



ALABAMA MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE XII

**UNESCO**

Update Paper



**Topic A:**  
**The Impacts of Artificial Intelligence on the**  
**International Community**



Artificial intelligence is a technology that has the possibility to change at any given time, and one new advancement could change the field of AI as a whole. There are updates to the ongoing research on an almost daily basis. This constant influx of research and innovation can make it hard to keep up with the field as a whole. Many of the new breakthroughs and discoveries can be put into a handful of different topic areas, such as: machine learning, reinforcement learning, robotics, natural language processing, and recommender systems. All of these different categories are important for the use and implementation of AI within the international community, as well as in the pursuit of the sustainable development goals. Within this committee we are focusing on how AI can be used to help international cooperation, how to ensure the future and ongoing developments of AI are beneficial to the entire international community, as well as making sure the development of the technologies is done with respect to global norms.

Within the field of machine learning, there is a lot of advancement and research being done within many scientific jurisdictions, including subjects such as physics, biology, psychology, neuroscience, math, and many more disciplines. Updates within the field of machine learning can be vast and differ in topics, but there are many discoveries that have come to light recently. On 09 January, 2020 a study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that computers using machine learning that have been known to ‘fall short’ for some conditions or populations, has found ways to further improve the performance of these computers. Another recent finding from 14 November, 2019 is that it has been observed that computers and machines are more successful than

humans in certain human-machine interactions if the machines are allowed to hide their non-human identity.

Reinforcement learning is described as Reinforcement learning is an area of machine learning concerned with how software agents ought to take actions in an environment in order to maximize some notion of cumulative reward. Within this field of study in the artificial intelligence research community there have been many advances recently. One of these advancements comes from Elon Musk himself, with a program he calls OpenAI, and its ‘Safety Gym,” which is described as ‘a suite of environments and tools for measuring progress towards reinforcement learning agents that respect safety constraints while training.’

Robotics is a very widely known field as well as it being a field with a variety of different uses and types of research. Robotics based within the field of AI has grown immensely in recent years allowing for amazing innovation and many uses within society as a whole. Reinforcement learning, while not being the most vital to discussion within our committee, is still a very important component within the field as a whole. This is because it helps to add accuracy to the machines and the algorithms themselves. The more a technology is able to practice its required task the better it will be at actually performing the task when asked to do so.

Natural language processing can also be instrumental within the subject, this being that a computer being able to process a language and translate it to another language can also lead to helping to bridge the gap between cultures. This is important in understanding how we can use AI in a way that is helpful for all. All of these sub categories are important for understanding, though for our purposes machine learning, because it is what the background guide focuses on, but knowing and understanding the basis of the other categories is very important.

## Topic B:

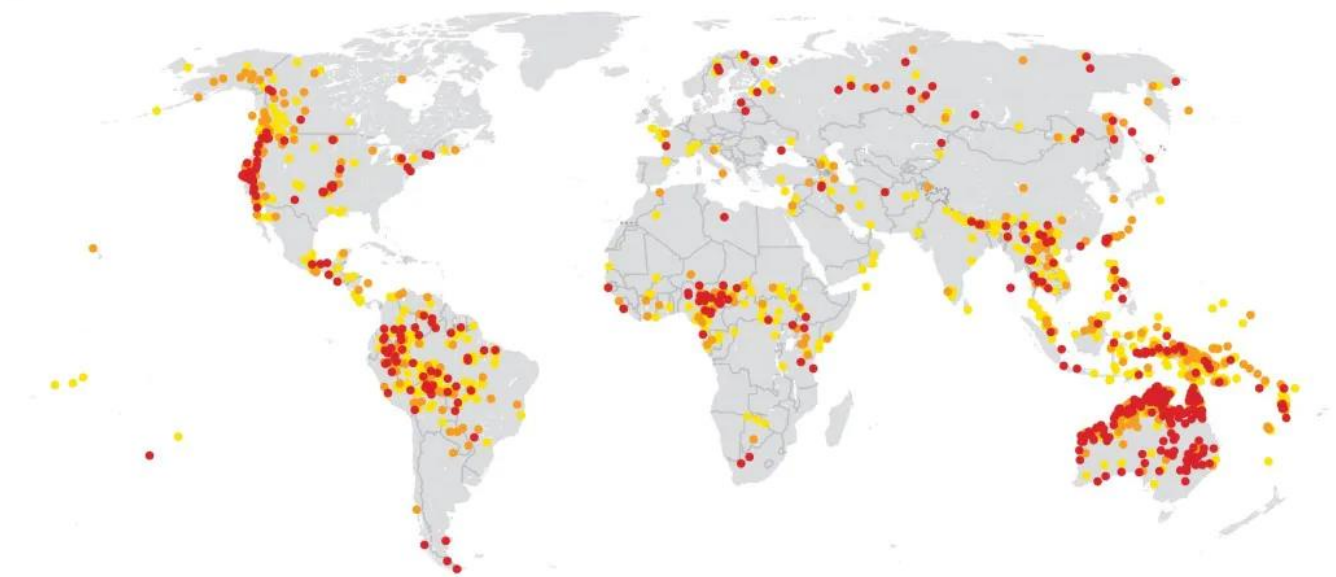
# Preservation of Endangered Languages

### *A Closer Look at the Language Policy of Mexico*

As briefly discussed in the background guide, Latin America has a high level of linguistic diversity; unfortunately, many of its lesser-known languages, in large part indigenous languages, are at risk of extinction. The map below, a joint effort by the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity and UNESCO, shows the higher number of critically endangered, seriously endangered, or endangered languages in Central and South America.

#### **At-risk languages**

● Critically endangered    ● Seriously endangered    ● Endangered



Sources: Alliance for Linguistic Diversity, UNESCO  
GENE THORP AND KEVIN SCHAUL/THE WASHINGTON POST

A world map indicating the location of endangered languages.

Especially when compared to the continents of Asia and Africa, which both boast a higher total number of languages, Central and South America's languages experience greater danger. Note that this second graph refers to the number of living languages in the Americas, including North

America, as well as Central and South. Mexico in particular has been referred to as “one of the 10 most linguistically diverse nations in the world,” where potentially over seven million speak one of 68 different identified indigenous languages. Languages among and beyond these 68 are either endangered or at least considered to be at risk, such as the language Ayapenaco, with two speakers, or Kiliwa with just 36.



This map shows generally where each language family is spoken.

Mexico’s language policy does provide some support for the country’s many concurrent cultures. Notably, it enforces “the Law of Linguistic Rights” which recognized 68 major indigenous languages as “joint official languages” in addition to Spanish, and as official languages, required government documents to be translated into each and for speakers of those languages to be able to receive “legal advice in their native tongue.” Though Mexico has faltered at times in enforcing this

law, its recognition of so many indigenous languages and their prevalence throughout the country is significant in preserving those languages' vitality. As the background guide diagrammed, the availability of materials and documentation of a language and governmental attitude towards it are major factors in language vitality, both of which the Law of Linguistic Rights supports for the indigenous languages named. This is in sharp contrast to the twentieth century, during which indigenous languages were banned from schools.

Even more recent changes bode well for the encouragement of the use of indigenous languages in Mexico. In the state of Yucatan, the Mayan language is taught alongside Spanish, recognizing the importance of the Mayan people to the area. Also, the Mexican government has significantly increased the number of languages for which the Federal Institute for Public Defense can offer legal counsel in--from 39 to 103. Not only is this a huge increase, but this effort also addresses a historical fault: for decades, people who did not speak Spanish faced significantly more hardship in the judicial system, often more likely to be convicted or denied legal counsel (since they could not communicate with the Spanish-speaking lawyers). The Mexican government has announced that this is not the end of their effort to provide comprehensive legal counsel, either; their ultimate goal is to "cover all the languages spoken in Mexico," a number that hovers somewhere around 360.

As they prepare for debate, delegates should consider how contemporary Mexico seeks to address not only the current state of its faltering linguistic diversity, but how the country seeks to make up for wrongs perpetrated against non-Spanish speakers historically. Resolutions should address not only how, when, or where to save endangered languages, but also how to address the historical, political, or social history that accompanies environments in which languages begin to die. Mexico, with its long history of various kinds of linguistic imperialism, as well as its incredible linguistic diversity, faces many challenges in its attempt to preserve indigenous languages. Delegates can learn from the failures Mexico has experienced, its successes, and what work remains to be done.