 1615 leading up to the shipwreck and massacre. While some tensions between the locals and the visitors are glimpsed earlier (some theft on both sides and some altercations over resources), these have for the most part been limited. The whalers are about to depart home for the Basque Country after a successful season hunting Atlantic right whales when they spot a higher-status sperm whale<sup>2</sup> (214), and they decide to postpone their departure by a few days. As a result of the delay, they are caught in a bad storm and two ships are destroyed. The stranded whalers prepare to spend the winter at one of the Icelanders'

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<sup>2</sup> The large-headed toothed whale that leads to the delay is called *kaskalotti* 'sperm whale' in Finnish (Koivukari 2011: 214), *búrhvalur* 'sperm whale' in the Icelandic translation (Koivukari 2012: 272), *kaxalote* in the Basque translation (Koivukari 2017: 262). The Icelandic *búrhvalur*, literally 'storehouse whale', is also calqued into Finnish as *pottivalas* 'pot whale' (Koivukari 2011: 214). Bakker (1995) studies Basque names for whales from before 1700 and concludes that both *trumpa* and *cachelot* refer to the sperm whale or cachelot, *Physeter microcephalus*; the former name is connected to Castilian *trompa* or *tromba* 'water spout', while the latter comes from Gascon, probably based on a word for 'tooth' (alternative proposals connect it with 'head') (Bakker 1995: 274–275). *Trompa* appears in two of the Basque-Icelandic glossaries mistranslated as *enne* 'forehead' (VB 88) and *ad ausa* 'to sprinkle, pour, ladle' (VG 464a) (Deen 1991: 68, 76). These mistranslations could stem from attempts to describe the whale through gesture; the description of the sperm whale in *Ariasman* emphasizes the valuable oil contained in its head (173) and the power of its water spout (214). See Huxley (1987a: 302).

seasonal fishing stations, declining the proposal that they declare themselves paupers to be distributed among households according to Icelandic law. Ari Magnússon sends messengers to the Súðavík assembly asking for the Basques to be declared outlaws so that they may be killed with impunity, and then he summons men from around the region to attack the whalers in their camp. The events are described in gory detail. After the attackers have left, Gartzia, the only survivor, emerges from hiding and goes to seek his companions. Some months later, Ari plans a third attack on the remaining whalers, but he is forced to abort it due to weather conditions.

A brief epilogue includes a return to Iceland in 1640 by Gartzia, now a captain, in which he glimpses the father of the Icelandic girl Kristrún with whom he had a brief romance in part 2, along with a young man who is implied to be Gartzia's son. This part of the story is fantasy, but it is likely that Basque whalers left some descendants in the West Fjords (Tapio Koivukari, p.c.).

Koivukari conducted extensive research for the book. His primary sources for the book were contemporary accounts: Jón Guðmundsson's *Sönn frásaga*, Ólafur Jónsson's *Spænsku vísur* and Jón Guðmundsson's autobiographical poem *Fjölmóður* 'Many-passioned' (Páll Eggert Ólason ed. 1916). He also made use of secondary literature on the events as well as on Basque history and on Icelandic folkways in the seventeenth century (Koivukari 2011: 342–343). Koivukari taught himself modern Basque in preparation for the book, using the textbook by Jansen (2002) and the dictionary by Aulestia and White (1992), and he made several trips to the Basque Country.

Koivukari's historical novel fills in the background to the shipwreck and slaying with portraits of historical figures such as the magistrate Ari Magnússon (1571–1652), the autodidact Jón Guðmundsson lærði 'the learned' (1574–1648), whose byname during his life was rather *málari* 'painter', and the captain Martin de Villanova (on whom see Huxley 1987b, 2006), as well as imagining biographies for others about whom little is known, such as the boy Gartzia mentioned in both Jón Guðmundsson's and Ólafur Jónsson's accounts as the sole survivor of the attack (See Jón Guðmundsson, Miglio transl. 2015: 76; stanza 41 in *Spænsku vísur*, Óskar Holm transl. 2015: 127). Gartzia becomes one of the main characters of the novel and the protagonist of an adaptation for young adult readers (Koivu-

kari 2015a, 2015b, 2018). *Ariasman* contains detailed descriptions of Icelandic landscapes, of seventeenth-century material culture (both Icelandic and Basque) and methods used e.g. in whale hunting.

Reviews of *Ariasman* (e.g. Juntunen 2011, Kotkamaa 2011, Niemala 2011, Skiftesvik 2012, Adamsson 2016) emphasize its role as an interpretation of the historical events. The novel presents “both sides” as ordinary people trying to live their lives under harsh conditions. There are no pure villains. Ari is concerned with preserving his own position and he believes that the social order and hierarchies are important to maintain, but his background makes his position understandable. Some cultural misunderstandings are comprehensible. For instance, Ari gives the Basques permission to gather driftwood, which they use as firewood. They are, however, not as sensitive as the locals to the consideration that, in a land without forests, particularly large and solid pieces of driftwood should be saved for other purposes (83), and some altercations develop. Characters give into temptations due to greed and opportunity and some poor decisions are made. Many of the Icelanders who participate in the massacre are caught up in the mob psychology; some fear losing their livelihoods if they decline to participate.

## **6. Multilingualism in *Ariasman***

The 340-page novel contains 136 segments (from single words to a few sentences) in languages other than Finnish. Of these, 52 are at least partly in Basque or pidgin or are Basquified renditions of Icelandic names. Other languages represented include Icelandic, Latin, German, French and Spanish. At the back of the book (346–349) there is a brief glossary section which includes Finnish translations of some of the foreign phrases. Others are translated or paraphrased in context (e.g. 219–220). In some cases, the reader must rely on previous knowledge or context.

Throughout the book are found numerous comments on multilingualism, including recognition of limited competence, receptive multilingualism and partial mutual intelligibility, as well as depictions of interpretation situations and communication by gesture. Some sample quotations are given below.

The captain Martin de Villafranca describes the language situation in Donostia:

Martin osasi baskia ja kastiliaa ja kohtalaisesti latinaa, kunnon donostialainen osasi itsestäänselvästi useita kieliä. Valleilla ja kentillä kajahtelivat sotamiesten kastil-  
iankieliset komennot, vanhemmissa porvarisperheissä puhuttiin gaskonia, [...] Ja  
tietysti kaupungissa kuuli myös pohjoisempaa ranskaa, laivoilla ja laitureilla vier-  
aat merimiehet puhuivat flaamia, saksaa ja englantia [...] ja illan tullen kaupungin  
tavernoissa ja sivukatujen porteissa kaikuivat kaikki nämä kielet. Eikä euskarakaan  
ollut yhtä ja samaa, ihmisten puheenparsa vaihtui laaksosta toiseen ja joskus oli  
vaikeuksia ymmärtää, mitä nafarroalaiset muulinajat, bizkaialaiset sardiinin-  
pyytäjät ja takkiraudan kauppiat tai Donostian laivoihin pyrkivät Pohjoisen  
miehet eli Ranskan puolen lapurdilaiset oikein sanoivat ja toimittelivat. (137)  
'Martin knew Basque and Castilian and knew Latin reasonably well; a good  
Donostian knew several languages as a matter of course. Commands echoes in the  
embankments and fields; Gascon was spoken in the older bourgeois families [...] And  
of course in the city one also heard more northern French; on the ships and the  
docks, foreign sailors spoke Flemish, German, and English [...] and when even-  
ing came all these languages echoed in the taverns and in the gateways of the side  
streets. Nor was Euskara all one and the same; people's way of speaking varied  
from one valley to another and sometimes there were difficulties in understanding  
what mule-drivers from Nafarroa, and sardine fishermen from Bizkaia and pig-iron  
sellers or the men of the North, i.e. Lapurdians from the French side who tried to  
get onto the ships really said or meant.'

Bakker (1987: 3) says that few Basques were bilingual in the seventeenth century, but has later changed his mind (p.c.). Basques' habit of code-switching is mentioned in some early texts (Zubergoitia and Zubergoitia 2008: 18–19). Many sailors might have known some Castilian or Gascon. Knowledge of other languages would also have been higher among residents of port cities than mountain villages. Later in *Ariasman*, the whalers are comforted by Peter de Jersey's reading of Latin psalms, as they listen with varying levels of comprehension:

Monet heistä ymmärsivät kastiliaa tai gaskonia ja niitten kautta ainakin hiukan latinaa, sanan sieltä, toisen täältä, joittenkin mieltä kohotti jo latinalaisten sanojen papillinen sointi. (154) 'Many of them [the Basque whalers] understood Castilian or Gascon and through them at least a little bit of Latin, a word there, another here; others' mood was lifted just by the clerical sound of the Latin words.'

Jón Guðmundsson's meeting with the ship crew who are impressed with his rudimentary Latin becomes a confusing cacophony:

[...] ja [Jón] puhui vielä alkeellista latinaa, mikä herätti entistä enemmän kumamastusta. Kapteenikin tuli hänen kanssaan juttelemaan, samoin laivan englantilainen pilotti, joka osasi muutaman sanan islantiakin. Kun juttu polveili ja poukka-roi miehestä toiseen, väliin puhui kapteeni hänelle latinaa ja kastiliaa, väliin taas engelsmanni puhui hänelle omaa kieltään, jossa vilahteli islantilaiselle ymmärrettäviä sanoja, eika Jón kohta tiennyt, mitä tulisi sanoa ja kelle ja millä kielellä. (73) ‘And [Jón] furthermore spoke rudimentary Latin, which aroused even more amazement. Even the captain came to chat with him, as well as the English pilot of the ship, who also knew a few words of Icelandic. As the conversation became more complicated and bounced back and forth from man to man, sometimes the captain spoke Latin and Castilian to him, while the Englishman spoke to him a little in his own language, in which here and there were glimpses of words comprehensible to an Icelander; soon Jón did not know what he should say and to whom and in which language.’

Mutual intelligibility between related languages is mentioned in a number of places. In the conversation between navigation officer Pierre and the sponsor of the expedition, Sylvia, she speaks Gascon and he Norman varieties of French (123–124). Perhaps more of a stretch, Ari from Ögur, who had spent his youth in Hamburg, discovers mutual intelligibility with a Basque sailor who knew Flemish:

Ari puhui vieraille saksaa, semmoista kun hän oli Hampurissa oppinut, ja yhtäkkiä Trinidadin perämies vastasi hänelle sanoin, joita hän ymmärsi. Pienen hakemisen jälkeen toinen sanoi osaavansa flaamia ja siten ymmärtävänsä Arin puheen, jota *Pastor Ólafur* oli kääntänyt latinaksi. (36–37) ‘Ari spoke German to the visitors, such as he had learned in Hamburg, and suddenly the helmsman of the Trinidad answered him in words that he understood. After a bit of querying, the other said that he knew Flemish and thus understood Ari’s speech, which *Pastor Ólafur* had translated into Latin.’

Semicommunication is presented plausibly – characters may have limited knowledge of the lingua franca, even if they are charged with interpreting, or they may understand some portion of what is said through a related language.

In some situations, however, communication relies on gesture:

Yhteistä kieltä ei oikein ollut, he osasivat muutaman islannin sanan ja puhuivat kai latinaa lopun edestä, mutta eniten heidän asiansa selvisi elein ja osoittelemalla. (308) ‘They didn’t really have a common language; they knew a few Icelandic words and probably spoke Latin for the rest but for the most part their errand was explained by means of gestures and pointing.’

Communication difficulties may have contributed to the tensions that led to the massacre. The whalers attempt to convey by gesture to Ari's wife that if Ari takes moves to harm them, they will kill them (277). However, the conditional nature of the menace does not get through and the fact that they have threatened to kill Ari is later cited to justify the preemptive attack on the Basques.

*Ariasman* even contains an overt presentation of the pidgin:

Baskit olivat Terranovassa, Irlannissa ja aiempina suvina Islannissakin tottuneet puhumaan ihmisille Atlantin rantojen kauppakieltä ja olivat havainneet, että jos ihmiset eivät sitä osanneet, he oppivat sen pian. Siinä oli sekaisin euskaraa, kastiliaa, latinaa, englantia ja hiukan islantiakin. Vastaavasti Islannin talonpojat pitivät tätä kauppakieltä biskajalaisten omana kielenä, jos eivät sitä espanjaksi arvelleet. (183) 'In Newfoundland, Ireland and also during earlier summers in Iceland the Basques had become accustomed to speaking to people in the pidgin language of the Atlantic shores and had observed that if people did not know it, they soon learned it. In it were mixed together Euskara, Castilian, Latin, English and also a little bit of Icelandic. Accordingly, the Icelandic farmers thought that this pidgin was the Biscayans' own language, if they did not guess it to be Spanish.'

Use of the pidgin in the novel is discussed below. There is also an allusion to the creation of the glossaries. Near the end of the book, the historical figure Jón Ólafsson Indiafari 'traveler to India' (1593–1679) is shown recording Basque words:

Ja tulipa heidän mukanaan muuan harmaapartainen mies, joka osasi puhua kauppakieltä, tunsu monta baskin sanaakin. Ukolla oli mukanaan vihko, johon hän kirjoitteli oppimiaan sanoja, hän kyseli niitä pyyntimiehiltä ja nämä neuvoivat häntä parhaan kykynsä mukaan. Joskus joku harpuneeri tai matruusi narrasi ukkoa, opetti hänelle ties mitä, mutta ukkopa huomasi, että hänen kanssaan kujeiltiin. Sen verran pidettiin kuitenkin yhtä, että sanottiin miehelle, että "hyvää päivää" oli yhtä kuin "*Ongi etorri, txapelgorri*". Eli ei sen ihmeempää kuin "tervetuloo, punalakki", eikä siihen mitään syytä ollut, se vain kuulosti niin hauskalta ja loppusoinnulliselta. (339) 'And along with them came a certain grey-bearded man who knew how to speak pidgin and also knew many Basque words. The old man had with him a notebook in which he wrote down the words that he learned; he asked the whalers for them and they advised him to the best of their ability. Sometimes a harpooner or seaman would trick the old man, teach him who knows what, but the old man noticed that they were pulling his leg. One thing, however, was maintained: they told the man that 'Good day' was the same as '*Ongi etorri, txapelgorri*'. Or nothing



other than ‘welcome, red-hat’.<sup>3</sup> There was no reason for this; it just sounded so funny and rhymed.’

Although the historical Jón Indíafari discusses Biscayans in his memoir, he does not mention having collected words; see Etxepare and Miglio (2015: 351). However, he did come in contact with Basque whalers on a Danish ship (Etxepare and Miglio 2015: 387) and has been suggested among possible authors for the glossaries (385).

In general, *Ariasman* shows a high degree of language awareness and believable representations of attempts to communicate across linguistic barriers, with varying degrees of success, doubtless drawing on the author’s own experience in multilingual contexts.

### 7. Basque and pidgin vocabulary in *Ariasman*

Miglio argues that the semantic range of the words and phrases found in the historical Basque-Icelandic glossaries provide clues to the nature of the interactions, attesting not only to practical trade relations, but to “a purely intellectual interest for a different culture” as well as “locker-room banter or simply nonsensical expressions or in-jokes” (2008: 10).

The Basque words used in *Ariasman* concentrate in certain thematic areas which are largely the same as those featured in the glossaries, though not all the specific words used in the novel are attested in the preserved word lists. Koivukari normalizes and modernizes the orthography of Basque words. Some words occur numerous times in the course of the book, such as *Amabirjina* ‘Virgin Mother’, *biskusa* ‘ship’s biscuit’, *gure* ‘our’ and *zer* ‘what’ (also used in the book for ‘who?’). The reader, like the Icelandic characters, can gradually learn these words through repeated exposure.

Prominent semantic fields among the Basque words in the novel are listed below, with the page numbers on which the word occurs in *Ariasman*. If the word in question also appears in one of the glossaries, the form and gloss found there are given in square brackets, along with an abbreviation (VG for *Vocabula Gallica* or list I in Deen, VB for *Vocabula Biscaica* or

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<sup>3</sup> This is a reference to item VB 215: *Ungetorri Sappelle gore Sæll raude hattur* ‘Greetings, Red-hat.’ Helgi Guðmundsson (1979: 83) suggests that this refers to Basque headgear. Miglio (2011) sees it rather as a Protestant insult alluding to some element of Catholic Papal or cardinal vestments.

list II in Deen, NLG for *Nokkrar latínu glósur*, the fourth list). None of the words in the novel appear in KG (*Kátlegar glósur*), the third list. The numbering for VG and VB follows Deen (1937) and subsequent editions, e.g. Oregi (1987), and for NLG Etxepare and Miglio (2015). The emphasis here is on nouns; words and phrases that do not obviously fit a category are discussed further below.

### *Recurrent semantic themes*

#### A. Animals:

1. *ardia* (183, 187), *ardina* (219) ‘sheep’ [*ardia ær* (VB 148) ‘ewe’, *ardigia saudur* (VG 267) ‘wether’, *ardia ær* (NLG 37) ‘ewe’, *sirilua saudur* (NLG 36) ‘wether’]

2. *balea* (27 (x2), 38, 183, 184 (x2)) ‘whale’ [*Balia Hvalfiskur* (VG 30), VB *Balia Hvalur* (VB 127)]

3. *zalde* (205 (x2)) ‘horse’

#### B. food and drink (other than the animals mentioned above):

1. *baia urdinak* (211) ‘blue berries’

2. *biskusa* ‘ship’s biscuit’ (26, 185, 211 (x2), 219 (x2)) [*bischusa braud-kaka* (VB 43) ‘bread-cake’, *biskosa skipbraud* (NLG 53) ‘ship-bread’]

3. *gurina* (187) ‘butter’ [*bura smiør* (VB 47), *bura smiør* (NLG 11) – French loanword *beurre* in glossary replaced with modern Basque]

4. *ardoa*<sup>4</sup> (219) ‘wine’; *ardo beltza* (219) ‘red wine’

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<sup>4</sup> The word appears here with a Finnish partitive singular ending *-a*. It could also be the Basque suffixed definite article.

5. *sagardoa* (209) ‘sour drink’ [*sagarduna syrdryckur* (VB 21) ‘sour drink’, *sagarnua drickiu vȳn* (NLG 67) ‘drinking wine’] (In *Ariasman* this is tart cider (Fi. *omenaviini* ‘apple-wine’), but the Icelanders, not being familiar with apples, guess it to be whey-based, 41–42.)

C. Relationships and titles:

1. *adiskidetasuna* (26 (x2), 43) ‘friendship’<sup>5</sup>
2. *ama* (299, 340 (x2)) ‘mother’ (see also religion, below) [*ama modir* (NLG 23)]
3. *amatxu* (102) ‘dear mother’ (diminutive)
4. *jaunak* (26) ‘gentlemen’
5. *laguna* (43) ‘friend’ [*laguna skipsfölk* (VG 15)]
6. *aita* (271) ‘father’ (see also religion, below); *Aitaren* poss.gen. (271 (x2), 274, 279, 280)<sup>6</sup> [*ætha fader* (VG 342) *aita fader* (VB 85) *aita fader* (NLG 22) ‘father’]

D. Religion:

1. *Amabirjina* (90, 102, 111, 251, 263, 299, 325, 326, 327 (x3)), 328) ‘Virgin Mother’<sup>7</sup>
2. *Gure Andrea* (102, 136) ‘Our Lady’<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This word does not occur in the glossaries, but there are seventeenth-century reports that Mi’kmaqs used variants of the Basque word *adesquidex*, *adesquidés* ‘friends’ when speaking to the French (Bakker 1989b: 117).

<sup>6</sup> Some of these include Finnish inflectional endings: *Aitarenilla* (adessive.sg) (274, 279), *Aitarenilta* (ablative.sg) (280).

<sup>7</sup> Three of these include Finnish inflectional endings: *Amabirjinan* (gen.sg.) (102, 327) *Amabirjinaa* (part.sg.) (328).

<sup>8</sup> One instance includes a Finnish gen.sg. ending *Andrean* (102).

3. *Amatxu* (102, 327) ‘Dear Mother’ (see also relationships, above)<sup>9</sup>
4. *Kristoren izenan* (299 (x3) ‘In the name of Christ’ (see also curses, below)
5. *Aita* (271) ‘(Heavenly) Father’ (see also relationships, above); *Aitaren* gen. (271 (x2), 274, 279, 280)<sup>10</sup> [*ætha fader* (VG 342) *aita fader* (VB 85) *aita fader* (NLG 22) ‘father’]
6. *Arantzazuko Amabirjina* (326) ‘Virgin mother of Arantzazu’ (337)
7. *Zoaz Jainkoarekin*. (337), *Zoazte Jainkoarekin* (341) ‘Go with God’ [*svass far þu* (VG 432) ‘go’ (2sg.imp), *svascamporat fardu frä mier* (VG 501) ‘go away from me’]

E. Curses:

1. *Arraioa!* (244) ‘lightning’
2. *Mildiabolo!* (244) ‘A thousand devils!’
3. *Kristoren izenan* (299 (x3)) ‘In the name of Christ’ (see also religion, above)

F. Clothing:

1. *attora* (185) ‘shirt’ [*atorra skirta* (VG 46), *attora skyrta* (VB 107)]
2. *galtzerdiak* (205) ‘socks’ [*galsaria sochar* (VG 49), *galzardia sockar* (VB 112), *galsardia sockar* (NLG 48)]

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<sup>9</sup> One instance includes a Finnish gen.sg. ending *Amatxun* (102).

<sup>10</sup> Some of these include Finnish inflectional endings: *Aitarenilla* (adessive.sg) (274, 279), *Aitarenilta* (ablative.sg) (280).

3. *mitones* (184 (x2) ‘mittens’ (Spanish) [*escularuba vetlingar* (VG 117), *schularua vetlýngar* (VB 113), *sekulara veltingar* (NLG 49)]

G. Trade and transport:

1. *diru* (75) ‘money’ [*dirua silfur* (VB 35)]<sup>11</sup>

2. *txalupa* (166) ‘boat’ [*selupa bätur* (VG 322) ‘boat’, *salupa ütlendskur bätur* (VB 65) ‘foreign boat’]

3. *untzia* ‘ship’ (219) [*uncia skip* (VG 7), *onzia ütlendskt skip* (VB 63) ‘foreign ship’]

H. Numerals:

1. *bat* (205) ‘one’ [*bat 1* (VG 464b) *batt 1* (VB 228c)]

2. *bigarren* (205) ‘second’

3. *hamabi* (219) ‘12’ [*hamavi 12* (VG 464b), *hamar by 12* (VB 228c)]

4. *hoge* (219) ‘20’ [*hogoi 20* (VG 464b), *hogoita 20* (VB 228c)]

As seen, many of the Basque words that appear in the book are also attested in glossaries, while others fit into similar semantic areas. In comparison to the glossaries, Koivukari uses more words connected to relationships and to religion. While there are some curses, he does not use the vulgar expressions or obscenities found in the glossaries (on which see Miglio 2008: 10).

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<sup>11</sup> That ‘money’ is a central vocabulary item for trade and may be one of a few words learned in another language is shown in a multilingual utterance put in the mouth of the English pilot of a Spanish ship that visits Iceland a couple of years before the massacre: “Good money. Pecunia, diru. Peninga, islensku, is it not?” (Koivukari 2011: 75)

## 8. Phrases and word order

Basque word order at the phrasal level is generally head-final, although clauses are not consistently verb-final; word order is influenced by information structure and weight and focus (Ortiz de Urbina 2018: 14). Icelandic in general has SVO and V2 clause-level word order in both independent and subordinate clauses. Smaller units such as adverbial phrases tend to be head-final. Word order in the noun phrase is complicated (see Friðrik Magnússon 1984, Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2006).

Hualde (1984, 1991) shows that the pidgin phrases in the glossaries generally follow Icelandic word order rather than Basque. In most cases, the word order is more neutral in Icelandic and possible but marked in Basque. There are, however, a few examples of word orders that are not possible in either language.

Many of the Basque or partially Basque segments in *Ariasman* consist of single words. In two-word phrases, there seems to be variation between Basque and Icelandic word order. The phrases are generally idiomatic ones that could be learned as units.

N-Adj (as in Basque):

*egun on* (26) ‘good day’ [*eguna dagur* (VG 192), *egun morgun* (VB 74) ‘morning’, *biar dagur* (VB 73) ‘day’ [Basque *bihar* ‘tomorrow’]; *ona gott* (VB 173) ‘good’]

*ardo beltza* (219) ‘red wine’ (also appears with a Finnish partitive or Basque definite ending, *ardoa* (219))

*Eskerrik asko* (206) ‘much gratitude’ (‘thank you very much’)  
*baia urdinak* (211) ‘blueberries’

Adj-N (as in Icelandic and in the glossaries):

*bigarren zalde* (205) ‘second horse’ (as in Basque)

*mala gizona* (219) ‘bad man’ [*mala illt* (VB 175) ‘bad’, *gizona madur* (VG 1) ‘man’, *forju mala gissuna þu ert vondur madur* ‘you are a bad man’ (VB 226)] (not used in this order in Basque)

PossPron - N (as in Basque; marked word order in Icelandic):

*Gure Andrea* (102, 326) ‘Our Lady’<sup>12</sup>

*Gure laguna* (43) ‘our comrade’ [*laguna skipsfölk* (VG 15)]

*Gure untzia* (219) ‘our ship’ [*uncia skip* (VG 7), *onzia ütlendskt skip* (VB 63) ‘foreign ship’]

*Zure ama zer da? Zure – ama?* (340) ‘What (i.e. who) is your mother? Your – mother?’ [*ama modir* (NLG 23)]

N - PossPron (default order in Icelandic):

*Amabirjina nerea* (299) ‘my Virgin Mother’ (Ortiz de Urbina (2018: 25) observes possible assimilation to Romance word order in some possessive phrases used in liturgical contexts in Basque.)

N-N (N-N compounds are common in Basque and consistently right-headed (Ortiz de Urbina 2018: 14–15). Icelandic also makes extensive use of N-N compounds, which are usually head-final, using either a stem or genitive form of the attribute, but genitive attributes that are separate words usually follow the head noun.

*Amabirjina* (90, 102, 111, 251, 263, 299, 325, 326, 327 (x3), 328) ‘mother-virgin’ (Mary)<sup>13</sup>

*balea sarda* (38) ‘pod whale’, i.e. Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*)<sup>14</sup> [*Balia Hvalfiskur* (VG 30), VB *Balia Hvalur* (VB 127)]

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<sup>12</sup> One instance includes a Finnish gen.sg. ending *Andrean* (102).

<sup>13</sup> Three of these include Finnish inflectional endings: *Amabirjinan* (gen.sg.) (102, 327) *Amabirjinaa* (part.sg.) (328).

<sup>14</sup> The principal prey of the whalers is referred to in *Ariasman* with the Finnish term *parvivallas* ‘pod whale’, a calque of Basque *balea sarda* or *sardako balea*. For a study of Basque whale names, see Bakker (1995). In places Koivukari also uses *siloselkä* ‘smooth back’, a calque of Icelandic *sléttbakur* ‘Icelandic right whale’ (*Eubalaena glacialis*). The standard Icelandic term is *mustavalas* ‘black whale’ (Koivukari 2011: 344). While the right whale has been regarded as the main target of Basque whaling, Frasier et



Gen-N (as in Basque, not Icelandic):

*Kristoren izenan* (299 (x3)) ‘in the name of Christ’

*Arantzazuko Amabirjina* (326) ‘Virgin Mother of Arantzazu’

N-numeral (as in Basque, not Icelandic):

*zalde bat* (205) ‘one horse’ [*bat* 1 (VG 464b), *batt* 1 (VB 228c)]

Numeral-N (as in both Basque and Icelandic):

*hogei hamabi biskusa* (219) ‘32 biscuits’ (*hogeitahamabi* is Basque for ‘32’) [*h. hamar byä* 32 (VB 228c) *hogoi* 20 (VG 464b), *hogoita* 20 (VB 228c)], *hamavi* 12 (VG 464b), *hamar by* 12 (VB 228c) *bis-chusa braud-kaka* (VB 43) ‘bread-cake’, *biskosa skipbraud* (NKG 53) ‘ship-bread’]

Adv-Adj (as in both Basque and Icelandic):

*Oso txar* (185) ‘very bad’ [*mala illt* (VB 175)]

*Oso ondo* (210) ‘very good’ [*ona gott* (VB 173)]

Adv-V (as in Basque, not in Icelandic):

*Ondo ibili* (206) ‘walk well’, i.e. ‘good journey’

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al. (2008) find that right whales represent only a small fraction of bone deposits in Newfoundland compared to bowhead whales (*Balaena mysticetus*). To the best of my knowledge, no analogical study has been conducted in Iceland. The bowhead whale is mentioned only briefly in *Ariasman*, called by the name *pohjanvalas* ‘northern whale’: *Parvivalas harvemmin, parvivalaan pidempi serkku pohjanvalas, jota jotkut sanoivat Grönlannin valaaksi, oli jo ärhäkämpi ja samalla uimaankin nopeampi, sillä se oli yhtä paksu kuin parvivalas, mutta pidempi mitaltaan.* (173) ‘The longer and rarer cousin of the pod whale, the northern whale, which some called the Greenland whale, was even feistier and at the same time also faster at swimming, since it was as thick around as the pod whale but proportionately longer.’

While the phrases in the glossaries most often follow Icelandic word order (Hualde 1984: 54), Basque phrases in the novel that are not taken from the glossaries usually follow Basque grammar, which is natural as they are attributed to Basque characters. There are, however, a few examples of Icelandic order and word-for-word translation.

## 9. Morphology

The Basque segments in the novel show limited inflectional morphology. Some of the Basque nouns in the novel (as in the glossaries) appear with the suffixed definite article *-a*. The same holds for the Basque nouns found in the early modern glossaries, although the Icelandic translations generally do not show the definite article (which in Icelandic is most often suffixed as well). The *-a* forms were presumably understood as citation forms, consistent with the comparatively neutral function of the article in Basque (King 1994: 345–346). Also for adjectives, the citation form includes the *-a* ending, in Basque and in the word lists.

The Basque plural ending *-ak* appears on some nouns: (*foruak* ‘districts’ (37), *galtzerdiak* ‘socks’ (205), *baia urdinak* ‘blueberries’ (211)).

A local-genitive *-ko* appears in *Arantzazuko Amabirjina* (326) ‘virgin mother of Arantzazu’ and possessive-genitive *-ren* and inessive *-en* in *Kristoren izenan* (299 (x3)) ‘in the name of Christ’. The postposition *-ekin* ‘with’ occurs in *Zoaz Jainkoarekin* (337), *Zoazte Jainkoarekin* (341) ‘Go with God’. These idiomatic expressions are presumably fixed phrases.

Verbs appear mainly in imperative forms. There are two instances of the positive imperative *lagundu* (299 (x2)) ‘help’ (also citation form), one of *garbitu* (185) ‘wash’ and one of *zoaz* (337) ‘go’ (second person polite imperative), a second-person plural *zoazte* ‘go’ and one negative imperative which is inflected with subject and object markers *Ez nanazue hil!* (299 (x3)) ‘Don’t kill me!’. Examples as they appear in sentences:

*Amabirjina nerea, lagundu!* (299) ‘Virgin mother, help!’

*Ama, lagundu!* (299) ‘Mother, help!’

*Zoaz Jainkoarekin. Mene Herran haltuun.* (337) ‘Go with God.’

*Zoazte Jainkoarekin.* (341) ‘Go (pl.) with God.’

*Ez nazazue hil!* (299 (x3)) ‘Don’t kill me!’ (n- 1stSG -za- stem -zue 2PL)

While not directly representing “ungrammatical” Basque, the fictional representation avoids most of the morphological complexities of Basque. The functions of the morphemes that are featured are communicatively and cognitively salient, and might be among the first that a learner would notice. Many of them seem to be represented primarily in idiomatic phrases that a novice would likely learn as units.

### 9. Adaptations of proper names

The title *Ariasman* refers to an adaptation of the name *Ari Magnússon*, attested in a document from the Danish state archive (R.A. Kongehusets og rigets arkiv D 11–12. Island. Supplement II, 14, nr. 14) concerning a dispute over whaling rights off Spitsbergen. The whalers said they had permission from the magistrate “Ariasman”, but Ari was not authorized to grant this (see Már Jónsson 2015: 138–143).<sup>15</sup>

There are other references to the ways in which personal names are perceived or adapted by speakers of the other language. Gartzia parses the Icelandic name *Gvendur* [kventYr] (hypocoristic for *Guðmundur*) as *Gen-dur* (340). Krístrún renders Gartzia’s name as *Garsia* (211) and Gvendur calls him *Garsi* (341). Gartzia approximates *Krístrún* as *Kristuru* (211, 341) and creates a diminutive *Kristurutxu* (211).

Place names are also approximated or translated. Icelandic *Æðey* [aiðei] ‘Eider Island’ is reinterpreted by the Basques as *Aitaren uharte* ‘father’s island’ (271), which they hope represents a blessing (though in fact they are massacred there). The name *Aitaren* appears several times (271 (x2), 274, 279, 280), including Finnish adessive (*Aitarenilla*) (274, 279) and ablative (*Aitarenilta*) (280) forms.

### 10. Bilingual puns and accidental homophones

Not only names, but other words and phrases are presented as heard through the ears of speakers of the other language. The Basque word

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<sup>15</sup> The name *Ariasman* appears numerous times throughout the book (43 (x2), 83, 158, 177, 232 (x3), 272 (x2), 275, 276 (x4), 277 (x3), 278 (x5), 311); some of these instances include Finnish genitive (*Ariasmanin*) and partitive (*Ariasmania*) endings.

*adiskidetasuna* (26 (x2), 43) ‘friendship’ is parsed by the Icelanders as a nonsense phrase: *að skíði eða sunnu* ‘to shingle or sun’ (26).

The similarity between the Basque *ama* ‘mother’ and Icelandic *amma* ‘grandmother’ is exploited in the final scene of the novel, in which an older Gartzia returns to Iceland and recognizes Krístrún’s father, who is accompanied by a young man whose features strikingly resemble Gartzia’s. Gartzia asks him in Basque who his mother is; the boy Gvendur first gives the name of his deceased grandmother but then adds that his mother is named Krístrún:

- Gvendur.
- *Gen-dur*, Gartzia tapaili ja mies nyökkäsi. Sitten Gartzia henkäili syvään ja kysyi:
- *Zure ama zer da? Zure – ama? Sinun – äitisi?*
- *Amma mín heitir Thorbjörg. En hún er dái.* Mummoni nimi on Thorbjörg. Mutta hän on kuollut. (340)
- [...]
- *Garsi!*
- *Bai, zer?* Kyllä, mitä?
- *En móðir mín heitir Krístrún.* Mutta äitini nimi on Krístrún.
- *Kristuru?*
- *Já.* (341)

In translation:

- ‘- Gvendur.
- Gen-dur, Gartzia attempted and the man nodded. Then Gartzia took a deep breath and asked:
- Who is your mother? Your – mother?
- My grandmother’s name is Thorbjörg. But she is dead.
- [...]
- Garsi!
- Yes, what?
- But my mother’s name is Krístrún.
- Kristuru?
- Yes.’

In this conversation, each party speaks his own language, but the gist of the message is nonetheless conveyed, notwithstanding the “false friend” word with a related but different meaning.

### 11. Exchange formulae

The most extensive utterances in pidgin in both the glosses and the novel represent an exchange formula ‘I give you X, you give me Y’. In most cases the verb is a Romance form *presenta* ‘give’. Hualde (1991: 434) points out that this bare form appears underspecified for tense, mood and person and can appear in a range of grammatical functions. The verb *presenta* occurs 12 times in *Ariasman* in variants of the exchange formula (183–185, 187, 205, 211).

a. *Mi presenta forju balea. Ju presenta formi ardia.* Annan sinulle valasta, anna minulle lammas. Bää, hän sanoi vielä varmuuden vuoksi. (183) ‘I will give you some whale, you give me a sheep. Baa, he added, just to be sure.’

b. *Zer ju presenta formi? Mi presenta forju balea.* (184) ‘What will you give me? I will give you some whale.’

c. *Ille* [Latin] *presenta forju vettlinga, ju presenta balea.*  
Martin nyökkäsi, ymmärsi.  
*Mitones.*

*Bai, ille presenta forju mitones.* (184) [*bai vyi ja* VB 181, *bai ja* (NLG 28) ‘yes’]

In translation:

‘He will give you mittens, you give whale.’

Martin nodded, understood.

Mittens.

Yes, he will give you mittens.’

d. *Ju presenta formi gurina, mi presenta forju ardia.* (187)  
‘You give me butter, I will give you a sheep.’

e. *Zer ju presenta formi?*[...] *Galtzerdiak. Konforme.* (205)  
‘What will you give me?  
Socks. Agreed.’

f. *Kristurutxu, mi presenta forju biskusa*. (211)  
‘Kristrún, I will give you a biscuit.’

Both the glossary and the novel contain examples in which the exchange involves washing a shirt, but Koivukari replaces the dialectal word *bocata* with the modern Basque *garbitu*:

*bocata for me attora þvodu fyrer mig skyrtu*  
‘wash a shirt for me’ (VB 196)

*Ju garbitu formi attora, mi presenta forju biskusa*. Sinä peset minulle paidan, minä annan sinulle laivakorpun. (Koivukari 2011: 185)  
‘You wash a shirt for me, I give you biscuit.’

The pidgin exchange formulae fit in the context of interactions depicted in the novel. Specific words that are not attested in the glossaries are filled in with words from other languages, e.g. the Latin 3rd sg pronoun *ille*. In some cases where a referent is attested in the glossaries, Koivukari uses a different word: hence he uses Modern Basque *garbitu* ‘wash’ whereas the glossary has a dialectal word *bocata*, but Spanish *mitones* ‘mittens’ whereas the glossaries have approximations of Basque *eskularru* (*escularuba vetlingar* (VG 117) *schularua vetlýngar* (VB 113) *sekulara veltingar* (NLG 49) (Etxepare and Miglio 2015: 358, 372). Bakker (1987: 7) argues that the sentence template may be filled with any noun representing a ware to be traded; variation between Basque and Spanish lexemes for the same concepts is plausible as with *mala* (Koivukari 2011: 219) vs *tsar* (185) for ‘bad’.

## 12. Pronouns

The interrogative pronoun *zer* ‘who, what’ (in Basque: *zer* ‘what’, not ‘who’) appears several times in both pidgin and purely Basque sentences in *Ariasman* (184, 205, 340, 341). It is also found in the glossaries: *ser travala for ju hvad giører þu* (VB 228a) ‘what are you doing?’ although Basque *serdahari* = *zer da hori* ‘what is that?’ is misinterpreted in the glossary as Icelandic *siädu það* ‘look at that’ (VG 338). Examples:

- a. *Zure ama zer da? Zure – ama?* (340) ‘Who is your mother? Your – mother?’
- b. *Zer ju presenta formi?* (184, 205) ‘What will you give me?’
- c. *Bai, zer? Kyllä, mitä?* (341) ‘Yes, what?’

English-based pronouns *mi* ‘I/me’ and *ju* ‘you’ and forms *for mi* and *for ju* derived from English prepositional phrases appear in the glossaries as personal pronouns. According to Bakker (1987: 7), they could also be Zee-landic Dutch. Bakker (1987) discusses these examples as a clue to the emergence of the various functions of forms derived from *for* found widely in pidgins and creoles.<sup>16</sup> In the glossaries the forms with *for* appear as both subjects and recipients:

- a. *ser travala for ju hvad giører þu* (VB 228a) ‘what are you doing?’
- b. *Christ Maria presenta for mi balia, for mi, presenta for ju bustana gefe Christur og Maria mier hval, skal jeg gefa þier spordenn* (VB 224) ‘If Christ and Mary give me a whale, I will give you the tail’

*Vocabula Biscaica* includes one example of *ju* used as a subject: *ser ju presenta formi hvad gefur þu mier* ‘what will you give me?’ Otherwise *for mi* and *for ju* seem to be treated as atoms which appear either as subjects or recipients. Koivukari, however, consistently uses *mi* ‘I’ and *ju* ‘you’ as nominative forms and *formi*, *forju* as recipients.

In seeking a 3rd person pronoun to insert into the exchange formula, Koivukari has Jón Guðmundsson use the Latin *ille* ‘he, that one’. Jón also uses the Icelandic acc.pl. *vettlinga* ‘mittens’, fitting the syntactic context.

- *Zer ju presenta formi? Mi presenta forju balea.*

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<sup>16</sup> Bakker (1989a: 131) observes that the forms *mi* ‘I’ and *ju* ‘you’ are also found in the sentences of *fáskrúðsfjarðarfranska* ‘French of the Fáskrúðsfjörður’ included in Jón Myrdal’s 1872 (reprint 1912) novel *Mannamunur* ‘Difference among people’ and are shared with Russenorsk. Despite the name, the phrases of *fáskrúðsfjarðarfranska* consist mainly of Germanic vocabulary; the source may have been Flemish fishermen from around Dunkerque (Bakker 1989a: 131).



Jón Maalari yritti tulkata, kuultuaan, ettei toisella ollut antaa kuin pari meri-vanttuuta:

- *Ille presenta forju vettlinga, ju presenta balea.*

Martin nyökkäsi, ymmärsi.

- *Mitones.*

- *Bai, ille presenta forju mitones.* Kyllä, hän antaa sinulle vanttuut. (184)

In translation:

‘-*What will you give me? I will give you some whale.*

Jón the Painter tried to interpret, having heard that the other had nothing to give but a pair of sea mittens:

-*He will give you mittens, you give whale.*

Martin nodded, understood.

-*Mittens.*

-*Yes, he will give you mittens.* Yes, he will give you mittens.’

Koivukari has said (p.c.) that this is because the character who utters this knows Latin. Helgi Guðmundsson (1979: 84) suggests that Latin had been used as an intermediating language in eliciting items for the glossaries. It does appear that Latin was used as a lingua franca during the encounters of 1615 (Peter Bakker, p.c.). The documentary evidence shows that at least three people involved knew at least some Latin: the Icelandic pastor Ólafur, crew member Luís and the captain Martín de Villafranca.

### 13. Translations and adaptations of *Ariasman*

*Ariasman* has been translated into Icelandic by Sigurður Karlsson (Koivukari 2012) and into Basque by Maia Ossa Rissanen (Koivukari 2017). In the translations, the pidgin exchange formulae have been left as in the original, followed by translations (e.g. Koivukari 2012: 234). Analysis of the use of different languages in these translations is a topic for future work.

A dramatic adaptation in Icelandic as a one-man play performed by Elfar Logi premiered at Komedíuleikhúsið Haukadal in Dýrafjörður on 29 June 2024 (Koivukari 2024). It also includes a presentation of the exchange formula, translated into grammatical Icelandic:

*Formi presenta forjú balea. Forjú presenta formi berri esne. Ég gef þér hvalkjöt, gefðu mér nýja mjólk.*

*Formi presenta forjú kordela, forjú presenta formi mitones. Ég gefi þér kaðal, gefðu mér vettlinga.*

*Forjú garbitu formi attora, formi presenta forjú biskusa. Þvoðu skirtuna fyrir mig, þá færðu skipakex.* (Koivukari 2024: 11)

‘I [will] give you whale meat, give me fresh milk.  
I will give you a cable, give me mittens.  
You wash the shirt for me, then you will get ship’s biscuit.’

Some of the wares included here are not mentioned in the novel, but occur in the glossaries: *esnia miölk* (VG 29) ‘milk’, *presenta for me berrua usnia eta berria bura gefdu mier heita miölk og nyt smiør* (VB 227) ‘give me hot milk and fresh butter’, *calia kadall* (VB 186) ‘cable’. Here, unlike in the novel, the forms *formi* and *forjú* are used for both subject and recipient. These sentences in the one-man play are given as examples of trade exchanges and not incorporated into dialogue or action.

Part of the story (focusing on Gartzia) was adapted into a young adult novel that appeared in a Basque translation by Maia Ossa Rissanen (Koivukari 2015a) and an English translation by Kate Lambert (Koivukari 2015b) and later in Finnish (Koivukari 2018). The Finnish version includes explanations of Finnish terms that may be unfamiliar to young readers, including diagrams such as the parts of a barrel (11).

The Finnish version of the young adult adaptation, *Gartzia: eloonjäänyt* ‘Gartzia: the survivor’ (Koivukari 2018), like *Ariasman*, thematizes language learning and multilingual communication, but with somewhat more transparent strategies than the adult novel. There are no passages in Latin or German and less word play. The standard term *mustavalas* ‘black whale’ for North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) is used instead of Koivukari’s calques *parvivalas* ‘pod whale’ and *siloselkä* ‘smooth back’ of the Basque and Icelandic terms *balea sarda* / *sardako balea* and *sléttbakur* respectively, which are used frequently in *Ariasman* (see Koivukari 2011: 344). In *Gartzia*, most phrases in other languages than Finnish are immediately translated or explained in context, although this is not the case in the English version of the young adult adaptation (Koivukari 2015b).

In *Gartzia*, the pidgin exchange formula appears numerous times (67, 68, 76, 87; also *Zer ju presenta for mi? Mitä sinä anta minä?* ‘What will you give me?’, 69). Whereas in *Ariasman* translations are normalized to standard Finnish, the Finnish translations of pidgin phrases in *Gartzia* omit inflectional endings, using nominative forms of nominals and bare verb stems to give an impression of a pidgin, e.g. *Ju presenta for mi galtzerdiak, mi presenta forju balea. Sinä anta minä sukat, minä anta sinä valas* (67) ‘You give me socks, I give you whale.’

Gartzia perceives the name Þorsteinn [θɔɾ.steɪn] as “Forsteid” (53):

Hän osoitti rintaansa ja sanoi nimensä, hitaasti ja selvästi. Osoitti sitten poikaa ja kysyi:

- Ja sinä?
- Thorsteinn, vastasi poika.

Gartzia tajusi, että tästä tulikin hankalampi juttu. Mutta pojan nimi oli siis jotain sellaista kuin “Forsteid”. (53)

In translation:

‘He pointed at his chest and said his name, slowly and clearly. Then he pointed at the boy and asked:

- And you?
- Thorsteinn, answered the boy.

Gartzia realized that this turned out to be a more complicated matter. But the boy’s name was something like “Forsteid”.’

A similar adaptation of names as in *Ariasman* (211) also appears in *Gartzia* (84):

Tyttö estteli itsensä.

-Kristrún.

-Kristuru, toisti Gartzia ja sanoi:

-Gartzia.

-Garsía, Kristrún sanoi. (84)

In translation:

‘The girl introduced herself.

- Kristrún.
- Kristuru, Gartzia repeated and said;
- Gartzia.
- Garsía, Kristrún said.’

Gartzia and Kristrún are shown teaching each other words by pointing, including names (84), body parts (86) and other concepts. The words are given first in Basque, then Icelandic, and finally in Finnish:

Näin he jatkoivat, opettivat toisilleen toistensa sanoja. Auga, begia.<sup>17</sup> Silmä. Munur, ahoa. Suu. Fótur, oina. Jalka. Jörð, lurra. Maa. Hjarta, bihotza. Sydän. (86) ‘So they continued, teaching each other their words. Eye. Mouth. Leg. Earth. Heart.’

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Begia auga* (NLG 20) ‘eye’.

Kristuru, mi presenta for ju biskusa.

Biskusa. Brauð. Korppu. (86) ‘Kristuru, I give you biscuit. Biscuit.’

Koss. Muxu. Pusu. (86) ‘Kiss.’

In general, *Gartzia* maintains the attention to communication difficulties seen in *Ariasman* but presents the multilingual situation in a more straightforward way, avoiding some of the wordplay, non-standard terms and untranslated foreign language segments that could confuse or frustrate younger readers.

#### 14. Literary representations of contact languages

Pidgins and contact language varieties are represented in literary works from around the world, including Iceland – the appearance of *fáskrúðs-fjarðarfranska* in Jón Myrdal’s (1872) novel *Mannamunur* is mentioned above in note 16 (Bakker 1989a). In their survey of literary representations of contact languages, Buzelin and Winer (2009) focus on examples from the Caribbean and on living languages. The representation of historical varieties poses a greater challenge. Shaun Hughes (2004) suggests that several putative literary representations of “Maori English”, i.e. English as spoken by persons of Maori descent in New Zealand, do not reflect specific Maori or New Zealand features so much as general international stereotypes of “bad English”. Iain Lambert (2008) argues that the representation of Maori speech in Alan Duff’s novel *Once were warriors* (1990), while not aiming for full accuracy, makes use of salient features of New Zealand English to create an impression of authenticity. While the novel provoked strong reactions to the sociolinguistic implications of representing non-standard speech, Lambert hopes that the book will help pave the way for other writers to use their own language varieties in literary works.

Koivukari’s task is different inasmuch as the situation depicted is remote in time and has limited documentation. Authors of historical fiction have in common with scholars an interest in creating a cohesive picture of the past on the basis of fragmentary information and there are many similarities in their use of sources. However, artists have more freedom to improvise and fill in gaps from their imagination. The “bottom line” is not necessarily the most plausible scenario, but the best story that is not inconsistent with the known facts. At the same time, it may be harder for a fiction writer to leave a gap when something needed for the narrative is not known.

Koivukari's aim in the novel is not to reconstruct the pidgin, but to flesh out a picture of the contact situation on a number of levels. The depictions of trade situations involving pidgin phrases, as well as different types of multilingual communication, semi-communication and interpretation seem authentic and plausible. They are informed by scholarship on the glossaries and make a contribution to understanding the context in which the pidgin was used and the glossaries came about.

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