

## Pph1 group

11A Grade, Kortkerosskaya secondary school, Komi Republic, Russia

# Endangered languages

“An **endangered language** is a [language](#) that it is at risk of falling out of use, generally because it has few surviving speakers. If it loses all of its native speakers, it becomes an [extinct language](#).” (Wikipedia)

The scientists estimate there are 6,000 to 8,000 languages in the world and that most are spoken by fewer than a few thousand individuals, which means that they face extinction. Most of them will have been died out by the end of the century. .More than 50% of languages are endangered.

We have studied what languages are spoken in some of the countries.

We found that all those countries are multinational. Most of them have endangered languages and even languages near extinction.

**Argentina** is predominantly a Spanish-speaking country.

The spoken languages of Argentina number at least 40, including native and immigrant languages; two languages are extinct and others are endangered, and spoken by elderly people whose descendants do not speak the languages. Some Argentine languages are critically endangered, spoken only by a handful of isolated elderly people whose children don't speak the language; they are likely to become dead languages once the remaining speakers die. Vilela has about 20 speakers; Puelche has 5 or 6 speakers; Tehuelche has 4 speakers as of the year 2000, out of about 200 ethnic Tehuelche people, (2000 W. Adelaar); and Selknam (also known as Ona) has 1 to 3 speakers (1991) and is nearly extinct; full blooded Ona people are already extinct. Abipon and Chane are now extinct languages that were spoken by people indigenous to Argentina before European contact; Chané was spoken in the Salta Province.

## Canada

Only English and French are recognized by the Constitution of Canada as official languages. All laws are enacted in both official languages, and government services are widely available in both English and French.

According to the 2006 census, English and French are the preferred language ("home language", or language spoken most often in the home) of 67.1% and 21.5% of the population, respectively. The five most widely-spoken non-official languages are Chinese (the home language of 2.6% of Canadians), Punjabi (0.8%), Spanish (0.7%), Italian (0.6%), and Arabic (0.5%). Aboriginal languages, many of which are unique to Canada, are spoken only by a very small percentage of the population, and are mostly in decline. Some members of the 900,000 Indigenous people in Canada (3%) speak one or more of fifty different languages. The most important languages still used are Cree, Inuktitut, Ojibway, Innu, and Mi'kmag. Nearly half (47%) of Indigenous people in Quebec reported an Indigenous language as mother tongue, the highest proportion of any province.

## **Iran**

There are about 70 languages spoken in Iran. *Britannica's* estimate of Iran's ethnic composition (2000) states "Persian 34.9%; Azerbaijani 15.9%; Kurd 13.0%; Luri 7.2%; Gilaki 5.1%; Mazandarani 5.1%; Afghan 2.8%; Arab 2.5%; other 13.5%". Endangered languages: Bashkardi (7,033 speakers), Gazi (7,033), Kazakh (3,000), Natanzi (7,033), Nayini (7,033), Sivandi (7,033), Soi (7,033), Tat, muslim (7,000). The languages near extinction: Koroshi (160-200), Mandaic (500), Senayaa (60),

## **Komi Republic**

The population of the Republic is 1 million people. 293 thousand people speak Komi language. Komi Republic is a multinational one. There are 720 thousand Russians, 104 thousand Ukrainians, 26 thousand Byelorussians, 26 thousand Tatars, 13 thousand Germans, 11 thousand Chuvash, 5 thousand Moldavians and other nationalities of our country.

The Russian laws include linguistic rights for all minority groups. This includes the adoption of signage in minority languages, the right to receive education in that language, and a series of other rights. Komi people are entitled to primary and secondary education in their native language, as well to radio and television programmes in Komi, and to communicating in Komi with the authorities.

## **Romania**

In Romania there are several spoken languages. Beside Romanian, the only official language nationwide, other spoken languages are Hungarian, Romani, Ukrainian, German and other languages. According to the Romanian Constitution and the law 1206 from 2006 the only official language in Romania is the Romanian Language both at national and local level. There are other 14 living languages in Romania. The Romanian laws include linguistic rights for all minority groups that form over 20% of a locality's population. This includes the adoption of signage in minority languages, access to local administration and justice systems, the right to receive education in that language, and a series of other rights. Lesser spoken languages in Romania are: Serbian (20,377), Slovak (16,108), Bulgarian (6,747), Croatian (6,355), Greek (4146), and others.

## **Russia**

There are 100 languages spoken in Russia. Russian is the only official language in the country. Republics of Russia have given official status to local languages. There are languages near extinction: Ainu, Akkala Sami, Enets (70 speakers), Karagas (25), Kerek (2), Modnyy (10), Orok (30-80), Ter Sami (6), Udege (100), Yugh (2-3), Northern Yukaghir (30-150), Vod (25).

## **Slovenia**

Slovenian is the official and national language throughout the country. Italian is officially recognized as the mother tongue of protected Italian minority and co-official language in Slovenian Istra near the Slovenian-Italian border and at the Slovenian coastline. Public usage of Italian is permitted and protected by minority protection laws. Hungarian is officially recognised as the mother tongue of protected Hungarian minority in Prekmurje region near the Slovenian-Hungarian border. Public usage of Hungarian is permitted and protected by minority protection laws.

## Turkey

The official language is Turkish. Ethnologies lists the following minority languages: Abaza, Abkhaz, Aduge, Armenian, Balkan Gagauz Turkish, Balkan Romani, Bulgarian, Crimean Turkish, Dimli, Domari, Georgian Greek, Hertevin, Kabardian, Kazakh, Kirgiz Kirmanjki, Kumyk, Ladino, Laz, North Mesopotamian Arabic, Northern Kurdish, Osetin, Pontic, Serbian, South Azerbaijani, Southern Uzbek, Tatar, Tosk Albanian, Turkmen, Turoyo and Uyghur.

## The USA

The United States does not have an official language nevertheless, English is the language used for legislation, regulations, executive orders, treaties, federal court rulings, and all other official pronouncements. Many individual states and territories have adopted English as their official language. According to the 2000 census, there are 21 main languages by number of speakers older than 5.

The Native American languages predate European settlement of the New World. In a few parts of the U.S. (mostly on Indian reservations) they continue to be spoken fluently. Most of these languages are endangered, although there are efforts to revive them. Normally the fewer the speakers of a language the greater the degree of endangerment but there are many small Native American language communities in the Southwest (Arizona and New Mexico) which continue to thrive despite their small size. The US (and North America in general) is one of the most linguistically diverse areas in the world. Of 300 or more indigenous languages, only 175 still exist. Of those, only 20 are spoken by all ages; 30- only by adults; 125- only by grandparents.

*But why does a language die?*

An outstanding British linguist, David Crystal says: “There is nothing unusual about a single language dying. Communities have come and gone throughout history, taking their languages with them. But what is happening today is extraordinary. It is language extinction on a massive scale. On average, there is a language dying out somewhere in the world every two weeks or so. Even a language with 10,000 speakers is not necessarily safe. It will not die next week or next year; but there is no guarantee that it will still exist in a couple of generations’ time.”

*Why should we be worried?*

“We should care about dying languages for the same reason that we care when a species of animal or plant dies. It reduces the diversity of our planet, which is the key to our survival. In the case of language, we are talking about intellectual and cultural diversity, not biological diversity, but the issues are the same. Languages are like people, in one way, but in another way they are not like people at all. When people die, they leave signs of their presence in the world, their archeology. But spoken language leaves no archeology. For, when a language dies, which has never been written down, it is as if it has never been.” (David Crystal)

*What should people do in order to help a language survive?*

There are three conditions necessary for a language to survive: the community itself must want to save its language; the larger culture of which it is a part needs to have a respect to minority languages; there needs to be a budget for courses, materials and teachers.

One of the most famous examples is the Mohawk language spoken by people who live in the Quebec region of Canada now. Linguists began working with Mohawk-speakers in the early 1970s. Mohawk lessons were offered as part of the curriculum of elementary schools in Quebec and now hundreds of children have learnt a language that would probably have died out by now.

We would like to thank **Grade 10 French Class, Vaughan, Ontario, Canada** that sent information for our project:

“Canada is a multicultural country. There are people from every part of the world, who live in Canada. However, Canada only has two official languages: French and English. But there are many other unofficial languages in Canada. Some languages include Mandarin, Cantonese, Russian, Albanian, Hindi, Punjabi and etc.

Even though Canada is a multicultural country, there is still one language Canada prohibits; Canada prohibits the language that the natives/aboriginals speak. We are not really sure what that language is called. Now that the natives are not allowed to speak their own language, the natives are forced to learn to speak English. The native children are being sent to residential schools, far from home, and being taught to speak and learn the Canadian culture.

After taking a poll, the majority of us agreed that the language diversity is the key to our survival. We all think that if there are more languages, it would be more diverse. Also, the important thing is that we can talk in our own languages when we want to talk about something in private, without anyone else knowing what we are saying. Also, if there is just one language, what is the use of having so many different countries scattered all around the world when there can just be one country where everybody is the same. That's the point!!

After taking a poll, the majority of us agreed with the question. We all think that if there are more languages, it would be more diverse. Also, the important thing is that we can talk in our own languages when we want to talk about something in private, without anyone else knowing what we are saying. Also, if there is just one language, what is the use of having so many different countries scattered all around the world when there can just be one country where everybody is the same. That's the point!!

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As we have said earlier, we believe that more languages, better it would be. Therefore, we agree with the first sentence "the death of a language is a disaster because language is part of people's culture." When someone loses their culture, it is like losing a friend or loved one. It would be really hard for the person to learn a new culture.”  
(Rachel Zhang, Ontario, Quebec)

“In Canada, there are a lot of languages spoken. The two main languages are English and French, but people who live in Canada are multi-cultural, so there are many languages spoken here.

Dans Canada, il y a beaucoup de langues. Les deux principales langues sont l'anglais et le français. Mais, les personnes qui habitent dans Canada sont de cultures différentes, ainsi dans Canada il y a beaucoup de langues.

The endangered languages in Canada are those from the immigrants' and their children. The children will forget their language, because they will not speak in it a lot. Instead, they will speak in English or French.

Les langues dans Canada qui sont “endangered” sont les langues des immigrants et ils

enfants. Les enfants seront ne parleront pas ils langues de ils cultures. Au lieu les enfants parleront Anglais ou Francais.

The Canadian government tries to keep Canada as multi cultural as possible. It provides different festivals for all cultures, and promotes these different languages. I believe that it is enough.

Les gouvernement de Canada essaient garder les langues de Canada très different. Les fournissent les festivals pour les cultures different, et ils promeuvent cette langues.

I agree, because diversity cannot be a bad thing.

Je concorde, parce que diversité n'est pas mauvais.

A large culture should provide the minority languages with festivals for their culture. La grande culture fourniront les langues fourniront avec festivals pour ils cultures. I think that the world needs to have many languages.

Je pense cela le monde seront beaucoup de langues.

I think people should keep their language alive. Qui, je pense cela les personnes garderont ils langues "vivant".

The death of a language is not a disaster because people would understand each other if there were fewer languages.

The death of a language is horrible, because it is important for a culture to have a language that can connect the people of that religion. It is important for cultures to have their own language, because it will help keep their traditions "alive". The people of the different cultures will feel a connection with each other when they speak their own, native language. Keeping a language "alive" will keep traditions alive, as well. This is very good.

La "morte" de langue est horrible, parce que la langues sont important pour une culture parce que cette langue associera les personnes de cette culture. Aussi, les traditions seront "vivant" (Tamara Proskura, Ontario, Quebec)

When we made a research in our school we met 3 points of view on this question

1-Fewer languages means better communication among the speakers

2-Parents can actively resist promotion of their own minority language, since children educated in the language are perceived to be at an economic or social disadvantage, when compared to other children.

3-Elder people express strong appreciation for the language as a means of communication.



We have asked these questions to a Frenchman, Sebastien Cagnoli, who learnt Komi language by himself and he liked this language so much that he began to translate Komi legends and poems by Komi poets.

. I think the diversity of the world languages is an image of the diversity of human thoughts. There are as many different representations of the world as there are languages. No language is better or worse than another: each one gives a particular comprehension

of the world; each one gives the ability to express some specific notions better than others.

Oui. La diversité des langues du monde reflète la diversité des pensées. Il y a autant de façon de voir le monde que de langues. Aucune langue n'est meilleure qu'une autre : chacune permet d'appréhender le monde d'une manière particulière, chacune permet d'exprimer certaines choses mieux que d'autres.

I think all the nations, large or small, should learn or try to understand as many other cultures as possible, in order to communicate better, and to respect one another.

Je pense que toutes les nations, grandes ou petites, devraient apprendre et chercher à comprendre autant d'autres cultures que possible, afin de mieux communiquer et de se respecter les unes les autres.

There's no limit! Since every language conveys its own vision on the world, there should be as many languages as there are human beings on the planet! Each of us is unique and has a personal, original, perception of the world, and personal abilities.

Language should enable

each of us do share all their individuality as a human being.

Il n'y a pas de limite ! Puisque chaque langue porte sa propre vision du monde, il faudrait autant de langues que d'êtres humains ! Chacun de nous est unique et a une vision du monde personnelle, originale, et des aptitudes personnelles. Le langage devrait permettre à chacun de nous de partager son individualité en tant qu'être humain.

Indeed language is the image of our thinking: it is our identity itself. I believe our existence as human beings can only be real through our thinking, and our thinking can only be expressed by language. And when our own existence is endangered, it is natural to struggle.

Oui. En effet, la langue est le reflet de notre pensée, c'est-à-dire notre identité même. Je crois que notre existence même en tant qu'êtres humains ne se réalise que par la pensée, et la pensée ne peut être exprimée que par le langage. Et quand notre existence est menacée, il est naturel de se défendre.

If there were fewer languages in the world, people would understand one another... but there would not be much to be understood (and I'm not even sure people would understand one another better, by the way).

The death of a language is like an instrument stopping playing in a symphony orchestra. In the end, if there is only one instrument left, of course there will be no tuning problems:

but will the symphony be still worth listening to?

S'il y avait moins de langues dans le monde, les gens se comprendraient... mais il y aurait beaucoup moins de choses à comprendre (et je ne suis même pas sûr que les gens se comprendraient mieux, d'ailleurs).

Si une langue disparaît, c'est comme si un instrument cesse de jouer dans un orchestre symphonique. A la fin, s'il ne reste plus qu'un seul instrument, on n'aura bien sûr aucun problème pour s'accorder: mais la symphonie méritera-t-elle encore d'être écoutée ?