

Language Technology for Language Communities: An Overview based on Our Experience

Ixa Group (Iñaki Alegria, Kepa Sarasola)

Haskòlinn Í Reykjavik

www.ixa.eus

Scheme

- To explain **our experience** on Language Technology for Basque
Perhaps some ideas **can be useful for Icelandic**,
as Icelandic is a reference for us in the Basque Country
- **Sharing and discussing** these ideas with you
- **Technology** may be useful for language development but...
A **core work** should be implemented before (or in parallel):
 - **Standardization**
 - **Digital Open Contents** and
 - **Open Source Software**

Scheme

- Introduction
 - “Ixa” research group
 - Basque language
 - Basic concepts, basic strategies
 - Languages with scarce resources
- Basic tools and their applications
 - Corpus, dictionaries, morphology, lemmatizer
- Language models.
 - Good news for less-resourced languages (2020)
- Spanish and Basque plans for Language Technology
- Other associations working to promote the use of Basque
- Discussion



People

Results

Master

Language Technology Applications

Information Retrieval, Information Extraction and Question Answering
Papers; Projects: *Kyoto*, *paths*, *Lcloud*, *opener*, *skater* and *Know2*; Demo: *Ihardetsi (QA system)*

Machine Translation
Papers; Project: *OpenMT-2*, *Takardi*, *qt leap*; Demo: *Opentrad-Matxin (Spanish to Basque MT system)*

Language learning
Papers; Project: *Irakazi*

Linguistic processors

Morphology
Papers; Project: *BER2TEK*; Demos: *Morfeus*, *Eustagger*

Syntax-Morphosyntax
Papers; Project: *BER2TEK*; Demos: *Zatiak (chunker)*, *Maltixa (statistical parser)*

Lexicography-Semantics
Papers; Project: *Kyoto* and *Know2*; Demos: *Know2's demos*, *Eihera (name entities)*

Linguistic Resources

Corpus
Papers; Project: *Lexikoaren behatokia* ; Demos: *ZT*, *Ancora-EPEC* , *EuSemcor*

Dictionaries
Papers; Project: *BER2TEK*; Demos: *EDBL (lexical database)*, *Xuxen (spelling checker)*

Ontologies
Papers; Project: *Kyoto*, *Know2* and *WNTERM*; Demo: *Basque Wordnet*

Master Ofiziala
Official Master's Degree

Hizkuntzaren
Azterketa eta
Prozesamendua (HAP)

Language
Analysis and
Processing (LAP)

<http://ixa.sleha.es/master>

Ixa group (1988) - HiTZ Center (2020)

- **ixa.eus**
- **35 year** working on Language Technology
- **Basque**-centred research group... but also other languages
- **Multidisciplinary**: computing, linguistics...
- **Text**-based resources and tools (speech in collaboration)
- **3 levels**: resources, basic tools, applications
- **Local** and **Global**
Basque **community** and International research **community**
- **Collaboration**: Basque academy, Governments, lexicography centres, publishers, schools...
- **Alternative forums**:
Basque Summer University, Wikipedia, NGOs...

Hitz research center (hitz.eus)

- *Ixa* (text) and *Aholab* (speech) groups works together facing to new challenges (AI) collaboration with government, companies and associations



Information Extraction
and Information Retrieval



Machine Translation



Text Analysis



Speech and audio
processing



Human-Computer
Interaction



Speech and Language
Resources



Medical and Legal
domains



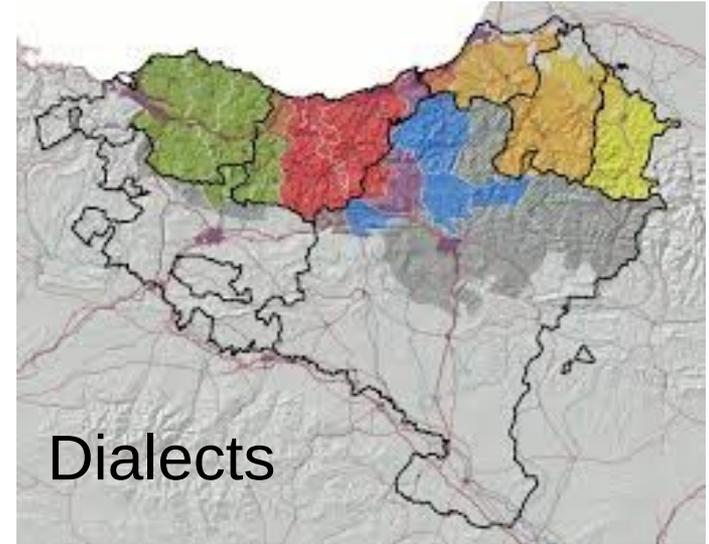
Digital humanities and
education



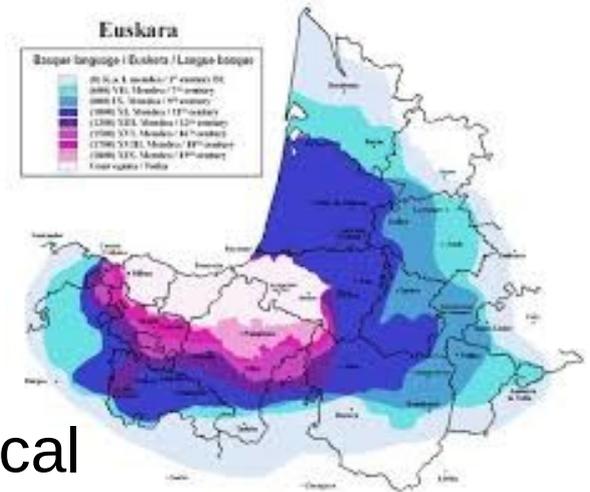
Basque language



Basque Country



Dialects



Historical regression

Basque language

- Four grammar-cases in Icelandic

M1	Singularra	Plurala		Singularra	Plurala
Nominatiboa	hestur	hestar		hesturinn	hestarnir
Akusatiboa	hest	hesta		hestinn	hestana
Datiboa	hesti	hestum		hestinum	hestunum
Genitiboa	hests	hesta		hestsins	hestanna

- 16 cases in Basque ([en.wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basque_language))

Case/Number	Singular	Plural	Undetermined
Absolutive	liburu-a-Ø	liburu-ak	liburu-Ø
Ergative	liburu-a-k	liburu-e-k	liburu-k
Dative	liburu-a-ri	liburu-e-i	liburu-ri
Local genitive	liburu-ko	liburu-e-ta-ko	liburu-tako
Possessive genitiveGenitive	liburu-a-ren	liburu-e-n	liburu-ren
Comitative (with)	liburu-a-rekin	liburu-e-kin	liburu-rekin
Benefactive (for)	liburu-a-rentzat	liburu-e-ntzat	liburu-rentzat
Causal (because of)	liburu-a-rengatik	liburu-e-ngatik	liburu-rengatik
Instrumental	liburu-a-z	liburu-etaz	liburu-taz
Inessive (in, on)	liburu-a-n	liburu-e-ta-n	liburu-tan
Ablative (from)	liburu-tik	liburu-e-ta-tik	liburu-tatik
Allative (where to: 'to')	liburu-ra	liburu-e-ta-ra	liburu-tara
Directive ('towards')	liburu-rantz	liburu-e-ta-rantz	liburu-tarantz
Terminative (up to)	liburu-raino	liburu-e-ta-raino	liburu-taraino
Prolative	liburu-tzat		
Partitive	liburu-rik		

Basic subjects in Language Technology

Looking for **texts in Basque...**

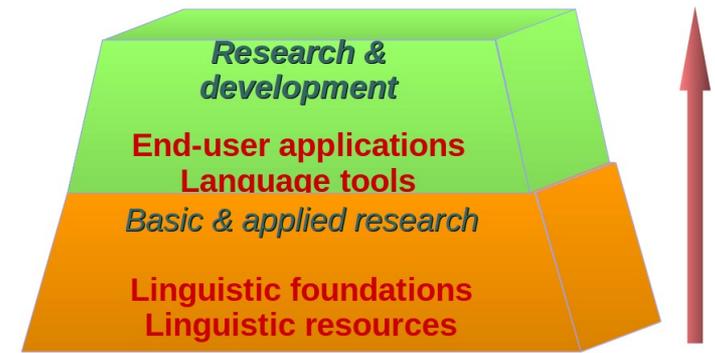
- Standardization (1968)
- (Digital) Contents (school books, small dictionaries, magazines...)
 - **Schools (*Ikastolak*)** → **University**
- Open/Free software / open contents
- Wikimedia / Wikipedia
- **Digital community**: websites, blogs, social networking, media...
- Need of **incremental design** and development of technology: **foundations** (resources), **tools**, and **applications**

Twitterreko euskarazko jarduna

Txio nabarmenak

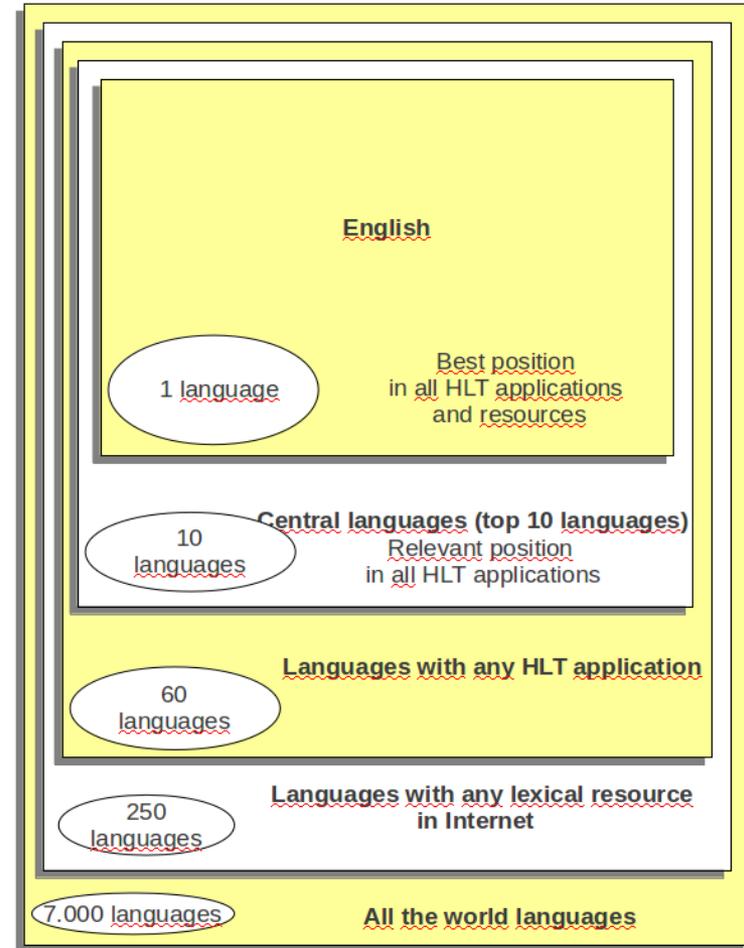
Rankingak

Euskara	Norbanakoak	Hedabideak	Kultura
1. EuskalHerriaEuskaraz @EH_E	1. Sorika Beretziartua @Sorika	1. Topatu @topatu_eus	1. Bertsozale Elkartea @bertsozale
2. esarak @esarak	2. Iñaki Petxarroman @petxarroman	2. REGIA @regia	2. Badok @badok
3. Kontseilua @kontseilua	3. Lander Arbelaitz @arbelaitz	3. Sustatu Albisteak @sustatu	3. DAL Durangoko Azoka @durangokoazoka
4. Azkue Fundazioa @azkuefundazioa	4. Iñaki Arrese Diegi @iako_diegi	4. kazeta.eus @kazetaeus	4. Bertsoa @bertsoa
5. Topagunea @topagunea	5. Iñigo Astiz @iastiz	5. EITB Albisteak @eitbalbisteak	5. Susa literatura @susaliteratura



Less resourced languages

- Typology based on (digital) resources



Languages with scarce resources

- Typology based on (digital) resources
- Associations:



mercator
European Research Centre on
Multilingualism and Language Learning

SOAS
University of London
100 Years

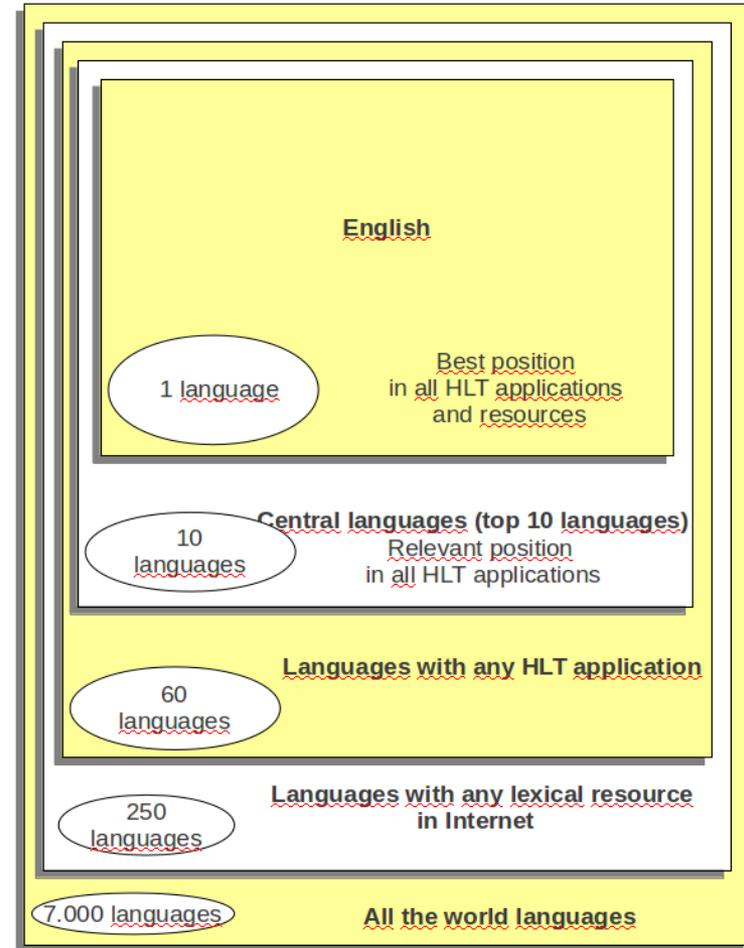
World Languages Institute

Foundation for Endangered Languages





SIGUL:
ISCA Special Interest Group.
Under-resourced Languages



Basic resources

- Corpora (digital texts)
- Dictionary (better a digital one)
- Normative grammar (even in paper)

Basic tools and their applications

- On-line dictionary → Games
- Morphology → Spelling corrector
→ Language Learning
- Lemmatizer/POS_tagger → Search engine
- Text normalization
and Machine translation

Dictionaries (mono- or bi-lingual)

- Basic tool for students, journalists, translators and writers
- Historical evolution: Paper cards → MSWord → XML/TEI
- XML/TEI → **Multimedia**: CD/DVD, Web/phone, Paper
 - Unique maintenance → 3 products
- Integration: *Euskalbar* (browser)
- Some projects in collaboration:
 - Small dictionary for Nahuatl, Garabide NGO
 - Scholar dictionary in Cuba (*DBE*), CLA institute in Santiago de Cuba
 - Scrable and other games in Basque



Lemmatizer / Search engine

- Stemming → Lemmatizer (morphology) → **POS tagging** (learning)
 - word → stem/lemma(root) → lemma in context
 - juego* → *jugar(V) / juego(N)* → *jugar(V)*
- used for information extraction
 - + language identifier → Search engine
- A **manually annotated corpus** is needed to create a POS tagger
- Powerful tool for Information Retrieval and Information Extraction
- Some projects for Basque:



Successful applications since 2018

- Machine translation
- Use of the local language in Health services
- Digital humanities
- Speech synthesis
- Speech recognition
- Conversational interfaces, chatbots
- ...

Machine Translation

- Precondition: (Parallel) Corpora
- 2006 RBMT (Knowledge based)
- 2009 SMT
- 2018 NMT

Collaboration with Elhuyar.eus

- Neural revolution
 - Not perfect, it needs postedition but the quality is very high
 - Something incredible five years ago
 - We have 4 free good translation-services via web for Basque
 - This opens new ways
where the use of translation could be extended to many situations
 - New horizons for under-resourced languages
- In most of the cases cross-lingual learning is used, but good results are also obtained even only using monolingual corpora (Artetxe et al., 2020)
 - Nice for languages with few parallel resources



I translated to Basque 472 Wikipedia articles (2021-2023) :-)



Spanish and Basque plans for Language technology

- **Plan for the Advancement of Language Technology**
2015-2020 90 M€

Spanish Plan for Artificial Intelligence

- 2021-2023
- Spanish Government.
- https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/presidente/news/Paginas/2020/20201202_enia.aspx

Basque Plan for Language technology

- 2021-2025
- Also the Basque Government.
- <https://www.euskadi.eus/gaitu-plan-de-accion-de-las-tecnologias-de-la-lengua-2021-2024/web01-ejeduki/es/>

Good news for less-resourced languages

There have been significant advances, even for less-resourced languages, in several areas:

- lexicon extraction (Artetxe et al., 2019),
- morphology induction (Anastasopoulos&Neubig, 2019)
- POS tagging (Kim et al., 2017),
- machine translation (Artetxe et al., 2017)
- chatbots

(Artetxe et al., 2020)

In most of the cases cross-lingual learning is used, but good results are also obtained even only using monolingual corpora,

→ Nice for languages with few parallel resources

Good news for less-resourced languages

(Agerri et al., 2020)

Word embeddings and pre-trained language models enabled improvements across most NLP tasks.

Unfortunately they are very expensive to train,
--> small companies and research groups tend to use big models provided by the big companies.

But our mono- & multilingual language BERT models have proven to be very useful in NLP tasks for Basque.

Eventhough they have been created:

- with a 500 times smaller corpus than the English one
- with a 80 times smaller wikipedia.

Good news for less-resourced languages

The original BERT language model for English was trained in 2018 using Google books corpus with 189 billion words. Almost 500 times bigger than the Basque one (384 millions).

Source	Text type	Million tokens
Basque Wikipedia	Encyclopedia	35M
<u>Berria</u> newspaper	News	81M
<u>EiTB</u> Television	News	28M
<u>Argia</u> magazine	News	16M
Local news sites	News	224.6M

Good news for less-resourced languages

(Otegi et al., 2020)

A multilingual language model
pretrained only for English, Spanish and Basque, using:

- The monolingual Basque model
- English Wikipedia (2.5 Gword)
- Spanish Wikipedia (650 Mword)
(80 and 20 times bigger than the Basque Wikipedia)

Successful to transfer knowledge from English to Basque
in a conversational Question/Answering system

Better than the general Google's official mBERT model
(it covers too many languages, Basque is not well represented).

Other personal projects

- Basque Summer University

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basque_Summer_University

- Association around the Basque Wikipedia

<https://eu.wikipedia.org>

- Garabide NGO

<https://www.garabide.eus/english/>

- Others:

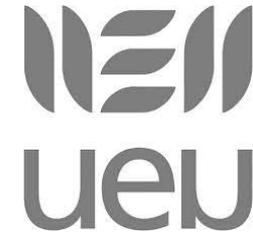
Language schools and communities for practice (online also), association for localising open software (*Librezale*) ...

Repositories of talks (old people), bibliography in Basque, open literature and critics...

.eus Internet domain



UEU: Basque Summer University



- The main public university (UPV/EHU) is bilingual
- UEU works only in Basque: community
 - Association of professors, lecturers and students
 - Promoting Basque at the University: teaching, research, dissemination
 - Some official titles in collaboration with official universities
 - Courses, conferences, books, databases...
- Two new interesting projects:
 - **Ikergazte**: pre- and post-doctoral Basque **researchers** together
 - **Open university in Basque**: today is not possible in Basque

JAKINTZA-ARLOA

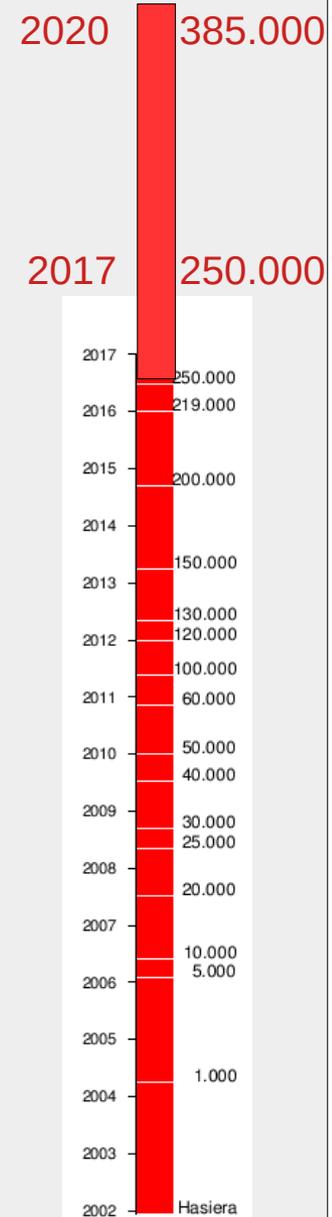
- Antropologia (9)
- Arte eta Letren zientziak (35)
- Biziaz zientziak (32)
- Filosofia (23)
- Fisika (4)
- Geografia (1)
- Historia (28)
- Hizkuntzalaritza (68)
- Informazio eta Komunikazio zientziak (54)
- Kimika (38)
- Lurra eta espazioaren zientziak (7)
- Matematika (45)
- Medikuntza (20)
- Nekazaritza zientziak (2)
- Pedagogia (25)



Wikipedia (open source text)

- No problems with copyrights and formats
- Applications:
 - **language models**
 - **text mining**
 - **Language Technology evaluation**
- Growing and growing
- 2017-2019
Basque Government Education program for creating 1.000 basic articles in Basque Wikipedia for 12-16 years students created by students at the university :-))

Articles in Basque Wikipedia year by year



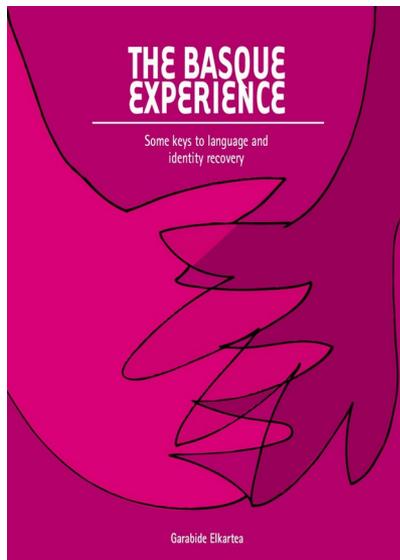
Garabide: NGO for language cooperation



- Cooperation with language communities, specially Latin America and north of Africa

The Revitalization of the Basque Language as a Model for Other Minority Languages in the World

- <https://issuu.com/di-da/docs/garabide-english>
- Cooperation in pedagogy, sociolinguistics, technology...
- Master on language management (in Spanish) for leaders



Basque in the digital era

- The Basque has achieved a good position
“a successful case”
- Basque (data from a research in 2014 [1])
 - Translated books: 54th among 247
 - Wikipedia: 47th among 134 (34th in 2022)
 - Twitter: 36th among 70
- Globalization and Internet (young people) →
main languages are more and more prevalent (Netflix...)
young people learn Basque, have tools, but many do not use them

[1] <https://www.pnas.org/doi/pdf/10.1073/pnas.1410931111>

Discussion

- Sustainability / Cost:
 - Planning is a need for sustainability
 - Fast development could be *expensive*
- Integration on commercial software / open software
 - Many popular applications are proprietary and the decision to add new languages depends on the company
 - interesting experience in Basque.
 - Microsoft become more interested after the localization and integration on free software
 - spin-off company for apps
- Standardization/dialect/language/alphabet...
 - Each community has to decide...
 - But standardization is crucial for text processing!
 - A spelling corrector can be a “de facto” proposal



Discussion

How to face the development of “ChatGPT” for Basque?

- Using commercial software?

<https://openai.com/customer-stories/government-of-iceland>

English to Icelandic

Prompt

Hvað heitir Donald Duck á íslensku?
What is Donald Duck called in Icelandic?

GPT-3 completion

Donald Duck heitir á íslensku Donaldi Kjáni
Donald Duck is called in Icelandic Donaldi the Fool
Incorrect

ChatGPT completion

Donald Duck heitir sama nafni á íslensku og ensku
Donald Duck has the same name in Icelandic and English
Incorrect

GPT-4 completion

Donald Duck heitir Andrés Önd á íslensku
Donald Duck is called Andrés Önd in Icelandic
Correct

- Or creating our open software by our own? Finland



Takk fyrir

Eskerrik asko

Thank you

*It is always easier to open way
when you have close references*

Technology makes it easier :-))

Spurningar, skoðanir...

Galderak, iritziak...

Questions, opinions...

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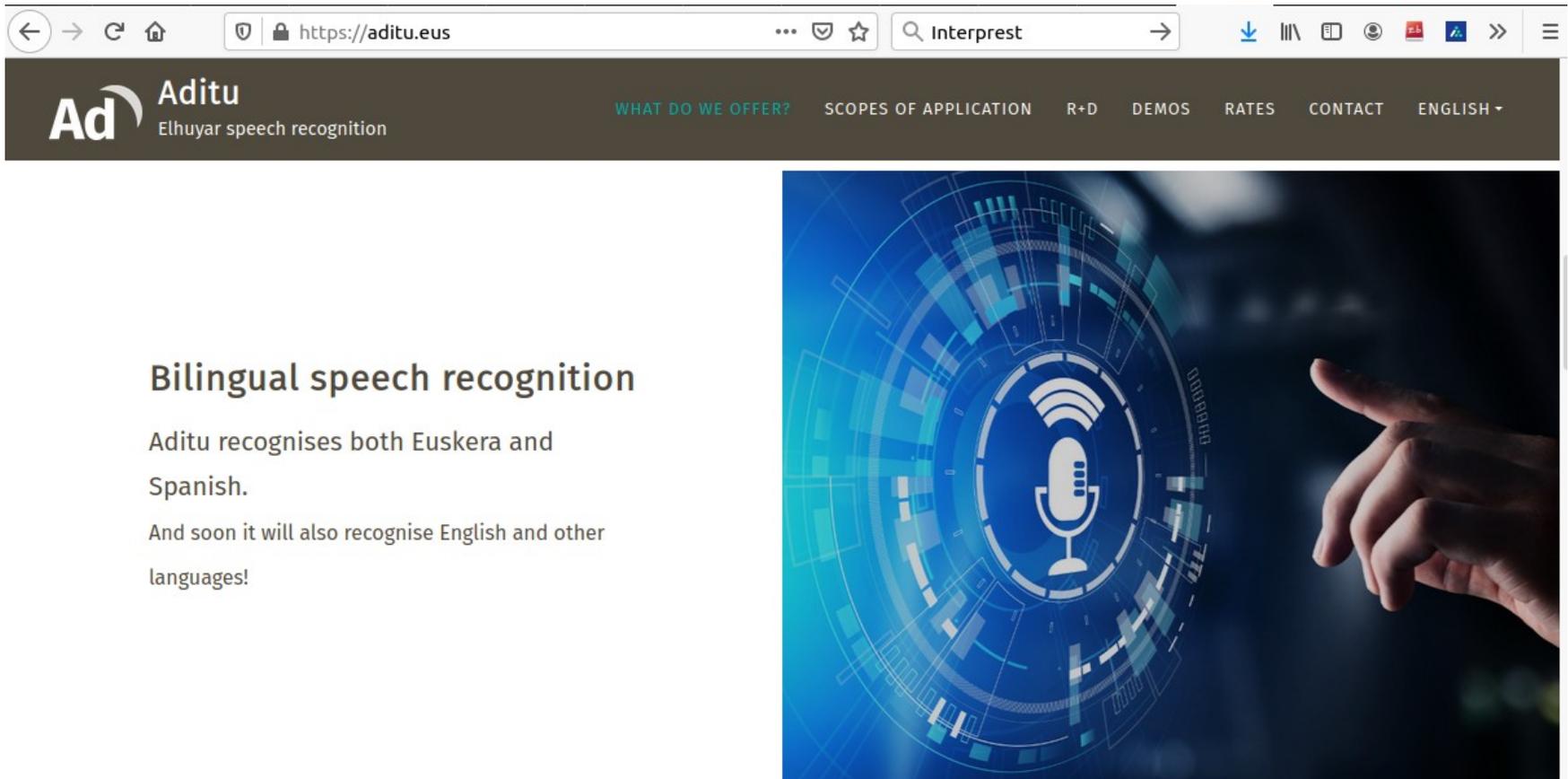
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Extra slides (complementary)

- Some Useful applications
 - Aditu, bilingual speech recognition
 - Interprest, low cost and portable interpretation services
 - Bidaide. Web service to create and provide multilingual contents.

Aditu, bilingual speech recognition



Ad Aditu
Elhuyar speech recognition

WHAT DO WE OFFER? SCOPES OF APPLICATION R+D DEMOS RATES CONTACT ENGLISH ▾

Bilingual speech recognition

Aditu recognises both Euskera and Spanish.

And soon it will also recognise English and other languages!

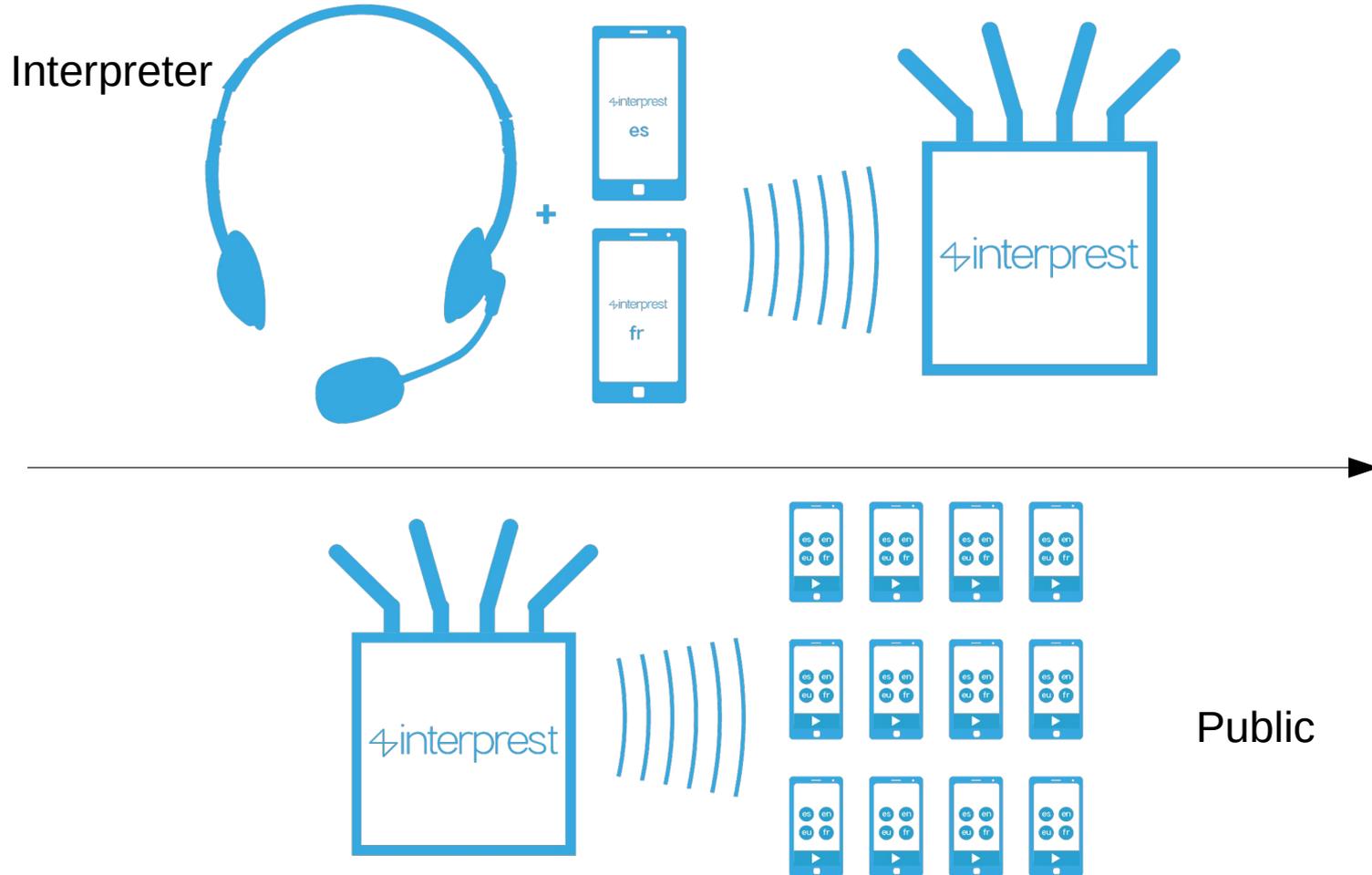
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HiTZ

Hizkuntza Teknologiko Zentroa
Basque Center for Language Technology

Interprest, low cost and portable interpretation services



Turin 2021



HiTZ

Hizkuntza Teknologiako Zentroa
Basque Center for Language Technology

Bidaide

Web service to create and provide multilingual contents.

In museums, routes or buildings.

Visitors read or listen to explanations on their own mobile

The screenshot shows the Bidaide website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Bidaide logo, a menu with items like 'What is Bidaide?', 'How does it work?', 'Success stories', and 'Contact', and a language selection dropdown showing 'EU EN ES FR IT PT CA GL'. The main heading is 'What is Bidaide?'. Below it, a sub-heading reads: 'Bidaide allows museums, cultural and tourist routes and buildings to create multilingual accessible audioguides for visitors that will run in their own mobile phones.' The content is organized into five feature cards, each with an icon, a title, and a brief description:

- Audioguide**: The visitor will be able to read or listen the explanations of the place or the route.
- In the visitor's mobile**: Without need of a specific physical support for audioguides, the visitor will listen or will read the explanations in his/her mobile telephone.
- Multilingual**: The visitor will read and listen the explanations in his/her language, thanks to the help that Bidaide offers to translate texts and create audios.
- Accessible**: Bidaide is a solution completely accessible at all levels. The phone app, in addition to being accessible, can guide visitors with visual disability along the route or museum.
- Outdoors or indoors**: Bidaide is designed for outdoor and indoor routes. In outdoor routes it uses the GPS system to guide the visitor. Indoors, by the contrary, it uses proximity beacons that emit a Bluetooth signal.

Turin 2021



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del País Vasco

GOVERNUL
Unibertsitatea

Basque Center for Language Technology

