

Communicative English Language Skills II

Lecture 14

Reading & Speaking: Indigenous knowledge

Biniam Atnafe Beyene

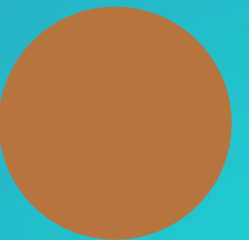
biniwaatnafe@gmail.com

LECTURE 14

Indigenous Knowledge

Reading & Speaking — Tradition · Heritage · Identity

Communicative English Language Skills II





Welcome to Lecture 14

- We've explored scientific life skills — today we examine a different kind of expertise.
- Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is a sophisticated, time-tested resource.
- It is the inheritance of land, language, and culture passed across generations.
- Today's question: Why are the 'old ways' often the most 'future-proof' ways?



Learning Objectives

- Define Indigenous Knowledge and explain its role in development.
- Explore the key concepts of tradition, heritage, and identity.
- Read and analyse Benjamin Mkapa's 'A Local Pathway to Global Development'.
- Practise reported speech and future forms in academic discussion.
- Speak confidently about local heritage in English.

Foundations: tradition, heritage, identity (the 3 key Concepts)

1

Tradition

Practical wisdom developed by communities over centuries- a local pathway to solutions.

2

Heritage

The past made present, land, language, music, monuments, and ways of living.

3

Identity

Who we are: shaped by our history, environment, and the values we choose to keep.

Warm-Up: Quick-Fire Round

ACTIVITY

10-Second Challenge

- Name ONE piece of advice your grandparents gave you about health or nature that you still believe today.
- Share it with the person beside you.
- Volunteers: share with the class.
- Listen for shared themes — food, weather, healing, the land.



Defining Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

- A unique resource for solving local problems and managing communal life.
- Deeply rooted in specific landscapes, climates, and regions.
- Developed and owned locally — ownership of development is never an issue.
- Lives in oral tradition, practice, ritual, and innovation.



Characteristics of Indigenous Knowledge

- Practical: built from observation, experience, and trial-and-error.
- Local: tuned to a particular environment and community.
- Oral: transmitted through stories, songs, and apprenticeship.
- Holistic: knowledge of land, health, and society are interconnected.
- Living: adapted continuously by each generation.

Indigenous Knowledge vs. Scientific Knowledge

Indigenous Knowledge

- Local and contextual
- Oral and experiential
- Holistic worldview
- Owned by the community
- Tested over centuries

Scientific Knowledge

- Universal in scope
- Written and codified
- Specialised by discipline
- Owned by institutions
- Tested by experiment

Vocabulary in Focus: 'Indigenous'

- Look at the word indigenous.
- Use what you know about prefixes and roots.
- What does it suggest about people, place, and origin?

ACTIVITY

Pair Discussion

- Predict the meaning with a partner (2 min).
- Compare with the dictionary definition.
- List two synonyms and one antonym.



Pre-Reading: Activate Your Thinking

- What is indigenous knowledge — in your own words?
- What community knowledge in your area is useful for development or medicine?
- Compared with scientific knowledge, what is your view of IK?
- Different countries claim to be the origin of human beings — what do you think?

Think · Pair · Share

ACTIVITY

Group Discussion (8 minutes)

- Form groups of 4–5 students.
- Discuss the four pre-reading questions in turn.
- Each group appoints a recorder for key points.
- Identify your most interesting insight to share with the class.

The Cradle of Mankind



From Laetoli to Lucy: our shared origin

- Paleontologists found 3.5-million-year-old footprints near Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania.
- In Ethiopia's Afar region, the skeleton 'Lucy' (Dinknesh) dates back 3.2 million years.
- The Middle Awash is a six-million-year window into our species' history.
- Our identity is not only who we are today — it is the journey from there to here.



A Six-Million-Year Story

6M+

years of human heritage in the Horn
of Africa

- Footprints, fossils, and tools document a continuous record.
- Ethiopia and Tanzania are global windows into human origins.
- These finds connect biology, culture, and identity.

“



Heritage is the past made present.

— P. J. Welch

Speaking Drill: Lucy & Laetoli

ACTIVITY

Pair Work (5 minutes)

- Student A: Explain the importance of Lucy (Dinknesh).
- Student B: Explain why the Laetoli footprints matter to our shared heritage.
- Swap and improve each other's explanation.
- Use full sentences and academic vocabulary.

PART 3

Tradition

A resource, not an obstacle





Tradition as a Resource

- Often dismissed as 'old wives' tales' or a hindrance to progress.
- In reality, tradition answers local needs and daily challenges.
- It is a 'local pathway' — a road built by generations who tested what works.
- Tradition is highly functional, not merely sentimental.

“



We have overlooked the potential of the knowledge developed by families and communities for centuries.

— Benjamin Mkapa, former President of Tanzania

Future Planning Task

- Scenario: A community plans a new irrigation system.
- How can traditional knowledge of the river meet modern engineering?
- Use future forms: will, going to, plan to.

ACTIVITY

Draft a Three-Step Plan

- Step 1: Consult elders on river history.
- Step 2: Combine local data with engineering survey.
- Step 3: Propose a hybrid design and timeline.

PART 4

Mkapa's Argument

Reading 'A Local Pathway to Global Development'





Reading Strategy: Skim for Gist

- Skimming = reading quickly to grasp the main idea.
- Look at the title, first paragraph, and topic sentences.
- Predict the author's stance before close reading.
- Question to hold in mind: replacement or partnership?



Mkapa's Central Thesis

- Science and technology alone cannot solve crises like hunger or HIV/AIDS.
- Indigenous knowledge offers proven, low-cost, locally-owned solutions.
- The way forward is partnership — not replacement of one by the other.
- Development must be led by those who live the problem.

Scanning Drill: 60 Seconds

ACTIVITY

Find the Evidence

- Scan the text quickly — do not read every word.
- Find **THREE** countries where IK has improved health or education.
- Note the page or paragraph where you found each one.
- Compare answers with a partner.

Indigenous Knowledge in Action

Country	Indigenous Practice	Outcome
India	Traditional water harvesting	Restored village agriculture
Senegal	Local farming calendars	Improved food security
Uganda	Traditional birth practices	Reduced maternal mortality
Tanzania	Herbal therapies for HIV/AIDS	Improved patient wellbeing
Mozambique	Community resource management	Sustainable land use

PART 5

Heritage

The past made present





Heritage: The Past Made Present

- Heritage is anything valued today that was also valued by past generations.
- It includes land, language, music, food, and ecosystems.
- It is a guide for what is meaningful and what is right.
- It is the gift we accept from those who came before us.

Tangible vs. Intangible Heritage

Tangible Heritage

- Lalibela rock-hewn churches
- Aksum stelae and obelisks
- The Olduvai footprints
- Traditional dwellings
- Crafts and textiles

Intangible Heritage

- Oromo Irecha celebration
- Timket (Epiphany)
- Fichee Chambalala (Sidama new year)
- Coffee ceremony
- Folktales, proverbs, music

Categorization Activity

ACTIVITY

List Heritage in Ethiopia

- List THREE tangible heritages found in Ethiopia.
- List THREE intangible heritages.
- Explain why each item matters to identity.
- Share your list with another pair.

PART 6

Science vs. Tradition

Proof, evidence, and the right kind of question



Science vs. Indigenous Knowledge: The Debate

- Scientists often demand experimental proof.
- Communities point to centuries of lived results.
- For people in crisis, IK is not anecdote — it is reality.
- The question: does a practice need a lab report to be true?



Case in Point: HIV/AIDS in Tanzania

- Many patients had no access to antiviral drugs.
- Local herbal therapies improved quality of life.
- Waiting only for scientific proof would have cost lives.
- Lesson: pragmatic partnership saves lives.

Role Play: Scientist & Elder

ACTIVITY

Pair Debate (8 minutes)

- Student A — Modern Scientist: argue for laboratory evidence.
- Student B — Community Elder: argue for inherited practice.
- Find a treatment plan that uses both 'toolkits'.
- Report your shared solution to the class.

PART 7

Case Study: Dr. Aklilu Lemma

When local knowledge becomes a global solution





Dr. Aklilu Lemma & the Endod Plant

- Ethiopian scientist Dr. Aklilu Lemma observed women using endod (soapberry) to wash clothes.
- He noticed snails dying in the soapy water — snails that spread bilharzia.
- Local knowledge + scientific testing = a low-cost treatment for a deadly disease.
- A model of how IK and science can work together.

Lessons from the Endod Story

1

Observe

Notice the wisdom already at work in daily community life.

2

Test

Use scientific method to verify, refine, and document.

3

Share

Return benefits to the community that held the knowledge first.

PART 8

Vocabulary & Grammar

Language for academic discussion



Vocabulary: Words & Their Opposites

Word

- Indigenous
- Tradition
- Tangible
- Sustainable
- Empower

Opposite

- Foreign
- Innovation
- Intangible
- Unsustainable
- Disempower



Grammar Review: Reported Speech

- We use reported speech to share what others have said.
- Direct: The elder said, "I know about herbal medicines."
- Reported: The elder said that he knew about herbal medicines.
- Tense usually shifts back: present → past, will → would, can → could.

Reported Speech: Common Shifts

Direct Speech	Reported Speech	Change
"I am tired."	She said she was tired.	am → was
"We will integrate IK."	He said they would integrate IK.	will → would
"I can do it."	She said she could do it.	can → could
"What will you choose?"	They asked what I would choose.	Question form
"I have lost my voice."	He said he had lost his voice.	have → had

Practice: Convert to Reported Speech



- "Indigenous knowledge will save communities," the minister announced.
- "I don't even like being on a balcony," Maria said.
- "We are integrating local wisdom," the planner explained.
- Write your own example based on something an elder once said.

ACTIVITY

Pair Conversion

- Convert each sentence with a partner.
- Check tense, pronouns, and time words.
- Share one transformation with the class.

Future Forms for Predictions & Plans

1

Will

Predictions and on-the-spot decisions:
'IK will shape future development.'

2

Going to

Plans and intentions:
'Communities are going to lead this work.'

3

Present continuous

Fixed arrangements:
'We are meeting elders next week.'

Mini-Debate: Speed vs. Sustainability

ACTIVITY

Groups of Four

- Two students argue for the SPEED of science.
- Two students argue for the SUSTAINABILITY of indigenous knowledge.
- Each side must use at least one future form.
- Each side must use at least one reported speech sentence.

PART 9

Protecting Our Heritage

From rights to action





Indigenous Heritage: A Right to Manage

- All peoples have an inalienable right to manage their heritage.
- Indigenous communities were denied this right for generations.
- Sustainable development depends on community ownership.
- True empowerment is always self-empowerment.



Cultural Tourism: Telling Our Story

- Heritage sites attract visitors and support local economies.
- Ethiopia's Historic Route: Aksum, Lalibela, Gondar, Harar.
- Living festivals: Irecha, Timket, Fichee Chambalala.
- Marketing must respect, preserve, and benefit the community.

Marketing the Historic Route

ACTIVITY

Group Strategy

- You are the Ethiopian Tourism marketing team.
- Propose THREE strategies to attract responsible visitors.
- Use future forms: 'We will...' / 'We are going to...'
- Present your strategy in 2 minutes.

Recap & Assignment

- Recap: tradition and heritage shape identity and development.
- Skills practised: skimming, scanning, reported speech, future forms, debate.

ASSIGNMENT

The Heritage and Healing Report

- Interview one elder about a local practice.
- Write 400 words using reported speech and future forms.
- Prepare a 2-minute summary to present next class.

You are the master of your destiny.

Take ownership of your knowledge — or it will be left behind.

———— Thank You

Questions, ideas, and reflections are warmly welcomed.

CONTACT

biniwaatnafe@gmail.com · Office Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri mornings

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