Introduction of a Wapishana–English Bilingual Education Programme: An Evaluation of the Early Stages

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Table of contents

Chapter 7: Conclusion

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List of figures

List of tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1   Introduction

Article 13
1.   Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons. […]

Article 14
1. Indigenous people have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the state without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

(United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007: 7)

Article 13.1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes that Indigenous histories, languages, beliefs, and cultural practices are valid forms of self-expression, which Indigenous Peoples have the right to transmit to their children and future generations. Article 14.1, complementing the above, stresses that Indigenous children have the right to an education that provides them with continuity of personal development in their own language and culture. Article 14.2 further stresses that Indigenous children have the right to equality of access to the national education systems in their countries. Finally, Article 14.3 emphasizes that countries/states facilitate the Indigenous forms of cultural transmission by encouraging and supporting their implementation.

These articles of the United Nations Declaration the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, signed and ratified by states, recognize some of the fundamental human rights that all peoples have. According to Jansen and Jiménez (2017: 26), these articles of the declaration, based on moral and ethical principles together with social norms, "precede and transcend the letter of law". Essentially, the internationally recognized Human Rights have not only set the international standards by which Indigenous Peoples can affirm their collective rights in order to find solutions to their social problems, but also for legitimating the use of their native languages and cultures in education.

The UN declaration was not the first to recognize the importance of addressing the rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, it is the prime current example of an international document to which the Indigenous Peoples can refer to claim their fundamental rights and in turn transmit knowledge of such rights to others. The declaration may have been inspired and informed in part by the 169th agreement of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which was written eighteen years prior. This ILO instrument recognized the use of Indigenous Peoples' languages in their education. Specifically, article 28 states that the children who belonged to the Indigenous or Tribal Peoples should "be taught to read and write in their own language or in a language most commonly used by the group to which they belong" (Feiring 2013: 43). Based on these international standards, Indigenous Peoples may speak from a position of strength, claiming a fundamental human right while at the same time defending and dignifying their Indigenous languages and cultures. Should states take the responsibility for the ratification of the above-named articles of the 169th agreement of the ILO and the UN declaration, the Indigenous Peoples will be further facilitated in addressing their social problems connected with language and culture.

Indigenous people around the world are beset by both unique and systemic social and educational problems. A key example of such problems is that of educational underachievement by children, as expressed by Baker (1995: 185):

> … when bilingual children exhibit under-achievement, the attributed reason is sometimes a mismatch between home and school. Such a mismatch is seen as not just about language differences but also about dissimilarities in culture, values and beliefs.

Many Indigenous communities are the archetype of the link between home–school mismatch and educational underachievement by children. In the Wapishana communities in Guyana—the focus of this PhD research—the

Wapishana language is the mother tongue while the dominant and official language of Guyana is English. Despite the fact that the Wapishana children do not know or barely know English on their entry into nursery school, they find themselves primarily, though not exclusively, in an English-only instructional environment. This is because the head teacher and teachers, despite being Wapishana and often fluent in the Wapishana language, begin and continue the school's reading programme and other subjects in English, the norm in all government-run schools. Consequently, one head teacher shared that over a period of time an analysis of the National Grade Two Assessment revealed that a majority of children in Wapishana communities were not achieving the literacy and numeracy benchmarks set by the Ministry of Education. This academic underachievement by children led teachers to realize that the majority of Wapishana children have a lack of requisite second language experiences on entry to school. The realization that the children are at such a disadvantage is consistent with the "recognition of a social problem connected with language" (Fasoldd 1984: 250). This language-related challenge for children especially in their education is, however, not confined to the Wapishana and other Indigenous communities in the country. Similar challenges are encountered by Indigenous communities in other countries of South America, such as Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, Venezuela. and El Salvador (Mora 2014: 16) and by culturally diverse communities elsewhere in the world such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, The Philippines, and Thailand (Kosonen et al. 2007: 18–37).[1] In fact, statistically speaking, nearly 40% of people around the world have no access to first-language or mother-tongue education (Walter and Benson 2012: 23). Returning to the Wapishana, the teachers' motivation was to address the dissimilarities in the language and culture experienced by the children. The most useful initial strategy for stakeholders who want to remedy this situation is the reintroduction of the children's first language and cultural context in the formal school setting, beginning at the kindergarten or the nursery level. This strategy will provide the young learners with continuity of their prior knowledge and experiences, since language is embedded in culture. Such continuity would be most beneficial for learners because it will lay the foundation for the literacy aspects of the learners' second language and future academic work in school.

The theoretical basis for the aforementioned strategy is the transferability of children's knowledge and skills from the mother tongue to

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1 Culturally diverse communities are groups of people who (a) share cultures (or ethnicities) and/or languages of their own that distinguishes them from other groups of people; and (b) in terms of numbers, are fewer than the predominant groups in a given state (Kosonen et al. 2007: 1).

the second language and that children's second language learning is influenced considerably with respect to the development of their mother tongue (Malone 2016: 2). Such theoretical basis has been established in part through large-scale research in North America (Benson and Young 2016: 2) and substantiated in other countries, particularly through the Latin American experience of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) which is "one of the varieties of bilingual education aimed at finding answers not only to the problem of illiteracy but also such issues as social integration of Indigenous communities together with the preservation of their cultural and linguistic diversity" (Szelivánov 2015: 35). More evidence for the advantages of using a mother tongue-based approach to education in bilingual/multilingual contexts is briefly reviewed in Chapter 4. Indeed, even though such overwhelming evidence comes from countries where the dominant languages are English and Spanish, mother tongue-based education certainly has high relevance to a country like Guyana where the dominant and national language of education is English, but where smaller populations such as those in the indigenous communities still speak their own native languages robustly.

The term bilingual education "usually refers to the use of two (or more) languages of instruction at some point in the student's school career" (Cummins 1996: 99). More recently, bilingual education may be referred to as "the use of two languages in a formal education system" (Bühmann and Trudell (2008: 8) or "as a system that uses two languages in the instruction and in the curriculum, more or less in an equal manner" (Jiménez 2015: 5). However, bilingual education implies more than the above definitions. According to Cummins, the term bilingual education is generally defined in relation to how particular goals are achieved; therefore, proficiency in two languages is not necessarily a goal of bilingual education. As in the case of bilingual indigenous education in the rural environment in Mexico, "it has been common to teach… first in the L1 and then gradually introduce the L2, until gradually achieving the displacement of the L1" (Recendiz 2008: 115). This is an example of the most common model of bilingual education, in which children are transitioned from learning in the mother tongue to learning in the dominant or national language, promoting monolingualism as opposed to promoting bilingualism or "building multilingualism and multiliteracy" (Benson and Young 2016: 2). The routes to and models of bilingual education are further discussed in Chapter 4 (see Sections 4.3 and 4.5.1, respectively).

In this chapter, I share some of the major reasons, sources of inspiration and justification for the project that led to this thesis (Section 1.2). I then present the thesis statement together with the research questions

that generate the core of the research data (Section 1.3). The significance and the limitations of the study are next considered in the context within which the study took place (Section 1.4), followed by a description of the variety of methods employed to collect data (Section 1.5). In the last section, I give an overview of the chapters to follow (Section 1.6).

1.2   The motivation for the Wapishana–English bilingual education approach

Wapishana teachers have long recognized that part of the educational difficulties faced by their pupils was the language mismatch problem. Driven by a responsibility to be more resourceful in overcoming their children's underachievement, the head teacher and teachers in one Wapishana village sought a strategic intervention in 2014—together with the representatives of the village, the government, and some non-governmental organizations—in the conventional approach to their teaching. While the common historical convention has been to employ the children's second language (English) as the language of instruction, the teachers shifted their attention starting with the children's first language (Wapishana). This paradigm shift was influenced by a reflection on the successes of past Wapishana literacy efforts of which I was part (see Chapter 3 for more details). Besides being an Indigenous educator working in the community to which I belong, I was specifically contacted based on my experience as the coordinator of the Wapishana instruction programme that was run between 2000 and 2002 in schools of the South Rupununi (See Section 3.3.4). This work enabled me to gain experience on the successes and constraints of such a programme. As such, it was perceived that I might be able to give valuable input in the light of a proposed Wapishana-based bilingual education programme, that is, the integrating of Wapishana pre-reading and pre-writing instruction in nursery classes, leading further to Wapishana reading and writing instruction in the early grades of the primary school. Thus, as community members, we shared common interests to redressing the children's underachievement. In other words, our collective, locally initiated advocacy for teaching reading and writing in Wapishana first, as a foundation upon which academic development can be built in the schools, formed part of the motivation. In this way, the teachers' self-identification of their own challenge and self-determination of the related solution are in line with the key concept that "bottom-up practices are a good foundation for strong bilingual education programs" (Benson 2004: 7). Similarly, a mother tongue-based bilingual education programme tends to be successful when it "begins at the level of the local community itself" (Lewis and Simons 2014: 46).

My efforts in advancing initial literacy in Wapishana village schools can be traced back to planning the integration of Wapishana literacy in village schools in 2000. Several major activities/events associated with Wapishana literacy by year include the following: participating in a UNICEF-sponsored workshop entitled "Delivery of Improved Education in Region 9" in 2000; coordinating a Wapishana literacy instruction programme in nursery schools and grades 1 and 2 of primary schools in six villages from 2000 to 2003; participating in an international course entitled "Bridging mother tongue to the school language" in 2005; coordinating an adult literacy programme for Wapishana villages from 2011 to 2014; and collaborating with stakeholders for the advocacy of a Wapishana based-instruction in village schools from 2014 to 2016.

To begin with, one source of inspiration came from a recommendation of stakeholders of Region 9 at a UNICEF workshop that I attended in April 2000.[2] The stakeholders recommended that Indigenous languages be taught in schools. This recommendation was later documented in the Blueprint for the Delivery of Improved Education in Region 9 (2000: 6).

Although the teaching of reading and writing in Wapishana in at least six nursery and six primary schools has been tried over the years 2000 to 2003, it has not been incorporated into the formal educational system, partly because "there is no explicit policy that addresses any special education programme for Amerindian children in Guyana" (Amerindian Peoples Plan 2014: 4). Therefore, with the current government's support for a bilingual education approach in Wapishana communities, my interest in it was naturally reignited.

The opportunity to continue and finish the work I had discontinued in 2005—designing a Wapishana-based literacy programme as an initial literacy strategy for children—served as another inspiration to write this thesis. The abandonment of the work was due to a break in communication with some professionals who shared similar interests with me as well as an educational policy environment that implicitly emphasized English over mother tongue instruction in schools. Initially, I had begun the work based on the training I received through a one-month international course entitled "Bridging mother tongue to the school language". I had envisioned that the application of the knowledge gained would enable me to make a contribution to the enhancement of the Wapishana children's academic growth. Over the

2 The UNICEF Amazon Programme was a special international programme concerned with developmental projects in Guyana during the late 1990s. The workshop brought together stakeholders for discussions on a Blueprint for the Delivery of Improved Education in Region 9.

last two decades, successive governments had indicated their verbal support to have indigenous languages taught in schools of the predominantly indigenous communities.

Recent developments in the communities in the context of Wapishana literacy have given me further encouragement. An adult literacy programme to teach reading and writing in Wapishana from 2011 to 2014, resulted in approximately 1,000 individuals now literate in their mother tongue. This result fostered the expectation that the increased number of mother tongue readers and writers would lead to fuller participation in parent–teacher meetings, as well as facilitating progress in the implementation of the project.

Beginning in 2014, our communal advocacy for mother tongue-based instruction in the village schools received both national and international attention from national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL, international), Jesuit Missions (Guyana), Fe y Alegría (Bolivia), and the supranational organization, UNICEF, with an office in Guyana.[3] One of the implications of such attention is that, as partners or stakeholders of educational programmes in the country, these national/international NGOs are more likely to access external funding and appropriate technical personnel for projects that require additional capital spending on the part of the government. The emphasis on international assistance is of relevance given that the bilingual education programme may be the first of its kind to be piloted among communities in a country that has been accustomed to a conventional monolingual education system. Where multilingual literacy is concerned, it is significantly a "more complicated issue than a monolingual one; it requires more efforts, financial contribution and well-organized strategies" (Szelivánov 2015: 37). It is desirable that at some point such projects are eventually run independent of international funding. Another reason for taking international assistance into account may be on ideological grounds in the sense that some governments may need to change their perspectives on such programmes. In this respect, "International contacts or exchanges are important to overcome nationalist ideology" (Jiménez 2015: 7). International influence may come into play in cases, for example, where some governments (such as those of the Latin American countries of Peru, Mexico, and Guatemala) have actively

3 The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) is a faith-based organization. The Jesuit Missions is a religious-based Catholic body that has had a presence in what was formerly known as British Guiana, now Guyana, since early colonial times. Fe y Alegría is another religious-based Catholic organization that has been working in several Latin American countries (Mora 2014: 14). UNICEF is an international organization concerned with the development of children.

participated in initiatives involving bilingual education policy, but which needs to be more of an academic or social justice concern rather than a political response (Escobar 2013; 741). This is consistent with the apt point made by Jiménez (2015: 7) with respect to more inclusive national, cultural, and educational environments for the Mixtec of Mexico: "In this way, education can be the "third space": an atmosphere of mutual respect, in which we can all communicate, learn and be creative." However, to create such an atmosphere is an immense challenge by itself. For new educational programmes in Indigenous contexts to succeed in this atmosphere, key stakeholders such as the community, the government, and the NGOs need to first of all agree to work in concert with one another.

Returning to the above-named NGOs, we were inspired by Fe y Alegría (Faith and Joy), an education model that was successfully implemented in other South American countries and elsewhere in the world. Fe y Alegría aims to offer quality education to socially marginalized and impoverished populations and is present in 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Mora 2014: 14). After some fruitful discussions with partner NGOs, it became clear that teaching literacy first in Wapishana and incorporating aspects of Wapishana traditional customs and cultural practices was a viable and feasible approach. As it is with faith-based organizations working among Indigenous Peoples, although their earlier missionary practices are to use "native languages for the purposes of evangelization and teaching the bible" (Novo 2014: 111), they have nowadays pondered on how best to assist the Indigenous children in their overall development. The Jesuit Missions in Guyana, for example, acknowledged that Indigenous communities throughout Latin America and indeed other parts of the world face the same question: "How can we educate our children in such a way that helps them progress and develop in the modern world, yet at the same time hand on to them the wisdom contained in their culture?" (from a letter dated 11 May 2016 from the Regional Superior of the Jesuits in Guyana to the Ministry of Education Inquiry Secretariat, Ministry of Education). The Jesuit Missions in Guyana proffered that a new curriculum needs to be produced which not only uses Wapishana as the medium of schooling but which incorporates elements of the Wapishana culture as well. Further, such a curriculum would require all teachers in the schools be trained in a new pedagogy. In this sense, there was consensus among the representatives of the faith-based organizations that part of the information needed to develop the curriculum should be about the values held by most people in the community. These values are certain aspects of the people's traditional culture or beliefs that in their view are acceptable or unacceptable in the community. Therefore, stakeholders supported the idea that values shared by the community be incorporated into the programme.

For their part, representatives of the Ministry of Education expressed their support verbally and through their presence at a meeting of stakeholders on 25 April 2016 in Maruranau. Further momentum was built up through an invitation from the Chief Education Officer of The Ministry of Education, for me to follow through with a presentation to other senior education officials in the capital city of Guyana, Georgetown. Thus, the willingness of the partner representatives to continually engage us in the project kept the momentum going.

More recently in 2016, during one of the quarterly meetings of a body of Indigenous leaders called the South Rupununi District Toshaos Council, the leaders reiterated the recommendation for the use of Wapishana language in the formal system via a letter to the Minister of Education. (In Guyana, an officially appointed Indigenous leader is called a toshao.) The letter represented a unified call for the government's support of the local initiative. The letter also reflected the communities' appreciation of and readiness to support such an initiative, thereby providing us with fresh impetus to pursue the project.

The reason to embark on this study is the fact that a clear majority of children entering formal schooling in the Wapishana communities are Wapishana-speaking. Based on my own experience of being a Wapishana and living in the community for over 50 years, approximately 95% of the children come from Wapishana-speaking homes whereas the remainder come from homes where their parents mainly speak English. While the Wapishana constitute only about 1% of the country's total population of approximately 800 000, they are in the majority in their villages. Moreover, the majority of the teachers employed in nursery and primary schools in the Wapishana communities are themselves Wapishana. For example, out of the nine female teachers in three pilot nursery schools, eight are Wapishana, while one is from the Makushi (another Indigenous People), married to a Wapishana. The eight teachers speak the language but some are still not literate in it. The evidence that Wapishana is indeed the stronger language used by both children and teachers served as a justification to lobby the government for the development of a first-language literacy first approach in the community schools.

Further motivation stemmed from ample research evidence regarding the educational validity of bilingual education, thereby providing a solid educational justification for mother tongue instruction. For example, the majority of research reports have found that developing competence and skills in the L1 can be transferred to the L2 (Baker 1995: 47 and Cummins

1996: 111).[4] Research also suggests that "the more developed the first language, the easier it will be to develop the second language" (Baker 2006: 173) and that "L1 academic proficiency is a strong predictor of L2 proficiency" (Cummins 1996: 133). These points of reference associated with North American and European contexts can guide us to adapt the form of bilingual education that suits the particular locality. Even in Latin America, seventeen countries have attempted to implement some kind of bilingual education, at least at the primary school level (López 2008: 44). In countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru that have Indigenous communities, one type of bilingual education, at its best, is "intercultural in that it recognizes and values understanding and dialogue across different lived experiences and cultural world views" (Hornberger 2009: 198). By vast experience, such practice of the bilingual and intercultural education processes is already well consolidated (Mora 2013: 18). Although the context in Latin American countries is different, the principles of intercultural education can be adapted in Guyana, the only English-speaking country within the continent.

There is also the social justice motivation, with its legal attendant repercussions for initially undertaking this study. That initial literacy should be in the language that children are most comfortable with is congruent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP 2007), adopted by Guyana. As stated in the beginning of Section 1.1, Article 14 recognizes the right of children to be educated in their first language. On this note, D' Emilio (2009: 1) asserts that it is not just about one particular right for one particular group of children, but about being able to offer the indigenous child exactly the same right that other children have to express themselves and communicate in their maternal language. This implies equality of treatment among children. Just as how children who speak the dominant language of a society at large have the right to be educated in that language, so do children who speak the non-dominant language at home have the right to be educated in theirs.

Finally, there were some personal motivations. I have had first-hand experience as a schoolteacher in both primary and secondary schools, seeing the struggles of the Wapishana children as they tried to fully understand their lessons in school. Based on these experiences, I was able to empathize and join with the teachers who sought assistance in reversing the pattern of school underachievement by their students. Another encouragement was the

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4 First language (L1) refers to the learners' first language or mother tongue (Benson 2004: 19). This is the language they know best. Second language (L2) refers to the language that is not the mother tongue of a person, but she/he communicates with it (Kosonen et al. 2007: 1).

thought that the writing up of this research would be of some assistance to the studious readers who would like to follow a similar line of endeavour.

Thus far, I have shared a combination of factors that influenced my pursuit of the Wapishana–English bilingual education approach in the Wapishana communities. In the next section I give the thesis statement and present the research questions.

1.3   Thesis statement and research questions

In Section 1.1, I cited educational difficulties for Wapishana children when they are not taught literacy in their first language. Based on these concerns, the broad purpose of the present study is to evaluate the processes of the introduction of a Wapishana–English Bilingual Education Programme currently running in three Wapishana communities in Guyana.

The evaluation of the processes is to determine what practices promote children becoming biliterate, bilingual, intercultural, and academically oriented so as to improve the existing practices in the Wapishana–English Bilingual Programme, such that it is meaningfully integrated rather than peripherally added to the mainstream curriculum. Such piloting is in alignment with using bilingual pupils' home language and cultural context in the teaching/learning environment as an essential initial strategy (Nyakatawa and Siraj-Blatchford 1994: 114). In this study, I reinforce the argument that besides the teaching of English academic skills, the initial and continued utilization of children's linguistic, cultural, and experiential background plays a critical role in determining their language learning and academic development. The core of my analysis concerns determining whether or not the "ingredients" of educationally proven forms of bilingual education in similar contexts are present in the Wapishana–English Bilingual Education Programme currently being piloted among the Wapishana children. In addition, I explore to what extent the ingredients are maintained and make recommendations to improve the existing practices.

In view of the above-mentioned broad purpose of the study, the main research question is "What are the practices in mother tongue-based schooling that promote children becoming biliterate, bilingual, intercultural, and academically oriented?**"**

The specific research questions are as follows:

1   What are the perceptions about the contributions of stakeholder groups in the planning stages of the mother tongue-based bilingual education programme?

2   To what extent have the essential features, components, and best strategies for successful bilingual education programmes been implemented in the introduction of the current programme?

3   What changes can be made for the improvement of the current programme so that it meets the needs of the Wapishana children, their families and their communities?

1.4   Significance and limitations of the study

In light of the research questions, I note the significance and limitations of the study. This study will assist me in offering recommendations on the components of the Wapishana–English Bilingual Education Programme that needs to be maintained, strengthened, and modified. The modified programme may lead to the adoption of the model to other similar educational contexts in the country. The outcome of the study will also strengthen the existing efforts of Wapishana language maintenance by the grass roots organization, the Wapichannao Waudniinao Ati'o (WWA: Wapishana Literacy Association) (see Appendix A for details on the WWA.).

However, there are limitations to the study. Firstly, most of the data were collected during the planning process of the programme, which lasted for about two years (2016 to 2018). During this time, I made my first two field trips. This means that the data relate less to the implementation, of which only the first seven months were covered by this study. Secondly, my direct observation at the beginning of the implementation process, which began in September 2018, was not possible. Thus, for the first three months into implementation, data were gathered from reports of the teacher-participants and the local coordinator of the programme. For the remainder of the four months (December 2018 through March 2019), data were gathered during my final field study period. Thus, the data related to the early stages of the programme, plus the seven months into the implementation stage, represent only part of the overall two-year programme. However, since the project is a two-year programme, the preparation process is critical. As noted by Hinton (2001: 51), some donor agencies in the United States insist that for any language project, especially as it relates to revitalization, local communities must first apply for a planning grant "and only after carrying out a year of planning, can they apply for an "implementation grant'." Similarly critical was the two-year planning period for the Wapishana–English bilingual programme. In fact, the planning process was extended beyond a year mainly because the draft

materials for the first year of the programme had to be reviewed and modified by the implementers. In the following section, I describe the methods employed in the study.

1.5   Methods

This study follows mainly qualitative research which may be described as multi-method, engaging the subject matter in an interpretive and a naturalistic approach (Wilson 2008: 39). I give a more detailed account of the methodology used in Chapter 5.

For part of this qualitative research, I asked Indigenous elders to tell stories about their histories and culture. The reason is that stories are culturally appropriate methods for the transmission of knowledge and skills, reflective of Indigenous communities. This is in line with Smith's (1999: 144) affirmation that "[s]torytelling, oral histories, the perspectives of elders and of women have become an integral part of all indigenous research." Other researchers have likewise affirmed that storytelling plays an important role in Indigenous methodologies. For example, methodologies such as storytelling methods emanate from the values and cultures of the peoples researched (Chilisa 2012: 306), and research stories reveal the deep purpose of our enquires (Kovach 2009: 108). In addition to the stories from elders, my research data stemmed from participant-observation of the people's activities, responses, or comments from people interviewed, information from documents, and observations from classroom teaching. Therefore, I employed a combination of methods to collect information on the context of the Wapishana and the actual pilot programme.

Firstly, the information on Wapishana history and the impact of colonization on the Wapishana is based primarily on my own knowledge and experience as a Wapishana insider and supplemented by some informal interviews that I conducted during the first fieldwork trip between December 2016 and March 2017. Secondly, the information on the preparatory stages of the pilot programme is based on the written documents, which I perused during the first fieldwork trip and during the second trip between December 2017 and March 2018. I also conducted additional interviews during this second trip. Thirdly, the information on teacher–pupil interactions is based on classroom observations that I conducted during the third fieldwork trip between February and March 2019. The information from the observations is primarily to supplement information obtained from the interviews. In the next section, I offer an overview of the contents of this thesis.

1.6   Overview of thesis

This chapter began with a consideration of the reasons, inspiration, and factors that motivated me to conduct this study. I then presented the thesis statement and research questions, followed by the significance and limitations of the study. I subsequently briefly described the methods used in the collection of the data. The remainder of this section concerns the organization of the subsequent chapters.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide the context for the present study. Chapter 2 offers a description of where Wapishana communities are located and their territories and of the Wapishana people that inhabit the communities, followed by a brief overview of their history. This chapter then sketches the impact of colonization on the Wapishana people and outlines elements/activities that embed values that could form the foundation upon which an interculturally and educationally relevant curriculum for the children could be built. Chapter 3 analyses the previous attempts at teaching Wapishana literacy in some schools and the role that the grassroots organization WWA played in these efforts. Some Wapishana orthography issues are further highlighted so that local decisions may be made to standardize the spelling system.

Chapter 4 reviews the literature study on bilingual education programmes associated with second language learners in culturally diverse contexts. The chapter then focuses on the arguments for and against bilingual education, the approaches to bilingual education and circumstances that determine types of programmes. A sketch of the essential features or components for planning a bilingual education programme are then presented, followed by a consideration of pedagogical strategies and materials employed in bilingual education programmes.

In Chapter 5 research participants are first described, followed by sources of information: elders of the community and documents relevant to the pilot programme. This is followed by a description of the procedure of interviews and classroom observations.

In Chapter 6, an evaluation of the introduction of the bilingual education programme begins with an overview of the problems and need of the Wapishana community. Perceptions about the contributions of stakeholder groups towards the planning of the programme are drawn from the interviews. Essential features and components and ingredients identified in Chapter 4 are compared with what is currently practised in the Wapishana–English Bilingual Education Programme by way of the interviews and classroom observations. The findings lead to a thematic analysis that could be used to improve the existing practices, which in turn

lead to the creation of a conceptual framework to work with. Overall, the analysis ascertains what practices suggested by research and experience promote biliterate, bilingual, intercultural, and academically oriented children.

In the final chapter (Chapter 7), I begin with some limitations of the study. I then present some insights into the potential contributions towards the wider study and success of bilingual education and recommendations for improvement of the current programme, followed by suggestions for future research in similar contexts and some final words.

Chapter 2

Introducing the Wapishana people

2.1   Introduction

In Chapter 1, I looked at the motivational factors that led to this study together with the research questions, the significance and limitations, the methods, and an overview of the thesis. In this chapter, I introduce the context of the study, that is, the Wapichan (Wapishana) People, their location, their population, a brief history, and the impact of colonization on their lives.

Based on the current and accepted orthography, Wapishana language activists feel strongly that the correct pronunciation is *Wapichan*. That this name should be correctly rendered is promulgated by its almost exclusive use throughout the two studies undertaken by teams of Wapishana researchers (see David et al. 2006 and South Central and South Rupununi Districts Toshaos Council 2012). However, the term Wapishana has been widely used by non-Wapishana and even Wapishana themselves and is seen in most English-written literature and school texts today. While being mindful of the sentiments of Wapishana language activists who are particular about the use of *Wapichan* and Wapishana names of villages and places, I will use the anglicized names. However, wherever necessary, I shall use the Wapishana names.

Even though the Wapishana are located in both Brazil and Guyana, this chapter focuses on the Guyanese Wapishana, since this study concerns their children. More specifically, this study concerns a mother tongue based-education programme being piloted in three Wapishana villages, Maruranau, Karaudarnau, and Sawariwau (See Section 2.2, Figure 4 for locations). Whereas each village has its own history, all villages have one common history, which will be briefly described in this chapter. As a result of historical contacts with other cultures over the years, Wapishana cultural practices have disappeared and are disappearing. At the same time, new cultural practices have been adopted in the midst of some common issues that continue to affect the people.

In addition to the location and population and a brief history of the Wapishana, the cultural aspects and social issues are highlighted here because they are not usually explicitly stated in the curriculum. Even if the

cultural aspects are stated, students may rarely have the opportunity to discuss or write about the topics in more detail. As such, I provide examples under the three broad areas of Wapishana cultural aspects here to illustrate the potential curriculum content matter that does exist. As stated above, the first set of examples concerns cultural aspects that have disappeared. The other two concern those cultural aspects that are in the process of disappearing and those that have been adapted. Other potential curriculum content matter concerns some current social issues that affect the lives of the people. The importance of education giving value to the children's heritage is underscored by several researchers. Smith (2012: 8), for instance, writes that in this age of globalization it becomes more important for people to have solid foundations deeply rooted in their heritage language and culture since young people need to be able to leave their communities with the strength of knowing who they are, while holding on to the wisdom of previous generations. Education should thus value the children's rich heritage passed down from their elders. Complementing the above, Jiménez (2015: 7) has argued, for the case of the Mixtec in Mexico, that the school system should give a dignified place to the Indigenous history, language, and other topics pertinent to their way of life: "Our literature, social organization, history, and traditional knowledge (e.g. of geology, flora and fauna, and their medical properties), should not be seen as anthropological curiosities but as integral parts of the national, cultural and educative environments." Similarly, given that Wapishana elders advised that their histories and aspects of their culture be part of the new programme, I fully support the importance of education giving value to the children's heritage. To begin with, the children's histories, aspects of their culture can be included in the curriculum as bases for thematic teaching (see Subsection 4.8.2.3.5). In the case of Quechua in Tatamayo (Peru), Howard (2004: 113) observes that a wealth of cultural knowledge is inextricably bound up with language. It can be said that other Indigenous languages in similar situations are likewise richly embedded in their own vast amounts of cultural knowledge but may be at risk of being forgotten. It can therefore be argued that bilingual education has to also be intercultural education since the teaching of language will have cultural contents as well.

Because the programme being piloted will more likely be extended to the other surrounding Wapishana villages, I first describe their locations and population in Section 2.2. I then provide an overview of the origin of the Wapishana and their contacts with other peoples in Section 2.3. I sketch the impact of colonization on the Wapishana in Section 2.4. Finally, I provide my conclusion in Section 2.5.

2.2   Location and population

The Wapishana live in Guyana, a country located in the northeast of South America, bounded to the east by Suriname, to the south by Brazil, to the north-west by Venezuela, and flanked to the north by the Atlantic Ocean. With a population of approximately 800,000, Guyana is commonly referred to the "land of six peoples", a familiar line from the country's national anthem, grouping the country's complex population into six broad categories: Indigenous peoples, Europeans, Africans, Portuguese, East Indians, and Chinese. The notion of "six peoples" is largely based on the origin of each "ethnic group". Except for the Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors were said to inhabit the land, the ancestors of the Europeans, Africans, Portuguese, East Indians, and Chinese originated from Europe, Africa, Madeira, India, and China, respectively. During the colonial period, the Portuguese were considered a separate group from other Europeans (mainly British) because of their origin as indentured immigrants from Madeira (Daly 1975: 174). Today, Guyana has a largely mixed population descended from these early inhabitants.

The official language is English, and as such, Guyana is part of the English-speaking Caribbean. Guyanese Creole or Guyanese Creole English, also known as Creolese, is widely spoken and can be considered the lingua franca of all six peoples. Hindi/Urdu and Arabic are used mainly for religious purposes. Nowadays, one also can hear Portuguese, Spanish, and Chinese, due to the large influx of Brazilians, Venezuelans, and Chinese. The Indigenous peoples also have their own distinct languages. They are Lokono (Arawak), Kari'na (Carib), Warao, Arekuna, Akawaio, Patamona, Makushi, Wapishana, and WaiWai. See Figure 1 for the distribution of the nine indigenous ethnic groups in Guyana. The Indigenous Peoples comprise about ten per cent of the total population, meaning that altogether they comprise about 80,000 of the country's population.

Figure 1. Distribution of the dominant indigenous groups of the Guianas
(reproduced with permission from Carlin and Mans 2015: 82).

A closer view of the location of the Wapishana settlements is shown in
Figure 2.
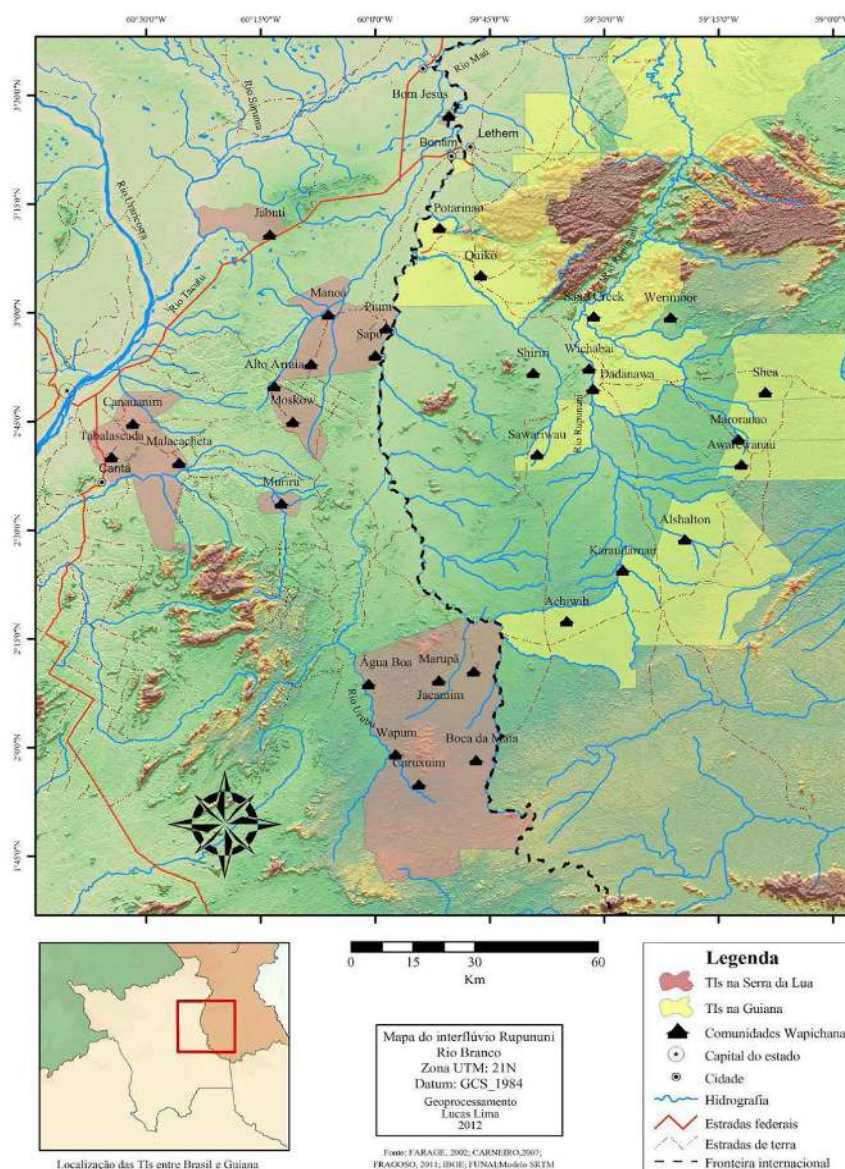
*Figure 2. Location of the Wapishana settlements
(reproduced from Lima 2012).*

As can be seen from the map above, the Wapishana settlements are located in both Brazil and Guyana. Specifically, the Wapishana "traditional lands

span the Rio Branco-Rupununi Savannah and adjacent forests and mountains over a region that is today sub-divided by the Brazilian State of Roraima in the West and the Southern Rupununi District of Guyana Region 9 in the East" (David et al. 2006: 9). Thus, Figure 2 shows the distribution of Wapishana settlements on both sides of the border between Brazil and Guyana.

In Guyana, the Wapishana people are known to have relatives living on the Brazilian side of the border, contributing to a continual cross-border movement of peoples. Even though people on both sides of the border can speak the Wapishana language, there is a difference in the orthographies used. The spelling rules of the Portuguese language are used for Wapishana writing by the Brazilian Wapishana, while the alphabet of the English language is generally used by the Guyanese Wapishana. Therefore, the literacy materials are not easily read interchangeably by Wapishana on either side of the border.

However, as shown in Figure 2, on the Guyanese side, the South Rupununi District encompasses most but not all the settlements of the Wapishana. In addition, the map includes *Quiko*, a small Makushi settlement and *Wichabai* and *Dadanawa*, ranches owned by non-Wapishana. In fact, the names on this map are anglicized and are so used by Wapishana and non-Wapishana alike when referring to the settlements. The names also largely reflect their orthography in most publications about the Wapishana and in most textbooks used in the education system in Guyana.

Since this study concerns the Wapishana living in Guyana, Figure 3 is presented below to show that Guyana has ten administrative regions. The shaded area in Region 9 locates the area known as the South Rupununi, where the Wapishana live. As can be seen, the Wapishana are located a great distance away from the coastal area. Travelling over land is tedious, taking approximately 16 hours via vehicular transport from Georgetown in Region 4, to Lethem in Region 9. By air, it is faster but costlier, taking approximately one hour via small aircraft from Georgetown to Lethem. To reach the Wapishana villages further south of Lethem, one has to travel further over land for as long as five to six hours by vehicle to reach the farthest Wapishana village in the South Rupununi.
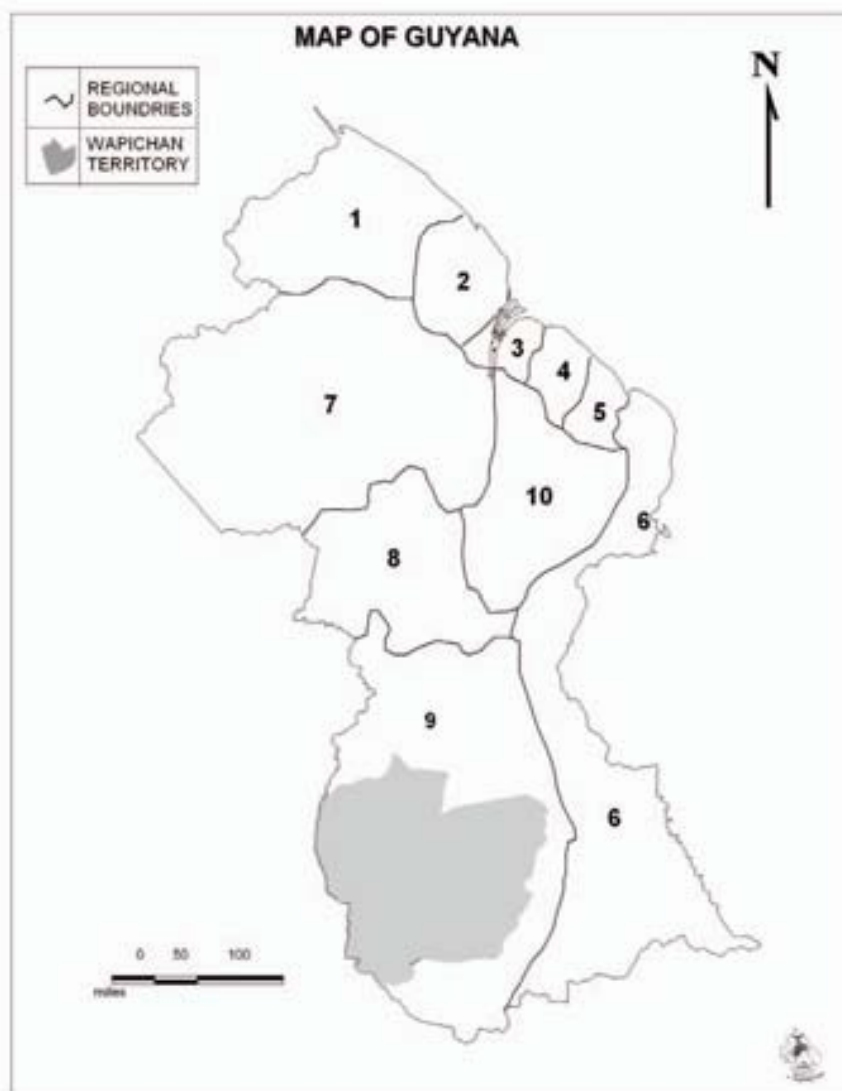
Figure 3. The South Rupununi in Region 9, Guyana, showing the location of Wapishana communities (reproduced from David et al. 2006: 10).

The Wapishana are not the only Indigenous People living in Region 9. Others living close by are the Makushi and the Wai Wai. It is worthy to note that among the Wapishana, there are some people who claim Atorad and Taruma ancestry. Atorad is an extinct language, but some people can distinguish between some Wapishana and Atorad words. Taruma is an

almost extinct language. There are at least three people in Maruranau who can speak Taruma, although their main language is Wapishana.

In terms of the topography of the Wapishana territory, there is mainly savannah (the lighter colour) and jungle (the darker colour) as shown in Figure 4 below.
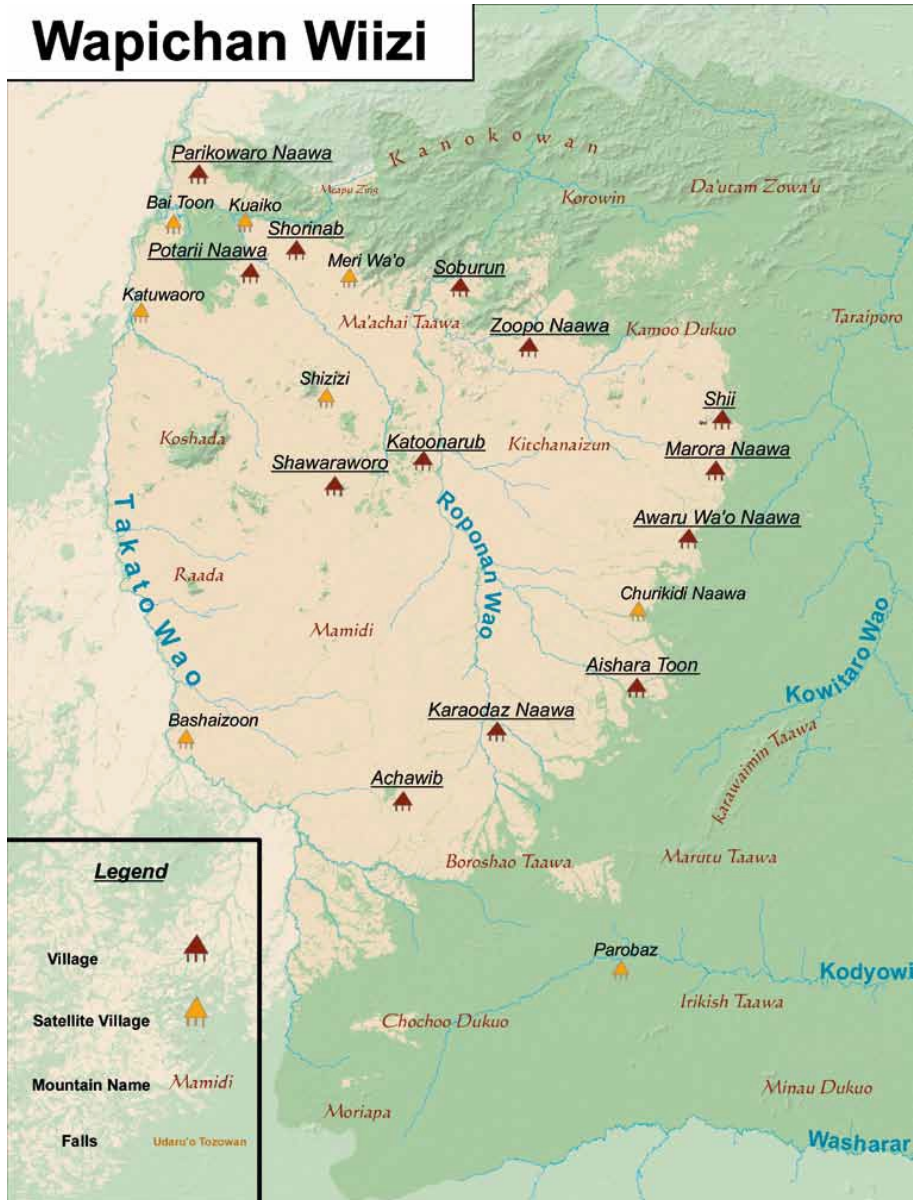
Wapichan Wiizi

Figure 4. Map of the Wapishana traditional lands (Wapichan Wizi) (reproduced from South Central and South Rupununi Districts Toshaos Councils 2012: 4).

Figure 4 further shows the location of all Wapishana settlements in Guyana. This more inclusive map, with names in the Wapishana language, shows the

Wapishana and Makushi settlements of *Shorinab* and *Meri Wa'o* in the north that are not included in Figure 2. As can be seen in Figure 4, the village of *Shorinab* with its satellite villages of *Kuaiko* and *Meri Wa'o* in the north and *Parobaz* in the south, are located in the traditional lands of the Wapishana and are considered parts of the whole territory. The first village mentioned, Shorinab, is predominantly occupied by Makushi, while Parobaz is home to a mixture of Wapishana and WaiWai. As observed from my own visit to *Parobaz*, there are some Wapishana families living there, while most of the WaiWai living there are a result of some WaiWai men marrying Wapishana women. Some Wapishana elders point out that, based on their choices of settlement, the Wapishana people living on the western part of the South Rupununi are additionally referred to as *Wakadap sannao* [west NOM.PL] 'people of the west', while those living on the eastern part, along the forest edge are *Taawudaz sannao* [forest edge NOM.PL] 'people of the forest edge'.

I shall now briefly describe the location of villages, beginning with the district commonly called South Central Rupununi in Subsection 2.2.1 and then South Rupununi in Subsection 2.2.2. Following this, I will provide data on the population on these two districts in Subsection 2.2.3. Finally, I highlight the mixed population of the Wapishana and the effect it has had on language use in Subsection 2.2.4.

2.2.1 South Central Rupununi

Alongside the foothills of the *Kanokowan* 'Kanuku Mountain Range', *Parikwaro Naawa* is the northernmost village. *Potarii Naawa*, located further south, is a larger village which is sometimes referred to as Ambrose, after the one-time chief of the Wapishana (Bridges 1985: 23). *Potarii Naawa* is located on the left bank of the *Shawaraworo* creek and has the following satellite settlements: *Bai Toon* to the northwest, *Katuwaoro* to the south, and *Shizizi* to the southeast. *Shizizi* lies a few miles to the south of the three-peaked towering mountain from which the village derived its name. Further south of *Shizizi* is *Shawaraworo* village, which is also on the left bank of the *Shawaraworo* creek. This village lies west outside the border of its titled land, while *Katoonarib* lies east within the borders of the titled land of *Shawaaraworo* (Henfrey 2017: 73; South Central and South Rupununi Districts Toshaos Councils 2012: 8). This discrepancy is part of a controversial issue involving the Government's land titling for some villages. As mentioned by David et al. (2006: 13): "Since 1977, eleven of our twenty-two principle communities have received limited land title to a small portion of their lands, which does not cover the full extent of our

territory and leaves many of our families living on and farming lands without title." While this discrepancy concerning the borders of these two villages is still to be sorted out by the government and the villages, these two villages operate autonomously; that is, each has its own village council to administer its affairs. The largest village in this district without any satellite is *Soburun*, which is located at the confluence of the *Katu Wa'o* 'Sand Creek' and *Roponan Wa'o* 'Rupununi' rivers. To the east lies the smaller village of *Zoopo Naawa*. These villages together with their satellites and other places comprise the South Central Rupununi.

Figure 5. Shizizi 'Shiriri' (the majestic three-peaked mountain) in South Central Rupununi.

2.2.2 South Rupununi

Further east of *Zoopa Naawa* is *Shii* which lies on the eastern edge of the savannah or the edge of the forest which forms a basin on the western bank of the *Kowitaro Wa'o* 'Kwitaro River'. To the south is *Maroro Naawa*, and even further south is *Awaru Wa'o Naawa*, all situated along the edge of the forest. These three villages form a contiguous block of titled village lands

(Henfrey 2017: 74). However, immediately south of *Awaru Wa'o Naawa*, Wapishana land contiguity is broken due to an area of state land. Immediately south of the state land, another contiguous expanse of titled village lands continues in an arc along the southern edge of the forest. First of these is a satellite village called *Churikidi Naawa*, with the main village of *Aishara Toon*, even further south. *Karaodaz Naawa* is located further to the west, along the right bank of the Rupununi River. Somewhat between *Aishara Toon* and *Karaodaz*, going further south into the jungle on the right bank of the *Kodyowin Wa'o* 'Kuyuwini River', is *Parobaz*. To the west of *Karaodaz* is *Achawib* with its satellite *Bashaizon*, on the right bank of the *Takoto Wa'o* Takutu River. These villages complete the arc or what the schoolteachers of the South Rupununi District used to refer to as the "Crescent" villages. Otherwise, teachers refer to the three eastern villages of *Shii*, *Maroro Naawa*, and *Awaru Wa'o Naawa* as the "East End", and the other three main western ones as the "West End." These villages together with *Masekenari*, the WaiWai village further to the southern jungle on the upper left bank of the *Chiipi Wa'o* 'Essequibo River', comprise the South Rupununi.

On the Guyana side, the Wapishana villages thus stretch south-eastwards from *Parikwaro Naawa* to *Zoopo Naawa* of the South Central Rupununi District and then in an arc to "East End" villages through *Shii*, thence south-westwards to the "West End" villages up to *Bashaizon* of the South Rupununi villages. Generally, the Wapishana occupy the entire Rupununi Savannah along with the forests of the Kwitaro River basin on the east, the forests of the Kuyuwini River system on the south and along the right bank of the Takutu River on the West.

2.2.3 Population

According to the records of 2017 provided to me by the Office of the Regional Administration, Region 9, there are approximately 8,401 people living in the Wapishana communities. Table 2.1 shows the population of twelve main Wapishana villages, which are numbered. Other villages are not numbered because they are considered smaller and part of the main villages under which they are mentioned. Accordingly, a smaller village is indicated as a satellite in round parentheses ( ).

Table 1. Data on the population sizes in Wapishana villages in 2017
(from records provided by the Office of the
Regional Democratic Council, Region 9).

No.	South Central Rupununi Villages	Population Size	Total
1.	Parikowaro Naawa [Parikwarunau]	221	221
2.	Potarii Naawa [Potarinau]]	613	1,125
	Bai Toon (satellite) [Baitoon]	290	
	Katuwaoro (satellite) [Small Sand Creek]	131	
	Shizizi (satellite) [Shiriri]	91	
3.	Soburun [Sand Creek]	896	896
4.	Zoopo Naawa [Rupunau]	332	332
5.	Katoonarub [Katoonarib]	416	416
6.	Shawaraworo [Sawariwau]	541	541
	South Rupununi villages		
7.	Shii [Shea]	443	443
8.	Maroro Naawa [Maruranau]	727	727
9.	Awaru Wa'o Naawa [Awarewaunau]	690	690
10.	Aishara Toon [Aishalton]	1,213	1,314
	Churikidi Naawa (satellite) [Churikidnau]	101	
11.	Karaodaz Naawa [Karaudarnau]	998	998
12.	Achawib [Achawib]	577	698
	Bashaizon (satellite)[Bashaizon]	121	
	Total		**8,401**

The general practice in the English-speaking Caribbean, including Guyana, is to use anglicized names of villages. However, wherever possible in this thesis, the Wapishana names will be applied. In Table 1 above, the Wapishana village names are given and followed by the anglicized version in square brackets.

2.2.4 Mixed population

The villages mentioned do not include *Shorinab*, the predominantly Makushi village, and *Parobaz*, with a mixed population of Wapishana and WaiWai. It is fair to say that most, if not, all Wapishana villages have people of mixed descent. In historic times, some Wapishana people mixed with Atorad and the Taruma. For example, there is an extended family of Wapishana-Taruma living in *Maroro Naawa*. Examples of villages that have more pronounced mixtures include *Shii* which has a mixture of Wapishana and people of African descent dating back to the time of the early European settlers in the area. Similarly, *Achawib* has people of mixed descent, resulting from a man of African descent coming to live there in a later period (see also Amerindian Research Unit of Guyana 1992: 38). However, the other villages also have people of mixed descent to a lesser extent as a result of non-Wapishana males who came to work in the area as settlers, teachers, policemen, and malaria workers. These workers married into the community or shared relationships with Wapishana women. Moreover, the mixture came about as a result of Wapishana women leaving their villages to work and forming relationships there. Therefore, today there are some people in the villages who are mixed with other Indigenous Peoples, such as the Makushi and Lokono (Arawak) or other ethnicities such as the European, Portuguese (Brazilian), African, East Indian, and Chinese.

Importantly, in such mixed families and some Wapishana families, parents speak to their children in English. English is mainly the language of meetings with visiting non-Wapishana in the villages and village assemblies with officials of the government. Additionally, English is the language of the school and of formal, official, and written use, but Wapishana is still the widely used language of the home and of informal, intimate, and oral use in most villages. In the next section, I turn to the origin of the Wapishana and their contacts with other peoples.

2.3   Origin of the Wapishana and contact with other peoples

This section gives an overview the origin of the Wapishana and their contact with other peoples from pre-colonial times. This information has implications for the understanding of the history of the Wapishana, especially by Wapishana children, who should know their historical background and culture. An overview of the origin of the people is provided from the perspective of the Wapishana and Western research, respectively (Subsections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2). Some researchers identify the North Arawak or Northern Arawakan area to classify or locate the Wapishana (Aikhenvald 1999: 69). What recent research says about this area may serve as a lead into the possible origin of the Wapishana. I then focus on the early migration of the Wapishana in Subsection 2.3.3, followed by the identification of the different peoples they encountered on their way to their present-day settlement locations in Subsection 2.3.4.

2.3.1 The Wapishana perspective

Some of the Wapishana elders interviewed said that they had no information as to the origin of their ancestors. One elderly woman offered a cosmological explanation told by her grandfather. According to oral tradition, all people spoke one language and lived as one on *amazada* 'earth'. As time went by, they questioned why *Tominkaru* 'God' put them on this *amazada* and not in *aokaz* 'heaven', where he lived. Determined to see God's place, they built a ladder with a platform to take them to see *aokaz,* but as they were about to touch the place, the ladder broke with everyone falling. When they awoke, different peoples spoke different languages. The Wapishana people fell on this side of the earth (where they are today) with their own language**.** However, this story was not easily verifiable, as others thought differently. For example**,** as noted by another Wapishana elder, it is likely that this story had a Christian influence as a result of the early missionary work by the Catholic Church (see Section 2.3.1). Testimonies, from some present-day Rupununi/Essequibo Wapishana, point to migration of their ancestors as **"**coming from the west**"**. For example, some felt that *Wapichan (Wapishana)* could be interpreted as *wakadapu sannao* 'people of the west'*,* a combination of *wakadapu* 'west' and *sannao* 'people (plural)'. Based on a comprehensive literature research by Rivière (1963: 123), it appears that there was consensus among the Wapishana on the Rupununi/Essequibo that the Wapishana lived originally west of the Takatu, which is on the Brazilian side of the border. Based on the accounts of the Wapishana interviewed, it can be concluded that the Wapishana people can trace the direction of their

ancestors' migration but not their place of origin. This brings us to the meaning of the word *Wapichan*.

The Wapishana interviewed offered different meanings for the term *Wapichan.* For example, as mentioned above, some felt that *Wapichan* could be interpreted as 'people of the west'. Another Wapishana interviewed shared what her father told her: *Wapichan* were nicknamed *Matauzi Pidiannao '*beetle people', a comparison made to a special beetle that cut the bark of trees with its mouth parts. As such, *Wapichan* were *barobainao* 'people who are masters at felling trees'. While this characteristic is indeed attributable to traditional Wapishana men, *Matauzi Pidiannao* should not be mistaken for *Mapidian,* whom the Wapihana describe as another group of people. The name *Mapidian* is the "calqued Wapishana name for Mawayana*, mawa = mao* 'frog' and *pidan (pichan)* 'person' corresponding to *-yana* 'ethnic group'" (Carlin and Mans 2015: 84). The Mawayana 'Frog People' and the Wapishana are both Arawakan Peoples and therefore speak Arawakan languages "that share no more than half of their basic vocabulary*"* (Carlin 2011: 225)*.* Other Wapishana reasoned that *Wapichan* could be interpreted as *Wapidannao* 'our people' (Wapishana Language Project 2000, pp. 91, 71), a combination of *wa* 'our' and *pidannao* 'people (plural)'. The shortened name became *Wapidan* or *Wapichan*, a combination of *wa* 'our' and *pidan (pichan)* 'people'.

Thus far, we have seen that according to Guyanese Wapishana testimonies, their ancestors generally came from the west of the Takutu River, on the Brazilian side of the border. They also offered some meanings of *Wapichan,* the most plausible of which seems *'our people'.* In the next section I focus on what research says about Wapishana origin, migration and the different peoples they encountered on their way to their present-day settlements.

2.3.2 The Western perspective

Some researchers locate the Wapishana in the North Arawakan or Northern Arawakan area, inclusive of Rio Branco in Brazil and the Rupununi in Guyana (Aikhenvald 1999: 69). Figure 6 below presents a simplified version of the classification of this language family as proposed by Aikhenvald (1999: 67–71).
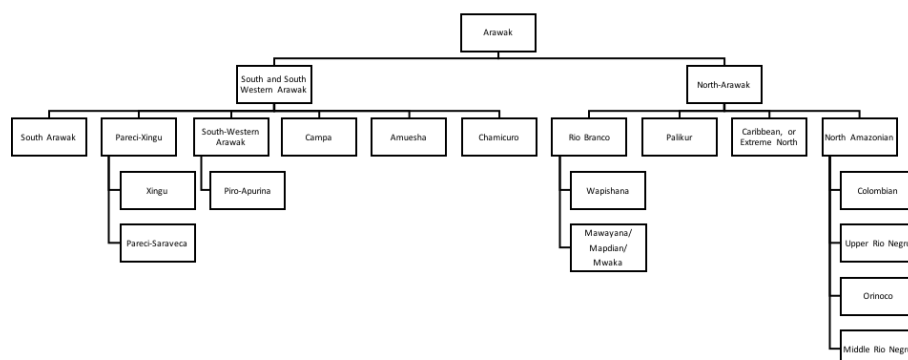
Figure 6. The Arawak language family classification
as proposed by Aikhenvald (1999: 67–71).

This family was first known as Maipuran, after the language Maipure, formely spoken in Venezuela (Aikhenvald 2012: 33). After Maipure became extinct as early as 1783, it was renamed Arawak, after Arawak (or Lokono), which is spoken in the Guianas (Aikhenvald 2006: 447). According to Hornborg (2005: 592), linguists have speculated probable areas of origin for the Arawakan Peoples as somewhere in the north-western Amazon. Aikhenvald (2012: 33) contends that there is strong linguistic evidence in support of the Arawak proto-home being located between the Rio Negro and the Orinoco, which is in line with the area which could be described as north-western Amazon.

North-western Amazonas, Brazil, is also thought to be the origin of the Wapishana. In fact, some sources indicate that one can trace the origin of the Wapishana through other names by which they were known in earlier times. Peter Rivière, the eminent anthropologist, (1963: 115) pointed out that Major John Scott's reference to the Swanes (Shahones, Shawhauns) was assumed to be the Wapishana, living near the source of the Rio Branco, Brazil, around the 1760s. According to Rivière (1963: 115), the Shawhauns or "Guaypes (and Uaupes*)*" referred to by Harris and de Villiers, was also identified with the Wapishana, who lived in the Rio Negro area, in the region of its tributary called "Uaupes." The "*Uaupes*" referred to is the River Vaupes, a tributary of the Rio Negro, in the north-western part of Amazonas, Brazil. According to more recent research, the River Vaupes–Rio Negro is the area from which the Wapishana seems to have originated (Henfrey 2017: 64 and Carlin 2011: 227). Oral tradition of the Guyanese Wapishana also points to Brazil as the country of their ancestors' origin (see Subsection 2.3.1). With this in mind, we now trace the direction of the Wapishana migration from Brazil to Guyana.

2.3.3 Early migration

Based on their places of origin, the River Vaupes-Rio Negro area, it is assumed that a group of Wapishana emigrated in a generally eastward direction, from the River Vaupes to the Rio Negro, then up the Rio Branco and eventually toward the Essequibo and Rupununi (Rivière 1963: 13; Henfrey 2017: 64; Carlin 2011: 227). Given that the Wapishana did traverse and occupy the Rio Branco area, David et al. (2006: 9) concurred that Wapishana traditional lands spanned the Rio-Branco-Rupununi savannah. The majority of present-day Wapishana living in Guyana have attested to this initial eastward migration of our ancestors. The main reason for this group of people coming from the West, according to Rivière quoted in Henfrey (2017: 65), may have been some unsuccessful attempts on part of the Portuguese to force Indigenous Peoples of the Rio Negro basin to stay in settlements known as "descimentos".

Similar accounts of the oppressive situations faced by Indigenous Peoples during the time of the Portuguese colonial powers have been documented. Hill (2008: 709) notes, for example, that although indigenous slavery was officially abolished in 1767, the Portuguese government in Brazil implemented a system of forced relocations called descimentos, using military force to capture Indigenous Peoples and transport them to Manaus. In other instances, Brazilian slave traders went to extreme positions to raid sites such as Pirara in British Guiana despite protests from British missionaries, removing indigenous inhabitants to sites on the Rio Branco for forced agriculture and other labour (ibid. 2008: 737). Furthermore, according to Hill, "Protestant missionaries also became agents of colonial contact with Macusi, Akawaio, WaiWai and Wapisiana and other Indigenous peoples of the remote forested interior" (ibid. 2008: 737). As a result of this imposition and early contact which no doubt had threatened their way of life, a number of these early Wapishana appeared to have emigrated from Brazil to the Essequibo-Rupununi area. Other groups remained in Brazil. We now turn to the groups of people the early Wapishana encountered on their way to their places of settlements.

2.3.4 Early encounters with other peoples

As the group of early Wapishana emigrated and arrived in the South Rupununi savannah around mid-18th century, they encountered other Indigenous Peoples such as the Atorais (Farabe 1918: 13) and the Amaripa and Paravilhana (Rivière 1963: 60–61). At least two of these Indigenous Peoples, which were smaller in number, were mentioned as *Atoradnao* for

Atorais and *Parauyannao* for Paravilhana by David et al. (2006: 9). They also mentioned other smaller but important groups of Indigenous Peoples whom the Wapishana encountered: the *Daozai, Tarabainao, Chiibizai diinao, Arokonnao, Paowishiyannao, Maoyannao, Karapunnao, Taromnao, Nikanikarunao, Burokotonao*, and *Makushi*. However, it is possible that some of these mentioned smaller groups were not necessarily distinct from the Wapishana. A Wapishana elder indicated to me that some of these Indigenous Peoples were probably so named because of their physical attributes or peculiarities. Accordingly, they were *Tarabainao* 'enemies'; *Paawishiyannao* 'curly-haired'; *Karapunnao* 'loud or vociferous'; *Nikanikarunao* 'those who ate to finish food, not keeping any for the next meal'; or *Burokotonao* 'those who lived around a particular place'.

From among these early Indigenous Peoples, the best known are the Atorai or Atorad (Henfrey 2017: 66). Daozai and Atoradnao are equivalents of Atorai according to Rivière (1963: 114). One of the common names from these smaller groups that emerged during the interviews I conducted with several Wapishana was *Dawuuzai*, which also appears to be an equivalent of *Daozai*. The *Dawuzaai* group and possibly others came before the *Atoradnao* and the *Taromnao (*also called *Taruma).* In fact, Sir Robert Schomburgk, a famous explorer-geographer, was among the first Europeans to visit the Taruma in the upper Essequibo between December 1837 and January 1838 (Butt Colson and Morton 1982: 207). Schomburgk also indicated that the Taruma appeared to be formerly located at the tributaries of the Rio Negro, but it is not certain if these people were related to the Taruma in Essequibo (ibid. 1992: 208). Based on this indication, it is possible that the Wapishana had already met the Taruma in Brazil. Nonetheless, most of these groups, except the Makushi, were smaller, and they have been absorbed or assimilated by the Wapishana (Farabee 1918: 14; Rivière 1963: 128; Henfrey 2017: 66; Carlin 2011: 227).

At least two of the smaller groups of Indigenous Peoples—the Atorad and the Taruma—seemed to have had an indelible influence on the language and the place names of the Wapishana. For example, according to Carlin (2011: 226), the Atorai were the closest relatives of the Wapishana such that their two languages share about fifty per cent of their basic vocabulary. Another example is that many of the toponyms and hydronyms in the territory of the Wapishana (Central Rupununi and South Rupununi) are of Taruma origin (ibid. 2011: 225).

Worth mentioning is the fact that some of the longstanding *Toshaos* 'Indigenous leaders' were part-Atorad. This highlights the claim made by a number of Wapishana people that they have Atorad or Taruma ancestry of which they are proud. In addition, some earlier Atorad men seemed to have

had natural leadership attributes. A case in point can be made to the Atorad chief whose two daughters married one of the earliest European settlers among the Wapishana (Henfrey 2002: 65). Such leadership positions seemed to have been upheld by some successive Wapishana leaders who had Arorad ancestry. According to one of the interviewees, Toshao Ritchie from *Maroro Naawa*, Toshao Winter from *Aishara Toon*, and Toshao Kinchino from *Potarii Naawa* were all part-Atorad. Such people never spoke of their "Atoradness" openly; they were somewhat elusive, secretive about it. As such, they were less-known as Atorads. Atorad names were lost in history as the people took on English or Portuguese names. Contemporaneous examples are "Mamai *Mary*" (Bridges 1985: xiv) and Toshao *Kinchino*, which are English and Portuguese names respectively. There are still some families who claim Atorad and Taruma relatedness.

However, the Wapishana were the dominant group and appeared to be deeply averse to the intrusion of other groups of people into their area. For example, a written record of 1765, by the Director-General of the Dutch colony, mentioned that the Wapishana were fighting against the Makushi (Rivière 1963: 116). This recorded information coincides with the short report provided by one resident from *Shorinab* (the Makushi village in South Rupununi) that according to oral history of the village, "[t]his was the furthest the Makushi could have gone because they were stopped by the Wapishana." This may have explained why there is a territory overlap between the Wapishana and Makushi, with the Makushi village of *Shorinab* and its satellites, *Kuaiko* and *Meri Wao* in the South Rupununi (see Figure 4).

The first non-Indigenous people the Wapishana came into contact with in the Essequibo-Rupununi area were the Dutch. The Wapishana communities were already living there in the 18th century when the first Dutchmen entered the area (David et al. 2006: 10). This added intrusion seemed to be the main reason for the hostility of the Wapishana towards the Dutch at that time. According to the records, the Director-General of the Dutch colony reported that three Dutch traders who had gone up the upper Rupununi River to try to establish commercial contact with the Portuguese in the Amazon were killed by the Wapishana in 1753 (Whitehead 1998: 156; Rivière 1963: 116; Henfrey 2017: 65; Carlin 2011: 227).

In this section, we looked at the origin of the Wapishana and the meaning of the word Wapichan (Wapishana). Having looked at their early migration, we see that the present-day Wapishana are the descendants of those early Wapishana migrating eastward from Brazil. From the time of their early encounters and conflicts with other indigenous and non-indigenous groups in the Takatu-Rupununi-Essequibo area, a large group of

the Wapishana have since settled in the area where they were seen by Barrington Brown in the 19th century (1877: 305–315). This area is commonly referred to as the Rupununi. Thus far, historical migration of the Wapishana has been mentioned. In the next section, I now turn to the main impacts made on the lives of the Wapishana from the time of early colonization to modern migration.

2.4   Impact of colonization on the Wapishana

Like other Indigenous Peoples in Guyana and elsewhere in the world, the Wapishana people have experienced loss of aspects of their language and culture as a result of our connections with the wider world. From the time of early colonization, these connections with the outside world were not devoid of conflicts between the Wapishana and the European colonists. As observed by Forte (1996: 54), the historical evidence suggests that Indigenous Peoples were deeply averse to the new European presence which generally disrupted their lives. In retaliation, as mentioned in the preceding section, the Wapishana clashed with the early Dutch colonists, with fatal consequences on one occasion. The Wapishana therefore resisted Dutch expeditions to the Rupununi, though such resistance was later suppressed by the colonial power and culture (David et al. 2006: 11). Over time, with the imposition of colonial power and culture, changes in the lives of the Wapishana inevitably occurred. These changes in turn have had an impact on the people institutionally, economically, and culturally (David et al. 2006: 17). These authors go on to document that in response to the institutional, economic, and cultural influences, "some aspects of Wapishana customs show remarkable resilience whilst others were highly flexible and adaptable" (ibid. 2006: 19). This resilience can be attributed to several factors which have enabled the maintenance and preservation of Wapishana language and culture, but there are other factors that have resulted in certain aspects being displaced or lost. I shall now attempt to identify some of these factors, beginning first with factors of maintenance of their cultural values.

Firstly, the fact that the villages continue to be isolated geographically from the heavily populated coastal areas of Guyana has enabled us the Wapishana people to maintain our language and culture to a large extent. This was mainly because access to their villages by road, water, or air was generally difficult. Whereas the roads have been improved to date, access to facilities in the settlements are far below that of urban and coastal areas. As a result, the majority of the Wapishana still speak their language and continue at least some of their cultural traditions today.

Secondly, although scattered over a wide geographical area, most of the villages are contiguous to one other, creating a continuous expanse of Wapishana territory to which the people are strongly attached (see Figure 4). For instance, the landscapes and the natural resources that are found therein have Wapishana names known by most of the inhabitants. In this sense, the language and the land are still strongly interwoven.

Thirdly, family members such as parents and mainly grandparents, who lived permanently over the years in their villages and who have not migrated, have largely been the ones who kept the language and culture alive. In the absence of other family members, they spoke the language to members of the younger generation and taught them aspects of the culture such as cotton-spinning and arrow-making, to name a few.

However, in spite of the factors mentioned above, which can partly account for the maintenance of the Wapishana language and culture, Wapishana have realized that their language use and some main cultural practices are disappearing, especially among the younger generation.

The maintenance of their cultural values together with the revitalization of those disappearing and a recovery of those lost are important for inclusion in a culturally relevant or student-centred curriculum. By starting with a linguistically and culturally relevant curriculum, children will more likely to eventually find it easier to deal with who they are or be accepted for what they are. At the same time, children will not only be educated in Western learning, but also be steeped in the knowledge, skills, and culture of their people. Overall, the use of the children's first language and culture "at any level of education builds not only cognitive skills but also a positive affect—self-confidence, self-esteem and strong identity—all of which contribute to successful learning" (Benson and Young 2016: 2). In this respect, the children's first language and culture may be seen as supportive environments, positively contributing to the development of the affective as well as the cognitive domains of their learning.

In the following section, I identify several of these factors that contributed to the present situation of the Wapishana and cite some specific cases based on my own experience as a Wapishana, the views of several Wapishana interviewed and of published documents. As mentioned above, three major influences—institutional, economic, and cultural—impacted the lives of the Wapishana since colonial times; these influences serve as starting points in discussing the impact of colonization on the Wapishana.

In the following subsections, I discuss the institutional influence (Subsection 2.4.1), the economic influence (Subsection 2.4.2), influence of cultural contact (Subsection 2.4.3), practices that have disappeared

(Subsection 2.4.4), practices that are in the process of disappearing (Subsection 2.4.5), and other factors contributing to changing circumstances (Subsection 2.4.6). Finally, I provide a summary (Subsection 2.4.6.6).

2.4.1 Institutional influence

In discussing the implications of European dominance over other worlds, Jack Goody (2006: 130) pointed to the fact that the process of displacement is rooted in the other worlds' immersion into the culture of the West. Goody provided a contemporary example of the patterns of control on the organization of spaces, the direction of worship and lives of the people which eventually resulted in our yielding to the pre-eminence of the European tradition:

> … positioning of holy cities […] has also controlled not only organization of spaces and direction of worship but also the lives of the people. […] The initial religious motivation may disappear, but the internal geography it generates, remains *"naturalized"* and may be imposed on others as being somehow part of the material order of things (pp. 19–20).

The order of things as a consequence of these patterns of control is reflected in smaller communities today. In the case of Indigenous Peoples in Guyana, David et al. (2006: 180) pointed to similar realities for the Wapishana: "since the early 20th century our people have adapted to new institutions like the churches and schools in our communities." As such, in the following, I discuss the influence of the church in Subsection 2.4.1.1 and that of school in Subsection 2.4.1.2, from the times of the early colonial period.

2.4.1.1 The Church

With respect to what led to the introduction of Christianity to the Rupununi area in what was then British Guiana, Bridges (1985: 1) notes the following about Fr. Cuthbert Cary-Elwes, who pioneered the establishment of the Catholic Church among the Wapishana, which in turn led to their acceptance of Christianity and other influences on their lives:

> In British Guiana, he worked first in Georgetown and then in Northwest District. There Michael McTurk—the then (unofficial) "Protector of Indians" spoke to him of the Takas—"a glorious opening

for a Mission." He told the Bishop who himself consulted McTurk. On 19th November, 1909, Bishop Galton—"Vicar Apostolic" of British Guiana—accompanied by Fr. Cary Elwes, started up the Demerara in a river-steamer, then, the same evening, from Wismar on the River Essequibo.

The "glorious opening for a Mission" assumes a preconception that the Takutu area was inhabited by people whose spiritual practices were alien to Christianity; therefore, they should be conquered through evangelization. Such colonial preconception is in alignment with what Jansen and Jiménez (2017: 28) refer to as the "Eurocentric representation of the Indigenous world by conquerors and missionaries". It can be said that such a perspective of the Indigenous world became the colonizers' justification to not only introduce their own religion but also their own civilization to the colonized.

Butt Colson and Morton (1982: 206) note that Fr. Cary-Elwes was attached to his missionary base in the Takatu, better known as the Rupununi area, for 13 years (January 1910–May 1923), working among the Indigenous Peoples including the Wapishana. Before Elwes' arrival, many Wapishana families lived in proximity to their farmlands, which were mostly along the edge of the forest. A case in point was the village of *Shawariminiz Naawa*, located on a long, flat hill in the savannah but in the vicinity of the forest. According to diary accounts of Fr. Cuthbert Cary-Elwes, because the water supply was limited at *Shawariminiz Naawa*, he and the chief chose a new site for the village about three miles away in a north-western direction (Bridges 1985: 46). Cary-Elwes went on to record that at this new site, the people first constructed a new church building before they eventually relocated to form the new village called *Maroro Naawa*. Such movement of people influenced by the church building parallels those of others such as *Shawaraworo* (ibid. 1985: 157), which was the largest village during the time of this earliest Catholic missionary. In other cases, persons moved to the villages first and then built churches as in the case of *Potarii Naawa* or Ambrose (ibid. 1985: 158).

Prior to the pioneering evangelical work of Cary-Elwes, the Wapishana had had a concept of a supreme spiritual being whom they called *Tominkaru* 'Creation' or 'Creator' of all things. Thus, when the priest preached to them about the overall supernatural being called 'God', it greatly influenced them, according to one Wapishana elder. However, their other ancestral beliefs that are connected to "a richly populated world of unseen spirits" (Henfrey 2017: 141) were not entirely displaced by their Christian beliefs and practices. For example, in Wapishana cosmology, there are overarching spirits of certain animals, plants, and landscape called *Tominkiz* 'origin' (e.g. *Kanawada tominkiz* 'cayman's origin'). Other authors refer to

the same overarching spirits as *Dokozu* 'Grandfather' or *Tapiki* 'Keeper' (David et al. 2006: 37). An elderly local Catholic leader offered a perspective on the difference between Tominkaru and other spirits that the Wapishana believe in. Tominkaru is perceived as the overall supernatural being whereas the spirits of certain animals, plants, and landscape are also supernatural, but smaller, less powerful, and put in charge there by Tominkaru. The difference is that worship is rendered to Tominkaru, while the smaller spirits are only given respect. In this sense, the overall modern Wapishana belief system is syncretic (Henfrey 2017: 137).

Further on the Wapishana traditional belief system, there is the realm of spiritual healing associated with the knowledge of esoteric techniques (Henfrey 2002: 133). A key example is that someone knowledgeable can invoke the desired overarching spirits through specialized rituals: prayers accompanied by blowing the breath of the mouth. The Wapishana also believe that these specialized rituals can be enhanced by the parts of special plants, animals, fish, insects, and amphibians found in on the land for use as *pasãnka* 'spirit charms' in activities such as hunting (David et al. 2006: 33). However, not many Wapishana are knowledgeable about these spirit charms. Perhaps, the more commonly known is the *panakaru* 'plant charms' for initiation rituals and hunting. It is also the belief among many Wapishana that certain ritual prayers and the use of certain plant charms can be used for evil purposes to cause harm on others. Perhaps the most feared of these practices is that of the *kanaumuu* 'an evil being' that has the ability to change from one form to another (e.g. from a human form to an animal form) and vice versa. These interchangeable forms are reportedly accomplished by the control and wishes of a knowledgeable man by the application of special *panakaru*. Activities of the *kanaumuu* are believed to cause severe illness and at times death, resulting in considerable social tension among people (Henfrey 2017: 140).

It is accepted by many that the *marunao*[5] is the main individual who knows specialized knowledge for guidance and healing, although there may be less prominent individuals who are also specialized healers. One *marunao*, whom I interviewed, shared that a *marunao* can perform both in the night and daylight, depending on his preference. Naturally, the *marunao* is respected and at the same time feared because he can also use the specialized knowledge to cause one's life to be off balance, causing sickness. From this perspective, one elderly woman indicated to me that people may

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5A *marunao*, as explained by one elder, is a gifted ritual specialist/spiritual healer who first fasts in order to enter into a visionary state that provides him with insights needed for the guidance and healing of others. *Marunao* is the male, and *marunaoaba* is the female.

be less inclined to consult a *marunao* who is heard to indulge in malevolent practices. Sometimes, however, whenever one is befallen by calamity or sickness that is believed to be connected with evil, one can go to a "good" *marunao* to ask for cures and healings. One of the roles of the *marunao* then, is to have balance restored in one's life through prayers, dietary restrictions, and other prohibitions, depending in the type of illness. Nowadays, this role complements the use of modern medicine, such as tablets provided by the Community Health Worker who is available at the village health posts. The other role of the *marunao* is controlling the opening and (in some cases, the closing) of previously inaccessible areas to human activity (Henfrey 2017: 150).All the traditional practices and beliefs mentioned above were not without opposition from the established religious bodies. The missionaries were known to discourage and, in some cases, openly denounce such practices or beliefs. For example, during my childhood days in my village, I remembered a preacher saying during his sermon that there was no such thing as a *kanaumuu*. Such denunciation has taken on an influential effect on quite a number of Wapishana Christians in that they in turn frown on certain "prohibited" practices engaged in by their fellow men. Such actions may create social tension among the people. This seems to have raised the issue as to how far or whether such practices should be allowed as an intercultural component in the Wapishana–English bilingual education programme. For example, while interviewing parents of the Year 1 class of the *Quality Bilingual Education Programme for Wapichan Children*, I noted that a few who are attached to a certain Christian denomination hinted that teachers should not mention "blowing" to their children, which in Wapishana culture is a practice of praying and using one's breath to invoke overarching spirits. This is fair enough, but as far as I know this aspect of the culture is not in the curriculum. This suggests that the programme leaders considered the sensitivities of individual parents towards such cultural practices and chose to exclude them from the programme. Nonetheless, some Wapishana still believe that their connection with plant and animal spirits is a way of life and still practise it.

The church as an institution then, influenced the early Wapishana immensely in that many of them were converted to Catholicism. Others, in later years, converted to other Christian denominations such as Christian Brethren and Assemblies of God. None of these churches differed much from the others in its influence levels of the tolerance of Wapishana culture. All the churches, for example, preached that there was only one supreme spiritual being. In effect, the church contributed somewhat to the diminishing of the public role of the *marunao*, who used to give healing and spiritual guidance to the people (South Central and South Rupununi Districts Toshaos Councils 2012: 10). Some churches who forbade their followers

from using traditional healing services have undermined the public role of the *marunao* in some communities (David et al. 2006: 18). Some people openly use stigmatizing terms such as "ungodly" or "evil" to refer to aspects of the spiritual work of the *marunao*. Partly for this reason, people would prefer to seek the services of the health centre or hospital. Only when they or their relatives have not fully recovered from the treatment received from the health personnel would they seek to see the *marunao*. In this way, the service of the *marunao* is seen as secondary or diminished, a last resort for treatment. Other sick people opt to see the *marunao* first. However, because of the stigma attached to their work by some people, a limited number of these spiritual healers are operating covertly.

The church further contributed to the devaluation of the language through the use of mainly English prayers and hymns. According to some elderly persons interviewed, Latin or English prayers were translated into Wapishana since the time of the first Catholic missionary priest, Fr. Cary-Elwes, who spoke Wapishana, a "with a fluency and correctness that astonished and delighted them" (Bridges 185: 169). These Wapishana prayers were encouraged and kept alive by successor priests including the popular educationist priest, Fr. Bernard McKenna (Greene-Roesel 1998: 60). However, while Wapishana prayers were said during Sunday services through the work of Parish Lay Assistants (PLAs), I can recall as a school boy that whenever the priest came, the mass and hymns were in English. It was only in the mid-70s that several Christian songs were introduced in Wapishana by other Christian missionaries who had also learned the language. In 2014, I was present at *Karaodaz Naawa* village where the New Testament in Wapishana was dedicated to the people by the Jesuit Missions, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and the Bible Society of Guyana. Since then, there has been an increase of the scripture readings in Wapishana. Within the past five years, one Catholic priest from India has also gone as far as saying the Mass in Wapishana. In terms of use, however, the Wapishana people have access to more Christian hymns and prayers in English than in Wapishana. These were the main ways by which the church as an institution changed the lives of the Wapishana**.** While the church had much influence over Wapishana through religious education meetings and instruction within the confines of the church building, it had less influence outside. By being able to partake in their traditional spiritual customs at places of use such as the home, the savannah, the rivers, the mountains, and the forest, the Wapishana are still able to create a sense of continuity with the spiritual past. Other profound changes resulted as an indirect influence of the church, which established primary schools. I now discuss the major ways these changes impacted the Wapishana people.

2.4.1.2   The school

With the construction of the church buildings came the eventual construction of school buildings, which were also run by the missionaries. Some of the primary schools were officially opened for the first time in the 1940s and early 1950s. According to the records kept in some primary schools in South Rupununi, for example, Aishalton Primary School was first opened on 1 April 1943; Karaudarnau Primary School on 2 September 1946; Maruranau Primary School on 15 October 1947; Awarewaunau Primary School on 1 September 1949; Achawib Primary School on 6 January 1953; and Shea Primary School on 14 September 1953. As people realized the need to send their children to school, more people came to live in the villages permanently. This was the case with Shea village, where in 1954 most of the people first lived in the forest along the Kwitaro River, according to Basil Rodrigues' autobiography, presented by Greene-Roesel (1998: 62).

This historical pattern of movement was not confined to the Wapishana. Research concerning other Indigenous Peoples revealed similar patterns. As expressed by Forte (1996: 73), such movement brought about a huge change in their lifestyles:

> The very transmission of Amerindian-ness was affected by the necessity of school. What an Amerindian child needed to know in order to be an Amerindian adult was, in all the thousands of years up to the middle of the last century, passed to the child directly from its parents and elders in constant interaction over shared daily activities. What it took to be an Amerindian was a vast range of knowledge of the natural environment, which came from the elders over the long periods of direct contact in connection with hunting, gathering, food preparation and farming itself. When Amerindian children began to spend most of their day in school, and travelling to and from school, their traditional way of learning what it took to be an Amerindian was replaced by a process which imperfectly taught them what colonials thought it took to be a servant of the Crown.

This process—in which the use of English as a medium of instruction for learning English as a second language was also seen as a replacement of the child's native language—was embedded in the British model of education, a reflection of what Jansen and Jiménez (2017: 27) see as a the "continuation of colonial structures, mentalities…" With time, such structures added to the Wapishana villages a political dimension. For example, the teaching in English only, with no Indigenous language permitted, had a political motivation and repercussions: to show that the area belonged to Britain, not Brazil. Thus, an English-speaking area meant it was British**.** Accordingly,

the education system prioritized English while devaluing Wapishana to such an extent that it had a "conditioning" effect on the school children. Forte (1996: 112) gave her perspective on this:

> After some 6 to 8 years of this kind of conditioning, Amerindian children also feel alienated from the life that surrounds them. Many grow dissatisfied with the natural and social environment of their villages and regions and think that they properly belong to the world from which their education derived.

In practice, this implied that children were influenced by the English language and culture insofar as they began to perceive their own language and culture as inferior. Such a marginal effect on the situation of the Indigenous population is reflective of the wider interplay of power stemming from what Ma Rhea (2015: 91) aptly captures as the "colonial mindset that established the system of education for Indigenous peoples globally". Partly, it is the colonial mindset that influences school leaders' and teachers' thinking "that they unwittingly reinscribe the contemporary school experience" contends Ma Rhea (ibid. 2015: 92). Following Ma Rhea's line of thought, it can also be said that such a colonial mindset also influences the students' thinking and actions. Though their actions or preferences have shifted towards the lifestyle of the western world, most Indigenous Peoples still experience marginal effects on their lives. In the case of the majority of Latin American states, the structures imposed by colonialism are replicated. As put by Aman and Ireland 2015: 4), "Newly born republics replicated the colonial structures in new terms where the very discourse of nationalist unity used for imperial decolonization continued to push the indigenous populations to the margins of society with the continuous enhancement of the colonial difference between modern European idioms (languages of science and knowledge) and those of indigenous populations (languages of religion and culture)". Where the education of indigenous children is concerned, indigenous languages continue to be marginalized in the school systems which perpetuate the dominance of the colonial language as the language of instruction. In Guyana, when a Wapishana-based bilingual educational programme was advocated for, some Wapishana parents and even teachers opposed the idea. However, much of this opposition is due to a lack of understanding with these stakeholders on the academic, cognitive, and social benefits their children could have as a result of being literate both in their native and majority languages (details of these are discussed in Chapter 4). All this and other matters cause most Indigenous Peoples to de-emphasize their traditional knowledge and skills. Similar attitudes towards their traditional knowledge and skills have been observed in other Indigenous Peoples. In the case of the Mixtec in Mexico, for example,

Jiménez (2015: 4) has argued that the root cause of such attitudes is the colonial mindset of the peoples: "Colonialism has been internalized: the dominant groups in society but also the indigenous peoples themselves still produce colonial ideas… The result is an attitude that glorifies western culture and modernization." Indeed, instances of this glorification are manifested in peoples' interactions with one another and the wider society.

In some Wapishana villages in Guyana, some younger parents, even though they can speak Wapishana, prefer to speak to their children in English. The preference given to English rather than Wapishana as the language of conversation in this case is reflective of its overwhelming dominance in the spoken and written realms, as expressed by Cenoz and Gorter (2012: 301): English is the most widely spread language of international communication and the most common language in education. As a result, there are scores of school children who speak English and not Wapishana as their first language. Such children, even though they understand the Wapishana being spoken, feel less confident in speaking it. Others have learned Wapishana and even when spoken to in the language, opt to answer in English. A contemporary example of such an attitude is in the remark of a young school-leaver: "We want to learn English, not Wapishana," in commenting on my work as the coordinator of the Wapishana Adult Literacy Programme. Similarly, some Wapishana secondary school children, even though they know their mother tongue, have been heard to remark to non-Wapishana teachers that they could not speak their native language. In commenting on similar actions by other Indigenous Peoples elsewhere, Cantoni (1997; 4) observes that such overt put-downs of their language come from older children who are ashamed of their own ethnicity (Cantoni 1997: 4). Cantoni further documents, that by seeing themselves as different, in language, appearance, and behaviour, people eventually regard these differences as undesirable because they impede their easy participation in the dominant society around them (Cantoni 1997: 3). In the case of the Wapishana, some people prefer speaking in English because it is not only the language of formal education, power, and prestige, but it is also widely used by people in the country and elsewhere in the world.

A similar negative attitude by other Indigenous Peoples towards their own language as a possible medium of instruction in a formal bilingual education programme has been observed. As noted by Hornberger (1999: 161), bilingual education has been resisted at times by the Quechua-speaking communities in Peru because of their firm belief that the most obvious way their children would be able to improve their lot is to be able to speak Spanish and to receive their education in Spanish. In Ecuador, the attitudes of the Indigenous peoples were no different. More recently, Novo (2014:

110), in an ethnographic study of elementary intercultural education in Kichwa, found that the Indigenous peoples claimed that they already knew the language and so preferred their children to learn foreign languages that are perceived to be useful in a globalized economy. In the above cases, the negative attitudes appear to be based on fear that the native language is inadequate for educational instruction or a lack of understanding of how such instruction will benefit the children. More recently however, there is a positive attitude in the Andean region, particularly in Peru. In this context, Escobar (2013: 730) notes that there are positive attitudes towards bilingual education by parents of the Indigenous language-speaking children because of the perception that by acquiring Spanish, they will "better integrate themselves into the national community, while maintaining their cultural identity". If more indigenous parents as well as the teachers and other key stakeholders can develop such positive attitudes towards mother tongue-based bilingual education, the children's first or native language will more likely be maintained alongside the second language throughout the primary school.

Returning to the Wapishana, a retired teacher informally shared how a particular element within the school system had a conditioning effect on the parents. When he was a young primary schoolteacher between the late 1960s and the early 1970s, teachers enforced the rule that children were not to speak their "dialect" in school. An interviewee offered a possible reason for this: historically, the teaching in English in the Rupununi was practised because Indigenous teachers were supplied from the highly educated Santa Rosa, Moruca area, inhabited by the Indigenous people called the Arawak (Lokono), which had had the advantage of good schooling already (see Amerindian Research Unit 1992: 67). Additionally, based on my own experience of being a pupil in one of these primary schools, non-Indigenous teachers were recruited from the coastal region of Guyana, signalling that this was the policy for recruiting teachers then. Eventually, as the years passed, more and more Wapishana people became qualified to teach in the schools. The Arawak teachers and non-Indigenous teachers from the coastal areas spoke neither Wapishana nor Makushi. Another reason is that they, together with structural system they were part of, did not consider it important to learn the languages as teachers, in the first place. From the standpoint of a retired resident teacher from the coastal area, another reason was that when the tests were designed they were written not in Wapishana but in English. Nevertheless, these examples illustrate the practices that were part of a structural system, whereby Indigenous languages are constantly undervalued and underrepresented.

The above-mentioned reasons seem to inadequately conform to the original sense of the term "dialect" which is defined as "a variety of a language, spoken in one part of a country (regional dialect), or by people belonging to a particular social class (social dialect or SOCIOLECT), which is different in some words, grammar, and/or pronunciation from other forms of the same language" (Richards and Schmidt 2002: 155). Based on the above definition, a dialect may be described as relational to another language, that is, one of the other. This implies two or more varieties of a language may be used by individuals or societies. Further, a useful description that elucidates the difference between varieties that are dialect and non-dialect is offered by Sallabank (2012: 105), who points out that many linguists, use the criterion of mutual comprehensibility: "if users of two varieties cannot understand each other, the varieties are considered to be different languages. If they understand each other, the varieties are considered mutually comprehensible dialects of the same language." The reasons for the choice of one dialect over another involve social considerations such as the participants, the social setting, or the purpose of the interaction (Holmes 2013: 5). However, the reasons for one choice or the other also involve complex issues, as stated by Errington (2008: 10): "Issues of linguistic identity and background can easily and oversimply thought of as matters of 'dialect' and 'accent' but these are terms which disguise and straddle complex, overlapping social categories: region, race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, age and so on." Errington further points out that during the colonial era "such linguistic differences were encountered by colonialists as challenges which they dealt with by selecting some ways of speaking as their objects of description, while ignoring others" (ibid. 2008: 10).

While people in a community may use one dialect over another, this pattern of variety choice has a slightly different dimension. Such a dimension may be described in the narrow and original sense as "diglossia", by which "two distinct varieties of the same language are used in a community, with one regarded as a high (or H) variety and the latter (a low or L) variety" (Holmes 2013: 27). Each variety has a distinct function: the former, for example, is generally used for literature whereas the latter for informal communication. Holmes goes on to note that the H and L varieties of a language function in very similar ways by which distinct languages operate in other communities, such as the Guaraní and Spanish in Paraguay (ibid. 2013: 31). Accordingly, because of this similarity it was suggested that bilingual communities such as those in Paraguay and elsewhere be considered examples of diglossia. Therefore, the term diglossia can be generalized to cover any situation where two distinct languages are used for

different functions in a speech community, especially where one language is used for H functions and the other for L functions.

Based on the generalized explanation, diglossia could be usefully extended to Indigenous communities in which an Indigenous language and an international language (e.g. Spanish or English) operate. The Indigenous language may be considered the L variety which is generally learned at home whereas the international one is the H variety, learned in school. In this respect, it is not surprising what the wider community in Mexico, for example, thought of the intercultural university, which is for both non-Indigenous and Indigenous students alike. According to Schmelkes (2014: 136) such a university was "considered poor, inadequate and of low quality because its instructors taught 'dialects', which is a derogatory way of referring to Indigenous languages because the implication is that they are not languages." That Indigenous languages are "dialects" is a perception that is reflective of the situation in Guyana, where many people, including Indigenous Peoples, perceive English as prestigious and Indigenous languages as less important or valueless, only "dialects" and not real languages.

Since Wapishana is not in any way related to English, to call Wapishana a dialect is a misconception. Rather Wapishana and English are distinct languages, each with its own word structure, sentence structure, and sound system. Furthermore, the Wapishana–English situation is diglossic. Nevertheless, one of the resulting effects is that some parents, educators, and officials perpetuate the use of the term "dialect" when referring to any one of the Indigenous languages today. This had caused some older folks to believe that their children must learn the second language as first and foremost. As a consequence, one can observe today that scores of younger parents prioritize the use of English by speaking to their children at home in English rather than Wapishana. These practices were largely influenced by the school structure, which facilitated the process of assimilating culturally diverse children to the dominant culture. As expressed by Cummins (1996: 147), while the well-intentioned educators saw "their role as helping students to add a second language and cultural affiliation", they were, by contrast, not helping to maintain their students' primary language and culture.

In addition to the negative effects noted above, the imposition of the British monolingual model of education led to the majority of Wapishana children experiencing a "language barrier" at the beginning of their formal schooling, because they were and still are instructed in the dominant language, English, which was once the elite colonial language, English (see Subsection 1.1). This situation typifies a school system that promotes the national language (Wright 2012: 71). However, for the Wapishana children,

they entered a classroom finding the promoted or endorsed national language unfamiliar. This contributed greatly to the majority of children underachieving or underperforming on school assessments. According to the head teacher of one primary school I interviewed, part of the problems teachers faced was children's underachievement in school assessments. The head teacher shared that the pupils who wrote the National Grade Two Assessment (NGSA) over the last ten-year period have not been achieving the national learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy. A similar trend is evident in nearby schools. I conducted an independent survey of the National Grade Six Assessment of children from three Wapishana villages over a six-year period (2007 to 2012). The findings revealed that on average only 30% of the children were awarded places in secondary schools, while the remaining 70% were awarded places in the same primary schools. Consequently, those children who remained continued in the upper classes of the primary schools with most of them being eventually phased out, thereby limiting their options for job opportunities and social and academic advancement. Those who dropped out prematurely experienced the same fate. This is often the situation faced by a number of Wapishana children who have taken the NGSA and obtained lower scores than the others. Such same-school placement parallels other examples of educational structures that have disadvantaged culturally diverse children. Cummings (1996: 140), for example, documents how ability grouping and tracking practices might systematically discriminate against average and low-ability students, leading to a retardation of their academic progress. Indeed, if children are made to learn in a language they are less familiar with, then there are consequences, as Baker (2006: 170) pointed out:

> …if children are made to operate in an insufficiently developed second language… the system will not function at its best. If children are made to operate in the classroom in a poorly developed language, the quality and quantity of what they learn from complex curriculum materials and produce in oral and written form may be relatively weak and impoverished.

A similar perspective was made by Benson (2004: 2), who pointed out that the learning difficulties experienced by children may be rooted in the "submersion" approach to teaching which is defined as instruction in a language that the learners do not speak when they start school. As Lam (2001: 96) further pointed out, in the submersion approach the children's first language is neither valued nor used as a medium of instruction. This implies that the submersion approach assumes the life, culture, and language of the mainstream culture to be the norm in a country, no matter what the culture or identity of the children, where they live or what they speak.

English as a language of instruction can be likened to a "barrier" to their learning if children do not know English or just know a little of it. An alternative formal approach is learning first in the L1 with its associated culture and then proceeding in a similar way in the L2, but at the same time not replacing the L1. Further discussion on approaches to schooling children who are bilingual or who will become bilingual is done in Chapter 4.

In spite of this barrier however, there are several Wapishana children who have performed exceptionally well at the National Grade Six Assessment and were offered places at senior secondary schools in the capital city. This has contributed to another type of displacement. This displacement may be termed an educational "brain drain" whereby the highest achieving children leave their villages at 11 years old for secondary schooling, truncating the development of their language and knowledge of their traditional ways of life at a crucial stage. Furthermore, some of the most successful students who obtain acceptable grades in a minimum of five subjects at the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate examination prolong their years in the city to pursue tertiary education. The certificate is awarded to students who write an examination at the end of the five-year period of their secondary education. Those who gain higher education qualifications often cannot return to work in their villages even if they feel compelled to, because of the lack of job/entrepreneurial opportunities for their educational level. Other young people leave the communities in search of employment elsewhere. A prime driver of this migration is a lack of opportunities to earn a steady income in the villages, "where the younger people measure status by the possession of consumer goods and the gradual de-emphasising of subsistence agriculture" (Forte 1996: 14).

As we have seen in this section, public infrastructure, beginning with the church buildings, has immensely influenced the organization of most Wapishana villages. Among the public buildings, the church building became the centre of convergence of most people when they came to worship on Sundays. One of the reasons for the dominance of the Christian activities is the fact that over the years the church discouraged the traditional spiritual practices of the Wapishana including those of the *marunao*. All this, along with the discouragement of the use of the Indigenous language in schools, caused many Wapishana to be seen as Christians and English-speaking. However, the total integration of the Wapishana into the mainstream culture appeared to have been resisted to some extent by a considerable number of men and women still spending their time in subsistence activities of farming, hunting, fishing, and gathering of fruits and nuts. These activities entailed constant connection with their landscape, which also lends itself to the ongoing practices of their spiritual beliefs. By

practising such spiritual beliefs covertly, and not overtly as they did with their Christian beliefs, they maintained their ancestral spiritual independence. In so doing, quite a number of families retained their identity and traditional lifestyle to a large extent.

In the next section, I discuss the economic influences on the Wapishana, beginning from the colonial-influenced cattle and balata industries to modern-day income generating activities.

2.4.2 Economic influence

When the Europeans first arrived in the Rupununi, an established trading system was in place between the Wapishana people and other Indigenous Peoples such as the Taruma and the WaiWai. As noted by Butt Colson and Morton (1982: 208), the famous explorer-geographer Robert Schomburk remarked that the Tarumas, who were trainers of fine hunting dogs and manufacturers of cassava graters, bartered these with their neighbours, particularly the Wapishana. This system continued during the early colonial period, as the Wapishana bartered cutlasses, axes, and other useful objects for bows and cassava graters from the WaiWai (Rivière 1969: 152). Due to the introduction of the cash-oriented system by the colonial presence, the barter system of the Wapishana became less robust. In this section, I first describe the economic influences of two main activities—the cattle industry (Subsection 2.4.2.1) and the balata industry (Subsection 2.4.2.2.). I then focus on their modern-day income-generating activities after the cattle industry reduced its work force and the balata trade ceased (Subsection 2.4.2.3).

2.4.2.1   Cattle industry

The influence of the cash economy on the Wapishana has its origins in the cattle industry. This can be traced to the last decade of the 19th century after De Rooy, a Dutchman, sold his herd to H. P. C. Melville, a Scotsman, who in turn sold his lot by the 1920s to the Rupununi Development Company (RDC) (Henfrey 2017: 69). The RDC employed some people as *vaqueros* "cowboys" and cooks at their main ranch of Dadanawa and other outstations. When there is a major round-up of cattle, the RDC would temporarily employ extra Wapishana men for as long as the round-up lasted. Through their employment, the men as well as some women learned the skills of cattle rearing. This included the skills of how to handle and care for horses

and cattle with the related skills in the tanning of leather and producing of leather craft items such as horse and cow hobbles, horse and cow belly bands, horse bit reins, saddles, leggings, knife shields, hats, belts, bags, and wallets. The leather was tanned using mainly the bark of special trees. The process generally included the following steps: (1) overnight soaking of dried cow hides in the creek; (2) three- to four-day soaking of the hides in a solution of water and "caustic soda" in a trough made from dried cow hide; (3) scraping off the hair and extra skin on the underside of the hides; (3) extracting and pounding the bark of special trees; (4) submerging the scraped hides with the pounded bark in a water-filled trough made of dry cow hide; (5) alternatingly upturning the submerged hides in the trough for a period of six to eight weeks; and (6) extracting the tanned hides to air-dry; and (7) beating the dried tanned hides with sticks to make them pliable for use. A useful tool is the rasp to smoothen the underside of the finished leather pieces. A few men can still produce some leather to sell as an added source of income. The knowledge and skills to produce leather are dying, however. One of the best ways to ensure that these knowledge and skills needed are passed on to the younger generation is to incorporate the leather craft as a topic in the school's curriculum.

While employing a considerable number of cowboys and cooks, the RDC also engaged the Wapishana in the barter of manufactured goods and *tasso* 'dried beef' for their cassava by-products such as cassava bread, *farine* 'a traditional meal-like staple', *casareep* 'a type of sauce', and edible tubers that grow in the ground. Such barter continues today to a lesser extent. The RDC was a major employer of the Wapishana. However, due to the closure of most of its outstations over the years, the work force has dwindled.

Figure 7. Vaqueros brand a calf in Maruranau.

The RDC activities altered the landscape by increasing the number of cattle and erecting infrastructure such as fences, corrals, and paddocks at smaller ranches or outstations. One prominent example is the fencing-off of the savannah to mark lands that belonged to the Wapishana and the company. However, some Wapishana saw the fences as an intrusion of their traditional lands. The fence became known as the "Wapishana Fence", but others refer to it as the "Company Fence" because it was sponsored by the RDC. According to elders, the RDC employed mostly Wapishana men to cut the needed materials and erect the fence. The fence, however, brought eventual conflicts between the Wapishana and the RDC. Whenever, the Wapishana used *oko*, which are special plants used for their traditional way of fishing in pools beyond the "Wapishana Fence", the RDC saw it as trespassing. The *oko* is pounded, put in baskets, and then submerged and shaken in a pool of water so that sap from the pounded *oko* dissolves in the water. After several minutes or even longer, fish may become suffocated and float to the surface of the water. The fish may then be shot with arrows, chopped with a cutlass, or caught with hand nets. While this is a way of fishing is advantageous to one party, it may be to the detriment to the other. Workers with the RDC, for example, usually claimed that some of the company's animals, especially the horses, were negatively affected by drinking the "polluted" water. Some experienced Wapishana vaqueros who once worked with the RDC claimed that if the horses drink the water of a stagnant pool in which certain *oko* was used, they may become blind. Other kinds of *oko,* when used, may result in dead fish poisoning a stagnant pool. Consequently, the horses that drink such

water may become sick and eventually die. Yet, other vaqueros claimed that the water in which certain kinds of *oko* were used do not affect animals when they drink the water. Others claimed that the monitored use of *oko* in fast-flowing creeks/rivers works best because the *oko* becomes less effective as most of it washes way with the downward flow. The use of *oko* within the Wapishana lands is also an issue because horses owned by villagers may be affected as described above.

After years of being involved in cattle industry directly or indirectly, the Wapishana people have come to adopt this economic activity to such an extent that it is fair to say that in most villages there are families who own their own cattle and horses. Most village councils today have their own herds. One or two cattle are slaughtered sometimes when a family needs cash or food. The cattle industry was an important source of income for the Wapishana people, but it could not provide employment for all who needed it. While some remained on the ranches as employees, other men turned to the balata industry for employment. I now briefly describe the involvement of the Wapishana in this industry, which many families relied on for years.

2.4.2.2   Balata industry

According to Forte (1996: 55), balata is the trade name for the coagulated latex of the bulletwood tree (*Mimusops globosa*) which was primarily used in the manufacture of belting and boot soles before the production of synthetic substitutes. Since the balata industry was active in British Guiana during the 20th century and the fact that bullet-wood trees were abundant in the forest east of the Wapishana villages, a small trade in Rupununi started (ibid. 2006: 55). Many Wapishana males became "balata bleeders", tapping the trees for latex in order to sell to middlemen or agents who were involved in the trade. For many Wapishana, the balata trade was their first experience at being involved in an economic activity that was run by people from outside their communities.

According to former balata bleeders, the work cycle sometimes took as long six months, beginning with the long rainy season in May. In this way, the work had been "reconcilable with the maintenance of subsistence activities, particularly agriculture, partly because of its seasonal nature" (ibid. 2017: 70). The work cycle also had an impact on the physical geography of the region where "Certain villages and river crossings gained prominence through trade, moving populations and commodities in alternating directions according to the seasons" (Greene-Roesel 1998: 127). Indeed, in recounting their canoe journeys as they transported their products,

former balata bleeders can refer to popular locations as "falls" or "landings". As David et al. (2006: 17) also added, "From the early 1920s until the 1970s many families were involved in bleeding balata from the bulletwood tree which they traded for manufactured foods and cash." Being employed in the industry, they used the extra material to manufacture their own prized balata goblet, that is, a container for beverages. Nowadays, these are still seen in Wapishana homes, though they are now substituted by plastic containers. In sum, the balata industry was another major supplier of wage labour for the Wapishana, the men as bleeders and others as captains and handymen of the boats which transported the balata. With the closure of the balata industry, the Wapishana men had no other alternative but to diversify into other activities. In the next section, I discuss the modern-day income generating activities including village-based activities and employment migration.

Figure 8. Bulletwood tree that has been tapped for balata.

2.4.2.3   Modern-day income-generating activities

Since the closure of the balata trade, families with access to better soils have turned to commercial peanut farming, which they have managed to integrate with traditional system of shifting cultivation and rotational crop farming (David et al. 2016: 17). Others than those above turned to planting peanuts, selling their produce mainly to businessmen from Lethem, the town nearest to the villages. Some young men went into the gold mining areas to make "fast" money. These sources of income allowed people to save enough money to invest in businesses such as grocery and utility shops. Others approached the local banks in Lethem or the Institute of Private Enterprise for Development, a national institute that provides small loans to start private businesses. Others used their profits or savings to buy motorcycles for private use and for renting to others who need faster transportation. A few people have been successful enough to be able to own vehicles, which are used for transportation of people to and from Lethem. Most times, the vehicles are hired by the local business people who transport goods from Lethem to their villages. This has been an ongoing activity.

Other cash-oriented systems have functioned within the villages. Thus, also contributing to local cash flow in the villages are government-paid employees such as the schoolteachers and health workers, as well as other technical and ancillary personnel at the Aishalton District Hospital. Some of these workers, who do not own a farm, turn to those who have to buy edible tubers that grow in the ground (e.g. yams, eddoes, and sweet potatoes) and cassava by-products (e.g. farine and cassava bread). Hunters and fishermen also sell meat to the government workers and business people. To assist others who may not have the time and skills to set up a farm or construct a house, some men offer their relevant skills. In this way, they obtain cash to buy the necessities for the home, such as clothes and manufactured goods. Others sell fruits from home-grown fruit trees or fruits from the forest. Most villages have a weekly or biweekly market where people sell their local produce including food, local beverages, and handicrafts. All in all, the major impact has been the Wapishana's increased dependency on the cash-oriented system over the barter system which they were accustomed to.

Others, in seeking better economic opportunities outside, leave their communities. People travel to other areas of the country, neighbouring parts of Brazil, or in a few cases, countries overseas. Some leave their villages temporarily, staying away for months in search of jobs to provide for themselves and their families. Even young people who have attained higher education are not inclined to return to their homeland due to a lack of economic enterprises that provide jobs within the district. The lack of

employment serves as a "push factor" in compelling youngsters to seek work (Guyana Human Rights Association Report 2016: 4; Forte 1996: 28). Due to their long absences from the villages, some parents are unable to interact with their children adequately enough to help them in deeper development of their first language skills and the various aspects of their culture. Even if these roles are partly taken over by other family members, they may not be enough to keep the language and culture robust among youngsters in some villages. The inability to pass on Wapishana knowledge becomes even more pronounced when parents, because of job security and economic opportunity found at their new places of abode, opt to live there permanently and move with their entire families. In short, employment migration has partly contributed to the loss of certain aspects of Wapishana culture.

In this section, we have looked at the economic influence ranging from the cattle industry to employment migration. Nowadays, cattle ownership and the related husbandry skills are indirect consequences of the Wapishana having worked with the company that controlled the cattle industry. Employment, whether within or outside the villages, contributes not only to the upkeep of families but also to increasing their possessions of imported foodstuff and desirable commodities. Other Wapishana secured bank loans for businesses to enhance their way of life. In this sense, access to purchasing power means enhancing one's status or prestige in the Wapishana communities. However, the transition to the cash-oriented lifestyle has placed some strains on the Wapishana traditional lifestyle. For example, husbands seeking employment outside the villages often create lengthy periods of separation from their families, leaving the added burden on the wives to fend for the families. The cash-oriented culture has also cultivated the "cash and carry" attitude, contributing to the dearth of the cultural values of generosity and sharing. If they can be reintegrated into the Wapishana communities, the cultural values of sharing and giving will help alleviate the economic strains experienced by families, thereby promoting greater interrelationships among the villagers.

In the following section, I further discuss the main ways by which the life of the Wapishana changed by the adoption of the languages and certain habits of the colonizing cultures. I then discuss certain traditional practices that have disappeared as well as those that are in decline.

2.4.3 Influence of intercultural contacts

The continuous contact of the Wapishana with other ethnic populations through schooling and migration, including those from other indigenous

groups, resulted in many Wapishana people learning English or Creolese as the lingua franca, "a means to communicate across linguistic boundaries" (De Vries 1997: 19). Consequently, certain Wapishana words are now replaced with English or Creolese equivalents. In this section, I highlight some instances of loss of language that some Wapishana are uneasy about. Specifically, I highlight a shift from Wapishana to English regarding kinship terms and counting and their effects in Subsection 2.4.3.1. I then point out the importance of the uniqueness of language as a key to identity in Subsection 2.4.3.2 and some changes in the Wapishana lifestyle in Subsection 2.4.3.3. In Subsection 2.4.3.4, I summarize and briefly discuss the section.

2.4.3.1   Attrition of some language aspects and counting system

One noticeable aspect of language that has been strongly influenced by English is Wapishana kinship terms used when greeting the elderly. For instance, the terms *taatai* 'mother's brother', *paapai* 'father's brother', and *imadokuz* 'father-in-law' are most times used interchangeably with "uncle". Other terms such as, *maamai* 'mother's sister', *w'anuu* 'father's sister', and *imauzo* 'mother-in-law' are used interchangeably with "aunty". Likewise, *maamaa* is replaced with "mum", and *paapaa* with "daddy". Thus, one can commonly hear a young man greeting his mother's brother as *Kaiman Uncle* 'Good morning, uncle' rather than *Kaiman taatai* 'Good morning, my mother's brother'. Others commonly say *Kaiman mum* instead of *Kaiman maamaa* for 'Good morning, mum'. The terms "uncle", "aunty", and "mum" are borrowings, with different meaning and reference. The fact is that the use of Wapishana kinship terms gives specificity. Otherwise, according to an elder of the Sawariwau village, the replacement of such Wapishana words would contribute to the erasure of not only important Wapishana words, but also what they represent—respect and ties that bind members of nuclear and extended families. She hoped that something could be done about it before more loss of the language is experienced. Thus, there is unease among the elders that the non-use of the specific kinship terms and the intermixing of Wapishana and English terms will lead to language attrition, the misunderstanding of proper relationships, and the erosion of respect within or between families.

Another aspect of the language partly lost is counting. The Wapishana Language Project (2000: 166) in presenting a particularly clear description of the terms, origin, and meaning of the Wapishana numbering system gave a brief background:

> Old Wapishana counting started with fingers and toes until they reached twenty, which made up one body. Then counting stared over by counting bodies until there were twenty bodies counted, that is 400. It was possible to keep counting beyond 400 but people almost never needed to count over 100.

With the introduction of schools, people were taught to count in English. This had a debilitating effect on the usage of the Wapishana counting system. For example, a considerable number of Wapishana speakers can count only up to ten in Wapishana as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Wapishana number terms and meaning
(adapted from the Wapishana language Project 2000: 166).

	Wapishana number terms	Meaning
1.	*bauda'apa*	– (one finger)
2.	*dya'utam*	– (two fingers)
3.	*idikinauda'au*	– (three fingers)
4.	*pamina'utam kida*	– (four fingers)
5.	*baka'iau da'u*	'one hand' (five fingers)
6.	*bauda'apa bakaunu'iti*	'one to its hand' (five fingers plus one other finger)
7.	*dya'utam bakaunu'iti*	'two to its hand' (five fingers plus two other fingers)
8.	*idikinauda'au bakaunu'iti*	'three to its hand' (five fingers plus three other fingers)
9.	*pamina'utam kida bakaunu'iti*	'four to its hand' (five fingers plus four other fingers)
10.	*baokooka'au*	'all (both) hands' (ten fingers)
11.	*bauda'apa wakidiba'iti*	'one toe to our foot' (ten fingers and one toe)
12.	*dya'utam wakidiba'iti*	'two toes to our foot' (ten fingers and two toes)
13.	*idikinauda'au wakidiba'iti*	'three toes to our foot' (ten fingers and three toes)
14.	*pamina'utam kida wakidiba'iti*	'four toes to our foot' (ten fingers and four toes)
15.	*badaarapa wakidiba'iti*	'one side of our foot' (ten fingers, five toes)

16.	*bauda'apa wakidiba bakaunu'iti*	'one toe to the other foot' (ten fingers, five toes on one foot and one on the other)
17.	*dya'utam wakidiba bakaunu'iti*	'two toes to the other foot' (ten fingers, five toes on one foot and two on the other)
18.	*idikinauda'au wakidiba bakaunu'iti*	'three toes to the other foot' (ten fingers, five toes on one foot and three on the other)
19.	*pamina'utam kida wakidiba bakaunu'iti*	'four toes to the other foot' (ten fingers, five toes on one foot and four on the other)
20.	*bauda'apa pidan nana/banupapa pidan*	'one person's body' (all twenty fingers and toes on one person)

The Wapishana way of counting is based on a quinary system that combines to twenty. For example, the number *bauda'apa pidan nanaa dy'atum powa'a* (literally: 'one person's body and two fingers') expresses 'twenty-two'. Using the above table, we can figure out that *bauda'apa* 'one', *pidan* 'person', *nanaa* 'body' are used for 'twenty' and *dy'atum* for 'two'. The word '*powa'a* 'more' is an addition marker that is usually used beyond 'twenty'.

Admirably, there are people who can still count beyond forty but most Wapishana people prefer to count in English for practical reasons. One is that the English terms for counting are shorter. The other is that there are more uses for English counting as in counting of money and doing accounts. For example, *six* in English as opposed to *bauda'ap bakaunau'iti* in Wapishana would make it easier for writing. The economical borrowing of English counting terms is likewise evident in the New Testament written in Wapishana (See *Kamaina'o Tominkaru Paradan* (2012: 117).

Meanwhile, efforts are made to introduce Wapishana numeracy in schools involved in the *Quality Bilingual Education for Wapichan Children.* It is important that the children grasp the Wapishana counting system based on a pattern linked to the origin of terms used and their meanings. The idea is that these concepts of numeracy would transfer in the minds of the children as they go on to learn the English terms.

Even though some important Wapishana words are currently replaced with English words, these changes indicate that the language is dynamic and ever evolving. As Baker (1995: 219) puts it: "Language change is a sign of an alive, adapting language**.** However, the fortunes of any one language necessarily hinge on those other languages in context (Hornberger 2009:

201). In a bilingual community, a language may be perceived as less dominant when it declines in its functions and use. In this sense, there is concern in the some communities that people should still be able to maintain the use of their native languages (less dominant languages) at least orally or informally to keep it alive. In the case of the Wapishana, besides speaking the language, there are now attempts by younger people to use it in writing, at least informally, following the informal uses of chatting or texting messages by mobile phones (see Subsection 2.4.6.5).

2.4.3.2   Uniqueness of language as key to identity

The progressive loss of the language has caused great concern among Wapishana leaders insofar as some Toshaos believed that if nothing was done soon, their collective identity would be lost. As one Toshao asserted, "Language can reveal identity; it is the main part of the culture of a people." How this identity of a people may be revealed was vividly illustrated by a former Toshao and "Chief of Chiefs" of the Wapishana at a village meeting I attended. His illustration commences with the idea that if we should put in front of us several indigenous men—one WaiWai, one Wapishana, one Makushi, one Patamona, and one Carib—we would not know their differences at a first glance because their complexion and other outward features are similar. One major way of knowing their differences is if each of them spoke to us in his own language. Expressed differently, it is the uniqueness of the different languages that give them an identity despite their similarities. This notion of identity is consistent with the point articulated by Cummins (1996: 10): when children use their mother tongue it is "the key to their identity". However, children's use of their mother tongue may be dependent on how robustly the language is used within the family. As one researcher puts it, a key factor is whether or not the language is used and transmitted to children in the family (Sallabank 2012: 101). In addition, it may well be in the children's best interest to point out to them instances of how the identity of people may be revealed as mentioned above. Used in the broader sense, identity covers more than speaking a language. In other words, the relationship between language and identity is more complex as pointed out by Joseph (2013: 39):

> Identities are manifested in language as, first, the categories and labels that people attach themselves and others to signal their belonging; secondly, as the indexed ways of speaking and behaving through which they perform their belonging; and thirdly, as the interpretations that others make of those identities.

These labels or acts of identity may be a matter of free choice, viewed on the individual or societal levels or scales. On the societal level, the social structures enable the labels and acts of identity to be more visible than on the individual level (ibid. 2013: 38) but "identities have to be forged—created, transmitted, reproduced, performed—textually and semiotically, that is through signs" (p. 41). Indeed, if identities are to be forged, all the above should not only be enacted through texts and signs, but also through symbolic considerations connected with place names of landscape (e.g. deep pools, lakes, rivers, caves, mountains). Such place names are relevant to the histories of individuals or the communities.

In the case of the Wapishana, one of the messages to be internalized from the Toshaos is that if the native language is not used frequently then more people may forget the language. Younger Wapishana, for example, know little of the stories behind certain place names—hydronyms and toponyms. A few examples of condensed stories will illustrate how striking the connections are to some of these place names. In the case of toponyms, there are differences in the use of *naawa* 'hill', *dukuo* 'mountain', or *taawu* 'steep rise'. When used in the broad sense, mountains may be called *naawa* or *dukuo*. In some specific cases, mountains may be called *taawu*. Two examples are *Aukuowii Taawu* 'brains steep rise' and *Wiiwii Taawu* 'sister's steep rise'. In relation to the former, the Wapishana oral tradition is that a group of people in attempting to escape from their enemies used a ladder-like structure to climb to the summit of the steep mountain. On realizing that their enemies were right on their track, they waited until the enemies were almost on the upper parts of the ladder to cut it loose. The enemies fell to their deaths, with their brains splattering on the rocky incline. The white spots on the rocky incline are said to be traces of the splattered brains.

Figure 9. Aukuowii Taawu 'brains' steep rise'.

With regard to the latter, a sister of a group of people, while fishing in the nearby creek, said she needed to visit the nearby mountain as someone was beckoning her. On her return, she described a beautiful farm which she mysteriously entered, bringing back plant parts such as banana and plantain suckers. Her brothers marvelled at her mysterious story and have since named the mountain after her.

Figure 10. Wiiwii Taawu 'sister's steep rise'.

The other example is *Kopau Saba* 'fine fish'. According to the Wapishana oral tradition, a mother fish of the Kwitaro River saw people continually using *oko* there to catch fish. So, she advised the rest that they should relocate to another river, further west in the savannah. In leading the move, the *Daobara* 'a type of fine fish' gave a huge leap towards the Achimaruwa'o River in the west. However, airborne and gliding as it went, the *Daobara* missed the river to land instead, head in and tail out, on top of a mountain located some distance before the river. Today, there is a fish tail-like outcrop of rock that gives the mountain its name.

Figure 11. Kopau Saba 'fine fish'.

These mountains referred to are between the villages of *Shii* (Shea) and *Zoopo Naawa* (Rupunau). The importance of these legends behind these mountain names is that they have some historical, territorial, and linguistic continuity with the original inhabitants—the ancestors of the Wapishana. Many of these place names are taken for granted today in that many younger people may know the names, but not the related historical knowledge. Nonetheless, the lack of knowledge in the Wapishana traditional past and its connection to the present has become part of the people's awareness that a notable direction to address it has been taken by some leaders. For example, the Wapichan Waddauniinao Ati'o (Wapishana Literacy Association) has supported and promoted the recording of short stories, songs, and legends throughout the district since 2011.The stories that are still known can be kept alive by the spoken and written language. A further suggestion to highlight the Wapishana way of life is to follow the example of Godfrey Pauline of Aishalton, who as a composer of his own Wapishana songs and poems, allowed a researcher to record his compositions on CDs, which he shared with his fellowmen, much to their delight and Wapishana pride. The

Wapishana people need to encourage more of our cultural activists to be positive role models for championing their cultural heritage through different expressions. On the formal side, one Toshao suggested that the Wapishana should have a formal educational system in place to develop the language. Such a system can reawaken awareness that the language provides access to the affiliated culture, enabling a security of self-identity, a sharing of the inheritance of the past, and giving some security and status within the "small and known" rather than "the large and unknown" (Baker 1995: 207).

However, as Baker also pointed out, non-dominant groups who speak their own languages require competence in the dominant language for economic, informational, and sometimes national needs. This point implies that it is commendable that Indigenous language activists promote their languages and cultures, but they must also do so for multilingual repertoires and additive bilingualism (see Section 4.2.1.1). In other words, Indigenous children should learn about Western knowledge, skills and culture but steeped in their own ways of learning. Broadly speaking, most Wapishana have embraced acculturation. It is based on their increased reliance on the cash-oriented system over the barter system that many of our young Wapishana people look for change and so go out seeking jobs. In the following, I discuss some of the cultural changes in the Wapishana lifestyle.

2.4.3.3   Some changes in the Wapishana lifestyle

According to one Toshao, as a result of living and working outside the communities, people have returned to their villages with changes in their behaviour and living styles. For example, several men and women who go to work in Brazil have been heard to return speaking Portuguese in the villages. Others learned a Brazilian dance and introduced it with recordings of the accompanying music to their fellow villagers. Over the years, this has become entrenched in Wapishana celebrations and parties. As aptly put by a young man interviewed, "If you want to see a full dance floor during a party in the village, play Brazilian music called *forro*." In many cases, the women decided to live permanently outside of the village, in urban areas with their non-Wapishana husbands. One of the reasons, based on the Toshao's observation, is that most of these men could not fit into the way of life of the village. He further observed that some of these men who came to live in the villages, first showed good signs of cooperating with the villagers, but after some years or even several months, showed their true colours. For example, given their nature of honesty and humbleness, some women were known to be exploited or mistreated by their non-Wapishana partners, according to one Toshao. Some women who became separated from their partners faced

pressure to fend for themselves and children. As a result, some women returned to work outside of the community, leaving their little ones behind with their parents or grandparents, who in turn felt added pressure to raise their grandchildren. It is for these reasons that the village councils felt that they should place conditions on how non-Wapishana men should live in the villages before they are accepted on a permanent basis as villagers. This type of monitoring system should still be followed, although there are some mixed unions that have thrived in the villages.

Some Wapishana who ventured into the gold-mining areas manifested cultural behaviours that were typical of mining workers elsewhere. In the words of Forte, such cultural behaviours tend to be influenced by the mining and concomitant activities (1996: 65):

> Mining workers are more often than not associated with the use of hard drugs and alcohol and with much of the physical violence and lawlessness reported from interior locations. Many Amerindian communities are fearful of the examples of the mining culture on their own young people, who increasingly join the ranks of the miners….

Both small and large-scale gold mining have also subtly yet profoundly influenced the way of life and cultures of the Wapishana and their Indigenous neighbours elsewhere in South America. In the southeast of Peru, the Arakmbut's reliance on the gold economy for their subsistence, for example, has not only changed their family sociocultural composition through intermarriage with migrants, but also their collective practices of sharing and reciprocity that are now less common (Aikman 2017: 104). Aikman goes on to point out that in their daily communication in relation to gold mining, the Arakmbut people have also increasingly used Spanish-language resources; though functionally useful, these resources contribute to language endangerment of the Arakmbut language. In the wider context, the worry about language endangerment by language activists is reflective of Evans' (2010: 22) observation that the transmission of one's linguistic heritage such as the ecological links between particular plant and animal species is at risk of being cut off because of a shift to another language. Similarly, the very words in one's heritage language tied to historical stories —linking the landscape or habitats in particular places to their corresponding place names—are also at risk of being forgotten (see Subsection 2.4.3.2). Whereas language endangerment is a cause of concern among those who wish to maintain their language, there are also other pressing concerns that need to be addressed by the leadership of Indigenous communities. Returning to the Wapishana, while some people have gained socially (increased use of English-language resources) and materially from gold

mining activities, others have experienced negative consequences. As one Toshao related, gold mining has negatively affected some villages in social issues such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, unpaid labour of young people, and alcohol-related violence.

Located deep in the jungle, to the south of the Wapishana communities, there is the Marudi gold-mining area. For some Wapishana people and others from urban areas of Guyana and Brazil, it is an area which is quite alluring for making "fast" money. In order to reach the Marudi area, however, people from the outside must pass through Wapishana villages such as Aishalton. A former Toshao pointed out that because of this, a lot of strangers pass through Wapishana villages unchecked. In order to mitigate the likelihood of criminal elements entering the Wapishana area, he proposed that a checkpoint before entering the South Rupununi be established in cooperation with the police. His proposal is that some villagers be posted along with the police to search persons and vehicles as they enter. For the checking of women a female member of the Community Policing Groups would be needed. This kind of vigilance that is proposed is to safeguard the Wapishana territory, for it is not known if illegal weapons or drugs are being transported. Reference was made to a few recent cases whereby the police arrested some young Wapishana men who were involved in drug trafficking. This example illustrates one of the breaches of law that has polluted the Wapishana culture.

Another example of transgression as a result of some Wapishana people coming into contact with individuals out of the village is cattle rustling. According to some leaders, a new method of rustling has emerged. They claimed that it is done by some Brazilians or some Wapishana who work in ranches across the border. It was reported that the people would come across to the Guyana side to graze their animals. As their animals intermingle with those from the Guyana side, all are then driven back to the Brazilian side. This is not to say that rustling is non-existent in the villages. Rustling does occur, but it is done less frequently on a small scale mainly for food, partly because of lack of fish or other wild animals such as the *aro* 'savannah deer' (*Odocoileus*) Whenever it arises, the issue of rustling is usually dealt with at the level of the village council, but in general there is a deep concern for the security of the people among villagers.

It should be mentioned, too, that the adoption of manufactured food items seems to have impacted the Wapishana dietary habits. While manufactured food items have not totally displaced the traditional diet, quite a number of them, such as cooking salt, sugar, rice, flour, and cooking oil are among the basic necessities. In earlier times of the colonial period, access to these necessities was made sparingly possible through the balata and cattle

industries and the opening of a few shops. As people increased their dependency on a cash-based lifestyle, more grocery shops appeared in the villages. More grocery shops meant more foodstuffs available. Some interviewees are of the view that an increased availability and a regular consumption of the processed food items (e.g. rice, sugar, chicken, canned sardines, and bottled carbonated soft drinks) may have contributed to the rise of certain ailments in the communities. While I have not seen any document to substantiate such claims, both the interviewee and I agreed that it would be worthwhile to have a competent authority to do a research on this and other health issues.

2.4.3.4   Summary and discussion

Thus far, we have seen that the contact of the Wapishana with other cultures has resulted in quite some cultural and social additions that the Wapishana have adapted in their own way, such as language use, *forro* music, gold mining, ranching, and food items. However, such additions to their culture are also unfortunately accompanied by sickness or other miseries. For example, miseries are ushered in by an increase of fragmentation of families, introduction and abuse of drugs, new but undesirable habits and the decrease in practice of aspects of the culture. Thus, considerable ambivalence is revealed by the leaders' responses about the effects of Western cultural penetration of much of the Wapishana culture. In addition, the misuse or non-use of kinship terms has caused unease that this may lead to misunderstanding of relationships and disrespect within the extended families, thereby impeding preservation of family unity or social cohesion within the villages. The displacement of many of the Wapishana counting terms and the legends behind important place names has further led to language attrition.

A counterbalance to these prevailing circumstances is awareness-raising through Wapishana lessons pertinent to the topics. Guidance can be given in Wapishana customary laws, long kept orally, but now existing in written Wapishana (see South Central and South Rupununi Districts Toshaos Councils 2012). Attention was also drawn to the importance of the active use of the language in ensuring not only the preservation of the histories and sacred stories, but also to instil a deep sense of belonging to a homeland. Therefore, the widespread use of the Wapishana language in most villages is still perceived an important source of identification. According to González (2017: 158) an indigenous language is a key element in shaping the identity of contemporary communities, but it is also an instrument of knowledge that allows for an understanding of another world view.

2.4.4 Practices that have disappeared

The changes the Wapishana experienced as a result of contact with mainstream cultures were not necessarily all disruptive. Other changes were inevitably adaptive as individual needs and personal motivations changed with the times. While we may not be able to pinpoint the initial results of contact during the period of early colonization, based on earlier writings of explorers and anthropologists, we can ascertain which former practices have disappeared.

In this section, I provide several examples that illustrate the disappearance of Wapishana traditional practices. Among the aspects of the culture that were affected are adornment customs (Subsection 2.4.4.1) and music, dance, and wrestling activities (Subsection 2.4.4.2).

2.4.4.1 Adornment customs

Piercing of the skin for adornment, specifically the nose and the lips, is a practice that has faded. Some men wore two feathers horizontally and diametrically through a pierced hole in the nose. As for the women, they pierced the lower lip, through which a short cord of colourful beads was passed and fastened, with the lower end adorned with small, delicate colourful feathers. While the men wore loin cloths, the women wore aprons. However, no mention was made of the specific head dresses both for men and women. The traditional dress that is donned nowadays is based on cultural memory of the people's great grandparents, a proud connection to the past. For example, for the adopted *Parichara* dance (see Section 2.3.3), a specially made outfit is crafted from the young leaves of a palm tree called *pokoridi* (*Attalea maripa)* and the purpose is to invoke the *dokozu* 'spirit' of the *bichi* (*Tayassu pecari*) to send the game to the village for food. Other types of beautiful adornment pieces are crafted out of imagination and for exhibition. Whatever the purposes, one should not think only about a display, but also about the knowledge and skills involved in the process of the craftsmanship. Usually, the process is educational and occurs in social spaces between the older and the younger people who must carry on the tradition.

The other practice that was characteristic of the Wapishana was the shaving of body parts, except for the hair on the head. As one interviewee noted, some men wore plaited long hair or hair tubes to keep loose hair out of their faces in the event that they saw a bird or an animal to shoot. The hair tube, which was made out of either bamboo or palm wood, was mainly an adornment piece of the Wai Wai (Rivière 1969: 155). The hair tube may

have been adopted by the Wapishana, since the material for the hair tube was also found in the forests within the Wapishana territory. Facial hair or eyebrows were shaved using a split piece of bamboo. The bits of hair on the eyebrow were carefully placed between the split bamboo and once clamped, the bamboo was then turned in a revolving fashion, removing bits of hair with it. A similar tube-like structure called the blowgun was used by the Wapishana for hunting purposes but became obsolete and replaced by introduced firearms (ibid. 1969: 152). Indeed, the ancestors of the Wapishana used a *kobin* 'blow-pipe' and poisoned darts to hunt small game (David et al. 2006: 27).

Youngsters had the sides of their upper front teeth filed and shaped with appropriate tools so that the tips were pointed appearing like that of the *perain* 'piranha'. When the file that is used to sharpen cutlasses and knives was introduced, it was later adopted for the same purpose. The main reason for the shaping of teeth this way was to have spaces between the teeth to minimize the formation of cavities, although others said it was to enhance the person's smile.

The Wapishana men's tattoos were part of the rituals for hunting purposes (Farabee 1918: 50), but no mention was made about tattoos for the women. However, as far as one elderly interviewee can remember, his grandmother, who was an Atorad, had two dots tattooed on both the left and right sides of the lips. Other women had a thin-lined tattoo moving upwards and ending in a sort of spiral shape in similar positions. As pointed out by one elderly woman, one of the purposes of the tattoo, besides enhancing beauty, is to enable the women to be skilful at making local drinks.

The Wapishana painted certain parts of their outer bodies using the *powizibai* 'red dye from annatto' and sometimes the black dye from the *saonoro* 'genipap tree' for ceremonial and ritual purposes. The red dye is made into *pisho*, a ready-made mix of the red dye, to paint parts of the body such as the face and arms. The girls or women would first *sarwun* 'body-paint' the young girls who had their first menstruation. Afterwards, the young women would themselves handle the *pisho* for their *sarwun* whenever needed**.** The red dye is more used today for cultural displays and people try to adapt these customs as they believed their ancestors performed them way back then. Some of these adapted traditions are based on cultural memory: practices younger people actually experienced with the elders or what was orally passed on to them by the elders.

2.4.4.2   Music, dance, and wrestling

According to one Toshao, there is no original Wapishana dance that he knows of. The *Parichara* dance, which is at times performed by a group in his village, had been adopted from other ethnic groups (Bridges 1985: 132). Ian Melville, a one-time prominent resident of the Rupununi, recalled seeing the bone flute being played by his Atorad father. Not only has the bone flute disappeared but also a number of songs and stories. Some of these stories are also about friendly wrestling competitions between men from different villages. As shared by one interviewee, staged wrestling became obsolete during the mid-20th century.

2.4.5   Practices that are disappearing

While some cultural practices have disappeared, some are in the process of disappearing. In the past, Wapishana children would usually accompany their parents into the fields, rivers, mountains, and savannah where important acts of transmitting knowledge and skills are performed by parents for their children. While many parents applaud the opportunity for their children to attend mainstream schooling, some parents lament the limited time they now have to transmit the various aspects of their cultural knowledge and skills to their children. The resulting effect, for example, is that many children miss valuable opportunities to learn those aspects of their culture that must take place in the deep forest, mountains, rivers, and savannah. Those children who miss such opportunities are usually not knowledgeable or skillful at hunting, fishing, and farming.

One solution to the disappeared or disappearing cultural practices is for those knowledgeable and skilful people to be encouraged to maintain certain traditional activities, for example, doing handicrafts. The different pieces of handicraft can be for personal use as well as didactic resources, part of teaching skills to those who want to learn how to produce such crafts. Nowadays, although some people sell a limited number of traditionally made items on order from others, this unsteady market is still a means of a small income for families. In all these uses described above and other different activities, there is the cohesive connection to the knowledge and skills of Wapishana traditional customs.

Another solution is by formal means: incorporating the teaching of Wapishana knowledge and culture into the school's curriculum. This could be achieved in two ways: through the invitation of knowledgeable and skilful Wapishana into the classroom as resource people and the recording of the most important aspects of the Wapishana culture as a learning resource. In

the absence of the resource people, teachers can always turn to the written or audio/video recorded aspects of the Wapishana culture as resource units for teaching. It is for this reason that I will describe in detail some aspects of the Wapishana culture that are disappearing.

In the following, I look at several practices that are disappearing: rituals (Subsection 2.4.5.1), hammock and baby-sling making (Subsection 2.4.5.2), use of bow and arrows (Subsection 2.4.5.3), use of special plants for fishing (Subsection 2.4.5.4), and use of farm and other household items (Subsection 2.4.5.5). Finally, I provide a summary and brief discussion (Subsection 2.4.5.6).

2.4.5.1   Rituals

In decline are mainly the initiation rituals for both girls and boys who have reached the stage of puberty, leading into adulthood. For boys to become skilled hunters, *diwi'i* 'a special ritual' is performed. This involves the use of a thin cord of plant fibre which is about one metre in length. The fibre is twisted, tapering from the thinness of a thread at one end, to the thickness of a pencil at the other. The thinner end is passed through one nostril at a time and pulled out with a quick force through the mouth. The friction of the cord as it is pulled through the upper parts of the nostrils causes some bleeding. Another type of ritual is the treating of the young men's arms and shoulders with the bites of *matauzi* 'a type of beetle'. This is for the strength and skill to fell large trees. Felling trees is one of the tasks of men as they prepare plots of land for farming.

For girls who have their first menstruation, their bodies are painted red to keep away evil spirits. In addition, these young girls are isolated and given dietary restrictions such as a prohibition on the eating of sweet and salty food. Furthermore, these young girls are forbidden to walk outdoors and to see men for several days. At the end of initiation, their hair is cut to shoulder length or even shorter as a mark of reaching this stage of womanhood in their lives. Today, one hardly sees this marker among young Wapishana girls.

Young mothers allowed the elderly or the knowledgeable individuals to treat their babies with *shanarabai* 'incense' in the evenings or whenever appropriate to keep evil spirits away. A mother who has recently given birth is subjected to abstention from work for about a month or when fully recovered. The fathers are also restricted from doing any strenuous work or any activity that might cause harm to the newly born baby. Useful prayers are pronounced upon babies or mothers before they go out for long walks or

before the mother or father eat hunted meat or fish. All this, is to safeguard their well-being.

Both boys and girls are encouraged to bathe early at the pools of creeks or rivers before sunrise to stay strong, alert, and willing to perform their chores at home and on the farm and other places of work. However, youth who are sickly and girls who have their menstruation are forbidden to bathe in pools lest they disturb the spirits therein. Upon returning from their early bath, they warm the soles of their feet against red hot coals to guard against snake and stingray attacks. In addition, the Wapishana treat themselves with the stings of the *wiko* 'black ant' whenever necessary, but the ritual was commonly practised during the celebration part of a *manoru* 'a cooperative work'. For the boys, the *wiko* ritual makes them willing, sharp shooters when hunting; for the girls, it makes them willing and able to make sweet *parakari* 'a type of cassava beverage'. Nowadays, these rituals are still practised occasionally by some families. The stinging by the *wiko* has been incorporated into the annual display of cultural activities of the Wapishana during the month of September. All of these rituals are performed with special spiritual invocation on part of the man or woman who performs them. Because the rituals are no longer practised widely among the various families, many Wapishana girls and boys grow up without experiencing and understanding these initiation rituals.

2.4.5.2   Hammock and baby sling-making

In the case of *zamaka* 'hammock', there is a scarcity of slung Wapishana-made hammocks in homes, giving way to Brazilian-made or Chinese-made ones, which are massed-produced. Persons who lack Wapishana-made hammocks opt to buy ready-made ones that are readily sold at shops throughout the Rupununi. It is quicker to buy a ready-made hammock than wait for a Wapishana-made one, which can take weeks to weave if one works on it periodically. People who can afford them also buy mattresses for beds in addition to owning hammocks. The same may be said for the *didimai* 'baby sling'. Some young mothers opt to buy the double strap adjustable front pack infant baby carrier. However, this does not mean that everyone can afford to purchase such items from shops. People without money can barter with one of the women who can weave a hammock or a baby sling. There are a small number of women who still possess the skills in weaving hammocks or baby slings and the related skill in cotton-spinning. An interviewee shared that there are at least four styles of hammock-making. The skills include selecting, making, and setting up the materials to make the cotton spindles and the hammock frames. Usually, cotton-spinning is taught

to girls at a very young age. When these girls become teenagers and have the strength to manoeuvre the tools used, they are taught mostly hammock-weaving. However, mothers who lack cotton-spinning skills are less likely to engage in activities of weaving hammocks or baby slings in their homes. In this sense, mothers have no knowledge of skills in cotton-spinning to impart to their daughters or younger female relatives. On the other hand, although the mothers may have the skills, the other reason could be that their daughters may lack the patience or interest to learn the skills, giving preference to other modern-day leisure activities, such as listening to music or playing contemporary games. Owing to these circumstances, there are now more women without these skills. Also, the decline of these skills seems to have contributed to the decline of the use of the prized *suburid* 'brown cotton', which is usually one of the materials used to beautify the hammocks. The *suburidi* is at the cusp of disappearing in some villages because it is not as widely grown as before. Despite the scarcity of Wapishana-made items from cotton, one can still find several girls who can spin cotton, an indication that some mothers still possess the skill and have passed it on.

Figure 12. The prized suburidi *'brown cotton'.*

2.4.5.3   Use of the bow and arrows

There are people who still use the *somara nai'ik bairii* 'bow and arrow' partly because most of the users find it easier and cheaper to own a set of bow and arrows than owning a firearm. A set of bow and arrows can be made or ordered within the community whereas the firearm must be applied for and, if approved, must be purchased from outside the community, usually in the capital city. As such, the bow and arrows are traditional tools used not only for hunting, but also for any eventuality such as the sudden emergence of a group of bush-hogs or the scampering of a deer in the village. In other situations, for example, where the man's livestock or the well-being of his family is threatened by a hovering chicken hawk or a prowling jaguar respectively, the use of the arrow and bow is called for. Very few men, whether young and older, can be seen on a long trip garbed with the arrow and bow in one hand, all at the ready. According to Austin Isaacs, one scarcely sees boys or men early in the mornings using the bow and arrow to shoot fish for food, a way of maintaining marksmanship by men.

Another interviewee pointed out that being able to hit a target with the bow and arrow is not all the knowledge and skill needed. One also needs to know how to string a bow and to use the variety of arrows, each of which has a different point suited for a different purpose, depending on the intended target. In addition to this, one needs the skill of selecting the right arrow based on the shape of the feathers on the arrow itself. For example, to shoot upwards at birds on trees, an arrow with specially shaped feathers needs to be used as opposed to an arrow to shoot downwards for fish in pools. The practice of using the bow and arrows was seen as crucial to the Wapishana method of fishing that it was depicted on a British Guiana stamp, decades ago. According to interviewee, Ian Melville, that stamp was sourced from a photograph of his Atorad uncle shooting fish at the Rupununi River. Today, it is still a very important method of traditional hunting among the Wapishana and should not be forgotten.

2.4.5.4   Use of special plants for fishing

One interviewee shared that her father advised that each Wapichan should know the different types of plants for various purposes. There are different types used for house construction, treatment of illnesses and for survival techniques in the jungle. Some, but not all, people are knowledgeable in the use of *panakaruu* 'plant charms' used in fishing and hunting and even to treat dogs that assist the Wapishana in hunting. Details of these plants and wood were not shared with me, but these are usually passed on to the

children when they accompany their parents or elders on forest or savannah trips**.** In the following**,** I explain the process of fishing using special plants.

There are various different types of special plants called *oko*,[6] which are traditionally used for catching fish. The commonly used ones include types of liana such as *aishara*, *kokizai*, and *katabaro;* types of shrub-like plants, such as *aia*, *konan*, and *komarao;* and a type of a large tree called *kawazi*. The lianas such as the *aishara* are cut and fetched in bundles to the flat top of a rock on which they are pounded into shreds with a stick-pounder. The *aia* shrubs are uprooted and only the stem, branches, and roots are pounded, whereas the *konan* leaves are pounded for use. The *komarao* branches with the leaves are broken off from the stem and pounded, whereas the *kawazi* fruits are crushed in shallow holes in the ground. Each type of *oko* is usually used separately, depending on its availability at the time of fishing. The pounded or ground *oko* are placed in baskets and taken to the chosen pool by a party of people. After a prayer is said to the spirits of the pool, some people with the baskets wade or swim in the pool. Next, they simultaneously submerge and shake their baskets of *oko*, covering the entire pool in the process. This exercise is done with chants and the effect on the fish is that they become suffocated and swim or float to the water's surface. This is the time when the fish are caught using the bow and arrow, cutlasses, or hand nets. As a help, fish are also caught by the use of the *daroka* 'cone-shaped fish trap', which is woven from palm fronds and vines. With or without the use of the *oko*, one or several *daroka* may be set at the narrowest and shallowest end of a flowing pool. A type of traditional fishing that does not entail the use of *oko* is the *sowaika* 'a large type of fish trap', which may be described as a huge stockade built across major creeks over several weeks and often left in place for months. The *daroko* trap is individually made, whereas the *sowaika* requires teamwork for its construction.

There are families who still use the *oko*, but it can be over-used. For example, some use the *oko* in a length of a small river or stream, killing out all the fish. In some cases, the fish are wasted. As advised by a Toshao, what should be done is to traditionally catch fish in selected pools in such a way that not all the fish would be affected.

All of the *oko* grow naturally, although some such as the *aia* and *konan* can be cultivated. Although the *oko* and traditional fishing traps are still at the disposal of Wapishana, more have turned to the modern methods of fishing, thereby foreclosing their children's opportunity to learn all about materials used and about the construction, setting, and care for the implements.

6

Most of the interviewees are of the view that a scarcity of fish in the nearby rivers is a result of overfishing by people using the adopted modern methods of fishing. For example, the tendency among the men is to buy long seine nets, which they easily stretch across deep pools to catch large amounts of fish. Additionally, Wapishana people commonly use the *kobao zunaa* 'hook and line' or the *kobawuzii* 'fishing rod'. People have also improvised the fishing rod with hook and line to set traps such as spring rods along the banks of creeks or rivers, but more people have turned to use of the seine net and 'diving'. This diving entails the use of wire arrows and wire-stringed bows to shoot fish under water. Other fishermen block sections of pools using seine nets and clear the weeds, fallen leaves, and branches therein before casting nets to catch fish. In this way, most fishes are caught and their habitats destroyed. As a consequence, a Toshao said, "We chase the spirits that keep the fish." Therefore, some pools which were once the natural habitat of a lot of big fish are almost without. There was the example of one man attempting to sell the fish he caught from nearby pools, but scarcely got quick sales because the fish were too small. During the start of the rainy season too, as fishes swim upstream to spawn, some people set seine nets and catch most of the fish so that there are now fewer to be caught. What the Wapishana need is selective fishing so that fish may multiply.

The known identifications according to Western botanists are: aishara [Lonchocarpas sp.] and konan [Clibadium sp.].

Figure 13. The semicircular-shaped kokizai
'a type of liana used for traditional fishing'.

Figure 14. The largest tree in the middle is kawazi
'plant used for traditional fishing'.

With access to the seine net and firearm, more Wapishana own these as a means of providing food for their families. With access to modern fishing and hunting implements comes the expectation that people buy the fish or meat if they need food. Very few of the people who have the intention to sell meat would share some with their relatives because the Wapishana are now increasingly influenced by the cash-oriented culture.

The decrease in the traditional way of fishing and hunting has also led to the decline in the practice of sharing the catch or kill with relatives or neighbor's. According to male interviewees, whenever a Wapishana makes a catch or kill, he ought to share some, such as part of the heart of the animal, with the wind and the sun before sharing the meat with his relatives or neighbours (see also David et al. 2006: 26). Having looked at the decline in the use of special plants for fishing, I now turn to the use of the farm and some household items.

2.4.5.5   Use of the farm items and some household items

The different activities performed by men and women pertaining to the farm should not be seen as unusual. The processing of cassava to bake cassava bread by the women, for example, should not be stereotyped as imposed labour by the men. In reality there is the division of labour among women and men in the Wapishana society. While the teacher, of course, needs to be aware of gender issues as a whole in the society, she or he also needs to understand that for most people in the Wapishana community, all works are traditionally and equally respected. With this in mind, I now describe the use of farm items and some household items of the Wapishana.

An expected possession in a typical Wapishana family is the *zakapu* 'farming plots'. The preparation of a farming plot is work generally undertaken by the men. This work includes choosing the site, cutting the trees, burning the cut trees, and clearing and planting the plot. The principal crop is bitter cassava (manioc), from which two staple products are made: farine and cassava bread. The processing of the cassava is a task undertaken mainly by women. These are the main steps of processing: reaping, scraping, grating, squeezing, sifting, and baking. Since harvesting the cassava crop can be a weekly activity, the concomitant activities involved in the processing of the products require a set of related tools be in place. Each of these steps requires that specially crafted household items be used. These include the following: the *dopaawai* 'backpack or 'back quake', the *chimara* 'cassava grater', the *nizo* 'cassava squeezer', the *chakoro* 'small trough for the grated cassava', the *manaru* 'cassava sifter' or 'farine sifter', the *awarubai* 'fan to fan the fire', the *sombara* 'a large weaved mat to place the baked cassava', and the *parakari tanaa* 'a cassava beverage strainer'. It is mainly the men who are responsible for the weaving of these items.

However, with the availability of commodities such as rice and flour that can substitute for cassava bread and farine, there seems to be less dependency on subsistence farming by a growing number of young people.

Wapishana who do not have farming plots are usually attached full-time to governmental or non-governmental organizations or reside outside of the community on a long-term basis seeking a cash-earning way of life to provide for their families. As a result, it is highly likely that these parents will be unable to transmit the farming knowledge and skills to the younger generation. For example, it is useful to distinguish between the sifters and strainers. At a first glance they look similar, but they are weaved differently to suit the purposes they serve. Without this knowledge, the younger generation tends to increasingly depend on the polythene bag as a substitute for the *parakari* strainer. However, this makeshift replacement is not as durable as the *parakari* strainer. Similarly, the traditional cassava grater is increasingly being substituted by mechanized cassava graters, a trend adopted from the Brazilians. Here, the skill of manual cassava grating with its concomitant chant (nowadays used by fewer women) may be eventually lost. Moreover, the processing of cassava provides a social space for women meeting and relating to each other and for teaching their children the skills of cassava-processing. As such, cassava is a "cultural keystone" (Platten and Henfrey 2009: 493) of the Wapishana.

Figure 15. Parakari tanaa *'parakari strainer'.*

Figure 16. Badi tanaa *'cassava sifter'*.

Figure 17. O'i tanna *'farine sifter'*.

Other items are disappearing, in addition to the decrease in household items related to farming and cassava processing. Among these household items are the *kubaiyao* 'clay pot', *wun kin* 'water vessel', *dazowan* 'basket', and the *dowada* 'goblet'. It has been observed that many Wapishana women do not make clay pots or drinking goblets. This is because most people have lost the art of making these household items. This is a common lament expressed by all interviewees. In most homes, one would mainly see aluminium pots and plastic buckets, which are commonly sold in shops. However, there is the belief that there are still some elderly ladies who are skilled in the making of clay pots and goblets; therefore, it was suggested that they be approached to teach others before the skill is completely lost. On the women's side, it is now the case that more women carry polythene-made bags rather than the *dopawai* in which they pack their load of cassava or other local products. Others no longer carry the *dazowan* 'basket' on fishing trips but carry haversacks instead. One of the reasons for this is that fewer people can plait *dopaawai* and the *dazowan*. Another reason is that haversacks are fashionable. According to one elder interviewed, if a Wapishana girl needs a *dopaawai or* a *dazowan*, the chances are that her father may not be able to provide her with these because he cannot weave any. Long ago, the Wapishana used wooden troughs or clay goblets to store their local drink. When balata-bleeding was in style, most opted to make large balata goblets. Today, some families still keep the goblets, but their use is almost non-existent. Most people use plastic containers or pails, which are more readily acquired and are portable. As a consequence, it may be difficult to find people who are still skilful in making the balata goblets.

Figure 18. Dowada *'balata-made goblet'.*

While it may be more economical to utilize these makeshifts and mechanized replacements, the negative effect on the associated traditional tools is that there will be a dearth of local skills in their manufacture and use. If this happens, such cultural elements may be rendered invisible in years to come. This in turn would make it difficult to incorporate them into the cultural consciousness of the younger generation who wish to make a historical connection with their traditional or cultural roots. As noted by Baker (1995: 82), as "teenagers move further into adulthood, there is often a desire to find out about the heritage, the rootedness of the family." Sharing such a view concerning Quichua language vitality in Ecuador, Haboud (2004: 75) writes that there is an overtly expressed tendency for parents to reidentify with their roots and take pride in their past, signalling a change in their linguistic attitude from favouring Spanish language to a preference for Quichua maintenance. In the case of the Wapishana, there is indication of young people being interested in becoming acquainted with cultural aspects of their tradition and learning to read and write their heritage language. Examples are the village "cultural groups" formed by some elderly and young people to perform traditional rituals, songs, and dances for special occasions. Additionally, for the Wapishana literacy classes intended for

Wapishana adults that were offered by the Wapishana Literacy Association, over 350 children attended (see Appendix A).

2.4.5.6   Summary and discussion

From the examples given above, the extent of the loss (Section 2.4.4) or decline (Section 2.4.5) of Wapishana traditional practices is clear. For example, cultural memory among present-day Wapishana of how their ancestors dressed is scant. Thus, much of the traditional dress worn on special occasions is an improvisation of what was the original custom. Cultural memory is stronger regarding the readiness of a Wapishana to be accepted into manhood or womanhood. Such readiness was marked by official rites of initiation that are now scarcely practised. As it relates to spiritual healing, the practice is still strong among several families.

Throughout their histories, hunting, fishing, gathering of resources, and farming have been the essential pillars of Wapishana livelihood. The practice of this traditional lifestyle by the Wapishana people has been an important basis for their identification. However, many young people who have adopted modern social and cultural lifestyles have a tendency to shun certain aspects of their own traditional lifestyle. For example, many Wapishana love the farine or cassava bread as part of their meals, yet some are inclined to shy away from an invitation to go to the farm. In Guyanese parlance, some Wapishana have developed 'sweet skin', preferring not to soil it as would likely occur in the farming activities. In this respect, the adoption of modern items or tools has threatened to overpower the use of traditional ones. The modern additions the Wapishana have made to their lives socially and culturally need not be at the cost of the traditional ones. Preservation of one's heritage is possible whilst adopting modern mainstream values. This is not to de-emphasize the importance of Wapishana-adopted mainstream values or to emphasize a return to the times when the Wapishana ancestral ways reigned supreme. Rather, gaining knowledge in one's cultural heritage and taking pride in it may prevent one's "loss of identity, even rootlessness (anomie), a lack of clear purpose and disruption in the family" (Baker 1995: 54). As an additional point, once knowledgeable in their cultural heritage, the Wapishana will be in a better position to talk to their own people about it and at the same time, educate the non-Wapishana about our own social and cultural values. If the Toshaos and other leaders must emphasize or exhort a need for Wapishana cultural and historical continuity, there is need to create and organize avenues of cultural expressions for a common bond or heritage among the Wapishana. Knowing how their ancestors lived, and a fuller and deeper understanding of

Wapishana culture would greatly contribute to a more grounded and sound sense of Wapishana identity and self-esteem.

2.4.6. Other factors contributing to changing circumstances

Children, particularly in Indigenous communities, face problems or issues, given that they are part of the society in which they live. However, they are not isolated in these circumstances: they have allies in children and parents who face very similar problems. As such, they all need to have the same important element of consciousness so that they become aware of factors or issues that affect the development of Indigenous Peoples.

It is particularly important for students to know about topics in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These topics, clearly expressed in articles (see Section 1.1 for examples), are an integral part of education, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. On the issue of language, rights are defined but sometimes are not respected, which may be a form of discrimination or marginalization. In writing on "The Indigenous Condition: An Introductory Note", Jansen and Jiménez (2017: 27) argue that the discrimination or marginalization of Indigenous Peoples is the result of colonial structures and mentalities, which in practical terms, for example, implies that "the language, literature, art and cultural heritage of the Indigenous (i.e. internally colonized) Peoples do not have official status and are not typically taught in schools." On a similar issue, another researcher points out conversely that it is the language that is socially and educationally dominant and highly desirable for academic and social advancement (Hornberger 2006: 288) that is taught in schools. Indeed, this is the case in the context of independent countries (once colonies) such as Guyana and other Latin American countries. As an Indigenous researcher, I agree with Jansen and Jiménez, but I would also add that societal issues that result from intercultural contacts should be part of Indigenous children's educative environment. This point parallels that of Aragón (2014: 164), who noted that attention needs to be paid to "current Indigenous languages and culture and how they relate to broader society". Therefore, Indigenous leadership can follow this lead. This is not to say that the teaching of the dominant language and culture should be replaced by the Indigenous language, but rather the latter should be recognized and respected as well. Likewise, other relevant issues such as those associated with the development of land and its resources are addressed in article 25 of the UNDRIP are relevant topics. Since language functions in social reality, it becomes pertinent to establish communication on these issues not only in the wider society but also in the school to look for solutions. One way to effect

communication on these societal issues is to incorporate them as resource units, leading further to lesson topics in the school's curriculum.

In the case of the Wapishana, some issues came to light at a public village meeting I attended on 3 February 2018, at Maruranau. At this meeting, a former Toshao of Aishalton and the Toshao of Maruranau led a discussion on specific issues such as environmental degradation, changing weather patterns, land use, the effects of some village-based social organizations, and some influences of globalization that affected the lives of the people. These issues remain important aspects of the Wapishana people's everyday reality. Young people and even children may not explicitly realize what they already know of these issues. It is therefore important that the young people's and children's prior knowledge of these issues be brought to their consciousness. In this way they might be encouraged to critically reflect on the issues and appreciate the reasons behind their leaders' concerns or activism. Most of the issues may be similar to the Indigenous neighbours of the Wapishana elsewhere in the country; however, other issues are specific to the Wapishana situation. The issue of the land claims, for example, is not only based on the given titles to their land by the government but also on their historical connections with the land. Therefore, if the younger generation is not made aware of such sensitive issues, the chances are that they will lose awareness of the linguistic, cultural heritage, and their history.

In the next section, I look at several of the factors that continue to contribute to the changing circumstances of the Wapishana lifestyle. In the following, I discuss environmental alterations in Subsection 2.4.6.1, changing weather patterns in Subsection 2.4.6.2, land claims in Subsection 2.4.6.3, some village organizations and the effects on social cohesiveness in Subsection 2.4.6.4, and some influences of globalization in Subsection 2.4.6.5. Finally, I provide a summary and discussion in Subsection 2.4.6.6.

2.4.6.1   Environmental alterations

In immersing themselves in the culture and economic system of the mainstream population, the Wapishana have adopted some modern ways of living. For instance, several people have adopted the making of baked bricks for housing. The Wapishana built houses with thatched roofs and walls of wooden, lattice framework or walls of mud bricks prior to the adaptation of baked bricks. This type of wall proved to be less durable than those made of baked bricks. For this reason, more and more people have built homes of baked clay brick walls. The clay material for baked brick-making is often

found on the banks of the rivers or creeks. As large amounts of clay are extracted, large pits are left. Eventually, the banks with pits become eroded. Moreover, in the rainy season, much of the erosion in the form of slush seeps into the river, causing deep pools to become discoloured and shallow. This disrupts the habitats of the fish and causes the spirits that keep them to move away. According to the Wapishana belief, the spirits that keep the water should not be disturbed so that the habitats of fish stay intact. Because of this, people have to traverse extra miles away to fish. Similarly, as a result of small- and medium-scale gold-mining excavations in the Marudi area made by several non-Wapishana, much of the landscape along with the headwater area of Kwitaro River and its tributaries are negatively affected in terms of direction of water flow, turbidity, and the destruction of trees. This type of environmental destruction has further driven away animals and fish, thus drastically diminishing meat supply which the people depend on for protein in their diet. The other river people can turn to for fishing and hunting grounds is the neighbouring Rewa River, but it is distantly located in the jungle east of the villages.

However, such negative effects on the environment are not always attributable to the modern-based activities as mentioned above. Some culture-based activities of the Wapishana have also partly affected the environment in which they live. People usually set grass alight for the following reasons: hunting deer; keeping the house environs free of harmful creatures; ridding a small area of a dangerous snake that might have gotten away, hunting missed game that might have been partly injured and hidden away; and signaling companionship with one another, especially when travelling far apart and going to a common destination. Nowadays, it is common to burn grass for the grazing of cattle, since cows tend to prefer the young, green grass to the older grass. Besides, people believe that the young green grass is more nutritious. If the old grass is not burnt, the cows usually go further in search of greener grass. Many people practice "slash and burn" agriculture in the forest to establish farms. Sometimes, the fire is controlled by people making fire breakers. For all these reasons, the burning of savannah and bush is a cultural practice, but not all burning is based on such traditional reasons. Sometimes, some people set grass or a bush alight for no real purpose. If left unchecked, the fire can spread rapidly for hours and even days, destroying a large portion of landscape. With such destructive practices, the fires usually get out of control and can destroy valued vegetation such as the *etai* trees (*Mauritia flexuosa*) and trees valued as timber. Valued animals such as the tortoise (*Geocheleone spp.*) and the labba (*Agouti paca*), together with their habitats, usually perish as a result of wide-spread fire. As part of a measure to mitigate these destructive practices, the Toshaos have recommended that villagers follow their documented

customary laws, including a fire calendar for controlled burning of savannah (see South Central and South Rupununi Districts Toshaos Councils 2012: 162). However, the fire calendar may not have taken into account the prolonged dry season, in which an increase of burning has been observed. With this in mind, I now discuss some of the major impacts of a changing weather pattern.

Figure 19. Controlled burning in the forest.

2.4.6.2   Changing weather pattern

In recent times, representatives of both governmental and non-governmental organizations have held meetings in the region to raise the people's

awareness of the changing weather patterns and their effects. In spite of the warnings that they should be prepared for either a prolonged dry season or rainy season, many of the people seemed to be unfazed. One Toshao is of the view that this attitude stems from the people's faith in knowing that the usual long rainy season from May to August and the dry season from September to April will return to normal as it had been for years.

However, in recent years, the Wapishana have experienced abnormal weather patterns that have changed the nature of things. For example, there were shorter rainy seasons with excessive flooding that has not been seen in years. As a consequence, the main crops such as cassava that were typically planted on low lands were destroyed. Due to becoming submerged for longer periods than usual, the cassava, tubers which are the parts used, rotted before they could be utilized. At other times, during the dry season, caterpillars infest a crop of cassava, devouring the leaves and destroying the plants totally. These kinds of adverse effects meant shortages in the Wapishana's staple diet, such as farine and cassava bread. On the other hand, prolonged dry weather has led to a severe shortage of water in some villages. Moreover, it was observed from the wells dug in the villages that the ground water level has sunk and keeps sinking. Some years ago, the ground water level in some places was at about five metres below ground level; today in the same places the ground water level is about ten metres below ground level, according to one Toshao. In addition, the prolonged dry season has caused both domestic and wild animals to frequent non-habitual feeding grounds, partly as an effect of scarcity of feed. For example, cows, horses, and sheep go farther out in search of better grazing grounds, causing much longer round-up time for owners. As for the wild animals, some are now more of a threat to the people. For example, the *bakuru* 'a type of bush hog' (*Tayassu tajacu* and *T. pecari*) are increasingly feeding on farm crops that people depend on for food. Also observed was more frequent evidence of jaguars on the move in villages. Jaguars were known to have killed domestic animals and, in a few instances, to have attacked people. It is not uncommon then for the men to kill the jaguar when they have the opportunity, but this has brought in some Wapishana hunters in conflict with protectors of animal rights in Guyana. The government's rule is that jaguars should not be killed, as they are an endangered species.

Another negative consequence of the changing weather patterns is related to fishing. Prolonged drought has caused the traditionally frequented pools to rapidly dry up, driving people farther away in search of fish to eat or to sell. The main river the Wapishana depend on for fishing is the Rupununi River. According to one Toshao, there are fewer fish resulting from overfishing both by Indigenous Peoples and by non-Indigenous visitors.

In order to mitigate these challenges, some leaders have held village meetings to make people aware of the complex issues of the negative effects of climate change and to discuss ways to mitigate them. The local leaders have also undertaken the initiative to fence off the edge of the forest in the villages of Maruranau, Awarewauna, Rupunuau, Sand Creek, and Shulinab, a project which began in 2003. Benefits derived from the project include farming closer to the savannah and preventing livestock such as cows from destroying the farms. As a further step, a few villages have decided to accept external aid to pilot experimental projects such as savannah farming. Such farming hinges on a drip-type irrigation method, sourced from a nearby deep well. Another proposed project to combat climate change in Maruranau is the building of a road from the edge of the forest to the eastern river of Kwitaro, in the jungle. People reasoned that the road will increase access to cooler farming areas because they are located deeper in the pristine forest. The change from the hotter farming areas along the edge of the forest to cooler farming areas in the deep forest may produce better farming yields, a way of combatting climate change. As recent as February 2019, the road was completed, and it was reported that at least motorcycles can now reach the Kwitaro River. Other expected advantages of the road that goes deeper into the forest are greater hunting, fishing, and logging prospects. In view of these initiatives, people are gradually adapting to the realities of climate change. Notwithstanding the new projects in the villages, a preoccupying concern by the Wapishana leadership remains the biggest issue: unresolved land claims. This has political implications for the Wapishana. I now focus on the ongoing issue of the land claims made by the Wapishana leaders and some of their justifications.

2.4.6.3   Land claims

According to one Toshao, when the Europeans first arrived in the Rupununi, the Wapishana lived in one contiguous block of land space, without known boundaries between villages. Although they had experienced disruptions to their lives by the European visits, expeditions, and settlement, little did the Wapishana know at the time that these disruptions would later include the demarcation of their lands. As Forte (1996: 12) puts it:

> Disruption of course would include the official fiat by which Amerindian lands would magically become crown lands. European dependency on Amerindian goodwill would somehow translate in the colonial scheme of things into Amerindian acceptance of European sovereignty over the land.

In a similar vein, David et al. (2006: 12) documented that the colonial powers asserted that all lands not held under grant from the state were crown lands.

Attempts to resolve the issue of land related to the indigenous peoples date back to just over fifty years ago, before Guyana gained political independence. According to David et al. (2006: 2), one of the conditions for gaining political independence from Great Britain, was that the successor government of Guyana was to legally recognize the ownership of lands by the Indigenous Peoples. The authors (ibid. 2006: 2) go on to document an ensuing consequence: the Amerindian Lands Commission that was established in 1966, consulted with the various Indigenous Peoples and looked into land claims presented to them. According to one Toshao, the government wanted to separate villages by demarcating each one rather than recognizing the unbroken Wapishana boundaries. In the Amerindian Lands Commission 1969 Report, it was recommended that each village be granted a selected section of land. As a result, the government demarcated these sections of lands, granting individual land titles to the people.

However, the leaders contended that each demarcated village land is insufficient for its related population, largely because of the Wapishana pattern of living. This perceived insufficiency of land becomes apparent in light of the increase of population, changing weather patterns, and change in the people's lifestyle. For example, years ago there was an abundance of fish, game, and fruits. Nowadays, fishing, hunting, and gathering fruits require people to go beyond the boundaries of the given lands. According to a former Toshao, Wapishana people cannot survive solely on the resources that fall within demarcated lands. For this reason, they are asking the government for extended lands in one contiguous block of Wapishana territory rather than individual villages with gaps in between. To ensure sufficient resources for all, the Toshaos reiterated that all Wapishana should live together in one single block, as promulgated by of the South Rupununi Development Council (SRDC), whose aim is to "support the long-standing struggle of the Wapichan people to obtain legal title over the full extent of their traditional lands in the South Rupununi" (David et al. 2006: 4). The SRDC Toshaos are also part of the National Toshaos Council (NTC). Nowadays, the NTC represents all Toshaos of the nine Indigenous Peoples of Guyana and holds a yearly national conference of Toshaos where they engage the government of the day on issues and topics related to their development.

Another reason why the Wapishana are so concerned about their land is because their notion of landscape, habitat, and territory is connected to the toponyms and hydronyms, many of which are not only in Wapishana, but

also in Atorad and Taruma. For example, the word *Roponan* "Rupununi River" is not Wapishana but Atorad, according to interviewee, Ian Melville. It is an Atorad word for a type of sour berry shrub that was plentiful along the river. There is also the bottle-shaped mountain that we used to call "bottle mountain", *Taraiporo* 'Ataraiporo', located in the jungle to the east of *Shii* village. *Taraiporo* is a Taruma name for one of the brothers who was turned into huge mountain-like rocks, according to Wapishana oral tradition (see also Carlin 2011: 230). The name *Shii* itself is a Wapishana word that means; swelling', and it refers to the mountain-sized rock from which the village "Shea" derived its name. Thus, the toponyms and hydronyms richly connect the Wapishana to their landscape. For this reason, during the verification of maps of our villages, the people proposed to the government that they include these toponyms and hydronyms as written in Wapishana alongside the current official names, which have been largely anglicized. Therefore, the dominance and historicity of Atorad, Taruma, and Wapishana toponyms and hydronyms that describe the Rupununi landscape is another justification for the Wapishana peoples' claim to land extensions beyond their boundaries.

A related reason for the Wapishana's preoccupation with the land issue is that it is connected to their notions of self-identification and self-determination. From this perspective, insufficient land space is regarded as diminishing their strength or means for self-identification and self-determination. Since one of the major sources of self-identification is the traditional lands people are accustomed to, one can therefore point to these "cultural and language differences as markers of the group's collective identity" (Cummins: 1996: 30). A similar notion regarding markers of a group's collective identity is eloquently expressed by Jansen and Jiménez (2017: 27).

> Shared language, territory, cultural memory and/or social condition are generally the main elements that lead to a people's self-identification and/or its identification by others, creating a bond of group-solidarity and a common orientation toward future development.

In this sense, the shared land or territory, through understanding the histories and meanings behind the toponyms and hydronyms, plays a huge part as a marker of self-identification. Through a sense of securing a sufficient land base to maintain their way of living, the people can have the confidence to exercise their right to "freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [UNDRIP] 2007, art.3).

Other reasons concern potentially enormous future projects that could transform the Indigenous Peoples' landscape. In the case of Indigenous Peoples in Guyana, they feel that certain conditions should be met before they agree to such projects. Concerning large projects such as the development of protected areas, Colchester (1997: 149) suggests that such projects would initially have to help clarify the boundaries of Indigenous areas and demarcate them effectively and that the people would need clear rights to be able to continue non-commercial hunting within the reserved area. More recently and specific to the Wapishana, such rights may be extended to lands that include not only the forest but also the savannah. For economic ventures that entail pasture lands, David et al. (2006: 18) assert that the allocation of grazing rights in no way limits traditional access rights to hunting, fishing, and gathering by other members of the community. Economic ventures should be open to people from both outside and within the community. Whatever the case may be, either party should still respect the rights of the people to continue their traditional ways of life.

As one Wapishana leader added, there can be no economic ventures without land. In trying to live out self-determination in practical terms, the people have conceptualized their own projects and activities, which they designed, implemented, and monitored themselves. For example, the Wapishana leaders continue to lobby for land extension by organizing themselves as the South Central and South Rupununi Districts Toshaos Council, later modified as the South Rupununi District Council (SRDC). This body, which has recently been recognized by the Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, has published a book entitled *Baokopa'o Wa Di'itinpan Waduaniinao Ati'o nii* 'Thinking together for those coming behind us'. The publication concerns "a general framework for land management and self-determined development based on concerns among communities on land issues and measures needed to protect our rights and continue our way of life" (South Central and South Rupununi Districts Toshaos Councils 2012: iv). Among important topics covered are "Important places", "How to use the land", and "How to put plans to work". The document, which represents a collective mechanism for instilling traditional values in the mindset of the people, must not only be recognized, but be actively applied by more Wapishana. This document has been presented to the government as part of the Wapishana's input so that it may be incorporated as part of the developmental plans for the district. To date, the government has at least verbally acknowledged the plan, but has not officially incorporated it. However, it is fair to say that at least the government should issue a written statement of support or acknowledgement. Just as the government would like the support of the people for its ideas concerning development, so too they should accept the

people's ideas and desires for development connected to their land. I now discuss some ways certain organizations within the villages have affected Wapishana traditional practices.

2.4.6.4　Some village organizations and effects

The SRDC is made up of elected representatives of all the village councils in the South Rupununi district. Each village council, comprising an elected Toshao and councillors, is another institution that had been developed in concert with the government. After the new councils are installed by the government, they are democratically elected every three years. Prior to this, some villages such as Maruranau followed their traditional practices in choosing their leaders. The leader who was chosen based on his or her good reputation and popularity was recognized as the true representative and would not be changed until a successor was acknowledged by the community. Nowadays, with the oversight of the government, voting for a new Toshao and councillors is done by consensus. Voting by consensus for leaders has been accepted as another order of political life of democratically organized institutions, of which the village councils are a part.

However, the principle of voting by consensus has been extended into village life in relation to decision-making involving large-scale projects for the village. Some community leaders felt that when consensus is used to arrive at crucial decisions on projects that would have long-term implications and consequences, the people who do not agree with the decision could subvert the project or programme and that this could affect its viability. In effect, non-cooperation by a number of people creates factions within a village. Along the same lines, as groups decide to move "beyond subsistence activities into new social formations, these stresses and strains can cause disruption within the fabric of village life" (Forte 1996: 14). Related somewhat to the stresses and strains created by conflict of interests regarding projects or new social formations is the formation of "new" churches in villages that are traditionally Catholic. One elder mentioned that in his village, members of the new churches are criticizing ways of worship of the members who belong to the older church. This leads to ill will and disunity among affected villagers, affecting cohesion in village day work or meetings. Another elder noted that the affiliation to political party groups by individuals or families within some villages is another cause for disharmony or social division to cordial working relationships. Thus, different church and political affiliations have contributed somewhat to the erosion of social cohesiveness, sometimes manifested by poor turnout at self-help activities or meetings in some villages. One way of restoring good will and unity in

affected villages could be through additional inter-party meetings. Such meetings chaired by the village councils could assist in ending disagreements, assuaging fears, or easing criticisms between parties or groups affected. If a form of agreement on being tolerant and respectful of each other's opinions or affiliations could be made, this would take much of the tension out of the situations.

A further cause for friction is the transition of some people to "individualism" as opposed to "cooperativism", which is one of the hallmarks of most villages. In "individualism", people pursue the possession of consumer goods, the goal of which is to make a profit. They pursue property or business ownership, which may dictate that less time on their part be spent on voluntary village activities. In this sense, "cooperativism" in which people share and unite is under threat, and, as one elder puts it, "We are not coming together as before." By contrast, in "cooperativism", the majority of individuals have sustained a cooperative way of living and sharing, largely without much money or commodities. It seems difficult to reconcile these two ways of living in a village without creating a feeling of class division. However, one of the people's strengths is still in their cooperative way of living and producing as in their subsistence farming. This is best illustrated by *manoru, "*cooperative work among a group of people*"*.

A *manoru* entails the invitation of relatives, neighbours, and friends by a host to assist in a manual task that otherwise could not have been easily accomplished by one or two individuals. The nature of the task could be related to the farm, the house, or domestic animals, concluding with a happy celebration of a shared meal along with an alcoholic beverage and sometimes music. The strong social obligation to assist each other in a *manoru* is manifest in the number of people participating, but participation need not be reciprocal. However, one facet of the *manoru* that sometimes leads to social breakdown is the overindulgence in the drinks by a few. In successfully counteracting this negativity, some hosts have been known to put limits on their offer of the beverages, while fewer hosts offered only non-alcoholic beverages. A less-practised form of cooperative work because it involves fewer people is called *kaminka'uakaru* 'self-help'. This has the same characteristics of the *manoru* except that no beverage or meal is obligatory on part of the host, while reciprocity of participation is obligatory. Depending on the number of individuals, this self-help is complete after a number of days, when each person will have had his or her turn of receiving assistance**.** Apart from the *manoru* and *kaminka'uakaru* there is still the "village work" in most villages, where councils choose a day in a week for a

number of hours of cooperative work to be done for the benefit of the village.

As factions and tensions continue to present challenges in the villages, there is the phenomenon of globalization, which brings in yet more challenges. I now focus on two examples of the effects of globalization. First, I mention how externally influenced policies have triggered the imposition of large-scale projects in some instances. Second, I touch on how people have adapted to the changing circumstances brought about by the introduction of a form of information technology.

2.4.6.5   Some influences of globalization

As argued by Baker (1995: 205), because globalization has caused the spread of information, telecommunications, and mass media to break down national frontiers, there is the pressure to belong to the global village, a pressure to be international, to become part of a bigger whole. From this perspective, it is the perception of some Toshaos that as the government signs on to internationally influenced policies, the government is obligated to pursue related developmental projects. The villages, in turn, are pressured by the government into accepting some planned large-scale projects for the development of their communities. A case in point is The Hinterland Sustainable Agricultural Development Programme, funded by the International Development Bank. At a specially convened meeting of residents and local leaders of the Rupununi, government officials spoke about the advantages of a huge reservoir project to be based in the North Rupununi. According to one interviewee, as the Vice President spoke, there was frequent applause, mostly from the government side. In view of the negative effects the project might have on the ecosystems upon which the people depend for a living, one Toshao asserted that the local leaders needed to take a more questioning stance before agreeing on such large-scale developmental projects. The interviewee further contended that the government should wait for at least a year, giving the people ample time for consideration and input before a final decision on the project is made. Clearly, such projects will require massive infrastructural works in the traditional land of the Indigenous people. There is, therefore, a need for the Indigenous leadership to engage in critical reflection on the pros and cons of such projects that have the potential to completely transform their landscape and to demand an independent report showing any detrimental effects. One suggestion for clearer information on projects and programmes is to have relevant documents or speeches translated from English to Wapishana and vice versa. This would call for the need of trained translators from within the

communities. In this way, internalization and interpretation of the information by all people concerned is more likely to be achieved before crucial decisions are made. This is one example of how globalization seems to indirectly threaten the Indigenous Peoples' maintenance of their traditional way of life.

The other example regarding a globalization-influenced development is the telecommunications brought about by the introduction of mobile phones to the Wapishana area. Since the digital network reached Wapishana villages over five years ago, the use of mobile phones ushered in easier and faster communication. However, the communication advantages of having mobile phones came at a price, as manifested in the increase of the people's movement and their expenditure. For instance, on a daily basis, there is noticeable movement of people from within some villages to a main point several miles away, where they access the telecommunication network signal. This new trend of movement also means the additional expense of having to buy phone credit for use. As one pensioner remarked, her mobile phone is "eating away" her money each time she talks to her relatives. On the part of some the younger people who are literate in their language, there is a disposition to enjoy communication by chatting or texting messages in Wapishana on their mobile phones. Conversing in Wapishana by this means is particularly representative of McCarty's (2012: 569) observation that the choice of youths to speak their heritage languages is an act of identity and belonging. All this reveals that Indigenous Wapishana youths are willing to adapt to a changing world despite the advantages and disadvantages experienced by the technological development. How this adaptation will be put to further advantage in terms of their education will be of interest. There is much benefit to be derived in the educational use of more digital tools if there is training to use these and the related programmes.

2.4.6.6   Summary and discussion

In this section, we have seen that the advantages ushered in by elements of change are acknowledged by the Wapishana communities. Amid all this, pedagogical, health, environmental, political, social, and economic issues remain important aspects of the Wapishana people's everyday reality. However, there is optimism in the following highlighted positive directions. In supporting the switch from a monolingual to a bilingual model of education for their children, the Wapishana may expect a more motivating learning environment, more engagement in academic effort, reformed minds, attitudes, and self-esteem. The awareness that a regular consumption of certain modern foods may lead to detrimental health effects can trigger the

local leaders to have educational programmes for the people on the use and the proper preparation of these foods. Consequences of environmental alteration are the result of both natural forces and human activities from within and outside the villages. The good news is that Wapishana communities are counteracting these challenges partly through the reinforcement of their customary laws. The controversial issue of land claims and extensions for one contiguous block of Wapishana territory remains unresolved, but the Toshaos' collective resolve to pursue the matter with the government of the day seems not to have waned. The existence of factions within the villages for various reasons has threatened the common bond of cooperation much needed to maintain the villages' social cohesion. Still, the continued practice of the *manoru* 'cooperative work among people' or *kaminka'uakaru* 'self-help' and the weekly village work has shown that the social value of the cooperative 'spirit' upholds a sense of community. The messages about maintaining traditional values whilst pursuing economic advancement the people receive may seem contradictory. However, the emphasis is that with a mindset anchored in traditional values, Wapishana cultural continuity is more likely. With a culturally relevant curriculum that provides a knowledge base in traditional values, intercultural experience may be more meaningful, leading to further knowledge of both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds.

It is must be further highlighted that the convening of the special meetings is indicative of the necessary vision and political will demonstrated by some leaders and Toshaos to address their problems. As they deliberate on issues that complicate the lives of the peoples, this "will encourage focused and strategic responses to the specific issues which they merit" (Guyana Human Rights Association 2016: 3). As one of the strategic responses to the troubling issues, the suggested frameworks such as their documented customary laws can be shared and discussed. Clearly, rather than a one-off meeting, there should be a series of meetings to discuss the issues in greater detail and with more specialized assistance than the peoples' own, if necessary. Hopefully, in this way, more strategic responses will be generated. Underlying all this is the peoples' persistence for self-sufficiency, self-identification, and self-respect for their livelihood.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided data regarding the location, population, and origins of the Wapishana, as well as their contact with other peoples and the experienced impact of colonization, as context for the rest of the thesis. In addition, elements of change contributing to either the growth of their

culture or the demise of aspects of it have been identified. Embedded in all these elements or activities are values, as outlined in Figure 20. These values, discerned as material and immaterial, are further characterized as the following: (1) Traditional: disappeared; (2) Traditional: in decline; and (3) Modern: adopted.

The categorization and characterization of these values are important for understanding both the historical and current status of the Wapishana people. Attempts have been made to resurrect the disappeared aspects of the culture, representing concrete examples of a connection to a common heritage. Nowadays, the creation of traditional dress or costume is mainly for glamourous exhibition on special occasions, but at least the display of these aspects of culture creates a cultural space for self-identification and a sense of pride. The cultural practices of farming, hunting, fishing, and gathering (food or materials) are still essential pillars of the Wapishana traditional lifestyle. Thus, the exhortation by elders for the younger generation to revisit and revalue these practices is a result of fewer people engaging in them. Conversely, more people tend to have an overwhelmingly growing dependence on products from urban centres but at a cost to the traditional practices. While the younger generation's embracing of modern Wapishana societal values is normal so as to keep abreast with current developments, they also need to take advantage of the opportunities for economic and social advancement. Some hold the view that the decision to uphold traditional values to create a sense of well-being, rests with individuals or groups. It is fair to say that people ultimately have the choice to pursue modernity, tradition, or both. Said differently, being part of the wider world while still upholding beliefs and values of the Wapishana culture is a choice partly open to Wapishana. However, if the Wapishana people can also appreciate and accept that there is much value in the use of their traditional immaterial knowledge to gain material values, then the goal for us as educators is to create a formal space for a future based on the foundation of their cultural heritage.

Such an envisioned goal for the children's education that is founded on their cultural heritage fits well in Hornberger's (2004: 159) continua model of biliteracy which encompasses contexts ranging from micro to macro, oral to literate, and bilingual/multilingual to monolingual levels. Moreover, considering educational policy and practice regarding biliteracy, one end of each continuum appears to hold privileged power over the other (e.g. written development over oral development); hence "there is need to contest the traditional power weighting by paying attention to, and granting agency to and making space for actors and practices at what have been traditionally been the less powerful ends of the continua" (Hornberger & Skilton-

Sylvester 2000: 99). In the context of Indigenous Mesoamerica, especially the Mixtec people, Jiménez (2015: 7) argues that with the end of Spanish colonization no social and mental decolonization has taken place and suggests that decolonization "should not lead to ethnic conflicts, but to a new society and mentality in which all cultural, historical and linguistic components are appreciated positively, shared, and cared for." Such decolonization can begin by creating space for a bilingual and intercultural education which in turn "could greatly reinforce self-esteem" of the children (Howard 2004: 115). A stronger self-esteem has a positive effect on the affective domain of the children's learning which in turn contributes to their overall successful learning, including the building of cognitive skills (see Section 2.4). It is with this space in mind that the efficacy of a mother tongue and culture-based education for Wapishana children is investigated in this thesis (see Section 1.3 for the research questions). The findings will be discussed later (see Chapter 6).
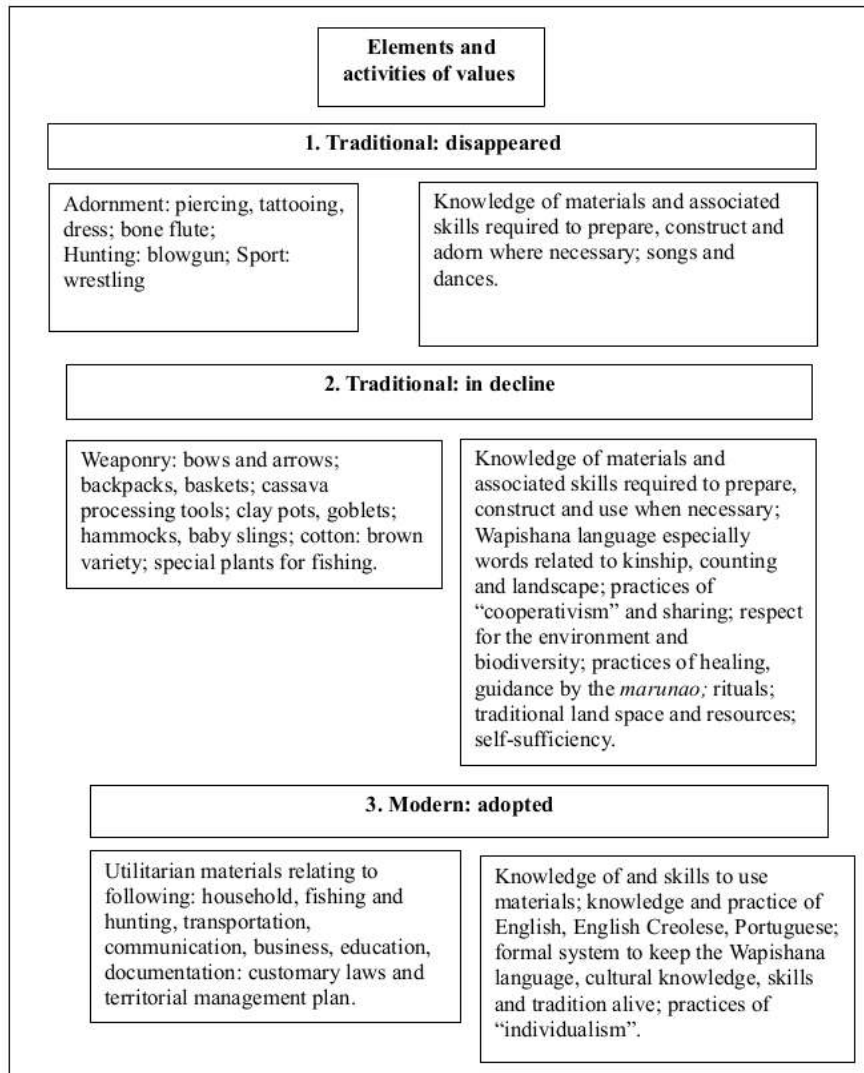
Figure 20. Elements/activities of Wapishana values.

Figure 20 outlines a menu of Wapishana values from which Wapishana decision-makers can choose as their core values. However, these core values should include the traditional ones the Wapishana are proud of. Perhaps, the best way of honouring these traditional values is by incorporating them into thematic units that inform what knowledge and skills children should have as a basis to begin their formal schooling. These traditional values should also

provide cultural content or topics to continue development of their heritage language and culture whilst they go on learn the second language and its affiliated culture. Such thematic units will contribute to the reformation of the conventional curriculum that is largely based on values of the mainstream or dominant culture. Thus, the construction and the following of a culturally and educationally relevant curriculum are of utmost importance because as a foundation, the future of our Wapishana children will be shaped by it.

Chapter 3

The education system

3.1   Introduction

In Chapter 2, I introduced the context of the study: that of the Wapishana people. I began with the location and population of the Wapishana villages, including the three where the pilot programme is being implemented. I then made a sketch of the impact of colonization on the lives on the people, suggesting elements and activities of Wapishana values that could lay the foundation for a culturally relevant curriculum. In this chapter, I first look at the wider context: the pre-tertiary education system in the country. The performance in English and mathematics, and the repetition and dropout rates of children at the primary and secondary school levels are considered. Especially where Indigenous children are concerned, there is need to redress the situation. In this respect, I then narrow the focus to the earlier experiences with Wapishana literacy in some selected nursery and primary schools among the Wapishana. In addition, I look at the Wapishana orthography that has been in use since these earlier trials, highlighting some issues and making some suggestions to resolve them.

As indicated in Section 1.3, a Wapishana–English bilingual education approach is being piloted in at least three Wapishana communities in Guyana. A two-year period was spent on the planning stages of the programme. One of the criteria for evaluation is the presence of the essential components of successful mother tongue-based programmes (see Section 4.7.2) in contexts similar to the Indigenous communities in Guyana. The desired impact of the project is that the education in Wapishana communities will result in children who are bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural and are able to meet the national education benchmarks (see impact in Appendix B: Results-Based Management [RBM] framework).

In light of this envisioned impact, this chapter provides a brief overview of the current education system in Guyana (Section 3.2). Specifically, information on the formal education system is given in terms of the general academic performance, attendance, repetition, and dropout rates of students at the pre-tertiary (nursery, primary, and secondary) levels. Of special concern is the general performance of students from the hinterland areas. Secondly, this chapter analyses the trials at Wapishana literacy in the Wapishana community over four decades from the time of their inception

(Section 3.3). It first presents the processes and outcomes of Wapishana literacy trials from which benefits and challenges are summarized so as to inform a possible course of action for similar efforts in the future. Thirdly, it gives a retrospective account of the advocacy for the reintroduction of mother tongue-education in the Wapishana community (Section 3.4). Fourthly, it presents a brief overview of the Guyanese Wapishana orthographic conventions, an examination of some orthography issues, and some reactions and suggestions from a number of Wapishana readers and writers (Section 3.5). Lastly, this chapter provides a conclusion (Section 3.6).

3.2   The current education system in Guyana

According to the Guyana Education Sector Plan 2014–2018 Volume 1 (p. 9), "the formal education system of Guyana has a structure that spirals up from nursery education through primary education, secondary education, technical/vocational education and training (TVET), teacher training, and ending at the University level." Of all the mentioned levels of the formal education system, only one level and part of another are compulsory, as indicated in the Ministry of Education Guyana Strategic Plan 2008–2013, (p. 14):

> Education is now compulsory for children, aged five years and nine months to 15 years. Although there are only three years of compulsory education, children are expected to remain in General Secondary and/or Community High School until they are 16 years old.

Based on this indication, nursery education (i.e. kindergarten) is not compulsory, while primary education and at least three years of secondary education are. However, the Government of Guyana has been continually advocating Universal Secondary Education (USE), and based on the last population projection in 2010, all secondary age students are taking advantage of secondary education (Guyana Secondary Education Improvement Plan Amerindian Peoples Plan Ministry of Education 2014: 4).

In this section, I describe briefly what is entailed in Guyana's pre-tertiary education system in Subsection 3.2.1. I then provide data for the following: performance at the secondary level with specific reference to the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) in Subsection 3.2.2; performance at the primary level with specific reference to the National Grade Six Assessments (NGSA) in Section 3.2.3 and attendance, repetition,

and dropout in Subsection 3.2.4. Some interventions are highlighted in Subsection 3.2.5.

3.2.1 Pre-tertiary education system

In Guyana, at the nursery level the education programme offered is for children of ages 3 years 9 months to 5 years 9 months and prepares children for entry to primary school (see *Report Strategizing for First Language Education in Indigenous Communities: A Needs Assessment* by Walter Edwards, 2012: 2). However, according to the Amerindian Peoples Plan (APP) (2014: 3), some children who live in the hinterland regions are admitted into nursery schools as early as 3 years 6/7 months and that teachers should know how to "conduct a diagnostic assessment and plan for children with different needs" (ibid. 2014: 9).

After the two years of nursery school, the children enter primary school, where they follow a compulsory six-year programme. During this time, children take the mandatory national assessments at Grades 2, 4, and 6. Based on the combined scores at these assessments, children are awarded placement in secondary schools or in other cases, placement in secondary departments of the same primary schools.

Generally, the secondary level of education comprises the National Grade Nine Assessment (NGNA), which is mandatory. For assessment in the higher grades (Grade 11 and beyond), students in the public secondary schools write external examinations based on a curriculum determined by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), of which Guyana is a member country. Thus, the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) replaced the British-based General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Ordinary Level and Advanced Level examinations, respectively.

All public secondary schools offer the following programmes:

1.   The general secondary school programme prepares students for two external examinations, the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) after five years of the programme and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) after another two years. The schools that offer CAPE are senior secondary schools that are mostly in or near the coastal areas.

2.   The general secondary school programme prepares students for one external examination, the CSEC, after five years of the programme. These schools that offer only CSEC are junior secondary schools.

3.   The "primary tops" in primary schools, especially in hinterland areas, offer three years of the programme. Those who do well at the National Grade Nine (NGNA) assessment are transferred to junior secondary schools. Others, who do not do too well, are phased-out of the school system, thus precluding them from pursuing tertiary education. I now turn briefly to the general performance of children at the three levels-secondary, primary, and nursery.

3.2.2 Performance at the CSEC level

According to the Guyana Education Sector Plan 2014–2018 (p. 23), the CSEC performance in all subjects for all public schools for the years 2008 and 2013 remained at 60%. However, the performance in mathematics and English is lower as depicted in the analysis of results in Table 3, below.

Table 3. CSEC performance in mathematics and English for all public secondary schools in the Hinterland and Coastal regions by gender. From Guyana Education Sector Paper 2014–2018 (p. 25).

Education level	Key sector outcome indicators											
	CSEC passes w/Grades 1-3: National				CSEC passes w/Grades 1-3: Mathematics				CSEC passes w/Grades 1-3: English			
	Mathematics		English		Hinterland		Coastal		Hinterland		Coastal	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Secondary (2013)	26%	29%	48%	43%	7%	10%	27%	29%	26%	22%	49%	45%
Secondary (2008)	30%	35%	36%	26%	16%	12%	32%	36%	15%	11%	38%	28%

Data source: CSEC Guyana Results 2008, & 2013.

Grades 1 (the highest) to 3 (pass) are considered passing grades. As can be seen, while there has been improvement in the national pass rates for both girls and boys in English, there has been a decline in mathematics.

Further analysis of the CSEC results shows a comparison between hinterland and coastal students. A similar trend can be seen: the percentage of passes for English increased for both regions (hinterland and coastal), whereas they declined for Mathematics. However, the pass rates differ significantly in that the pass rates of coastal students at least doubled that of hinterland students in both subject areas.

3.2.3 Performance at the NGSA level

The performance, at the National Grade Six Assessment for 2009 and 2013, is based on the number of pupils (female and male combined) scoring 50% and over in the three subject areas: mathematics, English, and science (see Table 4).

In relation to the national scores for Mathematics, students showed an increase of 20%. For the same subject area, students of the hinterland regions showed an increase of 14% as compared to 23% for the students of the coastal regions. For English, the national scores increased by 4%. However, in this subject area, the regional differences showed 5% improvement for the coastal students as compared to 2% for the hinterland student. As can be seen, students of the coastal region scored better than those of the hinterland, in both subjects, but nationally the mathematics scores were lower than English.

Table 4. Performance on National Grade Six assessments by coastal and hinterland regions.

Education level	Key sector outcome indicators								
	NGSA: Pupils Scoring 50% and Over in Mathematics		NGSA: Pupils Scoring 50% and Over in English		NGSA: Pupils Scoring 50% and Over in Science		NGSA: Pupils Scoring 50% and Over		
	Hinterland	Coastal	Hinterland	Coastal	Hinterland	Coastal	Math	English	Science
Primary - 2013 (MF)	18%	42%	10%	28%	9%	28%	31%	20%	18%
Primary - 2009 (MF)	4%	19%	8%	23%	5%	21%	11%	16%	12%

Data source: National Grade Six Assessment Analysis 2009 and 2013.
Note: MF = male and female students combined.

From Guyana Education Sector Paper 2014–2018 (p. 25).

In science, the national scores showed an improvement of 6%, while the hinterland region increased by 4% and the coastal region by 7%. One of the major conclusions is that the average performance in the coastal regions was significantly higher than in the hinterland regions (Guyana Education Sector Paper Volume 1 2014–2018, p. 23).

Excluded from the statistical analyses is performance at the nursery level. It was only in 2013 that the Ministry of Education developed and published a series of workbooks, readers, and assessment booklets to support emergent literacy and numeracy in the nursery schools (Guyana Education Sector Paper Volume 1 2014–2018, p. 11). From the field trips made to at least three nursery schools, I noted that numeracy and literacy assessment booklets were in place for each child at each of the nursery schools.

Teachers have been using them and recording the scores, which are submitted to Ministry of Education. With this ongoing, one would expect that in due course the statistics in relation to these aspects of the nursery programme would appear in an updated document by the Ministry of Education. I now turn to attendance, repetition, and dropout at the same levels.

3.2.4 Attendance, repetition, and dropout

Based on Ministry of Education Annual Questionnaires 2012–2013 (cited in Guyana Education Sector Plan 2014–2018, Volume 1, p. 22), the attendance averages are as follows: nursery (72% for the hinterland as compared to 74% for the coastal regions), primary (77% for the hinterland as compared to 79% for the coastal area), secondary (71% for the hinterland area as compared to 73% for the coastal area). As can be seen the attendance by the coastal schools is slightly better than the hinterland schools. This is not surprising, as regular absenteeism by scores of hinterland children may be due to economic constraints at home experienced by indigenous families, as is with the Wapishana. Due to a lack of income in the home to meet their basic needs, some Wapishana children would accompany their parents to the farm or on long hunting trips as a means to obtain food.

The nursery schools never had repetition, and at the primary and secondary school, the Ministry of Education mandated automatic promotion in 2010, thereby eliminating repetition in public schools (Guyana Education Sector Plan 2014–2018 Volume 1: 22). The Plan goes on to document that the national average dropout rates for the year 2011 to 2012 were as follows: primary (4% for hinterland schools as compared to 3% for coastal schools), secondary (7% for the hinterland as compared to 7% for the coastal area). The dropout rates for secondary students of both areas are the same, which should not be surprising. This may be partly explained by the fact that in both the coastal and hinterland areas, there are children who speak Creolese and indigenous languages, respectively, as their first languages. When these children are made to operate in an insufficiently developed second language, English, they may experience academic difficulties and underachievement. Similarly, for culturally diverse learners, when the instructional environment does not facilitate or encourage active participation on their part, the message they internalize is that academic success is unlikely and thus that academic effort is not worthwhile (Cummins 1996: 65). As a result, they mentally withdraw from academic effort and consequently drop out of school, according to Cummins.

3.2.5 Some interventions

Concerns relating to each level of education were such that the Government of Guyana sought to make some interventions. For young learners, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Grant for Early childhood Education was implemented to improve emergent literacy and numeracy outcomes for children at the nursery and primary Grade 1 in hinterland regions and targeted remote riverine areas (Amerindian Peoples Plan [APP] (2014: 3). For the primary school level, the government of Guyana implemented the Emergency Mathematics Intervention in 2016, which entailed a number of aspects, including training for teachers in content and methodology. According to the Stabroek News of 29 June 2018, under the caption "Grade Six Exams see rise in English passes, drop in Maths", the plan resulted in an across-the-board improvement in 2017. However, the pass rate for each subject over a six-year period (2013 to 2018) showed that with the exception of English in 2014, 2017, and 2018, the majority of the National Grade Six assessment students scored below 50% in these assessments.

For the secondary school level, the government of Guyana initiated a Guyana Secondary Education Improvement Project, part of which included continuous professional development for secondary school mathematics teachers and which is being implemented in Hinterland Regions 1, 7, 8, and 9 (Amerindian Peoples Plan 2014: 2). While there is much to be applauded for the excellent performances by students at both the CSEC and CAPE examinations, there have been efforts to improve the overall performance of the students in the literacy and numeracy subjects in all of Guyana.

Of particular concern has been the performance of children in indigenous-dominant villages and communities. As Edwards (2012: 2) puts it:

> In Guyana, all children, irrespective of location, cultural practices, and language barriers, must complete the national assessments at Grades 2, 4, 6 and 9 and, if successful, must compete in the high stakes Caribbean Examinations Council Secondary Education Certificate Examinations at Grade 11. The burning issue is the indigenous children's ability to cope with the demands of the examination especially since the language of instruction is English.

To successfully cope with the demands placed on them by the CSEC in English and mathematics, Indigenous children such as the Wapishana do need greater attention. For instance, based on statistics given by the Department of Education, Region 9, an analysis of the CSEC results for

Aishalton Secondary School for 2012, 2013, 2016, and 2017 shows the following pass rates at Grades 1 to 3 for English language: 2012 (12%), 2013 (23%), 2016 (38.4%), and 2017 (43%). The performances in mathematics were as follows: 2012 (12%), 2013 (7%), 2016 (9.7%), and 2017 (17%).

In order to understand the nature of the issues involved, so as to determine the types of interventions necessary for strategic reform in language pedagogy and language planning, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education's efforts to research the language needs of the indigenous children (Edwards 2012: 2). One of the recommendations made by Edwards (2014: 9) included strengthening professional and community support for programmes for mother tongue early childhood education in Indigenous communities. Edwards went on to recommend that first language education for children should be a priority in Indigenous areas where children come to school speaking their mother tongue and learning English as a second language. As far as I know, Edward's recommendations have not yet been implemented. However, in addition to Edward's above-mentioned recommendation, it should be stressed that the initial and continued instruction in the mother tongue and teaching of aspects of the culture besides the teaching of the second, dominant language should be implemented. Having looked at the current education system in Guyana, I now look at earlier trials at Wapishana literacy in the following section.

3.3   Earlier trials at Wapishana literacy

With regard to the earliest education model adopted in Guyana, Forte (1996: 11) noted the following:

> Historically, school education in indigenous communities—as it has been for the rest of the population—has been the transferal of criteria, values and content of the urban and monolingual model. During the colonial epoch, the model was that of the Mother Country.

Given that Guyana was formerly a British colony, the language of formal education was English. So too in the South Rupununi when formal education was introduced in the 1940s–1950s. This meant that instruction in the established primary schools run by the Jesuit Catholic missionaries was in English. Even after independence in 1966 and after the nationalization of schools in 1976, the government of Guyana perpetuated the model of education which they had inherited from the British.

In effect, the children were immersed or submerged in English, with the general rule that they speak only English whilst at school, including outdoors during recess. If children spoke in Wapishana during this time, they were reprimanded by the teachers. This certainly became ingrained in the children after some time, as based on my own experience in Shea Primary School in the late 1960s, I remember that my classmates would report to the teacher any instance of Wapishana being spoken by others. This would usually lead to the speakers being reprimanded by the teachers and reminded to speak only English.

However, the imposed programme, where Wapishana children were taught exclusively through English, did not always produce many scholastic success stories among the children. This led to the early trials of Wapishana literacy by officials of the Ministry of Education in collaboration with some missionaries who were living and working in the Rupununi. We shall now look at how these missionaries and other stakeholders became involved.

The historical accounts from the 1970s to the early 1990s are drawn mainly from short reports written by the missionary linguists and more recently from a report written and read by one of the missionaries at an advocacy seminar for Wapishana–English bilingual education held on 25 April 2015. The accounts from 1998 and onwards are drawn from my own experiences on being involved with further Wapishana literacy trials in schools. In the following, an account of the Wapishana literacy trials is provided through the 1970s (Subsection 3.3.1), the 1980s (Subsection 3.3.2), the 1990s (Subsection 3.3.3), and from 2000 to the present (Subsection 3.3.4). The main benefits and challenges of the Wapishana literacy trials are then enumerated (Subsection 3.3.5). Finally, I provide a summary and discussion (Subsection 3.3.6).

3.3.1 Wapishana literacy trials in the 1970s

Frances Tracy, an American linguist attached to the Unevangelized Fields Mission (UFM), started learning the Wapishana language in the 1960s and established a base at San Jose, a twenty-minute drive southwards from the town of Lethem in Region 9, Guyana. In fact, Hicks (2002: 1) noted that Tracy's Wapishana Language Project, which included devising the first formal Wapishana orthography, had been in existence since she began analysing the language in 1967. By 1972 she had devised the first formal orthography, which became the basis for most Wapishana writing presently in existence.

After several years of studying the Wapishana language, her acquaintance with residents and government officials had grown extensively. Thus, when she subsequently published *Dictionary English–Wapishana, Wapishana–English* (Tracy 1972), it was readily recognized and endorsed by these individuals, as well as further afield. It was therefore not surprising that she was encouraged by the then Minister of Education to conduct a seminar for primary schoolteachers of St. Ignatius Primary School on "Structural Differences between Wapishana and English". According to the report entitled the *History of Wapishana Bilingual Education* by Beverly Dawson, the aim of the seminar, which took place in January 1973, was to assist teachers in their understanding of some of the difficulties children from Wapishana-speaking homes experience in learning English. This was the beginning of bilingual education efforts among the Wapishana.

Frances Tracy was later joined by another American linguist, Beverly Dawson. Together, they conducted one more similar seminar in seven Wapishana villages between 1973 and 1974. During this time, they also constructed Wapishana reading materials by designing reading and writing lessons and accompanying teaching manuals based on recorded and transcribed Wapishana short stories. The materials mainly consisted of primers (easy reading books) consisting of short Wapishana stories and sight words that could be further divided into word parts or syllables. These materials were tested in two villages with Wapishana-speaking adults and school teenagers, who were not literate in their own language but who were literate in English. This exercise produced thirty-one short stories written in Wapishana, some of which became the basis of texts used in subsequent primers. In addition, several of these stories were translated into English by the linguists and printed by the Ministry of Education as booklets entitled "Amerindian Stories" and "More Amerindian Stories".

With discussions ongoing between the linguists and the Ministry of Education, in 1976 the next agreed plan of action was teaching school children from first grade to read in Wapishana before reading in English. Tracy and Dawson prepared various materials and tested them with illiterate Wapishana adults in Maruranau whilst also training two men—one teacher and one villager—on the use of the materials. In the following year, 1977, at Maruranau, the written lessons were again tested with the same adults, while some of the lessons were tested with the Grade 2 children of the Primary School. Their observations led them to the conclusion that the same material lessons could be used with the children. This was because it was challenging to find stories that were specific to children. Most traditional stories are passed on to adults and children alike. In light of these findings, the linguists embarked on the preparation of materials intended mainly for the untrained

teachers, who, in the majority, were Wapishana themselves. Even though there were a few trained teachers in the school at the time, they could not speak Wapishana. Rather, they spoke English because they were recruited from the coastal area of Guyana. Hence, the training session which was held in Awarewaunau, a neighbouring village to Maruranau, was aimed at four local teachers in the use of the materials and teaching practice.

With the training of some schoolteachers in place, Tracy and Dawson held more discussions with the Ministry of Education in 1979 on beginning a formal programme of Wapishana instruction in which initial reading instruction would be in Wapishana. After surveying the schools, Tracy and Dawson chose Aishalton village for the pilot study.

3.3.2 Wapishana literacy trials in the 1980s

Subsequently, in 1981, a three-week training course for four teachers was conducted by Tracy and Dawson in Aishalton. Here the teachers were made aware of certain expectations and suggestions in relation to the scope of the pilot programme for the Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes. According to Dawson's report, also referred to earlier (see Section 3.2.1), the following was suggested for incorporation:

> A basic premise is the progression from the known to the unknown. For the child who enters school speaking mainly Wapishana, new material should be introduced in Wapishana as well as in English to improve comprehension. The English-speaking child is not pushed aside, as English will still be used in all subjects except reading in Prep A. Wapishana vocabulary used in the primers will be explained in English to the English child, and the phonics approach to reading will help both Wapishana and English children when they continue with reading in English in Prep B. Also, discussion and creative oral expression will be encouraged in whichever language the children find more comfortable. Expression in oral English will be developed as the year progress.
>
> (Extract from the report *History of Wapishana Bilingual Education* on 25 April 2015 by Beverly Dawson)

In terms of the scope of the first year programme of the participating schools, Tracy and Dawson further suggested that at the beginning, Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes be merged for both Wapishana and literacy lessons. The primary reason for this suggestion was due to teacher availability at the time —there was only one teacher teaching both the Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes in each of the schools concerned.

Equipped with the training, the teachers embarked upon the pilot programme in 1981. Thus, for the initial four or five weeks in the first term, the merged classes were introduced to pre-reading and sight-words before actual teaching of the primer lessons. However, with respect to the English reading books already available, the teacher used the lesson presented, for example, only to discuss pictures and do related activities in Wapishana for the Wapishana-speaking children, allowing for the development of their oral skills in their native language. Following the discussion in Wapishana, English vocabulary was then introduced in the lesson to enable children to become familiar with the vocabulary used in the books before reading the words at the Grade 2 level. In the second term, Grade 1 children continued with the lessons in the Wapishana primer, to complete lesson 12 by the end of the second term, and lesson 18 by the end of the third. As for the Grade 2 class, English reading resumed, but they continued Wapishana reading as well. Whilst the other subject areas were unchanged, more attention was given to explaining new material in Wapishana as well as English for children to understand the material more quickly. Increased time was spent on reading and discussion of both Wapishana and English short stories, explaining these in Wapishana or English for children who did not have a strong grasp of the language in which the story was written.

For the second year of the programme, the Grade 1 class continued with the rest of the primer. The Grade 2 class also read in English beginning with the Grade 1 books. They covered these in the first term since they already knew how to read and were familiar with the English vocabulary in the books. Wapishana was continued as well as English at least three times a week.

As any pilot programme would necessitate, monitoring and evaluation were followed through. Dawson noted that during the ensuing school terms in 1982, they tested the Grade 1 pupils of Aishalton for reading ability and comprehension in Wapishana. Likewise, a year later, they tested the same group of now Grade 2 for reading ability and comprehension in English. They then extended the same English test to the Grade 2 children of Maruranau, as a control group, who had had no Wapishana reading lessons. The results showed that the children in Aishalton, who had their first reading experience in Wapishana, were already equal to the control group (those who were instructed only in English) in reading ability in English and even surpassed the control group in comprehension. This suggests a clear advantage for children who were initially taught Wapishana literacy before being taught English literacy. As mentioned above, children who were taught initially in Wapishana took their first test for reading and comprehension in Wapishana. When the same children moved to English

literacy, they were likewise tested in English. It was therefore concluded that the children's reading and comprehension skills in Wapishana assisted them considerably with their reading and comprehension skills in English. They noted especially that a girl who spoke more English than Wapishana at home was the top of the class in reading Wapishana. This suggested that learning to read in Wapishana did not put her at a disadvantage academically.

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the linguists, extended the programme so that a second training materialized in 1983 in Aishalton. Six teachers were involved—three from Aishalton, two from Awarewaunau, and one from Maruranau—enabling the programme to be initiated in two more primary schools. As the programme continued into the late 1980s, there was no more testing using controlled groups. The facilitators concentrated on periodic visits to observe the classes in the schools and made written reports. Based on the reports, all four of the schools followed the programme as stipulated by the facilitators.

However, there were some logistical challenges. One of the teachers left for a two-year teacher-training period; four others were reassigned to other class levels, precluding their teaching of Wapishana reading in the Grades 1 and 2 classes, while the remaining specially trained teachers left teaching. In effect, this setback undermined the effectiveness of the programme. For this reason, the local educational authorities such as the Regional Education Officer and the District Education Officer, together with the facilitators, decided to organize yet another seminar for the teaching of Wapishana literacy in schools. The three-week seminar, which was realized in April 1987, with the strong support of the Regional Education Officer, added three more villages—Karaudarnau from South Rupununi and Sawariwau and Sand Creek from South Central Rupununi (see Table 1). Some of the schools also sent nursery schoolteachers, as well as Grades 1 and 2 teachers, to the training. Following the training they received at Sand Creek, teachers returned positively and enthusiastically to begin their classes.

According to Dawson, for several years children in these villages learned to read in Wapishana. One of the successes worth mentioning was the report made by a teacher from the Grade 2 class. The teacher was amazed that children who had learned to read Wapishana in Grade 1 could actually read English words. For example, when she jumbled the words and put them in new sentences, they were able to read it, meaning they understood what they were reading and enjoyed reading. This contrasted with what they had observed before in English-only education: children would just repeat words after the teacher, neither recognizing them nor knowing their meaning or how to use them.

Another success story, which seemed to be linked with previous experience children had in reading in their native language, is also worth mentioning. When I returned to the Maruranau Primary School in 1985 after teacher training, I taught the Grade 6 class for five years. In 1989, when the children who had learned to read in Wapishana reached my class, I was amazed to see that as a whole, the class did better in the National Grade Six Assessment than the previous years. Notable improvement was observed in their numeracy, literacy, and comprehension skills. Although that particular class was small, with a total of only fourteen children, the improvement was reflected in the fact that thirteen of them obtained passes at the National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA) to be awarded entrance to or places in secondary schools, including the lone secondary school in Rupununi at the time—St. Ignatius Secondary. However, the NGSA results of other schools from the district were not considered. Nonetheless, viewed against the backdrop of the initial literacy experiences in this one school, these successes could be partly attributed to the children learning to read in their mother tongue first.

As the missionary facilitators visited the schools periodically and noted these successes, they also reported observing that the programme was again faced with challenges. It was noted that some children were unable to progress in the programme because of their irregular attendance. Their absence from school was due to illnesses such as malaria and the common cold. At other times, the absence of children was due to the difficult socio-economic situations in some homes. As a consequence, some children had to accompany their parents on hunting/fishing trips or to the farm to process the cassava for consumable products such as farine and cassava bread. In this sense, the programme was held back, as some teachers had to go over the lessons so that those children, who were absent, could catch up with the rest. Some teachers viewed the programme as an extra subject to the school's curriculum and so were overwhelmed by their workload in terms of the subjects they had to teach.

The missionaries also reported observing that the teaching staff in schools as well as education officers at the regional level changed, leading to the programme being gradually abandoned in most of the schools. Despite the fact that the bilingual programme fell dormant, the missionaries concentrated on other tasks, such as teaching Wapishana reading classes to Wapishana adults in different villages and enlarging the pool of Wapishana literature by publishing easy reading books in the language. One of the solutions to the above-mentioned challenges is regular teacher development associated with Wapishana literacy through short courses, besides ongoing

advocacy for both teachers and parents (see also the mentioned need for ongoing advocacy meetings in Sections 3.3.3, 3.3.6, and 3.4.2).

3.3.3 Wapishana literacy trials in the 1990s

During the early 1990s, Frances Tracy retired and returned to the United States. In 1992 interest was shown by the Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) in restarting the programme, but this did not materialize because Beverly Dawson, the main resource person, had to travel back to the United States to visit her ailing mother. However, the linguistic workforce was augmented with the arrival of a literacy specialist, Charlotta Ruth who, in 1998, conducted the first Wapishana Writer's Workshop in Maruranau. This was to train interested adults to write, edit, and produce their own material.

It was during this time that I joined in the efforts at Wapishana literacy trials in schools. By this time the grass roots organization, Wapichan Wadauniinao Ati'o (WWA),[7] the Wapishana Literacy Association, was already born and provided the ideal basis to lobby for the resuscitation of Wapishana literacy programme in selected schools (see Appendix A for a history of the WWA). The rest of the account on Wapishana literacy trials is largely based on my own recollection and short written reports.

With the endorsement and approval of the Regional Education Officer, another three-week training seminar was conducted by Beverly Dawson and Charlotta Ruth in August 1998. This was sponsored by the Department of Education. Prior to this, only three schools in the district had established nursery schools. Now that each of the six villages had an established nursery school and a primary school, the Regional Education Officer instructed all twelve schools (six primary schools and six nursery schools) from the South Rupununi to participate in the seminar. Each nursery school was invited to send at least one teacher, while each primary school was to send one teacher who taught at the preparatory level. This training of nursery teachers meant that the programme would now begin at the nursery level instead at the primary level. Children at the nursery level were included because most of them started off formal schooling knowing mainly Wapishana as their first language.

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7 The WWA was established in 1997. It was one of the main societal stakeholders that supported the Wapishana literacy programme in the schools. See Appendix A for a retrospective account about its origin and growth.

In the six villages of the South Rupununi, there were twelve schools at the time—six nursery and six primary schools. With two teachers from each village, twelve teachers were expected to attend. The two teachers from Achawib did not attend for one reason or another; thus, there were ten teachers in all who attended. They first learned to read and write Wapishana and then practised teaching lessons as set out in the teaching manual. One feature of the training focused on the strategy of repeated readings of *Big Books,* which are described as "highly predictable stories with natural meaningful language in enlarged text formats that enable children in a group to see text more easily in the context of a group" (Hudelson 1994: 144). The teachers were thus trained in the making of Big Books, as well as using them to teach pre-reading skills such as predicting and reading from left to right. Some teachers involved parents in the making of new Big Books as a way of increasing parents' participation in their children's education.

Also added to the seminar was the training of local supervisors. As the supervisor-trainees, Roy O'Connell and I were selected by the trainers and asked to attend. We attended the seminar primarily as observers of the training sessions, but particularly as monitors of the teaching practice sessions. All this was preparing us for the role of the supervisors which mainly entailed visiting schools to observe teachers' lessons, give feedback, encourage the teachers, and provide written reports to the trainers. Roy O'Connell was at the time the head teacher of the Maruranau Primary School, while I was a trained teacher at the same school. As this particular supervision involved travelling to schools, taking time off from our regular jobs, and seeking permission from our immediate supervisors, we realized that even though it was not ideal, we could attempt to do it occasionally but not frequently. Both Roy and I agreed to monitor the schools on a voluntary basis. Also, as executive members of the WWA, this voluntary service provided us with the ideal means of being directly involved with the programme. Roy agreed to monitor Maruranau and Shea schools, since he lived in Maruranau and he could reach the other school by bicycle. I agreed to check on the other schools, as I had plans to own a motorcycle, which would enable me to travel further afield.

The teachers, having enjoyed the training, returned with great enthusiasm to begin the programme in the new term. In villages where the programme was implemented, parents were made aware of the pilot through parent–teacher meetings. It was reported that parents generally agreed with the programme, as they waited to see the benefits that could be gained by their children. As it turned out, Roy and I did visit the schools and found that the children especially enjoyed the big books, which the teachers made with simple Wapishana stories.

However, with successes came more logistical challenges as time progressed. It came as a disappointment that the programme in the Grade 1 classes faltered in half of the schools in the first year of implementation for various reasons. For example, the primary teacher from Karaudarnau was reassigned by the head teacher to another class within the school and therefore could not find time to do the programme. Whatever the reason for this action by the head teacher, it was certainly disconcerting for the programme. The primary teacher from Awarewaunau left the job for domestic reasons. Shea and Aishalton teachers were not consistent with the programme. Part of this inconsistency was due to teacher shortage in the schools so that the teacher had the extra burden of supervising another class or more classes. Another reason for some teachers was that some head teachers appeared to have reservations about the programme, never showing encouragement towards the teachers. Another teacher became discouraged and frustrated by a parent who opposed the programme. A parent, who was not a Wapishana speaker, told the teacher that the children should be taught in English, not Wapishana. The other reason was that the lessons in the primer were rarely completed as they seemed too many to complete within the given time within the school terms. Although the linguists suggested to teachers that they could modify the lessons, this was never done, as no one actually took the time to do it or they did not know exactly how to do it. Again, as the Regional Education Officers changed because of the retirement of the one who had strongly supported it, the programme eventually came to a standstill in most of the participating schools. Also, I felt that some teachers became even discouraged when after a while, Roy O'Connell and I were unable to visit them more regularly so that they could have the encouragement they needed. At the end of 1999, only Maruranau teachers showed indications of continuity of the programme. Because of this situation, I stopped my trips altogether to allow time for reflection and the possibility of regrouping of the trainers, the Ministry, and the WWA.

All of the above-mentioned challenges call for more concerted efforts on part of the various stakeholders if the desirable success of the programme is to be realized. To address such setbacks, the following is in order: prestige planning that involves a process whereby "an action plan must be developed aimed at developing an awareness of the potential benefits of sustainable language use (at whatever level) generally and for specific Functions in particular" (Lewis and Simons 2014; 167). According to the authors, prestige planning requires both internal advocacy and external advocacy:

> Just as internal advocacy may require a good deal of orientation, education, perspective building in order to give community members the information they need to make well-informed decisions about

> language development, so too external advocacy may include a large
> investment in forming and educating policy makers regarding the
> dynamics of identity and language, the importance of achieving
> sustainable level of use… (ibid. 2014: 168).

The above statement can be usefully applied not only to community
members and policy makers, but also to teachers and officers within the
Education sector who would need to be kept informed about their roles, as
well as others. The initial focus of the advocacy may be on educational
benefits to be derived through initial and sustainable use of the native
language, even as the children go on to use the dominant language in the
school system. Attention can also be made to the associated benefits such as
strengthened identity and heightened self-esteem and increased confidence.
In order to achieve these above-named benefits, some concrete actions need
to be followed by stakeholders: keep all informed on progress and
constraints of the programme, merge the programme in the regular timetable
in such a way that it is not perceived as burdensome by teachers, and make
the programme an integral part of the institutions so that it is continued
independent of outside funding and the goodwill or availability of certain
individuals.

3.3.4 Wapishana literacy trials in 2000 leading to the present

In 2000, the WWA submitted a proposal through the Ministry of Education
to the UNICEF Amazon Programme, which at the time was operating in
Guyana, to restart the Wapishana Reading Instruction Programme. The
WWA obtained approval from the Ministry, but on the condition that it
cause minimal disruption to the school's regular programme.
Notwithstanding this restriction imposed, we took the opportunity to
organize the seminar and accepted UNICEF's approved funding for two
three-day weekend workshops in 2001. Even though we, the WWA and the
missionary linguists, felt there was too little time approved for training of the
teachers, we organized the workshops as planned. Part of the planning
included inviting the relevant officials from Lethem and the capital city,
Georgetown. For the training, the best that could have been done under these
time limitations was for the trainers to conduct the seminar as if it were a
refresher course. While on the one hand, those teachers who were familiar
with the methods benefitted, the others who were new to the methods, were
unable to fully grasp the essentials of the training, with the result that some
teachers lacked understanding of the rationale behind the programme. Added
to that, the teachers seemed confused when one of the invited officers from
the Ministry of Education suggested that a feature of bilingual education to

be applied should be the mounting of bilingual labels of objects in the classroom. However, rather than translating words from one language to another in this way, the emphasis of the seminar was to teach reading and writing in Wapishana for children as an initial strategy.

For the latter of the two workshops, I invited all the head teachers so that they could benefit from a better understanding and appreciation of what the programme entailed, in order that in turn they could better support it. However, I saw only minimal success, as only a few of them attended.

At the training workshop a head teacher suggested that formal approval of the programme be stated by the Ministry of Education by way of a mandatory memorandum to the schools concerned, so that teachers feel supported and confident in carrying out the mandate. The suggestion was agreed by the other teachers, and this was communicated to the Ministry by way of a report on the workshop. Partly because the programme organizers never followed up on it, such a document from the Ministry was never been received. Nonetheless, the programme started in both the nursery and primary classes and continued in some villages for one or two years, albeit with similar logistical challenges.

I again volunteered to check on the schools, but then I was offered a British Chevening Scholarship at the University of Leeds, UK, to pursue a Master's Degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages for young learners. After I left in September 2002, there was no one to replace me to monitor the programme. Whilst I was in the UK, I maintained contact through the District Education Officer, who reported that most schools were not consistent with the programme. When I returned from the UK, I visited some villages where I was informed by a few teachers that they were still, although not systematically, using the Big Books and some Wapishana lessons because of the interest shown by children during the use of these materials.

What caused the schools to discontinue the programme was the introduction of the mandatory National Grade Two Assessment for which all schools had to prepare their children. At a seminar on Native Languages held in Georgetown, Guyana, in 2003, as a representative of the Wapishana community, I expressed apprehension about the fairness of requiring our Wapishana children to take this particular assessment, which was to be instituted in 2003, according to a circular from the then Chief Education Officer. I pointed out that the assessment, which was to be administered in English, was not fair to the particular set of children who were involved in the Wapishana reading and writing programme. These children, who were specially taught reading and writing Wapishana first, were still consolidating

such knowledge and skills and would now have started English literacy. Thus, they would not have been ready to take the national assessment in English. In this respect, I suggested that these children be exempted from National Grade Two Assessment or take the assessment in Wapishana instead. They can take assessment in English reading and comprehension at a later level after they would have proceeded with English literacy. To date, we have not received a response from the Ministry. Since the assessment was in English, most of the teachers who were especially trained to teach Wapishana reading and writing reverted to teaching initial reading and writing in English.

3.3 5 The benefits and challenges of the Wapishana literacy trials

From the perspective of the WWA which represents the local community, the above account of the early trials at Wapishana literacy seems to have political, communal, structural, educational, and logistical dimensions with several stakeholder groups being involved.

In this section, the main benefits and challenges are drawn and summarized under the following stakeholder groups: government, non-governmental organizations (NGO), the programme, teachers, children, and parents. This is so done for the guidance of future implementers of similar programmes. Accordingly, I enumerate the main benefits and challenges under the following headings: government-related (Subsection 3.3.5.1), NGO-related (Subsection 3.3.5.2), community-related (Subsection 3.3.5.3), programme-related (Subsection 3.3.5.4), teacher-related (Subsection 3.3.5.5), children-related (Subsection 3.3.5.6), and parent-related (Subsection 3.3.5.7).

3.3.5.1   Government-related

The first part of this subsection highlights the benefits in terms of how some representatives of the Ministry of education responded positively towards the programme. The second part highlights the challenges in terms of how some actions of the representatives seemed to have caused the programme to falter somewhat. The remainder of the subsection will follow the same pattern.

Some benefits included the following:

1.   The Ministry of Education, through the Regional Education Officers, capitalized on the linguists' technical expertise which they contributed voluntarily.

2.   The education officials showed support by approving funding for most of the training workshops and for printing copies of two booklets of "Amerindian stories".

3.   Through their attendance and speeches at the first workshop in 2001, the Regional Education Officer, the Regional Chairman and the Hinterland Coordinator provided further encouragement to the teachers.

Some challenges included the following:

1.   Education officers at the regional level changed; those who strongly endorsed the programme were replaced by some who lacked understanding of the purpose of the programme, thereby showing a lack of consistent support from the Ministry of Education.

2.   The Ministry's restriction that the programme cause minimal disruption to the school's curriculum resulted in the trainers deciding to implement Wapishana reading three times a week rather than on a daily basis. This led partly to most teachers being unable to complete the programme.

3.   Some teachers were confused by some of the government officials' comments that seemed to suggest that they should translate words from one language to the other using bilingual labels or words, when this was not the emphasis of the programme.

4.   The alteration of education policy that mandated all primary schools participate in the English-medium National Grade Two Assessment caused further confusion and uncertainty among teachers regarding how to handle the Wapishana programme and the National Grade 2 Assessment in English.

5.   As a result of the above, most teachers stopped the Wapishana programme completely in order to concentrate on teaching the children in English.

3.3.5.2   NGO-related

The NGOs involved were mainly the UNICEF Amazon Programme and SIL International. It must be noted that SIL International, one of the NGOs

involved, has links with some evangelical churches to which the missionary linguists were associated. These churches established themselves after having Wapishana followers in villages that were traditionally Catholic. Mainly as a result of the differences of the ways of worship between village followers of the different churches, tensions were created. Notwithstanding these religious tensions in some of these villages, the leadership of these faith-based organizations have come together to play a vital role in assisting with awakening the conscience of the communities to support a mother tongue-based education for their children. As recently in 2015, the Catholic Church through the Jesuit Missions became involved, beginning from the advocacy meeting (see Section 3.4.1). Representatives of these faith-based organizations have made presentations at the advocacy meeting mentioned above and had a further meeting of representatives (see Section 3.4.2). Furthermore, representatives of the Jesuit Missions have met with officials of the Ministry of Education to explain the church's interests and the role it might play in the Wapishana-bilingual education programme advocated. As an Indigenous researcher, I have borne witness to the efficacy of their advocacy of which I was a part.

Some benefits included the following:

1. The efforts received international attention from the Canadian-based organization (CODE) and the UNICEF Amazon Programme, with the former expressing interest in funding programme-related workshops and the latter funding the last two workshops.

2. The UNICEF Amazon Programme representative, who also attended the first of the workshops in 2001, provided further technical assistance via an international consultant who partly facilitated the last workshop.

3. Through their linguists and literacy specialist, SIL International provided consistent training of teachers and overall guidance of the literacy trials from the inception.

The main challenge was the limited duration of the seminars as stipulated by the UNICEF Amazon Programme (namely over two weekends due to funding limitations) pressured trainers and organizers to rush through the training that should have been conducted in two weeks.

3.3.5.3   Community-related

The community was represented by the WWA as one of the stakeholder groups involved in the programme.

Some benefits included the following:

1. Subsequent workshops to restart the programme in 2001 were successfully proposed and coordinated by the WWA, a community-based organization.

2. The involvement of the WWA as a representative group of the community ensured the support of the programme at the grass-roots level.

3. Further involvement of the community was ensured when local supervisors were integrated into the programme from the late 1990s.

Some challenges included the following:

1. The visits by the local supervisors mainly were irregular because of the full-time jobs we held.

2. When I left for the University of Leeds in 2002, there was no replacement from the community as a local supervisor to monitor and encourage the teachers and to provide bimonthly reports with updates on the programme.

3.3.5.4   Programme-related

This subsection highlights some of the benefits and challenges resulting from the interactions of the different agents, such as the linguists as facilitators, education officers, the teachers, and the children.

Some benefits included the following:

1. In terms of the programme, there was a willingness to cooperate between the Ministry of Education, the non-governmental organizations, and the local community.

2. The fact that the foreign linguists were locally based made them readily available for collaboration and monitoring of the programme throughout their stay.

3. The linguists developed and tested the orthography of the Wapishana language, which became the basis of the primers and teaching manuals.

4. The linguists concluded that the same materials used with the adult Wapishanas could also be used with the children, paving the way for the designing of materials to be used in schools.

5. There were certain gains observed in the pilot school, particularly the class that began their initial reading in Wapishana:

    (a) This initial Wapishana-reading class, when tested in English reading in the second year, could read at the same level of English reading as the control group (class) that only had English reading; this class also surpassed the control group in comprehension skills.

    (b) The child who came from an English-speaking home and who was in the initial-Wapishana-reading class performed the best in reading and comprehension skills, suggesting that children with English-speaking background may not be impeded educationally.

6. Previous experience in Wapishana reading seemed to have had a positive effect on the performance of children at a later class, as was mentioned in the case of the Grade 6 class (see Section 3.3.2).

7. The programme was followed at least three times a week so as not to disrupt the school's curriculum as stipulated by the Ministry.

8. The Regional Education Officers, linguists, and local community representatives (including teachers) pressed on for the programme even when it became dormant several times.

9. The programme was eventually extended to other schools within the district.

Some challenges included the following:

1. Most schools were never able to complete the primer lessons because of time constraints; it therefore appeared that there were too many lessons to be completed in the stipulated time.

2. Although the facilitators suggested that trained teachers modify the manual, that was never done; the manual still appeared to be overloaded with lessons.

3. The Grade 2 class seemed to have had minimal exposure to reading in their L1 because in the second term they were expected to switch to English and at the same time still continue in the Wapishana lessons; this seemed harsh on the students in terms of coping with materials in both languages.

4. The programme went dormant several times over a period of years.

3.3.5.5   Teacher-related

This subsection points out how the teachers responded positively towards the programme and how other developments within the school system affected their performance.

Some benefits included the following:

1. Most teachers enjoyed the training sessions in Wapishana literacy and the methods used to execute the programme; they were often enthusiastic when they returned to their schools.

2. Teachers learned new methods of teaching, adding variety to their teaching strategies.

3. Teachers who enjoyed seeing children learn and who were also excited about the programme created positive, happy learners.

4. Teachers felt encouraged by the visits of the local supervisors and the trainers.

Some challenges included the following:

1. Some teachers, who left for two years to obtain trained teacher status, caused the programme to be disrupted as there were no others to immediately replace them.

2. Others, who were reassigned to other class levels by head teachers, were unable to continue teaching the Wapishana lessons.

3. Others left the job for domestic reasons, creating teacher shortages for some time and causing the head teacher to shift teachers around.

4. Most head teachers did not attend the seminar to which they were invited, missing out on crucial information related to how they may support the programme.

5. An official letter from the ministry as a directive to schools to follow the programme was never forthcoming.

6. Some teachers felt that teaching Wapishana reading was overwhelming or burdensome, an extra subject into their schedule.

3.3.5.6   Children-related

This subsection highlights how the children from the different villages responded to the Wapishana literacy lessons.

Some benefits included the following:

1.   Children who attended the lessons were able to learn to read in their native language and to enjoy reading at the same time.

2.   By understanding what they read in Wapishana and enjoying it, they approached reading in English with the same expectations; hence, they performed better in understanding English stories or passages and did better in their examinations (see also Chapter 4 for an overview of scientific studies on this topic).

Some challenges included the following:

1.   Some children were unable to succeed in the programme because they sometimes missed lessons, due to illness and difficult socio-economic situations at home.

2.   Only the early classes of the schools benefitted from the Wapishana classes, leaving the higher classes without the opportunity to become literate in their language.

3.3.5.7   Parent-related

This subsection highlights how the parents from the different villages responded towards the programme.

Some benefits included the following:

1.   Where parents were encouraged to participate in activities, such as making Big Books, they became more involved in their children's education.

2.   Most parents supported the programme as not many spoke against it at parent–teacher meetings.

Some challenges included the following:

1.   Some parents, especially those who spoke to their children in English at home, opposed the programme and explicitly told teachers so, resulting in teachers becoming discouraged to teach the programme.

2.   Although there were some meetings with parents to inform them about how they may support the programme, more organized meetings were needed at the village level to generate public awareness and support.

3.3.6 Summary and discussion

The picture that emerges from the benefits is the importance of initiating and pursuing partnerships that can lead to certain successes of the language programme, such as improved comprehension skills and better examination results of the learners. Where the government lacked the technical expertise, they sought the assistance of skilled foreign linguists whose work on Wapishana orthography formed the basis of the course design and materials. Some of the materials, especially for the teaching of Wapishana literacy, could be considered for reuse instead of reinventing an entirely new set of materials. As a result of the success stories of the children, together with the enthusiasm seen in the participating teachers, the decision-makers were motivated to restart the programme each time it became dormant. The motivation to resuscitate the programme was partly due to the involvement of the community-based organization, the Wapichan Wadauniiano Ati'o (WWA), thus further sharing the decision-making process. However, in spite of the above-mentioned factors that led to the advantages, there were various challenges, which are now summarized below.

Several reasons could be suggested for the challenges that arose. Benson (2004: 4) stated that when advantages are not experienced in literacy programmes such as the Wapishana one, it could be that some basic human needs of children are not met and that the programme is not meaningfully integrated into the mainstream curriculum. In the case of the former, children's absence from school can be related to socio-economic and health factors, which prevented children from regular attendance, contributing to their inability to complete the programme. In the case of the latter, it was clear that aspects of the programme were not sustained. Causal factors could be (1) a lack of awareness regarding the importance of the programme by major players; (2) a lack of optimal communication among major players (3) a lack of contingency plans; (4) the absence of an official educational policy for the use of local languages as languages of instruction in schools; and (5) a lack of explicit teaching of cultural topics.

A lack of awareness of the importance of the programme is evident in some of the major players, such as parents, teachers, head teachers and education officers. As education officers leave and are replaced by others, the persons responsible for overseeing the programme should inform these officers about the programme, update them on its progress and invite them to advocacy meetings. Head teachers and newly recruited teachers should likewise also be guided. In addition, a series of advocacy meetings about the rewards and benefits of the programme should have been pursued as a means of informing and motivating parents, teachers and officers. A one-off advocacy meeting is inadequate to allay concerns parents and others might

have about the particular programme. Negative attitudes and opposition from some parents, teachers and head teachers may stem from inadequate information. Orientation and advocacy meetings would help all concerned to be better informed so that they make better-informed and positive judgements about the programme.

The lack of optimal communication created anxiety and unease among some teachers, especially with respect to receiving encouragement from head teachers and information from the Ministry. Thus, the working environment frequently did not facilitate or encourage active participation on the teachers' part. A better rapport should have been in place between teachers and head teachers to allay their concerns. Likewise, a better channel of communication should have been established and maintained between teachers and the Ministry of Education for dissemination of information in a timely fashion. Also, the lack of optimal communication may have been the underlying reason for why the suggestion to modify the teaching manual was not acted upon. A frequent check on this by the persons responsible could have resulted in work done in this regard. Otherwise, delayed information hampered the programme's progress.

The other reason that could have accounted for some of the challenges is a lack of contingency plans. When teachers left or resigned, a temporary arrangement could have been followed to ensure that the programme continued. For example, a rotation of the specially trained teachers to teach the affected class could have been implemented.

The absence of an official educational policy for the use of the native languages as languages of instruction in schools seems to have contributed to certain actions and non-actions of some players. First, there was the Ministry's restriction that the programme should cause minimal disruption to the school's curriculum. Under this condition, it is not surprising that some teachers seemed to be overwhelmed by the Wapishana literacy programme in the sense that they saw it as an added burden to their already packed work load. The curriculum should be reviewed by the Ministry in collaboration with other partner stakeholders, such as the NGOs, teachers and parents. The resulting decision, should take into account concerns by the teachers so that a standard time-table that incorporates the bilingual programme is formulated and agreed upon. Second, some head teachers may have felt restricted in their authority to fully support the programme without the related mandatory letter they requested from the Ministry of Education. The non-receipt of such an official document seemed to have resulted in these head teachers de-prioritizing the programme as seen in their non-participation at the workshop to which they were invited. Such a document would have enabled them to follow through more confidently. Third, at the

community level, there seemed to be a restriction by the Ministry of Education's silence to our request to have our programme-participating Wapishana children approved for exemption from the National Grade Two Assessment. Such silence contributed to the standstill of the programme. Therefore, an important part of the local leadership is to advocate for an explicit educational policy to be in place. Such advocacy is reflective of language activism described as a force for social change which may result in changes in language policy, whether official, community or family-based (Combs and Penfield 2012: 463). However, for changes in language policy to be made official, language activism may entail advocacy at the higher levels of the governmental hierarchy for the related constitutional provision or statement. In the wider context, given that "much of language policy focuses primarily on official recognition of dominant languages within a nation-state, a growing number of scholars have turned their attention to the "negative space" in the policy environment taking note of the failure of much policy legislation to provide and protect a favourable environment for local languages" (Lewis and Simons 2014: 171). If such a favourable environment can be created through legislative provision, it will enable a fuller-scale integration of the mother tongue-based bilingual education programmes in the formal school system of Indigenous villages.

Finally, the early trials of the Wapishana instruction programme lacked the explicit teaching of the culture of the children. Given that most of the characters in the stories of the big books and reading material were culturally familiar to the children, further teaching of aspects of their culture would have been in order. In this sense, the children's cultural heritage would be much more valuable inside the curriculum than outside it. Furthermore, "Education should value the children's rich heritage passed down from their elders and so enable children to be proud of themselves, their community and to become proud members of their nation" (Smith 2012: 8). On this note, the explicit teaching of aspects of their culture teaches more about their language as well as taps into their prior experiences of what they already know. By expanding their knowledge and skills on the various aspects of their culture, the children are also enabled to have a sense of belonging and identity. In this way, as young people, they can contribute at home and to the wider community as they bring linguistic, cultural and intellectual resources to their nation (ibid. 2012: 8).

3.4   Advocacy for the reintroduction of mother tongue-based education

This section describes the progress made by the WWA in the advocacy efforts for a Wapishana–English bilingual education programme. At the same time, this section also points to the crucial role played by the WWA as the main societal stakeholder.

After a series of meetings with teachers, representatives of the Jesuit Missions and UNICEF Guyana in 2014, the WWA successfully submitted a proposal to the Jesuit Missions which provided funding for two advocacy meetings. In the following subsections, I describe the advocacy meeting (Subsection 3.4.1), the representatives' meeting (Subsection 3.4.2), follow up activities (Subsection 3.4.3), and the response from the Ministry (Subsection 3.4.4). I then provide the summary (Subsection 3.4.5).

3.4.1 The advocacy meeting

The meeting, which was held on 25 April 2015, had the following goals: (a) to raise awareness among teachers and parents in South Rupununi of the benefits of bilingual primary level education for Wapishana-speaking children and families; (b) to identify a group of competent and committed individuals to work on the development of an appropriate bilingual curriculum and lesson materials; and (3) to advocate for the piloting of bilingual primary education in Maruranau.

Seventy-four persons, representing four villages, attended. There were twelve representatives from various agencies: (a) four officers, including the Chief Education Officer of the Ministry of Education; (b) one officer from UNICEF, Guyana; (c) two missionaries from the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL, International); (c) one representative from Wycliffe, Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago); (d) one representative from Fe y Alegría, Brazil; and (e) three priests from the Jesuit Missions, Guyana. The participants from the villages were asked to give their expectations of the project. Examples of participants' expectations included the following:

1.   To learn more about bilingual education so that as teachers and parents, we can be more informed;

2.   To preserve and strengthen the mother tongue (reading and writing);

3.   To facilitate/advance the learning process especially at nursery education;

4. To foster greater parent input or participation in the education of their children;

5. To gain the support of the Ministry of Education for piloting the programme;

6. To advance literacy and to improve performance especially at grades 6 and 9;

7. To have rights to first language education and let it blossom;

8. To make citizens proud of their language and identity; and

9. To establish our own Wapishana University in the long term.

Presentations were part of the meeting. First, the Fe y Alegría representative's presentation focused on "The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" which also included a video on "Securing the rights of minority and Indigenous children". Second, one of the Catholic priests presented two videos, which focused on the pedagogical advantages of a mother tongue-based approach whilst increasing pride in their culture and fostering more self- esteem on their part. Third, the Wycliffe representative shared two videos which depicted experiences in minority language contexts of Asian countries, pointing out that although every minority language situation is unique, the same principles could be adapted and applied to the Wapishana context. Fourth, one of the SIL representatives, who worked as a missionary among the Wapishana for over forty years, shared her experiences in Wapishana biliteracy work in some schools, which included past constraints and past benefits.

After the presentations, the head teachers of the Maruranau primary and nursery schools each shared some challenges teachers faced in implementing the national curriculum at their schools. Some of the challenges identified were as follows:

(i) There seems to be a "language barrier" among children in understanding teachers' instructions in English; the learner is stifled at an early age;

(ii) Children lack full expression in English;

(iii) Some aspects of the texts are culturally irrelevant; and

(iv) The Diagnostic Assessment in English at the nursery level is impracticable.

They also offered some suggestions:

(a) Textbooks need to be modified to suit locality;

(b)   Parents are in need of workshops to participate more fully in their children's schooling;

(c)   There should be a School-based Literacy Committee; and

(e)   There should be an educational policy on mother tongue-based instruction for the schools.

Next, I shared my proposed developmental phases that the programme could follow, hinged on a basic premise in teaching methodology: the progression from the "known" to the "unknown". Here, the teacher extends the children's existing knowledge and skills. Once the new knowledge and skills are mastered, they in turn become the basis of mastering yet newer knowledge and skills. In the case of the South Rupununi, where the majority of children are native Wapishana speakers and the clear majority use English for the first time on entering the school system, the teaching of English presents two unknowns: the English language and reading and writing skills. If the child has already developed considerable skills (L1 oral) in their first language, these can be developed in the school context. First-language literacy (L1 written) is one such development, one such "unknown". Simultaneously, oral English (L2 oral) is introduced and gradually develop basic skills in English. Only once these English skills have become a "known", it is time to move on to English literacy (L2 written) as the next stage of development. In terms of developmental phases then, the children are taken to from the "Known" to the "Unknown" and may be described as follows:

(1)   L1 Oral (Known)   to   L1 Written
                                            + L2 Oral (Unknown)

(2)   L1 Written   to   L2 Written (Unknown)
       + L2 Oral (Known)

Children then, begin learning to read and write in a language they already know rather than learning to read and write in a language they are learning simultaneously. The developmental phases described above can be incorporated into Malone's (2005: 76) four general stages of strong bilingual education programmes in culturally diverse communities: Stage 1 is about beginning literacy (for children), focusing on oral language development; Stage 2 on gaining fluency in reading and writing the L1, which is also used as the medium of instruction; Stage 3 on bridging to L2 literacy, only after the learners have attained fluency in L1 literacy

and are gaining confidence in using L2 orally; and Stage 4 on continuing learning in both their first and second languages for ongoing education. An example of how the four general stages can be further incorporated into a progression plan is illustrated in Section 4.6.1.

Next, I shared a proposed time line for the advancement of the mother tongue-based approach in the schools, which the WWA was willing to work with. On the whole, there was a general feeling of satisfaction and enthusiasm as everyone left the meeting. Also, forty-seven of the participants signed a pledge of support. As a follow-up activity, for the benefit of other senior officers of The Ministry of Education, The Chief Education Officer (CEO) invited me, the WWA coordinator, to give a presentation on the proposed project in the capital of our country, Georgetown. The presentation was generally welcomed but was proposed for further discussion at a later date. In the following, I give highlights of the other meetings.

3.4.2 The representatives' meeting

The nature of the follow-up meeting was changed because of the following two main reasons:

1. At the first meeting, representatives of UNICEF, Jesuits, SIL International and the WWA perceived that there was unanimous support for the proposed project; thus, it was agreed that the decision as to the kind of meeting to be held next should be based on subsequent discussions with interested partner-organizations; and,

2. Based on the advice from UNICEF, Guyana, it was agreed that the next meeting should not yet involve schoolteachers, pending formal approval of the proposed pilot project from the Ministry of Education.

The meeting among representatives of the above-mentioned partner-organizations was held at St. Ignatius village, in Region 9, on 12 September 2015. The WWA especially hosted Dr. Diana Weber, a senior literacy and education consultant from the U.S.A, who came especially for the meeting. The meeting was to clarify roles of the various partner-organizations in the intended project. Instead, other topics were discussed: the formation of a core team to spearhead the project, the type of programme to be promoted and the Wapishana community involvement. In addition, it was emphasized that advocacy efforts should be ongoing and be directed not only at the parents, but also at the teachers including those not directly involved in the mother tongue-based

approach. For upkeep of the momentum, some follow-up activities were agreed upon.

3.4.3 Follow-up activities

As a representative of the WWA, I agreed to prepare a draft Resource-Based Management (RBM) document and share it by email with other participants for input. I began work on the RBM with WWA colleagues Roy O'Connell, Orville Gomes and Mureen Aguilar on the 14th and the 16th of September, 2015, after which I contacted Dr. Diana Weber in relation to the document. After receiving her feedback on the first draft of the RBM, I completed the second draft and shared it with the others on 15 October 2015. On the 3 November 2015, we received feedback from the Jesuits to the effect that they were not in a position to make a sufficiently strong contribution to any further dialogue with the Ministry about bilingual education at this stage. They felt that they needed to have more time to develop the work of Fe y Alegría in Guyana. This came both as surprise and disappointment to me as initially, the Jesuits had indicated that they were serious about entering into partnership to make bilingual education for the Wapishana children a reality. I speculated that the Jesuits' stance at this time had partly to do the delayed feedback from the Ministry of Education.

On 14 November 2015, the WWA representatives again met, concluding that the RBM was feasible, even though no budget was included since we felt that the Ministry of Education should have an input (See Appendix B for a copy of the RBM document). We then submitted the RBM document to the Ministry, through the UNICEF representative.

3.4.4 Response from the Ministry

At the invitation of the Chief Education Officer, I attended a short meeting in Georgetown on 21 March 2016. In the presence of the UNICEF representative, who was also invited, the Chief Education Officer informed me that in relation to our advocacy for a Wapishana-based approach to teaching Wapishana children, they had approved a five-year pilot project. Further, positions for consultants were to be advertised for two main activities: training of teachers to teach English as

a second language and developing of a fitting curriculum. Further notice on the launching of the project was to be communicated at a later date. This long-awaited response was obviously welcome news which we, the WWA, eagerly communicated to the other NGO partners.

However, after several months without seeing any advertisement for the consultants, we sensed that the Ministry's plans were stalled. This became more apparent with the announced change of the Chief Education Officer shortly afterwards. Only after April 2016, when the Ministry of Education launched a Commission of Inquiry into the state of education in the country, was the topic of bilingual education for the Wapishana again brought to the fore. In response to the Commission of Inquiry for submissions from the public, the Jesuit Missions wrote a letter to the COI on our behalf (those who met at St. Ignatius), explaining how we envisioned education for Wapishana children in Region 9. This led to a series of meetings between with the Jesuits, Wapishana representatives, Ministry officials and some NGO representatives in August, October, and December of that year. The culmination of meetings resulted in the Ministry of Education supporting the idea of a pilot project. However, rather than pursuing the approach for the advertisement of consultants, they opted for the formation of a core team of representatives from the various parties/organizations, one of which would provide a consultant. This led to planning stage of the project.

3.4.5 Summary

The first major advocacy meeting on 25 April 2015, produced positive results. The meeting received international attention in the attendance of resource people from India, Bolivia, Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States. Maruranau village, in which the major advocacy meeting took place, expressed its openness and enthusiasm to the idea of the sequential approach to literacy.

The second meeting on 12 September 2015, provided suggestions as to how the planning process could unfold. The coordinator of the WWA was the chief local collaborator on the ground with whom the Jesuits, UNICEF, SIL International, and the Ministry of Education have been engaged throughout the period of negotiation.

After some follow-up activities, which mainly involved more interaction between representatives of stakeholder groups and the

preparation of documents such as the RBM, the pilot project was approved by the Ministry of Education for a period of five years. However, plans to begin were stalled mainly because of the change of the Chief Education Officer. As such, the wait to begin on the project took longer than anticipated.

In sum, the collaboration among the stakeholder representatives has helped the WWA gain the acceptance and confidence of the community and other partner organizations. By building a body of adults literate in their mother tongue, the Wapishana people now possess the capacity from which knowledge and skills could be drawn to help facilitate the bilingual education project. In light of the bilingual education project being pursued, the next section moves to the highlighting of some issues in the Wapishana writing system that the children must deal with at some point in their formal schooling.

3.5   Orthography

This section presents an overview of the current Wapishana orthographic convention and some issues that continue to pose challenges for the Wapishana. This overview is of relevance for this study in several ways. Firstly, part of the bilingual education programme includes the introduction of some written Wapishana words and letters to the young learners. Secondly, in order for this to be done successfully, teachers should not only be able to speak the language, but also be able to read and write it. Thirdly, teachers should be aware of the spelling issues and the decisions taken so that these are presented correctly to the children from the outset. Lastly, the teachers would be exposed to the particular Wapishana orthographic conventions in the specially produced materials they have to use with the children.

The language of the Wapishana people of Guyana was given keen interest by some non-Wapishana during the early 1900s. Their interest partly resulted in written word lists, examples of which included those of Farabee (1918: 196–274) and Cary-Elwes (in 1919, 1922, and 1923, cited in Butt Colson and Morton 1982: 216), explorer and missionary, respectively. Subsequently, other studies of the language were carried out, resulting in short dictionaries by Keary (1947) and Tracy (1972), missionary and missionary-linguist, respectively. There is also a study done on Wapishana by the Brazilian linguist dos Santos (2006). This interest in the writing of Wapishana reflects the attempts by explorers, missionaries, and linguists at representing the language for their own religious or academic motives.

It seems that most of these documents could not be easily accessed by the Wapishana people, except the dictionary by Tracy (1972), which she made available to the villages. It was Tracy's dictionary of 1972 that became the basis of the current Wapishana writing system in Guyana. Since then, limited literature was published and distributed among the speakers of Wapishana. Besides calendars, there were booklets of folk tales or stories, easy reading books, and other biblical texts. An updated dictionary (Wapishana Language Project 2000) was given official approval by the community-based organization, the Wapichan Waudauniinao Ati'o (WWA). With Wapishana literacy courses coming into effect from the 1970s and onwards, more booklets of short stories and a translated version of the New Testament (Kaimana'o Tominkaru Paradan 2012) were published. The writers of the aforementioned literature had their own spelling systems of writing Wapishana. This brings us to the notion of orthography, which is defined as "consisting of the normative spelling conventions of a language, including letter sequencing, capitalization, spacing and punctuation" (Coulmas 1999: 137). Based on this definition of orthography, it is a representation of a language. Since most Wapishana live in English-speaking Guyana, the way Wapishana is written was modelled on English orthography as closely as possible (Tracy 1972: 84).

However, largely because the current Wapishana orthography was endorsed by the community based-organization, the Wapichan Wadauniinao Ati'o (WWA: Wapishana Literacy Association, see Appendix A), most Wapishana readers and writers have referred to the orthography as a model to follow. This is in alignment with the point concerning the choice of script made by Sebba (2009: 39): that it is possible for groups of language users to iconify script systems to create a common identity or seek to create solidarity among them. In a later publication, Sebba (2012: 4) reiterates that the choice of script is usually made by the language users collectively. In the Wapishana situation, the choice of script can be ascribed to the WWA-offered literacy classes, which in turn produced, in each of the villages, Wapishana readers and writers of their own short stories. Beyond that, the leadership of the villages has preferred the orthography used by the WWA writers. Therefore, the widespread use of the orthography among the villages implicitly helps to standardize the orthography. Despite all this, there are several issues that need attention before decisions can be made based on consensus.

In order to understand the orthography, we will first discuss the phoneme inventory in 3.5.1. In 3.5.2, I discuss the present orthography. Finally, in 3.5.3, I will present some issues that pose difficulties for teaching the orthography.

3.5.1 Phonemic inventory

Carter and Nunan (2001: 224) define a phoneme as a speech sound that is distinctive within the sound system of a particular language and therefore, makes contrasts in meaning. Phonemes are generally divided into consonant and vowel inventories. The Wapishana consonant inventory is presented in Subsection 3.5.1.1, and the vowel inventory in Subsection 3.5.1.2.

3.5.1.1   Consonants

Seidlhofer (2001: 56) describes the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as the "universally agreed transcription system for the accurate representation of the sounds of any language". Using IPA symbols, the inventory of the consonant phonemes is based on an analysis of words spoken by Wapishana on the Brazilian of the border. Dos Santos (2006: 32) classifies seventeen consonant phonemes as follows in Table 5.

Table 5. Consonant phonemes based on words spoken by Brazilian Wapishana (dos Santos 2006: 32).

		labial	alveolar	retroflex	palatal	velar	glottal
plosive	voiceless	p	t			k	ʔ
	voiced	b		ɖ		g	
affricate	voiceless				tʃ		
fricative	voiceless		s		ʃ		
	voiced			ʐ			
nasal	voiced	m	n		ɲ		
flap	voiced			ɽ			
approximant	voiced	w			j		

Most of the phonemes in the Guyanese Wapishana system are similar to dos Santos', but there are slight differences, which will be highlighted. The

Guyanese Wapishana phoneme system that I present here, with the assistance of Dr Martine Bruil, is based on Tracy's (1972) and dos Santos' (2006) analysis of Wapishana words. To describe the differences, I will use angular brackets <…> to show the orthographic representation or examples, slashes /… / to indicate phonemes, square brackets […] to show the phonetic representation of words, and inverted commas '…' to indicate the meaning. The empty dots under the vowels indicate that they are voiceless.

Firstly, the voiced labial plosive /b/ is analysed as a phoneme for Brazilian Wapishana. but it is not for Guyanese Wapishana. Instead, the Guyanese Wapishana system uses the voiced implosive labial plosive /ɓ/ as in <b> <badi> ['ɓadi̥] 'cassava bread'. Secondly, the voiced retroflex plosive /ɖ/ presented in the Brazilian system (Table 5) seems not to be used in Guyanese Wapishana system (Table 6). Instead, there are possibly three varieties of the alveolar voiced plosives that exist in the Guyanese system as shown in Table 6. There is the voiced alveolar plosive /d/, as in <d> <dawatan> [dawa'tan] 'search'; the voiced implosive alveolar plosive /ɗ/, as in <d> <daari> ['ɗɑːɽi̥] 'back mud'; and possibly an additional voiced implosive /ɗʲ/, as in <dy> <dyuwuza> [ɗʲɨ'wɨza̯] 'ité palm'. Lastly, there is another phoneme in Guyanese Wapishana that is not described for Brazilian Wapishana, as shown in Table 5: the voiceless retroflex fricative /ʂ/ as in <s> <shawarau> [ʂawɑ'ɽaɨ] 'a type of palm'. Because of these differences, the Guyanese Wapishana consonant inventory as represented in Table 6 below shows a total of 19 phonemes.

Table 6. Consonant phonemes based on words
spoken by Guyanese Wapishana.

		labial	alveolar	retroflex	palatal	velar	glottal
plosive	voiceless	p	t			k	ʔ
	voiced		d			g	
	voiced implosive	ɓ	ɗ	ɗ ʲ			
affricate	voiceless				tʃ		
fricative	voiceless		s	ʂ			
	voiced			ʐ			
nasal	voiced	m	n		ɲ		
flap	voiced			ɽ			
approximant	voiced	w			j		

The consonant phonemes /d/, /ɗ/, /ɗ ʲ/, and /ʂ/ with example words were already presented above. The following (near) minimal pairs will further show the differences between these phonemes. For the first pair, we have <d> /d/ <paradan> [paɽa'dan] 'speak' and <d> /ɗ/ <paradan> [paɽa'ɗan] 'undercut bush'. Secondly, we have <d> /ɗ/ <dakotan>[ɗako'tan] 'call' and <dy> /ɗʲ/ <dyukotan> [ɗʲoko'tan] 'crack'. Thirdly, we have <sh> /ʂ/ <shaabatan> [ʂa:ɓa'tan] 'stop'.

3.5.1.2   Vowels

The Wapishana vowel system comprises four short vowels with corresponding long vowels as presented in the Table 7, below, according to dos Santos (2006: 34).

Table 7. Vowel phonemes (From dos Santos 2006: 34).

	Front	middle	back
high	i, iː	ɨ, ɨː	u, uː
low		a, aː	

The vowels are the same in both Brazilian and Guyanese Wapishana. The following examples provide minimal pairs for the vowel phonemes. Again, the angular brackets, slashes, square brackets, and commas are used where appropriate. The empty dots under the vowels in the phonetic representation indicate that the vowels are voiceless.

(1)   a.   <a> /a/ <dawa> ['ɗawḁ] 'white clay'

      b.   <u> /ɨ/ <duwu> ['ɗɨwɨ̥] 'salt'

(2)   a.   <a> /a/ <man> ['man] 'maybe'

      b.   <i> /i/<min> ['min] 'wax root'

(3)   a.   <i> /i/<kiwan> [ki'wʲan] 'return'

      b.   <o> /u/ <kowan> [ku'wan] 'a type of fish'

(4)   a.   <ii> /iː/ <ii> [iː] 'in' or 'at'

      b.   <oo> /uː/ <oo> [uː] 'yes' or 'or'

      c.   <uu> /ɨː/ <uu> [ɨː] 'name' or 'juice' or 'gravy'

The pronunciation of <o> sometimes fluctuates between /u/ and /o/, 12 so <o> is used as the basic form.

Another type of vowel is nasal vowels. Tracy (1972: 84) and dos Santos (2006: 63) treat nasality as a suprasegmental feature. Since nasal vowels are contrastive in some contexts in Wapishana, they need to be represented in the orthography. The following are examples of nasal vowels contrasted with oral vowels.

(5)   a.   <ã> /ã/ <ã'ãi> [ã'ãi] or <hã'ãi> [hã'ãi] 'okay, all right'

      b.   <a> /a/ <awaru> [a'waɾɨ̥] 'wind'

(6)   a.   <i> /ĩ/ <ĩnao> [ĩ'nʲao] 'they, them'

      b.   <i> /i/ <iripi> [i'ɾipɨ̥] 'a type of fruit'

(7)   a.   <ũ>/ĩ/ <zũũ> [z�̃ː] 'sound of a motor vehicle' or 'sound of the
              hummingbird as it flies'

       b.   <u> /ɨ/ <uruu> [ɨ'ɽɨː] 'he, him, his, its'

(8)   a.   <õ> /ũ/ <õgaru> [ũ'gaɽɨ̥] 'I, me'

       b.   <o> /u/ <oroo> [u'ɽuː] 'she, her'

The commonly used elements consisting of nasal vowels /ĩ/ and /õ/ are the
abbreviated forms of the pronouns <ĩnao> [ĩ'nʲao] 'they, them' and <õgaru>
[ũ'gaɽɨ̥] 'I, me', respectively. The nasal vowels /ã/ and /ĩ/ are rarely used. As
mentioned above, /ã/ is used in the word <ã'ãi> 'okay, right' as in example
(5a); /ĩ/ can be used in the word <zũũ> for a sound that is onomatopoeic as
in example (7a).

       There are diphthongs which need to be accounted for in the
orthography. The commonly used ones are the following:

(9)   a.   <ai> /ai/ <aishara> [ai'ʂaɽḁ] 'a type of liana used for traditional
              fishing'

(10)   b.   <ao> /ao/ <aotaka> [ao'takḁ] 'guava'

(11)   c.   <au> /aɨ/ <baudokoru> [ɓaɨɗo'koɽɨ̥] 'jaguar'

3.5.2 The present orthography of Guyanese Wapishana

In this subsection, I will present the letters, for consonants and vowels alike,
as currently used in Guyanese Wapishana. Table 8 below presents the
information in the following order across each row: orthographic
representation, phoneme, orthographic example, example in IPA, and the
meaning of the orthographic example (word).

Table 8. Present orthography of the Guyanese Wapishana.

Orthographic representation	Phoneme	Orthographic example	IPA example	Meaning
<a>	/a/	<awaru>	[a'waɽɨ̥]	'wind'
<aa>	/aː/	<paapai>	[paː'pai]	'father's brother'
<ã>	/ã/	<ã'ãi>	[ã'ãi]	'okay, all right'
<b>	/ɓ/	<badi>	['ɓadɨ̥]	'cassava bread'

<ch>	/tʃ/	<chaakoi>	[t͡ʃaː'koj]	'toucan'
<d>	/d/	<dawatan>	[dawa'tan]	'search'
	/ɗ/	<daari>	['ɗɑːɽɨ̥]	'black mud'
<dy>	/ɗʲ/	<dyuwuza>	[ɗʲɨ'wɨz̯a̠]	'a type of palm'
<g>	/g/	<agao>	[a'gao]	'ouch'
<h>	/h/	<hai>	['hai]	'yes'
<i>	/i/	<iripi>	[iɽipi̥]	'a type of fruit'
<ii>	/iː/	<piimuda>	[piː'mɨɗa̠]	'hummingbird'
<ĩ>	/ĩ/	<ĩnao>	[ĩ'nʲao]	'they, them'
<k>	/k/	<kuruku>	[kɨ'ɽɨkɨ̥]	'fowl'
<m>	/m/	<maamai>	[maː'mai]	'mother's sister'
<n>	/n/	<ninoba>	[ni'noɓa̠]	'tongue'
<ny>	/ɲ/	<nyukunuu>	[ɲɨkɨ'nɨː]	'heart'
<o>	/u/	<oridi>	[u'ɽidi̥]	'dove'
<oo>	/uː/	<pootan>	[puː'tan]	'blow'
<õ>	/ũ/	<õgaru>	[ũ'gaɽɨ̥]	'I, me'
<p>	/p/	<pinidi>	[pi'nidi̥]	'grass'
<r>	/ɽ/	<ramita>	[ɽa'mitʲɛ]	'break'
<s>	/s/	<soowa>	[suː'wa̠]	'spider'
<sh>	[ʃ]	<shii>	[ʃiː]	'swelling'
	/ʂ/	<shawarau>	[ʂawa'ɽaɨ]	'a type of palm'
<t>	<t>	<tikazi>	['ti'kɛz̯ɨ̥]	'fire'
<u>	/ɨ/	<uruu>	[ɨ'ɽɨː]	'he, him'

<ũ>	/ɨ̃/	<zũũ>	[z̻ɨ̃ː]	'sound of motor vehicle'
<uu>	/ɨː/	<tuukii>	[tɨːˈkiː]	'very'
<w>	/w/	<wapichan>	[wapɨ̃ˈʧan]	'Wapishana'
<y>	/j/	<yawari>	[jaˈwaɽ̥i]	'mouse opossum'
<z>	/z̻/	<zakapu>	[z̻aˈkapɨ̥]	'farm'
<'>	/ʔ/	<imi'i>	[imiʔi̥]	'sand, soil'

In the Guyanese Wapishana spelling system, the sounds of most of the letters are similar to English, except for the following letters <b>, <d>, <r>, <u>, <z>, and <'>. The letter <b> always represents the implosive /ɓ/. The letter <d> represents two different sounds: in some cases /d/ and in others /ɗ/. The <sh> also represents the fricative voiceless palatal [ʃ], which is an allophone of the fricative voiceless retroflex /ʂ/. The letter <r> represents the voiced retroflex flap /ɽ/. The letter <u> represents the high unrounded vowel /ɨ/. The letter <z> represents a voiced retroflex fricative /z̻/. The symbol <'> represents the glottal stop /ʔ/. There is glottal stop insertion at the beginning of a vowel-initial word, but it is never written there; elsewhere, the glottal stop is marked in writing. The letter <h> is rarely used except in <hai?> [ˈhai] 'what?' and <hã'ãi> [ˈhãʔãi] 'okay, all right'; <g> is also rarely used except in the interjection <agao!> [aˈɡao] 'ouch!'

3.5.3 Some orthographic issues

Most Wapishana speakers who previously learned to read in English did not experience many difficulties in making the transfer into reading Wapishana, as far as the representation of sound by letter was concerned. However, seemingly influenced by the language in which they learned to read, several Wapishana who became accomplished English writers questioned the pronunciation of some Wapishana words and the non-use of certain letters in writing. In addition, non-Wapishana who became interested in the language questioned other aspects of the language. In light of the Wapishana–English Bilingual Education programme currently at the beginning stages, these

aspects of the writing system are of relevance, since it is expected that young Wapishana children must be literate not only in their second language, but also in their first language.

In this section, I examine some of the questions raised by some Wapishana and some observations made by non-Wapishana such as linguists who looked at some aspects of the language. I discuss various phonological processes that affect pronunciation and writing of some words in Subsection 3.5.3.1. This is followed by the need to distinguish between /d/ and /ɗ/ in Subsection 3.5.3.2, some issues involving the glottal stop in Subsection 3.5.3.3, and some dialectal differences in Subsection 3.5.3.4. Finally, I present the reactions of the people to the issues highlighted and some suggestions made on the teaching of some aspects in Subsection 3.5.3.5.

3.5.3.1   Phonological processes that affect pronunciation and writing of some words

In this subsection, I look at some phonological processes that that have caused some difficulties for Wapishana in the pronunciation and writing of words. I first look at vowel assimilation that causes variation in pronunciation, which confuses people in how to write these words (Subsection 3.5.3.1.1). Next, I look at palatalization, which also has particularly confused some people in writing the words (Subsection 3.5.3.2). This is followed by vowel reduction, which shows some inconsistency in writing the words (Subsection 3.5.3.3).

3.5.3.1.1 Vowel assimilation: causing variation in pronunciation and confusion in writing

One of the issues is that the <pu> [pɨ] connected to a word that begins with <w>, <p>, or <b> may sound like <po> [po]. There is variation in the pronunciation, and this confuses people with respect to how to write these words. Some Wapishana tend to change the pronunciation and writing of the pronouns <pu> [pɨ], a reduced form of <pugaru> [pɨˈgaɽɨ] 'you' and of <u> [ɨ], a reduced form of <uruu> [ɨˈɽɨː] 'he' or 'his'. The <pu> tends to be changed to <po> [po] or <pi> [pi] and <u> to <i> [i], as in the following examples:

(12)   a.   <puwa'atin> [pɨwaʔatin, changed to '<powa'atin> [powaʔatin]
              'you come'

        b.   <pupoza> [pɨ'poza̰], changed to <popoza> [po'poza̰] 'your
              ladder'

        c.   <pubairi> [pɨ'ɓairɨ̰], changed to <pobairi> [po'ɓairɨ̰] 'your
              arrow'

(13)   a.   <uino'i> [ɨinoʔi], changed to <iino'i> [iːnoʔi] 'his hammock
              rope'

        b.   <utiwapan> [ɨtiwʸa'pan], changed to <itiwa'pan> [itiwʸapan] 'he
              is hunting'

The changes in sound are caused by the consonants that immediately follow
the pronoun. In (13), when the pronoun <u> [ɨ] comes immediately before a
syllable that has the /i/, its sound is pronounced as [i]. This is a case of vowel
assimilation. However, the current norm in the orthography is to write the
pronouns the same way regardless of the sound changes in specific contexts.
Therefore, the pronoun that expresses 'he' is always written as <u>, and the
pronoun expressing 'you' is always written as <pu>.

        A related issue concerns the final /ɨ/, pronounced and written as /iː/ in
the following examples of unpossessed forms:

(14)   /ɨ/ [poitʸo'ɾɨi], pronounced and written as [poitʸo'ɾiː] 'servant'

(15)   /ɨ/ [da'ɾɨi], pronounced and written as [da'ɾiː] 'father'

In the above examples, people tend to change /ɨ/ to /i/ and combine it with
the other /i/ to a long /iː/, which is normally written as <ii>. As a result, they
write <poitorii> instead of <poitorui> and <darii> instead of <darui>.
Because of the vowel assimilation between /ɨ/ and /i/, people tend to say and
write these words with the long /iː/. However, we do not need to write the
<ii>, because the final <u> is always there in the possessed form as in
<upoitoru> 'his servant' and <ĩdaru> 'their father'.

3.5.3.1.2 Palatalization

Palatals are defined as consonants that are formed by raising the body of the
tongue to the hard section of the roof of the mouth (Velupillai 2012: 65). In
Wapishana, palatalization occurs in most words in which the letter <i>
precedes a consonant that is followed by the vowel <a> (e.g. <kiwan>
'return' or <tikazi> 'fire'). In such words, the preceding <i> affects the

pronunciation of the consonant so that the words are often pronounced with a <y> after the consonant as the letter (e.g. <kiwyan> or <tikyazi>).

As an automatic consequence of the palatalization caused by the preceding letter <i>, some Wapishana writers have an inclination to write the letter <y> when palatalization occurs. The palatalization can be perceived as the palatal approximant [j] in the words. However, the perceived /j/ in this environment is due to a phonological process; therefore, it is not necessary to write <y> in such words as in <inyawuzi> 'brother of male', <pidyan> 'person'; <aityapa> 'to know', and <karikyaonan> 'always'. Rather, the words should be written as the following:

(16)   <inawuzi> [inʲa'wɨzɪ̥]

(17)   <pidan> [pi'dʲan]

(18)   <aitapa> [ai'tʲapḁ]

(19)   <karikaonan> [kaɾi'kʲao'nan]

It is correct that palatalization occurs in these words. In the examples above, the consonants /n/, /d/, /t/, and /k/ are palatalized. In other words, consonants followed by the vowel <i> /i/ are perceived to contain the palatal approximant /j/, as in [ai'tʲan], but this sound is not written as a <y> in the present orthography.

The other issue is related somewhat to the above. Some Wapishana seem to have a tendency to write <e> whenever the [ɛ] is pronounced as in the English word <met>. The following are some examples:

(20)   <ipai> [i'pʲai], written as <ipei> 'all'

(21)   <aipan> [ai'pʲan], written as <aipen> 'need'or 'want'

(22)   <kaiman> [kai'mʲan], written as <kaimen> 'good'

From the above examples, it is clear that the pronunciation of <e> [ɛ] is due to the palatalization of /a/. One can predict that the vowel /a/ should be pronounced as [ɛ] when it follows a vowel /i/. Therefore, <e> is not needed in the present Wapishana orthography.

However, all the above (16 to 22) seem to be a consequence of people who were already literate in the L2, English. For this reason, this case with palatalization could be another example of a phonological change in progress. When they learned to read and write in Wapishana, the people were applying transferability from English to Wapishana literacy. This is representative of what Weber (2016: 9) refers to as the L2 to L1 biliteracy approach using a transfer guide that can produce readers of the L1 in a very short time. When this process of transferability is applied to reading and

writing in Wapishana, it is possible that some of the sounds the people learned in Wapishana are influenced by those in English. One practical way to overcome this is to remind learners to "put on their Wapishana hats" and think in Wapishana.

3.5.3.1.3 Vowel reduction

Currently, the reduced vowels are written in certain words (e.g. <kuba> ['kɨɓḁ]'stone') while there is no voiceless vowel after /n/ and /m/ (e.g. <atamun> [ata'mɨn] 'wood'). This was first brought to my attention by linguist Dr Sergio Méira, whom I had asked to make some comments on the Wapishana spelling system. The final reduced vowels in some words are of two types: vowel deletion and vowel devoicing. In the following, I illustrate each in turn with some examples.

I. Vowel deletion

(23) a.   <paran> [pa'ɽan] 'sea, ocean, waves'

      b.   <wuru'u paranaz> [wɨ'ɽi?ɨ̥ paɽa'naz]'this sea, ocean, waves'

(24) a.   <paashim> [paː'ʃim] 'anteater'

      b.   <wuru'u paashimaz> [wɨ'ɽi?ɨ̥ paːʃi'maz] 'this anteater'

(25) a.   <pishan> [pi'ʃan] 'cat'

      b.   <wuru'u pishanaz> [wɨ'ɽi?ɨ̥ piʃa'naz] 'this cat'

II. Vowel devoicing

(26) a.   <chimaru> [t͡ʃi'mʲaɽɨ̥] 'grater'

      b.   <uchimarun> [ɨt͡ʃimʲa'ɽɨn], [u] 'his' [chimarun] 'grater'

(27) a.   <kuruku> [kɨ'ɽɨkɨ̥] 'fowl'

      b.   <wuru'u kurukuz> [wɨ'ɽi?ɨ̥ kɨɽɨ'kɨz] 'this fowl'

(28) a.   <wato> ['wato̥] 'crow'

      b.   <wuru'u watoz> [wɨ'ɽi?ɨ̥ wa'toz] 'this crow'

In all the examples above, final vowel reduction occurs when the words are pronounced singly or on their own. However, when the words are preceded by a demonstrative or pronoun, final vowels appear in them with suffixes such as <-az>, <-uz>, <-oz>, <-iz>, <-un>, <-an>, <-on>, or <-in>. In (23a), (24a), and (25a), there are no traces of the final vowels, when the words are presented in citation form, that is presented without any additional words or

morphology. These vowels are completely deleted (e.g. <paran>, <paashim>, and <pishan>). This vowel deletion occurs after the consonants <n, m>. However, when the words are combined with the demonstrative *wuru'u* 'this' (e.g. <wuru'u paranaz> [wɨɾɨʔɨ̥ paɾa'naz̥]), the final vowel is clearly pronounced or voiced.

Examples (26b), (27b), and (28b) show that when the words are pronounced in the unpossessed form, the final vowels are devoiced (not sounded) but are written after the consonants (e.g. chimaru>, <kuruku>, and <wato>). When the words are possessed (e.g. <uchimarun> [ɨtʃĩmʲa'ɽɨn] 'his grater', the final vowel is clearly pronounced or voiced.The devoicing of the final vowels applies to the following consonants: <b, d, k, p, r, s t, w, z,'> that precede such vowels.

The aforementioned rules could be the motivation why the people who created the orthography decided to write the reduced vowels in the case of the devoiced vowels and not in the case of the deleted vowels. However, there are inconsistencies or perhaps exceptions to the rules. For example, the words <pawish> [pa'wiʃ], <achiwib> [atʃi'wiɓ] and <ba'okoz> [ɓaʔo'koz] in the Scholar's Dictionary and Grammar of the Wapishana Language (2000) are not consistent with the words at II above. On the other hand, the words <zuna> ['z̥ɨnḁ], <tuma> [tɨmḁ] and <sooma> [so:mḁ] in the dictionary are also inconsistent with the words listed under I above.

3.5.3.2   The need to distinguish between /d/ and /ɗ/

Together with linguists Sergio Méira and Martine Bruil, I observed that although <d> represents two distinct sounds in the Wapishana, they are not distinguished in the current spelling system. One sound is the explosive /d/, and the other is the implosive /ɗ/. Consider the following words in which /d/ and /ɗ/ occur:

(29)   Explosive /d/ sounds:

    a.   <daadowan> [da:do'wan] 'to tear'

    b.   <pudaru> [pɨ'daɽɨ̥], [pɨ] 'your' [daɽɨ̥] 'father'

    c.   <damotan> [damo'tan] 'dip in liquid'

    d.   <dazowan> [daz̥o'wan] 'basket'

(30)   Ingressive /ɗ/ sounds:

    a.   <dabikan> [ɗaɓiˈkʲan] 'to splatter'

    b.   <paradan> [paɾaɗan] 'to undercut a bush'

    c.   <kakudan> [kakɨˈɗan] 'to get well'

    d.   <kaudinan> [kaɨɗiˈnʲan] 'to work'

Even though the /ɗ/ is not marked in such words, they pose no difficulty for the Wapishana speaker who can easily know the /d/ or the /ɗ/ based on the context in which the word is used. However, if we are to consider readers other than the Wapishana, it seems important to distinguish these two sounds by representing each with different letters.

3.5.3.3   Glottal stops

Another observation is the omission of the /ʔ/ in the use of abbreviated pronouns that precedes words beginning with a vowel. When writing possessed form of words, people do not write <'> even though the /ʔ/ is pronounced, as in the following examples: <õidowau> 'my own', <uinawuzu> 'his brother', <oimauzo> 'her mother in-law', and <ĩiriban> 'their relative'. Ever since the orthography was established, the practice has been to write such words without the <'>. A possible reason is that writers thought of such a word as a combination of two words (e.g. <ĩ> 'their' and <iriban> 'relative'). However, people raised the concern that they sometimes have difficulty in reading the words fluently or correctly. The people at the meeting (see Subsection 3.5.3.5) agreed that this would be made easier for them if the <'> is inserted as in the following examples:

(31)   <õ'idowau> [õʔidʲoˈwaɨ], [õ] 'my' [idʲoˈwaɨ] 'own'

(32)   <u'inawuzu> [ɨʔinʲaˈwɨz̩ɨ], [u] 'his' [inawuzu] 'brother'

(33)   <o'imauzo> [oʔiˈmʲaɨzo̥], [o] 'her' [imauzo] 'mother in-law'

(34)   <ĩ'iriban> [ĩʔiɾiɓʲan], [ĩ] 'their' [iriban] 'relative'

The inclusion of the glottal stop as given in the examples above implies that this would have to be taught in future Wapishana literacy lessons. The necessary corrections would also have to be made in future editions of some Wapishana texts and publications and original writings of Wapishana speakers.

3.5.3.4   Some dialectal differences

Some people from different villages pronounce certain words differently. Sometimes even within a single village people pronounce the same word differently. The following may be pronounced differently due to dialectal differences:

(35)   <kopam> [ko'pam] or <kapam> [ka'pam] 'also'

(36)   <kuwiini'o> [kɨwiː'niʔo] or <kowiini'o> [kowiː'niʔo] or <kiwini'o> [kiwiː'niʔo] 'first'

(37)   <isha'izi> [iʃaʔizɨ̥] or <isha'uzi> [iʃaʔɨzɨ̥] clouds'

(38)   <maozaka> [mao'z̪ak̪ą] or <mabozaka> [maɓo'z̪ak̪ą] 'strong'

(39)   <toronaru> [toɾo'naɾɨ̥] or <toroanaru> [toɾoa'naɾɨ̥] 'thunder'

(40)   <kakowaapan> [kakowa'pan] or <kakuwaapan> [kakɨwa'pan] 'tell news'

(41)   <marainpan> [maɾain'pʸan] or <murainpain> [mɨɾain'pʸan] 'to love'

(42)   <tuubuzi> [tɨː'ɓizɨ̥] or <tuubuzu> [tɨː'ɓizɨ̥] or <tuubizi> [tɨː'ɓizɨ̥] or <tuu'uzi>[tɨː'izɨ̥] 'big, large, huge'

Some of these words are listed as "variants" in the current dictionary. The different spellings for each word should be accepted and taught. It would be up to the writer to choose which spelling she or he prefers as long as there is consistency. However, for future applications of Wapishana writing and the publication of literature, it is advisable that the writer be conscious of the common view among the people that the WWA-approved orthography will make it easier for most people to read.

3.5.3.5   Some reactions and suggestions from a number of Wapishana

I presented the aforementioned orthographic issues at two meetings: one was a public meeting of Wapishana readers and writers at Maruranau on 17 February 2019 and the other with two experienced Wapishana language tutors/editors at Aishalton on 9 March 2019. There were over twenty people, including young people, at the public meeting.

> All the participants at these meetings had benefitted from the Wapishana literacy classes offered by either the Wapichannao Wadauniinao Ati'o or the Wapishana Literacy Association (see Appendix A). The particular orthographic convention used in the literacy classes was developed by missionaries associated with SIL

International. As put by David et al. (2016: 18), the people have drawn upon the skills of missionaries and others to develop their own alphabet so that they can write their language. Since this particular orthography convention was endorsed by the Wapishana Literacy Association, most Wapishana people who completed the literacy classes, whether they belonged to one religious affiliation or the other, preferred it as the model that writers could follow. Moreover, using the same orthographic convention, there was already a dictionary that was circulated in all the villages by the Wapishana Literacy Association. All this seems to be in alignment with respect to the development of orthographies in the wider context: that an agreed writing system would also pave the way for increasing domains of use as in signage, computers, and mobile phones, increasing the visibility of the language (Sallabank 2012: 117). With this in mind, I look at some some reactions and suggestions offered by the people.

Firstly, on the issue involving the consistent changes in pronunciation of the <u> /ɨ/ to /i/ in some words, all agreed that that pronunciation in the given examples indeed changes, but the original spelling should not change. The participants at the meeting suggested that in future lessons, the Wapishana tutors need to emphasize sticking to the original spelling where <u> for /ɨ/ is always used. However, before the Wapishana tutors disseminate such decisions about the writing system in their literacy classes, it would be worthwhile if the leadership of the Wapishana Literacy association meet with Wapishana tutors to apprise them of the decisions. At the literacy classes, the tutors should explain and discuss these decisions with the people for better understanding and fewer difficulties in writing.

All participants at the meeting, including Wapishana tutors, agreed that the <y> and <e> should not be written in words where palatalization occurs. One Wapishana tutor, Ian Paul, shared that whenever he was asked by his students about the non-inclusion of the <y> or <e>, he would explain that the "echo" from the first syllable in the word (e.g. <ipai>) [i'pʲai]) is carried across to the second syllable. The 'echo' explanation seems to be useful in helping the people understand the concept of palatalization without getting too much into technical terminology.

On the final voiceless vowel issue, all participants at the meetings agreed with the way they are written currently. The Wapishana tutors agreed that the unwritten final vowels only occur with the nasals <n, m>. I pointed out the few writing inconsistencies in cases of final vowel devoicing. Such inconsistencies can be observed in the published Wapishana primer (easy reading book). The first lesson in the Wapishana primer, for example, introduces the word <zuna> ['ʐɨną]. I suggested that this be left as it is and taught as an exception to the rule. The reason is that the word has been

written as it is since the 1970s by missionary linguists. I also suggested to the tutors that one way of reinforcing correct spelling is to say the syllables in a word accompanied by claps, as is done by some schoolteachers in teaching syllables in some English words. Where the stress occurs in a word, a stronger clap is made. The Wapishana tutors liked the idea that clapping could be adopted as an activity to represent syllables. They see it as a strategy to add to their teaching.

As for the <d> that represents the explosive /d/ and the implosive /ɗ/, the larger group was of the view that the writing should not be changed as they do not have problems with it. However, at the meeting with the Wapishana tutors at Aishalton village, they agreed that the two sounds should be distinguished for the sake of non-Wapishana who may want to read and write the language. However, a letter to represent the ingressive /ɗ/ is still in contention. One suggestion is to use <ɗ>. However, it is not practicable typographically. Once agreed, the new letter will have to be introduced to Wapishana and non-Wapishana alike.

The omission of the glottal stop in words such as <uinawuzu> or <oimauzu>, several people at the meeting attested to the challenges they encountered in fluently reading such words. The participants at the meeting agreed that reading would be easier with the glottal stop placed between the abbreviated pronouns and words that begin with vowels.

The people who participated in the meetings agreed that some Wapishana people say certain words differently. All people who attend Wapishana literacy classes should be made aware of these dialectal differences when teaching Wapishana literacy. Once the people are made aware of these differences, an inclusive way of dealing with the matter is to accept that the pronunciation and spelling can vary according to the writer, as long as the writer is consistent. People who have observed instances of different pronunciation in words can report this to the WWA so that these differences can be investigated**.**

3.6   Conclusion

Like other developing countries elsewhere, Guyana, through its Ministry of Education, has been continually seeking educational interventions in providing effective education to sectors of its school population. Notably, such interventions include the training of teachers in methodologies and strategies to improve emergent literacy and outcomes for children at the nursery and primary Grade 1 in the hinterland and riverain areas (see Subsection 3.2.5). While these efforts are laudable, there is still the need for

the specialized training of teachers who must teach children in Indigenous-dominant communities. Indeed, one the recommendations emanating from the UNICEF-sponsored study of First Language Education in Indigenous Communities: A Needs Assessment (Edwards 2012, see Subsection 3.2.1) was that first language education for children should be a priority where children come to school speaking their mother tongue and learning English as a second language.

Such a language situation was long recognized, leading to the Wapishana literacy trials beginning from the 1970s. From these experiences, partnerships between the community, the government and non-governmental organizations need to be pursued for the successful integration of a mother tongue-based educational approach. It is also clear that a better channel of communication needs to be in place so that stakeholders such as teachers and head teachers understand the rationale behind such a mother tongue-based educational approach. This could be augmented by an official statement of support from the Ministry of Education. What also needs attention is raising the consciousness among parents of the importance of the mother tongue literacy in their children's education. These and other matters on successes and limitations need to be taken as lessons learnt to inform the new programme.

The advocacy meeting was a great step in raising this consciousness since the reactions from the parents and other community members were generally supportive. These meetings should be continued to update parents and members of community on the progress of such innovative programmes.

With the expected reintroduction of a mother tongue-based education programme, the teachers must first of all be familiar with the orthographic convention of the Wapishana language. By being au fait with the spelling system and the decisions taken on some orthographic issues, the teachers would be more confident in creating and presenting materials in Wapishana to their pupils.

Chapter 4

The value of mother tongue-based schooling for educational efficacy

4.1   Introduction

In Chapter 3, I provided the wider context of the study in terms of the pre-tertiary education system in the country, mentioning the general academic performance in English and mathematics and the repetition and dropout rates of children at the primary and secondary school levels. Of particular concern was the performance of children in communities that are predominantly indigenous such that there was a recommendation to prioritize the use of the Indigenous languages alongside the use of the second language, English. This was followed by a narrowing of the focus on earlier trials at Wapishana literacy in some schools in some Wapishana villages. An overview of the Wapishana orthography was then made, followed by highlighting certain issues and some suggestions to resolve them. In this chapter, I review the literature with respect to bilingual education programmes in culturally diverse contexts. I also give an overview of first language and second language literacy teaching methods for young learners.

In culturally diverse language contexts, it is useful to clarify what is meant by "minority" and "majority" languages. In terms of the population of a region or country, a minority language is one of the languages spoken by a small portion of the population of a region or a country. In the case of Guyana, the Indigenous Peoples constitute approximately 10% of the Guyanese population. In this sense, the Indigenous languages could be considered minority languages. On the other hand, a majority language is a language spoken by a large portion of the population of a region or a country. In Guyana, the majority of Guyanese speak English and Guyanese Creole or Guyanese-Creole English, also known as Creolese. Therefore, English and Creolese are majority languages, with English being the official language.

While I have highlighted the difference between minority and majority languages in the numerical sense, the term "minority" is not without controversy. Numerically speaking, there are cases where internationally prestigious languages such as Spanish could be considered as minority. In Bolivia, for instance, "nearly two-thirds of Bolivians belong to of the 34 indigenous groups, the largest in population being Quechua and Aymara"

(Albó 2006: 4). In the numerical sense, the non-Indigenous population is a national minority, while the Indigenous population is a national majority. Yet, Indigenous Peoples are typically considered "minority" communities. This concept of minority communities parallels that of "ethnic minority" which is used "in the sociological sense to mean those groups that are distinguished historically in society along the lines of history, ancestry and identity and that also have less power than the dominant group" (Ferdman 1999: 95). Similarly, a minority language refers to the language spoken by a numerically smaller population and/or to the language spoken by a politically marginalized population, whatever its size (Bühman and Trudell 2008: 6). In addition, the notion of majority-minority languages implies, for some other purposes other than fairness, that majority attention is given to the majority language and minor attention is given the minority language in the country. For these reasons, others prefer to use the term "minoritized" to describe those communities in which there is inequality in resources and capacity to meet communicative and other needs (Lewis and Simons 2016: 656). In a similar vein, it can be said that, generally, language minoritization is a symptom of social and political inequalities (Sallabank 2012: 122). In the context of formerly colonized countries, communities are described as "minoritized" because their situation is a consequence of colonialism. That is, the continuation of colonial structures and mentalities "results in discrimination, exploitation, marginalization, oppression and other forms of social injustice that primarily (though not exclusively) affects communities that descend from the pre-colonial occupants of the territory" (Jansen and Jiménez 2017: 27).

One such structure that operates in covert ways is in the education systems that enforce monolingualism in the dominant language (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000: 352). In this way, the dominant language is glorified while the non-dominant language is stigmatized, meaning that the linguistic choices are made in a politicized climate (ibid. 2000: 196). Such linguistic choices by the powers that be (e.g. government of the state) can cause political disaffection among people who wish to maintain and use their native language. In being mindful that such a sociopolitical climate may exist, I will try to avoid the use of the term "minority", preferring instead terms such as "culturally diverse", and sometimes "bilingual" or "multilingual", depending on the context.

In this chapter, based on a review of the literature, I discern what seem to be the best strategies for a bilingual education programme in a culturally diverse context where English is a second language. I begin with an overview of the prejudice against bilingual schooling, considering the claims and counterclaims in Section 4.2. This is followed by a distinction between

the two routes to bilingualism—simultaneous and sequential—in Section 4.3. Circumstances influencing the types of bilingual programmes are considered in Section 4.4, followed by the types of bilingual programmes in Section 4.5. Planning a bilingual programme with its features and essential components is sketched in Section 4.6, followed by pedagogical strategies and materials in Section 4.7. Finally, I present my conclusion in Section 4.8.

4.2   Prejudice against bilingual schooling

Children who speak Indigenous languages as their mother tongue often begin their formal education in the national language of the country. Such children are expected to read and write in the national language of the country or the language of education used in the schools. It is not surprising then that when the bilingual approach is advocated, there is opposition to it, coming from people who are accustomed to the conventional (monolingual) approach.

As starting points, I shall consider three major psycho-educational claims, identified by Cummins (1996: 102), that have been proposed to argue against bilingual education. The claims are the following: (a) the "time-on-task" (or "maximum exposure") claim: that "time-on-task" is the major variable underlying language learning, making immersion in English the most effective means to ensure learning in English; (b) the "quicker" claim: that under these conditions of immersion, culturally diverse students will quickly (within 1–2 years) pick up sufficient English to survive academically without further support; and (c) the "younger-the-better" claim: that English immersion should start as early as possible in the student's school career, since younger children are better language learners than older children. Each will be considered in turn. First, I consider the "time-on-task" claim that underpins English immersion programmes in Subsection 4.2.1, followed by the "quicker" claim in subsection 4.2.2 and the "younger-the-better" claim in Subsection 4.2.3.1. I then consider a counterclaim that argues for bilingual education: the home–school mismatch in Subsection 4.2.4, followed by arguments against bilingual education in Subsection 4.2.5. Finally, I present a summary and discussion in Subsection 4.2.6.

4.2.1 The "time-on-task" (or "maximum exposure") claim

In this subsection, I consider the "time-on-task" assumption by first looking at the implication and citing the evidence and counter-evidence. I then identify the contrasting theoretical assumption and also cite the evidence and counter-evidence in Subsection 4.2.1.1.

Many educators feel that the most straightforward way for children from non-English-speaking backgrounds to learn English is for them to be in an environment where they are constantly exposed to English (McLaughlin 1992: 4). People often believe that for children to experience success in learning a language, they need to be surrounded by it for a long time (Pinnock 2009: 3). Underlying language learning is the "time-on-task" or "maximum exposure" hypothesis, which implies that there is a direct relation between the amount of time spent through English instruction and academic development in English (Cummins 1996: 113).

Programmes that follow this model are called "total immersion" (Curtain and Pesola 1994: 77), where children learn to read through the second language rather than the first. In arguing for all-English immersion programmes as an alternative to bilingual programmes, some commentators cite the Canadian French immersion programmes that showed that English-background children who were taught initially through French in order to develop fluent bilingual skills did not suffer academically as a result of the home–school language switch (Cummins: 1996: 39). With reference to the arguments of opponents of bilingual education, Krashen (1998: 3) cites a common argument which implicitly supports the "maximum exposure" assumption through the words of an ESL practitioner, who reported that he went to the United States at age nine with no English competence and claimed that after many challenges he succeeded academically without bilingual education. This personal account suggests that success was achieved primarily through immersion in English. Additionally, in a study of immersion in Singapore schools by Eng et al. (1997: 204), it was noted that the preschool programme in English appeared to be successful, as principals and supervisors reported that children were conversing and responding in English after attending a programme for six months. Furthermore, in endorsing a major finding by Thomas and Collier, the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE 2003: 01) noted that when English language learners initially exited a language support programme into English mainstream, those schooled in all-English medium programmes (ESL) outperformed those schooled in bilingual programmes when tested in English. Favourable comments on the "maximum exposure" assumption based on similar evidence continue to be expressed by many commentators.

There is, however, documentation that refutes the **"**maximum exposure" assumption. Firstly, with respect to the Singapore schools' programmes and the Thomas and Collier's study mentioned above, the successes may be misleading. As Thomas and Collier (1997: 34) documented**,** students taught monolingually in English made great progress in the early grades in whatever type of programme they received; this misled teachers and administrators into assuming that the students would continue to perform successfully. The authors (1997: 35) went on to document that as these students being schooled in English (L2) moved into cognitively demanding work of increasing complexity, their rate of progress became less than that of native-English speakers. Thus, they regressed in their performance. Based on these findings, the successes seemed related only to the early part of the programmes; hence the successes are short-lived. Moreover, in referring to the Thomas and Collier study, CREDE (2003: 2) pointed out that students schooled in bilingual programmes reached the same levels of achievement as those schooled entirely in English by middle school years and that during the high school years the students schooled in bilingual programmes outperformed the students schooled entirely in English. Therefore, the long-term gains achieved as a result of the bilingual programmes surpassed the gains of those programmes that followed the maximum exposure hypothesis. Secondly, other successes, as in the example of the ESL practitioner who succeeded academically through maximum exposure to English, seem to be cases of exception rather than the rule. That is, the "success stories" may be few. The basis of such successes is anecdotal evidence rather than research evidence (Freeman 2007: 4). Thirdly, regarding the French immersion programmes, they are essentially bilingual programmes involving two international languages (French and English) of instruction, taught by bilingual teachers and with the goal of promoting bilingualism, whereas English immersion programmes or "structured immersion" has no instructional support for the culturally diverse language and all instruction is only in English, the national language (Thomas and Collier 1997; 58). From this standpoint, Cummins (1996: 208) has shown that one cannot reasonably extrapolate from the considerable French proficiency that students displayed as a result of the French immersion programmes to the provision of English immersion programmes for bilingual students. Fourthly, "less-proficient second language students, attempting the doubly complex task of taking information from the lesson and learning the language at the same time, are under even greater stress" (Corson 1994: 12). Put differently, simultaneously learning the English language and literacy skills seem a harder route to follow. Following a similar line of thought, Trammell (2016: 4) points out that "a person may have fluent basic communication skills adequate for informal knowledge

situations without having developed the language necessary to process abstract academic subjects" (see also Sections 4.2.2 and 4.8.2.5.1). Trammel further adds that optimal cognitive development can be achieved only when students sufficiently develop the language in which a subject is taught. Other counter-evidence of the 'maximum exposure' assumption are the cases of Zambian and Malawian schools where children who learned to read in their L1 did as well as, and in some cases better than in their L2 reading, their monolingual counterparts (Williams 1996: 196). These reading successes would not have happened if it were the case that the "maximum exposure" hypothesis is the most important factor in language learning.

The above-mentioned examples of counter-evidence do not mean that the "maximum exposure" assumption is totally meritless. It still is a widely used basis for the acquisition of second language skills. For example, McLaughlin (1992: 4) acknowledged that beginning language instruction in kindergarten or first grade gives more exposure to language than beginning in fifth or sixth grade, but exposure itself does not predict language acquisition. This suggests that besides the "maximum exposure" assumption, there is an alternative major assumption that accounts for second language acquisition success.

4.2.1.1   A contrasting theoretical assumption

The alternative major assumption that underpins bilingual education programmes or supports a model of bilingual proficiency is what Cummins (1996: 110) termed the common underlying proficiency (CUP) in which the literacy-related aspects of a bilingual's proficiency in L1 and L2 are seen as common or interdependent across languages. Genesee (1987: 142) described the CUP as a model "that is developmentally interdependent, that is to say, development proficiency in one language can contribute to development in another language." In a similar vein, Baker (2006: 415) acknowledged the idea of the CUP and termed it the "interdependence hypothesis". According to Baker, the hypothesis proposes that to the extent that instruction through a non-dominant language is effective in developing academic proficiency in the non-dominant language, transfer of this proficiency to the dominant language will occur given adequate exposure and motivation to learn the language. Benson (2004: 1) concurs with the following statement:

> The pedagogical principles behind this positive transfer of skills are Cummins' (1991, 1999) *interdependence theory* and the concept of *common underlying proficiency*, whereby

> the knowledge of language, literacy and concepts learned in the L1 can be accessed and used in the second language once oral L2 skills are developed, and no re-learning is required. Consistent with these principles, it is possible for children schooled only in the L2 to transfer their knowledge and skills to the L1, but the process is highly inefficient as well as being unnecessarily difficult.

As can be noted from the above, transferability of knowledge, concepts, and skills from one language to another are central to the interdependence or the CUP principle. Specifically, according to Baker (1995: 112), some reading skills, such as learning to recognize that letters represent sounds, decoding words as parts and wholes, making sensible guesses at words given the storyline, decoding the meaning of sentences from a string of words, and moving from left to right across the page can be transferred without being retaught. Similarly, "students who have been taught to initially read in their first language do need to learn a new set of sound–letter correspondences, but they don't have to relearn the whole process of reading in English" (Freeman and Freeman 1993: 553). As such, research points to a progression from the first- to second-language literacy as a strong source of cognitive growth for bilingual children. A similar pattern of cognitive growth is found with national language-speaking (e.g. English-speaking) children initially taught in the culturally diverse language in that "their English language competence and curriculum performance does not suffer" (Baker 1995: 131). In other words, learning through the new culturally diverse language neither caused, for instance, the English-speaking children to lose their language nor hindered them in their academic performance in the different school subjects. More recently, it was likewise pointed out that, generally, majority/national language-speaking children educated through a culturally diverse language are not impaired in their mastery of the majority/national language, given its dominance in the wider society (Sallabank 2012: 114). With respect to learners who were initially schooled only in their L2, it helps in the transfer of their L2 literacy skills to their L1 if they know how to speak the L1 from home. In this respect, bilingualism is not just a societal resource, but it is also an individual resource that can potentially enhance aspects of the bilingual children's academic, cognitive, and linguistic functioning (Cummins 2000: 175).

Other evidence in support of the interdependence hypothesis indicates that bilingual children generally achieved parity with their monolingual counterparts in terms of academic skills in English. For example, children who attended a bilingual education programme, where there is exposure both to the home language and to English, have been found to acquire English

language skills equivalent to those acquired by children in English-only programmes (McLaughlin 1992: 4). As mentioned earlier, the reading successes cited in the cases of the Zambian and Malawian schools (Williams 1996: 196) are testimonies to this assumption.

Research also indicates that despite the evidence in support of the interdependence principle, there are limitations in terms of what it claims to address or mediate. As an example of one limitation, Carlo and Royer (1999: 148) pointed out that Cummins only claims interdependence across languages with regards to academically mediated skills in L2, that is, skills requiring high cognitive demands and low contexts. Secondly, they have argued that the evidence from these studies does not provide completely convincing support for this hypothesis, since the benefits could be attributed to other factors, such as the intelligence of the students performing well in both languages and instructional quality in the second language. Implied in this argument is the non-consideration of other factors that could have accounted for the literacy successes of the learners. In response to these criticisms, Cummins (1996: 131) countered that he had always posited the interdependence of L1 and L2 as an intervening factor strongly influenced by broader societal factors. Similarly, Baker (2006; 176), observed that language proficiency relates to an individual's total environment, not just cognitive skills. Thus, transferability between the languages is one important factor, but there are others that are also crucial and must be in place for success to be realized.

Another limitation is that the L1 may not offer higher lessons other than lessons in basic literacy skills. Spada and Lightbown (2002: 229) noted this when they observed that Inuit students were losing or failing to develop their L1 in terms of language for academic purposes. In light of this negative consequence of L1 literacy, one could question whether or not the materials were designed to enable students to engage in lessons that were at both the concrete and abstract levels of thinking skills. In this respect, higher lessons in the L1 should engage children in at least some of the higher-order level thinking skills. In terms of linguistic skills at both concrete and abstract levels, children should have the "ability to recall, interpret, infer, deduct, analyse, synthesize and evaluate meanings using 'language itself' or just words" (Datta 2007: 18). If not, then the materials should be designed to enable the children to reach the grade-appropriate levels of abstraction necessary for the development of academic skills. This point leads us to the other assumption underlying bilingual education, referred to as the "additive bilingualism enrichment principle" (Cummins 1996: 104).

The term, additive bilingualism, evokes the opposite: subtractive bilingualism. As mentioned by Baker (2006: 74), the additive form of

bilingualism is the situation where the addition of the second language is added without replacing or displacing the first language and culture, whereas the subtractive form of bilingualism is the situation where the learning of the second language replaces or demotes the first language and culture. Corson (1994: 3–4) made similar references to the terms as two distinct categories: "additive bilingualism", when a second language is acquired with the expectation that the mother tongue will continue to be used; and "subtractive bilingualism", when a second language is learned with the expectation that it will replace the mother tongue (i.e. the child's native language).

The additive form of bilingualism is also linked to the threshold hypothesis. Cummins (1996: 106) notes that the main point of the threshold hypothesis is that for positive effects to manifest themselves, children must be in an additive situation where both languages are developing; if beginning L2 learners do not continue to develop both languages, any positive effects are likely to be counteracted by the negative consequences of subtractive bilingualism. The threshold hypothesis is also referred to as the Thresholds Theory, which partially summarizes the relationship between cognition and degree of bilingualism (Baker 2006: 171). In other words, children with high levels of proficiency in both languages are likely to gain cognitive benefits while those with low levels of proficiency in both languages are likely to show the opposite, that is, cognitive deficits. In effect, the subtractive form of bilingualism leads to the detriment of the first language which in turn leads to monolingualism.

From the two major theoretical assumptions discussed thus far, each assumption or principle has its own merits and limitations. While bilingual education based on the interdependence principle is a legitimate and useful approach to pursue in the culturally diverse language contexts, there are other claims that have been posited to discredit such an approach. We shall now look at the "quicker" claim identified by Cummins, as well as the claim that the "maximum exposure" is the major variable that underlies language learning. That is, culturally diverse language children will quickly (within 1–2 years) pick up enough English to survive academically without further support.

4.2.2 The "quicker" claim

At a first glance, the claim seems intuitively logical that young children should be educated quickly enough in the second language if their schooling is to be effective. This is based on a commonly held belief that young children are generally adept at "picking up" a new language. However, it

may be misleading. As noted by Cummins (1996: 52), the claim may be based on a misconception that the children's adequate control over the surface features of English (i.e. their ability to converse fluently in English) is taken as an indication that all aspects of their 'English proficiency' have been mastered to the same extent as the native speakers of the language. Accordingly, children may falsely appear ready to be taught through their second language in the classroom (Baker 2006: 179). This misconception may lead parents and teachers to make a premature decision that the children be taught in an all-English or mainstream-language mode of instruction.

Such a decision has the potential to ill-prepare children in terms of their inability to adequately cope with concepts in an all-English classroom. This is because the misconception may obscure a child having language problems in reading and writing that are not apparent if the child's oral abilities are taken as a gauge of English proficiency (McLaughlin 1992: 5). In other words, children may not have the necessary readiness to cope with the curriculum through English instruction at such an early stage of their second language development. As such, research does not support the notion that bilingual students will learn adequate English quickly enough to cope academically in higher classes.

What research has found is that while oral communication skills in a second language may be acquired within two or three years, it takes up to four to six years to acquire the level of proficiency for understanding the language in its instructional use (McLaughlin 1992: 4). In support of this position, a more recent study by Baker (2006: 174) revealed that based on more research "it was found that everyday conversational language could be acquired in two years while the more complex language abilities needed to cope with the curriculum could take five to seven years or more years to develop." Considering this revelation, Cummins (1996: 63) cautioned that exiting "children prematurely from bilingual or ESL support programs may jeopardize their academic development, particularly if the mainstream classroom does not provide an environment that is supportive of language and content development."

In culturally diverse language contexts, where there is an initial literacy programme in the children's first or native language, transitioning them prematurely or abruptly to the mainstream English programme may be the primary cause of their poor school performance in the English-based subjects. This implies that retention of the children's first or native languages should be maintained up to the levels of children's understanding of abstract concepts through higher-order thinking skills (mentioned in Section 4.1.1). Based on Cummins' interdependence principle, these skills

should be transferable while their level of English is being developed to the point where they are also able to tackle complex tasks in this language.

The more highly developed the first language skills, the better the results in the second language, because language and cognition in the second build on the first (Benson 2004: 8). In other words, the stronger the child is academically in the first language, the more quickly she or he will learn the second language. According to Caldas (2012: 359), it may well be in the children's best interest to develop speaking, reading, and writing skills in their first language to the greatest extent possible before developing the same skills in their second language. It is therefore advisable that serious consideration be given first to the development of a strong conceptual base in the children's first language. I now turn to the "younger-the-better" claim identified by Cummins: English immersion should start as early as possible in younger children's schooling since they are better language learners than older children.

4.2.3 The "younger-the-better" claim

As stated in Section 4.2.2, there is a belief that young children are quicker at learning a new language. About pronunciation in second language learning, research has supported the conclusion that younger children are better than older learners (McLaughlin1992: 4). This is, perhaps, because of certain gains exhibited by young children when they were placed in environment with a range of L2 support, such as L2-speaking peers, L2-speaking people, television, radio, the Internet, and an abundance of literature that facilitate the learning of the second language.

In other situations, as noted by McLaughlin, younger children may be slower in learning a second language because of their cognitive and experiential limitations. Collier (1992: 91) would agree: "Research to date has shown that older students are more efficient second language learners than young learners, but extended exposure to the second may be crucial in acquisition of second language." Extended exposure to the English as second language (ESL) could mean that English should be maintained within the school system for as long as possible for young learners with limited English proficiency skills. Extended exposure may be an important factor in successfully learning the second language in certain situations. As has been suggested, children who begin to learn a second language in the elementary school and continue learning throughout schooling, tend to show higher proficiency than those who start to learn later in their schooling (Baker 2006: 128).

One limitation of following the "younger-the-better" approach is that there is "the danger of the bilingual child losing their first language when the second language is introduced too early and dominantly" (ibid. 2006: 129). With the loss of the first language, not only would children lose aspects of their culture, but moreover, the opportunity to build their conceptual foundation in their L1. While L2 conversational skills are important, children's conceptual foundation in their L1 has a stronger influence on their academic development according to the CUP principle.

Despite all the documented pedagogical and affective advantages of bilingual education approach mentioned above, a considerable number of nursery and primary schools in culturally diverse language contexts still follow the structured immersion (submersion) approach, which is based on the "maximum exposure" assumption. In the following section, I discuss an additional, common counterargument to this approach.

4.2.4 Counter-claim: the home–school mismatch for bilingual education

According to Cummins (1996: 98), "the linguistic mismatch hypothesis would predict that in every situation where there is a switch between home language and school language, students will encounter academic difficulties." One of the daunting challenges teachers face in such a situation is a posture of reticence in the classroom on part of most young learners. Take the case of children who speak culturally diverse languages such as their mother tongue. When they begin their formal education in the national language of the country, they often cannot speak or barely know the language and are silent in the classroom for the most part. Cummins (ibid. 1996: 2) further notes that their "silence or non-participation under these conditions have frequently been interpreted as lack of academic ability or effort" or evidence that they are slow learners. Such apparent characteristics reflect the disadvantages or difficulties faced by culturally diverse children who follow the structured immersion/submersion approach.

The difficulties can be attributed to either linguistic or affective factors that are embedded in this approach. According to Baker (1995: 185), as a solution to this situation, past advice by some professionals has been for parents to raise their children in the second language. Another apparent way out of the situation that has been practised in most of U.S bilingual education is the quick-exit transitional programme (Cummins 1996: 103). While it is claimed that children cannot learn through a language they do not understand, the claim has failed to account for the success of English background children in Canadian French immersion or in U.S two-way

bilingual programmes (ibid. 1996: 103). However, the bilingual immersion programmes in these countries tend to involve "two major high-status international languages" (Baker 1995: 166). Based on this point, the type of immersion programmes practised in Canada are not applicable to culturally diverse language contexts.

As can be noted from the above discussion, not in every bilingual situation would children have trouble when there is a switch from the native language to the second language. In contexts where the two languages are relatively well-developed in terms of oral competencies, children may not encounter difficulties in the long term when there is such a switch. In culturally diverse language contexts, however, the barrier of school language is often enough for children not to enroll in school or, if they do, for them to experience difficulties, become discouraged, repeat years, or drop out of school (Webley 2006: 1). If it is perceived that the child will encounter difficulties switching from the native language to the second language, then the better approach is to begin initial literacy in the native language, followed by literacy in the second language.

As pointed out by Baker (1995: 185), "[a] mismatch between home and school can be positively addressed by 'strong' forms of bilingual education" through the inclusion of parents as partners and participants in their child's education. However, the mismatch is "not just about language differences but also about dissimilarities in culture, values and beliefs" (ibid. 1995: 185). In the affective way, children may also experience other disadvantages as a result of the disempowering nature of classroom interactions.

When children's language, culture, and experiences are ignored, downplayed, or excluded in classroom activities, children's confidence, self-esteem, and identity may be negatively affected. In some situations, such as those of the Indigenous Peoples, their culture is never mentioned in the classroom (Forte 1996: 112). The message to be internalized by the children is that their language and cultural ways are not as highly valued as the English language and culture in their classroom learning. Such negative messages serve to suppress children's background knowledge and experiences, and over time can cause them to forsake or disown their native language and culture for the new. One of the outcomes is that their identity is suppressed or weakened. In addition, what makes them eventually disengage themselves mentally from participating in schoolwork is when they are "forced to sit quietly or repeat mechanically, leading to frustration and ultimately repetition, failure and drop out" (Benson 2004: 4).

In contrast, classroom interactions can be empowering. Firstly, learners' first/native languages are given validity by their presence in school, which improves the learners' self-esteem, which in turn results in greater learning (Roberts 1994: 209). It is also very important that the atmosphere be non-threatening and relaxing, so students are willing to take risks and collaborate with each other (ibid. 1994: 4). Secondly, in the formal school setting, initial literacy using L1 instruction plus the continued use of it in the upper classes together with L2 instruction may seem to redress the imbalance so that pupils feel that equal status and respect is given to both languages. Furthermore, using native languages in nursery and primary education is clearly a way of strengthening ties between school and community. It also allows the school to incorporate some aspects of local life into early instruction, thus providing continuity between school and home to develop what children already have as knowledge and skills.

This, however, may be little understood by parents and teachers. A reflection of such a lack of understanding can be found in the Inuit study done by Spada and Lightbown (2002: 219). It was noted, for instance, that most teachers believed that in Inuit communities the mother tongue is important outside of school. This suggests that it is not important in school and that for cultural preservation external use of it would suffice. Further, it was noted that parents believed that their children would learn French only if they were educated in French. Yet, in the situation, L1 instruction was allowed up to Grade 2. This suggests a lack of understanding of "potential importance of Inuit as a language of Education as a basis on which to develop L2 skills" (ibid. 2002: 121).

Cummins (1996: 121) asserts that "programs that incorporate strong L1 promotion must also include active encouragement of parental participation." In this light, parents' as well as teachers' support for use of L1 in school is crucial. When children's developing sense of self is affirmed and extended through their interactions with teachers, they are more likely to apply themselves to academic effort and participate actively in instruction (ibid. 1996: 2). As a result, teachers should face fewer daunting challenges in the classroom by being mindful or cautious that their interactions between themselves and students are supportive, respectful, encouraging, and non-threatening.

Thus far, we have looked at some linguistic factors and other factors in the affective domain that can contribute positively or negatively to children's learning. On the negative side, if aspects of their cultural background and experiences are suppressed or never mentioned, children may have low self-esteem, resulting in a lack of confidence and disengagement from academic work. On the positive side, it "is well

established that when a child begins learning in his or her first language (also known as a home language or mother tongue) that child is more likely to succeed academically and is better able to learn additional languages" (Webley 2006: 1).

4.2.5 Other arguments against bilingual education

There is continued resistance to bilingual programmes especially from speakers of the dominant languages in a country. They often cite reasons to argue against bilingual schooling.

In this section, I consider several of these arguments: success without the support of bilingual education (Subsection 4.2.5.1); cognitive confusion among children (Subsection 4.2.5.2); places more demands on children (Section 4.2.5.3); too expensive as a programme (Subsection 4.2.5.4); threatens group or national cohesion (Subsection 4.2.5.5).

4.2.5.1 Success without support of bilingual education

English-only immersion/submersion programmes are still being followed by many education systems. These systems use one language: the dominant or official language of the country. The continued existence of the submersion approach to schooling seems to be partially associated with an interplay of power between of the dominant language and the socially powerful people who use it. Webley (2006: 1) notes that the languages of the elite groups or former colonizers often dominate the languages of the others, particularly in official settings like the school. Based on the historical and current dominance of the official languages in culturally diverse contexts, it is understandable that some people vouch for the structured immersion/submersion model, citing cases where people managed well without the support of bilingual education. However, such people had other supports for their learning, as pointed out by Pinnock (2009: 4):

> Many children do well in education, even where it isn't "child-centred" in this way; but these are often children who have a range of supports for learning in their lives. They may have literate parents, who can provide plenty of reading materials, TV and radio, uninterrupted study time, comfortable reading conditions, and so on.

In addition, these privileged supports are not necessarily derived from families that are fortunate to provide such comfortable settings in the home

for their children. According to Cameron (2001: 146), parents with the strongest motivation for their children's success seem to have produced most benefits in terms of the outcomes of a programme. In other situations, more support is provided in the immediate environment, for example, through signs, notices, and posters in the L2, which children could see and refer to at their own convenience. Conversely, other children, who dwell in disadvantaged areas with minimal L2 support, underperform in their formal school education. Some children, for example, have illiterate parents who missed out on their education for one reason or another. Owing to this, the children are unable to receive the kind of support literate parents give to their children. Others live in difficult socio-economic situations, making them vulnerable to malnutrition and illnesses. Under these conditions, they would be unable to study and consistently follow their programmes. In other areas, such as those remote Indigenous communities in Guyana, there is no reliable source of electricity. As such, they hardly have access to television, radio, or the Internet. Some of them travel great distances on foot to school. Furthermore, their environment is bereft of print. Most of the above examples of privileged supports or otherwise seem to typify what Freeman (2007: 4) refers to as anecdotal evidence. Such anecdotal evidence may supplement or give credence to research evidence.

Children who live under disadvantaged conditions mentioned above stand to benefit from well-implemented bilingual programmes that encourage even parents to become more involved. By being invited to share their experiences in reading or cultural knowledge, parents provide background knowledge to their children's learning. Parents can also assist in the construction of inexpensive materials, such as cardboard masks and puppets, at least for the initial stages of the programme. Parental participation is therefore a widely cited factor in successful bilingual programs (Benson 2004: 14). Bilingual programmes also stand to benefit if there are government-provided services such as the provision of regular hot meals or a school transport service. As a positive consequence of such services, for example, those children who have been regularly absent for various socio-economic reasons, may most likely improve their school attendance, leading to fuller participation in their schooling. Such basic needs that are factored in, contribute to well-implemented bilingual education programmes.

4.2.5.2   Cognitive confusion among children

One of the arguments against bilingual education is that it causes cognitive confusion among children (Cummins 1996: 104). Such an argument or

speculation by some educators and parents stemmed partly from the perception that, in the past, bilingual children experienced academic difficulties in rushed bilingual education programmes. (Benson 2004: 15) offers some possible reasons:

> Programs in economically disadvantaged countries often attempt to transition the L2 after only one or two years, without consolidating L1 literacy or L2 communication skills. "Short cut" transitions try to do too much too fast and fail to produce optimal results, giving the parents the impression that the L1 has caused confusion.

Rather than seeing children's L1 as causing confusion or hindrance, one should see it as a resource for their academic development. Used as a resource, the L1 may allow the later development of the second language to proceed with greater ease (Baker 1995: 54). By using their L1, children are less likely to be confused because they can then transfer the knowledge and skills from their L1 to their L2, moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar language. Otherwise, if they are abruptly transitioned into the L2 at the start of their schooling, the children "may appear to have shorter attention spans than native speakers, but in reality, those students may be suffering from fatigue of trying to make sense of the new language" (Freeman and Freeman 1993: 553). In this situation, they can easily be turned off by the teacher, becoming lagging, bored, and confused.

In addition to being able to transfer what they have learnt from their L1 to their L2, children who benefited from bilingual schooling are in an advantageous position, according to studies. It was found that such children may exhibit greater creativity in their thinking, called "divergent or creative thinking" (Baker 2006: 152). As an example, bilinguals who have two or more words for each object and idea may entail more elasticity in thinking (Baker 1995: 50). This is an advantage over monolinguals, who may have just one word for an object or idea. Furthermore, in gaining the command of two language systems the bilingual child can analyse or interpret more language input than the monolingual child who has been exposed only to one language system (Cummins 1996: 105).

4.2.5.3   Places more demands on children

Others argue that bilingual education places more demands on the children and reduce their chances of being fully integrated into the mainstream society. According to Baker (1995: 999) the reasoning is that the "extra demands" of bilingual education, if removed, will lighten the burden for the

child. By implication this reasoning sees the monolingual approach as easier because of the direct phase of exposure to the L2, whereas the bilingual approach is more complicated because of the seemingly double phases of learning in both the L1 and the L2. In this sense, the complex phases of learning seem to prevent many children from fully being mainstreamed into the English culture. In other words, it has prevented these children from entering the mainstream culture of the nation, thereby making them vulnerable to social and economic disadvantages.

On the other hand, bilingual education has the potential for reducing educational inequalities that may result from children following the monolingual approach. Cummins (1996: 140) suggests that educational inequalities such as ability grouping and tracking practices that deny children access to quality instruction tend to lower children's educational aspirations and promotes dropping out. This, in turn, can lead children to being subordinated economically and socially. By reducing educational inequalities, bilingual education enables more children to not only enter the national education system but progress further in it. By reaching higher levels of education such as secondary schools or tertiary institutions, children can pursue specialist programmes, succeed and apply what they learned in order to experience the benefits of the social and economic systems of the nation.

4.2.5.4   Too expensive as a programme

Related to the argument that bilingual education is complex is that it is too expensive because more money is spent on teaching children their native languages. Justifiable concerns have been posited even by government representatives, as noted by Benson (2004: 11): "Education ministries often object to the perceived cost of changing the language of instruction, contemplating the large investments needed particularly in teacher preparation and materials development." There is little doubt that bilingual education or Mother Tongue Education (MTE) programmes are highly expensive, but only initially, as explained by Pinnock (2006: 7):

> A cost–benefit analysis of MTE programmes shows that they cost more to set up but the costs of moving to MTE are not as high as might be expected…
>
> Once a new teacher education programme has been designed and trialed it is absorbed into the overall system. Similarly, the costs of textbooks and materials are absorbed into the overall running costs with time. Once developed, they only need updating and

> reprinting, as with any textbooks…. Additional benefits accumulate to a country from adopting MTE as students' future earning power is likely to increase if they stay in education for longer.

In other situations in Africa, according to Webley (2006: 2), a review of cost–benefit analyses has shown that "educational programmes starting with mother tongue and gradually moving into other languages lead to cost savings as compared to monolingual programmes." Pinnock (2006: 7) similarly documents the impact on the cost savings of incorporating mother tongue-based education programmes: "MTE leads to reductions in repetition and dropout rates, resulting in significant cost savings." In other words, bilingual education or mother tongue-based education is cost-effective in the long term.

4.2.5.5   Threatens group or national cohesion

Bilingual education is perceived to be a threat to group or national cohesion by some people. Baker (1995: 211) notes that bilingual education in culturally diverse language contexts is sometimes perceived as a political problem because it fosters the native language and language diversity, leading to less integration, less cohesiveness, more antagonism, and more group conflict and disharmony. Similarly, some people perceive that linguistic and cultural diversity may cause disunity and ethnic problems (Smith 2012: 6). From this perspective, fostering the native language seems to counter the assimilation of native language speakers into the second language and mainstream culture. Furthermore, the argument for assimilation seems to hold that if all people can speak the nation's official language, the more unified the nation will be. Based on this argument, some people may downplay proposals for bilingual education or lend little public support to ongoing programmes.

From the bilingual point of view, bilingual education functions to link together other language groups or people who speak different languages and feel estranged from one another. Some parents see a significant advantage and enhanced social capital given to their children who add a second or third language to their linguistic repertoire (Caldas 2012: 352). Further, the potential social and economic benefits of bilingual education are tremendous, particularly within the context of our global village's interdependence. There is the obvious advantage of a country that has a pool of adequate human resources with multilingual talents. The capacity to communicate across cultural and linguistic boundaries is crucial for one's quick interactions in a multilingual environment. In this respect, the

bilingual or multilingual speaker or writer feels less alienated in an environment that is not customarily her or his own and has the added confidence as she or he goes about transacting informal or business activities within that environment.

Returning to the school situation, it is important that bilingual education programmes are well-planned. In this respect, consideration should be given to Ruiz's three orientations: language as problem, language as right, and language as resource to facilitate examination of the status quo and formation of possible policies (Hult & Hornberger 2016: 30). For most culturally diverse contexts it would seem that recognizing language as resource can be enhanced by the right to use it. From this complementary stance, well-planned bilingual education places value in the national community and national unity. Being aware of differences is not equal to feeling estranged from those who are different; in fact, it may just as well mean to be proud of the variety of cultures that constitute a single national community. Bilingual education can increase pride in nation's diversity and strengthen national unity. As Baker (1995: 213) states, bilingual education will generally lead to better integration, harmony, and social peace.

4.2.6 Summary and discussion

We have seen that the "time-on-task", the "quicker", and the "younger-the-better" claims have their own merits or otherwise. The prediction based on the "maximum exposure" assumption is directly opposite to the prediction based on the common underlying proficiency (CUP) principle. The maximum exposure assumption underpins monolingual programmes whereas the CUP principle underpins bilingual programmes. While the "quicker" claim is persuasive, there is the danger that transitioning children prematurely into the mainstream English programme may slow down their learning. This is because they would not yet have developed the academic skills in the second language to adequately cope with concepts in an all-English environment. The "younger-the-better" claim is supported by research as far as pronunciation goes. However, younger learners may be slower in learning a second language because of their limited experiences in learning tasks that require higher levels of cognition. Returning to monolingual programmes as manifested in the structured immersion/submersion approach, it is suggested that embedded in such an approach is the disempowering nature of classroom interactions. While such interactions have contributed to the apparent lack of children's participation and academic effort, it is clear that the extent to which children's language and culture are incorporated into the school programme, together with the

attitudes of teachers, plays a major role in determining children's orientation to academic effort and to self. We have also seen that the other arguments against bilingual education have served to subvert bilingual education programmes and promote English-only or submersion programmes in preference to bilingual education programmes. However, common-sense claims and arguments against bilingual education are in the majority contradicted by research. Rather, as highlighted by Baker (1995: 212),

> the evidence suggests that developing bilingualism and bi-literacy within bilingual education is educationally feasible and can lead to:
> 1 higher achievement across the curriculum for minority children;
> 2 maintaining the home language and culture;
> 3 fostering self-esteem, self-identity and a more positive attitude to schooling.

This pattern of findings has been consistent in a variety of school contexts based on international research on bilingual education. Therefore, the evidence is clear that bilingual education, where L1 literacy is used as an initial strategy of instruction, is a pedagogically sound approach in promoting academic skills for all children. In other situations, it may not be feasible to implement bilingual programmes "because a school may not have bilingual teachers or because classes have students who speak a variety of primary languages" (Freeman and Freeman 1993: 554). In other contexts, the implementation of bilingual programmes may have been undermined as "a consequence of political pressure to remove students from bilingual programs as quickly as possible" (Cummins 1996: 119). For this reason, some programmes may represent only surface-level interventions that fail to achieve their goals of bilingualism and biliteracy.

4.3   Bilingual education: simultaneous versus sequential

The claims and counterclaims about bilingual education seem to imply that at some point in their school life, children would need instruction in one language or another or both. This point brings us to the issue of whether the simultaneous or sequential route to bilingual education is the one to follow. We now distinguish between the two routes to bilingual education. According to Baker (1995: 91), the two routes to bilingualism are simultaneous and sequential.

The rationale behind one of the approaches advocated for children to begin reading and writing in a bilingual situation is the progression from the

"known" to the "unknown." That is, the extension of children's existing knowledge and skills. The rationale is consistent with one of Gravelle's (1996: 25) guidelines for supporting language learning in school in that one should build on what the bilingual pupils bring to the learning situation, including their first language and their understanding of languages and how they operate. Research has shown that children's reading success in their second language is connected to their first language reading ability. For instance, when an English reading ability test was administered in Year 5 of schools in Zambia and Malawi, Williams (1996: 195) found that "Zambian children who had their first four years of education through the medium of English are not superior to Malawi children who have had Chichewa as a medium of instruction for those years." Another study by Spada and Lightbown (2002: 29) points to similar findings where Inuit children of Northern Quebec, Canada, were better in comprehension and oral skills in their second language (English or French) after having had initial instruction in their L1.

However, initial instruction is not the only successful approach in guiding children to read in their second language. There are cases of children learning to read two languages simultaneously (Baker 1995: 110). Cummins (1996: 122–123) further explains:

> …in other situations where bilingual students may have varying levels of proficiency in their L1 and English on entry to the program, it may be more effective to promote literacy in both L1 and English simultaneously or in close succession. The goal here would be for transfer across two languages from an early stage by encouraging grades 1 and 2 students to read literature in both languages and write in both languages (e.g. produce and publish bilingual books). This approach has been implemented very successfully since 1971 in the Oyster Elementary School two-way bilingual program in Washington, D.C. Children are reported to be reading in both languages by the middle of the first grade and by grade 3 are reading above national norms…

Although less customary, the case described above exemplifies the possibility of the simultaneous approach also being a successful route. The key factor as mentioned is that children must already have considerable skills in both languages at the point of entry to school. As Baker (1995: 111) puts it, "developing literacy in both languages simultaneously works best when both languages are relatively well-developed."

Having looked briefly at the simultaneous and sequential routes to bilingual education in the school situation, the route to follow would depend on the language situation of the children. Children who are largely monolingual may be guided along the sequential route whereas children who are already bilingual may be guided along the simultaneous route. Baker (ibid. 1995: 110–111) sums up the research findings:

> Sequential rather than simultaneous learning to read in two languages tends to be the norm and tends to have more successful case histories. This route is preferable when one language is stronger than the other. When sequential learning to read and write is adopted, it is important in a language minority context that the stronger language is used. This will usually build on the child's stronger first (minority) language competence and aid the child's motivation and develop more positive attitudes towards literacy. Developing a child's weaker language is often attempted with in-migrant children. For example, a Spanish-speaking in-migrant in the United States will be taught in the majority language of the country—English. Less success and slower development will usually occur than if the child is taught to read and write in the stronger language (Spanish) first.

In most indigenous communities, when the children enter school, the stronger language is usually the native language. The above discussion points strongly to the conclusion that in communities where preschool children are largely monolingual in their native language or first language and must learn English as a second language, English literacy is best developed through first-language literacy first approach. If this approach is not followed in language minority contexts, then children may struggle academically or experience less success or slower development as a result. In sum, of the two routes to bilingual education—simultaneous and sequential—the latter is preferable in most culturally diverse language contexts.

4.4   Circumstances influencing types of programmes

Bilingual programmes are determined largely by the circumstances in which they are situated. Accordingly, programmes are dependent on "program goals, status of the student group (e.g. dominant/subordinated, majority/minority), proportion of instructional time through each language and the sociolinguistic and socio-political situation in the immediate community and wider society" (Cummins 1996: 100). According to Cummins, depending on a combination of these circumstances, different types of bilingual education programmes may be generated.

Since we already know the status of the student group, that is, children of culturally diverse language contexts, we shall first consider programme goals (Subsection 4.4.1). This will be followed by the proportion of instructional time through each language (Subsection 4.4.2), the sociolinguistic situation (Subsection 4.4.3), the socio-political situation (Subsection 4.4.4), and a summary (Subsection 4.4.5).

4.4.1 Programme goals

One of the goals of bilingual education programmes intended for culturally diverse children is the revival or revitalization of languages that have become endangered (Cummins 1996: 101). According to Olko and Wicherkiewicz (2016: 659), when language revitalization entails school education of culturally diverse children in their native language, strong educational/cognitive benefits accrue. One example of this seemed evident in a bilingual education programme for Inuit children in Northern Quebec, Canada. Spada and Lightbown (2002: 230), who observed the programme, reported that all teachers not only acknowledged the importance of maintaining and preserving Inuktitut as a community language, but also saw it as a way to ease children's transition to schooling. The primary goal of the native language programme seemed to permit a transition from the home language to the school language for the children's education (ibid. 2002: 229). Such a programme moves from native to second language. However, these transitional programmes will depend on the extent to which the mother tongue is used before the transition to the second language is made. Where English is the second language, such a transition programme is to develop English academic skills in native language children as quickly as possible, so that they are on par with their counterparts who are native English speakers (Baker 1995: 212). If the instructional time in L1 is minimal, then it is unlikely to be enough to enable children to reach the L1 cognitive levels needed to be academically successful in L2 (Collier 1992: 93). The

overarching goal of transitional bilingual education programmes is to develop competent language skills in the L2.

A safer and more useful goal to pursue appears to come from bilingual programmes of which the primary goal is "to develop bilingual and bi-literacy skills among students" (Cummins 1996: 100) or "to promote among children additive bilingualism—the learning of an L2 while developing and maintaining the L1" (Swain and Johnson 1997: 4). This goal encompasses the ones mentioned earlier, including the goal to foster students' cognitive development resulting in better academic development (Trammell 2016: 4).

Goals affect the instructional time spent in both languages in a culturally diverse language situation. We shall now look at time spent on the languages of instruction.

4.4.2 Proportion of instructional time through each language

In practice, the use of indigenous languages as a medium of instruction is at the initial stages of school. In the case of the Inuit children, instruction in their mother tongue is from kindergarten to Grade 2 after which, instruction is entirely in their L2 except for a brief daily period of language and culture instruction in their L1 (Spada and Lightbown 2002: 212). Yet there are longer periods of instruction. In the case of Malawian schools, in Africa, Chichewa is used in the first four years of education (Williams 1996: 196). In two-way bilingual education or developmental programmes, initial instruction is given predominantly through the medium of the native language; after the initial grades, these programmes maintain close to 50% of instruction in the native language throughout the elementary school (Cummins 1996: 100).

For transitional bilingual education, the short-term programmes of two or three years are referred to as "early-exit" whereas the long-term ones of five to six years are referred to as "late-exit" (Corson1994: 5). For the "early-exit" transitional bilingual education programmes, it was pointed out earlier that when instructional time in L1 is minimal, the programme might not give an adequate base for children to be academically successful in their L2. A similar issue is mentioned in Cummins' (1996: 114) review of the Ramirez Report. Part of the report indicated that students, who were abruptly transitioned into almost all-English instruction in the early grades, seemed to lose ground in relation to the general population between grades 3 and 6 in mathematics, English language, and reading. The reason is that the L1 may not offer higher lessons other than those in basic literacy skills. Similarly, Spada and Lightbown (2002: 229) observed that Inuit students were losing

or failing to develop their L1, especially in terms of language for academic purposes. While the late-exit transitional bilingual programmes may appear to be a better option, all transitional programmes seem to promote subtractive bilingualism. Another issue is the retention of L1 instruction throughout the programme so that it becomes a "Maintenance/Heritage Language" programme (Baker 2006: 216). This programme occurs in situations where children use their native, home, or heritage language in school as a medium of instruction with the full goal of bilingualism (ibid. 2006: 238).

4.4.3   Sociolinguistic situation: distinction between ESL and EFL

One important consideration in the teaching of the English is the approach one should take: teaching English as a second language (ESL) or teaching English as a foreign language (EFL).

In a bilingual or multilingual context, it is useful to consider how one may teach the official language of a country where the official/national language is English. Teaching English can be separated into two sub-categories: ESL and EFL. This distinction is especially helpful for teachers because they will want to make some changes in the way they teach learners in those two different environments.

According to Brown (2000: 193), "Learning ESL—English with a culture where English is spoken natively—may be clearly defined in the case of say, an Arab speaker learning English in the USA or the UK, but not as easily identified where English is already accepted and widely used language for education, government, or business within the country (for example, learning English in the Philippines or India)." In an ESL situation then, learners do not speak or understand English, but live in a place where English is the main language of the community. In this environment, the children have already learned a first language, which is their mother tongue. ESL learners encounter English as soon as they leave the school grounds and whenever they go into the community. They also hear and see it on mass media, on signs, posters, or billboards, in newspapers, books, and magazines. In contrast, Brown (ibid. 2000: 193) goes on to say that "[l]earning EFL, that is, English in one's own culture with few immediate opportunities to use the language within the environment of that culture (for example, a Japanese learning English in Japan), may first also appear to be easy to define." In this environment, learners who are learning EFL do not speak or understand English and live in a community where English is not normally used or

heard by the learner. In this sense, English is a foreign language. Learners hear and speak English in the classroom.

Given the above distinction between ESL and EFL, a teacher should be able to determine which language environment she or he is working in. In the case of Guyana, if one is working with second language learners in urban areas, learners may hear a lot of English spoken and have daily opportunities to speak and use the language. To them, even if they speak Guyanese-Creole English or an Indigenous language, English is a second language, not a foreign one. On the other hand, if one is working with Indigenous learners such as the WaiWai, who live in the remote parts of the country and rarely hear English spoken and have little opportunity outside of the classroom to speak the language as they learn it, then, to them, English is a foreign language.

The ESL/EFL distinction implies very different ways of teaching. As Carter and Nunan (2001: 2) state, the learning environment in which the teaching takes place requires very different materials, syllabuses, and pedagogy. In the case of most EFL contexts, according to Carter and Nunan, the syllabus needs to be carefully structured with extensive recycling of key-target items. At the same time, it is the responsibility of the teacher to provide the cultural aspects of the foreign language. Teaching EFL seems much more difficult and requires more time for learners to be able to acquire it at a level needed to learn new ideas and concepts. This is because, frequently, the only place the learners hear and speak the language is in the classroom.

Any of the approaches may be used in transitional bilingual programmes. Whether the programmes be early-exit or late-exit, there is another concern that they tend to maintain the "societal status quo and the inequities associated with the status quo" (Cummins 1996: 119). In the following subsection, we turn to the socio-political situation.

4.4.4 Socio-political situation

It was stated earlier that transitional bilingual programmes tend to maintain the status quo of dominant–subordinate relations of the wider society. This can be attributed to certain factors. One is that culturally diverse language children such as in the Māori context in New Zealand "share a similar history of colonization to many other indigenous peoples who have become minorities in their own lands" (Durie 1999: 67). Such "minorities" may be referred to as those groups that differ from the dominant societal group in power, identity, and culture (Ferdman 1999: 95). By being constantly

exposed to or bombarded by the language of the dominant culture over the years, the non-dominant groups' native languages become marginalized.

On social justice grounds, Corson (1994: 2) argues that when languages of culturally diverse peoples are marginalized or ignored either as a means of instruction in school or as a curriculum subject, then people perceive that language to be valueless in school. Yet, there are culturally diverse communities that have kept their native languages alive socio-culturally, as in the case of the Guaraní in Paraguay (Wardhaugh 2002: 97). Such communities use their native languages in specified cultural contexts to communicate among family members at home and for other cultural purposes. However, when considered on the basis of the link between literacy and power, the communities tend to be at a disadvantage because "literacy can be seen as the degree to which a person displays those skills that are valued by the dominant group" (Ferdman 1999: 97). The tendency to downgrade or deprioritize the less dominant languages seems to be a result of the perceived supremacy the dominant languages have in a variety of domains and functions in the society at large. English as a dominant world language, on the one hand, has widespread use not only in education systems, but also in technology, medicine, the Internet, and entertainment (Baker 2001: 378). On the other hand, English as a world dominant language may be a result of "linguicism", which functions as ideologies, structures, and practices that are used to legitimize, effectuate, and reproduce unequal divisions of power and resources (material and immaterial) between language groups (Phillipson 2017: 317). Such linguicism is reflected in most education systems for Indigenous peoples and minorities worldwide (ibid. 2016: 317). Phillipson believes that one way to counter linguicism in a dominant language (e.g. English) is that while it should be learned as an addition to people's linguistic repertoire, their native languages should be maintained and used. This is consistent with the argument that the first language and culture of culturally diverse children should not be replaced by the second language, but rather additive bilingualism should be a goal of a bilingual education programme.

Cummins (1996: 15) argues that the interplay of such power generally operates to maintain the division of resources and status in the society, that is, the societal power structure. He (1996: 18) also asserts that the power structure in the wider society strongly influences the instructional organization of schools including "policies, programs, curriculum and assessment". It is not surprising then that there is opposition when bilingual education is advocated, since it implies changing the traditional instructional organization of the schools. Such opposition may stem from the anxieties of public opinion and government which include, among others, the disruption

of mainstream curriculum in schools (Baker 2001: 240). Based on the socio-political issues mentioned above, programmes for culturally diverse learners are likely to be successful if political support of the government is gained.

In the case of Guyana, political support by politicians needs to go beyond verbal means. Currently, there is no clear policy regarding the use of Indigenous languages in schools for Indigenous children (see Section 1.2). As stakeholders suggested at an advocacy meeting for mother tongue-based education, "There should be an educational policy on mother tongue-based instruction for schools" (see Section 3.4.1). In a recent UNICEF-sponsored survey/report entitled "Strategizing for First Language Education in Indigenous Communities in Guyana", one of the major findings suggests that the majority of interviewees would support the Ministry of Education in a policy decision that moves towards introducing programmes for mother tongue early childhood education in Indigenous areas (Edwards 2012: 9). If such a policy becomes a reality, robust community and family participation needs to be a part for the programmes for them to thrive.

4.4.5 Summary

While programme planners may wish to adopt the safer goal that promotes bilingualism and biliteracy skills, other surrounding circumstances may not allow this. If the political environment, for example, is not very supportive of promoting biliteracy skills, then the planners may have to settle for either the "early-exit" or "late-exit" transitional programme. Sometimes the political support also hinges on the available financial resources from the government or other stakeholder groups. In sum, a consideration of all circumstances will shape the type of programme that is suited to the context.

4.5   Types of language education programmes

In this section, language education programmes are first categorized as monolingual forms of education for bilinguals and forms of bilingual education for bilinguals. Secondly, the forms of bilingual education for bilinguals are subdivided into "strong" and "weak" forms of bilingual education programmes.

In what follows, the language education programmes are described and analysed in Subsection 4.5.1. This is followed by a comparison of bilingual education programmes for English language learners in Subsection

4.5.2 and reference to intercultural education programmes in Subsection 4.5.3. I provide a summary in Subsection 4.5.4.

4.5.1 Ten broad types of language education programmes

Baker (2006: 215–216) proposes ten broad types of language education programmes. Of these ten, Baker identifies three monolingual forms of education for bilinguals and seven forms of bilingual education for bilinguals. Of the seven forms of bilingual education, four are differentiated as "strong" and three as "weak". The difference is that the "strong" types, in terms of aims, content, and structure, foster bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism, whereas "weak" types foster monolingualism or limited bilingualism (Baker 2006: 228).

Following are paraphrased descriptions of each broad type in terms of medium of instruction and students' linguistic identity (Baker 2001: 197–221). Baker uses the terms "majority" and "minority" to describe the languages under consideration, but these terms may be seen by others in the light of dominant–subordinate relations in the wider society. To avoid the pejorative connotation, the terms "majority" and "minority" may assume (See Section 4.1), I shall use instead the terms "national" and "culturally diverse", respectively.

Firstly, there are three monolingual forms of language education for bilinguals: Mainstreaming/submersion (Structured Immersion); Mainstreaming/submersion with withdrawal classes/Sheltered English/Content-based ESL; and Segregationist. Mainstreaming/submersion (Structured Immersion) is conducted in the national language in mainstream schools and is intended for culturally diverse students. Mainstreaming/submersion with withdrawal classes/Sheltered English/Content-based ESL may be compensatory lessons in the national language (e.g. English as a Second Language) in mainstream schools and is intended for culturally diverse students. Segregationist is conducted in a culturally diverse language for culturally diverse students and is not part of the mainstream school system.

Secondly, there are three "weak" forms of bilingual education for bilinguals: Transitional; Mainstream with language learning; and Separatist. Transitional comprises two main types: early-exit and late-exit. The former refers to a maximum of two years of initial instruction conducted in the mother tongue for culturally diverse students before the instruction is conducted in the second language. The latter generally begins in a similar way as the early-exit type but continues for about forty per cent of

instruction in the mother tongue until about the sixth grade. Mainstream with Foreign Language Teaching is conducted in the national language (also the home language) and is intended for national language students. In this programme, the foreign language is taught as a subject like other core subjects, such as history, science, and mathematics. Separatist is conducted in the culturally diverse language for culturally diverse students as way of trying to protect the culturally diverse language from being dominated by the national language.

Thirdly, there are four "strong" forms of bilingual education for bilinguals: Immersion; Maintenance/Heritage Language; Two-Way Dual Language; and Mainstream Bilingual. Immersion, which is derived from the Canadian Immersion model, is initially conducted in a national second language (e.g. French) for national first language (e.g. English) students and later in the national first language. Maintenance/Heritage Language is conducted in culturally diverse and national languages for culturally diverse students. In this way, the culturally diverse language is protected and developed alongside the development of the national language. The Two-Way/Dual Language is conducted in both the culturally diverse and national languages and is intended for approximately equal numbers of culturally diverse and national language speakers in the same classroom. Mainstream Bilingual is conducted jointly in two or more national languages for national language students. Factors such as the use of languages in the classroom, whether the first and the second language are equally being developed and whether one language is seen as a replacement of another seem to determine such bilingual forms of education.

The broad types of language education programmes that have been typically practised in culturally diverse contexts are the following: Mainstreaming/Submersion (Structured Immersion); Mainstreaming/Submersion Withdrawal Classes/Sheltered English/Content-based; Transitional; and Maintenance/Heritage Language. The first two are monolingual forms of education for bilinguals and are "weak". The last two are bilingual forms of education for bilinguals, with the transitional being counted as "weak" and the Maintenance/Heritage as "strong". Table 9 below shows an analysis of the ten broad programmes.

Table 9. Ten broad types of language education for bilinguals suggested by Baker (adapted from Baker 2006: 215–216).

MONOLINGUAL FORMS OF EDUCATION FOR BILINGUALS				
Type of Programmes	Typical type of child	Language of the classroom	Societal and Educational Aim	Aim in Language Outcome
Mainstreaming/ submersion (structured immersion)	Culturally diverse	National language	Assimilation/ subtractive	Mono-lingualism
Mainstreaming/ submersion with withdrawal classes/ sheltered English/content-based ESL	Culturally diverse	National language with 'Pull-out' L2 lessons	Assimilation/ subtractive	Mono-lingualism
Segregationist	Culturally diverse	Culturally diverse language (forced, no choice)	Apartheid	Mono-lingualism

WEAK FORMS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION FOR BILINGUALS				
Transitional	Culturally diverse	Moves from culturally diverse to national language	Assimilation/ subtractive	Relative mono-lingualism
Mainstream with foreign language teaching	National language	National language with L2/FL lessons	Limited enrichment	Limited bilingualism
Separatist	Culturally diverse	Culturally diverse language (out of choice)	Detachment/ autonomy	Limited bilingualism

STRONG FORMS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION FOR BILINGUALISM AND BILITERACY				
Immersion	National language	Bilingual with initial emphasis on L2	Pluralism and enrichment. Additive.	Bilingualism and biliteracy
Maintenance/heritage language	Culturally diverse	Bilingual with emphasis on L1	Maintenance, pluralism, and enrichment. Additive.	Bilingualism and literacy
Two way/dual language	Mixed language: culturally diverse and national language	Culturally diverse and national	Maintenance, pluralism, and enrichment. Additive.	Bilingualism and biliteracy
Mainstream bilingual	National language	Two national languages. Pluralism	Maintenance and biliteracy and enrichment. Additive.	Bilingualism

4.5.2 Comparison of bilingual programmes for English language learners

Similar patterns of "weakness" or "strength" that characterize several bilingual education programmes for English language learners (ELLs) have been demonstrated by research studies in the United States. In their study entitled "School Effectiveness for Language minority Students", Thomas and Collier (1997: 6) collected data from well-implemented English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual programmes offered to second language learners in five large school districts in the United States during the years 1982 to 1996. The researchers (1997: 54) reported that from over 700,000 students' records, they were able to identify 42,317 student records in 4-year, 5-year, 6-year, 7-year, and 8-year overlapping testing cohorts to present a longitudinal perspective.

In comparing the ESL/bilingual programme types with the average student with English as the first language, the researchers found "dramatic differences in long term achievement, by the amount of L1 instructional support provided for language minority students in their elementary school program" (ibid. 1997: 57). Four programmes that are transitional or ESL-related resulted in moderate increases in performance of English language learners relative to the average performance of native-English speakers. Two programmes—two-way developmental and one-way developmental—resulted in English language learners finishing above the average of native-English speakers. Out of the six programmes analysed, the two-way

developmental and the one-way developmental programmes have shown that students exhibited superior performance in contrast to students in the transitional or ESL programmes. According to Thomas and Collier (1997: 50), the following is the clear message from their findings:

> […] all language minority groups benefit enormously in the long-term from on-grade level academic work in L1. The more children develop L1 academically and cognitively at an age-appropriate level, the more successful they will be in academic achievement in L2 by the end of their school years.

The implication is that instruction in the children's L1 should continue for as long as possible into the elementary or primary school. In addition, whilst the children go on to learn the L2 the L1 should not be replaced since it also complements the L2 besides other affective benefits such as the strengthening of identity and the building of self-confidence and self-esteem. In this way, children may develop sufficient competence in their L1, needed for them to be academically successful in their L2. Figure 21 below illustrates the comparison of the six bilingual programme types with the average student with English as the first language.
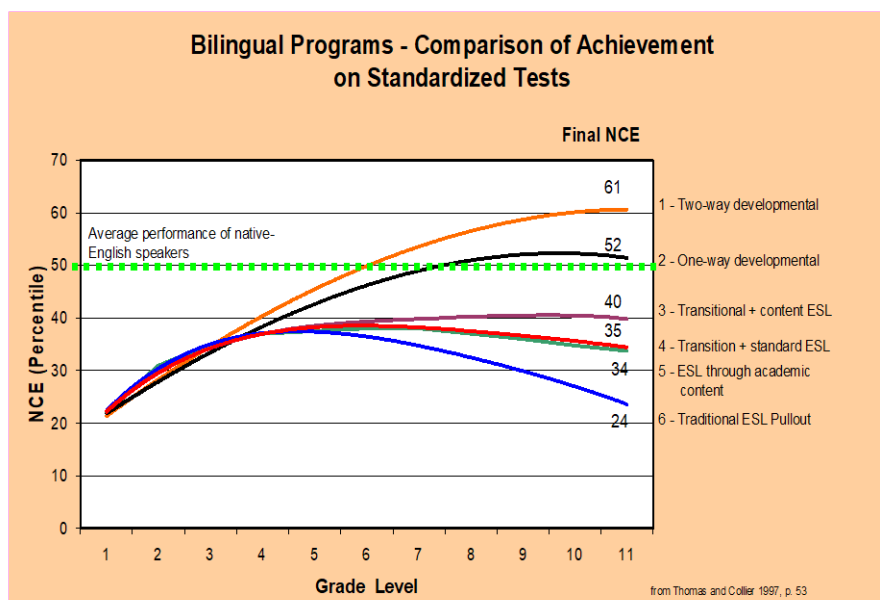
Figure 21. Graph of findings from the Thomas and Collier study (reproduced from Thomas and Collier 1997: 3).

A review of the afore-mentioned study was undertaken by the Centre for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE) in 2003. One of the major conclusions according to the study review is as follows (CREDE 2003: 1):

> The amount of formal primary language schooling that a student has received is the strongest predictor of second language student achievement. That is, the greater number of years of primary language, grade-level schooling that a student has received, the higher his/her level of achievement is shown to be.

While many of findings of this longitudinal study are relevant to the context of a highly developed country, some of the major findings have obvious implications for culturally diverse language contexts in developing countries. The findings of this study need to be carefully considered in order to understand which ones successfully promote the long-term achievement of English language learners.

Since the Two-way developmental programmes involve the use of dominant/national languages, it seems unrealistic to try to adopt this programme in developing countries like Guyana. In the context of Indigenous Peoples in Guyana, the most appropriate model to adapt then, seems to be One-way developmental, also called "Developmental Maintenance" (Benson 2004: 15). Such a programme shares the goals and duration of Two-way Developmental programmes but offers instruction only to second language learners of one language background (CREDE 2003: 1). As a strong form of bilingual education for bilinguals, the One-way developmental/Developmental Maintenance is compatible with Baker's Maintenance/Heritage Language Programme. As emphasized by Benson (2004: 17), selection of an appropriate bilingual education model is the key to educational quality.

4.5.3 Intercultural education programmes

In the previous Subsections (4.5.1 and 4.5.2), the words "heritage" and "maintenance" respectively were mentioned in the most appropriate models to adapt. These words suggest that these programmes are not restricted to merely education and language learning, but an education has its basis on the children's traditions, customs, and beliefs.

A key example of these programmes is the "Heritage Language Playschools for Indigenous Minorities" in developed Malaysia (Smith 2012: x). However, the ideas on the children's culture in terms of the US and

European discourses on multiculturalism focus on tolerance and acceptance, whereas Latin American thinkers focus on interculturality that stresses recognition and exchange between cultures (Gustafson 2014: 75). In Latin America, such an approach is called "intercultural education" which "now represents a new social paradigm which values diversity and puts it at the heart of education for all students" (Aikman 2006: 4). The initial emphasis is on the development of the learners' own culture before the consideration of other culture(s). In this sense, "there must be a strong phase of intraculturism before undertaking dialogue among other cultures" (Hornberger 2009: 201). In some cases, this concept of "interculturality" found its way into educational policies on distinct national levels in countries such as Nicaragua and Bolivia (Aman and Ireland 2015: 2). The developmental/maintenance model then should also be further enhanced as intercultural education, following the current educational reform attempts in Latin America and other countries with culturally diverse contexts.

4.5.4 Summary

We have seen that various factors such as students' linguistic identity, the medium of instruction, societal/educational aims, and language outcomes characterize ten types of language education programmes as suggested by Baker. Seven broad types of bilingual programmes can be labelled either "weak" or "strong". Such labels seem to fit some bilingual programmes that were reviewed in the United States, the findings of which can be applicable to culturally diverse language contexts.

In contemplating bilingual education in culturally diverse language contexts where learners are following a monolingual model or programme, implementers could switch to either a bilingual model of transition (quick-exit or late-exit) or developmental maintenance/one way-developmental or intercultural education. If it is not possible for the one-way developmental model/Developmental maintenance/Intercultural education type to be selected, then the second-best option seems to be the late-exit transitional type. The third best option seems to be the early-exit type.

4.6   Planning a bilingual education programme

When a type of bilingual programme has been selected for the situation, first and foremost is planning. Planning entails the identification of features and components that will make the programme successful. When these features

and components have been identified, the programme planners need to ensure that they are incorporated to produce the outputs and outcomes to realize the programme objectives.

In this section, I discuss the proposed stages for a sustainable bilingual education programme in Subsection 4.6.1. This is followed by a sketch of the different essential components of such a programme in Subsection 4.6.2 and a summary and discussion in 4.6.3.

4.6.1 Proposed stages for a sustainable bilingual education programme

The one-way developmental or the developmental maintenance programme parallels the type that Greg and Diane Dekker (2016: 1), Malone (2016: 1), and Walter (2016: 10) refer to as Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education programmes (MTB-MLE). According to Malone (2005: 79), a review of these programmes reveals that, in addition to leadership and support for the programmes, successful MTB-MLE programmes usually include certain essential features and components. One such feature includes four main phases, namely, (1) build small children's fluency and confidence in oral L1; (2) introduce reading and writing in L1; (3) introduce oral L2; and (4) introduce reading and writing in L2 (ibid. 2005: 76). Malone goes on to emphasize that as the programme progresses each phase is built on the preceding one and is reinforced throughout the progression. After the fourth phase, both L1 and L2 should be continued as subjects. Overall, the four phases integrate culturally diverse languages into national language programmes.

The four phases can be incorporated into a progression plan (Malone 2006: 6). The plan begins with developing children's oral L1. The next activities are introducing written LI and oral L2, followed by introducing the L2 alphabet and bridging to reading and writing in L2. As can be seen from Table 10 below, the main stages are not distinct and may overlap. As pointed out by Malone, in situations where the progression plan may not be applicable, it should be adapted.

Table 10. A progression plan for a programme from kindergarten
(K)/nursery school through primary school (Adapted from Malone 2006: 6)

K1 (age 4)	K2 (age 5)	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Develop **oral L1**	Develop oral L1 **Introduce written L1** **Introduce oral L2 (2nd semester)**	Develop oral & written L1, oral L2 **Introduce L2 alphabet (2nd semester)**	Develop oral & written L1, oral L2 **Bridge to reading and writing in L2**	L1 & L2 taught as subjects	L1 & L2 taught as subjects	L1 & L2 taught as subjects	L1 & L2 taught as subjects
L1 for teaching	*L1 for teaching*	*L1 for teaching*	*Both L1 & L2 for teaching*	*Both L1 & L2 for teaching*	*Both L1 & L2 for teaching*	*Both L1 & L2 for teaching*	*Both L1 & L2 for teaching*

While all stages are important, careful attention should be given to the development of oral L2 before "bridging" to reading and writing in L2. In underscoring the importance of the development of oral L2 (English), Mace-Matluck et al. (1989: 208) assert that children who have learned to read successfully in their L1 can be taught to read at the same level in English once their oral skills in English have reached an acceptable level of proficiency. Oral proficiency in the target language is therefore important for the development of the second language (e.g. English) because "student performance suggests that it is overlooked in instruction" (August and Shanahan 2006: 4). A similar reason is that programmes in economically disadvantaged countries often attempt to transition to the L2 only after one or two years without consolidating L2 communication skills (Benson 2004: 15), resulting in less success and slower development in children (see Section 4.3). In this respect, children also need both spoken English and reading and writing academic English. Therefore, the teaching of the second language should begin as a completely oral component as soon as it is considered feasible (Craig 2004: 8). Based on this suggestion, it should not be taken for granted that children will automatically learn the L2 by listening to instructions in it. The implication is that teachers should be aware that teaching oral L2 is a prerequisite to teaching of reading and writing in it.

Secondly, careful consideration should also be given to building a good bridge to the new language(s) (Kosonen et al. 2007: 14). According to Young (2005: 37), the "literature bridge" should consist of sequential, graded materials to move the learners "step-by-step" towards reading fluency. When children seem to have developed their oral L2 skills, there is the tendency for teachers to quickly introduce materials that are designed for national language children. Rather, such materials should be introduced after the specially graded materials. In this way, second language learners are more likely to transfer their oral L2 skills into the written L2 with greater ease.

4.6.2 Essential components of a bilingual education programme

Based on experiences in planning and documenting mother tongue-based educational programmes, there is documentation that provides us with valuable information that may guide us in designing our own programmes. An overview of these programmes reveals several common but essential components that characterize successful programmes.

Firstly, in order to have a background of the community in which the programme will be situated, it is necessary to conduct a language survey. Preliminary research of attitudes towards individual uses of the first language, learning needs, and interests of potential participants is essential (Kosonen et al. 2007: 40). Needs analysis is therefore essential. Other essential components include the following: mobilization of stakeholders and supporting them to take action (UNESCO 2005: 23); recruitment methods (Malone 2005: 79); development of a writing system before start of a literacy programme (Young 2005: 29); government-produced materials that can be adapted to a variety of multilingual communities (Malone 2005: 79); development of literature (Young 2005: 35); and programme evaluation that provides information (Thomas 2005: 55). Activities that embed these components take special relevance in linguistically diverse countries, especially in contexts where other languages have relatively far fewer speakers in comparison to speakers of the national dominant language. Fitting into such contexts are the predominantly Wapishana communities in Guyana where a mother tongue-based approach to education at the nursery level is being piloted. Since a new pedagogy will be needed, one of the first considerations should be the special training of teachers. The presence or non-presence of this component and others will be determined, wherever possible, as part of the findings of this study in Chapter 6.

In this section, we sketch what these essential components are, since they implicitly set the standards by which newly implemented programmes may be gauged. These essential components—not necessarily in the order they should be implemented—are sketched under subsections as follows: conducting preliminary research (4.6.2.1), mobilizing resources and developing linkages (4.7.2.2), recruitment and training (4.6.2.3), developing an orthography (4.6.2.4), developing curriculum and instructional materials (4.6.2.5), developing literature (4.6.2.6), and evaluating the programme and recording its progress (4.6.2.7).

4.6.2.1   Conducting preliminary research

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Section 1.1), a programme that is likely to be sustained emanates from the community's self-identification of its desired outcomes in connection to its problems and needs. These can be determined by collecting information related to a range of topics that may include potential stakeholders, the writing system for the language, the educational institutions in the community, the community members' attitudes towards literacy, ways literate people use literacy and the literacy abilities of the people.

It is advisable that researchers collaborate with the people to determine their needs by first gaining permission from the leaders of the community (Lambert 2014: 213). This initial collaboration is an example of a bottom-up approach to introduce a programme from the grassroots level. Just as how the identification of the desired outcomes of the community is done at the grassroots level, so is the mobilization of its people.

4.6.2.2   Mobilizing resources and developing linkages.

Mobilization of resources may begin in the community where the programme is to operate. The mobilization of people at the grassroots level is a good foundation for strong programmes because they allow all stakeholders to contribute to sustainability, but their efforts must be enabled by legislation at the official level (Benson 2004: 7). This suggests that linkages be developed with all stakeholders, including those outside the community.

Mobilizing resources may be enabled through internal advocacy and external advocacy (Lewis and Simons 2016: 167). For internal advocacy, Lewis and Simons suggest that an action plan be developed aimed at

developing an awareness of the potential benefits of sustainable language use. For external advocacy, they suggest that if the external policy environment is hostile, it may require the community to organize itself with other stakeholders to address policy issues through the political processes that are available to them. In the absence of a written document that conveys government's approval for a culturally diverse language project, there are other means of winning the support of stakeholders. Malone (2005: 79) notes that awareness-raising and mobilization activities should be those that provide information, generate interest and support for the programme within and outside the community. In practical terms this would entail making colourful posters that advertise the programme, talking informally with people, giving speeches, doing skits and demonstrations at public settings, writing letters of information to people who might be interested in the programme, and inviting influential guest speakers to give speeches at opening and closing ceremonies.

4.6.2.3   Recruitment and training

Before consideration is given to the people who will need training, one of the first priorities is to form an implementation team that will be responsible for planning and initiating the programme (UNESCO 2005: 23). The implementation team should then bring motivated and respected people into the programme and build their professional capacity (Kosonen et al. 2007: 15). Workers that will be needed are teachers, writers, editors, artists, supervisor/coordinator, and trainer. Once the implementation team has completed the steps above, they identify the people to be trained, taking into the consideration the various responsibilities and concomitant qualifications. Not to de-emphasize the other workers, the suggested qualifications the programme teachers and trainers would need to be effective are paraphrased below:

> A teacher should be a fluent speaker of the language of instruction in addition to being able to read and write it to be a good model to the learners (Kosonen et al. 2005: 49). One of the first steps in the training of teachers even if they are mother tongue speakers is to ensure that they can also read and write in the mother tongue as well as the second language, before they are deemed ready to teach children in the mother tongue and the other language (Trammell 2016: 6). Crucial is teacher proficiency (oral, reading, writing) in the languages(s) of instruction (Walter 2016: 1).

The trainer takes responsibility for training the workers, especially the teachers. The trainer should be able to speak, read, and write the second language. Being able to speak, read, and write the first language of the community will be an asset. An additional responsibility is ensuring the application of particularly useful training methods tested by practitioners in the field. Noting that adults learn best through the use of dialogue education and praxis to reflect on their own learning and make changes where necessary, Trammell (2016: 7) observed that—in teacher training seminars of the Kom Education Pilot project in Cameroon—when the above-mentioned principles were applied in a four-step method, it proved to be very effective in transforming classroom practices. The steps are as follows: (1) explain the new strategy; (2) model or demonstrate the strategy in the language; (3) let teachers practise the strategy in small groups with observation by the facilitator, followed by each teacher teaching the strategy to others and then helping one another by reminding them of the steps in the process; and (4) let teachers gather together to reflect on the experience and make suggestions for improvement (ibid. 2016: 7).

In addition to their responsibilities and qualifications, the workers should be committed to the programme and be respected by the community. The workers who are recruited from the community are specially trained for the purpose of the programme. This capacity building will likely increase the ownership of the programme and encourage the workers to stay with the programme.

4.6.2.4   Developing an orthography

Prior to the start of a literacy programme, a writing system needs to be developed (Young 2005: 29). If one has to be developed, this involves identifying the symbols that will form the writing system. In this respect, the assistance of a linguist who is familiar with the native and national languages will be needed. This language specialist should be part of the support committee that will choose the symbols for their writing system.

The writing system is the foundation for effective materials, and whether the writing system is already established or one has to be developed, there are challenges (Weber 2016: 9). Examples of how writing issues can be dealt with were given in Section 3.4. The materials may then be developed based on the approved orthography.

4.6.2.5   Developing curriculum and instructional materials

A team of people should take responsibility for the development of the curriculum and materials**.** If possible, a professionally trained educator with knowledge and experience in developing teaching materials, who will ensure that the materials follow good educational principles, should be recruited**.** In addition, government-produced curriculum guides that can be adapted to multilingual communities should be considered (UNESCO 2005: 82). The development of the curriculum should also take into consideration the following**:** values of the community (see Subsection 2.4.6.6); programme goals (see Subsection 4.4.1); proportion of instructional time through each language (see Subsection 4.4.2); the type of mother tongue-based bilingual education programme (see Subsection 4.5.2); and the pedagogical strategies and materials (see Subsection 4.7).

Together with all the above, the curriculum should also consider developing cultural, social, and historical awareness of Indigenous Peoples in accordance with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, see Section 1.1). The curriculum can be extended to include topics that refer to the history, culture, and spiritual beliefs of other Indigenous Peoples in the country and elsewhere in the world. In this way, the children can become aware of the similarities and differences between theirs and other peoples.

4.6.2.6   Developing literature

Once the teaching of literacy is intended, it is important to have reading materials.

Before developing literature, the implementation team needs to consider the reading audience in the community and the purpose for reading. For beginning readers, the purpose would be to get information. When people first learn to read in their first language, they need materials that are short and easy and about people, animals, and places that they are familiar with. These materials also promote readers' awareness and appreciation of their culture. As they progress in their reading in both their first and second languages, learners will need materials that are longer and more complex.

Young (2005: 35) suggests four stages of literature development that need to be considered: stage 1 literature for learning to read (L1); stage 2 literature for gaining fluency (L1); stage 3 literature for transfer to a second language (L1–L2); and stage 4 literature for life-long reading (L1 and L2). For young learners, literature in stage 1 that would be culturally appropriate

(see Subsection 4.7.1.2) are original stories, songs, and legends created by community members and from oral tradition put into written form. Stories can also be created about the writer's experiences with and outside the community. An example of material that can be adapted is the shell book, which is a book or other kind of reading material that is produced from a prepared "shell" or template, designed in such a way that the same title can be reproduced easily in different languages (Kosonen et al. 2007: 44). According to the authors, shell books are well-suited to certain situations and types of literature, and they complement literature that has been locally produced in writer's workshops. In addition, mother tongue speakers can translate materials from another language into the first language of the learners. However, these translated materials are more difficult to read, the reason being that simply translating such materials may result in content that is unfamiliar or inappropriate, especially for those in remote communities (Malone 2005: 78). The literature can be created in a variety of formats such as small books, big books, flip charts, and posters (Young 2005: 38). On the basis of the above, beginning readers are more likely to find the created materials more interesting and easier to read than materials with topics that are unfamiliar to them.

4.6.2.7   Evaluating the programme and recording its progress

Evaluating and documenting are other essential features of successful mother tongue-based education programmes. In terms of evaluating a course, Cameron (2001: 222) notes the following:

> …we would need to collect many different types of information: course documentation, observation of lessons, interviews with pupils and teachers, course feedback questionnaires, examination results. Analysing and combining the different types of information would enable a judgement to be made about its success, or viability of cost effectiveness, of the course.

To arrive at a judgement about a course or programme, a range of different types of evaluation needs to be considered to have the different types of information needed. Thomas (2005: 56) refers to these types as context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation (also called formative evaluation) and impact evaluation (also called summative evaluation). Thomas goes on to point out the types of information obtained from each type of evaluation. Context evaluation provides information about the community's situation, needs, problems, and goals. Input evaluation provides information about the potential resources and the appropriateness of

the programme plan. Formative evaluation primarily provides information about strengths and weaknesses of the programme plan and implementation. Summative evaluation is about whether the objectives were achieved. For each type of evaluation, the relevant records are also documented and kept about the baseline information, implementation process, and comparison of the programme with the original situation. This is also in keeping with reporting to stakeholders and maintaining a record of the programme (Thomas 2005: 55).

From this information about the four types of evaluation, the input evaluation should be done before the programme begins, the formative evaluation at regular intervals throughout the programme, and the summative evaluation at the end of the programme. As can be seen, evaluation of a programme is not a straightforward activity. Thus, the person or staff responsible for the evaluation would require prior special training and with experience and guidance would get better at it.

4.6.3 Summary and discussion

The proposed stages for a bilingual programme may overlap and be adapted to suit the context. The essential components seem compatible with late-exit transitional or developmental maintenance programmes discussed in Section 4.5.2, because the longer the duration of the programme the more information there will be to evaluate the programme. In evaluating the impact of end-of-programme, the developmental maintenance model lends itself well as opposed to the early-exit model, a weaker form of bilingual education. However, according to Benson (2004: 15), "even some time spent in the L1 is preferable to submersion because there are so many affective benefits associated with validation of the first language and culture, and teacher–student interaction is automatically facilitated to some degree by L1 use." In addition, the explicit teaching of topics of the children's heritage culture should be added to the essential components. The teaching of cultural contents would largely be consistent with practices in the wider context: creating space for practices at what had traditionally been at the less powerful ends of Hornberger's continua model of biliteracy (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester 2000: 99). All in all, the developmental maintenance or the intercultural model appears to be the best for the children's bilingual, biliterate, bicultural, and academic development.

It is important to note that the features by themselves do not necessarily characterize strong bilingual programmes. Of significance is the presence of ingredients of high degree such as "adequate quality materials",

"well-trained teachers", "effective use of the materials", and "active community participation". Such ingredients or indicators of success should corroborate in all components to determine that a programme is a success or a very strong one. As pointed out in Section 1.4, the planning process is a critical prerequisite to a strong programme. Even if the programme is in the early stages, there is space to ascertain the presence of certain ingredients, forming the basis for improvement as the programme unfolds. The next section will focus on pedagogical strategies and materials.

4.7   Pedagogical strategies and materials

When they enter formal schooling, most culturally diverse children speak their mother tongue and must eventually learn the second language, English. It must be pointed out that the learners in focus are young learners, beginning at their foundational years of schooling. Therefore, the strategies and materials considered are found to be effective with culturally diverse children in the first few years of kindergarten (nursery) and elementary (primary) schooling. These strategies and activities also offer the foundation for higher levels of learning which are not discussed here. However, as children begin to develop their reading and writing skills, these initial successes will lead to more advanced skills as children progress to higher level grades. The strategies and materials that are found applicable to the Wapishana context will be considered later in chapter 6.

In this section, approaches in reading instruction are discussed in Subsection 4.7.1. Next, I look at a proposed instructional approach comprised of other strategies with related materials in Subsection 4.7.2. I provide a summary in Subsection 4.7.3.

4.7.1 Approaches in reading instruction

It was mentioned Section 4.6.1 that the first stage of a successful mother tongue-based literacy programme should be the building of the children's fluency and confidence in oral L1. As children progress to reading and writing their L1, one of the first formal contexts they would find themselves in is the classroom that has printed materials.

In this section, I discuss the bottom-up and top-down approaches that are appropriate for the teaching of literacy in Subsection 4.7.1.1. I then focus on reading whole texts in Subsection 4.7.1.2, followed by reading words and

parts of words in Subsection 4.7.1.3. I then focus on the balanced methods in Subsection 4.7.1.4.

4.7.1.1   Bottom-up and top-down approaches

When reading is seen as a product, the term bottom-up has been used for approaches to reading that "emphasise text-based features at word and sentence level", whereas when reading is seen as a process with a focus on the reader, the term top-down has sometimes been used for approaches that give "greater emphasis to the kinds of background and values which the reader brings to reading" (Wallace 2001: 22). Related to the latter is the "whole language" approach, by which teachers attempt to encourage learning by involving students in doing real language activities (Waters 1998: 155). In the practice of the bottom-up approach, Wallace (2001: 22) mentions the "look-and-say or whole-word methods where learners are encouraged to acquire a sight vocabulary, largely through memorising." Wallace further mentions the teaching approach of "phonics", which promotes the skill of "phonemic awareness, as evidenced by sensitivity to the sound constituents of words, allowing the learner to map the letters in words onto an equivalence of sound" (ibid. 2001: 21). In other words, phonics teaching promotes the skill in relating letter shapes to sounds.

For young learners to become skilled readers, they would need to alternatively draw information processed at different levels of knowledge and skills (Cameron 2001: 135). According to Cameron, "the world" level, for example, corresponds with children's own knowledge of their cultural background. The "text" level may include the organization and structure of texts. The "sentence" level may entail the coordination of sentences. The "words" level may involve the recognition of words and spelling patterns. The "sound–letters" level may involve the skills in relating letter shapes to sounds. In effect, the bottom-up and top-down approaches to teaching literacy is displayed by Cameron's model of skilled reading in Figure 22 below.

knowledge		skills
skilled reading is a process of constructing meaning from written language		
• background knowledge of topic • functions of literacy in • uses of different genres / text types	**THE WORLD** ⇑ ⇓	• activate relevant knowledge of topic • activate vocabulary
• organisation and structure of texts • paragraphing • use and meaning of discourse markers	**TEXT** ⇑ ⇓	• recognise text type • locate key information • identify main points / detail • follow the line of argument • work out explicit / implicit meaning
• co-ordination and subordination • word order • meaning of punctuation • clause grammar	**SENTENCES** ⇑ ⇓	• work out how clauses relate to each other • identify verb and relation of other words to the verb • recognise formulaic chunks
• sight vocabulary • affixes • spelling • morphemes	**WORDS** ⇑ ⇓	• recognise by sight • guess meaning of new words from context • break words into morphemes • break words into syllables
• spelling patterns • meanings of common morphemes	**SYLLABLES** (spoken) **MORPHEMES** (written) ⇑ ⇓	• break syllables into onset and rime • spot same rime / morpheme in different words • use analogy to work out word
• grapheme-phoneme correspondences • the alphabetic principle • script • names / shapes of letters of the alphabet • letter clusters / digraphs	**SOUNDS – LETTERS**	• relate letter shape to sound • notice initial and final consonants in words • blend sounds to syllables

Figure 22. Skilled reading in English (from Cameron 2001: 135).

While the above model pertains primarily to skilled reading in English, the levels or scales from "The World" to "Sounds–Letters" generally correspond to reading whole texts and word parts in other languages that use more or less the same roman letters as in English; hence, most of the principles may be generally applied to such other languages. Cameron (2001: 123) notes that at the primary or elementary level, there has been opposition between the "whole language" approach and "phonics" teaching. However, depending on the lesson, some approaches or methods could be better employed than others. As Waters (1998: 139) notes, even though one approach is used primarily, there is no reason why other approaches cannot be used whenever there is a need or an advantage in doing so. As they become more fluent readers, for example, children need to progress to whole-language techniques. In a spelling lesson, the children

may need the phonics approach. As the need for a particular technique or approach arises, whether it is the whole language or phonics approach, the teacher may appropriately employ it. Both approaches are therefore important as children need them all anyway.

4.7.1.2   Reading whole texts

One of the contexts by which literacy is acquired is through the use of storybook reading with children (Hudelson 1994: 132**).** The format often used are big books, which are "A-3 sized or larger, with clear uncluttered illustrations that help learners understand what is said in the text" (Kosonen et al. 2007: 43). According to Kosonen et al., with language that is natural, predictable, memorable, and interesting, these books also provide learners with an immediate opportunity to experience reading, reading together with the facilitator and each other (ibid. 2007: 34). For the language to be predictable, the stories should have lots of repetition because children tend to love such stories. As noted by Hudelson (1994: 99), with repetitions, teachers can direct children to particular features of the text so that they can predict what they are going to read next, making them feel part of the story. In this way, stories may contribute to focused literacy skills practice, according to Cameron (2001: 178). For the stories to be memorable, they should be familiar or culturally appropriate. All this helps in the easier transmission of knowledge and skills. As noted by Wilson (2008: 32), when listeners know where the storyteller is coming from and know the story fits in the storyteller's life, it makes the absorption of knowledge easier.

From the above-mentioned strategy for teaching literacy, the stress is that learning always begins with the experience of the whole story (Hudelson 1994: 145). However, as the literacy lessons progress overtime, there is the also the opportunity for teachers to alternatively use the top-down and bottom-up skills in reading**.** While it would appear that the big book learning begins with the experience of the whole story, this does not last for long. For instance, the introduction of the lesson may begin with a discussion of the story**,** but it quickly becomes obvious that readers would need information from other levels of knowledge and skills to understand the parts of the text.

From the above-mentioned features of the big book, it is not clear what sequential steps should be generally followed. A clearer sequence may be adopted from the reading plan termed "Talk, Read, Talk, Read, Do Talk" (Waters 1998: 163). This plan has been found to be effective in the teaching vernacular literacy in Papua New Guinea with adults and children. This reading plan is paraphrased below.

1.   Talk—Give a short talk about the main character or theme of the story.

2.   Read—Read the big book phrase by phrase, following smoothly underneath the words with a stick (pointer) as they are spoken. As you read, draw the children's attention to the repetitive parts.

3.   Talk—Talk about the pictures page by page, beginning with questions such as "What do you see in each picture?" "What do you think about each picture?" This helps children to express themselves freely. Avoid "yes/no" or simple answer questions.

4.   Read—Read the story again. Once the students know some of the parts, you can divide them into groups and have one group read one part and the other group another part.

5.   Do Talk—Play a game or do an activity related to the activity. This provides further opportunities for the students to be able to talk and think about the story and its main points (ibid. 1998: 163).

It may not be practicable to go through all the steps in a single short lesson. For the first lesson, for example, the teacher may cover the first step or two. For the following lesson, the teacher may continue with the subsequent step(s). This five-step plan in the use of the big book should guide the teachers on what to cover, depending on the circumstances or the children. As Waters (ibid. 208) pointed out, some steps that work well are worth continuing. After these steps in the plan are completed, a review may include other extended activities such as dramatizing the story, writing words and sentences, and recreating the story so that it has a different ending.

4.7.1.3   Reading words and parts of words

The "look and say" and "phonics" approaches to reading are opposite to the whole language approach, since they correspond to the "words" and "sounds–letters" levels, respectively. As such, they follow the bottom-up approach to reading. One criticism levelled at reading books that follow these approaches is that they do not lend themselves much flexibility in discussion and that they discourage people from expressing and writing their own ideas and words (Taylor 1993: 111).

`   In culturally diverse contexts, literacy workers usually use primers, which are reading books that have pre-packaged and predetermined materials for reading lessons, but the pre-packaged lessons can be changed to fit the learners' expectations (Waters 1998: 103). Usually, once the

curriculum has been designed, the primers are written to reflect the themes, topics, and learning activities. As the teachers progress with the lessons, these may be modified based on the learners' responses to the lessons taught. Therefore, there should be room for flexibility as teachers proceed in their lessons using the primers. Literacy primers and graded books are primarily used for teaching of reading and writing (Bhola 1994: 49). Specifically, the layout of the literacy primers depends not only on the locality but also on the language. Some home languages or native languages are syllabic languages and, as such, lend themselves to the "syllable approach in teaching reading" (Waters1998: 144).

For a regular Primer Track lesson, Malone (2004: 59) suggests the general steps in the following order: (1) Put the picture and keyword on the chalkboard; (2) Introduce the picture; (3) Introduce the key word; (4) Do the "Breaking word Activity" (5) Do the "Making Word" activity. Malone's (2004: 59) illustration of steps in teaching a new symbol "t" is paraphrased in five steps below.

Firstly, the teacher displays a picture of an object or an animal (e.g. tiger) and writes the keyword "tiger" under the picture. Secondly, the teacher points to the picture asking the learners what it is. The learners respond, after which the teacher asks more questions about the picture, encouraging them to talk about it for a few minutes. Thirdly, the teacher points to the keyword, says it, and asks the learners to read it along several times with her or him. If the keyword has more than one syllable, the teacher draws a "syllable box" under the keyword and divides the box to write the syllables:

ti	ger

The teacher points to each syllable, reads it, and then says the word, clapping once for each syllable. This is repeated as the learners clap for each syllable with the teacher. Fourthly, the teacher writes the keyword, reads it to the learners, and then with them. The teacher writes the word parts with the new letter as follows:

tiger

ti

t

This is the "breaking word activity". The teacher reads all the word parts to the learners and then with the learners. Fifthly, the teacher writes the new letter on the chalkboard across from the "breaking word" set as follows:

t

ti

tiger

This is the "making word activity". The teacher reads all the word parts to the learners and then with them. These steps are for the regular primer track lesson. There should also be review lessons for the new word learnt before a new word is introduced.

4.7.1.4   The balanced methods

While acknowledging the two major approaches to teaching literacy (reading whole texts and reading words and word parts), other researchers have proposed to find a balance between the two. Accordingly, "balanced methods" include two "tracks": one emphasizes meaning and communication and focuses on whole texts; the other emphasizes accuracy and correctness and focuses on parts of the language (Kosonen et al. 2007: 55). These two "tracks" help learners gain mastery of all four essential language abilities or skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Activities in the balanced methods may include the reading of whole texts and some writing activities associated with sound–symbol correspondences (see Figure 23 for a description of activities for a balanced literacy programme emphasizing both accuracy and correctness).

	Emphasis: **Accuracy and Correctness** **Focus on** **parts of the language**	**Emphasis:** **Meaning and Communication** **Focus on** **whole texts**
Listening	Recognize and distinguish sounds. Recognize parts of words. Follow directions.	Listen in order to understand. Think critically about what is said.
Speaking	Use languages correctly (pronunciation, grammar).	Speak with understanding in order to communicate thoughts, ideas, needs, and experiences
Reading	Decode words by recognizing their parts (letters, syllables, etc.).	Reading for meaning and understanding.
Writing	From letters properly and neatly. Use correct grammar.	Write creatively to communicate thoughts, ideas, and experiences.

Figure 23. Literacy activities that reflect the balanced methods, emphasizing correctness and meaning (from Kosonen et al. 2007: 55.)

The above figure highlights the four elements that should be included in the approach for well-balanced literacy programmes. For new readers, the use of the big book and primer (focusing on whole texts and parts of language respectively) has been effectively used in culturally diverse language contexts such as in Papua New Guinea (Waters 1998: 168). In the case of the Wapishana in Guyana, earlier Wapishana literacy trials used similar big books (see Section 3.3.3) and found them to be effective, as children participated more and enjoyed the stories (see Section 3.5.5.6). Likewise, the primer consisting of sight words, word parts, and short stories were successfully used with children during much earlier Wapishana trials (see Section 3.3.1). It can be therefore be concluded that the use of the big book and primer is mainly for initial literacy instruction and can be adapted to other culturally diverse language contexts, elsewhere in the world.

4.7.2 Other strategies

Researchers have documented central aspects of effective instruction that can accelerate learners' academic language development across the

curriculum (Cummins 1996: 72). Cummins suggests that some of these central components be incorporated into instructional strategies to help second language learners attain grade expectations more rapidly than typically appears to be the case (ibid. 1996: 72). Some of these central components that should be considered are the following: (1) language and content that build on the past experiences of the learner (Kosonen et al. 2007: 54); (2) cognitive challenge with contextual supports (Cummins 1996: 79); (3) more active student participation in the learning process (Bühmann and Trudell 2008: 25); (4) other supportive ways to assess language learning that go beyond testing (Cameron 2001: 220); and (5) the extent to which learners can cope successfully with the cognitive and contextual demands placed on them (Cummins 2007: 122).

Further, these components can be merged into a proposed five-part instructional framework. This framework is modified slightly from the four-part instructional approach proposed by Cummins (1996: 75). The difference is that in this instructional framework, a fifth component is added so that the other components are embedded or situated in it. In this section, the proposed five-part instructional framework is sketched as follows: build on the past experiences of the learner (Subsection 4.7.2.1); present cognitively engaging content with contextual support (Subsection 4.7.2.2); encourage active student participation (Subsection 4.7.2.3); employ other useful assessment techniques (Subsection 4.7.2.4); and, manage the cognitive and contextual demands placed on the learners (Subsection 4.7.2.5).

4.7.2.1   Build on the past experiences of the learner

Since culturally diverse children enter school with some of knowledge and skills of their first/heritage language and related cultural experiences, these elements are already known. According to Smith (2012: 3), "The teaching methods in a heritage language are designed to promote interactive and participative learning as it builds on what the child knows and moves from the known to the unknown." Teachers' use of the children's first language is, therefore, an excellent way to begin as "first language instruction provides comprehensible input students need to develop academic concepts" (Freeman and Freeman 1993: 553). This progression, from the use of the learners' first language to the second, corresponds with the strategy in the initial teaching of literacy: that learning always begins with the experience of whole stories in big books (see Section 4.7.1.2). The stories, which can be written in the first language of the learners, activate the children's prior knowledge and experiences with their world or cultural background. Conversely, if the activation of their prior knowledge is not employed,

learning may be slower and more tedious (e.g. children listening to instruction in the L2 which is not well-developed in terms of their oral competencies). However, even with L1 instruction, children may not explicitly realize what they know about a topic unless it is brought to their attention (Cummins 1996: 76).

Students' background knowledge can be built in several ways. Use of visually appealing, high-quality materials is one such strategy (Benson 2004: 11). Visuals can activate learners' prior experiences and stimulate discussion. The use of manipulatives and multimedia presentations can also activate the learners' background (Cummins1996: 77). Therefore, it is appropriate that their experiences be partly supported by real objects that can be manipulated and visuals so that a setting is created and maintained as a "print-rich environment" (Hudelson 1994: 14).

Another strategy to activate students' prior knowledge is the sharing of experiences with other students by focusing discussions through particular questions (Cummins 1996: 77). For example, the question "What are the problems of flooding of the creeks and rivers?" can lead children to share their own experiences with the class. On the basis of the sharing and discussion, children might predict what the lesson is about, stimulating their interest.

Cummins mentions other ways such as brainstorming, quick writes, and responding to written prompts in assisting literate children to become aware of their prior knowledge. However, these strategies are only possible as the children progress to higher grades or when they become proficient writers. When children perceive that their background knowledge is valued and affirmed in these ways in the classroom, their self-esteem and cultural pride is positively affected.

4.7.2.2   Present cognitively engaging content with contextual support

This subsection concerns supportive ways of presenting cognitively engaging content to learners, in both written and oral modes. As Cameron (2001: 2) observes, too many classrooms have learners enjoying themselves on intellectually undemanding tasks instead of increasingly demanding challenges. In presenting intellectually undemanding tasks, the children's learning potential is wasted.

In presenting written content, Cummins (1996: 79) refers to visual support or graphic organizers such as simple diagrams, semantic or concept webs, and Venn diagrams. In addition to utilizing these graphic organizers,

teachers should model how these are sketched so that children may become familiar with them. This modelling by teachers will help children learn to apply these learning strategies in their own studies as they move up to higher grades.

A very helpful contextual support, of which teachers do not make effective use, is the provision of "lesson markers" (Cummins 1996: 79). In following the lesson markers as support, students become more engaged in the lesson as they know what to expect from the teacher in the major stages of a lesson. In other words, lesson markers give students a structure of the lesson or a sense of how the lesson will progress.

Another useful strategy that engages children in oral input that may be universal, but teachers may need to be reminded of, is for the teachers to extend beyond the usual one-word (yes/no) mode of accepting children's responses. Instead, teachers should encourage children to extend their responses with some elaboration,

 as this leads to the promotion of academic language.

Along the same lines, children can be guided to shifting to more linguistic ways of expression. For example, their linguistic resources can be extended by introducing more formal precise vocabulary to express a phenomenon (Cummins 2000: 125). In other words, teachers should continually introduce specific terms or academic language as equivalent to what children may express. For example, when children say, "drive backwards", the teacher can offer "reverse." Instead of "the vehicle went faster", the teacher may use "the vehicle accelerated". In this way, teachers are consciously promoting equivalent forms of expression, rather than unconsciously simplifying the oral or written use of their language with children. By constantly introducing and modelling academic language, teachers will expand the English vocabulary of their students, thereby accelerating their academic skills.

Another effective way of accelerating academic language is through the reading of a range of different types of texts. This is because academic success depends on students comprehending the language of the text from a variety of genres (Cummins 1996: 80). This is similarly noted by Datta (2007: 66), who is of the view that an awareness of different forms of writing is an important part of their linguistic knowledge. One form of writing is the story, using storybook reading with children (see Subsection 4.7.1.2). Other forms of writing for children can be locally produced by community members. These include songs, poems, folk tales, legends, instructions, directions, moral teachings, pictures, language learning alphabet, games, and calendars (Young 2005: 38).

4.7.2.3   Encourage active student participation

Children can participate actively by oral, written, and physical means. The basis of all this participation is communication of meaning through the active use of language. One of the main approaches employed is the language experience approach (Roberts 1994: 4). In addition, Cummins (1996: 73) suggested several other strategies that promote communication of meaning through the use of language: cooperative learning, drama and role-playing, total physical response, and thematic teaching. Other strategies include group work (McLaughlin 1992: 7) and drama/music (Baker 1995: 177). These additional two strategies could be incorporated into cooperative learning and drama, respectively.

In this subsection, we shall now look at each in some detail in the following sequence: language experience approach (Subsection 4.7.2.3.1), cooperative learning (Subsection 4.7.2.3.2), drama and music (Subsection 4.7.2.3.3), total physical response (Subsection 4.8.2.3.4) and thematic teaching (Subsection 4.7.2.3.5).

4.7.2.3.1 The language experience approach

This strategy is a shared experience (between the teacher and children), such as a walk around the school, a visit to a museum, or a cooking activity (Roberts 1994: 4). In this shared experience, two salient oral phases are linked together. Datta (2007: 19) points to the importance of the link between "exploratory talk" and the "reporting back" in that one gives rise to the other. According to Datta, "exploratory talk" corresponds to context-embedded linguistic and literacy skills and "reporting back", to the context-reduced skills. In this regard, the "reporting back" phase is important in promoting academic language development. As children report orally back in the classroom, the teacher and students together write story texts on a chart or on the blackboard (Waters 1998: 2001). According to Waters, in this way teachers use the stories of their students as their teaching materials. Roberts (1994: 4) highlights the related tasks:

The teacher asks the learners to describe what they did or said, and as they do, the teacher writes the sentences on the board or on butcher block paper. After writing several sentences, the teacher asks the students to read what they have all just written. The students can read it because they wrote it —at first it may be primarily memory, but this initial success in reading will soon lead to more advanced skills.

The language experience, then, encourages children to express themselves, building around conversational language to writing report or story texts with pupils.

4.7.2.3.2 Cooperative learning

While the group activity may be a universal pedagogical technique, careful attention to grouping students is essential for supporting and promoting the second language, literacy, and academic development of children (Johnson 1994: 185). In this respect, more focus should be on the group activity that has the characteristics of cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy that provides the social structure for learners working cooperatively (Calderón 1999: 1). It is also a strategy considered to be very valuable for promoting participation and academic growth in classrooms (Cummins 1996: 82). Groups may be formed based on mixed ability in terms of language proficiency and academic proficiency, with each child assigned specific roles (ibid. 1996: 83). While it may not be possible to assign roles such as timekeeper and recorder in groups with very young learners, roles such as collector of objects, sharer of objects, and leader may be practicable. In assigning such roles, the teacher explains these to the children so that they understand what needs to be done and how they should cooperate. Accordingly, the effort the teacher takes to explain and demonstrate these roles will be reflected in roles played properly by children. This is important for the success of the cooperative learning activity.

Based on the social structure, cooperative learning is learner-centred as opposed to the single large classroom arrangement that is more teacher-centred. While it is time-consuming to prepare a cooperative learning activity, the efforts expended will be worth it because active language use is promoted.

4.7.2.3.3 Drama and music

Drama or role-playing is another effective strategy that facilitates comprehension (Cummins 1996: 79). Interpersonal or non-linguistic cues such as facial expressions, gesture, and intonation are also utilized in role-playing and drama for conversational fluency. Children can use created "stick puppets (or masks, or cards to hang around children's necks) and act out the story as it is read" (Waters 1998: 175). If there is dialogue in the

story, the dialogue can be separated from the narrative and acted out as the teacher reads the story, providing useful repeated practice in the process (Cameron 2001: 176).

Baker (1995: 177) adds that in more holistic terms, music and drama are just two of a whole variety of enjoyable activities through which children learn language and pick up part of the culture allied to that language. Electronic tools such as recorders can also be used to teach pre-recorded songs and nursery rhymes, which in turn promote development of vocabulary in an engaging way. Young children can therefore use drama and music to gain confidence in the use of their local language as well as the second language.

4.7.2.3.4 Total physical response

While active language use for children has been reinforced in the preceding subsections, research also points to a period when children do not actively use language, especially when they begin learning a new language. An apt explanation by Datta (2007: 24) is worth quoting:

> … in entering a new language environment, minority language children go through a "silent period" during which they go through a process of "tuning into" the sound system of the new language and "seeing" how the new language works and how it is enacted. This is essential for beginner bilinguals, and although it is a "silent period", cognitively it is the most active period in the bilinguals' learning process, when the bilingual mind is constantly seeking to make sense of the new language as well as making the linguistic and cultural links with their experience with the first language.

As the most active stage for beginner bilinguals, this "silent period' should be taken into account as a critical stage in the development of the curriculum.

An effective strategy that taps into this "silent period" is termed the Total Physical Response (TPR), which is defined by "an experience that involves physical action as the learner interacts with the target language" (Asher 2009: 1). In TPR activities, the teacher gives commands to the learners which they carry out, without speaking (Thompson and Thompson 2004: 14). According to authors, the learners' interactions allow them to develop their ability to understand new words and sentences without being under the pressure to speak.

For children in a culturally diverse language context, the "silent period" is congruent with the stage of the introduction of oral L2, which is Stage 3 of the suggested four phases for a sustainable bilingual programme by Malone (2005: 76, from Subsection 4.6.1). The implication is that TPR is a very useful strategy to employ during the children's "silent period", because they first understand basic commands and vocabulary of the L2 and build confidence before they speak the language. Suggested introductory activities involving TPR are presented in Appendix C.

4.7.2.3.5 Thematic teaching

Theme-based classes are taught by language teachers who structure the language course around themes or topics (Freeman 2007: 11). Rather than teaching different content areas under subjects such as language, mathematics, social studies, science, arts and crafts, and so forth, content is taught under themes or topics in an integrated way. Thematic teaching is another effective strategy that allows the teacher to use an integrated approach to everything taught (Waters 1998: 231).

In planning the content, the teacher may utilize the web, which "is a way of writing down ideas and connections without forcing them into linear form as in a list or text" (Cameron 2001: 188). Cameron goes on to note that in the webbing process, the main idea is put in the centre of the paper, and connecting ideas around it, with lines showing connections. In practice, this main idea or topic may be used by teachers and learners for a week to explore the child's world (Smith 2012: 109). Figure 24 below illustrates the connection of ideas based on a topic web for cassava, a staple food used by most Indigenous Peoples in South America. The circles show that the traditional subject areas such as maths, science, and history may be taught under the topic cassava throughout. The rectangular boxes linked to each different content area contain school-based activities, which are further linked to the learning goals the teacher may aim to achieve.
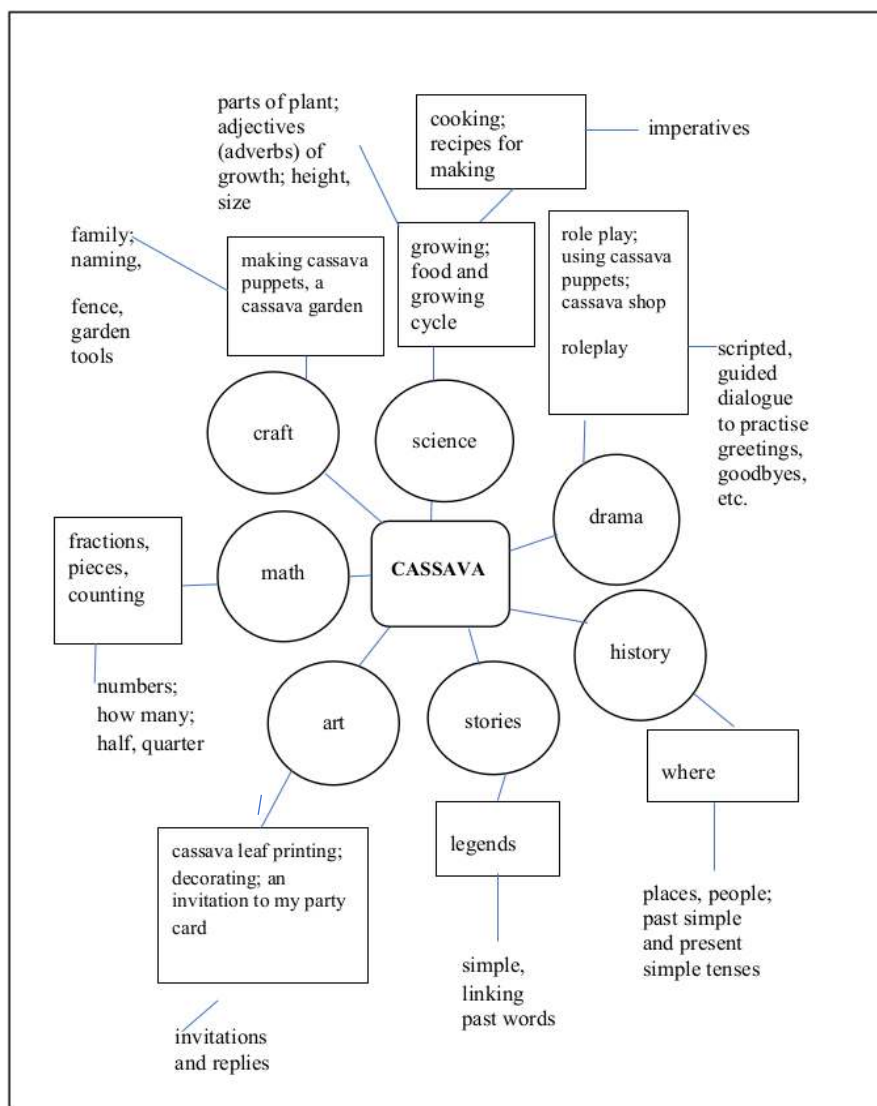
Figure 24. Thematic plan: topic web for cassava.
(adapted from Cameron 2001: 189).

While it is time-consuming to plan, thematic teaching seems worthwhile implementing.

In developing a programme entitled "Heritage Language Playschool for Indigenous Minorities" in Malaysia, for example, Smith (2012: 8) asserts that the themes must be based on "community life and activities which are

familiar to learners". The themes or topics are linked to the experiences of the child, thereby activating their prior knowledge and background experiences. In this way the curriculum is contextualized.

4.7.2.4   Employ other useful assessment techniques

Aside from classroom and national tests or assessments, "alternative assessment techniques" are observation, portfolios, and self-assessment (Cameron 2001: 220). Observation is the close and purposeful noticing of children's talk and actions (ibid. 2001: 232). The most common way of recording observations of children's performance is through a checklist of expected learning goals. According to Cameron (ibid. 2001: 233), this checklist could be incorporated for a unit of work by identifying learning outcomes and converting them to assessment statements of performance.

Portfolio assessment involves gathering a record of student work overtime to show the full scope of a learner's academic progress (Cummins 1996: 86–87). Examples of the learner's work may be kept in a file and might include a log of personal reading and responses texts, a personal writing log, samples of students' writing, or other language development activities.

Self-assessment may be encouraged as the children advance in their class levels. Self-assessment may include listening or viewing audio or visual recordings of themselves speaking and reacting in one-word comments such as "good" or "more practice" about their performances.

For all these assessment techniques, one should also consider fairness or equity principles which require that children are given plenty of chances to show what they can do through multiple methods of assessment (Cameron 2001: 226). This suggests that culturally diverse children should be assessed in their own language if possible, through culturally familiar pictures and through the types of instructions and questions they are familiar with.

At the same time, it is also necessary to provide children with corrective feedback. One effective way is the reinforcement of children's correct responses. Corrective feedback avoids fossilization, which is referred to as "the relatively permanent incorporation of incorrect linguistic forms into a person's second language competence" (Brown 2000: 231). In situations where the L2 input is coming from other L2 learners, the teacher should model the appropriate forms of the L2 and provide feedback in ways that do not impede communication. For example, in conversation, it is not advisable to provide immediate feedback, as this may impede com-

munication. The feedback could be given later by way of a mini lesson that deals with the language form in question. At the beginning stages of composing sentences and short texts, feedback should be focused more on the message than on the form to develop the learners' clarification of their ideas and clarity of expression. Later, in a subsequent writing session, the focus could be on the forms of the language that include grammar, spelling, and the choice of vocabulary.

Additionally, according to Cummins (1996: 87), feedback to students, based on assessment, should ideally include discussion or suggestions relating to learning strategies which are defined as "purposeful behaviours or thoughts that the learner uses to acquire or retain new information or skills" (ibid. 1996: 87). These strategies for young learners may be observable (e.g. asking clarification questions) or non-observable (activating prior knowledge, predicting answers or information in forthcoming sentences, making inferences). Cummins suggests that teachers should model the strategies learners need most so that the learners, in turn, can apply the strategies to assist them in overcoming the difficulties they may be encountering.

4.7.2.5   Manage the cognitive and contextual demands placed on the learners

Placing importance on managing the cognitive and contextual demands placed on the learners will complement and complete the five-part instructional approach proposed. This seems important, considering that it takes about five to seven years and even more for second language learners to acquire English academic skills to be on par with their on-grade-level, native English-speaking peers (Thomas and Collier 1997: 34). The length of time required for second language learners to close the gap or catch up academically with their native English-speaking peers, implies that the pace of development of their academic skills be accelerated.

In this subsection, I first present a conceptual distinction between basic interpersonal conversation skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in Subsection 4.7.2.5.1. Next, I describe the framework proposed by Cummins (1996: 52) in Subsection 4.7.2.5.2. I then discuss the implications of this framework for pedagogy in Subsection 4.7.2.5.3.

4.7.2.5.1 BICS and CALP

Teachers need to distinguish between conversational and academic aspects of language proficiency to clarify the relationship between language proficiency and bilingual students' academic progress (Cummins 1996: 55). For the conceptual distinction between these two aspects of language proficiency, Cummins (ibid. 1996: 57) used the terms basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). The former is defined as "the ability to carry on a conversation in familiar face-to-face situations" and the latter as "the ability to comprehend and produce the increasingly complex oral and written language used in content areas" (Freeman 2007: 4).

Although CALP is dependent on BICS, these two concepts should not be conflated. For example, while BICS it important, it should not be taken to constitute the child's overall proficiency in the second language such as English. Rather it is it the development of CALP based on BICS that should constitute overall language proficiency. BICS corresponds to conversational fluency and CALP to academic language proficiency (Freeman 2007: 4). In other words, the overall proficiency in a language should reflect development in it, for both conversational skills and academic purposes. The distinction between BICS and CALP is elaborated into a framework, as will be described in the next subsection.

4.7.2.5.2 A two-dimensional framework

The framework is made up of the intersection of two dimensions, one horizontal and the other vertical. This framework demonstrates the relationship between context and cognition. In reference to this framework, Baker (2006: 177) explains that the horizontal dimension relates to the amount of contextual support available to students. At one extreme end, we have context-embedded communication (synonymous with BICS), with a lot of support, such as interpersonal or situational cues as in face-to-face conversation, gestures, and intonation. At the other end, we have context-reduced communication (synonymous with CALP), with very few cues to meaning, dependent on linguistic cues or words and sentences. The vertical dimension relates to the level of cognitive demands required in communication. The upper part of the vertical dimension consists of cognitively undemanding communication, where a student has the mastery of language skills such that they become automatized. The lower part consists of cognitively demanding communication, where the language skills to be used are at a challenging level. The framework is outlined in Figure 25 below.
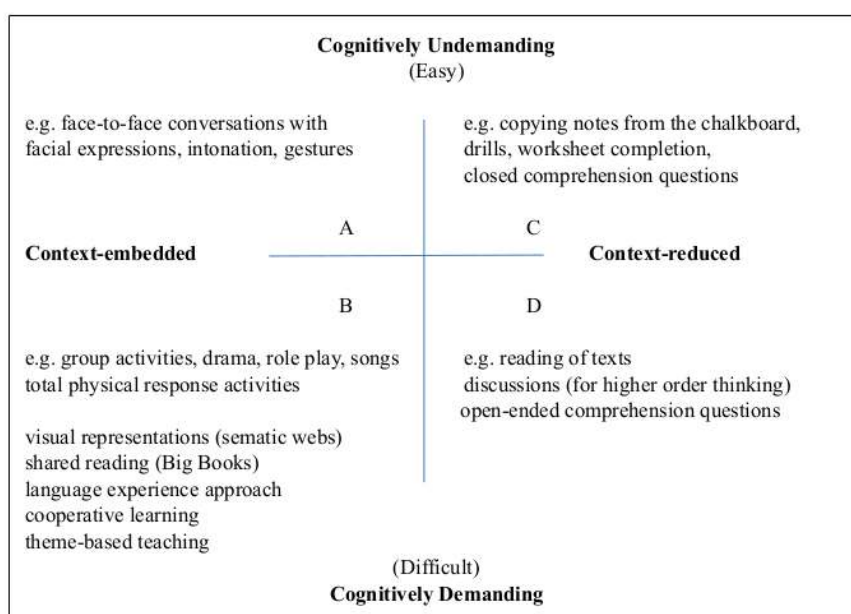
Figure 25. Situating activities, strategies, and approaches for optimum cognitive development and accelerated academic progress of second language learners (adapted from Cummins 1996: 57).

As can be seen in the figure, the quadrants formed are labelled A, B, C, and D. In each of these quadrants, examples of relevant activities, strategies, and approaches that were discussed in the preceding sections are situated ranging from "easy" to "difficult". The activities with the related strategies and approaches that promote conversational fluency or basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) would fit into quadrant A. The activities with the related strategies and approaches that promote cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) language would fit into quadrant B and D. The instructional approaches and strategies that fit into quadrant B are cooperative learning, drama and role-playing, total physical response, thematic teaching, use of visual representations (e.g. graphs, semantic webs to make academic content and language comprehensible), and language experience approaches (Cummins 1996: 730). As Cummins notes, because these approaches and strategies provide cognitive challenge and contextual support, they are crucial for promoting academic growth (ibid. 1996: 60).

4.7.2.5.3 Implications for pedagogy

Cummins (1996: 59) points out that the distinctions in the framework have significant implications for instruction of English language learners. Cummins states that progression should ideally go from quadrant A (context-embedded, cognitively undemanding) to quadrant B (context-embedded, cognitively demanding) to quadrant D (context-reduced, cognitively demanding). In other words, the progression of activities, strategies, and approaches can be conducted through communication that moves from gesture-dependent to linguistic-dependent. If instruction remains at quadrant A, the children may become bored and uninterested because they are not challenged cognitively. By contrast, if instruction is pitched prematurely at quadrant D, then it may become so challenging that the children may withdraw from academic effort. If cognitive challenge must be evoked on part of the child, teachers should pitch their instructional approach at quadrant B, providing both cognitive challenge and support. This quadrant corresponds with Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development", which suggests that intelligence is better measured by what a child can do with skilled help (Cameron 2001: 7). Quadrant C activities may be included before quadrant D, but more for consolidation of skills. However, the teacher "whose philosophy includes active language use and intellectually challenging content will tend to avoid quadrant C activities entirely" (Cummins 1996: 60). This is because the quadrant C activities, strategies and approaches do not offer cognitively challenging tasks for second language learners if they need to catch up to be on par with the

academic achievements of their peers who are native speakers of English. Expressed differently, the L2 speaking child, who already has some English language abilities, may succeed in each given task with little contextual support. On the other hand, the second language learner who has limited English language skills may find the same task more cognitively challenging. Similarly, most second language learners may find tasks in the L2 more cognitively challenging such that they would need more contextual support to succeed in the tasks. Therefore, if second language learners are to gain maximally or optimally in terms of cognitive development, they need to take advantage of the activities, strategies, and approaches that are situated in quadrant B, followed by D.

Teachers who are unfamiliar with instructional strategies for second language learners may initially pitch their instruction at quadrant D and find that the learners cannot cope. Sometimes this situation occurs when there is an absence of the contextual support needed for the learners to successfully engage in the task. What such teachers do is to simplify the task by pitching their instruction at quadrants A or C. Such practice may lead to the detriment of the child. For example, while the child might appear to be meaningfully engaged, the task may not be cognitively challenging, thereby reducing their chances of catching up academically with their peers who are native speakers of English.

The quadrants can serve as guide for lesson planning. By considering the children's level of linguistic development and experience, the teacher can create activities or experiences that are cognitively challenging and contextually supported as needed (Baker 2006: 178). The framework also situates the activities, strategies, and approaches into the various quadrants, compelling teachers to consciously manage the tasks in accordance with the abilities and language competencies of the children. In this way, the teacher's instruction will more likely invoke intellectual effort on the part of the learners to develop their academic and intellectual abilities (Cummins 1996: 72).

4.7.3 Summary

The two main approaches to reading—the "top-down" and "bottom-up"—are useful. While some educators prefer one to the other, research has shown that the literacy experience should begin with the whole story. Using the same story, the experience can then focus on the word and letter level of knowledge and skills. Since learners would benefit from both approaches, some educators have suggested the balanced methods, with one track that

focuses on meaning and communication and the other on accuracy and correctness.

According to research, some of the most effective strategies that are likely to accelerate second language learners' academic development comprise the following: the activation of learners' prior knowledge and background experiences; the engagement of learners in content that promotes higher levels of cognition; the active use of language through oral, written and even physical modalities; and feedback given to learners through assessment techniques so that they can apply some learning strategies to help them in their own learning. These strategies would be further augmented using the two-dimensional model that helps teachers to manage the cognitive and contextual demands placed on the learners. This model acts as the teachers' guide in their own lesson planning. By providing learners with the appropriate contextual supports, teachers can manage the demands so that there is the right level of challenge to move the learners forward, in the learning of both language and content. Teachers, who teach in culturally diverse language contexts should not only be aware of these strategies but also have practical training in them to apply them in the real situation.

4.8   Conclusion

This chapter began with an overview of the claims and arguments against bilingual programmes. In spite of the overwhelming empirical evidence for bilingual programmes, there is still controversy regarding the effectiveness of bilingual education. The suggestion is that the opposing side either lacks an awareness of the validity of bilingual education or chooses to ignore the empirical evidence. Additionally, it may be due to the perceived threat these programmes have in transforming the status quo of the dominant–subordinate relations in society.

Secondly, two routes to bilingual education were highlighted: simultaneous and sequential. However, some people prefer structured immersion/submersion or English-only immersion programmes, which are monolingual programmes. It would seem that more awareness or advocacy meetings on the rewards and benefits of bilingual programmes—especially mother tongue-based schooling where the mother tongue is maintained along with the second language—need to be held in communities where such programmes are to be instituted. In this way, stakeholders, including teachers, may be able to follow and support the programmes with conviction. In other words, genuine participation needs to be shown by all concerned for successful programmes.

Thirdly, from a brief overview of the types of bilingual programmes, two broad types were identified to be pertinent to culturally diverse children —transitional and developmental maintenance/one-way developmental. The transitional programmes are the weak forms of bilingual education, whereas the developmental maintenance or the one-way developmental programmes are strong forms of bilingual education applicable to culturally diverse language contexts.

Fourthly, the essential features of strong mother tongue-based educational programmes were reviewed. They were presented based on research and experiences of practitioners in several countries. It is suggested that if a literacy programme measures up to these essential features, then it will most likely be effective. The best we can do is to not only read the research findings and experiences, but also apply them practically to our unique situations.

Finally, the considered instructional approach with the suggested strategies and materials is less commonly tried. This is because the educational structures in schools, such as the curriculum and assessment, are still based on the structured immersion/submersion approach. Even if the teacher training institutions have provided information on them, the strategies may not be emphasized in practice in real classroom situations. One way of ensuring more of the strategies are employed is to change the existing educational structures so that the accommodation of the instructional approach become routinized, becoming more meaningfully integrated in the system. These strategies should produce better results in the children's cognitive and affective domains of learning.

Chapter 5

Sources and methodology

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, I provided a review of the literature on bilingual education programmes with focus on culturally diverse contexts. The review mainly included an overview of the prejudice against bilingual education together with the evidence and counter-evidence. The routes to bilingual education, the circumstances that determine the types of programmes, the types of bilingual programmes, and the pedagogical strategies and materials were considered. In this chapter, I present my sources of information and explain the types of methods that I employed.

Firstly, I describe the various stakeholders and the research participants in Section 5.2. Next, in Section 5.3, I describe the sources of the data, taking into account the documents perused and the elders whom I interviewed about Wapishana history and the impact of colonization on the Wapishana. I then explain the methodology in terms instrumentation in Section 5.4, followed by administration of the instruments in Section 5.5. After the procedure for data description and presentation in Section 5.6, I give a summary to conclude the chapter in Section 5.7.

5.2 Stakeholders and research participants

The stakeholders comprise two main groups: people internal and external to the community. The stakeholders internal to the community include the local organization, the Wapishana Literacy Association, and people in prominent positions in the communities such as teachers, head teachers, administrative leaders, religious leaders, and elders. There are also the community members who attended the public meetings for advocacy of the programme on 25 April 2015. As it pertains to the interviews, the research participants included the community leaders, the teachers and head teachers of nursery schools, and parents of the cohort of children. It is important that these local stakeholders be mentioned, as the programme needs their continued support if it is to be a success. The stakeholders external to the community are mainly organizations such as the Ministry of Education and the Jesuit Missions of Guyana.

In this section, I describe the stakeholders and their roles in 5.2.1. Next, I describe the research participants in 5.2.2.

5.2.1 Stakeholders

The organizations contributed to the planning and implementation of the pilot programme are the Wapichan Wadauniinao Atio (WWA), also known as the Wapishana Literacy Association, the Jesuit Missions of Guyana (JMG), and the Ministry of Education (MoE). The WWA comes from within the communities, while the JMG and the MoE come from outside.

The WWA, a community-based organization, has locally trained members as Wapishana literacy teachers, readers, writers, and editors in each of the Wapishana villages. The WWA participated in the programme because its members speak, read, and write the Wapishana language and contributed to the programme as writers and editors. Some of these locally trained members volunteered to participate in the preparatory stages of the programme (e.g. writing and illustrating of Wapishana stories). The participants were from the three villages (Maruranau, Sawariwau, and Karaudarnau), each with a nursery school selected for the pilot programme. The editors of the Wapishana language were from another village, Aishalton (see Subsection 3.3.3 for the involvement of villages in the WWA).

The JMG is a religious body of priests and brothers within the Catholic Church of Guyana. The Jesuits have been in Guyana for over 150 years and have had an interest in education from the beginning. Their work brought them into contact with about 60 Indigenous villages, including the Wapishana. The Jesuits' experience in working among these villages has helped them appreciate at first hand the enormous challenges involved in trying to provide quality education for these villages (taken from a letter dated 11 May 2016 from the Regional Superior of the Jesuits in Guyana to the Ministry of Education Inquiry Secretariat, Ministry of Education, in Georgetown). One of the Jesuits' field bases is in Aishalton, South Rupununi, with one priest in charge. With the approval of the MoE, the JMG sponsored most of the meetings, training sessions, and the preparation of materials for the Quality Bilingual Education Programme for Wapichan Children (QEBP), which is the title of the pilot programme. The JMG also designated a programme coordinator, an academic coordinator, and a facilitator/trainer for the pilot programme. The functions of the coordinators are carried out by two members of the Wapishana community and the function of facilitator is carried out by someone from outside of the Wapishana community. The positions of the coordinators and facilitator are

specially created for the QBEP. These three functionaries are based at the JMG's field office at Aishalton. Furthermore, these three functionaries, together with several Jesuit priests, form the core team that leads the QBEP. In addition, the QBEP leaders formed a resource team comprising twenty-five Wapishana community members with a wide variety of backgrounds or positions, such as schoolteachers, Wapishana language and culture experts, community leaders, and artists.

The MoE has an education officer at the district office in Aishalton, education officers at a regional office in Lethem and senior education officials at the national office in Georgetown. The MoE's interest in the programme is based on the fact that it has the total responsibility for running all public schools in the country, of which the schools in the Indigenous communities are a part. The MoE also has curriculum and literacy specialists at the National Centre for Educational Research Development in Georgetown, offering advice on the pilot.

5.2.2 Research participants

The research participants were classified according to the categories of the information sought. Nine elders participated in the interviews regarding the history and cultural knowledge of the Wapishana. Several key stakeholders: the programme coordinator, two head teachers, two teachers from a nursery school, and two community leaders (one village councillor and one local church leader) participated in the interviews regarding the planning of the programme. Three nursery teachers, three head teachers, and eighteen parents of the cohort of children participated in the interviews regarding the actual programme. Three nursery schoolteachers participated in the teaching that I observed.

The elders, whose age ranged from 60 to 80 years, had different experiences as a result of being *vaqueros* 'cowboys', carpenters, farmers, hunters, fishermen, *balata bleeders* 'people who tap the latex of the balata trees', and traditional knowledge-keepers (both men and women). These elders, who are trusted villagers with accurate information, agreed to share some aspects of their histories, traditional knowledge, and culture.

Several key stakeholders who were interviewed were selected based on their prominent positions within the community. In fact, they were representatives of the schools, the administration of the village, the church, and the bilingual programme. These representatives also participated in the meetings and the training sessions that were part of the planning process of the programme.

Three nursery teachers, three head teachers, and eighteen parents who were interviewed were selected based on their direct contact with the children who were part of the pilot programme. With respect to information regarding the classroom observations, the three nursery teachers participated in teaching their respective classes. All teachers and head teachers who teach at the nursery schools are women, with experiences ranging from two years to over fifteen years. Of the three young teachers who teach the cohort of children, one is a trained nursery teacher. That is, she trained for over a period of at least two years at the government training institution for nursery education. The others recently completed secondary school and work as temporary qualified teachers until such time they attain trained teacher status. At least one of these teachers is already on the in-service training, while the other two are still to enter the teacher-training programme. Two of the head teachers are trained nursery schoolteachers, with one having an additional qualification of the Bachelor of Education degree in administration at the nursery education level. The teacher who is not yet trained as a nursery teacher acts in the position of the head teacher. The head teacher who has an education degree is an integral part of the resource team and has therefore been attending the training sessions/workshops. The other head teachers have missed training sessions.

The Wapishana parents interviewed represented 75 per cent of the parents whose children are part of the cohort of all children from a village. Although, the individual interviews spanned two weeks, not all parents were available. Based on this experience and time constraints, I decided to discontinue similar interviews with the parents in the other two villages.

5.3 Sources

These sources are prepared documents that give valuable information on planning aspects of the programme. Wapishana elders also provided oral information on the Wapishana history and their cultural knowledge and skills. I describe the main features of the written documents in Subsection 5.3.1.

5.3.1 Documents

Two main sources that reflect the curriculum for the first two terms are the Teacher's Handbook Nursery Year I Term 1 (2018) and Teacher's Handbook Nursery Year 1 Term 2 (2019). These two handbooks are part of

the teacher's kit. Other documents that are for the children to use in class include big books, the Literacy Assessment Booklet Nursery Year 1 (2018), the Numeracy Assessment Booklet Nursery Year 1 (2018), the Numeracy Workbook Nursery Year 1, Term 2 (2019). Another valuable document is the list of the MoE's recommendations regarding the curriculum and other aspects of the programme. Another is a copy of an agreement termed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Quality Bilingual Education Programme for Wapichan children (QBEP), signed on 7 July 2018. The Memorandum of Understanding documents several points of agreement about the planning, implementation and evaluation of the pilot programme, before the actual programme began.

In this subsection, I further describe the written documents. Firstly, I highlight the features of the two teacher handbooks in Subsection 5.3.1.1, followed by suggested guidelines for presentation of the big book in Subsection 5.3.1.2, the workbooks and assessment booklets in Subsection 5.3.1.3. Next, I highlight the recommendations of the Ministry of Education in Subsection 5.3.1.4, followed by some main aspects of the Memorandum of Understanding in Subsection 5.3.1.5.

5.3.1.1 The teacher's handbooks

According to the Teacher's Handbook Term 1 (2018: 6), the programme entitled *Quality Bilingual Education Programme for Wapichan Children* attempts to facilitate the children's transition from home to school. At the same time the programme introduces them to literacy skills, rooted in their native language, culture and life experiences. In part, the children's introduction to books and text are built on their conversational skills of language and experience with the immediate environment. The programme also attempts to introduce the English language so that the children are not held back or left behind in a world in which they are going to have to complete with others in a national education system using the second language.

The Teacher's Handbook Nursery Year I Term 1 (2018) follows a common structure around chosen themes, sequenced over several weeks that comprise one school term. Each thematic unit, for example, is extended into language activities, mathematics activities, and other activities.

The language activities, which include the language experience, provoke children's curiosity and engage them in discussion about the thematic topics of the week. Teachers ask questions such as: "What happens during dry season?" and "What happens to the creeks during dry season?"

The shared reading activities include mainly Wapishana short stories such as "The crab saves the fish" to develop pre-reading skills such as discussing the pictures, predicting what would happen next, following texts from left to right, and recognizing and saying sight words and letters. The pre-writing skills focus mainly on the tracing of letters such as "Kk, Pp, Ss" that deal with the pre-reading activities.

The mathematics activities begin with pre-maths activities that introduce children to mathematical concepts. They begin, for example, with making sets and sorting objects into sets (Teacher's Handbook Nursery Year I Term 1 2018: 13). Other topics include "Recognition, writing, naming numerals 1–5" (p. 38). In order to develop their understanding of these concepts, children manipulate objects into sets and making sets with one to five objects. Maths activities are centred round a selected topic. This is followed by instructions for teachers in both Wapishana and English. Some nursery songs reinforce some of the mathematical concepts learned. At the end of the maths activities, numeracy standards or learning outcomes that are targeted or achieved are listed.

Other activities encompass integrated topics of Science, Social studies, Art, Singing, Physical Education, Health, and Family Life from the national nursery education curriculum and the teaching of Wapishana knowledge and culture. Each week, children learn a song or nursery rhyme such as "The creeks are dry." For other activities, other subjects from the national curriculum are included: arts and crafts, health and family life, and Wapishana culture. The activities help develop children's skills in the cognitive (e.g. visual discrimination such as distinguishing between letter and numeral shapes and auditory discrimination such as distinguishing between letter sounds), psycho-motor (e.g. strengthening of finger muscles), and affective (e.g. social skills such as cooperating) domains of learning. There are also instructions for teachers to carry out these activities with the children. At the end of the activities, developmental standards or learning outcomes that are targeted or achieved are listed.

Some topics and activities that reflect the incorporation of cultural content into the curriculum are worth noting (see Teacher's Handbook Nursery Year 1 Term 2. 2019). Apart from Week 1, in which children are welcomed and introduced to the class, Weeks 2 to 4 reflect the theme "Dry Season" because during this period of the year there is hardly any rain. The big book story is "The crab saves the fish" from a drying pond. From Weeks 5 to 8, the theme is "Farming—our way of life". Some of the big book stories include "Cassava" and "Baby cranes learn to fish." In "other activities", topics include occupations such as the fisherman and hunter. Community members who practise fishing and hunting are invited to the

class to introduce themselves and talk about the work they do, followed by questions from the teacher and children. From weeks 8 to 12, the theme is "Gathering from the forest". Some big book stories include "Gathering nuts", "Possum gets frightened", and "Powis makes its sound." Other activities are singing a song entitled "Making a farm", explaining the process of making cassava bread and displaying produce from the farm. From Weeks 13 to 14, the theme is "Celebration". The big book story is "Happy mongoose", and the songs include "Our drink" and "Going to the farm". Under "Other activities", the classes focus on traditional clothing. Parents are invited to engage in weaving, plaiting, and stringing necklaces, as well as in designing headbands. Children with teachers and parents also create a traditional clothing corner. From then on, children are also invited to appear in traditional clothing every Friday of the school term.

Each learning activity is matched with learning outcomes, which are specific statements that identify the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values all students should demonstrate or achieve. Taken in the context of the whole programme, the statements indicate whether a component of the programme is achieving its objectives. For the mathematical activity, for example, "Recognition, writing, naming numerals 1–5", the numeracy standards/outcomes are "identifies numerals 1–5 and "makes sets with 1 to 5 objects" (Teacher's Handbook Nursery Year I Term 1 2018: 41).

The Teacher's Handbook Nursery Year 1 Term 2 (2019) is slightly different from the first with respect to the sequence of the features. In Term 2, the first activity begins with "Other activities", followed by literacy and mathematics activities as in Term 1. The "Other activities" section begins with provocation, that is collecting evidence of prior knowledge and skills concerning the topic at hand, such as "Homes and shelters". The provocation on this theme can involve taking children to the nearest building site to engage them in discussion with the builder; noticing the likenesses and differences of nearby buildings; introducing them to the theme, outlining to them the main activities to be done; and asking them questions about the sub-topic at hand. For example, for the sub-topic "Different homes and animal shelters", the teacher's question to provoke the children's curiosity can be "What would you like to know about repairing or building homes?"

Concluding each sub-topic is a formative assessment, which is an ongoing process. The theme "Homes and shelter", for example, has the following sub-topics: different homes and shelters; homes and the security they provide; extraction of materials to build homes; and responsible extraction of materials used to build homes. At the end of the sub-topic "different homes and shelters", the formative assessment could consist of naming the different materials needed to build a home or an animal shelter.

Concluding each theme is a summative assessment. For the theme "Homes and Shelters", the summative assessment could be having children work in pairs, in groups, or individually to build shelters for animals in an affected habitat where building materials are extracted (Teacher's Handbook Nursery Year 1 Term 2 2019: 9).

Besides the recognition of words/letters and the tracing of letters identified from the Wapishana stories, there are similar activities dealing with words and letters from the English alphabet chart and other familiar English words. The translated instructions or questions in Wapishana for children to be used by teachers are not always included in the Teacher's Handbook Term 2. In the first Teachers Handbook, there is mention of the related action songs, while in the second they are not mentioned.

The handbooks also contain appendices that describe the following: the plan of activities for each week in the school terms; the daily timetable; guideline for the big book story sessions using the whole language approach; six steps to teaching Wapishana nursery rhymes/action songs; standards or learning outcomes for the literacy and mathematical activities.

5.3.1.2 Big books

According to the Teacher's Handbooks, children's introduction to books and text builds on their conversational abilities in their home language and experience with their immediate environment. The activities focus on stories related to their cultural traditions, home experiences, and familiar characters. Each story is pictorially illustrated, with a short sentence in Wapishana accompanying each picture.

The suggested guidelines for the big book presentation (*Teachers Handbook* 2018: 66) are paraphrased below:

1. Discuss the theme, characters, context of the story or the pictures/illustrations of the story.

2. Tell the story using the vocabulary given in the big book.

3. Read the story aloud page by page and then, while pointing to the words in each sentence, invite children to repeat the story.

4. Invite two or three children to voluntarily act as a teacher to the read the story the same way as above, with others repeating after them.

5. Dramatize the story and then while reading the story, invite children to act out the role of the main characters in the story.

6. Narrate the story, if possible, through action song or nursery rhyme, so that the children can join in.

7. Discuss the story through asking comprehension questions to have children understand the story.

8. Invite children in groups to put sentence cards in sequence so that the complete story is given.

9. Invite children in groups to put word cards in sequence to complete each sentence of the story.

10. Introduce the letters of the alphabet so that children can identify, name, and trace the letters.

5.3.1.3   Workbooks and assessment booklets

There are separate workbooks for literacy and numeracy, with each child having her or his own copy. The workbooks comprise exercises that have instructions in both Wapishana and English. The exercises extend activities already done as a whole class or in groups and are designed to foster the necessary prerequisite skills in the development of reading and mathematical concepts. The exercise in the numeracy workbook, for example, begins with identifying, naming, and colouring basic shapes such as the square, rectangle, triangle, and circle.

Assessment booklets enable the teacher to assess each child on achievement of the literacy and numeracy standards or outcomes under each concept taught. Like the workbooks, there are separate assessment booklets for literacy and numeracy, with each child having her or his copy. Instructions are in both Wapishana and English. Assessment tasks are designed to involve children in familiar activities done in the whole class, groups, and in the workbooks. In the literacy assessment booklet, for example, the teacher instructs the child to point out the difference or likeness of a given set of pictures. In the numeracy assessment booklet, for instance, each child is asked to compare sizes of two objects by pointing out which one is big or little. Each assessment booklet has an accompanying observational checklist for recording of how well the learning standard or outcome is achieved. The achievement may be recorded as A (Attained), IP (In Progress), or NA (Not Attained). In effect, the assessment booklet records each child's progress for the entire school year.

5.3.1.4   Recommendations from the Ministry of Education

Another important document for part of my analysis contains the recommendations of the MoE. The MoE suggested several ways in which the bilingual education programme can be improved before the final draft is written. The recommendations are paraphrased below:

- The current themes from the National Nursery Scheme should be followed for two reasons. Firstly, the themes will enable all children in the nursery cohort to be introduced to essential concepts needed for their all-round development. Secondly, the themes follow the pedagogical principle of moving from the "known" to the "unknown".

- The Science and Social Studies content from the National Nursery Scheme can be merged into the teaching of Wapishana traditional knowledge and skills, keeping as closely as possible to the themes.

- Since most children are Wapishana-speaking, the required Nursery Diagnostic Assessment for each child on their entry to school should be administered in Wapishana rather than in English.

- It should be clearly stated that other subjects areas from the National Nursery Scheme, such as Health and Family Life, Show and Tell, and so forth, would be allotted under "Other Activity" on the timetable; these subjects would be covered in a rotational manner.

- English should be taught as early as possible in the programme, with the Teacher's Handbook reflecting the specific English words covered in each subject area.

- Since the specific skills and concepts with respect to the language experience approach were not listed in the Teacher's Handbook, the teaching of these skills and concepts must be pursued.

- The suggested steps for the big book presentation should be adopted to suit the learning styles of the children.

- The Daily Timetable should have an additional explanatory document, specifying the sessions, strategies/methodologies, guideline/content, and recommended methods of evaluation.

- The prerequisite skills embedded in the language activity sessions should be stated, even though the language experience and shared reading components are excluded from the timetable.

- The current nursery national programme is very much integrated, but the developed curriculum does not reflect this between learning

sessions so that children are afforded many opportunities to develop the concepts.

- Approval for the pilot programme should be granted for an initial two-year period. Thereafter, it could be extended based on an evaluation report that should be submitted before a select committee.

- Continuous Assessment should be stated, and the following profiles from the national curriculum should be applied: Attained, Not Attained, and In Progress. The availability of the records for continuous assessment should form part of the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

- A format of a lesson plan, with samples of lesson plans to support the smooth delivery of concepts, should be included in the Teacher's Handbook. The format should also allow space for teachers to evaluate the lessons daily.

- These recommendations were offered to the implementers of the programme and are reflected in the two teacher's handbooks described above.

5.3.1.5   The memorandum of understanding

Another document that is of importance is the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the MoE and the QBEP. The following are the main points of understanding. The QBEP will run from the start of the academic year in September 2018 to the close of the academic year in July 2020. The prepared Nursery Year One materials will be used in the three pilot schools in Region 9: Maruranau, Sawariwau, and Karaudarnau nursery schools. As the programme progresses, the Nursery Year 2 material will be prepared by the resource team of the QBEP in collaboration with the MOE. If considered feasible, the programme will be extended into the first three years primary school; if not, it may be considered to continue in the nursery school as a free-standing initiative.

5.4   Methodology

The methods used in this research generally followed those in qualitative research (see Section 4.1). Firstly, I used my knowledge of the culture of the people and supplemented this with information from direct observations of the people's interactions. Therefore as a researcher, a participant, an

advocate, and a resource together with other participants, I partly shaped what actions should be taken initially within the context of the project. In this respect, the concerted effort to find solutions to the problems that impede people's growth could be defined as action within the framework of Participatory Action Research (McIntyre 2008: 33).

Secondly, I followed the lead that the primary end result of the sets of data is to arrive at themes or patterns which may be described as the ultimate products of the data analysis (Vaismoradi and Snelgrove 2019: 2). On a similar note, Williams (2008: 248) writes about emergent themes being a basic building block of inductive approaches to qualitative social research and are derived from life worlds of research participants through the process of coding. Moreover, "Themes only attain full significance when they are linked to form a coordinated picture or an explanatory model" (Bazeley 2009: 9).

Thirdly, this research has an added dimension of an indigenized methodology, which "refers to the extent the research methods and measures are tailored to the culture of the research" (Chilisa 2012: 98). In parallel to this, there is an indigenous paradigm or set of underlying beliefs that guide our actions. This Indigenous paradigm consists of an Indigenous ontology (the way we view reality), epistemology (how we think about and know this reality), axiology (our ethics or morals), and methodology (and how we go about gaining knowledge about reality) (Wilson 2008: 13). From this perspective, this study specifically adds an Indigenous paradigm that stems from the belief that all bits of knowledge are relational or interconnected as in the web of life. Accordingly, I used themes to create a conceptual framework that is "grounded in an Indigenous paradigm, a methodological approach and a perception of reality that informs our reality" (Lambert 2011: 200). Lambert goes on to state that each individual researcher would develop his or her own individual framework based on worldview, culture, place, and heart of the research process. With respect to this study, the voices of the participants in this research reflect the knowledge, interests, and experiences that fit into this research paradigm, resulting in the construction of knowledge as depicted in a conceptual framework for an improved programme that responds to the needs of the community. Thus, the resulting conceptual framework in this study is context-specific. At the same time the framework would have relevance to similar contexts elsewhere.

In this section, I elaborate on the methods used in terms of the following: instrumentation (Subsection 5.4.1), administration (Subsection 5.4.2), and procedure for data description and presentation (Subsection 5.4.3).

5.4.1 Instrumentation

Four instruments of research were employed in the collection of data:

1.   The unstructured or non-standardized interview;

2.   The semi-structured interview;

3.   The structured or standardized interview; and

4.   Observations.

All of the above methods or techniques are appropriate for qualitative research except (3) because it directs informants' responses (Chilisa 2012: 175). In this respect, although the directed informants' responses may lead to quantitative analysis, this research is more about qualitative analysis; for this reason, I looked for commonalities that lead to emergent themes.

(1)   The unstructured or non-standard interview

The information provided aspects of their history and cultural knowledge they most value and wish to be included in the curriculum of the pilot programme. They commented on how aspects of their culture have been affected as a result of contact with other cultures. They also shared their feelings about the importance of being Wapishana. Examples of questions that started off the informal interviews are as follows: (1) "How did you learn aspects of your culture, such as hunting, weaving, spinning cotton, or farming?"; (2) "What aspects of your culture are strong?"; (3) "What aspects of your culture are disappearing?"; and (4) "What aspects of your culture should be taught in schools?" Some of the information gathered was already incorporated into Chapter 2.

(2)   The semi-structured interview

This type of interview is focused in that it has questions in an interview guide and focuses on the issue(s)to be covered, depending on the process of the interview and answers from each individual participant (Chilisa 2012: 175).

Guided by the above process, I conducted such an interview, which mainly consisted of open-ended questions, eliciting responses or comments on interviewees' perceptions about the preparatory stages of the programme. There were six questions about the contribution or involvement of the following stakeholder groups:

- the government

- non-governmental agencies

- teachers

- facilitators
- community members
- children

Each question had two parts. Part (a) asked how each stakeholder group contributed to or was affected by the programme. Part (b) asked how these contributions or affected areas could be given more attention for improvement of the programme. Two examples from Interview 1 are as follows:

1.   a.   What were the positive ways by which the government representatives contributed?

     b.   What were the areas that needed more attention?

2.   a.   What were the positive ways in which the children were involved?

     b.   What were the areas that needed more attention?

Appendix D shows the full interview questions and the responses given by the people interviewed.

(3)   The structured or standardized interview

This type of interview contains a number of pre-planned questions, and each research participant is asked the same question (Chilisa 2012: 175). However, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, this type of interview lends itself better to quantitative analysis. Nonetheless, it was still used to focus on the commonalities of the responses.

This interview consisted of questions about the first seven months of the implementation of the programme. This covered almost two terms of the three-term yearly programme. The questionnaire consisted both of open-ended and closed questions, eliciting responses and comments the interviewees' perceptions regarding the following programme components:

A.   Programme Plan (questions 1 to 4)

B.   Curriculum/Teaching Method (questions 5 to 10)

C.   Personnel (questions 11 to 12)

D.   Training (questions 13 to 15)

E.   Materials (16 to 19)

F.   Learner/children's progress (questions 20 to 21)

G.   Programmes's growth (questions 22 to 24)

H.   Training, attitude, and ability of teachers and other staff (question 25)

I.   Quality of materials (questions 26 to 28)

J.   Strategies and activities (29 to 32)

An example of an open question from Interview 2 (no. 1) is "How well are the community needs incorporated into the programme plan?" An example of a closed question (no. 7) is "Did the teachers feel comfortable using it?" Appendix E shows questions with the responses given by the interviewed teachers and parents.

(4)   Observations

Direct observation of teacher–pupil interactions in classrooms was also done, since such direct observational methods are used to supplement information gained by use of other research techniques (Lovell and Lawson 1970: 111). In this study this direct observational method was used primarily to supplement the information gained through the interviews.

The primary purpose of the classroom observations is to supplement information obtained through the interviews and from the written sources. I obtained information through on-site observations of teachers' interactions with their pupils. The teachers who were observed teach the year 1 classes in the three pilot nursery schools. Therefore, I observed three teachers (labelled A to C) teaching their respective classes at different times (see Appendix H for details). The Teacher A's class comprised twenty-one pupils, Teacher B's eleven class, and Teachers C's twenty-four. Teacher A, also a head teacher, was a substitute teacher during the period of observation since the designated teacher was on a month's maternity leave.

5.4.2   Administration

To begin, I held informal one-on-one interviews and discussions with several elderly people for information on their history, cultural aspects, and the impact of colonization on the Wapishana. Specifically, I visited the homes of nine elderly people to audio-record their shared information about their knowledge of the history of the Wapishana as well as their views on the importance on being Wapishana. These recorded interviews will be accessible through Leiden University's repository. In addition, by accompanying some relatives and friends on planned and impromptu walks or visits to places in the forest or the immediate savannah, I observed the landscape and peoples' activities. I also participated in cooperative work, as well as traditional practices, such as the clearing of burnt wood in a plot of land for farming and walking in the jungle with elders and youths. Whenever

the situation arose, I participated in village activities to observe how the people participated in cultural as well as outdoor activities that were organized by local leaders. I gathered further information via photographs. I also attended two public meetings to take notes on the topics discussed, in particular issues affecting the environment within the Wapishana territory.

In considering the specific research question 1: "What are the perceptions about the contributions of stakeholder groups in the planning stages of the mother tongue-based bilingual education programme?" I conducted informal one-on-one interviews (Interview 1), using open-ended questions. There were seven key stakeholders with different backgrounds: a head teacher of a primary school, a head teacher of a nursery school, a teacher at a primary school, a teacher at a nursery school, a village councillor, a village church leader, and the programme coordinator. I took written notes on each interview. I also gathered relevant documents such as the designed curriculum, the storybooks, the assessment booklets, the memorandum of understanding (between the Ministry of Education and a representative of the communities), and the recommendations of Ministry of Education for perusal.

For the specific research question 2: "To what extent have the essential features, components and best strategies for successful bilingual education programmes been implemented in the introduction of the current programme", I conducted formal interviews (Interview 2), concentrating on the actual programme that had been implemented hitherto. I interviewed six teachers and eighteen parents, taking written notes for each interview.

I first obtained written permission from the Chief Education Officer to visit the three pilot schools. Equipped with copies of the permission, I then informed the teachers of my observation visits. With their permission in turn, I sat alone at the back of each class to observe mainly the literacy and maths activities. For other activities that were sometimes outdoor, I accompanied the class and observed the teacher–child interactions. I video-recorded several lessons and also made written notes. I collected further data by observing the teaching materials in and around the classrooms.

For the specific research question 3: "What changes can be made for the improvement of the current programme so that it meets the needs of the Wapishana children, their families and their communities?" I conducted thematic analysis of the findings to come up with a conceptual framework.

5.4.3 Procedure for data description and presentation

Part of the first set of data concerning the history and cultural aspects was incorporated into Section 2.4. These were further used to come up with elements/activities of Wapishana values (see Figure 20, Subsection 2.5).

The second set of data from Interview 1 was categorized as strengths as well as areas for improvement on the planning process of the programme. These were further analysed as the most common, common, and varied responses to come up with commonalities (see Appendix F for details). The second set of data from Interview 2 was also categorized as the most common, common, and varied comments to come up with commonalities (See Appendix G for details).

My classroom observations (see Appendix H) were mainly to supplement the findings from the interviews. As I observed the various lessons, I first identified patterns or variation in the teaching activities and children's interactions. As such, these were incorporated into the findings wherever appropriate in the form of photographs, illustrations, and extracts.

5.5   Summary

The Ministry of Education, the Jesuit Missions of Guyana, and the Wapishana Literacy Association are the main stakeholder organizations that were involved in the pilot programme. These organizations, along with other community members formed the core team, that is, the leaders of the programme. They in turn formed the resource team, responsible for selecting, writing, illustrating, and editing the stories. Several individual stakeholders from within the communities, teachers and head teachers of the nursery schools, and parents of the cohort of children comprised the research participants.

Sources of information were written documents prepared by the core team and Wapishana elders who provided information on aspects of their historical and cultural knowledge. Other sources of information were one-on-one interviews and classroom observations. Interview 1 dealt with the planning process of the bilingual education programme; interview 2 and classroom observations with the actual programme.

Chapter 6

Presentation of the findings

6.1   Introduction

In Chapter 5, I presented my sources and explained the methods used in this study. This chapter presents an evaluation of the findings based mainly on the three main methods employed: perusing written documents and conducting interviews, supplemented by classroom observations.

Beginning this chapter, Section 6.2 reflects on the problems and the need to redress them in a bilingual programme. Section 6.3 describes the planning of the programme in terms of the contributions made by several stakeholder groups and addresses the specific research question 1. Section 6.4 describes the actual programme in terms of the curriculum, materials, and teaching/training and addresses the specific research question 2. Section 6.5 evaluates the programme hitherto, with respect to emergent themes and the development of a conceptual framework and addresses the specific research question 3. Section 6.6 summarizes the findings by addressing the main research question.

6.2   The problems and need

It is useful to recollect the main problems identified based on preliminary observations before an evaluation of the findings are presented. The situation for most Wapishana children points to three main problems and the need to redress them:

1   academic underachievement

2   linguistic mismatch

3   declined cultural practices

Firstly, academic underachievement is reflected in children's performance over a period of several years at the National Grade Two Assessment. This was expressed, for example, by a head teacher who said that grade two pupils have scored below the mastery level at the National Grade Two Assessment over the last ten-year period (from Section 2.4.1.2). A similar pattern of underachievement emerged for students attending one of the

secondary schools situated in the Wapishana community. Based on statistics obtained through the Department of Education, results for Caribbean Secondary School Education Certificate showed that children from Aishalton Secondary School obtained the following pass rates of grades 1 to 3 in English (from Section 3.1.5), displayed in the table below.

Table 11. Pass rates of grades 1 to 3 in English
in Aishalton Secondary school
(from the Department of Education, Region 9, 2017).

Year	2012	2013	2016	2017
Per cent pass	12	23	38.4	43

Even though the school's percentage passes in English increased over the years, they have not surpassed the percentage passes at the national level for the same period. When the same subject is considered for 2013, for example, the national pass rates at grades 1 to 3 for girls and boys were 48% and 43%, respectively (Guyana Education Sector Plan 2014–2018: 23, from Section 3.2.2).

Secondly, the head teacher's comment and the pass rates of the secondary students' performance were reasons of concern among stakeholders. They believed that the children's underachievement was rooted in the linguistic mismatch experienced by the children during the foundational years of their schooling. Specifically, children's prior experience in their first language and culture is discontinued in a largely English-only instructional environment (from Section 3.4.1). As a result, most children had trouble in following the teacher's instruction and lesson content because of their limited knowledge of the second language. Consequently, it took longer for the children to achieve their educational goals because they are learning the second language and lesson content in it at the same time. Therefore, stakeholders felt that the Wapishana children's home language and cultural context should be used as an initial strategy in their instructional environment. Eventually, instruction in their second language would follow but at the same time the first language should be maintained.

Finally, stakeholders' perceptions also reflected that their languages and culture were not emphasized enough in the mainstream curriculum (from Section 1.2). A similar perspective was made during the advocacy meeting of stakeholders on 25 April 2015. Community members' comments

reflected a mismatch between the cultures of the community and the mainstream society. Community members commented that the content and pictures of textbooks and workbooks used in the classrooms should be relevant to the culture of the children (from Section 3.4.1). Furthermore, the elders interviewed expressed that those aspects of Wapishana cultural practices were in decline among the younger generations (from Section 2.4.5). The elders cited a decline in skills such as use of bows and arrows to hunt and the spinning of cotton to make hammocks. Stakeholders agreed that aspects of the traditional practices be incorporated in a new curriculum since this will help in the upkeep of Wapishana culture.

In sum, the central message is that the more the curriculum affirms the children's language and culture, the more likely they are to succeed academically. In reflecting on the lessons learned from the Wapishana instruction programme that was intermittently followed from the 1970s to 2002 (see Section 3.3), stakeholders thought that the Wapishana component could be reintroduced, improved, and expanded. Therefore, stakeholders agreed that in redressing the aforementioned problems, a mother tongue-based educational programme should be meaningfully integrated into the mainstream curriculum. Since the pilot programme is still at the early stages, the outcomes of this research would not be sufficient to determine whether or not solutions are found to the aforementioned main problems. Rather, a fuller-scale or longer-term programme would suffice. However, some immediate actions taken such as the instruction in Wapishana and teaching of the culture indicate that the linguistic mismatch is already being addressed; hence, some of the positive short-term outcomes of this research such as more participation and responsiveness by children are expected. The long-term outcomes of a full-scale pilot programme concerning the children's academic achievement and their cultural practices are yet to be realized.

6.3   Planning the programme: research question 1

The resource team met for discussions and training sessions before the actual programme was drafted. They were also in constant dialogue with representatives of the MoE, who advised on the aspects of the programme such as providing recommendations (see Subsection 5.3.1.4) and signing a memorandum of understanding (see Subsection 5.3.1.5). A brief overview of the programme has already been provided (see Subsection 5.31.1).

Prior to the start of the actual programme, teachers and parents attended workshops and subsequently came together with the children at the

schools to participate in trial sessions of the big books. The sessions with the children were specially about practising the given guidelines for the presentation of the big book. The data concerning the perceptions about the planning process of the programme was collected through the one-on-one interviews in Interview 1. The participants included seven individual stakeholders from the community who were part of the resource team: the programme coordinator, two head teachers, two teachers, and two community leaders. Their responses revealed a range of positive comments as well as suggestions in areas for improvement, all of which focused on contributions or involvement by stakeholder groups such as the government, a non-governmental organization, teachers, facilitator/coordinators, community members, and children. The responses/comments about the planning stages together with the components of the programme as contained in the Teacher's Handbooks address the specific research question 1: "What are the perceptions about the contributions of stakeholder groups in the planning stages of the mother tongue-based bilingual education programme?"

In this subsection, I present the most common or common as well as some varied comments about the contribution and involvement towards the planning stages by the following stakeholder groups: the government (Subsection 6.3.1), the non-governmental organization (Subsection 6.3.2), teachers (Subsection 6.3.3), facilitator/coordinators (Subsection 6.3.4), parents/community members (Subsection 6.3.5), and children (Subsection 6.3.6).

6.3.1 Contributions of the government

Five of the seven individual stakeholders commented that the government showed support for the programme generally. This was evident from some of the responses/comments by the following stakeholders taken from Appendix: Interview 1: "They are generally supportive, but nothing yet official" (Stakeholder A); "So far when invited, they are attending" (Stakeholder D); and "The Minister said he fully supports it" (Stakeholder F). The government, through the National Centre for Educational Research and Development, also provided "specialists in literacy and early childhood education" (Stakeholders B and C).

Representatives of the government preferred that instruction be in both Wapishana and English. As Stakeholder G commented, "They would like to see Wapishana and English together." Also, "They preferred to see

the programme in both Wapishana and English (instead of Wapishana first) because they saw it as a bilingual programme" (Stakeholder B).

During one of the meetings with the community members, two pertinent questions were posed by the representatives of the Ministry of Education for consideration: (a) "What happens to the English-speaking child who attends one of the pilot schools?"; and (b) "What happens if a child from the one of the pilot schools is transferred to another nursery (non-pilot) school in the district?" (Stakeholder B).

6.3.2 Contributions of the non-governmental organization

The Jesuit Missions provided most of the resources as evidenced from their responses/comments taken from Appendix D: Interview 1. For example, "They have links in terms of resources" (Stakeholder A); "The NGO provided all transportation, accommodation, and meals for the workshops" (Stakeholders B and C). The Jesuits volunteered to provide the consultant/facilitator. This was realized in the following statement: "The NGO representatives can procure and alternate specialists" (Stakeholder A).

One comment about improvement was in the recruitment of consultants. Two stakeholders made comments related to this: "The NGO should be open to other consultants from other NGOs (e.g. The Summer Institute of Linguistics) that indicate an interest to assist in the programme" (Stakeholders B and C). This comment surfaced as a result of one workshop having no consultant, with only the coordinators leading. Alternatively, "They should get someone to teach this programme in the absence of the facilitator" (Stakeholder D). Also, three stakeholders felt that in the absence of the consultant, there should have been another to continue facilitating the sessions in a professional but specialist capacity.

6.3.3 Contributions of the teachers

Most teachers in the nursery schools are Wapishana and Wapishana-speaking. This is evident in the following comments: "They know the Wapishana language (speaking)" (Stakeholders B and C), but "One teacher cannot speak Wapishana, but can speak Makushi" (Stakeholder F). However, two teachers revealed that they were not proficient in the reading and writing of Wapishana, a needed skill to be more effective in reading and presenting written texts in Wapishana. This was also revealed by the one

stakeholders who said that "Some of them are not literate in Wapishana, although they may know how to speak it" (Stakeholder A).

Another comment was on the difference in contributions to the discussions between the trained and untrained teachers. Two teachers, for example, commented that they did not fully understand some strategies or methods as explained at the workshops. As two head teachers commented, "Young teachers do not fully understand the methodologies because some now come on the job" (Stakeholders B and C). Furthermore, when it came to teachers' input during the training sessions, mainly the "trained teachers contribute" to the discussions (Stakeholders B and C). Thus, most teachers felt that with more specialist training and experience, the untrained teachers would gain more confidence in contributing to discussions about the programme.

6.3.4 Contributions of the facilitator/coordinators

On the contributions of the consultant/facilitator, all seven individual stakeholders acknowledged that the consultant/facilitator was indeed a professional trained in pedagogy. A couple of positive comments attributed to the consultant/facilitator were as follows: "Facilitator is world class" (Stakeholder A) and "The consultant had everybody participating in a lively way" (Stakeholder D). However, in the ensuing workshops, the facilitator seemed to be perceived as an "impatient worker" (Stakeholder A) that resulted in participants being discouraged by the facilitator's overt rejection of their work and contributions. As a result, some participants discontinued their participation in workshops.

Another positive comment was about the recruitment of Wapishana as coordinators: "The coordinators can speak both English and Wapishana" (Stakeholder D). It was also the perception of three stakeholders that even though the coordinators were professional in their own fields, they were new to the programme. For example, "The younger persons are not grounded in early childhood education" (Stakeholders B). In other words, they lacked the professional experience in teacher education and/or early childhood education for leading the sessions as in the case of at least one workshop when there was no consultant.

6.3.5 Contributions of the parents/community members

For their part, the parents and community members showed their general support. This was partly indicated in the following statement: "When parents were asked about the programme, they answered, "Yes, we want it" (Stakeholder B). As observed by one stakeholder, "When community members decide on something it is for a good reason" (Stakeholder A). According to another stakeholder, some parents who attended the training sessions were encouraged to partake in the trial sessions of the big books in an effort to have them more involved in their children's education. Moreover, the fact that some parents were willing to partake in the trial sessions of the big books with their children showed the extent to which they were willing to cooperate. Prior to start of the programme, for example, "Parents willingly came for one week for one hour a day to try out the materials" (Stakeholder E).

Even young community members other than parents participated as local artists and typists. One setback here is that some participants seemed to have expected some sort of compensation for their services, as in the following comment by one stakeholder: "Parents got no money to compensate for their time…" (Stakeholder G). When it was explained that all their services should be voluntary, they left the programme. Further, "Some parents were just not interested, e.g. from a total of 18 parents, sometimes only 3 or 6 came to meetings. Only the same set kept coming" (Stakeholder E). Consequently, the programme leaders asked for more volunteers at subsequent meetings with the community, encouraging them to offer whatever skills they have as support for the programme.

6.3.6 Contributions of the children

During the trial sessions of the big books, the children fully participated. Some interesting observations were made: "Children are familiar with some of the stories" (Stakeholder D) and "They enjoyed the stories" (Stakeholders B and C). In addition, the children were responding and interacting much more as illustrated in the following comments: "They understood the stories because it was in their language" (stakeholder D); "Most responded to questions" (stakeholder D); and "The child who never spoke up dominated the discussion" (Stakeholder D). However, some pictures were not accurate, and as a result "Some children were not able to recognize some animal characters, such as the eel" (Stakeholder E). Further, "Some pictures could not be identified because they were in 'black and white'" (Stakeholder E).

6.4   The actual programme: research question 2

The preceding subsection described the contributions or roles of the main stakeholder groups pertaining to the planning stages of the programme based on Interview 1. In this subsection, outcomes are presented that concerns the actual programme.

The data about the various aspects of the actual programme were collected mainly through the one-on-one interviews in Interview 2. The participants included three class teachers, three head teachers from the nursery schools, and eighteen parents whose children are part of the programme. The responses/comments about the various aspects of the programme, where appropriate, are also complemented by extracts from classroom observations. All this addresses the specific research question 2: "To what extent have the essential features, components, and best strategies of successful bilingual education programmes been implemented in the introduction of the current programme?"

In this subsection, I present the findings under the following headings: curriculum (Subsection 6.4.1), materials (6.4.2), and teaching/training (Subsection 6.4.3).

6.4.1 Curriculum

The integrated curriculum encompassed language, math, and other activities as mentioned in Subsection 5.3.1.1 (the Teacher's Handbooks) and is set out over two school terms of fifteen and fourteen weeks, respectively.

A majority of teachers and parents felt that the curriculum was progressing satisfactorily, as illustrated in the examples of the following responses: "Yes, it is" (no. 22); "Yes, they said the programme was going good" (no. 23); and "Heard that the people said it is good" (no. 24, from Appendix E: Interview 2).

Some other responses taken from Appendix E also illustrate major constraints faced by teachers in following the curriculum. One teacher commented that adequate coverage of the topics and activities was hindered by the challenges faced by the teacher in managing a large class of twenty-four. For example, the teacher noted, "Yes, but slowly because of the large class" (no. 22) and a parent added, "The second facilitator observed that the class was too large for the teacher" (no. 23). The large class exceeded the stipulated teacher–pupil ratio of 15:1 at this level. As one teacher commented, "The number in one class is 24. This is too many for one teacher. Now the Ministry of Education says the ratio is 1 teacher to 15

children" (no. 13). Consequently, more individual attention had to be given to children. Sometimes, this resulted in the teacher being unable to properly conclude all learning activities, before moving on to another concept. On how to improve the curriculum, one head teacher noted that "For math concepts, more practice should be done…to master concepts before rushing on to others, e.g. the numeral 3. […] Some children tend to confuse numerals with letters" (no. 6).

Another hindrance to the timely progress of the curriculum, according to a parent is that "Some younger parents do not have interest in the bilingual programme (no. 24). Specifically, the younger parents seemed uninterested when they were invited to meetings to assist in the collection or making of teaching materials. According to one half of the interviewees, community members other than parents of the cohort of the children seemed missing from the meetings (also see Subsection 6.3.5).

One of the concerns of the representative of the MoE according to the teachers was that the curriculum should achieve the required national standards or learning outcomes in the pre-reading, pre-writing, numeracy, and other developmental activities. Three teachers were "unsure" (no. 6) if these learning outcomes were clear or well-matched with the activities while two were certain.

6.4.2 Materials

Based on classroom observations, the main materials associated with literacy activities are the big books with stories (see also 5.3.1.2). Apart from the big books, there are also separate pictorial illustrations of the characters on charts that depict sight words. These are reinforced by a large chart of illustrations, labelled in both Wapishana and English (see Figure 26 below).

Figure 26. Illustrations of animals and a flower with bilingual labels.

As observed, all teachers in the big book presentation completed the first three steps, including inviting children to join in the "reading" of the sentences. These steps are the most straightforward because of the immediacy of the big book as a material. In going beyond these steps, only one teacher attempted inviting children to play the role of characters and retell the story in their own words. First, in demonstrating parts of the story, two children were guided in using paper models of the animal characters. Two children were instructed to hold the models and move them accordingly as the teacher read the story in Wapishana. The main challenge for the children was that they were uncertain when to move the paper models, prompting the continual assistance of the teacher. This caused the demonstration to be done haltingly. Second, for the retelling of the story, the teacher invited children to compose their own oral sentences about each picture through guided questions such as "What is happening in this picture?" Each sentence composed was repeated by teacher who in turn invited the children repeat the sentence. Each oral sentence is then written on displayed flip chart in front of the classroom. This activity was successfully completed as seen in the display of the story in Wapishana and English sentences on a flip chart below (Figure 27).
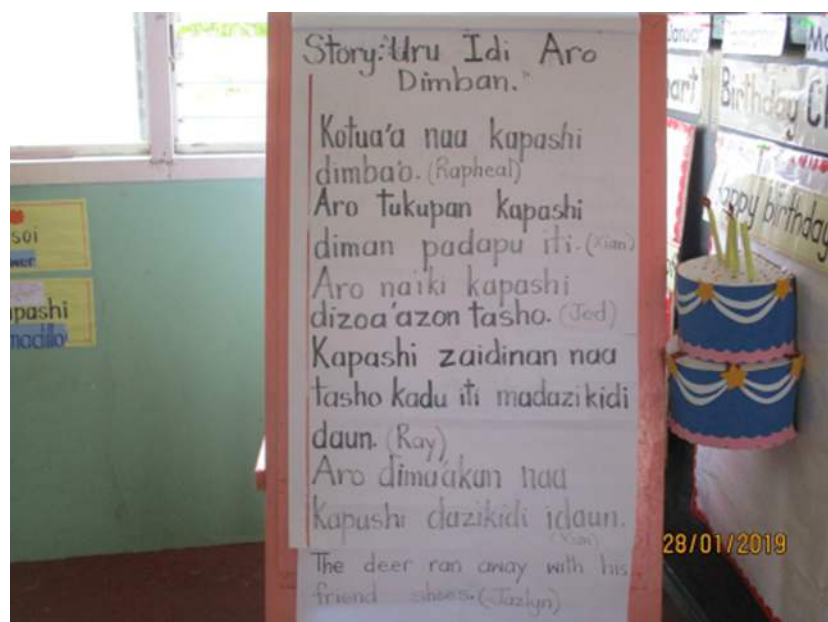
Figure 27. Sentences composed by children written on a flip chart.

Another teacher reported that the retelling of the story was attempted by having children match prepared sentence cards with each picture of the story. This activity proved to be too challenging for the children.

The language experience is one of the strategies employed as observed in children's short visits or trips to nearby places, accompanied by the teacher. There were two short trips made by one class to the village shop and the community health centre, where they listened to the explanation of the roles by shopkeeper and the health worker, respectively. They were also encouraged to ask questions. When they returned to the classroom, they orally reported what they observed through questioning by the teacher. However, the teacher did not employ the writing phase in which the teacher and the children together write sentences based on the reporting back.

For the pre-writing activities, children were seated in the whole class and other times in small groups. In the whole class, teachers demonstrated the formation of letters using large and clear letter cards. They drew the children's attention to the sound of the letters and helped them to name and recognize these letters in both English and Wapishana words. One strong link is this approach is the teaching of letter–sound correspondences related to the words of the story of the week or other stories previously told. The activity is extended to some letters from the English alphabet and related

English words children are familiar with. As noted, "Also, it was observed that both English and Wapishana words were dealt with in the activity" (see pre-writing activities in Appendix H: Classroom Observations). For reinforcement, the letters and words learnt are displayed on charts on the walls of the classrooms (see an example of such a chart in Figure 28 below).

*Figure 28. Charts of Wapishana and English words
with a focus on the letter <u>.*

In small groups, individual children did a variety of activities such as tracing, pasting, colouring, and shaping outline of letters. Such activities gave children exposure to tactile materials such as seeds, beads, crayons, and play dough. For each group, teachers first gave instructions and demonstrated the activity and assisted individual children to complete the activity wherever possible. For individual work and group work, children use paste, play dough, paper, crayons, seeds and beads, and miniature figures of some animals.

For mathematical activities such as identifying shapes and matching numerals, a list of materials such as beads, seeds, shells, and small smooth stones is obtained from the environment. A CD player and an accompanying audio CD contains recorded short songs or nursery rhymes for the children.

Besides a large chart for shapes, there are large numeracy charts with bilingual labels from 1 to 10 (see Figure 29 below).

Figure 29. Numeral and shape charts.

Other materials are small cardboard-made numeral grids of 1 to 5 (see Figure 30 below) to be filled with beads or seeds accordingly.
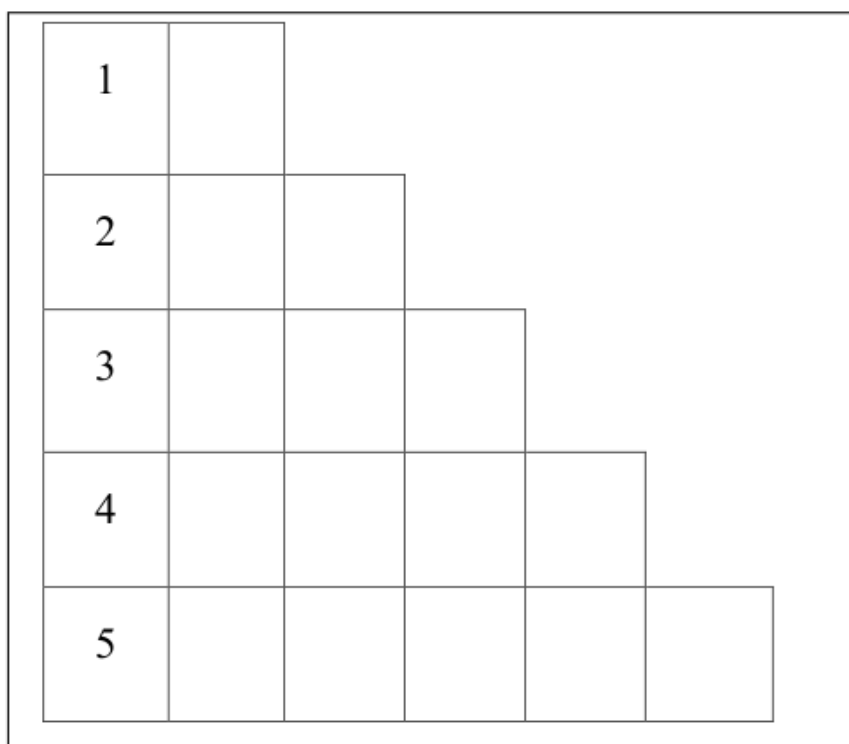
Figure 30. Numeral grid 1–5.

Given smaller numeral grids like the one depicted above, individual children were tasked with matching seeds or beads to numerals by filling in the spaces according to the corresponding numerals. Some children completed incorrectly the activity either because they did not fill all the spaces as indicated by the numerals or they also filled spaces on which the numerals were written.

For other activities, there is a corner for Wapishana artefacts (see Figure 31 as an example of display) contributed by parents and members of the community. Invited community members come to the school as resource people with their traditional materials such as traditional wear, baskets, fish traps, bows and arrows, and farm tools. They demonstrate how traditional activities are carried out.

Figure 31. Wapishana artefacts.

One aspect of the materials most interviewees liked was the quality, as evidenced in one of the responses: "They like the materials" (no. 16, Appendix E: Interview 2. The manipulatives or tactile objects were not only of a variety but also familiar and attractive. The pictures were large, beautiful, and colourful. As one teacher described, "Most of the materials are useful… creative, help to brighten the classroom" (no. 8). It was evident that the children liked the big books, as they can be seen flipping the pages during their spare time.

For improvement of the pictures, three teachers commented that some illustrations of the characters were unclear to the children. For example, one teacher commented, "Some of the pictures gave the children some problems in recognizing the characters, e.g. the artist drew a porcupine but the children say it is a pig" (no. 19). As a result, they had difficulty in identifying the characters. Another teacher felt that "Some pictures are not in proportion" (no.19) to others in some illustrations, while two parents felt that the colouring scheme could be improved and done before hand. For example, one interviewee said that "storybooks need more colouring" (no. 10).

Eighteen interviewees said that the materials were most useful because children can relate to them culturally. When interviewees were asked if they thought the materials represented the culture appropriately, eleven of them answered, "Yes" (no. 27). However, some stories, although relevant to the Wapishana culture and context, had some characters that were unfamiliar to some children. This is because the characters (e.g. the *minau* 'a type of nut') were not found in some villages. Besides, according to one teacher, "Other parents said that their children are not familiar with the materials because they do not take their children to the forest" (no. 16). Therefore, stories about fishing trips in the savannah were also unfamiliar to some children because they had not yet experienced fishing trips with their parents. The other challenge was finding stories that were specific for children. Most of the interviewees felt that the stories were for general audience. As one teacher commented, "mostly adult language used in stories, e.g. rhyming words are lacking" (no. 19).

One parent commented that although the stories are culturally relevant, they hoped that stories "not appropriate" (no. 26) are excluded. In terms of logistics, all teachers commented that the system of producing and distributing the materials was satisfactory. They all agreed that materials such as the big books came on time for the first term, but one teacher added that "in the second term, materials were brought after the term began" (no. 17). Another teacher further commented, "Timely delivery would result in better planning" (no. 18).

6.4.3 Teaching/training

As mentioned in Section 5.2, all three class teachers who teach the cohort of children (Year 1) and the three head teachers are attached to the nursery schools. Only one class teacher and two head teachers trained through the national teachers training programme for nursery teachers. The other two class teachers and one acting head teacher are not yet trained. From the other classes (Year 2), two teachers are on the in-service of the national teachers training programme.

One half of the interviewees felt that all teachers exhibited confidence in switching from English to Wapishana and vice versa in their spoken interaction with the children. For example, one head teacher commented "The teacher has confidence because she can speak both languages" (taken from no. 11, Appendix E: Interview 2). When reading and writing Wapishana was required on their part, two teachers admitted that they were at a disadvantage because they were not familiar with the spelling system of

the language. On whether or not they felt effective as teachers, the responses of teachers were as follows: "Certain words in Wapishana to write, I could not spell because I did not go through the Wapishana literacy course" and "There are times I find it difficult reading certain words in Wapishana in the big book" (no. 11).

Two teachers felt that the workshops assisted them in understanding the methods but not fully. One of the reason, according to one head teacher was that "Miss Elaine joined late… found some aspects difficult" (no. 4). Because the teacher joined the staff after the programme started, she missed valuable information on strategies and methods in the previous sessions. Furthermore, two head teachers were absent from most of the training workshops, especially when the duration of the workshops clashed with the school time. As one head teacher commented, "I never attended the workshop" (no. 3). Another teacher commented, "…I do not have a clear idea of what they expect…for language focusing on the storybook, this time they added 'inquiries, provocation'" (no. 12). On how to improve the programme plan, one teacher suggested, "I think when we go to the workshop, they are not demonstrating to us" (no. 4). On whether or not the training helped teachers understand the teaching methods, one teacher responded, "Not really; just lectures, no demonstrations" (no. 13). Another teacher suggested, "More demonstrations by facilitators would help" (no. 15). Nevertheless, it was the teachers' general perception that their attendance at the workshops helped them in preparing teaching materials. As one head teacher commented, "Yes, the training helps us to be more resourceful" (no. 14).

Besides training, one head teacher felt that "exchange visits to schools by staff" (no. 15) may add to variety in their teaching strategies in terms of sharing ideas on the presentation of materials/resources and the organization of the classroom environment. Further, one teacher suggested, "They always have the workshops in Aishalton. They should have workshops in other villages" (no. 4). Another teacher commented, "There should be exchange of venues for workshops. This would open up avenues for thinking" (no. 15). Another useful suggestion was to bring real life experiences from the field into the classroom via audio or video recording. For example, one head teacher suggested, "We need more audios/videos that are relevant, that would bring real life experiences from the field into the classroom, e.g. a scene of *maradapan* 'cleaning of pond for fish'" (no. 15).

6.4.4 Summary

There was consensus among the teachers and parents interviewed that aspects of Wapishana culture were incorporated into the curriculum. As a result, the programme has progressed satisfactorily, as seen in the increased interaction by children with the use of their home language and culturally relevant materials. However, there was concern by some teachers about the need for the activities to be properly concluded before new concepts are introduced. Most interviewees felt that teachers are confident in speaking both languages to the children. One setback was their unfamiliarity with the writing system of Wapishana which is a needed skill if they are to be more effective in reading, writing, and presenting materials in Wapishana.

Most interviewees liked the quality of materials. Some suggested that some of the illustrations or pictures of the big books need to be better produced. Others suggested that the all the big books should be coloured beforehand.

Most interviewees felt that the training sessions benefitted teachers in terms of being more resourceful. As an added component to the training, most teachers felt that the facilitator should model or demonstrate some of the strategies so that teachers can better apply them in practice. It was found that one teacher who missed the first set of training sessions was at a disadvantage in confidently employing the methods. Similarly, the head teachers who also missed training sessions were not fully aware what transpired. It was also found that teachers favoured other strategies of exchange visits and exchange of venues for sharing resources and ideas. Another suggested strategy was video/audio recording of real-life experiences in the field to show in the classroom.

6.5   Themes and the development of a conceptual framework: research question 3

In Section 6.4 the findings were presented under curriculum, materials, and teaching/training based on information from Interview 2. These findings were supplemented by information from the written sources (see Subsection 5.3) and classroom observations (see Appendix H), wherever relevant. This section attempts to infer from the findings commonalities or common themes that reflect key areas for improvement and upkeep of the programme. Further, I discuss the implications or possible factors that give rise to each theme, citing some essential components or ingredients that are consistent or inconsistent with successful mother tongue-based bilingual education programmes. All this addresses the specific research question: (3) "What

changes can be made for improvement of the current programme so that it meets the needs of the children, their families and their communities?"

This section begins with Theme #1 (Subsection 6.5.1). This is followed by the remainder: Theme #2 (Subsection 6.5.2), Theme #3 (Subsection 6.5.3), Theme #4 (Subsection 6.5.4), Theme #5 (Subsection 6.5.5), Theme #6 (Subsection 6.5.6), Theme #7 (Subsection 6.5.7), Theme #8 (Subsection 6.5.8), and Theme #9 (Subsection 6.5.9). Finally, I summarize the themes in the development of a conceptual framework (Subsection 6.4.10).

6.5.1 Theme #1: *Teachers working in bilingual contexts should have proficiency (oral, reading, writing) in the language(s) of instruction.*

This theme could be inferred from the following verbatim statements (from Appendix D: Interview 1: "Some of them are not literate in Wapishana although they may know how to speak it" (Stakeholder A). "They know the Wapishana language, speaking" (Stakeholder B and C). "Some teachers can speak Wapishana but cannot read and write it" (Stakeholder D). "All teachers talk Wapishana" (Stakeholder F).

More statements that led to the theme above are as follows: (From Appendix E: Interview 2: "We teachers need more training in teaching Wapishana. Ms. Elaine did not go to the WWA Wapishana literacy class which was being run by the WWA before" (DT) (no. 4). "Certain words in Wapishana to write, I could not spell because I did not go through the Wapishana literacy course" (LJ) (no. 11) and "There are times I find it difficult reading certain words in Wapishana in the big book" (EJ) (no. 11).

The following extract that also points to the theme above is taken from my own written observations about teacher–pupil interactions in the classroom:

> On three occasions, the teacher had to turn the big book to herself to make sure she could read the sentence before reading it aloud or just skipping it to go on to the next picture. It seemed that she was unable to "sound out" some words, suggesting that the teacher was not familiar with the written system of the Wapishana language although she knew to speak it well. Afterwards, in the interview she said that she never had the opportunity to attend any Adult Wapishana literacy classes. These classes had stopped in 2014 (Teacher B's Class, The Teacher, from Appendix H).

Although the teachers' ability to speak Wapishana is an asset to the programme, the implication is that they all needed to become familiar with the Wapishana orthographic convention to effectively utilize and present materials in Wapishana. In other words, their reading and writing skills in their children's first language become obvious prerequisites for the pilot programme, given that the stories in the Big Books and some of the instructions in the Teacher's Handbooks are written in Wapishana. They are also required at times to write in Wapishana. Because two of the teachers did not possess the these skills, they also were unable to participate fully in aspects of the training workshops that required them to either read or write Wapishana.

The need for teachers to possess the aforementioned literacy skills in their pupils' first language is underscored for similar contexts. According to Kosonen et al. (2005: 49), a literacy teacher working in such a bilingual situation needs to be able to read and write in the language of instruction to be a good model to the learners of both reading for meaning and accurate reading, in addition to being a fluent speaker of the language of instruction (from Subsection 4.6.2.3). Walter (2016: 1) also holds a similar position (see also Subsection 4.6.2.3) that in culturally diverse contexts where Multilingual Education or Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education programmes are implemented, teachers should not only have full oral proficiency but also the indispensable skills of reading and writing the children's first language if they are to provide good instruction to children to read and write in it. By the same token, while it is assumed that teachers should also be literate in the second language, it should not be taken for granted. In this respect, the BICS/CALP distinction (see Subsection 4.7.2.5.1) can be extended to the performance of classroom teachers who need to master ideas or concepts that are linguistically and cognitively demanding to be able to teach them to their students (ibid. 2016: 2). Programme implementers should ensure that teachers also have competence of both the first and second languages at the CALP level.

6.5.2 Theme #2: *Teachers should not only have special training in theories that underpin the strategies but also in some hands-on practice of the strategies.*

The following comments are taken from Appendix D, Interview 1: "However, others still do not fully understand the methodologies. Young teachers do not understand the methodologies because some now come on the job" (Stakeholders B and C).

The following are from Appendix E, Interview 2: "I think when we go to the workshop, they are not demonstrating to us" (EA) (no. 4). Further, on the question on whether or not the training helped teachers understand the teaching method, the following comments came forth: "No. We were just given guidelines…" (LJ) (no. 13). "Not really. Just lectures, not demonstrations" (DT) (no. 13).

On how to improve training, some comments were made: "Facilitator should demonstrate or model how the steps are done" (LJ) (no. 15). "Demonstrations by facilitator would help…" (DT) (no. 15). "More demonstrations by facilitator would help" (EA) (no. 15).

Some key stakeholders seem to believe that had the teachers been trained through the national teacher training programme, they would have contributed more in the discussions during the training workshops. This is because they would already have been exposed to some strategies such as the "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches to teaching (Wallace 2001: 22, from Subsection 4.7.1.1). Consequently, trained teachers with this knowledge base of approaches to teaching would have benefitted more from the specific training sessions as would untrained teachers who are newly on the job.

Although it would be ideal that all the teachers are trained through the national teacher training programme, teachers could still benefit from training sessions where they observe the demonstrations of a component of a lesson by the facilitator or an experienced teacher. Each teacher would then take turn in practising that component in small groups, discussing the strengths and weaknesses with the facilitator and other participants. Some key stakeholders seem to suggest that since some teachers lacked exposure to the special training, more hands-on training activities such those mentioned above would have been helpful. Teacher confidence in addition to enhanced competence could transform classroom performance by teachers once the facilitator explains, demonstrates the strategies and gives them opportunities for practice in the training seminars (Trammell 2016: 7, from Subsection 4.6.2.3).

6.5.3 Theme #3: *A bilingual programme should reflect an appropriate route that is either sequential or simultaneous based on the linguistic situation of the learners in the specific context.*

On the government's contribution, the following comments were made (From Appendix D, Interview 1): "They preferred to see the programme in both Wapishana and English, instead of Wapishana first, because they saw it

as a bilingual programme. The emphasis was that Wapishana go hand in hand with English, which is difficult to do" (Stakeholders B and C). "NCERD said that the programme should not be in Wapishana alone; there should be English language used. They would like to see Wapishana and English go together" (Stakeholder G).

On whether the programme is helping the children, the following comments were made (From Appendix E: Interview 2): "… Yes, the programme is helping. Especially in English, children's understanding is difficult. When they hear Wapishana, they are more confident. They have the answers but to put it in English, they are not able; they do it better in Wapishana" (EJ) (no. 20). "Yes. The children are responsive. They talk a lot. They talk more freely and openly. With the games, they are more relaxed, but they can't do the activities in English. They rely more on Wapishana" (MA) (no. 20).

The following are extracts from my written observations based on classroom activities from Appendix H: "The teacher used both Wapishana and English throughout the lesson. Such use included questioning of pupils, acknowledgement of responses, instructions for new activities, and instructions for paying attention" (Teacher A's Class, The teacher). "The teacher used mostly Wapishana throughout the lesson. Each time a pupil responded correctly, she repeated their answers, and praised them in English with either 'Very good!' or 'Good job!' When some pupils answered in English, she also repeated their answers and sought to have them give the Wapishana versions" (Teacher B's Class, the Teacher). "The teacher used mostly English for about half of the lesson in discussing parts of the book and the pictures. When she came to the 'reading' part of the activities, she spoke mainly in Wapishana, but also asked pupils to give the English versions of the animals involved in the story" (Teacher C's Class, the Teacher).

One of the decisions by the implementers of the *Quality Bilingual Education Programme for Wapichan Children* was the incorporation of Wapishana and English as languages of instruction from the start of the programme. This decision was based on a recommendation by the representatives of the Ministry of Education (from Subsection 5.3.1.4). However, this recommendation seems more in line with the programme that promotes "literacy in both the L1 and English simultaneously or in close succession in situations where the bilingual children may have varying levels of proficiency in their L1 and English on entry to the programme" (Cummins 1996: 122, from Section 4.3). In the Wapishana situation, the children are largely monolingual in their L1, with several of them speaking a bit of English. On this account, the programme that promotes Wapishana

language in close succession to English seems to be in line with the "early-exit" transitional model of bilingual education, geared towards monolingualism in English. In such transitional models, the L1 primarily helps the children to adjust to dominant national languages and culture.

The decision to simultaneously use both languages for instruction seemed to be based on three specific circumstances: the title of the programme, children speaking some English, and national priorities for assessment. Firstly, according to three key stakeholders, the representatives of the Ministry felt that if the programme is bilingual, it should reflect likewise in the approach employed (from Subsection 6.3.1). As a result, the pre-reading activities in the Teacher's Handbooks, for example, have written Wapishana and English questions to be asked about the stories. Such an approach suggests that the children are developing both languages they already converse in. However, the situation for the children points to most of them being monolingual in their native language. Secondly, several children can be observed speaking some words, phrases or short sentences in English, even though their stronger language is Wapishana. Thirdly, given other influences that determine priorities for action such as preparing children for the English-medium National Grade Two Assessment, it is understandable that the simultaneous use of the languages is preferred. If it were a situation with a fair percentage of English speakers, then both languages should be provided. However, this approach should primarily be for the development of literacy in both languages. According to Baker (1995: 111, from Section 4.3), promoting literacy in both languages simultaneously works best when children already have relatively well-developed oral competencies in both languages. Since the children's stronger language is Wapishana, the simultaneous use of both languages in this situation contradicts what research and experience say. Rather, the sequential route is preferable when one language is stronger than the other (ibid. 1995: 110, from Section 4.3). In this situation, it is advisable that the children's stronger language competence be built first, before moving on to the second language competence, but at the same time maintaining the use of the first language. Recall that if the children are not taught to read and write in their stronger language first, less success and slower development will usually occur (ibid. 1995: 111, from Section 4.3). As was shown in the National Grade Two Assessment, children performed below the benchmarks set by the Ministry of Education (from Subsection 2.4.1.2). A similar pattern of underachievement was reflected in one secondary school where children's pass rates at grades 1 to 3 were below 44 per cent in English at the Caribbean Secondary Education for the years 2012, 2013, 2016, and 2017 (from Subsection 3.2.5).

Furthermore, on the simultaneous use of the two languages, I have observed that teachers employed two strategies. One is code-switching, which occurs when bilingual speakers switch from one language to another in the same discourse, sometimes in the same utterance (Silberstein 2001: 103). Accordingly, when expressing themselves to the children, the teachers switch from Wapishana to English and vice versa. The other strategy commonly used is translating, where the teachers repeat an explanation in one language using the other language. Code-switching works best as a common communication strategy in bilingual/multilingual contexts when all parties are competent speakers of the languages involved (Benson 2004: 3). However, according to Benson, code-switching may be more of a coping strategy for dealing with the new/second language and does not necessarily contribute to second language learning. In a similar vein, the translating strategy may not offer the "bilingual" advantage if the children have not yet developed the requisite conversational skills in both languages. While the translating strategy is helpful in the short term, it may be less helpful in the long term (Cameron 2001: 206). The reason, according to Cameron is that if a first language translation regularly follows an instruction or command in the L2, the children may come to recognize the pattern and stop trying to understand the initial version in the L2. Expressed differently, the children may become programmed to the teachers' translation and may stop listening in their weaker language until the teacher explains the concept in their stronger language.

Beyond code-switching and translating there is an innovative strategy: translanguaging. "Translanguaging in education encourages bilingual performances that in so doing enable students to move simultaneously along the continuum of two socially constructed languages according to the standards of the community and the home, as well as the school" (Garcia and Wei 2014: 69). For Trammell (2016: 5) translanguaging is one recommendation to try to promote a supportive environment, especially as it occurs when multilingual speakers alternate between two or more languages in the context of a single conservation. This strategy seems best to try when learners are already proficient speakers in both languages. That said, the concurrent use of both languages would work best when children already have relatively well-developed conversational skills in the languages. For culturally diverse children, the better alternative points to the sequential approach of using the languages of instruction, beginning with the children's stronger language. It is also consistent with moving from the pedagogical principle of moving from the known to the unknown (Smith 2012: 3, from Subsection 4.72)

A reason for reconsideration of the simultaneous use of languages is that oral L2 should be given careful attention as one of the stages of a mother tongue-based bilingual education programme (August and Shanahan 2006: 4, from Subsection 4.6.1). The introduction of oral L2 is the third of the four stages of progression for a mother tongue-based education programme in minority language communities as pointed out by (Malone 2005: 76, from 4.6.1). According to Malone, the first stage is the development of the children's oral L1, with the language of instruction being L1. The second stage is the introduction of reading and writing, followed by the introduction of oral L2, all conducted in the L1. At the fourth stage of introduction of reading and writing in L2, the language of instruction is L2. Malone notes that the stages may overlap and where the suggested progression is not applicable, it should be adapted. The stress is that importance should be placed on the introduction of oral L2; therefore, it should be taught systematically and entirely as a component (Craig 2004: 8, from Subsection 4.6.1). As can be seen, the progression of stages in this situation clearly points to the sequential use of the two languages.

6.5.4 Theme #4: *Part of early instruction for young learners should focus on rhythmic and repetitive patterns of language since these will more likely be recalled.*

The following comments (from Appendix D: Interview 1) reflects the above-mentioned theme: "First assignment was hard, e.g. we had to find 5 idioms, 5 songs, 5 riddles. Sometimes it is hard to rhyme in Wapishana" (Stakeholder B and C). "Some parents felt that some stories were inappropriate for children" (Stakeholder F).

The following comments were also made (from Appendix E: Interview 2): "Stories were mostly from adults with the adult audience. […] When persons were asked to collect or gather stories, the instructions were not clear about the stories being appropriate for the children. Therefore, some stories collected were long stories. So, they tried to break down and shorten the stories" (LJ) (no. 10). "The written expression needs to be developed. Mostly adult language used in stories, e.g. rhyming words are lacking" (MA) (no. 19).

The following are extracts from my written observations (From Appendix H): "Most times, the children had to hear a sentence repeatedly before they were able to repeat it after the teacher" (Teacher's A Class, The Pupils). "When it was time for the 'reading' of the sentence, the teacher asked the pupils to attempt to 'read' before she read them the correct

sentence. Often they could not 'read' the sentence. Instead, they repeated the sentence after her" (Teacher's B Class, The Class). "When it was the 'reading' part of the sentences, most children could not recall the sentences. So, they had to rely on hearing the sentences read by the teacher more than once before being able to repeat it" (Teacher's C Class, The Pupils).

While the culturally relevant pictures enabled children to predict what could happen next in the story, it was not so in the "reading" of sentences. In almost all the big book activities, when the teachers read the sentences and invited the children to join in, most children could not successfully predict what the words or sentences were. This part of the lesson seemed to be tedious for the children, unless the word or sentences were repeated aloud or read word by word by the teachers (see Figure 32 below for an example of the Wapishana text with English translation in square brackets).

Sowan nai'iki Achimaru

[The iguana and fish]

Sowan ikodan koram wunu paawa'a.

[The iguana found a fruit on the surface of the water]

Sowan zamatan koram.

[The iguana bit the fruit]

Usakotan napain uto'otanuzu.

[It bit and pulled the fruit]

Upu'u Achimaru to'otanuzu kapam.

[At the same time a fish pulled at the fruit too.]

Yawari kawan ukaminkautan sowan.

[The opossum came and helped the iguana]

Sariapa Achimaru dako so'owakan.

[At once the fish's teeth fell off]

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*Figure 32. An example of a Wapishana story taken from
one of the big books with English translation.*

Due to a lack of repetitive lines or phrases, the big books do not lend themselves to predictability of the texts. One of the suggested reasons is that

it seemed difficult to find Wapishana stories that have lots of repetition to aid memorization. The other reason could be that the story collectors and writers edited the long stories to make them shorter and concise. The resulting stories with scarcely any repetitive phrases or storylines may have caused the children to struggle to predict texts or story lines. In order to have stories that have repetitive lines, it seems better to compose short Wapishana stories with repetitive or rhythmic language patterns or adapt stories that have such patterns from outside the Wapishana community. With reference to developing literature for children in culturally or linguistically diverse contexts, Kosonen et al. (2007: 44), from Subsection 4.6.2.6) point out that shell books can be adapted to the first language and context. With this in mind, stories that have similar contexts can be translated to the children's first language. The example below (Figure 33) illustrates how a story composed in English with repetitive phrases can be adapted to Wapishana. The English translation is in square brackets.

Õgaru mani udaru'o kopau

[If I were a big fish]

Õgaru mani udaru'o kopau, wizi'i mani õmadi mashaapan.

[If I were a big fish, my scales would be shiny.]

Õgaru mani udaru'o kopau, doko'o mani õzaka'u tan wun ai.

[If I were a big fish, I would jump high above the water.]

Õgaru mani udaru'o kopau, aonaa mani õzamatakao.

[If I were a big fish, I would never be caught.]

Õgaru mani udaru'o kopau, õkuzota mani kobawu zunaa.

[If I were a big fish, I would cut the fishing lines.]

Õgaru mani udaru'o kopau, naobanai nii mani õgaru wunu ka'azo ii.

[If I were a big fish, I would be like a king in the water.]

Figure 33. An example of an adapted story with repetitive phrases (taken from the Wapishana literacy trials in nursery schools during the 1990s).

The repetitive phrase <Õgaru mani udaru'o kopau> is clearly visible in each sentence of the story above. This story adheres to lots of repetition, one of the principles of writing stories for children at this level. Children may not understand every word in the book, but they will often understand the story line (Baker 1995: 111). As stressed by Hudelson (1994: 144) and Waters

(1998: 163), with repetitions teachers could direct children's attention to particular features of the text. The implication is that stories with repetitive phrases should be used at this level, when introducing literacy activities. As children progress in their reading, stories that have less repetition, as in Figure 32, may then be used.

6.5.5 Theme #5*: Where two different languages use more or less the same roman script, letters with similar sounds can be taught first, followed by letters with distinct sounds.*

The following are extracts from classroom observations (from Appendix H):

"This was a whole class activity. The teacher had a large chart on which was written a big <B> and a small <b>. The teacher used her finger to trace the big <B> and in doing so said that it was the big <B>. The small <b> was treated in like manner. Teacher said that the letter <B> started the Wapishana word *Baudokoru* 'jaguar'. She then brought their attention to the bell by ringing it and asked them to say the English word <bell>. The teacher pointed out that the word started with a <b>. […] Teacher A then asked a parent who was present to bring the balloons, saying that she would each give the children one, once they paid attention. The teacher pointed out that the letter <b> also started the word <balloon>" (B. Pre-writing Activities, Teacher A focusing on the letter <Bb>).

"The teacher then asked children, "What words begin with U?" The teacher asked the question in Wapishana, "Kanom words sakadina'o 'u' di'iki?"
    "What is the name of the letter?"
    Most gave the sound of the letter. The teacher wanted the name of the letter. The teacher then told them that the name of the letter is <u>. She then gave them the sound of the letter.
    Teacher: "Give some words that begin with <U>."
    "Pugaa di'itinapa" 'Think'.
    1st child: "Umbrella"
    2nd child: "Bread"
    3rd child: "Table"
    The teacher got them to say "under" after prompting them with "under the table".
    Teacher: "Where is my hand going? Up."
    "What about Wapichan?" Aonaa word nii sakadinao nii Wapichan di'iki?"
    "Isn't there a word that starts the same way in Wapichan?"

"   So, what is the sound of this letter? What is the name?" (B. Pre-writing Activities, Teacher B focusing on the letter <Uu>).

"The Teacher wrote <Uu> on the chalkboard. The teacher used the terms 'Upper case U' and 'lower case u'. The Teacher asked the question, 'What word begins with U?' The children could not say a word that begins with <Uu>. The teacher sang 'Up, up go umbrella when it starts to rain.' The teacher told them, 'U is the letter, u is the sound'" (B. Pre-writing Activities, Teacher C focusing on the letter <Uu>).

One difficulty that most children seemed to have was saying words that begin with the letters they learned. This seemed to be the result of teachers presenting the same letters in both Wapishana and English words in the same activity or lesson. Such letters represent different phonemes. Therefore, the question arises whether it is appropriate to conflate the different phonemes of the same letters that occur in both languages. Take, for example, the letter <u> is presented in both *Wapichan Paradan* 'Wapishana words' and English words as observed on the charts (see in Figure 28 as an example).

The letter <u> in Wapishana is always the close central vowel /ɨ/ (dos Santos 2006: 34, from Subsection 3.5.1.2). Therefore, the letter <u> represents the phoneme /ɨ/ as in the words <kanuzu> [ka'nɨzɨ̡] 'cassava' and <uza> [ɨza̤] 'pet'. In contrast, the letter <u> is the open-mid back vowel /ʌ/ in the following English words: <umbrella> [ʌm'brɛlə]; <under> ['ʌndər]; and <up> [ʌp].

In the case of the letter <b>, the voiced labial plosive /b/ exists in English but not in Guyanese Wapishana. For example, the <b> in the English word <bed> [bɛd] is a voiced labial plosive /b/ whereas the <b> in the Wapishana word <badi> ['ɓadɨ̡] 'cassava' is a voiced implosive labial plosive /ɓ/. The letter <b> in Guyanese Wapishana always represents the phoneme /ɓ/ (from Section 3.5.2).

As can be seen, the letters <u> and <b> in English and Wapishana represent different phonemes. Even if children are saying both Wapishana and English words that have these letters, one may not be sure if the children can distinguish between the different sounds the letters represent. In the Guyanese Wapishana spelling system, several letter-sounds such as <k>, <m>, <n>, <p>, <s>, <t>, and <w> are similar to English (from Section 3.5.2). In this respect, when using contextual words of both Wapishana and English, it seems better to first teach letters that have similar sounds. Letters with distinct sounds (e.g. <b> or <u>) should be taught separately, beginning with Wapishana first.

6.5.6 Theme #6*: Teachers should challenge learners with cognitively engaging tasks but with the right level of challenge to move the learners forward, both in language and content.*

The following are responses concerning extended activities on a story from the big book from Appendix E, Interview 2: "The big book approach is good. Drama is not done as one would expect them to. The teacher tried to show them" (LJ) (no. 31). "Stories with which they are not familiar, they do not want to act; children tend to be shy to do the role play. Probably the activities are new" (FB) (no. 32). "Most of the sentence strips to match with words seem too complex. Maybe it's because the children are not yet settled. They wanted to cry when asked to do the activities" (LJ) (no. 32).

The following are extracts from classroom observations (from Appendix H):

> The follow up activity was demonstration of parts of the story with two volunteer pupils who moved cut-out models of the two animals as the teacher read the story. […] As the teacher explained parts of the story, two children were guided to where to place the cut-out models (Teacher A's Class, The Class).

> Pupils seemed to enjoy the lesson which involved whole-class activities of answering questions about the pictures and the information contained in the sentences. They also repeated the sentences after they were read by the teacher (Teacher B's Class, the Pupils).

> A few of the children were able to compose their own sentences based on the some of the same words used in the story. These were written on the cardboard sheet which was prominently displayed in front of the class (Teacher A's Class, The Pupils).

The following is an extract concerning the completion of a numerical grid (from Appendix H):

> The teacher demonstrated to the group how to match the number of seeds/beads to given numerals on a grid. The teacher demonstrated up to 3 and then challenged children to do over and complete the grid 1 to 5. One child jumped to 11. Some children had difficulty in using the grid 1 to 5 (C. Maths Activities, Teacher B, reinforcement of numerals, Numeral grid).

Role play or drama seemed to be uncommonly employed by the two teachers in the other classrooms, suggesting that the activities or tasks may be too challenging for the children. Teachers' apparent omission of the step of

retelling the story which involves writing may also be attributable to their lack of knowledge of Wapishana orthographic conventions. Nonetheless, teachers should attempt the steps for the big book presentation that includes drama/role-playing and retelling of the story. The reason is that drama is an effective strategy that facilitates comprehension (Cummins 1996: 79, from Subsection 4.7.2.6). The retelling of the stories stimulates active language use needed for linguistic growth. Both of these instructional techniques provide both cognitive challenge and contextual support and are thus essential for promoting academic growth (ibid. 1996: 60, from Subsection 4.7.2.5.2).

That some children had difficulty in completing the numerical grid suggests that they did not fully understand the task despite the teacher's instructions and demonstrations. Even though the set task was in alignment with activities that are context-embedded and cognitively challenging (Cummins 1996: 37, from Subsection 4.7.2.5.2), it seemed too challenging for some children. In order to assist the children who had trouble in understanding the task, teachers should consider resetting it for them. This involves providing more contextual support that corresponds with the children's "zone of proximal development", which suggests that their intelligence can be better measured with skilled help (Cameron 2001: 7, from Subsection 4.7.2.5.3). For example, for the task on the numeral grid that deals with all five numerals, it may be better to let children begin with a grid that deals with one numeral at a time. After they have mastered this, they may then go on to the more challenging grid.

6.5.7 Theme #7: *The programme implementers should strive to always present a safe or inviting setting for fuller and more robust school staff, parent, and community participation.*

Concerning one of the facilitators, some of the following comments came forth (from Appendix D: Interview 1 **"**Impatient worker. Very strict and stiff. Does not know the culture of the Wapishana People" (Stakeholder A). "They all said they preferred another facilitator" (Stakeholder E). "A little impatient" (Stakeholder F). In addition, the following were made (from Appendix E: Interview 2): "Ms. Elaine had dropped out. The first facilitator did not want ladies with babies to leave the sessions and she felt it" (DT) (no. 23).

On the participation of parents and community members, the following comments were made (from Appendix D, Interview 1): "No compensation for time expended (a week in some cases) by the participants.

Some made big sacrifices to attend." As a result, "a number of people from the resource team withdrew" (Stakeholders B and C). In addition, the following were made (from Appendix E, Interview 2): "Some parents were just not interested, e.g. from a total of 18 parents sometimes only 3 or 6 of them came to meetings. Only the same set kept coming" (Stakeholder E). "Some younger parents do not have interest in the Bilingual Programme" (CE) (no. 24).

The fact that parents or community members said that they needed the programme is matched by several of them joining the resource team as writers, editors, story tellers, cultural experts, artists, and typists. Recruited parents formed part of the resource team under the leadership of the facilitator and coordinators. The team of facilitator and coordinators was part of the core team (from Section 5.2.1). This team corresponds to the implementation team that is responsible for planning and initiating a programme in minority language contexts (UNESCO 2005: 23, from Subsection 4.6.2.3). In this respect, the recruitment of people from within the community suggests a fairly strong combination of human resources. Such a combination reflects an ingredient that is in sync with what should be under "recruitment methods" one of the essential features of strong bilingual education programmes (Malone 2005: 79, from Subsection 4.6.2.3).

The recruited parents were guided in the writing of stories by a facilitator, who was also responsible for training the teachers and drafting the new curriculum. Though the facilitator possessed the requisite specialism and experience needed for the job, his lack of familiarity with the district or region and the culture of the local people seemed to have eventually created a distance between him and some parents and community members. This eventually led to their absence in subsequent training workshops, decreasing the pool of the Resource Team. As noted by Vella (1994: 7), when working with adults, the adherence to working in an environment of safety is a positive force. On this note, adults are more likely to show the willingness and readiness to learn in the creation of an inviting setting.

The call for voluntary services by writers, editors, and artists seemed to have caused some parents and community members to leave the resource team. Given the cash-oriented society in which the programme is situated, some parents and community members seemed perplexed about not being compensated for their services. With more meetings with the leaders of the programme, parents and community members may eventually accept that voluntary services would benefit their own children. This could be remedied by encouraging parents to provide their expertise in the making of materials from the local environment. Parents can be asked to choose which materials they would work on to contribute to the class. Another alternative is to seek

funding that covers the compensation of all workers/participants, including those skilled parents whose expertise is needed.

Parents have also shown interest in the programme by attending the trial sessions of the big books with the children. This attempt to involve parents in this activity seems to be consistent with one of the characteristics of a successful bilingual programme, that is, parental participation is a widely cited factor in successful bilingual programmes (Benson 2004: 4, from Subsection 4.2.5.1). However, their participation would be better facilitated through modelling of the steps in a training session as was mentioned by Trammell (2016: 7, from Subsection 4.6.2.3). This point is supported by the community members' suggestion that "parents are in need of workshops to participate fully in their children's education" (from Subsection 3.4.1). As suggested above, workshops for the collection or construction of materials from the environment can be planned for parents.

6.5.8 Theme #8: *A mother tongue-based bilingual education programme also needs to be intercultural education because the teaching of the language has to have cultural content.*

The following comments were about the cultural stories in the big books (from Appendix D, Interview 1):"They enjoyed the stories" (Stakeholders B and C). "Children are familiar with some of the stories. The child who never spoke up dominated the discussion" (Stakeholder D). "The trial of the big books—they were interested. They understood the stories because it was in their language. Most responded to questions, Most enjoyed the stories. They related to the stories. They enjoyed the songs" (Stakeholder E). "Children know some pictures" (Stakeholder F). "They like the pictures and stories of the locally made books. They can relate to the stories" (Stakeholder G).

Additional responses came from Appendix E, Interview 2: "Yes, culture comes out" (JD) (no. 6). "Yes, culture present" (RC) (no. 6).

The following extract is taken from classroom observations (from Appendix H):

> Teacher A on medicinal plants
>   Teacher A began by saying that they would talk about medicinal plants. … She began by asking them in Wapishana what was the name of the grass she displayed and passed it around for them to smell. They were introduced to this part of the plant before. Afterwards, the children gave the correct answer. As they said the correct name, the teacher explained what it was used for and how it was used. The same

was done for the "leaf of life", orange leaf, aloe leaf, lemon fruit, guava leaves and jamoon bark.

At the end of the activity, teacher shared some prepared lemon grass tea with individual children. Afterwards, the teacher asked if they liked tea and they all replied in that they did.

In another session, two parents as resource personnel gave oral presentations and demonstrated how to use traditional implements of hunting and fishing. Some of these traditional implements were given to the school and added to the display of an array of attractive Wapishana artefacts. Each school had its own corner of Wapishana artefacts. It is noteworthy that the teaching of cultural aspects of the Wapishana coincided with the day of the week children are given the option to wear traditional attire. Every Friday, children can wear traditional attire but it was observed that not all children did so.

The use of local plants as remedies for certain common illnesses aligns well with the recommendation of the Ministry of Education that other subjects, such as Science and Social Studies of the national nursery curriculum, be merged into the teaching of Wapishana cultural knowledge and skills (from Subsection 5.3.1.4). This is a reflection of successful thematic teaching, one of the effective strategies that allow the teacher to use the integrated approach to everything taught (Waters 1998: 231, from Subsection 4.7.2.3.5).

Adding to the variety of teaching strategies is the use of resource personnel from the community to give presentations about aspects of the culture. This is an excellent way of motivating more parents to become involved in their children's education. This positive involvement by parents is reflective of the observation by Cameron (2001: 146, from Subsection 4.2.5.1) that parents with the strongest motivation for their children's success have produced the most benefits in terms of the outcomes of a programme. The more benefits are accrued, the more successful the programme becomes.

When parents use the native language to explain aspects of the culture, this linguistic and cultural incorporation provides continuity from the home to the school. In similar contexts, Robert's (1994: 209, from Section 4.2.4) observed that it is the important that the atmosphere is non-threatening and relaxing, so that children are willing to take risks and collaborate with each other. Moreover, the presence of the children's home language and culture in school improves self-esteem of the children, which in turn results in greater learning (ibid. 1994: 209, from Section 4.2.4). In a similar vein, Cummins (1996: 2, from Section 4.2.4) states that when children's developing sense of self is affirmed and extended through their interactions with the teacher, they

are more likely to apply themselves to academic effort and participate actively in instruction.

As further contextual support to the teaching of Wapishana culture, each classroom had a prominent feature of Wapishana artefacts with labels in Wapishana. Such support can augment the effectiveness of the bilingual education programme. According to McLaughlin (1992: 9), "effective education of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds affirms the values of the home culture and develops in the children a positive emotional attitude toward their background." In the case of the Wapishana children, the Wapishana artefacts displayed communicate a strong message of respect for their language and culture. Furthermore, the inclusion of aspects of Wapishana culture into thematic units of the curriculum and the actual teaching of cultural topics are appropriate ways of partly honouring Wapishana values (mentioned in Section 2.5).

6.5.9 Theme #9: *All staff members of the school, if possible, should be participants in the programme from the beginning.*

The following comment came from a key stakeholder (from Appendix D, Interview 1: "The other head teacher […] was absent sometimes. It is said that the HM of […] is not interested in the programme" (Stakeholder G).

Other comments that complemented the above were made by interviewees (from Appendix E, Interview 2): "I never attended the workshop" (CE) (no. 3). "Not sure. Ms. Elaine joined late. She found some aspects difficult" (DT) (no. 5). "… From this term I did not go. I was waiting on a letter of release from the Department of Education. At the same time, the leaders of the programme did not instruct teachers from the classroom to attend the training sessions. Volunteers go instead" (DT) (no. 15).

It is important that all teachers and head teachers attend the training sessions. Back in the classrooms, the head teachers could offer guidance, support and encouragement to the teachers under their supervision. Since teachers and head teacher are an integral part of the school's life, it is important that they be involved in all processes of the programme from the outset. With respect to educational innovations in schools, Cummins (1996: 164) affirms that if the innovations are restricted to a single classroom and affect only the classroom teacher and a few others, the life of the school will remain largely unaffected. It is important that all teachers, including the administrative staff, "buy into" and take ownership of the innovation for it to become part of the school's mission, according to Cummins. However, a genuine involvement of the school staff will be more likely if all teachers

work in concert with one another, based on the conviction that the programme will make a positive impact on the life of the school.

6.5.10   The development of a conceptual framework

The themes inferred (from Subsections 6.5.1 to 6.5.9) are key ingredients for programme implementers of not only the *Quality Bilingual Education Programme for Wapichan Children* but also of mother tongue-based education programmes in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts, especially in Indigenous communities.

While all ingredients may not be applicable to all linguistically and culturally diverse contexts, most would fit in any Indigenous context. As stated by Lambert (2011: 2019), themes are the foundation for the Spider Web conceptual framework which is appropriate for Indigenous communities; hence, the themes are used to create a spider web conceptual framework (see Figure 34 below) that has been adopted in this study. As can be seen all themes are interconnected, converging at the centre or the heart of the web. This interconnectedness illustrates that all ingredients (themes), once activated, should progressively impact on the way a mother tongue-based bilingual education programme is implemented, thereby meeting the needs of the children, their parents and the community at large.
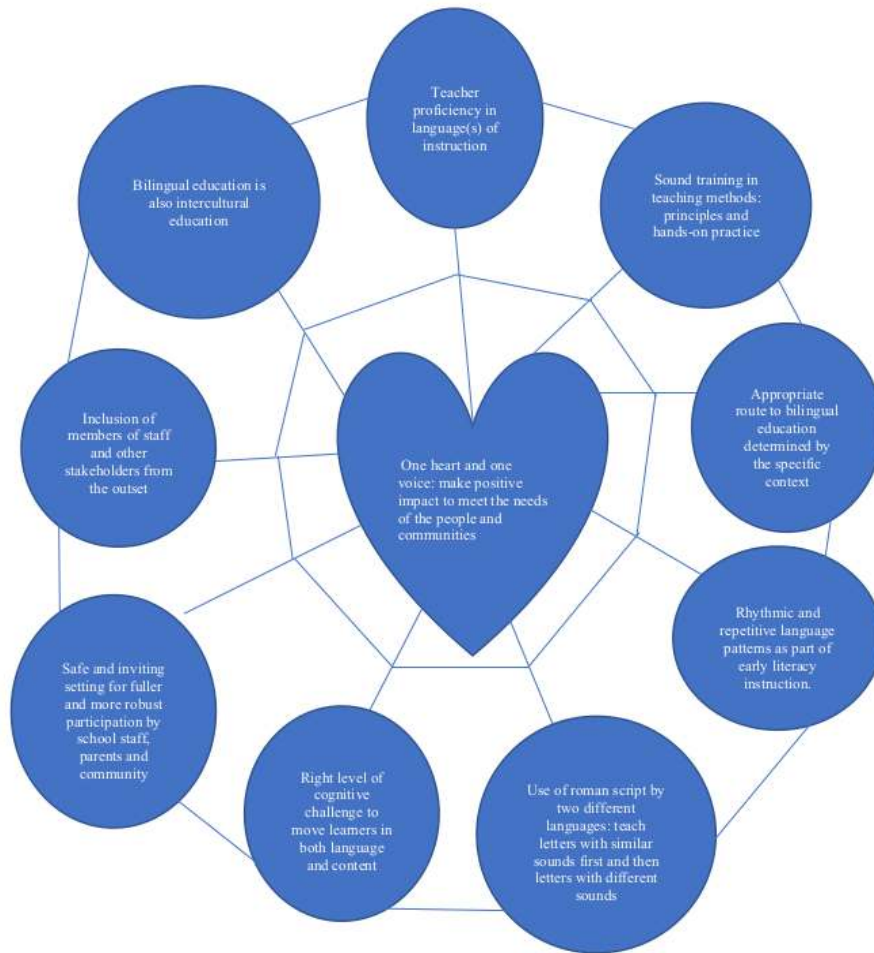
Figure 34. Spider web conceptual framework
(adapted from Lambert 2011: 220).

6.6   Summary and discussion: the main research question

Having presented the findings under the first two specific research questions (Sections 6.3 and 6.4) and inferred and discussed themes under the third specific research question (Section 6.5), I now return to address the main research question: "What are the practices in mother tongue-based schooling that promote children becoming biliterate, bilingual, intercultural, and academically oriented?"

The practices may be grouped under the following:

1.   Biliterate practices

The programme introduces the children to literacy skills in their first language. At the same time the programme also attempts to introduce the English language so that the children are not held back or left behind in a world in which they are going to have to complete with others in a national education system using the second language (from Subsection 5.3.1.1). A central component in the early stages of programme is therefore the concurrent use of both languages. Based on this together with the goals mentioned above, the programme seems to be in alignment with the "early-exit" transitional bilingual education programme, which is a weak form of bilingual education (Baker 2006: 216, from Subsection 4.5.1).

Clearly, this practice differs from the successful and strong forms of bilingual education termed the Maintenance/Heritage Language (Baker 2006: 216, from Subsection 4.5.1), also termed Developmental Maintenance (Benson 2004: 15, from Subsection 4.5.2) or the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education programmes (Dekker and Dekker 2016: 1; Malone 2016: 1; Walter 2016: 1, from Subsection 4.6.1). The evaluation of the two-year pilot programme as indicated in the memorandum of understanding signed between the MoE and the QBEP will determine if the programme is extended into the primary school (from Subsection 5.3.1.5). If the programme is extended for another two years, it would resemble the "late-exit" transitional programme (Corson 1994: 5, from Section 4.4.2). Even if this is followed, it would still have the characteristics of a weak form of bilingual education (Baker 2006: 215, from Subsection 4.5.1). At this stage, it would seem that the developmental maintenance programme (Benson 2004: 15, from Subsection 4.5.2), which is a strong form of bilingual education (Baker 2006: 216, from 4.5.1), is not the focus in the memorandum of understanding.

The programme benefitted from the adoption of a Wapishana orthographic convention that was in use in the communities since the 1970s (see Subsection 3.3.1). The stories and instructions were in a writing system

that was familiar and accepted throughout the communities. There was no need to develop a new writing system as there was already one that was followed. The adopted Wapishana orthographic convention is consistent with Young's (2005: 29) suggestion that a writing system be developed before the start of a mother tongue-based education programme.

The development of literature focused on the development of thirty short Wapishana stories and six short English stories for the big books. This development of stories fits into what Young (2005: 23) calls "Stage 1 literature for learning to read". The children's reaction to the Wapishana stories in particular is reflective of the point made by Wilson (2008: 32, from Subsection 4.7.1.2) that "when the listeners know where the storyteller is coming from… it makes the absorption of knowledge easier." Other visual materials in adequate supply were illustrations of plants and animals with bilingual labels as were charts of numerals and shapes. In effect, the use of the Wapishana orthographic convention contributed to development of stage 1 materials that are culturally appropriate (Young 2005: 53).

2. Bilingual practices

The programme seems to provide oral instructional time of approximately 50 per cent in Wapishana and the same in English as a lesson progresses. For most part of a lesson, code-switching from one language to another is done by most teachers. Teachers thus use both Wapishana and English for instructional purposes in close succession or simultaneously. This practice differs from what Baker (1995: 110, from Section 4.3) suggests: for learners in a language minority or linguistically diverse context, when sequential learning to read and write is adopted, it is important that the stronger language be used first. According to Baker, this will usually build on the child's stronger first language (minority) language competence, help the child's motivation, and develop more positive attitudes to literacy.

On collaboration, during a meeting with the resource team, the representatives of the MoE posed a couple of questions to the participants for further consideration and understanding. One of the questions concerns what would happen to an English-speaking child attending this special programme. For such a child in this situation, it would be regarded as an additive bilingual situation for the child (Baker 2006, from Subsection 4.2.1.1). In this situation, according to Baker, the child's first language (a majority language) is not replaced or under threat by the second (minority language); instead, the child is able to add a new language and culture without loss of the first language. Furthermore, based on research, such a child's English language competence together with their curriculum performance does not suffer or is not impaired (Baker 1995: 131 and

Sallabank 2012: 114 from Section 4.2.1.1). Similarly, regarding the other question about the child who would have attended the pilot programme and then transferred to another school, what s/he has learnt would not have been in vain. According to Datta (2007: 21), "their experience in and understanding of the first language acts as a cognitive sponge to absorb and make sense of the second language." Therefore, while children in these situations would have to readjust to the new school contexts, school language should be an "additional tool" in that it should be added rather than replace the first language (ibid. 2007: 23). These answers based on research could be shared with the teachers and stakeholders who may have similar cases of children in the programme. In this way, teachers and stakeholders can be better-equipped to address such questions or cases, should they arise.

3. Intercultural practices

The current practices are predominantly intracultural. This is understandable since at this stage children are expected to begin learning about their cultural knowledge and skills before learning about other cultures. One of the main strategies employed in the introduction of literacy activities is the use of the children's first language—Wapishana—and their cultural background. Specifically, stories from oral tradition were written in Wapishana. When these were presented in the big books, most children became animated in their responses as they related most of the stories to their experiences. The inclusion of the children's first language and cultural themes in the curriculum parallels one of the effective strategies of strong bilingual education programmes, namely, building on prior experiences of the learners (Kosonen et al. 2007: 54). Furthermore, the fact that the teachers spoke Wapishana and included aspects of Wapishana culture and skills in the timetable promoted the children's proficiency in their language and pride in their cultural heritage. All these activities clearly reflect what Nyakatawa and Siraj-Blatchford (1994: 114, from Section 1.3) see as using bilingual pupils' home language and cultural context as an essential initial strategy.

The big books were culturally relevant, but there were a few minor flaws. A few illustrations were unclear and some elements were not in proportion to others in some illustrations. There were also several big books in English reflecting the introduction of the affiliated culture. Before they were used in the classroom, most of the illustrations were coloured, using wax crayons.

Under "other activities" value was placed on Wapishana cultural knowledge and skills, augmented by the corner devoted to Wapishana artefacts and the traditional dress worn by the children. This seemed to have ignited motivation among parents to participate as resource personnel. In

other activities associated with Wapishana cultural knowledge and skills, it was evident that children were responding well.

There was also a CD and player that played recorded Wapishana songs/nursery rhymes about the weather and numeral concepts learned.

4. Academically oriented practices

The language, math, and other activities presented by the teachers were considerably challenging. Some relevant strategies that teachers employed were asked probing questions about the stories which allowed children to apply their understanding of the stories to their own experiences. Overall, the big book activities reflect the Balanced Methods, which incorporate the "reading" of whole texts and "reading" of words and parts of words, including some writing related to sound–letter correspondences (Kosonen et al. 2007: 55, from Subsection 4.7.1.4). One track of the balanced methods emphasizes meaning and communication of whole texts, while the other track emphasizes accuracy and correctness of words and parts of words (ibid. 2007: 55, from subsection 4.7.1.4).

Teachers provided lesson markers to give the children a sense of how the lesson was progressing. For maths and other activities, visual supports such as chart and real objects were used. For reinforcement of concepts, nursery songs/rhymes were used. All these strategies were largely in line with Cummins' suggestion (1996: 72, from Subsection 4.7.2) for the promotion of academic development for children from culturally diverse backgrounds: presenting input that is cognitively engaging with contextual supports.

Other strategies that were used by teachers included cooperative learning, thematic teaching and the language experience approach. Cooperative learning was evident in the small group work for language and maths activities. Working in small groups is reflective of cooperative learning, a strategy that promotes participation and academic growth in the classroom (Cummins 1996: 82, from Subsection 4.7.2.3.2). Indeed, children were meaningfully engaged in small groups, manipulating tactile objects such as seeds, beads, smooth stones, and shells. Such activities lead children to learn through discovery. In addition, the small group setting allows for the children's social interaction or rapport with peers and teachers. The rapport is characterized by children's greater interaction using their first language. This effect is extended to sharing what they have learned in school with their parents at home.

Thematic teaching was also evident as the teachers followed sub-topics in the Teachers Handbook. The language experience approach, which

is an experience shared between the children and the teacher, was a feature in the programme. Two phases of the experience were covered: exploratory talk and reporting back. Children's questions and oral reporting on what they observed are consistent with what Datta (2007: 19) terms "exploratory talk" and "reporting back", the oral phases of the language experience approach. The reporting back, which builds on the exploratory talk, is an important skill in promoting academic language development, according to Datta. Engaging children in these two skills is consistent with the recommendation by the MoE that the teaching of the skills in this approach must be actively pursued (from Subsection 5.3.1.3).

These strategies are in sync with the most promising instructional practices that should be used for a successful bilingual programme. This is because such practices engage children in activities that are cognitively demanding and context-embedded, leading to their academic growth (Cummins 1996: 73, from Subsection 4.7.2.5.3). Another major reason why these strategies are effective is that they promote more active student participation (Bühmann and Trudell 2008: 25, from Subsection 4.7.2).

The instrument of the required Nursery Diagnostic Assessment for each child on their entry to school was previously written in English. The instrument was translated into Wapishana. Formative or continuous assessment was done in both Wapishana and English at the end of each sub-topic of a theme. In this way, the teachers determined if each child was achieving the literacy, numeracy, and other developmental standards or learning outcomes. Moreover, a record of this assessment for each child was kept in assessment booklets for literacy and numeracy. In each assessment booklet, there was an observational checklist that assessed the overall performance of each child on achievement of the learning standards or outcomes. At the end of each theme, a summative assessment was done either by individual children exhibiting a portfolio of work or a completed group project (e.g. a model of a house) to demonstrate that they have grasped the concept taught. All these types of assessment reflect what a successful programme evaluation should have, that is, providing information on each child's academic progress for the entire school year (Thomas 2005: 55, from Subsection 4.7).

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6, I presented the findings and analysed the research data to identify themes to create a conceptual framework to improve the existing practices of the current programme. Since the broad purpose of this study was to evaluate the processes of a mother tongue-based schooling, the existing practices which seem to promote biliterate, bilingual, intercultural, and academically oriented children were provided.

In this concluding chapter, I first give a give a brief description of some limitations of the study in Section 7.2. Next, I provide some insights that could potentially contribute to the wider study and success of bilingual education in Section 7.3 and recommendations for improvement of the current programme in Section 7.4. I give suggestions for future research in Section 7.5 and some final words in 7.6.

7.2 Some limitations

One of the main limitations is that this research is not based on the pilot programme in its entirety, which spans a two-year period. For this reason, I have focused on the short-term impact of the Wapishana–English bilingual education programme to demonstrate some of the emerging successes as well as challenges. As I stated in Section 1.3, most of the data collected pertained only to the planning process and the first two school terms (semesters) of the pilot programme. Therefore, vital information on the practices and activities ongoing after the first two terms was not considered.

Also, one of the trained teachers who had attended the training sessions was on three-month maternity leave. For this reason, I was unable to observe this teacher in actual teaching. In the interim, the trained head teacher who also attended the training sessions as part of the Resource team taught the class. The teaching episodes in this class may not have reflected the usual teaching practices of the designated class teacher.

7.3   Some potential contributions towards the wider study and success of bilingual education

This research contributes towards providing data of a pilot mother tongue-based bilingual education programme that could be used to develop potential conceptual frameworks for educational interventions for enhanced mother tongue-based schooling in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts. This is especially so where the mother tongue is seen as non-dominant in the face of second languages that are prestigious, international, and thus dominant. In this respect, the findings are generally consistent with the established ideas identified in the literature (Chapter 4).

In particular, the conceptual framework can be usefully adapted to other Indigenous communities with similar contexts in the country and elsewhere in the world. Likewise, non-Indigenous communities with similar contexts can usefully adapt the model because most of the themes fit with the work of implementing and sustaining mother-based bilingual education programmes. By implication, if programme planners and implementers do not listen to the one voice as expressed via the themes in the conceptual framework, the needs of the children, their parents, and the community may not be effectively addressed.

Three examples will illustrate how the framework can contribute to the successful implementation of a mother tongue-based education programme in schools. Firstly, this study has shown that bilingual education is also intercultural education. Certain bodies of knowledge and skills that have been maintained, that have disappeared, and that are disappearing provide potential curriculum content matter or core values upon which a culturally based curriculum could be designed (see Subsection 2.4.6.6). Therefore, the explicit teaching of cultural topics may magnify their importance in a formal system at the community level. At the national level, the curriculum could be extended to include topics that refer to these bodies of knowledge and skills so that other children in the country can learn about Indigenous Peoples. This is one major way cultural topics that are rarely explicitly stated elsewhere can be made explicit and understood by other Indigenous Peoples and other non-Indigenous peoples in the country. In addition to cultural topics, social issues should also be part of the explicit teaching of topics. Recall that since children, particularly in Indigenous communities, face similar issues, they all need have that same important element of consciousness to become aware of the factors or issues that affect the development of Indigenous Peoples. They would also become aware of the similarities and differences between their own issues and those of other peoples. Therefore, it is particularly important that they have the knowledge about topics included in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples; some of the very issues their communities face are addressed in this international document.

Secondly, an appropriate route (simultaneous or sequential) to bilingual education should be determined by the specific context. The findings on bilingual and biliteracy teaching revealed that a systematic teaching of the oral component of the second language has been overlooked because of the simultaneous use of the two languages as the route to bilingual education. If the oral component of the second language is systematically applied, then it can usefully provide for the development of BICS, extending into the development of the CALP (see Subsection 4.7.2.5.1). The oral teaching of the L2 should therefore be a complete component of its own following the sequential route. This route may be followed for any mother tongue-based education programme in the country because it fits with the work of bridging into the target (second) language. Guidance from international research can be taken by way of the adaptation of the Growing Participator Approach (see Appendix C) which utilizes one effective strategy: the Total Physical Response (TPR). As described by Thompson and Thompson (2004: 14, from Subsection 4.8.2.3.4), in TPR activities, the teacher gives commands in the target language to the learners which they carry out, without speaking. According to these authors, the learners' interactions allow them to develop their ability to understand new words and sentences without being under the pressure to speak. Since it was observed that the TPR strategy was not employed in the pilot programme, it could be assumed that it was not part of the strategies explained and demonstrated in the training sessions. Nonetheless, the TPR seems to be an appropriate strategy to introduce the second language in a systematic way, given that children will be instructed in oral L2 (English, in the case of Wapishana children and other Indigenous children in the country) anyway, whether it be locally, nationally, or further afield.

Thirdly, teachers should be proficient in the languages of instruction. Some teachers' unfamiliarity with reading and writing their L1 and that of their pupils has shown that there is a deficit in effective teaching in the mother tongue-based programme in the specific context. For teachers' effectiveness in other contexts within the country and further afield where there are other Indigenous languages, teachers need to undergo special training in reading and writing of their children's L1 before they are ready to learn new strategies and construct and use related materials for the contextualized curriculum.

7.4 Recommended changes for improvement of the current programme

More frequent, systematic participation needs to come from parents. Besides inviting parents to attend meetings, teachers can invite them to join working groups to have more parents involved. Such groups may be formed for constructing materials, telling stories, reading stories, and explaining cultural practices. Joining these groups by parents should be open, welcoming but not obligatory. Parents should feel free to join the group they are most comfortable with, based on their knowledge, skills, and expertise. Whenever assistance is needed by the school on any topic, the particular group may respond by offering their assistance and support. In this way, parents should have fun, spending time with or for their children. In addition, on the day children are encouraged to wear a traditional outfit to school, visiting parents and even teachers can do likewise to show solidarity. This would further boost the message that the children's culture is valued and affirmed by the school.

The goal that should be considered is the promotion of additive bilingualism and biliteracy skills among learners. This goal would encompass the other goals of transition: from home to school, the maintenance of the L1, and facilitation of academic skills. The bilingual education programme should follow the one way-developmental/develop-mental maintenance/intercultural model. This programme follows the sequential approach. That is, the children are taught to read and write in their stronger language first, followed by being taught to read and write in their second language. As children progress onto higher grades, the first language is continually used alongside the second language throughout elementary or primary school. The model begins with the teaching of L1 literacy, followed by the teaching of L2 literacy. As children develop their oral L2 and written competencies in the higher grades, the teaching of the L1 and its associated culture are continued as subjects throughout primary or elementary school. In this way the L1 may not be replaced by the L2. Given that both languages are being used in close succession or simultaneously as languages of instruction, some stages of progression may overlap. Since the Wapishana language is the stronger language in the community, the following instructional stages are suggested over a two-year span:

Year 1

Term 1: Introduce written L1 by using L1 for teaching (this will help develop oral L1). Introduce oral L2 as a subject, either daily or weekly.

Term 2: Develop written L1 by using L1 for teaching (this will continue the development of oral L1). Develop oral L2 as a subject, either daily or weekly.

Term 3: Develop written L1 by using L1 for teaching (this will continue the development of oral L1). Develop oral L2 as a subject, either daily or weekly.

Year 2

Term 1: Introduce written L2 by using L2 for teaching. Develop written L1 as a subject, either daily or weekly.

Term 2: Develop written L2 by using L2 for teaching. Develop written L1 as a subject, either daily or weekly.

Term 3: Develop written L2 by using L2 for teaching. Develop written L1 as a subject, either daily or weekly.

The suggestion that development of written L1 should be included as a subject from Year 2 may seem subtractive. However, flexibility of approach is necessary. Instruction in the L1 may continue in other subject areas, considering the children's varying levels of proficiency in the L1. For the subsequent years, considering that national assessments in English must be held at the end of fourth year and the sixth year, the development of written L2 should be continued for most of the instructional time and may constitute about 60 to 80 per cent of the weekly instructional time. While written L2 is being developed, written L1 and the teaching of Wapishana culture can be continued as subjects with about 20 to 40 per cent of the weekly time table.

The major type of material is the big book. Although this strategy is very effective in having robust interactions between the teacher and the children, there are some points that could be improved in the future production of big books. That some stories are unrecognizable by several children seems to suggest that they could be rectified by the local artists. The stories should first introduce the plants and animals that are found in the immediate environment before introducing plants and animals from the outer environment. It would be beneficial to have the pictures printed in colour, making them more attractive. Although the big books are relevant to the children's culture, they lack the predictable language patterns with lots of repeated words or phrases. As a result, children struggle to read along with the teacher. There are two ways to remedy this situation. The first is to research Wapishana stories that have repetitive phrases and adapt them as stories for the big books. The other is to adapt short children stories from other cultures that reflect repetition and to translate these into Wapishana. Such stories are needed so that children can participate in the reading

process from the first day. As long as the principle of repetition is followed, then the repetitive lines or phrases as formulaic chunks are more likely to be recalled, and thus lend themselves to be "read" by the children. In this way, they have a more positive experience in their pre-reading skills. After the children have much experience with the prediction of texts and they are learning to read their L1, they can proceed to short Wapishana stories as in the current big books. When presenting charts of sight words and letters such as <b> and <u> in both Wapishana and English words, teachers conflate the sound of letters when in fact the letters represent distinct sounds in the two languages. To remedy this situation, teachers should carefully reconsider the sequence of teaching letter–sound links. Teachers should first teach the letter–sound links that are equivalent in Wapishana and English. The sounds of the same letters that are distinct should then be taught separately, in Wapishana first and then English, in another lesson.

For teachers to be more effective in reading and presenting materials in Wapishana, they need special training in Wapishana orthographic conventions prior to any training workshop. In the interim, while the programme progresses, teachers should seek the assistance of other Wapishana people who are familiar with the spelling system to read and write Wapishana texts for the children in the classroom. Some strategies such as role play and the retelling of stories in the big book presentation were not frequently practised by teachers. They also may need guidance in the use of the language experience approach so that the main phases of exploratory talk, reporting back, and writing up are successfully completed. Similarly, they may need guidance in the step-by-step building of tasks, as in the numerical grid, so that the most challenging task can be successfully accomplished by children. The teachers should also be systematically guided in the use of the Teachers' Handbooks. Furthermore, if English is introduced to the children from the first school term, the Total Physical Response as an effective strategy should be used.

In order for teachers and headteachers to have maximum benefits from these training workshops, their attendance should be mandatory. As part of their special training, teachers should be given the opportunity to practise the strategies in small groups. It is important that teachers practise the strategies so that they gain the confidence in employing them in the classroom. The head teachers will also be in a stronger position to offer guidance and support the teachers under their supervision. Overall, the resulting benefit would be better trained and informed teachers, needed for support of the entire programme.

7.5   Suggestions for future research

This study raised possibilities for further research. Firstly, besides the planning process of the programme, only two school terms of the actual programme were evaluated. As the programme progresses into the second year, more information on the various aspects become available. The various strategies, for instance, are being practised and refined by teachers. They are also continually observing and recording the children's progress. For this reason, a follow-up study on the whole two-year programme is an obvious general interest.

Secondly, specific research could be pursued on aspects of the programme. Specific studies could be conducted on the presentation of materials such as the big books. A comparative study could be done on the big book presentation of Wapishana stories that have insufficient repeated phrases with the big book presentation of adapted Wapishana stories that have lots of repetition. Wapishana stories that have repetitions could also be studied for this study. The outcomes of such a study would provide a better understanding of which types of stories are best for young Wapishana learners in the teaching of literacy.

Additional research could be conducted with respect to the best strategy to teach letter–sound correspondences associated with both Wapishana and English words. Common letters that have equivalent sounds can be found in both languages. Common letters that have different sounds can also be found in both languages. A study could be done on the teaching of letter–sound links that are sequenced versus those that are not. One strategy, for example, would be to teach common letters that have equivalent sounds by presenting them in both Wapishana and English words, followed by common letters that have different sounds in both Wapishana and English. These common letters are first presented in Wapishana words. At a later stage, the same letters with different sounds are presented in English words. Another strategy would be the teaching of common letters regardless of their different sounds as they occur in both Wapishana and English words. The observed learning outcomes exhibited by the learners in terms of their understanding the letter–sound links could provide teachers with information on which is the better strategy.

7.6   Some final words

Well-planned and well-implemented bilingual education programmes must not only take into account the principles of interdependence across languages and additive bilingualism, but also factors that are socioeconomic

and sociopolitical in nature. The type of bilingual education should be determined based on the educational problems and needs of the children, the cultural context, and other circumstances, such as the political and economic climate in which the programme is to be instituted.

As one community member remarked, the bilingual education programme is doable based on the all the circumstances (e.g. government, non-governmental, and community support) that have allowed the programme to begin. Such a programme is not only doable, but also the best alternative for effective education in culturally diverse language contexts. Therefore, there are obvious implications for communities that would like to consider such a programme. First, bilingualism and biliteracy should be promoted for all the children. The other is that the programme should place emphasis on developing literacy in the children's first language but that it should be maintained as long as possible alongside the second language as children progress in their schooling. One of the reasons is that school education of culturally diverse children in their native language maintains the language and culture, thereby enhancing the children's self-esteem. Another reason is that conceptual knowledge developed in one language helps make input in the other language more comprehensible. There should also be a systematic introduction of the oral aspects of the second language such as English. This can be done initially by introducing English as a subject in the timetable.

Although it is not the only one, this study can be used as a resource for information including the following: rationale for mother tongue based-education programmes; the importance of using an approved orthography as a language of instruction in the formal system; the production of curriculum materials in a language that was previously not used for instructional purposes; the importance of specialized training for all teachers who are stakeholders; and the suggested guidelines for recording progress of the programme.

Lastly, the study can provide practical information for several types of interested community members and serve as a guide for initiating similar programmes. It can be used by the studious reader or stakeholder who may need to explain the issues of mother based-education programmes in detail to government representatives, as well as by teachers and educators who are already trained in various methodologies and strategies, but who may need more detailed information on current research and practices on mother tongue-based education, would find this study useful. Researchers who are considering a pilot project or experiment within their own context might also find valuable information from this study.

Appendix A

Wapichan Wadauniino Ati'o (The Wapishana Literacy Association)

As the missionaries assisted with Wapishana literacy in schools, they also encouraged literacy in Wapishana by teaching courses to adults in different villages. After a group of us adults attended such a course in Maruranau in 1996, we were challenged to form a reading club. Instead, we formed the Wapichan Wadaunninau Ati'o (WWA: The Wapishana Literacy Association) on 7 October 1997, with the aim of facilitating the spreading of Wapishana literacy to other Wapishanas. In what follows, I highlight the growth of the WWA in terms of its activities.

The *Wapichan Wadauniinao Ati'o* 'the Wapishana Literacy Association' played a pivotal role in advocacy efforts regarding bilingual education. Some lessons learned from the activities of this organization, especially in terms of advocacy, are summarized for consideration as a major bilingual education effort unfolds.

Some activities since the inception of the WWA

Initial activities included monthly meetings, fundraising activities, Wapishana writing practice, and the production of a monthly one-page newsletter in Wapishana. As the news of our activities spread to neighbouring villages, the District Toshaos Council (DTC) of South Rupununi invited me, as the WWA's chairperson/coordinator, to their quarterly meetings so as to sensitize them about our activities. Thus, our objectives became the following:

1. To train Wapishana adults to conduct biliteracy classes in all Wapishana villages;

2. To preserve existing Wapishana stories and generate a new body of Wapishana literature; and

3. To use the programme to explore new ways of revitalising Wapishana culture and knowledge amongst upcoming generations. (See also the Wapishana Language Project 2000: 5.)

Subsequently, the DTC leaders signed a statement supporting a WWA proposal for a two-year Wapishana Adult Literacy Programme in six villages. With the WWA gaining the related funding from SIL International,

through the missionaries, each leader or Toshao selected two of their villagers for training. After a three-week training in 2000, the trained adults returned to teach Wapishana reading and writing classes in their respective villages. The trained adults were referred to as "WWA tutors" to distinguish them from the government-paid schoolteachers working in the villages. Just as SIL International provided the WWA with financial support for these initial projects, so did the UNICEF Amazon Programme, which provided limited funding for Wapishana literacy trials in the schools. When the funding ended in 2002, the Wapishana Adult Literacy Programme became dormant. The WWA tutors, having received stipends for each course taught, were not keen on offering classes voluntarily. However, a total of 356 adults became literate in their own language during this time. In response to our encouragement that villages form organized groups to apply their newly acquired literacy skills, Maruranau, Aishalton, Karaudarnau, and Shea formed their own WWA groups.

Concurrently, the WWA engaged in the discussion concerning spelling issues with additional missionary team members, Richard and Charlene Hicks. This resulted in an updated Wapishana dictionary, which was published in 2000. Several years later, in 2005, this couple were tragically murdered at their home base in San Jose. However, other WWA activities continued. Spearheaded by Nigel Marco of the WWA unit in Maruranau, the villagers constructed a thatched-roofed building, as a self-help project, for the centre of the WWA in Maruranau. The building was sadly destroyed by fire in August 2009, but has been reconstructed by the villagers of Maruranau with assistance of friends from the district.

Nevertheless, at the DTC quarterly meetings, which were now held jointly between the Toshaos of South Rupununi and the South Central Rupununi, I shared the common request we received from individuals and some village leaders, that is, a restart of Wapishana literacy classes. The leaders supported this idea to include all Wapishana villages, thus providing new impetus for the WWA.

The spread of Wapishana literacy to other communities

Inspired by support of the leaders coupled with the post-graduate training I received in applied linguistics, specifically in community-based literacy, in 2009, I saw potential for both the language and culture to thrive. So, having been head teacher of the Aishalton Secondary School for eleven years, I resigned from my teaching job on 30 September 2010 in order to take the

lead for the next four to five years towards the revitalizing and strengthening of the Wapishana language.

In order to up keep the momentum, I approached several key individuals attached to non-governmental organizations, since they had shown a keen interest in our Wapishana literacy programme. First, I collaborated with Beverly Dawson and Kaye Froehlich, who were attached to SIL International, and with Nico Doelman, the director of the SIL, Caribbean Area. Next, I approached Sarah Broscombe, who was at the time in Aishalton, doing voluntary work with the Jesuits Missions of Guyana. The results of the collaboration were favourable in that the WWA received partial funding from each of the organizations to resuscitate the project for four years. Additional funding was secured from the British High Commission to train some people in short-story writing via a writers' workshop. In February 2011, the first activity of the resuscitated Wapishana Adult Literacy Programme commenced.

The more we advanced with the project, the more we were encouraged to formally register the WWA. In this way, we were advised that donor agencies might be more willing to fund projects we proposed. After seeking the assistance of my colleague, Mr David James, an attorney at law, we eventually followed the process of registering the WWA. Registering the WWA as a Specially Authorized Society under the Friendly Societies Act, Chapter 36:04, was completed on 8 August 2011. Having completed formal registration, the WWA was able to relate and negotiate with stakeholders at different levels as depicted in Figure 35 below.
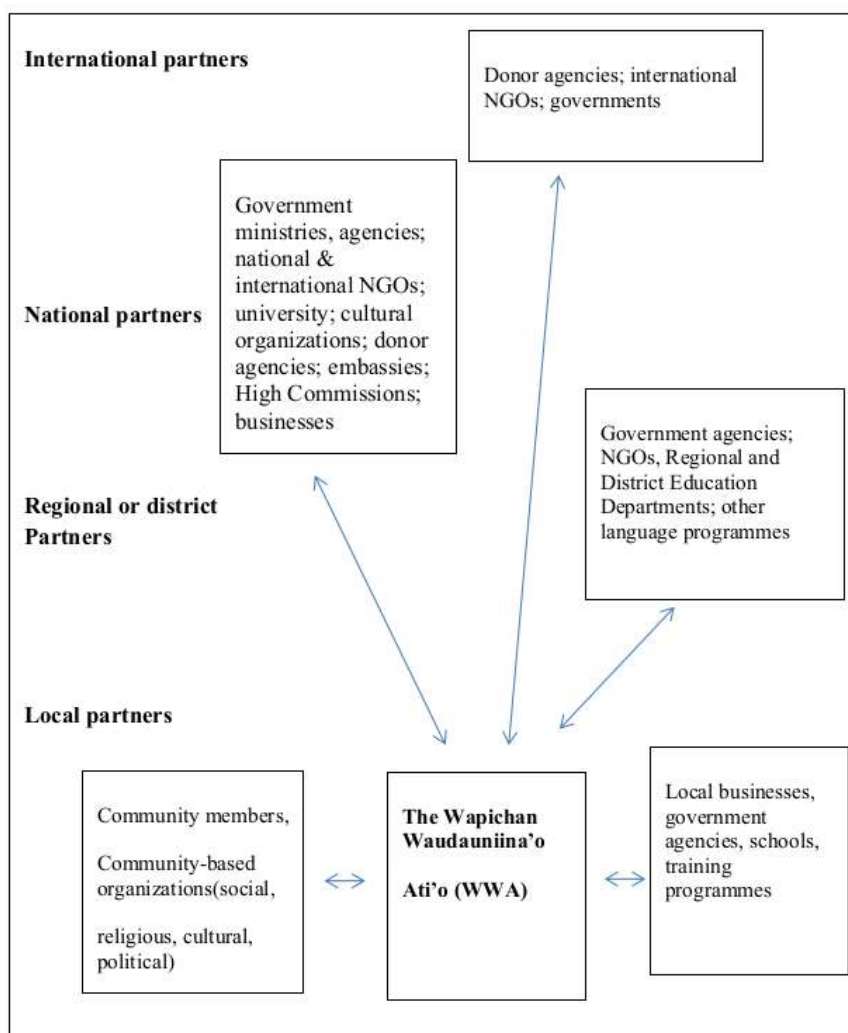
*Figure 35. Relationship between the WWA and stakeholders
(adapted from Malone 2004: 5).*

Through its various activities, the WWA developed linkages with stakeholders, ranging from the community (internal) to international levels (external). Activities included meeting with villagers, partaking in Indigenous Heritage Celebrations at the District/Regional level, procuring national funding to print copies of a booklet of Wapishana stories, and procuring international-donor funding for other activities. As it related to the submission of proposals to the government, a representative of the Ministry

of Indigenous Peoples Affairs advised that any WWA proposal to the Ministry should be submitted through the village council of Maruranau for their endorsement. One such proposal has been submitted. Otherwise, the WWA has had the privilege to apply for funding directly to NGOs, nationally, and internationally. Pursuing funding through these avenues has been more favourable, thus far. I now discuss the highlights of main activities of the Wapishana Adult Literacy Programme.

The main activities

Training Seminars and Literacy Courses

The training seminars for the WWA tutors began after the village councils were given prior notice to select their participants. There were four components central to the training: (a) reading and writing in Wapishana; (b) using the tutors' manual to teach Wapishana reading and writing; (c) practising teaching in small groups; and (d) discussing the logistics of running a class/course in their villages. Altogether, there were three tutor training seminars. The first, with the largest intake of twenty-three participants, occurred in February 2011. The second, with an intake of eleven, was held in March 2012, to have tutors in villages that were not represented or not adequately represented in the first seminar. The third, with an intake of seven, occurred in December 2012 to replace those tutors who ceased to function or had difficulty in carrying on their courses.

The main facilitator of the training seminars was Beverly Dawson. In the first training seminar, she was assisted by Nigel Marco (Maruranau) and Ian Paul (Aishalton), who had been trained before as Wapishana reading and writing tutors in 2000; hence, it was a refresher training seminar for them. In the third training seminar, Berlinda Alfred, who was also a previously trained tutor of Awarewaunau, shared the facilitating. By being so engaged, these WWA tutors became the potential local trainers to train others, independent of guidance by the missionaries. For the logistics aspects of conducting the classes/courses in the villages, I led the discussions.

Back in their villages, the WWA tutors recruited interested individuals to enrol in the course. Next, they met as a group to decide on the dates and times for the course, considering the main activities for the individuals and the village. It was decided that the span of one entire Wapishana course of forty-two lessons be seven to eight weeks, with three sessions per week, with each session lasting for about one and a half hours. Considering this time span, each tutor was advised to teach a maximum of three courses per year. It was also decided that at least seven adults, but no more than ten, comprise

a class. As part of their contribution to the course, each participant was asked to bring an exercise book and a pencil. Towards the end of the course, each participant was challenged to produce a short original Wapishana story with an accompanying drawing, which was submitted to the WWA's office for future reference. Upon successful completion of the course, each participant received a certificate of achievement at a simple graduation exercise organized by the group. Most participants bought at least three Wapishana booklets to own a WWA book bag, in addition to becoming a WWA member for a nominal fee. This fee was part of the conditions the WWA had to abide by to be registered as a Specially Authorized Society as mentioned in in Section 3.2.2.

Guided by the course schedules of the village tutors, I travelled by motorcycle periodically to observe WWA classes and give encouragement and advice where necessary. I also attended a number of graduation exercises. According to the records kept at the WWA's office, the following statistics are related to the Wapishana Adult Literacy Programme (2011 to 2014):

Number of persons who completed classes: 528 adults and 370 children, totalling 898 individuals.
Number of locally trained adults as tutors of the language: 34.
Number of short stories generated through the literacy classes: 450.
Villages reached in terms of tutor training: 17.

Although the programme was intended for adults, some classes comprised school children who expressed interest in attending. Thus, in some villages, the tutors handled more than ten students. In other villages where tutors struggled to recruit a full class of adults, schoolchildren were favourably considered because the course was offered outside of regular school hours.

The funding provided a stipend for each course a tutor successfully completed. However, when funding came to an end in 2014, the Wapishana tutors stopped offering the course. As a possible means of procuring the financial resources for the continuity of the courses, I suggested to the Toshaos that they make financial provisions for the courses in their proposals for the annual Presidential Grant they received through the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs. In this way, if the programme were incorporated into their yearly village plans, it would demonstrate a sense of ownership on their part. I have yet to hear if my suggestion has been followed through by any village. While these literacy activities unfolded, the WWA was engaged in other important activities.

Other important activities

(a) Equipping the centre

Part of the funding was utilized to add some furniture and equipment to the existing infrastructure at the WWA centre. Equipment comprised two solar panels, two twelve-volt batteries, an inverter, a controller, six laptops, two printers, related wiring, stationery and a small, portable generator. The solar system still works, but each of the computers has undergone programme-updating. Two of the computers had their batteries replaced, while another, the keyboard**.** The servicing of the computers entailed taking them to the capital city, Georgetown. This hampered the activities of the typists such that most times the WWA building was closed.

(b) Basic computer training

In order to use the equipment, a series of workshops, conducted by the missionaries, provided training for eight young women from Maruranau and Shea in basic computer skills and desktop publishing. Subsequently, the WWA saw the need to equip the most active WWA units outside of Maruranau in order to assist in the typing of submitted short stories. As a result, Karaudarnau and Sawariwau WWA units were each equipped with a computer, a solar panel and one twelve-volt battery in 2013. Three of the women who were initially trained in basic computer skills, in turn, trained two other women from these two villages in basic use of the computers.

(c) Staffing of the WWA's centre

To have activities ongoing, the WWA installed staff to run the office in Maruranau. The staff consisted of a coordinator and two typists to run the office. The coordinator supervised all activities and made field trips to villages. The two typists typed submitted written stories from the villages and dealt with written correspondence as the need arose. They also scanned related drawings of stories and kept these on file until they were ready for formatting and publishing. Added to this, they held type lessons for interested villagers. The staff members were paid stipends, but these ended in 2015, after which voluntary work was done. When I left for Leiden University in 2016, the executive of the WWA in Maruranau agreed that one of the typists be in charge of the office. However, the building has not been opened as regularly as it should, as the typists sought other avenues of income to provide for their families.

(d) Writers' workshop

A writers' workshop was held in 2012. Wapishana-literate adults, who were interested in developing their writing skills, were invited to attend so as to become local authors who would continue writing short stories to generate new Wapishana literature. Eleven people from a cross-section of the villages participated. Most of them submitted written stories which were published in the bimonthly Wapishana newsletter. The newsletters provided an outlet for their work to be appreciated, but the newsletter, too, came to an end as the voluntary workers came less often to the office.

(e) Reprinting of books for distribution and sales

The WWA undertook the task of reprinting Wapishana primers for those villages that needed them. We dispatched stacks of Wapishana booklets of short stories to villages at the request of tutors because people were requesting them. Older booklets were distributed, while newer ones were each sold for a nominal fee. In these ways, we disseminated mostly stories, making them accessible to many Wapishanas. The proceeds from the sales were sent back to the WWA's office to purchase ink for the printers. Some of the challenges faced were slow sales of books in the villages, partly because people preferred to see the latest publications in Wapishana. We were unable to keep up at least a yearly supply of new publications mainly because of funding. With the temporary closure of the WWA programme, the primers are not needed for now, but the pursuit of printing more booklets of short stories will be followed.

(f) Recording of oral stories

As the person who usually made field trips, I recorded fifty-three oral stories from senior Wapishana adults. These stories were transcribed and archived at the WWA's office by the typists. These stories, it is hoped, will contribute to the production of more Wapishana literature, categorized into genres such as legends, Wapishana customs and values, Wapishana village histories, and personal experiences.

(g) Tutor conference

Based on the successes and constraints tutors experienced in teaching the courses, we convened a conference in March 2013 for the participants to share their experiences. At the conclusion of a three-day conference, they recommended that the programme continue. Nevertheless, such a

recommendation was dependent on more funding, which in turn was dependent on submission of a related proposal that had to be considered favourably by potential donor agencies. Additionally, owing to the dwindling numbers of villager-participants in the latter part of the four-year programme, we felt that seeking funding, particularly for literacy courses, might not be advisable at the time. As such, we decided to inform the villages that we would attempt to restart the programme once we received information from the leaders that a considerable number of their villagers had again requested it.

(h) Going beyond literacy classes

While the WWA has led successful efforts towards preserving the language by providing Wapishana literacy training and enabling hundreds of Wapishanas to read and write their native language, little work had been done in the academic field. The WWA depended on researchers such as anthropologists and linguists from outside the communities to do research during which they produced materials through their universities and institutions. When these academic articles, particularly regarding the language, are written by non-Wapishana linguists, however, even Wapishana scholars are not be able to understand them fully because of a lack of formal training in linguistics. For example, I have been asked to comment on past academic articles on the Wapishana language, but felt inadequately equipped because I lacked the relevant background. We felt that if some Wapishana scholars had such relevant training at a sufficient level, not only would they be able to partake in discourse on the structure of their own language, but also understand how it relates to other languages of the world. With sufficient training, the WWA as a grass-roots institution would then have the potential to produce its own research and produce its own articles, extending its capacity beyond merely the teaching of Wapishana literacy. As a lead in this direction, I was able to advance the work of the WWA in the academic field by pursuing training in Applied Linguistics in Community-based Literacy in 2009 and by taking some foundational linguistics courses at the University of North Dakota (UND) in 2014. I had intended to pursue more linguistic courses such as phonology, ethnographic methods, and field methods, leading to an MA thesis in linguistics, but did not secure the funding to continue. Nevertheless, with the some background in linguistics, I am able to understand some of the basic structure of the Wapishana language so as to better relate to publications on the language. It is my hope that emerging Wapishana scholars will be inspired by my efforts to further their studies in similar fields.

(i) Wapishana reading and writing competitions

The WWA recognized that except for reading the New Testament in Wapishana, the bimonthly newsletter, and other WWA booklets, there was no other means of encouraging people to apply their Wapishana literacy skills after they had attained competency. In order to practise their skills, the WWA took part in Wapishana reading and writing competitions at the inter-village, district, and regional levels during the years 2012 to 2014. By participating in Wapishana reading and writing competitions at the district and regional levels of the yearly Indigenous Heritage celebrations, we promoted the language in fun ways. It would be an added boost to the local languages if such activities of literacy could continue to be part of the yearly highlights.

(j) Outreach of the WWA

Besides coordinating Wapishana literacy activities in villages, we collaborated with several other parties. The first is that at least two Makushi leaders, upon hearing of our literacy activities, expressed their interest in having the assistance of the WWA in beginning their own local language literacy programmes by sharing our methods and experiences. This line of interest was not followed through due to lack of funding, although a related proposal was submitted. Other collaboration included the following: (1) exploring the possibilities of a short course for teaching Wapishana language through the Amerindian Research Unit at University of Guyana; (2) writing a joint proposal with representatives of SIL, International for documentation of the Wapishana language; and (3) writing proposals to potential donors such as the Canadian Organisation for Development through Education (CODE), the British High Commission in Guyana, and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs. The proposals concerned expanding the Wapishana dictionary, printing booklets, and stipends for the two typists at the WWA centre. In response, one of the potential donors—The Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs—advised in 2016 that our proposal would be considered in the following year's national budget. To date, however, nothing further on this has been communicated to us. Meanwhile, in engaging the Wapishana groups and individuals, particularly the head teacher of the Maruranau Primary School, we became aware of the dismal performances of the children, particularly at the National Grade Two Assessments over a period of years. This led to the advocacy for mother tongue-based education in the school.

Main achievements of the WWA

The Wapishana Adult Literacy Programme, together with its associated activities, has promoted and strengthened the Wapishana language in communities throughout South and South Central Rupununi districts by increasing literacy at grass-roots level. That the Wapishana people value this new knowledge and skills is evident as many individuals are applying them to reading printed Wapishana texts from the New Testament, as well as writing their own stories and even personal letters among themselves. As the programme progressed, other essential elements to success became apparent: the development of a centre to organize language-based activities, the empowerment of the people to produce their own reading materials, the means to archive language data at the WWA centre, capacity-building of local WWA tutors to train their own people, the promotion of the language through reading and spelling competitions, collaboration between other partners who have similar interests, recognition of the WWA as the local authority in the approval of translation needs, and the achievement of consensus for starting bilingual education. With regard to the particular role played by the WWA in advocacy of the mother-based approach, I now turn to the principal successes of the advocacy meetings organized by the WWA.

Some lessons learned

In this section, I discussed the reasons for the stagnation of the WWA literacy courses and advocacy efforts for the bilingual education programme.

Participation in the WWA literacy courses dwindled towards the end of the four-year programme as some tutors reported struggling to recruit a full class. Part of the struggles was that most of those who were initially interested in Wapishana reading and writing had already taken the classes; hence, a considerable number of people were not motivated enough to participate. In the wake of such limited participation, further literacy courses in the villages were ceased temporarily. It was agreed that the WWA would consider restarting Wapishana literacy classes when there was reignited interest on the part of villagers, to be indicated through individual village councils. Based on the estimated number of Wapishana-speaking individuals, there are over two thousand Wapishana-speakers who may wish to become Wapishana-literate. In response to this situation, the WWA realizes that more internal advocacy efforts in the different villages should be exercised in order to achieve a positive change in people's attitudes towards the local language programmes. Part of the strategy will be the special training of a number of WWA mother-tongue facilitators who will

meet people in the different villages to raise awareness and win grass-roots support for the WWA activities.

Another challenge is that the WWA has not been able to meet the demands of current Wapishana-literate individuals who wish to have new material to read. This demand for new reading material in Wapishana points to the need for the WWA to urgently address the provision of an adequate body of literature in Wapishana, but this is largely dependent on external funding.

In relation to the large number of children participating, despite the literacy courses being intended for adults, the WWA will consider offering Wapishana literacy courses for the older children so that they become Wapishana-literate before they leave the primary schools.

In taking a realistic view of WWA capabilities, there is a lack of adequately trained technical personnel as it relates to the managing of the programme and related activities. On the one hand, the WWA is a community-based organization based in a Wapishana village; on the other, it is a national entity linked to the network of the Friendly Societies in Guyana. From this perspective, it behoves our WWA staff workers to not only be Wapishana-literate but also be "Western-trained" in skills such as programme planning and management, proposal writing, and reporting. At the same time, there is a need to seek new leadership to spearhead the work of the WWA. Once this is achieved, the WWA will have an increased capacity to seek continual funding to achieve its objectives and so strengthen its efficacy.

Appendix B

Results-Based Management (RBM) framework

RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

TITLE: Wapishana Bilingual- Education Project	LOCATION: In and around Maruranau, South Rupununi, Region 9, Guyana	Date:
		DURATION: 5years
SITUATION, GOAL, PURPOSE: Most Wapishana-speaking children of South Rupununi, Region 9, Guyana, enter the formal school setting using their mother tongue and culture. Usually, they do not know the English language or culture. Forcing children into an English only classroom to begin learning has not been beneficial to them. From being the confident and interactive children, they become shy, scared or reticent learners. The negative effects on children are attributed to the majoritarian teaching approaches teachers employ in an unintelligible language of instruction. Further, the lack of space for Wapishana culture in their learning materials coupled with unrealistic curricular expectations at early grades, have contributed to their struggles to achieve the literacy and numeracy benchmarks set by the Ministry of Education (MOE). This project will enhance the learning levels of indigenous Wapishana children, use relevant pedagogy and child friendly teaching practices. This project will increase participation, build self-esteem and confidence among Wapishana children by promoting respect for indigenous language, culture and life style. The desired impact of this project is that the Wapishana children will improve their learning through the initial use of their language in oral and written forms, and thereby achieve a successful biliteracy with English.		BUDGET:

HOW		WHAT WE WANT		WHY
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
People -Local Wapishana leaders including a coordinator -Two typists. -Head teachers and teachers of the schools. -Education Officers. -Curriculum Specialist(s) from the Ministry of Education. -Two international literacyspecialist/trainers	WAP.1.0.1.1.Develop a working partnership with non-governmental and governmental and community organizations. WAP.1.0.1.2. One or more meetings of MOE with CBLC to understand roles and responsibilities. WAP.1.0.3.Monthly meetings of 'core' team to monitor progress and communicate with regional officials.	WAP.1.0.1. Local, non-governmental and governmental organizations are working together. WAP.1.0.2. Community-based LiteracyCommittees are establised and running effectively. WAP.1.0.3. Reports and documents are being submitted and feedback is given by Government and NGOs.	WAP.1.0. An active Guidance Committee with ties to local, regional, national and international partners to develop, monitor, and evaluate local education.	WAP.1.The education in Wapishana communities results in children who are bilingual, biliterate and bicultural, and are able to meet the national education benchmarks.

-One international consultant (educationalist) in Bilingual Education fromIndia) -One International consultant (Senior literacy consultant from the the USA.) **Systems** -The WapishanaLiteracy Association - The Ministry of Education - The Jesuits of Guyana - Fe y Alegria of Bolivia - The Summer Institute of Linguistics, International -UNICEF, Guyana **Adequate facilities** The WWA office The most, 3 nursery schools and 3primaryschools **Equipment** 3 computers 2 printers 2 12- volt batteries for solar system. **Supplies** -office supplies - Fuel for generator - Fuel for motor cycle -motor cycle for	WAP.1.1.1. Curriculum for 4 years of BE is developed with 'core' team and specialists. WAP.1.1.1.2. Workshops to prepare instructional and training materials. WAP. 1.1.1.3. Testing of the materials with focus group. WAP. 1.1.2.1. Workshops every vacation period to train teachers to employ new materials. WAP.1.1.2.2. ' Core' team is involved in each workshop developing internal monitors and evaluators. WAP. 1.1.2.3. Informal assessment/supervision of teacher performance monthly. WAP 1.1.3.1. Develop a working relationship with parents and friends. WAP.1.1.3.2. Have events where leaders from other communities can see benefits of BE. WAP.1.1.3.3. Report on or document activities and experiences and share with MOE and NGOs WAP.1.2.1.1. Teachers receive training in writers workshops and classroom	WAP1.1.1. Project materials in L1 and L2 beginning with nursery school, and each year thereafter adding the materials for the next grade (e.g. at the end of five years) ; thus, grades from the nursery school to grade 4 will be developed, tested and revised. WAP.1.1.2. In schools where the bilingual education is being used, there are at least two teachers trained for each grade. WAP.1.1.3. Parents, family members and friends will participate in and help design activites to promote biliteracy. WAP. 1.2.1. Wapishana teachers encourage Wapishana values and facilitate ongoing intergenerational communication and language development.	WAP.1.1. A significant percentage of Wapishana children are able to read and write in L 1 and L2, and are capable of achieving grade level outcomes. WAP.1.2.Wapishana children are valuing their language and culture more.	

Coordinator -honoraria/fees for curriculum designers, material developers, trainers, consultants. -stipends for coordinator and typists - incentives for headteachers and teachers. Transport : - Team to meet to design curriculum - Team to work on materials. - Teachers and trainers to workshops. - Consultants to meetings/visits. - Room and board of participants for these meetings. - Materials to venues and schools	publication. WAP.1.2.1.2. Encourage the reading and writing of more Wapishana stories, poems and songs through exhibitions.		
	WAP.1.2.2.1 Competitions for good reading. WAP.1.2.2.2. Certificates for good, great and professional level reading. WAP.1.2.2.3 Writing competitions / fairs where the stories, songs and games are written and then in exhibition.	Wap. 1.2.2 More Wapishanachildren are reading and writing Wapishana traditional stories, histories and new materials.	
	WAP.1.3.1.1. Informally assess the student-teacher interactions. WAP.1.3.1.2. Stage skits, ,games, quizzes, games and impromtu speeches.	WAP.1.3.1 Increased participation in curricular and co-curricular activities..	WAP.1.3.Wapishana children are building their self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence.

INDICATORS	WAP.1.0.1. Number of organizations working together. WAP.1.0.2. Frequency of the Community-Based Literacy Committee meetings. WAP.1.0.3. Presence of reports and documents. WAP.1.1.1 Number of materials distributed and in place in the schools. WAP.1.1.2 .Number of teachers trained. WAP.1.1.3 Frequency of parents, family members and friends meeting. WAP.1.2.1 Observation of teachers encouraging children to upkeep their Wapishana values. WAP.1.2.2 Number of Wapishana children reading and writing Wapishana materials. WAP.1.3.1. Frequency of participation by children in co-curricular activities.	WAP. .1.0 Frequency of meetings of the Guidance Committee. WAP.1.1 Percent of overall pass rate of children in each class assessment. WAP. 1.2 Number of booklets of stories, poems and songs produced locally. WAP.1.3 A positive attitude about participating in curricular and co-curricular activities.	
REACH **(PEOPLE/GROUPS/** **COMMUNITIES/SECTORS/INVOLVED)**	Wapishana children, teachers and families.	Wapishana villages.	Whole Wapishana communitiy. Education System.
ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS	The assumption is that the Wapishana communitywill have the desire to see change in the teaching approaches and practices in the schools that would result in the improvement in their children's performances. It is assumed that the the schools will have adequate facilities, and representatives from the partner organizations will step into leadership roles to implement the program. Funding for the program and the materials will likely be provided by both government and non-governmental agencies. A core team of experts will cooperate with positive input and guidance for materials and feedback throughout the program. There are several risks to consider.Some education officials, head teachers and teachers may not be motivated to participate in the program that would entail changes in the approaches to which they are accustomed .There may be hesitancy among some teachers in supporting and encouraging one another because of the perceived added burden it maybring. Some parents may oppose the program because they feel that the pevious system worked fine with them.		

Appendix C

Suggested introductory activities involving TPR

These activities adapt parts of the Growing Participator Approach (GPA) by Greg and Angela Thompson (2004: 22). Due to limited time, the activities would cover the first 20 fifteen-minute sessions of selected main activities of the "Here-and-Now" Phase of the GPA. The activities really offer an introduction to the oral aspects of the English language.

Time	Topic	Objectives	Content	Learning Activities	Learning Materials	Evaluation
Week 1 Day 2 Session 2 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To reinforce activities of the previous sessions. **Specific** 2. To strengthen the five names of humans, the two pronouns and the word "and".	2. Names as mentioned in the first session.	2. Teacher begins by asking questions, "Where is the man? Where are you? Where are the boy and the baby?" The questions are asked randomly. Participants indicate by pointing as a group and then individually.	2. Six toy animals, pictures.	2. Point out people (toys, pictures, or real individuals in group).

Week 1 Day 3 Session 3 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To describe ongoing activities and states that are visible to the growing participators. **Specific** 3.To perform at least seven basic actions.	3. Basic action words (stand, sit, walk, lie, run, jump, stop).	3. Teacher follows the steps of the previous activity, demonstrating each activity and tells participant to do likewise. Teacher combines people (including "I", "we", "you") and actions using toys. Participants will move about in the room doing the actions.	3. Space in room. Set of toys.	3. Perform actions as told.
Week 1 Day 4 Session 4 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	4. To express greeting, leave taking, and gratitude.	4. Useful phrases: greeting, leave-taking, gratitude.	4. Teacher demonstrates the setting and the phrases using toys. Teacher lays down a picture representing a phrase, and the second is added. Teacher asks randomly, "Who is saying…?"	4.Toys and useful phrase pictures depicting simple greeting, leave-taking, and gratitude.	4. Perform actions as told.

Week 1 Day 5 Session 5 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To review English words. **Specific** 5. To listen to at least seven words and see the corresponding words and pictures.	5. Pre-recorded basic action words as mentioned above.	5. Participants listen to words and see corresponding words and pictures.	5.Toys and pictures.	5. Listen to spoken words and see corresponding words and pictures.
Week 2 Day 6 Session 6 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To reinforce activities of the previous sessions. **Specific** 6. To strengthen seven action words and three phrases expressing greeting, leave-taking, and gratitude.	6. Words and phrases as mentioned in previous sessions.	6. Teacher begins by asking participants to perform basic actions. Participants respond in group and then individually. Teacher says the expressions for greeting and participants act this out in a group and then individually. The same is done for the other expressions which are said randomly.	6. Toys and picture strips depicting greeting, leave-taking, and gratitude.	6. Perform actions as told.

Week 2 Day 7 Session 7 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To describe on-going activities and states that are visible to the growing participators. **Specific** 7. To be able to recognize the names of at least six animals.	7. Animal names (horse, cow, dog, cat, frog, pig). Pronouns (I, 2e, you) from previous sessions.	7. Teacher introduces "animals" and appropriate pronouns using the activity 1 on Day 1. Teacher then randomly adds in already familiar people and names by asking questions, such as "Where is the baby? Where are the frog and the dog?"	7. Toys of six animals. Pictures.	7. Point out animals and pictures.
Week 2 Day 8 Session 8 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To listen to and review English words. **Specific** 8. To listen to at least six names of animals and see the corres-ponding words and pictures.	8. Pre-recorded names of six animals as mentioned above.	8. Participants listen to words and see corresponding words and pictures.	8. English words	8. Listen to spoken words and see corresponding words and pictures.

Week 2 Day 9 Session 9 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To reinforce activities of the previous sessions. **Specific** 9. To strengthen all of the names, pronouns, and actions with statements.	9. Animal names, pronouns and actions.	9. Teacher makes statements such as, "The dog is running. The horse is lying down, The baby is standing. Yes, it is standing." Participants act out statements using toys as before.	9. Toys of animals	9. Acting out statements
Week 2 Day 10 Session 10 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To describe on-going activities and states that is visible to the growing participators. **Specific** 10.To be able to recognize the names of at least ten objects in the room.	10. Common objects in the room (table, chair, light, window, door, floor, wall, pillow, clock, picture).	10. Teacher introduces words for new objects and places found in the room using the first activity in Day 1. Participants listen and point, as before.	10. Room to move about freely. Toys.	10. Point out objects.
Week 3 Day 11 Session 11 15min	Here-and-now descriptions	11. To act out actions in relation to places in the room.	11. Same as above.	11.Teacher does actions in relation to places in the room and states what she is doing, e.g. "I am sitting on the floor", etc. Teacher tells participants to do likewise as she/he makes statements.	11. Same as above.	11. Act out statements.

Week 3 Day 12 Session 12 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	12. To be able to learn names of individuals.	12. Names of individuals in the group.	12. Teacher gives names in new language to two participants and asks "Who is…? Who is…?" All point together and individually.	12. Picture strips illustrating asking for someone's name and the response.	12. Participants point to the phrase picture when teacher uses a particular phrase.
Week 3 Day 13 Session 13 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	13. To learn useful phrases.	13. Phrases: "What is this? Who is this? I don't know"	13. Teacher introduces the phrases as above. All point together and then individually.	13. Picture strips illustrating the phrases.	13. Participants point to the phrase picture when teacher uses a phrase.
Week 3 Day 14 Session 14 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** 14. To listen to and review English words. **Specific** 14. To listen to at least ten names of objects and see the corresponding words and pictures.	14. Pre-recorded names of ten objects, as mentioned above.	14. Participants listen to words and see corresponding words and pictures.	14. English words.	14. Listen to spoken words and see corresponding words and pictures.

Week 3 Day 15 Session 15 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To reinforce activities of the previous sessions. **Specific** 15. To strengthen all of the names of objects and location markers and useful phrases.	15. Names of objects in the room and location markers.	15. Teacher demonstrates placing objects in the room, saying, "beside the horse, on the table, etc." Participants take turns with objects.	15. Toys. Objects in the room.	15. Participants place objects or themselves at places the nurturer describes.
Week 4 Day 16 Session 16 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To describe ongoing activities and states that is visible to the growing participants. **Specific** 16. To be able to recognize four more location markers.	16. More location markers (in, behind, in front, between).	16. Teacher introduces new words as in Activity 1, Day 1. Teacher describes where an object is using all location markers. Teacher also describes where an object is to be put in relation to the other objects on the table, e.g. "The pillow is between the bed and the clock." Participants take turns moving objects to the right position.	16. Objects, toys, pictures	16. Participants take turns in moving objects to the correct position.

Week 4 Day 17 Session 17 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	17. To be able to perform three actions.	17. Action words (give, take, put).	17. Teacher uses toys and pillows to demonstrate the simple commands, "Take a pillow. Give a pillow. Take the horse. Give the cat and the boy to John." Participants respond.	17. Toys, objects, people.	17. Performing actions.
Week 4 Day 18 Session 18 15 min	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To listen to and review English words. **Specific** 18. To listen to at least four location markers and three action words, and see the corresponding words and pictures.	18. Pre-recorded location markers and three action words as mentioned above.	18. Participants listen to words and see corresponding words and pictures.	18. English words.	18. Listen to spoken words and see corresponding words and pictures.

Week 4	Here-and-now descriptions	**General** To reinforce activities of the previous sessions. **Specific** 19. To strengthen all of location markers with pronoun form.	19. Location markers from previous sessions. Pronouns from previous sessions.	19. Teacher tells Participants to put objects in locations or put them down. Teacher reinforces with pronoun form, e.g. "Yes, you are putting it in the corner; yes, you are giving the bird to John; yes, you are taking the cat."	19. Toys, objects, pictures.	19. Participants manipulate objects in relation to the location markers.
Day 19						
Session 19						
15 min						

Appendix D

Interview 1

Questions

1.   a.   What were the positive ways by which the government representatives contributed?

      b.   What were the areas that needed improvement?

2.   a.   What were the positive ways by which the non-governmental organization(s) contributed?

      b.   What were the areas that needed improvement?

3.   a.   What were the positive ways by which the facilitators/coordinators contributed?

      b.   What were the areas that needed improvement?

4.   a.   What were strengths of the programme?

      b.   What were the areas that needed improvement?

5.   a.   What were the positive ways by which the parents/community members contributed?

      b.   What were the areas that needed more attention?

6.   a.   What were the positive ways by which the children were involved?

      b.   What were the areas that needed more attention?

Responses/Comments
Stakeholder A

Government-related

General information

The ministry of education put forward twelve recommendations after they perused the reports and planned curriculum of the Nursery Year 1 programme of the pilot project.

There was an informal meeting on 15 October 2017. One of the recommendations is that the timetable needs to correspond to the learning guide.

There is supposed to be a monitoring and evaluating phase. This still has to be worked out. In the second year there supposed to be workshops to develop the second-year nursery programme.

Strengths

They are generally supportive verbally, but nothing yet official.

There is an agenda that they are following which is based on "one size fits all", where all children are included (no one is left behind).

Areas for improvement

Information in terms of feedback was delayed, leaving the core team clueless sometimes.

They seem not to have the specialists or the technical personnel who can confidently lead the programme.

NGO-related

Strengths

The NGO representatives can procure and alternate specialists.

They can get funding.

They have many links, in terms of resources.

One of their foci is education; some of them can teach.

Areas for improvement

They lack the technical personnel in Rupununi.

Sometimes, they delay in decision-making.

Teacher-related

Strengths

They are interested.

They focus on pedagogy rather than administration.

Areas for improvement

There is much work to do as teachers.

Some of them are not trained professionally.

Some of them are not literate in Wapishana, although they may know to speak it.

They need training in teaching English as a second language.

Facilitators/coordinators-related

Strengths

Facilitator is world-class.

Gets results from the workshops.

Makes one think, bringing out one's thoughts and opinions.

Completed the programme of work set out.

Knows the tempo of the programme and writes them up.

Areas for improvement

Impatient worker.

Very strict and stiff.

Does not know the culture of the Wapishana People.

Parent/community-related

Strengths

When community members decide on something, it is for a good reason.

They still do self-help activities.

Area for improvement

They tend to forget things, so they need to be reminded of things repeatedly.

Children-related

Strength

Reports are glowing.

Stakeholders B and C

Government-related

Strengths

The Ministry representatives are responding.

The workshops were more like classroom presentations.

Every teacher had to work with a villager.

They suggested that control schools be included.

They had specialists in literacy and early childhood education.

Areas for improvement

They preferred to see the programme in both Wapishana and English instead of in Wapishana first because they saw it as a bilingual programme.

One of the Toshaos from a Makushi village, at one meeting, talked negatively about the programme because she had never had experience with it.

The emphasis was that Wapishana must go hand in hand with English, which is difficult to do.

The expected MOU delayed the process; the consultant was hustling the process, that is, the year one curriculum should be ready for September 2017.

Although the representatives of the Ministry approved of the inclusion of "Easter" and "Christmas" celebrations in the curriculum, they recommended that the Muslim and Hindu celebrations be included as well.

As for the exemption of the children from the National Grade 2 Assessment, they said that only the Chief Education Officer could give such an approval.

The representatives of the Ministry questioned how many children are Wapishana speaking? English-speaking only? Both Wapishana- and English-speaking? They suggested that a survey be done in this regard.

They also put forward the following questions: (1) What happens to the English-speaking child in this programme?; (2) What happens when a child who is in this bilingual programme, is transferred to another school that is not a pilot school?

They note that that only top-down approach was emphasized in the proposed curriculum, but what about the bottom-up approach (the phonics approach)?

The representatives of the Ministry wanted a monitoring framework every four weeks.

The representatives of the Ministry wanted a total of 39 big books for the children.

NGO-related

Strength

The NGO provided all the transportation, accommodation, and meals for the workshops.

Areas for improvement

No compensation for time expended (a week in some cases) by the participants. Some made big sacrifices to attend. As a result, a number of people from the resource team withdrew.

Artists and typists were not compensated. Because of this, the people were reluctant to go back to attend the workshops.

The food did not have a variety of ingredients.

One community had not yet hosted a workshop due to a lack of accommodation. Only the other two villages had the opportunity to host.

First, the organizers said that if one is absent, one cannot attend the rest of the sessions. Now, they are accepting any interested people because some people have withdrawn their participation.

The NGO should be open to other consultants from other NGOs (e.g. The Summer Institute of Linguistics) that indicate an interest to assist in the programme.

Teacher-related

Strengths

They know the Wapishana language (speaking).

Trained teachers contributed.

Areas for improvement

However, others still don't fully understand the methodologies.

Young teachers do not understand the methodologies because some now come on the job. This was a big setback—one teacher was one only month on the job; another, one term on the job.

Even primary teachers were a little discouraged.

Facilitators/coordinators-related

Strengths

There are two young people who it seemed were recruited by the NGO. Although they have different backgrounds in training other than educating children, they have demonstrated interest in being part of the resource team.

Areas for improvement

The younger people are not grounded in early childhood education. It seemed that they do not know a lot about early childhood education and are still attempting to lead the discussions at times. When they first started, they were heavily dependent on experienced teachers.

One of their researchers found that the children may experience academic difficulties as a result of being "stunted". The teachers had asked about a copy of the report; it was promised that it would be given to them later.

The facilitator did not have a very good working relationship with people; argued with one participant who asked questions.

Sessions were too late into the night with short periods of recess.

The representatives of the Ministry did not wholly accept the first draft of the curriculum.

Programme-related

Strength

Involved mostly Wapishana culture as the basis.

Areas for improvement

First assignment was hard, e.g. we had to find five idioms, five stories, five songs, five riddles. Sometimes it is hard to rhyme in Wapishana.

Some work by the participants was rejected.

When some stories were tested, children did not understand. If the artist does not illustrate correctly, then the whole concept can be lost.

Theories of teaching: everyone had to read. This was difficult for parent-participants.

Parent/community-related

Strengths

The core team updated parents on what's going on.

They talked about the Wapishana programme. When parents were asked about the programme, they answered "*Oo Wa'aiap*" 'Yes, we want it'.

Children-related

Strength

They enjoyed stories.

Area for improvement

Some pictures were not accurate.

Overall

I don't see the programme starting this September based the amount of work to be done.

The National Toshaos Council talked about it at their forum but NCERD said we have to review it before we implement it.

Stakeholder D

Government-related

Strengths

They are there working together with us.

They want to see the programme happen.

They have plans to train the teachers to teach ESL.

So far when invited, they are attending.

One official suggested that they use the period "Modern Education" to teach Wapishana (30 minutes) for twice a week. This slot is in the standard time table.

NGO-related

Strengths

They want our children to be literate in Wapishana.

Funding provided for transportation, accommodation.

Area for improvement

They should get someone to teach this programme in the absence of the facilitator.

Teacher-related

Strength

Some of the concepts covered were learnt while on training.

Areas for improvement

Some teachers can speak Wapishana but cannot read and write it. I had the WWA course and so can read and write Wapishana course, but I need a refresher course.

Facilitators/coordinators-related

Strength

The consultant had everybody involved, participating in a lively way.

Area for improvement

Sometimes one cannot understand his pronunciation of some English words.

Impatient.

Speaks down to people. This happened many times, and some participants ended up crying.

The coordinators can speak both English and Wapishana.

They are interested.

Most times, in the absence of the facilitator, the coordinator(s) depended on one of the senior teachers when it came to discussing topics such as methodology.

Saying "This is the teacher's thing, it is not my thing."

Or "I don't expect to hear that."

Programme- related

Strengths

The resource team made the big books.

The use of the big books in Wapishana during the trialing.

Areas for improvement

Children were not familiar with some characters (animals), such as *korau* 'mongoose'.

You really have to be a good storyteller to have children enjoy it.

Some parents who were asked to tell the story did not do the story telling well (it could be because the modelling of the story was not done beforehand.)

Parent/community-related

Strength

The majority of parents said "Let's have the programme."

Areas for improvement

One or two parents are negative about it.

Concerning the papers given to read on teaching methodologies, parents read the papers, going through to read and understand it. I tried to explain bits of it in simple English the way I understood the reading to assist them.

Child-related

Strengths

Children are familiar with some of the stories.

The child who never spoke up spoke up dominated the discussion.

Area for improvement

Some characters were unfamiliar to them. For example, *kasom* 'eel' could be more suitable for grade 2 children.

Overall

In discussing the use of the two languages as the grade progresses, NCERD personnel had some questions:

1.   What about the English-speaking child?

2.   Why not teach both Wapishana and English? Develop questions both in English and Wapishana?

We had no idea how to do it. It seems that we, teachers, are just feeling our way through.

Stakeholder E

Government-related

Strengths

Supports the programme verbally.

 They wanted the programme to start in October 2017.

Areas for improvement

Although they wanted it to be a pilot, they want it to be aligned with the national curriculum.

They said that there is an educational policy on such a programme, but when they checked nothing is clear.

They didn't agree with the curriculum; we had to change it to fit their the national nursery programme themes.

They said that themes and topics differ.

Therefore, this is more work on us.

Email response from NCERD takes very long; delay in responding to our letters, etc.

NGO-related

Strengths

They are funding the workshops.

They provide transportation.

They provide food.

They pay for the expenses on the books.

They paid tickets for NCERD representatives.

They also provided them with accommodation.

Areas for improvement

The NGO could have found somebody who knew more about the programme.

The coordinators should be grounded in early childhood education topics such as curriculum development, etc.

At the last workshop 10 February 2018, they left us on our own; there should have been a consultant rather than coordinators to deal with subject matter of the curriculum.

Teacher-related

Strengths

I learnt a lot of things; benefited from handouts; new things were learnt.

Tried to put it into practice; found it helpful.

Areas for improvement

Most of us were not trained; those who were new on the job were at a loss.

Afterwards they kept dropping off, even community members; this was mainly because of the way the consultant started treating them.

Facilitators/coordinators-related

Strengths

He had an experience with children from India.

The curriculum: he wanted to develop a similar one as the one he worked on in India.

At first, he started good.

The coordinators were more open.

The coordinator knows Wapishana and can relate to us in both Wapishana and English.

Areas for improvement

Later, he started shouting at us, treating us like little children.

At the beginning part, he generally asked us to collect stories and songs. Some stories were inappropriate for children, while others were appropriate.

Afterwards, he rejected some stories as "boring", "no story line".

He made one of our senior participants cry.

They all said they preferred another facilitator.

He seemed not to know much about early childhood; maybe eleven-year old or more.

Our children are different from those in India.

The coordinators mostly depended on the trained teachers when it came to discussing aspects of teaching.

Programme-related

Strengths

Started with topics related to the child's experiences and how to deal with the child.

Curriculum—how to deal with it.

Then we created a timetable and learning sessions.

Most work was completed for Year 1.

Areas for improvement

The work seemed too much for us.

There seemed no curriculum specialist; we needed help.

We were put in groups, especially parents.

At times he would say "you are wrong", "rejected". He would shut them down.

Community members were "frightened" and so withdrew.

Parents were dependent on teacher, so each teacher had to head a group.

The next time some did not want to come to the workshop anymore.

Parent/community-related

Strengths

They were interested when they came because they would like to see how it worked.

Those parents whose children were here were interested in the programme. During The August holiday, parents willingly came for one week, for one hour a day, to try out the materials.

Also during the term: one hour for trialing—20 minutes a session.

Areas for improvement

Some parents felt that some stories seemed inappropriate for children.

Some parents were just not interested. For example, from a total of 18 parents sometimes only 3 or 6 of them came to meetings. Only the same set kept coming.

Others felt that the programme was for those parents whose their children were part of the programme.

The uncertainty of the starting of the programme caused some parents to stay away from meetings.

Children-related

Strengths

The trial of the big books—they were interested.

They understood the stories because it was in their language.

Most responded to questions.

Most enjoyed the stories.

They related the stories to their experiences.

They enjoyed the songs.

Areas for improvement

Some children were unable to recognize some animal characters, such as the eel. This was probably because the pictures were not coloured; some pictures could not be identified because they were in black and white.

The fonts for the stories cause some problems like the "a" and the "g".

Some spellings of words were long.

Overall

One nursery teacher did not partake because she is on teacher-training.

Right now I am not sure how the programme will become.

Even if it is our programme, we need someone (a specialist) to guide us through.

Training is needed for us to teach English as second language.

Stakeholder F

Government-related

Strengths

The Minister said that he fully supports it.

The advisor to the MOE said he also supports it.

Areas for improvement

NCERD said they liked it but they want the written curriculum fixed; wants it to be done all over.

NGO-related

Strengths

They greatly support it.

They substantiate their support by the following:

1.   Transportation for the participants

2.   Food for the participants

3.   Accommodation

4.   Funding for the meeting

5.   A representative almost attends every meeting.

Teacher-related

Strengths

Attend workshops.

All teachers talk Wapishana.

Areas for improvement

One Nursery teacher cannot speak Wapishana but can speak a Makushi.

One teacher at Sawariwau is reportedly not supportive of the Bilingual Education Programme.

Facilitators/coordinators-related

Strengths

Facilitator started well; finished all workshops.

Coordinator did well, is always present, informing everyone before the workshops.

The other coordinator writes well and can talk both Wapishana and English.

Weaknesses

A little impatient.

Speaks harshly to participants.

Made some participants cry.

Coordinator sometimes wants people to do things quickly; gets hasty sometimes.

Programme-related

Strength

Some topics were easy.

Areas for improvement

Some topics were hard because hard words were used; makes it hard to understand.

Parent/community-related

Strength

Parents attended the workshops.

Areas for improvement

Afterwards, some parents did not attend.

Parents got no money to compensate for their time (e.g. one husband came back from workshop with nothing like monetary compensation).

Children-related

Strengths

Testing of big books was good.

Children know some pictures.

Areas for improvement

Some animals in the pictures were not recognized. They need to be coloured.

Old people made the stories about *Kasom dorotapan padaiaoro nii* 'The eel who sought a wife'.

This story could be used for higher grades.

General comments

Turu'u ushaapatakao 'It can be done'

As NCERD representatives said, there are aspects of the curriculum that needed to be modified.

After September, the group will work on the Year 2 curriculum. So, they cannot call for the consultant as yet, as the Year 1 curriculum has to be modified.

Stakeholder G

Government-related

Strengths

Spoken words of support.

The Minister of Indigenous Peoples Affairs likes the programme.

NCERD said that the programme would begin by September 2018.

NCERD said they liked it, but little things still need to be fixed.

They want to see results (of the children). This would be partly determined by control schools like Awarewaunau, Shea, Potarinau, and Katoonarib.

Areas for improvement

No written document of support.

NCERD said that the programme should not be in Wapishana language alone; there should also be English language used.

They would like to see Wapishana and English together.

NGO-related

Strengths

They like the programme.

They are assisting in lobbying for the programme.

They would like to see it started.

Areas for improvement

Since it is they who are sponsoring these workshops, they do not cater to the compensation of participants (local) for the days they attend.

This could be the reason some participants drop out.

Facilitators/Coordinators-related

Strengths

Recommended that most instruction be in Wapishana and little English.

Started off good.

Learnt a lot from him.

The coordinator was good, conducted the sessions respectfully.

Areas for improvement

After he got accustomed to the group, he started losing his patience and became and quarrelsome.

All participants complained about his attitude.

One of the coordinators tends to be dominant in the discussions.

One of the coordinators disregarded some of the designated Wapishana editors' corrections of Wapishana words, partly causing them to leave the programme.

Parent/community-related

Strengths

We go to the meetings/workshops steadily.

Most teachers from Maruranau and Karaudarnau attend regularly.

Here at Maruranau, some are interested.

Areas for improvement

Sometimes the head teacher from Maruranau does not attend due to her other work as Nursery Field officer.

The other head teacher from Maruranau was absent sometimes.

Most Sawariwau teachers do not attend because of the facilitator's treatment (being openly critical) of them.

It was said that the HM of Sawariwau is not interested in the programme.

Other parents are not interested. Even class meetings, they do not attend.

They often give the excuse that they have a lot of work to do.

Children-related

Strengths

They like the pictures and stories of the locally made books.

They can relate to the pictures.

Areas for improvement

Some elements in the picture are not recognized; coloured pictures could have helped children recognize them.

General comments

The programme should start this September, 2018.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the communities and the Ministry of Education is still to be signed.

Appendix E

Interview 2

Questions, responses and comments

A.   Programme plan

1.   How well are the community's problems and needs incorporated in the programme plan?

Not very well. Most community members were not there to help. In the Resource Team, there are a few, not enough. Those who were chosen did not really know what was supposed to be in the programme plan. They did not have much input into it. (LJ); Yes, developed some materials (EJ); Yes (DT); Yes. We did not know anything about it. They talked to the Toshao. (CE); Not too sure (EA); I do not know (HD); I do not know (JD); It would help with more materials (MD); Small children learn quicker based on her experience (ND); Know nothing about program plan (RC & VC).

2.   How clear were the planned outcomes and outputs?

More big books to lend out to parents to borrow. Parents need to be more proactive to find out more how their children are doing (MA); Not sure (LJ); Not sure (EJ); Not sure (CE); They were clear but to put it to work, … too much for you (EA).

3.   Are the objectives SMART? (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound)

I never attended the workshop. The teachers were on contract (CE); Not sure (EA); Some objectives... we have a long way to go. Lack of materials. Workshop held at end of the term. Children are not academically oriented. Should be more of play. MOE said do not take away play. Need to have a balance (MA).

4.   How can we improve the programme plan?

Need more people (consultants) who know about the bilingual programme. For the first, it was only one person. Now, another person (lady) is leading.

She has switched around some aspects. Therefore, the consultancy should have more than one person. They should try to bring their views together, work as a team (LJ); They always have the workshops in Aishalton; they should have workshops in other villages; Teachers should have a classroom structure, teaching aids (EJ); We teachers need more training in teaching Wapishana. Ms. Elaine did not go to the WWA Wapishana literacy class that was being run by the WWA before (DT); Maybe by giving more activities, e.g. like a little book work; giving little activities to occupy them. Before it was just playing (CE); I think when we go to the workshop, they are not demonstrating to us (EA); No, I do not know (HD); I do not know (JD); Not sure (MD); I never saw the plan (ND). Some stories not familiar to children. For maths concepts, more practice should to be done. Better to master concepts before rushing on to others. e.g. the numeral 3. Some children tend to confuse numerals with letters. A lot of absences by children (MA).

B.   Curriculum/Teaching method

5.   Is the curriculum clear?

Last term's curriculum was not clear. For this term, they changed some parts (LJ); One—one, not all (EJ); Not sure. Ms. Elaine joined late. She found some aspects difficult (DT). Yes, it is written clearly (CE); Not too sure (EA); Clear (MD).

6.   Is it appropriate to the culture?

Last term—yes. This term—yes (houses, cutting leaves, farming) (LJ); Yes (EJ); Yes (DT); Yes, I think so. Only parents are not cooperating with materials to help the teacher, e.g. *minau* (CE); Yes, appropriate (EA); Yes, culture comes out (JD); Comes out well on Friday sessions (ND); Not all is culture (SR); Yes, culture present (RC); Yes (VC); Most of it but there are gaps. Not spiral. Not much connectivity. Teacher needs to conclude before going to the next concept (MA).

7.   Do the teachers feel comfortable using it?

Last term—not really. Certain things in the curriculum, the children are not exposed to them, e.g. parents do not usually take their children into the deep forest. *Maradapan*—parents do not usually take their children to the lake; they bring fish to them. (LJ); Yes (EJ); Yes; not really because the *namachi* is not found in our community and the *minau* is never seen in our

community (DT); Yes. But the class of 24 is too large; it should be 15 children to one teacher (CE); Yes, but for some activities the class is too large; two groups are enough to work with (EA); It is good (JD); They explain to our children (MD); Good (ND); The teacher reads comfortably, but some children do not pay attention (SR); Do not know (RC); Do not know (VC); Many questions among themselves on how to teach a concept. Children's language is different to adults. Sometimes blend in with English, e.g. gravy (MA)

8.   Do the teachers find the teaching materials useful?

Some materials are not very useful. Children also cannot match sentence strips with words. On teaching letters from last term, they know it as how it is written by hand and not as the printed "a". In some big books, some children cannot connect the topic with their experiences (LJ); Yes. Just that the Big Books are without colouring; we have to put our own colouring (EJ); Yes, children understand some of it (DT); Yes. I think the children love the materials. In one book, they could not identify the iguana (looks like a frog) (CE); Some are useful (EA); Yes (JD); useful (MD); Not sure (ND); Yes (SR); They used the local language well (VC); Not sure (RC); Most of the materials are useful…creative, help to brighten the classroom (MA).

9.   Do the curriculum and instructional materials help the learners to achieve their instructional goals?

Helped a little. Not all the children could grasp the concept (LJ); Yes, it does (EJ); Yes (DT); Yes. It is helping them (CE); Yes, but not everybody (EA); It helps (JD); My grand-daughter is learning (MD); Materials do help (ND); Not sure (RC); Not sure (VC); Yes, helping (MA).

10.   How can we improve the curriculum?

Stories were mostly from adults with an adult audience. One problem is that some of the stories do not fit with the theme. When people were asked to collect/gather stories, the instructions were not clear about the stories being appropriate for children. For this reason, some stories collected were long. So, the team tried to break down and shorten the stories (LJ); Not sure (EJ); Storybooks need more colouring (DT); Maybe having more shell books for colouring and painting (CE); More demonstrations. They expect us to give more than we know (EA); We need to come out more to give the teachers support (JD); Not sure (RC); Not sure (VC); Should be improved from the first term. Look over everything—evaluate and listen to each other's

comments. We made stories but field trials were not done for all. All stories should be field-tested (MA).

C.   Personnel

11.   Are the teachers effective?

Not really. Still striving to use the materials effectively. Certain words in Wapishana to write, I could not spell because I did not go through the adult Wapishana literacy course (LJ); Not really. There are times, I find it difficult reading certain words in Wapishana in the big books (EJ); Yes, Ms Elaine is trying (DT); She always tries with her material, but the timetable is confusing; sometimes she uses the national time table. She cannot have the cooks waiting (CE); Yes, teachers are effective (EA); Yes, child explains what she did (JD); They use the materials well (ND); The current teacher does not know Wapishana well (RC); Same as above (VC); The materials improves the teacher's teaching a lot. The teacher has confidence because she can speak both languages (MA).

12.   Are the supervisors and teachers doing their jobs well?

The supervisor is trying. The coordinators do not tell us what to do because they have no experience in teaching; therefore, they cannot help us in teaching. The supervisor comes around to help when she is around. My head teacher helps in the teaching (LJ); Yes (EJ); The supervisor is helping; the others are helping, trying to get all the materials (DT); Only the supervisor helps out. The others stay outside. They have some nice videos, but they did not give us, just showed us. If we had copies, we would adapt (CE). Last term, it was different. Now they switch some activities (take off some to add others), and this is confusing. I do not have a clear idea of what they expect. I try other ways, the way I understand the activities. For the language focusing on the storybook, this time they added "inquires, provocation" (EA); Do not know (HD); Yes, they do (JD); They come happily. She likes children (MD); Not sure (ND); Good (VC); Good. The supervisor is an experienced nursery teacher, but needs to know the language to keep the attention of the class. Just few words they can pick out when she speaks in English (RC).

D. Training

13.   Does the training help teachers understand the teaching method?

No. We were just given guidelines. The first consultant gave us steps, but the steps were too long. We had to break it down, omitting some steps to suit the duration/slot allocated in the time table (LJ); Yes but I did not attend all the workshops. Attended three so far (EJ); Not really. Just lectures, no demonstrations (DT); One time all of us attended. Also helped them. The other teacher who left, she was doing well (CE); It was not clear to me; probably, I understood it differently (EA); Do not know (JD); Not sure (ND); From the last training, they were reluctant to speak. Not sure about the training. The number in one class is 24. This is too many children for one teacher. Now the MOE says the ratio is one teacher to 15 children. The expectations are too high. A child asked high-order thinking questions (e.g. Child: What happened to the baby animal? What did you do with it?) (MA).

14.   Does the training produce effective teachers?

Not sure (LJ); Not too sure (EJ); Not sure (DT); Yes, the action songs (CE). We do not have CD players to assist us; Not sure (EA); Not sure (JD); Yes. The training helps us to be more resourceful (MA).

15.   How can we improve training?

Facilitators should demonstrate or model how the steps are done. The supervisor tried in English. The children responded well in some parts, but the questioning was done in English, not in Wapishana (LJ); Not sure (EJ); Demonstrations by the facilitator would help. From this term I did not go. I was waiting on a letter of release from the Department of Education. At the same time, the leaders of the programme did not instruct teachers from the classroom to attend the training sessions. Volunteers go instead. At the moment, they are working more on editing stories. Volunteer-parents help out on Wednesdays (DT). Not sure, because I never attend (CE); More demonstrations by facilitator would help (EA); Do not know (JD); Exchange visits to schools by staff. There should also be exchange of venues for the workshops. This would open up more avenues for thinking. We need more audios/videos that are relevant; that would bring real experiences from the field into the classroom, e.g. *maradapan* scene (MA).

E.   Materials

16.   Do people like the reading materials?

Some parents. Other parents said that their children are not familiar with the materials because they do not take their children to the forest (LJ); Yes (EJ); Yes (DT). Yes, only thing is that they cannot read the Wapishana. Maybe, they can attend the Wapishana class. They can only help to explain the picture (CE); Not sure (EA); I do not know (HD); Yes (JD); They like the materials (ND); The supervisor likes the materials; I like the materials. (FB); Never seen materials (RC); Never seen materials (VC); Not sure, but there is a parent's corner in our school (MA).

17.   Is our system of producing materials as efficient as it needs be?

In the first term, materials were brought on time. In second term, materials were brought after the term began. Teachers already started to teach. Some big books are coloured. We colour the big books before we use them (LJ); Yes, we have enough (EJ); Yes, they were brought on time (DT); I think for this term, they did not give any materials, such as cardboards. (CE); Yes, materials are being produced adequately (EA); Good. Numeral cards were sent but did not arrive (ND).

18   Is the distribution system effective and reliable?

Not sure. Some were not distributed on time. Some came on time (LJ); Big Books were distributed on time. Only work books—numeracy and literacy workbooks came in late. For this term, the materials were not on time. Had to do additional changes which delayed the handbook (EA); Not sure (ND); Not sure (JD); Not sure (RC); Not sure (VC); For this term, the materials came in a bit late. Timely delivery would result in better planning (MA).

19.   What parts or components could be improved?

Colouring. Some pictures are not in proportion (LJ); Some of the pictures gave the children some problems in recognizing the characters. For example, the artist drew a porcupine but the children say it is a "pig" (EJ); Colouring-volunteers are to do the colouring (DT); Drawings need to look real (CE); Stories, drawings, songs (EA); I do not know (HD); Not sure (JD); Colouring (ND); Not sure (RC); Not sure (VC); The written expression need to be developed. Mostly adult language used in stories; e.g. rhyming words are lacking (MA).

F.   Learners' (children's) progress

20.   Is the programme helping them to do better in school?

Not sure. Just orally in Wapishana. Responding but not much (LJ); Children are not familiar with some characters. For example, some children never see a *powis* and for *minau*, we do not have the fruit in our community. Right now, we don't have armadillos with boots, etc. Yes, the programme is helping. Especially in English, children's understanding is difficult. When they hear Wapishana, they are more confident. They have the answers but to put it in English, they are not able; they do it better in Wapishana (EJ); Not sure (DT); Yes, but they need correct colouring (CE); Not sure (EA); Yes, the programme helps (MD); More learning takes place (ND); Do not know (RC); Do not know (VC); Yes. The children are responsive; they talk a lot. They talk more freely and openly. With the games, they are more relaxed, but they can't do the activities in English. They rely more on Wapishana (MA).

21. How can we improve the teaching/learning situation?

Not sure (LJ); Not sure (EJ); Not sure, because all of us are untrained (DT); Not sure (CE); Not sure (EA); Not sure (ND); The teacher–pupil ratio should be followed. More teaching aids (MA).

G.   Programme's growth

22.   Is the programme growing as we said it would?

Not really. Seems to be the same (LJ); Yes, it is (EJ); Yes, but slowly because of the large class (CE); Yes (EA); Yes, it is going on well (JD); Yes (MD); It is going slow but good (ND); Good (FB); Not sure (RC); Not sure (VC); For now, it is going according to how it was planned, but a lot of reteaching to be done (MA).

23.   Are the people responsible for the programme satisfied with the way it is growing?

Not sure (LJ); Not too sure (EJ); They thought Elaine was a trained teacher because her kids were responding to her well. Only in December she started (DT); The second facilitator observed that the class was too large for the teacher (JD); Yes, they said the programme was going good (MD); Never

hear their comments on it (ND); I do not know (FB); Good (SR); Not sure (RC); Not sure (VC); From the experiences of last term, the children were settling in with the programme (MA).

24.   Is the community satisfied?

Never hear comments by the people, but for a few of them of them, their children would tell them what they learnt (LJ); Not sure (EJ); Not sure (DT); Some younger parents do not have interest in the Bilingual Programme (CE); Not sure (EA); JD Heard that the people said that it is good (JD); They said the programme is good (MD); I do not know (JD); Good (FB); Do not know (RC); Do not know (VC); Not sure, only members of the resource team visit (MA).

H.   Training, attitude, and ability of teachers and other staff

25.   Have the teachers done a good job in communicating new information?

They are trying. They have been respectful and supportive of the learners (LJ); Yes (EJ); Yes (DT); Emily is doing good job (CE); Yes, because the children grasped some concepts (EA); Yes, the teachers are doing a good (MD); Yes (ND); Good (FB); Lourina is doing her best (RC); The teacher is doing her best (VC); Yes (MA).

I.   Quality of materials

26.   Do people in the community like the materials?

They like the materials but they are also good for adults (LJ); Yes (EJ); Yes (DT); Yes. Those parents who always come out (CE); Not sure (EA); Sometimes they speak to the children harshly when they are being disobedient; Some of the stories that are about "blowing" [not appropriate]; Same (VC); Just few parents visited. So, some parents would say they did not know we were teaching this topic (MA).

27. Do they think the materials represent the local culture appropriately?

Not really (stories) (LJ); Yes (EJ); Yes (DT;) Yes (CE); Yes (EA); Yes (JD); Yes (MD); Yes (JD); Good (RC); Good (VC);Yes (MA).

28. Do they provide information that is interesting and relevant to the learners?

Some of them not relevant (e.g. *korau* is not relevant) (LJ;) Yes (CE); The books are interesting but not relevant to the level of the children (EA); Yes (JD); Interesting (MD); Some stories they know; others they do not know (e.g. about the cranes at the lake) (ND); Interesting (FB); Not sure (RC); Not sure (VC).

J. Strategies and activities

29. Do people in the community think that the different aspects of the program are helpful?

Not sure. (LJ); Not too sure (EJ); Before, parents used to come (DT); Yes (CE); Not sure (EA).

30. Do you think the teachers and the writers do a good job?

Teachers are doing their jobs to the best of their abilities. Same with me but I have challenges (LJ); Yes (EJ); Yes, writers did a good job (DT); Yes, they did a good job. A man can't bite the porcupine (CE); Yes, the writers did a good job (EA); Yes (JD).

31. What classroom activities do you think are good/appropriate?

Although we invite the parents, they do not come, although they said they would come. The big book approach is good. Drama is not done as one would expect them to. The teacher tried to show them (LJ); They mostly enjoy numeracy time in groups (EJ); Stories are good (DT); Not sure (CE); big books, numeracy workbooks—they need more pictures to colour (EA); They like the storybooks (MD); Literacy activities (FB); The Friday culture session (SR); Colouring and pasting (RC); Same (RC); They like miming. They like the music/singing. The children like realia (concrete objects) that parents brought to the classroom (MA).

32.   What activities do you think are not good/inappropriate?

Most of the sentence strips to match with words seem to be too complex. Maybe it is because the children are not yet settled. They wanted to cry when asked to do the activities (LJ); Writing. Some children find writing challenging (EJ); Not sure (DT); We can have concrete materials according to what are found in their village (CE); Not sure. They do not know how to count and recognize materials (EA); Not sure (JD); Not sure (MD); Stories with which they are not familiar they do not want to act (children tend to be shy to do role play. Probably the activities are too new (FB); Maths activities (RC) and (VC); Giving them activities that relate to books. Pencil grip not at that level yet (MA).

Appendix F

Analysis of responses and comments (Interview 1)

1   Government-related

Strengths

Most common response

- Government was generally supportive, offering verbal encouragement and attending specially convened meetings.

Common responses

- They offered recommendations for the Year 1 curriculum.
- They talked about the importance of monitoring and evaluation.

Varied responses

- They said that workshops should continue to develop the Year 2 curriculum.
- NCERD suggested a total of 39 big books for the first year.

Areas for improvement

Most common responses

- They perceived the first draft of curriculum not to be totally aligned with the national curriculum.
- They wanted to see both Wapishana and English languages used as languages of instruction. They saw the programme as "bilingual" which some teachers feel is difficult to do.
- The expected memorandum of understanding delayed the start of the programme that should have started in September 2017.

Common response

- They seem to lack the technical personnel (specialists) in bilingual education.

Varied responses

- For the children's exemption from the National Grade Two Assessment, they said that only the Chief Education Officer could give the approval.
- They put two questions for consideration.
- They noted that in the first draft of the curriculum only the top-down approach was emphasized and not the bottom-up approach (phonics teaching).
- Literacy specialists in early childhood education will look at the draft of the curriculum.
- There need to be letters of release for teachers in order to have them feeling confident in attending the training sessions.

2   NGO-related

Strengths

Most common response

- The Jesuit Missions obtained funding for transportation, accommodation, and food for participants at the training workshops.

Common response

- The Jesuit Missions have links to resources.

Varied response

- The Jesuits would like to see Wapishana children literate both in Wapishana and English.

Areas for improvement

Most common response

- They did not compensate artists, typists, and editors, partly resulting in some people dropping out of the training sessions.

Varied responses

- They planned the workshops during the weekends, but some participants disagree with this as this is the time they spend with their families.
- There was no bibliography on a baseline study on the situation of the Wapishana children.
- They seemed to limit the selection of technical personnel (consultant) to their network, not considering other potential partner organizations.
- They lack the technical personnel in the Rupununi.
- They had not had one of the pilot villages (Karaudarnau) host any of the training sessions to date.
- Sometimes the food offered could be better.

3.   Facilitators/coordinators-related

Strengths

Most common responses

- The facilitator is an expert in pedagogy; got all interested; got all involved; completed the programme of work that was set out and wrote all reports.
- Two Wapishana joined the resource team as coordinators.

Varied response

- The facilitator recommended that most instruction be in Wapishana and little in English.

Areas for improvement

Most common response

- The facilitator was impatient and had little working relationship with people.

Common response

- The coordinators are not grounded/trained in the education of young learners.

Varied responses

- The facilitator has the resource team working late into the night.
- There were short recesses.
- One coordinator edited Wapishana texts, superseding the experienced editors.

4.   Teacher-related

Strengths

Most common response

- Almost all speak Wapishana.

Varied responses

- The teachers seem interested in the programme.
- They learnt a lot from the workshops; handouts were given.
- Workshops focused on pedagogy.
- The trained teachers contributed more to the discussions.

Areas for improvement

Most common responses

- Not all the teachers are trained. They do not know much about methodology.
- Teachers need more training especially in the demonstration or modelling of the steps of the story presentation. This training should be done prior to actually teaching in the classroom.

Common response

- All teachers are not familiar with the writing system of the Wapishana language.

Varied responses

- One teacher said that with this programme, there is much work to do.
- Not all teachers participated in the training.
- One teacher who is a Makushi does not speak Wapishana.

5.   Programme-related

Strengths

Varied responses

- The programme was rooted in Wapishana culture.
- The curriculum started with topics related to children's experiences.
- The big book stories were written by members of the resource team.
- Some topics were easy to understand.
- The programme can be done.

Areas for improvement

Most common response

- When some stories were tested, some children did not understand or recognize the illustrated characters of animals.

Common response

- Some work during the workshops (e.g. finding idioms, stories, songs, riddles) was rejected by the facilitator.

Varied responses

- The curriculum seemed too much work to cover.
- There seemed to be no specialist in bilingual education when the facilitator was absent.
- Some stories seemed to be inappropriate.
- Needed a specialist to guide the teachers in using the curriculum.

6.   Parent/community-related

Strengths

Most common response

- Most parents were supportive.

Common response

- Parents generally agreed to the programme.

Varied responses

Members of the core team updated parents on progress of preparation.

- Most parents attended meetings regularly.
- Other parents are not interested; not attending meetings.

Areas for improvement

Varied responses

- Other parents tend to forget.
- One Toshao (village leader from a Makushi village) never heard of the programme and seemed to be negative about it.

7.   Children-related

Strengths

Most common response

- During the testing of the stories, the children enjoyed the stories.

Varied response

- The child who never spoke up dominated the discussion of the stories.

Appendix G

Analysis of responses and comments (Interview 2)

A.   Programme Plan

1.   How well were the community needs incorporated into the programme?

Most common responses

- Not sure.
- We were informed about it.
- Leaders of the programme talked to the village leaders (Toshaos).

Common responses

- Some needs were incorporated.
- They were well incorporated.

Varied responses

- Some materials were developed.
- The children learned faster.
- I was part of it.
- I did not know anything about it.

2.   How clear were the planned outcomes (for teachers)?

Most common response.

- Not sure.

Common response

- They were well written.
- Are the objectives of the programme SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound)? (For teachers.)

Most common response

- Not sure

Common response

- They are SMART.

4.   How can we improve the programme?

Varied responses

- Need more consultants (facilitators) who know about bilingual education; they should work as a team.
- Alternate the venues of the workshops.
- Need training in the teaching and reading of Wapishana.
- More activities other than play.
- Workshop facilitators should demonstrate or model how to engage children in the activities.
- In numeracy activities, more practice activities should be done before moving on to new concepts.

B.   Curriculum/Teaching method

5.   Is the curriculum written clearly? (ForTeachers)

Varied responses

- Last term's curriculum was not clear; some aspects had to be modified.
- Bits of it; not all.
- Not sure; the teacher joined late (after the programme began) and found some aspects difficult to understand.
- Yes, it is clearly written.
- Not too sure.

6.   Is the curriculum appropriate to the culture of the children?

Most Common response

- Yes, it is appropriate.

Common responses

- Not all; parts of it.

- Some aspects of the culture are included.

Varied responses

- Not sure.

7.   Do the teachers feel comfortable using it?

Most common response

- Yes, the programme before this one was not like that.

Common responses

- Not all topics. Some topics are unfamiliar to the children because they have not yet been exposed to the experiences at this stage (e.g. some parents do not go with their children to the river, creeks, ponds, or the jungle). They bring fish or meat home. Also some fruits and birds are not found in some villages.
- Yes, but the class is too large (24 pupils) for one teacher to manage. One teacher to fifteen pupils would be manageable.
- Not sure.

Varied response

- Not sure.

C.   Materials

8.   Do the teachers find the teaching materials useful?

Most common response

- The materials are most useful and creative, and they brighten the classrooms.

Most common responses

- Yes, but more colouring to the illustrations is needed; the children love the materials.
- Not sure.

Varied response

- Some materials are not useful because they do not relate to the children's experiences.

9.   Do curriculum and materials help learners to achieve their learning goals?

Most common response

- Yes, the curriculum and materials helped the children.

Varied responses

- Helped a little. Not all children grasped the concepts.
- Not sure.

10.   How can we improve the curriculum?

Varied responses

- Stories seemed mostly for an adult audience.
- Not sure.
- Storybooks need colouring.
- More demonstrations of strategies by facilitators (they expect us to give more than we know).
- Parents need to come out to give teachers support.
- All stories should be field-tested and evaluated (we should listen to each other's comments).

D.   Personnel

11.   Are the teachers effective?

Most common response

- Yes, they seem to be more effective teaching through the use of Wapishana.

Common responses

- Not sure.

- More improvement in speaking Wapishana.
- More improvement in use of more materials.

Varied responses

- Not effective in spelling and writing of Wapishana words because some lack familiarity with the writing system.
- At times the teacher finds it difficult in reading certain words in Wapishana.
- The teacher has confidence because she speaks both languages and use of materials makes her effective.

11.   Are the facilitators/coordinators doing their jobs well?

Most common response

- Yes.

Common response

- The facilitator helps when she visits.

Varied responses

- Yes, the facilitators help. The others help in obtaining printed materials.
- Not sure.

E.   Training

13.   Does the training help the teachers understand the teaching methods?

Common response

- Not fully. We are given lectures but more demonstrations on the steps are needed.

Varied responses

- Yes, but I did not understand the workshops from the beginning because I joined the teaching staff after the programme started.
- The training helped a little. I attended only one workshop.
- Not clear. Maybe I understood the methods differently.

- Not sure about the training. Perhaps, the facilitators' expectation of the teachers' performance was too high.

14.   Does the training produce effective teachers?

Common response

- Not sure.

Varied responses

- Yes, the inclusion of action songs helps teachers become more effective.
- Training helps us to be more resourceful.

15.   How can we improve the training?

Common response

- Facilitators should demonstrate and model how the steps in some strategies are done.

Varied responses

- Not sure.
- Exchange visits by teachers to other schools would help and video/audio recordings of some processes of traditional practices to show to the children would also help.

F.   Materials

16.   Do people like the materials?

Common responses

- Yes.
- Not sure.

Varied responses

- Some like the materials.
- They like the materials but the stories seemed more for an adult audience.
- Some stories about "blowing" should not be used.

17.   Is the system producing materials as efficiently as possible?

Common responses

- In the first term materials were produced efficiently but for the second term materials were a bit delayed.
- Yes.

Is the distribution system effective and reliable?

Common response

- In the first term, the materials were distributed on time but in the second term they were distributed a bit late.

19.   What part of the materials should be improved?

Common responses

- Some pictures are not easily recognizable by the children.
- Prior colouring of the big books before they are used.

Varied responses

- Some pictures/illustrations need to be in proportion.
- The big books carry mostly adult language, with hardly any repetition of phrases or rhyming words.

F.   Learners' progress

20.   Is the programme helping the children to do better in school?

Most common response

- Yes, children are responding more in oral Wapishana as compared through the use of English.

Varied responses

- Not sure.
- Children need more help.

21.   How can we improve the teaching/learning situation?

Common response

   • Not sure. Most of the teachers are untrained.

Varied responses

   • Facilitators should model or demonstrate the steps to teach the activities.

   • The teacher–pupil ratio should be 1:15 for teachers to give pupils more individual attention.

   • In one school volunteers help teachers on Wednesdays.

   • Exchange visits of staff to the pilot schools.

   • Bring real life experiences through video/audio recordings of cultural activities of people in the community.

   • Unsure because I do not attend the training sessions.

G.   Programme's growth

22.   Is the programme growing as we said it would?

Most common response

   • Yes, it is steadily growing.

Common response

   • Not sure.

Varied response

   • Seems to be the same like before.

23.   Are the people responsible for the programme satisfied with the way it is growing?

Common response

   • Yes, some untrained teachers are doing well.

   • Not sure.

Varied response

   • The class may be too large for the teacher.

24.   Is the community satisfied?

Common responses

- Not too sure.
- Heard people say the programme is good.

Varied responses

- Some parents said that their children eagerly reported to them what went on at school and what they learnt. This was not so before.
- Some younger parents do not have interest in the bilingual programme.
- We had meetings before we started it. The whole village seemed to welcome it.
- Only the members of the resource team seemed satisfied.

H.   Training, ability of teachers and other staff

25.   Have teachers done a good job in communicating new information?

Common response

- Yes, children are grasping the concepts.

Varied response

- Not sure.

I.   Quality of materials

26.   Do people like the materials?

Common responses

- Yes, they like the beautiful pictures.

Varied responses

- Some parents.
- Not sure.

27.   Do you think the materials represent the Wapishana culture appropriately?

Most common response

- Yes, especially the stories.

Varied response

- Not all pictures.
- Do they present information that is interesting and relevant to the learners?

Common response

- Yes.

Varied responses

- Some of the information is unfamiliar to the children (e.g. *korau* 'mangoose'),
- The stories are interesting but not relevant to the level of the children
- Not sure.

J.   Strategies and activities

29.   Do the people in the community think that the different aspects of the programme are helpful?

Common response

- Not sure.

Varied response

- Before parents used to come to meetings.

30.   Do you think the teachers and the writers are doing a good job?

Common response

- Yes.

Varied response

- Teachers are doing their jobs to the best of their abilities; the same with me, but I have challenges.

31.   What classroom activities do you think are good/appropriate?

Common responses

- The big book strategy with stories.
- Colouring and pasting.
- Children mostly enjoying activities in groups.
- The Friday culture session.
- Working with real objects.
- Most are helpful.

Varied responses

- Not sure.
- Literacy activities
- Singing is easy and catchy.

32.   What activities do you think are not good/inappropriate?

Common responses

- Pre-writing activities.
- Not sure.
- Counting seems too challenging.

Varied responses

- Sentence strips to match words seem too challenging.
- Some stories are unfamiliar to the children.
- Inappropriate stories.
- Calling out words in some books.
- Some activities of the big book seems difficult for the children.

Appendix H

Classroom observations

Literacy activities

A.   The Big Book presentation

Teacher A's class

The class

The class was the Year 1 class in School A. The class was seated in a semi-circle on mats under a small open hut in the school compound. Previous to this lesson was the introduction of a big book, *Wurada Maridan Baudokoru* 'The turtle fools the jaguar'. The main activity was the retelling of the story.

There were some introductory activities before the lesson proper began. Firstly, there was the singing of an action song in English, followed by answering the teacher's questions about the name of the day. The answers led them to say *Aizii Tuesday* 'Today is Tuesday'. The teacher and pupils together sang a song: *Aizii Tuesday* in Wapishana and then the version in English. More answering of questions about the weather, followed by having them say *Kamoo wichan* 'The day is hot'. The teacher and pupils sang a Wapishana song, *Kamoo wichan*.

The lesson proper began with the teacher questioning pupils about the cover picture of the big book for a review of the story to prepare them for a demonstration of the story. For example, the teacher asked in English, "Is it a small book or a big book?" An English-speaking pupil answered, "It is a big book." The teacher also asked in Wapishana, "*Kanom da'a'a diora'azu'u kotuainao?*" 'What is this story about?' Another pupil answered, "*Wurad*" 'Turtle'. As the teacher took them through a 'picture walk', that is, further questioning about the pictures, more questions were asked in Wapishana. For example, the teacher asked, "*Wurad sha'apanom da'a'a?*" 'What happened to the turtle here?' A pupil replied, "*Ukidopan*" 'He got away.' The teacher sometimes translated the questions for the English-speaking child, who would give short answers in English.

Afterwards, the teacher read the storylines and asked the class to repeat, sometimes calling on individuals who were inattentive to repeat after

her. The follow-up activity was the demonstration of parts of the story with two volunteer pupils who moved cut-out models of the two animals as the teacher read the sentences.

The follow-up activity was supported by the use of the big book and then cut-out models of the turtle and the jaguar, as well as a football-sized rock, placed on top of the small desk in front of the class. The teacher asked, in Wapishana what 'rock' was called in Wapishana. A pupil answered in Wapishana, *Kuba* 'rock'. The teacher then asked about the cut-out models (e.g. *Kanom wuru'u*? 'What is this?'). A child answered, *Wurada* 'Turtle'. As the teacher explained parts of the story, two children were guided as to where to place the cut-out models. The teacher used English to instruct the English-speaking child to move the cut-out models. At the end, the class was asked if they liked the story. Most replied in the affirmative.

The teacher

The teacher used both Wapishana and English throughout the lesson. Such use included questioning of pupils, acknowledgement of responses, instructions for new activities, and instructions for paying attention. At times, the teacher accommodated the English-speaking child when she asked questions or commented on the pictures or what the teacher said. The teacher read the sentences and asked pupils to repeat after her. Sometimes a sentence was additionally repeated to have inattentive pupils repeat after her. For the follow-up activity, the teacher told the class that they were going to demonstrate the story with the participation of two volunteer-pupils. The teacher first demonstrated how to move the cut-out models as she explained parts of the story before asking the two volunteer-pupils to do likewise. The teacher admitted afterwards that she sensed that the children were losing attention, resulting in her switching from the "reading" part of the lesson to proceed with the demonstration of the story.

The pupils

Teacher A's class spoke mostly in Wapishana in their interaction with the teacher. Whenever, the teacher asked questions in English, the pupils responded likewise in one-word or two-word answers. Several times the English-speaking child stood to point at the pictures as she reacted to the story. One pupil in reaction to the story said, "*Odadin zamatanii wurad wanyukunuunii*" 'My daddy caught a turtle for our food.' The children also asked questions in Wapishana such as, "*Na'iam wurad*?" 'Where is the turtle?' The English-speaking child also asked a similar question in English.

Such interactions revealed that the pupils were engaged the story despite the distraction of a few pupils. Most times, the children had to hear a sentence repeatedly before they were able to repeat it after the teacher. For the follow-up activity, most pupils paid close attention. For example, when the teacher asked of the jaguar, *"Na'apam ukian*?" 'What did he say?' A pupil answered, *"Õnikan nii pugaru!"* 'I will eat you!'

Teachers B's class

The class

Teacher B's class was a year 1 class in School B. The teacher reviewed the story in the big book that was already presented in previous lessons.

She started by displaying the picture on the book cover and asking pupils to name the characters in Wapishana. After correct answers, she challenged pupils to recall the title by asking them to "read" the print above the picture. More questions in Wapishana were asked about the picture such as, *"Kanom ĩsha'apaapan wur'ru*?" 'What are they doing?' A pupil answered, *"Ĩtowa'akapan"* 'They are pulling against one each other.' The teacher repeated the correct responses aloud for the pupils.

The teacher continued asking similar questions for the subsequent picture. When it was time to "read" the sentence, the teacher asked the pupils to attempt to "read" before she read them the correct sentence. Often they could not "read" the sentence. Instead, they repeated the sentence after her. More questions were also asked about the information given in the sentence.

Similar activities were followed for each picture. When the last picture was arrived at and dealt with in like manner, the teacher concluded the activity by praising them and asking them to clap for themselves.

The teacher

The teacher used mostly Wapishana throughout the lesson. Each time a pupil responded correctly, she repeated their answers and praised them in English with either "Very good!" or "Good job!" When some pupils answered in English, she also repeated their answers and sought to have them give the Wapishana versions. On three occasions, the teacher had to turn the big book to herself to make sure she could read the sentence before reading it aloud or just skipping it to go on to the next picture. It seemed that she was unable to "sound out" some words, suggesting that the teacher was not familiar with

the written system of the Wapishana language although she knew to speak it well. Afterwards, in the interview she said that she never had the opportunity to attend any Adult Wapishana literacy classes. These classes had stopped in 2014. It seemed that because the class was a small one and the fact that the pupils were seated in a semi-circle, the teacher managed class control very well.

The pupils

Pupils seemed to enjoy the lesson, which involved whole-class activities of answering questions about the pictures and the information contained in the sentences. They also repeated the sentences after they were read by the teacher. When some pupils answered in English, they were led to give the Wapishana versions of their answers. Except for one or two cases, children were unable to recall or "read" the sentences when the teacher asked them.

Teacher C's Class

The class

The teacher had children seated on a mat on the floor while she sat in front on a chair to retell the big book story of *Baudokru nai iki ziwaru,* 'The jaguar and the porcupine'. From the beginning, the atmosphere in the school was noisy because of the other activities of the Year 2 class nearby. This caused some of the words spoken by the teacher and the pupils to be inaudible at times. The activities were also constantly interrupted by the teacher having to instruct pupils to be attentive, causing her at times to leave her seat to go directly to individual pupils to have them take their seats.

The series of activities began with questions on parts of the book, such as "What do we call this part again?" The pupils answered, "Front cover." Each time the children answered correctly, the teacher followed up with by repeating the answers of the pupils.

The next activity focused on the pictures from the beginning to the end, asking more questions about them. In one instance, the teacher asked a prediction question: "I wonder what will happen to them." After going from one picture to the next, it seemed that children were inattentive, causing the teacher to interrupt the activity to direct the pupils to sing a short action song, "Rolly Polly", which ended with everyone folding their arms. About

half of the time included the naming of parts of the book and discussing the pictures by asking questions such as, "What do you see here?"

Despite the continuing noisy atmosphere in the remainder of the lesson, the teacher returned to the first page of the book and rallied through with the "reading" of the sentences. She took care to have students repeat after her before asking them for information about the sentences read. After the last picture, the teacher closed the book and ended the story.

The teacher

The teacher used mostly English for about half of the lesson in discussing parts of the book and the pictures. When she came to the "reading" part of the activities, she spoke mainly in Wapishana, but also asked pupils to give the English versions of the animals involved in the story. The teacher was very mindful of the inattention of several children, prompting her to change the activity to an action song, which at the end demonstrated how they should fold their arms. She urged them to stay in that position so as to pay attention. She also continually used English whenever she instructed pupils to pay attention. For example, she said "Pay attention here!", "Please sit down."

The pupils

The pupils responded well to the first part of the activities, that is, naming parts of the book. When it came to the picture walk, most times, their answers were inaudible because of the noise of the nearby class and the talking and playing of some children within the class. When it was the "reading" part of the sentences, most children could not recall the sentences. So, they had to rely on hearing the sentences read by the teacher more than once before being able to repeat them. They also had to answer questions in Wapishana about the information in the sentences. Most times they gave the correct answers, which the teacher repeated aloud as an acknowledgement of their responses.

Teacher A's class

The class

The class was seated on small chairs in a semi-circle. This was another activity on the big book *Baudokoru nai'iki Ziwaru* 'The jaguar and the porcupine'.

Firstly, the teacher got children focused by asking them about their well-being, before telling them that they were going to again read the big book. The teacher proceeded with the discussion of the pictures by taking them through a "picture walk", asking them questions about the pictures. Some questions went beyond just naming or describing. For example, the teacher asked, "Why do you think the jaguar hugged his friend?" One child answered, "Because he loves him."

After discussing the pictures, the teacher told the class that they were going to read the sentences together, after which they were going to write their own sentences based on the pictures of the book.

The teacher

Using mostly Wapishana and sometimes English, the teacher first got the children's attention by asking them about their well-being and naming the day (e.g. the teacher: "*Sha'apam unao aizii? Kaiman upokodan*? "How are you today? Did you wake up all right?" The children responded: "*Ãhã*!" "Okay!") The teacher then took them on a "picture walk", after which she had them repeat the sentences after she read them. Several times, the teacher repeated one word at a time, for the children to correctly repeat after her. Children's correct responses were reinforced by the teacher repeating them. At times, the children were praised for their correct answers. At one time the pacing of her lesson was interrupted by two children who were not being attentive. In the last part of the activity, the teacher first asked the children to come up with a title for the story. They then composed their own sentences based on the other two pictures. While the teacher was writing, she took the opportunity to have children recall letters such as "B" and "z". The teacher also asked the children to repeat the sentence written in Wapishana. Due to time constraints, the teacher wrote only two sentences before bringing the activity to a close.

The pupils

The pupils were engaged throughout the lesson, though at times, some seemed inattentive. A few children extended the discussion by relating the animals to their own experiences. They also learnt the English name "porcupine", which was remembered by the English-speaking child. When it came to repeating the sentences after the teacher, the teacher had to repeat one word at a time to get them to repeat the sentence correctly. A few of the children were able to compose their own sentences based on the some of the same words used in the story. These were written on the cardboard sheet that was prominently displayed in front of the class.

B.   Pre-writing activities

Teacher A's class

Teacher A displayed a large card with <Dd> and asked what the letter was. Children could not guess. The teacher said that they would come back to the letter and displayed another letter <Nn>. A child said <Z> but the teacher said that <Z> is incorrect. Another child said the right letter. The teacher instructed the child to repeat it for the rest of the class. Teacher A then wrote the letter <N> on the large white sheet. Teacher A asked a child to trace the letter on the large white sheet. The teacher emphasized big <N> and little <n>. Another child was asked to trace the little <n>. Next, the teacher pointed to letter <Bb>. A child answered correctly. Teacher A demonstrated how the letter B is formed by tracing with her finger over the letter. Teacher A guided the child to do likewise. The same was done for letters <Ff>, <Aa>, and <Uu>. Afterwards, the teacher displayed the letter <Dd>. Children again guessed, until a child, Rafael, said the correct answer. She asked children to repeat what Rafael said. Everyone clapped for Rafael.

Comment: Although they knew most of the letters, children still could not remember the letter <Dd>. Maybe more practice on this is needed.

Teacher A focusing on the letter <Bb>

This was a whole class activity. The teacher had a large chart on which a big <B> and a small <b> were written.

The teacher used her finger to trace the big <B> and in doing so said that it was the big <B>. The small <b> was treated in like manner. Teacher said that the letter <B> started the Wapishana word *baudokoru* 'jaguar'.

She then brought their attention to the bell by ringing it and asked them to say the English word <bell>. The teacher pointed out that the word started with a <b>.

(While she taught, she asked a boy to come in front because he was playing and not paying attention.)

Teacher A then asked a parent who was present to bring the balloons, saying that she would each give the children one, once they paid attention. The teacher pointed out that the letter <b> also started the word <balloon>.

Next, the teacher demonstrated the sound of <B>. She explained that some air could be felt coming out from one's lip when the letter <B> was sounded. Teacher A asked each child to sound out the letter <B>. One child did not do the activity, so the teacher said she would come back to her. However, most of the children were able to sound the letter as the teacher.

Next, the teacher pointed to two name labels on the wall. One was <Berlinda> and the other was <Ben>. She pointed out that each name started with the letter <B>. One child, Jazlyn, went for her name label as well, but the teacher said that she was only looking at the names that started with <B>. As a last activity, the teacher sang a rhyme "B for Berlinda" and then repeated it with "B for Ben".

Comment: This seemed an engaging activity although the sounding of the letter by focusing on the lips might be hard for a few. Also, it was observed that both English and Wapishana words were dealt with in the activity. It seemed that this was so done, following the Ministry of Education's suggestion.

Teacher B focusing on the letter <Uu>

The teacher began by asking children to sing "Twinkle, twinkle little star" in English and then "Mishi, Mishi" in Wapishana.

The teacher then asked children, "What words begin with U?" The teacher asked the question in Wapishana, "Kanom words sakadina'o 'u' di'iki?"

"What is the name of the letter?"

 (Most gave the sound of the letter)

The teacher wanted the name of the letter.

The teacher then told them that the name of the letter is <u>.

She then gave then the sound of the letter.

Teacher: "Give some words that begin with <U>."

"Pugaa di'itinapa" 'Think'.

1st child: "Umbrella"

2nd child: "Bread"

3rd child: "Table"

The teacher got them to say "Under" after prompting them with "Under the table".

Teacher: "Where is my hand going?" "Up"

"What about Wapichan?" "Aonaa word nii sakadinao nii Wapichan di'iki?"

"Isn't there a word that starts the same way in Wapichan?"

"So, what is the sound of this letter? What is the name?"

Teacher C focusing on the letter <Uu>

The teacher wrote <Uu> on the chalkboard. The teacher used the terms "upper case U" and "lower case u". The teacher asked the question, "What word begins with U?" The children could not say a word that began with <Uu>. The teacher sang "Up, up, go umbrella when it starts to rain." The teacher told them, "U is the letter, u is the sound."

C.   Maths activities

Teacher A—reinforcement of shapes

The teacher called on all children to stand together around her. Several children had cut-out cardboard shapes of a circle, triangle, square, and rectangle.

The teacher pulled out a shape from the bag and asked a child what shape it was. They were asked to repeat the correct answer. This was repeated several times. She then invited those with shapes in their hands to throw the shapes in the air. She invited the children to pick them up and put them back in the bag.

Comment: This seemed an enjoyable activity for the whole class. This was a good reinforcement activity.

Teacher B—reinforcement of numerals

Numeral grid

The teacher demonstrated to the group how to match the number of seeds/beads to given numerals on a grid. The teacher demonstrated up to 3 and then challenged children to do over and complete the grid from 1 to 5. One child jumped to 11. Some children had difficulty in using the grid (1 to 5).

Reinforcement of numeral 5, 3, and 1

Teacher B placed five objects on the small table in front of the class. Teacher B guided a child to touch the objects as she counted the objects 1 to 5 in English. Teacher then showed a cardboard with the numeral 5. Teacher asked children to count in Wapishana from 1 to 5. Children counted in Wapishana together with the teacher. Children then counted in English.

Next the teacher showed a sheet of cardboard with the numeral 3. [A child who was not paying attention was brought to sit on his chair in front of the class, facing the teacher]. The teacher called on a male child, Rafael, to count the three objects and place them on the table. Rafael counted in English. The teacher then showed another card with the drawing of three fruits with the numeral 3 printed besides the drawing. Children were asked to count in Wapishana. Teacher B then told the class that they had one more numeral to do. She told a riddle in Wapishana. The children answered, "one". Teacher B placed an object on the table and asked a volunteer to come in front to count "one" as he touched the object. Teacher B asked the children to say the numeral in Wapishana. Teacher B then showed a cardboard drawing of the *etai* fruit and asked them what it was.

Comment: Here the teacher reinforced three numerals. Each numeral was dealt with in both Wapishana and English. Most of the children did the activity easily and appeared to know the numerals.

Teacher C teaching numerals 1 to 5

Children sat in a semi-circle arrangement. Teacher C sat in front and displayed a large card with drawings of two cashews and the numeral 2. She asked them in Wapishana and then in English what the numeral was. The

children gave the correct answer. They said the numeral in both English and Wapishana.

Teacher C did the same for three, four, and five. When the children could not remember the numeral five in Wapishana, Teacher C told them, and they repeated the correct answer.

Teacher C then invited them to count from 1 to 5 in English using the cards. She did the same in Wapishana. Some children first said the names, and the teacher repeated the correct answer for the rest of the class to say again. She praised them for answering correctly.

Comment: This was clearly an activity to reinforce the numerals 1 to 5. Some children still need to learn all the numerals in Wapishana.

Teacher C—reinforcement of shapes

Teacher C is sat in front of the class. Teacher C displayed a small flip chart with shapes of the triangle, rectangle, moon, and heart. As she flipped the pages, she asked pupils to name them in English.

Comment: Again, this seemed to be a lesson that reinforced shapes. Pupils answered correctly most times. They seemed to know the colours well.

D.   Other activities

Teacher A on medicinal plants

Teacher A began by saying that they would talk about medicinal plants. She asked them to stand, and they all sang "Rolly Polly". Next, she asked them to sit and pay attention.

She began by asking them in Wapishana what the name was of the grass she displayed and passed it around for them to smell. They were introduced to this part of the plant before. Afterwards, the children gave the correct answer. As they said the correct name, the teacher explained what it was used for and how it was used. The same was done for the "leaf of life", orange leaf, aloe leaf, lemon fruit, guava leaves, and jamoon bark.

At the end of the activity, teacher shared some prepared lemon grass tea with individual children. Afterwards, the teacher asked if they liked tea, and they all replied in that they did.

Comment: This was an interesting demonstration. The class was mostly attentive throughout.

Teacher B on "The farmer"

Teacher: "What is your topic for this week?

"New topic is 'Community *kanom*?'" "Community what?"

Child: "Community helper"

Teacher: "Farmer."

Teacher: "Na'ii dii farmer kaudinan?" 'Where does the farmer work?' The teacher asked more question about the farmer. Children named some plants found in the farm such as corn, *kawiam* 'pumpkin', *pa'achiiaa* 'watermelon', *didad* 'pepper'.

The teacher displayed a picture and then asked questions about it in Wapishana (e.g. *Kainaa uzakapun*? 'Do they have a farm?'), as well as in English (e.g. What are they doing?).

Teacher: Name me some tools used by the farmer.

(In Wapishana.)

Children: Samp, Sooparu, rake, Fios, baro

Teacher: What about in English?

Teacher: *Na'ap dii sooparu dakotakao English ida'an*? 'What is *sooparu* called in English?'

(They do not know the word in English.)

Teacher: Fork (pointing to the tools in the picture).

Teacher: It is a hoe. It is a spade. Who uses these?

Child: Daddy

Teacher: It is used by the farmer.

Any question from you?

Child: *Ogaru makonkan zakapa it.* 'I went to the farm?'

Teacher: I went to the farm. Name me what the farmer plants.

Child: Watermelon

The teacher gave the children activities. (Teacher B used the child's drawing or her own prepared drawing of mixed tools such as spoon, fork, spade, cutlass, hoe in the child's book). The teacher asked one group to colour only the tools used by the farmer (instruction was also in Wapishana). The teacher asked another group to draw tools used by the farmer.

In another session, two parents as resource personnel gave oral presentations and demonstrated how to use traditional implements of hunting and fishing. Some of these traditional implements were given to the school and added to the display of an array of attractive Wapishana artefacts. Each school had its own corner of Wapishana artefacts. It is noteworthy that the teaching of cultural aspects of the Wapishana coincided with the day of the week children are given the option to wear traditional attire. Every Friday, children can wear traditional attire, but it was observed that not all children did so.

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Curriculum Vitae

Adrian Gomes was born in Maruranau, South Rupununi, Guyana in 1963. He hails from the Wapishana Indigenous community. After becoming a trained schoolteacher, he taught in the primary school in his village for ten years and later at the only secondary school in his district for another ten years. He obtained a Bachelor of Education in primary education from the University of Guyana in 1994 and a Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from the University of Leeds in 2003.

He resigned from teaching in 2010 to spearhead a community-based organization, *Wapichan Wadauniina'o Ati'o* (WWA: lit. 'Wapishana for Our Descendants'), which promoted the reading and writing of Wapishana language in the Wapishana villages. He pursued postgraduate training in Community-based Literacy for Adults in 2009 and took foundational courses in linguistics in 2014, both at the University of North Dakota. He also worked with linguistic students during Institute for Field Linguistics and Language Documentation in 2010 at the University of Oregon. These experiences and networks led him to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy in Bilingual Education at the Centre for Indigenous America Studies, at Leiden University.

Introduction of a Wapishana–English

Bilingual Education Programme:

An Evaluation of the Early Stages

Summary

A Wapishana–English bilingual education programme that has been advocated for by the Wapishana community and approved by the Ministry of Education is currently piloted in three nursery schools in Guyana, beginning September 2018. Prominent among the features of the *Quality Bilingual Education Programme for Wapichan Children* is the use of their native language and incorporation of some aspects of their culture. As a result, the programme seemed to have progressed satisfactorily, as evidenced by the increased use of the Wapishana language by the children and their growing interest in and interaction with culturally relevant materials.

This dissertation evaluates the early stages of the programme. The evaluation strives to determine what practices promote biliterate, bilingual, intercultural, and academically oriented education for bilingual children, with an eye to improving existing practices in the above-mentioned programme. Although the children's native language together with their cultural context is incorporated into the curriculum, the initial teaching of literacy employed the simultaneous use of Wapishana and English as languages of instruction. However, given the fact that the first (and therefore stronger) language of the children is Wapishana, a sequential rather than a simultaneous approach should be followed, whereby education should first immerse the students in their mother tongue and only later complement it with English. Another reason for the sequential approach is that the teaching of oral English (their second language) should be treated as a separate component in the stages of the programme. The study also proposes a five-part instructional approach that is likely to accelerate second language learners' academic development. Finally, this study offers recommendations to improve existing practices so that the Wapishana–English Bilingual Education Programme is meaningfully into the mainstream curriculum.