According to Wheeler (2010), Catalan is currently the official language of Andorra, and it is also spoken in the Catalonia region which lies in northeastern Spain. It also appears to be spoken in Alghero, a city in the Italian island of Sardinia. It is not an endangered language.

The documented number of speakers of Catalan varies from source to source, but the government of Catalonia estimated that there were about 9 million speakers of Catalan in 2004. Catalan is a written language.

Catalan is primarily based in the language family of Romance languages. In Herman (2000), it is shown that the Romance languages evolved from what is called "Vulgar Latin." Specifically, it has been debated as to which subgroup Catalan belongs to. Catalan has been said to be a part of the Occitano-Romance languages, while others such as Maiden et al. (2013) say it should be a part of the Iberian Romance group.

Despite the majority of speakers of Catalan living in Spain, Catalan has some vocabulary differences with surrounding languages such as Spanish or Portuguese, languages that also belong in the Iberian Romance group. In fact, Feldhausen (2010) argues that the Catalan lexicon has more in common with the Occitan and French languages than with Spanish, disagreeing with the view that the Catalan language is a dialect of Spanish. Feldhausen expands on this claim with an example by showing that in Spanish, the initial f- in Latin became h- in Spanish under certain circumstances (Facere - hacer "do"). This h- later became silent. However, in Catalan this initial f to h transformation did not occur (hacer in Spanish versus fer in Catalan). Feldhausen goes on to give more examples. A word like siete (seven) in Spanish was originally septem in Latin. Along with other words, siete is one example of Latin vowels becoming diphthongs in Spanish. Catalan once again does not have this transition.

Catalan does have distinctions for gender. The masculine form for singular words is "el," and the feminine form is "la." The masculine plural form is "els," and the masculine feminine form is "les." When saying a sentence such as "the father," the Catalan word for father is "pare" and since it is a masculine word, the full sentence would translate to "el pare." Similarly, the sentence "The mother" would translate into "La mare."

Verbs in Catalan do change in the past, present and future tense. Using the Catalan verb cantar ("To sing"), we can show this. When speaking in the 2nd person singular (you sing, you sang, etc.), the present tense of cantar is cantes,
and the future tense is cantaràs. There are two versions of the past tense. The past imperfect tense is cantaves, and the past perfect tense is cantares.

A simple google search will result in many examples of online Catalan dictionaries as well as hard copies as well. On top of this, reference grammars (description for major grammatical constructions) also exist for Catalan.

Google translate supports translations to and from Catalan.

Works Cited


"Catalan, language of Europe“. Generalitat of Catalonia.

Feldhausen, Ingo (2010). Sentential Form and Prosodic Structure of Catalan. p. 4