

Your name:

The UK Linguistics Olympiad 2017



Problem 5. Basquing in the sun (15 marks)

The Basque language (whose Basque name is actually 'Euskara') is spoken by around 700,000 people in the western Pyrenees, partly in Spain and partly in France. Although this area is within Europe, Basque is not related to Spanish and French except through a number of loan words. In fact, as far as we know it is not related to any other language, anywhere.

Q.5.1 Here are some Basque sentences and their English translations. Fill the gaps 1-5.

Emakumeak gizona ikusi du.	The woman has seen the man.
Zuk umea ikusi duzu kalean.	You (singular) have seen the child in the street.
Non ikusi duzu umea?	Where have you seen the child?
Nork ikusi du umea kalean?	Who has seen the child in the street?
Umeak ez du gizona ikusi.	The child has not seen the man.
Emakumeak liburua irakurri du.	The woman has read the book.
Umea etorri da.	The child has come/arrived.
Umea kalean erori da.	The child has fallen in the street.
Igela agertu da.	The frog has appeared.
Nork ikusi du gizona?	1
Igela kalean agertu da.	2
3	The woman has come.
4	The man has seen the woman.
5	The book has not arrived.

Q.5.2. The order of words in a Basque sentence is actually very free, so the words in the translation of 'The child has fallen in the street' can be shuffled into several alternative orders, but not all orders are permitted. In the following sentences, those which are not allowed are marked with *.

Your name:

The UK Linguistics Olympiad 2017



Umea erori da kalean.	*Erori umea da kalean.
Kalean erori da umea.	*Erori kalean da umea.
Erori da umea kalean.	*Erori umea kalean da.
Erori da kalean umea.	_____

Here are some more Basque sentences. Once again your task is to fill the gaps 6-7 in the table.

Gizonak umeari liburua eman dio.	The man has given the book to the child.
Irakasleak umeari liburua irakurrarazi dio.	The teacher has made the child read the book.
Emakumeak umeari etorerrarazi dio.	6
7	The child has given the frog to the woman.

Your name:

The UK Linguistics Olympiad 2017



Solution and marking.

Scoring (max 22)

- 2 for each correct English **sentence** (max 3 x 2 = 6)
 - 1 with one mistake. e.g. #6: The woman has come to the child.
 - accept *arrived* for *come*.
- 1 for each correct Basque **word** (max 3 + 4 + 4 + 5 = 16)
 - accept any order of words, provided the underlined words are next to each other and correctly ordered.
- Score positively – 1 for each target word, ignore extra non-target words.
 - But insist on correct order; if A ... B should be B ... A, accept A but not B.
 - Insist on correct number (singular/plural) and correct affixes.
 - Accept simple past for perfect (e.g. saw ~ has seen)
 - But accept an English noun only if its grammatical function is right.
 - Reject active-passive exchanges even if the meaning is the same.
 - Accept minor copying errors e.g. liburua ~ libura
- Score generously – if different scores are possible, choose the highest.

Q.5.1.

Nork ikusi du gizona?	1 Who has seen the man?	2
Igela kalean agertu da.	2 The frog has appeared in/on the street. or: The frog in/on the street has appeared. or: The street frog has appeared.	2
3 Emakumea <u>etorri da</u> .	The woman has come.	3
4 Gizonak emakumea <u>ikusi du</u> .	The man has seen the woman.	4
5 Liburua <u>ez da</u> etorri.	The book has not arrived.	4

Q.5.2.

Emakumeak umeari etorrarazi dio.	6 The woman has made the child come.	2
7 Umeak emakumeari igela <u>eman dio</u> .	The child has given the frog to the woman.	5

Your name:

The UK Linguistics Olympiad 2017



Commentary

- Basque is an 'ergative' language, meaning that the subject of an intransitive sentence (e.g. The child has come) has the same form as the object of a transitive (e.g. *the man* in 'The woman has seen the man'), in contrast with English where it has the same form as the transitive subject. Basque nouns have an extra -k added to their basic form when they are the subject of a transitive (e.g. *emakumeak* in #1).
- These sentences contain a little word (maybe an auxiliary verb – we'll just call it 'v'): *du, duzu, da, dio*. This shows both the type of subject (second or third person) and whether the verb is intransitive, transitive or ditransitive (i.e. 0, 1 or 2 objects).
- Word order is free except that v must stand just after one selected other word: the word *ez* if present, otherwise the verb. (The evidence for *ez* is indirect: v otherwise has to follow the verb, *ez* overrides that rule, so by implication the position after *ez* is obligatory just as it is after the verb.)