

Endangered languages in Brazil*

Línguas em perigo de extinção no Brasil

Aryon D. RODRIGUES
(CNWS and University of Brasília)

1. The social importance of the indigenous languages

The culture of every human society is the result of a specific response to the challenges nature and other human societies have imposed through millennia to human survival in physical and mental health. Even the culture of the least human society is a complete universe of integrated knowledge, strongly bound to the milieu where it was developed but also accumulating experience of the remotest past. The native language of a society is not only the means of communication that keeps social solidarity, but it is also the basic means of organizing and storing experience and knowledge. Every human language is unique in the way it codifies knowledge and experience, for it has been shaped and reshaped following the needs for the adequate expression of an extremely diversified and variable complex of mental representations. A true understanding of mankind can ideally be achieved only with the knowledge of every particular culture and society. This implies that

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every unique key for an in-deep accessing of the culture of the society that speaks it.

In the course of history and prehistory many cultures and many languages have disappeared from the face of the earth. With some fragmentary exceptions, their knowledge is lost and unretrievable. The same is true of the non-human companions of man on the world, the animals and the plants. But what has been for millennia, in the one and in the other case, a matter of sporadic accidents, only rarely intensified by cataclysmic events, is becoming in the last few centuries a growing process of systematic destruction not only of animal and plant species, but also of human languages and cultures. The exacerbated predatory and imperialist spirit that became an important feature of modern civilization has led to a vertiginous destruction of genetic and cultural diversity in large parts of the world. Even where there is plenty of space for peaceful coexistence, minority peoples are not allowed to carry freely their own ways of life and strong pressure is exerted on them for assimilating to the mainstream culture and language.

The maintenance of the native language favours a smooth evolution of the respective culture, even under strong outside pressure, enabling people to incorporate new knowledge without systematically losing their old wisdom. This is vital not only for the healthy psychological equilibrium of the individuals, but also for the social and economic adaptation to new situations. If a community is compelled to abandon its native language in a too short space of time, say in one or two generations, a too large break occurs in the transmission of old concepts and knowledge, long before new knowledge and new experiences can mature and become integrated and functional. The whole community will fall in a culturally void space and people will become dependent on foreigners for the simplest actions and get impoverished both economically and culturally.

This has been the fate of many communities exposed to colonization. Of course language loss is not the only factor affecting such situations; it is very often associated with economic, political, and religious abuse on the part of an encroaching, powerful society.

For the minority peoples that managed so far to preserve their language it is essential to stop to be directly or indirectly pushed to abandon this language. It is equally essential for them to receive serious, well founded and well planned help for coping with the extremely delicate problem of getting effective access to and control of a dominant language and culture without losing the command of their own language, the knowledge of their own culture, and the control of the very difficult situation they are confronting as subjects (frequently involuntary) of a modern state. This means to have the opportunity of having sound programs of bilingual/ bicultural education.

2. Short overview of the linguistic scene

The territory of Brazil with its 8.500.000 km² embraces most of the lowlands of South America, including most of Amazonia. This territory was formerly occupied by many indigenous peoples, the so-called Indians or Amerindians, which spoke a very large number of languages. As a consequence of the conquest of the territory by the Europeans and their descendants, in the course of the last five hundred years there was an enormous reduction in the number of indigenous peoples and languages. The Portuguese as carriers of Western culture arrived in Brazil in the last year of the 15th century, 1500, and, as pioneers of modern expansionism, soon engaged in one of the most wild exploitation enterprises the world has known, draining intensively not only mineral, floral, and animal resources, but also native human energy. The indigenous peoples, if friendly, were seen by most settlers as sources of cheap workers to be exploited to exhaustion, and if hostile, were seen as obstacle to be removed until extermination. It is enough to recall that the General Governor of Brazil in the middle of the 16th century, Mem de Sá, recorded himself in written form that, having some Indians of the Paraguaçu river attacked a few Portuguese, he raided the region with his troops and put afire more than one hundred villages. This same Governor exterminated the Caeté people in Pernambuco and the Tamoyo people in Rio de Janeiro, and thereafter was highly praised in an epic poem composed in Latin, “*De gestis Mendi de Saa*”, by Father Anchieta, on his turn highly praised by clergymen and laymen as the “Apostle of Brazil”.

Only recently more attention is being given by historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, and linguists to the process of depopulation of the Indians and to the proportions it reached. Huge areas were soon emptied out of Indians and others became progressively territory of Portuguese or of *Língua geral* speaking mestizos. *Língua geral* is the name given in colonial Brazil to an originally indigenous language that became the common language of mestizos, white men, and Indians submitted by these, not as a pidgin, but as the continued mother tongue of children of indigenous mothers and white fathers. There has been two *línguas gerais*, both based on Tupí-Guaraní languages, a southern one (*língua geral paulista*), expanding from São Paulo into the southern and central provinces and a northern one (*língua geral amazônica* or *nheengatú*), spreading from Pará westwards into Amazonia. The southern *língua geral* became extinct in most of its domain in the second half of the 18th century, and its last speakers have probably lived in some places until the end of the 19th century. The northern *língua geral* is yet spoken, but it has been losing ground to Portuguese since the beginning of the 20th century and counts now with no more than 3,000 speakers.

According with a recent estimate (Rodrigues 1993), about 75% of the languages spoken in Brazilian territory five hundred years ago disappeared. This notwithstanding, the number of languages spoken today in Brazil is between 160 and 180, but none of these counts with a population large enough to ensure its future. Indeed, the most populous indigenous language in Brazil is Tikúna (or Tukúna), which has 18,000 speakers in Brazil and about 4,000 in Peru and Colombia. Next comes Makuxí with about 15,000 speakers and Kaingang and Teréna spoken by a little more than 10,000 persons each. All other languages have less than 10,000 speakers, the majority of them less than 1,000, as can be seen in Table 1. Of 166 languages figuring in this table only 26 are spoken by more than 1,000 people, whereas 110 have only 400 or less speakers. The number of languages spoken by only 100 or less persons is almost one third of the total of surviving languages. Other numerical relations can be seen in figure 1.

Most of the languages spoken today are to be found in northern and western Brazil, that is to say, in the innermost regions of the country. Portuguese colonization started from the Atlantic coast in the East and progressively wiped out most indigenous peoples on its way. Only three indigenous languages of Eastern Brazil are yet being regularly passed on to the children: Yatê in Pernambuco, Maxakalí in Minas Gerais, and Xokleng in Santa Catarina. It is true that there are now many speakers of Mbiá, a Guaraní dialect, in South-eastern Brazil (and a few in Northern Brazil), but these are very recent migrants from the valley of the Paraná River in the Southwest. Even in Northern Brazil, however, there are areas where the original indigenous languages disappeared almost completely. One important case is the valley of the Amazon stream, where the big nations whose villages extended continuously on both banks as reported by the first Spanish and Portuguese explorer, have left no trace of them-selves but some archeological remains. Indigenous peoples and languages are almost totally absent in an extension of about 1,800 km along the valley and about 250 km from each river bank, with additional extensions in the valleys of the major tributaries.

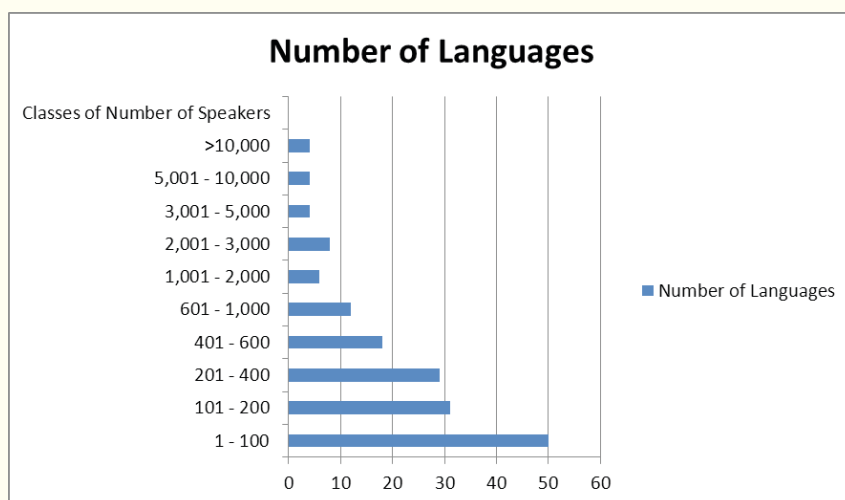


Figure 1: A synoptical view of the distribution of languages in relation to some classes of number os speakers.

The extant languages in all Brazilian territory belong to several linguistic families. If we count each genetically isolated language as a one-member family, we have 35 linguistic families, 10 of which are one-member ones. Those of the extinct languages for which there is some date preserved reveal the existence in the past of more genetic families. Probably some families have completely disappeared with all its members before any record could be done of them. Comparative research has shown that certain linguistic families, although quite different in the phonology, grammar, and lexicon, may be grouped into larger genetic units on the basis of regular phonological correspondences in their basic vocabularies. One well established case is that of the Tupí stock, that embraces 10 linguistic families (here the term “family” corresponds more properly to complexes such as Romance, Germanic, Slavic, and so on, whereas “stock” corresponds to a more comprehensive one such as Indo-European. Another case, with a lesser degree of confidence for many of the proposed components, is the Macro-Jê stock, with possibly 12 families. In table 1 are all the families to which belong any living languages, without reference to their affiliation to the one or the other stock. To the Tupí stock have been ascribed the following families: Arikem, Jurúna, Mondé, Mundurukú, Ramarpama, Tuparí, and Tupí-Guaraní, as well as the isolates (one-member families) Awetí, Mawé, and Puruborá. The most likely members of the Macro-Jê stock are the following families: Boróro, Botocudo, Karajá, and Maxakalí (and also the families Kamakã, Karirí, and Purí, whose languages are all dead), as well as the isolates Guató, Ofayé, Rikbaktsá, and Yatê.

Another important feature of the Brazilian linguistic scene is the overwhelming presence of a non-indigenous population and a massively dominant European language, Portuguese. The total population of Brazil today is of 150,000,000 people, and the indigenous peoples participate in this total with about 200,000, i.e. only 0.13%. And these 200,000 Ameridians are divided into more than 150 ethnic groups. The largest of these, Tikúna (see above), with its 18,000 members, represents no more than 0.012% of the national population. An almost fatal consequence of these numerical relations is that for most governmental officials concerned with national needs the indigenous people are

statistically negligible for even deserving the slightest consideration in planning of any sort. This notwithstanding, some success has been reached in opening space, for instance, for bilingual education, but the small gains are always under the risk of becoming ineffective for lack of understanding and interest in the intermediate administrative instances, not to speak of lack of money.

3. The scientific importance of the indigenous languages and particularly of the Brazilian ones

As has been stressed in several recent publications (especially Robins & Uhlenbeck, eds., 1991, and Hale, ed., 1992), all the minority languages of the world are equally important and essential for the knowledge of human language in general. There are today in the world between 5,000 and 6,000 languages, but the data used by theoretical linguists for proposing and testing hypotheses on the nature of language are yet restricted to relatively few languages. If unbiased knowledge of the very nature and dimensions of human language and of the cognitive processes associated with it is worth of being researched, account must be taken of as many as languages as possible. From a scientific point of view no language should be neglected: the next one to be analysed may present something new in its phonology, in its grammar, or in its organization of the discourse, and may ask for minor or major revision of some theoretical assumptions. Thus every indigenous language in every part of the world is an important object of research for linguistic science and its study has to be seen as a must for a sound linguistic scientific policy.

Given the instrumental role it plays in the development, maintenance, and transmission of culture, language is the unique means anthropologists have for approaching many basic aspects of culture. This goes of course far beyond the use of the indigenous language for communication in field work, but covers areas of knowledge such as taxonomies (of plants, animals, human beings, etc.), health, social organization, religion/shamanism, mythology, cosmology, etc.

Together with the other South American languages, the indigenous languages of Brazil may play a significant role in the development of linguistic knowledge. South America is in a certain way comparable to Australia. On the one hand, it is almost an island, for it is separated from the other continents by the two greater oceans and is connected to Central and North America only by the Isthmus of Panama, which, although having been the bridge through which prehistoric man peopled the South American sub-continent, restrained considerably the opportunity of reflux movements northwards. Most human groups that entered South America when it was first peopled expanded and evolved inside it, adapting themselves to the new environments it offered, for thousands of years, without any direct contact with people of other continents (the most conservative estimates for the antiquity of man in South America are in the range of 10,000 to 12,000 years, while others push it back in time to more than 30,000 years). Innovations in their languages are unlikely to have spread even to North America, so that we would not wonder to find in some of the South American languages features uncommon or even unknown in other parts of the world. This appears to be true of some phonological, grammatical, and discursive features found so far in indigenous languages of Brazil, e.g. an alveo-labial-flap (Pirahã: Everett 1979), nasalization generated at word ends (Maxakalí, Xetá, etc.: Rodrigues 1986), nasalization as an extreme degree of vowel compactation (Kaingang, Tapirapé, etc.: Rodrigues 1981), object-initial basic word order (Hixkaryána, Nadëb, etc.: Derbyshire 1977, Derbyshire & Pullum 1981), sentence negation expressed by omission of tense/aspect markers (Karitiána: Landin 1984), neutralization of the distinction between 1st person inclusive and 3rd person (Tupinambá: Rodrigues 1990).

On the other hand, most of South America, including Brazil, has like Australia taken very long to have the indigenous languages studied systematically. In South America, indeed, with the exception of the Andean area only in the very last years we can speak of systematic linguistic research: the scientific study of the indigenous languages is yet at a very incipient stage. So as it occurred with the Australian languages (e.g. Dyirbal), it is likely that some South American languages,

once well described, will have a significative role to play in improving our knowledge of language in general. This likeliness is even greater if we consider that all the Australian languages belong to only one genetic family, whereas South American languages are divided into many linguistic families, what means that there is much more linguistic differentiation in South America than in Australia

4. The research on the Brazilian indigenous languages

Research on the indigenous languages of Brazil is progressing, but very slowly. Until 1980 most linguistic work on different languages was done by missionary linguists, mainly members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), who study the languages for the final end of Bible translation. As a policy of public relations for its own ends, SIL has been a publisher of first-hand data and first moment analyses of many languages (in Brazil about 40), but, with a few and honourable exceptions, the publication on each language diminishes and practically stops when the missionaries, after having learned the language, engage in the lengthy work of Bible translation. Very few missionary linguists evolve to see scientific contribution as another objective of their lives and, when they do so, apparently it is very difficult for them to reconcile this interest with those of the majority of their missionary fellows. On the one hand, languages with which SIL linguists started over 30 years ago, like Apinayé, Mawé (Sateré), or Apuriãa, have no more than fragments of phonological or grammatical analysis published: no reference grammars, no dictionaries. On the other hand, distinguished linguistic contributions on Kaingang, Guaraní (Mbiá), Hixkaryána, Guajajára, Pirahã, Nadëb, Wayampí, and some other languages have been published by SIL linguists; although, only for the first two of these small dictionaries have been published. Other protestant missionary organizations have contributed by far fewer than SIL, although some of them work with a sizable number of languages. New Tribes Mission (Missão Novas Tribos do Brasil) does not stimulate publication by its members and avoids putting data at the disposal of other linguists. Rare linguistic publications authored by NTM missionaries have been a result of SIL workshops. Recently two reference grammars (Makuxí and Sanumá) have been published by M.

Abbot and D. Borgman of Missao Evangélica da Amazônia (MEVA) under the stimulus of D. Derbyshire of SIL. Catholic missionaries in Brazil have no linguistic training, but the best dictionary produced in this century for a Brazilian indigenous language, Boróro, is due to the Salesian Fathers Albisetti and Venturelli.

Before 1980 linguistic fieldwork by Brazilian students of Indian languages was sporadic. Only thus recently institutional conditions were met for stimulating more systematically graduate students to engage in fieldwork. In 1988 the National Research Council agreed to sponsor a program of scientific research on the indigenous languages (Programa de Pesquisa Científica das Línguas Indígenas Brasileiras), which, though without any special funds, multiplied the number of students entering the field of indigenous languages. The program defined four degrees of priority for research: 1) languages strongly endangered for which there is no previous study, 2) languages strongly endangered for which there is already some data and analysis, 3) languages not immediately endangered for which there is no previous study, 4) languages not immediately endangered for which there is already some data and analysis. Last year the number of (non-missionary) people carrying out linguistic research under the sponsorship of this program was about 60. This number included 10 people working on languages with less than 50 speakers. Most of the researchers are graduate students at the master's level and a few are working towards the doctor's degree. This is an exceedingly happy situation indeed both in what concerns the endangered indigenous languages and as to perspectives of forming a strong professional group of descriptive linguists, but it is also a matter of deep concern. Although the number of institutions open to the research on indigenous languages has increased from two in the seventies to seven or eight now, it is being and will continue to be very difficult to assure conditions for so many students to prosecute the work begun at the masters level and to complete their education as linguists, so that many research projects now initiated are doomed to be discontinued prematurely.

The creation of a centre for the study of Amazonian languages in Belém (Pará) is now being planned and international funds are being sought for maintaining a very active program devoted mainly to the

documentation, analysis, and description of the many endangered languages of Brazilian Amazonia. The project foresees intensive cooperation with linguists of other institutions, in Brazil and elsewhere in the world, aiming at becoming a logistic basis for linguists and students of linguistics interested in working on languages of Brazilian Amazonia. The conditions for housing the centre at the Goeldi Museum (Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi) are very good, indeed in this moment better than in any Brazilian university. If financial support is found, such a centre may overcome a great deal of the desperate situation of the scientific research of indigenous languages in Brazil.

With so many languages to be described and with most of them seriously endangered, requiring urgent research, it is clear that other centres of study in the country must be reinforced or even created. The universities should be the natural nests for such centres or programs of research, but in the area of humanistic studies (letras), they are in general very weak institutions. This is the reason why the Programa de Pesquisa Científica das Línguas Indígenas Brasileiras has also been aiming at a National Centre for the Study of Indigenous Languages. If the Centre designed by the linguists at the Goeldi Museum becomes reality, most of what was intended for a national center will be realized. Minor efforts could then be directed to encourage research on the non-Amazonian languages.

5. The need for international cooperation

Like other countries that depend heavily on imported technology, Brazil has a weak and unstable economy, unlike other countries in this situation, it has the greatest foreign debt and is, consequently, the biggest payer of interests to the strongest economies of the world. With the largest territory and the biggest population of Latin America it has enormous social problems whose treatment requires more financial resources than are available. Successive administrations try different economic and social measures, often contradictory and inefficient. In such a situation it is difficult to see a sound scientific policy being carried out coherently. Even when the planning is good, soon it is annihilated by unavoidable cuts in the budget dictated by the treasury.

No program of urgent research can be conducted properly without the means for putting at work, as soon as possible, personnel and equipment. If an effective action is to be developed for the documentation and description of the many languages that are strongly endangered in Brazil, international resources must be asked.

International cooperation for this task should not, however, be seen as a purely financial matter. Much cooperation is needed and will be welcome in the form of scientific competence to reinforce the as yet modest capacity present in the country and to contribute to the training of young local linguists for the work of documenting and analysing the languages as well as for the application of linguistic knowledge to the benefit of the indigenous communities. Such an application may be either in pedagogical tasks, like the elaboration of orthographies and the training of native writers and teachers, or in psychosocial orientation, such as devising means of stimulating people to cultivate their own native language alongside with the country's official language instead of simply (and tragically) abandoning the first in favour of the second

International help can also come from the side of technology, by bringing to the local linguists the knowledge and use of technical devices that help to organize and to accelerate the work of documentation and analysis of linguistic and paralinguistic data.

Another very useful form of international cooperation is the exchange of scholars and students. Brazilian students who have collected data in fieldwork could analyse them abroad, under the supervision of skilled linguists: this would, on the one hand, increase the supervising capacity that is yet too limited in Brazil, and, on the other hand, give the students an important experience with another academic culture as well as make them feel members of a larger, international cooperating community of linguists. Foreign students of linguistics who would like to work on an endangered indigenous language would also contribute substantially to the urgent task of working out as many languages as possible in as short a time as available, before more and more languages disappear.

Table 1: List of languages with summary information on number of speakers, localization, and research activities (November 1993)**Abbreviations:**

(a) States of Brazil where spoken: AC Acre, AM Amazonas, AP Amapa, ES Espírito Santo, GO Goiás, MA Maranhão, MG Minas Gerais, MS Mato Grosso do Sul, MT Mato Grosso, PA Pará, PE Pernambuco, PR Paraná, RJ Rio de Janeiro, RO Rondônia, RR Roraima, RS Rio Grande do Sul, SC Santa Catarina, SP São Paulo, TO Tocantins.

(b) Linguistic families: AK Arawak, AR Arikem, AW Arawá, BO Bororo, BT Botocudo, GK Guaikurú, IS isolate (= one-member family), JE Jê, JU Jurúna, KB Karib, KJ Karajá, KT Katukína, MK Makú, MO Mondé, MR Múra, UM Mundurukú, MX Maxakalí, NB Nambikwára, PN Páno, RM Ramaráma, TG Tupi-Guaraní, TK Tukáno, TP Tuparí, TX Txapakúra, YA Yanomámi.

(c) Research: C current study, I previous study now interrupted, N under study in a neighbouring country, O no study.

(d) Researchers: M missionary linguists, U academic linguists: mi master's level students unfinished, mc master's level students finished, di doctor level students unfinished.

Language	Nº of speakers	Localization	Family	Research	Researchers
1-20 speakers					
Apiaká	2	MT	TG	O	
Arikapú	4	RO	IS	O	
Aruá	?	RO	MO	O	
Avá	10	GO, TO	TG	C	Umi
Baré	1?	AM	AK	C	Umc
Guató	5?	MS	IS	I	U
Kanoê	5	RO	IS	C	Umc
Katawixí	10	AM	KT	O	
Kaoiá	13	RO	IS	O	
Kokáma	5	AM	TG	C	Udi
Krenak	6?	MG	BT	C	U
Kujubim	2	RO	?	O	
Máku	1	RR	IS	C	Umc
Mondé	?	RO	MO	O	
Múra	?	AM	MR	O	
Puruborá	2	RO	IS	O	
Sabanê	20	RO	NB	O	
Suriána	10	AM	TK	O	
Tariána	?	AM	AK	C	U
Umutína	1?	MT	BO	O	
Wayoró	20	RO	TP	C	U
Xabriabá	?	MG	JE	O	
Xetá	5	PR	TG	I	U
Xipáya	2	PA	JU	C	Udi

Language	Nº of speakers	Localization	Family	Research	Researchers
21-50 speakers					
Arára-do-Beiradão	?	MT	?	O	
Awetí	36	MT	IS	I	U
Barasána	43	AM	TK	N	
Galibí	37	AP	KB	N	
Jabutí	40	RO	IS	C	Umc
Jurití	35	AM	TK	O	
Kamã	30?	AM	MK	C	M
Karapanã	49	AM	TK	N	
Matipú	40	MT	KB	O	
Mekém	40	RO	TP	O	
Ofayé	23	MS	IS	I	
Paraná	31	MT	JE	C	Umc
Sakirabiap	?	RO	TP	O	
Txunhuã-djapá	37	AM	KT	O	
Trumái	34	MT	IS	I/C	U/Umc

51-100 speakers					
Anambé	61	PA	TG	C	Umc
Asuriní-do-Xingu	53	PA	TG	O	
Káro	92	RO	RM	C	Udi
Kuruáya	?	PA	MU	O	
Karipúna-TG	60?	RO	TG	O	
Mehináku	95	MT	AK	C	Umc
Nahukwá	83	MT	KB	O	
Tuparí	56	RO	TP	C	Umc
Yebá-masã	55	AM	TK	O	
Yoé	60?	PA	TG	C	Udi
Zuruahá	100	AM	AW	C	M

101-200 speakers					
Apalaí	135	PA	KB	C	M
Arára-do-Xingu	110?	PA	KB	C	M
Araweté	136	PA	TG	O	
Asuriní-do-Tocantins	131	PA	TG	C	M/U
Banawá	130?	AM	AW	C	M
Irántxe	195	MT	IS	I	M
Jamamadí	150	AM	AW	C	M
Jarawára	120	AM	AW	C	M/U
Jurúna	126	MT	JU	C	Umc
Kalapálo	191	MT	KB	C	U

Endangered languages in Brazil

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101-200 speakers					
Kanamantí	130	AM	AW	O	
Karitiána	109	RO	AR	C	M/Umi
Kaxararí	110	RO	PN	O	
Kaxuyána	198	PA	KB	I	Umc
Kubéwa	150	AM	TK	N	
Matsés	141	AM	PN	O	
Mayongong. (Yekuána)	200	RR	KB	N	
Nambikwára-do-Norte	180	MT, RO	NB	I	U/M
Pirahã	200	AM	MR	C	M/U
Salumã	154	MT	AK	O	
Suruí-do-Tocantins	101	PA	TG	C	Umc
Suyá	114	MT	JE	C	U
Txikão	107	MT	KB	I	U
Urupá	150?	RO	TX	O	
Waurá	130	MT	AK	C	M
Wayána	125	PA	KB	C	U
Xambioá	102	TO	KJ	O	
Yawalapití	135	MT	AK	C	Umc
Yawanáwa	196	AC	PN	O	
Zoró	175	MT, RO	MO	O	

201-400 speakers					
Amawáka	220	AM	PN	N	
Atroarí	350	AM	KB	O	
Gavião/ Ikôrô	230	RO	MO	C	U
Guajá	240	MA	TG	I	Umc
Hixkaryána	308	AM	KB	C	M
Javaé	383	TO	KJ	C	Udi
Kamayurá	207	MT	TG	C	U
Kampa	235	AM, AC	AK	N	
Katukína-do-Biá	253	AM	KT	O	
Katukína-Páno	353	AC	PN	C	Umc
Kuikúru	221	MT	KB	C	U
Makurap	215	RO	TP	C	Umc
Maxinéri	345	AM	AK	N	
Nukuíni	238	AM	PN	O	
Parakanã	197	PA	TG	O	
Parintintim	396	AM	TG	C	M
Paumarí	280	AM	AW	C	M
Poyanáwa	227	AC	PN	C	Umc

Language	N° of speakers	Localization	Family	Research	Researchers
201-400 speakers					
Suruí-Paitér	340	RO	MO	C	M
Tapirapé	217	MT	TG	C	U
Taulipang. (Pemong)	220	RR	KB	N	
Tiriyó	264	PA	KB	C	U
Torá	256?	AM	TX	O	
Uruewawau	215	RO	TG	C	Umc
Warekéna	338	AM	AK	C	Umc
Warikyána	300	PA	KB	O	
Wayampí	291	AP	TG	C	M
Yamináwa	357	AC	PN	O	
Yuhup	400	AM	MK	C	M

401 - 600 speakers					
Apinayé	508	TO	JE	C	M
Bakairí	409	MT	KB	C	M/Udi
Dení	560	Am	AW	C	M
Ingarikó. (Kapong)	459	RR	KB	N	
Manitenéri	530	AC	AK	N	
Marúbo	499	AM	PN	C	Umc
Maxakalí	500	MG	MX	C	M/Umc
Nadéb	480	AM	MK	C	M
Nambikwára- do-Sul	550	MT	NB	I/C	U/M
Ninam	466	RR	YA	C	U
Palikur	561	AP	AK	C	M
Rikbaktsa	466	MT	IS	I	M
Sanumá	462	RR	YA	C	M
Tembé	410	PA	TG	O	
Tuyúka	465	AM	TK	N	
Urubú-Kaapor	500	MA	TG	C	M
Wanána	555	AM	TK	N	
Yamamadí	450	AM	AW	C	M

601 - 1,000 speakers					
Boróro	752	MT	BO	C	M
Cinta-Larga	953	MT, RO	MO	I	M
Desána	960	AM	TK	N	
Kadiwéu	850	MS	GK	C	M/Udi
Kanamari	647	AM	KT	C	M
Kayabí	620	MT	TG	C	M
Mayorúna	609	AM	PN	O	

Endangered languages in Brazil

Language	Nº of speakers	Localization	Family	Research	Researchers
601 – 1,000 speakers					
Paresí	631	MT	AK	C	M
Pirá-tapúya	613	AM	TK	N	
Waiwái	922	PA, RO	KB	N	
Xerénte	850	TO	JE	C	M
Xokleng	634	SC	JE	C	M/Umi

1,001 – 2,000 speakers					
Húpda	1,431	AM	MK	C	M
Karajá	1,194	GO, T, TO	KJ	C	M/U
Kaxináwa	1,987	AC	PN	C	U
Mundurukú	1,460	AM	MU	I	M
Pakaanóva	1,147	RO	TX	C	M
Yanomámi	2,000	AM, RR	YA	I/C	U/M

2,001 – 3,000 speakers					
Apurinã	3,000	AC, AM	AK	C	M/Umi
Kayapó	2,400	MT, PA	JE	C	M/Umi
Kulína	2,437	AC, AM	AW	C	M
Língua. Geral	3,000	AM	TG	C	U
Mawé	3,000	Am	IS	I	M
Mbiá	2,250	RS, SC, PR, SP, RJ, ES	TG	C	M/U
Timbira	2,670	MA, PA, TO	JE	C	M/U
Tukáno	2,635	AM	TK	N	

3,000 – 5,000 speakers					
Baniwa.do.Içana	4,672	AM	AK	C	U
Nhadéva	4,900	MS, PR, SP	TG	C	M
Xavánte	4,413	MT	JE	C	M/U
Yatê	4,000	PE	IS	I/C	M/U

5,001 – 10,000 speakers					
Guajajara	6,776	MA	TG	C	M
Kaiwá	7,000	MS	TG	C	M
Wapixána	5,122	RR	AK	N	
Yanomam	6,000	RR	YA	C	M

10,001 or more speakers					
Kaingang	10,426	RS, SC, PR, SP	JE	I/C	M/U
Makuxí	15,000	RR	KB	C/I	M/U
Teréna	10,100	MS, SP	AK	C	M
Tikúna. (Tukúna)	18,000	AM	IS	C	U