

Brazil and its Languages: Language Policy and Immigrant Minorities

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Language policy is a key factor in minority language maintenance; this is the reason why this conference paper overviews the Brazilian language policy changes from the 19th century to the present time. As a result of the positive changes of the 20th century, the preservation of all traditional languages becomes preferred and desired, as part of the Brazilian cultural diversity. This study summarizes the current situation of national minority groups and presents a few positive examples of language maintenance or revitalization projects. The analysis of the case of the Hungarian minority is based upon participant observation and 16 semi-structured qualitative interviews (expert sample), that have been prepared among community leaders, Hungarian language teachers, and 25 Hungarians (first, second and third generation) in Brazil. The results summarize the positive effects of the measures taken in the past decade, which were initiated by the Hungarian government. However, comparing these measures with the international best practices, it is recognizable that in order to offset the effect of the decreased number of language use domains (1 from 5), a greater amount of targeted institutional support and education is required. Although the Hungarian language has been preserved for more than five generations in Brazil, it still shows an endangered status by Fishman's (1972) language use domain theory.

Keywords: Brazil, Language policy, Minority languages, Language maintenance, Domains of language use

Abstract in Spanish or Hungarian (Presentation Language)

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