TRANSFER EXAM

Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literature, NTHU, June 19, 2024
Read the two passages below and answer the following essay questions.
<u>This test is 100-minute long.</u>

<u>PASSAGE ONE</u>

[This passage is extracted from the article entitled "**A language dies every 2 weeks. AI can help save them from digital extinction–or accelerate their demise**", published on the website <Fortune> on January 31, 2024].

Around the world, thousands of languages are in danger of going extinct. According to the United Nations, an indigenous language has been dying every two weeks. The loss to humanity is difficult to fathom. Languages are filled with unique ideas, concepts, and understandings that don't always translate since other languages simply don't have words for them. As linguist Anastasia Riehl put it, languages are not only a vital source of culture and identity for individual communities, but also benefit the world as "an invaluable source of information about human cognition."

A big part of what endangers indigenous languages is the shift into the digital age. One particularly concerning study by researcher András Kornai predicted that "less than 5% of all languages can still ascend to the digital realm," and warned that there is "evidence of a massive die-off caused by the digital divide."

As humanity carries out more and more of its communications through digital tools, languages that aren't carried or supported by dominant digital platforms are likely to be forgotten. Researchers have coined a term for this: "digitally disadvantaged languages."

Much of what excites people about generative AI is its ability to "understand" and replicate the ways humans talk to each other. It has a snowball effect. The more people use generative AI tools such ChatGPT and Bard, the better these tools become at understanding and replicating the language. Currently, they are only proficient in the languages that dominate the internet–especially English.

This presents a profound opportunity for linguists, technologists, and others who are working to move languages into the digital realm. Building generative AI tools for at-risk languages will give speakers a chance to teach AI how they speak their native tongues in natural conversations. AI tools will also improve translation and interpretation apps aimed at helping people communicate across different languages. The better the digital world understands and translates the intended meanings of phrases, idioms, and ideas, the more people will feel they can express themselves in their native languages.

One of the most pressing reasons to do all this is for business. There are talented people across the world who speak thousands of languages, and who currently cannot get jobs with many large corporations that may require English. With AI providing instant translations that capture ideas and nuances, people will be able to express themselves to colleagues who speak different languages without slowing down the pace of business.

Businesses will also be able to reach entire new markets of consumers. With AI technologies improving for phone cameras, people will be able to point their phones at any sign or product and

have it instantly translated into their native tongue. Today, most such apps translate fewer than 200 of the 7,000 languages spoken around the world.

Of course, this also means ensuring that more and more people have access to the Internet and AI tools. Currently about two-thirds of humanity, more than 5 billion people, are online. Building as many languages as possible into this new era of AI isn't just an opportunity, it's an imperative. If people looking to join the AI revolution find that their language precludes them from being a part of it, then they'll naturally let it go and move to a more dominant language. But if AI tools become home to everything from Hawaiian to Arhuaco to Siphuti, these languages can be saved before it's too late.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the author trying to say in this essay? Using your own words, summarize the essay in 150 words. (20%)
2. Do you agree or disagree with the authors' arguments? Why? Please explain your position in around 250~300 words. (30%)

PASSAGE TWO

William Butler Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

QUESTIONS

In this celebrated poem, the poet William Butler Yeats shows his affection for Innisfree, a small island in County Sligo, Ireland. While it may seem obvious that Innisfree is a favorable and desirable place for Yeats, discuss how you can tell that it is a good place in the poem. What is a good place, according to this poem? What distinguishes a good place from other places in the world? How does the good place appear, in terms of the physical senses, to the poet? How does the good place as it is perceived in the poem reflect the poet's fundamental values about human and social conditions? What do you think are the poet's fundamental values?(50%)