The background is a vibrant red color. In the center, there is a faint, semi-transparent image of a globe. Overlaid on the globe and the background are several large, dark red mathematical symbols: a greater-than sign (>), a plus sign (+), a percent sign (%), an equals sign (=), and a summation symbol (Σ). These symbols are arranged in a way that suggests a network or interconnectedness.

# Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey

# 2016





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# 2016

EUSKO JAURLARITZA



GOBIERNO VASCO

KULTURA ETA HIZKUNTZA  
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DEPARTAMENTO DE CULTURA  
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## INTRODUCTION

The Sociolinguistic Survey reflects a rich and complex reality. In a small geographical area we see completely different situations. However, taken as a whole there is a feature that encourages hope: a majority of the public wants a future in which the Basque language is present. Attachment to Basque has in recent decades led to its reactivation, and its future revitalisation calls for just this, the backing of society.

Taking into consideration the whole of the Basque-speaking territory, attitudes favourable to promoting the use of Basque have risen by 8 points since 1991. Meanwhile, the opposite attitude has declined by nearly 5 points. Nearly 56% of society is in favour of encouraging the use of Basque, while only 16% is against (28.2% is neither for nor against). Nevertheless, it should be recalled that this development is not uniform throughout the Basque-speaking region, as in certain areas attitudes contrary to encouraging the use of Basque have hardened. If in the future we want to build a process of revitalisation of Basque on solid foundations, it is decisive to nurture and disseminate this consensus.

While it is an essential condition, consensus alone has not brought about the rise of Basque. Consensus has made possible effective policies that have influenced the development of Basque. As the Sociolinguistic Survey shows, the development of Basque in recent decades has been the most far-reaching in the places where these two factors have coincided the most strongly.

The most relevant indicator of this development in recent decades has been the significant growth in knowledge of Basque. There are 223,000 new speakers of Basque. Moreover, the profile of new Basque speakers has been entirely rejuvenated. In 1991

Basque speakers belonged to the oldest generations; today, on the other hand, the most Basque-speaking generations are the youngest. The younger the person the more likely they are to be Basque-speaking, in terms of both knowledge and use. This profound change has made the process of reactivating Basque a model for minority languages all over the world, at the same time placing our language in a new scenario.

In this new setting, however, new challenges arise, and these are shown precisely in the Sociolinguistic Survey. It clearly shows that the main weak points are directly linked to the logical boundaries of any process. The vast majority of new Basque speakers have learnt Basque outside their families, in most cases through the education system. This has completely changed the profile of today's Basque speaker. Not only are there more and more of them, but the Basque speakers of the early 21st century are more diverse than ever.

These new speakers are also part of a changing global context, with all the implications of this. Just as has happened up to now, it will be essential to consolidate the basis that has brought us this far, always through consensus and the backing of society. In doing this, all the information and knowledge provided by the Sociolinguistic Survey and in general by any sociolinguistic analysis will be highly useful, as research will also be vital in deciding on the right path to follow.

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**TERRITORY OF THE  
BASQUE LANGUAGE**  
Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey



## 1. POPULATION

In 2016, the territory of the Basque language had a total population of 3,131,464. If we compare this figure with that recorded for 2001, we see an increase of 206,062 people, in absolute terms.

However, the evolution of the population over the course of these fifteen years has differed from territory to territory.

Up until 2011, population numbers rose in all the Basque provinces except Zuberoa. Between 2011 and 2016, however, population numbers dropped not only in Zuberoa, but in Bizkaia and Navarre also. Nevertheless, despite the small drop in population in these three provinces, thanks to the growth experienced in the others, the overall population of the territory of the Basque language has risen, even over the course of the last five years, during which the increase has been slower.

**Table 1.** Population evolution by province. Territory of the Basque language, 2001-2016

	2001	2006	2011	2016
<b>Territory of the Basque language</b>	<b>2,925,402</b>	<b>3,012,606</b>	<b>3,114,276</b>	<b>3,131,464</b>
Araba	290,220	303,727	321,205	325,953
Bizkaia	1,132,979	1,140,236	1,156,141	1,147,903
Gipuzkoa	680,068	691,895	709,607	717,832
Navarre	555,877	601,874	642,051	640,647
Lapurdi	222,097	230,065	239,635	252,492
Lower Navarre	28,659	29,403	30,357	31,639
Zuberoa	15,502	15,407	15,280	14,998

Source: Gaindegia.

Two factors are responsible for this evolution, firstly the natural increase (i.e. the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths) and secondly, the migratory balance (i.e. the difference between immigration and emigration rates).

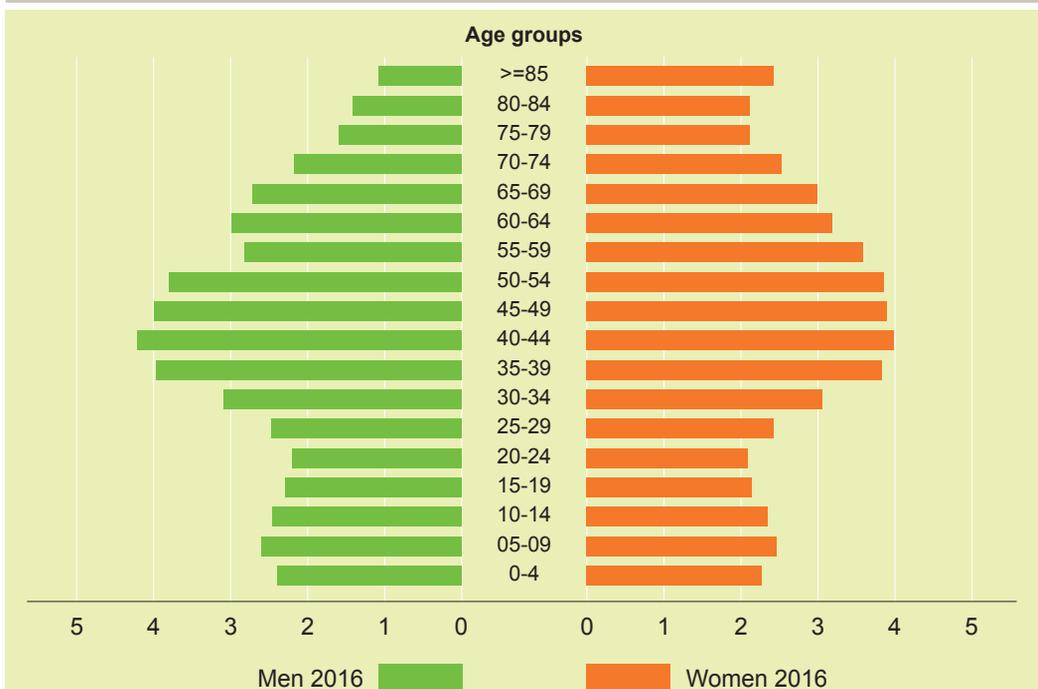
The main characteristics of the native population are as follows:

- Ageing population: life expectancy is high while birth rates are very low (8.6 births per 1,000 inhabitants; the EU27 mean is 10.1).
- Increased immigration: the percentage of residents born abroad has increased (9.1% in the Basque Autonomous Community and 13.4% in Navarre, in 2016).

Since 2001, the percentage of over 65s has increased by 3 points, and today, this age group accounts for 21.1% of the total population (as opposed to just 18% in 2001).

At the same time, the percentage of young people in the population has decreased. In 2016, just 19% of the population was under 20 years of age. In short, there are more people over the age of 65 living in the territory of the Basque language than there are young people aged under 20 (21.1% versus 19%).

**Figure 1.** Population pyramid. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



Source: EAS.

## 2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

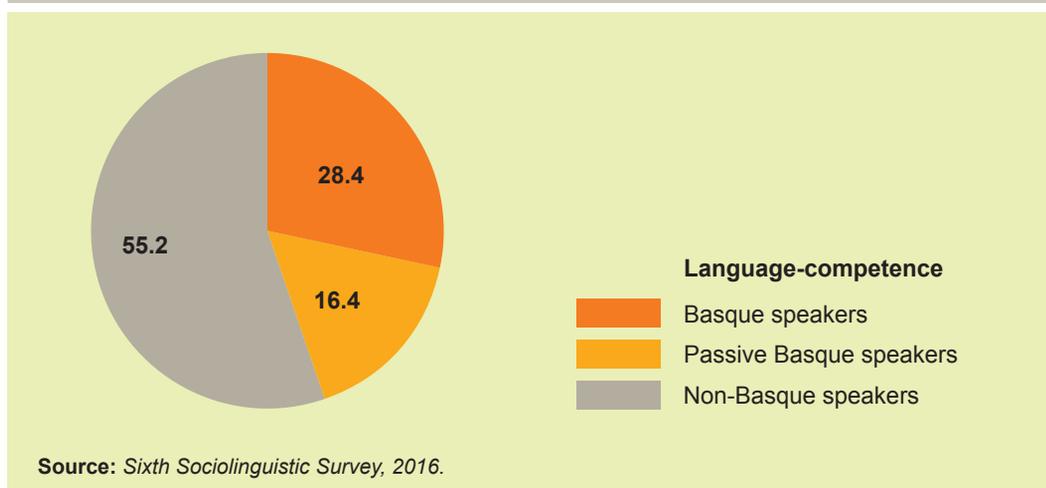
### 2.1. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY TERRITORY, PROVINCE AND CAPITAL CITY

If we classify the population according to their ability to speak Basque, we see there are three types of speaker:

- **Basque speakers (bilinguals):** people who speak Basque fluently and those who speak and understand it fairly well.
- **Passive Basque speakers (passive bilinguals):** people who are not able to speak Basque well or fairly well. However, they do have some knowledge of the language. This group includes anyone who fulfils at least one of the following criteria:
  - They are able to understand and speak some Basque.
  - They are able to understand Basque “well” or “fairly well”.
- **Non-Basque speakers:** people who can neither understand nor speak Basque.

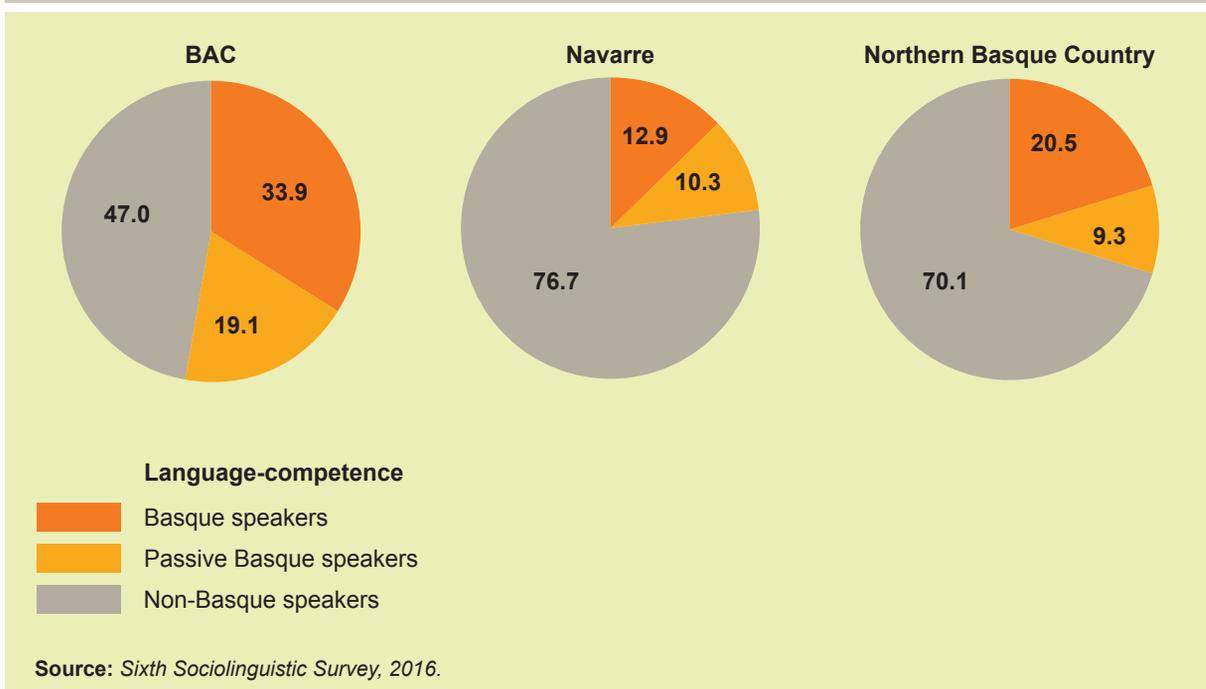
According to the Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, in 2016, 28.4% of the over-16 population living in the territory of the Basque language are Basque speakers, 16.4% are passive Basque speakers and 55.2% are non-Basque speakers.

Figure 2. Language-competence. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



The situation varies widely between the three territories. In the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) over one third of the population are Basque speakers (33.9%). In Navarre, on the other hand, only one eighth of the population are Basque speakers (12.9%). And finally, in the Northern Basque Country, one fifth of the population can speak Basque (20.5%).

**Figure 3.** Language-competence by territory. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



**Table 2.** Language-competence by territory. Territory of the Basque language, 2016

	Territory of the Basque language	BAC	Navarre	Northern Basque Country
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,647,422</b>	<b>1,864,380</b>	<b>533,602</b>	<b>249,441</b>
Basque speakers	751,527	631,384	68,946	51,197
Passive Basque speakers	434,370	355,936	55,134	23,299
Non-Basque speakers	1,461,525	877,060	409,522	174,944

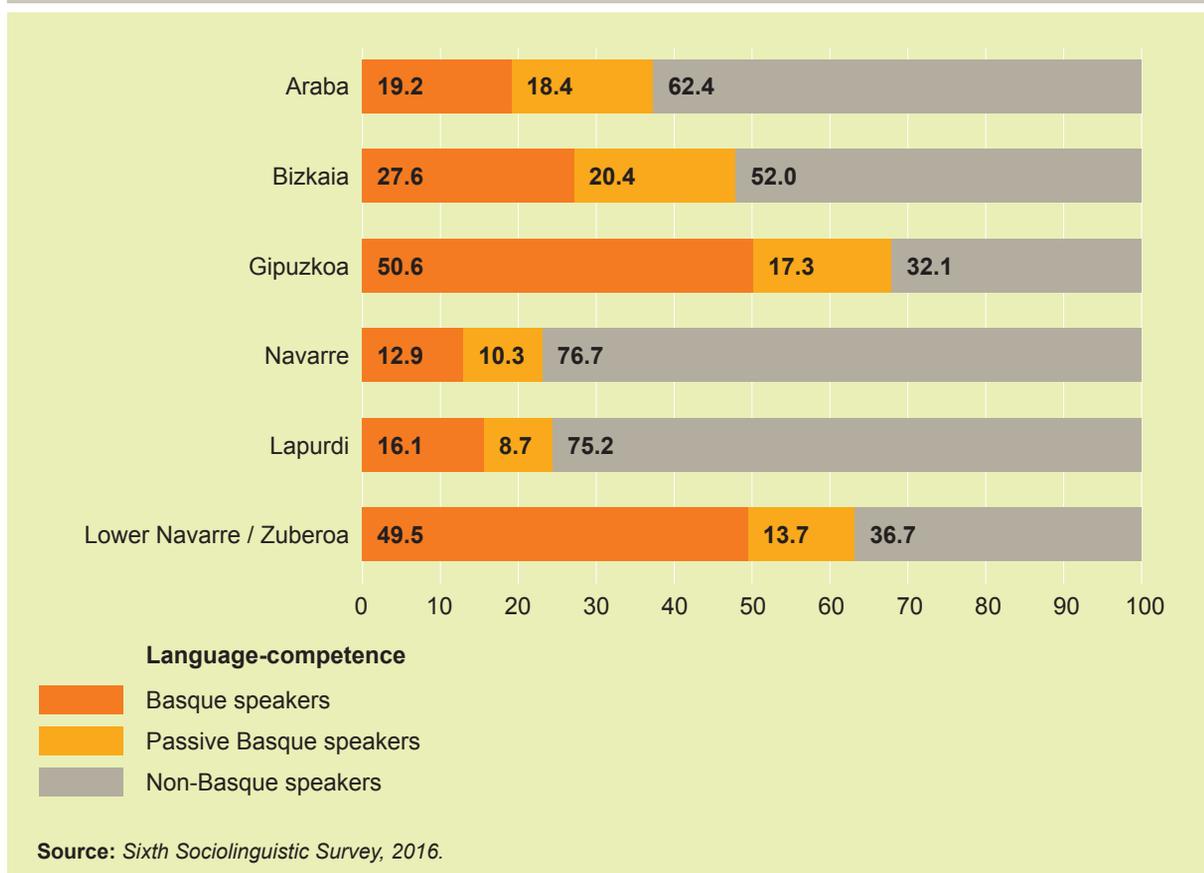
**Source:** Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

The percentage of Basque speakers also varies widely between the different provinces of the BAC and the Northern Basque Country.

In the BAC, the highest percentage can be found in the province of Gipuzkoa (50.6%). In Bizkaia, on the other hand, the percentage is lower (27.6%). Finally, Araba has the lowest percentage of Basque speakers of all three BAC provinces (19.2%).

The percentages also vary widely between the provinces of the Northern Basque Country. In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, 49.5% of the population are Basque speakers, whereas in Lapurdi, including the BAB (Bayonne-Anglet-Biarritz) district, this figure is just 16.1%.

**Figure 4.** Language-competence by province. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



**Table 3.** Language-competence by province. Territory of the Basque language, 2016

	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa	Navarre	Lapurdi	Lower Navarre / Zuberoa
<b>Total</b>	<b>273,086</b>	<b>986,155</b>	<b>605,139</b>	<b>533,602</b>	<b>216,764</b>	<b>32,676</b>
Basque speakers	52,513	272,423	306,448	68,946	35,006	16,191
Passive Basque speakers	50,197	201,074	104,665	55,134	18,808	4,492
Non-Basque speakers	170,376	512,658	194,026	409,522	162,950	11,994

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

As regards the provincial capitals, it is worth noting that all have a lower percentage of Basque speakers than their respective provinces. In Donostia-San Sebastián, 35.4 % of the population can speak Basque; in Bilbao the figure is 18.6 %, in Vitoria-Gasteiz it is 17.9 %, in Pamplona 10.5 % and in the BAB (Bayonne-Anglet-Biarritz) district it is 8.4 %.

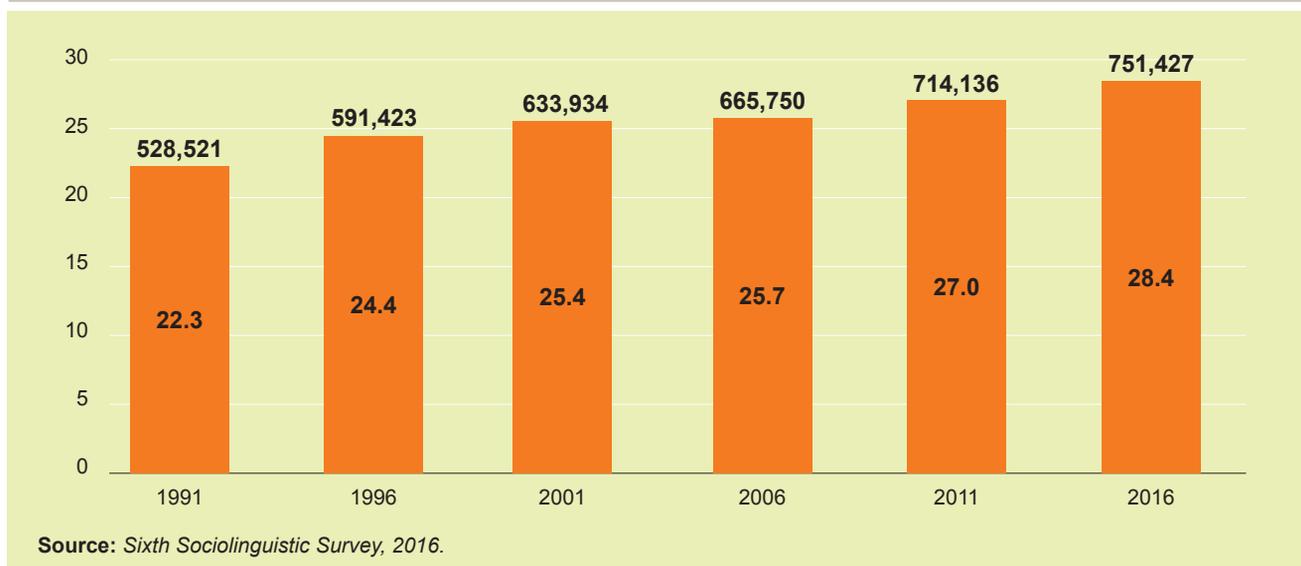
**Table 4.** Language-competence by capital city. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

	Vitoria-Gasteiz	Bilbao	Donostia-San Sebastián	Pamplona	BAB
<b>Total</b>	<b>206,334</b>	<b>300,283</b>	<b>160,826</b>	<b>166,500</b>	<b>102,200</b>
Basque speakers	17.9	18.6	35.4	10.5	8.4
Passive Basque speakers	18.4	21.1	21.5	11.4	5.7
Non-Basque speakers	63.8	60.3	43.1	78.1	85.8

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

In 2016, there were 223,000 more Basque speakers in the territory of the Basque language than in 1991. This is an increase of 6.1 % (22.3 % versus 28.4 %).

**Figure 5.** Evolution of Basque speakers. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016



The percentage of passive Basque speakers also rose by 9 points over that 25-year period (7.7 % versus 16.4 %).

The number of non-Basque speakers, on the other hand, dropped from 70 % in 1991 to 55.2 % in 2016.

This decrease in the percentage of non-Basque speakers and increase in the percentage of Basque speakers is even more remarkable if we take into account the sociodemographic changes that have taken place in our society over recent years. The local population is ageing steadily and the birth rate is dropping. This means that young people, among whom the percentage of Basque speakers is highest, bears increasingly less weight within the population as a whole.

The percentage of Basque speakers has risen in the BAC and Navarre, although it has dropped in the Northern Basque Country. In 1991, 24.1 % of the population in the BAC were Basque speakers, whereas today, this figure is 33.9 %. Similarly, the percentage in Navarre has risen from 9.5 % to 12.9 % in the same time frame. In the Northern Basque Country, however, in 1996, 26.4 % of the population were Basque speakers, whereas now that figure is 20.5 %.

Please note that the starting point for calculating increases and decreases in percentages in the Northern Basque Country is the 1996 survey, rather than the one conducted in 1991.

## 2.2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY SEX AND AGE

In the territory of the Basque language, 28.8% of women are Basque speakers, where for men this figure is 27.9%. Therefore, the percentage of Basque speakers among women is slightly higher than among men.

The largest difference is in the BAC, with 34.4% of women and 33.2% of men being Basque speakers (a difference of 1.2 points).

It should be noted that more women than men are enrolled on adult Basque language learning courses in the BAC. In the 2016-17 academic year, two thirds (66.8%) of all those studying Basque were women. Consequently, more women than men have learned Basque as adults thanks to the Basque adult language education system. This is nothing new, with the trend remaining largely unchanged over the last 20 years (i.e. since 1996).

In Navarre and the Northern Basque Country there is almost no difference between the percentages of men and women who speak Basque.

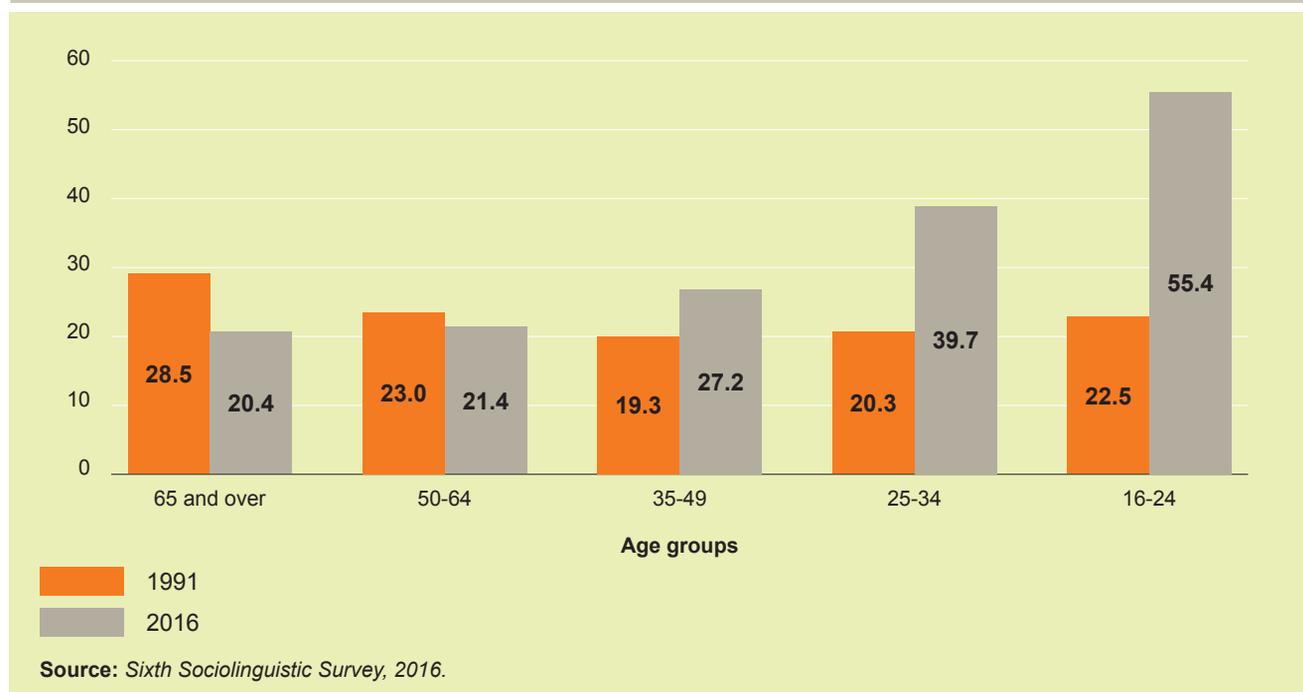
**Table 5.** Basque speakers by sex. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

	Territory of the Basque language	BAC	Navarre	Northern Basque Country
Total	28.4	33.9	12.9	20.5
Women	28.8	34.4	12.7	20.4
Men	27.9	33.2	13.1	20.7

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

The highest percentage of Basque speakers can be found in the under 35 age group. Nevertheless, the percentages have increased in all age groups among people under the age of 65. Today, over half of all those aged between 16 and 24 are Basque speakers (55.4%), whereas in 1991 this figure was not even one third (22.5%).

**Figure 6.** Evolution of Basque speakers by age. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)



Thus, the rise in the percentage of Basque speakers is particularly notable among young people. The percentage of non-Basque speakers is higher among the adult population, although over the years more and more people in these age groups have learned to speak the language. In other words, as an increasing percentage of young people become Basque speakers, so too is the percentage growing among the older population.

This trend is observed in both the BAC and Navarre, even though the percentages are very different in absolute terms. There is a marked increase in the percentage of Basque speakers among the youth population, and a general drop in the percentage of non-Basque speakers in that same age group. In the BAC, over seven out of ten of those aged between 16 and 24 speak Basque (71.4%), and the trend is similar in Navarre, although the percentage is lower (25.8%).

In the Northern Basque Country, on the other hand, the highest percentage of Basque speakers is found among the over 65s, and this figure drops as you move down the age scale, until you reach the 25-24 group, in which the trend is reversed. Nevertheless, the largest increase in the percentage of Basque speakers is found among the 16-24 age group (18.9% in 2016, as opposed to 11.3% in 1996).

**Table 6.** Basque speakers by age and territory. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

	Age					
	Total	65 and over	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
Territory of the Basque language	28,4	20,4	21,4	27,2	39,7	55,4
BAC	33,9	22,4	24,6	33,2	49,3	71,4
Navarre	12,9	8,3	9,5	11,7	18,8	25,8
Northern Basque Country	20,5	28,1	21,3	14,6	15,7	18,9

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

### 2.3. RELATIVE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE: FLUENCY AMONG BASQUE SPEAKERS

We will now analyse relative language competence among Basque speakers. In other words, we will analyse their oral fluency in Basque and their other language.

By “other language” we refer to any language other than Basque, mainly (although not exclusively) Spanish in the BAC and Navarre and French in the Northern Basque Country.

Basque speakers are divided into the following categories, depending on their relative language competence:

- **Bilinguals with a greater command of Basque:** these people are more fluent in Basque than they are in their other language.

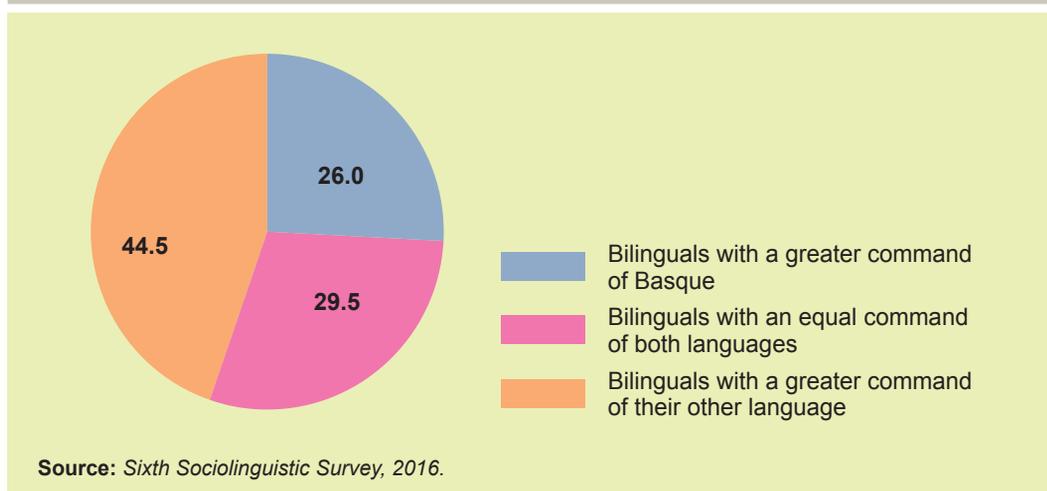
- **Bilinguals with an equal command of both languages:** these people are equally fluent in both Basque and their other language. In other words, these bilinguals can express themselves equally well in either language.
- **Bilinguals with a greater command of their other language:** these people are more fluent in their other language than they are in Basque.

In the territory of the Basque language, 26% of all Basque speakers over the age of 16 claim to speak Basque more fluently than their other language. In other words, 26% of Basque speakers fall into the first category.

Just under one third (29.5%) of Basque speakers claim to have an equal command of both of the languages they speak.

And finally, bilinguals with a greater command of their other language represent 44.5% of all Basque speakers. This is the largest group, and the percentage is even higher among younger speakers.

Figure 7. Basque speakers by fluency. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

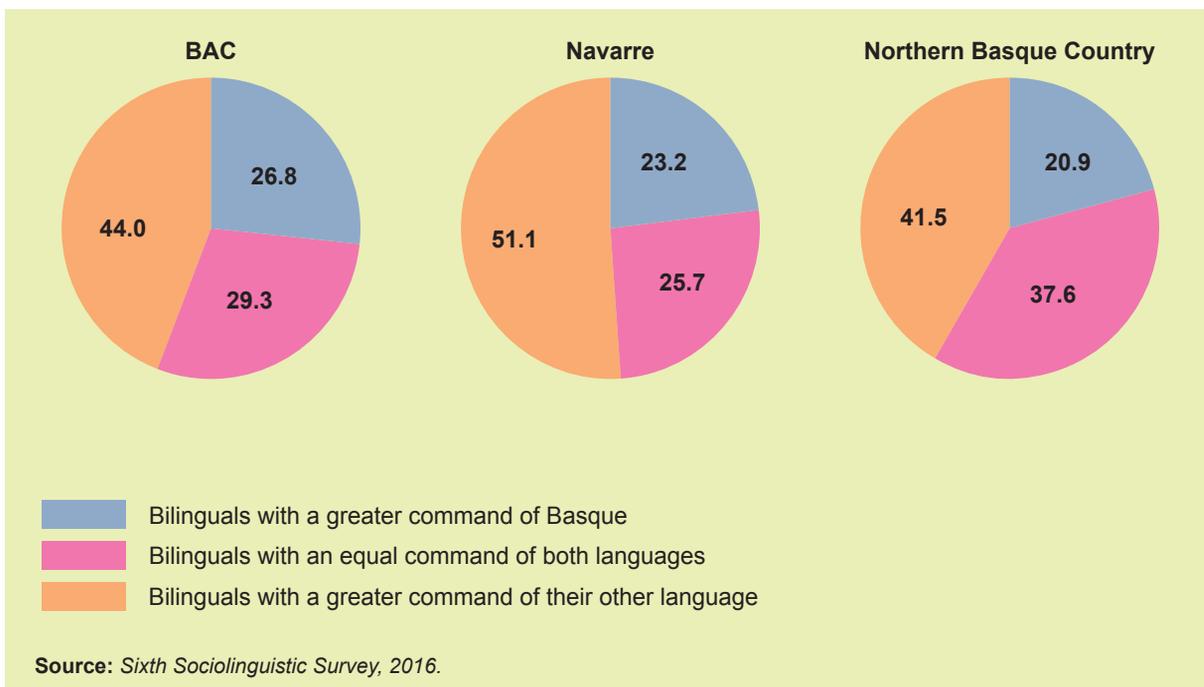


The highest percentage of bilinguals with a greater command of Basque is found in the BAC (26.8%), while the lowest percentage is found in the Northern Basque Country (20.9%). The percentage of this type of Basque speaker in Navarre is 23.2%.

The highest percentage of bilinguals who are equally fluent in both languages is found in the Northern Basque Country (37.6%), with this figure being 29.3% in the BAC and 25.7% in Navarre.

In Navarre, 51.1% of Basque speakers are bilinguals with a better command of Spanish (or another language) than Basque. In the BAC this percentage is 44% and in the Northern Basque Country 41.5% of Basque speakers are more fluent in French (or another language).

**Figure 8.** Basque speakers' fluency by territory. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

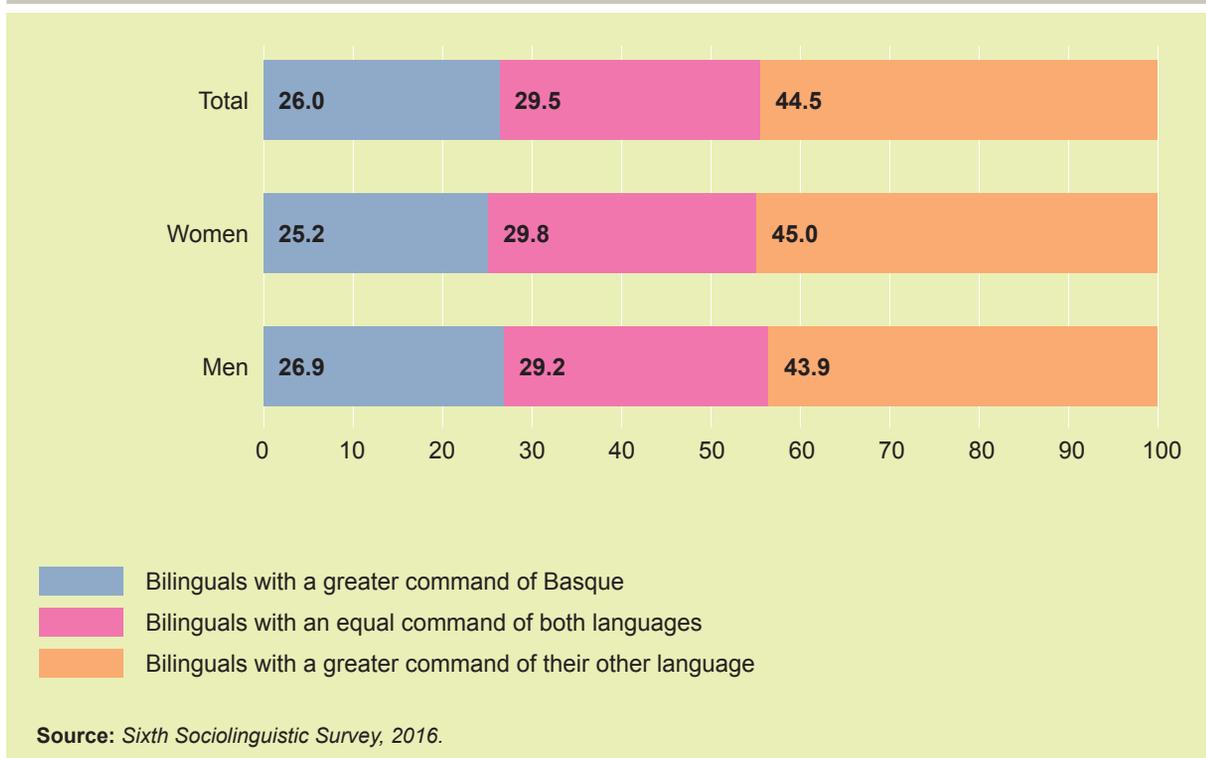


The percentages of men and women in the different relative language competence categories are similar, with the percentage of male bilinguals with a greater command of Basque being slightly higher than the percentage of female ones (26.9% versus 25.2%).

The differences in the second two categories (bilinguals with an equal command of both languages and bilinguals with a greater command of their other language) are even smaller, being of 0.6 points and 1.1 points respectively. 29.8% of female Basque speakers and 29.2% of male ones are equally fluent in both languages,

while 45% of female Basque speakers and 43.9% of male ones claim to be more fluent in their other language than in Basque.

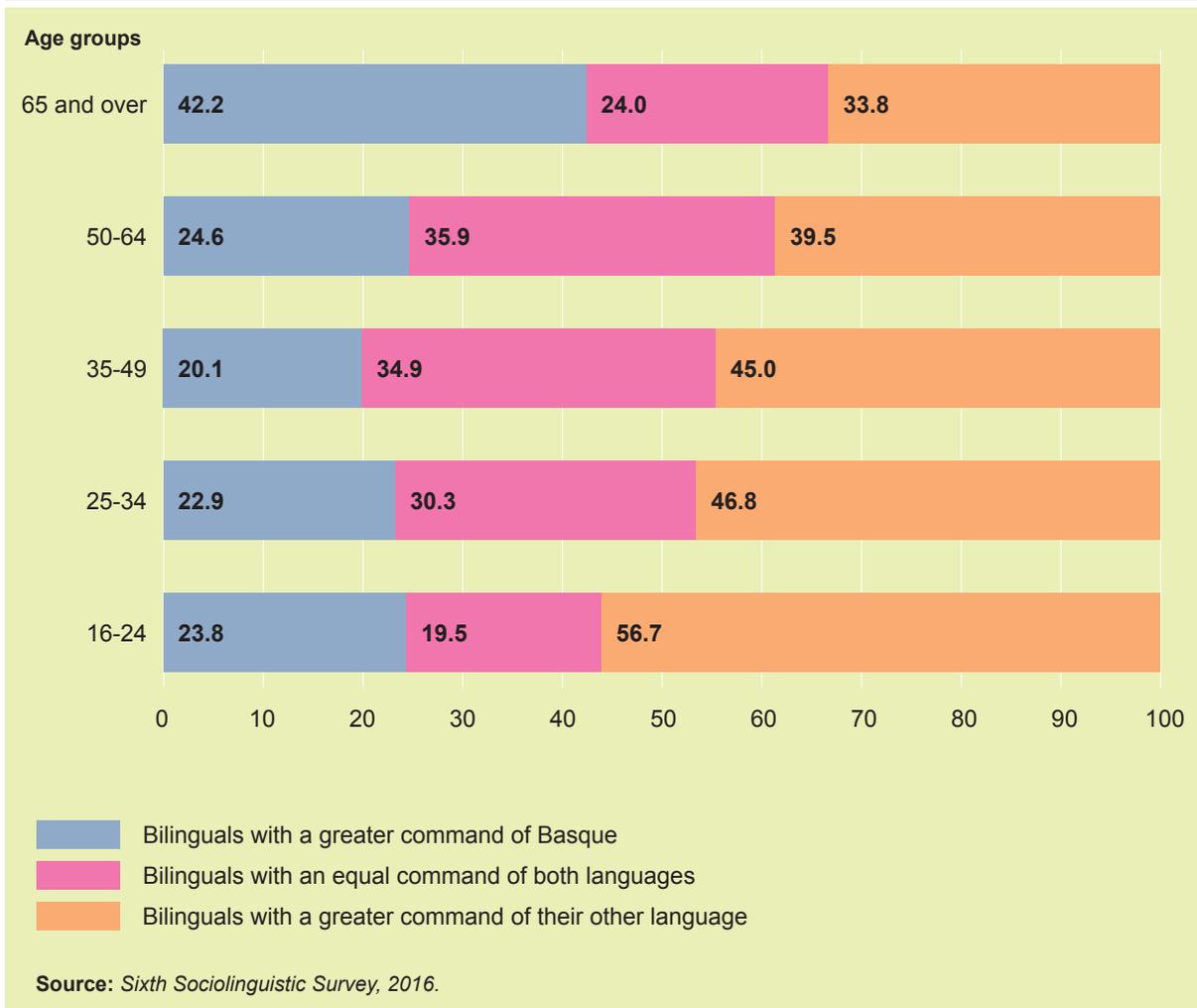
**Figure 9.** Basque speakers' fluency by sex. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



In relation to age, the largest percentage of bilinguals with a greater command of Basque is found among those aged 65 and over (42.2%), and the smallest percentage among those aged between 35 and 49 (20.1%).

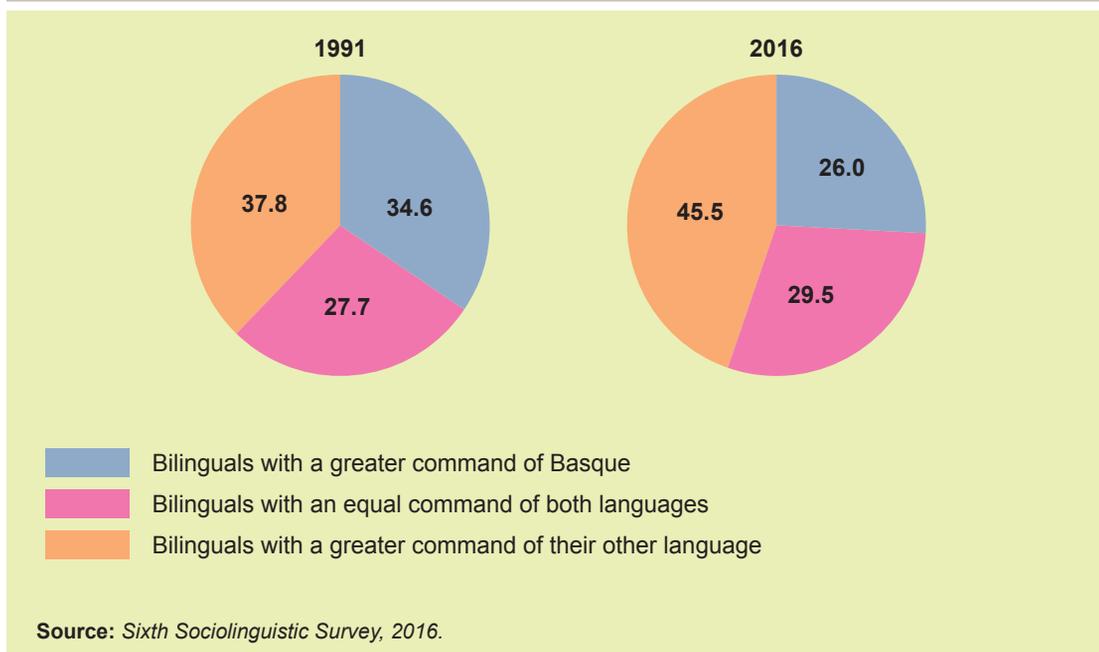
The highest percentage of bilinguals with an equal command of both languages is found among the 35-64 age group (35%).

Finally, the percentage of bilinguals who are more fluent in their other language grows higher as you move down the age scale, with over half (56.7%) of Basque speakers aged between 16 and 24 belonging to this category.

**Figure 10.** Basque speakers' fluency by age. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)


Basque language fluency has changed since 1991. Twenty-five years ago, the percentage of Basque speakers more fluent in Basque was similar to that of Basque speakers more fluent in their other language (34.6% versus 37.8%). Today, however, the percentage of bilinguals more fluent in their other language is 18.5 points higher than that of bilinguals more fluent in Basque (44.5% versus 26%).

**Figure 11.** Evolution of Basque speakers' fluency. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)



If we analyse this evolution in accordance with age, we see that in 1991, the percentage of bilinguals more fluent in Basque decreased with age. By 2016, this trend had changed, with the percentage of this type of Basque speaker among those aged 16-24 and 25-34 (23.8% and 22.9%, respectively) being higher than among those aged 35-49 (20.1%).

In 1991, the highest percentage of bilinguals equally fluent in both languages was found among the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups (27.8% and 32.2%, respectively). In 2016, however, the highest percentages were found among those aged 35-49 and 50-64 (34.9% and 35.9%, respectively).

In 1991, the highest percentage of bilinguals more fluent in their other language was found among the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups (52.8% and 49.3%, respectively). In 2016, this trend had not changed, with the highest percentages still being found among those aged 16-24 and 25-34 (56.7% and 46.8%, respectively).

**Table 7.** Evolution of Basque language fluency by age. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)

1991	Age					
	Total	65 and over	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>528,521</b>	<b>98,274</b>	<b>126,679</b>	<b>109,512</b>	<b>93,027</b>	<b>101,028</b>
More fluent in Basque	34.6	57.3	44.2	30.6	18.5	19.4
Equally fluent in both	27.7	24.5	27.2	27.0	32.2	27.8
More fluent in their other language	37.8	18.2	28.5	42.4	49.3	52.8
<b>2016</b>						
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>751,527</b>	<b>132,988</b>	<b>137,326</b>	<b>204,088</b>	<b>142,325</b>	<b>134,800</b>
More fluent in Basque	26.0	42.2	24.6	20.1	22.9	23.8
Equally fluent in both	29.5	24.0	35.9	34.9	30.3	19.5
More fluent in their other language	44.5	33.8	39.5	45.0	46.8	56.7

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

### 3. LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

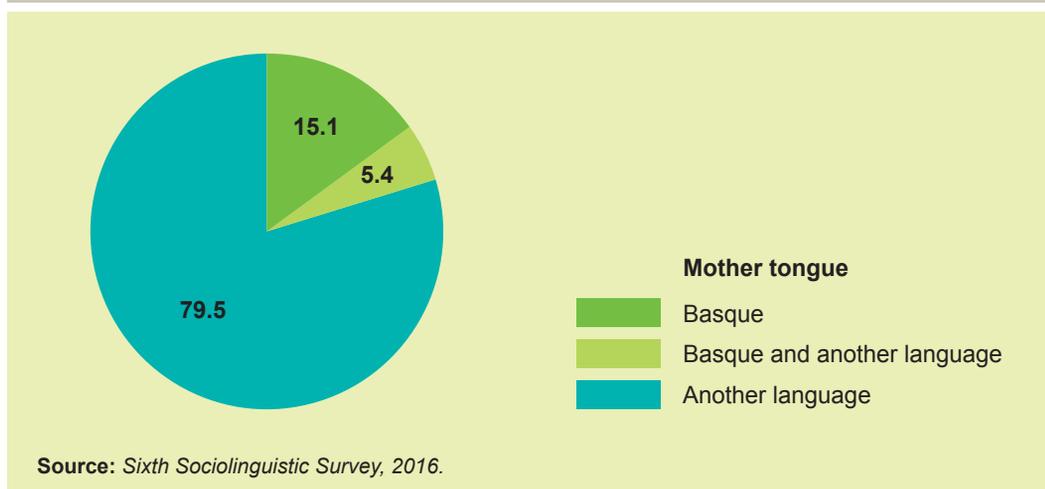
#### 3.1. MOTHER TONGUE BY TERRITORY, PROVINCE AND CAPITAL CITY

By mother tongue we mean the language or languages acquired from parents or relatives with whom a child has lived until the age of three.

According to the Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, Basque is the sole mother tongue of 15.1% of the over-16 population of the territory of the Basque language, and 5.4% have both Basque and another language as their joint mother tongues. The remaining 79.5% have another language as their mother tongue.

By other language, we mainly mean Spanish or French, but it should not be forgotten that, increasingly, it may be Romanian, Portuguese, Arabic or Russian, among others.

Figure 12. Mother tongue. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



If we look at the evolution of these figures, we see that the percentage of those for whom Basque is their mother tongue is lower than it was 25 years ago, dropping from 19.5 points in 1991 to 15.1% in 2016 (a 4.4% decrease).

The percentage of those for whom Basque is a joint mother tongue (along with Spanish, French or another language) has risen from 3% in 1991 to 5.4% in 2016 (a 2.4 points increase).

Finally, the percentage of those for whom Spanish, French or another language is their sole mother tongue has also risen, going from 77.5% in 1991 to 79.5% in 2016 (a 2 points increase).

**Table 8.** Evolution of mother tongue. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016

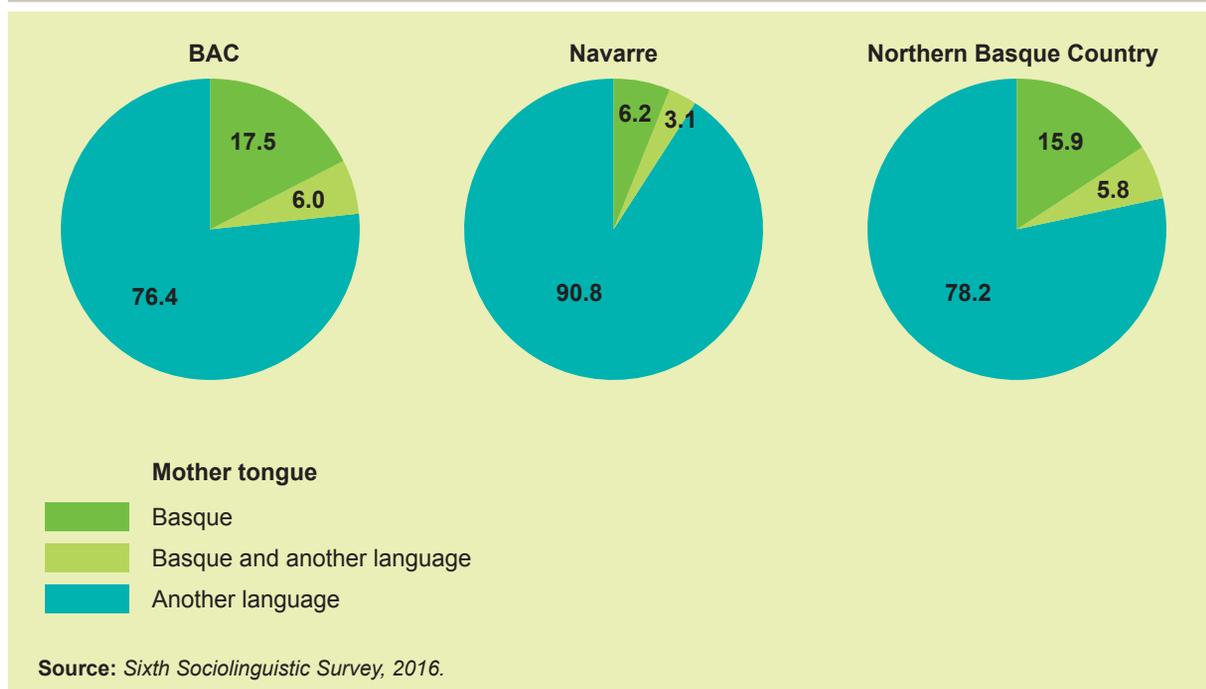
	1991	2016	1991 (%)	2016 (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,371,079</b>	<b>2,647,422</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Basque	462,118	399,644	19.5	15.1
Basque and another language	70,520	143,247	3.0	5.4
Another language	1,838,442	2,104,531	77.5	79.5

**Source:** *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

Despite the fact that all three Basque territories show a prevalence of people whose only mother tongue is a language other than Basque, there are notable differences between them.

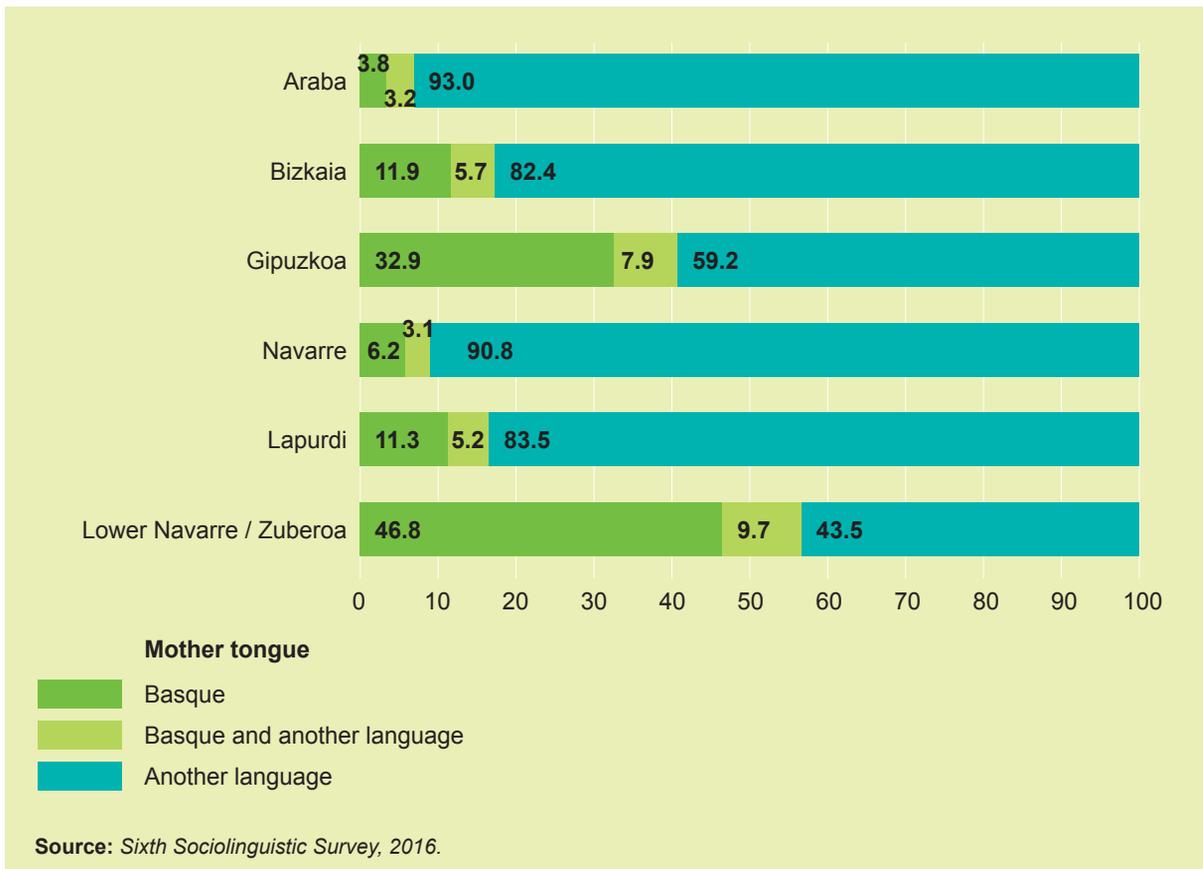
Although this group is the most numerous in all territories, the percentages are smaller in the BAC and the Northern Basque Country (76.4% and 78.2%, respectively). In Navarre, on the other hand, the percentage is notably higher (90.8%).

Figure 13. Mother tongue by territory. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



If we look at each individual province, we see that there are considerable differences between the percentages of those who have Basque as their mother tongue.

The highest percentage of those who have Basque as their sole mother tongue is found in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa (46.8%), followed by Gipuzkoa (32.9%). Next come Bizkaia and Lapurdi, with very similar figures (11.9% and 11.3%, respectively). Finally, Navarre (6.2%) and Araba (3.8%) are the two provinces with the lowest percentages of people for whom Basque is their sole mother tongue.

**Figure 14. Mother tongue by province. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)**


The percentages are lower for the capital cities than for the provinces to which they belong. The city with the highest percentage of those for whom Basque is their mother tongue is Donostia-San Sebastián (15.6%), followed by the BAB district and Bilbao (6.1% and 5.5%, respectively). Finally, Vitoria-Gasteiz has the second-to-lowest percentage (3.2%) and Pamplona the lowest (3.1%).

The percentage of those who have Basque and another language as their joint mother tongues is 8.7% in Donostia-San Sebastián, 3.4% in Bilbao, 3.2% in the BAB district and 2.7% in Vitoria-Gasteiz and Pamplona.

Over 90% of the population of all capital cities except Donostia-San Sebastián have a language other than Basque as their sole mother tongue.

**Table 9.** Mother tongue by capital city. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

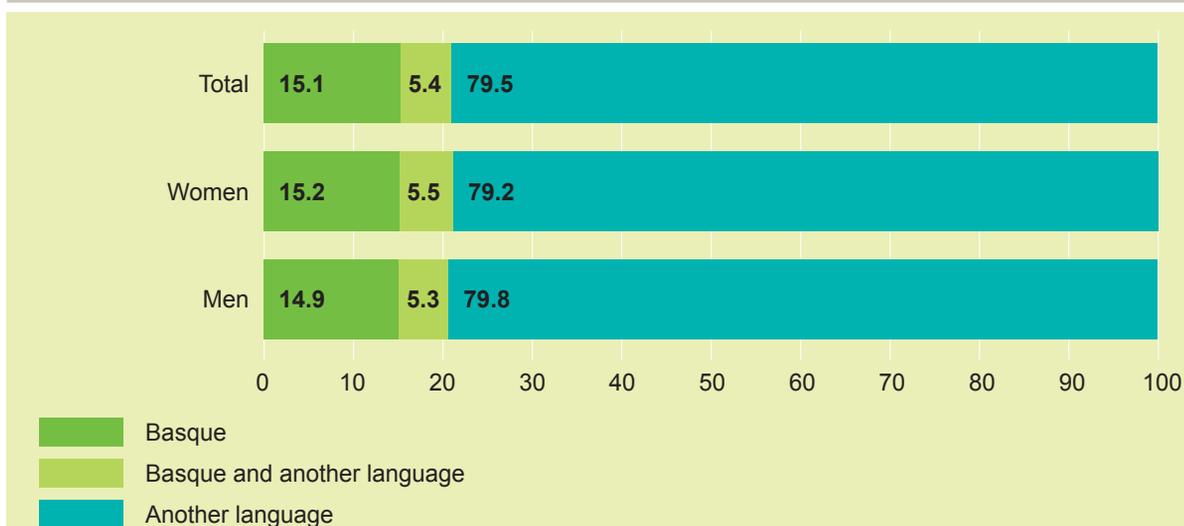
	Vitoria-Gasteiz	Bilbao	Donostia-San Sebastián	Pamplona	BAB
<b>Total</b>	<b>206,334</b>	<b>300,283</b>	<b>160,826</b>	<b>166,534</b>	<b>102,216</b>
Basque	3.2	5.5	15.6	3.1	6.1
Basque and another language	2.7	3.4	8.7	2.7	3.2
Another language	94.1	91.2	75.7	94.2	90.7

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

### 3.2. MOTHER TONGUE BY SEX AND AGE

There are no differences between men and women as regards mother tongue.

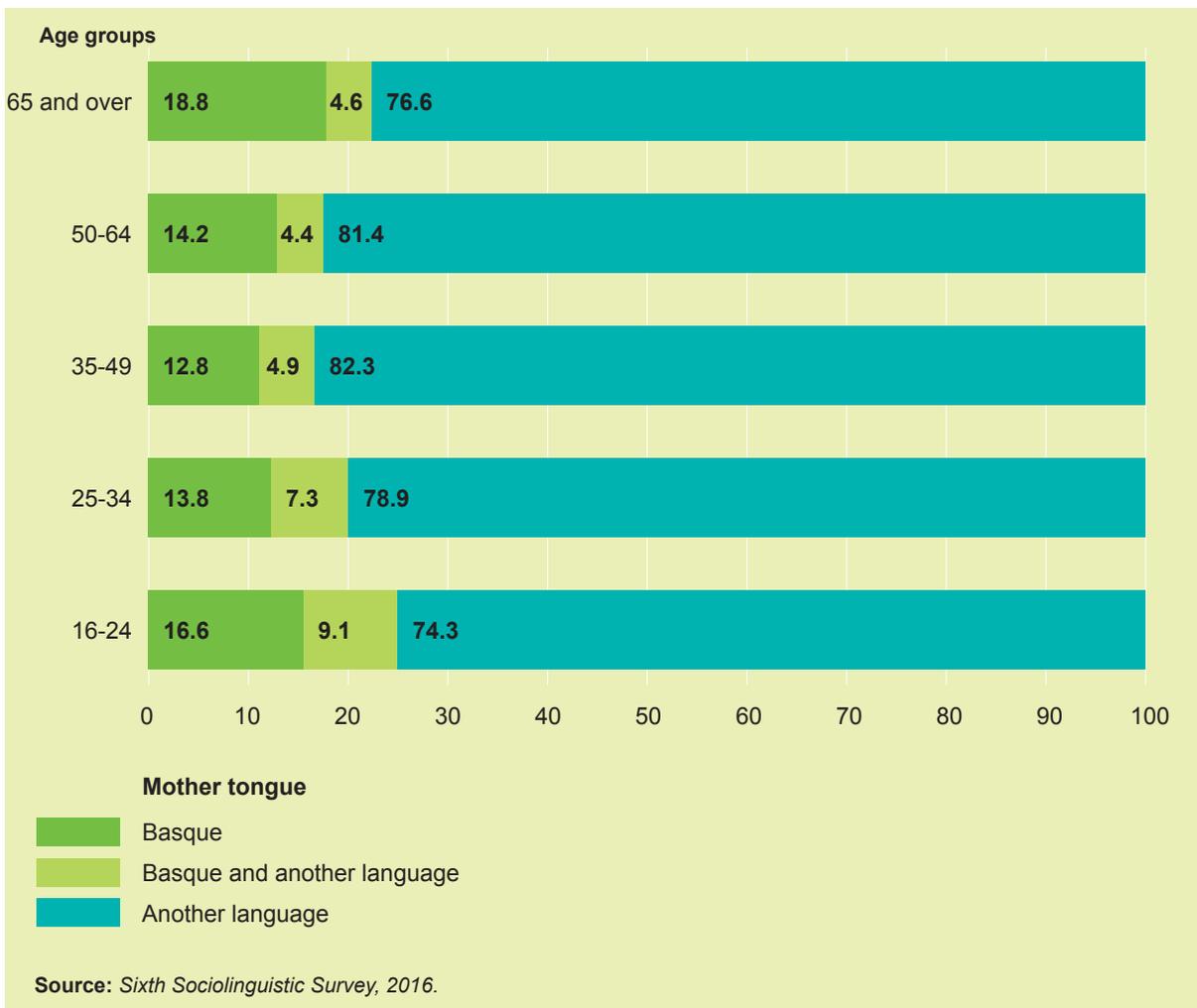
**Figure 15.** Mother tongue by sex. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

As regards age, the over-65s and young people aged 16-24 represent the highest percentage of those whose sole mother tongue is Basque (18.8% and 16.6%, respectively). Those aged 35-49 represent the lowest percentage (12.8%).

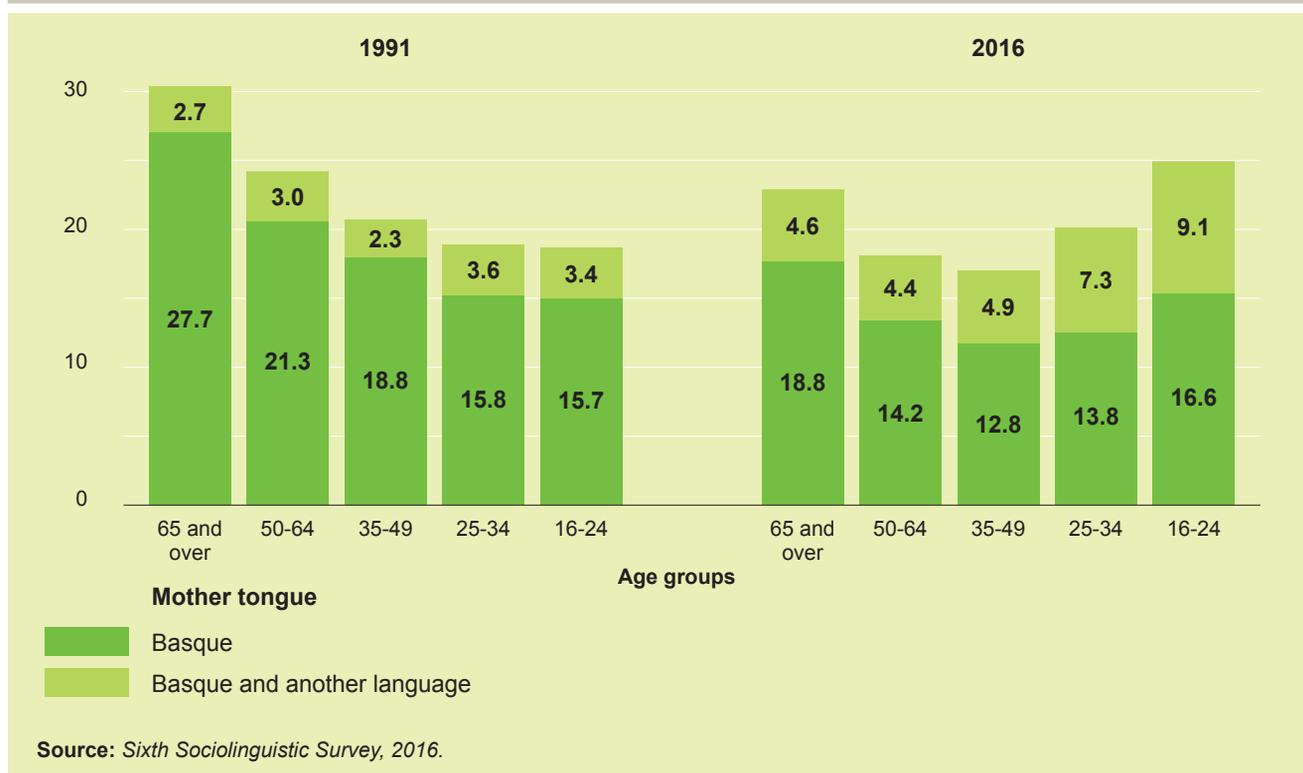
**Figure 16.** Mother tongue by age. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



If we compare this to the situation 25 years ago, we see that the highest percentage of those whose sole mother tongue was Basque was found among the over-65s (27.7%), with the percentages dropping as you moved down the age scale, and the lowest figure being found for the youngest age group (15.7%). In 2016, on the other hand, the 16-24 age group had the highest percentage (16.6% as opposed to 15.7%).

The percentage of those in all age groups who learned both Basque and another language at home was lower 25 years ago than today. However, it is among the youngest groups that this difference is most noticeable. Thus, 25 years ago, 3.4% of those aged 16-24 learned both Basque and another language at home as their joint mother tongues, whereas in 2016, this figure was 9.1% (nearly a 6 points increase).

Figure 17. Evolution of mother tongue by age. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)



### 3.3. BASQUE SPEAKERS BY MOTHER TONGUE

Below we will analyse Basque speakers aged 16 and over, in accordance with the language they learned at home as their mother tongue.

Basque speakers are divided into the following categories, depending on their mother tongue:

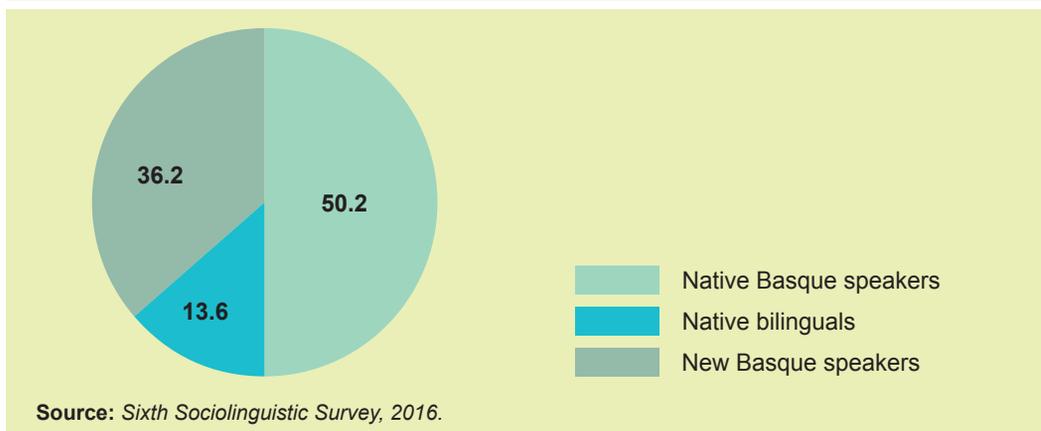
- **Native Basque speakers:** those who acquired only Basque from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three.
- **Native bilinguals:** those who acquired Basque and another language from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three.
- **New Basque speakers:** those who did not acquire Basque from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three and learned the language later, either at school or at a language academy.

Half of all Basque speakers (50.2%) learned only Basque at home with their parents (i.e. they are native Basque speakers).

A much lower percentage (13.6%) learned both Basque and another language at home up until the age of three (i.e. are native bilinguals).

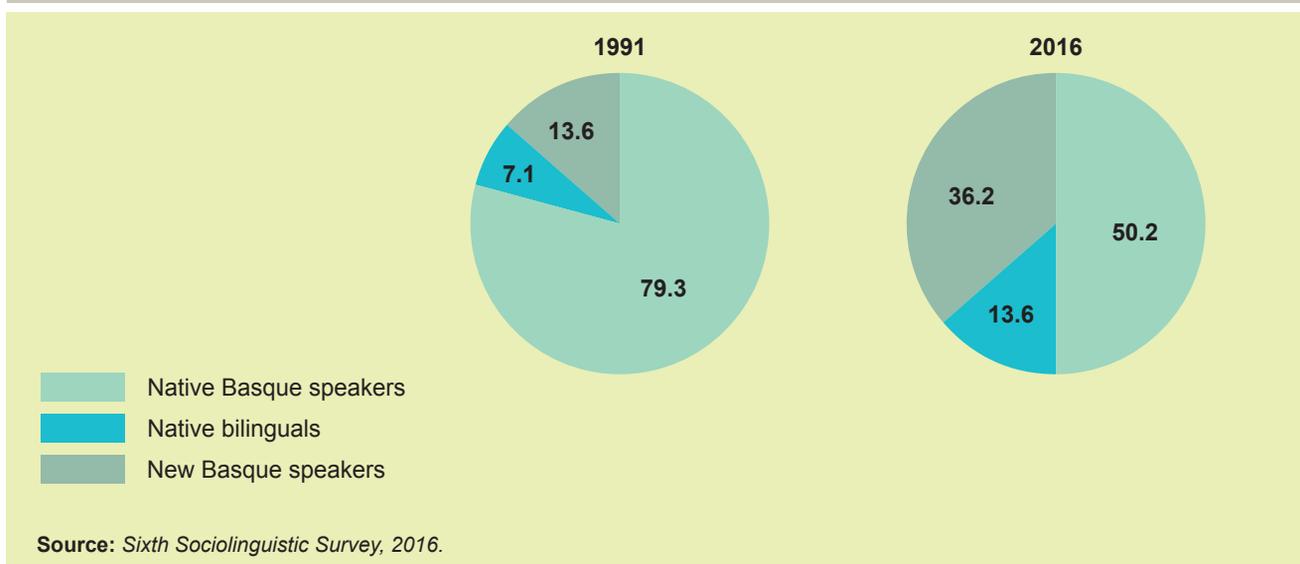
Finally, over one third (36.2%) of all Basque speakers did not acquire Basque as their mother tongue and learned the language later, either at school or at a language academy (i.e. are new Basque speakers). It is worth highlighting that this last group of Basque speakers is growing in size.

Figure 18. Basque speakers by mother tongue. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



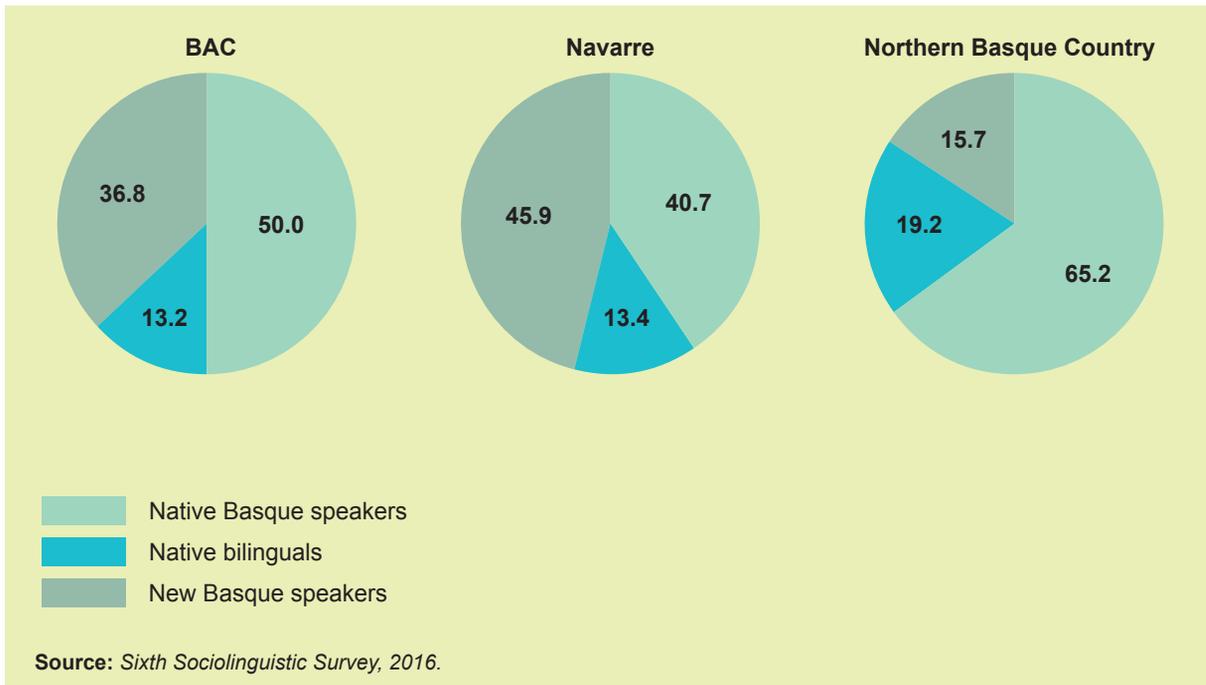
The percentages of the three different types of Basque speaker have changed a lot over the past 25 years. In 1991, the majority (79.3%) of Basque speakers were native Basque speakers (i.e. people who had learned Basque at home as their sole mother tongue). In 2016, on the other hand, although this group was still the largest, the percentage of new Basque speakers was much higher (36.2% as opposed to 13.6% in 1991). The percentage of native bilinguals also underwent a drastic increase, almost doubling from 7.1% in 1991 to 13.6% in 2016.

**Figure 19.** Evolution of Basque speakers by mother tongue. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)



In both the BAC and the Northern Basque Country, the largest group is still that of native Basque speakers, although the percentage of new Basque speakers in the BAC has risen considerably (36.8%). In the Northern Basque Country, the difference between the percentage of native Basque speakers and that of new Basque speakers is much greater (65.2% and 15.7%, respectively).

In Navarre, on the other hand, there are more new Basque speakers than native ones (45.9% versus 40.7%).

**Figure 20. Basque speakers by mother tongue and territory. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)**


The differences between the individual provinces are also considerable. In Araba, new Basque speakers represent by far the largest group (71%), with only 17.4% being native Basque speakers (the lowest percentage of all three provinces of the BAC). The percentage of native bilinguals is also lower in Araba than in the other provinces (11.6%).

In Bizkaia, the largest group is that of new Basque speakers (46.7%), although the percentage of native Basque speakers is also high (40%).

In Gipuzkoa, just under a quarter of all Basque speakers are new Basque speakers (22.2%). The largest group is that of native Basque speakers (64.4%).

As in Bizkaia, in Navarre, the largest group is that of new Basque speakers (45.9%), although the percentage of native Basque speakers is also high (40.7%). The remaining 13.4% of Basque speakers are native bilinguals.

In Lapurdi, the largest group is that of native Basque speakers (57.2%), with 21.9% being native bilinguals and 20.9% new Basque speakers.

Finally, in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, more than eight out of every ten Basque speakers are native Basque speakers (82.3%), 13.4% are native bilinguals and 4.4% are new Basque speakers.

**Table 10.** Basque speakers by mother tongue and province. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa	Navarre	Lapurdi	Lower Navarre / Zuberoa
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>52,514</b>	<b>272,422</b>	<b>306,448</b>	<b>68,946</b>	<b>35,006</b>	<b>16,191</b>
Native Basque speakers	17.4	40.0	64.4	40.7	57.2	82.3
Native bilinguals	11.6	13.3	13.4	13.4	21.9	13.4
New Basque speakers	71.0	46.7	22.2	45.9	20.9	4.4

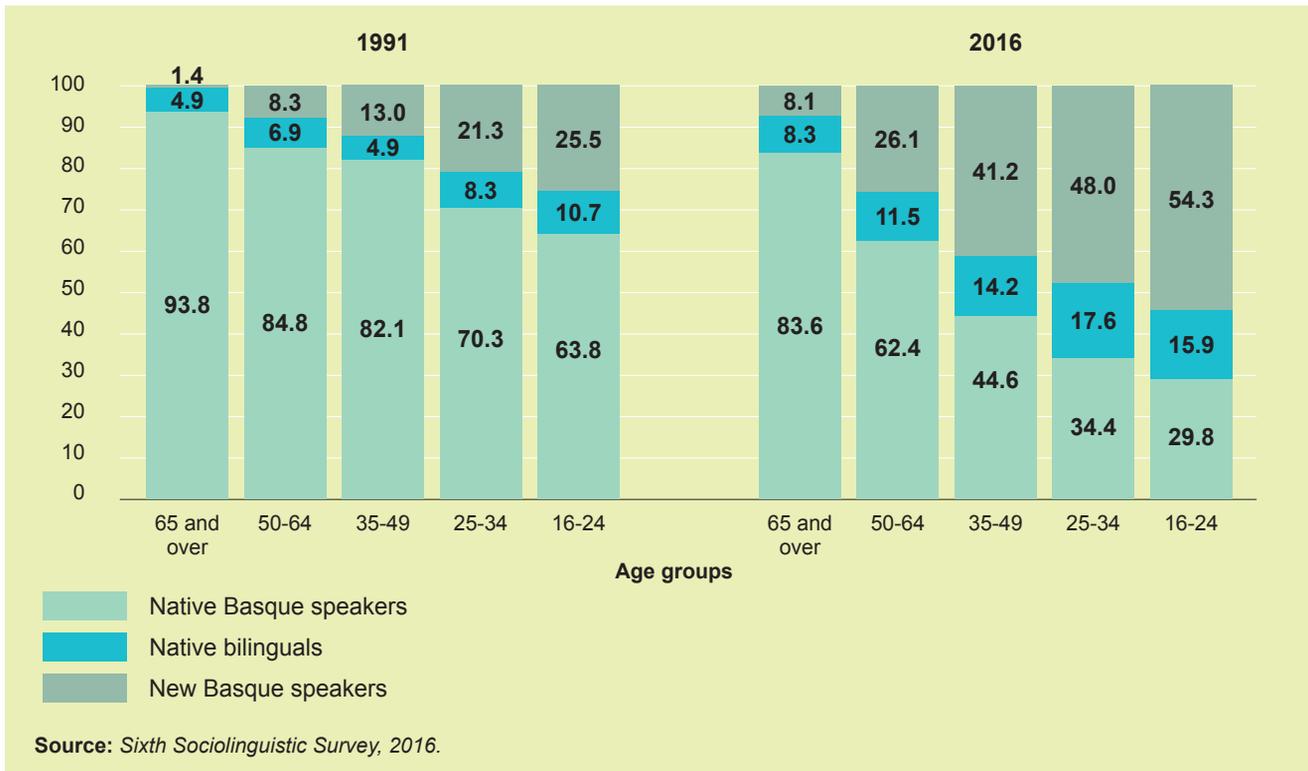
Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

The percentages of the three different types of Basque speaker have changed a lot over the past 25 years. In 1991, the majority (79.3%) of Basque speakers were native Basque speakers (i.e. people who had learned Basque at home as their sole mother tongue). This group was also the largest in all age ranges.

In 2016, on the other hand, while native Basque speakers were still the largest group, the percentage of native bilinguals had increased substantially, and that of new Basque speakers had increased even more, particularly among the under 35s.

Currently, over half of all Basque speakers aged 16-24 are new Basque speakers (54.3%), as are almost half of all those aged 25-34 (48%). In 1991, new Basque speakers represented just over a quarter (25.5%) of all Basque speakers aged 16-24, and one fifth (21.3%) of those aged 25-34.

**Figure 21.** Evolution of Basque speakers by mother tongue and age. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)



### 3.4. FAMILY LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

To establish the extent of family language transmission, all of those surveyed were asked what language or languages they had acquired at home, depending on the language competence of their parents.

We must remember that the universe surveyed includes people aged 16 up to almost 100. The survey therefore offers the possibility of finding out how language has been transmitted in the home over this period of time.

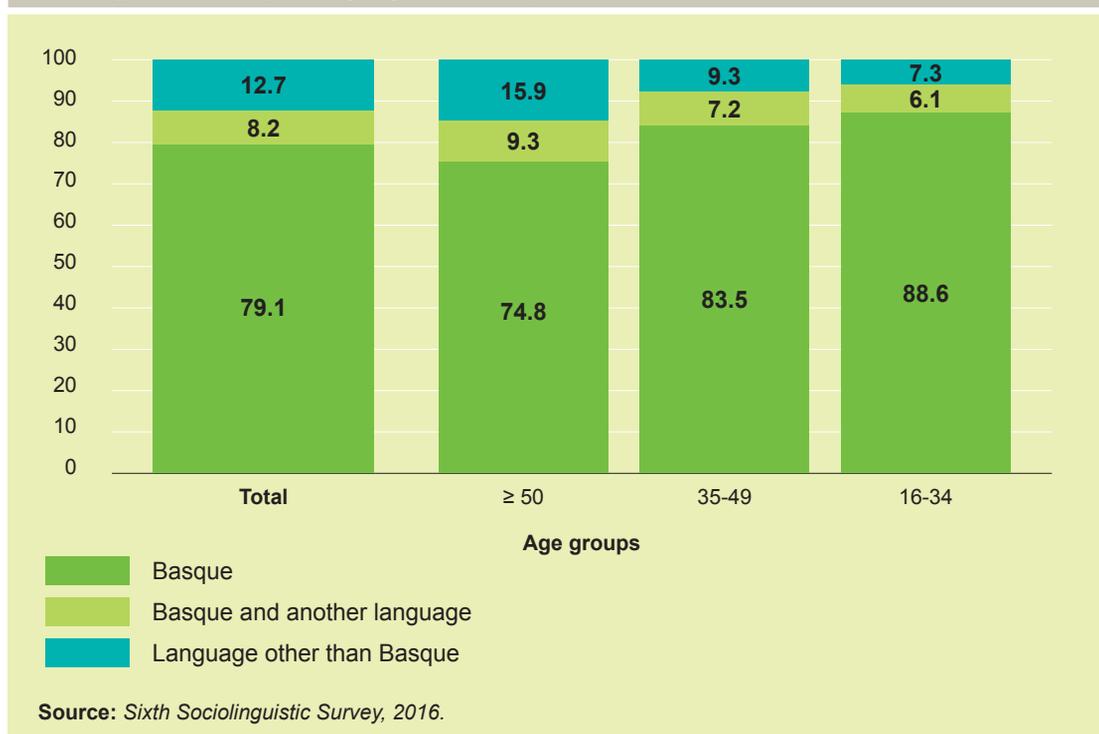
In the territory of the Basque language, when both parents are Basque speakers, 79.1% of children acquire only Basque as their mother tongue, 8.2% acquire both Basque and another language and 12.7% do not learn Basque from their parents at home.

We should point out that, when both parents are Basque speakers, transmission in Basque increases as age decreases. The highest percentage of Basque language transmission occurs in the 16-34 age group. Within this group, 86.6% claim to have learned only Basque at home and 6.1% claim to have learned both Basque and another language.

Similarly, in the 35-49 age group, when both parents are Basque speakers, 83.5% learn only Basque at home, and 7.2% learn Basque and another language.

Finally, among the over 50s, Basque language transmission is somewhat lower. Of this group, 74.8% learned only Basque at home, and 9.3% learned both Basque and another language.

**Figure 22.** Basque transmission when both parents are Basque speakers, by age. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

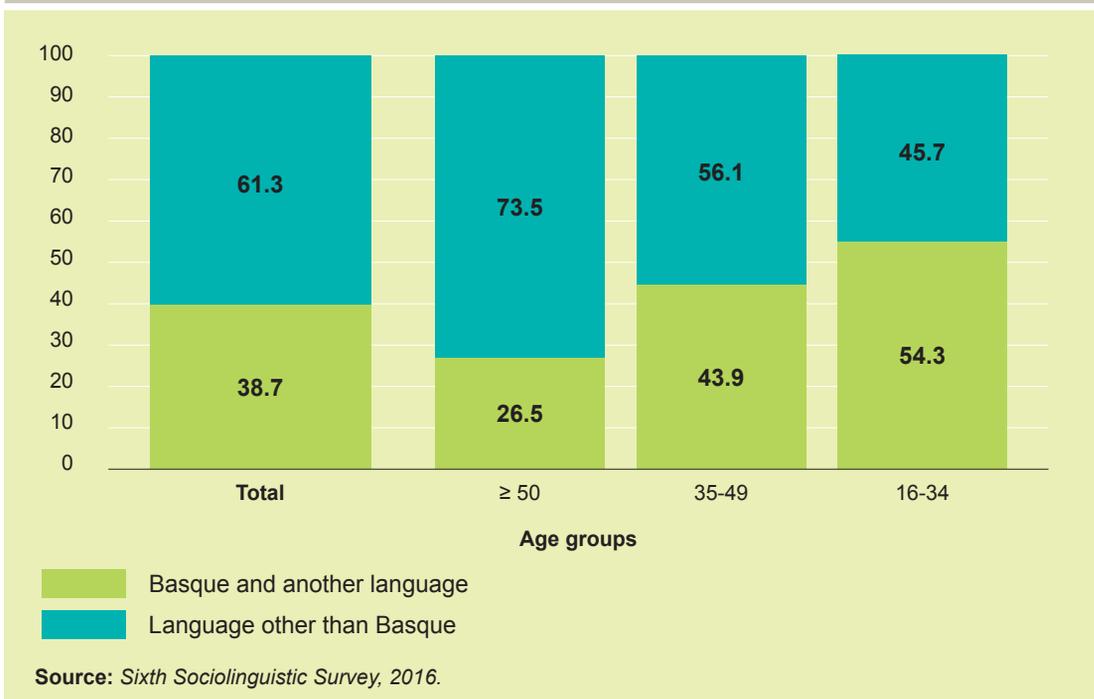


When only one parent speaks Basque, 61.3% learn only a language other than Basque at home and 38.7% learn both Basque and another language.

When only one parent speaks Basque, the difference between the age groups is greater. Among the younger people surveyed, Basque transmission is greater.

Thus, among those with only one Basque-speaking parent, just over half (54.3%) of those in the 16-34 age group learned both Basque and another language at home as their mother tongues, while this figure is 43.9% among the 35-49 age group and 26.5% among the over 50s.

**Figure 23.** Basque transmission when only one parent speaks Basque, by age. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



When only one parent speaks Basque, Basque language transmission differs notably depending on whether that parent is the mother or the father. Nevertheless, this difference is smaller among the younger age groups.

When only the mother speaks Basque, 55% learn only a language other than Basque at home and 45% learn both Basque and another language. When only the father

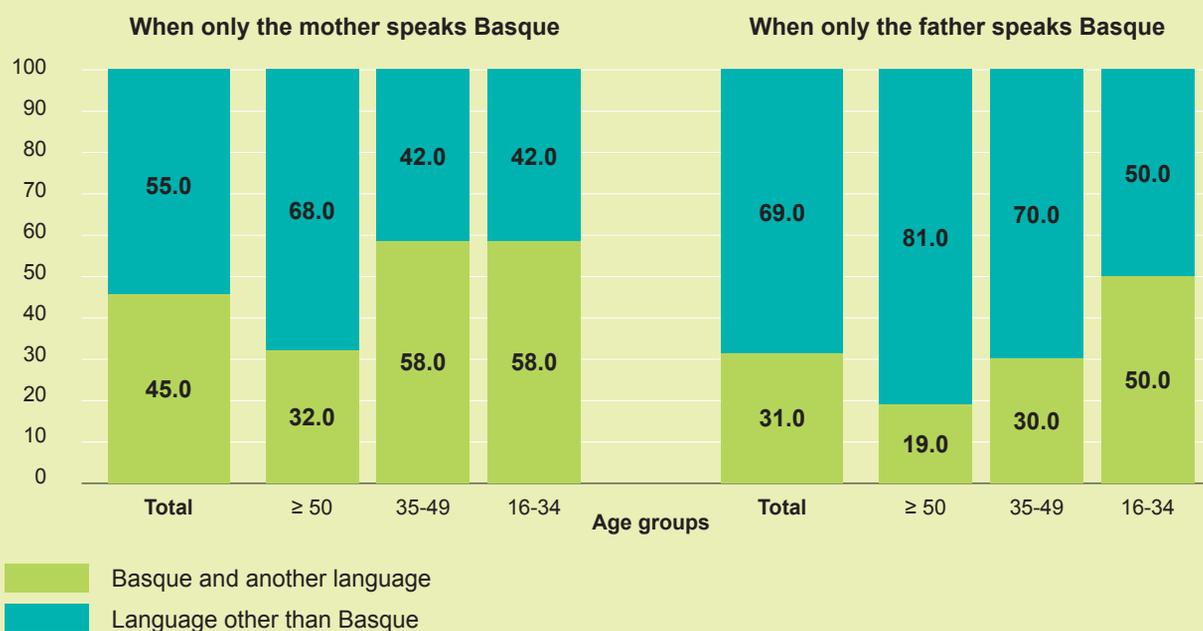
speaks Basque, 69% do not learn Basque at all and 31% learn both Basque and another language.

Transmission increases as we move down the age scale, both when the single Basque-speaking parent is the mother and when it is the father (although the increase is greater in the latter case).

Thus, when only the mother speaks Basque, 58% of those in the 16-34 and 35-49 age groups learned both Basque and another language at home from their parents; among the over 50s, however, the percentage of those who learned only a language other than Basque (68%) is greater than that of those who learned Basque and another language together (32%).

When only the father speaks Basque, 50% of the 16-34 age group learned Basque and another language at home. In the 35-49 and over 50 age groups, the percentage of those who learned only a language other than Basque at home is much higher (70% and 81%, respectively) than that of those who learned both Basque and another language together (30% and 19%, respectively).

**Figure 24.** Basque transmission when only one parent speaks Basque, by age and sex of the Basque-speaking parent. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

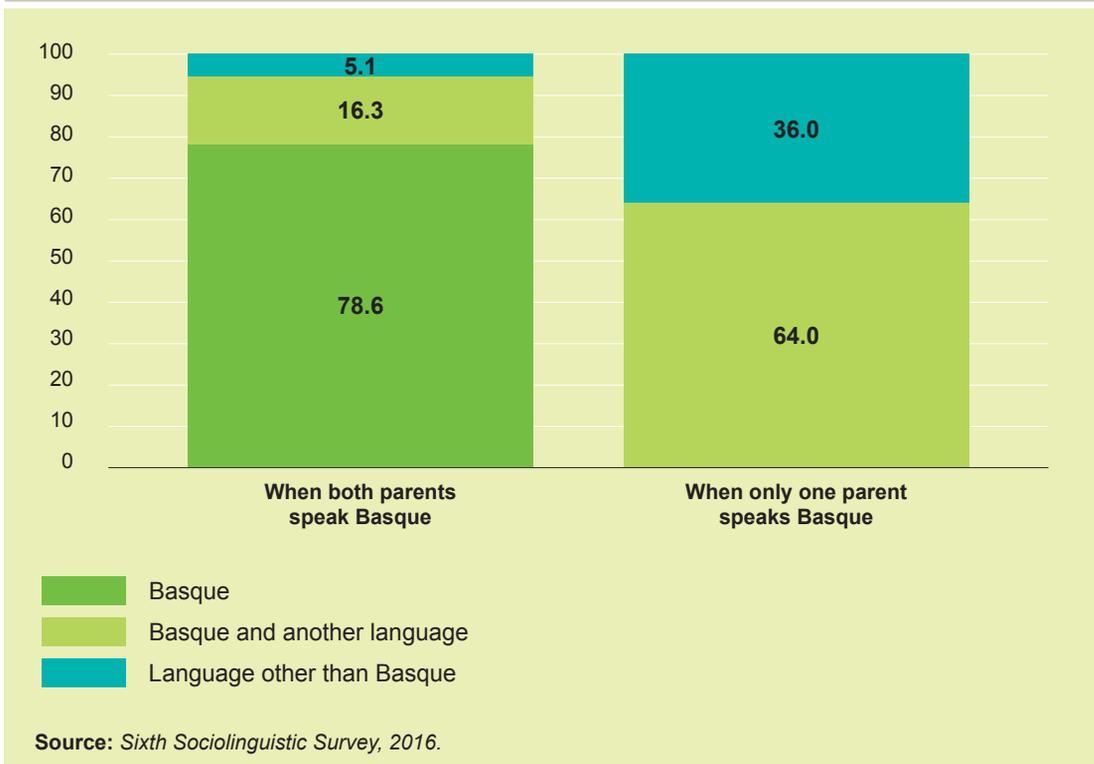
## LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 3 AND 15

In order to explore language transmission in families with children aged between 3 and 15, interviewees were asked what language they transmit to their offspring.

When both parents speak Basque, 78.6% transmit only that language, 16.3% transmit both Basque and another language and 5.1% transmit only another language.

When only one parent is a Basque speaker, 64% transmit Basque and 36% a language other than Basque.

**Figure 25.** Basque transmission in families with children aged 3-15, by parents' language competence. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



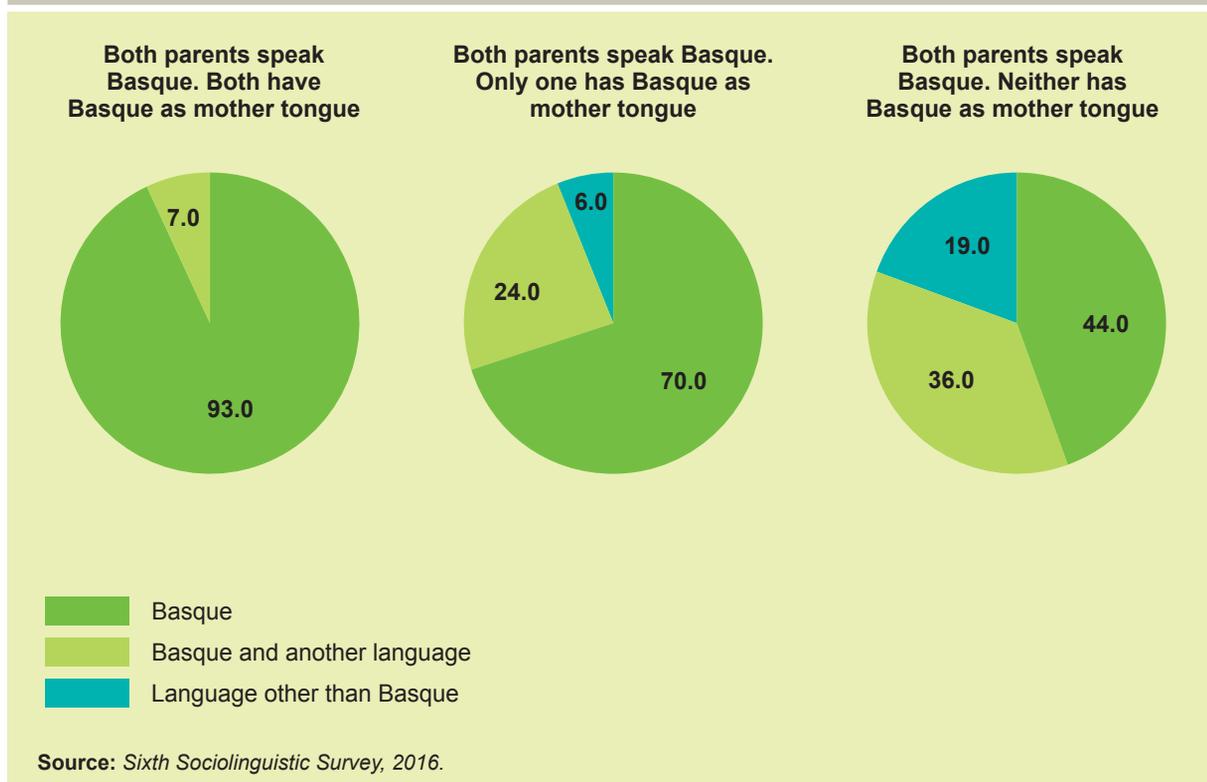
When analysing this kind of transmission, parents' mother tongue was taken into consideration, alongside their language competence.

When both parents speak Basque and both have that language as their mother tongue, 93 % transmit only Basque to their children at home, and 7 % transmit both Basque and another language.

When both parents speak Basque and but only one has that language as their mother tongue, 70 % transmit only Basque to their children at home, 24 % transmit both Basque and another language and 6 % transmit only a language other than Basque.

When both parents are Basque speakers but neither have Basque as their mother tongue, 44 % transmit only Basque to their children at home, 36 % transmit both Basque and another language and 19 % transmit only a language other than Basque.

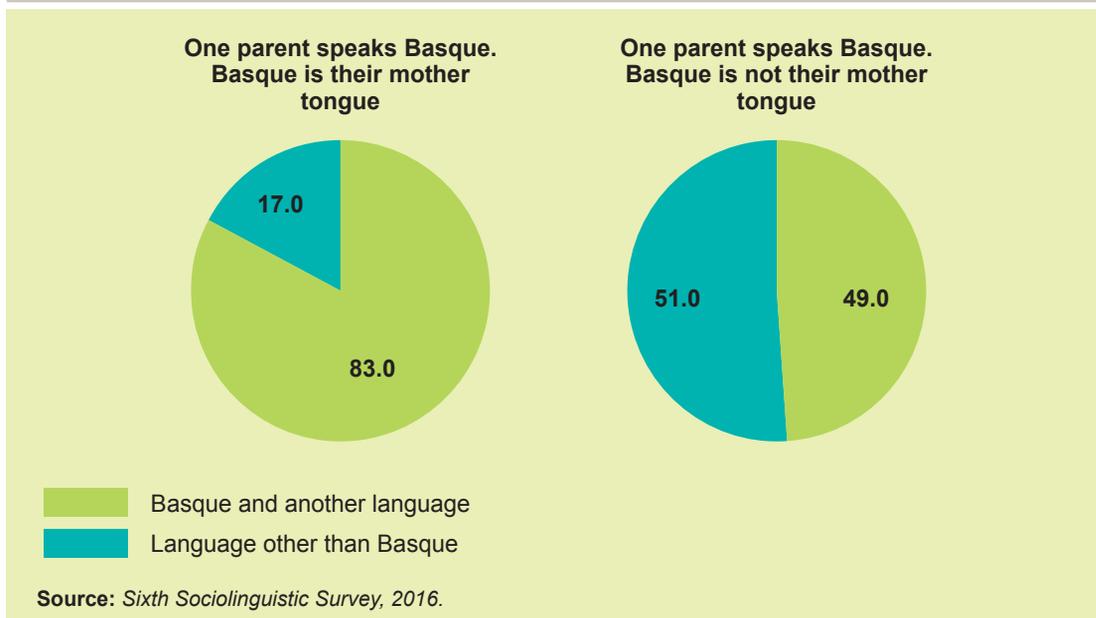
**Figure 26.** Basque transmission in families with children aged 3-15, by parents' mother tongue. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



When only one parent speaks Basque, and that language is their mother tongue, 83% transmit both Basque and another language to their children at home, and 17% transmit only another language.

When only one parent speaks Basque, and that language is not their mother tongue, 49% transmit both Basque and another language to their children at home, and 51% transmit only another language.

**Figure 27.** Basque transmission in families with children aged 3-15, by parents' mother tongue. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



### 3.5. BASQUE LANGUAGE GAINS AND LOSSES

Most people whose mother tongue is either Basque or Basque and another language have retained the language and are currently Basque speakers (88.3%).

However, there are people who have totally or partially lost their Basque (2.4% of inhabitants aged 16 years or older). Most of these losses are partial, i.e. these

people have a good understanding of Basque, even though they no longer speak it well (1.4 %, 26,000 people).

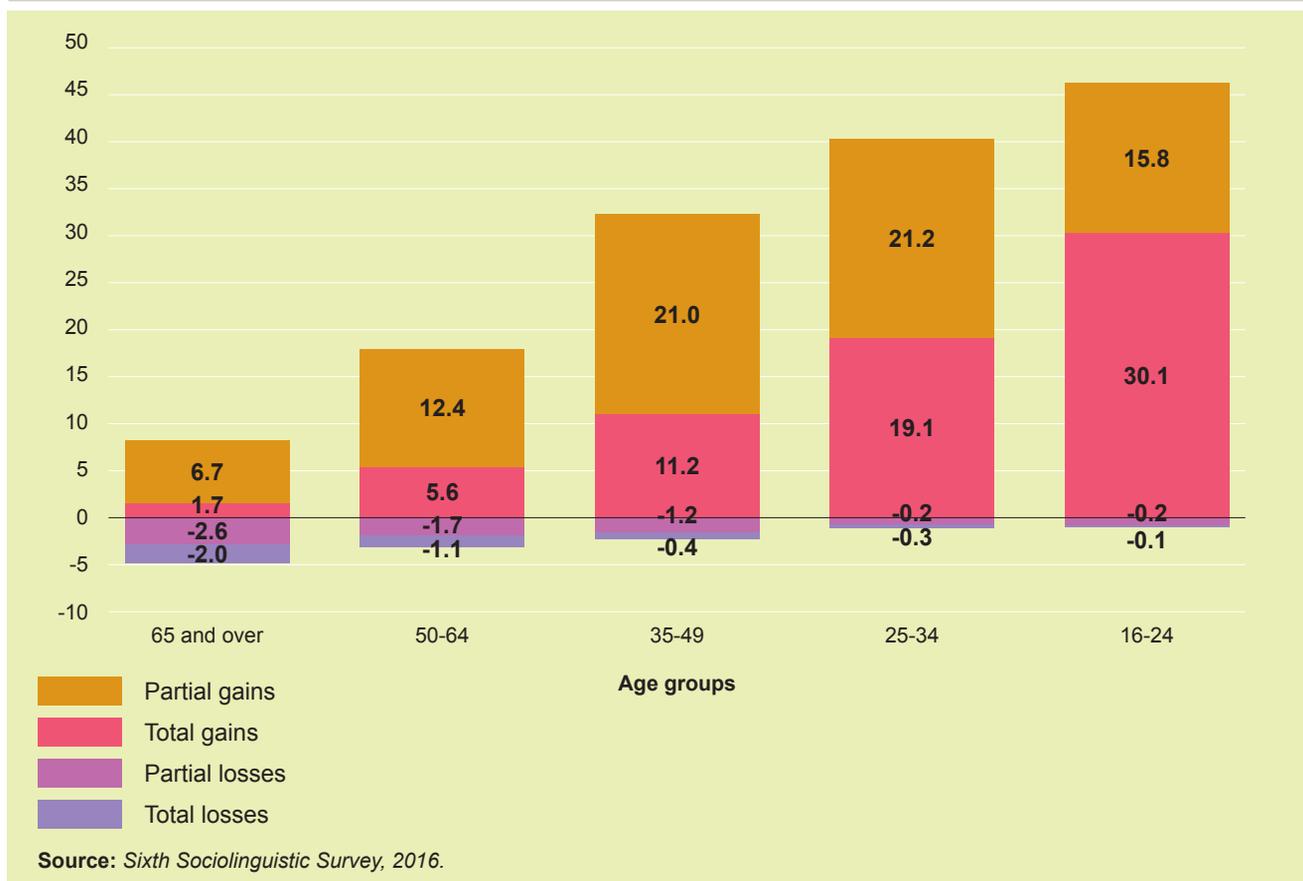
Most losses are found in people aged 50 and over.

On the positive side, there are another 272,000 people among the inhabitants of the territory of the Basque language aged 16 or over who, despite not speaking Basque as their mother tongue, have learned the language later in life and are now counted among the Basque-speaking population. This is 200,000 more people more than in 1991. They are new Basque speakers.

New Basque speakers are divided as follows across the three Basque territories: 232,000 in the BAC, 32,000 in Navarre and 8,000 in the Northern Basque Country.

The rise in Basque gains and almost total disappearance of Basque losses is particularly notable among the younger population, even in the Northern Basque Country (although to a lesser extent).

**Figure 28.** Basque gains and losses, by age. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



## 4. USE OF BASQUE

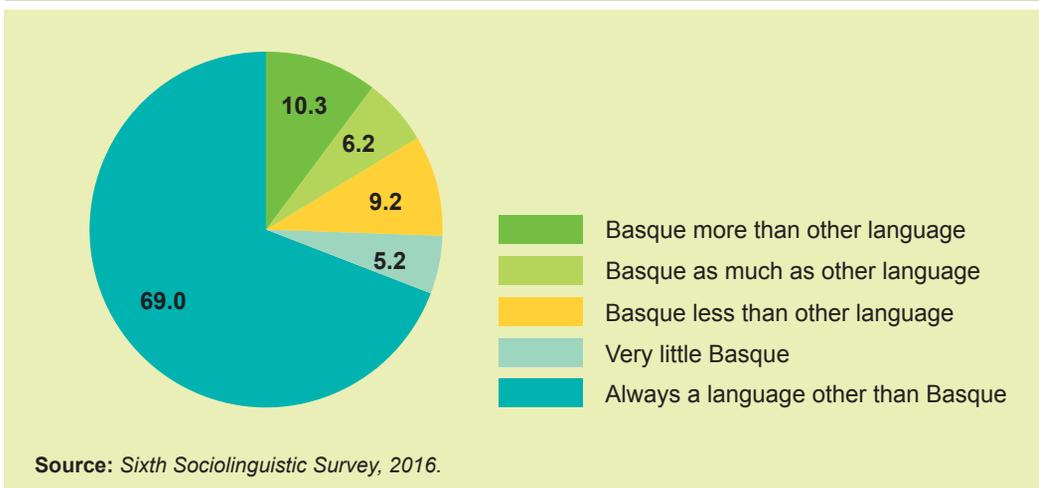
### 4.1. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BY TERRITORY, PROVINCE AND CAPITAL CITY

Of the population in the territory of the Basque language aged 16 and over, 25.7% use Basque to some extent:

- a. 16.5% use Basque intensively, i.e. they use it as much as or more than the other language they speak in their everyday life.
- b. 9.2% also use Basque, but to a lesser extent than their other language.

The remaining 74.2% almost always or always use a language other than Basque. It is important to bear in mind, however, that in this last group there is a small percentage of people (5.2%) who do occasionally use Basque, even though they do not do so very often.

Figure 29. Basque use. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

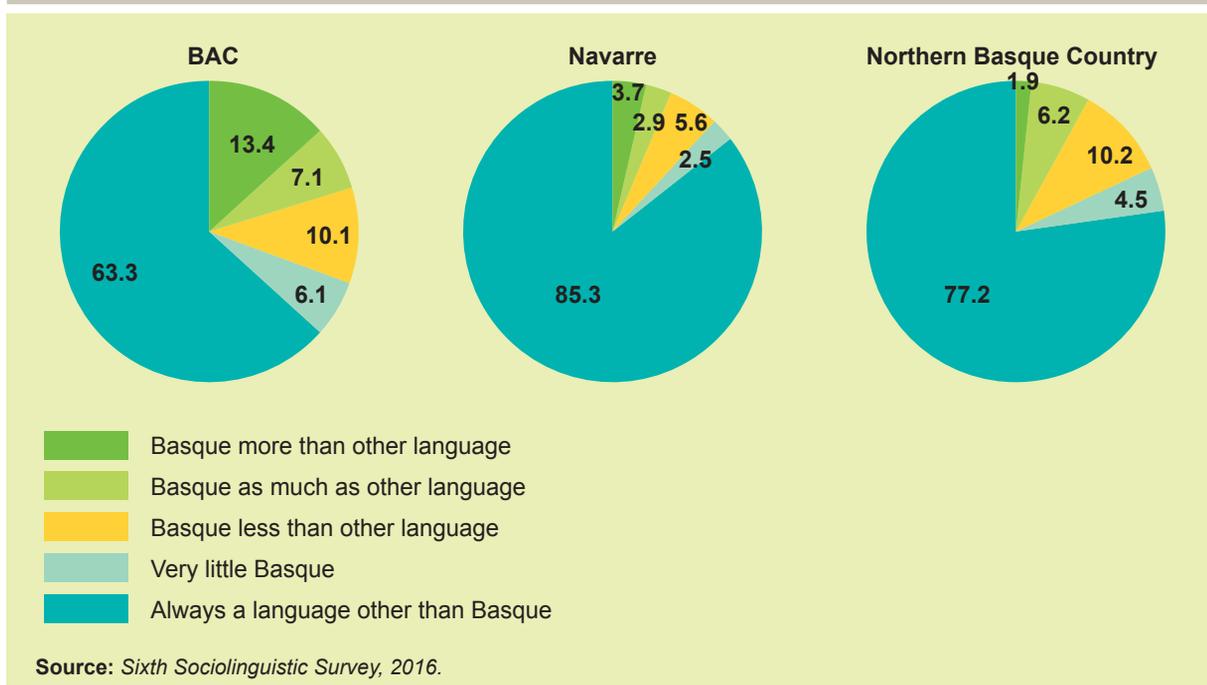


To measure Basque language use, the Basque Government Deputy Ministry for Language Policy has defined a series of categories or typologies. These categories take into account Basque use in the following domains:

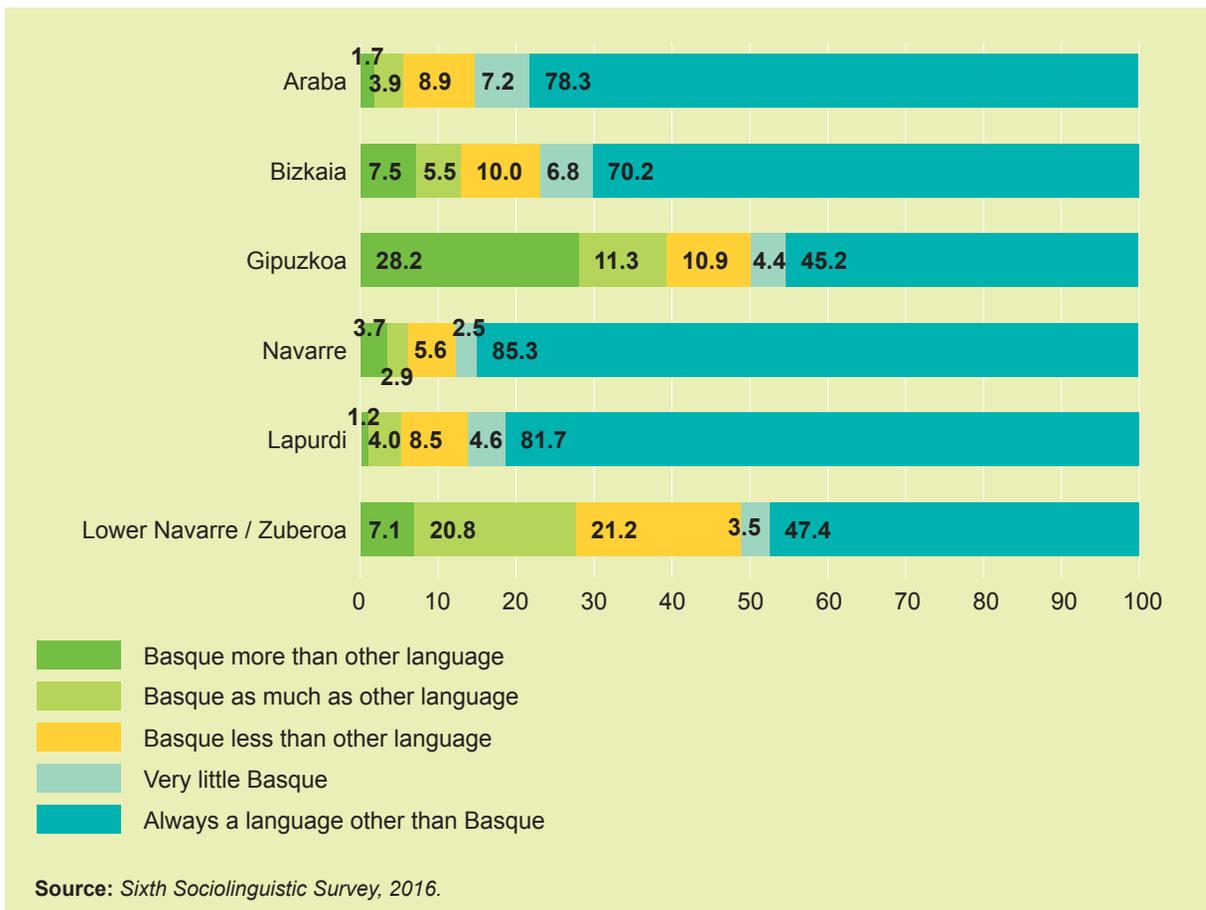
- use at home (with one’s partner, children, siblings and parents);
- use with friends;
- use in formal situations (local shops, banks, health centres and municipal services).

Major differences exist between the three Basque territories in relation to Basque language use. Those who use Basque intensively (i.e. as much as or more than any other language) represent 20.5% of the population living in the BAC, 6.6% of the population of Navarre and 8.1% in the Northern Basque Country. Those who use Basque, but to a lesser extent than the other language they speak represent 10.1% in the BAC, 5.6% in Navarre and 10.2% in the Northern Basque Country.

Figure 30. Basque use, by territory. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



These differences are also evident if we compare use in the individual provinces. The percentages of those who use Basque intensively are fairly similar in Araba (5.6%), Lapurdi (5.2%) and Navarre (6.6%), higher in Bizkaia (13%) and even higher in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa (27.9%). The highest percentage, however, is found in Gipuzkoa (39.5%).

**Figure 31. Basque use, by province. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)**


If we look at the percentages for the capital cities, we see that the highest percentage of people who use Basque intensively is found in Donostia-San Sebastián (19.7%). In the other capital cities, the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than the other language they speak is much lower (less than 5%).

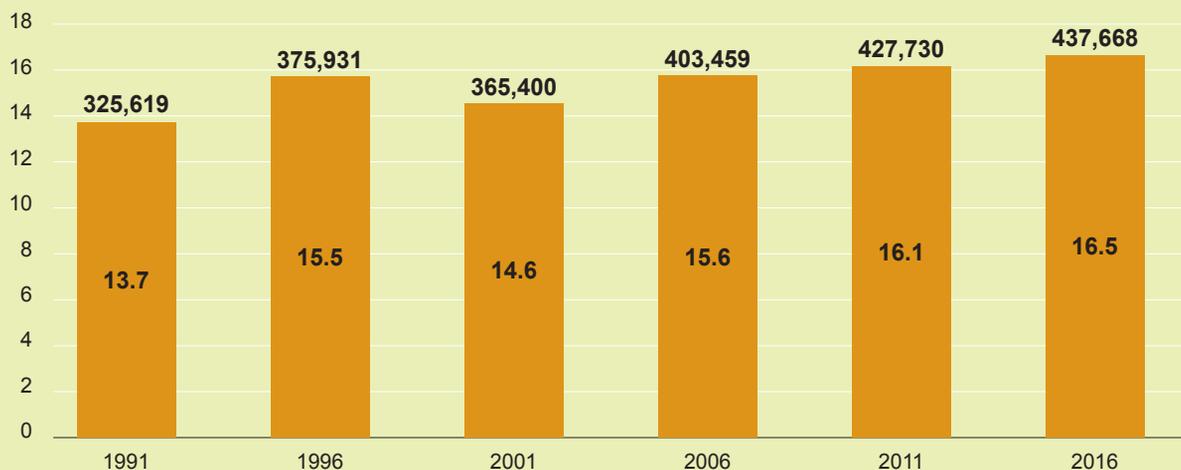
**Table 12.** Basque use, by province and capital city. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

	Vitoria-Gasteiz	Bilbao	Donostia-San Sebastián	Pamplona	BAB
Basque more than other language	1.2	1.7	8.3	0.7	—
Basque as much as other language	3.5	2.9	11.4	2.4	0.8
Basque less than other language	7.8	9.2	13.3	6.6	4.2
Very little Basque	6.9	7.5	6.7	2.4	3.0
Always a language other than Basque	80.5	78.8	60.2	87.9	92.0

**Source:** Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If we analyse the evolution of these figures over the last 25 years, we see that the proportion of those who use Basque intensively has increased by 2.8 points. In 2016, 112,000 more people in the territory of the Basque language use Basque as much as or more than their other language than they did in 1991.

**Figure 32.** Evolution of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016



**Source:** Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

This increase is mainly due to the growth of this group in the BAC, where the percentage of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language has risen by 5 points. In Navarre the percentage has remained more or less the same (around 6%), whereas in the Northern Basque Country it has dropped (by 5 points in 20 years).

**Table 13.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language, by territory. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Territory of the Basque language	13.7	15.5	14.6	15.6	16.1	16.5
BAC	15.5	18.1	17.5	18.9	20.0	20.5
Navarre	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.5	6.6
Northern Basque Country	—	13.3	9.9	10.6	9.6	8.1
Territory of the Basque language	325,619	375,931	365,400	403,459	427,730	437,668
BAC	271,121	321,976	315,826	349,425	375,139	382,419
Navarre	25,214	25,697	27,528	29,551	29,714	34,993
Northern Basque Country	—	28,258	22,045	24,484	22,877	20,256

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

## 4.2. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BY SEX AND AGE

As regards sex, in general there are no significant differences between men and women as regards Basque language use. The percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language is 16.1% among women and 17% among men. Moreover, over the last 25 years, the difference in the percentage of women and men who use Basque as much as or more than their other language has been consistently small.

**Table 14.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language, by sex. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Men	14.2	16.3	14.9	15.8	16.1	17.0
Women	13.3	14.6	14.4	15.3	16.2	16.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>16.5</b>

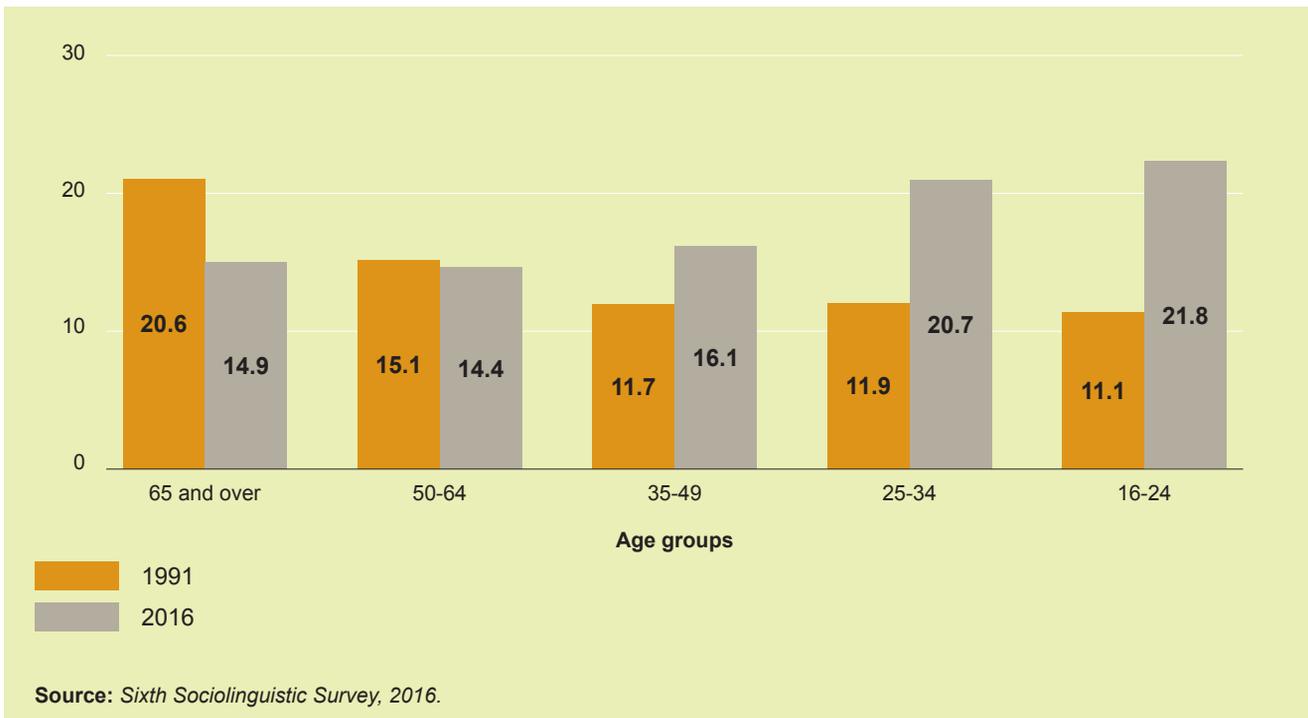
**Source:** *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

If we analyse Basque language use by age, we see that the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language decreases as you move up the age scale from 50 years of age, and increases as you move down the age scale from that same point. Moreover, the growth in this percentage also increases as you move down the age scale. Thus, in 2016, 14.9% of those aged 65 and over used Basque as much as or more than their other language (compared to 20.6% in 1991) and the figures for the other age groups are as follows: 14.4% among the 50-64 age group (15.1% in 1991), 16.1% among the 35-49 age group (11.7% in 1991), 20.7% among the 25-34 age group (11.9% in 1991) and 21.8% among the 16-24 age group (11.1% in 1991).

Those who always use a language other than Basque represent over half of all people in all age groups, with the exception of those aged under 25 (48.7% of the 16-24 group always use a language other than Basque).

This pattern remains more or less constant in the three provinces of the BAC and in Navarre, although not in the Northern Basque Country. Moreover, it is worth noting that in Gipuzkoa, those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language now represent over half of not only the under 25 age group (54.7%), but also the second-youngest one (52.1% among those aged between 25 and 34).

**Figure 33.** Evolution of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language, by age. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)



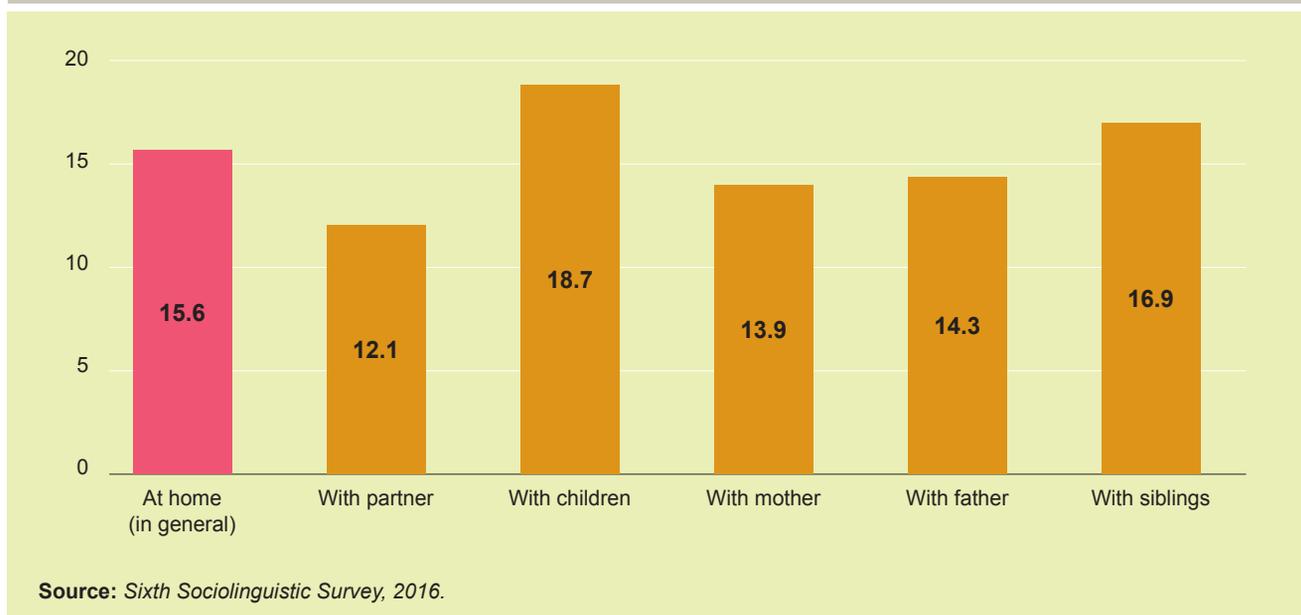
### 4.3. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS: AT HOME, WITH FRIENDS, IN FORMAL SITUATIONS

#### BASQUE USE AT HOME

In the territory of the Basque language, 15.6% of all those aged 16 and over use Basque as much as or more than their other language at home when all family members are present; 7% use Basque at home but use their other language more and the remaining 77.5% use only a language other than Basque.

There are significant differences in Basque use between the different family members. Basque is most used when talking to children (18.7%), and least used when partners talk to one another (12.1%). The figures for other types of use are as follows: between siblings: 16.9%, with the father: 14.3% and with the mother: 13.9%.

**Figure 34.** Those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language at home.  
Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



If we analyse the evolution of these figures over the last 25 years, we see that Basque use at home has varied very little over that period, and the figure for those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language in that environment was the same in 2016 as it was in 1991 (15.6%).

As regards use between different family members, the number of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language has risen by 4.4 points in the case of use with siblings, 2.9 points in the case of use with children and 1.3 points in the case of use with the father. The percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language with their mother remains more or less unchanged (0.7 points lower) Finally, use between partners in a couple dropped by 1.2 points over the past 25 years.

**Table 15.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language at home. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
At home, when all family members are present	15.6	16.5	14.6	15.3	14.2	15.6
Between partners in a couple	13.3	13.9	10.7	11.7	11.8	12.1
With children	15.8	19.0	16.9	19.4	18.7	18.7
With mother	14.6	15.6	13.1	15.0	13.4	13.9
With father	13.0	14.2	12.6	14.3	12.9	14.3
With siblings	15.5	17.7	15.8	16.8	16.8	16.9

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

## BASQUE USE WITH FRIENDS

In the territory of the Basque language, 17.9% of all those aged 16 and over use Basque as much as or more than their other language with their friends; 9.7% use Basque with friends but use their other language more and the remaining 72.4% use only a language other than Basque.

The percentage of those who use mainly Basque with their friends has risen by 3.2 points over the last 25 years, and the percentage of those who use some Basque in that environment (although less than their other language) has risen by 4.6 points.

**Table 16.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language with friends. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Use with friends	14.7	17.5	15.8	17.7	17.8	17.9

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

## BASQUE USE IN FORMAL SITUATIONS

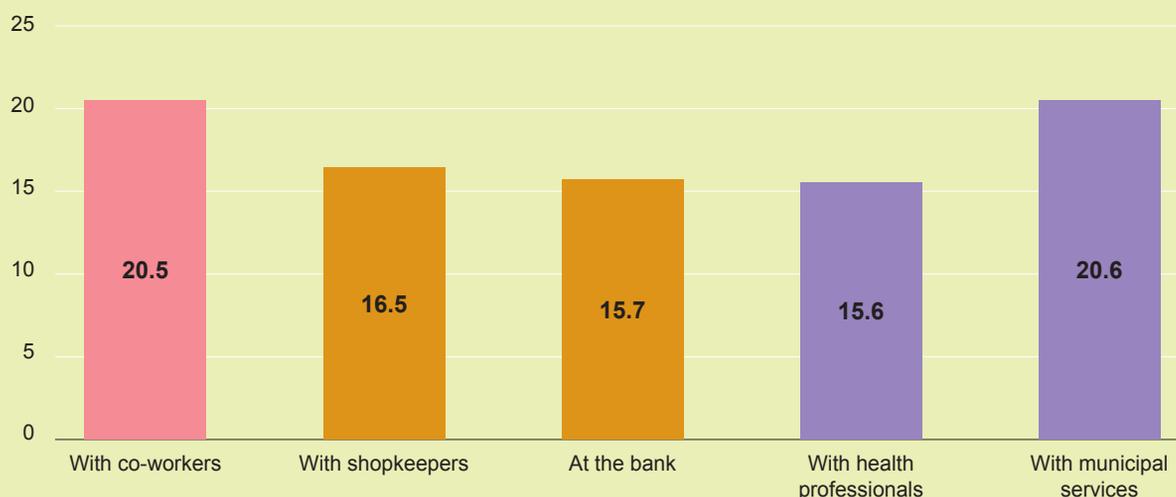
In this section we analyse Basque use in three different domains: with co-workers, in the private sphere (with shopkeepers and bank clerks) and in the public sphere (healthcare and municipal services).

In 2016, 20.5% of people living in the territory of the Basque language claimed to use Basque as much as or more than their other language with their co-workers; 9.2% said they used Basque in this environment, but less than their other language and 70.4% said they did not use Basque at all.

In the private sphere, 16.5% use Basque as much as or more than their other language with shopkeepers and 15.7% do so at their bank. In these same two domains, the percentages of those who use Basque but do so less than their other language are 8% and 4.9% (respectively).

In the public sphere, 15.6% use Basque as much as or more than their other language with members of the health service, and 20.6% do so when dealing with municipal services. In these same two domains, the percentages of those who use Basque but do so less than their other language are 5.8% and 5.3% (respectively).

**Figure 35.** Those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language in formal situations. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

Over the last 25 years, the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language with co-workers has increased by 7 points, while the figures for use with shopkeepers and banks have increased 3.8 points and 3.5 points (respectively). In the public sphere, the figures have risen by 8.5 points in relation to healthcare and 7.6 points in relation to municipal services.

**Table 17.** Percentages of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language in formal situations. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
With co-workers	13.5	15.7	14.6	18.3	19.6	20.5
With shopkeepers	12.7	15.4	13.8	15.4	16.0	16.5
At the bank	12.2	16.7	16.0	16.4	16.4	15.7
With healthcare professionals	7.1	11.4	11.5	13.4	15.3	15.6
With municipal services	13.0	18.4	16.6	17.9	19.4	20.6

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

#### 4.4. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA

Of those surveyed, 71.5% use the social media, and most of these (60.8%) do so on a daily basis.

As regards age, in all groups aged under 65, the majority use the social media on a daily basis, and use increases as you move down the age scale, from 69.1% in the 50-64 group to 98.1% in the 16-24 group.

In the territory of the Basque language, the languages most commonly used on the social media are Spanish and French: Spanish in the BAC and Navarre and French in the Northern Basque Country. However, 14.2% often use Basque (i.e. they use Basque as much as or more than their other language when using the social media). Basque language use on the social media is highest among young

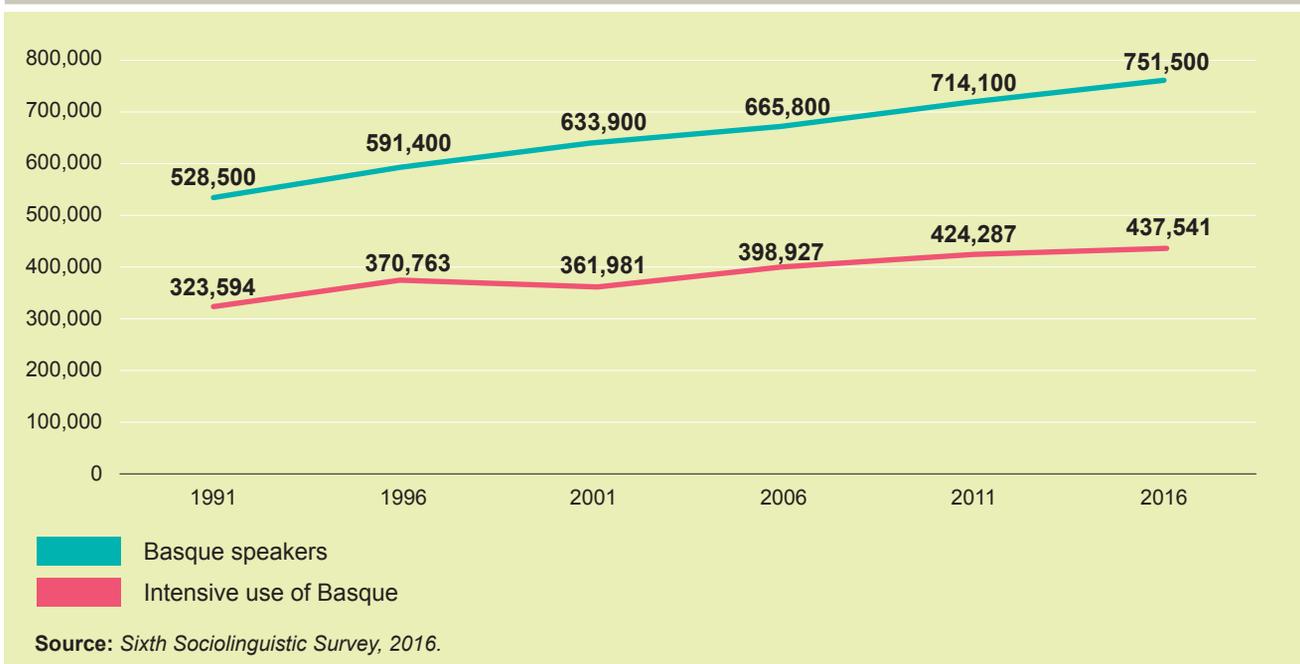
people aged 16-24, 23.2% of whom use Basque as much as or more than their other language in this sphere.

In addition to Spanish, French and Basque, however, the citizens of the territory of the Basque language also use other languages when interacting on line, mainly English (3.6%).

#### 4.5. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BETWEEN BASQUE SPEAKERS

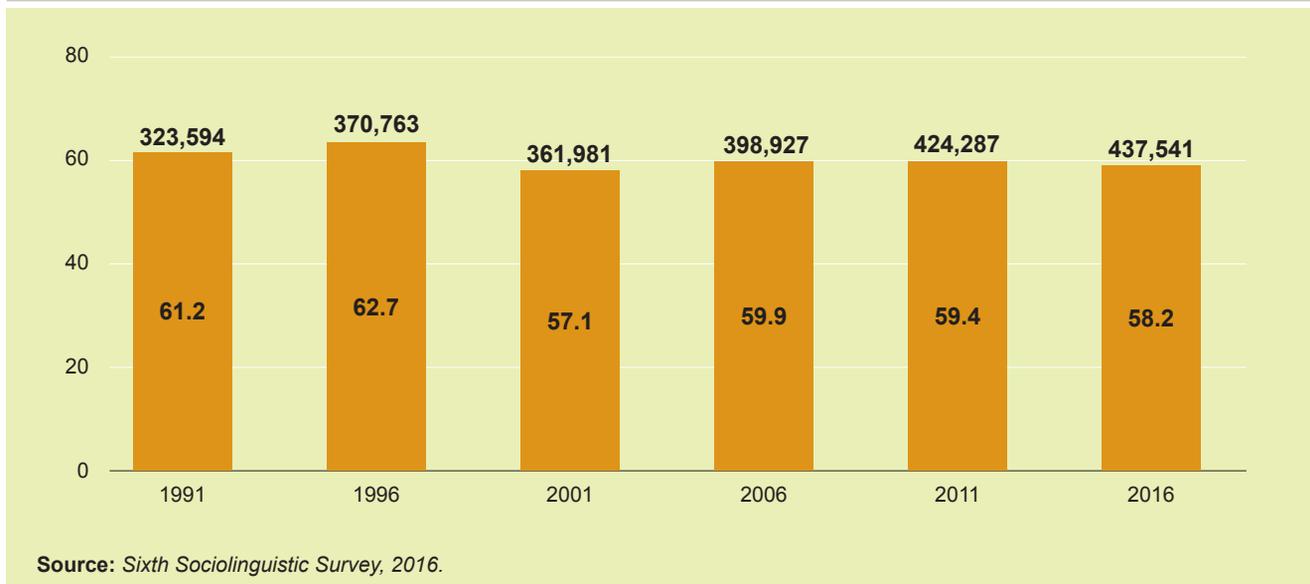
To sum up what we have seen so far, we can say that Basque language use is gradually increasing. However, this increase is not evenly spread. In addition to significant differences in percentage terms, important contrasts have also been found in attitude between provinces, age groups and use domains. Nevertheless, in general, more people in the territory of the Basque language use Basque today than 25 years ago. But use is not increasing at the same speed as knowledge, and while the number of people who speak Basque well or quite well is growing, among those who can use the language, the percentage of those who do use it is lower than 25 years ago.

**Figure 36.** Evolution of Basque knowledge and use. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016



In other words, if instead of looking at use figures for the whole of Basque society, we look only at use among Basque speakers, we see that the percentage of Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language has dropped by 3 points over the last 25 years, even though the number of those who use Basque has increased in absolute terms.

**Figure 37.** Evolution of Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016

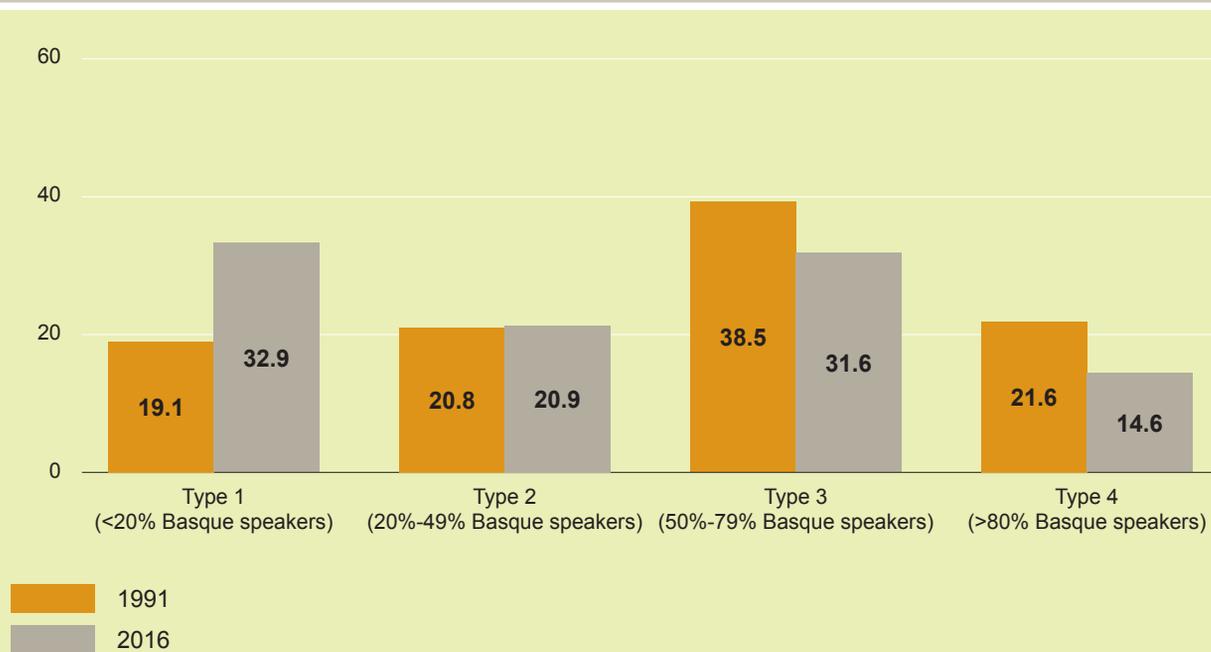


In order to explore this phenomenon further, we analysed the factors influencing Basque use by conducting correlation analyses. Although more specific explanations of the results of these analyses are provided in the sections focusing on the individual territories, in general we can conclude that, while their relative order of importance may vary, there are two main factors which influence Basque language use: the density of the Basque-speaking social network (i.e. how many people speak Basque in your family and friendship groups, at work and in your sociolinguistic environment) and fluency (which is directly linked to mother tongue).

As regards social network, 25 years ago, 60.1% of Basque speakers lived in sociolinguistic areas classed as Type 3 (50%-79% of the population are Basque speakers) and 4 (80% or more of the population are Basque speakers) areas, 20.8% lived in Type 2 area (20%-49% of the population are Basque speakers) and 19.1% lived in Type 1 area (less than 20% of the population are Basque speakers). Today,

the opposite is true. Of all Basque speakers living in the territory of the Basque language, 32.9% live in Type 1 sociolinguistic area and 20.9% (more or less the same percentage as 25 years ago) live in Type 2 area. This means that over half of all Basque speakers (53.8%) live in areas classed as being predominantly or fairly Spanish or French-speaking. A large percentage of Basque speakers live in Type 3 sociolinguistic area: 31.6% (9,800 speakers fewer than those living in Type 1 area), but only 14.6% live in Type 4 (i.e. predominantly Basque-speaking) area.

**Figure 38.** Evolution of Basque speakers by sociolinguistic area. Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

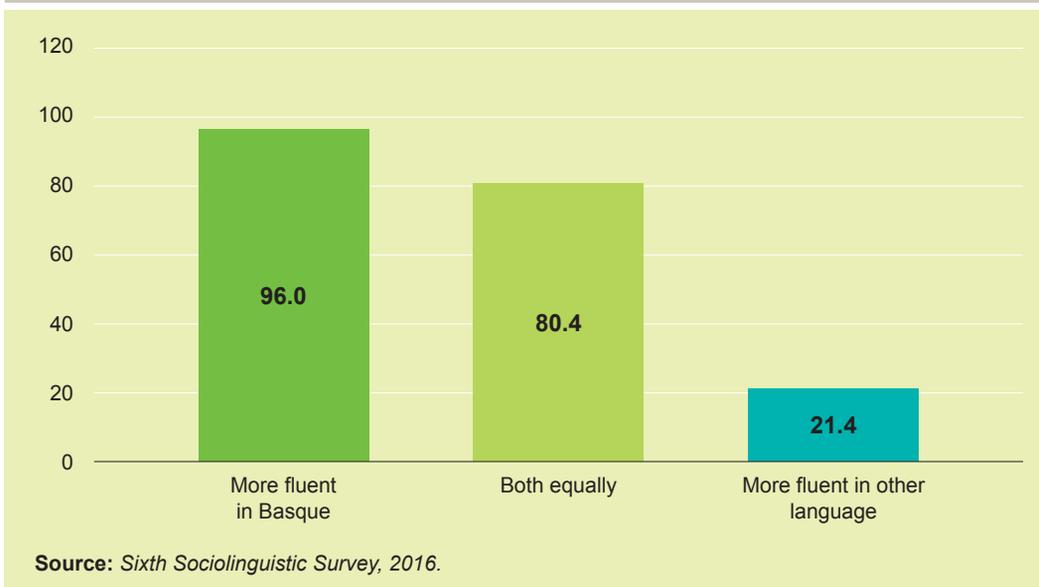
#### 4.6. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BETWEEN BASQUE SPEAKERS, ACCORDING TO FLUENCY

Among bilinguals with a greater command of Basque (i.e. those who are more fluent in Basque than they are in their other language), 96 % use Basque as much as or more than their other language. Very little difference is observed in accordance with age, although the average figure for those aged 35 and over is slightly higher and the average figure for those aged under 35 is slightly lower.

In the case of bilinguals with an equal command of both languages, 80.4 % use Basque as much as or more than their other language. Among this group, use decreases as you move down the age scale.

Finally, among bilinguals with a greater command of their other language, 21.4 % use Basque as much as or more than their other language. As with the group of bilinguals with an equal command of both languages, among this group too, use figures decrease as you move down the age scale.

**Figure 39.** Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language, by fluency. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



## 5. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE

### 5.1. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE, BY TERRITORY, PROVINCE AND CAPITAL CITY

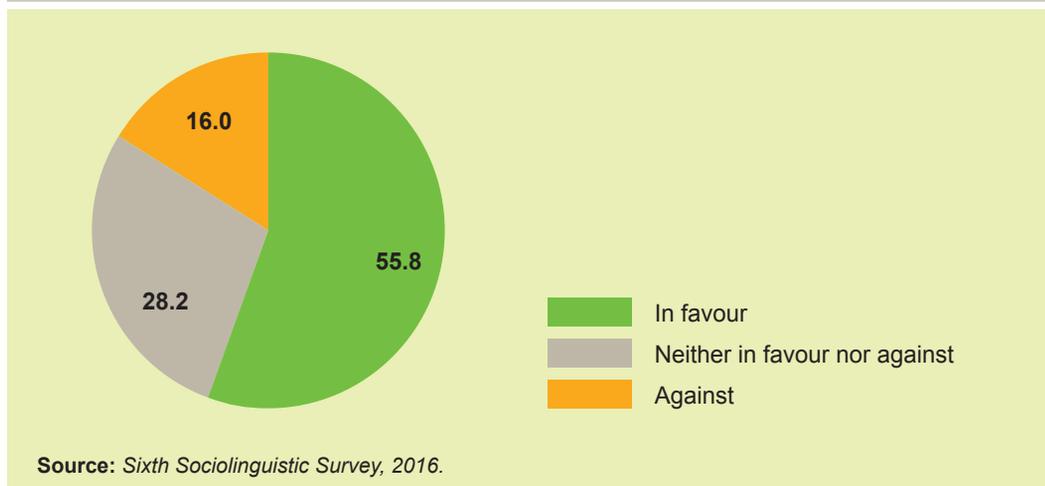
To explore attitudes to the promotion of Basque language use, the Basque Government Deputy Ministry for Language Policy 4 different categories have been established in accordance with the level of support for or opposition to such a policy.

To develop this system, the following statements were used:

- Anyone applying for a job in the Public Administration must speak Basque.
- It is better for people to learn English than Basque (those who disagree with this statement are in favour of Basque language promotion).
- It is vital for all children to learn Basque.
- There should be more radio/TV programmes in Basque.

According to the results of the survey, 55.8% of inhabitants aged 16 and over are in favour of promoting the Basque language; 28.2% are neither in favour nor against and 16% are against this policy.

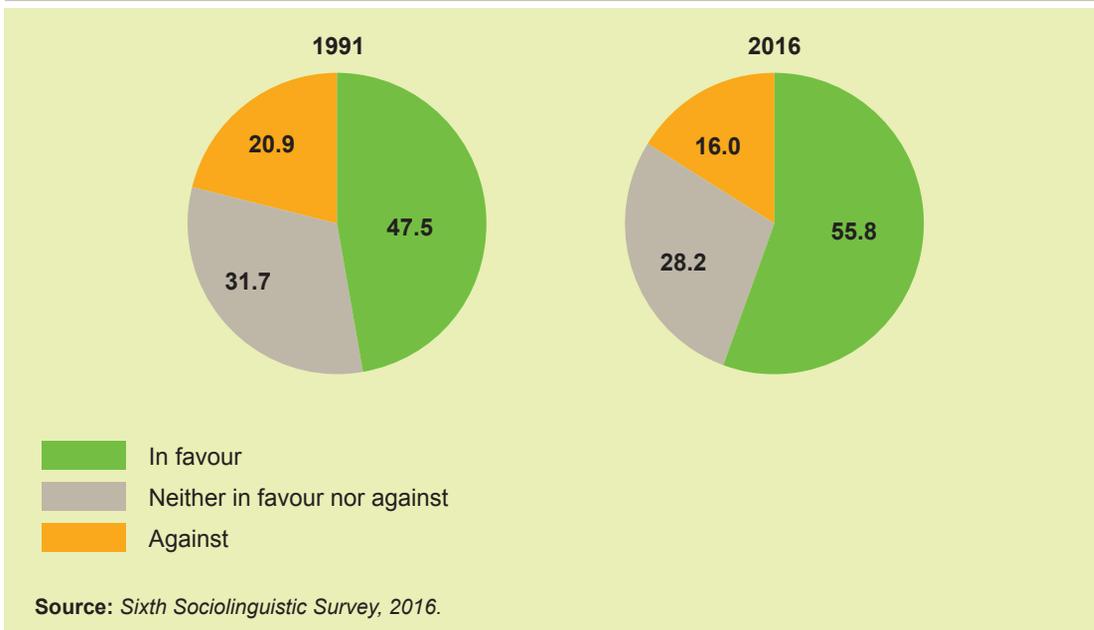
**Figure 40.** Attitudes towards Basque language promotion. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



The percentage of those in favour of Basque language promotion has risen over the last 25 years. If we compare the figures from 1991 with those from 2016, we see that there has been an 8 points increase in the number of those in favour (47.5 % versus 55.8 %).

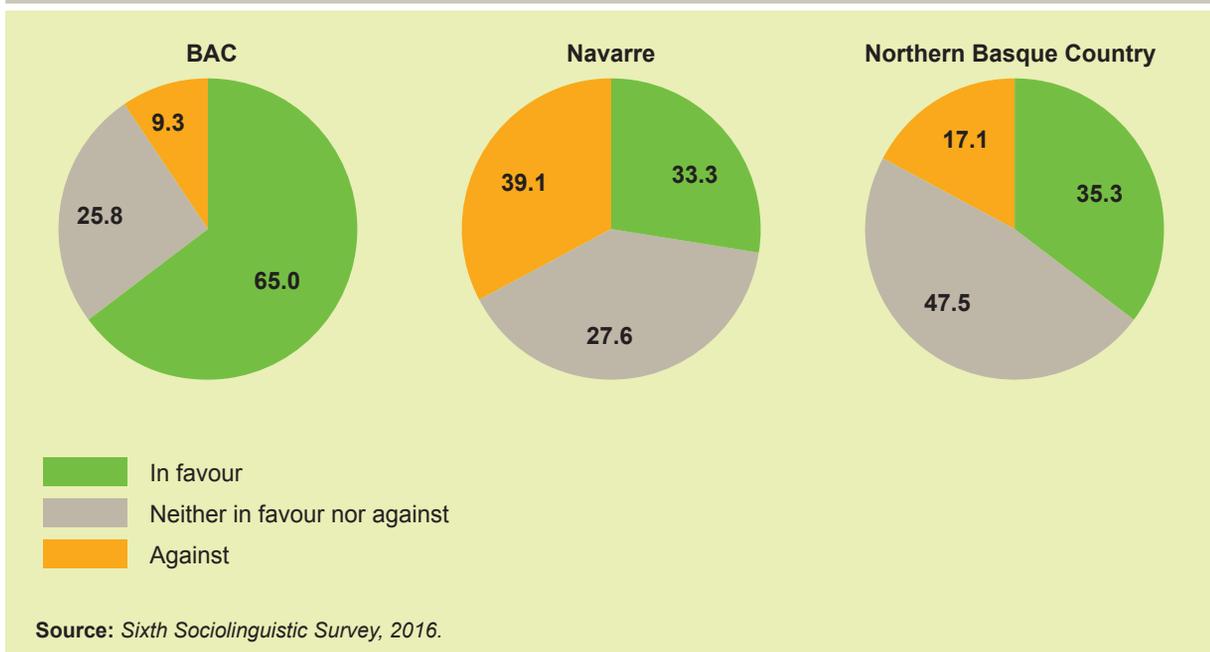
In 2016, the percentage of those neither in favour nor against was lower than in 1991 (28.2 % as opposed to 31.7 %), as was the percentage of those against Basque language promotion (16 % in 2016, as opposed to 20.9 % in 1991).

**Figure 41.** Evolution of attitudes towards Basque language promotion.  
Territory of the Basque language, 1991-2016 (%)



The percentage of those in favour of Basque language promotion is higher in the BAC (65 %) than in either Navarre (33.3 %) or the Northern Basque Country (35.3 %).

**Figure 42.** Attitudes towards Basque language promotion, by territory. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



By province, the highest percentage of those in favour is found in Gipuzkoa (74.6 %), followed by Bizkaia (62.2 %), Lower Navarre/Zuberoa (55 %) and Araba (53.4 %). The lowest percentages are found in Navarre (33.3 %) and Lapurdi (32.4 %).

**Table 18.** Attitude towards efforts to promote Basque, by province. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa	Navarre	Lapurdi	Lower Navarre / Zuberoa
In favour	53.4	62.2	74.6	33.3	32.4	55.0
Neither in favour nor against	32.7	27.2	20.4	27.6	49.9	32.0
Against	13.9	10.6	5.0	39.1	17.7	13.1

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

In relation to the capital cities, 60.7 % of those living in Donostia-San Sebastián are in favour of Basque language promotion, and this figure is 53.8 % in Bilbao, 50.6 % in Vitoria-Gasteiz, 37.6 % in Pamplona and 26.4 % in the BAB district.

**Table 19.** Attitude towards efforts to promote Basque, by capital city. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

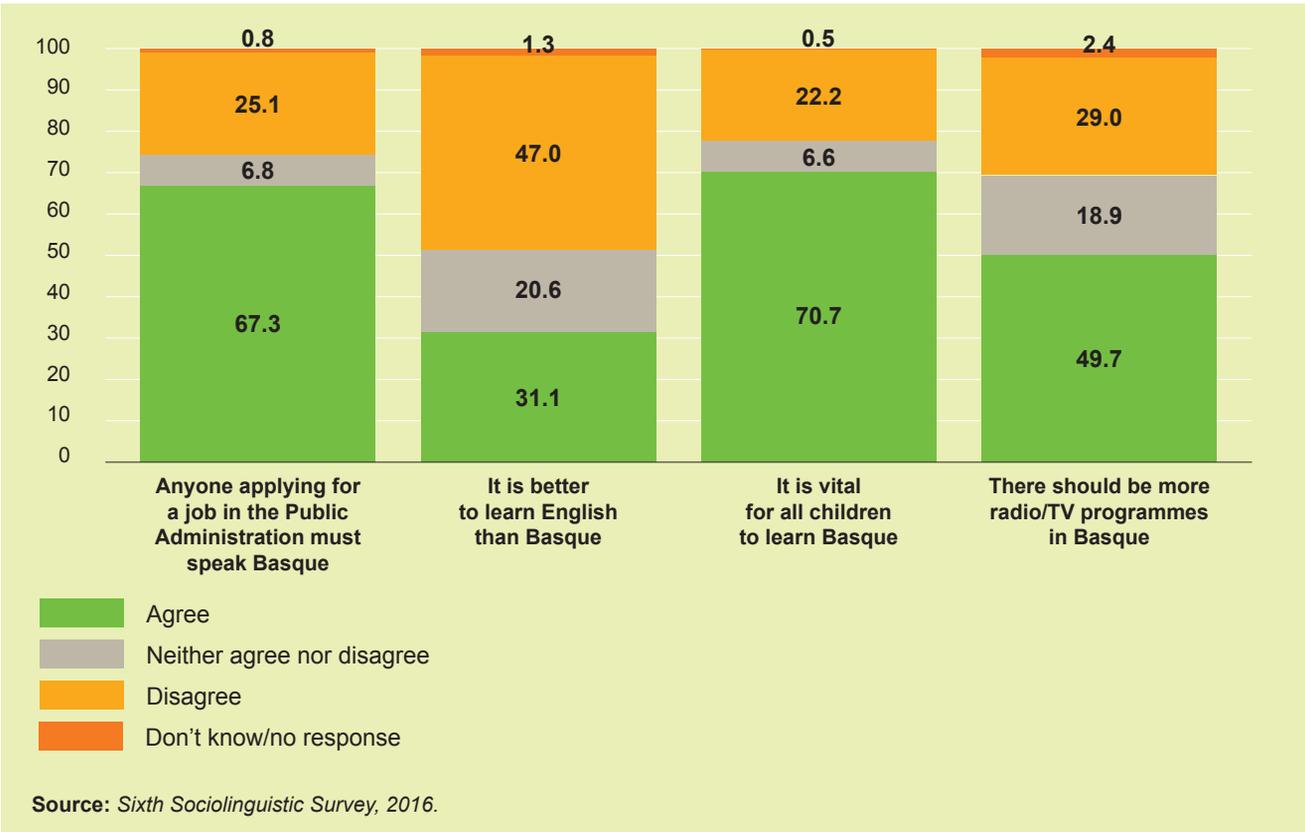
	Vitoria-Gasteiz	Bilbao	Donostia- San Sebastián	Pamplona	BAB
In favour	50.6	53.8	60.7	37.6	26.4
Ni In favour ni Against	35.0	30.5	30.6	29.6	52.5
Against	14.3	15.7	8.8	32.7	21.1

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

Responses to the statements used to determine attitude type were as follows:

- 67.3% of those living in the territory of the Basque language agreed that anyone applying for a job in the Public Administration must speak Basque, and 6.8% neither agreed nor disagreed. 25.1% disagreed with this affirmation and 0.8% declined to answer.
- Of those interviewed, 31.1% agreed that it was better to learn English than Basque (i.e. 31.1% were against Basque language promotion), 20.6% neither agreed nor disagreed and 47% disagreed (i.e. were in favour of Basque language promotion). No answer was given by 1.3% of those surveyed.
- The majority of those interviewed (70.7%) said they agreed that it is vital for all children to learn Basque; 6.6% neither agreed nor disagreed, 22.2% disagreed with this statement and 0.5% declined to answer.
- Finally, 49.7% said they thought there should be more radio/TV programmes in Basque, 18.9% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, 29% disagreed and 2.4% did not answer.

Figure 43. Opinions used to established attitude categories. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



**5.2. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE BY LANGUAGE COMPETENCE, SEX AND AGE**

Attitude towards Basque is closely linked to language competence, with 85.3 % of Basque speakers being in favour of this policy. The figure among passive Basque speakers is 61.2% and among non-Basque speakers it is 39%.

In relation to sex, there is hardly any difference between the percentages for men and women in terms of their attitude to Basque language promotion.

**Table 20.** Attitude towards efforts to promote Basque, by sex. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)

	In favour	Neither in favour nor against	Against
<b>Total</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>16.5</b>
Women	53.0	31.0	16.0
Men	52.6	30.4	17.0

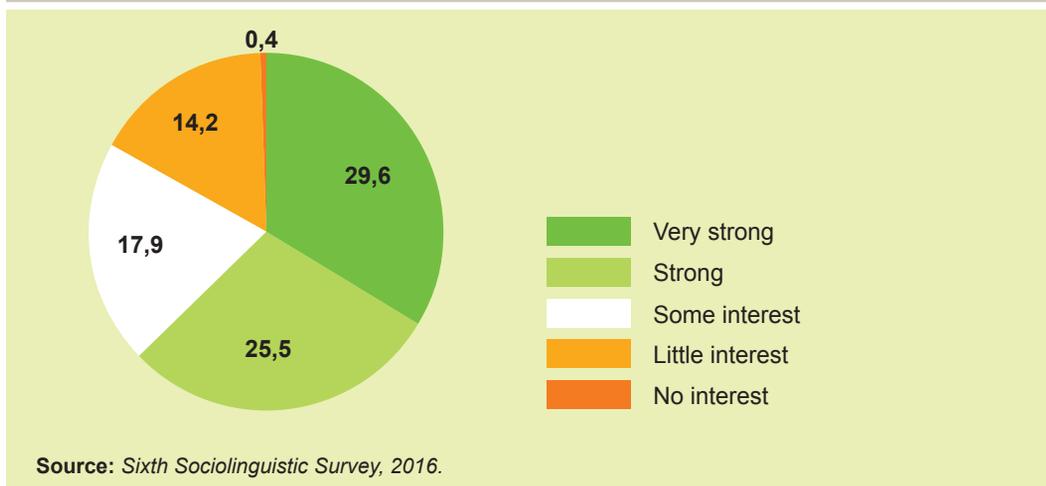
Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

As regards age, very little difference was observed in terms of attitude to Basque language promotion, with 54.6% being the lowest percentage of those in favour (50-64 age group) and 57.7% the highest (25-34 age group).

### 5.3. INTEREST IN BASQUE AND OTHER OPINIONS

When asked about their interest in Basque, the majority of those living in the territory of the Basque language gave a positive response, with 55.1% expressing a very strong or strong interest in the language (29.6% very strong; 25.5% strong) and 14.2% expressing little interest.

Figure 44. Interest in Basque. Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



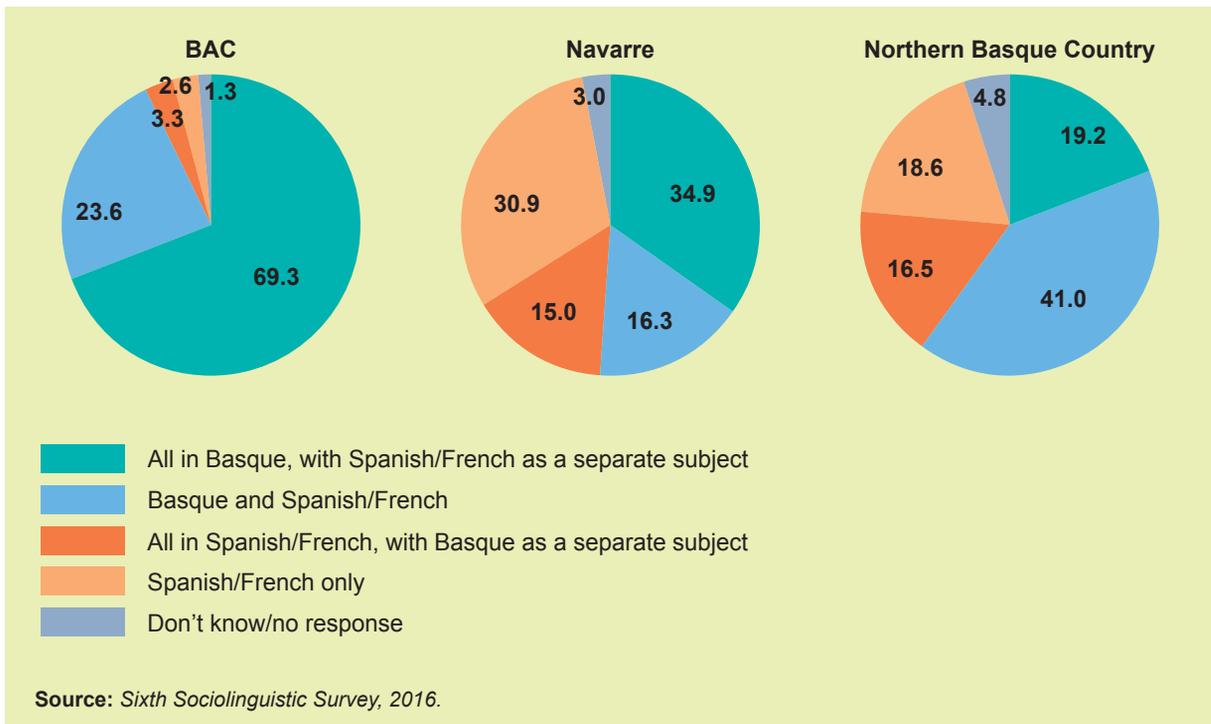
Exploring other opinions related to Basque, we found that 57.6% of those living in the territory of the Basque language would choose the D model for their children's education (all subjects taught in Basque, with Spanish/French as a separate subject), 23.7% would choose the B model (subjects taught in both Basque and Spanish/French), 6.9% would choose the A model (all subjects taught in Spanish/French, with Basque as a separate subject) and 9.8% would choose the X model (all subjects taught in Spanish/French). The remaining 1.9% either did not know or did not answer.

In the BAC, the majority said they would choose either the D model (69.3%) or the B model (23.6%) for their children's education.

In Navarre, 34.9% would choose the D model, 30.5% the X model (everything taught in Spanish), 16.3% the B model and 15% the A model.

Finally, in the Northern Basque Country, the most popular model was the B model (41%), followed by the D model (19.2%), the X model (18.6%) (everything taught in French) and finally, the A model (16.5%).

**Figure 45.** What language model would you choose for your children's education?  
Territory of the Basque language, 2016 (%)



As regards other attitudes, 85.8% of those over 16 living in the territory of the Basque language believe that, in the future, people should speak Basque and Spanish/French; 9.2% believe people should speak only Basque; 4.1% Spanish/French only and 1% did not answer.

Basque speakers were also asked if they had ever felt discriminated against due to not being able to speak their language of choice; 36.8% answered affirmatively. Non-Basque speakers were asked if they had ever felt discriminated against for not being able to speak Basque; 24.3% answered affirmatively.

Interviewees were also asked about other opinions linked to the Basque language. The results can be summarised as follows:

- 40.7% of those aged over 16 in the territory of the Basque language believe that, in the future, Basque will be as important as Spanish/French is now. Nevertheless, over one third of those interviewed (38.3%) expressed the opposite opinion, i.e. that Basque will never be as important as Spanish/French.

- In response to the statement “Basque is necessary for people to communicate with each other”, 47.2 % said they agreed and 44.9 % said they did not.
- When asked whether Basque speakers should start all conversations with strangers in Basque, 51.6 % of interviewees said they agreed and 31.7 % said they disagreed. The rest either said they neither agreed nor disagreed (14.1 %) or did not answer (2.6 %).
- When asked whether they thought Basque speakers should always speak to each other in Basque, even when some people present do not speak the language, the majority (75.8 %) said they disagreed.
- Finally, the majority of those interviewed (69.1 %) said they did not think Basque was in danger of extinction. If we take only Basque speakers into account, over half (52.2 %) said they did not think Basque was in danger of extinction, although 39.7 % said they thought it was.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- Basque society is growing older. Life expectancy is high and the birth rate is low. Moreover, the number of citizens born abroad has risen significantly over the last 15 years, particularly in Navarre and the BAC (13.4 % in Navarre and 9.1 % in the BAC).
- 28.4 % of all those aged 16 and over are Basque speakers, 16.4 % are passive Basque speakers and the remaining 55.2 % do not speak Basque. There are currently 751,500 Basque speakers, 223,000 more than in 1991.
- Most of the increase in the number of Basque speakers over the past 25 years has occurred in the BAC (9.8 points rise). The increase is smaller in Navarre (3.4 points) and in the Northern Basque Country the number is still decreasing (there has been a drop of 5.9 points over the last 20 years). Nevertheless, the percentage of young Basque speakers has recently begun to rise.
- The percentages of the three different types of Basque speaker have changed a lot over the past 25 years. Today, although most Basque speakers are still native Basque speakers (50.2 %), this figure has dropped by 29.1 points. 13.6 % of Basque speakers are native bilinguals (an increase of 6.5 points). And finally, 36.2 % are new Basque speakers (an increase of 22.6 points).
- As regards age, over half (54.3 %) of Basque speakers aged between 16 and 24 are new Basque speakers.
- Almost all Basque-speaking parents with children under the age of 16 speak Basque with their children at home. When both parents speak Basque and both have that language as their mother tongue, transmission is total (93 % transmit only Basque to their children at home, and 7 % transmit both Basque and another language). Transmission is also high when neither Basque-speaking parent has Basque as their mother tongue (81 % speak Basque at home with their children). Even when only one parent speaks Basque, transmission remains fairly high, particularly when that parent's mother tongue is Basque (83 %). However, when that parent's mother tongue is a language other than Basque, transmission drops to just half (49 %).

- 16.5% of inhabitants living in the territory of the Basque language use Basque as much as or more than the other language they speak (i.e. they use Basque intensively): 20.5% in the BAC, 6.6% in Navarre and 8.1% in the Northern Basque Country.
- As regards the evolution of intensive Basque use, the figure has risen by 2.8 points since 1991, with the percentage increasing by 5 points in the BAC, remaining the same in Navarre (less than a 1 point variation) and decreasing in the Northern Basque Country (a 5 points drop over the last 20 years).
- In the BAC and Navarre, the percentage of those who use Basque intensively has risen among those aged under 50, and in the Northern Basque Country it has risen among those aged between 16 and 24.
- Positive attitudes towards Basque language promotion increased in the territory of the Basque language between 1991 and 2016 (from 47.5% to 55.8%), with figures rising by 10 and 11.7 points in the BAC and Navarre (respectively). In the Northern Basque Country, however, the percentage of those with a positive attitude has dropped (by 7 points over the last 20 years).



**BASQUE  
AUTONOMOUS  
COMMUNITY**

Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey



## 1. POPULATION<sup>1</sup>

According to EUSTAT (the Basque Institute of Statistics), in 2016, the population of the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) was 2,176,577.

If we compare this figure with the one recorded for 1991, we see that the population has increased by 72,536 in absolute terms, although this growth has not been linear throughout the entire period. Up until the year 2000, the population was declining. Then, from the turn of the new millennium onwards, it increased sharply, reaching a peak in 2011, with the highest number ever recorded.

The population of Araba increased in all periods analysed, although the sharpest increase occurred over the last fifteen years. Gipuzkoa, on the other hand, followed the general pattern for the BAC as a whole, and the population of Bizkaia decreased in almost all periods studied.

**Table 1.** Population evolution by province. BAC, 1991-2016

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
<b>BAC</b>	<b>2,104,041</b>	<b>2,098,055</b>	<b>2,082,587</b>	<b>2,129,339</b>	<b>2,179,815</b>	<b>2,176,577</b>
Araba	272,447	281,821	286,387	305,822	321,254	323,889
Bizkaia	1,155,106	1,140,026	1,122,637	1,136,852	1,153,351	1,140,569
Gipuzkoa	676,488	676,208	673,563	686,665	705,210	712,119

**Source:** EUSTAT. *Population and housing censuses and statistics.*

Two factors are responsible for this evolution, firstly the natural increase (i.e. the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths) and secondly, the migratory balance (i.e. the difference between immigration and emigration rates).

<sup>1</sup> Data from EUSTAT (Basque Institute of Statistics) and the INE (Spanish Statistical Office)..

The main characteristics of the native population are as follows:

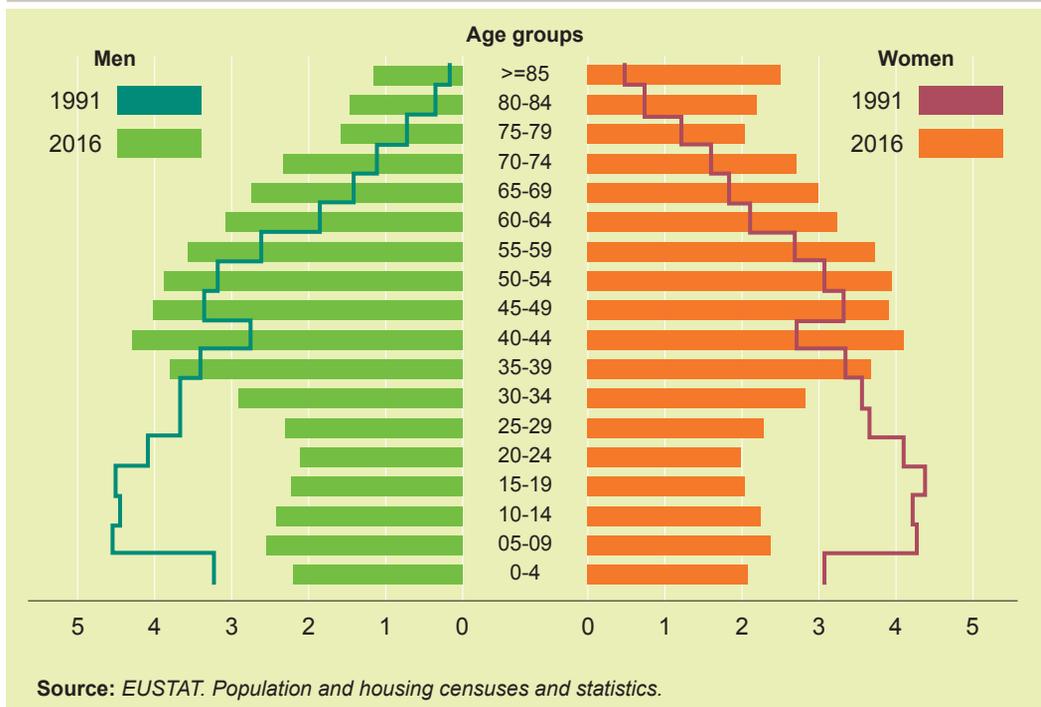
- Ageing population: life expectancy is increasing (86.2 years for women and 80.3 years for men) while birth rates are very low (8.4 births per 1,000 inhabitants; the EU27 mean is 10.1).
- The increase in the number of inhabitants born abroad: 9.1% of all those living in the BAC in 2016.

Since 1991, the number of over 65s has increased by 9%, and today, this age group accounts for 21.6% of the total population (as opposed to just 12.6% in 1991).

At the same time, the percentage of young people in the population has decreased. In 2016, just 18.3% of the population was under 20 years of age (this figure was 25.5% in 1991).

The growth of the older population, particularly the over 85s, is striking. Over the past 25 years, the percentage has quadrupled, and this group now accounts for 3.7% of the total population.

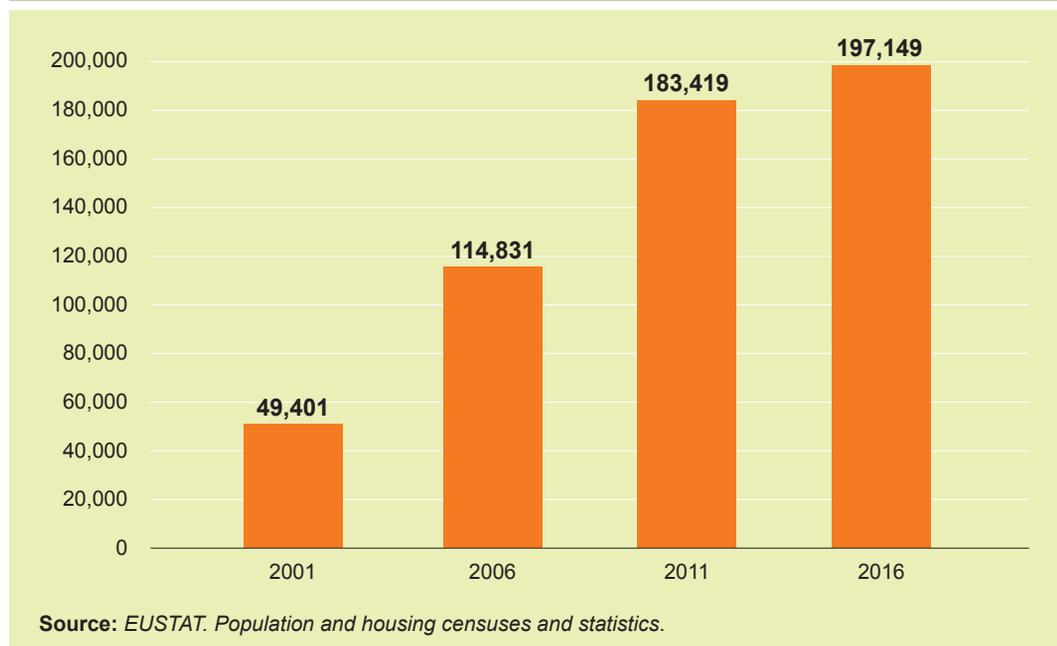
**Figure 1.** Evolution of the population pyramid. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)



Although immigration is not a new phenomenon, it nevertheless does have some specific characteristics. Unlike the immigrants who came to the BAC from the 1960s onwards, those who have come since the turn of the new millennium mainly hail from abroad.

The percentage of inhabitants who were born abroad has increased twelvefold since the start of the century, from 0.7% in the year 2000 to 9.1 points in 2016.

**Figure 2.** Evolution of foreign-born inhabitants. BAC, 2001-2016



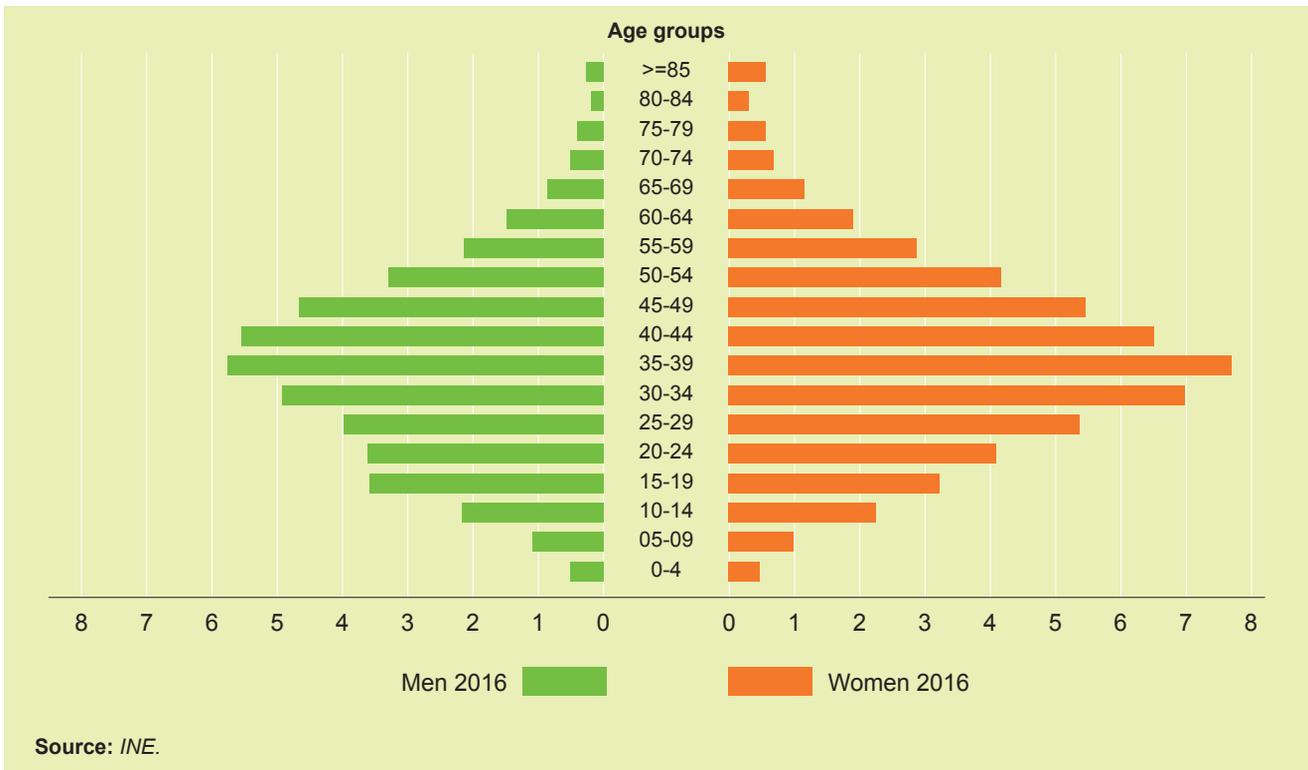
Among the residents of the BAC who were born abroad, women are more numerous than men (52.3% are women and 47.7% are men).

As for their origin, a great many come from the American continent (36.9%), with most of those hailing from South America. Nevertheless, the relative percentage of this group has started to decrease in recent years while the number of immigrants from Africa has risen (28%). Most of this group hail from the Maghreb.

The third largest group of immigrants are those from other European countries (26.2%), mainly Eastern Europe. Finally, 8.9% of foreign immigrants come from Asia and Oceania.

As regards age, the main characteristic of inhabitants who were born abroad is reflected in the population pyramid. This group is mostly very young, with eight out of every ten foreign immigrants being aged 50 or under.

**Figure 3.** Population pyramid of foreign-born inhabitants. BAC, 2016 (%)



The growth of the population of the BAC in the future may depend on immigration, since it has been forecast that the natural increase will be negative in the coming years. In other words, due to low fertility levels, the birth rate is expected to drop, and the death rate is expected to increase due to the higher number of older citizens.

## 2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

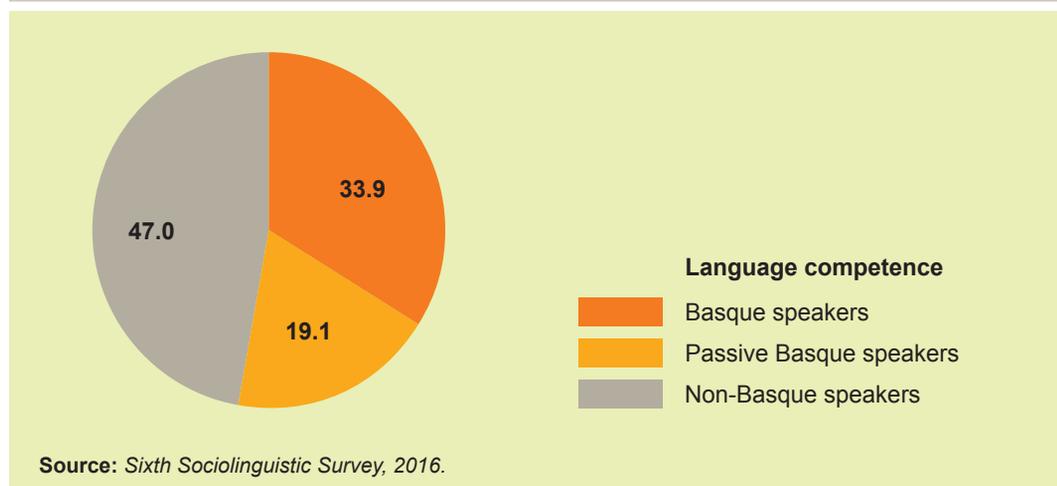
### 2.1. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY PROVINCE AND CAPITAL CITY

If we classify the population according to their ability to speak Basque, we see there are three types of speaker:

- **Basque speakers (bilinguals):** people who speak Basque fluently and those who speak and understand it fairly well.
- **Passive Basque speakers (passive bilinguals):** people who are not able to speak Basque well or fairly well. However, they do have some knowledge of the language. This group includes anyone who fulfils at least one of the following criteria:
  - They are able to understand and speak some Basque.
  - They are able to understand Basque “well” or “fairly well”.
- **No vascohablante:** no es capaz de hablar ni de entender el Basque.

According to the Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, carried out in 2016, 33.9% of the over-16 population living in the Basque Autonomous Community are Basque speakers, 19.1% are passive Basque speakers and 47% are non-Basque speakers.

Figure 4. Language competence. BAC, 2016 (%)

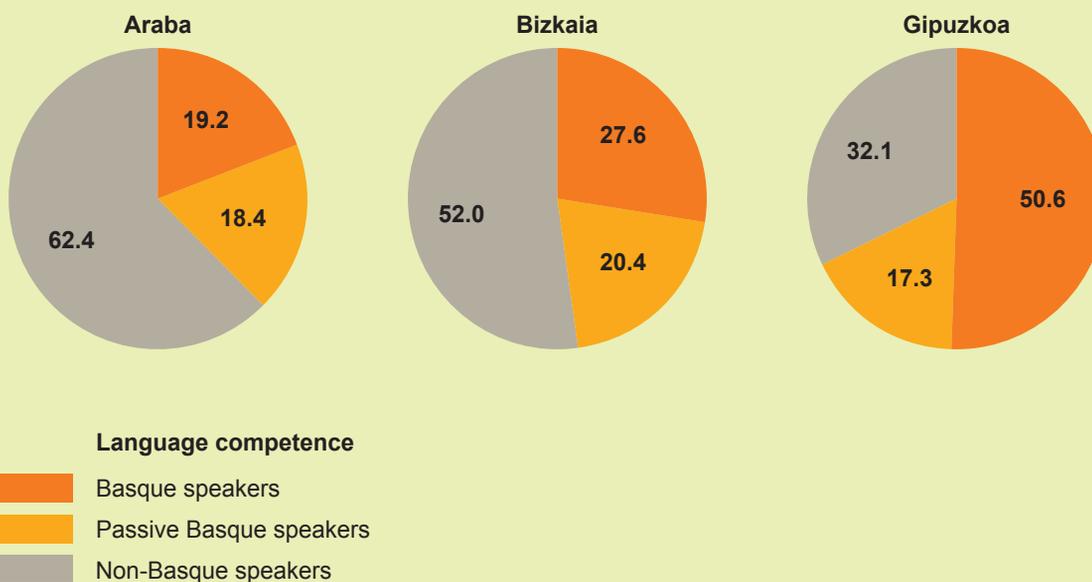


**Table 2.** Language competence by province. BAC, 2016

	BAC	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,864,380</b>	<b>273,086</b>	<b>986,155</b>	<b>605,139</b>
Basque speakers	631,384	52,513	272,423	306,448
Passive Basque speakers	355,936	50,197	201,074	104,665
Non-Basque speakers	877,060	170,376	512,658	194,026

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

The situation varies widely between the three provinces. In Gipuzkoa, half of all inhabitants are Basque speakers (50.6%). In Bizkaia, on the other hand, this figure is just over one quarter (27.6%). Finally, one fifth of all those living in Araba can speak Basque (19.2%).

**Figure 5.** Language competence by province. BAC, 2016 (%)


Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

As in 2011, the survey also gathered data regarding the three provincial capitals. It is worth nothing here that all three capital cities have a lower percentage of Basque speakers than their respective provinces. Thus, 35.4% of the inhabitants of Donostia-San Sebastián are Basque speakers, and this figure is 18.6% for Bilbao and 17.9% for Vitoria-Gasteiz.

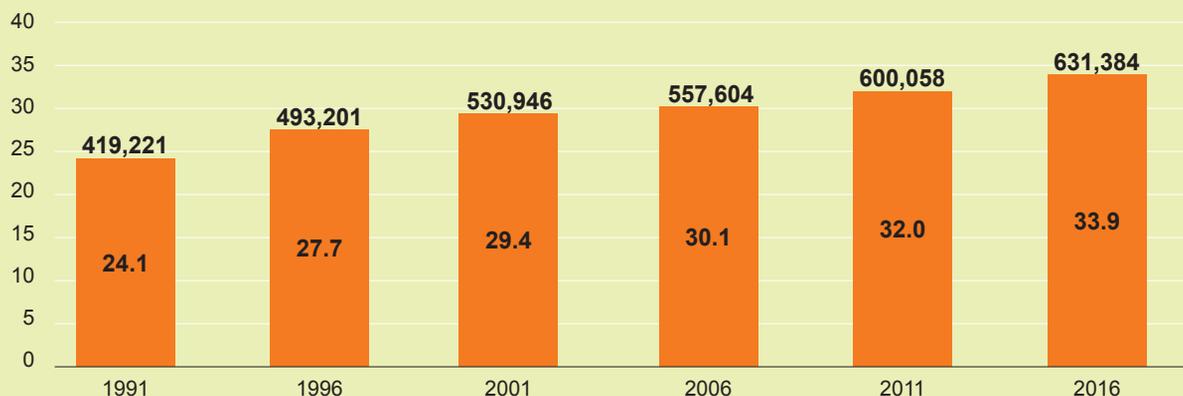
**Table 3.** Language competence by capital city. BAC, 2016 (%)

	Vitoria-Gasteiz	Bilbao	Donostia-San Sebastián
<b>Total</b>	<b>206,334</b>	<b>300,283</b>	<b>160,826</b>
Basque speakers	17.9	18.6	35.4
Passive Basque speakers	18.4	21.1	21.5
Non-Basque speakers	63.8	60.3	43.1

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If we look at the evolution over the last 25 years, we see that in 2016, there were 212,000 more Basque speakers in the BAC than in 1991. This is an increase of almost 10 points (33.9% as opposed to 24.1%).

**Figure 6.** Evolution of Basque speakers. BAC, 1991-2016



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

The percentage of passive Basque speakers also rose by nearly 11 points over that 25-year period (8.5 % in 1991 versus 19.2 % in 2016).

The number of non-Basque speakers, on the other hand, dropped by 12 points (from 59.2 % in 1991 to 47 % in 2016).

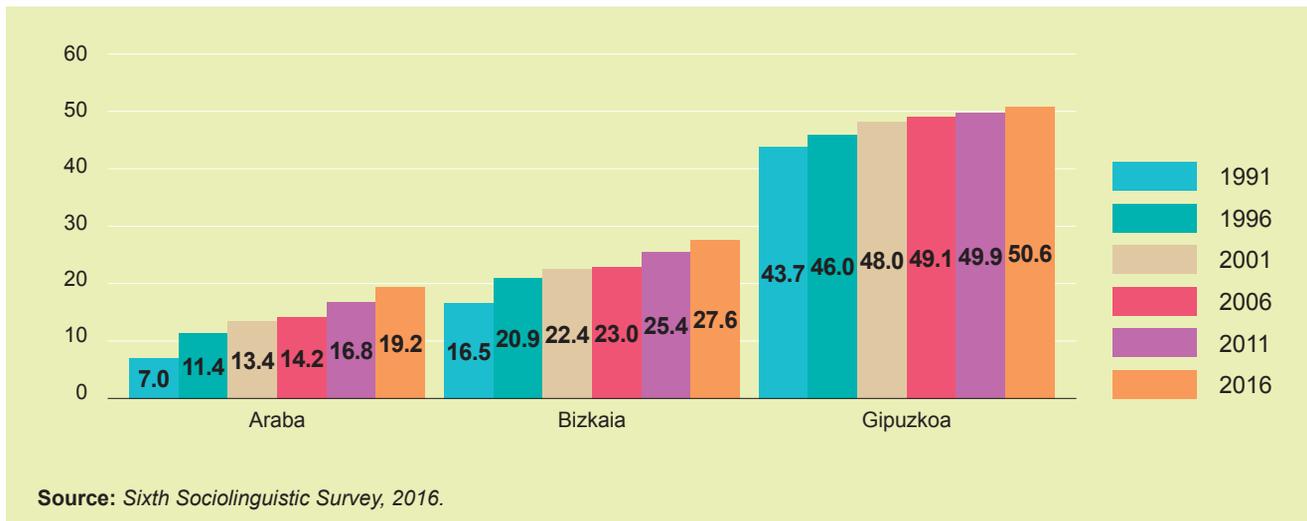
This decrease in the percentage of non-Basque speakers and increase in the percentage of Basque speakers is even more remarkable if we take into account the sociodemographic changes that have taken place in our society over recent years. Firstly, Basque society is growing older and the birth rate is very low. This means that young people, among whom the percentage of Basque speakers is highest, bears increasingly less weight within the population as a whole.

Although the number of Basque speakers has risen in all three provinces, the growth in Araba is particularly worth mentioning. In 1991, 7 % of those living in Araba could speak Basque, whereas today, that figure is 19.2 %. This is an 11.8 points increase over the space of 25 years.

In Bizkaia, 16.5 % of the population could speak Basque in 1991, whereas that figure was 27.6 % in 2016, meaning that the percentage of Basque speakers aged 16 and over in that province has risen by 10.1 points over the last 25 years.

Although the growth in Basque speakers in Gipuzkoa (6.9 points) is the smallest recorded in percentage terms (from 43.7 % in 1991 to 50.6 % in 2016), it should be remembered that the starting point was much higher (i.e. the percentage of Basque speakers in Gipuzkoa in 1991 was much higher than in either Bizkaia or Araba).

Figure 7. Evolution of Basque speakers by province. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)



## 2.2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY SEX AND AGE

34.4% of women and 33.2% of men in the BAC are Basque speakers, meaning that the percentage of those who can speak Basque is slightly higher among women than among men (a difference of 1.2 points).

If we look at the different provinces, we see that the greatest difference between the sexes is found in Araba (2.4 points), with 20.4% of women in that province being Basque speakers, as opposed to 18% of men.

In Bizkaia also the percentage of female Basque speakers is slightly higher than that of male ones. Nevertheless, this difference is small compared to Araba (just 1.3 points). In Gipuzkoa, on the other hand, there is hardly any difference at all (0.6 points).

It should be noted that more women than men are enrolled on adult Basque language learning courses. In the 2016-17 academic year, two thirds (66.8%) of all those studying Basque were women. Consequently, more women than men have learned Basque as adults thanks to the Basque adult language education system. This is nothing new, with the trend remaining largely unchanged over the last 20 years (i.e. since 1996).

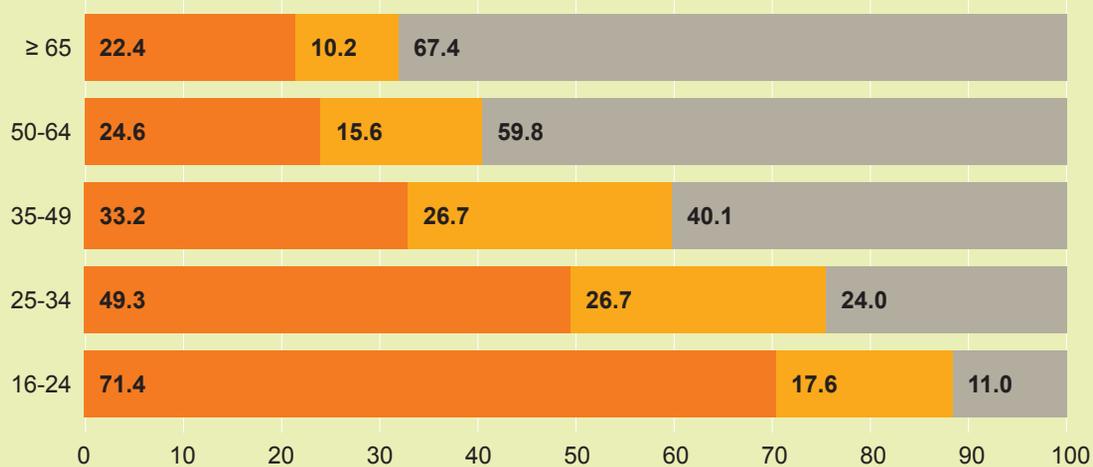
**Table 4.** Basque speakers by sex. BAC, 2016 (%)

	BAC	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.9</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>50.6</b>
Women	34.4	20.4	28.2	50.9
Men	33.2	18.0	26.9	50.3

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If we look at age, we see that the highest percentage of Basque speakers can be found among the under 35s (i.e. in the 16-24 and 25-34 groups).

Nevertheless, the percentage of Basque speakers has grown in all age groups under 65, although it is more noticeable among young people. Today, 71.4% of those aged between 16 and 24 are Basque speakers, compared with just 25% in 1991.

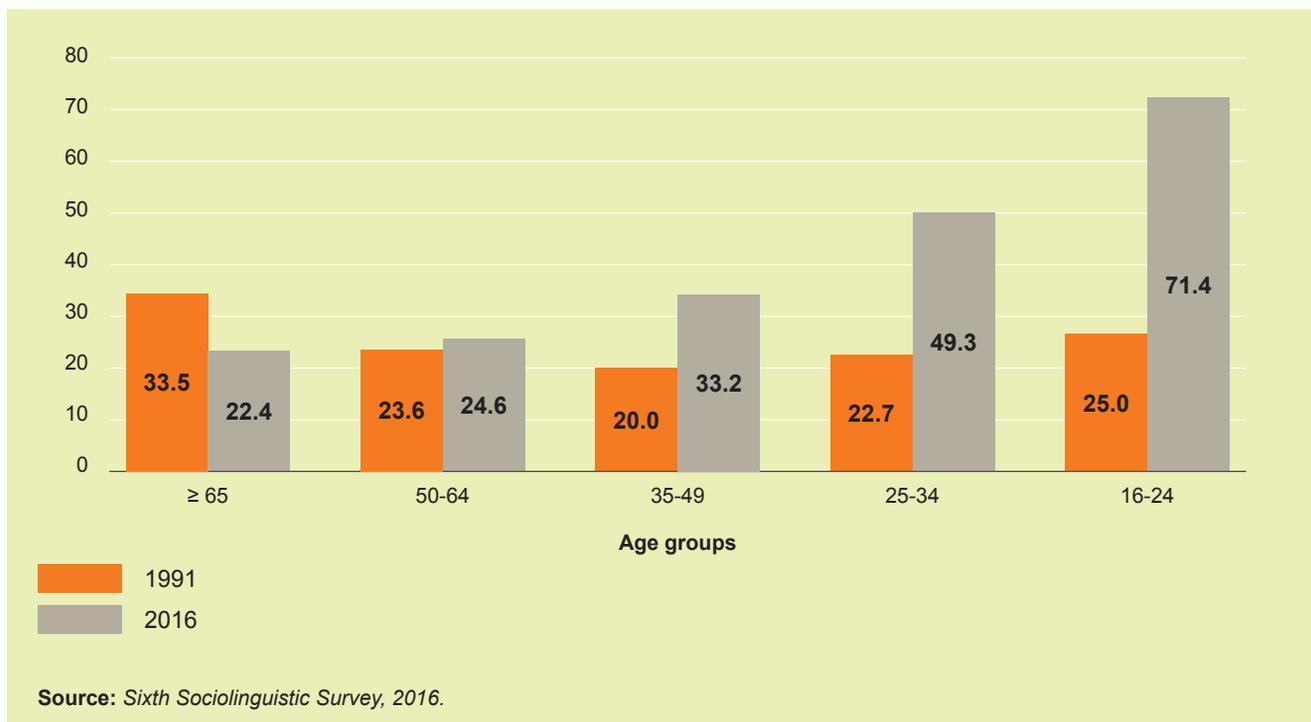
**Figure 8.** Language competence by age. BAC, 2016 (%)


■ Basque speakers  
■ Passive Basque speakers  
■ Non-Basque speakers

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

Thus, the rise in the percentage of Basque speakers is particularly striking among young people. The percentage of non-Basque speakers is higher among the adult population, although over the years more and more Basque speakers are entering this group from the younger age ranges and more and more non-Basque speakers are being lost from among the older population. In other words, as an increasing percentage of young people become Basque speakers, so too is the percentage growing among the older population.

**Figure 9.** Evolution of Basque speakers by age. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)



This trend is observed in all three provinces, even though the percentages are very different in absolute terms.

If we look at the evolution of Basque speakers by age in Araba and Bizkaia, we see that the trend observed 25 years ago has intensified. In other words, there is a marked increase in the percentage of Basque speakers among the youth population, and a general drop in the percentage of non-Basque speakers in that same age group. Over 60% of those aged 16-24 are Basque speakers (60.1% in Araba and 66.8% in Bizkaia).

In Gipuzkoa there is an even larger increase in the percentage of Basque speakers by age. Of all young Gipuzkoans aged between 16-24, 83.2% are Basque speakers, with this figure being 66.5% among those aged 25-34. Finally, among the over 35s, more than 40% can speak Basque.

**Table 5.** Basque speakers by age and province. BAC, 2016 (%)

	Age					
	Total	65 and over	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
<b>BAC</b>	<b>33.9</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>33.2</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>71.4</b>
Araba	19.2	4.4	10.2	18.4	35.2	60.1
Bizkaia	27.6	15.9	18.6	27.3	43	66.8
Gipuzkoa	50.6	40.9	41	49.6	66.5	83.2

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

### 2.3. RELATIVE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE: FLUENCY AMONG BASQUE SPEAKERS

We will now analyse relative language competence among Basque speakers. In other words, we will analyse their oral fluency in Basque and their other language (mainly Spanish).

By “other language” we refer to any language other than Basque.

Basque speakers are divided into the following categories, depending on their relative language competence:

- **Bilinguals with a greater command of Basque:** these people are more fluent in Basque than they are in their other language.

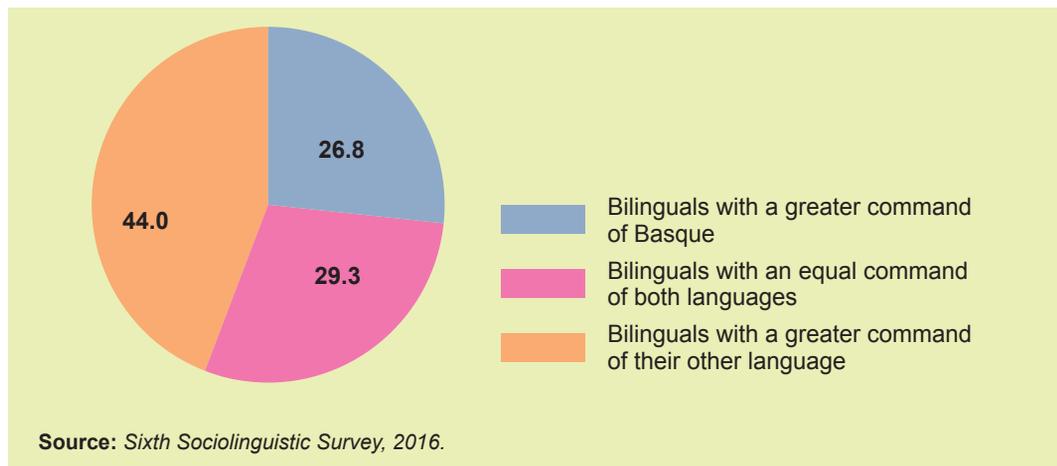
- **Bilinguals with an equal command of both languages:** these people are equally fluent in both Basque and their other language. In other words, these bilinguals can express themselves equally well in either language.
- **Bilinguals with a greater command of their other language:** these people are more fluent in their other language than they are in Basque.

In the Basque Autonomous Community, 26.8% of all Basque speakers over the age of 16 claim to speak Basque more fluently than their other language. In other words, 26.8% of Basque speakers in the BAC fall into the first category.

Just under one third (29.3%) of Basque speakers claim to have an equal command of both of the languages they speak.

And finally, bilinguals with a greater command of their other language represent 44% of all Basque speakers. This is the largest group, and the percentage is even higher among younger speakers.

**Figure 10.** Basque speakers by fluency. BAC, 2016 (%)

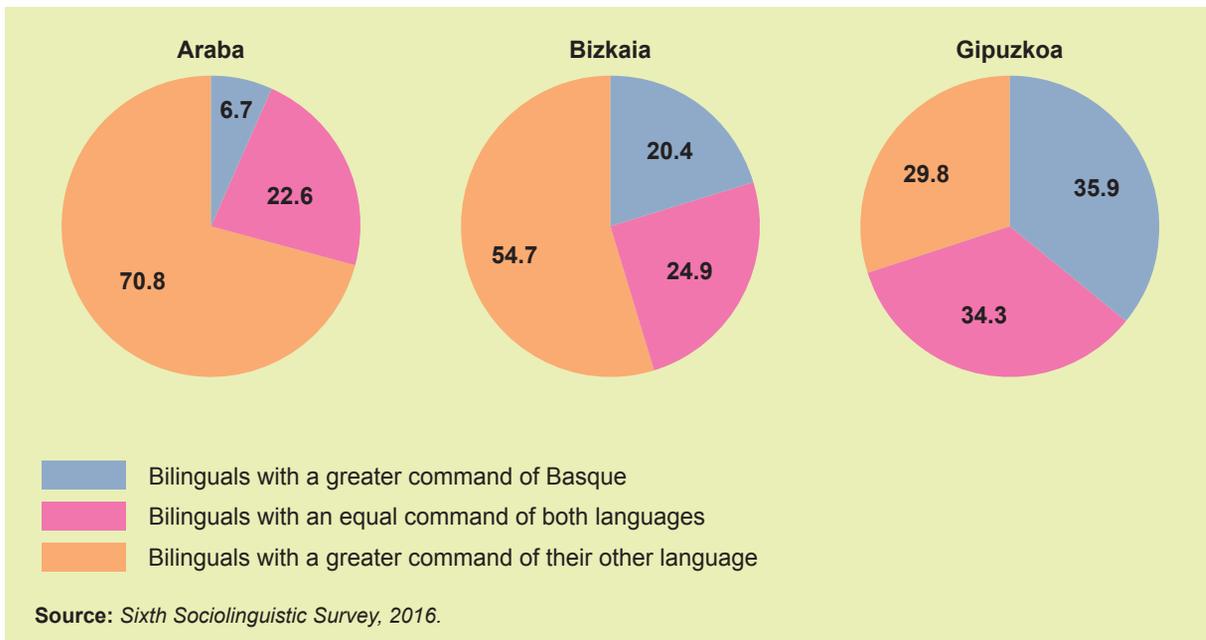


The highest percentage of bilinguals with a greater command of Basque is found in Gipuzkoa (35.9%), while the lowest percentage is found in Araba (6.7%). The percentage of this type of Basque speaker in Bizkaia is 20.4%.

The percentage of bilinguals with an equal command of both languages is highest in Gipuzkoa (34.3%), and fairly similar in both Bizkaia and Araba (24.9% and 22.6%, respectively).

The highest percentage of bilinguals with a greater command of their other language is found in Araba, with 70.8% of Basque speakers living in that province falling into this category, as opposed to 54.7% in Bizkaia and 29.8% in Gipuzkoa.

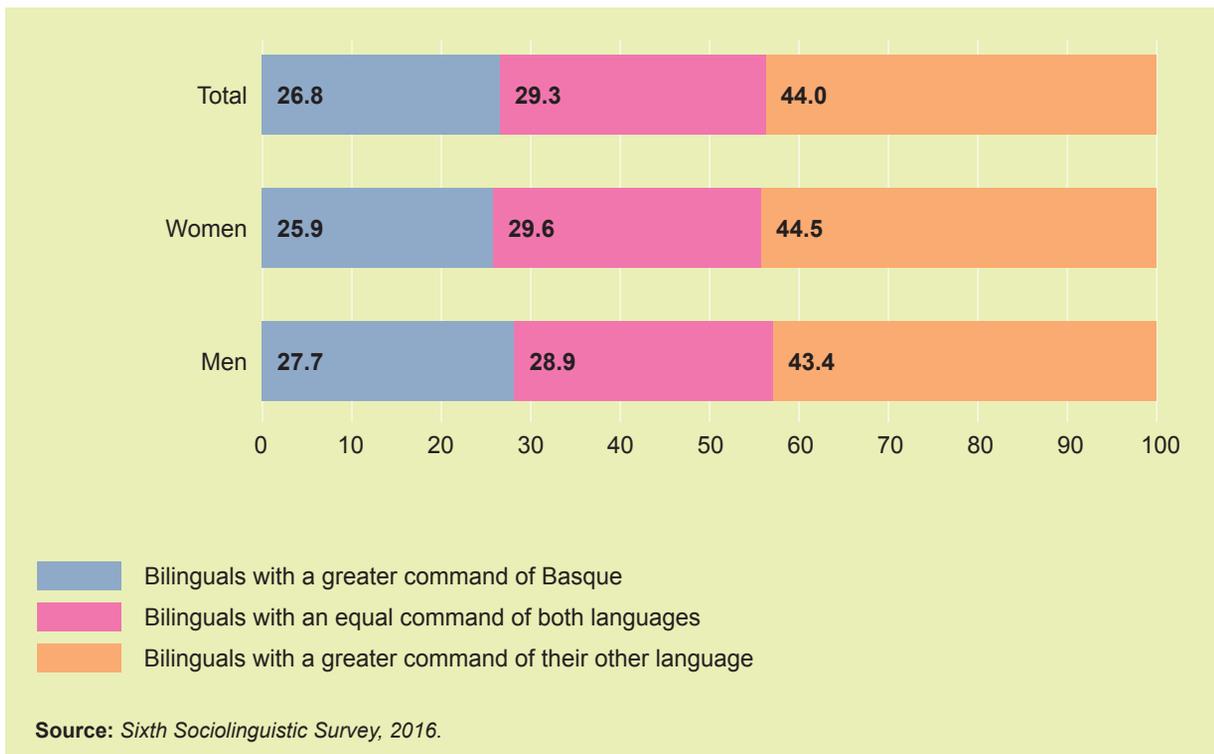
**Figure 11.** Basque speakers' fluency by province. BAC, 2016 (%)



The percentages of men and women in the different relative language competence categories are similar, with the percentage of male bilinguals with a greater command of Basque being slightly higher than the percentage of female ones (27.7% versus 25.9%).

The differences in the second two categories (bilinguals with an equal command of both languages and bilinguals with a greater command of their other language) are smaller, being 0.7 points and 1.1 points respectively. 29.6% of female Basque speakers and 28.9% of male ones are equally fluent in both languages. Finally, 44.5% of female Basque speakers and 43.4% of male ones are more fluent in their other language.

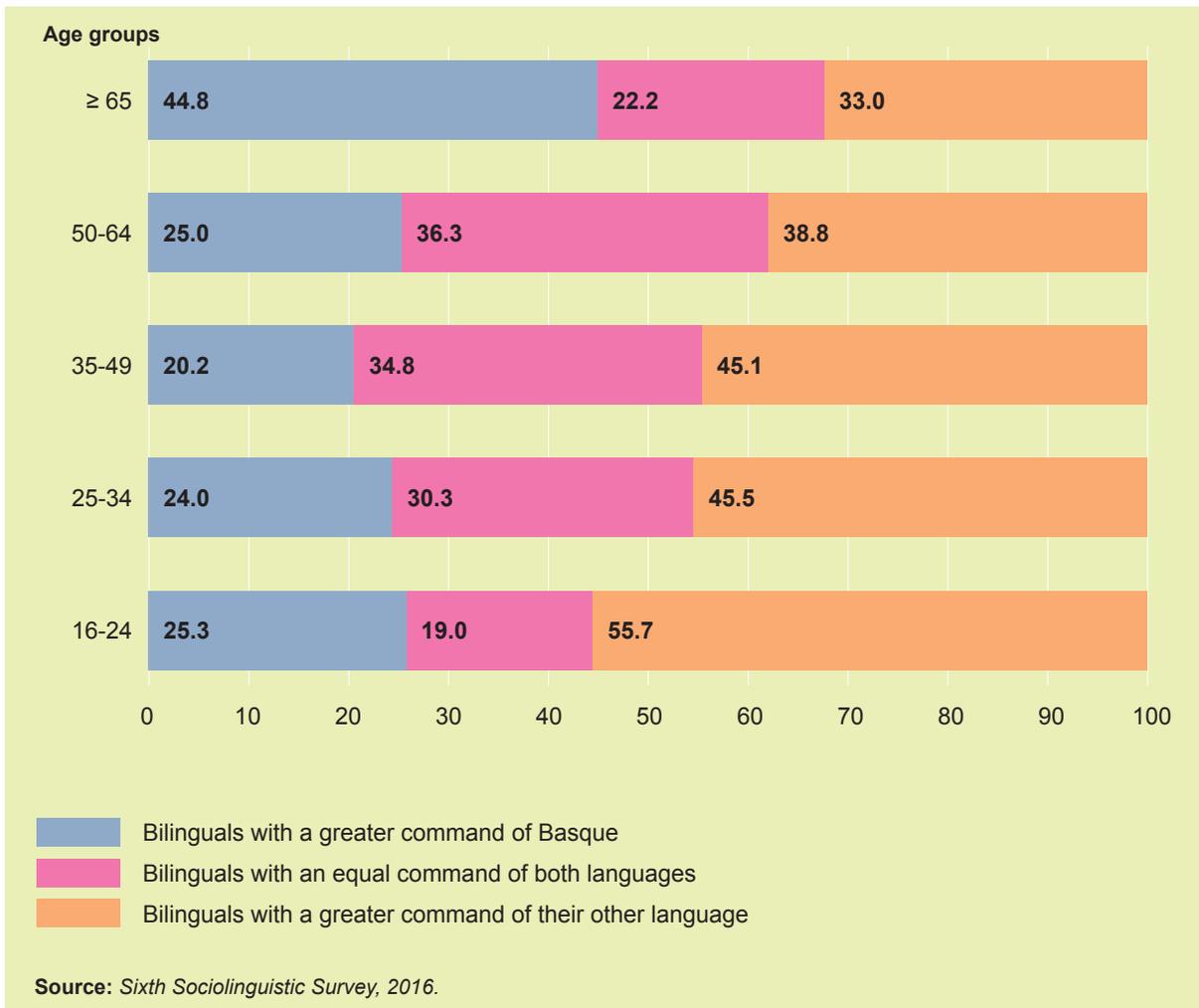
Figure 12. Basque speakers' fluency by sex. BAC, 2016 (%)



In relation to age, the largest percentage of bilinguals with a greater command of Basque is found among those aged 65 and over (44.8%), and the smallest percentage is found among those aged between 35 and 49 (20.2%).

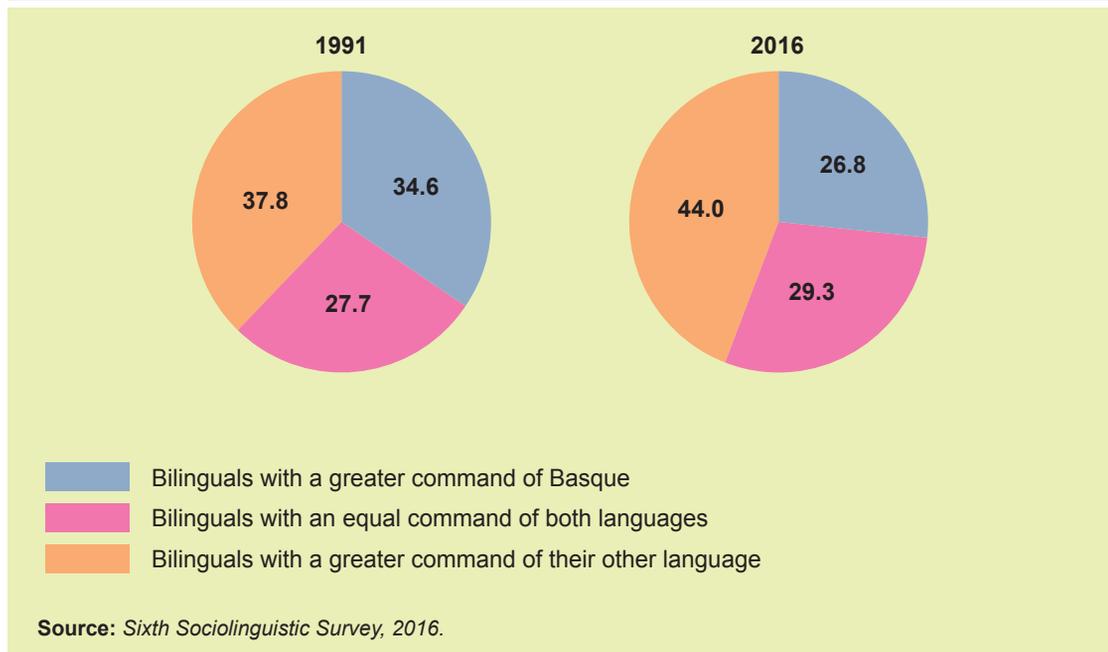
The highest percentage of bilinguals with an equal command of both languages is found among the 25-64 age group (over 30%).

Finally, the percentage of bilinguals who are more fluent in their other language grows higher as you move down the age scale, with over half (55.7%) of Basque speakers aged between 16 and 24 belonging to this category.

**Figure 13. Basque speakers' fluency by age. BAC, 2016 (%)**


Basque language fluency has changed since 1991. Twenty-five years ago, the percentage of Basque speakers more fluent in Basque was similar to that of Basque speakers more fluent in their other language (34.6% versus 37.8%). Today, however, the percentage of bilinguals more fluent in their other language is 17 points higher than that of bilinguals more fluent in Basque (44% versus 26.8%).

Figure 14. Evolution of Basque speakers' fluency. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)



If we analyse this evolution in accordance with age, we see that in 1991, the percentage of bilinguals more fluent in Basque decreased with age. In 2016, however, this trend had changed, with the percentage of this type of Basque speaker among those aged 16-24 and 25-34 (25.3% and 24%, respectively) being higher than among those aged 35-49 (20.2%).

In 1991, the highest percentage of bilinguals equally fluent in both languages was found among the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups (27% and 29.9%, respectively). In 2016, however, the highest percentages were found among those aged 35-49 and 50-64 (34.8% and 36.3%, respectively).

Finally, in 1991, the highest percentage of bilinguals more fluent in their other language was found among the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups (53.4% and 50.3%, respectively). In 2016, this trend had not changed, with the highest percentages still being found among those aged 16-24 and 25-34 (55.7% and 45.5%, respectively).

**Table 6.** Evolution of Basque language fluency by age. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)

1991	Age					
	Total	65 and over	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>419,221</b>	<b>71,612</b>	<b>97,595</b>	<b>81,331</b>	<b>78,103</b>	<b>90,580</b>
More fluent in Basque	35.5	58.9	47.9	32.8	19.7	19.6
Equally fluent in both	25.4	23.0	24.0	22.9	29.9	27.0
More fluent in their other language	39.1	18.1	28.1	44.3	50.3	53.4
<b>2016</b>						
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>631,385</b>	<b>103,736</b>	<b>112,621</b>	<b>176,770</b>	<b>122,660</b>	<b>115,598</b>
More fluent in Basque	26.8	44.8	25.0	20.2	24.0	25.3
Equally fluent in both	29.3	22.2	36.3	34.8	30.5	19.0
More fluent in their other language	44.0	33.0	38.8	45.1	45.5	55.7

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

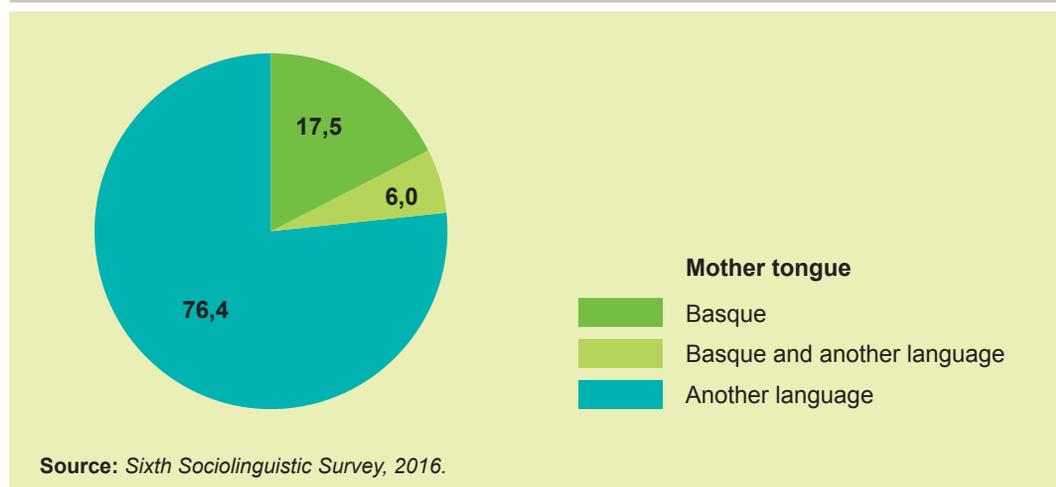
### 3. LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

#### 3.1. MOTHER TONGUE BY PROVINCE AND CAPITAL CITY

By mother tongue we mean the language or languages acquired from parents or relatives with whom a child has lived until the age of three.

According to the Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, Basque is the sole mother tongue of 17.5% of the over-16 population of the Basque Autonomous Community, and 6% have both Basque and another language as their joint mother tongues. The remaining 76.4% have another language as their mother tongue. By “other language”, we mainly mean Spanish, but it should not be forgotten that, increasingly, it may be Romanian, Portuguese or Russian, among others.

Figure 15. Mother tongue. BAC, 2016 (%)



The percentage of the over-16 population for whom Basque is their mother tongue is lower than it was 25 years ago, dropping from 20.7% in 1991 to 17.5% in 2016 (a 3.2 points decrease).

The percentage of those for whom Basque is a joint mother tongue (along with Spanish or another language) has risen from 2.6% in 1991 to 6% in 2016 (a 3.4% increase).

The percentage of those who have a language other than Basque as their mother tongue was similar in 2016 to what it was in 1991 (76.1 % and 76.7 %, respectively).

**Table 7.** Evolution of mother tongue. BAC, 1991-2016

	1991	2016	1991 (%)	2016 (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,741,470</b>	<b>1,864,379</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Basque	360,232	326,995	20.7	17.5
Basque and another language	45,488	112,235	2.6	6.0
Another language lengua	1,335,750	1,425,149	76.7	76.1

**Source:** *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

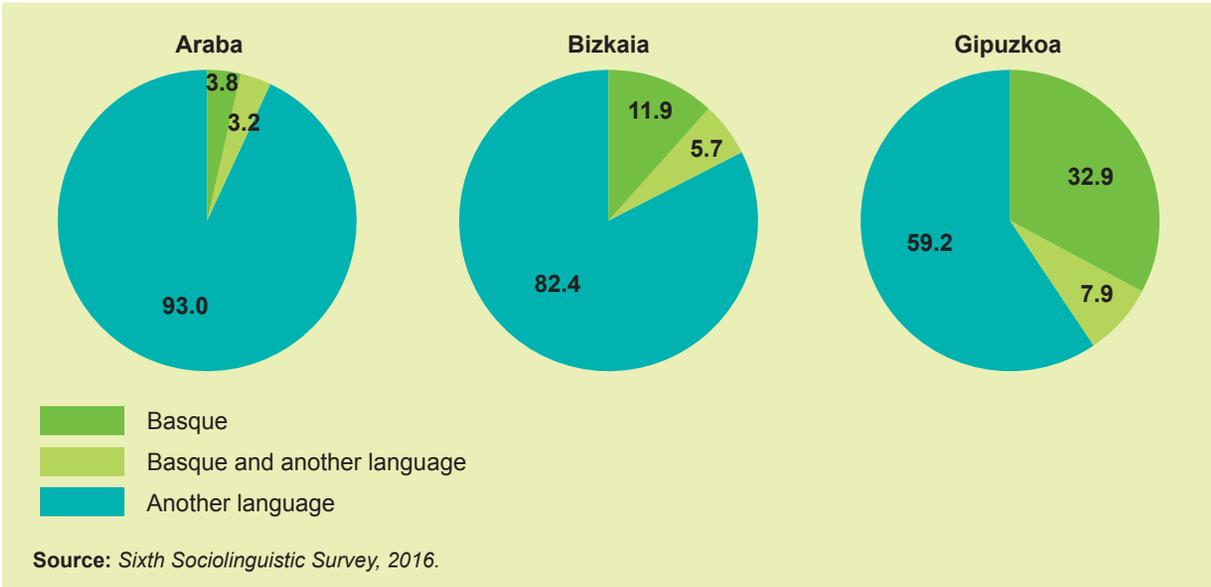
Despite the fact that all three provinces of the BAC show a prevalence of people in all age groups whose only mother tongue is a language other than Basque, there are notable differences between them.

Although this group is the largest in all three provinces, the percentage is smaller in Gipuzkoa (59.2%) and much higher in Bizkaia and Araba, where most people's mother tongue is a language other than Basque (82.4% and 93%, respectively).

3.8% of those living in Araba have Basque as their mother tongue, and this figure is 11.9% in Bizkaia and 32.9% in Gipuzkoa.

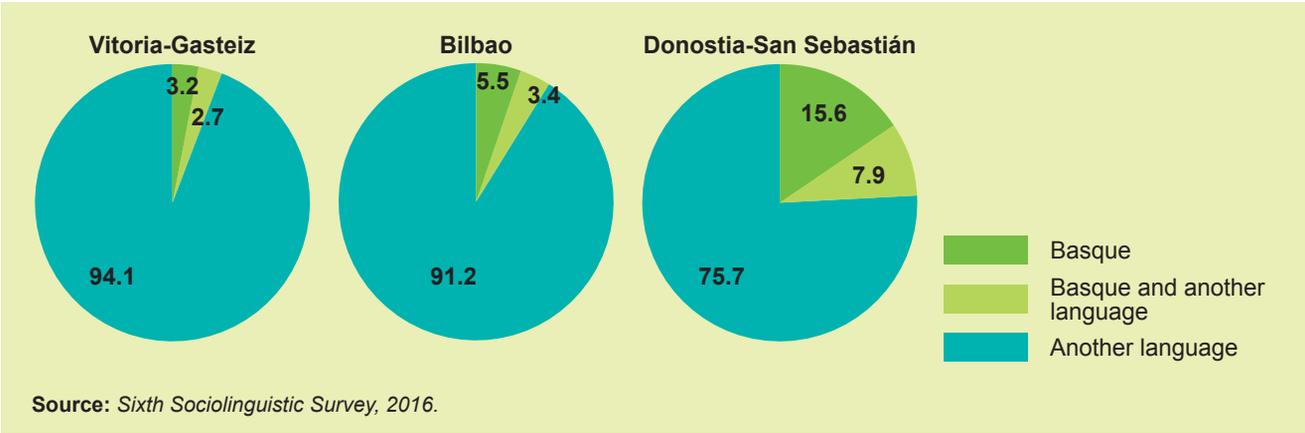
The difference between the three provinces is smaller as regards those who have both Basque and another language as their joint mother tongues (3.2% in Araba, 5.7% in Bizkaia and 7.9% in Gipuzkoa).

Figure 16. Mother tongue by province. BAC, 2016 (%)



The percentages are lower for the capital cities than for the provinces to which they belong. The city with the highest percentage of those for whom Basque is their mother tongue is Donostia-San Sebastián (15.6%), with the figures for Bilbao and Vitoria-Gasteiz being 5.5% and 3.2%, respectively. The percentage of those who have Basque and another language as their joint mother tongues is 8.7% in Donostia-San Sebastián, 3.4% in Bilbao and 2.7% in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

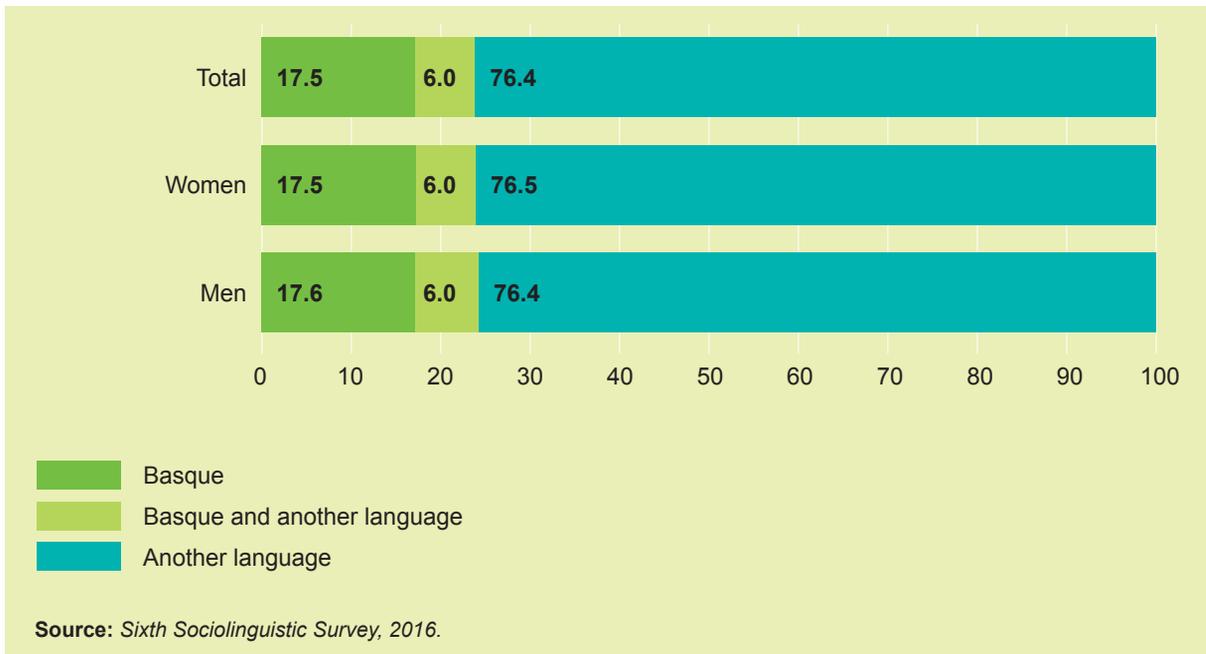
Figure 17. Mother tongue by capital city. BAC, 2016 (%)



### 3.2. MOTHER TONGUE BY SEX AND AGE

There are no differences between men and women as regards mother tongue.

**Figure 18.** Mother tongue by sex. BAC, 2016 (%)



There is, however, a major difference as regards age. Thus, the highest percentage of those who learned only Basque at home is found among young people aged between 16 and 24 (22%).

This percentage decreases as you move up the age scale, remaining at between 15% and 17% up until the 65 and over age group, where it increases again to 20.5%.

Figure 19. Mother tongue by age. BAC, 2016 (%)

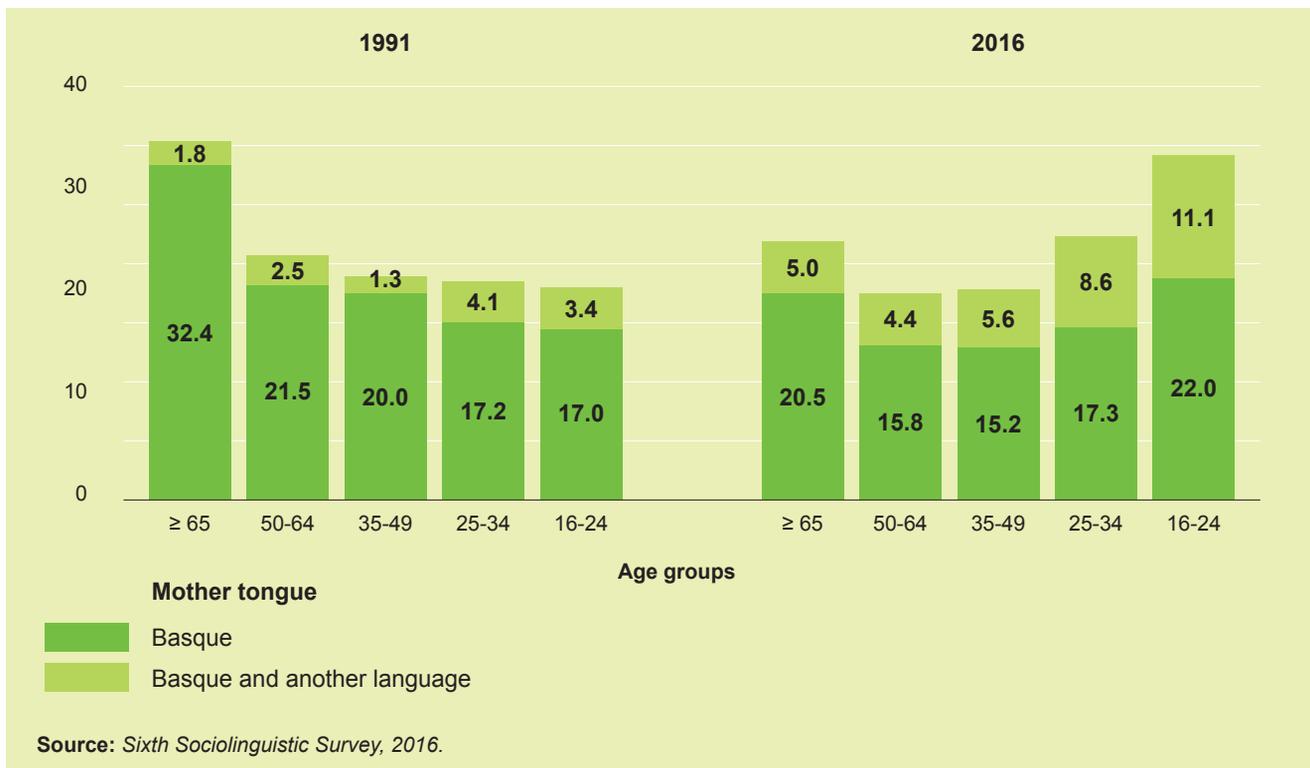


The opposite was true 25 years ago. In 1991, the highest percentage of those whose sole mother tongue was Basque was found among the over-65s (32.4%), with the percentages dropping as you moved down the age scale, and the lowest figure being found for the youngest age group (17%). Today, however, the highest percentage is found in that same age group (16-24 years of age). There has therefore been a 5 points increase in the percentage of young people who have learned only Basque at home as their mother tongue (17% to 22%).

In general, the percentage of those for whom Basque is their joint mother tongue, along with another language, was smaller in 1991 than in 2016 (2.6% as opposed to 6%). If we analyse the changes in percentages in accordance with age, we see that the greatest change has occurred among young people. Thus, 25 years ago,

3.4% of those aged 16-24 learned both Basque and another language at home as their joint mother tongues, whereas in 2016, this figure was 11.1% (nearly a 7 points increase).

**Figure 20.** Evolution of mother tongue by age. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)



### 3.3. BASQUE SPEAKERS BY MOTHER TONGUE

Below we will analyse Basque speakers in the BAC aged 16 and over, in accordance with the language they learned at home as their mother tongue.

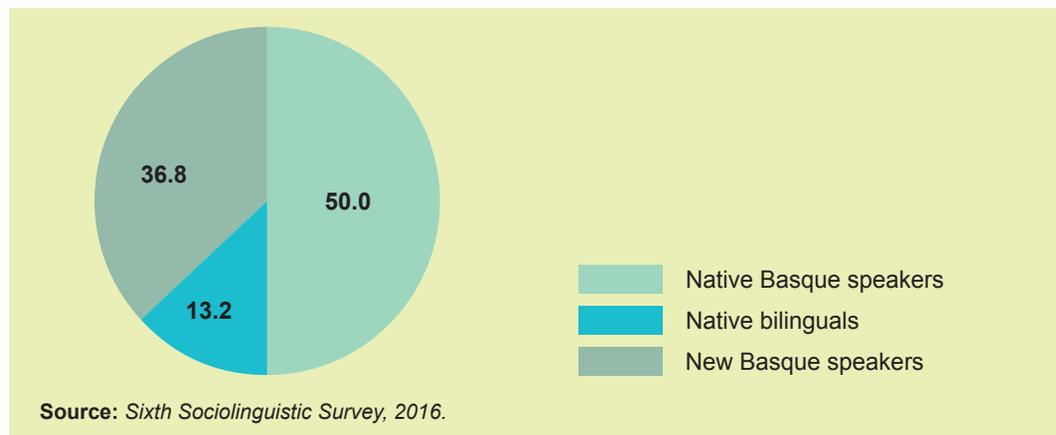
Basque speakers are divided into the following categories, depending on their mother tongue.

- **Native Basque speakers:** those who acquired only Basque from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three.

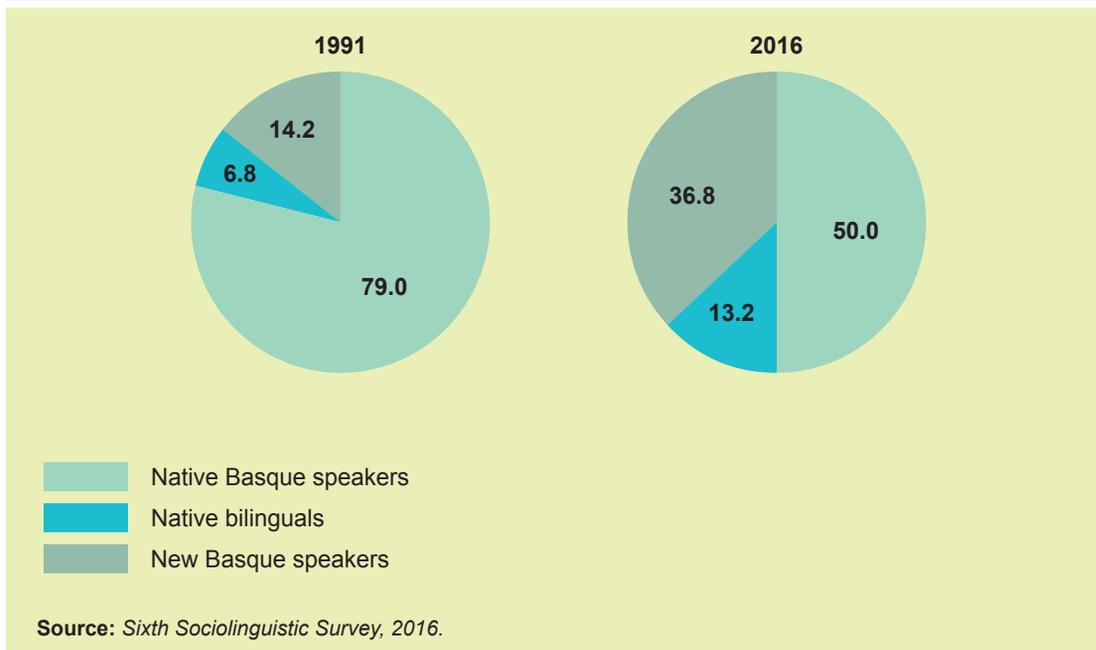
- **Native bilinguals:** those who acquired Basque and another language from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three.
- **New Basque speakers:** those who did not acquire Basque from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three and learned the language later, either at school or at a language academy.

Half of all Basque speakers are native Basque speakers (50%), whereas a much lower percentage are native bilinguals (13.2%). Finally, over one third (36.8%) of all Basque speakers did not acquire Basque as their mother tongue and are new Basque speakers. It is worth highlighting that this last group of Basque speakers is growing in size.

Figure 21. Basque speakers by mother tongue. BAC, 2016 (%)



The percentages of the three different types of Basque speaker have changed a lot over the past 25 years. In 1991, the majority (79.3%) of Basque speakers were native Basque speakers (i.e. people who had learned Basque at home as their sole mother tongue). In 2016, on the other hand, although this group was still the largest, the percentage of new Basque speakers was much higher (36.8% as opposed to 14.2% in 1991). The percentage of native bilinguals also underwent a drastic increase, almost doubling from 6.8% in 1991 to 13.2% in 2016.

**Figure 22.** Evolution of Basque speakers by mother tongue. BAC 1991-2016 (%)


There are significant changes also in accordance with province. In Araba, new Basque speakers represent by far the largest group (71%), and the percentage of native Basque speakers is just under one fifth (17.4%). The percentage of native bilinguals is also lower in Araba than in Gipuzkoa or Bizkaia (11.6%).

In Bizkaia, the largest group is that of new Basque speakers (46.7%), although the percentage of native Basque speakers is also high (40%).

Finally, in Gipuzkoa, new Basque speakers do not even represent one quarter of the Basque-speaking population (22.2%). The largest group is that of native Basque speakers (64.4%).

As regards capital cities, in Vitoria-Gasteiz and Bilbao the largest group is formed by new Basque speakers (72.6% and 64.1%, respectively), although this is not the case in Donostia-San Sebastián (37%).

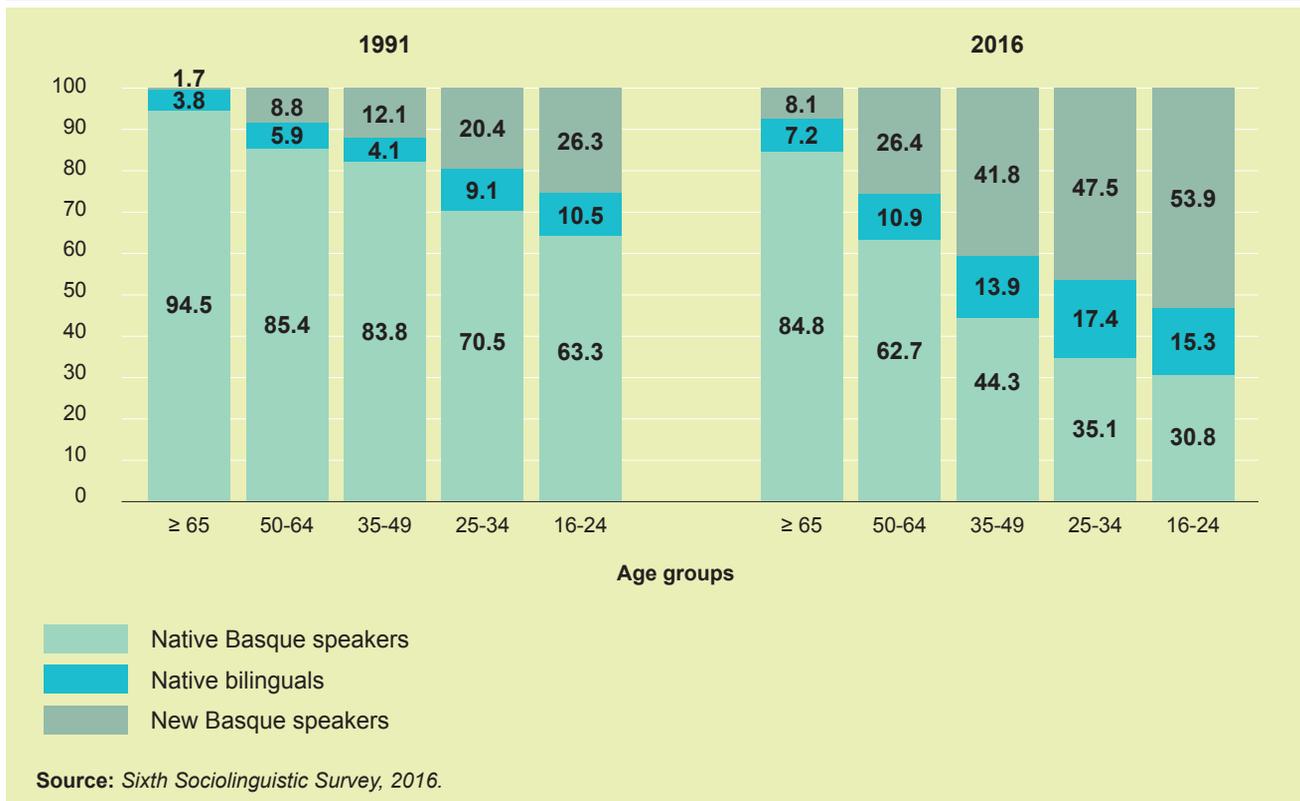
**Table 8.** Basque speakers by mother tongue, province and capital city. BAC, 2016 (%)

	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa	Vitoria-Gasteiz	Bilbao	Donostia-San Sebastián
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>52,514</b>	<b>272,422</b>	<b>306,448</b>	<b>36,872</b>	<b>55,857</b>	<b>56,867</b>
Native Basque speakers	17.4	40.0	64.4	16.5	23.7	43.1
Native bilinguals	11.6	13.3	13.4	10.9	12.2	19.8
New Basque speakers	71.0	46.7	22.2	72.6	64.1	37.0

**Source:** *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

As regards age, today, over half (53.9%) of Basque speakers aged between 16 and 24 are new Basque speakers. In 1991, this figure was just 26.3%. Of Basque speakers aged between 25-34 and 35-49, over 40% are new Basque speakers.

In 1991, on the other hand, native Basque speakers represented the largest group in all age ranges and the number of native bilinguals was very low (less than 10%) in all age groups, with the exception of the 16-24 group.

**Figure 23.** Evolution of Basque speakers by mother tongue and age. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)


### 3.4. FAMILY LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

To establish the extent of family language transmission, all of those surveyed were asked what language or languages they had acquired at home, depending on the language competence of their parents.

We must remember that the universe surveyed includes people aged 16 up to almost 100. The survey therefore offers the possibility of finding out how language has been transmitted in the home over this period of time.

In the Basque Autonomous Community, when both parents are Basque speakers, 83.3% of children acquire only Basque as their mother tongue, 6.7% acquire both Basque and another language and 10% do not learn Basque from their parents at home.

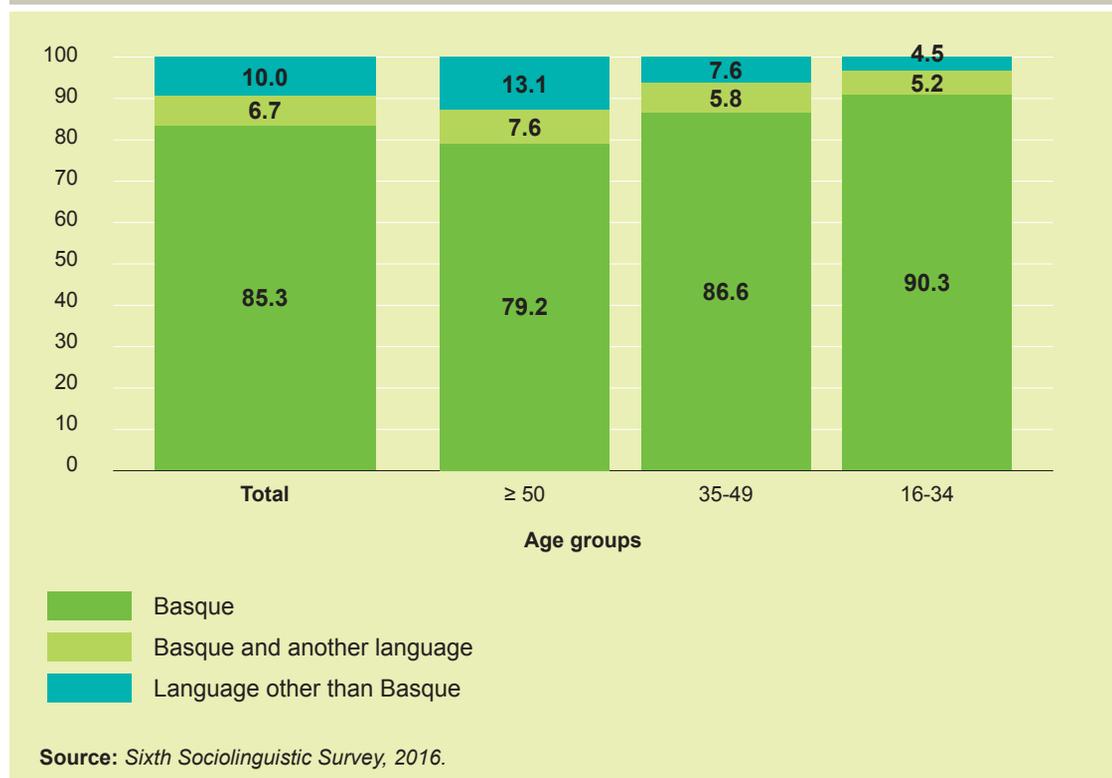
When only one parent speaks Basque, 55.3% learn only a language other than Basque at home and 44.7% learn both Basque and another language.

We should point out that, when both parents are Basque speakers, transmission in Basque increases as age decreases. The highest percentage of Basque language transmission occurs in the 16-34 age group. Within this group, 90.3% claim to have learned only Basque at home and 5.2% claim to have learned both Basque and another language.

Similarly, in the 35-49 age group, when both parents are Basque speakers, 86.6% learned only Basque at home, and 5.8% learned Basque and another language.

Finally, among the over 50s, Basque language transmission is somewhat lower. Of this group, 79.2% learned only Basque at home, and 7.6% learned both Basque and another language.

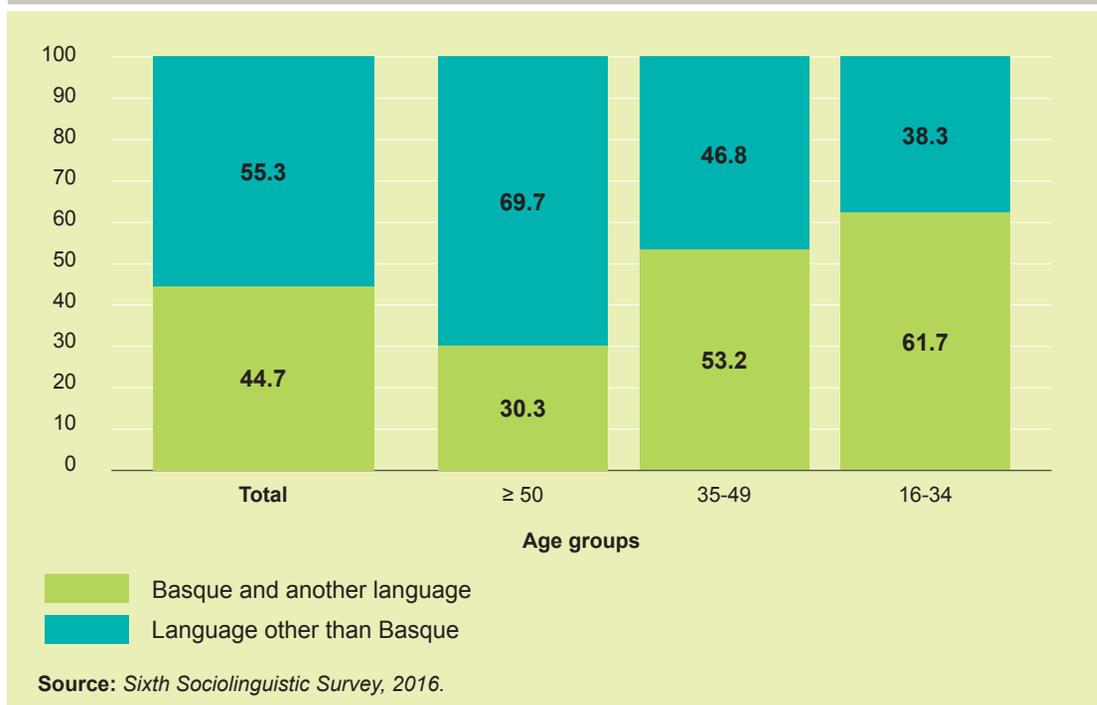
**Figure 24.** Basque transmission when both parents are Basque speakers, by age. BAC, 2016 (%)



When only one parent speaks Basque, the difference between the age groups is greater. Among the younger people surveyed, Basque transmission is greater.

Thus, among those with only one Basque-speaking parent, more than half of those under 50 years of age learned both Basque and another language at home as their mother tongues: 61.7% among the 16-34 age group, and 53.2% among those aged 35-49.

**Figure 25.** Basque transmission when only one parent speaks Basque, by age. BAC, 2016 (%)



When only one parent speaks Basque, Basque language transmission differs greatly depending on whether that parent is the mother or the father. Nevertheless, this difference is smaller among the younger age groups.

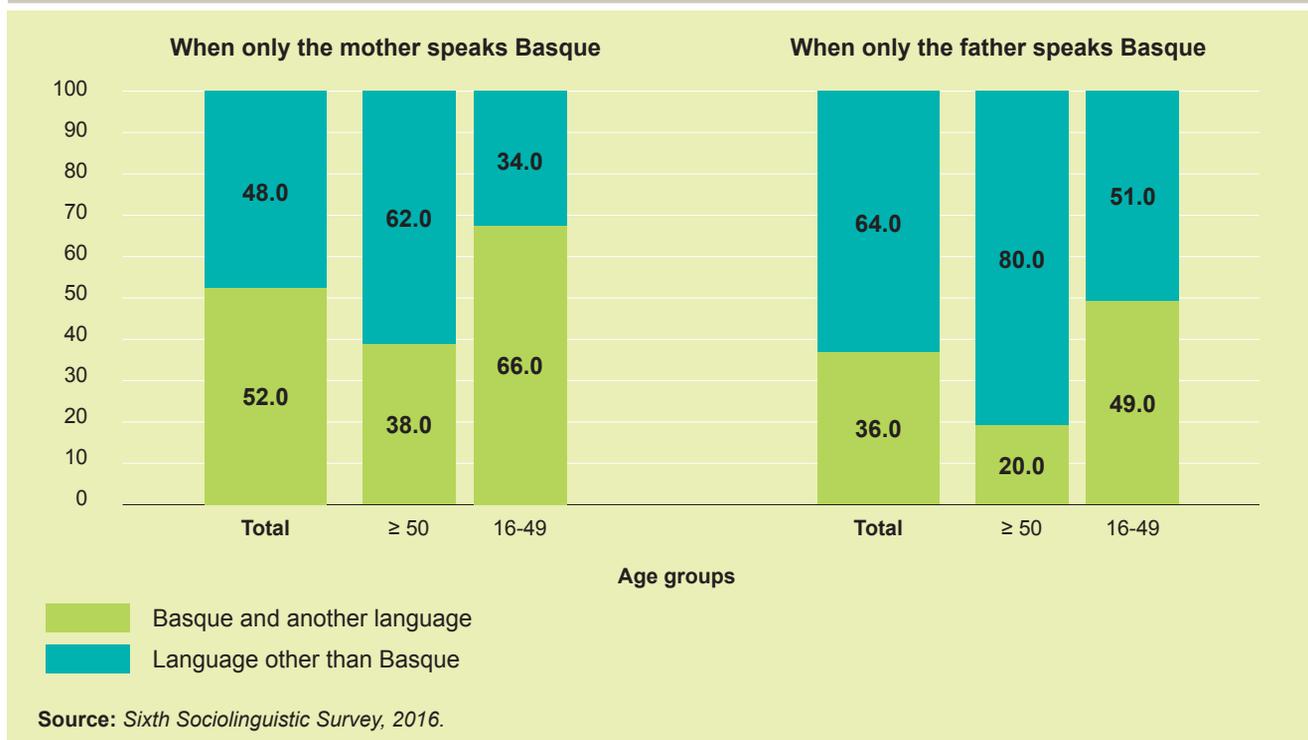
When only the mother speaks Basque, 52% learn only a language other than Basque at home and 48% learn both Basque and another language. When only the father speaks Basque, 64% do not learn Basque at all and 34% learn both Basque and another language.

Transmission increases as we move down the age scale, both when the single Basque-speaking parent is the mother and when it is the father.

Thus, when only the mother speaks Basque, 66% of those under 50 years of age learned both Basque and another language at home from their parents; among the over 50s, however, the percentage of those who learned only a language other than Basque (62%) is greater than that of those who learned Basque and another language together (38%).

When only the father speaks Basque, almost half (49%) of those under 50 years of age learned Basque and another language at home. As we move up the age scale to those aged 50 and over, the percentage of those who learned only a language other than Basque at home is much higher (80%) than that of those who learned both Basque and another language together (20%).

**Figure 26.** Basque transmission when only one parent speaks Basque, by age and sex of the Basque-speaking parent. BAC, 2016 (%)



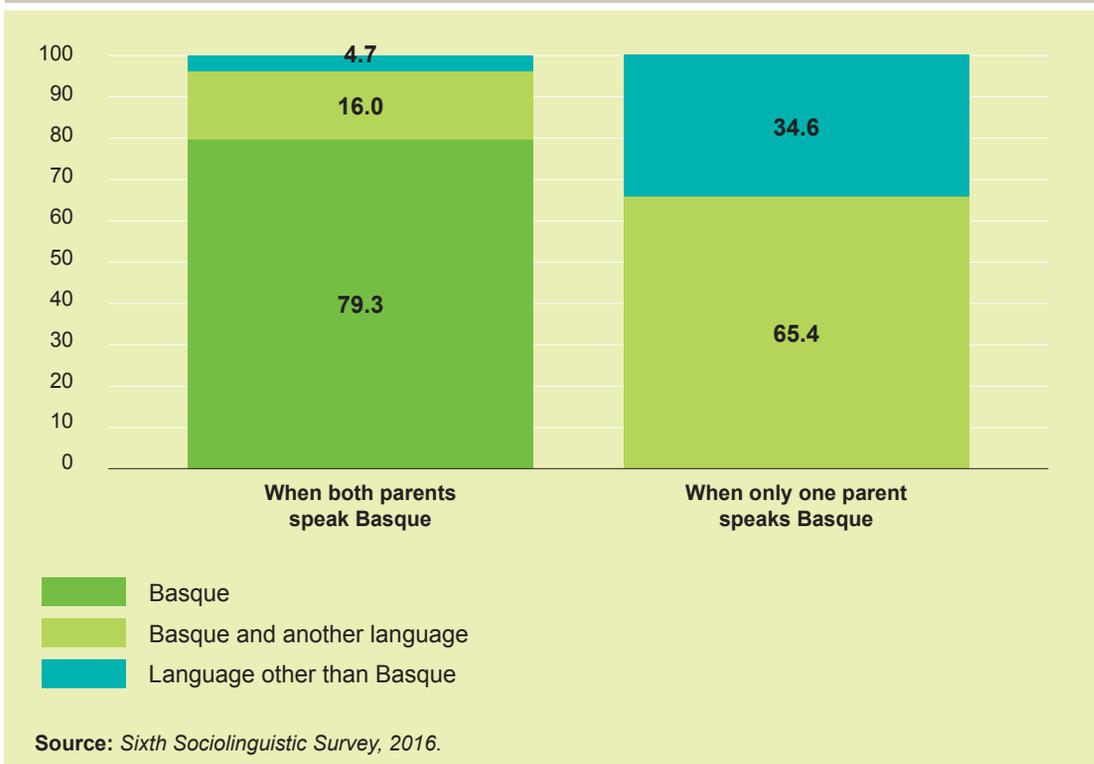
## LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 3 AND 15

In order to explore language transmission in families with children aged between 3 and 15, interviewees were asked what language they transmit to their offspring.

When both parents speak Basque, 79.3% transmit only that language, 16% transmit both Basque and another language and 4.7% transmit only another language.

When only one parent is a Basque speaker, 65.4% transmit Basque and 34.6% a language other than Basque.

**Figure 27.** Basque transmission in families with children aged 3-15, by parents' language competence. BAC, 2016 (%)



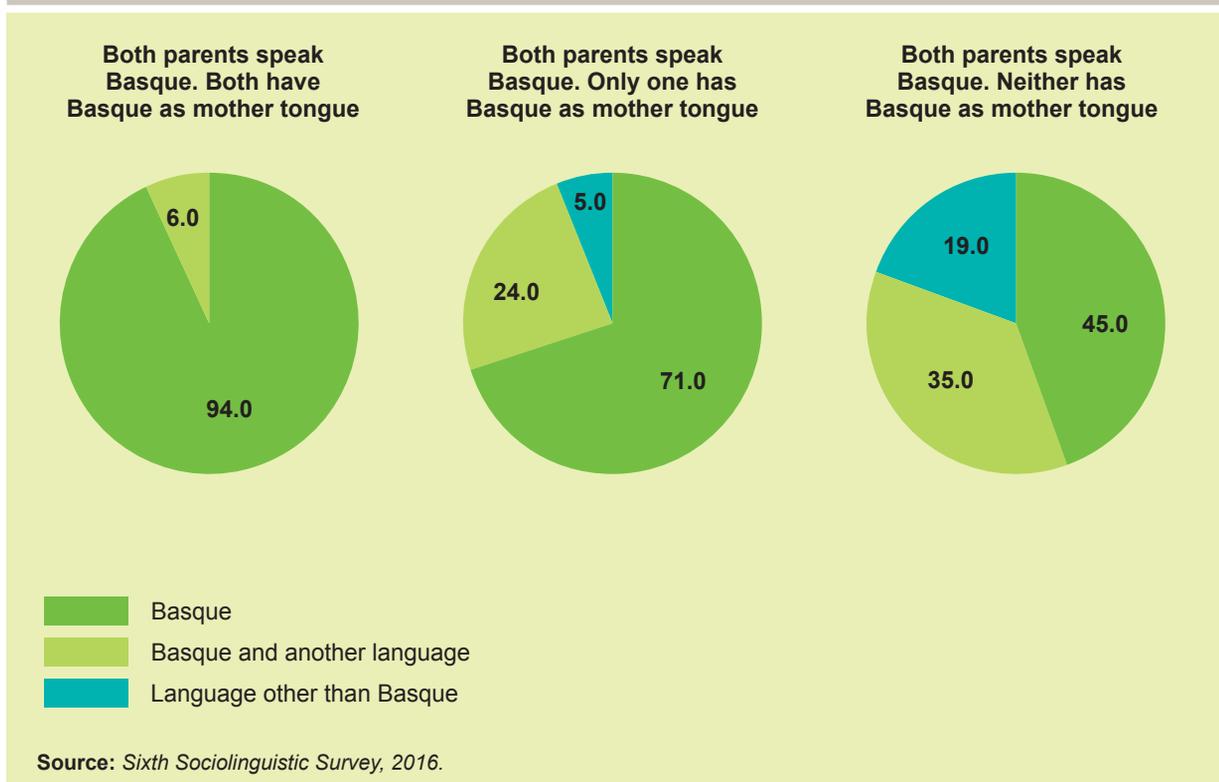
When analysing this kind of transmission, parents' mother tongue was taken into consideration, alongside their language competence.

When both parents speak Basque and both have that language as their mother tongue, 94 % transmit only Basque to their children at home, and 6 % transmit both Basque and another language.

When both parents speak Basque and but only one has that language as their mother tongue, 71 % transmit only Basque to their children at home, 24 % transmit both Basque and another language and 5 % transmit only a language other than Basque.

When both parents are Basque speakers but neither have Basque as their mother tongue, 45% transmit only Basque to their children at home, 35% transmit both Basque and another language and 19% transmit only a language other than Basque.

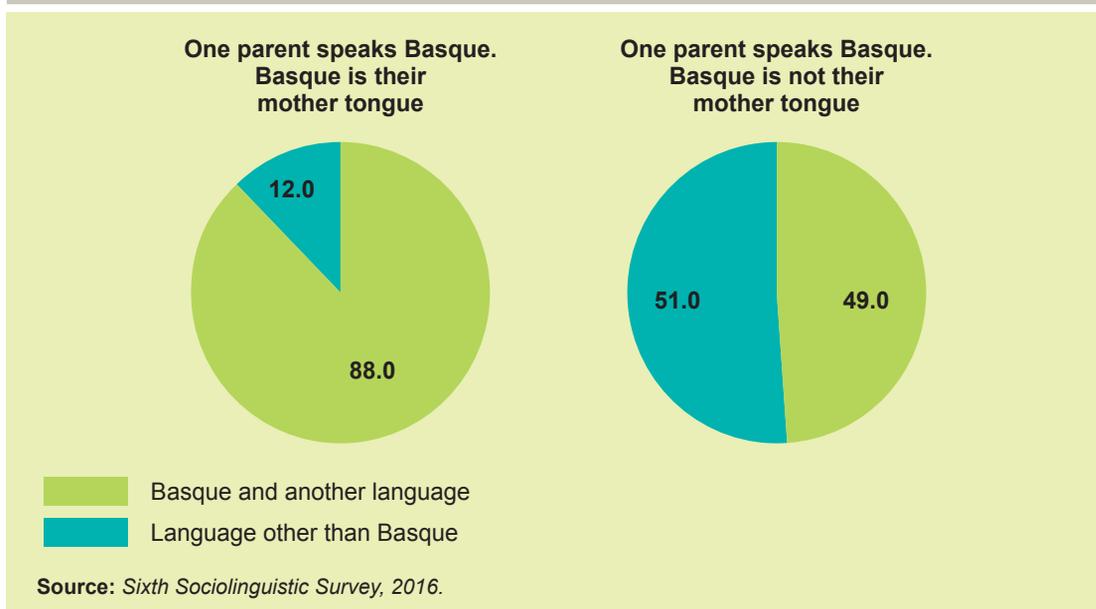
**Figure 28.** Basque transmission in families with children aged 3-15, by parents' mother tongue. BAC, 2016 (%)



When only one parent speaks Basque, and that language is their mother tongue, 88% transmit both Basque and another language to their children at home, and 12% transmit only another language.

When only one parent speaks Basque, and that language is not their mother tongue, 49% transmit both Basque and another language to their children at home, and 51% transmit only another language.

**Figure 29.** Basque transmission in families with children aged 3-15, by parents' mother tongue. BAC, 2016 (%)



### 3.5. BASQUE LANGUAGE GAINS AND LOSSES

The vast majority of people in the BAC whose mother tongue is either Basque or Basque and another language have retained the language and are currently Basque speakers (90.8%).

However, there are people who have totally or partially lost their Basque (2.2% of inhabitants aged 16 years or older). The majority of these losses are partial, i.e. these people have a good understanding of Basque, even though they no longer speak it well.

Most losses have occurred among the over 50 population. The majority of total losses occurred among the over 65s, while most losses occurring among those aged 35-54 are partial.

On the positive side, there are another 232,400 people among the inhabitants of the BAC aged 16 or over who, despite not speaking Basque as their mother tongue, have learned the language later in life and are now counted among the Basque-speaking population. This is 183,000 more people more than in 1991. They are new Basque speakers.

These language gains differ widely between the various age groups, with the percentage being very low among the over 65s and very high among the youngest people surveyed. In other words, the numbers increase as you move down the age scale.

**Figure 30.** Basque gains and losses, by age. BAC, 2016 (%)



## 4. USE OF BASQUE

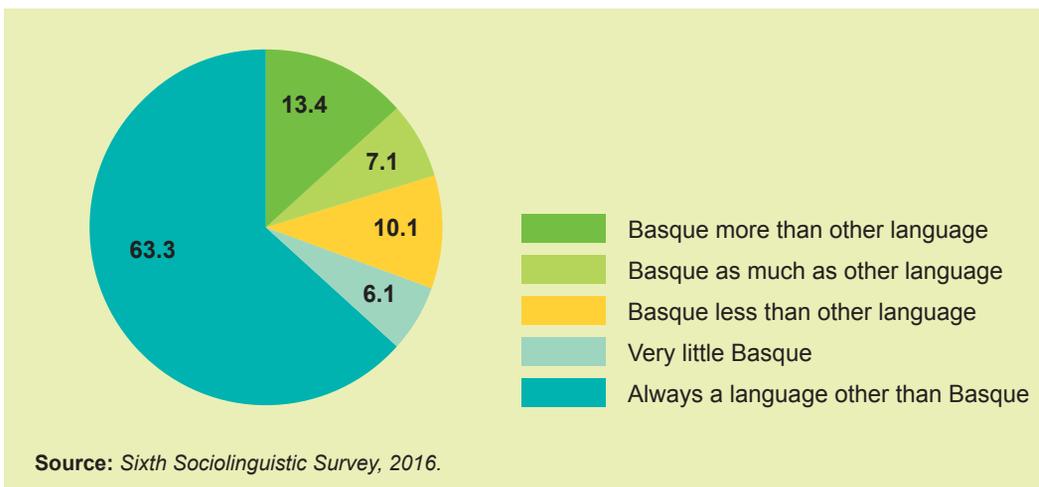
### 4.1. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BY PROVINCE AND CAPITAL CITY

Of the population of the BAC aged 16 and over, 30.6 % use Basque to some extent:

- a. 20.5 % use Basque intensively, i.e. they use it as much as or more than the other language they speak in their everyday life.
- b. 10.1 % also use Basque, but to a lesser extent than their other language.

The remaining 60.4 % almost always or always use a language other than Basque. It is important to bear in mind, however, that in this last group there is a small percentage of people (6.1 %) who do occasionally use Basque, even though they do not do so very often.

**Figure 31.** Basque use. BAC, 2016 (%)



To measure Basque language use, the Basque Government Deputy Ministry for Language Policy has defined a series of categories or typologies. These categories take into account Basque use in the following domains:

- use at home with family members (with one's partner, children, siblings and parents)
- use with friends

- use in formal situations (local shops, banks, health centres and municipal services)

Major differences exist between the three provinces of the BAC in relation to Basque language use. Those who use Basque intensively (i.e. as much as or more than any other language) represent 39.5% of the population living in Gipuzkoa, 13% of the population of Bizkaia and 5.6% in Araba. Those who use Basque, but to a lesser extent than the other language they speak represent 10.9% in Gipuzkoa, 10% in Bizkaia and 8.9% in Araba.

There are also major differences between Vitoria-Gasteiz and Bilbao, on the one hand, and Donostia-San Sebastián on the other. Those who use Basque intensively represent 4.7% in Vitoria-Gasteiz, 5.6% in Bilbao and 19.7% in Donostia-San Sebastián. Those who use Basque, but to a lesser extent than the other language they speak, represent 7.8% in Vitoria-Gasteiz, 9.2% in Bilbao and 13.3% in Donostia-San Sebastián.

**Table 9.** Basque language use by province and capital city. BAC, 2016 (%)

	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa	Vitoria-Gasteiz	Bilbao	Donostia-San Sebastián
Basque more than other language	1.7	7.5	28.2	1.2	1.7	8.3
Basque as much as other language	3.9	5.5	11.3	3.5	2.9	11.4
Basque less than other language	8.9	10.0	10.9	7.8	9.2	13.3
Very little Basque	7.2	6.8	4.4	6.9	7.5	6.7
Always a language other than Basque	78.3	70.2	45.2	80.5	78.8	60.2

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

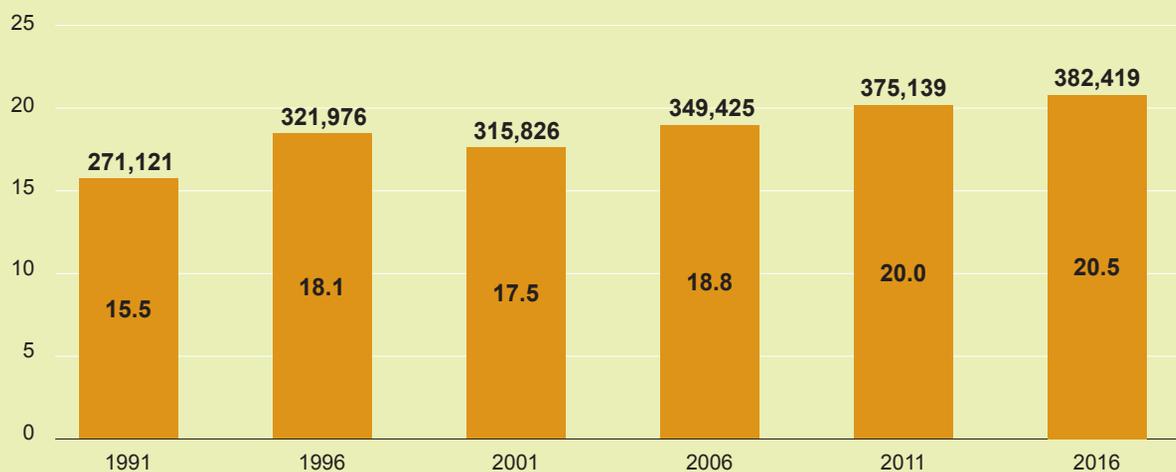
The differences observed between the provinces and capital cities of the BAC are also noticeable between the different sociolinguistic areas. Those who use Basque intensively represent 3.9% of those living in Type 1 sociolinguistic area, and 19.1% of those living in Type 2 area. In Type 3 area, on the other hand, this figure is 52.4%, and in Type 4 area it is 78.6%.

**Table 10.** Basque language use, according to sociolinguistic area. BAC, 2016 (%)

	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
Basque more than other language	1.2	7.9	36.8	72.0
Basque as much as other language	2.7	11.2	15.6	6.6
Basque less than other language	9.1	14.6	9.3	6.1
Very little Basque	7.6	6.9	2.1	1.9
Always a language other than Basque	79.4	59.4	36.1	13.5

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If we analyse the evolution of these figures over the last 25 years, we see that intensive Basque language use has increased by 5 points in the BAC. In 2016, 111,000 more people in the BAC used Basque intensively than they did in 1991.

**Figure 32.** Evolution of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language. BAC, 1991-2016


Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

This increase occurred in all three provinces and in all three capital cities. Intensive Basque use increased by 5.1 points in Araba (14,305 people), 4.2 points in Bizkaia (43,830 people) and 6.4 points in Gipuzkoa (53,164 people).

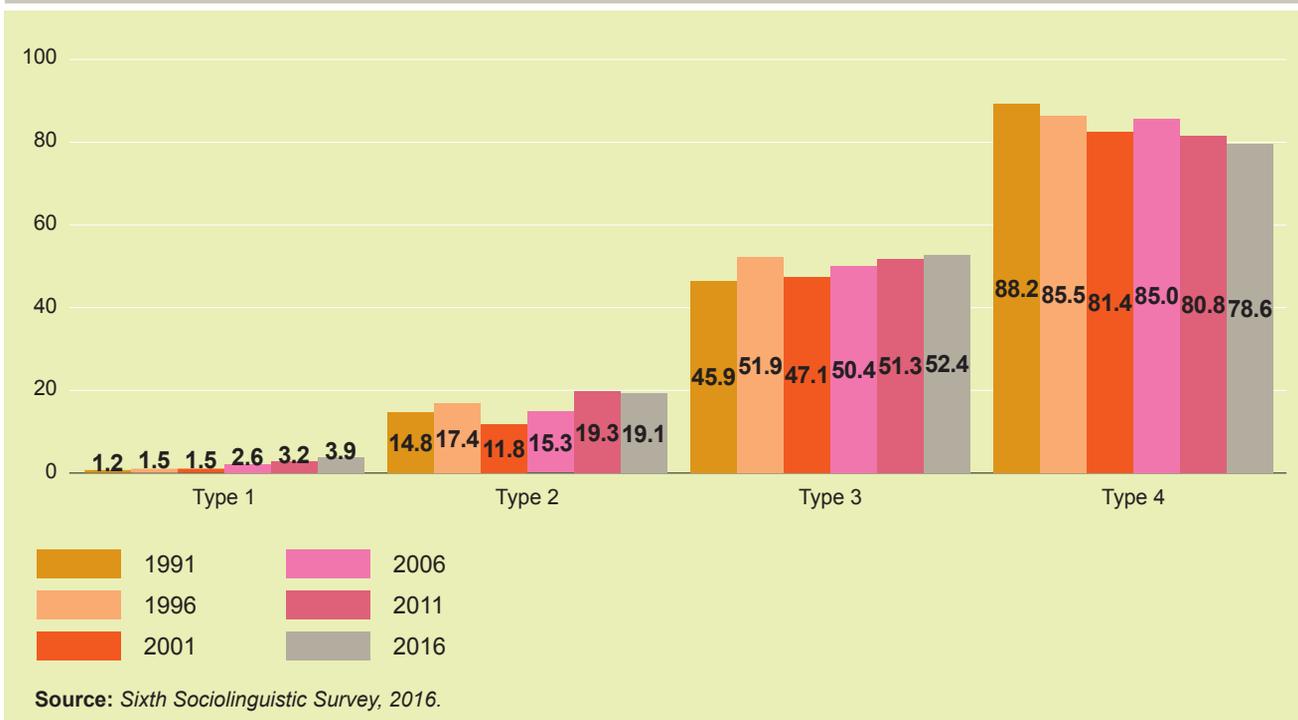
**Table 11.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language, by province. BAC, 1991-2016

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
BAC	15.5	18.1	17.5	18.9	20.0	20.5
Araba	0.5	1.9	1.9	3.4	4.3	5.6
Bizkaia	8.8	11.1	11.2	12.6	12.9	13.0
Gipuzkoa	33.1	36.5	34.7	36.2	39.0	39.5
BAC	271,121	321,976	315,826	349,425	375,139	382,419
Araba	1,080	4,559	4,588	8,899	11,676	15,385
Bizkaia	84,321	108,200	201,285	125,326	128,471	128,151
Gipuzkoa	185,720	209,218	315,826	215,200	234,992	238,884

**Source:** *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

Between 1991 and 2016, Basque use increased in the BAC in sociolinguistic areas Types 1, 2 and 3. In Type 4 areas, however, it dropped (by 9.7 points). This decrease is mainly the result of population shifts over the last two decades. Although these shifts have been beneficial to the Basque language in non-Basque-speaking areas, they have (in general) been detrimental in Basque-speaking ones, since in the majority of cases, those moving to such areas have been less fluent in Basque than those already there or those who have moved to non-Basque-speaking areas.

**Figure 33.** Evolution of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language, by sociolinguistic area. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)



## 4.2. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BY SEX AND AGE

As regards sex, in general there are no significant differences between men and women as regards Basque language use. The percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language is 20 % among women and 21.1 % among men. Moreover, over the last 25 years, the difference in the percentage of women and men who use Basque as much as or more than their other language has been consistently small.

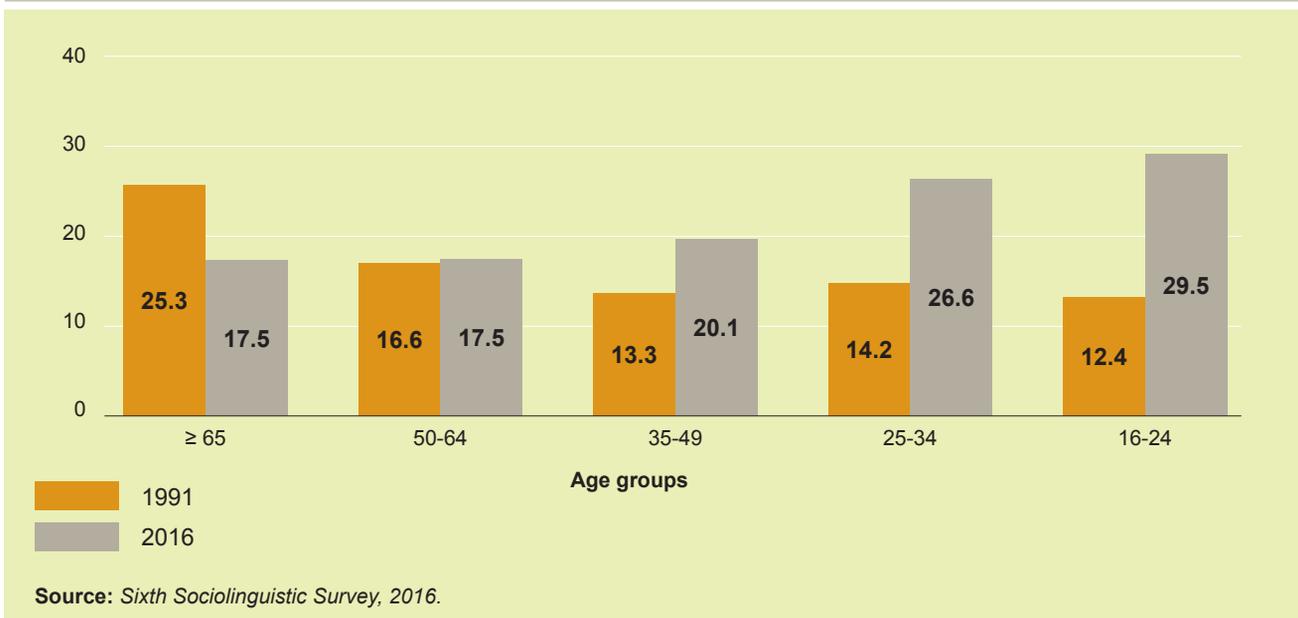
**Table 12.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language(s), by sex. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Men	15.9	18.9	17.5	19.0	19.8	21.1
Women	15.2	17.3	17.5	18.7	20.2	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>20.5</b>

**Source:** *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

If we analyse Basque language use by age, we see that the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language decreases as you move up the age scale from 65 years of age, and increases as you move down the age scale from that same point. Moreover, the growth in this percentage also increases as you move down the age scale. Thus, in 2016, 17.5% of those aged 65 and over used Basque as much as or more than their other language (compared to 25.3% in 1991) and the figures for the other age groups are as follows: 17.5% among the 50-64 age group (16.6% in 1991), 20.1% among the 35-49 age group (13.3% in 1991), 26.6% among the 25-34 age group (14.2% in 1991) and 29.5% among the 16-24 age group (12.4% in 1991).

**Figure 34.** Evolution of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language, by age. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)



Those who always use a language other than Basque continue to be the majority in all age groups, with the exception of those aged under 25 (35.8% of the 16-24 group always use a language other than Basque).

This pattern remains more or less constant in all three provinces of the BAC. Moreover, it is worth noting that in Gipuzkoa, those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language now represent over half of not only the under 25 age group (54.7%), but the second-youngest one also (52.1% among those aged between 25 and 34).

**Table 13.** Those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language, by province and age. BAC, 2016 (%)

	Edad					
	Total	≥ 65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
BAC	20.5	17.5	17.5	20.1	26.6	29.5
Araba	5.6	1.1	4.2	5.6	9.8	14.9
Bizkaia	13.0	12.1	12.3	11.8	16.2	16.7
Gipuzkoa	39.5	33.5	32.1	40.2	52.1	54.7

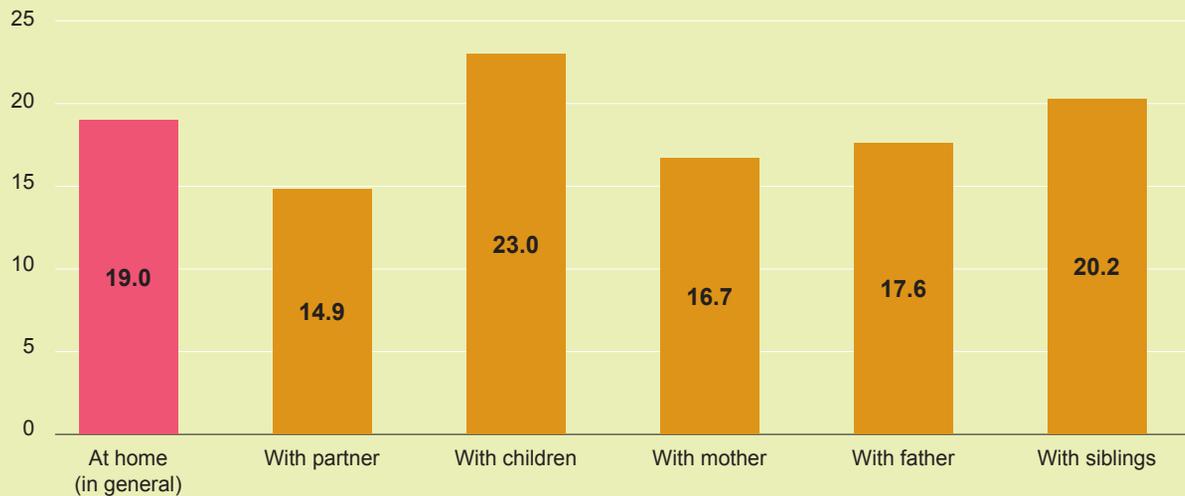
Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

### 4.3. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS: AT HOME, WITH FRIENDS, IN FORMAL SITUATIONS

#### BASQUE USE AT HOME

In the BAC, 19% of all those aged 16 and over use Basque as much as or more than their other language at home; 8.1% use Basque but use their other language more and the remaining 72.9% use only a language other than Basque.

There are significant differences in Basque use between the different family members. Basque is most used by parents when talking to children (23%), and least used when partners talk to one another (14.9%). The figures for other types of use are as follows: between siblings: 20.2%, with the father: 17.6% and with the mother: 16.7%.

**Figure 35.** Those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language at home. BAC, 2016 (%)


Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

Basque language use at home has varied very little over the last 25 years (just 1.7 points). The least variation has occurred between the partners in a couple, although this figure has risen slightly over the last decade. The most positive evolution has occurred regarding Basque use by parents when talking to their children (increase of 4.9 points) and Basque use between siblings (increase of 3.2 points).

**Table 14.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language at home. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
At home, when all family members are present	17.3	19.0	17.0	18.2	17.2	19.0
Between partners in a couple	14.7	15.9	12.1	13.8	14.1	14.9
With children	18.1	22.4	20.5	23.5	22.8	23.0
With mother	16.0	17.4	14.8	17.3	16.4	16.7
With father	13.9	16.3	14.1	16.3	15.9	17.6
With siblings	17.0	20.2	18.1	19.7	20.1	20.2

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

## BASQUE USE WITH FRIENDS

In the BAC, 21.4% of all those aged 16 and over use Basque as much as or more than their other language with friends; 11.1% use Basque but use their other language more and the remaining 67.5% use only a language other than Basque.

The percentage of those who use mainly Basque with their friends has risen by 5.3 points over the last 25 years, and the percentage of those who use some Basque in that environment (although less than their other language) has risen by 5.9 points.

**Table 15.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language with friends. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Use with friends	16.1	19.9	18.2	20.8	21.3	21.4

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

## BASQUE USE IN FORMAL SITUATIONS

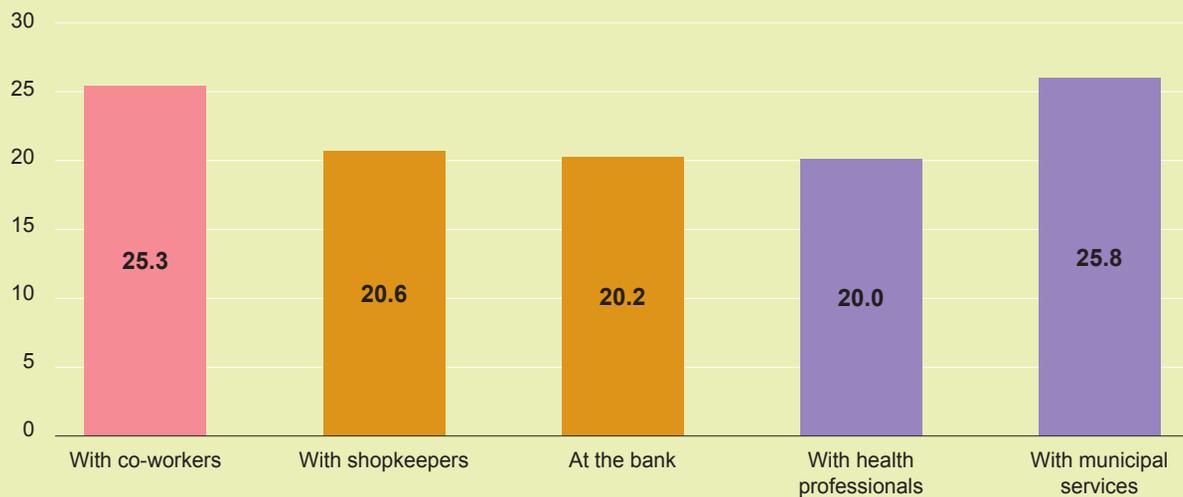
In this section we analyse Basque use in three different domains: with co-workers, in the private sphere (with shopkeepers and bank clerks) and in the public sphere (healthcare and municipal services).

In 2016, 25.3% of people living in the BAC claimed to use Basque as much as or more than their other language with their co-workers; 10.9% said they used Basque in this environment, but less than their other language and 63.8% said they did not use Basque at all.

In the private sphere, 20.8% use Basque as much as or more than their other language with shopkeepers and 20.2% do so at their bank. In these same two domains, the percentages of those who use Basque but do so less than their other language are 9.2% and 5.7% (respectively).

In the public sphere, 20% use Basque as much as or more than their other language with members of the health service, and 25.8% do so when dealing with municipal services.

**Figure 36.** Those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language in formal situations. BAC, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

Over the last 25 years, the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language with co-workers has increased by 9.9 points, while the figures for use with shopkeepers and banks are 6 points and 5.1 points (respectively). In the public sphere, the figures have risen by 11.5 points in relation to healthcare and 10.4 points in relation to municipal services.

**Table 16.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language in formal situations. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
With co-workers	15.4	18.8	18.0	22.5	24.5	25.3
With shopkeepers	14.8	18.6	16.9	19.1	20.4	20.8
At the bank	15.1	19.9	19.9	20.7	21.3	20.2
With healthcare professionals	8.5	13.6	14.1	17.0	19.8	20.0
With municipal services	15.4	21.7	20.0	22.2	24.8	25.8

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

#### **4.4. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA**

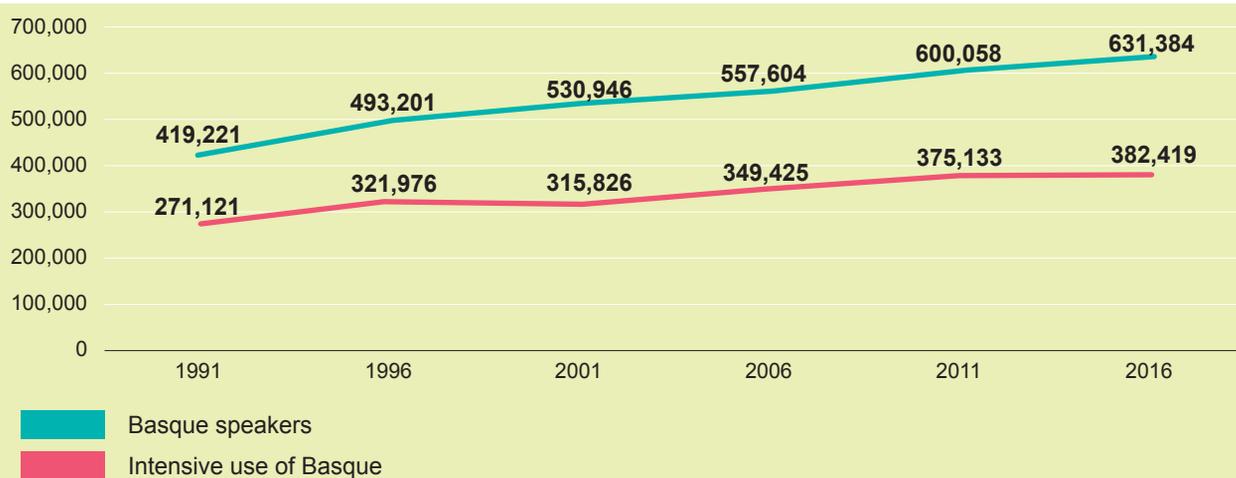
Of those surveyed, 72% use the social media, and most of these (61.7%) do so on a daily basis. As regards age, in all groups aged under 65, the majority use the social media on a daily basis, and use increases as you move down the age scale, from 56.3% in the 50-64 group to 95.2% in the 16-24 group).

The language most commonly used on the social media is Spanish, even among young people. However, 17.6% often use Basque (i.e. they use Basque at least 50% of the time). Among young people (16-24), 29.5% use Basque very frequently in this sphere. In addition to Spanish and Basque, however, social media users also use other languages when interacting on line, mainly English (2.9%).

#### **4.5. THE FACTORS INFLUENCING BASQUE LANGUAGE USE: CORRELATIONS**

Taking the results presented so far into account, it can be concluded that more and more people in the BAC use Basque and fewer and fewer use only a language other than Basque. The presence of spoken Basque is gradually increasing in both the family environment and the immediate community, as well as in formal situations.

However, at the same time, it is also true that use is not increasing at the same speed as knowledge, and while the number of people who speak Basque well or quite well is growing, among those who can use the language, the percentage of those who do use it is lower than 25 years ago.

**Figure 37.** Evolution of Basque knowledge and use. BAC, 1991-2016


Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

In other words, if instead of looking at use figures for the whole of society, we look only at use among Basque speakers, we see that the percentage of Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language has dropped by 3.7 points over the last 25 years, even though the number of those who use Basque has increased in absolute terms.

**Figure 38.** Evolution of Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)


Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

In order to explore this phenomenon further, we will now analyse the factors influencing Basque use by conducting correlation analyses. Correlation analyses enable us to determine how one variable influences others. This influence is expressed as a value between 0 and 1, with values closer to 1 reflecting a greater degree of influence.

Correlation analyses were conducted in relation to three use domains: use at home, use with friends and use with co-workers. In all three domains we can conclude that, while their relative order of importance may vary, there are two main factors which influence Basque language use: the density of the Basque-speaking social network (i.e. how many people speak Basque in your family and friendship groups, at work and in your sociolinguistic environment) and fluency (which is directly linked to mother tongue).

The factor which most influences use at home is the density of the language environment in that sphere, i.e. how many family members speak Basque (0.758). The second most influential factor is fluency (0.695). Mother tongue is closely linked to fluency, and has a major influence on Basque use at home (0.658). The next most important factor is sociolinguistic area (0.575).

**Table 17.** Correlations: Basque use at home. BAC, 2016

	How many people speak Basque	Fluency	Mother tongue	Sociolinguistic area
Language spoken at home	0.758	0.695	0.658	0.575

**Source:** *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

Unlike use at home, the factor which most affects use with friends is fluency (0.683), and the correlation with mother tongue (closely linked to fluency) is also high (0.579). The second most important factor is sociolinguistic area (0.591), which is in turn linked to social network, and the number of friends who speak Basque also has a significant influence (0.539).

**Table 18.** Correlations: Basque use with friends. BAC, 2016

	Fluency	Sociolinguistic area	Mother tongue	How many people speak Basque
Language spoken with friends	0.683	0.591	0.579	0.539

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

The most influential factors for Basque use with co-workers is the density of the Basque-speaking environment (0.777), or in other words, who many of one's co-workers speak Basque. The second most important factor is fluency (0.438), followed by interest in Basque (0.301), mother tongue (0.298) and sociolinguistic area (0.297), all with very similar levels of influence.

**Table 19.** Correlations: Basque use with co-workers. BAC, 2016

	How many people speak Basque	Fluency	Interest	Mother tongue
Language spoken with co-workers	0.777	0.438	0.301	0.298

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

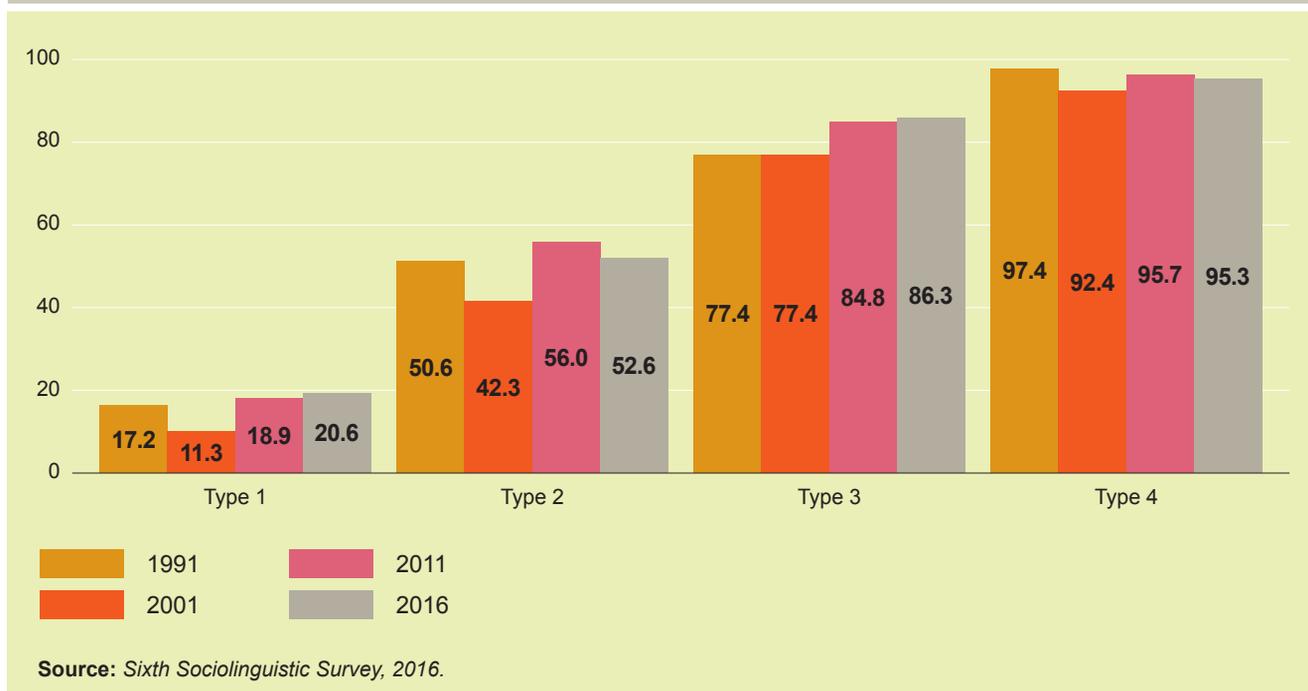
As outlined above, more than one third of Basque speakers in the BAC (36.9%) did not learn Basque at home, more than half (51.9%) live in Type 1 or Type 2 sociolinguistic areas and 44% speak their other language more fluently than Basque. Moreover, these percentages rise as you move down the age scale.

In the following two sections we will examine how these characteristics influence Basque language use.

#### 4.6. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BETWEEN BASQUE SPEAKERS, ACCORDING TO SOCIOLINGUISTIC AREA

In 2016, 20% of Basque speakers living in Type 1 sociolinguistic area (i.e. predominantly non-Basque-speaking areas) used Basque as much as or more than their other language. This figure increases as the number of Basque speakers rises, since this implies a broader network of Basque-speaking relationships. Indeed, in Type 2 sociolinguistic area, 52.6% of Basque speakers use Basque as much as or more than their other language, and this figure is 86.3% in Type 3 area and 95.3% in Type 4 area.

**Figure 39.** Evolution of Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language, by sociolinguistic area. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)



If we look at the evolution of these figures over the past 25 years, we see that Basque use among Basque speakers has risen by 3.4 points in Type 1 area, by 2 points in Type 2 area and by 8.9 points in Type 3 area. However, in Type 4 area it has dropped by 2.1 points.

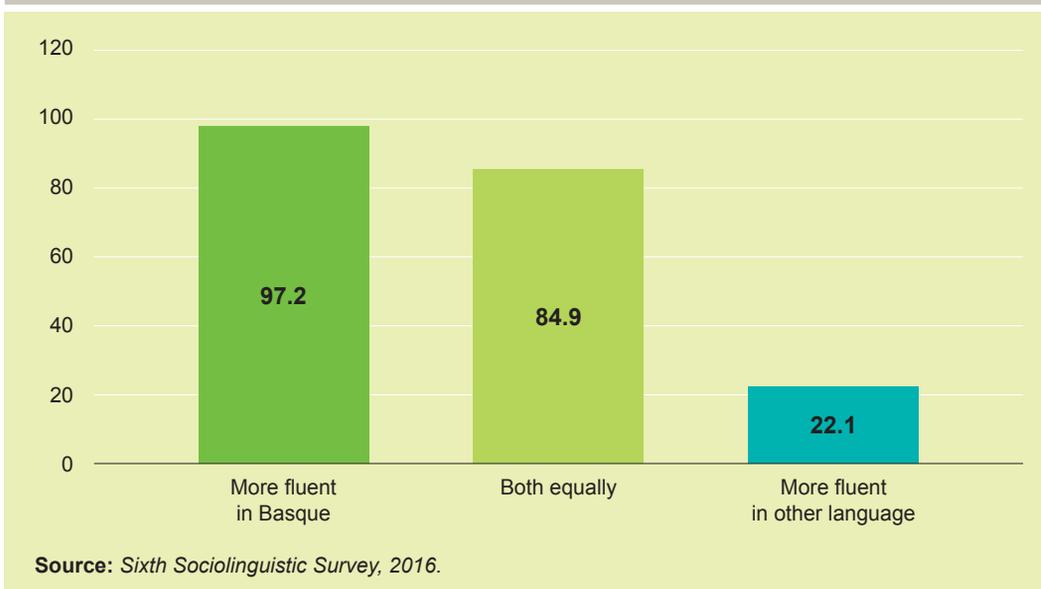
#### 4.7. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BETWEEN BASQUE SPEAKERS, ACCORDING TO FLUENCY

Among bilinguals with a greater command of Basque (i.e. those who are more fluent in Basque than they are in their other language), 97.2% use Basque as much as or more than their other language. Very little difference is observed in accordance with age, although the average figure for those aged 35 and over is slightly higher and the average figure for those aged under 35 is slightly lower.

In the case of bilinguals with an equal command of both languages, 84.9% use Basque as much as or more than their other language. Among this group, use decreases as you move down the age scale.

Finally, among bilinguals with a greater command of their other language, 22.1% use Basque as much as or more than their other language. As with the group of bilinguals with an equal command of both languages, among this group too, use figures decrease as you move down the age scale.

**Figure 40.** Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language, by fluency. BAC, 2016 (%)



## 5. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE

### 5.1. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE, BY PROVINCE AND CAPITAL CITY

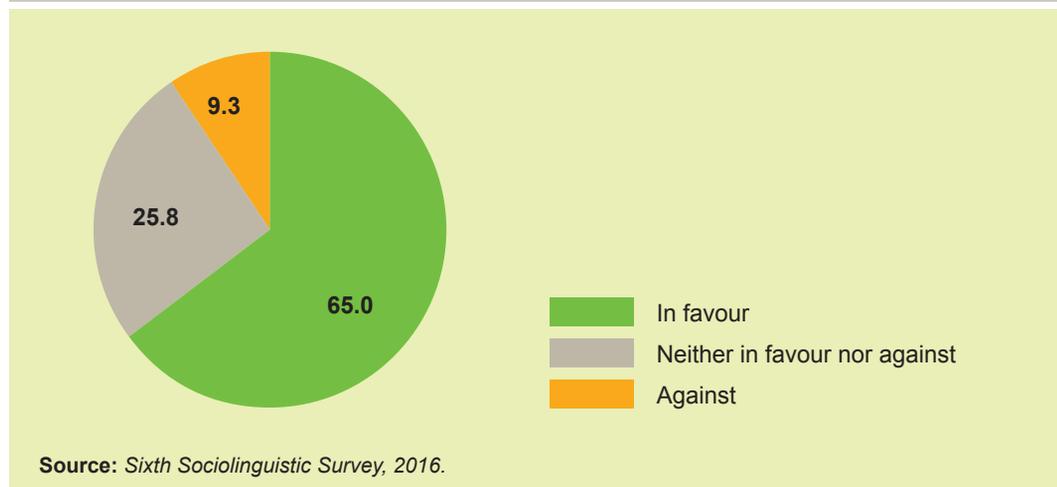
To explore attitudes to the promotion of Basque language use, 4 different categories have been established in accordance with the level of support for or opposition to such a policy.

To develop this system, the following statements were used:

- Anyone applying for a job in the Public Administration must speak Basque.
- It is better for people to learn English than Basque.
- It is vital for all children to learn Basque.
- There should be more radio/TV programmes in Basque.

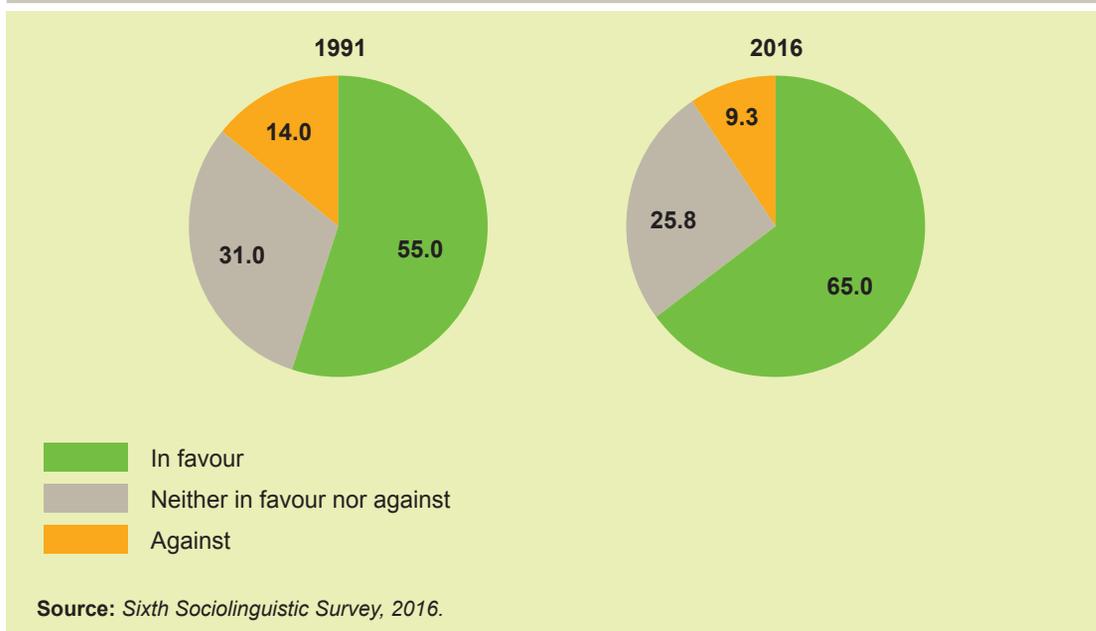
According to the results of the survey, 65% of those living in the BAC aged 16 and over are in favour of promoting the Basque language; 25.8% are neither in favour nor against and 9.3% are against this policy.

**Figure 41.** Attitudes towards Basque language promotion. BAC, 2016 (%)



If we compare the figures from 1991 with those from 2016, we see that there has been a 10% increase in the number of those in favour (55% versus 65%). In 2016, the percentage of those neither in favour nor against was lower than in 1991 (25.8% as opposed to 31%), as was the percentage of those against Basque language promotion (9.3% in 2016, as opposed to 14% in 1991).

**Figure 42.** Evolution of attitudes towards Basque language promotion. BAC, 1991-2016 (%)



The percentage of those in favour of Basque language promotion is higher in Gipuzkoa (74.6%) than in Bizkaia (62.2%) or Araba (53.4%).

In relation to the capital cities, 60.7% of those living in Donostia-San Sebastián are in favour of Basque language promotion, and this figure is 53.8% in Bilbao and 50.6% in Vitoria-Gasteiz. As regards the percentage of those against this policy, the highest figures are found in Bilbao and Vitoria-Gasteiz (15.7% and 14.3%, respectively) and the lowest in Donostia-San Sebastián (8.8%).

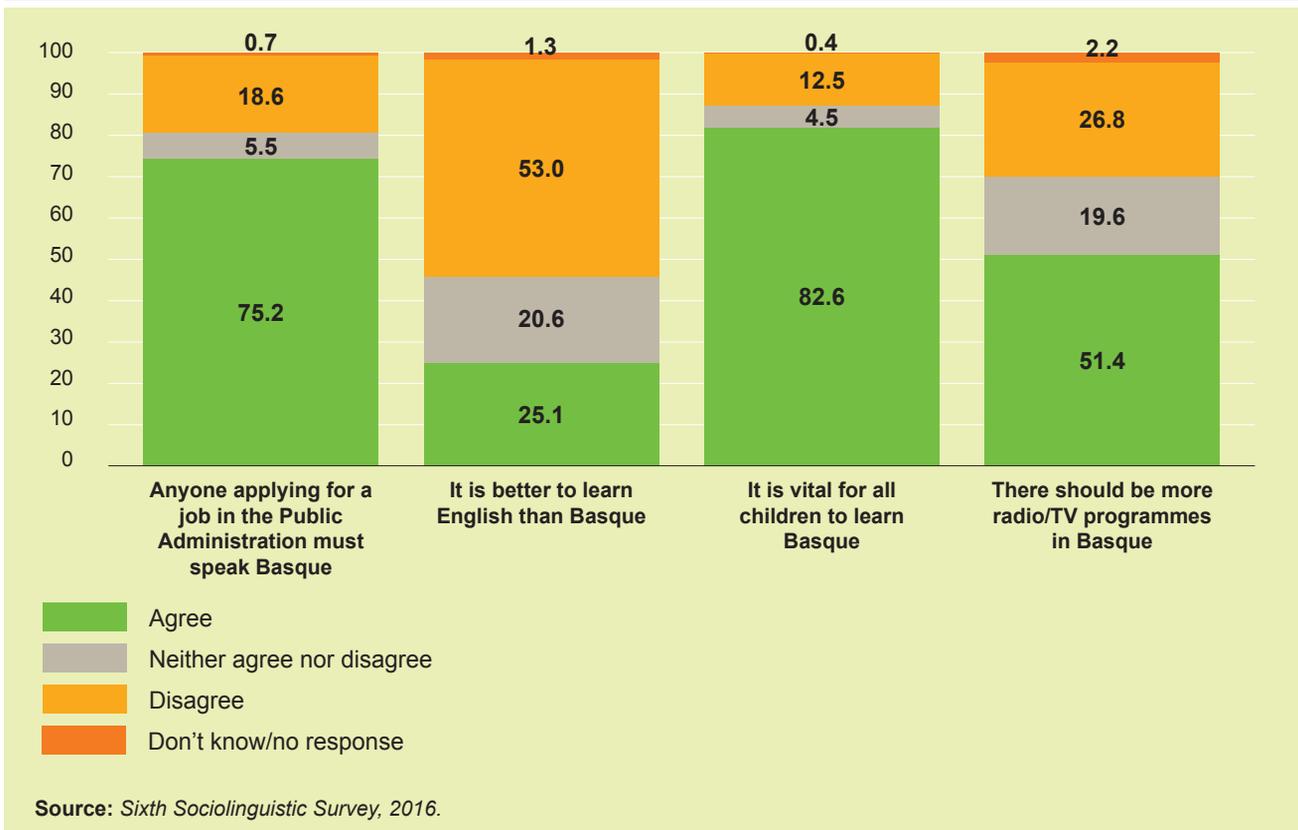
**Table 20.** Attitude towards efforts to promote Basque, by province and capital city. BAC, 2016 (%)

	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa	Vitoria-Gasteiz	Bilbao	Donostia-San Sebastián
In favour	53.4	62.2	74.6	50.6	53.8	60.7
Neither in favour nor against	32.7	27.2	20.4	35.0	30.5	30.6
Against	13.9	10.6	5.0	14.3	15.7	8.8

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

The responses and opinions used to determine attitude type were as follows:

- 75.2% of those living in the BAC agreed that anyone applying for a job in the Public Administration must speak Basque, and 5.5% neither agreed nor disagreed. Furthermore, 18.6% disagreed with this affirmation and 0.7% declined to answer.
- Of those interviewed, 25.1% agreed that it was better to learn English than Basque, 12.1% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement and 53% disagreed with it (i.e. are in favour of Basque language promotion). No answer was given by 1.3% of those surveyed.
- The majority of those interviewed (82.6%) said they agreed that it is vital for all children to learn Basque; 4.5% neither agreed nor disagreed, 12.5% disagreed with this statement and 0.4% declined to answer.
- Finally, 51.4% said they thought there should be more radio/TV programmes in Basque, 19.6% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, 26.8% disagreed and 2.2% did not answer.

**Figure 43.** Opinions used to established attitude categories. BAC, 2016 (%)


## 5.2. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE BY LANGUAGE COMPETENCE, SEX AND AGE

Attitude towards Basque is closely linked to language competence, with 87.1 % of Basque speakers being in favour of this policy. The figure among passive Basque speakers is 63.4 % and among non-Basque speakers it is 49.7 %.

In relation to sex, in general, women tend to have a more positive attitude to Basque language promotion than men (65.6% as opposed 64,3%), and more men than women expressed their disagreement with the policy (9.8% and 8.8%, respectively).

**Table 21.** Attitude towards efforts to promote Basque, by sex. BAC, 2016 (%)

	In favour	Neither in favour nor against	Against
Total	65.0	25.8	9.3
Women	65.6	25.7	8.8
Men	64.3	25.9	9.8

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

As regards age, the highest percentage of those in favour of Basque language promotion were found among the oldest and the youngest age groups: 69.4 % among the 16-24s, 67.8 % among the 25-34s and 67 % among those aged 65 and over. The percentages were lower among middle-aged adults: 63.3% and 61.7 % among the 35-49 and 50-64 age groups (respectively).

**Figure 44.** Attitudes towards Basque language promotion, by age. BAC, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

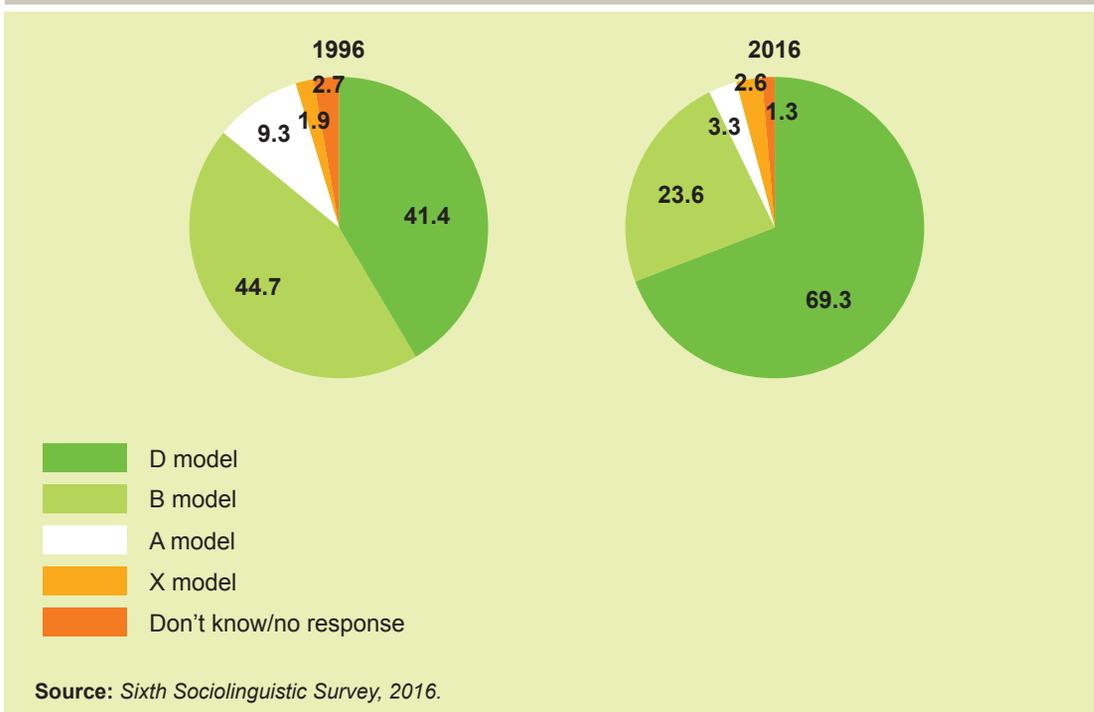
### 5.3. INTEREST IN BASQUE AND OTHER OPINIONS

When asked about their interest in Basque, 59.5% of the inhabitants of the BAC expressed a strong interest in the language, 16.7% expressed some interest, 12.1% said they had little interest and 11.4% said they had no interest whatsoever.

Exploring other opinions related to Basque, we found that 69.3% of the over-16 population of the BAC would choose the D model for their children's education and 23.6% would choose the B model.

Twenty years ago, in 1996, the percentage of those who said they would opt for the D model was lower (41.4%) and that of those preferring the B model was higher (44.7%). Similarly, in 1996, the percentage of those who said they would choose the A model was also higher (9.3% in 1996 as opposed to 3.3% in 2016).

**Figure 45.** What language model would you choose for your children's education? BAC, 1996-2016 (%)



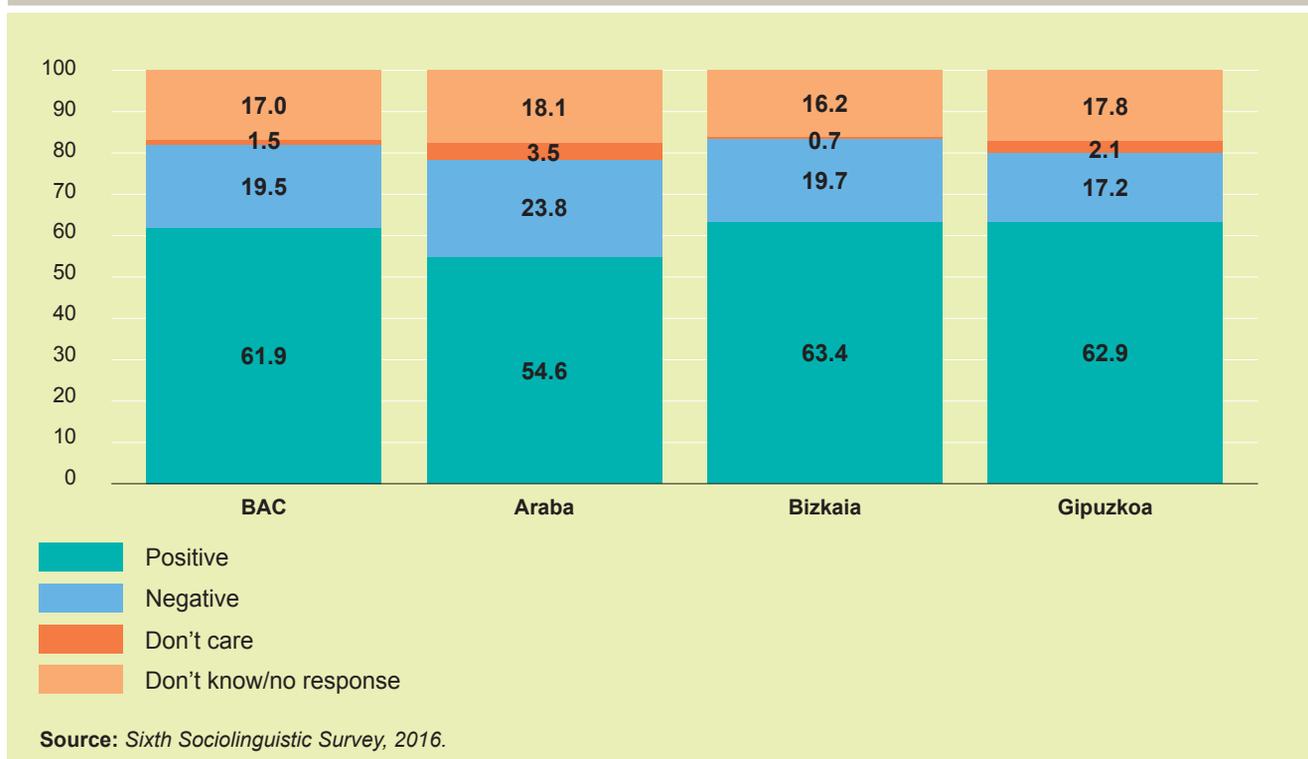
As regards other attitudes, 85.2% of those over 16 living in the BAC believe that, in the future, people should speak Basque and Spanish and 12% believe people should speak only Basque.

Basque speakers were also asked if they had ever felt discriminated against due to not being able to speak their language of choice; 36.5% answered affirmatively. Non-Basque speakers were asked if they had ever felt discriminated against for not being able to speak Basque; 23.4% answered affirmatively.

When asked to rate the work being done by the Basque Government to promote Basque language use, 61.9% of those aged 16 and over in the BAC rated it positively, 19.5% rated it negatively, 1.5% said it was immaterial to them and the remaining 17% didn't know or didn't answer.

If we look at the results for the three provinces, we see that the highest percentages of those who rated the work carried out by the Basque Government positively were found in Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa (63.4% and 62.9%, respectively), and the lowest percentage was found in Araba (54.6%).

**Figure 46.** Assessment of the work carried out by the Regional Basque Government to promote the Basque language, by province. BAC, 2016 (%)



Interviewees were also asked about other opinions linked to the Basque language. The results can be summarised as follows:

- A significant percent (46.7%) of those aged 16 and over living in the BAC believe that Basque will be as important as Spanish in the future. Nevertheless, almost one third of those interviewed (31.3%) expressed the opposite opinion, i.e. that Basque will never be as important as Spanish.
- In response to the statement “Basque is necessary for people to communicate with each other”, 52.6% said they agreed and 39.9% said they did not.
- When asked whether Basque speakers should start all conversations with strangers in Basque, 55.3% of interviewees said they agreed and 28.2% said they disagreed.
- When asked whether they thought Basque speakers should always speak to each other in Basque, even when some people present do not speak the language, the majority (73.8%) said they disagreed.
- Finally, the majority of those interviewed (72.6%) said they did not think Basque was in danger of extinction. If we take only Basque speakers into account, over half (53.5%) said they did not think Basque was in danger of extinction, although 38.6% said they thought it was.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- Basque society is characterised by two main features: the progressive ageing of the population and a sharp rise in the number of foreign-born inhabitants. Today, the population of the BAC aged 65 and over is more numerous (21.6%) than the under-20 population (18.3%). Foreign-born inhabitants currently constitute 9.1% of the population of the BAC.
- 33.9% of all those aged 16 and over are Basque speakers, 19.1% are passive Basque speakers and the remaining 47% do not speak Basque. There are currently 631,000 Basque speakers, 212,000 more than in 1991. This is an increase of almost 10% (33.9% as opposed to 24.1%).
- The highest percentage of Basque speakers is found among young people aged between 16 and 24, with this figure being 71.4% as opposed to just 25% in 1991. This said, the fact that young people today represent only a small portion of the population as a whole means that this increase is not clearly reflected in the overall results.
- Just over 60% of Basque speakers are native Basque speakers or native bilinguals (i.e. they learned Basque at home as their sole or joint mother tongue). As you move down the age scale, however, the percentage of new Basque speakers increases.
- Fluency among Basque speakers varies greatly between the three provinces. The majority of Basque speakers in Araba are bilinguals with a better command of Spanish (70.8%), whereas this group represents just over half of Basque speakers in Bizkaia (54.7%) and just under a third of those in Gipuzkoa (29.8%). The pattern for bilinguals with a greater command of Basque is the opposite, with the highest percentage being found in Gipuzkoa (35.9%) and the lowest in Araba (6.7%).
- Today, almost all Basque-speaking parents with children under the age of 16 speak Basque with their children at home. When both parents speak Basque and both have that language as their mother tongue, transmission is total (94% transmit only Basque to their children at home, and 6% transmit both Basque and another language).

Transmission is also high when neither Basque-speaking parent has Basque as their mother tongue (81 % speak Basque at home with their children). Even when only one parent speaks Basque, transmission remains high, particularly when that parent's mother tongue is Basque (88 %). However, when that parent's mother tongue is a language other than Basque, transmission drops to just half (49 %).

- The number of people who use Basque in the BAC is rising, with 20.5 % of the population using Basque as much as or more than their other language (a 5 points increase over the last 25 years). Furthermore, 10.1 % also use Basque, but to a lesser extent than their other language.
- Use of the Basque language has increased in all three provinces, in sociolinguistic areas Types 1, 2 and 3 and among the under 65s.
- Formal domains have seen the sharpest rise in use of the Basque language, whereas in the home, the increase has been less marked, with the exception of parent-child and sibling relationships.
- Knowledge and use of the Basque language have not increased to the same extent. The reason for this lies in the two main factors which influence use: fluency and social network.
- 36.8 % of Basque speakers learned Basque outside the home, a percentage that rises to 53.9 % in the case of those aged between 16 and 24. Moreover, half of all Basque speakers (51.9 %) live in sociolinguistic areas Types 1 and 2, meaning that their home and immediate environment is largely non-Basque-speaking.
- The percentage of those in favour of Basque language promotion has risen over the last 25 years, with 65 % claiming to be in favour of this policy (10 points more than in 1991). In turn, attitudes against the promotion of Basque language use have decreased from 14 % in 1991 to 9.3 % in 2016.

**N A V A R R E**  
Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey



## 1. POPULATION<sup>1</sup>

According to the Navarre Institute of Statistics, the population of Navarre in 2016 was 640,322.

If we compare this figure with the one recorded for 1991, we see that the population has increased by 121,370 in absolute terms, although this growth has not been linear throughout the entire period. Up until 2011, the growth in population was fairly sharp, although from that year onwards it levelled out and has even decreased slightly.

**Table 1.** Evolution of the population. Navarre, 1991-2016

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Navarre	519,277	520,574	555,829	601,874	642,051	640,647

*Source: Navarre Institute of Statistics.*

Two factors are responsible for this evolution, firstly the natural increase (i.e. the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths) and secondly, the migratory balance (i.e. the difference between immigration and emigration rates).

The main characteristics of the native population are as follows:

- Ageing population: life expectancy is increasing (86.3 years for women and 80.9 years for men) while birth rates are lower than the European mean (9.2 births per 1,000 inhabitants; the EU27 mean is 10.1).

<sup>1</sup> Data taken from the INE (Spanish Statistical Office) and the Navarre Institute of Statistics.

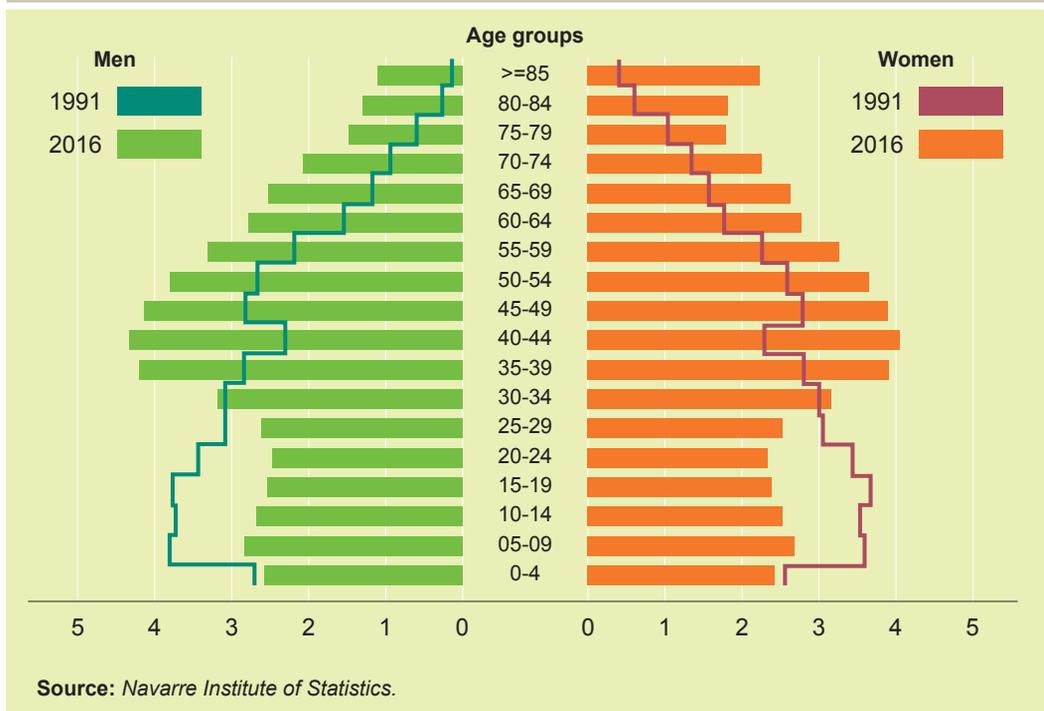
- There has been a marked increase in the number of foreign immigrants since the beginning of the century, with this group representing 13.4 % of the population in 2016.

Of these two characteristics, the first one is nothing new. The population of Navarre began to age in the 1970s. From 1991 to 2016, the number of over 65s increased by 4%, and today, this age group accounts for 19.4% of the total population.

The growth of the older population, particularly the over 85s, is striking. Over the past 25 years, the percentage has almost tripled, and this group now accounts for 3.3% of the total population (it was 1.3% in 1991).

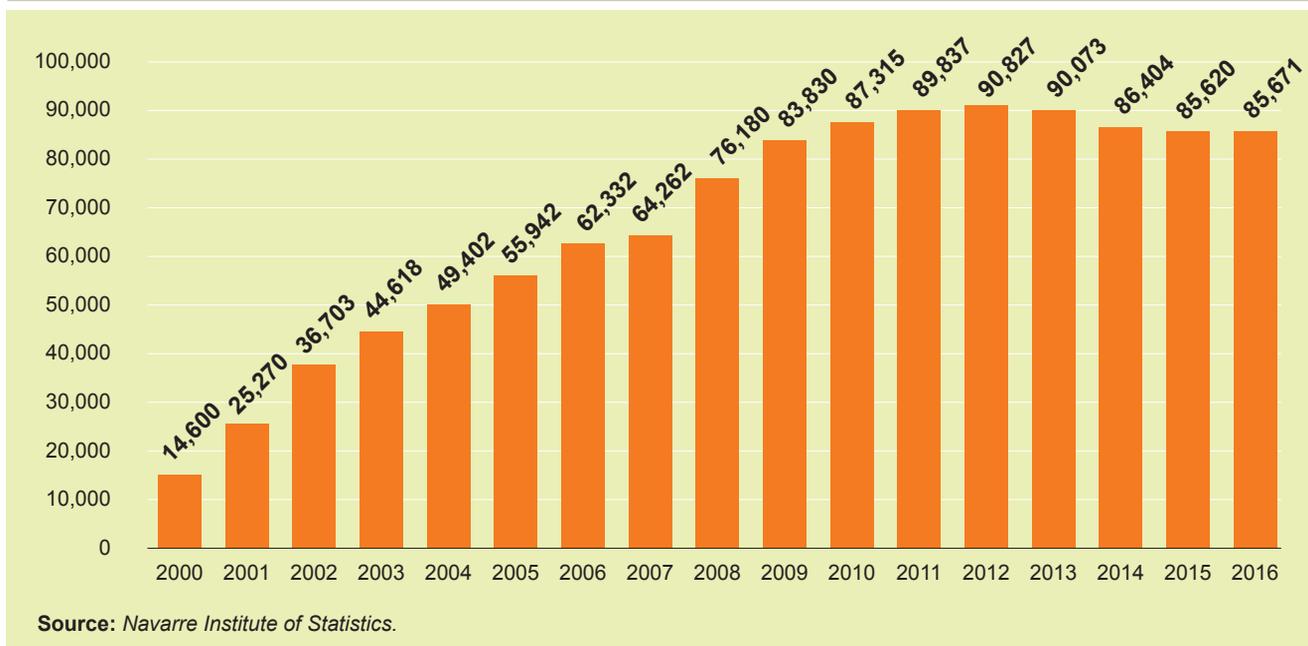
At the same time, the percentage of young people in the population has decreased. Today, just 20.6% of citizens are under 20 years of age, 5 points less than 25 years ago.

Figure 1. Evolution of the population pyramid. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)



The second main characteristic is the growth in the number of foreign immigrants (i.e. immigrants born outside Spain). The percentage represented by this group in the Navarre population has increased from 2.7% in the year 2000 to 13.4% in 2016, with the percentage of men being higher than that of women, although this gap is closing.

**Figure 2.** Evolution of foreign-born inhabitants. Navarre, 2000-2016



As for their origin, the majority come from other countries in Europe (42.2%), with the second largest group coming from Africa (29.4%). The third largest group hails from the American continent (23.8%) and, finally, 4.6% come from Asia and Oceania.

As regards age, most foreign-born inhabitants are young, with an average age of 32.9 years. Over two thirds of foreign immigrants (81.2%) are aged between 15 and 64, and therefore have significant weight in that age range, particularly in the 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 age groups. Indeed, a quarter (between 24% and 25%) of those living in Navarre in those age groups were born abroad.

Figure 3. Population pyramid of foreign-born inhabitants. Navarre, 2016 (%)



## 2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

### 2.1. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY LANGUAGE ZONE AND CAPITAL CITY

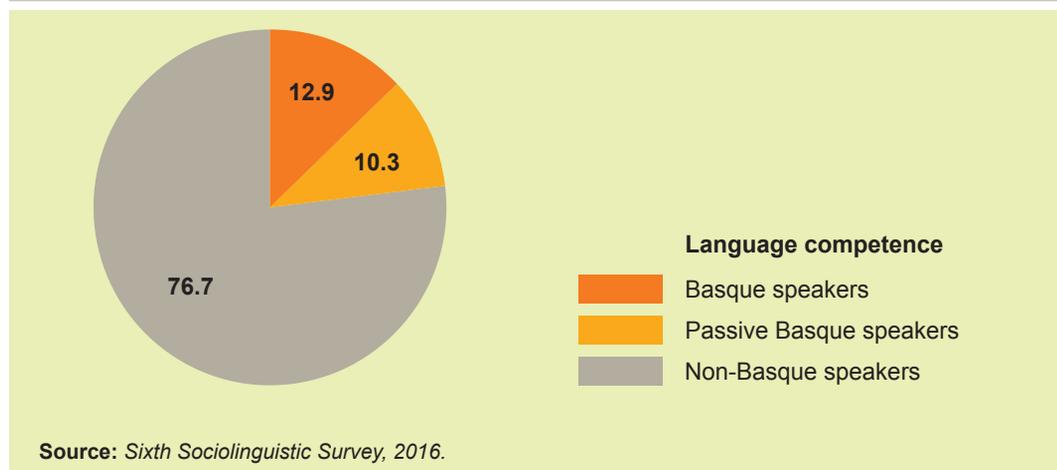
If we classify the population according to their ability to speak Basque, we see there are three types of speaker:

- **Basque speakers (bilinguals):** people who speak Basque fluently and those who speak and understand it fairly well.
- **Passive Basque speakers (passive bilinguals):** people who are not able to speak Basque well or fairly well. However, they do have some knowledge of the language. This group includes anyone who fulfils at least one of the following criteria:
  - They are able to understand and speak some Basque.
  - They are able to understand Basque “well” or “fairly well”.
- **Non-Basque speakers:** people who can neither understand nor speak Basque.

According to the Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, in 2016, 12.9% of the over-16 population living in Navarre are Basque speakers, 10.3% are passive Basque speakers and 76.7% are non-Basque speakers.

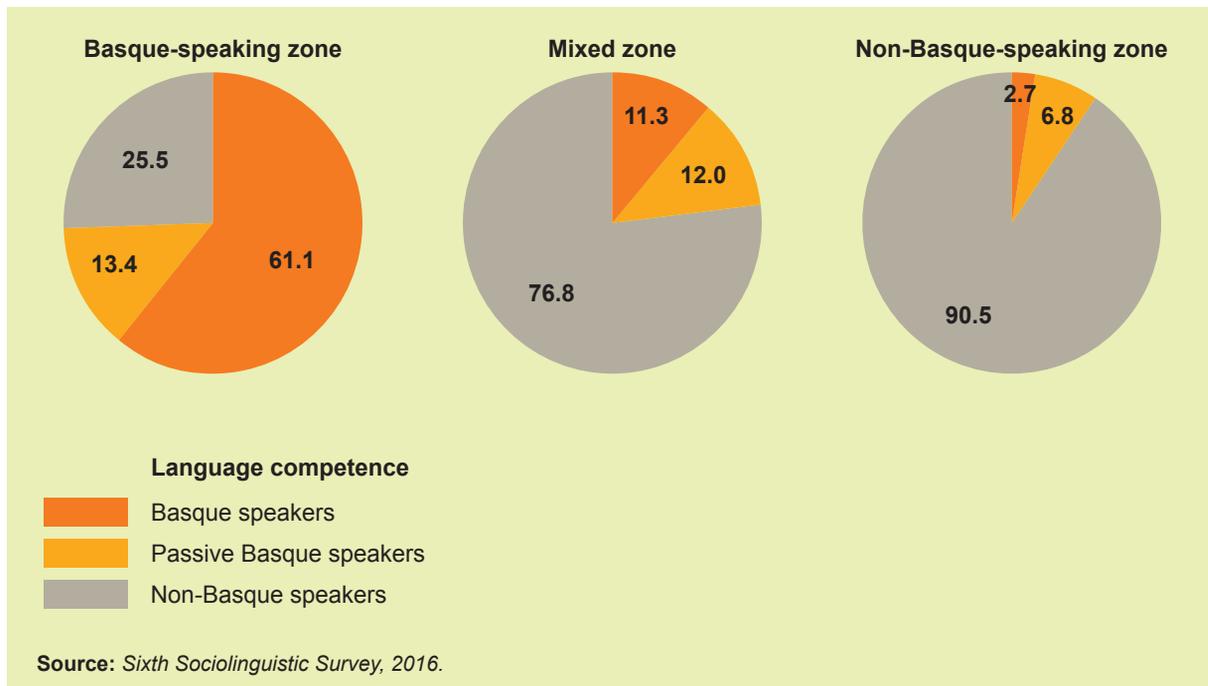
In other words, of the over-16 population of Navarre, 68,946 can speak Basque, 55,134 are passive Basque speakers and 409,522 can not speak the language.

Figure 4. Language competence. Navarre, 2016 (%)



The situation varies widely between the three language zones. The highest percentage of Basque speakers (61.1%) is found in the Basque-speaking zone. In the mixed zone this figure is 11.3% and the lowest percentage of Basque speakers is found in the non-Basque-speaking zone (2.7%).

Figure 5. Language competence by language zone. Navarre, 2016 (%)



If we look at the absolute numbers instead of the percentages, however, we see that more Basque speakers live in the mixed zone than in the Basque-speaking zone. Thus, the mixed zone has 34,136 Basque speakers, whereas the Basque-speaking zone has only 29,909. Finally, the non-Basque-speaking zone has the lowest number of Basque speakers (4,901).

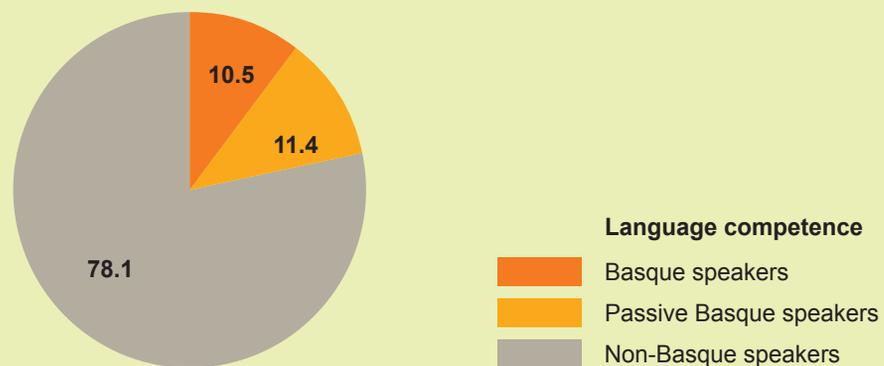
**Table 2.** Language competence by language zone. Navarre, 2016

	Navarre	Basque-speaking zone	Mixed zone	Non-Basque-speaking zone
<b>Total</b>	<b>533,602</b>	<b>48,938</b>	<b>302,428</b>	<b>182,236</b>
Basque speakers	68,946	29,909	34,136	4,901
Passive Basque speakers	55,134	6,558	36,169	12,407
Non-Basque speakers	409,522	12,471	232,123	164,928

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

As in 2011, the survey also gathered data regarding capital cities. In Pamplona, 10.5% of all those aged 16 and over are Basque speakers, 11.4% are passive Basque speakers and the remaining 78.1% do not speak Basque.

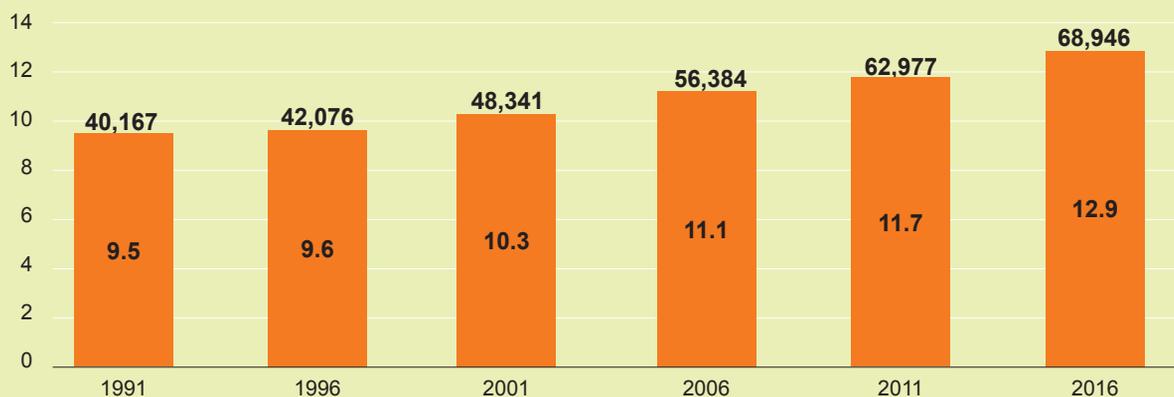
**Figure 6.** Language competence. Pamplona, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

Over the last 25 years, the percentage of Basque speakers in Navarre has increased by 3.4 points (from 9.5% in 1991 to 12.9% in 2016). Similarly, the percentage of passive Basque speakers has also increased, rising from 4.6% to 10.3%.

**Figure 7.** Evolution of Basque speakers. Navarre, 1991-2016



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

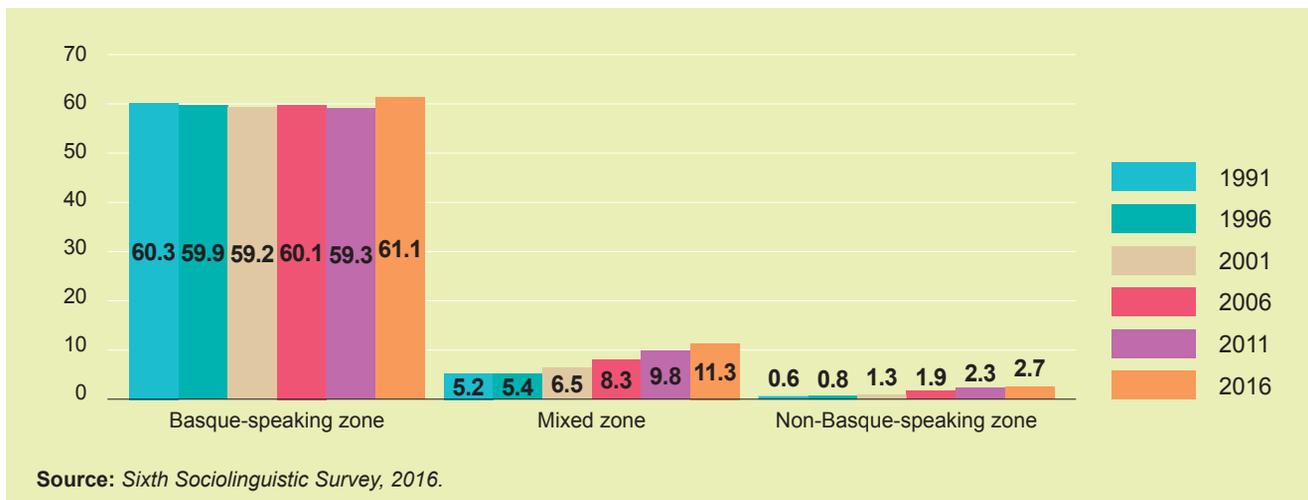
While the increase in Basque speakers is not particularly large, it should be remembered that Navarre society has undergone several sociodemographic changes over recent years. Firstly, Navarre society is ageing, with life expectancy increasing every year. Secondly, the birth rate is much lower than it was 25 years ago. Consequently, young people, among whom the percentage of Basque speakers is highest, represent an increasingly smaller portion of both the population as a whole and the population of Basque speakers.

In Navarre, the largest increase in Basque speakers has occurred in the mixed zone (from 5.2% to 11.3%). The percentage has also risen in the non-Basque-speaking zone, increasing from 0.6% in 1991 to 2.7% in 2016.

Finally, in the Basque-speaking zone, the percentage of Basque speakers has hardly risen at all over the last 25 years, remaining stable at 59%-60% from 1991 to 2011, although it did increase to 61.1% between 2011 and 2016. Although this is not a sharp increase, it does reflect an upwards trend (an almost 2 points rise between 2011 and 2016).

It can therefore be said that the percentage of Basque speakers is growing in all three language zones, including the non-Basque-speaking one, even though the increase in that zone has been very small.

**Figure 8.** Evolution of Basque speakers by language zone. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)



## 2.2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY SEX AND AGE

As regards sex, 12.7% of women and 31.1% of men in Navarre speak Basque. There is therefore almost no difference at all between the sexes in this field. This is true in all three language zones.

**Table 3.** Basque speakers by sex. Navarre, 2016 (%)

	Navarre	Basque-speaking zone	Mixed zone	Non-Basque-speaking zone
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>61.1</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>
Women	12.7	61.4	11.2	2.7
Men	13.1	60.9	11.3	2.7

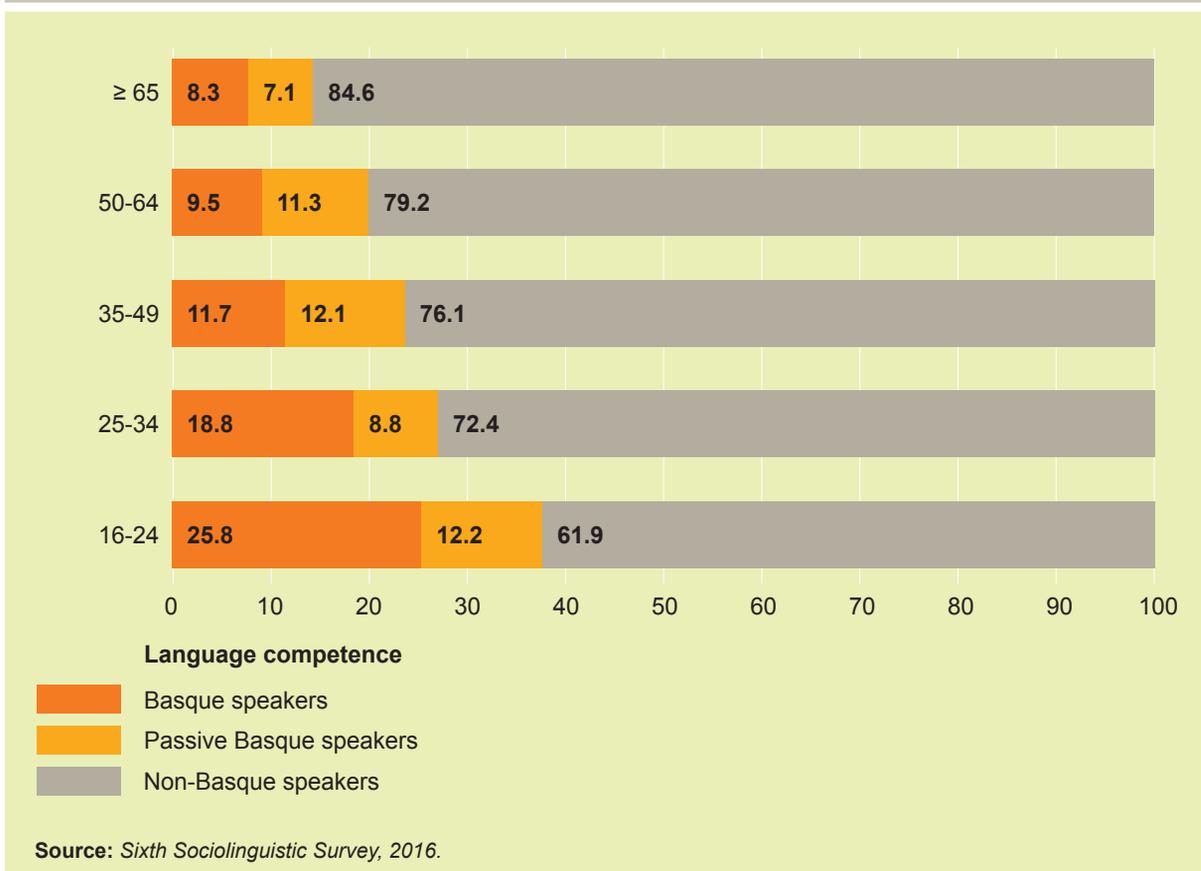
Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If we look at age, we see that the highest percentage of Basque speakers can be found among the under 35s (i.e. in the 16-24 and 25-34 groups, although mainly the 16-24 one). Today, 25.8% of young people in Navarre aged between 16 and 24 can speak Basque, and this figure is 18.8% among the 25-34 age group.

The percentage drops, however, as you move up the age scale, with the smallest figures being found among those aged 50-64 and the over 65s (9.5% and 8.3%, respectively).

Thus, the rise in the percentage of Basque speakers is particularly striking among young people. The percentage of non-Basque speakers is higher among the adult population, although over the years more and more Basque speakers are entering this group from the younger age ranges and more and more non-Basque speakers are being lost from among the older population. In other words, as an increasing percentage of young people become Basque speakers, so too is the percentage growing among the older population.

**Figure 9.** Language competence by age. Navarre, 2016 (%)

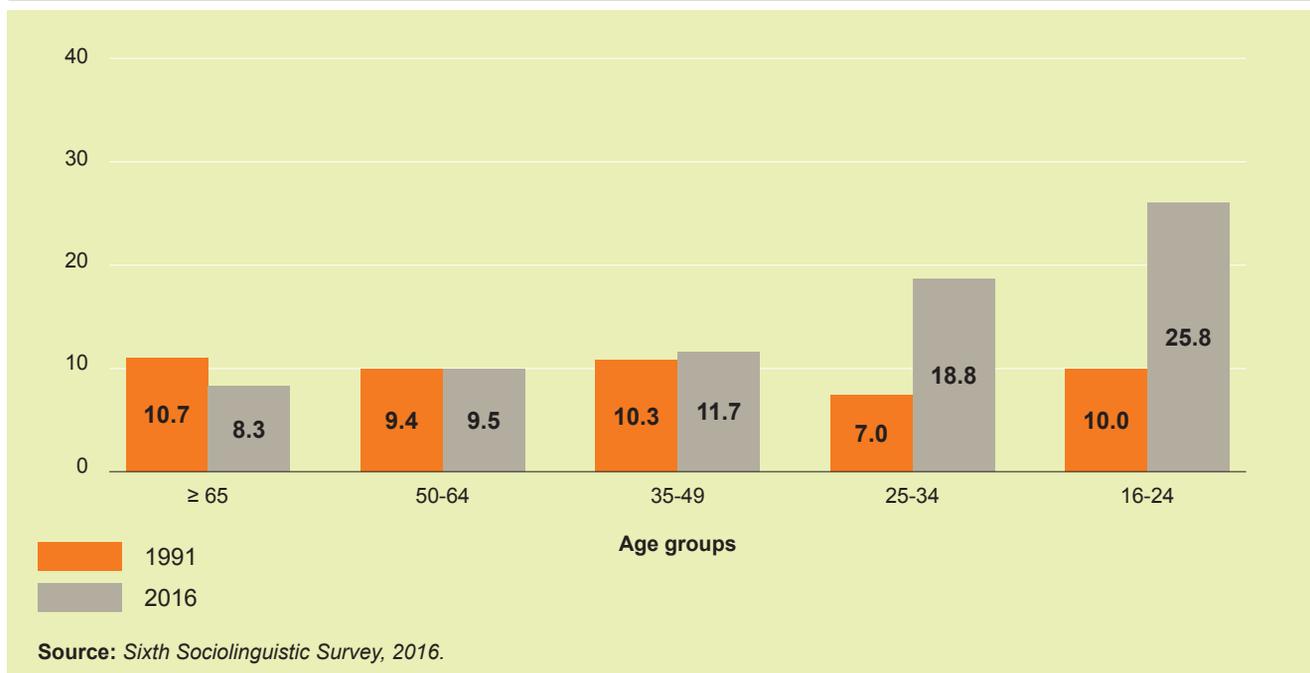


If we look at the evolution over the last 25 years, we see that the increase in Basque speakers stems from the younger generations. In 1991, 10% of the 16-24 age group spoke Basque, whereas today, this figure is almost 16 points higher.

Similarly, the percentage of Basque speakers has increased also among those aged between 25 and 34, rising from 7% in 1991 to 18.8% in 2016.

In the other age groups, the percentages have remained more or less stable, with just a 1% or 2% rise or fall.

**Figure 10.** Evolution of Basque speakers by age. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)



This pattern of evolution in the different age groups is common to all three language zones. Nevertheless, the situations in each are very different.

In the Basque-speaking zone, the highest percentage of Basque speakers is found among young people aged between 16 and 24 (89.6%). This figure decreases as you move up the age scale, with the smallest percentage being found among those aged 50-64 (51.1%). However, the percentage increases once again to 58.4% among the over 65s.

In the mixed zone, the highest percentage of Basque speakers is found among the youngest inhabitants (27.3%) and the smallest percentage among the oldest members of the population (4.1%).

The figures for Pamplona are similar, with 25.1% of those aged 16-24 being Basque speakers and 4.1% of those aged 65 and over being able to speak the language.

In the non-Basque-speaking zone, the highest percentages of Basque speakers are found once again among the youngest age groups: 8.6% in the 16-24 group and 4.1% in the 25-34 group. The figures for the other age groups are very low.

**Table 5.** Basque speakers by age and language zone. Navarre, 2016 (%)

	Age					
	Total	≥ 65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
<b>Navarre</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>25.8</b>
Pamplona	10.5	4.1	7.5	10.3	16.3	25.1
Basque-speaking zone	61.1	58.4	51.1	56.0	77.7	89.6
Mixed zone	11.3	4.1	7.1	10.1	18.7	27.3
Non-Basque-speaking zone	2.7	0.7	1.4	2.7	4.1	8.6

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

### 2.3. RELATIVE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE: FLUENCY AMONG BASQUE SPEAKERS

We will now analyse relative language competence among Basque speakers. In other words, we will analyse their oral fluency in Basque and their other language (mainly Spanish).

Basque speakers are divided into the following categories, depending on their relative language competence:

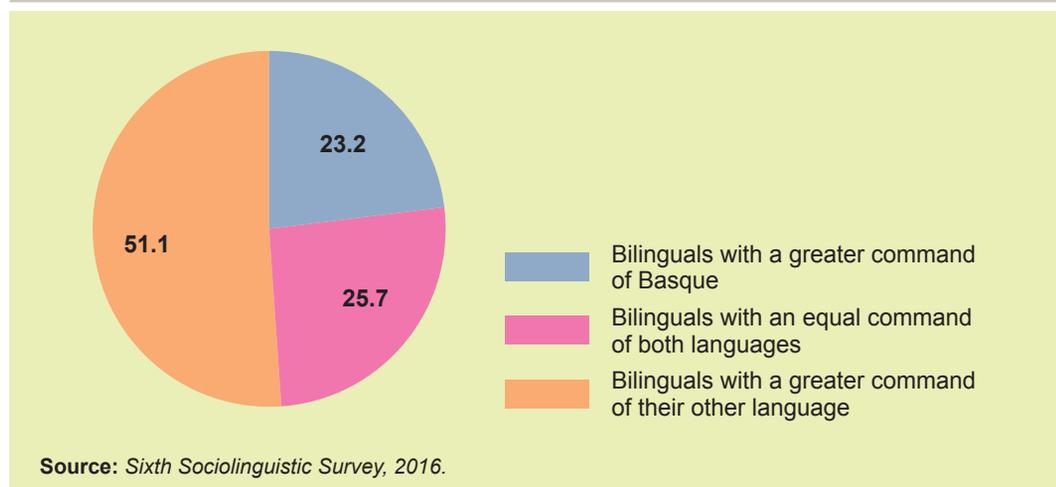
- **Bilinguals with a greater command of Basque:** these people are more fluent in Basque than they are in their other language.
- **Bilinguals with an equal command of both languages:** these people are equally fluent in both Basque and their other language. In other words, these bilinguals can express themselves equally well in either language.
- **Bilinguals with a greater command of their other language:** these people are more fluent in their other language than they are in Basque.

In Navarre, 23.2% of Basque speakers are bilinguals with a greater command of Basque. Almost all of this group have Basque as their mother tongue (95%) and the majority live in the Basque-speaking zone (81%).

Bilinguals with an equal command of both language represent 25.7% of all Basque speakers in Navarre. More than half of this group (58%) live in the Basque-speaking zone and over one third (38%) live in the mixed zone. Most bilinguals with an equal command of both languages have Basque as their mother tongue (74%).

Bilinguals who are more fluent in their other language represent the largest group of Basque speakers (51.1%). Most live in the mixed zone (71%) and most have a language other than Basque as their mother tongue (75%).

Figure 11. Basque speakers by fluency. Navarre, 2016 (%)

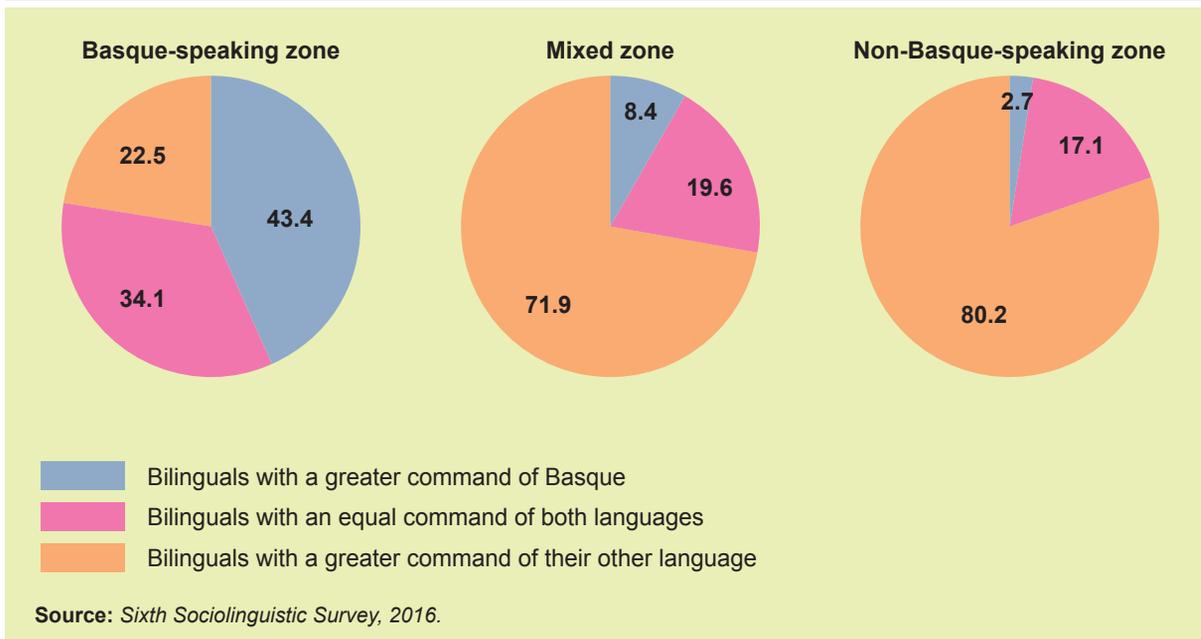


There are notable differences between the three language zones as regards Basque speakers' fluency levels. In the Basque-speaking zone, 43.4% speak Basque more fluently than their other language. One third speak both languages fluently (34.1%) and just over one fifth (22.5%) are more fluent in their other language than in Basque.

In the mixed zone, on the other hand, the largest group of Basque speakers are those who speak their other language more fluently than Basque (71.9%). One fifth (19.6%) of Basque speakers in this zone speak both languages with equal fluency and 8.4% are more fluent in Basque.

In the non-Basque-speaking zone, 80.2% of Basque speakers speak their other language more fluently, 17.1% have an equal command of both languages and 2.7% are more fluent in Basque.

Figure 12. Basque speakers' fluency by language zone. Navarre, 2016 (%)

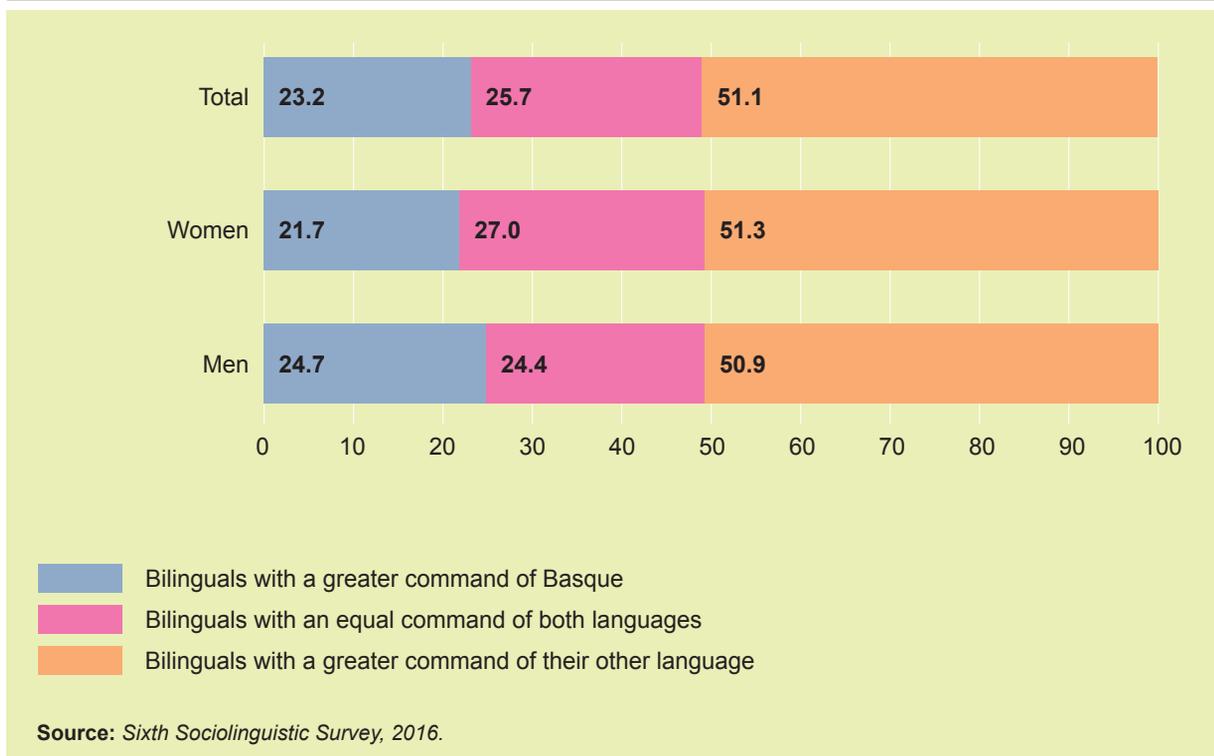


The percentage of those with a greater command of Basque is higher among men than among women (24.4% versus 21.7%).

However, in the case of those who are equally fluent in both languages the opposite is true, with the percentage being higher among women than among men (27% versus 24.4%).

There is almost no difference at all among Basque speakers who are more fluent in their other language, (51.3% among women and 50.9% among men).

**Figure 13.** Basque speakers' fluency by sex. Navarre, 2016 (%)

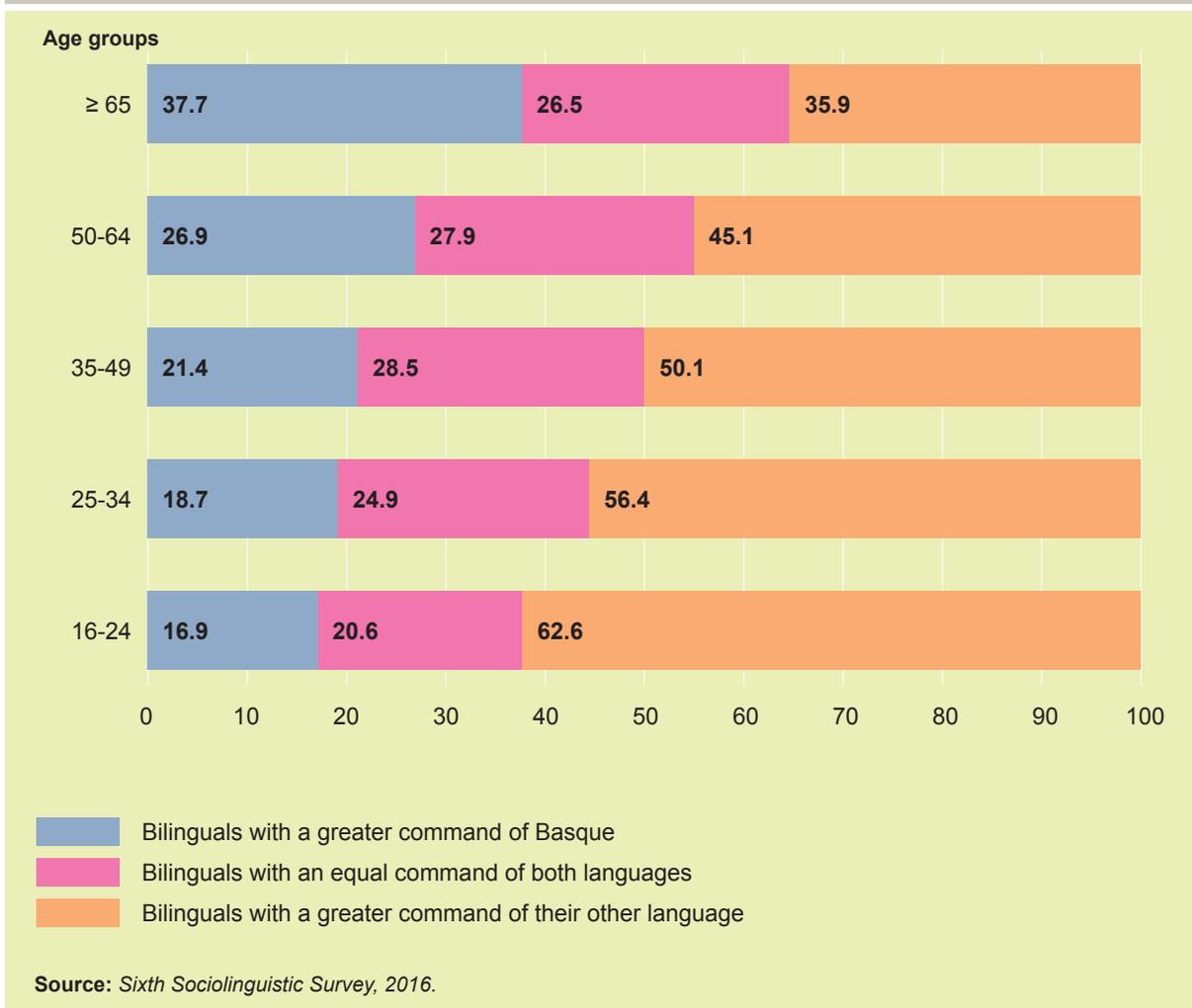


There are significant differences also in accordance with age. The highest percentage of Basque speakers more fluent in Basque is found among those aged 65 and over (37.7%), with this figure decreasing as you move down the age scale. Among those aged 16-24, only 16.9% claim to be more fluent in Basque than in their other language.

The highest percentage of those who are equally fluent in both languages is found among those aged 35-49 (28.5%) and the lowest among those aged 16-24 (20.6%).

Finally, the percentage of bilinguals who are more fluent in their other language grows higher as you move down the age scale, with more than half of those aged 16-24, 25-34 and 35-49 belonging to this group (62.6%, 56.4% and 50.1%, respectively).

Figure 14. Basque speakers' fluency by age. Navarre, 2016 (%)



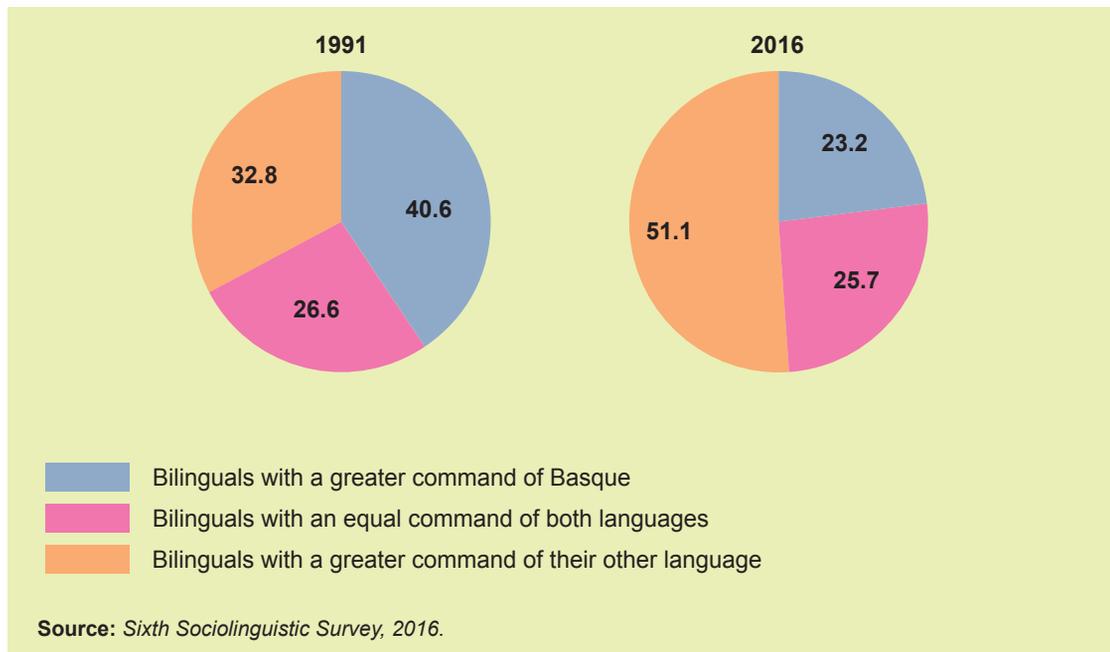
If we look at the evolution of these figures, we see that the situation regarding Basque speakers' fluency has changed drastically over the last 25 years.

In 1991, 40.6% of Basque speakers spoke Basque more fluently than their other language, as opposed to 23.2% in 2016.

The percentage of those equally fluent in both languages has not changed notably, dropping from 26.6 % in 1991 to 25.7 % in 2016.

The percentage of those who speak Basque, but speak their other language better, on the other hand, has increased, rising from 32.8 % in 1991 to 51.1 % in 2016.

**Figure 15.** Evolution of Basque speakers' fluency. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)



If we analyse this evolution in accordance with age, we see that in 1991, the percentage of bilinguals more fluent in Basque decreased with age. This trend remained unchanged in 2016.

In 1991, the highest percentages of bilinguals equally fluent in both languages were found among the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups (39.5 % and 28.7 %, respectively). In 2016, however, the highest percentages were found among those aged 35-49 and 50-64 (28.5 % and 27.9 %, respectively).

Finally, in 1991, the highest percentages of bilinguals more fluent in their other language were found among the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups (40.1 % and 40.2 %, respectively). In 2016, this trend had not changed, with the highest percentages still being found among those aged 16-24 and 25-34 (62.6 % and 56.4 %, respectively).

**Table 6.** Evolution of Basque language fluency by age. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)

1991	Age					
	Total	≥ 65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>40,167</b>	<b>9,031</b>	<b>7,706</b>	<b>11,248</b>	<b>5,367</b>	<b>6,815</b>
More fluent in Basque	40.6	56.2	51.8	37.1	31.2	20.4
Equally fluent in both	26.6	19.3	22.9	26.3	28.7	39.5
More fluent in their other language	32.8	24.5	25.2	36.6	40.2	40.1
<b>2016</b>						
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>68,946</b>	<b>10,069</b>	<b>11,682</b>	<b>18,452</b>	<b>14,526</b>	<b>14,217</b>
More fluent in Basque	23.2	37.7	26.9	21.4	18.7	16.9
Equally fluent in both	25.7	26.5	27.9	28.5	24.9	20.6
More fluent in their other language	51.1	35.9	45.1	50.1	56.4	62.6

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

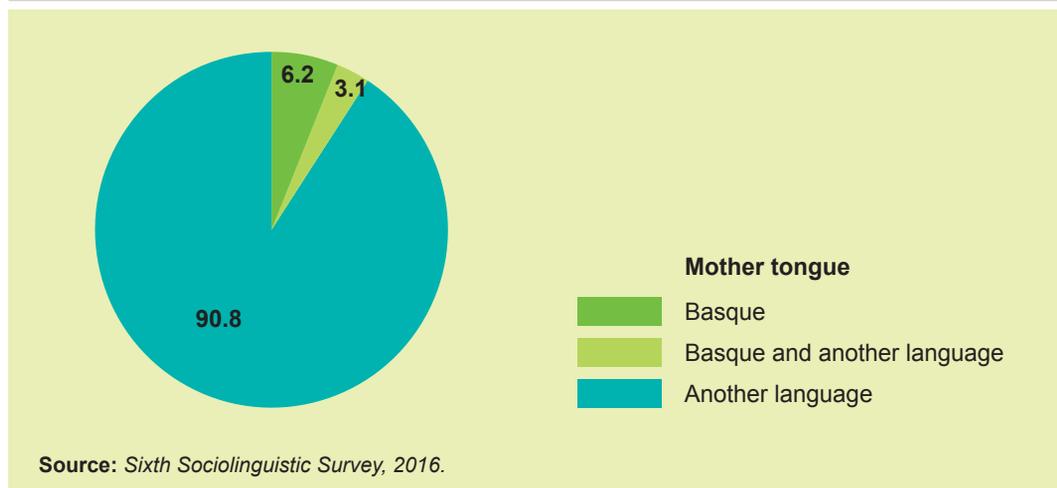
### 3. LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

#### 3.1. MOTHER TONGUE BY LANGUAGE ZONE AND CAPITAL CITY

By mother tongue we mean the language or languages acquired from parents or relatives with whom a child has lived until the age of three.

Of the Navarre population aged 16 and over, 9.3% learned Basque at home. Of this group, 6.2% learned only Basque at home, and 3.1% learned both Basque and another language. The vast majority (90.8%) of Navarre citizens learned only a language other than Basque at home. By other language, we mainly mean Spanish, but it should not be forgotten that, increasingly, it may be Romanian, Portuguese or Russian, among others.

**Figure 16.** Mother tongue. Navarre, 2016 (%)



The percentage of the over-16 population for whom Basque is their sole mother tongue is lower than it was 25 years ago, dropping from 8.1% in 1991 to 6.2% in 2016 (a 1.9 point decrease).

The percentage of those for whom Basque is a joint mother tongue (along with Spanish or another language) has risen from 2.1% in 1991 to 3.1% in 2016 (a 1 point increase).

The percentage of those who have a language other than Basque as their mother tongue was similar in 2016 to what it was in 1991 (90.8 % and 89.8 %, respectively).

**Table 7.** Evolution of mother tongue. Navarre, 1991-2016

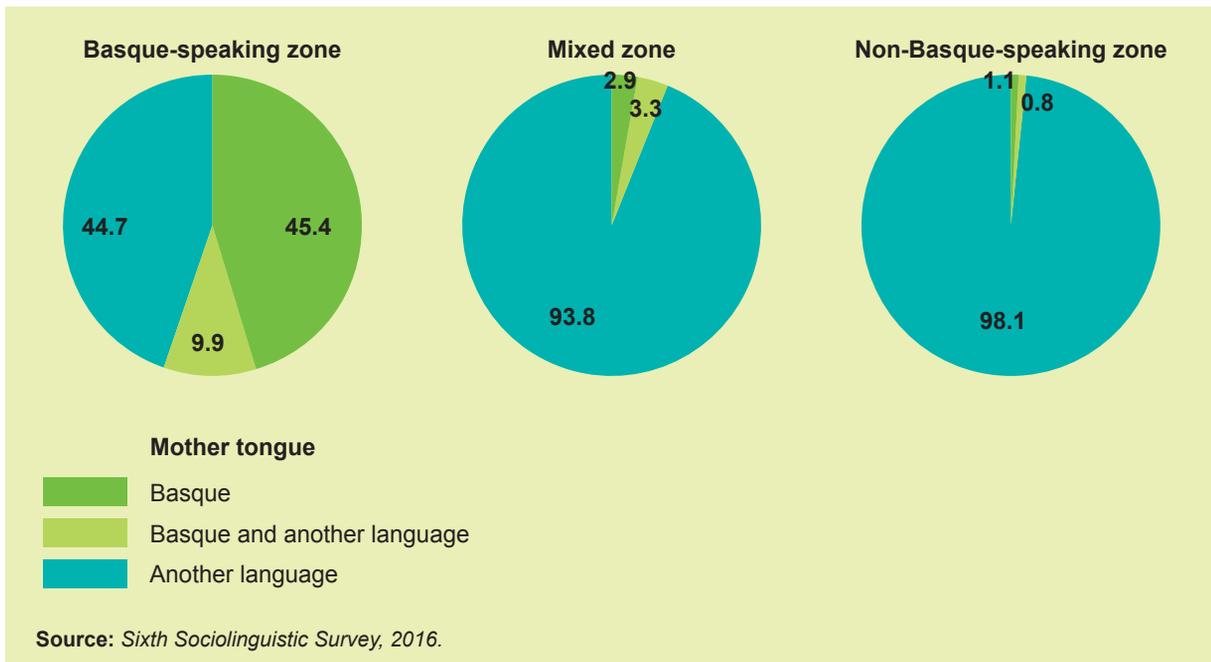
	1991	2016	1991 (%)	2016 (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>420,712</b>	<b>533,602</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Basque	34,051	32,876	8.1	6.2
Basque and another language	9,026	16,456	2.1	3.1
Another language	377,635	484,270	89.8	90.8

**Source:** *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

The figures differ between language zones. Over half of all those living in the Basque-speaking zone have Basque as their mother tongue (55.3 %): 45.4 % learned only Basque at home and 9.9 % learned both Basque and another language.

Those who have a language other than Basque as their mother tongue are the vast majority in both the mixed zone (93.8 %) and the non-Basque-speaking zone (98.1 %).

Figure 17. Mother tongue by language zone. Navarre, 2016 (%)



In Pamplona, the percentages are similar to those of the mixed zone in general, with only 3.1% of the over-16 population having Basque as their sole mother tongue and 2.7% having both Basque and another language. Thus, over nine out of every ten inhabitants of Pamplona have a language other than Basque as their mother tongue (94.2%).

Table 8. Mother tongue. Pamplona, 2016

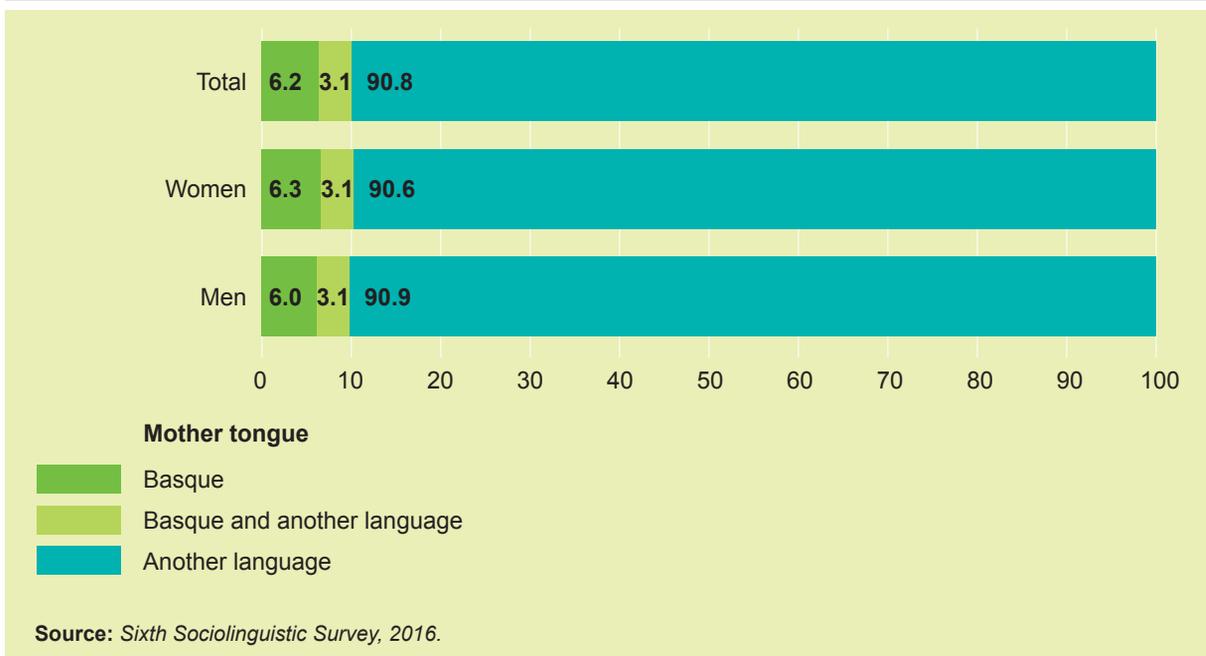
	2016	2016 (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>166,534</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Basque	5,120	3.1
Basque and another language	4,481	2.7
Another language	156,933	94.2

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

### 3.2. MOTHER TONGUE BY SEX AND AGE

There are no differences between men and women as regards mother tongue.

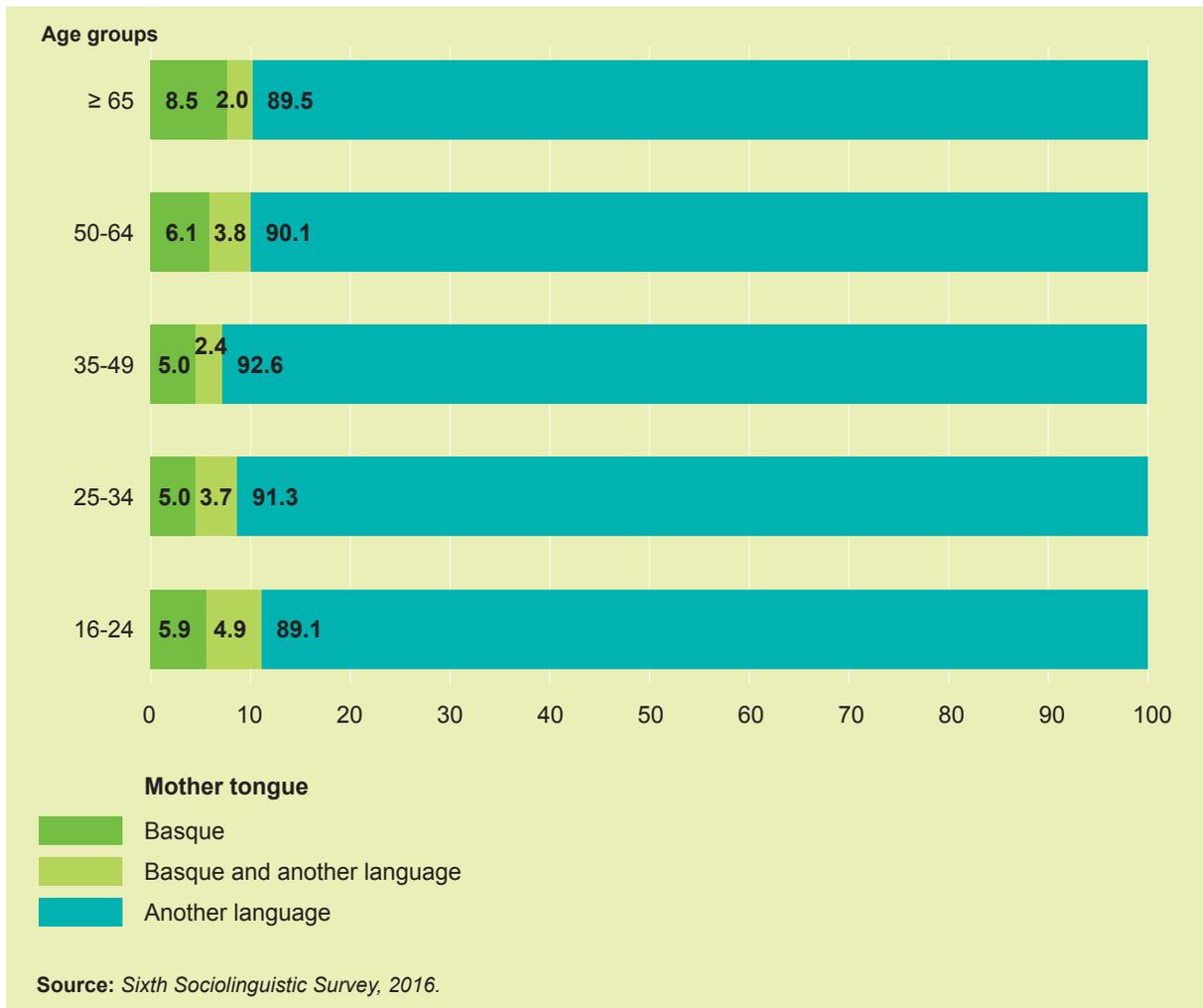
Figure 18. Mother tongue by sex. Navarre, 2016 (%)



The highest percentage of those for whom Basque is their sole mother tongue is found among the over 65s (8.5%). This percentage decreases as you move down the age scale, up until the 16-24 age group, where there is a turning point, with the percentage of those for whom Basque is their sole mother tongue being higher in this age group than in the one above (25-34): 5.9% as opposed to 5%.

The highest percentage of those who have both Basque and another language as their joint mother tongues is found once again among the youngest age group (4.9%).

Figure 19. Mother tongue by age. Navarre, 2016 (%)



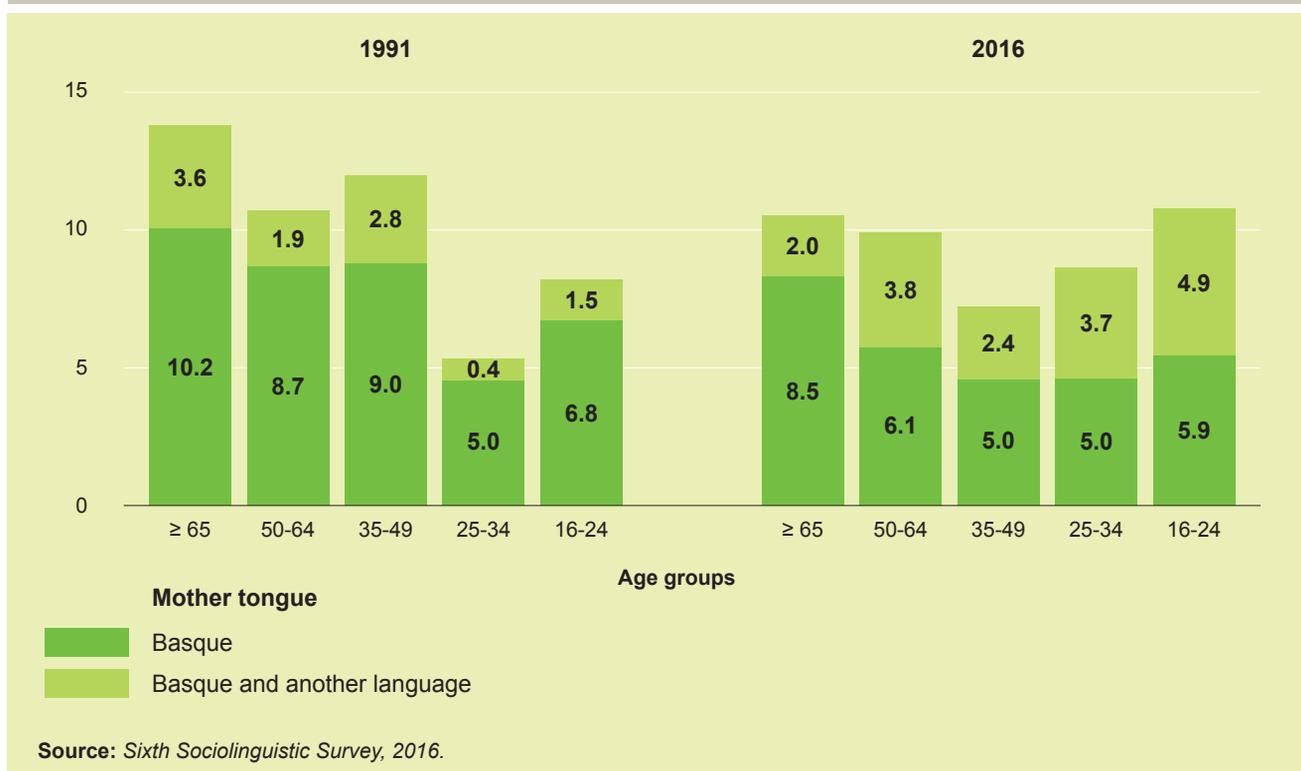
Much the same was true 25 years ago. In 1991, the highest percentage of those whose sole mother tongue was Basque was found among the over-65s (10.2%), with the percentages dropping as you moved down the age scale, until you reached the youngest group.

Moreover, in 1991, the percentage of those whose sole mother tongue was Basque was higher in all age groups, with the exception of the 25-34 group, which was where the lowest percentage of those for whom Basque was their sole mother tongue was found (5%). In 2016, this figure has not changed.

The percentage of those for whom Basque is their joint mother tongue, along with another language, was, in general, lower in 1991 than in 2016 (2.1% as opposed

to 3.1%). If we analyse the changes in percentages in accordance with age, we see that the greatest change has occurred among young people. Thus, 25 years ago, 1.5% of those aged 16-24 learned both Basque and another language at home as their joint mother tongues, whereas in 2016, this figure was 4.9% (a 3.4 points increase).

**Figure 20.** Evolution of mother tongue by age. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)



In the Basque-speaking zone, those with Basque or Basque and another language as their mother tongue(s) represent over half of all inhabitants in all age ranges. However, if we look only at the percentage of those for whom Basque is their sole mother tongue, we see that it drops as we move down age scale (52.7% among the over 65s and between 40% and 45% among those aged 50 and under).

In the Basque-speaking zone, the percentage of those who have both Basque and another language as their joint mother tongues increases as we move down the age scale, being 7.7% among the oldest age group and 17.7% among the youngest.

In this same zone, the highest percentages of those for whom a language other than Basque is their sole mother tongue are found among those aged 35-49 and 50-64 (49.7% and 45.3%, respectively), and the lowest percentages are found among those aged 65 and over and among the 16-24 age group (39.5% and 40.7%, respectively).

In the mixed zone, on the other hand, those who have a language other than Basque as their mother tongue represent the vast majority in all age groups, with over 90% of people of all ages belonging to this category. The highest percentage of people whose mother tongue is Basque is found among those aged 65 and over (6.7%), with this figure decreasing as you move down the age scale, until you come to the youngest age group. In this last group, the percentage of those with Basque as their mother tongue is higher than that of the previous group (2.3%).

Also in the mixed zone, the opposite pattern can be detected among those for whom both Basque and another language are their joint mother tongues, with the percentage increasing as you move down the age scale, in almost all age ranges. Among the younger generations, the percentage of those for whom Basque is a joint mother tongue along with another language (6.2%) is much higher than that of those for whom Basque is their sole mother tongue (2.3%). The same can be said for Pamplona.

**Table 9.** Mother tongue by age and language zone. Navarre, 2016 (%)

		Age					
		Total	≥ 65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
<b>Basque-speaking zone</b>	Basque	<b>45.4</b>	52.7	45.5	42.5	40.3	41.6
	Basque and another language	<b>9.9</b>	7.7	9.2	7.8	14.9	17.7
	Another language	<b>44.7</b>	39.5	45.3	49.7	44.9	40.7
<b>Mixed zone</b>	Basque	<b>2.9</b>	3.9	2.7	2.0	2.6	4.1
	Basque and another language	<b>3.3</b>	2.3	3.4	2.7	4.3	5.5
	Another language	<b>93.8</b>	93.8	93.9	95.3	93.1	90.4

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

In the non-Basque-speaking zone, the sample of Basque speakers is too small to enable it to be classified according to mother tongue. Nevertheless, it can be said that 98.5% of people in all age groups have a language other than Basque as their mother tongue.

### 3.3. BASQUE SPEAKERS BY MOTHER TONGUE

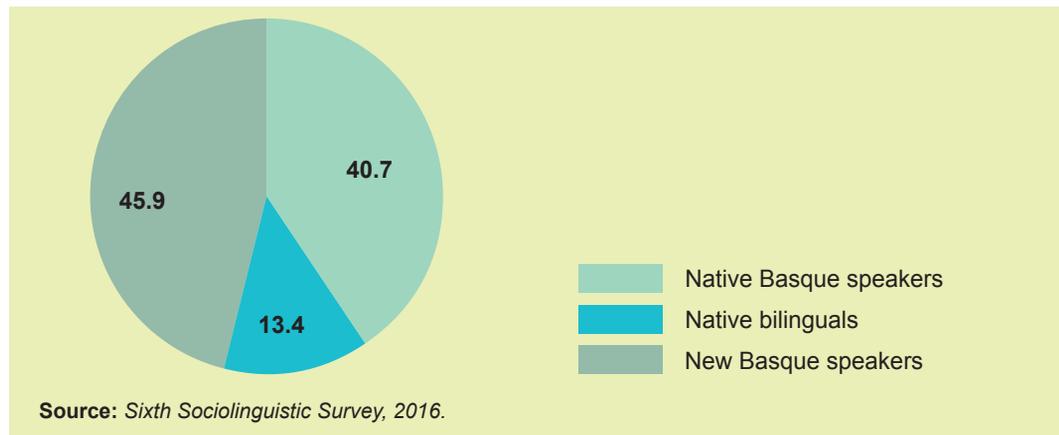
Below we will analyse Basque speakers in Navarre aged 16 and over, in accordance with the language they learned at home as their mother tongue.

Basque speakers are divided into the following categories, depending on their mother tongue.

- **Native Basque speakers:** those who acquired only Basque from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three.
- **Native bilinguals:** those who acquired Basque and another language from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three.
- **New Basque speakers:** those who did not acquire Basque from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three and learned the language later, either at school or at a language academy.

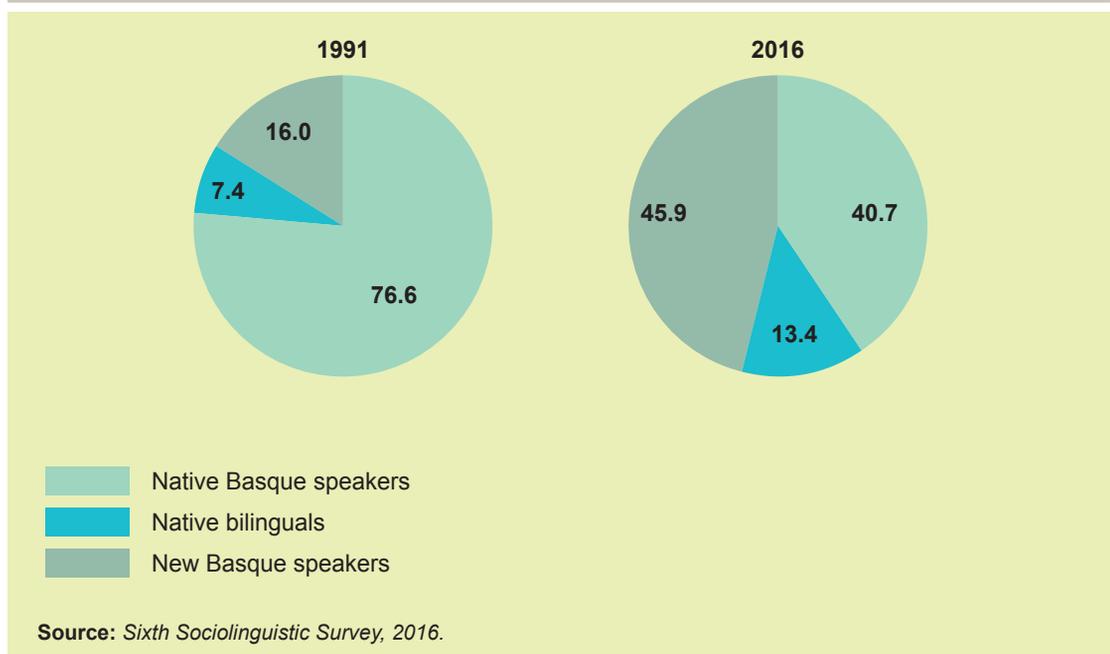
Of Basque speakers over the age of 16 living in Navarre, 40.7% learned only Basque at home (i.e. are native Basque speakers). A much lower percentage (13.4%) learned both Basque and another language at home up until the age of three (i.e. are native bilinguals). Finally, almost half (45.9%) did not learn Basque at home and learned the language later, either at school or at a language academy (i.e. are new Basque speakers).

**Figure 21.** Basque speakers by mother tongue. Navarre, 2016 (%)



Twenty-five years ago, three quarters of all Basque speakers were native Basque speakers (76.6 %) and, unlike today, the percentages of native bilinguals and new Basque speakers were low (7.4 % and 16 %, respectively).

**Figure 22.** Evolution of Basque speakers by mother tongue. Navarre 1991-2016 (%)



If we analyse the figures in relation to the different language zones, we see that the difference is striking. In the Basque-speaking zone, 71.3 % of Basque speakers are native Basque speakers, 11 % are native bilinguals and 17.6 % are new Basque speakers.

In the mixed zone, 65.8 % are new Basque speakers, and the percentages for native Basque speakers and native bilinguals are fairly similar (18.1 % and 16.1 %, respectively).

Finally, in the non-Basque-speaking zone, 80 % are new Basque speakers, 11.7 % are native Basque speakers and 8.3 % are native bilinguals.

The situation in Pamplona is similar to that of the mixed zone, with 62.6 % of Basque speakers being new Basque speakers and the percentages for native Basque speakers and native bilinguals being more or less the same (17.9 % and 19.5 %, respectively).

**Table 10.** Basque speakers by mother tongue and language zone. Navarre, 2016 (%)

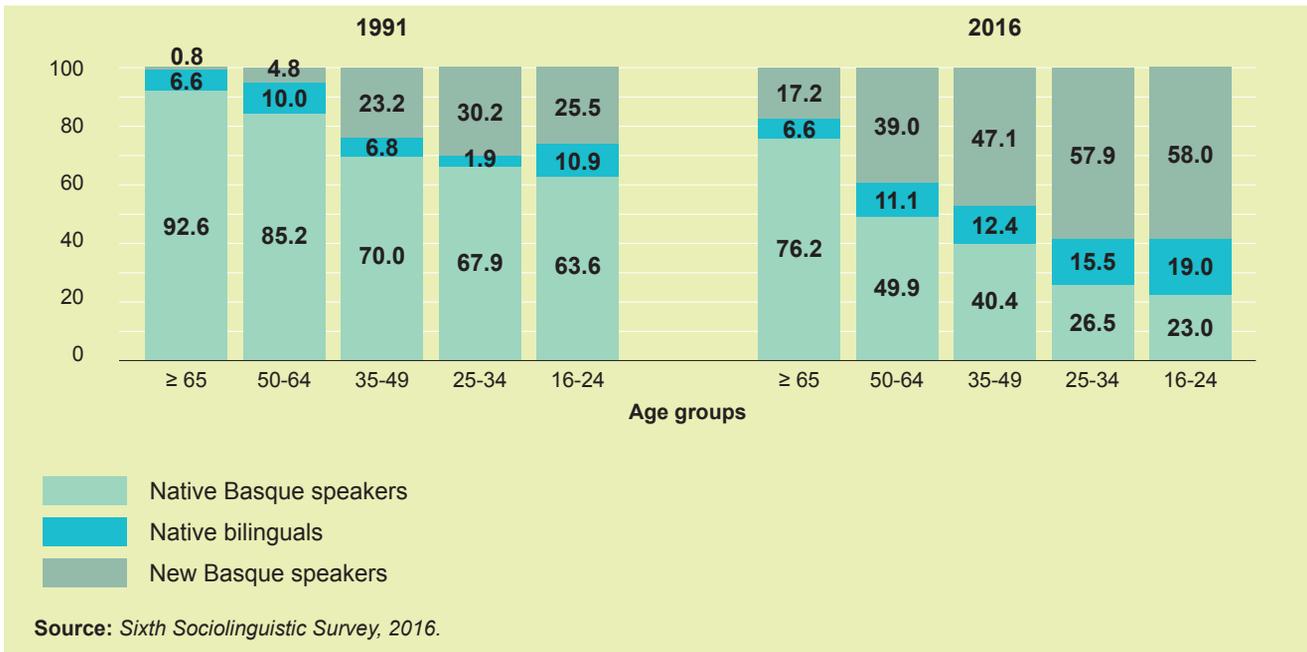
	Basque-speaking zone	Mixed zone	Non-Basque-speaking zone	Pamplona
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>29,909</b>	<b>34,136</b>	<b>4,901</b>	<b>17,491</b>
Native Basque speakers	71.3	18.1	11.7	17.9
Native bilinguals	11	16.1	8.3	19.5
New Basque speakers	17.6	65.8	80.0	62.6

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

If we look at the evolution according to age, we see that the population of Basque speakers has changed considerably over the last 25 years. In 1991, native Basque speakers constituted the majority in all age groups.

Today, however, more than half of all Basque speakers aged 16-24 and 25-34 are new Basque speakers (58 % and 57.9 %, respectively), whereas in 1991, the percentage of new Basque speakers in these age groups were 25.5 % and 30.2 % (respectively).

Figure 23. Evolution of Basque speakers by mother tongue and age. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)



### 3.4. FAMILY LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

To establish the extent of family language transmission, all of those surveyed were asked what language or languages they had acquired at home, depending on the language competence of their parents.

We must remember that the universe surveyed includes people aged 16 up to almost 100. The survey therefore offers the possibility of finding out how language has been transmitted in the home over this period of time.

In Navarre, when both parents are Basque speakers, 69.3% of children acquire only Basque as their mother tongue, 11.8% acquire both Basque and another language and 18.9% do not learn Basque from their parents at home.

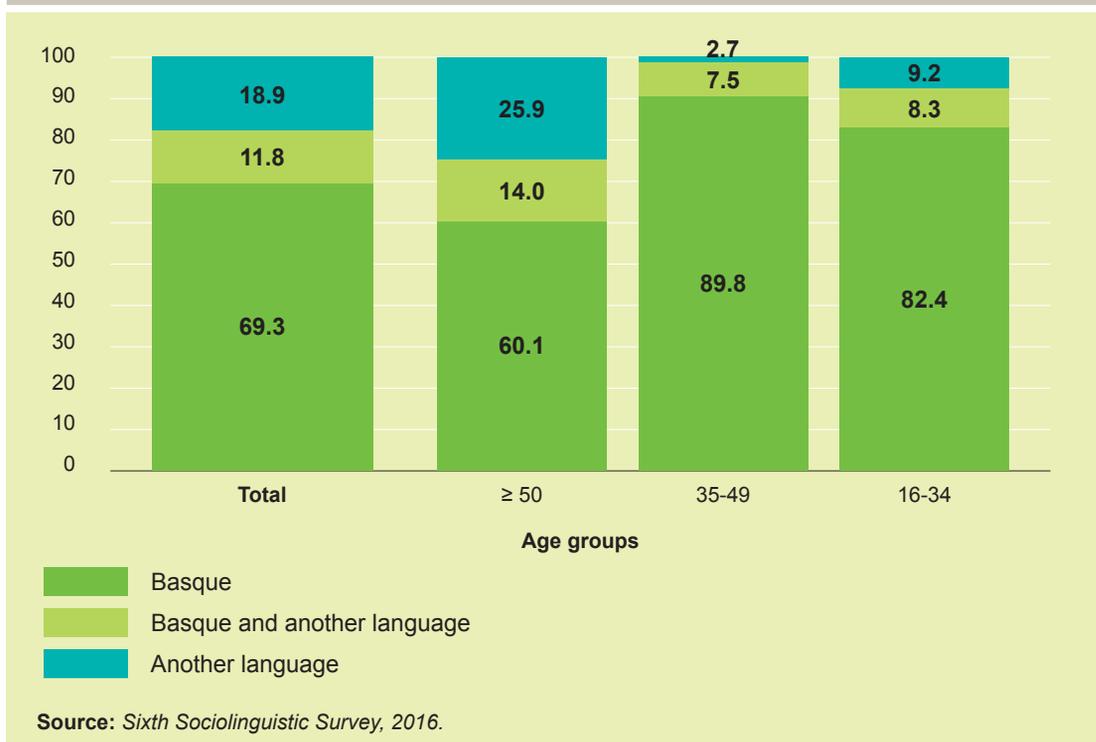
When only one parent speaks Basque, 71.6% learn only a language other than Basque at home and 28.4% learn both Basque and another language.

It is worth mentioning that when both parents are Basque speakers, the lowest level of transmission is found among those aged 50 and over. Thus, among those aged between 16 and 34, when both parents are Basque speakers, 82.4 % claim to have learned only Basque at home, and 8.3 % both Basque and another language.

Similarly, in the 35-49 age group, 89.8 % learned only Basque at home, and 7.5 % learned Basque and another language.

Finally, among those aged 50 and over, 60.1 % learned only Basque at home, and 14 % learned both Basque and another language.

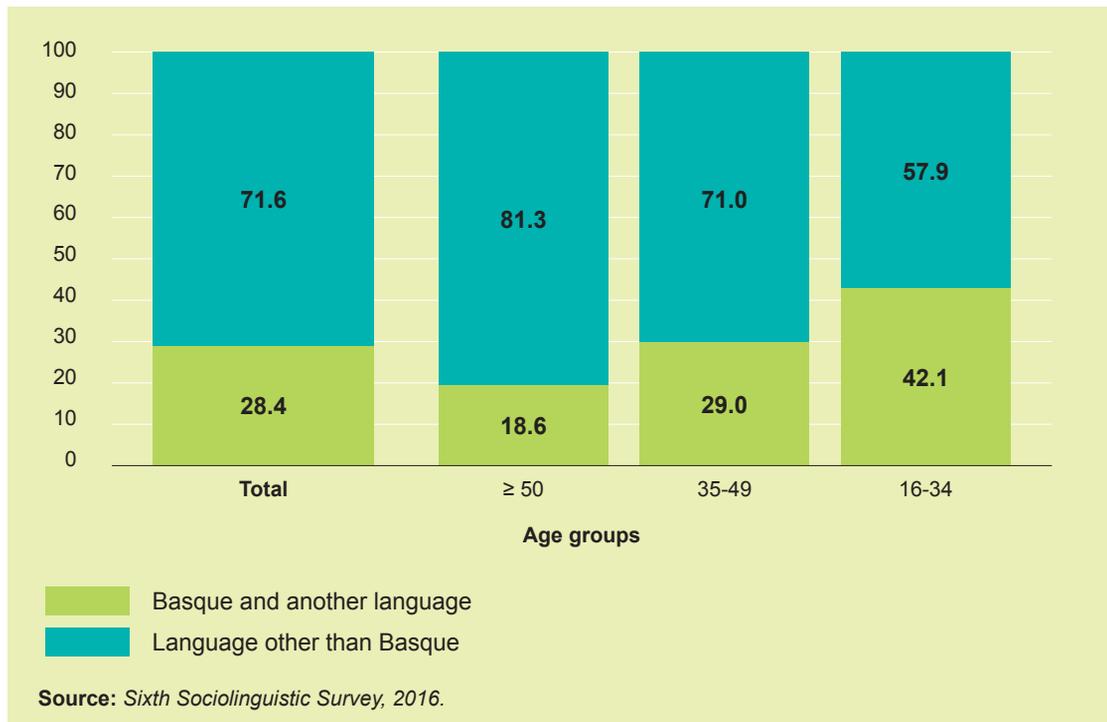
**Figure 24.** Basque transmission when both parents are Basque speakers, by age. Navarre, 2016 (%)



When only one parent speaks Basque, the difference between the age groups is greater. Among the younger people surveyed, Basque transmission is greater.

Thus, among those with only one Basque-speaking parent, 42.1 % of those in the 16-34 age group learned both Basque and another language at home as their mother tongues, while this figure is 29 % among the 35-49 age group and 18.7 % among the over 50s.

**Figure 25.** Basque transmission when only one parent speaks Basque, by age. Navarre, 2016 (%)

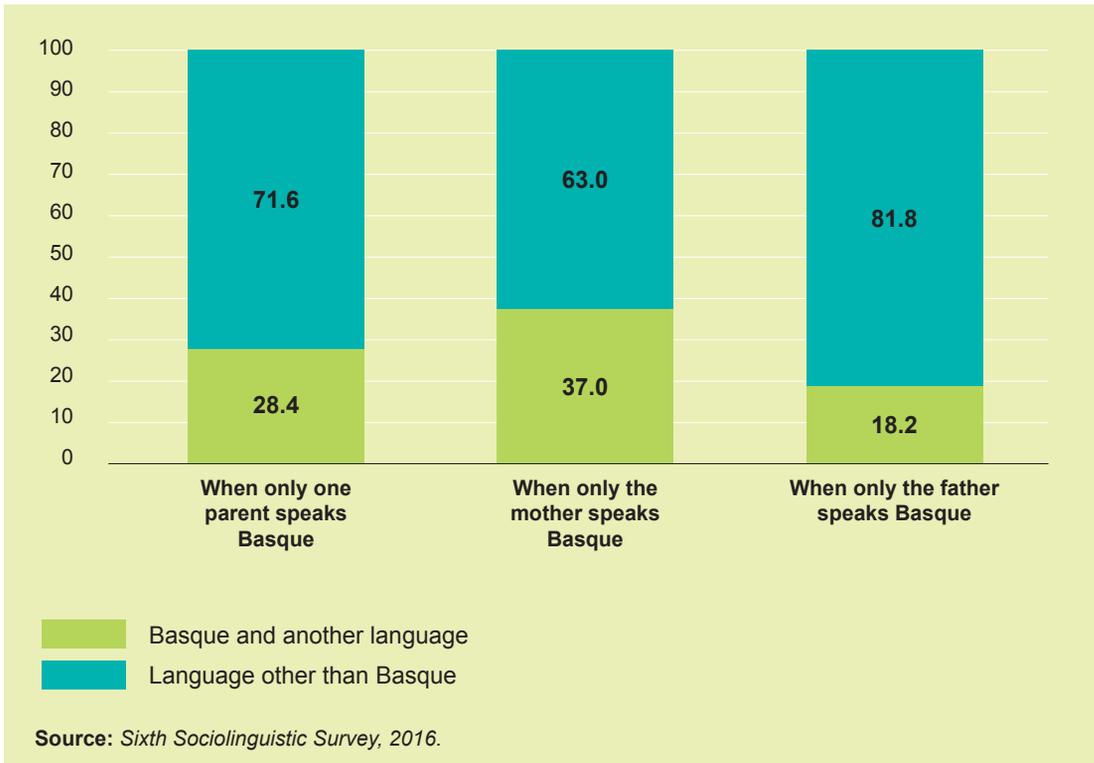


Similarly, when only one parent speaks Basque, Basque language transmission differs greatly depending on whether that parent is the mother or the father.

When only the mother speaks Basque, 63% learn only a language other than Basque at home and 37% learn both Basque and another language. When only the father speaks Basque, 81.8% do not learn Basque at all and 18.2% learn both Basque and another language.

Transmission increases as we move down the age scale, both when the single Basque-speaking parent is the mother and when it is the father. The difference between the two situations also grows smaller, although we will not present those data here, since the sample is too small to enable the results to be broken down in accordance with sex and age.

**Figure 26.** Basque transmission when only one parent speaks Basque, by sex of the Basque-speaking parent. Navarre, 2016 (%)



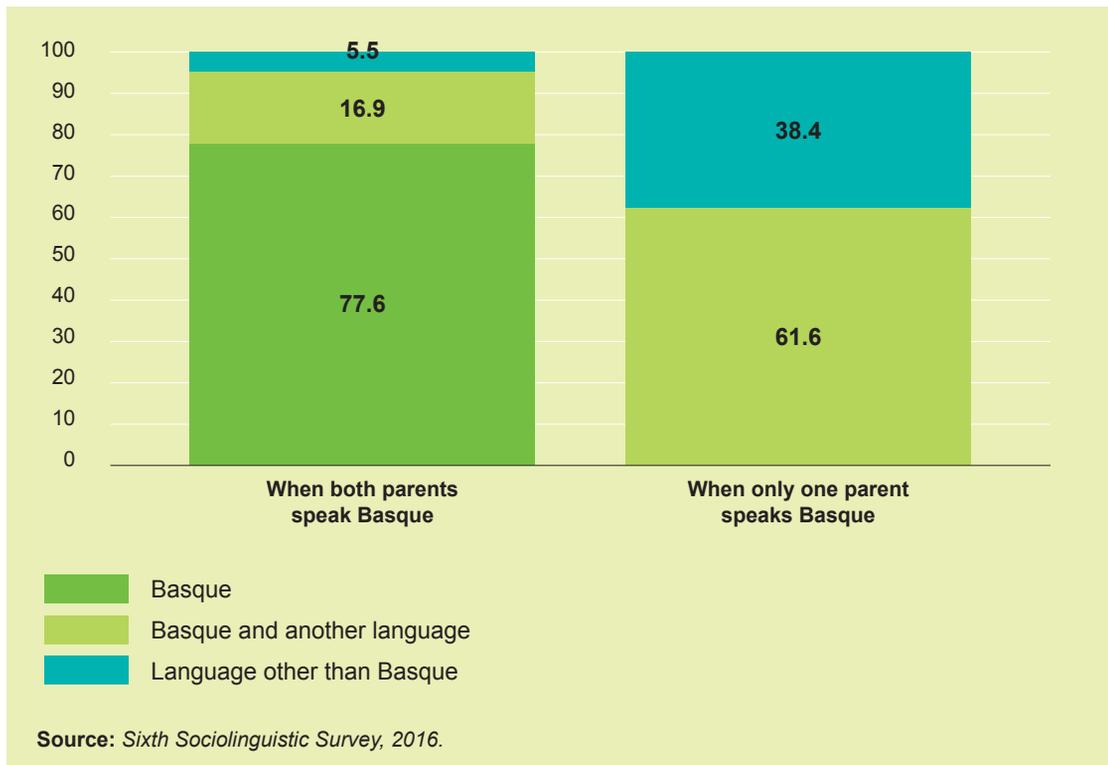
### LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 3 AND 15

In order to explore language transmission in families with children aged between 3 and 15, interviewees were asked what language they transmit to their offspring.

When both parents speak Basque, 77.6% transmit only that language, 16.9% transmit both Basque and another language and 5.5% transmit only another language.

When only one parent is a Basque speaker, 61.6% transmit Basque and 38.4% a language other than Basque.

**Figure 27.** Basque transmission in families with children aged 3-15, by parents' language competence. Navarre, 2016 (%)



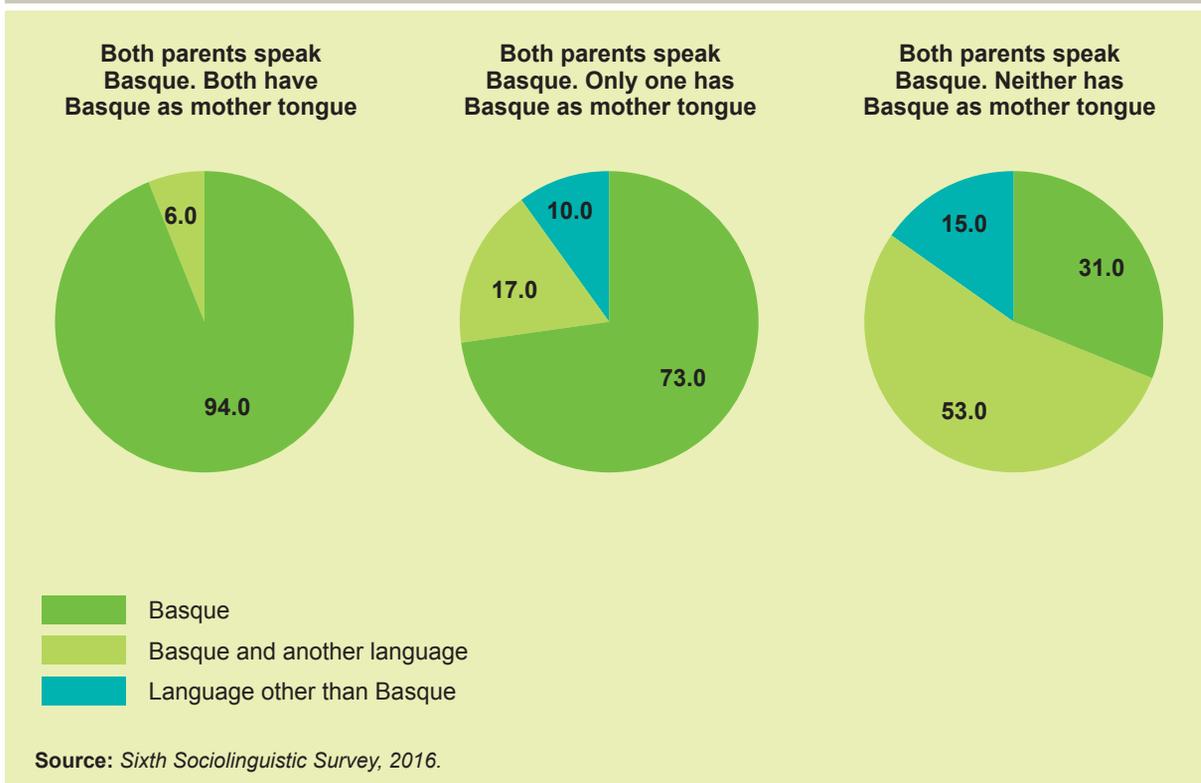
When analysing this kind of transmission, parents' mother tongue was taken into consideration, alongside their language competence.

When both parents speak Basque and both have that language as their mother tongue, transmission is total, with 94 % speaking only Basque at home with their children and 6 % speaking both Basque and another language.

When both parents speak Basque and but only one has that language as their mother tongue, 73 % transmit only Basque to their children at home, 17 % transmit both Basque and another language and 10 % transmit only a language other than Basque.

When both parents are Basque speakers but neither have Basque as their mother tongue, 31 % transmit only Basque to their children at home, 53 % transmit both Basque and another language and 15 % transmit only a language other than Basque.

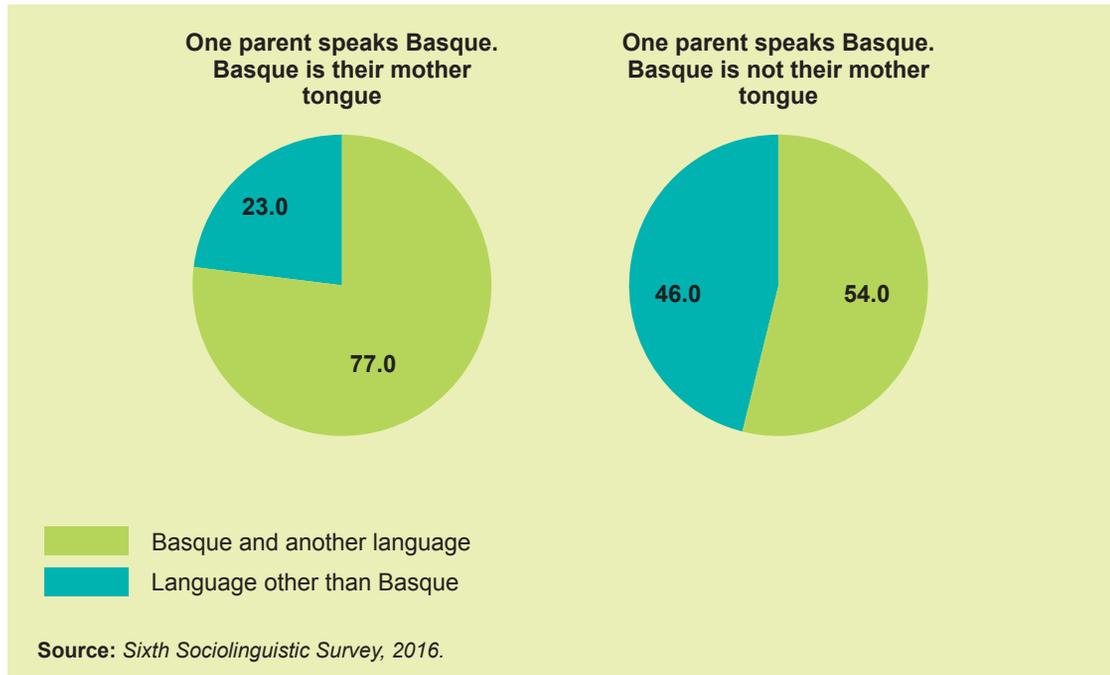
**Figure 28.** Basque transmission in families with children aged 3-15, by parents' mother tongue. Navarre, 2016 (%)



When only one parent speaks Basque, and that language is their mother tongue, 77% transmit both Basque and another language to their children at home, and 23% transmit only another language.

When only one parent speaks Basque, and that language is not their mother tongue, 54% transmit both Basque and another language to their children at home, and 46% transmit only another language.

**Figure 29.** Basque transmission in families with children aged 3-15, by parents' mother tongue. Navarre, 2016 (%)



### 3.5. BASQUE LANGUAGE GAINS AND LOSSES

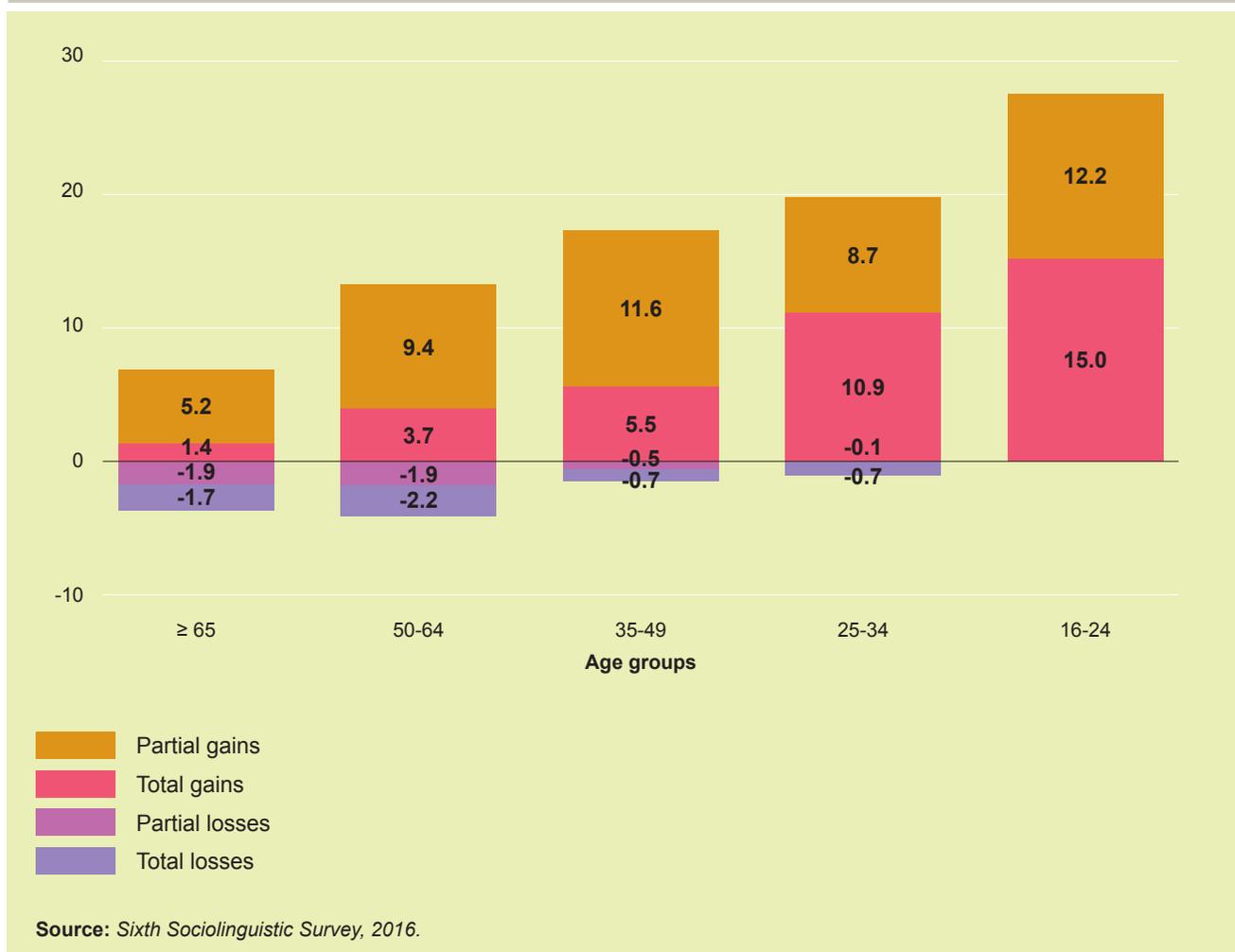
Most people whose mother tongue is either Basque or Basque and another language have retained the language and are currently Basque speakers (75.6%).

However, 12,000 people no longer speak Basque, despite having learned that language as their mother tongue (i.e. they have totally or partially lost their Basque). This group represents 24.4% of those who learned either only Basque or Basque and another language at home with their parents. Most of these are in the over 50s age group and live in the mixed zone.

At the same time, 31,600 people (45.9% of the Basque-speaking population) have learned Basque and are now Basque-speakers, despite not having learned the language at home as their sole or joint mother tongue. Most live in the mixed zone.

These language gains differ widely between the various age groups, with the percentage being very low among the over 65s and very high among the youngest people surveyed. In other words, the numbers increase as you move down the age scale.

Figure 30. Basque gains and losses, by age. Navarre, 2016 (%)



## 4. USE OF BASQUE

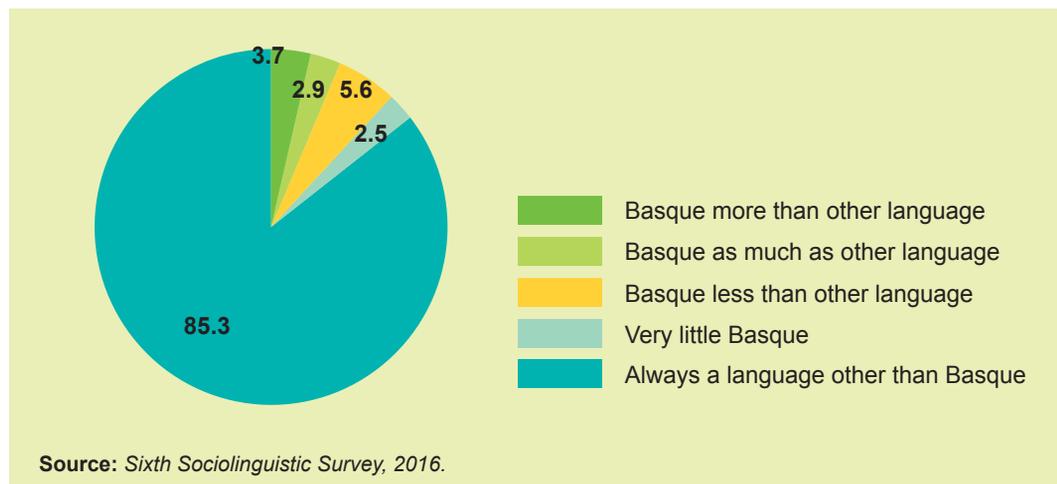
### 4.1. BASQUE USE BY LANGUAGE ZONE AND CAPITAL CITY

Of the population of Navarre aged 16 and over, 12.2% use Basque to some extent:

- a. 6.6% use Basque intensively, i.e. they use it as much as or more than the other language they speak in their everyday life.
- b. 5.6% also use Basque, but to a lesser extent than their other language.

The remaining 87.8% almost always or always use a language other than Basque. It is important to bear in mind, however, that in this last group there is a small percentage of people (2.5%) who do occasionally use Basque, even though they do not do so very often.

Figure 31. Basque use. Navarre, 2016 (%)



To measure Basque language use, the Basque Government Deputy Ministry for Language Policy has defined a series of categories or typologies. These categories take into account Basque use in the following domains:

- use at home with family members (with one's partner, children, siblings and parents)

- use with friends
- use in formal situations (local shops, banks, health centres and municipal services)

Major differences exist between the language zones in relation to Basque language use. Those who use Basque intensively (i.e. as much as or more than any other language) represent 50.7% of the population living in the Basque-speaking zone, 3.2% of those in the mixed zone and 0.2% of those in the non-Basque-speaking zone. Those who use Basque, but to a lesser extent than the other language they speak, represent 11.9% of those in the Basque-speaking zone, 10.8% of those in the mixed zone and 2.5% of those in the non-Basque-speaking zone.

3.1% of those living in Pamplona claimed to use Basque as much as or more than their other language.

**Table 11.** Basque language use in the three language zones and Pamplona. Navarre, 2016 (%)

	Basque-speaking zone	Mixed zone	Non-Basque-speaking zone	Pamplona
Basque more than other language	36.2	0.6	—	0.7
Basque as much as other language	14.5	2.6	0.2	2.4
Basque less than other language	9.8	7.4	1.4	6.6
Very little Basque use	2.1	3.4	1.1	2.4
Always a language other than Basque	37.3	85.9	97.3	87.9

**Source:** Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

The differences observed between the language zones are also noticeable between the different sociolinguistic areas, with the percentage of those who use Basque intensively being 2.5% in sociolinguistic areas Types 1 and 2, 53.3% in Type 3 area and 81.5% in Type 4 area.

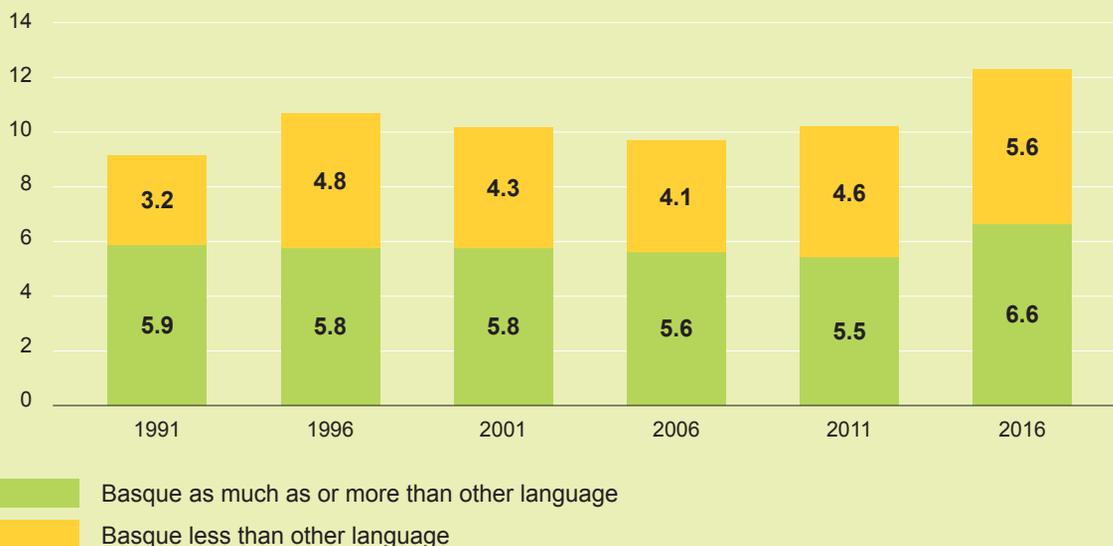
**Table 12.** Basque language use by sociolinguistic area. Navarre, 2016 (%)

	Types 1 and 2	Type 3	Type 4
Basque more than other language	0.5	34.1	65.9
Basque as much as other language	2.0	19.2	15.5
Basque less than other language	5.4	11.2	6.4
Very little Basque use	2.5	4.8	0.3
Always a language other than Basque	89.6	30.7	11.9

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If we analyse the evolution of these figures, we see that intensive Basque language use has changed very little over the last 25 years. After a slight decrease between 1991 and 2011, the trend has changed over the last five years, with the percentage rising by 1.1 points. It has yet to be determined whether this trend will continue in the future.

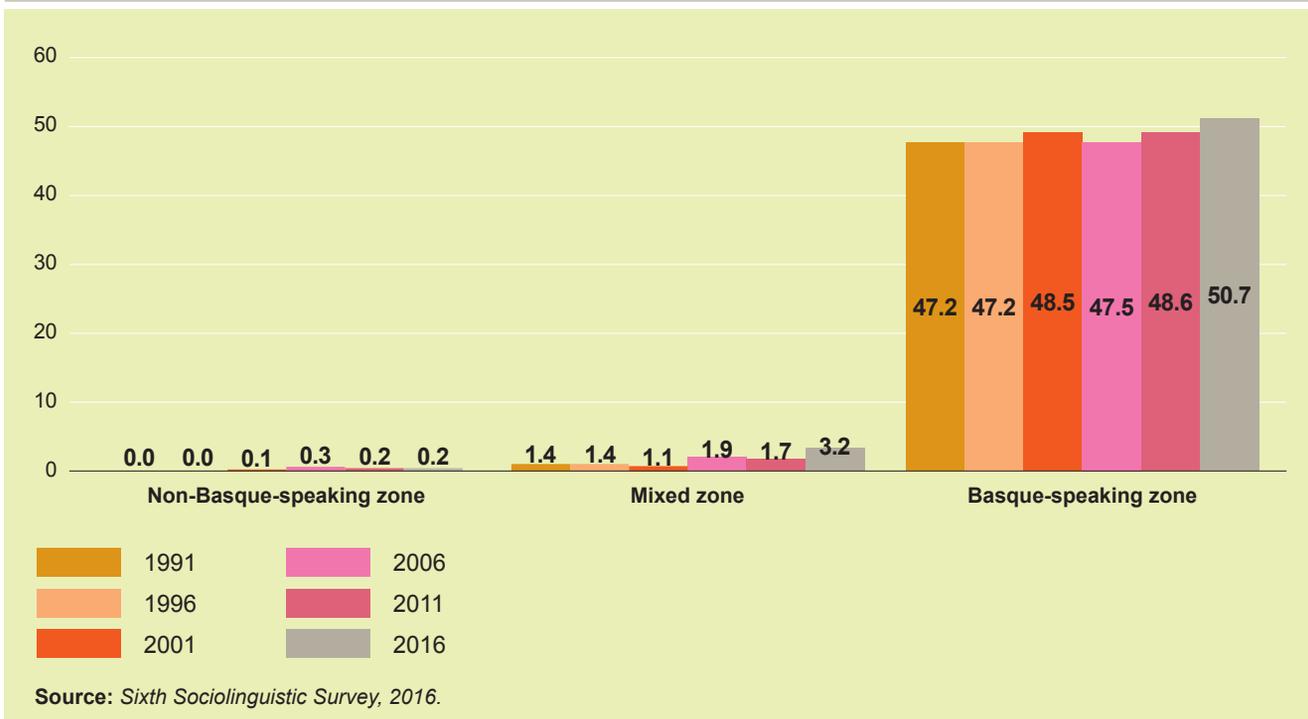
**Figure 32.** Evolution of Basque use. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

Basque use has increased in the Basque-speaking and mixed zones. Between 1991 and 2016, the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language rose by 3.5 points in the Basque-speaking zone and by 1.8 points in the mixed zone. The largest increase took place over the last five years: 2.1 points in the Basque-speaking zone and 1.5 points in the mixed zone.

**Figure 33.** Evolution of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language, by language zone. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)



## 4.2. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BY SEX AND AGE

As regards sex, in general there are no significant differences between men and women as regards Basque language use. In 2016, the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language is 6.3% among women and 6.8% among men. Moreover, over the last 25 years, the difference in the percentage of women and men who use Basque as much as or more than their other language has been consistently small, although the figures have been slightly higher for men than for women.

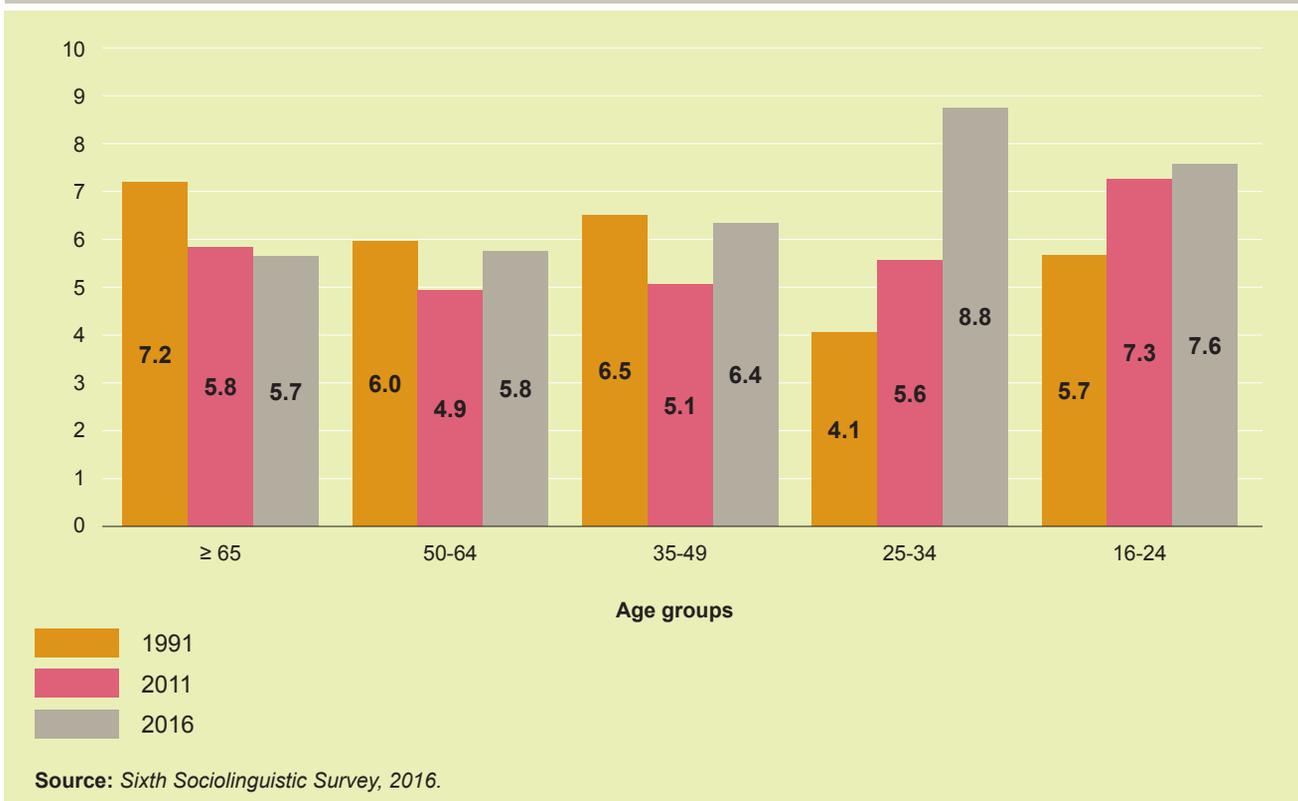
**Table 13.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language, by sex. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Men	7.0	6.4	6.6	6.2	5.8	6.8
Women	5.0	5.3	5.2	5.4	5.3	6.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If we analyse Basque language use by age, we see that the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language decreases as you move up the age scale from 65 years of age, and increases as you move down the age scale from age 35. Among the 35-49 age group, Basque use dropped between 1991 and 2011, although the change in trend over the last five years occurred here also. The percentage of Basque use rose by 0.9 points among the 50-64 age group and by 1.3 points among those aged between 35 and 49.

**Figure 34.** Evolution of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language, by age. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)



In the non-Basque-speaking zone, the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language has remained at less than 1% in all age groups over the last 25 years (and is still below that threshold today).

In the mixed zone, the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language is 1.3% among those aged over 65, and has changed very little (0.5 points or less) over the last 25 years. Moreover, although there have been some ups and downs, in general, the percentage of those who use Basque intensively has risen in all age groups, with the largest increase being found among the under 35s.

In the Basque-speaking zone, the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language has dropped among the over 50s and risen among those aged 49 and under. The largest increase is found among the under 35s, with the percentage of intensive Basque use growing as you move down the age scale.

**Table 14.** Those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language, by language zone and age. Navarre, 2016 (%)

	Age					
	Total	≥ 65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
Navarre	6.6	5.7	5.8	6.4	8.8	7.6
Basque-speaking zone	50.7	50.2	42.0	49.4	61.8	64.6
Mixed zone	3.2	1.3	2.9	3.1	6.0	4.2
Non-Basque-speaking zone	0.2	—	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.3

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

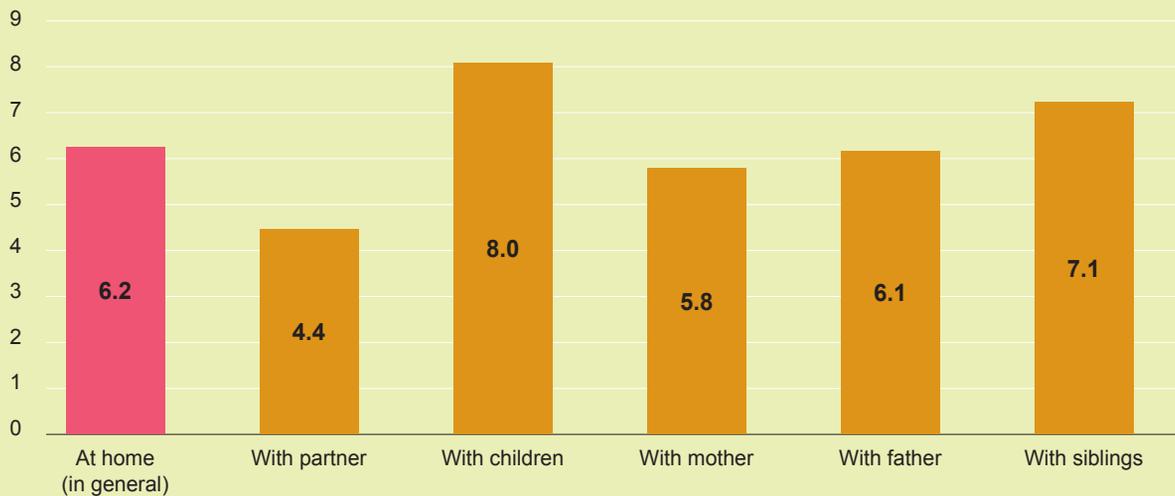
### 4.3. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS: AT HOME, WITH FRIENDS, IN FORMAL SITUATIONS

#### BASQUE USE AT HOME

In Navarre, 6.2% of all those aged 16 and over use Basque as much as or more than their other language at home; 3.1% use Basque but use their other language more and the remaining 90.7% use only a language other than Basque.

There are significant differences in Basque use between the different family members. Basque is most used by parents when talking to children (8%), and least used when partners talk to one another (5.4%). The figures for other types of use are as follows: between siblings: 7.1%, with the father: 6.1% and with the mother: 5.8%.

**Figure 35.** Those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language at home. Navarre, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

As regards the evolution of these figures over the last 25 years, after dropping between 1991 and 2011, general Basque use at home has increased over the last five years by 0.8 points.

**Table 15.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language at home. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
At home, when all family members are present	6.7	6.5	6.3	6.0	5.4	6.2
Between partners in a couple	5.0	4.0	4.6	4.1	4.2	4.4
With children	6.5	7.1	6.8	7.6	8.0	8.0
With mother	6.5	6.0	6.2	5.4	5.0	5.8
With father	6.2	4.7	6.1	5.4	4.7	6.1
With siblings	6.2	6.9	7.2	6.6	7.0	7.1

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

## BASQUE USE WITH FRIENDS

In Navarre, 7.8 % of all those aged 16 and over use Basque as much as or more than their other language with their friends; 5.8 % use Basque with friends but use their other language more and the remaining 86.4 % use only a language other than Basque.

The percentage of those who use mainly Basque with their friends has risen by 0.6 points over the last 25 years, and the percentage of those who use some Basque in that environment (although less than their other language) has risen by 2.7 points.

**Table 16.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language with friends. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Use with friends	7.2	7.9	7.5	7.2	7.2	7.8

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

## BASQUE USE IN FORMAL SITUATIONS

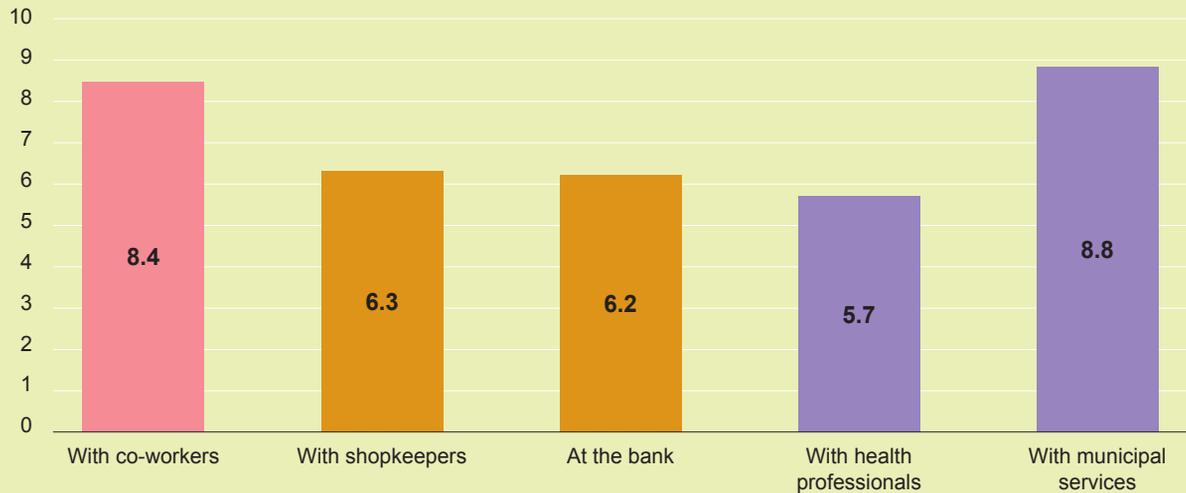
In this section we analyse Basque use in three different domains: with co-workers, in the private sphere (with shopkeepers and bank clerks) and in the public sphere (healthcare and municipal services).

In 2016, 8.4 % of people living in Navarre claimed to use Basque as much as or more than their other language with their co-workers; 4.6 % said they used Basque in this environment, but less than their other language and 87 % said they did not use Basque at all.

In the private sphere, 6.3 % use Basque as much as or more than their other language with shopkeepers and 6.2 % do so at their bank. In these same two domains, the percentages of those who use Basque but do so less than their other language are 4.6 % and 3.1 % (respectively).

In the public sphere, 5.7 % use Basque as much as or more than their other language with members of the health service, and 8.8 % do so when dealing with municipal services.

**Figure 36.** Those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language in formal situations. Navarre, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

The use of Basque in the formal sphere has increased over the last 25 years, with the percentage of those who use it as much as or more than their other language rising by 3.1 points with co-workers, 1.6 points with shopkeepers and 2.2 points with bank clerks. In the public sphere, the figures have risen by 3% in relation to healthcare and 4.6 points in relation to municipal services.

**Table 17.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language in formal situations. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
With co-workers	5.3	6.5	5.4	6.3	7.1	8.4
With shopkeepers	4.7	5.0	5.0	5.4	5.1	6.3
At the bank	4.0	5.7	5.6	5.3	5.3	6.2
With healthcare professionals	2.7	4.9	4.7	4.5	4.8	5.7
With municipal services	4.2	6.1	6.7	5.7	6.3	8.8

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

#### **4.4. BASQUE USE ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA**

Of those surveyed, 77% use the social media, and most of these (68.7%) do so on a daily basis. As regards age, in all groups aged under 65, the majority use the social media on a daily basis, and use increases as you move down the age scale, from 74.3% in the 50-64 group to 98.2% in the 16-24 group).

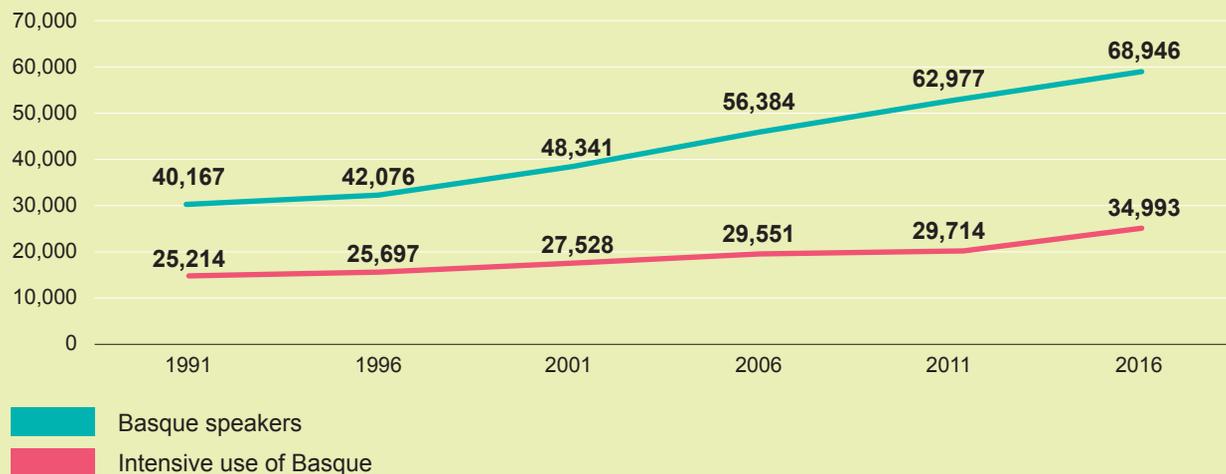
The language most commonly used on online social media is Spanish, even among young people. However, 6.5% often use Basque (i.e. they use Basque at least 50% of the time). Among young people (16-24), 13% use Basque very frequently in this sphere. In addition to Spanish and Basque, however, social media users also use other languages when interacting on line, mainly English (3.3%).

#### **4.5. THE FACTORS INFLUENCING BASQUE LANGUAGE USE: CORRELATIONS**

Taking the results presented so far into account, it can be concluded that more and more people in Navarre use Basque and fewer and fewer use only a language other than Basque. The presence of spoken Basque is gradually increasing in both the family environment and the immediate community, as well as in formal situations.

However, at the same time, it is also true that use is not increasing at the same speed as knowledge, and while the number of people who speak Basque well or quite well is growing, among those who can use the language, the percentage of those who do use it is lower than 25 years ago, even though this figure has risen over the last five years.

**Figure 37.** Evolution of Basque knowledge and use. Navarre, 1991-2016



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If instead of looking at use figures for the whole of society, we look only at use among Basque speakers, we see that the percentage of Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language has dropped by 12.2 points over the last 25 years, even though the number of those who use Basque has increased in absolute terms.

**Figure 38.** Evolution of Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language. Navarre, 1991-2016



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

In order to explore this phenomenon further, we will now analyse the factors influencing Basque use by conducting correlation analyses. Correlation analyses enable us to determine how one variable influences others. This influence is expressed as a value between 0 and 1, with values closer to 1 reflecting a greater degree of influence.

Correlation analyses were conducted in relation to three use domains: use at home, use with friends and use with co-workers. In all three domains we can conclude that, while their relative order of importance may vary, there are two main factors which influence Basque language use: the density of the Basque-speaking social network (i.e. how many people speak Basque in your family and friendship groups, at work and in your sociolinguistic environment) and fluency (which is directly linked to mother tongue).

The factor which most influences use at home is the density of the language environment in that sphere, i.e. how many family members speak Basque (0.770). The second most influential factor is fluency (0.645). Mother tongue is closely linked to fluency, and has a major influence on Basque use at home (0.604). The next most important factor is sociolinguistic area (0.574).

**Table 18.** Correlations: Basque use at home. Navarre, 2016

	How many people speak Basque	Fluency	Mother tongue	Sociolinguistic area
Language spoken at home	0.770	0.645	0.604	0.574

**Source:** *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

The factor which most influences use with friends is the density of the language environment, i.e. how many of one's friends speak Basque (0.614). The second most influential factor is fluency (0.602). Sociolinguistic area is closely linked to social network and has a major influence on Basque use with friends (0.573). The next most important factor is mother tongue (0.442).

**Table 19.** Correlations: Basque use with friends. Navarre, 2016

	How many people speak Basque	Fluency	Sociolinguistic area	Mother tongue
Language spoken with friends	0.614	0.602	0.573	0.442

*Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

The factor which most influences use with co-workers is the density of the language environment in that sphere, i.e. how many people at work speak Basque (0.846). The second most influential factor is fluency (0.407), followed by sociolinguistic area (0.332) and mother tongue (0.251).

**Table 20.** Correlations: Basque use with co-workers. Navarre, 2016

	How many people speak Basque	Fluency	Sociolinguistic area	Mother tongue
Language spoken with co-workers	0.846	0.407	0.332	0.251

*Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

As outlined above, almost half of all Basque speakers in Navarre (45.9%) did not learn Basque at home, half (49.5%) live in the mixed zone and more than half (51.1%) speak their other language more fluently than Basque. Moreover, these percentages rise as you move down the age scale.

In the following two sections we will examine how these characteristics influence Basque language use.

#### 4.6. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BETWEEN BASQUE SPEAKERS, BY SOCIOLINGUISTIC AREA

In 2016, 28.2% of Basque speakers living in sociolinguistic areas Types 1 and 2 (i.e. predominantly non-Basque-speaking areas) used Basque as much as or more than their other language. This figure increases as the number of Basque speakers rises, since this implies a broader network of Basque-speaking relationships. Indeed, in Type 3 sociolinguistic area, 80.3% of Basque speakers use Basque as much as or more than their other language, and this figure is 92.8% in Type 4 area.

**Table 21.** Basque language use by sociolinguistic area. Navarre, 2016 (%)

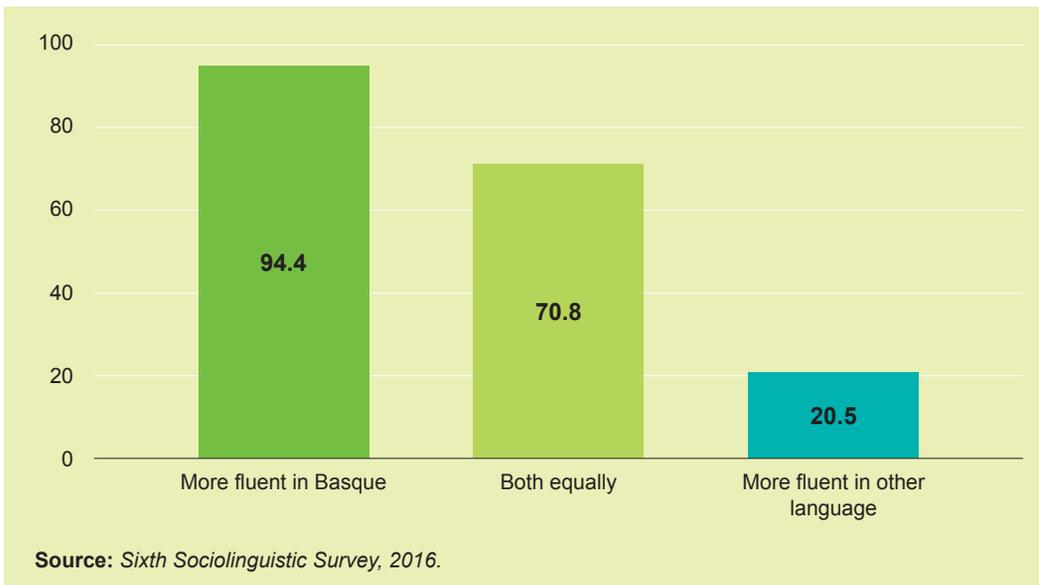
	Types 1 and 2	Type 3	Type 4
Basque as much as or more than other language	28.2	80.3	92.8

**Source:** *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

#### 4.7. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BETWEEN BASQUE SPEAKERS, BY FLUENCY

Among bilinguals with a greater command of Basque (i.e. those who are more fluent in Basque than they are in their other language), 94.4% use Basque as much as or more than their other language. In the case of bilinguals with an equal command of both languages, 70.8% use Basque as much as or more than their other language. Finally, among bilinguals with a greater command of their other language, 20.5% use Basque as much as or more than their other language.

**Figure 39.** Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language, by fluency. Navarre, 2016 (%)



## 5. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE

### 5.1. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE, BY LANGUAGE ZONE AND CAPITAL CITY

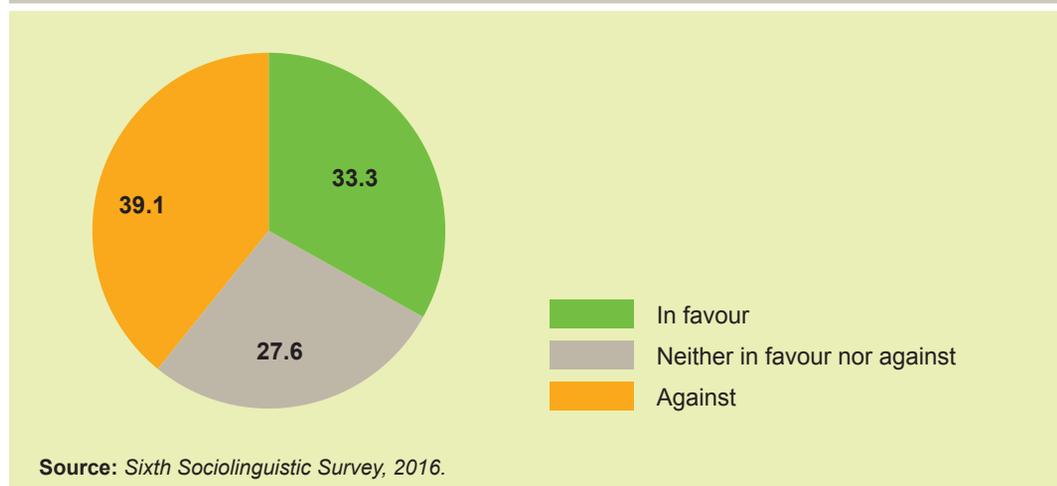
To explore attitudes to the promotion of Basque language use, interviewees were read four statements and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with them.

The statements were as follows:

- Anyone applying for a job in the Public Administration must speak Basque.
- It is better for people to learn English than Basque.
- It is vital for all children to learn Basque.
- There should be more radio/TV programmes in Basque.

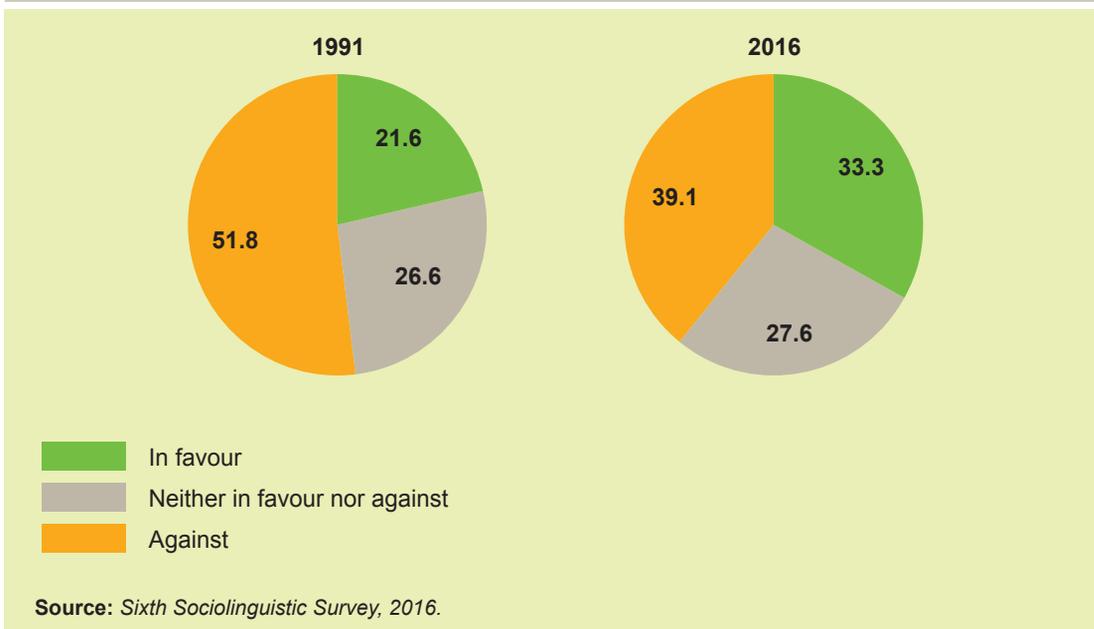
According to the results of the survey, 33.3% of inhabitants aged 16 and over are in favour of promoting the Basque language; 27.6% are neither in favour nor against and 39.1% are against this policy.

**Figure 40.** Attitudes towards Basque language promotion. Navarre, 2016 (%)



In Navarre, the percentage of those in favour of Basque language promotion has risen by almost 12 points over the last 25 years (from 21.6% to 33.3%), although if we compare the current figure with that recorded five years ago, we see that it has dropped slightly (in 2011, 37.7% of the population were in favour of Basque language promotion).

**Figure 41.** Evolution of attitudes towards Basque language promotion. Navarre, 1991-2016 (%)



The percentage of those in favour of this policy is much higher in the Basque-speaking zone (68.1%) than in the mixed zone (36.3%) and the non-Basque-speaking zone (19.1%).

In Pamplona, 37.6% are in favour of Basque language promotion, and 32.7% are against this policy.

**Table 22.** Attitude towards efforts to promote Basque by language zone and capital city. Navarre, 2016 (%)

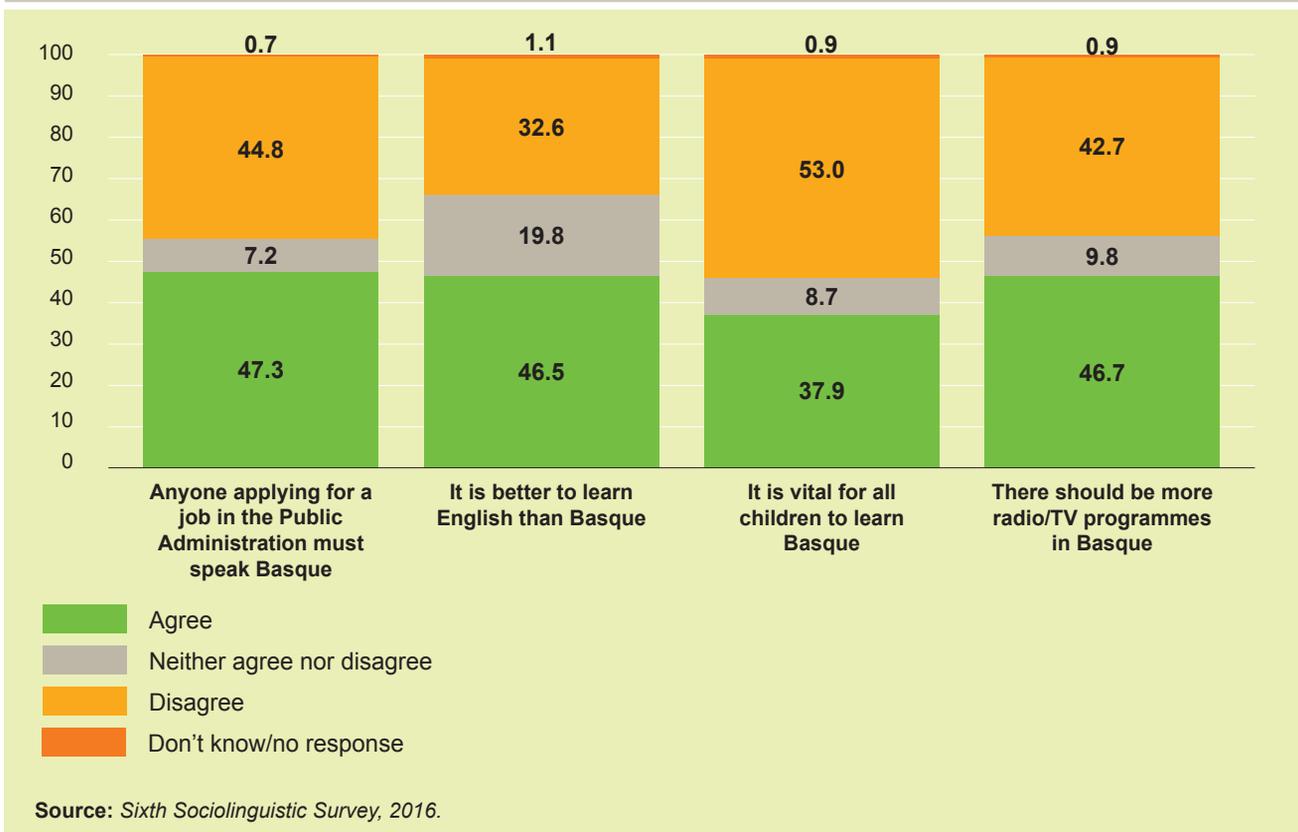
	Basque-speaking zone	Mixed zone	Non-Basque-speaking zone	Pamplona
In favour	68.1	36.3	19.1	37.6
Neither in favour nor against	22.3	31.9	21.8	29.6
Against	9.5	31.8	59.1	32.7

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

The responses to the statements used to determine attitude type were as follows:

- 47.3% of those living in Navarre agreed that anyone applying for a job in the Public Administration must speak Basque, and 7.2% neither agreed nor disagreed. Furthermore, 44.8% disagreed with this affirmation and 0.7% declined to answer.
- Of those interviewed, 46.5% agreed that it was better to learn English than Basque (i.e. 46.5% are against Basque language promotion), 19.8% neither agreed nor disagreed and 32.6% disagreed with this statement (i.e. are in favour of Basque language promotion). No answer was given by 1.1% of those surveyed.
- Of those interviewed, 37.9% said they agreed that it is vital for all children to learn Basque; 8.7% neither agreed nor disagreed, 53% disagreed with this statement and 0.9% declined to answer.
- Finally, 46.7% said they thought there should be more radio/TV programmes in Basque, 9.8% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, 42.7% disagreed and 0.9% did not answer.

Figure 42. Opinions used to established attitude categories. Navarre, 2016 (%)



## 5.2. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE BY LANGUAGE COMPETENCE, SEX AND AGE

Attitude towards Basque is closely linked to language competence, with 82.3% of Basque speakers being in favour of Basque language promotion. The figure among passive Basque speakers is 51.1% and among non-Basque speakers it is 22.7%.

In relation to sex, women tend to have a more positive attitude to Basque language promotion than men (34.3% as opposed 32.4%), and more men than women expressed their disagreement with the policy (40.4% and 37.8%, respectively).

**Table 23.** Attitude towards efforts to promote Basque, by sex. Navarre, 2016 (%)

	In favour	Neither in favour nor against	Against
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>39.1</b>
Women	34.3	27.9	37.8
Men	32.4	27.2	40.4

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

As for age, the highest percentages of those in favour of Basque language promotion are found among the 50-64 and the 25-34 age groups (37.6% and 34.8%, respectively). The highest percentages of those against this policy are found among the over 65s and the 35-49 age group (41.3% and 40.7%, respectively).

### 5.3. INTEREST IN BASQUE AND OTHER OPINIONS

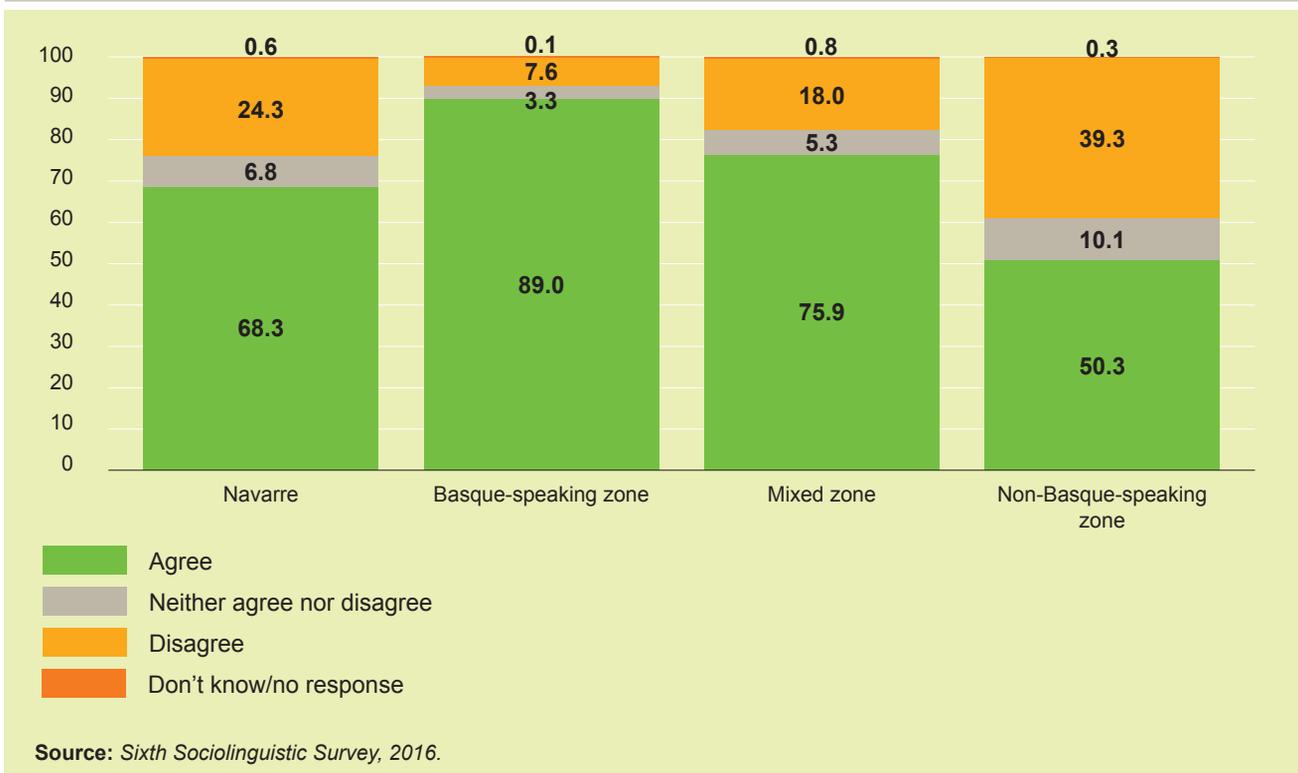
When asked about their interest in Basque, 37.9% of the inhabitants of Navarre expressed a strong interest in the language, 19.5% expressed some interest, 15.3% said they had little interest and 26.8% said they had no interest whatsoever.

Exploring other opinions related to Basque, those surveyed were asked whether they thought Basque should be present in public services throughout the whole of Navarre. Most answered in the affirmative (68.3%), 24.3% answered in the negative, 6.8% said they neither agreed nor disagreed with this idea and 0.6% did not know or did not answer.

If we analyse responses in accordance with language zone, we see that the vast majority (89%) of those living in the Basque-speaking zone are in favour of this idea, and the majority of those in the mixed zone also agreed (75.9%). Even in the non-Basque-speaking zone, the percentage of those who agreed that Basque should be present in public services throughout the whole of Navarre was higher

than that of those who did not (50.3% in favour as opposed to 39.3% against). The rest either said they neither agreed nor disagreed or did not answer.

**Figure 43.** Should Basque be present in public services throughout the whole of Navarre? Responses by language zone. Navarre, 2016 (%)



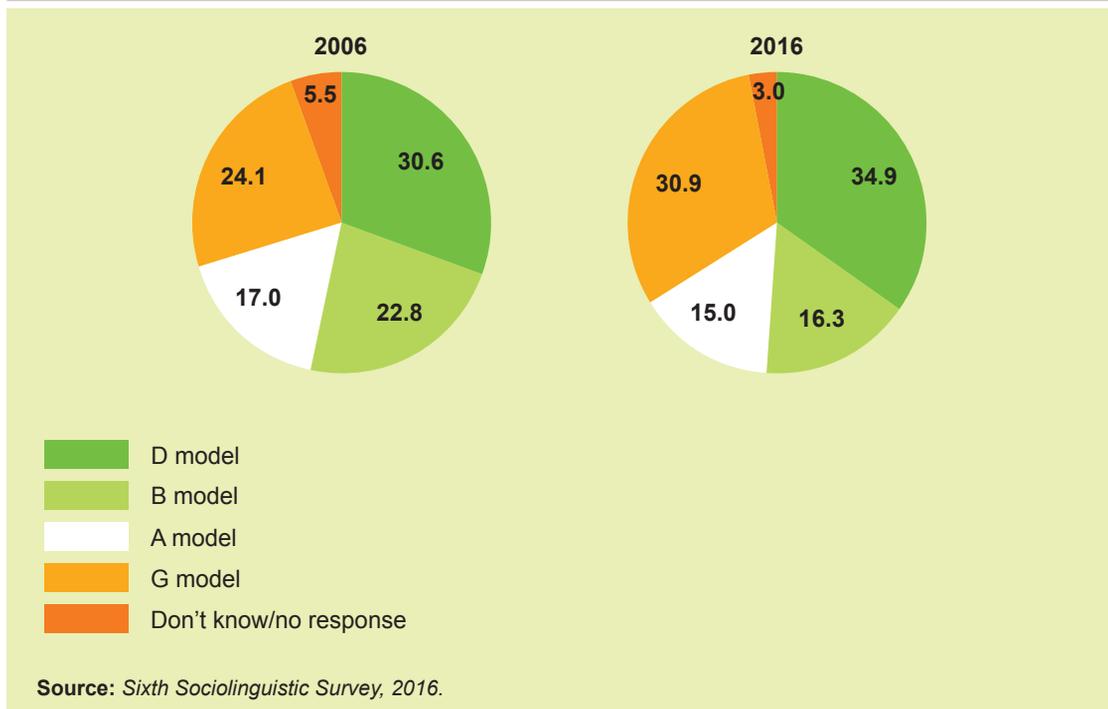
Interviewees were also asked whether they agreed with the statement that all Navarre citizens should have the same right to use Basque, regardless of where they live. Most answered in the affirmative (80.9%), 13.2% answered in the negative, 5.3% said they neither agreed nor disagreed and 0.5% did not know or did not answer.

If we analyse responses in accordance with language zone, we see that the vast majority (92.9%) of those living in the Basque-speaking zone agreed with the statement, as did a clear majority of those in the mixed zone (84.3%). Finally, in the non-Basque-speaking zone also, the percentage of those who agreed with this statement was higher than that of those who did not (72.2% in favour versus 19.7% against).

Exploring other opinions related to Basque, we found that 34.9% of the over-16 population of Navarre would choose the D model for their children’s education, 16.3% would choose the B model, 15% the A model and 30.9% the G model (i.e. Spanish only). The remaining 3% either did not know or did not answer.

Ten years ago, in 2006, the percentage of those who said they would opt for the D model was lower (30.6%) and that of those preferring the B model was higher (22.8%). Similarly, in 2006, the percentage of those who said they would opt for the A model was slightly higher (17%). The percentage of those preferring the G model, however, was lower (24.1%).

**Figure 44.** What language model would you choose for your children’s education? Navarre, 2006-2016 (%)



As regards other attitudes, 84.3% of those over 16 living in Navarre believe that, in the future, people should speak Basque and Spanish, 12.3% believe people should speak only Spanish and 2.5% believe people should speak only Basque.

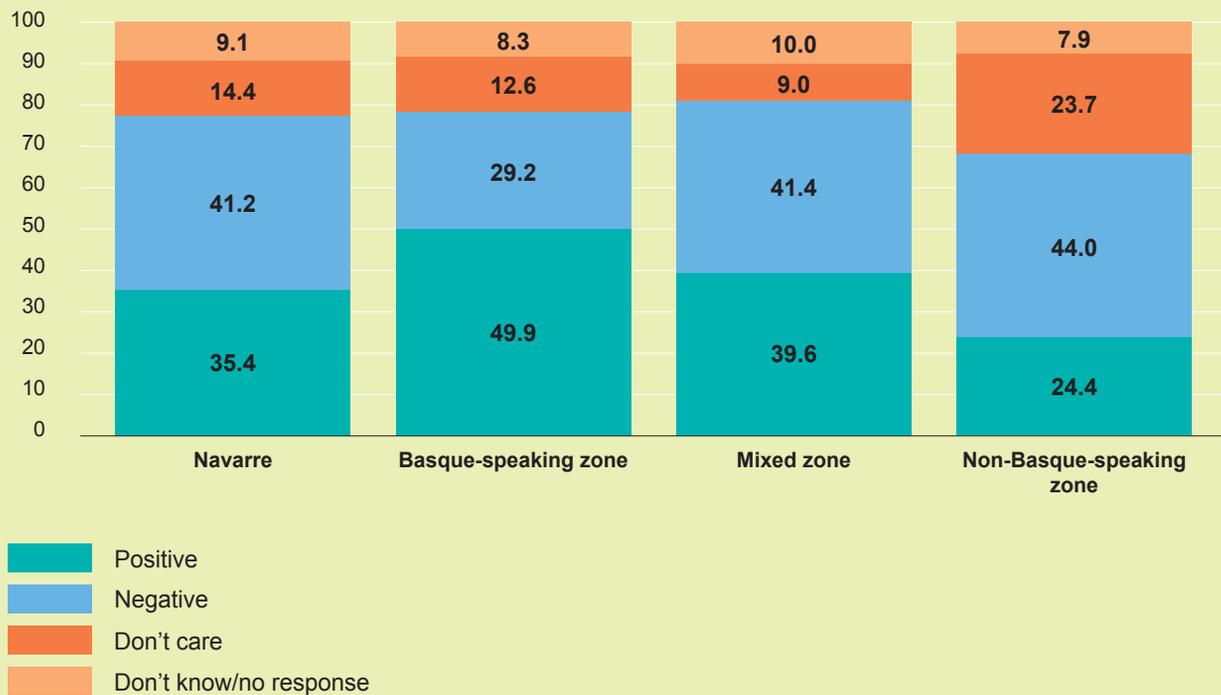
Basque speakers were also asked if they had ever felt discriminated against due to not being able to speak their language of choice; 47.9% answered affirmatively.

When asked to rate the work being done by the Navarre Government to promote the Basque language, 35.4% rated it positively, 41.2% rated it negatively, 14.4% said it was immaterial to them and the remaining 9.1% didn't know or didn't answer.

When asked why, 30.2% said they rated it positively because they felt the Regional Government did a lot to promote Basque, and 2.4% said they did so because they do not think anything further needs to be done. Of those who rated it negatively, 26.3% said they did so because too much has been done and 13.8% because not enough has been done.

In the Basque-speaking zone, 49.9% rated the work carried out by the Navarre Government positively, and 29.2% rated it negatively. In the mixed zone, 39.6% rated the work carried out by the Navarre Government positively, and 41.4% rated it negatively. Finally, in the non-Basque-speaking zone, 24.4% rated the work carried out by the Navarre Government positively, and 44% rated it negatively.

**Figure 45.** Assessment of the work carried out by the Navarre Government to promote the Basque language, by language zone. Navarre, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

In the 2011 survey, 18.3% of Navarre citizens rated the work carried out by their Regional Government to promote Basque positively, and 47.8% rated it negatively. Thus, if we compare the data, we see that the percentage of those rating the work carried out by the Navarre Regional Government positively has risen over the intervening years (from 18.3% to 34.4%), while that of those who rated it negatively has dropped (from 47.8% to 41.2%).

Interviewees were also asked about other opinions linked to the Basque language. The results can be summarised as follows:

- Over half (58.1%) of those aged 16 and over living in Navarre believe that Basque will never be as important as Spanish and 26.1% expressed the opposite opinion, i.e. that Basque will be as important as Spanish in the future.
- In response to the statement “Basque is necessary for people to communicate with each other”, 29.4% said they agreed and 64.9% said they did not.
- When asked whether Basque speakers should start all conversations with strangers in Basque, 42.8% of interviewees said they agreed and 43.5% said they disagreed.
- When asked whether they thought Basque speakers should always speak to each other in Basque, even when some people present do not speak the language, the majority (83.1%) said they disagreed.
- Finally, the majority of those interviewed (68%) said they did not think Basque was in danger of extinction. If we take only Basque speakers into account, almost half (49.1%) said they did not think Basque was in danger of extinction, although 44.1% said they thought it was. The remaining 6.4% said they didn't know.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- Navarre society is characterised by two main features: the progressive ageing of the population and a sharp rise in the number of foreign-born inhabitants. Currently (2016), 19.4% of the population of Navarre is aged 65 and over, life expectancy is increasing (86.3 years for women and 80.9 years for men) and 13.4% of citizens are foreign-born.
- 12.9% of all those aged 16 and over are Basque speakers, 10.3% are passive Basque speakers and the remaining 76.7% do not speak Basque. The percentage of people in Navarre who speak Basque has risen by 3.4 points over the last 25 years, and there are currently 69,000 Basque speakers, 29,000 more than in 1991.
- The highest percentage of Basque speakers is found among young people, with 25.8% of those aged between 16 and 24 being able to speak the language. In 1991 this figure was 10%.
- Almost half of the Basque speakers in Navarre live in the mixed zone (49.5%), 43.4% live in the Basque-speaking zone and 7.1% live in the non-Basque-speaking zone.
- Almost half (45.9%) of all Basque speakers in Navarre learned the language outside their home environment, either at school or at a language academy (i.e. are new Basque speakers). Furthermore, the percentage of new Basque speakers increases as you move down the age scale, with this group representing over half of all Basque speakers aged under 35 years of age. Most new Basque speakers live in the mixed zone and the non-Basque-speaking zone. Most Basque speakers living in the Basque-speaking zone are native Basque speakers (71.3%).
- Mother tongue is directly linked to fluency. Today, over half (51.1%) of all Basque speakers in Navarre speak their other language more fluently than Basque. This percentage is even higher among young people (62.6%).
- Today, almost all Basque-speaking parents with children under the age of 16 speak Basque with their children at home. When both parents speak Basque and both have that language as their mother tongue, transmission is total (94% transmit only Basque to their children

at home, and 6% transmit both Basque and another language). Transmission is also high when neither Basque-speaking parent has Basque as their mother tongue (85% speak Basque at home with their children). Even when only one parent speaks Basque, transmission remains high, particularly when that parent's mother tongue is Basque (77%). However, when that parent's mother tongue is a language other than Basque, transmission drops to just half (54%).

- 6.6% of Navarre citizens use Basque intensively, i.e. they use it as much as or more than the other language they speak in their everyday life. Furthermore, 5.6% also use Basque, but to a lesser extent than their other language. Young people are the ones who use Basque most.
- Major differences exist between the language zones in relation to Basque language use. 50.7% of those living in the Basque-speaking zone use Basque as much as or more than their other language, while this figure is 3.2% in the mixed zone and 0.2% in the non-Basque-speaking zone.
- Intensive use of Basque rose in both the Basque-speaking and mixed zones from 1991 to 2016 (by 3.9 points and 1.8 points, respectively).
- Over the last 25 years, Basque use in formal situations has increased, although use among friends has hardly changed at all. At home and among family members, use in parent-child and sibling relationships has increased, although it has decreased slightly or not changed at all between the partners in a couple (less than 1 point variation).
- The percentage of those in favour of Basque language promotion has risen by almost 12 points over the last 25 years, with 33.3% of those living in Navarre today being in favour of this policy. Attitudes against this policy have decreased, and today, 39.1% are against Basque language promotion. The figures differ significantly between language zones, with the percentage of those in favour being higher than that of those against in the Basque-speaking and mixed zones, and the opposite being true in the non-Basque-speaking zone.



**NORTHERN BASQUE COUNTRY**  
Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey



## 1. POPULATION

In 2016, the Northern Basque Country had a total population of 299,129. If we compare this figure with that recorded for 2001, we see an increase of 32,781 people, in absolute terms.

However, the evolution of the population over the course of these fifteen years has differed from province to province.

If we analyse the situation in the different provinces, we see that population levels have risen all across Lapurdi and Lower Navarre, particularly in Lapurdi. In Zuberoa, on the other hand, population numbers have dropped. Despite this decrease in Zuberoa, however, thanks to the growth in the other provinces, the total population of the Northern Basque Country has increased, particularly over the last five years.

**Table 1.** Population evolution by province. Northern Basque Country, 2001-2016

	2001	2006	2011	2016
<b>Northern Basque Country</b>	<b>266,258</b>	<b>274,875</b>	<b>285,272</b>	<b>299,129</b>
Lapurdi	222,097	230,065	239,635	252,492
Lower Navarre	28,659	29,403	30,357	31,639
Zuberoa	15,502	15,407	15,280	14,998

Source: Gaindegia.

Two factors are responsible for this evolution, firstly the natural increase (i.e. the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths) and secondly, the migratory balance (i.e. the difference between immigration and emigration rates).

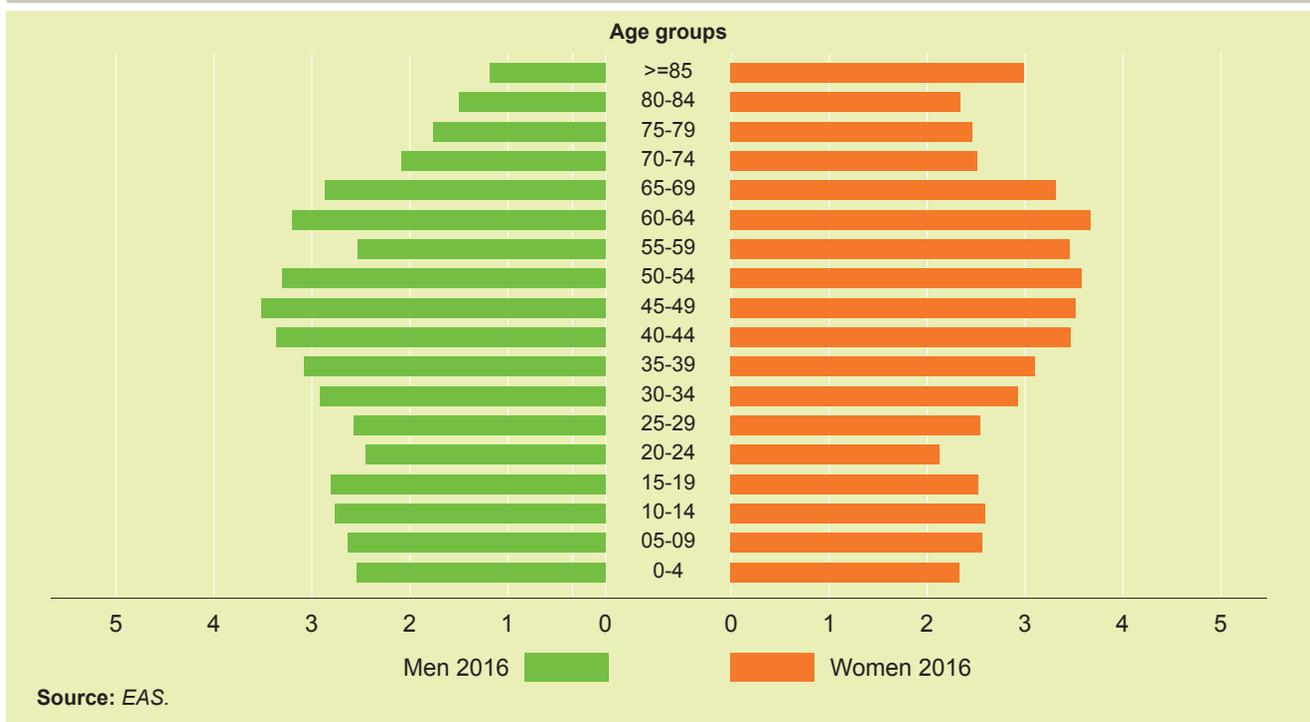
The main characteristics of the native population are as follows:

- Ageing population: life expectancy is high while birth rates are very low (9.3 births per 1,000 inhabitants in 2016; the EU27 mean is 10.1). In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, the birth rate is even lower (8.2 and 7.6 births per 1,000 inhabitants, respectively).
- The death rate, on the other hand, is very high in the Northern Basque Country (11 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants), particularly in Zuberoa (14.3 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants).
- There has also been an increase in the number of inhabitants hailing from other French departments, the Southern Basque Country and abroad. This is particularly noticeable along the Lapurdi coast.

Since 2001, the number of over 65s has increased almost three points, and today, this age group accounts for 23.2% of the total population (as opposed to 20.6% in 2001).

At the same time, the percentage of young people in the population has decreased. In 2016, just 20.8% of the population was under 20 years of age. In short, there are more people over the age of 65 living in the Northern Basque Country than there are young people aged under 20 (23.2% versus 20.8%).

Figure 1. Population pyramid. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



## 2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

### 2.1. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY PROVINCE

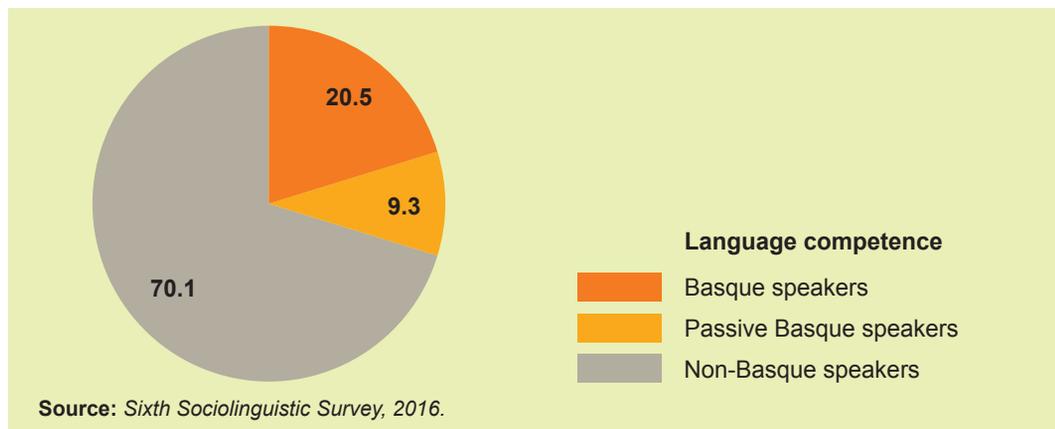
If we classify the population according to their ability to speak Basque, we see there are three types of speaker:

- **Basque speakers (bilinguals):** people who speak Basque fluently and those who speak and understand it fairly well.
- **Passive Basque speakers (passive bilinguals):** people who are not able to speak Basque well or fairly well. However, they do have some knowledge of the language. This group includes anyone who fulfils at least one of the following criteria:
  - They are able to understand and speak some Basque.
  - They are able to understand Basque “well” or “fairly well”.
- **Non-Basque speakers:** people who can neither understand nor speak Basque.

According to the Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, in 2016, 20.5% of the over-16 population living in the Northern Basque Country are Basque speakers, 9.3% are passive Basque speakers and 70.1% are non-Basque speakers.

In other words, of the over-16 population of the Northern Basque Country, 51,197 can speak Basque, 23,299 are passive Basque speakers and 174,944 can not speak the language.

Figure 2. Language competence. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



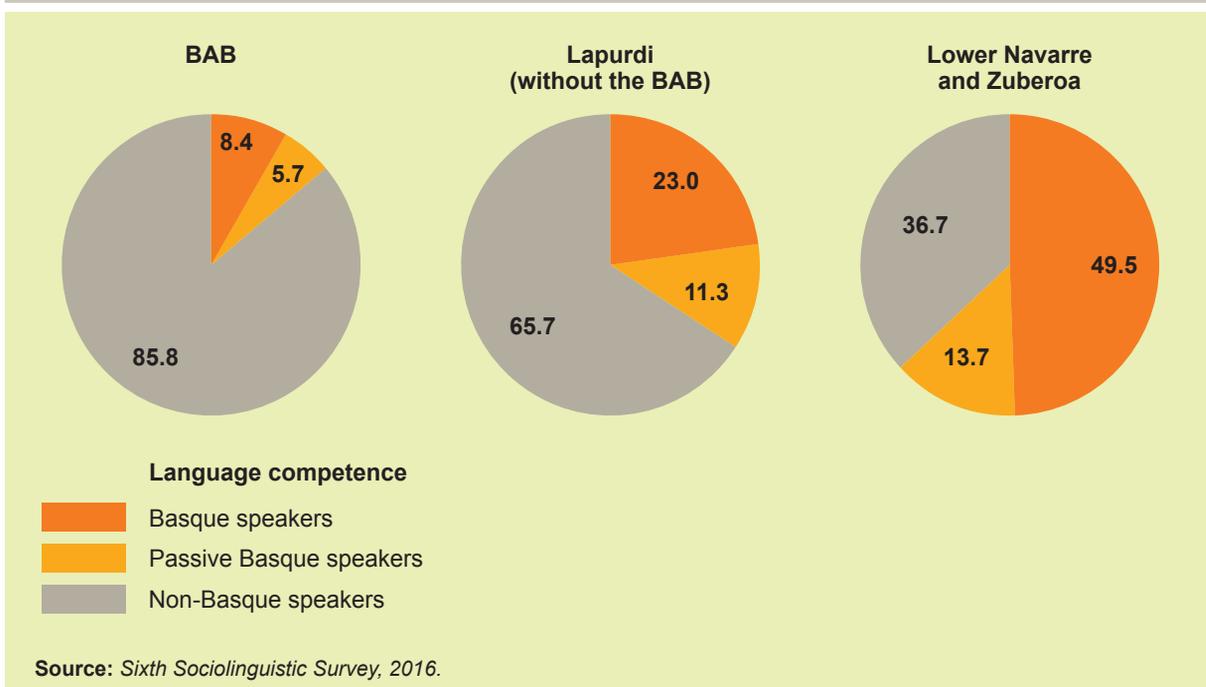
Provinces with the largest percentage of Basque speakers are Lower Navarre and Zuberoa (49.5%). In Lapurdi (without the BAB) 23%. Finally, the lowest percentage of Basque speakers (8.4%) is found in the BAB district (Bayona-Anglet-Biarritz).

**Table 2.** Language competence by province. Northern Basque Country, 2016

	Northern Basque Country	BAB	Lapurdi (without the BAB)	Lower Navarre and Zuberoa
<b>Total</b>	<b>249,441</b>	<b>102,216</b>	<b>114,548</b>	<b>32,677</b>
Basque speakers	51,197	8,633	26,374	16,191
Passive Basque speakers	23,299	5,858	12,949	4,492
Non-Basque speakers	174,944	87,725	75,225	11,994

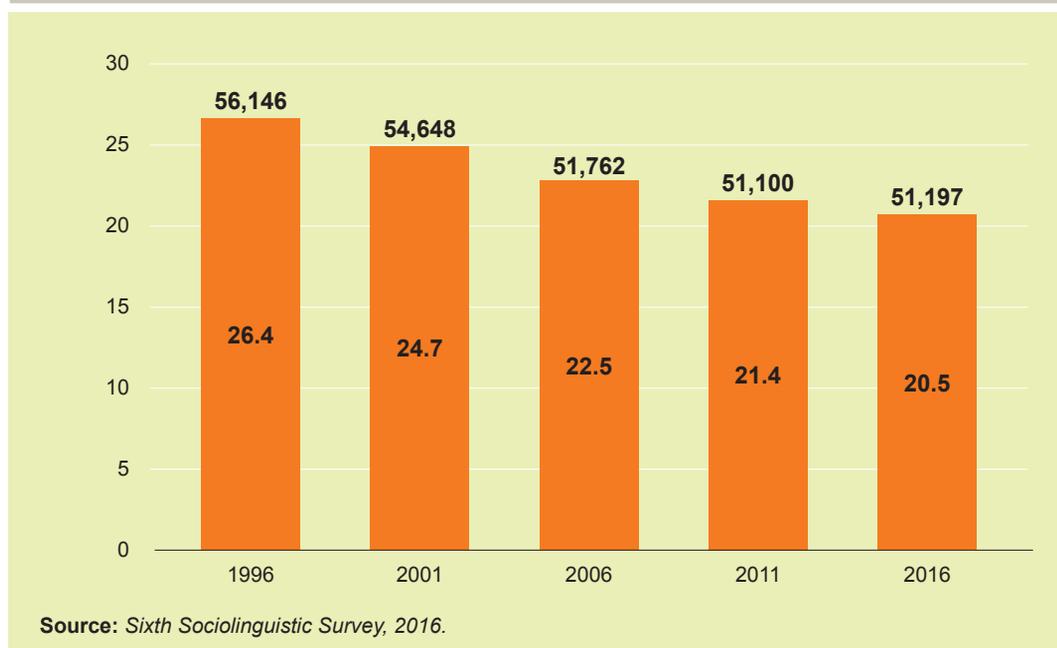
Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

**Figure 3.** Language competence by province. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)

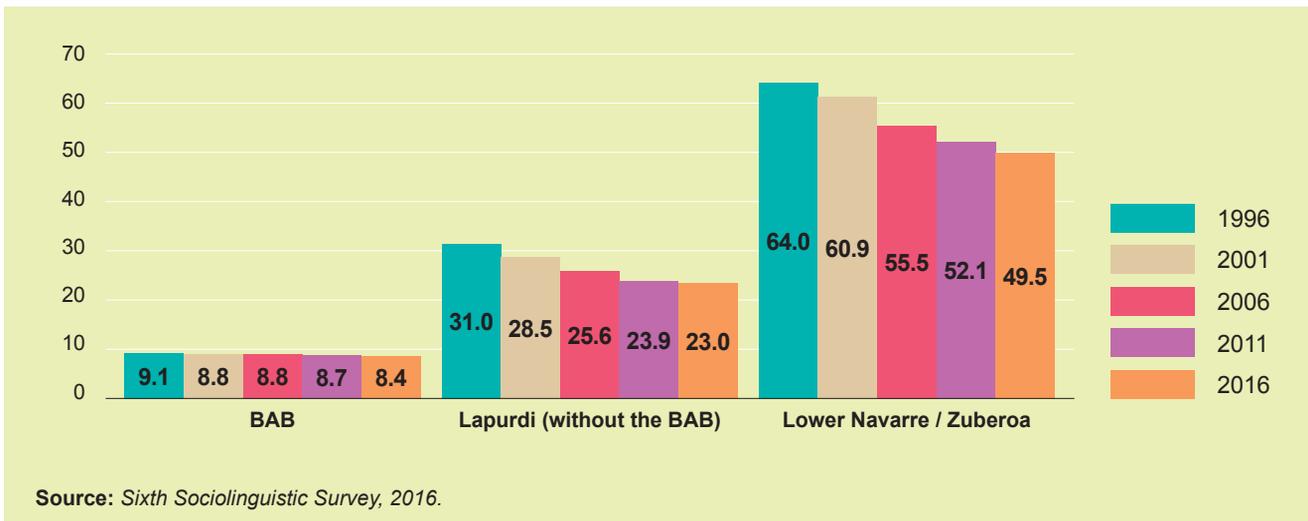


If we look at the evolution over the last 20 years, we see that the percentage of Basque speakers has dropped by 5.9%. In 1996, 26.4% of those living in the Northern Basque Country were Basque speakers, whereas today, this figure is 20.5%. The percentage of passive Basque speakers, however, has not changed at all: 9.3% in both 1996 and 2016.

**Figure 4.** Evolution of Basque speakers. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016



The greatest drop in Basque speakers has occurred in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa. Over the last 20 years, the percentage of Basque speakers in those provinces has decreased 14.5 points, with 64% of the over-16 population being Basque speakers in 1996, as opposed to just 49.5% in 2016.

**Figure 5. Evolution of Basque speakers by province. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)**


## 2.2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY SEX AND AGE

20.4% of women and 20.7% of men in the Northern Basque Country speak Basque, meaning that there is hardly any difference at all between the sexes as regards the overall number of Basque speakers.

If we look at the different provinces, we see that the greatest difference between the sexes (1.4%) is found in the BAB district (9.1% among women and 7.7% among men).

In the other provinces of the Northern Basque Country, however, there is almost no difference at all in either Lapurdi (without the BAB) or Lower Navarre and Zuberoa.

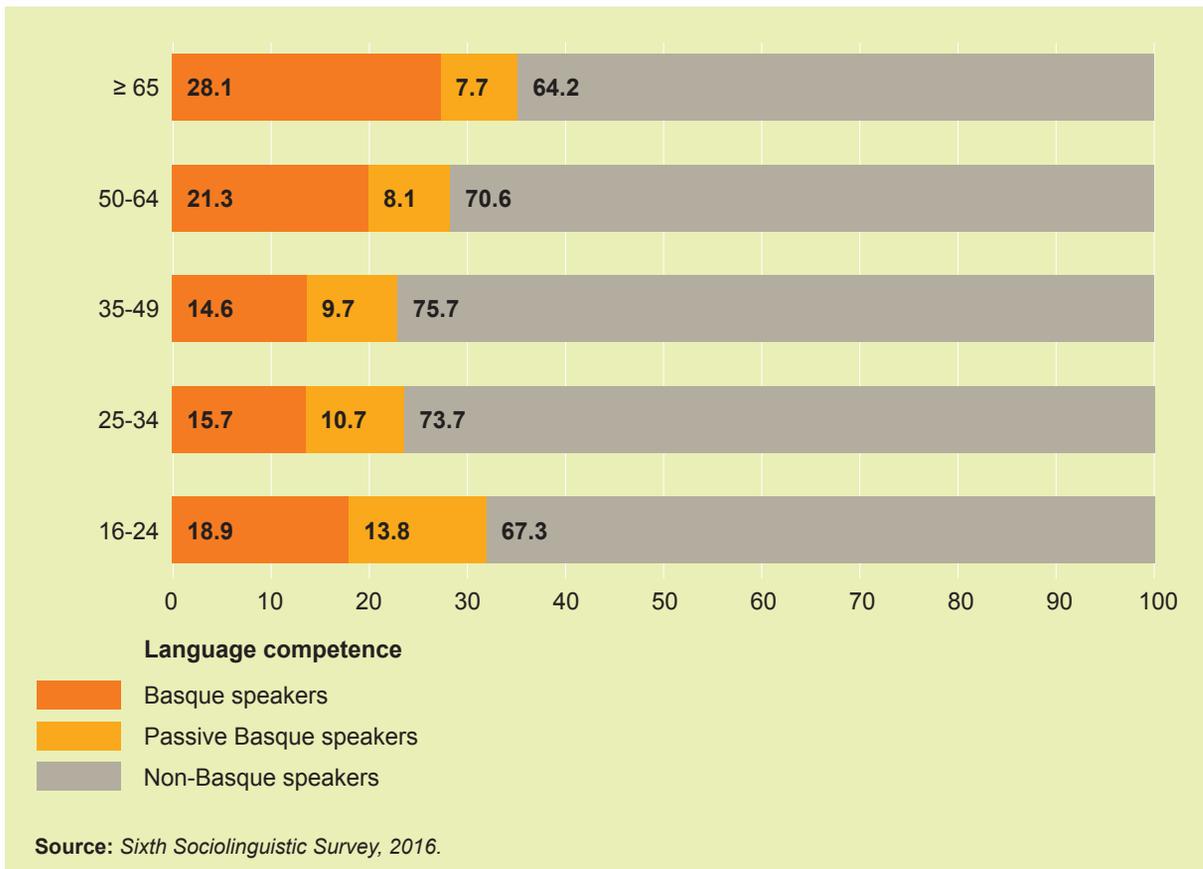
**Table 3.** Basque speakers by sex. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)

	Northern Basque Country	BAB	Lapurdi (without the BAB)	Lower Navarre / Zuberoa
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>49.5</b>
Women	20.4	9.1	23.0	49.8
Men	20.7	7.7	23.1	49.3

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

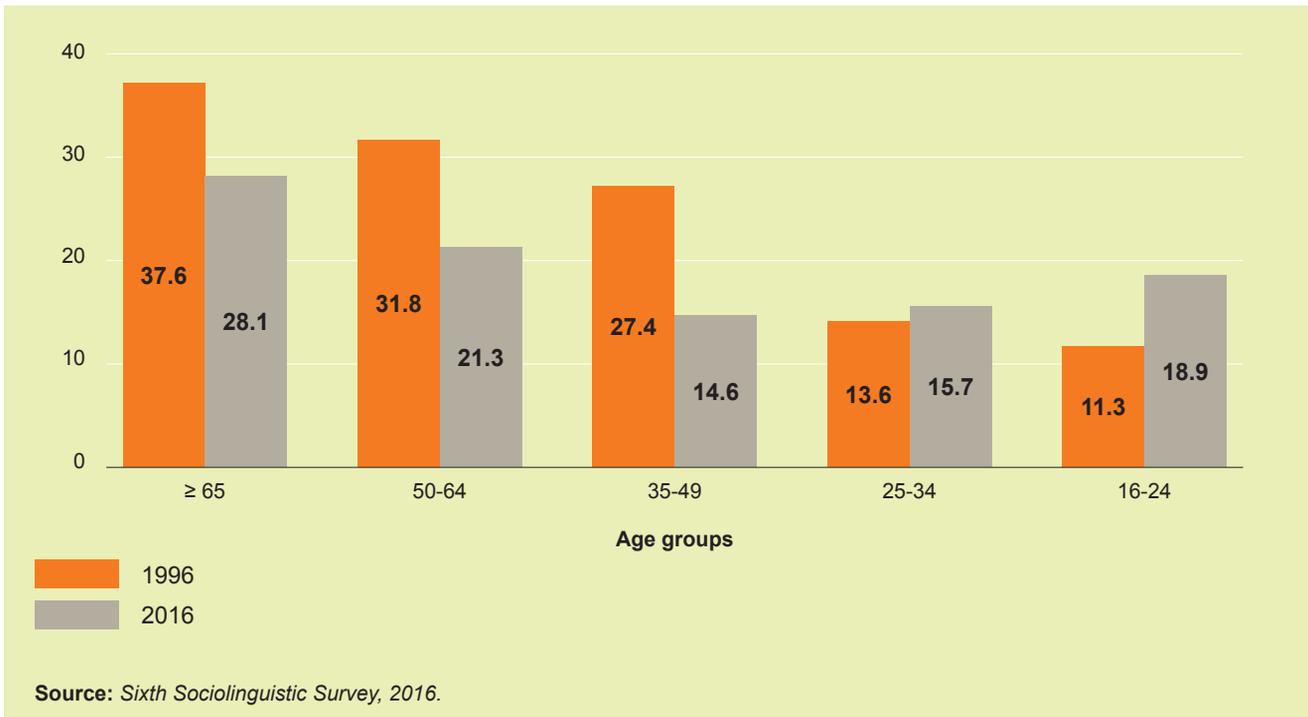
As regards age, the highest percentage of Basque speakers is found among the over 65s, and this figure drops as you move down the age scale, until you reach the 25-34 group, in which the trend is reversed, with the figure being 1 point higher than for the previous age range (15.7%). The largest increase is found in the 16-24 age group (18.9%), in which the figure is 3 points higher than in the next youngest group.

As stated above, the drop in Basque speakers has not occurred uniformly throughout all the age groups. Moreover, among young people, the percentages have not dropped at all, but rather increased. Thus, although the smallest percentage of Basque speakers is found among those aged 35-49 (14.6%) and the highest among the over 65s (28.1%), it is important to highlight the figures for the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups: 18.9% and 15.7%, respectively. These figures indicate that the trend detected five years ago (i.e. a halt in the downward turn and the beginning of a rise) among the younger generations has become a consolidated change.

**Figure 6. Language competence by age. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)**


If we look at the evolution over the last 20 years, we see that the increase in Basque speakers stems from the younger generations. In 1996, 11.3% of the 16-24 age group spoke Basque, whereas today, this figure is almost 7 points higher. Similarly, the percentage of Basque speakers has increased also among those aged between 25 and 34, rising from 13.6% in 1996 to 15.7% in 2016. In all other age groups, the percentage of Basque speakers has dropped, with the sharpest decrease occurring among those aged 35-49 (almost 13 points).

Figure 7. Evolution of Basque speakers by age. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)



The increase in the percentage of Basque speakers among the youngest generation (16-24) occurred in all three provinces. The highest percentage of Basque speakers is found among the over 65s, and this figure drops as you move down the age scale, until you reach the youngest groups.

In the BAB district, the highest percentage of Basque speakers is found among the over 65s (11.5%) and the lowest among those aged 35-49 (5%).

In Lapurdi also (without the BAB), the highest percentage of Basque speakers is found among those aged 65 and over (32.4%), and the lowest percentage among those aged between 35 and 49 (15.7%).

Similarly, in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, the highest percentage is found among those aged 65 and over (65.2%), and the lowest among those aged between 25 and 34 (31.6%).

**Table 5.** Basque speakers by age and province. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)

	Edad					
	Total	≥ 65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
Northern Basque Country	20.5	28.1	21.3	14.6	15.7	18.9
BAB	8.4	11.5	8.8	5.0	6.4	9.2
Lapurdi (without the BAB)	23.0	32.4	22.1	15.7	20.4	25.0
Lower Navarre / Zuberoa	49.5	65.2	52.2	40.1	31.6	34.0

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

### 2.3. RELATIVE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE: FLUENCY AMONG BASQUE SPEAKERS

We will now analyse relative language competence among Basque speakers. In other words, we will analyse their oral fluency in Basque and their other language (mainly French).

By “other language” we refer to any language other than Basque.

Basque speakers are divided into the following categories, depending on their relative language competence:

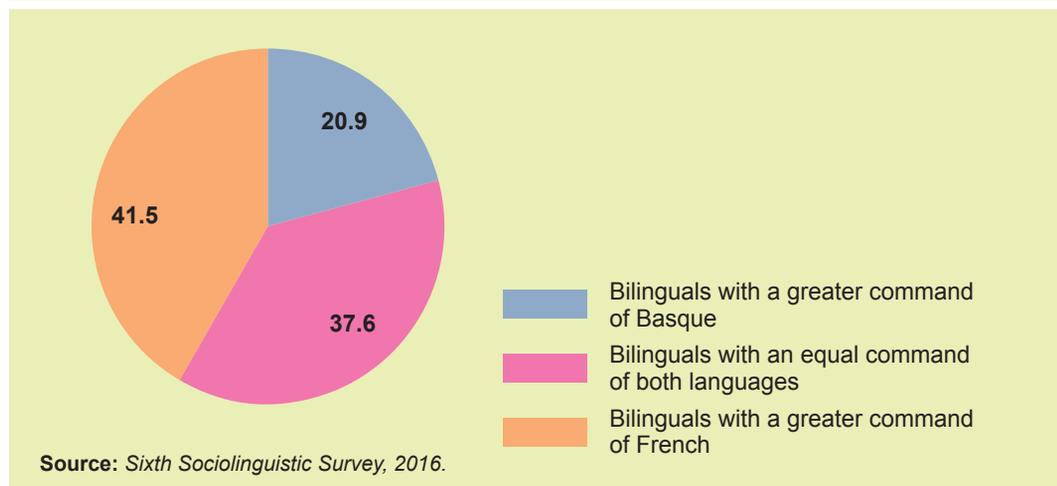
- **Bilinguals with a greater command of Basque:** these people are more fluent in Basque than they are in their other language.
- **Bilinguals with an equal command of both languages:** these people are equally fluent in both Basque and their other language. In other words, these bilinguals can express themselves equally well in either language.
- **Bilinguals with a greater command of French:** these people are more fluent in their other language than they are in Basque.

In the Northern Basque Country, 20.9% of Basque speakers speak Basque more fluently than French. In all cases, Basque is their mother tongue.

37.6% of Basque speakers have an equal command of both their languages. In almost all cases, their mother tongue is either Basque alone or Basque and French.

Those who speak Basque but have a greater command of their other language form the largest group, representing 41.5% of all Basque speakers in the Northern Basque Country. As regards mother tongue, even though most Basque speakers learned either Basque alone or Basque and another language at home up until the age of three, 27% learned only a French than Basque.

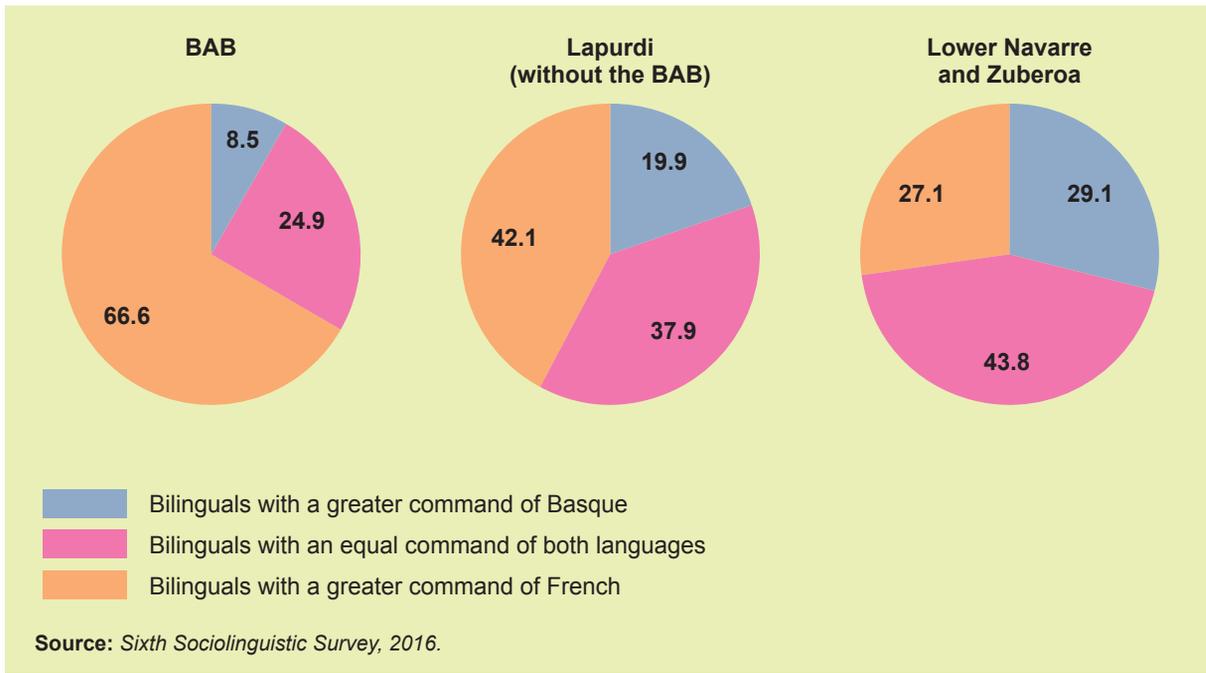
**Figure 8.** Basque speakers by fluency. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



Fluency in Basque differs widely between the three provinces. In the BAB district, 66.6% of Basque speakers speak French more fluently than Basque, 24.9% have an equal command of both languages and 8.5% speak Basque more fluently.

In Lapurdi (without the BAB), the majority of Basque speakers (42.1%) speak French more fluently, 37.9% speak both languages with equal fluency and 19.9% are more fluent in Basque.

In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, 43.8% speak both languages with equal fluency, 29.1% speak Basque more fluently and 27.1% are more fluent in French.

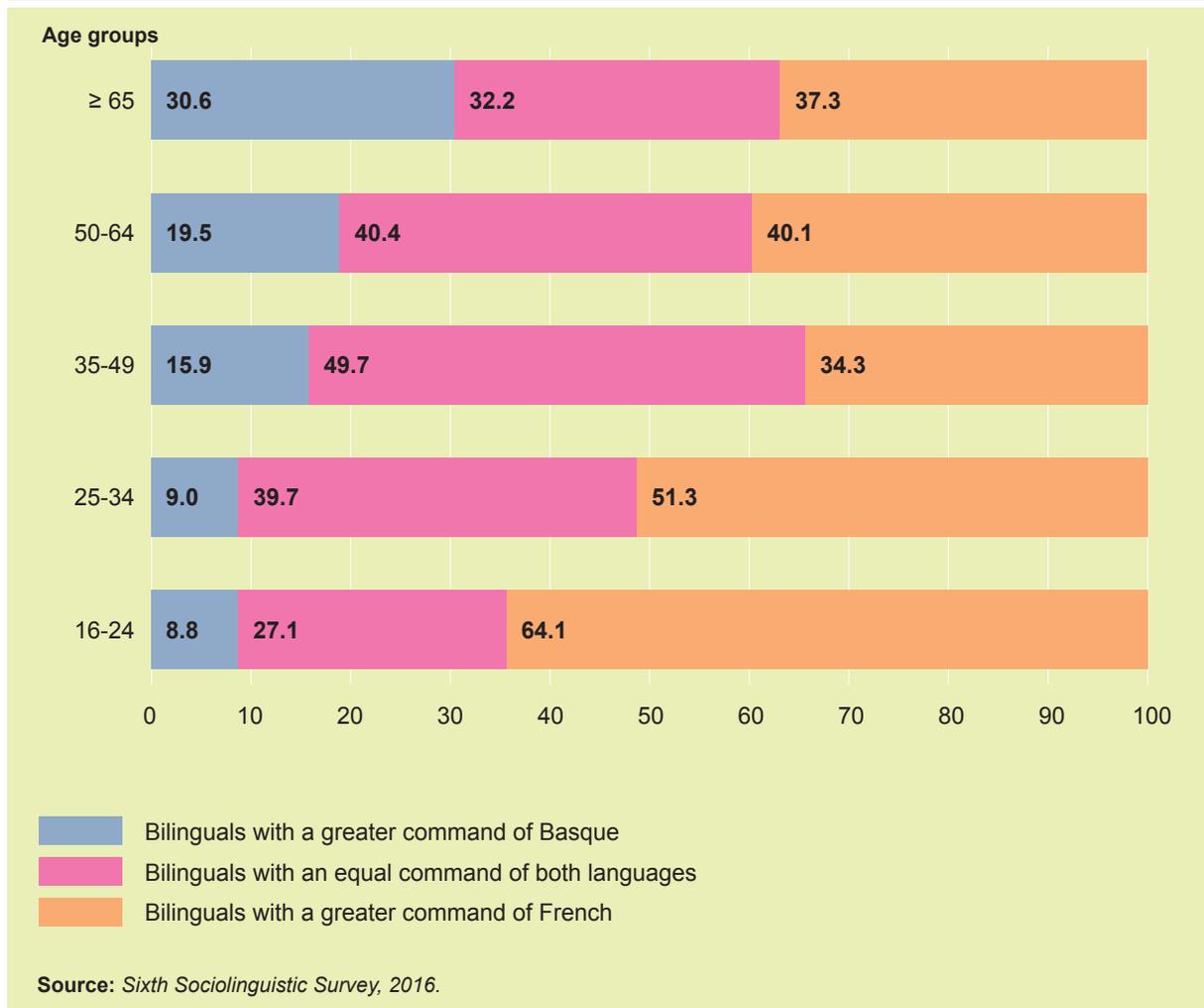
**Figure 9.** Basque speakers' fluency by province. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)


In relation to age, the largest percentage of bilinguals with a greater command of Basque is found among those aged 65 and over (30.6%), and the smallest percentage is found among those aged between 16 and 24 (8.8%).

The highest percentage of those who are equally fluent in both languages is found among those aged 35-59 (49.7%) and the lowest among those aged 16-24 (27.1%).

Finally, the percentage of bilinguals who are more fluent in French grows higher as you move down the age scale, with 64.1% of those aged 16-24 being more fluent in French, and over half (51.3%) of those aged 25-34 falling into that same category.

Figure 10. Basque speakers' fluency by age. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



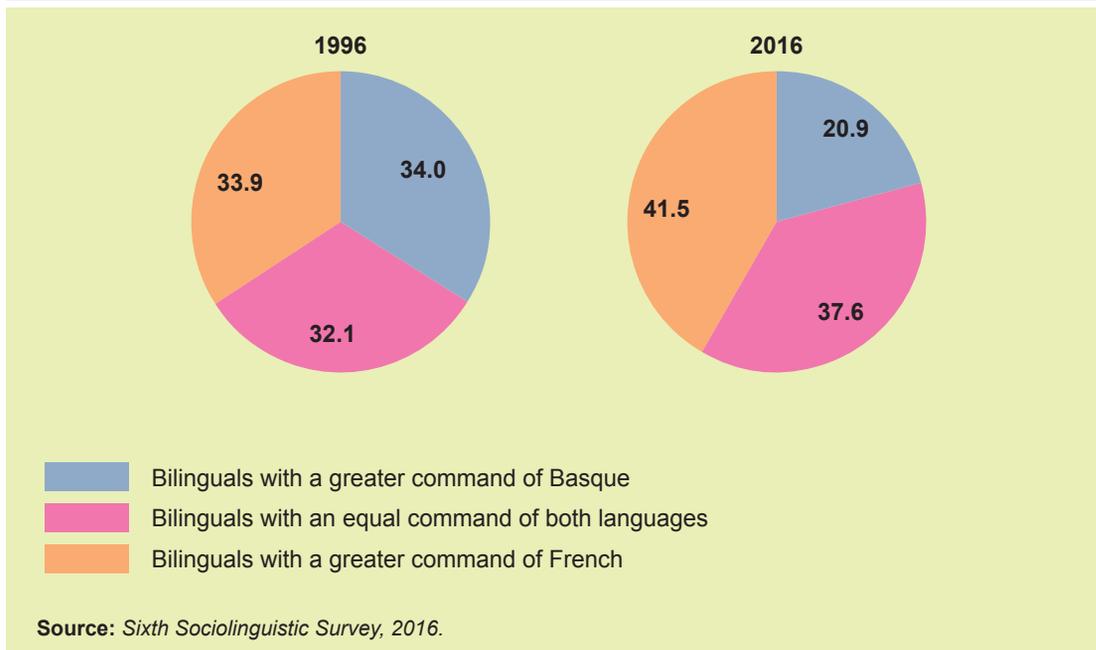
If we look at the evolution of these figures, we see that the situation regarding Basque speakers' fluency has changed drastically over the last 20 years.

In 1996, 34 % of Basque speakers in the Northern Basque Country spoke Basque more fluently than French, as opposed to just 20.9% in 2016.

The percentage of those equally fluent in both languages, on the other hand, has risen, increasing from 32.1 % in 1996 to 37.6 % in 2016.

Finally, the percentage of those who speak French more fluently than Basque has also risen, increasing from 33.9 % in 1996 to 41.5 % in 2016.

Figure 11. Evolution of Basque speakers' fluency. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)



If we analyse this evolution in accordance with age, we see that, just like in 2016, in 1996 also, the percentage of Basque speakers more fluent in Basque decreased with age, although the difference was much greater. Thus, in 1996, the difference between the 16-24 and over 65 age groups was 51 points (3.5% as opposed to 54.4%), whereas in 2016, it was just 21 points (8.8% versus 30.6%).

In 1996, the highest percentages of bilinguals equally fluent in both languages were found among the 50-64 and 25-34 age groups (40.4% and 36.3%, respectively). In 2016, however, the highest percentages were found among those aged 35-49 and 50-64 (49.7% and 40.4%, respectively).

Finally, in 1996, the highest percentages of bilinguals more fluent in their other language were found among the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups (67.3% and 54.8%, respectively). In 2016, this trend had not changed, with the highest percentages still being found among those aged 16-24 and 25-34 (64.1% and 51.3%, respectively).

**Table 6.** Evolution of Basque language fluency by age. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)

1996	Age					
	Total	≥ 65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>56,146</b>	<b>19,943</b>	<b>13,075</b>	<b>15,281</b>	<b>4,658</b>	<b>3,189</b>
More fluent in Basque	<b>34.0</b>	54.4	39.8	16.3	8.9	3.5
Equally fluent in both	<b>32.1</b>	27.1	40.4	30.8	36.3	29.2
More fluent in French	<b>33.9</b>	18.5	19.7	52.9	54.8	67.3
2016						
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>51,197</b>	<b>19,183</b>	<b>13,023</b>	<b>8,866</b>	<b>5,139</b>	<b>4,986</b>
More fluent in Basque	<b>20.9</b>	30.6	19.5	15.9	9.0	8.8
Equally fluent in both	<b>37.6</b>	32.2	40.4	49.7	39.7	27.1
More fluent in French	<b>41.5</b>	37.3	40.1	34.3	51.3	64.1

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

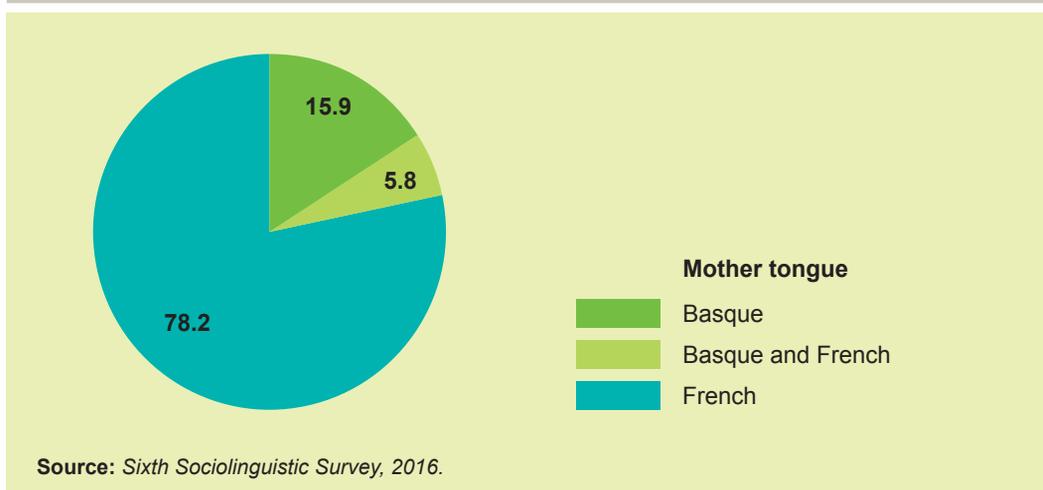
### 3. LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

#### 3.1. MOTHER TONGUE BY PROVINCE

By mother tongue we mean the language or languages acquired from parents or relatives with whom a child has lived until the age of three.

Basque is the mother tongue of 21.7% of the over-16 population of the Northern Basque Country, with 15.9% learning only Basque at home and 5.8% learning both Basque and French. The remaining 78.2% learned only a language other than Basque at home up until the age of three. By other language, we mainly mean French, but it should not be forgotten that, increasingly, it may be Spanish, Portuguese, or Arabic, among others.

Figure 12. Mother tongue. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



Over the last 20 years, the percentage of those who have only Basque as their mother tongue has dropped by over 10 points (from 26.4% to 15.9%).

The percentage of those who have both Basque and French as their joint mother tongues, on the other hand, has remained more or less the same (5.2% in 1996 versus 5.8% in 2016).

The percentage of those who have a French or other language than Basque as their mother tongue, however, was higher in 2016 than it was in 1996 (78.2% and 68.5%, respectively).

**Table 7.** Evolution of Mother tongue. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016

	1996	2016	1996 (%)	2016 (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>212,392</b>	<b>249,441</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Basque	56,051	39,773	26.4	15.9
Basque and French	10,958	14,556	5.2	5.8
French or another language	145,383	195,112	68.5	78.2

**Source:** *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

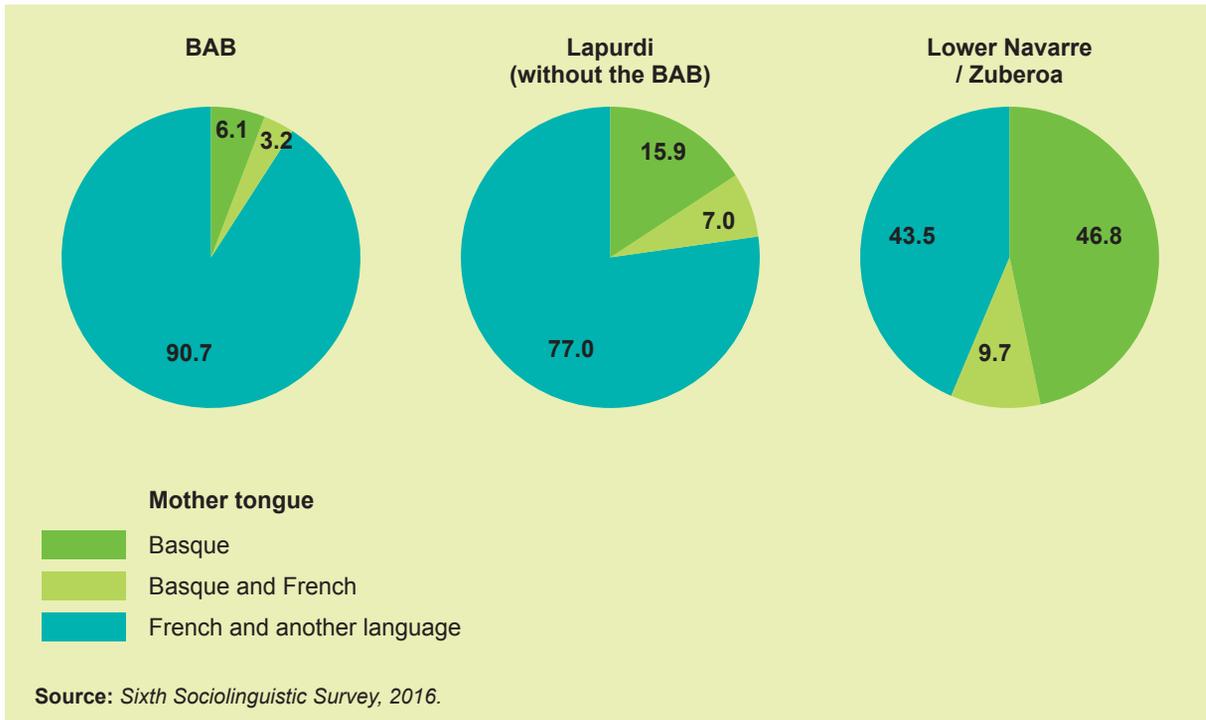
Language transmission varies from province to province.

Over half of all those living in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa have Basque as their mother tongue (56.5%): with 46.8% having learned only Basque at home and 9.7% having learned both Basque and French. The remaining 43.5% learned only a language other than Basque as their mother tongue.

In Lapurdi, 15.9% have Basque as their sole mother tongue and 7% have both Basque and French. The largest group in this province is that of those who have only a language other than Basque as their mother tongue (77%).

Finally, in the BAB, 6.1% have Basque as their sole mother tongue and 3.2% have both Basque and French. As in Lapurdi, by far the largest group in this district is that of those who have only a language other than Basque as their mother tongue (90.7%).

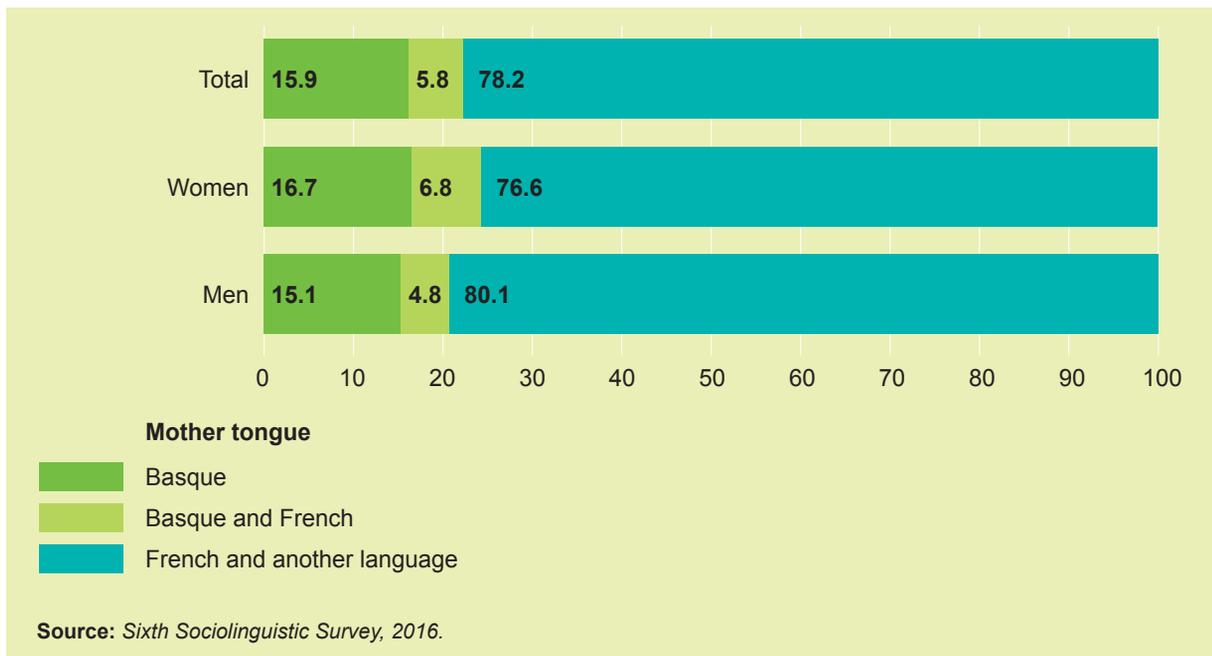
**Figure 13.** Mother tongue by province. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



### 3.2. MOTHER TONGUE BY SEX AND AGE

Some differences exist between men and women as regards mother tongue, with more women than men having Basque or Basque and French as their mother tongue(s).

Figure 14. Mother tongue by sex. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



The highest percentage of those for whom Basque is their sole mother tongue is found among the over 65s (25.5%), with this figure decreasing as you move down the age scale, with only 5.3% of the youngest group (16-24) having learned only Basque at home up until the age of 3.

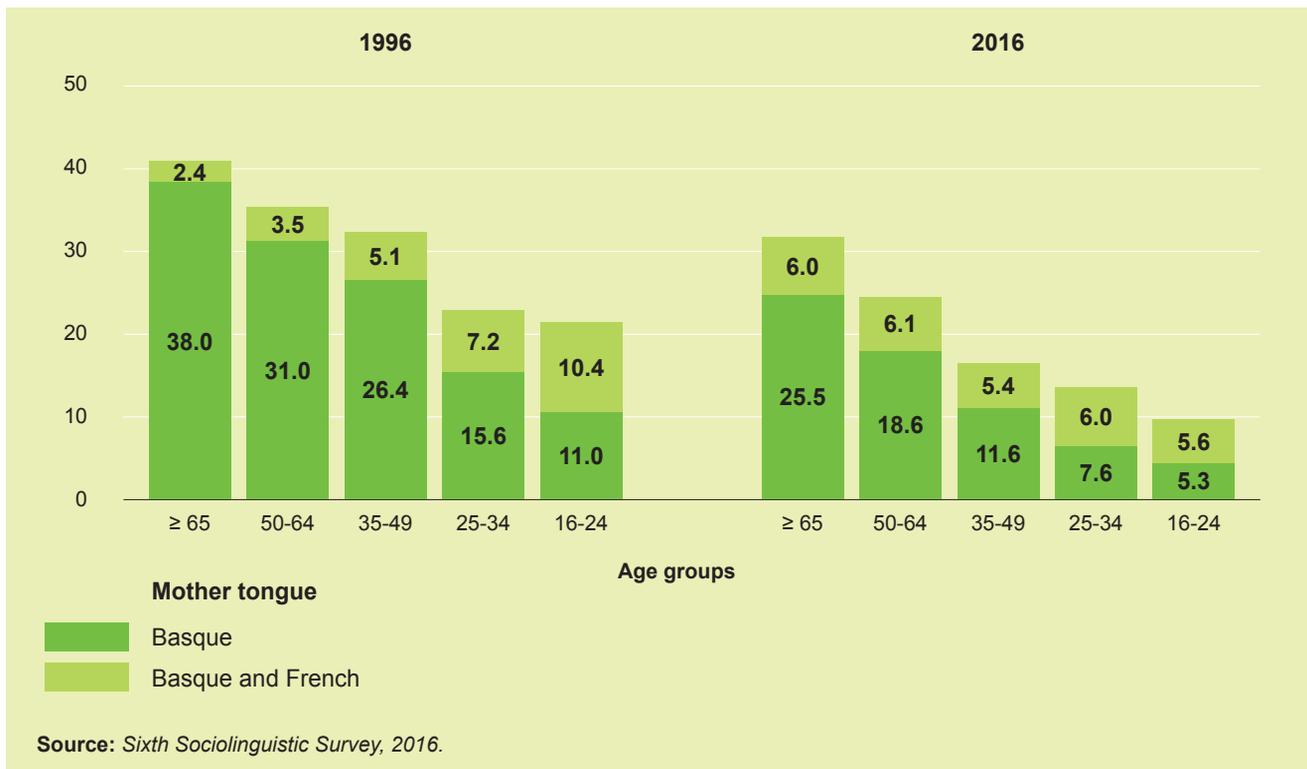
The percentage of those who learned both Basque and French as their joint mother tongues is similar in all age groups (between 5% and 6%).

It is worth noting that among young people aged 16-24, the percentage of those who learned only Basque as their mother tongue and that of those who learned both Basque and French are almost identical (5.3% and 5.6%, respectively).

**Figure 15. Mother tongue by age. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)**


If we look at the evolution of these figures, we see that, 20 years ago, the highest percentage of those for whom Basque or Basque and French were their sole/joint mother tongue(s) was found, as in 2016, among the over 65s (40.4%). This figure dropped as you moved down the age range with the lowest percentages being found among the 25-34 and 16-24 age groups (20% and 21.4%, respectively).

**Figure 16.** Evolution of mother tongue by age. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)



The percentage of those who have Basque as their mother tongue is dropping in all provinces of the Northern Basque Country. However, although the trend is similar, the numbers in percentage terms differ considerably from one province to another.

Thus, in the BAB district, 4% of those aged 16-24, 25-34 and 35-49 have either only Basque or Basque and French as their mother tongue(s). Among the older population, this percentage is higher (15%).

In Lapurdi (without the BAB), 35% of over 65s have either Basque or Basque and French as their mother tongue(s), although this drops as you move down the age scale and is just 11% among young people aged 16-24.

In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, the drop in the percentage of those with Basque or Basque and French as their mother tongue(s) is even more pronounced, with 69% of the over 65s falling into this category, as opposed to just 38% of those aged between 16-24.

### 3.3. BASQUE SPEAKERS BY MOTHER TONGUE

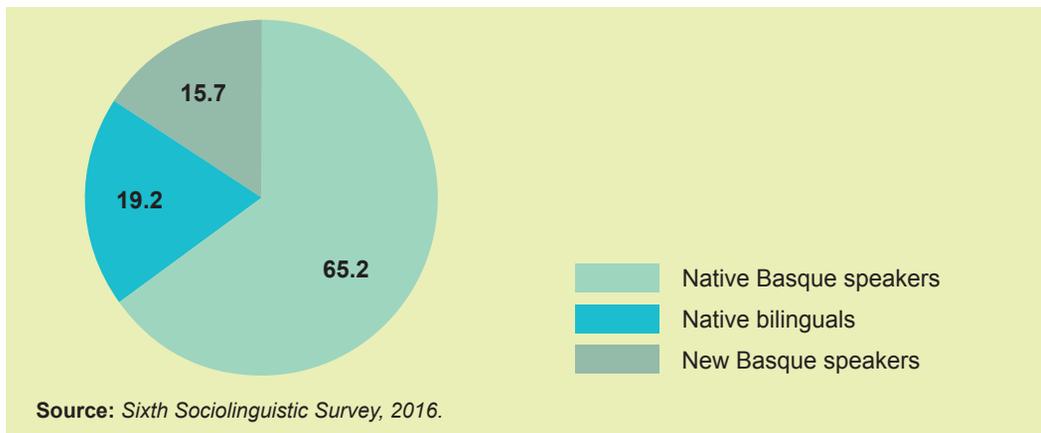
Below we will analyse Basque speakers in the Northern Basque Country aged 16 and over, in accordance with the language they learned at home as their mother tongue.

Basque speakers are divided into the following categories, depending on their mother tongue.

- **Native Basque speakers:** those who acquired only Basque from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three.
- **Native bilinguals:** those who acquired Basque and another language from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three.
- **New Basque speakers:** those who did not acquire Basque from their parents or relatives at home until the age of three and learned the language later, either at school or at a language academy.

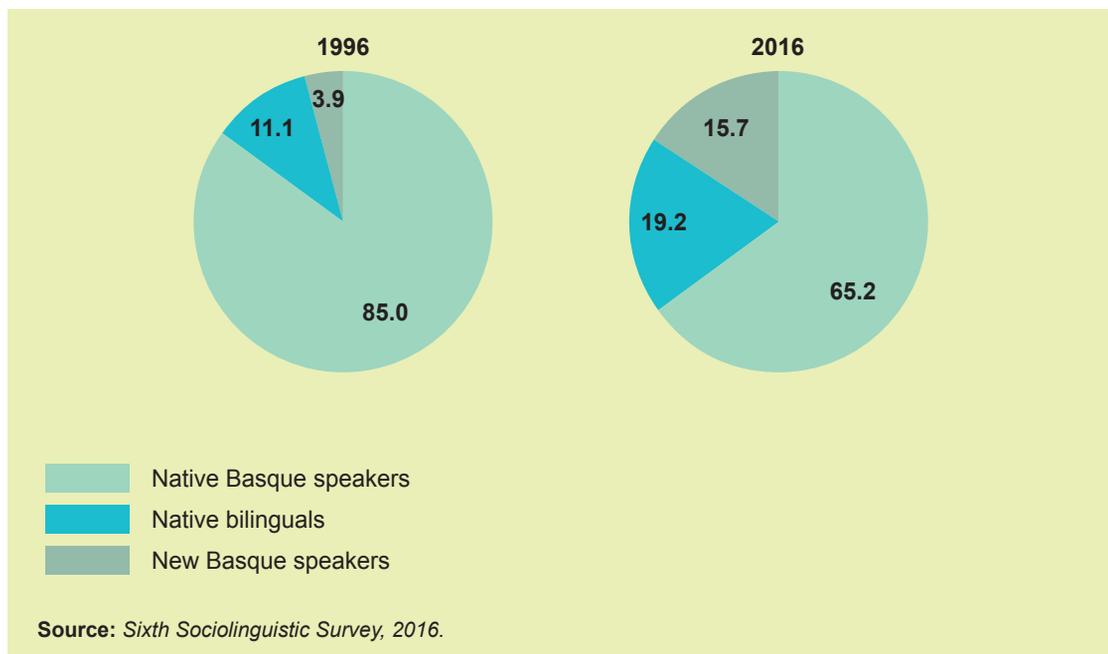
Of the Basque speakers over the age of 16 living in the Northern Basque Country, 65.2% learned only Basque at home (i.e. are native Basque speakers). A much lower percentage (19.2%) learned both Basque and French at home up until the age of three (i.e. are native bilinguals). And finally, 15.7% did not learn Basque at home and learned the language later, either at school or at a language academy (i.e. are new Basque speakers).

Figure 17. Basque speakers by mother tongue. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



There has been a 20 points drop in the percentage of native Basque speakers over the past 20 years, with 85 % of Basque speakers falling into this category in 1996 as opposed to 65.2% today. The percentage of native bilinguals was smaller 20 years ago (11.1% as opposed to 19.2% today) and that of new Basque speakers was smaller still (3.9% as opposed to 15.7% today).

**Figure 18.** Evolution of Basque speakers by mother tongue. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)



If we analyse the figures in relation to the different provinces, we see that the difference is striking. Half (52.4%) of all Basque speakers in the BAB district are native Basque speakers, 26.4% are native bilinguals and 21.3% are new Basque speakers.

In Lapurdi (without the BAB), the majority (58.8%) are native Basque speakers and the percentages of native bilinguals and new Basque speakers are fairly similar (20.4% and 20.8%, respectively).

Finally, in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, more than eight out of every ten Basque speakers are native Basque speakers (82.3%), 13.4% are native bilinguals and 4.4% are new Basque speakers.

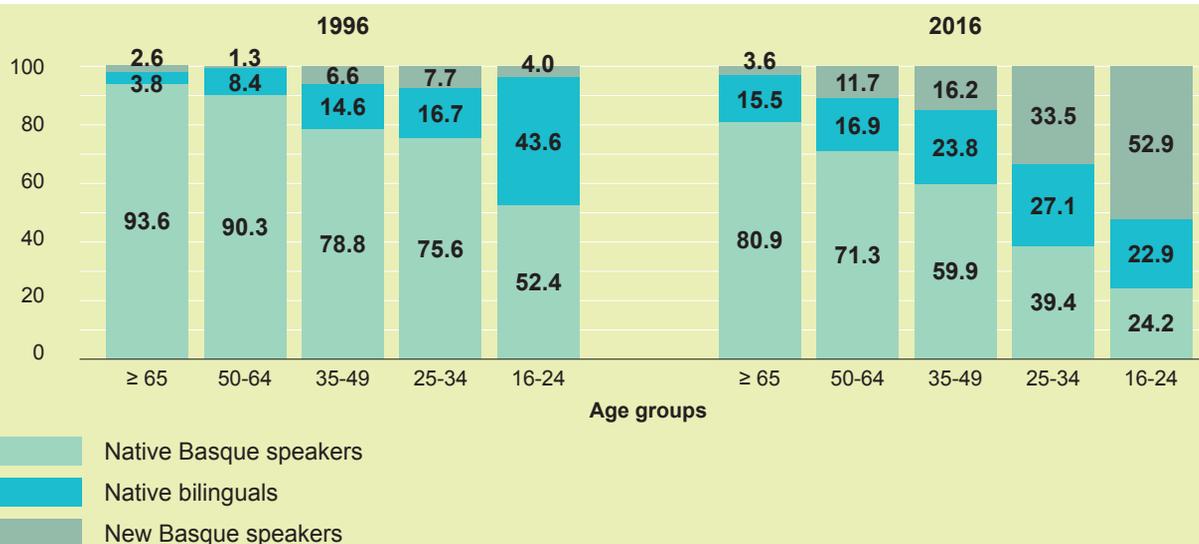
**Table 8.** Basque speakers by mother tongue and province. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)

	BAB	Lapurdi (without the BAB)	Lower Navarre and Zuberoa
<b>Basque speakers</b>	<b>8,633</b>	<b>26,374</b>	<b>16,191</b>
Native Basque speakers	52.4	58.8	82.3
Native bilinguals	26.4	20.4	13.4
New Basque speakers	21.3	20.8	4.4

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If we look at the evolution according to age, we see that the population of Basque speakers has changed considerably over the last 20 years. In 1996, native Basque speakers constituted the vast majority in all age groups.

Today, however, over half (52.9%) of Basque speakers aged between 16 and 24 are new Basque speakers, whereas in 1996, the percentage of new Basque speakers in this age group was just 4 %.

**Figure 19.** Evolution of Basque speakers by mother tongue and age. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)


Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

### 3.4. FAMILY LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

To establish the extent of family language transmission, all of those surveyed were asked what language or languages they had acquired at home, depending on the language competence of their parents.

We must remember that the universe surveyed includes people aged 16 up to almost 100. The survey therefore offers the possibility of finding out how language has been transmitted in the home over this period of time.

In the Northern Basque Country, when both parents are Basque speakers, 61 % of children acquire only Basque as their mother tongue, 14.6 % acquire both Basque and French and 24.4 % do not learn Basque from their parents at home.

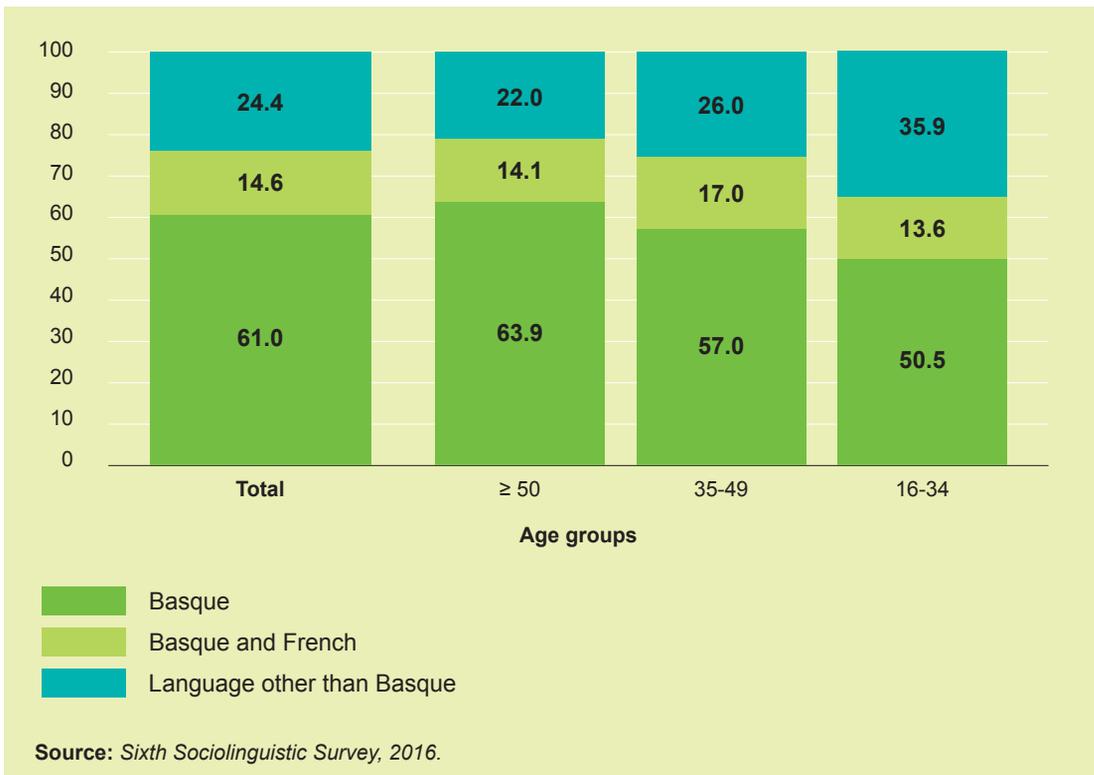
When only one parent speaks Basque, 83.5 % learn only a language other than Basque at home and 16.5 % learn both Basque and French.

It is worth mentioning that when both parents speak Basque, transmission of that language decreases as you move down the age scale, with the lowest percentage of Basque language transmission occurring among those aged 16-34. In that age group, when both parents are Basque speakers, 50.5 % claim to have learned only Basque at home, and 13.6 % both Basque and French.

Similarly, when both parents speak Basque, in the 35-49 age group, 57 % learned only Basque at home, and 17 % learned Basque and French.

Finally, among the over 50s 63.9 % claim to have learned only Basque at home, and 14.1 % both Basque and French.

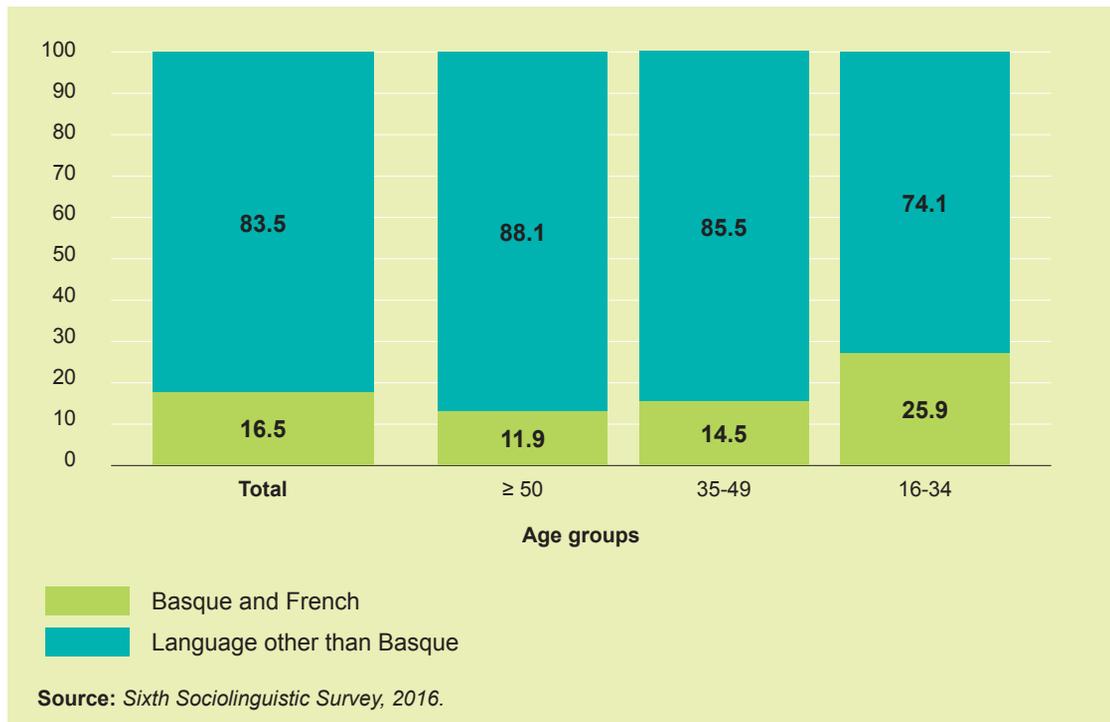
**Figure 20.** Basque transmission when both parents are Basque speakers, by age. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



There are differences also between the age groups when only one parent speaks Basque, with Basque transmission decreasing as you move up the age scale.

Thus, among those with only one Basque-speaking parent, 25.9% of those in the 16-34 age group learned both Basque and French at home as their mother tongues, while this figure is 14.5% among the 35-49 age group and 11.9% among the over 50s.

**Figure 21.** Basque transmission when only one parent speaks Basque, by age. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



When only one parent speaks Basque, Basque language transmission hardly differs at all depending on whether that parent is the mother or the father.

When only the mother speaks Basque, 83% learn only a language other than Basque at home and 17% learn both Basque and French. When only the father speaks Basque, 84% do not learn Basque at all and 16% learn both Basque and French.

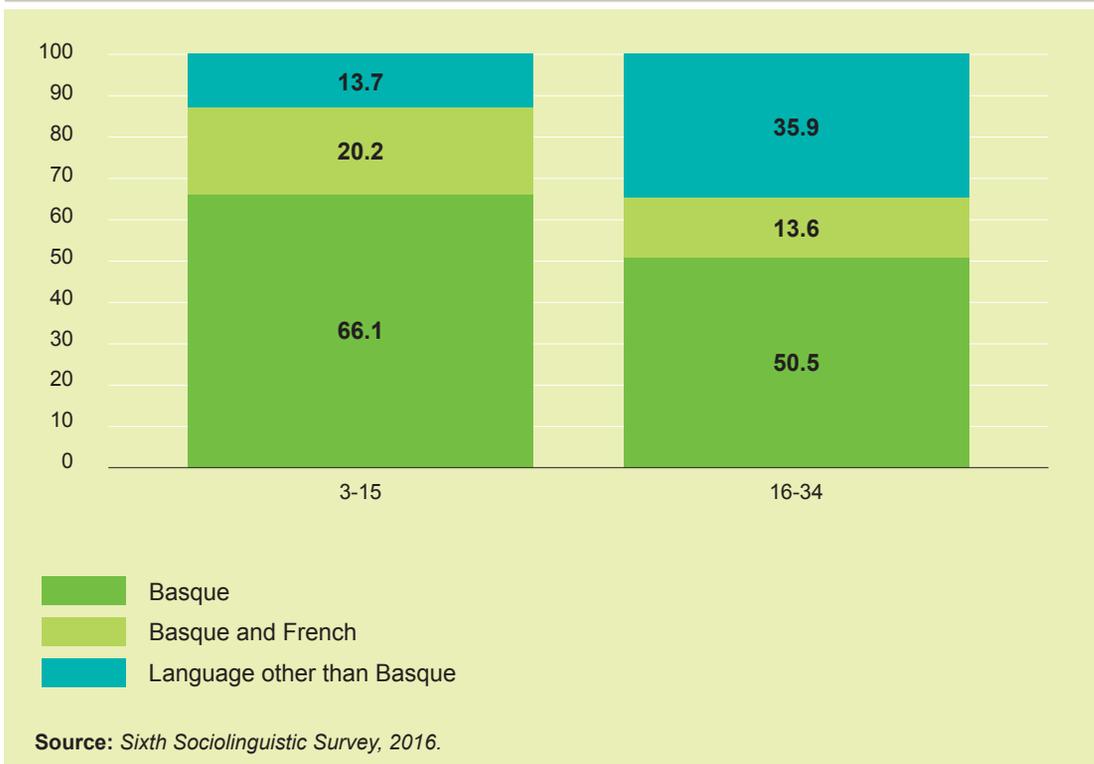
### LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 3 AND 15

In order to explore language transmission in families with children aged between 3 and 15, interviewees were asked what language they transmit to their offspring.

It is worth noting that when we compare transmission in families with children aged between 3 and 15 with transmission in the 16-34 age group, when both parents are Basque speakers, Basque transmission is more frequent among the former than among the latter group.

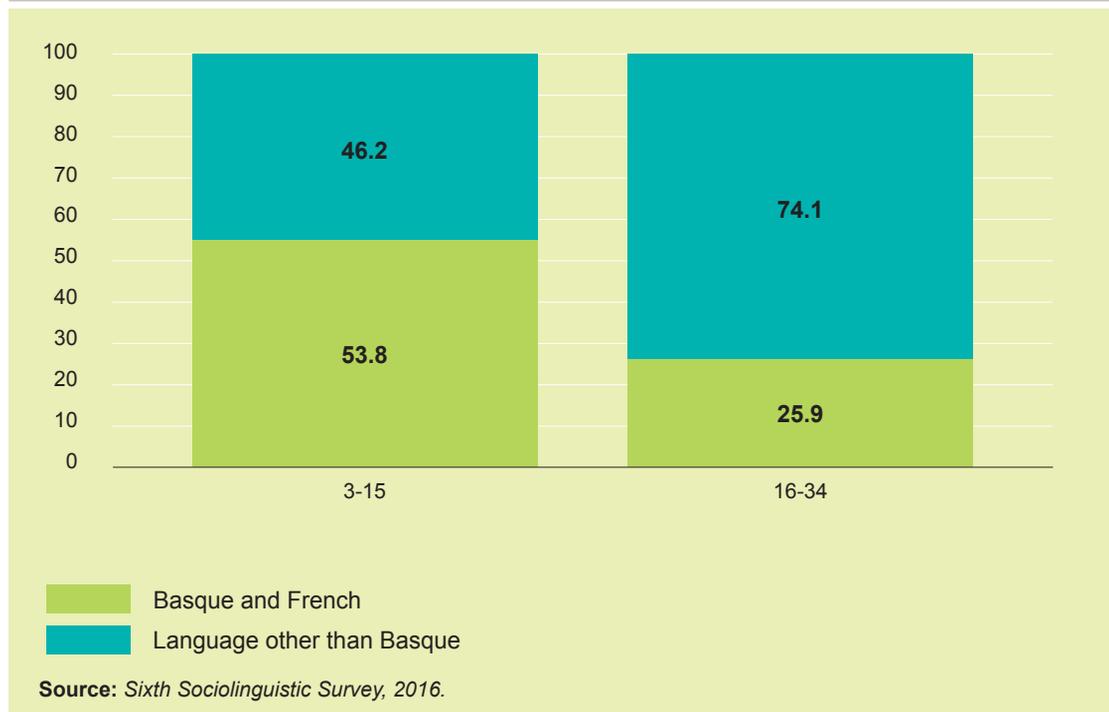
When both parents are Basque speakers, 66.1% of those with children aged between 3 and 15 speak only that language with their children at home, as opposed to 50.5% among those aged 16-34. Moreover, 20% of families with children aged 3-15 transmit both Basque and French, as opposed to 13.6% of those aged 16-34. Finally, 13.7% of those with children aged 3-15 do not transmit Basque at all, whereas this figure is 35.9% among the 16-34.

**Figure 22.** Basque transmission in families with children aged 3-15 and among those aged 16-34, when both parents speak Basque. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



When only one parent speaks Basque, transmission is still higher among the 3-15 age group than among those aged 16-34 (53.8% versus 25.9%).

**Figure 23.** Basque transmission in families with children aged 3-15 and among those aged 16-34, when only one parent speaks Basque. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



### 3.5. BASQUE LANGUAGE GAINS AND LOSSES

Of those who learned Basque at home as their sole or joint mother tongue, 79.5 % still speak the language today. This also means that one fifth (20.5 %) of all those who learned Basque at home up until age 3 no longer speak the language, i.e. have totally or partially lost their Basque (11,000 people). Most losses are partial ones (7,000 people), meaning that although they cannot speak Basque well, they can understand it. However, a further 4,000 people have lost the ability to speak and understand Basque entirely, i.e. have totally lost the language.

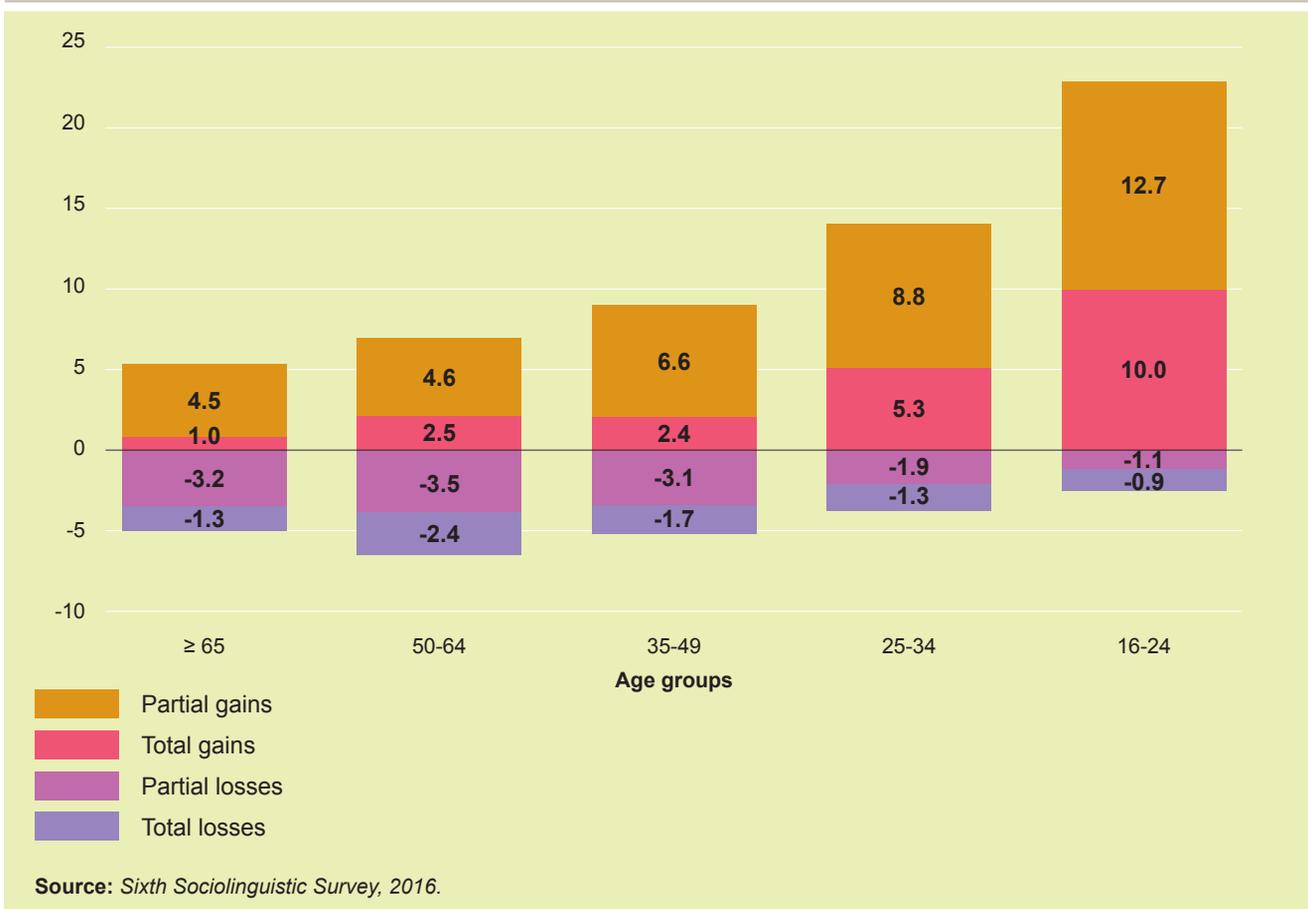
At the same time, however, 8,000 people whose mother tongue is French or a language other than Basque have learned Basque and are today counted among the Basque-speaking population. These people represent 15.7 % of all Basque speakers and are language gains.

A further 16,000 people understand Basque well, despite not having it as their mother tongue. These are partial gains (or partial new Basque speakers).

Losses still outweigh gains, but although some of those who learned Basque as their mother tongue continue to lose the language, the number of people with a mother tongue other than Basque who are learning or have learned Basque later in life is increasing.

Significant differences exist in accordance with age, with the percentage of gains being very low among the over 35s. For instance, only 2.4% of those aged 35-49 are new Basque speakers. Among the younger age groups, however, particularly those aged 16-24, this figure is 10% (i.e. 4 times greater).

**Figure 24.** Basque gains and losses, by age. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



Although both losses and gains have been recorded in all three of the provinces of the Northern Basque Country, the figures in percentage terms vary widely.

In the BAB district, 2.7% of the population have totally or partially lost their Basque, and 1.8% have learned the language later in life. Thus, losses are greater than gains in that district. Partial new Basque speakers represent 4.1% of the population.

In Lapurdi (without the BAB), the percentage of partial or total losses is 4.7%. However, the percentage of new Basque speakers is increasing (4.8%), as is that of partial new Basque speakers (8.3%). Thus, in Lapurdi, gains currently outweigh losses, thanks to the increase in the number of new Basque speakers.

In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, the percentages are as follows: partial or total losses - 9.2%, new Basque speakers - 2.2% and partial new Basque speakers - 7.5%. Here, as in the BAB, losses outweigh gains, and many more people have lost the ability to speak Basque than have learned the language.

## 4. USE OF BASQUE

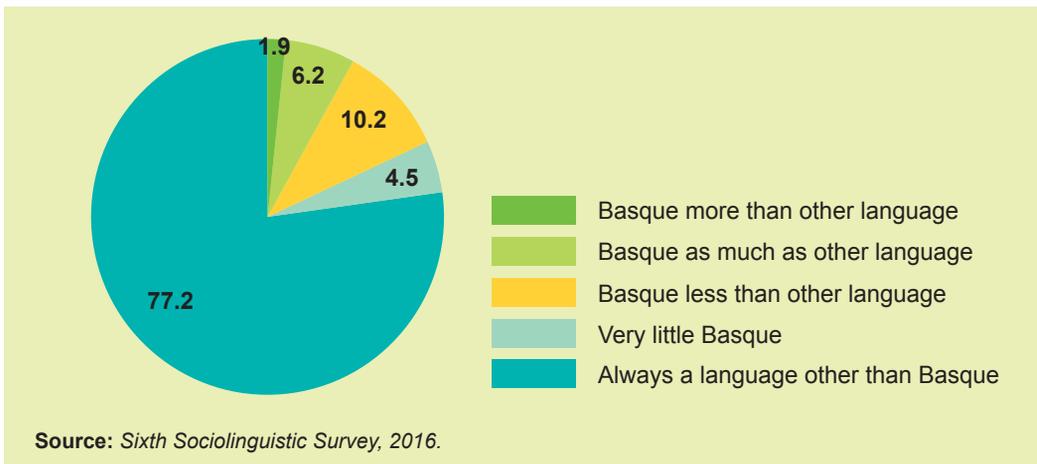
### 4.1. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BY PROVINCE

Of the population of the Northern Basque Country aged 16 and over, 18.3% use Basque to some extent:

- a. 8.1% use Basque intensively, i.e. they use it as much as or more than the other language they speak in their everyday life.
- b. A further 10.2% also use Basque, but to a lesser extent than their other language.

The remainder of the population always (77.2%) or almost always (4.5%) uses a language other than Basque.

Figure 25. Basque use. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)

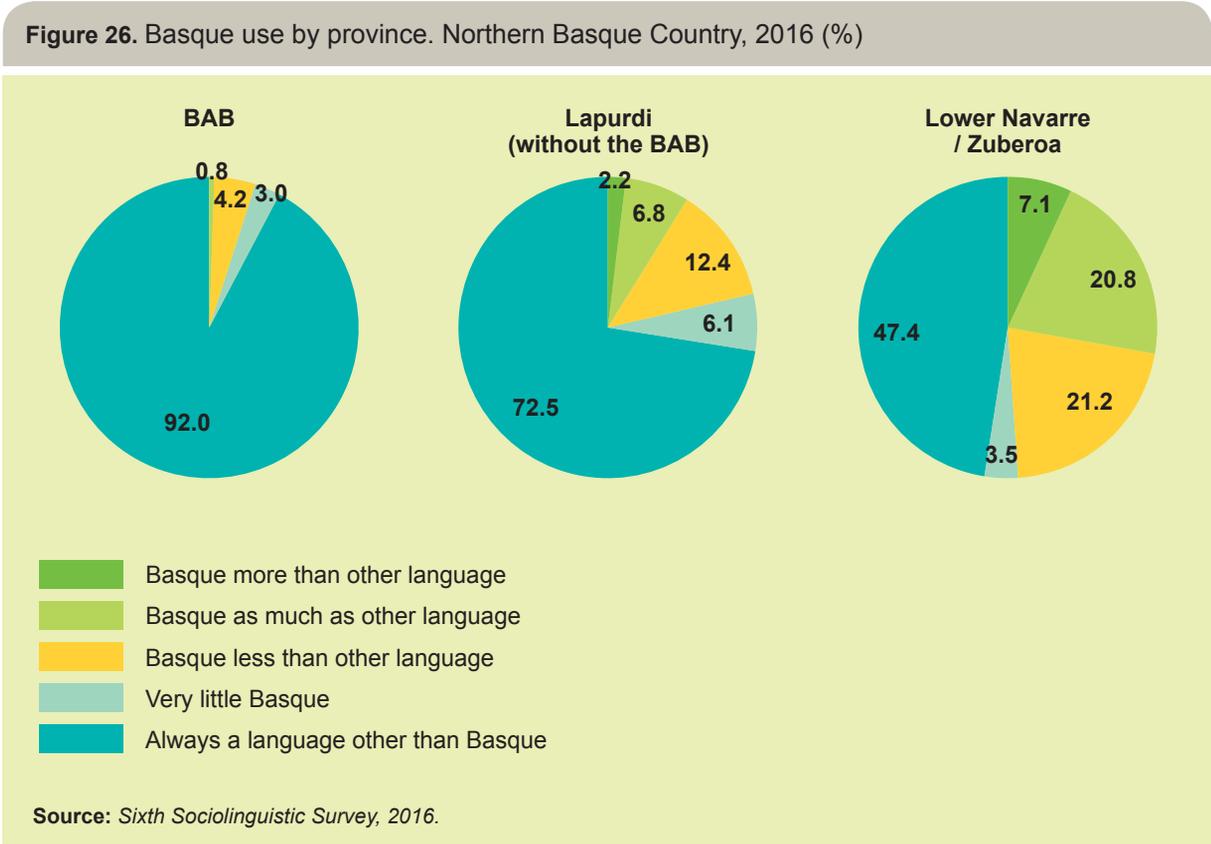


To measure Basque language use, the Basque Government Deputy Regional Ministry for Language Policy has defined a series of categories or typologies. These categories take into account Basque use in the following domains:

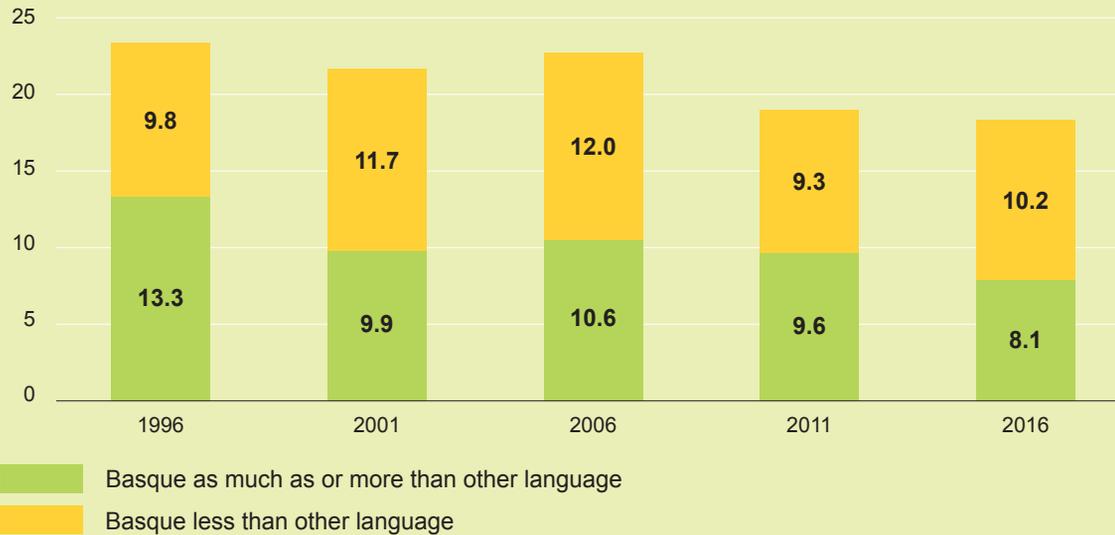
- use at home with family members (with one's partner, children, siblings and parents)
- use with friends

- use in formal situations (local shops, banks, health centres and municipal services)

Major differences exist between the three provinces of the Northern Basque Country in relation to Basque language use. Those who use Basque intensively (i.e. as much as or more than any other language) represent 0.8% of the population living in the BAB district, 9% of the population of Lapurdi (without the BAB) and 27.9% in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa. The percentages of those who use Basque, but do so less than their other language are 7.2% in the BAB district, 18.5% in Lapurdi (without the BAB) and 24.7% in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa.



If we analyse the evolution of these figures over the last 20 years, we see that Basque language use has decreased. Thus, intensive Basque use has dropped by 5 points in the Northern Basque Country, from 13.3% in 1996 to 8.1% in 2016. The percentage of those who use Basque, but less so than their other language, has remained more or less the same over the last 20 years, with just a 1 point increase: 9.8% in 1996 and 10.2% in 2016.

**Figure 27.** Evolution of Basque use. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)


Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

Intensive Basque use has dropped in all three provinces: by 1.4 points in the BAB, 4.9 points in Lapurdi (without the BAB) and 15.9 points in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa.

**Table 9.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language, by province. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016

	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
<b>Northern Basque Country</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>8.1</b>
BAB	2.2	1.5	1.6	2.1	0.8
Lapurdi (without the BAB)	13.9	10.5	11.3	10.2	9.0
Lower Navarre / Zuberoa	43.8	33.5	36.5	30.6	27.9
<b>Northern Basque Country</b>	<b>28,258</b>	<b>22,045</b>	<b>24,484</b>	<b>22,877</b>	<b>20,256</b>
BAB	2,018	1,456	1,620	2,009	835
Lapurdi (without the BAB)	12,367	9,887	10,879	10,911	10,319
Lower Navarre / Zuberoa	13,873	10,702	11,984	9,958	9,102

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

## 4.2. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BY SEX AND AGE

Basque use is higher among men than among women. The percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language is 9.1% among men and 7.4% among women. This difference has remain more or less constant over the last 20 years.

**Table 10.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language, by sex. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)

	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Men	14.2	11.7	11.9	10.8	9.1
Women	12.5	8.4	9.5	8.5	7.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>8.1</b>

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If we analyse Basque use in accordance with age, we see that those aged 65 and over use the language most, with the percentage of intensive use dropping as we move down the age scale. Thus, 13.5% of over 65s use Basque as much as or more than their other language, as opposed to just 4% of those aged 25-34. It is worth highlighting that the downward trend is reversed among the youngest age group, in which the figure is more or less the same as (and even slightly higher than) in the second-to-last one (4.3% for the 16-24).

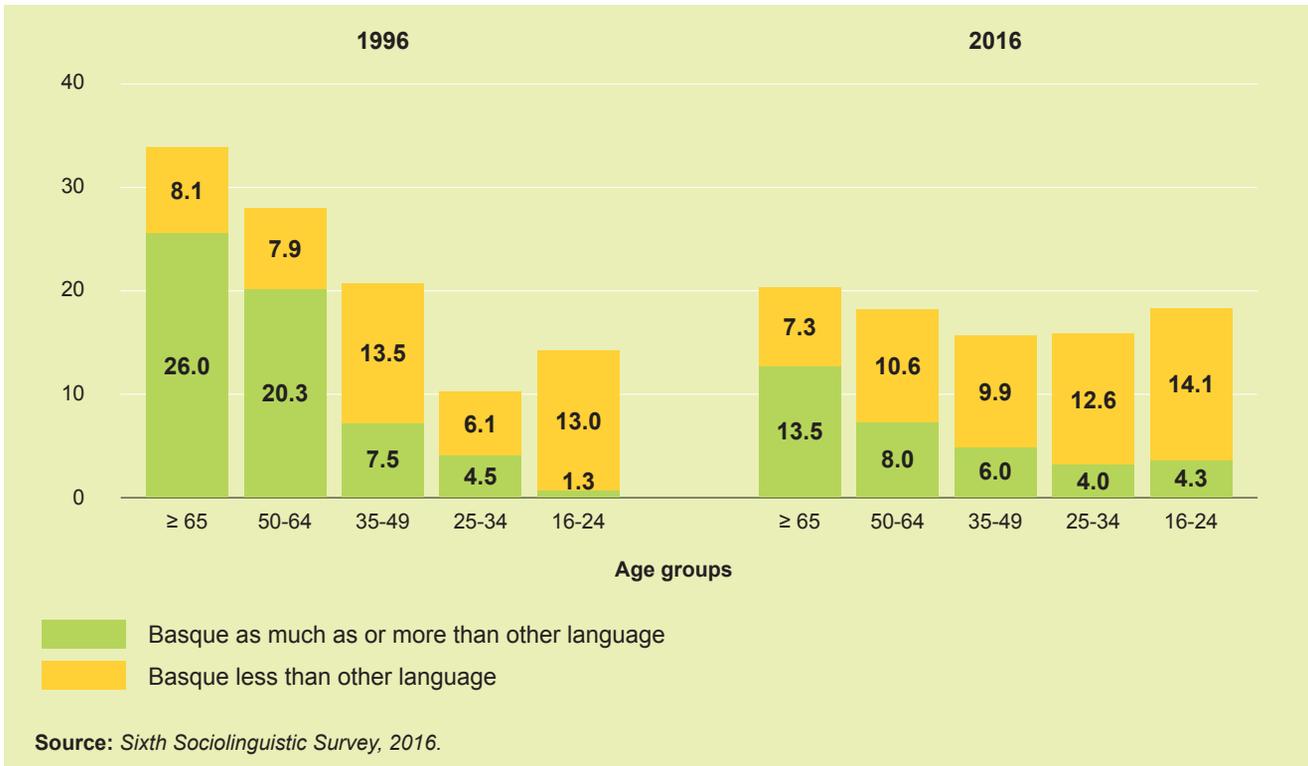
The percentage of those who speak Basque, but less so than their other language, increases as you move down the age scale: being 7.3% among the over 65s and 14.1% among the 16-24s.

If we look at the evolution of these figures over the last 20 years, we see that, between 1996 and 2016, the percentage of intensive Basque use dropped among those aged 25 and over, with this decrease being particularly sharp among the over 50s.

It is worth nothing that Basque use in general increased among those aged 16-24, with this rise being particularly sharp in relation to intensive Basque use (i.e. the

number of people who use Basque as much as or more than their other language): 1.3% in 1996 and 4.3% in 2016.

**Figure 28.** Evolution of Basque use, by age. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)



However, those who use only a language other than Basque continue to be the majority in all age groups.

This pattern remains more or less constant in all three provinces of the Northern Basque Country. The over 65s are the group in which the most intensive use of Basque is found in all three provinces, with the percentage dropping as you move down the age scale. Nevertheless, in 2016, for the first time, the figure for intensive Basque use among the youngest age group (16-24) was not lower (and was actually slightly higher) than the figure for the previous one (25-34).

**Table 11.** Those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language, by province and age. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)

	Age					
	Total	≥ 65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
Northern Basque Country	8.1	13.5	8.0	6.0	4.0	4.3
BAB	0.8	1.5	—	0.9	1.1	0.4
Lapurdi (without the BAB)	9.0	14.0	9.7	6.6	5.3	6.2
Lower Navarre / Zuberoa	27.9	47.6	24.0	19.8	10.0	12.9

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

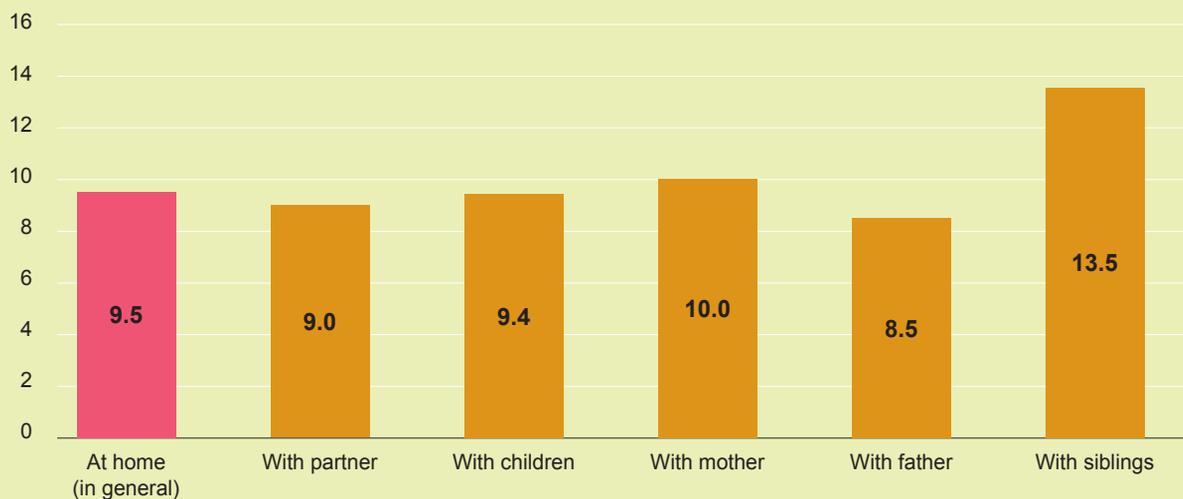
### 4.3. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS: AT HOME, WITH FRIENDS, IN FORMAL SITUATIONS

#### BASQUE USE AT HOME

In the Northern Basque Country, 9.5% of all those aged 16 and over use Basque as much as or more than their other language at home; 7% use Basque but use their other language more and the remaining 83.5% use only a language other than Basque.

The differences which exist between Basque use among different members of the family are fairly small, although the highest figures are recorded for use between siblings, with Basque being used more than the other language spoken in the family in 13.5% of cases. The lowest figures were found for use with the father (8.5%) and use between the partners in a couple (9%). The figures for the other types of use were as follows: use with children - 9.3%, and use with the mother - 10%.

**Figure 29.** Those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language at home. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If we look at the evolution of these figures over the last 20 years, we see that Basque use has dropped by around 6 points, both at home in general, and among the different family members. The sharpest decrease is found for use with the father and with the mother, although this trend has levelled out over the last 5 years.

**Table 12.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language at home. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)

	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
At home, when all family members are present	16.0	11.9	12.4	10.7	9.5
Between partners in a couple	16.5	12.2	10.6	10.8	9.0
With children	16.5	10.7	12.3	11.1	9.4
With mother	19.2	13.8	15.6	9.9	10.0
With father	17.8	13.6	15.5	8.2	8.5
With siblings	19.6	15.0	16.8	13.7	13.6

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

## BASQUE USE WITH FRIENDS

In the Northern Basque Country, 12.6% of all those aged 16 and over use Basque as much as or more than their other language with their friends; 7.5% use Basque with friends but use their other language more and the remaining 79.9% use only a language other than Basque.

The percentage of those who use mainly Basque with their friends has dropped by 4.6 points over the last 20 years, although the percentage of those who use some Basque in that environment (although less than their other language) has risen by 1.7 points, from 5.8% in 1996 to 7.5% in 2016.

**Table 13.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language with friends. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)

	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Use with friends	17.2	14.1	17.0	14.5	12.6

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

## BASQUE USE IN FORMAL SITUATIONS

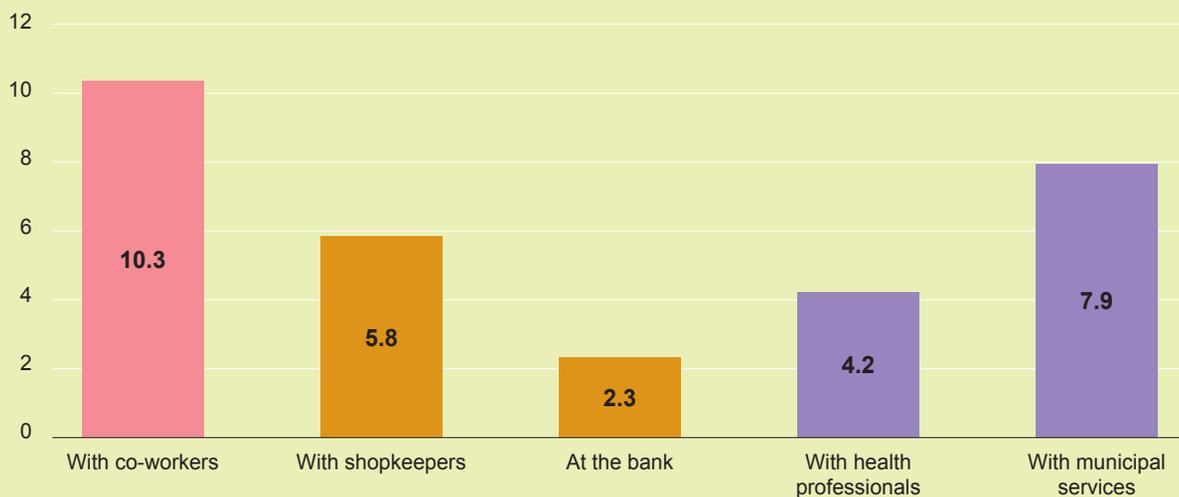
In this section we analyse Basque use in three different domains: with co-workers, in the private sphere (with shopkeepers and bank clerks) and in the public sphere (healthcare and municipal services).

In 2016, 10.3% of people living in the Northern Basque Country claimed to use Basque as much as or more than their other language with their co-workers, 5.9% said they used Basque in this environment, but less than their other language and 83.8% said they did not use Basque at all.

In the private sphere, 5.8% use Basque as much as or more than their other language with shopkeepers and 2.3% do so at their bank. In these same two domains, the percentages of those who use Basque but less than their other language are 6.2% and 2.5% (respectively).

In the public sphere, 4.2% use Basque as much as or more than their other language with members of the health service, and 7.9% do so when dealing with municipal services.

**Figure 30.** Those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language in formal situations. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

Over the last 20 years, the percentages of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language have dropped by 1.6 points with co-workers, 4.9 points with shopkeepers and 6.8 points with bank clerks. In the public sphere, the figures have dropped by 1.5 points in relation to healthcare and by 6.5 points in relation to municipal services.

**Table 14.** Evolution of those who speak Basque as much as or more than their other language in formal situations. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)

	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
With co-workers	11.9	8.5	10.9	10.9	10.3
With shopkeepers	10.7	7.6	7.4	6.6	5.8
At the bank	9.1	6.9	5.7	3.0	2.3
With healthcare professionals	5.7	6.2	4.0	3.5	4.2
With municipal services	14.4	9.1	10.2	8.3	7.9

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

#### 4.4. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA

Of those surveyed, 55.6% use the social media, and of these, 36.7% do so on a daily basis. As regards age, 81.7% of those aged 16-24 and 65.6% of those aged 25-34 use social media sites daily. Thus, use increases as you move down the age range.

The language most used on social media sites is French, although 3.6% of those surveyed said they often use Basque (i.e. they use Basque at least 50% of the time). Among young people (16-24), 6.1% use Basque very frequently in this sphere. In addition to French and Basque, however, social media users also use other languages when interacting on line, mainly English (11.3%).

#### 4.5. THE FACTORS INFLUENCING BASQUE LANGUAGE USE: CORRELATIONS

We shall now explore the factors which influence Basque use, by carrying out correlation analyses. Correlation analyses enable us to determine how one variable influences others. This influence is expressed as a value between 0 and 1, with values closer to 1 reflecting a greater degree of influence.

Correlation analyses were conducted in relation to three use domains: use at home, use with friends and use with co-workers. In all three domains we can conclude that, while their relative order of importance may vary, there are two main factors which influence Basque language use: the density of the Basque-speaking social network (i.e. how many people speak Basque in your family and friendship groups, at work and in your sociolinguistic environment) and fluency (which is directly linked to mother tongue).

The factor which most influences use at home is the density of the language environment in that sphere, i.e. how many family members speak Basque (0.694). The second most influential factor is fluency (0.527), the third is sociolinguistic area (0.418) and the fourth is attitude (0.291).

**Table 15.** Correlations: Basque use at home. Northern Basque Country, 2016

	How many people speak Basque	Fluency	Sociolinguistic area	Attitude
Language spoken at home	0.694	0.527	0.418	0.291

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

The factor which most influences use with friends in the Northern Basque Country is the density of the language environment, i.e. how many of one's friends speak Basque (0.737). The second most influential factor is fluency (0.568), the third is sociolinguistic area (0.387) and the fourth is attitude (0.343).

**Table 16.** Correlations: Basque use with friends. Northern Basque Country, 2016

	How many people speak Basque	Fluency	Sociolinguistic area	Attitude
Language spoken with friends	0.737	0.568	0.387	0.343

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

The factor which most influences use with co-workers is again the density of the language environment in that sphere (0.860). The second most influential factor is fluency (0.298), the third is sociolinguistic area (0.168) and the fourth is attitude (0.139).

**Table 17.** Correlations: Basque use with co-workers. Northern Basque Country, 2016

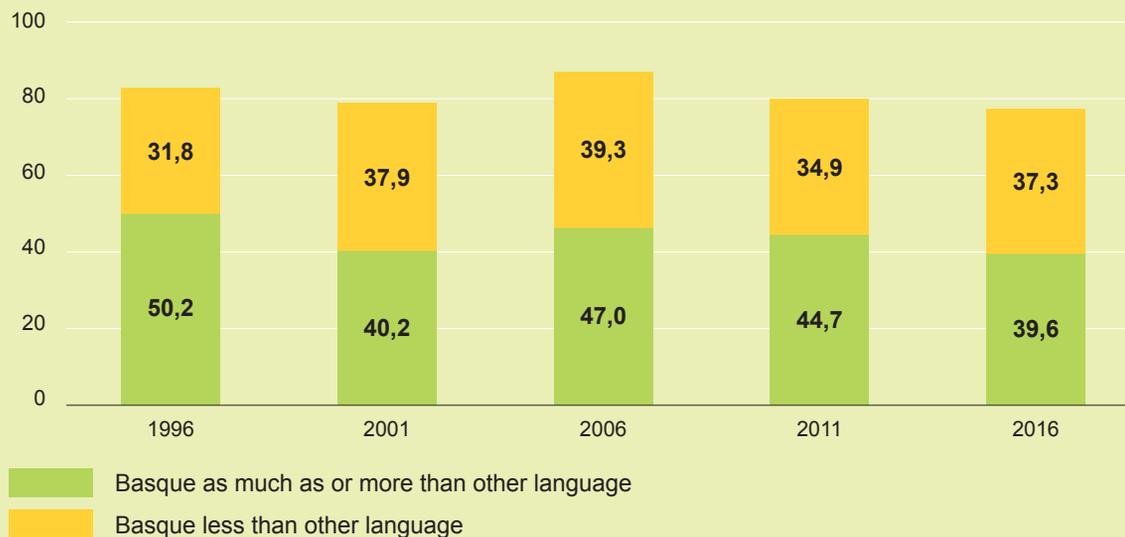
	How many people speak Basque	Fluency	Sociolinguistic area	Attitude
Language spoken with co-workers	0.860	0.298	0.168	0.139

Source: *Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.*

#### 4.6. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BETWEEN BASQUE SPEAKERS

The figures presented in relation to Basque use so far have pertained to the entire population, i.e. everyone over the age of 16 living in the Northern Basque Country. The figures provided below, however, pertain only to the Basque-speaking population, as in the correlation analyses carried out to determine the factors which influence Basque use.

39.6% of Basque speakers in the Northern Basque Country use Basque as much as or more than their other language, 37.3% use Basque, but less so than their other language and the remaining 23.1% use Basque rarely or never.

**Figure 31.** Basque use between Basque speakers. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)


Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

If we analyse the evolution of these figures over the last 20 years, we see that the percentage of Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language has decreased 10.6 points, while that of those who speak Basque but less so than their other language has increased 5.6 points.

**Table 18.** Evolution of Basque use between Basque speakers. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)

	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Total number of Basque speakers	56,146	54,647	51,761	51,100	51,197
Basque more than other language	20.5	18.1	15.8	11.5	9.4
Basque as much as other language	29.7	22.0	31.2	33.1	30.2
Basque less than other language	31.8	37.9	39.3	34.9	37.3
Very little Basque use	6.8	8.2	7.6	11.7	12.7
Always a language other than Basque	11.3	13.8	6.1	8.7	10.4

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

As regards age, between 1996 and 2016, the percentage of intensive Basque use dropped among Basque speakers aged 50 and over, although it is still this age group in which the highest percentage of intensive Basque use is found.

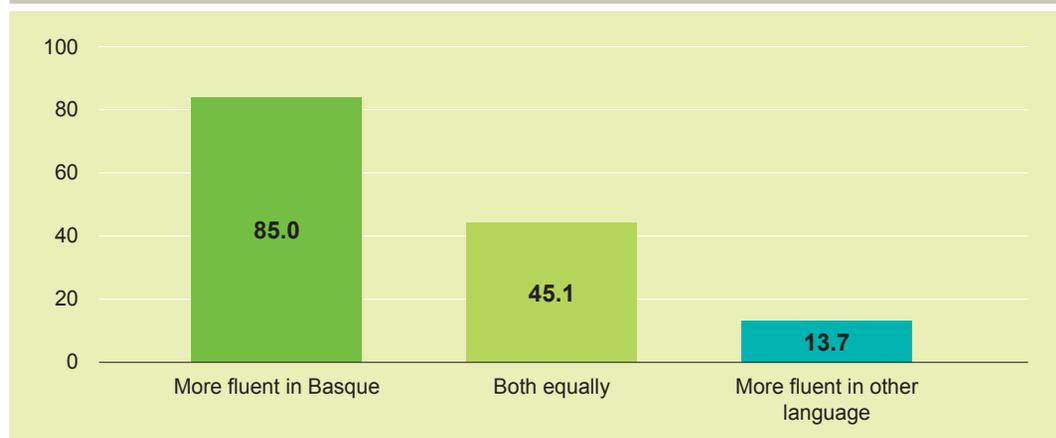
Among those aged under 50, although the figures are fairly low, the evolution over the last 20 years has been overall positive, marked by a rise in the percentage of those who use Basque as much as or more than their other language.

#### 4.7. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE BETWEEN BASQUE SPEAKERS, BY FLUENCY

As observed in the section on the correlation analyses, fluency has a major influence on Basque use. Among the Basque speakers of the Northern Basque Country, 85 % of those who speak Basque more fluently than their other language use Basque as much as or more than that language.

Among native bilinguals, less than half (45.1 %) use Basque as much as or more than their other language, and finally, among those more fluent in their other language, this figure is just 13.7 %.

**Figure 32.** Basque speakers who use Basque as much as or more than their other language, by fluency. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

## 5. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE

### 5.1. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE, BY PROVINCE

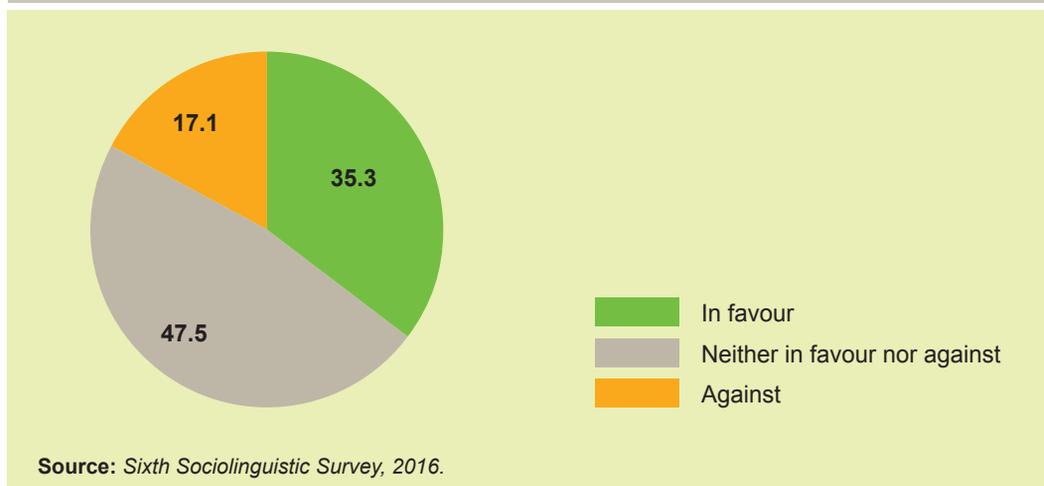
To explore attitudes to the promotion of Basque language use, 4 different categories have been established in accordance with the level of support for or opposition to such a policy.

To develop this system, the following statements were used:

- Anyone applying for a job in the Public Administration must speak Basque.
- It is better for people to learn English than Basque.
- It is vital for all children to learn Basque.
- There should be more radio/TV programmes in Basque.

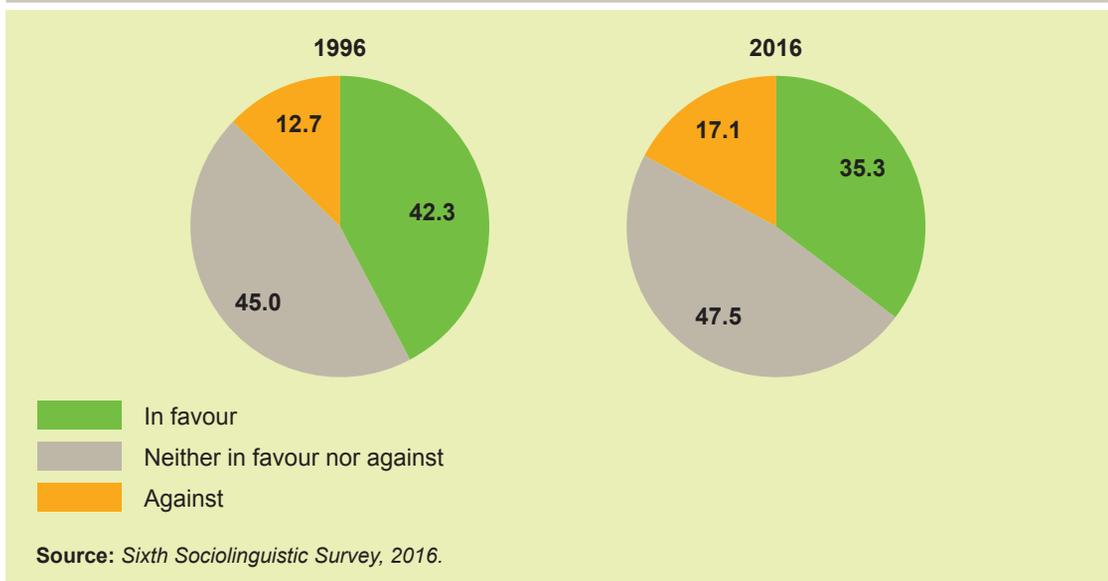
According to the results of the survey, 35.3% of inhabitants aged 16 and over are in favour of promoting the Basque language; 47.5% are neither in favour nor against and 17.1% are against this policy.

**Figure 33.** Attitudes towards Basque language promotion. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



If we compare the figures for 1996 with those recorded for 2016, we see that positive attitudes towards Basque promotion have dropped by 7 % (from 42.3 % to 35.3 %). In 2016, the percentage of those neither in favour nor against was higher than in 1996 (47.5 % as opposed to 45 %), as was the percentage of those against Basque language promotion (17.1 % in 2016, as opposed to 12.7 % in 1996).

**Figure 34.** Evolution of attitudes towards Basque language promotion. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)



Attitudes towards Basque language promotion are more positive in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa (55 %) than in Lapurdi (37.6 %) and the BAB district (26.4 %).

**Table 19.** Attitude towards efforts to promote Basque, by province. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)

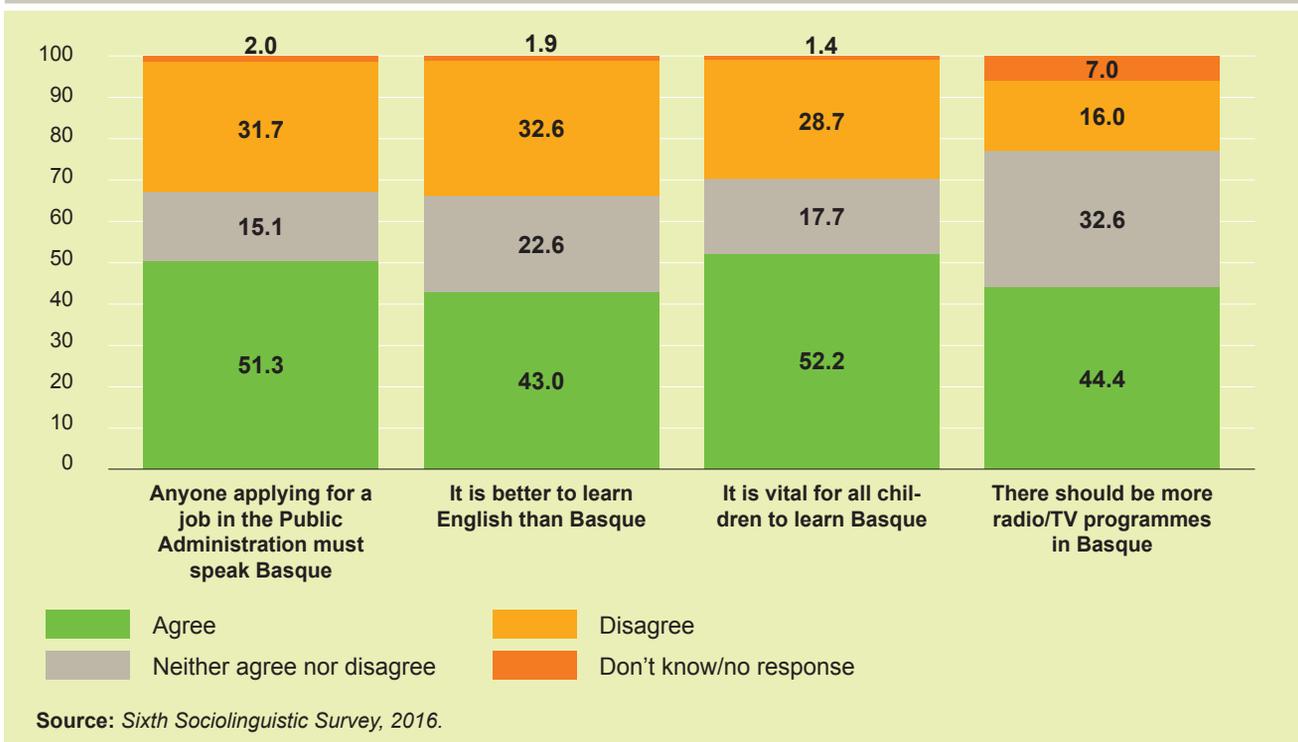
	BAB	Lapurdi (without the BAB)	Lower Navarre / Zuberoa
In favour	26.4	37.6	55.0
Neither in favour nor against	52.5	47.6	32.0
Against	21.1	14.8	13.1

Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

The responses to the statements used to determine attitude type were as follows:

- 51.3% of those living in the Northern Basque Country agreed that anyone applying for a job in the Public Administration must speak Basque, and 15.1% neither agreed nor disagreed. Furthermore, 31.7% disagreed with this affirmation and 2% did not answer.
- Of those interviewed, 43% agreed that it was better to learn English than Basque (i.e. 43% were against Basque language promotion), 22.6% neither agreed nor disagreed and 32.6% disagreed with this statement (i.e. are in favour of Basque language promotion). No answer was given by 1.9% of those surveyed.
- 52.2% of those surveyed said they agreed that it is vital for all children to learn Basque; 17.7% neither agreed nor disagreed, 28.7% disagreed with this statement and 1.4% did not answer.
- Finally, 44.4% said they thought there should be more radio/TV programmes in Basque, 32.6% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, 16% disagreed and 7% did not answer.

**Figure 35.** Opinions used to established attitude categories. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)



## 5.2. ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BASQUE BY LANGUAGE COMPETENCE, SEX AND AGE

Attitude towards Basque is closely linked to language competence, with 66.7% of Basque speakers being in favour of Basque language promotion. The figure among passive Basque speakers is 52% and among non-Basque speakers it is 23.9%.

As regards sex, no major differences were observed in general between men's and women's attitudes to Basque language promotion, although positive attitudes were slightly more frequent among men (35.8% versus 34.9%). Negative attitudes, on the other hand, were almost exactly the same: 17.3% among women and 17% among men.

**Table 20.** Attitude towards efforts to promote Basque, by sex. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)

	In favour	Neither in favour nor against	Against
Total	35.3	47.5	17.1
Women	34.9	47.8	17.3
Men	35.8	47.2	17.0

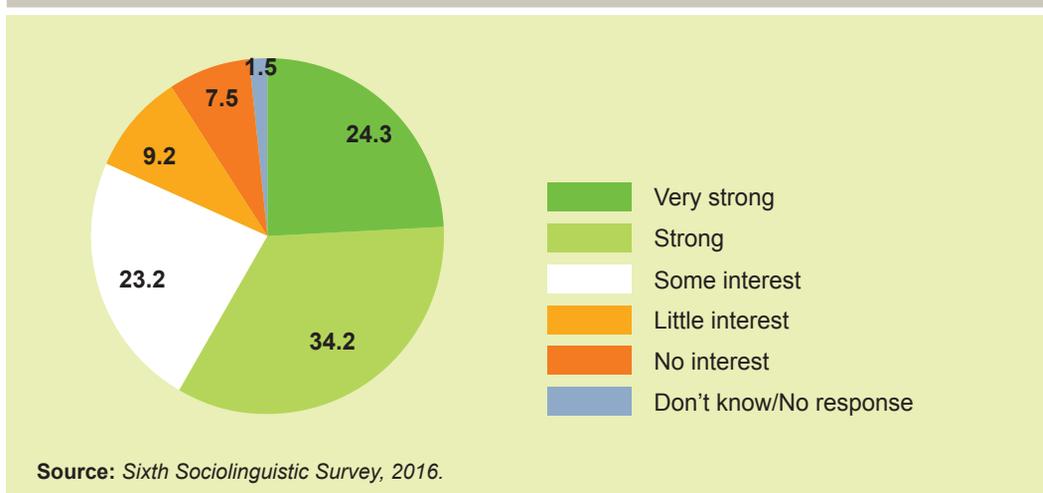
Source: Sixth Sociolinguistic Survey, 2016.

In relation to age, the highest percentage of favourable attitudes to Basque language promotion is found among adults and older adults, i.e. among those aged 35 and over (over 35% in favour). The lowest percentage of favourable attitudes, on the other hand, are found among those aged 16-24 (30.6%).

### 5.3. INTEREST IN BASQUE AND OTHER OPINIONS

When asked about their interest in Basque, 58.5 % of the inhabitants of the Northern Basque Country expressed a strong or very strong interest in the language, 23.2 % expressed some interest, 9.2 % said they had little interest, 7.5 % said they had no interest whatsoever and 1.5 % did not know or did not answer.

Figure 36. Interest in Basque. Northern Basque Country, 2016 (%)

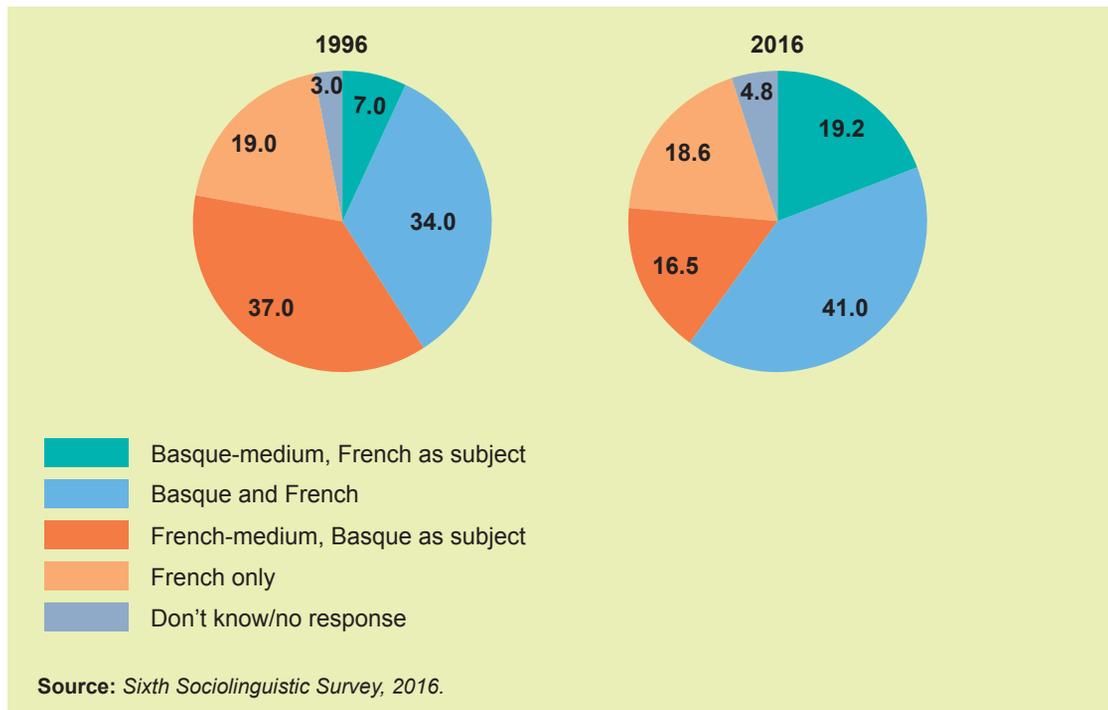


Exploring other opinions related to Basque (48 % in 2006) of the over-16 population of the Northern Basque Country said they would choose the total immersion (19.2 % in 2016 vs 12 % in 2006) or bilingual model (41 % in 2016 vs 36 % in 2006) for their children's education (all in Basque, with French as a separate subject, or joint Basque and French), and a smaller percentage (35.1 % in 2016 vs 47 % in 2006) said they would prefer a French-medium education model.

In 1996, the percentage of those who said they would prefer either the total immersion or bilingual model was smaller (41.4 %), whereas that of those who said they would choose a French-medium model (with or without Basque as a separate subject) was higher (56 %).

It is worth noting that the percentage of those who said they would choose a Basque-medium (immersion) model for their children's education has risen by 12 points over the last 20 years, from 7 % in 1996 to 19.2 % in 2016.

**Figure 37.** What language model would you choose for your children’s education?  
Northern Basque Country, 1996-2016 (%)



As regards other attitudes, 93.3% believe that, in the future, people should speak Basque and French, 2.3% believe people should speak only Basque and 3% believe people should speak only French.

Basque speakers were also asked if they had ever felt discriminated against due to not being able to speak their language of choice; 24.8% answered affirmatively.

Interviewees were also asked about other opinions linked to the Basque language. The results can be summarised as follows:

- When asked whether they thought Basque was necessary for people to communicate with each other, 44.8% of the over-16 population of the Northern Basque Country said they agreed and 39.7% disagreed.
- 47.6% believe that Basque will never be as important as French and 25.8% expressed the opposite opinion. A further 20.5% said they neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 75.1% said they disagreed with the statement “Basque is only for use with family and friends” and 16.5% agreed. The rest either said they neither agreed nor disagreed or did not answer.

- 80.4 % said they did not think that the existence of two languages caused problems in society, and 12.6 % said they thought it did.
- 80.8 % said they thought it was a good idea to educate children in the immersion model, and 9.4 % said they did not.
- When asked whether Basque speakers should start all conversations with strangers in Basque, 42.9 % of those living in the Northern Basque Country said they agreed, 32.4 % said they disagreed and 20.9 % said they neither agreed nor disagreed.
- When asked whether they would rather go to shops where Basque is spoken, 43.2 % said no, 17.9 % said yes and 32.4 % said neither yes nor no.
- Finally, 45.7 % said they did not think Basque was in danger of extinction, and 41.1 % said they did. The rest either said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, did not know or did not answer.
- If we take only Basque speakers into account, the percentages are reversed, with 46.3 % saying they thought Basque was in danger of extinction and 41.6 % saying they did not.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- The population of the Northern Basque Country is characterised by two main features: the progressive ageing of the population (there are more people aged 65 and over than there are aged 20 and under: 23.2% versus 20.8%); and the high percentage of those born outside the region, particularly along the coast. The population of the Northern Basque Country is therefore growing as the result of the positive migratory balance, even though the natural increase is negative (11 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants versus 9.3 births).
- 20.5% of all those aged 16 and over are Basque speakers, 9.3% are passive Basque speakers and the remaining 70.1% do not speak Basque. There are fewer Basque speakers now than 20 years ago (5,000 fewer) and their relative numbers have continued to drop (mainly due to the arrival of people from outside the region). However, for the first time ever, in absolute terms, the number of Basque speakers has remained stable over the last 5 years (there are currently 51,200, the same as in 2011).
- Lower Navarre and Zuberoa are the provinces with the highest density of Basque speakers (49.5% of the population, 16,200 speakers in absolute terms). However, the highest number of speakers is found in inland Lapurdi (without the BAB): 26,300 speakers (23% of the population). Finally, in the BAB district there are 8,600 speakers (8.4% of the population).
- In terms of age, the largest group of Basque speakers (30%) is still found among the older generations (65s and over). Nevertheless, over the last ten years, the incipient trend detected some years ago has consolidated, and the number and proportion of young bilinguals has consistently increased. Thus, among those aged between 16 and 24, the number of Basque speakers continues to increase, both in comparison with the figures reported by previous surveys and in relation to the next youngest age group (25-34): in 2016, 18.9% of those aged 16-24 spoke Basque, as opposed to 11.3% in 1996 and 15.7% of those aged 25-34.

- Just over 80% of Basque speakers are native Basque speakers or native bilinguals (i.e. they learned Basque at home as their sole or joint mother tongue). As you move down the age scale, however, the percentage of new Basque speakers increases, and more than half (52.9%) of those aged 16-24 learned Basque outside the home, either at school or in a language academy.
- As regards fluency among Basque speakers, the figures are lower than they were 20 years ago. In 1996, 34% of Basque speakers spoke Basque more fluently than their other language, whereas today, this figure is 20.1% (8.8% among the younger generations).
- The figures for 2016 confirm the trend towards increased Basque language transmission in the family. Today, the vast majority of Basque-speaking parents with children under the age of 16 speak Basque with them at home. When both parents are Basque speakers, 86.3% transmit Basque to their children (the percentage was the same in 2011 and 81% in 2006), with 66.1% speaking only Basque and 20.2% speaking both Basque and another language at home with them. When only one parent speaks Basque, more than half transmit Basque to their children at home along with another language (53.8% in 2016, 56% in 2011 and 44.4% in 2006).
- 8.1% of those living in the Northern Basque Country use Basque intensively, i.e. they use it as much as or more than the other language they speak in their everyday life. A further 14.7% also use Basque, but to a lesser extent than their other language.
- Intensive Basque use has dropped in the Northern Basque Country (5 points in comparison with 1996, 1.5 points in comparison with 2011), particularly in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, although this decrease has slowed over recent years (15.9 points over 20 years, but only 2.7 points decrease over the last 5 years). It has also dropped in the Lapurdi hinterland and the BAB district, although to a lesser extent (1.2 points in Lapurdi and 1.3 points in the BAB since 2011). Basque use has also dropped in all areas of life: at home, in the immediate environment and in formal situations.
- If we analyse use in accordance with age, we see that the highest figures are found among those aged 65 and over, with the percentages decreasing as you move down the age scale. Nevertheless, a significant

change in trend was detected in this survey among those aged 16-24, with use increasing among those in this age range in comparison with the figure for the next youngest age group (25-34): 4,3% and 4%, respectively. Between 1996 and 2016, general use decreased in all age groups except the youngest one (16-24), in which it increased, rising from 1.3% in 1996 to 4.3% in 2016. Similarly, over the last 5 years, occasional use of Basque has also increased among the 16-24 age group, rising from 12.1% in 2011 to 14% in 2016.

- While attitudes to Basque language promotion underwent only minor changes from 1996 to 2006, positive attitudes have dropped by 5.9 points over the last 10 years. In 2016, 35.3% were in favour of Basque language promotion, 47.5% were neither for nor against and 17.1% were against this policy.
- Most of those surveyed expressed a strong interest in Basque (58.5%). In relation to education, the percentage of those who say they would choose the immersion or bilingual model for their children's education has increased over the years, from 40% in 1996, to 53% in 2011 and 60% in 2016. As regards other attitudes, 93.3% believe that, in the future, people should speak Basque and French (2.3% believe people should speak only Basque and 3% believe people should speak only French).





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