Knowledge and Language: Lingua Franca

Lesson 2: Fact-Finding Task

Focus: *Does the dominance of a language shape what is visible and valued on the internet?*

Objectives	● **Investigate real-world case studies that illustrate how language impacts the visibility, credibility, and accessibility of knowledge online.** ● **Substantiate or challenge the claims from Lesson 1 using evidence from media articles, video interviews, and platform case examples.** ● **Develop critical thinking and source evaluation skills by connecting practical examples to abstract knowledge questions.**

Homework Preparation Task	**Case Study Task**
	● Discussion Prompt: *Does the dominance of a language shape what is visible and valued on the internet?*
	● Divide students into small groups and assign each group a case study related to the topic. Suggestions are listed below. Students will add their evidence to the Kialo discussion from Lesson 1.
	
	Each group will:
	● Reflect on how these cases connect to the concepts discussed in Lesson 1.
	● Explore their assigned case using the provided resource and their own research.
	● Prepare a short presentation (5–10 mins) responding to the following question:
	    ○ How does language affect visibility, credibility, or accessibility of knowledge in this case?
	● Students should include details of:
	    ○ What happened in the case.
	    ○ How language influenced what knowledge was visible or valued.
	    ○ Which TOK concept (power, culture, or perspective) is most relevant.
	    ○ Whether the case supports or challenges a claim from Lesson 1.
	
	Case Study Options
	1. **Wikipedia's Language Divide**
	● Focus: The manipulation of smaller Wikipedia editions.
	● Task: Examine how language communities shape the knowledge that is presented and trusted.
	● Resource: [Undark: Wikipedia Has a Language Problem. Here's How to Fix It](#)
	
	2. **Latin America – Invisible Science in Global Media**
	● Focus: The underrepresentation of Latin American scientists in English-speaking media.
	● Task: Examine why knowledge produced in non-dominant languages is often undervalued or unseen globally.
	● Resource: [The Open Notebook: Invisible Science – Why Are Latin American Science Stories Absent in European and U.S. Media?](#)
	
	3. **Facebook Mistranslation and Content Moderation**
	● Focus: The impact of translation systems and moderation policies on the transfer of knowledge.
	● Task: Examine the impact of automated systems and bias policies on the understanding of cultural and linguistic nuance.
	● Resource: [The Guardian: Facebook Translation Fail Leads to Arrest](#)
	
	4. **Language Infrastructures and the Future of the Internet**
	● Focus: The way language influences not just content, but the systems that build and deliver knowledge online.
	● Task: Examine the potential impact of linguistic "bubbles" online.
	● Resource: [YouTube: Will technology end the English Language's global domination?](#)

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Activities	**1. Introduction (5 mins)**
	● Recap Lesson 1:
	    ○ Review key arguments from the previous debate on the guiding question: "*Does the dominance of a language shape what is visible and valued on the internet?*"
	● Quick group reflection:
	    ○ What claims did you find most convincing or most problematic in last class's debate?
	    ○ Were there any claims that felt hard to prove or lacked real-world examples?
	● Present the task's central question:
	    ○ Does the dominance of a language shape what is visible and valued on the internet?
	● The emphasis is on applying power, culture, and perspective to evaluate how language shapes digital knowledge.
	
	2. Bridge to Lesson 2
	● Explain that students will now investigate how real-world language practices, policies, and technologies (e.g., translation tools, media coverage, platform design) influence what becomes visible or credible online.
	● Clarify that the goal is to move from opinion to evidence. These case studies are not about language in theory — they're about who gets heard, trusted, or erased online because of language.
	
	3. Presentations (30 mins)
	● Students present their case studies to the class.
	● Students should take note of any useful points from other groups' presentations to use in the Kialo discussion.
	
	4. Recording Findings in a Kialo Discussion (20 mins)
	● Students return to the Kialo discussion from Lesson 1 and:
	    ○ Add at least one new claim or counterclaim based on their case study.
	    ○ Reply to at least one peer's argument, using insights from another group's case.
	    ○ Label their post with the relevant TOK concept (e.g., perspective — Arabic content suppression).
	
	● **Focus areas for Kialo updates:**
	    ○ Digital gatekeeping: Who controls which languages/platforms dominate?
	    ○ Cultural framing: How do translation and language communities shape meaning?
	    ○ Linguistic inequality: Are all languages and their speakers equally represented or trusted online?

Reflection Questions	**Reflection (10 mins):** Discuss the following reflection questions in open discussion or exit ticket format: ● How did the case studies challenge or deepen your understanding of how language influences what we see, trust, or ignore online? ● Whose knowledge or perspective was missing, silenced, or distorted in the examples you explored — and why might that matter? ● Can knowledge truly be global if it's shaped by a few dominant languages? What are the consequences for those outside that linguistic majority? ● How do language, culture, and power interact to determine which knowledge is made visible and which is hidden on the internet? ● What responsibilities do we have — as students, creators, or consumers of knowledge — to engage with linguistic diversity in digital spaces?
Resources	● Lesson Slides ● Kialo Discussion: [Does the dominance of a language shape what is visible and valued on the internet?](#)

TOK Concepts	● **Power:** To what extent does language determine who has the authority to create and disseminate knowledge in digital spaces? ● **Culture:** How does the cultural context embedded in language influence the way knowledge is understood and communicated? ● **Perspective:** In what ways do different languages shape distinct versions of reality, and how does this affect our understanding of truth?

Critical Thinking Concepts	● **Confronting Biases and Assumptions:**
	  ○ Challenging Linguistic Neutrality: Questioning the assumption that digital platforms or knowledge systems treat all languages equally.
	  ○ Identifying Hidden Power Structures: Recognizing how language dominance can reflect geopolitical, economic, or institutional power.
	● **Exploring Contexts:**
	  ○ Case-Specific Inquiry: Understanding how each case study reveals different relationships between language, knowledge, and power.
	  ○ Cultural Sensitivity: Examining how translation, moderation, and platform design reflect or erase cultural perspectives.
	● **Responsiveness and Flexibility of Thought:**
	  ○ Adapting Claims with Evidence: Revising or strengthening arguments based on real-world examples and counterexamples.
	  ○ Balancing Contradictions: Navigating how language can both expand access and create silos, depending on the context.