Technology and language shift: the case of two Brazilian faith settings

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Ethnic churches have increasingly adopted the use of technology as part of their services and as a way of maintaining transnational links (Garbin & Vásquéz, 2012; Levitt, 2007; Oosterbaan, 2011; Sheringham, 2011; Vertovec, 2009). Therefore, it is highly relevant to consider the impact of the virtual world on the religious practices of migrants (Vásquéz, 2010) and on their use of languages. There are signs that technology may contribute to the transmission of religious beliefs, however, technology can threaten the transmission of minority languages due to English being accepted as the language of this medium (Annamalai, 2006). This paper adopts a micro-perspective to the analysis of language planning (Baldauf, 2006; Ferguson, 2010; Hatoss, 2006; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Souza et al, 2012) in faith settings in London. The interface of language, religion and technology is explored through the examination of computer-mediated communication, such as websites. The discussions are illustrated with examples from two of the most common religions among Brazilians both in their country of origin as in their settling countries: Pentecostalism and Kardecism. It is argued that both groups use technology to develop virtual transnational networks that will support their language ideologies in relation to the transmission of religious beliefs.

Keywords: LPP, technology, religion.