

Basque language



Euskara, the language of the Basque people

Euskara is the language spoken in Euskal Herria, the Basque Country, a nation that lies in southwestern Europe and that is currently divided between two states: France and Spain.

Euskara, Euskaldunen Hizkuntza

Euskara Euskal Herrian hitz egiten den hizkuntza da. Euskal Herria Europaren hego?mendebaldean dago, gaur egun bi estatutan banatuta: Frantzia eta Espainia.

The Basque Country

- 20,864 km²

- 2.9 million inhabitants
- 750,000 Basque-speakers

Euskal Herria

- 20.864 km²
- 2,9 milioi biztanle
- 650.000 euskal hiztun

Euskara, an ancient language

Euskara is a language of unknown origin, with no connection to the Indo-European, Uralic or any other family of languages. This mystery about its roots has led many linguists to the formulation of a variety of hypotheses: it has been said that the Basque language could be related to languages from the Caucasus; or that it might be linked to non-Arabic languages from the north of Africa; others have claimed that it was the language of the Iberian peninsula, or even the language spoken all over Europe before the Indo-European invasions. Nothing has been proven so far. The only thing we know is that Euskara has been spoken for thousands of years at least in both parts of the Pyrenees Mountains, and that it is probably the oldest language on the European continent.

Euskara, Hizkuntza Zaharra

Euskara jatorri ezezaguneko hizkuntza da, hizkuntz familia indo-europarrekin, uralikoekin edota beste ezein hizkuntzarekin inolako loturarik ez duena. Bere sustraian inguruko misterio honek hipotesi ugari eragin ditu hainbat eta hainbat hizkuntzalariren artean: euskara Kaukasoko hizkuntzekin lotuta egon litekeela esan izan da; edota Afrikaren iparraldeko hizkuntza ez arabiarrekin erlazionatuta dagoela; beste batzuek Iberiar penintsula osoan hitz egiten zen hizkuntza zela aipatu izan dute, edota inbasio indo?europarren aurretik Europa osoan erabiltzen zen hizkuntza. Ezer ez da frogatu oraindik. Dakigun gauza bakarra da euskara milaka urtetan hitz egin dela Pirinioen bi aldeetan gutxienez, eta ziurrekin Europa osoko hizkuntzarik zaharrena dela.

Euskara, a difficult language?

Being a language that is unrelated to any of the languages by which it is surrounded (except for some similarities in vocabulary due to the words borrowed from other languages throughout history, such as zilar "silver" from Celtic, eliza "church" from Latin, greba "strike" from French or gutuna "letter" from Arabic), it is always said that Basque is extremely difficult to learn. However, this is not true, as shown by the great progress made by our English students in Basque!

In fact, Euskara is a rather easy language to learn: the pronunciation is quite easy, the spelling is regular, there is no grammatical gender, there are no irregular nouns, there are no prepositions (although there are about 20 declination cases, but these are very easy to learn, as they are formed by strictly regular postpositions)...

Euskara, Hizkuntza zaila?

Inguruko hizkuntzekin inolako loturarik ez duen hizkuntza izanik (hiztegiaren arloko antzekotasun batzuk gorabehera, historian zehar beste hizkuntza batzuetatik hainbat hitz mailegatu baititu euskarak, hala nola zilar zeltatik, eliza latinetik, greba frantsesetik edo gutuna arabieratik), beti esan izan da euskara ikastea izugarri zaila dela. Ez da hala ordea, gure ikasle ingelesek euskararen egindako aurrerapausoek erakusten diguten bezala!

Berez, euskara nahiko hizkuntza erraza da: ahoskera nahiko erraza da, idazkera erregularra, ez dago genero gramatikarik, ez dago izen irregularrik, ez dago preposizioirik (nahiz eta 20 bat deklinazio kasu dituen; baina oso errazak dira, erabat erregularrak diren postposizioen bidez osatzen baitira)...