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Training indigenous people as teachers and researchers

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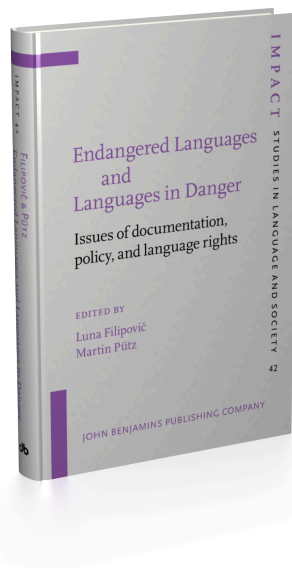
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Indigenous language policies in Brazil

Training indigenous people as teachers and researchers

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In this chapter we outline the historical background of Brazilian language policies that are meant to be supportive of Brazilian indigenous languages and discuss some positive and negative impacts of national programmes developed under these policies. We single out the official programmes relating to indigenous education, language planning and language description and documentation, and ways in which they might help to assure the survival and vitality of Brazil's indigenous languages. We also draw attention to official support for directing these positive initiatives towards an effective strengthening of indigenous languages and cultures in collaboration with indigenous peoples and in the context of self-determination and empowerment.

Keywords: documentation, indigenous education, indigenous languages of Brazil, language description, language planning, linguistic policies

1. Introduction

Brazil is the South American country with the richest linguistic diversity. Excluding Libras, other sign languages and Brazilian Portuguese, there are approximately 220 languages, comprising immigrant languages and indigenous languages and their variants (Rodrigues 2012). We have to add the possible existence of at least 40 more indigenous languages which are spoken by isolated communities who have not yet experienced any contact with present day outsiders that have been ignored in statistics concerning extant Brazilian indigenous languages. Most of the indigenous languages in Brazil are seriously endangered, either because their use presents symptoms of progressive decline, such as reduction in the contexts

of use, or because they are no longer being transmitted to new generations. This is a consequence of many years of assimilationist policies promoted by the Brazilian Federal government, whose goal until recently had been the integration of the so-called minority indigenous communities into the dominant Brazilian society, discouraging and suppressing thousands of years of linguistic diversity and indigenous knowledge.

The last thirty years, however, have seen remarkable advances in the scenario of linguistic policies concerning indigenous languages. These include an increase in linguistic description and documentation of these languages; an increasing number of doctoral and master's dissertations on indigenous languages; increased financial support from governmental agencies for linguistic studies of indigenous languages. Most importantly, policies have been implemented for the promotion of indigenous intercultural education, as well as the inclusion of indigenous students in undergraduate and graduate programmes by means of quota policies. A new program, The National Inventory of Indigenous Languages (an initiative of the Ministry of Culture) also reflects a positive governmental approach to safeguarding indigenous languages and cultures.

In this chapter, we shall (i) briefly outline the historical background of Brazilian language policies meant to be supportive of indigenous languages; (ii) discuss some positive and negative impacts of national programmes developed under these policies. Our main focus here is on the official programmes concerning indigenous education, language planning and language description and documentation, and how they may help to assure the survival and vitality of indigenous languages of Brazil. We shall call attention to the kind of official political support necessary to direct these positive initiatives towards a more effective strengthening of indigenous languages and cultures in partnership with the indigenous peoples in their movements for self-determination and empowerment.

2. A brief account of the last thirty years of indigenous languages research and documentation

The linguistic description and documentation of Brazilian indigenous languages started some thirty years ago. In 1986, the Brazilian linguist Aryon Dall'Igna Rodrigues, in association with Dr. Marisa Cassim, a technical adviser of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), created the *Programa de Pesquisa Científica das Línguas Indígenas Brasileiras* (PPCLIB: Scientific Research Program of Brazilian Indigenous Languages), the first official program supporting graduate studies, field work research and documentation of Brazilian indigenous languages. This program was the first step in the legitimization of

public policies recognizing the importance of the linguistic study and documentation of indigenous languages of Brazil. The PPCLIB provided: (i) delivery of four short courses preparing students of linguistics for the scientific study of Brazilian indigenous languages; (ii) the granting of fellowships for graduate studies abroad focusing on the description and documentation of Brazilian indigenous languages; (iii) the granting of fellowships for masters' students in Brazilian universities for the purpose of scientific research and documentation of Brazilian indigenous languages;¹ and (iv) funding for field work on indigenous languages. The proposal setting out the CNPq policies took into consideration the inventory made by Rodrigues (1985, 1986) summarizing the number of extant Brazilian languages, their importance and the urgent need of developing their linguistic study and documentation. One of the most significant research projects benefiting from the PPCLIB, coordinated by the linguist Lucy Seki, aimed at the description and documentation of Xingu languages such as *Trumai*, *Awetí*, *Suyá*, *Kamaiurá* and *Jurúna*. The efforts of Aryon Dall'Igna Rodrigues and Marisa Cassim also secured the appointment of a linguist at the Goeldi Museum in Belem. The PPCLIB became the most important program ever of scientific research on Brazilian indigenous languages.

Although the PPCLIB was suspended in 1990, these initiatives generated fruitful results. Indigenous languages entered the list of scientific fields funded by CNPq; and at the research training agency CAPES, indigenous languages became an official field of graduate studies. As a consequence, linguistic studies of Brazilian indigenous languages proliferated in graduate programmes in different parts of Brazil: (the Federal Universities of Pará, Pernambuco, Alagoas and Santa Catarina, and the University of Brasília.

Another program of fundamental importance in the development of Brazilian policies regarding indigenous languages and cultures was the *Projeto Interação* (Interaction Project) (1983–1989). It was carried out by the *Pró-Memória* National Foundation, a now defunct Department of the *Instituto do Patrimônio*

1. Amongst the positive results of the PPCLIB is the number of students that finished their PhD abroad, between 1989 and 2004: Filomena Sândalo, *A Grammar of Kadiwéu* 1995, University of Pittsburgh, PITT, USA.; Ana Suelly Arruda Câmara Cabral, *Contact Induced Language Change in the Western Amazon: The Non-Genetic Origin of the Kokama Language*, 1995 University of Pittsburgh, PITT, USA. Nilson Gabas Junior, *A Grammar of Karo* (Tupi, Brazil) 1999 University of California System, UC System, USA. Marcia Dâmaso Vieira, *O problema da não-configuracionalidade na língua Asurini do Trocará: um fenômeno derivado da projeção dos argumentos verbais* 1993, University of Arizona, USA. 1993. Marília Facó Soares, *O supra-segmental em Tikuna e a Teoria Fonológica. Volume I: Aspectos da Sintaxe em Tikuna*, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, UNICAMP, Brasil. 1984–1992; Luciana Raccanello Storto, *Aspects of a Karitiana Grammar* 1999. MIT, USA. (See also Seki 1999).

Histórico e Artístico Nacional (Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage), founded during the transition from twenty years of military dictatorship to democracy, inaugurating the first official program promoting: (i) the interface of culture and education; (ii) educational projects oriented to the different Brazilian sociocultural contexts; (iii) focusing on cultural and linguistic diversity; (iv) inspiring the dissemination of intercultural knowledge, and (v) funding civil society as well as governmental organizations developing projects in this field (Quintas 1996).

Two main projects benefiting indigenous groups were supported by the *Projeto Interação*: the Authorship Project of the Indigenous People of the Acre state (Cabral et al. 1987), and the Tikúna Project; both of them charged with bilingual education and with the documentation of indigenous languages and cultures. Very importantly, it was the indigenous communities themselves who were the the main agents in the educational and documentation processes. Since in this project the indigenous students started having access to the writing systems of their own languages, they also started producing a written indigenous literature based on their myths and other traditional native knowledge. For the first time in Brazil, indigenous teachers were contracted by State governmental education departments, and indigenous languages were officially recognized as the legitimate languages of instruction in indigenous schools. The *Projeto Interação* financed some of the first books mainly authored by indigenous writers. Amongst these were *Torudü'ügu*, a bilingual reader of Tikuna myths, translated into Portuguese, and a significant number of other books written by indigenous students of the Acre project.

Projeto Interação, with its innovative mission and political orientation, became an important reference during the 1980s; it had a positive impact in the writing of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, and subsequent governmental policies regarding indigenous cultural, linguistic and education rights. The 1988 Constitution guaranteed for the first time the right of indigenous peoples to primary education in their own language. It charged the official educational system with providing to indigenous communities the recovery of their historical memory, the reaffirmation of their ethnic identities and the valorization of their indigenous languages and sciences. It also prescribed the recognition of indigenous peoples' forms of social organization, customs, languages and traditions; and recognized their natural rights to the lands traditionally occupied by them, with responsibility for the demarcation of their lands and the protection of their heritages being assigned to the Federal Government.

These constitutional measures were reflected in the 1999 Education legislation (1999) which has inspired and validated new official policies and educational

programmes responsible for the strengthening of indigenous languages and cultures. New addenda to this Law have been issued, further improving indigenous educational policies. Monserrat (2000) observes in 1999 there were 3,127 indigenous students and 1,673 indigenous schools in the indigenous reservations. A report produced by the Ministry of Education in 1998 identified, as highlighted by Monserrat (2000: 142), the absence, with some exceptions, of the use of the indigenous languages as a specific discipline, as the languages of instruction of other disciplines, and as languages of literacy programmes. Among the exceptions, we can cite the indigenous Tikuna, Roraima, Yanomami, Kaiová and Guaraní schools of Acre where the native language was the main language of

During the 1990s, Brazilian policies developed through the provision of programmes aiming to improve indigenous primary schooling and indigenous teachers education. The responsibility for indigenous education, which previously rested with the *Fundação Nacional do Índio* (National Indian Foundation, a federal organ), became the responsibility of each State with an indigenous population. State Departments of Education started developing educational programmes to prepare native teachers in indigenous reservation schools. The pioneering programmes coordinated by civil organizations, such as the Acre experience of indigenous authorship, continued to be an important reference for this process, as well as the ideas promoted by *Projeto Interação*.

Around the turn of the century, further significant changes took place in the field of indigenous education in Brazil. The experience of transferring indigenous education to the governmental sphere required increased specialization and the teaching of native languages required the training of native speakers as teachers.

In 2004, the *Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização e Diversidade* (SECAD: Department of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity) was established within the Ministry of Education and Culture. This Department brought together, for the first time, themes such as field education, environmental education, indigenous education, ethnic diversity and racial issues, previously distributed amongst different ministerial sectors. From 2011 SECAD has included in its mission social inclusion, with the addition of this to its title. (Department of Continuing Education, Diversity, Diversity and Inclusion: SECADI). The main responsibilities of SECADI with respect to the indigenous populations are:

1. Initial and continuing training of indigenous teachers at intermediate level. These programmes have an average duration of five years, leading to a formal Diploma qualification, the *Magisterium*. They are delivered mainly by residential short courses, in which indigenous teachers leave their villages for a month, participating in joint activities at a training center, and stages of independent studies, research and reflection on teaching practice in the

villages. The Education Ministry provides technical and financial support for the courses.

2. Higher Education of indigenous teachers (Intercultural undergraduate courses). The main objective is to ensure quality in indigenous education and expand the provision of teaching to the secondary school and high school sectors in indigenous communities and territories.
3. Production of didactic materials in indigenous language, bilingual or Portuguese formats. Books, posters, videos, CDs, DVDs and other materials produced by indigenous teachers are published with the financial support of the Education Ministry and distributed to indigenous schools.
4. Political and pedagogical support to school systems for expanding the provision of education in indigenous lands.
5. Promotion of indigenous social autonomy. The MEC develops, in conjunction with FUNAI, training courses for teachers and indigenous leaders; these courses contribute to knowledge of civil and social rights and to the exercise of control over the mechanisms of funding of public education, as well as the implementation of actions and programmes in support of indigenous education.
6. Financial support for the construction, renovation and expansion of indigenous schools.

3. The implementation of linguistic, cultural and educational policies benefiting indigenous peoples in Brazil

Currently, in Brazil, every Department of Education in the States with indigenous populations provides programmes to indigenous teachers at the high school level; some public universities, in these same states, have Intercultural Indigenous Programmes. There are states that have more than one Intercultural Programme, particularly those with large numbers of indigenous communities, as is the case for the States of Mato Grosso, Amazonas and Pará. The idea is that this degree programme admits graduates of the High School Teacher Training (*High School Magisterium*). Let us take for example the state of Rondônia: in 2004, the High School Magisterium was instituted for all indigenous teachers of Rondônia; at that time, the number of indigenous communities with primary schools was negligible. Initial contact with some indigenous communities took place in late 1979 and early 1980; the first establishment of elementary schools gathered momentum in the late 1990s; most students at High School Magisterium level were between 15 and 20 years old.

Under Brazilian law, indigenous peoples have the right to specific, differentiated, intercultural and bilingual schooling. In summary, the most important policies are set out in:

- The Federal Brazilian Constitution (1988), which guarantees to the indigenous people's rights to their own social organization, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions.
- Presidential Decree no. 26 (1991) – which transfer the coordination of educational activities from the Ministry of Justice (FUNAI) to the Ministry of Education; the implementation of these actions is assigned to States and Municipalities.
- Law no. 9,394 – Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education (1996), establishing the provision of bilingual and intercultural education as a duty of the State.
- Resolution no. 3 (CEB/CNE, 1999), which establishes national curriculum guidelines and standards for the recognition and operation of indigenous schools.
- The National Guidelines for Indigenous Education (1993), for differentiated, bilingual and multicultural education of indigenous peoples and training of indigenous teachers.
- The National Curriculum Guidelines for Indigenous Schools (1998), which provide insight and guidance on the preparation of indigenous education programmes to meet the aspirations and interests of indigenous communities, with regard to the principles of cultural equity among all sections of Brazilian society, as well as the development and production of teaching materials and indigenous teacher training.
- The Indigenous Teachers Formation Guidelines (2002), whose objectives are to contribute to the creation and implementation of initial and continuing training of indigenous teachers in State education systems, and programmes to meet the demands of indigenous communities.

In respect to the continuing education of indigenous teachers, important policies have been developed by means of governmental programmes such as:

- The “Parameters in Action of the Indigenous Scholar Education Program” (initiated in 2002), which aims to support the “professional development of teachers and experts in education, in coordination with the implementation of the Parameters and National Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary Education, for Indigenous Education and Childhood Education; and also for the implementation of Youth and Adults Education” (p. 05).

- The Action “Indigenous Knowledge in School” (initiated by *Portaria no. 98*, December 2013), whose objectives are:
 - I to promote the continuing education of teachers who work in indigenous primary education;
 - II to provide instructional and learning resources that respond to the specificities of the community organization, multilingualism and interculturalism underpinning educational projects in indigenous communities;
 - III to provide aids for curriculum development, development of methodologies and evaluation processes that respond to the specific processes of literacy, numeracy and knowledge of indigenous peoples;
 - IV to promote researches that result in the production of bilingual and monolingual didactic and paradidactic materials, according to the sociolinguistic situation and in accordance with the specific needs of indigenous scholar education.

3.1 The consolidation of educational programmes for indigenous communities

A recent project for training indigenous primary school teachers is the *Açaí* Project, which is a modular four year educational project developed by the Rondônia State Department of Education.

The *Açaí* Project involved, between 1998 and 2004, 126 indigenous teachers from 34 ethnic groups, of whom 44 were already teachers in their village school (cf. Gonçalves 2013, 86).² One of the hallmarks of this project has been an interdisciplinary conception and the inclusion of professionals with extensive experience in elementary school. As a fundamental practice, beside the inclusion of non-indigenous teachers with extensive experience in key disciplines for training, the programme also included some indigenous teachers who had extensive experience with the wider indigenous issues and indigenous education. The course systematically brought together the same teachers twice a year, so that there was continuity in the application of methods and content.

Given the linguistic diversity represented by 14 indigenous ethnic groups with a preponderance of students of *Mondé* and *Ramarãma* families, the latter were organized as a separate class pursuing the course “Indigenous Languages”;

2. The project was planned to be developed over five years, totaling 4620 hours, divided into two annual intensive steps of approximately 35 days each, corresponding to four or five weeks with workload around 250 hours per step, totaling, at the end of the course, 2700 hours of class contact time and 1920 hours of homework (at the village school), with the pedagogical support (Gonçalves 2013: 87).

the other students (*Oro*, *Oronáwa*, *Aikanã*, *Kuaza*, *Kanoê*, *Tupari Makurap*, *Jeoromitxi*, *Nambiquara*, *Uru-eu-au-au*) were gathered in another “Indigenous Languages” class.

Almost all the students who completed the first round of the *Açaí* Project (1998–2004) subsequently entered the Teacher Training programme “Superior Indigenous Intercultural Magisterium”, located in the Ji-Paraná campus of the Federal University of Rondônia. This program was designed by some of the same academics who had designed the *Açaí* Project. In this sense, for indigenous students, the entry into college represented the continuation into a new stage of studies supported by familiarity with the colleagues and teachers.

3.2 The undergraduate programme in Intercultural and Basic Education of the Department of Intercultural Education of the Federal University of Rondônia

A major goal of undergraduate programmes such as that in Intercultural and Basic Education of the Department of Intercultural Education of the Federal University of Rondônia is preparing these students for language teaching in village schools. This is perhaps the biggest challenge for all programmes, for several reasons. The principal one is the lack of established methods of mother tongue teaching in schools; from the initial acquisition of literacy in the mother tongue, the students are expected to “jump” directly to the composition of texts. However, the indigenous teachers do not have sufficient linguistic knowledge of the language and they fully mastered writing in their native language. There is therefore still a lot of work to be done on writing in such a way as to conform to the structure and grammatical principles of each language.

One of the biggest problems of indigenous intercultural programmes is undoubtedly the teaching of indigenous languages. In programmes such as that in Ji-Paraná, at least 8–10 languages are spoken in each class, all belonging to different genetic families, such as *Jeoromitxi*, *Paitei*, *Kanoê*, *Makurap*, *Oro Win*, *Tupari*, *Karritiana*, *Karipuna*, *Puruborá* and *Zoró*, for example. The question then is: how can we appropriately and thoroughly deliver indigenous languages courses in classes with such linguistic diversity? There is great motivation on the part of the students to learn the linguistic analysis of the grammar of their native languages, but how can an intercultural programme respond to the demands of such a diverse reality?

The Ji-Paraná programme has invested in the participation of linguists for teaching phonetics, phonology, morphology and syntax. But the time devoted to these disciplines is inadequate for an effective teaching of the linguistic concepts that would allow students to develop a thorough theoretical knowledge of the

structure of their native languages. There is also the problem that not every linguist who teaches on these courses has experience with language teaching; only a minority are both descriptive linguists and specialists in applied linguistics.

The indigenous students aspire to theoretical-descriptive knowledge of their languages, but the existing grammars of the indigenous languages of Rondônia are almost all written in English. They are useless for the indigenous students, who do not read English. Even the grammars and other descriptive works in Portuguese are extremely technical and difficult to “digest” by indigenous students.

One of the big issues that the Indigenous Intercultural Programmes is focusing on is the extent to which linguists, and their academic research, may contribute to the training of indigenous teachers so that they can develop their language teaching in village schools. In Rondônia, even in groups in which indigenous languages are still fully transmitted to the new generations there is a competition between Portuguese and the indigenous language, and even though teaching is given in the native language, the Portuguese language comes with a didactic framework which makes it a strong competitor to the indigenous languages. There is a huge lack of written materials in indigenous languages that can be used in the teaching of these languages in the village schools. Some linguists help produce brochures for literacy, books with stories collected from older people, but these materials still have insufficient impact on the daily life of the village schools.

Another important aspect of the problem of indigenous teacher education, at both High School and undergraduate levels, is the degree of vitality of languages, which differs greatly from one language to another. Some languages like *Campé* and *Arikapú* are spoken by a very small number of individuals (in the case of *Campé*, the three remaining speakers live practically without communicating with each other as a result of the geographical distance separating them); other languages like *Puruborá* are no longer spoken, and most of the languages of the *Txapakúra* family are no longer being transmitted to the new generations. This complex reality requires the development of linguistic studies and special teaching methods for each particular case. There is a need for specialists in methods of language teaching not only as a first language, but also as a second language, and a category of language teaching which shares features of a foreign language. And how can we adequately provide programmes in languages that are only partially remembered, but in which the remaining knowledge of the language is of fundamental importance to the communities where these languages were spoken in the past?

In Intercultural Programmes where linguistic diversity is minimal, the problems relating to the teaching of indigenous languages are fewer, as is the case at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, where *Maxakali* is the only language fully

spoken; the Federal University of Goiás, in which students are *Xerente*, *Tapirapé* and *Karajá*, *Kamayurá* and *Kalapalo* (these two last ones being included only in 2014); the Federal University of Grande Dourados has the privilege of hosting students all speaking languages from Sub-branch I of the Tupi-Guarani family: *Nhandewa*, *Ymbiá* and *Kaiowá*. However, the programmes located in the Federal Universities of Acre, Amazonas, Mato Grosso and Rondônia face a problematic and complex situation of linguistic diversity that seems to have no immediate solution.

It is to be hoped that these experiences, together, can nourish reflections that lead to a new approach to the training of indigenous teachers that actually prepares them to deal with the teaching of native languages in the village schools. Experience has shown that new policies and planning are needed to resolve this impasse.

In a country with such linguistic diversity as we find in Brazil, it is necessary to create Applied Linguistic programmes for the teaching of indigenous languages. In every public University, there are Departments of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. In some of these Universities there are Departments with research lines emphasizing indigenous languages, like the University of Brasília, the State University of Campinas, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, the State University of São Paulo, the Federal University of Goiás, the Federal University of Pará, the Federal University of Alagoas, among others; but in none of them do the Applied Linguistics programmes address indigenous languages, even though they teach languages such as English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Persian, Japanese, Greek and Latin. None of the more than 180 Brazilian indigenous languages are taught.

3.3 The challenge of including indigenous students in the Linguistics Graduate Programmes in Brazil

The University of Brasília, which was the first Brazilian University to adopt quotas for indigenous students under a Federal governmental social inclusion policy, was an ideal setting for indigenous students graduating from Intercultural Studies to be admitted to the Graduate Programme in Linguistics, specifically in the area of research named Theoretical and Descriptive Linguistics of Indigenous Languages. The greatest problem faced by this proposal was to convince faculty and students members of the Linguistics Department of the advantages of having indigenous students, since they are speakers of their own native languages.

But how would an indigenous student survive in an educational system requiring an “A” student profile? Opponents feared that the graduate programme

could suffer penalties, as the performances of such students did not correspond to the expectations of completed theses and dissertations. How could such students improve their linguistic knowledge if they are fluent neither in Portuguese nor in English, quite apart from their difficulties in dealing with the philosophical and epistemological scientific concepts they need to discuss in their scientific works?

All of these were difficult obstacles to face in trying to advocate for the admission of indigenous students into a Linguistics programme. The quotas for indigenous peoples were preserved despite strong negative reactions, including prejudice on the part of non-indigenous students worried about having their employment opportunities reduced as a consequence of the quotas reserved for indigenous students.

3.4 Five years of teaching indigenous students in Linguistics Graduate Studies at the University of Brasília

The outcome of the evaluation of the performance of indigenous students at the graduate program in Linguistics, viewed as a process, is highly positive, despite the difficulties they face. We can characterize the process as having six main phases: (1) facing the unknown, where students experience the torment of trying to acquire knowledge of linguistics; (2) starting to be familiar with linguistic analytic procedures and theoretical issues; (3) learning how to see and feel their native language from outside, as they say, (4) fascination at discovering what they could never imagine to know about the complexity of a language as a cultural tool, as conceived by Everett (2012); (5) reaching visibility in academia and bringing new knowledge to the academic setting, and (6) self-confidence as independent, indigenous researchers, together with consciousness of being far from the academically normative profile of an 'A+ white graduate student'; but also the object of anxiety generated by their incomparable knowledge of their own languages.

The five years of experience, up to the present moment, of indigenous students pursuing Linguistics studies at the University of Brasília provides important clues as to ways of improving Brazilian educational and linguistic policies for indigenous education. One of its main contributions is to underline the fundamental importance of training indigenous people as teachers and researchers at a high level of formal education. The indigenous students are very conscious that they are at the University to become linguists of their own languages, and then to go back to their communities to improve their school programmes, to develop more adequate native language teaching, and to initiate themselves the training of new educational providers.

Students' experience at the University of Brasilia, in both undergraduate and graduate studies, is making them increasingly aware of the endangerment risks affecting their languages and cultures. They are also increasingly aware of their political role as representatives of their communities, as well as representatives of indigenous people in general, in negotiations with the governmental sphere. They know how precious their linguistic knowledge of their own languages is for their struggle for self-determination. The indigenous students are also highly conscious of how much they still need to learn in the fields of Linguistics, Anthropology, and other disciplines.

4. Conclusions

The recognition of the national linguistic diversity by the Brazilian Government is a prominent fact, and the indigenous educational policies associated with linguistic policies are nowadays realized through various educational programmes covering all levels of studies for indigenous people. There are also special programmes benefiting indigenous health, as well as indigenous culture, and all of them increasingly interact. All Ministries are responding, to a greater or lesser degree, to indigenous peoples' rights and needs.

A few years ago, the *Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* (IPHAN: Institute of the National, Historical and Artistic Heritage) started developing a project to establish a National Inventory of Linguistic Diversity furthering the recognition of Brazilian linguistic diversity. The idea is to promote each of the approximately 220 languages spoken in Brazil, including immigrant languages, sign languages, indigenous languages and Portuguese variants conceived as Afro-Brazilian languages, as a vital constituent of national heritage and patrimony.

As each indigenous language will be then recognized as heritage, it can be expected that there will be new Brazilian indigenous languages policies, and planning for their preservation. A major step already achieved by this project is the formal commitment of all Ministries to contribute to the development of these new policies. The IPHAN staff is also aware of the fundamental need for the indigenous communities' commitment. An important lesson already incorporated is that without community engagement, the programme will fail to attain its objectives.

In relation to language preservation and revitalization, the role of the indigenous linguistics teachers and researchers is fundamental, and new policies need to be developed in order to support the training of indigenous linguists at a high level of formal education.

All these policies and programmes have highlighted and recognised the multi-ethnic and multilingual nature of the indigenous population in Brazil, but more still needs to be done. The implementation of these policies must have a central focus on community engagement and empowerment of these groups. In this way it is possible to transmit a positive message to the new generation that is important to speak their languages. Linguistic diversity is a reality, and is now recognized not only for political reasons but also on the grounds of scientific and social rationale.

The approach we should advocate is that political agents, scientific researchers and teachers, and indigenous communities should work together in promoting not only the continuing documentation of indigenous languages, but also in promoting indigenous education and linguistic training as an additional way to strengthen indigenous language usage, and its transmission to future generations.

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