

BASQUE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY  
NORTHERN BASQUE COUNTRY  
NAVARRE  
BASQUE COUNTRY

# Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey

# 2006



# Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey

2006



**Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia**

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Miren AZKARATE  
Minister of Culture,  
the Basque Government



## A COUNTRY MOVING FORWARD WITH THE BASQUE LANGUAGE AS ITS TRAVELLING COMPANION

In the nineteenth century there were some who believed Basque would not make it into the twentieth century. And in the twentieth century, there were also those who prophesied it would be gone before the twenty-first. Despite the apocalyptic calculations and forecasts, the Basque language, or to be more precise, the Basque-speaking language community, has clearly not only survived the last few decades but has also made significant strides towards acquiring renewed strength.

The number of citizens who know and use Basque has grown in recent years. For those wishing to speak or write in Basque, the domains of use in which it may be used have multiplied, while the average age of the Basque-speaking language community is now younger than it has been for many years past. In consequence, the former death-knell discourse has little bearing on the Basque language's recent language recovery process and certainly does not reflect the present day reality.

But this fact should not distract us from the need to face up to new circumstances and, indeed, challenges. For Basque society is forever changing and the characteristics and needs of those who employ Basque to a lesser or greater extent are constantly adapting and evolving. It is therefore a matter of the greatest importance to take note of these changes as they occur and to seek to respond to them if we are to go on supporting the Basque language and the community of its speakers in the years to come.

The progress and vitality of the Basque language varies from one region of the country to another, so evidently there are three essential factors to be considered in order to strengthen Basque: a legal framework giving adequate recognition to the language; a language policy that promotes language recovery effectively; and grass-roots support, without which all the other efforts would be in vain. To these we might add



a fourth: cooperation between all official bodies throughout the Basque-speaking areas, given that bringing about collaboration in matters of language use depends on the will to do so, while acknowledging and respecting the competence and decision-making powers of each such institution. For there is no such thing as a truly unsurmountable obstacle to working together on language-related initiatives, from which there is something to be gained by all sides, nothing need be lost, slighted or neglected thereby, and it affords a decisive move towards tolerant coexistence between all citizens.

The Council of Europe has long urged cooperation in the area of revitalisation of minority languages between communities sharing a common language, whether across state borders or within a member state. Such cooperation is sought by both myself and the Basque Government, it has been in the past and will continue to be in the future. The Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey presented here is the fruit of just such a joint effort between the Basque Government and the Public Institute of the Basque Language in the northern Basque Country. Henceforth, it is to be hoped that the public institutions of Navarre might likewise participate in the development of future editions of the Survey while respecting the competence and powers of decision of each such entity within the Basque-speaking regions.

The results of the Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey, performed in 2006, are published in four languages (Basque, Spanish, French and English). The Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey presents a snapshot not only of the situation of Basque but of the society as a whole at a given point in time. Beyond the snapshot, it also provides an incomparable watchtower allowing us to trace the society's development over a fifteen-year period.

Strengths, weaknesses, challenges and needs: all of these are subjected to close observation and analysis in the present study, which offers an excellent opportunity to reflect on the present situations and the direction that should be taken by efforts in the immediate future to continue the work of Basque language recovery.

Donostia, the 28th of June, 2008

Patxi BAZTARRIKA  
Vice-Minister for Language Policy  
of the Basque Government and  
chairman of the committee that  
produced the Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey



## PREFACE

The revitalisation of a language spoken by a minority is not something that happens from one day to the next. It takes time, several generations, patience, the energy to surmount any difficulties emerging along the way, the capacity to respond promptly to the old and new needs of speakers, support from the grass roots, a commitment from public entities to satisfy this public demand, many types of resources, etc. In addition, it is also essential to have access to accurate information about the evolution of Basque society.

Sociolinguistic studies provide an important means of obtaining such information. They offer a useful handle, revealing social changes, social attitudes towards the language undergoing revitalisation, strong and weak areas, while pointing the way towards an effective language policy aimed at transforming the situation.

For that reason, number 32 of the 2005-2009 guidelines defined by the Vice-Ministry for Language Policy of the Basque Government is: "To promote research providing information about sociolinguistic change", with explicit mention of the development and publication of the Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey of the Basque Country.

Taken together, the census and registry data constitute the most important instrument providing fundamental information about how the situation of Basque is developing. By cross-referencing these two sources of data, it has been possible to gather a wealth of language information on a five-yearly basis (citizens' language knowledge, as of 1981; mother tongue, as of 1986; and language use in the home, as of 1991) for the entire population of the Basque Autonomous Community. The Autonomous Community of Navarre only collects data on its citizens' language knowledge. In the northern Basque Country the census does not include any language-related questions.

Since census and registry data in the BAC and Navarre cover the whole population but do not include the same information, while we lack census data for the North, the first Sociolinguistic Survey was carried out in 1991 in order to obtain uniform information about the situation of Basque throughout the language's territory.

The Surveys have two purposes: to perform detailed studies of the situation of Basque in the Basque Country every five years, in step with the census and registry campaigns, to permit systematic comparison with these; and to gather as much information as possible covering all regions where the language is spoken through the cooperation of official institutions of the Basque Autonomous Community, the Autonomous Community of Navarre and the North.

The Survey covers inhabitants of the Basque territories aged sixteen and over (approximately 2,500,000 people). Hence it does not include the youngest age groups, which are the most Basque-speaking owing to the influence of the schools in recent years. The survey is stratified by sex and age with a total of 7,200 subjects. Data is obtained using a structured, closed questionnaire. However, this time round the method of gathering data was modified by using the information provided by subjects in phone calls.

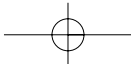
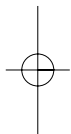
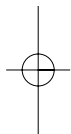
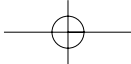
The results of the First Sociolinguistic Survey of 1991 were published in 1995 in a document called *Euskararen Jarraipena*; the Second Sociolinguistic Survey, performed in 1996, was published in 1999; the Third Sociolinguistic Survey of 2001 was published in 2003; while the present survey, published in 2008, reflects data obtained in December, 2006.

The Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey covers a variety of research areas summarised under four general headings: citizens' language knowledge and linguistic competence; language transmission; Basque language use in a number of domains (such as the home, among friends, at work, in formal contexts etc.); and attitudes towards the Basque language.

Thus we have published a series of syntheses of uniform data about the development of Basque over fifteen years (from 1991 to 2006) in all the Basque regions. Valuable information indeed for any serious attempt to assess the past and present revitalisation of the Basque language, and equally useful, in my opinion, for an assessment by both institutions and the Basque public of the direction in which we ought to move in the near future in order for revitalisation to continue.

Donostia, the 28th of June, 2008

**BASQUE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY**  
Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey



## 1. Overview of the population of the BAC

According to 2006 population data, the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) has a total population of 2,133,684. Of this number, 279,600 (13.1%) are aged sixteen or under and are not included in this survey.

It should be noted that the young people excluded contain the highest percentage of bilinguals: two-thirds of young people aged sixteen and less are bilingual. Despite the small proportion they represent relative to the universe surveyed, this does affect the results. In fact, over one-third of the entire population of the BAC is bilingual.

Two features stand out when we look at the development of the population of the BAC over the past fifteen year period:

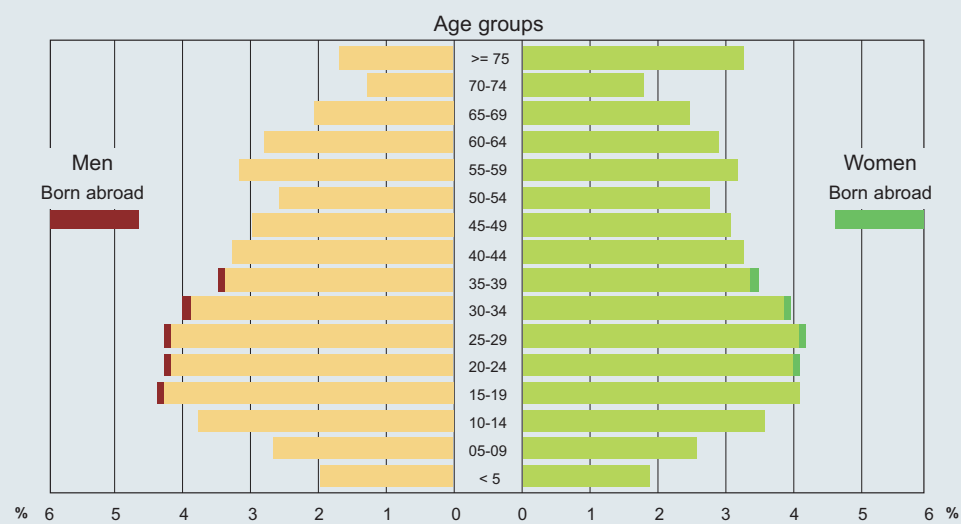
- the aging of the population, and
- the impact of immigration.

The population of the BAC is getting progressively older: life expectancy is high, while the birth rate has fallen substantially. The over-65 population grew by almost 50% between 1991 and 2006: there were 126,661 more people aged 65 or over in 2006 than in 1991. The number of people aged between 15 and 24 has dropped quite substantially: by 145,144 (a fall of 40.5%).

Foreign immigration to the BAC has grown considerably over the past fifteen years. In 1991 there were 25,782 foreign immigrants in the BAC. In 2006 there were 108,782. This represents a rise from 2% to 5% of the total population.

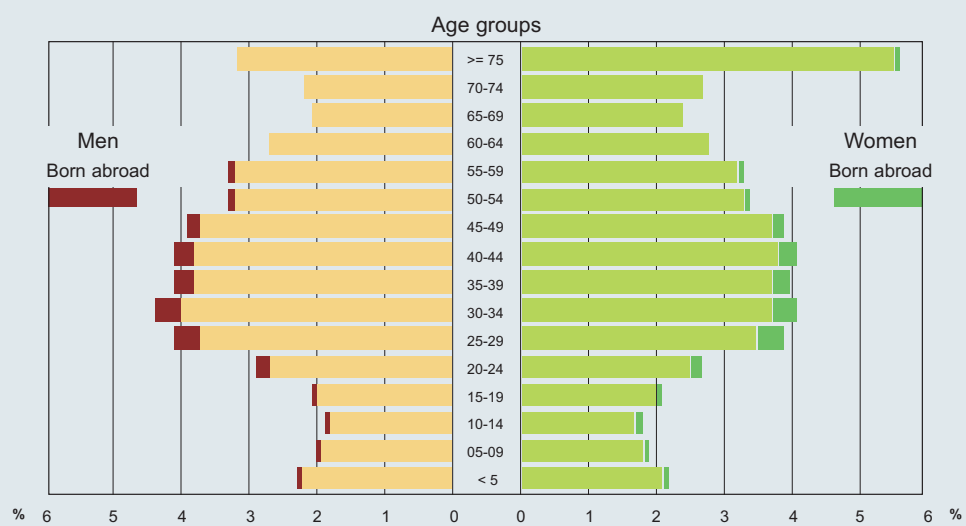
**Basque society is aging, and immigration has greatly increased in recent years**

**Figure 1.** Population pyramid by sex, age and place of birth.  
BAC, 1991



Source: INE

**Figure 1.** Population pyramid by sex, age and place of birth.  
BAC, 2006



Source: INE

2. Language competence

2.1. POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

According to 2006 data the BAC has 1,850,500 inhabitants aged sixteen or more, 30.1% of whom (557,600 people) are fully bilingual, meaning that they speak both Basque and Spanish well. A further 339,600 (18.3%) are able to understand Basque although they do not speak it well; these will be referred to as passive bilinguals. The rest (953,300 people, i.e. 51.5%) are non-Basque speakers, in other words, people who do not know Basque at all.

30.1% of the inhabitants of the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) aged sixteen or over are full bilinguals, and another 18.3% are passive bilinguals, while 51.5% are non-Basque speakers

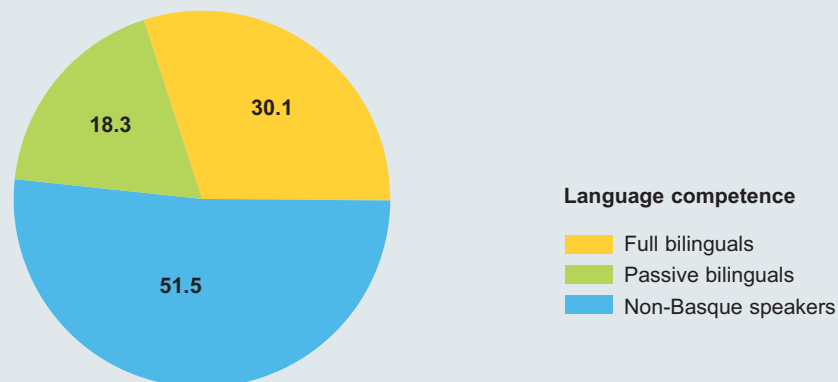
Table 1. Population aged sixteen or over by age group and province.  
BAC, 2006

Age groups	Population aged 16 or over			
	BAC	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa
≥ 65	393,200	49,800	217,400	126,000
50-64	402,400	56,800	213,500	132,100
35-49	512,000	73,500	275,100	163,400
25-34	348,600	51,800	184,900	111,900
16-24	194,300	29,100	104,000	61,200
Total	1,850,500	261,000	994,900	594,600

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.



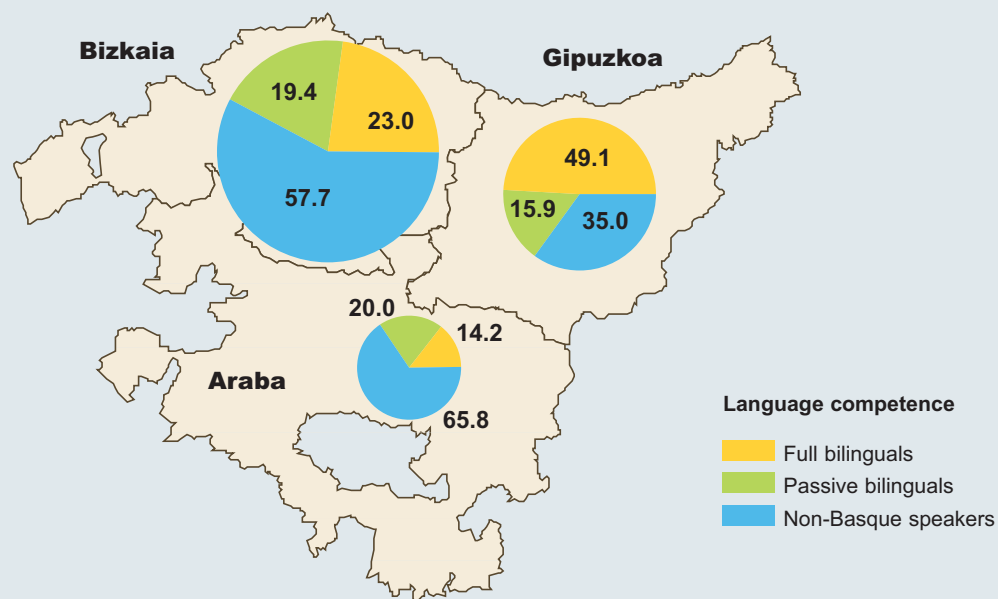
Figure 3. Language competence. BAC, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

The largest proportion and absolute number of full bilinguals in the BAC (49.1% and 291,900 respectively) are found in the province of Gipuzkoa. The 228,500 full bilinguals in Bizkaia represent 23.0% of this province's over-sixteen population. The smallest percentage and absolute number of bilinguals in the BAC (14.2% and 37,200 respectively) are found in the province of Araba.

Figure 4. Language competence province by province. BAC, 2006 (%)



Note: The size of circles represents the population of each province.

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Over the past fifteen years, from 1991 to 2006, the number of full bilinguals has increased by 138,400. Their proportion has also grown: from 24.1% of the whole population in 1991 to 27.7% in 1996, 29.4% in 2001, and again to 30.1% in 2006. It is interesting to note that despite the fact that the overall over-fifteen population has constantly grown, there are at present 119,300 fewer completely non-Basque speakers today than fifteen years ago, falling from 59.2% of the population in 1991 to 51.5% in 2006. In the same period the percentage of the population who although they do not speak Basque perfectly can understand it has risen, from 8.5% to 18.3%.

The number of full bilinguals has risen in all three provinces of the BAC. In Araba there are 21,600 more full bilinguals than in 1991, in Bizkaia 70,000 more and in Gipuzkoa 46,500 more.

**Table 2.** Changes in the number of full bilinguals. BAC, 1991-2006 (%)

	Population age 16 and more			
Full bilinguals	1991	1996	2001	2006
Araba	7.0	11.4	13.4	14.2
Bizkaia	16.5	20.9	22.4	23.0
Gipuzkoa	43.7	46.0	48.0	49.1
<b>BAC</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>30.1</b>

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

## 2.2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY AGE

The highest percentage of full bilinguals is found among people under 35 years of age. This is also the part of the population showing the greatest change in recent years

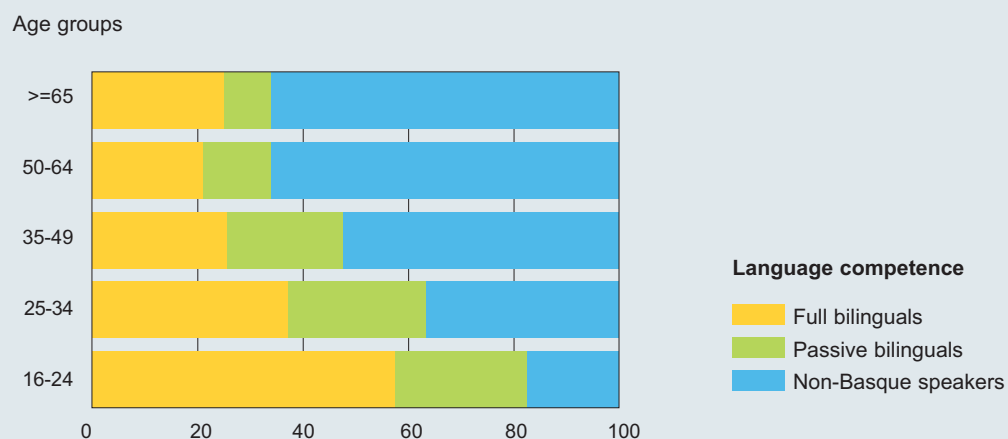
Growth in the number of bilinguals has taken place in all age groups below 50. This increase is not new, having been continuous over the past fifteen years, but is particularly marked in the youngest part of the population. Today 57.5% of the population between 16 and 24 are fully bilingual, as are 37.3% of the population between 25 and 34 years of age.

The lowest percentage of full bilinguals is found among those over 35, where it is lower than the overall percentage of full bilinguals for the BAC. The percentage of those between 50 and 64 is especially low at 21.3%.

The increase in the number of bilinguals over the past fifteen years originates from young people. The least Basque-speaking group is that of older people, but as the years go by this group is gaining bilinguals from below, and losing non-Basque-speaking monolinguals at the top as the oldest inhabitants pass on. While the young are becoming progressively more Basque-speaking, in the oldest group (which had the highest proportion of bilinguals fifteen years ago) the percentage of non-Basque-speakers has now grown.

Overall, the percentage of passive bilinguals has increased in every age group. However, for the first time, the proportion of passive bilinguals (24.9%) in the 16-24 age group is lower than that in the 25-34 age group (26.0%). Thus the growth of full bilingualism in the youngest group has resulted not only in a falling number of non-Basque-speakers in this group but in a fall in the number of passive bilinguals also. In other words, the loss of passive bilinguals in the 16-24 age group is benefitting the full bilinguals.

Of the over-fifty population, two-thirds are non-Basque speakers, while in the under-fifty population this number is falling off, and is presently at about half (52.3%) between the ages of 35 and 49, just over one-third (36.7%) between 25 and 34, and under a fifth (17.6%) between 16 and 24.

**Figure 5.** Language competence by age group. BAC, 2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

These trends are clearly visible in the statistics for each province, despite the marked differences between percentages in the different provinces.

**Table 3.** Language competence by age group. BAC, 2006 (%)

Age groups	Population age 16 and more		
	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	25.0	9.0	66.0
50-64	21.3	13.2	65.6
35-49	25.7	22.0	52.3
25-34	37.3	26.0	36.7
16-24	57.5	24.9	17.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>51.5</b>

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

## ARABA

Full bilinguals make up about 5% of inhabitants over the age of 50 in the province of Araba. In inhabitants under fifty, the percentage doubles with each change of age group: for the 35-49 group it is 11.3%, for the 25-34 group it is 21.5%, and full bilinguals make up 42.5% of the 16-24 age group. There has been an impressive rise in the number of full bilinguals among young people over fifteen since 1991, when the percentage for the 25-34 group was 5.1% and that for the 16-24 group was 8.9%.

The lowest percentage of full bilinguals is found among the elderly, at 4.4%; the highest is in the 25-34 group, at 33.8%. Among those between 16 and 24 years old, the percentage of passive bilinguals is 27.9%, which is lower than the proportion of full bilinguals.

An increase in the number of full and passive bilinguals implies, of necessity, a fall in the number of Spanish-speaking monolinguals. Nine out of ten (90.7%) of the inhabitants of this province over 65 years old do not know any Basque. Below this age, and in particular below the age of 35, the decrease in the number of non-Basque speakers is very notable, reaching 29.5% in the 16-24 group.

Thus the first signs of change observed in 1996 have turned into a new reality ten years on. The acquisition of Basque by the youngest members of the population is now in evidence, with an across-the-board drop in the proportion of Spanish-only speakers. Among the youngest age group (16-24), moreover, there are now more full bilinguals than Spanish-speaking monolinguals.

**Table 4.** Language competence by age group. Araba, 2006 (%)

Age groups	Population age 16 and more		
	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	4.9	4.4	90.7
50-64	5.2	15.0	79.8
35-49	11.3	21.5	67.2
25-34	21.5	33.8	44.7
16-24	42.5	27.9	29.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>65.8</b>

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

BIZKAIA

Half (49.2%) of the population of the province of Bizkaia between 16 and 24 years old are fully bilingual. The percentage of full bilinguals between 25 and 34 years of age is 29.4%; for those over 35 it is about 17%. As in Araba and (as we shall see below) Gipuzkoa, the increase in the number of full bilinguals in Bizkaia has been particularly marked among the young, rising from 17.9% of 16-24 year olds and 14.5% of 25-34 year olds in 1991. The percentage of bilinguals over the age of 50 has continued to drop. The largest number of non-Basque speakers is found among adults, among whom the older one gets, the more the percentage of non-Basque speakers rises.

The proportion of passive bilinguals varies inversely with age. Thus the highest proportion of passive bilinguals (31.1%) is found in the 16-24 age group and the smallest (9.9%) in the over-65s.

Non-Basque speakers continue to predominate in all the age groups over 25, representing over 70% of those over 50, more than half (57.4%) of people between 35 and 49, and a little under half (45.0%) of people in the 25-34 age bracket. In contrast, only one-fifth (19.7%) of the youngest age group are non-Basque speakers.

Table 5. Language competence by age group. Bizkaia, 2006 (%)

Age groups	Population age 16 and more		
	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	18.0	9.9	72.0
50-64	14.6	12.6	72.8
35-49	19.1	23.5	57.4
25-34	29.4	25.7	45.0
16-24	49.2	31.1	19.7
Total	23.0	19.4	57.7

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

GIPUZKOA

In the province of Gipuzkoa, the majority of the population under 50 are full bilinguals. As in the whole BAC and its other provinces, the younger the group, the higher the proportion of bilinguals. Compare to the 43.3% full bilinguals between ages 35 and 49, the 78.7% between 16 and 24. The lowest percentage of full bilinguals in Gipuzkoa comes from the 50-64 group, where it stands at 39.0%.

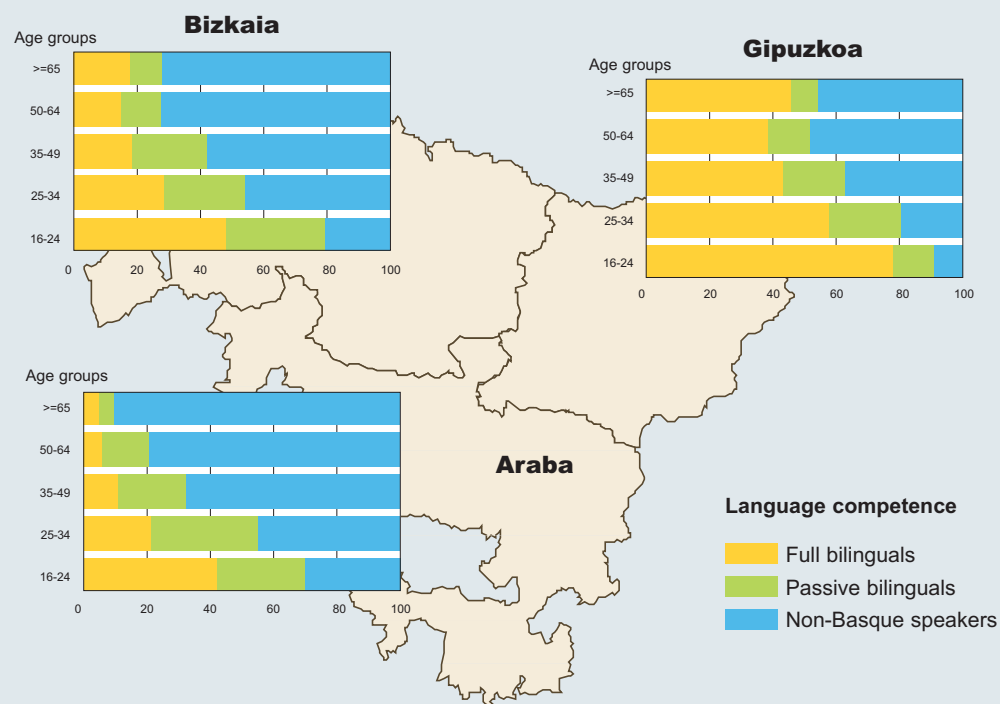
The percentage of passive bilinguals is somewhat smaller than that for the whole BAC for inhabitants under 35, and very similar to the latter in the remainder of the population.

The highest percentage of non-Basque speakers is in the population over fifty, at just under half of all Gipuzkoans in that age bracket. Below the age of 50, the proportion of non-Basque speakers diminishes at almost the same rate at which the proportion of full bilinguals rises, with just over a third (37.2%) between 35 and 49 years of age, one-fifth (19.4%) between 25 and 34, and fewer than a tenth (8.3%) among people between the ages of 16 and 24.

Table 6. Language competence by age group. Gipuzkoa, 2006 (%)

Age groups	Population age 16 and more		
	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	45.2	9.1	45.8
50-64	39.0	13.4	47.7
35-49	43.3	19.6	37.2
25-34	57.8	22.8	19.4
16-24	78.7	13.0	8.3
Total	49.1	15.9	35.0

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 6.** Language competence by age group, province by province. BAC, 2006 (%)

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.



### 2.3. GROUP CHARACTERISTICS ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

Next we shall examine the characteristics of the members of each of the three groups that make up our language competence typology (full bilinguals, passive bilinguals and non-Basque speakers).

The typical profile of full bilinguals is as follows:

- Born in the BAC of locally-born parents.
- Over half are native Basque speakers, and over a third went to a Model D (Basque-medium) primary and secondary school. Another fifth studied or improved their Basque outside of the school system.
- The parents of over half of full bilinguals are both bilingual. However, a significant number (over a quarter) also have non-Basque-speaking parents.
- Full bilinguals are very interested in Basque and support the promotion of the Basque language.

Typical characteristics of passive bilinguals are as follows:

- Spanish is the mother tongue of the majority and the medium of their primary and secondary schooling.
- They have Spanish-speaking families, friends and work environments.
- They live in Spanish-speaking areas.
- Half of the people in this group are in favour of promotion of the Basque language, and as a general rule they are not particularly interested in Basque.

Lastly, non-Basque speakers have the following typical profile:

- More than half were born outside the BAC.
- The mother tongue of almost all is either Spanish or some other language other than Basque.
- They live in a non-Basque-speaking environment.
- One in ten has tried to learn Basque outside of school.
- They are not very interested in Basque, yet four out of ten are in favour of efforts to promote the Basque language.
- Over half the members of this group are over fifty years of age.

## 2.4. RELATIVE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

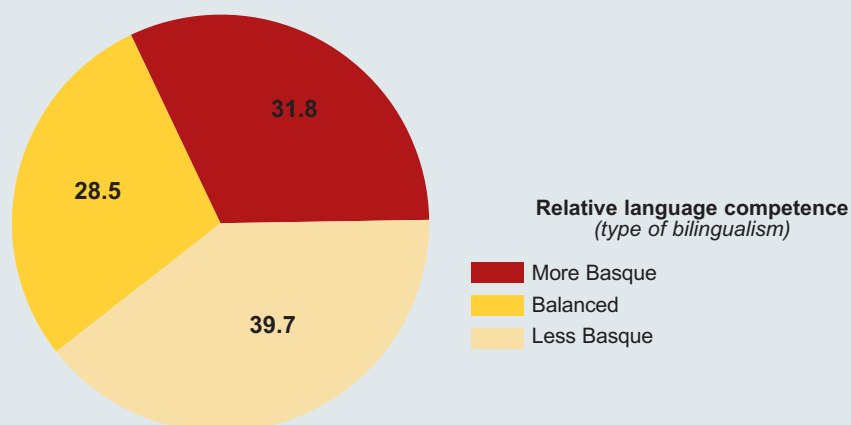
We may divide full bilinguals into three groups depending on how well they express themselves in Basque or in Spanish.

**“More Basque”** bilinguals, who are more fluent in Basque than in Spanish, comprise 31.8% of full bilinguals and 9.6% of the whole over-sixteen population of the BAC. The greatest proportion (54.7%) of such “more Basque” bilinguals is found among those over 65, and the younger the age group the fewer there are. Taking the full bilinguals in the under-25 age group, for example, “more Basque” bilinguals make up 21.6% of their total. Nevertheless, this percentage has risen gradually over the past fifteen years. Nearly all “more Basque” bilinguals speak Basque as a mother tongue (91% as their only mother tongue and 8% as one of their mother tongues, together with Spanish). They live in Basque-speaking areas: more than half reside in the third sociolinguistic area (where Basque speakers comprise 50-80% of the local population), and almost a third in the fourth area (where over 80% of the population are Basque speakers). Half of all “more Basque” bilinguals live in the province of Gipuzkoa.

**Balanced bilinguals**, who are equally fluent in both Basque and Spanish, comprise 28.5% of full bilinguals and 8.6% of the whole over-sixteen population of the BAC. The highest proportion of balanced bilinguals (one in three) is found between the ages of 25 and 50. Over half (57%) live in Gipuzkoa and a little over a third (36%) in Bizkaia. Basque is the mother tongue of most of them (61%); however, Spanish is the mother tongue of one-fourth (24%) of balanced bilinguals, and another 15% have both languages as mother tongues.

**“More Spanish”** (or “less Basque”) **bilinguals**, who are less fluent in Basque than in Spanish, comprise, with 39.7% of full bilinguals and 12% of the whole population of the BAC, its largest group of bilinguals. The younger their age, the larger the proportion of “more Spanish” bilinguals becomes: over half (55.7%) of full bilinguals in the 16 to 24 age group find it easier to speak Spanish than Basque. Half (49%) of “more Spanish” bilinguals live in Bizkaia, and 40% in Gipuzkoa. Spanish is the mother tongue of most (63%) “more Spanish” bilinguals, Basque of one fourth (25%) of them, and both Basque and Spanish of the remaining 12%.

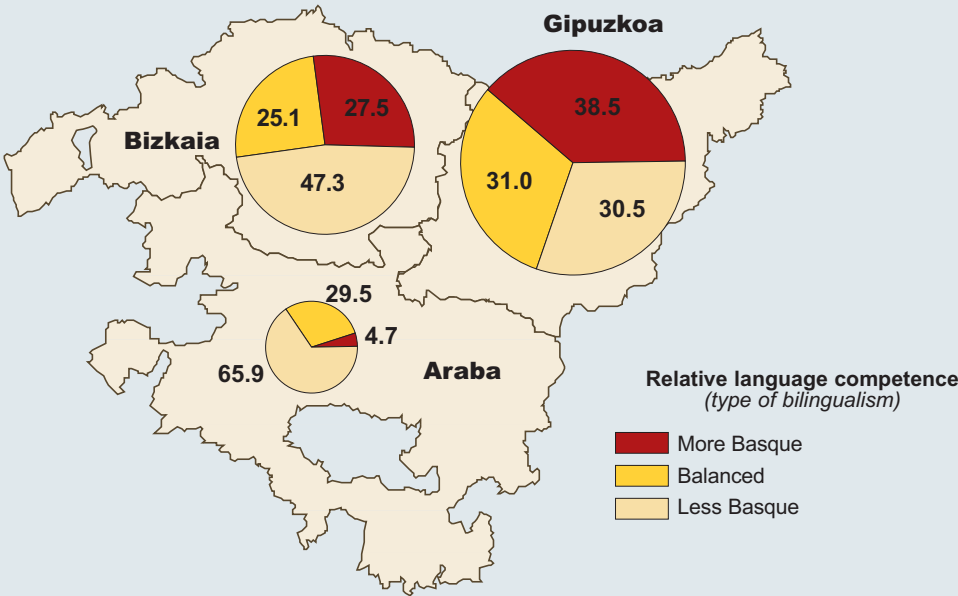
**Almost one-third of full bilinguals express themselves better in Basque than in Spanish. However, this proportion is lower (one-fifth) among young people**

**Figure 7.** Type of bilingualism (*in full bilinguals*). BAC, 2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Looking at these findings province by province, similar overall trends are seen in all the BAC's provinces. However, there are some particularities to be noted. Thus in Gipuzkoa there are more "more Basque" bilinguals (38.5%) than balanced (31%) or "more Spanish" (30.5%) full bilinguals. Moreover, although the "more Spanish" type of bilingual still predominates among young people, the proportion of "more Basque" bilinguals for Gipuzkoans remains ten percentage points higher than for the BAC as a whole. In Araba, balanced bilinguals make up 29.5% of the whole, which is more than in Bizkaia (with 25.1%) and almost as many as in Gipuzkoa (with 31%). Three out of four of all full bilinguals from Araba under the age of 35 are "more Spanish" bilinguals and 1% are "more Basque" bilinguals. Bizkaia is the province of the BAC where the types of bilinguals distribute most similarly to the mean for the whole BAC, but its percentages of "more Basque" and balanced bilinguals are overall slightly lower than those for the whole BAC, while its proportion of "more Spanish" bilinguals is correspondingly somewhat higher.

Figure 8. Type of bilingualism (in full bilinguals) province by province. BAC, 2006 (%)



Note: The size of circles represents the number of bilinguals of each province.

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Table 7. Type of bilingualism (in full bilinguals) province by province. BAC, 2006 (%)

	Population age 16 and more			
Type of bilingualism	BAC	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa
More Basque	31.8	4.7	27.5	38.5
Balanced	28.5	29.5	25.1	31.0
Less Basque	39.7	65.9	47.3	30.5

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

### 3. Language transmission

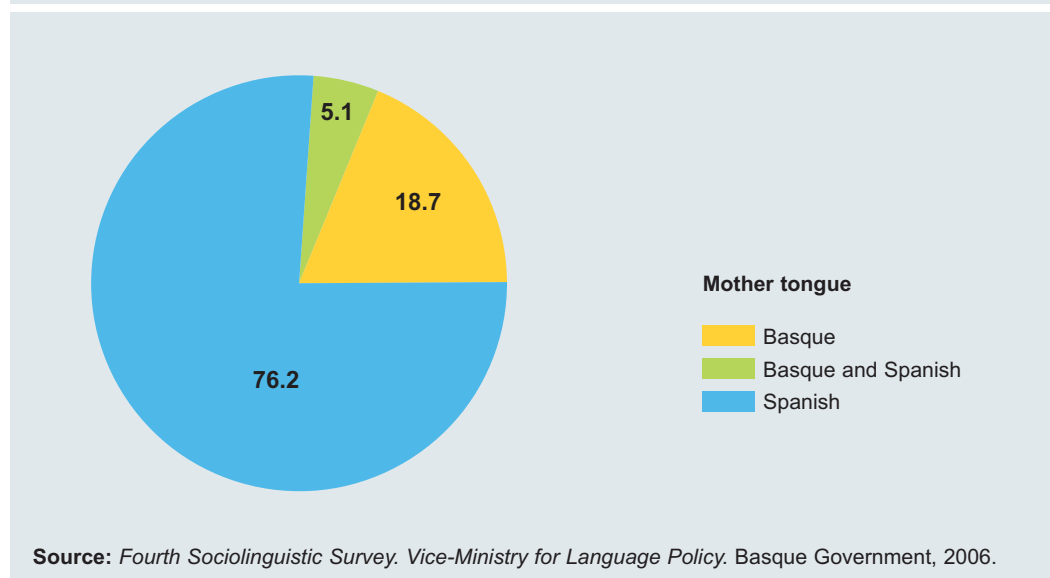
#### 3.1. MOTHER TONGUE, PROVINCE BY PROVINCE

Spanish mother-tongue speakers predominate in all regions of the BAC and all age groups. However, the number of people between 16 and 24 with Basque as their mother tongue, especially in combination with Spanish, is growing

We may define mother tongue as the language or languages acquired from parents or relatives with whom a child lives up to the age of three. Nonetheless, given the high number of children starting their schooling before they are three, the increasingly important role of school in language transmission should also clearly be acknowledged. However, considering that the universe of the sociolinguistic survey consists of people aged sixteen or over and that when these people were three years old or younger the number of children attending preschool was still relatively small, this recent phenomenon is not particularly relevant here.

Spanish is the mother tongue of three out of four inhabitants (76.2%) of the Basque Country, and Basque is that of 18.7%, while 5.1% are native speakers of both languages.

Figure 9. Mother tongue (L1). BAC, 2006 (%)



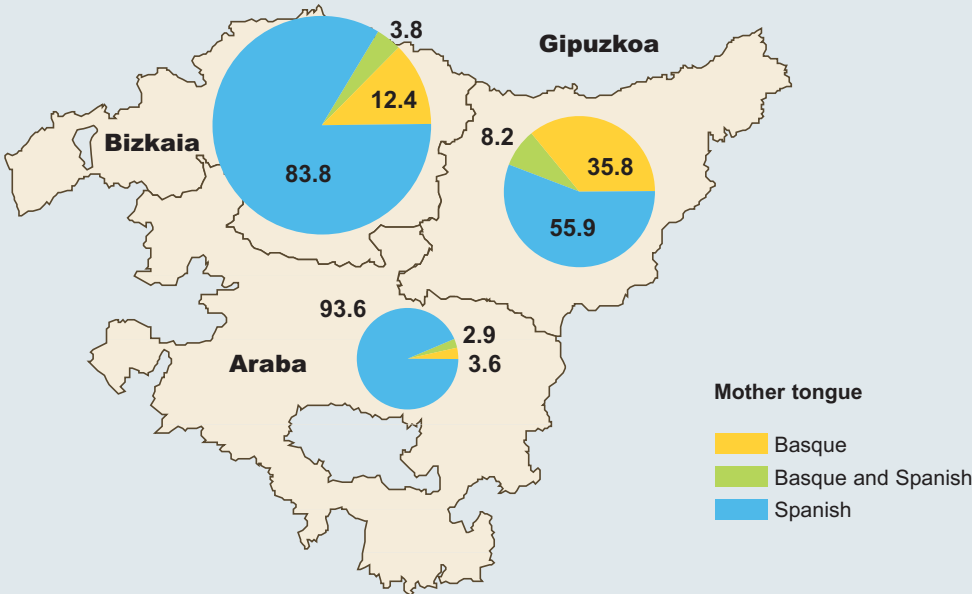
Spanish mother-tongue speakers predominate in all three provinces, but the big difference is in the relative proportions for each province. An overwhelming majority (93.6%) of the population of Araba has Spanish as their mother tongue; the mother tongue of 3.6% is Basque, and both Basque and Spanish are mother tongues for 2.9%. In Bizkaia, on the contrary, the corresponding figures are 83.8% for Spanish, 12.4% for Basque and 3.8% for both languages as mother tongues. Gipuzkoa has the lowest percentage of Spanish mother tongue speakers (55.9%), and by far the highest proportion of people with Basque (35.8%) or Basque and Spanish (8.2%) as their mother tongue.

Table 8. Mother tongue province by province. BAC, 2006 (%)

	Population age 16 and more			
Mother tongue	BAC	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa
Basque	18.7	3.6	12.4	35.8
Basque and Spanish	5.1	2.9	3.8	8.2
Spanish	76.2	93.6	83.8	55.9

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Figure 10. Mother tongue (L1), province by province. BAC, 2006 (%)



Note: The size of circles represents the population of each province.

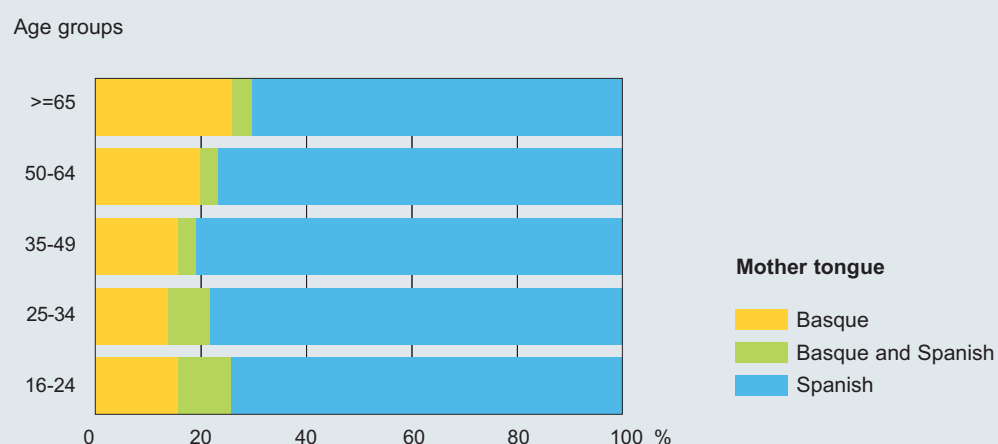
Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

### 3.2. MOTHER TONGUE BY AGE

The highest proportion (26.1%) of mother-tongue Basque speakers is still found in the 65-and-over age group. The percentage drops in parallel with age, but that trend changes in the youngest group (aged 16-24), with an increase in the proportions whose mother tongue is Basque (16%) or both Basque and Spanish (9.7%). This new trend, first observed in 1996, was also noted in 2001 and is confirmed for 2006.

Meanwhile, however, the opposite is occurring in the oldest segment of the population. As we have seen, Basque or both Basque and Spanish are increasingly widespread as mother tongues of the youngest age groups. As the latter reach maturity, the proportion of adults with Basque or both languages as mother tongue will rise. But since present-day adults constitute the age group with the highest proportion of Spanish as their mother tongue, as they grow older the proportion of Basque mother tongue speakers among the elderly is bound to decrease.

**Figure 11.** Mother tongue by age group. BAC, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

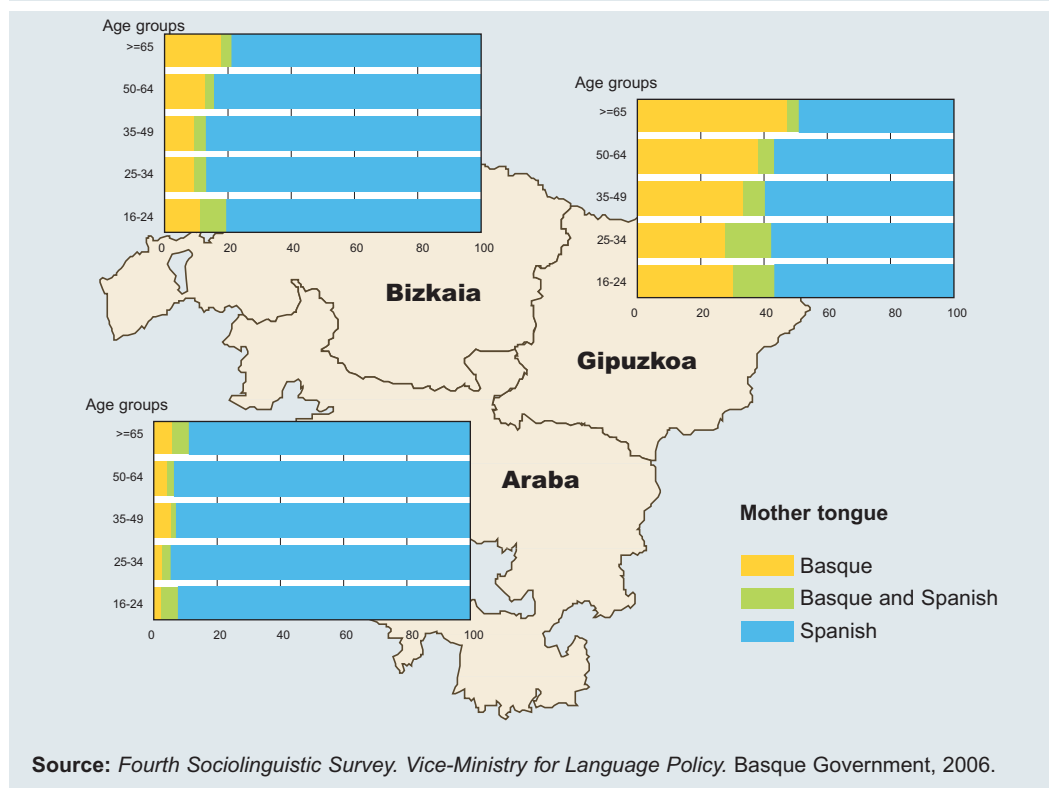
These tendencies are common to all three provinces, but as was the case with competence, there are big differences between the actual percentages in each province. Thus in Araba the proportion of Basque mother tongue speakers is

under 10% in all age groups. In other words, nine out of ten Araba inhabitants learnt Spanish at home.

In Bizkaia there is very little difference between the overall percentages of the old and the young who have either Basque only, or Basque and Spanish, as mother tongues (22% and 20.9% respectively). However, the percentages for Basque only as mother tongue tell a different story, with 18.7% for old people and only 11.7% for the young.

In Gipuzkoa, a comparable number of people have Basque (47.2%) or Spanish (47.9%) as their mother tongue (over 65 years old). The proportion over 35 with Basque as their mother tongue is more than a third of the population, and although there is a noticeable decrease in the under-35s (e.g. 27.5% for the 25-to-34 group), the number who have Basque or Basque and Spanish as mother tongues is relatively high (15.4% for the 25-to-34 age group), while of the youngest group studied (16 to 24), 30.1% have Basque as their mother tongue and a further 12.7% have both Basque and Spanish.

**Figure 12.** Mother tongue by age group, province by province. BAC, 2006 (%)





3.3. MOTHER TONGUE BY LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

Over half (56.3%) of full bilinguals aged sixteen or over in the BAC have Basque as their mother tongue; another 11.8% have both Basque and Spanish; while the mother tongue of the remaining 31.9% (almost a third) of full bilinguals have Spanish as their mother tongue.

The last-mentioned group comprise the “new speakers” (*euskaldun berriak*) who have learnt Basque at school or in adult classes, and whose statistical weight, particularly among the young, is growing fast. Over half (56.2%) of the 16-24 age group in the BAC are *euskaldun berriak*.

3.4. FAMILY TRANSMISSION

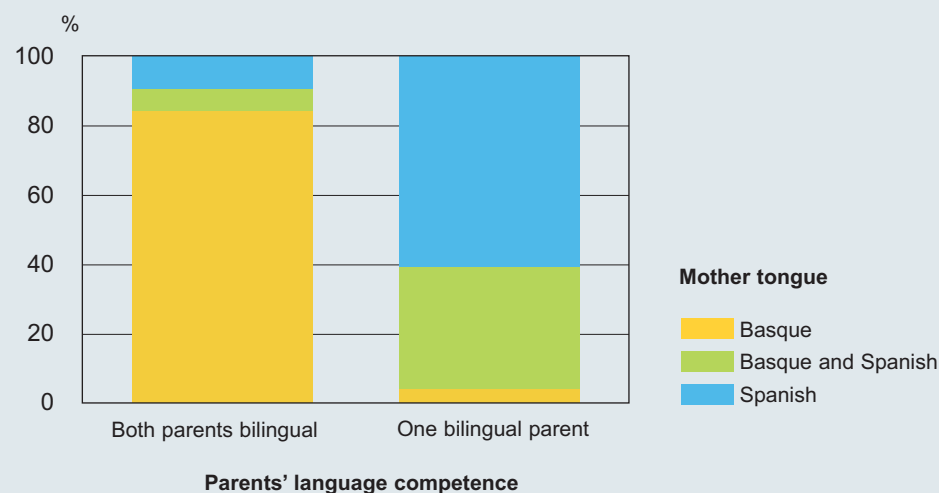
“Family transmission” refers to the language or languages that a child learns from its parents. The present sociolinguistic survey provides an opportunity to track the development of language transmission from parents to children over the past hundred years or so.

In the BAC, the language that more than 84.9% of children whose parents are both bilingual learnt at home was Basque; 5.7% learnt Basque and Spanish; and 9.4% only learnt Spanish. When only one of the parents was bilingual, the percentage of children who only learnt Basque at home is small (4.5%), but 34.9% learnt both Basque and Spanish. The majority (60.6%) of such children, however, only learnt Spanish from their parents.

Table 9. Mother tongue depending on parents’ language competence.  
BAC, 2006 (%)

	Basque-speaking parents		
	Both	One	Neither
Childrens’ mother tongue			
Basque	84.9	4.5	
Basque and Spanish	5.7	34.9	0.7
Spanish	9.4	60.6	99.3

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 13.** Mother tongue depending on parents' language competence.  
BAC, 2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

These figures tell us how Basque has been transmitted over the course of the past century but do not tell us anything about *present-day* language transmission in Basque families.

To find out about the transmission of Basque in the BAC today, we looked at the respondents of our survey who have children aged between two and twenty-five, whom we divide into three age groups: 2-9, 10-15 and 16-24.

The language transmitted to children today is fully determined by parents' language competence. 99% of children aged between two and twenty-five whose parents were fully bilingual learnt Basque in the home. Most of them (over nine out of ten) *only* learnt Basque in the home, while the remainder learnt both Basque and Spanish.

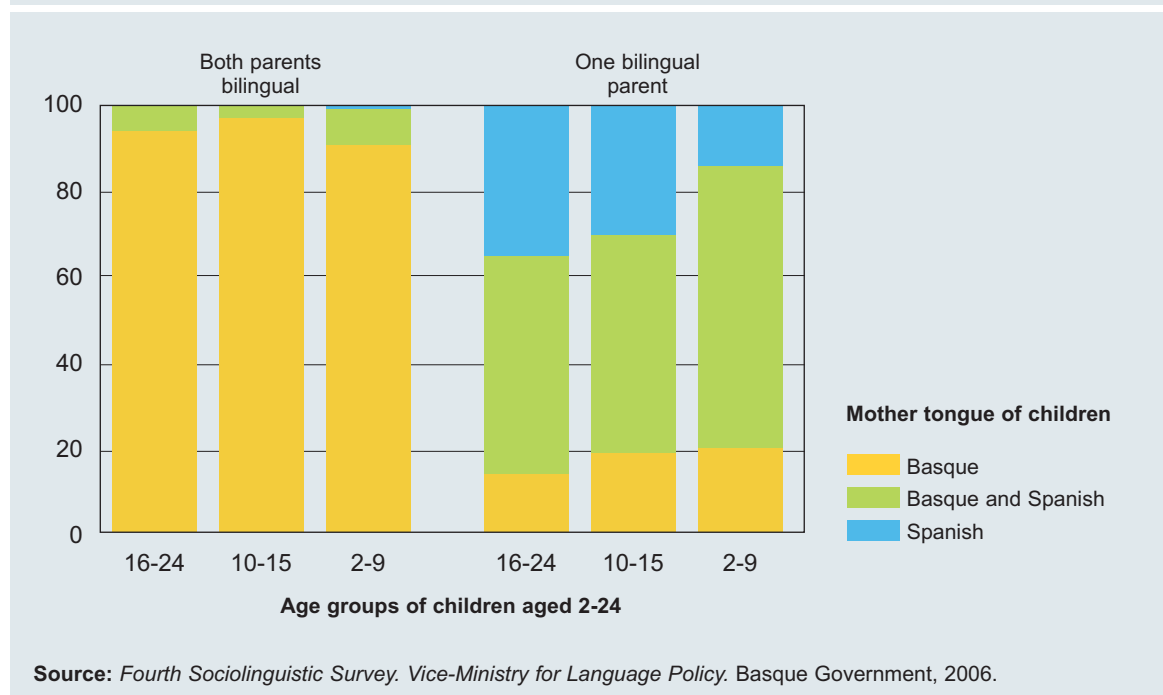
When one parent doesn't speak Basque, however, fewer than one-fifth of children learnt only Basque at home, yet a high percentage of children of such mixed marriages learnt both Basque and Spanish at home (half of children aged between 10 and 24, and two-thirds of those aged between two and nine).

Breaking down these figures according to age provides us with a view of trends over the past 25 years. When both parents are Basque speakers the percentage

of children who learn Basque as their mother tongue is 94.7% in the 16-to-24 age group, 97.8% in the 10-15 age group and 90.8 in the two-to-nine age group. The corresponding percentages that have both Basque and Spanish as mother tongues when both parents are Basque speakers are 5.2% for the 16-to-24 age group, 2% for the 10-15 age group and 8.1% for the two-to-nine age group. Thus we may conclude that almost all Basque-speaking couples do transmit Basque to their children and a growing number transmit both languages (Basque and Spanish).

This phenomenon has to do with language competence. While all the parents considered here are bilingual, the language recovery process over the past twenty-five years has led to the existence among present and future parents of a growing number of *euskaldun berriak* ("new" Basque speakers) who, while transmitting Basque to their children, also transmit Spanish to them in increasing numbers.

**Figure 14.** Mother tongue of children aged 2-24 by age group, depending on parents' language competence. BAC, 2006 (%)



### 3.5. LANGUAGE TREND: BASQUE LANGUAGE GAINS AND LOSSES

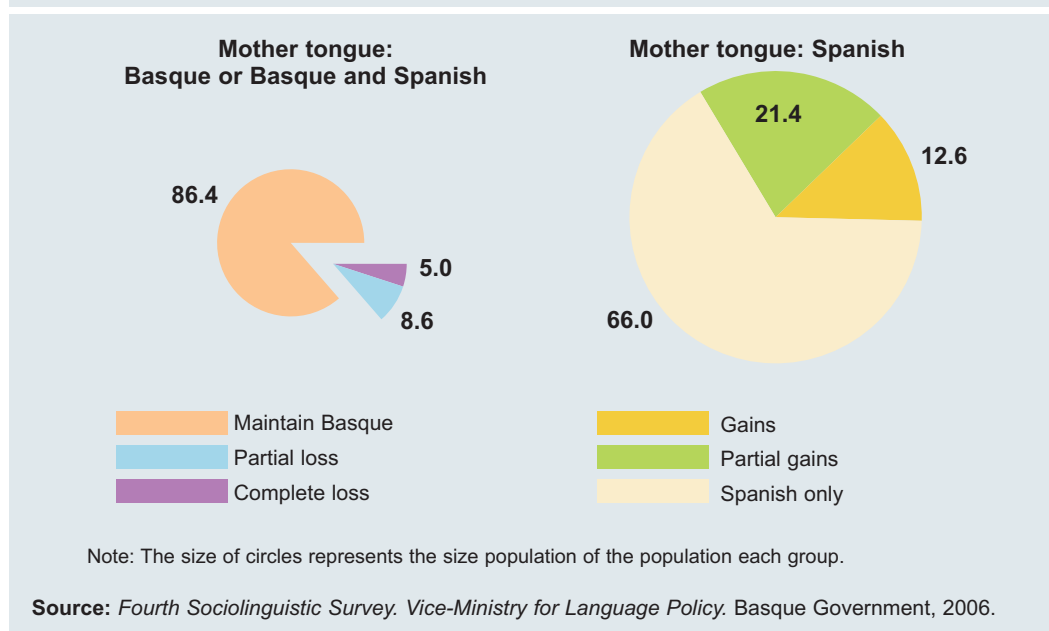
Most people whose mother tongue is Basque (or whose mother tongues are Basque and Spanish) have conserved their Basque and are fully bilingual. Nonetheless, there are 59,973 people in the BAC who are no longer bilingual although Basque was indeed their mother tongue, having partially or totally forgotten their Basque. Nearly two thirds of these losses (63.2%) are partial losses: such people cannot speak Basque well, but are still able to understand it. The remaining 52.7% have forgotten their Basque completely.

**Gains for Basque (i.e. “euskaldun berriak”) are three times as high as losses in the BAC. Gains are increasing and losses are close to disappearing among the young in particular**

On the other hand, there are 178,036 people whose mother tongue is Spanish yet who have subsequently learnt Basque and become fully bilingual. These are the Basque language’s gains.

Here we are referring to those who have fully learnt Basque. There are another 300,000 people whose mother tongue is Spanish and who are able to understand Basque today, although they do not speak it proficiently.

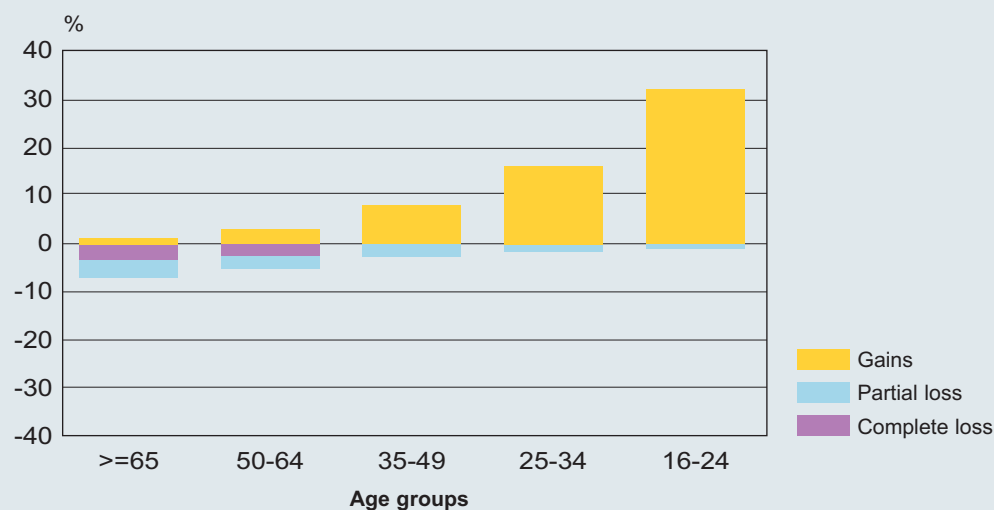
**Figure 15. Gains and losses for Basque. BAC, 2006 (%)**



The proportions of such gains, i.e. the *euskaldun berriak*, are basically similar across all three provinces: 10.2% in Araba, 9.1% in Bizkaia and 10.3% in Gipuzkoa.

On the other hand, the figures for *euskaldun berriak* do vary considerably according to age. The percentage for people over 50 is low (averaging 1.9%). But for those aged under 50 the percentage of “new” Basque speakers doubles from one age group to the next: 8.3% in the 35-49 age group, 16.6% in the 25-34 age group, and 32.3% in the 16-24 age group.

**Figure 16.** Basque language gains and losses by age group. BAC, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Those who have **gained** Basque have the following general profile:

- Most are young. Two out of every three (68%) are under 35 years old. However, one-fourth of all those who have gained Basque (24%) are in the 35-49 age group.
- Half (48%) went to Model B (mixed-language) or Model D (Basque-medium) schools, and almost as many (42%) learnt or improved their Basque out of school.
- Most (78%) have greater fluency in Spanish than in Basque.

Those who have **lost** Basque share the following general characteristics:

- Nearly three quarters (72%) are over 50 years old.
- Both Basque and Spanish are the mother tongues of nearly half (47%).
- Hardly anyone in this group received their primary school education in Basque (1% in Model D and 4% in Model B), and two out of three (64%) have never tried to study Basque out of school either.

Basque is the mother tongue of *euskaldun zaharrak* (“old” Basque speakers) who are now full bilinguals. Spanish, on the other hand, is the mother tongue of those whom we may call “old” Spanish speakers who have remained Native Spanish speakers.

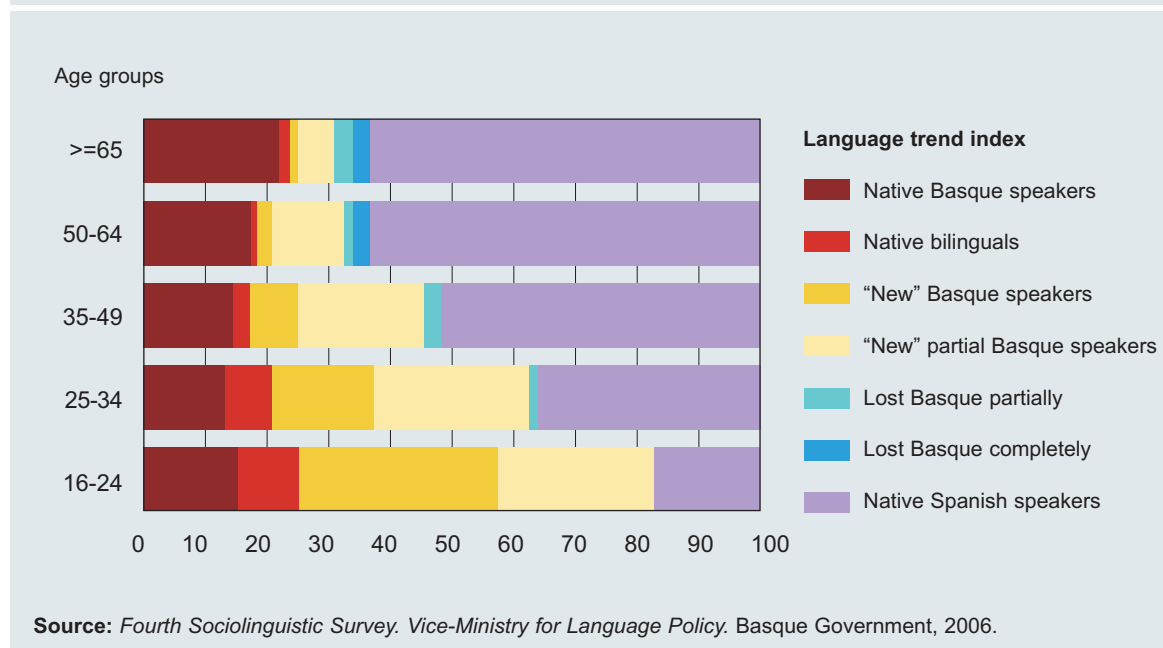
Despite the contrast between these two groups, they show a similar age correlation: in both cases, they are typically over 50 years old and contrast sharply with younger age groups.

Thus, the highest proportions of both groups are in the over-fifty age bracket (over 17% for *euskaldun zaharrak* and over 60% for “old” Spanish speakers).

Below 50, the proportion of “old” Spanish speakers drops off sharply, and the younger they are, the smaller their percentage becomes (between 25 and 34, 36.5%; between 16 and 24, 17.6%).

The proportions for *euskaldun zaharrak* (“old” Basque speakers) likewise drop off below the age of 50 (between the ages of 35 and 49 there are 14.9%, and between 25 and 34 there are 13.6%). But below the age of 25 the trend has been reversed and the proportion of *euskaldun zaharrak* has begun to rise (16%).

However, together with the *euskaldun berriak* (“new” Basque speakers), it is the “native bilingual” group that grows spectacularly as we descend down the age groups. These are people whose mother tongues are both Basque and Spanish and who are fully fluent in Basque. In the population over the age of 35 the proportion of native bilinguals does not reach 3%. Below 35, this percentage is doubled (rising to 7.2% in the 25-34 age group) or even tripled (reaching 9.2% in the 16-24 age group).

**Figure 17.** Language trend index, by age group. BAC, 2006 (%)


## 4. Use of Basque

### 4.1. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE TYPOLOGY

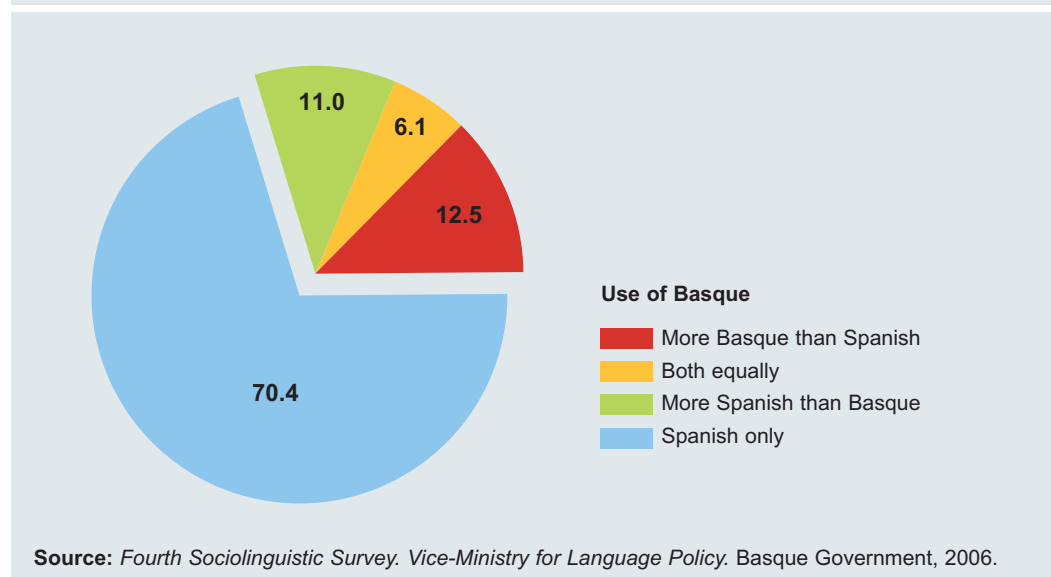
The sociolinguistic survey collects information on the nature of Basque language use in various domains: the home, the family, interactions with friends, shopping, the work environment, and public and private formal domains. As a result, we now dispose of data concerning the development of the use of Basque over recent years in each domain. An index measuring the social use of Basque, known as the Basque language use typology, was created by the BAC's Vice-Ministry for Language Policy in 2001.

This considers three domains: home, friends and the formal domain, the last-named of which has four subdivisions: health care and council services in the public sector, and local shops and banking outlets in the private sector.

The Basque language use typology was applied to the universe of 1,850,500 subjects of the sociolinguistic survey, i.e. the whole population aged 16 and over, yielding the following results.

18.6% of the BAC's population speak Basque as much as (6.1%) or more than (12.5%) Spanish. Another 11% use Basque but speak it less widely than Spanish. 70.4% of the population do not use Basque at all.

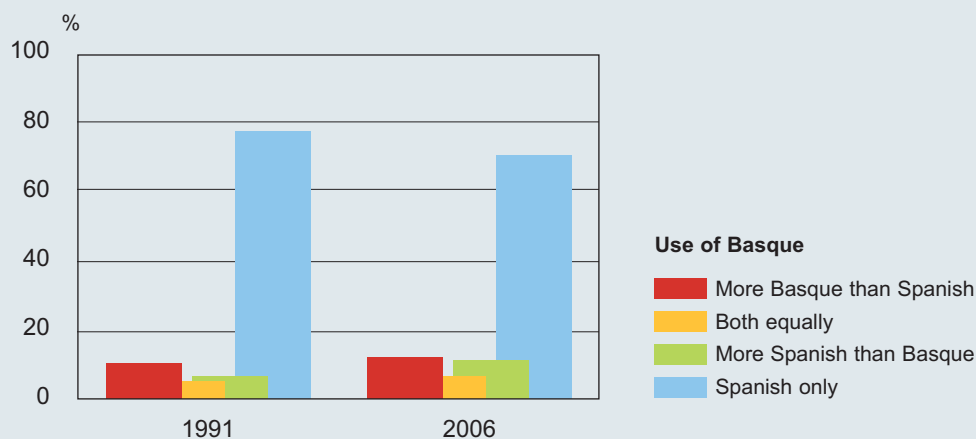
**Figure 18.** Use of Basque. BAC, 2006 (%)



Over the past fifteen years the use of Basque has increased steadily in the BAC. In 1991, 15.3% of the population of the BAC used Basque as much as (5.3%) or more than (10.0%) Spanish. Ten years later, in 2001, 17.2% used Basque as much as (7.1%) or more than (10.1%) Spanish.

The largest group is clearly still that of people who only speak Spanish, yet the size of this group is gradually getting smaller, dropping from 77.7% in 1991 and 73.6% in 2001 to 70.4% in 2006.



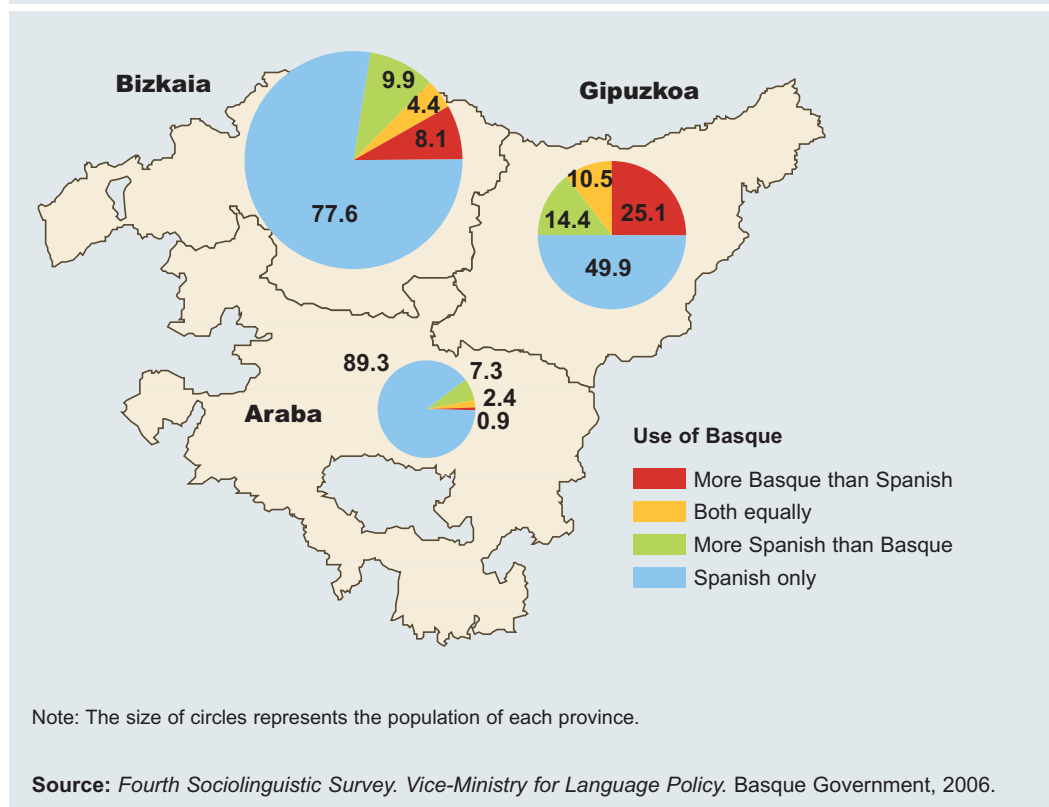
**Figure 19.** Use of Basque. BAC, 1991-2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

The figures of Basque language use for each province vary greatly. The percentages of people who use Basque as much as or more than Spanish are 3.3% for Araba, 12.5% for Bizkaia and over one-third (35.6%) of the population of Gipuzkoa. The proportions of the population who use Basque though to a lesser extent than Spanish are also significant: 7.3% in Araba, 9.9% in Bizkaia and 14.4% in Gipuzkoa.

Hence there are also substantial differences in the percentages of inhabitants of the different provinces who only use Spanish. In Araba, almost nine out of ten people (89.3%) use Spanish exclusively. In Bizkaia this percentage falls to 77.6%, with a further downward jump to barely half of the population (49.9%) in Gipuzkoa.

In the population of the BAC aged sixteen and over, the use of Basque has increased between 1991 and 2006 in all three provinces. This increase has occurred not only in the number of people who use Basque as much as or more than Spanish, but also among those who use some Basque although not as much as Spanish. Consequently, the proportion of people who only speak Spanish has dropped by an average of seven percentage points over the past fifteen years.

**Figure 20.** Use of Basque province by province. BAC, 2006 (%)

Still sharper contrasts are seen when we classify data on the use of Basque according to sociolinguistic areas, rather than by province. In Sociolinguistic Area 1, where fewer than 20% of the population are Basque speakers, only 2.5% of the population use Basque as much as or more than Spanish. Nonetheless, a respectable percentage (7.6%) of this population use some Basque, although less than Spanish. The majority of people (89.8%) in Sociolinguistic Area 1 only employ Spanish.

Spanish is likewise the language most used in Sociolinguistic Area 2, where between 20% and 50% of the population is Basque-speaking. Two-thirds of the population of this area (67.7%) only use Spanish. 14.9% of this population speak Basque as much as or more than Spanish, and another 17.5% also use some Basque, although less than Spanish.

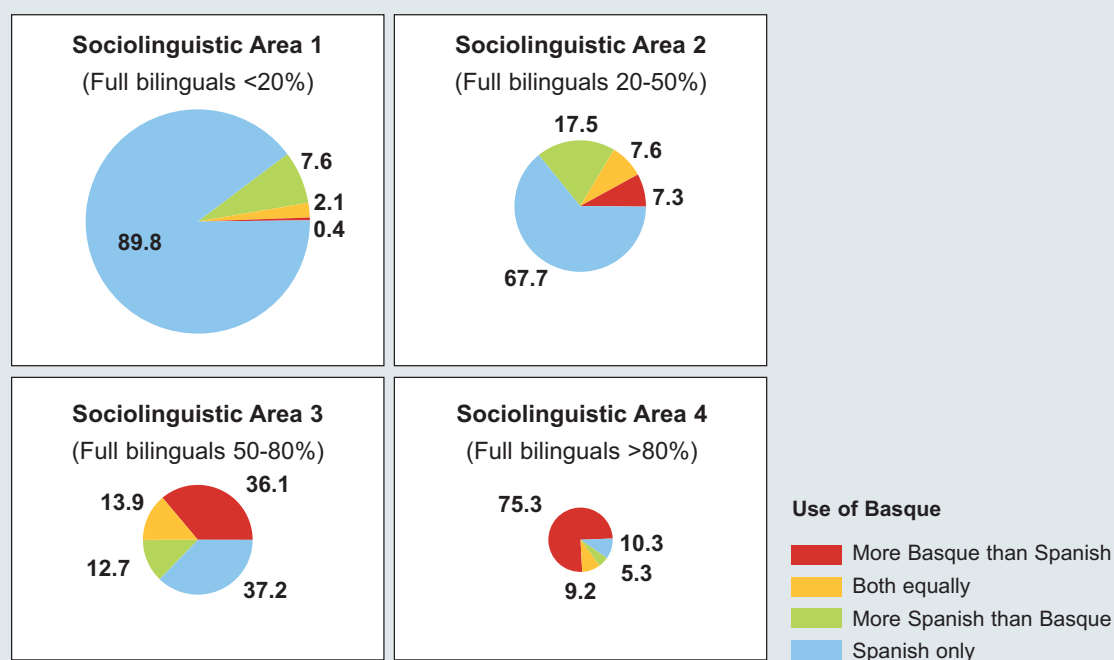
In Sociolinguistic Area 3 (where between 50% and 80% of the population can speak Basque), over a third of the population (36.1%) mostly use Basque. Span-

ish is spoken to a lesser degree than Basque by a quarter (26.6%) of this population, while another one-third (37.2%) do not use Basque at all. Thus half (50%) of the population of Area 3 use Basque as much as (13.9%) or more than (36.1%) Spanish.

Finally, in Sociolinguistic Area 4, where over 80% of the population is Basque-speaking, three out of four members of the population (75.3%) mainly use Basque, 9.2% use Basque as much as Spanish and 5.3% use some Basque but less than Spanish. 10.3% of the population of Sociolinguistic Area 4 only use Spanish.

The better to evaluate the true impact of data classified by sociolinguistic areas it is useful to be reminded of the relative weight of the population sizes of each area in relation to the population of the BAC as a whole. A half (51%) of the entire population of the BAC reside in Sociolinguistic Area 1, which includes almost all of Araba, Bilbao with its Left Bank, and western Bizkaia. Area 2 represents a quarter (25%) of the BAC's population, Area 3 represents a fifth (19%), and Area 4 represents the remaining 5%.

**Figure 21.** Use of Basque by sociolinguistic areas. BAC, 2006 (%)



Note: The size of circles represents the population of each area.

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

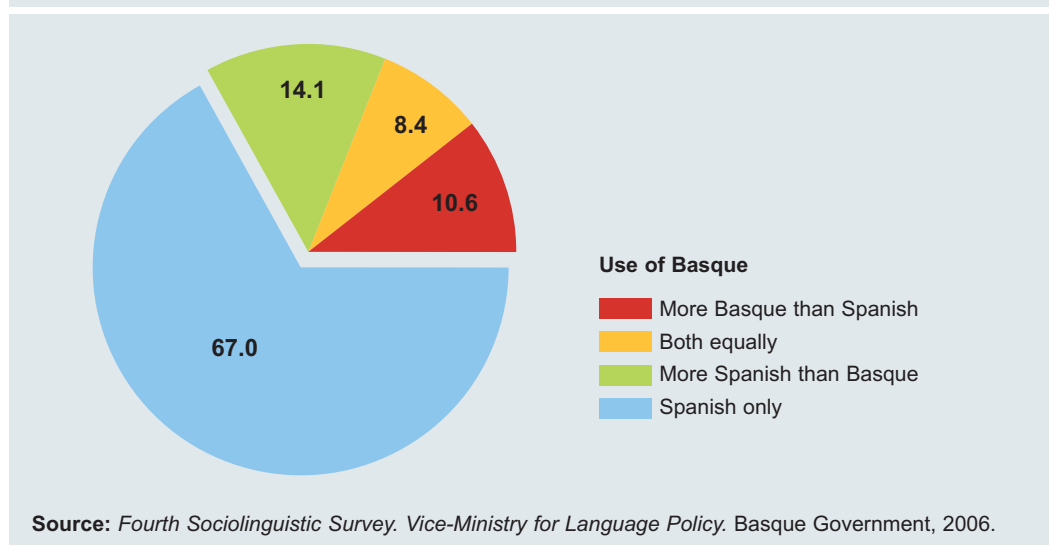
In the last fifteen years the use of Basque has increased somewhat in Sociolinguistic Areas 1 and 2, significantly in Sociolinguistic Area 3 (by five percentage points if we combine those using Basque as much as and more than Spanish) and somewhat less in Sociolinguistic Area 4 (by three points). But it is important to note that this is a reversal of older trends, and the latest results are better than those for 2001.

Now there can be no doubt about the importance of the world of work to the language recovery process, so we also looked at how the presence of Basque at work affects the index of Basque language use. For this purpose, we added use at work to the Basque language use typology.

This expanded use typology is not applicable to the whole universe of our survey, but only to those currently employed. Thus in this case we will take as our reference employed people sixteen years of age or over, who comprise 914,000 people, or 49.4% of all the subjects of the general survey.

These data clearly show the importance for the index of language use in the work place. Overall, the percentage of the population who use Basque as much as or more than Basque remains quite similar (18.6% in the first analysis, as against 19% in the second). But breaking this down further, the proportion of people who use *more* Basque than Spanish at work is lower (10.6% as compared to 12.5%), while the proportion who use Basque *as much as* Spanish is higher (8.4% versus 6.1%). Meanwhile, the proportion of all people using some Basque, even if less than Spanish, is noticeably higher (14.1% as against 11%) and the percentage who speak Spanish only is correspondingly lower (67% compared to 70%).

**Figure 22.** Use of Basque (at work). BAC, 2006 (%)



Summing up, then, it is true to say that a smaller proportion of people at work use mainly Basque, but also a smaller proportion don't use Basque at all, while the percentages who use Basque as much as or somewhat less than Spanish are higher. Roughly the same pattern occurs in all the provinces, in all the sociolinguistic areas, and, as we shall see below, in all age groups.

Between 1991 and 2006 there was an increase in the use of Basque regarding those who use Basque as much as Spanish or more (by five percentage points) and those who use Basque to a smaller extent than Spanish (by seven points). This applies to all three provinces.

## 4.2. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE TYPOLOGY BY AGE GROUPS

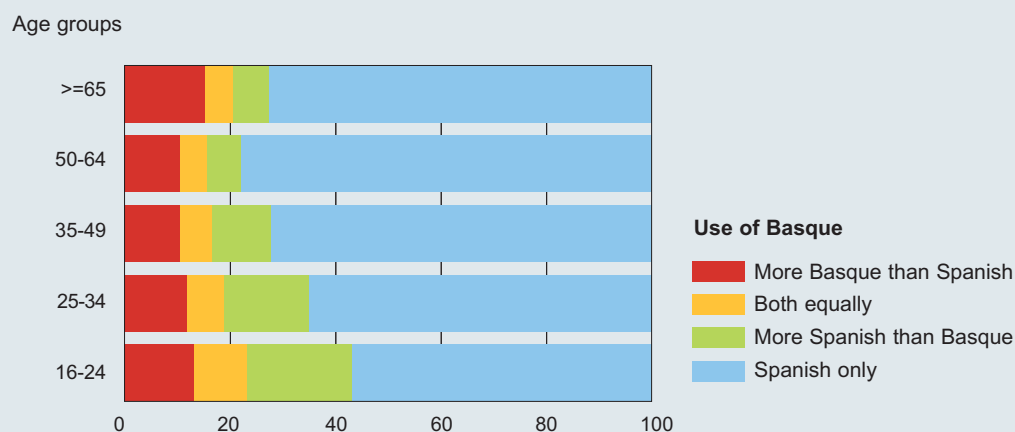
**The youngest and oldest groups are the ones who use most Basque in their daily lives**

Although the use of Spanish clearly continues to predominate overall in every age group (by an average proportion of 70%), the proportion of exclusive Spanish users is definitely falling among the under-35s, and most notably of all, in the under-25 group (64.8% and 56.9%, respectively). Between the ages of 16 and 24, only 65.4% use only Spanish, almost ten percentage points lower than the overall average. In the latter group the gain is at the expense of the Spanish-only

part of the population, now down to 13.5%.

The highest proportion of people using Basque as much as (10%) or more than (13.5%) Spanish is found in the 16-24 age group, where 23.5% of the group are in this category. They are followed by people over 65, at 20.7%. However, we should note that among the latter there are more people who speak *more* Basque than Spanish than among the youngest group: the figures for those speaking more Basque than Spanish are, respectively, 15.7% and 13.5%. But this is compensated for by the numbers of people who use both languages to the same extent.

Among the under-35s a substantial number of people (17.4%) use some Basque but less Basque than Spanish. The younger the people, the larger this percentage gets: for the 16-25 age group represents one-fifth (19.7%) of the population.

**Figure 23.** Use of Basque by age group. BAC, 2006 (%)

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Looking at the trend over the past fifteen years, Basque is used less today among people over 65 to talk to their friends than in 1991, when one in four (25.2%) either used Basque as much as (7.4%) or more than (17.8%) Spanish. Today only one in five (20.7%) people in this age group use Basque in this way as much as (5%) or more than (15.7%) Spanish. This is hardly surprising given that the part of the population who were already adults has long been the least Basque-speaking component of the population, and as they get older we can expect this to result in a rise of Spanish in the age group of the elderly, who were once the group with the highest percentage of Basque speakers.

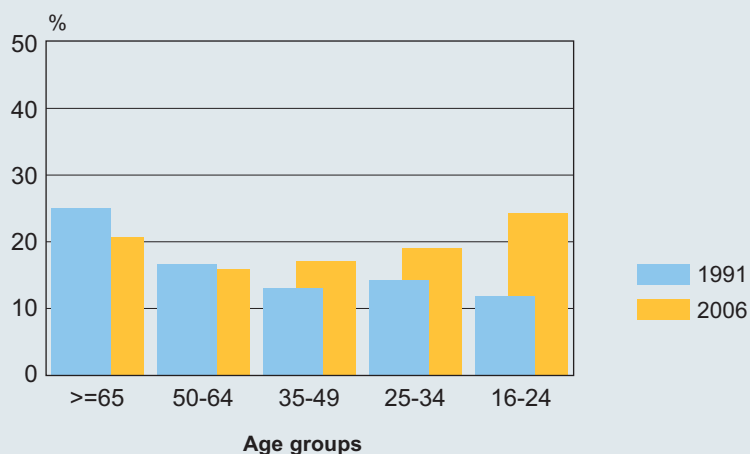
The percentage of members of the 50-to-64 age group who use Basque remains similar today (16%) to what it was fifteen years ago (16.5%). But among the under-fifties, Basque is used more now than it was in 1991, and the difference gets bigger the younger the group: in the 35-to-49 age group the percentages are 16.9% versus 13.2%; in the 25-to-34 age group, 19.2% versus 14%; and in the 16-to-24 age group, 23.5% versus 12.1%.

Thus two conclusions emerge from an analysis of trends over the past fifteen years:

- Overall more Basque is used today than in 1991. All age groups except for the over-65s use more Basque, and the younger the group the more Basque it uses.

- A change of direction is clearly in evidence. Fifteen years ago old people were the ones who used most Basque; the younger the age group, the smaller the proportion in which Basque was then used. Today, although the percentage of the elderly who use Basque remains high in comparison to people under 65, when we look at the different age groups below 65, the younger the group the higher the proportion of Basque they use.

**Figure 24.** Trend in the use of Basque as much as or more than Spanish, by age group. BAC, 1991-2006 (%)



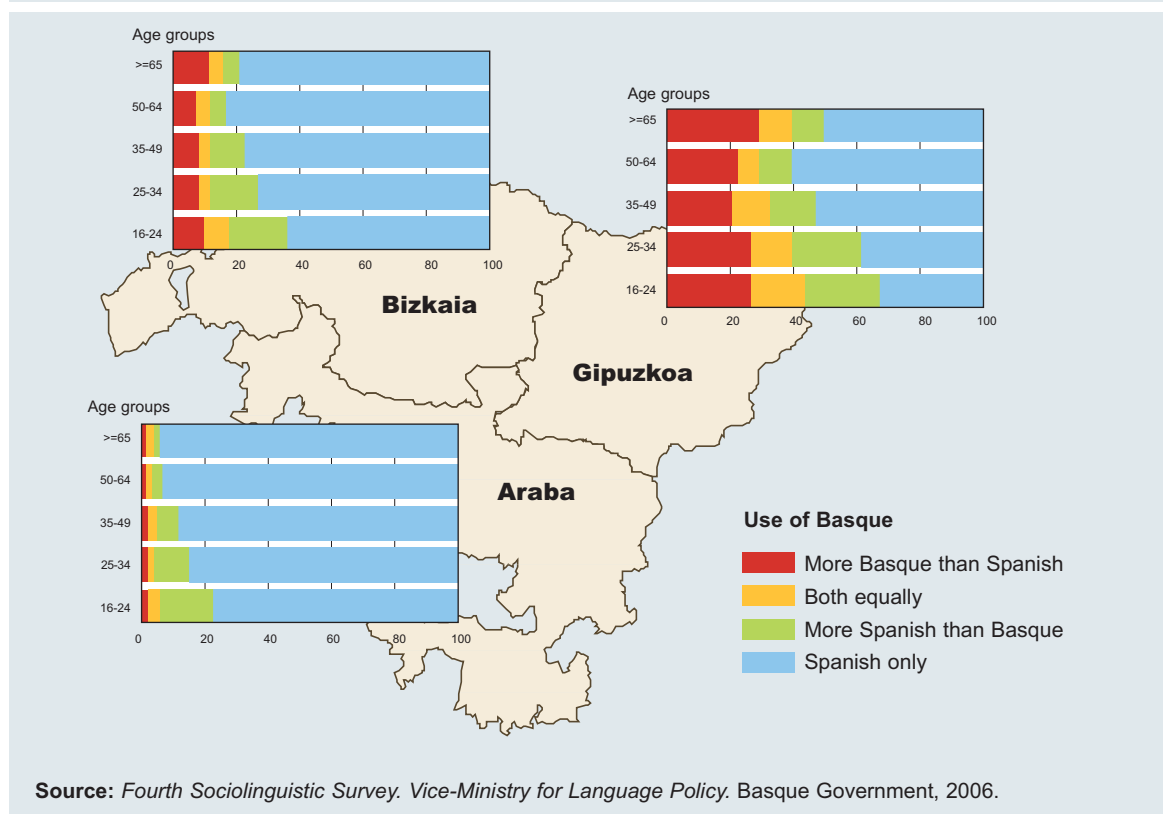
**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

On the whole, the patterns of Basque language use described here are repeated for each of the provinces in proportion to the overall level of Basque language use in each. In all three provinces, Basque is most used by the 16-to-24 age group. But if we look at who speaks *mainly* in Basque, the highest percentages for Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa are found in the over-65 age group. On the other hand, if we look at people using Basque and Spanish to the same extent, the count for young people is double what it is for the elderly.

The younger the age group, the smaller the proportions of people who only speak Spanish. This is true in all three provinces. Araba has the highest proportion of Spanish-only speakers across all age groups: over 85% for the over-25s and 77.4% for the youngest age group. In Bizkaia over 75% of the population over 25

only speak Spanish, and 65.1% of the youngest group. Gipuzkoa has the lowest percentages, most strikingly in the youngest group with 33.1%. For the other age groups in Gipuzkoa, the proportion is over half in the over-35 groups, and 39.3% in the 25-to-34 group.

**Figure 25.** Use of Basque by age group, province by province. BAC, 2006 (%)





### 4.3. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE AMONG BILINGUALS

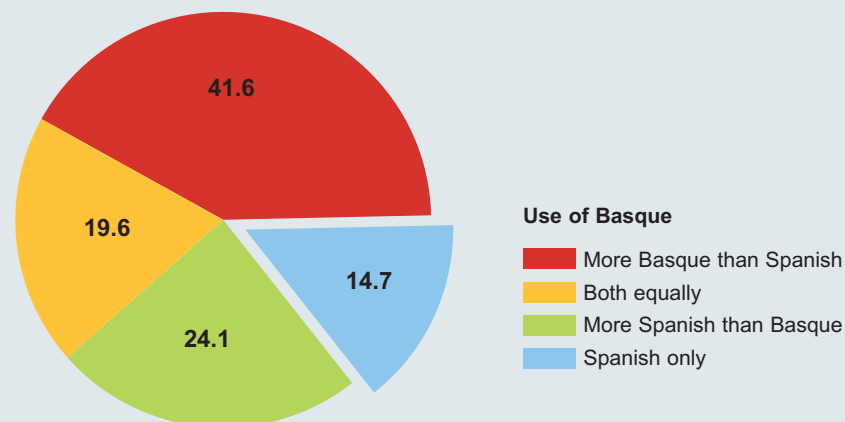
What the findings discussed so far show is that over the last fifteen years, from the point of view of the whole society, the use of Basque has increased to some degree everywhere. More and more people use Basque in the Basque Autonomous Community.

Moreover, this increase is not limited to just one domain or activity but covers society as a whole. Nevertheless, Basque can only be used under certain conditions and such conditions are still only fulfilled in the BAC in a limited range of areas and circumstances.

More and more people can speak Basque, and in consequence more and more do speak it. But is the proportion of fully bilingual people who actually use Basque today higher or lower than it was in the past? We shall now try to answer that question and to discover its causes.

We shall start by defining the universe. There are 557,600 full bilinguals over sixteen years of age in the BAC, comprising 30.1% of the whole universe. These may be further classified into 31.8% "more Basque", 28.4% balanced and 39.7% "more Spanish" bilinguals. Classified by age, 43.4% are under 35 years old, 38.9% are aged between 35 and 64, and 17.7% are 65 or over. Classified by mother tongue, more than half (56.5%) are native speakers of Basque, 11.6% are native bilinguals, and 31.9% are *euskaldun berriak* ("new" Basque speakers). Two out of three acquired Basque in the home and the remaining third learnt it at school or by attending language classes.

61.2% of full bilinguals use Basque as much as (19.6%) or more than (41.6%) Spanish, 24.1% use Basque less than Spanish and 14.7% do not use Basque at all.

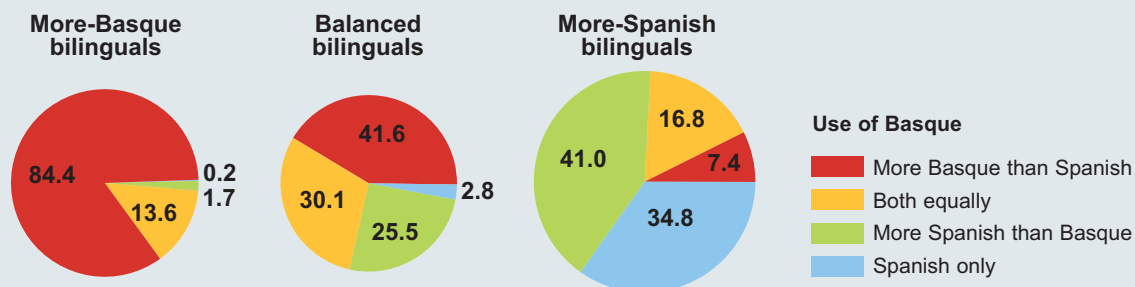
**Figure 26.** Use of Basque by full bilinguals. BAC, 2006 (%)

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

The biggest users of Basque are the “more Basque” bilinguals, 84.4% of whom mainly speak Basque in their daily lives, while another 13.6% speak Basque and Spanish to a similar degree.

Fewer than half (41.6%) of balanced bilinguals use Basque more than Spanish, but a considerable percentage (30.1%) use Basque as much as Spanish.

The “more Spanish” bilinguals are the ones who use the least Basque. Only 7.4% of them use Basque more than Spanish and 16.8% use both languages equally. Most of them (41%) do use Basque in their daily lives, but use Spanish more.

**Figure 27.** Use of Basque by full bilinguals according to type of bilingualism. BAC, 2006 (%)

Note: The size of circles represents the size of each group.

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

The over-65 group of full bilinguals in the BAC are the ones who in the highest proportion principally speak Basque (62.8%). As we move down the age groups, the corresponding proportion clearly diminishes, with only 32.9% in the 25-to-34 group and 23.5% in the 16-to-24 group.

Figure 28. Use of Basque by full bilinguals according to age group. BAC, 2006 (%)

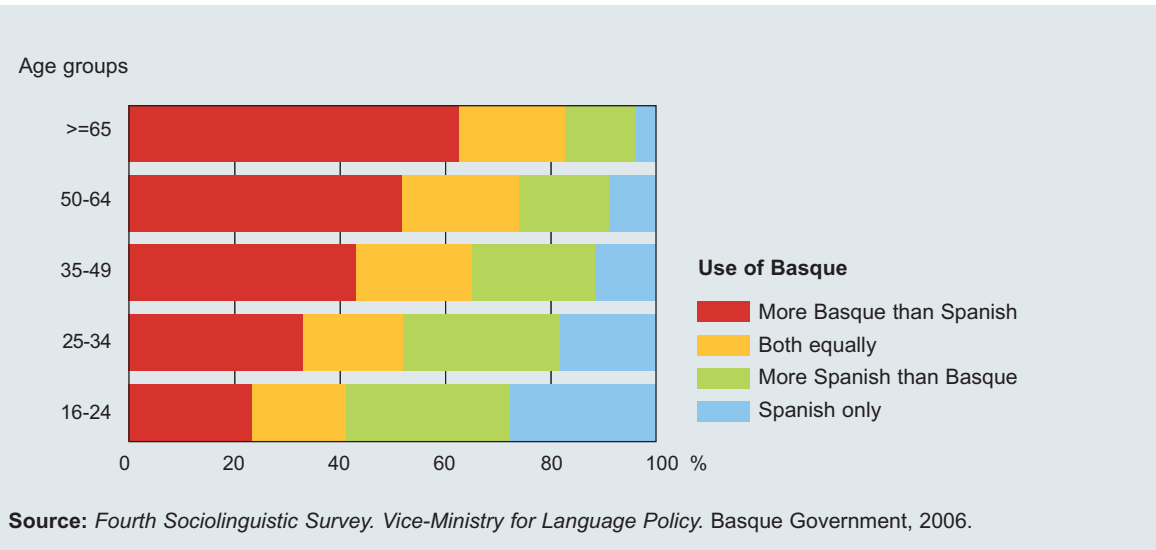


Table 10. Use of Basque by full bilinguals according to age group. BAC, 2006 (%)

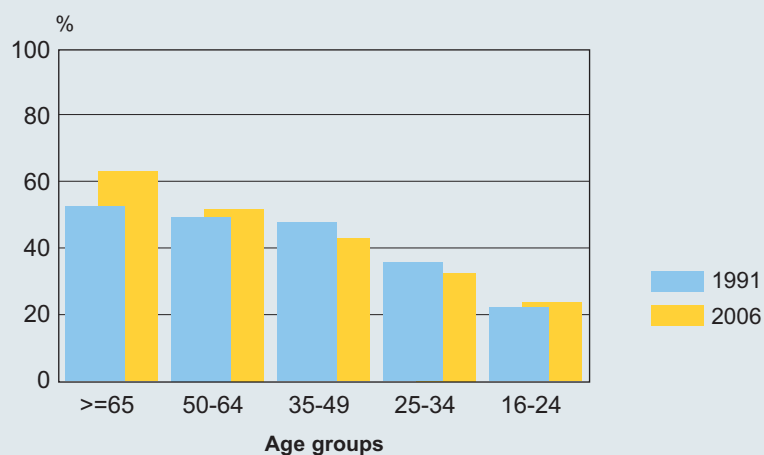
Use of Basque	Age groups				
	>=65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
More Basque than Spanish	62.8	52.0	43.0	32.9	23.5
Both equally	19.4	21.6	21.5	18.4	17.3
More Spanish than Basque	14.1	17.4	23.9	30.2	31.3
Spanish only	3.7	9.0	11.6	18.5	28.0

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

This has varied little over the last fifteen years. The percentage of full bilinguals who always or nearly always spoke Basque according to the 1991 data is the same as today's percentage: 41.6%. But the percentage of those who used Basque to the same extent as Spanish was higher (19.6% versus 21.8%).

In the breakdown by age, however, the present-day proportion who use Basque more than Spanish is smaller than it was in 1991 in the age groups between 25 and 50 (37.9% versus 42.1%), and greater both among the over-sixties (57.8% versus 51.2%) and in the 15-to-24 age group (23.5% versus 22.8%).

**Figure 29.** Trend in full bilinguals who use more Basque than Spanish, by age group. BAC, 1991-2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

The proportion of full bilinguals who use Basque to the same degree as Spanish is in general smaller now than in 1991, but most notably in people under 35.

In the group of “more Basque” bilinguals, Basque is used more now than fifteen years ago. Among balanced bilinguals, on the other hand, use has hardly increased (the percentage of those who use Basque to the same extent as Spanish has fallen, while the percentage of those using more Basque than Spanish has risen). Among “more Spanish” bilinguals, the use of Basque has diminished, but the context for this is that more and more of the “more Spanish” bilinguals are young *euskaldun berriak* living in non-Basque-speaking urban areas where most of them lack not only fluency in Basque but a Basque-speaking social network within which to use Basque in a normal manner.

#### 4.4. FACTORS DETERMINING BASQUE LANGUAGE USE

The main factors influencing Basque language use are the density of the Basque-speaking social network and fluency

Studies of language use have repeatedly shown that the two main factors determining use are:

- the density of the Basque-speaking social network, and
- a speaker's command of the two languages in question.

In order to find out exactly how much these two factors influence language choice in the main use domains, we shall now examine these by looking at the correlations between pairs of variables, on a 0-to-1 scale.

The correlation between Basque language use and density of the social network is 0.76 for the use of Basque at home, 0.69 with friends, and 0.88 at work. Here we see that the correlations are high in all domains of use, while the strongest factor is density of the Basque-speaking social network, particularly regarding the use of Basque at work.

To appreciate the importance of the social network, consider the results for each sociolinguistic area. In the first sociolinguistic area fewer than 20% of the population is Basque speaking on average. The percentage of this population who use Basque as much as or more than Spanish here is 2.5%. In the second area, where 20% to 50% of the population can speak Basque, this percentage jumps up to 14.9%. But the biggest leap forward comes in the third area, where 50% to 80% of the population can speak Basque: here a full half of the inhabitants use as much Basque as Spanish or more Basque than Spanish. In the fourth area, finally, with over 80% Basque speakers, a full three out of four inhabitants (75.3%) speak *more* Basque than Spanish in their everyday lives, plus an additional 9.1% who use either language as much as the other.

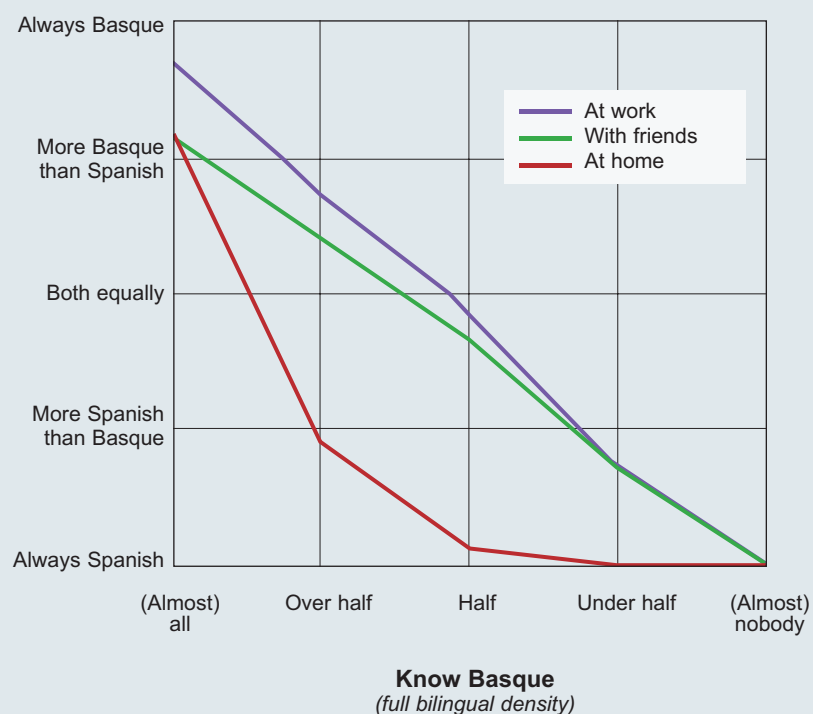
Notice again the use-fluency correlation of 0.69 at home, 0.65 with friends and 0.33 at work. We may say that the more fluent a bilingual is in Basque (the more of a "more Basque" bilingual he or she is), the more Basque he or she will use at home and with friends... but not at work. On the other hand, the balanced bilingual uses both languages to a similar degree in all three domains, but more Basque. Lastly, the "more Spanish" bilingual for the most part uses Spanish, no matter what the domain.

Other factors, such as age and attitude to Basque, while also affecting Basque language use, are far less decisive than social network and fluency. The correlation between language use and attitude is 0.29 for use at home, 0.28 with friends and 0.18 at work; while that between use and age is 0.31 at home, 0.24 with friends and 0.08 at work. In fact, when network and fluency conditions match closely, age and attitude have hardly any notable effect at all on Basque language use.

In short, when the conditions are right for Basque to be used, bilinguals use Basque in their everyday lives. When those conditions are absent, Basque language use diminishes considerably.

**Figure 30.** Use of Basque depending on density of bilingual social network. BAC, 2006

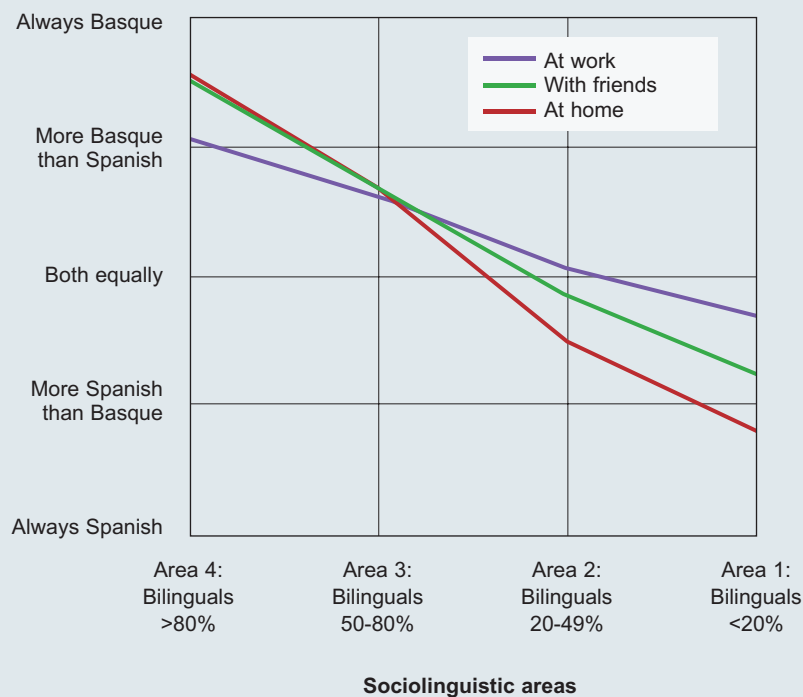
Language spoken...



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Figure 31. Use of Basque depending on sociolinguistic area. BAC, 2006

## Language spoken...



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

## 5. Use of Basque, domain by domain

We will examine the data for Basque language use in each of the following domains:

- the family (partner, children, siblings and parents)
- the immediate community (friends, neighbours, co-workers, shopping)
- formal domains (the bank, health centre and council offices)

### 5.1. USE OF BASQUE IN THE FAMILY

At **home** 14% of the inhabitants of the BAC aged sixteen or older always or usually speak Basque, and a further 4% speak Basque and Spanish to an equal degree. Yet another 8% speak Basque sometimes but not as much as Spanish. The remaining 74% of the population of the BAC over sixteen years old only speak Spanish at home. Most of these are or course non-Basque speakers.

At home, most Basque is used  
with offspring and siblings

If we repeat these figures looking not at the whole population of the BAC but only at bilinguals aged 16 or over, we find that 45% of these bilinguals always or usually speak Basque at **home**, a further 12% speak approximately as much Basque as Spanish, and still another 13% speak some Basque, but less than Spanish. There is a remainder of 31% of bilinguals who only speak Spanish at home.

The density of the speaker's Basque-speaking social network and the speaker's fluent command of Basque go a long way towards determining language use, especially in the home domain.

When everyone or nearly everyone in the **home** can speak Basque, 76% of the population of the BAC aged sixteen or more mainly speak Basque at home and a further 12% speak as much Basque as Spanish in the home. But when the number of people in the home who can speak Basque descends to half of the house's residents, nobody in the house speaks mostly Basque, and only 1% speak as much Basque as Spanish.

There are also big differences in the amount of Basque spoken at **home** depending on the sociolinguistic area. In the fourth area (with 80% or more Basque speakers), for instance, 74% mainly speak Basque in the home and 8% speak as much Basque as Spanish. But in areas where fewer than 50% of whose population are Basque speakers, 10% or fewer of the inhabitants speak Basque as the main language of the home, and 5% or fewer speak as much Basque as Spanish.

87% of "more Basque" bilinguals mainly speak Basque at **home**, and another 6% of them speak as much Basque as Spanish. As the fluency of bilinguals goes down, so does the use of Basque in the home. Thus only 44% of balanced bilinguals and 12% of "more Spanish" bilinguals mainly speak Basque at home. Among such bilinguals the tendency to use as much Basque as Spanish in the



home (though not for Basque to predominate) is fairly substantial: 20% for balanced bilinguals and 10% for “more Spanish” ones. More than half (58%) of “more Spanish” bilinguals only speak Spanish at home.

Close to half (48%) of bilinguals over sixteen in the BAC speak mostly Basque to their **partner** and another 9% speak as much Basque as Spanish. The proportion who speak Basque to their **children** is higher: 74% speak mostly Basque and 11% speak as much Basque as Spanish. 55% speak Basque to their siblings, plus an additional 9% who speak both languages equally. When it comes to addressing their parents, 47% always (or almost always) speak to their **mother** in Basque and 44% to their **father**: a further 5% speak to one or another of their parents as often in Basque as in Spanish.

When we break down the use of Basque in the home according to age, it makes a big difference whether we take into account the whole universe of all BAC inhabitants over sixteen or limit ourselves to bilinguals. Looking at all inhabitants first, most Basque is spoken at home between people over 65 and those under 25 (19% of the population use at least as much Basque as Spanish in one or another of these groups).

If however we refer just to bilinguals, then we find that bilinguals over-65 score highest for use of Basque: 72% of bilinguals speak Basque as much as or more than Spanish, while the younger the age group, the lower is the proportion who use Basque. Thus in the 16-to-24 group, only 31% of full bilinguals use Basque as much as or more than Spanish at home.

Breaking down the data for use of Basque at home by age group, the trends that emerge have to be read bearing in mind that people of different ages make up the domestic environment; only communication with a partner or sibling involves two people of the same age and generation. Given that over half of bilinguals aged 25 or less are “new” speakers, these are hardly likely to have opportunities to speak Basque at home, at least certainly not with their parents, who will be non-Basque speakers by and large.

Table 11. Use of Basque at home. BAC, 2006 (%)

	Age groups				
Use of Basque	>=65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
Basque only or more than Spanish	16.9	11.8	12.9	14.2	14.4
Evenly balanced	1.5	4.1	6.2	4.8	3.7
Spanish only or more than Basque	81.5	84.1	80.9	81.0	81.9

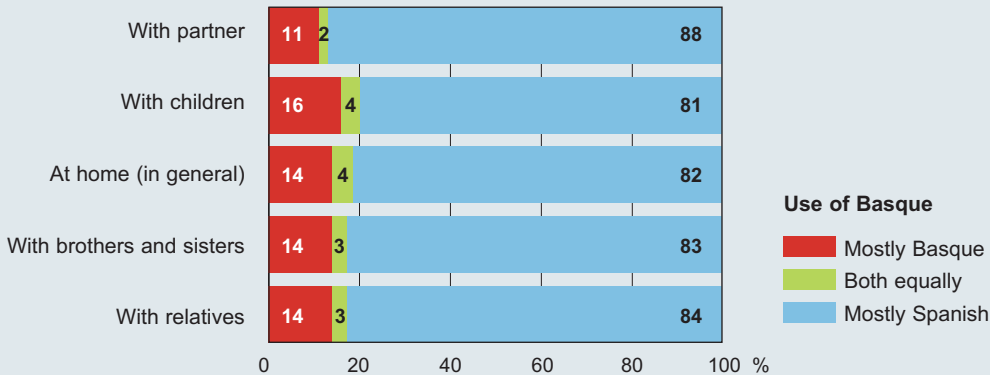
Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Table 12. Use of Basque at home by full bilinguals. BAC, 2006 (%)

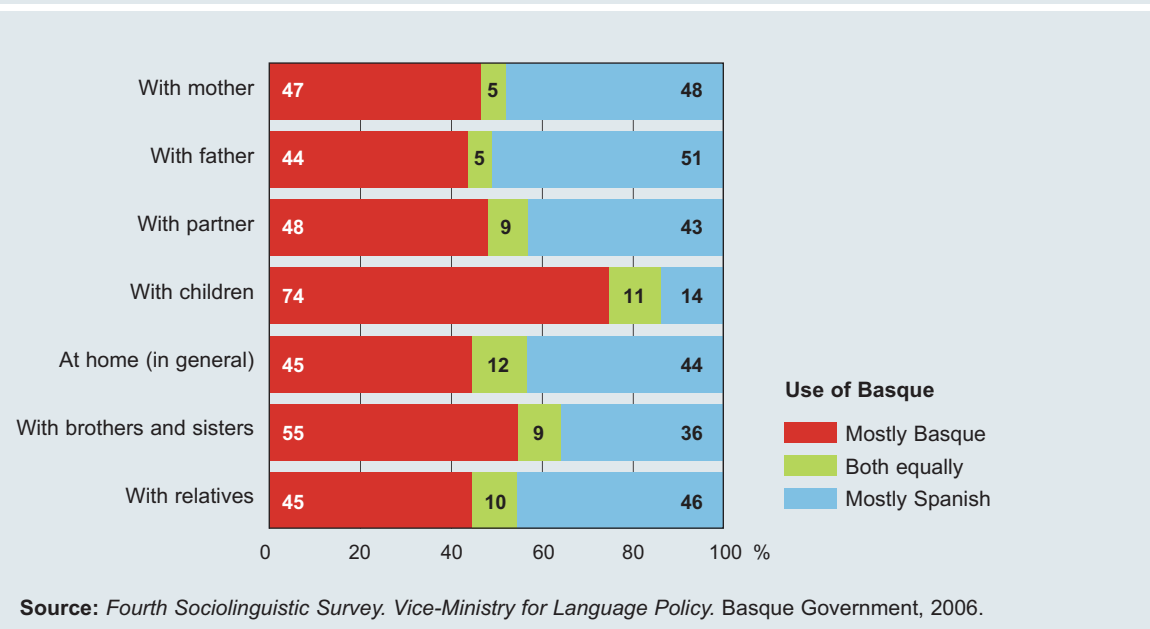
	Age groups				
Use of Basque	>=65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
Basque only or more than Spanish	66.0	55.0	49.0	38.0	25.0
Evenly balanced	6.0	16.0	17.0	11.0	6.0
Spanish only or more than Basque	28.0	29.0	33.0	50.0	68.0

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Figure 32. Use of Basque at home. BAC, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 33.** Use of Basque at home by full bilinguals. BAC, 2006 (%)

## 5.2. USE OF BASQUE IN THE IMMEDIATE COMMUNITY

The proportion of the inhabitants of the BAC aged sixteen and over who always or nearly always use Basque in these domains is 15% when talking to co-workers, 14% with friends, and 13% with neighbours or shop assistants. The percentages who use as much Basque as Spanish are 7% for co-workers and friends, and 6% for neighbours and shopkeepers.

The preceding figures refer to the whole population over sixteen. The percentage of just full bilinguals who always or generally speak to their **friends** in Basque is 46%, while those who use Basque as much as they do Spanish make up another 18%.

Networks exert a strong influence here too, although the impact is not as marked as in the home. Among inhabitants of the BAC aged sixteen or more, when everyone or almost everyone in a **group of friends** can speak Basque, 54% of people always or nearly always speak Basque and a further 7% speak as much Basque as Spanish. When the number of people in the group who can speak Basque is not the whole (or almost the whole) group but is still more than half of the group, then a considerable number of people again speak Basque (28% always or almost always; and another 9% as much as Spanish). The figures based on the bilingual

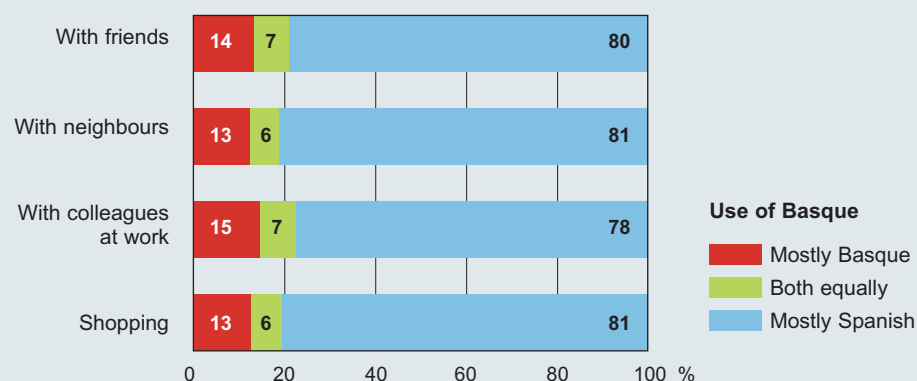
population pattern similarly: when everyone or almost everyone in the group can speak Basque, 74% of bilinguals always or nearly always speak Basque and a further 9% speak as much Basque as Spanish.

On the other hand, the factor of fluency plays as big a part in **language use between friends** as it does within the family. Therefore, 85% of “more Basque” bilinguals always or nearly always speak to their friends in Basque, whereas only 50% of balanced bilinguals and a mere 13% of “more Spanish” bilinguals do so. A considerable number of balanced and “more Spanish” bilinguals (26% and 20%, respectively) speak Basque as much as Spanish with friends.

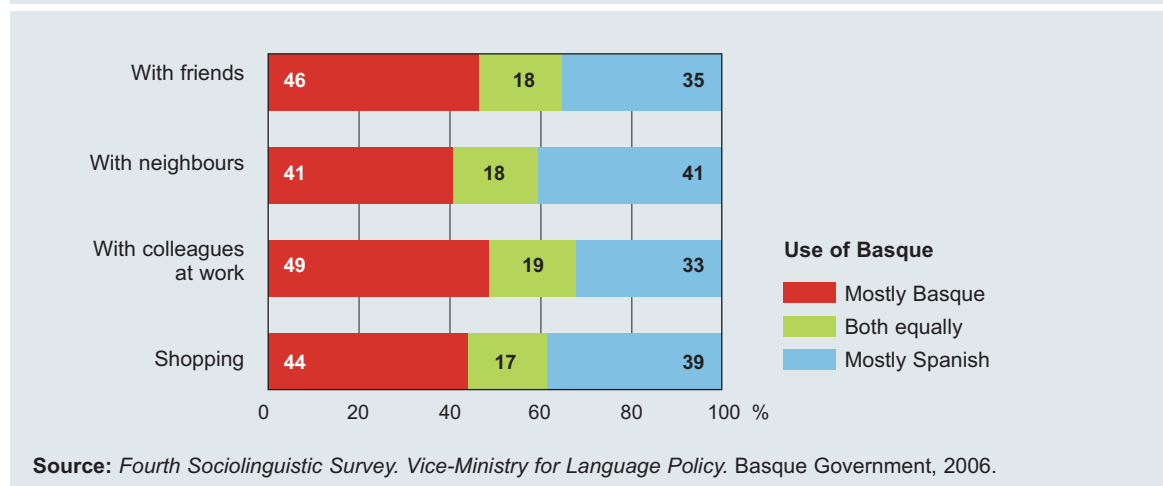
When speaking to **neighbours**, 41% of the inhabitants of the BAC aged sixteen and over always or nearly always use Basque, and another 18% use as much Basque as Spanish in this context. The social network weighs heavily on language choices when speaking to neighbours: when all or nearly all the neighbours are Basque speakers 92% always or nearly always speak Basque, but when not all or nearly all, yet still over half of the neighbours can speak Basque, the percentage of people who still always or nearly always speak to their neighbours in Basque drops by eleven percentage points to 71%.

When doing their daily **shopping**, 13% of all the inhabitants over sixteen in the BAC always or almost always speak Basque in the shops where they habitually shop, and another 6% speak Basque as often as Spanish. The corresponding percentages of bilinguals are that 44% nearly always or always speak Basque where they usually shop, and a further 17% use as much Basque as Spanish there.

**Figure 34.** Use of Basque with immediate community. BAC, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 35.** Use of Basque with immediate community by full bilinguals. BAC, 2006 (%)


### 5.3. USE OF BASQUE IN FORMAL DOMAINS

18% of the over-sixteen population of the BAC use mostly Basque, plus 4% who use as much Basque as Spanish, when visiting council service offices. Those who are most prone to using Basque in such places are the younger part of the population: a quarter (25%) of inhabitants between 16 and 24 years of age mainly use Basque, as do 19% of those between 25 and 34. Among more mature people, use of Basque in this context is below average, and among those aged 65 or older it is average (18%).

The density of the Basque-speaking social network once again strongly influences the use of Basque in council offices as in other use domains. In the fourth sociolinguistic area, where over 80% of the population of the council district is Basque-speaking, 84% speak mainly Basque when they go into the offices of council services, whereas in areas where the density of Basque speakers is lower than 80% the percentage of people who speak Basque in such places drops dramatically, reaching no more than 49% at the very highest (in areas where the Basque-speaker density is between 50% and 80%).

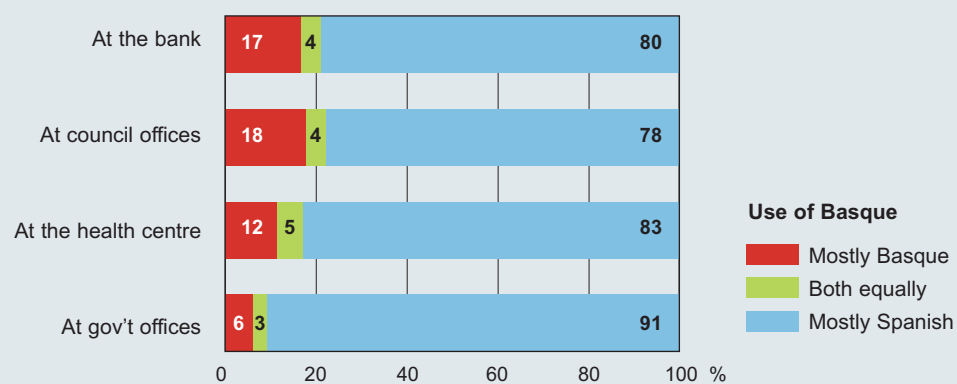
At the bank, 17% of the over-sixteen population of the BAC mostly speak Basque, and another 4% as much Basque as Spanish. As was observed for council services, use of Basque at the bank is somewhat higher for young people than other age groups (e.g. 23% for the 16-to-24 age group).

At health centres and clinics, 12% of the over-sixteen population of the BAC mostly speak Basque, and another 5% as much Basque as Spanish. In general the fig-

ures for Basque language use in this domain is lower than for the two environments we have just looked at, with significant differences whether analysed in terms of sociolinguistic areas or by age groups, so that 58% of the population in sociolinguistic area 4, and 16% of people aged between 16 and 24, mainly use Basque here.

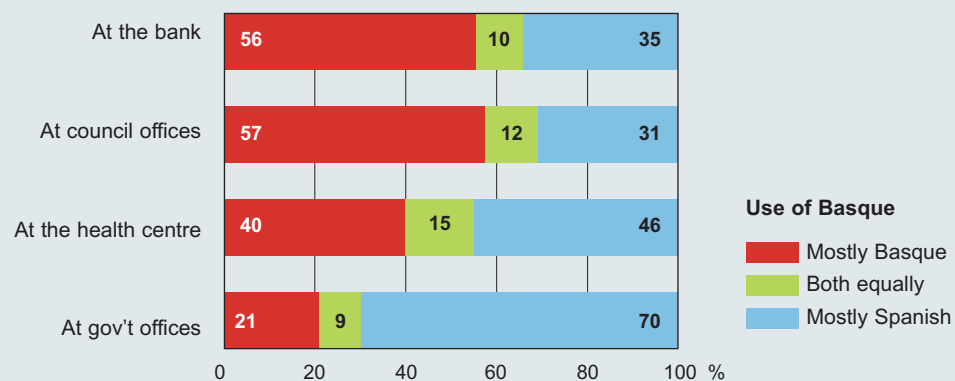
But the lowest figures of Basque language use are those for the offices of services provided under the Spanish government administration, such as the social security offices, job centres, offices issuing national identity cards etc. Yet even here the use of Basque increases from year to year. At present, 6% of the over-sixteen population mainly speak Basque, and another 3% speak as much Basque as Spanish, in such offices.

**Figure 36.** Use of Basque in the formal domain. BAC, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 37.** Use of Basque in the formal domain by full bilinguals. BAC, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

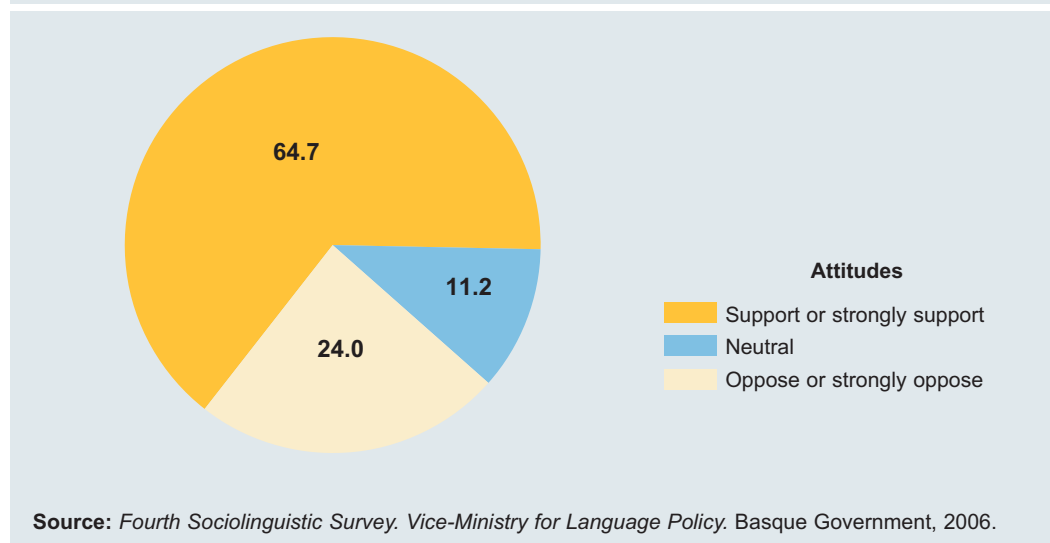
## 6. Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque

Almost two-thirds (64.7%) of the inhabitants in the BAC aged sixteen or more support the promotion of use of the Basque language. Support is stronger (89.3%) among the bilingual part of the population than among those who speak no Basque (50.8%)

The Vice-Ministry for Language Policy of the Basque Government has developed a typology for the classification of opinions expressed in support of or contrary to the promotion of the Basque language in different domains by inhabitants of the BAC aged sixteen or older.

Two out of three people (64.7%) aged sixteen or more in the BAC view action to promote the use of Basque favourably. 24% are neutral on the issue and 11.2% oppose such action.

**Figure 38.** Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque. BAC, 2006 (%)



Support for promoting Basque is stronger in the province of Gipuzkoa (76.3%) than in Bizkaia (62.5%) and Araba (47.2%).

The data on attitudes regarding Basque have undergone some fluctuations over this fifteen-year period. In the percentages of people who oppose Basque lan-

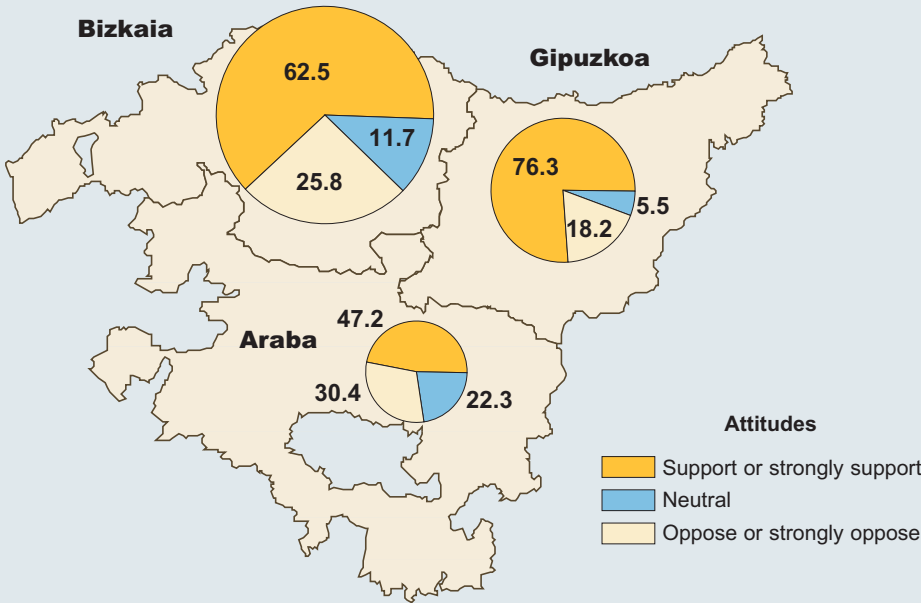
guage promotion there are a mere two points of difference separating the four sociolinguistic surveys that have been performed. The main fluctuations observed involve the ratio between neutral and favourable positions, and this probably

**Table 13.** Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque, province by province.  
BAC, 2006 (%)

	Population age 16 and more			
Attitudes	BAC	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa
Support or strongly support	64.7	47.2	62.5	76.3
Neutral	24.0	30.4	25.8	18.2
Oppose or strongly oppose	11.2	22.3	11.7	5.5

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 39.** Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque, province by province.  
BAC, 2006 (%)



Note: The size of circles represents the population of each province.

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.



reflects to some extent the alternation between more and less troubled times that our society has known. Thus the lowest level of support for pro-Basque action was recorded in 1996 (52%) and the highest in 2006 (64.7%).

Attitudes towards Basque are closely linked to language competence. 89.3% of full bilinguals in the BAC favour Basque language promotion. This contrasts with 63.7% of passive bilinguals and 50.8% of non-Basque speakers.

One out of ten full bilinguals is neutral on the issue, and 1% oppose promoting Basque. Among passive bilinguals and Spanish-speaking monolinguals, fewer than one-third are neutral (26.3% and 31.6% respectively). Opposition to moves to promote Basque is found among 10% of passive bilinguals and 17.6% of people who can only speak Spanish.

As regards age, the proportion of people 65 or older who view Basque language promotion efforts favourably is high, at 71.4%. Support in the remaining age groups is found among a little less than two-thirds of the population. Neutrality is expressed by similar percentages of all age groups (less than one in four). Opposition to promotion of the Basque language is found in 6.5% of the elderly population and between 12% and 15% in the rest of the population.

Most people sixteen or over in the BAC consider that children should be required to learn Basque (82%) and that a knowledge of Basque ought to be required of people entering the civil service (75%).

There is hardly any difference between people of different bilingualism types on the issue of schools in Basque. But age does affect attitudes: although support for Basque-language schooling is strong in all age groups, younger subjects tend to be less vehement in their support.

Yet on the question of making the knowledge of Basque compulsory for people entering the civil service, the opposite pattern emerges: in this case any differences between age groups are negligible, but while this proposal is supported by almost all (94%) full bilinguals, only three quarters (73%) of passive bilinguals and two thirds (65%) of non-Basque speakers agree.

Half (54%) of the inhabitants of the BAC over sixteen support promoting Basque-language media. Type of bilingualism is an important factor for this issue, as the percentages of people in favour of measures in favour of the Basque-language media vary from 80% of full bilinguals to only 39% of monolingual Spanish speakers. As for the influence of age, the younger groups express more support than either the middle-aged or the elderly.

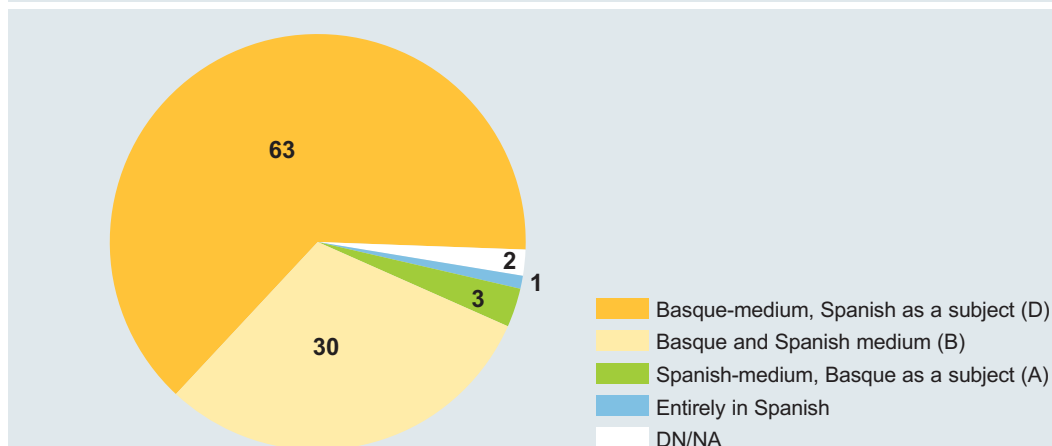
To find out how deeply engrained certain preconceptions about Basque are in our society, those surveyed were asked for their opinions, the responses on which are summarised here:

**Most people in the BAC think that having a society with two languages is not a source of problems**

- Asked whether they thought Basque would ever become as strong as Spanish, 44% in the BAC responded affirmatively. Nevertheless, a substantial proportion (33%) of the population do not think that Basque will ever become as strong as Spanish.
- Regarding the richness of the language, 52% of the population think that Basque is as rich as Spanish, while few think the opposite (15%).
- The existence of two languages in a society does not pose a problem according to 77% of the population, while 19% consider it may cause problems.
- Finally, most of the population think that the placement of children in immersion programmes is not a bad thing (84%).

There are no marked differences between the provinces in their opinions about Basque, and type of bilingualism also has little effect on them. The biggest differences are those correlating with age. In general, those 35 or younger have more positive opinions about the richness of the Basque language, Basque not being a source of problems for society and the desirability of child immersion programmes than those over that age.

Moving on to other opinions about Basque: 63% of inhabitants of the BAC aged sixteen or over want their children to go to Basque-medium (Model D) schools, while 30% would opt for mixed-language (Model B) schools. Looking at the results by province, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa show the clearest preference for Model D (66% and 68% respectively), while choices of the inhabitants of Araba are split down the middle on this (45% for each).

**Figure 40.** Opinions about children's school type. BAC, 2006 (%)


**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

There are also noticeable differences depending on the type of bilingualism. 88% of full bilinguals think Model D is best, and 11% favour Model B. For passive bilinguals these percentages move to 66% and 30% respectively, and in the case of non-Basque speakers to 48% and 42%.

84% of the population over sixteen are of the opinion that in the future both Basque and Spanish should be spoken, while 13% think that just Basque ought to be spoken. Among full bilinguals, the figures of those who favour the future use of both languages or of Basque only come closer together, reaching 73% and 26%, but the majority are still in favour of the maintenance of both.

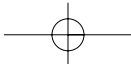
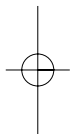
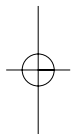
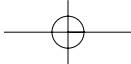
## 7. Conclusions

- Two points in particular stand out in the development of the population during the past fifteen years: the aging of the population and the recent impact of immigration. A quarter of the BAC's population is over sixty, while only 17% are under twenty. 5% of the population are immigrants.
- 30.1% of the over-16 population are fully bilingual, 18.3% are passively bilingual, and 51.5% speak only Spanish. The number of bilinguals is rising all the time. Today there are 557,600 full bilinguals, which is 138,400 more than in 1991.
- The largest proportion of bilinguals is found among the young. 57.5% of those between 16 and 24 years old are full bilinguals, twice the percentage in 1991. However, since the young have little weight in the overall population, this increased bilingualism has not yet greatly affected the population as a whole.
- Basque is the mother tongue of seven out of ten full bilinguals. However, the younger people are, the higher proportion of "new" Basque speakers among them. In the 16-to-24 age group one out of every three full bilinguals has learnt Basque outside the home (usually at school).
- The gains made by Basque (in the form of "new" speakers) are three times as great as its losses in the BAC. In the young population the gains rise proportionally, while the losses decline practically to zero.
- Mother tongue has a strong bearing on fluency. Today, almost a third of full bilinguals are more fluent in Basque than in Spanish. However, among the younger members of the population this proportion falls to a fifth.
- Today, when both parents are bilingual the transmission of Basque is practically guaranteed. In 99% of couples aged 25 or less, when both are fully bilingual their children learn Basque. In nine out of ten of such cases Basque is the only language the children learn in the home. In only two out of three mixed couples (i.e. when only one of the two speaks Basque) do children learn Basque at home, and most of these also learn Spanish at home.
- In the data for use the presence of Basque is seen to be slowly on the rise in Basque society. Use of Basque is for the most part on the increase in all

domains, but most notably in the formal domains. In 1991 15.3% of the inhabitants of the BAC used Basque as much as or more than Spanish. In 2006, fifteen years later, the figure is 18.6%. Use of Basque has taken place in all age groups except the over-65 group, being particularly noticeable among young people.

- However, if we look just at the full bilinguals, the use of Basque has not changed much in the last fifteen years. In 1991 61.2% of bilinguals used Basque as much as or more than Spanish, and in 2006, 63.4%. The differences are small, especially among the young.
- This is explained by the chief factors that affect use: fluency and social networks. A growing proportion of bilinguals, and especially younger bilinguals, learn Basque outside the home (32.3% in the 16-to-35 age group). The majority of these will be “more Spanish” bilinguals, who are more fluent in Spanish than in Basque. Moreover, they typically live in urban, Spanish-speaking environments and the family environment and immediate community of the majority of these are very Spanish-speaking. Consequently, their opportunities to speak Basque spontaneously in either formal or informal contexts are highly limited.
- Attitudes to the promotion of Basque language use over the past fifteen years have changed to a limited extent. Today, close to two-thirds (64.7%) of the population support action to encourage the use of Basque, nearly ten percentage points more than in 1991. Most people today consider that it is necessary for children to learn Basque (82%) and for people entering the civil service to know Basque (75%). 77% of the population is of the opinion that it is not a problem for the society to have two languages.

**NORTHERN BASQUE COUNTRY**  
Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey



Max BRISSON  
President of the Public Institute  
of the Basque Language



## The findings of the Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey in the North: alarming statistics amidst rays of hope

*To outline and implement a public policy  
in favour of the Basque language*

Such is the brief of the Public Institute of the Basque Language, founded in December, 2004 as a public interest organisation sponsored by the state of France, the Aquitaine Regional Council, the department of Pyrénées Atlantiques, the *Syndicat Intercommunal* in support of Basque culture, and the Basque Council of Public Office-Holders.

Since the creation of this legal structure, a necessary precondition for the implementation of effective public action, the Institute has set up a project of language policy for the promotion and development of the Basque language in the coming years which will determine the action of public entities focusing on the basic objective of “complete speakers” while defining children and young people as the top priority.

The Public Institute of the Basque Language resolved to enter into close cooperation with the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) in order to establish and implement its language policy project.

For the Public Institute of the Basque Language, the ground-breaking experience in the South, the lessons learnt, the numerous tools that have already been developed and the professionalism that has been acquired are all valuable points of reference for the development of a pro-Basque language policy adapted to conditions in the North.

The Sociolinguistic Survey of the Basque Country exemplifies this. Such instruments are an essential means of acquiring detailed information about the sociolinguistic



tic situation, evaluating the results of present policy, and sharing these findings with all the social agents in this process.

The situation in the North was already covered by the surveys carried out by the Basque Autonomous Community in 1991, 1996 and 2001.

The decision to carry out the 2006 survey jointly is an important step forward: while maintaining the previously established partnership with the Basque Cultural Institute, this move constitutes for the first time a joint activity pursued together by the public institutions on both sides of the border. The Basque Autonomous Community took responsibility for the execution of the project in the whole of the Basque Country, while for the North, the Public Institute of the Basque Language delegated the sampling to INSEE and ensured adequate working conditions enabling SIADECO, the company responsible for carrying out the survey, to operate within the terms of their brief with respect to the questionnaires, headquarters, materials etc.

The Public Institute of the Basque Language also contributed other services such as the writing and translation of reports and publication of the results.

The results of the 2006 Sociolinguistic Survey confirm the main trends revealed by the preceeding three surveys: the number of bilingual speakers is still dropping both in absolute numbers and in proportion to the overall population. Looking ahead, two general demographic tendencies point to the likely continuation of this trend:

- the rapid growth of the population of the North is continuing as more people move to the area
- one-third of all bilinguals are over 65 years old.

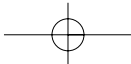
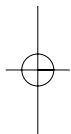
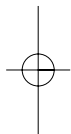
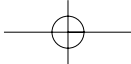
Nonetheless, this fourth survey shows that a trend change is possible.

Previous surveys suggested that the downward trend would come to a halt with the youngest age groups. In 2006 that hope is fulfilled and a number of indicators have started to rise for the first time: figures for language competence and use have started to rise, language transmission has improved, and the gains in new speakers now outnumber the losses. This turnaround is particularly notable in the most populous province of Lapurdi (both along the coast and in the interior). The new trend is founded on positive attitudes towards Basque with respect to education, the media and public services.

Before the results of this survey became available, the Public Institute of the Basque Language had committed itself to a language policy project targeting children and youth as a priority. The survey results have confirmed the wisdom of this choice and demonstrate that the situation of Basque in the North, while critical, is not irreversible.

We need to assimilate those findings and adopt them as a basis giving new strength and helping us to confront the challenges of the Basque revitalisation process with renewed energy and motivation, striking a balance, with the whole of society, between the need to promote the Basque language and the right of individual choice.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to our partners in the BAC for organising this Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey in which the Public Institute of the Basque Language chose to participate. This experience has fired us with enthusiasm not only to take part in the fifth survey programmed for 2011, but even more importantly, to show how the hopes that will be raised by the results of 2011 and beyond are transformed into reality.



1. Language competence

1.1. POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

According to 2006 data the northern part of the Basque Country has 230,200 inhabitants aged sixteen or more, 22.5% of whom (51,800 people) are fully bilingual (meaning that they speak both Basque and French well). A further 19,800 (8.6%) are able to understand Basque although they do not speak it well; these will be referred to as passive bilinguals. The rest (158,600 people, 68.9%) are non-Basque speakers who do not know any Basque.

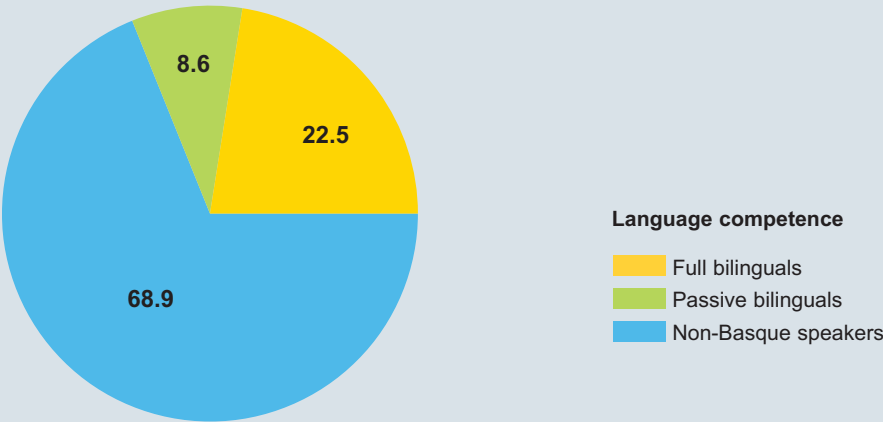
22.5% of the inhabitants of the northern Basque Country are full bilinguals, 8.6% are passive bilinguals, and 68.9% are non-Basque speakers

Table 1. Population aged sixteen or over by age group and district. Northern Basque Country, 2006

	Population aged 16 or over			
Ages groups	Northern Basque Count.	BAB	Lapurdi hinterland	Lower Navarre and Zuberoa
≥ 65	59,600	27,800	21,800	10,000
50-64	51,500	21,600	22,900	7,000
35-49	59,000	25,100	26,100	7,800
25-34	31,000	14,700	12,100	4,200
16-24	29,100	11,700	13,600	3,800
Total	230,200	100,900	96,500	32,800

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Figure 1. Language competence. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Over the past ten years the population of the northern Basque Country of age sixteen or more has grown by 18,000, whereas the number of full bilinguals has fallen, as has, in consequence, the proportion of full bilinguals in the population, which was 26.4% in 1996, and only 22.5% in 2006.

Table 2. Changes in language competence. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2006 (%)

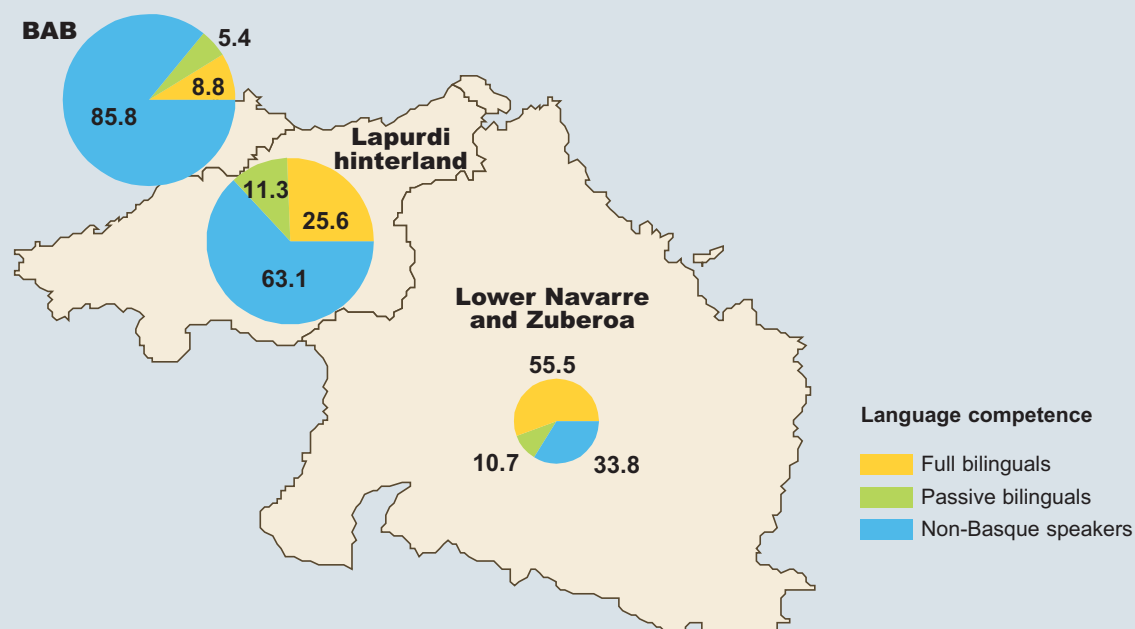
	Population aged 16 or over		
Language competence	1996	2001	2006
Full bilinguals	26.4	24.8	22.5
Passive bilinguals	9.3	11.7	8.6
Non-Basque speakers	64.2	63.5	68.9
Total	212,400	221,600	230,200

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

In the breakdown by regions, there are sharp contrasts. Lower Navarre and Zuberoa have the highest percentage of full bilinguals, at 55.5%, representing 18,200 people. In terms of absolute numbers, though, the largest number are found in the rural part of the coastal province of Lapurdi, where there are 24.700 full bilinguals, representing 25.6% of the population of this region. Lastly, the BAB urban district of Lapurdi, composed of the three large towns of Bayonne, Anglet and Biarritz, the most highly populated in the northern Basque Country, has the lowest percentage of full bilinguals at 8.8%, or 8,800 individuals.

A comparison with older statistics shows that the over-sixteen population of the North is undergoing constant growth, in both Lapurdi hinterland and the BAB in particular, but the percentage of bilingual speakers of Basque and French is not growing, and if the trend of recent years continues their proportion will continue to decrease.

**Figure 2.** Language competence by district. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



Note: The size of circles represents the population of each district.

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Table 3. Change in the number of bilinguals by district. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2006 (%)

	Population aged 16 or over			
	Language competence	1996	2001	2006
BAB	Full bilinguals	9.1	8.8	8.8
	Passive bilinguals	3.9	8.3	5.4
	Non-Basque speakers	87.0	82.9	85.8
Lapurdi hinterland	Full bilinguals	31.0	28.5	25.6
	Passive bilinguals	13.9	14.5	11.3
	Non-Basque speakers	55.0	57.1	63.1
Lower Navarre and Zuberoa	Full bilinguals	64.0	60.9	55.5
	Passive bilinguals	12.3	15.1	10.7
	Non-Basque speakers	23.7	24.0	33.8

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

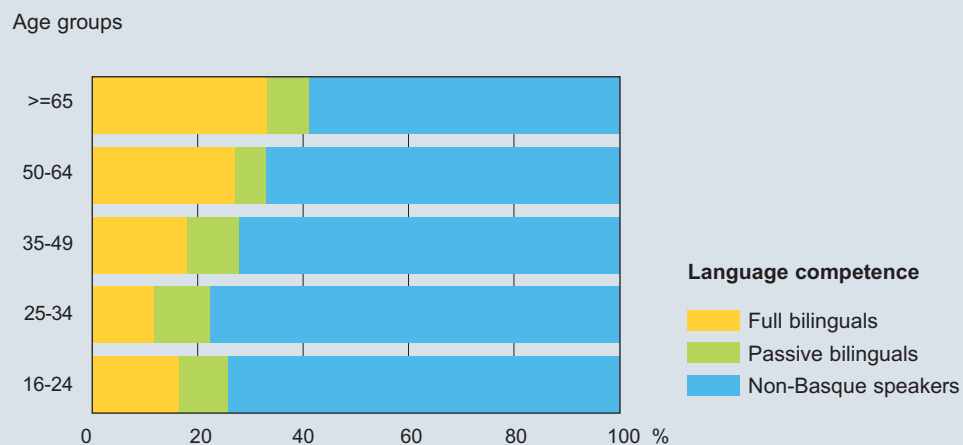
1.2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY AGE

Although the general percentages of bilinguals have fallen, that for the 16-to-24 age group has start to rise

The highest percentage of full bilinguals is in the over-65 age group, and percentages decrease with age, with the exception of the youngest age group, where the trend reverses. The percentage for the 16-to-24 group is a full five points higher than that for the 25-to-34 age group.

The rate of decrease in the percentages of bilinguals is not uniform for all age groups, and that of the youngest group has risen in comparison to the preceding group.

The lowest percentage of bilinguals is thus in the 25-to-34 age group, at 11.6%, while the highest is that of the over-65 group with 32.4%. But the most remarkable statistic is 16.1% for the 16-to-24 group, since this signi-

**Figure 3.** Language competence by age group. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

fies that the downward trend of recent years has halted and an upward trend begun.

The highest percentage of partial bilinguals is found between the ages of 16 and 50, at around 10%. The proportion of partial bilinguals is lower for groups aged over fifty, with 5.9% for the 50-to-64 age group and 8.1% for people aged 65 and older.

The highest percentage of non-Basque speakers is in the 25-34 age group, at 77.9%, and the lowest is in the over-65 age group, at 59.5%. The proportion of monolinguals in the 16-to-24 age group has dropped almost four percentage points in comparison to the group preceding it, at around 74.2%.

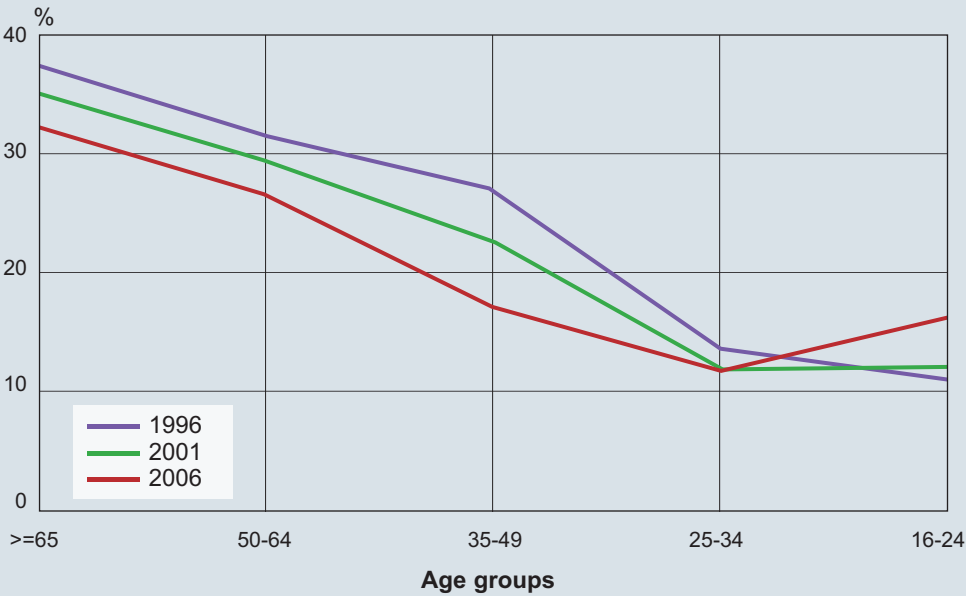


Table 4. Language competence by age group. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

Age groups	Population aged 16 or over		
	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	32.4	8.1	59.5
50-64	26.8	5.9	67.4
35-49	17.5	10.1	72.4
25-34	11.6	10.4	77.9
16-24	16.1	9.6	74.2
N. Basque Coun.	22.5	8.6	68.9

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Figure 4. Changes in full bilinguals by age group. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2006 (%)

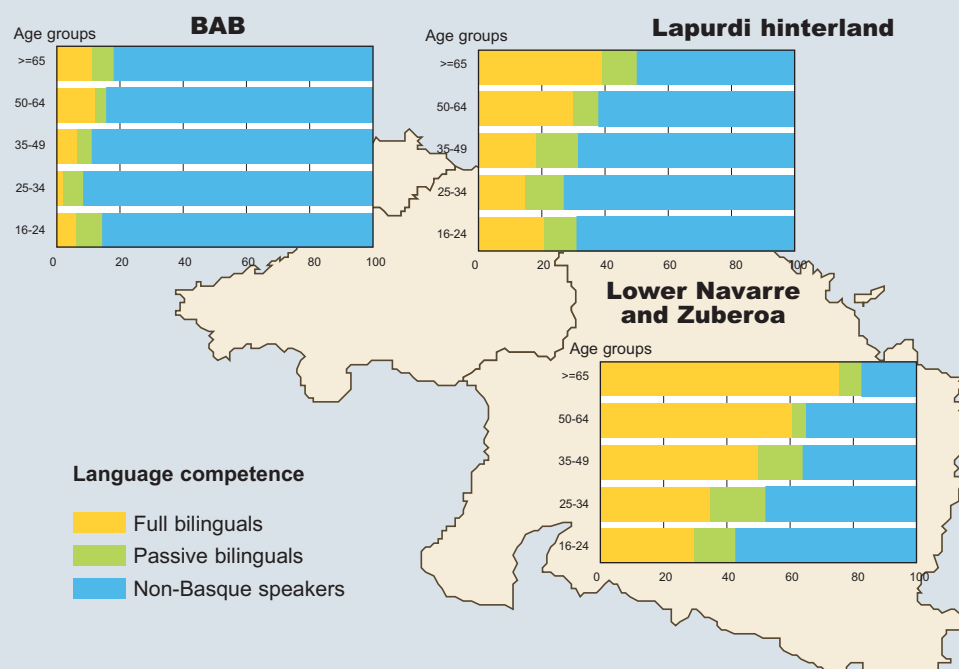


Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

In all three surveys to date, the total percentage of full bilinguals has continually dropped, yet the downward trend was slowing down in 2001, and in 2006, for the first time, has stopped in the case of the 16-to-24 age group and begun to rise.

The pattern is not uniform for all districts. While the statistics for BAB and Lapurdi hinterland generally coincide, those for Lower Navarre and Zuberoa are different; here, in the provinces of Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, the downward trend for bilingual young people is still maintained. Next we will look at the situation in each of these districts.

**Figure 5.** Language competence by district and age group. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

BAYONNE, ANGLET AND BIARRITZ (BAB)

Full bilinguals make up about 12% of inhabitants over the age of fifty in the three-town urban area of Bayonne (*Baiona* in Basque), Anglet (Basque: *Angelu*) and Biarritz (Basque: *Miarritze*), on the coast of the Basque province of Lapurdi, here referred to as BAB for short. Below the age of fifty, the proportion of Basque speakers decreases progressively, to 6.6% in the 35-to-49 age group and a mere 2.8% in the 25-to-34 age group. However, at this point a new trend appears and the proportions start to rise again, given the percentage for the 16-to-24 group of 6.5% full bilinguals. In comparison to the preceding group there has been a rise in both percentage and absolute number of bilinguals.

The percentage of passive bilinguals in the BAB area is higher than that of full bilinguals for people aged between 25 and 34, particularly in the 16-to-24 group, at 8%, the highest proportion of passive bilinguals in any age group. In the groups above 35, in contrast, the percentage of passive bilinguals does not reach 6% in this area, unlike the remaining districts of the North.

The numbers for monolingual French-speakers are high (over 80%) in all age groups, reaching 91% in the 25-to-34 age group.

On the basis of the data for the 16-to-24 group, we may expect the numbers of young full or partial bilinguals to go on increasing in the future in the BAB district, even though for the present they still only represent a small minority of the population.

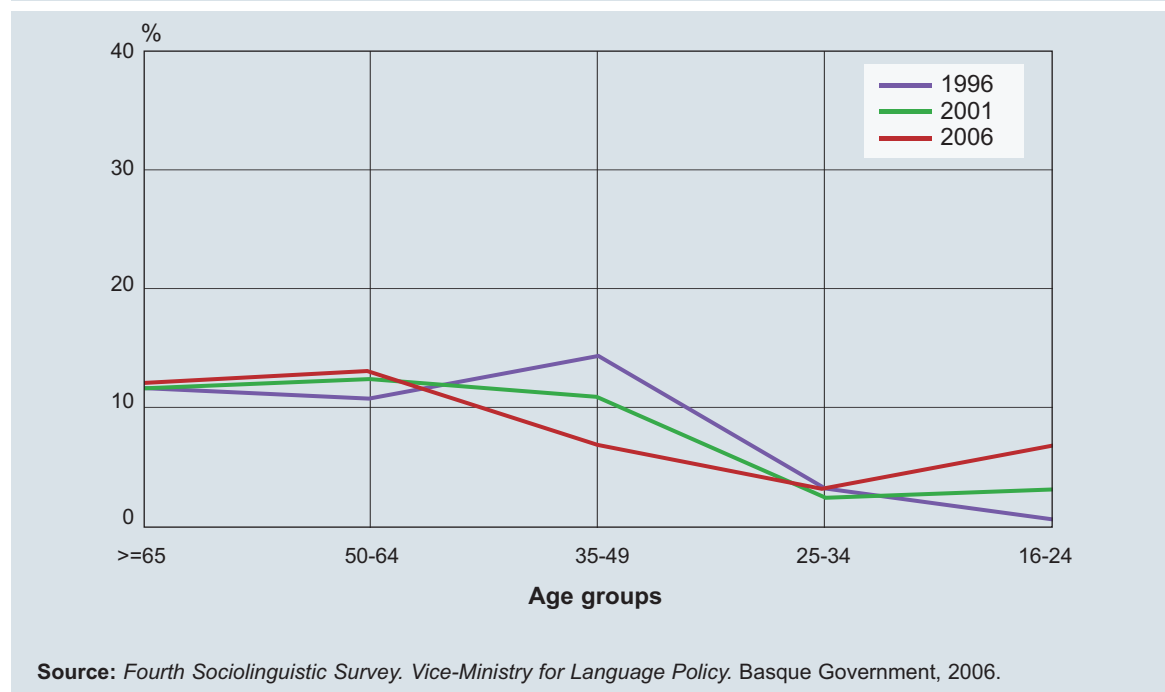
Table 5. Language competence by age group. BAB, 2006 (%)

Age groups	Population aged 16 or over		
	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	11.8	5.8	82.4
50-64	12.7	3.5	83.8
35-49	6.6	4.8	88.6
25-34	2.8	6.2	91.0
16-24	6.5	8.0	85.5
<b>BAB</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>85.8</b>

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Comparing the trends observed in the earlier surveys, there were already signs in the 2001 data of coming change, which has now accelerated in the youngest part of the population.

**Figure 6.** Changes in full bilinguals, by age group. BAB, 1996-2006 (%)



LAPURDI HINTERLAND

As throughout the North, the highest proportion of full bilinguals is found in people over 65. That percentage is close to 40% (39.1% to be precise), and descends progressively to a low point of only 14.6% among the 25-to-34 age group. As in the BAB area, however, the downward trend turns around for the 16-to-24 age group and rebounds to a quite remarkable 20.6%, which is higher than either the 25-to-34 or the 35-to-49 age groups.

The percentage of partial bilinguals is above 10% for all age groups except for the 50-to-64 group, which has 8.2%. The highest proportion of passive bilinguals is in the 35-to-49 age group, at 13.8%.

The proportion of non-Basque speakers only falls below half of the total population in the over-65 age group, and rises to over 60% in the remaining age categories, with a high point of 72.5% in the 25-to-34 age group. As in the BAB district, the percentage of non-Basque speakers, after reaching this maximum, falls proportionately, by almost three percentage points, in the youngest group.

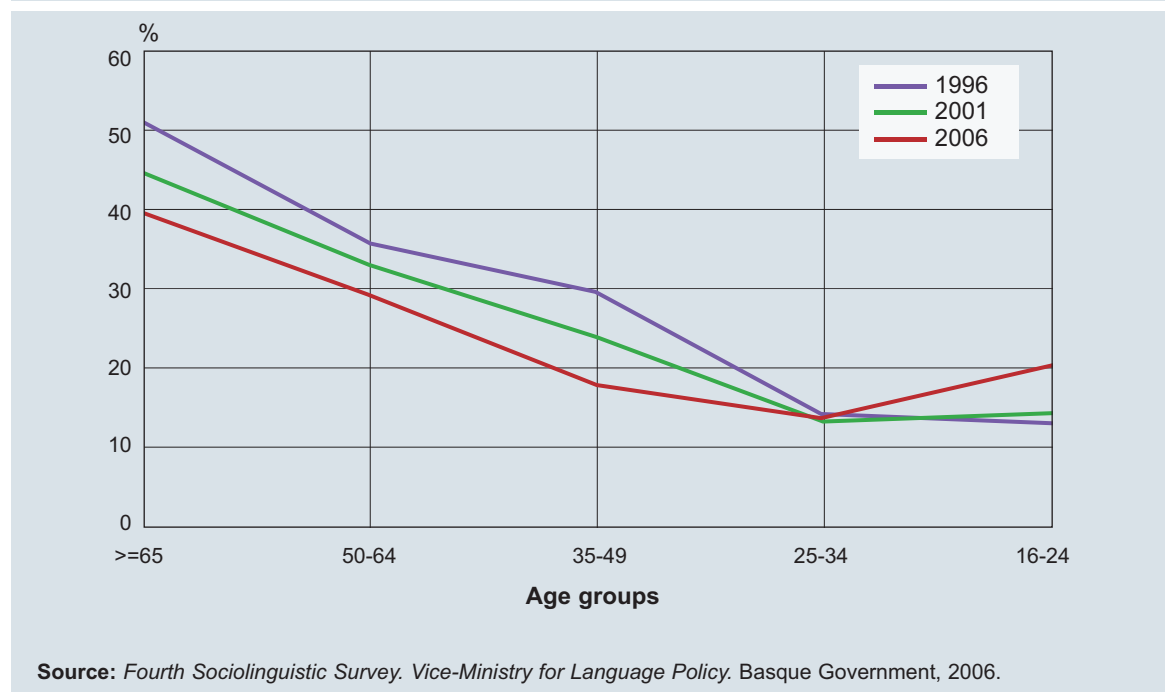
Table 6. Language competence by age group. Lapurdi hinterland, 2006 (%)

Age groups	Population aged 16 or over		
	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	39,1	11,3	49,6
50-64	29,8	8,2	62,0
35-49	18,3	13,8	67,9
25-34	14,6	12,9	72,5
16-24	20,6	10,1	69,3
Lapurdi hinterland	25,6	11,3	63,1

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Comparison of successive surveys shows that the new figures confirm the change first perceived in the 2001 survey and indicate its acceleration among younger speakers.

**Figure 7.** Changes in full bilinguals, by age group. Lapurdi hinterland, 1996-2006 (%)



LOWER NAVARRE AND ZUBEROA

In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, as in Lapurdi, the percentage of bilinguals decreases with age, with the difference that this process appears still to be ongoing and extends to the youngest group, although at a lower rate. There are big differences between the older and younger groups; the over-65s, 75% of whom are bilingual, contrast with the 16-to-24 group, where only 30% are.

As we go from older to younger, the proportion of passive bilinguals rises. Thus partial bilinguals make up 14.4% of the 35-to-49 age group, but 18.1% of the 25-to-34 group. Conversely in the older groups there are fewer partial bilinguals; the proportion among the 50-to-64 group is only 5.2%.

The highest proportion of non-Basque speakers is found amongst the youngest part of the population. 57% of people between 16 and 24 years old are monolinguals. On the other hand, the percentage of non-Basque speakers among the population over 65 is as low as 17.3%. As we move down the age groups the proportion of monolinguals constantly increases.

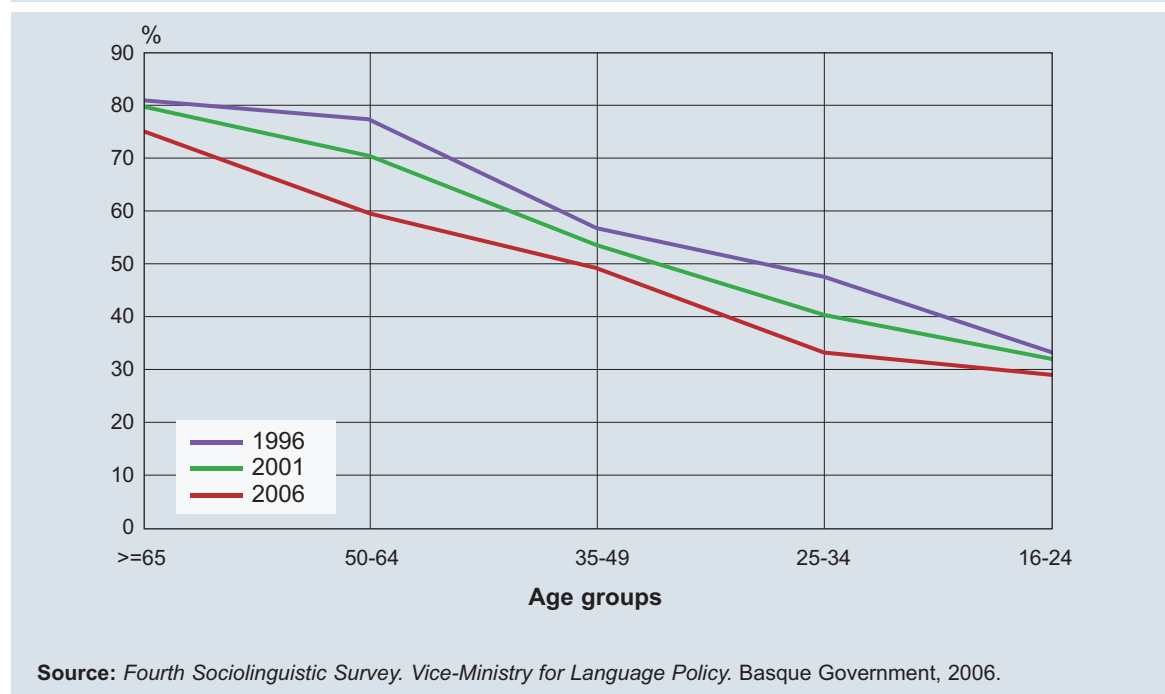
Table 7. Language competence by age group. Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, 2006 (%)

Age groups	Population aged 16 or over		
	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	75.1	7.6	17.3
50-64	60.1	5.2	34.7
35-49	50.1	14.4	35.5
25-34	34.2	18.1	47.7
16-24	30.0	13.0	57.0
Lower Navarre and Zuberoa	55.5	10.7	33.8

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Looking at successive surveys the drop in the percentages of bilinguals in progressively lower age groups is seen to continue down to the present in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa.

**Figure 8.** Changes in full bilinguals, by age group. Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, 1996-2006 (%)



The survey shows, then, that overall the proportion of bilinguals has decreased rapidly and constantly in the North of the Basque Country, down to the 16-to-24 age group, but at different rates in Lapurdi and in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa. Both in the BAB urban area and in Lapurdi hinterland the percentage is rising with the youngest age group, whereas in the other two provinces the downward trend for bilingualism may have slowed down but is still continuing.



### 1.3. GROUP PROFILES ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

Next we shall examine the characteristics of the members of each of the three groups that make up our language competence typology (full bilinguals, passive bilinguals and non-Basque speakers).

The typical profile of full bilinguals is as follows:

- Basque-French bilinguals typically were born in the northern Basque Country, as were their parents, and Basque is their mother tongue.
- Usually their family and friends are almost all Basque-speaking, but not their work environment.
- About 70% of them live in municipalities with under six thousand inhabitants.
- More than half are over fifty years old, and a third of all full bilinguals are over 65 years old.
- Given the advanced age of many, their typical level of education is below average.
- They are very interested in Basque and strongly support efforts in favour of the language.

Typical characteristics of passive bilinguals are as follows:

- Passive bilinguals typically were born in the northern Basque Country, and more than half were born in Lapurdi hinterland. Basque is the mother tongue of nearly half.
- Their friends are more Basque-speaking than either their families or their work environment.
- 40% are studying Basque or have studied it in the past.
- Most are interested in Basque and support efforts to support the language.

Lastly, non-Basque speakers have the following profile:

- Three-fourths are immigrants to the area or the children of immigrants, and French is their mother tongue.
- Their family, friends and work environment are all French-speaking.
- Over half live in the BAB area.
- Most are interested in Basque. Half are neutral on the subject of efforts in favour of the language, a quarter support such efforts and the other quarter are oppose them.

## 1.4. RELATIVE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

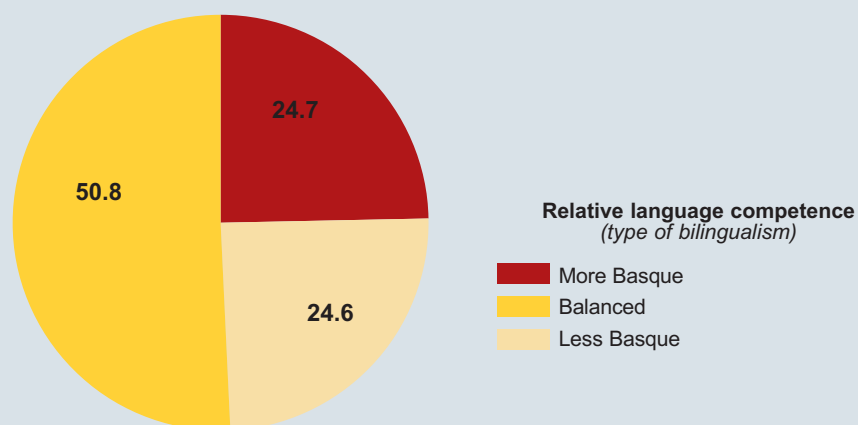
We may divide full bilinguals into three groups depending on how well they express themselves in Basque or in French.

Those we shall call “**more Basque**” bilinguals, who are more fluent in Basque than in French, comprise 24.7% of all full bilinguals and 5.5% of the whole over-sixteen population of the northern Basque Country. The greatest proportion (39.7%) of such “more Basque” bilinguals is found among those over 65, while the younger the age group the fewer are found. Taking the full bilinguals in the under-25 age group, for example, “more Basque” bilinguals make up 12.8% of their total. Their percentage has gradually decreased over the past ten years from 32.2% in 1996. Basque is the mother tongue of almost all these “more Basque” bilinguals. Normally they live in Basque-speaking areas and in small towns or villages, chiefly in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa.

**Half of full bilinguals express themselves equally well in Basque and in French. A quarter are more fluent in French than in Basque, and a quarter are more fluent in Basque than in French**

**Balanced bilinguals**, who are equally fluent in both Basque and French, make up the largest group of full bilinguals, comprising 50.8% of the total and 11.4% of the entire over-sixteen population of the northern Basque Country. Most balanced bilinguals (more than half of the total) are aged between 25 and 64. Most live in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa (53.7%) or in Lapurdi hinterland (50.8%). Basque is the mother tongue of nearly all balanced bilinguals.

“**More French**” (or “less Basque”) bilinguals, who are less fluent in Basque than in French, make up 24.6% of full bilinguals in the northern Basque Country and 5.5% of the area’s total over-sixteen population. The younger their age, the larger the percentage of all bilinguals who are “more French” bilinguals: thus, 44.2% of full bilinguals in the 16 to 24 age group find it easier to speak French than Basque. Most “more French” bilinguals live in the province of Lapurdi, either in the BAB or the rural back country. The mother tongue of most “more French” bilinguals is Basque, while French is the mother tongue of some.

**Figure 9.** Types of bilingualism (*in full bilinguals*) by age group. Northern BC, 2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

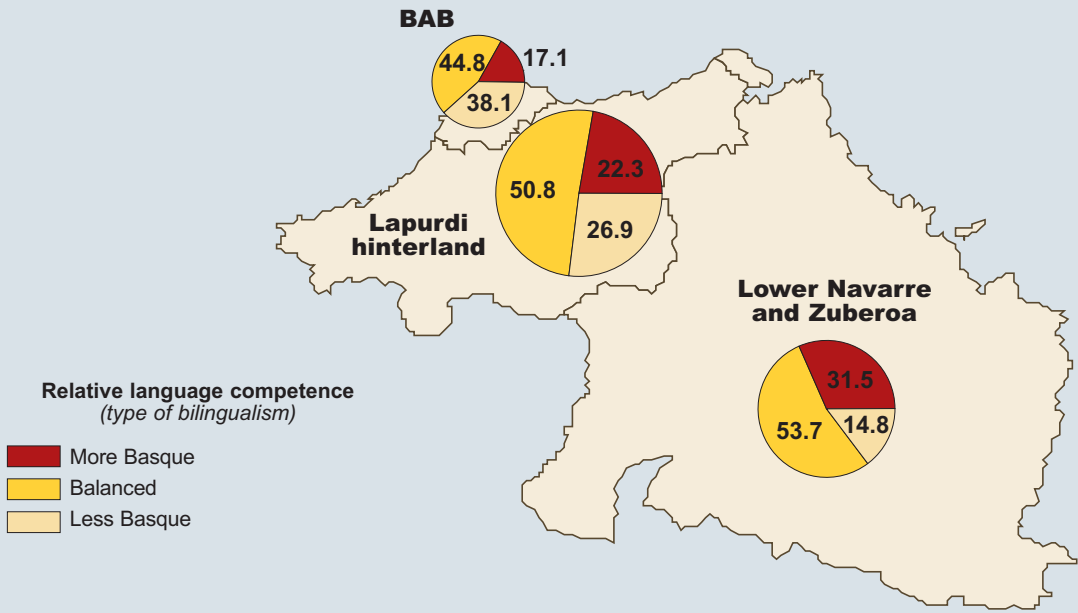
Geographically the three types of bilinguals have an uneven distribution.

In the BAB district, 44.8% of bilinguals are balanced ones. 38.1% are more fluent in French, while a minority, 17.1%, are more fluent in Basque.

In Lapurdi hinterland the majority of full bilinguals (50.8%) are balanced, 26.9% are more fluent in French and a minority, again, of 22.3% are more fluent in Basque.

In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, balanced bilinguals make up most of the bilingual population (53.7%), while another 31.5% are more fluent in Basque. Unlike the other two regions, here the “more French” bilinguals are the minority, with 14.8%.

Figure 10. Type of bilingualism (*in full bilinguals*) by district. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



Note: The size of circles represents the number of full bilinguals of each district.

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Table 8. Type of bilingualism (*in full bilinguals*) by district. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

	Population aged 16 or over			
Type of bilingualism	Northern Basque Country	BAB	Lapurdi hinterland	Lower Navarre and Zuberoa
More Basque	24.7	17.1	22.3	31.5
Balanced	50.8	44.8	50.8	53.7
Less Basque	24.6	38.1	26.9	14.8

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

## 2. Language transmission

### 2.1. MOTHER TONGUE BY DISTRICTS

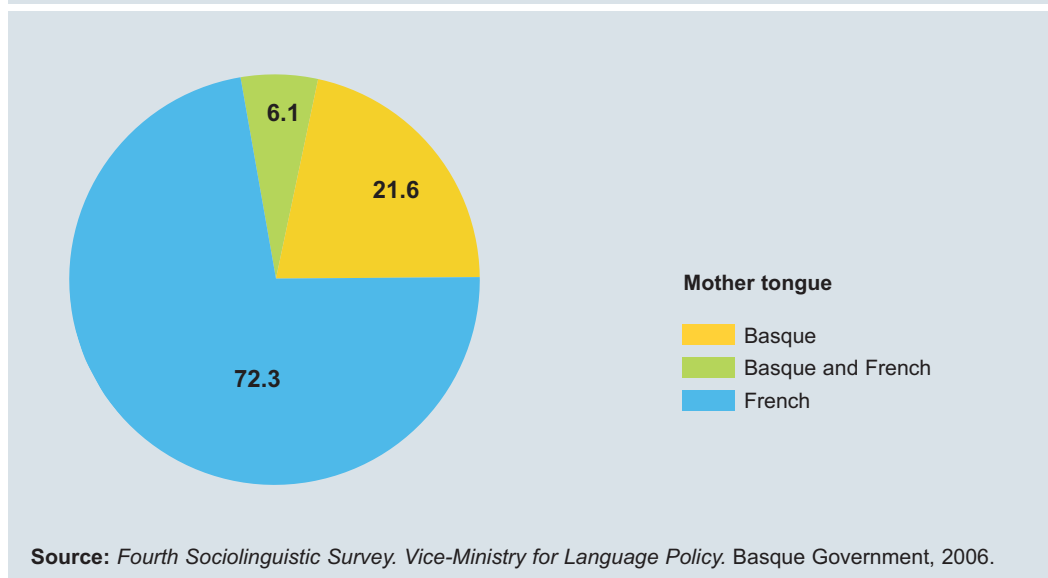
French is the mother tongue of most of the population of BAB and Lapurdi hinterland. In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, the mother tongue of two-thirds of the population is Basque

We may define mother tongue as the language or languages acquired from parents or relatives with whom a child has lived until the age of three.

The population of the northern Basque Country can be divided into three groups in terms of mother tongue, as follows:

- Basque is the only mother tongue of 21.6% (49,800 people).
- Basque and French are both mother tongues for 6.1% (14,000 people).
- French is the only mother tongue of 72.3% (166,400 people).

Figure 11. Mother tongue. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



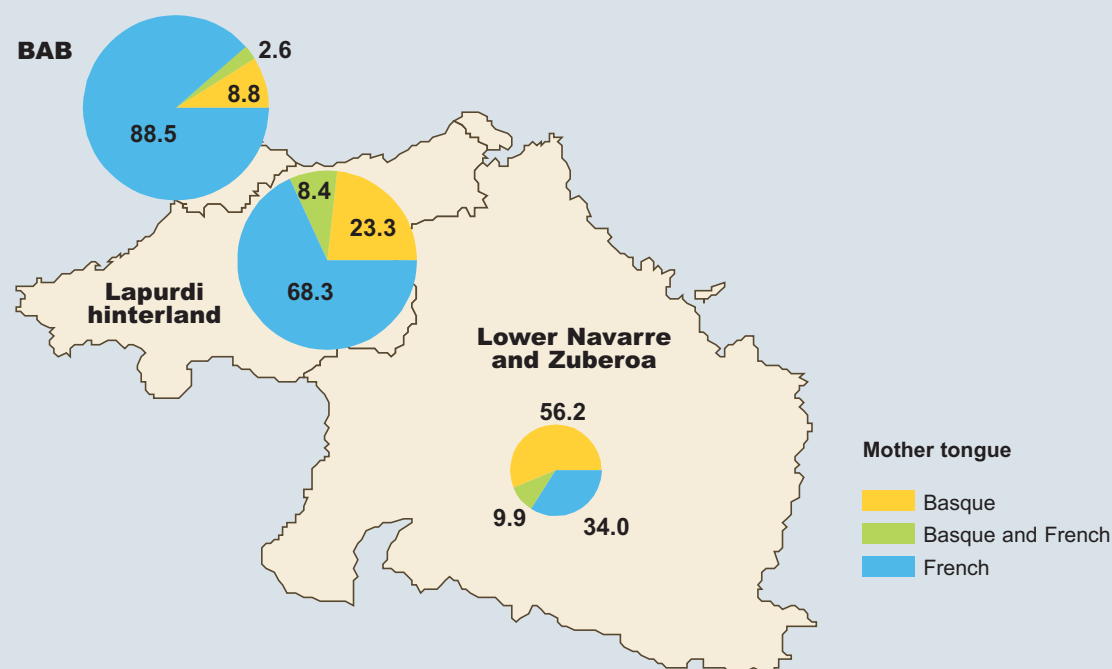
French is the mother tongue of most inhabitants of BAB and Lapurdi hinterland, whereas Basque is the mother tongue of two-thirds of the population of Lower Navarre and Zuberoa.

French is the mother tongue of most inhabitants (88.5%) of BAB; a small minority have Basque (8.8%) or both Basque and French (2.6%) as mother tongues.

French is the mother tongue of 68.3% of the inhabitants of Lapurdi hinterland, Basque of 23.3%, and the remaining 8.4% are native speakers of both languages.

In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, the reverse pattern holds: Basque is the mother tongue of most of the population (56.2%), and a further 9.9% are native speakers of both languages. French is here the minority mother tongue, with 34%.

**Figure 12. Mother tongue by district. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)**



Note: The size of circles represents the population of each district.

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Table 9. Mother tongue by district. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

	Population aged 16 or over			
Mother tongue	N. Basque Country	BAB	Lapurdi hinterland	Lower Navarre and Zuberoa
Basque	21.6	8.8	23.3	56.2
Basque and French	6.1	2.6	8.4	9.9
French	72.3	88.5	68.3	34.0

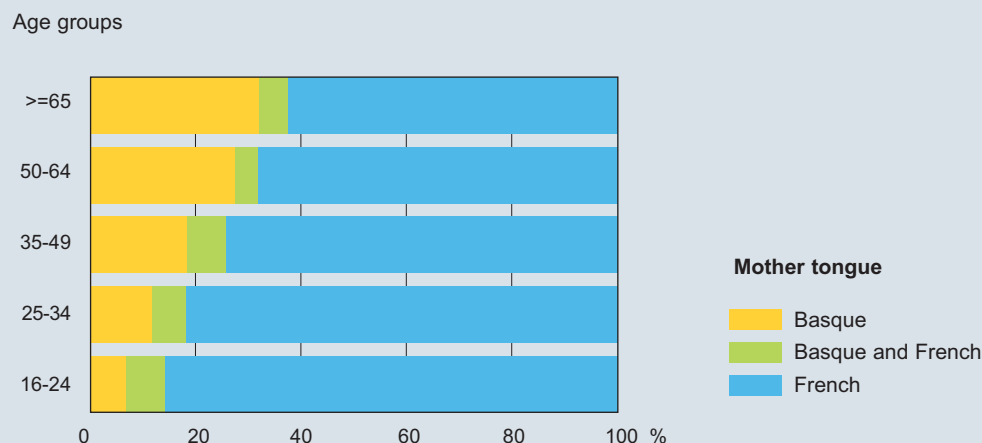
Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

2.2. MOTHER TONGUE BY AGE

In the younger age groups the percentage of people whose mother tongue is Basque decreases drastically

The largest proportion of people whose mother tongue is just Basque or Basque together with French is found among older people aged 65 and more (37.5%). This proportion drops rapidly when we look at younger age groups, until by the time we get to the group of people aged 24 or less it is only 14.1%. There is a perceivable shift with the youngest group, in that a larger percentage of these (7.7%) have both Basque and French as mother tongues than have only Basque (6.4%). In

general, the proportion of the population with French as a mother tongue is increasing constantly. In the over-65 group the percentage with only French as a mother tongue is 62.5%; to this we may compare the 16-to-24 age group where the corresponding percentage is 85.9%.

**Figure 13.** Mother tongue by age group. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

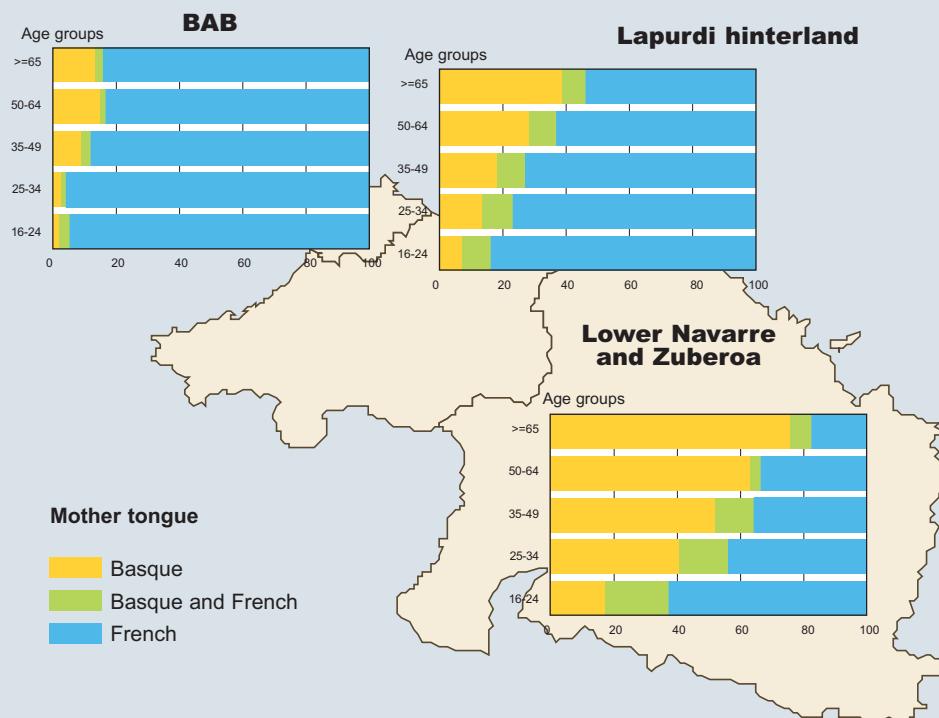
While the proportion of the population with Basque as their mother tongue is receding in all three districts of the northern Basque Country, the percentages in the different districts are quite different.

In the BAB district a very low percentage, around 2%, of people between 16 and 34 learnt Basque as their mother tongue. The percentage who learnt both Basque and French as mother tongues is also very low, at 3.4% for the 16-to-24 age group. The highest proportion is found in the 50-to-64 age group, where it stands at 14.5%.

In Lapurdi hinterland, Basque, either alone or together with French, is the mother tongue of 46.4% of the population aged 65 and more, but that percentage drops dramatically and consistently in the younger age groups until for the 16-to-24 age group it is only 15.8%.

In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, the recession of Basque or Basque-plus-French as a mother tongue is even more worrying, having gone from 82.5% in the over-65 age group to 36.6% in the 16-to-24 group.



**Figure 14.** Mother tongue by district and age group. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

## 2.3. MOTHER TONGUE BY LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

“Family transmission” refers to the language or languages that a child learns from its parents. The present sociolinguistic survey provides an opportunity to track the development of language transmission from parents to children over the past hundred years or so.

In the over-sixteen population of the northern Basque Country as a whole, when both parents are Basque speakers they have transmitted Basque to their children 69% of the time, both Basque and French 11.5% of the time, but the other 19.5% of the time they have only transmitted French. When only one of the parents knows Basque, a very small percentage (1.5%) learnt just Basque, and 18.1% Basque and French. In most cases by far (80.5%), these children did not learn Basque.

**Failure to transmit Basque is occurring even where both parents are Basque speakers, and is even more frequent when only one of the parents can speak Basque**

**Table 10.** Mother tongue depending on parents' language competence. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

	Basque-speaking parents		
	Both	One	Neither
Childrens' mother tongue			
Basque	69.0	1.5	
Basque and French	11.5	18.0	
French	19.5	80.5	100.0

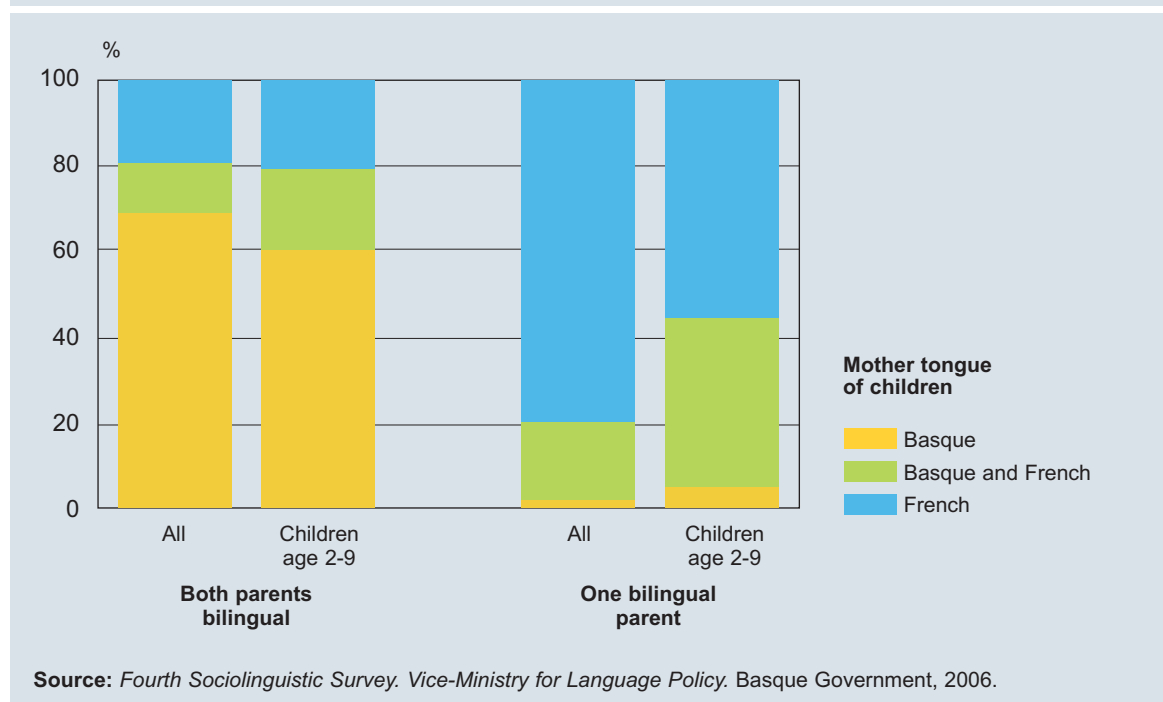
**Source:** *Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy.* Basque Government, 2006.

These figures tell us how Basque has been transmitted over the course of the past century, but do not tell us anything about *present-day* language transmission in Basque families.

To find out about the transmission of Basque in the northern Basque Country today, we looked at the respondents to our survey who have children aged between two and nine.

The language transmitted to children today is fully determined by parents' language competence. 79.2% of children whose parents were fully bilingual learnt Basque in the home. Most of these (60%) *only* learnt Basque in the home, while the remainder (19,2%) learnt both Basque and French. The remaining 20.9% only learnt French.

**Figure 15.** Mother tongue of children aged 2 to 9 depending on parents' language competence. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



When one parent doesn't speak Basque, however, more than half (55.6%) have only transmitted French to their children, while 39.8% transmitted both Basque and French and 4.6% only transmitted Basque.

## 2.4. LANGUAGE TREND: BASQUE LANGUAGE GAINS AND LOSSES

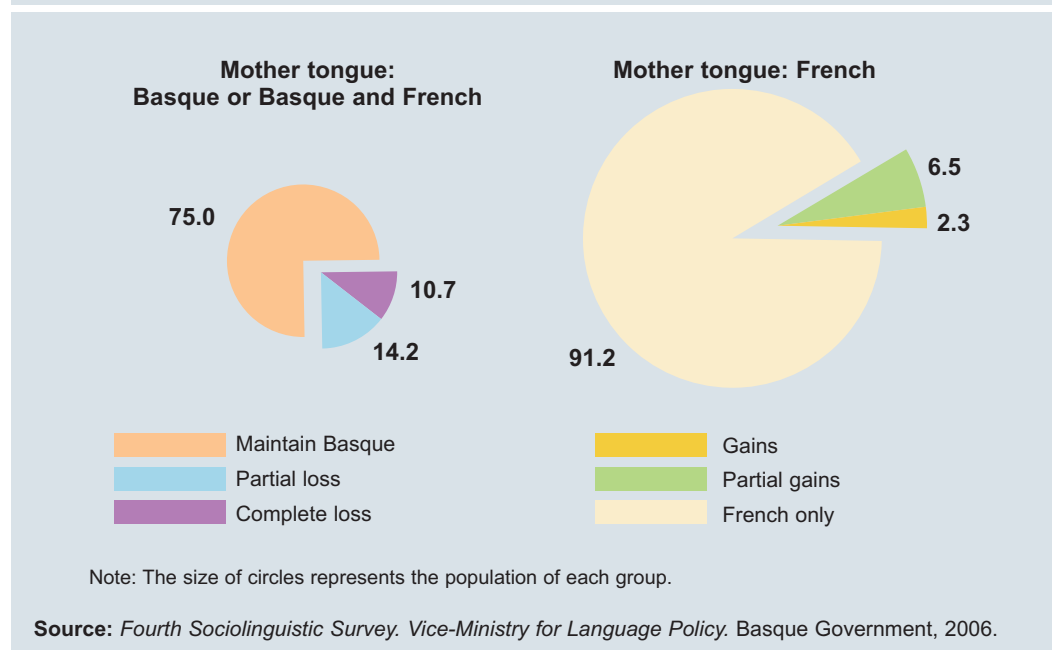
Most people whose mother tongue is Basque (or whose mother tongues are Basque and French) have conserved their Basque and remain fully bilingual (75%). Nonetheless, there are 16,000 people (24.9%) who are no longer bilingual although Basque was their mother tongue, having partially or totally forgotten it. Over half of those losses (9,100) are partial losses: such people can no longer speak Basque well but are still able to understand it. The remaining 6,900 people have forgotten their Basque altogether.

On the other hand, there are 3,900 people whose mother tongue is French yet who have subsequently learnt Basque and become fully bilingual.

And there are a further 10,700 people whose mother tongue is French but who are able to understand Basque; that is, they have become partial Basque speakers.

Although the losses suffered by Basque are much greater than its gains, they are proportionately smaller than ten years ago. Gains are now surpassing losses among young people.

**Figure 16.** Gains and losses for Basque. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



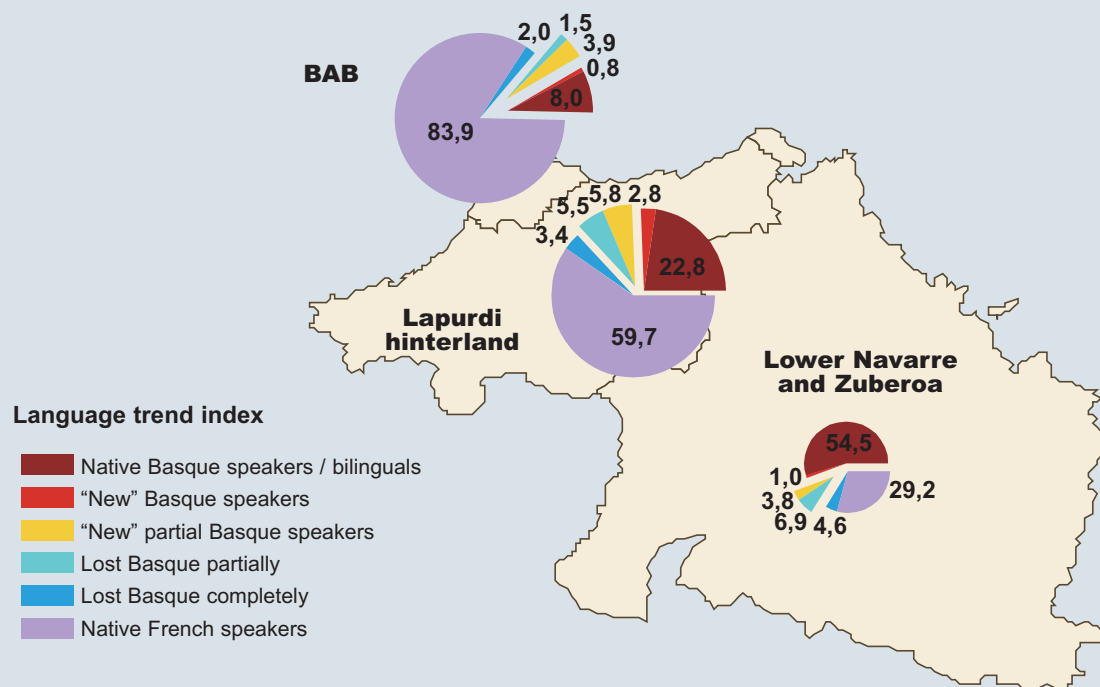
So losses still triple gains, but although some native Basque speakers continue to lose their Basque, more and more native French speakers have started learning Basque giving rise to present-day bilinguals.

While such gains and losses occur all over the northern Basque Country, their proportions vary from place to place.

In the BAB area there are 2,000 people who have lost their Basque completely, and a further 1,500 partially. In the same area 800 people have successfully learnt Basque and another 3,900 have studied it or are doing so at the present time. In this case the losses far outweigh the gains, by almost three to one.

In the remaining parts of Lapurdi, 3,300 original Basque speakers have lost all their Basque and 5,300 have partially forgotten their mother tongue. On the other hand, the number of “new” Basque speakers in this area, 2,700, is considerably higher than for the BAB urban district, and a further 5,600 have gone some way towards learning Basque. In Lapurdi hinterland, then, the gap between losses and gains is much smaller than in the other areas thanks to the surge of new Basque speakers.

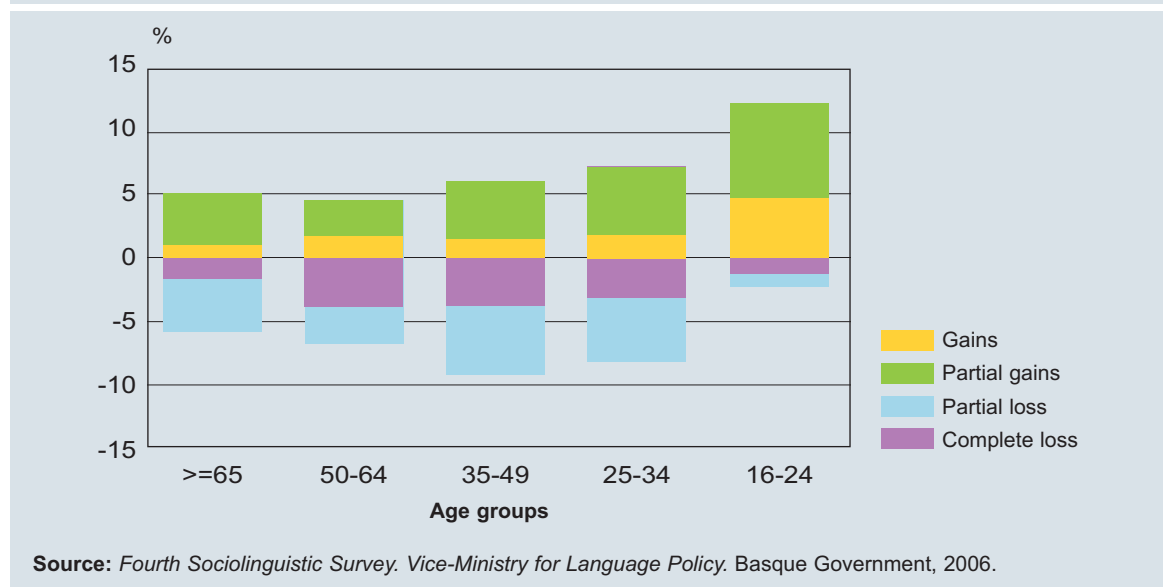
In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, 1,600 individuals have lost their Basque altogether and 2,300 in part, while 400 people have fully learnt Basque and 1,300 have partly learnt it. Here the losses outweigh the gains by about four to one.

**Figure 17.** Language trend index district by district. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

Note: The size of circles represents the population of each district.

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

On the other hand, the figures for *euskaldun berriak*, "new" speakers, vary considerably according to age. The percentage for people over 25 is low; for example, only 1.6% of inhabitants in the 25-34 age group have learnt Basque outside the home. However, the percentage of those in the 16-to-24 age group who have become *euskaldun berriak* is almost three times as high, at 4.5%, with 1,300 new speakers. There are also a good many partial "new" speakers, who have learnt Basque imperfectly and who make up 8.5% of the population of this district; such are Basque's "partial gains".

**Figure 18.** Basque language gains and losses by age group. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

Those who have **gained** Basque have the following general profile:

- Most are very young: 34% of “new” speakers are aged between 16 and 24. The smallest proportions of *euskaldun berriak* are found in the 25-to-34 age group and among people over 65.
- The majority (70%) live in Lapurdi hinterland.
- Many (24%) went to Basque-medium primary schools, and (67%) to French-medium schools. 52% learnt or improved their Basque out of school.
- Most (76%) have greater fluency in French than in Basque.

Those who have **lost** Basque share the following general characteristics:

- The greatest loss (35%) is in the 35-to-49 age group, and the smallest (5%) is in the 16-to-24 group.
- Basque alone was the mother tongue of 48% of those who have lost their Basque, Basque and French of the remaining 52%.
- None received their primary school education in Basque, but 30% have tried to study or improve their Basque out of school.

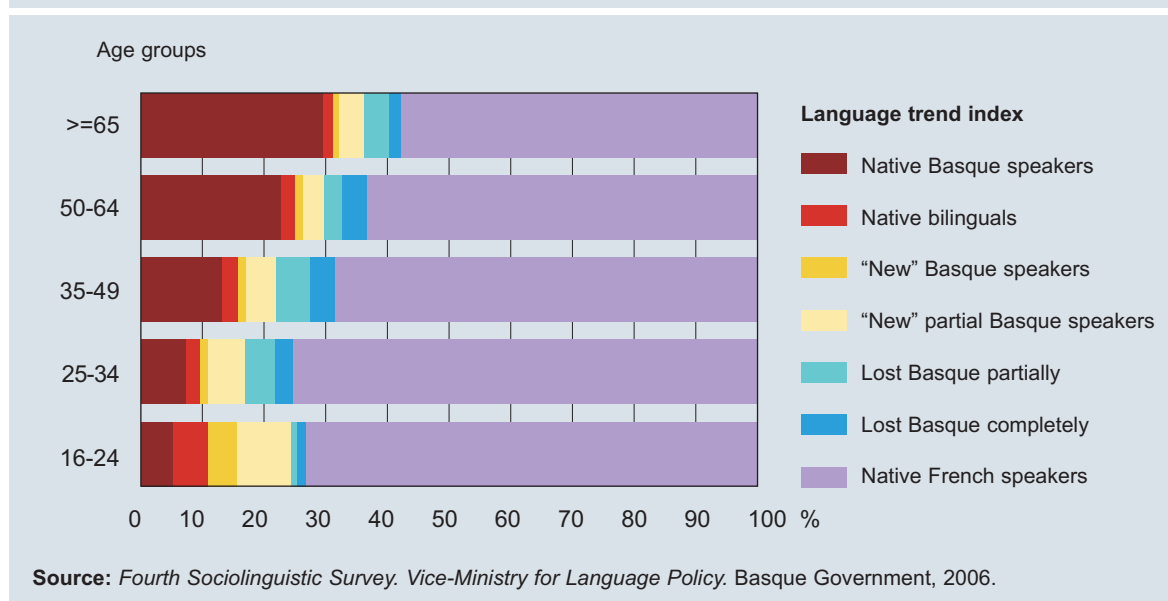
Basque is the mother tongue of *euskaldun zaharrak* (“old” Basque speakers) who are now fully bilingual. French, on the contrary, is the mother tongue of those whom we might call “old” French speakers, who have remained non-Basque speakers all their lives.

These two groups show contrasting patterns depending on age. The largest percentage of “old” Basque speakers is in the 65-and-over age group (29.9%), and they become fewer in the younger age groups, descending to just 5.6% in the 16-to-24 group.

The opposite is true of the “old” French-speaking part of the population, which represents a smaller proportion of the older population, except that in the 16-to-24 age group the proportion of “old” French speakers falls slightly, from 74.6% to 72.9%, suggesting that in the future it will continue to diminish as the percentage of “new” Basque speakers starts to grow.

However, together with these *euskaldun berriak*, it is the “native bilingual” group that grows significantly as we move down the age groups. These are people with two mother tongues, Basque and French, who are fully fluent in Basque. In the population over the age of 25 the proportion of native bilinguals is around 2%, but in the 16-to-24 group it has tripled to 6%, overtaking the percentage of “old” Basque speakers whose only native language is Basque.

**Figure 19.** Language trend index by age group. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)





### 3. Use of Basque

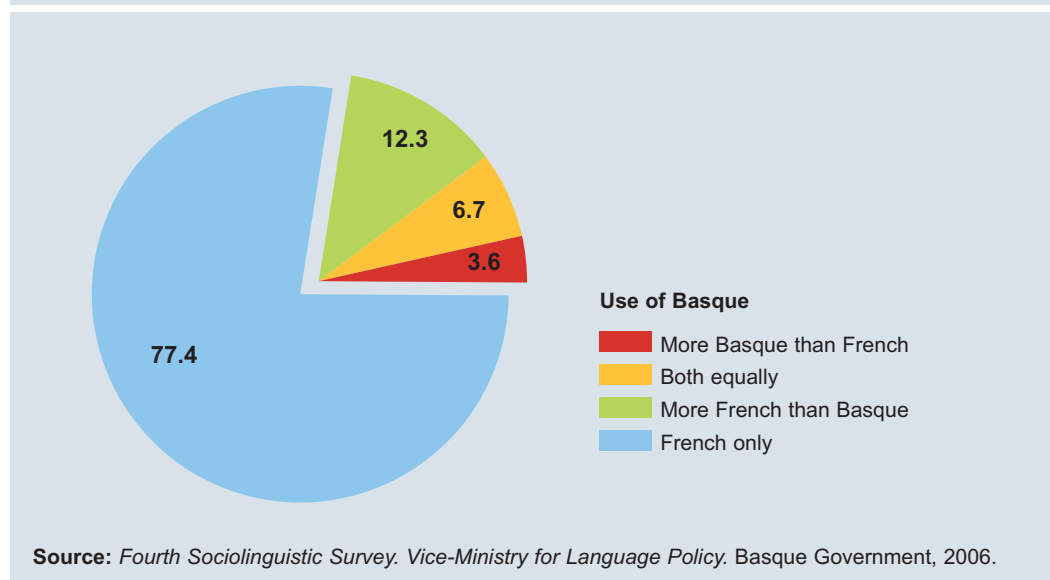
#### 3.1. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE TYPOLOGY

The sociolinguistic survey collects information on the nature of Basque language use in various domains: the home, the family, interactions with friends, shopping, the work environment, and public and private formal domains. We now dispose of data concerning the development of the use of Basque over recent years in each domain. An index measuring the social use of Basque, known as the Basque language use typology, was created in 2001 by the Basque Autonomous Community's Vice-Ministry for Language Policy.

The typology considers three major domains: home, friends and the formal domain, the last-named of which has four subdivisions: health care and council services in the public sector, and local shops and banking outlets in the private sector.

The Basque language use typology was applied to the universe of 230,200 subjects of the sociolinguistic survey, i.e. the whole population aged 16 and over, yielding the following results.

**Figure 20.** Use of Basque. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



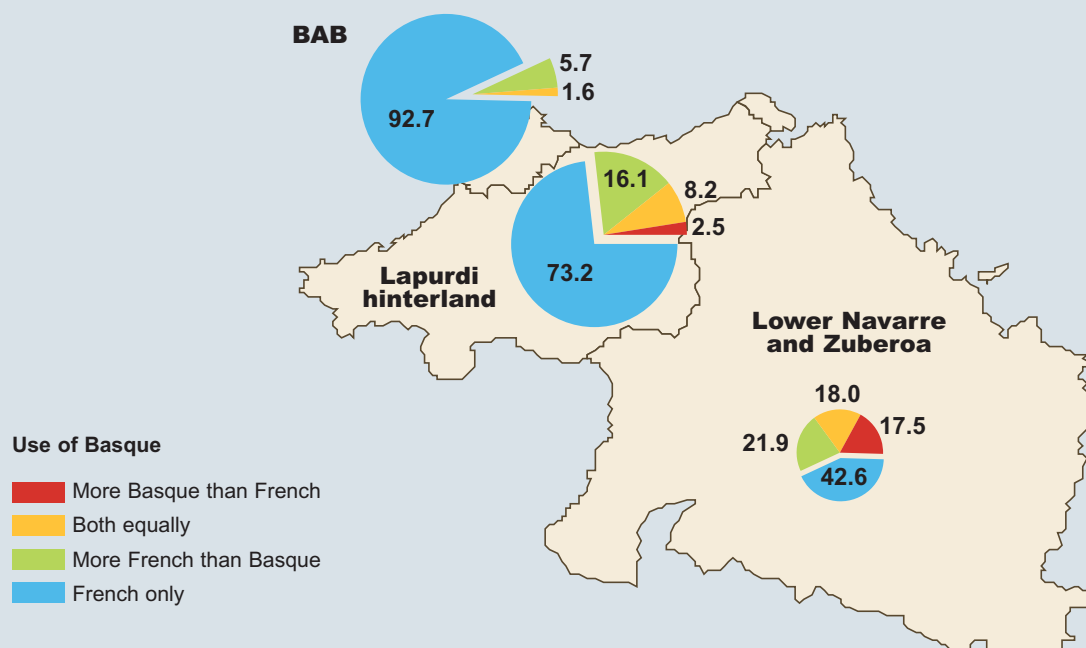
10.3% of the northern Basque population speak Basque as much as (6.7%) or more than (3.6%) French in their daily lives. 12.3% mainly speak French and the remaining 77.4% do not use any Basque at all.

The figures for language use vary widely depending on the region. The percentages of people who use Basque as much as or more than French, for example, are 1.6% for the BAB, 10.7% for Lapurdi hinterland and 35.5% for Lower Navarre and Zuberoa.

Again, the percentage of the population who use Basque less than French varies from 5.7% in the BAB to 16.1% in Lapurdi hinterland and 21.9% in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa.

Hence there are of course also substantial differences in the percentages of inhabitants of the different zones who only use French. In the BAB, the number of people who only ever use French make up 92.7% of the population. In contrast, in Lapurdi hinterland the part of the population that always speaks French is only 73.2% of the total, and in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, as few as 42.6%, not even half of the total population of these provinces.

**Figure 21.** Use of Basque district by district. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



Note: The size of circles represents the population of each district.

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Still sharper contrasts are seen when we classify data on the use of Basque by sociolinguistic areas rather than by district.

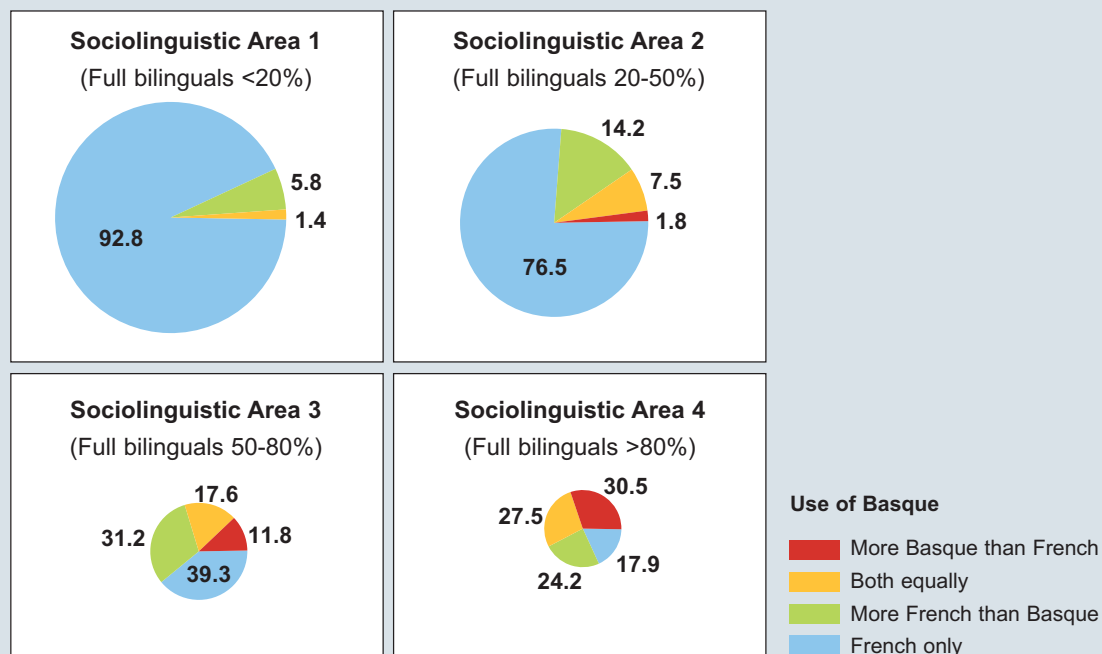
In Area 1, which we define as all municipalities with fewer than 20% Basque speakers among their populations, only 1.4% of the population use Basque as much as or more than French, yet another 5.8% of this population do use some Basque (although less than French). The vast majority of people (92.8%) in Sociolinguistic Area 1 only ever speak French.

French is likewise the language most used in Sociolinguistic Area 2, where between 20% and 50% of the population is Basque-speaking. Here 9.3% speak Basque as much as or more than French, while another 14.2% also use some Basque, although less than French. Three out of four people in this sociolinguistic area (76.5%) only speak French.

In Sociolinguistic Area 3 (where between 50% and 80% of the population can speak Basque), 11.8% of the population generally speak Basque, and another 17.6% use Basque as often as French. One-third (31.2%) of the people use some Basque, but not as much as French. Lastly, 39.3% never speak Basque. Thus 60% of the population of Sociolinguistic Area 3 do use Basque to some extent.

In Sociolinguistic Area 4, where over 80% of the population is Basque-speaking, 30.5% mainly use Basque, a further 27.5% use Basque as much as French and 24.2% use some Basque but not as much as French. This leaves 17.9% of the population of Sociolinguistic Area 4 who only use French.

The better to evaluate the true impact of data classified by sociolinguistic areas, it is useful to remind ourselves of the relative weight of the population sizes of each area in relation to the population of the North of the Basque Country as a whole. 48.8% (close to half) of the entire northern population reside in Sociolinguistic Area 1. Area 2 includes 35.5% (over a third) of the population, Area 3 includes 10%, and Area 4 represents 5.6%.

**Figure 22.** Use of Basque according to sociolinguistic areas. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

Note: The size of circles represents the population of each area.

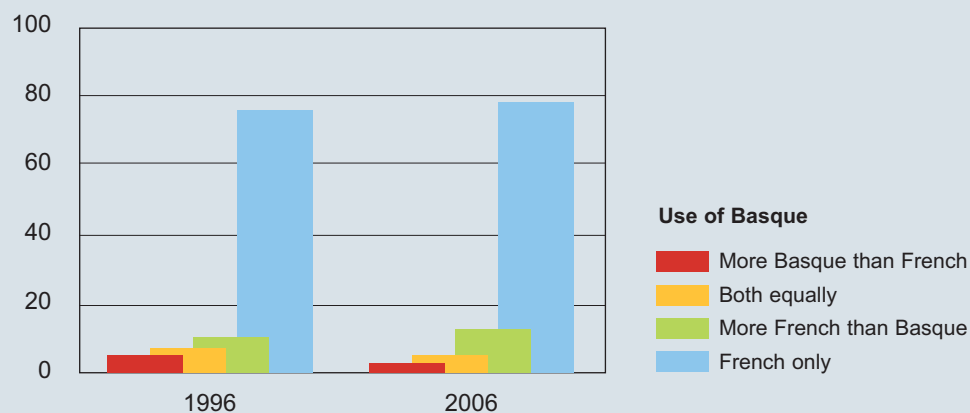
Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Over the past ten years the percentage of people using Basque as much as or more than Basque dropped by a full three points.

Ten years ago, in 1996, 13% of the population of the North used Basque as much as (7.6%) or more than (5.4%) French. Today only 10.3% use Basque as much as (6.7%) or more than (3.6%) Basque.

By far the largest percentage is that of people who only use French, which has remained virtually constant.

To be precise, in 1996 76.9% used only French, and the corresponding percentage is now 77.4%. These data show that there has been very little change in the proportion of the population that only uses French.

**Figure 23.** Use of Basque typology trend. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

There can be no doubt about the importance of the world of work to the language recovery process, so we also looked at how the presence of Basque at work affects the index of Basque language use. For this purpose, we added use at work to the Basque language use typology.

This expanded use typology is not applicable to the whole universe of our survey, but only to those currently employed. Thus in this case we will refer to employed people sixteen years of age or over, who comprise 112,600 people, or 48.9% of all the subjects of the general survey.

The data clearly show the importance of language use in the work place. The general pattern in the northern Basque Country is for Basque to be used less at work. Thus it is spoken less by people who speak more Basque than French (1.7% versus 3.6%), people who use both equally (5.4% versus 6.7%) and those who use less Basque than French (11.2% versus 6.7%). Thus there are more people who exclusively speak French at work (81.7% versus 77.4%).

In general, this pattern holds for all the districts, sociolinguistic areas and age groups.

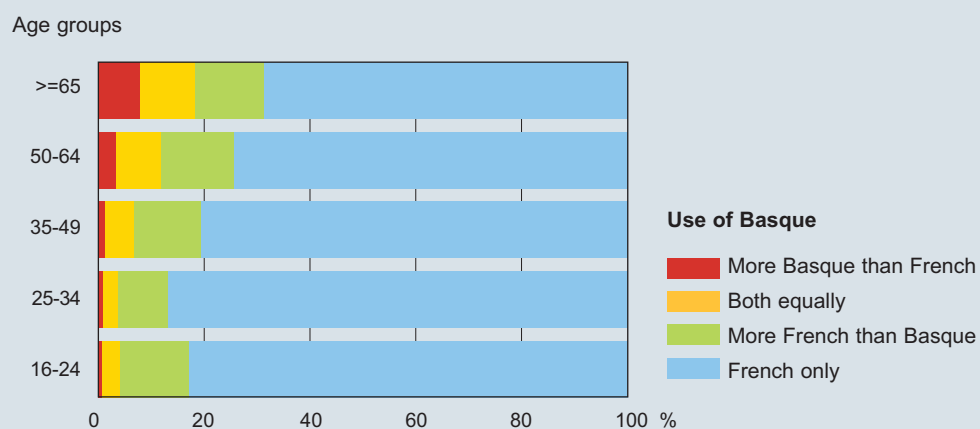
### 3.2. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE TYPOLOGY BY AGE GROUPS

The highest percentage of people who use Basque as much as (10.2%) or more than (8.3%) French is held by those over 65, with 18.5%. Following them, the younger the group, the lower the figures for language use until we get to the youngest group. The use index for the 16-to-24 group improves slightly in comparison to the preceding age groups.

In every age group except for people between 25 and 34, over 12% use more French than Basque but do use some Basque, and of people between 16 and 24, almost 13% use less Basque than French.

**French predominates in all age groups, by an average of 77.4%. However, it is the oldest people who use most Basque in their daily lives**

**Figure 24.** Use of Basque by age group. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



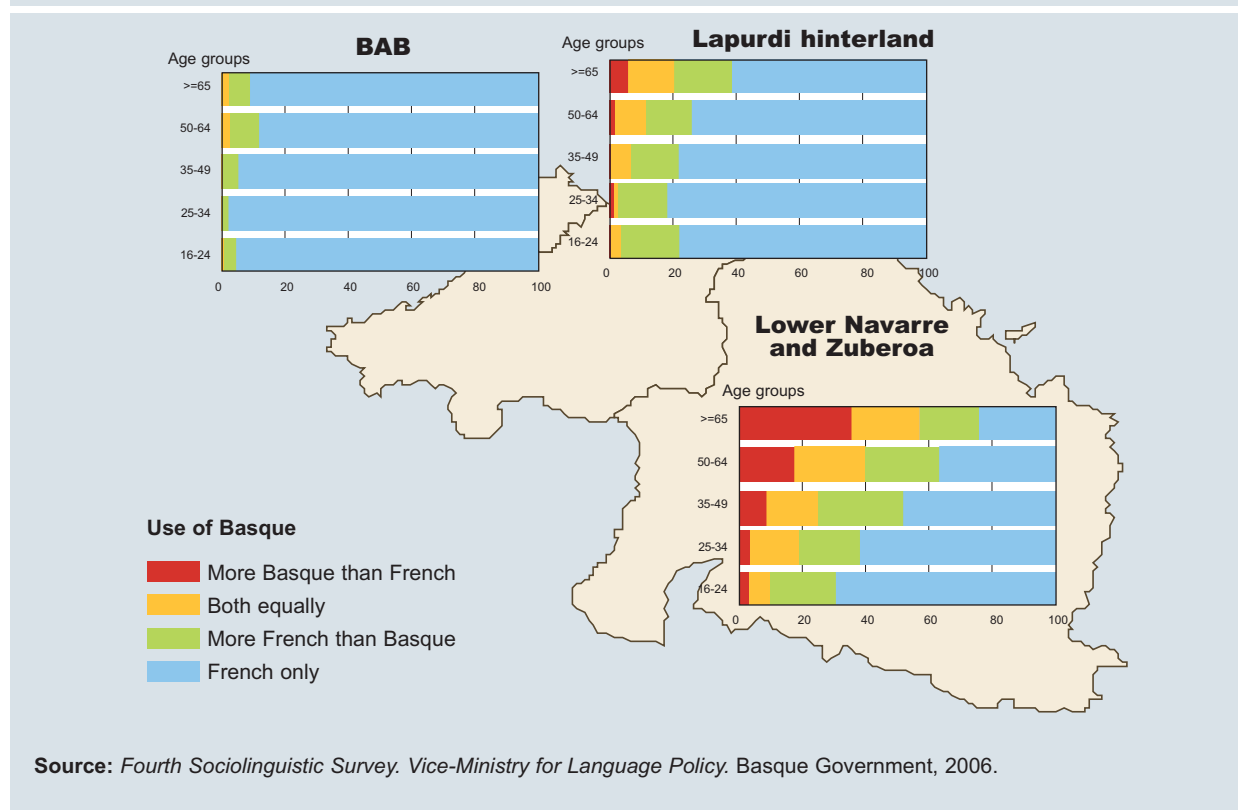
**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

These trends vary from one district to another. Looking at people who use mainly Basque or who use as much Basque as French, people over 65 have the highest percentages in Lapurdi hinterland and Lower Navarre and Zuberoa.

The percentage of people who only speak French increases inversely with age all the way down to the 16-to-24 age group, where the trend changes in the BAB and Lapurdi hinterland districts. The highest percentages of people who only speak French in all age groups are found in the BAB, with an average of 94.6%. In Lapurdi hinterland 81.4% only speak French in the 25-to-34 age group, but 76.6% in the 16-to-24 age group.

Lower Navarre and Zuberoa have the lowest percentage (42.6%) of people who only speak French, but here no change has taken place in the downward trend. Thus the proportion of people only speaking French is continuing to rise inversely to age, right through the 16-to-24 age group, at around 69%.

**Figure 25.** Use of Basque district by district and age group. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



The last ten years' statistics show Basque being used less today than it was in 1996, especially among people over fifty.

Ten years ago 20.2% of people aged between 50 and 64 used Basque as much as or more than French, while today only 12.1% of them do.

A similar decrease has taken place in the over-65 age group, from 25.3% to 18.5%.

Among people younger than fifty, use of Basque has stabilised in the past ten years. Among people between 25 and 49, differences in levels of language use over this period have been quite small.

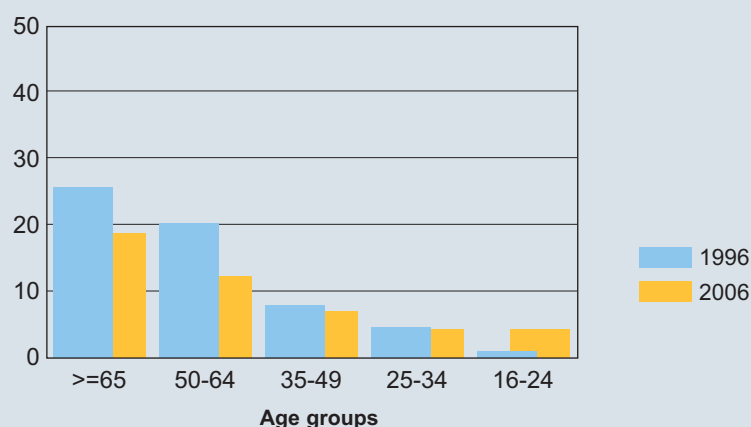
On the other hand, a slight change is perceivable in the 16-to-24 age group, the percentage of whom using Basque to some extent has risen from 14.3% ten years ago to 16.9% at present.

Thus the following two conclusions are to be drawn about the trend in language use over the last ten years:

- Basque is being used less today than in 1996, especially among people aged fifty and older. However a new tendency among people below that age has stabilised Basque language use.
- Ten years ago the biggest users of Basque were people over fifty years old, with use getting weaker the younger the age group, all the way down to the youngest group. At present, on the contrary, the level of use of Basque by 16-to-24-year-olds is very close to that by 25-to-34-year-olds, allowing us to assume that the downward trend has halted.



**Figure 26.** Trend in the use of Basque as much as or more than French, by age group. Northern Basque Country, 1996-2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

### 3.3. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE AMONG BILINGUALS

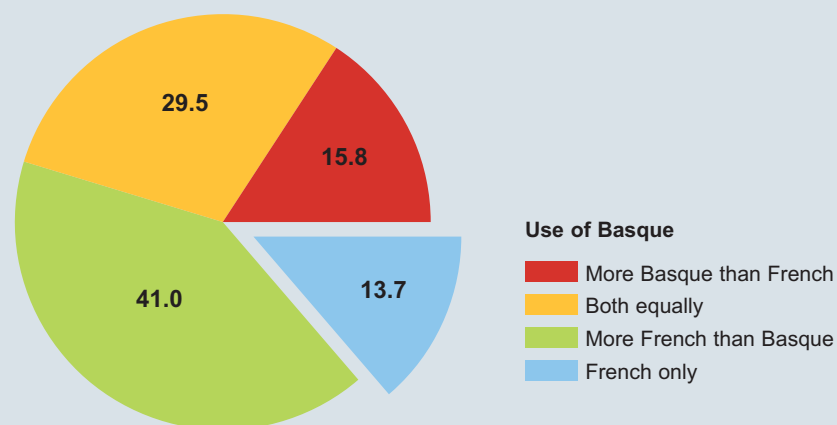
**Over half of all people who know both Basque and French either use Basque less than French (41%) or only use French (13.7%)**

Up to here we have been considering use of Basque by society as a whole; now we will look at the rate of Basque language use by Basque speakers (i.e. bilinguals).

There are 51,800 full bilinguals over sixteen years of age in the North of the Basque Country, comprising 22.5% of the whole population included in the survey. These are further classified into 25% “more Basque”, 51% balanced and 25% “more French” bilinguals.

Classified by age, 37% are elderly ( $\geq 65$ ), 47% are aged between 35 and 64, and 17% are young (under 35). Classified by mother tongue, most (81%) are native speakers of Basque, 11% are native bilinguals and 8% are *euskaldun berriak* (“new” or non-native Basque speakers).

45.3% of full bilinguals use Basque as much as (29.5%) or more than (15.8%) French, 41% use Basque less than French and 13.7% do not use Basque at all.

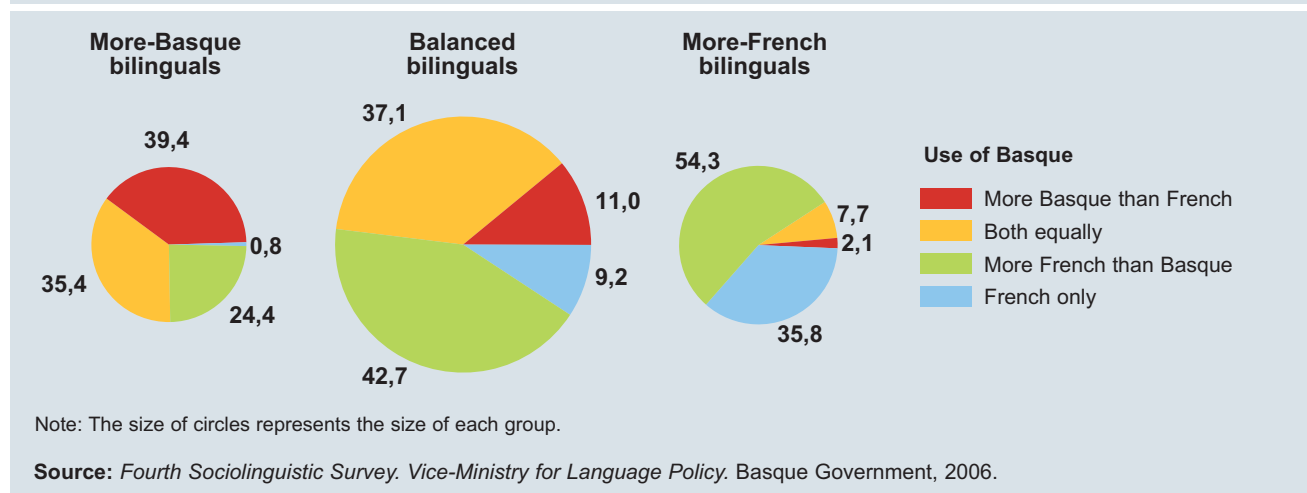
**Figure 27.** Use of Basque by full bilinguals. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

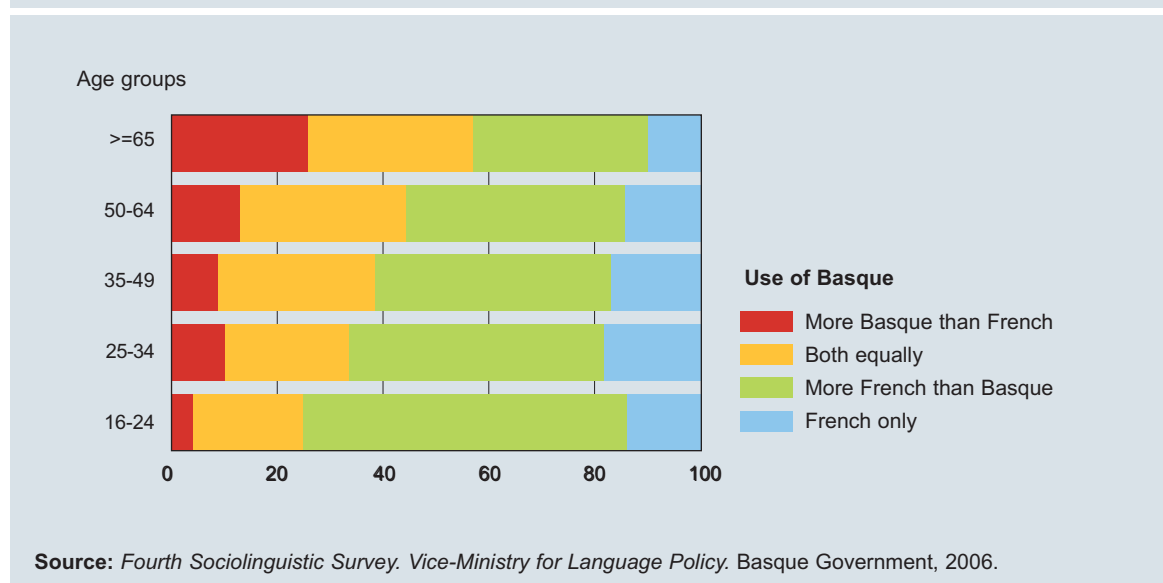
The biggest users of Basque are the “more Basque” bilinguals, 39.4% of whom mainly speak Basque in their daily lives, while another 35.4% speak Basque and French to a similar extent.

11% of balanced bilinguals use Basque more than French and 37.1% use both languages to the same extent. 42.7% use less Basque than French and 9.2% do not use Basque at all.

The “more French” bilinguals are the ones who use the least Basque. 2.1% of them use Basque more than French and 7.7% use both languages equally. Most of them (54.3%), however, use some Basque in their daily lives but use French more, and 35.8% use no Basque at all.

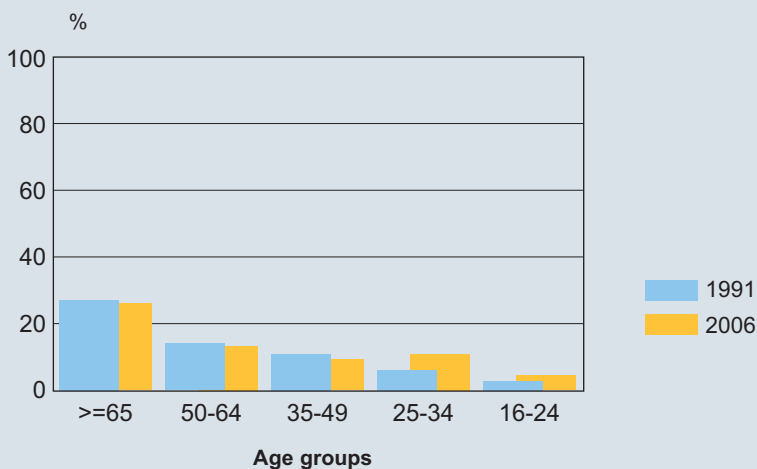
**Figure 28.** Use of Basque by full bilinguals according to type of bilingualism. Northern BC, 2006 (%)

Over half (56.8%) of the over-65 group of full bilinguals use Basque as much as or more than French. But as age decreases, the proportion of bilinguals who speak Basque as much as or more than French falls steeply, and the percentage of those who use Basque less than French or not at all rises correspondingly.

**Figure 29.** Use of Basque by full bilinguals according to age group. Northern BC, 2006 (%)

The data show that there has not been a great deal of change over the last fifteen years. Comparing the 1991 and 2006 data, use of Basque has generally remained stable in all age groups at home, with friends, in formal domains (the bank, town council offices and health services) and at work. However, among the younger age groups (16-to-24 and 25-to-34) the number of people using more Basque than French has risen somewhat in comparison to fifteen years ago.

**Figure 30.** Trend in full bilinguals who use more Basque than French, by age group. Northern Basque Country, 1991-2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

### 3.4. FACTORS DETERMINING BASQUE LANGUAGE USE

The main factors influencing Basque language use are the density of the Basque-speaking social network and fluency

Studies of language use have repeatedly shown that the two main factors determining language use are:

- the density of the Basque-speaking social network, and
- how good a command the speaker has of the two languages in question.

In order to find out exactly how greatly these two factors influence language choice in the main use domains, we shall now examine these by looking at the correlations between pairs of variables, on a 0-to-1 scale.

The correlation between Basque language use and density of the social network is 0.74 for the use of Basque at home, 0.73 with friends, and 0.84 at work. These correlations are high in all domains of use, while the strongest factor is density of the Basque-speaking social network, particularly regarding the use of Basque at work.

To appreciate the importance of the social network, we shall examine the results for each of the sociolinguistic areas mentioned earlier. In area 1 fewer than 20% of the population is Basque speaking on average. The percentage of this population who use Basque as much as or more than French here is 1.4%. In the second area, where 20% to 50% of the population can speak Basque, the percentage rises to 9.3%. A bigger leap comes when we move to the third area, where 50% to 80% of the population can speak Basque: here 39.4% of the inhabitants use as much Basque as French or more Basque than French. In the fourth area, finally, with over 80% Basque speakers, over half (58%) of inhabitants speak Basque as much as or more than they speak French in their everyday lives.

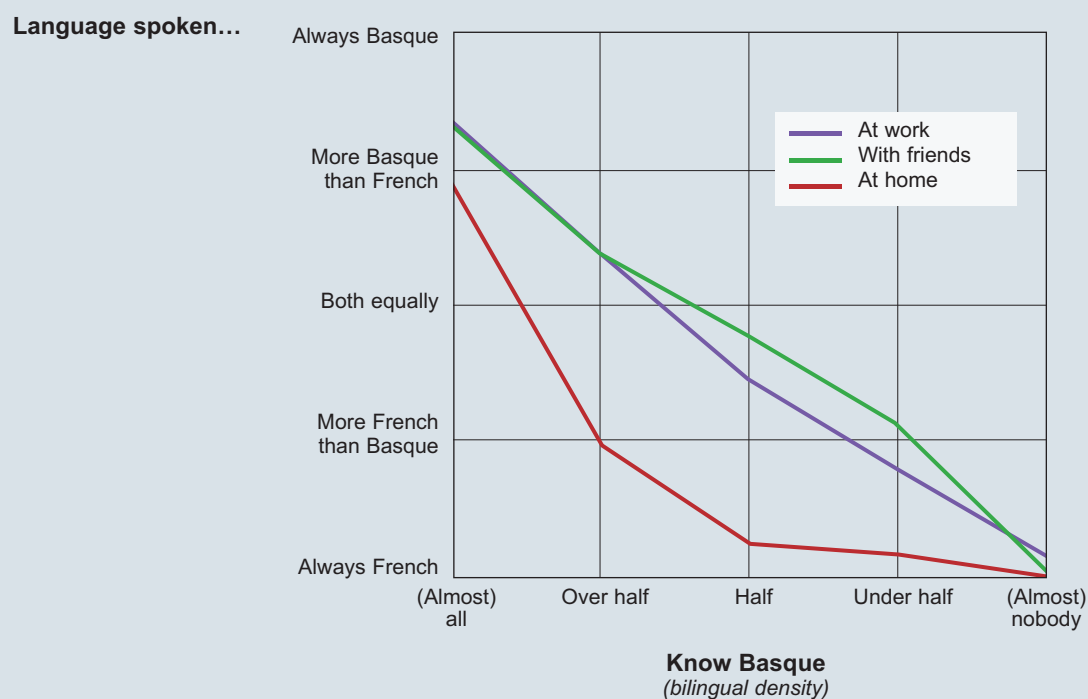
These percentages suggest that although the more Basque-speaking the area the more Basque is used, Basque has not completed a true leap forward in the North, and French is very widely spoken even in the most Basque-speaking areas.

The correlation between language use and fluency is 0.53 at home, 0.47 with friends and 0.23 at work. This indicates that bilinguals who are more fluent in Basque than in French mostly speak Basque at home and with their friends, but not so much at work. The balanced bilingual uses both languages to about the same

extent as each other in these domains, while “more French” bilinguals tend to use French mostly in all domains.

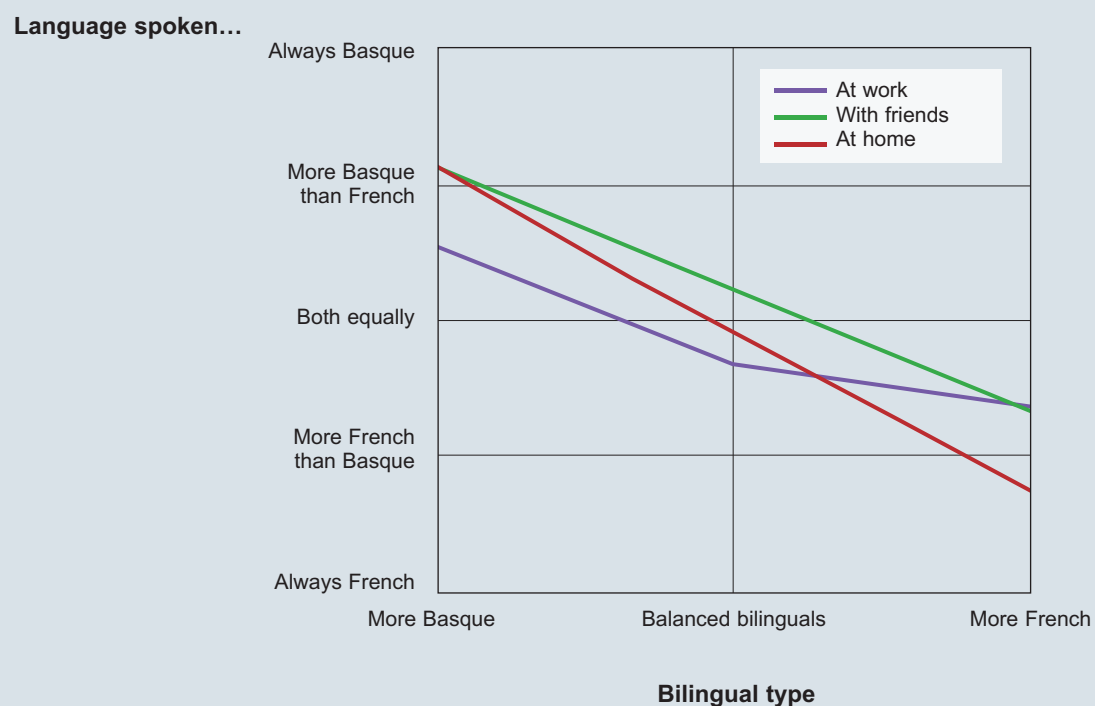
Other factors, such as age (with a correlation of 0.21) and attitude to the Basque language (0.11), while also affecting Basque language use, are far less decisive than social network and fluency. In fact, when network and fluency conditions match closely, age and attitude have hardly any notable effect at all on Basque language use.

**Figure 31.** Use of Basque depending on density of bilingual social network. Northern Basque Country, 2006



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 32.** Use of Basque depending on bilingual type. Northern Basque Country, 2006



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

## 4. Use of Basque, domain by domain

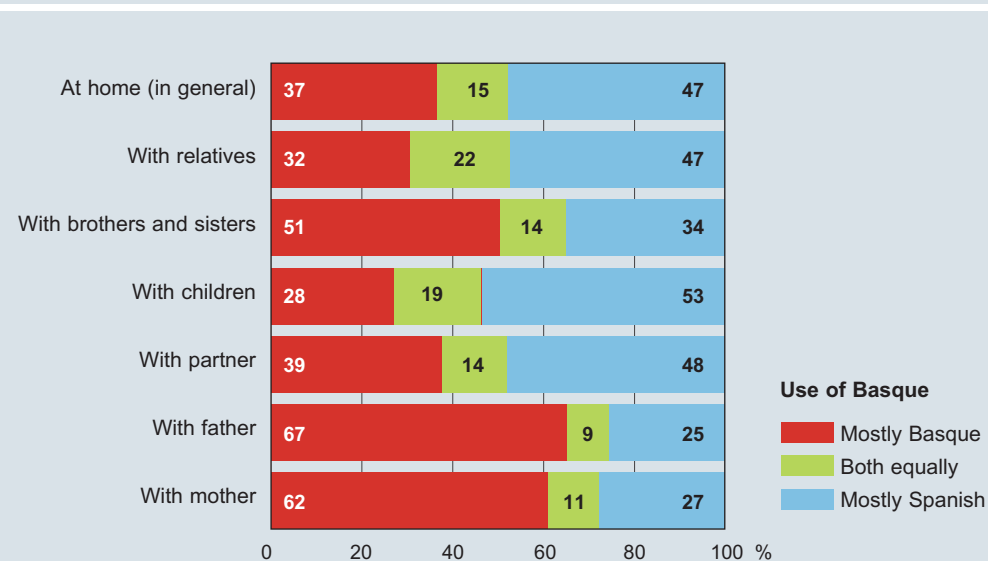
### 4.1. USE OF BASQUE IN THE FAMILY

9% of the inhabitants of the Northern Basque Country aged sixteen or older always or usually speak Basque, and a further 4% speak Basque and French to an equal extent.

37% of bilinguals mainly speak Basque at home, and another 15% speak as much Basque as French.

**At home, bilinguals use more Basque with their parents than with their siblings, partners and offspring**

**Figure 33.** Use of Basque at home by full bilinguals. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

57% mostly or always speak Basque with their partner at home when the partner knows Basque, but 22% mostly or always speak French with their partner even when the partner is a Basque speaker.

55% always or mainly speak Basque to their children when all or most of the latter know Basque. 13% use French, or more French than Basque, with their children.



62% of northern Basque bilinguals always or usually speak Basque with their mother, and 67% with their father.

It is mostly people over 35 who use Basque at home with their mother and father; the older they are, the more use they make of Basque. Thus 77% of those in the 50-to-64 age group always or usually speak Basque to their mother, and 85% to their father.

With brothers and sisters, 51% of bilinguals use Basque always or usually.

When it comes to other members of the family, the proportion of bilinguals who use Basque is smaller than with parents and siblings, falling to 32%.

In a geographical breakdown, Basque is used most in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, where nearly half (49%) always or mainly speak Basque. Relatively fewest people use Basque in the BAB area (18%). In the rural part of Lapurdi, however, 35% claim to always or usually speak Basque at home.

In terms of sociolinguistic areas, over half (54%) of people in Area 4 always or usually speak Basque, but in the less Basque-speaking areas use of Basque in the home drops off notably, falling to 18% who always or usually speak Basque at home in Sociolinguistic Area 1.

In terms of age, the highest index of use of Basque at home is that of people in the over-65 group, in which 58% of bilinguals speak Basque in the home. Other age groups use Basque less, e.g. 31% of those aged between 50 and 64, 28% of those between 35 and 49, and 26% of bilinguals aged between 16 and 34.

**Table 11.** Use of Basque at home by full bilinguals, by age group. Northern BC, 2006 (%)

	Age groups			
Use of Basque	>=65	50-64	35-49	16-34
Mostly Basque Always Basque	49	25	15	20
More Basque than French	9	6	13	6
Both equally	15	12	18	18
Mostly French less Basque than French	5	19	31	32
Always French	22	39	24	25

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Notice that the use of Basque is considerably greater when everyone or nearly everyone in the home can speak Basque, and conversely drops drastically when half or more than half of the people know Basque. Thus when everyone or nearly everyone knows Basque, 52% always or usually speak Basque.

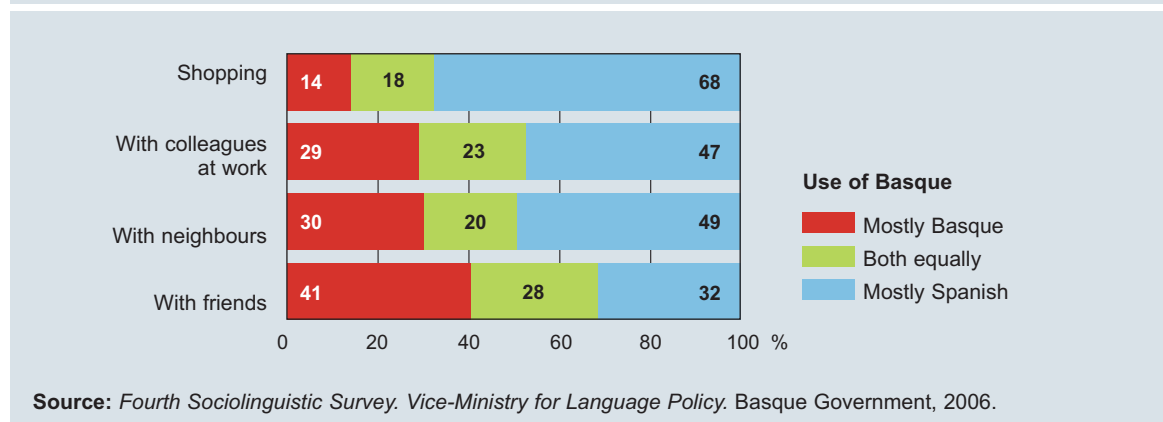
77% of the people who always speak Basque or speak it more than French with their family are “more Basque” bilinguals. Very few bilinguals who are more fluent in French always speak Basque at home (3%) or speak more Basque than French (2%).

43% of people whose mother tongue is Basque speak it at home always or mainly, while 42% of such people speak French at home always or usually.

**4.2. USE OF BASQUE IN THE IMMEDIATE COMMUNITY**

The immediate community is considered here to include friends, neighbours, co-workers and shopkeepers. Of all these domains, where most Basque is used is with friends, and it is used least at the shops. As was the case with use in the home, the greatest amount of Basque language use in the immediate community is found in people over 65 years old, excluding language use at work since most such people are retired.

**41% of bilinguals always or usually speak Basque with their friends**

**Figure 34.** Use of Basque in the immediate community by full bilinguals. Northern BC, 2006 (%)

The percentage of inhabitants of the North aged sixteen and over who always or nearly always use Basque with friends is 10%, while another 8% speak as much Basque as French with their friends.

With neighbours, 7% always or usually speak Basque, while 6% speak it as much as French.

Basque language use among colleagues at work has decreased. 5% always or usually speak Basque, and another 4% speak it as much as French.

At the shops, the index of Basque language use is still lower, with 3% of people always or mostly speaking Basque and 4% as much as French.

Among bilinguals, 41% always or usually speak Basque with their friends and 28% use Basque as much as French. Moreover, when all or nearly all of the friends can speak Basque, 80% of bilinguals always or nearly always speak to them in Basque. Even when not all but more than half know Basque, 52% always or usually speak Basque.

30% of bilinguals always or usually speak to their neighbours in Basque and 20% speak Basque as much as French. But with co-workers, 29% always or usually speak Basque and 23% speak as much Basque as French.

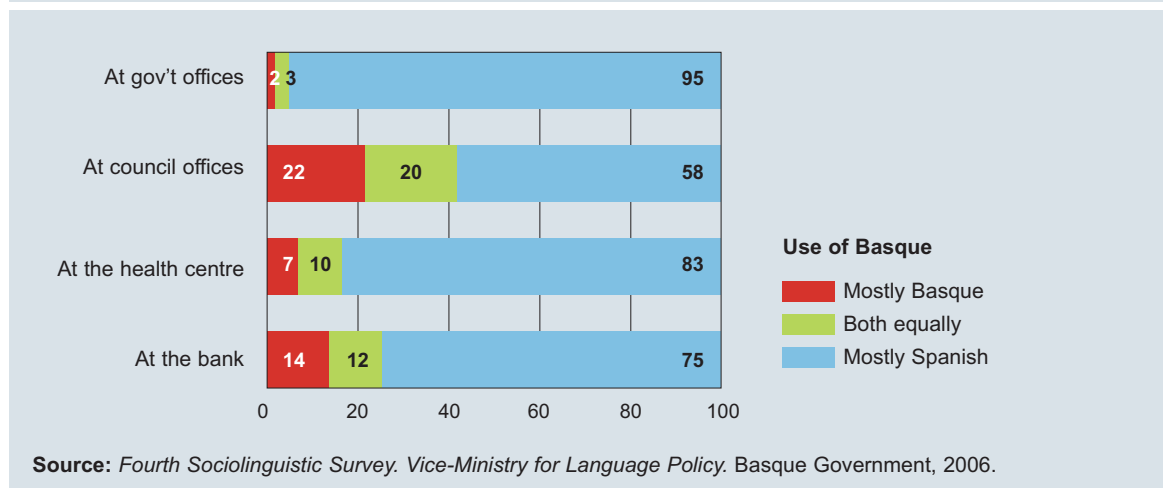
Finally, when shopping these proportions are halved, with 14% of bilinguals always or usually using Basque and 18% speaking as much Basque as French.

### 4.3. USE OF BASQUE IN FORMAL DOMAINS

Banks, health centres, local council services and government offices comprise the formal domains of language use examined. Of these, bilinguals in the northern Basque Country use most Basque at the bank and in council offices. Very little Basque is used at health centres and government administrative offices.

**Council services are the formal domain where Basque is most used; 22% of bilinguals speak Basque always or most of the time here**

**Figure 35.** Use of Basque in the formal domain by full bilinguals. Northern BC, 2006 (%)



Of the population of the northern Basque Country aged sixteen or over, 5% always or nearly always use Basque at council offices, and another 5% use Basque to the same degree as French. At the bank, 3% always or usually speak Basque and another 3% speak Basque as much as French.

At health centres, Basque is used less: 2% of the population always or usually speak Basque and a further 2% speak both languages equally. In government offices only 1% say they speak as much Basque as French.

Looking specifically at bilinguals now, 22% always or nearly always use Basque at council offices and 20% speak as much Basque as French. At the bank, 14% always or generally speak Basque and 12% speak as much Basque as French.

At health centres, 7% use Basque always or usually, and 10% as much as French.

Basque is very rarely used in the government administration. 2% of bilinguals always or usually speak Basque when dealing with the administration, and another 3% to the extent as French.

A typical profile of someone who makes the most use of Basque in highly formal situations would be a bilingual living in Lower Navarre or Zuberoa who is 65 years old or older.

## 5. Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque

**The inhabitants of the North of the Basque Country view the presence of the Basque language as perfectly normal**

93% of the inhabitants of the northern Basque Country aged sixteen or more believe that both Basque and French should be spoken in the future. 3% think only Basque should be spoken, and another 3% think that only French should be spoken.

Over half (56%) think that the Basque language is as rich as French, while few (4%) think the opposite.

The existence of two languages in a society does not pose a problem according to a broad majority, 82%, of the population, while 12% consider it may cause problems.

72% of the population disagree with the suggestion that it is not a good thing for small children to learn Basque at school when they have not learnt to speak French properly.

Lastly, most of the population express interest in the Basque language: 83%, of whom 22% say they are very interested, 35% quite interested, and 26% somewhat interested. This interest in Basque is expressed by inhabitants of all parts of the northern Basque Country.

Table 12. Interest in Basque. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

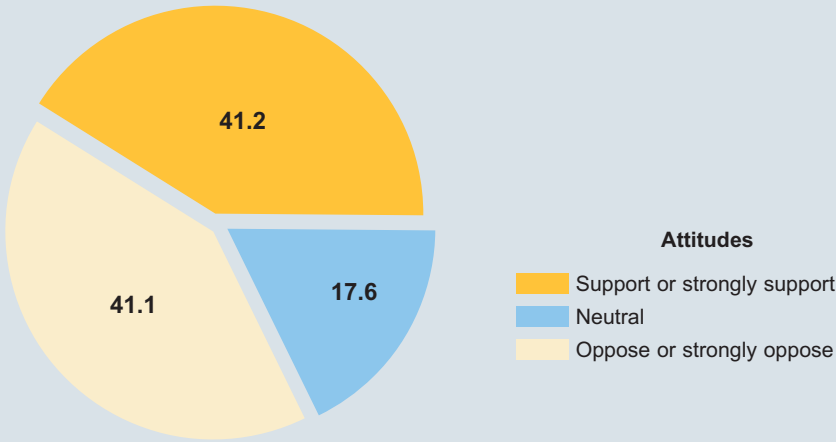
Interested	N. Basque Country	BAB	Lapurdi hinterland	Lower Navarre and Zuberoa
Very	22	16	24	29
Quite	35	33	36	34
Somewhat	26	27	25	25
Not very	9	11	8	7
Not at all	7	11	5	3
DN/NA	1	2	1	2

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Altogether 41.2% of the population of the North favour promotion of Basque language use, which is “supported” by 31.5% and “strongly supported” by 9.7%. 41.1% neither support nor oppose such promotion, while 15.1% are opposed and 2.5% are strongly opposed.

41.2% of the inhabitants of the Northern Basque Country are in favour of promoting the use of the Basque language and 17.6% are opposed

Figure 36. Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque. N. Basque Country, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

74.7% of full bilinguals support or strongly support Basque language promotion, 22.5% are neutral and 2.8% oppose promotion of the use of Basque.

Among passive bilinguals, most (58.2%) are in favour of promoting the use of Basque, 36.9% are neutral and 4.9% are against.

The percentage of non-Basque speakers in favour of promotion of Basque is much lower, at 28.2%. However, most Non-Basque speakers (47.8%) are merely neutral, while 24% say they are against such measures.

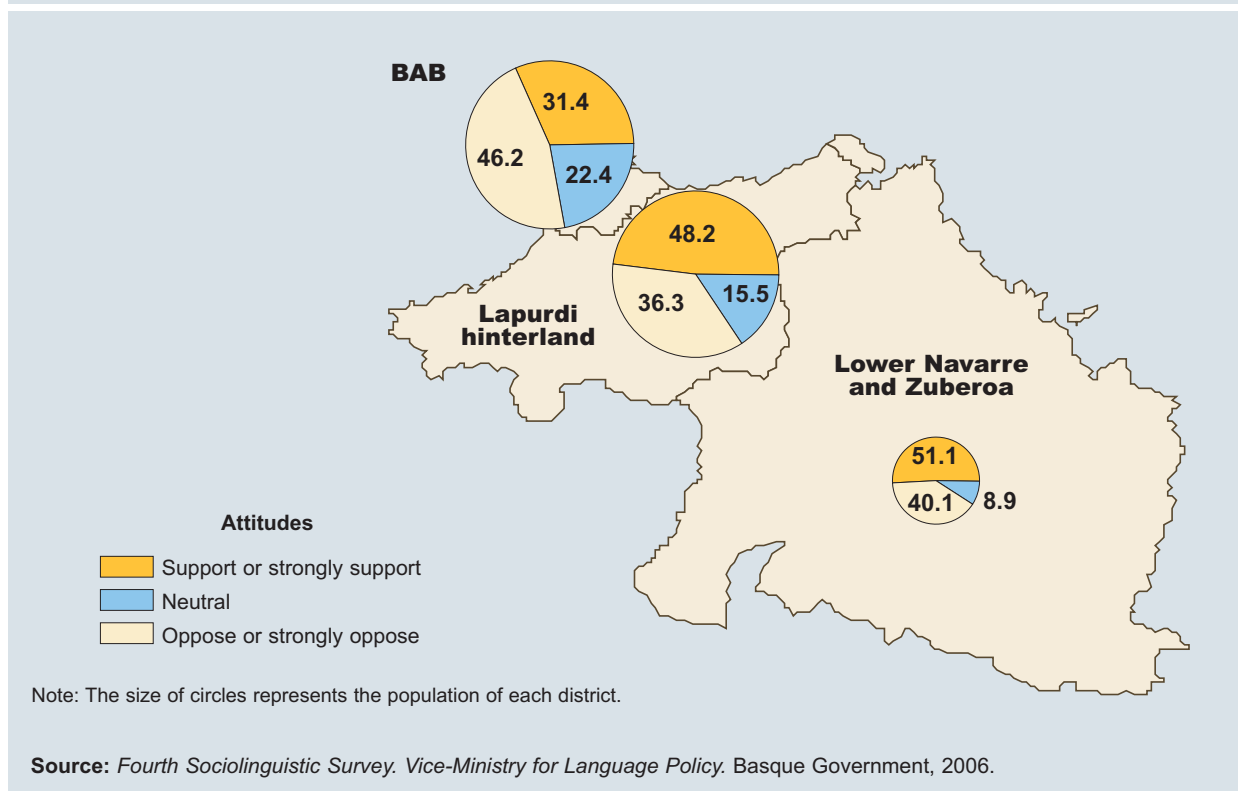
Table 13. Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque. N. Basque Country, 2006 (%)

Attitude	Full bil.	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
Strongly support	26.2	13.6	3.9
Support	48.5	44.5	24.4
Neutral	22.5	36.9	47.8
Oppose	2.3	4.9	20.6
Strongly oppose	0.5		3.4

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Geographically, attitudes favourable to promoting the Basque language are less widespread in the BAB district, although even here more people are supportive (31.4%) of such measures than oppose them (22.4%), and 46.2% neither support nor oppose them.

In Lower Navarre, Zuberoa and Lapurdi hinterland, favourable attitudes predominate. In Lapurdi hinterland 48.2% support promoting Basque and 15.5% are opposed to it. In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, 51.1% support and 8.9% are opposed.

**Figure 37.** Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque, by district. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

Opinions on measures favouring the promotion of Basque language use have not changed much over the past ten years. In the 1996 survey 42.3% supported the promotion of Basque language use and 41.2% in the present survey. Thus nearly half of the population supported such measures ten years ago and support them now. The same is true of the percentage who neither support nor oppose such measures, 39% in 1996 and 41.1% in the latest survey. The percentage of people who were opposed rose a little in the last survey but was the smallest proportion and remains so, with 12,7% in 1996 and 17.6% in the present survey.

More specifically, respondents' opinions on measures to promote the use of Basque in education, the administration and the media were surveyed.

The majority expressed support for bringing more Basque into the administration, which 51% favour, while 32% are against this.

Attitudes on measures to promote the use of Basque in the media pattern similarly, with 51% in favour of an increase in the amount of Basque language radio and television programming, and 17% against.



Basque-language education for children had the widest approval, with 56% accepting that all children should learn Basque at school and 23% opposing this. People were asked what language children should be taught in.

In the northern Basque population as a whole, there is an equilibrium between those opting for bilingual education (“Basque and French as subjects” or “Basque-medium and French-medium”) and those preferring a mostly French education, with 48% for bilingual education and 47% for education in which mainly French is used.

Figure 38. Opinions about school types for children. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

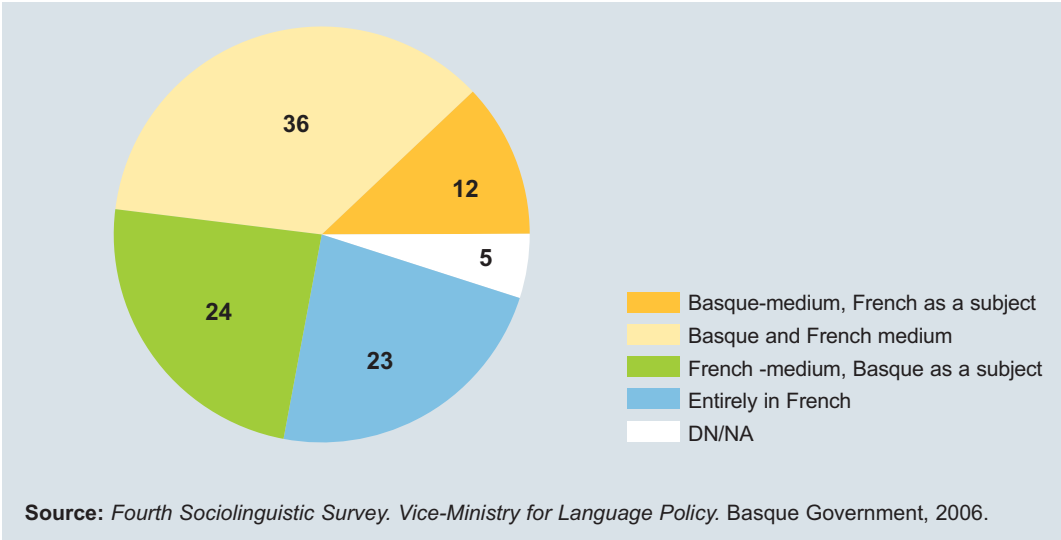


Table 14. Opinions about school types for children. Northern Basque Country, 2006 (%)

School type	N.Basque Country	BAB	Lapurdi hinterland	Lower Navarre and Zuberoa
Basque-medium with French as a subject	12	10	14	15
Basque and French medium	36	28	40	49
French-medium with Basque as a subject	24	28	20	22
Entirely in French	23	28	22	10
DN/DA	5	6	5	4

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

In a geographic breakdown there are differences between the districts. 28% of BAB opt for bilingual education and 56% for mainly French education.

In Lapurdi hinterland, Lower Navarre and Zuberoa most people prefer bilingual education. In Lapurdi hinterland bilingual education is preferred by 54% and mainly French education by 42%. In Lower Navarre and Zuberoa 64% express a preference for bilingual education and 32% for a form of education in which French is used for the most part.

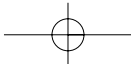
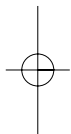
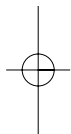
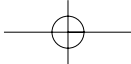
There are also noteworthy contrasts depending on the type of bilingualism or monolingualism of respondents. 34% of full bilinguals prefer their children to go to a Basque-medium where French is taught as a subject, and 47% prefer the mixed-medium option (partly in Basque, partly in French), as against 18% and 50%, respectively, in the case of partial bilinguals, and 4% and 31% in the case of monolingual French speakers.

Asked for their view on public language policies, nearly half either responded that they didn't know or failed to answer (37.8%), or else said they weren't concerned about this (11.9%). Of the remainder, more disapproved (27.9%) of public language policies than approved of them (22.4%). When asked why, more (25%) complained that not enough was being done than thought that too much was being done (19.7%). Most people, however, gave no reason or didn't answer (49.9%).

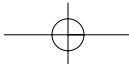
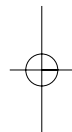
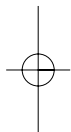
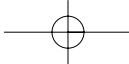
## 6. Conclusions

- **The downward trend of bilingualism is not over yet** in the North of the Basque Country. Today there are 51,800 bilinguals aged sixteen or more, 4,400 fewer than ten years ago. Bilinguals today constitute 22.5% of the population, as opposed to 26.4% ten years ago.
- For the foreseeable future, three phenomena will have a bearing on this trend. First and foremost is the escalating arrival of **people from outside the area** which will continue, in the opinion of experts. Second is the fact that **most bilinguals (64%) are aged over fifty**. Lastly, Basque is still **losing ground** among the young in the **most Basque-speaking areas** (Lower Navarre and Zuberoa), even though the process of loss is slowing down.
- Nevertheless, **the process of language loss is not unavoidable**. The percentage of bilinguals has begun to rise among 16-to-24-year-olds. The percentage of bilinguals in this age group is five points higher than the next age group (16.1% for the 16-to-24 group versus 11.6% for the 25-to-34 group). This turnaround is particularly notable in Lapurdi hinterland and BAB (Bayonne, Anglet and Biarritz), i.e. the most populated areas.
- It should also be noted that although, taking into account all age groups, **losses still exceed gains**, it is the 16-to-24 age group where most gains have been made and also where the losses are lowest.
- Moreover, **young parents are transmitting** more Basque as a mother tongue **in the home** than parents with older children, especially in the case of linguistically mixed couples (44.4% of whom transmit Basque and French, or Basque alone, to their children aged from two to nine). Taking into account all the parents of different ages participating in this survey, a high percentage of mixed couples (80.1%) have failed to transmit Basque.
- It must also be borne in mind that **French is the only mother tongue of seven out of ten (72.3%) inhabitants of the northern Basque Country**. Among inhabitants aged sixteen or more, 21.6% only learnt Basque at home and 6.1% learnt both Basque and French. The proportion whose mother tongue is French are a large majority in the BAB (88.5%) and Lapurdi hinterland (68.3%) districts. But in Lower Navarre and Zuberoa, it is people who learnt Basque in the home who make up the majority (66.1%).

- **Not just knowledge but use of Basque has decreased** in the North of the Basque Country. The percentage of people who use Basque as much as or more than French has fallen by three percentage points in ten years, from 13% in 1996 to 10.3% today.
- **There is support for efforts to promote the Basque language in the northern Basque Country.** Many people (41.2%) support or strongly support such efforts and relatively few (17.6%) are opposed. Most people approve of children having to learn Basque at school (56%), increasing the amount of Basque language radio and television programming (51%) and requiring people entering government administration to be able to speak Basque (51%).
- In the area of education, **48%** of the inhabitants of the northern Basque Country **want their children to learn Basque at school.** Since that is higher than the percentage of children who are going to Basque-language schools today, there is currently a proportion of children who need to be provided a Basque education not now available.
- Hence we may expect the number of bilinguals to **continue to decrease.** However, positive data for the youngest age group and attitudes generally favourable to Basque suggest that this decrease **is not unstoppable.**



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



## 1. Overview of the population

According to 2006 population data, Navarre (*Nafarroa* in Basque, *Navarra* in Spanish) has a population of 601,874. Of this number, 91,448 (15.1%) are aged sixteen or under and will not be included in this survey.

It should be noted that the young people excluded contain the highest percentage of bilinguals: almost one in four young people aged sixteen or less is bilingual.

Despite the small proportion young people represent relative to the universe surveyed, this does nevertheless affect the results.

Two features stand out when we look at the development of the Navarrese population over the past fifteen years:

- the aging of the population, and
- the impact of immigration.

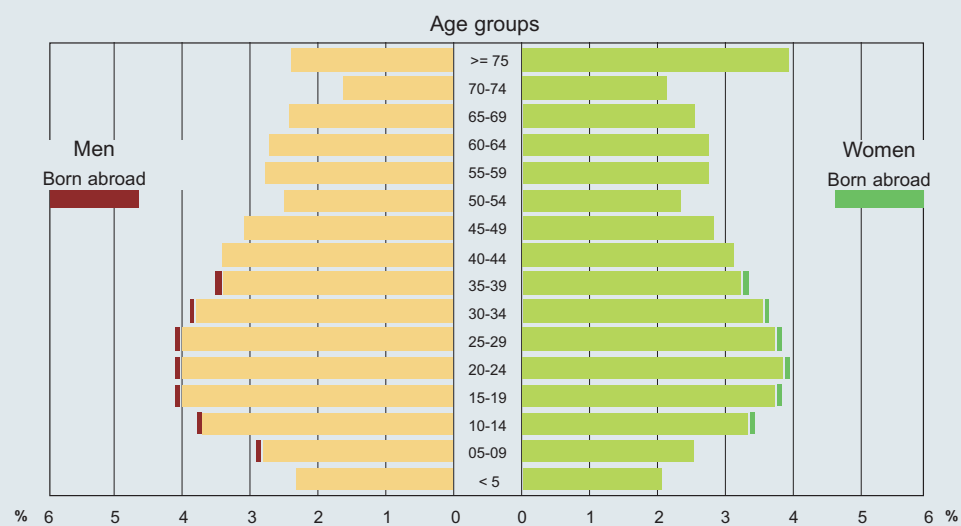
**The society is aging, and immigration has greatly increased in recent years**

Navarre's population is getting progressively older: life expectancy is high, while the birth rate has fallen substantially. In 1991 there were 84,127 people aged between 15 and 25; fifteen years later, there are only 67,047 people of the same age, i.e. 17,080 fewer, a negative growth of -21%. Meanwhile, the over-65 population grew by 63% over the same period, from 79,791 in 1991 to 126,026 in 2006.

Foreign immigration has grown strikingly over the past fifteen years. In 1991 there were 8,965 foreign immigrants in Navarre. In 2006 there were 62,782, representing a rise from 2% to 10.4% of the total population.

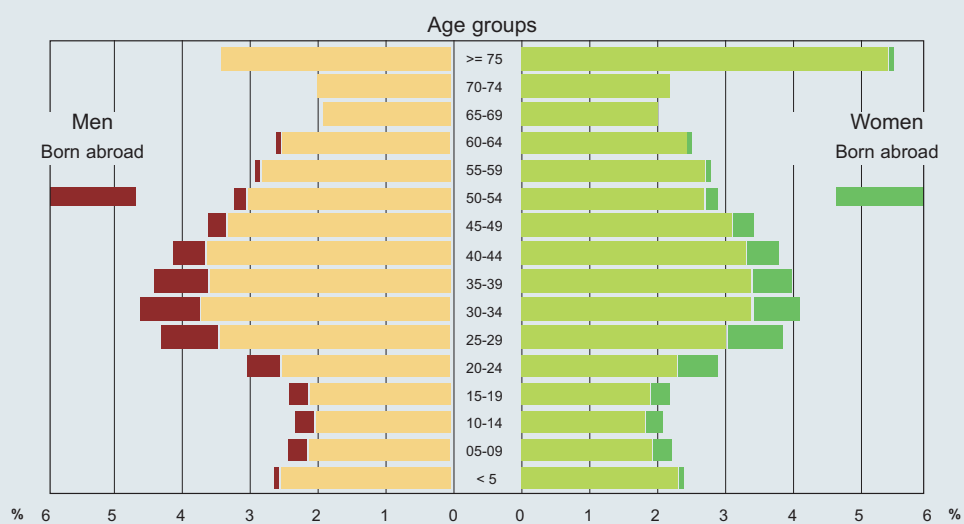


**Figure 1.** Population pyramid by sex, age and place of birth.  
Navarre, 1991



Source: INE

**Figure 2.** Population pyramid by sex, age and place of birth.  
Navarre, 2006



Source: INE

Table 1. Population aged sixteen or over by age group and zone.  
Navarre, 2006

Age groups	Population aged 16 or over			
	Navarre	Basque-speaking z.	Mixed zone	Non-Basque-speaking z.
≥ 65	104,700	11,400	49,800	43,500
50-64	102,900	10,600	57,100	35,200
35-49	141,300	13,100	78,000	50,200
25-34	101,500	9,300	57,500	34,700
16-24	58,500	5,600	31,900	21,000
Total	508,900	50,000	274,300	184,600

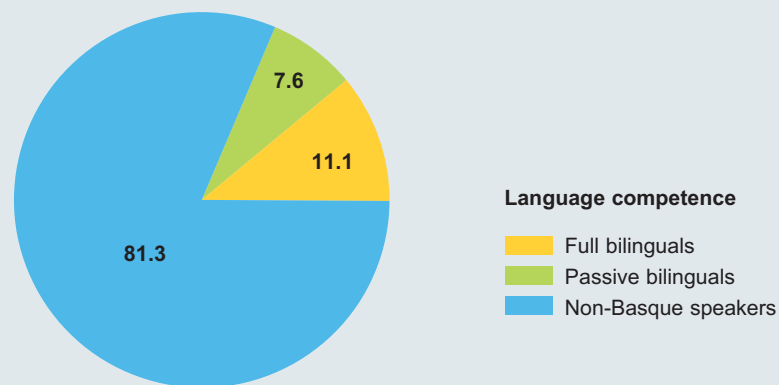
Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

2. Language competence

2.1. POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

According to 2006 data Navarre has 508,900 inhabitants aged sixteen or more, 11.1% of whom (56,400 people) are fully bilingual, meaning that they speak both Basque and Spanish well. A further 38,600 (7.6%) are able to understand Basque although they do not speak it well; these will be referred to as passive bilinguals. The rest (413,900 people, i.e. 81.3%) are non-Basque speakers, i.e. people who do not know any Basque.

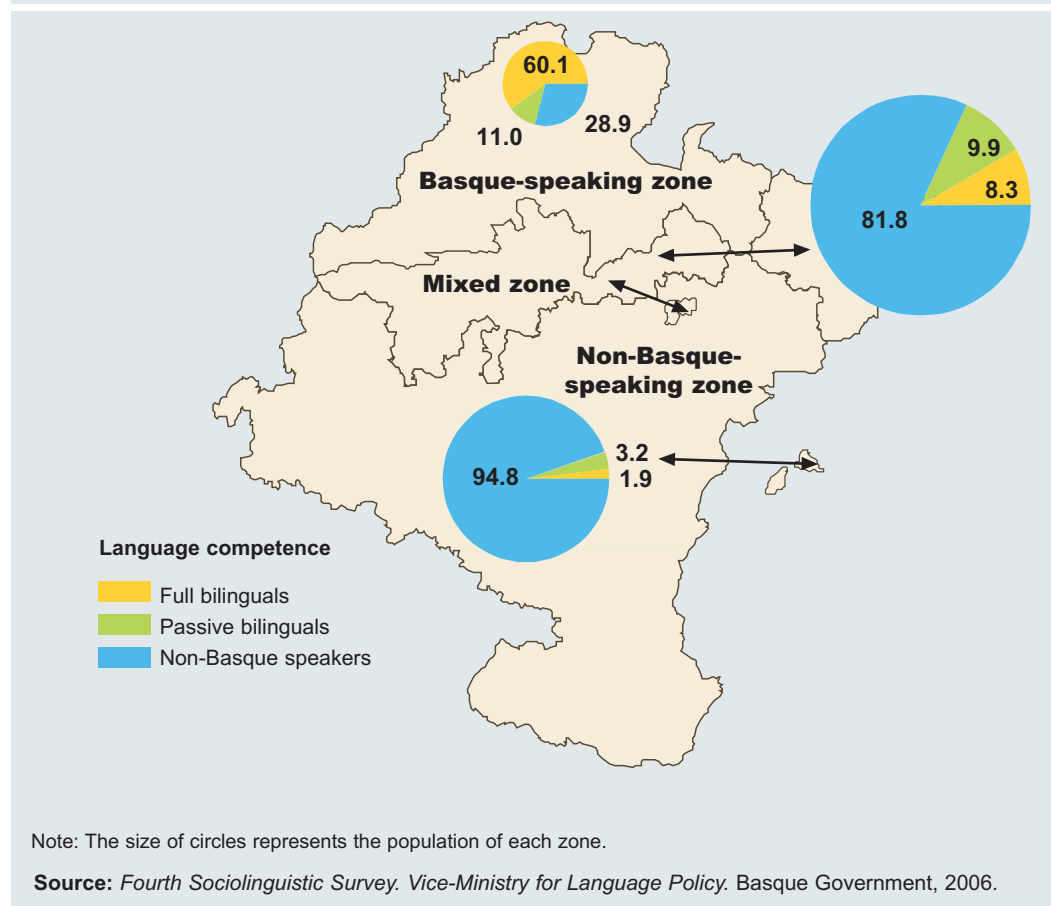
11.1% of the inhabitants of Navarre are full bilinguals, 7.6% are passive bilinguals, and 81.3% are monolinguals (non-Basque speakers)

**Figure 3.** Language competence. Navarre, 2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

In terms of Navarre's three official language zones, the largest proportion and absolute number of full bilinguals (60.1% and 30,000 respectively) are found in the Basque-speaking zone. The 22,800 full bilinguals in the mixed zone represent 8.3% of this area's population. The smallest percentage and absolute number of bilinguals in Navarre (1.9% and 3,543 respectively) are found in the non-Basque-speaking zone.

To interpret the above figures, it helps to bear in mind the relative weight of the population size of each language zone or area within the overall population of Navarre. Just over half of the inhabitants of Navarre live in the mixed zone, one-third in the non Basque-speaking zone, and one-tenth in the Basque-speaking zone.

**Figure 4.** Language competence zone by zone. Navarre, 2006 (%)

Over the past fifteen years, from 1991 to 2006, the total number of full bilinguals has increased by 16,200. Their percentage of the Navarrese population has grown from 9.5% in 1991 to 9.6% in 1996, 10.3% in 2001, and (as we have seen) 11.1% in 2006. In the same period the percentage of the population who can understand Basque although they do not speak it perfectly has risen from 4.6% to 7.6%. The non-Basque-speaking proportion of the population has decreased, correspondingly, from 85.9% to 81.3%.

Increases in the number of full bilinguals have taken place in all three of Navarre's language zones, although not to the same extent. In the non-Basque-speaking zone 1.9% of the population is bilingual today, in contrast to 0.6% fifteen years ago. The growth of bilingualism has also been substantial in the mixed zone: from 5.2% to 8.3%, with 11,500 more bilinguals, thereby doubling their number. The proportion of bilinguals in the Basque-speaking zone has remained stable at 60%.

Table 2. Changes in language competence. Navarre, 1991-2006 (%)

	Population aged 16 or over			
	1991	1996	2001	2006
Full bilinguals	9.5	9.6	10.3	11.1
Passive bilinguals	4.6	9.8	6.6	7.6
Non-Basque speakers	85.9	80.6	83.1	81,3
Total	420,700	437,200	468,700	508,900

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

2.2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY AGE

The highest percentage of full bilinguals is found among people under 35 years of age. This is also the part of the population showing the greatest change in recent years

Growth in the number of bilinguals has taken place in all age groups below 35. This increase is particularly marked in the youngest part of the population. Today 19.1% of the population between 16 and 24 are fully bilingual, as are 12.5% of the population between 25 and 34 years of age.

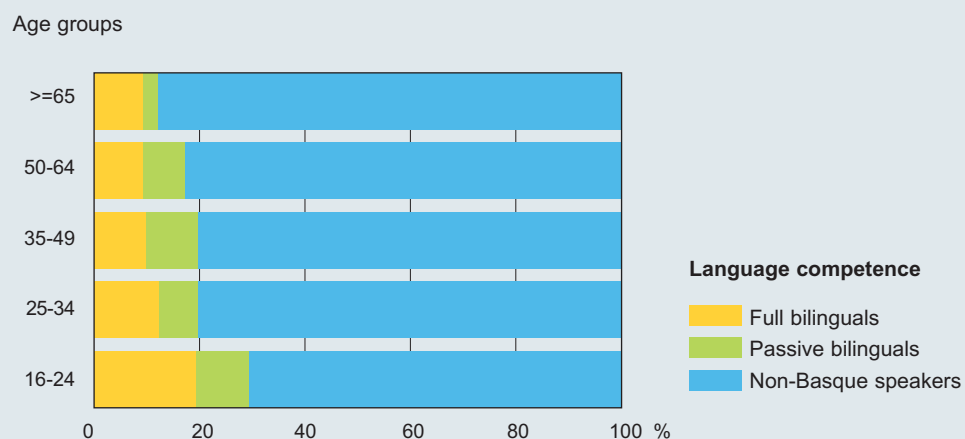
The lowest percentage of full bilinguals is found among those over 35, where it is lower than the overall percentage of full bilinguals in Navarre in all age groups, at between 9% and 10%.

The increase in the number of bilinguals over the past fifteen years originates from young people. The least Basque-speaking group is that of older adults, but as the years go by this group is gaining bilinguals from below, and losing non-Basque-speaking monolinguals at the top as the oldest inhabitants pass on. While the young are becoming progressively more Basque-speaking, in the oldest group (which fifteen years ago had the highest proportion of bilinguals) the percentage of non-Basque-speakers has now grown.

The percentage of passive bilinguals has increased in every age group except for the over-65s. The highest percentage (10.2%) is found in the youngest age group and the lowest (2.8%) in the over-65 group. The differences between these percentages is striking.

The younger the age group, the smaller the number of monolingual Spanish speakers. In the over-65 group 88.1% are Spanish speaking monolinguals, and this proportion drops as we look at younger and younger groups. Thus in the 16-24 age group the proportion of monolingual Spanish speakers is 70.6%, ten percentage points lower than in the 25-34 age group where the proportion is 80.4%.

**Figure 5.** Language competence by age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Here we see confirmation of the incipient trend, noted in 2001, towards a more Basque speaking young (16-24) population, while the growth of both full and partial bilingualism is leading to a decrease in the number of monolingual young people.

Table 3. Language competence by age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)

	Population aged 16 or over		
Age groups	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	9.1	2.8	88.1
50-64	9.0	8.1	82.9
35-49	9.7	10.0	80.3
25-34	12.5	7.1	80.4
16-24	19.1	10.2	70.6
Total	11.1	7.6	81.3

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Young people have the highest proportion of bilinguals in all three language zones, despite marked differences between the percentages from zone to zone.

THE BASQUE-SPEAKING ZONE

Full bilinguals make up 62.7% of inhabitants over the age of 65 in the Basque-speaking zone. In younger age groups the proportion of Basque speakers decreases progressively, to 51.8% in the 35-to-49 age group. However, at this point a new trend appears and the proportions start to rise again, so much so that the highest percentage is that of the 16-to-24 group, with 79.6% full bilinguals.

The percentage of passive bilinguals is very low indeed in the 16-to-24 group, at 2.1%, differentiating this language zone from the other two. The highest percentages of partial bilinguals are in the 25-34 and 35-49 age groups, with 17.6% and 16% respectively. Over the age of fifty the proportion of passive bilinguals drops off again, with just 7.9% in the 50-to-64 age group and 7% in the over-65 group.

Monolingual Spanish speakers make up just over a third of this zone's over-35 population. In the 16-to-24 and 25-to-34 age groups the proportions drop sharply to 18.3% and 21.6% respectively.

Table 4. Language competence by age group. Basque-speaking zone, 2006 (%)

Age groups	Population aged 16 or over		
	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	62.7	7.0	30.3
50-64	56.7	7.9	35.4
35-49	51.8	16.0	32.3
25-34	60.8	17.6	21.6
16-24	79.6	2.1	18.3
Total	60.1	11.0	28.9

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

THE MIXED ZONE

In the mixed zone 5% of the population over fifty are full bilinguals. In the 35-to-49 age groups this percentage rises to 7.5%, then 20.7% in the 25-to-34 group and 18.4% of young people aged between 16 and 24.

The highest proportions of passive bililnguals are found in the 35-49 age group, with 14%, and the 50-to-64 group, with 13.2%. In other age groups the percentages are considerably lower, all under 10%.

Thus monolingual Spanish-speakers predominate in all age groups in the mixed zone. Their highest proportion is found among those over 65, but in all groups they constitute more than three-fourths of the population. Nevertheless, there is a respectable difference between the youngest age group (16-to-24, at 76%) and the oldest (over-65s, at 93%).



Table 5. Language competence by age group. Mixed zone, 2006 (%)

	Population aged 16 or over		
Age groups	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	4.2	2.8	93.0
50-64	5.1	13.2	81.7
35-49	7.5	14.0	78.4
25-34	10.7	9.7	79.6
16-24	18.1	5.4	76.5
Total	8.3	9.9	81.8

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

## THE NON-BASQUE-SPEAKING ZONE

The highest percentage of bilinguals in the non-Basque-speaking zone is found in the youngest group, at around 5%. In older age groups the percentages are extremely low.

There are likewise very few passive bilinguals in all age groups except the youngest, where they stand at about 20%.

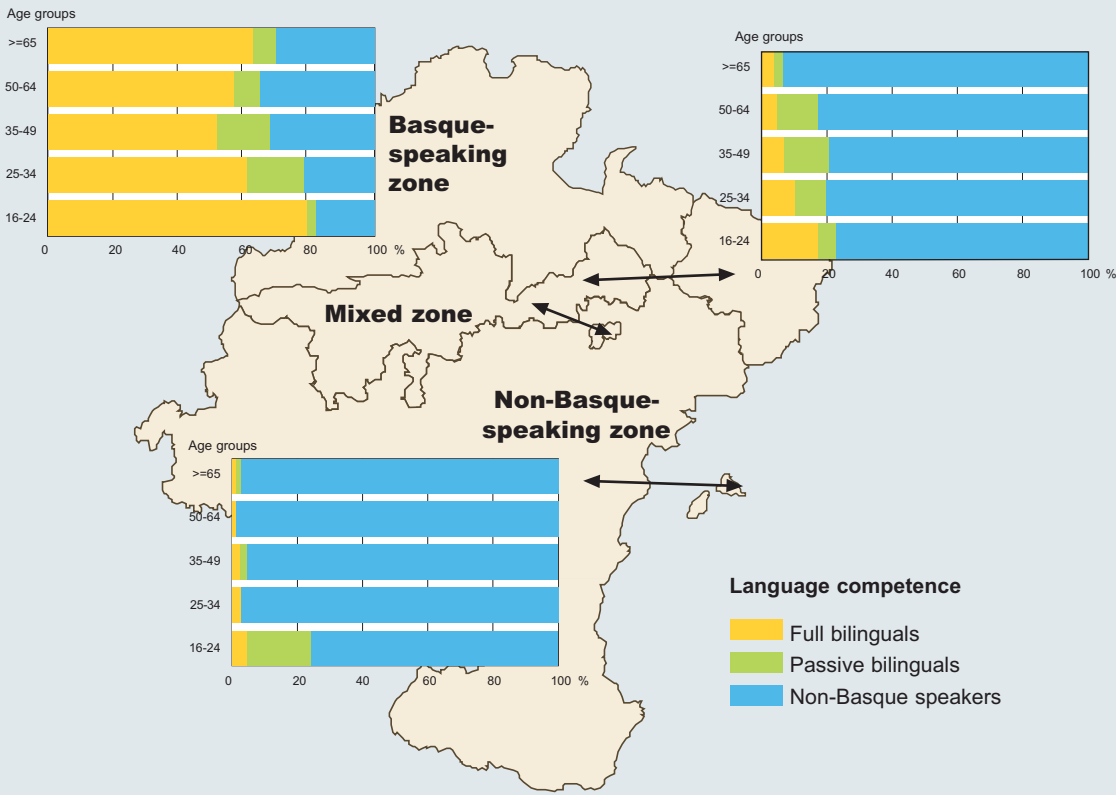
Thus, nearly all the inhabitants of this zone are Spanish-speaking monolinguals, at over 95% in all age groups except for the youngest. In the 16-to-24 group, three out of four are monolinguals.

Table 6. Language competence by age group. Non-Basque-speaking zone, 2006 (%)

Age groups	Population aged 16 or over		
	Full bilinguals	Passive bilinguals	Non-Basque speakers
≥ 65	0.6	1.6	97.7
50-64	1.0	(*)	99.0
35-49	2.2	2.3	95.6
25-34	2.5	(*)	97.5
16-24	4.6	19.7	75.7
Total	1.9	3.2	94.8

(\*) percentages lower than 0.1%.  
Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Figure 6. Language competence by age group and zone. Navarre, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

### 2.3. GROUP PROFILES ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

Next we shall examine the characteristics of the members of each of the three groups that make up our language competence typology (full bilinguals, passive bilinguals and monolingual Spanish speakers).

The typical profile of full bilinguals is as follows:

- They live in the Basque-speaking zone or the mixed zone, and have parents who come from there.
- Over half are native Basque speakers, and over a third went to a Basque-medium primary and secondary school. Another fifth studied or improved their Basque outside of the school system.
- The parents of over half of full bilinguals are both bilingual, yet a significant number (over a fourth) have non-Basque-speaking parents.
- Full bilinguals are very interested in Basque and support the promotion of the Basque language.

Typical characteristics of passive bilinguals are as follows:

- Spanish is the mother tongue of the majority and the medium of their primary and secondary schooling.
- Generally they have Spanish-speaking families, friends and work environments, but the children of most partial bilinguals can speak Basque.
- They live mainly in the mixed zone.
- They are very interested in Basque, and are strongly in favour of promotion of the Basque language.

Lastly, monolingual Spanish speakers have the following typical profile:

- Although most are locally born, there are also a growing number of recent immigrants.
- The mother tongue of almost all is either Spanish or some language other than Basque.
- They live in the mixed or non-Basque-speaking zones.
- Fifteen percent tried to learn Basque outside of school.
- They are not particularly interested in Basque, yet one in four is in favour of efforts to promote the Basque language.

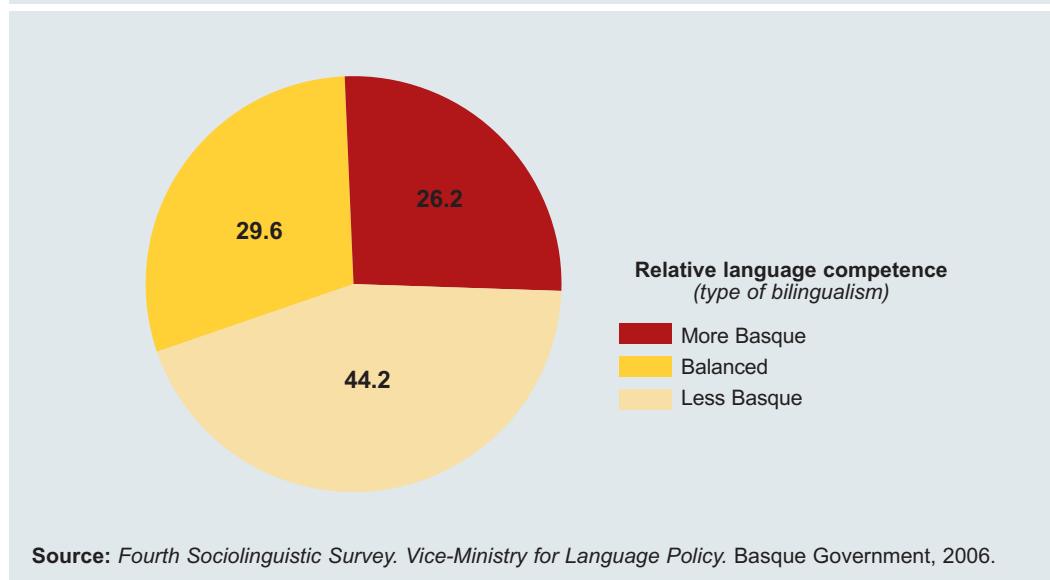
## 2.4. RELATIVE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

We may divide full bilinguals into three groups depending on how well they express themselves in Basque or in Spanish.

Those we shall call “**more Basque**” bilinguals, who are more fluent in Basque than in Spanish, comprise 45.1% of all full bilinguals, and 2.9% of the whole over-

On the whole, almost one-third of full bilinguals express themselves better in Basque than in Spanish. However, among young people under 25 that is true of only half as many

Figure 7. Type of bilingualism (*in full bilinguals*). Navarre, 2006 (%)



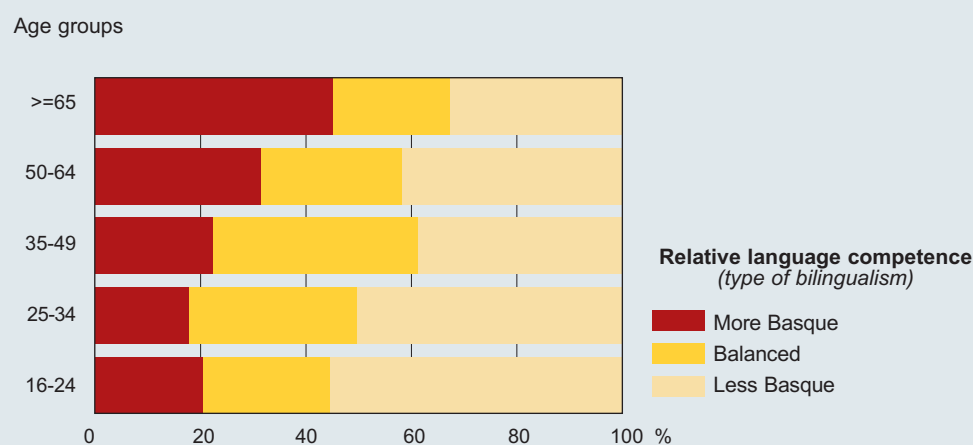
sixteen population of Navarre. The greatest proportion (54.7%) of such “more Basque” bilinguals is found among those over 65, while the younger the age group the fewer are found. Taking the full bilinguals in the under-25 age group, for example, “more Basque” bilinguals make up 15% of their total. Nearly all “more Basque” bilinguals speak Basque as a mother tongue (92%). Most (81%) live in the Basque-speaking zone, but one-tenth (11%) live in the mixed zone.

**Balanced bilinguals**, who are equally fluent in both Basque and Spanish, comprise 29.6% of full bilinguals and 3.3% of the whole over-sixteen population of Navarre. Most balanced bilinguals (more than half of the total) are aged between

25 and 50. Over half (55%) live in the Basque-speaking zone, but almost one in four (39%) in the mixed zone. Basque is the mother tongue of most of them (58%); however, Spanish is the mother tongue of one-fourth (26%) of balanced bilinguals.

**“More Spanish”** (or “less Basque”) **bilinguals**, who are less fluent in Basque than in Spanish, comprise the largest group of bilinguals, making up 44.2% of full bilinguals and 4.9% of the whole population of Navarre. The younger their age, the larger the proportion of “more Spanish” bilinguals becomes: over half (55.4%) of full bilinguals in the 16 to 24 age group find it easier to speak Spanish than Basque. Over half (58%) of “more Spanish” bilinguals live in the mixed zone, and 32% in the Basque-speaking zone. Spanish is the mother tongue of most (58%) “more Spanish” bilinguals, but the mother tongue of just over one-fourth (27%) of them is Basque.

**Figure 8.** Type of bilingualism (*in full bilinguals*) by age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Although relative language competence has generally varied little between 1991 and 2006, the percentage of “more Basque” bilinguals may be said to be somewhat lower today, and the proportion of balanced and “more Spanish” bilinguals slightly higher.

Although similar overall patterns are seen across Navarre, some particularities are to be noted. In the Basque-speaking zone close to half the bilinguals (42%) are more fluent in Basque, almost a third (30.8%) manage equally well in Basque and in Spanish, and the remainder, slightly over one-fourth (26.7%), have greater fluency in Spanish.

In the mixed zone, most bilinguals are more fluent in Spanish (63.9%). Balanced bilinguals make up a little more than a quarter of the total (28.7%) and “more Basque” bilinguals the remaining 7.4%.

Given that the total percentage of bilinguals in the non-Basque-speaking zone is only 1.9%, the sample is too small to classify them by relative competence, but it is fair to assume that most are more fluent in Spanish.

**Figure 9.** Type of bilingualism (*in full bilinguals*) zone by zone. Navarre, 2006 (%)

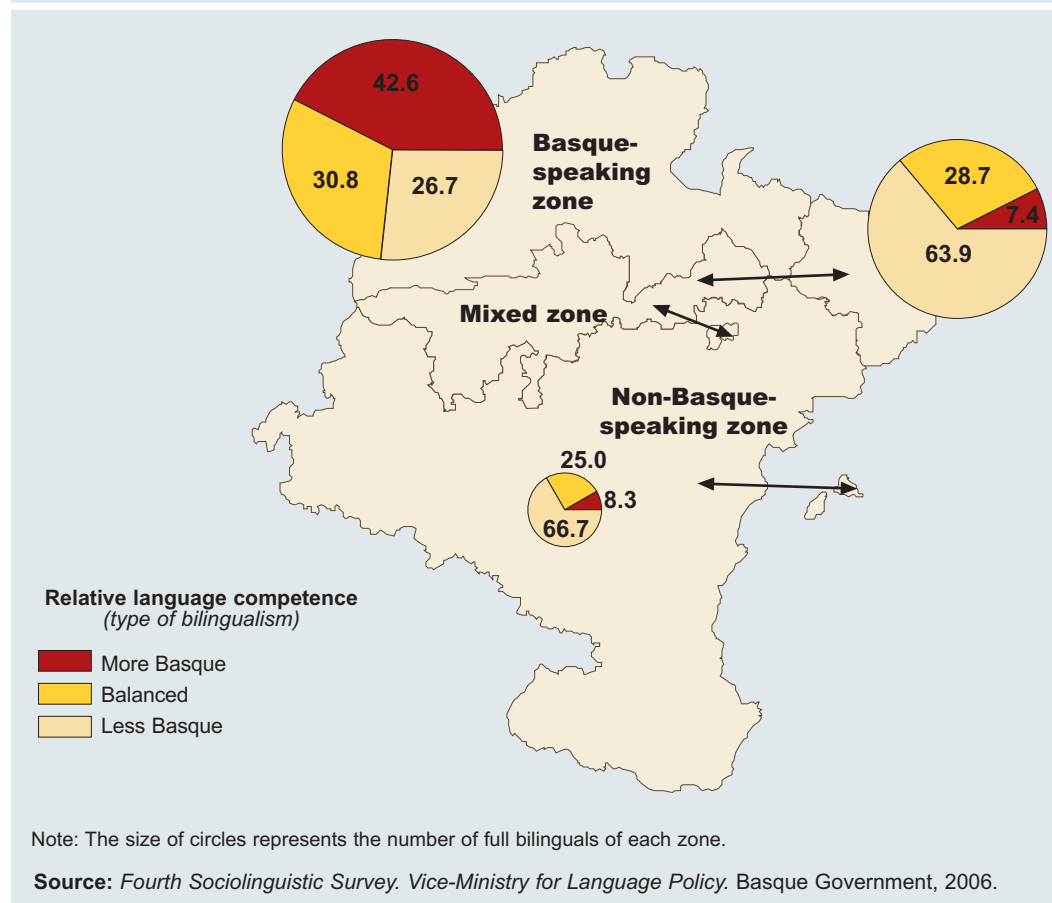


Table 7. Type of bilingualism (*in full bilinguals*) zone by zone. Navarre, 2006 (%)

	Population age 16 and more			
Type of bilingualism	Navarre	Basque-speaking z.	Mixed Zone	Non Basque-speaking z.
More Basque	26.2	42.6	7.4	8.3
Balanced	29.6	30.8	28.7	25.0
Less Basque	44.2	26.7	63.9	66.7

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

3. Language transmission

3.1. MOTHER TONGUE BY LANGUAGE ZONE

Spanish mother-tongue speakers predominate everywhere in Navarre except the Basque-speaking zone, where Basque is the mother tongue of more than half the population

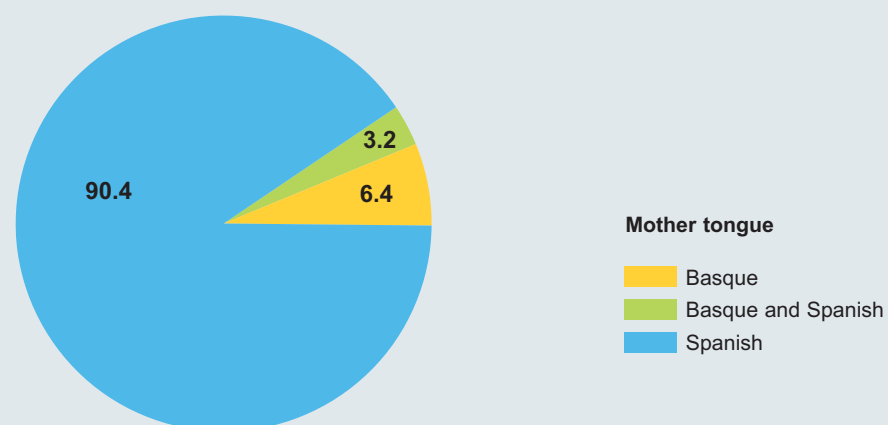
We may define mother tongue as the language or languages acquired from parents or relatives with whom a child lives up to the age of three. Given the high number of children starting their schooling before they are three, the increasingly important role of school in language transmission should also clearly be acknowledged. However, considering that the universe of the sociolinguistic survey consists of people aged sixteen or over and that when these people were three years old or younger the number of chil-

dren attending preschool was still relatively small, that recent phenomenon is not very relevant here.

Spanish is the mother tongue of nine out of ten inhabitants (90.4%) of Navarre, Basque is that of 6.4%, and the remaining 3.2% are native speakers of both languages.

Spanish is the predominant mother tongue in the mixed zone (93.7%) and the non-Basque-speaking zone (98.5%). In the Basque-speaking zone, Basque is the

**Figure 10.** Mother tongue (L1). Navarre, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

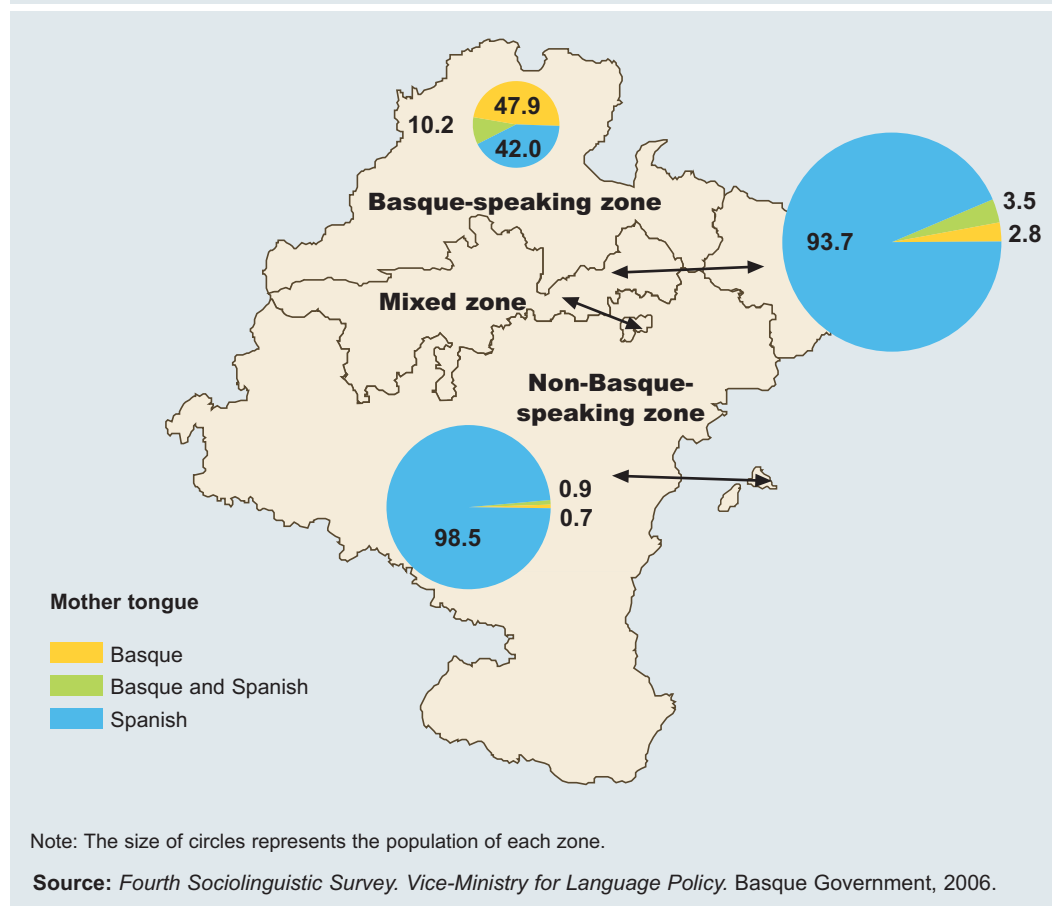
**Table 8.** Mother tongue (L1) zone by zone. Navarre, 2006 (%)

	Population aged 16 or over			
Mother tongue	Navarre	Basque-speaking z.	Mixed zone	Non-Basque-speaking z.
Basque	6.4	47.9	2.8	0.7
Basque and Spanish	3.2	10.2	3.5	0.9
Spanish	90.4	42.0	93.7	98.5

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

mother tongue of close to half (47.9%) of the population, while both languages are native to a further 10.2%. Spanish is the mother tongue of the remaining 42% of the population in this zone.

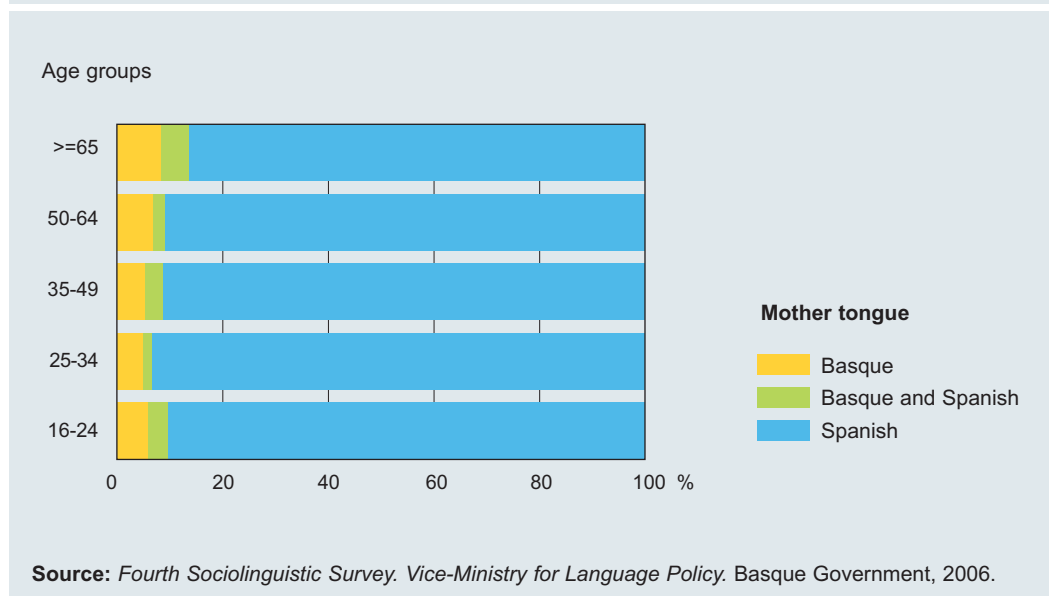


**Figure 11. Mother tongue (L1) zone by zone. Navarre, 2006 (%)**

### 3.2. MOTHER TONGUE BY AGE

The highest proportion (8.5%) of mother-tongue Basque speakers is found in the 65-and-over age group. The percentage drops in parallel with age, but that trend is turning around in the youngest group (aged 24 and under). Thus the percentages of both Basque (5.8%) and Basque and Spanish (4.3%) mother-tongue speakers in the 16-to-24 age group are now higher than in the 25-to-34 group, where Basque is the mother tongue of 5% and both languages are mother tongues to 1.9%.

A comparison of these figures between language zones brings out the contrast among them.

**Figure 12.** Mother tongue (L1) by age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)

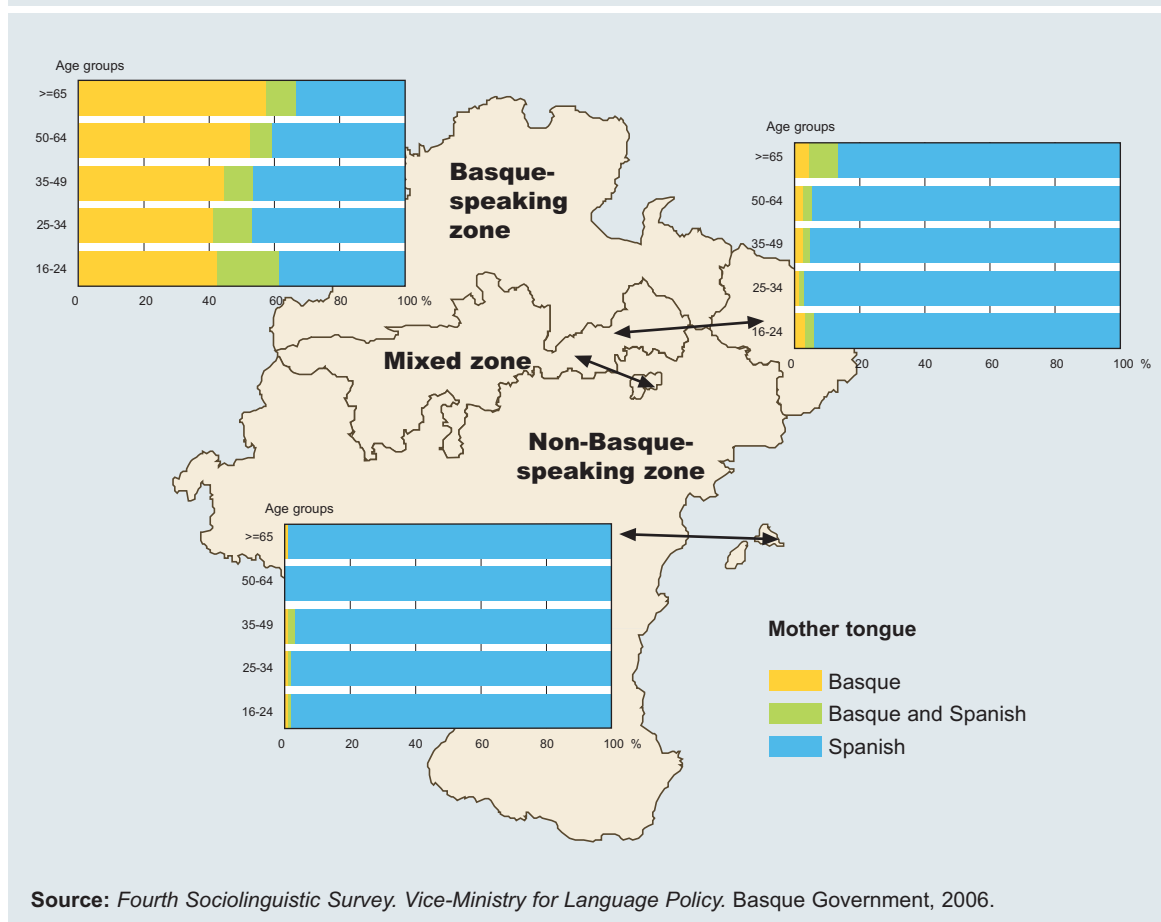
Once more the sample for the non-Basque-speaking area is too small to permit a classification of inhabitants in terms of mother tongue and age group, but it may be surmised that in all age groups Spanish is the mother tongue of 98.5% of the population.

Spanish also predominates as the main mother tongue in all age groups in the mixed language zone. In all age groups except the over-65 group, where the percentage is 86.8%, Spanish is the mother tongue of over nine out of ten inhabitants. The highest proportion with Basque as mother tongue is thus in the 65-and-over group, at 13.2%, and the younger inhabitants are, the fewer native Basque speakers we find, until we reach the youngest group in the survey, where Basque (or both Basque and Spanish) is the mother tongue of 6.5% of the population.

The Basque-speaking zone tells a different story. Here Basque is the sole mother tongue, or else Basque and Spanish are both mother tongues, of most people in all age groups. The percentages of those whose only mother tongue is Basque decrease with age from 64% (for the over-65 age group) to 41.1% (for the 25-to-34 group), but this decrease is compensated for by an increase in the number of people for whom both languages are mother tongues, which rises from 10.1% in the oldest group to 18.8% in the youngest. The proportion of the population for whom Spanish is the only mother tongue steadily rises from 33.2% in the over-65

group to 47.6% in the 25-to-34 group, until we reach the youngest age group (16 to 24) at which point it drops down again to 39.3%, on account of the increase in the number whose mother tongue is Basque (for 42%) or Basque together with Spanish (for 18.8%).

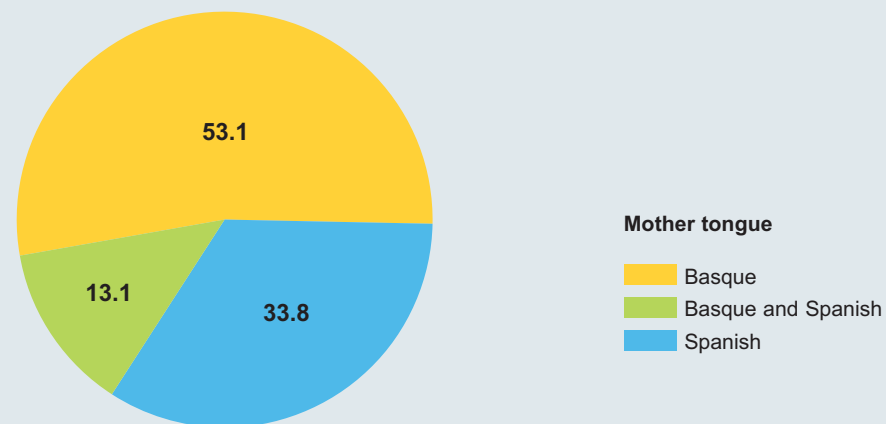
**Figure 13.** Mother tongue (L1) zone by zone and age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)



### 3.3. MOTHER TONGUE BY LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

Over half (53.1%) of full bilinguals aged sixteen or over in Navarre have Basque as their mother tongue; another 13.1% have both Basque and Spanish; while the mother tongue of the remaining one-third (33.8%) of full bilinguals have Spanish as their mother tongue. The last-mentioned group comprise the “new speakers” (*euskaldun berriak*) who have learnt Basque at school or in adult classes, and whose statistical weight is growing fast.

Figure 14. Mother tongue of full bilinguals. Navarre, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

### 3.4. FAMILY TRANSMISSION

Nowadays when both parents are bilingual the transmission of Basque to their children is almost a certainty

“Family transmission” refers to the language or languages that a child learns from its parents. The present sociolinguistic survey provides an opportunity to track the development of language transmission from parents to children over the past hundred years or so.

In Navarre, on the basis of the whole population aged sixteen or over, the language that 66.2% of children whose parents are both bilingual learnt at home was Basque; 16.4% learnt Basque and Spanish; and 17.3% only learnt Spanish. When only one of the parents was bilingual, the percentage of children who only learnt Basque at home is 2.6%, while 16.3% learnt both Basque and Spanish. The majority (81.1%) of such children only learnt Spanish from their parents.

**Table 9.** Mother tongue depending on parents' language competence.  
Navarre, 2006 (%)

	Basque-speaking parents		
	Both	One	Neither
Childrens' mother tongue			
Basque	66.2	2.6	
Basque and Spanish	16.4	16.3	0.3
Spanish	17.3	81.1	99.7

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

These figures tell us how Basque has been transmitted over the course of the past century, but do not tell us anything about *present-day* language transmission in Basque families.

To find out about the transmission of Basque in Navarre today, we looked at the respondents to our survey who have children aged between two and nine.

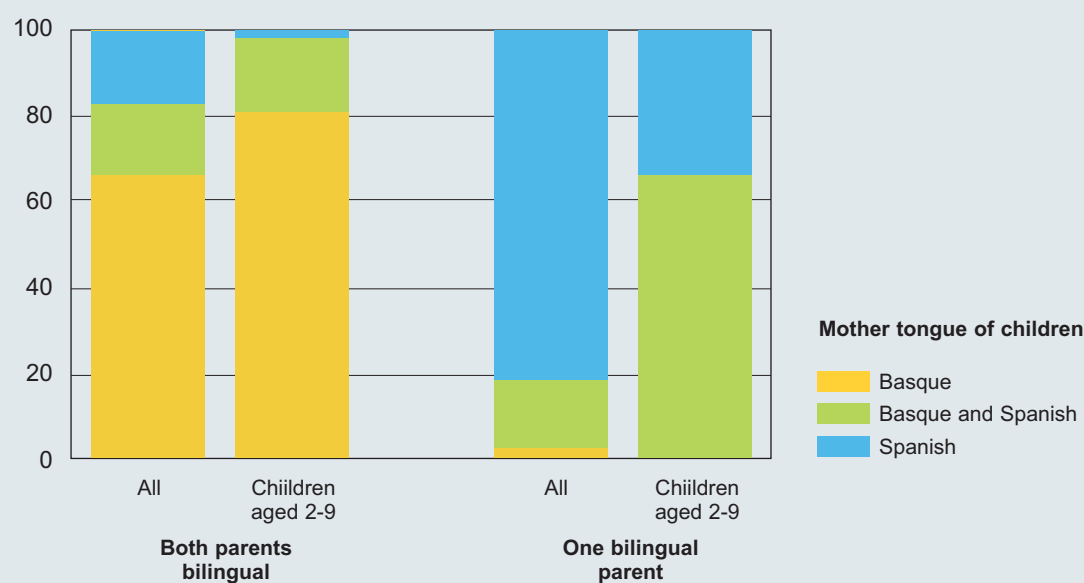
The language transmitted to children today is fully determined by parents' language competence. 98% of children whose parents were fully bilingual learnt Basque in the home. Most of these (more than eight out of ten) *only* learnt Basque in the home, while the remainder (17.2%) learnt both Basque and Spanish.

When one parent doesn't speak Basque, however, less than one child out of ten learnt only Basque at home, yet a high percentage of children –more than half– learnt both Basque and Spanish at home (67%).

Thus we may conclude that almost all Basque-speaking couples do transmit Basque to their children and a growing number transmit both Basque and Spanish.

This has to do with language competence. While all the parents considered here are bilingual, the language recovery process over the past twenty-five years has led to the existence among present and future parents of a growing number of *euskaldun berriak* ("new" Basque speakers whose mother tongue is not Basque) who, while transmitting Basque to their children, also transmit Spanish to them in increasing numbers.

**Figure 15.** Mother tongue depending on parents' language competence. Navarre, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

### 3.5. LANGUAGE TREND: BASQUE LANGUAGE GAINS AND LOSSES

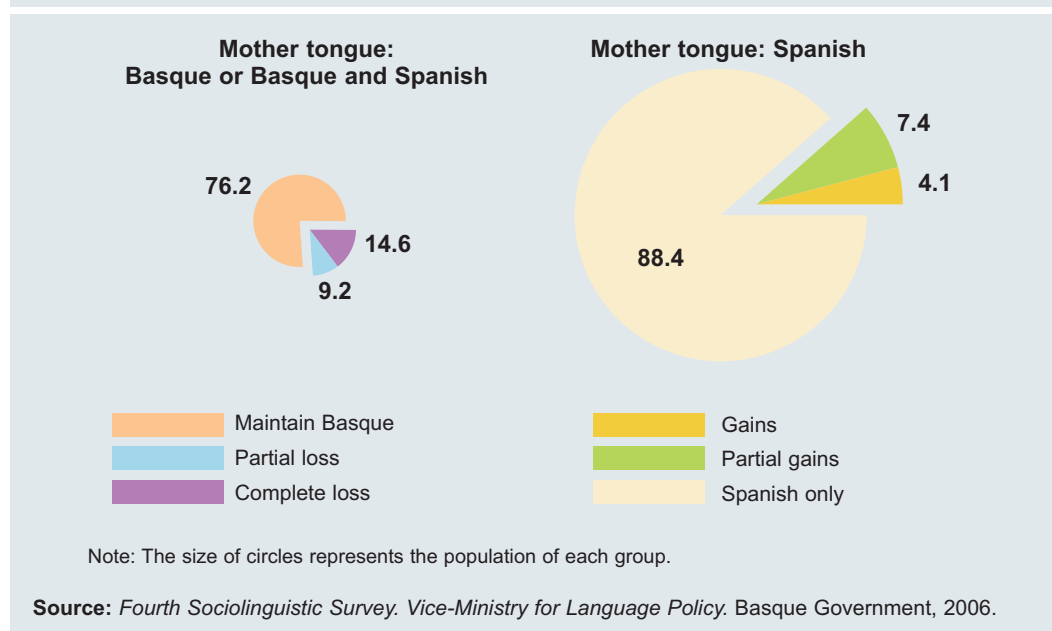
Gains for Basque (i.e. “euskaldun berriak”) are three times as high as losses in Navarre. Gains are increasing and losses are close to disappearing among the young in particular

Most people whose mother tongue is Basque (or whose mother tongues are Basque and Spanish) have conserved their Basque and remain fully bilingual. Nonetheless, there are 11,700 people who are no longer bilingual although Basque was their mother tongue, having partially or totally forgotten it. Over a third of those losses (38.7%) are partial losses: such people can no longer speak Basque well but are still able to understand it. The remaining 61.3% have forgotten their Basque completely.

On the other hand, there are 19,000 people whose mother tongue is Spanish yet who have subsequently learnt Basque and become fully bilingual.

Here we are referring to people who have fully learnt Basque, but there are another 34,100 people whose mother tongue is Spanish but who are able to understand Basque today although they cannot speak it proficiently. These should not be included altogether on the side of the Basque language's gains.

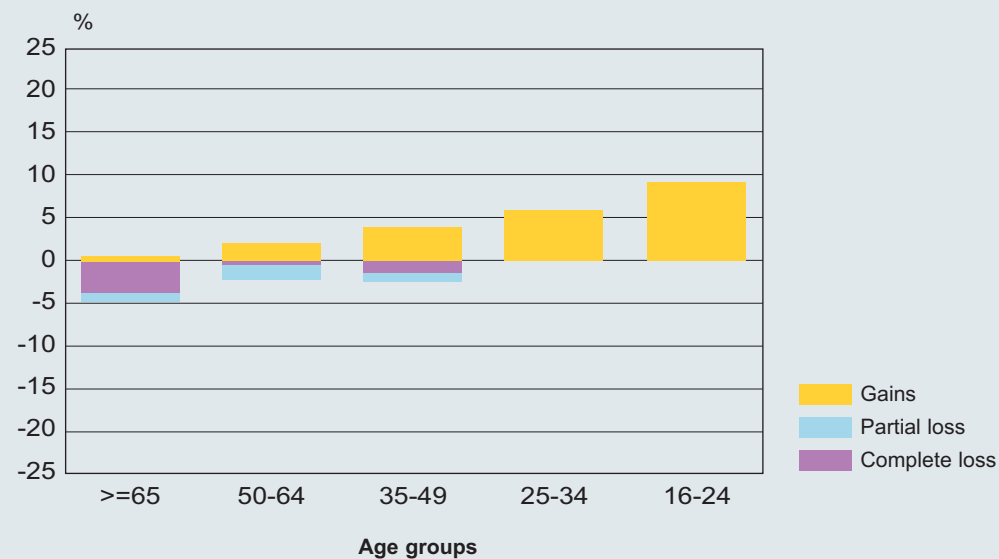
Figure 16. Gains and losses for Basque. Navarre, 2006 (%)



The proportions of such gains, i.e. the *euskaldun berriak*, contrast greatly between language zones: 7.2% in the Basque-speaking area, 5% in the mixed zone and 1% in the non-Basque-speaking area.

On the other hand, the figures for *euskaldun berriak* vary considerably according to age. The percentage for people over fifty is low (averaging less than 2%). But for those aged under fifty the percentage of “new” Basque speakers increases from one age group to the next: 3.5% in the 35-49 age group, 5.8% in the 25-34 age group, and 9.3% in the 16-24 age group.

**Figure 17.** Basque language gains and losses by age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.



**Table 10.** Basque language gains and losses by age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)

Age groups	Gains and losses for Basque		
	Gains	Partial loss	Complete loss
>=65	0.5	-1.3	-3.8
50-64	2.2	-1.5	-0.8
35-49	3.5	-0.9	-1.6
25-34	5.8	-0.2	0
16-24	9.3	-0.2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	<b>-1.4</b>

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Those who have **gained** Basque have the following general profile:

- Most are young: over half (59%) are under 35 years old. However, one-fourth of all those who have gained Basque (26%) are in the 35-to-49 age group.
- Nearly half (41%) went to Basque-medium schools, and over half (65%) learnt or improved their Basque out of school.
- Three out of four (76%) have greater fluency in Spanish than in Basque.
- Nearly three out of four (72%) live in the mixed zone.

Those who have **lost** Basque share the following general characteristics:

- Nearly all (97%) are over 35 years old.
- Both Basque and Spanish are the mother tongues of three out of four (76%).
- None received their primary school education in Basque and nearly three out of four (72%) have never tried to study Basque out of school.
- Most (69%) live in the mixed zone.

Basque is the mother tongue of *euskaldun zaharrak* ("old" Basque speakers) who are now full bilinguals. Spanish, on the contrary, is the mother tongue of those whom we might call "old" Spanish speakers, who have remained Spanish-speaking monolinguals all their lives.

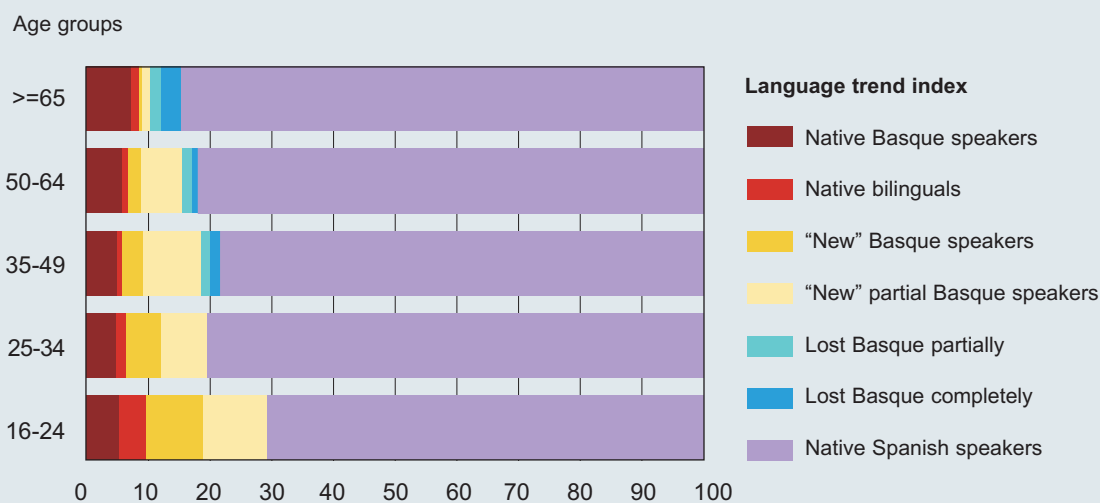
Despite the contrasts between these two groups, they show a similar age correlation: in either case they are typically over 65 years old: over 7% of *euskaldun zaharrak* and over 84% of “old” Spanish speakers.

Among the younger part of the population the proportion of “old” Spanish speakers decreases in general, and this is particularly striking in the under-25 age group. Thus 80.4% of the 25-to-39 age group are “old” Spanish speakers, but in the 16-to-24 group this falls by almost ten points to 70.6%.

The percentages of “old” Basque speakers (*euskaldun zaharrak*) also falls off in the under-65 groups and stays around 5% in all the under-50 groups.

However, together with the *euskaldun berriak* (“new” Basque speakers), it is the “native bilingual” group that grows spectacularly as we descend down the age groups. These are people with two mother tongues, Basque and Spanish, who are fully fluent in Basque. In the population over the age of 25 the proportion of native bilinguals does not reach 2%. In the 16-to-24 group, the percentage more than doubles, rising to over 4%.

**Figure 18.** Language trend index by age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

## 4. Use of Basque

### 4.1. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE TYPOLOGY

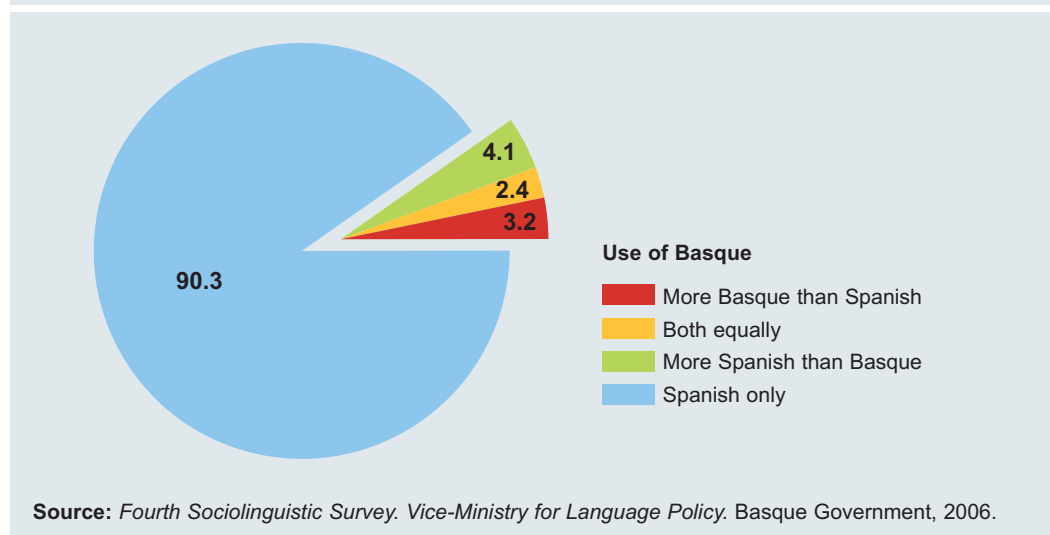
The sociolinguistic survey collects information on the nature of Basque language use in various domains: the home, the family, interactions with friends, shopping, the work environment, and public and private formal domains. We now dispose of data concerning the development of the use of Basque over recent years in each domain. An index measuring the social use of Basque, known as the Basque language use typology, was created in 2001 by the Basque Autonomous Community's Vice-Ministry for Language Policy.

The typology considers three major domains: home, friends and the formal domain, the last-named of which has four subdivisions: health care and council services in the public sector, and local shops and banking outlets in the private sector.

The Basque language use typology was applied to the universe of 508,961 subjects of the sociolinguistic survey, i.e. the whole population aged 16 and over, yielding the following results.

5.6% of the Navarrese population speak Basque as much as (2.4%) or more than (3.2%) Spanish in their daily lives. 4.1% mainly speak Spanish and the remaining 90.3% do not use any Basque at all.

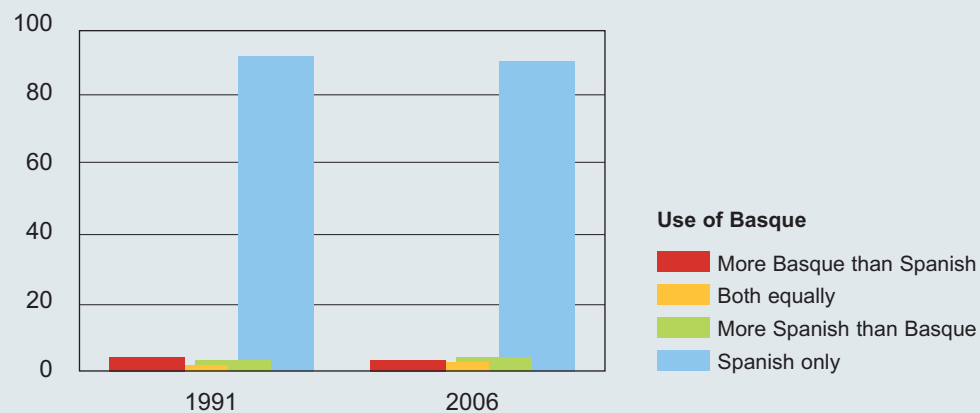
Figure 19. Use of Basque. Navarre, 2006 (%)



The percentage of use of Basque has hardly varied over the past fifteen years. In 1991, 5.9% of the population of Navarre used Basque as much as (2.2%) or more than (3.7%) Spanish. Ten years later, in 2001, 5.8% used Basque as much as (1.6%) or more than (4.2%) Spanish. In 2006, 5.6% used Basque as much as (2.4%) or more than (3.2%) Spanish.

By far the largest group is still that of people who only speak Spanish, but the size of this group has remained practically stable at 90.9% in 1991, 89.9% in 2001 and 90.3% in 2006.

**Figure 20.** Use of Basque trend. Navarre, 1991-2006 (%)



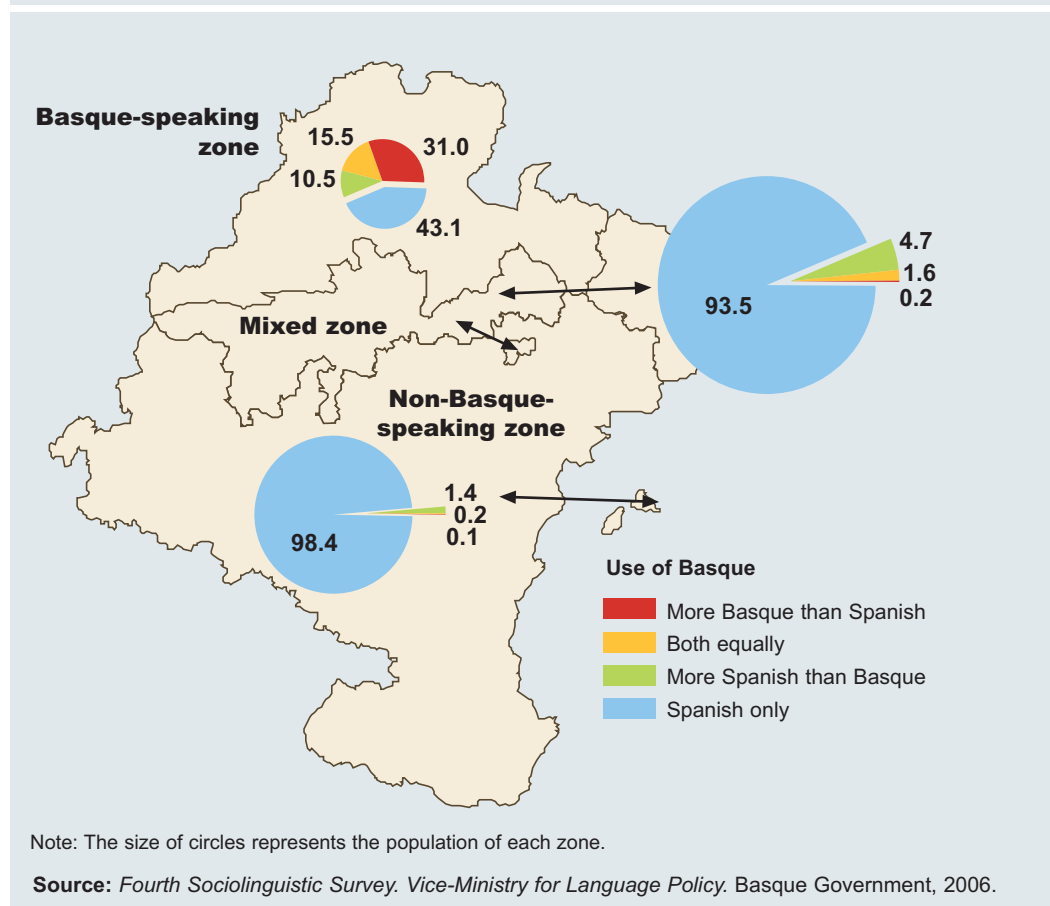
**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

However, the figures for Basque language use vary enormously from the Basque-speaking language zone to the mixed zone and again from there to the non-Basque-speaking zone. Thus the percentages of people who use Basque as much as or more than Spanish are 46.5% in the Basque-speaking zone, 1.8% in the mixed zone and 0.3% in the non-Basque-speaking zone. Also highly significant, particularly in the mixed zone, are the percentages who do use some Basque although not as much as Spanish: 10.5% in the Basque-speaking zone and 4.7% in the mixed zone. The figure for the non-Basque-speaking zone is considerably lower, at 1.4%.

Hence there are of course also substantial differences in the percentages of inhabitants of the different zones who only use Spanish. In the Basque-speaking zone, the number of people who only ever use Spanish represent well under half of the population (43.1%). In contrast, in the mixed zone the part of the population that always speaks Spanish is 93.5% of the total, and in the non-Basque-speaking zone it covers almost everyone, at 98.4%.

The use of Basque in the Basque-speaking zone has not varied significantly over the last fifteen years. In 1991 46.8% of the population used Basque as often or more so than Spanish, 11.4% less often than Spanish, and 41.9% only spoke Spanish.

Figure 21. Use of Basque zone by zone. Navarre, 2006 (%)



Still sharper contrasts are seen when we classify data on the use of Basque by sociolinguistic areas rather than by the official language zones. Within Sociolinguistic Area 1, which we define as all municipalities with fewer than 20% Basque speakers among their populations, only 1.2% of the population use Basque as much as or more than Spanish, yet 3.4% of this population do use some Basque (although less than Spanish). The vast majority of people (95.4%) in Sociolinguistic Area 1 only ever speak Spanish.

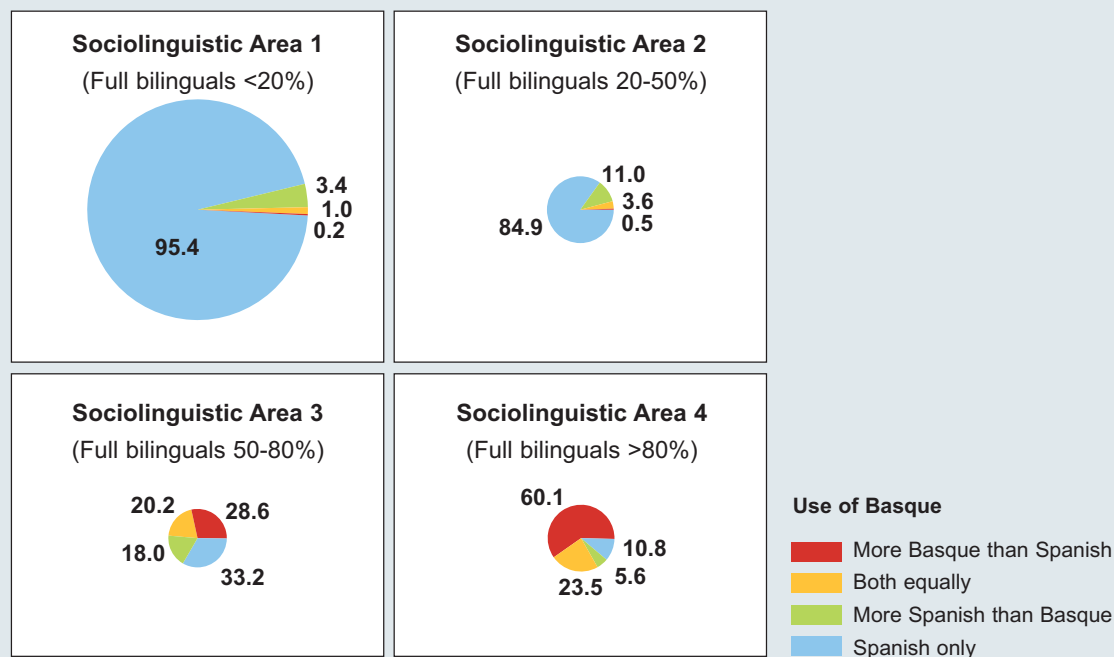
Spanish is likewise the language most used in Sociolinguistic Area 2, where between 20% and 50% of the population is Basque-speaking. 84.9% of the population of this area only use Spanish. 4.1% speak Basque as much as or more than Spanish, while another 11% also use some Basque, although less than Spanish.

In Sociolinguistic Area 3 (where between 50% and 80% of the population can speak Basque), close to half (48.8%) of the population generally speak Basque, another 18% also speak more Basque than Spanish, while one-third (33.2%) of the people only use Spanish.

Finally, in Sociolinguistic Area 4, where over 80% of the population is Basque-speaking, well over half of the population (60.1%) mainly use Basque, a further 23.5% use Basque as much as Spanish and 5.6% say they use some Basque but not as much as Spanish. This leaves 10.8% of the population of Sociolinguistic Area 4, barely one in ten, who only use Spanish.

In the last fifteen years the use of Basque has not changed much except in Sociolinguistic Area 3, where only 43.1% of the population used Basque as much as or more than Spanish in 1991. Since then the use of Basque in this sociolinguistic area has increased by five percentage points.

The better to evaluate the true impact of data classified by sociolinguistic areas it is useful to be reminded of the relative weight of the population sizes of each area in relation to the population of Navarre as a whole. 90.6% of the entire Navarrese population of Navarre reside in Sociolinguistic Area 1. Area 2 includes 3.1% of Navarre's population, Area 3 includes 2.5%, and Area 4 represents the remaining 3.8%.

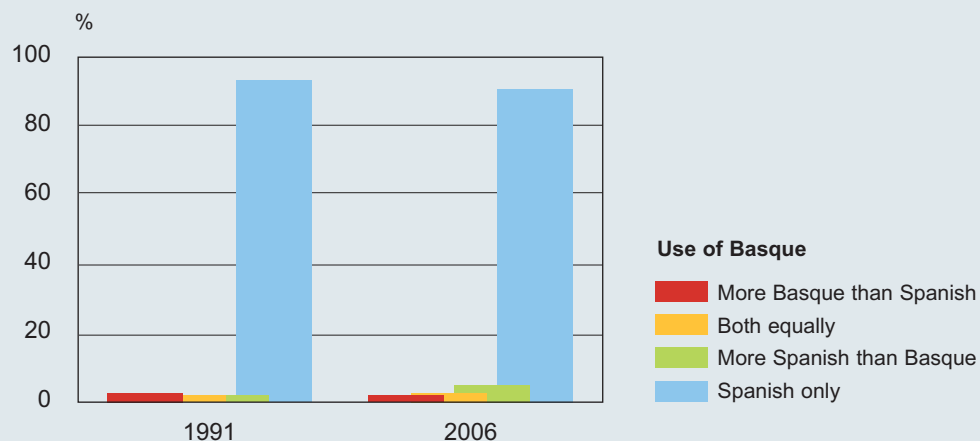
**Figure 22.** Use of Basque according to sociolinguistic areas. Navarre, 2006 (%)

Note: The size of circles represents the population of each area.

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Now there can be no doubt about the importance of the world of work to the language recovery process, so we also looked at how the presence of Basque at work affects the index of Basque language use. For this purpose, we added use at work to the Basque language use typology.

This expanded use typology is not applicable to the whole universe of our survey, but only to those currently employed. Thus in this case we will take as our reference employed people sixteen years of age or over, who comprise 252,100 people, or 49.5% of all the subjects of the general survey.

**Figure 23.** Use of Basque trend (the work place). Navarre, 1991-2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

The data clearly show the importance of language use in the work place. Overall, the percentage of the population who use Basque as much as or more than Basque remains quite similar (5.6% in the first analysis, as against 5.2% in the second). But breaking this down further, the proportion of people who use *more* Basque than Spanish at work is lower (2.1% as compared to 3.2%), while the proportion who use Basque *as much as* Spanish is higher (3.1% versus 2.4%). Meanwhile, the proportion of all people using some Basque, even if less than Spanish, is noticeably higher (5.4% as against 4.1%) and the percentage who speak Spanish only is correspondingly lower (89.5% compared to 90.3%).

Summing up, then, it is true to say that a smaller proportion of people at work use mainly Basque, but also a smaller proportion don't use Basque at all, while the percentages who use Basque as much as or somewhat less than Spanish are higher. Roughly the same pattern occurs across all zones, in all the sociolinguistic areas, and, as we shall see next, among all age groups.



## 4.2. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE TYPOLOGY BY AGE GROUPS

**The youngest and oldest groups  
are the ones who use most  
Basque in their daily lives**

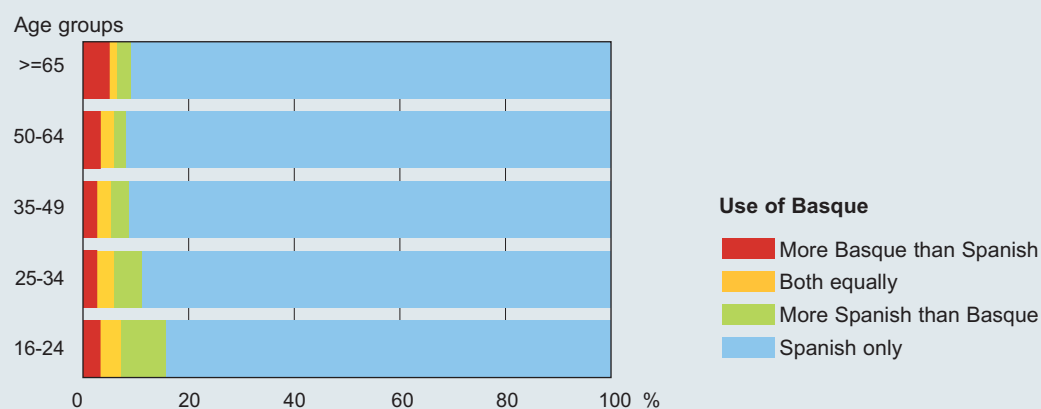
Spanish is the language used most by far (averaging around 90%) among all age groups. However, among those under the age of 25 the figure is only 84.7% and this is decreasing.

The highest proportion of people using Basque as much as (3.6%) or more than (3.1%) Spanish is found in the 16-24 age group (6.7%). They are followed by people over 65, at 6.2%. However, we should note that

among the latter there are more people who speak *more* Basque than Spanish than among the youngest group: the figures for those speaking more Basque than Spanish are, respectively, 4.8% and 3.1%. But this is compensated for by the numbers of people who use both languages to the same extent.

Among the population aged between 25 and 34, 5.3% use some Basque but less Basque than Spanish. The younger the group, the larger this percentage gets, climbing for the 16-24 age group to 8.6% of the population.

**Figure 24.** Use of Basque by age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)



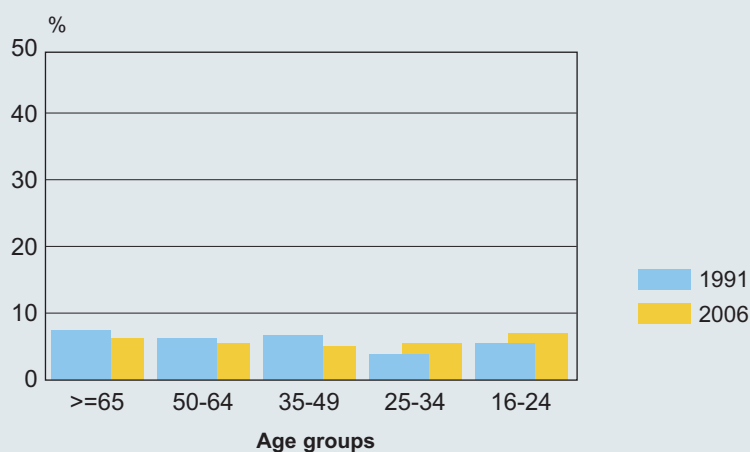
**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Looking at the trend over the past fifteen years, Basque is used less today by people over 65 than in 1991, when 7.3% either used Basque as much as (2.3%) or more than (5%) Spanish. Today only 6.2% of the people in this age group use Basque as much as (1.4%) or more than (4.8%) Spanish. This is hardly surprising given that the part of the population who were already adults has long been the least Basque-speaking component of the population, and as they get older we can expect this to result in a rise of Spanish in the age group of the elderly, who were once the group with the highest percentage of Basque speakers.

The percentage of people aged between 35 and 64 who use Basque is somewhat lower today (around 5%) than it was fifteen years ago (6%). But among the under-35s, Basque is used more now than it was in 1991. The figures are: in the 25-to-34 age group, 5.3% versus 4%; and in the 16-to-24 age group, 6.7% versus 5.7%.

In conclusion, an analysis of trends in language use over the past fifteen years shows that where young people are concerned, the habits of use are changing, in spite of the low percentages. Fifteen years ago old people were the ones who used most Basque; the younger the age group, the smaller the proportion in which Basque was then used. Today, among people under 25, the percentage who use Basque has increased, although the proportion among old people remains the highest.

**Figure 25.** Trend in the use of Basque as much as or more than Spanish, by age group. Navarre, 1991-2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

On the whole, the patterns of Basque language use described here are repeated for each language zone, naturally in proportion to the overall level of Basque language use in each, and in particular in the Basque-speaking and mixed zones. In all three zones, Basque is most used by the 16-to-24 age group.

But if we look at who speaks *mainly* in Basque, the highest percentages are found in the over-65 age group.

On the other hand, if we look at people using Basque and Spanish to the same extent, the count for young people is almost three times as high as for the elderly.

The younger the age group, the smaller the proportions of people who only speak Spanish. The non-Basque-speaking zone has the highest percentage in all age groups of Spanish-only monolinguals (over 98% of age groups from 25 up and 94.7% for the youngest group). In the mixed zone, the age groups from 25 up have percentages of over 90% for monolinguals, while the youngest group's Spanish-only percentage is 85.8%. By far the lowest percentage of Spanish-speaking monolinguals is found in the Basque-speaking zone, most strikingly of all in the youngest age group (29.2%). In the remaining age groups the figure is over 40%.

#### 4.3. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE AMONG BILINGUALS

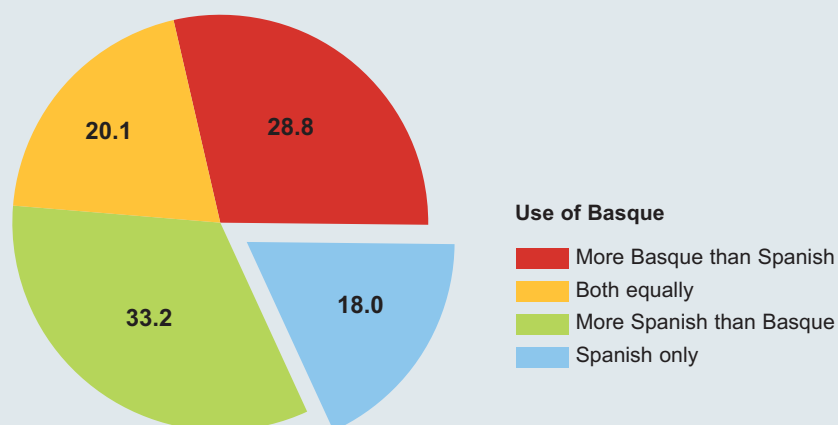
More and more people know Basque. But what about the percentage of Basque language use among Basque-speaking bilinguals? Has it gone up or down?

To find out, we shall start by defining the universe. There are 56,384 full bilinguals over sixteen years of age in Navarre, comprising 11.1% of the whole universe. These are further classified into 26.2% "more Basque", 29.6% balanced and 44.2% "more Spanish" bilinguals. Classified by age, 42.3% are under 35 years old, 40.8% are aged between 35 and 64, and 16.8% are 65 or over. Classified by mother tongue, more than half (53%) are native speakers of Basque, 13% are native bilinguals, and 34% are *euskaldun berriak* ("new" or non-native Basque speakers). Two out of three acquired Basque in the home and the remaining third learnt it at school or by attending language classes.

48.9% of full bilinguals use Basque as much as (20.1%) or more than (28.8%) Spanish, 33.2% use Basque less than Spanish and 18% do not use Basque at all.

The biggest users of Basque are the “more Basque” bilinguals, 75.8% of whom mainly speak Basque in their daily lives, while another 17.3% speak Basque and Spanish to a similar degree.

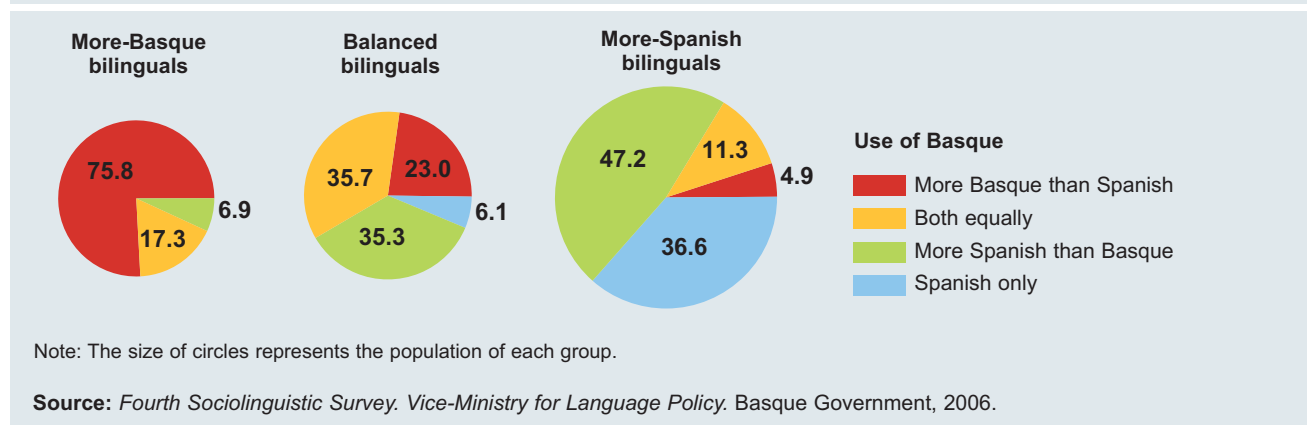
**Figure 26.** Use of Basque by full bilinguals. Navarre, 2006 (%)



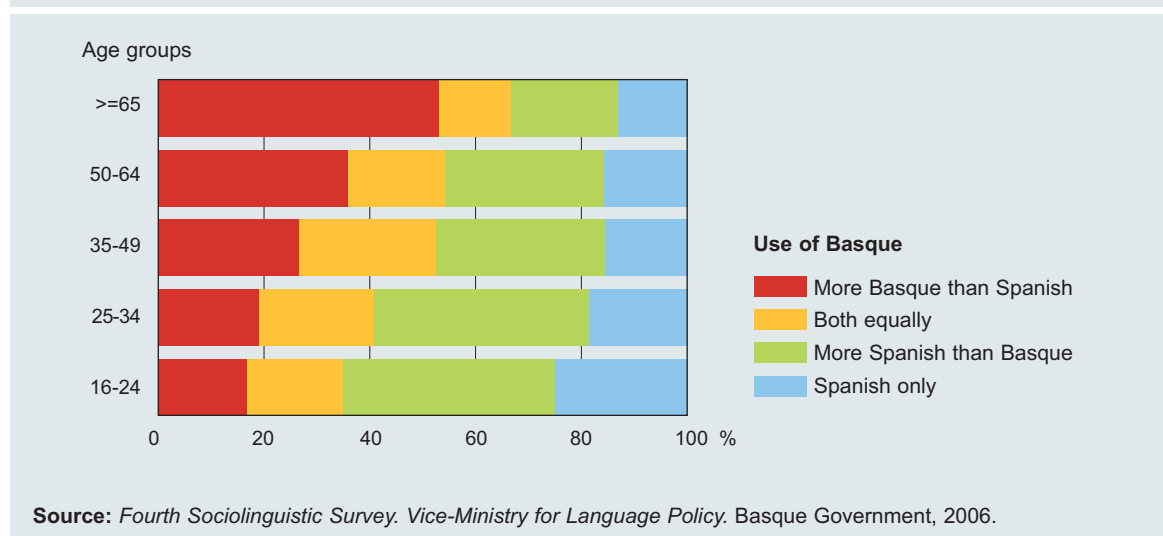
**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

fewer than one-fourth (23%) of balanced bilinguals use Basque more than Spanish, but a considerable percentage (35.7%) use Basque as much as Spanish.

The “more Spanish” bilinguals are the ones who use the least Basque. Only 4.9% of them use Basque more than Spanish and 11.3% use both languages equally. Most of them (47.2%) do use Basque in their daily lives, but use Spanish more.

**Figure 27.** Use of Basque by full bilinguals according to type of bilingualism. Navarre, 2006 (%)

The over-65 group of full bilinguals in the Navarre are the ones who in the highest proportion principally speak Basque (52.9%). As we move down the age groups, the corresponding proportion falls steeply, with only 19% in the 25-to-34 group and 16.1% in the 16-to-24 group.

**Figure 28.** Use of Basque by full bilinguals according to age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)

**Table 11.** Use of Basque by full bilinguals according to age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)

Use of Basque	Age groups				
	>=65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
More Basque than Spanish	52,9	35,8	26,7	19,0	16,1
Both equally	13,3	18,0	25,6	21,7	18,8
Less Basque than Spanish	20,5	29,8	32,0	40,6	39,6
Spanish only	13,3	16,3	15,7	18,7	25,5

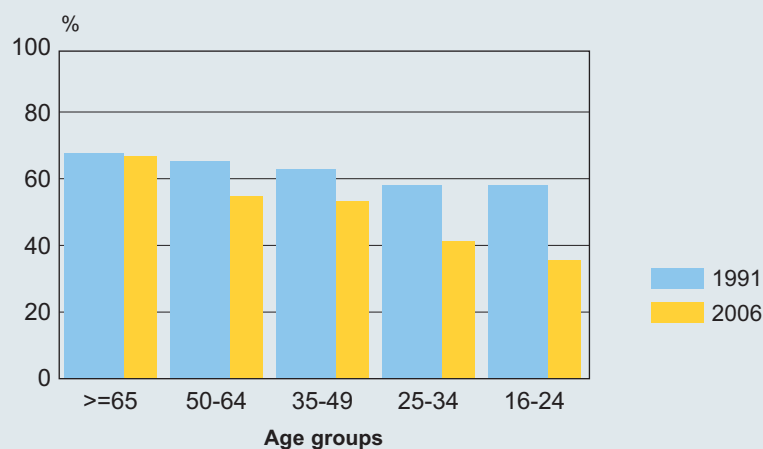
**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

There have been some changes over the last fifteen years. The percentage of full bilinguals who always or nearly always spoke Basque according to the 1991 data is higher than today's percentage (38.7% as against 28.8%), and so is the percentage of those who used Basque to the same extent as Spanish (23.3% versus 20.1%). Thus the proportion who spoke less Basque than Spanish was lower (27.9 versus 33.2%), as was the proportion who only spoke Spanish (10.1% versus 16.4%). Between 1991 and 1996 the figures remained more or less constant. But over the past five years the proportion of bilinguals who mostly speak Basque has fallen (from 40.9% to 28.8%) and the percentage speaking both to the same degree (16.4% versus 20.1%) or less Basque than Spanish (27.3% versus 33.2%) has correspondingly risen.

In the breakdown by age, we observe that the proportion of the population using more Basque than Spanish is today lower than it was in 1991 in all the age groups under 65.

But the proportion of bilinguals who now use both languages equally is comparable to 1991 among those aged less than fifty. In the older age groups, however, it is smaller.

**Figure 29.** Trend in the use of Basque as much as or more than Spanish by full bilinguals, by age group. Navarre, 1991-2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

#### 4.4. FACTORS DETERMINING BASQUE LANGUAGE USE

**The main factors influencing Basque language use are the density of the Basque-speaking social network and fluency**

Studies of language use have repeatedly shown that the two main factors determining language use are:

- the density of the Basque-speaking social network, and
- how good a command the speaker has of the two languages in question.

In order to find out exactly how greatly these two factors influence language choice in the main use domains, we shall now examine these by looking at the correlations between pairs of variables, on a 0-to-1 scale.

The correlation between Basque language use and density of the social network is 0.75 for the use of Basque at home, 0.68 with friends, and 0.88 at work. These correlations are high in all domains of use, while the strongest factor is density of the Basque-speaking social network, particularly regarding the use of Basque at work.

To appreciate the importance of the social network, consider the results for each sociolinguistic area. In the first area fewer than 20% of the population is Basque speaking on average. The percentage of this population who use Basque as much as or more than Spanish here is 1.2%. In the second area, where 20% to 50% of the population can speak Basque, the percentage jumps up to 4.1%. But the biggest leap comes in the third area, where 50% to 80% of the population can speak Basque: here 48.8%, practically half, of the inhabitants use as much Basque as Spanish or more Basque than Spanish. In the fourth area, finally, with over 80% Basque speakers, 60.1% of inhabitants speak *more* Basque than Spanish in their everyday lives, and an additional 23.5% use either language as much as the other.

Notice again the use-fluency correlation of 0.68 at home, 0.56 with friends and 0.33 at work. We may say that the more fluent a bilingual is in Basque (the more of a “more Basque” bilingual he or she is), the more Basque he or she will use at home and with friends... but not at work. On the other hand, the balanced bilingual uses both languages to a similar degree in all three domains, but more Basque. Lastly, the “more Spanish” bilingual for the most part uses Spanish no matter what the domain.

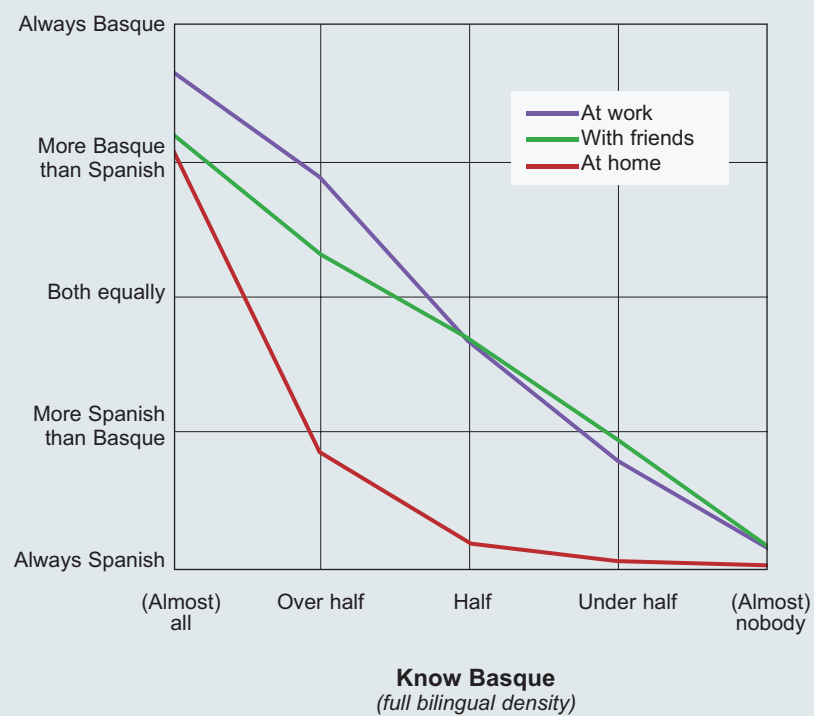
Other factors, such as age (with a 0.24 correlation) and attitude to the Basque language (0.31), while also affecting Basque language use, are far less decisive than social network and fluency.

In short, when the conditions are right for Basque to be used, bilinguals use Basque in their everyday lives. When those conditions are absent, Basque language use diminishes considerably.

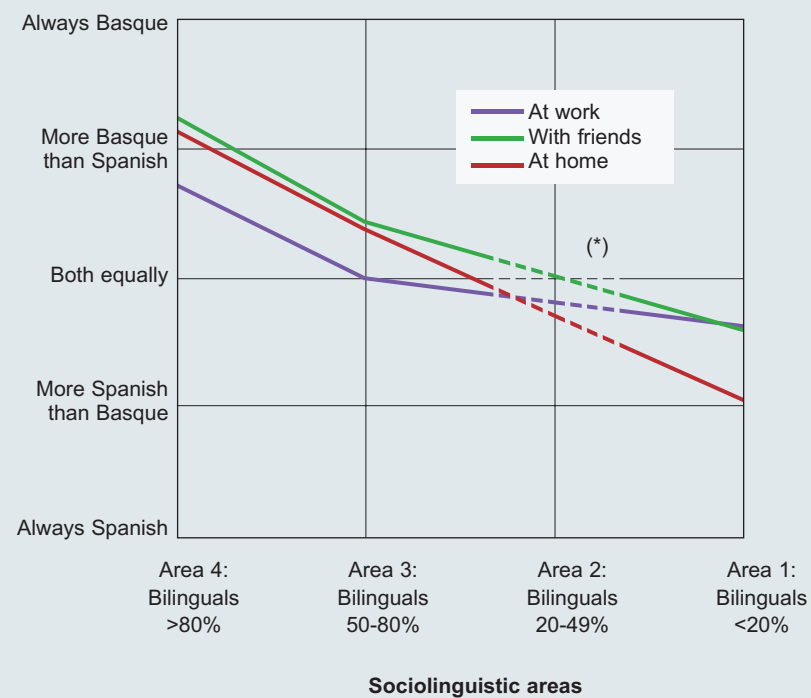


**Figure 30.** Use of Basque depending on density of bilingual social network.  
Navarre, 2006

**Language spoken...**



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 31.** Use of Basque depending on sociolinguistic area. Navarre, 2006**Language spoken...**

\* Figures are too low for the data of this area to be meaningful.

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

## 5. Use of Basque, domain by domain

We will examine the data for Basque language use in each of the following domains:

- the family (partner, children, siblings and parents)
- the immediate community (friends, neighbours, co-workers, shopping)
- formal domains (the bank, health centre and council offices)

### 5.2. USE OF BASQUE IN THE FAMILY

**At home, most Basque is used with offspring and siblings**

At home, 5% of the inhabitants of Navarre aged sixteen or older always or usually speak Basque, and a further 2% speak Basque and Spanish to an equal degree. Yet another 2% speak Basque sometimes but not as much as Spanish.

The density of the speaker's Basque-speaking social network and the speaker's fluent command of Basque go a long way towards determining language use, especially in the home domain.

When everyone or nearly everyone in the home can speak Basque, 69% of the population of Navarre aged sixteen or more mainly speak Basque at home and a further 15% speak as much Basque as Spanish in the home. But when the number of people in the home who can speak Basque descends to half of the house's residents, nobody in the house speaks mostly Basque, and only 2% speak as much Basque as Spanish.

There are also big differences in the amount of Basque spoken at home depending on the sociolinguistic area. In the fourth area (with 80% or more Basque speakers), for instance, 65% mainly speak Basque in the home and 13% speak as much Basque as Spanish. But in areas fewer than 50% of whose population are Basque speakers, 2% or fewer of the inhabitants speak Basque as the main language of the home, and 3% or fewer speak as much Basque as Spanish.

85% of “more Basque” bilinguals mainly speak Basque at **home**, and another 9% speak as much Basque as Spanish. As the fluency of bilinguals goes down, so does the use of Basque in the home. Thus only 41% of balanced bilinguals and 9% of “more Spanish” bilinguals mainly speak Basque at home. Among such bilinguals the tendency to use as much Basque as Spanish in the home (though not for Basque to predominate) is fairly substantial: 19% for balanced bilinguals and 12% for “more Spanish” ones. More than half (62%) of “more Spanish” bilinguals only speak Spanish at home.

Close to half (37%) of bilinguals over sixteen in Navarre speak mostly Basque to their partner and another 9% speak as much Basque as Spanish. The proportion who speak Basque to their children is higher: 68% speak mostly Basque and 11% speak as much Basque as Spanish. 45% speak Basque to their siblings, plus an additional 14% who speak both languages equally. 47% always (or almost always) speak to their parents in Basque; a further 7% speak to their mother, and 6% to their father, as often in Basque as in Spanish.

Breaking down the data for use of Basque at home by age group, the trends that emerge have to be read bearing in mind that people of different ages make up the domestic environment; only communication with a partner or sibling involves two people of the same age and generation. Given that over half of bilinguals aged 25 or less are “new” speakers, these are hardly likely to have opportunities to speak Basque at home, at least certainly not with their parents, who will be monolingual Spanish speakers by and large.

When we break down the use of Basque in the home according to age, it makes a big difference whether we take into account the whole universe of all Navarrese inhabitants over sixteen or limit ourselves to bilinguals. Looking at all inhabitants, there is not much difference between the different age groups, in all of which 5%-7% use Basque as much as or more than Spanish.

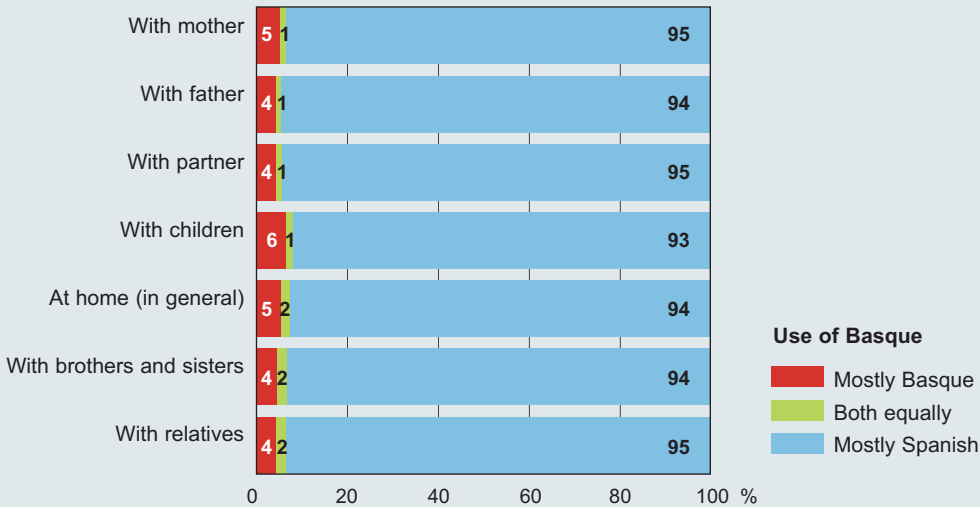
If however we refer just to bilinguals, then we find that bilinguals over 65 score highest for use of Basque: 72% of bilinguals speak Basque as much as or more than Spanish, while the younger the age group, the lower the proportion who use Basque. Thus in the 16-to-24 group, only 30% of full bilinguals use Basque as much as or more than Spanish at home.

Table 12. Use of Basque at home, by age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)

Use of Basque	Age groups				
	>=65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
Basque only or more than Spanish	5.5	4.0	4.3	4.0	4.7
Evenly balanced	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.4	1.0
Spanish only or more than Basque	92.6	93.9	94.0	94.9	94.3

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Figure 32. Use of Basque at home. Navarre, 2006 (%)



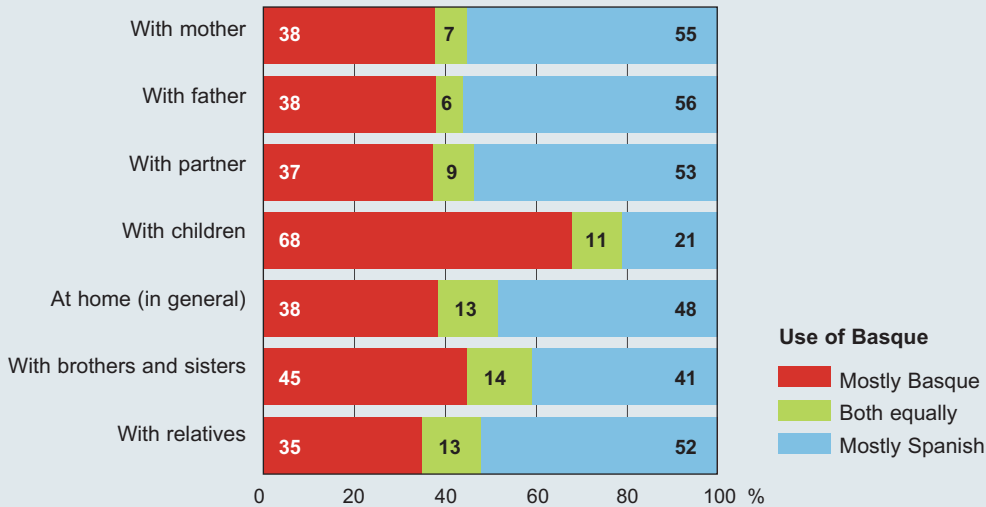
Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Table 13. Use of Basque at home by full bilinguals, by age group. Navarre, 2006 (%)

Use of Basque	Age groups				
	>=65	50-64	35-49	25-34	16-24
Basque only or more than Spanish	55.0	45.0	44.0	28.0	25.0
Evenly balanced	17.0	16.0	19.0	11.0	5.0
Spanish only or more than Basque	28.0	39.0	37.0	62.0	70.0

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Figure 33. Use of Basque at home by full bilinguals. Navarre, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

## 5.2. USE OF BASQUE IN THE IMMEDIATE COMMUNITY

The proportion of the inhabitants of Navarre aged sixteen and over who always or nearly always use Basque in these domains is 4% when talking to co-workers, friends, neighbours or shop assistants. The percentages who use as much Basque as Spanish are 2% for co-workers and friends, and 1% for neighbours and shopkeepers.

Now we will look at just bilinguals in the domains that make up the immediate community (friends, neighbours, co-workers and shopkeepers). All inhabitants of Navarre, bilinguals included, have limited opportunities to use Basque in their relations with friends, neighbours, co-workers and shopkeepers because of the low percentage of the whole population that they represent. Thus it is more useful to examine the use of Basque in the immediate community limiting ourselves to bilinguals.

Of full bilinguals, the proportion who always or generally speak Basque to their friends is 43%; neighbours and co-workers, 39%; and shopkeepers, 34%. The percentage who use Basque to the same extent as Spanish with their friends is 13%; co-workers and shopkeepers, 13%; and neighbours, 10%.

Networks exert a strong influence on the use of Basque with friends, too, although the impact is not as marked as at home. When everyone or almost everyone in a group of friends can speak Basque, 72% of people always or nearly always speak Basque and a further 13% speak as much Basque as Spanish. When the number of people in the group who can speak Basque is not the whole (or almost the whole) group but is still more than half of the group, a considerable number of people again speak Basque (51% always or almost always; and another 13% as much as Spanish).

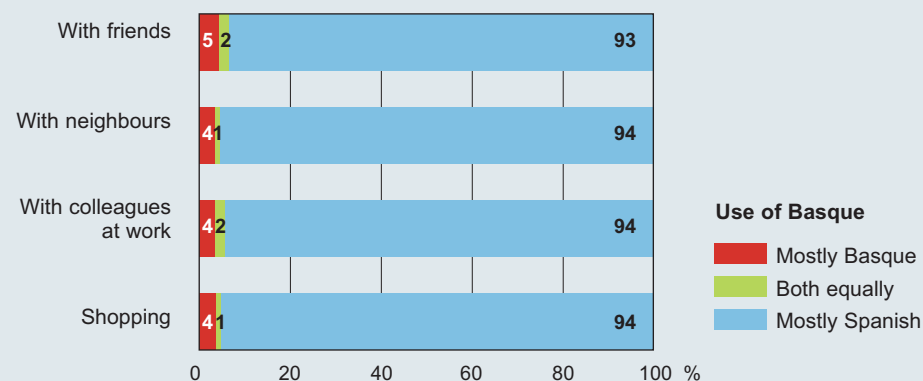
On the other hand, the factor of fluency plays as big a part in language use between friends as it does within the family. 83% of “more Basque” bilinguals always or nearly always speak to their friends in Basque, whereas only 51% of balanced bilinguals and 22% of “more Spanish” bilinguals do so. A considerable number of balanced and “more Spanish” bilinguals (23% and 21%, respectively) speak Basque as much as Spanish with friends.

When speaking to neighbours, 39% of the inhabitants of Navarre aged sixteen and over always or nearly always use Basque, and another 10% use as much Basque as Spanish in this context. The social network weighs heavily on language choices when speaking to neighbours: when all or nearly all the neighbours are Bas-

que speakers 87% always or nearly always speak Basque, but when not all or nearly all, yet still over half of the neighbours can speak Basque, the percentage of people who still always or nearly always speak to their neighbours in Basque drops by twenty-one percentage points to 66%.

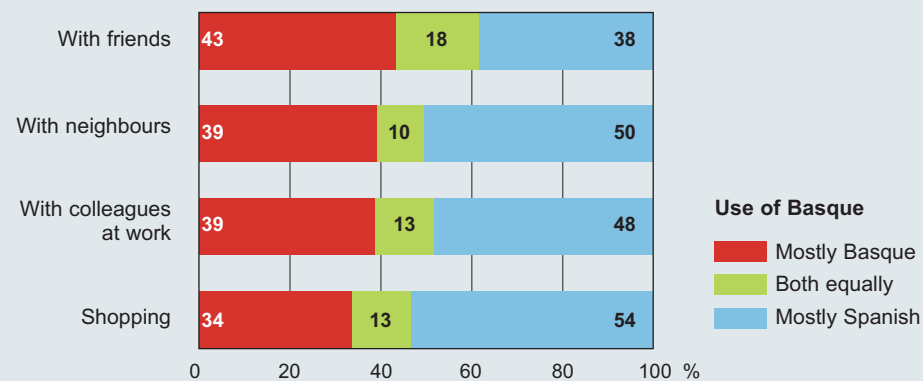
The patterns of language use when people go shopping are rather similar: 34% nearly always or always speak Basque in the places where they usually shop, and a further 13% use as much Basque as Spanish. The social network strongly influences language choice in the shop environment.

**Figure 34.** Use of Basque with immediate community. Navarre, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 35.** Use of Basque with immediate community by full bilinguals. Navarre, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.



### 5.3. USE OF BASQUE IN FORMAL DOMAINS

Banks, health centres, local council services and Spanish government offices comprise the formal domains of language use examined. Of the population of Navarre aged sixteen or over, 4% always or nearly always use Basque at the bank and the health centre, 5% at council offices and 1% at Spanish government offices. Another 1% use Basque to the same degree as Spanish at the bank, the health centre and council offices.

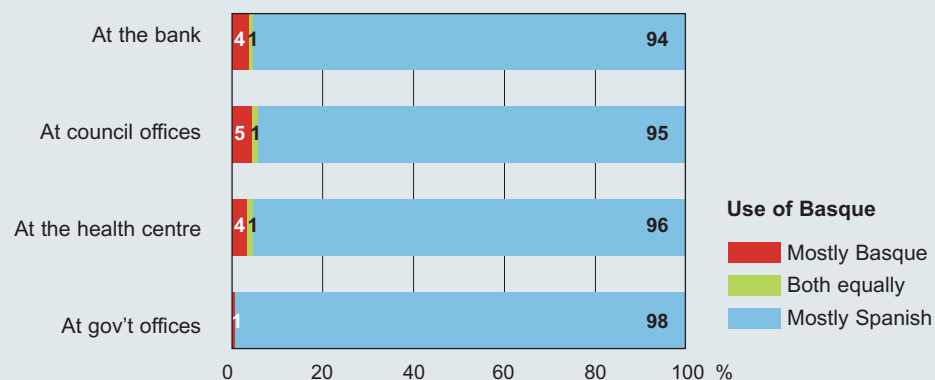
For the same reason as with the immediate community, henceforth we shall only consider the language use of bilinguals in these domains.

Of Navarrese *bilinguals* aged sixteen or over, 39% always or nearly always use Basque at the bank, 31% at the health centre, 38% at council offices and 13% at Spanish government offices. Another 8% use Basque to the same degree as Spanish at the bank and the health centre, 12% at council offices and 4% in government offices.

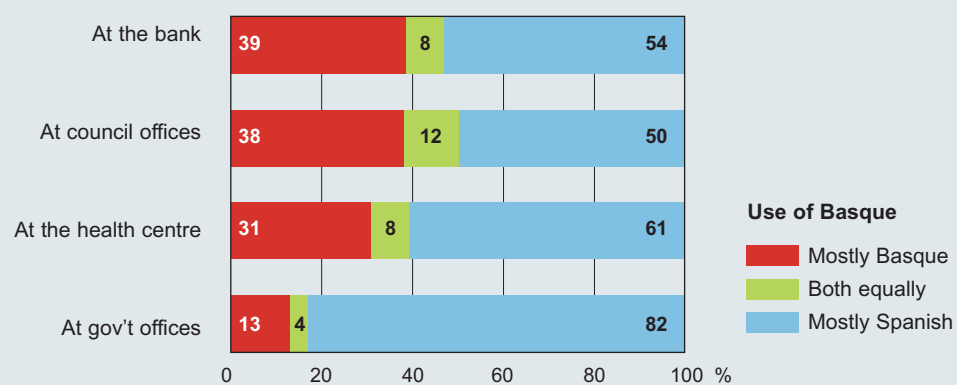
The influence of the social network on language use in the formal domain is not as decisive as it is in communication in the home and with friends. Thus for instance when everyone or nearly everyone at the bank, health centre or council office can speak Basque, 80% speak Basque always or almost always. But when not everyone (or even nearly everyone) speaks Basque yet more than half the people do, a considerable proportion, 60%, of bilinguals will still always or nearly always use Basque.

On the other hand, fluency is as important in determining language use in the formal domain as it is in the home and the immediate community. Thus whereas 67% of “more Basque” bilinguals always or almost always speak Basque at the bank, only 48% of balanced bilinguals and 15% of “more Spanish” bilinguals do so.

At Spanish government offices, where least use by far is made of Basque, 13% of bilinguals speak Basque always or nearly always, and 4% speak Basque to the same extent as Spanish. Even among “more Basque” bilinguals the use of Basque always or nearly always drops to 32% in this context. The corresponding proportions of balanced bilinguals is 11%, while that for “more Spanish” bilinguals is just 4%.

**Figure 36.** Use of Basque in the formal domain. Navarre, 2006 (%)

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 37.** Use of Basque in the formal domain by full bilinguals. Navarre, 2006 (%)

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

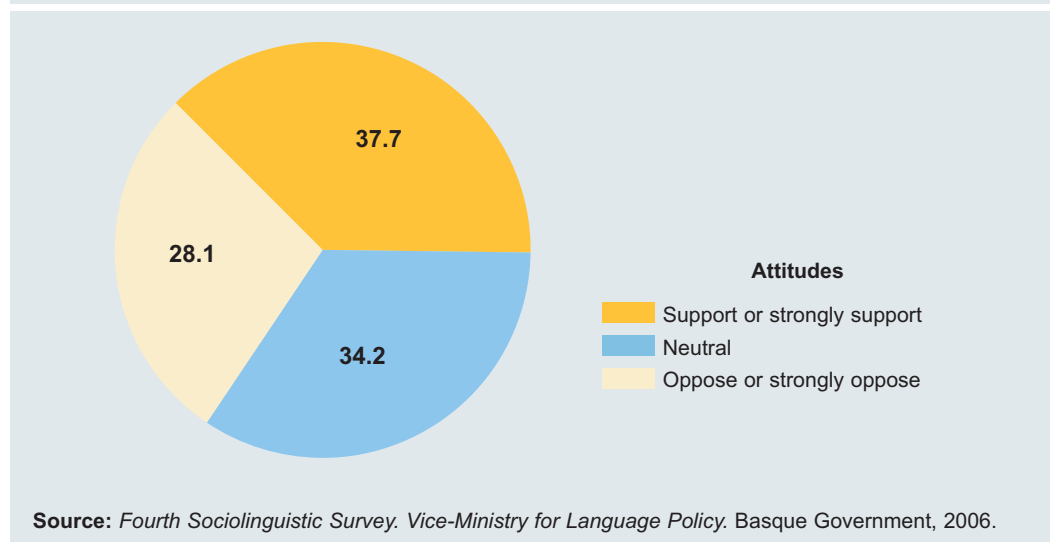
## 6. Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque

Over a third (37.7%) of the inhabitants of Navarre aged sixteen or more support the promotion of the Basque language use. Support is stronger (89.3%) among the bilingual part of the population (85.4%) than among those who speak no Basque (28.4%)

The Vice-Ministry for Language Policy of the Government of the Basque Autonomous Community has developed a typology for the classification of opinions expressed in support of or contrary to the promotion of the Basque language in different domains by inhabitants of Navarre aged sixteen or older.

37.7% of people aged sixteen or more in Navarre view action to promote the use of Basque favourably. 28.1% are neutral on the issue and 34.2% oppose such action.

**Figure 38.** Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque. Navarre, 2006 (%)



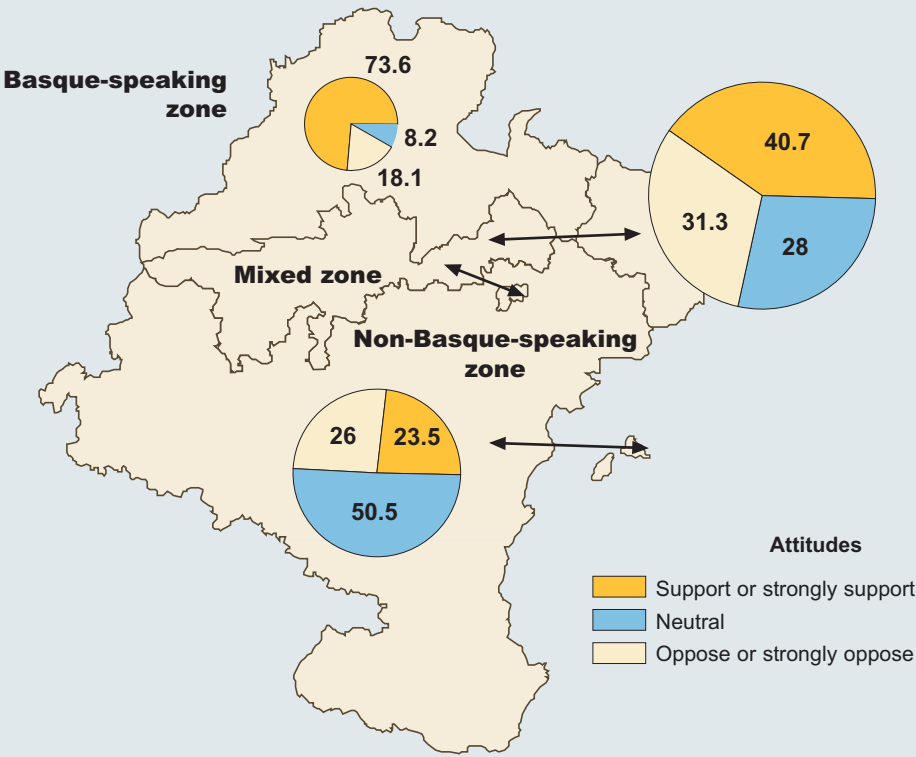
Support for promoting Basque is stronger in the Basque-speaking zone (73.6%) than in the mixed (40.7%) and non-Basque-speaking (23.5%) zones.

**Table 14.** Changes in attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque, zone by zone.  
Navarre, 1991-2006 (%)

	1991			
Attitudes	Navarre	Basque-speaking z.	Mixed zone	Non Basque-speaking z.
Support or strongly support	21.6	78.6	19.9	7.2
Neutral	26.6	18.2	30.5	23.7
Oppose or strongly oppose	51.8	3.2	49.6	69.0
	2006			
Attitudes	Navarre	Basque-speaking z.	Mixed zone	Non Basque-speaking z.
Support or strongly support	37.7	73.6	40.7	23.5
Neutral	28.1	18.1	31.3	26.0
Oppose or strongly oppose.	34.2	8.2	28.0	50.5

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 39.** Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque, zone by zone.  
Navarre, 2006 (%)



Note: The size of circles represents the population of each zone.

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Attitudes towards Basque are closely linked to language competence. 85.4% of full bilinguals favour Basque language promotion. This contrasts with 67.1% of passive bilinguals and 28.4% of monolingual Spanish speakers.

12.9% of full bilinguals are neutral on the issue, and 1.7% oppose promoting Basque. 20.9% of passive bilinguals and 30.8% of Spanish-speaking monolinguals are neutral. Opposition to moves to promote Basque is found among 12% of passive bilinguals and 40.7% of people who can only speak Spanish.

As regards age, efforts to promote Basque are viewed most favourably by people in the 35-to-49 and 50-to-65 age groups (over 40%). Support is likewise expressed by a little over one-third of the over-65 group and about a third of the remaining age groups (16-to-24 and 25-to-34). Neutrality is highest in the over-65 population and the youngest (16-to-24) group, at 35% and 30% respectively. Opposition to promotion of the Basque language is found in 29% of the elderly population and between 32% and 41% in the rest of the population.

43% of people sixteen or over in Navarre consider that children should be required to learn Basque, and 53% think that a knowledge of Basque ought to be required of people entering the civil service.

The statistics show that people's opinions about children learning Basque vary depending on their knowledge of Basque. 74% of full bilinguals consider this necessary, as do 61% of passive bilinguals, but only 37% of monolingual Spanish speakers.

Age also affects attitudes: although Basque-language schooling is widely supported by older people, the younger the age group the less widespread is their support, falling as low as 28% in the 16-to-24 age group.

On the question of making the knowledge of Basque compulsory for people entering the civil service, differences between age groups are negligible, but while this proposal is supported by almost all (89%) full bilinguals and three quarters (72%) of passive bilinguals, under half (46%) of monolingual Spanish speakers agree.

Nearly half (46%) of the inhabitants of Navarre over sixteen support promoting Basque-language media. Type of bilingualism or monolingualism is an important factor for this issue, as the percentages of people in favour of measures in favour of the Basque-language media vary from 91% of full bilinguals to only 39% of monolingual Spanish speakers. Younger groups express more support than either the middle-aged or the elderly.

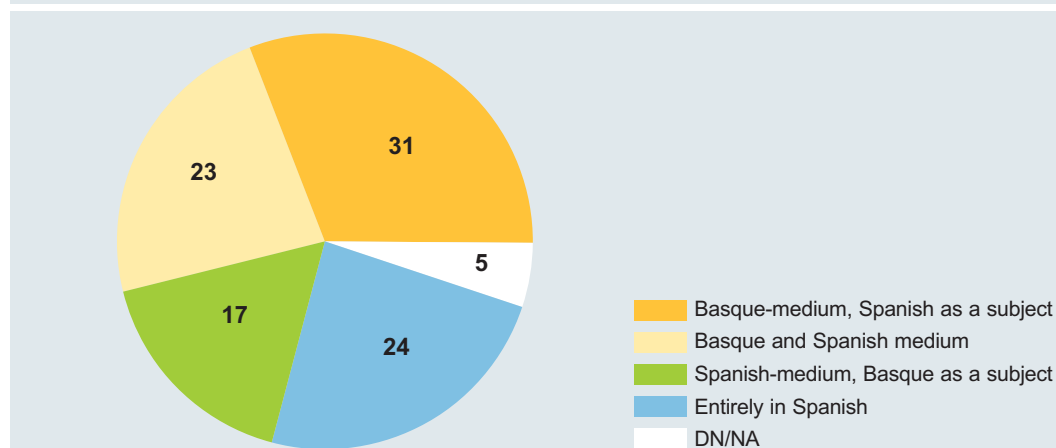
To find out how deeply engrained certain preconceptions about Basque are in our society, those surveyed were asked for their opinions, summarised here:

- Asked whether they thought Basque would ever become as strong as Spanish, 26% of the inhabitants of Navarre responded affirmatively. Nevertheless, a substantial proportion (53%) of the population do not think that Basque will ever become as strong as Spanish.
- Regarding the richness of the language, nearly half (43%) of the population think that Basque is as rich as Spanish, while few think the opposite (15%).
- The existence of two languages in a society does not pose a problem according to 64% of the population, while 24% consider it may cause problems.
- Finally, most of the population think that the placement of children in Basque-medium schools even when not fully competent Spanish speakers is not a bad thing (84%).

**Most Navarrese think that a society with two languages is not a source of problems**

There are no marked differences between age groups and bilingualism types regarding their opinions about Basque. The biggest differences are those correlating with the language zones. In general, people in the Basque-speaking and mixed zones have more positive opinions about the richness of the Basque language and its outlook for the future, but very similar views to the rest of the population about the desirability of Basque-medium schools and the coexistence of two languages not being a source of problems for society.

Moving on to other opinions about Basque: 31% of inhabitants of Navarre aged sixteen or over would like their children to go to Basque-medium schools (with Spanish taught as a subject), while 30% would opt for mixed-language schools (part Basque-medium, part Spanish-medium), and 17% for Spanish-medium schools.

**Figure 40.** Opinions about school types for children. Navarre, 2006 (%)

**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

There are noticeable differences depending on the language zone. 91% of Basque-speaking zone inhabitants prefer for children to go to Basque-medium schools (with Spanish taught as a subject) or mixed Basque/Spanish-medium schools, a preference also expressed by 57% of mixed zone inhabitants, but by only 38% of the population of the non-Basque-speaking zone.

Likewise for biligual or monolingual type. 87% of full bilinguals prefer the Basque-medium and 9% the mixed-medium option (partly in Basque, partly in Spanish), as against 63% and 23%, respectively, in the case of partial bilinguals, and 20% and 25% in the case of monolingual Spanish speakers.

73% of the population over sixteen are of the opinion that in the future both Basque and Spanish should be spoken, while 5% think that just Basque ought to be spoken. Among full bilinguals, the figures of those who favour the use of both languages or of Basque only in the future contrast less, reaching 79% and 19%, with the majority still in favour of the maintenance of both languages.

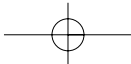
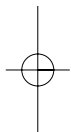
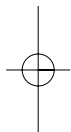
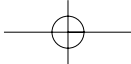
## 7. Conclusions

- At present and for the foreseeable future, two points in particular stand out in the development of the population, and hence influence sociolinguistic developments.
- One is the **notable impact of immigration**. In 1991, 2% (8,965 people) of Navarre's inhabitants were immigrants, whereas in 2006 Navarre had 62,328 immigrants making up 10.4% of its total population. Thus immigration has grown very fast in the last fifteen years both in terms of absolute figures and as a percentage, proceeding at an average rate comparable to Spain's state-wide immigration rate. Considering that immigrants are speakers of languages other than Basque, this phenomenon has a bearing on the percentage of bilinguals Basque-Spanish in Navarre.
- The other important point is the **aging population and decreasing birth rate**, which also affect the proportion of bilinguals, given that growth in the number of bilinguals has been chiefly centred in the under-25 age group, which itself represents an decreasing part of the overall population.
- Looking at some numbers, in 1991 there were 84,127 inhabitants between the ages of 15 and 25. Fifteen years later, there are 67,047, or 17,080 fewer and a negative growth of -21%. The opposite trend is seen in the over-65 age group, which has grown in this same fifteen-year period by 63%, going from 79,791 in 1991 to 126,026 in 2006.
- In this context, then, it is remarkable that the number of full bilinguals has **risen** in Navarre during the last fifteen years in both absolute numbers and percentages. Today the population of Navarre aged 16 and over includes 56,400 bilinguals, 16,200 more than there were in 1991. In percentages, fifteen years ago 9.5% of the population of Navarre were bilingual; today, 11.1% are bilingual.
- The **most striking increase** in the number of bilinguals has taken place in the **mixed zone**, where 5.2% of the population were bilingual in 1991, as against 8.3% today. In terms of absolute figures the increase is even more remarkable, from 12,400 (in 1991) to 22,800 (in 2006). That amounts to an increase of 45.9% in the total number of full bilinguals in the mixed zone.

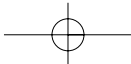
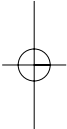
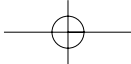


- It is also noteworthy that **gains outweigh losses** in the numbers of Basque speakers across Navarre thanks to the “new” Basque speakers or *euskaldun berriak*. The trends of high gains and close-to-zero losses are most in evidence in the young population.
- Basque language **transmission** has also made headway. The young parents covered by the survey who have children aged between two and nine are transmitting much more Basque than their predecessors. Where parents are bilingual, 98% of their children acquire Basque in the home; even with mixed couples where only one parent is bilingual, this is true of more than half of the children. Looking at parents of all ages, even when both parents are Basque speakers, as many as 17.3% failed to transmit the language. The percentage of parents not transmitting Basque in the case of mixed couples is much higher, at 81.1%.
- However, it must not be forgotten that **Spanish is the mother tongue of nine out of ten (90.4%) of Navarre’s population**. Basque is the sole mother tongue of 6.4% of the population aged sixteen or over, and another 3.2% have both Basque and Spanish as mother tongues. Spanish is the mother tongue of the vast majority in the mixed (93.7%) and non-Basque-speaking (98.5%) language zones. In the Basque-speaking zone, Basque is the mother tongue of most of the population (63%).
- Looking next at **use**, the general data show neither a significant increase nor decrease in the past fifteen years (going from 5.9% to 5.8%), but there is a changing trend regarding the ages of Basque language users. **The percentage of people under the age of 25 who use Basque as much as or more than Spanish has grown** to 6.7%. However, the highest proportion of people speaking more Basque than Spanish is to be found in the 65-and-over age group.
- Also, since many bilinguals (33.8%) are “**new**” **Basque speakers**, they have **limited opportunities to speak Basque** either inside or outside their homes because they live mostly in very monolingual Spanish-speaking area, given that most *euskaldun berriak* live in the mixed area. Hence their homes, immediate communities and formal use domains are mostly Spanish-speaking. It is very important to find ways of providing such bilinguals with places and opportunities for using their Basque.

- In the **Basque-speaking zone** the percentage of bilinguals is very high, having remained at 60% over the past fifteen years. In comparison to the other zones, here use of Basque is much more common. In fact, 46.5% of the inhabitants of this zone speak Basque as much as or more than Spanish. The level of use has remained stable over the past fifteen years; in 1991 the figure was 46.8%.
- The percentage of the population who support initiatives to support the Basque language has grown substantially. Today the proportions of the population **in favour of promoting Basque** (37.7%) and **opposed** to doing so (34.2%) are only three percentage points apart, with a larger number in favour, in clear contrast to fifteen years ago, when the proportion against (51.8%) was much bigger than the proportion in favour (21.6%).



**THE BASQUE COUNTRY**  
Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey



## 1. Overview of the population of the Basque Country

According to 2006 population data, the Basque Country has a population of 3,015,558, 71% of whom live in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), 20% in Navarre and the remaining 9% in the northern Basque Country.

The Basque Country covers an area of 20,664 km<sup>2</sup>, bordering on the Bay of Biscay at the western end of the Pyrenee mountains. The Basque Country is made up of four provinces, which form part politically and administratively of two states: Spain, in the case of Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Navarre; and France, in the case of Lapurdi, Low Navarre and Zuberoa.

Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa make up the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), while Navarre (Nafarroa) is constituted as a separate autonomous community (the Autonomous Community of Navarre). The northern Basque Country consists of Lapurdi, Low Navarre and Zuberoa. The BAC and Navarre each have self-government, whereas the three northern provinces are merely a part of the French department of Pyrénées Atlantiques.

Two features stand out when we look at the development of the population of the Basque Country over the past fifteen year period:

- the aging of the population, and
- the impact of immigration.

The population of the Basque Country is getting progressively older: life expectancy is high, while the birth rate has fallen substantially. In the BAC and Navarre, the over-65 population rose by almost 50% between 1991 and 2006. In the North the increase was less steep, but this may be because the proportion of older people in the population of this region was already high fifteen years earlier.

**Basque society is aging, and immigration has greatly increased in recent years, especially in Navarre and the BAC**

Foreign immigration to the Basque Country has grown very substantially over the past fifteen years, notably in the BAC and above all in Navarre. Between 1991 and 2006 the proportion of foreign immigrants in the population of the BAC rose from 2% to 5%, while that of Navarre went from 2% to 10%.

The universe studied in the sociolinguistic survey covers people in the Basque Country aged sixteen and over. According to 2006 data, the Basque Country has 2,589,600 inhabitants aged sixteen or older, of which 71.5% (1,850,500 people) live in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), 19.7% (508,900 people) in Navarre, and 8.9% (230,200 people) in the Northern Basque Country.

When looking at the statistics it is always important to bear in mind the heavy demographic weight of the BAC within the Basque Country and the consequent impact on the overall picture.

Table 1. Population aged 16 or over by age group. Basque Country, 2006

	Population aged 16 or over			
Age groups	Basque Country	BAC	Navarre	Northern BC
≥ 65	557,500	393,200	104,700	59,600
50-64	556,800	402,400	102,900	51,500
35-49	712,300	512,000	141,300	59,000
25-34	481,100	348,600	101,500	31,000
16-24	281,900	194,300	58,500	29,100
Total	2,589,600	1,850,500	508,900	230,200

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

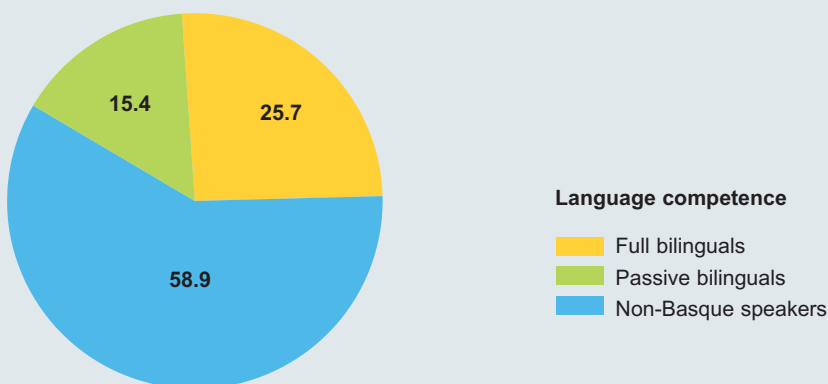
## 2. Language competence

### 2.1. POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

According to 2006 data the Basque Country has 2,589,600 inhabitants aged sixteen or more, 25.7% of whom (665,700 people) are fully bilingual, meaning that they speak both Basque and either Spanish or French well. A further 397,900 (15.4%) are able to understand Basque although they do not speak it well; these will be referred to as passive bilinguals. The rest (1,525,900 people, i.e. 58.9%) are non-Basque speakers, in other words, people who do not know Basque at all.

**25.7% of the inhabitants of the Basque Country are full bilinguals, another 15.4% are passive bilinguals, while 58.9% are non-Basque speakers**

**Figure 1.** Language competence. Basque Country, 2006 (%)



**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

The greatest proportion and absolute number of full bilinguals in the Basque Country (83.7% and 557,600 respectively) live in the BAC. The 56,400 full bilinguals in Navarre represent 8.5% of the Navarre's over-sixteen population. The smallest percentage and absolute number of bilinguals in the Basque Country (7.8% and 51,800 respectively) are found in the North.



Figure 2. Language competence region by region. Basque Country, 2006 (%)

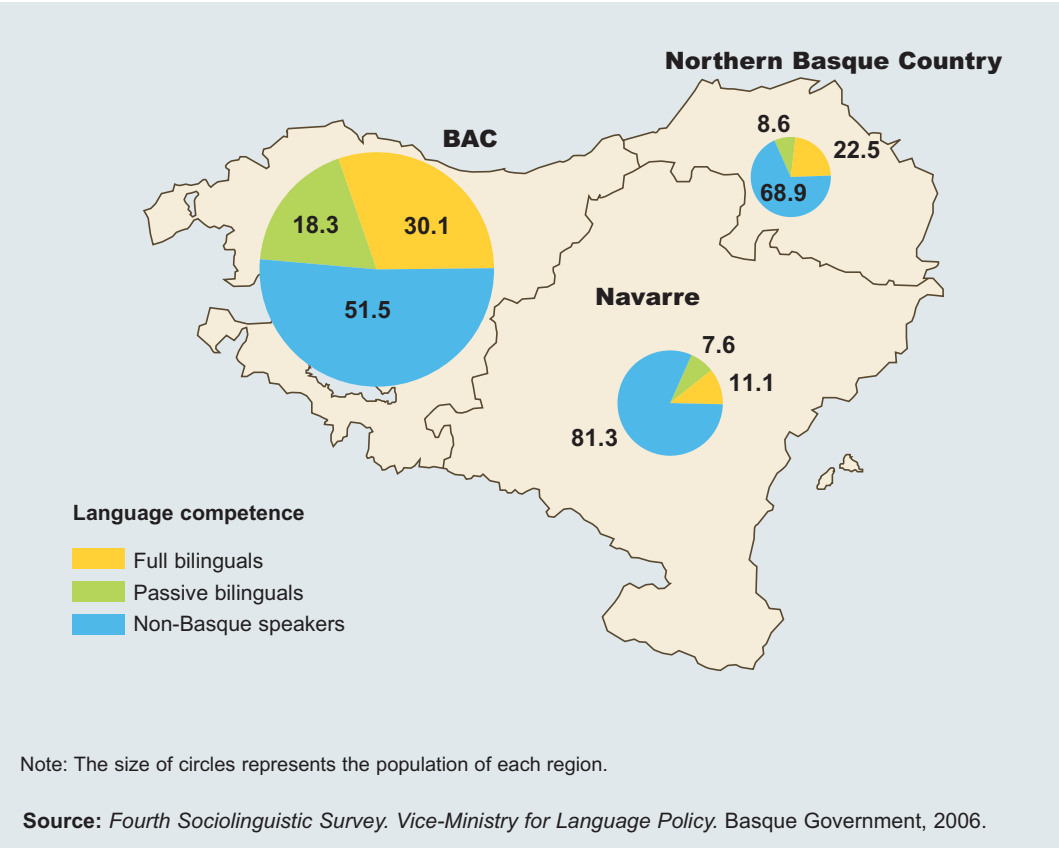


Table 2. Change in the numbers of inhabitants and full bilinguals 16 and over. Basque Country, 1991-2006

Region	Population change age 16 and more			
	1991		2006	
	Total	Full bilinguals	Total	Full bilinguals
BAC	1,741,500	419,200	1,850,500	557,600
Navarre	420,700	40,200	508,900	56,400
Northern BC	208,900	69,100	230,200	51,800
<b>Basque Coun.</b>	<b>2,371,100</b>	<b>528,500</b>	<b>2,589,600</b>	<b>665,800</b>

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

Over the past fifteen years, from 1991 to 2006, the number of full bilinguals has increased by 137,300. Their proportion has also grown, from 22.3% in 1991 to 25.7% in 2006. Increases in the number of bilinguals have occurred in the BAC and Navarre but not in the North. The number of bilinguals is constantly on the rise in the BAC. It is notable in this respect that the increase in numbers of bilinguals has been greater over the past fifteen years in the BAC (with an increase of 138,400) than in the Basque Country as a whole (with an increase of only 137,300). In Navarre, also, the number of bilinguals is gradually growing and there are hardly any losses. It is in the North where losses are still occurring and will continue in coming years; nonetheless, the number of bilingual young people has now begun to rise.

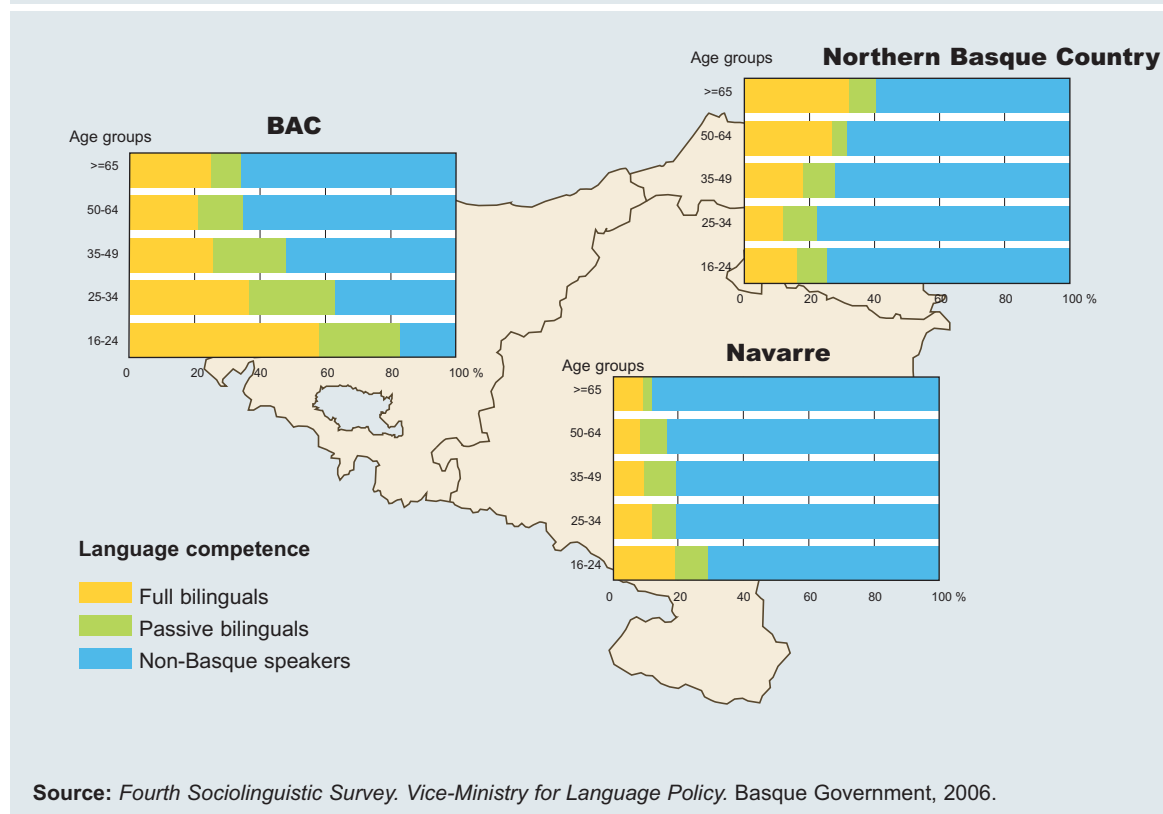
Meanwhile, the number of non-Basque-speaking monolinguals in the Basque Country is lower by 133,900 today than fifteen years ago (going from 70% in 1991 to 58.9% in 2006). However, as with bilinguals, the situation of non-Basque speakers in the BAC and Navarre is distinct from that in the North. While the percentage of non-Basque speakers has gone down in the BAC and Navarre, both their numbers and their proportion have risen in the North.

Finally, the numbers of passive bilinguals, i.e. people who can understand Basque adequately although they do not speak it well, have risen in all the regions, having risen from 7.7% to 15.4% for the Basque Country as a whole in the last fifteen years.

## 2.2. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY AGE

Growth in the number of bilinguals in the BAC has taken place in all age groups below 50, and in Navarre in those below 35. In the North, the largest percentage of bilinguals is found in the 65-and-over group, and the younger the age group, the lower the percentage of bilinguals. However, there are growing signs of a changing trend among young people in the North, and according to 2006 data the percentage and absolute number of bilinguals has risen. Thus in 2001 there were 3,200 full bilinguals (representing 12.2%) aged from 16 to 24, whereas in 2006 there were 4,700 (representing 16.1%).

**In the BAC and Navarre, the highest proportion of full bilinguals is found among young people; but in the North, the highest proportion is found among the elderly**

**Figure 3.** Language competence by age group, region by region. Basque Country, 2006 (%)

Thus over the past fifteen years the increase in the number of bilinguals originates from young people in all three regions (the BAC, Navarre and the North).

The least Basque-speaking group is that of older people, but as the years go by this group is gaining bilinguals from below, and losing non-Basque speakers at the top as the elderly pass away. While the young are becoming progressively more Basque-speaking, in the oldest group (which had the highest proportion of bilinguals in the BAC and Navarre fifteen years ago) the percentage of non-Basque speakers has grown.

Overall, the percentage of passive bilinguals has increased in every age group. This increase is found in all three regions. However, for the first time in the BAC, the proportion of passive bilinguals (24.9%) in the 16-24 age group, i.e. among young people, is lower than that in the 25-34 age group (26.0%). Thus the growth of full bilingualism in the youngest group has resulted not only in a falling number of non-Basque speakers in this group but in a fall in the number of passive bilin-

guals also. In other words, the loss of passive bilinguals in the 16-24 age group is benefitting the full bilinguals.

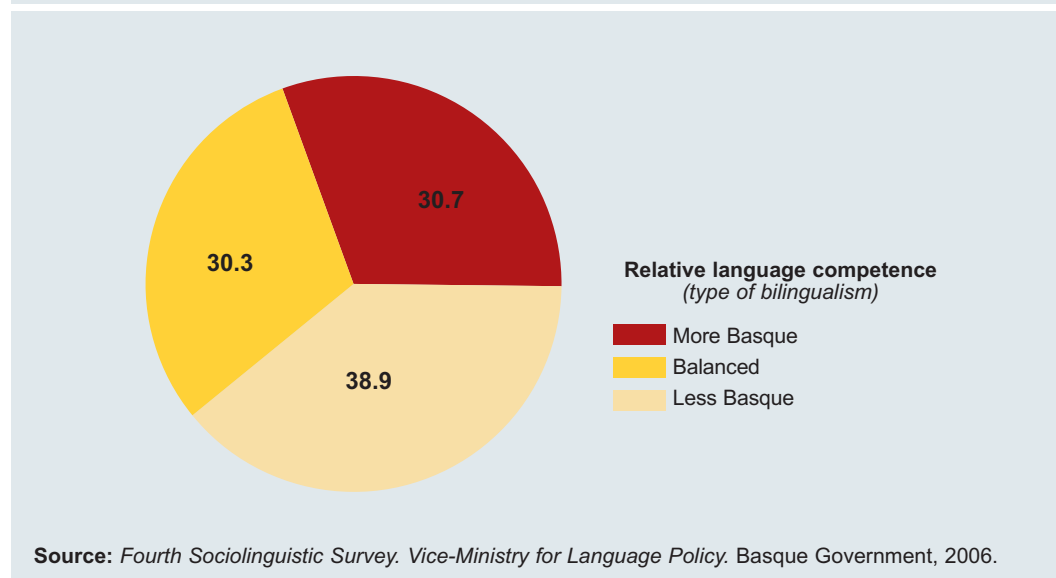
### 2.3. RELATIVE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

We may divide full bilinguals into three groups depending on whether they express themselves better in Basque or in Spanish or French, as follows: “more Basque” bilinguals (30.7%), balanced bilinguals (30.3%) and “less Basque” (i.e. “more Spanish/ French”) bilinguals (38.9%).

**“More Basque”** bilinguals, who are more fluent in Basque than in Spanish, comprise 31.8% of all full bilinguals in the BAC, 26.2% of Navarrese bilinguals and 24.7% of bilinguals in the Northern Basque Country. Throughout the Basque Country, the greatest proportion of such “more Basque” bilinguals is found among those over 65, and the younger the age group

**Almost one-third of full bilinguals in the Basque Country express themselves better in Basque than in Spanish or French. However, this proportion is lower (one-fifth) among young people**

**Figure 4.** Type of bilingualism (*in full bilinguals*). Basque Country, 2006 (%)

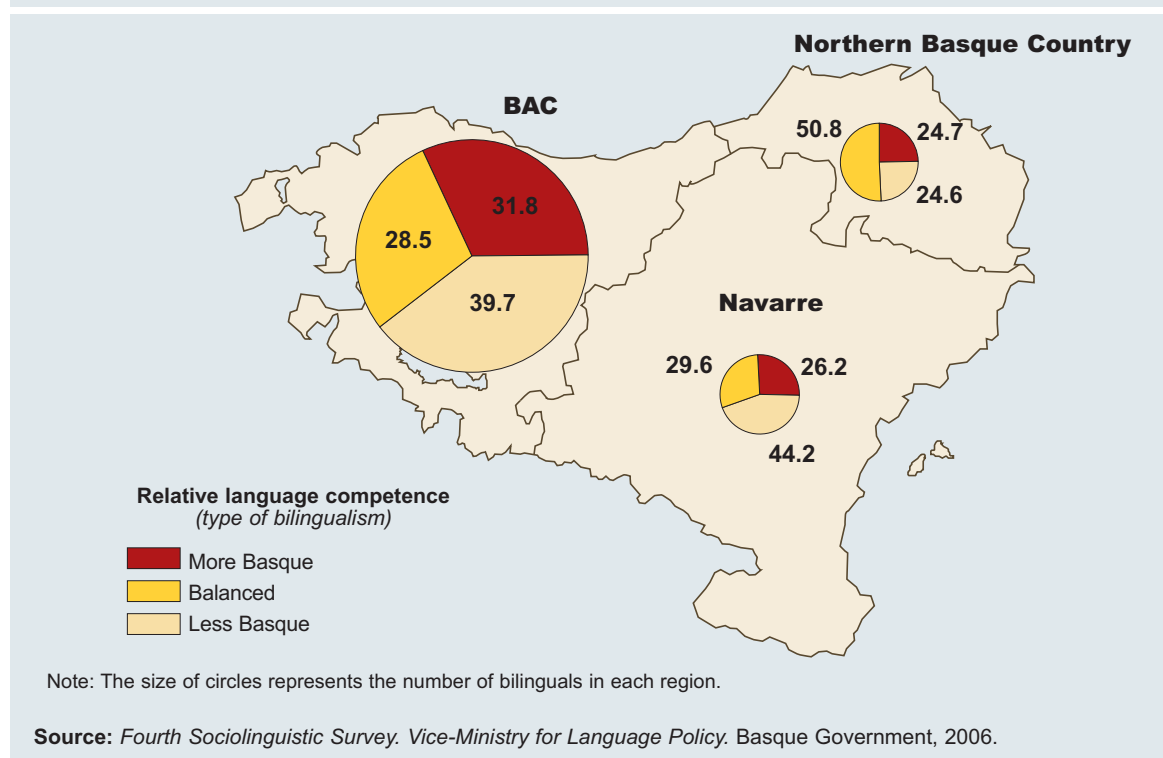


the fewer there are. Nearly all speak Basque as their mother tongue. “More Basque” bilinguals in the BAC and Navarre live in Basque-speaking areas: mainly in the third area (i.e. the area where Basque speakers make up between 50% and 80% of that area’s population) in the case of the BAC, and the fourth area (in which over 80% of the population is Basque-speaking) in the case of Navarre.

**Balanced bilinguals**, who are equally fluent in both Basque and either Spanish or French, comprise 28.5% of all bilinguals in the BAC, 29.6% of Navarrese bilinguals and 50.8% of bilinguals in the Northern Basque Country. The highest proportion of balanced bilinguals is found between the ages of 25 and 50 (one out of three in the BAC and Navarre, and over half in the North). Basque is the mother tongue of most of them (particularly in the North). However, Spanish is the mother tongue of one-fourth of balanced bilinguals in the BAC and Navarre.

**“Less Basque” bilinguals**, who are less fluent in Basque than in Spanish or French, comprise the largest group of bilinguals in the BAC and Navarre. The younger the age, the larger the proportion of “less Basque” bilinguals becomes. Spanish is the mother tongue of most of those in the BAC and Navarre, but Basque is the predominant mother tongue in this group in the North.

Figure 5. Type of bilingualism (*in full bilinguals*) region by region. Basque Country, 2006 (%)



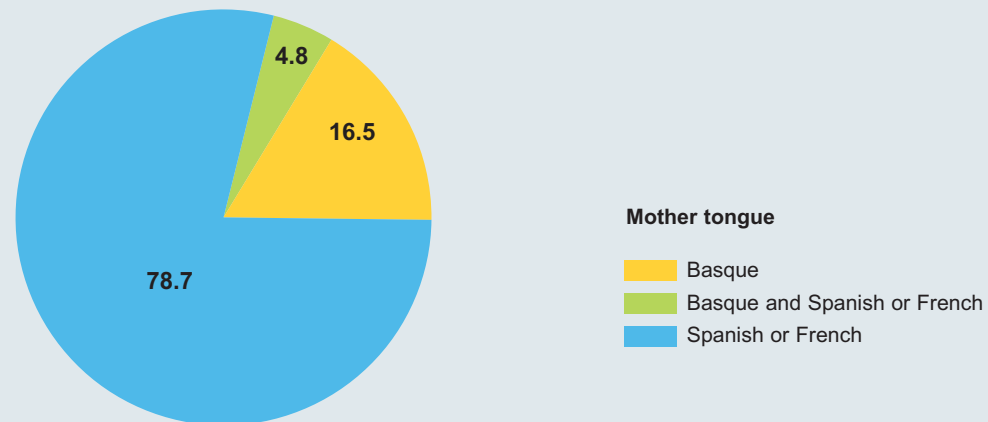
### 3. Language transmission

#### 3.1. MOTHER TONGUE, REGION BY REGION

Spanish or French is the mother tongue of three out of four inhabitants (78.7%) of the Basque Country, and Basque is that of 16.5%, while 4.8% are native speakers of both languages.

**Spanish or French mother-tongue speakers predominate in all regions of the Basque Country and all age groups**

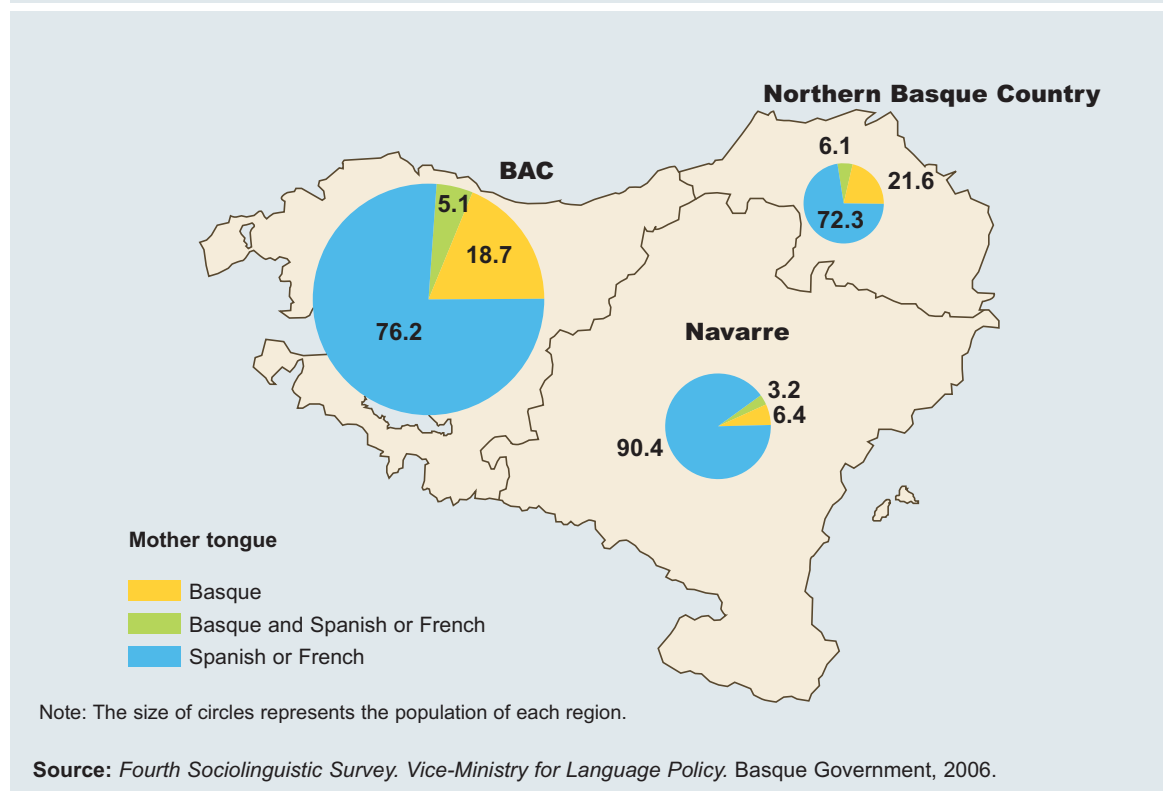
Figure 6. Mother tongue (L1). Basque Country, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

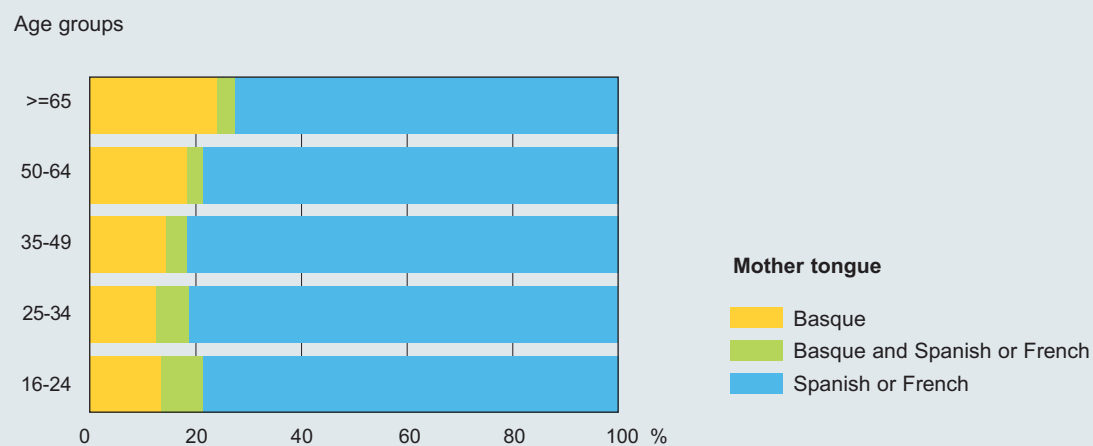
By regions, 21.6% of the population of the Northern Basque Country, 18.7% of that of the BAC and 6.4% of the inhabitants of Navarre have Basque as their mother tongue.

**Figure 7. Mother tongue (L1) region by region. Basque Country, 2006 (%)**

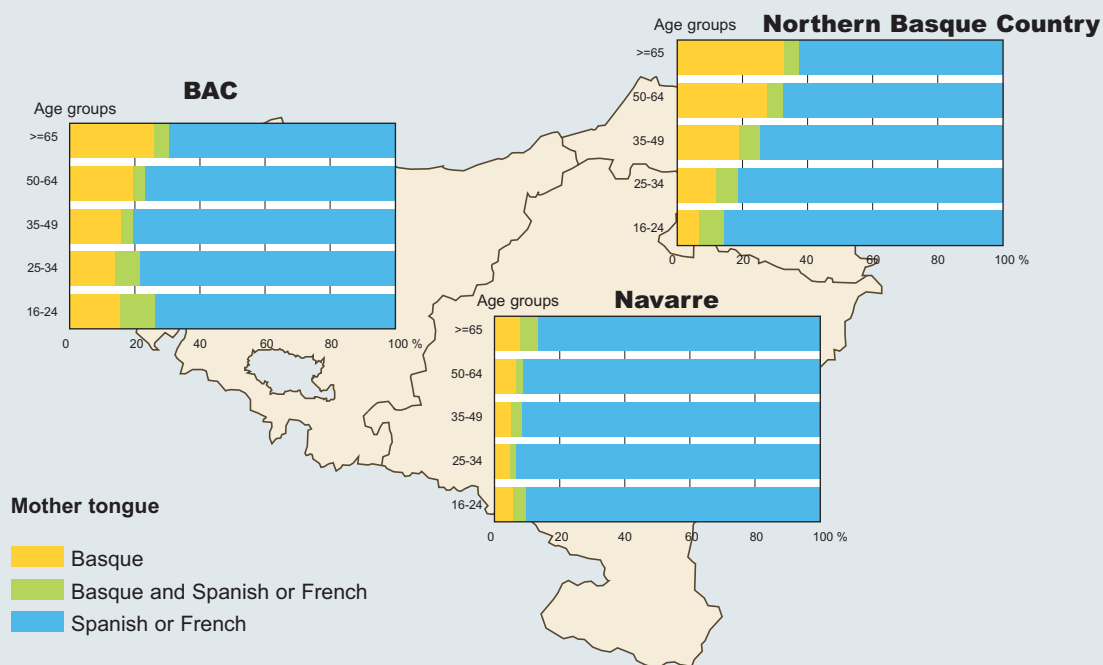


### 3.2. MOTHER TONGUE BY AGE

The highest proportion (23.5%) of mother-tongue Basque speakers is still found in the 65-and-over age group. The percentage drops parallelly with age, but the trend changes in the youngest group (aged 24 and under), with a new increase in the proportions whose mother tongue is Basque (12.9%) or both Basque and Spanish (8.4%). However, this turnaround has only taken place in the BAC and, to a lesser extent, in Navarre. In the North, on the contrary, the proportion of the youngest group with Basque as mother tongue continues to plummet.

**Figure 8.** Mother tongue by age group. Basque Country, 2006 (%)

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Figure 9.** Mother tongue by age group, region by region. Basque Country, 2006 (%)

Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

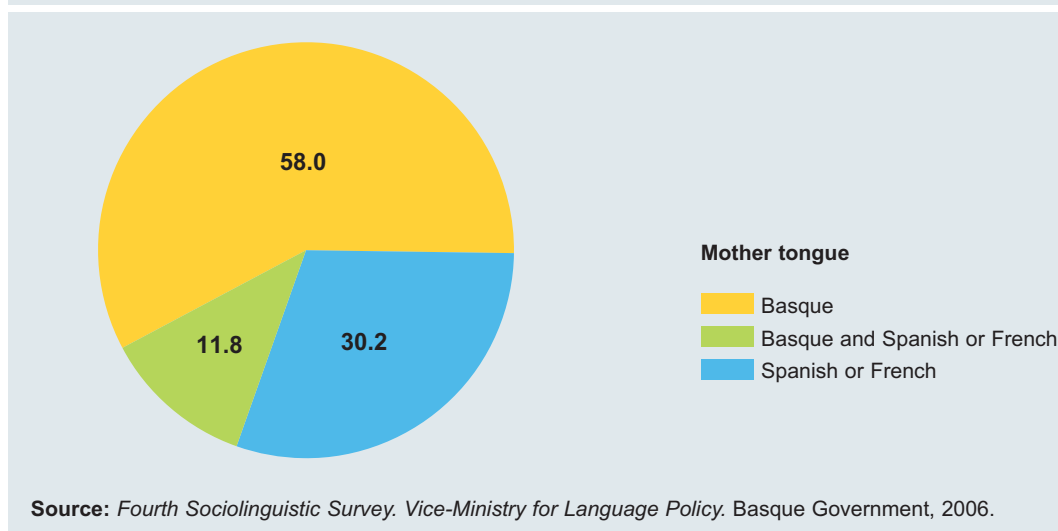


### 3.3. MOTHER TONGUE BY TYPE OF COMPETENCE

Over half (58.0%) of full bilinguals aged sixteen or over in the Basque Country have Basque as their mother tongue; another 11.8% have both Basque and Spanish or French; while the mother tongue of the remaining 30.2% of full bilinguals have Spanish or French as their mother tongue.

The last-mentioned group comprise the “new speakers” (*euskaldun berriak*) who have learnt Basque at school or in adult classes. In the BAC and Navarre they make up one-third of full bilinguals aged sixteen or more, and their proportion is growing. In the North, the proportion of “new speakers” remains small at 7.5%, yet we should bear in mind that ten years ago it was even smaller, at 3.9%.

Figure 10. Mother tongue of full bilinguals. Basque Country, 2006 (%)



### 3.4. FAMILY TRANSMISSION

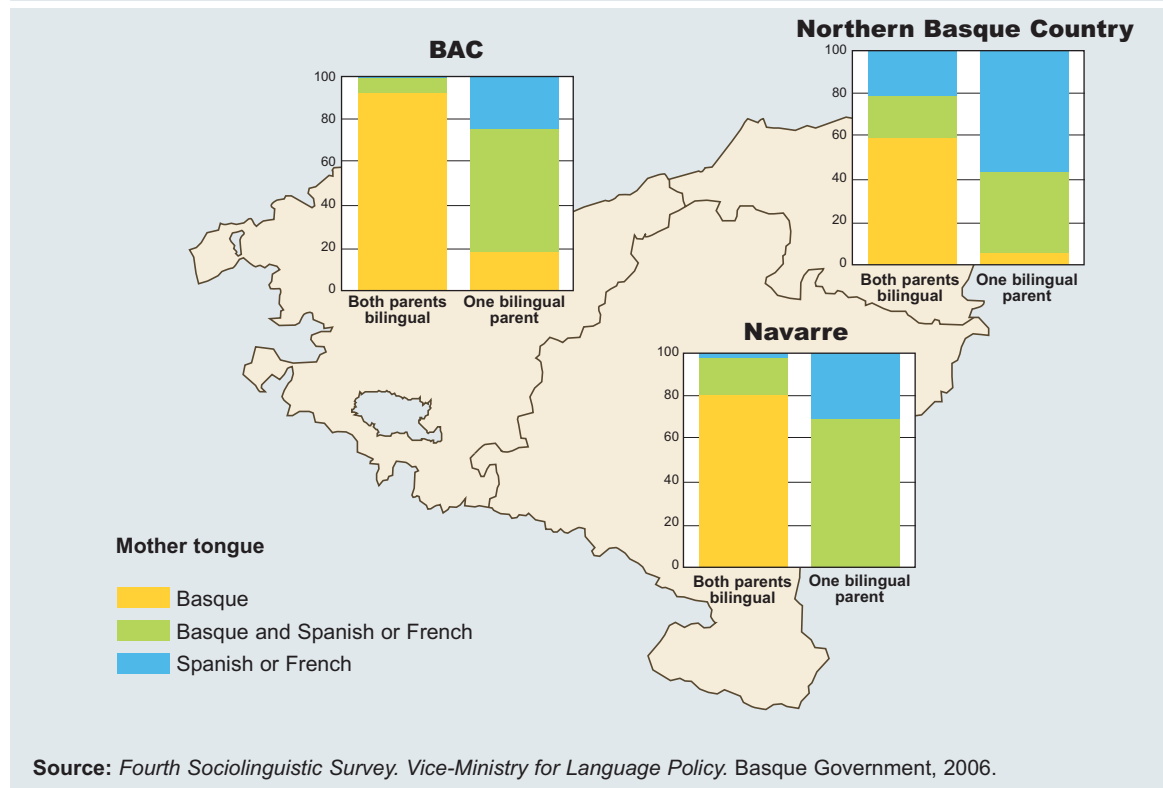
“Family transmission” refers to the language or languages that a child learns from its parents. To measure Basque language transmission in the family in the Basque Country over the past ten years, we looked at survey participants with children aged between two and nine.

The language transmitted to children is determined by parents’ language competence. In the BAC and Navarre, more than 98% of children whose parents are bilingual learn Basque at home. Although the corresponding proportion for the North is also high, it stands at ten percentage points lower than in the other regions. Most children who learnt Basque at home (more than eight out of ten of them in the BAC and Navarre, and three out of four in the North) *only* learnt Basque at home, while the rest learnt both Basque and either Spanish or French from their parents.

When one parent doesn’t speak Basque, 20% of children in the BAC, 9.1% of Navarrese and 4.6% of northern children still learnt only Basque at home. A high percentage of children of such mixed marriages in the BAC and Navarre learnt both Basque and Spanish at home (half of children aged between 10 and 24, and two-thirds of those aged between two and nine).

Nowadays when both parents are bilingual the transmission of Basque in the family is almost a certainty in the BAC and Navarre; in the North, however, the language is still being lost

**Figure 11.** Mother tongue of children aged 2-9 depending on parents' language competence, region by region. Basque Country, 2006 (%)



### 3.5. LANGUAGE TREND: BASQUE LANGUAGE GAINS AND LOSSES

Gains are increasing and losses are close to disappearing among the young in particular; the same is true, though to a lesser extent, in the North

Most people whose mother tongue is Basque (or whose mother tongues are Basque and Spanish or French) have conserved their Basque and are bilinguals today (this is true of over 85% of such people in the BAC and over 75% in both Navarre and the North). These bilinguals comprise the native Basque speakers (*euskaldun zaharrak*, “old speakers”, whose mother tongue is Basque) and native bilinguals (whose mother tongues are Basque and Spanish or French).

There are also some people who, although Basque is their mother tongue, are no longer full bilinguals becau-

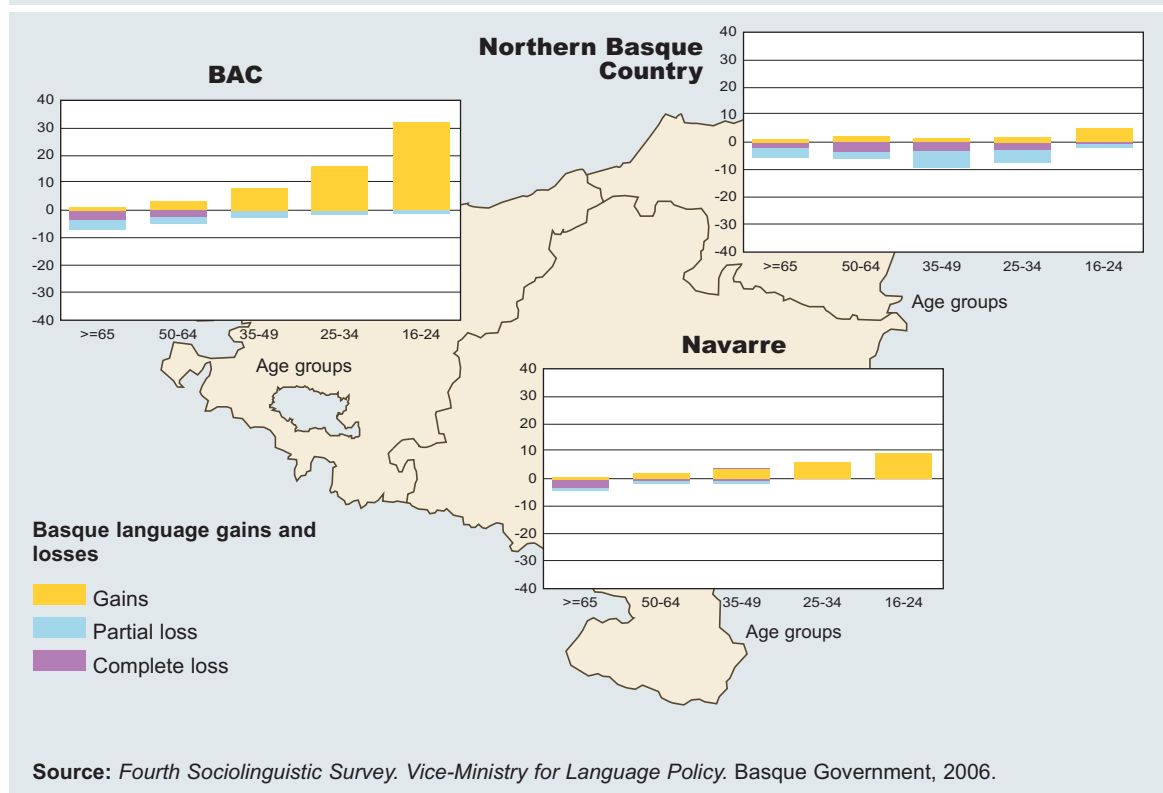
se they have lost their Basque partially or completely (these represent about 3% of the population aged sixteen or more). In some of these cases (about half in the BAC and the North, and over a third in Navarre) the loss of Basque is partial; such people no longer speak Basque well yet are able to understand it.

On the other hand, there are 200,987 people whose mother tongue is Spanish or French yet who have subsequently learnt Basque and become fully bilingual. These are the Basque language's gains.

Of these *euskaldun berriak* ("new speakers"), there are 178,000 in the BAC (10% of the population aged sixteen or over), 19,000 in Navarre (4% of the population aged sixteen or over), and 3,900 in the North (2% of the population aged sixteen or over).

The figures for *euskaldun berriak* vary substantially according to age. The percentage for people over fifty is low (averaging 1.7%). But for those aged under fifty the percentage of "new" Basque speakers is growing fast, with the most notable increase taking place in the BAC.

**Figure 12.** Basque language gains and losses by age group, region by region. Basque Country, 2006 (%)



**Source:** *Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey*. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

**Source:** *Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey*. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

## 4. Use of Basque

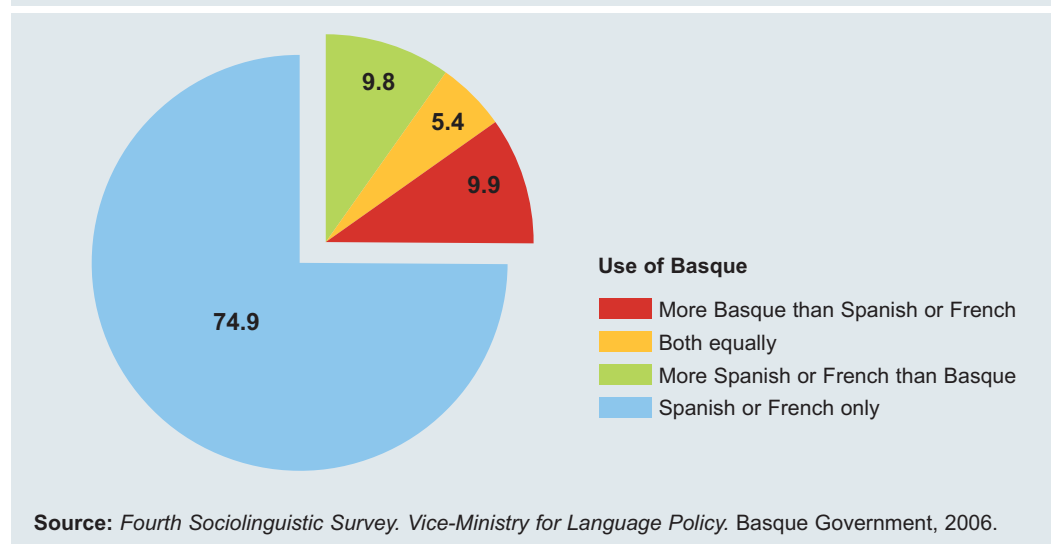
### 4.1. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE TYPOLOGY

An index measuring the social use of Basque, known as the Basque language use typology, was created by the BAC's Vice-Ministry for Language Policy in 2001. This considers three domains: home, friends and the formal domain, the last-named of which has four subdivisions: health care and concil services in the public sector, and local shops and banking outlets in the private sector.

The Basque language use typology was applied to the whole universe of 2,589,629 subjects of the sociolinguistic survey, i.e. the population aged 16 and over, yielding the following results.

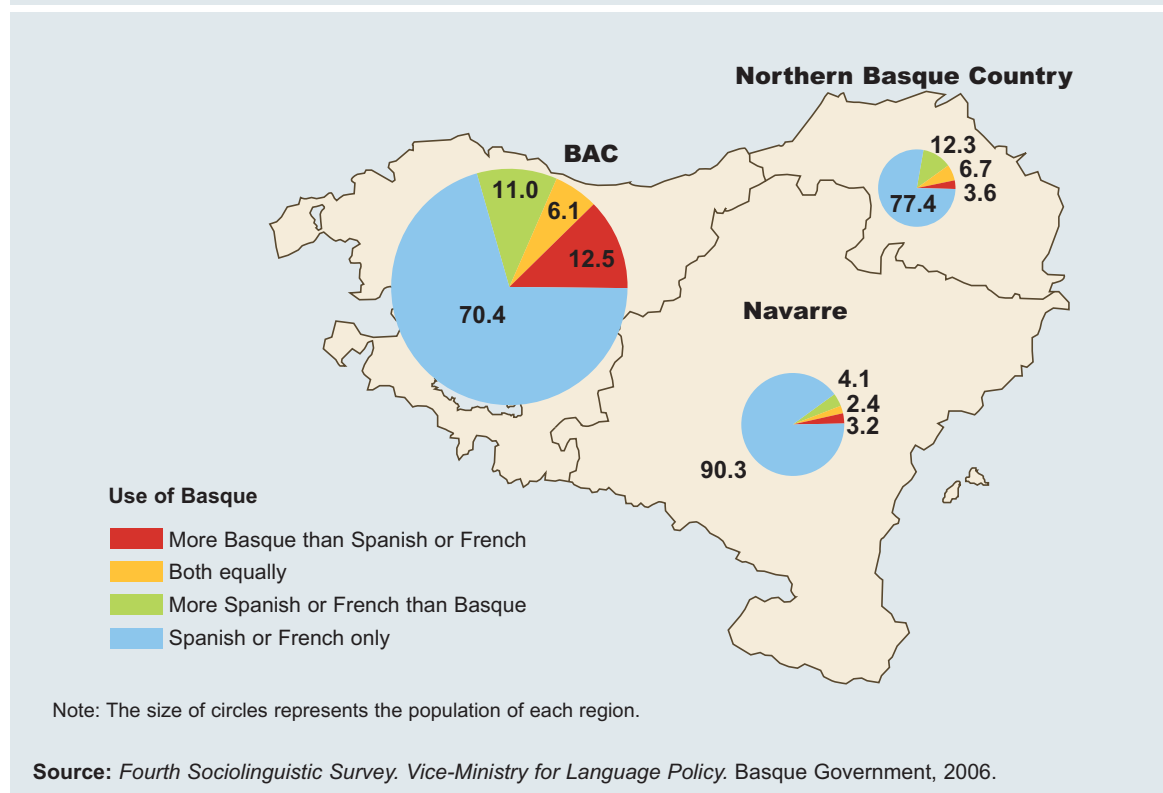
15.3% of the Basque Country's population speak Basque as much as Spanish or French (5.4%) or more Basque (9.9%). Another 9.8% use Basque but speak it less than Spanish or French. 74.9% of the entire population do not use Basque at all.

Figure 15. Use of Basque. Basque Country, 2006 (%)



In use data the regions vary widely. The percentage of the population who use Basque as much as or more than Spanish or French, for instance, varies from 18.6% in the BAC to 10.3% in the North and 5.5% in Navarre. A significant percentage of people in all regions use some Basque but not as much as Spanish or French: 11% in the BAC, 12.3% in the North and 4.1% in Navarre.

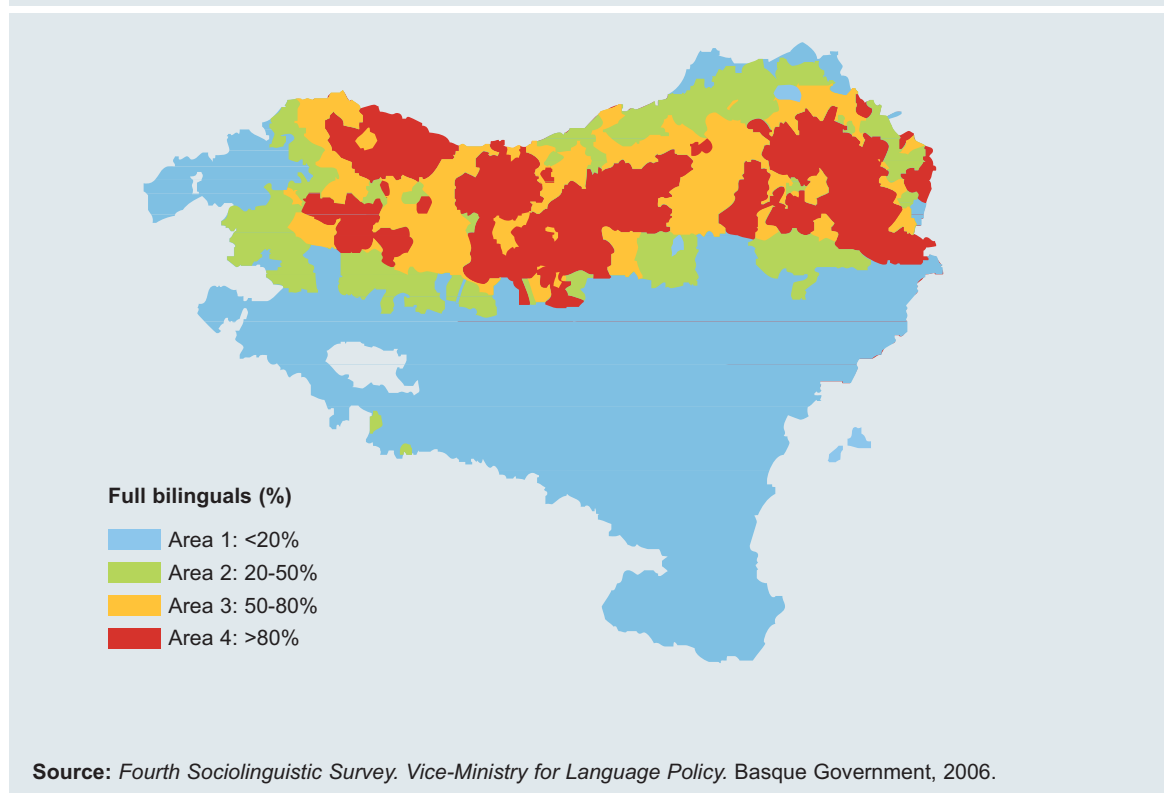
**Figure 16.** Use of Basque region by region. Basque Country, 2006 (%)



Over the past fifteen years the use of Basque has increased steadily in the BAC, remained constant in Navarre and decreased in the North. In 1991, 15.3% of the population of the BAC and 5.9% of that of Navarre used Basque as much as or more than Spanish. Thus the use of Basque has increased by three percentage points in the BAC, and decreased by three tenths of a point in Navarre, over this period. In the Northern northern Basque Country, 13% of the population used Basque as much as or more than French, which is three percentage points higher than today (10.3%).

Sharper contrasts are seen when we classify data on the use of Basque according to sociolinguistic areas, rather than by regions, however.

**Figure 17.** Sociolinguistic areas of the Basque Country, 2006



In Sociolinguistic Area 1, where fewer than 20% of the population are Basque speakers, only 2.0% of the population use Basque as much as or more than Spanish or French. Nonetheless, there is a significant percentage (6.2%) of this population who do use some Basque, albeit less than their other language. The majority of people (91.8%) in Sociolinguistic Area 1 only employ Spanish or French.

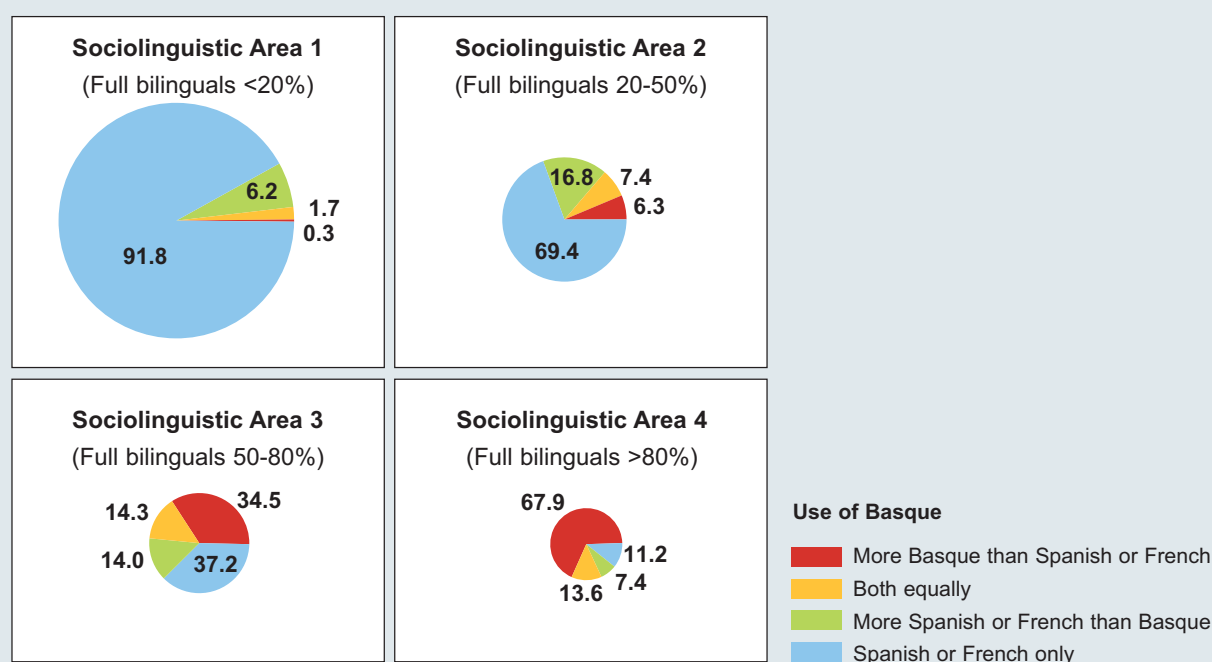
Spanish or French is likewise the language most used in Sociolinguistic Area 2, where between 20% and 50% of the population is Basque-speaking. Over two-thirds of the population of this area (69.4%) only use Spanish or French. However, 13.7% of this population speak Basque as much as or more than Spanish or French, and another 16.8% also use some Basque, although less than Spanish or French.



In Sociolinguistic Area 3 (where between 50% and 80% of the population can speak Basque), nearly half of the population (48.8%) use Basque as much as or more than Spanish or French. Spanish or French is spoken to a lesser degree than Basque by 14%, while over one-third of the population of this area (37.2%) do not use Basque at all.

Finally, in Sociolinguistic Area 4, where over 80% of the population is Basque-speaking, two out of three members of the population (67.9%) use Basque at least as much as Spanish or French, and a further 7.4% also use Basque but less often than their other language. 11.2% of the population of Sociolinguistic Area 4 only use Spanish or French.

**Figure 18.** Use of Basque by sociolinguistic areas. Basque Country, 2006 (%)



Note: the size of circles represents the population of each area.

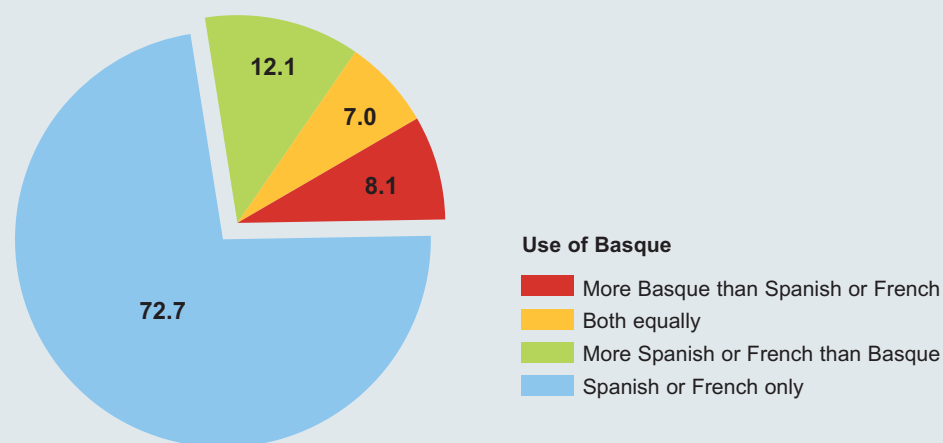
**Source:** Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

There can be no doubt about the importance of the world of work to the language recovery process, so we also looked at how the presence of Basque at work affects the index of Basque language use. For this purpose, we added use at work to the Basque language use typology.

This expanded use typology is not applicable to the whole universe of our survey, but only to those who are currently employed. Thus in this case we will only refer to employed people sixteen years of age or over, comprising 1,278,700 people or 49.4% of all the subjects of the general survey.

These data clearly show the importance for the index of language use in the workplace. Overall, the percentage of the population who use Basque as much as or more than Basque remains quite similar (15.3% in the first analysis, as against 15.1% in the second). But breaking this down further, the proportion of people at work who use *more* Basque than Spanish or French there is lower (8.1% as compared to 9.9%), while the proportion who use Basque *as much as* Spanish or French is higher (7% versus 5.4%). Meanwhile, the proportion of all people using some Basque, even if less than Spanish or French, is noticeably higher (12.1% as against 9.8%) and the percentage who speak Spanish or French only is correspondingly lower (72.7% compared to 74.9%).

Figura 19. Use of Basque (at work). Basque Country, 2006 (%)



Source: Fourth Sociolinguistic Survey. Vice-Ministry for Language Policy. Basque Government, 2006.

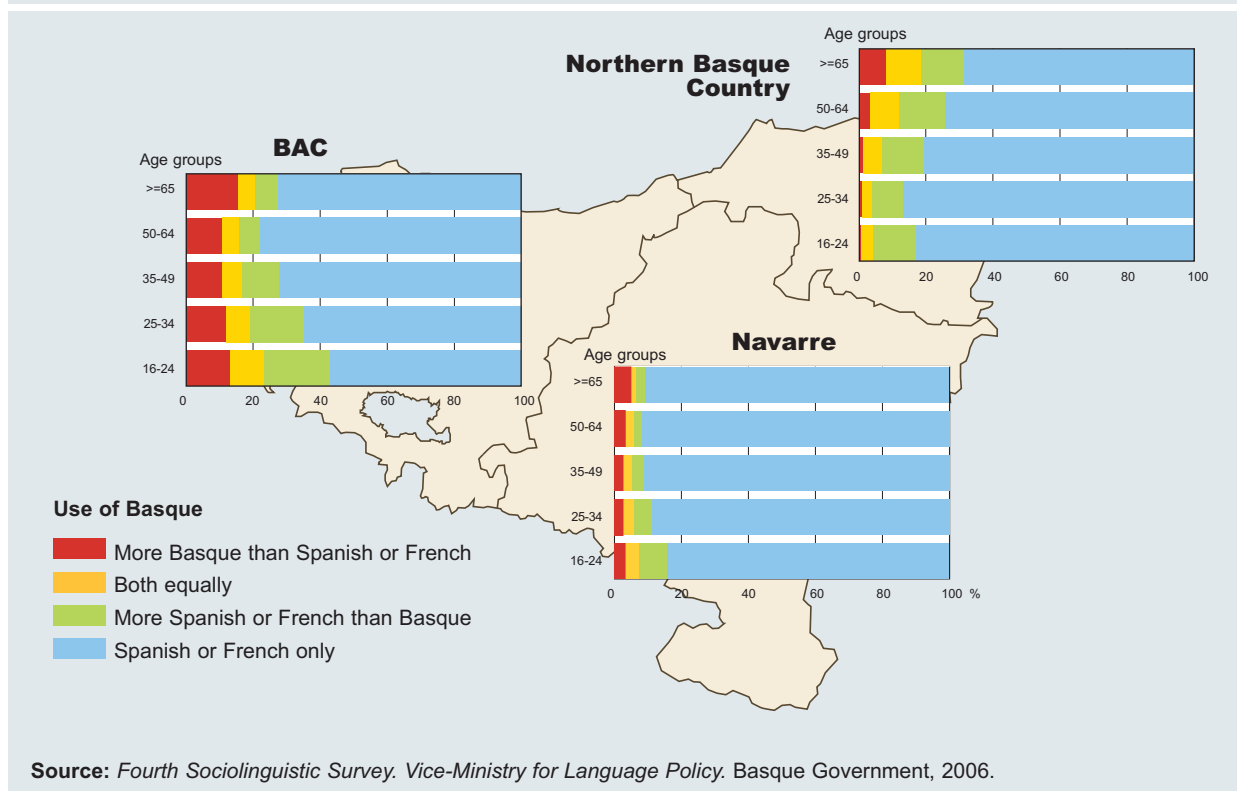
The trends just described for the Basque Country as a whole are generally repeated in all three regions. The one exception is in the percentage of people who use Basque as much as French in the North, which in this case is lower.

#### 4.2. BASQUE LANGUAGE USE TYPOLOGY, BY AGE GROUPS

**In the BAC and Navarre, the youngest and oldest groups are the ones who use most Basque in their daily lives. In the North, young people use very little Basque, while the elderly use it almost as much as their counterparts in the BAC**

Although the use of Spanish and French clearly continues to predominate overall in every age group (by an average proportion of 75%), the proportion of exclusive Spanish and French users is definitely falling among the under-35s, and most notably in the under-25 group. Between the ages of 16 and 24, only 65.4% use only Spanish or French, almost ten percentage points below the overall average.

The highest proportion of people using Basque as much as or more than Spanish is found in the 16-24 age group in the BAC (where 23.5% of the group are in this category) and Navarre (at 6.7%), while in the North, on the contrary, the distinction of being the age group with the highest proportion of people using Basque as much as or more than French goes to the over-65s (at 18.5%).

**Figure 20.** Use of Basque by age group, region by region. Basque Country, 2006 (%)

## 5. Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque

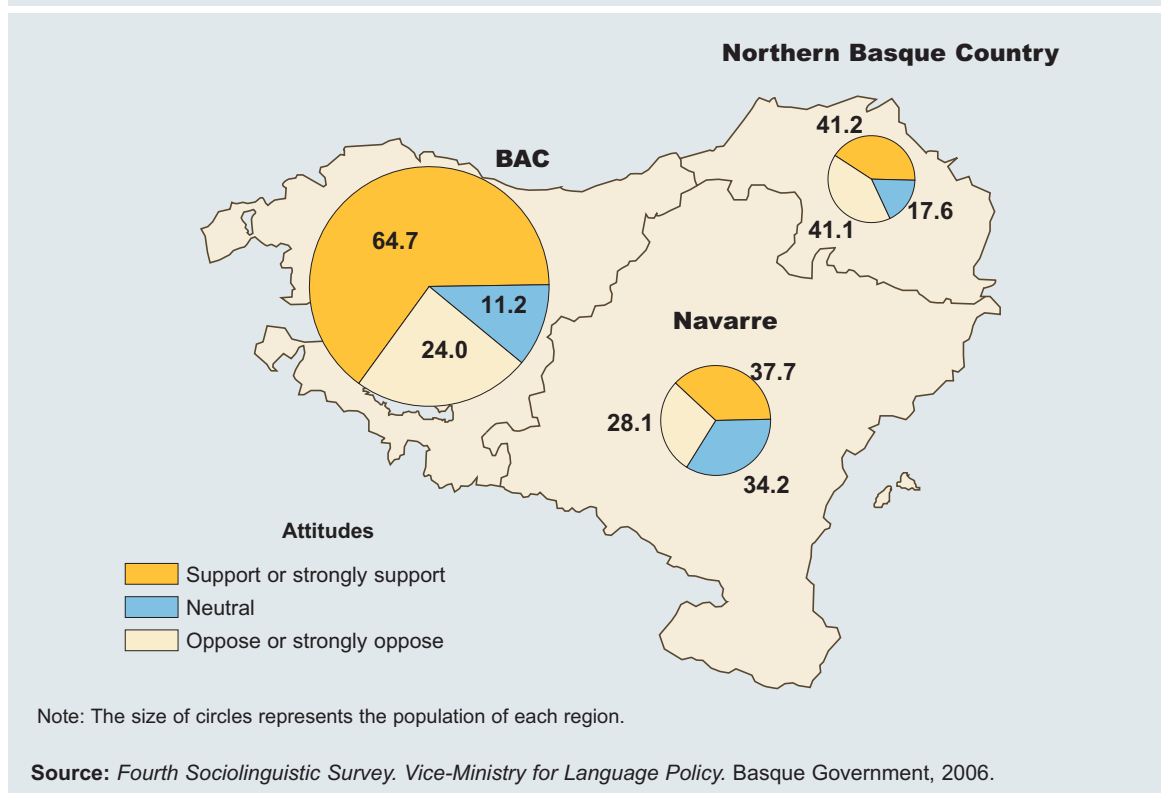
The Vice-Ministry for Language Policy of the Basque Government has developed a typology for the classification of opinions expressed in support of or contrary to the promotion of the Basque language in different domains by inhabitants of the BAC aged sixteen or older.

Two out of three people (64.7%) aged sixteen or more in the BAC view action to promote the use of Basque favourably; in the North, 41.2%; and in Navarre a little over one-third of this population (37.7%).

**64.7% of inhabitants aged sixteen or more in the BAC support the promotion of use of the Basque language; 41.2% in the North support such promotion; and in Navarre, 37.7%**

Another significant proportion of the population (41.1% in the North, 28.1% in Navarre and 24% in the BAC) neither favour nor oppose such action. The percentages of people who are opposed to promotion of Basque number 11.2% in the BAC, 17.6% in the North and one-third (34.2%) in Navarre.

**Figure 21.** Attitudes towards efforts to promote Basque, region by region. Basque Country, 2006 (%)



Attitudes towards Basque are closely linked to language competence: over 85% of bilinguals in the BAC and Navarre, and 75% of bilinguals in the North, favour Basque language promotion. Among non-Basque speakers, the proportion favourable to Basque language promotion is considerably smaller: 50% in the BAC, and 28% in Navarre and the North.

As regards age, the proportion of people aged 65 or older who view Basque language promotion efforts favourably is high in all the regions; in the BAC and the North, for instance, it is higher than in any other age group. The younger the age group, the smaller the proportions become of people who favour Basque language promotion, in general. However, this trend is seen to change in the youngest age group in the BAC and Navarre, where the proportions again start to rise. In the North, on the contrary, the youngest age group shows the smallest proportion of people favourable to Basque language promotion.

Most people sixteen or over in the BAC consider that children should be required to learn Basque (82%) and that a knowledge of Basque ought to be required of people entering the civil service (75%). The majority in the North (56% and 51%, respectively) have similar views. In Navarre, a high proportion of people (53%) consider that people entering the civil service should be required to know Basque. Many also think that learning Basque should be obligatory for children (43%) and believe that the presence of Basque in the media should be increased (46%).

To find out how deeply engrained certain preconceptions about Basque are in our society, those surveyed were asked for their opinion. The results are summarised here:

**Most people in the Basque Country think that having a society with two languages does not create problems**

- Asked whether they thought Basque would ever be as strong as Spanish/French, 47% in the BAC responded affirmatively, while in Navarre 53% and in the North 48% do not think so. Even in the BAC, a substantial proportion (33%) of the population do not think that Basque will never become as strong as Spanish.
- Regarding the richness of the language, 52% of the population of the BAC, 56% of northerners and 43% of Navarrese think that Basque is as rich as Spanish or French, while few think the opposite (15% in the BAC and Navarre, and 4% in the North).
- The existence of two languages in a society does not pose a problem according to 77% of the population of the BAC, 64% of Navarrese and 82% of northern Basques.
- Finally, most of the population think that it is not a bad thing to teach young children Basque at school even though their command of Spanish or French is incomplete (84% in the BAC, 66% in Navarre and 74% in the North).

There are no marked differences between the regions as regards their opinions about Basque. Nevertheless, it may be said on the whole that opinions are slightly more positive in both the BAC and the North than in Navarre concerning the richness of the Basque language, its not being a problem for society, or the desirability of teaching young children Basque at school. Opinions show little variation according to respondents' language competence, although full bilinguals do express more favourable views than either passive bilinguals or non-Basque speakers.

Where we do find a substantial difference is according to the age of respondents. In general, those 35 or younger have more positive opinions about the richness of the Basque language, Basque not being a source of problems for society and the desirability of young children learning Basque at school.

Moving on to other opinions about Basque: 63% of inhabitants of the BAC, 31% of Navarre and 12% of the North aged sixteen or over want their children to go to Basque-medium schools. Over one-third (36%) in the North favour mixed-language schools. In Navarre, although the most popular choice is the Basque-medium school option, one-fourth (24%) of the population prefer for their children to go to Spanish-only schools.

## 6. Conclusions

- Two points in particular stand out in the development of the population of the Basque Country during the past fifteen years: the aging of the population and the impact of immigration. In the BAC and Navarre, the 65-plus age group grew by almost 50% between 1991 and 2006. In the North the increase was less marked, but then its elderly population was already quite large fifteen years ago. The increase in the size of the foreign immigrant population over this fifteen-year period has been very notable in the BAC and, in particular, in Navarre. Between 1991 and 2006 the percentage of foreign immigrants in the BAC rose from 2% to 5%, and in Navarre from 2% to 10%.
- 25.7% of the current population of the Basque Country is fully bilingual, 15.4% is passive-bilingual, and 58.9% are non-Basque speakers. However, these statistics should be read bearing in mind the great demographic weight of the BAC within the Basque Country and, consequently, its heavy influence on the overall figures. The largest proportion (83.7%) and absolute number (557,600) of all full bilinguals in the Basque Country live in the BAC, while bilinguals in Navarre make up 8.5% of the Basque Country's total (with 56,400 full bilinguals). The smallest proportion and number of the Basque Country's full bilinguals comprise those inhabiting the northern region (7.8%, 51,800).
- There are 137,300 more full bilinguals today than in 1991. This increase has taken place in the BAC (with 138,400 more bilinguals) and Navarre (with 16,200), whereas in the North the number of bilinguals has fallen by 17,300.
- In the BAC and Navarre, the largest proportion of bilinguals is found among the young, while in the North, on the contrary, it is among the elderly. In the BAC, the growth of bilingualism has taken place in all under-50 age groups; in Navarre, in the under-35 groups. In the North, the largest proportion of bilinguals is in the 65-and-over group; the younger the inhabitants, the lower the proportion of bilinguals among them. However, there are increasing signs of a changing trend among the young in the North.
- Basque is the mother tongue of over half (58%) of full bilinguals aged sixteen or more in the Basque Country; for another 11.8% Basque and

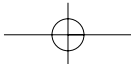
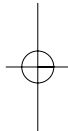
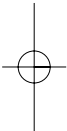
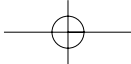


Spanish (or French) are both mother tongues, while almost one-third of full bilinguals (30.2%) are Spanish or French mother-tongue speakers who have learnt Basque at school or in adult courses. This last group represent about a third of the full bilinguals aged sixteen or more in the BAC and Navarre, and their importance is on the increase. In the North, such “new speakers” are still only a minor phenomenon, making up less than 7.5% of full bilinguals. Yet this figure has risen from 3.9% in the past ten years.

- There are in the Basque Country today 200,987 full bilinguals who have learnt Basque although it is not their mother tongue. These are the gains that Basque has made. These “new Basque speakers” number 178,000 in the BAC (10% of the population aged sixteen and over), 19,000 in Navarre (4% of its population) and 3,900 in the North (2% of its over-sixteen population).
- There is also a group of people whose mother tongue is Basque but who at present are not fully bilingual, having lost their Basque partly or completely. These represent about 3% of the inhabitants aged sixteen or more. These losses are mainly taking place in the North. In the BAC there is virtually no such loss among the young, and in Navarre it is only 0.2% among those aged 35 or younger.
- Full bilinguals may be classified into three groups according to which language they are most fluent in: “more Basque” bilinguals (30.7%), balanced bilinguals (30.3%) and “more Spanish/French” (38.9%). In the BAC and Navarre, “more Spanish” bilinguals predominate, and their proportion increases inversely to age. In the BAC and Navarre the mother tongue of most such “more Spanish” bilinguals is Spanish; but in the North, the mother tongue of most “more French” bilingual speakers is Basque.
- Today, on the basis of subjects surveyed who have children aged between 2 and 9, when both parents are bilingual the transmission of Basque is practically guaranteed in the BAC and Navarre, while in the North there are still some failures to transmit in these circumstances. Over 98% of children with bilingual parents learn Basque in the home in the BAC and Navarre; in the North the figures are ten percentage points lower, but still high.
- In the data for use there are wide differences between the regions. The percentage of the population using Basque as much as or more than Spanish or French are 18.6% in the BAC, 10.3% in the North and 5.5% in Navarre.

Looking at the trend over the past fifteen years, the use of Basque has risen progressively in the BAC, remained steady in Navarre and decreased in the North.

- In the BAC and Navarre, the young and the elderly are the age groups that use most Basque in their daily lives. In the North, the young very seldom use Basque, while the elderly speak it almost as widely as in the BAC.
- The respective percentages of the population aged sixteen or older who support efforts to promote the use of Basque are 64.7% in the BAC, 41.2% in the North and 37.7% in Navarre. Attitudes towards Basque are closely related to language competence. Over 85% of Basque-Spanish bilinguals in the BAC and Navarre favour the promotion of use of Basque, and 75% of Basque-French bilinguals in the North likewise favour promotion of Basque.
- As regards age, the percentage of the population aged 65 or more who are in favour of promotion of the use of Basque is high in all three regions, and the younger the age group, as a general rule, the smaller is the proportion who support such efforts. However, the trend changes among the youngest age group in the BAC and Navarre, with the percentages starting to grow again. In the North, however, the youngest group expresses the least support.



## Technical information

### BASQUE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY

Fieldwork in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) was carried out by Ikertalde.

Data collection took place in June and July, 2006 in phone calls using a structured, closed questionnaire.

The sample taken represents the population aged sixteen and over. A total of 3,600 interviews were performed, distributed across provinces as follows: 750 in Araba, 1,510 in Bizkaia and 1,340 in Gipuzkoa.

In each province the results are projected onto the population aged sixteen or older on the basis of the updated 2001 census. Moreover, for each province the results were weighted according to the distribution of the over-16 population in terms of sex, age and Basque-speakers versus non-Basque-speakers.

Multi-stage sampling was used and the choice of homes in which to carry out interviews was stratified by sociolinguistic areas and municipalities.

The margin of sampling error for the entire sample for the Basque Autonomous Community is  $\pm 2.0$  for a confidence level of 95.5% and  $p=q=50\%$ . Provincial sampling error margins for the same confidence level are  $\pm 4.3$  for Araba,  $\pm 3.0$  for Bizkaia and  $\pm 3.0$  for Gipuzkoa.

### NORTHERN BASQUE COUNTRY

Fieldwork in the North was carried out by Siadeco.

Data collection took place from November, 2006 to January, 2007 in phone calls using a structured, closed questionnaire.

The sample taken represents the population aged sixteen and over. A total of 2,000 interviews were performed, distributed across districts as follows: 750 in the BAB, 750 in the Lapurdi hinterland and 500 in Low Navarre and Zuberoa.

In each district the results are projected onto the population aged sixteen or older on the basis of the updated 1999 census. Moreover, for each district the results were weighted according to the distribution of the over-16 population in terms of sex and age.

Multi-stage sampling was used and the choice of homes in which to carry out interviews was stratified by sociolinguistic areas and municipalities.

The margin of sampling error for the entire sample for the Basque Autonomous Community is  $\pm 2.3$  for a confidence level of 95.5% and  $p=q=50\%$ . Provincial sampling error margins for the same confidence level are  $\pm 3.6$  for BAB,  $\pm 3.6$  for the Lapurdi hinterland and  $\pm 4.5$  for Low Navarre and Zuberoa.

## NAVARRRE

Fieldwork in the Autonomous Community of Navarre was carried out by Gizaker.

Data collection took place in June and July, 2006 in phone calls using a structured, closed questionnaire.

The sample taken represents the population aged sixteen and over. A total of 1,600 interviews were performed, distributed across language zone as follows: 500 in the Bascophone zone, 753 in the mixed zone and 347 in the non-Bascophone zone.

In each zone the results are projected onto the population aged sixteen or older on the basis of the updated 2001 census. Moreover, for each province the results were weighted according to the distribution of the over-16 population in terms of sex, age and Basque-speakers versus non-Basque-speakers.

Multi-stage sampling was used and the choice of homes in which to carry out interviews was stratified by sociolinguistic areas and municipalities.

The margin of sampling error for the entire sample for the Autonomous Community of Navarre is  $\pm 3.3$  for a confidence level of 95.5% and  $p=q=50\%$ . Language-zone sampling error margins for the same confidence level are  $\pm 5.0$  for the Bascophone zone,  $\pm 4.6$  for mixed zone and  $\pm 5.7$  for the non-Bascophone zone.

## THE BASQUE COUNTRY

The margin of sampling error for the entire sample for the Basque Country is  $\pm 1.6$  for a confidence level of 95.5% and  $p=q=50\%$ . The sampling error margin of Basque speakers for the same confidence level is  $\pm 2.0$ , while that of non-Basque-speakers is  $\pm 2.6$ .

