Indigenizing Language Teaching through School-Community Collaborations: (Re)Turning to the Land

Claudia Patricia Gutiérrez

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2024

Reading Committee

Manka Varghese, Chair

Julia Duncheon

Shaneé Washington

Cristina Sanchez-Martin

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

College of Education

University of Washington

Abstract

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Claudia Patricia Gutiérrez

Chair of Supervisory Committee:

Manka Varghese

College of Education

Resistance to colonization and multiple forms of coloniality is increasing worldwide in various spheres of society, and the field of language teaching, especially English language teaching, (hereinafter ELT), is not alien to these efforts. Coloniality in language and education policies has historically influenced Indigenous students' education (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; McCarty & Coronel-Molina, 2017). This still holds true on Indigenous lands in Colombia, where ethno-education policies purport to sustain Indigenous students' languages, cultures, and epistemologies, while education is mainly tailored to privilege western schooling practices as well as colonial ideologies around languages such as Spanish and English. Recent research has explored the tensions and impact stemming from these seemingly contradicting policies (De Mejia, 2005; Guerrero, 2009:2018). Similarly, studies conducted in higher education suggest that

these colonial ideologies often undermine Indigenous students' cultural and linguistic identities perpetuated through education (Alvarez-Valencia & Miranda, 2022; Cuasialpud-Canchala, 2010; Arismendi, 2016; Usma et al., 2018). Yet, less is known about the possibilities that open up in the resistance to this coloniality when language, especially English teaching is approached through Indigenous perspectives; that is when language teaching is Indigenized. Therefore, this dissertation centers on the Indigenization of language teaching in an Indigenous territory by drawing on Land-based education. Designed as a Community-Based Design Research CBDR (Bang et al., 2015), this study proposes to explore the possibilities school-community collaborations afford to attain an ecology of languages and move toward a dialogue among knowledges, as Wayuu members and the Wayuunaiki and Spanish-English teachers collaborate to center Indigenous perspectives in English teaching and learning. Results of this study indicate that, despite the existence of ethno education policies, coloniality continues to shape the schooling experience of Indigenous children and youth who resist this colonial influence in multiple ways. Findings also made evident the power Indigenous communities have to positively affect the education of their children and how this effect can be potentiated through language teaching, especially ELT. This study has implications for language teachers, learners, and Indigenous communities and is expected to inform language policymakers and language teacher education programs.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been possible without the love and support of my friends Diegox2, Majo, Simon, and Yenny, and my family, especially my brothers Tito and Jesid. Your video calls and faith in me kept me going at times when I felt tired and lonely, and when I doubted I had it in me to write this dissertation. Also, none of this could have been possible without the people who became like my family away from home: Hanna, Janelle, Samia, Patricia, Carrol, Yenny, Nir, Shayla, and Camille. I am forever grateful for the joy and growth each of you brought to my life.

There are not enough words to express my appreciation for my advisor Manka Varghese, for her wisdom, humanity, and support throughout this journey. One day I hope to be half of the scholar and caring human being that you are. I am equally thankful to my committee members: Shaneé Washington, Julia Duncheon, and Cristina Sanchez-Martin. I admire you and your work and feel extremely fortunate to have learned from your wisdom and compassionate feedback. Your insightful remarks have made me a better researcher.

Lastly, I am forever indebted to the Wayuu people and their boundless generosity. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Estefania and her family for welcoming me into their home during all the time I spent on their land. To the Wayuu students, their families, the Wayuunaiki and Spanish-English teachers, and other community members who led this research and allowed me into the intimacy of talking circles and Wayuu lifeways. I feel honored by your trust in this research work and wish I knew enough Wayuunaiki to express my gratitude for the many ways in which you all have transformed my life.

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Introduction

No other process has been as powerful as education to attempt to erase Indigenous cultures and languages across the globe (Cajete, 1994; Deloria, 1994; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). School curriculum has traditionally been used as a tool to further the aims of coloniality, that is; the imposition of Eurocentric languages, cultures, and ideologies in education, and to silence Indigenous peoples' ways of being, knowing, and doing (Darder, 2014a). In this vein, these colonial languages and the cultures associated with them compete for dominance with local languages and epistemologies (Canagarajah, 1999), armed with discourses of power and social mobility that shape school curricula and that have resulted in the "creation of cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 47).

Such is the case of Colombia where, although schools that primarily serve Indigenous students are expected to preserve Indigenous languages and cultures, national policies increase school teachers and administrators' pressure to ensure students develop proficiency in Spanish and English as teachers aim for better scores in standardized testing (Mora, 2019). To meet these expectations, and as a result of the spread of hegemonic English language ideologies, schools in Indigenous territories **a)** tailor their curriculum to make privileged space for English learning, **b)** incorporate English teaching and learning with little attention to the racialized ideologies embedded in this language **c)** further displace Indigenous languages and epistemologies by fostering westernized ideologies of language and culture **d)** disqualify ethno-education policy and Indigenous communities' demands to sustain their languages and ways of being, knowing, and doing. This linguistic hegemony has implications for English teachers who become instrumental in advancing linguistic imperialism by favoring English at the expense of Indigenous languages (Branschat, 2019). It also conditions Indigenous students' attitudes toward

their ancestral language and culture (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006), as well as Indigenous communities' investment in sustaining their language across generations.

Although scholars in Colombia have documented this tension created by colonial language ideologies stemming from the *National Bilingual Program* and *Colombia Very Well* policies (Ayala & Álvarez, 2005; Bettney, 2022; Gónzalez, 2007; Usma, 2009), and their harmful impact for Indigenous peoples (Guerrero, 2009; Arias-Cepeda, 2020) less is understood about the ways in which a dialogue among knowledges and an ecology of languages could be achieved in Indigenous territories. Thus, this study proposes to explore the possibilities to achieve this ecology through a school-community collaboration that centers Mother Earth in the education of Wayuu youth, particularly in English teaching and learning.

Drawing on tenets from Land-Based Education and Indigenization, this proposal theorizes land as central to the Indigenization of ELT, to achieve a dialogue among knowledges (Leyva et al., 2018) and an ecology of languages (Lopez, 2005; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994). Bringing together these theoretical perspectives that draw on the centrality of land to Indigenous peoples, as well as on Indigenous people's agency, languages, and epistemologies (Coulthard, 2010; Simpson, 2014) this study proposes to investigate how English and Wayuunaiki teachers come together with members of the Wayuu people to resist coloniality in the language education of Wayuu youth, namely in their English classes, to achieve an ecology of languages (Lopez, 2008) and a dialogue among knowledges (CONTCEPI, 2008; Leyva et al., 2018). While land-based education has recently gained more attention in this school context, particularly due the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting need to rely on the community for the education of Wayuu children and youth (UNICEF, 2021), this approach has not been connected to the sustenance of Wayuunaiki, as Spanish and English continue their relentless displacement

of this ancestral language. Hence, given that educating Indigenous children and youth on their land has historically helped Indigenous peoples worldwide to sustain and revitalize their languages and ways of being as they contend with one colonial language, collectively, this study is set out to explore whether and how land-based education can also assist Indigenous schools and communities in a context like Colombia as they collaborate to resist the hegemony of two colonial languages and strive to attain an ecology of languages and a dialogue among knowledges.

In what follows, I propose a Community-based design research (CBDR) to explore the possibilities that land-based education affords to sustain Indigenous languages and epistemologies in the Wayuu territory. To attain this, English and Wayuunaiki teachers, along with different families and community members, collaborated to (re)envision and Indigenize English language teaching and language and strived to attain an ecology of languages and a dialogue among knowledges. Through this CBDR, I attempted to challenge the hegemony of English language and culture, center Indigenous voices and perspectives, and prepare students to meet academic demands in English. First, I ground the study in relevant literature related to decolonization and Indigenization in education in general and in language teaching in particular, globally and in Latin America (Macedo, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2012. Relevant literature related to coloniality in language policies (McCarty & Coronel-Molina, 2017), and Indigenous communities efforts to resist coloniality (Rorick, 2019; Schecter & Ippolito, 2008; Walsh, 2014; Washington, 2021) are also offered to ground this study. Next, I relate the potential gaps in this literature and connect it to the theoretical framework for this study. Weaving Land-based education, dialogue among knowledges (Leyva et al., 2018), and Indigenization as a framework that extends beyond decolonization (Grafton & Melançon, 2020) I suggest a framework for

understanding whether and how an ecology of languages and a dialogue among knowledges are possible when Mother Earth is centered in the English language education of Wayuu youth. Finally, I outline the proposed methodological approach to this study and describe the findings, contributions, and implications of this research.

Chapter One - Literature Review

In this section I interlace research exploring attempts to decolonize and Indigenize education in general (Battiste, 2017: Cote-Meek, 2014) and language policies and ELT in particular (Macedo, 2019, Motha, 2014), both in and out of Latin America. Research exploring the roles of Indigenous communities in these processes of decolonization and Indigenization (Mateos Cortes, 2017; Washington, 2021) is also interlocked in this section. Having these bodies of literature converse allowed me to identify a number of gaps I will try to bridge with this study. Weaving these various areas of research also contributed to solidify my assertion that although there is a recurrent interchangeable use of decolonization and Indigenization in these bodies of literature (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Walsh, 2018), and several overlapping aims, in language teaching, particularly ELT, there is a need to move beyond decolonization to Indigenize a field that is colonial at its core.

Decolonizing and Indigenizing Education

Resistance to colonization and multiple forms of coloniality is increasing worldwide in various spheres of society, often guided by decolonizing or Indigenizing frameworks. In education, decolonization refers to the undoing or removal of colonial elements and to resistance to multiple forms of coloniality (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018), while Indigenization strives for the incorporation of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, led by Indigenous peoples (Grafton & Melançon, 2020). These attempts to decolonize/Indigenize education worldwide have been more prominent in higher education. A review of the literature conducted by Shahjahan, et al. (2022) indicates that these attempts have taken multiple forms such as challenging the status of hegemonic knowledge in educational spaces, making space for Indigenous knowledge systems

in the curriculum, striving for relational teaching and learning, and seeking collaborations with communities and social movements to transform teaching and learning practices in and out of school spaces. A few decolonizing projects driven by students and activists in higher education have pushed back against international ranking systems (Motta, 2014) and against racist policies targeting Black and Indigenous students (De Carvalho & Flórez-Flórez, 2014)

In Canada, the response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, has resulted in an increased number of publications addressing Indigenization in education (McDonald, 2016). A similar trend that privileges the concept of Indigenization has been found in Australia and South Africa, at the university level. A common feature of these studies is the interchangeable use of decolonization and Indigenization (Dutta, 2018; O'Shea, 2018), although Indigenizing projects significantly tend to prioritize allyship with community members who lead the transformation of educational practices (Attas, 2019).

Initiatives to Indigenize K-12 curriculum are growing in numbers. In countries such as Canada and Australia, national policies have strived to prepare school teachers to incorporate historic and cultural Tribal content in the curriculum while in the United States, Tribally developed curriculum is being implemented in eleven states. Overall, these initiatives are place based and are aligned to common core standards. Research projects addressing Indigenization of K-12 have mostly focused on the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge systems to develop children and youth's knowledge about science, mathematics, and environmental topics (Barajas-López & Bang; 2018; Cajete, 1999; Sammel, 2020; Tailbay, et al.; 2020).

Similarly, Indigenizing projects framed within land-based perspectives have centered Indigenous epistemologies in subjects such as science and math (Bang, et al, 2015; Cajete, 1999). These land-based approaches to education have also informed teacher education processes

(Calderon, et al., 2021; Lees, et al,, 2021; Zurba, et al., 2021), intergenerational land pedagogies to build families' knowledge about the natural world (Marin & Bang, 2018) and the disruption of the disconnect between nature and children's learning experiences by centering colonial histories and Indigenous presence in nature (Nxumalo, 2016). In the case of ELT there seems to be an absence of efforts to Indigenize the field despite the impact hegemonic English language ideologies continue to have on Indigenous peoples worldwide. In the following section, I will illustrate how these findings compare to Latin America, where efforts to decolonize/Indigenize education have increased in the past decades.

Decolonization and Indigenization of Education in Latin America

In Latin America, the need to decolonize education has been manifested since the 1960's, with the consolidation of Indigenous resurgence (Lopez & Sichra, 2016). Either informed by the emancipatory ideals of Paulo Freire (1970) or structured under a number of frameworks: Intercultural Bilingual[1] Education (IBE), Buen Vivir, Life-for-the Common-Good, Indigenist and Zapatista movements, Indigenous Intelligentsia, Educacion propia (Own Education), and popular education, Indigenous movements have strived to guarantee Indigenous peoples' right to be educated in their Mother tongue and through their own knowledge systems (Varese, 2007), by centering Elders and other community members in the education of Indigenous children and youth (Bolaños et al. 2004), and by reconstructing harmonious relations with Mother Nature (Lopez, 2017). Across these efforts there is a rejection to all forms of coloniality but not of other peoples' cultural richness and values, (Rivera-Cusicanqui, 1986) or western knowledge (Smith, 2012); instead, these approaches to education demonstrate a commitment to attain an ecology of languages (Lopez, 2005; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994) and a dialogue among

[1] Bilingualism as in the use of an Indigenous and colonial language, such as Spanish and Portuguese

knowledges (Leyva, et al., 2018; Patzi , 1999), which is a central objective I am setting in this study.

Decolonizing initiatives stemming from these frameworks have materialized, at a macro level, through the creation of "Indigenous autonomous community universities in Colombia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua, as well as alternative tertiary education programs in Bolivia, Brazil, Nicaragua, and Peru" (Lopez, 2017, p.307). At a lower scale, decolonizing efforts to sustain Indigenous languages and epistemologies at all levels of education have materialized through:

- Creating adult Indigenous intercultural literacy programs carried out in Indigenous languages (Gustafson 2009).
- Creating youth and adult education programs led by Native facilitators (Lopez, 1997)
- Collaborating with community Elders to challenge official history and reconstruct local histories and worldviews (Rivera-Cusicanqui & THOA 1991)
- Partnering with Indigenous communities to envision curriculum and pedagogies (Mateos Cortes, 2017)
- Promoting the use of Indigenous languages in-and-out of schools (Lopez, 1991)
- Using technology to make indigenous issues and demands available to all populations (Cru, 2014)
- Implementing Indigenous language revitalization programs in higher education (Usma et al., 2018)
- Using hip-hop to teach Indigenous languages and revitalize oral traditions (Navarro, 2016)

More recently, a report published by UNICEF (2021) highlighted initiatives undertaken in Latin America, in response to school closures due to COVID-19, to sustain and revitalize Indigenous language education. Some of these initiatives made use of technology to create radio and TV programs that advanced Indigenous children and youth's education in their mother tongues, such as in the case of Peru, Paraguay, and Mexico (UNICEF, 2021). Materials design in teaching Indigenous languages was another strategy privileged in countries such as Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, and Mexico. Using the land as pedagogy was reported in Colombia, where a school community in the Amazon centered the land to teach multiple subject areas, privilege Indigenous knowledge systems, and strengthen Indigenous students' Mother tongue. (ibid)

A salient trend from the majority of these initiatives is that school-community collaborations became vital in the education of Indigenous children and youth. Creating space and drawing on the knowledge of local authorities, knowledge holders, parents, Indigenous leaders, and students was paramount to informing and sustaining these initiatives (UNICEF, 2021). Across these projects there is a desire to keep Indigenous peoples and their cultures and languages alive and, in many cases, these projects seem to disrupt the "historically constructed hierarchy between schools and communities" (Lopez, 2017, p.308) that dominates the literature on education for Indigenous peoples. They also bring hope to the possibilities to sustain Indigenous languages at a time in which they have lost spaces even in the intimacy of homes and communities (Lopez, 2017; Usma et al.; 2018), and the hegemony of English has become stronger in education systems across the globe.

Coloniality in English Language Teaching ELT

> *". . . it is not the English language that hurts me, but what the oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how*

they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, and colonize."

(hooks, 1995, p.296)

For the past decades, in similar ways as other fields, scholars have denounced the ways in which coloniality and discourses of globalization have driven neoliberal agendas and linguistic imperialism in English language teaching, hereinafter ELT, across the globe (De Mejia, 2020; Motha, 2020; Guerrero; 2009; Usma, 2015). That is, the way economic and political agendas set by the Global North, influence language education to the service of capitalism (Block et al., 2012). Rooted in these neoliberal agendas in ELT (Motha, 2020) are racial hierarchies and discrimination that privilege certain languages based on their assigned economic value and prestige (Camargo Cely, 2018; Guerrettaz & Zahler, 2017; McKinney, 2017**)**. From this colonial, capitalist logic, it has been assumed that learning a language such as English grants citizens and countries from the Global South the possibility to escape poverty, become competitive, and access a developed world delineated by the Global North (Bhattacharya, 2017; Kramsch, 2019; Von Esch et al. 2020). As a result, hegemonic language ideologies, the hierarchical position of certain languages over others, have been perpetuated, utilizing languages to erase minoritized communities through cultural assimilation (Glenn, 2015). An instance of this hegemony is the compulsory incorporation of English learning throughout the education system in a vast number of countries (Nunan, 2003).

Contrary to what is claimed through discourses of globalization, the widespread promotion and imposition of English "has not led to more equity either between or within nations." (Bettney, 2022 p. 264). Instead, while the Global North continues to define the terms for development for the Global South, it perpetuates racial, social, political, economic, cultural,

linguistic, and epistemic domination across nations (Motha, 2014). Attempts of the Global South to insert in these neoliberal agendas, has resulted in widened economic, social, linguistic, and epistemic gaps for communities whose languages and knowledge systems are excluded from globalized narratives (De Ferranti et al. 2013; Moreno et al. 2013). This language hegemony, which brings alongside colonial knowledge and value systems, has been reified through language policies that carry the assumption that, indisputably, communities need to learn English and wish to engage in global relationships (Canagarajah, 2005; Phillipson, 2017). An understanding of this reality has led multiple actors to engage in efforts to decolonize the field of ELT both at the policy level as well as at the classroom level. In what follows I will describe some of these initiatives.

Decolonizing Language Policies

"Who is to say that robbing a people of its language is less violent than war?"

Ray Gwyn Smith as quoted by Anzaldua (1987)

It has been well established that "language loss is not only, perhaps not even primarily, a linguistic issue," but is deeply implicated in issues of identity and unequal power relations (May, 2001, p. 4). Aware of the harmful effects of colonial language policies and language teaching practices, scholars, researchers, language teachers, and ethnic minoritized communities have put forth initiatives to challenge and resist this coloniality in language education worldwide (McCarty & Coronel-Molina, 2017). Although "language-minoritized and Indigenous communities continue to be underrepresented in policymaking processes" (Phyak, 2021, p.220), some of these decolonizing initiatives have resulted in the creation of language policies that

attempt to reverse the pervasive effects of past policies (Coronel-Molina & McCarty, 2016; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006).

In Latin America, Indigenous peoples' agency and activism has led to the creation of models for intercultural bilingual education -EIB- per its acronym in Spanish- in which Indigenous languages are taught alongside a colonial language such as Spanish and Portuguese. This Indigenous resurgence demands schools to "return to the communities the languages they helped eradicate" (Lopez, 2020, p.3). This advocacy has led to the incorporation of Indigenous languages in national curricula in countries such as Guatemala, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Furthermore, a literature review conducted by McCarty & Coronel-Molina (2017) has made evident how certain language policies have begun to address the cultural context for language planning, creating spaces for Indigenous languages in education as they compete for recognition against other colonial languages such as Spanish and Portuguese. This review depicts the myriad ways in which the disruption of hegemonic language ideologies, language revitalization processes, the vindication of literacies in Indigenous lands, and Indigenous resurgence have begun to inform policymakers' decisions for language planning, especially in countries such as Mexico, Peru, and Bolivia (McCarty & Coronel-Molina, 2017).

However, across contexts, the politicized and racialized nature of language policies, along with the lack of enforcement of policies that guarantee the language rights of Indigenous peoples at the national level, has resulted in a weak incorporation and sustenance of ancestral languages for Indigenous students who also face the demands of learning colonial languages and literacies (Haque & Patrick, 2015; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2017). Such is the case of Colombia where, despite having an ethno-education policy that purports to protect the right of Indigenous peoples to preserve their languages and systems of knowledge, national language policies and

standards compel schools to engage in neoliberal logics that privilege Spanish and, more recently, English. (Bettney, 2022; De Mejia, 2005; Guerrero, 2018)

In sum, across countries, while some language education policies appear to be in service of the revitalization and sustenance of the languages and epistemologies of minoritized peoples, policymakers' failure to consistently prioritize local languages in national education and language policies (Canagarajah, 2005) often results in the co-optation of Indigenous linguistic rights in education (Lopez, 2017). To challenge the status quo and counter the harmful effects of these policies, schools and communities are left to their own struggles, to engage in language practices that defy the racialized, homogenizing linguistic, cultural, and epistemic aims of globalization. In the following lines, I will describe some of these initiatives.

Decolonizing/Indigenizing Language Education from the Bottom-up

In the Global South, bilingualism historically referred to Indigenous peoples' right to be educated in their Mother tongue alongside the colonial language imposed on their nation (Marback, 2002). Nonetheless, with the forces of globalization, bilingualism has been increasingly defined as the addition of English to another colonial language, ignoring Indigenous peoples' already present languages. Hence, addressing this coloniality in the field of language teaching has become a necessity for both, speakers of other colonial languages who witness how the power of English and its racialization and commodification create social standards that perpetuate the status quo (Macedo, 2019), and for Indigenous peoples who now contend with a second colonial language privileged in national language education policies (Fuentealba et al,, 2019; Guerrero, 2018).

The need to dismantle the hegemony of English at multiple levels has been sufficiently established; whether it is through the decolonization of translation (Kramsch, 2019), the

decolonization of research in ELT (Ortega, 2019), or the incorporation of alternative approaches to language learning that embrace and celebrate students' cultural and linguistic repertoires (Canagarajah, 2013; García & Wei, 2014; Schissel et al., 2018). Other approaches to decolonizing language education have focused on heritage language teacher education (Austin, 2019).

At the student level**,** in the epistemological South located in the Northern hemisphere, learners' resistance to the racialized ideologies embedded in English teaching practices (Kubota & Lin, 2009; Jenks, 2017, Von Esch et al.,2020) is wide-ranging. In a literature review of the intersection of race and English teaching, Von Esh et al., (2020) suggest that the hegemony of English and its association with whiteness has been resisted through English learners' a) lack of compliance with standard English ideologies in writing b) creation of dynamic multilingual policies c) use of alternative literacy practices and d) incorporation of translanguaging practices (ibid). For Indigenous peoples located in countries such as Canada, the USA, New Zealand, and Australia, English-only policies have been contested to address the language rights of Indigenous students (Attas, 2019; Bruin & Mane, 2016; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2017; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006).

At the community level, Indigenous communities' and heritage language speakers' resistance to the hegemony of English, in countries where English is a dominant language, is well documented (Fillerup, 2011; Hermes et al., 2012; McCarty & Lee, 2014; Newcomer & Puzio, 2016; Anoee, et al., 2017; Rorick, 2019; Schecter & Ippolito, 2008; Walsh, 2014; Washington, 2021). Across these multiple studies, the role of families and communities in their language and cultural maintenance has been paramount to engage in or challenge school-community collaborations. However, when these collaborations took place in schools

spaces, even for the purpose of Indigenous language revitalization, Volfova (2015) found that "elders were often seemingly underutilized, just sitting or standing in the front of the classroom, not taking overly active role in this particular form of instruction" p.102. Findings also indicate that the dominance of English prevailed in these spaces, thus creating an imbalance between the two languages. Hence, there is a need to envision possibilities to not decolonize but Indigenize language teaching in ways that strive for an ecology of languages, center Indigenous voices, and privilege school-community collaborations out of school spaces, as proposed in this study. In what follows, I will describe how these findings compare in Latin America where Indigenous communities contend with more than one colonial language privileged in language policies.

Decolonizing ELT in Latin America

If English is imposing the world on our students, we as TESOL[2] professionals can enable them, through English, to impose their voices on the world (Warschauer, 2000, p. 530)

In Latin America, documentation of the resistance to hegemonic language policies put forth by communities and English teachers, in Indigenous territories or with Indigenous populations is scarce, especially in K-12. An initiative to decolonize ELT in a Mexican context focused on the incorporation of translanguaging for teaching and assessment in linguistically diverse contexts (Schissel et al., 2018). An ethnographic study conducted in a Mexican middle school used English lessons to strengthen Indigenous students' linguistic and cultural identities in Mayo, their Mother language. Designing assignments that required input from elders and other community members encouraged intergenerational sharing of knowledge and allowed the use of English as "a catalyst for heritage language revitalization and maintenance" (Gutiérrez-Estrada & Schecter, 2018, p.138). In another study, Lopez-Gopar (2013) used critical pedagogy and

[2] TESOL Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

teacher candidates' praxis in English as a means to appreciate Mixteco language and cultural practices and values in an Indigenous community in Mexico. Similarly, Lopez-Gopar (2016) reported a study intended to resist the coloniality of English among Indigenous elementary students, through the creation of identity texts. Results of all of these projects indicate that creating spaces for Indigenous languages in the English classroom led to Indigenous students' heightened appreciation of their values, community practices and language.

Salient trends in these studies intended to decolonize ELT in Latin America, particularly with Indigenous populations, suggest that there is an absence of Indigenous communities involved in these initiatives. Although school-community collaborations have historically been paramount to sustain the cultures and languages of Indigenous peoples, (Becerra-Lubies, 2021; Valenzuela & Aranis, 2018) and Indigenous communities have been central in this sustenance (Washington, 2021, Anoee et al., 2017), in Latin America, when it comes to resisting the hegemony of English, the role of Indigenous communities is limited or completely absent; a trend already identified by Becerra-Lubies & Mayo (2017). This creates a need to expand research that builds on partnerships between schools and communities and aims to identify "educational inequities rooted in systemic racism and linguicism and collaboratively designing and shaping changes in instruction, programs, and structures" (Von Esh et al., 2020, p.414).

The Case of Colombia

In Colombia, the compulsory incorporation of English across all levels of education, along with requirements to demonstrate English proficiency to graduate from any undergraduate program and to access graduate education, have increased researchers' interest in critically analyzing coloniality in language policies and their implications for minoritized communities

(De Mejia, 2005; Fandiño-Parra, 2021; Guerrero, 2009;2018; Henao-Mejia, 2020) and for teachers' professional development (Gonzalez, 2007). Studies concerned with this issue have addressed the need to decolonize English textbooks (Nuñez-Pardo, 2018; 2020), language teacher education (Granados-Beltrán, 2016; Ortiz et al., 2019; Ramirez-Espinoza, 2021), English teachers' identity (Castañeda-Peña, 2018) and pedagogy and methodology (Ubaque-Casallas, 2021). These studies have demonstrated that although teachers exercise their agency over prescriptive methods, colonial roots prevail in ELT which calls for a transformation of the often uncritical instrumentalization of language teaching that fails to question relations of power between English, Spanish, and students' already present languages and literacies, which is an area I expect to contribute to with this study, by bringing together English and Wayuunaiki teachers and community members to collaborate in this Indigenization of ELT.

Other decolonial contributions to ELT in Colombia have explored the entanglements of coloniality and English language teaching and learning for Indigenous peoples. An instance of this is the work of Arias-Cepeda (2020) who outlined the complexities embedded in being an Indigenous English pre-service and in-service teacher. This author advocates for a decolonial approach to English teaching that results in an ecology of languages and sustains Indigenous English teachers' identities. The studies conducted by Alvarez-Valencia and Miranda (2022), Cuasialpud-Canchala (2010), Arismendi (2016), and Usma et al., (2018), analyzed the challenges Indigenous students face in higher education, among which is the lack of recognition of their languages and cultures in academic spaces and stigmatization of their communities, which lead to students' decision to hide their Indigenous identity. Finally, Alvarez-Valencia and Wegner (2021) visibilized Indigenous students' resistance to coloniality in higher education, and Gutiérrez et al., (2021), engaged Black and Indigenous university students in critical English

lessons that challenged the hegemony of English and resulted in the assertion of their ethnic and linguistic identities, and sustenance of their languages and cultures.

This analysis of global and local literature indicates that initiatives that incorporate Indigenous lands to contest the cultural and linguistic hegemony brought by language and education policies are scant. In fact, despite the growing advocacy from Indigenous scholars, leaders, and organizations worldwide (CRIC, 2008; Lopez, 2008; Simpson, 2004; 2014) to center the land in the education of Indigenous people across all levels of education, instruction in most decolonizing projects continues to take place in colonial school settings, even when schools are located in Indigenous territories. Moreover, Native languages are confined to the classrooms, and to restricted amounts of class time (Rorick, 2019). In this quest to decolonize education within school spaces, researchers encountered challenges that included the restricting set up of the classroom (Fellner, 2018), and "the lack of institutional support for integrating Elders and knowledge holders, and land-based and ceremonial learning barriers" (Shahjahan, et al.,2022, p.24). Similarly, involvement of community members in these initiatives has been limited or fully absent. Although these shortcomings of decolonization have been addressed by Indigenizing initiatives in education in general, the field of ELT has not started to move in this direction. This study intends to contribute to filling this gap.

As presented above, this literature review evinced a need for more research that moves from decolonization to Indigenization and explores the ways school-community collaborations that center the land and the knowledges and languages of the land, can contribute not only to the strengthening of Indigenous' students languages and culture, but to the resistance of the hegemony of English in contexts where this language is added to another colonial language. In the specific context on Latin America, more research is needed to understand in what ways

centering the land in English teaching and learning allows Indigenous students to use English classes to a) (re)connect to their language and community, b) re(embed) themselves in the land, c) counter multiple forms of coloniality, and d) develop literacies in English. This research could also shed light to overcome some of the barriers identified in previous studies while also building partnerships that center Indigenous communities as valuable knowledge holders (Volfová, 2015; Washington, 2021).

As found in the literature, fostering school-community collaborations that center the land and Indigenous voice brings many benefits for all parties involved. Namely, results of collaborations between schools and communities have demonstrated that Indigenous students' academic achievement increases (Kearney et al., 2014), as well as their interest in and commitment to their community (Powers, 2004). Moreover, grounding education in Indigenous epistemologies and values has aided in the sustenance of Indigenous languages and cultures (Michel, 2012), while Indigenous students strengthen their self-esteem and positive perceptions of their culture (Warren & Quine, 2013). These collaborations benefit the community at large as all members navigate, resist, and negotiate dominant narratives of globalization that devalue their languages and their existence.

In a similar vein, this literature review indicates that teachers who engage in these collaborations could gain a more complex understanding of Indigeneity (Battiste, 2017). They could become organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971) who use their praxis to collaborate with students in the transformation of the historical exploitation and oppression of their community, to dream of another possible social order. School-community collaborations within a land-based education framework can result in an increase of teachers' satisfaction with their profession (Powers, 2004) and in raised expectations for Indigenous students (Warren & Quine, 2013).

Collaborating with communities has also resulted in teachers' expanded perceptions of students and their communities' languages, and ways of being, knowing, and doing as assets, which has the potential to transform the learning environment (Gutierrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999). Finally, quoting Sammel (2020), "as educators, we might not be able to generate large-scale political change, but we can become shining examples of what can be achieved in collaboration with our local Indigenous and school communities". p.142.

Considering these benefits school-community collaborations have afforded in different contexts, through this study, I proposed to bridge this gap in the current literature in Latin America by striving to Indigenize language teaching, especially ELT, in an Indigenous territory through the incorporation of Land-based education. Proposed as a community-based design research (Bang, et al., 2015), this study aimed to explore the possibilities that emerge when schools and Indigenous community members collaborate to center the land, the languages and epistemologies of the land, and the people of the land in the English language curriculum. I also aimed to analyze how this collaboration impacts Indigenous youth and English teachers as they navigate linguistic academic demands set up by colonial agendas. Finally, I strived to explore whether and how an ecology of languages and a dialogue among knowledges could be achieved as Indigenous students both learn English and (re)embed in their land and the language of the land. In the next section, I will elaborate on the theories underpinning this study.

Chapter Two - Theoretical Framework

The advancement of colonial language policies, the compulsory incorporation of this language in education systems, and the perpetuation of its racialized ideologies create an imbalance of power that often results in the marginalization of Indigenous languages. As current ventures to decolonize education become more popular, I grappled with envisioning ways in which decoloniality could be fostered when teaching a colonial language like English. I wondered whether this power imbalance between English and Indigenous languages that already contend with another national language such as Spanish, could better be addressed by Indigenizing the English teaching and learning. That is, I aimed to decenter colonial language ideologies and to achieve an ecology of languages in which Indigenous voices hold space, while also decentering western knowledge and knowledge systems and centering Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing grounded in Mother Earth.

To explore these possibilities, this study brings together three frameworks that overlap in their aims to strive for a decolonized world but that each adds a specific tenet required to Indigenize ELT (See Figure 1). In this section, I draw from *Dialogo de Saberes* or dialogue among knowledges to establish the need to build an equitable relationship between Indigenous and western knowledges (Leff, 2003) in the education of Indigenous children and youth. Then, I utilize decolonization and its related ideas to multiple forms of coloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Quijano, 1998) to theorize its influence on ELT and its impact on Indigenous languages. Finally, I elaborate on how Indigenization (Grafton & Melançon, 2020) further advances the aims of decolonization and how Land-based education (Coulthard, 2010; Simpson, 2014) contributes to this Indigenizing endeavor.

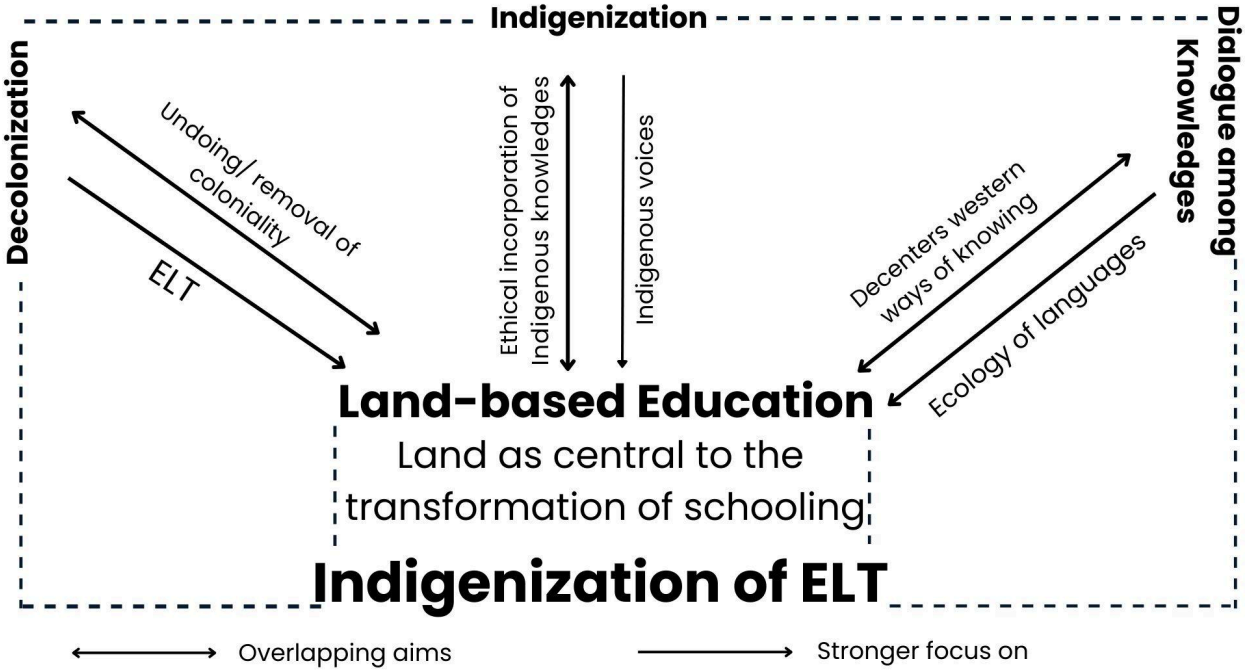


Figure 1. *Visual representation of the theoretical framework of this study.*

> *Desde la conquista y el comienzo del colonialismo moderno, hay una forma de injusticia que funda y contamina todas las demás formas de injusticias que hemos reconocido en la modernidad, ya sean la injusticia socioeconómica, la sexual o racial, la histórica, la generacional, etc., se trata de la injusticia cognitiva. No hay peor injusticia que esa, porque es la injusticia entre conocimientos. Es la idea de que existe un sólo conocimiento válido, producido como perfecto conocimiento en gran medida en el Norte global, que llamamos la ciencia moderna.*
>
> (Santos, 2011, p.16)

Dialogue among Knowledges and Languages

Attaining a fair dialogue among knowledges has for decades been a goal for Indigenous peoples in Latin America to ensure their survival and thriving, and work toward the strengthening of their cultural identity, the development of community-led educational projects, the preservation of their languages, and the recognition of their cosmologies (CONTCEPI, 2008). In Latin America, a dialogue among knowledges is understood as a mutually enriching

relationship between peoples, cultures, and epistemologies to attain a common goal (Ishizawa, 2012). This dialogue among knowledges is a political and epistemic framework that rejects the dichotomy between Western and Indigenous knowledges, created and maintained by colonial discourses (Carenzo et al., 2020; Macedo, 1999; Mignolo, 2000). In doing this, this dialogue among knowledges values those Othered epistemologies (Leyva et al., 2018) that have persisted and continue to exist outside western logics of what counts as science (Pérez-Bustos y Márquez, 2016). Consequently, this dialogue among knowledges opens new possibilities to envision and build a global world otherwise founded on cultural diversity, fair relationships among peoples and their territories, and an equitable coexistence enriched by difference (Leff, 2003). Inviting a dialogue of knowledges in this study, I attempt to add to initiatives led by Indigenous scholars in the Global South and North alike, who continue to advocate for this fair coexistence between Indigenous and western knowledges in the education of Indigenous children and youth (Bang, et al., 2016; Kimmerer, 2013; Smith, 2012). Although this dialogue among Indigenous epistemologies does not entirely dilute colonial asymmetries, it allows for new counterhegemonic epistemic relations, uplifting the knowledges of those communities that remain in the margins in colonial schooling practices.

At the heart of this equitable relationship among epistemologies is the concept of an 'ecology of languages' (Lopez, 2008). The link between the incorporation of Indigenous languages in education and the subsequent improvement in Indigenous students' academic outcomes is a well-established fact supported by numerous authors (Cajete, 1994; Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; McCarty, 2002). This evidence underscores the importance of incorporating Indigenous languages in the curriculum and its direct impact on the educational success and overall well-being of Indigenous students. For Indigenous peoples and activists in Latin America

this positive impact is transparent, hence their historical fight for an education in which Indigenous languages, knowledge systems, and traditions coexist in equitable conditions with western ways of knowing, being, and speaking. (Lopez, 2005).

Decoloniality & Decolonization

In the Global South, resistance to coloniality of being, knowledge, and power has been labeled as decoloniality. Decoloniality is a way of being, thinking, and doing that acknowledges unbalanced relations of power intertwined with globalization and coloniality (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). In other words, decoloniality is a critical position -both epistemic and political- that results in efforts to deconstruct colonial relations of power that have been historically inherited and appropriated (Maldonado-Torres, 2006; Mignolo, 2007; Walsh, 2013). At its core, decoloniality attempts to dismantle "conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world" (Maldonado-Torres, 2006, p.117). Decoloniality also strives to overcome and react to cultural and linguistic impositions and supremacy (Fandiño-Parra, 2021), and to recenter ethnic communities in the Global South: their existence, their languages, cultures, and their knowledges (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Achieving these aims requires the willingness to embrace the perspectives from communities whose existence and ways of being have been systematically marginalized, as lenses necessary to read the world (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

Decolonization -not decoloniality- is the more common word used by communities and social movements to name their resistance to ongoing forms of coloniality (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Decolonization no longer refers solely to the end of colonial political and economic

relations between countries (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). According to Cote-Meek (2014), colonization has four dimensions "it concerns *the land, it requires a specific structure of ideology to proceed, it is violent and it is ongoing" p. 18***.** Hence, decolonization addresses issues of repatriation of land and Indigenous life (Tuck & Yang, 2012); place and material conditions of communities (Cabral, 1974, Fanon, 1963; Mignolo, 2020), language rights (Macedo, 2019; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2016), and education (Battiste, 2017). Put differently, decolonizing efforts have extended to all areas of society to reckon with racial, ethnic, linguistic hierarchies imposed by European narratives of modernity.

These overlapping agendas have resulted in the interchangeable use of these concepts by different authors such as Quijano (2000) who defines epistemological decolonization as decoloniality or Maldonado-Torres, (2007) who states that *"In short, with decolonization I am thinking of oppositions to the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being.* (p261). Similarly, Walsh (2005) asserts that instead of being something different, decoloniality represents a strategy beyond the transformation of what it means to be decolonized, and extends its meaning to the construction or creation of something new (Walsh, 2005, p.24). In her view, "it is the political meaning and project that matter and not the word itself" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p.56). In these overlapping aims, decolonization has been understood as 'epistemic disobedience' (Mignolo, 2011), discursive 'delinkings' (Mignolo, 2007), and liberation of the mind (wa Thiong'o, 1986) from colonial thought. In sum, decoloniality/decolonization supports the pursuit to dismantle colonial relations, resist gender oppression, capitalism, patriarchy, racism, resist linguistic imperialism and challenge power relations among languages, and resist coloniality in all of its manifestations.

Coloniality of Power, Knowledge, and Being

Coloniality survives colonialism (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) which is the political domination of one country over another for economic exploitation. The multiple forms in which coloniality operates have come to be known as a Colonial Matrix of Power CMP (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). That is, this Eurocentric hegemony has created, among many other forms of coloniality, a coloniality of power (Maldonado Torres, 2007), coloniality of knowledge (Lander, 2000), and coloniality of being (Mignolo, 2003) that continue to rule the globe.

Coloniality of power advances discourses in which race is used for the naturalization of colonial relations and exploitation of certain communities whereas coloniality of knowledge addresses the politics of knowledge generation and denounces the ways in which Indigenous and other minoritized knowledges have been pushed to the margins to favor western forms of knowledge production and reproduction in education and other spheres of society (Lander, 2000; Mignolo, 2003). Hence, while coloniality of power refers to the interrelation among modern forms of exploitation and domination, and the coloniality of knowledge has to do with impact of colonization on the different areas of knowledge production, coloniality of being refers to the lived experience of colonization and its impact on language and the racialization of the communities that speak those languages.This colonial matrix of power becomes the accepted world order and is reified through an amalgam of policies, actions and behaviors that extend to all areas of societies (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Thus, unveiling these multiple forms of coloniality and their impact, particularly on minoritized communities, is paramount in any effort to decolonize different spheres of society.

All these forms of coloniality extend to the field of language teaching and learning. Evidence of this is the way languages are hierarchized in school curricula, the way language ideologies inform learners' decisions to learn (or not) certain languages, in how certain knowledges and languages are privileged or marginalized in language policies and education, and in the decisions communities make to sustain their languages across generations or to adopt a dominant one. As noted by Garcia (2019) "standardized named western European languages, and especially English, have been the key to the continuation of this 'coloniality of power.'" p.159. Along these lines, Pennycook (2019) asserts that, given the far-reaching consequences of the hegemony of English and the multiplicity of ways in which it surfaces in language education, "for those of us involved in ELT, we need to consider how all that we do in the name of English teaching is ineluctably connected to power and politics, coloniality, and modernity." p.181. Exploring possibilities to decolonize language education and to resist these multiple forms of coloniality in English teaching takes particular relevance in contexts where minoritized languages are already competing for recognition and survival against another colonial language.

Indigenization

Despite the relevance and growing popularity of decolonizing/decolonial theories and approaches in the field of education, most decolonizing efforts continue to take place in colonial spaces, framed in colonial curricula, and informed by colonial teaching practices (Lavallee, 2020; Tuck & Yang, 2012). These decolonizing efforts also fail to center Indigenous people's connections to land (Corntassel, 2008). That is, decolonizing efforts are"still essentially rooted in Western colonial epistemologies" (Pardy & Pardy, 2020, p.233), even when spaces are beginning to gradually decolonize (Grafton & Melancon, 2020).

To avoid the cooptation of Indigenous perspectives in decolonial projects, especially in the field of education (Tuck & Yang, 2012), Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars continue to advocate for the Indigenization of education. Although decolonization and Indigenization are often used interchangeably, Sium et al. (2012, ii) assert that "decolonization does not exist without a framework that centers and privileges Indigenous life, community, and epistemology". In other words, decolonization does not happen without a process of indigenization.

Indigenization refers to "efforts to transform spaces, processes, and institutions founded in non-Indigenous cultures to include Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and acting and the persons who practice them." (Grafton & Melançon, 2020, p.149). It draws on the multiplicity of Indigenous identities (Gray & Coates, 2010) and entails the recognition that "something of great value existed in the "old ways." (Wildcat, 2001, p.8), thus it should guide the education of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

In this process of Indigenizing, "landscapes, images, languages, themes, metaphors, and stories of the Indigenous world" (Smith, 2012, p.147) are consciously centered while explicitly acknowledging that such world views are not subordinate to colonial world views. Indigenizing requires incorporating the voices of knowledge keepers and Elders to inform schooling practices and scholarly work, to prevent the exploitation and misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples. In this process, teachers are asked to "build relationships between Indigenous knowledge systems and Western knowledge systems" (Sammel et al., 2020, p.ix). Since knowledge and language cannot be detached from one another (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018), inherent to processes of Indigenization is the sustenance of Indigenous languages. Weenie (2020) contends that

> *An articulation of Indigenous epistemologies begins by acknowledging and honouring our languages. It is proposed that by using our languages, we can privilege Indigenous*

knowledges. It is in our languages that we come to know and understand deeply about Indigenous epistemologies. p.3.

To achieve these aims, Indigenizing academic spaces requires more than just increasing Indigenous representation in institutions (Tuck, 2018). It requires capacity building for students, staff, and Indigenous intellectuals and activists so that they bring Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing and transform educational colonial spaces that are not designed for those ways of existing in our society (Bishop et al., 2007). This work should be co-created with Indigenous communities and led by them to avoid tokenism and cooptation of Indigenous systems of knowledge and values (Grafton & Melançon, 2020). This allyship might prevent that the incorporation of Indigenous histories and cultures in the curriculum, turns into mere "symbolic gestures" (Cooper, Major, & Grafton, 2018, p. 55), while no real agendas exist to transform the material conditions and education of Indigenous peoples. Finally, Indigenist authors and activists insist that processes of Indigenization require the development of connections to land and communities as well (Weenie, 2020). In sum, Indigenizing movements in education stem from the need to transform institutions so that a) the linguistic and epistemic violence present in the curriculum is addressed; b) Indigenous knowledges are not tokenized and co-opted; c) Indigenous peoples have an active role in the transformation of educational spaces d) and Indigenous peoples and their relation to the land are centered.

Extending these aims to the field of ELT is paramount to resist and transform hegemonic English language ideologies. In ELT, this Indigenization refers to the transformation of English teaching and learning drawing from epistemologies that arise from the margins. Particularly, from a Global South that has for long struggled for recognition in an endless sea of narratives that devalue the existence and the languages of those deemed less: less human, less

knowledgeable, less bilingual. Indigenizing language teaching, and particlarly ELT, aims to return Indigenous English learners to their land, to take them out of classroom spaces where their language and values are confined to a curriculum that "talks" about their ways of being (Volfová, 2015) and tokenizes their existence through the incorporation of cultural topics, through superficial representation of Indigenous peoples, and through their description as "the other" in lessons. That is, Indigenizing ELT centers the voices of Indigenous peoples, their land, languages, cultural practices and knowledge systems to redress the historic imbalance between English and Indigenous languages.

In this Indigenization of ELT, English becomes a means to unveil the multiple forms of coloniality that impact Indigenous communities and shape their perceptions of their own existence. It also attempts to visibilize the multiple ways in which Indigenous communities continue to resist and thrive by centering the knowledges that come from the land. In other words, while decolonizing efforts have for long described the ways in which coloniality marginalizes Indigenous communities and their languages, the Indigenization of ELT draws on the agency of Indigenous peoples to challenge colonial language education by articulating collaborations between intergenerational community members and English teachers. In this process of Indigenization, the allyship of English teachers and community members becomes central to dismantle relations of power between languages, advanced by colonial language policies and school curricula.

By Indigenizing ELT in Latin America, Indigenous English learners no longer require another colonial language such as Spanish to navigate English lessons in Indigenous territories. Instead, Indigenous languages such as Wayuunaiki are validated in their own right, to connect students to their ways of being, knowing, and doing, while Indigenous English learners use

English as a means to affirm, center, and strengthen their linguistic and cultural identities. In sum, this Indigenization constitutes an epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2009) and disrupts the hegemony of English, as Indigenous people and English teachers collaborate to achieve an ecology of languages (Lopez, 2005; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994) and a dialogue among knowledges (Patzi, 1999). This ecology would be possible by centering Indigenous lands that have historically sustained these knowledges and languages and shaped the experiences of indigenous communities (Escobar, 2000). These aims can be achieved through an approach known as Land-Based Education.

Land-Based Education

Western societies see land as a place or a material object available for exploitation to achieve colonial-capitalist development. Instead, for Indigenous cultures, land is fundamental to their identity as a people. It is connected to the ways they experience the world and get to know it; it is knowing and knowledge (Coulthard, 2010). As stated by Meyer (2008) “One does not simply learn about land, we learn best from land" (p.218). This connection to the land propels Indigenous peoples’ resistance to colonial, anti-Indigenous power relations in education (Tupper, 2011). Hence, any attempt to decolonize education should further relationships between Indigenous peoples and their land (Simpson, 2014), “in a physical, social and spiritual sense” (Wildcat et al., 2014, p.2).

Land-based education (Simpson, 2002; 2017) is a decolonial framework founded on ethical practices and grounded in Indigenous knowledge (Wildcat et al., 2014). It is an approach to education that unveils and strives to dismantle the impact of coloniality on Indigenous communities and their land (Brayboy & Maughan 2009). It centers place and highlights Indigenous communities’ relationship with the land and all beings that inhabit it (Cajete, 2000;

Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). In other words, it disrupts the human/nonhuman divide on which definitions of land are built (Bang & Medin 2010). Hence, more than a set of strategies, land-based education is the ethical incorporation of Indigenous knowledges and knowledge systems in the curriculum (Lees et al., 2021), led by Indigenous peoples.

In this sense, land-based education contributes not only to focus decolonizing/Indigenizing efforts on the land, but to resist the multiple ways in which coloniality operates: power, knowledge, and being. By centering Indigenous peoples, land-based education challenges the way race and ethnicity have been used to sustain colonial relations that naturalize the exploitation and marginalization of Indigenous communities. Put differently, because land-based education is led by Indigenous communities, it shifts colonial power dynamics and asserts the sovereignty of Indigenous communities and their right to lead the education of their children and youth.

By the same token, land-based education addresses coloniality of knowledge by challenging the politics of knowledge generation, breaking “historical and contemporary relationship between education and the reproduction of settler-colonial power and associated forms of knowledge” (Wildcat et al., 2014, p.3), and privileging the diversity of Indigenous knowledges. Through land-based education, Indigenous communities resist attempts to annihilate their knowledge systems, thus challenging the epistemic hegemony furthered by colonial education policies.

Considering that relationships with the land sustain Indigenous languages (Wildcat et al., 2014), land-based education disrupts linguicism in language policies. That is, it disrupts language ideologies and practices that result in “unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups" (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988, p.13). If unchallenged, these

language ideologies result in linguicide; the annihilation of languages. Hence, land-based education resists coloniality of being and its inherent connection to language by nurturing spaces in which Indigenous peoples reclaim their linguistic rights (Macedo, 2019; Tochon, 2019) while also coping with linguistic demands embedded in school curricula.

To summarize, land-based education centers the land in its multiple dimensions thus creating spaces for Indigenous communities to privilege their ways of knowing, speaking, doing, and being in the world. Embedded in land-based education is the resistance to the multiplicity of ways in which coloniality surfaces in language policies and education as well as the means for communities to preserve local epistemologies in the face of globalization (Higgins & Sharma, 2017). Hence, land-based education allows Indigenous communities to shape their education, to signify the world in their own terms (Smith, 2009), and to pave the way to a more just, sustainable future for their children and youth (Lees, et al., 2021; Nxumalo, 2018). Thus, in this proposal, I explore the contributions of Land-based education to the Indigenization of English teaching and learning, in an attempt to achieve an ecology of knowledges and languages that sustains Indigenous ways of knowing, being, speaking, and doing.

Taken together, these theories unveil how language education, particularly in English, worldwide is fraught with colonial ideologies framed within neoliberal agendas that are harmful to Indigenous peoples and their languages. This is even more evident in territories where Indigenous languages already contend with a national colonial language such as Spanish. Consequently, given that educating Indigenous children and youth on their land has historically helped Indigenous peoples worldwide to sustain and revitalize their languages and ways of being as they contend with one colonial language, drawing on land-based education may assist Indigenous schools and communities in a context like Colombia to resist the hegemony of two

colonial languages and strive for an ecology of knowledges. Thus, this study is set out to explore the possibilities to Indigenize language education in general, and ELT in particular, and to sustain Indigenous languages and epistemologies in the Wayuu territory, through land-based education, as English, Spanish, and Wayuunaiki teachers and different community members collaborate to (re)envision and enact an Indigenized language curriculum. That is, a language curriculum that attains an ecology of language and knowledges, challenges the hegemony of Spanish and English language and culture, counters multiple forms of coloniality, centers Indigenous voices, and prepares students to meet academic demands. Land-based education is not entirely new to this context, in fact, recent efforts have been made to redress the education of Wayuu children and youth so that it reflects Indigenous ways of being as mandated by ethno education policies. This approach to education, however, has only recently begun to be considered in subjects like math and science while, overall, the curriculum continues to be dominated by Spanish and English, advances colonial ideologies, and is rooted in western teaching practices in its entirety.

Research Questions

Striving to achieve an ecology of knowledges and languages is central to this Indigenization of language, especially in ELT. This study will focus on this goal by bringing together intergenerational members of the Wayuu people to collaborate with the Spanish-English and Wayuunaiki school teachers to weave together different knowledges and languages. In addition, given the colonial nature of Spanish and English language teaching, this study will seek to explore whether this collaboration to Indigenize language opens up possibilities to unveil the multiple forms of coloniality that impact Indigenous communities and shape their perceptions of their own existence. Similarly, given the centrality Mother Earth has for Indigenous peoples, it is important to investigate in what ways a land-based approach may contribute to this

Indigenization of language teaching and to the preparation of students to meet academic demands in English. Thus, this qualitative study will seek to answer the following research questions:

- To what extent does the Indigenization of language teaching create the conditions for an ecology of knowledges and languages in the Wayuu territory?
    - How is this Indigenization of language teaching mediated by the collaboration of different members of the Wayuu community, along with the Spanish-English and Wayuunaiki teachers?
- In what ways do school-community collaborations centered on land-based pedagogies contribute to unveiling coloniality in language teaching and learning in the Wayuu territory?
    - In what ways does this collaboration contribute to countering coloniality in language teaching and learning in the Wayuu territory?
- In what ways does the Indigenization of language teaching, particularly English, contribute to preparing students to meet curriculum academic demands?

Chapter Three - Methodology

In this study, I draw from dialogue among knowledges, a body of theory developed by Indigenous peoples in Latin America, intended to counter the dominance of Western ways of knowing in the schooling experience of Indigenous children and youth (Lopez, 2020). Seeking a dialogue among knowledges, this study intends to blur the imagined line that divides and legitimizes some ways of being and speaking (Garcia et al., 2021) while delegitimizing the existence and ancestral languages of those who inhabit the Global South. Drawing from the concept of dialogue among knowledges will enable me to unpack ways in which the language curriculum, teaching practices, and students' responses position Western and Indigenous knowledge along this imagined line. Central to fostering a dialogue among knowledges is the presence of an ecology of languages (Mora, 2016) in which power relations are addressed to ensure an equitable coexistence among languages.

In addition to this, I draw from decolonization which in the specific field of language education questions the symbolic and material violence present in language policies, instruction and assessment (Austin, 2019) that continue to marginalize minoritized languages. It interrogates colonial agendas that treat language and culture as separate (Tochon, 2019) and that attempt to assimilate students from minoritized communities into the language and culture of dominant ones (Giroux, 2016). In this study, resisting assimilation is key given that Wayuu students already grapple with Spanish, a colonial language that dominates their schooling experience. The way decolonization in English teaching and learning will be addressed is by using English classes to (re)embed Wayuu youth in their land and the knowledge and language of the land, as students unpack relations of power between these languages and develop academic literacies estalished in the curriculum. This articulation of different languages and cultures will enable me

to explore in what ways it is possible to achieve a dialogue among knowledges and an ecology of languages, as well as whether and how it impacts students' linguistic and cultural identities.

Indigenization which refers to "efforts to transform spaces, processes, and institutions founded in non-Indigenous cultures to include Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and acting and the persons who practice them." (Grafton & Melançon, 2020, p.149) is an important theory in study. This transformation of spaces is a core objective in my study given that the Wayuu land will be centered to avoid the tokenization or surface incorporation of Indigenous topics in the curriculum. Equally important in this Indigenization is the centrality of languages and Indigenous stories (Smith, 2012) while explicitly acknowledging that Indigenous worldviews are not subordinate to colonial ones. The process of Indigenization proposed in this study aligns with this aim since I intend to balance the power relations in which Spanish, English and Wayuunaiki currently engage, by centering the land and the epistemologies of the land, thus paving the way for a dialogue among knowledges and an ecology of languages.

Finally, I draw upon Land-based education which unveils and strives to dismantle the impact of coloniality on Indigenous communities and their land (Brayboy & Maughan 2009). More than a set of strategies, land-based education is the ethical incorporation of Indigenous knowledges and knowledge systems in the curriculum (Lees et al., 2021), led by Indigenous peoples. The centrality of the land, along with the ethical incorporation of Indigenous knowledge systems driven by intergenerational Wayuu members will guide this research. The encounters between Wayuu youth and intergenerational members of the Wayuu people on the land, intend to (re)connect Wayuu youth to Wayuunaiki and the practices and knowledges stemming from the land, in an attempt to unveil the impact multiple forms of coloniality have had on the land, the language, epistemologies, and ways on knowing that arise from the land. These encounters will

also enable me to understand ways in which Wayuu youth identify this imagined line and how they resist the marginalization of their knowledges and languages.

My Positionality

I approach this research aware that I have been labeled a Mestiza whose Indigenous and Black roots have been erased from my upbringing. This reality keeps me away from fully understanding the experiences and perspectives of these communities, which have mostly been portrayed as uncivilized in my country, through multiple sources of media. However, instead of focusing this research on the multiple ways Indigenous communities have been historically oppressed and marginalized, promoting more damage-centered research (Tuck, 2009) than is already available, I began envisioning this study as a way to give back and open spaces for reparation for these communities. Colombia has an "educational debt" (Ladson-Billings, 2006), to Indigenous communities. Thus, this project is grounded on my conviction that Indigenous peoples and their epistemologies are entitled to recognition and validation in the school system. It is also grounded on my determination to create spaces where this Indigenous community collaborates with educators to envision teaching practices that affirm the cultures and languages, not as part of a subject that can be co-opted, but as the core through-line of the school curricula. Despite my commitments, I do not enter this research positioned as a savior, ripping the Wayuú people off their agency to stand for themselves. In addition, these commitments do not make me oblivious of the power dynamics that permeate my interaction with different members of this community.

Because I have built a relationship for some years with a member of the clan Arpushana in the Wayuú community, I became more sensitive to the realities of this community, which inspired my interest to work in this context. Although this relationship allowed me to gain access

to the local authorities to obtain their consent for this research project, this does not mitigate the power differentials created by my ethnicity, mastery of Spanish as the colonizing language that it is, and education level I bring to this research. I also cannot claim any Indigenous belonging and my limited knowledge of Wayuunaiki, the language of this community, certainly positions me as an outsider.

Being an outsider to this community comes with great ethical responsibilities and commitments. To honor this community and their generosity allowing me to enter their land, adn to ensure I engage in ethical relationships throughout this research, I will continuously ask myself the questions proposed by *Audra Simpson (2007) "Can I do this and still come home; what am I revealing here and why? Where will this get us? Who benefits from this and why?" (p. 78).* I will also ensure that this research is not "on" but "with" and "for" the community (Koster, Baccar, & Lemelin, 2012). Aside from adhering to the ethical procedures established by the Wayuu people in terms of consent, I will ensure that data collection, analysis, and the presentation of results respond to the community protocols and practices. That is, I will treat research as ceremony (Wilson, 2008) by centering Wayuu methodologies, ontologies, and epistemologies, and by honoring the relationship with the community from the beginning to the end. This involves engaging them in academic presentations and publications and supporting the community in ways that benefit them and are within my capacity.

Research Strategy and Design

This study is qualitative in nature and follows a Community-Based Design Research CBDR approach (Bang, et al. 2016). Community-Based Design Research (CBDR) is "a reworking of design-based research methods because it privileges and centers the work in community, engages broad ranges of community members, and is driven by community

members" (Bang et al., 2016, p.4). At the core of CBDR are design commitments that privilege learning across generations and that strive to strategically transform institutional relations (Bang et al., 2016); both of which are aims central to this research proposal. CBDR also addresses the limitations of place-based research which "fails to meaningfully address colonial legacies in education" (Calderon, 2014, p.33). Because CBDR is led by community members on their land, it challenges colonial relations of power and ideologies prevalent in westernized teaching practices that often invisibilize Indigenous ways of knowing. These tenets of CBRD align with my project for I seek to foster school-community collaborations drawing on land-based education, to understand how this impacts Indigenous learners' linguistic and cultural identity. By centering the land and the voices of different community members across generations, this study also seeks to explore the possibilities land-based education provides to counter coloniality in language teaching and learning in the Wayuu territory and to envision possibilities for an Indigenized curriculum. These purposes fall within the qualitative research paradigm, given their reliance on the participants' perspectives to understand how they are making sense of this research experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In addition, this research design will be conducted in a natural setting and will require the analysis of words, and detailed description of participants and their views to build a holistic picture of the results, all of which are features of qualitative research (Creswell, 1998).

Broader Context

In Colombia, the vast majority of local languages initially spoken in the territory (more than 100 languages) were drastically reduced with years of colonization (Etxebarria, 2018; Ardila, 2010). As a result of the struggles of indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups and social movements, the Political Constitution of 1991 declared Colombia as a multiethnic and

pluricultural country and gave official recognition to local languages in the territories where they are spoken, supported by ethno-education laws intended to preserve ancestral languages and cultures. However, efforts to sustain this cultural and linguistic diversity have not been enough given the privileged positions that Spanish holds in the education system (Etxebarria, 2018). This situation has been aggravated by the relentless emergence of English language policies that mandate English to be learned so that the country becomes more competitive as defined by narratives of globalization. In fact, tracing the number of governmental policies and initiatives to foster the learning of English and the ones to foster the revival or strengthening of local languages, the disparity is undeniable. This disparity goes alongside the fact that language policies for local languages have never been pushed throughout the whole education system, as it has always been the case for foreign languages.

Bilingualism Law (Ley 1651)

To ensure the incorporation of English in the education system, In 2013, the national government issued the Bilingualism Law (Ley 1651, 2013) in order to modify several articles of the General Education Law, 1994. These amendments intended to complement the general goals of education at the elementary, secondary levels by adding goals related to the development of oral and written language skills in a foreign language. This law also established the teaching of English as a priority in public institutions and claimed not to affect the education that should be provided to Indigenous peoples.

National English Program: Colombia Very Well 2015-2025

In 2014, the government decided to launch a new program called *Programa Nacional de Inglés Colombia Very Well 2015-2025* intended to turn Colombia into the most educated country in Latin America, with the highest English proficiency in South America by 2025. This ambitious initiative set guidelines for the language curriculum that continued to enforce English teaching and learning.

The mandates of ethno education, the dominance of Spanish, the compulsory nature of English language policies, and the restrictive definition of bilingualism (Spanish-English) enforced by the government create trying conditions for schools located in Indigenous territories which must ensure that Indigenous children and youth preserve their languages, cultures, and epistemologies, and learn Spanish and English to cope with standardized testing delivered solely in these languages.

Setting

Let me take you to La Guajira, an Indigenous territory located on the northernmost part of Colombia, home to the Wayuu people: the largest Indigenous group in the country. In the heart of a desert that meets the Caribbean Sea, you can witness the strength and resilience of the Wayuu people, who have managed to sustain their language and culture despite numerous challenges. These include the presence of one of the largest open-pit coal mines in the world, operated by BHP, Anglo American and Glencore, which poses a threat to the health of Indigenous communities (United Nations, 2020); corruption and historical neglect by the national government resulting in a significant decrease in their population each year due to illness and malnutrition (Human Rights Watch, 2020); and ongoing oppression and

stigmatization faced by Indigenous peoples in Colombia, both within and outside the education system (Usma et al., 2018).

A visit to this Indigenous land would allow you to witness the enduring presence of Wayuunaiki, the ancestral language of the Wayuu people, within families and clans that have passed it down through generations. You will also notice that elementary schools in rural areas ensure that Wayuu children receive education in their native language until the third grade. For kids that attend schools out of their community, instruction takes place predominantly in Spanish with a recent incorporation of English classes, from the moment they start their schooling experience. Such is the case of Nuestra Senora de Fatima, an elementary-middle-high school located in Manaure, an Indigenous territory historically inhabited by the Wayuu people. This school context is shaped by an entanglement of national language and ethno-education policies. This rural school predominantly serves Wayuu youth and is regulated by the Colombian ethno education policy intended to foster *educacion propia,* that is, education tailored according to the needs, cosmogony, worldviews, knowledge systems, and language of Indigenous peoples. This is the only high school in this area so all students from the different clans and rancherias (Indigenous reservations) in this Wayuu rural area attend this school.

Most Wayuu children arrive in this school strong in their Mother tongue, Wayuunaiki, which for many of them is the only language spoken at home. However, for Wayuu children, the beginning of their schooling journeys comes with the dominance of Spanish since all subjects are taught in this language, with the exception of one hour of instruction in Wayuunaiki and 2 hours in English. Although Wayuunaiki receives less hours of instruction, this language is only given space in the curriculum until 9th grade, whereas English continues to receive more hours and is taught until grade 11; the last grade in the Colombian education system.

Key Learnings from a Pilot Study

Results from a pilot study I conducted between 2021-2022 revealed that teachers, schools administrators, and other community members perceive in students what they have described as "ethnic shame". According to them, students are increasingly reluctant to speak Wayuunaiki and to engage in their cultural practices. This "ethnic shame" according to the school principal is, among other factors, the result of schooling practices that do little to sustain the language and culture of the Wayuu people. Aware of this, the school has started to rethink their curriculum to center Wayuu epistemologies across subjects. Other learnings from this pilot study indicate that:

- Despite teachers and school administrators' unanimous agreement that Wayuunaiki should be allocated more hours in the curriculum, English and Spanish continue to hold a privileged space.

- Different members of the Wayuu people have expressed their concern about the colonial education students are receiving and the lack of sustenance of Wayuu perspectives in schooling practices.
- Wayuu students have an easier time learning English when the English teacher connects vocabulary directly to Wayuunaiki.
- The use of Wayuunaiki is being restricted in classrooms where students are demanded to use Spanish. This is consistent with personal stories narrated by older members of the community, which in some cases resulted in their loss of Wayuunaiki.
- There is a perceived need to create spaces for teachers and students to get closer to the Wayuu culture, language, and knowledge systems.

- There is a perceived need to collaborate with different community members to ensure that the curriculum truly reflects content relevant to Wayuu children and youth. To address this need, the school has started to insert Indigenous perspectives in subjects like math and science and a Knowledge keeper is now a part of school staff.

Participants

Following CBDR principles, participants in this study were selected by members of the school community along with members of the Wayuu people. In their view, ninth grade students would benefit the most from this research, given that this is the last grade they are exposed to Wayuunaiki classes as part of the school curriculum. Given the impact of coloniality in this school context, a number of these students have distanced from their language and cultural identities. Thus, (re)embedding students in the land and the language of the land could strengthen their cultural and linguistic identities while also gaining the academic skills in English indicated in the curriculum.

Hence, all 34 students in 9th grade level were invited to be a part of this research project. Every time students (re)embeded in the land through talking circles (Brayboy et al., 2012; Majin-Melenje, 2018), they were invited to record their reactions using ***photovoice*** -an increasingly used strategy in Indigenous and Community-Based Design Research (Carroll, et al., 2018). Talking Circles are a traditional Indigenous methodology intended, among many other purposes, to connect with other members at a spiritual, intellectual, or emotional level (Brown & Di Lallo, 2020) and to elicit members' insight around a particular topic that impacts their community (Brandenburger et al., 2017). The following table offers a general description of the students. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identities:

Name	Age	Clan
Nestor	14	Arpushana
Eleinis	18	Uriana
Rafael Elias	18	Pushaina
Roger	20	Arpushana
Berenice	15	Arpushana
Dana	14	Epieyu
Jair Jose	16	Uriana
Sheila	16	Epiayu
Hilda	15	Epiayu
Guillermo	18	Epiayu
Nudys	18	Epiayu
Dalvis	18	Epiayu
Lajayaleth	14	Epieyu
Yolimar	15	Epieyu
Darwin	18	Epieyu
Elizabeth G.	14	Arpushana
Cindy Carolina	14	Ipuana Arpushana
Yulibeth	16	Ipuana
Edwin	16	Ipuana
Jean Carlos	17	Ipuana
Clarisbel	15	Arpushana
Yender	15	Bouriyu
Jhonatan	17	Pushaina
Elizabeth P.	15	Pushaina
Cilena	16	Uriana
Aucinia	15	Urariyu

Ovidio	18	Urariyu
Bernando	20	Uriana
Yanelis	14	Uriana Urariyu
Jose David	15	Uriana
Saideth	18	Uriana
Keiner	14	Epieyu
Amilkar	15	Jusayu
Elizabeth V.	15	Uriana

Table 1: Students' Information

Other participants in this study were the school principal, the Wayuuaniki teacher, and the English-Spanish teacher, who expressed their desire to be a part of it, during the pilot study conducted in 2021-2022. Both teachers collaborated to support these 9th graders in their strengthening and development of Wayuunaiki and English in a balanced way. Similarly, given the relevance that learning across generations has in CBDR (Bang et al., 2016) students' families and other community members were invited to participate. Following is a description of these participants and their role in this study:

Participants	Role
Alfredo	Knowledge Keeper appointed to the school. Led talking circles about Pütchipü'üi, the main authority in the Wayuu normative system, and about Hunting in the Wayuu territory
Juvenal	Knowledge Keeper. Led talking circle about Yonna, a Wayuu sacred dande
Francia	Knowledge Keeper. Led talking circle about midwifery

Analdo	Knowledge Keeper - led talking circle about community gardens
Rogelio	Knowledge Keeper and Local Authority - Led Talking circle about ancestral Calendar
Estefania	Community Leader - Facilitated Class Discussion about leadership roles in the Wayuu territory. Supported Project design and impementation
Nereida	School Principal
Agneris	Spanish-English teacher
Victoria	Wayuunaiki Teacher

Table 2. Participants' Roles

These intergenerational participants were key informants (Patton, 2002) in this project. Their participation was mediated through storywork which is an Indigenous methodology used to engage Indigenous research participants (Archibald, 2008). Through talking circles, Wayuu people shared stories centered on land-based practices and knowledges. Through their stories, these members of the Wayuu people led students to (re)connect to their land and language. Following, each talking circle the English teacher used English classes as a space to vindicate Wayuunaiki and Wayuu epistemologies through different class activities, to foster a dialogue among knowledge and an ecology of languages. In what follows, I will describe the specifics of this land-based education proposal.

Land-based Education Proposal

Although this school community has recently begun to draw on Wayuu epistemologies to teach subjects like math and science in connection to the land, Land-based education has not been considered in the English classroom. Similarly, when the knowledge systems of the Wayuu people are accounted for in the curriculum, the voices of community members are not included.

Thus, these are factors I considered in the design of this Land-based education proposal that strived to Indigenize the English classroom. Firstly, each week, lessons incorporated the learning objectives established in the English and Wayuunaiki curricula. These objectives were discussed and adjusted with the English and Wayuunaiki teachers. Secondly, each week there was stalking circle guided by a specific member of the Wayuu people. Thanks to this, the values, ways of being, knowing, and doing of that particular member and role in the Wayuu territory framed the English lessons during that specific week. This engagement of community members and centrality of the land kept the research implementation faithful to land-based pedagogies.

Data Generation

For this research project, data was collected over a four-month period that extended between May and September 2023. During this period of collecting data, storywork (Archibald, 2008) was embedded in talking circles (Brayboy et al., 2012; Majin-Melenje, 2018) led by different school and community members. In addition to this, I used photovoice (Carroll, et al., 2018), field notes, participant class observations, and semi-structured conversations, which honor oral traditions of Indigenous peoples (Kovach, 2010) and align with methods used in CBDR. Students' produced artifacts and a final questionnaire were also used to collect data in this research. The incorporation of these multiple sources of data allowed me to triangulate them, provide a more comprehensive understanding of my research questions, and enhance trustworthiness (Bhattacharya, 2017). This data collection was ongoing and it was simultaneously analyzed during three major phases described below. Throughout each phase, I took detailed notes and used audio and video recordings to gather data. Having these videos and recordings of specific stages enabled me to better analyze data and answer the research questions guiding this study.

Phase 1: Preparing the Soil

The purpose of this phase was manifold. Firstly, by setting up planning sessions, I sought to collaborate with community members in the planning stage to determine the scope of this study and the Wayuu values, knowledge systems, and cultural practices they deemed important to uplift in this study. Secondly, though class observations, this phase enabled me to better understand the context of the English classes, and the role of English, Wayuunaiki, and Spanish in this classroom context. Finally, with the incorporation of an ethnoautobiography (Kremer, 2003) I sought to provide students with a space for self-representation and agency (Vizenor, 1994) to effect the implementation of this study by suggesting topics they wanted to delve deeper into.

Planning Sessions

Estefania and I met on May 24 and May 31, 2023, to discuss the implementation of this study. In these meetings, Estefania explained core values and cultural practices for the Wayuu people. She outlined important roles in her territory and emphasized the need to center Wayuu methodologies, ontologies, and epistemologies in the project development. During these meetings we discussed traditional food we could provide during talking circles, logistics to take students to different parts of the territory and Wayuu protocols of reciprocity. That is, she emphasized the need to treat research as ceremony (Wilson, 2008). On June 15, 2023, I met with the school principal, coordinator, and Wayuunaiki and English teachers to get their insight on this initial planning and to adjust it accordingly.

Class Observations

Another important component in this initial phase was to understand how Wayuunaiki, Spanish, and English interacted in the English class and were positioned through discourses and practices, by both the teacher and students. To this end, I conducted two English class observations before starting the implementation of this Land-Based Education proposal. Conducting class observations allowed me to see whether and how coloniality plays out in the language curriculum, teaching instruction, and students' responses and interactions. Each observation lasted 50 minutes which corresponded to a class period. During these observations, I took detailed notes of the way topics were addressed and the space English, Spanish, and Wayuunaiki occupied in the English classes. Moreover, drawing on decoloniality, these observations helped me to identify the teacher's and students' attempts to resist different forms of coloniality and to attain an ecology of languages and a dialogue among knowledges in this space. These class observations provided useful data on students' English learning process to cope with standardized testing and with academic demands set by the English curriculum.

Ethnic Autobiography

This data collection instrument **(See Appendix A**) was created in collaboration with Estefania and was piloted with different teenagers from Taiwakat, one of the rancherias in La Guajira, to ensure the guiding questions and word choice were clear and accessible. With this ethnic autobiography, aside from gathering students' demographic information, I intended to gain insight into students' ethnic and linguistic identity and language use in and out of school. Given that community members and some school administrators had described signs of students' shame in their ethnic identity, I wanted to provide students with the opportunity to self-represent and speak about their lived experiences on their own terms. Additionally, this instrument

intended to give students' agency in deciding on the Wayuu traditions they wanted to learn more about throughout this project development.

Phase 2: Planting the Seed - Learning from the Land

This major phase intended to immerse Wayuu students in Land-Based education driven by intergenerational community members. Through talking circles, different community members creates spaces to (re)connect students to the land and to the multiple ways in which Wayuu epistemologies are embedded in the land. Building a school-community collaboration led by Wayuu people who spoke in Wayuunaiki disrupted the dominance of Spanish and opened a door toward an ecology of languages. To attain these aims, this phase was divided into four major steps that involved the use of storytelling, photovoice, field notes, talking circles, and participant class observations. Each step as well as the purpose of each data collection strategy will be described below.

Step 1 - Storywork through Talking Circles: Learning from the Land and the Language and People of the Land

Each week, for one hour, one community member met with students to share their knowledge through a talking circle filled with stories. These talking circles took place in different Wayuu communities with the exception of 2 weeks when due to the road conditions, knowledge keepers came to the school. Because most community members invited to this project speak mostly Wayuunaiki, this in itself centered Wayuunaiki in this connection to the land; a core aim of storywork in Indigenous research methods (Kovach, 2010).

Step 2 - Photovoice: Inviting Participants' Reflections and Knowledge Generation

Protovoice is an increasingly used method in Community-Based Design research, particularly with Indigenous and other marginalized populations (Bennet et al., 2019). According to Wang and Burris, (1997) the use of photovoice strives "(1) to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, (2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and (3) to reach policymakers" (p. 370). After each talking circle, students were asked to visually capture their learning and reflect on it. Consequently, photovoice made evident the ways in which students not only connected to these stories but navigated the tensions stemming from discourses of modernity and from their membership to the Wayuu people. Photovoice was guided by the following questions:

- Describe your picture
- Why did you take this picture? Why is this picture important?
- What did you learn today?
- How did this visit/conversation/story make you feel? Why?
- What did this story teach you about the Wayuu people/culture?

By incorporating photovoice, I strived to Indigenize these Wayuu youth's learning process by centering "landscapes, images, languages, themes, metaphors, and stories of the Indigenous world" (Smith, 2012, p.147) without subordinating them to colonial world views. Drawing on Indigenization, I sought to understand the ways in which Wayuu youth explored, made sense of, and narrated their worldviews in connection to their particular context (Bang et al., 2012). In a nutshell, photovoice became a gateway toward a dialogue among knowledges by bringing Wayuu worldviews absent from students' schooling experience across subjects. It also created an

avenue to achieve an ecology of languages since students were encouraged to record their reflections in their preferred language.

Step 3: Participant Observations - Connecting the Land to the English Classroom

Each visit to the land was paired with one English class to introduce essential vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation related to the content addressed by each Knowledge Keeper. This strategy provided students with the knowledge to read and listen to texts in English, talk to their classmates, and practice academic skills such as synthesizing and summarizing information to meet the standards established in the English curriculum. To attain this, the English teacher and I collaborated designing and revising teaching materials and teaching these lessons. Given my focus on attaining an ecology of languages, throughout this project development, Wayuunaiki, Spanish, and English interacted in different ways. Wayuunaiki was always the main language during talking circles led by Knowledge Keepers. In addition to this, instructions and explanations for the completion of activities such as photovoive and ethnic autobiography were mainly developed in Wayuunaiki, led by Estefania who would come to school and make sure information was accessible for all students. Similarly, Wayuunaiki was incorporated in some of the worksheets intended to have students report their learning gained during talking circles with Knowldge keepers. Given my lack of proficiency in Wayuunaiki, creating these worksheets required consistent collaboration with Estefania and the Wayuunaiki teacher. Incorporating Wayuunaiki enabled students to practice written skills in this language; something they have been increasingly working on to ensure the survival of Wayuunaiki.

Alongside Wayuunaiki, Spanish and English were also incorporated in these worksheets. This multilingual approach enabled students to be exposed to these languages while it also required students to develop some fluency as they completed the activities in all three languages.

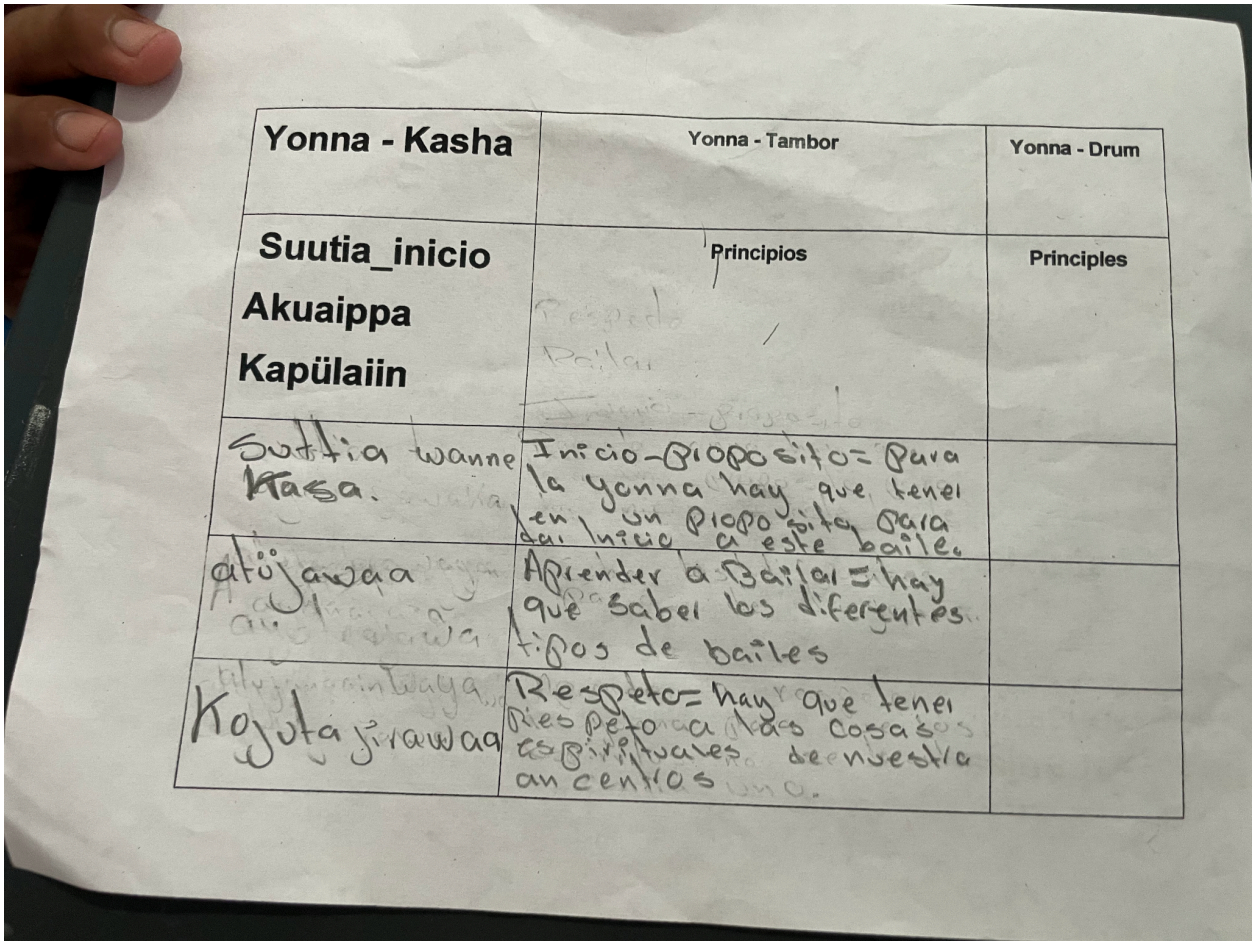
Striving to attain an ecology of languages, some class time would be devoted to working on vocabulary building and pronunciation in all three languages. During some of these lessons, students, as the experts on Wayuunaiki and their culture, taught me what and how to write for certain categories, while I was in charge of bringing the English component into these lessons. Following is an example of a chart students, Estefania, and I developed together, after having engaged in a Talking Circle with a midwife.

Emejiia Wayuu	**Partera**	**Midwife**
Suutia_inicio **Akuaippa** **Kapülaiin**	**Principios**	**Principles**
aiin	**Espiritualidad:** desde **Lapü (sueño) y aseyuu (espiritus/ancestros** que guían a la partera)	Spirituality Dream Ancestors
aiin, kataa ouu	**Sentir:** tacto y cuidado con la mujer. **Nota:** no se ve con los ojos biológicos sino con la espiritualidad.	Feel
eiisalajaa, auunjaa	**Dieta** de los alimentos y cuidados con los ancestros medicinales. **Responsabilidad** del hombre y de la mujer	Diet Responsibility

Table 3: Multilingual Chart to Scaffold Vocabulary

Following this collective sharing of knowledge, students would engage in a reading and listening activity in English, in which the new vocabulary was incorporated. During other classes, students would draw on their collective learning and collaborate filling out charts that illustrated their learning in Wayuunaiki and Spanish with the support of the Wayunaiki teacher.

After this, the English teacher and I would scaffold the vocabulary and language structures needed to access the oral and writen texts in English.



Yonna - Kasha	Yonna - Tambor	Yonna - Drum
Suutia_inicio Akuaippa Kapülaiin	Principios	Principles
Suutia wanne Kasa.	Inicio-Proposito= para la yonna hay que tener en un proposito para dar inicio a este baile.	
atüjawaa	Aprender a bailar = hay que saber los diferentes tipos de bailes	
Kojutajirawaa	Respeto= hay que tener respeto a las cosas espirituales de nuestra ancestros	

Figure 2: Multilingual worksheet to summarize learning after Talking Circles

In addition to multilingual input in the form of worksheets and graphic organizers, during the English class, explanations and instructions would often take place in Spanish and English. Subsequently, the English teacher and I would provide readings and listening exercises that restated what students had learned in the talking circles. This step yielded data to analyze in what ways an Ecology of knowledges and languages can be attained as Wayuu students (re)connect to

the land, without ignoring their needs to be successful in westernized schooling practices (Bang, et al., 2016).

Step 4 - Talking Circles: Promoting Critical Dialogue

Every two weeks, students and the English and Wayuunaiki teachers were invited to a talking circle to promote dialogue around the reflections stemming from photovoice. These hour-long talking circles sought to engage students and teachers in member check-ins to validate, further understand, or refine my initial findings in data analysis. These talking circles led by the Wayuunaiki teacher triggered teachers' and students' reflections on colonial schooling practices. Furthermore, these talking circles led students to reflect on how coloniality has permeated their communities and Wayuu identity and yielded additional data concerning their resistance to coloniality.

Holding these talking circles and member check-ins in Wayunaiki reinforced the presence of this language during the project development. During these talking circles, the Wayuunaiki teacher would translate my questions into Wayuunaiki, and students could choose to respond in the same language or Spanish. For the numerous occasions students chose to respond in Wayuunaiki, the teacher would offer a translation for me. Talking circles were also useful for sharing these initial findings with Estefania and a few community members to gain their insights and explore possibilities for Indigenizing the education of children and youth moving forward.

These four steps outlined above were repeated over six weeks, as opposed to 12, due to numerous city strikes, class cancellations, and school events. Since data analysis was ongoing, I refined the questions or procedures after each week. An example of these adjustments was reflected on the questions students answered for photovoice after the ancestral calendar, since no pictures were taken during this talking circle that took place in the school. In addition, I

incorporated students' and other research participants' insights throughout the project, to honor the Community-Based design research and to ensure each step was responsive to their needs and expectations. For instance, students' suggestion to switch the talking circles to Fridays so that they had more time to spend in each community was also granted as was their suggestion to get the school principal's permissin to wear their traditional regalia during these days. That is, I ensured that research was done "for" and with the community.

Phase 3: Harvesting

The purpose of this final phase was to gather all participants' responses to this experience, to collectively construct meaning from the data. In this stage, I also intended to bring students together to present their learning back to their families and other community members who participated in this project. For this presentation students will put together *a collective visual artifact* (Bang et al., 2015) composed of the most relevant pictures from this project development. A visual artifact is a method often used in CBDR that supports participants and collaborators as they share their stories and perspectives on a particular topic. In addition to this, I conducted semi-structured conversations (Kovach, 2010) with the English teacher, the Wayuunaiki teacher, school principal, and Knowledge Keeper appointed to the school. Finally, with Estefania's support, we created a visual report of the findings for students and the school community, making space for their remarks and interpretations in Wayuunaiki. The purpose of each of these data collection strategies will be described below.

Collective Visual Artifact

Students collaborated to choose the most significant pictures from the photovoice to create a visual artifact that helped outline their journey from the beginning to the final stage of

the project. This visual artifact intended to position Wayuu youth as knowledge holders in their community as it supported students' presentation to Elders, families, and other community members to make them part of the intergenerational transmission of knowledge suggested in this Community-Based Design research. For this presentation, students were invited to use whichever language they preferred. Using decoloniality and Indigenization as my theoretical lenses to analyze these presentations enabled me to identify students' affirmation of their cultural and linguistic identities as well as any forms of resistance to dominant discourses of globalization and the hegemony of Spanish and English. Throughout this process of data analysis, I consistently compared data from the talking circles, photovoice, class observations, and students' produced artifacts from phases 1and 2.

Semi-structured Conversations

Conversations enable the creation of strong relationships in research (Kovach, 2010). Moreover, conversations give space for stories to emerge thus honoring Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge sharing systems (King, 2010). Through conversations, participants in this study offered stories that spoke to their perceptions about this research process and their experience participating in it. These conversations also offered data that helped me understand participants' language ideologies, lived experiences as they navigate coloniality in this territory, and their hopes moving toward Indigenous self-determination. Additionally, these conversations yielded data that allowed me to contrast participants' desires and commitments to the sustenance of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing, and speaking in this school context framed under ethno-education aims. Finally, these conversation provided insight on possible paths to extend this project to other grade levels and to make more balanced space for Wayuunaiki and Wayuu ways of being in the curriculum.

Final Talking Circle with Research Participants and Community Members

This two hour-long talking circle was led by Estefania to ensure information was presented in Wayuunaiki. The specific aim of this talking circle was to explore all participants and other community members' reactions to the results of this school-community collaboration and to envision avenues to build sustainable allyship that contribute to the revitalization and thriving of the Wayuu people, their language, and cultural practices. Furthermore, this talking circle became an opportunity to gather community members' insight of the ways the Indigenization of education through land-based education could continue to provide opportunities for intergenerational transmission of knowledge and collaborations between the school and the community in a way that shapes the education of Wayuu children and youth and results in the community's well-being and self-determination.

Data Analysis

CBDR entails sustained relationships with participants throughout all of the stages of research projects (Bang et al., 2016). Striving to honor this essence of CBDR, Estefania played a major role in this research development by ensuring Wayuu protocols were followed and accompanied the process of data analysis from the beginning to the end. Following Battacharya (2017) the first pass at data analysis was done inductively. I led this stage by organizing data according to the different sources and by creating a living codebook (Reyes et al., 2021). Given that a lot of data stemming from class observations, talking circles, photovoice, and students' final presentations was provided in Wayuunaiki, Estefania took the lead to translate it. As soon as each data segment was transcribed we began discussing our initial ideas and started populating

the living codebook with definitions and verbatim data to support each code. This living codebook helped us keep track of our initial and final codes, definitions of terms, and ideas stemming from memo writing and informal conversations. Following this, I began creating descriptive and analytic labels intended to identify and group data by clusters related either theoretically, thematically, or methodologically. Estefania and I would then talk about these clusters guided by Bttacharya's suggested questions for data analysis:

> What is going on here?
>
> What connections am I making?
>
> How does my theoretical framing make me think of this excerpt?
>
> How does what I am reading connect to the literature in the field?
>
> How does what I am reading connect to the research purpose?
>
> What truths/realities/meanings are rising to the surface for me?
>
> What contradictions/tensions/messiness are rising to the surface for me?
>
> Where do I need to probe further?
>
> What hunches are arising for me? (Battacharya, 2017, p. 155)

Knowing that Indigenous peoples tend to operate from a collective worldview (Cajete, 1999), these ongoing processes of data analysis were shared and discussed with students, during talking circles. These initial analyses were also shared with the English and Wayuunaiki teachers, the Knowledge Keeper appointed to the school, and the school principal through informal and semi-structured conversations. These talking circles and conversations further informed data analysis and led to adjustments to the research when participants deemed it necessary. Given the various roles and positions participants held in this study -students, teachers, Elders, and Knowledge keepers, sharing these initial findings in separate spaces allowed participants,

especially those in less powerful positions such as students and teachers, to comment on them more freely. To address power differentials between students and me, results were shared by the Wayuunaiki teacher, in Wayuunaiki, which somewhat decentralized my role as a researcher.

Once we began to identify patterns, I led a deductive data analysis (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022) to see how codes and patterns connected to the different theories that frame this research. These iterations of data analysis allowed me to pinpoint contradictions or tensions arising in this study, and to discuss them with the research participants to probe my understanding and collaboratively make sense of the data, which is a core characteristic of CBDR. This collaboration with participants helped us read data from the margins striving to challenge dominant academic discourses that might invisibilize participants' ownership and sense-making of the data (Galafassi et al., 2018). Data triangulation was used to outline the findings, and member checks, in the form of talking circles, were incorporated to validate these research findings with the students, teachers, Knowledge Keepers, school principal, and other community members.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the rigorous efforts made in this study, some important limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, as a researcher I felt limited by my lack of knowledge of Wayuuaniki, the dominant (and often only) language of Elders, and other key members of the Wayuu people invited to participate in this study. Centering Wayuunaiki was central to this study, which led to much data being collected in this language. This data had to be translated, so it is possible that some meaning was lost or blurred during translation. To mitigate this limitation, I conducted systematic member checks with participants to ensure I captured their ideas accurately after translating the data. To lessen the impact of this language limitation on the process of relationship-building with the students, which, in turn, could affect the quality of the information

I gathered, I spent several weeks in La Guajira, attended and supported school events, and participated in class activities out of the context of this project. I believe this eased students' interactions around me and increased their confidence when engaging in photovoice in different languages.

Another critical limitation is the generalizability of the research findings, which are limited to the specific conditions and context of the ethno-school setting where the research was conducted. The characteristics and dynamics of other schools operating under ethno-education goals may differ, impacting the applicability of the study's claims to different contexts. Hence, caution should be exercised when extending the research findings to other settings, and active community engagement should be sought to ensure specific contextual factors are considered. Despite these limitations the research findings shed light into possibilities to Indigenize language teaching through school-community collaborations. These major findings related to a) how education continues to be used for the advancement of coloniality; b) students' multifaceted forms of resistance to this coloniality; c) the power communities hold to resist this coloniality in education; and d) the possibilities an Indigenized ELT offers to move toward a dialogue of knowledges and an ecology of languages. In the following chapters I will elaborate on these findings.

Chapter Four: Education and the Advancement of Coloniality on Indigenous Lands

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the multifaceted dimensions of coloniality that Wayuu students continue to endure in their education, and "the obstacles, barriers, and risks that accompany [their] literacy learning." (Finders, 1997, p.26), despite attending an ethno-education school. However, because Wayuu youth are not passive in this navigation of coloniality, I also describe their unwavering commitment to access education in this territory and the multiple forms of resistance in which they engage to sustain their linguistic and cultural identities. That is, this chapter is not about survival, but survivance (Vizenor, 2008). According to Morrill (2017), "Survivance describes 'Indigenous creative approaches to life beyond genocide, beyond the bareness of survival'" p. 15. Hence, aside from naming the plethora of tools coloniality has found to threat the existence of Wayuunaiki and Wayuu epistemologies, in this chapter I center the presence of Wayuu youth and tell their stories of Native sovereignty as they resist coloniality in schooling in subtle yet powerful ways. Some of these stories will be offered in the form of vignettes intended to let the reader glance at this youth's daily existence. These stories are both place-based and global as they connect to the realities Native children and youth continue to face, while also shapeshifting schools with their presence and resistance.

This chapter is divided into three parts. I first illustrate the ways in which coloniality of power and being operate as mechanisms to assimilate students into Spanish and offer evidence of the impact this has on Indigenous students' possibilities to succeed in school. Subsequently, I describe how coloniality of knowledge dominates the schooling experience of Indigenous students. In this account, I illustrate how, informed by colonial education policies, standardized testing, and discourses of globalization and social mobility, this coloniality of knowledge is

perpetuated by teachers and school administrators. As a result, Native ways of knowing and doing that have sustained Indigenous peoples since time immemorial are disregarded. Thirdly, I offer an account of the ways in which students resist the relentless onslaught of coloniality in overt and subtle ways. For most students, this resistance takes the form of pride in their Wayuu identity, predilection for their home language, and defiance of school rules in relation to their uniforms. I conclude this chapter by pointing out the insufficiency, and at times performative existence, of ethno-education policies to sustain Indigenous languages and knowledges, particularly as schools navigate multilayered forms of coloniality. Moreover, I argue for the need to defy and transform the colonial systems in place that are buttressed by governmental oppression and neglect and that are enforced through educational institutions and policymakers interested in the advancement of coloniality on Native lands.

Vignette # 1 - August 11, 2023. Today students only had two classes in the morning. After recess, everyone was requested to come around the open dirt patio where kids usually play with marbles, play tag, or chat during recess. A few chairs are placed on the L-shaped corridor that surrounds this patio. Some kids sit on the available chairs and everyone else either stands or finds a spot on the floor, trying to move away from the sunshine. It is hot and this school event will last 2 hours. The purpose of this event is to celebrate the independence of Colombia, and teachers from grades K to 11 have chosen one student from each grade to represent the famous characters that played a part in this independence. The teacher appointed to lead this school event, or acto civico -civic act-, as it is referred to by the school community, begins by praying in Spanish. He then begins calling students from each grade and asks them to stand at the front of the patio, to take the microphone, and to state the name of their character and their contributions to the independence of our nation. Dressed in clothes representative of this colonial time, one by

one, students do as they are told, and everyone applauds. Not a single mention to the contributions of Black or Native peoples is made and not a single word is spoken in Wayuunaiki during this school event. To wrap up this acto civico, "the best" student from each grade level was called in front of everyone to be celebrated. Clarisbel, the only participant in this study who does not speak Wayuunaiki in her household, and whose command of Spanish is stronger than everyone else's in her class, was nominated as the best 9th grade student. Her sister who is in 7th grade also received this nomination. But there is no coincidence here. For Indigenous peoples In Colombia, Spanish has operated as a colonizing force (Mignolo, 1995) that advances the colonial systems of power, knowledge, and being (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) in schools located on Indigenous lands.

Speak Spanish! Wayuunaiki is for your Home.

For middle-high school students enrolled in this ethno-school, class instruction takes place fully in Spanish across grade levels, with the only exception being the Wayuunaiki class students take once a week for fifty minutes. During classes, students are asked to participate in Spanish, write in Spanish, give presentations in Spanish, do class assignments in Spanish, and ask clarifying questions when they struggle to understand their teachers' explanations. Wayuunaiki has no place in science, math, or in any other subject. Students consistently stated this in their ethnic autobiography: with the exception of their Wayuunaiki class, Spanish is required to navigate schooling.

Yo hablo el español pues aca en el colegio, pues para responder algunas preguntas de los profesores y también para participar en eventos (Elizabeth V.)

I speak Spanish here at school; I use it to answer some questions from the teachers and also to participate in [school] events.

Bueno yo hablo español en el colegio, con los maestros que no entienden el wayuunaiki (Cilena)

Well, I speak Spanish at school with the teachers who do not understand Wayuunaiki.

Yo en mi casa hablo wayuunaiki porque mi abuela es Wayuu y mis hermanos, y en el colegio hablo español (Edwin)

At home, I speak Wayuunaiki because my grandmother is Wayuu, and my siblings, and at school, I speak Spanish.

These quotes illustrate the way most students described their school as the main site where Spanish is always privileged and enforced. As evidenced in the way distinctions were awarded during the school event, proficiency in the colonial language becomes a marker of success in schooling (Hornberger, 2003), while the predominance of Wayuunaiki is met with no recognition. Although this dominance of Spanish seems contradictory given the population this school serves and its focus on ethno-education, as the name of the school indicates, this is the reality Indigenous peoples in the Global South still endure. Just the same way race has been used to establish social hierarchies (Maldonado-Torres, 2007), racist linguistic hierarchies have historically positioned European languages above non-European modes of expression (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). This continues to be the case for Wayuu youth who, despite attending an ethno-education school, see their language erased from their schooling experience. This racialization of Native peoples along with colonial language ideologies and discourses of modernity (Flores, 2021; Kroskrity, 2018) affirm colonial relations of power in which European languages and their speakers are deemed superior. This coloniality explains the elementary school coordinator's pride when pointing out to me how well first graders in this school speak Spanish, as opposed to children in the rancherias whose communication occurs almost entirely in Wayuunaiki. (Personal communication, July 11, 2023). Further evidence of this privileged position of Spanish vis-a-vis Wayuunaiki, was the school principal's explanation of the school's commitment to enforcing Spanish from elementary school:

"…..hasta el grado segundo, la profesora les habla en Wayuunaiki y algunas cosas le habla en español, ya en tercero ya le colocamos una profesora que hable únicamente el español para que (cada estudiante) vaya más fortalecido (School principal, semi-structured conversation)

"...Until second grade, the teacher speaks to them in Wayuunaiki, and some things are spoken to them in Spanish, by third grade, we assign a teacher who only speaks Spanish so that (each student) strengthens this language."

With this strategy, children who mostly communicate in Wayuunaiki in their communities and within their households, are pushed to develop proficiency in Spanish. Contrary to what happens with Spanish, in this ethno-school, Wayuunaiki is not celebrated. For the school principal and some school coordinators, Wayuunaiki is seldom referred to as an asset students bring to school. Instead, the school principal takes pride in the proficiency level students develop in Spanish when the entirety of their schooling experience is led by this school as opposed to students from other institutions where Wayuunaiki predominates. In fact, Wayuunaiki seems to be portrayed as a barrier to be overcome by the school as illustrated in the quote below:

"el estudiante de acá de la sede principal que llega de preescolar y termina once, maneja perfectamente su español, ¿Donde radica la dificultad? cuando viene un estudiante de otro establecimiento educativo. …..entonces vienen a hacer décimo y once aquí y es un choque porque manejan muy poco el español, Y mucho el Wayuunaiki (School Principal, Semi-structured Conversation)

"The student from here, at the main school site, who starts from preschool and finishes eleventh grade, speaks Spanish perfectly, Where is the difficulty? When a student comes from another school... then they come here to do tenth and eleventh grade, and it's a clash because they speak very little Spanish and a lot of Wayuunaiki."

This view contrasted with that of the Knowledge Keeper appointed to the school:

"fijese que aquí (en el proyecto) me he dado cuenta, en el colegio hay una niña que no habla wayuunaiki, esa es una dificultad que hay" (Alfredo, Semi-structured conversation)

"Here (in the project), I have noticed that there is a girl in school who does not speak Wayuunaiki. That is a difficulty that exists."

These opposing views reveal the ideological standing of these two members of the school community, with the caveat that the school principal has the power to shape the school curriculum while the Knowledge Keeper's participation in decision-making is quite restricted. Other scholars have found similar restrictions in the participation of Native voices in ongoing partnerships with academic institutions (Fellner, 2018), which brings attention to the need to redress this power imbalance in these collaborations. In doing this, Indigenous languages might find a more fertile ground to flourish in schools and to prevent their superficial incorporation or outright marginalization as illustrated in the following excerpt:

[Ausencia de Wayuunaiki} porque era [el dia] de la independencia, ellos [estudiantes] se saben como es el himno [nacional] en Wayuunaiki, ellos se saben la oración patria en Wayuunaiki, el juramento a la bandera… (School Principal, Semi-structured Conversation)	***[Absence of Wayuunaiki} because it was Independence Day, they [students] know how to sing the national anthem in Wayuunaiki, they know the patriotic prayer in Wayuunaiki, the pledge of allegiance…***

In response to why Wayuunaiki was absent from the acto civico, the school principal explained this space was not meant for Wayuunaiki because it was about a national celebration. She, however, explained that students know how to say the national anthem, pledge of allegiance, and patriotic prayer in Wayuunaiki, as evidence of how this language is represented in this school. This indicates that Wayuunaiki finds a space in this school to instill a nation-state identity in Wayuu children and youth rather than to empower these youth to preserve and maintain their culture and language (Smith, 2012) and to sustain their identity and well being (McCarty, 2012). When asked about other spaces the school offers, aside from the one hour a week for Wayuunaiki, the principal insisted there are some school events such as "Dia del Idioma" where Wayuunaiki is centered. This coincides with what the school teachers affirmed,

which indicates that once a year, students get to see their language centered in the school; an indicator of the value and relevance given to this language.

"hacemos el evento del día del idioma, ahora en octubre también hacen el día cultural, a veces una semana, a veces tres días, dependiendo, si hemos perdido mucha clase,... si hemos perdido [muchas clases, tenemos] un día cultural" (English-Spanish Teacher, semi-structured Conversation)

"we hold the Language Day event. In October, [the school] also has the Cultural Day. Sometimes it lasts for a week, other times for three days, depending on whether we have missed many classes,.. if we have missed [many classes, we have], one cultural day."

Shortening the one week in which students and their communities are actively engaged in the sustenance of their culture and language seems to speak to the value the school places on this event and on this commitment to ethno-education. Colonial language and cultural ideologies have been foundational in the displacement of Indigenous languages in Colombia as well as in most countries in the Global South (Garcia & Garcia, 2023; Motha, 2014). As seen in the quotes above, colonial ideologies result in ongoing efforts to suppress Indigenous languages, whether consciously or unconsciously. Namely, in this school, students are coerced into leaving their ancestral language outside the school doors and to pursue the mastery of the colonial language (Hornberger, 2003) and to be able to navigate schooling and participate in school events.

Teaching in the Language of the Colonizer: A Gatekeeper

Coloniality in education has serious implications for Wayuu students who end up being denied the right to access and demonstrate their learning in the language in which they are more proficient. This dominance of Spanish disregards the fact that most of these Wayuu students, given their command of Wayuunaiki, have an easier time understanding information and explanations provided in this language; a fact that is not unknown by school teachers and administrators.

"que yo a veces les estoy explicando algo y ellos a veces no lo logran, una instrucción por lo menos, …una instrucción a veces no la captan muy bien, pero yo digo que es por el vocabulario, las palabras, entonces yo le digo a Clarisbel, explícales y ella le explica en Wayuunaiki a ellos…," (English-Spanish Teacher, Semi-structured Conversation)

Sometimes I am explaining something to them, and sometimes they do not get it, like a class instruction… Sometimes they do not grasp an instruction very well, but I think it's because of the vocabulary, the words. So, I tell Clarisbel, "Explain it to them," and she explains it to them in Wayuunaiki…"

By turning to Clarisbel to clarify class instructions and assignments, the teacher positions her as knowledgeable and reinforces the power of Spanish in this setting. This absence of Wayuunaiki during class instruction does not only affect students in the English class. Back in the rancheria, it was not uncommon for students in different grade levels to seek Estefania's help to understand class assignments. In the afternoon, after school, children and youth arrived at the elementary school in Taiwakat, the only place with access to the internet, powered by solar panels that keep the modem running from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. As students became more used to my presence, they started seeking my support to clarify instructions on assignments and to explain the content of readings related to various school subjects. This indicates that Wayuu students' education is hindered by teachers not drawing on Wayuunaiki to make content accessible to them. Moreover, students' possibilities to clarify information are further hindered by teachers' lack of knowledge of Wayuunaiki and by their insistence on having students express their ideas in Spanish.

"porque ellos como no entienden Wayuunaiki entonces nos dicen que hablemos en español que wayuunaiki es para la casa"(Elizabeth Vangrieken, Ethnic Autobiography)

"because they (teachers) don't understand Wayuunaiki, they tell us to speak Spanish, that Wayuunaiki is for our home."

This displacement of ancestral languages from school settings and its implications for Indigenous students' Native identity has been documented widely (McCarty & Wyman, 2009; Wyman et al., 2014). Informed by colonial language policies and ideologies, schools, even when

intended to serve Indigenous children and youth, often end up placing ancestral languages underneath colonial ones (Wyman et al., 2014), in the name of progress, globalization, and modernity. In this Wayuu territory, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and other community members bare witness to this displacement of Wayuunaiki to privilege Spanish in the education of children and youth:

"eso es lo que está pasando aquí [en la institución].. otras personas dicen que es mejor que aprenda el español que lo de nosotros, …entonces [estudiantes] lo deja en el olvido… y es una dificultad grave, porque es la identidad *(Knowledge Keeper Alfredo, Semi-structured Conversation,* Septiembre, 2023)

"That's what's happening here [in this school] ... some people say it's better to learn Spanish than our language, so [students] leave their own language behind, and it's a grave difficulty because it's about [our] identity."

"yo veo lo que hacen esas personas, todos en Aremasahin son Wayuu, pero hacen que, botar el saber, desplazar el saber por ese tema de los alijuna, que es el español, el español le están dando más importancia que lo propio" (Knowledge Keeper, Rogelio, Talking Circle, August 24, 2023)

"I see what people in Aremasahin do, everyone is Wayuu in Aremasahin, but what do they do? They discard our knowledge, displace our knowledge because of alijunas [Non-Wayuu people], because of Spanish, they're giving more relevance to Spanish than to our own [language-knowledge]."

These Knowledge Keepers agreed on the role of schooling in the displacement of Wayuunaiki due to colonial language ideologies that positioned Spanish above their ancestral language. Whether teachers and school administrators are aware of the harm this dominance of Spanish is causing to students is unknown. Kroskrity (2006) affirms that people's degrees of awareness of their linguistic ideologies can vary. While some people are not fully aware that their view of certain languages is shaped by colonial ideologies, others might simply assume that the "standard" language, which is promoted by dominant groups through media and the education system, is the one that should prevail, even at the expense of local languages. (Siegel, 2006). So, what resources are Wayuu students left with to achieve the academic success that

would enable them to attain school recognition and to increase their chances to access higher education? And, as an ethno-education school, what is their responsibility and accountability to Wayuu students' learning, their linguistic identity development, and cultural sustenance?

According to Barillas (2019), “coloniality of power allows us to see that intentions behind teaching in Spanish are to create a uniformity of language while simultaneously erasing Indigenous languages and identities” p.18. For the Wayuu people, this erasure is rampant in every classroom and across subjects. Both coloniality of power (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) and coloniality of being (Mignolo, 2003) inhabit the classrooms in this ethno-school whose purpose should be to sustain Wayuu ways of being and knowing, as well as Wayuunaiki. By erasing Wayuunaiki from their schooling experience, Wayuu children and youth find themselves marginalized in the classrooms in their own territory. On top of this, teachers and school administrators alike stated students often feel embarrassed to speak in Spanish; mispronouncing words or using incorrect sentence structures is often met with laughter by their peers.

“pero hay unos [estudiantes] que les da pena hablar el español porque ellos lo hablan enredado, que ellos lo hablan mal, que se ríen de ellos y así eso es lo que sucede” (Semi-structured Conversation, Wayuunaiki teacher)

"but there are some [students] who feel ashamed to speak Spanish because they speak it tangled, they speak it poorly, they are laughed at, and that's what happens."

la transición de Wayuunaiki al español no es fácil para ellos, entonces muchas veces ellos se cohíben de expresar algunas palabras, porque les da pena, porque van a ser burlados, porque vayan a ser rechazados por esa palabra, entonces no se sienten bien [hablando espanol] *(School principal, September 8, 2023)*

the transition from Wayuunaiki to Spanish is not easy for them, so oftentimes they refrain from expressing some words because they feel ashamed, because they will be mocked, or they will be rejected for that word, so they don't feel well [speaking in Spanish.

A close look at these two quotes makes apparent the colonial whirl schooling has created for these Wayuu youth who refuse to abandon Wayuunaiki and assimilate into Spanish. On the

one hand, instruction in Spanish prevents them from fully engaging in classes and on the other hand, their attempts to participate in Spanish are met with mockery by their peers. This colonial whirl has implications for students who refrain from communicating at all during classes, thus resulting in class participation often dominated by the same students who, unsurprisingly, have a stronger command of Spanish as students consistently described:

"Bueno yo no hablo en español mucho, yo siempre hablo en Wwayuunaiki" (Jhonatan, Ethnic autobiography)	***"Well, I don't speak Spanish much. I always speak in Wayuunaiki."***
Yo soy callada, responden los otros, son tres o dos que responden siempre. Los que siempre responden son los de habla alijunaiki y pocas veces los de habla wayuunaiki (Tamara, Semi-structured Conversation)	**I am quiet, others answer, It is the same two or three who always answer. The ones who always answer are thos who speak Spanish, and very rarely those who speak Wayuunaiki.**

The English teacher and the school principal also referred to this limited class participation but relied on narratives that portrayed students as shy to account for their silence. That is, this silence was not explicitly placed on the fact that students were not allowed to showcase their knowledge in Wayuunaiki, the language that most of them feel more confident speaking, and that allows them to better understand class instruction, as stated by students during one of the talking circles.

"Ellos [estudiantes] por lo general se quedan algunos callados, siempre participan los mismos…ellos son muy tímidos, no participan muchas veces. (Spanish-English teacher, Semi-structured Conversation,)	***"They [students] generally remain silent, the same students always participate... they are very shy, they do not participate very often.***

By placing this absence of participation on students' perceived shyness, the school does little to address the root of this imbalance in class participation and students' performance. Hence, as Spanish displaces Wayuunaiki, this relentless erasure and marginalization of Indigenous languages is not deterred by the mere existence of language policies that purport to sustain Indigenous peoples and their ancestral languages. In addition to the ethno-education law passed in 1994, the Colombian government sanctioned a new law called "ley de lenguas" intended to foster, protect, and preserve ethnic groups' languages and cultures (Law 1381, January 2010). This, however, seems to have had little effect in the protection of Indigenous languages. To explain this dominance of Spanish, the school principal states that Indigenous students will have a higher chance of succeeding in higher education if schools prepare them to face an academic world that takes place in Spanish in its entirety.

"Y eso -hablar Wayuunaiki-" se les dificulta a ellos [estudiantes] cuando ellos vayan a la universidad, porque en la universidad no les van a explicar en Wayuunaiki, sino en español (School principal, Semi-structured Conversation)

"And that -knowing Wayuunaiki- becomes a difficulty for them when they go to ollege, because at the university, no one will explain to them in Wayuunaiki, but in Spanish."

In addition to colonial ideologies that position Spanish as the language of success, this quote indicates that aiming to prepare students to access higher education provides schools with arguments to displace Indigenous language. That is, higher education becomes yet another colonial system in place to ensure Indigenous students are assimilated into the colonial language under the promise to access the possibilities of social mobility through higher education (Usma et al., 2018). Looking at this quote above, coloniality of power (Maldonado Torres, 2007) is evident in the way a colonial education system constitutes yet another structure to dominate Indigenous peoples, even at the heart of their territories. While decolonizing efforts have extended to all areas of society to reckon with racial, ethnic, linguistic hierarchies imposed by

European narratives of modernity (Macedo, 2019), Indigenous peoples continue to face the pressure to assimilate into dominant languages, that promise them to be successful in colonial societies. That is, founded on colonial ideologies, education for Indigenous peoples continues to be a violent and ongoing process of colonization (Cote-Meek, 2014).

Indigenous movements in Latin America have strived to counter this reality and to assert their educational sovereingty. In Colombia, this has led to recently founded Universidad Autonoma Indigena Intercultural and a few university programs that are Native-led. Despite this, higher education in Colombia takes place almost entirely in Spanish with English proficiency being required to graduate (Usma et al., 2018). This dominance of Spanish in higher education in Latin America (Lopez, 2020) constitutes yet another argument for schools to pressure Indigenous youth to leave their language at the school door:

“y la lengua que es adoptada como el español, la necesitamos porque cuando nosotros vamos a la universidad, nos vamos a enfrentarnos a otro mundo” (Wayuunaiki teacher, Semi-structured Conversation)

"and the language [we] adopted like Spanish, we need it because when we go to the university, we will face another world.

With the exception of Brazil, Spanish continues to dominate the linguistic landscape in Latin America buttressed by language and education policies and enforced by discourses of globalization that advertise it as the language of success. These neoliberal ideologies inform school practices across all levels of education thus turning schools into sites of reproduction of Spanish as the language of power (Barillas-chon, 2019; Canessa, 2007). By assigning a market value to Spanish, Wayuu students are not only pressured to assimilate into this language but told that it is the only path to academic success. This promise is founded on the idea that speaking Spanish will grant them equal opportunities to be successful so long as they acquire the dominant language (Siegel, 2006). For the Wayuunaiki teacher, this ideological terrain creates some

tension around the sustenance of Wayuunaiki and the need to develop students' proficiency in Spanish:

"nosotros siempre tenemos que, o sea, yo digo que deberíamos de trabajar las dos lenguas, hay que fortalecer las dos lenguas, pero más que todo la propia, la lengua materna, yo digo que hay que fortalecerla, ambas, hay que fortalecerlas, porque nosotros los Wayuu, nuestra lengua es muy hermosa" (Wayuunaiki teacher, Semi-structured conversation)

"We always have to, I mean, I say we should work with both languages. We have to strengthen both languages, but above all our own, our mother tongue. I say we have to strengthen it, both of them, we have to strengthen them, because we as Wayuu, our language is really beautiful."

The conflicting ambiguity surfacing in this quote stems from the Wayuunaiki teacher's commitment to preserving this ancestral language in a context where there is little room for it. According to Mignolo (2000), colonial and Indigenous languages exist in a constant asymmetry of power given their ties to larger systems -social, political, economic- that position them in hierarchical categories. For these Indigenous students, their bilingualism -Wayuunaiki-Spanish- is an embodiment of this asymmetry. The attempt to sustain their ancestral language comes at the cost of being denied their right to being successful in schooling systems that see students' home languages as a barrier. In Mignolo's words "the asymmetry of languages is not a question of a person knowing one better than the other, but it is a question of power" (Mignolo, 2000, p. 231). As a result of this asymmetry, Wayuu students see Wayuunaiki vanish in a school context that prevents them from speaking their language. Language, however, is not the only means by which coloniality surfaces in the education of Indigenous students. Informed by neoliberal agendas in education, and discourses of globalization, language and education policies, armed with standardized testing pressure Indigenous students into colonial models of education, as will be described in the next lines.

Furthering Coloniality of Knowledge

There are multiple ways in which coloniality of knowledge operates and shapes the education of Indigenous students. This coloniality influences what counts as knowledge, what ways of knowing are advanced, and who gets to be represented in the curriculum, often pushing minoritized knowledges to the margins to favor western forms of knowledge production and reproduction in education (Lander, 2000; Mignolo, 2003). In this school, mostly western content and literacies were considered in the curriculum for middle and high school students. Despite having an ethno-education policy, and accompanying decrees such as 804 from 1995 and decree 2500 from 2010 that regulate education for ethnic communities in Colombia, this school centers national education policies to design school curricula. As a result, Indigenous epistemologies are displaced frm the curriculum as stated by the Wayuunaiki teacher

"seño, lo que yo le estoy explicando a los niños sobre la caza, como cazamos nosotros los Wayuu, que ya a medida del tiempo, …hoy en día, ya eso se está perdiendo poco a poco, no se está aplicando porque no se le enseña de pronto, no se refuerza, no se fortalece en las instituciones educativas" (Victoria, Talking Circle, September 18, 2023)

"Ma'am, what I am explaining to the children about hunting, how we Wayuu hunt, is gradually being lost over time in today's world. It's not being applied because perhaps it's not taught, reinforced, or strengthened in educational institutions."

Here the Wayuunaiki mentions how little by little some cultural practices such as hunting have been fading from the Wayuu territory while outlining how the abscence of this content from the school curriculum is as contributing factor to this fading. This quote also signals a breach between what the ethno-education policy mandates and how schools execute such mandates (Lopez, 2020). During one of the talking circles, another Elder brought up this displacemnt of Wayuu knowledges and ways of knowing from the school curriculum:

“...es que se desplazan los saberes, lo olvidan, lo pierden …. entonces ?qué pasa con (The school principal)?, lo mismo, ella tiene que acudir a libros para aprender sobre la huerta y ella es Wayuu, entonces ella lo que hace es desplazar el saber, botar el saber, el Wayuu …ya saben desde su corazón, antes los abuelos guardaban la semilla, las guardaban en totumas, las guardaban en vidrios gruesos que se tenían antes que venían antes, y ellos ya sabían, comprendían, que espacio, no hablaban el número al detalle, pero si sabían para cuánto terreno esa semilla se podía sembrar, al igual que el Arijuna, el Arijuna sabe cuantos kilos, cuantas libras se puede en tantas hectáreas, tantos metros, pero esos saberes [Wayuu] se conservan digamos que en el cuerpo en sí, que va de generación en generación” (Rogelio, Talking Circle, August 24, 2023)

"...what happens is that knowledge is displaced, forgotten, lost... so what happens with (The school principal)? The same thing, she has to turn to books to learn about gardening, and she is Wayuu. So what she does is displace the knowledge, discard the knowledge, the Wayuu... they already know it from their heart. Before, our grandparents used to store the seeds, they kept them in gourds, they kept them in thick glass jars that they had before, and they already knew, understood, what space, they didn't speak the number in detail, but they knew how much land that seed could be planted in, just like the Arijuna, the Arijuna knows how many kilos, how many pounds can be planted in so many hectares, so many meters, but those [Wayuu] knowledges are preserved, let's say, in our bodies, passed down from generation to generation.”

This hierarchy between Indigenous and western knowledges has traditionally been perpetuated through national education policies in the Global South and North alike. Favoring western content, western languages, and western ways of teaching and learning has historically been used as tools to assimilate Indigenous students into colonial societies (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). And while Inigenous communities resistance and activism has led to the creation of laws and policies intended to preserve their knowldges and languages, the is a persistent gap between policies and practice (Lopez, 2014). Evidence of this gap is outlined in the quote below:

"*...todas esas normas que ha sacado el Ministerio de Educación para fortalecer la parte étnica, es muy favorable ahora a los pueblos un poco más autónomos, no dejando de un lado lo reglamentario también del Ministerio (política nacional de educación) y hemos querido articular [políticas de etnoeducación y políticas nacionales], porque [la institucion] es etnoeducativo, y al ser etnoeducativo puede llegar un niño Inga, puede llegar un niño que en nuestro contexto, de pronto vengade otro [contexto] que no sea Wayuu, entonces necesita conocer de lo nuestro, pero también de lo que no es propio que le puede servir para la vida*" (Semi-structured conversation, School principal)

"... all those regulations that the Ministry of Education has implemented to strengthen the ethnic aspect are very favorable now for the slightly more autonomous peoples, without neglecting the regulatory aspect of the Ministry as well (national education policy). We have wanted to integrate [ethno-education policies and national policies], because [the school] is ethno-educational, and being ethno-educational, a child from the Inga community can come, a child who may come from another [context] that is not Wayuu, so they need to learn about our culture, but also about what is not ours that can be useful for life."

As seen in this quote, the school principal states the school wants to make sure the curriculum is useful for students regardless of their ethnic background. In her view, these students who do not identify as Indigenous or who belong to other Indigenous peoples can learn about the Wayuu context, but need to learn about what is not Wayuu that can be useful for their lives. When elaborating on what she meant by useful knowledge, she explained:

"pues tratamos de que el estudiante sea, que tenga un conocimiento en todas las áreas, que tenga un conocimiento global, que si va otros países, cuando ya sea profesional, vaya con unos conocimientos previos que le ayuden a salir adelante" (Semi-structured conversation, School principal)

"Well, we try to ensure that the student has knowledge in all areas, that they have a global understanding, so that if they go to other countries, when they become professionals, they go with prior knowledge that will help them succeed."

Looking at this quote, discourses of globalization and Eurocentric ideals seem to be informing the principal's definition of what counts as success (CastroGómez, 2005). During our conversation, Wayuu knowledges did not surface as something that added value to the education of the student population, regardless of their ethnicity. It was as if somehow, western and Wayuu

knowledges belonged to different realms in which a clear, normalized power relation was established. Instead, the existence of the numerous ethno-education policies she described, intended to preserve Indigenous peoples' cultures and languages, seemed relegated to a realm in which the notions of "success, moving ahead in life" could not co-exist. The principal seemed to respond to a colonial episteme (Mignolo, 2009) in which Wayuu students needed to fit if they wanted to access a better, globalized, colonial world. That is, in this ethno-education school, students are exposed to knowledge sanctioned and validated by powerful colonial institutions (Zavala and Back, 2017) with the purpose of joining globalized economies.

"lo que es el tema del normativo Wayuu, los usos y costumbres de nosotros no se aplicaban acá, enseñan una sola cultura, o sea, lo occidental, aprender a leer, aprender todas cosas occidentales" (Knowledge Keeper Alfredo, Semi-structured conversation)

"What is the issue with the Wayuu normative, our customs and traditions were not applied here. They teach only one culture, that is, the Western one, learning to read, learning all Western things."

This obedient replication of colonial systems (Castro-Gómez, 2005), even when intended to advance equity among Indigenous students, has harmful consequences for the sustenance of Indigenous peoples and their epistemologies. This colonial view of education that seems to place Wayuu knowledge below western knowledge, begs the question: Is Wayuu knowledge useful for students' life? Looking at the content prioritized in the curriculum, the answer appears to be a resounding "no.". Evidence of this is how students who mastered the academic literacies privileged in the curriculum were awarded distinctions over students whose Wayuunaiki and oral traditions were stronger. These distinctions were not only awarded on account of language, but on account of the value placed on written assignments and on being able to decode written texts in Spanish; skills also needed to succeed in standardized testing as illustrated in the next paragraphs.

Vignette # 2 - Friday, August 25th, 2023: School got canceled due to a strike. People were protesting the conditions of education, the health system, and transportation in this territory and so all the main roads were blocked. This means that the teachers who live in Riohacha, the capital of La Guajira, were not able to come to school. This also means that most students who walked or cycled to get to school were sent back home. Because it rained really hard over the weekend, many students could not attend school on Monday. These students who were scheduled to take a practice test on Monday, in preparation for upcoming standardized testing, had to do so the following day. For this reason, on Tuesday, while some students took the practice test, the students that had already done so were asked to stay in their classrooms while their teachers supervised test takers. As I sit in the only classroom that has air conditioning, one group of students begin the practice test. There aren't enough copies for everyone, so students are asked to tear a piece of paper from their notebook and answer the questions projected on the board. The ICT teacher is in charge of supervising this test. She begins reading some paragraphs but notices students' blank stares so she begins paraphrasing what she just read. She reads each question and then scrolls down and reads the multiple answers students have to choose from, to answer the question she just read. She then scrolls up again and gives students time to look at the question, the paragraph, and scrolls down again to give students time to answer.

Standardized Testing: A Tool of Coloniality of Knowledge

Knowledge and language cannot be detached from one another (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Hence, as I sit there, I wonder how these results compare to the actual results students get in standardized tests where there is no one to support them in understanding the questions. It is well known that standardized testing contributes to the "forced assimilation of Indigenous language-speaking children" (Wilson & Kamanā, 2013, p.194) and that this assimilation hinders

students' academic outcomes (Wyman et et al., 2013). Moreover, these tests are developed based on western norms, education models, and contexts that disregard the contextual socio-economic factors that students continue to navigate to access schooling (Hoyos Pipicano, 2024). These harsh conditions faced by minoritized communities in Colombia, are not unknown by the government. In fact, in an attempt to relate these tests to Black, Indigenous, and other minoritized populations, the long distances to access schooling and water scarcity faced by ethnic peoples are part of the content of materials intended to prepare students for these standardized tests. Evidence of this can be found in the excerpt below:

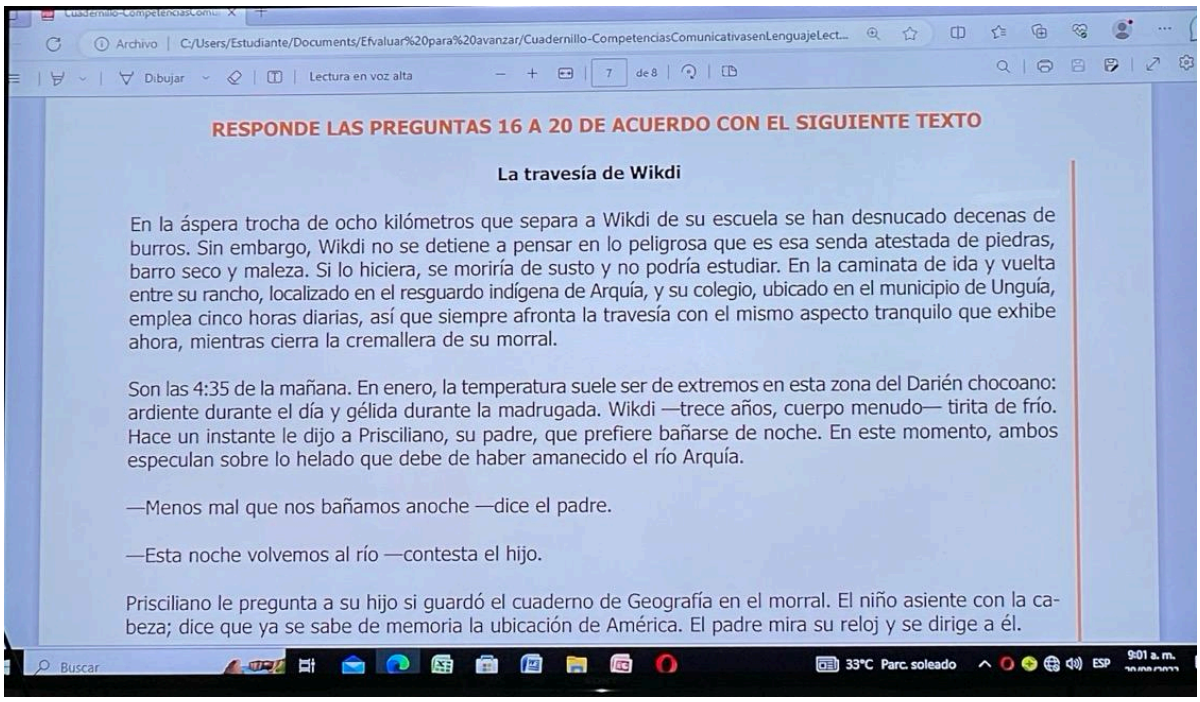


Figure 3: Text used in Preparation for Standardized Testing

Evidently, while education policies rely on standardized tests to ensure that all students' learning is assessed the same way, these policies do little to ensure all students have equal access to learning opportunities and to resources that sets them up for success in their education.

Consequently, concerned with the impacts these test results have on schools, standardized testing creates a situation in which schools devote many hours to prepare students to face these tests.

"en las pruebas hay unas palabras que ellos no logran entenderlas y entonces aja, nosotros por eso les hacemos pre ICFES[3]" (Semi-structured conversation, English-Spanish teacher)

"In the tests, there are some words that they don't manage to understand, so, yes, that's why we conduct pre-ICFES tests for them.

*A*s stated by Ortega (2024) teachers often "have to choose between teaching their students meaningful linguistic content and training them for standardized testing." p. 74. This preparation usually takes up a lot of class time which adds to the high number of classes these Wayuu students already miss due to an array of factors such as strikes, weather, school events, or early dismissals due to lack of food, when corruption finds its way on this territory.

In the Global South, Eurocentric ideologies continue to shape language and education policies; a fact that is reflected in standardized tests. According to the Colombian Ministry of Education (Decree 869, 2010) these standardized tests provide evidence of students' academic skill development. The colonial nature of these standardized tests, however, is undeniable when analyzing the knowledge they privilege across subject areas, the literacies that are assessed -written-, and the language in which they are developed; Spanish with a number of questions in English-. Indigenous epistemologies, languages, and ways of knowing are fully absent from these tests.

[3] Mandatory national test whose result holds implications for students to get scholarships or access higher education.

“[standardized tests] deberían ser en Wayuunaiki, traducidas al español, deberían tener Wayuunaiki, pero sí, eso se debería hacer como una prueba para ver que tal es la, para ver si son ellos realmente los que no quieren aprender, o es en sí, la cultura, o la lengua que no les permite a ellos entender bien lo que leen, porque a veces no entienden lo que leen, yo los pongo a leer cualquier tandita y tres o a veces no entienden lo que leen, yo los pongo a leer cualquier tandita y tres o cuatro entendieron pero los demás no entendieron nada. (Semi-structured conversation, English-Spanish teacher)

"[Standardized tests] should be in Wayuunaiki, translated into Spanish. They should include Wayuunaiki. But, yea, that should be done as a test to see how well, to see if it's really them who don't want to learn, or if it's the culture, or the language itself that doesn't allow them to understand what they read because sometimes they don't understand what they read. I make them read any passage, and three or four students understand, but the rest say they didn't understand anything."

As a result of this coloniality, Indigenous students' knowledge is measured against Eurocentric standards that create a dichotomy between western and Indigenous knowledge (Macedo, 1999). Cemented in colonial discourses, this dichotomy often results in deficit views of both students and their culture as illustrated in the quote above. And while the industry of standardized tests seems to be here to stay, witnessing Wayuu students' proficiency in Wayuunaiki and in oral traditions, I am left wondering how many of these students would stand a better chance of performing well, if they were provided with opportunities to perform on their own terms. Along this line, the Wayuunaiki teacher stated all Indigenous peoples would benefit from being tested in their Native languages. While she was not critical of the content of the standardized test itself, she acknowledged Native languages should be included in it:

“hay que enseñarles el español porque ellos van, van a enfrentar otro mundo y las pruebas vienen en español, ya me entiendes, las pruebas que vienen es en español y ellos a veces, ellos tienen que leer, tienen que pronunciar, pero sería bueno, bueno desde que el MEN, desde el Ministerio de Educación, sería bueno que se implementara para cada institución, que todas las pruebas fuesen con las lenguas nativas de los pueblos indígenas, yo digo que eso quedaría mejor ahí” (Semi-structured conversation, Wayuunaiki teacher)

"We have to teach them Spanish because they will face another world, and the tests come in Spanish, you understand, the tests that come are in Spanish, and sometimes, they have to read, they have to pronounce. But it would be good, well, well that from the MEN, from the Ministry of Education, it would be good if it were implemented for each institution, that all tests were in the native languages of indigenous peoples. I think that would be better."

This quote illustrates how the Ministry of Education, through the enforcement of standardized testing, has created the need to prioritize Spanish in the education of Indigenous students, as well as the dominance of mainstream literacies present in these tests. This favoring of western knowledge, language, and literacies is a reflection of “conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world” (Maldonado-Torres, 2006, p.117). This renewed coloniality takes the form of racist education and language policies (Garcia & Garcia, 2023), enforced through tests, in which only western knolwedge and literacies grant Indigenous students the possibility to succeed in schools and access higher education. Thus, tests become yet another colonial tool to reinforce and justify colonial teaching practices in ethno-schools.

Added to this is the fact that in Colombia, like in many other countries, teacher education programs are rarely concerned with the preparation of teachers sensitive to the needs, desires, and unique contexts of Indigenous peoples (Gutierrez & Aguirre, 2023; Lees, 2016). Consequently, teachers engage in colonizing pedagogies that seem to respond to a deficit view of

students' home literacies and knowledges. These colonizing pedagogies respond to colonial "disciplinary pressures to ignore the affective and embodied experiences of youth, and teach in 'high-leverage,' obedient ways" (Dominguez, 2021, p.553) . As a result of these pressures, teachers and school administrators, whether knowingly or unknowingly, fall into colonial obedience that reinforces colonial logics and frameworks that determine the content and literacies that Wayuu students need to learn, and the language they should speak, on this Indigenous land.

Summary and Conclusion

Describing the multiple ways in which coloniality makes its way into the education of Indigenous students and in their communities is nothing new. Globally, Indigenous students continue to attend schools that are predominantly staffed by non-Indigenous teachers who often lack adequate training in Indigenous education (Lees, 2016). Similarly, there is nothing new in naming the fact that schools are sites of struggle for Indigenous students. In fact, "western schooling systems have long excluded Indigenous and other minoritized histories, languages, and knowledge systems". (Martinez et al., 2018, p.333). As a result, schools advance colonial Eurecentric agendas in education that celebrate western values, religions, languages, and ways of being and doing (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). But again, none of this is new.

The point here is that Ethno-education policies and bylaws in Colombia, and in other countries in the Global South, purport to deter this situation from happening, by giving Indigenous peoples the freedom to direct their education. But freedom without support can barely be called freedom. Granting Indigenous peoples the right and freedom to exercise their educational sovereignty while sanctioning national education and language policies that fail to

account for Indigenous languages and ways of knowing creates unbalanced conditions for Indigenous peoples. This imbalance poses barriers for children and youth to thrive in schooling systems where they are measured through standardized tests that were not designed with Indigenous peoples in mind (Bishop et al., 2007). Thus, the mere creation of ethno-education policies does not suffice to ensure the curriculum affirms Indigenous students' cultural and linguistic identities. Lack of funding, few opportunities for teacher training, governmental neglect, colonial language ideologies, among other contextual factors converge to ensure Indigenous students are not provided with the means to thrive in schools (López, 2020). As a result of this gap between policies and practice Indigenous students are forced to resist and survive an education system that fails to value theirs knowledges and languages. Redressing this would require governmental commitment to center Native voices in the construction of national language and education policies from the bottom up (López 2019).

Aside from policymakers, school administrators and teachers have a huge responsibility in ensuring that policies and bylaws, intended to sustain Indigenous peoples' cultures and languages are materialized in schools. This would require a strong conviction that students' education would be better when multiple streams of knowledge are incorporated in the curriculum (Kimmerer, 2013). Switching this power dynamic and engaging in resistance and discursive delinking requires not just changing the content of the curriculum but the entirety of the terms on which education is framed for Indigenous peoples (Mignolo, 2007). And while some teachers and school administrators struggle to engage in epistemic disobedience (Dominguez, 2021), Wayuu students and the Wayuunaiki teacher, refuse to give up their resistance to sustain Wayuunaiki and their Wayuu culture and identity, as will be illustrated in the next chapter.

Vignette # 3 -July 28th, 2023. It's around 4:00 a.m. and, as I lie on my hammock, I can hear the sheep and the goats in the background. There are a good number of lambs crying out what to me sounds like "maaa". For some reason, this reminds me of human babies calling out for their moms. While teenagers in this community called Taiwakat usually head to school at about 5:30 either by bike or on foot, this morning their journey must start earlier. It rained hard last night and the roads are not in bikeable condition. Joel, a tenth grader with whom I live, is lying on the hammock next to Estefania's and mine. His caring demeanor has earned him respect among his younger cousins who live somewhat nearby, and so, without any advanced notice, they show up to our house to start the journey together to school. Very few families own a cell phone in this community, but there is no need to call or ask Joel for confirmation. This is just how it works and youth in this rancheria[4] are prepared to start their day earlier during the rainy season. This walk through the unmarked roads in the desert would take this group of teenagers about 2 hours and they want to arrive at school by 6:00 a.m. This will give them time to wash the mud off their feet and to take a break before their 6:30 a.m. class starts. Joel gets up from his hammock, wears the school uniform -black dressy pants and white shirt- that his mom, seno Aura, keeps in impeccable condition. But he does not wear black shoes and socks as instructed by the school. Instead, he puts on his waireña, the traditional knitted shoes a lot of Wayuu people wear to protect their feet from the sharp cactus leaves that abound here. He meets everyone by the fence that keeps goats, sheep, pigs, and other animals from entering our house and they all start walking toward Aremasahin, the town where the middle-high school is located. In this Wayuu territory, teachers know rainy days mean fewer students will make it to school, especially if the roads are completely flooded. This is especially true for students who live in the more isolated rancherias, where there is no transportation available for Wayuu students. For the

[4] This is what Wayuu communities are called when they are located in rural areas.

children who live and attend school in Taiwakat, rainy days mean that their teacher, who does not live in the rancheria, will not come to school. Although children still show up to the single room that makes up their elementary school..…. just in case.

Chapter Five: Multifaceted Shapes of Resistance

Introduction

Dropout and pushout rates are high among Native peoples worldwide (Ruglis, 2009; Tuck, 2012) and Colombia is not an exception to this phenomenon. For Wayuu children and youth, long distances, socio-economic conditions of their families, and absence of schools in their territory are factors that affect their access to education (Lemos & Fajardo, 2015). These statistics sore in higher education where the Wayuu people have the lowest rate of enrollment in the country (Masip & Romero Rodriguez, 2022). Despite these statistics, these Wayuu youth are not deterred in their commitment to study and access the education system that has promised them a chance to be successful. Despite these socio-economic conditions of their territory, the school neglect of their language and knowledges, and the systematic governmental abandonment and oppression menace their humanity, Wayuu youth in this study came to school, day after day. However, this participation in the very institution that insists on assimilating them is far from passive. As stated by Tuck and Yang (2014) "youth resist educational injustice in multiple, sometimes simultaneous and contradictory, sometimes self-injuring, sometimes triumphant ways" p.2. In the following lines I will describe the many forms in which these Wayuu youth resist colonial schooling by taking pride in their Indigenous identity, clinging to their ancestral language, and demonstrating a critical understanding of the schooling practices aimed to assimilate them into a colonial way of existence.

Indigenous Pride

Toward the beginning of this study, students were asked to write an ethnic autobiography. One of the guiding questions was: What does being Wayuu mean to you?. With this question I

aimed to explore students' own depiction of their identity and, to some extent, gain a better understanding of the so-called "ethnic shame" the school principal, school coordinator, and other members of the community had mentioned during the design stage of this study. After analyzing students' responses, findings indicated that, contrary to what these adults stated, there was overwhelming evidence of students' pride in their Wayuu identity.

Orgullosa de ser wayuu me siento porque es una de las culturas que no se ha desaparecido en Colombia (Eleinis)	***I feel proud to be Wayuu because it is one of the cultures that has not disappeared in Colombia***
"Ah bueno, es un honor, me siento orgullosa pertenecer a una cultura en que todo el mundo ya quisiera estar, me gusta porque tenemos una tradición bien chevere, me encantan sus historias, mejor dicho, todo lo que tiene que ver con la cultura wayuu". (Berenice)	***"Oh well, it's an honor, I feel proud to belong to a culture that everyone would like to be a part of. I like it because we have really cool traditions, I love our stories, in fact, everything related to the Wayuu culture."***
"La mujer Wayuu representa el clan :) o sea, soy Hilda del clan epiayu y me siento muy orgullosa de ser quien soy (Hilda)	***"The Wayuu woman represents the clan :) I mean, I'm Hilda from the Epiayu clan, and I feel very proud of who I am."***
"Pues para mi, pertenecer al pueblo Wayuu es algo muy bonito [ya] que nosotros tenemos otras costumbres que las de los españoles, como la riqueza que tenemos como los animales y cosas que hacemos a mano como las mochilas y etc". (Jean	Carlos) ***"Well, for me, being part of the Wayuu people is something really beautiful since we have customs different from the Spaniards, like the wealth we have such as animals and things we make by hand like the mochilas, and so on."***
"Pertenecer al pueblo wayuu es mi grande alegría porque tenemos culturas bonitas, por ejemplo, la economía tradicional Wayuu, la Yonna, artesanias Wayuu, etc." (Ovidio)	***"Belonging to the Wayuu people is my greatest joy because we have beautiful cultures, for example, the traditional Wayuu economy, the Yonna, Wayuu crafts, etc."***

I could go on and on providing evidence of students' pride in their identity, as reflected in their ethnic autobiography, but their pride was visible in other subtle yet subversive ways. For instance, students' reclamation of their Wayuu identity surfaced as some male-identifying students' often mixed their school uniform with their traditional waireña; a colorful knitted type of sandal. Hence, instead of wearing their required formal black shoes or the white sneakers mandated for their physical education uniform, some students wore their waireña, just the way they do in their daily lives in their community. A picture taken during the community garden gathering, offers evidence of the prevalence of waireña for the Wayuu people and of some students' defiance of the school uniform policy by wearing them to school.

Figure 4: Knowledge Keeper and students in the Community Garden

For female-identifying students, this defiance was harder as their attempt to wear their mantas -traditional Wayuu garment- to school could result in a denial of entrance; wearing their

mantas was prohibited according to the school manual. In fact, female students who failed to comply with uniform policies would often have to beg to be allowed to enter the school when they arrived in the morning. This did not prevent some of them from trying as seen in the picture below, taken during a community visit:

Figure 5: Community visit - Putchipui

To understand this resistance, I draw on Sabzalian, (2019) who states that "just as settler colonialism can operate in both extraordinary and ordinary ways, stories and practices of

survivance simultaneously surface in the epic and the everyday" p. xv. For these Wayuu youth, survivance surfaced in their active resistance against colonial and racist acts aimed to assimilate them into a westernized school that denied them the right to attend school in their regalia.

Something important to note here is that, for most Wayuu people, across all ages, waireña, hats, and mantas are part of their daily lives. This is not something they wear on special occasions or to attend cultural events. This regalia is part and parcel of the Wayuu culture. Thus, being Wayuu, for a number of students, meant wearing their regalia:

"Para mi es cuando nosotros los wayuu nos vestimos con nuestro atuendo y las comidas típicas que tenemos y por nuestro origen ancestral"*(Jair, Ethnic Autobiography)*

"For me, it's when we as Wayuu dress in our traditional attire, eat our traditional foods, and celebrate our ancestral origin."

Additional evidence of the significance of their regalia for Wayuu students was found in the final project takeaways in which a number of students proposed advising this school to allow them to wear it. Based on this evidence, the fact that students still find ways to defy their school uniforms becomes a clear sign of their resistance to this schooling rule:

"El consejo que le daría a la institución es hablar sobre la cultura wayuu para que no se pierda, para mantenerla viva, usar nuestro atuendo Wayuu y hablar en nuestra lengua y alimentarnos con las comidas de nuestros ancestros*." (Dana, Project Takeaways)*

"The advice I would give to the institution is to talk about the Wayuu culture so that it doesn't get lost. To keep it alive, we should wear our Wayuu attire, speak our language, and eat the foods of our ancestors.

According to the Wayuunaiki teacher, this uniform policy has been introduced and enforced in recent years. The school went from having one day a week in which students could wear their traditional regalia to school, to once a year during the cultural day celebration, to not being allowed at all. In response to this enforcement, students' survivance emerges in the form of

an everyday act “as they create spaces of possibility within public schools” (Sabzalian, 2019, p.2).

“*... o sea, había un día que era el día de la cultura Wayuu, tenían que venir con su atuendo típico acá, ya ellos, ya la seño lo quitaron, ya según el reglamento del colegio, [antes] los niños tenían que venir los jueves con su atuendo típico y las niñas con sus mantas*” (Semi-structured conversation, Wayuunaiki teacher)	***"... I mean, there used to be a day that was the Wayuu culture day, they had to come here wearing their traditional attire, but now, they, the teacher took it away, according to the school rules, [before] the children had to come on Thursdays wearing their traditional attire and the girls with their mantas."***

Wayuu students' desire to hang on to this important part of their identity was evident as female-identifying students would always ask me to get permission from the principal to wear their mantas, at least on the days we held community gatherings. The significance of this was also clear when Clarisbel, whose apparent detachment from the Wayuu culture surfaced in her refusing to eat the traditional food provided during gatherings, or in her reference to Wayuu culture as “la cultura” as opposed to “nuestra cultura” suggested making mantas an inherent component of community gatherings. In her words, wearing her manta would allow her to feel more connected to her Wayuu identity:

“Para ser sincera, el proyecto me gusta así, aunque podríamos usar mantas para cada encuentro que tengamos y así poder sentirnos, bueno, yo poder sentirme más identificada” (Clarisbel, Project Takeaways)	***"To be honest, I like the project as it is, although we could use mantas for every meeting we have and thus feel, well, I could feel more identified.***"

While other schools in this territory have made mantas a part of students’ daily life, this school, has adopted and enforced uniform policies that contribute to distancing students from this important part of their identity. This has repercussions for Wayuu people who eventually stop making their regalia a part of their daily lives, more so when they reach higher education. As

explained by Bonilla Sanchez et al., (2021): "It is not common in regional academic contexts and university corridors to find indigenous peoples proudly wearing their colorful regalia" p.267.

Along with other colonial impositions, school uniform policies have implications for Indigenous students' identity since aside from leaving behind their traditional regalia, by the time Indigenous students reach higher education, they would often hide their ethnic identity (Usma et al., 2018). Thus, this finding has important implications as it illustrates that against all of the colonial systems in place to annihilate Indigeneity, resistance within Indigenous communities is strong. Further evidence of this resistance is students' refusal to abandon Wayuunaiki within the school walls as I will describe next.

Refusal to Abandon Wayuunaiki

This disruption of the school uniform policy was not the only way in which students' resistance to coloniality was evident. While coloniality of being and knowledge presents them with what seems inescapable forces to assimilate into Spanish and western ways of being, Wayuu students continue to privilege Wayuunaiki in their daily interactions. Some of these interactions are with their families who only communicate in Wayuunaiki and some are with their friends and other community members who, despite being able to communicate in Spanish, choose Wayuunaiki over and over again. This finding aligns with Pennycook and Makoni (2020)'s portrayal of the Global South, not as a mere victim of oppression, but as agents who engage in active refusal and strive for change. During school hours, Wayuunaiki predominates while students' conversations with one another during class time, during recess, and during every down time they get while being at school. This finding gains relevance when considering that for all of the students, even the one whose command of Wayuunaiki was weaker than Spanish, being

Wayuu is tightly related to speaking Wayunaiki.

“Pues para mi es muy significativo porque pertenecer al pueblo Wayuu me hace feliz porque puedo participar en cualquier parte con los Wayuu, puedo hablar en mi lengua con otras personas, puedo enseñarles y que aprendan nuestra lengua” *(Elizabeth Vangireken)*

"For me, it's very meaningful because belonging to the Wayuu people makes me happy since I can participate anywhere with the Wayuu, I can speak in my language with other people, I can teach them and they can learn our language"

“Hablo en español cuando los alijunas no entienden el idioma wayuunaiki, pero me gusta más usar el idioma Wayuu porque es el que me representa como Wayuu que soy.” *(Berenice)*

"I speak Spanish when non-Wayuu people don't understand the Wayuunaiki language, but I prefer to use the Wayuu language because it represents me as the Wayuu that I am."

Students’ predilection for Wayuunaiki is a form of resistance against the imposition of Spanish in their education. As McCarty, (1998; 2002) states, in Indigenous communities, speaking their ancestral language becomes a form of resistance against colonial forces of assimilation and cultural erasure. This resistance was accompanied by students’ critical position vis-a-vis Wayuu people who, being Wayuu and being able to communicate in Wayuunaiki, chose to speak Spanish. As demonstrated in the quotes below, this privileging of Spanish in their daily interactions, was seen as a sign of disrespect to their ancestral language:

“Yo hablo español en el colegio, en Riohacha, y Maicao, pero siempre respeto mi idioma. Hay wayuu que yo he visto en cualquier lugar, que son wayuu, que hablan mucho español, no respetan el idioma Wayuu” (Edwin, ethnic autobiography)

"I speak Spanish at school, in Riohacha, and Maicao, but I always respect my language. There are Wayuu people that I have seen everywhere, who are Wayuu, who speak a lot of Spanish, and don't respect the Wayuu language.

What this quote indicates is that Spanish is only used by this student when navigating places where Spanish is required, such as bigger cities nearby and school. Other than this,

Wayuunaiki is the language he chooses to speak out of respect for his home language. This predilection for Wayuunaiki was consistent among students. Even when narrating instances of discrimination students always referred to their commitment to speaking Wayuunaiki as denoted in the quote below:

"Si me han discriminado por ser Wayuu, como los arijuna que decían 'el Guajiro indio' y algunos que tambien quieren mucho de [ser] arijuna que discriminan sus propia lengua, que no quieren hablar en wayuunaiki" (Edwin, ethnic autobiography)

"I have been discriminated for being Wayuu, like the Arijuna who used to say 'the Indian Guajiro,' and some who also aspire greatly to being Arijuna, who discriminate their own language, who don't want to speak Wayuunaiki."

Similarly, in the following quote, Cilena expresses her pride and fierce defense of Wayuunaiki when being discriminated against in a space dominated by non-Wayuu people:

"Pues si, una sola vez en la institución Gladys Bonilla de Gil porque era un colegio donde casi no hay Wayuu, pues yo estaba hablando mi idioma en el salón y una compañera me dijo cosas por mi idioma, que ese idioma era muy feo, que era un idioma feo de hablar. Pues le dije que como soy Wayuu y pertenezco al pueblo Wayuu, yo hablo mi idioma cuando yo quiera, no me da pena." (Cilena, ethnic autobiography).

"Well, yes, only once at the Gladys Bonilla de Gil institution because it's a school where there are hardly any Wayuu people. I was speaking my language in the classroom, and a classmate said things to me about my language, that it was very ugly, that it was an ugly language to speak. Well, I told her that since I am Wayuu and belong to the Wayuu people, I speak my language whenever I want, I'm not ashamed."

These quotes are mere instances of the vast accounts of resistance and pride these Wayuu students demonstrated in as they retain and uplift their language. This finding takes significant relevance and offers hope amidst the plethora of studies documenting the rapid decrease and extinction of Indigenous languages worldwide (Coronel-Molina, 2011) Another form of resistance surfaced in students' criticality toward the onslaught of coloniality in their school context as described in the next section.

A Critical Understanding of Coloniality

Schooling has historically been used to strip Native children and youth of their Indigeneity (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). This had led to Indigenous movements and activism to assert Native peoples' sovereignty and to demand education tailored to their needs, desires, belief systems, languages, and knowledges (Battiste, 2017; Smith, 2012). As a result, Native educational models such as Educacion Propia, Bilingual Intercultural Education EIB as per its acronym in Spanish, and ethno-education have been introduced in Latin America (Lopez & Sichra, 2016; Lopez, 2020). For Indigenous families in Colombia, schools under these models are expected to create a haven to preserve their ways of being, knowing, and doing, while their children and youth develop academic literacies required to succeed in school settings. This has been true for Indigenous peoples such as the Nasa (Llano, 2010). Under this promise, Wayuu families enroll their children in ethno-schools to preserve their culture and language as illustrated in the following quote:

"las familias dicen yo no coloca mi hijo en Riohacha [la capital] porque mi hijo se vuelve chirrete, se vuelve no se que,... ellos lo colocan acá para que ellos puedan fortalecer más su cultura y puedan aprender otra lengua, además de aprender otra lengua no perderla y no perder la cultura en sí, todas las prácticas culturales que tenemos nosotros los Wayuu, es lo que ellos nos indican a veces" (Wayuunaiki

"families say ''I don't enrol my child in Riohacha [the capital] because my child can become a bum and I don't know what, that's what they express to me sometimes.' They enroll them here so that they can strengthen their culture more and learn another language; in addition to learning another language, not to lose their own, and not to lose their culture, all the cultural practices that we [Wayuu] have, that's what they express to us sometimes."

This finding indicates that education specifically tailored for Indigenous students has tremendous relevance for communities who trust ethno-schools adherence to Native values, languages, and epistemologies. Moreover, for these families, this sustenance of Wayuu values is expected to prevent their kids from becoming "chirretes", a word that, loosely translated, means

someone who has no aspirations and who engages in delinquent conduct. This seems to signal that, for Wayuu families, education and the preservation of their kids' Wayuu identity has implications that go beyond their development of academic skills.

This view of how ethno-education schools are expected to differ from traditional schools in Colombia was shared by the Knowledge Keeper appointed to the school:

"los niños que están estudiando en otras instituciones que no sean étnicas, esos niños crecen con otra mentalidad como que ya muy apartado de lo de ellos, como que cuando ya regresan, llegan a la comunidad, lo ven raro el sistema normativo de nosotros entonces chocan con el, entonces hay es donde está el problema" (Alfredo, Semi-structured conversation)

"The children studying in non-ethnic schools grow up with a different mentality, somewhat detached from their own [cultural identity]. When they return to their community, they find our normative system strange, and they clash with it.That's where the problem lies."

As noted here, Indigenous communities place their hope on ethno-education schools to strengthen students' Native identity while also increasing their familiarity with Indigenous normative systems that underlie their sovereign nations. These ethno-education goals seem elusive in this school context grounded in colonial structures that students navigate on a daily basis. As Pimienta et al.,(2017) found, ethno-education for the Wayuu is far from sustaining Wayuu lifeways and Wayuunaiki; a fact that often leads to their abandonment of their ethnic identity. However, students' are not unaware of these colonial forces. They live and navigate these colonial entanglements (Dennison, 2012) exercising and embodying their self-determination, while also naming the colonial pressures they face. An instance of this critical awareness of the colonial, assimilationist role of education is provided below:

" Nosotros como Wayuu estamos estudiando y nos podemos dejar la cultura Wayuu. hay que hablar en wayuunaiki, no español, vamos hablar en español cuando

"We as Wayuu are studying, and we can't abandon our Wayuu culture. We should speak in Wayuunaiki, not Spanish. We'll speak Spanish when we must, and also our

nos toca y también nuestra lengua materna Wayuu” (Saideth, Project takeaways)

Wayuu mother tongue."

This overt criticality of colonial schooling practices became another form of resistance. When asked what advice they would give their school or peers to preserve Wayuu traditions, students emphasized the importance of centering Wayuu identity, culture, and language. Edwin, however, understood that the absence of Wayuu culture in this school signaled a degree of disrespect toward it:

“yo como estudiante daría un consejo en el colegio nuestra señora de fátima, respete sobre la cultura wayuu, hacer cultura en el colegio, que represente sobre la mujer wayuu y padre wayuu.” (Edwin, Project takeaways)

"As a student, I would give a piece of advice to Our Lady of Fátima School: respect the Wayuu culture, incorporate it into the school's culture, and represent the Wayuu women and fathers."

Besides advising their school to respect to their culture, other students invited their peers to always speak Wayuunaiki, be proud of their culture and Wayuu identity, and not to mock other Wayuu people:

“Bueno, darle un consejo, que siempre tenga que hablar el Wayuunaiki y no darles pena su cultura y no darle pena de dónde viene, ni también burlarse de otra persona que sea Wayuu y ser orgullosa, pues, ese seria mi consejo (Elizabeth Pushaina, Project takeaways)

"Well, my advice would be to always speak Wayuunaiki and not be ashamed of your culture, not to be ashamed of where you come from, and also not to make fun of another person who is Wayuu and to be proud. That would be my advice."

Further instances of students’ criticality surfaced during talking circles which triggered conversations among students about some Wayuu people’s shame in their ethnic identity and adoption of western practices:

Amilkar: *“o sea, ahí, ahora les da pena decir lo que es, o sea lo que son, les da*

Amilkar: *I mean, there, now [Wayuu people] feel ashamed to say what they are, I*

pena, o no le gusta reconocerlo, o sea, como te digo, seño, estoy buscando la palabra

mean, they feel ashamed, or they don't like to acknowledge it, I mean, how can I say this, ma'am, I'm searching for the word.

Guillermo: *nosotros estamos aceptando todo lo que hacen ellos [alijunas]* **(**Talking Circle, August 30, 2023)

Guillermo: *We are accepting everything they [alijunas] do.*

In this conversation, as Amilkar is trying to think of another way to express what he perceives as Wayuu people's shame in their ethnic identity, Guillermo chimes in to add that Wayuu people, they included, are adopting western practices. Naming this westernization of certain Wayuu people became yet another instance of students' criticality. In addition to this, during this same Talking Circle, one of the students challenged Clarisbel, who self-identifies as Wayuu, for speaking about the Wayuu culture as, "*la cultura*" as opposed to "*nuestra cultura*":

Clarisbel: muy chéveres [English classes], porque así hemos aprendido más cosas sobre la cultura

Clarisbel: Very cool [English classes], because that way we've learned more things about the culture.

Amilkar: <u>nuestra</u> cultura

Amilkar: <u>our</u> culture

Amilkar emphasizes the word "nuestra" as he addresses Clarisbel. Later on in this talking circle, when Clarisbel participated again, she now used the word "nuestra" to refer to Wayuu culture.

Clarisbel: …si, por ejemplo, si nos fuéramos a otro lugar, a Estados Unidos, podemos practicar, hablar de nuestra cultura

Clarisbel: ...yes, for example, if we were to go somewhere else, to the United States, we can practice, talk about our culture.

Whether Clarisbel was intentional in using "our" right afterwards or did it to appease her classmate, is hard to know. What became clear, however, is that students understood that word choice had an impact on how people positioned themselves in relation to their culture. Students' critical understanding of the forces of coloniality was not reserved to the classroom, their

photovoice, and the other tools used to collect data in this study. This criticality also surfaced during the final presentation to their families, Knowledge keepers, and other community members. Namely, to conclude their presentation about community gardens, a group of students addressed this audience stating the following:

"estamos pensando mucho en la cultura occidental y así provocamos, que estamos perdiendo la cultura Wayuu, pero en este proyecto estamos hablando y dando ejemplo para conservar nuestra cultura nuevamente y fortalecer la cultura que somos nosotros los Wayuu, no debemos perder nuestra cultura por nada del mundo, nosotros nacimos Wayuu, somos Wayuu y nosotros no tenemos que andar adoptando otra cultura como la occidental, tenemos que ir adelante con nuestra cultura que es Wayuu…." (Final Presentation to school community)

"We are thinking a lot about Western culture, and in doing so, we are causing, we are losing Wayuu culture, but in this project, we are speaking and setting an example to preserve our culture once again and strengthen the culture that we are as Wayuu. We should not lose our culture for anything in the world. We were born Wayuu, we are Wayuu, and we don't have to adopt another culture like the Western one. We have to move forward with our culture, which is Wayuu."

Taken together, these findings indicate that these Wayuu students understand, navigate, and resist coloniality in multiple ways. As stated by one of the students during the last photovoice, sustaining their Wayuu culture is not something students do thanks to schooling, but despite schooling:

"en cada espacio que estemos debemos de compartir nuestros saberes, compartir nuestras raíces, no debemos de olvidarlo aunque nos coloquen nuestros padres en estos espacios como los colegios

"In every space we find ourselves, we must share our knowledge, share our roots. We must not forget it, even if our parents place us in spaces like schools."

(Saideth, photovoice, September 1, 2023)

This dissonance between the goals ethno-education schools should pursue and what is actually occurring in this school context has important consequences. As has been found in Colombia, ethno-schools' failure to stay true to their ethnic ideals, results in further alienation of Indigenous students who eventually experience feelings of uprootedness in their ethnic identity

(Osorio & Lozano, 2019). Countering this dissonance and bridging the gap between policy and practice (Lopez, 2014) seems to require a radical transformation of education in Indigenous school contexts where coloniality rules.

Summary and Conclusion

Opening possibilities for Indigenous knowledges to converge with western knowledge can result in students who are stronger academically. It can also lead to strengthening their cultural and linguistic identities, not despite schools but because of schools.

The stories of resistance and survival, or survivance, (Vizenor, 2008) described in this chapter, are not unique to the Wayuu people; Native students globally continue to navigate colonial school settings (Sabzalian, 2020) fighting to retain their cultural and linguistic identities. And while many manage to resist and survive, survivance is not enough. In the next chapter, I will describe how the students' resistance described above was joined by their families, the Wayuunaiki teacher, and other community members, and how this joint collaboration offered hope to move from resisting and surviving to thriving.

Chapter Six It Takes a Village to Raise a Child…and to Resist the Onslaught of Coloniality

Introduction

In this chapter, I describe how the Wayuu people came together to collaborate in the implementation of this research and how this became a strong force against coloniality. First, I illustrate how learning is conceived for the Wayuu people and the role stories, listening, observation, and engagement with the land play in the education of Wayuu children and youth. Next, I describe how centering families and other community members uplifted Wayuu knowledges and cultural practices. In this process, Indigenous knowledges and their tight relationship to the land, and to their identity as a people became undeniable (Coulthard, 2010). Subsequently, I narrate the impact this collaboration had on participants and illustrate their felt need to resist the forces of coloniality that have interrupted the intergenerational transmission of knowledge that have sustained their people since time immemorial. In this vein, I describe how school-community collaborations have the potential to (re)ignite this intergenerational transmission of knowledge. I conclude this chapter by indicating that, given the multifaceted layers of coloniality, it takes a village to push back against it. Bringing the voices of multiple Knowledge Keepers into the education of Indigenous students, allowed learning to happen in students' ancestral language and on their own terms (Mignolo, 2007). I also point how school-community collaborations can support teachers in better understanding how to incorporate Indigenous epistemologies and languages in their teaching (Lees, 2016), in ways that counter the hegemony of westernized education and colonial language ideologies.

Vignette # 4 - August 8th, 2023. We walked to Juvenal's house. Juvenal is a Knowledge Keeper who has maintained alive the tradition of Yonna, a sacred Wayuu dance. I was informed his community was close to school so no transportation was arranged for this gathering. It is almost 100 degrees, we are sweaty, and students are already asking how far it is until we reach our destination. Keiner, one of the students who lives in this community, indicates we are almost there. Once we arrive, Juvenal and other people begin placing a few hammocks under the "enramada" , a wooden open structure you would often find in many Wayuu communities. They also place some plastic crates and chairs and so Victoria, the Wayuunaiki teacher, Alfredo, the Knowledge Keeper appointed at this school, the students, and I begin finding a place to sit. Although there are not enough chairs and hammocks we manage to share the ones provided and organically form a circle around Juvenal. He begins speaking in Wayuunaiki and we all listen. Every now and then, Victoria or Alfredo would look at me and offer some highlights of these stories in Spanish. After these short commentaries, Juvenal continues speaking in Wayuunaiki.

"***Les digo a todos ustedes que la danza es sagrada, es de respeto y cuidado. que no se piensen sobre la danza solo en estos espacio sino desde nuestro idioma, no deben alejarla de ustedes"*** (Juvenal, Talking circle, August 16, 2023)

"I tell all of you that dance is sacred, it's about respect and care. Don't just think about dance in these spaces but also in our language, you shouldn't distance it from yourselves."

As Juvenal shares more stories, I notice he has a Kasha -a traditional Wayuu drum- placed between his legs. In my ignorance, toward the end of the gathering, I ask when he will play it. Alfredo explains to me that the Kasha can only be played when a ritual is performed. Sometimes, the Outsü, a spiritual Wayuu healer, would advise the community to arrange a Yonna; in her dreams, spirits let her know this ritual is needed for the well being of the community. Hence, playing the Kasha foretells spirits on this land that a Yonna is about to take place and that food has been provided for all attendees. After about an hour, our time together is

coming to an end but before we head out, students ask Juvenal a few questions about this tradition. Some more stories are also shared by Alfredo and Victoria, and then we begin walking back to school where students have a few classes to take. Some students are worried that if we are late, the teacher will not let them enter the classroom, so we hurry.

Storying Learning

This study was founded on the premise that "Indigenous education affords spaces for reclaiming, reaffirming, and revitalizing Indigenous ways of speaking, doing, being, thinking, and feeling." (Hornberger, 2019, p.2) However, schools' attempt to incorporate Indigenous stories and topics in the curriculum can often result in a superficial approach to them or in a harmful appropriation of sacred spaces and cultural elements (Sun, et al., 2021). This is particularly true given the vast number of non-Indigenous teachers within schools. This calls for an allyship with Native peoples to lead the education of Indigenous children and youth. In this Indigenization of education, stories gain relevance since they are a fundamental component of Indigenous ways of knowing (Archibald, 2008; Guiberson & Vining, 2023). Through stories, Indigenous knowledge is reclaimed, asserted, (Patel, 2015) and passed on generationally. Not surprisingly, then, students in this study would often refer to the centrality of stories in their identity as Wayuu:

"Ser del pueblo [Wayuu] es muy bonito, la cultura, como nos comunicamos con nuestros abuelos, como nos cuentan las historias" (Keiner, Ethnic autobiography)

"Being from the Wayuu people is really beautiful, our culture, how we communicate with our grandparents, how they tell us stories."

This prevalence of stories in the Wayuu territory kept surfacing over and over during the planning sessions, during community visits and gatherings, and during all stages of data collection in which questions were often answered through stories. During planning sessions,

asking Estefania a question about important roles we should consider in the development of this project would always result in countless stories associated with each role. The importance of oral traditions also kept emerging and Knowledge Keepers would often attest to this way of knowing for the Wayuu people. In this regard, Alfredo stated:

"Mi hermano era palabrero, Putchipui, …… yo he aprendido mucho de él, observándolo, no que él me haya dado de pronto una clase no, si no mirándolo, verbal, o sea oralmente, lo que él habla" (Knowledge Keeper, September 1)

"My brother was a Palabrero, Putchipui... I have learned a lot from him, observing him, not that he taught me a class, but by watching him, verbally, I mean orally, what he says."

This finding unveiled a stark contrast between Wayuu education and the westernized education Indigenous students receive in schools. Although Indigenous peoples have sustained their knowledge through stories since time immemorial, these stories are mostly absent from students' schooling experience, particularly out of the Wayuunaiki class. This sharp contrast is so prevalent that, in Wayuunaiki, there is a word designated to denote people that transmit knowledge in the way Freire (1968) would call "banking education"

"si, ekirajaa ese ya es más para, es un rol nuevo, porque nuevo?, …porque esto comienza a emerger cuando llegan las instituciones [educativas] a las comunidades, …el ekirajaa, el que enseña es "tal cual como yo le aprendí tu te lo aprendes", entonces, el que hace desde la práctica permite fluir desde la creatividad del niño, porque hay maneras de sembrar, hay maneras de cosechar, hay maneras de recolectar las cosas, pero en una fórmula química, matemática no hay formas creativas desde la enseñanza para hacerlo, o sea, no te dejan ser libre, o sea hay un método y ese método hay que cumplirlo, entonces a ese se le llama ekirajaa. (Estefania, planning session)

"Yes, ekirajaa is more for... it's a new role, why new?... because this begins to emerge when [educational] institutions arrive in these communities. ..the ekirajaa, the one who teaches is 'just as I learned, you learn.' But, the one who shares knowledge through practice allows the child's creativity to flow because there are ways of planting, ways of harvesting, ways of gathering things, but in a chemical, mathematical formulae, there are no creative ways of teaching, I mean, they [teachers]don't let you be free, I mean, there's a method and that method has to be followed, so that's called ekirajaa."

In this quote, Estefania underscores an important difference between how education occurs in westernized schools vis-a-vis Indigenous ways of knowing; something Native scholars have reported for decades (Archibald, 2008; Battiste, 2017; Cajete, 1994; 2000; Smith, 2004). She also refers to the static models western education often adheres to, in which there is only one valid way to learn and demonstrate learning. In this vein, Estefania would go on to add another example of how the education of Wayuu children and youth differs as they move from learning in their community to learning in schools:

"la mamá comparte a través de historias y todo eso, la abuela también, …. la madre guía, pero no enseña, porque cada uno aprende diferente y ¿cómo aprende? relacionándose con el entorno y permitiéndole fluir, ser humano, en cambio, muchas veces en los colegios no, …, en los colegios más que todo de allá de La Guajira que yo me he acercado, te enseñan las formas así todas robóticas (Estefania, planning session)

"A mother shares through stories and all that, a grandmother too... the mother guides, but does not teach, because everyone learns differently and how do they learn? By relating to the environment and allowing it to flow, being human, whereas many times, in schools, in schools they are teaching you, more so in the schools I have visited in La Guajira, they teach you in all these robotic ways."

This profound dissonance between the values, ways of knowing, and being that colonial schooling rigidly enforces and the rich tapestry of traditions, wisdom, and cultural values that Native communities have historically centered in their communities has been discussed widely (Grande, 2004; San Pedro, 2021; Smith, 2012). I am convinced that harmony can be attained in schools by centering Native voices in the education of children and youth. However, forging this harmonious interaction between Native and western epistemologies and values demands meticulous consideration to prevent the insidiousness of coloniality from, intentionally or unintentionally, ensnaring Native voices and coercing them to conform to western molds.

During the implementation of this research, I became fully aware of how the insertion of wester ways of knowing in Native led spaces can disrupt their dynamic. This time, however, I

was the one responsible for the disruption in Indigenous ways of knowing. On one occasion, due to the heavy rain and road conditions, students could not be taken to visit one of the communities as had been previously scheduled. Instead, Rogelio, one of the Knowledge Keepers from the clan Arpushana, visited students at the school to hold a Talking Circle about the Wayuu ancestral calendar. In preparation for this visit, I had designed a graphic organizer on which students would, later on, during the English class, be asked to record their learning. When the Knowledge Keeper arrived, I informed him about this upcoming activity and handed him a copy of the graphic organizer. That was a mistake! Or better put, even when attempting to Indigenize education and disrupt colonial spaces "our inner colonizers do come to surface every now and then" (Guerrero et al., 2022, p.593)

What seemed to be the simple present of a sheet of paper, deviated the course of this talking Circle. Instead of telling stories and addressing students as had been the case in every other Talking Circle, Rogelio held this piece of paper and kept staring at it, pointing at it, which made it hard for students at the back of the classroom to see what phase of the moon he was referring to, as he described what each phase meant for the Wayuu people. When some students expressed that it was hard for them to see the paper and hear his words, Rogelio moved to another part of the room, but this only made it hard for a different group of students to follow along. I, inadvertently, had made Rogelio fit a mold for which stories about the ancestral calendar were not meant. In this talking circle, even if unintended, I had created a series of squares that made Rogelio feel the need to refer to as he spoke about this ancestral knowledge. And Just like that this Talking Circle turned into a lesson about the phases of the moon:

Figure 6: Knowledge Keeper Explaining the Ancestral Calendar Using a Graphic Organizer

While this does not mean that students did not learn or that they saw no value in this Talking Circle, it would be wrong on my part not to acknowledge how this action transformed

the dynamic of this encounter. From this experience, it became clear that attempting to inscribe Native wisdom and epistemologies into colonial structures can lead to the displacement of Indigenous ways of knowing (Smith, 2012; Battiste, 2017); even when education is led by Native voices. Just to be clear, I am not implying that teaching resources such as graphic organizers, readings, and any other artifacts cannot be included in the education of Indigenous children and youth. In fact, when the midwife who lived 3 hours away visited the school to lead a talking circle, along with traditional medicines, she brough a slide deck with pictures related to this traditional practice. What I am saying here is that my uninvited incorporation of a graphic organizer into this talking circle about the ancestral calendar signaled to this Knowledge that his purpose was to provide information related to each square. Disruption aside, talking circles, grounded in stories, guided Wayuu students' learning. These stories also brought to the surface the myriad ways in which Indigenous epistemologies are interwoven with the land. Instances of these land-based epistemologies will be described in the following paragraphs.

(Re)Turning to the land: Southern Epistemologies

Wayuu people's connection to the land goes beyond claiming, preserving, and protecting acres of soil in La Guajira desert to establish a rancheria they can call home. For Wayuu clans and families, land is not just understood as soil.Wayuu people see "Land as sustainer. Land as identity. Land as grocery store and pharmacy. Land as connection to our ancestors. Land as moral obligation. Land as sacred. Land as self." (Kimmerer, 2013, p.337). Land is the encompassing interconnection of the sea, the moon, and the more-than-humans beings of the land that percolates every fiber of their existence. Following is an example of this connection and of the knowledges interwoven to the land:

La luna y el mar están representados en el cuerpo y la maternidad… el mar es la mar, es la hermana mayor, fue la que nació primero, por esto el líquido amniótico sale primero, ….lo explican en la gestación, la historia de origen Wayuu…. en la gestación dicen, no hay nada, solamente el óvulo simple, luego el corazón y así va cada fase de la historia Wayuu, no había nada era sawai piyuushii, luego sawai piyuushii en vestido de luz que es el corazón de nosotros cuando palpita, luego el destello de luz, vienen los abuelos ancestrales que son los que ven todos los sentidos del niño, todos los órganos del niño que se van formando y luego que se van formando nace entonces la tierra y el mar, y el mar es el líquido amniótico para nosotros y luego que ellos nacen conocen a la otra hermana que es la tierra y así se va repitiendo siempre …..

The moon and the sea are represented in the body and motherhood... the sea is the sea, it's the oldest sister, it was the one born first, that's why the amniotic fluid comes first... they explain it in the gestation, the Wayuu origin story... during gestation they say, there is nothing, only the simple egg, then the heart and so on, each phase of the Wayuu story, there was nothing, it was sawai piyuushii, then sawai piyuushii in a dress of light which is our heart when it beats, then a flash of light, our ancestral grandparents come, they are the ones who see all the senses of the child, all the organs of the child forming, and then as they form, the earth and the sea are born, and the sea is the amniotic fluid for us, and after they are born they meet the other sister which is the earth, and so it goes on repeating forever.

(Knowledge Keeper Rogelio, Talking Circle, August 24, 2023)

For Native peoples, land-based education highlights their tight relationship with the land

and all beings that inhabit it (Cajete, 2000; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). As seen in the quote above, the Wayuu cosmogony is explained through this connection to the land. Relatedly, in the heart of Wayuu land, guided by the moon, Elders consult the ancestral calendar to take care of their animals and to prepare and sustain their community gardens; something key in their work toward attaining food sovereignty.

"la luna te dice, te indica brisa, o lluvia, cuando la luna está inclinada hacia la izquierda, ésta indica el cuidado de los animales, para que no se pierdan, también si está hacia arriba, es porque tiene agua, viene con agua" (Knowledge Keeper, Rogelio, Talking Circle, August 24, 2023)

"The moon tells you, it signals breeze or rain. When the moon is tilted to the left, it indicates the care of the animals, so they don't get lost. Also, if it's tilted upwards, it's because there's water; rain is coming."

In La Guajira desert, particularly in rancherias that are kept away from electricity, running water, and sanitary systems, Wayuu people rely on nature for their subsistence. They rely on the sun to dry their meat, on the moon to illuminate their territory at night, and on the rain to keep community gardens alive. Hence, foreseeing when the rain is coming allows Wayuu people to prepare their community gardens, harvest, and store their food. These traditions are vital since the onset of heavy rains turns roads into treacherous waterways that confine Wayuu people to the bounds of their community, thus impeding their ability to procure their sustenance and engage in commerce out of the rancherias. Weaving, like community gardens, is a core tradition for the Wayuu people that sustains not just their economy but their daily lives. In this tradition we can find another instance of the strong connection Wayuu people have to the land and the more-than-human beings of the land as illustrated in the quote below:

“waleker, que es la sabedora ancestral araña, la tejedora, {uno} se conecta con ella y lo hace a través de los sueños donde se permite mirar, visionar figuras” (Estefania, planning session, May 24, 2023)

"waleker, who is the ancestral wise spider, the weaver, one connects with her and does so through dreams where one allows oneself to look, envision figures."

Weaving is a tradition practiced by Wayuu children, youth, men and women alike, who generate countless designs in the form of bracelets, anklets, headbands, mochilas, hammocks and more, to provide for their families. In this Wayuu territory, weaving is present in the waireña that protect their feet from the cactus leaves that abound in the desert. It is present in the mochilas -knitted bags- Wayuu people carry around, and in the hammocks where Wayuu people sleep at night, nap during the day, and accommodate visitors. Weaving a hammock is a Wayuu woman’s first task to prepare for the birth of their children. This tradition is so prevalent across generations that students often referred to it as an instance of what it means to be Wayuu and of ways in which they continue to sustain their culture:

“Bueno, yo me siento muy orgullosa de ser wayuu porque nosotros los wayuu sabemos hacer mochilas, chinchorros, gasas de mochilas, sabemos hacer mantas, waireña, wayucos (Elizabeth Pushaina, ethnic autobiography)

"Well, I feel very proud to be Wayuu because we Wayuu people know how to make backpacks, hammocks, backpack straps, we know how to make mantas, waireña, and wayucos.

Para mi significa muchas cosas, como somos wayuu sabemos bailar la yonna, sabemos tejer, hacer chinchorro (Yolimar, Ethnic Autobiography)

For me, it means many things, like being Wayuu, we know how to dance the Yonna, we know how to weave, and make hammocks.

But spiders are not the only more-than-human beings of the land entrenched in Wayuu culture; flies and birds inspire the Wayuu’s sacred dance, Yonna:

Nuestra danza tiene dos formas, lo que es en pareja y una samutya (grupal), la de las moscas, la práctica de la danza viene de las aves. (Knowledge Keeper Juvenal, August 16, 2023)

"Our dance takes two forms: one in pairs and one in groups, known as 'samutya,' reminiscent of the movements of flies. The practice of this dance originates from observing birds."

Through these stories shared during talking circles, land was also described as a central element in mediating conflicts among clans. For the Wayuu people, the pütchipü'ü[5] plays a central role in administrating justice in their territory. When the pütchipü'ü arrives at a community to "traer la palabra" -loosely translated as bring a message-, and to mediate between families, he often accompanies his dialogues with a wooden stick "waraarat". He uses this stick to draw on the sand and transmit his message to the community as he listens and speaks. That is, aside from his words, the pütchipü'ü draws on the connection to the land to bring peace and harmony to Wayuu clans.

The pütchipü'ü is not the only important community member that centers oral traditions and relies on this connection to the land to sustain Wayuu people. Midwives rely on the land to provide the medicinal plants needed to assist women throughout their pregnancy and during labor. These plants are also pivotal for the Outsü, the spiritual healer, who holds ancestral knowledge that has sustained Wayuu people since time immemorial. The fact that land is of utmost relevance for Wayuu people, particularly for students is not something school teachers and administrators are unaware of. During a semi-structured conversation with the principal, she explained that when the science teacher sets up projects related to nature, students would often state how relevant Mother Earth is to them:

[5] A pütchipü'ü, or palabrero, exercises the traditional administration of justice for the Wayuu people. This justice system was recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010.

"…cuidar a ma[6], como dicen ellos, cuidar a ma que es la que nos da todo que es la madre de nosotros, eso es lo que ellos dicen, si no estuviera ma, nosotros no estudiáramos, no tuviéramos vida, sino que estudiamos porque todo sale de ahí, o sea, es muy gratificante escuchar eso de los niños (School principal, Semi-structured Conversations).

"...take care of ma, as they say, take care of ma who gives us everything, who is our mother, that's what they say. If ma weren't there, we wouldn't study, we wouldn't have a life, but we study because everything comes from there, I mean, it's very gratifying to hear that from the children."

This tight connection to the land, to the sky, and to the more-than-human beings of the land that has sustained Indigenous peoples since time immemorial (Bang & Medin, 2010; Buck, 2018; Simpson, 2017) is absent from most school curricula, though. As Native scholar Wilfred Buck (2018) states, when young Indigenous people look up to the sky, it is not their Native stories they see, but the colonized, Eurocentric versions they have been fed and made to memorize. Similarly, school curricula continue to enforce a divide between the human and more-than-human relatives that inhabit the land (Cajete, 2000; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001) thus rendering invisible the strong relationship Indigenous epistemologies have with the land (Lees, et al., 2021). This invisibility was countered by Knowledge Keepers in this school-community collaboration who grounded teaching and learning in stories that brought to the surface the myriad ways in which Wayuu traditions and epistemologies are embedded in the land. This collaboration impacted all participants

Vignette # 5 - September 22nd, 2023. Juvenal invited us to participate in a Yonna. For this gathering, all female students wore their mantas and a few male students brought their traditional wayuco[7]. We engaged in this traditional ceremony following all of the Wayuu protocols; having coffee and food available before playing the Kasha and asking the spirits of the land for permission to dance. One of the school coordinators, the Wayuunaiki and English

[6] Word in Wayuunaiki to refer to Mother Earth
[7] Traditional garnmet Wayuu men wear on celebrations such as weddings and sacred rituals.

teachers, and some of the students' parents and relatives, old and young, along with other community members, joined us for this celebration.

Just like during the first gathering at Juvenal's, some hammocks and chairs were arranged. After eating, Juvenal began playing the Kasha, and for a few seconds, students seemed shy to dance. However, after a while, more and more students, relatives, and Victoria began dancing. The powerful sound of the Kasha kept rising, inviting more and more people to dance, and almost everyone obliged. Even male students that had not brought their regalia, convinced they would not dance, began asking their peers if they could borrow theirs to engage in this sacred dance. After a couple of hours that felt like minutes, we were informed the bus that would take us back to school had arrived. Students kept asking for just a few more minutes to dance one more time. After agreeing to this request, quite a few times, it became clear that we really needed to go. As we walked toward the main road to get on the bus, everyone's excitement was palpable. During the bus ride, students kept saying how happy they were and how amazing this had been. While this was happening, I overheard the English teacher asking the coordinator what the school could do to keep these encounters happening.

The Power of the Indigenization of Education

As outlined above, (re)embedding participants in storywork and in the land, expanded their knowledge about their traditions, reconnected them to Wayuu lifeways and ways of being; something of undeniable relevance in the education of Indigenous peoples (Kovach, 2009; Lees, et al., 2021; Wilson, 2008). In this section, I illustrate how this Indigenization of education through stories grounded on land-based epistemologies, afforded participants in this study the possibility to push their education beyond colonial boundaries. Namely, students developed a renewed criticality in their relationship with the land and the relevance of the land in their past,

present, and future as a people. Secondly, This Indigenization of education also (re)ignited an intergenerational transmission of knowledge that encouraged students to bring their learning home and share it with their older and younger relatives. Finally, centering Wayuunaiki in this Inigenization transformed the power relation Spanish had dominated in this school context.

Climate Justice Awareness. The collective effort of Indigenous voices who through stories (re)embeded students in the Wayuu land, did not only expand their learning on their culture but increased their awareness of issues such as climate justice that affect their community. Countless examples of this awareness surfaced after our visit to the community garden sustained by the clan Arpushana. In their photovoice, a number of students expressed their sadness for the condition of certain plants affected by water scarcity.

"En la foto te estoy enviando una huerta y en la huerta hay una mata de yuca y la yuca está triste, está marchita, porque tiene mucho sol, entonces por culpa del sol se está muriendo…" (Yolimar, Photovoice, July 18th, 2023)

"In the photo I'm sending you, there's a garden, and in the garden, there's a cassava plant, and the cassava is sad, it's withered because of too much sun. So, because of the sun, it's dying..."

"la yuca esta muy marchitada se ve que no le echan agua… y creo que no le limpian por el alrededor y la planta esta muy mal tiene muy mal cuidado, ... esta foto nos enseña que debemos cuidar el medio ambiente, como las plantas que si no hay lluvia tenemos que echarle agua para mantenerlos sanos" (Keiner, photovoice, July 18th, 2023)

"The cassava looks very wilted, it seems they don't water it... and I think they don't clean around it, and the plant looks very bad, it's very poorly cared for... This photo shows us that we must take care of the environment, like plants, that if there's no rain, we have to water them to keep them healthy."

Interacting with their surrounding and taking a closer look at their land through photovoice, enabled these Wayuu youth to name how the land is reacting to water scarcity and

increased temperatures. In this vein, bringing students to this community garden created the conditions for them to rethink their relationality with the land and how the land herself is communicating with the community (Kimmerer, 2013). Gaining this understanding was possible through the sharing of stories that made students cognizant on how their ancestors have sustained by this land since time immemorial. This historical relation to the land was illustrated by one of the students on the following way:

"la planta esta como muy descuidada, como falta de agua porque se está pudriendo, …se está muriendo y .. pues … tenemos que tener una importancia tan grande hacia las plantas, sea fruta o no sea fruta, tenemos que tenerle importancia, pues …porque durante siglos nuestros ancestros tuvieron con la patilla una relación muy apegada a la patilla y funcional, o sea saciaban la sed a toda costa con la planta o la fruta llamada patilla.." (Amilkar, Photovoice, July 18th, 2023)

"The plant looks neglected, like it lacks water because it's rotting, ...it's dying and ... well ... we have to give such great importance to plants, whether they are fruit-bearing or not, we have to give them importance, because for centuries our ancestors had a very close and functional relationship with the watermelon, I mean, they quenched their thirst at all costs with the plant or fruit called watermelon."

Here, Amilkar points to the significance of the land for the Wayuu people, and to the accumulated knowledge Indigenous peoples have passed to younger generations (Cajete, 1995; Jessen et al., 2021; Whyte et al., 2016). Although in these quotes students are not critical of the cause of this water scarcity -corruption, exploitation from multinational corporations- and seem to place the blame on the people who should look after this community garden, an increased criticality was developed throughout the project, as demonstrated in the quotes below:

"Que todos tenemos derecho a protestar y a exigir como personas y humanos que somos, tenemos derecho al agua, mejor dicho, tenemos derecho a todo." (Berenice, Project Takeaways)

"That we all have the right to protest and demand as people and humans that we are, we have the right to water, in other words, we have the right to everything."

"Hay que luchar por el derecho del Wayuu" (Jair, Project Takeaways)

"We must fight for the rights of the Wayuu."

As noted by a number of Native scholars, education founded on the land contributes to Indigenous students' development of a critical stance toward the unjustices their communities continue to navigate (Lees et al., 2021; Nxumalo, 2018). Schools can play a crucial role in sustaining these land-based practices that not only contribute to the strengthening of Wayuu identity but to their thriving. As schools collaborate with communities, they can engage students in curricular activities that strengthen traditional practices such as food sovereignty initiatives. This might enable Indigenous peoples to thrive amidst the relentless colonial forces that continue to harm their territory. Similarly, this collaboration can contribute to raising awareness of the harmful effects of multinational corporations that ceaselessly exploit Native lands. As seen in the following quote, some Indigenous people see in these multinational companies opportunities to obtain a job, without criticality pointing out the harm they have historically caused to their land and people:

"empresas multinacionales que están llegando aquí a La Guajira, busca un Wayuu un bilingüe [Wayuunaiki-español], que sea un conocedor de la cultura, conocedor de la cultura primordialmente y conocedor de la zona también, que conozca la zona de la Guajira ya, por eso es muy importante, cuando ustedes se gradúen ya, de suerte que hayan caído en una empresa de esas… por ejemplo, en el cerrejón, el cerrejón aquí buscan personas bilingües, para traductor, " (Sabedor Alfredo, Talking Circle, September 8th)

"Multinational companies that are coming here to La Guajira are looking for a bilingual Wayuu [Wayuunaiki-Spanish], someone who knows the culture, primarily knowledgeable about the culture and also familiar with the area. Knowing the region of La Guajira is very important. So, when you graduate, if you happen to join one of these companies... for example, at Cerrejón, they look for bilingual individuals for translation."

In this quote, the Knowledge Keeper is encouraging students to sustain their bilingualism Wayuunaiki-Spanish so that they can access jobs in one of these multinational companies. However, in this conversation, there is no reference to how this particular corporation, operated by BHP, Anglo American and Glencore, exploits one of the largest open-pit coal mines in the world, which poses a threat to the health of Indigenous communities (United Nations, 2020).

This critical awareness needs to be continuously developed to resist other colonial forces that have threatened the sustenance of the Wayuu people such as the influence of religion, and a disruption in intergenerational transmission of knowledge within families and communities. In the following section I will describe how the collective power of communities also has the potential to resist these colonial forces.

A (Re)Ignition of Intergenerational Transmission of Knowledge

Language and knowledge have always had an intimate relationship for Indigenous peoples**;** at the heart of Indigenous families and communities, Elders and Knowledge Keepers share stories to heal, empower younger generations, and ensure their cultural continuity (Archibald, 2008). This Intergenerational transmission of knowledge systems safeguards Indigenous notions of power, relationality, and care (Grande, 2004) that have historically sustained Indigenous families and communities. For the Wayuu people, this intergenerational transmission of knowledge has been vital to preserve their cultural practices, whether it is through the sharing of stories or through active engagement with the land as seen in the quotes below:

"***En la foto, veo una medicina wayuu ulisha, la foto la tomé porque me interesa mucho sobre ella, mi abuela siempre cuenta sobre ella, la foto me enseña que la ulisha sirve para muchas cosas como heridas etc. Este encuentro me cuenta sobre cómo deberíamos de mantener intacta nuestra cultura tradicional que nos enseño nuestros abuelos y abuelas."*** (Keiner, Photovoice, July 25th, 2023)
"In this photo, I see a Wayuu medicine called 'ulisha.' I took the photo because I am very interested in it; my grandmother always talks about it. Ulisha is good for many things such as wounds, etc. This gathering told us how we should keep intact our traditional culture that our grandfathers and grandmothers taught us."

"los rituales de los chicos son más en el hacer…. ellos se van, que vamos a cazar hoy, se lo llevan a cazar en la madrugada, vamos a buscar los chivos, por ejemplo, Joel aprendió, porque el papá lo llevaba pequeño, entonces le decía cómo se identificaban las huellas de los chivos cuando se perdían, como se identificaban las huellas de los burros y así" (Estefania, Talking Circle, August 24, 2023)

"The boys' rituals are more about doing... They go, 'We're going hunting today,' they take them hunting in the early morning, 'Let's go look for goats,' for example. Joel learned because his dad took him when he was young, so he taught him how to identify goat tracks when they got lost, how to identify donkey tracks, and so on."

This intergenerational transmission of knowledge within families, however, has begun to be disrupted due to the influence of religion in this Indigenous territory. Religious organizations have historically contributed to the assimilation of Indigenous peoples worldwide (Deloria, 1973; Smith, 2005) and this Wayuu territory has not been exempted from this trend. During various Talking Circles, participants lamented that Christian evangelical organizations have begun to influence this land and that, for this reason, many families no longer dance Yonna, wear the jewelry that accompany their traditional regalia, nor engage in a number of traditional practices.

"Ahora no se realiza la danza porque no hay entre nosotros médica espiritual (outsü) que nos indique cuándo hacerlo, que nos guíe en esta práctica. Se acaba la práctica por los evangélicos, si eso es, por ellos no hay muchas de nuestras prácticas" (Juvenal, Talking Circle, August 16, 2023)

"Nowadays, the dance isn't performed because we don't have a spiritual healer (outsü) among us to indicate when to do it, to guide us in this practice. The practice is fading away because of the influence of the evangelicals, yes, it's because of them that many of our practices are disappearing."

"Hay unos que aceptan, aceptan mandar hacer una iglesia y así convierten a todos y así nuestra cultura se va perdiendo, porque…ya tú no puedes bailar, no puedes utilizar tus atuendos, no puedes utilizar aretes" (Wayuunaiki teacher, Talking Circle, August 16, 2023)

"Some people accept, they agree to build a church and convert everyone, and that's how our culture is being lost. Because [they say] no, you can't dance anymore, you can't wear your traditional regalia, you can't wear earrings."

Despite this identification of religion as a major threat to Wayuu culture and to Wayuunaiki [Spanish is the language used in churches], religion is not only a part of the school curriculum, but operates relentlessly at the classroom level, enforced by teachers who take time from class instruction to pray. The same way the civic act on Independence day celebration began with a prayer, it is not uncommon for teachers across grade levels, to begin their classes by

having students listen to religious prayers. The incorporation of religion in the school curriculum is explained by the school principal in the following way:

"..como somos etnoeducativos, nosotros trabajamos con lo que está escrito en el akwaipa[8],.... enfocándonos en la parte étnica, entonces en cosmovisión nosotros vemos lo que es ética y valores, vemos religión, entonces lo adaptamos al proceso, porque estamos en una zona étnica" (School Principal, Semi-structured Conversation)

"Since we are ethno-education focused, we work with what is written in the akwaipa... focusing on the ethnic aspect. So, in worldview, we consider ethics and values, we consider religion, then we adapt it to the process because we are in an ethnic zone."

In this quote, the school principal demonstrates awareness of the fact that being an ethno-school, Wayuu values are expected to be centered in Indigenous education. Despite this, she explains the presence of religion as a somewhat necesary adaptation in the curriculum in this Indigenous land. As has been documented by numerous authors, the incorporation of religion in the school currilumum, alongside Eurocentric values, languages, and dress, fosters inequities in education and lays the ground for the assimilation of Indigenous students (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Lees, 2016; Yellow Bird, 2005). This religious influence in the Wayuu territory transforms cultural dynamics and further distances Wayuu people from their cultural values. An instance of this harmful impact can be found in the articule published by Bonilla-Sanchez, (2021) in which a Wayuu student in higher education, who self-identifies as Christian, refers to the Outsü, the Wayuu spiritual healer, as a witch. This growing influence of religion and other forms of westernization have implications for the intergenerational transmission of knowledge since many Wayuu epistemologies have begun to debilitate at the heart of students' homes and communities as illustrated in the quotes below:

[8] Akwaipa refers to the Wayuu people's story of origin and values that guide their existence

Bueno, a mi me gustaron los encuentros de nuestra cultura porque no lo habíamos aprendido en nuestra comunidad (Elizabeth Gonzalez, Project Takeaways)

"Well, I liked the community gatherings because we hadn't learned about [our culture] in our community."

"lo que mas me gusto fue que en el proyecto aprendi muchas cosas que antes yo no sabía y estoy muy orgulloso de aprender más sobre mi cultura, porque si no hubiese el proyecto no no iba a prender otras cosas [que] <u>en mi casa no sabían</u>" (Jose David, Project Takeaways)

"What I liked the most was that in the project, I learned many things that I didn't know before, and I am very proud to learn more about my culture. Because if it weren't for the project, I wouldn't have learned other things that my family didn't know at home."

Theses quotes above are not a mere description of the hopeless absence of some Wayuu epistemologies in this territory. These quotes indicate that the incorporation of Native voices in the education of children and youth holds the power to (re)ignite an intergenerational transmission of knowledge; something that has proven critical for the sustenance of Indigenous peoples worldwide (Archibald, 2008; Battiste, 2000; Cajete, 1994). Furthermore, centering Indigenous voices in the education of this Wayuu youth sparked in them a desire to pass their knowledge to their families as demonstrated in the quotes below:

"....en mi casa, las personas que están embarazadas no se cuidaban estando embarazadas y paseaban de noche y eso es algo que yo no sabía y ellas también, cuando les dije todo lo que aprendí sobre la partería fue me que preguntaron donde lo aprendí (Elizabeth Vangrieken, Project Takeaways)

"...in my home, pregnant women didn't take care of themselves while pregnant and went out at night, and that's something I didn't know, and neither did they. When I told them everything I learned about midwifery, they asked me where I had learned about it."

"***la verdad muy chevere para mi porque yo aprendí cosas que antes no sabía de mi cultura y también los demás aprendieron de las cosas que yo aprendí en el proyecto, bueno, como mis primos.*** (Elizabeth P, Project Takeaways)

"That was really cool for me because I learned things about my culture that I didn't know before, and also, others learned from the things I learned in the project, like my cousins."

As noted here, these students had already begun to pass this knowledge to their relatives, activating an intergenerational trasmission of knowledge within their families. Bringing this

spark home might kindle a small fire that reactivates the sharing of stories at the heart of students' families. Similarly, the knowledge passed on by Knowledge Keepers in this school-community collaboration increased students' awareness of the relevance of their ancestral knowledge and sparked their desire to make this knowledge available to other members of the school and with people outside of their community:

> *"**Esto [partería] nos enseña que debemos siempre estar desde los saberes que nos comparten los abuelos, deben permanecer y no debemos olvidarlos, recordarlos siempre y pasarlos, compartirlos de generación en generación como a nuestros hijos. Los saberes que nos compartieron fueron transmitidos por sus abuelos y así como fueron transmitidos por sus abuelos ellos no los transmiten a nosotros para que nosotros lo aprendamos, para que nosotros así los guardemos en el cerebro y así compartirlos a los demás, a los diferentes, para que ellos también aprendan de nosotros".*** (Jean Carlos Montiel, July 25, photovoice)
>
> ***"This [midwifery] teaches us that we should always stay true to the knowledge shared by our elders. It must endure, and we mustn't forget it. We should always con remember it and pass it on, share it from generation to generation, like we do with our children. The knowledge shared with us was passed down by their grandparents, and just as it was passed down to them, they pass it on to us so that we can learn and preserve it in our minds, and then we can share it with others, with people different from us so they can learn from us too."***

This quote above is but one instance of how students gained a renewed awareness of the significance of their traditions and of the intergenerational transmission of knowledge that has allowed their lifeways to endure historical oppression in their communities. Moreover, centering the voices of Elders and knowledge Keepers who shared the practices they and their ancestors have sustained since time immemorial positively affected not just students but other participants in this study, as allustrated in the following conversation with the Knowledge Keeper appointed to the school:

Knowledge Keeper: What we saw from the first day, those are things that are like being born again.

Claudia: The community garden?

Knowledge Keeper: The community garden, it's like us, I mean, in my childhood, I mean, my teenage years,... that role that we saw there, all that experience that he [the other Knowledge Keeper] explained thereI saw all of that in my childhood, I experienced all of that, that's our wealth as Wayuu people, sowing, when people get together to do a Yamana[9], to harvest, all of that.

In this quote, the Knowledge Keeper expressed how he felt reinvigorated and affirmed in the wealth and beauty of the Wayuu culture that he experienced in his upbringing, after joining the talking circle at the community garden. Taken together, this finding indicates that drawing on the power of the community to Indigenize the education of children and youth reactivated an intergenerational transmission of knowledge not just from Elders to younger generations but from students to their families. This Indigenization also allowed other particpants to experience anew some of their ancestral practices. This finding has important implications since the sustenance of Indigenous peoples, their languages, and traditions, has historically depended on this Intergenerational passing of knowledge (Cajete, 1994).

This analysis of the manifold ways in which this collaboration centered on the land impacted participants in this study indicates that communities are more powerful when working together to resist the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) that relentlessly attacks Native peoples. As seen in these quotes above, joining the voices and knowledges of Wayuu Knowledge Keepers that continue to sustain their cultural practices and epistemologies has a transformative power for intergenerational members of the community. Collectively, participants' indicated the myriad ways in which this collaboration, centered on land-based epistemologies, afforded opportunities to further (re)connect to practices rooted in their culture

[9] Traditional practice in which people gather to work toward a communal goal

and brought to the surface how coloniality harms the land that sustains them. Similar impact has been found on different contexts when grounding the Mother Earth in the education of Indigenous children and youth (Bang et al., 2014; Calderon, 2014). Embedded in this collaboration, in the stories that were shared, and in the prominence of the land-based epistemologies discussed in this section is language. Witnessing students' criticality and active engagement during talking circles led me to believe that Wayuunaiki was pivotal in this (re)connection since students were not coerced to communicate in Spanish. That is, access to this knowledge shared by community members was not conditioned to their proficiency in the colonial language that has dominated their schooling experience. In this regard, Weenie (2020) affirms that

> An articulation of Indigenous epistemologies begins by acknowledging and honouring our languages. It is proposed that by using our languages, we can privilege Indigenous knowledges. It is in our languages that we come to know and understand deeply about Indigenous epistemologies. *p*.3.

Switching the Terms and Language of the Conversation

Education in Indigenous languages positively impacts indigenous students since they feel validated in their linguistic identity (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; King, 2001). Given the tight relationship between culture and language, centering Indigenous languages contributes to sustaining Indigenous cultures (O'Connor & González, 2017; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Similarly, centering Indigenous languages increases parental involvement in the education of children and youth and results in a more relevant curriculum that fosters stronger community connections (Johansson, 2009; Rabahi et al., 2015; Romero-Little et al., 2011). The prominence of Indigenous languages in Native education also signals schools' respect for students' linguistic

diversity and maximizes the effectiveness of communication between teachers and students, thus leading to improved academic outcomes (McCarty, 2014). For the Wayuu youth in this study, these statements proved true, as will be illustrated in the following lines.

"y la mayoría, [students] ellos cuando realizan una exposición [for other subjects], hay unos que yo le ayudo de corazón porque yo lo entiendo {Wayuunaiki} y a veces me toca acercarme a la exposición en Wayuunaiki, porque ellos bien, bien, bien (in Wayuunaiki) seño y yo les elaboro pues ese texto, por ejemplo, la fábula y, {kids say} yo le explico, seño, lo que yo leí con mis propias palabras, pero en Wayuunaiki, eso es lo que ellos me expresan". (Semi-structured conversation, Wayuunaiki teacher)

"and the majority [of students], when they do a presentation [for other subjects], there are some that I help with all my heart because I understand it {Wayuunaiki}, and sometimes I have to approach the presentation in Wayuunaiki because they are really, really, really good (in Wayuunaiki) ma'am, and then I elaborate on that text for them. For example, the fable, and {kids say} I explain, ma'am, what I read in my own words, but in Wayuunaiki, that's what they express to me."

This quote illustrates students' plea to be allowed to showcase their learning in their ancestral language. It also illustrates the Wayuunaiki teacher's effort to support students in doing well in subjects in which Wayuunaiki has no space. Unfortunately, these are not isolated cases since Native children worldwide continue to be pressured to assimilate into colonial languages despite decades of Indigenous activism and subsequent recognition of Native educational sovereignty (Lopez, 2020). Switching the language and terms of the conversation (Mignolo, 2007) in the education of Indigenous children has important effects in their academic success as it was the case for students in this study.

To offer evidence for this claim, I want you to meet Sheila. Sheila is a female-identifying student. She is 16 and belongs to the clan Epiayu. In the classroom, you would usually see Sheila working by herself. Looking at her written ethnic autobiography, it became clear Sheila struggled to articulate her ideas in Spanish. Although I offered the option to write in Wayuunaiki, being an

oral language, students are just getting familiar with the written form of this language, so this offer did not help much. I offered Sheila the option to answer the questions orally, in Wayuunaiki, but I understood her refusal, always telling me she would do it some other day. Because I do not speak Wayuunaiki, I do not think Sheila took my offer too seriously. It might have also been that breaking the tradition of submitting assignments in Spanish, to ease teachers' understanding, seemed weird to her.

Sheila and I interacted very little. We would often offer each other a smile during school days and that was about it. She would never ask a question in class or volunteer to participate when I was in the room. When the time came to prepare for the final presentation in which students would share with their families and other community members what they had learned in this project, I noticed Sheila was once again sitting by herself. After asking her who her teammates for the presentation were, Sheila informed me she was going to present by herself. This was intended to be a group presentation in the language students chose, but it seemed other groups were not too eager to include her, so she decided to do it alone. I must confess I was not thrilled about this. Seeing her always quiet during lessons made me think she would probably end up not presenting at all. After all, this was a presentation in front of many people, and some students were visibly nervous about it.

On the day of the presentation, families began arriving and sitting on the patio, on the chairs students had arranged for them. Female students wore their mantas, and many male students wore traditional Wayuu hats. Teachers and students collaborated on the wall decoration that would serve as the background for presenters: big and tiny hammocks covered the wall, a Kasha, the traditional Wayuu drum was placed on a corner, and small cacti were arranged on the floor. After greeting families and the knowledge keepers who had supported the project, students

took the microphone and began their presentations. One small group of male students told the audience about the community garden. With the machete they had brought, students began making holes in the dirt and demonstrating how many seeds should go in each hole, at what distance, and at what time of the year according to the ancestral calendar. Although the presentation was entirely in Wayuunaiki, I could follow because we had already covered this content in our English class as well.

Group after group, most students explained in Wayuunaiki what they had learned, some students danced, and then it was Sheila's turn. She grabbed the microphone and addressed everyone in Wayuunaiki with a confidence we had not seen before. She spoke about midwifery, about the importance of keeping this tradition, about men's responsibility in ensuring the baby was healthy, about the traditional medicine needed in this tradition, and about the loss of this practice due to the influence of alijunas[10]. Students and teachers alike praised Sheila. The Wayuunaiki teacher told me how impressed she was and her classmates kept telling Sheila how great her presentation had been. She shone.

Opening up the possibility to unapologetically use Wayuunaiki, positioned these youth as knowledgeable, thus switching the power dynamic that Spanish has dominated in the education of Wayuu students. This situation was not the same for Clarisbel. It might have been the fact that she presented in Spanish for an audience that mainly spoke Wayuunaiki that made her feel less confident. After her presentation, she told me and her mom she was disappointed in her performance. She said she wanted to say more but she had blanked during her presentation. Her mom and I comforted her and assured her the information she had shared was beautiful, but she still seemed really disappointed. Clarisbel did not shine the way she had all this time. She did not

[10] People who are not Wayuu or who do not share an Indigenous identity

stand out the way she had throughout her school year, which led to her distinction as the best student in 9th grade. This contrasting situation taught every one of us an important lesson about what is possible when students are allowed to learn and to showcase their learning in a language they feel confident in and through literacies they have developed since time immemorial.

This presentation was not the only evidence I had on how students' performance changed when given the opportunity to choose the language they preferred to communicate. When students first started doing photovoice for this project, they were invited to send their recordings in any language they chose. While some students seemed reluctant to start sending theirs, the few who did decided to send the recordings in Spanish. These voice messages, however, were extremely short; some ranged between 5 to 8 seconds to answer questions related to each community gathering. After discussing this with Estefania, she came to school and explained to students it was truly okay to send their recordings in Wayuunaiki if they chose to do this. As it turned out, the fact that I did not speak Wayuunaiki, made students feel it was their responsibility to use a language I understood. After Estefania clarified she would help me with translations, this situation was transformed and the quality of the recordings increased significantly. In this process, some students would always send their recordings in Wayuunaiki, some in Spanish, some would choose a different language from week to week, and some would simply switch languages in the middle of the recordings. By not placing on students the responsibility to adjust to my lack of knowledge of Wayuunaiki, they felt encouraged to utilize their bilingualism and their freedom to make meaning in their different languages. This finding did not only underscored the importance of centering Indigenous languages but made evident the struggles a westernized education system poses for Native students who refuse to lose their languages to fit

colonial education models (Batiste, 2017; Rudiger, 2020) that center only Spanish, and now English, in their education.

Centering Wayuunaiki during talking circles did not come without a challenge, though. For Clarisbel, the one student whose command of Wayuunaiki was not too strong, some of these community gatherings posed a barrier in her understanding. This disruption in the uneven power relation Wayuunaiki and Spanish had maintained throughout their schooling journey arose during the final questionnaire intended to gauge students' takeaways from this project. To the question: Which of these gatherings contributed less to your learning and why? Clarisbel responded:

En todos los encuentros que tuvimos aprendí mucho y me ayudaron a reforzar más sobre lo que yo ya sabía. Aunque se me dificultaba entender, mis compañeros me ayudaron. Pero si de aprender menos creo que fue sobre el calendario Wayuu ya que en algunos momentos, bueno, en todo lo que el señor dijo, no le entendía nada, pero como dije, mis compañeros me ayudaron (Clarisbel, Project takeaways)

"In all the gatherings we had, I learned a lot and they helped me reinforce what I already knew. Although I found it difficult to understand, my classmates helped me. But if it comes to choosing the one where I learned less, I think it was the Wayuu calendar because at some points, well, in everything the man said, I didn't understand anything, but as I said, my classmates helped me."

Clarisbel's knowledge of Wayuunaiki was far superior and oftentimes a lot stronger than what she seemed willing to admit. Evidence of this were the expanding questions she asked during gatherings that unfolded fully in Wayuunaiki and the English teacher's reliance on her to explain instructions in Wayuunaiki when her classmates struggled to understand them in Spanish. Regardless of this, looking at Clarisbel's final reflection, I celebrate that switching the language of instruction positioned students who mainly spoke Wayuunaiki as knowledgeable and capable learners. Put differently, switching the power dynamic that Spanish has dominated in their education, positioned students' fluency in Wayuunaiki as an asset. Consequently, these students were no longer positioned as in need of remediation, or as lacking knowledge nor desire to learn as the English teacher had insinuated. The following conversation with the English teacher

demonstrates how her perception of students' was transformed as she witnessed their performance once Wayuunaiki was centered:

English Teacher: *Well, I liked the midwife talking circle, I liked it a lot because I learned things I didn't know…*

Claudia: *But that talking circle was all in Wayuunaiki*

English Teacher: *Yeah, everything was in Wayuunaiki. Nonetheless, I learned a few things because she projected them, she projected on the white board, and so I was able to learn a lo of things because those [slides] were in Spanish and I also asked some of the girls. In the other gathering [ancestral calendar] I didn't learn anything at all, because everything was in Wayuunaiki, yeah we would have had to translate everything. But students did learn, they did, I mean we will find out when we look at the sheet [graphic organizer about ancestral calendar]*

Claudia: *They already filled it out*

English Teacher: *They already filled it out. That's when you realize they learned all the changes of the moon with the Knowledge Keeper, yeah, they paid attention…but that's when you feel, you put yourself in the students' shoes, like when they are talking to me and I don't understand, and they use words that I don't understand, that's how they feel, like us [her and me] when we don't understand anything at all, that's how they feel when we speak to them in Spanish, using our words, or in English, that's how they feel.* (English Teacher, Semi-structured Conversation, my translation)

Transforming the English teacher's perception of students' capabilities was a powerful result of this Indigenization of education. She went from seeing students' culture as a barrier in their learning to witnessing their increased class engagement and improved academic outcomes

when Wayuunaiki was centered. From this conversation, we can infer how the positive effect of this collaboration led the English teacher to reflect on the struggles Wayuu students might face when their language is disregarded and when students are taught exclusively in Spanish and in English. This realization might hopefully lead to more scaffolded lessons, a stronger incorporation of students' home language in their classes and a more serious commitment from the school at large to build on students' Wayuunaiki to advance their learning across subjects. Similarly, looking at the English teacher's reflection, this finding suggests that these school-community collaborations can also support teachers in better understanding how to incorporate Indigenous epistemologies in their teaching (Lees, 2016) while privileging Native languages.

Dian Million, (2011) affirms that Native peoples' "continuing desire to bring Indigenous community-based ways of knowing into dialogue with Western research paradigms is fraught with difficulty." p.313. Over a decade after Million's publication this statement still rings true. However, this school-community collaboration shed some light into the possibilities to counter the monopoly of westernized approaches to the education of Indigenous peoples while also resisting the violent erasure of Indigenous peoples and their language from school curricula. Bringing together the collective power of Native voices in the education of Indigenous children had an impact that went beyond centering "landscapes, images, languages, themes, metaphors, and stories of the Indigenous world" (Smith, 2012, p.147). Sustained school-community collaborations rooted in the land countered the systematic displacement of Indigenous knowledges and languages from schooling practices (Lees, 2016) and (re)ignited an intergenerational transmission of knowledge. In this study, this was possible by exposing students to myriad knowledges and cultural practices that their ancestors have practiced and

preserved but that forces of coloniality have disrupted. These results would not have been possible without inviting the ancestral knowledge rooted in the sacred practices and spaces Wayuu people have preserved and sustained since time immemorial: Yonna, midwifery, hunting, Putchipui, community gardens, and ancestral calendar.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that it takes a village to push back against coloniality and discourses of modernity and globalization that insist on erasing Native knowledges and languages from education. Similarly, it takes a village to uplift Native knowledges and to validate them in their own right and through their ancestral language. In this collaboration and through these gatherings, Wayuu knowledge existed without being measured up against the colonial gaze. It was not toned down nor downplayed to fit western molds. Through stories and connections to the land, Wayuu knowledge and Wayuunaiki walked hand in hand, proud and tall, in the diverse communities we visited, and in the various realms in which Knowledge Keepers allowed us to enter. This offered possibilities for all participants to (re)connect to their traditional knowledges and practices. In addition to this, in this chapter, I have argued that these knowledges are closely tied to the land which allowed students not only to (re)connect to their territory, but to become critical of the way nature is reacting to the historical scarcity of water and food their ancestors have faced; an issue that has cost the lives of thousands of Wayuu children in the past decades.

Finally, the impact of this collaboration on students and other participants speaks to the power communities hold to sustain their lifeways and to transform the education of Indigenous students. This sheds light on the possibilities that open up for Native communities when schools center the knowledges Native communities have accumulated and sustained throughout time.

These collaborations do not require community members' command of mainstream literacies, such as reading and writing; they do not even require their command of a colonial language. By removing these colonial requirements, community members are positioned as knowledge holders (Murrell, 2000) and their knowledges and command of Native languages as assets that students also bring to the classroom. That is, Indigenous knowledges and languages are positioned alongside western knowledge and ways of knowing; not underneath them. This Indigenization of education disrupts the shortcoming of decolonizing project that restrict the presence of native voices, knowledges, ceremonies, and languages in academic spaces (Fellner, 2018; Rorick, 2019; Shahjahan, et al.,2022). However, schools and communities still have a crucial task to further unveil how exploitation by multinational companies poisons the air, kidnaps their water supply, and uncontrollably exploits Wayuu land resources. Developing students' and communities' critical understanding of this harm, could result in collective initiatives to deter these companies and/or to make their threat visible in and out of Colombia through the use of multiple resources such as media. In a nutshell, centering multiple community members disrupted the limited space Wayuu people had in this school and opened multiple possibilities for them to influence the education of Wayuu youth proving that, together, the Native peoples are stronger bridging the gaps between schools and their communities (Lees, 2016). In the following chapter, I will describe how this collaboration also afforded possibilities for the Indigenization of the English class.

Vignette # 6 - Poem

A Language Battle

Look at it! {insert any colonial language here}

It's been approaching Indigenous Land for a while.

It's been slowly walking towards it.

I've often seen it coming closer, trespassing, riding on the shoulders of national mandates that glorify its presence, its visits, its charges against Mother Earth, against the words, songs, and stories protected, sustained, and fed by Mother Earth.

Look at it!

It now sits comfortably in schools.

Its presence is week after week sometimes welcomed but often forced upon the children of the Land.

Look at it!

It stares at Mother Earth. It smiles.

It thinks the words, and songs, and stories of Mother Earth will soon be forgotten because its presence is now taking up sacred space.

Look at it!

Hear its sounds, its promises of a better future.

But Mother Earth stares back. She refuses to surrender to this visitor and its powerful army.

Mother Earth continues to teach, and to feed those words, and sing those songs, and tell those stories that the visitor can't utter, can't replace.

Mother Earth summons the animals, the sand, the rocks, the cacti, and the wind and compels them to speak louder, to sing louder.

Mother Earth summons the ancestors who come charging in the form of dreams and say the words, and sing the songs, and tell the stories at night.

The visitor smiles again. Its army gets stronger. It now has more policies and mandates that allow it to walk freely on Mother Earth.

Its visits can't be avoided. The visitor now enters houses, bedrooms, kitchens.

It wants to join the stories told around the fire that Mother Earth has fed since time immemorial.

The visitor does not leave.... but Mother Earth does not surrender. She runs through the blood of those children who still dream about those words, and sing those songs, and remember those stories told by Mother Earth.

The visitor stares in anger.

Mother Earth stares back and smiles.

Chapter Seven: Toward the Indigenization of English Language Teaching

Introduction

In chapter four, I described the myriad forms in which coloniality operates in this school context and In chapter five, I described students' manifold forms of resistance against this colonial education. In chapter six I contrasted this coloniality in schooling with the multiple ways in which Wayuu knowledges, embedded in the land, are part and parcel of the sustenance of the Wayuu people and offered evidence of how the power of Native communities alongside students' resistance can act against colonial forces. In this chapter, I will argue that Indigenous and western forms of knowledge are not irreconcilable. Instead, these knowledges can coexist and engage in epistemic dialogue to advance the education of Indigenous peoples worldwide. To this end, I describe how school-community collaborations in which Wayuu people led students' (re)connection to their land, language, and epistemologies were utilized to Indigenize the English classroom. Firstly, I describe how this collaboration shifted the instrumental focus of English classes toward the sustenance of Wayuu students' epistemologies. Secondly, I narrate the ways in which Wayuunaiki, Spanish, and English interrelated during the project development and how this Indigenization of the English classroom afforded possibilities for an ecology of languages (Lopez, 2008). Thirdly, I illustrate the ways in which this attempt to Indigenize language teaching created opportunities to move toward a *dialogo de saberes* -dialogue among dialogues- (CRIC, 2004; Leff, 2003;)thus challenging the epistemic injustice prevalent in this school context (Carenzo & Trentini, 2020). I conclude this chapter by arguing that, although it is not possible to remove the colonial essence from a colonial language, it is possible to use the space English has gained in Indigenous schools to Indigenize English classes. That is, to bring Indigenous ways of being, knowing, doing, and speaking to the English classroom while

developing students' academic literacies.

Indigenizing the English Classroom

English came to join the linguistic language in Colombia a few decades ago, finding its way to every classroom on every land, and community, through language policies that make its learning mandatory (Bettney, 2022; Usma et al., 2018). This study aimed to draw on the school-community collaboration described above to Indigenize English classes. In other words, with this collaboration, I intended to use the privileged space English has gained in Colombia to counter the impact of coloniality on Wayuu students' identities, epistemologies, and cultural practices. This Indigenization afforded possibilities to transform the traditional instrumental approach to English teaching endorsed in the National Bilingual Program in Colombia by centering Wayuu epistemologies in English lessons. Drawing on the learning students gained during talking circles the presence of English in the curriculum turned into meaningful opportunities to read, write, listen to and talk about Wayuu culture and ways of being, knowing, and doing in this colonial language.

The National Bilingual Program in Colombia has been heavily critiqued for its outright disregard for the existence of ancestral languages and multilingualism of the over one hundred Indigenous peoples in the country (Garcia & Garcia, 2023; Torrez- Martinez, 2009) who speak about 65 ancestral languages A quick glance at this English policy, textbooks, and propaganda set in place to enforce English learning throughout the country makes this disregard transparent. The following is a quote included in the textbook Way to Go; one instance amidst the plethora found in teaching resources since this program was launched in 2004:

"Thank you for opening a window for your students to see English as a means of interacting with the world, and for contributing to make Colombia a bilingual country" (Way to Go textbook, National Bilingual Program)

In this quote, English is advertised as a globalizing project and English teachers are thanked in advance for their contribution to the advancement of bilingualism -Spanish-English- in Colombia. Subsequently, in an attempt to respond to this endeavor, English teaching has been introduced in the curriculum across all grade levels. For Wayuu youth in this school, the allocation of time for English learning has resulted in the disminution of class time for Wayuunaiki which is only taught once a week, for fifty-minutes, and only up to ninth grade. Despite this policy's enforcement of English and of colonial ideals of bilingualism (Miranda & Valencia, 2022) through textbooks, standardized testing, and through extravagant resource allocation -resources that exceed by far what is ever allocated to the sustenance of all ancestral languages combined- English learning in the country has not improved significantlyfor students in public schools (Bettney, 2022). This reality is not dissimilar for students in this study who acknowledge the limited opportunities they have to use this language in their territory, and whose familiarity with English ranges from saying a few words, to admitting they never speak in English:

"Bueno, el inglés no lo hablo porque para mi es muy difícil y en La Guajira no lo hablan" (Jose David, ethnic autobiography).	***"Well, I don't speak English because it's very difficult for me, and in La Guajira, they don't speak it."***
"Bueno yo no hablo ingles, ni para qué mentirte, de vez en cuando digo "good morning" a la seno Agneris" (Yolimar, ethnic autobiography)	***" Well, I don't speak English, I won't even lie, sometimes I say 'good morning' to Miss Agneris."***
"Bueno, de verdad yo no hablo inglés nunca, estamos hablando con nuestro	***"Well, I really don't speak English at all. We're speaking our language, which is***

idioma que es Wayuunaiki" (Jhonatan, ethnic autobiography) ***Wayuunaiki."***

Teachers in this school are not unaware of students' emergent English level. During the practice test day described above, once the Spanish component was over, the teacher supervising the test started the English section. For this section, the teacher translated some of the words to ease students' understanding. She looked at me every now and then seeking reassurance that her translation was accurate. She once again scrolled up and down, and up, and down, translated the text, the questions, and the possible answers, until she determined it was time to move on to the next text because time was running out. Following is an except from one of the texts used in this preparation for standardized testing:

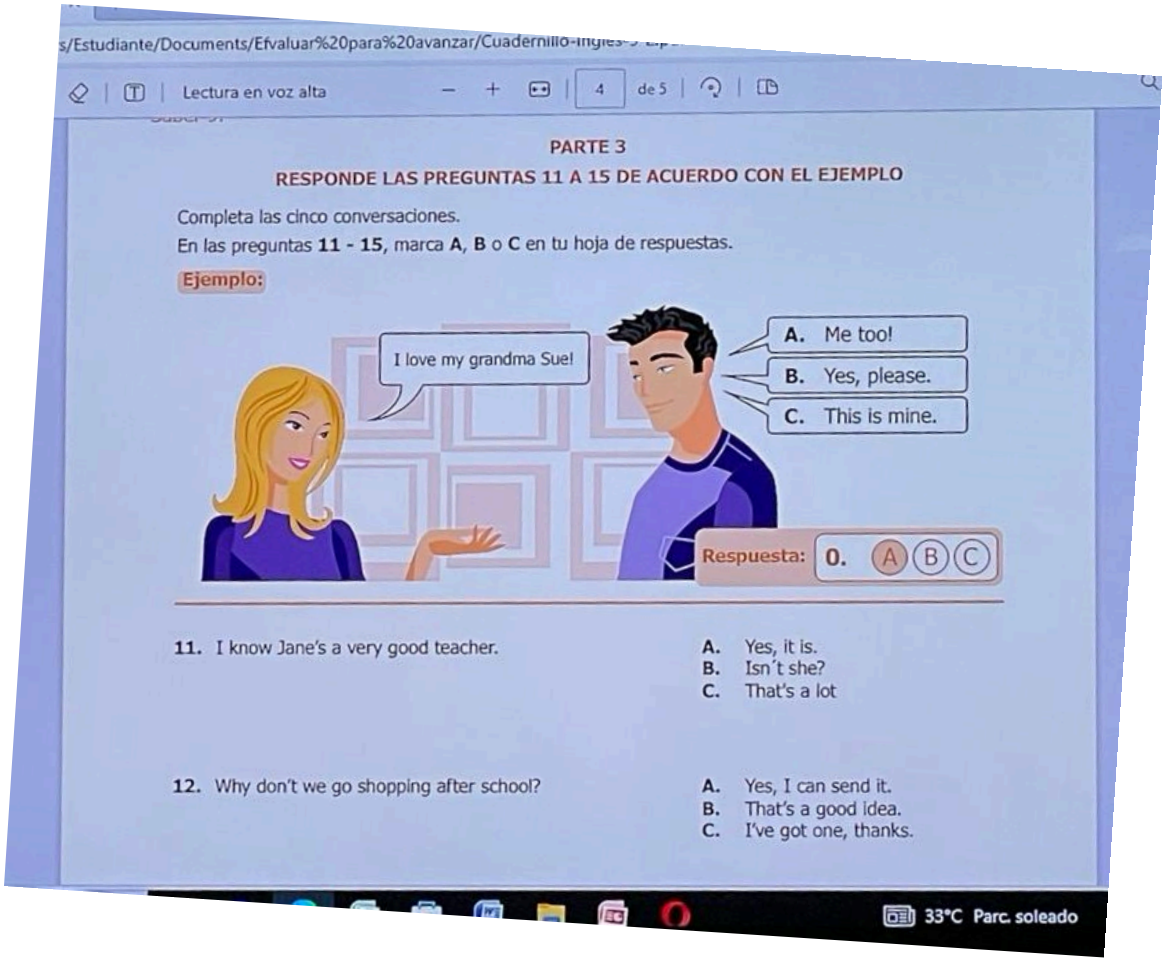


Figure 7: Excerpt Taken from Standardized Test Preparation Resource

Unsusprisingly, whiteness alongside a persistent instrumental, decontextualized approach to English learning dominate textbooks, standards for learning, and every other resource set in place by the National Bilingual program. These factors influence the English lessons delivered in most classrooms across the country, and this school in no exception to this rule, as explained by the English teacher:

“bueno cada uno [profesore] en su materia…, yo me acojo a los lineamientos curriculares del inglés desde el bilingüismo, lo que tiene el Ministerio, yo trabajo con esos DBA [Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje} y con los temas que están

"Well, each [teacher] in their own subject, I adhere to the curricular guidelines for English to foster bilingualism, what the Ministry [of Education] states. I work with those Basic Learning Rights (DBA) and with the topics included there."

ahí"(Agneris,Semi-structured Conversation).

Colonial language and cultural ideologies fostered by the National Bilingual Program, lead to English classes that often uplift whiteness, center Eurocentric decontextualized content, and erase ethnic and other minoritized populations, their languages, and their realities (Manan et al., 2023). Added to this is the fact that in Colombia a vast number of language teacher education programs, in and out of Indigenous territories, do not seem concerned with the preparation of English teachers committed to the incorporation of ethno-education principles in their classes. As a result of this complicit compliance of teacher education programs with colonial language policies, English language teaching often focuses on the instrumental utilization and rehearsal of grammar structures that neglect the power relations among colonial and Indigenous languages (Tochon, 2019). The quote below illustrates this pattern:

"*por ejemplo, sí yo les digo, ahora que estamos en el presente simple, yo le doy el tema, les coloco unos ejemplos y les digo, realizar dos oraciones, les pongo eso nada más, dos oraciones en inglés y dos en español… o los pongo a ilustrar la clase, 'van a dibujar y abajo van a colocar en inglés y también lo van a colocar en español'*" (English teacher, Semi-structured conversation**)**

"For example, if I tell them, now that we are in the simple present, I give them the topic, I give them some examples, and I tell them to make two sentences, I just assign that, two sentences in English and two in Spanish... or I have them illustrate the class, 'you are going to draw and below you are going to write in English and you are also going to write it in Spanish."

This quote also evinces how, in Colombia, Spanish and English have joined forces to erase Indigenous languages from the English classroom. Moreover, English teaching has traditionally focused on topics related to colonial cultures that, oftentimes, present these cultures and their speakers as superior to students' own cultures (Pennycook, 2018). These decontextualized topics, teaching materials, and lack of resources have consequences for the development of English learners' identities, Indigenous and otherwise, since this creates an

implicit hierarchy between the local and the foreign (Núñez Pardo, 2020). Although this instrumentalization of English teaching and learning has repercussions for all English learners, regardless of their ethnicity, for Indigenous students, whose ancestral language already competes with a dominant colonial language, such as Spanish, the pressure to sustain their linguistic and cultural identity is even greater. As has been established by scholars critical of this coloniality in ELT, failure to ignore this reality cements colonial language ideologies that result in the weakening and subsequent loss of ancestral languages and cultures globally (Motha, 2014).

Countering this coloniality through the Indigenization of English classes through systematic "efforts to transform spaces, processes, and institutions founded in non-Indigenous cultures to include Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and acting and the persons who practice them." (Grafton & Melançon, 2020, p.149). The figure below illustrates the process I followed in this attempt to Indigenize ELT:

Figure 8: Process in the Indigenization of English Lessons

By following this process, the purpose behind English classes was transformed and students grew aware of it:

"Me sentía muy feliz en la hora de inglés ***"I felt really happy during English class to***

***para saber como es la yonna y también el calendario ancestral para saber como es en inglés y también sobre la caza para aprender todo lo que pertenece en nuestra cultura wayuu..*"** (Saideth, Project Takeaways, sep 21. 2023)

learn about the yonna and also the ancestral calendar to know how it is in English, and also about hunting to learn everything that belongs to our Wayuu culture."

"Me pareció excelente saber de la cultura, como escribirla en inglés, como nombrarla y compartir [este aprendizaje] con la familia" (Keiner, Project Takeaways, sep 21. 2023).

"I found it excellent to learn about our culture, how to write it [about] in English, how to name it, and to share this learning with the family."

These quotes represent a sentiment expressed by most students in this study. By drawing on this school-community collaboration, English became a tool to restate and revoice students' knowledge about their Wayuu culture. Put differently, the transformation of the instrumental approach to English classes that has dominated English teaching and learning in Colombia, turned English classes into a platform to revisit that knowledge in a different language and through other literacies such as reading and writing. In this process, students' writing moved beyond the translation of sentences that aided with the incorporation of tools such as graphic organizers, enabled students to practice academic skills such as synthesizing information. Following is an example of the graphic organizer students used to summarize their learning about the ancestral calendar:

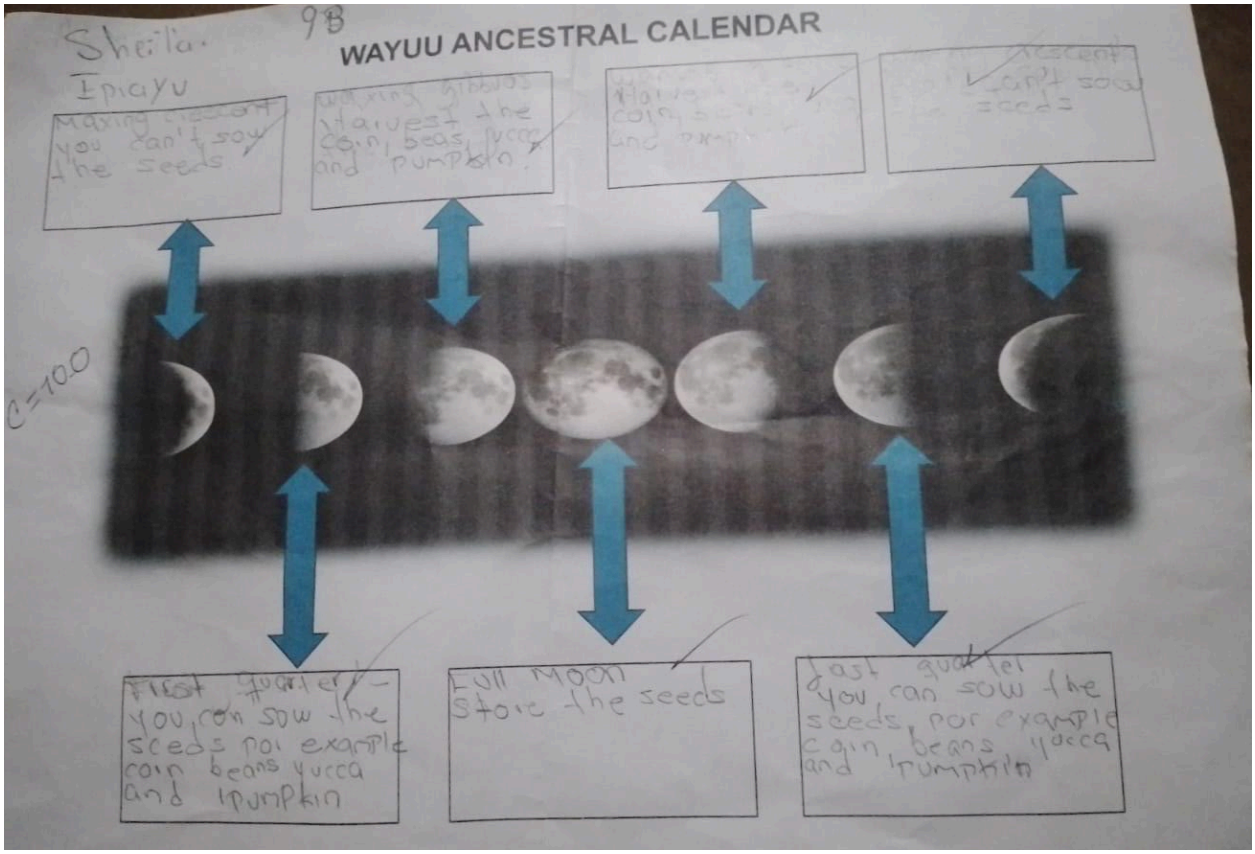


Figure 9: Ancestral Calendar: Graphic organizer filled out in English

Here, after engaging in a Talking Circle and working on vocabulary building activities related to the ancestral calendar, students collaborated to summarize their learning. This turned English lessons into opportunities to revisit what students had learned about their Wayuu epistemologies and cultural practices thus shifting the focus from Eurocentric worldviews. Moving away from instrumental approaches to English learning has important implications for students' ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identity develoment. As explained by Norton (2013), every time language learners speak, read, or write in the target language, they are not simply exchanging information but constructing and negotiating their sense of being and their relationship to the world. That is, language learning influences students' sense of who they are and who they can be in relation to the world. In this regard, by creating opportunities for students

to strengthen their ethnic identity through English, this Indigenization of language teaching instilled in students desire to use English to talk about their culture as illustrated in the quotes below:

"....el usar otro idioma como lo es el inglés me ayudó .... bueno aprendí más palabras en inglés, la pronunciación, aunque con eso no me va tan bien, pero me gustaria algun dia aprender más inglés y si se me llegara la oportunidad de presentarme a algún lugar, empezar a hablarles sobre mi cultura" (Cindy, Project Takeaways)

"Using another language like English helped me... well, I learned more words in English, pronunciation, although I'm not so good at it. But I would like to learn more English someday, and if I had the opportunity to introduce myself somewhere, start talking to them about my culture."

"A mi me gustó porque en las clases hablé [sobre]mi cultura en otra lengua que es inglés y ya tengo ideas por si llega un gringo y me pregunta sobre mi cultura ya sabré que responderle" (Dana, Project Takeaways)

"I liked it because in class I talked about my culture in another language, which is English, and now I have ideas in case a foreigner asks me about my culture, I'll know what to answer."

English lessons focused on the reification of whiteness and westernized values can lead to students' internalization of racial, linguistic, and cultural hierarchies and to their aspirations to belong to those cultures that appear superior to their own (Ferrão Candau, 2019;Flores & Rosa, 2015; Garcia, 2009; Guilherme & Souza, 2019; Kramsch, 2014; Kubota, 2016; Norton, 2000). These quotes above seem to indicate that, thorough the Indigenization of English, lessons no longer perpetuated these racial hierarchies and instead positioned Wayuu culture as something valuable students could, and desired to, speak about in yet another language. Following Rivera-Cusicanqui, (2012), students' intention to use English to assert their culture and knowledges enabled them to reappropriate their multilingualism "as a decolonizing practice [that] will allow for the creation of a "we" as producers of knowledge and interlocutors who can have discussions as equals with other centers of thought" (Rivera-Cusicanqui, 2012, p.106). This

coincides with the expectations Elders and Knowledge Keepers hold for students as learners of other languages. In their view, other languages allow Wayuu people to visibilize their culture so their learning should not come at the expense of Wayuunaiki:

"eso [preservar la lengua ancestral] es lo importante, el inglés a ti te permite dialogar, si tú te encuentras con un gringo le hablas en tu lengua, no te va entender, le hablas en español si no te entiende pues ya tu estas diciendo, ?porque no me entiende si [el español] es un idioma universal?, luego si hablas en inglés, él te va a entender, ahí tú estás haciendo como, ganar, ganar en qué sentido, de que tú estés llevando varias palabras [mensajes] pero desde la base que es el Wayuunaiki, una misma palabra pero desde la base Wayuunaiki y ahí estás tú dando cátedra, eso es lo que se quiere, que haya una conciencia colectiva y que la lengua de nosotros sea la más fuerte" (Rogelio, Talking Circle).

"That's [to preserve our ancestral language] is what's important. English allows you to have a dialogue. If you meet a foreigner and speak to them in your language, they won't understand. If you speak Spanish and they still don't understand, you might think, 'Why don't they understand? Spanish is a universal language.' But if you speak English, they will understand. There, you're achieving a win-win situation. You're conveying multiple messages, but all rooted in Wayuunaiki. It's about teaching from our language. That's what we want – collective awareness, with our language being the strongest language."

yo le he dicho a los niños, no tengan pena donde usted esté, así sea en otros países, preséntese, hable primero lo de ustedes [Wayuunaiki], porque si usted habla primero de lo que no es usted, entonces usted no se está identificando en nada, hay que hablar, después explican que fue lo que dijiste, que eres tú, esa es la identidad de nosotros como Wayuu, la lengua y la vestimenta, ...o solamente que importa que esté [en] otra ropa, de otra cultura, pero después que usted hable [en Wayuunaiki], [los demás] se dan cuenta… (Alfredo, Semi-structured Conversation)

I have told the children, "Do not be ashamed wherever you are, even if it's in other countries. Introduce yourselves, speak first in your own [Wayuunaiki] language, because if you speak first about what you are not, then you are not identifying with anything. You must speak, then explain what you said, who you are. That is our identity as Wayuu, our language and regalia. ...It doesn't matter if you're wearing different clothes, from another culture, but after you speak [in Wayuunaiki], [others] realize…[who you are"

Evidently, Knowledge Keepers and other community members in this territory do not oppose the learning of Spanish, English, or any other language. As seen in these quotes, and as

evidenced in other Talking Circles, they see in language learning an opportunity to make Wayuu culture and values visible to other people by starting from self-identification rooted in their Wayuu identity. As stated by Carvajal et al. (2022) "The ways we self-identify speak to different layers of our identities situated in relationships to our own selves, the ancestors, the land, and communities." p.616. Attaining this requires from students a desire to preserve a collective spirit rooted in their love for their culture and language. The following except from a talking circle exemplifies this view:

Rogelio: ***It's good for students to know more than one language…***

Estefania: ***but there are students who displace Wayuunaiki to favor English***

Rogelio: ***These are people who are not strong in their [ethnic] roots,....and they don't love [lo propio] their own culture and when you don't love your own culture then there's no prescription… there's no cure, there's nothing, because that person individualizes from the collective ..*** (Talking Circle, August 24, 2023)

This conversation brings to the surface the need to center Wayuu knowledges and Wayuunaiki so that students are strong in their Indigenous identity; something that this school-community collaboration aimed to achieve by making room for students to value *lo propio* throughout the Indigenization of English classes. This attempt to Indigenize ELT joins other efforts in Latin America in which scholars have advocated for the incorporation of Indigenous perspectives in English language teaching, learning, and teacher preparation (Carvajal et al., 2022; Gutierrez & Aguirre, 2022) This Indigenization of schooling spaces seems to be a paramount endeavor to ensure students strengthen their relationship with their language and commit to its sustenance across spaces. Furthermore, this Indigenization of the English classroom opened up spaces for Wayuunaiki, Spanish, and English to co-exist in a more

harmonious. That is, it paved the way toward an ecology of languages (Lopez, 2008), as will be described in the following paragraphs:

An Ecology of Languages

For multilingual learners, literacy development has historically focused on the enforcement of dominant languages sanctioned by colonial curricula (García & Kleifgen, 2019). In Colombia, like in many other countries in the Global South and North, English classrooms have traditionally been used as spaces to enforce English-only rules (Ortega, 2019; Von Esch, et al., 2020). The enforcement of this class rule ensures that students with more access to resources to pay for private lessons (Bettney, 2022) dominate class conversations. This enforcement also creates a hierarchy among students' languages which, for Indigenous students who have fought to preserve their ancestral language, means their language is further displaced. This contributes to "the decline in family- and community-based intergenerational transmission of Indigenous languages as a consequence of colonial schooling, the pressures of globalization and modernity, racial and linguistic discrimination, and continuing policies that marginalize Indigenous peoples." (Coronel-Molina & McCarty, 2016, p.1-2)

Although no English-only rule is implemented in this school, Wayuunaiki still found no place in English lessons. As evidenced in the previous section, English classes traditionally fostered translation from Spanish to English and vice versa, thus rendering Wayuunaiki invisible in English lessons. This situation, however, began to be transformed as English lessons were Indigenized through the recognition of orally-based communal knowledges that have been deemed illegitimate in colonial education systems (Million, 2011). That is, by inviting Wayuunaiki into Talking circles as the basis of English lessons, students' home language claimed

space in the English classroom. This ecology of languages (Lopez E., 2008) was enforced through the provision of input in three different languages and in students' freedom to communicate and to complete class activities in any language they chose, enabled students to draw unrestrictedly from their linguistic repertoire (Becker, 2014; Garcia, 2019). This incorporation of different languages eased students' familiarity with the content of class readings and recordings in English and made exposure to this language less intimidating and overwhelming to students as we could evidence class after class. In this vein, students consistently expressed that reading in English about something they were familiar with, made the texts more accessible. This increased accessibility also affected students' perception of the easiness of learning English throughout the project:

"Nosotros lo Wayuu no hablamos el ingles porque todavía no damos para el inglés" (Aucinia, Ethnic Autobiography, July 18th, 2023)	***"We Wayuu don't speak English because we're not capable yet with English."***
"pues a mí me pareció como fácil de hacer así [leer en inglés]" (Aucinia, Talking Circle, August 30th)	***"Well, it seemed easy for me to do it like this [read in English]."***

The first quote above illustrates Aucinia's perception of English being something difficult for the Wayuu people. The phrase "no damos para el ingles" can be translated as "English is something beyond us, beyond our capabilities". This was a perception shared by many students at the beginning of the study. The second quote, however, indicates Aucinia's positive perception about English learning, when referring to a class reading. Moving toward this ecology of languages does not imply that English learning did not come without a challenge for students whose exposure to English had been mostly at the sentence and vocabulary level. The following quotes exemplify several students' sentiment in relation to their English learning process:

“la clase fue muy divertida o sea las palabras en inglés eran más difíciles antes para mi, pero con el tiempo aprendí” (Elizabeth Vangrieken, Project Takeaways)

"The class was very fun, I mean, the English words were more difficult for me before, but over time I learned."

“Estaba emocionada y al mismo tiempo no entendía, pero después entendí y aprendí” (Hilda, project takeaways)

"I was excited and at the same time I didn't understand, but later I understood and learned."

Despite this bumpy journey, overtime engaging with short texts fully written in English became more manageable. When further inquired, students seemed to agree that reading texts in English was not as hard since they could make connections to the content they had already approached in Wayuunaiki and in Spanish. In other words, an integration of an ecology of languages into the education of these Wayuu youth proved essential for their enhanced academic performance. This link between the incorporation of Indigenous languages in education and Indigenous students' improved academic outcomes has been well documented (Cajete, 1994; Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; McCarty, 2002) Similarly, this ecology of languages might add to students' cultural preservation by offering multiple opportunities for Indigenous students to talk about their epistemologies in different languages. The following quotes speak to students' perception of how Wayuunaiki, Spanish, and English converged in the English class and the impact this articulation had on their attitude toward English lessons:

“Es muy bonito usar la clase de inglés para aprender sobre mi cultur en inglés, en wayuunaiki y en español” (Cindy Carolina, Project Takeaways)

"It's beautiful to use the English class to learn about my culture in English, Wayuunaiki, and Spanish."

“…a mi me gusta mucho el inglés y ademas quisiera poder aprender a hablarlo y además el mezclar otro idioma a estos 3 idiomas que son el espanol, el inglés y nuestro idioma, el wayuunaiki, hace mas

"I really like English, and I would also like to learn to speak it. Additionally, mixing another language with these three languages which are Spanish, English, and our language, Wayuunaiki, makes it even

bueno, como diria, dan mas ganas de seguir en el proyecto ya que lo hace muy interesante” (Clarisbel, Project Takeaways)

better, as it makes it very interesting and motivates me to continue with the project."

Something noteworthy in this Indigenization of English classes is that the incorporation of these three languages was not restricted to whether we were in the English class, Wayuunaiki class, or during talking circles. Hence, it was not uncommon for students to engage in discussions fully in Wayuunaiki, during the English class, to fill out some of these graphic organizers.This unregulated presence of these languages might have been the reason why students freely chose the language in which they wanted to do these activities as evidenced in the picture below:

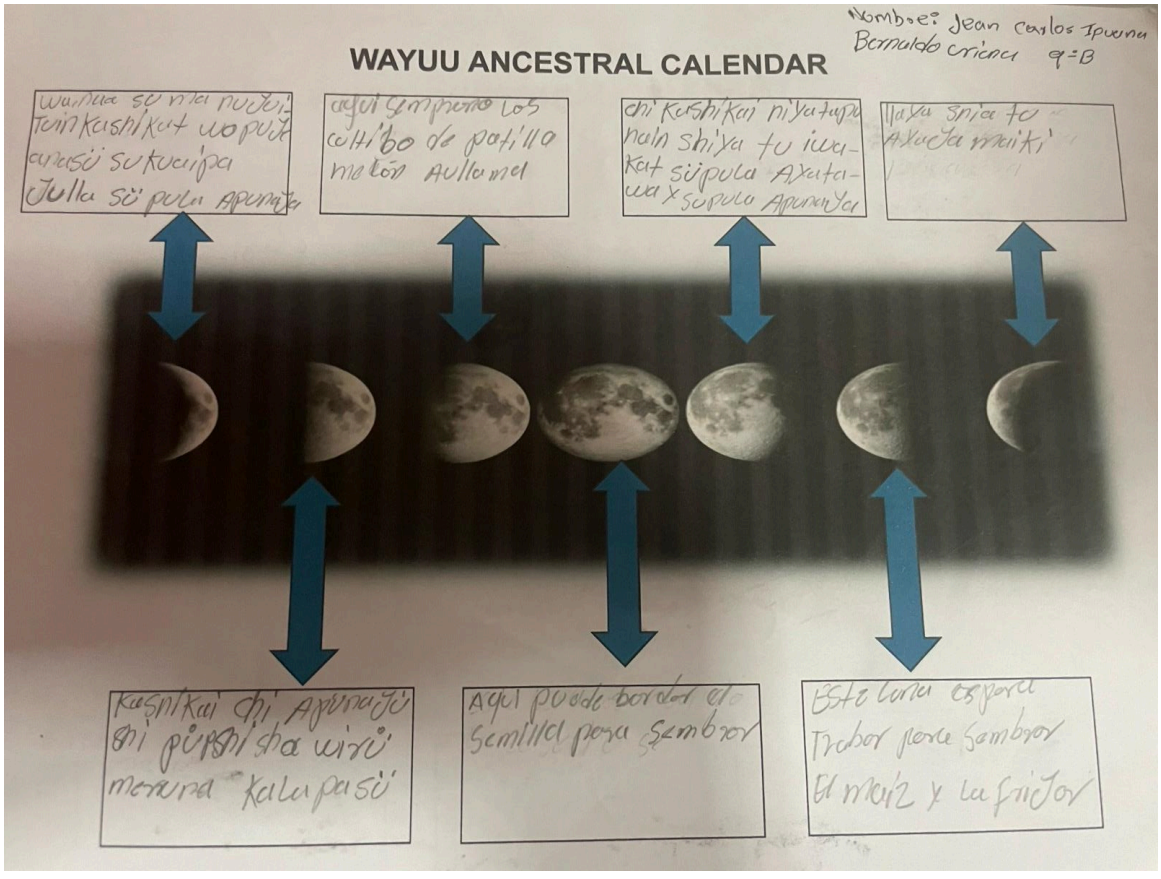


Figure 10: Worksheet filled out in Wayuunaiki and Spanish

In this picture, we can see these two students who unapologetically used Wayuunaiki to fill out this graphic organizer, with the exception of the last 2 sections which they filled out in Spanish. As seen in the section above, other students like Sheila, did this exercise entirely in English while a few others did it in Spanish in its entirety. While I found it difficult to determine what had led students to choose either language, this variety of choices made it evident that students did not feel Spanish was the only choice they had to showcase their learning. An important consideration here is that this exercise was meant to ensure students had some common understanding of the role the ancestral calendar plays for the Wayuu people. Consequently, students' language choice was not regulated since they would later on be exposed to readings and listening exercises in English in which they would have the opportunity to showcase their learning in this language, to meet the academic standards set for this school term. But students were not the only participants that started weaving Wayuunaiki, Spanish, and English as a result of this experience. The English teacher found inspiration to incorporate Wayuunaiki in her English classes beyond this project, albeit at the vocabulary level.The following picture was taken from an English class in eighth grade, in which the teacher started inviting students to connect vocabulary in Spanish, English, and in Wayuunaiki.

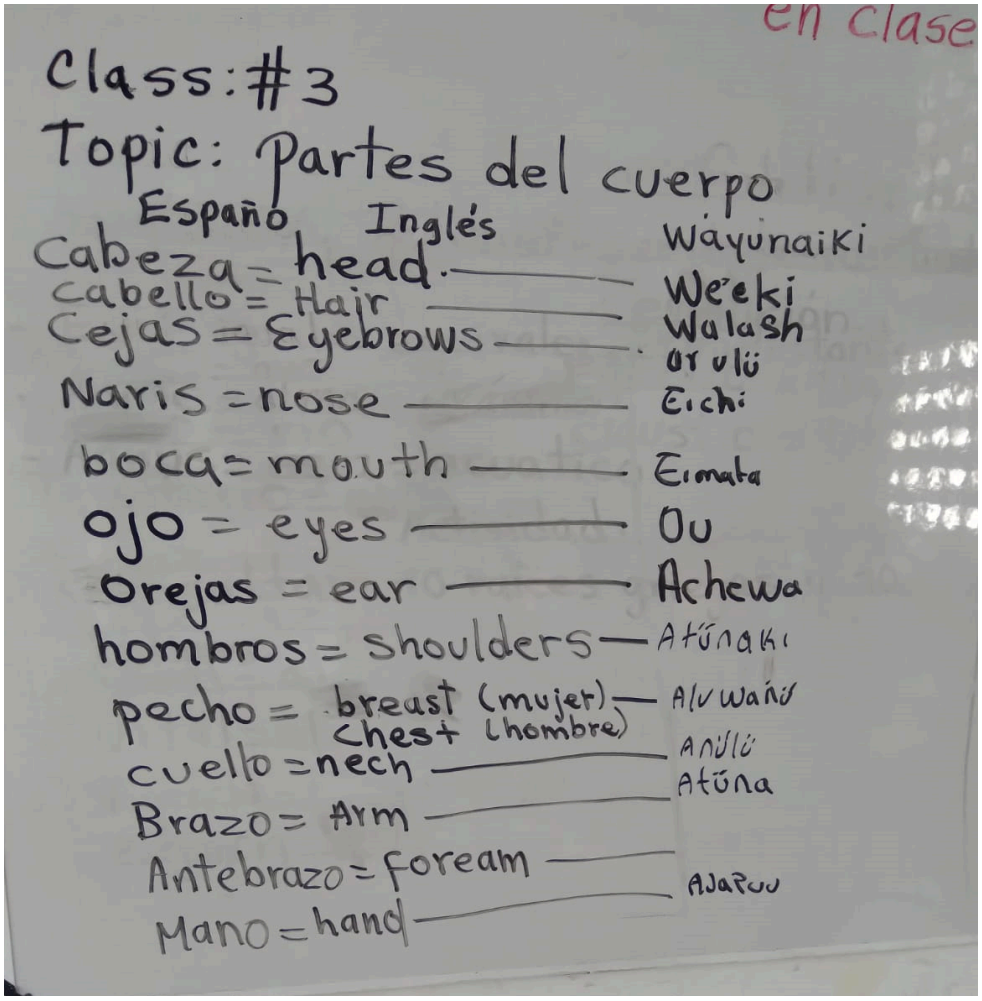


Figure 11: English' teachers' weaving of Wayuunaiki, Spanish, and English

Even though this incorporation of Wayuunaiki might seem limited, given that Wayuunaiki did not have space in other classes, English not being the exception, I take this as a win. This timid incorporation of Wayuunaiki in the English class might indicate that when Indigenous perspectives are centered in the curriculum, teachers feel invited to ignore the grammars of settler colonialism (Calderón, 2014) and to defy school policies and ideologies (Lees & Calderon, 2021) that strive to assimilate students into colonial languages. Witnessing this incorporation of Wayuunaiki in English classes became a sign of the possibility to move toward an ecology of languages in a space fully dominated by Spanish and, to a certain extent,

by English. This small victory would not have been possible without the school-community collaboration which led the English teacher to realize how much more students were able to learn when their ancestral language was centered in their learning. Similarly, the Wayuunaiki teacher agreed that this ecology of languages would enhance students' learning experience across subjects:

"...o sea, yo digo que mejor sería transversal, que significa transversal, es como enseñarle en las tres lenguas ....que yo le estoy enseñando a ellos un tema, se los explico en español y se los explico en Wayuunaiki para que ellos puedan captar, pero si da resultado, …, bueno lo otro sería que los profesores que están todos manejaran las dos lenguas y aquí nos falta demasiado.". (Wayuunaiki teacher, Semi-structured conversation)

" ... I say it would be better to be transversal, what does transversal mean? it's like teaching in the three languages ... that I am teaching them [students] a topic, I explain it to them in Spanish and I explain it to them in Wayuunaiki so that they can grasp it, but it does work, ... Well, the other thing would be for all the teachers to speak the two languages and here we are far from that."

Here, the Wayuunaiki teacher addresses the possibility to weave Wayuunaiki, Spanish and English in the education of these Wayuu youth and emphasizes the benefits she has seen in students' learning when explanations are provided in Wayuunaiki and Spanish. She also points out to the insufficiency of teachers proficient in Indigenous languages which many authors have also discussed widely (Cortina, 2014; Hornberger, 2008; Carty & Lee, 2014;) Introducing language training for teachers and weaving these languages would signal a more harmonious language interaction, not to mention the impact this would have on students' learning across subjects. Furthermore, this would reinforce the spaces the Wayuunaiki and English teachers have already created for this language ecology to take place during the school event that celebrates the dia del idioma -languages day-.

*"**nosotros nos preparamos en un tiempo limitado en las tres lenguas, hacemos poemas en nuestras lenguas, o sea, yo me uno, trabajo con la seño bastante, con la seño Agneris y trabajamos las tres lenguas"*** (Wayuunaiki teacher, Semi-structured conversation)

"we prepare ourselves in a limited time in the three languages, we do poems in our languages, I mean, I join in, work with the teacher quite a bit, with teacher Agneris, and we work with the three languages."

Albeit imperfect, this attempt to Indigenize the English classroom resulted in an ecology of languages that decreased the power Spanish has hold in the education of Wayuu youth. This Indigenization created spaces for Wayuunaiki to exist alongside two colonial languages and for students to negotiate and showcase their learning in multiple languages. In this regard, Million (2011) affirms that "language is absolutely important, the Indigenous languages, and any necessary academic languages that we appropriate to put our meanings across are important. The fact that these languages and language strategies can transform and strategically comprehend and act is absolutely important. (Million, 2011, p.329-330). As different languages converged in this Indigenization of the English classroom, Wayuu epistemologies and oral traditions also found space in a schooling system dominated by western ways of knowing. Hence, this Indigenization catered for a dialogue among knowledges and literacies as will be described next.

Toward a Dialogue among Knowledges

Colonial education has historically aimed to validate Western epistemologies at the expense of Indigenous knowledges and literacies (McCarty, 2008). To counter this, the Indigenization of Education requires teachers to "build relationships between Indigenous knowledge systems and Western knowledge systems" (Sammel et al., 2020, p.ix). As stated by Hernández-Ávila and Varese, (1999):

> *As indigenous peoples reestablish political and cultural jurisdiction over their historical territories, they are also engaging in a decolonization project of the mind, an unlayering*

> *of reproductions of Eurocentric hegemony (including the domination of its singular cosmology). At the same time, Native communities are (re)searching their own systems of knowledge, as well as culling from global discourses other paradigms that are useful to them*.p.82.

Attaining a fair dialogue among knowledges has for decades been a goal for Indigenous peoples in Latin America to ensure their survival and thriving, and work toward the strengthening of their cultural identity, the development of community-led educational projects, the preservation of their languages, and the recognition of their cosmologies (CONTCEPI, 2008). In these lines, I illustrate how the Indigenization of language teaching afforded possibilities to open this dialogue among knowledges by establishing a school-community collaboration in which Native epistemologies were not superficially included in the curriculum. Similarly, this school-community collaboration aimed to Indigenize language teaching contributed to the generation of a dialogue among literacies by enabling students to develop digital literacies and mesh them with oral traditions to (re)connect to their land, strengthen their Wayuu identity, and showcase their learning.

A dialogue among knowldges allows us to value those Othered knowledges (Leyva et al., 2018) placed on the other side of the imaginary line that divides Indigenous and western knowledge (Garcia et al., 2021; Pérez-Bustos & Márquez, 2016). In this Indigenization of ELT, one of the Knowledge Keepers introduced content such as the Wayuu legal system and normativity, which is rendered invisible in the curriculum. Similarly, the visit to the community garden brought to the front ancestral knowledges about the natural world that Wayuu people have preserved and embodied since time immemorial. Inserting these knowledges in the English

curriculum unveiled the possibility to decenter the westernization of academic content that community members have named throughout this study and to begin a dialogue among knowledges in which Wayuu epistemologies existed in their own right. This possibility to open a dialogue among knowledges is something participants in this study have envisioned for their curriculum as seen in these conversations:

"...en sociales mirando el territorio, mirando que le corresponde, esta es la tierra de mis ancestros…" (School principal, Semi-structured conversation)

"...in social studies, looking at the territory, looking at what belongs to it, this is the land of my ancestors..."

"por ejemplo, los profesores de educación física también pueden trabajan los juegos tradicionales Wayuu, porque él docente de educación física puede hacer una transversalización enseñar las dos cosas al mismo tiempo, no que solamente le enseña voleibol, balón, pelota, ellos quieren es jugar y ya lo del juego tradicional muy poco, ya no lo practican casi" (Wayuunaiki teacher, semi-structured conversation)

"For example, physical education teachers can also work on traditional Wayuu games because the physical education teacher can transversalize and teach both things at the same time, not just teach volleyball, ball games, or sports, they want to play and the traditional games are played very little, they hardly played them anymore."

Like these, there were many other instances in which participants outlined possible connections between the knowledges Knowledge Keepers hold in their communities and the one included in the school curriculum. In these quotes above, the school principal and the Wayuunaiki teacher are describing the possibility of opening this dialogue among knowledges, while the teacher also emphasizes the need to infuse the curriculum with Wayuu epistemologies. Opening this dialogue could help to resist epistemicide (Hall & Tandon, 2017; Svalastog, et al., 2021) and work toward a harmonious interaction among plural knowledges to counter social and cultural asymmetric relations of power in education (Carenzo & Trentini, 2020). For Estefania and other participants in this study, this dialogue would allow students to weave multiple knowledges across languages. The following quote illustrates this idea:

“ahi esta el secreto del intercambio de saberes, que se pregunten [los estudiantes], para fortalecer, para saber, que, si por ejemplo hay un tema que él quiere saber, por ejemplo el inglés, ah yo le pregunto a ella… y ahí vamos haciendo un tejido de saberes” (Rogelio, Talking Circle, August 24, 2023)

"That's the secret of knowledge exchange, that they [students] ask questions to strengthen their knowledge, to know more. For example, if there's a topic they want to know about, let's say English, they can ask her [me].. and that's how we weave knowledge together."

In the Global South, Indigenous and other marginalized epistemologies constitute acts of resistance against dominant cultures invested in the annihilation of minoritized cultures and identities (Lopes da Silva, 2011). Through these epistemologies, communities make sense of and assign meaning to their existence (Azuaje, 2008). Thus, creating space for the incorporation of these epistemologies in the curriculum is not just a desire but an imperative endeavor in the sustenance of Indigenous and other marginalized communities in the Global South. Central to this endeavor is the acceptance of oral traditions as valid sources of knowledge within these communities (Azuaje, 2008). In the following section, I will describe how the incorporation of photovoice shed light on the possibility of making room for Indigenous students to draw on oral traditions to showcase their learning in an education system in which written literacies predominate.

Meshing Oral Traditions and Digital Literacies. Beyond creating opportunities for a dialogue among knowledges, Indigenizing the English class opened room for a dialogue among literacies. At the beginning of this study, each student received a cell phone so that they could engage in photovoice. Then, the Knowledge Keepers appointed to the school, Estefania, the ICT teacher, and I collaborated to support students with creating an email and setting up a WhatsApp account. Once all students had completed this step, Estefania explained in Wayuunaiki how to use some device features to attach pictures and record voice messages. She also explained the

purpose and procedures for photovoice. Students' engagement in photovoice contributed to their development of digital literacies while also inviting them to get closer to their land and land-based traditions. After engaging in each talking circle, students showcased their learning through voice recordings in Wayuunaiki and/or Spanish. Thus, digital literacies and orality engaged in a dialogue in which oral traditions took precedence over written literacies that had dominated not only the English class but also students' schooling experience as stated by this Knowledge Keeper:

"*.. hablar, conversar y dejar de pronto de estar escribiendo, por ejemplo, los niños aquí, ellos que hacen?, ellos llenan todos esos cuadernos*" (Knowledge Keeper Alfredo, Semi-structured Conversation)

"...talking, conversing, and maybe stop writing, for example, what do the children do here [at school[? They fill all those notebooks."

The prioritization of written literacies expressed by this Knowledge Keeper responds to the continuation of colonial impositions brought to Latin America in the XVI century. According to Mignolo (2003) Spanish missionaries judged communities' intelligence based on whether they had a writing system and from that moment on, a configuration of colonial differences and superiority was established. Although students were still asked to write to fill out graphic organizer and charts, this privileged position of writing was somewhat transformed by offering students the opportunity to narrate their learning through voice recordings. This incorporation of technology balanced the over-reliance on written literacies in mainstream schooling which perpetuates the marginalization of Indigenous oral traditions and detaches Native students from this knowledge system that has sustained their families and communities for centuries (Soler Castillo, 2013; Battiste, 2013; Gonzalez, 2012; Medina, 2010).

Although Native scholars such as (Simpson, 2017) affirm that the presence of the internet can interfere with cultural and relational dynamics among Indigenous peoples, some Wayuu people see in these devices and other forms of technology possibilities to expand their learning and sustain their culture. The following two quotes illustrate these affordances:

el celular es algo nuevo para todos nosotros,…. los celulares no son malos, lo que hay que enseñarle a los niños es como acceder a esos dispositivos y que esos dispositivos no le den mal uso, sino que todo lo contrario, lo usen para investigar .. e informarse,....(Knowledge Keeper Rogelio, Talking Circle, August 24, 2023)	***Cell phones are something new to all of us,…. Cell phones are not bad, what we have to do is teach kids how to access those devices and not to misuse those devices, Instead, they can use them to research stuff, to get informed***
si tú haces podcast sobre los akwaipas eso no solamente se queda aquí, sino también se transmite a muchos lugares, que los niños por ejemplo hagan ejercicios como los de Nazaret audiovisuales, hay un grupo de chicos Wayuu que son audiovisuales, que hacen registros fotográficos, videos de las cosas de nosotros y lo muestra en plataformas como la de la Universidad de la Guajira …, y eso es lo que hace fortalecer y hacer memoria (Estefania, Talking Circle, August 24, 2023)	If you create a podcast about our akwaipas [stories of origin] that doesn't just stay here, it can be transmitted to other places, kids can, for example, do things like those from Nazareth [another Wayuu community] there is a group of Wayuu youth who know about [creating] audiovisual [materials] and they take pictures, videos of our things and they upload them in platforms like the one from University of La Guajira.. And with that they strengthen and create memories

In these quotes, Estefania and the Knowledge Keeper discuss how technology allows their communities to sustain their epistemologies when students are guided to do this. This far-reaching nature of technology has afforded Indigenous peoples global possibilities to sustain their languages, establish relationships with other Indigenous peoples (Lopez, F., 2017) and, to engage in collective active resistance against coloniality (Lees, 2016). In this vein, Keme (2018) states that "it has been social networks such as Facebook that have also enabled a valuable exchange of dialogues and knowledges through the constant dissemination of articles and books in PDF, facilitating access to many Indigenous works" p. 48. This means schools have the power to turn technology and the development of digital literacies in favor of Indigenous peoples by

engaging students in collaborative projects with community members to uplift their languages and epistemologies as illustrated by Estefania in the quote above. Some students in this study have begun to make use of technology to visualize their culture and land through their WhatsApp stories. Namely, about a week after we concluded this project, one of the male students published a video from the day they danced Yonna. The caption stated **"*Que lindo nuestra cultura*".** Our culture is so beautiful.

Figure 12: Students' WhatApp Story Uplifting Wayuu Culture

This and similar posts yielded evidence of how students began drawing on their digital literacy development to exercise their agency to make their culture visible, expressing their pride in their Wayuu identity. This resurgence through media adds to a plethora of initiatives advanced by Indigenous peoples in the Global North and South (Cárcamo-Huechante, 2013;

Coronel-Molina, 2019; Hermes & King, 2013; Keme, 2018). By making visible their Indigenous resistance and resurgence through all forms of language and literacies, Wayuu students feed a fire that keeps Indigenous resistance stronger in the Abya Yala and beyond. This presence in media also allows Indigenous peoples to continuously redefine Indigeneity (Raheja, 2015) as they persist in their fight for self-determination. As Keme, (2018) bluntly puts it:

> *Let us develop processes of relearning to revive our memories and nourish ourselves with old and current knowledges; let us learn non-Indigenous histories and knowledges as long as these are dissident tools that guide us in producing categories that help us bring our emancipatory goals to fruition. p.58*

Summary and Conclusion

In the Global North, "racialized bilingual students are continuously positioned by society and categorized in schools as deficient in language" (Garcia et al., 2021, p.3). This statement also hold true in the Global South where Indigenous languages and epistemologies are under sustained oppression and marginalization as they compete with not one but two colonial languages. This oppression is materialized in school contexts in which colonial curricula censure students' linguistice practices to respond to racist neoliberal logics that render Indigenous languages and epistemologies inferior and illegitimate (Quijano, 2000). These colonial logics that are buttressed by racist, colonial educational policies that result in processes of assimilation and alienation (Garcia & Garcia, 2023; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Von Esch et al., 2020) for minoritized communities.

This study was a small step toward countering "this imagined line in which some language practices and ways of life are understood as more academic, standard, or legitimate."

(Garcia et al., 2021, p.3). When I started thinking about this project, the notion of decolonization did not quite fit. As I reviewed the literature I kept finding scholars reporting the shortcomings of decolonization in education. This led me to wonder: Can you take the colonial out of a colonial language? Concluding that this endeavor sounded contradicting, I turned toward Indigenization. So can English be Indigenized? I believe it can. However, my learning from this research leads me to conclude that this endeavor cannot be done in isolation. This Indigenization requires re-storying relationships with the land, with ancestral practices, and with the community members that on a daily basis sustain both their language and culture on Indigenous lands. It also requires careful attention to the logics we operate from since "in education, even our best intentions can, unwittingly, be obedient to a logic of coloniality". (Dominguez, 2021, p.552). Along these lines, turning toward epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2009) is not something that English teachers can do on our own. As seen in this section, moving toward the Indigenization of ELT requires summoning the power of Indigenous communities and the ancestral knowledges that have sustained them since time immemorial. Only then would we be able to open spaces in which Indigenous knowledges, languages, and literacies dialogue on equal terms with western ways of knowing. This way we might stand a chance to subvert coloniality by incorporating epistemically disobedient pedagogies in the curriculum (Bhabha, 1994) to join Indigenous students and their communities in their fight for self-determination.

Contributions

This study was set out to explore whether it was possible to Indigenize the field of language teaching through school-comunity collaborations centered on the land. Employing a community-based design research, this study illuminated how Indigenous people grapple with contextual and colonial ideological factors that impact the education of children and youth despite attending ethno-education schools. Moreover, the insights garnered from this study shed light on Indigenous students' unwavering commitment to their education and their multifaceted shapes of resistance to coloniality which matched Wayuu peoples' steadfast willingness to effect the education of their youth. In addition, this study provided insight into the possibilities that open up when education is Indigenized. Namely, Indigenous students' academic outcomes improve while they also increase awareness of issues that harm their communities. Finally, this study shed light on the possibility ELT offers to foster a dialogue among knowledges in ways that sustain Indigenous epistemologies while also developing students' academic skills. Opening this epistemic dialogue requires careful consideration to avoid the recolonization of spaces led by Indigenous peoples. In the following lines I will elaborate on the significance of these contributions

The Power of Indigenization. This study expands our understanding of the multiple ways in which coloniality continues to permeate the education of Indigenous students, even in schools framed under ethno-education policies, thus making evident for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers a persistent gap between policy and practice (Lopez, 2014). As evidenced in this study, this gap is further widened by the presence of conflicting national education and English language policies which exert pressure on school to displace ethno-education mandates and work toward test preparation aligned with neoliberal agendas in education. While studies

conducted with Indigenous students in higher education outline the debilitation of their ethnic and linguistic identities (Alvarez-Valencia & Miranda, 2022; Arismendi, 2016; Cuasialpud-Canchala, 2010; Gutierrez et al., 2021; Usma et al., 2018) this study provides insight into how colonial schooling practices contribute to such debilitation at the heart of Indigenous territories.

On a more hopeful note, this study outlines a potential avenue to counter this impact of coloniality through the Indigenization of education. Centering Indigenous ways of being, doing, knowing, and speaking in school curricula, in ways that avoid their tokenization or cooptation, proved essential in this Indigenization (Grafton & Melançon, 2020; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Additionally, by fostering allyship between educators and Indigenous people, this project contributes to the development and implementation of an Indigenized school curriculum that provides significant learning opportunities for students (Zurba, et al., 2022) and that (re)connects them to their community. It also centers communities' self-determination and sovereignty (Washington, 2021) in the education of Indigenous youth, so that they engage in meaningful language learning (Anoee et al., 2017).

Turning Wayuunaiki into the language of instruction and offering Indigenous students space to demonstrate their learning in their language, transformed the power relation between Spanish and Wayuunaiki which, in turn, significantly improved students' academic outcomes. This finding makes an important contribution to the body of literature that links Indigenous languages and academic success (Cajete, 1994; Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; McCarty, 2002) and challenges commonly-held deficit narratives on the capabilities of Indigenous students in Colombia (Soler Castillo, 2013). This contribution is expected to inform not only K-11 education, but teaching practices at the university level in which Indigenous languages struggle

to find space. Evidently, Indigenous communities hold knowledge that can directly impact students' education when actively engaged in schooling processes. This knowledge can be extended to teacher education programs by building collaborations with Indigenous communities, so that teachers better envision possibilities to incorporate Indigenous languages and epistemologies in the curriculum.

This study also evinces how school-community collaborations founded on land-based education unveiled issues of climate justice whose impact extend beyond Indigenous territories. Hence, schools' collaboration with Indigenous peoples who have been stewards of the land have the potential to benefit every member of our society (Battiste, 2017). Tenets of Indigenization and land-based education can be extended to the national education system to contribute to the preparation of citizens aware of issues of climate justice and hopefully invested in the protection and preservation of natural resources. Similarly, the incorporation of these tenets in national education can lead to an increased solidarity with Indigenous peoples to work together toward the preservation of their languages, cultural practices, and epistemologies. Moreover, results of this study can contribute to envisioning what is possible when Indigenizing not just education but every social structure. This Indigenization would strengthen the fabric of our society since it demands an ethical weaving of Indigenous knowledge, lifeways, and worldviews into systems that have historically rendered them illegitimate (Million, 2012).

Relatedly, this study shed light into the need to carefully approach these relationships and collaborations with Indigenous peoples, in ways that grants them leading roles without attempting to recolonize their engagement by expecting them to fit western molds (Dominguez, 2021) . This attempt to Indigenize education tends to the shortcomings of decolonizing projects outlined by numerous authors both in the Global North and South in which Indigenous

participation is restricted and colonial practices are still reproduced (Beato-Canato et al., 2022; Cooper et al., 2018; Grafton & Melançon, 2020; Pardy & Pardy; Volfová, 2015). I am hopeful that moving toward this Indigenization would encourage us all to unveil, resist, and counter the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) that infuses every sphere of our society.

Contributions to the Indigenization of ELT. This study shed light into the possibility to counter the Eurocentric ideologies and teaching practices that continue to govern the field of ELT (Ubaque-Casallas, 2021) Building off the power of this school-community collaboration led by Indigenous people allowed for English lessons to no longer revolve around the reification of whiteness and the instrumentalization of English teaching and learning with the intention of assimilating students into dominant cultures. Instead, the incorporation of Indigenous knowledges and literacies as the basis of English lessons made space for a dialogue among knowledges (Arias-Cepeda, 2020; CONTCEPI, 2008; Leyva et al., 2018) and challenged the epistemological racism in a field historically dominated by racist, westernized logics and practices (Garcia & Garcia, 2023; Kubota, 2020; Vos Esch et al., 2020). In a similar line, by creating materials in English, such as the storywork and the collective visual artifact, this project provides English teachers with access to materials that are relevant to the local realities of Wayuu students, which according to Benton (2017) is paramount for students' academic success. This allyship proposed in this project also has the potential to disrupt the way English teachers, permeated by the pressure of national policies, relegate Indigenous traditions and epistemology to the margins (Motha, 2014). Following McKinney (2017), "It is the language ideologies underpinning current language policies, curricula, and teacher education and classroom practice that need to be changed if we are to change what counts as language and as legitimate language use in schooling' (p. 161).

Fostering this dialogue among knowledges contributed to the strengthening of students' linguistic, ethnic, and cultural identities while advancing their development of digital literacies and academic skills established by the school curriculum. Students' increased criticality and utilization of these literacies to visibilize the wealth of their culture signals the potential ELT has to support students in engaging in activism in multiple languages to create and join constellations of coresistance (Simpson, 2017) in the Abya Yala and beyond. Relatedly, this collaboration could result in sustained epistemological counter hegemonic teaching practices that drive Indigenous students to "repelar" (fight back) as Anzaldua (1989) suggests, against the multiple forms of coloniality that threatens their land, their language, and their existence.

In this Indigenization of ELT, students' home language also found a place thus countering the linguistic domination often perpetuated in English classrooms (Gutierrez & Aguirre, 2022; Ortega, 2019; Pennycook; 2019). Findings in this study add to the work of scholars who advocate for an ecology of languages in the education of Indigenous populations (Cajete, 1994; Lopez, 2008) to join forces with Native communities in their preservation. Relatedly, this study illuminates the potential for (re)igniting an intergenerational transmission of knowledge from Elders to students and onward to their families, facilitated through meaningful school-community collaborations. This intergenerational transmission of knowledge is of utmost importance for Indigenous peoples to ensure their cultural continuity (Grande, 2004). Within this context, the utilization of ELT as a vehicle to actively contribute to this vital process takes great significance.

Implications

The implications stemming from this study hold substantial relevance for policymakers, teachers and teacer education programs, and researchers. Firstly, policymakers need to address

the neoliberalism and racism undergirding national education and language policies, which in both covert and overt ways contribute to the displacement of Indigenous languages and epistemologies (Garcia & Garcia, 2023; Kubota, 2020). Similarly, the standardization of learning and testing must account for the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country, as well as for the contextual factors that influence the education of Indigenous and other minoritized populations (Bermúdez Jiménez et al. 2018; Gómez Sará 2017).

Implications for Policymakers. Meaningful collaborations with teacher, activists, and Indigenous communities can contribute to the creation of more fair policies that conceive cultural and linguistic diversity as cultural capital worth of preservation. This would in turn transform national standards for learning. Relatedly, ehtno-education policies need to be coupled with teacher training initiatives, resource allocation, and support to schools for their implementation. (Lopez, 2020) Failure to reinforce ethno-education policies would perpetuate the perception that these policies are mere symbolic gestures, especially when looking at the absence of systematic tangible actions to uphold Indigenous peoples' right to preserve their cultures, languages, and epistemologies through education. Supporting schools in the implementation of Indigenous models to educate their children and youth can counter school drop out and pushout rates that significantly harm Indigenous populations (Ruglis, 2009; Soler Castillo, 2013; Tuck, 2012)

Finally, the National Bilingual Program needs a serious revision of the colonial ideologies underlying this policy and the textbooks and teaching materials that accompany it (Núñez-Pardo, 2020). Furthermore, the portrayal of English as the language of success (Bonilla Carvajal y Tejada-Sánchez 2016) further reinforces racist hierarchies between colonial and local languages. This is particularly concerning in a country where Indigenous languages already

struggle to find space within schooling systems predominantly conducted in Spanish with a compulsory incorporation of English.

Implications for Language Teacher Education Programs. Findings in this study hold implications for language teacher education programs whose compliance with the aims of colonial language policies makes them complicit in the attempted annihilation of Indigenous people's epistemologies, languages, and cultures. To revert this, language teacher education programs need to commit to the dismantling of the hegemony of English, and turn English toward the revitalization and sustenance of ancestral languages and cultures. This requires the incorporation of Indigenous education principles in (language) teacher preparation programs to disrupt the intellectual imperialism (Rivera Cusicanqui et al., 2016; Zeiny, 2019) promoted at the heart of universities. Conscious efforts to resist this linguistic imperialism, particularly in language teacher education programs, can lead to language teachers' commitment to epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2009; Dominguez, 2021) in ways that honor Indigenous students' knowledges, languages, literacies, and ways of being (McCarty & Lee, 2014).

As shown in this study, collaborations with Indigenous peoples hold the potential to transform teachers' perception of Indigenous students. Consequently, this finding calls for strong community-university collaborations (Lees, 2016; Lees & Calderon, 2021). These community-university partnerships should focus on Native-led curriculum development and should make meaningful space for Indigenous voices to be heard and centered. An noted by Tuck (2018) increasing Indigenous representation in institutions does not suffice to resist the colonial forces that govern academic spaces. Instead, Indigenizing education calls for capacity building for Indigenous peoples and their ways of knowing, being, and doing to transform colonial educational spaces that are not designed for those ways of existing in our society

(Bishop et al., 2007). As noted in this study, Native communities hold the power to lead the education of their children and youth to avoid tokenism and cooptation of Indigenous knowledge systems and values in school curricula(Grafton & Melançon, 2020). I believe these collaborations with higher education institutions should then create avenues for Native teachers to further support Indigenous students' cultural and linguistic development. A growing number of Indigenous teachers can move toward the Indigenization of education to counter the racist and colonial ideologies ingrained in westernized schooling practices that Indigenous students navigate on a daily basis.

Implications for Research. Findings in this study hold substantial implications for research, particularly for those interested in doing research with and for Indigenous peoples (Koster, et al., 2012). I humbly approached this research with the Wayuu people without speaking their language and without sharing an Indigenous identity. This research was guided by my passion for languages and cultures, my close relationship with Estefania and her family, and our shared desire to fight against the forces of coloniality that kept invading the Wayuu territory, particularly through education. Having various members of the Wayuu people walk with me along the way in this research held me accountable from the moment we started talking about this research, seeking consent, and asking for insight from community members, to the stages of implementation, data analysis, and report back to the community. As a researcher, my lack of knowledge of Wayuunaiki led me to further rely on the community. It encouraged me -pushed me- to stay true to the nature of this community-based design research. In short, it led me to take a step aside and let the community take control of this research in their language. I believe the results of this study would not have been the same otherwise. This has implications for other researchers who, like me, are trained in colonial institutions: It is easy to recolonize spaces in

which we operate even when striving to Indigenize them. (I already offered an example of how I fell in a colonial trap during one of the talking circles.) As researchers, this findings indicates the importance of letting go of power and requires keeping ourselves accountable and committed to reciprocate and honor our communities' engagement in research projects. This must be at the core of our research. When doing this research I kept revisiting Audra Simpson's, (2007) questions: "Can I do this and still come home; what am I revealing here and why? Where will this get us? Who benefits from this and why?" (p. 78). Constant reflection on these questions along with the relationships I developed with students, their families, school teachers, and Knowledge Keepers should keep researchers grounded in principles of reciprocity and care. Engaging in reciprocal relationships should keep us away from advancing a damage-centered approach (Tuck, 2012) that further harms the communities we work with and for.

Drawing on these implications, further research could focus on the collective creation of language and education policies and curricula driven by Indigenous peoples and local teachers to bridge the ongoing gap between policies and practice. Future research could also explore the impact Indigenized curricula have on non-Indigenous students. This could create new avenues to move toward a dialogue among knowledges in which Indigenous epistemologies influence national language and education policies.

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