Torrey & Triton 2025

Fourth Committee (SPECPOL)

The Role of Artifical Intelligence in Preserving Indigenous Communities

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Letter to Delegates

Co-Chair: Fabian Garcia

Dear Delegates,

Hey Y'all, and welcome to the Fourth Committee! My name is Fabian Garcia, and I am very excited to be able to chair this year's T&TMUN. I am a senior at The Preuss School UCSD and have been involved with MUN since the 9th grade.

As well as my dedication to MUN, I am very dedicated to numerous other clubs, hobbies, etc. I am the president of my school's Black Student Union. I am also a proud advocate and happily involved in our school's Spanish National Honors Society, National Honor Society, School Board, ASB, and even School Site Council. In addition, I am on the track and field team, and I also enjoy working out at the gym and generally throwing large heavy spheres (shotput) in my free time. I play lots of video games (FPS and story-based), listen to music, and spend time with my family. As mentioned, I have been dedicated to MUN through conferences such as MUN, PHMUN, many T&T MUN events, and much more :), serving as both the passionate delegate and the authoritative chair (also very much passionate).

Wrapping this up, I can't wait to see and meet those who are reading this. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at fdgarcia@preuss.ucsd.edu. Take care and good luck!

Best Regards,

Fabian Garcia.

Co-Chair: Mahlet Mekasha

Dear Delegates,

My name is Mahlet Mekasha, and I'm thrilled to serve as your Head Chair for the Fourth Committee this year. As a returning staff member and a Senior at The Preuss School UCSD, I've had the privilege of growing with Model UN and gaining valuable experience.

Beyond MUN, I'm passionate about squash, community service, and exploring diverse extracurricular activities. I believe that getting involved early can open doors to countless opportunities. My 9th-grade involvement in MUN sparked my interest in global issues and inspired me to pursue a leadership role.

My MUN journey began by representing China in the ECOSOC Committee at JMUN. Despite the initial intimidation of representing a major power, I found my voice through research, debate, and the support of my peers. This experience ignited my passion for MUN, leading me to attend and chair multiple conferences.

Remember, we're here to support you every step of the way. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. I'm excited to witness your creativity, passion, and contributions to the Fourth Committee.

Wishing you a successful and enriching conference,

Mahlet Mekasha

Key Terms

1. **A.I. Methodology**: Various amounts of technologies that allow machines to mimic human intelligence, process data, and extract knowledge.

2. **Chatbot**: A software application/web interface that is designed to mimic human conversation through text or voice interactions.

3. **Digital Archives**: Preserves and stores digitized data, including documents, contracts, financial records, and customer data.

4. **Globalization**: The growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information.

5. **Morphemes**: A meaningful & morphological unit of a language that cannot be further divided.

6. **OBTranslate**: A deep learning, online CAT (computer-assisted translation) tool, neural machine translation (NMT), and artificial intelligence platform for languages.

7. **Polysynthetic Languages**: Languages in which words are composed of many morphemes.

8. **Repository**: A place, building, or receptacle where things are or may be stored.

9. **Revitalize**: To inspire something with a new life or form.

10. **TensorFlow**: A free and open-source software library for machine learning and artificial intelligence.

Committee Background

The Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly was established in 1946 to address decolonization and Non-Self-Governing Territories. Its primary mandate includes examining the situation in these territories, considering information transmitted by administering Powers, encouraging cooperation between administering Powers and the United Nations, and promoting the self-determination of peoples. Over the years, the Fourth Committee has played a crucial role in supporting the independence of numerous territories. However, its work has also evolved to address broader issues related to decolonization, such as human rights in Non-Self-Governing Territories, economic development and sustainable development, environmental protection, and security and conflict resolution. While the Committee has achieved significant progress, challenges remain, including ongoing disputes over territorial sovereignty, limited access to Non-Self-Governing Territories, lack of resources for development and self-determination, and the impact of climate change on vulnerable island territories. The Fourth Committee continues to be a vital platform for addressing these issues and advancing the cause of decolonization and self-determination.

Topic Background

Indigenous languages are facing unprecedented threats due to globalization, cultural assimilation, and the decline of traditional ways of life. As David Crystal, a renowned linguist, has observed, "Languages are not just tools of communication; they are repositories of cultural identity and knowledge." The loss of indigenous languages can lead to a significant erosion of cultural heritage and limit the adaptability of communities to changing circumstances. In light of these challenges, Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers a promising approach to language preservation. AI-powered technologies can document and archive endangered languages, create language learning resources, and facilitate cross-linguistic communication. However, the use of AI in this context raises essential ethical and practical considerations, such as preventing cultural appropriation and ensuring that Indigenous communities retain control over their data and cultural heritage.

One key challenge in this endeavor is data scarcity. Many indigenous languages have limited digital resources, making it difficult to build comprehensive AI applications. AI can address this by collecting and analyzing data from various sources, including recordings, texts, and cultural artifacts, to create a more robust digital presence for these languages. Another critical factor is cultural sensitivity; AI models must be designed to respect indigenous traditions and avoid perpetuating stereotypes or biases. This requires close collaboration with indigenous communities to ensure that AI models are both culturally respectful and accurate. Additionally, community engagement is essential for successful language preservation, as strong collaboration

between AI researchers and indigenous communities empowers these groups to document and revitalize their languages with tools and resources tailored to their needs.

The urgency of this preservation is underscored by compelling statistics. UNESCO estimates that over 400 indigenous languages are at risk of extinction within the next century. National Geographic further highlights the alarming rate of language loss, reporting that one language disappears approximately every two weeks. Of the roughly 7,000 languages spoken globally today, Ethnologue estimates that over half are indigenous, yet United Nations data shows that indigenous peoples represent only 5% of the world's population. This linguistic diversity, however, remains critical to the world's cultural fabric, as indigenous languages make up 70% of the world's languages.

AI brings numerous potential benefits to the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures. For instance, AI's capabilities in documentation and archiving, through speech recognition and natural language processing, help capture and safeguard endangered languages. Language revitalization is another area where AI shines, as AI-powered language learning tools provide engaging, personalized experiences that can bring a language back into use among younger generations. AI also facilitates translation between indigenous and widely spoken languages, making it easier for people around the world to learn and engage with indigenous cultures. Furthermore, AI has potential applications beyond language, as it can help preserve other aspects of indigenous heritage, including traditional crafts, art, and music.

By addressing these challenges thoughtfully and leveraging the opportunities presented by AI, the survival and revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures for future generations can be ensured.

UN Involvement

UN Involvement in AI for Indigenous Language Preservation

The United Nations has played a significant role in advocating for the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures. The UN has collaborated with numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on indigenous language preservation to explore the potential of AI. The Indigenous Language Institute (ILI) has partnered with AI researchers to develop language learning tools and resources for indigenous communities. Mozilla Foundation has supported projects aimed at promoting indigenous language technology and digital literacy. The AI for Good Foundation has organized initiatives to explore the ethical and responsible use of AI for social good, including indigenous language preservation.

In addition to collaborating with NGOs, the UN has also launched initiatives and adopted resolutions related to indigenous languages and technology. The International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) aims to raise awareness of the importance of indigenous languages and promote their revitalization. UNESCO has been working to promote the use of technology for indigenous language preservation, including through the development of language learning resources and online platforms. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms the rights of indigenous peoples

to their languages and cultures, providing a framework for the use of technology to support these rights.

While the UN has made significant progress in supporting indigenous language preservation, there is still much to be done. The Fourth Committee can play a role in advocating for increased UN involvement in this area, by encouraging collaboration between indigenous communities, AI researchers, and international organizations, providing financial support for AI projects that benefit indigenous languages, and developing ethical guidelines for the use of AI in indigenous language preservation. By taking these steps, the UN can help to ensure that AI is used effectively and responsibly to support the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures.

Timeline

- **1990:** The Universal Unicode Standard initiative was established, unfortunately resulting in it being ineffective and insufficient.

- **2022-2023:** Declared the International Decade of Indigenous Languages by the United Nations

- **2024:** The initiative of this topic was pushed and presented at the UNESCO World Conference and Arts Education on February 14, 2024.

- **Current:** The U.N. Is currently taking steps to regulate A.I. and ensure its security before utilizing it by any means, however, the Missing Scripts Program is currently fighting to preserve the indigenous languages with the aid of the digital sphere.

Questions to Consider

1) What is your country's stand on the usage of Artificial Intelligence?

2) Has any regulatory action been taken in place to control the usage of Artificial Intelligence?

3) What considers a language to be Indigenous or even endangered?

4) Does your country take part in the effort to preserve indigenous languages that are currently endangered?

5) How can the usage of artificial intelligence in this scenario benefit your country and the languages that might be endangered or soon to be extinct?

6) Does your country have any prominent indigenous groups that require immediate and necessary preservation?

7) Would this be ethical by any means in your country?

8) Would preserving the languages of these indigenous cultures be efficient in any other method?

9) How can someone access artificial intelligence?

10) A) If permitted, how will your country manage the usage of artificial intelligence in the lives of the people and society to the benefit of preserving the indigenous languages?
B) If not permitted, how will your country prevent the usage of artificial intelligence in the lives of the people in need of language preservation and society as a whole? Will there be anyone permitted to use artificial intelligence at all?

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