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Language Hotspots Map

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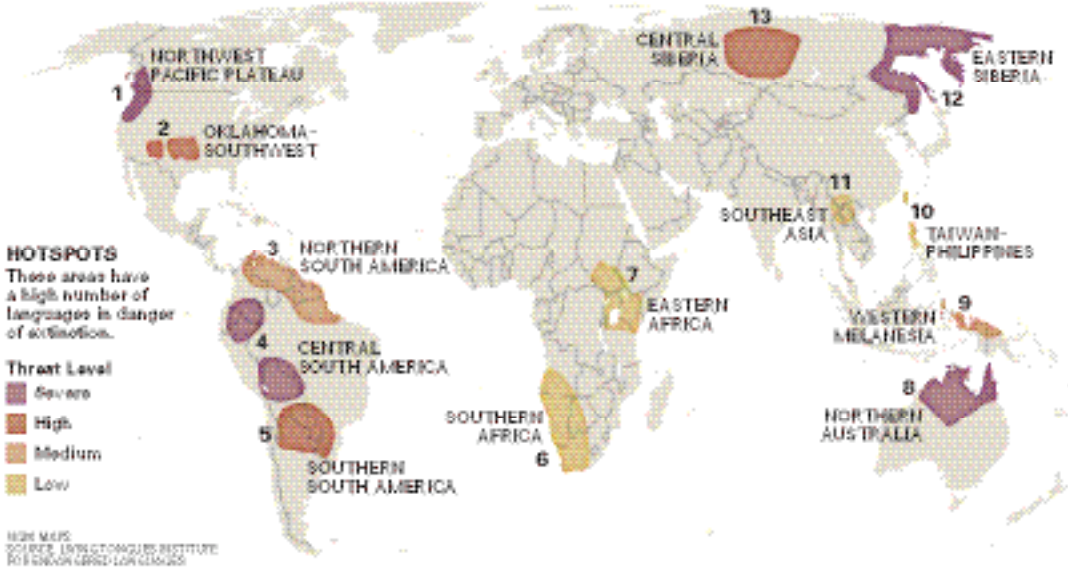
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A World Loses Its Tongues

About every two weeks another language dies, taking millennia of human knowledge and history with it.



GOING SILENT

Falling numbers of speakers endanger these languages and many others.

- 1 Northwest Pacific Plateau**
Ktunaxa 10 speakers
Siletz Dee-ni 5
South Haida 10
- 2 Oklahoma-Southwest**
Cahuilla 20
Mohave 7
Wichita 3
- 3 Northern South America**
Tinigua 2
Totoro 5
Zaparo 5
- 4 Central South America**
Muniche 5
Taushiro 1
Uru 1
- 5 Southern South America**
Guató 50
Ofaye 20
Vilela 2
- 6 Southern Africa**
Nlu ("l" is a click) 8
Tswapong 2,000
Xiri 85



In her traditional Monchak language, this western Mongolian grandmother (above) has no word for "grandson" but several for goats with different colors or markings. That richness of vocabulary is typical of herders. She is one of the last speakers of the ancient tongue. Her grandson knows only Mongolian; within his lifetime, Monchak will be extinct. The Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages is working with National Geographic's Enduring Voices Project to map linguistic hotspots so resources can be directed to record fading languages and help those that can be saved. —A. R. Williams

- 7 Eastern Africa**
Ngasa 300
Nindi 100
Omotik 50
- 8 Northern Australia**
Gurdanji 5
Mati Ke 10
Nyikina 50
- 9 Western Melanesia**
Piru 10
Usku 25
Woria 10
- 10 Taiwan-Philippines**
Arta 5
Babuza 5
Pazeh 1
- 11 Southeast Asia**
Arem 40
Buxinhua 200
Red Gelao 20
- 12 Eastern Siberia**
Medny Aleut 20
Orok 20
Tundra Yukaghir 50
- 13 Central Siberia**
Enets 50
Os 15
South Selkup 20