

## Emerging Languages and the Digital Preservation of Endangered Tongues: Translational Perspectives

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### **Abstract:**

*This article addresses the complex relationship between translation and the preservation of endangered languages in the context of digital transformations, with a particular focus on the impact of emerging language forms within digital communication spaces. This newly developed language is characterized by abbreviations, linguistic blending, and the extensive use of emojis, leading to the diminished presence of native languages and the reshaping of cultural identities. The article analyzes the challenges associated with translating this type of discourse, especially considering the loss of emotional nuances, the absence of symbolic equivalents for emojis, and the difficulty of conveying the hybrid characteristics of digital speech. It highlights the limited availability of digital translation tools tailored to vulnerable languages, which further deepens the digital divide. The article also emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach that combines the development of digital infrastructure, the training of translators to handle non-standard languages, and the adoption of interactive translation strategies that respect the cultural specificities and networked identities of speakers.*

**Keywords:** languages, preservation, translation, endangered languages, digital transformations, linguistic forms

## **Langues émergentes et préservation numérique des langues en danger : Perspectives translationnelles**

### **Résumé :**

*Cet article traite de la relation complexe entre la traduction et la préservation des langues en danger dans le contexte des transformations numériques, en mettant l'accent sur l'impact des formes linguistiques émergentes dans les espaces de communication numérique. Ce nouveau langage se caractérise par des abréviations, des mélanges linguistiques et l'utilisation intensive d'emojis, ce qui entraîne une diminution de la présence des langues maternelles et un remodelage des identités culturelles. L'article analyse les défis associés à la traduction de ce type de discours, notamment la perte des nuances émotionnelles, l'absence d'équivalents symboliques pour les emojis et la difficulté de transmettre les caractéristiques hybrides du discours numérique. L'article souligne la disponibilité limitée d'outils de traduction numérique adaptés aux langues vulnérables, ce qui aggrave encore la fracture numérique. L'article souligne également la nécessité d'une approche globale combinant le développement de l'infrastructure numérique, la formation des traducteurs au traitement des langues non standard et l'adoption de stratégies de traduction interactives qui respectent les spécificités culturelles et les identités en réseau des locuteurs.*

**Mots clés :** *langues, préservation, traduction, langues en danger, transformations numériques, formes linguistiques*

## Introduction

Linguistic diversity constitutes one of the most significant manifestations of humanity's cultural richness, as language serves both as a natural vehicle for culture and a guarantor of its transmission across generations. However, this diversity is currently facing an unprecedented threat, as numerous natural languages around the world are at risk of extinction. UNESCO reports indicate that at least 40% of the world's languages are endangered, placing humanity before the imminent loss of an immense intangible heritage (UNESCO, 2011).

In recent decades, there has been a marked increase in attention to the fate of endangered languages, particularly in light of the global expansion of dominant languages, most notably English, across the domains of media, education, and technology. These shifts have led to a reshaping of the global linguistic landscape, with many local languages facing decline or disappearance, largely due to factors such as digital dominance. Within this context, the digital environment—particularly social media platforms—has generated a non-traditional communicative space where languages interact and expressive modes intertwine. This has given rise to what may be termed an "emerging language," a phenomenon that raises critical questions about the future of linguistic diversity worldwide. Faced with this reality, translation emerges as a pivotal yet problematic tool in the struggle against language extinction. On the one hand, translation can enhance the presence of vulnerable languages within the digital sphere; on the other hand, it may inadvertently reinforce their subjugation to dominant linguistic and cultural norms. Accordingly, this study proposes an analytical ap-

proach to examining the role of translation in safeguarding endangered languages by deconstructing the relationship between the "emerging language" and translation practices on social media platforms, which function as arenas for the reconfiguration of linguistic expression and identity—and which may simultaneously serve as a site of linguistic threat or as a means for linguistic empowerment.

### **Research Problem and Objectives**

Despite the global recognition and consensus on the threat of language extinction—given that these languages carry rich cultural heritage and long histories—efforts to protect them remain limited, particularly in countries with significant cultural and linguistic diversity. In this context, and in light of the rapid digital transformations witnessed by contemporary society, social media platforms have become an open linguistic space, reshaping communication patterns. Concurrent with this shift, concerns are growing regarding the fate of endangered languages, which face the dual threats of digital marginalization and cultural erosion. This situation raises a central question regarding the role of translation: Can translation be considered a tool to protect vulnerable languages from fading by integrating them into the digital sphere? Or does translation, when subjected to linguistic dominance (e.g., English), contribute to reproducing dependency and reinforcing the disappearance of linguistic diversity? What impact does the "emerging language" on social networks have on the functions of the native language? Does this emerging language represent a genuine threat or an opportunity for reshaping linguistic identities?

Based on these questions, this research aims to analyze the complex relationship between translation, emerging language, and the protection of endangered languages through

a case study of linguistic and translational practices on social media platforms. The goal is to identify the potential of translational intervention in safeguarding linguistic memory and cultural identity. Thus, addressing the topic "**Emerging Languages and the Digital Preservation of Endangered Tongues: Translational Perspectives**" requires a multi-methodological approach that aligns with the complex nature of the phenomenon under study, where linguistic, social, and digital dimensions intersect. From this perspective, the research is grounded in a sociolinguistic framework, as it offers a suitable lens to understand the transformations occurring in the use of native language within digital spaces by analyzing communication patterns, the distribution of linguistic competencies, and interactions between native languages and dominant languages. A digital discourse analysis methodology is also employed to deconstruct the structure of the "emerging language" as it manifests in posts and interactions on social media platforms, focusing on symbols, abbreviations, and hybrid patterns that may impact the continuity of the native language or neutralize it. This analysis is complemented by a descriptive-analytical approach that allows for the observation of linguistic and translational phenomena as they manifest in the field, along with a critical reading of translational practices in the digital context. This topic is both urgent and necessary for contemporary studies due to the rapid technological advancements and the evolution of the digital space, especially following the global health crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the world's focus on digitization. This shift has dramatically affected the nature of digital communication, leading to the continuous emergence of new forms of language. Therefore, the emerging language in the digital

space is not static but evolves rapidly, making the topic a rich field for new academic studies. Furthermore, while many studies have addressed the impact of technology on global languages, endangered languages have not been sufficiently studied within the digital space context. As the linguistic dominance of languages like English on online platforms increases, it becomes crucial to analyze how these phenomena affect less widely spoken languages, particularly regarding their protection or endangerment. Previous studies have not thoroughly examined this relationship in the context of growing digital interaction. Moreover, it is essential to investigate the impact of symbols such as emojis and abbreviations on local or endangered languages, as this is an underexplored area. The long-term effects of this type of language on linguistic and cultural identities in the digital world still require further academic research. Additionally, focusing on digital translation as a tool for either protecting or threatening endangered languages in the context of online interaction remains an underdeveloped aspect in academic literature. Most studies addressing translation in the digital space have focused on global languages, while digital translation for local languages can provide significant solutions to ensure and preserve linguistic diversity. Therefore, despite some existing literature discussing the impact of the internet and technology on language, the relationship between emerging language in the digital space and the protection of endangered languages has yet to be comprehensively and extensively addressed, making it a novel and highly relevant research topic that deserves further academic attention.

## **1. The Concept of Endangered Languages**

UNESCO defines an endangered language as follows: "A language is endangered when it is on a path toward extinc-

tion. Without adequate documentation, a language that is extinct can never be revived. A language is in danger when its speakers cease to use it, use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains, and cease to pass it on from one generation to the next. That is, there are no new speakers, adults or children" (UNESCO, 2003, p. 04).

"A language is clearly endangered when it is at risk of vanishing within a generation or two – that is when its last fluent speakers are elderly, when few or no children are learning it as a first language, and when no one is learning it as a second language. Some experts call a language MORIBUND when it is no longer being learned as a first language: a language that is not being transmitted to younger generations cannot outlive the last generations of native speakers" (Thomason, S., 2015, p. 04).

Thus, a language is considered endangered when the number of its speakers is continuously declining, causing it to gradually lose its status within the community of speakers, which leads to the younger generation ceasing to acquire it as a first language. This phenomenon indicates the loss of the language's communicative and social functions, placing it on a trajectory of gradual linguistic erosion that could ultimately result in its complete extinction.

According to UNESCO's classification (UNESCO, 2003), endangered languages pass through five stages of endangerment, starting from "vulnerable" and ending with "extinct." The degree of endangerment is assessed based on factors such as intergenerational language transmission, the number of speakers, the domains of use, and the availability of written documentation.

Addressing this phenomenon requires interdisciplinary approaches that include documentation, language revitaliza-

tion, and promoting its use in educational and media sectors, framing the modern efforts in the field of safeguarding intangible linguistic heritage.

## **2. Structural Factors Leading to Language Extinction**

According to the "Atlas of Endangered Languages" report published by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2003), statistics indicate that at least 40% of the world's languages are at risk of extinction in the near future. The total number of languages in the world is estimated to be around 7,000, but approximately 2,500 of these are considered endangered. In many of these cases, the number of speakers of these languages is rapidly declining, as many of them are not being learned by younger generations.

Globalization, migration, and educational policies are key factors contributing to the decline of local languages worldwide. Globalization, through media, the internet, and the global economy, leads to the dominance of global languages like English and French in everyday life, thereby marginalizing local languages (Crystal, 2000). Regarding migration, the movement of populations from rural areas to urban centers or from one country to another leads to the adoption of official or dominant languages at the expense of native languages. In terms of educational policies, the focus on teaching official languages such as French or English significantly contributes to the decline of these languages (Bamgbose, 2000; Wright, 2004).

In the context of contemporary studies on endangered languages, the concept of Language Ecology has emerged as a multidimensional theoretical framework linking language with the cultural, social, and biological environment in which it arises and is used. Recent literature emphasizes that language cannot be understood in isolation from the envi-

ronmental and social contexts it is embedded in; rather, it is the result of a complex interaction between diverse factors (Pütz & Filipović, 2016, p. 14). Thus, if this cultural, social, and biological environment—meaning the people and the geographical context in which they interact and practice their cultural and social rituals—disappears, the language they used for communication will inevitably vanish. This argument is supported by field studies, such as those conducted by Gómez (2016) on the interconnected relationship between language, culture, and the natural habitat of communities like the Yanomami speakers in the Brazilian Amazon. This relationship manifests in metaphorical and rhetorical language use, such as metaphors, euphemisms, and circumlocutions, which are understood only within the narrow geographical circle of speakers of that language.

Linguist David Crystal (2000) also affirms that the death of a language is linked to the loss of its ability to perform symbolic and cultural functions and the absence of intergenerational transmission. This absence is primarily attributed to environmental, political, health, and natural changes, or, more directly and swiftly, to educational and communicative systems that impose an alternative dominant language. Recent studies suggest that the main causes of language extinction include institutional marginalization, globalization, urban expansion, migration, and the weakening of traditional community structures (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; Austin & Sallabank, 2011).

Therefore, these ecological approaches are crucial for understanding the threats faced by languages with limited and confined distribution, especially when they are excluded from their original environments or marginalized. This perspective also helps justify the importance of safeguarding

languages from extinction within a comprehensive framework that not only includes linguistic documentation but extends to the protection of the cultural and social environment that allows the language to persist and thrive.

### **3. Efforts to Protect Languages from Extinction**

Various measures are being adopted by countries and UNESCO to preserve languages from extinction, including linguistic documentation, which aims to preserve linguistic material through the recording of dictionaries, grammar, oral texts, and the cultural contexts associated with the language. Grenoble and Whaley (2006) recommend using multimedia approaches in documentation, which include sound, image, and written text to ensure comprehensiveness. Another method is community participation, which aims to use the language in daily life, cultural production, and ritual practices. The importance of this practice is highlighted in the studies of Hinton and Hale (2001), who assert that language revival goes beyond the educational domain and becomes part of the daily cultural fabric. Additionally, various linguistic planning and policies are adopted by countries, depending on their internal contexts, which include integrating the language into the educational system. UNESCO (2003) has pointed out that teaching in the mother tongue during the early stages of education not only enhances linguistic skills but also contributes to improved academic performance and strengthens cultural identity. Moreover, another method suggested by Austin and Sallabank (2011) is the use of digital applications and platforms to teach and spread the language among younger generations.

Translation serves as a crucial intermediary in the revitalization of endangered languages. It transcends mere linguistic conversion, functioning as a multifaceted cultural process

that aids in the preservation of community cultural memory. This powerful mechanism safeguards endangered languages by documenting them and integrating them into new domains such as education and media, as well as by producing original texts in these languages or translating cultural works from other languages into them. Bassier (2009) posits that translation is instrumental in maintaining linguistic memory, facilitating the transmission of knowledge and cultural traditions linked to native languages to subsequent generations. In this regard, translation allows endangered languages to participate in the 'cognitive production circle' by translating culturally and scientifically significant texts from dominant languages into them. Bassier (2009) further asserts that translation fulfills a dual role: it not only conveys content but also reconstitutes cultural and cognitive frameworks within the local language, thereby enhancing its symbolic legitimacy. Cronin (2003) highlights that translation 're-creates linguistic symbolism' in the target language, altering the community's perception of it and imbuing it with a dynamic cultural role. Additionally, digital translation has emerged as a strategic asset for the promotion of endangered languages, encompassing website localization, audiovisual media translation, and even the application of artificial intelligence.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced human societies at all levels, particularly in terms of linguistic diversity. It highlighted the vulnerabilities within social systems regarding the preservation of endangered languages, especially in the context of disseminating critical health information. Urbanc (2021) noted that the pandemic exposed linguistic disparities in the delivery of health information to speakers of less prevalent languages, which called for urgent

translation and localization of communications. The global health emergency illustrated that many countries' health systems were ill-equipped to address the needs of linguistically diverse populations. Various initiatives by international bodies, including the World Health Organization and independent entities like Translators Without Borders (TWB) (2020)<sup>1</sup> promoted and supported the translation of medical information into a wide array of less commonly spoken languages. By the end of 2021, preventive measures related to COVID-19 were accessible in approximately 700 languages, with around 630 of these targeting speakers of minority or marginalized languages, a result of collaborative efforts from governments, NGOs, scholars, and local communities<sup>2</sup>. In the digital age, artificial intelligence (AI) and related technologies, such as machine learning (ML), have become essential tools in efforts to preserve endangered languages. AI can assist in building linguistic models for these languages, even with limited textual resources, through techniques like low-resource learning and transfer learning. In this context, Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques enable the analysis of audio and written texts, extracting syntactic and lexical structures, which enhances documentation and language revival processes. AI can also be used to generate customized educational content or even design conversational applications based on the target language, facilitating language transmission to new generations (Bird, 2020). A prominent example is the Masakhane project, which aims to develop machine translation for African languages using AI with the involvement of local communities. Studies such as Tapo (2023) highlight the significance of such initiatives in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://translatorswithoutborders.org/covid-19/>,

<sup>2</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8722626/>.

empowering communities to control the future of their languages. Companies like Google and Microsoft have also developed AI systems capable of supporting endangered languages by incorporating them into translation platforms, thereby increasing their visibility and use in the digital space (Pérez et al., 2022).

However, is this enough, especially when the UNESCO Atlas (2003) continues to record languages at risk due to a decline in their speakers, particularly in light of the policies adopted by countries to preserve these languages? If we analyze the available data, we find that these efforts remain extremely limited. The preservation of languages in databases, documentation, or their imposition in educational or official institutions does not necessarily guarantee their survival. These languages need to thrive to continue existing, meaning they must interact with their environment and produce knowledge that is passed on naturally across generations. Knowledge transfer is the process through which experiences, values, skills, and information are transmitted from one generation to the next, whether formally (such as through formal education) or informally (such as through oral traditions and customs). Several factors hinder this process, including:

- **Social and Cultural Changes:** Modernization and globalization are reshaping societal values, leading to differing priorities among the new generation compared to previous ones (Inglehart & Baker, 2000).
- **Shifts in Education and Learning Patterns:** Knowledge has become instantly and openly available, changing the role of older generations as the sole reference for knowledge (Siemens, 2005).

- **Disintegration of Traditional Social Ties:** Urbanization and migration have weakened family and community bonds that once facilitated knowledge transmission (Putnam, 2000).
- **Modern Technologies:** The internet and social media have created knowledge and behavioral gaps between generations, potentially hindering or altering traditional ways of transmitting knowledge (Twenge, 2017; Prensky, 2001).

#### 4. The Emergence of Language in the Digital Space: Characteristics, Threats, and Its Implications for Translation and Identity

The digital space, particularly social media platforms, forms a dynamic interactive environment that produces new expressive patterns known as "emergent language." This language or linguistic style is shaped by cultural and technological changes in society, especially within digital or social communication spaces. It may include the use of abbreviations, visual symbols (emojis), loanwords, or the blending of languages, reflecting the linguistic transformations that occur due to interaction between different cultures or digital spaces (Herring & Dresner, 2010; Chavez, 2013; Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). Gómez (2016) notes that these phenomena represent a shift in communicative structure and may contribute to the fragmentation of the mother tongue, especially among younger generations who acquire their initial linguistic skills within this digital environment. In the face of this change, the mother tongue transforms into a "fragile symbolic code," in which its cognitive and communicative roles diminish, potentially accelerating its decline in the absence of institutional interventions.

On the other hand, this emergent language poses a real challenge to translators, particularly regarding the reproduction of meaning in digital texts characterized by abbreviation, multilingualism, and high symbolism. Translators find themselves dealing with texts that extend beyond verbal dimensions to include cultural, contextual, and visual cues, thereby necessitating an expansion of their competence beyond the linguistic (to include translingual and multimodal literacy), as noted by Cronin (2013). At the cultural level, the emergent language gradually contributes to the reshaping of digital identities (Bala, A. V., 2024), where linguistic affiliations are built according to new criteria that do not necessarily rely on the mother tongue but rather on symbols and network-based affiliations. From this perspective, digital translation becomes a dual tool: it either contributes to the integration of the mother tongue into this space, restoring its legitimacy in digital use, or it reinforces its marginalization by prioritizing languages more "translatable" within global technical frameworks and platforms.

## **5. Translation as a Tool for Protecting or Marginalizing Endangered Languages**

Translation operates within a paradoxical role when it comes to endangered languages. On one hand, translation serves as a protective mechanism, enabling endangered languages to maintain relevance in the digital world. On the other hand, it can inadvertently contribute to the marginalization of these languages, particularly when translation processes are not carefully designed. The duality of translation in this context hinges on its ability to either safeguard linguistic diversity or exacerbate linguistic homogenization:

### **5.1. Translation as a Tool for Preservation**

By translating content into endangered languages, translation ensures their visibility on online platforms, which have become central to global communication. This is particularly important for younger generations, as digital platforms increasingly shape language use and literacy. Translation can provide these young speakers with a familiar, native-language interface, allowing them to engage with content, from social media posts to educational resources, in their own language. This method also contributes to the development of technical terminology in the endangered language, which is vital for its continued use in contemporary discourse.

Moreover, providing interfaces and content in endangered languages not only facilitates communication but also promotes cultural diversity. It challenges the dominance of major languages such as English, fostering a more inclusive digital environment that reflects the linguistic diversity of the world. The expansion of digital content in endangered languages creates opportunities for speakers to use their native languages in various domains, from entertainment to commerce, thus supporting their continued use in everyday contexts.

### **5.2. Translation as a Source of Marginalization**

However, the effectiveness of translation in preserving endangered languages is compromised by the limitations of digital platforms. While platforms like YouTube and Instagram offer automatic translation features, they often only support the most widely spoken languages, leaving less widely spoken and endangered languages on the periphery (Bird, 2020). This imbalance raises a significant concern re-

garding the role of translation in perpetuating linguistic dependency and cultural marginalization.

When translation options are limited, it not only reduces the visibility of endangered languages but also reinforces the dominance of global languages. This can lead to a scenario where speakers of endangered languages find themselves increasingly disconnected from their cultural and linguistic roots. Cultural specificities tied to local expressions and idioms may be overlooked or diluted, replaced by globalized, standardized language that fails to capture the nuances of the original. This process, over time, erodes the richness of the endangered language and weakens the linguistic identity of its speakers.

Furthermore, when translation is primarily mechanical or literal, it can fail to capture the unique syntactic and semantic features of the target language. The loss of these linguistic features can result in a translation that is not truly representative of the culture and worldview embedded in the original language. In this sense, the act of translation, instead of serving as a bridge to preserve cultural identity, may inadvertently contribute to the cultural assimilation of the language into a dominant linguistic framework.

### **5.3. Cultural and Linguistic Identity Crisis**

The risk of cultural and linguistic identity loss becomes particularly pronounced when translation is reduced to a simple linguistic exchange rather than a culturally nuanced process. In such cases, the subtle and deeply ingrained cultural references that are inherent in a language's expressions may be lost in translation. As when translation bypasses these cultural elements, it can lead to a homogenization of cultural identities. The unique linguistic markers that distin-

guish one culture from another are replaced with expressions that fit within a globalized framework, undermining the specificities of the endangered language (Zappavigna, M. 2012).

For example, the use of automatic translation tools in social media platforms may replace local idiomatic expressions with simpler, more universally understood terms, which while functional, lack the emotional or cultural depth of the original. This erasure of cultural nuance results in a shallow form of communication that fails to resonate with native speakers on an emotional level, potentially weakening their connection to their language and culture.

#### **5.4. The Need for Inclusive and Contextual Translation Strategies**

To mitigate the risks of linguistic marginalization, it is essential to adopt translation strategies that go beyond simple linguistic transfer. Translation for endangered languages should be context-sensitive and culturally aware (Cronin, 2003). This means that translators must be trained not only in the linguistic aspects of the source and target languages but also in the cultural, social, and historical contexts that shape language use.

For instance, in the case of endangered languages, translation should be seen as part of a larger effort to revitalize the language, incorporating local expressions, metaphors, and idioms that reflect the language's cultural heritage. In addition, platforms should be encouraged to expand their language options and collaborate with linguistic communities to develop more inclusive digital tools. This would ensure that endangered languages are not just preserved in an academic sense but are actively used in digital environments,

empowering speakers to maintain their linguistic heritage in the face of globalization.

## **6. Social Media: A Threat or an Opportunity? – A Case Study**

### **6.1. On the Official Level:**

The digital realm has both positive and negative implications for endangered languages. On one hand, digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become spaces where endangered languages are underrepresented or marginalized. The dominance of global languages like English, Spanish, and Chinese in the digital world presents a barrier for smaller, endangered languages, limiting their visibility and utility. The digital environment is heavily influenced by global communication norms, and when these norms prioritize widely spoken languages, minority languages are often relegated to the periphery, becoming endangered or even extinct.

On the other hand, the digital space can be a powerful tool for the revitalization of endangered languages. The internet, with its far-reaching capabilities, can provide platforms for these languages to thrive in new contexts. The growing presence of digital content in endangered languages enables local communities to reconnect with their linguistic heritage and engage in cross-cultural dialogue. Therefore, the digital space is both a challenge to and an opportunity for the survival of endangered languages, depending on how these languages are utilized in digital content creation and community involvement.

### *6.1.1. Community Translation Projects: A Model for Language Protection*

One of the promising models to counterbalance the threats posed by digital globalization is the community translation project. These initiatives, which are often collaborative efforts by native speakers, aim to create digital content in endangered languages. The primary strength of these projects lies in their community-based nature, allowing for the preservation of linguistic authenticity and the creation of content that reflects the cultural and social realities of the language speakers.

For example, the "Wikipedia in Indigenous Languages" project empowers local communities to create and translate Wikipedia articles in their native languages. This project not only provides a digital repository of knowledge in endangered languages but also contributes to the creation of diverse, community-driven content that reflects indigenous worldviews and knowledge systems. The Wikimedia Indigenous Languages Users Group (WikiNAIL)<sup>1</sup>, which supports languages like Navajo, Quechua, and Basque, is an excellent case study of how such community-driven initiatives can bolster the digital presence of endangered languages. By fostering a space for these languages to thrive on platforms with wide visibility, such projects help ensure their ongoing relevance and encourage their continued use by younger generations.

Another example of a successful community-driven project is the "Tusaalanga" platform (Accessible via <https://tusaalanga.ca>), which supports the revitalization of

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[https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedians\\_of\\_North\\_American\\_Indigenous\\_Languages\\_User\\_Group?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedians_of_North_American_Indigenous_Languages_User_Group?utm_source=chatgpt.com))

the Inuktitut language. The platform allows speakers of Inuktitut to access resources and engage in language learning, helping to bridge the gap between language preservation and technological innovation. Initiatives like these not only help increase the use of endangered languages in digital spaces but also contribute to the development of resources that enable these languages to be used in everyday communication.

### ***6.1.2. Governmental and Corporate Support for Endangered Languages***

In addition to grassroots initiatives, governmental bodies and corporate entities have also played a key role in supporting the digital presence of endangered languages. For instance, the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) in British Columbia supports Indigenous communities through its digital resources, including an active Facebook page<sup>1</sup> that provides educational materials and updates on language revitalization efforts. This initiative strengthens communication within Indigenous communities and fosters a sense of pride and unity among speakers of endangered languages.

Similarly, the Indian government's MyGov India initiative<sup>2</sup> leverages social media to highlight the linguistic diversity of the country. Through platforms like Instagram<sup>3</sup>, the initiative promotes India's 22 official languages and numerous local dialects, showcasing the rich cultural and linguistic heritage of the nation. The inclusion of such initiatives

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/firstpeoplesculturalcouncil>)

<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.instagram.com/vicepresidentofindia/reel/DHILbvOsG8x>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DIzj1ehA6V9/>)

demonstrates the potential for governmental and corporate efforts to create spaces where endangered languages can be celebrated and preserved digitally.

On the corporate front, Google's recent announcement to include 110 new languages, including several African languages like Tifinagh and Wolof, in its machine translation services is a step forward in bridging the digital divide. By incorporating these languages into mainstream digital platforms, Google helps create a more inclusive digital environment, ensuring that these languages are not left behind in an increasingly globalized world.

### ***6.1.3. Challenges Posed by Limited Usage and Hybridization of Language***

Despite the growing efforts to integrate endangered languages into the digital space, several challenges remain. One of the most significant issues is the symbolic usage of local languages in specific, often ceremonial, contexts—such as holidays or cultural events. While these uses are important for raising awareness of the language and its cultural significance, they do not contribute to the everyday use of the language in digital life. For endangered languages to thrive, they must be embedded in daily communication practices, which requires a shift from symbolic to functional use in the digital space. Simply celebrating the language during cultural events is insufficient for its long-term survival.

The emergence of hybrid linguistic phenomena is another concern. As individuals increasingly use global languages like English, French, and Spanish in their daily lives, there is a tendency for these languages to intermingle with local languages. This hybridization often leads to the weakening of the original linguistic identity, as the use of foreign terms becomes more frequent in everyday speech. The widespread

adoption of foreign expressions can erode the structural integrity of endangered languages, leading to a loss of linguistic purity and, over time, to the erosion of essential cultural and linguistic features. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the pervasive influence of social media, where English and other global languages dominate discussions, further reinforcing the marginalization of local languages.

#### ***6.1.4. The Digital Divide: Lack of Translation Tools for Endangered Languages***

The lack of machine translation tools dedicated to endangered languages remains a critical issue. Many endangered languages do not have adequate machine translation services, limiting their users' access to the wealth of global information available online. Without proper translation tools, speakers of endangered languages are excluded from fully participating in the global digital ecosystem. This digital gap reinforces the linguistic marginalization of these communities, as they are unable to access critical digital resources, such as news, educational materials, and entertainment, in their native languages.

The absence of machine translation infrastructure also limits the development of language technologies that could promote the use of endangered languages in the digital space. As a result, speakers of endangered languages are often forced to rely on global languages for communication, further diminishing the presence of their native tongues in digital environments.

Although the digital realm poses considerable obstacles to the preservation and revitalization of endangered languages, it simultaneously provides remarkable opportunities for these languages to flourish in novel environments. Initia-

tives such as community translation projects, governmental backing, and corporate efforts are essential for securing a digital presence for endangered languages. Nevertheless, the symbolic employment of these languages in particular contexts, along with the emergence of hybrid linguistic practices, presents threats to their long-term viability. To tackle these issues, it is imperative to establish sustainable frameworks that incorporate endangered languages into everyday digital interactions and offer the requisite technological infrastructure to facilitate their usage. This approach can cultivate an inclusive digital landscape that honors linguistic diversity and guarantees the survival of endangered languages in the contemporary digital age.

## **6.2. On the day-to-day life:**

While safeguarding collective memory is a vital aspect of language preservation, a deeper and more nuanced analysis requires looking beyond the official and formal interventions of experts. As noted, before, we must examine the broader, more subtle linguistic phenomena that may not be directly visible to specialists. These include the everyday use of language in digital spaces, which involves not only institutional efforts but also grassroots interactions among speakers, especially those within younger, more digitally connected populations. This distinction is crucial in understanding how endangered languages evolve and how their digital representation may influence their future.

### ***6.2.1. The Impact of User-Generated Content on Language Use***

A particularly noteworthy aspect is the evolving function of translation in environments dominated by user-generated content, such as comment sections and informal digital plat-

forms. In these scenarios, translation tends to be decentralized, with contributions from individuals across diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This democratization of translation presents opportunities for linguistic expression; however, it also results in a considerable linguistic divide. A significant number of those involved in translation and content creation are young individuals who may lack a profound connection to the endangered languages being discussed, focusing instead on articulating their views on subjects such as celebrities, television programs, and global trends.

This creates a linguistic tension, as users seek to assert their presence, engage with global issues, or demonstrate loyalty to specific cultural phenomena. As a result, translation becomes a tool for negotiation of identity and affiliation. On one hand, it facilitates the spread of information and participation in global dialogues, but on the other hand, it can undermine the integrity of local languages, particularly when those languages are used in a fragmented, hybridized manner. This tension between the global and the local is a key issue in the digital landscape and poses a risk to endangered languages, as users may prioritize global languages or use hybrid forms of communication that dilute linguistic purity.

### ***6.2.2. Technical Challenges Faced by Endangered Languages in the Digital Space***

At the technical level, the limitations of modern devices and platforms are a significant obstacle for endangered languages. These devices typically offer limited language options, which are skewed toward the most widely spoken languages. We can highlight two main technical challenges:

the lack of standardization (such as Unicode support for many endangered languages) (Oberhaus, D. 2023) and the scarcity of linguistic resources for training machine translation models.

The lack of standardized systems in Unicode prevents many endangered languages from being represented digitally. Unicode, the global standard for text encoding, is essential for enabling consistent representation of languages across different devices and platforms. Without a standardized character set, it becomes difficult to input, store, and display endangered languages on modern devices, further limiting their digital presence.

Additionally, the scarcity of linguistic data for training machine translation models is another significant challenge. Machine learning and artificial intelligence tools, which have the potential to aid in language revitalization, rely heavily on large datasets to improve their accuracy. For endangered languages, which often lack substantial digital resources, these tools cannot function optimally, hindering the development of technologies that could support these languages in digital spaces. The result is that endangered languages are excluded from the very technological innovations that could promote their use and survival.

### ***6.2.3. Linguistic Innovations in Digital Spaces: New Practices and Globalization Pressures***

It is essential to examine the rise of new linguistic practices within digital environments, especially on social media platforms. A sociolinguistic analysis of these practices uncovers two significant trends: the utilization of acronyms such as 'LOL' and 'OMG' to enable rapid communication, and the incorporation of emojis as a means of conveying emotions. These practices signify broader societal transfor-

mations, including the swift pace of digital interactions and the lack of conventional communicative signals (such as facial expressions and vocal tone) in written exchanges. These phenomena align with what Danesi (2016) describes as a 'quasi-linguistic shift,' wherein symbols like emojis assume roles typically associated with spoken language.

Moreover, the integration of foreign languages in comments and posts reflects multiple socio-cultural phenomena, such as the desire to connect with a global community or respond to cultural hegemony. The phenomenon of hybrid multilingualism, where speakers mix languages in their communication, reflects these pressures and desires for social distinction and belonging in a globalized world. However, this hybrid communication also creates challenges for endangered languages, as speakers, particularly younger ones, may adopt expressions from dominant languages and reduce their use of native linguistic forms.

#### ***6.2.4. The Risk of Language Erosion and the Marginalization of Endangered Languages***

While these new linguistic practices contribute to the dynamism and creativity of digital communication, they also pose risks for endangered languages. As younger generations increasingly adopt hybrid expressions or use global languages in their online interactions, there is a significant risk of marginalizing their native tongues. This linguistic shift, particularly in digital environments, can lead to the erosion of traditional language structures and a weakened command of the mother tongue. As Gómez (2016) notes, such changes may impact the language's vitality, with the younger generation potentially losing their ability to speak the language fluently.

From a critical sociolinguistic perspective, these phenomena also reflect broader power dynamics in global communication. The dominance of certain languages (such as English) in digital spaces reinforces cultural and linguistic hierarchies, marginalizing languages that are already endangered. The widespread use of global languages and symbols in digital communication further entrenches these power imbalances, creating a vicious cycle where speakers of endangered languages are pressured to conform to global norms, rather than maintaining their linguistic and cultural heritage.

The challenges faced by endangered languages in digital spaces are multifaceted, involving both technical barriers and linguistic shifts. While efforts by governments and specialized bodies to preserve these languages are crucial, they must be complemented by broader strategies that address the digital realities of language use. The technical challenges related to Unicode standardization and the lack of resources for machine translation must be overcome to ensure that endangered languages can thrive in the digital age. Moreover, as digital spaces continue to shape language practices, it is essential to be mindful of the hybridization of language and the potential marginalization of native tongues. Through inclusive and contextually aware strategies, endangered languages can find a place in the digital world, ensuring their continued relevance and survival.

## **7. Challenges of Translating Digital Content in the Context of New Language: A Socio-Linguistic and Semantic Analysis**

Translation in the digital age has faced unprecedented challenges, especially with the emergence of the "new language" that combines abbreviations, emoticons, and linguistics.

tic blending between colloquials and foreign languages. The main issues can be summarized as follows:

1. **Loss of Expressive Rhythm and Emotional Charge** Oral expressions and digital abbreviations such as "OMG" and "LOL" carry emotional and contextual charges that are difficult to convey through traditional text-based translation, leading to the erosion of the emotional impact of the translated text. House (2015) suggests that the loss of these emotional dimensions reflects the failure of translation to achieve pragmatic communicative equivalence.
2. **Absence of Visual Symbolic Equivalence** Emoticons (emojis) are an integral part of meaning-making in digital messages. However, most traditional translation processes overlook these symbols or translate them in ways that strip them of their interactive function. Zappavigna (2012) discussed the importance of the social and visual meanings conveyed by symbols in online discourse, asserting that dealing with them requires a multimodal approach.
3. **Neutralizing Digital Identity** Hybrid digital language contributes to the construction of a "networked identity" for users. When translating into an endangered native language, this identity is often neutralized in favor of rigid linguistic standards. Tagg (2015) demonstrated that linguistic mixing and the use of symbols represent an essential part of social identity in digital spaces.
4. **Difficulty in Conveying Hybrid Linguistic Structures** The blending of different languages within a single phrase (e.g., "I'm so tired اليوم") creates difficulty for translations that assume a clear separation of lan-

guages. Canagarajah (2013) argues that transcending the rigid boundaries of languages (translingual practices) should be an integral part of any modern translation strategies.

### **Practical Examples:**

- On the "Native American Language Net" Facebook page, we encounter mixed comments like: "*Loving the powwow vibes today* 🍂 #TraditionsStrong" This blends English with native cultural terms, accompanied by an emoticon for emotional emphasis.
- On Instagram accounts in Cornish (Cornish language): "*Gool Peran Lowen everyone* 🏡 Stay #KernowProud!" Here, there is a blend of the native language with modern English and emoticons.

The translation of digital content in the contemporary landscape of emerging languages encounters considerable obstacles stemming from the dynamic evolution of communication within online environments. The diminishment of emotional impact, the lack of visual symbolic parity, the standardization of digital identities, and the challenges posed by hybrid linguistic frameworks highlight the limitations of conventional translation techniques in tackling the intricacies of present-day digital dialogue. To accurately convey the subtleties of this new linguistic paradigm, translation methodologies must evolve by incorporating multimodal and translingual strategies, thereby safeguarding both the social and emotional aspects of digital interactions across different languages.

## **Conclusion:**

The new language phenomenon in the digital space represents a complex linguistic development that illustrates the interaction between modern technologies and socio-cultural transformations. This type of language, which includes abbreviations, visual symbols (emojis), and the blending of languages, creates a communicative environment characterized by speed and flexibility, allowing individuals to express their thoughts and emotions through hybrid linguistic tools and unconventional communication. Although this phenomenon contributes to facilitating immediate communication and improving interaction between individuals in the digital space, it carries linguistic and cultural challenges that may significantly impact the native language and weaken the expressive capacity of traditional languages.

From what has been discussed in this paper, it is evident that the new language is not merely a tool for simplifying expression or achieving rapid interaction, but rather a linguistic and cultural shift that reflects the effects of globalization and technology on linguistic identity. In the context of the dominance of languages such as English in the digital space, these phenomena may contribute to the weakening and marginalization of endangered languages, especially if current trends continue to rely on symbols and abbreviations that fail to reflect the complexity of traditional language and do not cover all aspects of meaning.

Despite these risks, translation can be a vital and essential tool for protecting linguistic diversity, provided it is employed strategically and consciously. Translation can contribute to transferring digital content into endangered languages, thus giving them an opportunity to survive and

evolve in digital contexts. However, the effectiveness of translation in this context depends on the strategies employed, such as adaptive translation that takes into account cultural and linguistic contexts and avoids reproducing the standards of the dominant language. Furthermore, supporting the digital infrastructure for endangered languages is crucial, such as providing technological tools that support machine translation and interfaces in local languages, which will help encourage the digital representation of these languages.

In this context, the role of translators and specialists in translation and language teaching is of paramount importance, as it requires advanced academic training that enables them to understand the challenges and opportunities that arise for languages in the digital age. In this framework, innovative educational strategies should be developed, focusing on the interaction between translation and endangered languages, thus enhancing the capacity to preserve linguistic diversity and cultural interaction.

The phenomenon of the new language in the digital space requires further research, especially regarding its impact on local languages and cultural identities in the digital world. This research should include studying the reciprocal effects between technology and language in various contexts, analyzing how translation and digital technologies can be leveraged to develop effective protection mechanisms for endangered languages, ensuring the sustainability and preservation of linguistic diversity in the future.

Based on the foregoing, the challenges posed by the new language in the digital space require a conscious academic response, encompassing both theoretical foundations and practical applications that contribute to the preservation of

linguistic diversity, while ensuring that language integrates with digital technologies without weakening or replacing it.

This study may be limited in its scope and applications, but we must acknowledge the question: Can we truly overcome the law of natural selection, where the strongest survive, and ensure the continuity of languages spoken by only a few thousand people, regardless of their cultural, social, religious, and civilizational traditions? Meanwhile, languages and civilizations of powerful and influential peoples have faded, and their languages either disappeared or remain trapped in historical and archaeological studies after their extinction. Despite the efforts that have been made and are still being made to revive them, only fragments of their memory have been preserved. Therefore, we must recognize that a language remains alive as long as its speakers are alive, eager to revive it and allow it to interact with others. Once they disappear or abandon it for one reason or another, its fate is extinction, transforming into merely a tangible or intangible heritage stored in databases.

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