



European Day of Languages
26 September

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MODERN LANGUAGES
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EN

LARA'S

JOURNEY THROUGH EUROPE'S REGIONAL AND MINORITY LANGUAGES

WELCOME TO LARA'S SECOND JOURNEY THROUGH EUROPE



In this chapter of her journey, Lara explores the fascinating world of regional and minority languages along with some of Europe's other linguistic treasures!

Regional and minority languages (RMLs) are spoken in parts of a country or specific areas of several countries, often by a relatively small number of the population.

RMLs can also be non-territorial, i.e., spoken by groups of people spread all over Europe who do not identify with a specific country of origin. They include languages that are the majority language/official language of another state (such as Italian in Slovenia). More than half of the Council of Europe's member states officially recognize RMLs within their borders, and it is estimated that these languages are spoken by over 50 million people.

With around 225 languages which are native to Europe, as well as many languages brought to the continent through immigration, many RMLs find themselves in stiff competition with Europe's more dominant languages. When a language ceases to be used by all generations and in all aspects of life, and instead becomes limited to certain age groups

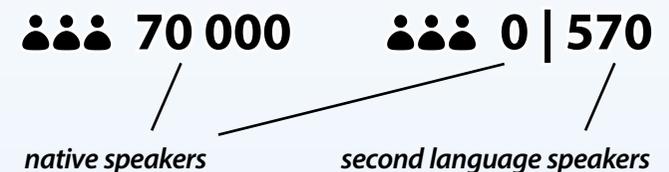
and/or certain domains of society, there is a danger that it enters a spiral of decline, which can eventually lead to extinction.

Having found out about some 46 of Europe's mostly 'bigger' languages on her first journey, Lara has now chosen to dig a little deeper and explore languages that are not so well-known beyond the areas they are spoken in. In some cases, the languages she encounters have several dialects, some do not have a standardised written form, and others can be written in different scripts. For many of these languages, the number of native speakers is diminishing. In all cases, however, the languages have a proud tradition and dedicated communities of speakers seeking to ensure that their linguistic heritage is passed on to future generations.

We can only offer you a brief glimpse of some of Europe's languages. There are many, many more that we have not mentioned. Not because they are any less important or less interesting but simply because we cannot cover them all on this short journey. On each language page, there is a short introduction from Lara, some keywords, phrases, and special characters from the alphabet, as well

as an estimated number of people around the world who use it as their first and second language.

We hope you will enjoy following our guide, Lara, on her trip through some of Europe's less familiar languages. Her adventures might prompt you to set off on a similar voyage of discovery! Thanks to recent technical advances in language learning and an increasing number of resources available online, it has never been easier to get a taste of the impressive range of languages present in Europe. So, let's get to know them a little better and celebrate the linguistic diversity present on our continent!



Also included in this book:

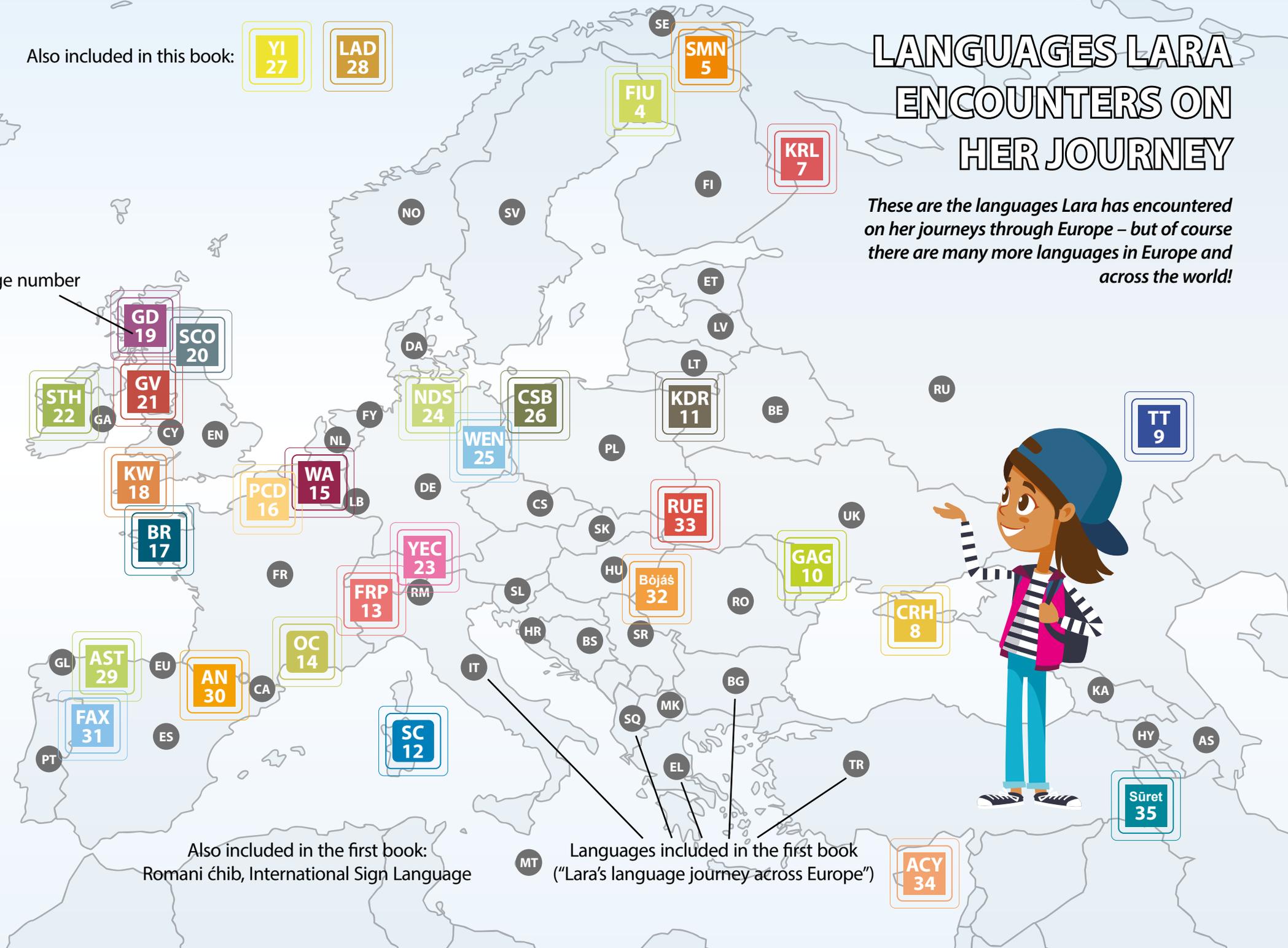
YI 27

LAD 28

LANGUAGES LARA ENCOUNTERS ON HER JOURNEY

These are the languages Lara has encountered on her journeys through Europe – but of course there are many more languages in Europe and across the world!

Page number



Also included in the first book:
Romani čhib, International Sign Language

Languages included in the first book
("Lara's language journey across Europe")

FIU

MEÄNKIELI

👤👤👤 70 000

Today, Meänkieli has three different versions, or dialects, spoken in the northern parts of Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

The blossom of a new language

Have you ever heard of Meänkieli? Meänkieli was originally a dialect of Finnish, spoken in the border region of Sweden and Finland around the Tornedal River Valley. In 1809, when Finland was invaded by Russia, the Finnish-speakers in Sweden suddenly found themselves cut off from their friends in Finland. Over time, the Tornedal dialect began to change and evolved into its own unique language – Meänkieli!

The story of Meänkieli teaches us some valuable lessons: it shows us how languages can change and grow apart when groups of people are separated by geography and politics, demonstrating that they are both resilient and dynamic.

Hei!

Kunka sie jaksat?

Kiitos!

- 1 yks
- 2 kaks
- 3 kolme
- 4 neljä
- 5 viis
- 6 kuus
- 7 seittemän
- 8 kaheksan
- 9 yheksän
- 10 kymmenen

Kyllä

Ei

å

ö

ä

Kuuntele, miltä nämä sanat kuulostava >>>>

Photo: Jukkasjärvi Ice Hotel, Sweden



ANARÂŠKIELÂ SMN

👤👤👤 450

- 1 ohtâ
- 2 kyehti
- 3 kulmâ
- 4 nelji
- 5 vittâ
- 6 kuttâ
- 7 čiččâm
- 8 käävci
- 9 oovce
- 10 love

Joo

Ij

Mii kulloo?

Tiervâ!

Takkâ!

The language of the Northernmost indigenous people of Europe

The Sami languages are spoken by the Sami people in the northern parts of Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Western Russia, right within the Northern Polar Cap. In the first booklet ('Lara's language journey across Europe'), we learned about the most widely spoken Northern Sami, but there are a total of 9 distinct Sami languages. Some of these are so unique that they're considered independent from one another.

On this page, you can explore words and phrases in Inari Sami. Although the number of native Inari Sami speakers has decreased in recent decades, efforts are being made to bring the language back. For example, recently, a Finnish documentary filmmaker and a Sami poet joined forces to create an online phrasebook called "Say it in Saami". This platform allows anyone to suggest phrases for translation. You can use this tool to listen to and compare phrases in Northern, Inari, and Skolt Sami.

And by the way, we really 'love' the word for 10 in Inari Sami!



◀◀◀ Kuldâl tai saanij jienâdem

Photo: Lapland, Finland

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KARJALAN KIELI KRL

👤👤👤 20 000

There are three dialects of Karelian: Viena, South and Livvi Karelian. The words and phrases on this page are from the Livvi Karelian dialect.

Kyllä

Muga

- 1 yksi
- 2 kaksi
- 3 kolme
- 4 nelli
- 5 viizi
- 6 kuuzi
- 7 seiččie
- 8 kaheksa
- 9 yheksä
- 10 kymmene

Kuibo
dielot?

Terveh!

Passibo!

Have you ever heard of a 'dialect continuum'?

Karelian is spoken in parts of Finland as well as in Northwestern Russia. Although Karelian shares some similarities with Finnish, it is more than just a Finnish dialect, and its status as a minority language in Finland attests to this.

Karelian is part of what linguists call a 'dialect continuum'. In such a continuum, speakers of different dialects (or languages) can understand one another. They often share similar words and grammar, which allows for communication. But the further you move away, the more different these become, making mutual understanding more difficult. This also shows us that the line between language and dialect can sometimes be blurry. There are quite a few dialect continua in Europe, as you will soon discover!



◀◀◀ Kuundele nämmä ezimerkit karjalakse

Photo: Church of the Transfiguration, built without nails or metal parts, Kizhi Island

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A language with a turbulent history

Crimean Tatar is a Turkic language which, as a result of a series conquests and the influx of various ethnolinguistic groups, has undergone several transformations. Among others, the language has been written in no less than 4 different scripts over its history: Latin, Cyrillic, Arabic and Old Turkic.

A long-term ban on the study of the Crimean Tatar language following the deportation of the Crimean Tatars by the Soviet government even drove the language close to extinction. This is referred to in the song '1944' by the singer Jamala, which won the Eurovision song contest for Ukraine in 2016. Fortunately the language has been experiencing a revival and is taught more widely in schools in Crimea – it now has an estimated 580 000 speakers.

Despite the resemblance in name, Crimean Tatar and Tatar belong to different subgroups of the Kipchak Turkic languages and while maintaining a significant degree of mutual intelligibility, Crimean Tatar shares more similarities with Gagauz (page 10) than Tatar (next page).

Evet

Yoq

Nasılsıñız?

Selâm!

Sağ ol!

- | | |
|----|-------|
| 1 | bir |
| 2 | eki |
| 3 | üç |
| 4 | dört |
| 5 | beş |
| 6 | altı |
| 7 | yedi |
| 8 | sekiz |
| 9 | doquz |
| 10 | on |

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Bu sözlerniñ sesini diñle >>>>

Photo: Swallow's Nest at Black Sea, Crimea, Ukraine



The language of storytelling

Tatar belongs to the Turkic language family and is one of Europe's largest regional languages with around 8 million speakers. While it is predominantly spoken in the Republic of Tatarstan, Tatar communities are also present in parts of Finland, Poland, Romania and Türkiye. Just like its cousin Crimean Tatar, Tatar's fascinating journey led it through various scripts: from Arabic to Cyrillic, and Latin.

Speaking about the past, Tatar has a unique form of past tense that allows speakers to describe events they weren't directly involved in – a special storytelling superpower indeed! Tatar is also an “agglutinative” language, where suffixes become like pieces of LEGO bricks, unlocking new and complex meanings. With these incredible linguistic features, the possibilities for storytelling are truly endless!

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ТАТАР ТЕЛЕ ТТ

👤👤👤 8 000 000



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Хәлләр
ничек?

Сәлам!

Рәхмәт!

- 1 бер (ber)
- 2 ике (ike)
- 3 өч (өб)
- 4 дүрт (dyrt)
- 5 биш (biş)
- 6 алты (altı)
- 7 жиде (zıde)
- 8 сигез (sigez)
- 9 тугыз (tuğız)
- 10 ун (un)



««« Сүзләрнең әйтелешен тыңла!

Photo: Sabantuy, a traditional Tatar festival

GAG GAGAUZ

👤👤👤 150 000

Nâbıysın?

Selâm!

Saa ol!

Ölä

Diil
(yok)

- 1 bir
- 2 iki
- 3 üç
- 4 dört
- 5 beş
- 6 altı
- 7 yedi
- 8 sekiz
- 9 dokuz
- 10 on

One language, three scripts

Gagauz is spoken by the Gagauz people and belongs to the largest branch of the Turkic language group, just like Azeri, Turkmen, and Turkish.

Gagauz is spoken in the autonomous region of Gagauzia in Moldova, as well as in parts of Ukraine, Russia, and Türkiye. Interestingly, the coexistence of the Gagauz people with other ethnolinguistic groups is not only reflected in the extensive use of loan words from Ukrainian, Romanian, Bulgarian and Russian but also in the history of its written language. Just like Crimean Tatar and Tatar, the Gagauz alphabet can be written using three different scripts: Greek, Cyrillic, and Latin. Can you believe it? It's like having multiple outfits in which to clothe your words, each with its own unique style!

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Bu sözleri sesleyin >>>



Photo: Violinist at traditional festival

KARAJ TILI KDR

80

A Turkic language meets the Hebrew alphabet

Karaim is a Turkic language, but is spoken by Jewish communities! How come? Here's the whole story: the first Karaim people to migrate to Eastern Europe, more specifically to Crimea, in the 10th century were descendants of the "Golden Horde" empire in Central Asia. In the 13th century they converted to Judaism, but managed to preserve their Turkic language and culture. Still, they wrote with a modified Hebrew script until the early 20th century. In the 18th century they also moved to other parts of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania.

Although Karaim is critically endangered, the Karaim people play an important role in Lithuanian history, as they are the ancient defenders of the Trakai Island Castle (now a popular location for making films, among others). This is well acknowledged and puts them in the spotlight, helping this community to keep their language alive.



<<< Bu siožliarni tynlajynyz!

Photo: Trakai Island Castle, Lithuania



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Jo

Nie bolas?

Kiuń
jachszy!

Tabu
ètiam!

- 1 bir
- 2 èki
- 3 üč
- 4 diort'
- 5 bieš
- 6 alty
- 7 jedi
- 8 siegiž
- 9 tohuz
- 10 on



SC SARDU

👤👤👤 1 200 000

There are several dialects of Sardinian. The words and phrases on this page are from the Campidanese dialect, spoken on the southern part of the island.

- 1 unu
- 2 dus
- 3 tres
- 4 patru
- 5 cincu
- 6 ses
- 7 seti
- 8 otu
- 9 noi
- 10 dexi

eja

no

Saludi!

Cumentis
stais?

Gratzias!

Do you want to feel like an ancient Roman?

Then the closest you can get is learning Sardinian! Sardinian, spoken on the island of Sardinia, is the oldest Romance language still in use. It is believed to be the closest living language to Latin, the ancestor of all Romance languages. Now, here's an intriguing twist: Although Sardinian shares its roots with Latin, it is not easily understood by most native Italian speakers.

Except for the Campanian dialect, the number of Sardinian speakers has declined significantly over the years, primarily due to the prominence of Italian. However, in the face of this challenge, determined efforts have emerged to standardise Sardinian and bring it to the forefront of the island's linguistic landscape.



á é í ó ú
à è ì ò ù

Ascuta su sonu de custus fueddus >>>>

Photo: Li Cossi beach, Costa Paradiso, Sardinia, Italy



FRANCO-PROVENÇAL FRP

👤👤👤 140 000

Comèn te
reste?

Tchao!

Mersi!

Ouè

Na

- 1 on
- 2 dou
- 3 trî
- 4 cattro
- 5 hinc
- 6 chouï
- 7 satte
- 8 ouètte
- 9 noou
- 10 guî

What is in between French and Italian?

Franco-Provençal is commonly, yet wrongly, believed to be the outcome of borrowing between standard French and the Provençal dialect of Occitan (next page). However, it is much more complex than a fusion between two languages! Franco-Provençal can be viewed as a mosaic of Romance languages spoken in parts of Italy, France, and Switzerland. As a result of its geographical dispersion, Franco-Provençal is also referred to by different names, such as Patois and Arpitan. In fact, the name question is fundamental in efforts to revitalise the language and establish its recognition as an independent language rather than a mere dialect of French and Provençal.

←←← Acoutta lo sòn di paròlle qui chouyón

Photo: Extreme skiing close to Mont Blanc, Europe's highest peak, Italy/ France



OC OCCITAN

👤👤👤 600 000

The words and phrases on this page are in the Lengadocian variety of Occitan, which is spoken in rural parts of France. Due to its central position among the dialects of Occitan, it is often used as a basis for a Standard Occitan.

The language of the troubadours

Troubadours were poets and musicians who travelled throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, spreading their language through songs and poems. Many wrote and sang in Occitan, which was once very influential in Europe, specifically in Southern France, as well as in parts of Italy and Spain. It was the language of the arts, in which many important literary works of the time were written.

However, over time as people started speaking more French, the language of national institutions, Occitan lost its prestige and became less prominent. Today, Occitan speakers are working to keep the language alive, but it is endangered. Interestingly, one of its varieties, Aranese, is an official language in the region of the Val d'Aran in Catalonia, Spain. And in the city of Bayonne, France, many city signs are even displayed in 3 languages: French, Occitan, and Basque. So there's no excuse to get lost!

Cossí vas ?

Bonjorn !

Mercé !

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non

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- 1 un
- 2 dos
- 3 tres
- 4 quatre
- 5 cinc
- 6 sièis
- 7 sèt
- 8 uèch
- 9 nòu
- 10 dètz

Escotatz lo son d'aqueles mots >>>



WALON WA

👤👤👤 600 000

- 1 eune
- 2 deûs
- 3 treûs
- 4 cwate
- 5 cinq
- 6 sîh
- 7 sèt'
- 8 ût
- 9 noûv'
- 10 dîh

Kimint
alez-v' ?

Bondjoû !

Mèrci !

Could theatre and folklore help save this language?

The internet, TV, or theatre can be vehicles to spread a language and ensure its survival. Maybe Walloon could be a such a case! Walloon is a Romance language related to French and Picard, spoken in Wallonia, southern Belgium. Despite struggling to maintain its presence in the face of French, theatre could be Walloon's ticket to survival: There are around 200 companies that perform for an audience of over 200,000 people every year in this language. These performances not only entertain the audiences but also help preserve and promote the Walloon language and culture. Here, young and old alike can discover the language – either as actors or spectators. Local traditions, such as carnivals and celebrations, also play a significant role. Let's hope that this helps Walloon to 'stage' a revival and become popular again!

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<<< Houêtez kimint qu'on dit tos cès mots-là

Photo: Statue of Adolphe Sax, inventor of the saxophone, Dinant, Wallonia, Belgium

PCD PICARD

👤👤👤 700 000

wé
nan

- 1 in
- 2 deus
- 3 tros
- 4 quate
- 5 chonq
- 6 sich
- 7 siète
- 8 huit
- 9 neu
- 10 dich

û æ
 é è ô ç
 ê



Meet French's sibling

Walloon on the previous page is not the only language related to French: Picard is another of its siblings. Picard is similar to French while still having its own vocabulary and expressions, making it both close and oddly distant for French speakers. Together with standard French, Picard, Walloon, and others, they form part of the so-called 'langues d'oïl' continuum (Karelian page 7), which stretches from the North of France to Belgium. The name 'langues d'oïl' comes from the word 'oil', meaning 'yes'!

Another interesting fact: in the Middle Ages, Picard was the language of the court in the County of Flanders, which was then part of the Holy Roman Empire.

With its regal past, let's hope that Picard also has a golden future!

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 â ä œ

Acoute kmint qu'in prononche ches mots-lo >>>>



Photo: Char à voile, France

BREZHONEG BR

👤👤👤 210 000

Penaos 'mañ kont ?

Demat !

Trugarez !

- 1 unan
- 2 daou
- 3 tri
- 4 pevar
- 5 pemp
- 6 c'hwec'h
- 7 seizh
- 8 eizh
- 9 nav
- 10 dek

Celtic traces on the European continent

Did you know that there is one Celtic language still in use on the European mainland? That language is called Breton, and it is spoken in Brittany, a region in the northwest of France. This fact makes Breton unique.

Breton is closely related to Cornish and Welsh. In fact, the language was brought to Brittany by Celtic speakers from Great Britain during the Early Middle Ages.

One more interesting fact about Breton is that the Cathlicon, the first dictionary published in France (in 1499), was trilingual, including Breton, French, and Latin.

Breton has managed to maintain its unique identity and is still spoken today. So the next time you visit Brittany, why not take some time, in between eating crêpes and other local delicacies, to learn a few phrases in Breton?

ya

ket

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ü



<<< Selaout son ar gerioù-mañ

Photo: Although crêpes are widespread throughout France and the world, they originate from Brittany

KW KERNEWEK

👤👤👤 0 | 570

Cornish does not have single words for “yes” and “no”. As in Irish, Manx, and Scottish Gaelic you need to use verb forms to answer a question.

The Cornish language: from dodo to linguistic phoenix

An example of a revived language is Cornish, once commonly spoken in Cornwall, a duchy within the British Isles. In fact, Celtic languages were once spoken in much of Europe by different Celtic tribes from the British Isles to the Danube River valley. Most of these eventually died out, and their speakers assimilated into other surrounding languages. It seemed that Cornish would go down the same path, as it fell out of use when people shifted to English.

However, by the end of the 20th century, language activists began to join forces in order to get Cornish back on track. And they achieved it! Cornish is now taught in schools and spoken again by some Cornish people as a second language. It is thus similar to Manx (page 21): a case of a linguistic phoenix that has risen from the ashes!

- 1 onan
- 2 dew
- 3 tri
- 4 peswar
- 5 pymp
- 6 hwegh
- 7 seyth
- 8 eth
- 9 naw
- 10 deg

Fatla genes?
Dydh da!
Meur ras!



Goslowgh orth son an geryow ma >>>



GÀIDHLIG GD

👤👤👤 57 000

Ciamar a
tha thu?

Latha
math!

Tha mi
gu math!

- 1 aon
- 2 dhà
- 3 trì
- 4 ceithir
- 5 còig
- 6 sia
- 7 seachd
- 8 ochd
- 9 naoi
- 10 deich

à

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◀◀◀ Éistibh ri fuaimen nam faclan

Photo: Tug of War, Highland Games at Fochabers, Scotland

Scottish Gaelic: The language of Alba and almost of Canada!

By 1850, Scottish Gaelic was the third most spoken language in Canada. In 1890, Thomas Robert MacInnes, a Canadian from Cape Breton, put forward a senate bill that would allow the use of Gaelic in official proceedings, but it was defeated. Can you imagine what would have been the role of Gaelic in Canada today if the bill had gone through? In a parallel universe, Scottish Gaelic could have been the main language spoken on the streets of New Scotland (Nova Scotia).

But let's rewind. What is the Scottish Gaelic language? Scottish Gaelic originated in the language of the Gaels of Ireland but grew apart from its sister tongue, Irish, during the later Middle Ages. Gaelic was the dominant language of the kingdom of Alba (the Gaelic name for Scotland) until the 11th century, but in the centuries following that its use became increasingly confined to the Highlands and Islands. Today around 90,000 people still have some knowledge of it in Scotland.

SCO SCOTS

👤👤👤 99 000 | 1500 000

Hoo's it
gaun?

Hullo!

Thank ye!

- 1 ane
- 2 twa
- 3 three
- 4 fower
- 5 five
- 6 sax
- 7 seeven
- 8 echt
- 9 nine
- 10 ten



aye

naw

Div ye speak Scots?

Scots emerged as a language of the Scottish royal court during the 14th century. It was an official language of the Scottish kingdom until the Treaty of Union with England, in 1707, and is today spoken by 1.5 million people in Scotland. Whereas Gaelic was the dominant language in the Highlands, Scots spread throughout the Lowlands, the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland, and also the north of Ireland giving rise to the Ulster Scots dialect.

Wee is a common word that you'll hear in everyday conversation, and it's an essential part of Scottish culture and identity. In Scots, 'wee' is used to mean 'small' or 'little'. However, the word can also be used to convey a sense of endearment or affection. For example, a Scottish parent might say to their child, 'M'on here, wee ane', meaning 'Come here, little one'. Similarly, a friend might say to another friend, 'Hoo's it gaun, wee man?', as a term of friendly familiarity.

Listen tae the soond o thir words >>>>

Photo: Scottish bagpiper dressed in traditional tartan dress, Edinburgh, Scotland



A little island's reborn language

Manx Gaelic used to be the main language spoken on the Isle of Man, located between Great Britain and Ireland. However, in the 19th century, islanders started viewing English as a language which could improve their economic situation, as tourism from England became increasingly important. This led to Manx Gaelic becoming less and less common. By the 1920s, only 1.1% of the population claimed to speak it.

But then something remarkable happened: a group of people decided that they didn't want Manx Gaelic to disappear. From the late 1940s, recordings were made of the last native speakers, classes were organised, and books were published to teach the language and encourage its use. In the 1990s, work started on teaching the language to children in schools and to promote its use in everyday life. Today, more and more people are learning to speak Manx Gaelic again and are keeping it alive for future generations. That's pretty cool, don't you think?



Manx, just like Cornish and Scottish Gaelic, has no single words for "yes" and "no". Here's an example of how you'd answer a yes/no question in Manx: The answer to "Did they go home?" would be "(they) did go" or "(they) didn't go". Or in Manx: "Jagh d dy valley? – Hie / Cha jagh."

- 1 nane
- 2 jees
- 3 tree
- 4 kiare
- 5 queig
- 6 shey
- 7 shiaght
- 8 hoght
- 9 nuy
- 10 jeih



<<< Eaisht rish shean ny focklyn shoh

Photo: Lighthouse, Isle of Man



STH SHELTA / DE GAMMON

👤👤👤 50 000

- 1 ain / awárt
- 2 od
- 3 sikr
- 4 sakar
- 5 sukur
- 6 see
- 7 seltu
- 8 od'sakar
- 9 ayen
- 10 tal a get'ah

Grält'a!

Cain a
geels?

Maa'ths!

Stés

Ní Déis

A travelling language of Ireland

Shelta or De Gammon is a language spoken by Irish travellers or 'Rilantu Mincéirí'. It is an instance of a 'cryptic' language that was developed to enable its speakers to communicate with each other and also to protect their privacy with respect to the majority communities. It has features of Irish Gaelic, English, and other languages, and has a distinct grammar and vocabulary. In fact, its lexicon is mostly made up of Irish, but the grammar mainly reflects English structures.

One interesting aspect of Shelta is its rich oral tradition that has largely been passed down through the generations by word of mouth. Reputedly the word Shelta refers to 'a voice that moves (emotionally)' and we find that a lovely description of a language! Until recently, Shelta had no written form, making it difficult to document and study. As a result, much about its history and structure remains unknown. Find out about another 'secret' language on the next page.

Glóri a grolan a'gresko >>>

Photo: Atlantic puffin, Ireland



JENISCH YEC

👤👤👤 16 000

There are several Yenish dialects in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The words and phrases on this page are from the Franconian dialect in Germany.

Hauerscht
gwand?

Gwandâ
Schein!

I'h
bederch mi'!

- 1 alet
- 2 zwis
- 3 triwas
- 4 dohlet
- 5 keh
- 6 woof
- 7 sojin
- 8 keß
- 9 deß
- 10 juhs

The language of German-speaking fairs and markets

Yenish is recognized as a minority language in Switzerland. However, just like Shelta on the previous page it was once a 'secret' language, especially common among travelling people – this time among traditional Yenish trades like coppersmiths, tinkers, and fairground performers. If you had seen a juggler a century or two ago, he or she might have spoken Yenish.

Like other cryptic languages, Yenish was not developed to facilitate communication with others but rather to hinder it. In fact, Yenish has been negatively associated with the language of bargaining and plotting. But that's wrong. Yenish is much more than just a tool for maintaining secrecy: it is a complex language with a distinct vocabulary, having a German basis but borrowing from other languages.

wui

nowas

<<< Lohs wi' di' Diewerei schallt

Photo: Juggler playing with fire, Cologne, Germany



NDS PLATTDÜÜTSCH

👤👤👤 70 000

There are many different dialects of Lower German. The words and phrases on this page are from the East Frisian Platt dialect – which is a variation of the North Lower Saxon dialect.

ja

nee

Moin!

Wo geiht di dat?

Bedankt!

- 1 een
- 2 twee
- 3 dree
- 4 veer
- 5 fiev
- 6 sess
- 7 söven
- 8 acht
- 9 negen
- 10 teihn



ß

ö

ä

ü

Höör, wo disse Woorden klingen >>>

The German sound shift

Around a thousand years ago, a significant change occurred in the German language known as the 'Sound Shift'. This shift had a strong impact on the pronunciation and vocabulary of German. Among many other shifts, sounds like 'p' changed to 'f' and 'k' changed to 'ch'.

While all German dialects below the 'Benrath Line,' a line stretching across Northern Germany from West to East, underwent this sound shift, Lower German (Plattdeutsch) did not. In Lower German, words are still pronounced as they were in the old form of the language.

For example, the Lower German word for horse, 'Päerd,' is 'Pferd' in German, and the word for cooking, 'koken,' is 'kochen' in German. If you look closely, you might notice something interesting about the last example. Yes, 'koken' in Lower German sounds quite similar to 'cook' in English. Although a Germanic language, English did not undergo this particular sound shift but did have its own pronunciation shift, known as the 'Great Vowel Shift,' between the 15th and 18th centuries. Like most things in life, languages do not stand still!



Photo: Fishing boats at low tide, Dorum-Neufeld, Germany

SERBŠĆINA WEN

👤👤👤 20 000

There are two varieties of Sorbian:
Upper and Lower Sorbian.
The words and phrases on this page
are from the Upper Sorbian language.

Kak so
wjedže?

Witaj!

Džakuju
so!

- 1 jedyn
- 2 dwaj
- 3 tři
- 4 štyri
- 5 pjeć
- 6 šěsć
- 7 sydom
- 8 wosom
- 9 džewjeć
- 10 džesać



Haj

Ně

č

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Two Slavic languages native to Germany

The smallest Slavic people are the Sorbs (not physically of course!). They live in Germany and have their own language – or, rather, two languages. Sorbian is primarily spoken in Lusatia, which includes the Eastern states of Brandenburg (Lower Sorbian) and Saxony (Upper Sorbian). The Sorbian alphabet is based on the Latin alphabet but contains some additional letters that represent unique Sorbian sounds. Interestingly, Sorbian uses the dual grammatical number. So talking about two people is different from referring to just one person or a group. Perhaps Sorbian is the ideal language for couples!

Sorbian has a long and interesting history, with many fairy tales, legends, customs, songs, and traditional costumes. Unfortunately, fewer and fewer people speak Sorbian nowadays. Efforts are nonetheless being made to counteract this trend, and we hope to see them thriving very soon!



<<< Słuchaj, kak tute słowa klinča

Photo: Devil's Bridge, Kromlau, Germany

CSB KASZĚBSCZI JÄZĚK

👤👤👤 108 000

Cëž je kòl
ce częc?

Witôj!

Dzãka!

Jo

Nié

ą

ã

ô

ó

ù

é

ë

ò

ń

ż

ł

- 1 jeden
- 2 dwa
- 3 trzë
- 4 sztërë
- 5 piãc
- 6 szesc
- 7 sédem
- 8 òsem
- 9 dzewiãc
- 10 dzesãc

A regional language in Poland

Although similar to Polish, Kashub's distinctiveness is shown, among other things, by the fact that it contains many pre-Slavic words that have already disappeared in modern Polish. It also contains many borrowings from German. Look at the characters on the left to see the striking difference with the Polish language. The Kashub language is promoted by an ethnic and cultural group which has consciously developed its literary language and cultural traditions – one legend is that a now vanished race of giants was responsible for shaping the region's distinctive landscape!

In recent decades, the Kashub language has experienced a renaissance and is now protected by Polish law as the only regional language in Poland. It is visible in literature, music, art, media and, above all, in school education. There are several dozen schools in Poland where children learn Kashub. Since 2005, it has been possible to take a Kashub Baccalaureate exam. Books and magazines are published in Kashub and regional radio and television programmes are broadcast in the language.

Slëchôj, jak brzëmiã te słowa >>>



Photo: Kashubian amber, formed from fossilized resin, is well known for its quality and unique colors

There are two major varieties of Yiddish: Standard Yiddish and Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish. The words and phrases on this page are from the Standard Yiddish variety.

YIDISH-TAYTSH YI

 1 500 000

A Germanic language meets the Hebrew alphabet

Yiddish is a Germanic language written using the Hebrew alphabet. Odd, right? But how did this happen? For centuries, Jewish communities lived in Central and Eastern Europe and learned the language spoken by their neighbours. They also adapted it to their needs, writing it with their alphabet and adding Hebrew words. This led to the emergence of Yiddish. When Yiddish speakers migrated to other areas, they learned words and grammar from other languages, such as Slavic ones, and added them to Yiddish.

Today, Yiddish is mostly spoken in some parts of Israel, the United States, and Russia. In fact, there is even a Netflix series called 'Unorthodox' about a Yiddish-speaking community from New York! German speakers might be able to grasp some of words and phrases as Yiddish and German are somewhat similar. It's fascinating to think about all the different places that Yiddish has travelled to, all the different languages that have influenced it, as well as all the languages that Yiddish has influenced! It is currently protected as a regional, minority or non-territorial language in no less than 8 European countries.



◀◀◀ Listen to the sound of these words

Photo: Bagels traditionally originated in the Jewish communities of Poland

יא

Yo!

ניין

Neyn!

וואָס מאַכסטו?

Vos makhstu?

שלום-עליכם

Sholem aleykhem

דאַנק/ש'כּוּחַ

A dank!

- 1 סנייא (eyns)
- 2 ייווצ (tsvey)
- 3 יירד (dray)
- 4 ריפּ (rif)
- 5 פּינף (finf)
- 6 סקעז (zeks)
- 7 זיבן (zibn)
- 8 טאָכאַ (akht)
- 9 נאַנן (nayn)
- 10 טען (tsen)



LAD DJUDEOESPANYOL

888 51 000

קומו סטאס?

Komo stas?

בואין דיאה

Buen Dia!

מירסי מוג'ו

Mersi Mucho!

- 1 אונו (uno)
- 2 דוס (dos)
- 3 טרי (tres)
- 4 קואטרו (kuatro)
- 5 סינקו (sinko)
- 6 שיש (sesh)
- 7 סייטי (syete)
- 8 אוג'ו (ocho)
- 9 מואיב'י (mueva)
- 10 דייס (dyes)

נו

Si!

סי

No!

A snapshot of 15th century Spanish language in a modern world!

In 1492, the same year as Columbus 'discovered' America, the Sephardic Jews from the Kingdom of Spain were forced to leave their homeland. They eventually migrated to the former Ottoman Empire (comprising the Balkans, Türkiye, as well as other parts of Central and Eastern Europe Western Asia, and North Africa,) and later on, to the United States, South America, and Israel. This community also brought with it the Ladino or Judeo-Spanish language, which is nowadays spoken in its different varieties by Sephardic communities in more than 30 countries, using the Hebrew script.

In some ways, Ladino is like a snapshot of the Spanish language from the 15th century, with influences from the local languages of the places where Sephardic communities lived and still live. Interestingly, a language more or less similar to that of Cervantes' Spanish is still spoken today in places such as Istanbul, Thessaloniki, Sarajevo, New York, or Jerusalem. An old language with a modern twist!

Ascoltar bien alton de esas palabras >>>





- 1 un
- 2 dos
- 3 tres
- 4 cuatro
- 5 cinco
- 6 seyes
- 7 siete
- 8 ochu
- 9 nueve
- 10 diez

Si

Non

Comu tás?

Hola!

Gracies!

ASTURIANU **AST**

👤👤👤 110 000

The fall and rise of Asturian...

For quite some time, Asturian served as the lingua franca across a vast territory, stretching from Asturias to Extremadura in Spain. Asturian is just one example of the many languages that were in use during the Middle Ages across the various kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula. The ambition to unify Spain into a single nation, rather than a patchwork of kingdoms, required the establishment of a shared language. As a result, languages like Asturian gradually fell out of use in the public sphere and were replaced by Castilian Spanish. Luckily, the language has recently witnessed a surge of interest, leading to an increase in the number of schools offering Asturian classes!

On the map on the left, you can see the variety of languages spoken on the Iberian Peninsula around the year 1250. Turn to the next page to learn about another language spoken in one of Spain's former kingdoms.



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é

í



<<< Oyéi'l soníu d'estes frases



Photo: Farinato Race, an extreme obstacle race, Gijón, Spain

AN ARAGONÉS

👤👤👤 11 000

- 1 uno
- 2 dos
- 3 tres
- 4 cuatro
- 5 cinco
- 6 seis
- 7 siete
- 8 ueito
- 9 nueu
- 10 diez

Sí

No

Ola!

Qué tal plantas?

Gracias!

The Greek classics in an unexpected language...

Aragonese was once the widely spoken language of the Kingdom of Aragon, located in the northeastern part of the Iberian Peninsula. It served as the language of culture, administration, and everyday life. Thanks to its use in poetry and literature, numerous texts have been preserved for linguists and others to explore, even centuries after the kingdom's decline. As early as the 14th century, Johan Ferrández d'Heredia translated Greek classics into Aragonese.

Today, Aragonese is actively spoken by around 11,000 people living in the autonomous community of Aragon, mainly in the valleys of the Aragonese Pyrenees. Despite its relatively small number of speakers, the Aragonese community has been dedicated to keeping the language alive by promoting and striving to integrate Aragonese into the education system.

Year 2000



á

ñ

é

í

ó

ú

Siente o soniu d'istas frases >>>>



Photo: Furco Canyon, Aragon, Spain

- 1 un
- 2 dois
- 3 tres
- 4 cuatro
- 5 cinco
- 6 seis
- 7 seti
- 8 oitu
- 9 novi
- 10 de

Comu estás?

Hola!

Gracias!

Sí

Non

A Galician-Portuguese language in Extremadura

The history of Fala dates back to the 12th and 13th centuries when Galician settlers established themselves in the Jálama Valley, located in the northwest region of Cáceres, Spain. Today, a thriving linguistic community of around 4,000 people communicates using this variant of the Galician-Portuguese language. If we consider those who have moved to different parts of Spain and Europe, the number of speakers reaches approximately 10,000.

It is spoken mainly in just three towns of the valley bordering on Portugal. However, there are ongoing efforts to gain recognition for Fala and integrate it into the local education system. To support this goal, a scientific committee has been formed to standardise its writing system, transitioning Fala from a language passed down orally to one with a standardised written form. If you get a chance to travel to Valverde del Fresno, Eljas or San Martín de Trevellu you will certainly hear this mysterious and beautiful language spoken on the streets.



◀◀◀ Escuta o suiu de estas frasis

BÔJĂȘ

👤👤👤 ~150 000

While the Boyash/Boyash Romanian language primarily survives through oral tradition, however it has an official written form in Hungary and Croatia. The words and phrases below are written according to the Hungarian convention.

An archaic gem of the Romanian language

Boyash is an archaic form of the Romanian language, spoken by Boyash communities across Romania, Hungary, Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria, and beyond. As Boyash people migrated, their language absorbed influences from the countries they lived in, such as Hungarian in Hungary and Croatian in Croatia. This led to various community names like "Boyash" in Hungary, "Romi Bajași" in Croatia, and "Rudari" in Bulgaria. The term "Rudari," meaning "metal" or "ore," reflects the Boyash people's ancestral role as skilled miners and gold panners.

Despite the declining number of native speakers, there are collaborative initiatives spanning various countries dedicated to its preservation. In Croatia, Boyash is taught in 3 primary schools, and in Hungary, the teaching of Boyash extends up to university level. The Austrian Academy of Science has established a partnership with the dynamic Boyash community in Vienna, and similar efforts are underway in Serbia.

Dá

Nu

Kum jésty?

Bună ziua!

Mulcumszck!

- 1 unu, uná
- 2 doj, dauă
- 3 trij
- 4 pátru
- 5 sjinsj
- 6 sásză
- 7 sáptyé
- 8 opt
- 9 nauă
- 10 zesjé

Punyé uretyé lá vorbilyestyé! >>>

Photo: Small fishing cottages on Bokod lake, Hungary



РУСИНСЬКИЙ ЯЗЫК RUE

👤👤👤 624 000

A bridge between Eastern and Western Slavic languages

The Ruthenians have lived for centuries around the Carpathian Mountains, stretching from the Czech Republic to Romania, in close contact with both Eastern and Western Slavic language groups. That's why their language, Ruthenian, or Rusyn, as it is also known, is sometimes referred to as a bridge between the Western and Eastern branches of Slavic languages. The language has grammar features from both West and East Slavic languages, making it somewhat easier for you to understand and pick up other Slavic languages if you already know Ruthenian. One feature that makes it special among the Slavic languages is the extra vowel that comes from the differentiation between *i and *y from way back in time (we're talking Proto-Slavic!).

айно

aino

ніім

n'it

Як ся маєш?

iak sia maiesh?

Дякую!

diakuiu!

Здоров

zdorov

1 єден (ieden)

2 два (dva)

3 три (try)

4 чотыри (chotýry)

5 п'ят (piat)

6 шість (shist')

7 с'ім (sim)

8 вусям (vusiam)

9 дивять (dyviat')

10 дисять (dysiat')



<<< Послухайте далші фразы

Photo: Retezat National Park Carpathian Mountains, Romania

ACY ΣΑΝΝΑ

👤👤👤 0 | 9800

Cypriot Maronite Arabic is usually written with the Greek alphabet, but the Latin alphabet is also used by linguists. The words and phrases on this page are written using the Latin alphabet.



- 1 eḡen
- 2 ḡnayn
- 3 tlaḡe
- 4 arpca
- 5 ḡamse
- 6 sitte
- 7 sapca
- 8 xmenye
- 9 tisca
- 10 caṡra

Aṡ pitsay?

Salám!

ṡukran!

Nke-ye

Lla

When two languages become one

What happens when speakers of two language communities live together and have to communicate? They often borrow words from one another to convey their messages. Sometimes new languages are born out of this interaction – that is the case with Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

This language is spoken by a small community of people on the island of Cyprus. It is a mixture of Arabic and Greek, which means that it has words and sounds from both languages. This happened because for centuries Arabic and Greek speakers lived together on the island and started using words from each other's languages. Over time, these two languages merged to form a new language.

It's kind of like how two different colours can blend to create a new one. Cypriot Maronite Arabic retains features from two very different languages, and that makes it unique!

ğ

ṡ

ḡ

č

Smacu l-ḡis telli klam >>>>



SÜRET

👤👤👤 1 000 000

There are two dialects of Assyrian: Eastern and Western. The words and phrases on this page are from the Western dialect (Surayt) spoken, among others, in Tur Abdin of in Türkiye.

Ay Derbo Hat?

ܐܝ ܕܪܒܘ ܗܬ?

ܫܠܘܡܐ

Shlomo

ܬܘܕܝ

Tawdi

- 1 ܗܐ (ha)
- 2 ܬܪܝܐ (tre)
- 3 ܬܠܘܗܐ (tlotho)
- 4 ܐܪܒܘܐ ('arbo)
- 5 ܗܡܫܘܐ (hamsho)
- 6 ܐܝܫܘܐ (ishto)
- 7 ܫܘܘܐ (shaw'o)
- 8 ܬܡܢܘܐ (tmanyo)
- 9 ܬܝܫܘܐ (tish'o)
- 10 ܐܫܘܪܐ ('asro)

A language with a long history

Did you ever wonder which languages were used by the brightest minds of the past? For many of them, we know! Socrates and Aristotle spoke Ancient Greek, Cicero and Seneca wrote in Latin, and Confucius in Old Chinese. According to the Bible, Jesus spoke ancient Aramaic. The Aramaic language was once the language of the Assyrian empire and held a position similar to that of English today. Both the Arabic and Hebrew alphabets are based on the Aramaic script, and overall, the Aramaic language has had a significant influence on both Afro-Asiatic and Indo-European languages.

Linguists consider the Assyrian language, now spoken across parts of Armenia, Türkiye as well as in Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon, to be the contemporary descendant of Aramaic. Although the Assyrian-speaking diaspora is scattered around the globe, and many of them have brought their language with them, a considerable number of Assyrian dialects are now endangered. A language with such a long history and significant impact on languages spoken across the globe... it would be a shame to see it fade away.

ܐܝܢ

Een

ܠܘ

Lo



ܕܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܘܪܘܢܐ

Photo: High snowy Ararat and the ruins of Zvartnots temple, Armenia

edl.ecml.at/languagejourney

This sequel to 'Lara's language journey across Europe' focuses largely on regional and minority languages and serves to highlight the rich linguistic diversity present on the continent of Europe.

It was developed by the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe within the framework of the European Day of Languages. We would like to thank all experts who helped us to create this comprehensive and informative resource.

For more information on the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe and the European Day of languages see www.ecml.at.

For any adaptations or translations please contact us at information@ecml.at.

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FIU	SMN	KL	KRL
CRH	TT	GAG	KDR
SC	FRP	OC	WA
PCD	BR	KW	GD
SCO	GV	STH	YEC
NDS	WEN	CSB	YI
LAD	AST	AN	FAX
Böjáś	RUE	ACY	Süret

