



THE ROLE OF THE INTERNET IN LANGUAGE PRESERVATION AND REVITALIZATION

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Abstract

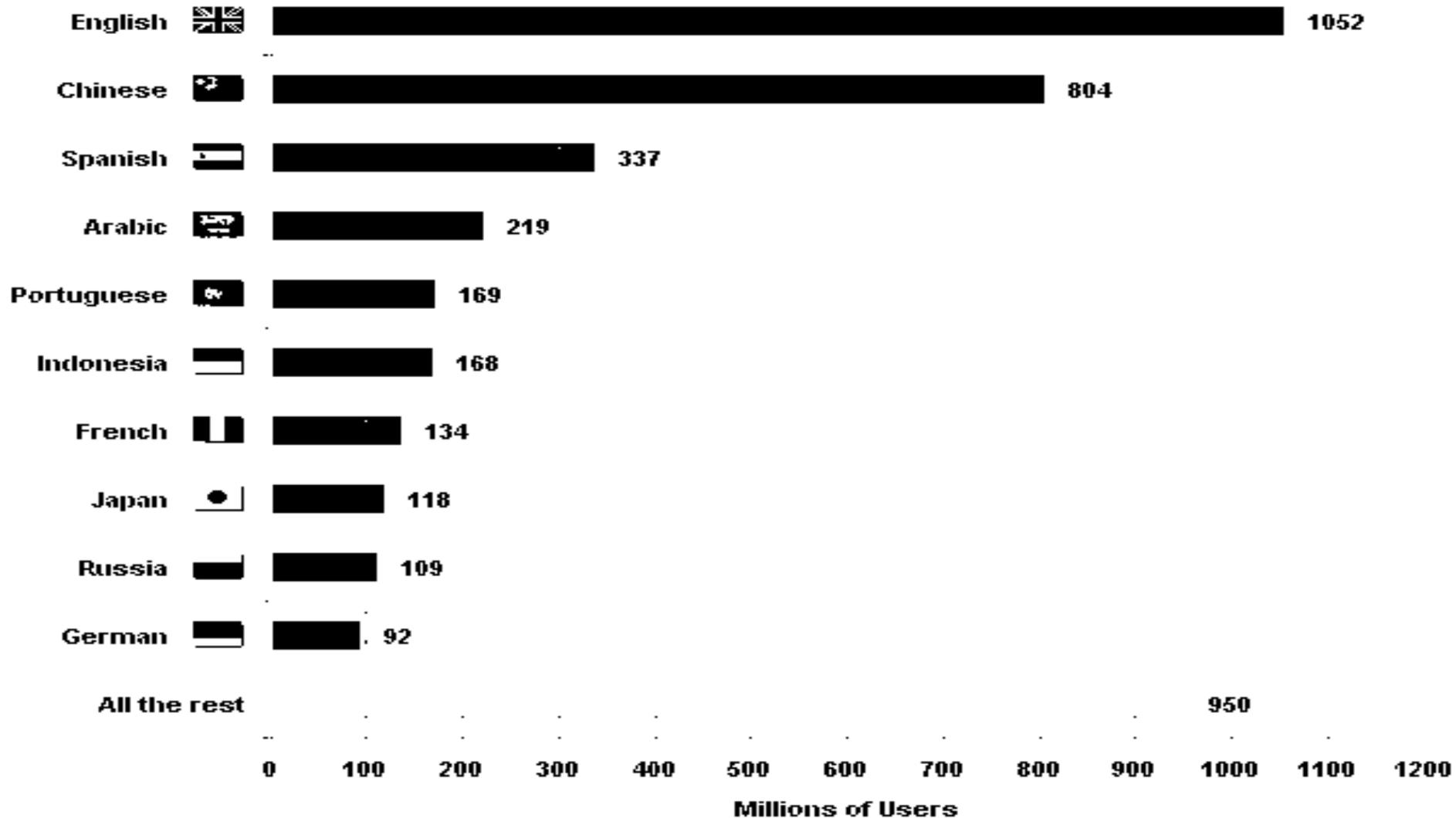
While world languages like English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, and Arabic dominate the Internet, small languages in danger of extinction have benefited greatly from websites, blogs, Google, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Wikipedia, Skype, language learning apps, and other online forms of documentation, preservation, and revitalization. This paper looks at the role of the Internet in saving endangered languages and helping speech communities restore linguistic vitality. Among the cases considered are: Hawaiian, Mohawk, Maori, Navaho, Hadza, Luxembourgish, Yiddish, and Balinese.

**Table 1: Estimated Distribution of Top Ten Languages on Internet
(As of December 31, 2017)**

Language	Number of Speakers	Number of Internet Users	Internet Penetration (%)	% of World Internet Participation
English	1,462,008,909	1,055,272,930	72.2	25.4
Chinese	1,452,593,223	804,634,814	55.4	19.3
Spanish	515,759,912	337,892,295	65.5	8.1
Arabic	435,636,462	219,041,264	50.3	5.3
Portuguese	286,455,543	169,157,589	59.1	4.1
Indonesian/ Malaysian	299,271,514	168,755,091	56.4	4.1
French	412,394,497	134,088,952	32.5	3.2
Japanese	127,185,332	118,626,672	93.3	2.9
Russian	143,964,709	109,552,842	76.1	2.6
German	143,964,709	92,099,951	95.1	2.2
Top 10 languages	5,135,270,101	3,209,122,400	62.5	77.2
Rest of languages	2,499,488,327	950,318,284	38.0	22.8

[Source: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm>]

**Figure 1: Top Ten Languages on the Internet
Expressed as Millions of Users (As of December 31, 2017)**



Source: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm>

Figure 2: The Garifuna Nation



Figure 3: Scottish Gaelic-speaking Areas

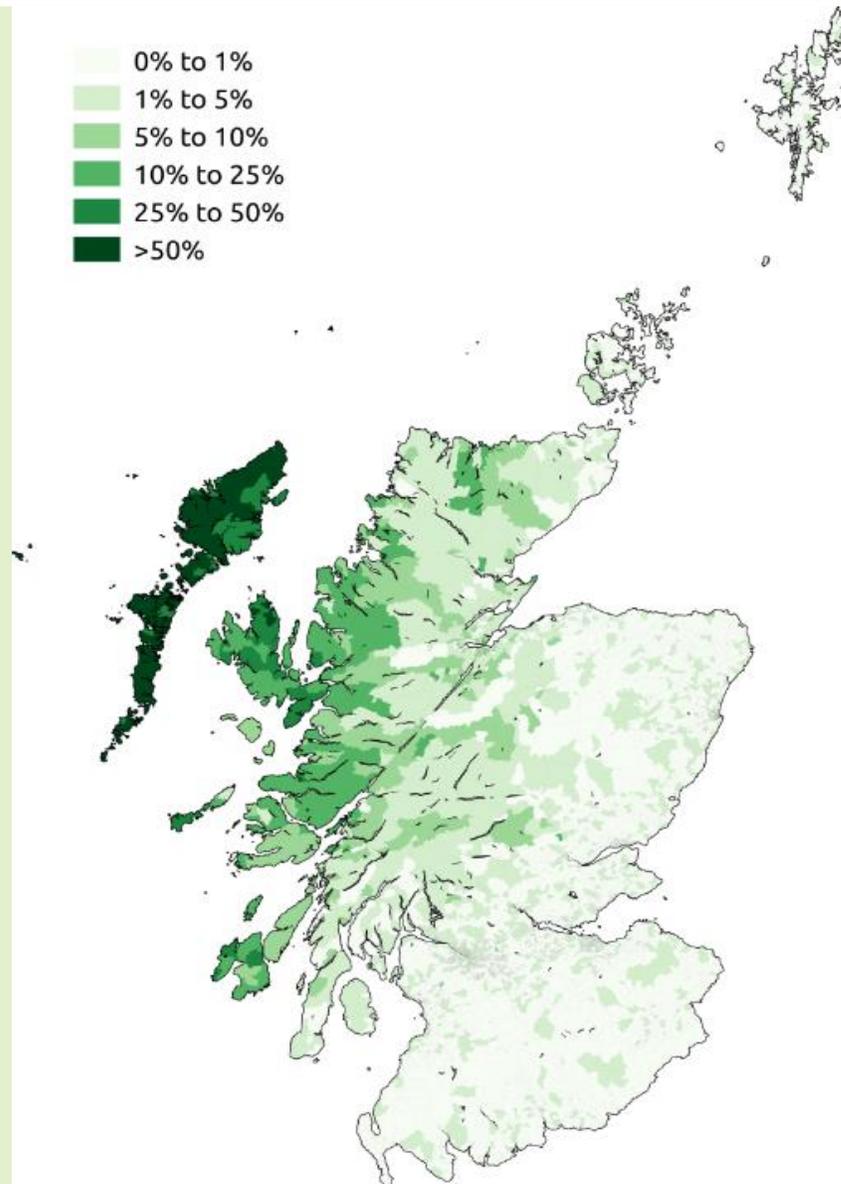


Table 2: Degrees of Language Endangerment

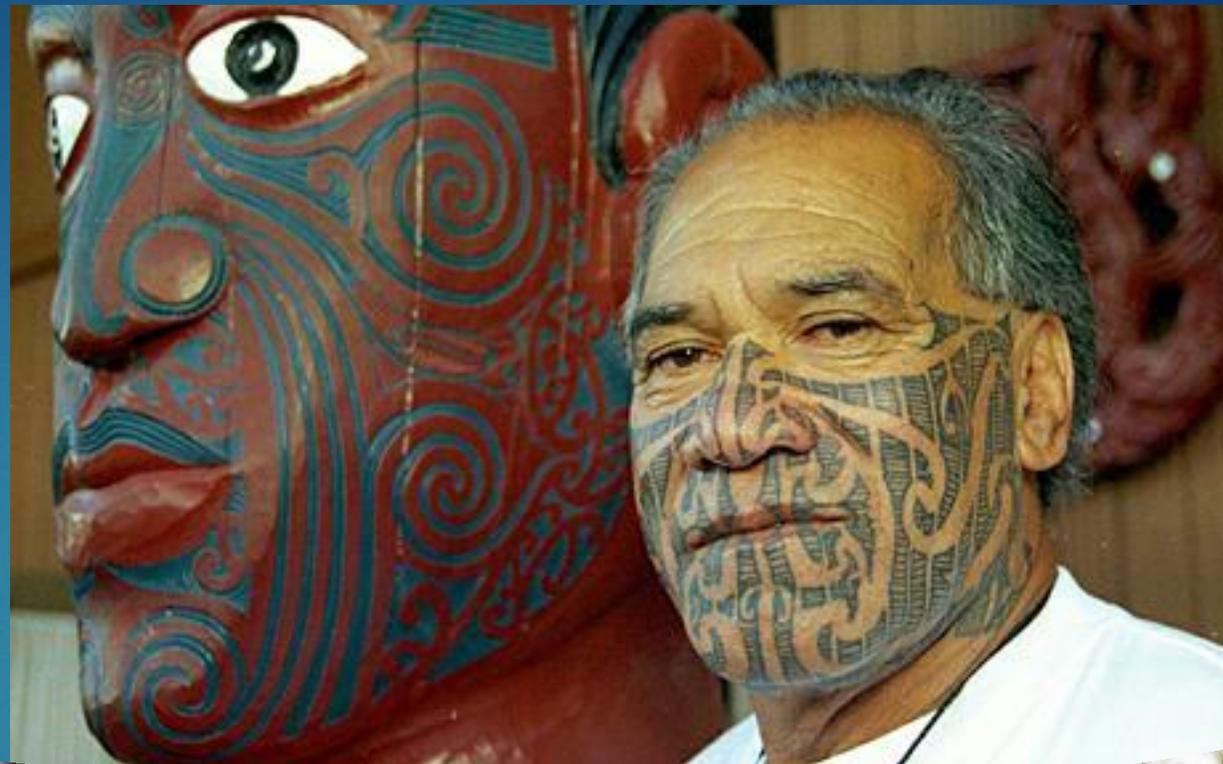
(Based on: UNESCO (2003), p. 8)

DEGREE	GR.	SPEAKERS
SAFE	5	Speakers of all ages use the language.
VULNERABLE	4	Youngsters speak the language, but it is restricted to the home domain.
DEFINITELY ENDANGERED	3	Children no longer learn it as their mother tongue at home.
SEVERELY ENDANGERED	2	The language is only spoken by the older generations.
CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	1	Only elderly speakers are left, and they speak it imperfectly and rarely.
EXTINCT	0	No one speaks the language.

Hawaiian



Maori



Mohawk

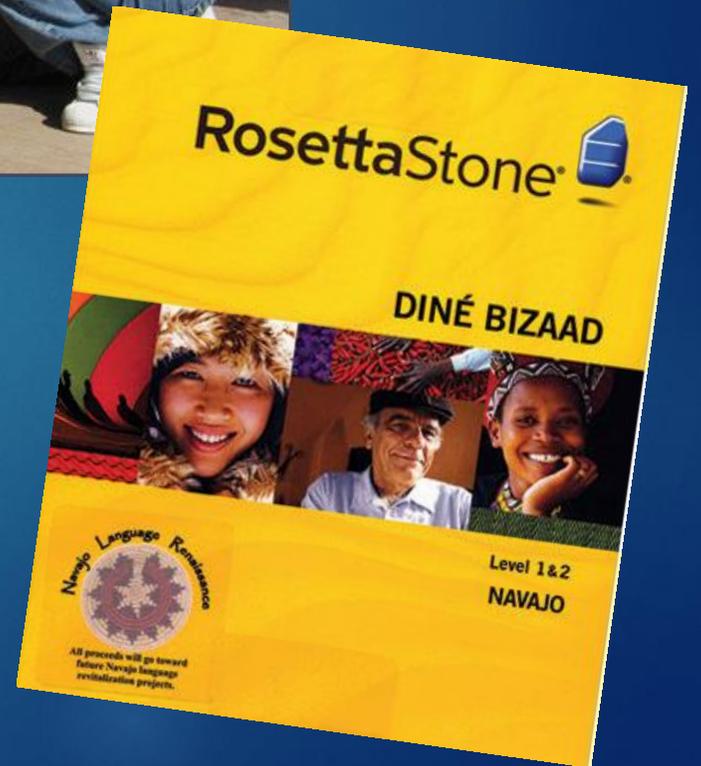


Kanien'kéha Alphabet

	a	e	i	o	en	on
h	ha	he	hi	ho	hen	hon
k	ka	ke	ki	ko	ken	kon
n	na	ne	ni	no	nen	non
r	ra	re	ri	ro	ren	ron
s	sa	se	si	so	sen	son
t	ta	te	ti	to	ten	ton
w	wa	we	wi		wen	



Navaho



Luxembourgish



 <p>uTalk Luxembourgish EuroTalk Ltd</p> <p>★★★★★ CZK177.27</p>	 <p>ask</p> <p>Luxembourgish for Michel Weimerskirch</p> <p>★★★★★ FREE</p>	 <p>Learn languages FounDreams</p> <p>★★★★★ FREE</p>	 <p>Lingapp - Language One People Co. Ltd.</p> <p>★★★★★ FREE</p>
 <p>Restopolis Ministère de l'Éducatior</p> <p>★★★★★ FREE</p>	 <p>INFO Luxembourg actualités news nachrichten</p> <p>News Luxembourg TallSnail</p> <p>★★★★★ FREE</p>	 <p>Luxembourg Radio radio streamer</p> <p>★★★★★ FREE</p>	 <p>Google News</p> <p>All Luxembourg News xdev</p> <p>★★★★★ FREE</p>

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Hadza



Balinese



The Balinese Digital Library

Almost all of the writings in Balinese were digitized and preserved here in 2011 by the Internet Archive from their major library in Denpasar, Bali. A official in the cultural ministry said that this collection is "90% of all writings in Balinese." Most of the Balinese literature is written

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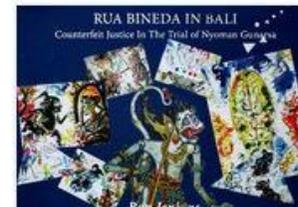
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Tari Musik Kreasi Baru

12,698 0 1



Rua bineda in Bali : counterfeit justice in the

by Jenkins, Ron. 1932-



The invisible mirror : siwaratrikalpa : Balinese

by Jenkins, Ron. 1932-

Conclusions

The preservation and revitalization of an endangered language can take many forms. Table 3 presents some of the most common low and high tech initiatives in use today, many of which we have seen operating among the eight languages briefly presented in this paper.

Table 3: Language Revitalization Initiatives

Low Tech Media:

Printing	Newspapers; books; banners; comics
Radio	News programs and language lessons; community or state-backed radio stations
Audio recordings	Spoken language cassettes, CDs, and podcasts
Videos/movies	DVDs; captioned movies; film festivals
TV programs	News; language classes; soap operas; community or state-backed TV stations

[continued on next slide→]

Table 3 continued:

High Tech Media:

Computer	Dedicated keyboards; programs; statistical modeling programs for reconstructing ancient languages
Web	Wikis; online digital libraries; online dictionaries; Rosetta Stone learning program; Facebook groups; online language maps; databases; tracking of Twitter via Indigenous Tweets program; YouTube channels
Interactive	Blogs; video games; video conferencing; interactive graphics; crowd sourcing for language projects
Smart phones	Keyboards; mobile apps; Living Tongue's talking dictionaries; electronic flashcards; Transparent Languages courses



It appears that the fear that the Internet would make small languages invisible has not really come to pass. In a growing number of cases, such as the ones we have examined in this paper, the opposite has occurred.



Utilizing myriad forms of cyber-communication has actually allowed endangered language groups to:

- solidify their positions,
- create solidarity with diasporic populations,
- initiate or perpetuate literary production, and
- make their presence known in the world.



Having modern tools at their disposal empowers threatened language speakers, particularly the young who are the ones who will turn things around if they have the desire and organize themselves.

It is our fervent hope that they are able to do so. We all stand to benefit.



Thank You!

A copy of this presentation with complete bibliography will be available at: aliciapousada.weebly.com