Teaching Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) in a Wayúu Indigenous Community in Colombia

La enseñanza del español como segunda lengua (SSL) en una comunidad indígena Wayúu, en Colombia

O ensino do espanhol como segunda língua (SSL) em uma comunidade indígena Wayúu, Colômbia

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Abstract

This study characterizes Spanish as a second language teaching methodology implemented by a group of three Watúu teachers from three schools in La Guajira (Colombia) who described their teaching practices based on their beliefs and experiences. We followed the methodology of a qualitative case study. The data was collected through a questionnaire, field notes, individual interviews, and a focus group. Thereafter, results evidence that their teaching methodology is strongly bonded to the community's cosmovision, setting harmony between traditional and communicative teaching models: likewise, it considers students' needs and promotes their responsibility to safeguard their culture.

Keywords: Spanish as a second language; education; indigenous peoples; methodology; second language instruction.

Resumen

Este estudio caracteriza la metodología de enseñanza del español como segunda lengua de tres maestros Wayúu provenientes de tres escuelas en La Guajira (Colombia), quienes describieron sus prácticas de enseñanza basándose en sus creencias y experiencias. Esta investigación sigue la metodología de estudio de caso cualitativo. Los datos se recopilaron a través de un cuestionario, notas de campo, entrevistas individuales y un grupo de enfoque. Los resultados evidencian que su metodología está fuertemente ligada a su cosmovisión, ya que armonizan modelos de enseñanza tradicionales y comunicativos; asimismo, consideran las necesidades de los estudiantes y fomentan la responsabilidad de salvaguardar su cultura.

Palabras clave: español como segunda lengua; educación; enseñanza de una segunda lengua; metodología; población indígena.

Resumo

Este estudo caracteriza o espanhol como uma metodologia de ensino de segunda língua de três professores Wayúu de três escolas em La Guajira (Colômbia), que descreveram as suas práticas de ensino com base nas suas crenças e experiências. Esta investigação segue a metodologia do estudo de caso qualitativo. Os dados foram recolhidos através de um questionário, notas de campo, entrevistas individuais e um grupo focal. Os resultados mostram que a sua metodologia está fortemente ligada à sua visão do mundo, uma vez que harmonizam modelos tradicionais e comunicativos de ensino; também consideram as necessidades dos estudantes e encorajam a responsabilidade de salvaguardar a sua cultura.

Palavras-chave: Espanhol como segunda língua; educação; povos indígenas; metodologia; ensino de segunda língua.

1. Introduction

Indigenous communities in Colombia have been dealing with educational models that have not considered their culture and beliefs since conquest times (Romero, 2015); these models have hindered their mother tongue and culture development. Along with this problematic condition, distinct matters related to their political, social, and educational structure were not acknowledged for a long time. Therefore, indigenous people began to work for themselves by systematizing data and developing identification hubs to scout and get informed about their practices. This was the case of Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC), founded in 1971, which, in 1982, constituted the first national organization named Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC) (Bolaños *et al.*, 2018; ONIC, 2022). Among its goals, it has made efforts to guarantee quality education for indigenous people, being native languages one of the main points of interest.

Certainly, among the broad concept of education and its subjects in indigenous communities, language learning is one essential matter considering the significant impact that comes along with its historic preservation role. In the case of Spanish as a second language (SSL), ONIC (2022) has worked as a bridge between the national government and indigenous communities to establish teaching practices that may take place in their territories while safeguarding their cosmovision. However, as a result of the lack of clearness when systematizing the methodologies implemented to teach SSL, the Wayúu community, as the role model for this research, claims that a phenomenon of displacement from the mother tongue to Spanish is occurring (Sánchez, 2015), entitling Spanish as the primary communicative language in the schools.

Indeed, it is worth emphasizing that the Wayuunaiki language depicts the purpose of reproducing, preserving, and imparting the traditions and cosmovision of the Wayúu community to the youngest generations (Sanchez, 2015). Besides, considering the context outside the Wayúu community, they are aware of the vital role Spanish plays in their lives, as it is used in academic, economic, and

social encounters with the external world and even inside their community. Hence, learning SSL has become a necessity, for which they have devoted spaces in their curriculum that include teaching subjects in this language.

Accordingly, this study has focused on the beliefs that a group of three SSL teachers from two public schools and one Rancheria school, located in Riohacha and Rancheria Cangrejito (La Guajira), has regarding their teaching practices in order to characterize the SSL methodological model that has been implemented in their classrooms. Consequently, the research question is: How do three SSL teachers from Wayúu schools characterize the methodology they implement to teach Spanish inside their community?

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Ethno-education

Ethno-education has brought with it a work of reconstruction and preservation of the ethnic communities' remembrance. In Colombia, in the late 1980s, due to the new educational dynamics and school experiences, our ethnic groups advocated for ethno-education, which is a fundamental notion for the evaluation and rethinking of their pedagogical processes (Enciso, 2004), and this has generated intercultural experiences beyond the few laws that supported minorities' education. In this way, ethno-education became an essential concept, actively involving the ethnic communities in the decision-making process regarding their education.

Being politically recognized by the Colombian government has helped ethnic communities to achieve active and inclusive participation and voice regarding social, economic, and educational matters that affect them. Nevertheless, before the acknowledgment of the ethnic groups in the Colombian Political Constitution (1991), our indigenous peoples had to struggle to achieve this goal. Organizations such as ONIC, CRIC, and the National Work and Concentration Commission on Education for the Indigenous People (Comisión Nacional de Trabajo y Concertación en Educación para los Pueblos Indígenas - Contcepi, 2013) focused on these matters and started to propose their own pedagogical processes after creating the ethno-education office in 1985 (Enciso, 2004). This office has been the promoter of different projects, such as the Community Education Projects (PECs) and the Intercultural Bilingual Educational Project (PEBI) which sought their own inclusion as policymakers in their territories, departing from the legislative national norm recommended by the government.

Afterward, indigenous communities continued researching and creating more projects and policies in which, apart from their own inclusion, the objective was to formalize themselves as communities that all external agents would recognize in the Colombian territory, so that they could remain an actual and authentic voice in their education. This is the case of The Own Indigenous Educational System or Sistema de Educación Indígena Propio SEIP (Contcepi, 2013), created hand in hand with ONIC and Contcepi, which promotes the development of their beliefs and cultures by straightening their own educational system (Rodríguez, 2017), for the development of indigenous cultural competences. Subsequently, after proving the western education models under their practices, traditions, and languages, indigenous communities could achieve an adequate educational bond between their cosmovision and the western one (Rodriguez, 2017), by implementing relevant aspects of the national standards of education within their own educational framework.

In addition, regarding cosmovisions of the Colombian ethno-communities, they are essential components of the Colombian identity as a whole territory. Nevertheless, it is imperative to consider interculturality as a general educational landmark that considers and upholds diverse international and national approaches and procedures, and also, ethno-education as a way to transcend the indigenous' memories of the past to those to come (Bolaños *et al.*, 2018) in order to distinguish the different models of education and the one the indigenous communities deserve. In this regard, the Colombian government must recognize and maintain indigenous cultures through their own education (Pulido, 2012), which does not ensure an outright and adequate education, only their participation in an effort to safeguard their traditions.

Likewise, researchers such as Bolaños (2018), Rodriguez (2017) and Sánchez (2015) have shown the relevance of supporting indigenous education by considering their traditions and history when implementing methodologies in their educational settings. However, these authors have found the current education for indigenous people is still ruled under practices that are not systematically adequate for them; yet, owing to the indigenous' strive and commitments, they have created different ways to reassemble and reconstitute the guidelines provided by the national policies for their educational benefit. Thereby, the lack of coherence is latent between what is experienced in their communities and what is written in certain Colombian policies (Mendoza, 2019). So now, apart from the recognition given to the communities, ethno-education must evolve to guarantee that they receive support and benefits outside their territories as well.

2.2. Spanish as a Second Language in Colombian Indigenous Territories

A second language is considered the one that coexists with the mother tongue in the same territory and one that people can use to work, study, and communicate. According to Pato and Fantechi (2011), a second language is defined by the user's interest and determination to accomplish the learning of that language. Ergo, in Colombia, native communities acknowledge their indigenous language as their mother tongue and consider Spanish as their second language since it enables them to grow and broaden their horizons further than their own territories.

On the other hand, Colombia is characterized by being a multiethnic and multicultural nation (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991, 7th article). However, the cosmovision of indigenous communities has consistently been violated since the standards that rule their education were designed according to the post-modern national ones. Regarding their languages, many indigenous communities perceive Spanish as their second language despite its use being relatively scarce in situations that take place within their practices. Although SSL has become the vehicle for indigenous communities to get their voice heard and even thrive outside their communities, it has provoked a certain displacement of the indigenous mother tongues, which has become evident in educational practices.

Regardless of the policies, whose purpose is to protect and support ethnic groups conceived in the Colombian constitution and its languages, indigenous communities have faced another struggle when trying to complete the requirements for a higher education career. Several cases have been brought to light in which these people have appealed to law countersuits to graduate from higher education institutions only due to Spanish being considered as their second language instead of a

foreign one, just to set an example (López, 2013). Hence, most of them have endured the process of shaping their cosmovision differently to comply with the national dictate and fit in society.

Some studies have been conducted about SSL Teaching in Colombia, and the majority of them have prescribed numerous flaws that have not been addressed yet. To begin with, Mejía (2009) displays missing elements within ethno-education, such as the wrong focus on communication and orality rather than comprehension and analysis in the second language. In addition, Pato and Fantechi (2011) explain that the approaches and methodologies implemented for SSL are not rightfully guided and tend to misinterpret the big picture of it regarding ethno-education. Therefore, traditional approaches do not follow the essence of indigenous communities' education since they do not settle for the right focal point, considering teaching form, content, and focus parallel to students' context. Evidently, different programs have supported indigenous communities by seeking improvement for their education within the territory; however, a fair amount of research has found the gaps that still need to be worked on.

2.3. Teachers' Beliefs

It is discursive to depict beliefs as an exclusive description since they can be captured upon society's ideals entailing its users into constricted behaviors and also vague branches of knowledge. According to Richardson (2003) and Tondeur *et al.* (2017), beliefs represent people's understanding and are taken as accurate propositions, for they foster a prospective promotion of culture. As stated by Buehl and Fives (2009), beliefs about the source of knowledge are essential to learning outcomes and potentially to teaching practices, whereas the role of beliefs leads to sustained knowledge sharing in a learning process.

Following the aforementioned, beliefs significantly impact students' motivation and performance levels. Such impacts can be varied and nuanced (Shwetlena *et al.*, 2022). In some instances, teachers' beliefs may influence a student's learning process and the effectiveness of how subject content is learned; in that sense, according to Shoente (2017), the teacher must be knowledgeable about the cultures of their students. As Sabarwal *et al.* (2021) demonstrate, teachers' beliefs may tailor to how strategies and methodologies are implemented in classrooms and how successful a session can be. Depending on how a teacher's beliefs are built through their experiences, students may be submerged into an ideal environment in which they get to be challenged and motivated toward learning certain subjects, hence, the relevance of beliefs in teaching and learning processes.

2.4. A Framework for Language Teaching Approaches and Methods

Teaching methodologies are those paths that teachers define in order for students to achieve their learning goals; they involve a set of theories and principles and guide the learning processes. In order to analyze the methodology that the participants of this study carry out, the model proposed by Edward Anthony was chosen; it involves three levels of organization and conceptualization to characterize methods for this subject area (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

Approach is the first layer of the aforementioned model, "in which assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified" (Richards and Rodgers, 2014, p.21). The theory of language has three points of reference; first, the structural perspective sees language as a complex system composed of structures whose elements interplay; the second is the functional view, which

refs to the semantic and communicative dimension of the language, and the third view is the interactional one, where we can see the language as a vehicle of social interaction. On the other hand, the theory of language learning assists educators in developing teaching methods by focusing on the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes that are carried out when learning and the conditions that these processes require (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

Likewise, a second level is called design. As stated by Richards and Rodgers (2014), "design is the level of method analysis" (p. 29), in this level, we need to consider the following six aspects: first, the methods that teachers apply have specific objectives, which focus on the levels of performance expected from the learners; the second one corresponds to the syllabus, which is the selection and organization of linguistic items, depending on the type of lesson teachers apply; the third refers to the learning tasks and the teaching activities that belong to a given method. The fourth is the students' role in their learning process, which is vital to identify the level of autonomy that they can achieve. The fifth aspect is the teachers' role and the decisions they make regarding all the processes the students go through at the moment of learning. Finally, there is the role of instructional materials, due to the fact that they support the goal of each class (Richards and Rodgers, 2014; Shirvan *et al.,* 2016).

The third level is called procedure, in which "the actual moment-to-moment, techniques, practices and behaviors" (Richards and Rodgers, 2014, p. 35) are presented. It considers time, space and resources used, different patterns of interaction that are planned, and strategies implemented toward the achievement of learning goals (Richards and Rodgers, 2014; Shirvan *et al.,* 2016). This model is useful to analyze current language teaching methods and represents a point of reference to describe emerging ones.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative approach, which is focused on meaning-making processes and interpretation based not on statistical data, but words and images collected from the phenomenon and the participants according to emerging questions and procedures (Creswell, 2018). It also enables researchers to interpret and understand a phenomenon by acknowledging the participants' beliefs in accordance with their contexts; thereby, to emphasize diverse realities that they perceive and experience (Montgomery, 2017). Additionally, this research followed a case study research design since the phenomenon and the context are firmly connected, and the participants' behavior is not manipulated in any way (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

3.2. Setting and participants

This research took place in two indigenous public schools and one indigenous rancheria in Riohacha, La Guajira (Colombia). The participants were three elementary school teachers who are active indigenous members of their community (T1, T2 and T3). T1 graduated from a teacher training school, and teaches from preschool to high school; T2 graduated from a bachelor's program, and is in charge of preschool and first grade; and T3 graduated from a teacher training school, and teaches from third to fifth grade. T1 and T2 work at the same school, and T3 works at another school located in a ranchería; currently, they teach the four basic subjects (Spanish, math, natural sciences and social studies). Convenience sampling was carried out (Stratton, 2021) due to the willingness of

the three teachers to participate and the reduced number of educators who could communicate in Spanish in their institutions. In addition, it is important to indicate that the Tepipapa Corporation was the facilitator to contact the institutions and participants we worked with.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

Taking into account the protection of the participants' personal information, a written consent form was given to them in order to inform the goals of the present study and the data collection procedures. On the other hand, the researchers have guaranteed the confidentiality of personal information and all data provided by the participants, which was codified to be addressed, analyzed and socialized.

3.4. Techniques and instruments to collect data

The process of data collection involved two main stages: an online questionnaire, in which the participants shared their personal information, professional studies, career experience, and background information, and some interviews to gather information regarding the participants' beliefs on the meaning that SSL has for them and their students, and the methodology they implement to teach it in their educational context.

First, the teachers answered the online questionnaire, and after analyzing the information collected, we implemented three techniques. First, structured interviews were carried out. They are non-observational techniques to collect information regarding the participants' insights, experiences or opinions about a specific topic. According to Creswell (2018), they enable researchers to obtain in-depth information by listening to the proper words of the person. Second, a focus group was developed. Creswell (2018) states that this is a technique to collect data regarding a shared understanding of a group of people as well as on the varied perspectives each of them has. This involves specific protocols in which gatherings, meetings, and discussions are conducted alongside a moderator. All interviews and the focus group were audio-recorded and transcribed. Third, field notes were taken during the interviews and the focus group. They constitute a meaningful instrument for collecting data from observation processes. According to Barrett and Twycross, (2018), field notes are malleable and come in various forms such as a description of what is being observed, a description of the environmental factors, a chronological log, and even a record of the conversations held. Therefore, by using field notes, meaningful information from the interviews, that was not evidenced from the recordings, was collected.

Consequently, in order to streamline and systematize the data, participants, questionnaires, field notes and transcripts were codified as shown in table 1.

Table 1
Codification

Variable	Code
Teachers	T1, T2, T3
Questionnaires	Quest 1, Quest 2, Quest 3
Field notes	FN1, FN2, FN3, FN4
Transcripts	Trans 1, Trans 2, Trans 3, Trans 4

Note. Codes for participants, questionnaires, field notes and transcripts

3.5. Data Analysis Methods

In order to analyze the data, methodological triangulation and deductive thematic analysis were implemented. Triangulation implies the combination of theories, methods, and observations in a research study (Noble and Heale, 2019), in order to provide greater assistance in confirming the proposed theories. Additionally, in the words of Braun *et al.* (as cited in Nowell *et al.,* 2017), deductive thematic analysis is a useful method for exploring and scrutinizing the beliefs of research participants. It enables narrowing massive arrays of data to take a streamlined approach towards proper data handling and to revise participants' perspectives generating rising up unforeseen insights by contrasting their similarities and differences.

4. Data analysis and discussion

This section characterizes the methodology that three SSL Wayuú teachers implement to teach Spanish inside their community based on the three levels proposed by Edwar Antony's model (Richards and Rodgers, 2014), approach, design and procedure, as it was presented in the theoretical framework.

4.1. Approach

For the purpose of this study, it was paramount to identify the teachers' beliefs that could help us characterize their approach when teaching SSL. To start with, language is an instrument of expression and reflection (Chomsky, 1987, as cited in Rashid, 2019), and by glimpsing at language as an instrument, one can perceive that it is constantly fluctuating based on the users' interpretations. Regarding their vision of language, the participants of this study considered Spanish as an instrument for communication with agents in and outside their community, and also, a bridge that brings their community closer to the outsiders helping them safeguard their culture and territory by providing them with a voice to be active ambassadors along the national territory.

Likewise, they explained that language is not only a vehicle of communication with others, but it also has the role of a facilitator among cultures since it represents a tool for understanding foreigners as well as for being understood. The following excerpt exemplifies this view.

> (1) Cuando yo voy a salir afuera de la comunidad, por ejemplo si yo tengo que salir a otra ciudad, tengo que aprender a hablar el español. (when I leave the community, for instance if I have to go to another city, I have to learn how to speak Spanish). (Trans 1, T1)

When talking about the theories of language, there are three main views. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), language teaching can be approached from the structural, functional, and interactional perspectives, which are focused on the language's grammatical units and operations, its role as a vehicle for meaning and communication, and its capacity to promote social transactions and interpersonal relations respectively. After analyzing the data, it was evidenced that teachers' beliefs show their preference for the interactional approach. Based on their insights, SSL is taught in different contexts and for different purposes as far as it may serve as a way to exchange ideas, reflect and act upon their realities and share their traditional knowledge. Pertaining to SSL, they explain that:

> (2) En la comunicación diaria es que uno se comunica con ellos, comienza a hablarles, charlarles sobre lo que pasa. (It is in daily communication that one can communicate with them, one starts talking, chattering about what happens). (Trans 3, T3)

Hence, it is clear that teachers emphasize SSL as an active, communicative instrument and a bridge that enables intercultural encounters, and also lets us perceive the type of bilingual practices that are promoted in their educational settings, which fosters the meaningful use of SSL in an interactional environment.

4.2. Design

The methodological design is the second level proposed in the model for analyzing language teaching methods (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). This one refers to the practical realization of the theories presented above. Based on the data collection, it was evidenced how the teachers defined and described the design components as unique for their academic and cultural context, since they not only aim to develop proficiency in Spanish but also to safeguard the Wayúu's culture, which is their main concern and life purpose.

First, considering the vital role of the objectives in each class, it was noticed that teachers in the Wayúu community design their goals based on their communicative and cultural needs. For them, the primary learning goals should be to learn SSL to interact and talk about what happens outside the community, at the same time, respond to the necessity to preserve their traditions and guarantee their cultural welfare. They realize the importance of being a Spanish speaker, representing their culture and keeping their customs and beliefs alive, yet they do not mention the need for learning specific linguistic forms, such as tenses of grammatical categories or for developing any specific competence since they see language as a whole, just as much as culture. As an example, T2 explained how SSL is used in physical education classes; students and teachers interact in their second language while doing different activities, such as playing traditional games.

> (3) Eso sí, ellos realizan juegos tradicionales con nuestra supervisión, como usando el arco y la flecha, el juego de caza y los mantiene conectados. Para esa actividad, pues salimos, vamos a un espacio abierto. (They do play traditional games under our supervision, such as using the bow and arrow, which is "el juego de caza". It keeps them connected, and for that activity, we go out to an open space). (Trans 4, T2)

In fact, the teachers mentioned different activities they apply in their classes, which can be formal or informal. Students are told to work on workshops and word puzzles in classes as part of their class routine, but they must also participate in spontaneous conversations, follow instructions in everyday scenarios and even play by using SSL in other classes or school activities. Also, teachers explained that they include culture in their SSL activities; it seems they are always connected. What is more, children tend to be very interested in Spanish and the western culture since it is a new world for them. However, teachers never neglect their responsibility to strengthen their sense of belonging to their community and their mother tongue. Thus, through their SSL classes, they aim to address Wayuunaiki as much as Spanish, for they are both needed to broaden children's horizons and enlighten all human dimensions to be developed in and outside their community. They are aware that Spanish brings culture with it as well, but it cannot displace their own. They acknowledge the

kids' need for exploring, understanding and even using items of the Arijuna (or Spanish speakers), but they emphasize on the need for recognizing the beauty of their culture and their duty to represent and safeguard their cosmovision as the main target. This can be seen in the following extract.

(4) O sea, la idea es no olvidarlos [Sus antepasados, cultura y costumbres] porque a la final lo que usted va a aprender es lo que viene en el libro, pero lo que vamos a llevar como persona es nuestra esencia, en este caso nosotros los Wayúu y lo que no podemos perder es nuestra lengua porque prácticamente, como le digo yo a usted, cuando el Wayúu aprende el español, mete la lengua del arijuna y sus cosas, ellos se olvidan de los de ellos y ya entonces usan el pantalón y no se lo quieren quitar, se olvidan de la manta y así sucesivamente, y esa no es la idea. Es que si, yo me pongo el pantalón, pero no me puedo olvidar de mi manta. (In other words, the idea is not to forget them [their ancestors, culture and customs] because, in the end, they are to learn what's in their books. Nevertheless, what we are to carry as individuals is our essence, in this case, we are the Wayuú and what we cannot lose is our language. When the Wayuú learns Spanish, they add the Arijuna's tongue and its things. They forget what belongs to them and wear pants and do not want to take them off, they forget their blankets and that is not the idea. I mean, I do wear pants, but I never forget my blanket. (T2, Trans 2)

Likewise, another goal they have for the learning of Spanish is the need for protecting and defending themselves from the Arijuna, and this is a goal that has been posed for the new generations, as T3 mentioned:

(5) Uno y los Wayúu deben defenderse y aprender a hablar en español ante la sociedad y ante la comunidad porque es muy importante que los niños Wayúu fomenten esto, ya que los mayores no tienen conocimiento del español. (The Wayúu community has to defend themselves and learn Spanish before society and the community; it is really important for the Wayúu children to do so since the adults do not have that knowledge). (T3, Quest 3)

Moreover, the syllabus, which is embedded in their class programs, depicts the relevance of honing their communicative competencies in Spanish in order to expand their knowledge outside their classroom and community. They are aware of the guidelines given by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN, 2022); however, they are allowed to adapt those guidelines based on their context. In so doing, the contents are strongly connected to cultural topics bringing practicality to the classroom and engaging learners with ease. Likewise, they recognize that designing and adjusting their class programs is an autonomous task, yet they express they can receive their colleagues' support when they ask for it. As an example, it was an acquaintance that the teachers feel the need to attune the guidelines for their children and community.

(6) Si, vamos como... o sea, esos son currículos que están, vienen ya dirigidos desde el Ministerio de Educación. Pero, al igual nosotros lo … cómo decimos nosotros vulgarmente: lo aterrizamos a nuestro contexto. (Sure, those syllabi that are established are provided by the Ministry of Education. However, we decide, as we say, we adapt them to our context). (T1, Transcript 1)

Therefore, their syllabuses align the national standards with the actual learners' needs since the government provides guidelines and materials, yet they are to be whittled down, bearing in mind the students' learning path. T2 mentioned that they utilize workshops that are given by Programa Todos a Aprender (PTA), as support for the classes; however, occasionally teachers need to look for other strategies, such as looking for some other material on the internet to complement the learning process.

(7) Nosotros de parte del PTA utilizamos unas cartillas que esas nos las envían del mismo ministerio, como cartillas de apoyo (...) Tenemos cartillas también en la institución. De pronto de editoriales o que nos ha llegado de parte de la secretaría de educación y como docente también de pronto buscamos otras estrategias con lecturas cortas, las sopas de letras que nos ayudan bastante. (As part of the PTA, we use coursebooks that are sent to us by the ministry itself, as support material (...) We also have coursebooks in the institution. Maybe from publishers or from the Ministry of Education, and as teachers we also look for other strategies with short readings, word search puzzles that help us a lot). (T2, Trans 1)

Following the aforementioned, the teachers' pledge upon recognizing their culture over the MEN guidelines demonstrates their interest in the authenticity of their materials. However, they use some other materials the Secretary of Education and others have provided them with, but just as a support.

Additionally, some classes may include time to focus on repetition and memorization, which are the main formal strategies implemented. Nevertheless, there is a clear interest in creating communicative spaces for children to use the SSL as a meaningful and functional tool to learn and interact with in everyday situations and be able to serve as cultural ambassadors to keep their traditions alive.

Subsequently, it can be said that these SSL teachers' role is determined by the need to develop the learners' proficiency in Spanish so that they can speak in and outside their communities and thus, help revitalize and boost the Wayúu culture. As a result, teachers have empowered themselves by proposing and developing different strategies and activities to teach Spanish without forfeiting their identity. Likewise, another crucial role teachers play is to identify the students' level and the strategies that seem more appropriate for them; this relates to the aforementioned regarding how it helps them to develop and modify activities and materials taking into account their actual level and their reality. As an example, T3 explains how they shape the types of activities they develop for their students.

(8) Lo que hacemos es que analizamos esos contenidos, miramos de pronto qué podemos abarcar del libro o qué temas podemos apropiarnos y de pronto pulirlos a nuestro contexto para que al niño no se le dificulte tanto. (What we do is analyze those contents, we look at what we can cover from the book or what topics we can appropriate and maybe polish them to our context, so that the children do not find them so difficult to understand). (Trans 1, T3)

Likewise, learners have a vital role during the learning process. First, they are the ones that are to make the most of the SSL communicative environments and situations that teachers propose; they must be active participants during the lessons by using the language they have learned inside and outside their classrooms. Thus, they must be willing to ask questions about what they want to learn

and answer whenever they are asked about it. Second, they must become preservers and custodians of their culture so that by employing SSL they can strengthen their identity, and eventually, protect their ancestors' legacy.

(9) Es importante porque no todos son wayuu y cuando llegue el momento de desenvolverse con los arijunas ellos sabrán cómo defender y decir lo que quieren o dar a conocer sus conocimientos. (SSL is important due to the fact that not everyone is a Wayúu community member, so when the time comes to live with outsiders, the Wayúu children will know how to express themselves and get others to know their knowledge). (T2, Trans 2)

Finally, materials have a meaningful role to play in teaching and learning SSL in the Wayúu community. To begin with, the national government provides teachers with some materials, like booklets, worksheets and more to guarantee that learners reach the level of knowledge that is determined according to the standards. A great example of this is the PTA, which underlines the support given to the educational community through its materials. Such materials are analyzed and adapted by teachers to become contextualized to their learners' reality; therefore, they reach a level of authenticity that equally fosters the students' SSL learning progress and their love for their traditions. Likewise, teachers use different elements from their context in order to enrich their classes and support the learning process. Thus, materials act as a language facilitator for learners to practice and as a reminder of their identity.

(10) Sí, nos dan la oportunidad de crear una propia [estrategia], como teniendo de base la que ellos nos dan, pero ya esas son directrices de la institución, por estar en comunidad porque en una institución educativa de la ciudad no se hace eso. Ellos, son las guías que les manda el Gobierno, les toca trabajar. En cambio, nosotros tenemos la oportunidad de y entre esas actividades también resaltamos y ahí es donde ubicamos los temas de la cultura. (Yes, they give us the opportunity to create our own [strategy], having as reference what they provide, although those are institution procedures. Thanks to being with a community because otherwise, in an educational institution in a city it isn't done. Then, they are the guidelines that the government sends to them, so they must work with them. In contrast, we have this opportunity, and among those activities, we also include cultural topics). (T2, Transcript 2)

All in all, the methodological design that the teachers allowed the researchers to characterize through their interventions was a very complete one, which presents clear and meaningful objectives, syllabus, activities and roles.

4.3. Procedure

According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), the procedure is the last level of conceptualization and organization. This is constituted by a compilation of behaviors, practices, and techniques that are applied in the teachers' educational contexts. Based on the teachers' insights, activities are planned in alignment with the context of the students, and they may involve the use of Wayuunaiki whenever it is pertinent. In the words of a teacher, the instructions for the class are given in Wayuunaiki, yet the content of the class is given in Spanish.

(11) Yo por lo menos las clases lógico que vienen en los libros o uno se las aprende, las practica y cuando uno va allá, yo por lo menos se los digo en español y se los traduzco en su lengua, o si no, primero se los digo en su lengua y se los traduzco al español. (At least in my case, it is a fact that class content comes in books. One can learn, practice, rehearse it for when you go to the classroom and, talking about me personally, I give it to them in Spanish and translate it to their first language or the other way around. (Trans 2, T2)

Additionally, the educators have selected different techniques to present, practice, and assess their students' progress. Some of these activities are praying at the beginning of class, singing traditional community songs in Spanish, establishing principles for proper class development by using Spanish, and developing worksheets and workshops previously customized to meet the students' learning needs, among others. Something that teachers emphasize is the entertaining nature of these activities and strategies. According to their answers, teachers value the need to make SSL entertaining to engage learners and ease their learning process. It seems that having students play and enjoy their lessons is paramount for them. In the voice of T1, it is stated that:

(12) Como docente también de pronto buscamos otras estrategias con lecturas cortas, las sopas de letras que nos ayudan bastante… las rimas, los trabalenguas. (As a teacher, we also look for other strategies with short readings, word search puzzles that help us a lot… the rhymes, the tongue twisters). (Trans 1, T1)

Given these points, the patterns and behaviors found among the participants are quite relevant. They align with the purpose of driving students towards learning SSL by building rapport through shaping traditional learning activities into engaging strategies.

All in all, the impact that the participants have on students apprises us of the inconsistency evidenced in traditional schools wherein creativity and passion are not embedded within the classroom. Thus, the methodology that has been described sustains a positive learning environment propitiating rapport and confidence among the students and teachers, and a SSL learning process that focuses on real communication.

5. Conclusions

This research aimed to characterize the teaching methodology applied by three teachers of SSL from two indigenous public schools and a Rancheria school, located in Riohacha and Rancheria Cangrejito, La Guajira (Colombia). These participants shared beliefs and insights based on their experiences through a series of interviews and a focus group. Having analyzed the data, it was possible to describe a theory about language and the way it is learned, the syllabus and goals they follow, the type of activities they favor, the roles students, teachers and materials play and the techniques they implement to teach SSL in their classrooms all based on their insights; therefore, three categories were set, approach, design and procedure, in order to describe the model of their methodology.

To begin, their approach to teaching SSL is directly connected to their cosmovision. Their beliefs about language and culture are interwoven to the point they become one. Language is the tool to keep their culture alive, and their culture is what makes them have a purpose, then without the language,

culture would not exist, and they would disappear. It is clear that languages, in this case, Wayuunaiki as well as SSL, are meaningful for their communities since they are responsible for passing their legacy and preserving the community that they have constructed and protected for so long. Besides, they are aware of the complexity of the learning process, which must be focused on interaction. Thus, teachers understand SSL as a means for communication and a bridge to keep connected with other cultures. Moreover, they tend to favor active and participatory learning practices. They seem to strike a balance between memoiristic activities and lively, meaningful communicative tasks, which makes the learning process successful.

Regarding the design, it became evident that their classes are structured toward building the students' identity and developing their skills before SSL. Well-focused learning goals are set to suffice the community's necessity of communicating outside their territory and raising their voice to safeguard their culture. Furthermore, guidelines and materials provided by governmental programs are embedded, thought, and whittled by the student's needs and interests, if not the teachers themselves create them. The precedent becomes a prime example of a responsibility that belongs to the teacher's role: humanizing the materials and landing them close to the students' reality.

Likewise, it is essential to notice that although there is an array of guidelines that tend to govern the second language teaching process, the Wayúu community has its own perspective depicted in the materials they adapt in accordance with their context. Consequently, as the purpose of the participants has been driven by the urge of safeguarding the Wayúu cosmovision, the learning environment is characterized by giving momentum to rapport-building and creating a customized learning process. Prominently, teachers adequate these learning environments generating interest through a selection of contents to go over with the students by endowing life to day-to-day activities; they go from carrying out self-care routines to actual Spanish interlocutions to achieve daily tasks. Thus, their methodology becomes meaningful and effective to their students and gives them the opportunity to get a closer look at a different culture, without prioritizing it.

To summarize, bringing up all the participants' ceaseless labor is pivotal. Daily, they connect two cultures coexisting one next to another, and guide the Wayúu children through honoring and preserving theirs, despite the adversities of interacting with the Arijuna culture. Following the aforementioned, it can be concluded that their beliefs about their methodology were strongly supported by their expertise as educators and influenced by their cultural backgrounds.

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Annex

ABBREVIATIONS USED

SSL	Spanish as a second language
T	Teacher
Quest	Questionnaire
FN	Field notes
Trans	Transcript

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