



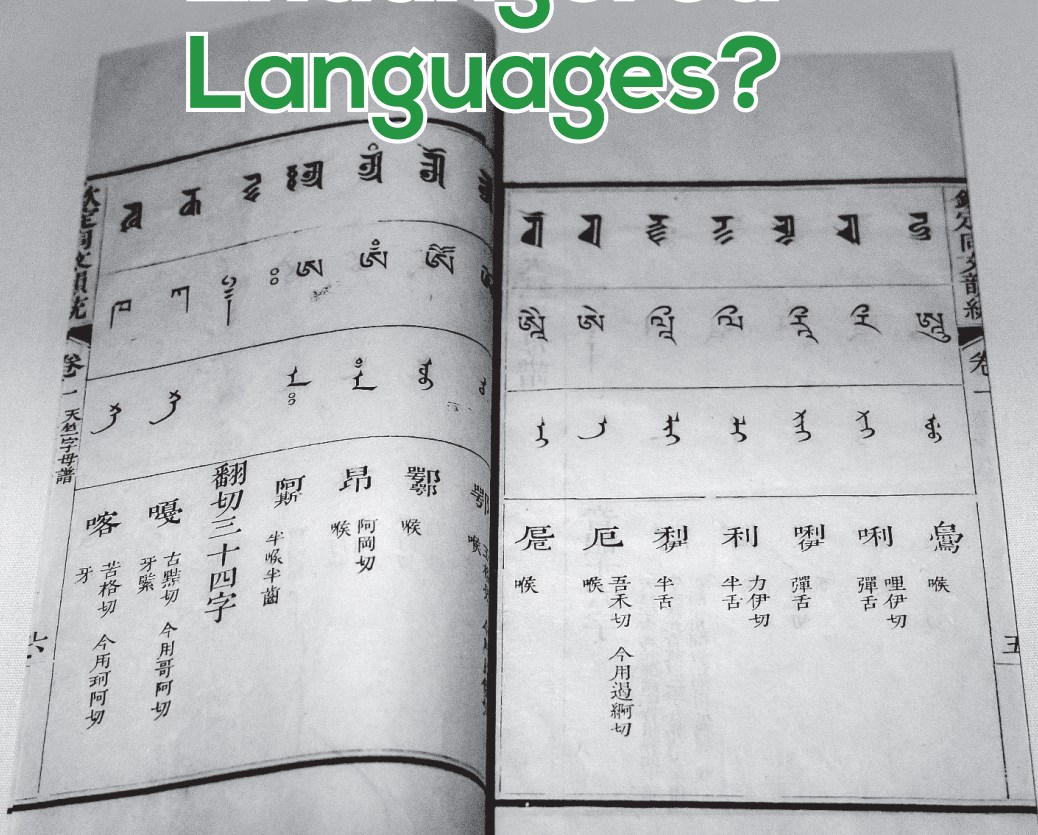
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# 2

## UNIT

# Should We Preserve Endangered Languages?



### Setting Goals

*In this unit, you will learn to:*

1. define terms and interpret a proposition;
2. make a topicality argument;
3. identify fallacies (false dilemma, argument from ignorance, slippery slope, and complex question).

## Warm-Up

Discuss the following questions in groups. First, briefly explain your ideas for the first question in your own dialect/mother tongue. Then discuss the rest of the questions in English.

1. What are your thoughts on dialects? Does anyone in your family or circle of friends speak a dialect? Which Chinese dialects can you recognize or speak? Do you have a favorite among them? If so, why is it your favorite?
2. Do you think it is a good idea to preserve or promote your dialect/mother tongue in a more proactive manner? Why or why not?

## Background

As globalization increases, so does the loss of human languages. People find it easier to conduct business and communicate with those outside their own culture if they speak more widely used languages like Chinese, English, French, Spanish, or Russian. As fewer people use local languages, they gradually die out. Between 1950 and 2010, over 230 languages went extinct, according to the UNESCO's *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*. Today, a third of the world's languages have fewer than 1,000 speakers left. Every two weeks a language dies with its last speaker, and 50 to 90 percent of them are predicted to disappear by the next century.

There are two versions of this problem. The first is minority languages/dialects within a particular country and the second area is the micro-languages spoken by no more than a few hundred people in small tribal groups in places like Papua New Guinea and the Amazon. These are threatened less by cultural hegemony than by the collapse of traditional ways of life. The question remains whether we can or should save the language even if we can't protect the community. Furthermore, small countries often feel that their entire national language is under threat from Western cultural domination.

## » Activity 1 Independent Research

Are you aware that China is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, and over 130 languages are spoken in the country? Do some research into the language landscape of China with a particular focus on the endangered languages.

## Case Study

### The Story Behind Language Preservation

*“The Wusuli River is long and winding,  
The Heilongjiang River is wide and wavy.  
Living on the Three River Plain,  
The Hezhe people are brave and hard-working.”*

- 1 Such folk rap art is called Yimakan by the Hezhe people in northeastern China.
- 2 “The lyrics of Yimakan are a true reflection of our daily work and life,” said You Jun, a Hezhe villager. “No matter what we are doing, we’d always like to sing Yimakan.”
- 3 Having no written language of their own, the Hezhe people document their ethnic heritage in Yimakan. They hope to pass on their spoken language in such a unique way.
- 4 “If we do not keep on teaching Yimakan, there will be only ethnic Hezhe who have no language in China,” warned Wu Mingxin, a national-level inheritor of Hezhe Yimakan storytelling.
- 5 Currently, there are fewer than 60 speakers of Yimakan around the world. According to UNESCO’s *Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger*, there are around 6,700 known languages in the world, but 40 percent of them are teetering on the brink of extinction. On average, a language disappears every two weeks.
- 6 The loss of a language has consequences much wider than simply losing a vocabulary. When a language disappears, we lose a culture, a work of art, and a unique way to perceive the world.

- 7 In 2015, China initiated a language resources protection project to keep endangered languages, including the Hezhe language, safe from extinction.
- 8 “It is government-led and joined by the whole society. We have 1,500 research centers responsible for the investigation of more than 130 languages and hundreds of Chinese dialects,” said Cao Zhiyun, director of the Center for the Protection and Research of Language Resources of China.
- 9 So far, the project has saved around 120 languages of the over 130 languages nationwide.
- 10 “It is evident that China invests a lot of effort, human resources, and time and energy to document language resources and make the project not only known in China but also internationally,” said Dr. Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, a program specialist with UNESCO.
- 11 In fact, many countries and organizations have already taken action, such as Europe’s Endangered Languages Documentation Programme launched in 2002, UNESCO’s online platform World Atlas of Languages released in 2016, both of which have made significant contributions to language preservation.



- 12 In September 2018, the first World Language Resources Protection Conference was held in Changsha, central China's Hunan Province. The conference issued the draft of Yuelu Proclamation, a document on protection and promotion of the world's linguistic diversity.
- 13 On January 18, 2019, the Yuelu Proclamation was officially released. Being UNESCO's first permanent document on linguistic diversity protection, the proclamation represents a real milestone for the preservation of the world's language resources.
- 14 "The first word has to come from the communities, the language communities themselves. So they have to raise their wish to revive their languages," said professor Elsa Stamatopoulou with Columbia University.
- 15 "When this language dies, we will also lose the cultural inheritance," echoed Mandana Seyfeddinipur from the University of London.
- 16 Protecting the world's language resources and promoting intercultural communication are the essential driving forces for the advancement of human civilization and world peace and development. Culture is colorful and diverse, and such diversity makes exchanges and mutual learning among them relevant and valuable.
- 17 The world would be a dull place if everything were in black and white only. Let's make the world colorful and diverse in languages.

## Activity 2 Group Discussion

Answer the following questions according to the case above.

1. How many speakers are there of the Hezhe language? Do you think protecting this or any other endangered language is necessary? Why or why not?
2. What measures have been taken to protect the dying languages in China? Find more about the Yuelu Proclamation and share your findings.
3. Why do you think speaking a dialect/language could help you preserve your cultural identity?
4. "Culture is colorful and diverse, and such diversity makes exchanges and mutual learning among them relevant and valuable." (Para. 16) Comment on the argument for cultural diversity through language protection.

## For & Against

### Passage 1

#### Saving Endangered Languages— Some Better Reasons for Keeping Languages Alive

- 1 When I read the article by Roy Baumeister, saying it isn't worth the trouble to save endangered languages, my hackles rose and, just this once, I threw in my lot with the conventional wisdom.
- 2 Roy rightly skewered what he sees as the three strongest arguments for saving endangered languages. Do multilingual children behave better than monolinguals? Even if that's true, you don't need the world's seven-thousand-plus languages—a handful would do. Are wars between speakers of the same language at least as frequent and bloody as wars between speakers of different languages? No stats on that, only anecdotes, and anyway, if language is irrelevant to war, the argument is neutral. Do some languages have words for things that other languages lack? Big deal: Any language can invent new words. I agree, if this were all that endangered languages could muster, their plight would be a sorry one. But it's not. There are at least three arguments for preserving languages stronger than any that Roy considered. Let's take the weakest first.
- 3 The early twentieth-century linguist Benjamin Whorf believed that speakers of different languages perceive the world in significantly different ways; for instance, a speaker of the Native American language Hopi might find modern physics easier to understand than a speaker of English would, since (according to Whorf) the categories and structures of Hopi are more fluid and dynamic than those of English. The jury is still out on Whorfism; though most would reject its claims in their strongest form, there are certain areas, such as perception of space, where some effects have been demonstrated experimentally. But even if such effects are minor, don't we risk shrinking our understanding of the world if the languages that cause them are allowed to die?
- 4 The second argument is based on firmer science. The whole thrust of modern linguistics is to determine just what language is: where it came from, how we acquire it, how it works, how it relates to the human brain. We know some of it

must be learned and some is probably hard-wired, but how much (or how little) of each, and exactly which parts?

- 5 Does this matter? I'll say it does. Take away language and what's left? Everything that makes us human depends directly or indirectly on language. If we don't understand what language is, we don't understand ourselves.
- 6 The massive database that the world's myriad languages provide is an essential resource in this quest. Any generalization we might want to make must run the gauntlet of all its possible counterexamples. A case in point arose recently when Piraha, a language spoken by a handful of Amazonian tribespeople, was claimed to lack a proposed universal feature of language; the resulting debate even reached the pages of *The New Yorker*. Many if not most of these languages are still poorly described or not described at all. Can we afford to lose such a resource? Could you even put a dollar value on it? How much would we know about the human language faculty if, as Roy suggests, its sole exemplars were English and Chinese?
- 7 But it isn't just science that's in jeopardy. It's the human spirit.
- 8 A language is more than just a complex of sounds, structures, and word-meanings. It's also the bearer of a culture, an incredible freight of human knowledge and experience and understanding—of epics, myths, nursery rhymes, proverbs, parables, ritual formulae, jokes, love-songs, and dirges. When a language dies, all these die with it. Think about that, then multiply it by the literally thousands of languages now at risk.
- 9 Could we survive without such richness? Oh, sure. You've seen climax forest in the North-West alongside the tree-farms of spindly conifers that are replacing it. Life survives, I mean, they're all trees, aren't they? More now than there were a century ago, idiots will tell you proudly. If what you want is a globalized, homogenized, utterly stultified, and terminally boring world, go for it and let the languages die—we'll all speak nothing but Mandarin and English and we'll never know the wonders that we've lost.

### » Activity 3 Probe the Text

Probe into the text of the essay above and answer the following questions.

1. What is the main argument of this article?
2. According to Roy Baumeister, why is it unnecessary to save endangered languages? Do you side with him or not? Why or why not?



3. What arguments does the author offer to refute Baumeister? Which of his arguments do you find is the strongest?
4. Identify the weakest aspects of the position held by the article. How might they help you prepare counterarguments?
5. What additional points could you add to support this article's position?

## Passage 2

### Is Saving Endangered Languages Always a Pro?

- <sup>1</sup> Saving a language can be a tough and, at times, impossible job. With roughly 6,700 languages in the world and statistics showing that up to 40% of those could be completely wiped out in the next 100 years, the idea of saving any language at all can seem daunting indeed.
- <sup>2</sup> However, in the process of bringing back languages from the point of extinction, we often forget to ask ourselves why saving a language is so important. Of course, you've probably read (or heard) about the pros of saving a language. One major one has to do with the language-culture ties which make language an essential part of the survival of a culture, but is it possible that some serious cons also exist when we attempt to keep thousands of languages around—especially when so many of them have only a handful of speakers?
- <sup>3</sup> Global language trends have a major effect on which languages survive, thrive, wane, and disappear altogether. It's no secret that economic development has a lot to do with this. On the other hand, global trends can change at the drop of a hat and languages can also quickly fall out of prominence. Just as Latin was once an important language to know, any tongue can become a “has-been” when it comes to the ever-shifting power scope of our planet. But, does this make trying to save each and every language worth it?
- <sup>4</sup> Some prominent linguists take the less popular stance and point instead to the negative effect that saving languages can have on the progress of a culture. Even speakers of some endangered languages have come forward to reveal that holding on to their mother tongue may be less beneficial than most would believe. Why? Because progress is simply not possible unless concessions are made. For example,

new generations will not have the same tools at their disposal for success if they are limited by the notion that their native language must, at all costs, be preserved.

- 5 Furthermore, too much diversity in language can many times create cracks in a culture, pushing people apart instead of uniting them in a peaceful way. In these cases, national languages are a must in order for people of the same nation to be able to work together in a concise way to push their country forward. Some would argue that nations like India, which boasts a remarkable 122 major languages and countless minor ones, are held back by their inability to unify under a single language umbrella. And in cases like these, the cost of saving a language is perhaps a bit steep.
- 6 That's not to say that we should all focus on learning the same language, forget our culture, and disregard other tongues. It's important to remind ourselves that languages don't necessarily die but many times evolve and accommodate to the changes we see in the world. None of us speak the same English, or Spanish, or French that our ancestors spoke, and yet our cultures have survived and adapted alongside the drastic changes in languages across the globe!

#### **» Activity 4**    **Probe the Text**

**Probe into the text of the essay above and answer the following questions.**

1. What are the main arguments against saving endangered languages? Which of them do you consider most convincing?
2. The author argues that “new generations will not have the same tools at their disposal for success if they are limited by the notion that their native language must, at all costs, be preserved.” (Para. 4) How do you understand this statement? What does “success” probably refer to here? Can you give an example to illustrate the author's argument?
3. What do you think of the author's point that national languages are a must for people of the same nation to be able to work together for progress?
4. The passage seems to advocate that, rather than protecting all dying languages at all costs, we should be more confident about the ability of languages to survive and adapt. Do you agree? Why or why not?
5. Identify the weakest aspects of the position outlined by the author. How might they help you prepare counterarguments?
6. What additional points could you add to support this article's position?

## Types of Persuasive Speeches

In a debate, a **proposition** is a statement that affirms or denies something. A proposition may also be called a **topic**, **motion**, or **resolution** in formal debates. Persuasive speeches revolve around propositions that can be defended through data and reasoning. There are three common claims: factual, value, and policy.

Factual claims ask whether something is true or false. Some factual claims are straightforward, such as “Yang Liwei was the first Chinese person in space.” In reality, however, many such claims deal with deep-seated controversies such as the existence of global warming or the cause of a major disaster, the final answers of which have not been discovered. In a value claim, the speaker judges the (relative) worth of something: Is it good or bad, right or wrong, just or unjust, ethical or unethical, etc.? For example, “So-and-so is the greatest actress ever” is a proposition of value. The last type of claim, the policy claim, is a statement about the nature of a problem and the solution that should be implemented. A proposition of policy may call for people to start a particular behavior, or to stop one. All policy propositions have the word “should” in them. “The university should provide free yoga classes for students” and “Human cloning should not be allowed” are two examples.

### Defining Terms

When the proposition for the debate is decided, we must study it carefully to find reasons for and against it. We must start with a proper understanding of the proposition by finding possible definitions of the key terms. Then, we could break down the complicated topic into several smaller issues to understand the proposition’s nature.

Some debate propositions are very specific, for example, “All students should learn at least two foreign languages,” or “Schools should have authority over students’ hairstyles.” In these cases, the affirmative team will immediately know what to propose in the debate. However, debate propositions are often more broadly worded so that they allow different interpretations. For example, in a proposition “The university cafeteria should adopt a vegetarian diet,” there will be more than one interpretation of the phrase “vegetarian diet.”

At the beginning of the analysis, debaters should explore different meanings of the key words in the proposition. They should prepare standard definitions of the words because the negative team may introduce their own definitions in a debate. In an academic debate, the affirmative team has the obligation and the privilege to interpret the proposition and define all ambiguous words so that the meaning of the proposition

is clear. There is no need to define every single word, however. Debaters should be concerned only with the few content words that are relevant to the subject of debate. They must also define words that have more than one meaning. The affirmative team has the privilege to choose one of the possible interpretations. If the negative team finds its opponent's interpretation unreasonable, it may challenge it.

There are many ways you can define words and phrases. The first one is to give examples. Suppose you will debate the proposition "Chain stores are detrimental to the people's best interest." If you want to define the phrase "chain store," you may say "chain store" in this debate means stores like A, B, or C. If the number of examples is small and such a list covers most of the intended items, this method is easy to understand and quite accurate. However, as in the case of "chain store," the list of examples covers only a small part of the intended items; the definition may not be accurate.

The second method is to look for dictionary definitions. You may either use a comprehensive language dictionary, such as the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* and the *Collins English Dictionary*, or a glossary, a reference source that includes terms specific to a particular subject. You may also check encyclopedias such as *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *Encyclopedia Americana*. You may want to refer to the *Encyclopedia of China* for information about things related to China. "Chain store," for example, is defined as "one of several similar shops that are owned by the same person or company, especially one that sells a variety of things" by the *Collins English Dictionary*.

The third approach to looking for definitions is to turn to authorities or experts. Some of the best definitions for certain terms are found in textbooks of the relevant fields. You may also find more academic definitions in journal papers or theoretical works. For example, the definitions of "chain store" in business textbooks are much more detailed and accurate than those in ordinary dictionaries.

### The Topicality Argument

While the affirmative team interprets the proposition by defining certain key words in the plan, the negative team has the right to challenge it—maybe the definitions are incorrect or not good enough, or "not topical." If the negative manages to show why the affirmative is non-topical, they will often win the round. In this sense, topicality is a negative's best friend. A topicality argument should be presented in the first negative round.

The topicality argument has four parts. The first part is the definition, where the negative team defines the word or phrase in the proposition. The second is the violation, which explains why the affirmative team's plan is inconsistent with the negative team's interpretation. The third is the standard. It lists the reasons why the negative thinks their definition is better and therefore should be accepted. The last part is the voter. In this part, the negative will argue that the affirmative should lose if they are non-topical.

**>> Activity 5 Identify Words to Be Defined**

Decide which words in each topic need to be defined and provide as many definitions as possible.

**TOPIC 1**

**Progress is impossible for any nation or culture unless concessions are made.**

**Words to be defined**

**Definitions**

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**TOPIC 2**

**Dying languages should be protected because we need cultural diversity.**

**Words to be defined**

**Definitions**

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## TOPIC 3

The protection of endangered languages is a waste of resources that could be better spent on more pressing issues, such as poverty reduction or climate change mitigation.

## Words to be defined

## Definitions

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**» Activity 6    Make a Topicality Argument**

Choose one topic from Activity 5, and divide the class into two teams: The affirmative makes a proposition and suggests a plan of action, and the negative makes a topicality argument based on the affirmative's plan.

A fallacy is an error in reasoning, i.e., an argument that is either flawed or irrelevant. In a debate, we should be able to make reasoned arguments and point out the fallacies committed by the opposing team.

There are two types of fallacies: formal and informal. **Formal fallacies** refer to arguments with an invalid structure (“form”), while **informal fallacies** involve the misleading use of language and evidence.

Most formal fallacies are errors of logic—the conclusion is not supported by the premises. For example, some boys have short hair, and Tom is a boy. Therefore, Tom has short hair. In this case, the premises do not necessarily lead to or justify the conclusion. Just because some boys have short hair does not mean all boys, including Tom, have short hair.

On the other hand, informal fallacies relate to an argument’s content, context, or presentation rather than its form. Informal fallacies take many forms and are found in everyday life. They bring irrelevant information into an argument or are based on incorrect assumptions.

Our textbook delves into 31 common logical fallacies, including nine categories: fallacies of distraction, causal fallacies, fallacies that miss the point, fallacies of explanation, inductive fallacies, fallacies of ambiguity, fallacies of changing the subject, category errors, and conditional fallacies. This unit will begin with the fallacies of distraction, and the rest will be covered in subsequent units.

## Fallacies of Distraction

Fallacies of distraction misdirect the audience’s attention, steering the conversation away from logical reasoning and toward an unsupported or irrelevant conclusion.

### False Dilemma

It is also known as either-or reasoning, black-and-white fallacy, or false dichotomy, among others. This is where just two mutually exclusive options are presented for something when actually there are (many) more.

**Example:** You’re either with me or against me.

**Fallacy Explained:** The flaw in this argument lies in the fact that the choices offered are the only choices. However, the reality is

rarely so simple. The arguer ignores a range of choices in between.

**Calling It Out:** Identify the either-or options, and provide an example of a middle ground. For instance, “You present this as binary options, but there are more alternatives. We could agree on some points while disagreeing on others.”

### Argument from Ignorance

It is an assertion that since we don’t know (or can never know, or cannot prove) whether a claim is true or false, it must be false, or it must be true. This is a special case of a false dilemma since it assumes that all claims must either be true or false.

**Example:** There are no proven UFO sightings. Therefore, aliens do not exist.

**Fallacy Explained:** This claim only implies that there is no evidence of UFO sightings on the Earth, but we do not know if alien life exists elsewhere in the universe.

**Calling It Out:** Identify the unproven claim and explain how it could still be true despite lack of proof. For example, “While we don’t have proof of alien life, its existence elsewhere in the universe remains a possibility.”

### Slippery Slope

Also known as the Domino Theory, the slippery slope argues that a first step inevitably leads to a second step, and so on, until a final step ends in trouble. Therefore, the first step must not be allowed if we don’t want the last step to occur.

**Example:** If you don’t study hard, you will fail your exams. Then you won’t go to college and won’t find a good job. Eventually, you will end up living on the street. Therefore, you should study hard.

**Fallacy Explained:** The probability of failing your exams if you do not study hard is probably quite high, but each subsequent event becomes more unlikely as the statement goes on. In the end, the probability of living on the street is likely next to nothing if one just does not study hard.

**Calling It Out:** Identify the starting point and alleged final consequence.



Explain why the final event doesn't necessarily occur. For instance, "You claim one small failure inevitably leads to homelessness, but there are many opportunities to improve along the way."

### Complex Question

This fallacy involves asking a question that has a presupposition built in, which implies something without evidence or assumes an unproven truth. It's often used to trap the respondent into admitting something indirectly.

**Example:** Has the pollution you caused increased or decreased your profits?

**Fallacy Explained:** Either a "yes" or a "no" answer would lead to the conclusion that the company ("you") did cause pollution. That is, the question assumes that the concealed question has already been answered affirmatively.

**Calling It Out:** Identify the embedded, unproven claims. Explain why believing one doesn't mean believing the other. For example, "Your question assumes the company has caused pollution, which is an unproven claim."

## » Activity 7 Fallacy Identification

Examine each of the examples and identify the fallacies.

1. If you don't protect the languages of a culture, they will eventually die.
2. If we allow minority languages to go extinct, soon the majority languages will start dying out too. Before long, even dominant languages like English and Chinese will begin to disappear. If no one does anything to stop it, language extinction will continue until there are only one or two languages left in the world.
3. If we don't protect the Hezhe language, the same thing will happen to other dialects or languages in China, and then *putonghua*. So, we must try our best to save the Hezhe language from extinction.
4. Isn't it true that anyone who doesn't support the preservation of dying languages is ignorant and indifferent to the cultural heritage of humanity?
5. You either support the protection of dying languages, or you prioritize more pressing issues like poverty reduction.

6. If we start protecting dying languages, we'll have to protect all endangered languages, and eventually we'll have to teach them all in schools, and before we know it, our education system will be in chaos.
7. If you're not careful with what you eat, you'll end up overweight, and then all your life will be ruined.
8. You can protect the environment, or you can protect employment, but you can't do both.
9. Our universe must have begun with the primordial explosion since we can obtain no information about events that occurred before it.
10. Have you stopped using illegal sales practices?
11. You say we ought to buy a new car. Which should we get—a car made in China or one made in Germany?
12. So far, no research has found these additives harmful. Therefore, they must be safe.
13. There is no proof that the policeman "leaked" the news to the papers, so he couldn't have done it.

**>> Activity 8 In-Class Debate**

Debate the topic “We Should Protect Dying Languages” in class, following the suggested steps.

**STEP 1**

Before the debate, break the class into groups of 12. Within each group, four are on the affirmative team, four are on the negative team, four are judges, and the teacher is the timekeeper.

**STEP 2**

During the debate, everyone should take notes in the following flow sheet. The judges should also fill out the debate evaluation form and then decide which team wins.

Affirmative Construction	Negative Construction	Free Debate	Negative Rebuttal & Summary	Affirmative Rebuttal & Summary



### Debate Evaluation Form

Debate Topic							
<b>Affirmative Team</b>	Opening Statement or Argument (0-10)	Content (0-10)	Style or Rhetoric (0-5)	Closing Statement or Rebuttal (0-10)	Teamwork (0-5)	Overall (0-10)	Total (50)
Score							
<b>Negative Team</b>	Opening Statement or Argument (0-10)	Content (0-10)	Style or Rhetoric (0-5)	Closing Statement or Rebuttal (0-10)	Teamwork (0-5)	Overall (0-10)	Total (50)
Score							

**STEP 3**

After the debate, choose one of the following two tasks to reflect upon what you have debated.

- Discuss the following questions on the debate.
  - Which team won the debate? Why?
  - Which of your arguments were successful or unsuccessful? How would you have argued differently if you could debate on the same topic again?
  - What do you think is the proper attitude toward the protection of dying languages? How should we deal with the advantages and disadvantages of it?
- Write a reflective essay about the debate.
 

Think about what you've learned from your research and debate, and write a short, reflective essay (1-2 pages) that takes a position on the topic. Make sure that you support your opinion with arguments, including evidence. Do you agree with a particular side? If so, why? Which arguments were most persuasive to you? Sometimes, you will not know which side you agree with. This is okay too. You may choose to write about why you're still undecided.

**>> Activity 9 After-Class Debate**

Over 400 languages were lost over the past 100 years, at a rate of one every three months, and approximately 40% of the languages remaining today are expected to disappear over the next century. Should we save them from extinction? Engage in a free debate with your classmates on the topic. The following are some random points for your reference.



Ultimately, a language lives as long as it is useful. You cannot stop people from voting with their feet. In most cases, a minority language dies because few people stick to it. The truth is, the motivation to save a dying language is largely sentimental rather than rational.



Saving a language means more than preserving some words or sentences. When a language dies, a wide range of information is lost forever. The oral traditions of an entire culture are gone; with that, the songs, anecdotes, and historical occurrences that document an essential piece of human history are also lost. Information about the medicinal value of plants and the habits of local animals becomes a mystery to future generations as well.



In one sense, you could call it a cultural loss. But that makes no sense because cultural forms are lost all the time. To say every cultural form should exist forever is ridiculous. And when governments try to prop languages up, it shows a desire to cling to the past rather than move forward.



It is not only information that disappears but also a unique way of looking at the world. Each language has its own phrases, expressions, and grammatical rules that provide a different point of view and understanding of the world around us. The language a person speaks also affects the way they think and process information. In fact, indigenous languages are often considered more complex than a widely spoken language like English, which has been simplified over the years to be more widely applicable. Without language diversity, the world slowly becomes more homogeneous in various ways.



Saving dying languages costs a lot of money and energy. It's a huge waste to preserve a language that has only a handful of speakers in some distant, secluded village. Most taxpayers would be more delighted to see their money spent on improving infrastructure or hiring better teachers.