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INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE VALORIZATION: INITIATIVES OF AN INDIGENOUS INTERCULTURAL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE AMAZON

FORMAÇÃO INTERCULTURAL E VALORIZAÇÃO LINGUÍSTICA: AÇÕES DE UMA LICENCIATURA INTERCULTURAL INDÍGENA NA AMAZÔNIA

Experience report

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ABSTRACT: This article examines how the education of Indigenous teacher-researchers (*professores pesquisadores-indígenas*) contributes to language strengthening, drawing on experiences from the Indigenous Intercultural Teacher Education Program at the Federal

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University of Amapá in Oiapoque, Brazil. It discusses how integrating teacher education, language documentation, and the development of educational resources can enable schools to act as catalysts for language revitalization initiatives addressing community needs. The approach involves systematizing and analyzing initiatives undertaken since 2017 through the status, corpus, and acquisition dimensions of language planning, considering training activities, community discussions, resources produced, and Indigenous researchers' accounts. For Kheuól do Uaçá, key outcomes include the consolidation of distinct orthographies for the Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno varieties, the development of metalinguistic terminology, the publication of instructional and supplementary books, and the creation of multimedia dictionaries, followed by the ongoing development of writing materials. For Kali'na, outcomes include researcher training, the creation of a collection of oral recordings, the development of a proposed orthography, and the expansion of the language's presence in the school curriculum. These experiences highlight the need to integrate oral and written practices, respect community ways of transmitting knowledge, and adapt learning objectives and teaching practices to students' language proficiency. The article concludes that educating teacher-researchers supports the investigation of local language issues and the development of responses connecting schools, universities, and communities. Sustaining these efforts requires institutional support and expanded opportunities for language use.

KEYWORDS: Indigenous teacher education. Language revitalization. Language documentation. Language planning. Indigenous school education.

RESUMO: Este artigo analisa a contribuição da formação de professores-pesquisadores indígenas para o fortalecimento linguístico, a partir de experiências do Curso de Licenciatura Intercultural Indígena da Universidade Federal do Amapá, em Oiapoque. Objetiva discutir como a articulação entre formação docente, documentação linguística e produção de recursos pedagógicos pode transformar a escola em catalisador de ações de revitalização vinculadas às demandas comunitárias. A abordagem consiste na sistematização e análise das experiências desenvolvidas desde 2017, organizadas pelas dimensões de status, corpus e aquisição do planejamento linguístico, considerando atividades formativas, discussões comunitárias, materiais produzidos e relatos de pesquisadores indígenas. No kheuól do Uaçá, destacam-se a consolidação de ortografias distintas para as variedades Karipuna e Galibi-Marworno, a elaboração de metalinguagem, a publicação de livros didáticos e paradidáticos e a construção de dicionários multimídia, seguidas pela elaboração de materiais de produção textual. No kali'na, os resultados compreendem a formação de pesquisadores, a constituição de um acervo de registros orais, a elaboração de uma proposta ortográfica e a ampliação da presença curricular da língua. As experiências evidenciam a necessidade de integrar oralidade e escrita, respeitar os modos comunitários de transmissão dos conhecimentos e flexibilizar objetivos e práticas pedagógicas conforme a proficiência dos estudantes. Conclui-se que a formação do professor-pesquisador oferece condições para investigar problemas linguísticos locais e desenvolver respostas que articulem escola, universidade e comunidade, cuja continuidade depende de apoio institucional e da ampliação das oportunidades de uso das línguas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Formação de professores indígenas. Revitalização linguística. Documentação linguística. Planejamento linguístico. Educação escolar indígena.

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY: How can Indigenous teacher education help strengthen community languages? This article presents initiatives undertaken by the Indigenous Intercultural Teacher Education Program at the Federal University of Amapá in Oiapoque, Brazil. Since 2017, students, teachers, and communities have worked together to decide how to write their languages, record speech and stories, produce books, and create dictionaries with text, sound, and images. In work with Kheuól do Uaçá, spoken by the Karipuna and

Galibi-Marworno peoples, these resources support teaching and expand opportunities to use the language. For Kali'na, which is no longer passed on to children, research brings young people and older speakers together to support language reclamation. The aim is to prepare teachers to investigate local language challenges and design activities suited to students' different levels of knowledge. Schools can advance this work by connecting with families and other community spaces. Producing materials is one part of the process: strengthening a language requires opportunities for people to learn, converse, and share knowledge through it.

Introduction

This article presents the outcomes of a teacher education initiative within an Indigenous intercultural undergraduate program in the Brazilian Amazon whose institutional mission includes valuing and strengthening Indigenous languages threatened by language loss. In Brazil's education system, Indigenous school education is guided by the principles of bilingual, culturally specific, and differentiated education, grounded in the rights recognized by the 1988 Federal Constitution⁸. Enacted during the return to democracy following the military dictatorship (1964–1985), the Constitution established a landmark in recognizing Indigenous peoples' linguistic and cultural diversity and their own learning processes.

In this context, Indigenous schools have incorporated language and culture components into their curricula. The network of intercultural teacher education programs established in recent decades addresses the specific circumstances of different peoples and regions, increasing the presence of Indigenous teachers and reducing reliance on outside professionals. This training supports continuity in teaching practices and their connections to community life, especially where access difficulties require travel and intensive blocks of classes.

Producing instructional and supplementary materials for bilingual, culturally specific, and differentiated education requires attention to each community's linguistic diversity, cultural practices, and sociolinguistic circumstances. These specific conditions limit the relevance of widely distributed standardized models, such as those commonly used in Portuguese-medium instruction in non-Indigenous public schools. Indigenous intercultural teacher education programs must therefore foster teachers' intellectual autonomy to investigate their own circumstances and develop appropriate responses to local needs.

⁸ Bilingual, culturally specific, and differentiated Indigenous school education is grounded in the 1988 Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988), particularly Article 210, paragraph 2, which guarantees Indigenous communities the use of their own languages and learning processes in elementary education, and Article 231, which recognizes their languages, customs, beliefs, traditions, and social organization. These rights are developed in Articles 78 and 79 of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, Law No. 9,394/1996 (Brasil, 1996), which provide for bilingual and intercultural schooling, specific curricula and programs, and culturally specific and differentiated teaching materials.

Our approach within these programs is to prepare Indigenous teacher-researchers through a solid grounding in linguistics, combined with proficiency in language documentation and revitalization methods and techniques and an understanding of language policy. This perspective integrates theoretical reflection with the development of instructional and supplementary materials addressing concrete school and community needs.

We recognize that language documentation, description, and analysis do not, by themselves, revitalize a language, but they can provide a foundation when their findings inform language-strengthening initiatives. Revitalization depends on collective engagement and positive attitudes toward the language. These attitudes may be present from the outset or encouraged by conditions conducive to maintaining, reclaiming, and expanding contexts and domains of use. From this perspective, linguistic prestige involves a language's valued presence in different social practices, encompassing contexts where it remains in use, dormant contexts, and new spaces of circulation. Accordingly, we align ourselves with the view that linguistic prestige grows when a language's presence begins to be felt (Crystal, 2000), that prestige can be influenced by fostering positive attitudes (Ager, 2005), and that new ways of using and circulating the language should be embraced (Dołowy-Rybińska; Hornsby, 2021).

Following the introduction, the article presents Oiapoque's sociolinguistic context and the preparation of teacher-researchers in the CLII (Indigenous Intercultural Teacher Education Program)⁹¹⁰. It then examines the Kheuól initiatives through the status, corpus, and acquisition dimensions of language planning, followed by Kali'na reclamation and concluding remarks.

1. Sociolinguistic context and Indigenous school education

1.1. The languages of Oiapoque

Located in the far north of the state of Amapá, on the border between Brazil and French Guiana, the municipality of Oiapoque (AP) is an area of substantial sociocultural and linguistic diversity shaped by historical relationships between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous populations. The town of Oiapoque is located at approximately 3°50'36" N

⁹ Following the separation of the Oiapoque Binational Campus on September 24, 2026, to establish a new public university, the CLII, its faculty, and its students ceased to belong to UNIFAP (Federal University of Amapá) and became part of the newly established Federal University of the Northern Frontier (UFFN). This article retains the designation CLII-UNIFAP because the experiences reported predate the establishment of the new institution.

¹⁰ The establishment of UFFN and its full implementation are separated by a transitional period. Although both authors are affiliated with the same CLII, the first author has chosen to use the new institutional affiliation, while the second has chosen to retain the previous one.

and 51°50'06" W, equivalent to 3.8432° latitude and -51.8351° longitude. The region is home to the Karipuna, Galibi-Marworno, Palikur-Arukwayene, and Kali'na peoples, whose histories have shaped a multilingual setting encompassing Kheuól do Uaçá (Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno varieties), Parikwaki (spoken by the Palikur), Kali'na, Portuguese, and French (Lüpke et al., 2020). The municipality includes the Uaçá, Galibi, and Juminã Indigenous Lands (TIs), formally ratified in 1991, 1982, and 1992, respectively. Uaçá is home to the Karipuna, Galibi-Marworno, and Palikur-Arukwayene; Juminã to the Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno; and Galibi to the Kali'na and communities from the other peoples. Kheuól do Uaçá, Parikwaki, and Kali'na coexist in these territories (Instituto Iepé, [n.d.]). In April 2026, this territorial framework was expanded through the establishment of the Txi Juminã Indigenous Reserve for the four peoples (FUNAI, 2026). Mobility and contact among communities, together with border dynamics and the presence of educational institutions, make Oiapoque an important setting for investigating language use, relationships between language and identity, and language maintenance and transmission.

Kheuól do Uaçá originated in Guianese French Creole, a French-lexifier creole that emerged in Cayenne in the seventeenth century through language contact involving speakers of Gbe languages (Jacobs; Parkvall, 2021; Jennings; Pfänder, 2018). Its development is tied to the history of the border region between Brazil and French Guiana, whose territorial boundary was established in 1900 after approximately two centuries of disputes (Cavlak, 2016; Gallois; Grupioni, 2003). Within this context, Kheuól do Uaçá emerged during the twentieth century under the influence of Portuguese, developing characteristics that reflect both its origins in Guianese French Creole and the contact relationships established on the Brazilian side of the border (Silva, G. R.; Forte, 2024; Silva, G. R.; Santos, 2022).

Kheuól do Uaçá is spoken by the Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno peoples, whose histories of formation involve relationships among populations of different origins. The Karipuna descend from Brazilians and Indigenous groups that migrated to the region during the nineteenth century, whereas the Galibi-Marworno emerged through processes of ethnic formation involving Cariban, Arawakan, and non-Indigenous peoples (Vidal, 2001; Tassinari, 2003; Gallois; Grupioni, 2003). These histories situate the shared use of Kheuól within a context of historical contact without erasing each people's sociocultural particularities and identity.

The Palikur came from the Amazon estuary region in the seventeenth century, although their ancestors were probably the earliest inhabitants of the Oiapoque region, with records of their presence dating to 1513 (Nimuendajú, 1981). Historically, they were

described as “pure Indians,” in contrast to groups classified as “mixed peoples,” categories reflecting external conceptions of Indigenous identities and contact processes. Among the Palikur, adults over 40 speak Kheuól as a lingua franca, reflecting their participation in communication networks among the region’s peoples (Silva, E. B., 2016; Tassinari, 2003).

The Kali’na of Oiapoque settled on the Brazilian side of the border in 1950 and maintained kinship ties with French Guiana. Some live in Galibi village, also known as São José dos Galibis, in the Galibi Indigenous Land on the Oiapoque River, while others live in urban areas. Kali’na belongs to the Cariban language family and is spoken by a people whose presence extends across Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and Brazil.

In his account, Curt Nimuendajú (1926) described the region’s Indigenous inhabitants using the Latin expression *colluvies gentium*, attributed to von Martius, emphasizing their heterogeneous composition and asserting that they did not constitute a “tribe.” The expression, rendered here as “mixed people,” refers to the historical contact processes and diverse origins that shaped the Indigenous peoples of the Uaçá region. This interpretation must be situated within the ethnological classifications of the time, whose assumptions tended to associate Indigenous peoples with culturally homogeneous units. Diverse origins, however, do not imply the absence of distinctive collective identities; they are part of the historical processes through which the peoples of Uaçá emerged and differentiated themselves.

1.2. Language vitality in Oiapoque

Table 1 presents 2022 Demographic Census data (IBGE, 2025) on population and languages spoken by four Indigenous peoples of Oiapoque, showing substantial differences in the distribution of Indigenous language and Portuguese/Libras use¹¹. Moving from left to right, Table 1 suggests an ascending scale of language vitality based on the proportion of Indigenous language speakers: 20.8% among the Galibi Kali’na¹², 53.6% among the Karipuna, 83.8% among the Galibi-Marworno, and 89.6% among the Palikur. Exclusive use of Portuguese/Libras predominates in the first group (74.6%); bilingualism is prominent among the Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno, at 50.5% and 57.1%, respectively; and exclusive use of an Indigenous language predominates among the Palikur (62.2%). These differences

¹¹ We retained all categories as reported by IBGE (2025). In this case, the census groups two distinct languages, Portuguese and Brazilian Sign Language (Libras), within the same category.

¹² IBGE uses the designation Galibi Kali’na, but the more specific name Kali’na has become increasingly common. This preference, it is argued, distinguishes them from the Galibi-Marworno, who have different origins.

support the need for language-strengthening initiatives tailored to each people and community.

Category	Galibi Kali'na	Karipuna	Galibi-Marworn o	Palikur
Population	520 (100%)	4,014 (100%)	2,463 (100%)	1,842 (100%)
Speaks only an Indigenous language	21 (4.0%)	125 (3.1%)	657 (26.7%)	1,146 (62.2%)
Speaks only Portuguese/Libras	388 (74.6%)	1,686 (42.0%)	282 (11.4%)	80 (4.3%)
Speaks an Indigenous language and Portuguese/Libras	87 (16.7%)	2,027 (50.5%)	1,407 (57.1%)	505 (27.4%)
Total Indigenous language speakers	108 (20.8%)	2,152 (53.6%)	2,064 (83.8%)	1,651 (89.6%)

Table 1. Population and use of Indigenous languages and Portuguese/Libras among four Indigenous peoples of Oiapoque.

Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (2025).

1.3. Threats to Brazil's Indigenous languages and the role of Indigenous school education

With Brazil's Indigenous languages under threat and a median speaker population below 300 (Drude et al., 2023, p. 23), Indigenous school education offers an institutional framework for local responses. Its contribution depends on preparing teacher-researchers to investigate community needs and develop materials appropriate to sociolinguistic circumstances and pedagogical objectives. These resources should support the maintenance, reclamation, and expansion of language-use domains.

Schools have been criticized for historically imposing models that restrict linguistic diversity. Despite the principles of recognition and respect for diversity established in the 1988 Constitution, criticism persists of Indigenous schooling models that reproduce the structures and difficulties of Brazilian public schools with even fewer resources. In some settings where intergenerational transmission remains robust, schools have been conceived as spaces exclusively for learning Portuguese, excluding the Indigenous language; where vitality is lower, schools may become the only place where the language is used or studied. Both situations restrict its participation in social life.

2. The CLII experience and the language planning perspective

We understand domains of use as events and media through which a language circulates in oral, written, and other modalities, in individual, private, and family contexts or in community, public, and external contexts. They include events such as fishing, hunting, and collective work parties, as well as media such as notes, books, film, and documents. These categories are open-ended; Chart 1 provides examples.

	Individual/private/family	Community/public/external
Oral practices	Conversations at home	Traditional speeches and songs, conversations within and beyond the community, collective work parties, hunting, fishing, rituals
Writing	Notes, diaries	Documents, notices, signs, books
Other media	Social media	Social media, radio, film

Chart 1. Examples of language-use domains in oral, written, and other modalities.

The CLII seeks to prepare teachers who promote their languages across different domains. In addition to supporting writing, schools should catalyze the maintenance, reclamation, and expansion of oral uses and uses in other media. This contribution requires technical knowledge, positive attitudes, and connections with community practices (Franchetto, 2008).

The initiatives integrate the interdependent status, corpus, and *acquisition* dimensions of language planning (Amaral, 2021; McCarty, 2013, 2018), detailed in Section 2.2. This approach to planning revitalization initiatives reformulates the questions concerning the circumstances of action, or a heuristic framework for inquiry (*quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando*: who, what, where, by what means, why, how, and when), which have circulated in Western philosophy and rhetoric since their beginnings. Status planning thus addresses when, where, and why to use the language; corpus planning addresses what linguistic resources will be used; and *acquisition* planning addresses who will learn and use the language and by what means. The cultural relevance of materials and their connection to actual contexts of use are cross-cutting principles.

2.1. The CLII and the preparation of Indigenous teacher-researchers

The perspective developed through the CLII experience views schools as an available institutional resource for advancing learning and expanding Indigenous language-use

domains. Schools should provide an additional context for language use, connected to other community spaces through the participation of recognized knowledge holders¹³ and the integration of local practices and knowledge into learning processes. To establish these connections, teacher-researcher education must provide tools to investigate community sociolinguistic circumstances and develop initiatives that promote language use both within and beyond schools.

These possibilities are supported by the body of rights and regulations consolidated since the 1988 Constitution, which recognizes Indigenous languages and cultures and respects Indigenous learning processes. Within this framework, the participation of elders and other recognized knowledge holders as educators helps connect school practices with each community's knowledge and modes of transmission. Training Indigenous professionals also expands their participation in schools and other institutions, supporting the implementation of language rights, including the recognition of Indigenous languages as co-official and the provision of bilingual public services. In Amapá, State Law No. 3,146 of December 12, 2024, granted co-official status to nine Indigenous languages, including the Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno varieties of Kheúól, Parikwaki, and Kali'na, recognizing their public use and providing for protection and revitalization measures (Amapá, 2024). In Oiapoque, Joint Bill No. 002/2026, introduced on March 3, 2026, proposes co-official status for these four languages at the municipal level, although its enactment has not been confirmed in the sources consulted (Oiapoque, 2026). Notably, CLII-UNIFAP graduates participated directly in all these legislative initiatives.

Revitalization brings together community practices, professional training, legal recognition, and public policies conducive to positive language attitudes. Implementing the rights already secured requires sustained mobilization for material and human resources. An outcome of Indigenous struggles, school education contributes to this process when it strengthens language use and community belonging.

Intercultural teacher education programs enable language documentation to be integrated into teacher preparation and school practices. Indigenous teachers can produce, analyze, and organize records in response to community needs. Their entry into master's and doctoral programs expands their academic participation and supports continuity across school, university, and community initiatives.

¹³ CNE/CP Resolution No. 1 of January 7, 2015 (Brasil, 2015), Article 10, paragraphs 2 and 3, provides for teacher education institutions to welcome Indigenous knowledge holders, elders, and political leaders and recognizes their participation as educators through specific institutional strategies.

Established in 2007 in response to demands from the Indigenous movement, the CLII enrolls 308 undergraduate students representing eight languages and nine Indigenous peoples: the Karipuna, Galibi-Marworno, Palikur-Airukwayene, and Kali'na of Oiapoque, and the Tiriyó, Kaxuyana, Wayana, Apalai, and Waiãpi from other parts of Amapá and northern Pará. The preparation of Indigenous teacher-researchers is supported by a curriculum that connects teaching with research on community languages and cultural practices.

In the CLII curriculum, Documentation Tools, part of the common core, addresses audiovisual recording and the storage of speech events; Language Documentation and Description, in the Languages and Codes specialization, covers data collection, elicitation, transcription, glossing, analysis, and database organization. Together with courses in linguistic analysis, Verbal Arts, Sociolinguistics, and Language Policy, these components foster teachers' autonomy to investigate sociolinguistic circumstances, document languages and knowledge, and produce materials for teaching and community revitalization (UNIFAP, 2023).

2.2. Status, corpus, and acquisition planning

Our approach can be described using language planning terminology. Our methodology connects language documentation and revitalization through the interdependent dimensions of status, corpus, and acquisition planning (Amaral, 2021; McCarty, 2013, 2018).

In *status* planning (when, where, and why to use the language), we define the settings, participants, and purposes of language use. Schools provide the starting point for these initiatives, given our work in the undergraduate program and in Indigenous teacher education (see Sections 2.1 and 3). We aim to enhance the value of Kheuól use by teachers and students in school practices, strengthen positive attitudes toward the language, and encourage its use in other community spaces.

Corpus planning encompasses the linguistic forms and resources needed for these practices (what aspects of the language will be used, and with which resources?). An earlier, completed stage involved consolidating orthographies and translating the terminology used in the orthographic manuals for the two distinct varieties of Kheuól do Uaçá and in supplementary educational materials (see Section 4.1). In the current stage, nearing completion, translating new materials for developing writing in Kheuól draws on the experience of living between two languages and expands opportunities for naming, sentence

construction, text production, and the development of metalinguistic terminology in Kheuól (see Section 5.1).

Acquisition planning primarily addresses students in Indigenous schools, regardless of proficiency (see Section 5). Differences in language vitality across villages call for culturally relevant materials in the Indigenous language and flexible objectives. In a unit on the elements of the Turé, a ritual of the Uaçá region, all students learn orthographic forms and cultural meanings, with greater emphasis on cultural learning for less proficient students. As linguistic complexity increases, objectives should be individualized according to proficiency. This approach is logistically more feasible than producing different materials or organizing separate classes.

2.3. Approach: lexicon, grammar, texts, and contexts

Our documentation approach builds on the classical three-part framework of lexicon, grammar, and texts. We combine Franz Boas's foundational toolkit with the ease of accessing, managing, and reproducing language collections through specialized documentation *software*. This is the approach to language documentation used in CLII courses.

We use the free *software* FLEx (SIL Global, n.d.) to organize lexical and grammatical databases, compile dictionaries, and transcribe, translate, and interlinearize written texts. In workshops, teacher-researchers produce, for example, small illustrated dictionaries within a semantic field, accumulating data for future materials and grammatical analyses. For audiovisual records, we use ELAN (Wittenburg et al., 2006), developed by The Language Archive/Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (<https://archive.mpi.nl/tla/elan>), which organizes transcription, translation, glosses, and morphological segmentation in tiers aligned with time or morphemes.

The programs may change, provided that they support the production of free, organized, accessible, and reproducible materials, primarily for Indigenous schools, and the development of cumulative databases for linguistic research.

2.4. Developments over the past decade

Work on Kheuól encompasses orthography workshops beginning in 2017; instructional materials, corpora of traditional texts, and films in 2019; and publicly accessible

multimedia dictionaries in 2025. Since that year, resources for developing writers have also been under development, continuing the expansion of written and audiovisual language use.

3. Status planning: schools as contexts for Indigenous language use

For schools to support diversity, they must confront their history of linguistic and cultural homogenization. For Indigenous peoples, schools also provide tools for engaging with the wider society. Their contribution to revitalization depends on how these tools are appropriated and connected to community practices.

Franchetto (2008) and Gallois (2014) criticize the concentration of Indigenous languages and knowledge within schools. We propose that schools catalyze the maintenance and reclamation of traditional domains and the occupation of new spaces. Incorporating knowledge into the curriculum may change how it is transmitted, as with any knowledge brought into schooling. Indigenous teacher-researchers should assess these effects through informed, technically grounded decisions that promote autonomy and guard against domestication.

4. Corpus planning: orthographies, metalinguistic terminology, and linguistic resources

4.1. Consolidating two orthographies for a single language

Consolidating two orthographies for Kheuól do Uaçá connects linguistic description with Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno choices about the written representation of their varieties. The previously available proposal was based on the Karipuna variety (Montserrat; Silva, M., 1984). The new proposals (Silva, J. S. et al., 2019a, 2019b; Forte et al., 2019a, 2019b) emerged from community discussions that led to different solutions: the Karipuna eliminated diacritics and rules considered unnecessary, whereas the Galibi-Marworno deliberately chose an orthography with ad hoc rules (Santos; Silva, G. R., 2020). Table 2 illustrates these differences in demonstrative forms, accent marks, vowel sequences, and the segmentation of reduplicated forms.

Feature	Karipuna	Galibi-Marworno	Meaning
s~h	sa liv-la	ha liv-la	‘this book’
accent	lahosiel	lahosiél	‘sky’

Feature	Karipuna	Galibi-Marworno	Meaning
w/u	tauahu	tawahu	'yellow-spotted river turtle'
reduplication	kase kase	kasekase	'shatter'

Table 2. Examples of differences between written forms in the Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno varieties of Kheúól do Uaçá.

The examples show that the proposals differ in both variety-specific features and writing conventions. The demonstrative forms *sa* and *ha* illustrate the former. The remaining examples involve an acute accent in *lahosiél*, the use of ⟨u⟩ and ⟨w⟩ in *tauahu* and *tawahu*, and the separate or combined spelling of *kase kase* and *kasekase*. Thus, two orthographies for one language accommodate community choices about representation, whose consolidation depends on circulation and use.

Consolidating the orthographies also contributed to training Indigenous researchers. Discussions brought together teachers, graduating students, school students, and other community members, who assessed the advantages and limitations of the technical alternatives (Seifart, 2006, p. 297). We consider an orthography effective when it is used; decisions therefore sought informed community consensus based on suitability for the purposes of writing.

Developing an orthography involves choices whose benefits and limitations must be assessed in relation to the language's structure, its users, and the purposes of writing (Seifart, 2006). Shallow orthographies, which more closely reflect pronunciation, tend to facilitate learning for beginning readers and less fluent speakers, but may obscure the graphic identity of morphemes. Deep orthographies preserve that identity despite alternations, benefiting experienced readers while requiring more initial learning and providing less information about phonetic realization (Seifart, 2006, p. 279–284). Similarly, underrepresenting contrastive distinctions may simplify writing but produce homographs and ambiguity; its appropriateness must therefore be assessed in terms of the functional load of those distinctions in contextualized texts (Seifart, 2006, p. 280–281). Sociopolitically, adopting conventions from the dominant language may facilitate literacy in both languages while introducing inconsistencies and reducing the writing system's symbolic distinctiveness; adopting distinctive conventions, in turn, may strengthen its identity-marking function (Seifart, 2006, p. 284–285). Identity was the decisive factor in negotiating these differences (Santos; Silva, G. R., 2020).

The consolidation of two orthographies for the Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno varieties of Kheuól do Uaçá (Santos; Silva, G. R., 2020) shows that orthographic choices were guided primarily by political and identity considerations, although technical alternatives and their practical implications were explicitly discussed with participants. Graphic differentiation enabled peoples who share a language, and whose histories have been marked by erasure and homogenization policies, to affirm distinct collective identities (Santos; Silva, G. R., 2020, p. 234, 246). Following Seifart (2006, p. 284–287), this experience can be understood as an expression of orthography’s emblematic function, through which writing contributes to the construction and recognition of social belonging.

Table 3 summarizes two strategies for developing metalinguistic terminology in Kheuól: the Galibi-Marworno adaptation of Portuguese terms and the Karipuna creation of descriptive designations. These choices respectively involve alignment with the more prestigious grammatical tradition and the development of distinctive expressions, affirming different linguistic identities (Santos; Silva, G. R., 2020, p. 244–245).

Metalinguistic concept	Galibi-Marworno: adaptation of Portuguese terms	Karipuna: descriptive designations	Meaning of the Karipuna designation
Tilde	<i>txiu</i>	<i>txisiapã</i>	‘little snake’
Hyphen	<i>if</i>	<i>txithas</i>	‘little line’
Compound words	<i>pahól kôpóxt</i>	<i>de pahol ki ka fome selmã un</i>	‘two words that form a single word’
Verbal reduplication	<i>heduplikasiõ dji vehb</i>	<i>tut vehb ki ka pahet de fue âsam</i>	‘verbs that occur twice together’

Table 3. Examples of metalinguistic designations in the Galibi-Marworno and Karipuna varieties.

Source: Santos and Silva, G. R. (2020).

This process was developed in collaboration with communities through the Valorização das Línguas Crioulas do Norte do Amapá project (2017–2019), with the participation of Indigenous teachers and researchers trained in the CLII who would join the first cohort of the Federal University of Amapá’s Graduate Program in Languages and Literature (PPGLET-UNIFAP), established in 2019. Village workshops supported the development of two representative orthographies and their use in the textbooks *Ximê dji konetmã* (Forte et al., 2019b) and *Nate konétmã dji thavai* (Silva, J. S. et al., 2019a), and in the supplementary books *No lang no mias* (Forte et al., 2019a) and *No liv dji ixtwa Galibi-Marworno* (Silva, J. S. et al., 2019b).

This work also includes the documentaries *Os Galibi-Marworno* (2019), by the Galibi-Marworno Audiovisual Collective, and *Os Karipuna de Uaçá* (2019), by the Karipuna Audiovisual Collective, narrated in Kheuól with Portuguese subtitles, as well as *Xandoca* (2019), directed by Davi Marworno and Takumã Kuikuro. These productions expand spaces for language circulation and the presentation of community histories and experiences. Connecting training, community discussion, and material production thus creates conditions to expand the presence of the Kheuól varieties in schools and other settings.

4.2. Developing two multimedia dictionaries

Following the orthographic manuals, we developed two multimedia dictionaries, with e-book and print versions nearing completion. Recordings of entries and examples enable teachers, students, and the public to consult spoken forms; semantic-field searches support corpus planning for revitalization initiatives. Print versions provide offline access and ensure circulation and preservation independently of online servers, although connectivity has become more widespread in the villages. Figure 1 presents the dictionary interface.



Figure 1. Kheuól do Uaçá multimedia dictionary interface, showing lexical information, audio playback, an image, and a usage example for the Karipuna entry *akupa*.

In Figure 1, the entry *akupa* includes its orthographic form, phonetic transcription [a.ku.'pa], audio, grammatical category, definition, photograph, and a translated usage example. Alphabetical and semantic-field searches support lesson preparation using targeted corpora. Integrating text, sound, and images expands opportunities for dictionary consultation and pedagogical use.

5. Acquisition planning: children, schools, and pedagogical flexibility

Acquisition planning focuses on children in schools through flexible activities that accommodate different proficiency levels. In a class with Kheúól speakers and nonspeakers, for example, a naming activity can help less proficient students learn forms and meanings while enabling proficient students to reclaim uses associated with dormant cultural practices. Materials should therefore address cultural contexts and language-use needs, strengthening existing contexts, reclaiming dormant ones, and encouraging use in new spaces.

5.1. Writing materials

We are finalizing separate instructional materials for the Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno for grades 6–9¹⁴, each comprising fifty writing units that connect language, territory, identity, and community knowledge. These materials were produced and funded through the Saberes Indígenas na Escola project. Their pedagogical approach builds on students' experiences and interaction with relatives and elders, integrating oral practices, writing, and different textual genres. The four parts allow progression across school grades: grade 6 emphasizes observing and describing everyday life through lists, recipes, accounts, and inventories; grade 7 expands narrative development and imagination through narratives and verbal art; grade 8 develops reflective, bilingual writing about belonging, cultural practices, and school experiences; and grade 9 deepens metalinguistic reflection, lexical creation, translation, and argumentation. This correspondence is one possible pedagogical arrangement, as the files do not explicitly assign each part to a grade. Figure 2 presents one of these units.

¹⁴ In Brazil, *ensino fundamental* comprises nine years of compulsory schooling, typically for ages 6–14, divided into early years (grades 1–5) and later years (grades 6–9). It broadly corresponds to elementary and middle school in the United States and to primary and lower secondary education in many Latin American and Western European countries.

Unite 49: mun dji lavehite

Tem: mun dji kumunite-la i kumã ie ka viv.

Objetxiv: ekhi papie dji mun-iela lâdã kumunite-la suje metxe êdjê.

Kalite dji text: ixtwa dji lavi dji un mun, dumãde îfohmasiô i text dji aphwezêtasiô.

Thavai phîsipal: bladje ke un mun dji kumunite-la i ekhi i isplike akimun i sa.



Figure 2. Writing unit on “real people,” designed to explore the lives and experiences of community members. This image shows a preliminary mock-up of the book. The final version is still in development.

This progression, from everyday texts to metalinguistic reflection and argumentation, encompasses creative writing, elders’ memories, intercultural experiences, and alternation between languages.

The materials value local oral repertoires, allow Portuguese as a supporting resource, and propose community consultations, narrative documentation, glossary development, annotated translations, and word creation. They thus engage Kheuól as a language of description, literary creation, reflection, and social intervention, fostering student authorship and expanding written language use in culturally meaningful situations. Figure 3 presents another unit.

Unite 41: fe thadusiõ a un dhwa

Tem: fe pahól i lalwa dji lang kheuól.

Objetxiv: koze i fe nóv pahól ke lide lãdã lang kheuól i lãdã lavehite dji kote-la.

Kalite dji text: gade un mãiẽ dji isplikasiõ dji pahól ki ka vinĩ pi djivã kumã txi text dji nóv pahól lãdã djisione.

Thavai phĩsipal: fe pahól pu bagaj ki nóv (teknoloji, bagaj, pei), ize hasin o lide-iela dji lang kheuól.



Figure 3. Writing unit on “translation is a right,” addressing reflection on translation and Kheuól’s expressive possibilities. This image shows a preliminary mock-up of the book. The final version is still in development.

Connecting training, documentation, and teaching requires different approaches when intergenerational transmission has been interrupted and teachers are also learning the language. The next section examines this situation in Kali’na reclamation.

6. Kali’na reclamation as an intercultural education initiative

Kali’na currently has the lowest vitality among Oiapoque’s Indigenous languages. Unlike Kheuól do Uaçá, whose intergenerational transmission is highly variable, and Parikwaki, whose transmission is more robust, Kali’na transmission was interrupted beginning with the first generation that arrived in Brazil in the 1950s. Recent Kali’na reclamation efforts in Oiapoque therefore illustrate how Indigenous teacher education connects with language valorization and influences community initiatives. In the CLII, this connection is expressed through student and faculty participation in documentation, the collaborative development of a writing proposal, and engagement with speakers and family knowledge as a first step toward reclamation. The trajectory described by Santos *et al.* (2022), Jeanjacque *et al.* (2023), and Silva, N. S. L. (2025) shows that university education can enable

young Indigenous people to reconnect with a language they did not acquire and participate in decisions about its reclamation.

Declining Kali'na use must be understood in relation to the history of schooling and the social pressures on speakers. Relocating to attend school, contact with different groups, and multilingual family composition contributed to the expansion of Portuguese. However, accounts collected by Silva, N. S. L. (2025) show that interrupted transmission was also associated with discrimination and school practices that restricted the Indigenous language. The author describes a generation of parents who sought to spare their children the suffering they had experienced during their own schooling.

In the interviews presented in the undergraduate thesis (TCC), M. C. L. and M. T. C. J. J.¹⁵ recall the compulsory predominance of Portuguese at school and the continued use of Kali'na at home and in play during childhood. Silva, N. S. L. (2025, p. 9) reports that her mother stopped teaching the language to her children to protect them from the punishments and difficulties she associated with schooling. Over time, Portuguese became the main language of family communication. The third generation grew up speaking Portuguese, although kinship terms, cultural vocabulary, and contact with relatives in French Guiana continued to provide connections with Kali'na.

Available surveys reflect the community's concern to understand this situation. Santos et al. (2022) mention approximately 74 individuals; Jeanjacque et al. (2023) estimate 93 Kali'na in Brazil and approximately 15 speakers. In a January 2025 survey, Silva, N. S. L. (2025, p. 13) records 27 Kali'na in the village and 23 in Oiapoque. Because these figures differ in coverage and methods, they do not constitute a directly comparable demographic series. They nevertheless highlight the need to strengthen intergenerational encounters and language-learning spaces.

It is in this context that CLII training becomes significant. In Nicole Sthefany Lod da Silva's account, her sisters' entry into the program and their research prompted questions about family history and culture. Her subsequent participation in the program expanded this engagement. Academic work encouraged conversations with her mother, consultations with elders, and participation in community activities. Her decision to become a teacher became connected to the desire to learn and pass on this knowledge to children and young people (Silva, N. S. L., 2025).

One initiative that continued this engagement was the outreach project Kali'na na escola: uma construção colaborativa de material didático em língua Kali'na, dated by Silva,

¹⁵ The consultants' identities have been kept confidential.

N. S. L. (2025) to October 2020–March 2021. It aimed to support teachers at São José State Indigenous School through materials produced with the community. The team included UNIFAP faculty, Kali'na students, and a collaborating Galibi-Marworno researcher. Participation by people from different fields and backgrounds facilitated knowledge sharing in linguistic and cultural documentation (Santos et al., 2022; Jeanjacque et al., 2023).

The work began with workshops on audio and video recording, organizing records, and transcribing and translating speech events in ELAN. Young people applied these skills in interviews and recordings with speakers, taking responsibility for building the collection. Technical training was connected to concrete activities and the researchers' everyday relationships, supporting their participation in documenting their own language.

Narratives of migration from French Guiana to Brazil were among the topics documented. The accounts provided insight into travel conditions, preparations for the crossing, and the community's settlement in the new territory. For young people, listening to these stories in Kali'na provided contact with their relatives' language and events that form part of their collective memory. Documentation thus connected learning research procedures with recognition of speakers' knowledge and experiences (Santos et al., 2022).

Conducting the project during the COVID-19 pandemic restricted travel and meetings. Some recordings were possible because Indigenous researchers worked within their own social circles.

Transcription and translation allowed young people to revisit the recordings, listen to speech segments, and consult collaborators. Although they had not learned to read and write in Kali'na, they began writing with support from French Guianese materials and familiar Portuguese conventions. This exercise showed that documentation could begin before an orthographic proposal was consolidated. It also highlighted the need to discuss writing choices that were accessible to participants and appropriate for representing the language.

The outcomes of this stage must be distinguished from its initial goals. Silva, N. S. L. (2025, p. 21) reports that the project completed the training workshops but did not produce the planned teaching materials. Building the collection and learning recording, transcription, and translation procedures were concrete achievements. Selecting, reviewing, and transforming the records into school materials remained tasks for subsequent work. This experience shows that producing pedagogical resources requires a process connecting training, consultation with speakers, and experimentation in educational settings.

The need to write down the recordings prompted Kali'na writing workshops. The first took place in October 2022 at UNIFAP's Binational Campus, coordinated by professors

Gelsama Mara Ferreira dos Santos and Cilene Campetela. Word elicitation, recordings, and collective writing and reading exercises provided data for an initial proposal. The aim was to offer evidence and alternatives to inform choices to be discussed by the community.

The second workshop took place in November 2023 in São José village, with broader participation by speakers and residents. Previous data were analyzed, corrected, and expanded, resulting in an orthographic proposal and a summary for community testing. Participants' familiarity with Portuguese writing was considered throughout. This writing system therefore remains under development, and its consolidation requires monitoring use and further discussion.

The workshops illustrate the relationship between linguistic knowledge and community decisions. Speakers contributed their experience of the language, young people participated in exercises, and linguists provided analytical support. Grapheme choices involve representing speech, facilitating reading, and responding to prospective users' expectations. From this perspective, the university contributes through dialogue and the presentation of alternatives, with Indigenous participation in determining the direction of the work.

Subsequent initiatives show that reclamation encompasses other community spaces. At a meeting of the Indigenous Youth Organization of Oiapoque in August 2023, young people painted traditional designs on the village's large communal building and the school. This activity required the participation of elders who knew the designs and could teach their production. Further work is needed on the names and histories of these designs. The experience offers opportunities to connect language, memory, and cultural practices in learning activities, while also reclaiming dormant contexts of language use.

Ties with relatives in French Guiana sustain opportunities to communicate in Kali'na and broaden the resources available to young people. The continuity of these relationships shows that language valorization is also sustained by cross-border family networks that bring speakers together with people interested in learning.

Within schools, the inclusion of Indigenous Culture and Mother Tongue courses marks an important change from the situation described by Jeanjacque et al. (2023), when a curricular presence for Kali'na was still an aspiration. In her account, Kassia Lod discusses demands submitted to the state and the involvement of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office in introducing these courses and hiring teachers. This achievement expands institutional conditions for connecting students with their people's knowledge and their relatives' language.

The introduction of these courses must be accompanied by conditions that support teachers' work. Recordings can inform activities involving listening to and discussing narratives; the writing proposal can support text production; and traditional designs and family histories can provide learning themes. These possibilities depend on speakers' participation, material review, and adaptation to learners. The CLII can contribute by connecting teacher education, research, and outreach around community-identified needs.

Kali'na participation in the Ministry of Education's Saberes Indígenas na Escola initiative provides continuing education for Kali'na teachers and an opportunity to develop teaching materials in Kali'na. These activities bring young people closer to speakers' knowledge through the production of school materials.

These experiences demonstrate advances in researcher training, collection development, and intergenerational engagement. Continuing reclamation requires support for teachers, community review of records, and expanded opportunities for interaction in the language, connecting universities, families, and communities.

7. Concluding remarks

The experiences presented demonstrate a progressive integration of Indigenous teacher-researcher education, language documentation, and planning to strengthen Oiapoque's languages. For Kheuól do Uaçá, community discussions between 2017 and 2019 laid the groundwork for consolidating the Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno orthographies and publishing instructional and supplementary books in 2019. Records of traditional texts and film productions expanded the media through which the language circulates. In 2025, work on multimedia dictionaries involved master's students, deepening Indigenous participation in organizing and analyzing records. The current stage comprises materials for developing writers, with Indigenous master's graduates coordinating undergraduates and qualified teachers. Continuity across levels of education supports the development of teams capable of investigating local needs and monitoring the outcomes of their own proposals.

Kali'na reclamation follows a different trajectory, shaped by interrupted intergenerational transmission. In 2020–2021, documentation workshops provided training in recording, transcribing, and translating speech events, including narratives of migration from French Guiana to Brazil. Although the initially planned teaching materials were not produced, building the collection and training Indigenous researchers were concrete outcomes. Documentation thus preceded the 2022 and 2023 writing workshops, which yielded an

orthographic proposal still requiring community testing and assessment. The subsequent introduction of Mother Tongue and Indigenous Culture courses expanded institutional conditions for learning. This trajectory shows that documentation, writing-system development, and teaching may follow different sequences depending on language vitality, available resources, and community decisions.

The preparation of teacher-researchers connects these experiences. Given linguistic diversity and the shortage of resources suited to each community's circumstances, investigating local language problems and developing responses are unavoidable responsibilities of Indigenous teaching. The CLII must provide training grounded in scientific knowledge, an understanding of sociolinguistic conditions, and community participation. This perspective takes up Franchetto's (2008) and Gallois's (2014) criticisms of the effects of schooling on Indigenous languages and knowledge, treating them as questions that should guide pedagogical decisions. The participation of teacher-researchers and knowledge holders makes it possible to examine what may be incorporated into schools, under what conditions, and with what consequences for how knowledge is produced, circulated, and transmitted.

In status planning, schools are understood as powerful, available institutions that can expand Indigenous language-use domains. Recognizing this potential also means acknowledging that schools are neither the only nor necessarily the privileged spaces for producing and transmitting community knowledge. Their role as catalysts for revitalization depends on relationships with families, speakers, and recognized knowledge holders that foster opportunities for use beyond school. Young Kali'na people documenting narratives with relatives and elders participating in activities involving traditional designs exemplify these connections. Schools can encourage such encounters and sustain the learning they generate while respecting the authority and conditions governing the transmission of the knowledge involved.

In corpus planning, developing writing systems, metalinguistic terminology, and materials provides tools for new language uses. Consolidating two Kheúól orthographies shows that technical solutions must accommodate political and identity choices: the Karipuna terms *txisiapã*, "little snake," and *txithas*, "little line," for example, demonstrate how metalinguistic terminology can draw on the language's own resources. The expansion of writing must nevertheless be accompanied by the centrality of oral practices. In multimedia dictionaries, recordings of entries and examples enable direct engagement with spoken forms; in writing materials, consultations with relatives and elders connect writing, memory, and interaction. These resources offer ways to address the risk of reducing a language to forms

selected for primers, bringing oral practices to the center of activities while preserving their connections to the contexts that give them meaning.

Acquisition planning is the most complex dimension of this work because it requires turning resources and opportunities into meaningful learning under material constraints and among students with different proficiency levels. Pedagogical organization therefore calls for flexibility in objectives, activities, and assessment criteria. In the same naming activity, less proficient students can learn forms and meanings, while proficient students can expand their repertoires and reclaim uses associated with dormant cultural practices. Similarly, the progression of writing materials from lists and descriptions to narratives, translations, and argumentation must be adapted to learners' circumstances. Sustaining this trajectory requires long-term commitment, support for teachers, and evaluation of material use. By preparing teacher-researchers to lead this process, the CLII helps transform schools into catalysts for community revitalization initiatives, connecting learning, research, and expanded possibilities for living and producing knowledge through Indigenous languages.

Additional information

Declaration of artificial intelligence use (Declaração de Uso de Inteligência Artificial)

During preparation of this manuscript, ChatGPT 6.1 (OpenAI) was used to support drafting and language editing, translation into English, text condensation, bibliographic research and checking, and formatting. Following the use of the tool, the authors validated, reviewed, and critically edited all content, assuming full and sole responsibility for the content of the manuscript.

CREdit (Contribuição de autoria)

Glauber Romling da Silva: conceptualization, methodology, investigation, resources, data curation, writing, review and editing, supervision, project administration, funding acquisition.

Gelsama Mara Ferreira dos Santos: conceptualization, methodology, investigation, resources, data curation, writing, review and editing, supervision, project administration, funding acquisition.

Janina dos Santos Forte: conceptualization, investigation, resources, data curation, review, supervision.

Jaciara Santos da Silva: conceptualization, investigation, resources, data curation, review, supervision.

Amanda da Costa Carvalho: conceptualization, resources, data curation, supervision, project administration, funding acquisition.

Kassia Angela Lod Moraes Galiby: conceptualization, investigation, resources, review, supervision.

Evangelina Sonia dos Santos Jeanjacque: conceptualization, investigation, resources, review, supervision.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Research protocol and preregistration

The authors assessed the applicability of the reporting guidelines listed by the Equator Network, particularly the Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research (SRQR) and the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ). Because this manuscript is an experience report based on a retrospective systematization of Indigenous teacher education, language documentation, and pedagogical resource development initiatives, rather than a qualitative study structured around interviews or focus groups, no specific guideline

was identified as appropriate for full adoption. Accordingly, no specific reporting guideline was adopted. The work has no published research protocol and was not preregistered.

Data availability statement

The data and materials supporting this experience report are presented in the manuscript and the cited sources. Published instructional and supplementary books are available at the web addresses provided in the references. The Kheuól do Uaçá multimedia dictionaries can be accessed through the Japiim platform at <https://japiim.museudoindio.gov.br/dic/karipuna/> and <https://japiim.museudoindio.gov.br/dic/galibimarworno/>, for the Karipuna and Galibi-Marworno varieties, respectively. Demographic data come from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics' 2022 Demographic Census, as cited in the article.

Ethics

The activities reported here were authorized by the Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Peoples of Oiapoque (CCPIO).

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