

February 21, International Mother Language Day

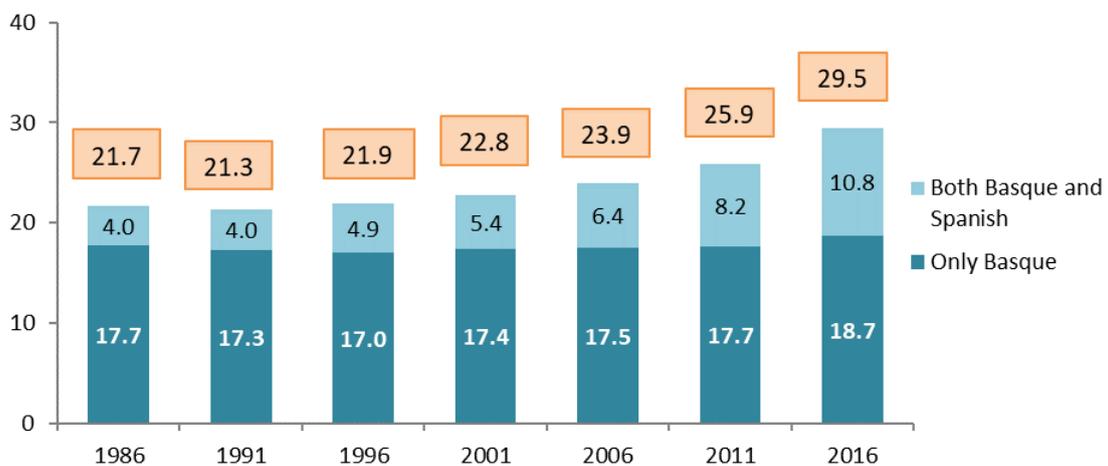
Three out of ten Basque youths aged 15 to 29 say Basque is their mother language

The Basque Youth Observatory of the Department of Employment and Social policies of the Basque Government has studied data relating to the mother language of young people in the Basque Country. The mother language is the language that children learn at home, from their parents or other relatives who live with them, up to the age of three.

According to the data from the last Sociolinguistic Survey in the Basque Country (2016), Basque is the only mother language of 18.7% of young people aged 15 to 29. Another 10.8% has both Basque and Spanish as mother languages, so 29.5% of the Basque youths learned Basque at home when they were child under the age of three.

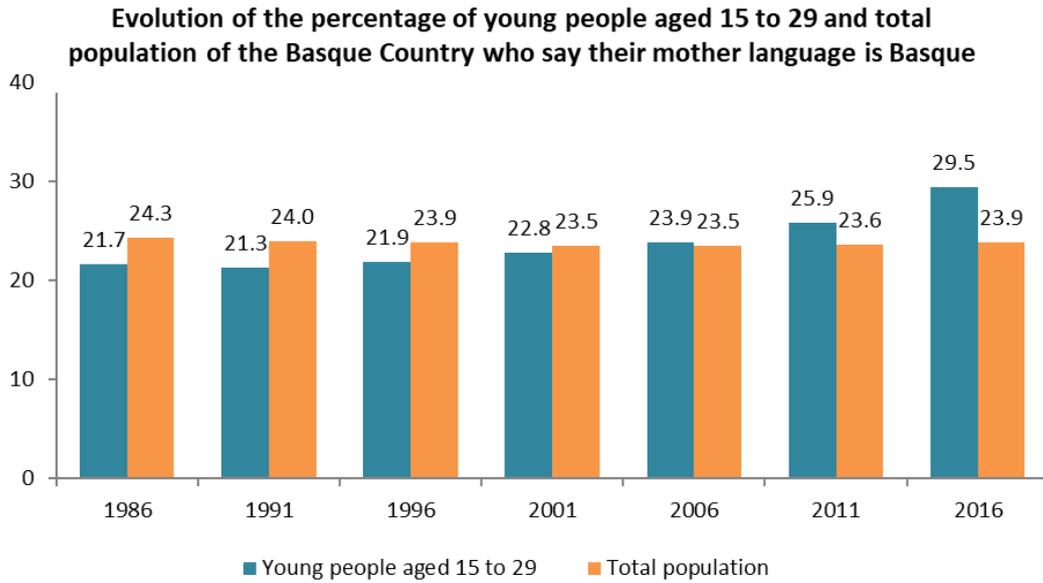
This percentage has increased in last thirty years from 21.7% in 1986 to 29.5% in 2016.

Evolution of the percentage of young people aged 15 to 29 in the Basque Country who say their mother language is only Basque or both Basque and Spanish



Source: Basque Youth Observatory based on data taken from the Indicator System of Basque (EAS)

If we compare data of young people whose mother language is Basque (only Basque or both Basque and Spanish) with data of the general population of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, we will see that the percentage of young people was under the general average in 1986 but it is over the general average in 2016.

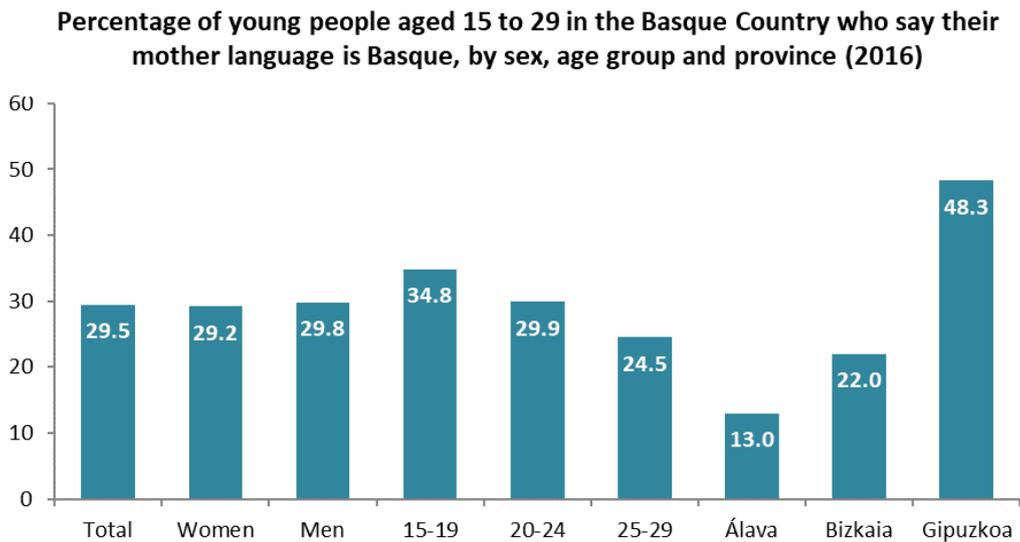


Source: Basque Youth Observatory based on data taken from the Indicator System of Basque (EAS)

In addition, based on data from 2016, we can say that there is no difference between young males and females, but if we attend to age or province there are hidden differences.

As age increases the percentage of those youths whose mother language is Basque decreases. The percentage is 34.8% in 15 to 29 age group, 29.9% in 20 to 24 age group and 24.5% in 25 to 29 age group.

Additionally, in Gipuzkoa almost half of total youth (48.3%) heard Basque at home when they were under the age of three, in Bizkaia 22.0% and in Álava even less, i.e., only 13.0% of youths aged 15 to 29 are in the same situation.



Source: Basque Youth Observatory based on data taken from the Indicator System of Basque (EAS)

In 1999, UNESCO declared February 21 the International Mother Language Day. The purpose of establishing an international mother language day is to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism, i.e. preserve and protect all the languages that the nations of the world use.