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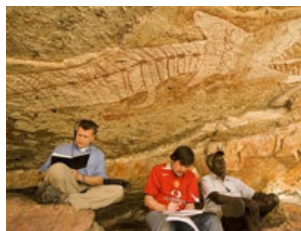
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语言学家：多种语言正在消失 Researchers say many languages are dying

[2007-09-19 15:04]



Many languages are endangered

When every known speaker of the language Amurdag gets together, there's still no one to talk to. Native Australian Charlie Mungulda is the only person alive known to speak that language, one of

thousands around the world on the brink of extinction. From rural Australia to Siberia to Oklahoma, languages that embody the history and traditions of people are dying, researchers said Tuesday.

While there are an estimated 7,000 languages spoken around the world today, one of them dies out about every two weeks, according to linguistic experts struggling to save at least some of them.

Five hotspots where languages are most endangered were listed Tuesday in a briefing by the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages and the National Geographic Society.

In addition to northern Australia, eastern Siberia and Oklahoma and the U.S. Southwest, many native languages are endangered in South America — Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Brazil and Bolivia — as well as the area including British Columbia, and the states of Washington and Oregon.

Losing languages means losing knowledge, says K. David Harrison, an assistant professor of linguistics at Swarthmore College.

"When we lose a language, we lose centuries of human thinking about time, seasons, sea creatures, reindeer, edible flowers, mathematics, landscapes, myths, music, the unknown and the everyday."

As many as half of the current languages have never been written down, he estimated.

That means, if the last speaker of many of these vanished tomorrow, the language would be lost because there is no dictionary, no literature, no text of any kind, he said.

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(Agencies)

Vocabulary:

即便所有会说Amurdag语的人聚在一起，也还是无人可交流。因为澳大利亚土著居民查理·穆尼古尔答是世界上唯一会说这种语言的人。包括Amurdag语在内的全世界几千种语言正濒临消失。有关研究人员于周二称，从澳大利亚乡村到西伯利亚，再到美国的俄克拉荷马州，很多体现人类历史和传统的语言正在消失。

据语言学家们介绍，目前世界上约有7000种语言正在使用，而每两个星期就有一种语言消失，语言学家们正在试图挽救其中的一些语言。

周二，濒危语言拯救研究所和国家地理学会在联合发布的一份简报中公布了五大语言濒危重点地区。

除澳大利亚北部、东西伯利亚、俄克拉荷马州以及美国西南部地区外，厄瓜多尔、哥伦比亚、秘鲁、巴西和玻利维亚等南美洲地区以及英属哥伦比亚、华盛顿州和俄勒冈等地区的多种土著语言也濒临消失。

斯沃斯莫尔学院语言学副教授K·大卫·哈里森说，失去语言意味着失去知识。

"我们失去一种语言，就意味着失去了人类好几个世纪对于时间、季节、海洋生物、驯鹿、食用花卉、数学、风景、神话、音乐、未知事物以及日常生活的思考成果。"

据他估计，目前世界上多达一半的语言没有文字记录。

这意味着，如果最后一个会说这些语言的人明天消失了，这种语言也就消失了，因为这些语言没有任何相关的字典、文献和文本的记录。

(英语点津姗姗编辑)

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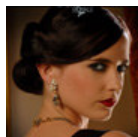
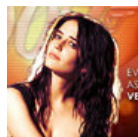
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