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Máté Barnabás Csrepka: Hungarians and their dual identity in São Paulo
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Hungarians and their dual identity in São Paulo

This study aims to present the dual identity of the Hungarian community in São Paulo. More than 100,000 Hungarians settled in Brazil during the migration waves of the 20th century. In this metropolis, home to one of South America's most populous Hungarian communities, generations of Hungarian descendants make up the distant diaspora.

The Hungarian House, established to preserve the Hungarian culture and language, is a meeting point for all the active members of the Hungarian community in the city. The leaders of the institution, who are of Hungarian origin, reach out to members of all ages with their events held regularly. In this way, the Hungarian House serves as a meeting point for different generations; thus different concepts of identity can be observed there. The study outlines the attitudes of the different age groups of Brazilian Hungarians towards language and identity preservation through semi-structured interviews.

Keywords: dual identity, diaspora, language maintenance, bilingualism, multilingualism

1. Introduction

1.1. Identity

The notion of identity has become a natural part of our vocabulary without thinking about what we actually mean by it. The term *identity* is used under various conditions and has often been the root of harsh debates, especially in the past decades. According to American ego psychologist Erik Erikson (1968), ego is a mental process that works unconsciously and continuously integrates information from internal and external stimuli into a single entity, thus connecting one's inner world with the outer social world. It is the ego that builds identity that has an individual and social component.

The word 'identity' originates in Latin, coming from the root 'idem,' which means 'the same.' Despite its literal meaning, it suggests both difference and similarity (Buckingham, 2008). It represents difference from the point of view of individuals who have separate and permanent identities throughout their lives (or at least during significant periods). However, it represents similarity at the same time concerning the same or at least similar self-views a broader community shares. According to Owens and Samblanet (2013), the word 'I' refers to the individual's conscious processes, and identity is a 'tool' through which the individual and the group understand the social and psychological processes. A shared national identity or cultural identity builds up by numerous individual identities. Belonging to a social group requires members to have some of their

identities in common –their shared language, historical bonds, cultural habits, religion, race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, etc. A sense of belongingness may be rooted in identifying ourselves with one or more social groups that possess an impression of ‘oneness.’ Cultural and linguistic characteristics provide a sense of cultural identification (Maher & Winston, 2017).

Joseph (2004) suggests that there are two fundamental aspects regarding the identity of an individual: (i) the name that basically differentiates a person from another and then (ii) the immaterial phenomenon that lies inside and constitutes each one of us. In his book *Language and Identity*, he classifies types of identities into three categories, among which the categorization of individual and group identities are the most relevant considering the recent paper. Joseph points out that group and individual identities operate quite separately at the deictic level since group identities such as ‘Brazilian’ or ‘catholic’ are not usually considered names. In our interpretation, a name is a word like ‘Pedro’ that only has the deictic function of distinguishing among different individuals. ‘Brazilian,’ on the other hand, is a term with a broader meaning, which not only designates a particular group of people but indicates something more profound about them that is more complex than the name of a single Brazilian person.

Identity researchers often refer to two different historical models. Gleason (1983) suggests that one perception is rooted in psychology and the work of the American ego psychologist Erik Erikson, and the other in sociology, and essentially to the American philosopher and sociologist George Herbert Mead and his symbolic interactionism. The first model explains the solidity of the ‘I,’ while the latter, in contrast, explains its changeability. Pléh (2015) calls ‘centripetal’ the conception according to which the self-view is constructed from the body image, and ‘centrifugal’ the one that considers the self-view to be constructed from outside, from social interactions and the relationship between people. According to Bögre (2020), the relationship between life story, identity, and narrative has become increasingly evident. Narrative identity research amplifies the idea that people create their identities by constructing stories and that the defining image of identity is formed in personal narratives. The influence of the centripetal and centrifugal models can also be seen within narrative identity theories, forming a bridge between them. Because of the blurring of disciplinary boundaries, it is no longer possible to claim that one model reflects the approach of psychology and the other that of sociology. Hammack (2015) has also argued that narrative identity links individual and social cognition, social categorisation, and linguistic and discourse research.

1.2. Language and culture

Bilingualism does not mean biculturalism in most cases, nor sharing awareness towards another culture necessarily presupposes language proficiency in another language. Maher and Winston (2017) state that knowing more than one language does not automatically indicate loyalty to more than one ethnicity but rather expresses cultural capital and personal complexity. He differentiates three groups of individuals related to the relationship between their language and culture. Bicultural bilinguals can communicate proficiently with users of both languages, and in the meantime, they identify themselves with both cultures. They form new identities (Hall, 1996) that belong to two worlds, speak two languages, and live with two identifications. Monocultural bilinguals barely go out of their ‘cultural zone’; therefore, they belong to only one cultural context in which they acquired another language as L2. Bicultural monolinguals are those, for instance, who form an immigrant community – they maintain cultural habits and religious practices even though their ancestors did not pass on their mother tongue. Some immigrants willingly lose a part of their identity represented by their native country and its values and tend to identify themselves instead with their host country. Also, some improve a new, more complex identity, becoming culturally distributed (e.g., Brazilian-Hungarian).

There are no two linguistic minorities that are the same since each is affected by different political, economic, geographical, and socio-cultural features (Stavans & Hoffmann, 2015). Considering language, members of linguistic minorities also vary even within every community. There are monolingual speakers whose mother tongue is either one of the minority languages or the majority language, bilinguals or multilinguals who have already acquired the language of the host country besides the language of their community, and an L3 in an educational context. Hence language competence varies significantly in immigrant communities, including monolingualism and many stages of bilingualism blending with monolingualism in either the language of the host country or one of the linguistic minorities. According to Simon et al. (2013), dual identity is the identification with both an ethnocultural minority group and the society of residence. González and Brown (2003) also describe the term ‘dual identity’ as a state when an individual identifies himself with two groups simultaneously (which can also be competing with each other). Klandermans et al. (2008) conclude that in comparing immigrants with single and dual identities, the latter are likely to be more satisfied with their situation. Dual identity is not just the root of dual culture but also the outcome of it. Minority and majority languages are both elemental sources of cultural and, thus, identity production.

1.3. Hungarians in Brazil

1.3.1. Immigration waves

Troughout history, language contact and language spread were the outcomes of migration waves, regardless of the era and which ethnicities were involved in the process. In Brazil, the population of the Hungarian diaspora is formed by groups of large immigration waves and their descendants. The identification of the main periods, and thus their number, vary from one researcher to another. According to Pongrácz (2008), the immigration of Hungarians to Brazil consisted of six major waves, while Bába (2015) identifies five main periods up until 1956. Anderle (2008) distinguishes four major waves of immigration, and this is the position taken in this study. He suggests a more transparent and efficient differentiation and observation of the four waves, which is relevant in the scope of this study on the Hungarian diaspora living in São Paulo. The other perspectives include immigration periods that did not consist of that significant number of groups of people compared to the mentioned four, and they also tend to view Latin America as a whole.

In 2006, Law No. 219 in Brazil, which proposed the establishment of the Day of the Hungarian Community, the number of Hungarians and Hungarian descendants in Brazil is estimated at around 100,000. The Hungarian community in the city and region of São Paulo today numbers more than 10,000, and there is also a significant number of Hungarians in other cities: Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba, and Porto Alegre. Therefore, it is not easy to estimate the number of descendants, which could vary between 150 and 300 thousand.

The first large-scale immigration took place at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (Pongrácz, 2008). The Hungarians arriving at that time were motivated, among other things, by promising immigration policies and economic opportunities. The families were drawn to the continental climate of southern Brazil, which was similar to the European climate. They established entire villages and built churches and schools. Approximately two hundred and fifty Hungarian families were almost completely assimilated into the local culture, primarily because the circumstances at the time did not create the conditions for communication with the mother country (Piller, 1996).

A high percentage of the groups linked to the First World War came from areas no longer part of Hungary after the Treaty of Trianon. The second migration wave mainly comprised poorer, blue-collar people from the lower classes. Among them, tens of thousands began working on the coffee and sugar cane plantations, two of the country's main export products (Szilágyi, 2003). However, for many of them, this life proved to be deeply below their expectations, and they left with other immigrant communities and sought their fortunes in the big cities. The situation of the First World War immigrants was made more difficult because the Hungarian diplomatic missions could not officially deal with people who did not have Hungarian passports. After the Treaty of Trianon, a large number of citizens

of the former Hungarian territories were forced to give up their passports, and for them, Romanian, Czechoslovak, Yugoslav, and Austrian passports were given - this also meant a dead end considering their contacts with the Hungarian consulate and thus with Hungary (Kóbori et al., 2017).

The third migration wave, which lasted during and after the Second World War, comprised wealthier and more educated people. Brazil welcomed immigrants in a targeted way: as there was a shortage of engineers, electrical technicians, and teachers, for example, immigrants with specific qualifications and experience were among the first to be granted residency (Piller, 1996). They were people of different social statuses and political views compared to those who arrived in the first and the second waves. Brazil also offered asylum to tens of thousands of Europeans of Jewish origin, including Hungarians fleeing the Holocaust. During World War II, many Hungarian families were stuck in European camps before the great voyage, but during this time and under these circumstances, they were able to preserve and practice their Hungarian identity through community-building activities such as scouting and folk dancing.

The fourth and last major wave of migration was the emigration after the 1956 revolution. Thousands of young, educated people were forced to flee, mainly from Budapest. Thanks to the local representations in Brazil, which were solid and significant by this time, the integration of the immigrants from 1956 into Hungarian communities was much easier. Nevertheless, after the situation in Hungary had stabilized, many moved back to their homeland. Today's Hungarian community in São Paulo is considered the most populous in Latin America and comprises groups from the above-mentioned immigration waves and their descendants.

1.3.2. Hungarian institutions in São Paulo

In the 20th century, many associations were founded by European immigrant groups in the Brazilian metropolis (Némethy, 2005), but only a small percentage survived by the end of the millennium. As for the organizations and service providers established by the Hungarian community, some still exist (e.g., Restaurante Chárika, Clube XV de Março, Colégio Santo Américo, etc.), but officially, it is the Hungarian House and the Consulate General of Hungary, which are the leading institutions of the Hungarian community in São Paulo.

The oldest and most influential institution in the Hungarian community in São Paulo is the Association of Hungarian Entities of Brazil, or *Associação Húngara Auxiliadora do Brasil* (later known as Hungarian House), founded in 1926 by Hungarians who migrated to Brazil after World War I. Its statutes were based on the principles of the Deutscher Hilfsverein (German Aid Association), which by then had 60 years of experience. The current Hungarian House aims to foster and maintain Hungarian culture, language, and national identity. The Hungarian language is taught in the Hungarian House, coordinated by the organization's

management staff. On Hungarian public holidays, the Hungarian House regularly holds commemorative events, including performances by scouts and folk dancers, as well as speeches by invited guests from Hungary. Hungarian dinners, joint cookouts, Hungarian market, Easter, literature and chess circle, Christmas market, Hungarian mass - these and many other smaller events enrich the Hungarian community life, which is one of the most active among the Hungarian colonies in South America. The events are usually attended by various numbers of people, between 50 and 150.

The Consulate General of Hungary in São Paulo is located in the skyscraper of a corporate centre in the business district of the Brazilian metropolis. Today, after the hardships of the First and Second World Wars, the institution is once again hosting national celebrations and traditional festivities, with more and more visiting people from the colony. The institution is indispensable in organizing the Hungarian community life in São Paulo. Since the introduction of the simplified naturalization procedure by the Hungarian government in 2011, it has also provided citizenship for people of Hungarian ancestry and individuals married to Hungarian citizens. The procedure resulted in nearly 700,000 Hungarians from abroad being granted citizenship worldwide within five years. Many members of the Hungarian community in São Paulo have also taken advantage of simplified naturalization, and every year they can obtain their Hungarian documents in a ceremony at major events in the colony.

1.3.3. Linguistic landscape study

The focus of a previous study (Csrepka, 2022) was on the two Hungarian institutions, as only the Hungarian House and the Consulate have a significant number of Hungarian texts in São Paulo. The hypothesis was that, although these institutions are visited mainly by Hungarians and their descendants living in the area, due to the language attrition of younger generations, there are now many more signs with Portuguese text than Hungarian.

The data source of the study (77 photos) is the visual data, which consists of photos of the signs inside and outside the Hungarian House (50 photos) and the Hungarian Consulate General in São Paulo (27 photos). The early hypothesis that the two institutions had many more signs in Portuguese proved partly correct and partly wrong. According to the data, the Hungarian House has significantly more monolingual Hungarian signs. The reason is that Casa Húngara is the main meeting place for the Hungarian community. The main intention of the Hungarian House is to pass on Hungarian traditions, identity, and language to the younger generations, and therefore they intend to continue using the Hungarian language signs, too. There were no monolingual Hungarian signs at all at the Consulate General of Hungary, but the language itself is included in all bilingual and multilingual signs. Individuals who visit the institution, e.g., to apply for

Hungarian citizenship, are presumably not yet proficient in the language, hence the dominance of Portuguese and English on most signs.

The data collected accurately reflects the current situation of the Hungarian language in São Paulo - the desire to preserve the language, even if it is no longer the community's mother tongue. Most of the signs in the two institutions include Portuguese text - the overall results show a balance between Portuguese and Hungarian texts on the signs.

1.3.4. The Hungarian language within the community

Apart from the first-generation Hungarians, who have maintained their L1, Portuguese is the mother tongue of the diaspora. The younger generations use less and less Hungarian, and in many cases, English has become the second language instead of Hungarian. For parents from the first generation, it was natural to teach their children Hungarian, to enroll them in Hungarian scout troops, and later in folk dance groups. In the second and third generations, the previous trend is declining, mainly due to mixed marriages and rapid assimilation due to the hospitality of the Brazilians (Piller, 1996): their children speak less Hungarian, and nowadays, the working language of scouting and folk dancing is Portuguese. Nevertheless, the community cannot be blamed; their love and loyalty towards Hungarian culture and identity are just as unwavering as before.

The official Hungarian ceremonies are hosted in Portuguese, while the performances (scout shows, choir, recitations) are presented in Hungarian. However, this is more to preserve tradition than to ensure mutual intelligibility, as most people attending community events would have difficulty understanding Hungarian. It was initially upsetting for the older generation to experience the dominance of the Portuguese language even in the Hungarian ceremonies, but they also realized that this is an inevitable, even natural, process of generational change.

Hungarian expressions and accents typical of certain regions used by the first generation of emigrants were passed on to the children and grandchildren of the second and third generations. In the absence of continuous contact with present-day Hungary and the people living there, the new expressions, newcomers' words, and slang were not integrated into the language of the community over the past century. Grandchildren learned the variety of Hungarian their parents taught them. Their grandchildren's linguistic heritage is thus the Hungarian language of their Hungarian-born ancestors.

1.4. Research questions and hypotheses

There are various ways of differentiating between generations as well. The present study considers the first generation as the representatives of the community who were born in Hungary. Therefore, members of the second and third generations are the children and grandchildren of the first generation, already born in Brazil.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Hungarian with representatives of three different generations of the Hungarian community. The personal discussions were based on a predesigned set of questions. Lutz (1988) argues that when collecting data for anthropological work on language, the author's and the informants' acquisition of language skills is important to highlight. The researcher's linguistic repertoire in the language in question might be one of "the first and most significant ways that access to local ethno-psychological knowledge is obtained" (p.84). Pavlenko (2005) also states that the discussion about the linguistic histories and repertoires of both parts is indispensable with regard to the complex understanding of the results of a particular research. Considering the participants of a recent study, two of the first-generation interviewees had Hungarian as their mother tongue and Portuguese as a second language (completely fluent in both), and the rest had L1 Portuguese and L2 Hungarian. The ones having Hungarian as L2 did not have a high level of fluency. All participants had significant English knowledge, some in German, Spanish, and French. It occurred in some cases that languages besides Hungarian and Portuguese were involved in an answer:

(1) *"És minket kislányokat betettek egy öö... Egy ilyen francia kindergartenba..."*

("AND THEY PUT US LITTLE GIRLS IN A, ER... A FRENCH KINDERGARTEN...")

(a first generation Hungarian)

(2) *"Ő-ők mindig kapitalisták voltak. Kereszténykapitalisták, mindig. So what?"*

("THEY-THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CAPITALISTS. CHRISTIAN CAPITALISTS, ALWAYS. SO WHAT?")

(a first generation Hungarian)

The study points out the generations' perceptions of key factors such as identity, culture, and language. The hypothesis before conducting the interviews was that the younger the generation, the weaker the attachment is to Hungarian culture. However, since the participants of the interviews all had/have some connection to the Hungarian House, it can be assumed that they consider it essential to have strong bonds with the culture. Another hypothesis was that the youngest participants with dual identities chose their Brazilian identity as the more significant one over their Hungarian identity. Considering language proficiency, it can be presumed that the older representatives of the diaspora possess better Hungarian language skills.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

Semi-structured interviews in Hungarian were conducted with nine individuals, with each generation represented by three interviewees. Participants are Hungarian language users on a daily, weekly, or at least a monthly basis – depending on the generation. Among the first-generation members, two females (ages: 74 and 82) and one male (78) were asked for personal discussions. Similarly, two female (50 and 51) and one male (55) participants represented the second generation of Hungarians, and two young men (23 and 27) and a young woman (19) gave interviews from the third one.

Interviewees were aware of the interviewer's competence in Portuguese and English; therefore, they did not hesitate when they needed to code-switch into a different language. The researcher's mother tongue is Hungarian, and he is an L2 user in English and L3 user in Portuguese. During the recorded conversations, interviewees genuinely opened up as they felt the interviewer's friendly intention to integrate into the community; thus, Labov's paradox was avoided.

2.2. Methods

The participants answered 26 questions grouped around four themes: identity, language, family, and relations with Hungary and cultural habits. The present study focuses only on three aspects of these four themes: the participants' attitude toward the Hungarian language, culture, and identity. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with the representatives of the Hungarian community in São Paulo in 2020. The conversations were recorded using a mobile phone voice recorder and transcribed with specific reference to the spoken language features. The research was based on a qualitative method, understanding the problem with a small sample (9 interviews).

3. Results and discussion

Second language researchers usually separate second language (L2) and foreign language (FL): L2 is used in the daily life of an individual, and foreign language is the one that has been studied in an educational context. Regarding the term 'L2 user' suggested by Cook (1999, 2002), we can divide different types of language engagements. On the one hand, the term 'L2 user' avoids the constant use of the notion of 'non-native speaker,' and on the other, it sets up a possibility to differentiate language users who learn their language in the classroom or by themselves (L2/FL learners) and the ones that use their language in everyday life situations and purposes (L2 users). The focus group of the recent study is a group of L2 users of the Hungarian community living in São Paulo who share Hungarian and Brazilian dual citizenship. Individuals in this diaspora were either born in Hungary and learned Portuguese in their new homeland after their immigration or

were already born in Brazil and acquired Hungarian in their family or language courses as their second language.

According to Pavlenko (2005), bilinguals can also be categorized into specific groups regarding the context of language acquisition: coordinate, subordinate, and compound bilinguals. Language users forming the first group learn their languages in different contexts, while subordinate bilinguals master one language through another one. Hungarians in São Paulo belong to compound bilinguals, who master their languages in the same social and cultural environment. Members of the present study's focus group are L2 users of Hungarian within the diaspora that they formed throughout the past century. Representatives of the oldest generation learned Portuguese by adopting the country's majority language, using Hungarian among each other, and later teaching younger generations directly or indirectly. Therefore, it can indeed be stated that the Hungarian language is being used in the same social and cultural environment, irrespective of whether it is an L1, L2, or even L3.

Active members of the Hungarian community consider themselves individuals with a dual identity: Brazilian and Hungarian – the dominance of each identity depends mainly on the person's generation.. Hypothetically, the younger the participants are, the more they consider themselves Brazilian rather than Hungarian. Is their language use influenced by their dominant identity when communicating with an interlocutor who shares the same languages and identities? Emotions affect language choices, people attach great importance to choosing the language in their linguistic repertoire that properly fits the situation, how their languages are being used and what values are accompanied by each language. Heider (1991) agrees that some languages are better suited for an individual when it comes to expressing emotions.

(3) *“Ömm szeretem a magyar nyelvet, vannak dolgok amiket úgy gondolom hogy csak magyarul tudok kifejezni.”*

(“WELL, I LOVE HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE, THERE ARE THINGS I THINK I CAN ONLY EXPRESS IN HUNGARIAN”)

(a second-generation Hungarian)

Another participant works as a Hungarian-Portuguese interpreter in court. For him, translating into his beloved Hungarian language in favor of Hungarian criminals caught in Brazil creates an awkward situation. For him, the language is associated with childhood and adolescent memories, dreams, literature, and the tastes of traditional Hungarian dishes, not with crimes.

The Hungarian language is used less frequently in families, especially in mixed marriages, where generally, the Hungarian parent considers him/herself more Hungarian than Brazilian, compared to the children, who are already more Brazilians than Hungarians. Undoubtedly, the Hungarian language can be

maintained much more efficiently in families where both parents are Hungarian or have Hungarian ancestors.

(4) *“Mi fent a szobában ment a portugálul nyelv, és ha szülők ott voltak akkor felkiabáltak: Milyen nyelven beszéltek? Akkor átfordultunk magyarra, beszélünk valamennyit, akkor megin portugál, s akkor megint jött letről: Milyen nyelven beszéltek? Ezt például én nem csinálom a gyerekekkel, tudod? Ebbe lesz különbség. Csomó szókins el fog veszni, hogy én nem szólok rájuk...”*

(“WE USED TO SPEAK PORTUGUESE UPSTAIRS, AND THE PARENTS YELLED AT US: WHAT LANGUAGE ARE YOU USING? THEN WE SWITCHED TO HUNGARIAN FOR A WHILE, THEN BACK TO PORTUGUESE, AND WE HEARD AGAIN: WHAT LANGUAGE ARE YOU USING? FOR EXAMPLE, I DON’T DO THAT WITH MY CHILDREN, YOU KNOW? THERE WILL BE A DIFFERENCE. A LOT OF VOCABULARY WILL BE LOST BECAUSE I AM NOT ASKING THEM TO SPEAK MY LANGUAGE.”)

(a second-generation Hungarian living in mixed marriage)

Language choices can be determined by the bonds individuals have with their languages and identities, and their actual feelings might be affected by the language they speak or hear. Religiosity, for instance, has a great tradition in the Hungarian diaspora worldwide. In São Paulo, the first Hungarian immigrants built churches and, even today, the community members can attend a mass, listening to priests and pastors of Hungarian origin.

(5) *“Tartom egyformaképpen a hittemet, úgy ahogy tanultam magyarul, csak most portugálul tartom, mert inkább a portugál misére járok, talán egy kicsit átáll az embernek a hitje is, de hogyha néha beszélek erről magyarul a papámmal, akkor ez visszajön és szerintem ez nagyon erősen hozzá van öő fűzve a magyarsághoz.”*

(“I KEEP MY FAITH THE SAME WAY, THE WAY I LEARNED IT IN HUNGARIAN, BUT NOW I KEEP IT IN PORTUGUESE, BECAUSE I PREFER GOING TO THE PORTUGUESE MASS, MAYBE I CHANGE MY FAITH A LITTLE BIT, BUT IF I TALK ABOUT IT SOMETIMES IN HUNGARIAN WITH MY FATHER, IT COMES BACK AND I THINK IT’S VERY STRONGLY CONNECTED TO BEING HUNGARIAN.”)

(a second-generation Hungarian)

In Example (5), as her heritage language, Hungarian has more significant dominance in religious life due to the bonds she shares with the language and the memories she carries by acquiring the Hungarian language. Weinreich (1953) states that bilinguals might have different emotional links to each language.

Involvement of one language in determining emotional attachments throughout the life of a bilingual can create bonds strong enough to cause conflicts with the bonds established by the other language. This is another explanation for why the level of language attrition is getting higher and the level of language maintenance lower in younger Hungarian generations.

Languages can be tightly connected to national, cultural, and religious identities and social status, hence some languages (and therefore identities) can be linked to higher or lower classes (Heller, 1992). Surprisingly, some examples show that the Hungarian language and identity seem more appealing than one would think, and being part of the Hungarian community can even lead to jealousy.

(6) *“Néha alakulnak furcsa helyzetek, mindig úgy néz ki, hogy az ember annyira büszke, öö sokszor van az, hogy azt mondják ‘jaaaj asszisi hogy jobb, mert magyar és nem brazil’, szóval kicsit próbálok vigyázni erre, de néha, nem egyszer, hanem többször eltávozom a brazil barátnőimtől emiatt, mert érzem, hogy ők féltékenyek, hogy „ah ela é húngara” és akkor így néznek, hogy... Tudod...”*

(“SOMETIMES THERE ARE STRANGE SITUATIONS, IT ALWAYS SEEMS THAT YOU’RE SO PROUD, UM, A LOT OF TIMES THEY SAY ‘YEAH, SHE THINKS SHE’S BETTER BECAUSE SHE’S HUNGARIAN AND NOT BRAZILIAN’, SO I TRY TO BE A LITTLE BIT CAREFUL ABOUT THAT, BUT SOMETIMES, NOT ONCE BUT SEVERAL TIMES, I GET DISTANT FROM MY BRAZILIAN FRIENDS BECAUSE OF THAT, BECAUSE I FEEL THAT THEY’RE JEALOUS, LIKE ‘AH ELA É HÚNGARA’ AND THEN THEY LOOK AT ME LIKE... YOU KNOW...”)

(a second-generation Hungarian)

(7) *“Volt egy olyan szituáció, amikor valamér ki lettem tüntetve hogy ööö legjobb menedzser vagy mittudomén mi, és akkor az egyik alkalmazott mikor megtudta gúnyosan azt mondta hogy biztos azért lettem a legjobb menedzser, mert magyar, mert európai vagyok.”*

(“THERE WAS A SITUATION WHERE I WAS SOMEHOW AWARDED THAT I WAS THE BEST MANAGER OR WHATEVER, AND THEN ONE OF THE EMPLOYEES, WHEN HE FOUND OUT, SAID SARCASTICALLY THAT I MUST HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO BE THE BEST MANAGER BECAUSE I’M HUNGARIAN, BECAUSE I’M EUROPEAN.”)

(a first-generation Hungarian)

However, in general, São Paulo is neither considered to be the hotbed of linguistic discrimination nor is the process of misrecognition (Gal & Irvine, 1995)

perceptible, since the Brazilian metropolis is a melting pot of numerous minorities, cultures, and languages.

3.1. Attitude towards the Hungarian language

The three representatives of the first generation acquired Hungarian as their mother tongue and unanimously claim that their attachment to it is still very strong. All three participants speak Hungarian fluently, with occasional code-switches to Portuguese, English, or German. To the question ‘Can someone consider him/herself Hungarian without proficient Hungarian language knowledge?’ they give a strict answer, which clearly shows their ideology about the importance of language maintenance:

(8) *“Ha már valakinek ez az állampolgársága, akkor lege... legalább tudja azt a nyelvet, beszélje azt a nyelvet. Nekem ez az elképzelésem.”*

(“IF ONE HAS A CITIZENSHIP, THEN HE SHOULD AT LEAST KNOW THE LANGUAGE, SPEAK THE LANGUAGE. THAT’S MY IDEA.”)

(a first-generation Hungarian)

(9) *“Én személyesen nem találom igazságosnak. Nem találom igazságosnak, de hát Istenem ez van, ez a törvény, én ez ellen nem tudok mit csinálni. Én nagyon furcsának találom.”*

(“I PERSONALLY DON’T FIND IT FAIR. I DON’T FIND IT FAIR, BUT GOD, THAT’S THE LAW, I CAN’T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. I FIND IT VERY STRANGE.”)

(a first-generation Hungarian)

Two out of three interviewees even expressed their displeasure with Hungarian parents who do not teach their mother tongue to their children when they have a chance to.

The L1 of the second generation is already Portuguese, not Hungarian. The latter is learned mainly within their families. All three participants of this generation appear to be more open-minded concerning the interdependence of Hungarian citizenship and language command.

(10) *„Lehet, hogy kezdésnek így is lehetséges magyarnak lenni, de be fog jönni a nyelv, hogy kezdje betölteni azt a megértést, hogy tényleg mi is a magyar. Én asszem hogy még az érzéseken is átérzem mondjuk úgy, nemcsak a nyelven.”*

(“IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO BE HUNGARIAN FOR A START, BUT THE LANGUAGE WILL COME IN AND START TO FILL IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT ‘HUNGARIANNESS’ REALLY IS. I THINK I EVEN GET IT THROUGH MY FEELINGS, SO TO SPEAK, NOT JUST THE LANGUAGE.”)

(a second-generation Hungarian)

For descendants of the first generation, identification with the culture and traditions is equally important as mastering the language. They consider being Hungarian without proficient language knowledge possible, but they also admit that language is crucial. Learning and using Hungarian in their families were important both for them and their parents:

(11) *“Mindig magyarul beszéltünk. Fontos volt, hogy mikor volt valami brazil velünk, ne beszéljünk magyarul. Hogy ők megértik, hogy mit mondunk. De mikor csak mi voltunk, mindig magyarul beszéltünk.”*

(“WE ALWAYS SPOKE HUNGARIAN. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT WHEN WE HAD A BRAZILIAN WITH US, WE DIDN’T SPEAK HUNGARIAN. SO THAT THEY WOULD UNDERSTAND WHAT WE WERE SAYING. BUT WHEN IT WAS JUST US, WE ALWAYS SPOKE HUNGARIAN.”)

(a second-generation Hungarian)

Participants from the third generation are the least proficient in Hungarian. Code-switching often occurs, in the majority of cases, to the Portuguese language:

(12) *“Hogy mennyire fontos az Isten és hogy mennyire fontos a-a religiosidade, tudod?”*

(“HOW IMPORTANT GOD IS AND HOW IMPORTANT RELIGIOSIDADE IS, YOU KNOW?”)

(a third-generation Hungarian)

(13) *“A nevelés miatt, né? A integridade, honestidade, respeito, aa hogy az ember hogy viselkedik a másik..másokkal.”*

(“BECAUSE OF EDUCATION, NÉ? A INTEGRIDADE, HONESTIDADE, RESPEITO, MM HOW ONE BEHAVES WITH OTHER..OTHERS.”)

(a third-generation Hungarian)

The third-generation Hungarian descendants’ mother tongue is Portuguese, and their L2 is often English or Spanish. Thus, Hungarian might only be their L3 or even L4. Only one of the three participants communicates in Hungarian with his family; the others use Hungarian only through scouting or in the language courses provided by the Hungarian House. They all agree that proficiency in the Hungarian language is not a requirement for someone identifying as Hungarian.

(14) *“A cserkészeten csak kevesek beszél magyarul, né? Mégis van cserkészet, van magyar törti..történelem tanítás meg irodalom is ott. Mindenki szeret járni, büszkén szeret járni mint magyar, pedig már régóta portugálul megy minden.”*

(“ONLY A FEW AMONG THE SCOUTS SPEAK HUNGARIAN EITHER, NÉ? YET THERE IS SCOUTING, THERE IS HUNGARIAN HISTORY AND LITERATURE TEACHING THERE. EVERYBODY

LOVES TO ATTEND, PROUDLY LOVES TO ATTEND AS A HUNGARIAN, EVEN THOUGH EVERYTHING HAS BEEN IN PORTUGUESE FOR A LONG TIME.”)

(a third-generation Hungarian)

3.2. Attitude towards the Hungarian culture

The oldest generation of immigrants forms the majority of the audience in the occasional Hungarian events. The Hungarian House offers weekly rehearsals for folk dancers, reunions of groups with different hobbies, Hungarian dinner every second week, large-scale celebrations on Hungarian national holidays, and representatives of the first generation are always the guests.

(15) *“Hogy szoktam ünnepelni a magyar eseményeket? Úgy, hogy vagy részt veszek az ünnepélyen vagy magam vagyok a-aaa az organizációban, vagy én szerepelek, vagy ott vagyok, de hát természetesen száz százalékosan ott vagyok. Vagy mint hallgató, vagy mint rendező, vagy mint szereplő, vagy mind a három.”*

(“HOW DO I CELEBRATE HUNGARIAN EVENTS? EITHER I TAKE PART IN THE CELEBRATION OR I’M IN THE ORGANIZATION, OR I’M INVOLVED OR I’M THERE, BUT OF COURSE I’M THERE ONE HUNDRED PERCENT. EITHER AS AUDIENCE, OR AS A DIRECTOR, OR AS A PERFORMER, OR ALL THREE.”)

(a first-generation Hungarian)

All three participants agree that maintaining the Hungarian culture is one of the most significant elements in their identities. To the question regarding the importance of knowing Hungarian literature, music, theatre, and history, the eldest participant’s answer is straightforward:

(16) *„Nagyon fontos. Hozzátartozik a kultúrámhöz. Az én kultúrámhöz, és szerintem hozzá kéne hogy tartozzon minden magyar származásúnak a kultúrájához. Nagyon gazdag, nagyon gazdag a mi magyar kultúránk minden szempontból.”*

(“IT IS VERY IMPORTANT. IT IS PART OF MY CULTURE. IT’S PART OF MY CULTURE AND I THINK IT SHOULD BE PART OF THE CULTURE OF EVERY PERSON OF HUNGARIAN ORIGIN. OUR HUNGARIAN CULTURE IS VERY RICH, VERY RICH IN ALL ASPECTS.”)

(a first-generation Hungarian)

Only one out of three second-generation participants is familiar with Hungarian literature, history, and music; their attitude toward this aspect of culture is not definite.

(17) *“Szóval kéne, hogy fontosabb is legyen, de ezek nem olyan dolgok, amik amik annyira vonzzanak igazából, tudod?”*

(“SO, IT SHOULD BE MORE IMPORTANT, BUT IT’S NOT THE KIND OF THING THAT REALLY APPEALS TO ME, YOU KNOW?”

(a second-generation Hungarian)

Because of possible pressure from the parents’ side, a participant feels guilty about not getting more involved in these topics. Similarly, another interviewee points out that she enjoys and pays attention to the theatre and movies, but history for her is only Brazilian history.

(18) *“Filmek, színházak én szeretem. Szeretem hallani a magyar magyarul beszélni, mert nagyon más, a- amit az ember itt hallgat, nem? Történelmet.. csak brazil emlékezés.”*

(“MOVIES, THEATERS I LOVE. I LIKE TO HEAR HUNGARIAN SPOKEN IN HUNGARIAN BECAUSE IT’S VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU HEAR HERE, ISN’T IT? HISTORY...JUST BRAZILIAN MEMORIES.”

(a second-generation Hungarian)

The active members of the second-generation immigrants in their 40s and 50s are the community leaders in São Paulo now. They form the directorate of the Hungarian House, for instance. One of the participants keeps the traditional customs even outside the events of the Hungarian House, and she involves her Brazilian husband, too:

(19) *“Aztán persze, hogy locsolás, hogy tojásfestés, mmöő húsvétkor. Szóval ezt a férjem is megtanulta és ő is csinálja és szereti csinálni és én büszke vagyok, hogy ezek benne vannak az én családomba mái napig.”*

(“THEN OF COURSE, EASTER SPRINKLING, PAINTING EGGS, ETC. SO THAT’S WHAT MY HUSBAND LEARNED TO DO AND HE DOES IT AND HE LOVES TO DO IT AND I’M PROUD TO HAVE IT IN MY FAMILY TO THIS DAY.”)

(a second-generation Hungarian)

Third-generation Hungarians are the new hope of the community. The youngest ones interested in culture maintenance participate in scouting, attend folk dance rehearsals and language courses. However, as the world changes, this generation has more and more impulses at both local and international levels; they have more chances to travel than their ancestors did, and with the globalization of the English language and the Western culture, it is hard for older immigrant generations to pass on the interest in maintaining the Hungarian language and culture.

(20) „*Fontos annyiból, hogy mindig mondom, hogy oké, valamikor fogom tudni ezt (irodalom, történelem, színház), de öömm nem hívja a figyelmemet ez. Brazíl vagyok.*”

(“IT’S IMPORTANT IN THAT I ALWAYS SAY, OKAY, I’LL KNOW THIS AT SOME POINT! BUT IT DOESN’T CALL MY ATTENTION.”)

(a third-generation Hungarian)

Another participant did not understand why cultural maintenance was important in his family:

(21) “*Az ember ismerte Magyarországot arról, amit a nagyszülők meséltek, a szülők meséltek, és oké ömm leült a nagypapa meg a papa, hogy meghallgatjuk vasárnapi ebédkor a Liszt Ferenc..ö...cet, és akkor ott sírva fakad a papa meg a nagypapa egy ebédnél, most mi va.. mi történt, tudod?*”

(“YOU KNEW HUNGARY FROM WHAT YOUR GRANDPARENTS TOLD YOU, WHAT YOUR PARENTS TOLD YOU, AND OKAY, UM, UM, FATHER AND GRANDPA SAT DOWN TO LISTEN TO FERENC LISZT AT SUNDAY LUNCH, AND THEN THERE’S FATHER AND GRANDPA CRYING, WHAT HAPPENED, YOU KNOW.”)

(a third-generation Hungarian)

3.3. Attitude toward Hungarian identity

There is no doubt among the first-generation participants in the declaration of Hungarian identity. They consider themselves Hungarians (or Europeans) rather than Brazilians; their bonds with their Hungarian identities are unbreakable.

(22) „*Mindig magyarnak. Mindig. Brazíliából jövök, de magyar vagyok.. Mindig, mindig, mindig, mindig.*”

(“ALWAYS HUNGARIAN. ALWAYS. I COME FROM BRAZIL, BUT I AM HUNGARIAN.. ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS.”)

(a first-generation Hungarian)

The younger female participant claims that most of her friends have Hungarian origins because they have numerous things in common.

(23) “*Szinte kilencvenöt százalékban a baráti köröm magyarokból áll, így hát én csak magyarok között vagyok. Ők legalább megértik, hogy én mit akarok mondani és én megértem, hogy ők mit akarnak mondani. Szoktunk színházba menni, moziba menni, enni, inni, mulatni, például emegyünk például Lizihez a sítióba és egész nap csak énekelni megyünk magyar népdalokat. Ha elmegyünk egyik nap a csak azért hogy verseket mondjunk, s akkor egész nap verseket mondunk.*”

(“ALMOST NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF MY FRIENDS ARE HUNGARIANS, SO I’M ONLY AMONG HUNGARIANS. AT LEAST THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT I HAVE TO SAY AND I

UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY. WE GO TO THE THEATRE, TO THE CINEMA, WE EAT, DRINK, HAVE FUN, WE GO TO LIZI'S PLACE IN THE SÍTIO AND SING HUNGARIAN FOLK SONGS ALL DAY LONG. IF WE GO OUT ONE DAY JUST TO RECITE POEMS, AND THEN WE RECITE POEMS ALL DAY LONG.”)

(a first-generation Hungarian)

The question of identity is less obvious for the second generation. They were born and raised in Brazil and have spoken Portuguese since early childhood, and it is more common for them to find Brazilian partners. The second generation is generally indecisive when choosing their more dominant identities.

(24) „Attól függ, hogy hol vagyok. Ha Európában, akkor biztos magyarnak. Ha Amerikában, akkor legtöbbször brazilnak.”

(“IT DEPENDS ON WHERE I AM. IF I'M IN EUROPE, I'M DEFINITELY HUNGARIAN. IF I'M IN AMERICA, MOST OF THE TIME I'M BRAZILIAN.”)

(a second-generation Hungarian)

For them, the most convenient state is to feel the components of both identities.

(25) “Nagyon érdekes és igazából az ember nem is magyar és nem is brazil. Az az igazs.. hogy mi ‘brungariok’ vagyunk. Igen, és ez.. evvel kicsikét megtaláltuk a helyünket, mer igazából nem vagy egy sem, s a másik sem. Vagy mind a kettő, igen.”

(IT'S VERY INTERESTING AND YOU'RE NOT REALLY HUNGARIAN OR BRAZILIAN. THE TRUTH IS... THAT WE ARE 'BRUNGARIANS'. YES, AND THAT'S WE'VE FOUND OUR PLACE A LITTLE BUT, BECAUSE WE'RE NOT REALLY ONE AND THE OTHER. OT BOTH, YES.”)

(a second-generation Hungarian)

Generally, Hungarian identity is much less dominant than Brazilian among third-generation members. Although two of the three participants assign great importance to their Hungarian identity, these participants are attached to the Hungarian House. There are only a few exceptions in this generation that considers him/herself more or even equally Hungarian than Brazilian. To the question “what nationality would you present yourself as in a third country?” all the answers were: Brazilian.

4. Conclusions

Results confirmed the hypothesis that generational change weakened attachment to the Hungarian language and identity. It is a general and natural process that the youngest generation's contact with the culture and traditions their ancestors represent is loosening, despite the extraordinary efforts of the leaders of the Hungarian colony and the success of various Hungarian-centred events. During the past decades and century in the Hungarian diaspora, mixed marriages have also played an inevitable role in forming national identities. For first-generation immigrants, finding Hungarian partners in São Paulo was most common if they had not already arrived in their new homeland with Hungarian spouses. Two out of the three participants of the study representing second-generation immigrants are married or live in a relationship with Brazilian partners; only one has a Hungarian spouse. Considering the youngest generation, they all have Brazilian partners.

Despite the attrition in their Hungarian language and the increasing dominance of their Brazilian identity, the community members often emphasize that it makes them feel proud to be Hungarians, even if their language skills are insufficient. Belonging to the same colony, sharing the same traditions, listening to the stories about the motherland of their ancestors, and participating in events such as folk-dance festivals and cultural dinners are the bonds that will keep the community together also in the future when even fewer individuals will have the ability to speak Hungarian. As long as *Casa Húngara* stays a popular scene for those who intend to maintain their Hungarian language and identity, and as far as the interest of applying for Hungarian citizenship in the Consulate stays remarkable, the Hungarian diaspora in São Paulo will stand still as one of the most active Hungarian communities overseas.

Maintaining contact and communication with Hungary is paramount in language maintenance and considering questions of identity for Hungarians and Hungarian descendants living abroad. In the past years and decades, the programmes of the Rákóczi Association, Balassi Institute, and the State Secretariat for National Policy have significantly contributed to the indirect provision of natural language development for Hungarians living in the diaspora. As a result of these programmes, young Hungarians from Brazil can spend time in Hungary for study purposes, and young Hungarians from Hungary can help promote the cultural life of Hungarians living in the diaspora.

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