While most world languages spoken by minority populations are in serious danger of becoming extinct, Pennsylvania Dutch is thriving. In fact, the number of Pennsylvania Dutch speakers is growing exponentially, although it is spoken by less than one-tenth of one percent of the United States population and has remained for the most part an oral vernacular without official recognition or support. A true sociolinguistic wonder, Pennsylvania Dutch has been spoken continuously since the late eighteenth century, even though it has never been “refreshed” by later waves of immigration from abroad.

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