



1,500 Languages May Die Out by 2100

Discussion > Advanced 8



Exercise 1 – Vocabulary

model	A mathematical description of a system, process, etc. that is used to help make calculations.
[noun]	<i>Ex: According to the latest model, temperatures in the region will rise by 1.2 degrees Celsius over the next five years.</i>

endangered	In danger of no longer existing (of a species).
[adjective]	<i>Ex: With less than 300,000 left in Africa, Chimpanzees are an endangered species.</i>

dominant	Having more power and influence than others.
[adjective]	<i>Ex: China has been dominant in table tennis in many international competitions.</i>



neighboring	Next to or close to another place.
[adjective]	<i>Ex: In California and some neighboring states, the drinking age is 21.</i>

indigenous	Coming from or existing naturally in a particular place.
[adjective]	<i>Ex: Kangaroos are indigenous only to Australia.</i>

revitalize	To make something stronger, healthier, etc.
[verb]	<i>Ex: The government has outlined its plan to revitalize the country's economy.</i>



Exercise 2 – Reading

Read the text aloud with your tutor and discuss the key points.

1,500 Languages May Die Out by 2100

More than 7,000 languages are spoken around the world, but according to a study led by the Australian National University, 1,500 of these may die out by 2100.

The study, which was published in *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, used models to predict which languages may become endangered and why.

The researchers found that of the more than 6,500 languages they analyzed, 37% were considered endangered. The areas predicted to lose the most languages were the west coast of North America, Central America, the Amazon rainforest, West Africa, New Guinea and northern Australia.

The researchers looked at 51 factors to predict whether a language will become endangered. As might be expected, the most important factor was the number of people who spoke it as their first language.



However, another factor was the number of roads in the area where a unique language was spoken. The researchers said that more roads mean remote communities are more connected to larger towns. People may move between areas, spreading a country's dominant language to remote areas, or using their local language less when they leave the area to access new jobs.

More years of formal schooling were also connected to languages being endangered. The researchers said this shows the need for bilingual education, and not just teaching in an area's dominant language.

However, having contact with neighboring languages was not found to be a threat in itself.

"Contact with other local languages is not the problem," said study co-author Professor Lindell Bromham. "In fact, languages in contact with many other Indigenous languages tend to be less endangered."

This is perhaps because people in these areas might speak more than one language, but don't stop speaking their first language. "Many of the languages predicted to be lost this century still have fluent speakers," said Bromham. She said there's still a chance to revitalize these languages to keep them strong for future generations.

According to research center Ethnologue, 23 languages account for more than half of the world's population, with English, Mandarin and Hindi being the most spoken in 2021.



Exercise 3 – Discussion

Discuss the following questions with your tutor.

1. What are your thoughts on the fact that 1,500 languages may die out by 2100?
2. Are there any languages in your country that are in danger of disappearing?
3. Do you find it surprising that 23 languages account for more than half of the world's population?
4. Do you expect English, Mandarin and Hindi to be replaced as the most spoken languages anytime soon?
5. What percentage of people in your country do you imagine are bilingual?
6. What languages would you like to become fluent in? Why?
7. What do you think is the best way to stay motivated while learning another language?
8. What's the best language learning advice you've heard?