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Initial Literacy Teaching of Indigenous Children: Designing Pedagogy for Urban Schools

Mayara Priscila Reis da Costa

Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology, Amapá, Brazil & University of Minho, Portugal

Íris Susana Pires Pereira

University of Minho, Portugal

Silvia Lopes da Silva Macedo

French Guiana University, French Guiana

ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a pedagogical design for the language and literacy learning of indigenous children within mainstream non-indigenous schools in the municipality of Oiapoque, located in the Federal State of Amapá, Brazil. It begins by describing the linguistic and cultural diversity that characterizes the area followed by the outline of the key tenets underpinning the educational policy that frames language and initial literacy education in indigenous communities. The chapter then problematizes the case of migrant indigenous children in urban schools, where there is no specific legal protection for their linguistic and literacy education. In response to this shortcoming, we present a culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy based on the Linguistically Appropriate Practice method, aimed at guiding teachers to educate these children to become bilingual and proud of their cultural heritage. The design is innovative in the context of its application in Brazil and of potential relevance for similar contexts worldwide.

Keywords: Mother Tongue, Second Language, Heritage Language, Language of Schooling, Multilingualism, Dynamic Bilingualism, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP), Multimodal Communication, Linguistically Appropriate Practice (LAP).

INTRODUCTION

As it is the case in several contexts worldwide, Brazilian Amazonia is the home of thousands of indigenous children. The literacy education of such children has been the subject of intense theoretical and practical elaborations in different countries. A central premise in these advances has certainly been Article 30 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), which states that a child “who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language” (p. 21). As it is the case in several contexts in our super-diverse world (Vertovec, 2010), rising numbers of indigenous children have moved into urban places near the Brazilian Amazonia and enter mainstream classrooms. However, the

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initial literacy learning among these indigenous children has been the focus of much less attention. In this chapter, we discuss this situation and put forward a pedagogical design for those teachers who experience multiculturalism and language diversity due to the presence of indigenous children in their urban classrooms.

The chapter is organized as follows. It begins by discussing key issues in current understanding of literacy education of indigenous children, namely **multilingualism**, cultural diversity, identity, culturally sustaining, and multimodal pedagogy. We illustrate these by reference to Brazilian indigenous communities, discussing some dimensions of the educational policy that frame their present literacy education. The chapter then problematizes the case of indigenous children who enter mainstream schools, where there is no specific legal protection for their linguistic and literacy education. In response to this shortcoming, the chapter presents a culturally sustaining and multimodal pedagogy based on the **Linguistically Appropriate Practice** approach (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012, 2019), aimed at guiding teachers to educate (urban) indigenous children to become bilingual and proud of their cultural heritage.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Language(s), cultural identities, and pedagogy stand out as cornerstone themes in the scholarship of literacy education for indigenous children. In our opinion, these are also inescapable dimensions when envisioning the education of the indigenous children who move to urban, mainstream classrooms. In the sections below, we discuss these themes in order to frame the presentation of the design for a culturally sustaining and multimodal literacy pedagogy for indigenous children in non-indigenous schools.

Language and Cultural Identity in Indigenous Children's Literacy Learning

Oral languages are key to any discussion of print literacy learning. The most fundamental reason for this is that alphabetic written systems are visual symbols of the phonemes of oral languages (Morais, 1996). The value of this premise is unquestionable in the understanding of the literacy learning of indigenous children, although it is clearly insufficient for two major reasons. One is the linguistic and cultural diversity that singularizes these literacy learners; the other is the fact that oral language is but one among the literate semiotic repertoires that are used in indigenous communities.

Language is a human endowment. Every human society makes use of at least a *mother tongue* (MT/L1), that is, a grammar system by which children have fulfilled their biological base for linguistic learning (Chomsky, 1965). In the process of intuitively reconstructing in their minds the language of the community to which they belong, other speakers in their community are scaffolders, providing children the necessary language (inter)action (Bruner, 1983). Many children acquire a *second* (or additional) *language(s)* (SL/L2) after the beginning of their MT acquisition, thus becoming bi/multilingual (Cummins, 1979, 1983; García, 2014). Since increasing numbers of children grow up in homes where different languages are used or move into multilingual social contexts, bi/multilingual children are becoming the norm (García, 2014). Yet, besides MT and L2, a number of other important notions are required to understand the complex linguistic reality of indigenous children. These concepts include *heritage language* (HL), that is, "the community ethnocultural language which is not necessarily the child's first-learned language (or even used in the home)" (Cummins, 1983, p. 7); *pidgin*, that is, a shared vocabulary spontaneously emerging from the confluence of different vocabularies of co-present languages (Bickerton, 2009); *lingua franca* (LF), which designates any lingual medium of communication between people of different mother tongues (Samarin, 1987), and the *official language* (OL) of the country (McArthur, 1998), which often is also labeled the *language of schooling*.

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Culture is another key dimension relevant to discussing the literacy education of indigenous children. The constructivist tradition has long established the role of individual knowledge and experiences in the construction of any learning (Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1972). When discussing literacy education of indigenous children, *cultural identity* is a fundamental idea, bringing concepts such as *difference* and *diversity* into the discussion. For Hall (2006), *cultural identity* is formed and transformed by social actors within social communities. Silva (2000) interestingly defines *identity* as “that which one is” (p. 74), while defining *difference* as “that which one is not, that which the other is” (p. 74), both of which are connected with linguistic and cultural representations as well as power relations. In the same line of thinking, Pardo (1996) argues that to respect and admit difference is “to allow the other to be what I am not, to allow the other to be that self that cannot be me, that I myself cannot be, that self cannot be another I” (p. 154, our translation). From this point of view, to be indigenous is to identify with a certain ethnic group with linguistic, social, historic, cultural, economic, political, and epistemic attributes that are different from the prevailing national identity. A common trait uniting indigenous peoples around the world seems to be the cultural and linguistic prejudice they may suffer from the dominant groups. By having been considered “*savage* [emphasis added] and of no value in the modern world” (Reyhner, 2009, p. 6), indigenous people have been highly vulnerable to poverty, school failure, and social exclusion (Singh & Reyhner, 2013; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2003) and even to identity abnegation (Molina Cruz, 2000).

Brazilian Amazonia: A Melting Pot of Languages and Cultural Identities

We use the Brazilian Amazonia to illustrate the points introduced so far. According to Indian National Foundation/FUNAI (<http://www.funai.gov.br/index.php/indios-no-brasil/quem-sao>, retrieved from 23 de abril de 2019), in 2010, there were 817,963 self-declared indigenous people in Brazil distributed across 305 ethnic groups, speaking 274 indigenous MT languages. Brazilian Amazonia is therefore a diverse multilingual society (Council of Europe, 2001). This is what occurs in the city of Oiapoque, located on the border with French Guiana in the Northeastern Brazil, where there are four ethnic groups, namely Karipuna do Amapá, Galibi-Marworno, Palikur and Galibi Kali'nã, and four different indigenous languages. Table 1 details this information, specifying the original languages that they derive from.

Table 1. Ethnic groups in Oiapoque and their respective indigenous languages.

Ethnic Group	Indigenous Language	Linguistic Family
Karipuna do Amapá	Kheuól, variety Karipuna	Creole
Galibi-Marworno (Galibi do Uaçá)	Kheuól variety Galibi-Marworno	Creole
Palikur	Palikur	Arawak
Galibi Kali'nã (Galibi do Oiapoque)	Galibi Kali'nã	Karib

Note. Data adapted from Santos (2018)

As can be inferred from the table, indigenous children's Oiapoque speak diverse MTs, including indigenous languages and Brazilian Portuguese, the country's official language. Besides, children may also learn Brazilian Portuguese and an indigenous language as L2. In these ethnic groups, both Kheuól varieties and Brazilian Portuguese are often used as lingua franca (Anonby, 2007). In addition, cases can be found in which monolingual communities use their HL as a cultural sign of power. Despite sharing the same geography, each ethnic group has its own particular history and cultural identity (Capiberibe, 2009; Tassinari, 2001, 2003; Vidal, 2007), which now includes an adaptation of the alphabetic written system (Santos, 2018). It is therefore indisputable that indigenous children bring with them a very complex linguistic potential when they begin their literacy learning at school, being also influenced by their own

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specific cultural identity, which is quite distinct from non-indigenous Brazilian people (Gomes, 2012).

Literacy Pedagogy for Indigenous Children: Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Multiliteracy

Contexts of difference such as those exemplified by indigenous peoples demand from schools an *active production of identity and difference* (Silva, 2000), that is, an education for the acknowledgement of, respect for, and enactment of social difference. As we see it, two general pedagogical trends have answered to this call, namely **culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP)** and multiliteracies.

Being situated in the *resource pedagogies*, developed either as culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995) or culturally responsive (Gay, 2002; Samuels, 2018; Villegas & Lucas, 2014; Weschenfelder, 2019), culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) acknowledges the importance of students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and experiences "as resources to honor, explore and extend" (Paris, 2012, p. 94) in all aspects of school learning (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014). Kozlowski (2019) states that selecting teaching approaches that are relevant or responsive to students' cultural backgrounds "allows educators to discontinue prejudicial or inappropriate practices in the classroom and correct the inadequacies that occur with diverse students in schools" (p. 42). By assuming these tenets, CSP aims to promote engagement, enrichment, and achievement of every student by welcoming diversity, nurturing students' cultural strengths, and affirming their lived experiences as a way of promoting their academic learning and social inclusion. Yet, CSP moves the resource theory beyond by acknowledging the need for

our pedagogies [to] be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people – it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence (Paris, 2012, p. 95).

The goal of CSP is therefore to "perpetuate and foster – to sustain – linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (Paris, 2012, p. 95). Internationally, there have been well known instances of pedagogies developed in indigenous communities that align with these tenets. This is, for instance, the case in New Zealand, where indigenous MTs and HLs are scaffolded in school contexts as platforms for multilingual learning. Franken, May, and McCornish (2005) highlight the support that is provided to New Zealand teachers and emphasize the benefits such as tolerance, increased self-esteem, and identity affirmation among students. In Latin America, there have also been successful culturally sustaining initiatives targeting indigenous literacy learning in Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru (López & Hanemann, 2009). As reported in López and Hanemann (2009), cultural valuation and bi/multilingualism have been developed among indigenous populations as an answer to rising school dropout rates, which were attributed to difficulties in learning official schooling languages.

Current pedagogical discussions of initial literacy pedagogy in indigenous contexts are also beginning to be informed by key tenets coming from the theory of multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; New London Group, 1996). Multiliteracies developed in the context of The New Literacy Studies, which came up *against* the exclusive focus on literacy and literacy learning as a psychological endeavor and *for* a sociocultural understanding and education of literacies as a set of situated communication practices (Gee, 2015). The New London Group further developed these ideas by arguing that literacies are indeed specialized multimodal

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meaning making practices (New London Group, 1996). A central assumption sustaining the focus put on multimodality is that modes are culturally shaped and socially available resources of meaning representation for members of human communities that go well beyond the written mode of verbal language; another is the central role played by such multiple modes in digital communication (Kress, 2010). Accordingly, the theory of multiliteracies defends the need of a new literacy pedagogy, one which puts **multimodal communication** at the center of the curriculum (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

Although not developed with early childhood education in mind, multiliteracies has been influencing the conceptualization, research, and practice regarding initial literacy learning, thus elucidating the second factor that influences initial literacy learning. Indeed, there is a growing demand for new discussions of central concepts to autonomous literacy models, such as emergent literacy (Clay, 1998; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982). Early childhood education has to expand children's meaning making repertoires and practices through the use of visual, spatial, and aural modes and acknowledge children's emergent multimodal meaning making capacity (Flewitt, 2013; Lotherington, 2017, 2019; Pereira, Silva, Borges, & Araújo, 2019; Yelland, Lee, O'Rourke, & Harrison, 2008).

Multiliteracies also has an important impact upon theory and research of indigenous literacy learning. López-Gopar (2007) argues that exclusive educational focus on alphabetic literacy has alienated indigenous peoples in Mexico and led to increased school drop-out rates among indigenous students. He argues for the potentially democratizing role of acknowledging indigenous people as multiliterate and their children's specialized, multimodal funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) in literacy education. More recently, Mills and Doley (2019) report research that shows how indigenous children are socialized in multimodal representation, communication, and learning processes in Australia, and they also defend the enhancement of literacy learning at school by acknowledging children's communicative funds of knowledge. In Brazil, Menezes de Souza (2003) also calls attention to the forms of representation of indigenous knowledge on the basis of his analysis of multimodal texts from an indigenous community in Amazonia. His research revealed that indigenous people gave drawings a differentiated and very particular status according to the support (or media) on which they were made: they meant a legitimation of indigenous culture when made in fabrics, body and handicrafts; and, if otherwise done on paper, they were taken as illustrations of verbal messages.

On the whole, multiliteracies enhances our understanding of indigenous cultural heritage as including culturally specific modes of communication, therefore expanding the conceptualization of initial literacy education of indigenous children as involving the enactment of linguistically sustaining multimodal pedagogy (Mills & Doley, 2019).

Culturally Sustaining/Intercultural Literacy Pedagogy in Brazilian Policy for Indigenous Communitiesⁱ

The political circumstances in Brazil in the last decades of the 20th century (Freire, 2011) favored the emergence of a *popular pedagogy*, conceived as “an education of the people, by the people, for the people and with the people, against the dominant education that was of the elite, by the elite, for the people but against the people” (Saviani, 2013, p. 415, our translation). The specific concern for the education of indigenous people gained prominence in this context of explicit dismissal of the authoritarian paternalism of the (then) political framework (Grupioni, 2001, 2008; Macedo, 2006), leading to the proclamation, in 1988, of *Indigenous school education* in the *Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil* (Government of Brazil, 2013). In paragraph 2, Article 210, one can read that “regular elementary education shall be

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given in the Portuguese language and Indian communities shall also be ensured the use of their native tongues and their own learning methods” (p. 114). This right was reinforced through the statement, found in Articles 78 and 79 of the *Basis for national education* (Government of Brazil, 1996), that it is the duty of the State to offer bilingual and intercultural school education to the indigenous peoples in order to recover memories and cultures; to reaffirm ethnic identities; to uphold their languages and cultures; and to guarantee to indigenous peoples access to scientific and technical knowledge of the national and other indigenous and non-indigenous societies. The same law also determines the provision of specialized teacher training, clearly defined curricula, and specific pedagogic materials.

This legal guarantee, which targets schools located in indigenous villages, was subsequently incorporated in the *National curriculum standard for indigenous schools* (Ministry of Education & Sport, 1998). This key document establishes that an indigenous school is *communitarian* (involving the active participation of the indigenous community in administration and pedagogy); *intercultural* (promoting respect towards cultural and linguistic diversity of other cultures); *bilingual/multilingual* (stimulating the use of more than one language, including among those peoples who have Portuguese as MT); and *specific and differentiated* (planned according to the particularities of the community it serves) (Grupioni, 2001).

One of the most significant aspects of THE *National curriculum standard for indigenous schools* (Ministry of Education & Sport, 1998) is how it frames the literacy education of indigenous children. The *National curriculum standard for indigenous schools* (Ministry of Education & Sport, 1998) determines that indigenous schools should actively reinforce or revitalize indigenous languages by:

- Adopting the indigenous language as the language of schooling whether orally or in written modes so that teachers use it to teach and discuss all subjects, thus creating communicative conditions for students to become linguistically competent;
- Delivering literacy instruction in the (most representative) indigenous MT;
- Teaching the indigenous language as L2 in cases where children are monolingual in Portuguese.

On the whole, the *National curriculum standard for indigenous schools* (Ministry of Education & Sport, 1998) thus provides the framework for a culturally sustaining learning process in indigenous schools. This legal framework was enacted by the *Fundamental Curriculum of the Indigenous schools in Oiapoque* (Government of Brazil, 2003), which defines that in the first period of schooling – including the optional early childhood education (beginning at the age of 4 or 5 at families’ request) and the first year of formal learning – literacy learning takes place in MT (indigenous language or Portuguese), with literacy learning in L2 (indigenous language or Portuguese) being introduced in subsequent years. A general communicative approach (Richards, 2006) is advocated as children are expected to develop their oral bilingual competences through active communication before learning to write. In addition, raising language awareness, and specifically, comparative phonemic language awareness (see Kkese in this volume), is advised in the early stages of L2 learning. After completing this first cycle of education, children are expected to have bilingual and biliterate linguistic competence allowing them to respond to the demands of their community’s daily life.

Yet, despite being a progressive educational policy developed with the aim of enabling bilingual literacy education rooted in indigenous cultures, languages, and identities (Guedes, 2005), the *National curriculum standard for indigenous schools* (Ministry of Education & Sport, 1998) did not include a focus on multiliteracies and multimodality when it was originally

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conceived. On the other hand, body language, artistic languages, and mathematical languages are acknowledged in the *National curriculum standard for indigenous schools* (Ministry of Education & Sport, 1998), but they are discussed separately and not acknowledged as part of indigenous peoples' specialized literacies. It is evident then, that a restrictive assumption of literacy as strictly related to the written code underpins the pedagogical orientations regarding initial literacy learning in indigenous education in Brazil.

Indigenous Children in Mainstream Classrooms

The substantive legal stipulations regarding the education of indigenous children referred to above do not apply when children move from indigenous villages with their parents and enter regular non-indigenous education in mainstream urban classrooms. As already stated, the culturally sustaining educational policy that has been described exclusively targets the education given in indigenous villages and communities in Brazil. There are no specific curriculum guidelines targeting the education of these children, and urban teachers

do not feel prepared to dialogue with difference and to develop the necessary pluralist, humanist and ethnic relationships for a coherent and proficient work. The state does not provide them with courses or training specifically targeting ethnic diversity in the classroom (Both, 2006, p. 83, our translation).

The recent past in Brazil has taught us to expect that, in circumstances such as those experienced in urban schools, teachers may aim to assimilate children into mainstream discourse and culture (Kozłowski, 2019). Lacking awareness or training, they may inadvertently develop and apply assimilationist ideas like those that prevailed in the past (Ministry of Education & Sport, 1998), considering indigenous people to be *all alike*, thus devaluing their unique sociocultural and linguistic diversity; seeing them as coming *from the past* but possessing *no history*, thus ignoring their heritage of long and painful struggles for human rights and against alienation (Candau, 2012; Freire, 2011); considering them to be *primitive* and *uncivilized*, thus excluding them from the future of Brazil's people; and as having no right of access to both information and communication technologies as well as other sociocultural capitalist benefits on account of being *acculturated*. Alternatively, teachers' practice may simply be "oriented by good will and intuition, not always in agreement with pluralism" (Both, 2006, p. 83, our translation). It is therefore imperative that teachers develop the necessary professional knowledge to be able to commit to CSP, thus actively producing linguistic and cultural diversity (Silva, 2000) with indigenous students who move into urban contexts, a need that becomes especially evident if one considers these children as showing a post-modern identity (Hall, 2006), that is, as "having no fixed, essential or permanent identity" (Hall, 2006, p. 12). In contrast with those learners who remain and are educated in the indigenous communities and develop a unified coherent self, those who move out become different, developing specific educational needs configured by the reconciliation of a diverse indigenous cultural identity and language competence within the culture of academic success and urban social integration. The next section introduces a pedagogical design to help teachers to navigate their professional needs regarding the initial stages of literacy education of these children in mainstream classrooms.

A Design for a Culturally Sustaining and Multimodal Pedagogy for Indigenous Children in Non-Indigenous Schools

The pedagogical design articulates the central tenets of the linguistically and culturally sustaining principles of literacy education of indigenous children in mainstream classrooms. The approach is based on the method called Linguistically Appropriate Practice (LAP) (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012, 2019). LAP is defined as an inclusive approach to working with

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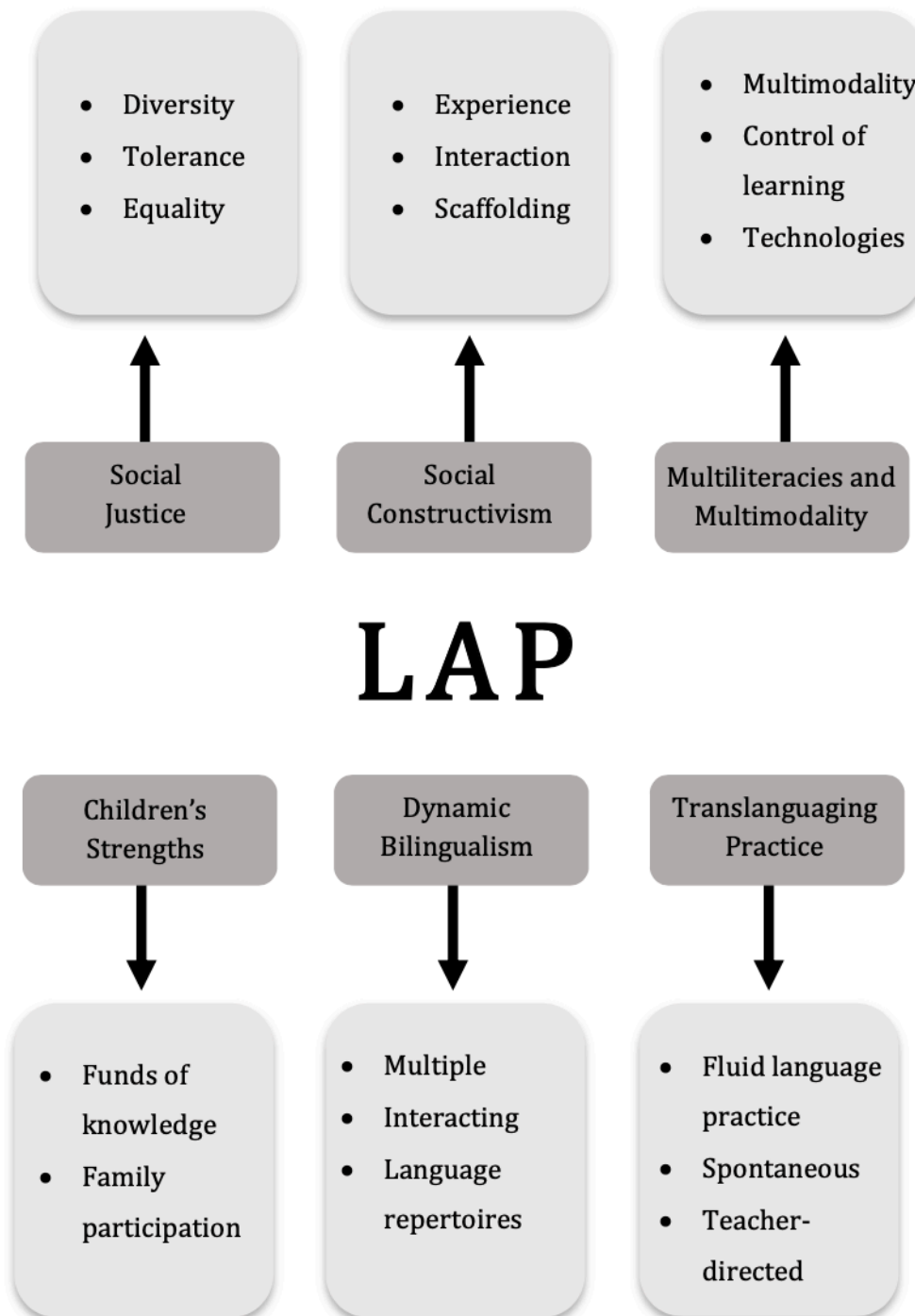
young children of minority languages, which assumes that children “have two language environments, the home and the classroom. As a result, they have dual language and literacy needs” (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012, p. 51). Therefore, one of LAP’s key tenets is acknowledgment of the teacher’s need to support development of both the language and literacy knowledge that children gain from home and the linguistic and literacy competencies they are expected to learn at school. As such, we take LAP is an accomplished enactment of a CSP for language and literacy learning in mainstream classrooms, its major singularity being its specific focus on early childhood education. Although LAP was not developed for indigenous learners, we believe that it holds a strong potential to help urban teachers develop the necessary pedagogical knowledge to teach their indigenous students in the Brazilian Amazonia and similar contextsⁱⁱ. The arguments sustaining our point will be made clear below.

Key Tenets (or Preparatory Understanding of LAP)

As Chumak-Horbatsch (2019) explains, LAP is underpinned by fundamental ideas arising from current theories concerning culturally relevant/responsive pedagogies, bilingualism and multiliteracies, and early childhood education (cf. Figure 1). We argue that it is crucial for teachers to first become acquainted with these ideas before LAP’s pedagogical design is presented and developed. The key ideas behind the preparatory understanding of LAP are as follows (adapted from Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012, 2019):

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Figure 1. LAP values for teachers, adapted from Chumak-Horbatsch (2012, 2019).



1. Social justice: LAP teachers enact social justice by promoting equal opportunities, scaffolding children's learning, welcoming their knowledge, developing language awareness, appraising diversity, and stimulating tolerance. It is our conviction that, in

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the context of Brazilian Amazonia, this discussion might be best achieved by introducing teachers to the pedagogical principles and aims that are established in the *National curriculum standard for indigenous schools* (Ministry of Education & Sport, 1998) for indigenous school education.

2. Social constructivism: The idea that children construct their knowledge upon experience (Piaget, 1972) with more capable others (Bruner, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978) is essential in LAP. These are fundamental tenets when thinking about the language and literacy skills of indigenous children, which are learned through interaction and by active participation in playful and motivating literacy events at any time and place. For this learning experience to be fully enriching, teachers are expected to actively scaffold children's learning by planning relevant, challenging, and involving learning moments and by providing necessary constructive feedback.
3. Multiliteracies and multimodality: LAP also takes into close consideration recent developments in early childhood education which acknowledge the inherent potential in the use of multimodality in literacy learning (Kress, 1997; Malaguzzi, 1998) as also supported by digital technologies (Lotherington, 2019). As Chumak-Horbatsch (2019) puts it, "this rich and engaging approach to literacy allows children to take control of their learning and express their perspectives in their own ways" (p. 13). As initially discussed in this chapter, advocating that multimodality, manipulatives, and digital supports be used by children in their literacy learning ensures an added relevance and meaning among indigenous learners.
4. Children's strengths: LAP is openly based upon children's linguistic and literacy knowledge. In LAP, families play an essential role in assisting teachers in developing a sociolinguistic mapping of children's competences. This will be key in pedagogical planning and action for learning that which is new, as it needs to be situated in known languages and cultures. Indigenous children's funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) are therefore expected to sustain their learning as well.
5. **Dynamic bilingualism:** Bilingual children possess multiple and interacting language repertoires, which they spontaneously enact as they adjust to multilingual contexts of communication (Cummings, 2007, 2019; García, 2014). Following Chumak-Horbatsch (2012), we also assume that there must be room for bilingual communication in the urban classrooms that welcome indigenous children, acknowledging that it is necessary for teachers to understand key research-based principles underpinning the active promotion of bilingualism from early stages in educational settings, namely:
 - **Second language** learning is not a simple soaking-up process; rather, it demands meaningful, supportive, and stimulating language practice. We believe that it is important that teachers understand for the role of emotional belonging in dual language learning among their indigenous children;
 - Young children learn their second language in many different ways due to non-linguistic individual factors (such as age, motivation, and learning styles) and external or circumstantial factors (such as the level of exposure to the new language, adults' attitudes, and extent of linguistic similarities). This means that the learning of a second language that is targeted at urban schools is differently felt and thought and that teachers need to be aware of this;
 - Learning a new language involves acquiring skills on two levels: social (which is generally acquired within the first two years of exposition) and academic (which might need from 5 up to 7 years of exposure);
 - When properly fostered, the two languages of a bilingual interact and actively contribute for communication and learning;

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- The home language affects children's personal, social, linguistic, and cognitive development, meaning that children with a strong MT competence may end up developing a strong L2 at school; and
 - There are cognitive and language processing advantages to bilingualism, especially regarding flexibility in thinking, working memory, and concentration.
6. Translanguaging practice: Translanguaging is an essential learning practice for bi/multilingual learners (e.g., García & Wei, 2014). As Chumak-Horbatsch (2012) explains:

as they translanguage, bilinguals make use of multiple communicative possibilities, practices, and choices. They use their languages flexibly, shifting, mixing, and blending linguistic features. They go back and forth from one language to the other, combining elements from each language to convey their language and social skills and their cultural knowledge and understanding (p. 56).

LAP explicitly adopts translanguaging as a new means of responding pedagogically to children's linguistic demands, which can be adapted to different pedagogical contexts and be actively promoted by teachers who do not share their students' languages. As Chumak-Horbatsch (2019) acknowledges, such practice is necessary so that teachers "build on, extend and sustain the language and literacy practices of all children, help them engage with the curriculum and develop new and meaningful understandings" (p. 14), which is the case when working with multilingual and multicultural indigenous children in urban schools.

CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

Having discussed and understood the fundamental tenets underpinning LAP, it is essential that teachers are helped to explore how they can implement LAP to enact a culturally sustaining and multimodal initial literacy education of indigenous children in mainstream classrooms.

Structure

LAP is divided into three parts, namely: 1. Background 2. Setting the stage for LAP; and 3. LAP activities: Themes and sample activities (Chumak-Horbatsch 2019, p. 08). We offer some practical tips when describing each of these in turn.

Background

As a qualitative pedagogical tool, LAP requires teachers to begin preparing their pedagogical work by formulating a *sociolinguistic profile*, or a precise preview based on the children's language portrait (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012, p. 21) and their bilingual potential in order to provide indicators for LAP to be established as an inclusive literacy methodology. For this purpose, it is essential that teachers devise an adequate data collection tool (e.g., see Figure 2 for an adapted sample for the Brazilian context) and that they know how to interpret the data using their own sociolinguistic knowledge of the multilingual and multicultural indigenous region, most notably regarding the ethnic groups to which the indigenous children in the classroom belong. This data helps teachers recognize the children's bilingual potential which might not be otherwise evident. In cases where families or caregivers do not understand the or are not literate in the official language, multilingual interpreters should be invited to assist. Teachers can use the data to build a chart of the languages that are spoken in the classroom. Children should be directly involved in the process, which is a rich, situated practice to build important curricular knowledge,

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e.g., numbers. The profile can be exhibited in the *Language Centre* in the classroom (see Teaching Tip below).

Figure 2. Sociolinguistic data collection tool, adapted from Chumak-Horbatsch (2012).

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Student Sociolinguistic Profile

Dear Parents,

You are invited to share important information about the languages that your child speaks at home and in your original community, e.g., when you visit. The aim of the questionnaire is to collect data that will help the teacher to develop activities in class that actively involve all languages that are spoken by the children. All the information will be kept confidential.

About your child and you

1. Child's name: _____
2. Child's birthdate: _____
3. Which language does your child speak at home?

 Portuguese only.
 Indigenous Language only. Which? _____

 Portuguese and Indigenous Language. Which? _____
 Portuguese and other Language. Which? _____

 Indigenous Language and other Language. Which? _____
 Other Language. Which? _____
4. Which language does the child's mother speak at home?

5. Which language does the child's father speak at home?

6. Which written language(s) is/are present at home?

7. Which written language(s) is/are present in your community?

About your child and your community

8. Which language(s) does your child speak when you visit your community?

9. When you are in _____ (enter the community's location), does your child communicate with some relative or friend from your community?
If yes, how and in which language?

About your child and school

10. In your opinion, what challenges will your child face in a monolingual Portuguese classroom?

Thank you!

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Setting the stage for LAP

LAP provides a description of how early childhood teachers can physically prepare their classrooms to carry out the method (see Teaching Tip below), especially concerning what actions to be taken prior to its inception, specifically, by helping teachers to:

- Promote inclusion, justice, acceptance, tolerance, and linguistic diversity;
- Understand how they can promote bilingualism even if they themselves are monolingual;
- Enact a linguistic policy in the classroom by negotiating rules and expectations that orient the language behavior of both children and teachers;
- Develop school-family communication, for instance by constructing mother tongue visual representations in order to help every child in the classroom to become aware of its linguistic diversity;
- Make use of information about children’s linguistic and literacy practices to plan language and literacy pedagogy;
- Create the *Language Center* (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012) in the classroom in order to further empower the mother tongues of indigenous children, which are thus present as additional languages of schooling; and
- Plan the physical configuration of the room, stimulating the use of multimodal supports, including photos, drawing exhibitions, drama tools, books, music, and so on.

When preparing the stage for LAP, teachers are advised to conduct some research about the cultures of the children and their languages. Also, teachers must be aware of key assumptions regarding translanguaging practice so that encourage children to use their own MTs during the activities.

LAP activities: Themes and sample activities

Three major questions frame these activities, namely “Who am I?”, “Who are you?” and “Who are we?” (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012, p. 100) and themes are intentionally suggested by the author to support the children in the classroom in building and defining personal and collective identities by answering these questions. In the Teaching Tip below, we offer some examples of activities that have been developed to address some of these major questions.

Teaching Tip

Ms. Ana is a teacher in an early childhood program in Brazilian Amazonia. Multilingualism and multiculturalism figure among her learning priorities, and she decided to provide a fundamental physical scaffold for the construction of such learning through a *Language Center* in her classroom. She took the following steps.

- First, Ms. Ana designated an area where children’s work could be displayed – a wall in the classroom above a table designated for the children to work on projects that incorporated their identities.
- She introduced the space to the children and explained its role, assuring them that they would be welcome to use it during their free time as well as during classroom work times. She explained that the center was for specific projects, such as reading books in different languages, exploring maps of regions throughout the country, writing stories in multiple languages, and exploring other multimodal and multilingual resources.

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- Finally, Ms. Ana invited the children to name the language center and together they created a multimodal sign to post. The sign reads, *Our Language Center*.

Ms. Ana has developed several activities within the language center. The following two examples show how she involved parents through multimodal projects that celebrate the language diversity among class members.

Class Language Tree

To launch the center, Ms. Ana started with an activity to develop a collective *Language Tree*. Together, the children and Ms. Ana, with the help of parents, created a large cardboard tree to display on a wall near the entrance to the classroom. They made white leaves for the tree and on each leaf, the children wrote greetings in their MTs. Visitors to the classroom, as well as other students and teachers at the school saw this celebration of the languages when they came in, which raised all students' sociolinguistic awareness about their own identities.

Multimodal Story Time

Ms. Ana began by inviting families to come to the classroom and share important stories from their cultures. Sometimes she invited one family at a time and on other occasions, she invited the families of all children to learn from one another. Prior to each story time event, Ms. Ana found out about the story from the parents so that she could prepare students through activities that activate background knowledge. Ms. Ana asked the families to tell the stories the way they would in a non-formal education setting and she encouraged them to utilize the tools, accessories, sounds, songs, and dances just as they would in their communities. She always got permission from the parents to take photos during story time and while everyone was engaged in the activities.

On some occasions, Ms. Ana scaffolded children to recreate the oral indigenous stories in visual modes, asking parents to write the stories in their MTs. Drama representations of such stories were also prepared with the help of the parents and digitally recorded (Lotherington, 2019). Invariably, Ms. Ana thanked the parents for their participation, letting them know how important their involvement was in promoting a wider appreciation and use of the various linguistic and cultural strengths the children bring to class. Ms. Ana always built on this story time by having students share their opinions about contents and the way stories were told. The students then worked together to create or select photos that best reflected the story and the lessons they learned from the shared narrative experience.

Celebrating Special Days

The Language Center was used to celebrate the International Mother Tongue Day (21st of February) and the World Environment Day (5th of June). In each case, the whole group was involved in collaborative project work and collective, multimodal displays and discussions.

Sharing Books with Children

Picture books, whether indigenous or not, were available in the Language Center for children to use. Children can read the books individually or in pairs during their quiet activity time each week. When reading books to the whole class, Ms. Ana invites indigenous children to use MT words when referring to key ideas in the story or to translate them for their classmates.

So, what did Ms. Ana accomplish by engaging her students in the development of the Language Center? Besides providing a space for multilingual and multimodal (inter)action (speak, listen, write, read, question, paint, sing, construct, etc.), “where languages are

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explored, discovered, compared and shared” (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2019, p. 8), the Language Center became the stage for multimodal story comprehension and production and for active family participation. By developing this space, Ms. Ana created relevant occasions for the indigenous children to translanguage as well as for the whole class to develop their sociolinguistic and cultural awareness. The Language Center was very important for Ms. Ana to build her culturally sustaining and multimodal pedagogy throughout the school year.

Practical Challenges

In her most recent version of LAP, Chumak-Horbatsch (2019) calls attention to four major practical challenges reported by teachers who have implemented the approach. The first is involvement between monolingual and bilingual children. In order to circumvent this challenge, teachers need to ensure that the language of schooling is used to promote collaborative and self-selected working groups. Besides, they can involve all children in school events that raise awareness of relevant indigenous languages and cultures. The second challenge is lack of interest in using the MT/ HL at school. It is the teacher’s role to scaffold bilinguals to use of their MT and encourage monolingual children to learn words from the languages spoken by other students. Special activities such as vocabulary games might be designed to involve children. The third challenge is the presence of a single bilingual student in the classroom. In this case, teachers may investigate the presence of other students in the school or in other schools in the community and invite them in. Another possibility is the establishment of online networks with indigenous children from indigenous communities. In no event should single indigenous children be left isolated and alone among their classmates. Finally, the fourth challenge that was identified concerns partnerships with parents. Parents, in particular mothers from certain ethnic groups, may be reluctant to be involved with the school. Teachers need to patiently explain and encourage parents’ active participation in the development of their children’s sense of belonging and appreciation for school and the wider community, as well as to implement activities that encourage family involvement.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have looked into literacy education of indigenous children who leave their communities and begin their educational journey in mainstream, urban schools. In order to frame our discussion of this specific situation, we introduced some key concepts and tenets underpinning current theoretical approaches to literacy education of indigenous children worldwide, such as multi/bilingualism, cultural identity, and sustaining and multimodal pedagogical approaches. We deliberately illustrated these by extensive reference to the case of indigenous children in a municipality in Brazilian Amazonia due to its less known complexity. We further showed that this multilingual scenario is upheld by the *Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil* (Government of Brazil,) and legally regulated by the *National curriculum standard for indigenous schools* (Ministry of Education & Sport, 1998), which guarantee the enactment of a differentiated, intercultural, bilingual and communitarian education to indigenous schools at indigenous communities.

By centering our discussion on the specific situation of indigenous children who leave their original communities and enter urban schools and mainstream education, our intention was to bring to the academic arena a less pedagogically explored and yet challenging situation of these learners as well as to fill the gap created by the lack of provision of specific linguistic programs for the education of indigenous children in non-indigenous schools. As some research has begun to show, quite often teachers lack the necessary knowledge to enact a differentiated pedagogy that meets the needs of these students. The practical guidelines that we suggested in the chapter, based on the principles of LAP (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012, 2019), are meant to illuminate urban

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teachers' actions aimed at promoting a culturally sustaining and multimodal initial literacy education of indigenous children. The guidelines target the development of the bilingual potential of indigenous students at the initial stages of early childhood education, while at the same time offering a multimodal, situated practice aimed to enhance initial literacy development. Building on the development of social bilingual skills in general, LAP offers an approach that scaffolds the development of the language of schooling, while at the same time fostering children's MT(s)/HL(s) and cultural knowledge. It involves families' active participation and aims to develop indigenous children who are proud of who they are and establishing a strong basis for formal literacy learning.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why can the indigenous school education as established by the *National curriculum standard for indigenous schools* (Ministry of Education & Sport, 1998) be considered as enacting a culturally sustaining pedagogy? State your opinion. Do similar legal guidelines exist in your context?
2. Revise the theoretical tenets underpinning LAP and identify those that you understand. Illustrate them with evidence drawn from your practice. Then identify those you do not understand and discuss them with your colleagues.
3. Consider how you might further enrich the practical activities suggested to enact LAP's culturally and pedagogically responsive pedagogy for the learning of indigenous students in urban schools. If possible, use your own context as an example.

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SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS

1. Chumak-Horbatsch, R. (2019). *Using linguistically appropriate practice: A guide for teaching in multilingual classrooms*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Multilingual Matters. This book is an excellent educational resource that invites teachers to reflect on their own practices and also to understand the educational demands of multilingual and multicultural learners in mainstream classrooms. It presents the theories that support the LAP approach and, in addition, provides several examples of its practical enactment in classrooms around the world.
2. Paris, D. & Alim, S. (Eds.) (2017). *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World*. New York: Teachers College Press. The book brings together a group of prominent educators and researchers in the discussion and expansion of CSP. As the editors themselves state, the book offers readers a “dialogic interweaving of research, theory and practice necessary to fully understand and move forward with CSP for educational and cultural justice with students and communities in a changing world” (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 15).
3. Ministry of Education and Sport (1998). *Referencial curricular nacional para as escolas indígenas* [National curricular referential for indigenous schools]. Brasília, Brazil: Ministério da Educação e do Desporto, Secretaria de Educação Fundamental. This document exemplifies the enactment of a culturally sustaining policy for the curriculum development of indigenous schools in Brazil. It addresses key issues such as bilingualism/multilingualism, multiculturalism, and inclusive and differentiated education in the following curriculum areas: Language and Literacy, Mathematics, History, Geography, Sciences, Arts and Physical Education.

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP): Student-centered pedagogy aimed at fostering flexible, fluid and critical multicultural and multilingual identities of diverse students.

Dynamic Bilingualism: Linguistic practice that reflects the continuously changing role of languages within multilingual contexts and multimodal communication.

Heritage Language (HL): The community's ethnocultural language, which may not be the child's MT.

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Language of Schooling: The language system used as the vehicle in the educative process, the one taught as dominant, and the one in charge of facilitating progression across the curriculum.

Linguistically Appropriate Practice (LAP): An inclusive approach to the special educational needs of immigrant and displaced children, sensitive to the needs of both home and school. It envisions children as bilinguals who require a dual approach to language and literacy education.

Mother Tongue (MT) (also referred to as First Language (L1)): The language system that the speaker is exposed to early in life and the one which triggered their language acquisition process. It is the language routinely used in most non-formal situations and the one from which an ethnolinguistic identity develops.

Multilingualism: Individual knowledge of two or more languages; coexistence of more than one linguistic tradition within the same social context.

Multimodal Communication: Communication that employs multiple semiotic modes, such as oral and written verbal language, static and moving image, sound, music, gesture, and sculpture, to represent meanings.

Second Language (L2): The language system acquired/learned with a certain delay relative to the MT, irrespective of other contextual factors. Second language offers non-native speakers the means for communication and socialization in contexts where some other language is dominant.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Here, we refer indistinctly to culturally sustaining and intercultural pedagogy, though the concepts come from different epistemic traditions. In Brazil, intercultural pedagogy has been highly influenced by Paulo Freire (2011), whereas in the Anglophone world sustaining pedagogies have been more directly influenced by Paris (2012) and Paris Alim (2014) and, indirectly, by Ladson-Billings's (1995) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy.

ⁱⁱ An ongoing professional learning initiative for early education teachers is currently being developed by the first author in the municipality of Oiapoque, in the Federal State of Amapá, Brazil.