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Université Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3

ED 625 MAGIIE - Mondes Anglophones, Germanophones,  
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Thèse de doctorat en didactique de l'anglais

Christiane CHARON

**Student-Educator Tandem with Indigenous  
Students in Urban Australian Boarding Schools**  
*Two case studies in translanguaging pedagogy*

Thèse dirigée par Madame la Professeure Claire Tardieu

Soutenue le 10 Septembre 2020

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# Le Tandem élève-éducateur avec des élèves indigènes dans les internats urbains en Australie

## *Deux études de cas en pédagogie du translanguaging*

### **Résumé**

Cette recherche vise à étudier et rendre-compte du potentiel de l'apprentissage en tandem entre des élèves indigènes<sup>1</sup> et des éducateurs non-indigènes. Depuis 2016, l'intégration des langues indigènes est devenue une exigence officielle pour toute l'Australie. Grâce à un modèle de tandem créé spécifiquement dans lequel les élèves enseignent leurs langues à leurs éducateurs non-indigènes, je propose une manière d'avancer vers l'égalité des langues dans des internats urbains australiens.

Les bases théoriques de ce modèle tandem rassemblent la pédagogie ELF, la théorie du translanguaging telle que élaborée par García et Li Wei (2014) et García et Kleyn (2016), la pédagogie critique et l'éducation en « heritage languages ».

Afin de répondre à la question de recherche « dans quelle mesure des élèves indigènes et des éducateurs non-indigènes peuvent-ils bénéficier de l'apprentissage en tandem dans un internat urbain ? », j'ai choisi la recherche-action. J'ai d'abord testé le modèle de tandem pour lequel j'ai choisi le nom de « student-educator tandem » (SET) avec quatre élèves âgés de 11 et 13 ans internes dans une école de Darwin en 2016. Les langues des élèves sont le Kunwinjku, le Maung, l'Iwaidja et le Gupapuyngu. Cette étude exploratoire a fait émerger une gamme de stratégies d'enseignement et de feedback.

Une étude de suivi dans un internat à Adélaïde a été mise en place en 2019 par une tutrice indépendante. Les deux élèves (de 14 et 15 ans) participant à cette étude ne parlent aucune langue indigène ancestrale, mais se définissent comme parlant l'anglais dit « Aboriginal English ». Au lieu d'un apprentissage linguistique, c'est la construction effective d'une relation interpersonnelle et le développement de compétences interculturelles qui se sont révélés comme étant les principaux bénéfices du modèle de « student-educator tandem » dans ce contexte.

***Mots clés : élèves indigènes, Australie, tandem, tutorat, translanguaging***

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<sup>1</sup> J'ai choisi le terme « indigène » dans ma traduction du résumé malgré les connotations négatives en français afin de rester fidèle au terme « Indigenous » en anglais. « Indigenous » est le terme de référence utilisé de manière inclusive dans le contexte australien pour les personnes aborigènes et celles qui sont d'origine des Torres Strait Islands (Burridge et al., 2012, p. 7).

# Student-Educator Tandem with Indigenous Students in Urban Australian Boarding Schools

## *Two case studies in translanguaging pedagogy*

### **Abstract**

This research explores the potential of tandem learning between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous educators. Since 2016, the integration of Indigenous languages into all school curricula has become an official requirement for all Australian states and territories. In a specifically devised tandem model in which the students teach their home languages to their non-Indigenous educators, I propose a practical way of moving toward language equality in urban Australian boarding schools.

In its theoretical underpinnings, this tandem model brings together English as a Lingua Franca pedagogy, translanguaging theory as elaborated by García and Li Wei (2014) and García and Kleyn (2016), critical pedagogies and heritage language education.

To answer the research question: “To what extent Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators can benefit from tandem learning in an urban Australian boarding school?”, I have chosen an action research approach. I first trialled the tandem model which I have chosen to call “student-educator tandem” (SET), with four students between the age of 11 and 13 in a boarding school in Darwin in 2016. The students’ home languages were Kunwinjku, Maung, Iwaidja and Gupapuyŋu. During this exploratory study, a variety of teaching and feedback strategies have emerged.

A follow-up study at a boarding school in Adelaide was conducted in 2019 by an independent tutor. The two students (aged 14 and 15) participating in this study did not speak any ancestral Indigenous languages, but identified as speakers of Aboriginal English. Instead of language learning, effective interpersonal rapport building and intercultural competencies development emerged as the main benefits of the student-educator tandem model in this context.

***Key words: Indigenous students, Australia, tandem, tutoring, translanguaging***

*For Lara, Dan, Gabi and Peter*

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# List of Abbreviations

ACARA: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority  
ACER: Australian Council for Educational Research  
AIATSIS: Australian institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies  
AICLS: Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival  
AFEC: Aboriginal Family Education Centres  
AIM: Aborigines Inland Mission  
AFA: Aborigines' Friends' Association  
AuSIL: Australian Society for Indigenous Languages  
APA: American Psychological Association  
CV: Curriculum Vitae  
DFJW/OFAJ: Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk/Office franco-allemand pour la Jeunesse  
EAL: English as an Additional Language  
EFL: English as a Lingua Franca  
EMI: English Medium Instruction  
ESL: English as a Second Language  
HL: Heritage Language  
ITAS: Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme  
L1: first language  
L2: second language  
LAAL: Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages  
MAP: Master-Apprentice Programme  
NAPLAN: National Assessment Programme - Literacy and Numeracy  
NTDE: Northern Territory Department of Education  
SACE: South Australian Certificate of Education  
SET: Student-Educator Tandem  
SIL: Summer Institute of Linguistics  
SLA: Second Language Acquisition  
SLL: Second Language Learning  
UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

# INTRODUCTION

## Challenges in Indigenous education in Australia

Ever since formal education started in the colony that was to become Australia in 1901, a significant gap has existed between the quality of education and the quality of life accessible to Indigenous compared to non-Indigenous Australians (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 9; Duguid, 1963, p. 151). Since the beginning of formal education, it has been widely acknowledged that education is the basis for far-reaching improvements in Indigenous affairs (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, pp. 7-8; Gondarra, 2000, p. 3; McInerney, Fasoli, Stephenson, & Herbert, 2012, p. 23; Rennie, 2013, p. 155). Particularly literacy and numeracy have long been areas of immense concern when considering educational outcomes for Indigenous students (Hughes, 2013, p. v). Bilingual education, ESL literacy initiatives and English-only approaches have been implemented successively with mixed results (Hughes, 2013, p. v; Perso, 2012). The failure of communication between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians has been identified as a central issue underlying problems in diverse spheres of life, be it education, employment, personal or public health (Gardner & Mushin, 2013, p. 101; Gondarra, 2000, p. 3; Trudgen, 2000, pp. 68-80). However, communication difficulties have not been acknowledged by all stakeholders as a core problem area. Few practical ways of addressing ameliorating communication between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have been found.

In the last five years, one specific area of interest has been the systemic use of Indigenous languages in the educational arena. A concrete step to enable this on a national level has been taken by ACARA, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (Weinmann, 2016, p. 204). In December 2015, ACARA launched the Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Framework as part of the Australian Curriculum for students from foundation to Year 10. Co-written by Indigenous scholar Dr Jakelin Troy, this is the first official government document, binding nationwide, to formally

require the inclusion of Indigenous Australian languages into everyday teaching. Split into pathways for first and second language learners, the framework also includes language revival. It offers detailed curricular sequences and achievement standards for year levels from Foundation to year 10. This framework operates on the rationale of supporting first language programmes “on Country”, i.e. in remote communities which are often located on ancestral land. More generally, the framework aims to ensure “that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas, can fully participate in the curriculum and can build their self-esteem” and that all members of school communities in Australia can “engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world’s oldest continuous living cultures” (ACARA, 2015).

Even though these goals are easily embraced by many educators and schools administrators in the spirit of reconciliation in Australia and on ethical grounds, they are not easy to put into practice. Given the complexity and variety of Indigenous languages, educators and administrators may struggle to implement this framework. Meanwhile, not much has changed in student outcomes or the broader outlook to employability and/or positive lifestyle changes (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 8). Along with these macro-social factors, the decline of traditional Indigenous languages continues (Marmion, Obata, & Troy, 2014, p. xii). A particularly challenging scenario is faced by Indigenous students in urban boarding schools where they are often taught by non-Indigenous educators. While most recent studies on Indigenous language education programmes to date have focused on remote areas of Australia (see Bedford & Casson, 2010; Disbray, 2014; Guenther, Bat, & Osborne, 2013; Guenther & Osborne, 2013; Harper, Helmer, Lea, Chalkiti, Emmett & Wolgemuth, 2012; Kral, 2011; Maher, 2012; Scull, 2016), I have located my research in an urban context.

## **The rationale of locating my project in urban boarding schools**

I chose to explore urban boarding education because this is where Indigenous students or their family and/or elders have made a choice to engage with the Australian education system in a major city, away from their homes. This choice reflects Stanner's (1969) suggestion that "to go near is always a sort of offer" and "an implicit appeal for a new identity within the union [of Indigenous<sup>2</sup> and non-Indigenous lifestyles in Australia]" (p. 56). Stanner (1969) made these remarks with reference to colonial times where this offer and appeal went unnoticed (p. 56). However, he suggested that this offer, appeal and search will continue for Indigenous Australian as a way "of making a better bargain of life ... at a more understanding time" (p. 57).

For Indigenous languages, this "more understanding time" is the 21st century. A national curricular framework exists and policy efforts continue. In this dissertation, I develop a model of language teaching and learning to assist Indigenous students enrolled on a voluntary basis in an urban boarding school. From the perspective of research ethics, and considering Stanner's analysis above, I have chosen this approach rather than imposing on a remote community to conduct research, where different considerations may apply. My intention is to present a tandem approach which can improve overall communication between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous educators in the specific context of urban boarding education. My proposed tandem model will provide some of the material resources and didactic tools the new curriculum framework requires (Tan, 2015).

To give a broad definition, tandem was originally conceptualised as a learning process where two people of different native languages collaborate in order to learn each other's language, and to get to know each other and each other's cultures (Brammerts, 1996, p. 2; Brammerts, 2010, p. 10; Ciekanski, 2017, p. 12; Kleppin, 2002, p. 168, Vassallo & Telles, 2006). While ample documentation of tandem involving European languages has been

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<sup>2</sup> As Burrige et al. (2012) have clarified: "The term 'Indigenous' is the preferred term used by Commonwealth government agencies in Australia when referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, policies, programs and activities" (p. 7). A more ample discussion of this terminological choice is included at the end of this introduction where I elaborate on other key terms.

collated over many years, to date, no interactional data on tandem practice involving Indigenous Australian languages exists. Baker and Lewis (2017) have also pointed out the general shortage of research on Indigenous language education internationally (p. 117). This dissertation seeks to close a research gap and documentation gap by creating a first corpus involving speakers of Indigenous languages in tandem practice. The model of student-educator tandem will bring together students who are speakers of Indigenous languages and English-speaking educators in a mutual effort to learn from one another. The two studies, one exploratory study and one follow-up study, will examine the tandem approach as a teaching and learning action of high impact potential.

The question this dissertation will seek to address is: “To what extent can Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators benefit from tandem learning in an urban Australian boarding school?” To answer this question, four hypotheses have been developed based on the fact that Australian Indigenous languages are oral languages carrying specific cultural knowledge (McCarty & Nicholas, 2012, p. 145). These hypotheses will be considered first from an historical and a theoretical stance, then tested against a selection of data recorded when the student-educator tandem model was implemented during the exploratory study and the follow-up study. The hypotheses are:

1. Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators can benefit from using the tandem approach if tandem is modified to cater for the specificities of oral languages and Indigenous types of knowledge. These modifications include adapting the traditional tandem model which involves two peers to accommodate the constellation of educators and one or more students working cooperatively.
2. The model of student-educator tandem can provide a way of implementing ACARA's stipulation to include Indigenous languages in everyday school life thus contributing to reconciliation through the integration of all languages and cultures represented in a group of learners.



3. Significant benefits for the participants can result from an implementation of student-educator tandem on a linguistic, intercultural and interpersonal level.

### **Research narrative**

This dissertation has two major parts, each containing four chapters. This structure follows the development of the research process and provides a reflection of the research narrative. I went from being a practitioner in the field to wanting to become a researcher, moving along the continuum of engagement in classroom work first to gradually gaining distance to my field of inquiry during the dissertation (Narcy-Combes, 2005, p. 121), aspiring to fill a role identified by Hinton (2011): “Absent from second language pedagogy for endangered languages, in many cases, are applied linguists who specialize in language teaching theory and methodology” (p. 317). As a teacher linguist working at a remote community school in Australia’s Northern Territory, I observed many obstacles to successful and effective communication, teaching and learning between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous educators. The same obstacles existed when I moved to a position in an urban school in Darwin which offered boarding facilities for Indigenous students from remote communities. As ESL coordinator, I observed that relationship building with my students was a significant component in teaching that was hard to achieve across a cultural gap.

From various historical sources, I found that some successful language learning happened on a mutual basis in the past between non-Indigenous missionaries, teachers and their Indigenous students and friends. I started thinking about a way to reinject such effective language learning dynamics into current teaching practice. It was only when I had left Indigenous education to pursue a career in international education that I remembered my own language learning as a tertiary student using tandem. I wondered whether tandem could work in the context of Indigenous students being taught by non-Indigenous educators. I decided that a doctoral dissertation would be suited to investigate this matter.

After having found a supervisor with expertise in the area of tandem learning, I conducted an exploratory study at my former workplace in Darwin. During the exploratory study, I was implicated as “praticien-chercheur” in the sense that Narcy-Combes (2005, p. 121) has explained “désireux d’approfondir sa pratique” [wanting to improve one’s practice] but without any training in “recherche-action” [action research]. Instead, my approach was reliant on creativity and innovation, but lacked the “distanciation” which would ensure a higher degree of “scientificité” (Narcy-Combes, 2005, p. 121). I had conceived the first, exploratory study as a pilot study, hoping to conduct a larger scale study with more numerous participants in the future, but for various logistical reasons, this has not been possible. Longitudinal, larger scale research projects in the area of Indigenous education in Australia have mostly been conducted by teams of established researchers rather than doctoral candidates (Bedford & Casson, 2010; Harper et al., 2012; Lea, Thompson, McRae-Williams & Wegner, 2011; Lea, Wegner, McRae-Williams, Chenhall & Holmes, 2011; Oliver, Grote, Rochecouste & Exell, 2013). Due to the relatively small data volume (only about 3 hours of audio-recordings), I was aware that I couldn’t really consider this first empirical experience as a pilot study. Instead, I had to consider it as an exploratory study on the way to further research. Through this experience, I evolved in my status as “praticien-chercheur”. Even though I organised the tandem experimentation in Adelaide in 2019, I was not directly implicated in the tutoring sessions during the follow-up study conducted.

After the exploratory study, in order to give the idea of student-educator tandem more ample scope, I needed a theoretical foundation which would then enable me to design a more scientifically anchored methodological framework. Initially, I had conceived the tandem model within the original theoretical framework of Second Language Learning (SLL), developing a second monolingualism (see Gracia & Li Wei, 2014, p. 12; Grosjean & Byers-Heinlein, 2018, p. 4; Grosjean, 2019, pp. 111-113). I then came across translanguaging as a very apt theoretical model which can reflect and underpin the merits of student-educator tandem for Indigenous education. Based on this theory, I constructed a methodological

approach using collaborative action research to take the idea of student-educator tandem further.

### **Dissertation outline**

In part one of the dissertation, I will present the context and theoretical framework out of which student-educator tandem has been developed. This will allow me to explain to what extent Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators can benefit from tandem learning in an urban Australian boarding school drawing on relevant historical examples and considering the tandem model through various theoretical lenses.

### Chapter 1

In chapter one, I will describe the research genesis, amplifying the research narrative presented above, then examine historic evidence about learning and specifically language learning in Indigenous communities in Australia. Drawing on the work of revisionist historians and using oral history project transcripts, I will try to relativise the findings from sources written in English by the dominant settler groups and missionaries. Chapter one is thus an attempt to trace the history of Indigenous education from traditional family structures through the frontier society in Australia to mission-led boarding schools and government reserves into the heyday of bilingual education between the 1960s and 1980s to the 21st century. I will argue that a form of tandem learning took place between some Indigenous individuals and non-Indigenous missionaries. The functioning of some missions will provide examples to inform the development of the student-educator tandem model. By first proposing an historical overview, I avoid a too narrowly focused interactional analysis of the tandem.

Many educators, activists and scholars working in Indigenous education Australia know that without a deep understanding of contact history, a comprehension of the continuing educational issues and the dysfunction in many Indigenous communities is impossible

(Burrige, Buchanan, & Chodkiewicz, 2014; Christie, 1985, pp. 1-3; Guenther & Osborne, 2013, p. 115; Herbert, 2012, p. 96; Keffee, 1992, p. 66; McCarty & Nicholas, 2012, p. 150; Trudgen, 2000, pp. 8-9). An appreciation of this history is important for educators today in order to assist in safeguarding against prejudice and low expectations that have survived and constantly resurface in the general discourse on the topic of Indigenous education (Burrige et al., 2012, p. 2; Christie, 1985, p. 64; Harper et al., 2012, p. 47; McInerney et al., 2012, p. 2; Keffee, 1992, p. 12).

## Chapter 2

The question at the core of chapter two is: With which practical and theoretical adaptations can tandem learning contribute to putting into practice the stipulation of ACARA's framework for the inclusion of Indigenous languages in urban Australian schools? To answer this question, I have traced the development of the tandem model of language learning. First, I have considered precursors and related models used exclusively in classrooms such as proposed by Steinig (*Zweierschaftslernen*) and Kriebitzsch. Through a literature review in the second part of this chapter, I will present the features and contexts of use of tandem learning. In particular, I will focus on the principle of learner autonomy, the principle of reciprocity, error correction and intercultural learning.

It is clear from the outset that the traditional principles of tandem need to be adjusted to cater for the mostly uncharted linguistic terrain of oral Indigenous languages. To demarcate student-educator tandem from the established concept of tandem which has gained academic currency since the mid-1980s (Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 15), I will present an in-depth comparison of the two models. This comparison will show how student-educator tandem has emerged from the basic principles of tandem. I will finally consider the social psychology of student-educator tandem with its implications on role reversals, stance, authority, power, interculturality, self-efficacy and perceptual bias. Chapter two ends with a definition of student-educator tandem.

### Chapter 3

Given the novelty of student-educator tandem, it is important to inscribe the model into an established theoretical field. In chapter three, I will consider the student-educator tandem model through various theoretical lenses. To construct my theoretical framework, I will follow Narcy-Combes (2005) who coined the “technique des entonnoirs” [funnel technique] (p. 118). This technique has provided for multiple theories to be drawn upon in a somewhat repetitive structure to filter out elements of relevance for an experimentation.

Since the Australian context involves oral languages where many of the primary records needed for the elaboration of tandem materials are coloured by colonial attitudes, a nuanced discussion of student-educator tandem in the light of linguistic postcolonial theories as elaborated by Canagarajah (1999; 2007) and Makoni and Pennycook (2007) is necessary. I will first consider how educators can avoid linguistic imperialism through student-educator tandem. I will then include perspectives from intercultural communication theory. As a backdrop to the social agenda of student-educator tandem, I will then provide some theoretical background on Freire's, Illich's and Bourdieu's critical pedagogy. Finally, I will illustrate the parallels between student-educator tandem and the emerging areas of translanguaging education and heritage language education in order to answer the questions: In how far is student-educator tandem an actualisation of translanguaging theory? Which parts of heritage language research and education are generalisable for Indigenous learners in Australia?

This dissertation does not contain a state-of-the art section, because tandem learning has not been researched in the context of Indigenous education in Australia. In lieu, I will include research and theories on related models of teaching and learning in the area of Indigenous languages worldwide which have generally been subsumed under the term of heritage language education. Heritage language education encompasses not only programmes for students who wish to gain greater fluency and knowledge in the languages of their countries of origin, such as for instance students of Japanese born in the US but whose parents

are Japanese and speak the language in the family home (see Kondo-Brown, 2005), but also speakers of endangered Indigenous languages as explicated by Hinton (2011) and Lie (2003). As tandem learning has not been trialled in Indigenous education in Australia yet, I will argue that the tandem approach of language learning lends itself perfectly to this context based on these various theoretical underpinnings.

#### Chapter 4

In chapter four, I will address the question: Which research design will best allow the specific features of student-educator tandem to become observable during the implementation of the model? As the discussion of pedagogical interventions at the end of chapter one shows, new research trajectories are needed to address the linguistic heterogeneity of 21st century classrooms in Australian Indigenous education. In the double-role of educator-researcher, I conducted an exploratory study in 2016. At a boarding school in Darwin, Northern Territory, I implemented student-educator tandem with four middle school students as part of the national Inclusion Support Programme, a tutoring initiative. I will start chapter four with a few statements of self-positioning, then inscribe the research design and methodology of this study into the fields of action research and translanguaging research. Subsequently, I will present the research site and protocol for the exploratory study.

In the second part of chapter four, I will introduce the design and protocol for the follow-up study based on lessons learnt from the first study. In order to analyse which benefits student-educator tandem has for the participants, a research design is needed that allows the description, documentation and analysis of real student-tandem interactions embedded in an existing educational scenario. Analytical tools are needed that allow to find answers to the research question to what extent Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators can benefit from tandem learning. Discourse analysis using coding categories proposed by Hymes (1986/2003), Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2008/2016), Lyster and Ranta (1997) based on real student-educator tandem interactions fulfills these requirements.

## Chapter 5

I will present the data obtained from the two case studies, the exploratory study conducted in Darwin in 2016, and the follow-up study in Adelaide in 2019 in Part Two. In chapter five, I will discuss the data obtained from the exploratory study in Darwin. Through the analysis of four interviews with teaching staff at the residential college in Darwin, I will elucidate how student-educator tandem can amplify successful strategies that are already being used by experienced educators.

The combination of a qualitative-descriptive and a quantitative approach in the exploratory study produced reams of interactional data from which I have filtered four important features of student-educator tandem: stancetaking, rapport building, feedback techniques and the use of multimodality<sup>3</sup>. In chapter five, these characteristics will be illustrated in the sample analysis of extracts which are representative of the student-educator tandem exchanges in the exploratory study. This analysis will illuminate whether the chosen research protocol and methodology for data analysis are viable.

## Chapter 6

In chapter six, I will analyse the interactional data collected during the follow-up study. I will retain the categories of analysis presented in chapter five, but examine more closely the viability of the student-educator tandem model in contexts where student participants speak Aboriginal English rather than an ancestral language. Finally, I will consider how the tutor who implemented student-educator tandem in the follow-up study evaluated the model.

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<sup>3</sup> I use the term multimodality here as understood in translanguaging education: “language interaction taking place on different planes ... that is, different modes of language (visual as well as print, sound as well as text, and so on)” (García, 2009, p. 54). With a different focus, following Kendon (2004) and McNeill (2014), Morgenstern, Beupoil, Blondel and Boutet (2016) have emphasised the multimodality of language as “a complex system involving other paradigms such as gestures, actions, facial expressions, gaze, and intonation” (p. 16).

## Chapter 7

In chapter seven, I will juxtapose the conclusions drawn from the exploratory study to the data obtained from the follow-up study to refine the conceptualization of student-educator tandem.

## Chapter 8

In chapter eight, I will provide an outlook for a wider scope of implementation within Australia with concrete recommendations to stakeholders including teachers and governmental agencies. This chapter will provide concrete links between the student-educator tandem model and the national curriculum framework for Indigenous languages (ACARA, 2015).

## **Additional remarks**

### Citation style

As far as the visual presentation of this dissertation is concerned, American Psychological Association (APA) citation and format style has been chosen. APA appears to be the most suitable style of referencing because of the dissertation's interdisciplinary nature combining historical considerations, linguistics and pedagogy under the umbrella of social sciences. APA allows readers to efficiently locate information and also verify the recency of references used (APA, 2018, p. 37). My choice of APA as a style of referencing also largely takes care of the points Sprague (2016) has criticised about academic writing: the use of inaccessible "specialized jargon" (p. 24) and the passive voice (p. 27). Sprague (2016) has also noticed that information about the investigator/researcher and his relationship with research participants is not included in much academic work (p. 26). I have included this crucial information in the research genesis section in chapter one and the self-positioning statement in chapter four. I hope that this choice of referencing style may assist in furthering



the research activity in the field of Indigenous education through additional projects combining insights from various fields in the social sciences and beyond.

### Key terms

For this dissertation, I have identified several recurring terms which should be understood in order to provide a foundation for my elaborations. Among these include *Indigenous*, *Indigenous education*, *literacy*, *majority language*, *centre and periphery* and *agency*. There are other key terms which I have defined at the start of relevant chapters or paragraphs where they constitute the central notion.

Burridge et al. (2012) have clarified: “The term ‘Indigenous’ is the preferred term used by Commonwealth government agencies in Australia when referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, policies, programs and activities” (p. 7). In keeping with this use, I have chosen to capitalise the term, also as a form of showing respect. However, in most international research, including documents issued by the United Nations, there is no capitalisation (Jacob, Sheng Yao Cheng & Porter, 2015, p. 2).

By *Indigenous education*, I broadly mean all aspects of education that involve Indigenous learners in some formalised way such as school-based education, tutoring or workplace-related programmes. From an international point of view, Jacob, Sheng Yao Cheng and Porter (2015) have explained the essence of Indigenous education with a view to the interconnected concepts of language, identity and culture with an emphasis on leadership: “Language, identity, and culture all elevate indigenous people to agents who have sovereignty, voice, and integrity. Indigenous education is about holistically nurturing future leaders who will be able to speak and act on behalf of their people” (p. 2). The idea of leadership resonates with the expert role students take on in student-educator tandem, however, its wider societal implications are not an aspect which I wish to foreground in my dissertation, especially since leadership is a highly complex area of Indigenous Australian societies (Leske, 1977, p. 99; Trudgen, 2000, pp. 202-210). Interconnectedness is clearly

evident in my explorations of tandem learning, transcultural learning and heritage language education.

Jacob, Sheng Yao Cheng and Porter (2015) have defined “indigenous education as the path and process whereby individuals gain knowledge and meaning from their indigenous heritages. Indigenous education involves knowledge that is generated, obtained, and adapted to fit the historical contexts and needs of indigenous peoples and is then transmitted through educative means to others. It is communal and communitarian, gaining potency as it is shared and reshaped across generation and geography” (p. 3). They add that indigenous education is part of multicultural education with its goal of social justice (p. 5). I embrace this definition as the basis on which I propose the model of student-educator tandem which extends the key aspects presented by Jacob, Sheng Yao Cheng and Porter (2015) also to non-Indigenous people in the interactive educational processes of tandem learning.

*Literacy* is used in this dissertation as elaborated by Rennie (2013) to encompass both, schools, students and students’ families literacy practices in a “socio-cultural view of literacy” (p. 159). Understood as such, “literacy enables us to ‘do’ things, to learn about ourselves and others and to communicate our knowledge, thoughts, understandings and feelings about ourselves, others and the world” (p. 159).

By using the term *majority language*, I follow Hinton (2011)’s definition as “a language that is supported by the government within a nation and spoken by the majority of citizens” (p. 308). Hinton (2011) has also used the term “hegemonic language” (p. 308) for English - a term which is apt for the situation in Australia.

The categories of *center* and *periphery* “tap a long tradition of scholarship in political economy” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 43). In Australian scholarship, the term has been widely used in studies on postcolonial literature (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1989, p. 4). Indigenous scholar Herbert (2012) has applied the concepts of centre and periphery to the Australian education context to lament the marginalisation of Indigenous perspectives in political discussions (pp. 93-94). Similarly, Kerwin and Issum (2013) have identified an urban and

suburban epicentre for Australian education with a “reduction of outcomes for students outside this epicentre” (p. 9). It is in this sense that I employ the term in my dissertation: ‘white’ Australia is the centre, urban and remote Indigenous education concerns are situated at the periphery.

I use the term *agency* in line with its definition in heritage language studies as “the recognition of one's ability to act, together with purposeful action or activity” which is “intricately tied up with identity” (Leeman et al., 2011, p. 484).

Finally, to avoid ambiguities and numerical hierarchies of first, second, third or subsequently acquired languages, I have chosen to refer to the students’ languages as *home languages* (see García & Li Wei, 2014).

# **PART ONE: CONTEXT, CONCEPTS AND FRAMEWORKS**

## **Chapter 1: The Socio-Historical Context of Indigenous Education in Australia**

### **Introduction**

The initial motivation for this project stems from my experiences teaching and coordinating language programmes both in a remote and an urban institutional context in Australia between 2008 and 2011. There have been three particularly influential experiences during this time which made me want to address the issue of communicative imbalance and communication breakdown in educational settings where Indigenous students are taught by non-Indigenous educators. The first influence was a conversation with an Indigenous elder, the second influential experience was reading *Why Warriors Lie Down and Die* by Richard Trudgen (2000) around the same time and the third experience was in an urban boarding school where I conducted a journaling project with an ESL class of senior Indigenous students. I will first describe the local context where these experiences occurred to give a clearer idea of their effect on me.

The appalling statistics that abound about remote and urban Indigenous children's participation and performance in the Australian school system today will then be viewed in their historical light. This historical lens will provide a deeper understanding of the difficulties experienced to this day by educators and students alike. I will summarise autobiographical, biographical and historiographical information to trace a timeline of Indigenous education in

Australia and outline the different historical understandings of education from times of pre-European contact until the 21st century.

In the historical overview, it is important to avoid the trap pointed out by many researchers of assuming Aboriginal culture to be a static primordial fact of the past (e.g. Curthoys, 2008, p. 78; Keeffe, 1992, p. 9; Hinton, 2011, p. 311; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p. 23) or as Said (1985) has put it: “supposed by mainstream academic thought to be confined to the fixed status of an object frozen once and for all in time by the gaze of western percipients” (p. 4). Yet more specifically for the Australian context, Denoon, Mein-Smith and Wyndham (2000) have clarified that “Australia was not ‘found’ or ‘born’ but pieced together by European imagination and exploration” (p. 83). Hence, culturally sensitive educational practice cannot try and emulate the traditions of the past.

## **1.1 Research Project Genesis**

### **1.1.1 The Educational and Linguistic Scenario in a Remote Indigenous Community**

In this part of my dissertation, I reflect upon my experience as a graduate teacher-linguist in a remote Indigenous community in Australia’s Northern Territory and how this has shaped my research pathway. In January 2008, I started my job as Teacher Linguist in what is commonly referred to in Australia as a ‘remote community’. Located in the Northern Territory, an hour’s flying time south-west of Darwin, i.e. about 420 kilometers, it is one of the biggest remote towns with a majority of Indigenous inhabitants in Australia and has preserved a great linguistic variety. Seven different languages are spoken by the different clans. The strongest language and lingua franca is Murrinhpatha. Murrinhpatha has also been chosen as the language for the bilingual programme the local school has had in place for many years (McCormack & Nganbe, 2008).

Sadly, the community shares the signs of dysfunction visible in many of Australia's remote, inhabited areas. Unemployment, poor health, overcrowded housing, substance abuse, domestic and gang violence, and a low level of education afflict the majority of the population. In 2007, there were about 2200 inhabitants. 700 students were enrolled at the school. These numbers show the ratio of young to older persons typical of such towns. The Thamarrurr Development Corporation lists a figure of about 3000 inhabitants, including 200 non-Indigenous workers for 2008 (<http://thamarrurr.org.au/job-submit/>).

When the community was founded as a mission site in 1935, other language and clan groups from the surrounding areas gathered to make it their semi-permanent home during periods when they did not pursue a nomadic lifestyle. It is likely that in many cases this marked the first contact with non-Indigenous persons. The pull factors of the mission were access to safety under the supervision of missionaries who used to carry rifles, wet season shelter and introduced goods Indigenous people were given in exchange for labour in the market garden or building endeavours.

The missionaries also brought formal European education (McCormack & Nganbe, 2008). Bible translations were, as in many other Indigenous communities, the first written pieces and the start of introducing literacy (Gale, 1997, p. 53). They were written in the strongest local vernacular, Murrinhpatha, which translates as *good language*. (<http://www.westdaly.nt.gov.au/our-communities/wadeye>). The local Catholic school was founded in 1935 and offers bilingual education to this day (<http://www.olshtnt.catholic.edu.au/about-us>).

It was at this school, one afternoon in my first few weeks there, that I was discussing – in English – the diverse linguistic expertise existing in the community with the Indigenous co-principal. During our conversation, he asked me whether English was my first language. He was baffled when I answered in the negative. His comment “So you are just like us, then” did not strike me at the time as holding a significant key to unlocking a path to communicative success in multilingual contexts. However, reflecting back on this conversation many years

later, it struck me that what he had implicitly pointed out were some essential prerequisites for non-Indigenous teachers working with Indigenous students: To have empathy for the students and expertise in delivering curriculum content in appropriate ways for non-native speakers of English, the language used for instruction.

The second influential experience which prompted me to start this research project has been reading *Why Warriors Lie Down and Die* by Richard Trudgen. Even though Trudgen's (2000) case studies have primarily examined communication in the health sector in Arnhem Land, much of his criticism of the status quo applies to education. One statement has pointedly summed up what is at stake in the Australian context should the status quo not be challenged: “the world loses the chance to hear wisdom that is thousands of years old while the people are passed off as an almost muted race” (Trudgen, 2000, p. 77). This warning has resonated with me as I later taught ESL classes in an urban boarding school facing Indigenous students or sitting beside them, often without being able to engage in conversation. Many non-Indigenous colleagues had had similar experiences.

However, I only understood the true significance of what my students must have been experiencing on a daily basis in the urban boarding school in Darwin many years later. At the time, I was studying basic Japanese in order to prepare for my husband's work related stay in Tokyo. What my students went through in every single lesson was like me trying to live in Japan when I knew only one of the three alphabetic systems in use. I might only have known the first and the last character of anything I read. This was clearly not sufficient to become a functioning communicator in Japanese. Imagine going to the supermarket and having to rely on pictures, visiting a clinic and not being able to understand the nurses and doctors, coming into an educational institution and not recognising any of the linguistic signs around the buildings. I then understood what life may well be like for many Indigenous Australians in remote and linguistically diverse communities and in the urban centres.

Remembering my own experience as an undergraduate student learning in tandem with a French exchange student at University in Freiburg i. Br., Germany in 2003 set me on

the path to investigate alternative ways of approaching the communication issues between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous educators.

## **1.1.2 Experiences of Communication Breakdown and Silencing**

During my 16 months in the job of teacher-linguist in the remote community, it was obvious in every facet of community and school life that English had taken the place of a lingua franca for any dealings between non-Indigenous and Indigenous persons. This has meant that it was highly questionable how much real communication and exchange took place. From my own experience, many staff meetings and team teaching planning sessions at the local school elapsed in the same manner: The English-speakers in the group inevitably took the lead, as the documents on curriculum, funding, enrolment or student information at hand were to be filled out in English. I also vividly remember coming to the limits of my linguistic flexibility, typing up annual report cards with a senior Indigenous teacher. While trying to render the concepts of key stages in early childhood education taken from the NT curriculum framework into a comprehensible statement, I was feeling helpless and ineffective in communicating with my colleague. The least I could do was to decrease my reading speed in English when picking out the most relevant sections in the 50 page curriculum folder on which to base our report comments. My level of Murrinhpatha, acquired through self-study based on a bilingual dictionary (Street & Molligin, 1983) before starting the job, was nowhere near sufficient to tackle this task.

On a broader community level, these scenarios seemed to have been replicated. It mostly went unnoticed that the linguistic tools for consultative processes to be effective were not often available. Not all communities have interpreters available and hence, in reality, instead of being consulted, the people are silenced. This has been a nation-wide practice since the policy of self-determination required community consultation in order to give a voice to



those unheard in previous decades (Trudgen, 2000, p. 77). After this kind of silencing, ineffective consultation has been concluded, government interventions of various kinds have often followed in its wake. Medical, sociological, anthropological and educational research has been carried out – some of it long-term, some sporadically – funding for many initiatives has been provided, but fundamentally, no measurable improvements have been achieved (Commonwealth of Australia – Closing the Gap, 2018, p. 8; Gondarra, p. 2; Jorgensen, Sullivan & Grootenboer, 2013, p. ix; Trudgen, 2000, pp. 7-8, pp. 176-197). The cycle of incomprehension continues (Trudgen, 2000, p. 80).

This seems absurd given that many speakers of Indigenous languages are and have been multilingual historically (Curthoys, 2008, p. 79; Eades, 1993, p. 81). Trudgen (2000) has listed an average of fifteen languages or dialects being spoken by some Yolŋu (p. 82). In contrast, non-Indigenous teaching staff nowadays are often monolingual and hence have difficulty linking their teaching of English to personal experience of learning another language with all its complexities and challenges (see Trudgen, 2000, p. 85).

### **1.1.3 Teaching ESL in an Urban Boarding School in the Northern Territory – an English-Only Approach as the Answer?**

The college where I was employed in 2011 as ESL coordinator was typical of an increasing number of 140 schools across Australia which offer boarding facilities to students from remote communities (Abernethy, 2019). These students either opt to attend themselves or their family or elders have selected them for enrolment. Many communities' links with specific schools often originate from religious connections dating back to mission times. Where a form of functional, eclectic syncretism developed (see Figure 1.1) and mission schools were successful, elders are likely to perpetuate connections to the city churches –

even though they may be many hundreds of kilometres away – through lay priests, Indigenous pastors and dignitaries.



Figure 1.1. Dot Painting With Black and White Cockatoo Totems in a Remote Community Church

Senior researcher and former teacher Kral has emphasised “family loyalty” to a specific boarding school (I. Kral, personal communication, July 22, 2016). The decision to seek a residential school outside the remote location, away from immediate family happens mostly in the view of developing access to economic advantages (Gondarra, 2000, p. 1) or developing proficiency in English (personal communication with parents of Tiwi, Arrernte and Yolju students, Darwin, 2011). The promise of securing employment after graduating remains the single most motivating factor for this choice. The lure of successfully constructing a bi-cultural life, uniting elements of Indigenous and non-Indigenous society also holds some appeal, especially in Indigenous communities where role models exist (Guenther & Osborne, 2013, p. 118). Personal safety and well-being outside of dysfunctional domestic realities are in some cases also strong contributors to the choice of sending children away from home to study from as early as year seven, at the age of about twelve. Arnhem Land elder Talapindja Mamarika (1993) has made a point in favour of boarding schools:

The ones who are away at boarding school don't get into the same sort of trouble. The ones who are here all the time think of something else to steal, to sniff, you know. They don't know what to do with their time. (p. 76)

Reminiscent of the mission school system with its many negative connotations as it may be, boarding remains very popular with 3675 Indigenous students enrolled in boarding schools nationwide in 2017 (Abernethy, 2019). However, the transition to a boarding school environment can come with its own set of issues, not only personally, but also from the schools' point of view in terms of a suitable academic framework and mode of delivery.

In the case of my position in Darwin, Accelerated Literacy was the model of instruction chosen. Accelerated Literacy centered on several activities such as recounts, rewrites and creative writing all based on a literary text or excerpt thereof. It was successful to a point, although it left me feeling like I had taught the students to use English in a very prescribed framework. I was not entirely sure they could deploy these skills in other contexts. We had the luxury of small classes at the time, so I wanted to give the students an opportunity to write more freely in English. Since I also worked in after-school tutoring, I initiated a journaling project with a year 11 class. The instructions were simple: Students could write whatever and however much they wanted in a dedicated journal. I would match the length of their journal entry and write back to them with some feedback and comments on their writing. Although I never explicitly stated this at the time, all this writing occurred in English. The majority of students responded well to the project, enjoying the exchange and the quick feedback – I was usually able to return the journal to the class the following morning during pastoral care time. From several entries, I noticed that the students saw me as a caring teacher because of the journaling project. In the light of my current knowledge of the tandem method, I could see that the reciprocity inherent in this project might have contributed to this positive impression.

The project helped the students build their literacy portfolio towards basic credits for ESL going towards their school leaving certification, but it did not encompass any knowledge

of literacy in their home languages. Sadly, at the time, I forgot to ask myself: What linguistic strengths do my students bring with them to school? During my two years in the role of ESL coordinator, I only drew upon students' home languages once. It was to transcribe and translate the lyrics of some songs in Tiwi and Arrernte recorded in two remote communities for an oral history project conducted by the Catholic Education Office (2010). While I noticed the students' enjoyment of this activity at the time, it was not until I had left Indigenous education that I realised its potential. I started thinking about a more regular way of integrating students' home languages in urban boarding schools.

Intrigued by the linguistic expertise of many non-Indigenous missionaries who assisted in developing the materials we had had in use in the bilingual programme in the remote local school where I had worked prior to coordinating the ESL programme in Darwin, it seemed obvious that I should commence my research with a review of the historical notion of Indigenous education and language learning in Australia.

## **1.2 Historical Background**

### **1.2.1 Education in Traditional Indigenous**

#### **Societies pre-European Contact**

Before written records were produced about Australia's Indigenous population by outsiders, no information traceable today existed. Anthropological writings provide a glimpse of what forms traditional education took. However, these sources are products of their time and therefore not without bias as Williams and Jolly (1994) have warned:

We have no first-hand reports of life in Australia before literate people wrote them. Since 'history' generally presupposes 'writing', and given the way that Europeans are accustomed to structure their accounts of change in the world, Aboriginal societies are 'prehistoric' ... In the case of first

observations of Aborigines, the observers had little or no knowledge of the languages of the people they were observing. Consequently, their recorded observations are quite like those of ethologists studying non-human animals. (p. 9)

The inexistence of a mutually intelligible way of communicating Williams and Jolly have described has been an obstructing factor to communicating successfully across cultures in history as it is today. The vastly differing world views of Indigenous peoples and Europeans also contribute to this culture clash.

Indigenous inhabitants thought at first that the intruders were ghosts (Curthoys, 2008, p. 83; Muecke & Shoemaker, 2004, p. 28; Reynolds, 1982, p. 35) and “fruitful exchange proved impossible because Aboriginal Australians and Europeans had no shared philosophical and social categories” (Denoon et al., 2000, p. 61). Later on, as the dichotomous world view of black and white spread, Indigenous Australians were considered savages. In the rhetoric of imperial expansion and slavery, their humanity was denied and the tone was set for decades of exploitation. The theories and ideologies of racism that underpinned the colonisation process from the 16th to the 18th century stood in the way of unbiased cultural contact (Denoon et al., 2000, p. 68; Muecke & Shoemaker, 2004, p. 29; Peel, 1997, p. 16). Certain of their supremacy, the colonisers had little reason to listen to, let alone learn to communicate in the native tongues. Due to colonising greed, “armed squatters ..., explorers or missionaries, generally with more interest in changing the indigenous way of life than in recording it” (Williams & Jolly, 1994, p. 10), did not create reliable, balanced accounts which lend themselves as sources for the present study. The focus in this section about traditional education before European colonisation will therefore be on oral history. A close reading of transcribed and recorded stories told by elders from the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia has provided the basis for the following overview. Numerous quotes highlight the original voices of elders, complemented by some anthropological observations.

The word *education* does not occur in any of the elders' accounts, whereas verbs like *learning*, *teaching* and *showing* indicate that learning was an organic part of daily routines embedded in tribal lifestyles (Brandl, 1983, p. 36; Napanangka, 1995, p. 143; Nungurrayi, 1995, p. 1, p. 6). Storytelling and ceremonial learning emerge as more ritualised ways of education where values and cultural knowledge are transmitted through elders telling the youngsters.

All stories studied here are consistent in highlighting that learning took place within a larger family unit. Nangala (1995) has explained the contrast to the European style of bringing up children in a bigger social group: "No mother, big mob look after us" (p. 46; see Napaltjarri, 1995, p. 26). Nungurrayi's (1995) recollection is representative of many accounts in illustrating how this kind of learning happened when accompanying older family members on hunting and gathering trips:

The mother teaches the children the new bush tucker and when she cooks it, we all try it. ...The little kids stay at camp with the grannies and the big ones go out bush so that they can be taught. The mother takes the girls and shows them how to follow tracks and dig the animal out of a hole. She teaches them how to eat a grasshopper and how to collect bushseeds...if it's too green it not ready. ... Mother tells them that when the tomato is white and yellow, it is ready to eat, and not green. The men showed the boys how to hunt. (p. 3)

The teaching and learning documented here arose out of the practical need to secure food supplies for the family group. Sharing tasks and sharing food were a vital imperative and are to this day a defining feature of Indigenous societies in Australia (Brandl, 1983, p. 33; Hagan, 2008, p. 21) – so much so that explorers William Thomas and Donald Thomson noted the absence of an equivalent for *thank you* in Aboriginal languages of Port Phillip and Cape York in the 1840s (as cited in Reynolds, 1982, p. 69). In societies where reciprocity is an inherent value, the verbal expression of thanks is redundant. Brandl (1983) has specified: "A

strong emphasis in Aboriginal social life everywhere is cooperation. Over 40 000 years of coming to terms with surviving – and living a full and satisfying life – on the Australian continent has taught them this” (p. 33).

The Indigenous peoples' adaptation to a variety of naturally often harsh conditions with droughts or flooding, extreme heat or rainfall made it necessary for children to learn the practicalities of the environment from early on. Sequences of watching, imitating, being shown, trying for themselves, all as part of daily routines of securing and preparing food were the scaffolding children experienced in their social groups. They could perform the tasks at their pace as they had the individual attention of available family members and what was learnt produced an immediate result relevant to daily survival. Purpose and feedback were obvious in this practical, socially embedded learning without temporal delay or the verbal feedback and approval experienced in more formalised education settings. Any learned skill was related to contributing to survival and providing daily necessities or artefacts (Brandl, 1983, p. 35; Christie, 1985, p. 43; Denoon et al., 2000, p. 45; Duguid, 1963, p. 83; Kerwin & Issum, 2013, p. 3; Muecke & Shoemaker, 2004, p. 28; Nampitjin, 1995, p. 179).

Apart from practical skills needed to procure food, the knowledge of kinship ties was and still is equally important for children's successful development in society. Knowing who their relatives are will reveal from whom they can expect assistance in times of need and to whom they can turn for guidance throughout their lives, but also to whom they are obliged and for whom they are responsible (see Morgan, 1989, pp. 18-19). The first words children learn are thus kinship terms. Due to the larger family units of traditionally around 50 related people (Muecke & Shoemaker, 2004, p. 28), this terminology is more intricate than those involving the nuclear family the English language has terms for (see Stanner, 1969, p. 38; Stanner, 1979, p. 15, p. 47, pp. 58-60; Street & Mollingin, 1983, p. 23).

In terms of disciplining, Dodson (1990) has explained:

Until puberty and initiation they [the children] can do no wrong. They are cuddled not chastised. They learn from love and from example. The

children grow in security and confidence. They are tutored in the life of the spirit, in respect of the elders and kinship and the ways of the country. (pp. 326-327)

Traditional Pitjantjatjara woman Wilson (1993) has remembered knowledge relating to social rules, health and culture being passed on by grandparents:

I'm talking about the old ways of raising children, how grandmother and grandfather laid down the old laws and prevented them from being broken. How we taught about protecting children in case of snake bites and so on, how to soak up water into the sponge grass to drink, the dances and songs, and how to stay healthy. All these things we were taught back then, and about all the different sorts of wild foods, and there were many. (p. 16)

Learning culturally significant knowledge not only occurred through dance and ceremony. Since Indigenous societies were oral societies, stories and myths were an important means of educating the young. Berndt (1983), who has completed extensive anthropological field work in Western Australia, has defined the term myth as:

A believed-in truth, told through an important story or song-sequence that people believe to be true. It is a source of values, a guide to values, and a charter or guide to action: wrong action as well as right action, bad action as well as good. It is a guide to fantasies and wishful thinking, as well as a source of rules. (p. 13)

When teaching law, narrating was the mode of teaching (Mosquito, 1995, p. 89; Napaltjarri, 1995, p. 21). Listening and remembering were essential skills for learning. As the quote by Wilson (1993) has illustrated, narrating was not always verbal, it could be done through songs and whole song cycles, too. Memory skills had to be highly developed and often word for word repetition was necessary to pass on information about landscape features that would function like mental maps vital for the nomadic lifestyle (Curthoys, 2008, p. 80). The entire content of the information told was not always comprehensible to all listeners, but it was



accepted that, when the time was right and the children were ready, the information that was appropriate for them, would be understood (Duguid, 1963, p. 82).

Stories and songs thus highlight that the learning of socio-ethical and geographical knowledge was governed by tribal laws and not accessible to all. Specific Dreaming<sup>4</sup> stories exist that explain how learning occurred as ritual: “Brother, you gotta learn Culture and Law right/We’ll grab them, rub red ochre and take them to another place/He bin take two boys long way” (Taampa Nampitjin, 1995, p. 152). A custodian of traditional knowledge, Yunpu man, in this same story says “We gotta start dancing and learning” (Taampa Nampitjin, 1995, p. 160). The verbs stand in close proximity in his sentence, giving them equal value and underlining that dancing is a form of learning, in fact that dancing and learning go hand in hand as recognised by Rennie (2013) in a more recent study of Tiwi literacy.

In conclusion, before the arrival of the first European settlement on the eastern coast of Australia was established in 1788, educational practices existed in nomadic tribal groups. Roles of who taught whom were clearly embedded in daily routines. Through ways of learning by being involved in actual tasks on a smaller, age-appropriate scale, children obtained immediate feedback for practical actions. Their learning also often occurred in a peer group within the larger family unit and by following adult role models for social behaviour. Learning the Law was a form of ritualised learning. All the above practices were widespread and functioning features of learning within Indigenous societies on the continent prior to European settlement, varying only according to area and distinguishable tribal or language groups.

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<sup>4</sup> Dreaming refers to the spiritual and philosophical intangible cultural heritage of Australia’s Indigenous peoples around which their social life is organised (Muecke & Shoemaker, 2004, pp. 34-35).

## 1.2.2 First Contacts and the Frontier

The history of contact along the frontier is fraught with government-sanctioned and government-initiated criminal activity which could be considered genocide (Curthoys, 2008, p. 92), in the light of today's insights and understanding of human rights.

The same as in the pre-contact sources described in the previous section, Eurocentrism, and particularly Anglocentrism set the tone for the majority of historical materials about the frontier period in Australian history (Denoon et al., 2000, p. 19). For a lot of the sources available, Spearritt's (1994) statement that "[h]istorical significance is the instrument of authorial selection and contemporary political fashion" (p. 329) holds true.

Jebb and Haebich (1994) have warned: "The available archival sources, written by literate white men and a small number of white women can present enormous obstacles to interpreting experience" (p. 38) but "the call ... for a body of Aboriginal oral literature and greater knowledge of Aboriginal society has been acted upon, although this material is still in the early stages of integration into detailed historical contextualisation" (p. 38). Oral history projects across Australia have been increasing (see Crugnale, 1995; Gale, 1997, pp. 188-191; Neidjie & Lang, 2015). The *My Voice, Our Story* oral history project is an educational initiative which collated stories from all Catholic missions in the Northern Territory in 2010 (Catholic Education Office, 2010). As in the previous section, the evidence selected for the purpose of this study will focus on oral recordings and transcripts, juxtaposed to revisionist historiographical information mainly used to establish timelines and national trends for ease of reading.

The dates of first encounters vary significantly across the different tribal groups. For the Yolngu of Arnhem Land, the first contact with Europeans can be dated to 1803 (Trudgen, 2000, p. 17) but in places like Wadeye, it was not until the 1930s (<http://thamarrurr.org.au/job-submit/>) and for the Pintupi of the Gibson Desert not until the 1940s (Atkinson, 2008, p. 34).



Figure 1.2. Map of Australia Showing Lands of Some Tribal Groups  
(adapted from Terrain Legend, Jeppesen, 2018)

The spectrum of experiences was as varied as the tribes and settlers who crossed paths. Some of the First Fleet crew's chance meetings in 1770 were peaceful silent encounters, characterised by curiosity (Curthoys, 2008, p. 80, p. 84; Denoon et al., 2000, p. 45; Peel, 1997, pp. 14-15). In his seminal work *The other Side of the Frontier*, Reynolds (1982) has highlighted how many of the inland expeditions between 1830 and 1861 were observed, often from a distance, by various tribes who then developed a common terminology across tribal and linguistic boundaries to describe the newcomers. Most widely spread and still used today is *whitefella* in all its spelling and pronunciation variants as *wapala* in Warlpiri or *waelbela* in Arrernte (Reynolds, 1982, p. 37). The news that were passed on also contained a few words of pidgin English which soon became almost universal across the continent. They were integrated into various Indigenous languages. Reynolds (1982) has noted in particular that tremendous lexical innovativeness and flexibility ensued in terms of morphology, for instance

*wulubua* was used for sheep by the Jodajoda who derived this word from the English word wool (p. 41). In many languages the equivalent of *whitemen's kangaroo* was used for *horse* (p. 41). Some tribes incorporated European presence, artefacts and habits into their songs (D. K., personal communication, March 2009; Reynolds, 1982, p. 43; Stanner, 1969, p. 49; Stanner, 1979, p. 43). The tribes also developed some basic terms for the Europeans' possessions and passed on information on the whitefellas' practices and behaviours (Reynolds, 1982, p. 14).

In line with this linguistic adaptation and lexical integration, Peel (1997) has noted that “[i]n general, Aboriginal people tried to incorporate Europeans within their own systems of exchange and hospitality” (p. 18). However, “Aboriginals expressed little desire to assimilate into European society. Instead, they expected Europeans either to move on, or to recognise the superiority of Aboriginal ways” (idib., p. 18; see Curthoys, 2008, p. 83). Since none of this ensued, a period which is referred to by many Indigenous people as the “Killing Times” (Kinnane, 2003, p. 22) started in the 1830s, an “undeclared war over land and resources” (Denoon et al., 2000, p. 82) which lasted until about 1890 (Denoon et al., 2000, p. 75) and in some places continued into the 1920s (Atkinson, 2008, p. 34). A conclusive or legally binding statement about *terra nullius*, the Australian continent as the land belonging to no one, a view based on the lack of evidence of agricultural use or settlement according to European standards, was not forthcoming at the time. The predominant driving forces in this interstice between pastoral frontier and distant imperial control were ignorance, greed for land and fear (Curthoys, 2008, p. 81; Danaiyarri, 2008, p. 31; Denoon et al., 2000, p. 82; Schreuder & Ward, 2008, p. 13). As Critchett (1990) has stated: “The frontier was in fact a very local phenomenon, the disputed area being the very land each settler lived upon” (p. 23). Violent conflicts increased and “greed, ignorance, and fear outweighed goodwill; where neither party recognized or understood the political authority and social conventions of the other” (Porter, 1999, p. 207).

Officials were quick to equate Indigenous Australians and Africans, whose lot could only be improved through civilization on Victorian terms to elevate them from their status as “poor Unenlightened People” (Governor Macquarie as cited in Denoon et al., 2000, pp. 79-80). On the other hand, in 1825, Supreme Court Judge Field (as cited in Denoon et al., 2000, p. 80) proclaimed that Indigenous peoples “will never be civilised” due to their “degenerate Ethiopian character”. These are but a few examples of the prevailing views of racial hierarchies among many men of authority in the Australian colonies (Curthoys, 2008, p. 84).

However, the drastic decimation of Indigenous peoples also fuelled public humanitarian outcries. Voices from the Colonial Office and humanitarian societies in Britain made themselves heard by the 1840s to remind the Empire of its civilising mission (Carey, 2008, p. 197; Curthoys, 2008, p. 88; Porter, 1999, p. 212). It was the Empire's duty to protect the Indigenous population, who were legally British subjects, from the cruelties of the economically powerful graziers, who were openly considered to be exploiters. However, the logistics of enforcing such a protective policy proved to be insurmountable obstacles (Curthoys, 2008, p. 86; Porter, 1999, p. 207). In this unfortunate concatenation of administrative needs and logistical limitations, the duty of implementation and evaluation of policy fell to the settlers. Triumphalist narratives of settler culture stood alongside and often overshadowed or silenced more discerning accounts of gruesome bloodshed as governors failed to “turn British policy into colonial practice” (Curthoys, 2008, p. 91). Rapidly, many traditional tribal societies disintegrated through loss of land, food sources and kinship ties (Denoon et al., 2000, p. 75; Stanner, 1979, p. 19).

Under such circumstances, the lack of a common language could rapidly culminate in violence during frontier encounters as in Tjama Napanangka's (1995) stories. One episode she has recalled deals in particular with the failure of communication in the Halls Creek area along the Canning Stock Route between stockmen and her people: “They bin ask: *Who bin killing sheep/* People never said anything...no English” (p. 121). When there was no comprehension of the accusation and no means of defending oneself in English, the blame

was often easily laid on those who remained silent in a frontier society where settlers and stockmen mostly lived according to their own law. The insight of Attorney General Bannister of New South Wales, that a knowledge of the local Indigenous languages would bring a better mutual understanding of justice, legal and moral systems was shared by some settlers (Atkinson, 2008, p. 47). However, when faced with the existing linguistic diversity, Atkinson (2008) has found that the effort required to learn any of the languages “was beyond British patience and skill” (p. 48). To exacerbate the communication problem, many of the Indigenous station workers were hired as children. As a result, they were neither permitted to fully learn within their own society nor within the newly established educational institutions (Morgan, 1989, p. 31).

The breakdown of traditional societies also meant that many educational practices and ceremonies of Indigenous societies ceased to function (Curthoys, 2008, p. 83; Denoon et al., 2000, p. 82; Muecke & Shoemaker, 2004, p. 24). A “distortion of gender roles” (Denoon et al., 2000, p. 75) was set in motion by the changing surrounding landscape and the availability of food as well as work opportunities outside the tribal group on newly established stations. This would have rendered many teaching and learning scenarios dysfunctional, especially since “in traditional society a communal responsibility was taken for the upbringing of children” (Boyle, 1983, p. 45). The need to adapt would change all societal structures and lead to what Brandl (1983) has termed “a changing heritage” (p. 30) where lifestyles were altered for Indigenous cultures to survive in the onslaught of physical, cultural and linguistic invasion of Australia.

These detrimental dynamics were partly due to the demographic of the emerging frontier society. Unlike in the 1880s, language contact was no longer between Indigenous inhabitants and curious, educated explorers, botanists and cartographers who had developed an “Australian pidgin – a melange of words from English, from Pacific creole and more especially from the dialects in use around the earliest settlements” (Reynolds, 1982, p. 40). In contrast, since the transportation of convicts to the Australian colonies was suspended in 1853

(Denoon & Wyndham, 1999, p. 555), the advancement of the agricultural frontier brought men of working class, farming or criminal backgrounds to Australia (Harper, 1999, p. 78; Denoon & Wyndham, 1999, p. 567). In the ensuing establishment of stations, the language of the colonisers ruled at least on the surface. The English spoken and heard was mainly that of some ex-convicts and colonists who had come in under schemes of assisted migration to escape a hapless future in their mother country. Unstoppably, settlements emerged along the pastoral frontier, grew bigger and attracted tribal people. Settling on the mission in the Western Australian township of Balgo, for instance, meant getting used to a new language. Ningi Nangala (1995) has recalled that elders sometimes acted as interpreters and first teachers of English:

We got to Balgo and Nanyuma tell me to camp with her and she gave me supper (in the mission). ... We bin living there for good in Balgo, little girl I bin come. Nanyuma bin learning English. Father bin singing out *Come here!* Poor Ningi.../*Come here!* That mean yanama, that Nanyuma bin tell me. (p. 50)

As many of the oral recordings transcribed in *Moola Bulla In the Shadow of the Mountain* have illustrated, during the first third of the 20th century, Indigenous peoples of the Kimberley region in Western Australia who were living on pastoral land often heard English only in the limited realm of station work. As prospective workers, they were only taught rudimentary command phrases of immediate practical use such as “Get wood”, “Make a fire” or “Cook some feed” (1996, p. 235).

Language contact always goes both ways. English unquestionably stayed the stronger language in the case of Australia, but not all the encounters were one-way. Reynolds (1982) found evidence that early squatters kidnapped individual Aborigines to act as tutors in the local languages (p. 169). Walsh (1993) observed that the Standard Australian lexicon has incorporated terms like kangaroo, woomera, billabong or kookaburra (p. 9). Napurrula (1995) has recalled an interesting linguistic detail about the first contact in her communities,

Wangkajunga and Walmajarri: “Those *kartiya* knew that language. Braitling, that fella name. They bin come out and make tea for us” (p. 14). Even though some travellers on the Canning Stock Route had learnt some of the local language, the contact is described as far less positive later in her story. Language alone was not sufficient to efface the negative image: “We go back – white man frighten us, he might kill us, shoot. We bin go back home fast” (p. 15). Here, the form of English with pidginised verb forms and short sentences used by this elder reveals more than a linguistic variety of contact language. It implies the relationship between coloniser and colonised, the legacies of a violent history. To retain as much of their own languages as possible was a way of ensuring cultural survival. To develop English as a lingua franca was a necessity of physical and economic survival. To develop what is now known as Standard Australian English was impossible due to the lack of educational facilities for Indigenous children during the early frontier days.

The attitude that Indigenous children did not need education was indicative of a wider form of racial prejudice which was reflected in the dehumanizing rhetoric being used to interact with and talk about Indigenous station workers. Indigenous station workers were “broken in” and “run down” mimicking the language used when referring to training animals (Ann Curthoys & Clive Moore in *Aboriginal Workers*, Sydney, 1995 and C.D. Rowley, *The New Guinea Villager*, Melbourne 1965 as cited by Denoon et al., 2000, p. 171; Duguid, 1963, p. 33). Later on, A. O. Neville, chief protector of Aborigines from 1915-1936 and commissioner for native affairs from 1936 to 1940 in Western Australia created policies which aimed at “breeding out” the Indigenous population (Haebich & Reece, 1988).

However, since farming land was often in the vicinity of or had a connection to the ancestral land of Indigenous station workers, ceremony, initiation and learning about the Dreaming could still continue (Denoon et al., 2000, pp. 81-82). In line with Trudgen’s (2000) accounts of resilience in Arnhem Land (pp. 18-42), Denoon et al. (2000) have noted that in spite of all the trauma of invasion and dispossession, “by the 1860s, many had patched together their community life, albeit in the shadows of whites” (p. 81) and mostly with access to or even



control over their original land through “co-operation, acquiescence, resistance, armed struggle” (p. 82).

The ultimate result of this coexistence was the emergence of practices reflecting intercultural phenomena, reuniting, merging and blending elements of Indigenous lifestyles and settler ways. As Canagarajah (1999) has cautioned:

It is wrong to assume that the cultures of the subordinate groups are always passive and accommodative. They have a long history of struggle and resistance against the dominant cultures, and members of these communities can tap the resources in their cultures to oppose the thrusts of alien ideologies. (p. 25)

While it is undeniable that violence, killing and cruelty along with immense injustices set the tone for many frontier experiences, another way in which the pastoral encounters can be analysed has come to the foreground since the 1980s, namely to regard colonisation not exclusively as calamity. This new tendency wants to distinguish the traits of resistance and adaptation that arose and ultimately ensured survival of Indigenous peoples all over Australia (Curthoys, 2008, p. 93). For example, artists and staff at Magjaka Arts Centre in Fitzroy Crossing, emphasise that at times, people came out of the bush due to a drought and the stations saved some of them from dying of thirst and starvation (Tabone, 2012).

A related view was to value Indigenous contribution to Australia's economic successes. Revisionist historians have continued to draw attention to the fact that the entire outback station economy depended to a large extent on the labour of Indigenous workers: “Europeans ... needed Aboriginal people to develop primary industries. This need to exploit black labour, as well as a small measure of power and much tenacity on the Aborigines' part, aided in their survival” (Jebb & Haebich, 1994, p. 23; see Waterhouse, 2008, p. 60).

In sum, the invasion left a *tabula rasa* in terms of traditional and European education along the frontier. The arriving convicts and subsequently the settlers were concerned with surviving, building up the pastoral industry and ensuring their own economic advancement in

the new colony at the expense of the local Indigenous peoples on whom they were dependent for labour, geographical and mercantile knowledge. Educational institutions emulating the ones in Britain only followed later, when there were more women and consequently more children which created the need for formalised teaching and learning settings (Denoon et al., 2000, pp. 87-89). In the absence of costly administrative authorities in the colonies which would be able to promote Indigenous welfare, it was hoped in the mother country that imperial authority and Britain's civilising and humanitarian obligations could be upheld by missionary societies as a source of “colonial order” (Denoon et al., 2000, p. 202). This idea gathered momentum in the mid-1830s as the political reforms terminating slavery had been concluded and humanitarian efforts were redirected towards Indigenous peoples in other parts of the Empire (Curthoys, 2008, p. 88; Porter, 1999, p. 207). The missionaries' work in terms of linguistic documentation and educational approaches sheds further light on the processes in the history of culture contact and educational practices in the 19th century. Some of their efforts were not unlike tandem learning.

### **1.2.3 Mission Life**

The missions in Australia played a nationwide role in all areas of Indigenous education and often existed alongside or in the vicinity of stations: “This was the cultural arm of the colonial endeavour; Christianity eventually touched the lives of nearly the whole Indigenous population” (Muecke & Shoemaker, 2004, p. 68). From the arrival of the first missionaries in 1821 in New South Wales and Western Australia (Muecke & Shoemaker, 2004, p. 67) to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when most church missions had been “incorporated into the regime of paternal repression inaugurated by the colonial Protection Acts (Carey, 2008, p. 200), education on missions remains a controversial topic in contact history.

Each mission site has its own history, linked inextricably with the individuals who worked there in various capacities. The missionaries' and lay missionaries' own motivations,

personalities and interests shaped the way in which mission life played out for those staying on site (Kartinyeri, 2000, p. 16, pp. 29-31, p. 54; Kinnane, 2003, p. 95). How relatively enjoyable or traumatic the experience could be, was in the hands of those who had set out to remote areas of the continent to spread the word of God in the “spiritual darkness of these simple primitive folk” (R. Long, n.d., p. 76). Similarly, the degree to which a mission site turned into a successful and self-sustaining farming venture like at Koonibba, Thursday Island and Palm Island (Hoff, 1951, p. 12, p. 23; Deere, 1994, p. 18; R. Long, n.d., p. 84) or became a derelict detention facility like the Moore River Settlement in the 1920s (Kinnane, 2003, p. 156, p. 160) depended on the various federal policies, the individuals in charge and the economic situation of the new colonies. The same applies to the mission staff’s attitude towards Indigenous languages as Liddicoat (2018) has summed up: “Different missions adopted different approaches and language choices were often made on an ad hoc basis” (p. 239).

What is noteworthy in the context of the present dissertation is that some of the most proficient multi-literate individuals, who continue to work in the 21st century as teachers, community linguists or school principals were associated with the missions, either as students or as teachers (McCormack & Nganbe, 2008). Yet, the gruelling truth of testimonials, biographies and oral histories leaves no doubt that oftentimes the underlying focus was on eliminating “primitive practices”, often in the most inhumane ways (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997; R. Long, n.d., p. 62). Language being one of these practices, it was often the first part of the cultural heritage to be eradicated, followed by cultural practices, ceremonial life and custodianship of the land.

A significant caveat needs to precede the following considerations in the light of postcolonial critique: “Missionaries, administrators and other colonial functionaries who wrote grammars and textbooks learnt their own versions of indigenous languages” (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p.7). Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have examined the case of Zimbabwe, but what they found is valid for the Australian context: “These invented indigenous languages

arose throughout European empires and central to the claims being made is that the languages as they were described were products of the inadequate language skills of the missionary linguists” (p. 7). Fenton (2004) has called this phenomenon “interlinguistic description” (as cited by Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p. 7) in foregrounding the fact that all the linguistic work done by missionaries was based on European languages they knew. It is with this consideration in mind that I now attempt an analytical overview of this part of Australian contact history.

The missionaries’ intervention marked the first formalised initiative in Indigenous education by non-Indigenous persons in Australia since first contact. The practical implications of sending missionaries out to educate Indigenous people were not defined very well in the general recommendation of the Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes. This led to a motley approach across the six colonies. At the crossroads of saving face internationally and genuine humanitarian interest, it was decided that missionary societies would intervene where the bureaucratic channels between Australian and Britain had failed. The missionaries were to curtail the uncontrollable effects of squatting on the native peoples and ensure the dissemination and perpetuation of Victorian and Christian values abroad. Their presence and assiduity, it was hoped, would bring progress and improvement to the lands that had been conquered, but where the felt obligations that imperial authority implied had lagged behind (Porter, 1999, p. 198).

How did communication and teaching work in these encounters? Did some missionaries practise a form of tandem learning when compiling dictionaries and even complete Bible translations? The two most active mission societies were the non-denominational United Aborigines Mission and the Australian Inland Mission. Both started in New South Wales and then branched out. Their missionaries mainly lived within communities and did not apply the same “authoritarian approach” as was common in other parts of the continent (Djenidi, 2009, p. 12). Living on a mission, Indigenous people were “under tutelage” and therefore considered under age and “unmuendig”, without a mouth, literally, to

use the German word of the Lutheran missionary chroniclers in South Australia (Lange, 1951, p. 18). This lexical choice highlights the recurring fact that they were silenced, without the full rights of an adult, a person who is of age.

### **1.2.3.1 The Process of Evangelisation and its Adaptation in Communication and Teaching**

Education on any mission meant first and foremost religious instruction to ensure “the social, moral, religious, and intellectual welfare of the aborigines” (Telfer, 1939, p. 14). This was done creatively if there were language barriers using “lantern pictures” (Telfer, 1939, p. 72) in “illustrated talks” (Telfer, 1939, p. 71, p. 84). Often, “[w]hile the Bible pictures were being shown, some of those who could understand simple English were translating our words to the others in their own language” (A. Long, n.d., p. 79).

Despite the omnipresence of racist-patronising tones in most publications of the time about “the dear dark people of Australia” (Telfer, 1939, p. 32), the missionaries, just like the pastoralists and squatters of the frontier (Waterhouse, 2008, p. 59), knew that they were in a situation of dependence. In his memoirs *On Highways and Byways*, A. Long (n.d.) has noted:

Our dark folk are wonderful guides and, in addition to their keen observation of everything in nature, they have that mysterious sixth sense of orientation which enables them to find their way homeward in the darkest night and in country with which they are unfamiliar. (pp. 20-21)

Communication was only possible through the involvement of a “native helper” who offered and was able to speak to his or her people in their own language about the Gospel message (R. Long, n.d., p. 83).

In many circumstances, though, the missionaries' effectiveness relied on their ability to familiarise themselves with languages other than English (Leske 1977, p. 94 , Telfer, 1939, p. 113, p. 127, p. 203; R. Long, n.d., p. 22). These linguistic encounters often took the form of informal language lessons as described by A. Long (n.d.): “These little boys could speak some

English. They taught us some of their words and we taught them some of ours. It was lovely to hear them pronouncing in their own way the words, 'Bible' and 'God' and 'Jesus' ” (p. 78) using what he has described as “the musical aboriginal language” (p. 76). Even so, the evangelising endeavours were continuously made more powerful by those converted Indigenous missionaries who worked in translating, singing or providing technical assistance:

Wandy, on every occasion, gave a clear and telling testimony, and his words always deeply impressed his own countrymen, who seemed to regard him as a special messenger of God. ... Wandy was a great help to the missionary at all these gatherings. He proved to be an excellent lanternist, and soon mastered the mechanisms of the lantern and the manipulation of the slides. His presence at the meetings was a great attraction, and his musical items played upon the gum-leaf amazed those who had been accustomed to think of the aborigines as a useless and degraded people. (Telfer, 1939, pp. 109-110)

Some missionaries taught English to members of the community (Telfer, 1939, p. 26) and R. Long (n.d.) noted that “our Aboriginal Christians began to preach the gospel on Friday and Sunday evenings to the white people in the main streets of the town.” (p. 37). The transcribed communications from those newly converted missionaries, however, do not accord them a place of equality. “Me go West Australia” (Telfer, 1939, p. 107) is just one example of a non-standard English simplification, published in the chronicles of the United Aborigines Mission. For an educated Australian reader of the time, this grammatically faulty utterance clearly portrays the speaker, Wandy, as inferior and child-like and thus positions him in the same rhetoric of benevolent paternalism which refers to the mission inhabitants as “inmates” who “came to us from the camps of sin” (Telfer, 1939, p. 135). Many missionaries were not able to shake off their preconceived ideas.

An ambiguous discourse emerged when they were trying to unite progressive humanistic stances and long established racial theories. A deep-seated belief in the hierarchy

of languages and cultures was sometimes revealed when missionaries came across new situations: “We preached the Word of Life among them and held Sunday School for their children, to whom we gave Bibles and literature” (A. Long, n.d., p. 73). Then “another tribe who had come in from the west were quite uncivilised and could not understand a word of our speech. We had to speak by signs. ... We showed them a lot of photographs and Bible pictures with which they were very pleased.” (A. Long, n.d., pp. 76-77). In the analysis of historical accounts written by the AIM missionaries, the attitude surfaced that the Warramunga language, however “musical” it may be, was still inferior to English, the language of civilisation. Nevertheless, they understood language as a means to their end goal and fostered an interest in and a promotion of the local languages that even went as far as broadcasting Gospel recordings in different languages at cattle stations, camps and other places from 1939 onwards (Collins, 1965, p. 28).

In other instances, the missionaries' work required more systematic documentation during a phase of linguistic pioneering. This was the case in the Adelaide plains of South Australia. Lutheran missionaries Teichelmann and Schuermann, who had been sent from Germany, and three Kurna elders wrote a Kurna grammar for children in 1840. It was used for instruction on the Pirltawardli school site until 1851 (Harris, 2014). However, these missionaries' interest in the Kurna people's cultural heritage remained relegated to the linguistic realm: “Whilst the German missionaries held Kurna language in high regard, they were contemptuous of Kurna religion and used every opportunity to rubbish Aboriginal beliefs” (Department of Education and Children's Services, 2002, p. 21).

Several accounts from South Australia highlight attitudes towards language and communication at the time of the early missionaries in 1901. The Koonibba Jubilee Booklet contains accounts of some difficulties and how they were dealt with:

With the exception of those who worked on sheep stations most natives knew practically no English. This increased the missionary's difficulties. In order to make himself understood he had to instruct them first in

English. ... It soon became apparent that some common ground had to be found, and that proved to be the innate love of the natives for singing. Therefore Christian hymns were taught and the Bible stories were brought to their knowledge by means of picture rolls. Soon you could hear the singing of hymns everywhere in the camps of the natives. (Hoff, 1951, p. 5)

Unfortunately, no further elaboration on the nature of this instruction is included. Songs and pictures point to a child-like perception of the “natives”. However, reading further in the passage, some attitudes towards the role of language in missionary work are revealed:

It is a moot question whether it would not have been better to learn the natives' tongue. You gain a foreigner's confidence more quickly if you can converse with him in his own language. Besides, you penetrate his mind and understand his way of thinking more thoroughly when he expresses himself in his own language. (Hoff, 1951, p. 5)

Despite the promise of “penetrating” the mind of the “natives”, missionary Hoff and his team opted for an English-only approach for the Koonibba mission: “The advantage of his [the native's] learning English is apparent. He becomes a member of the community and the gulf between natives and white people is bridged. The process of absorption, though gradual, is set on foot” (Hoff, 1951, p. 5). This quote echoes the most widespread, politically supported attitude in Australia at the time which eventually led to linguicide (see Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994, pp. 2211-2212 for a definition). The predominant assumption was that the best way to “bridge the gulf” between the two groups was for the Indigenous Australians to learn English and not vice versa. This attitude paved the way for the government policy of absorption in linguistic terms. Similarly, Trudgen (2000) found evidence that it was mission policy in Arnhem Land for non-Indigenous mission staff to learn the local language, but in reality, only a few of them did (p. 40).



These examples from diverse settings and periods in the evangelising process highlight that any form of learning exchange relied on two prerequisites:

1. The involvement of at least one local Indigenous person who was willing to work alongside the missionaries as an interpreter.
2. The willingness of the missionaries to either acquire conversational language skills in the local languages or at least some key words of vocabulary.

Any of these learning experiences were accomplished with the sole objective of Christianisation. Linguistic or anthropological insights were mostly viewed as means to an end or byproducts of the encounters (Telfer, 1939, p. 61).

### **1.2.3.2 Hermannsburg Missionaries and Their “Tandem” Attitude**

In terms of linguistic research and language learning, the Lutheran Hermannsburg was a model mission which can be summed up in pastor Kempe’s prayer: “May God grant us the right wisdom in all things and help us over all difficulties in learning the language, so that we may be able to proclaim to these Natives the Gospel of God for their salvation” (as cited in Lohe, 1977, p. 15).

From its first days in 1877, the local languages were of major concern for the generations of missionaries who stayed there. Staffed primarily from a Lutheran training seminary in Germany which provided basic linguistics courses, a pro-bilingual attitude shaped the interactions between missionaries and local peoples. The missionaries with the highest degree of linguistic competency experienced the lowest number of setbacks and were thus able to stay the longest in Hermannsburg. Those who struggled with learning Arrernte were sometimes only able to stay for a couple of years at the most. Perhaps the most significant merit from today's point of view was the systematic emphasis on creating literacy materials, such as Pastor Kempe's “21-page primer” from 1880 and a compilation of grammar and vocabulary published in 1890. These more secular publications proliferated alongside the

usual Christian worship materials (Lohe, 1977, p. 22). All this was due to the missionaries' relentless efforts to learn Arrernte:

Nothing is gained by impatience or rash haste. We have preferably concentrated on the growing generation, giving the children lessons in reading and writing, and recently have made a beginning with memory work and singing. Contrary to our expectations, the children have made good progress in these subjects. We have also begun to gather the adults and to tell them the Bible stories ... The stories are told and questions asked, and thus we ourselves have the advantage of becoming more fluent in their language. (Lohe, 1977, p. 15)

Fluency in Arrernte was seen as an “advantage”. The negative rhetoric which prevailed in many of the other mission chronicles was absent from the discourse at Hermannsburg from its earliest days. To regard the local Indigenous language as equal in value to English, to learn it, was to show respect to the local peoples and to gain their trust and interest. The following quote illustrates the positive interaction between teachers and students. A school teacher explains the closing of daily instructional routine: “After the evening meal, the teacher sat with them [the schoolchildren] around the fire, teaching them songs and recitations, and at the same time learning Aranda from the children” (Lohe, 1977, p. 32). This routine would have allowed the students to act as experts in their language and pass on this knowledge to the same person instructing them throughout the day in maths, writing, reading and Bible studies. Collaboration also occurred among the adults in Hermannsburg who even reached out to translate the Aranda Service Book into the neighbouring Loritja language.

Nevertheless, many features of the Indigenous languages were challenging for missionaries who did not have linguistic training. In Hermannsburg, early missionaries struggled with the “lack of abstract terms and moral ideas” (Kempe, as cited in Lohe, 1977, p. 15) in the languages with which they came into contact and became frustrated with the

difficulty to assimilate the correct pronunciation due to little cooperation from the tribes in the area (Lohe, 1977, p. 15).

The situation changed with the arrival of the “talented linguist” pastor Strehlow (Lohe, 1977, p. 23) whose work saw the first new testament in an Aboriginal language, “Dieri” into print in 1897 and who subsequently worked extensively on Arrernte publications until 1922. Linguistic work blossomed, official events were always held in English, the local language and “English and Aranda translation” (Lohe, 1977, p. 29) were taught at the local school. A fresh point of view was also presented in the publications and speeches of the pastor’s son, T.G.H. Strehlow (1957) who considered “Aranda” as one of his mother tongues (p. 11) and stressed that his relationship with elders was one of trust, “sustained by mutual admiration and loyalty” (p. 11).

Similarly, the founder of Ernabella, another central desert mission, medical doctor Charles Duguid (1963) made respect for native customs and languages a key requirement: “There is no inferiority complex at Ernabella ... pidgin English has never been spoken, and the fact that the white staff had to learn the language of the aborigines has established a tradition of co-operation between the two peoples” (p. 35). As far as bilingual education was concerned, Ernabella adopted the model of teaching in the mother tongue Pitjantjatjara in the early years and introducing English as a foreign language later on. Ernabella's philosophy also left ample space for Indigenous practices to be carried out. Initiation, corroborees and traditional teenage games as preparation for hunting and spear fighting took place alongside the mission routine of milking, firewood collecting, mustering horses and work in the vegetable garden (Duguid, 1963, pp. 81-83).

### **1.2.3.3 Educating for the Periphery of White Australia**

Early views propagated that Western education was an impossible option for Indigenous children. Pseudo-scientific evidence was quoted in newsletters such as published by the Aborigines Inland Mission and a negative discourse started:

It was alleged by an early scientific study of the Aborigines and has since passed into common belief, that the Aborigines only being able to count five at the most, is a proof that they possess a very limited intellect. ... Others have adducted the fact of the Aborigines having no written language. (L. W. Long, 1919, p. 5)

However, in later years, missionaries made an effort to put forth the valuable educational work that went on, albeit in fairly general terms at first when merely stating that: “Adults and children have diligently attended school and made good advance along educational lines” (Aborigines Inland Mission, 1912, p. 4; see Telfer, 1939, p. 53). Gradually, complimenting students on their achievements became a common feature in the AIM newsletters and Aborigines' Friends' Association's annual reports. The framework of reference always being the superior, dominant culture's children, comparisons were often made to other state schools. The recurring mention of surprise underlines the low expectations associated with Indigenous students' academic work:

They [the Indigenous students] sing everything well, and more than that, they do everything well ... They have made splendid advance particularly during the last year. The Inspector's last report was something worth working for. ... Their school tablets, copy books and drawing books were a surprise to us. We were particularly struck by the advanced arithmetic of the second eldest boy, and his books testified of an all-round efficiency. ... the native children are bright and intelligent and will repay effort put forth in their education. (Aborigines Inland Mission, 1914, p. 3)

This quotation is exemplary of the patronising type of racism under the cover of benevolent work. These projections of low levels of academic achievement led to practical curricula once primary school was completed. They were heavily based on gender roles of the European societies at the time where young men were taught manual labour, agriculture and some mechanics while young women were instructed in domestic skills such as sewing,

spinning, knitting, cleaning and cooking (Boyle, 1983, p. 44; Carter, 1982, p. 40; Kartinyeri, 2000, p. 55). Throughout Kinnane's biography of his grandmother, Jessie Argyle, education at Moore River Settlement, was “a singular fixed ideal of a Mission education that was supposed to equip them for a world of servitude and piety” (Kinnane, 2003, p. 82). Girls and boys were educated separately at Moore River and many other institutions, and the Swan Boys Orphanage only offered “three hours of school” (p. 82). The rest of their time was spent on chores for boys and girls alike:

It was a place of planned repetition designed to breed well-mannered, hard-working, obedient children who would take their place – and that was never expected to be too high a place – in white society. They did learn, but not beyond what they had to know to be good workers. (Kinnane, 2003, p. 83)

Author Alice Nannup's (1986) experiences at Mogumber and those of many others as compiled in the *Bringing Them Home* report (1997) have confirmed this official line. Work was much more of a focus than education and young Alice was shocked when she overheard a conversation between Mr Neville, then the Chief protector of Aborigines in Western Australia, and the teacher: “as long as they can write their name and count money ... that's all they need”. Up to then, Alice had been under the impression that she and some other children “were sent down from home to be educated.” But at only 14 years of age, “[t]hey took us out of school to work 5 days a week.” Instead of going to school, the boys were working in the garden, milking cows, killing sheep and for the girls there was a weekly cooking class and work in the sewing room at other times, making up to 16 men's shirts per day, then trousers for the Forrest River Mission (Nannup, 1986).

The description of the work routines in the 1950s Children's Home in Koonibba, South Australia does not differ much from the Moore River Settlement in Western Australia: “The older girls are taught to assist the matrons with the cooking, cleaning, sewing, washing, ironing, and mending” (Brueggemann, 1951, p. 31). Thus, gender roles were quickly

established during the mission's daily routines that then translated into the school syllabus and the adults' jobs: The men cleared the land and did building and farming work while “the women were taught cooking, baking, washing, mending, etc.” (Hoff, 1951, p. 7) and in the 1950s a weekly class was available for “fancy work, knitting, weaving, basket making, dressmaking, and sewing” (Brueggemann, 1951, p. 34). For mission girls, this was preparation for the running of a household as cheap labour on the growing frontier settlements.

Students were “indoctrinated and taught the rudiments of all those branches of knowledge making for good churchmanship and citizenship” (Lange, 1951, p. 19). And again: “The school ... has enabled the children to become thoroughly grounded in Christian knowledge, so that its graduates have gone out into the world well indoctrinated in the teachings of the Word” (Eckermann, 1951, p. 28). The recurring choice of *indoctrinated* as a verb in both statements is revelatory. In like manner, at Colebrook Home, as South Australian author Doris Kartinyeri (2000) has called the Colebrook Training Centre, no real curriculum was followed (pp. 29-31). As the one stable element in this haphazard way of running the centre “the Bible was read a lot” and the children “were brainwashed” (Kartinyeri, 2000, p. 31). Teaching, in summary, was mostly a forceful act with a religious aim, deliberately positioning Indigenous students at the periphery of white Australia, using a “debased curriculum” (Burrige & Chodkiewicz, 2012, p. 12). This practice continued in some places well into the 1970s (Herbert, 2012, p. 94).

#### **1.2.3.4 Shifting Traditional Educational Customs and Continuity of Bush Survival Skills**

With the expansion of missionary reach all over the continent, from one generation to the next, learning was outsourced from the camps to the mission or, rarely, public schools. However, there is evidence, that traditional learning still continued on the missions and in the areas controlled by the Protection Boards, like in Raukkan, in South Australia. Learning to

find water in the arid country of Lake Alexandrina was a survival skill that fathers passed on to their children (Brodie, 2002, p. 30). Kinnane (2003) has made particular mention of a couple who was in charge of the mission at Moore River in Western Australia at one point and showed a little respect for the children's culture, allowing outdoor learning to happen every Sunday afternoon:

The children were also operating from their own rhythms – watching for *jennuks* (bad spirits), and checking out each new inmate to see where they belonged; to see if they were from their home country. (p. 92)

In subsequent years, this continuation of cultural knowledges was not well viewed by other superintendents at Moore River. Jaky McPhee's autobiography (Morgan, 1989) has highlighted the monolingual, anglo-centric policy at Moore River Native Settlement. The sister in charge organised regular dances and provided the musical accompaniment by piano. This was new to some, as they only “knew the blackfella way of dancing” and was just one of the practices that were discouraged and labeled “wrong”: “A lot of people took this seriously and gave up their language and everything. As for me, I suppose I was silly enough to think I could have the best of both worlds” (Morgan, 1989, p. 104). While Jaky McPhee tried to make the most of his mixed heritage, he was well aware that transgressing the boundaries and having “the best of both worlds” was not going to be an easy path to take. From an official point of view it was almost impossible. As can be seen in the story of Stephen Kinnane's grandfather, language exchanges were not supported at all. When making notes of the “Noongar words” he learnt from the Settlement population, he went against the public servants' directives (Kinnane, 2003, p. 158).

Nevertheless, culture contact also led to appropriation of non-Indigenous styles, particularly the use of written language by Indigenous people. Petitions were one example, used to claim back land and campaign for rights (Curthoys, 2008, p. 95; Gale, 1997, p. 152), but other instances are recorded in individual stories on how the written word served in communication with family and partners, but also in complaints and requisitions to their

superiors, or the chief protectors (Gale, 1997, p. 64; Kinnane, 2003, p. 195, 292; Nannup, 1986).

Positive influences of mission establishments are recorded where drought and starvation were the causes of decimation of tribes, primarily in central Australia. The more reliable supply of food and water through bores ensured survival in difficult times (Albrecht, 1977, p. 53; Lohe, 1977, p. 15, p. 26; Tabone, 2012). Furthermore, it was a desirable role of the missions to “provide some substitute for lost community life” (Muecke & Shoemaker, 2004, p. 69; Trudgen, 2000, p. 40) and mitigate the impact of the lost land.

### **1.2.3.5 Linguistic Implications of Mission Education: A new Language Develops for the Stolen Generations**

Stations and missions often existed alongside each other. A self-reinforcing system emerged where the need for labour on the frontier led to more children of mixed descent being born who, once old enough to help, again provided more labour for the growing station economy. “An endless cycle of abuse, use, advantage and imprisonment” (Kinnane, 2003, p. 21) started. The missions often supported this, albeit unintentionally, through the provision of training for cheap labour in the domestic or agricultural domain. Eventually, many missionaries' moral outrage at the increasing incidents of miscegenation (Lohe, 1977, p. 34) combined with the government's priority on assimilation from the 1930s onwards, led to the removal of “between one in three and one in ten Indigenous children ... from approximately 1910 until 1970” (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997, p. 31).

During this time, many missions came under heavy criticism for lack of hygiene and maltreatment of children and adults living there (Duguid, 1963, p. 105, p. 114; T.G.H. Strehlow, 1957, p. 3; Lohe, 1977, p. 30). It was the peak of assimilationist intentions to confine children of mixed descent in institutions far from their home communities with little prospect of seeing their families.



The monumental *Bringing Them Home* report from 1997 which took into consideration 535 testimonials has now established the intentions of this policy as genocidal: “When a child was forcibly removed that child’s entire community lost, often permanently, its chance to perpetuate itself in that child” (p. 190).

The protectorate system itself, with its “faulty logic of assimilation” where Indigenous people were expected to become the same as their colonisers, but were kept separate and treated very differently (Muecke & Shoemaker, 2004, p. 69) is regarded with utmost criticism today. The devastating consequences on so many of the individuals removed from their families as infants or children are underlying causes of the issues Indigenous communities have been facing well into the 21st century. Even in instances where there was no physical or mental abuse by the caregivers, the trauma of not knowing one's origins can be felt as a life-long burden by individuals such as explained by this man adopted into a non-Indigenous family at 3 months. He was unable to meet his birth mother before she died:

I’ve got everything that could be reasonably expected: a good home environment, education, stuff like that, but that’s all material stuff. It’s all the non-material stuff that I didn’t have – the lineage. It’s like you’re the first human being at times. You know, you’ve just come out of nowhere; there you are. In terms of having a direction in life, how do you know where you’re going if you don’t know where you’ve come from?

(Confidential evidence 136, Victoria)

As detailed in *Bringing Them Home National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* (1997), drawing on research by Bowlby (1951), Wolkind and Rutter (1984) and various experts in child psychology, the damage done to infants' mental health is now obvious in emotional and personality disorders in adult life. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, difficulties in parenting, anti-social activity, delinquency, violence and even suicide are just some of the psychiatric symptoms affected individuals have to grapple with. A further alarming insight is

provided through attachment theory. The gross sense of betrayal and the resulting mistrust prevented the “inmates” from developing a feeling of safety enabling them to explore the world as infants would in their own families. A secure attachment style, essential for social bonding and learning, could never be developed (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997, pp. 158-161; Wentzel, 2015, p. 170). Their fragmented identity often stood in the way of learning and some described school as “nauseating” (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997, p. 229).

For parents and extended families, the newly developing educational systems were not transparent. How much duress or pressure was applied to Indigenous families could not be established clearly in the *Bringing Them Home* Report. One of the existing views was that Indigenous children should be given the same opportunities as all other children in Australia so that this would remove the limits of remoteness where schools were not readily available. The power imbalance between the police and other government officers who took the children and the Indigenous parents makes it difficult to determine how much parental consent was really given in many circumstances. It is very clear, though, that assimilationist legislation as well as economic circumstances made it either impossible or very difficult for Indigenous parents to stay in contact with their institutionalised children (see e.g. Nannup, 1986; Kartinyeri, Doreen, 2000, p. xvi; Kartinyeri, Doris, p. 47).

Many submissions to the *Bringing Them Home National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* indicate an active discouragement of the use of first languages in the institutions. Physical punishment often backed the verbal reprimands and practices such as scrubbing the children's mouths with soap were a reason for language loss for many individuals and entire communities (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997, p. 133).

At the interface of corporal punishment and the need for communication, a variety of new languages developed. As children from various regions were grouped together on missions, their resilience meant that communication occurred which undermined the efforts of superintendents and governments to establish an English-only environment:

Northern Aboriginal people such as my grandmother were taken and placed in institutions, terms such as marda-marda were used instead of derogatory words such as ‘half-caste’ and ‘quarter-caste’. Thrown together and forced to learn English, a new language developed, mixing Kimberley Mulba and Yamatji lingo with that of a community of people, mostly women removed from their country, existing in Noongar country. (Kinnane, 2003, p. 17)

The same language contact phenomena occurred in South Australia. Kartinyeri (2000) has recalled that in Colebrook Training Centre, an institution founded in 1943, “we developed a lingo that was taught to us by the older ones. It was Ngarrindjeri, Pitjantjatjara, English and some of our own words all mixed up together” (p. 14). New contact languages emerged, but the traditional style of old teaching young remained intact.

In an advocacy speech for multilingualism and Indigenous language preservation, anthropologist and government officer T.G.H. Strehlow, the son of missionaries who grew up on Hermannsburg mission, explained to an Adelaide audience in 1957:

Above all, let us also permit the native children to keep their own languages, - those and expressive tongues, rich in true Australian imagery, charged with poetry and with love for all that is great, ancient, and eternal in our continent. There is no need to fear that continued knowledge of their own languages will interfere with the learning of English as the common medium of expression for all Australians. In most areas of Australia the natives have been bilingual, probably from time immemorial. Today white Australians are among the few remaining civilized people who still think that knowledge of one language is the normal limit of linguistic achievement. (T.G. H. Strehlow, 1957, p. 27)

With Professor T.G.H Strehlow (1957), the shift in thinking of Indigenous Australians as “objects of scientific curiosity” to “fellow human beings” (p. 33) has occurred. His speech and subsequent publications pre-empted the efforts of teacher linguists and their teams in

schools from the 1970s onwards when bilingual education was the model of choice for many remote schools that had remained open as the missionaries retracted. The functioning of these models will be highlighted in the following section.

The documentation available from mission times still aids in many language teaching and revival programmes and in the development of materials for the student-educator tandem model proposed in this dissertation. Religious and instructional materials have been produced by missionaries who were either linguists or lay linguists, often trained in summer school courses as offered by institutions like the Summer Institute of Linguistics (see <https://www.silaustralia.org.au/about/our-history/>). Their primary concern was to spread the word of God, but the dedication with which some missionaries pursued their own language learning can still be a source of inspiration for today's educators. The challenge in the 21st century is to establish a similarly mutual learning relationship minus the religious zeal and judgemental attitude which coloured the mission days.

## **1.2.4 The 1960s, 70s and 80s – Golden Days and new Horizons for Bilingual Education**

### **1.2.4.1 Policy Support: From Assimilation to Self-Determination**

The 1960s and 1970s have often been described as a time where educational opportunities for Indigenous Australians were successful (Duguid, 1963, p. 152; Herbert, 2012, p. 98; Leske, 1977, p. 94). One Arnhem Land elder has recalled:

I was educated in the '70s. I got better education than my daughter here. I know how to read and write and talk English. I can talk to you, to anybody, to Land Council. I don't want more excuses that we are blackfellas. So the education department I reckon is going backward and is always coming up with excuses. (Learning lessons, 1999, Case Study 32, p. 117, as cited in Trudgen, 2000, p. 121)

The foundations for these developments had been laid in the 1950s in the wake of the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which put Australia increasingly under international pressure to address issues of racial inequality (Curthoys, 2008, p. 99). The 1950s saw the policy of assimilation, meaning that Indigenous people should eventually attain the same lifestyle as other Australians, as the only answer to the plight of Indigenous peoples. Official publications made clear that this should not mean abandoning Indigenous identity, languages, art and other elements of culture, especially since these elements had already been incorporated into the wider understanding of Australian national identity (Reynolds, 1982, p. 200). To counteract immediate effects of poverty, various social services were made available to Indigenous people. Legislation made provisions for equal opportunities, pay and political representation. Governments, Christian missions and various welfare organisations worked towards the idea of one Australian people where no minority should be isolated (Minister for Territories, 1961).

A prerequisite for these adaptations was the assumption that Indigenous people also wanted to accept the same responsibilities and show willingness to be trained accordingly, an assumption which left the target group “frustrated, due to influence of linguistic and cultural inadequacy” (Bostock, 1977, p. 102). With welfare payments being systematically extended as part of this equalisation effort, critical voices soon pointed out the undesired and devastating side effects of these entitlements: Spending on alcohol and further disruption of family and tribal links. As put in the official Northern Territory government publication from 1961, *One People*:

Aborigines and part-aborigines cannot be left entirely to their own resources; nor can they benefit from such a superfluity of welfare measure that no initiative, no effort, no struggle is necessary on their part. This latter alternative can lead only to complete loss of self-respect, and doom the aborigines to an ignominious extinction. (Minister for Territories, p. 24)

In response, the Federal Government started to develop new forms of settlement in the 1960s. Particularly in the Northern Territory the aim was to provide opportunities for “aborigines in varying degrees of de-tribalization” (Duguid, 1963, p. 115) to get acquainted with more settled life. The motivation for this came from shocking reports of starving tribal people who were badly affected by droughts in the bush and who could not be catered for by the existing missions or welfare systems due to extremely remote lifestyles. Modern housing, pre-schools, schools and vocational training in domestic science, mechanics, nursing, carpentry, brickmaking, saddling and plumbing as well as hospitals and schools made these options attractive to many Indigenous people and some of them quickly gained the professional skills to work in a chosen trade or position within the settlement, reducing the need for non-Indigenous workers and also – in the long term – for restrictive or protective legislation as individuals adopted certain ways of living (Duguid, 1963, p. 115).

The referendum in 1967 further changed the political landscape in Australia. Indigenous peoples were now recognised in the constitution. The political climate favoured questioning of ethnocentric attitudes for the first time in contact history. Indigenous cultures became widely visible and gained more recognition as the nation's foundation, also internationally (Reynolds, 1982, p. 200).

The Whitlam government, which came into power in 1972, took many steps towards righting the wrongs of the past. Policies of this decade aimed at integrating multiple cultures and started to seek ways to value their uniqueness and contribution to Australia (Denoon et al., 2000, p. 368). Progressively, opportunities for self-determination and greater access to education and social equity were created nationwide. A slow shift from taking action ‘for’ Indigenous peoples to taking action ‘with and alongside’ Indigenous Australians occurred. Community action groups emerged. Scholarships were created to actively promote academic pathways for Indigenous Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies courses were established in many tertiary education institutions (Bin-Sallik, 1993, p. 27). The practice of sending students from remote communities into urban centres to boarding schools gathered

momentum. Indigenous teachers and teaching assistants gained access to Teachers Training Colleges (see AFA Annual Report 1966, p. 15; AFA Annual Report 1960, p. 41, 48). A policy framework was in place to foster manifold educational opportunities.

#### **1.2.4.2 Theoretical Foundations of the Bilingual Approach**

The results of various studies and theories aggregated in Bostock's (1977) meta-study of contemporary political educational tendencies "Alternatives of Ethnicity" has analysed the role of specific language difficulties of non-English speakers in Australian society. Without adequate English as well as cultural knowledge, he concluded, newly arrived migrants and Indigenous citizens remained excluded from full participation in Australian society (p. 67) due to a lack of knowledge of what Trudgen (2000) has termed "hidden English" (p. 125). To refine the understanding of the role of English in settings where minority languages and English intersect, Canagarajah (1999) has put forth that: "To be academically literate in English, second language students have to acquire not only certain linguistic skills, but also the preferred values, discourse conventions, and knowledge content of the academy" (p. 147). However, some experts also warned of the centrifugal effect of English-only education where a young person may forsake their own cultural background in order to acquire the 'package' of assimilation, modern lifestyles, Christianity, economic success and political participation which are all correlating attributes of mastering the English language (Bostock, 1977, pp. 7-8; Duguid, 1963, p. 153).

Investigations began into an educational approach that valued both, the Indigenous home languages and English. Australian education specialists and stakeholders were quick to seek inspiration from international experiences. This was "the educating phase" of writing in Aboriginal languages (Gale, 1997, p. 112). It was mainly based on a UNESCO publication from 1953 stating that "the best medium for teaching is the mother tongue of the pupil" (as cited in Bull, 1964, p. 527) and the work of eminent language education specialist Cummins (1979, 1981) who found that in bilingual programmes as researched in Canada "the use of L1

as the language of instruction builds on the linguistic and intellectual skills which students bring to the school. Thus, students are able to benefit fully from interaction with the teacher, and when instruction in L2 is introduced, they can use the concepts and knowledge developed in L1 to make the L2 input comprehensible” (Cummins, 1981, pp. 21-22). However, interaction in L1 in the home with the parents was also found to be a decisive factor for children’s success at schools (Cummins, 1981, p. 26). Cummins' (1979) also found that “in minority language situations a prerequisite for attaining a higher threshold level of bilingual competence is the maintenance of L1 skills” (p. 232). In his developmental interdependence hypothesis, Cummins (1979) differentiated very clearly between majority and minority L2 scenarios, arguing that status of the languages involved, socio-economic and linguistic factors in the children’s home lives, such as exposure to print texts, could not be neglected when developing or evaluating bilingual education models (pp. 233-234; p. 240; p. 246). In his Think Tank Model, Cummins (1981) posited that the “thinking that underlies talk in L1 is essentially the same as the thinking that underlies talk in L2” (p. 29) and “understanding, speaking, reading, and writing *either language* contributes to the development of the *total* Think Tank [emphasis in the original]” (p. 30). He concluded that “the same mental expertise underlies performance (namely processing of input and output) in both languages” (Cummins, 1981, p. 30).

Cummins (1981) also found that different patterns of bilingualism developed depending on students’ cultural identity development, i.e. to which degree they identified with the majority culture and how highly they were motivated to learn the L2 (p. 19). A problematic pattern of linguistic proficiency emerged in contexts where “ambivalence towards the majority group and insecurity about the value of their own cultures” (Cummins, 1981, p. 19) existed. Cummins’ conclusions were founded on studies involving languages with a long history of literature, spelling norms and grammatical conventions. They were the languages of literate migrant groups, like Hispanics, or heritage language groups like French in Canada.



In Australia's remote Indigenous community schools, the context of bilingual education was different. Indigenous children in remote areas are and were surrounded by varieties of English other than Standard Australian English and/or by their oral native languages in diglossic communities where the use of formal and informal varieties of English and the oral L1s depends on situational requirements. Some of these communities have already adopted a practically functional linguistic situation in the sense Canagarajah (1999, p. 127) has described for the Sri Lankan context: Native-like competence in Standard English is not desirable with a view to local communicative needs of many Sri Lankan speakers of English.

Furthermore, Indigenous languages in Australia are traditionally oral languages with "phonemic-based alphabets" (Gale, 1997, p. 7). This factor has not been explored by Cummins (1979). Gale (1997) has pointed out:

The use of vernacular languages in this phase was largely functional or utilitarian in focus. Issues of identity or the affirmation of cultural heritage were not a priority. In fact, maintenance of language and culture was never an official explicit aim of bilingual education in the Northern Territory. (p. 213)

Instruction in the students' first language should prepare the ground for the transitional introduction of English in the timetable. The prominent aim of the programmes was therefore not bilingualism as the equal promotion of two languages. The instruction in the L1 was rather seen as a means to eventually make the students function in English if they choose to move on to further education options outside of the community (Lo Bianco, 2017, p. 609). Since Lambert (1974), this model has been known as "subtractive bilingualism" which is "transitional and compensatory" in nature (Valdés, Poza & Brooks, 2017, p. 56). The L1 became a vehicular language and may well have made the educational experience overall an example of what McCarty and Nicholas (2012) have referred to as "subtractive schooling" (p. 150). This scenario has also been explained by Grosjean (1989; 2019, p. 8) who has proposed

the Complementarity Principle to highlight the variations in acquisition and use of languages where bilingual individuals need different languages in different domains of life, e.g. school versus social or family life.

Controversial as it may seem in hindsight imposing written expression onto oral languages, the momentum the bilingual programmes gathered and their resilience regarding government funding cuts throughout the 1990s show that they did address a great need for the recognition of Indigenous languages in educational settings (Disbray, 2014b, pp. 33-34). Bilingual programmes also saw an unprecedented involvement of Indigenous educators in formal western school settings. They effectively fostered collaborative projects between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators (Disbray, 2014b, p. 36). These merits can serve as an inspiration for future models such as the modified tandem proposed in this dissertation.

#### **1.2.4.3 Bilingual Education for Remote Community Schools**

A vast difference existed between developments in urban versus rural or remote areas (Cummings, 1993, p. 147). An early observer of educational programmes on missions and settlements, Duguid (1963), found some striking differences in provisions made for Indigenous populations:

Aboriginal children at missions attend the mission school but few if any of these schools provide anything like full primary school requirements. Too often the building is unsuitable, staff is inadequate, and many of the teachers are untrained. But at missions where tribal or semi-tribal aborigines are first taught in the vernacular, where the teachers are fully trained and have an understanding of the people, good results are achieved.

(p. 150)

However, home environments and racial attitudes were also identified as significant hindrances to educational success (Duguid, 1963, p. 151; Bostock, 1977, p. 142). Comparatively low numbers of enrolment highlighted this: secondary school enrolment of

Indigenous children in 1969 was at 2596. In 1976, this had not significantly changed for the better and was still a significantly lower percentage compared to the age group of the rest of Australian secondary students (Bostock, 1977, p. 137). The statistics quoted in Bostock's meta-study are echoed throughout the annual reports published by the Aborigines' Friends' Association (1955, 1960 and 1966) where mostly two-digit or three-digit figures appear when reporting the attendance or enrolment figures at any specific educational institution from pre-school to secondary school.

When it was becoming increasingly evident that not many Indigenous children experienced success in “centralized, white-oriented systems” (Teasdale & Whitelaw, 1981, p. xiii), the Bilingual Education Programme in the Northern Territory was established in 1972 “to deliver an effective education to students in remote Indigenous schools” at the instigation of a government demand for L1 education (NTDE 1973, p. 1, as cited in Disbray 2014b, p. 25).

In reality, many schools in the Northern Territory had practiced bilingual education since mission times continuously as for instance at Ernabella in central Australia, which was the first school to start bilingual education as their official school policy as early as 1940 (Duguid, 1963, p. 35). The 1973 initiative led to the establishment of 25 bilingual programmes (Disbray, 2014a, p. 126). The vast majority of non-religious printed and digital resources now available stem from this era, “a period of remarkable creativity, educational engagement and innovation” (Disbray, 2014b, p. 25). Supported by a policy which valued bilingualism, individual schools, educators, linguists and the religiously motivated, prolific Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) produced some of the best materials for teaching and learning Indigenous languages that exist to this day. Linguistic anthropologist Kral has described the SIL productions as “some of the best linguistic work” in this field in Australia (personal communication, July 22, 2016).

As the previous section on mission life has amply illustrated, in remote communities, one result of missionary presence was a more or less systematic documentation of Indigenous

languages. Religious texts from what Gale (1997) has termed the “Christianising phase of writing in Aboriginal languages” (p. 53) often provided the basis from which further educational materials were developed. This work continued into the 1990s (Ganambarr, 1993, p. 105). In some communities it continues to this day (see <https://www.puliima.com/> for a recent conference programme highlighting this work).

Federal policy encouraged people to return to their ancestral lands to live and small 'outstation schools' catered for this trend (Muecke & Shoemaker, 2004, p. 108). To support bilingual education, teacher linguists were employed to work alongside local staff. Indigenous persons could receive teacher training through schemes which accommodated the remote locations and the needs of many local educators for flexible modules (Disbray, 2014b, p. 34). Genuine collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff was the norm in remote bilingual schools (AuSIL, 1981; Disbray, 2014a, p. 134; Disbray, 2014b, pp. 31-32, p. 36; Duguid, 1963, p. 35). L1 literacy was fostered alongside English (L2) literacy.

It was at that time that many Indigenous peoples started to see writing as a way of lifting the status of their languages. The need for standardised orthography of many of their languages arose. Schools needed a practical way to teach reading and writing in the L1s of the respective communities and subsequently developed extensive teaching materials (Disbray, 2014b, pp. 37-40; Gale, 1997, pp. 103-148). The Northern Territory remained at the centre of this bilingual effort until the 1990s (Liddicoat, 2018, p. 245).

Several early childhood education programmes were implemented specifically targeting Indigenous students. Their outcomes were monitored from 1967 onwards by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). These programmes incorporated values and lifestyles of the local cultures and helped to strengthen the self-image of students. Other initiatives in New South Wales were completely organised by the communities themselves as family education centres (AFEC) without the input of an external consultant and great success was achieved. The funding, however, still came from external sources (Teasdale & Whitelaw, 1981, p. 47).

New South Wales early childhood programmes also sought the help of foreign experts and a “cross-cultural exchange” (Teasdale & Whitelaw, 1981, p. 55) started where Maori visitors stayed between three and six months to observe, consult and share the programme strategies they had used in New Zealand (Teasdale & Whitelaw, 1981, p. 57). Similar exchanges were initiated by the independent Aborigines' Friends' Association (AFA) Incorporated who had invited tribal Indian elders from Canada to visit Cherbourg, Queensland and Adelaide, South Australia to meet with notable Indigenous individuals such as the artist David Unaipon (see AFA Annual Report 1960, p. 7).

Kral has attributed the relative success in educational work during this time to the fact that there was no “us-and-them” divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers. Non-Indigenous teachers in Indigenous communities “were living more closely” with the local population, in caravans and without the financial incentives that exist today for teachers in remote locations, such as free housing or airfares to the next urban centre. The “interdependence” that existed in the 1970s and 1980s helped to break down barriers between local and non-Indigenous teachers in remote schools and ultimately allowed for a successful “socialisation into Western schooling”. As a result, whole cohorts of Indigenous students and staff became educated, some of whom became confident leaders with knowledge of two cultures (I. Kral, personal communication, July 22, 2016).

Another important observation senior educators who were actively involved in teaching in the 1970s and 80s share is that the success of a bilingual programme or any other educational initiative often hinged on the individual effort of one staff member who was particularly involved in the local culture and language. This could be a teacher, a missionary or a teacher linguist. The enthusiasm of one person with integrity and an authentic interest in moving the programme forward would make the difference for many language centres embedded in schools at the time (Disbray 2014b, pp. 33-34; I. Kral, personal communication, July 22, 2016). While this speaks very positively of the individual efforts and merit in many communities and schools, it also highlights the vulnerability of such programmes in terms of

staffing or longevity without outside involvement – an aspect the proposed student-educator tandem model seeks to address.

#### **1.2.4.4 Language Preservation and Oral History Projects**

Alongside the creation of bilingual programmes, community efforts to record languages and oral histories multiplied and received government funding. Language Resource centres were established in regional towns to foster the production of bilingual materials. The books published by the Kimberley Language Resource centre provide excellent examples of presenting texts in Indigenous languages and English translations “side by side to give them equal status” (Wrigley, 1996, p. xii). These publications were the result of close co-operation between professional linguists and speakers of the relevant languages. These were often elders eager to preserve history that so far had not been recorded in languages such as Kija and Jaru, Kimberley languages that were on the edge of disappearing with a few hundred speakers left at the time of recording in the mid-1980s:

The translation teams that worked on this book [Moola Bulla In the Shadow of the Mountain] each consisted of a linguist and an Aboriginal language speaker. The linguist brings a sound knowledge of English, an understanding of Kriol or Aboriginal English, some knowledge of a traditional tongue and a grasp of the principles of translation. The language speaker knows a traditional language and can use a form of English or Kriol. Translation proceeds by the team listening to sections of a tape, reaching agreement on the meaning, and the linguist recording the translation. Unclear sections are painstakingly discussed. (Kimberley Language Resource Centre, 1996a, p. 241)

This description of linguistic collaboration is a typical method of the time that still prevails in today's linguistic fieldwork (L. Ford, personal communication, 2011). In the Northern Territory, the Department of Employment, Education and Training offered dedicated courses

to teach women recording and documentation skills (Torres, 1993, p. 101) following an idea to “revive Aboriginal people's interest in their own culture and languages” (Torres, 1993, p. 103). Such documentation made these stories accessible to the wider public in an effort to further promote Indigenous cultures and languages and is being carried forth by publishing agencies such as the Institute for Aboriginal Development Press or Magabala Books. Many researchers of this time were aware of the nature of language as a social boundary in Australia and the need to understand the languages of Indigenous Australians as a starting point for understanding their culture. Publications prioritising this need were more abundant than in previous decades (Bostock 1977, p. 151; Duguid, 1963, pp. 185-186; Leske, 1977, p. 94).

In most official education programmes of the 1960s, 70s and 1980s, the students' home languages were not seen as an impediment. Instead, the languages were embraced with enthusiasm and optimism by most education personnel from Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds alike. Today, bilingual programs are still seen as an integral component of a culturally inclusive curriculum by some educators working with Indigenous students in Australia. Similarly inclusive programmes, however, are not officially endorsed or funded on a national or state/territory scale any longer (see Liddicoat, 2018, p. 245). Experts like I. Kral regret not seeing the same process of whole cohorts gaining education and confidence and emerging as leaders with bi-cultural knowledge today, where bicultural individuals are more isolated – and ultimately under more pressure without a peer group undergoing the same process (personal communication, July 22, 2016).

Sadly, the issues which led to the change in the constitution in 1967 (see <http://aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/recognition-australian-constitution>), the often extremely poor living conditions, especially the poverty, malnutrition, and high infant mortality in Indigenous settlements are still experienced today. Ways to remedy this situation are still being sought, in particular through education.

# **1.3 Policies and Educational Support**

## **Frameworks in Indigenous Education in the 21st century**

### **1.3.1 The Communication Crisis Persists**

In 2014, the government-funded “Report of the Second National Indigenous Languages Survey”, found that of the original over 250 Australian Indigenous languages, only around 120 are still spoken today. The vast majority, about 100 Indigenous languages, are critically endangered (Marmion et al., 2014, p. xii). On the flipside, levels of literacy in English among Indigenous persons in Australia are not increasing. The “Closing the Gap Prime Minister’s Report 2018” has highlighted that with regard to completing high school education (year 12 or equivalent), Indigenous Australians are still about 24% behind non-Indigenous Australian students (p. 64). Lo Bianco (2017) has attributed this to the fact that “Australia’s policy development has been beset by changing priorities, inadequate and inconsistent implementation, and contested aims and purposes” and “continual disagreement about how general education for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders should be conducted, and what role and seriousness to accord to traditional languages” (p. 609).

Apart from Trudgen (2000), not many have pointed to the fact that the dismal status quo in Australia – seemingly unchanged for decades – is the result of a crisis of communication (pp. 67-80). In the setting of the present study, this crisis of communication may contribute to a child finishing school or else abandoning it, with all its societal and economic implications. English as the only language used in all interactions fails without true bilingualism of the Indigenous interlocutor which allows to recreate the meaning of what is being said in English in a home language. The majority of multilingual speakers of Indigenous languages do not have this linguistic agility to switch between languages at their



disposal. Furthermore, equipping them with those tools cannot be achieved without adequate instructional methods which involve a deep understanding of Indigenous languages.

However, the compulsory next step of recruiting communication experts to work in this area has been lacking. Trudgen (2000) has argued that this has not been understood by the wider community “*because* [emphasis in the original] it is a communication problem. This communication gap is cemented into the system so deeply that it is not even noticed by the dominant culture” (p. 70). Providing non-Indigenous staff, not only those working at schools, with tools for learning the local lingua franca would have a tremendous positive impact on their work in any sector if, as Trudgen (2000) has put it: “those of us from the dominant Australian culture will learn to construct knowledge in the way Yolŋu construct knowledge and deliver it in a language that Yolŋu think in” (p. 9). Unless both parties have at least one language in common in which they can communicate intellectually, the situation cannot be remedied. So either the level of English or the command of the local languages needs to improve. Neither can happen without real understanding of the L1 in question by those in charge of delivering language lessons. Missionaries often were very successful communicators not only because they applied rigorous methods of English language instruction consistently, but also because they applied themselves to learning the L1 of the communities they interacted with. No educator or policy-maker has since applied the principles of reciprocity in language learning. At a national meeting of Indigenous women in 1981, two elders from Borroloola poignantly put it like this: “We don't know how to read and write but we can, we speak white people's language. We can understand white fellas' language but they don't talk our language. White fellas say to us, 'we understand'. How can they say that?” (McDinny & Isaac, 1983, p. 67).

No organised way exists yet for non-Indigenous professionals or visitors moving to Indigenous communities to learn the local language prior to starting their work there or for urban workers involved in Indigenous education or other programs. Instructional materials are rare and only available for a few of the 80 Indigenous languages still taught around Australia

(see Tan, 2015). There is no quick fix for this issue and in fact it took many of the missionary linguists decades to develop a native-like or near-native command of some of the local Indigenous languages (Chester Street, personal communication, 2007; Dominic McCormack, personal communication, 2007 and 2016). With the end of the mission era, the number of competent non-Indigenous speakers of Indigenous languages has dramatically decreased. This generation of non-Indigenous speakers of Indigenous languages is also disappearing with many of them in their 60s and 70s and battling their own failing health (see Trudgen, 2000, p. 95).

### **1.3.2 The Issue of Adequate Staffing**

An anecdote from my teaching experience in the remote education system highlights realistic recruitment expectations as a decisive factor in this discussion. Mrs. R., the non-Indigenous co-principal of a remote Catholic school, said to me during a professional conversation early in 2007: “It is hard enough to get *anyone* to come and teach here.” She could not be choosy and expect to be able to find ESL-trained staff or staff who were able to speak or willing to learn the local language. Even though this principal recognised the necessity of having teachers with ESL training and the advantages of knowledge of the community’s lingua franca, the issue of staff recruitment and retention had to be viewed in the realistic light of the Northern Territory, and especially remote community schools, being a difficult place to attract teachers to (see Harper et al., 2012, p. 34; Maher, 2012, p. 345). But the issue involves more than just a selection of CVs on the principal's desk. It goes further away from the classroom and into those areas of the education system where decision-making about positions takes place.

Many advertisements in the area of Indigenous education and/or community work have often been fairly general. They have very rarely included the specific requirement of English as a Second Language or other linguistic training. Paradoxically, though, the

employers, mostly government agencies or schools, have often asked for a range of skills related to successful exchange of ideas. One section of an online advertisement published on [career.one.com.au](http://career.one.com.au) in 2015 for the position of “Learning and Development Coordinator” for the Nhulunbuy East Arnhem regional council in Nhulunbuy, Northern Territory read:

Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills, including demonstrated cultural understanding and knowledge of sensitivities and protocols specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations. (Career One)<sup>5</sup>

This advertisement emphasised communication skills as an essential prerequisite for the role, but does not postulate in which languages these skills must be demonstrated. The prerequisite of language or at least language awareness was glossed over with umbrella terms like “communication skills” and “cultural understanding”. The fact that cultural understanding cannot be separated from linguistic understanding in the context of non-anglophone communities was as absent from the job advertisements as it is from the minds of many stakeholders and practitioners in Indigenous education and community work (see Disbray, 2014a, p. 131). After many years of living in Arnhem Land, Trudgen (2000) has observed the following counterproductive effects of this practice: “Because communication skills between Yolŋu and Balanda are so poor, when people from the dominant culture are employed as trainers or resource people, Yolŋu learn very little good information from them” (p. 70). When approached to give advice to consultants from outside, Trudgen (2000) has therefore always replied:

Without language and without understanding the world view of the people, it is impossible. Yes, you can go out and get some responses; but you will never really hear the people, nor they you, unless you can communicate intellectually with them in their own language. (p. 95)

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<sup>5</sup> Initially, this advertisement is no longer retrievable. It was published on the Career One website: [http://www.careerone.com.au/job-search/regional-nt/education-childcare-training/search/page2?j\\_c=71&j\\_l=154&j\\_a=155&lid=130&where=regional%20nt&category\\_name=Education%2C+Childcare+%26+Training](http://www.careerone.com.au/job-search/regional-nt/education-childcare-training/search/page2?j_c=71&j_l=154&j_a=155&lid=130&where=regional%20nt&category_name=Education%2C+Childcare+%26+Training)

### **1.3.3 The English-Only Approach and NAPLAN as Initiatives to Move Forward**

Issues surrounding literacy education in remote and urban schools have been dealt with almost exclusively from the angle of English literacy since the missions closed down. As Liddicoat (2018) has put it, “discourses of crisis around the lower level of English language capabilities among indigenous students” (p. 251) dominate the discussion around the place of Indigenous languages in Australian education. In fact, the 34-year old, existing bilingual programmes in the Northern Territory have been scaled back in government schools since the late 1990s. This policy decision “established the relationship between indigenous languages and English in bilingual programs as one of conflict, with the indigenous language undermining or threatening the place of the dominant language in the educational context” (Liddicoat, 2018, p. 245). Due to much protest, eleven government schools and a small number of private, denominational schools which still existed from the mission days, continued to offer bilingual programmes in remote communities across the Northern Territory (<https://fobl.net.au/index.php/au-WA/history/71-government-support-for-nt-bilingual-education-after-1950-a-longer-timeline>).

October 2008 marked another incision in the maintenance of Indigenous languages in the Northern Territory when the local Minister for Education, Marion Scrymgour, announced a decision to have English-only instruction in the first four hours of every school day (Wilkins, 2008). This decision was surrounded by controversy due to the reasons given by policymakers. They attributed low literacy among students in remote bilingual programmes to the very existence of these programmes (Devlin, 2011). It led to the implementation of somewhat successful programs such as Direct Instruction, Reading Recovery or Accelerated Literacy which solely focus on the target language English (Rennie, 2013, p. 169; Scull, 2016, p. 54).

All schools in the education climate of 2016 to 2020 have been performance orientated in the view of standardised tests, first and foremost NAPLAN. NAPLAN stands for National Assessment Programme - Literacy and Numeracy, a test carried out in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 on the same day, nationwide. This standardisation of students' achievement is seen by some analysts as an alienating practice, such as mentioned to me by J. Schwab, Honorary Associate Professor at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at Australian National University in Canberra (personal communication, July 22, 2016). This is because it fails to address the real educational needs of many linguistically heterogeneous Indigenous students. Instead, NAPLAN measures “language-specific performances” in Standard Australian English as opposed to “general linguistic performances” which the students may be able to express in a language other than English (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 24; see Otheguy, García & Reid, 2015, p. 299). NAPLAN was developed to ensure that specific outcomes were achieved by all students in Australia. It does not take into account the circumstances of multilingual students.

Often overwhelmed by the tasks, many Indigenous students from remote schools or urban boarding schools hand in blank test scripts or only minimally address the task on the test day (my personal observation as NAPLAN marker in 2010). Such standardised tests represent reductionist and ineffective ways of evaluating Indigenous students' academic performance, especially from a point of view of bilingual education (Devlin, 2011; Disbray, 2014b, p. 42; Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 300). In this way, NAPLAN and related practices might contribute further to many Indigenous students' perception of school as puzzling, irrelevant or even humiliating.

In an attempt to provide additional academic support to such marginalised students, the Inclusion Support Programme was put into place by the Department of Education and Training. It commenced in mid-2016 and typically has focussed on early childhood education (Australian Government, Department of Education, 2019). The explicit goal of this national service is “to include children with additional needs in mainstream services; providing them

with an opportunity to learn and develop alongside their typically developing peers” (Australian Government, Department of Education, 2019). While there is no specific mention of Indigenous Australian children being the target group, the term *inclusion* is neutral and at the same time comprehensive. It allows local Inclusion Support Coordinators to use the funding to support Indigenous children. Seven regional agencies are in charge of implementing the programme in the various states and territories. As a result, in the Northern Territory, some of the funding has been deployed for use in middle schools. As will be further explicated in the description of the exploratory study, Inclusion Support Officers offer after-school tutoring to assist with the academic skills development of Indigenous boarding students in an urban school.

### **1.3.4 “Closing the Gap”: A Framework With a View to Language Equality**

Informed by data from NAPLAN and other statistics, another government initiative has reviewed the English-only approach. The Closing the Gap framework, launched in 2008, explicitly aims to address the existing inequalities by 2030. So far, this national initiative has mainly resulted in increased funding for areas as diverse as literacy workshops and teacher training. According to the executive summary of the *Closing the Gap Prime Minister’s Report 2018*, 1.3 billion Australian dollars have been spent on specialised academies, scholarships and mentoring for Indigenous students since 2014 (p. 55). Unfortunately, little progress has been made towards creating a lasting change to the dismal situation. Many of the targets fixed in the framework are not on track ten years after its launch. Particularly school attendance as well as reading and numeracy attainment remain behind the national standards. The worst outcomes were recorded in the Northern Territory, the area with the highest number of Indigenous inhabitants (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 46, p. 60).

What one can see today in the streets of Darwin and many smaller communities in more remote locations in Australia's Northern Territory, but also the rest of the country, albeit to various degrees of visibility, is the sad result of colonial practice: a marginalised population of Indigenous people locked in a continuous struggle to come to terms with another culture. The problems educators and Indigenous students face in schools are well-documented, yet under-researched.

Improvement of educator quality and curricular inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are two key areas identified in the *Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2018* which correlate with the goals of student-educator tandem:

The quality of teaching is recognised as the largest 'in-school' influence on student achievement. Well trained, skilled and knowledgeable teachers who are able to engage with their students and the community are essential to lifting student outcomes. ... For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to be successful, a culture of high expectations in schools, strong student-teacher and community relationships and support for culture are important. (p. 56)

Another way in which student-educator tandem aligns with this political vision relates to curriculum. The curricular importance of integrating Indigenous languages in everyday classroom practice has been identified as a crucial component of progress in the area of reconciliation through education:

For all students, learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages provides a distinctive means of understanding the country in which they live, including the relationship between land, the environment and people. The ongoing and necessary reclamation and revitalisation of these languages also contribute to reconciliation. (p. 57)

Both these areas can be addressed through the student-educator tandem model. As noted in a Guardian article on the 25th of May 2015, the Aboriginal Languages and Torres

Strait Islander Languages Framework's intent is that nationwide, schools and communities develop language specific curricula and programmes on the basis of this framework from December 2015 onwards (Tan, 2015).

Burridge et al. (2012) have criticised practices in the past: "Traditional approaches such as setting achievement targets without attention to what will change the pedagogy in classrooms and professional development for teachers and developing a deep understanding of local Aboriginal culture and history has not achieved the desired outcomes" (p. 1). It remains to be seen if the current curriculum can change this situation, or if, like other former settler colonies, with the exception of New Zealand/Aotearoa, Australia still needs to do more to implement a culturally appropriate curricular framework.

As field researchers Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003) have noted, the dominant presence of white teachers (over 90%) is a hindrance to "extending the task of culturally and linguistically congruent, anti-racist, and multicultural education" (p. 66). Through an adapted form of practising tandem learning with their educators, Indigenous students will be more likely to perceive school as a place where their origins and knowledge are valued and where they can contribute positively, being experts in their own languages. As Woodley (2016) has put it: "Language is intrinsically linked to students' identities and the ways in which young people perceive the educational value of their home languages" (p. 91).

Student-educator tandem also resolves a very practical issue. It has been pointed out by Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003) that even schools willing to adapt their curriculum to be more culturally and linguistically appropriate struggle with the practicalities of such a decision:

In the case of indigenous languages, one dilemma is that, with the number of speakers rapidly decreasing, there are not enough teachers of these languages. Another dilemma was illustrated by our case of school 4 in Australia, where students came from over a dozen language backgrounds, making it unviable for the school to select any particular languages to



teach. The situation of Creole English is even more complex: these blends of English and other languages spoken by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are predominantly oral and are often not regarded as being suitable for formal learning. (p. 86)

The adapted tandem model which will be presented in chapter two has the potential to solve this dilemma as each student is able to represent and teach their home language. Since many schools operate under financial constraints, it makes sense to work with the resources available (staff and students) and invest in the idea that teachers, tutors, learning support staff and students will understand more of each other's languages by using the tandem method. In its adapted form between students and educators, tandem learning does not require additional monetary resources, but rather a change of attitude within the educators themselves.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have first presented the research project genesis. I elaborated on two teaching experiences: (a) my experience as a graduate teacher-linguist in a remote Indigenous community in Australia's Northern Territory where communication breakdown and silencing emerged as defining features of community interactions; (b) teaching ESL in an urban boarding school in the Northern Territory which has made me question an English-only approach as the answer to existing communication problems.

I have then traced the history of Indigenous education from traditional family structures prior to European settlement through the frontier society in Australia to mission-led boarding schools and government reserves into the heyday of bilingual education between the 1960s and 1980s to the 21st century. Through the analysis of historical documents, I found that some successful language learning happened on a mutual basis between non-Indigenous missionaries, teachers and their Indigenous students and friends during mission times. This is a period in Australian history which is often examined with a view to the unspeakable

atrocities inflicted upon Indigenous persons by members of mission societies and the church (see Commonwealth of Australia, 1997). However, the positive functioning of some missions has informed the development of the student-educator tandem model.

In the third and last part of this chapter, I have focused on policies and educational support frameworks in Indigenous education in the 21st century. The communication crisis persists, also due to issues of adequate staffing, the continuing English-only approach and the inadequacy of teaching strategies associated with NAPLAN, a national standardised literacy and numeracy test.

Based on this historical panorama, I have situated student-educator tandem in the educational scene in contemporary Australia with a view to the stipulations aiming at language equality of the Closing the Gap initiative and the 2016 curriculum framework to integrate Indigenous languages into everyday teaching. I have argued that a new approach to teaching and learning is needed to achieve language equality in urban boarding schools. Tandem learning could help non-Indigenous educators to interact with their students in a mutually instructive way.

# **Chapter 2: From Tandem to Student-Educator Tandem – a Conceptual Framework**

## **Introduction**

The simplicity of the tandem idea does not imply an absence of theoretical grounding. The idea that language learning can occur between two speakers of different mother tongues to mutual benefit is undebatable and seems almost self-evident. Forms of cooperative learning and peer teaching have been discussed and recommended in diverse contexts perhaps since the time of Comenius (1657/2018) and the pedagogical reforms in 17th century Europe (pp. 117-118). Tandem scholars agree that the actual origins of the tandem idea cannot be attributed to a specific framework, person or date. One of the first scholars to work on the theory and practical applications of tandem, Brammerts (2010), has aptly summed up: “Dass sich zwei Sprecher mit unterschiedlichen Muttersprachen gegenseitig beim Sprachenlernen unterstützen können, liegt so nahe, dass man die Ursprünge dieser Idee nicht zurückverfolgen kann” [The fact that two speakers of different mother tongues can support each other in language learning is so obvious that one cannot trace the origins of the idea] (p. 15). Comenius (1657/2018), one of the first proponents of the idea of peer teaching and lifelong learning models, did not claim any copyright for his didactics (pp. 117-118; p. 237).

There are some studies on peer teaching containing elements which can be viewed as precursors of tandem learning. In this chapter, I will explore the theoretical foundations, related concepts and implementations of tandem learning. I will start by tracing the pathways educators from various backgrounds have taken to maximise cooperation between language learners in schools and other educational settings.

A form of peer teaching developed in the 1980s by Steinig stands out in particular.

Steinig's (1985) publication is perhaps one of the earliest book-length works on peer teaching in a formal classroom setting. His frustrations with foreign language instruction in Germany and the Netherlands in the 1970s and 1980s led him to search for a pedagogical model which would enable students to become active speakers of the languages studied at school. This was in strong opposition to the common view of students as passive reproducers of grammar inculcated through pattern drills, a product of the combined influence of structuralist linguistics and behaviourist psychology on L2 acquisition and language teaching (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 127). Understanding Steinig's (1985) work will help channel my own inquiry along more productive lines in the development of an adapted tandem model. In the first section of this chapter, I will examine more closely how Steinig's ideas and some of the theories he has drawn on undergird tandem practice in general.

As foundational concepts of cooperative learning between peers, the interrelated features of social relationships, motivational advantages, self-directed learning and mutually beneficial study arrangements have been subsumed under two main principles in the established notion of tandem: autonomy and reciprocity. The theoretical considerations brought forth in academic work concentrate largely on these principles. I will explore the literature on the established notion of tandem in the second section of this chapter. I will then draw on further studies which have focused on augmenting the benefits of these two basic principles through error correction and intercultural learning in tandems.

Finally, I will elaborate on how the established understanding of tandem learning has been adapted to suit the context of Australian classrooms where Indigenous students learn under the guidance of non-Indigenous teachers. In introducing this new model of tandem, I follow Calvert (2010, p. 170), Ciekanski and Kleppin (2017, p. 139), and Reymond and Tardieu (2001, p. 31) who have reminded us that the established tandem principles have to be understood more as guidelines which can be flexible to suit any specific context. I will show how the student-educator tandem model can support the development of autonomous, active, individualised learning pathways and foreign language learning through authentic interaction

in a way similar to what Steinig has sketched.

I chose the term *educator* in my tandem model to encompass the wide range of professionals involved in education: mentors, tutors, boarding house parents, inclusion support assistants, classroom assistants and classroom teachers. For ease of reading, I consistently use the singular since it is usually one educator working with a group of Indigenous students in student-educator tandem.

## **2.1 In Search of Cooperative Language**

### **Learning Models Between Peers: Precursors and Related Models of Tandem and Student-Educator Tandem**

#### **2.1.1 The Peer Teaching Model of**

#### ***Zweierschaftslernen***

The title of Steinig's 1985 publication *Schüler machen Fremdsprachenunterricht* [Students make foreign language lessons] promises a way for students to create their own language lessons. Steinig's work is about putting students in charge of foreign language instruction at school. Steinig places his model in the theoretical vicinity of Freire (1970), Illich (1972) and Otto (1933) whose publications make clear that teaching should be a shared task with greater learner autonomy than had been granted to learners previously.

Particularly Otto's (1933) concept of "selbstgerichtetes Lernen" [self-directed learning] (p. 248) has been an inspiration for Steinig's studies. Otto (1933) distinguishes between spontaneous learning, "Spontaneität" [spontaneity], which includes a feeling of responsibility on the part of the learner, from the more passive "Reaktivität" [reactivity], an activity under and dependent on the guidance of others. Otto (1933) has called this

“fremdgerichtetes Lernen” [foreign-directed learning] (p. 233). Languages were a typical case of “fremdgerichtetes Lernen” because the teacher determined the type, timings and order of all activities and acted as the authority on the exactitude of the target language (pp. 266-267).

Contrarily to this, the freedom of spontaneous learning is for Otto (1933) the only possible way of teacher-based instruction that respects the dignity of any individual as a human being governed by reason, the so-called *Vernunftmensch*. This means the teacher allows students to participate in the process of guiding them (p. 248). This process allows for what is now commonly referred to as motivation in second language learning (see Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 2001). Applied to language learning as Steinig (1985) has envisaged it, rather than speaking as prompted by textbook instructions or at a teacher's request, free conversations with peers allow students to explore their interests independently.

Further inspired by earlier experiments such as the Bell-Lancaster model (Bell, 1805), the American model of the One-room school (Allen, 1976), Kaufmann's (1977) “Freies Lernen” [free learning] during French lessons in Switzerland and peer teaching in primary school (Cazden, Cox, Dickinson, Steinberg, & Stone, 1982) which all granted students increased freedom in their own learning and space to collaborate with their peers, Steinig elaborated a classroom-based peer teaching model which preempts many of the features and benefits of tandem learning. Some of the ideas represented in the models Steinig quoted as his inspiration are mirrored in other well-known advances into free learning (see Neill, 1960; Rogers, 1969; 1983).

At the centre of the learning partnership called *Zweierschaft*, literally *two-ship*, is the idea that older students, who have had more formal instruction and are thus more proficient in the target language, teach younger students. This teaching takes the form of one-to-one conversation in the language to be learnt. The role of the teacher becomes that of an advisor. Through short consulting sessions, the teacher guides students facing obstacles in their teaching and learning of the language. After setting out the initial conditions of peer teaching pair work, the advisor's role, according to Steinig (1985), is predominantly to ensure the five

principles guiding this approach are adhered to: “individualise learning, intensify learning and activate the learner, place the student in charge of teaching, organise learning autonomously, integrate social relationships into the learning process” (p. 52).

To examine how these principles can be put into practice, Steinig conducted two studies: One with private tuition students learning English at two German schools, the second one with learners of German in the Netherlands. Following the encouraging results of these trials, Steinig (1985) came to see his model as a methodology in itself. In his view, the methodology underlying foreign language instruction was a mere “crutch” (p. 54), necessary in classroom-based instruction due to a lack of sufficient individualised attention to each pupil. In one-to-one instruction such as enabled in *Zweierschaften*, students could develop their own strategies as needed, much as they do in tandem interactions.

That being an advisor rather than a teacher is nuanced and challenging work with the need for more training became clear in Steinig's scenarios from the 1980s and is still a request made by tandem scholars today (Ciekanski, 2017, p. 138; Cravageot & Lipp, 2017, p. 93). Steinig's (1985) five principles have been subsumed under the categories of learner autonomy and reciprocity which constitute the two pillars of tandem work. In student-educator tandem, the five principles are actualised and amplified through the relational and cultural dimension. Intensive, individualised, autonomous, active and social learning with peer teaching elements is congruent with the principles of tandem learning in its traditional form as well as with the student-educator version of tandem adapted for Indigenous languages. Social learning and motivation have been found to be strong correlates of Steinig's *Zweierschaften* which also play a crucial role in tandem learning.

## 2.1.2 Developing Social Relationships Through Teaching and Learning With Peers

Motivation research was still in its infancy when Steinig conducted his studies. It is therefore useful to view Steinig's work through the lens of social psychology as actualised in more recent relevant studies. Deci's and Ryan's (2012) self-determination theory has been widely accepted as a key contributor to the contemporary understanding of human motivation. It links human motivational dispositions to the three psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2012). When applied to the work of educators and education systems, it follows that they must support students' feelings of competence, autonomy and relatedness. All models of peer learning presented in this chapter fulfill this proposition: *Zweierschaften*, same-class tandem as elaborated by Kriebitzsch (2013), tandem learning and student-educator tandem.

Social learning as proposed by Steinig (1985) is to be understood as the acquisition of social skills. Two skills in particular have emerged from interviews and whole class discussions with participating students: taking on responsibility for others and developing or fostering willingness and enthusiasm for helping others. These social experiences were found to contribute directly to the participants' motivation (p. 165) and are echoed in the reciprocity principle formulated by tandem scholars (e.g. Brammerts, 2010, p. 10; Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 22). Taking on responsibility for others and learning how to help others have thus been set as explicit learning goals for *Zweierschaftslernen* (Steinig, 1985, p. 161).

To consider these learning goals in a wider social context, Steinig (1985) has compared the authentic conversations in the *Zweierschaft* to a child's language acquisition within a family. What the child says is more interesting to the listener than how it is said. To which degree utterances meet criteria of grammaticality is of lesser importance in a natural language acquisition situation where for instance error correction is generally a gentle and subtle process. Following this comparison, he found that social connections naturally



developed between the members of each learner pair due to a number of identifiable factors (p. 57).

Primarily, the lack of an authoritarian relationship in favour of a mutually beneficial practice within the *Zweierschaft* was a positive factor (Steinig, 1985, p. 84). Students who took on the expert role or who worked as tutors found the experience enriching as it allowed them to “review, refresh and deepen their own knowledge” (Steinig, 1985, p. 87), the same as Comenius (2018) had noted in his *Didactica magna* in 1657 (p. 117). This was possible since students’ own knowledge about the topics at hand was still in flux, “noch Teil eines nicht abgeschlossenen dynamischen Aneignungsprozesses” [still part of an unfinished, dynamic acquisition process] (Steinig, 1985, p. 89). The students were aware that as tutors or peer teachers, they were developing their ability to explain problems autonomously and deal with other people in an understanding and patient manner while learning to appreciate the personality of their tutee (Steinig, 1985, pp. 88-89).

To sum up, learning in a *Zweierschaft* gains a real and social dimension which in turn is motivating for the participants: When one is responsible for someone else's learning, motivation is a natural by-product. Steinig (1985) has criticised institutionalised learning as depriving students of experiencing this kind of success and motivation that goes along with teaching echoing Comenius (1657/2018, p. 118). Another point of criticism has been the existing discrepancy between life and school: “Privates Erleben und schulisches Erleben klaffen weit auseinander. ... Die Trennung von privater Sphäre und öffentlich schulischer Sphäre trägt zur Entfremdung des Schülers bei” [there is a wide gap between private experience and experience at school. ... The separation between private sphere and public sphere at school contributes to an alienation of the student] (Steinig, 1985, p. 113). This separation could hinder motivation because meaning has been found to be “the prime motivator” in educational settings (Taylor, Cooper-Thomas, & Peterson, 2015, p. 46).

Alienating, meaningless educational experiences can be countered through peer tutoring in the *Zweierschaftslernen* model. The open conversational style can void any clichés

of classroom interaction and enlarges the behavioural repertoire of all students (Steinig, 1985, p. 130). *Zweierschaft* also eliminates the perceived separation between school and private life through relationship building. This is because the conversations with a peer tutor have a higher potential to touch on personal interests than textbook dialogues or grammar exercises.

All these examples illustrate what is now known as relatedness in Deci's and Ryan's (2012) self-determination theory which Taylor et al. (2015) have described in this way:

The extent to which students buy into, or feel related to, the social structure in which they learn will affect how completely they take on the logic of the social structure as their own, such as recognizing the value of assignments. (p. 44)

Through the actions and factors described by Steinig (1985), individual students "are meaningfully socially connected to the people or communities which structure the task" (Taylor et al., 2015, p. 44), since, in cooperative models, the peers structure the task directly themselves.

To conclude the considerations on the social learning benefits of *Zweierschaftslernen* it is worth mentioning that Steinig (1985) discerned a significant gender difference in his two studies. He attributed this finding to the different socialisation of boys and girls in Germany and the Netherlands in the 1980s. Girls were more frequently encouraged to help others and were therefore more successful peer teachers whereas many boys lacked this kind of awareness because they had not been encouraged in the same way. According to Steinig's (1985) observations, sometimes boys had felt emboldened to be self-reliant rather than socially aware. For some boys, helping others was considered a weakness (p. 160). Whether this applies to student-educator tandem or tandem in general is a question which is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Only boys participated in the exploratory study in the Northern Territory and the subsequent study in South Australia. As explained in the research protocols, the reasons for this were of a practical, logistical nature, not based on gender bias. To this date, there appear to be no specific studies on gender differences in tandem practice.

## 2.1.3 Increased Motivation Through Individualised Learning Pathways in Peer Teaching

Canadian researcher Gardner was the first to work on the notion of motivation. He found that motivation was associated to four key notions: “a goal, effortful behaviour, a desire to attain the goal and favourable attitudes toward the activity in question” (Gardner, 1985, p. 50, as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 350). Before delving into the motivating factors afforded by peer instruction, a descriptive definition of motivation provided by Patrick and Mantzicopoulos (2015) which further builds upon Gardner’s findings, shall frame the subsequent examples:

Individuals’ motivation is observable from their behaviors: choices made, energy exerted, extent of persistence, care taken, and thoughtfulness applied. Specifically, when motivated, people take on challenges, apply effort, continue with a problem, topic or issue even after making errors or incurring set-backs and are thoughtful and strategic. (p. 67)

Gardner’s (1985) “effortful behaviour” translates to “people take on challenges, apply effort, continue with a problem, topic or issue even after making errors or incurring set-backs and are thoughtful and strategic” in Patrick’s and Mantzicopoulos’ definition.

In a school context, this means that students should want to engage in the activities proposed by the teacher. This want, Gardner’s (1985) “desire to attain the goal”, is the conative function of the human mind, one of its most basic aspects, and plays a considerable role in determining how successful students will be in any given learning situation (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 2). The activities and/or their outcomes should be meaningful, enjoyable and feasible in order to be considered motivating (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 8). Only then can proposed activities enable students to experience what Gardner (1985) has termed “favourable attitudes towards the activity in question”. These defining points surface at multiple instances in models of peer

instruction. For the expert tutor, the idea that they have been asked to instruct a younger student implies that they are good at the language, or at least sufficiently proficient to impart useful knowledge to a younger student. The social relationships discussed in the section above ensure a degree of enjoyment and meaning derived from the responsibility for another learner, thus engendering “favourable attitudes towards the activity” (Gardner, 1985, p. 50, as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 350).

Apart from social relationships correlating with motivation, students in Steinig’s (1985) studies emphasised the positive, motivating experience of a fear-free atmosphere during *Zweierschaftslernen* allowing them experimentation with the language (p. 185). Steinig (1985) made similar observations when examining the common model of “Nachhilfe” in Germany, private tuition given by older students to younger students, paid for by the parents of the tutee. His observations suggested that the tuition model was preferable to classroom instruction due to a nicer, more individualised and personalised learning atmosphere. Working with an older student as a tutor was found to be less anxiety-producing, more efficient and less stressful (p. 79; see Dörnyei, 2001, p. 16, p. 141) and the older student felt motivated when the younger student made improvements (p. 55; see Dörnyei, 2001, p. 137).

Applying self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2012) to the example of *Zweierschaften* has shown that social relatedness is created through the intrinsically motivating cooperation between peers. But what about the other two essential components of motivation, competence and autonomy? Competence is fostered in both the ‘expert’ student and the student receiving tuition or peer instruction. Autonomy is inherent in the peer instruction models because content and mode of delivery are largely decided upon by the students themselves, the same as in tandem learning. The fact that cooperative peer teaching models can fulfill the three basic psychological needs underpins their positive impact on motivation. Nevertheless Dörnyei (2001) has warned: “So much is going on in a classroom at the same time that no single motivational principle can possibly capture this complexity” (p.

13) In language learning specifically, much depends on the location and its requirements for certain languages (p. 15). Furthermore, students' motivation often fluctuates over time (p. 19).

Despite the potential of Steinig's model given that measurable improvement of pupil's spoken expression occurred after only eight weeks (Steinig, 1985, p. 168), a caveat is necessary with regard to implementing *Zweierschaftslernen* in the classroom without appropriate preparation. Motivation and effective use of time do not automatically follow from merely setting up pair work in a peer teaching framework if the students are not used to self-directed, independent study (Steinig, 1985, p. 172). Similarly, Little (1996) has pointed out that too little guidance for new practitioners of tandem can mean that learners who lack a sufficient degree of autonomy find tandem learning difficult and even unsustainable (p. 28). As with all new approaches, they have to be made explicit to the learners and practised before the professional educator can expect them to work smoothly. Before starting his project, Steinig (1985) wrote a letter to the students to make the rationale, conditions and instructions for this new mode of working in the German lessons explicit (p. 134), preempting one of manifold motivational strategies suggested by Dörnyei (2001, p. 144). Steinig (1985) concluded that further studies were needed to finetune the modalities of peer teaching and to confirm initial positive results (p. 204). My study of student-educator tandem in Australia follows in the footsteps of these incipient explorations of cooperative peer learning and its motivational correlates.

## **2.1.4 Tandem Among Peers Within the Same Language Class**

Similarly to Steinig, Kriebitzsch (2013) has recognised deficits regarding conversational skills in classroom-based language instruction in Germany (pp. 2-3). Under the umbrella term of *tandem* she has introduced a very practical tool for classroom interaction in English to promote speaking among students in the same class and motivate all students. Her

publication on grammar-based tandem activities follows a “paradigm shift” and an “orientation towards competencies” in the German federal unit planners and curricula. The ease of integrating the exercises into existing lesson plans in “Fremdsprachenunterricht” [foreign language instruction] is evident from the ready to copy worksheets, but Kriebitzsch (2013) has pointed out that the activities cannot replace free flowing conversation among students that evolves spontaneously (p. 3).

Students in the tandem activity proposed by Kriebitzsch use a double-sided worksheet with about eight typical sentences focussing on only one grammatical phenomenon at the time, for example 3<sup>rd</sup> person -s or control of verb forms in a particular tense. Two students sitting opposite each other hold the worksheet up between them. One side of the worksheet contains a sentence with a gap, the other side shows the same sentence complete with the correct form. This is reversed for the next sentence. One student is thus able to correct the other systematically through this highly scaffolded conversation along prescribed grammatical phenomena (pp. 4-5).

Even though the term *tandem* has been chosen for this classroom-based interaction among peers, the activity described by Kriebitzsch (2013) is not based on the established notion of tandem as discussed by prominent scholars in the field such as Brammerts (1996, 2010) Kleppin (2002, 2003), Reymond and Tardieu (2001) and Wolff (2018). However, the worksheet activity seems like the next best option when speakers of the target language English are not available in most German classrooms. By providing students with the model answers, this grammar tandem model simulates what English speakers could do for their tandem partners. Kriebitzsch equips her students with the tools to give meaningful feedback to their peer or correct their peer immediately in necessary.

The principles of Kriebitzsch's (2013) model are in some ways identical to the established notion of tandem and to Steinig's (1985) *Zweierschaftslernen* as the following quote has illustrated: “By working in pairs, the tandem activities offer a protected space in which students are enabled to experiment in the language that is still new to them and also

reduce fear of the unknown” (p. 4). Students’ motivation increases as a result of what Kriebitzsch (2013) has called “erlebte Handlungsfähigkeit” [the experiencing of agency] (p. 7). In this self-paced, self-directed (Kriebitzsch, 2013, p. 8) activity, students in the same English class are thus assigned and take turns performing the exact roles which exist interchangeably in a tandem pair. One partner is a master-speaker, albeit assisted through the use of worksheets containing explicit language information. The other partner is an apprentice of the language in question, experimenting in a communicative situation with an expert peer.

## **2.2 The Established Notion of Tandem and its Actualisations: A Literature Review**

### **2.2.1 The Development of the Tandem Method and its Contexts of use**

A first step towards the didactically purposeful use of the tandem idea can be traced back to the 1960s and the Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk/Office franco-allemand pour la Jeunesse, DFJW/OFAJ (Brammerts, 1996, p. 4; Brammerts, 2010, p. 15; Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 15) which continues to offer tandem-based youth exchanges (Jardin, 2017, p. 3). The development of tandem language courses for adults within a tourism scenario started in Spain in the 1970s (Brammerts, 2010, p. 16). It quickly gathered momentum as Wolff and his team of teachers started to provide materials and consulting services to independent tandems. This activity eventually resulted in a network of TANDEM branded language schools, now operating commercially worldwide. In the meantime, Wolff also set up the *Tandem Fundazioa*, a non-for-profit organisation (Brammerts, 2010, p. 16; Wolff, 2018). As the next step, Wolff has envisaged moulding tandem activities as peace building journeys and is looking for sponsors for Peace Tandem courses and exchanges (<https://tandemcity.info/>).

Initially, the autonomous learning aspect of tandem made adult learners the primary users of the method (Calvert, 2010, p. 177). First experiences using tandem for high school students independent from the DFJW/OFAJ structures were collected during student exchanges in the 1990s (Schlang-Redmond, 2010, p. 181). The results of these tandems were successful and showed that students were able to work autonomously in tandem pairs. Since, many schools have used internet tandem, especially through e-mail (Calvert, 2010, p. 177).

Between 1992 and 1996, the tandem concept has been used in a much broader scope through an internet-based project called International Tandem Network hosted by the University of Bochum to assist people in finding a tandem partner. From 1998 to 2001, the LINGUA-D project for Tandem Language Learning Partnerships for Schools in 16 European secondary schools was established (Brammerts, 2010, p. 16; Calvert, 2010, p. 177; Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 16). With the expansion of the internet, the tandem method is reaching more language learners than ever before.

Contact between tandem partners which initially happened via e-mail exchanges and online forums (Brammerts, 1996, p. 4) can occur through other commercial online tools such as the service [matorixmatch4tandem](http://www.matorix.com/en/matorixmatch/matorix4tandem) ([www.matorix.com/en/matorixmatch/matorix4tandem](http://www.matorix.com/en/matorixmatch/matorix4tandem)) or an application for mobile devices available from [www.tandem.net](http://www.tandem.net). The tandem application, “crafted by an international team of language hackers based in Berlin” and launched in 2017, allegedly has two million users worldwide ([www.tandem.net](http://www.tandem.net)).

These developments seem to have replaced Brammerts’ International Tandem Network. The application “helps you find native speakers of almost any language who want to learn your language in exchange” and also offers local “drop-in” branches called “Language Exchanges” in 20 international locations where tandem partners can be found. Advertising slogans emphasise the native-like aspect of language learning combined with the mobile study mode: “Practice listening, improve your pronunciation, and learn to speak a foreign language like a local – no matter where you are” ([www.tandem.net](http://www.tandem.net)). Circumventing e-mail, skype and other online communication channels, tandem partners can connect directly through the



application. Tandem.net also offer paid lessons by professional tutors.

With a blog and “revamped” profiles of prospective tandem partners, the application bears a resemblance to facebook and other social media. Its ambitious mission targets an online audience “to build a global, mobile-first language learning community that empowers everyone, everywhere to speak any language” (<https://www.tandem.net/about-tandem-language-exchange/>). The application has received a google play award in 2017 and has been copyrighted in 2018 (© 2018 Tandem - Speak Any Language). To maintain a link with one of the founding fathers of tandem, the license for the website and the application has been provided by Wolff’s *Tandem Fundazioa* (<https://tandemcity.info/history-tandem/>).

Alongside these online options, some universities still provide their own tandem partner matching agencies for their students and even extend their services to individuals who are not enrolled (<https://www.uni-kl.de/vkb/sprachkurse/tandem/>). Through the use of detailed questionnaires about motivational and personal profiles of the tandem seekers and the provision of resources for tandem practitioners, many educational institutions have put their own twist on tandem. Some universities present tandem with an emphasis on peace-building and intercultural understanding as part of ERASMUS exchange programmes between tertiary students within the EU (<https://www.uni-kl.de/vkb/sprachkurse/tandem/was-ist-tandem/>). Another goal at the tertiary education level has been to use the linguistic and cultural learning opportunities provided by tandem to promote the integration of foreign nationals within their campus communities. Tandem learning is used with these goals in mind for instance at the University of Saarland in Germany and University of La Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris 3 in France (<https://www.uni-saarland.de/global/deutschkurse/tandem.html>; <http://www.univ-paris3.fr/accueil-projet-tandem-p3-2016-2017-247557.kjsp?RH=1179926084097>).

Other institutions, such as the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, go even one step further and provide individual tandem learner coaching. In Bochum, observations of tandem pairs across different settings had revealed a need for coaching. Even though they were very motivated in their tandem sessions, many learners did not tap into the full potential afforded by this

specific learning context. The coaching is a way to optimise tandem sessions by making the individual, autonomous learners more efficient and their learning more effective (Brammerts, 1996, p. 21; Brammerts et al., 2010, p. 53; <http://www.zfa.rub.de/ils/lernen/index.html.de>).

The two main pillars of any tandem exchanges have been maintained in all of these tandem learning options. As Woodin (2010) has summed up in her guidelines for students: reciprocity and autonomy are the only rules the partners have to keep in mind (p. 54).

Despite its proven academic benefits across a variety of contexts and the fact that most learners find tandem fun (Woodin, 2010, p. 49) the method is still not didactically established very widely in schools. A separation between learning a language and actually using it still persists in many educational institutions (Bechtel, 2003, p. 12; Brammerts, 2010, p. 9; Canagarajah, 1999, p. 12; Eckerth, 2003, p. 284; Kriebitzsch, 2013, pp. 2-3). Ciekanski (2017) has also noted the lack of any large-scale empirical study dedicated to language acquisition via tandem (p. 9). What proponents of the practice can access so far is evidence from field experience and research, such as the publications which resulted from Brammerts' two projects in the 1990s, a handbook from 2001 co-edited by Brammerts and Kleppin which now exists in its second edition since 2010, and a collection of articles published in the German-French study from 2017 by the DFJW/OFAJ which has combined practical applications of tandem with new theoretical considerations. The 2020 publication *Redefining Tandem Language and Culture Learning in Higher Education*, co-edited by Tardieu and Horgues is the most recent collection of studies on tandem learning to date. The title indicates already that from its beginnings until now, tandem learning has undergone changes and been adapted to various settings. Tardieu and Horgues (2020a) have specified that the book examines "the adaptation process Tandem has been and is still undergoing, by looking at ... the fast-evolving language learning situations along with the linguistic and sociocultural realities of an increasingly globalised world" (p. 1).

## 2.2.2 The Principle of Learner Autonomy

Autonomy has been identified as one of the key competencies schools should help their students develop in the 21st century (Miehe & Miehe, 2004, p. 73). As an explicit learning goal, the principle of autonomy can enable students to use what has been taught in the classroom in real life and become lifelong learners (Eckerth, 2003, p. 278; Miehe & Miehe, 2004, p. 19; Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 15). As Little (1996) has put it: “The effect of learner autonomy is to break down the barriers that so easily erect themselves between formal learning and the rest of the learner's life” (p. 23). Through the principle of autonomy, tandem thus facilitates a seamless transition between learning at school and learning in real life in the same way as *Zweierschaftenlernen* (Steinig, 1985, p. 113; p. 130).

Historically, Holec (1981) was one of the first to apply the concept of autonomy specifically to language learning in his pioneering publication “Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning” which he prepared for the Council of Europe in 1979. Although his work has dealt with “self-directed learning” scenarios in European adult education with various degrees of support (p. 9), his inquiry has yielded some fundamental results and considerations which are relevant for the development of the contemporary tandem notion. Holec (1981) has cited one case which resembles tandem learning as it is understood today. In this particular example, instead of audio and video recordings like in the other “experiments” (p. 27), native English speakers, who had been explicitly asked not to teach, were used as resources by a group of learners in France (p. 13, p. 32).

According to Holec (1981) a foundational premise of learner autonomy is learner-centredness: “whether a teacher is present or not as learning proceeds, it is principally the role of the learner which is the determining factor of self-directed learning” (p. 4). Consequently, there are two conditions for “autonomization of learning”. Firstly, the learner must have the ability to make sensible decisions regarding the learning process and take charge of his learning. In addition, the institutional structure must allow the learner to exercise this know-

how (p. 7) in terms of trial and error (p. 14), internal evaluation of objectives (p. 17) and even the construction of an individual language system, an idiolect (p. 21). According to Holec (1981), these processes nullify the traditional hierarchy which places the teacher above the students (p. 4) and instead facilitates the “reversal of educational poles” (p. 34). This idea resonates with Steinig’s (1985) findings on social learning (p. 52) and is revisited in student-educator tandem.

In developing the concept of learner autonomy specifically for the tandem context, the following definition by American philosopher Geoffrey Dworkin (1988) has been used as a basis:

Autonomy is conceived of as a second-order capacity of persons to reflect critically upon their first-order preferences, desires, wishes, and so forth and the capacity to accept or attempt to change these in light of higher-order preferences and values. By exercising such a capacity, persons define their nature, give meaning and coherence to their lives, and take responsibility for the kind of person they are. (p. 20, as cited in Little, 1996, p. 24)

For tandem learning this means that the desire to learn or improve one’s knowledge of a new language leads to a reflection on how exactly this can be achieved through collaboration with a native speaking partner who in turn projects the same desire onto one’s own native language.

The tandem-orientated definition of autonomy specifies that it is the repertoire of competencies of any learner to self-direct their activities, to plan, check and evaluate their learning activities in terms of content as well as process (Little, 1996, p. 23). Seen from this point of view, autonomy is not only a marker of all successful learners but also an attribute that can be acquired by all learners (Little, 1996, p. 23; Brammerts & Calvert, 2010, p. 31; Mieke & Mieke, 2004, p. 73).

Considering further benefits of autonomy on an individual level, Little (1996) has

found that “it is through the exercise of autonomy that learners integrate the knowledge and skills they acquire in formal learning contexts with the totality of what they are” (p. 23). This view of autonomy preempts what García and Li Wei (2014, p. 80, p. 89) and García and Kleyn (2016, pp. 22-23) have established as a significant benefit of translanguaging education: learners being integrating new language learning into their selves in a holistic manner.

Brammerts (2010) has defined the roles of each tandem partner in this social learning arrangement: “Jeder der beiden Tandempartner ist für das eigene Lernen selbst verantwortlich. Er allein legt fest, was er wie und wann lernen will” [Each of the two tandem partners is responsible for their own learning. He or she alone determines what, how and when he or she wants to learn] (p. 10). Methods such as goal setting and concerns such as motivation are the sole responsibility of the learner. The principle of learner autonomy thus places tandem in the vicinity of practices like home-study, reading in the target language, listening to the radio, watching TV or spending time in a country where the target language is spoken (Brammerts, 1996, p. 10). However, both partners have to cooperate in terms of content and logistics of the sessions which links the principle of autonomy to that of reciprocity (Little, 2010, pp. 19-21). Following Holec (1981, p. 4, p. 7), Little (2010) has thus specified that learning languages in a tandem scenario is a continuous approximation between self-study and learning in the classroom or in any other formal context. Through ongoing reflection upon their own learning in formal settings, learners develop an individual plan for their learning (p. 25). Despite the emphasis on individual responsibility, autonomy is always developed in interaction with others (Little, 2010, p. 19; Mieke & Mieke, 2004, p. 66), thus also has a clear social dimension in the same way Steinig (1985, p. 54) has presented. It is with this premise in mind that I now turn to a description of the principle of reciprocity.

## 2.2.3 The Principle of Reciprocity

Comparable to more general discussions of cooperative learning where the success of each individual team member is dependent on the whole team being successful (Miehe & Miehe, 2004, p. 67), definitions of the reciprocity principle tend to place emphasis on social as well as structural conditions of tandem partnerships as summed up by Brammerts (1996): “Successful learning in tandem is based on the reciprocal dependence and mutual support of the partners; both partners should contribute equally to their work together and benefit to the same extent” (p. 11).

In terms of structuring the tandem sessions, this means that the same amount of time must be dedicated to each language. Less easy to monitor is the agreement that each of the two partners must be equally invested in the success of the other in terms of preparation of the sessions and attention given to the partner (Brammerts, 1996, p. 11). Brammerts (2010) has later offered a simplified version of this definition: “Tandem learning is learning in an exchange” (p. 12). Tardieu and Horgues (2020a) have included the affective, human dimension in this understanding of reciprocity: “Tandem language learning relies heavily on the good will of both partners to take part in the exchange and to support each other in the learning process” (p. 3).

A more detailed discussion of reciprocity by Brammerts and Calvert (2010) has provided a useful starting point for understanding the exact interpersonal dynamics of reciprocity in language learning with a native speaker. Even though the basic benefit of a tandem learning partnership is obvious in the sense that each partner can learn from the other partner what he or she already masters, it is important to consider the implications of this arrangement in terms of exact modalities of the reciprocal arrangement. As communicative learning, tandem requires an uptake of any communication as an opportunity for further learning. Learners need to understand that each linguistic exchange in the tandem situation inherently bears the possibilities for practical language exercise, continuous self-evaluation

and also provides the basis for corrections and other suggestions from the partner, should this be desired (Brammerts & Calvert, 2010, p. 27).

Therefore, the biggest advantage in a tandem scenario may well be the fact that both partners understand what it is like to be in the role of the helper/teacher or in the role of the learner (Brammerts & Calvert, 2010, p. 27). Theoretically, they can also use both languages to discuss or solve a linguistic problem. Since their situation is comparable, they are both in each other's position at some point during each meeting. Consequently, the threshold for asking for help is lower compared to other language learning scenarios:

In the case of tandem learning both partners are in the role of learners, and have fewer inhibitions in expressing themselves in the foreign language than they would have in a class scenario or in relating to other native speakers. As both partners experience what it is like to be a learner of a language, they are more likely than other speakers to deal with their partner's problems with a greater sensitivity, patience and understanding.  
(Brammerts, 1996, p. 11)

In a survey with participants, Brammerts (1996) has noted an insightful statement which further illustrates reciprocity. One participant said they found it easier to ask their partner for help, because their partner also needed their help (p. 16). For Brammerts (1996), key is that both partners perceive and experience themselves as learners (p. 11) and their activity as “learning together and from each other” through authentic communication (Brammerts, 2010, p. 10). Similarly, in his observations of peer learning, Steinig (1985) has quoted many instances where it was actually a relief for the students when their peer educator or their tutor made a mistake or expressed insecurity about the correct formulation in the target language (p. 108). A tutor or more knowledgeable peer expressing doubt and insecurity is seen as something positive, presumably because authority is broken down. The tuition session feels more like problem-solving with a friend rather than a replica of the hierarchical classroom situation. As a result, Steinig (1985) noticed a “Souveränität gegenüber Fehlern”

[aplomb towards errors] (p. 149) where students no longer harboured negative feelings about inaccuracies which occurred while experimenting with the new language. The situation which ensued was comparable to L1 acquisition where errors are corrected by benevolent parents or siblings in a secure and loving family environment. Steinig (1985) has concluded that the punishment that is often associated with making errors in a formal school context disappeared during peer tutoring (p. 149) and with it the danger of developing “language anxiety” (Pavlenko, 2012, p. 464). Nevertheless, error treatment remains a sensitive area which is closely related to how the principle of reciprocity is realised between tandem partners. As such, it merits closer attention in in this theoretical discussion of tandem learning.

## **2.2.4 Error Correction in Tandem Learning**

Error treatment has become a point of controversy in second language teaching research (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 54; Canagarajah, 1999, p. 144; Hélot, 2012, p. 216; Kohn, 2016, p. 2). I will explore key arguments of the ongoing debate in more detail in the third chapter of the dissertation. Suffice it here to mention that according to newer linguistic schools of thought, the pursuit of linguistic accuracy is of less and less importance in language learning and actual language use in the face of seemingly ever-increasing plurilingual spaces, especially when such accuracy is measured against an elusive puristic native speaker standard (Cook, 2016, p. 5; García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 11; Li Wei, 2016, p. 533; Martin-Jones, Blackledge & Creese, 2012, p. 12).

Quivy’s and Tardieu’s (2002) definition has provided an insight into a more traditional conceptualisation of the error as being a deviation from the norm. Such a conceptualisation leaves the actual language learner out of the picture:

Il est juste de dire que souvent, l’erreur (terme utilisé de préférence à faute qui revêt un sens moral) est vue comme un écart par rapport à une norme. Néanmoins, une telle conception dénote une focalisation quasi exclusive



sur la langue aux dépens de l'apprenant. [It is correct to say that often, the error (preferred term used for mistake which has a moral sense) is seen as a deviation from a norm. Nevertheless, such a conception denotes an almost exclusive focus on language at the expense of the learner.] (p. 135)

Many accuracy-focused studies are firmly anchored in this type of definition and have produced some insights into error correction behaviour of classroom teachers. Such studies have suggested classifications of different types of corrections and different student responses to these (Chaudron, 1977, pp. 31-45; Lyster & Ranta, 1997, pp. 46-51; see Quivy & Tardieu, 2002, pp. 138-139).

The question of linguistic accuracy is prominent for some proponents of tandem practice. Gaßdorf (1996), for example, has suggested using a “Fehlerprotokoll” [error protocol] (p. 66), a list drawn up by each tandem learner according to a typology of individual errors. This list is to be reviewed after each tandem session in order to reduce and possibly eliminate errors in written expression in subsequent exchanges. However, for other tandem scholars, linguistic accuracy is less relevant and the controversy about receiving inaccurate input from the tandem partner becomes a moot point. When learners at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany have asked: “Lernt man vom Tandempartner nicht auch Falsches?” [Doesn't one also learn wrong things from the tandem partner?] (p. 98), Brammerts and Kleppin (2010) have replied in the affirmative. The same as any speaker, the tandem partner will use regional, social and individual linguistic varieties which may deviate from the standard norm taught at schools and other institutional settings. From certain viewpoints, this use of varieties would translate as the native-speakers making mistakes (Brammerts & Kleppin, 2010, p. 98). Hence, Reymond and Tardieu (2001) have opted for the term “usager ‘relativement expert’ ” [relatively expert user] when describing the native-speaking tandem partner who inevitably draws upon his or her local culture which is influenced by economic and social factors (p. 28).

The advice by Brammerts and Kleppin (2010) is that rather than being afraid of

learning something incorrect, one should always reflect critically upon what is heard or learnt in tandem (p. 98). How then, do tandem learners deal with each other's errors and how do they offer each other help when erroneous utterances occur in conversation?

In general terms, Quivy and Tardieu (2002) have noted the possibility of positively reframing the concept of error: "C'est grâce à l'erreur que l'apprenant parvient à se créer son propre système de représentation de la langue" [Thanks to the error, the learner manages to create their own system of representation of a language] (p. 136).

If applied to tandem learning, these arguments make it obvious yet again that error correction goes back to the principle of reciprocity. Understanding the errors which occur in the learning process of one's partner, means one learns as well. By the same token, it is important not to correct every single mistake as this can quickly become overwhelming (Brammerts & Hedderich, 1996, p. 53) and in the worst case discouraging. The point of tandem is not to produce a flawless text or to discover all the mistakes (Brammerts & Hedderich, 1996, p. 59). In order to avoid disappointment or misunderstandings, Woodin (1996) has advised to discuss how one would like to be corrected, if at all, very early on in the tandem pair formation (p. 56). Similarly, Kleppin (2003) has emphasised the need for tandem partners to understand that "permanente Fragen" [questions on a permanent basis] (p. 190) are an integral part of their cooperation. Mutual questions touch as much on the content- and language-based aspects of the exchanges as they are necessary in order to fully tap the intercultural learning potential of tandem (Kleppin, 2003, p. 190).

## **2.2.5 Tandem Learning as Intercultural Learning**

Apart from enhancing linguistic competency, tandem exchanges constitute an ideal setting for learning about another culture (Bechtel, 2003, p. 12; Kleppin, 2003, pp. 190-192). Byram (1997), a leading scholar in the field of intercultural education, has defined intercultural learning through four *savoirs* which comprise detailed descriptions of

knowledge, skills and attitudes (pp. 57-63). Following this, Byram, Golubeva, Hui and Wagner (2017) have explained that foreign language education which includes teaching for intercultural communicative competence (ICC) must include “critical cultural awareness; a focus on others who live beyond our national boundaries and speak another language; comparative analysis of our situation and theirs” (p. xxiii). To refine this understanding further, Byram et al. (2017) have also specified that observable behaviours are the best indicators of people’s interculturality as a state of mind which at the same time shows people’s “ability to act interculturally” (p. xix). Intercultural communicative competence as described by Byram et al. (2017) is completely compatible with tandem learning.

This initial theory of intercultural communicative competence has since been extended to intercultural citizenship which “occurs when people who perceive themselves as having different cultural affiliations from one another interact and communicate, and then analyse and reflect on this experience and act on that reflection by engaging in civic or political activity” (Barrett, 2016, p. vii). While the explicit engagement in the civic or political arena is not part of the tandem concept, it is definitely possible that tandem learning could plant the seeds for such activity to be taken up by the participants in the future. All other elements of Barrett’s definition apply.

While the case studies on intercultural citizenship collated by Byram et al. (2017) focus on classroom instruction where learners of different cultural backgrounds do not necessarily meet in person, a number of scholars have reflected upon intercultural learning specifically in the context of tandem where partners meet face-to-face or virtually. Bechtel (2003) has provided an empirical foundation of tandem learning as a model of intercultural learning (pp. 90-92). He collated the statements of DFJW/OFAJ tandem course participants and completed discourse analysis of 12 hours of recorded tandem interactions on the topics of cultural particularities and differences or experiences abroad (Bechtel, 2003, p. 320).

To better frame the concept of intercultural learning, Bechtel (2003) first conducted a meta-study of current literature on the notion of culture. He found a consensus on two

understandings related to culture as used for pedagogical purposes. Firstly, “Gleichwertigkeit der Kulturen” [the equality of all cultures] (p. 51) was recognised as a foundational idea. Secondly, a society’s everyday interactions, routines, and the rules which govern them were also seen as being central to the notion of culture for intercultural learning (ibid., p. 51).

Another recurring element in the current literature concomitant with the concept of intercultural citizenship (Byram et al., 2017) is the importance of being able to relativise one’s own cultural stance in order to achieve acceptable forms of agency in the target culture (Kleppin, 2002, p. 168; 2003, p. 192; Steinmüller, 1991, p. 14; Woodin, 2010, p. 45). Woodin (2010) has explained this dimension of intercultural learning in tandem as follows:

Um interkulturelle Bewusstheit zu erreichen, muss der Sprachenlerner seine eigene Kultur verstehen und relativieren.” / “Und um interkulturelle Kompetenz zu erlangen, benötigt der Lerner nicht nur Wissen und Bewusstheit, sondern auch die Fähigkeit, innerhalb einer Kultur angemessen zu handeln. [In order to achieve intercultural awareness, the language learner has to understand his or her own culture and relativise it. / And in order to achieve intercultural competence, the learner needs not only knowledge and awareness, but also the ability to act appropriately within a culture.] (pp. 45-46)

Similarly, Quivy and Tardieu (2002) have specified:

Le point focal étant l’échange, l’interaction par la communication tandem permet d’une manière très « humaine » de relativiser pour passer d’un ethnocentrisme linguistique et culturel à une appréciation réelle d’autres langues et d’autres cultures. [The focal point being the exchange, the interaction through communication, tandem allows to relativise in a very humane way in order to move from linguistic and cultural ethnocentrism towards a true appreciation of other languages and cultures.] (p. 36)

Empirically, Bechtel (2003) found that all tandem partners he observed readily acted as

representatives of their country, but this was focused on their everyday living experiences there (p. 322). He also found that, in general, tandem participants were in search of differences and commonalities alike during their exchanges with their partners (p. 366). However, the seven case studies Bechtel (2003) has presented illustrate very clearly the differences in each interaction. Therefore, intercultural learning in tandem appears to be a complex, individual process which cannot be predicted or influenced from outside (p. 365).

With a focus on exploring another culture autonomously (Bechtel, 2003, p. 365), internal and external perspectives are taken on by the tandem partners respectively, allowing them to reflect upon their own culture not only from their own, but also from their partner's point of view (Bechtel, 2003, p. 364) without the pretence of representativity of the information exchanged (Bechtel, 2003, p. 366). In this way, tandem exchanges can take into account regional and local versions and perceptions of culture (Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 28). This perspective taking can result in replacing a simplified image of the target culture with a more nuanced one (Bechtel, 2003, p. 366).

Based on his empirical findings, Bechtel (2003) has formulated a concluding definition of intercultural learning in tandem as “das Ereignis einer kulturell und individuell spezifischen, einmaligen, in dieser Form nicht wiederholbaren Begegnung zweier Tandempartner” [the event of a culturally and individually specific, unique and non-repeatable encounter of two tandem partners] (p. 367).

To establish a link with student-educator tandem and to complement Bechtel's (2003) definition, it is useful to consider an explanation offered by Reymond and Tardieu (2001) about the benefits of the intercultural nature of the tandem exchange within school contexts:

Tandem implique nécessairement altruisme et tolérance. Il permet de relativiser sa propre culture et sa propre langue, de quitter l'ethnocentrisme pour l'esprit de découverte et de curiosité. Il permet de développer la solidarité avec un jeune du même âge, dans une démarche d'entraide mutuelle. [Tandem necessarily implies altruism and tolerance. It allows

one to put into perspective one's own culture and one's own language, to leave ethnocentrism behind for a spirit of discovery and curiosity. It allows students to develop solidarity with a peer in an approach based on helping each other.] (pp. 27-28)

In this sense, as Reymond and Tardieu (2001) have stated that “tandem est un extraordinaire outil pour ouvrir l'école sur le monde” [a wonderful tool to open the school to the real world] (p. 31). This can be a motto for the model of student-educator tandem which opens urban learning environments to the realities of the bush through the voices of Indigenous students. To achieve this and introduce tandem into the institutional urban boarding school context where Indigenous learners and their non-Indigenous educators meet, cooperate and sometimes clash, the basic principles and related concepts of tandem learning have to be modified.

## **2.3 An Adaptation of the Tandem Principles and Related Practices in Student-Educator Tandem**

### **2.3.1 A Different Setting for Tandem Learning**

While tandem-like models of instruction like the master-apprentice scheme<sup>6</sup> or Both-ways learning are already in use in some institutions in Australia (<http://www.batchelor.edu.au>), tandem learning has not been trialled in Indigenous education yet. The only programme with a related approach is the Master-Apprentice Programme (MAP). Developed by a nonprofit organisation called Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival (AICLS) has been described by Hinton (2011) as “a rather informal

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<sup>6</sup> The master-apprentice scheme has been used in languages where there were still speakers left and younger heritage speakers eager to learn in the effort of language reinvigoration such as Kurna (<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/>).

program that can be readily varied according to the situation. The teams trained by AICLS usually consist of as little as one master (a fluent speaker) and one apprentice (a dedicated learner), and a mentor to help guide their work through occasional phone calls and visits” (p. 314). A pairing between an older speaker of the language and a younger learner establishes a “real partnership between generations” (Hinton, 2011, p. 315). A mentor can also be present in traditional tandem as explained by Brammerts and Kleppin (2010), although this is usually a person external to the tandem pair (p. 95). In student-educator tandem, an educator takes on the mentor role as they plan and guide the sessions.

The ease of application of tandem principles by anyone who is not an education professional has often been pointed out by tandem scholars (Brammerts, 2010, p. 9). Brammerts (1996) has clarified that the tandem partners usually do not have a teaching qualification (p. 3), so a systematic approach to grammar or evaluation of the partner's progress cannot be expected. The goal of student-educator tandem is not to replicate classroom instruction. Tandem thus lends itself to the present context where some of the teaching responsibility is in the hands of students.

As I have stated in the discussion of the traditional, recognised concept of tandem, it most commonly occurs as an accompaniment to language courses at school, university or professional adults' self study (Brammerts, 1996, p. 2; Brammerts, 2010, p. 15; Ciekanski, 2017, p. 9; Kleppin, 2002, p. 165, 2003, p. 187; Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 16). In contrast, due to inexistence or inaccessibility of language courses in a majority of Australian Indigenous languages (<https://ulpa.edu.au/where-can-study-indigenous-languages/>), student-educator tandem learning becomes a course replacement for the educator. Logistically, it is often the only language learning activity possible apart from self-study. For the students, student-educator tandem learning remains one component of their language learning in addition to formal ESL or English instruction, the same as conventional tandem (Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 16).

When integrating tandem into schools, Calvert (2010) has put the onus on the educators:

Viel hängt vom Einfallsreichtum und der Phantasie der Lehrer ab und ihrer Fähigkeit, die Tandemprinzipien, Hinweise und Materialien so für ihren Kontext anzupassen, dass Tandem für ihre Schüler zu einer handhabbaren, bedeutsamen, flexiblen und ertragreichen Lernerfahrung wird. [A lot depends on the creativity and imagination of the teachers and their ability to adapt the tandem principles, instructions and materials for their context in such a way that it makes tandem a feasible, meaningful, flexible and productive learning experience.] (p. 179)

This is the kind of learning experience student-educator tandem for Indigenous languages can make possible. The genesis of the model goes back to my own experiences working with Indigenous students where I used conventional ESL strategies for many years without giving much consideration to my students' home languages. student-educator tandem is the result of a search which finally led to creative and flexible adaptations of tandem principles. These adaptations require the creation of a set of materials suited to the particular micro-context of individual students and their home language/s in order to enable not only an enriching and meaningful but also a feasible learning and teaching experience which then may positively influence motivation (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 140).

To add a pragmatic angle to the exploration of institutional settings for tandem learning, it is worthwhile considering Brammerts' and Calvert's (2010) overview of how conventional forms of tandem have been organised (pp. 28-31). Following their classification, student-educator tandem falls into the category of "*Präsenztandem*" where both participants are present in the same location and have a face-to-face conversation. This kind of tandem exchange involves mostly oral communication, however, if need be, written materials can be used, particularly for increased textual understanding or note-taking (Brammerts & Calvert, 2010, p. 28). "*Präsenztandem*" has been used to promote integration of foreign learners



(*ausländische Lerner*) into new countries (Brammerts & Calvert, 2010, p. 29). Comparably, student-educator tandem facilitates the familiarisation of educators with the foreign culture of their students even though the participants are geographically located in the same country, Australia.

In contrast to eTandem or “*Distanztandem*” (Brammerts & Calvert, 2010, p. 29), *Präsenztandem* has the advantage that mimics and gestures are visible during the communicative process. Mimics and gestures can make mutual understanding easier. Helpful interventions, such as clarification requests, repetitions and corrections, can occur spontaneously (Brammerts & Calvert, 2010, p. 28). Due to cultural ramifications, this advantage is not entirely applicable to student-educator tandem for Indigenous languages. Making eye contact and using gestures in Indigenous cultures can have very different implications depending on tribal customs and might not always be facilitative of mutual understanding (McCormack & Nganbe, 2008).

This typical clash between classroom expectations and cultural norms has been explained by Philips (1993) in a study of what she has termed “invisible culture” (p. 127). When working with American Indian children in Warm Springs, Philips (1993) noticed among others the issue of direct eye contact – an observation which can easily be transferred to many Australian contexts. Misunderstandings can occur when educators see the avoidance of eye contact on the part of the students as a sign of lacking politeness, whereas for the students it is a sign of respect or decency (McCormack & Nganbe, 2008).

Philips (1993) has also noted “the general uncertainty Indian children experience as they find they do not understand the teacher, and the teacher does not understand them” (p. 149). Hence, for student-educator tandem, the claim that face-to-face tandem allows for enhanced communication needs to be mitigated and rephrased as follows: Tandem partners can immediately react to one another provided sufficient familiarity exists between the student(s) and the educator in terms of cultural expectations. It is possible that such familiarity only ensues after several student-educator tandem sessions, so that participants may be able to

break what Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy and Ramesh (2009) have termed the “vicious circle of language disadvantage” (p. 284).

To end on a positive note, I conclude with Calvert (2010) who has summed up the benefits of tandem in a school setting: Tandem enables authentic, real communication; it motivates; it prepares students for life-long learning; it promotes learner autonomy; it enables a new role for teachers – that of the coach; it brings to life the concept of intercultural learning; it opens up opportunities for interdisciplinary learning (see Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 30); it offers flexibility; it adds to or augments schools' prestige (see Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 30); it promotes reflective learning and critical thinking; it promotes social learning and contributes to the advancement of technical skills through internet tandem (Calvert, 2010, p. 178).

As the following sections of this chapter and the two case studies (see chapters six and seven) will show in more detail, all these advantages can apply to student-educator tandem. A slight difference concerning technical skills exists, though. Students' technical skills in student-educator tandem mostly target accessing online resources such as the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages (LAAL), in order to locate materials in their home languages (<https://livingarchive.cdu.edu.au/>). More significant modifications are in order for the principle of learner autonomy in the emerging theoretical framework of student-educator tandem.

## **2.3.2 Adapting the Principle of Learner Autonomy: The Rationale of Educator-Guided Sessions**

Adapting the principle of learner autonomy is interdependent with logistical ramifications as well as students' developmental needs. Autonomy has been posited as one of the three basic psychological needs linked to motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2012) which traditional tandem has no problem fulfilling. In contrast, the integration of student-educator

tandem within the constraints of school schedules means moving away from the established tandem principle of learner autonomy, where each learner is free to decide on the content, time, mode of learning and the assistance expected from a tandem partner (Brammerts, 2010, p. 10). This is not unique to student-educator tandem but another illustration of how the principle of autonomy “has been challenged by the institutional integration of tandem learning practice” from its very beginnings to the present day, particularly in higher education settings (Tardieu & Horgues, 2020b, p. 270).

In student-educator tandem, the responsibility for and the monitoring of the learning process lie almost exclusively with the educator who prepares materials and sets goals in line with students' linguistic profiles and areas of interest. Due to the age of the students and their relatively low exposure to institutional learning as evidenced in the student profiles in chapter four, the educator retains an important role in organising the tandem. Viewed more critically, this means being caught in the double bind of orchestrating the tandem sessions without wanting to hold or holding the educator's status of (relative) power. What Houssaye (2014) has formulated for any general non-authoritarian pedagogical approach as “les règles des rapports professeur-élèves ne sont pas donnés à l'avance, il va falloir précisément les définir, les constituer” [the rules of the teacher-student relationship are not given in advance, they will need to be defined and established] (p. 13) comes into play in the student-educator tandem model. Student-educator tandem thus presents “un climat qui trouve sa souplesse par une relation non-figée professeur-élèves” [a climate of flexibility due to the fact that the teacher-student relationship is not set] (Houssaye, 2014, p. 18).

However, Steinig (1985, p. 172) and Little (1996, p. 20) have warned that if a sufficient degree of autonomy has not been reached by the learners, any kind of self-directed study can be challenging. This is the case for the students in both case studies. To counter the risk of disengagement with the task due to insufficient levels of autonomy on the part of the students, the student-educator tandem sessions have to be educator-guided. Consequently, the continuous seeking to understand what, why, how and with what success is being learnt, the

metacognitive aspect of tandem work, is in the background in student-educator tandem as the educator initiates and guides the sessions exclusively, at least in the beginning.

In contrast to Steinig's (1985) emphasis on responsibility for others in *Zweierschaftslernen*, in student-educator tandem, the students taking on responsibility for the educator's learning is much less in the foreground (p. 199). However, student-educator tandem may empower students as contributing and knowledgeable members of the school community and create empathy on the educator's side who experiences what it is like to learn a new language.

Even so, all participants in student-educator tandem can still develop competencies for autonomous learning: educators through the uncircumventable initial self-study and preparation of materials; students by witnessing exactly these methods and ideally having a conversation about them as educators demonstrate how materials have been accessed and didactically prepared, for instance by making mind maps from word lists as a memorisation through visualisation strategy. Students also make an initial, autonomous decision as to whether to participate in the activity at all. Subsequently they decide how actively to contribute, what knowledge to share and in which mode.

To take this argument further, in his discussion on learner autonomy, Little (1996) has noted that it is important to support students in the development of their own repertoire of conscious study techniques (p. 28). Following Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the "zone of proximal development" (p. 86) and the idea that human beings acquire knowledge in relationships with other human beings and with the world, Little (1996) has stipulated that students need to be shown how to plan learning activities, how to control these activities and how to evaluate them. They should also be instructed on how one selects relevant strategies for problem-solving (p. 27).

Such instruction can happen automatically in the student-educator model of tandem as the educator constantly provides avenues for each of these processes. Initially, a conversation about the educator's preparation often naturally occurs. The students are curious about the

origin of the materials. In any case, the process of selecting and preparing the materials must be made explicit by the educator at the start of each session. This is most easily done when stating the lesson goal. At this point, the educator could also show the students dictionaries and other primary materials used to prepare materials. In terms of problem solving strategies, the educator may also want to explain how easy or difficult it was to obtain materials and what searches, either online or in libraries, yielded results. All these processes contribute to students' understanding of what independent language learning might involve.

An overlap between the adapted and the traditional tandem models exists in the sense that goal and methods are rarely identical for both partners (Brammerts, 1996, p. 3). In the adapted student-educator tandem, the educator's goal is easy to determine: to gain a basic understanding of and appreciation for their students' home languages and culture while giving them an authentic voice within a classroom or another institutional education setting. As far as the students are concerned, goals may range from wanting to improve their command of spoken and written English, wanting to comply with the educator's expectations in order to avoid reprimands, or wanting to explore the materials provided in their home languages.

Given the complexities surrounding the principle of autonomy, it may be useful to consider student-educator tandem less as a form of learning in which the principle of autonomy is clearly actualised, but more under the term proposed by Sensevy (2007) as "une action conjointe" [joint action] which is "organiquement coopérative ... parce qu'elle prend place au sein d'un processus de communication" [organically cooperative ... because it takes place within a communicative process] (p. 15).

### **2.3.3 Adapting the Principle of Reciprocity: Student-Educator Tandem as a Strategy in ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) Pedagogy**

When tandem involves speakers of Indigenous languages and an educator without any basic knowledge of these languages, a significant re-conceptualisation of the principle of reciprocity is required. This re-conceptualisation needs to address the interrelated prerequisites of target language competence of each partner at the start of the tandem learning partnership, mother-tongue proficiency and the willingness to respect a 50-50 allocation of time to each language.

Traditional tandem usually presupposes at least basic knowledge of the target language by each participant (Brammerts, 1996, p. 10). Kleppin and Brammerts (2010) have gone as far as stating that learning in a tandem setting is not suitable for complete beginners, because both languages should actually be used for communicating. This is only possible if each partner is able to understand the other when they express themselves in their mother tongue in a simple way (p. 96).

Especially at the early stages of the student-educator tandem, it is highly unlikely that the Indigenous languages could become a medium of communication during the exchanges. The reasons for this are time constraints, the complexity of Indigenous languages, the fact that several different languages are usually present in any boarding school context and a lack of self-study materials in most of the Australian Indigenous languages. This presents a significant discrepancy between the proposed model and the established notion of tandem. English will remain the language dominating the exchanges until a suitable level of command in the Indigenous language/s can be reached by the educator which may or may not occur. This practical necessity inscribes student-educator tandem in the emerging field of ELF pedagogy (Kohn, 2016, p. 94). In student-educator tandem, the students have to use English to the best of their ability to explain features or vocabulary of their home languages to an

educator. English thus works as a lingua franca in student-educator tandem following Kohn's (2016) idea of getting students to experience authentic situations where using English is indispensable for effective communication (p. 90). In the case of student-educator tandem, effective communication pertains to students' effective teaching interaction with an English-speaking educator. Feasibility and effectiveness of student-educator tandem rely on the students' ability to use English as a lingua franca<sup>7</sup> to conduct their teaching. At the same time, from the educator's perspective, this means "granting creative agency to non-native speakers" (Kohn, 2016, p. 93).

In Kohn's (2016) teaching philosophy, whether or not students use English with a high degree of (grammatical) accuracy or not is beside the point (p. 88). In the same vein, Lo Bianco (2016), following Seidlhofer (2008), has stated that "these speakers make English, in its lingua franca manifestation, work for them, their purposes and needs and ... in this process, more than communication occurs" (p. 269). In student-educator tandem there simply is no other way than adopting the ELF perspective as students engage in meaning-making and instructing with educators who cannot meet them halfway on linguistic grounds. This linguistic deficit on the educator's part is not necessarily a disadvantage as has been indicated by a non-Indigenous Pitjantjatjara course participant:

Even one phrase will help to establish a bond of good will, it is a token of willingness to meet them halfway, and for this the Aborigines are very grateful. ... these children felt that I was not looking down on Aborigines, I was using their language. (Pitjantjatjara course participant, University of Adelaide, 1968 as cited in Bostock, 1977, p. 155)

Kramersch (2016) has expressed a nuanced critique of the EFL dynamic. In her view, it is not the shared code of ELF, but the associated shared ways of thinking that have been passed on in educational settings where English is used, for instance by people from various

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<sup>7</sup> Following the established use of the term ELF, English as a lingua franca, I will forgo the use of italics as in the publications in *English as a Lingua Franca: Perspectives and Prospects* edited by Pitzl and Osimk-Teasdale (2016).

languages of origin who all studied somewhere in the English-speaking academic world. In the context of student-educator tandem, such a common experience does not exist. Therefore, EFL “can only serve to flag the incompatibilities, highlight the challenges, and increase the urgent need of dialogue” (p. 184).

In student-educator tandem, dialogue happens through English and around Indigenous words and knowledges under the guidance of an educator. This kind of dialoguing is not reciprocal as in traditional tandem, but rather going some way towards establishing a mentality of reciprocity in which English and Indigenous Australian languages are being learnt and used in communication, making students and educators L2 users conform to Cook’s (2016) definition as “people who know and use a second language at any level” (p. 4).

Another facet of the particular ELF scenario that student-educator tandem affords is the target language input in English from the educator. Kleppin (2003, p. 190) and Brammerts and Kleppin (2010, p. 100) have dispelled concerns about using one’s mother tongue during the tandem exchange. They argue that the most important learning happens from the model provided by the native speaker, from the input in the foreign language. When the educator<sup>8</sup> uses English, the content of the exchanges becomes more complex. This input in English necessarily contains the metalanguage (Jakobson, 1960) needed to talk about language learning. One of the major benefits Kleppin (2003, p. 189) and Brammerts (2010, p. 11) have identified for tandem learning occurs in this situation because language itself becomes the topic of the conversations.

This input is likely to be more complex than what would be experienced by the Indigenous students during other academic interactions. In ESL or English class where the focus is on basic vocabulary and grammar for a beginning or emerging level of English, the students are treated as L2 learners in the sense Cook (2016) has criticised as “measured against the sole language of the monolingual” (p. 1). In Australia, this “sole language” is

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<sup>8</sup> In the exploratory study and the follow-up study, the educators are non-native speakers of English. As Cook (2016) has noted in the light of multi-competency, this is not necessarily a disadvantage: “Non-native speaker teachers may make better role models for the students because they have travelled the same route as them and are living exemplars of L2 users able to handle two languages at the same time” (p. 14).



Standard Australian English (ACARA, 2015, p. 4). It is in this metalinguistic input received from the educator that students benefit in student-educator tandem, even though the students' input might seem more significant for the educator who is a complete beginner.

In sum, input in the foreign language is quantitatively significant for both partners in traditional tandem, where repetitions are necessary in order to ensure the learner can understand and use new words, meanings, collocations and pronunciation (Brammerts & Calvert, 2010, pp. 28-29). In contrast, in student-educator tandem, input is quantitatively minimal for one party since the educator is usually a complete beginner. A balanced 50-50 allocation of time to each language is not possible.

Another perspective from which to consider educators' complete beginner status in the Indigenous language/s, is afforded by a few precedents where highly motivated complete beginners worked successfully in tandem pairs. According to Brammerts and Kleppin (2010), these individuals had prior experience in self-guided study, often had received tandem coaching and in addition, their partners displayed a high level of patience (p. 96). These cases of pure beginners shed light on the fact that student-educator tandem, their may be other factors which help the educator to overcome their linguistic disadvantage. In other words, what the educator lacks in basic linguistic knowledge of the students' home languages might somewhat be balanced by their proficiency and expertise in study skills including self-study skills, perhaps even language study skills specifically.

The principle of reciprocity in traditional tandem has also been built on the prerequisite that both partners must be native speakers or mother-tongue speakers of the languages involved in the tandem exchange (Brammerts, 2010, p. 10). Although being a native speaker of the language one represented in the conventional tandem pair was not elevated to the status of a principle of tandem, it initially was strongly implied in enabling the reciprocity of tandem exchanges (Tardieu & Horgues, 2020a, p. 3). This premise needs to be re-examined from the perspective of multi-competencies, defined as "the overall system of a mind or community that uses more than one language" (Cook, 2016, p. 3). In the exploratory

study, for instance, all participants were actually multi-competent and the tutor was not a mother-tongue speaker of English. Moreover, it is also difficult for any educator to establish to which degree the students involved in the tandem are competent in their respective home languages, another prerequisite according to Brammerts (2010, p. 10). In most urban boarding school contexts, there would be no way of assessing the students' competency when the educator cannot draw upon the linguistic authority, for instance of an elder or an Indigenous teacher.

Through the multi-competence perspective, the students' degree of competence in their home language is not of primary importance in student-educator tandem. Since most of the home languages involved are endangered, instead of applying criteria of competence, it is useful to consider the students' language skills in the light of language revitalization and reconciliation as proposed by Hirata-Edds and Peter (2016): "For users of endangered languages, who strive to reconcile their indigenous identity with the dominant, mainstream culture, any amount of competence in the ancestral language provides the possibility for a cognitive balance of the different worlds they live in" (p. 323).

Finally, reciprocity has been identified as an important facet of Aboriginal cultures in Australia (Kerwin & Issum, 2013, p. 16) and this seems to be a further indicator of tandem being a suitable model in Indigenous education. What is assumed as a given in the established tandem notion, the willingness of both participants to learn from each other and help each other with their individual learning goals, is something that first needs to be negotiated in the student-educator tandem model. Educators should explore ways of making the purpose of the tandem transparent.

## **2.3.4 Using Writing and Multimodal Materials to Negotiate Literacy and Orality in Student-Educator Tandem**

One of the challenges educators in Indigenous education in urban schools face is the intercultural dimension of their daily work. As Taylor et al. (2015) have stated: “For educators, providing an inclusive social context involves paying particular attention to the content, structure of the material, and the way these represent, misrepresent, or are silent with respect to students’ persons and communities” (p. 46). Choosing materials for student-educator tandem is thus inextricably linked to developing intercultural awareness. When following an education in English delivered by non-Indigenous educators in a boarding school, speakers of these languages have to bridge the gap between orality and literacy. In contrast to all previous studies and examples of tandem described above, the Indigenous languages spoken by the participants of the case studies do not have a long history of writing (Gale, 1997, p. 21). The availability of linguistic documentation, and consequently of teaching, study as well as self-study materials, varies depending on historic circumstances as I have outlined in chapter one.

As I have discussed in terms of autonomous learning, one specificity of student-educator tandem with Indigenous Australian languages is the fact that the educator alone prepares the materials for the initial sessions. For languages with a paucity of (written) resources, co-developing further materials for subsequent sessions together with the students may well be the only option – unless other speakers of the languages, such as elders or tertiary students enrolled in an urban institution, are available to help. The co-development of study materials would be a feature of student-educator tandem that perfectly follows Brammerts’ (2010) key statement that tandem is about learning together and from each other (p. 10). In the long term, co-creation of materials could also lead to more autonomy on the part of the students who would incrementally complete this preparation on their own. Students creating

materials could also reactivate intellectual vocabulary in their home languages which is no longer actively used by the students due their more Western education (Trudgen, 2000, pp. 126-127) but which might resurface in transcribed oral texts from tribal elders.

In any case, it is important to discuss the use of writing with the students. A survey by McKay (1982) among Indigenous speakers of Kunibidji showed that for some of the survey participants, writing as a means to “teach whites” about their language was identified as one of the benefits of literacy (McKay, 1982, p. 108 as cited in Gale, 1997, p. 34). In this sense, it is important to explain to the students that the educator’s material collection and creation unavoidably commences with the consultation of any written sources in the students’ home languages. This is due to the predominant use of writing in non-Indigenous cultures (Coulmas, 1989, pp. 11-14). Further, the lack of institutional support for the languages and the added difficulty of liaising with expert native speakers outside the school community may make an online search the first step.

An online search for language materials can prove fruitful as it gives a first sense of the sheer multitude of Indigenous languages in Australia and the alternative ways of spelling them. This search could be done systematically by educators during “ice-breakers” or “getting-to-know-you” activities with their study groups. I would strongly advise this practice as a whole class activity at the beginning of the school year or term, working towards the translanguaging strategy of making languages visible in the school through bulletin boards and word maps, even signs around the school or the classroom in the Indigenous languages (see García & Li Wei, 2014, pp. 126-127). The role that writing plays in this activity can then be discussed at the same time. One question to guide such a discussion could be: Why should we write the words in the home languages down to share our languages with the school community? A nuanced dimension of post-colonial critique quickly becomes apparent when researching this area and could be a further discussion starter, not only with the students, but also among educators.

Furthermore, this sort of ice-breaker activity represents a practical example of how an

educator might connect learning and using the language/s, particularly in written form, such as recommended by Brammerts (2010, p. 11), combining *Lernkontexte* [contexts of learning] and *Verwendungskontexte* [contexts of use] (Eckerth, 2003, p. 284). For this purpose, students in *Zweierschaften* were advised to consult dictionaries (Steinig, 1985, p. 134). This is not a viable option for the vast majority of Indigenous students and their educators in Australia. Printed dictionaries are only available in a limited number of languages (e.g. Lowe, 2004; Street & Molligin, 1983) and presuppose a certain degree of literacy which cannot be taken for granted given the individual students' educational backgrounds. For the majority of languages, where word lists exist online, these materials are not always presented in a user-friendly fashion (see <http://www.ausil.org.au/>).

To sum up, the preparation of materials is the first step for the educator towards developing linguistic and cultural awareness. A possible reaction on the part of the educator might be a sense of awe at both, the complexity of the students' home languages, the cognitive effort this meant and still means for their acquisition of English, and the work Indigenous people together with non-Indigenous linguists and missionaries have accomplished to develop such materials. That this is not an unproblematic endeavour in itself has been discussed in the historical overview in chapter one and will be further explicated through the lens of postcolonial critique in the following chapter. Nevertheless, the variety of existing genres and the increasing online presence of some of the languages for instance in LAAL, all point towards a vitality of these languages worth noting and celebrating. As Hirata-Edds and Peter (2016) have pointed out within the context of language revitalization, “technology has opened up seemingly endless possibilities for translingual practice” (p. 325).

It is undebatable that non-Indigenous Australian educational culture has a strong bias in favour of the written word which cannot be resolved through student-educator tandem. This is not only due to the availability of written sources in Indigenous languages resulting from the historical situation, but also due to habitual way of learning and memorising new information by writing it down. While this bias persists in student-educator tandem, writing

can also become an expression of empowerment, autonomy, appropriation and creativity. Empowerment because it gives the students a way to use their own language alongside English in written form at school; appropriation because in this way, writing, an element of non-Indigenous culture, can be perceived as belonging to Indigenous languages; and finally creativity because writing is part of a multimodal approach to teaching an Indigenous language. Writing is not privileged over other forms of literacy, but is on equal footing with speaking, singing, dancing, drawing, gestures and mimics.

## **2.4 The Social Psychology of Student-Educator Tandem**

### **2.4.1 Role Reversals, Stance, Authority and Power**

It is no longer realistic to believe that educators in Australia in the 21st century will spend years in the bush and educate themselves in an Indigenous language like some missionaries and linguists were able to do in the past (Albrecht, 1977, p. 83; Gale, 1997, p. 69; Schurmann, 1987, p. 26; Strehlow, 1957, p. 19, 1964, p. 13; Telfer, 1939, p. 113). Student-educator tandem offers an alternative starting point for non-Indigenous educators in urban institutional contexts. The actualisation of the tandem learning approach has much to do with stance, roles and relationships of power which in turn relate to motivational factors, what Dörnyei (2001) has identified as the “basic motivational conditions” (p. 138) centered around pleasant, supportive, collaborative learning environments which can foster the desire to achieve a set goal (Gardner, 1985, p. 50, as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 350).

In some considerations on learner autonomy in classroom settings, it has been observed that it is sometimes the teacher who is in the way of the students’ successful independent, cooperative learning (Miehe & Miehe, 2004, pp. 34-35, p. 52). Steinig (1985) has provocatively asked:

Warum traut sich der Lehrer nicht, die Schüler allein zu lassen? Das sind Fragen, die weniger mit Didaktik als vielmehr mit Macht und Autorität zu tun haben. Der Lehrer ist als Leiter und Regisseur derjenige, der Macht ausübt und sie behalten will. Mächtige sind – und das ist der springende Punkt – auch immer die Sprechenden. Solange die Mächtigen sprechen, sind die Zuhörer gezwungen zuzuhören und zu schweigen. [Why does the teacher not dare to leave the students alone? These are questions which have less to do with didactics and more to do with power and authority. The teacher as director of the learning process, is the person who exercises power and wants to keep this power. Those who are powerful are – and that is the point – also always the ones who have the floor. As long as the powerful ones are talking, the listeners are forced to listen and remain silent.] (p. 128)

Steinig (1985) has raised a few points which are key to an understanding of student-educator tandem. An important prerequisite of student-educator tandem is the educators' willingness to relinquish the power and status associated with their role while still performing most of the tasks of orchestrating the language learning sessions.

The second important aspect emerging out of Steinig's (1985) provocative statement is the idea that whoever has the power also has the floor. Student-educator tandem consciously opens up the floor for students to have their voices heard in their home languages. Students no longer sit silently and listen to English which they comprehend to varying degrees. Instead, they use English as well as their home languages confidently to address the teaching tasks at hand. In student-educator tandem, the expert-novice roles of educator and student, which are a norm in many conventional classroom contexts (Bechtel, 2003, p. 11; Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 27), can be inverted at any point. The student is positioned as the expert. The educator is in the novice or apprentice situation. In order to fully appreciate the benefits of this inversion, it is useful to briefly consider the implications of the general relational setup of

classroom learning:

Le professeur dispense traditionnellement un savoir dont l'élève est le récipiendaire. Le degré d'expertise du professeur étant bien supérieur à celui de l'élève, une distance s'établit nécessairement entre eux. [The teacher traditionally delivers knowledge of which the student is the recipient. Due to the teacher's higher degree of expertise compared to the student, distance is necessarily established between them.] (Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 27)

In tandem between students, this distance can be reduced or even eliminated and replaced by an egalitarian relationship, "*une relation égalitaire*". One of the goals in student-educator tandem is to achieve a similar learning partnership, thus enabling both learners to share linguistic as well as cultural expertise (Reymond & Tardieu 2001, p. 27). Without this relational basis, some aspects of tandem learning, for instance the necessity of asking questions, can become difficult (Kleppin, 2003, p. 192).

Student-educator tandem thus provides the space for young speakers who can enjoy "exercising their right of speakerhood without fear of scorn for their mistakes or perceived limitations" which in some cases has been shown to go along with younger speakers using ancestral languages (Hirata-Edds & Peter, 2016, p. 325). In student-educator tandem, students do not only exercise their right as speakers of an ancestral language, their role encompasses teaching functions as well.

Through this sharing of expertise during student-educator tandem sessions, the students develop their agency and their multi-competence, "a continuous interaction between the different languages in the ... individual" (Cook, 2016, p. 10). This further marks their status as "unique users of multiple languages, not pale imitations of native speakers" (Cook, 2016, p. 12). This way of carving an identity for Indigenous students that goes beyond the identity of the learner is at the core of student-educator tandem. As Lo Bianco (2016) has specified: "ELF communication is also found to carry, signal and even create social and



personal identities for its users” (p. 269). Much of this dynamic process occurs through the temporal role reversal and the valuing of students’ home languages in a mutual discovery of these languages together with an English-speaking educator.

To elucidate the complex relationship building and negotiation processes that take place during these sessions, I will draw on Kramersch (2016) who has explained that:

EFL [English as a Lingua Franca] provides contacts, connections, alignment and affiliations, collaborations, support and solidarity, but it can only bring people together and provide a forum for negotiation to come. The people, then, have to go through the laborious task of disentangling the linguistic symbols that divide them. (p. 181)

Student-educator tandem brings its participants together through ELF. Consecutively, it provides the space for “disentangling the linguistic symbols” (Kramersch, 2016, p. 181) of native or near-native English and the Indigenous languages involved. By going through this labor-intensive task together, a valuable dynamic between students and educator can develop which has implications on the understanding of intercultural communication benefits of tandem practice. In her observation of the dynamics developing in a plurilingual research team working together in 2002 with French as the lingua franca, Kramersch (2016) noticed that “it obviated the need to engage in intercultural communication” (p. 182), following House and Edmondson (1998) who once said that the lingua franca itself enabled people to negotiate meaning and build consensus on the practical tasks at hand since they had the lingua franca as their basis securing sufficient mutual comprehensibility (p. 171).

A uniting aspect of both the conventional and the student educator tandem model on the relational level is the loss of inhibitions compared to a classroom scenario. Learners experience what it is like to be exposed to a different language. Increased levels of patience and empathy often result from such experience (Brammerts, 1996, p. 11). Patience and empathy are also attributes of successful intercultural learning.

## 2.4.2 Enabling Intercultural Learning Through Student-Educator Tandem

For educators, the significance of positioning themselves as learners has been explicated eloquently by Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003):

If white teachers want to challenge the authority of the white, Western worldview and build an antiracist, socially just, and global curriculum, they need to acknowledge their power and privilege. This is the foundation for learning to give up that power, working instead to build antiracist alliances across ethnic, racial, and cultural differences. (p. 67)

This giving up the power is mirrored in taking on the apprentice role, being the learner, not the educator in the tandem setting and granting the freedom of developing agency to the students.

Much of what will be argued in this part of the chapter is interrelated with the strengths of the traditional tandem model in terms of intercultural learning and will, to some extent, be reiterated when viewing student-educator tandem as an actualisation of translanguaging theory in chapter three. In order to avoid circularity of the argument, but for the coherence and completeness of the student-educator tandem model, I will present a summary of how intercultural learning can be facilitated through student-educator tandem. The strengths of student-educator tandem which explicitly foster intercultural learning and understanding are:

- Topic choices reflective of authentic life experiences of students foster the sharing of personal experiences from insiders of Indigenous cultures
- The understanding that facial expressions and gestures are used differently in Australian non-Indigenous mainstream and Indigenous cultures

- The idea that Indigenous languages can gain equality with English in the written form and may perhaps become more visible in the school and a visual testimony of intercultural learning which can be enjoyed by the entire school community
- An appreciation of the fact that learning happens differently in different cultures

It is useful to distinguish the benefits for the educator and those for the students as there are some differences in advantageous outcomes. An educator might take some concrete cultural knowledge about customs, behavioural expectations or bush lifestyles with them from the sessions. Cultural learning for the students in the tandem setting is much more of a byproduct than something that is readily observable and is linked to other social-emotional aspects. Taylor et al. (2015) have reminded us that “social relationships and settings are crucial to foster and sustain extrinsic motivation” (p. 43). Student-educator tandem can enhance the quality of the relationships between boarding students and their educator(s). The cultural learning for the students has to do with understanding the way non-Indigenous persons structure knowledge, organise their learning and how they value educational institutions and systems.

Connected to this cultural learning is the consideration that extrinsically motivated tasks arise out of a particular social order from which they derive their value (Taylor et al., 2015, p. 44). The social order of non-Indigenous Australians bestows value onto certain school-based tasks, assignments and finally formal qualifications. Indigenous students may not identify with the social order in which they go to school that would allow them to share these values. That is why student-educator tandem has the importance of building familiar elements into these students’ everyday educational experience. Taylor et al. (2015) have recommended:

Educators may foster this [students’ sense of relatedness] by creating warm relational conditions and socially compelling learning environments that generate roles or tasks that the learner (a) wants to work within and (b) believes implicates them to act and behave as a motivated learner. (p. 44)

Student-educator tandem fulfills these recommendations by implicating students' home languages and cultures and specifically creating expert and instructor roles for students. As stated in the discussion of adaptations to the principle of reciprocity, a difference lies in the explicit and articulated interest that educators show in the students' home languages and cultures. This interest is not necessarily mutual since students are engaging in the tandem as part of their institutional boarding school experience.

What remains unchanged from intercultural learning in the established notion of tandem is that it assists in the development of more adequate behaviour in the target culture. This happens through the information, views and behaviours both tandem partners bring to the sessions (Brammerts, 2010, p. 11; Kleppin, 2003, p. 191). When Indigenous students from remote communities in Australia choose to attend boarding school or are sent there by parents or elders, it is often with the hope that this experience will equip them with the linguistic skills, and with the cultural understanding necessary to straddle the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lifestyles. That these differences can often cause problems is illustrated in publications such as *Whitefella Culture* (Hagan, 2008), a manual about cultural expectations and how they can cause misunderstandings in everyday life.

The flipside of the coin of successfully fitting into this "whitefella culture" is that oftentimes "youth, in particular, are pressured to conform to the norms of the dominant society" (Hirata-Edds & Peter, 2016, p. 333). The awareness of social inequalities associated with one's language "can silence a young language user" (Hirata-Edds & Peter, 2016, p. 333) and in this way can contribute to language shift and eventual language loss. As a countermeasure, Hirata-Edds & Peter (2016) have suggested language revitalization efforts. Student-educator tandem can be inscribed in this same dynamic as another measure of "promoting the advantages of multi-competence" and "instilling confidence in and valuing use of ancestral languages together with languages of the broader community" (p. 333). In turn, with increased awareness of cultural behaviours in the respective Indigenous cultures

represented in a class, an educator would be enabled to tread more carefully on sensitive and unknown cultural ground.

The exchange about cultural knowledge in student-educator tandem also ensures authenticity in communication. In any encounter between a non-Indigenous educator and their Indigenous students, a “déficit d’information qui suscite un besoin réel de communication” [a deficit in information which triggers a real need for communication] (Quivy & Tardieu, 2002, p. 97) exists. When an educator seeks a student’s advice on vocabulary or other linguistic or cultural information in a tandem situation, it is because the educator does not have any authentic knowledge in this domain. This authenticity renders the exchange meaningful and remains a common point between the established and the adapted tandem models. Tandem participants are not using a language for the sake of practice, but because there is a real communicative need for exchange with the partner (Brammerts, 1996, p. 8; Eckerth, 2003, p. 284; Kleppin, 2003, p. 189; Steinig, 1985, p. 99, p. 107) which in turn becomes an important motivational correlate (Kleppin, 2003, p. 189). Much like the communication gap which is at the heart of the communicative approach, student-educator tandem and its theoretical support, the translanguaging approach, are built around the linguistic and cultural information gap between the participants.

When cultural knowledge is constructed during the tandem exchange, the concept of “culture active” [active culture] is useful: “Chaque donnée culturelle nouvelle doit être intégrée au réseau de données antérieures constitutives de la culture autonome de l’élève, à son système de représentation culturelle” [Every new cultural fact needs to be integrated in the already existing network which constitutes the student’s autonomous culture, their system of cultural representation] (Quivy & Tardieu, 2002, p. 263). This is of particular importance in the context of Indigenous cultures where the educator’s existing knowledge may not be founded on much personal contact with Indigenous people. As Bechtel (2003) has reminded us, it is encouraging is that there is no right or wrong in terms of the information shared. It is only the personal experience of each tandem partner which counts as the basis for the expert

roles taken on and accepted respectively in the interactions (p. 367). This requires a sensible choice of topics which allow participants to feel this expertise is within their comfort zone (Bechtel, 2003, p. 367). Neutral topics of everyday interest such as flora and fauna therefore lend themselves as preferential choices in student-educator tandem. A problematic point of intercultural learning can be encountered when one or both partners are unwilling to share cultural perspectives or experiences (Bechtel, 2003, p. 368). This can be the case for culturally sensitive or protected Indigenous knowledges (Trudgen, 2000, p. 243).

On the one hand, the avoidance of sensitive or controversial topics presents a limit of intercultural learning in tandem. This is an area where further research is needed (Bechtel, 2003, p. 370). On the other hand, intercultural citizenship projects dealing with sensitive political topics, such as human rights in Argentinian history and the Falklands war, have already been put into practice successfully with tertiary students in a tandem-like format (see Porto & Yulita, 2017, pp. 199-224, pp. 225-250).

A similar approach in the Australian context could include student-educator tandem sessions on early settlement of Australia examining written versus oral Indigenous accounts of frontier violence. However, the English language skills documented by Porto and Yulita (2017a, 2017b) for their projects were B2 or even C1 levels on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) scale. Less developed English language skills may be a limiting factor for some Australian boarding school contexts where more complex projects might require extensive scaffolding.

Tardieu and Horgues (2020b) have found studies in which tandem learning has been suggested as “a multilingual and multicultural asset” (p. 272) for remote areas of the world and for heritage languages in particular as a way to value these languages (see Gallagher, 2020, pp. 253-259 for a study of this in the European context). Tandem for Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators also serves to improve the relationship between educators and their students, rather than purely aiming at the improvement of linguistic proficiency or cultural knowledge.

## 2.4.3 Fostering Positive Relationships Through Student-Educator Tandem

I will finalise my theoretical discussion of student-educator tandem by placing the model in the light of some interrelated notions from the field of social psychology. Drawing on research into motivation, engagement and self-efficacy, I will explain how student-educator tandem can ameliorate relationships and thus contribute to the participants' overall well-being. To date, this research has mainly focused on classroom settings, so *teacher-students relationships* appears to be the most established term in the literature. For purposes of consistency and ease of reading, I will, however, continue to use the more general term *educator* for the considerations presented here.

Robust literature exists on student-teacher relationships as a major factor in motivational processes and student outcomes across a variety of educational settings (Hattie & Yates, 2014, pp. 16-25; Hargreaves, 2000; Morris, 2015, p. 374; Robertson, 1997; Wentzel, 2015, pp. 167-169). This complex and multi-layered relationship can be a source of stress for both parties (Morris, 2015, p. 374). Student-educator tandem seeks to lay the foundations for effective, stress-free relationships by addressing particular student needs which Taylor et al. (2015) have summed up:

We know that supporting students' experience of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are important; that they require physical, emotional, and psychological safety; that availability and meaning are important; and that experiencing a deep sense of belonging to and within a learning community both intellectually and socially is deeply beneficial. (p. 50)

Following Kuczynski and Parkin (2007), the following summary by Wentzel (2015) has added the dimensions of power, agency and reciprocity: "Mental representations believed to be optimal for the internalization of social influence are those that associate relationships

with a personal sense of power and agency, predictability and safety, useful resources, and reciprocity” (p. 169).

From these definitions, a few obvious links with tandem practice emerge. Power and agency are reflected in autonomous practices. Reciprocity is one of the tandem principles. Feelings of autonomy are fostered in the tandem model for both, educators and students. As outlined above, autonomy in student-educator tandem still occurs within the given logistics of the institutional framework such as timing and facilities. Educators have a certain freedom of choice when selecting and creating the materials. Students can choose what they consider the best way of imparting linguistic and cultural knowledge. This includes being selective about which knowledges are shareable and which are not.

Feelings of competence are enhanced as educators incrementally build up their knowledge of their students’ linguistic and cultural background. This is the kind of knowledge that will eventually help them deal with the complexity of intercultural contact situations not only in their classrooms but also in encounters with students’ parents or caregivers. In that sense, even basic multilingualism and cultural awareness are professional assets. It is conceivable that such skills can be linked to career advancement in the same way as conventional professional development can. Furthermore, educators see themselves as learners and also as emerging plurilinguists as Cook (2016) has emphasised “multi-competence concerns the mind of any user of a second language at *any* [emphasis added] level of achievement” (p. 5).

In terms of relatedness and belonging, Indigenous students face specific challenges deriving from their racial-ethnic identity. I use the term racial-ethnic identity here according to a definition provided by Webber (2015):

Racial-ethnic identity ... emerges in institutional, cultural, and personal contexts; is neither static nor one dimensional; and its meanings, as expressed in schools, neighbourhoods, peer groups, and families, vary



across time, space, and place. The term is hyphenated since adolescents develop both racial and ethnic identity simultaneously. (p. 102)

Through student-educator tandem, elements from the students' racial-ethnic background they can directly relate to are meaningfully brought into the learning space. Such an experience is motivating for students as educators show and vocally express interest in their individual home cultures. Apart from the individual attention given to each student or a small group of students, students also see their interests reflected in the choice of topics studied in the tandem sessions. As such, student-educator tandem helps to create an instructional environment facilitative of feelings of relatedness, one of three components driving motivation according to Deci and Ryan (2012).

While physical safety is a given in any regulated teaching environment through codes of practice and laws, educators using student-educator tandem have a toolkit available to meet the challenges that come with students being away from home in an urban boarding school, learning English through EMI (English-medium instruction) and having to negotiate two cultures in everyday life without any guidance in this complex area.

Educators' self-efficacy beliefs may also become positively influenced by mental representations of their professional selves as role-model of lifelong learning. It is known since Bandura (1997) that beliefs individuals hold about their capabilities are important since these beliefs determine how individuals actualise the knowledge and skills they have. However, "[t]eacher efficacy is a self-perception, not an objective measure of teaching effectiveness, and it is hard to evaluate the extent to what teacher self-efficacy has an effect of student outcomes" and there are still "many unanswered questions" (George, Richardson, & Dorman, 2015, p. 357). Seeing themselves as more competent educators due to exposure to and basic learning of previously unknown languages and cultures through student-educator tandem might contribute to educators' well-being.

Students' feelings of competence are likewise enhanced through their teaching experience in student-educator tandem which they can perform based on their individual life

path and knowledge. If we draw on self-efficacy perceptions again, it is easy to see that students may be empowered by a change of their view of themselves as experts who, with the individual resources they bring from their socialisation in their respective home cultures, can make valuable contributions to school life. On this basis, engagement, understood as a “positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006, p. 702) can also be supported through the motivational attributes of the tandem model.

## **2.4.4 Perceptual Barriers in Student-Educator**

### **Tandem**

Amid these positive correlations of the tandem practice, it is easy to forget the perceptually fraught intercultural encounter in which student-educator tandem is situated. Stereotyping occurs as a time-saving and cognitively efficient way for humans to deal with a variety of complex impressions and stimuli about people, such as in a classroom. It is essentially a positive psychological mechanism, but it can have negative consequences. Educators are susceptible to stereotyping because of the large number of different students they deal with professionally. Therefore they may use their associative memory to apply categorisation (Brinkworth & Gehlbach, 2015, p. 199).

Many countries have documented achievement gaps between majority and non-majority learners and Australia is no exception (Rennie, 2013, p. 155). As a result of the achievement problems associated with learners from minorities, there is a danger of teachers developing stereotypes which include having lower expectations when dealing with those students (Alexander et al., 1987; Cummins, 1981, p. 19; Dusek & Joseph, 1983; Ferguson, 2003; Muller, 1997). Student-educator tandem allows educators to see their students in a different light and appreciate their expertise in a complex linguistic and cultural knowledge system. Rather than focusing on the literacy problems of Indigenous learners in English, the

students' diverse literacy skills in their home languages can become the focus of educators' attention during the tandem sessions. The educator to student ratio in student-educator tandem also reduces the risk of stereotyping since the time-saving motivator for the educator to recur to stereotypes has been removed from this situation. From the intercultural learning point of view, stereotypes can be juxtaposed to the personal encounters with tandem partners and their personal experiences and narratives (Kleppin, 2003, p. 190).

It has been shown that individualised treatment of students paired with a caring attitude for their well-being is a condition for positive relationships (Ferreira & Bosworth, 2001; Garza, 2009; Hattie & Yates, 2014, p. 17, p. 20, p. 184; Hattie & Zierer, 2018, p. 169; Muller, 2001). The simplifying and generalising nature of stereotyping negatively counteracts such individualised encounters between educators and students. An additional problem in this dynamic process is posed by confirmation bias. Confirmation bias has been described as “a sort of 'booster shot' bias”. Its psychological purpose is to preserve one's sense of self by looking for indications that confirm rather than contradict prior assumptions and hypotheses such as stereotypes (Brinkworth & Gehlbach, 2015, p. 203).

Brinkworth and Gehlbach (2015) have warned that “when confirmation bias combines with stereotyping, teachers and students committing the stereotyping are likely to become even more convinced of their judgements, given the bounty of confirming evidence and dearth of disconfirming evidence that they perceive” (p. 203). It is unlikely that educators or students easily review their perceptions when this mechanism comes into play as they think, based on the stereotypes they apply (stereotypes of the sort “Indigenous learners = low literacy or non-Indigenous educators = no interest in or knowledge of Indigenous cultures) they already know more about each other than is the reality. Since student-educator tandem is a platform for authentic, mutual, meaningful encounters, it reduces the danger of stereotyping through ameliorating perceptual biases.

Student-educator tandem offers one additional countermeasure to such perceptual barriers. Following Galinski and Moskowitz (2000) and Ames (2004), Brinkworth and

Gehlbach (2015) have found that “when individuals perceive themselves as having overlapping, similar characteristics, the tendency to stereotype is reduced” (p. 204). This means when educators display or communicate difficulties in learning certain features of a new language, students see that their teachers or tutors struggle in the same way they do when e.g. pronouncing words or trying to remember vocabulary. Both, educators and students can share an experience of teaching and learning in mutual exchange.

## **2.4.4 Towards a Definition of Student-Educator**

### **Tandem**

To clearly define student-educator tandem (henceforth SET), I will first juxtapose a range of traditional definitions, then contrast the features of the established notion of tandem with the emerging features of SET. This comparison will illustrate the multiple facets the tandem notion can comprise and further support the development of SET for Indigenous languages.

On the language courses website, the University of Bern in Switzerland has offered the following introductory definition to potential tandem practitioners:

Tandem learning is a learning partnership between two people with different mother tongues. The participants meet regularly to improve their language skills and to learn something about each other's culture and country. Tandem is based on autonomous learning, and each Tandem partner chooses how they would like to move forward, deciding on their own learning strategies and the material or topics they want to cover.

(Universität Bern, 2019)

In one of the earlier publications *Tandem per Internet und das International E-Mail Tandem Network*, Brammerts' (1996) definition follows a similar tenor but includes the area of career development and emphasises the invariably personal nature of the exchange:

Learning in tandem can be defined as a form of open learning, whereby two people with different native languages work together in pairs in order to learn more about one another's character and culture, to help one another improve their language skills, and often also to exchange additional knowledge for example, about their professional life. Tandem language learning takes place through authentic communication with a native speaker, who can correct the learner and also support him in his attempts to express himself. (p. 10)

St. John's and White's (2010) definition has added more concrete elements to the communicative understanding of tandem practice:

Beim Tandemlernen geht es in erster Linie um Sprechen und Zuhören. Tandemaktivitäten können jedoch fünf verschiedenen Zielen gerecht werden: ... Kulturbewusstheit zu erweitern, das Leseverständnis zu entwickeln, das Vokabular auszubauen sowie das Hörverständnis und die Flüssigkeit beim Sprechen zu verbessern. [Tandem learning is about speaking and listening in the first instance. Tandem activities can, however, serve five different goals: ... they can enlarge cultural awareness, develop reading comprehension, enlarge vocabulary as well as improve listening comprehension and fluency when speaking.] (p. 39)

While the aspect of fluency is probably of greater relevance for the Indigenous students learning English than for the novice educator who has no prior knowledge of the target language/s, all other aspects are of equal value for both the students and the educator. The following table (2.1.) offers an overview of the modifications which are necessary to adapt the original features and principles of tandem to the circumstances of Indigenous learners and non-Indigenous educators. This overview prepares the implementation of SET in the exploratory study.

<b>Principles and features of Tandem according to Brammerts (2010)</b>	<b>Modified tandem for the exploratory study involving Indigenous languages</b>
<u>Autonomy</u> : Learner responsibility, including negotiation about areas of focus and modalities of the exchange, e.g. frequency, location and duration of meetings.	Educator initiates and organises exchanges during a fixed time within school programmes and contact hours.  Students choose whether to participate, if and what to contribute and how to share knowledge in the sessions.
<u>Reciprocity</u> : Exchange should be balanced, benefit should be equal, the tandem pair forms a partnership in learning.	Linguistic benefit might initially be greater for the non-Indigenous educator; social-emotional benefits should be equal. Intention for students and educators to work as partners, but established roles of student and teacher/tutor may be difficult to disregard. Tandem pair might be replaced by a more fluid constellation of two or more students working with one educator.
<u>Nativeness</u> : Each learning partner speaks the other partner's target language as a mother tongue.	All learners speak English as a lingua franca (see chapter three). English is also the target language for the students. English might be the educator's mother tongue.
<u>Learning through corrections</u> : Most effective through individual <i>Lernberatung</i> [coaching]; Need for corrections varies individually, so both learning partners negotiate if, how and/or when to correct each other.	Students provide corrective feedback on the educator's use of Indigenous languages spontaneously (see chapters five and six).  Educator provides feedback on the students' use of English.
<u>Cultural awareness and language awareness increase</u>	<u>Cultural awareness and language awareness increase</u>

Table 2.1. Comparison Between Original Principles of Tandem and Student-Educator Tandem

# Conclusion

To sum up, traditionally, tandem is a suggestion, model and training for lifelong, open, self-directed and cooperative learning paired with authentic intercultural communication in which both partners perceive and experience themselves as language learners (Bechtel, 2003, p. 15; Brammerts, 1996, p. 3; Brammerts, 2010, p. 10; Brammerts & Calvert, 2010, p. 27; Kleppin, 2003, p.187; Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 15).

Student-educator tandem (SET) in the Australian context can be defined as a model for cooperative, intercultural language learning between Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators where the starting context and learning goals of each participant differ significantly in terms of linguistic proficiency, which necessitates English as a lingua franca. SET offers ways for non-Indigenous educators to appreciate and integrate their students' home languages into their teaching practice. For Indigenous students, it offers opportunities to own and share cultural and linguistic information appropriately. Through the tandem sessions, students discover their home languages as written languages with possible creative uses in terms of spelling and multimodality.

In the larger institutional context, SET allows for Indigenous languages to become heard and visible in the school community, and therefore a valuable and valued component of school life. As Indigenous scholar Herbert (2012) has put it: "People want to be valued for the knowledge they bring to the learning situation and to be respected as equals in Australian society" (p. 92). Finally, if "Indigenous education is primarily a game of relationships based on mutual cross cultural respect" (Lester, 2012, p. xi; see Rennie, 2013), SET is the approach used to build relationships in a demanding teaching environment.

# Chapter 3: Theoretical Underpinnings of SET

## Introduction

From mission times to the introduction of bilingual education in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, many educators in Australia have held the belief that Indigenous students' home languages should be part of their experience at school, even before this became officially part of the national curriculum in December 2015. Various scholars have supported this view. Cook (2016) has requested that "we need to rethink the widespread view in language teaching that the students' first language has no role in classroom learning" (p. 15) and earlier Canagarajah (1999) has asked for theory to "arise in a grounded manner, from practical experience and participation in specific contexts of struggle" (p. 31). I follow in Canagarajah's footsteps in presenting a theoretical approach anchored in my own experience. The SET model is the result of my own struggle to meet the needs of Indigenous students as a non-Indigenous person and teacher.

When integrating Indigenous students' home languages into school curricula, there is and always has been the danger of representing those languages through the coloniser's lens as Said (1978) has criticised. Non-Indigenous governors, missionaries, linguists, teachers and anthropologists mapped, named, documented, normalised orthographies and disseminated materials in what they thought were the languages of the local peoples. They thus constructed their own representations of these ways of communicating or as Bourdieu (1982) has put it more generally they utilised "ce pouvoir de nommer et de faire le monde en le nommant" [this power of naming and making the world by naming it] (p. 99).

In the first section of this chapter, I will revisit this process with a view to the linguistic aspects of postcolonial theory in the sense Canagarajah (1999, 2007) and Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have brought forth. A danger inherent in the implementation of SET is



to continue – even in an unconscious manner – imperialist attitudes which can still be felt in Australia today. This risk is inextricably linked to the materials stemming from an era of colonial domination of Indigenous peoples in Australia. In theorizing about SET, I must tread very carefully in order not to reinstate the oppressive mechanisms which developed as a result of colonialism and Christianisation.

I will address the risk of linguistic imperialism in SET and the oppositionality between written and oral languages which already has been examined from a practical point of view in the previous chapter on tandem. In the same vein, I will present the idea of decolonising language teaching in Australia under the aspects of ownership of knowledge, creativity and language evolution with the concept of ELF pedagogy in mind. This will add a critical edge to aspects of language contact, bilingual education and English-only education explicated from a historical stance in chapter one. I will also consider several insights from intercultural communication theory to highlight its relevance for the Australian context.

In the second part of this chapter, I will explore some prominent concepts proposed by Freire (1970/1977), Illich (1972) and Bourdieu (1982) as a backdrop to the general social agenda of translanguaging theory. The explorations of Freire's and Illich's theories can be subsumed under the category of *critical pedagogy*. Critical pedagogy, according to a definition by Leeman, Rabin and Roman-Mendoza (2011),

takes up issues of identity, and sees education as a site where students are socialized into particular subject positions and social roles. Rather than socializing students as unquestioning recipients of dominant social and linguistic hierarchies, critical educators seek to identify and challenge educational practices that reify those hierarchies and power. (pp. 481-482)

I will show to what extent SET is a foray into the realm of critical pedagogy.

In the third part of this chapter, I will illustrate how translanguaging theory elucidates a number of key features of SET. Concepts drawn from some recent enquiries into multilingual education by Cook (2016), Li Wei (2016), and Wright, Boun and García (2017)

will provide an additional prism through which the understanding of language and spheres of agency for multi-competent students in SET becomes obvious. I will then zero in on how SET can become an actualisation of the social agenda proposed by translanguaging theory.

In the fourth part of this chapter, I will explore the field of heritage language education to offer as coherent a theoretical panorama as possible of the all-underlying dichotomy between majority and minority languages. Even though there are many overlaps between the proposals and considerations of the various scholars from the field of postcolonial critique, ELF, intercultural communication theory, critical pedagogy, translanguaging theory and heritage language education, they all view the need for the inclusion of minority languages from slightly different angles, thus providing a nuanced understanding of the theoretical foundations of the newly developed SET model as intended in Narcy-Combes' (2005) "technique des entonnoirs" [funnel technique].

## **3.1 A Postcolonial Critique of Teaching and Learning in SET**

### **3.1.1 Avoiding Linguistic Imperialism Through SET**

Canagarajah (1999) has reminded us that "ideology finds its clearest manifestation in language" and therefore "[d]iscourse is the linguistic realization of the social construct of ideology" (p. 30). The imperialist ideology of the supremacy of English will be at the centre of this first theoretical discussion of SET. I use the term *imperialism* in its specific actualisation of *linguistic imperialism*, following Canagarajah's (1999) considerations of this phenomenon in the educational sphere. In the context of SET, linguistic imperialism means prolonging the effects of colonisation in Australia in relation to Indigenous languages. It

perpetuates the disadvantages of these languages' speakers, not as drastically as during mission times and frontier encounters, but still based on the same understanding that the English language prevails, at the expense of all existing linguistic diversity which has survived the colonial period. Gale (1997) has found that ideas of "only one Aboriginal language" (p. 1) still circulate in Australian society. Unsurprisingly, the notion of *linguicide* (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994, pp. 2211-2212) is still evoked in the post-colonial era in Australia today to draw attention to its irrevocable connotations of losing not only languages but also the wisdom purported through these languages, wisdom stemming from some of the world's oldest cultures (Trudgen, 2000, p. 77). Although much has been done in the public domain to increase the visibility of Indigenous languages in place names of urban and remote sites (see Amery & Williams, 2002), these efforts have not permeated all areas of life in Australia.

In education, linguistic imperialism denotes the practice of EMI (English Medium Instruction) in Australian schools where Indigenous students attend. Unconsciously, such practice, left unquestioned despite the provisions made by ACARA's languages framework, is a continuation of the colonial attitude. Standard Australian English, as the national language, should be learned by Indigenous attendees of residential colleges as well as remote schools, however, not at the detriment of nurturing their home languages. As Canagarajah (1999) has pointed out, schools are not neutral sites: "The institutionalized forms of knowledge embody assumptions and perspectives of the dominant social groups" (p. 16). Therefore, I propose SET as a way to balance institutionalised forms of knowledge with the Indigenous knowledge systems present among the student community. In doing so, I refer to Kleppin (2003) who has invoked Said (1978) to frame the intercultural learning potential of tandem through "Fremdverstehen" [understanding the foreign], which "ermöglicht uns, das Fremde in seiner Andersheit zu erfassen, indem wir uns mit Hilfe unseres Wissen, unserer Imagination und Empathie in den anderen versetzen" [enables us to grasp what is foreign in its otherness by virtue of our knowledge, our imagination and empathy in order to put ourselves in the other's

place] (p. 192). According to Kleppin (2003), we can avoid applying our own cultural categories to everything we perceive as “das andere” [the other] (p. 192), thus escaping the categorisation process Said has lamented (1987/2003, pp. 5-6, p. 21).

As a practical consequence of linguistic imperialism, Canagarajah (1999) has criticised the use of centre-materials in his study of Sri Lankan tertiary education. Teaching and learning materials produced in the UK or the US were used in periphery communities where they were irrelevant to students’ everyday lives and therefore only of very limited use in teaching and learning (p. 12) in communities where “the lived culture of the students reveals cultural and ideological conflicts in using and learning English” (pp. 173-174).

SET necessitates the creation of individualised contextualised materials, thereby avoiding this aspect of linguistic imperialism. It is also possible that educators who prepare materials in this way, respond with more empathy to the “cultural and ideological conflicts” (Canagarajah, 1999, pp. 173-174) students may experience (Christie, 1985, pp. 40-51; Keeffe, 1992, p. 164; Trudgen, 2000, pp. 242-245). To take the argument of mismatched materials further, Canagarajah (1999) has challenged the idea that “cognitive strategies are universal – that learning styles found to be effective for students from one community may be assumed to be equally effective for students from others” (p. 13). The individualised materials and the one-to-one or small group format of SET have the potential to meet the students’ needs on an individual level more effectively than in bigger classroom contexts as research into Indigenous education has suggested (Pegg & Graham, 2013, p. 127). Given the intercultural learning benefits afforded by SET outlined in the previous chapter, the model is also able to cushion the effects of what Canagarajah (1999) has identified as “cultural frames in the understanding of language and texts” (p. 14). “Cultural frames” refer to being conscious of one’s own situation compared to that of a character or persona in a text. In the context of SET, ancestral stories, commonly referred to as Dreaming stories, may pose such difficulties for non-Indigenous readers. Even if diglot, such narratives may remain aloof for a cultural outsider without guidance (Gale, 1997, pp. 181-182; Stanner, 1979, p. 81, p. 87). When using

transcribed texts by Indigenous writers, the educator can ask their students directly to avoid misunderstandings. When working in English, the educator's role in SET is to make these frames transparent from the point of view of Australian mainstream culture as presented through the national curriculum. The educator then transforms cultural frames into explicit knowledge for the students' benefit, "to help students interrogate the hidden assumptions and values that accompany knowledge" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 16).

Hagan's (2008) indispensable observations about everyday life such as friendliness (p. 2), asking for help (p. 4), the role of questions (p. 6), financial literacy (p. 10), time (p. 14), promises (p. 16), losing or saving face (p. 18) and individual versus common property (p. 20) published in her short booklet *Whitefella Culture* detail how the aforementioned topics and actions take on different meanings in many Indigenous societies compared to the understanding of non-Indigenous Australians.

To further pursue Canagarajah's (1999) argument as a theoretical foundation for SET, teaching is not about handing established knowledge over to the students, it is rather based on the idea that

knowledge results from constant negotiation between communities in terms of their values, beliefs, and prior knowledge. Knowledge is itself a changing construct ... It is therefore important to negotiate knowledge more consciously, and to involve the teachers as well as the students in the learning process. Collaboration between the two groups, as they aim to reach consensus through debate, simulates the social process of knowledge construction. (p. 16)

Not so much debate as discussion and conversation make up the dynamics of language learning through SET. However, the term negotiation is central to this model of tandem and so is the understanding of knowledge as emerging and as social construct. Canagarajah's (1999) emphasis on collaborative learning is represented in the fact that SET automatically places educators in the role of learners.

There are several strands of thought linking Canagarajah's (1999) explorations of the dangers of linguistic imperialism to ELF pedagogy and translanguaging pedagogy, making this network of theories a tightly interwoven backdrop against which the theory of SET can unfold. This interconnectedness is particularly evident in Canagarajah's (1999) practical strategies to avoid "subtler neo-imperialist activities" (p. 40) in English teaching. Canagarajah's (1999) suggestions preempt many points put forth in translanguaging education:

- setting up small groups for tasks and discussion with students from same or similar language groups
- pairing more proficient students with less proficient students of the same language group for peer tutoring or peer translation
- encouraging the use of bilingual dictionaries and making native language reference books available to enable students to deal with L1 written material and develop bilingual literacy
- maintaining journals so students have ways to use their own language or mixed codes for expressing themselves imaginatively (p. 193).

That such "mixed codes" are not identical to Standard Australian English will be discussed below from the angle of language disinvention paired with ELF pedagogy.

### **3.1.2 Accepting Languages as Evolutive and Creative Through SET: Contributions of English as a Lingua Franca Pedagogical Theory**

To make the link with ELF pedagogy explicit, it is useful to bear in mind that Canagarajah (1999) has distinguished between a reproduction perspective and a resistance perspective when discussing the power relations between coloniser and colonised in terms of linguistic agility and adaptability (p. 2). He has explained: "while language may have a

repressive effect, it also has the liberatory potential of facilitating critical thinking, and enabling subjects to rise above domination: each language is sufficiently heterogeneous for marginalized groups to make it serve their own purposes” (p. 2). In this way, the students adopt English as the lingua franca in the tandem exchanges. To follow Canagarajah’s (1999) logic, this means putting English in the service of the Indigenous languages. English serves as the mediating communicative means to enable educators to learn the students’ diverse home languages. In contrast to the classroom, where English is the focus of academic interest, SET exchanges place English into a position where it serves in the teaching of other languages.

To take this argument further, it is useful to consider Canagarajah’s (1999) criticism of applied linguistics with regard to ELT (English language teaching) where

a debilitating monolingual/monocultural bias has revealed itself in the insistence on ‘standard’ English as the norm, the refusal to grant an active role to the students’ first language in the learning and acquisition of English, ... and the insensitive negativity shown by the pedagogies and discourses towards the indigenous cultural traditions (p. 3).

Instead, in very idealistic terms, Canagarajah (1999) has proposed learning as “a value-free, pragmatic, egalitarian enterprise” which should not provoke “undue inner conflict among students” as they acquire a new language (p. 3).

SET can provide multiple avenues for this proposal to be put into practice because it allows students to maintain all of their languages on their educational pathway. Once English is used as a lingua franca in SET, this means the students have appropriated English in the sense Canagarajah (1999, p. 185) has elaborated following Bakhtin (1981, p. 293). Rather than “serving other people’s intentions” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 294), students have their own “expressive intention” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293) when they use English.

Following the same train of thought, Kramersch (2016) has argued that “there is an element of subversion associated with English, a need to escape social, cultural, and institutional constraints, not necessarily to join a community with established traditions, nor

even an established social group, but to find new individual freedoms and new sources of creativity” (p. 180). In SET, students can open up this space of creative expression and use of English whilst maintaining and fostering multilingual identities. The element of subversion would be the use of the former colonisers’ language to bring Indigenous languages to the forefront.

Drawing on numerous studies in ELF (see Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011; Mauranen, 2006; Pitzl, 2010, 2005; Seidlhofer, 2011; Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2009), Kohn (2016) has defined this appropriation of English with regard to *lingua franca* pedagogies:

Quite obviously, to ensure communicative success, non-native speakers need to resort to a rich array of communicative strategies including e.g. paraphrasing, accommodation, co-construction, negotiation of meaning, or resolving misunderstandings ... And what is more, in their endeavour to find appropriate expression for their communicative and communal needs and intentions, they creatively exploit and extend the English they were taught beyond mere correctness, thus appropriating ... the language. (p. 2)

Similarly, Thorne and Lantolf (2007) have argued for an emphasis on human communication in interactions where grammar is not a precondition but a product of such communication (p. 34). By taking the focus off accuracy, educators grant students the agency and space to propose alternative spellings for lexical items or alternative phrases in their home languages. Thereby, SET enables a renewal of linguistic ownership and creativity in line with what Canagarajah (2007) has advocated as a pedagogical model “founded on notions of difference” (p. 34).

Rather than aspiring to a standard version of a language or native likeness, Indigenous students’ appropriation of English or ELF has resulted in the use of Aboriginal English. Aboriginal English is a manifestation of what Canagarajah (1999) has termed “periphery Englishes” (p. 4), a product of “the hybrid mixing of languages in indigenous communities”



(p. 42), or “a reflection of a creative adaptation to new contexts” (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, pp. 26-27).

Using the example of a shift towards urban vernaculars observed in Africa, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have criticised that “promoting the continued use of indigenous languages constitutes a retrospective justification of colonial structures” (p. 26). However, SET offers the possibility to include urban languages such as local varieties of Aboriginal English. In fact, there are no limits as to how many languages and which varieties can be included in this adapted tandem practice. Tandem does not deny the dynamic evolution of languages. It is through the younger speakers of the communities that the languages are portrayed and brought to the limelight of the urban classroom. Insisting on “the integrity of indigenous languages” (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p. 24) as a concept fixed to the pre-colonial past is thus excluded in the suggested tandem model.

It is also worth examining how SET can help to facilitate conversations about how “particular definitions of what constitutes language expertise are construed and imposed” (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p. 30). Such conversations become particularly salient as a young multicompetent speaker is “the locus of language contact” (Valdés, 2005, p. 414) when alternately using Indigenous languages, Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English in distinct everyday settings. The sharing of what Geertz (1983) has termed “local knowledge” by the students in SET sessions highlights that linguistics should look at what is actually practiced rather than the supposedly expert knowledge of non-Indigenous persons who collated and published most of the materials that are used for the tandem sessions. Students have an opportunity to point out discrepancies between the language which has been used in the materials and what they know from their actual usage of the respective languages. As Menezes de Souza (2007) has found, the definition of language expertise happens alongside the construction of languages (p. 166).

In SET, there are two angles from which to consider linguistic expertise. Looking in from the outside, linguistic expertise is evenly distributed among all participants of SET. The

students bring to the table years of experience in speaking and learning in their oral home language/s, including very important cultural restrictions as well as some understanding of spoken and written English. The anglophone educator contributes expertise in ESL, SAE and expertise on how to organise learning effectively. This includes the preparation of materials, the proposal of the session format and explanatory guidance given to the students about the purpose and running of the tandem exchanges. The educator can also offer assistance with certain aspects of English as they emerge in the sessions, e.g. correct spelling, pronunciation or grammatical structures.

For the purpose of SET, where the emphasis is on bringing the students' home languages to the forefront, subtle ways of correcting the students' English may be more desirable than more intrusive methods. Even though recast has been shown as less effective than other types of feedback in some studies (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 57), it is a non-intrusive way of weaving a correct version of the student's utterance into the conversation without interrupting the flow of the tandem exchange. It also avoids making the student feel ashamed, which is a major factor in Indigenous education (Oliver et al., 2013, pp. 236-237). The fact that students will also need to give feedback to help the educator move towards a learning goal further points to expertise as shared rather than held by the educator alone. It could be posited that SET can go as far as reversing the roles between students and educator. However, given the institutional context and the fact that the educator mainly guides the session and provides the materials, it cannot be said that the expert role shifts completely to the side of the students. Adding to the picture of evenly distributed expertise is the fact that English functions as the lingua franca in SET. No matter how basic the students' level of English may seem on a reference scale in official teacher resources (see ACARA, 2015, pp. 5-6), it is in fact very apt to conduct a teaching activity in which students share their linguistic and cultural expertise with an educator.

This kind of dynamic establishes new paradigms for the understanding of expertise which are not a replica of the colonial dichotomies between dominant and dominated speech

forms criticised by Makoni and Pennycook (2007) in their work on language invention (pp. 1-27). Students' creative use of English and their home languages is a key to unlocking the potential of SET to reconstitute the respective Indigenous languages in the way Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have suggested (pp. 27-37).

### **3.1.3 Reconstituting Languages Through SET**

Drawing on a range of inquiries into the existence of languages (e.g. Baumann & Briggs, 2003; Chimhundu, 1985; Cohn, 1996; Gumperz, 1972; Jeater, 2002; Kuzar, 2001; Mühlhäusler, 1996) from fields as varied as colonial history, globalization, language ecology and sociocultural theory, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have proposed an ideology of “disinventing and reconstituting languages” (pp. 1-37) with a “non-materialistic view of language” (p. 2) at its centre. They have built on Bakhtin's (1981) reflections on heteroglossia where “unitary language constitutes the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization (p. 270), when in the reality of heteroglossia, language is “unitary only as an abstract grammatical system of normative forms” and “within an abstractly unitary national language” (p. 288).

To start with, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have pointed out that there is a need to recognise “both languages and nations as dialectically co-constructed” (p. 7) or as Sabino (2018) has put it “a bounded linguistic system is tied to an emerging sense of geopolitical belongingness” (p. 20). Using examples from various former British colonies, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have posited that languages as we know them in everyday life through dictionaries, grammars, institutional instruction and language policies, are a pure invention in the service of nation-state interests and empire building through imperialist and nationalist discourses propagated during colonial times (pp. 1-4). Based on an understanding of ideologies as establishing “standards of similarity and difference” to “naturalize distributions of privilege and power” (Sabino, 2018, p. 1), Sabino (2018) has put it like this: “No more real

than witches or races and like the nations and the groups they represent, languages are brought into existence through discourse” (p. 17). Her “more radical discourse avoids language names and the bounded, structures linguistic systems they are intended to represent” in the hope that “when fully developed, such a discourse will provide means of escaping the confines of the languages ideology” (p. 13).

With regard to education specifically, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have elaborated:

Constructed languages were administratively assigned to colonized populations as mother tongues and went on to form the basis of so-called mother tongue education and vernacular literacy. When the constructed languages were introduced into local communities they had the effects of creating and at times accentuating social differences. Since the constructed languages could be acquired only through formal education, frequently coupled with Christianity, those who had acquired them tended to have a higher social status than those who were not exposed to them. (p. 14)

Just like “Africa is a European construct” (p. 4), so is Australia. The effort that turned languages into “objects of European knowledge” (p. 5) in other parts of the British Empire during this historical time has not been questioned enough on a larger scale since (p. 4), even though “these inventions have had very real and material effects” (p. 2). Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have argued:

The ideology of invention serves as a critique of language imposition or linguistic imperialism, not in the sense that dominant languages are imposed on minority groups, but rather in the sense that the imposition lies in the ways in which speech forms are constructed into languages, and particular definitions of what constitutes language expertise are construed and imposed. (p. 30)

How can some of these critical points around the notion of language be addressed through SET? There are various concepts worth exploring around Makoni’s and Pennycook’s (2007)

ideology and the practice of SET.

The conviction that “languages can be distinguished and named” has formed the basis on which several “enumerative” strategies were and continue to be built (Mühlhäusler, 2000, p. 358), for instance the “Report of the Second National Indigenous Languages Survey” (Marmion et al., 2014) and the texts on which I draw for the creation of materials for the proposed tandem model. Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have spoken of “a census ideology founded on the enumerability of languages” (p. 12) and such “census strategies” were employed to capture language diversity as part of the colonial endeavour to objectify and rule what was seen as foreign or other (p. 16).

The fact that the materials in SET are based on work stemming from the colonial past opens the door for some criticism. First, SET requires the acceptance of historical sources with their ideological baggage as relics which educators and students use for their purposes in critical and creative ways. Educators are not “reformulating indigenous languages” in order to use them on their terms (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p. 16), but prepare materials to have a starting point for a linguistic discussion with their Indigenous students. Using writing for the creation of materials is not a way of validating the superiority of written versus oral languages. It is a mnemonic for educators whose background is in written literacy.

In the light of Makoni’s and Pennycook’s (2007) “ideology of invention” (p. 30), the work of the educator in the tandem model could also be negatively seen as “attempt to own indigenous knowledge” (p. 26). However, it is not the educator's aim to make the students' home languages into “objects of ... knowledge” (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007, p. 5). The nature of sharing is foregrounded in the tandem principle of reciprocity. SET enables the acquisition of authentic linguistic knowledge paired with cultural knowledge. As the defining paradigms of SET in the previous chapter have shown, the linguistic benefit of initial tandem sessions could be greater for the educator than for the students. This is due to the fact that the educator – in the vast majority of cases – starts from zero without any previous exposure to the students’ home languages. The students, on the other hand, have at least been exposed to

some English Medium Instruction during primary school in their home communities (see Disbray, 2014b, p. 29, p. 43) before attending urban boarding schools<sup>9</sup>.

Rather than appropriating features of Indigenous languages, the main idea is for educators to show an interest in and gain an awareness of the wealth of students' home languages. This is how educators can acquaint themselves with some basic features (such as vocabulary) of these languages. Building up to mutual communicative understanding in both English and the Indigenous languages would be desirable, however, would also require a more concentrated and time-intensive effort than intended in the student-educator model proposed here.

Remains the broader criticism aiming at the notion of language itself. From a language ecology stance, Mühlhäusler (2000) has observed that what we know as languages are part of “a recent culture-specific notion associated with the rise of European nation states and the Enlightenment. The notion of “a language” makes little sense in most traditional societies” (p. 358). Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have also argued “for an understanding of the relationships between what people believe about their language (or other people’s languages), the situated forms of talk that they deploy, and the material effects – social, economic, environmental – of such views and uses” (p. 22). SET enables this kind of understanding in various ways. Through discussion, students and educators can “actively engage with the history of invention of languages” (p. 21) as stipulated by Makoni and Pennycook (2007) in order to counter “the process of epistemic violence visited on the speakers of those languages as they were called into existence” (p. 21). The fact that the tandem exchanges are based on materials produced by purporters of colonial and Christian ideologies provides an excellent platform for interrogating their authenticity from the students' point of view. Viewing the materials together can invite a discussion of colonial/mission practices in the respective

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<sup>9</sup> The students' achievements in SAE vary depending on many interrelated factors, e.g. school attendance, opportunities or necessity to use SAE within the community, schools' literacy programmes and their effectiveness etc. No conclusive, researched statements are readily available about the general exit levels of students from remote primary schools (see e.g. Harper et al., 2012).

communities. This may even lead to a continued conversation students can have with elders during home visits or school holidays, thus empowering students to renew their ownership of their ways of communicating and to develop a nuanced understanding of language construction in historical circumstances.

Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have concluded: “The conceptual orientations that we adopt in disinvention and reconstitution may also vary depending upon the problems we are seeking to address” (p. 30). I suggest that SET, despite building upon materials produced by enactors of colonial authority and Christianisation agendas, is a way of disinventing languages in order to reconstitute authentic and equitable communication in a mixed culture classroom. Through the agency assumed by the students who become expert teachers in their home language/s, these languages can in fact become a more truthful and authentic representation of what Thorne and Lantolf (2017) have called speakers' “communicative activities” (p. 171).

Drawing a parallel between art as representation of reality and named languages as representations of individual ways of communicating, in her explorations of didactical approaches respectful of diversity in the classroom, Castellotti (2017), revisiting Foucault's (1966) *Les mots et les choses*, has pointed out:

Alors que R. Magritte juge important de préciser que la représentation ... qu'il donne d'une pipe n'«est» pas une pipe, ni les linguistes ni les enseignants de langues ne pensent généralement utile d'expliciter ... que ce qu'ils décrivent ou transmettent n'«est» pas une langue. Ces langues sont au contraire, le plus souvent, essentialisées, censées représenter une réalité tout aussi essentialisée. [While R. Magritte believes it important to clarify that the representation ... he gives of a pipe is not a pipe, neither linguists nor languages teachers think it generally useful to make explicit ... that what they describe or impart is not a language. On the contrary, these languages are most of the time essentialised, meant to represent an equally essentialised reality]. (p. 269)

Since Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have emphasised that “it is more realistic to think in terms of viable alternatives” (p. 30) rather than hoping to propose solutions, SET presents such an alternative pedagogical approach. SET has the potential to address the complex and highly relevant questions raised by the invention ideology, or what Sabino (2018) has termed “the languages ideology” (p. 13). Sabino (2018) has warned that in linguistics, “by describing languages, by arguing about how such entities emerge, change, shift, are learned, and are forgotten, we ensure our continued entrapment on unproductive ideological terrain” (p. 12). Similarly to what could be achieved through the SET model, Sabino (2018) has argued that “ideologies can be dismantled and social constructs, though powerful, are subject to revision” (p. 12). Through mutually instructive and enriching intercultural dialogue going beyond the ideological fissures of the past and its consequences, SET makes this possible.

In terms of individual language learners as operating with one single linguistic repertoire, integrating new features therewithin, Sabino (2018) has agreed with translanguaging theory. Radical as her stance might be, Sabino (2018) has acknowledged that it is difficult for scholars to escape the languages ideology (pp. 9-11), due to “the pervasiveness of our attachment to discrete, bounded linguistic systems” (p. 9) which stems from “western confidence in the existence of reified linguistic systems” (p. 4). Translanguaging scholars Otheguy, García and Reid (2015) have identified the same difficulty: Even though linguists study idiolects as a linguistic phenomenon they revert back to the socially constructed category of named languages when reporting on their findings (p. 289). The SET model is no exception. The model relies on languages for materials and discussions with students. Therefore, SET is a “discursive (re)enactment of the languages ideology” (Sabino, 2018, p. 8).



### 3.1.4 The Contribution of Intercultural Communication Theory

Intercultural communication scholar Piller (2012) has asked for “an empirical and critical enquiry into intercultural communication, which simultaneously narrows and widens the field” (p. 4). The present empirical study narrows the field to pedagogical interactions and widens it to encompass research into relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals living in Australia.

Just as Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have opposed the established idea that a language exists as a separate and stand-alone entity, demarcated in contrast to other languages (p. 2), Piller is opposed to static views of culture which align culture with nationalities. This is the case when the definition of national identity is too closely connected to the political entity of a nation (p. 5). In Makoni’s and Pennycook’s (2007) view, “[l]anguages do not exist as real entities in the world and neither do they emerge from or represent real environments; they are, by contrast, the inventions of social, cultural and political movements” (p. 2). Piller (2012) has applied this same idea to cultures which then become no more than “imagined communities” that are a product of discourse rather than a reality (p. 5).

Piller (2012) has warned that the abstract notion of cultural difference is used all too often to distract from fact that people simply might not fully understand each other due to linguistic barriers (p. 8). In the current discourse revolving around education in Australia, culturism, i.e. the kind of discrimination based on assumptions about culture (<https://www.lexico.com/definition/culturism>), is thriving. The section on education in the *Closing the Gap Prime Minister’s Report 2018* with one of its foci being on “developing committed, skilled staff (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and providing diversity and cultural awareness training” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 12) is an example of this. Linguistic training is not on this list. Piller (2012) has pronounced a significant caveat which sheds light on this common omission: “In thrall to a cultural world view, we see “culture”

where linguistic proficiency and communicative competence (or their lack) and inequality and injustice would explain much more” (p. 8). The argument of cultural difference is convincingly and continuously used to account for the failure of pedagogy in Australian schools with Indigenous students, thus distracting from the issue of language (Perso, 2012, p. 67). Spanning a period of four centuries, from the beginning of colonisation to the current day, this discourse may well be the major reason for some less effective pedagogical initiatives.

## **3.2 The Social Dimension in SET**

### **3.2.1 The Subversive Potential of SET in the Light of Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed**

Postcolonial theory and its linguistic branches explored by Canagarajah (1999, 2007) and Makoni and Pennycook (2007) offer a macro-perspective of the general dynamics of SET. To zero in on the pedagogical-societal implications of SET, it is worthwhile considering some key concerns in *critical pedagogy* and *libertarian education*. Even though *critical pedagogy* is an established field, the term itself seems to escape definition as it has been used across a variety of socio-historical settings (Porto & Yulita, 2017b, p. 230). Guilherme’s (2002) summary of critical pedagogy as a pedagogy of “reflection, dissent, difference, dialogue, empowerment, action and hope” (p. 17) most strongly resonates with principles of SET. The *libertarian education* movement also has some links with SET.

Specifically, Rogers (1969/1974) cast the teacher in the role of a mentor or facilitator rather than an expert, thereby proposing an idea which is central to SET and developed by Freire from a socio-political angle: changing the hierarchical relationship between teachers and students into one of more equality. Furthermore, Rogers (1983) identified three “attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the

learner” (pp. 105-106): “genuineness” (p. 106), “prizing the learner, prizing his feelings, his opinions, his person” (p. 109) and showing empathy (p. 112). In SET as in original tandem learning, the tandem partners develop positive, authentic and empathetic attitudes.

Freire’s theoretical considerations in particular lend themselves to a comparison with SET. In his seminal text from 1970 on education as the praxis of liberation, Freire (1970/2014) has aimed at political emancipation of the oppressed through “the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (p. 79). Freire has posited that education can never be neutral, but can only be in the service of either liberating or domesticating humans with the teacher as serving a particular system (Lange, 1971, p. 13). To avoid such practice, Freire has proposed *educaça problematizadora* leading to *consientização*, a *prise de conscience* of one’s own life situation (Freire, 1974/1977, pp. 46-49). In SET this corresponds to an awareness of one’s own language/s and a critical appraisal of their status in the wider social context.

Freire (1970/2014) has likened the relationship between educators and students to a worrying constellation between a teaching subject and the students as patiently listening objects (p. 73), using the metaphor of students as “containers” or “receptacles” to be “filled” (p. 72). This view resonates with the context of the present study where Indigenous students’ pre-existing knowledge students is often ignored in the scope of an urban education (Herbert, 2012, p. 92; Oliver et al., 2013, p. 235). The ignorance of non-Indigenous Australian values, behaviours and ways of communicating might be an obstacle to academic success of some boarding students. This is parallel to a view in which “national languages came to be associated with modernity and progress, whereas their less fortunate counterparts were associated (conveniently) with tradition and obsolescence” (May, 2012, p. 134). What SET brings to the forefront is what Indigenous students bring with them to school: a wealth of linguistic and cultural knowledge. If students’ prior (linguistic) knowledge is ignored, one particular language-related problem Freire (1970/2014) has detected may appear: words used by teachers become “hollow, alienated, and alienating verbosity” (p. 72), much like non-

anglophone students would experience in an urban Australian school without appropriate scaffolding or ESL support.

In response to such issues, Freire (1970/2014) has advocated that “education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students” (p. 72). Freire analyst Lange (1971) has pointed out that the dichotomies in the conventional student-educator relationships make it an encounter based on inequalities: “In Lehrer und Schüler begegnen sich Wissen und Unwissen, Haben und Nichthaben, Fülle und Leere, Macht und Ohnmacht” [Within the teacher-student encounter, there is an encounter of knowledge and ignorance, having and not having] (p. 13). In practical terms, resolving this contradiction would start with a different actualisation of the roles of teacher and student which are no longer set in stone. A dialogical learning process that is anchored in students’ life reality and experiences (Freire, 1970/2014, p. 71) can set the stage for learning as preparing the questioning and subversion of the status quo (Freire, 1970/2014, p. 73) which in turn would foster critical thinking in educational processes (p. 81):

Indeed, problem-solving education, which breaks with the vertical patterns characteristic of banking education, can fulfill its function as the practice of freedom only if it can overcome the above contradiction. Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn, while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. (Freire, 1970/2014, p. 80)

In such a scenario, authority is no longer considered a valid base for any argumentation or imparting of knowledge (Freire, 1970/2014, p. 80), an idea which is still very present in more contemporary pedagogical discussion (see Houssaye, 2014, p. 33).

Resolving the teacher-student contradiction is the singular point in Freire's pedagogy most concomitant with SET. In a classroom, where one teacher is in charge of a whole group of students, this might be more challenging to do than in a one-on-one teaching situation which enables a more direct and personal way of communicating. SET can dissolve the contradiction between student and teacher and create a learning space where students and teachers take on one another's role interchangeably (see Freire, 1970/2014, p. 65). Due to this interchangeability in SET, the educator retains their teaching role which is their professional responsibility. Transmitting the knowledge and skills needed to live successfully in the (urban) "whitefella" world is expected of educators in the Australian boarding school context where parents or community elders from remote Indigenous communities have sent the children specifically for this reason.

Freire (1970/2014) has specified that a teacher's "efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. His efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power. To achieve this they must be partners of the students in their relations with them" (p. 75). Students become "critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher" (Freire, 1970/2014, p. 81) and, the same as the educator in SET, "the teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their own" (Freire, 1970/2014, p. 81).

The fact that such a role reversal has been proposed by an educator and academic who based his observations on experiences in the postcolonial contexts of South America is no coincidence. As Lange (1971) has explained, Freire's model is only valid in colonial or postcolonial contexts where education indeed can be seen as "Fremdbestimmung" [foreign determination] (p. 14). The same is true for SET. It has been created for use in contexts where minority languages exist but are not part of the lifestyle and culture of the national majority.

According to Freire (1970/2014) "knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in

the world, with the world, and with each other” (p. 72). This collaborative inquiry process resonates strongly with the premises and practices I have set out for SET. SET as a sort of skills exchange includes cooperation between the participants in a similar manner, making it a way of learning that does not necessarily require a formalised school setting.

### **3.2.2 SET as a way of “Deschooling Society”**

In his proposals on “deschooling society” (pp. 9-10, p. 12, p. 22, p. 30, p. 33), Illich (1972) has advocated a culture of people where everyone in society contributes to teaching in more informal ways than what is provided by schools (p. 33). Illich (1972) has cited an example of informal language instruction from 1956 illustrating the dynamics SET can emulate in a school context. About 50 Spanish native-speakers in New York were recruited by a church in order to teach Spanish to English-speaking teachers, social workers and clergymen in order to enable them to communicate with the Puerto Rican population in their respective New York parishes.

Each native speaker was in charge of teaching four English-speakers. Many of the native Spanish-speakers had not finished school. The only assistance they had was a teaching manual. The language teaching of these ‘lay teachers’ yielded outstanding results: After six months, each of the 127 parishes boasted at least three employees who were able to converse in Spanish. According to Illich (1972) no school programme at the time had led to comparable results (p. 8).

Illich (1972) has evoked evidence that most learning does not occur at school (p. 14) but rather seems a byproduct of schooling: informal learning from peers or learning languages through travel or other contact with speakers of the languages. Inspired by such evidence, Illich has elaborated a model of teaching and learning primarily as a self-responsible and self-guided process, getting people together to engage in a skills exchange, away from institutionalised schooling with professional educators:

Both the exchange of skills and matching of partners are based on the assumption that education for all means education by all. Not the draft into a specialized institution but only the mobilization of the whole population can lead to popular culture. The equal right of each man to exercise his competence to learn and to instruct is now pre-empted by certified teachers. (p. 11)

According to Illich (1972), outsourcing this responsibility to institutions such as schools or universities would have an alienating effect because these educational institutions artificially separate interrelated areas of life such as work, freetime, school time etc. (pp. 11-12) and eventually, as “education becomes unworldly and the world becomes noneducational” (p. 12), “school prepares for the alienating institutionalization of life by teaching the need to be taught” (p. 22).

All of these aspects, being responsible of one's own learning, linking learning to the reality of life and the interests of the students and exchanging skills rather than being taught in a hierarchical system, are considered fundamental in tandem practice traditionally and in the adapted student-educator model. They translate as principles of learner autonomy and reciprocity and learning embedded in the students' individual life contexts.

On the role of the teacher, reiterating Freire's (1970/2014) criticism, Illich (1972) has stated that currently, educational institutions seem to cater for the goals of the teacher (p. 14). Instead, he would like to see structures emerge which allow each individual to find self-actualisation by being able to learn and contribute to the learning of others independent of institutionalised processes and curricula (p. 33). Illich's (1972) vision of educational culture would enable breaking the “hidden curriculum” (p. 32) where students experience that education is only valuable when it is acquired through the step-by-step consumption of school-mediated knowledge which will determine the future success one can have in society as an adult (p. 17). Linked to such a perception is the misguided idea Illich sees propagated through schools that learning **about** [my emphasis] the world is more valuable than learning

by exposure to real life and world experiences (p. 18).

The curricular framework in Australia now requires the integration of Indigenous knowledges albeit within the institutionalised form of education. By bringing students' home languages into the institutional education sphere, SET enables educators and students to effectively inject other world views and knowledges into their actualisation of this curriculum. This happens within the institution and not as an informal skills exchange, a halfway position between Illich's more radical views and the socio-educational reality in Australia. That students' educational pathways can be predetermined by social factors has also been amply examined in the work of Bourdieu (1982) from the perspective of language varieties and their interplay with dominant languages.

### **3.2.3 *Ce que parler veut dire* in SET – Bourdieu's Influence**

In the 1970s and 1980s, Bourdieu started his campaign of criticism against formal and structural linguistics. Bourdieu's main point of criticism was the detachment of this theoretical approach from specific social and political conditions of language development and language use. According to Bourdieu (1982), language is first and foremost a product of complex origins embedded in social, historical and political circumstances that led to its genesis and usage (pp. 13-15). Having established the connection between the genesis of modern nation-states and dominant languages, Bourdieu (1982) has prepared the ground for the ideology of disinvention proposed by Makoni and Pennycook (2007). Bourdieu (1982) has pointed out how, in the process of creating national unity, language standardisation was linked closely to the emergent educational system, the standardised national degrees it produced, the grammars and dictionaries it churned out as correlates of the educational system and finally, how all these components served to distinguish individuals' chances and opportunities in the labour market (pp. 27-34). Similarly, Pennycook (2007) has described English as a



“discursive field” synonymous with “neoliberalism ..., globalisation” and “human capital”, in the constant process of “semiotic reconstruction”. Therefore, “English is not so much a language as a discursive field: English *is* neoliberalism, English *is* globalisation, English *is* human capital” (p. 112).

Bourdieu (1982) has warned that the institutional disregard for local forms of non-standard speech could lead to a neglect of vernacular speech forms by the speakers themselves. Speakers of nonstandard varieties unwittingly “collaborent à la destruction de leurs instruments d’expression” [participate in the destruction of their own ways of expression] (p. 34). This is what could be happening in urban boarding schools in Australia if counter measures are not taken. Like any institution, according to Bourdieu (1982), a school establishes certain social conditions which render certain ways of communicating powerful and devalue other ways of communicating. This influence is explained because “l’autorité advient au langage du dehors” [languages receives its authority from the outside] (p. 105). In SET, the authority of a language is conferred onto the language from an outsider. The outside authority, the educator, values the students’ home languages and thereby confers institutional value onto these languages. Such processes are enabled by what Bourdieu (1982) has termed “pouvoir symbolique” [symbolic power] (p. 14), an aspect of most forms of power as it unfolds in social systems and life. Individuals take certain aspects of existing hierarchies for granted and tacitly accept them. Individuals do this even though these hierarchies may devalue them and attribute them a lower position in social hierarchy through communication and use of language. Individuals comply with this system for instance in accepting the legitimacy of an official language (pp. 36-39).

While it is not possible to entirely apply these explorations of power dynamics to the Australian context, Bourdieu’s thinking still opens up areas for consideration in language education. In the case of the Australian language Yolŋu, Trudgen (2000) has stated: “It was not until the 1950s that language was taken seriously, when a teacher/linguist at Milingimbi, Beulah Lowe, started in earnest to understand and decode the language. This was a major job

and is still unfinished today” (p. 40). Vice versa, Trudgen (2000) has called English an “uncharted language ... one that has not been fully analysed” (p. 89). As a result, a literate “Yolŋu Matha speaker cannot pick up a comprehensive dictionary and discover in their own language the meanings of English words or concepts” (p. 89). In Trudgen’s example, Yolŋu gained value through an outsider. However, the lack of a reliable dictionary excludes Yolŋu speakers from many areas of life in Australia.

An additional complexity when applying Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power to the Australian context is that some tribal values and authorities co-exist for some Indigenous individuals alongside or above the hierarchies of non-Indigenous Australian society (Trudgen, 2000, p. 234; Kimberley Language Resource Centre, 1996b, p. 244; Watson, 1989, p. 231). The preconditions formulated by Bourdieu (1982) that individuals subjected to “domination symbolique” (p. 36) must be complicitly engaged in recognising its legitimacy (p. 36) are thus not entirely transferable to the Australian Indigenous situation. The system of power and hierarchy represented in the Australian government, police, legal system, and also institutionalised education is neither understood nor recognised by many Indigenous Australians (Gondarra, 2000, pp. 1-2). This can lead to a situation in which Indigenous English speakers have sufficient knowledge of terms and phonology to seemingly function in a monolingual English-speaking community or workplace. In reality, according to Trudgen (2000), “they can use these 'hidden' English terms but not really understand them” (p. 94). This problem would only become apparent to a very observant interlocutor who can grasp when a word is used slightly out of context. It goes almost without saying that this poses “a major problem with medical terms, [and] it is also a dilemma in economics, law, technology and many other areas” (Trudgen, 2000, p. 95). It is therefore not possible to say that Indigenous Australians contribute to reinforcing and maintaining a system which aims at dominating them as Bourdieu has described. Instead the argument comes back to miscommunication through the lack of common language.

Zeroing in on education, Bourdieu (1982) has further emphasised the role of the French educational system in “le processus qui conduit à l’élaboration, la légitimation et l’imposition d’une langue officielle [the process of the development, the legitimisation and the imposition of the official language] (p. 32). Formally defined certificates, report cards or qualifications have become mechanisms not only to create, but also to maintain social inequality. Therefore, social background is a predeterminer, first for educational and later on for professional success, due to the cultural capital inherited which is based on social origin (pp. 27-29).

Historically, the role of the teacher became that of shaping the sense of national unity through teaching the standard national language as opposed to regional varieties: “le processus d’unification linguistique se confond avec le processus de construction de l’État monarchique” [the process of linguistic unification is linked to the process by which the monarchical state is constructed] (p. 29). Part of this process was that written language takes precedence over the dialects (p. 29) and literature became a measure of linguistic authority (pp. 46-47). This consideration may hold true for the societal value of Indigenous Australian languages. These languages do not have corpus of classics which can easily be accessed by outsiders to the culture in any meaningful way, apart from some translations which may still appear abstract to a non-Indigenous reader (Crugnale, 1995; D. K., personal communication, Wadeye, February 2009; Gale, 1997, pp. 176-195).

To focus Bourdieu’s considerations on the linguistic context of SET, it is useful to consider the risks inherent in language standardisation. Through fixing orthography and standardising the language – which is what would have happened in certain communities and on certain missions – the language which is produced in this way is not necessarily accessible to all of its actual speakers (Bourdieu, 1982, p. 29; see Gale, 1997, p. 188, p. 194; Hinton, 2011, p. 311).

To sum up, Thompson (2005) has pointed out that Bourdieu’s (1982) merit in *Ce que parler veut dire* is his bringing to light the socially created boundaries between ways of

speaking, ways of thinking and ways of acting that have become normal and unquestioned in our societies. Bourdieu's work can help us understand these dynamics as the first step towards creating new social conditions and alternative forms of organising social and political life (Thompson, 2005, p. 35) just like SET aims at creating more equitable dynamics for Indigenous students in urban Australian boarding schools. Bourdieu's (1982) reflections have set the stage for translanguaging theory with its insight that languages are not a linguistic, but rather a material and social reality.

## **3.3 SET as an Actualisation of Translanguaging Theory**

### **3.3.1 How Language is Understood in Translanguaging Theory**

As I have outlined in chapter one, Cummins' work on bilingualism (1979) has informed some Australian programmes in Indigenous education from the 1980s onwards providing an example of the often selective interrelatedness of linguistic thinking and language teaching (Widdowson, 2009). The advantage often cited at the time was that the more developed students' ability in their home languages and associated knowledges, the easier it will be for them to succeed at school in the acquisition of other languages (Cummins, 1979, p. 240, p. 247; Hamers & Blanc, 1989, pp. 187-212). Cummins (1981) also developed the idea that transfer between the languages of bilingual individuals can easily occur (p. 36). Related to Cummins' *common underlying proficiency* hypothesis, García (2009) developed a dynamic model of bilingualism. García's (2009) model has shown the complex interrelatedness of the language practices involved in the way their speakers use them with fluidity, drawing upon features of what is commonly understood as two or more separate languages in their integrated repertoire (pp. 53-54). Bilingualism is therefore not understood

as restricted to the use of two languages only, but used as the umbrella term for multiple languages spoken by an individual (Otheguy, García & Reid, 2015, p. 282).

From a different angle, Canagarajah (1999) has come to a similar conclusion. Canagarajah cited the literary example of Caribbean writer Derek Walcott. Walcott has successfully seized the “creative tension between the languages” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 1), St Lucian creole and English, in his poetic and dramatic writing, showing that “our consciousness is able to accommodate more than one language or culture, just as our languages can accommodate alien grammar and discourses.” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 2). In fact, individuals could use the perceived “linguistic conflict” (p. 2) between English and a vernacular to their advantage because “the very fact that we are for ever [*sic*] rooted in the primary community of socialization is what enables us to negotiate or appropriate other languages (and cultures) more effectively” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 2).

In their publication on translanguaging, García and Li Wei (2014) have aggregated the results of numerous studies on bilingual teaching and learning including neuroscientific evidence underpinning the interdependence hypothesis (pp. 11-15). Based on the premise that no strict separation between autonomous L1 and L2/3/etc. and therefore no additive multilingualism exist, human beings are assumed to be equipped with only one dynamic linguistic system instead. In this system, all linguistic capabilities, or “linguistic features” (p. 15) are integrated, accessed and developed in a continuum-like manner. Throughout the life of the individual, these features make up their particular linguistic repertoire (p. 22). So, what from the outside may look like separate languages, for bilingual speakers these are actually features of the same, one repertoire, activated as necessary due to the monoglossic paradigm of schools and society in general. This dynamic bilingualism has been termed translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2014, pp. 14-15). To refine their model of dynamic bilingualism, García and Li Wei (2014) have used descriptors along the lines of integration (p. 15), interconnectedness and mutual interdependence (p. 21). These descriptors resonate strongly with the positive outcomes associated with tandem practice and even with the desired

outcomes of the Australian reconciliation effort (Reconciliation Australia, 2017). To sum up, according to García and Li Wei (2014)

Rather than learning a new separate 'second language', learners are engaged in appropriating new languaging that makes up their own unique repertoire of meaning-making resources. The language practices then don't belong to the school or to the home; the languaging is that of the learner, his or her own being, knowing and doing, as it emerges through social interaction. ... Translanguaging refers to the flexibility of bilingual learners to take control of their own learning, to self-regulate when and how to language, depending on the context in which they're being asked to perform. (p. 80)

García and Li Wei (2014) have further specified that “translanguaging ... liberates language from structuralist-only or mentalist-only or even social-only definitions. Instead, it signals a trans-semiotic system with many meaning-making signs, primarily linguistic ones that combine to make up a person's semiotic repertoire” (p. 42). This multimodal dimension typical of translanguaging education (Collins & Cioè-Peña, 2016, p. 130) is mirrored in the SET exchanges where – apart from linguistic signs – any mode of communication, such as drawing or songs can be used.

Even though the notion of language is seen as controversial in translanguaging theory because of the reasons outlined by Makoni and Pennycook (2007) and reiterated by other scholars (see Sabino, 2018; Wright, Boun & García, 2017, pp. 1-2), it is still recognised that because named languages exist and have real consequences in daily life, teachers and students must in a way, ‘play the game’ of knowing and using named languages (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 19). Translanguaging therefore does not refute the notion of language or advocates language education without the concept of languages (see Makoni and Pennycook, 2007, p. 36), but more practically proposes “a theory of translanguaging, in which named languages are seen as having social, although not linguistic, reality” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 15; see

Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 298). In my choice of terminology, I keep with García and Kleyn (2016) using named languages, to be understood in the conventional sense as delimiting languages according to regions of Australia where they are spoken.

However, I am mindful of the conceptualisation that languages are “socially invented categories” which “do not necessarily overlap with the linguistic systems of individual speakers” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 10) who instead chose their linguistic features from a repertoire that is one and also their own, independent from any map of tribal, ancestral language regions, nation-state, government or school authority. To clarify this concept further, Otheguy et al. (2015) have introduced the term idiolect as “a linguistic object” as opposed to language as a “cultural object” (p. 291). They have defined idiolect as “a person’s own unique, personal language, the person’s *mental grammar* [emphasis in the original] that emerges in interaction with other speakers and enables the person’s use of language” (p. 289). For teaching, “[i]t means we start from a place that leverages all the features of the children’s repertoire, while also showing them when, with whom, where and why to use some features of their repertoire and not others, enabling them to also perform according to the social norms of named languages as used in schools” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 15).

A similar teaching approach cannot completely be assumed by educators in the Australian context as they may not have the authority and/or expertise to decide which Indigenous languages or features thereof are appropriate for use in which domain. However, they can explain to students that such decisions are their prerogative as speakers of their home languages. The advice and instruction of non-Indigenous educators can only pertain to which variety of English to deploy in which practical circumstance. As García and Li Wei (2014) have stated: “A translanguaging approach to bilingualism extends the repertoire of semiotic practices of individuals and transforms them into dynamic mobile resources that can adapt to global and local sociolinguistic situations” (p. 18).

### **3.3.2 Translanguaging Theory as the Most Suitable Theoretical Umbrella for SET**

In pedagogy, it is not always possible to clearly separate theory from didactic approach. I therefore develop my discussion of SET from the view proposed by Houssaye (2014) that “le pédagogue est celui qui cherche à conjoindre la théorie et la pratique à partir de sa propre action. C’est dans cette production spécifique du rapport théorie pratique en éducation que s’origine, se crée, s’invente et se renouvelle la pédagogie” [a pedagogue seeks to join theory and praxis together in their own action. It is in this specific creation of a link between theory and praxis in education that pedagogy originates, creates, invents and renews itself] (p. 140).

Linguistic theories which ignore the social context of language use and present languages as bounded entities, most prominently the models proposed by de Saussure and Chomsky, have been refuted by many scholars of 21st century multilingualism (see e.g. Canagarajah, 1999, pp. 127-130; García & Li Wei, 2014, pp. 6-7; Jonsson, 2017, p. 20; Langacker, 2013, pp. 215-217; Valdés, Poza & Brooks, 2017, p. 60). These theories imply that native-speaker likeness is the ultimate attainment of any learner. Similarly, traditional Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research predominantly examined issues from a monolingual stance, seeing the native-speaking individual as the norm worth aspiring to and the L2 user as deficient in comparison (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 127; Cook, 2016, p. 5; May, 2012, p. 13). This “monolingual bias” in dominant models of SLA (Kachru, 1994) has been questioned by researchers in the emerging field of translanguaging education (García & Li Wei, 2014; García & Kleyn, 2016; Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016; Paulsrud, Rosén, Straszer & Wedin, 2017). Consequently, the didactic models which have emerged out of structuralist linguistics and Chomsky's transformational generative paradigm seem inapt to capture the realities of multilingual classrooms in the urban boarding schools in Australia which are the focus of my study.



Stemming from a functional approach to language as an instrument of communication, the recently much discussed and implemented action-oriented approach (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 9-16; Puren, 2018b, 2018b), or in its francophone merger form, “l’approche communic’actionnelle” (Bourguignon, 2006), does not lend itself completely to the SET model either. It has been developed for use within whole-class contexts linked to tight assessment procedures. One of its central ideas is that students use language to act upon the world. It generally aims at educating any pupil as a “citoyen acteur social engagé” [a citizen engaged in social action] based on common values and a “projet collectif commun” [a common collective project] in which they are engaged through co-action, acting with one another (Puren, 2018b, p. 16). This socio-cultural dimension and the element of co-action are characteristics which I have incorporated into SET. Since SET is about helping each other to learn, it can be considered as a social project. Furthermore, the emphasis on action through communication draws the attention away from abstract linguistic mastery, echoing Hymes’s (1972) communicative competence and Widdowson’s (1978) communicative approach.

With its one-on-one or small group mode, SET is also a reflection of differentiated pedagogy. Individual differences between students in the same group are taken into account in order to provide the most suitable learning experience for each student (Hattie & Yates, 2014, p. 184; Houssaye, 2014, p. 113; see García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 121, p. 194; Palmer, Mateus, Martínez & Henderson, 2014, p. 766).

SET borrows the element of a distinct role for the students as “l’élève-acteur et auteur du savoir” [the student as someone who is actively involved in the construction of knowledge], students who construct knowledge which in return grants them access to autonomy in the learning process (Quivy & Tardieu, 2002, p. 170) from communicative and cognitivist approaches to language instruction. However, the cognitivist focus on the acquisition of a grammatical system as an important goal (Valdés, Poza & Brooks, 2017, p. 61) is not shared by the SET model.

Understanding and implementation of the communicative approach vary significantly

across geographical regions (Germain, 1993, p. 3; Howatt, 2009, pp. 484-485). It therefore remains elusive of definition (Germain, 1993, p. 3). Puren (2018b) has summed up communicative language instruction as favouring student-student interaction in real or simulated situations (p. 17). As its predecessors, the direct method and the audio-lingual method, the communicative approach still advocates that as much as possible of formal language instruction should happen in the target language (Howatt, 2009, p. 473; Little, 1996, p. 26; Quivy & Tardieu, 2002, pp. 161-172).

In many current contexts, such a view may seem obsolete as it is less appropriate to capture the reality of many multilingual students. This is why the actional perspective allows the use of the L1 or any language shared by several students in a class, thus providing a space for plurilingual social practices as legitimate means of communication in the language classroom (Puren, 2018b, p. 18). This is a significant parallel to SET which foregrounds “the legitimacy of the hybrid and multi-faceted linguistic repertoires of bilingual individuals who perform complex identities effectively through more than one language for a variety of purposes” (Valdés et al., 2017, p. 59).

Sridhar (1994) was one of the first to see the “need to rebuild SLA theory from the ground up” towards “a more functionally oriented and culturally authentic theory, one that is true to the ecology of multilingualism and views the multilingual’s linguistic repertoire as a unified, complex, coherent, interconnected, interdependent, organic ecosystem” (p. 803). Sridhar has evoked here the understanding of language as required by translinguaging theory. Sridhar’s suggestions of a bottom-up approach to second language teaching and learning resonate with Tomasello’s (2000) view of language acquisition as usage-based. Following Langacker (1987; 1988; 2000), Bybee (1985; 1995), and Croft (2000), Tomasello (2000) has described usage-based theories as models in which “all things flow from the actual usage events in which people communicate linguistically with one another” (p. 61). Therefore, “the linguistic skills that a person possesses at any given moment in time ... result from her accumulated experience with language across the totality of usage events in her life.”

(Tomasello, 2000, pp. 61-62). When this experience is one involving many languages, Tomasello's description resonates with a recurrent idea in translanguaging theory: the linguistic repertoire of multilinguals. This repertoire can only be understood through observation (see Tomasello, 2000, p. 62).

To situate SET within more recent research in the functionalist tradition, I will describe how SET links with two specific strands of cognitive linguistics: cognitive grammar and construction grammar. Cognitive grammar as presented by Langacker (2013) offers a useful perspective on linguistic meanings as being “grounded in social action, being negotiated by interlocutors based on mutual assessment of their knowledge, thoughts, and intentions” (p. 4). SET is a model based on social interaction, negotiation of linguistic meaning and reciprocity. Langacker (2013) has also emphasised that rather than being “an autonomous formal system, grammar is reflective of our experiences in life, of “moving, perceiving, and acting on the world” (p. 4). It follows that through an understanding of some aspects of the grammar of Indigenous languages afforded during SET sessions, educators can gain an insight into their students' world views.

In terms of linguistic accuracy, which I have established as a more peripheral notion in SET in chapter two, Langacker (2013) has formulated the idea that linguistic “structures do emerge with varying degrees of robustness, definition, and stability” (p. 218). Therefore, the interest is less on qualifying or disqualifying structures as accurate according to what Langacker (2013) has called the “would-be grammar police” (p. 1), but rather on the “inherent dynamicity and variability of linguistic structure” (p. 218) based on language usage (p. 220). This is concomitant with SET because rather than aiming at a native-like use of either any of the target language, the focus of SET is to explore languages in their actual usage, taking into account language change.

Construction grammar is based on constructions as the basic units of language. Constructions are conventionalized form-meaning pairs which occur frequently in language usage (Goldberg, 2006) and present SLA researchers with the challenge of describing how

learners use constructions in order to inform teaching practice (De Knop & Gilquin, 2016, p. 14). Construction grammar presents a strong argument against grammar rule-based approaches which are still pervasively used. Therefore, researchers in the emerging field of construction-centered instruction have made a call for teaching materials to better represent language based on actual language usage (De Knop & Gilquin, 2016, p. 7). This can be done in SET as students inform the materials with their own language usage experience. However, the focus is still on language accuracy, on enabling learners to make acceptable generalizations based on input – thus imitating what native speakers do naturally (De Knop & Gilquin, 2016, p. 14). In contrast to SET, the native-speaker norm persists, which might hinder a validation of students' entire linguistic repertoire.

A definition by García & Kano (2014) of translanguaging as “a process by which students and teachers engage in complex discursive practices that include *all* the language practices of students in order to develop new language practices and sustain old ones, communicate appropriate knowledge, and give voice to new sociopolitical realities by interrogating linguistic inequality” (p. 261) has offered the most suitable theoretical basis for SET. Translanguaging is all the more appropriate as a theoretical base because it is “centred on the speakers and their practices” and therefore “relevant when language learning and teaching is concerned” (Narcy-Combes, M.-F., Narcy-Combes, J.-P., McAllister, Leclère, & Miras, 2019, p. 12).

The practice of translanguaging described and amplified by García and Li Wei (2014) and García and Kleyn (2016) stems from Wales. Welsh bilingual educator Cen Williams (1996) started in the 1990s to ask his students to display their full linguistic repertoire. Williams deemed this repertoire part of their *one* [emphasis added] bilingual identity. He held the view that his students' linguistic knowledge should be deployed not only at a designated time during the school day, but simultaneously in tasks. Williams asked his students to use English and Welsh to deepen their understanding of the subject matter, focusing more on language function than purely on accuracy while alternating input and output languages for

reading and writing.

The “main tenets” of his “Welsh translanguaging” remain significant for the broader movement of translanguaging theory and education: first, the recognition that “bilingual children develop a single complex repertoire”, secondly, the idea that “bilingual children are capable of communicating and acting with only certain features of their repertoire, those that respond to socially named languages”; thirdly, “to deepen the bilingual child’s performances in socially named languages, it is important to first recognize and leverage their entire linguistic repertoire” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 16) and lastly, an emphasis on communicative functionality instead of linguistic accuracy (Creese, 2017, p. 8; Narcy-Combes et al., 2019, p. 11; Palmer et al., 2014, pp. 765-766).

Three significant differences between translanguaging education and the proposed SET model are evident, though. The first is the stipulation that translanguaging in classrooms can happen without the teacher having to know the students' home languages (Ebe & Chapman-Santiago, 2016, p. 76). The adapted tandem model aims at establishing some knowledge of students' home languages for the benefit of the educator. The second difference is that the scenarios examined in previous studies of translanguaging (Ebe & Chapman-Santiago, 2016, p. 57; García & Kleyn, 2016; García & Li Wei, 2014; Mary & Young, 2017; Straszer, 2017; Toth & Paulsrud, 2017) involve language repertoires with established writing conventions as opposed to oral Indigenous languages. While knowing how to write in a language is not a prerequisite of being able to translanguage, it does have practical implications such as the availability and in-class use of online translation tools or dictionaries (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 106) and “multilingual word walls” (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 122).

The third difference is that García and Kleyn (2016) have developed translanguaging as “a critical activity that disrupts and opens up spaces within the existing language education policies that are imposed” (p. 182). However, “[f]or this potential to be actualized, we need changes in how society views language-minoritized communities” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p.

200). According to policy documents (see ACARA, 2015; Commonwealth of Australia, 2018), Australia's view is in favour of inclusive language policies. Since December 2015, the Australian curriculum framework has explicitly invited the integration of Indigenous languages into schools nationwide. What is left to be elaborated specifically by individual schools is a way of implementing this. This is where the SET model can help.

One of García's and Li Wei's (2014) key exigencies is that “teachers need to develop a critical sociopolitical consciousness about the linguistic diversity of the children” (p. 123). The situational use of the students’ home language has been recognised as a potent accomplice in this endeavour. As Narcy-Combes et al. (2019) have put it: “teachers must be prepared to ‘shift’ their design, which implies changing the course of instruction in order to respond to individual children’s language repertoire” (p. 13). Teachers using the students’ home languages has increasingly become a way to activate the students' entire linguistic repertoire rather than an “illicit pedagogical strategy” (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 124) often seen as unwelcome in the classroom and particularly “maligned by teachers in dual language education” insisting on strict separation of the two languages of instruction (Palmer et al., 2014, p. 759). SET has the potential to release Australian classrooms from the dichotomies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, orality and literacy, possibly even between language of power and suppressed language. As such, it has an important social purpose in serving students who may have been underserved by the current system.

### **3.3.3 The Social Agenda of Translanguaging**

#### **Theory**

Valdiviezo and Nieto (2017) have reminded us that “cultural diversity is also a political struggle for the right to co-exist, to participate, and to contribute to society and the world” (p. 104). García and Li Wei (2014), Palmer et al. (2014) and Valdiviezo and Nieto (2017) have found that bilingual education has so far been ineffective in enabling such

participation and in creating a more equitable educational environment for students from language minorities. García and Li Wei (2014) have criticised that “bilingual education, in the forms of the past, has done little to destroy the hierarchies among languages and people, ... or to generate learner subjectivities able to engage in, and value, the translanguaging practices which are the norm in bilingual communities” (p. 44). Translanguaging as a transformative practice goes beyond the nation-state and its associated educational systems (García & Li Wei, 2014, pp. 43-44) much like the “*école véritablement multi-inter-transculturelle*” envisaged by Akkari and Broyon (2014, p. 17). Akkari and Broyon (2014) have argued that national approaches to education have become unsuitable and need to be adapted to the realities of migration and the pluralities of cultures in societies globally (p. 5).

The real potential for social change inherent in translanguaging is not merely seeing translanguaging as a scaffolding tool (García & Li Wei, 2017, p. 227) – as has been the case with previous approaches in bilingual models used in Australia, especially in remote community schools. The L1 was seen as the stepping stone to acquiring the nationally dominant language (Gale, 1997, p. 107, p. 213). In contrast, teachers who develop a “transformative stance” with regard to translanguaging have understood its power to reverse language hegemony: “a way not only to invert the power positions of the named school languages, but also a way to disrupt the hegemony of the named national languages and of the power of the political state” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 21). Teachers then take on roles as “policy agents, innovative thinkers, researchers in the classroom, and community advocates” (Valdiviezo & Nieto, p. 105). Such wide-reaching aims resonate strongly with the voices of heritage language scholars. Many heritage language specialists have advocated strongly against the “institutionalization of linguistic subordination” for the sake of protecting the students’ sense of self-esteem and thus contributing to “chances of attaining educational and societal success” (Leeman, Rabin & Roman-Mendoza, 2011, p. 482).

In like manner, SET involving Indigenous Australian languages promotes “liberating the voices of the oppressed” (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 42). Firstly, the conventional

hierarchy in which the educator alone holds knowledge and power is inverted. The oral Indigenous languages involved in this study are brought into sight and into writing and thus gain equality with the language of power, Standard Australian English. As Otheguy (2016) has reminded us, multilingual students are asked to inhibit 50% of their repertoire, compared to monolingual students who are never asked not to use 50% of their linguistic repertoire in school or society (p. xii). Quite literally, they become what Back (2007) has poignantly described as “the half muted” (p. 8) in *The Art of Listening*. As non-speakers of SAE, many Indigenous students are half muted not only in the classroom, but also in wider Australian society as their academic performances are viewed through the lens of national assessment schemes which do not take into account any other linguistic or cultural knowledge.

Translanguaging thus continues a tradition of critical pedagogical approaches starting with a transformation of the classroom with a view to “the creation of a more just democratic society” (Leeman et al., 2011, p. 485). SET can “de-center the terms of expertise” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 196), but it does so along the lines provided by an official, national curriculum framework and at the instigation thereof. SET can be viewed as an implementation of a written political and pedagogical desire to integrate Indigenous languages into the teaching and learning scene in Australian schools (see Oliver et al., 2013, p. 235). SET therefore remains focused on the social reality of the institutional context. To make this social reality a more just one, students need educators to cooperate effectively with them.

### **3.3.4 Students and Educators co-Construct Multi-Competency Through Translanguaging in SET**

Cook (2016) has coined the term “multi-competence” as “the overall system of a mind or community that uses more than one language” (p. 3). In this system, degrees of mastery or native-likeness play a subordinate role (Cook, 2016, pp. 3-4). Similarly, from the European Framework of Reference point of view, Le Lièvre and Forlot (2014) have reminded us that



“on peut tous posséder, à divers degrés, une langue sans en être locuteur natif” [we can all own a language, to varying degrees, without being a native speaker] (p. 166). To seize the opportunities afforded by multi-competence in an urban boarding school context, educator and students must cooperate on many levels in the proposed tandem learning model.

When García and Li Wei (2014) and Palmer et al. (2014) have observed students and teachers who made use of translanguaging, they found that this was sometimes not viewed favourably by authorities promoting standard languages as the norm in school. Teachers translanguaged to make curriculum content accessible, give instructions, behavioural reminders or to build relationships with their students (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 124). Especially the aspect of relationship building constitutes an important parallel to the proposed tandem model as “translanguaging refers to the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire that is constantly evolving in social interaction with others” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 22). In SET this interaction occurs with an educator whose linguistic repertoire is enlarged as educator and students construct meaningful interactions together.

On a practical micro-planning level, in terms of translanguaging lesson design for multicompetent students, significant overlap exists with the proposed adapted tandem model. Apart from the cooperative space which allows for power relations between educators and students to be transformed, the collecting and collating of multilingual resources is an essential component of the educator’s preparatory work (Collins & Cioè-Peña, 2016, pp. 130-131, p. 138; see Appendices 1, 2, 5 and 9 for the actual materials prepared for the exploratory study). On the macro-level of unit planning, García and Kleyn (2016) have noted that within their educational teams of researchers and teachers they “imagine what it would be like to educate and develop students’ language performances if we started with the students’ own internal language repertoire, rather than from the external definition of the language of school” (p. 45). In the same manner, SET seeks to bring out the students’ voices by activating a repertoire that otherwise lies dormant in an English-medium educational environment.

Ultimately, any planning processes in SET can be completed jointly by students and their educators. Even if the end product of Indigenous students' educational pathway is confidence and proficiency in Standard Australian English, through cooperative planning with their students, educators can “ensure that the bilingual children's full language repertoire is given a rightful place in the *process* of learning. Even when the *product* of learning is in one or another language, the process must leverage the students' full repertoire” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 28). Being involved in the selection of topics, the choice and creation of materials increases students' ownership and metalinguistic awareness, another crucial component of translanguaging as well as heritage language education (see García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 29). This can take the shape of what Leeman et al. (2011) have called “critical language awareness” referring to the roles ascribed to languages in societies (p. 482) or as Woodley (2016) has put it for translanguaging: “the ways in which young people perceive the educational value of their home languages” (p. 91).

If an educator who represents the more prestigious majority language places value on the students' home languages, this may have a positive impact on their perception of these languages (see Borden & Wagner, 2013, pp. 107-108; Candelier, 2008; Voise, 2018). Similarly, Canagarajah (1999) has reminded us that “at a time when periphery communities still associate English with colonialism and oppression, it is important to show local students that their vernacular is valued by actively using it in the ESL classroom” (p. 128).

Another parallel between the translanguaging approach and SET is the grouping of students according to shared home languages (Collins & Cioè-Peña, 2016, p. 135; Ebe & Chapman-Santiago, 2016, p. 59; García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 122). Along with this grouping, it is important to make the purpose of using translanguaging strategies transparent:

Students must understand the expectations and rationale for inclusion of more than one language within each lesson. This should be stated explicitly – both in terms of the process or how students will be moving

through the lesson and the final product or the piece of work they will develop. (Kleyn, 2016, p. 204)

The same transparency is a requirement for the success of SET as the methodology and protocol in chapter four will show in more detail.

With SET, I am also in the company of Canagarajah's (1999) demand for "appropriate practices from bottom up" (p. 195) i.e. for "periphery learning communities to conduct their language learning in terms that are relevant and effective to their socio-cultural context and needs" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 195). In assuming that a learning community in an urban Australian school constitutes part of the periphery, SET responds to the need for the actors in the learning processes there to seek out suitable alternatives for their specific communicative needs as reflected in the ACARA framework. ACARA does not tell schools and teaching staff exactly how to integrate the Indigenous languages. In an "absence of preconstructed methods" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 195), educators therefore "discover relevant pedagogical approaches in negotiation with their students" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 196), in this case a language learning scenario based on reciprocity and focused on relationship building. This allows educators "to open themselves more fully to the realities of their educational context" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 196). Educators can discover the wealth of knowledge in the didactic vacuum surrounding Indigenous languages which can be seized as an opportunity.

The educator's function as a role model is a further opportunity offered by SET. By learning another language and making mistakes, the educator models risk-taking in language learning (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 112). In SET, risk-taking is a key element. For many Indigenous people, taking risks when learning or performing a task might pose particular cultural challenges. Making mistakes or talking about mistakes one has made is in conflict with face-saving strategies and can lead to withdrawal from school or places of employment (Hagan, 2008, pp. 18-19). For these reasons, it is even more important for Indigenous students to witness non-Indigenous educators attempting to learn some of their home languages and making mistakes in the process. Indigenous students benefit in terms of intercultural learning

(in “whitefella” culture, it is okay to make mistakes) as well as in terms of language learning strategies as they realise that making mistakes is part of the learning process. Translanguaging practitioner Brown (2016) has found that correcting his efforts in their home languages has engaged his students more (Woodley & Brown, 2016, p. 87). Students’ acting as teachers has also been part of other translanguaging studies’ evidence (Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016, p. 46) or studies in Indigenous education (Borden & Wagner, 2013).

Despite its promises, translanguaging is not yet widely used by policy makers and education practitioners (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 135, p. 137), apart from a cluster of schools in New York city and the state of New York (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 200) and some cases in Europe (Paulsrud, et al., 2017). Rennie (2013) has reminded us of the parallels between Black and Hispanic students in the United States (p. 155) which are targeted by Gracia’s and Kleyn’s intervention (2016) and Indigenous students in Australia in underperformance according to national test scores. The proposed tandem model could provide additional pieces of evidence in an endeavour to offer alternative pedagogical tools for the complexities of classrooms around the world.

### **3.4 SET in the Light of Heritage Language**

#### **Education**

Another emerging field of research (Kondo-Brown, 2005, p. 563) which provides supporting evidence and enriching perspectives for the model of SET is *heritage language* (HL) education. It has emerged not only in response to migrant minorities’ language educational needs in majority language societies, but has also encompassed cases of language revival and revitalisation. Otheguy et al. (2015) have clarified that translanguaging practices can support sustainable language maintenance efforts (p. 283).

Although most heritage language education research focuses on the Hispanic student population in the United States (Hinton, 2011; Lie, 2003, p. 274; Valdés, 2005), I will include

the common key points here for consideration to show how SET could play a role in the international efforts of language revitalisation and language maintenance. The question to guide my considerations here is: Which parts of heritage language research and education apply to the situation of Indigenous learners in Australia?

Hinton (2011) has distinguished the “teaching of endangered languages” from “world languages” (p. 307) to underline their specificity. The term *heritage language* has been “used broadly to refer to nonsocietal and nonmajority languages spoken by groups often known as linguistic minorities” (Valdés, 2005, p. 411). This minority status does not necessarily imply that the languages in question are endangered. These languages are spoken in the homes of many individuals but are not the majority language in the wider community, such as for instance Spanish or Korean in the United States. As a result of the individual socialisation process, the languages in question may not have been acquired to the desired degree by the speakers who seek educational opportunities to consolidate their knowledge of the languages they consider part of their heritage. I have adopted Hinton's (2011) definition and “reserve the term ‘heritage languages’ to refer to those languages which are not the majority language of the country, but where there is also some place in the world where the language is not endangered” (p. 308). Following this terminological clarification, it makes sense to refer to Indigenous languages, such as the languages involved in this study of SET, as endangered languages.

The first commonality between HL education and SET is that the literature on heritage languages and endangered languages shows continued use of the term *language* by many researchers (see Hinton, 2011; Kondo-Brown, 2005; Leeman et al., 2011; Lie, 2003; Mascia-Lees & Lees, 2003). The same as in the understanding of language brought forth in translanguaging theory and adopted in the SET model, the emphasis is on the practicality of moving forward with named languages even though they may be products of colonisation and

Christianisation<sup>10</sup> or reflect contemporary social injustices.

A second commonality extends to the rejection of the native-speaker norm or the national standard of a language which ultimately relegates other varieties and languages to a stigmatised position (Hinton, 2011, p. 308; Lee & McCarty, 2017; Leeman et al., 2011, p. 482; Valdés, 2005, p. 412). Rejecting such language hierarchies means accepting all varieties of the students' home languages (Leeman et al., 2011, p. 484; Valdés, 2005, p. 411). For Indigenous languages, this would also include modernised versions of such languages which bear the signs of influence from a majority language (Hinton, 2011, p. 311).

A third commonality is the support provided by governments or language communities or ideally both in carrying out tailor-made language programmes to cater for heritage speakers (Lie, 2003, p. 274). According to Hinton (2011, p. 308, p. 312) and Baker and Lewis (2017, p. 118), language revitalization programmes worldwide struggle with the same kind of problems that schools in Australia face when trying to implement Indigenous language courses. There are few speakers, and even less who might want to or have been trained to teach the languages. Some larger communities of speakers have managed to successfully implement full immersion programmes with good results (Hinton, 2011, p. 307; Lee & McCarty, 2017, p. 423; Lie, 2003, p. 289) but for smaller language communities, SET might be a practical alternative.

Another significant overlap with SET is the fact that materials in revitalisation programmes have to be designed by the teachers using what Hinton (2011) has called “bootstrap strategies” (p. 308), making the pedagogical work in this area “a pioneering process that involves the development of new models of language teaching” (Hinton, 2011, p. 308). However, as opposed to the examples Hinton has cited (2011, p. 308), Australia has provided a curriculum for these languages, although not language-specific like in other parts of the world (see Lie, 2003, p. 273).

Much of the research on heritage language education has placed an emphasis on the

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<sup>10</sup> Murrinhpatha, literally 'language good', the good language, seems to have existed with this name prior to missionaries naming the language of the Port Keats area.

links between language, culture and identity, especially as one needs a certain degree of language knowledge to access and maintain cultural knowledge (Hinton, 2011, p. 309; Leeman et al., 2011; Lie, 2003, p. 275; Woodley & Brown, 2016, p. 91). In the light of critical pedagogy, community activism has been proposed in a service-learning programme by Leeman et al. (2011). The university students in this programme offered after-school reading and language enrichment for children from Spanish-speaking homes in a local primary school. After interviewing their research participants, Leeman et al. (2011) have found that

HL [heritage language] students integrated their home and community identities into a critical learning and teaching experience. As they brought their language and their new classroom knowledge into the young HL learners' program, university HL students developed new identities as language experts, gaining confidence as well as linguistic ability. These new expert and educator roles were coupled with their development of other identities, including those of cultural elders and social activists. Significantly, these new identities contrasted sharply with past identities that had been ascribed to them through much of their educational careers and which cast them as linguistically deficient in both, Spanish and English. (p. 492)

The positive shaping of identity and self-perception/-efficacy described by Leeman et al. (2011) might be possible in SET over a period of time. Similarly, social action, which has already been tied to Intercultural Citizenship (Byram et al., 2017) is conceivable for SET, but only once the tandem model has been established and accepted. In its initial phase, as described in this study, SET focuses on relationships and richer linguistic comprehension within the institutional context solely. Once students are comfortable with their identity as language experts, they could go on to widen their instructional field, maybe with a view to professional language teaching to close the staffing gap stated by Hinton (2011, p. 308, p. 312).

A significant difference is that SET is proposed by a non-Indigenous educator. SET does not happen at the instigation of an Indigenous language community pursuing motives of language preservation as a personal or political stance such as identified by Hinton (2011):

Endangered languages are usually endangered because conquest, oppressive policies or economic needs have resulted in a language shift. That this shift is unacceptable to the current generations of the minority groups is clear from the fact that efforts at language revitalization are taking place” (p. 310).

The long-term goal of recreating a larger community of speakers (Hinton, 20011, p. 310) is beyond the scope of SET. At best, the tandem model could plant the seeds for this to happen in individual students. The responsibility carried by learners of an endangered heritage language that Hinton (2011, pp. 309-310) and Otheguy et al. (2015, p. 299) have identified in terms of language modernization, is actually higher in SET and language revitalization or revival compared to HL education. This is something that needs to be carefully gauged by the educator initiating the sessions: Are the students willing to accept this kind of responsibility where they take on an expert role to transmit their endangered language(s) to another person? Saving a language from extinction or resurrecting a language<sup>11</sup> is not an unproblematic concept in itself (see Mascia-Lees & Lees, 2003, p. 710). This is not the primary goal of SET. While there seems to be a consensus that Indigenous language reclamation and maintenance projects should remain the initiative of Indigenous communities (Lee & McCarty, 2017, p. 423), SET is located in the comprehension gap between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous educational staff and therefore initiated by the educators.

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<sup>11</sup> Rather than speaking of extinct languages, some researchers prefer the term “dormant” (Hinton, 2011, p. 315).



## Conclusion

In my theoretical advances on the model of SET, I have aimed to bring together related areas of research to provide as accurate and diverse a spectrum as needed to do justice to the complexities of the field. The postcolonial perspective has shown that the attitudes required to implement SET are favourable to counter neo-colonialist tendencies in Australian education. SET is also effective in creating more equitable scenarios for Indigenous students attending boarding schools and is thereby concomitant with the social justice agendas purported by critical pedagogies as proposed by Freire, Illich and explicated by Bourdieu. In search of the most apt theoretical framework for SET, translanguaging theory has proven to be suitable. Finally, the developing field of HL education has offered many insights which can fruitfully inform the SET model in its concerns with endangered ancestral languages.

# Chapter 4: Methodology

## Introduction

No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of a society. (Said, 2003, p. 10)

Said (2003) has underlined the impossibility of being completely nonpolitical and impartial as a scholar. He detected “the protocol of pretended suprapolitical objectivity” (p. 10) as a major difficulty in research and Sprague (2016) has reiterated the same concerns with regard to sociologically-oriented research. I have chosen to anchor my methodological choices in the current realities of educational policy in Australia, attempting to make my project serve social justice in the spirit of Sprague’s (2016) work who advocates research as “a consideration of how we might change the situation” (p. 24). My research seeks to address the absence of Indigenous languages in many urban boarding schools:

**To what extent can Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators benefit from tandem learning in urban Australian boarding schools?**

To investigate this question, I have developed two hypotheses.

(1) With some adaptations to the conventional tandem model as proposed in chapter two, students and educators can benefit from using SET techniques on a linguistic, intercultural and social-emotional level leading to effective interpersonal relationships.

(2) Implementing SET can help non-Indigenous educators to meaningfully include Indigenous languages and cultural knowledge into their day-to-day teaching, thus being consistent with the national policy framework.

I will start this chapter with a reflection on my position as a researcher in order to make my approach as transparent as possible. In doing so, I will mainly draw on the work of Canagarajah (1999), Said (2003) and Sprague (2016).

In the second part of this chapter, I will explain the action research design that has been used leaning on projects completed by researchers in translanguaging and heritage language education. In the third part of this chapter, I present the research design of the exploratory study which I conducted in August 2016. This description will include the participant profiles, the language profiles and an explanation of the materials proposed.

In the fourth and last part of this chapter, I will build on the lessons learnt from the exploratory study in introducing the research protocol for the follow-up study conducted in Adelaide in September 2019. Again, I will provide the profiles of the participants and their languages. I will then explain how the independent tutor was trained in the SET model and how materials were compiled. In the final part of this chapter, I will develop the coding system applied to the data from both studies.

## **4.1 Self-Positioning**

If white teachers want to challenge the authority of the white, Western worldview and build an antiracist, socially just, and global curriculum, they need to acknowledge their power and privilege. This is the foundation for learning to give up that power, working instead to build antiracist alliances across ethnic, racial, and cultural differences. (Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist, 2003, p. 67)

Having grown up in Germany, I trained as a teacher in Germany, France and Australia. My qualification is a French-German double degree and I hold Australian teacher registration. Alongside my PhD studies, I have been working in the International Baccalaureate system in Singapore and Geneva. Following Sprague (2016, pp. 3-4) and others

(Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003, p. 67; Vasseur, 2007, p. 31), I have to acknowledge my own privileges in this situation compared to that of the students participating in the project and avoid what Canagarajah (1999) has identified as “tricky issues of power inherent in the relationship between the researcher and subjects” (p. 49) and Sprague (2016) has called “studying down” by directing one’s “attention to those who have less power” (p. 14). As my elaborations on SET in chapter two have shown, the model I devised aims at reducing such a (perceived) power difference between educators and students, and it can, as Sprague (2016) has put it, “challenge existing power arrangements” (p. 14) in the micro-context of the school.

My work on the SET model has started from the position of an educator, teaching students of a colonised minority. Once Australia was seen as a settler colony at the periphery of the British Empire, the centre of the white Anglo-Saxon Western civilization (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002, pp. 131-134). Using the dichotomous terminology proposed by dependency theories trying to capture worldwide reasons for economic development and underdevelopment, Australia can now be counted among the countries in the economically developed, wealthy centre (Batur, 2014). Yet, within Australia, a periphery exists consisting of the Indigenous peoples’ urban and remote communities. Staying within this logic of centre and periphery, due to my European origin and training, I am what Canagarajah (1999) has called a “center scholar” (p. 5). Given my position as an educator in English language teaching working with Indigenous students, I could simultaneously consider myself as part of Canagarajah’s (1999) “periphery teachers”, “authorities in their own way - as nobody else (least of all, center practitioners) can understand better the linguistic needs and learning styles of local students” (p. 196). I do not have Indigenous Australian heritage, but the location of my teaching experience in the Northern Territory, first in a remote community and then in Darwin, is distant from the centres of Australian education. It is in this sense that I can identify with the position of a periphery teacher. From this position, I set out to develop a language sharing model to promote language equality according to the center model provided by the national Australian curriculum authority.

The development and study of SET inscribes itself in the broader field of what Knapp and Antos (2009) have called “linguistics for problem solving” (p. xi), a specific area of applied linguistics which can be “made relevant to the real-life world” (p. xii). This prerequisite is very similar to Sprague’s (2016) call for research activities in the service of society (p. 5). I have been trying to somewhat mitigate social, political and historical facts through a method of cooperative learning, not assuming “intellectual authority” (Said, 2003, p. 19) over the participants of the study. Giving priority to the students’ benefit situates my project within the resistance perspective advocated by Canagarajah (1999). He has challenged “the dichotomizing of the objective and subjective, data and interpretation, description and application, and fact and opinion” (p. 39), the givens of scientific inquiry as inapt for research from a resistance perspective. A resistance perspective in research means a commitment to social action with a clear vision of improved conditions, or as Canagarajah (1999) has phrased it “motivated by the urgency of social action” (p. 39). Similarly, sociologist Back (2007) has also reminded us that the research writer’s experiences should be “put to work in the service of others” (p. 160). Canagarajah (1999) has suggested this can be achieved through collaboration on research design and implementation (p. 49). The collaborative nature of tandem learning already places the research process into a more power-neutral arena. Collaboration has also been inherent in the research protocol for the follow-up study where I worked with the tutor in order to best adapt the project to the students’ needs.

In the Australian Indigenous education research context, the same beneficial intention of research has been expressed during the mission era (Leske, 1977, p. 101). Grey (1981) has specifically stated that: “the only valid form of research is that which can be of immediate and ongoing assistance to the people involved on an educative, whole-life basis” (as cited in Teasdale & Whitelaw, 1981, p. 60). As Houssaye (2014) has remarked, “le pédagogue est avant tout un praticien théoricien de l’action éducative” (p. 140) [the pedagogue is first and foremost a practitioner theorist of educational action]. I have adopted this double role in the exploratory study. This is because tandem learning for Indigenous languages is a model which

I newly developed. Therefore, I could not observe a tandem session or train colleagues in the approach without having tried it myself. Ellis (1997) has argued that such research can “make explicit the principles, assumptions and procedures for action” (Ellis, 1997, p. 26) and that such an “inside-outside (i.e. from pedagogy to research)” approach achieves more relevance as “it is based directly on pedagogical constructs” (p. 41).

However, this way of conducting research had its limitations in the chosen context of the exploratory study where I was not an employed teacher, but an outsider coming in to support students as a tutor trialing a teaching and learning model. This has led to a micro-experimentation in terms of data volume. This is further evidence of Devlin’s (2009) finding that small data sets are common in research involving Indigenous students (as cited in Disbray, 2014, p. 29). These challenges highlight why there might be a research gap in this area of Australian education.

One final dilemma presents itself in my own ethnicity and the many social privileges connected to it. As Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003) have stated:

Many educators of indigenous students are likely to continue to be white in white-dominant countries. The challenge is a complex one – that of educating these educators to deconstruct and displace the Eurocentric discourses of whiteness and to collaborate in exploring discourses rooted in epistemologies that are unfamiliar to them. (p. 82)

The colleagues involved in both the exploratory and the follow-up study and I, as the researcher, are caught in this dilemma as non-Indigenous persons working with Indigenous students within the framework of the national Australian curriculum. I am keenly aware of the controversies surrounding my own legitimacy in this context. I thus propose SET as one avenue to address the challenge identified by Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003) above. Tandem practice can invite Indigenous linguistic knowledge into urban classrooms. In writing this dissertation and sharing the insights derived from two case studies, I adopt a pragmatic approach: While the reality in Australia is that many non-Indigenous educators remain

employed in Indigenous education, it is useful to provide them with a practical, collaborative teaching and learning model that can enable an exploration of Indigenous epistemologies through language.

The theoretical knowledge and the adapted tandem model I present in this dissertation are what I would have liked to have had at my disposal when I was employed as a teacher-linguist coordinator and subsequently ESL coordinator and teacher in Australia's Northern Territory. This dissertation is a retrospective attempt to zero in on what, as a non-Indigenous educator working with Indigenous youth, I could have done differently and perhaps better. As Back (2007) has put it describing the task of a sociologist "paying attention to the fragments, the voices and stories that are otherwise passed over or ignored" (p. 1), through practising SET, I can "admit these voices and pay them the courtesy of serious attention" (p. 1). This can happen in a "commitment to engagement, of opening up a sometimes very uncertain space of dialogue" (p. 8) as is the case in the tandem sessions. Finally, as Back (2007) has specified, "a thesis is also an exercise in storytelling" (p. 171). In the exploratory study, I tell the story of my own experience working in the tandem model and the story of the students whose voices are being heard – sometimes in their home languages.

## **4.2 Translanguaging Research as Action**

### **Research in SET**

The theoretical orientation developed in the previous chapter has implications for the methodology. I have chosen an action research approach to best address the research question which reads:

To what extent can Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators benefit from tandem learning in an urban Australian boarding school?

Defined as “iterative episodes of teaching and investigation” which are “grounded in local context of practice” (Leeman et al., 2011, p. 482), action research fulfils the requirements proponents of translanguaging theory and heritage language education have posited for valid and useful research projects. Action research is also compatible with my own beliefs about how knowledge in the area of applied linguistics and didactics should be created. I am thus in accordance with Sprague (2016) who has defined methodology as “a way of implementing a research method given a specific epistemology” (p. 32) and embrace “the realization that all knowledge is ideological and interested” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 39). Since my belief is that knowledge in the area of Indigenous education should be gained through collaborative processes with educators and students, action research lends itself to the implementation of both, the exploratory study and the follow-up study. Both studies were integrated in the ongoing tutoring programme at the respective research sites.

The research cycle Narcy-Combes (2005) has described for “recherche-action” aptly reflects the procedure of my investigation: After having identified a problem during my time as a teacher and programme coordinator, I took a step back to reflect upon this problem and started to look first at historical practices, then at theories in order to find a solution (p. 115). Narcy-Combes (2005) has underlined that the French tradition of “recherche-action” is slightly different from action research, but has located both on a continuum (p. 114). Therefore, since no strict separation between the different academic traditions exists, I have drawn upon both, the term as it is used by Narcy-Combes (2005) as “recherche-action” and the action research frameworks first introduced by Lewin (1946), adapted for English language teaching by Burns (1999) and elaborated in translanguaging studies published in English. Lewin’s (1946) original idea of action research as uniting the desire for change with a research intention is present in my project because I aim at providing a practical pathway for more educational equity in Australia.

Gonzalez-Laporte (2014) has pointed out the multitude of formats action research can take based on Lewin’s original concept (p. 3). Common to all research actions approaches is



that “les chercheurs sont considérés comme des partenaires” [researchers are considered as partners] and that action research “rejette explicitement la séparation entre la pensée et l’action [explicitly rejects the separation between thinking and action]” (Gonzalez-Laporte, 2014, p. 7). Leaning on Reason and Bradbury (2001, p. 1), Gonzalez-Laporte (2014) has emphasised the “principal objectif de produire des connaissances pratiques [main objective of producing practical knowledge]” (p. 8). This means that researchers and users of the proposed results must meet each other and exchange as I could do in the exploratory study in my discussions with classroom teachers and other education staff at the research site.

While the definition of the problem, in my case the broader issue of maximising educational equity for Indigenous students in urban boarding schools, was not jointly done as suggested in much of the literature on action research (see Gonzalez-Laporte, 2014, p. 12), it was identified as a shared concern when I interviewed four senior teachers (see chapter five, part 5.1). Two varieties of action research have gained currency across a range of disciplines and research settings: the participative and collaborative approach.

In participatory action research, all participants are empowered to take on various roles and even be in positions of control of the actions which are carried out and which have a direct effect on their social environment or their organisation. The distinction between researcher and participant is diluted. Research becomes an educational process which results in the independent construction of knowledge which ultimately aims at social action or even social transformation (Gonzalez-Laporte, 2014, pp. 14-15). Flexible interchangeability of the roles of researcher/tutor and student is inherent in the SET research project, because the educator temporarily becomes a student when learning cultural and linguistic knowledge shared by their students. However, the role of the researcher is not negotiable in SET. Social transformation for SET pertains primarily to the local school, even the local classroom context. Only a wider implementation of the model could lead to larger scale social transformation (see chapter eight).

Collaborative action research implies a close cooperation between all persons involved

in the project in order to develop shared expertise and a shared practical vision, to jointly experiment and evaluate new interventions and finally arrive at a better understanding of the issues at hand. As a result, the competencies of all participants can be enhanced (Gonzalez-Laporte, 2014, p. 17). Gonzalez-Laporte (2014) has also summed up that in collaborative action research “le chercheur considère les intervenants comme des agents compétents” [the researcher considers those who intervene as competent agents]. Finally, collaborative action research “se présente comme un outil intellectuel et démocratique au service de la population et du développement social” [presents itself as an intellectual and democratic tool in the service of the population and of social development] (Gonzalez-Laporte, 2014, p. 19). Again, positioning students as experts and developing shared linguistic and cultural expertise which enhances all participants’ competencies is a parallel between the SET research project and the above definition. SET also intends to be in the service of the participating students and further along, in the service of non-Indigenous educators working in urban boarding schools. Again, the scope of the model is primarily limited to the educational context. Longitudinal SET projects would be needed before any claims to wider social benefits can be made (see chapter eight).

Drawing on work by Whyte (1991), Burns (1999) and Kemmis and McTaggart (2005), García and Kleyn (2016) have used the term *Transformative Action Research* for their work in translanguaging pedagogy: “Transformative Action Research is action research that is collaborative and participatory, taking on some of the features of Collaborative Action Research and of Participatory Action Research” (p. 49). This approach “inverts the power position of researchers and teachers, as each brings their own expertise into the process, becoming co-learners. In the process, both research and teaching is transformed in ways that improve understandings and educational conditions.” (p. 49). Transformative Action Research describes the work carried out by the independent tutor in the follow-up study. We valued each other's work and collaborated on instructional design, “in pursuit of improving socioeducational conditions” for the students (García & Kleyn, 2016, p.49).

From the above definitions, it is clear that my research project does not exclusively fit into one of the proposed categories, participative, collaborative or transformative action research, but rather borrows elements from all of these approaches to action research. The following, more general definitions provide further insight as to why action research is the most suitable approach for my undertaking and show that action research is completely in line with the theoretical framework I have presented in chapters two and three.

In French research culture, Narcy-Combes (2005) has posited that “la recherche-action est la méthodologie de la recherche qui s’impose en didactique de L2” [action research is the methodology which imposes itself in L2 didactics] and it comprises preparation, organisation, follow-up and taking measures, perhaps a reorganisation and finally a publication (p. 112). De Ketele and Roegiers (1996) have specified that “recherche-action” is a method which “décrit et expliquera ce qui arrive dans la situation en utilisant le langage des participants (langage de la vie de tous les jours et non langage technique)” [will describe and explain what happens in the situation using the participants’ language (everyday language and not technical language)] (p. 100). Publishing results is necessary to distinguish it from a simple action without any final sharing of the findings (Narcy-Combes, 2005, p. 113) and has been achieved for the exploratory study presented in chapter five (see Charon, 2020). After the publication, the likelihood of an innovation derived from action-research such as the model of SET being taken up in a broader context hinges on many factors: feasibility, perceived relevance and explicitness, but also feelings of ownership experienced by educators (see Ellis, 1997, pp. 28-29).

For many case studies in translanguaging education (García & Kleyn, 2016), “translanguaging was not presented as a bounded theoretical construct, impervious to the school policies at hand, but in tension with the realities in which it was executed” (p. 184). As a result, researchers co-taught and the research was part of classroom work – this meant that risk-taking was shared by all participants (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 34; pp. 183-184; see chapter three, part 3.3.4). In this way, action research has worked a way to “bridge the gulf

between the researcher and the teacher” (Ellis, 1997, p. 24), one of the main problems identified by Ellis (1997), Widdowson (2009) and Sensevy (2012, p. 515) when using research to inform pedagogical practice in language education.

In translanguaging research, researchers ideally take up positions as teachers and co-teachers, co-designing lessons with the teachers. Vice-versa, teachers find themselves in “positions as researchers interpreting their own performance” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 34). This opportunity did not exist in the exploratory study of SET due to the novelty of the model. However, I noted down impressions and observations gathered through casual conversations with teaching staff at the school. These notes then informed my reflection on the model as it evolved during its implementation. Due to time constraints, I only transcribed and coded the audio data after the end of the exploratory study. In contrast to the exploratory study, through intermittent monitoring (Narcy-Combes, 2005, p. 113) of the educator during the follow-up study, the dimension of interpreting one’s own performance was more present. The tutor, Milica, placed all recordings on google drive after each session which enabled ongoing exchanges (five debriefs by phone on October 15, October 18, November, 1 November 16, and December 1, 2019) and three e-mails (see Appendix 50) between us. Upon project completion, Milica also provided me with a set of reflective notes taken immediately after each session (see Appendix 52).

	<b>Exploratory study</b>
<b>Educators’ posture</b>	Researcher as educator implementing the tandem model
<b>Audio-recordings of tandem interactions</b>	3 hours and 7 minutes stored on google drive for my own reference and for coding
<b>Student feedback</b>	Mostly implicit as evident in students’ responses to the model
<b>Additional documentation available</b>	Notes on observations and conversations with teaching staff; 34 minutes and 17 seconds of audio- recorded interviews with four senior teachers

Table 4.1. Action Research Design for the Exploratory Study

## 4.3 The Exploratory Study

### 4.3.1 Purpose of the Exploratory Study

The interconnectedness of practice, theory and the research cycle is mirrored in the data collection process. This study was conducted in two phases: the exploratory study and the follow-up study. Initially, I had envisaged the exploratory study as a pilot study. However, I was not able to complete a longitudinal follow-up study with a larger cohort. Difficulties in implementing longitudinal studies with large cohorts independent from government projects (see e.g. Harper et al., 2012; Liddicoat, Curnow & Scarino, 2016) are typical in the Australian context and in translanguaging action research as I will explicate in part 4.4.1 (The challenges of gaining access). During tutoring sessions for the exploratory study, I asked four students, who are speakers of endangered Indigenous languages from various regions across the north of Australia, to teach me their native language/s. I was thus implicated in the exploratory study in a double role: as the researcher initiating the tandem activity to conduct the study and as the tutor participating in the tandem model. The study was purposely conceived as a short-term literacy enrichment activity alongside usual homework tasks and assignments. The exploratory study has served three purposes:

- a) To implement the SET model in a boarding school in Australia's Northern Territory.
- b) To document the emerging specific characteristics of SET for Indigenous languages.
- c) To assess the suitability of both, the research protocol and the methodology chosen to analyse the data recorded during the implementation.

I opted for a combination of a quantitative and a qualitative-descriptive research method that used a protocol of observations, audio-recording transcripts and description of discourse features based on a selection of Hymes's (1986/2003) components of speech (pp. 40-45). Video-recordings would certainly have enriched my analysis with a view to multimodality, allowing me to include aspects of body language (see Morgenstern, 2014, p. 1; Morgenstern & Beaupoil, 2015, p. 438; Morgenstern, Beaupoil, Blondel & Boutet, 2016, p.

16; Morgenstern, 2019, p. 1, p. 4). However, I decided not to use video-recording for cultural reasons. In many Indigenous cultures, recorded images of people may become culturally problematic material after the individuals depicted have passed away (see <https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research>). The choice against video-recording is also based on my respect for the cultural protocol in many Indigenous communities. Having worked closely with Indigenous educators and elders in my first job in a remote Indigenous community as I outlined in chapter one, I have been told personally about the cultural problems which may emanate from video-recordings even if used exclusively for research purposes. When recorded images of people who had passed away in the meantime were unwittingly viewed by family members, this can be a source of great distress (D. K. personal communication, April 2009). By using audio-recording only, I could avoid this sensitive issue and stay true to my personal commitment to work for the benefit of Indigenous students rather than making them objects of research. In this way, it has been possible to respect the values and beliefs of the participants' cultures as elaborated in my reflections on postcolonialism and neo-imperialism in chapter three (see part 3.1.1).

I completed all transcriptions of the audio-recordings using Word. I then coded the transcripts partially following the feedback categories proposed in the error treatment sequence model by Lyster and Ranta (1997, p. 44) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni's (2008/2016) elaborations on initiating interventions (p. 60) and questions (p. 86). I have chosen to selectively apply the feedback categories by Lyster and Ranta (1997) because of their potential to capture how students have put into practice their teaching roles and to what extent the educators have used feedback to assist students with their academic English. The feedback categories have allowed me to examine a wide variety of teaching actions performed by the students. They have also shown to what extent educators have retained their posture by giving feedback. Feedback can also illuminate aspects of stancetaking which is one of my foci.

A summary presentation of the coding categories is included at the start of part two of this dissertation. A quantification of certain interactional features was possible using Word.

The student-educator interaction recordings were complimented by four interviews with senior educators at the college. The purpose of these interviews was to ascertain to what extent the SET model for teaching and learning was in line with strategies these experiences educators had found successful through their own practice teaching Indigenous students. I transcribed the recordings of these interviews in Word in order to identify recurring topics. According to Hymes's (1986/2003), "content enters analysis first of all as a question of topic" (p. 41). A close reading of the interview transcripts has allowed me to filter out the topics of students' home languages, places of origin, family connections and identifying common acquaintances.

### **4.3.2 Research Site and Protocol of the Exploratory Study**

The research site for the implementation was a private middle and senior school in Darwin founded by Catholic missionaries in the 1960s. Darwin is the capital of the Northern Territory, the part of Australia where the highest number of Indigenous Australians live.

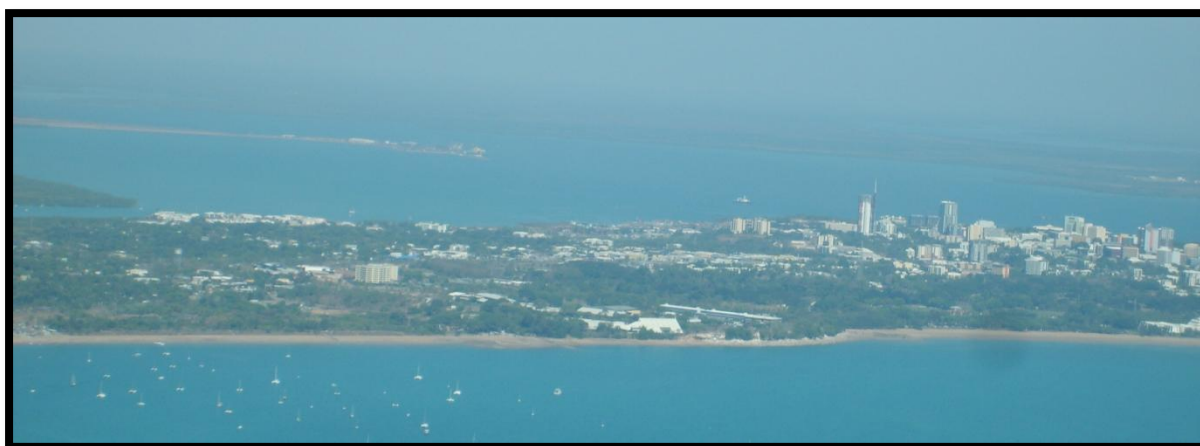


Figure 4.1. Aerial View of Darwin City



Figure 4.2. Cullen Bay Harbour in Darwin

At the time of the exploratory study, the school had an enrolment of about 350 students, all receiving English-medium instruction delivered by non-Indigenous anglophone educators. This school was chosen based on my professional experience there between 2009 and 2011 as English as a Second Language (ESL) coordinator. With approximately 50 percent of students coming from 35 Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander communities, the school has always been open to research about how to best serve this particular student population.

Following Eckerth (2003, p. 281) and García and Kleyn (2016, p. 184) in their idea that educational research conducted by outsiders should always be embedded in the ongoing educational programme, I offered SET as part of the Inclusion Support tutoring programme. At the time of the exploratory study in August 2016, 90 minutes of Inclusion Support tutoring on four evenings per week were compulsory for all boarding students to support them with homework assignments and general academic skills.

In the tutor-researcher double role with a professional connection to the research site, I had to be aware of the hometurf effect. It manifested itself when some students asked me directly if I remembered a former student of the college who was their relative. During the actual SET sessions, the hometurf effect was mitigated by working with a group of year 7 students (average age of 13) from areas and home language groups that I had never worked with in my time as ESL coordinator.



As a new tutor, I got to know the students and their first languages through informal conversation before, after and during tutoring and obtained their consent to audio-record our sessions. In the ensuing tandem sessions, I worked with the students either one-on-one or with two students at a time. A corpus of three hours and seven minutes of audio-recordings of 11 SET exchanges could be obtained. The 11 individual sessions varied in length between 13 and 30 minutes with most sessions lasting 14 minutes on average. This variance is due to other homework assignments taking priority on certain evenings. As the exploratory study only yielded a relatively small corpus of data, anecdotal notes on general observations and conversations taken immediately after the sessions complemented the audio-recordings.

I analysed the transcripts of these recordings with a particular focus on stance and feedback techniques, drawing on the work of Du Bois (2007) and Lyster and Ranta (1997). Multimodality, broadly defined by García and Wei (2014) as “a trans-semiotic system with many meaning-making signs, primarily linguistic ones” (p. 42) has provided the conceptual lens for the analysis of the materials proposed during the SET sessions: vocabulary mind maps, posters with photos, and texts in the students’ home languages (see Appendices 1-12). Students’ annotations of the materials were also analysed based on the concept of multimodality, for example drawings and translations added to my vocabulary mind-map:

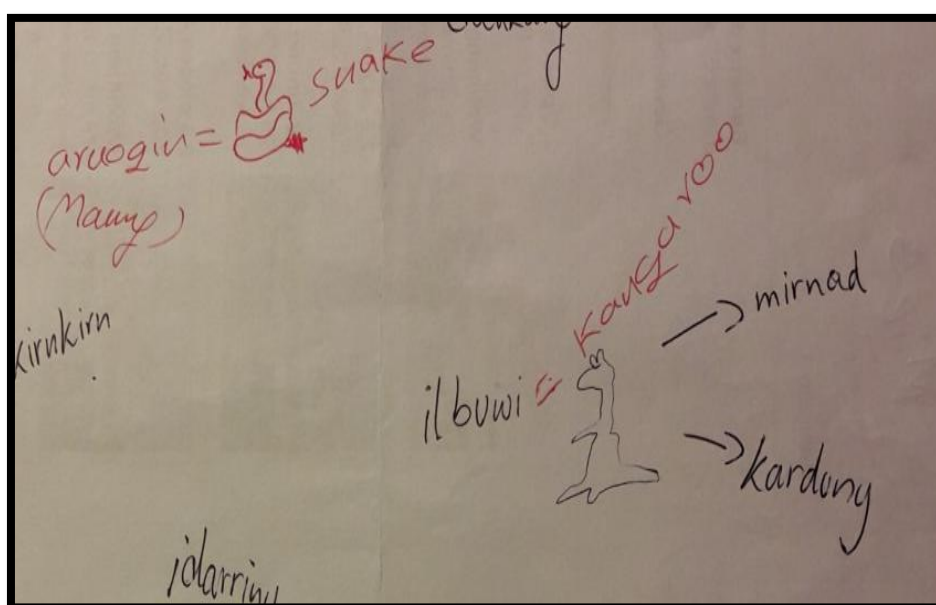


Figure 4.3. Part of Iwaidja Animal Names Mind Map Poster (see Appendix 1)

The reflective dialogues that ensued with fellow tutors and teachers at the school also became part of the data. An additional layer of the research process has included short semi-structured interviews with four non-Indigenous senior teachers at the school hosting the exploratory study. Each interview lasted between 7 and 13 minutes. All interviews together added 34 minutes and 53 seconds worth of audio data and were transcribed in Word (see Appendices 26-29). The interviews enabled me to tap into teachers' knowledge of successful pedagogical strategies working with Indigenous students in order to see to what extent such strategies were in line with the SET approach.

I have chosen representative excerpts from SET sessions with Iwaidja, Maung, Yolŋu matha and Kunwinjku as the target languages for the micro-analyses presented in chapter six of this dissertation. When selecting the excerpts, I looked for ones that would best represent the variety of student responses to this way of working and would enable me to address my research question about the benefits of this tandem model. The coding categories elaborated in part 4.5 below allowed me to quantify patterns in student responses to show tendencies and identify the typical features and potential benefits of SET.

## 4.3.3 From the Model to the Implementation

### 4.3.3.1 The Participants of the SET Exploratory Study

Student and year level	Home languages (main home language <u>underlined</u> )	Number of speakers of the student's main home language	Level of formal education prior to moving to Darwin	Proficiency in English according to CEFR	Time spent at the residential college
D., year 7	<u>Kunwinjku</u>	1600 (First Peoples' Cultural Council, n.d.)	unknown	A1	6 months
W., year 7	<u>Maung</u> and Iwaidja	300 (First Peoples' Cultural Council, n.d.)	primary education completed	A2	6 months
R., year 7	<u>Iwaidja</u> and Maung	150 (First Peoples' Cultural Council, n.d.)	interrupted primary education	A1	6 months
M., year 7	<u>Gupapuyŋu</u> , one of the Yolŋu matha clan languages (Gale, 1997, p. 249); Yolŋu matha - several other varieties	6300 (Treloar, 2012, p. 4)	unknown	A1	6 months

Table 4.2. Exploratory Study Student Profiles

The exploratory study involved four boys boarding at the school who have been anonymised as D., R., W. and M. They were between 12 and 13 years old and in year 7, the first year level of middle school. All of them had started at the school in January 2016, so they were used to school routine. This cohort of boys was selected by the Inclusion Support coordinator as a group needing special attention in their ESL literacy work. The gender

division in the boarding facilities of the college was maintained for the grouping of students for evening tutoring. This meant that only male students participated in the study because the female students were in a different tutoring group.

Census day, a national data collection initiative carried out by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, provided a useful starting point for creating linguistic and educational profiles of all participants. Assisting the students with the completion of the official form involved reading the questions to the students and putting them “into plain English” as one of the students phrased it. The four students participating in the exploratory study also required significant assistance with spelling, especially for the question on languages other than English spoken at home.

The students' home languages are Iwaidja, Maung, Gupapuyngu and Kunwinjku respectively. None of the languages receive much institutional support, with the exception of the Yolngu matha language group (<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/yolngustudies/>). The lingua franca between all the boys in the group appeared to be a local Aboriginal English. Like all Indigenous languages in Australia, the students' home languages were originally oral languages. Spelling conventions have been elaborated by linguists and missionaries over time as described in the previous chapters. None of the four students were aware of these spelling conventions. An online search of LAAL, the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages (<https://livingarchive.cdu.edu.au/>) and AuSIL, the Australian Society for Indigenous Languages (<http://www.ausil.org.au/>) helped to establish the accepted spellings.

The students' overall SAE levels corresponded to A1 and A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). The students were able to understand basic information and express themselves using simple English in contexts which allow a high degree of predictability. For all four pupils, the levels of their spoken English and oral comprehension skills were higher than their written English with reading comprehension being the most challenging area.

The data from the census forms combined with the notes taken after having worked

with the students on regular homework assignments for the three previous evenings allowed me to compile the following language and education profiles for the students:

- D. identifies as a speaker of Kunwinjku as his first home language. He was partly brought up by his aunt on Croker Island and therefore also learnt Maung and Iwaidja. When he moved to Croker Island from his original community, his formal schooling was interrupted. D. tends to be disruptive when he cannot understand or fulfil the academic requirements. He is at the school together with his cousin, W.
- W.'s mother and grandfather speak to him in Maung and Iwaidja at home. He is an eloquent student. When we first met, he enthusiastically explained details of his primary education at a remote school on Croker Island where he first learnt Standard Australian English.
- R. is a lively, extrovert student who speaks both Iwaidja and Maung as his home languages. R. started learning English in primary school. He enjoys music and singing and likes to joke with the classmates and tutors, often to distract from a challenging academic task at hand. Due to family issues, his primary education has been interrupted.
- M. is a quiet student who speaks and understands several of the Yolŋu matha group languages. He has identified Gupapuyŋu as his main home language. M. is a slow but avid reader. He did not volunteer any information about his primary education in his home community in Arnhem Land.

#### **4.3.3.2 The Participants' Home Languages in the Exploratory**

##### **Study: The Practicalities of Disinventing Named Languages**

Following the theoretical bases of translanguaging and in particular the ideology of disinventing languages (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007), Indigenous languages are not understood as scientific objects to be described and studied as has been a colonial and postcolonial practice in Australia and many other parts of the world. The danger of

representing those languages through the coloniser's lens as Said (1978) has criticised is also present in my study. As I have outlined in chapter one, non-Indigenous governors, missionaries, linguists, teachers and anthropologists have constructed their own representations of Indigenous Australians ways of communicating. As Bourdieu (1982) has put it, they utilised “ce pouvoir de nommer et de faire le monde en le nommant” [this power of naming and making the world by naming it] (p. 99). The data analysis will reveal how the descriptions correspond to or differ from students' ways of communicating and thereby provide an illustration of the limits of the term *language* in educational contexts where diversity should be foregrounded (see Castellotti, 2017, p. 269). Since language constructs itself in communication, educators using the SET model have to think and act within the two frameworks. These two frameworks are: the academic framework aiming for linguistic accuracy (the monolingual paradigm) and the practicality of functional communication with varying levels of accuracy depending on the individual students' linguistic repertoire (the plurilingual paradigm). When preparing materials for the initial sessions in SET in the exploratory study, I was mainly interested in the status quo relating to the documentation and teaching in the respective Indigenous languages as reproduced below:

### Iwaidja

Iwaidja, spoken on Croker Island, currently has about 150 speakers according to the Australian Society for Indigenous Languages, AuSIL. Iwaidja was first documented between 1972 and 1979 by linguists working for the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Mutual intelligibility exists between Maung and Iwaidja (AuSIL).

### Maung

Maung, also spelled Mawng (<http://www.mawngngaralk.org.au/main/index.php>), spoken by 300 people on South Goulburn Island, was the focus of a dictionary project in 1990 (<http://www.ausil.org.au>).

## Yolŋu matha

Yolŋu matha, which has around 6300 speakers (Treloar, 2012, p. 4), is taught at Charles Darwin University with a focus on its variety Gupapuyŋu. In comparison to the other languages, Yolŋu matha is extensively documented. Gupapuyŋu is mainly spoken in the Miliŋimbi area, but it is understood by many of the Yolŋu clans in Arnhem Land. The language has its own alphabet, developed by linguist, Beulah Lowe between the 1950s and 1970s (<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/yolngustudies/>). Since I first implemented the exploratory study in 2016, Gupapuyŋu has gained a significant online presence comprising a bilingual website featuring traditional songs and other cultural information (<http://www.gupapuyngu.com/napurru.html>) and a language learning application for smartphones (<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/yolngustudies/gupaappdownload.html>).

## Kunwinjku

Kunwinjku, also commonly spelled Gunwingu or Gunwinygu, has about 1600 speakers, as listed on the Endangered Languages Project website (First Peoples' Cultural Council, n.d.). The language was first formally studied in 1964 by Oates, then by Carroll for his Master's thesis in 1976. A free online dictionary has been accessible since July 2019 (<https://www.njamed.com/>) which contains the most frequent 1500 words and makes links to related languages such as Maung and Iwaidja. Kunwinjku has been introduced as an online course for beginners at Charles Darwin University since 2019 (<https://bininj-kunwok.cdu.edu.au/>).

I decided against a description following the structuralist linguistic approach such as employed by non-Indigenous linguists who have formally examined the properties of the languages involved in the exploratory study. Instead, in line with usage-based theories, in which “all things flow from the actual usage events in which people communicate linguistically with one another” (Tomasello, 2000, p. 61), I wanted to prioritise the students’ ways of using their home languages in our exchanges.

### 4.3.3.3 Preparation of Materials for the Exploratory Study

In Hickling-Hudson's and Ahlquist's (2003) comparative study about Eurocentrism versus culturally responsive curricula, the schools where teachers used Indigenous texts as much as possible and wrote a lot of their own material had lower rates of absenteeism and higher rates of school completion (p. 79). In the exploratory study, I have followed the same approach by using materials which were adapted to the four participating students' personal linguistic and academic English profiles ranging from a level of A1 to a level of A2 as outlined above and tailored to their respective home languages (see Table 4.2.).

The profiling described in part 4.3.3.1 was the preliminary step for the preparation of individualised, language-specific materials for the SET sessions. For Yolŋu matha, the most extensively documented language in the exploratory study which also features as a course at Charles Darwin University, a variety of texts are readily available. To work with M., I selected a text on family routines from LAAL, the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages online (Appendix 8). I chose family routines as an initial topic because I hoped the vocabulary would be easily accessible to M., keeping in mind what the ITAS coordinator had told me about his emerging reading skills. For my own learning, the text was interesting from the point of view of discovering traditional family routines in Arnhem Land. We read this text together and M. summed it up for me in English as we went along. M. also sometimes took the initiative to annotate the original text. This meant I was able to create bilingual word lists and fill-the-gap style worksheets (see Appendix 9) to further support M.'s multiliteracy learning.

For the less documented languages Iwaidja, Maung and Kunwinjku, I created my own materials. The online dictionaries available on AuSIL (<http://www.ausil.org.au/>) provided the basis of my work on Maung and Iwaidja. I chose either real life photos or my own drawings and labelled them. At the bottom of each photo, I noted the lesson goal, e.g. describing my home environment, naming native Australian animals or introducing family members (see Appendices 1, 2 and 5), recurring themes that I had noticed in the students' conversations with



each other during the three evenings prior to census day.

Apart from being a necessity for the implementation of SET, making my own materials also had a pedagogical use: to model different ways of learning vocabulary for the students, using visual aids, mind maps and writing. From a learner's perspective, it helped me to identify basic grammatical features of the languages such as the absence of grammatical articles.

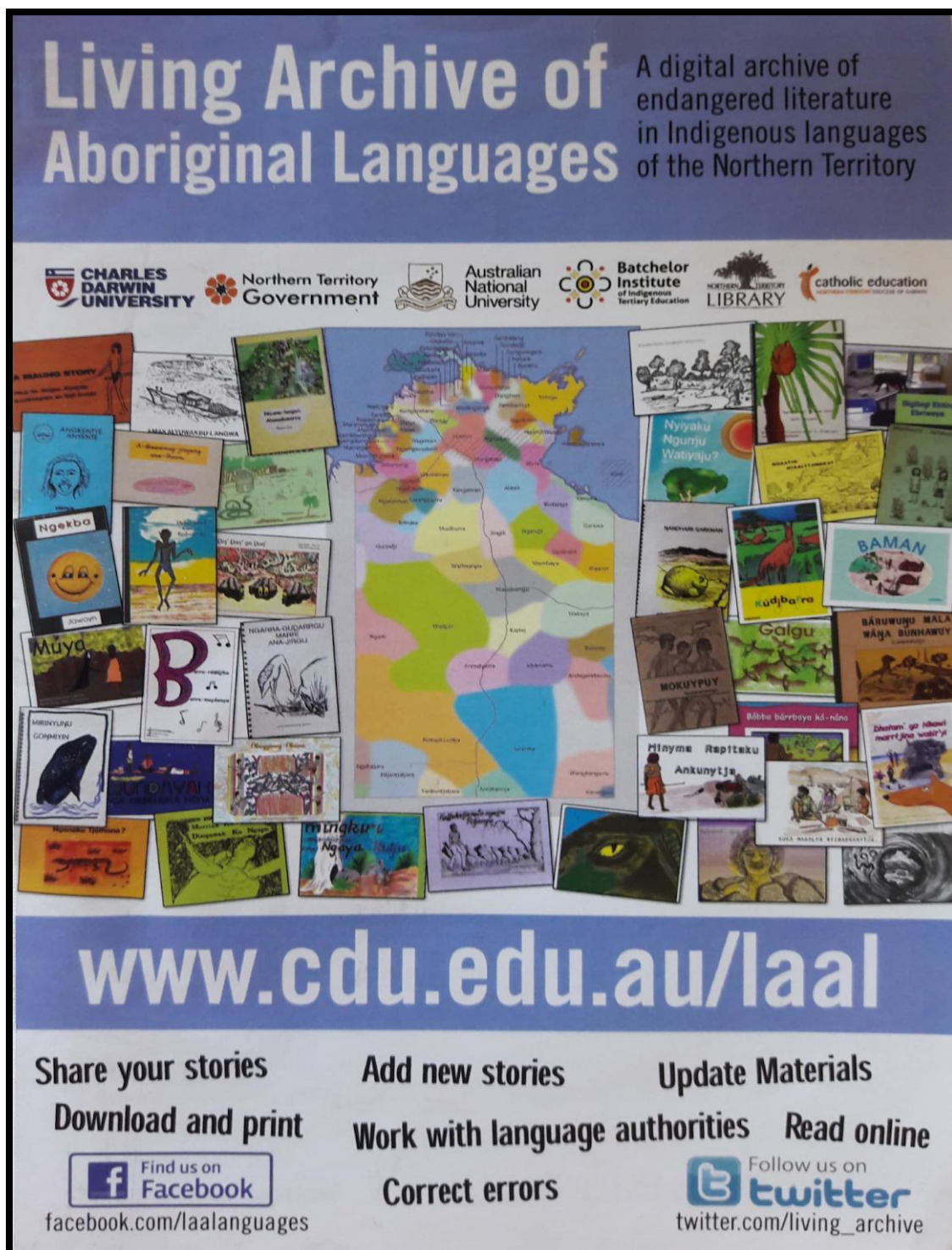


Figure 4.4. Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages Flyer

## 4.4 The Follow-up Study

### 4.4.1 The Challenges of Gaining Access

Gaining access to a school community without any previous professional connection has been difficult. The fact that between the exploratory study in 2016 and the follow-up study in 2019, I had left the Australasian region to take up a position in Switzerland had added a logistical issue: organising the follow-up study from overseas using e-mail, LinkedIn and phone. I had underestimated the challenges trying to find an alternative research setting away from my “hometurf” of Darwin. As Narcy-Combes (2005) has specified: “une recherche-action requiert une grande dynamique et une certaine souplesse institutionnelle” (p. 113). This kind of institutional flexibility was not easy to locate. This was possibly due to stricter child protection policies in Australian schools requiring several levels of police clearances for anyone who is physically present on the schools’ premises (C. Pape, personal communication via e-mail, 1.8.19). After e-mails and follow-up phone calls with five urban schools over a period of 6 months starting in December 2018, one school showed interest in trialling the project.

To find an educator who was interested in trialling the model, I disseminated an advertisement through the job services of eleven universities across Australia in December 2018. In response to this advertisement campaign, a trained youth mentor and student of child psychology expressed interest in the follow-up study and established the initial contact with the coordinator for Indigenous students’ well-being at a school in Adelaide, South Australia. However, due to significant delay in starting the project caused by a restructuring of the leadership and coordinator roles at the chosen school, she could not make herself available to work as a tutor.

After re-publishing the advertisement at the start of August 2019 at the three main universities in South Australia, University of Adelaide, University of South Australia and

Flinders University, Milica<sup>12</sup>, a future primary teacher in her final year of study, offered me her assistance. While we had planned to start the project mid-August 2019, a delay in obtaining a Catholic police clearance for Milica meant the actual start was not until October 2019.

## **4.4.2 Lessons Learnt From the Exploratory Study: Research Design of the Follow-up Study**

Choosing a small cohort in a small school has limited the generalisations that can be made. However, in-depth studies focussing on just one student, a small group of students (Dewilde, 2017; Allard & Wedin, 2017; Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016) or just one teacher (Mary & Young, 2017) or two teachers (Palmer et al., 2014) are not uncommon in translanguaging research or in research in Indigenous education in Australia (Gardner & Mushin, 2013; Rennie, 2013). Hughes (2013) has advocated “micro research” (p. vii) for the Australian Indigenous education context specifically. Based on the theory of disinventing languages explicated in chapter three, Sabino (2018) has proposed “discontinuing our discursive use of names for languages, focusing instead on individuals’ continual accrual, loss, modification, and deployment of linguistic resources” (p. 12). This focus on the individual is foregrounded in the methodology used for SET. I focus upon a small data set in order to ensure sufficient attention can be given to individual research participants.

The interpretative depth deriving from careful observation and discourse analysis of the transcripts provided validity for the exploratory study data and has allowed identifying the following features of SET:

- students’ use of a variety of teaching and feedback techniques, although a clear taking on of the teacher’s role was not observed

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<sup>12</sup> Milica has allowed me to use her full name in this dissertation. For ease of readability, I did not initialise her name.

- the preferred mode of instruction was co-teaching (two or three students teaching together)
- students were positioned as knowledgeable and experts in their home languages
- multimodality used in the pedagogical material helped to address certain complexities of writing down oral Indigenous languages
- collaborative meaning-making processes occurred between the participants
- educators learned culturally relevant information which the students had volunteered

These features are the variables which according to Narcy-Combes (2005, p. 115) result from a redefinition of the problem, namely that tandem first had to be adapted to the context of Indigenous languages before any observable features could emerge. These features have become the variables or themes guiding the follow-up study and contribute to exploring the research question to what extent Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators can benefit from tandem learning in an urban Australian boarding school.

The first hypothesis is that, provided adaptations to the tandem model are made and it becomes SET as I have defined it in chapter two, students and educators can benefit from using SET techniques on a linguistic, intercultural and social-emotional level which relates positively to the development of effective interpersonal relationships. Linguistically, insights into previously unknown languages or aspects of language can be developed as educators learn about their students' home languages and students learn about features of SAE. In terms of intercultural learning, the materials proposed and the discussions around language naturally introduce cultural topics into the tandem work. Intercultural learning occurs alongside language learning. The mutual interest in each other's languages and cultures has positive effects on interpersonal relationships between the participants. The second hypothesis is that SET can therefore enable non-Indigenous educators to work with their Indigenous students in a way that is consistent with the national policy framework: educators can meaningfully include Indigenous languages and cultural knowledges into their day-to-day teaching

(ACARA, 2015; Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 57; Commonwealth of Australia, 2019, p. 65, p. 88).

Having an exploratory study and a follow-up study has allowed me to respect Narcy-Combes' (2005) idea that the analysis of results may lead to a more satisfactory modification of the action (p. 117). In my case, the action was the follow-up study as a way of “relancer l'action” [re-launch the action] (p. 117). Narcy-Combes (2005) has also emphasised the need for “des duplications dans des contextes différents” [duplications in different contexts] (p. 117).

For reasons of enhanced scientific validity, I wanted to replicate the SET model without being directly involved in the sessions myself. The obvious advantage was further “distanciation” (Elias, 1993, p. 33, as cited in Narcy-Combes, 2005, p. 75). An additional positive effect of this choice was a way to test if the model could indeed be ‘picked up’ by any educator who has not been exposed to Indigenous languages in their studies or career. Furthermore, having found a school outside of the Northern Territory for the follow-up study has been decisive in giving the study more ample scope in terms of replicability and practicality. This was a way of testing if and how the model trialled in Darwin would function in another setting. In line with my ethical commitment as a professional teacher and Milica's vision as a future teacher, we chose to engage in tutoring on a broader spectrum, not only for the sake of the SET project, but to assist with any of the students' academic tasks.

Due to the chronological and contextual separation between exploratory study and follow-up study, I chose to interpret the data generated in both studies in two separate chapters. This choice was also a methodological necessity because I had to first implement and test SET before being able to analyse its features from a distanced perspective. Chapter five will lay the interpretational foundations for further analysis of data in chapter six. A final, general presentation of the SET model is then possible through a comparison of the two studies in chapter seven.

### 4.4.3 Research Site and Protocol for the Follow-up Study

The Catholic day and boarding school, founded in the 1920s, caters for boys from Reception to year 12. It is located in a suburb of Adelaide, the capital of South Australia.



Figure 4.5. Map of Australia Showing Adelaide (adapted from Terrain Legend, Jeppesen, 2018)

At the time the study was conducted, it offered a “home away from home” to 67 students of about 750 students enrolled. The majority of students are SAE (Standard Australian English) speakers. They are non-Indigenous students who attend the college either as day students or boarding students. Some international students as well as Indigenous students from rural or remote communities in South Australia, but also from the Northern Territory attend the college. They speak English as an additional language. The two students

participating in the follow-up study speak an approximation of SAE used in academic contexts such as the classroom and tutoring or in interaction with non-Indigenous peers who they socialise with in the boarding house, at school or during sporting events. Unfortunately, I did not gain any insight into the frequency or ease of these social interactions. In the recordings, such interactions were indicated by H. and T. calling out to other boarding students and by what the students told Milica about their weekend outings. Amongst themselves, H. and T. speak Aboriginal English. They have been encouraged by a community leader and elder to attend this Catholic boarding school in Adelaide as part of a community effort to remove impressionable youth from numerous negative influences in Daly River.

The student population presents a marked contrast to the school in Darwin chosen for the exploratory study. The 44 Indigenous students are a minority in this school. Only three of these students were identified by the Director for Wellbeing for Indigenous students, who had replaced the coordinator with whom I was in contact initially, as speaking an Indigenous language at home. The boarding house makes a special effort to advance reconciliation by inviting Indigenous guest speakers and dedicating time to events such as reconciliation week. One of the mission statements is: “We strive to be an inclusive community that welcomes each member with deep respect for their individuality and uniqueness.” The school also offers a number of scholarships exclusively for Indigenous students.

The timeframe of the follow-up study was the eight-week period after the term break in October 2019. It took place on three evenings per week during after-school tutoring. The average length of the sessions was 55 minutes. The follow-up study has yielded a total of 11 hours 29 minutes and 45 seconds of student-educator interactions. Initially, we had planned to record about 16 hours of student-educator interactions, but sporting events, students arriving late to the sessions and an issue of truancy on two occasions meant that Milica recorded less. Milica worked as a volunteer tutor in the boarding house alongside other tutors. Instead of creating an artificial research setting, Milica thus used the existing model of tutoring the college had in place to deploy SET as a translanguaging strategy.

At the start of her sessions, Milica used SET as a dedicated activity to facilitate getting to know each other. SET techniques were interspersed throughout the following tutoring sessions. The overall aim was always to assist the students with the completion of any assignments or homework and to further their literacy skills in general. To optimise the approach, Milica liaised with the Director for Wellbeing for Indigenous students to find out which areas of literacy to target or which assignments to prioritise.

Several steps were necessary in order to ensure ethical research conduct. To avoid disclosing sensitive data, we disqualified video-recording and Milica opted for audio-recording on a smartphone as a non-intrusive way to document the sessions. We checked our procedure against the guidelines for conducting research with Indigenous Australian participants (AIATSIS, 2012). At the end of each week, Milica uploaded her recordings on a shared google drive. Following the protocol of the exploratory study, I opted for a qualitative-descriptive research method combining audio-recording transcripts and observations. I used Word to complete all transcriptions. For my analysis, I have anonymised all participants' names (see Nancy-Combes, 2005, p. 113), as stated on the consent forms which were completed prior to commencing the study (see Appendix 54 for a template of the consent form).

To introduce the project to the students, the Director for Wellbeing for Indigenous students explained that Milica would help them complete some of their academic work. Since she was a student herself at this point, she would record the sessions in order to learn from the tutoring experiences. These recordings would be used for a bigger project at la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris 3. Finally, Milica found opportune moments during the sessions to ask students what they thought of the experience and elicit feedback directly. This explicit way of collecting feedback is a modification made after the exploratory study. In the exploratory study, students' feedback was implicit in their reactions to the tandem way of working together. I also asked two students explicitly how they enjoyed this type of language work. To achieve greater reliability and validity of the findings, I have triangulated data and



methods (De Ketele & Roegiers, 1996, p. 212). In addition to the actual tutoring session recordings, I have used anecdotal notes taken during our regular debriefs and Milica’s post-lesson reflective notes (see Appendix 52).

	<b>Follow-up study</b>
<b>Educators’ posture</b>	Independent tutor implementing the tandem model
<b>Audio-recordings of tandem interactions</b>	11 hours, 29 minutes and 45 seconds stored on google drive for discussion with Christiane, the main researcher
<b>Student feedback</b>	Explicit as elicited by the tutor
<b>Additional documentation available</b>	Notes from five debriefings, three e-mails, 15 post-lesson reflective entries in a google doc journal including notes on conversations with teaching staff

Table 4.3. Action Research Design for the Follow-up Study

#### **4.4.4 The Participants of the Follow-up Study**

During my initial training session with Milica in August 2019 via skype, she shared a bit about her own multilingualism with me. This information helped me to compile the following brief description of Milica as the educator, but also another participant in the follow-up study. Having arrived in Australia as a refugee from Serbia with her family at primary school age, Milica fondly remembers being welcomed in a school community where multiculturalism was celebrated. With Indigenous Australians as next-door neighbours, Milica also had the positive experience of being friends with an Aboriginal boy throughout her childhood. In addition to learning English, she has also maintained her home languages, Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian as well as a dialect of Serbian. At the time of the follow-up study, Milica had completed several school placements in Adelaide and was in her final year of a Master’s degree in primary education. She had also been operating her own tuition business since April 2019.

Following the approach from the exploratory study, language and education profiles of the participating students were compiled based on notes Milica took after informal conversations with the students and the Director for Wellbeing for Indigenous students.

An observation made by Hirata-Edds and Peter (2016) has aptly described the situation of many boarding students in Australian urban schools and especially the situation of the two participants from Daly River in the Northern Territory: “It is quite possible that different dialects spoken among endangered language communities actually reflect different families’ experiences with language shift, as use of the mother tongue may have been interrupted by schooling, periods of distance from the family, exposure to written text in the language, and the like” (p. 327).

As Valdés (2005) has put it, their linguistic profiles reflect “the complexities of heritage language speakers within whose lives commonplace concepts such as mother tongue, first language, second language, dominant language, and home language become problematic” (p. 410).

- T. is a quiet student and a talented artist who completes any art projects with diligence and enthusiasm. However, T. has difficulties staying engaged in academic tasks. His literacy level in English presents a challenge when tackling academic texts due to vocabulary and written expression skills.
- H. finds it difficult to focus on any academic tasks, although his vocabulary and decoding skills are good. H. asks for help in a small group setting, but remains quiet and/or distracted in regular classes. He tends to tease T. about his less advanced literacy skills.

Two additional students had been identified by the programme coordinator as potentially benefiting from one-on-one literacy support. However, between the time of the first e-mail exchange in May 2019 and the actual follow-up study in October 2019, one of these students had not returned to the college after a three week term break in June. From my previous experience working in Darwin, this is not an uncommon occurrence. The other student, a Tiwi speaker from the Tiwi Islands in year 11, had been doing well academically. Therefore, the Director for Wellbeing for Indigenous students decided that this student would continue in the regular tutoring programme.

This meant that Milica worked intensively with two students who were 14 and 15 years of age and enrolled in year 9.

<b>Student and year level</b>	<b>Home languages</b>	<b>Level of formal education prior to moving to Adelaide</b>	<b>Proficiency in English according to CEFR</b>	<b>Time spent at the residential college</b>
H., 15 years old, year 9	Daly River variety of Aboriginal English	unknown	A2-B1	16 months
T., 14 years old, year 9	Daly River variety of Aboriginal English	unknown	A2	17 months

Table 4.4. Follow-up Study Student Profiles

#### **4.4.5 Training Sessions for the Tutor and Preparation of Materials for the Follow-up Study**

In a 50 minute training session over skype at the end of August 2019, Milica and I discussed ways of approaching the research project in order to maximise the benefit for the students in the relatively short amount of time the school had accorded us. Prior to this training session, Milica had read the draft of the publication on the exploratory study (Charon, 2020) to familiarise herself with basic theoretical foundations and the general format envisaged for the SET model.

The short time I spent searching online for suitable materials for my tandem sessions with the middle schoolers for the exploratory study was in itself a fruitful exercise through which I learnt more about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in my care. The Australian Society for Indigenous Languages' website has made dictionaries for 14 languages accessible online. Specifically, the introductory section to each dictionary on [ausil.org](http://ausil.org) provides details such as numbers of speakers, areas where the languages are commonly spoken and some pronunciation guidance. For the follow-up study, I shared these

online resources with Milica.

In a face-to-face training session in Adelaide at the start of September 2019, Milica and I prepared more materials together. At this point, we still thought that Milica would also be working with the year 11 student from the Tiwi Islands. Therefore, I had provided Milica with some minimal linguistic specifications: the pronunciation of ‘ng’ as velar /ŋ/ in many Indigenous languages such as Tiwi or Murrinhpatha, and the use of noun classes in Murrinhpatha. I also made her aware of the debate surrounding old versus modernised Tiwi which I remembered from discussions with elders at the Literature Production centre in Nguiu, Tiwi Islands in March 2008. This ongoing debate is reiterated on the AuSIL website (<http://ausil.org/Dictionary/Tiwi/intro.htm>).

When preparing for Milica’s introductory session with the students, we quickly realised that from the English-Tiwi bilingual dictionary alone, we could not construct phrases easily. We spent ten minutes to find a way of saying *my mother* and *my father* so that Milica could talk about her family. Due to the complexity of Tiwi kinship vocabulary and associated possessive pronouns, it quickly became clear that the student’s input would be needed. Learning how to say one’s name in Tiwi was easier. The primary reader “Ngiya Puranji Nguwapa . . .” [I like to eat...] (Heysen, 1985/2009) about a hungry crocodile from the LAAL website included the Tiwi phrase “Awi, ngiya yintanga ...” [Hello, my name is...] and its English translation in a glossary.

For the Daly languages, the recently created website [dalylanguages.org](http://dalylanguages.org) has offered the most extensive overview of materials available. The situation of the languages which linguists have subsumed under the name “Daly languages” (Green & Nordlinger, 2019) is very different from all the other languages in the study. The Daly languages have become ancestral languages to the younger generation. For SET, this has meant shifting the focus from only the educator acquiring some knowledge of these languages to students and educator exploring the resources together. Milica chose to do this through the book *Marri Ngarr and Magati Ke plants and animals: Aboriginal knowledge of flora and fauna from the Moyle River and*

*Neninh areas, North Australia* (Nambatu, Ngarul & Ngarr, 2009) which we had acquired through an online order from Batchelor Press. From reading the introductory sections of this book, we found that Murrinhpatha was a lingua franca in the Daly region and therefore also prepared the phrase *murrinh ngay-ka* for *my name is* based on Street's and Mollingin's dictionary (1983) which I remembered from my teaching in the Northern Territory. We concluded our face-to-face training session with a role play in which Milica taught me how to introduce myself in her home language, Serbian.

## **4.5 Developing Coding Categories for the Data Analysis**

Before delving into the corpus analysis (see chapters five and six), I will explain the coding categories I have used to identify the unique characteristics of SET and to draw conclusions on the model's benefits. My hypothesis is that Indigenous students and non-Indigenous educators can benefit from SET techniques on a social-emotional and cognitive level consistent with the stipulations on language equality made in national curriculum and policy frameworks (see ACARA; Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 57; Commonwealth of Australia, 2019, p. 65, p. 88). The coding categories applied to the corpus have to capture elements pertaining to teaching actions and to rapport building between educator and students.

Verplaetse-Manoilov (2017) has pointed out that “si les intuitions du chercheur orientent l'étude, une méthode rigoureuse d'analyse sera une étape nécessaire pour faire émerger des régularités préalablement envisagées mais également des éléments initialement insoupçonnés” [if it is the researcher's intuition that orients the study, a rigorous analytical method is necessary in order to bring the regularities one has envisaged beforehand to the fore but also reveal initially unexpected elements] (p. 184). For the purpose of my analysis, I have considered utterances as performed actions following Austin's (1962) theory of speech acts. Following the theoretical provisions elaborated in chapter three, one aim of my study is to

shed light on recurring teaching actions performed by the participants to examine whether the SET model allows students to take on expert roles. By the same token, another area of interest is in how far the educator remains in charge of orchestrating teaching and learning processes and/or takes on a learner's posture. To provide a panoramic view of these actions, a quantitative approach using the count/search function in Word has preceded the descriptive analysis of salient, illustrative or unique passages from the corpus (see Verplaetse-Manoïlov, 2017, pp. 184-185 for a similar approach to classroom-based peer interactions). In order to ensure greater validity of the qualitative coding process, 10% of the corpus has been double-checked by an external researcher, Ms Vanessa Gonzalez, PhD (University of Geneva). An interrater agreement of 95.6% has been reached.

To enrich the general theoretical grounding of the SET model in translanguaging theory, I have selectively drawn on sociolinguistics and discourse analysis to code the transcribed data. I made this choice in order to capture the actual features of SET through the language used in the recorded exchanges. My interest was not on the formal features of the students' home languages, but on the students' reactions to the tandem model. Although formal linguistic features sometimes became the subject of brief metalinguistic discussions and have been coded as such, the focus of my analysis has been how students and educators have reacted when faced with the communicative exigencies of the tandem learning situation, the actual communicative event.

To describe the diversity of speech with a view to the relation between language and culture, Hymes (1986/2003) has proposed sixteen components of speech. I have adopted the component "message content" (p. 41) for any classification of cultural topics present in the data. The component "channels", pertaining to the "choice of oral, written, ... or other medium of transmission of speech" (p. 43) enters my analysis through the concept of multimodality. Hymes (1986/2003) has also pointed out the "interdependence" and "relative hierarchy" among channels in interaction which surface in my data in the negotiation of oral versus written or sometimes drawn elements of communication. I lean on Hymes's "norms of

interaction” (p. 44) and “genres” (p. 45) in the analysis of the participants’ stance and rapport as teachers or students in the tandem and classroom situation. In these interactions, speaking is governed by normative expectations linked to the roles of teacher and student (“norms of interaction”) and the formal characteristics of the classroom or tandem situation (“genres”). While Hymes’s components have provided the sociolinguistic framework for my coding, I have drawn on the work of Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2008/2016) to develop the actual coding categories.

To zero in on the actualisations of stancetaking, I have chosen to base my analysis of feedback on Lyster and Ranta (1997) who have considered error treatment sequences and created coding categories to this end (p. 44). In subsequent studies (Lyster, 1998; Lyster, Saito & Sato, 2013), simplified frameworks grouping the initial categories into the areas of explicit feedback, implicit feedback and negotiation of meaning have been presented. Even though the simplified frameworks have many merits, I chose to base my coding categories on those developed by Lyster and Ranta in 1997. The 1997 framework has captured the variety of teaching actions performed by the students, allowing me to foreground how this has benefitted the students in terms of agency and cognition.

While it has been useful overall to stay within the framework set out by Lyster and Ranta (1997), some additions were necessary to do justice to my particular data set. I have omitted any *repair* categories including *topic continuation*, a move without response. These categories aim at linguistic accuracy. Accuracy is an important concern in linguistic analysis and central to teaching and learning approaches throughout Europe (see Council of Europe, 2001, p. 37) and in international education (see <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/curriculum/language-acquisition/>). However, in translanguaging and ELF pedagogy which are important theoretical pillars of SET, the emphasis is speaking a language at any level of competence (Cook, 2016, p. 4). Consequently, accuracy is not highlighted. I have retained the category of *reinforcement* because it elucidates the use of teacher talk. The

category of reinforcement (proposed as “intervention evaluative” by Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2008/2016, p. 95) reveals tendencies pertaining to stancetaking.

Elaborating on Kerbrat-Orecchioni’s (2008/2016) “intervention initiative” [initiating intervention] which “ouvre l’échange et appelle une réponse” [opens the exchange and calls for a response] (p. 60), the additional categories I developed are:

{Educator-initiated vocab elicitation}<sup>13</sup>: This is a move the educator used to open a discussion on new words or phrases, basically to get the students’ teaching started. I added HL for home language or Eng for English to indicate which way of communicating the educator’s elicitation targeted.

Christiane: /dʒaraŋ/ And you see this is, the weather is not really hot. So you say ... /jirug/? {Educator-initiated vocab elicitation HL} W.: /iru/ {FB-recast student} Christiane: /jirug/? W.: /iru/ {FB-recast student}
---

In the example above, the educator initiates the teaching of the word in a way that invites feedback at the same time. Any erroneous pronunciation (Christiane: /jirug/?) or errors of any kind have not been coded because the interest of this study is to explore how students develop expert identities as teachers of their home languages. The student’s (W.) feedback has been coded following Lyster and Ranta (1997) as I will explicate below.

{Educator-initiated decoding}: This is a move the educator used to incite the students to read words in their home languages (HL) or in English (Eng).

Christiane: Mmh. And I thought was like clear sky. So look up in here [shows the student the word list] for ‘the clear sky’ and it gives me /al/ ..., this one [points to the entry for alwarr] ... {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
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{Educator-initiated metalinguistic}: This category has captured any requests for metalinguistic information by the educator, e.g. pronunciation details, differences between

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<sup>13</sup> I used {...} for the coding remarks. This choice was necessary because I have used square brackets to indicate the duration of pauses and include any interactions unrelated to the tandem work which occurred during the sessions.



written and spoken representation of lexical items or spelling of words in students' home language/s (HL) or in English (Eng).

Christiane: [points to letter 'y' again] This, this letter here, we can't hear. {Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL}  
W.: Yeah, /irug/ {Reinforcement student}

{Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng} has been extended to include moments where Milica asked the students to render information in a different mode, e.g. explaining verbally what they heard from a video (see Appendix 51 for a list of videos used) or else paraphrasing this information. This code also included phrasing thoughts in ways that are acceptable in written language. This concerned for instance the forming of sentences, e.g. distinguishing when to end one sentence and when and how to start a new one.

H.: It was hot for them. Sweaty.  
Milica: It was hot and sweaty for them. {FB-recast educator} {Educator scribing}  
H.: Mhm.  
Milica: Is that it? Do you wanna finish the sentence or keep it going? {Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng}  
[T. humming]  
H.: Finish it there.

These three educator-initiated moves are elicitation moves in the broader sense since an educator elicits knowledge from the students to incite the students to share some of their expert knowledge in the home language (HL). This type of elicitation also aimed at the students practising English (Eng). These moves were not preceded by any error. The counterpart, the students' response, what Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2008/2016) has called "intervention réactive" [reactive intervention] (p. 60) has been coded as {Student teaching vocab HL}, {Student decode HL} or {Student decode Eng}. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2008/2016) has specified that such a response is expected after an initiating intervention (p. 60). Indeed from the point of view of an educator who asks students to decode, even implicitly through scaffolding (see example in the box below), to provide a lexical item or some metalinguistic information, the expected response is that students perform this action, i.e. that they decode, teach the vocabulary item or provide the relevant metalinguistic explanation.

Christiane: So let's see what happens. Karri ... karrire. {Educator-initiated decoding HL}  
D.: Karrire. Let's go. {Student decode HL}{Student teaching vocab HL}

In the example reproduced above, the student decodes after the educator, but adds a translation, thereby effectively teaching the educator a new expression.

{Student decode HL partial} was used when only part of an utterance were decoded. This was useful for instances where students were unsure about how to read complete words in their home languages as represented on the materials:

Christiane: And this is /ri/ ... {Educator-initiated decoding HL}  
W.: /ri/ ...amh ... {Student decode HL partial}  
Christiane: /riwuringi/  
W.: /riwur/ My mum will know. {Student decode HL partial}

Sometimes, students were able to decode without any assistance, or perhaps aided by visuals. In the example below this visual element was a photo labeled with arrows to the respective vocabulary. Following a prompt or elicitation by the educator or of their own accord, students taught vocabulary or metalinguistic information in their home languages coded as {Student teaching vocab HL}:

Christiane: [points to the word for horse] This one you know, ah? This one? {Educator-initiated vocab elicitation HL}  
W.: /dʒaraŋ/ {Student teaching vocab HL}

When students asked for help with metalinguistic aspects of their work, such as spelling or translations, I coded this initiating intervention (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2008/2016, p. 60) as {Student-initiated metalinguistic}, either in {HL} or in {Eng} such as shown in the example below. The educators' responses have been coded as feedback following Lyster and Ranta (1997).

T.: How you spell August? {Student-initiated metalinguistic Eng}  
Milica: A-U- {FB-explicit educator}

The categories of {Translation-verification} and {Translation-confirmation}, specified with the addition of {student} or {educator} have been taken from Quivy and Tardieu (2002)

to account for translanguaging moments during the tandem exchanges<sup>14</sup>. {Translation-verification} has sought to clarify whether a lexical item has been understood correctly as in this discussion about a mind map on animal names:

R.: That's kangaroo. This is kangaroo? {Translation-confirmation student} {Translation-verification student}  
D.: Yeah. {FB-explicit student}  
Christiane: I thought it's wallaby?  
R.: It's kangaroo. {Translation-confirmation student}

{Translation-confirmation} was deployed to confirm the learner's understanding and give positive feedback. It is part of reinforcement, a category which I have also used, but a specific multilingual form of reinforcement which has merited particular attention:

Christiane: Say again?  
W.: Sandy ground, I mean /adbudʒadbud/ {Translation confirmation student}

The intercultural nature of the tandem work also necessitated additional coding specifications. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2008/2016) has identified questions as inherent components of many types of interactions such as interviews where “l'échange question-réponse constitue l'essentiel du matériel conversationnel” [the question-answer exchange constitutes the essential part of conversational material] (p. 85). Similarly, SET exchanges are interactions where questions and answers are in rapid, predictable succession. Following the concept of “question” defined by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2008/2016) as “tout énoncé ayant pour finalité principale d'obtenir de son destinataire un apport d'information” [any utterance which has the final aim of obtaining additional information from its addressee] (p. 86), I propose two categories where this “apport d'information” targets specifically cultural knowledge. I chose the word *request* for this category to reflect the intended respectful nature of SET exchanges. The categories are: {Student request cultural knowledge}, {Educator request cultural knowledge} and the responses {Educator sharing cultural knowledge} and {Student sharing cultural knowledge}. Cultural knowledge included life skills such as navigating the internet

<sup>14</sup> Lyster and Ranta (1997) have included translation in the category of recast as they found it served the same function and was quantitatively insignificant in their data (p. 47).

and performing online searches, rules of common games, geographical details, flora, fauna and information about fishing and hunting as evidenced in this exchange:

Milica: Turtle? Oh. Do you eat those, too? {Educator request cultural knowledge} H.: Sorry? Milica: Do you eat them? {Educator request cultural knowledge} T.: Yeah. / H.: Yeah. They're good. {Student sharing cultural knowledge}
--

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2008/2016) has considered responses, represented here in the respective {sharing} category, as obligatory following “un acte initiatif” like the question (p. 92). However, admitting one’s ignorance can also be a valid response to a question (p. 93) and will be analysed as such in the present data set. The students’ agency is actualised through selecting which elements of cultural knowledge they are willing to share with a non-Indigenous person.

Due to the multimodality (MM) of the tandem exchanges, I have included four specific categories. In my use of multimodality, I follow García (2009) who has simply defined the term as “language interaction taking place on different planes ... that is, different modes of language (visual as well as print, sound as well as text, and so on)” (p. 54). In the present data set, this pertains to all instances in which the educator rendered spoken utterances the students contributed into written language, coded as {Educator scribing}. I cite the example of the crocodile attack again to show how the coding has made the student’s and educator’s co-construction of written work obvious:

Milica: Yeah, so give me a sentence. {Reinforcement educator} {Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng} H.: So what will happen when they get out of the car / Milica: Yeah. / H.: The crocodile feel, feel the vibration, they come out of the water, to the skin. They can hear screaming and then they'll come up to have a look and see what it is, like if the people are straight there like that, they attack, they gonna come from every different direction. And then, I think that's an easy target for them so they can have a feed. {Student sharing cultural knowledge} Milica: Sorry, when they get out of the car, the crocodile can sense them and will {Educator scribing} H.: And will attack them.
--

To showcase the students’ multimodal (MM) choices, the categories of {Student MMw}, {Student MMd}, and {Student MMv} have been added for students writing (w),

drawing (d) or viewing information e.g. in a video (v). This category has captured students' annotations of the proposed texts as well as other student-initiated additions to the posters I had created:

R.: How do you draw a kangaroo?  
Christiane: My drawing is bad. My kangaroo looks a bit funny.  
R.: Yeah [giggles]. K-A [attempts to spell *kangaroo* on my poster as he plays with the red pen] {Student MMw}

I did not consider intonation or body language as part of multimodality, but chose to focus instead on its visible actualisations as commonly understood as multimodal choices in translanguaging (see García & Li Wei, 2014, pp. 28-29).

For the classification of feedback types, I have also used Lyster's and Ranta's (1997) definitions. The feedback types recorded in the data sets were clarification request (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 47), explicit correction (p. 46), recast (p. 53), elicitation (p. 48) and metalinguistic feedback (p. 47). Explicit correction required the "explicit provision of the correct form" (p. 46):

Milica: Alright, sorry. What, um, so God's gotta be a capital G for starters. {FB-explicit correction educator}

Any recast was a rephrasing of the utterance containing the correction (p. 46):

Christiane: /gaŋuri/ {Educator-initiated decoding HL}  
Do.: /gaŋuri/ {FB-recast student}

Clarification requests were triggered by "problems in either comprehensibility or accuracy or both" (p. 47):

Milica: My favourite bird's a cockatoo.  
T.: They're noisy.  
Milica: Naughty? {FB-clarification request educator}  
T.: Noisy.  
Milica: Noisy. Yeah, they are. That's why I like them though. They're so funny. ... Is that a crocodile?

Metalinguistic feedback referred to comments relating "to the well-formedness" of an utterance without the provision of a correction (p. 47):

D.: Man sat ... under a tree making for a spear. {Student decode Eng}  
Christiane: Okay, it's more than one. {FB-metalinguistic educator}  
D.: Spears.

Elicitation took the form of “fill in the blank” (p. 48):

R.: Miss, miss, miss! [points to the word for caterpillar] /win/, /win/... {FB-elicitation student}  
Christiane: /windzulam/

Reinforcement referred to “short statements of approval” and/or a repetition of the corrected form (p. 51):

Christiane: /adbudadbud/  
W.: Yeah. {Reinforcement student}  
Christiane: Both together.  
W.: Yeah. /adbudadbud/ ... Getting there. {Reinforcement student}

In order to be able to quantify who used which types of feedback most frequently, I, as the educator or the students acting as expert-teachers in their home languages, I needed to add {... student} or {... educator} to the categories of explicit correction, recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and reinforcement. These specifications have taken the following form based on Lyster and Ranta (1997, pp. 46-51) depending on who has provided the feedback, e.g. {FB-metalinguistic student}, {FB-metalinguistic educator}, {FB-recast student}, {FB-recast educator}, {FB-explicit correction student}, {FB-explicit correction educator}, {Reinforcement student}, {Reinforcement educator} etc. Here, I have not added {HL} or {Eng} as I assumed that meaningful feedback can only be provided by the expert of the language in question. Students' feedback targeted any of the utterances or written work in the students' home language. Feedback given by the educator was aimed at any utterances or written production in English.

I also added the category of {Student uptake}. In line with my decision not to analyse language accuracy in concordance with translanguaging theory and ELF pedagogy, I did not include the detail suggested by Lyster and Ranta (1997) to specify which kind of error has

been corrected in which way (pp. 49-51). The general code {Student uptake} can take various forms as exemplified below:

H.: Shoes is a noun. {Student-initiated metalinguistic Eng}  
Milica: Shoes is a noun. Do, what do you reckon, T.? You reckon shoes is a noun?  
T.: Yeah.  
Milica: Yeah? Why? Is it something we do, or something we have?  
T.: We have. {Student uptake}

Milica: All right, let's see who can who can think of nouns. {Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng}  
T.: Couch. {Student uptake}

Milica: So, paraphrasing when I ask what's the Anzac spirit. {Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng}  
H.: I don't know what's the Anzac Spirit.  
Milica: Yeah, it says in the, that, um, contact sheet. {Educator-initiated decoding Eng}  
H.: So the Anzac spirit is ... {Student uptake}

Including the coding categories based on Lyster and Ranta (1997), I have developed a total of 24 specific categories (see Tables 5.3. and 6.2.) for the coding of both, the data from the exploratory study and the follow-up study. As explicated above, the categories have been split into {HL} / {Eng} and {student}/{educator} to make language foci and participation clear.

<b>Theoretical foundations</b>			
<b>Hymes (1986/2003): Message content, channels, norms of interaction</b>			
<b>Lyster and Ranta (1997)</b>	<b>Quivy and Tardieu (2002)</b>	<b>García (2009)</b>	<b>Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2008/2016)</b>
FB-metalinguistic (student or educator)	Translation-verification (student or educator)	Educator scribing	Educator-initiated decoding (Eng or HL)
FB-recast (student or educator)	Translation confirmation (student or educator)	Student MMw	Educator-initiated vocab elicitation (Eng or HL)
FB-clarification request (student or educator)		Student MMd	Educator-initiated metalinguistic (Eng or HL)
FB-elicitation (student or educator)		Student MMv	Student teaching vocab HL
FB-explicit correction (student or educator)			Student decode (HL or Eng) - also partial
Reinforcement (student or educator)			Student-initiated metalinguistic (Eng or HL)
			Student request cultural knowledge
			Educator request cultural knowledge

Table 4.5. Theoretical Foundations of the Coding Categories

As outlined in chapter four, all student participants' names have been anonymised by using only the initials or the first two letters in the case where the initial is the same for two students. The tutor-researcher and author of this dissertation appears as Christiane in the exploratory study transcripts. Other students or tutors incidentally talking during the recorded sessions who did not actually participate in the tandem have also been anonymised. Milica, the tutor who implemented the follow-up study, also appears with her full first name in the transcripts. Any overlapping speech has been indicated by using “/” for where the two speakers overlap. Any pause longer than three seconds appears in square brackets [no. of sec.]



with the exact length of the pause. Any pause shorter than three seconds has been indicated by "...". When a word is spelled out, I have used capital letters separated by dashes to indicate this. A word pronounced or read syllable by syllable is represented by a dash in between the syllables. I have used bold letters for any words or parts of words which were emphasised. Parts of the recordings which were not related to the tandem exchanges have not been transcribed. This has been indicated by the specific mention "unrelated conversation" including the duration of this side-conversation. One passage of the exploratory study has not been coded due to the suspected inappropriate word choices by two students (see Appendices 13, 17).

## **Conclusion**

Positioning myself as educator with some privileges teaching students of a minority, I have chosen an action research approach to ensure the maximum benefit for the participating students. During the exploratory study in Darwin in 2016, I implemented SET to test its feasibility and to document its features.

Once I had collected and analysed this data, I could use a formative design to train Milica, the tutor implementing the follow-up study to assist students with academic tasks using the SET model and other translanguaging strategies. Trying to find a research site for the follow-up study in 2019 highlighted the reasons for the existing research gap in Indigenous education. Among the challenging factors were a restructuring of the school administration dealing with Indigenous students, changes in student attendance and a prolonged policy clearance process for Milica. Based on the initial information we had obtained from the school hosting the follow-up study, I trained Milica to work with Indigenous students using SET to ascertain the transferability of the model to a different context.

In order to analyse the data generated during the implementation of both the exploratory study and the follow-up study, I needed to develop a coding system. Drawing on Hymes (1986/2003), I applied and adapted coding categories proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997), Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2008/2016) and Quivy and Tardieu (2002) to obtain a quantitative overview and qualitative insights into the teaching and learning actions which occurred during SET sessions.

# **PART TWO: DATA ANALYSIS**

## **Chapter 5: Student-Educator**

### **Interactions in the Exploratory Study**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will present how SET was implemented in a boarding school in Darwin. In the first part of this chapter, I will describe the context of the school where SET was first implemented. This description will include information obtained through interviews with four senior teachers at the school. The key factors these Darwin-based teachers have mentioned as positively influencing their relationships with Indigenous students relate to the students' home languages, places of origin, family connections and identifying common acquaintances – the recurring topics which have emerged from all four interviews. I will analyse this data with a view to how SET incorporates the key factors identified by the teachers. A final consideration will be how teachers use students' home languages in developing their students' literacy skills in English. I will present and analyse these strategies, then point out overlaps with SET in terms of these successful approaches to literacy development.

In the second part of this chapter, I will provide a quantitative overview of the teaching and learning actions recorded during the exploratory study. In section three of this chapter, I will present and then analyse some representative student-educator interactions. I have grouped the major themes which have emerged from the exploratory study in the following main categories: (1) stancetaking; (2) feedback techniques; (3) rapport building; and (4) use of multimodality (paper-based and electronic documents). In twelve excerpts, I will analyse various discourse features following the above-mentioned categories (1) to (4). In the chosen tandem vignettes, I have focused on three tandem sessions, although as the tutor-

researcher, I worked with the students over a period of four weeks. To identify emerging trends, I will always juxtapose the micro-analysis of the excerpts to the quantitative insights derived from the entire data set. Finally, in section five of this chapter, I will evaluate the exploratory study by reflecting on the suitability of the research protocol and the effectiveness of the methodology chosen to analyse the data. I will conclude by examining to what extent the exploratory study data has revealed how Indigenous students and a non-Indigenous educator benefited from using SET techniques.

## **5.1 School Context and Educators'**

### **Perspectives**

Various communicative practices coexist at the boarding school in Darwin. There are several subgroups of students at the college: West Papuan students who have come on scholarships from a mining company, Indigenous students speaking their traditional language/s, Indigenous students speaking English or Aboriginal English only, non-Indigenous day students whose families live in Darwin and non-Indigenous boarding students whose families live more remotely.

All students in the exploratory study are multilingual or at least bilingual with some partial multilingualism. They can be described as irregular speakers of their home languages with a motivation to learn English for reasons of social mobility and economic advancement. The students' home languages have not been used in the classroom except in the case of one senior English teacher, Janet, whose examples form part of the discussion of educator perspectives below. The SET format has thus been a new experience for the students participating in the exploratory study.

While implementing SET, I conducted interviews with senior teacher at the school. These interviews enabled me to gauge educator's views on the SET model. I could also tap into the teachers' knowledge of successful pedagogical strategies working with Indigenous

students in order to see to what extent such strategies were in line with the SET approach. The four teachers who shared their expertise and experience were not involved in the implementation of SET. The interviews analysed subsequently functioned as an additional support of my approach. Through the teachers' examples, it was possible for me to view many beneficial aspects of the SET model against the background of existing classroom practice.

### **5.1.1 Teacher Profiles**

All interviews took place on site in Darwin in August 2016. The four teachers in Darwin have all been working with Indigenous students for over nine years. All teachers' names have been changed to respect anonymity. The information presented in this part of the chapter is based on my knowledge working with these teachers as a colleague between 2009 and 2011. Students' names mentioned by teachers have been shortened to one initial letter.

At the time of the interview, Bryan (43 years old) was a senior English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher at the school. For the past nine years, Bryan has been teaching Indigenous students as well as international students from West Papua and other parts of Indonesia in dedicated ESL classes. Originally from Sydney, teaching in Darwin was Bryan's first experience in Indigenous education.

Janet, a 57-year old senior English teacher and fluent speaker of Anindilyakwa and Yolŋu matha, has had extensive experience teaching many years in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. Through marriage, she has become part of an Indigenous family.

Teresa (40 years old) recently qualified as a Design and Technology teacher. Prior to becoming a teacher at the school, she has been coordinating the after-school homework tutoring programme for thirteen years. Born in Adelaide, but having lived in Darwin for most of her adult life, Teresa is very familiar with the challenges Indigenous people can face in urban societies in Australia.

Victoria (53 years old), a science teacher from Sydney, has had many years experience in Catholic schools in teaching and management roles. Victoria’s teaching approaches have been influenced by her own upbringing as a daughter of Serbo-Croatian immigrants in Sydney’s multicultural suburb Redfern as she explicitly pointed out.

Teachers	Age	First language and country of origin	Years of experience teaching Indigenous students	Knowledge of students’ home languages
Bryan	43	English, Australia	9	Some words in Yolŋu matha
Janet	57	English, Australia	over 20	Fluency in Anindilyakwa and Yolŋu matha
Teresa	40	English, Australia	13	None
Victoria	53	English, Australia	7	Few words in various languages as represented by her current student cohort

Table 5.1. Exploratory Study Teacher Profiles

## 5.1.2 Building Effective Student-Teacher

### Relationships: The Importance of Teachers

#### Knowing Students’ Origins, Family Connections

#### and Identifying Common Acquaintances

##### 5.1.2.1 Findings

Janet and Bryan have stated that one of their most successful ways of initially building a good rapport with their Indigenous students is about identifying where they are from. Part of this is speaking about common acquaintances as Janet has described: “With other kids you can connect in terms of 'do you know?' So you use the relationships from kids you've

taught before.” The following observation from Bryan has also illustrated the dynamic of speaking about former students, sharing personal and family information:

Establishing relationships ... sometimes it feels like it's a very intuitive thing that you have to do, you know. But I think it's really important, I mean first, really basic stuff like, just knowing their names is, you know, one on one, yeah that's, and pronouncing and knowing articularly with Indigenous kids, knowing where they're from, if you've travelled a bit, knowing a few people that might be from that place. So say, 'ah, do you know ah Bruce from Croker Island?', 'yeah he was a funny kid, he' and they'll say like 'he's my uncle' ... and they kind of loosen up and they understand that you know people have been it there before them and they know. Getting them to somehow connect where they've come from with where they are now, that's a really good way to do it, talking with talking about kids that. Once you know where they're from and you can sort of place them with another somebody else that really helps them - more so I think than it would with a non-Indigenous kid for some reason.

As a general reflection on the question of relationship building with Indigenous students, Janet has offered this statement:

Like I've been teaching for so long now, but I think that over the time who you are at that time in your life will change the relationship you have with, with the students. So as a young first year out teacher then that was a different style of making the relationship as a grandmother who has taught for in the communities and things like that for so many years. So the relationship I have with the the students now is, it's just beautiful, it's just a really rich, ah, relationship and they call me 'Nana'. Like so, so when L., his first day at school was on eh yesterday, so he's in class the first time, never seen him before, he's sitting down, and it's ah you know and eh, W.,

who is from the same community, ... goes 'you can call her Nana', he just 'you can call her nana' I bet and it's just that **comfort**. And I've got, you know, big students from different, you know, urban Indigenous ... as well as out bush and that 'Nana' ... is a real sense of ahm, that they get it. There is a real energy ... and a real comfort zone around 'nana'.... But also you've got the ok I've got my 'Nana' hat on now – and you can you can get, you know, growl them in some ways, you know. So it's, so there is the relationship building through language.

Classroom and behaviour management are often cited as significant problems for new or trainee teachers in Indigenous communities (R. Haines, personal communication, January 20, 2008; C. Veith, personal communication, January 20, 2008). Two of the interviewed teachers explained that due to their rapport with the students, classroom management was not problematic. Janet has found that she could almost eliminate problems due to her status as nana, Australian English for grandma, as an elder, but also as someone who has an intimate understanding of the students' backgrounds and families (“C.: You wouldn't have discipline problems. J: I don't think so. [chuckles] Mind you, it's period six on Friday”).

Similarly, Teresa has stated:

If I reflect back on my ten years here and I've never had really any behaviour problems. But I've seen other teachers have really bad altercations. I'll go up and say hello and introduce myself and I always start and smile maybe I don't know.

The other two teachers did not mention discipline during the interview, but from informal conversations in the staffroom I learnt that Bryan as well as Victoria were admired by colleagues for their effective behavioural classroom management.

### **5.1.2.2 Analysis of Findings**

The connections teachers have made with their Indigenous students through common



acquaintances are a decisive factor identified by Janet and Bryan. This has been a way for Janet to create a link between her students' home community and their life in the boarding school environment: "With other kids you, you can connect in terms of 'do you know?' so you use the relationships from kids you've taught before." Bryan, has shared this experience: "For some reason if you know somebody they know they seem to trust you." Bryan has also used the phrase "they loosen up" to explain the change in students' attitude once the information of who knows whom has been communicated.

Data from the exploratory study confirmed this observation. When talking about where I went to university, one student, R., asked me about the adults and students there. Presumably, R. immediately associated *university* with the local university in Darwin where he might have some connections. It was only when I explained that my university was in Paris, France, that he changed the topic (ll. 636 - 645). Similarly, her tutees asked Milica, the tutor implementing the follow-up study about common acquaintances at Flinders University in South Australia (l. 5361).

Victoria's ability to empathise with her students may well be the result of her own childhood as a daughter of Eastern European immigrants in multicultural Redfern. When asked where they are from, her students' testimonies have often revealed varied movements between their families' traditional lands and choices of settlement in more recently developed areas. Victoria's key to relationship building seems to be anchored in mutual interest ("So I'll tell you about me, but you gotta tell me about you"). This attitude of mutual curiosity is described by Victoria where the kids ask her about her background and in exchange, they share more with her about themselves. During the interview, Victoria used "fascinated" three times ("I'm fascinated with their background because they're fascinated with mine") to emphasise her passion for the students' home cultures.

Victoria has also shown awareness of culturally sensitive ways of asking her students' personal questions ("I'll ask kids and I'll always go 'look if I ask the wrong way or it's wrong culturally, just tell me' "). This echoes Kleppin (2002) who has explained that in tandem,

among other factors, “the intercultural learning consists of ... how to ask for clarification if necessary” (p. 168).

In a similar way to Victoria, Janet has also shared some information about her personal life with the students (“I talk about my daughters and you know and things like this”). Establishing familiarity as an important element of working with Indigenous students has emerged in various forms in all teachers’ experiences. Teresa has stated that a certain level of closeness was necessary to motivate students to tackle their academic work: “that kind of closeness. ... That’s probably number one importance. And that’s how you get them to work for you, too.”

A respectful interest in each other’s origins, family and social connections forms part of most conventional tandem pair work scenarios (Brammerts, 2010, p. 11). The SET model is no exception. However, the initial mutual curiosity might not flow as naturally in an institutionalised hierarchy such as the existing formality between an educator and a student or a group of students. The teachers I interviewed during the exploratory studies have shown an authentic interest in their students’ backgrounds and reported genuine, positive student responses as a result. SET aims at facilitating a similarly positive experience for the participants.

### **5.1.3 The Importance of Students’ Home Languages for Effective Student-Teacher Relationships**

#### **5.1.3.1 Findings**

In a boarding school context, away from family and familiar surroundings, making students feel welcome and comfortable cannot be stressed enough. Three out of the four teachers I interviewed were in the habit of learning vocabulary or short phrases from their students. When elaborating on how he has built rapport with his students, Bryan has stated:

Knowing a couple of words in their language is always helpful as well. Like ah, you speak, I mean, you know well 'cause you speak, you learnt Murrinhpatha, but ah, if you can occasionally drop a word from their language into a sentence, they go [imitates students' laughter]. And you only know one word and they think [imitates students' laughter]. That helps, too.

Victoria has also recognised the importance of languages when getting to know her students. She has tried to learn a few words from her students in languages such as Kriol and Arrernte:

You get them to teach you a few words. ... But, but if you have more than one language in the classroom ... 'no Miss, you gotta learn my language, no Miss, you gotta learn mine' and so, and then they go 'Miss why don't you learn an Aboriginal language?' And I go 'which one?' I should learn Larrakia<sup>15</sup> because that's where I am.

As many colleagues in multicultural Darwin schools, Victoria has often found it challenging to understand the discrepancy between spelling and pronouncing the names of her students' home languages. She has jokingly admitted: "And you know what, what I don't like about language<sup>16</sup>? They say it one way and they spell it differently."

Victoria has also noticed great differences between what she has called "westernised" or "anglicised" students and those who still speak a traditional Indigenous language at home. She has described this situation at the college as follows:

The family that we teach that's Larrakia, they're so westernised by education, by living, they're all urban that ...even the mothers who're in their 40s have no idea about, like they'll know one maybe two words. ... But the elders have passed away that know that spoke the language. Gone.

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<sup>15</sup> Larrakia is the traditional language of the Darwin area.

<sup>16</sup> "Language" in this case refers to Indigenous home languages in general. Using the singular to refer to Indigenous languages is common in the Northern Territory and interestingly sets English apart as the norm not even questioned, whereas "language" is used for any language other than English, especially Indigenous languages.

Whereas the kids that speak language have elders, have people. It's spoken normally at home.

As an example, Victoria recounted a visit to the Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards in 2016 with some of her students from the boarding house. The Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards are held annually as part of the Darwin festival to celebrate and honour Indigenous art from across the nation (<https://www.magnt.net.au/natsiaa>). During the event, one of the students, N. who did not know her home language, recorded the awards ceremony on her mobile phone. N. did this to capture the Indigenous languages spoken by the artists on stage. Victoria spoke extensively about this particular situation and retold a dialogue between herself and her student, N.:

N. was just filming and going 'what did he say?'. 'N. what's your language?' 'Miss, you know, I'm a ward of the state, I have no country'. She speaks no language you know and she's like 'oh my God that's fascinating do you know what he said?' and then somebody else said 'that was Kriol' and translated cause most of the artists spoke in language and someone translated. And she was just like ...and she **is kind of lost**, like even in school because there is no ground ... well, peer group, but there is no ground. I can't turn around and go 'well you're from Borroloola you know the traditions; you know this is your spirit' cause ... she has no idea.

As a result, this student seems to have chosen to socialise selectively in the boarding school community. Victoria has elaborated:

N. is **very** very lost. So she ... aligns herself with the ... Kimberley mob because they're more westernised you know. So she, and they don't speak language as fluently, so she feels more comfortable with a group of girls that aren't traditional traditional. Like she doesn't hang out with the Tiwis or the Borroloolas or or the ahm, ah ... central Australia, Arrernte.

Linguistic acculturation is another aspect teachers have identified. After many years of teaching in Darwin and spending time with Indigenous students during outings, Victoria has also jokingly reported a change in her way of speaking English: “Where you were? Where you been? I'm like, I'm missing some words. There's gotta be some prepositions in there.”

Teresa has explained her passion for working in Indigenous education and the importance she places on effective student-educator relationships. In order to build a rapport with her students, she has adapted her communicative behaviour:

I really like working with Indigenous kids because I find them ... once you get to know them, they become, they're very open and they treat you like family and I guess, I , personally, really like to have that closeness and familiarity. ... Like I love to give them a hug and ... like, ahm, yeah, talk to them like they are my children, really, yeah that kind of closeness. Which I think some people don't think is good when you are a teacher, but I think if you're not like that with Indigenous kids, they don't wanna have a bar of you. That's probably number one importance. And that's how you get them to work for you, too.

Having first-hand experience with Indigenous languages, Janet has often deployed her existing language skills in order to welcome her students:

A lot of it's for the social-emotional so that he feels at home so when I find out that they're from ah ... Yolŋu speakers, or they might be Yolŋu speakers sort of saying ah maywar yothu gaehwuyu ... .

Indirectness as a distinct way of making students feel comfortable is another example from Janet's experience:

But there is also the relationship building through ehm who and how you do your business ... So looking at L., L.'s new in the class, it's 'oh hi' and then I turned to D. and said 'oh, what's, what's his, who's, who would I

know that he would?' So I didn't wanna put the spotlight on L. and make him feel embarrassed.

A difficult area of intercultural contact in classrooms often revolves around asking questions. Janet's experience has taught her to phrase ideas or requests indirectly to respect cultural protocol especially in terms of avoidance relationships (see Stanner 1979, pp. 58-60): "Or to ask a question. Like, I can't go to such and such, I can't talk to so and so. They [the students] know then that you probably want to talk to ... and they can easily say, **no** that's OK." As an outsider in an Indigenous community in her role as a remote community teacher, Janet has learnt to seek permission or advice before asking people in the community directly about anything from cultural knowledge, to personal information or advice about a student. By asking someone she knows well and communicates with regularly, like a student in her class, Janet can avoid disrespecting cultural protocol in terms of who she is allowed to speak to. Having this combined cultural and linguistic knowledge has also had implications on Janet's behaviour management. She has cited an example when students have asked questions in preparation of a field trip that would require a clear 'no' from the teacher:

When they say, ah Nana, can we do such and such, such and such? And I'll say: I can't say yes. So if you say 'no', they'll be grumpy. ... You say: I can't say yes. They can't get grumpy with me. 'Cause I say, I **can't** say yes, you know I don't wanna get the sack. Because we' re going out into the mang ... So we are visiting the mangroves next week. So they're like 'we're going in the' ... 'No, we are not going in the mud. We're going on the boardwalk.' I can't say yes. I can't say yes to that. We can't go. Is that sort of cultural. And I learnt that from out bush. ... Not to say no, just to say, I can't say yes.

### 5.1.3.2 Analysis of Findings

Teachers learning some words in their students' home languages is a strategy which has been positively used in translanguaging education (see Seltzer et al., 2016, p. 142; Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016, p. 46; Woodley & Brown, 2016, p. 87). In SET, this strategy has been formalised. The four teacher interviews have shown that experienced and caring educators have intuitively employed this strategy to connect with their Indigenous students in informal and anecdotal ways in their daily practice.

Victoria has made a point of exploring her students' background from a linguistic as well as from a geographical perspective. In doing so, Victoria has felt a sense of insecurity about pronouncing the names of her students' home languages: "When they say 'oh I speak...' and I always pronounce it wrong, you know, Arrernte and, you know, south and 'I speak Kriol' and you go 'But isn't Kriol here?'".

When I mentioned during the interview that in the past, missionaries often imposed the spelling of these languages, Victoria's reaction highlighted the complex interface between orality and literacy: "I don't care, whoever imposed wasn't listening. You know Ngukurr? ... So the first time I had to write Ngukurr I thought N-U-K-U-R. Then you look at it and you go that's not Ngukurr." A similar sense of insecurity has surrounded kinship terms. Victoria noticed the level of complexity involved when students have explained details about their family members and respective language ties: "But then my grandfather's father's mother's cousins [giggles] ya, ok, you know so, it just, I just am fascinated with how kids can speak languages of different lands."

Victoria has expressed interest in learning an Aboriginal language more thoroughly, but it has remained difficult for her to choose one particular language. Over the years, a variety of languages have been represented in her classrooms by students from Queensland, Western Australia, the Central Desert area and from across the Top End, the northern part of the Northern Territory. When faced with the decision which language to tackle, Victoria has found the added difficulty relating to languages like Larrakia which do not have any native

speakers left (“We have two Larrakia students in the whole school. They don't speak Larrakia. ... I think the last person that actually knew the language was their grandfather”). In a language revival scenario such as presented by the traditional local language Larrakia, Victoria could tackle this challenge using SET provided that the custodians of the languages in question approve.

To consider this situation in detail, Victoria has used passive verb forms like “westernised” and “anglicised” to describe a lot of her students who are in a similar situation to the two Larrakia students. The statement that “N. is **very**, very lost” has illustrated Victoria’s keen observation of the correlation between language, identity and peer group adherence (see García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 187; Leeman et al., 2011, p. 482; Palmer et al., 2014, p. 760; Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016). Victoria’s awareness of students’ linguistic knowledge and affiliations has allowed her to understand individual students’ choices and challenges more astutely.

Furthermore, at times, Victoria has adapted her Standard Australian English to a more local version spoken by her students where auxiliary verbs are omitted. This also reflects a certain alignment with the way her students use English (“And working here for seven years, **my English** [emphasis added] – what you do? Where you were? Where you been? I'm like, I'm missing some words”). Such linguistic alignment can indicate another way of reaching out to students. The alignment seen in Victoria’s adaptation of her SAE is also evident in Teresa’s testimony where she has aligned her language in the way that she speaks to the students as if they were her own children. The way Teresa has described her use of body language such as hugging students is not without risk and might be inappropriate for a male educator. SET offers a more neutral way of connecting to students without crossing potential boundaries involving body contact.

Due to her unique linguistic expertise, Janet has enjoyed particular insight into ways to find common linguistic ground with her students in Darwin. Drawing upon her experience in remote and linguistically isolated communities, Janet has naturally used her own knowledge



of Anindilyakwa and Yolŋu matha in her teaching. She has identified the positive influences of having this knowledge for the “social-emotional” wellbeing of her students and “just to make them feel comfortable in some ways”.

All four teachers I interviewed during the exploratory study have been working with Indigenous students for over nine years and have developed various strategies around language use through their own ongoing practice. For these experienced teachers, connecting with Indigenous students has occurred naturally or intuitively as stated by two of the interviewees. Particularly for educators who have not had this longer experience, like the tutor in the follow-up study, SET offers an avenue to tap into these useful strategies. Language learning and cultural learning through a tandem approach is a way to establish positive relationships with Indigenous students and foster their multiliteracy skills at the same time. So how have the four teachers harnessed their familiarity with students’ home languages in supporting academic work and particularly EAL literacy?

## **5.1.4 Using Students’ Home Languages to Support Literacy Development in EAL**

### **5.1.4.1 Findings**

In terms of successful literacy and general teaching strategies, Teresa has stated: “I feel like I don't have the answers, I don't know what ... works.” The only teaching format she has identified as benefiting most Indigenous students is a one-on-one approach.

Janet has actively incorporated translations in the students’ home languages into her ESL classes:

I will use Anindilyakwa as an example, so that then they know how they can use their first language within their writing to enrich their language, their writing, so that, so that when they're writing about...so for example, T. is writing a story and he is talking about the forest, ... now the story is

located in the Tiwi Islands, they don't call it the forest ... they call it the bush, so to actually embed the story. I'm trying to encourage them to use Standard Australian English but also the voice to try and strengthen the voice.

Janet has also asked students to translate sentences into their home languages to identify more nuanced meanings or to clarify how intonation can change an utterance:

So for example today in English we were talking about ... I said OK, so if I say 'Come here please' or 'Where have you been?', 'Ah, eh where have you been?' [different intonation] like this. I said: 'That's not what you'd say to your brother...

When teaching more abstract concepts such as the relationship between two objects in terms of location, Janet has stated:

The other way is to try and find out sometimes, especially like in Maths, like with lower level maths. You know like if you are teaching things, for example the prepositions, so in, on, under. So Anindilyakwa I use again as the example: arawarr is for in, arawarr is also under, on. Karawarr and karrarwara, is on or above. So if you try to get them to do different tasks they may not be differentiating between, between the language.

This also extends to kinship terms as Janet has explained: “When they say ‘mum’, well what mum are they talking about?”. This is an example of “where the English is being used with an Indigenous meaning.”

When teaching literary texts, Janet has found that texts which are anchored in Australian Indigenous cultures, even when these are not identical to the students' own cultures, provide useful material for encouraging students' multilingual written expression:

With the book I was using in the classroom, *My Girragundji*, you see nobody speaks Kungandji in the class but **that's OK** because we can use it as an example about ah what, you know and then, then we can write, and

say ok, so how can we write something that has ourselves in it and locates it with us, can be English and some home language whether that be slang, whether it be, you know, Aboriginal English or language, you know, that's, that's what we do.

In terms of learner group composition, Teresa has found one-on-one instruction a very successful approach:

In most cases I feel like that is the only way. If you expect them to get through that really literally is the only avenue. Because if they're left on their own, they won't read, even a scaffolded document they won't read. So they'll just sit there and not do any work or look at other things.

This idea would assist with any writing as part of the students' coursework. Teresa has explained that especially written expression has presented a challenge for Indigenous students:

It's very hard for them and I feel sorry for them, having to write at ... I think there is no consideration in the school system to write as an ESL student. That's what it is. You write as a native Australian. That's how SACE<sup>17</sup>, the SACE requirement. And if you're a ESL student there is no extra allowance.

Teresa has further elaborated on this particular concern and explained the difficulty of text-based instruction and her preference for individualised tuition:

I had a classic example this afternoon, J., who is a really good English speaker. And she wanted to learn how to do something and so I printed her out instructions. But she wouldn't, she was like, 'No, Miss, I'm not gonna use them'. So I had to sit there and go through it with her.

---

<sup>17</sup> South Australian Certificate of Education.

### 5.1.4.2 Analysis of Findings

Due to her skills in Indigenous languages, Janet has used many ways to incorporate Indigenous languages in her teaching of English writing. Finding the students' strong, authentic “voice” is a key notion in her English classes. For this purpose, she has encouraged in-text code-switching to give the students' written productions a special cultural element. Janet has used translanguaging as a literary device as proposed for instance by Ebe and Chapman-Santiago (2016, pp. 57-82) and also Stewart and Hansen-Thomas (2016, pp. 463-467). One of the questions Janet has asked herself as a teacher of writing and her students in years 7 to 11 is: “How can we write something that has ourselves in it?”.

Janet has recognised the “importance of using culturally relevant texts” (Ebe & Chapman-Santiago, 2016, p. 60) as well as the often-cited link between language and identity (see García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 187; Leeman et al., 2011, p. 482; Palmer et al., 2014, p. 760; Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016). Janet has acted on these insights by promoting the use of the home language in all written production in order to make her students “more comfortable with sharing and being involved and using their language.”

Janet's teaching is an example of translanguaging as she encourages her students to use their home languages when writing in English (see Ebe & Chapman-Santiago, 2016, pp. 57-82). Furthermore, having knowledge of the grammatical features of some Indigenous languages has helped Janet with grammatical instruction (“So I'll use language as an example”). Contrastive grammar teaching is more effective because Janet knows that prepositions in Indigenous languages may often seem less precise compared to English prepositions, i.e. there may not be a distinction between in, on and under (“arawarr is for in, arawarr is also under, on. Karawarr and karrarwara is on or above”). When teaching vocabulary, there is another advantage, particularly when it comes to members of the family for which the English lexicon is not as varied and specific as many Indigenous languages (see Stanner, 1969, p. 38; Stanner, 1979, p. 15, p. 47; pp. 58-60; Street & Mollingin, 1983, p. 23).

Janet has acknowledged that her positive rapport as a speaker of Indigenous languages has functioned as a way of enhancing the students' achievement levels: "I think it supports. It supports, you can push the students." In many ways, it seems like Janet's unique career path is a recipe for success.

It is not practicable for every teacher to spend years in the bush and educate themselves in Indigenous languages like Janet has chosen to do. However desirable, realistically, not every teacher involved in Indigenous education in Australia can have the same first hand experience with Indigenous cultures and languages. SET offers non-Indigenous teachers a structured approach to acquiring some of this basic knowledge. At the same time, SET would allow an immediate start to building effective and mutually respectful educator-student relationships through language learning.

To help her students to complete assignments, Teresa has used scaffolding (Bruner, 1966/1974, p. 53) to split up the task ("Ok, so I try and look at the assignment and what kind of questions that I can ask them to answer that will help them write that assignment"). However, Teresa has questioned that this is helpful in terms of developing her students' thinking skills: "I'm a bit worried, too ... because when you're just answering questions you're not thinking for yourself about how you could answer this. Like you're following a structure." Teresa has acknowledged that the students' language skills play a big role in course completion and academic achievement in general. She has often felt like making her subject accessible to students whose first language is not English and who are used to different learning styles is one of her weaknesses: "I'm probably ..., I worry that I'm not very good at that. Having the right, ... saying it in the right language. Like I think even after all my years of tutoring, teaching ... it just seems so different."

The bias of the external assessment criteria and national or state authorities criticised by translanguaging scholars and specialists in Indigenous education alike (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 24) is shared as a problematic construct by teachers. Apart from being allowed to use a dictionary, there seems to be no effort to accommodate students who attempt the South

Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) with a language background other than Standard Australian English. In addition, dictionaries in Indigenous languages are not widely accessible. When I have asked Teresa explicitly whether she had ever seen Indigenous students use any of the online dictionaries that are available, she replied: “No, they don't. But Indigenous kids don't like to risk. They don't like researching, they don't like writing. They, they just like to learn by you telling them how to do it.” SET is an ideal vehicle for introducing dictionaries where available and for promoting and modeling risk-taking as a necessary step during language learning (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 112).

In terms of learning styles, Teresa’s expectations appeared to be very different from those of her students. Like many teachers, Teresa regards reading as a good way to find information about how to do something. Her Indigenous students, however, often prefer to be “talked through” a process so they can act as they hear instructions from their teacher. It is obvious that such a format could be challenging to put into practice with a whole class and numerous students requiring this level of individualised support. This example further underpins the effectiveness of one-on-one or small group work, the format proposed in SET.

<b>Successful pedagogical choices identified by senior teachers</b>	<b>Actualisations in SET</b>
Respectful interest in students’ personal lives and home cultures including home languages to build rapport	Facilitation of respectfully exchanging personal, cultural and linguistic information
Teachers’ linguistic acculturation	Learning the basics of students’ ways of communicating in their home languages
Encouraging translinguaging in written/literary expression to foster multiliteracy skills	Integrating students’ home languages in literacy instruction
Contrastive grammar teaching	Acquisition of basic knowledge of grammatical structures in Indigenous languages
One-on-one instruction	One-on-one or small group
Students’ preference for verbal mode of content delivery	Conversational format of the sessions

Table 5.2. Representation of Proven Pedagogical Strategies in SET

## 5.2 Presentation of Quantitative Data From the Exploratory Study

As outlined in chapter four (part 4.5), I used a coding system which has combined sociolinguistic (Hymes, 1986/2003), didactic (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Quivy & Tardieu, 2002) and interactional (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2008/2016) approaches. This coding system will be applied to the quantitative analyses and the extracts presented for micro-analysis throughout this chapter.

In terms of transcriptions, the words recorded in Iwaidja, Maung, Gupapuyŋu and Kunwinjku have been represented using the Latin alphabet. The spellings in the following transcripts are consistent with the original materials used for the tandem sessions as listed in the references and indicated in the online sources. For some of these words, alternative spellings might have been proposed by other speakers or linguists. For the representative passages, I have added International Phonetic Alphabet symbols in brackets behind the words recorded in Iwaidja, Maung, Gupapuyŋu and Kunwinjku. I have chosen to use IPA (see <http://www.internationalphoneticalphabet.org/ipa-sounds/ipa-chart-with-sounds/>) to avoid the ambiguities of the Latin alphabet spellings presented in the original materials (Appendices 1-12). A first quantitative analysis of the recorded data has yielded the following distribution of teaching and learning actions represented through discourse features:

	Category	Subcategory	Occurrences
1	Educator-initiated decoding		133
		Educator-initiated decoding Eng	17
		Educator-initiated decoding HL	116
2	Educator-initiated vocab elicitation		20
		Educator-initiated vocab elicitation Eng	1
		Educator-initiated vocab elicitation HL	19

	Category	Subcategory	Occurrences
3	Educator-initiated metalinguistic		105
		Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng	37
		Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL	68
4	Student teaching vocab HL		97
5	Student decode Eng		24
		Student decode Eng partial	2
6	Student decode HL		87
		Student decode HL partial	17
7	Student-initiated metalinguistic		30
		Student-initiated metalinguistic Eng	22
		Student-initiated metalinguistic HL	8
8	Translation-verification		33
		Translation-verification student	4
		Translation-verification educator	29
9	Translation-confirmation		39
		Translation-confirmation student	33
		Translation-confirmation educator	6
10	Student request cultural knowledge		0
11	Educator request cultural knowledge		4
12	Student sharing cultural knowledge		29
13	Educator sharing cultural knowledge		4
14	Educator scribing		2
15	Student MMw (Multimodal writing)		33
16	Student MMv (viewing)		0
17	Student MMd (drawing)		3



	Category	Subcategory	Occurrences
18	FB-metalinguistic		41
		FB-metalinguistic student	23
		FB-metalinguistic educator	18
19	FB-recast		61
		FB-recast student	47
		FB-recast educator	14
20	FB-clarification request		36
		FB-clarification request student	18
		FB-clarification request educator	18
21	FB-elicitation		20
		FB-elicitation student	4
		FB-elicitation educator	16
22	FB-explicit correction		56
		FB-explicit correction student	27
		FB-explicit correction educator	29
23	Reinforcement		151
		Reinforcement student	71
		Reinforcement educator	80

Table 5.3. Overview of Interactional Data from the Exploratory Study

These features were represented in speech turns as follows:

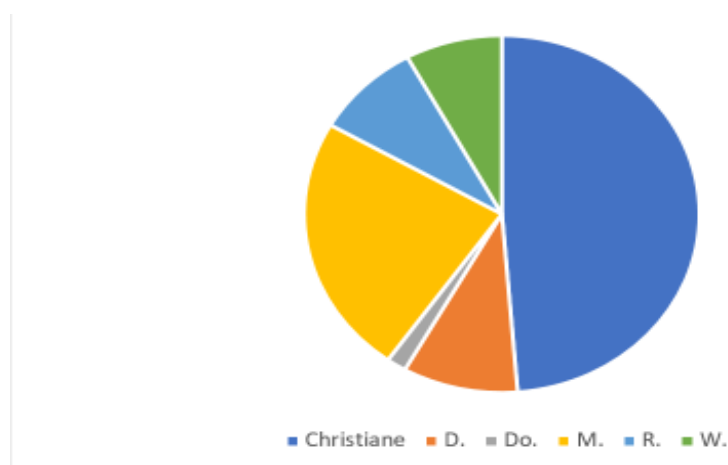


Figure 5.1. Distribution of Speech Turns in Interactional Data from the Exploratory Study

## 5.3 Qualitative Analysis of Exploratory Study

### Data

In order to illustrate the variety student-educator interactions displayed above, I will propose a micro-analysis of some excerpts. The examples reproduced below are typical of all recorded SET sessions (Appendices 13-25). One excerpt shows a unique, yet remarkable feature (Excerpt L). I have first included a description of the chosen sessions before providing the excerpt transcripts and analysis. Christiane is my first name and has remained spelled out in the transcripts to mark any utterances by the tutor and researcher. R., D., W. and M. are the students (see Table 4.4. for student profiles). The room in which the sessions took place had the following set-up:

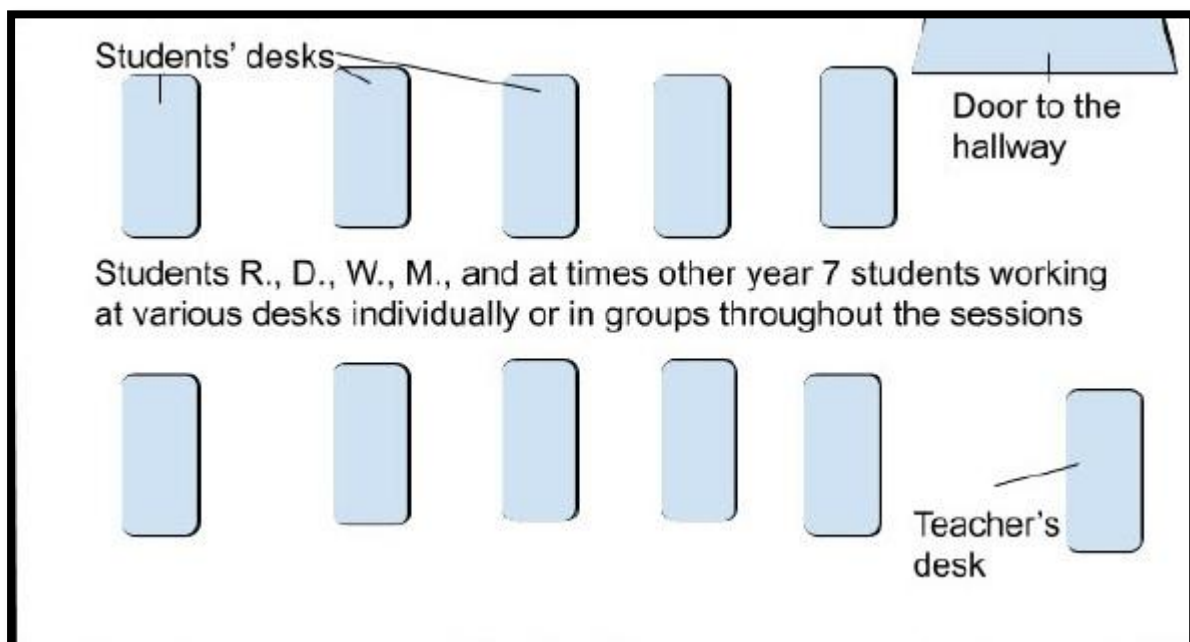


Figure 5.2. Classroom Set-up for the Exploratory Study

### 5.3.1 Example One: Animal Names in Iwaidja

The first set of examples has been taken from a 13 minute and 31 second exchange on animal names in Iwaidja (see Appendix 17 for the complete transcript of this session). The

cousins R. and D. wanted to work together in their temporary role of teachers (see chapter two, part 2.4.1). As I have explained in chapter two, one prerequisite of SET is that the educator can, at least momentarily, relinquish the power and status associated with their role while still performing most of the tasks of orchestrating the language learning sessions. The tandem session on animal names will illustrate this dynamic. I will provide five fragments (A - F) of this particular tandem session. The fragments have been reproduced in chronological order to capture the sequence in which we have moved through the 15 animal names. Following the principle of autonomy, I set myself the goal of learning the names of fifteen Australian animals in Iwaidja. For this purpose, I created a mind map-like poster with drawings of the chosen animals as a pedagogical support for myself and to role-model vocabulary learning techniques (combining drawing, writing and translating). The Iwaidja names of these animals, taken from the online dictionary (AuSIL), are written next to the drawings. As the different handwriting shows, the students made some additions to this poster

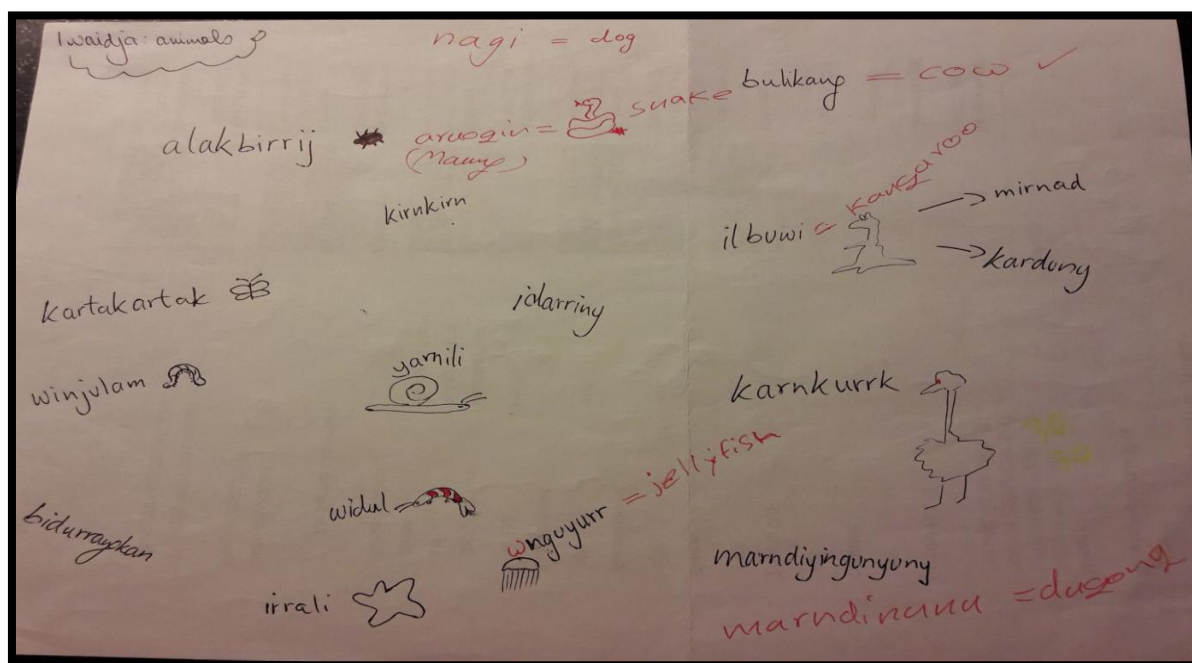


Figure 5.3. Iwaidja Animal Names Mind Map Poster (see Appendix 1)

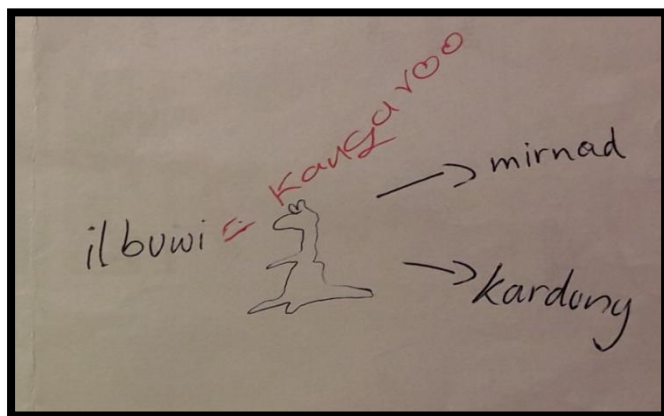
### A. Start of the tandem

- 917 R.: What is this animal? {FB-clarification request student}  
 918 Christiane: /karn-garn-gur/  
 919 R.: /karn/ What is this? ... {FB-clarification request student}

- 920 R.: Miss, miss, miss! [points to the word for caterpillar] /win/, /win/... {FB-elicitation  
 921 student}  
 922 Christiane: /windzulam/  
 923 R.: We don't call this that. {FB-explicit correction student}

R. was quick to assume a teacher stance by employing three types of feedback in rapid succession. However, his initial interest in /karn-garn-gur/ was not sustained as he quickly moved on to elicit the word for *caterpillar*. R. disagreed with the word I found for caterpillar, but did not provide the correct form. This could point towards a lexical gap between English and Iwaidja as spoken by today's generation, or more likely, the student was indeed not familiar with this particular lexical item and therefore not in a position to comment. It is also possible that R. did not want to continue in his teaching role and therefore chose not to pursue this discussion further.

**B. The Wallaby example** (see Figure 5.3. for complete poster)

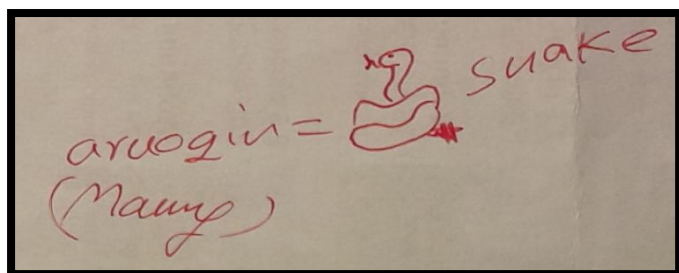


- 967 Christiane: D., say it again? How do you say it? /il/ {Educator-initiated metalinguistic  
 HL}  
 968 D.: /ilbui/ {Student teaching vocab HL}  
 969 Christiane: /ilbui/  
 970 D.: /ilbui:/ {FB-recast student}  
 971 Christiane: /ilbui:/  
 972 D.: Yeah. [nods] {Reinforcement student}

In this example, I wanted to learn how to say *wallaby* and started to read the word when D. filled the gap for me by providing the correct form and thereby explicitly teaching me the word /ilbui/. For the pronunciation work on the Iwaidja word for *wallaby*, D. initially

used recast, or more precisely for this case “repetition with change and emphasis” (Chaudron, 1977, p. 37), followed by uptake, defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997) as “a students’ utterance that immediately follows the teacher’s feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher’s intention to draw attention to some aspect of the students’ initial utterance” (p. 49). Here my uptake took the form of repetition and resulted in “repair” (p. 49). D.’s feedback made me realise the subtleties of pronunciation which could not be understood exclusively by looking at the written representation of words in a dictionary. After my uptake, D.’s final “post-repair reinforcement” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 51) was verbal (“Yeah”), combined with non-verbal feedback. D. nodded and we moved on to another lexical item. At a later point in the session, R. insisted that *ilbuwi* actually meant kangaroo and added this translation in red, further illustrating fluid communicative practices among the students and their confidence to contribute in writing to the proposed pedagogical materials.

### C. The snake example (see Figure 5.3. for complete poster)



- 1027 R.: How do you spell /arugin/? / Christiane: /a/ {Student-initiated metalinguistic Eng}  
 1028 D.: S-N-A-K-E  
 1029 Christiane: /a/... /ru/ / D.: E ... /gin/ {Educator-initiated metalinguistic}  
 1030 R.: /arugin/ / D.: [slowly repeats in the background] /arugin/  
 1031 R.: [quietly] /arugin/ [writes as he speaks] {Student MMw}  
 1032 Christiane: Nice work. /arugin/ Okay, um... {Reinforcement educator}  
 1033 R.: Are you sure this is your real homework?

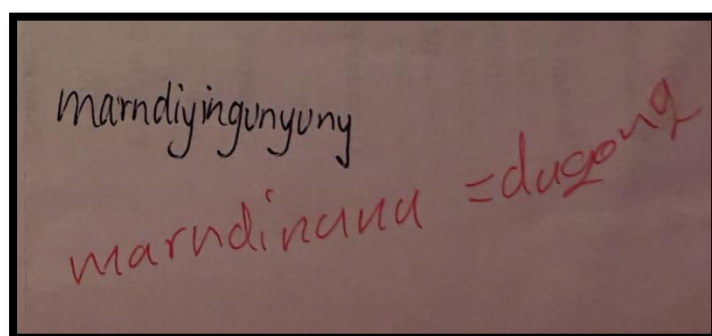
In our discussion of the word for *snake* we entered multimodal terrain. In terms of spelling in the students’ home languages, I provided the start of the word for snake, *arrugin* to scaffold the writing of the word retaining my role as an educator. R. used the opportunity to clarify the spelling of this word, attempting to spell it in his home language using the Latin

alphabet. R. immediately received peer support from D. who proposed the spelling in English, transgressing the boundaries of verbal and written literacy. However, following a short prompt in the form of an elicitation (“Christiane: /a/... /ru?”), D. finished the word (“/gin?”).

R. then attempted a written representation of his oral home language as *aruogin*. Finally, R. and D. pointed out to me that the word was the same in Maung and I added this in parenthesis underneath the word. This similarity the students mentioned further supports the theoretical considerations brought forth by scholars like Makoni and Pennycook (2007) and Sabino (2018) about the seemingly arbitrary imposition of linguistic categories on named languages by those documenting the languages (see chapter three, part 3.1).

In an isolated utterance, R. expressed that he felt unsure about my lesson goal. Two interpretations are possible. Either, using typical teacher style, R. wanted to ensure I was on task and had shown them the “real homework” or R. intended to confirm that I was happy to adopt the student role in this session.

#### D. The dugong example (see Figure 5.3. for complete poster)



- 1057 R.: I don't know what this word. [points to the word *marndiyungunyuy*]  
 1058 {FB-clarification request student}  
 1059 Christiane: Dugong. {Translation-verification educator}  
 1060 D.: /maɲdijɲuɲu/ {Student teaching vocab HL}  
 1061 R.: [proposes alternative simplified spelling on the paper] /maɲdi/ / D.: Guɲu. Yeah.  
 1062 Christiane: Is it right? [points to the word 'marndiyungunyuy' on the paper]  
 1063 {Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL}  
 1064 R.: No, that's wrong spelling, Miss. I'll show you. {FB-explicit correction student}  
 1065 Christiane: Okay.  
 1066 R.: /marn/... /marn/ ... /di/ ... /ɲu/ ... /ɲu/. {FB-explicit correction student}  
 1067 Christiane: Mmh, that's a bit easier, too, than this spelling, isn't it? {Educator-initiated  
 1068 metalinguistic HL}  
 1069 R.: Equal dugong [draws the mathematical = sign and then starts to slowly write the  
 1070 word in English behind it] {Translation-confirmation student} {Student MMd}

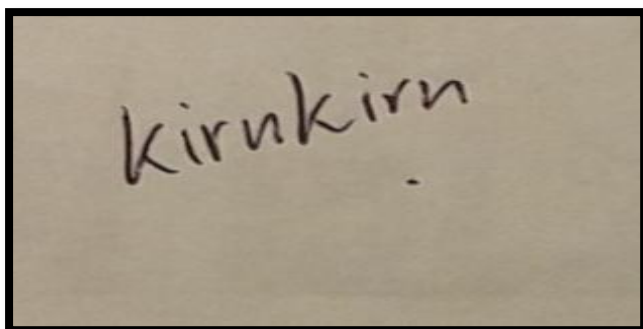
1071 Christiane: Du - gong. No, no, you're right. {Reinforcement educator}  
 1072 D.: Excuse me, excuse me, have you seen dugong in true life?  
 1073 Christiane: No, never.  
 1074 D.: I eat it. I eat it.  
 1075 R.: Yeah, we eat it, in our way. {Student sharing cultural knowledge}  
 1076 Christiane: You're missing one letter. [points to dugong spelling] {FB-explicit  
 1077 educator}  
 1078 D.: I-N-G  
 1079 Christiane: N-G at the end ... Where did you, um, where did you find it? {FB-explicit  
 1080 educator} {Educator request cultural knowledge}  
 1081 D.: Croker Island. {Student sharing cultural knowledge}

After his initial hesitation decoding *marndiyungunyuy*, R. quickly embarked on a creative teaching sequence in which he proposed his version of the word. I used translation as a translanguaging strategy (García & Kleyn 2016, p. 188; Woodley & Brown, 2016, p. 87) to support both our learning.

R.'s use of the = sign in excerpt D showed equality between the two languages on paper. He spontaneously created a visualisation of the social agenda described by translanguaging theory according to García and Li Wei (2014, p. 137) and García and Kleyn (2016, pp. 198-199) which aims at dissolving the power imbalance between named languages. R. drew on his knowledge of a mathematical sign to create a clear end product: a multimodal overview of animal names written in Iwaidja followed by their English translation and further clarified with a drawing.

When it came to English spelling, I reverted to the educator's posture for a short moment and first used metalinguistic feedback to assist the student (“Christiane: You're missing one letter”). I then provided explicit correction for the ending of *dugong*, the spelling of the velar nasal [ŋ]. A further example of explicit correction was when R., clearly confident in his teaching role, stated “No, that's wrong spelling, Miss. I'll show you.” This alteration between who took on which role shows the flexibility of the student-educator model in terms of accommodating different postures according to the linguistic item under discussion (see chapter two, part 2.4.1).

**E. Sandfly totem** (see Figure 5.3. for complete poster)



- 1148 Christiane: Good work! [points to *kirnkirn*, the word next the dot designating a fly]  
1149 This one here, I thought it was sandfly. {Educator-initiated decoding HL}  
1150 R.: What's that? {FB-clarification request student}  
1151 Christiane: Like, you know the little insects that bite you.  
1152 D.: Ah, yeah, yeah, yeah and make us lump.  
1153 Christiane: Really bad the sandfly!  
1154 R.: Ah, we don't.  
1155 Christiane: You don't have that word? {Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL}  
1156 R.: Yeah, because that's our totem. {Student sharing cultural knowledge}  
1157 Christiane: Okay. So then you're lucky, they don't bite you.  
1158 R.: Yeah, yeah.  
1159 Christiane: They bite me.  
1160 R.: They do bite us but they don't .... make us lump. / Christiane: Okay. / R.: They  
1161 just sting. {Student sharing cultural knowledge}

In this example, I taught the word *sandfly* in English prompted by a clarification request. Once R. understood what it meant, he was able to engage in a cultural discussion. R. did not focus any further on the word itself showing a preference for sharing cultural expertise at this point: having the sandfly as one's totem protects against the negative effects of this insect's bite.

**F. End of session – review test as self-assessment** (see Figure 5.3. for complete poster)

- 1225 Christiane: Okay, we'll do a quick test. So I'll try. For cow, /bulikaŋ/.  
1226 R.: /buligaŋ/ {FB-recast student}  
1227 Christiane: /buligaŋ/  
1228 D.: Yeah, cow. {Reinforcement student} {Translation-confirmation student}  
1229 Christiane: For snake ...  
1230 D.: /aru/ {FB-elicitation student}  
1231 Christiane: /arugin/ For jellyfish ...  
1232 R.: ... is /uŋuŋ/. {FB-explicit student}  
1233 D.: Put a tick, put a tick! [points to the word for cow on the poster] / Christiane: /uŋuŋ/  
1234 [R. adds more features to the drawing of the curled up snake] {Student MMD}  
1235 Christiane: Ah, it's got a tongue.  
1236 R.: Yeah. [as R. is completing the drawing, he points to the snake's tongue sticking out]



- 1237 [D. makes clicking noises with the erasable red pen]  
1238 Christiane: Woo! A bit scary the snake.  
1239 D.: It quite good. [points to the completed snake drawing on the poster]  
1240 Christiane: And /i6ui/ ?  
1241 D.: /ilbui/ Yeah, kangaroo. {FB-recast student} {Translation-confirmation student}  
1242 Christiane: /ilbui/ Kangaroo.  
1243 R.: Did you know that kangaroo swim, you know? {Student sharing cultural knowledge}

Educator-initiated vocab elicitation was a way to focus on vocabulary in translation in this excerpt. I paused to get the students to complete the Iwaidja equivalents for me (“Christiane: For snake ... D.: /aru/ Christiane: /arugin/ For jellyfish ... R.: ... is /uŋuŋ/”) and to involve the students in a more reciprocal, collaborative manner of completing the task. This resulted in a series of teaching moments where both students took turns in providing the Iwaidja animal names employing a range of feedback techniques. R. finally extended our discussion by volunteering some cultural knowledge about kangaroos.

This review test on animal names in Iwaidja was an example of “reactivation”, defined as “utilisation ponctuelle d’un acquis récent” [momentary use of a recently acquired concept] (Quivy & Tardieu, 2002, p. 260). Completing such a test aligned my activity with activities typically performed by students. This was a way of modeling self-assessment for the students. Sensevy’s (2012) view that as a teacher “one has to make a great effort to model these practices” (p. 512) that one wishes to see develop in the students is relevant for the SET model since the educator has to model what effective language learning strategies might look like.

In terms of multimodal contributions, during my Iwaidja quiz, students were still completing the poster. R. added some detail to his drawing of a snake to complement the translations. Immediately after, D. commented on the good quality of this drawing which demonstrated the importance students accorded to the visual details of the materials.



In the relatively short exchange on Iwaidja animals illustrated in the excerpts above, the two students volunteered four examples of specific cultural knowledge, for instance about the hunting of dugong (Excerpt D), the sandfly totem (Excerpt E), kangaroos' swimming skills (Excerpt F) and finally, not reproduced above, the Iwaidja number system (ll. 1204-1221) which only comprises the equivalents of numbers one and two (ll. 1217-1219: “Christiane: So you count up to four or to five? R.: To two. D.: Only two.”). This insight about numbers shared by R. and D. reveals a distinct cultural difference showing the reduced need for counting items in the culture of Iwaidja speakers. This might pose interesting conceptual challenges in mathematical instruction at the urban boarding school.

In contrast to the sharing of cultural expertise, students expressing expertise relating to their home languages was fraught with additional complexities. A significant factor in students' hesitation to take on the teacher's role might well be their own insecurities about expressing certain things in their home languages. These insecurities might also be the reason why some students wanted to work together forming a 'tridem' rather than staying within the one-on-one format. Competing values involving English versus their home languages and progressive language loss might contribute to feelings such as articulated by one of the students at the start of the session on animal names in Iwaidja: “R.: Um, I don't know much /iwadʒa/” (l. 950). Despite his initial hesitation, R. sustained his participation for the entire 13 minutes and 31 seconds of this session and deployed various teaching techniques, amongst them varieties of corrective feedback.

At the beginning of the session in example one, clarification requests appeared frequently as exemplified in excerpt A. The student, R. pointed to seven words on the animal names mind map, one after the other, and asked “What is this animal?” or “What's this?”. This was a dynamic way of moving through the vocabulary as R. got me to read the Iwaidja words for different animals which allowed me to practice the pronunciation of the new words. At the same time, R. matched what he heard to the written words on the paper. Towards the

middle of the session, R. also used a clarification request when he did not initially understand the English word for *sandfly* (Excerpt E).

Sometimes explicit correction of the written version of a lexical item in the students' home languages was required (see Excerpts D and A). R. also noted certain incongruencies between the dictionary vocabulary for insects and the actual usage as he knew it from his mother. In one instance (Excerpt A), he disagreed completely with the word the dictionary proposed for the English *caterpillar*, but did not provide the correct form. Later in the exchange, W. confirmed my correct pronunciation of the word for *caterpillar*: "Yeah, you're saying it right" (l. 1407).

All excerpts reproduced in example one exemplify cooperation between the speakers of Iwaidja and Maung in the negotiated spelling of oral language. In the entire session, R. and D. wrote down the English equivalents of nine Iwaidja words. Both students took risks in terms of spelling words that they had not practised before in their ESL class such as *dugong* (Excerpt D) or *snake* (Excerpt C).

## **5.3.2 Example Two: Describing my Home Environment in Iwaidja**

These sessions' goal was to describe my home environment in Iwaidja. In preparation, I had looked up the vocabulary needed to label the photo in an online dictionary (<http://ausil.org/Dictionary/Iwaidja/index-english/main.htm>; see Appendix 3). I showed this dictionary word list to W. and D. and we referred to it throughout the sessions. Based on a poster with a photo in the middle showing a landscape with meadows, trees, horses and cows grazing (see Appendix 2), I asked the two students to check the labels I had added. In order to practise my pronunciation, I read out the words to them, pointing to the items in the photo and tracing the letters with my index finger, commonly referred to as *reading finger* by ESL educators at the college, at the pace of my reading. In this second set of excerpts, the students

W. and D. mostly preferred the pair work format. Excerpt G has been taken from a very short review session based on dictionary word list (see Appendix 7) which only lasted 1 minute and 36 seconds (see Appendix 16 for the complete transcript of this session). This session was recorded at the end of the evening tutoring time. It involved only W. who stayed behind with the boarding house supervisor after the bell indicating the end of the lesson had rung.

### G. Describing my home environment in Iwaidja - a brief check

- 900 Christiane: And this one? /abuḍʒadbud/ [bell rings] {Educator-initiated decoding HL}  
901 W.: /adbuḍʒ adbudadbud/ Ahm, beach. {Translation-confirmation student}  
902 Christiane: [reads from the word list] Sandy beach. / W.: Sandy beach.  
903 Christiane: Say again? [incomprehensible - Tutor's voice in the background]  
904 W.: Sandy ground, I mean /adbuḍʒadbud/ {Translation-confirmation student}  
905 Christiane: Mmh.  
906 W.: You know, like /adbud/, where you say, you put the two letters in, /adbudadbud/  
907 {FB-metalinguistic student}  
908 Christiane: /adbudadbud/  
909 W.: Yeah. {Reinforcement student}  
910 Christiane: Both together.  
911 W.: Yeah. /adbudadbud/ ... Getting there. {Reinforcement student}  
912 Christiane: [laughs] Getting there? Thank you.

W. offered his paraphrase of reduplication to explain the word formation process for *sandy ground*: “You know, like /adbud/, where you say, you put the two letters in, /adbudadbud/”. Even though W. referred to the syllables as “letters”, his intention in providing metalinguistic feedback is clear. There was also an element of risk-taking as W. explained a complex concept in his own words, using English to get the message across and teach me about this morphological process. This is an example of how ELF pedagogy can be actualised in SET.

In terms of stancetaking, W. used the colloquial register when he concluded the session with reinforcement: “Yeah. /adbudadbud/ ... Getting there.” This was a considered way of offering praise after a short pause indicated by “...” at the very end of the session which coincided with the end of tutoring class. Here, W. assumed not only the teacher's role

but also that of a language expert able to assess my progress after two attempts at achieving good pronunciation.

In the second excerpt (H), R. acted as the teacher assisting me in taking a review quiz. This excerpt has been taken from a 15 minute and 41 second recording of a session in which I had first spent eight minutes assisting R. and M. with the completion of a worksheet for the subject Religious Education (see Appendix 15 for the complete transcript of this session).

## H. Iwaidja review quiz

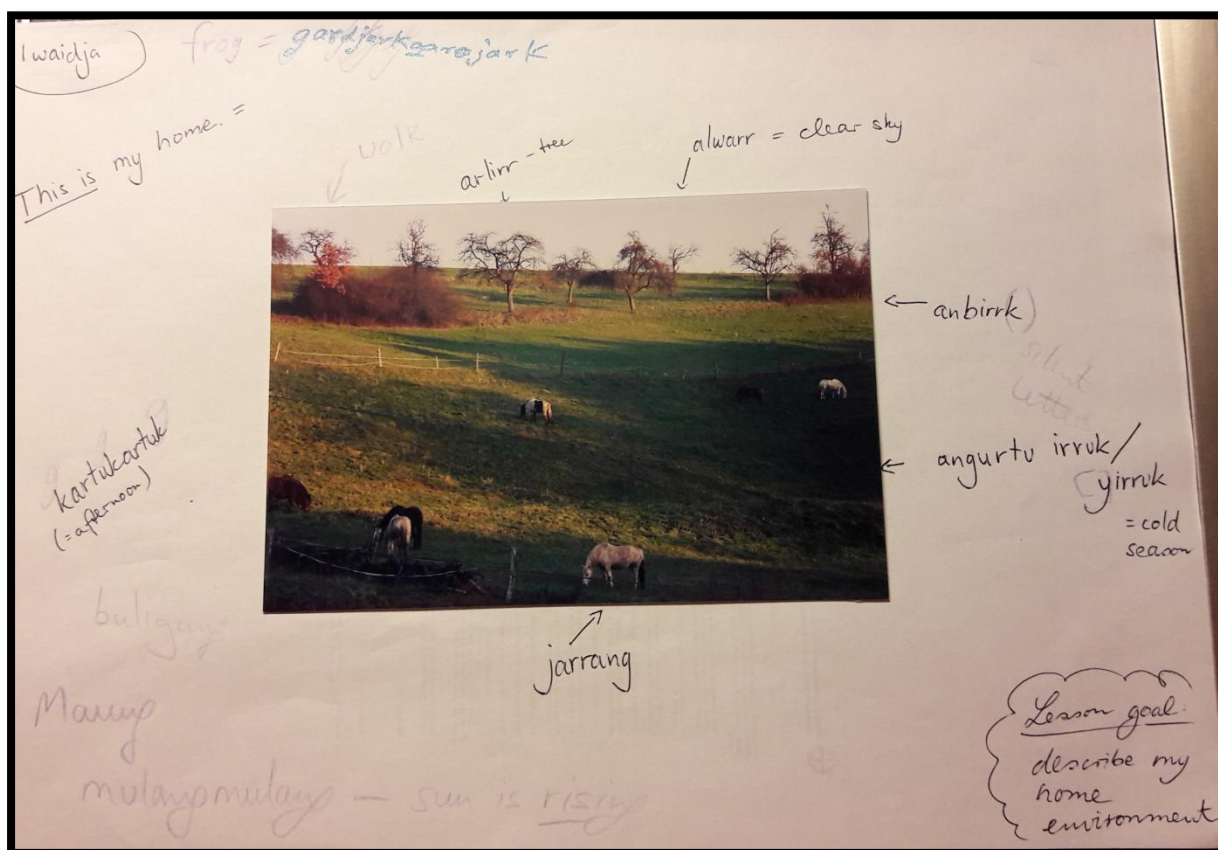


Figure 5.4. Iwaidja Home Environment Mind Map Poster

- 712 Christiane: So we're starting with /iwad̪ʒa/  
 713 R.: What d'you say for tree?  
 714 Christiane: /arlin/?  
 715 R.: Ah, nah. [shows me the poster]  
 716 Christiane: No, I don't wanna look.  
 717 R.: No, look at it and do like this. [covers up the words with his hand]  
 718 Christiane: No, I've looked.  
 719 R.: All right, then.  
 720 Christiane: So, /arlin/.  
 721 R.: Ah, no, no, no, no! Just look everything first.  
 722 Christiane: Ah, but I said it. I said it.

- 723 R.: No, look everything first.  
724 Christiane: Okay. You're a very nice teacher.  
725 R.: Look everything. Miss, read everything, then I take it away, then you do the test.

R.'s instruction before starting the Iwaidja review quiz "Look everything, read everything then I take it away, then we do the test" was an example of multimodality. R. stressed the importance of the visual dimension. R. mentioned looking, the visual mode, before reading, the visual-cognitive mode, both of which precede the verbal quizzing. In this instance, R. might have been imitating his teachers and the instructions they have used in testing situations in class. At the end of the quiz, not reproduced above, I asked for my score and R. happily offered the perfect score: "Five out of five." (l. 867). R.'s volunteering of the score has shown that he confidently took on the teacher's role at this point. We concluded the quiz session in a spirit of reciprocity when I summed up: "That's an A for me tonight. And for your RE [Religious Education, a compulsory subject in Catholic schools in Australia] ... also. Well done" (l. 868).

Excerpt I shows the transition from Iwaidja to Maung which was triggered by the discussion around the Iwaidja word for *rainbow serpent* as represented in the dictionary (see Appendix 4). This word posed some difficulty to W. and as a result, he initiated the work on Maung by sharing more about members of his family he identified as expert speakers of Iwaidja and Maung. While we had started the session describing one's home environment in Iwaidja, W. naturally moved onto Maung. Even though this session was not planned as a tridem, D., who was working in the same room, joined in at this point as Maung is another language the cousins W. and D. know. The poster I had prepared in Maung showed a photo of my father, my grandmother, my aunt and myself with labels and arrows to identify the family members (see Appendix 5).

## I. Introducing my family in Maung



Figure 5.5. Maung Family Mind Map Poster

- 138 Christiane: And this is /ri/ ... {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
- 139 W.: /ri/ ... um ... {Student decode HL partial}
- 140 Christiane: /riwuringiji/
- 141 W.: /riwur/ My mum will know. {Student decode HL partial}
- 142 Christiane: Your mum will know, right?
- 143 W.: Yeah, he speak /iwadza/
- 144 Christiane: She speaks, she speaks that language. {FB-recast educator} / W.: My
- 145 uncle and my mum, they teach me, teach me how to talk. They speak the language. /
- 146 W.: [incomprehensible utterance]
- 147 Christiane: So when you go home, you speak with them?
- 148 W.: Yeah. But I know most of Maung. I know Maung.
- 149 Christiane: Mmh, I did some work on Maung, too. [turns towards D.] Did you do
- 150 work on Maung?
- 151 D.: Yeah.
- 152 Christiane: Yeah? So I did my family in Maung. [shows the students the family poster
- 153 compiled with vocabulary from
- 154 <http://ausil.org/Dictionary/Maung/index-english/index.htm>, see Appendix 4]
- 155 W.: /gamu gamu/ {Student teaching vocab HL} / D.: Your family?
- 156 {Translation-verification student}
- 157 Christiane: /gamu/?
- 158 W.: Is mum. And then auntie, ma ... /gamu/ {Translation-confirmation student}
- 159 Christiane: No, grandma. [points to her grandma on the photo]
- 160 W.: Ah grandma, we call, ah...
- 161 Christiane: Mama? Ah, mum ... / W.: /man/, ah, /wanman/ {FB-explicit correction student}

- 162 Christiane: /wan/ ...?  
 163 W.: Ey, which one is your mum?  
 164 Christiane: Ah, my mum, she's not on this picture.  
 165 W.: Ah.  
 166 Christiane: This is my, um, my auntie.  
 167 W.: Auntie...?  
 168 Christiane: Let me check [looks up the word for auntie in the word list, see Appendix  
 169 4] Say again for mum? /gamgam/ ...? {Educator-initiated decoding HL}  
 170 W.: /gamu/ {Student decode HL}  
 171 Christiane: /gamu/  
 172 W.: Mmh. {Reinforcement student}  
 173 Christiane: /gamu/... Here, I printed out the Maung [goes through printed out pages of  
 174 the word list, see Appendix 4, to check the proposed spelling]  
 175 W.: /iwaḍʒa/ and thing, ah Maung they, they're really similar to each other. Like eh,  
 176 /gamu/ is /iwaḍʒa/ and Maung. {FB-metalinguistic student}

In this example, W. was placed in a difficult position when trying to decode the complex word for *rainbow serpent* from a dictionary word list (see Appendix 3). W. recognised the limits of his expertise and referred to his mother as someone well versed in the language. This triggered the change to Maung, a language about which W. felt more confident to teach. When W. elaborated on who in his family speaks which language, I recast one of his verb forms (“speaks”) to add the reciprocal dimension of the exchange. However, in line with Lyster and Ranta (1997), recast is not always met with successful uptake and W. continued his narrative. Using a photo and a word list, we drew on multimodality to make meaning and ensure I could learn some words. W. brought in the metalinguistic dimension spontaneously to enhance my understanding of both, Iwaidja and Maung when he pointed out their similarity.

Brammerts (2010) has identified language itself becoming the topic of conversations as a major benefit for tandem teams (p. 11). W.’s explanation has shown that the discussion of vocabulary in the students’ home languages can bring metalinguistic reflection to the fore. This is another way SET assists in activating parts of the students’ linguistic repertoire that would go unnoticed in an English-only environment (see García & Kleyn, 2016, pp. 1-5; García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 92; Otheguy, 2016, p. xi).

Excerpt J contains some more examples of tandem’s metalinguistic dimension when W. compared the languages Iwaidja and Maung (“/iwaḍʒa/ and thing, ah Maung they, they’re



really similar to each other. Like eh, gamu is /iwaḍʒa/ and Maung”). This similarity and W.’s example of the word for *mother* being the same in both languages reinforces the criticisms of language invention brought forward by scholars such as Makoni and Pennycook (2007, pp. 1-27), and Sabino (2018, p. 17). Iwaidja was first documented by linguists working for the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Maung was documented as part of a dictionary project in the 1960s to 1970s by Hewett. Since 2002, linguist Singer and Maung speakers have been extending the dictionary and made it available online (<http://www.mawngngaralk.org.au/main/who.php>). As I have outlined in chapter three, these language classifications may not necessarily represent communicative reality. Language boundaries have not been established on the basis of linguistic evidence but according to political agendas. However, during the exploratory study, W. and D. showed that they knew and respected these boundaries as a result of their lived experience communicating with people on Croker Island. This forms part of both students’ metalinguistic knowledge. This knowledge has contributed to how they could, at least momentarily, perform teaching roles in the tandem exchanges.

Du Bois’ s (2007) view of stance “as a linguistically articulated form of social action whose meaning is to be construed within the broader scope of language, interaction, and sociocultural value” (p. 139) has offered a useful way to examine the roles which the participants in the SET sessions assumed. One might speculate that SET would also facilitate a role reversal with students being the experts in their home languages and the educator being the novice. The linguistic acts functioning equally as social acts (Du Bois, 2007, p. 141) which have most saliently shown these roles in the data set are examples of teacher talk being used by students. Olshtain and Celce-Murcia (2003), following Swales (1990, p. 24), have clarified that “school language has its specific lexis, language learning has its specific lexis” (p. 712) which can be observed in a stock of words or phrases commonly used by those in charge of teaching.

Only two students have used teacher talk. One example occurred when I asked R. to test me on my Iwaidja vocabulary (Excerpt H). In one of the following sessions, R. used teacher talk without any prompt: “Are you sure this is your real homework?” (Excerpt C). The other example of teacher talk was extended praise. W. displayed this kind of teacher behaviour in the session on describing my home environment using Iwaidja (Excerpt G). The colloquial phrasing R. and W. used made both of these instances borderline cases of teacher talk as they are less formal examples of evaluative language than what one would expect. Yet, W.’s more assured comments are remarkable because in our first session together, he did not readily identify himself as an expert, rather citing other students as good speakers of Iwaidja (“Ehm, you know, H.? He know, he's good in, at /im/ ... /iwad̥ʒa/, him and E.”, l. 17) or by referring to his mother as an Iwaidja expert on more complex vocabulary: “Riwu, ya. My mum will know” (Excerpt I).

### **5.3.3 Example Three: Yolŋu Matha Reading**

#### **Tandem**

This example contains three excerpts (J, K and L) illustrating the SET format based on reading. All together, M. and I had five sessions on Yolŋu matha over the course of two weeks (see Appendices 19-23 for the complete transcripts of these sessions). The ITAS coordinator’s wish had been to focus on reading with M. as this was his weak area. Drawing on the coordinator’s advice with a view to best support the student through then tandem model, I therefore decided to offer a text from Elcho Island in Yolŋu matha (see Appendix 8 and Figure 5.6. below) which I had chosen from the LAAL website. In excerpts J and K, taken from the first SET reading session with M. and his friend Do., who joined at the end of the session, this text served as a basis for reading and spelling work. This first session represented in excerpts J and K here lasted 30 minutes in total. It is the longest tandem session recorded during the exploratory study.

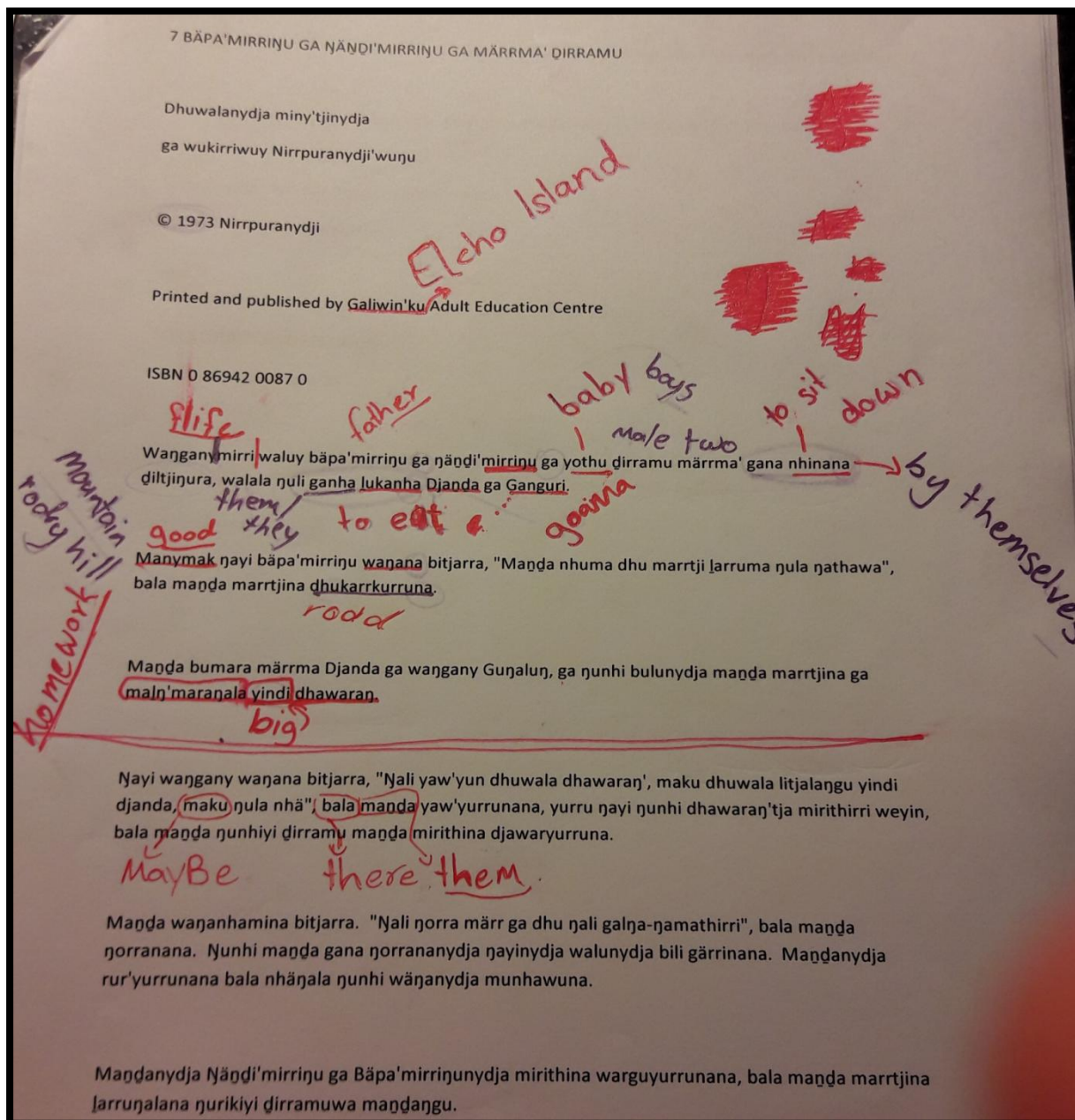


Figure 5.6. Yolŋu Matha Reading Tandem Text

### Excerpt J: Start of the Yolŋu matha reading tandem

- 1587 Christiane: [points to 'Waj', the first word in the text] /waŋ/ ... {Educator-initiated  
1588 decoding HL}
- 1589 M.: /waŋananmiŋi/ {Student decode HL}
- 1590 Christiane: /wan/? {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
- 1591 M.: /bapamiŋiŋu/ ... /gʌ:/ {Student decode HL}
- 1592 Christiane: /gʌ:/ [traces the syllable using the reading finger, then points to the next  
1593 word in the text] /nan/ {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
- 1594 M.: Mmh, /ŋandi miŋiŋugʌ:/ ... {Student decode HL}
- 1595 Christiane: /jɔdu/? {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
- 1596 M.: /jɔdu/ [7 seconds pause] {Student decode HL}
- 1597 Christiane: I'm stuck with this one, too. /jɔdu di diŋamə/ {Educator-initiated decoding  
HL}

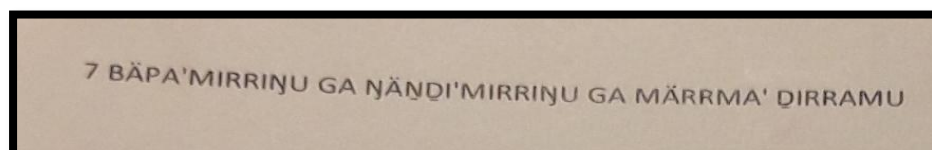
- 1598 M.: /jɔɖu diɾamu:/ [10 seconds pause] /maɾda {Student decode HL}
- 1599 Christiane: This one [points to the word ‘märrma’ which is the next word in the text]
- 1600 {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
- 1601 M.: /maɾda/ {Student decode HL partial}
- 1602 Christiane: /mΛ/ {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
- 1603 M.: /ganΛ/ {Student decode HL}
- 1604 Christiane: /maɾmΛ' ganΛ/ {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
- 1605 M.: /maɾΛ' ganΛ/ {Student decode HL}
- 1606 Christiane: /n/ {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
- 1607 M.: /ŋu/ ... {Student decode HL}
- 1608 Christiane: /ninΛnΛ/ {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
- 1609 M.: /maɾmΛ' gΛnΛ ninΛnΛ. {Student decode HL} {FB-recast student}
- 1610 Christiane: Ah! /ninΛnΛ/
- 1611 M.: Yeah, like sit. {Student teaching vocab HL}
- 1612 Christiane: Sit? {Translation-verification educator}
- 1613 M.: Yeah, sit down. {Translation-confirmation student}
- 1614 Christiane: Sitting down.
- 1615 M.: Yeah, setting down.
- 1616 Christiane: Can you write for me, so I don't forget? {Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng}
- 1617 M.: Like this is, /jɔɖu/ means baby. [annotates the text using a red pen] {Student
- 1618 teaching vocab HL}

This excerpt has shown an alternation between my decoding requests and M.'s attempts at decoding a dialect of his home language represented in the Roman alphabet. M. sustained his decoding effort even though this was a completely new way of reading for him. The two pauses of seven and then ten seconds revealed his hesitation when faced with this task. As we moved along in the text, M.'s confidence increased. Pauses decreased and M. took the initiative to annotate the text with written translations, providing a kind of glossary for me in the margins and in between lines. The use of the red pen is a further indication that M. felt at ease taking on some of the teaching responsibility as red is a colour often reserved for teachers making corrections to texts. Spelling in English, M. also took a risk here, moving out of his comfort zone and moving between the roles of teacher and learner. He was a teacher when he translated or recast words for me, but a learner when he filled the gap or repeated the words I decoded (e.g. ll. 1620-1660).

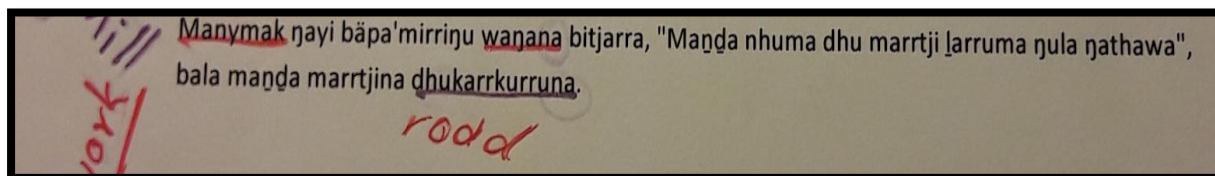
A generally slow pace of decoding and many educator-initiated decode moves confirmed M.'s difficulty in reading as pointed out to me by Teresa, the programme coordinator at the college. Excerpts J and K have shown some typical ways of {Educator-

initiated decoding} where I only read the start of the words in a fill the gap manner. Lyster and Ranta (1997) have described this as an “elicit completion” move (p. 48). I waited for M. to read the words in the text: “[points to the first word in the text] /waŋ/”. Uptake for M. was mostly successful and he sometimes relied on his contextual understanding more than on his decoding and letter recognition skills which advanced him from a decoding to a reading stage as M. started to read whole phrases rather than just single words (“M.: /maŋma' ɣana ninana.”, l. 1609). As we moved through the sessions, M. felt more sure of his own knowledge and provided feedback in the form of recast (l. 1609), positioning himself as an emerging expert in Yolŋu matha.

As a further actualisation of his emerging expertise during the Yolŋu matha reading tandem, M. used different coloured pens to annotate the reading text (e.g. l. 1617, l. 1643). M made it clearer to me how Yolŋu matha translated to English by adding lines and arrows between the words. Using writing, a different colour and English were all ways of using multimodality. M.’s annotations then served as a basis for Do. to comment and enhance our work on the text (Excerpt K). Do.’s presence changed the tandem into a tridem, yet again highlighting students’ general preference for working with a peer when instructing me. The constant back and forth between orality and writing, Yolŋu matha and English demonstrated in example three (see Appendices 19-23 for complete session transcripts) has shown M.’s creativity and confidence, similarly to R.’s annotations and drawings evidenced in excerpts G and F, W.’s spelling suggestions (see Appendix 2) and D.’s annotations in excerpt C. As an extension, M. later used the writing of Yolŋu matha as an opportunity to discuss and confirm his understanding of the written rendition of /ŋ/ or capital Ɔ (ll. 1902-1914) based on some passages in the text:



7 BĀPA'MIRRIŊU GA ŊĀŊDI'MIRRIŊU GA MĀRRMA' ƆIRRAMU



### Excerpt K: Co-teaching Yolŋu matha and sharing metalinguistic moments

- 2140 Do.: /jɔḁu diŋamu maŋma/ Ya, that's two. {Translation-confirmation student}
- 2141 M.: /kana ninana/
- 2142 Do.: Two babies. {Translation-confirmation student}
- 2143 Christiane: Ah, two babies.
- 2144 Do.: Ya. {Reinforcement student}
- 2145 Christiane: Two baby boys. {Translation-confirmation educator}
- 2146 Do.: Ya. {Reinforcement student}
- 2147 M.: They were sitting down.
- 2148 Christiane: It's different from English, isn't it?
- 2149 Do.: Yeah.
- 2150 Christiane: Cause in English you would say two baby boys and then we would put the
- 2151 S here [writes the word on a piece of scrap paper]. {Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng}
- 2152 M.: Yeah. [reads from the paper] Two baby boys.
- 2153 Christiane: But you don't do that, you have the baby, male, two. [points to the words
- 2154 in order in the text as she glosses what she reads] {Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL}
- ...
- 2161 Christiane: /ga gana/ Oh, this is the same. This is all part of the same, the /gana ninan/ {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
- 2162 Do.: Yeah.
- 2163 M.: Sitting. Sitting down. {Translation-confirmation student}
- 2164 Christiane: To sit down. So the two of them... / Do.: Alone, alone. / Christiane: Alone?
- 2165 Do.: Yeah, by, by themselves.
- 2166 Christiane: Ah, by ... them ... [spells the words on the margin of the paper]
- 2167 M.: Self.
- 2168 Christiane: Selves. {FB-recast educator}
- 2169 M.: Self.
- 2170 Christiane: We need to put S. {FB-metalinguistic educator}
- 2171 Do.: S. {Student uptake}
- 2172 Christiane: You know, because here we also put S [points to the word 'boys']
- 2173 {FB-metalinguistic educator}
- 2174 Do.: Yeah.
- 2175 M.: Ah.
- 2176 Do.: Yes.
- 2177 Christiane: So we have, we call it plural, this kind of thing where we have ... / Do.:
- 2178 Yeah, plural. / Christiane: Two together. / Do.: S on the end. {Student uptake}
- 2179 {FB-metalinguistic educator}
- 2180 Christiane: Yeah, S at the end, that's right. Superstar. {Reinforcement educator}

Metalinguistic feedback has also played an important role in the Yolŋu matha reading tandem as I commented on some grammatical and orthographic features of English. Excerpt

K contained two examples of metalinguistic discussions as we examined the word order of Yolŋu matha compared to English (“Christiane: But you don’t do that, you have the baby, male, two [points to the words in order in the text as she glosses what she reads]”) and the plural markers of both languages (“Christiane: ... in English you would say two baby boys and then we would put the S here”). There is evidence of uptake in excerpt K when M. showed his understanding of the plural concept we had discussed (“M.: Yeah, two baby boys”). Do. explicitly acknowledged the plural as a concept known to him (l. 2178).

### **Excerpt L: Ancestral vocabulary**

- 2191 Do.: /gaŋuri gaŋuri/ What’s that? /gaŋuri/?  
 2192 Christiane: You don’t know either?  
 2193 Do.: Yeah, wait, wait, wait.  
 2194 [M. speaks fast in Yolŋu matha for 3 seconds]  
 2195 Do.: /ja’ka/  
 2196 [M. speaks fast in Yolŋu matha for 5 seconds, then laughs]  
 2197 Do.: Wait, wait ... [holds his head as he is thinking]  
 2198 Christiane: Boys, this is an old book, look when it’s published.  
 2199 M.: Pub?  
 2200 Christiane: It’s from 1973.  
 2201 Do.: Ah!  
 2202 M.: 1973 [traces the year] What?  
 2203 Christiane: It’s more than forty years, so maybe this is an older word.  
 2204 {Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL}  
 2205 Do.: Yeah.  
 2206 Christiane: I don’t know.  
 2207 Do.: Yeah. Me, too.  
 2208 Christiane: Sometimes in English also we have older words. {Educator-initiated  
 2209 metalinguistic Eng}  
 2210 M.: Yeah.  
 2211 Christiane: Like last night, you know, when you were reading the Bible.  
 2212 M.: Yeah.  
 2213 Christiane: It had some older words. / M.: Yeah. / Christiane: That now, in English, I  
 2214 wouldn’t use or the teachers wouldn’t use. So maybe it’s the same in your language.  
 2215 {Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng}

In our discussion about the word *ganguri*, which appeared to be an older word in the Yolŋu matha variety spoken on Elcho Island, I retained the educator’s role for some metalinguistic observations. I made use of this occasion to refer to some Bible study homework from a previous tutoring session which involved rarely used words in English such as “gentiles” (Excerpt K; see also l. 616). The students were obviously unsure about this word

which is evidenced by the laughter (l. 2196) and the use of Yolŋu matha among themselves (l. 2194, l. 2196). Do.'s presence changed the dynamic of the tandem slightly and accelerated the pace, but also meant some repetition in terms of reading passages M. had already read and translated previously. This indicates that SET can flexibly incorporate more than one student and offers possibilities for two students or even small groups of students who share the same home language to work in this format (see Ciekanski & Kleppin, 2017, p. 139; Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 31; Tardieu & Horgues, 2020 for an elaboration on flexible guidelines for conventional tandem to suit specific contexts). Excerpt M shows a lively exchange towards the end of the reading tandem in which code-switching featured.

### **Excerpt M: Codeswitching and multilingualism**

- 3261 Christiane: Yeah, we can all share. [points to a packet of almonds]  
3262 D.: /ji:/ ... /maŋmakbaldi/ [grabs two hands full of almonds]  
3263 Christiane: But leave some. I know you're speaking Yolŋu matha.  
3264 M.: Yeah, Yolŋu /maŋmak/. You speak Yolŋu matha.  
3265 Christiane: What did you say /maŋmakba/...'?  
3266 M.: /maŋmak/ means good. {Translation-confirmation student}  
3267 Christiane: Good.  
3268 D.: That's good.

D.'s spontaneous use of Yolŋu matha towards the end of the session illustrated that he felt empowered to show his multilingualism in a casual, conversational way. It could be seen as a case of codeswitching to be used to mark D.'s identity as a plurilingual Indigenous person as described by Narcy-Combes et al. (2019, p. 11). Narcy-Combes et al. (2019) have defined codeswitching as follows: "In different situations, speakers may resort to the different subsets of their competence in flexible ways in order to communicate with a given interlocutor" (p. 10). M.'s intrasentential codeswitching ("Yeah, Yolŋu /maŋmak/", l. 3264) is another example of this possible identity manifestation. If codeswitching is also "a way to determine boundaries between social groups" (Narcy-Combes et al., 2019, p. 11), M.'s inclusive statement "You speak Yolŋu matha." (l. 3264) is even more significant in counting me in the group of plurilinguals who can speak some Yolŋu matha. It is an indication of SET enabling



more peer-like relationships between educators and students when M. positioned me as a speaker of his home language.

Even though this was the only example of this kind in the exploratory study corpus, it showed the positive impact of the SET practice after only a few sessions. Due to M.'s previous teaching of the word *manymak* (see l. 1759), I could join the conversation. M. credited my interest in learning with the statement "You speak Yolŋu matha" which also mirrors the translanguaging strategy of positioning learners as multilingual individuals regardless of their actual level of competence (see Palmer et al., 2014, p. 763). It also echoes the understanding of multicompetence as speaking a language at any level (see Cook, 2016, p. 4). Here, M. has applied Kohn's (2016) lingua franca teaching philosophy stating that students' level of language accuracy is beside the point (p. 88) to my use of Yolŋu matha which is limited to a word recognition level. Le Lièvre and Forlot (2014) have similarly suggested that "parler une langue, ce n'est pas forcément copier le modèle du natif et, éventuellement, souffrir du manque de légitimité de ne pas en être un" [speaking a language does not necessarily mean copying the model of the native speaker, and perhaps, suffering from a lack of legitimacy of not being a native speaker] (p. 166). M.'s encouragement has illustrated how SET can contribute to alternative understandings of communicative competences needed for building rapport and learning when Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students work together. This short example illustrated that the students felt comfortable using one of their home languages in the classroom. This showed the promising tendency of SET to legitimise multilingualism in ESL classrooms and tutoring situations.

## **5.4 Conclusions Based on the Combination of Qualitative and Quantitative Data**

### **5.4.1 Taking on the Teacher's Role? Conclusions on Stancetaking**

From the careful examination of linguistic acts in the exploratory study, it can be concluded that rather than a role reversal taking place, co-teaching emerged as a preferred mode of instruction. Students working in pairs according to their home languages is further evidence of translanguaging features being actualised in this tandem model (see García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 21).

Since all participants had spent some time at the residential college, they were aware of the “didactic contract” that “identifies a system of largely implicit expectations” (Sensevy, 2012, p. 503) in the sense that as their tutor, I was first and foremost in charge of imparting knowledge and assisting when academic difficulties arose. Many times, students were not ready to relinquish the “genre de discours” [discursive genre] (see Kerbrat-Orecchioni & Traverso, 2004) that constitutes the didactic contract. Even when the “knowledge at stake”, the Indigenous languages in question, clearly fell within the students’ area of expertise, giving them “a power of acting” (Sensevy, 2012, p. 505), it was difficult for the students to envisage themselves in the role of an educator consistently during the tandem sessions. They have remained anchored in their established, expected role of learners, respecting the “norms of interaction” (Hymes, 1986/2003) based on the asymmetrical social relationship between students and teachers/educators. At times, though, they did perform “didactic action” in the sense of giving, not only receiving information (Sensevy, 2012, p. 505) such as shown most importantly in the high number of instances of {Student teaching vocab HL}.

In order to give meaningful feedback such as illustrated in the examples above, a certain degree of expertise is necessary. This expertise was evident in the way the students

used corrective feedback successfully in our sessions. Giving feedback is thus another avenue for students to “enact identities as language experts” (Leeman et al., 2011, p. 482) when they deployed linguistic knowledge to aid the educator. Giving feedback to the students on certain features of English was part of the reciprocal nature of the tandems (see Excerpt K). As the tutor and researcher, I ensured that the students benefited from the exploratory study tandem sessions. Using elicitation to encourage students to decode texts in their home languages was a further way of providing them with literacy support.

What has made SET challenging is the fact that “the teacher and the students no longer move around in a common well-known, taken-for-granted conceptual space” as Sensevy (2012, p. 508) has put it in his Joint Action Theory in Didactics. Sensevy (2012) has called for “imagining new ways of teaching and learning” (p. 513) in which students may become able “to emancipate themselves” (p. 515). For a real shift in stancetaking leading to such emancipation to occur, an exchange of roles might be necessary. It is understandable that for students who are only just getting used to the “whitefella” way of studying and behaving in an urban school setting, this might not be easy to achieve (Hagan, 2008, pp. 8-9).

It is important to bear in mind that stancetaking can also be affected by differences in language proficiency among the participants. Kondo-Brown (2005) has identified differences in language learning among heritage speakers depending on the degree of exposure to the language in the home and the family or other ties to the country where the language is spoken. Proficiency was most robust for students who had parents or grandparents speaking the language in the home environment (p. 575). The language profiles (see Table 4.2.) of the students involved in SET have revealed distinct differences in home backgrounds. These differences are reflected in the students’ acceptance of the tandem model and particularly if and how they assumed and performed the role of the expert or teacher. For instance, when W. explained his own language learning in our session on Iwaidja, he stated: “my uncle and my mum, they teach me, teach me how to talk. They speak the language.” (l. 145) W. used *teach* which implies conscious learning rather than acquiring the language. This might be due to his

use of English at his level of competency or point to the fact that certain families might make a conscious effort to educate their children in ancestral languages in communities where speakers are fast disappearing (see Hinton, 2011, p. 310). W. was quick to add that Iwaidja was not his strongest language, showing self-awareness in terms of linguistic expertise: “Yeah. But I know most of Maung. I know Maung” (l. 148). W. later expressed his interest for me to work more on Maung (l. 148), evidencing that he felt more comfortable with Maung compared to Iwaidja. In the same session, W. and D. struggled to read a longer Maung word (“imurra wimpurrk”, see l. 364) meaning *successful person* in English. W. actually expressed his frustration after a few attempts at reading the word: “Ah, that’s too hard!” (l. 367). W. uses the colloquial *hard* instead of *difficult* as a way to casually comment on the word I chose for this reading example.

Not being familiar with some vocabulary in Maung might have several reasons. It could be the result of language loss (see Trudgen, 2000, pp. 126-127), language change (see Hinton, 2011, p. 311) or also due to the inadequacy of the linguists compiling the dictionary to record the word which is actually in use. D.’s more complex language background was reflected in his participation. He contributed to sessions on Iwaidja, Maung and lastly Kunwinjku where he slowly engaged in a bit of teaching and even used a word of Yolŋu matha (l. 3262 in Excerpt M).

On many occasions, I used educator-initiated decoding in Iwaidja sessions (“Christiane: [points to the word for horse] This one you know, ah? This one?”, l. 30). At times, W. immediately responded with the Iwaidja word. However, elicitation was not always successful. For instance, W. was not able to decode or recognise the words *alwarr* (l. 51-55) and *riwurinyin* (l. in 141) in their written versions and waited for me to read them from the word list. During the Maung family vocabulary session (Excerpt K), I used elicitation (“Christiane: This one, I looked up, is my dad. /pun/ ... /pun/ ...”, l.247) with immediate success when W. filled the gap for me: “/buŋi/”.

In the reading tandem, M. and Do. acted as language experts and teachers according to their proficiency with Do. taking a more clearly articulated expert role compared to M. (l. 2119 - 2260). The mixed responses reconfirmed the students' tenuous foothold on linguistic expertise.

As a technique at the interface between written and spoken language (see Appendix 23), educator-initiated decoding occurred 134 times in the entire data set and concerned the students' home language 117 times. It was followed by student decoding 104 times, out of which only 17 moves were partial decodes. This made educator-initiated decoding the second most frequent move overall followed by 107 {Educator-initiated metalinguistic} inquiries. This has confirmed that the educator has remained in charge of guiding the students through all tandem sessions. In the Yolŋu matha reading tandem alone (see Excerpts J, K and L), 73 out of my total 643 moves were instances of educator-initiated decoding in the HL. M. needed me to decode the vast majority of HL words before reading them fluently himself. Only 14 out of a total of 56 decoding moves by M. were not preceded by educator-initiated decoding. These quantitative results can partially be explained through the activities used. Reading is the most frequently used activity in the tandems. This tendency which could be ascribed to the college's ESL classes' focus on literacy improvement where students read set texts each term. However, the students' dedication to reading and decoding has also shown the students' curiosity about the written word in their home languages.

The frequent use of {Educator-initiated} moves, 266 moves in total out of 1357 educator moves in the entire data set, further confirms my role in driving the sessions both in terms of imparting knowledge about English and in terms of eliciting knowledge from the students. However, the overall distribution of speech turns remains balanced between myself and the students (see Figure 5.1.) and also among the students. M. was an exception with 655 turns due to the Yolŋu matha reading tandem's length and Do. (45 turns) intervened only briefly as a co-teacher of Yolŋu matha.

Students accepted expert stances in the way they shared cultural knowledge. In the exploratory study corpus, 29 instances of such sharing were recorded, even though none of the activities and texts had culture as a particular focus. Students naturally decided to weave in contextual information when discussing vocabulary or other linguistic information.

One additional consideration relevant to this discussion of stancetaking is that the preparation of materials was entirely in my hands. A real exchange of roles would have implied that students also completed this very important step in the teaching process: the selection and preparation of culturally relevant learning materials.

For pedagogical interventions such as disciplining, for instance when R. tried to scribble on his hand with a red pen, (“Christiane: No don't put, don't put it on your skin, please”, l. 998) or initiating the learning activities, especially the self-assessments (Excerpts F, D), the preset roles of tutor and student remained intact.

## **5.4.2 Feedback Techniques in SET**

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2008/2016) has reminded us that “parler, c’est échanger, et c’est changer en échangeant” [speaking is exchanging, and it means changing by exchanging] (p. 2). In this sense, educator and students alike were able to, at least temporarily, slip into each other’s roles during the tandem session. Examining the types of feedback used has shed more light on how the students fulfilled their teaching assignment and how this linguistic act has positioned them as language experts at various moments throughout the sessions. Contrary to recommendations by tandem scholars (Kleppin, 2003, p. 190; Woodin, 1996, p. 56), there were no specific negotiations or instructions on how feedback should be given. I had deliberately left this open because I wanted to document how the tandem model evolved during its first implementation. Giving feedback is one area in which students’ agency and appropriation of the model can be actualised. Students have independently devised various ways of providing me with feedback. At times, I have also used feedback to help students

with salient features of SAE as they appeared in the context of our sessions. The categories of feedback students made use of were, in order of frequency, reinforcement, recast, explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, clarification request and elicitation.

#### **5.4.2.1 Reinforcement**

Quantitatively speaking, the most frequent coded move overall was reinforcement with 149 moves in total. The 149 moves were distributed in a relatively balanced way between students' reinforcement of my utterances in their home languages (71 moves, 5 of which were non-verbal) and my reinforcement as feedback to the students (78 moves). This relative balance has shown that teaching and learning are shared in this tandem model. The same balanced distribution has applied to all feedback moves except for elicitation and recast. 66 student reinforcement moves in total were recorded. Out of these, 17 were accompanied by repetitions which is very common (see Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 51). The casual forms "yeah" or alternatively "yep" or "yow" instead of a formal "yes" were recorded 60 times as part of students' reinforcement. This is exemplary of the casual register chosen for all verbal interactions in English. The students delivered feedback in what Canagarajah (1999) has termed "periphery English" (p. 4). Their choice is another example in the lingua franca argument proposed by Kohn (2016) where students have appropriated the English language "beyond mere correctness" (p. 2).

#### **5.4.2.2 Recast**

Recast was the most pervasively used feedback strategy chosen by the students (see Excerpts B, F, J). I recorded 49 student recast moves in total, most of which contained the colloquial "yeah" as an accompanying encouragement, usually combined with another repetition of the word previously recast. I have coded these moves as reinforcement but they were often accompanied by recast or repetition of my correct utterance (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 51). The preference for students to use recasts is understandable from various points

of view. Given the cultural ramifications of indirectness (see Janet's statements in part 5.1.3.1/Appendix 27), it is easy to see why this would be a preferred mode of correcting an educator. Recast as a face-saving strategy where neither party assumes superiority seemed a suitable way of providing feedback to an educator who institutionally is in a position of superiority in the conventional student-teacher hierarchy (see Houssaye, 2014, p. 33).

Recasts were possible in the exchanges because comprehension was not an obstacle. Students actually understood what I was saying. In some excerpts, their understanding of my utterances was probably aided by the visual components of the mind map-like posters. In my role as educator, knowing that recast has been shown to be less effective than other types of feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 54), I tried to avoid recasts and only used them 14 times in the entire exploratory study.

#### **5.4.2.3 Explicit Correction**

Explicit correction featured 57 overall, 27 of which were student moves and 30 moves were feedback which I gave to the students. The balance between students' feedback and the way I used feedback indicates overall harmonious exchanges where both parties benefitted and received adequate attention. Confidence in one's linguistic ability is a prerequisite for providing explicit corrections. Students' use of this feedback category further adds to the diverse panorama of their agency in this tandem model.

#### **5.4.2.4 Metalinguistic Feedback**

Overall, students used metalinguistic feedback on 23 occasions in the entire data set, making it their third most used feedback type. This low number can be explained by the complexity of metalinguistic processes. Metalinguistic observations might be challenging for students to convey in English which they use as the lingua franca in these sessions as a necessary courtesy towards me. In the entire corpus, 22 instances of metalinguistic feedback



given by me as the educator were recorded. This has again indicated how balanced the exchanges were in terms of both the students and the educator learning from each other.

#### **5.4.2.5 Clarification Requests**

With 18 moves recorded for each, educator and students alike, clarification requests are the most balanced category of feedback in the exploratory study. This shows that both, educator and students remained engaged in negotiation of communicative understanding, but it is not a frequently used category. Good illustrations of the use of clarification requests during the exploratory study are provided in the reading tandems in Yolŋu matha and Kunwinjku. Both students, M. and D., had difficulty decoding the written versions of their home languages.

#### **5.4.2.6 Elicitation**

The overall paucity of {FB-elicitation} students employed is indicative of a reticence towards assuming a teacher's role. Only 4 elicitation moves were recorded in the complete data set. On the other hand, I made 15 elicitation moves to scaffold repair moves for the students.

### **5.4.3 Multimodality in SET**

Multimodality as a learning support strategy used by teachers and students is recommended in translanguaging education (see Collins & Cioè-Peña, 2016, p. 130; García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 117). One overarching feature of all SET sessions was the students' multimodal orientation. The four students used all the resources at their disposal to assist me. Multimodality during the exploratory study encompassed the application of the Roman alphabet to the students' oral home languages, the use of drawing (see Appendix 1), singing and body language. It also meant working with resources which combined visuals and written

text, on paper as well as online. The use of translation, either as verification or confirmation, is also counted among the multimodal choices participants of the exploratory study made.

#### **5.4.3.1 Spelling in the Students' Home Languages**

During the online searches on the LAAL and AuSIL websites on census day, the students were intrigued to see how the linguists who had documented their languages had used the Roman alphabet. This investigation of proposed spellings continued as we moved through the sessions. The students' contributions are examples of changing language conventions in endangered languages. What started as first attempts to represent the sounds of Iwaidja, Maung, Kunwinjku and the various varieties of Yolŋu matha by those involved in documenting the languages was continued by the students who added their versions of spellings directly on the materials I had prepared (Excerpts F, G). Hinton (2011) has explained this dynamic as follows: "Many Indigenous languages do not have standardized writing systems, so literacy itself represents a change in the language" (p. 311). This is evidenced in the poster "My home environment in Iwaidja" (Appendix 2). After a brief discussion about the similarity between the words for *afternoon* (*kartukartuk*) and *frog*, W. wrote *gardjarkgardjark* on the poster next to the English word for frog. The proposed dictionary entry for frog was *kajakajak* (see Appendix 7).

In some sessions, not all of my writing requests were met with success. In Appendix 18, W. often just moved on, revealing his hesitant attitude towards written work in his home language. In total, I recorded 34 examples of {Student MMw} when students took the risk to write in their home languages (see García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 26). These writing attempts have indicated some willingness to engage multimodally with languages. This is particularly salient because up to the point of the exploratory study, English had been the language of writing for the students. They had not been exposed to writing in their home languages. In their primary school, all subjects were taught in English by English-speaking teaching staff.

The use of writing in both, English and the students' home languages has added another dimension to the understanding of multimodality in SET.

#### **5.4.3.2 The Importance of Visuals**

The materials I had proposed were multimodal in nature due to the centrality of the photos in the mind map posters (Examples 2-3, see Appendices 1, 2, 5) and the online accessibility of texts and dictionaries. Translanguaging education as explicated in chapter three and SET as I have introduced it in chapter two both presuppose the collecting of multilingual resources as an essential component of the educator's preparatory work (see Collins & Cioè-Peña, 2016, pp. 130-131, p. 138). In the exploratory study, I proposed the initial materials, but as the excerpts in examples one and four have shown, students have contributed to the further development of these resources (Appendices 1, 2, 5, 8, 9) and even used drawing three times in the entire corpus to enhance the quality of our learning materials.

#### **5.4.3.3 Online Resources**

The entire student community at the college was aware of the ubiquity of electronic devices, online and telecommunication. What I introduced as a new element was the online presence of their home languages in dictionary format. Consistently, I modeled the use of dictionaries (Appendices 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 22), which was a novelty for the students as confirmed by Teresa's observation (see part 5.1.4.2/Appendix 29). This integration of online dictionaries and printed sections of pdf dictionary versions presented a further facet of multimodality in SET. Students attempted reading passages in the dictionary on ten occasions during the tandem sessions (e.g. l. 90, l. 427, l. 430, l. 470, l. 533, l. 1202, l. 1349, l. 1352, l. 1357). Nine out of ten instances of dictionary consultation were prompted by me as the tutor. Only M. (l. 2798, l. 2821) used the dictionary independently after we navigated the online version together. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find out whether the students subsequently made use of the dictionaries for other school work.

#### 5.4.3.4 Translating

Translation moves were made 74 times in the entire data set. Students used translation to confirm words has been understood correctly 35 times out of 40 translation-confirmation moves in total. Students' choice to translate was linked to the level of perceived expertise and a genuine willingness to clarify vocabulary for me. Translation appears as a purposeful teaching strategy students employed and as such reconfirms that at times, when confident in their own knowledge, students did act as teachers.

In contrast, I used translation-verification far more frequently than the students. 30 out of 34 moves were coded as {Translation-verification educator} when I wanted to ensure I had understood new vocabulary correctly. It also functioned as a repetition strategy for me.

#### 5.4.4 Building Rapport Through SET

Our tandem sessions had many moments when students shared family stories with me. The cousins W. and D. are both speakers of Iwaidja and Maung. However, D. has identified primarily with Kunwinjku as his home language (“D.:/enamatukunwreg/ in my language /enamatukunwreg/ Christiane: Is this /iwaḏʒa/? W.: No, Kunwinjku.”, ll. 23-26). By adding this phrase in Kunwinjku, D. took some initiative during the first Iwaidja session to bring his primary home language into the discussion. D. also made reference to his language in the Maung session: “That’s in my way, Kunwinjku ...” (l. 432). Furthermore, D. has been identified as a Kunwinjku expert by his peer, W. who stated during our first Iwaidja session: “Especially, you know in Kunwinjku” (l. 307). When I got a chance to dedicate a reading tandem to Kunwinjku on the last day of the exploratory study, D. showed a positive can-do attitude when presented with the text I had chosen when he said: “Yeah, I’ll try it. I’ll look” (l. 3122). D. remained engaged for the entire session which lasted just under 7 minutes, even though he found the decoding difficult.

The reading tandems in particular bring the concern about using writing to represent oral languages to the foreground. Writing down oral Indigenous is a problematic activity in the light of postcolonial critique and the ideology of language disinvention (see Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). However, from a practical pedagogical perspective, bringing written materials into the tandem sessions had some advantages. When students engaged with the written texts, either by spelling such as shown in excerpts F and G, or by decoding and reading, this gave students some autonomy. They were able to use their home language in the same way they use English in a classroom setting, namely writing and reading the languages contributing to the greater aspect of language equality. In their creativity regarding spelling, students demonstrated ownership of their languages.

As a general observation, my interest in the students' languages might immediately have opened up an avenue for them to share important facts about their family lives. Less than three minutes into our first session together, W. told me his mother was the main speaker of Iwaidja during his childhood. This led to W. then sharing more about the family connections when D.'s father had passed away and W.'s mother took D. away from his original community of Kunwinjku speakers into their home on Croker Island. This is where D. learned Iwaidja as the cousins grew up together (ll. 76-77). For D., Iwaidja and Maung are therefore additional home languages he learnt as he was being brought up by W.'s mother (l. 20). W. volunteered this information about D., thus introducing his cousin in an indirect way. This choice was in line with what senior teacher Janet has found: indirectness as a preferred mode of communication in certain circumstances (see part 5.1.3.1). This indirect introduction positioned W. as a facilitator or 'introduction broker' during our first exchange. It also created common ground where as an outsider, I was trusted with this personal information.

Similarly, M. shared a lot of personal information with me 14 minutes into the first Yolŋu matha reading tandem. M. not only spoke about his cousin, Do., whose expertise in Yolŋu matha became a point of reference three times during our sessions (see e.g. l. 1926), but also about his grandparents and his stepfathers (ll. 1954-1955, l. 2021), mentioning his

grandma's sister as another expert of the language (l. 1933). The discussion about language, in particular lexical items, and writing or reading in Yolŋu matha triggered this sharing of information about these significant people in M.'s family. It was yet another example of how language is inextricably linked to identity (see Leeman et al., 2011; Palmer et al., 2014, p. 760; Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016). At the same time, this sharing of life details has shown how SET can be facilitative of building effective relationships between the participants. SET has created a space where information can be safely shared. Such openness might suggest that in SET, relationships between the students and the educator are based on equality rather than authority. A cooperative more peer-like relationship started to shine through when personal information was shared by the students. The fact that students were willing to take risks in terms of spelling as explicated in section 6.4.3.1 above is another indication of their level of comfort in the tandem situation.

## **5.5 Evaluation of the Exploratory Study**

### **5.5.1 Suitability of the Protocol**

As the adapted model is not part of any education programme yet, it had to be implemented first in order to generate observable and recordable data. Choosing a small student cohort in a small school has limited the generalisations that can be made. Nevertheless, the follow-up study again only has a small group of participants. This is justifiable in the light of translanguaging research, Indigenous education research and for logistical as well as practical reasons as cited in chapter four.

Apart from its small scale, the exploratory study had two other weaknesses. One area fraught with difficulty has been the positioning of students as language experts. This has meant putting students into the spotlight. As Janet (see part 5.1.3.1/Appendix 27) mentioned, such praise might be perceived as “shaming” them (see Oliver et al., 2013, pp. 236-237). A more indirect way of the positively intended positioning might have to be explored.

Another problematic aspect has appeared in three episodes during the exploratory study where W., D. and R. made reference to what I eventually concluded was an inappropriate or swear word (ll. 202-237, ll. 973-982). When the students kept repeating the word as a recast and got distracted from the entertainment of hearing me use this word, I stopped recording to avoid the session moving further away from its pedagogical purpose. This episode is similar to an experience described by sociologist Les Back (2007) in *The Art of Listening*. Back (2007) has learnt a lesson from one of his informants who “undermines playfully the implicit hierarchy between questioner and respondent” by joking and making inappropriate remarks (p. 19). The researcher “being made to feel a fool” (p. 19) in a sociological setting is still different from an educator in a school setting whose task it is to keep the students engaged in some pedagogically meaningful activity. However, the principle remains the same.

As the researcher and novice in the students’ home language, I quickly realised that the students took this opportunity to have a joke at my expense by making me repeat an inappropriate word. Implicitly, this episode has validated the claim that SET can break down barriers between educators and students. The danger of a tandem session escalating towards inappropriate language is a given in any SET where a mature individual with language authority cannot be referred to. It is comprehensible and natural teenage behaviour. As an outsider and not a regular teacher, I could not apprehend that such distractions might occur with these particular students. I did not know the students prior to the exploratory study and was unable to tap into the sort of information teachers would have through experiences with the students in a classroom setting, e.g. whether these students were likely to engage in some jokes. As an educator, one needs to be mindful of this potential of tandem sessions to veer away from the learning activity. However, as Back (2007) has put it: “True dialogue also means to remain open to the possibility that those involved will refuse to have dialogue or the participants whose integrity researchers so strenuously preserve may subvert the tacit rules of the ethnographic game itself” (p. 19). Even though Back (2007) has written from the

perspective of a sociologist, his remark is valuable in the light of implementing SET. In the exploratory study and the follow-up study, such refusal of students to participate came to light on several occasions and needs to be respected as a valid response to the tandem model on their part. The complete withdrawal from an educational setting, however, cannot be sanctioned due to institutional and legal ramifications pertaining to duty of care. Within the tutoring sessions, students may have opted not to participate in the tandem model. In the exploratory study, this did not occur.

An area worth exploring further is the practicality of creating materials. In terms of resourcing the exploratory study, I have made the following observations: Apart from being a necessity for the implementation of SET, making my own materials had a pedagogical use. I was able to model different ways of learning vocabulary for the students, using visual aids, mind maps and writing. From a learner's perspective, it helped me to identify basic grammatical features of the languages such as the absence of grammatical articles. A co-preparation of materials was partially achieved through the students' appropriation of the mind maps shown in the ways in which they annotated them as shown above in section three. If more tutors had been involved in the exploratory study, a collaborative preparation of materials would have been highly desirable.

## **5.5.2 Suitability of the Methodology Used for Data Analysis**

Another goal of the exploratory study was to show how viable the research protocol was in the light of some unique challenges in Indigenous education involving orality versus literacy and representation of Indigenous versus non-Indigenous knowledge. These challenges derive from the fact that Australian Indigenous languages are oral languages carrying specific cultural knowledge (McCarty & Nicholas, 2012, p. 145). The micro-level discourse analysis of the transcripts has proven to be a suitable methodology for the data analysis as it enabled



me to identify the unique features of SET. The analysis of the transcripts has thus served as a way to evaluate whether SET could be a suitable approach in a pedagogical framework aiming to integrate endangered or minoritised Indigenous languages into urban boarding schools.

SET enables collaborative meaning-making processes using multimodality to address the complexities of Indigenous languages. It provides Indigenous students with an avenue to share linguistic and cultural knowledge within an urban boarding school context where they are exclusively taught by non-Indigenous educators. Co-teaching emerged as the students' chosen mode of lesson delivery. For the educator, the tandem experience means an exposure to previously unacknowledged linguistic processes within the repertoire of the students, such as spelling words they normally only use verbally, providing meaningful feedback and engaging in co-teaching.

How effective has SET been in terms of assisting the students in their academic development? The exploratory study took place as a stand-alone project during the ITAS tutoring sessions in the evening and was not directly connected to ongoing in-class work. I was therefore unable to gather evidence of students' learning or progress during any of their other academic subjects before or after the four weeks of the exploratory study.

However, an evaluation of improved literacy outcomes was embedded in the Yolŋu matha reading tandem in the form of the bilingual worksheet (Appendix 9). In the other sessions, I gathered evidence of students' progress in literacy and communicative skills anecdotally. Students' positive feedback has been evidenced in the recordings through M.'s appreciation of my efforts in his farewell after the first Yolŋu matha reading tandem session when he said: "Good night. God bless you" (l. 2276). Although accuracy was not a focus of the exploratory study, some evaluative comments about learning of SAE on the basis of the present data are possible:

- There was some student uptake of my corrective feedback regarding features of English as evidenced in the excerpts below, mostly during the Yolju matha reading tandem:

“M.: Dhukarrkurruna. That means ‘roa’ {Student teaching vocab HL}  
Christiane: To roll? {FB-clarification request educator}  
M.: Yeah, road, road.  
Christiane: Ah, the road. {FB-recast educator}  
M.: The road.  
Christiane: Ah.” (ll. 1810-1815)

“Christiane: Sitting by themselves. Try and say the S always, M. In English, we have to say the S. Try again. {FB-metalinguistic educator}  
M.: By themselves.” (ll. 2845-2847)

“Christiane: May-be. M. {FB-elicitation educator}  
[M. starts to write in his notebook]  
Christiane: Good. {Reinforcement educator}  
M.: Y? {Student-initiated metalinguistic Eng}  
Christiane: Yes. Excellent. {Reinforcement educator}  
M.: May. {Student-initiated metalinguistic Eng}  
Christiane: Be. {FB-explicit educator}  
M.: Be. Ah, the letter B? {Student-initiated metalinguistic Eng}  
Christiane: Of course. And one more. Be. {Reinforcement educator} {FB-explicit correction educator}  
M.: I, I mean E.” (ll. 2984-2981)

“M.: There. T-H-E, I mean A.  
Christiane: Is it there? {FB-clarification request educator} / M.: There.  
Christiane: Like over there? Or they? {FB-clarification request educator} / M.: Over there.  
Christiane: Okay, so it's E. {FB-metalinguistic educator}  
M.: E-R.  
Christiane: Yes. There. {FB-recast educator}  
M.: There.  
Christiane: And then there's a silent letter. {FB-metalinguistic educator}  
M.: E.  
Christiane: Excellent. Silent E at the end. We cannot hear it. But we have to write it. {Reinforcement educator}  
M.: [reads] There.

Christiane: Fabulous! [X. whistles in the background.] {Reinforcement educator}”  
(ll. 2994-3006)

- SET enabled improved and accelerated relationship building. Four weeks was a very short time of interaction in which students quickly felt comfortable sharing details about their personal circumstances and their cultures.
- SET led to increased motivation. This has been observed in three cases. M. explicitly requested: “I want Yolŋu matha” (l. 2827). M. and Do. also stayed back for 9 minutes after the end of official tutoring time to complete the task of the evening: reading, annotating, translating and extracting key vocabulary from the Yolŋu matha text. During the Kunwinjku reading tandem, D., who had experienced difficulty concentrating on academic homework tasks in all previous sessions, remained focused on decoding and reading.
- In excerpt L, D.’s spontaneous use of Yolŋu matha towards the end of the session has illustrated the promising tendency of SET to legitimise multilingualism in urban, English-dominant learning environments.

## Conclusion

Three strategies experienced teachers in Darwin use when working with Indigenous students have been formalised in the SET format. The first pertains to showing interest in students’ origins, family backgrounds and any acquaintances one might have in common with the students. Secondly, teachers recognised the importance of acknowledging and possibly using students’ home languages for building rapport with them. Finally, the teachers in Darwin have identified the use of culturally relevant materials, extensive scaffolding and if possible, the students’ home languages in EAL instruction have been recognised as having a positive effect on student achievement in literacy work.

The features of SET in evidence through the analysis of exploratory study data pertained to (1) stancetaking; (2) a varied use of feedback techniques; (3) rapport building; and (4) use of multimodality, including students' contributions to materials such as adding translations, spelling adaptations and drawings. The discursive norms emerging in SET seem to facilitate a truly inclusive and mutually enriching learning experience such as witnessed in classrooms where translanguaging was used for teaching and learning (see Collins & Cioè-Peña, 2016, pp. 118-139; García & Li Wei, 2014, pp. 126-130; Ebe & Chapman-Santiago, 2016, pp. 57-82; Seltzer, Collins & Angeles, 2016, pp. 140-159; Palmer et al., 2014, pp. 763-769; Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016, p. 458; Woodley & Brown, 2016, pp. 83-99). A more longitudinal follow-up study conducted over eight weeks presented in the following chapter will further illustrate how a newly-trained non-Indigenous educator can work positively with Indigenous students using SET.

# **Chapter 6: Student-Educator**

## **Interactions in the Follow-up Study**

### **Tandem Sessions**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will look at how the documented features of SET sessions during the exploratory study are represented in the follow-up study. In the first part of this chapter, I will describe the institutional context of the college in Adelaide and introduce the tutor who implemented the follow-up study there. In the second part of this chapter, I will present the findings of the follow-up study through a quantitative overview. In the third part, I will analyse these findings in a qualitative manner based on excerpts from the recorded interactions. The same themes of (1) stancetaking; (2) feedback techniques; (3) rapport building and (4) use of multimodality which have emerged from the exploratory study will structure my reflections in this chapter. These themes cover academic as well as social-emotional aspects of teaching and learning and allow me to answer my research question to what extent Indigenous students and non-Indigenous educators benefit from tandem learning in an urban boarding school.

The difference in linguistic backgrounds between the participants of the exploratory study and the follow-up study has brought an additional aspect to the fore: (5) SET for intercultural learning. The analysis of the chosen excerpts will be complemented by the tutor's own thoughts on the interactions based on our debriefings by phone, e-mail and as recorded in her post-lesson notes (see Appendices 50 & 52). The fact that the participants of the follow-up study are speakers of Aboriginal English merits additional analysis. Some considerations regarding SET in contexts where students speak Aboriginal English instead of an ancestral Indigenous language therefore conclude this chapter.

## 6.1 Context of the Follow-up Study

### 6.1.1 School Context

With a majority of students from suburban Adelaide and more remote towns in South Australia, Indigenous boarding students were a minority at this school. Their often long travel times to their home communities made the separation from families and community life more palpable and had led to difficulties in behaviour for the two students participating in the follow-up study. One of them, T., had been suspended for several weeks before the October holidays due to behavioural difficulties at the school. The SET project presented an avenue for the school to provide these two students with particular support by an individual tutor. The space provided for the sessions was a separate study room.

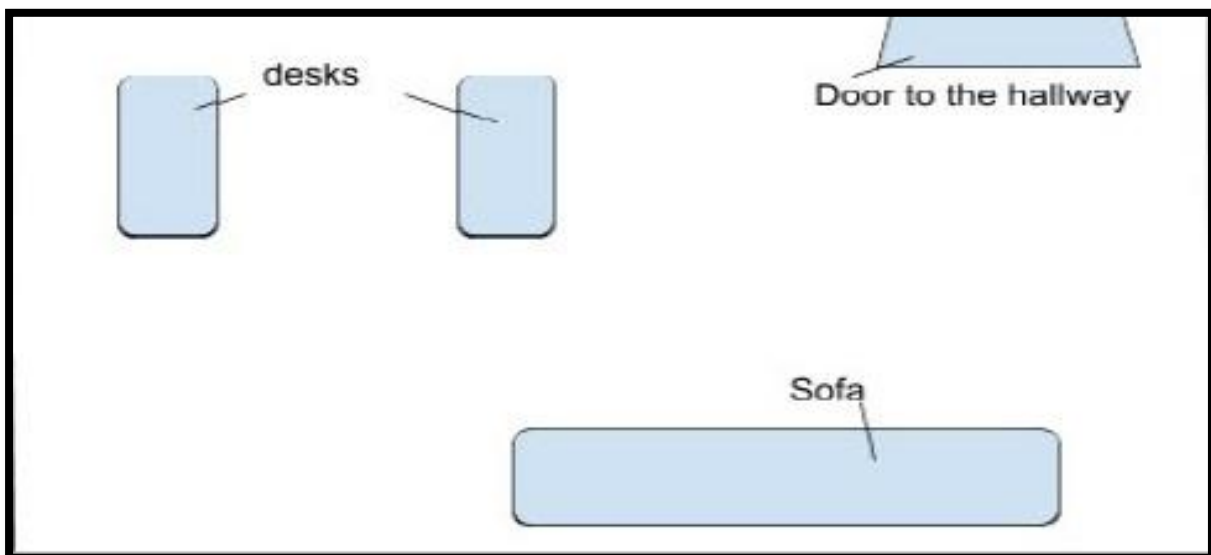


Figure 6.1. Study Room Set-up for the Follow-up Study

### 6.1.2 Tutor's Profile

The re-publishing of the advertisement in August 2019 for a tutor willing to implement SET in the chosen research site enabled the formation of a team between Milica and myself. Milica, who is 23 years old, grew up as the daughter of a refugee family of Serbian background in South Australia. In her family home environment, she spoke a dialect of Serbian and learned English as a Second Language in primary school. At the time of the

study, Milica was enrolled in her final year of a primary teaching degree at Flinders University, South Australia. She had gained experience working in literacy support with primary students in Adelaide during her placements as part of her university course. After graduating, Milica would like to spend some of her time as a teacher in a remote or rural location in Australia working with Indigenous students. Some of her university courses were about the importance of culturally sensitive teaching when working with Indigenous learners. However, Milica has remarked that no practical ways of how to be culturally sensitive in the classroom have been suggested during her courses. This is where she has perceived a gap in her tertiary education and welcomed student-educator tandem as one such strategy.

Complementarity emerged quickly between Milica and myself. As Nancy-Combes (2005) has put it: “Chacun agit en sachant qu’il ne peut pas le faire seul, en s’appuyant sur les talents des autres. [Knowing that one cannot achieve it by oneself, everybody acts in such a way that they are leaning on the talents of the other]” (p. 122). Milica has suggested I use her real name in this dissertation which indicates her level of identification with the proposed teaching and learning model. During our first training session on skype in August 2019, after having read the draft of an article summarising the main findings of the exploratory study (Charon, 2020), Milica shared a few memories from her childhood in Australia which have influenced her perspective on the linguistic and social benefits of SET.

The first example Milica mentioned was an experience of translanguaging. She remembered the significance of seeing one’s home language in a new and foreign environment. When she came to Australia as a primary school student, Milica noticed the Serbian word for *welcome* on a multilingual poster when entering the school in Adelaide. The fact that the school had made its appreciation of multiculturalism visible has had a positive impact on Milica’s view of the school. When retelling the experience, she vividly recalled a sense of happiness: “I saw my language!” (Milica, personal communication, August 20, 2019). Similarly, as a future primary teacher, Milica could envisage herself using the SET model at the start of an academic year to learn how to introduce herself in each language

present in a classroom. As a memory aid for herself and to give visibility to the languages, Milica suggested creating a poster for display in the classroom. The poster would present the different phrases and words learned in her students' home languages. Such a poster would serve as a reminder to alternate for example the ways of greeting each other in the students' various languages at the start of each school day. This would then show how teachers can value each language. During such an activity, the preparation of materials would be done together with the students to ensure maximum collaboration.

The second example is Milica's personal use of dictionaries. As a speaker of what she has referred to as a "Croatian dialect of Serbian", Milica has valued a so-called "dialect conversion dictionary which I am so grateful for" to help her put her dialectal phrases into standard Serbian. When we discussed the availability of dictionaries in some Indigenous Australian languages, I mentioned the online resources which had helped me during the exploratory study. Milica immediately expressed her awareness of what the existence and usage of a dictionary might mean when working with Indigenous students: a proof that a language is "valued" by wider society.

Having lived in Adelaide all her life, Milica's own knowledge of Indigenous languages includes one word in Kaurna, a revitalised language of the Adelaide area, which she pronounced /nakanja/ and translated as *hello*. Milica was keen to expand this knowledge through her work with the students at the residential college. She explicitly said that she hoped that introducing herself in Tiwi<sup>18</sup> for the start of her first session with P., the year 11 student from the Tiwi Islands, would make the students "welcome" her. In terms of working with the students from Daly River, Milica wanted to use the book by Nambatu et al. (2009) to explore if the students recognised any of the Daly region's ancestral languages.

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<sup>18</sup> At this point in the study, we did not know that Milica would only be working with the two students from Daly River.





Figure 6.2. Cover of the Book by Nambatu et al. (2009)

Milica did not want to prepare any additional materials before having done “a pre-assessment”, get access to their school work and ascertain the students’ literacy levels. We therefore decided not to discuss any further ideas until after Milica had met the students.

### **6.1.3 Features of Aboriginal English**

Indigenous students’ language use in the institutional context of a boarding school in South Australia depends on many factors: the presence of other students who share the same home language, the requirements to use English for academic purposes, to socialise with non-Indigenous peers and to interact with staff at the school. To prepare the ground for my analysis of Milica’s work with two students from Daly River who were speakers of Aboriginal English, I include some background information on Aboriginal English. This will help to contextualise

Milica's efforts and challenges when implementing SET in a situation where the students' home language has many similarities with Australian English.

Malcolm (2013) has attempted a definition of Aboriginal English which I have adopted for the purpose of my study: "We cannot do justice to Aboriginal English to identify it either as a variety of Australian English, or as a creole, though it has overlap with both" (p. 277). An overview of features of Aboriginal English according to Malcolm (2013) shows the following significant differences between SAE and Aboriginal English. Some of these features also overlap with informal Australian English. Malcolm's taxonomy does not account for regional adaptations (see Gale, 1997, p. 40).

Grammatical category	Feature	Example
Pronouns	Alternative forms/phrases for dummy it	'It's nice country'
	Generalised 3sg subject pronoun	'e for SAE 'he/she/it'
	Generalised 3sg object pronoun	'im for SAE 'him/her/it'
	Subj. pronoun drop: dummy pronouns	[Was it a big one or a little one?] Big one.
	No gender distinction in 3sg pronoun	'My mother, 'e ....'
	Alternative forms for 2pl pronoun	youse, youfella/s (youse is also used in informal Australian English)
Noun phrases	Plural marking via pre-posed elements	Alla boy for SAE 'the boys'
	Optional plural marking	two sister for SAE 'two sisters'
	Zero definite article	We all went to [the] funeral

Grammatical category	Feature	Example
Tense and aspect	Past tense/anterior marker been	Kitty bin blow dat candle out
	Go-based future markers	E gonna come with us to station
	Present tense for neutral future reference	When Christmas come we're leaving
Verb morphology	Past tense/participle regularisation	catch-catched-catched
	Past tense/participle unmarked forms	give [gave]
	Serial verbs with go	They was goin singing
	Past tense for past participle	when e'd came
	Past participle for past tense	I seen that big one
	Zero past tense for regular verbs	We pick [picked] the bucket up
Negation	Multiple negation/negative concord	They not give us nothing
	Invariant don't for all persons	E don't work no more
	Never as preverbal past tense negator	I never got no pay
	Invariant non-concord tags	He can walk, eh?
Agreement	Zero marking of 3sg verb	He live in that house
	Existential there's with plural subjects	There's hospital dere and hostel
	Variant forms of dummy subject there	E got [there is] some sand there
	Deletion of auxiliary be before progressive	I goin shame for her
	Deletion of auxiliary be before gonna	He gonna eat

Grammatical category	Feature	Example
Adverbial subordination	No subordination	No rain they don't camp in the cave
Adverbs and prepositions	Omission of prepositions	'E stayed mission
	Use of postpositions	cold weather time
	Adverb-forming suffixes -way, -time	longway, northway, darktime
	Degree modifier adverbs have same form as adjectives	They're playing real happily
	Other adverbs have same form as adjectives	I can easy do that
	Too, too much, very, very much as qualifier	Mum she put too much rugs on us
Discourse organisation and word order	No inversion/no auxiliaries in wh-questions	Where you go yesterday? What I'm gonna do now, Aunt?
	No inversion/no auxiliaries in main clause or yes/no questions	You come from Darwin? (This grammatical feature is also part of informal Australian English.)

Table 6.1. Some Features of Aboriginal English According to Malcolm (2013)

## 6.2 Presentation of Quantitative Data From the Follow-up study

Unlike the students who participated in the exploratory study, the two students in the follow-up study did not identify as speakers of any Indigenous language. Their individual communicative choices during the recorded sessions alternated between Aboriginal English, spoken quite fast among themselves, and informal Australian English including some

mitigated forms of Aboriginal English spoken to the tutor, Milica. The students opted for a situational adaptation of their way of communicating as is common for all individuals, not just bilinguals (Grosjean, 2019, p. 8). Aboriginal English as a way of communicating was often unintelligible to Milica and has been equally difficult to transcribe from the recordings. As Verplaetse-Manoïlov (2017) has pointed out, “les transcriptions doivent être considérées comme un matériau secondaire, reflet certainement subjectif” [the transcripts have to be considered as secondary material, certainly a subjective reflection] (p. 182). A quantitative analysis of these transcribed recordings using Word and Excel has yielded the following overview:

	Category	Subcategory	Occurrences
1	Educator-initiated decoding		71
		Educator-initiated decoding Eng	65
		Educator-initiated decoding HL	6
2	Educator-initiated vocab elicitation		199
		Educator-initiated vocab elicitation Eng	194
		Educator-initiated vocab elicitation HL	5
3	Educator-initiated metalinguistic		207
		Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng	197
		Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL	10
4	Student teaching vocab HL		1
5	Student decode Eng		152
		Student decode Eng partial	55
6	Student decode HL		1
		Student decode HL partial	0
7	Student-initiated metalinguistic		24
		Student-initiated metalinguistic Eng	23
		Student-initiated metalinguistic HL	1 (pertains to Serbian)

	Category	Subcategory	Occurrences
8	Translation-verification		0
9	Translation-confirmation		0
10	Student request cultural knowledge		6
11	Educator request cultural knowledge		27
12	Student sharing cultural knowledge		66
13	Educator sharing cultural knowledge		30
14	Educator scribing		141
15	Student MMw		1
16	Student MMv		2
17	Student MMd		1
18	FB-metalinguistic		55
		FB-metalinguistic student	3
		FB-metalinguistic educator	52
19	FB-recast		21
		FB-recast student	5
		FB-recast educator	16
20	FB-clarification request		85
		FB-clarification request student	3
		FB-clarification request educator	82
21	FB-elicitation		38
		FB-elicitation student	0
		FB-elicitation educator	38
22	FB-explicit correction		158
		FB-explicit correction student	4
		FB-explicit correction educator	154

	Category	Subcategory	Occurrences
23	Reinforcement		211
		Reinforcement student	7
		Reinforcement educator	204
24	Student uptake		241

Table 6.2. Overview of Interactional Data From the Follow-up Study

These features were represented in speech turns as follows:

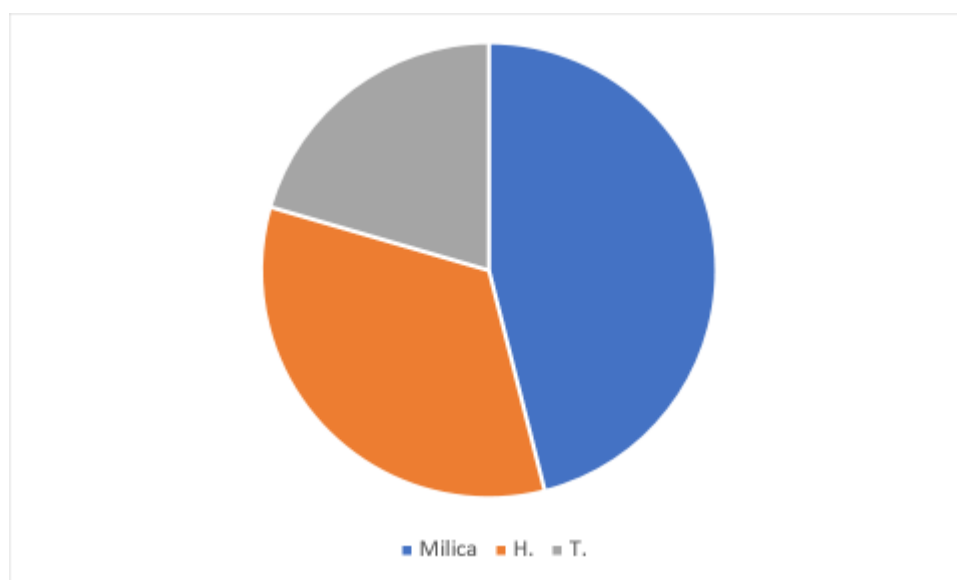


Figure 6.3. Distribution of Speech Turns in the Follow-up Study

In addition to this quantitative representation of results, three sets of examples have been chosen to present salient features of SET actualisations during the follow-up study. In contrast to the excerpts from the exploratory study presented and analysed in chapter six, the examples chosen here are not representative of all sessions recorded during the follow-up study (see Appendices 30-44 for transcripts of all sessions). Due to the format of delivery as part of the ongoing academic tutoring, tandem learning was embedded and not realisable during every recorded session. The fact that Aboriginal English was the students' home language added further complexity to the implementation of student-educator-tandem in the follow-up study. Therefore, the vast majority of the recordings (13 out of 15 sessions) did not contain clear elements of the SET model such as devised in chapters two and three (see

Excerpt A below). The follow-up study shows how SET has not manifested itself as a stand-alone model but rather appeared in moments of reciprocity at various points during the tutoring sessions (see chapter seven, part 7.1). The context of the follow-up study has meant that these exchanges of knowledge and the related gain in learning has not targeted linguistic elements exclusively but has encompassed cultural learning in its broadest sense, including life skills.

The fragments which make up the examples reproduced below are in chronological order to give a sense of how this attitude has developed in the working relationship between Milica and the students, H. and T., throughout the sessions. In keeping with the format of presentation used for the exploratory study data in chapter five, I have first described the chosen sessions before providing excerpts from the transcripts. The variety of teaching and learning actions captured in the coding categories of the exploratory study data (see chapter four, part 4.5) also applies to the data transcribed from the follow-up study. All utterances in Aboriginal English have been represented following Malcolm (2013) who has used the Latin alphabet. Any words from the Daly languages have been transcribed following Green and Nordlinger (2018) who have also used the Roman alphabet (see <http://dalylanguages.org/map.php>). Milica, the tutor, did not want to be anonymised in the dissertation. H. and T. are the students (see Table 4.4. for student profiles) whose names have been anonymised by using their initials.

## **6.3 Qualitative Analysis of Follow-up Study**

### **Data**

#### **6.3.1 Example One: Getting to Know Each Other**

In this example, I will present three excerpts from the first session (Excerpts A and B) and the second session (Excerpt C) to show how SET techniques can be used as a way of



establishing an initial rapport with students. Excerpt A is taken from the start of the first session. T. and H. had just returned to Adelaide from a two-week stay in Daly River during the term break. In this initial session, Milica chose to introduce herself using a photo of her family and a world map showing her country of origin, Serbia (Appendix 45). Additional materials included maps of Australia and the world accessed online through google maps, photos of Daly River (Appendix 46) and the book *Marri Ngarr and Magati Ke plants and animals: Aboriginal knowledge of flora and fauna from the Moyle River and Neninh areas, North Australia* (Nambatu et al., 2009). The total duration of the first session was 42 minutes and 10 seconds.

### **A: Start of the first session**

- 3289 Milica: ... So... so I speak the Serbian language and the English language ... never  
3290 heard of it, huh? That's okay. What, um, what languages do you speak?  
3291 H.: Um ... only this one, Pidgin English.  
3292 Milica: How?  
3293 H.: Pidgin.  
3294 Milica: Cool. So, how would we um, how would you introduce yourself to me? If you  
3295 were to say 'hello my name is T., hello my name is H.'? {Educator-initiated vocab  
elicitation HL}  
[unrelated conversation with the Director of Boarding who introduced himself - 34 seconds]  
3316 Milica: Alright. So... where were we? What was I even saying? [laughs] So, yeah, um  
3317 ... so your languages. So, how would you introduce yourself? If you were to say hello  
3318 for example. {Educator-initiated vocab elicitation HL}  
3319 T.: Yeah.  
3320 Milica: How? {FB-clarification request educator}  
3321 T.: Hello.  
3322 Milica: Hello? Oh, interesting... pretty, pretty similar to English, yeah? What about  
3323 how we say mum and dad? ... {Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL}  
3324 {Educator-initiated vocab elicitation HL}  
3325 T.: Mum.  
3326 Milica: Mum? And dad? {Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL}  
3327 T.: Mum, yeah. Pretty similar language. Mum and dad and stuff, yeah. {FB-explicit  
3328 correction student} {FB-metalinguistic student}  
3329 Milica: Mum and dad is the same? / T.: Yeah. {Reinforcement student}

In the excerpt reproduced above, Milica has made an explicit link between home language and identity when she introduced herself to H. and T. as a speaker of Serbian at the start of the first tuition session. When Milica asked about their home languages, H.'s answer

“Um ... only this one, Pidgin English” revealed hesitation and uncertainty. The fact that H. used “only” might refer to an awareness of language shift in Daly River ([http://dalylanguages.org/overview\\_Typology.php](http://dalylanguages.org/overview_Typology.php)). “Pidgin English” might be the only language accessible to the younger generation in this community. H.’s use of “only” might also be an indication of an existing awareness regarding the status of this way of communicating: Pidgin English as opposed to the standard variety of English valued in academic contexts and wider society in Australia.

Milica followed up with a request for clarification (“M.: How?”, l. 3320) revealing her initial unawareness of this linguistic variety. When H. repeated: “Pidgin”, Milica did not enquire further, but offered the casual comment “Cool” (l. 3294) as an acknowledgement. Milica then moved on to vocabulary elicitation true to the model of SET she was familiar with from her two training sessions. The ensuing exchange has shown that Milica’s attempts at elicitation of vocabulary quickly came to a limit. Milica maintained her attitude of interest and respect through acknowledgement of the similarity between the two linguistic varieties (“Oh, interesting... pretty, pretty similar to English, yeah?”, l. 3322), thus deploying one of many proven motivational strategies (see Dörnyei, 2001, p. 137). With her metalinguistic comment, Milica provided the basis for the metalinguistic reflection offered by T. (“T.: Mum, yeah. Pretty similar language. Mum and dad and stuff, yeah. {FB-explicit correction student} {FB-metalinguistic student}” ll. 3327-3328). The coding of T.’s utterance as ‘explicit correction’ seems to be the closest option in Lyster and Ranta’s (1997) taxonomy. “Mum and dad” are clearly not the terms Milica was expecting and the fact that these SAE words are also used in T.’s understanding of Aboriginal English is a reflection of the limits of the coding categories proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997) for my particular data set.

Milica now had to come to terms with a situation which was distinctly different from what her training sessions prepared her for. She had expected the students to provide her with terms for mum, dad and some phrases of personal introductions. This initial lesson plan with the goal of learning how to introduce herself in H.’s and T.’s home language was not working

out in the way she had planned as her frequent requests for clarification and further confirmation show (“Milica: Mum and dad is the same? / T.: Yeah. {Reinforcement student}” l. 3329). After this brief exploration of the students’ linguistic background, Milica moved on to a discussion of the students’ place of origin. Excerpt B is taken from further along in this first session, 18 minutes into to the first session, when Milica referred to maps of Australia and the world.

**Excerpt B: Mapping the country**

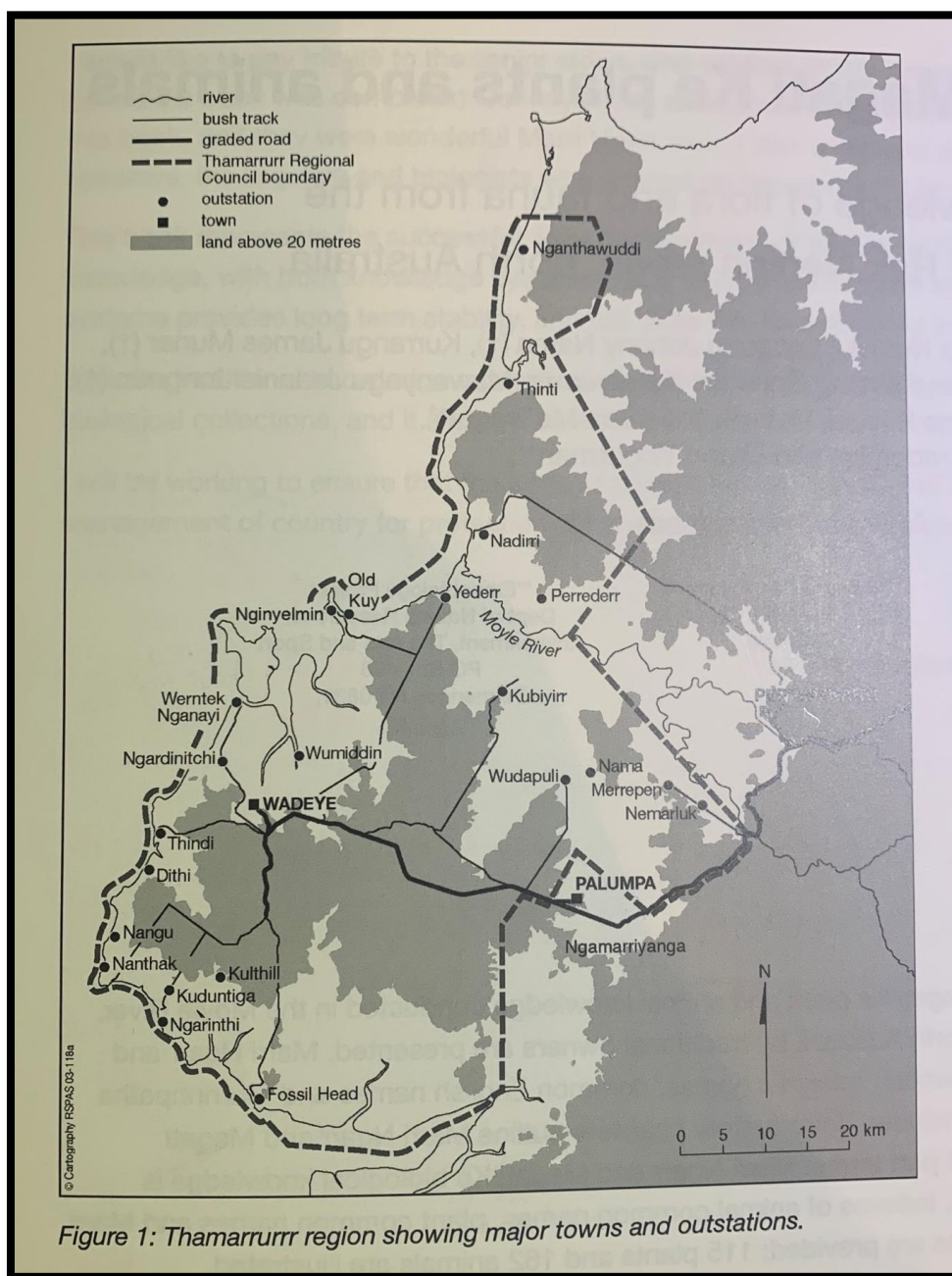


Figure 1: Thamarrurr region showing major towns and outstations.

- 3582 Milica: And where did you say you are? Did you want to circle it for me so I can get it right?
- 3583 T.: Yeah, there. [circles the location of Daly River] {MMd}
- 3584 Milica: Oh, awesome. ... Beautiful. {Reinforcement educator}
- 3585 H.: Northern Territory. {Student decode Eng}
- 3586 Milica: Northern Territory. That's right. So that comes up to about here? Is that right?
- 3587 T.: Yeah. {Reinforcement student}
- 3588 Milica: And then we've got... Am I doing this right?
- 3589 T.: Yeah. {Reinforcement student}

When locating their community on the map, H. and T. were quick to circle the exact place and offer additional information such as “Northern Territory”. They also reinforced Milica’s attempts at demarcating the state and territory borders, taking on an expert stance briefly. Milica placed herself in the position of a learner when asking for the students’ feedback on her map skills. In the following tutoring session, Milica moved on to combine mapping work and ancestral language distribution using the book *Marri Ngarr and Magati Ke plants and animals: Aboriginal knowledge of flora and fauna from the Moyle River and Neninh areas, North Australia* (Nambatu et al., 2009). Excerpt C is taken from the start of this second session which lasted 51 minutes and 1 second in total. To keep this excerpt as coherent as possible with relevance to the analysis, some parts of the exchange have been omitted as they were unrelated to the discussion about ancestral languages of the Daly River region.

### **Excerpt C - Locating languages**

- 4038 Milica: That's the languages they speak in, um, in Daly River? The, the Moo,
- 4039 Moorin? {Educator-initiated decoding HL}
- 4040 H.: Huh? {FB-clarification request student}
- 4041 Milica: Um. The, the language. I forgot how to say it. Um, Moorin...purra? Is that
- 4042 right? {Educator-initiated vocab elicitation HL}
- 4043 T.: Murrinhpatha. {FB-explicit correction student}
- 4044 Milica: How?
- 4045 T.: Murrinhpatha. / H.: Murrinhpatha. {FB-explicit correction student}
- 4046 Milica: Murrinhpatha. Ah, there you go. Yeah, so it's got some of the, um, some of the
- 4047 words written in Murrinhpatha. In, um, in the book. Pretty cool, huh? [laughs]
- ....
- 4056 Milica: Do you know Murrinhpatha?
- 4057 H.: Nah, that's like for East, Keats. ... It's like West where we're from. {Student
- 4058 sharing cultural knowledge}
- ...

4101 Milica: That's one. And then there's another one here. Something M-K. So I got to  
 4102 find. Magati Ke?  
 4103 H.: Hm? {FB-clarification request student}  
 4104 Milica: Magati Ke? That one? {Educator-initiated decoding HL}  
 4105 [H. looks at the book]  
 4106 H.: Nah, I don't know that one.  
 ...  
 4341 Milica: Blind snake. Oh yeah, we looked at that one yesterday.  
 4342 H.: Yeah.  
 4343 Milica: Does it say what it is in Murrinhpatha? {Educator-initiated decoding HL}  
 4344 H.: Nah.  
 4345 Milica: Hm.  
 4346 H.: Murrinh? Oh yeah. {Student decode HL}  
 4347 Milica: Ku kani. I can't say it. {Educator-initiated decoding HL}  
 4348 H.: [laughs] Hold on.  
 4349 Milica: Ku kani. ...  
 4350 H.: I don't know.

In this excerpt, Milica has tried to ascertain the students' awareness of the ancestral languages of the Daly River region. T. could assist Milica with the decoding and pronunciation of one of the major languages in the region, Murrinhpatha ("Milica: Um. The, the language. I forgot how to say it. Um, Moorin...purra? Is that right? T.: Murrinhpatha.", l. 4041), and explain the language's geographical location around the Port Keats<sup>19</sup> area ("Nah, that's like for East, Keats. ... It's like West where we're from.", l. 4057). This expertise did not extend to other ancestral languages in the area ("Milica: Magati Ke? That one? [H. looks at the book] H.: Nah, I don't know that one.", ll. 4105-4106) or to the lexical level in Murrinhpatha as the brief discussion of *blind snake* has illustrated. This vocabulary-related discussion quickly came to an end. The student became distracted and possibly used laughter to mask his discomfort before finally admitting that he did not know the word.

A hesitant attitude towards the ancestral languages also became evident in Excerpt C when Milica asked about languages of the Daly River region. Students corrected Milica's pronunciation of two language names of their region, Murrinhpatha and Marri Ngarr (l. 4045, l. 4095). However, this has remained the only example of this kind in the corpus of the follow-up study. Despite Milica's attempts to engage in a tandem exchange and incite the

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<sup>19</sup> Colloquially, the community of Port Keats or Wadeye is often referred to as Keats.

students to decode some of the heritage language terms in the book, decoding or any form of teaching her vocabulary did not ensue.

A clear connection for H. and T. to their ancestral languages has not been recognisable in the present data set. The two students may well be in a position of language deprivation in a double sense. They cannot revert back to an ancestral language which would provide grounding in a traditional community (see Hinton, 2011, p. 310) and they do not have full access to SAE in a way that can enable a smooth transition from community life to urban life, study and perhaps future employment. Trudgen's (2000) warning about passing Indigenous people off as muted (p. 77) and Back's (2007) description of half-muted individuals who cannot participate in majority discourses (p. 8) come to mind as fitting descriptions of the students' situation (see chapter three, part 3.3.3).

For T. and H., perceiving themselves as language experts has proven difficult. The status of Aboriginal English in wider Australian society (see Malcolm, 2013, p. 277) might have to do with this. The students seemed to be aware of the fact that they are not speakers of an academically or socially acknowledged variety of English. Excerpt A has shown that the students may in fact hold a deficit view of their own linguistic backgrounds using the word "only" to refer to their home language. The word *pidgin* itself has a denotation of inferiority which is mirrored in the eighth session when T. said "Broken English" in reply to the paraphrasing activity question about any other language he might speak (l. 11095). This marked a second instance where the language status entered the tuition sessions. While *Broken English* is not an established term in the same way that Pidgin English or Aboriginal English are, the stigma this variety of English carries is very clear.

In session twelve, the students also demonstrated an awareness of the difference between SAE as opposed to "language", the generic singular referring to any Indigenous language following the colloquial use of this term in the Northern Territory. During a game of hangman, Milica asked H. whether his chosen word was "in one of the languages" (l. 15372), meaning the languages they had discussed in their second session (see Excerpt C). In his

reply, H. used the simplified, generic singular: “it’s not in language, it’s in English” (l. 15373). The use of “language” rather than for example Marri Ngarr or Murrinhpatha implicitly validates the relegation of Indigenous languages to the realm of the other, the foreign. Using “language” instead of a specific, named language excludes the possibility of identification with the language in question. This offers additional insight why the tandem moments in the subsequent tutoring sessions could not centre on language but had more of a focus on culture.

The casual register, illustrated here in the student’s use of *nah* instead of *no* is representative of the entire follow-up study corpus. This is not a specific feature of Aboriginal English, but part of informal English (see <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/nah-meaning/>; <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=nah>). This choice of register is to be expected in the tutoring situation which is a learning space temporarily and physically separate from the regular classroom. Yet, the students still referred to Milica mostly as *Miss* (213 times in total) showing that a certain degree of formality is maintained.

H.’s and T.’s expertise started to shine through on cultural topics. When introducing the activities fishing and hunting with the aid of the book by Nambatu et al. (2009), both students started to contribute to the discussion. Students’ speech turns were more frequent and extended than previously. Presumably, this happened because this was an area of personal interest and they were happy to share their knowledge. A similar increase in the length and frequency of students’ speech turns was observable on two additional occasions. When Milica showed them a picture of Daly River for a description activity in session two, (“H.: Yeah, this is Daly River map. You got Wadeye there. / Milica: Mmm. / H.: There’s Palumpa, another town. Moil. Wait... Which way are we? / T.: Here. Up there. / H.: Ya, Palumpa, Peppi. It would be up here somewhere.” ll. 4084-4087), both students felt encouraged to share details about the area with Milica. H.’s omission of the article in “this is Daly River map” is an example of Aboriginal English used in direct conversation with Milica indicating a certain sense of familiarity and ease. Possibly seeing the map of his home community triggered the

use of this Aboriginal English form. However, this remains one of only a few instances where grammatical features of Aboriginal English became apparent in the sessions when H. or T. were speaking directly to Milica. The fact that H. code-switched is an indication of Aboriginal English being a language, adding to Malcolm's (2013) dilemma of placing Aboriginal English into a schema in linguistic terms (p. 277).

In session eleven (Appendix 40), when Milica brought up the community of Daly River on google maps, T. participated more than in any other session and demonstrated an interest in exact map details. Encouraged by Milica's frequent questions about his personal life circumstances and the town of Daly River, T. wanted to share information about his home ("T.: And then I walk from here to / Milica: So you guys live close / T.: Yeah. I walk from there ... right down like this, through there / Milica: [laughs] / T.: And from there I go to my nana's place, where he stayed.", ll. 14089-14091).

After her initial attempts to replicate the student-educator format of the exploratory study to get to know her tutees in sessions one and two, Milica changed her approach. To harness the students' expertise in the follow-up study, rather than focusing on linguistic aspects, Milica chose to guide the students more towards cultural and location knowledge during the sessions (see Excerpts D, F & G).

### **6.3.2 Example Two: Exchanging Cultural Knowledge**

The first excerpt in this example is taken from the end of the first session. Following the conversation about where they are from, H. and T. started watching a youtube video featuring the landscape around Daly River. Milica watched it with them. Both students offered commentary to explain what was shown in the video.



## D. Edible plants



Figure 6.5. Waterlilies (<https://parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu/discover/culture/bush-food/>)

- 3711 H.: That's waterlily. {Student sharing cultural knowledge}  
3712 Milica: Oh, that's cool. And so what? You take out these green things and you have to  
3713 open it and inside is the white? {Educator request cultural knowledge}  
3714 H.: Yeah.  
3715 Milica: Oh. Next time bring some.  
3716 T.: It's like a peanut. {Student sharing cultural knowledge}  
3717 Milica: Like a peanut? Does it taste like peanut? How big is it? Like that? I assume.  
3718 Or bigger? {Educator request cultural knowledge}  
3719 H.: It's that big. [makes a gesture using both hands] {Student sharing cultural  
knowledge}  
3720 Milica: That's so cool. Amazing. There's um, we have this plant in, in Serbia that like,  
3721 if you, if it touches you, you get really itchy. Um, like it gets red. But you can put it in  
3722 salad and eat it. I'll see if, um, you would probably know what it is. I don't know how  
3723 to say it in English. But it's this [shows them a picture of the plant on her iphone] You  
3724 ever seen that before? {Educator sharing cultural knowledge}  
3725 T.: Yeah. The stinging nettle.  
3726 Milica: Stinging nettle, yeah. That's it.  
3727 T.: We've got some of it at the farm.  
3728 Milica: Do you eat it?  
3729 T.: Nah.  
3730 Milica: Yeah, see we eat it in, in my home country, because it grows there. I've never  
3731 tried it. I've had the tea with it, but I haven't, um, I've got some at home actually. But  
3732 I haven't had it, eaten it in like a salad. {Educator sharing cultural knowledge}

In this example, H. commented on what is shown in the youtube video (l. 3711) and Milica immediately reacted in a positive and encouraging way, showing that she appreciated this information (l. 3712). She asked follow-on questions to confirm that she had understood

the actions shown in the clip (ll. 3712-3713, ll. 3717-3718). The students then volunteered more information about the taste and size of the edible part of the plant (l. 3719). Milica's continuation of the topic then lead to her sharing information about a plant eaten in Serbia, showing linguistic alignment in her omission of the auxiliary: "You ever seen that before?" (l. 3723) which represents an overlap between informal Australian English and Aboriginal English (see Malcolm, 2013, p. 277). Even though she did not provide the name of the plant, a photo helped T. to identify it as a stinging nettle and reconnect it back to the farm at Daly River. This exchange happened early on in the tandem project (session one). It has shown that at times, participants were on equal ground discussing cultural knowledge such as edible plants in a reciprocal way which is mirrored in Milica's informal question ("You ever seen that before?"). The students do not use any grammatically marked forms of Aboriginal English, but use the informal "yeah" instead of *yes* and keep their replies short. Milica is the one presenting herself on level ground with her tutees through her informal linguistic choices as she learns and shares information about edible plants.

That the sharing of cultural knowledge can go both ways is further illustrated in excerpts E and F below. Excerpts E and F are taken from the fourth session. The entire session lasted 56 minutes and 59 seconds. H. and T. did not bring along any homework assignments to be completed. Instead, Milica had asked the students to plan a trip to anywhere in the world with a budget of AUD 10 000. She had chosen this activity as a way to make literacy and numeracy skills relevant to everyday life and connect to something the students might find fun.

### **E. New Year's in Las Vegas**

- 6916 Milica: Hey, you could do New Year's in Las Vegas, that would be cool, right?  
6917 H.: When's New Year's? {Student request cultural knowledge}  
6918 Milica: Um, thirty first of December. The last day of the year. {Educator sharing  
6919 cultural knowledge}  
6920 H.: Oh yeah.

In this brief exchange, H. was planning a trip to Las Vegas and deciding on a date. He became aware of his knowledge gap and asked Milica for help directly. Both H. and Milica remained in their roles of student and educator as Milica informed H. of the date. H.'s "Oh yeah." might imply that he actually knew this, but had forgotten or a simple acknowledgement of this new information. Such cultural knowledge does not necessarily translate to Indigenous seasonal knowledge which has often been represented in seasonal calendars. These calendars contain ecological knowledge about natural events like the monsoon, the build-up to the rainy season, the availability of seasonal food sources and other insights into the natural world (see <https://www.csiro.au/en/Research/Environment/Land-management/Indigenous/Indigenous-calendars/About-the-calendars>).

In the trip planning activity, Queensland was another destination of choice. A specific cultural detail from Milica's home culture naturally occurred in the conversation.

#### **F. A Serbian custom**

- 6856 Milica: Oh, Queensland, that would be cool. I've always wanted to go there. My  
6857 Godsister / H.: Have you been there?  
6858 Milica: Nah, I haven't but I really want to. My Godsister lives there. {Educator  
6859 sharing cultural knowledge}  
6860 H.: Godsister?  
6861 Milica: Yeah.  
6862 H.: Never heard of Godsister before.  
6863 Milica: Yeah, it's like a thing we have in our, in our Serbian customs, we say we're  
6864 cousins, you know. {Educator sharing cultural knowledge}

H.'s question ("Have you been there?", l. 6857) confirmed mutual interest in each other's lives (see Brammerts, 2010, p. 11) and H. implicated Milica in the activity not only as an educator providing additional information but also as a person. Milica took this opportunity to share some personal information which then became a point of cultural interest. H.'s statement "Never heard of Godsister before" (l. 6862) incited Milica to refer to her Serbian background. Milica aligns her expressions ("Nah", l. 6858; "Yeah", l. 6861) with the informal style used by her students. From the casual way H. and Milica approached this

exchange, a certain level of familiarity was evident. This resulted in H. feeling comfortable to ask about a personal cultural detail like the Godsister concept. Given that kinship terms and relationships in Indigenous cultures follow intricate patterns (see Stanner, 1969, p. 38; Stanner, 1979, p. 15, p. 47, pp. 58-60; Street & Molligin, 1983, p. 23), it is not surprising that H. took an interest in this Serbian custom. H.'s choice of an elliptic phrase lacking auxiliary verbs and pronoun ("Never heard of Godsister before", l. 6862) cannot exclusively be linked to Aboriginal English. This way of communicating is representative of the students' general use of informal English as a lingua franca with the tutor.

Excerpt G is taken from session ten where Milica had chosen a video and articles about crocodiles, connecting with the students' interest in fishing and outdoor life. This session lasted 54 minutes and 34 seconds and included paraphrasing activities where Milica asked T. and H. to sum up the main points from the video and write an essay outline based on these notes. After a few minimal answers from H. paraphrasing the content of a video on crocodiles near a popular fishing spot in the Northern Territory, Milica insisted on H. producing a complete sentence that she could then note down for him.

### **G. Crocodile attack**

13012 Milica: Yeah, so give me a sentence. {Reinforcement educator} {Educator-initiated  
13013 metalinguistic Eng}  
13014 H.: So what will happen when they get out of the car ... / Milica: Yeah. / H.: The  
13015 crocodile feel, feel the vibration, they come out of the water, to the skin.  
13016 They can hear screaming and then they'll come up to have a look and see what it is,  
like if the people are straight there like that,  
13017 they attack, they gonna come from every different direction. And then, I think that's  
13018 an easy target for them so they can have a feed. {Student sharing cultural knowledge}

Milica's acceptance of the oral mode was evident in this activity. In this example, Milica first reaffirmed, then encouraged H.'s attempts at paraphrasing in a casual way using "Yeah". She acted as a scribe for the students and did not interfere to correct any features of language that may not be accurate from the point of view of SAE. The omission of the plural -s ("The crocodile feel...", l. 13015) and the auxiliary be ("they gonna come", l. 13017) are

specific features of Aboriginal English (see Malcolm, 2013, p. 273, p. 275). This longer contribution is the only example where H.'s use of Aboriginal English is evidenced in grammatical features. The expression "have a feed" (l. 13018) is informally used in Australian English and not a specific lexical example of Aboriginal English.

Even though the instruction was for H. to produce a sentence based on the video, Milica was happy for H. to continue a longer elaboration on how crocodiles react when people are present in their water territory. H. was in his comfort zone sharing knowledge about crocodile's behaviour and his explanations went beyond the contents of the video. This excerpt has illustrated Kriebitzsch's (2013) observation that "tandem activities offer a protected space in which students are enabled to experiment in the language that is still new to them and also reduce fear of the unknown" (p. 4), thereby increasing feelings of agency and motivation (Kriebitzsch, 2013, p. 7). Accepting the oral mode in Aboriginal English as a way of approaching academic tasks has formed part of Milica's cultural learning. Like many scholars advocating culturally sensitive pedagogies (see Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003; Perso, 2012). Rennie (2013) has specifically recommended "making connections to students' lifeworlds and experiences" (p. 162) for effectively working with Indigenous students in Australia. With regard to tandem, Reymond and Tardieu (2001) have stated that tandem learning is "un extraordinaire outil pour ouvrir l'école sur le monde" [a wonderful tool to open the school to the real world world] (p. 31). In chapter two, I have explicated how the adapted SET model can open urban learning environments to the realities of the bush through the voices of Indigenous students. The information provided on bush food (Excerpt D) and animals (Excerpt G) are examples where Indigenous students brought elements from their lifeworlds into an urban educational setting encouraged by a non-Indigenous educator.

To achieve this and introduce tandem into the institutional urban boarding school context where Indigenous learners and their non-Indigenous educators meet, flexibility and creativity were necessary. Calvert (2010) has stressed that in any tandem learning scenario in school contexts, educators need to be creative enough to adapt the tandem principles so that

the students get the most out of the experience (p. 179). In working with two students whose linguistic backgrounds were different from the exploratory study cohort, Milica had to show such creativity. She devised several strategies following the principle of reciprocity to create opportunities for intercultural learning. An additional layer of cultural learning was afforded by her Serbian background. As an Australian with migrant roots, Milica represents non-Indigenous Australian culture and a facet of this culture at the same time. Milica used her own cultural background to enrich the tandem moments by bringing in Serbian cultural information at opportune times. This spontaneous cultural sharing has illustrated that Milica was authentically interacting with H. and T. When considering Milica's own EAL background, it is arguable that she might have been positioning herself on equal ground with her Indigenous tutees on these occasions.

As a further aspect of tandem learning, Reymond and Tardieu (2001) have explained the benefits of the intercultural tandem exchanges in schools as promoting altruism, tolerance and leaving behind any pre-existing ethnocentric notions in favour of a spirit of discovery and curiosity (pp. 27-28). Such curiosity became evident in the sessions when students asked specific questions such as "When is New Year's?" (l. 6917). Milica was comfortable to share details about the Serbian family tradition of having a Godsister. This specific cultural knowledge expanded the travel planning activity in session three into the realm of cultural discovery. In terms of practical knowledge about living in a "whitefella" world (Hagan, 2008), the trip planning activity was useful as Milica was able to provide information about the purpose of a passport, how to obtain one and the costs associated with this (l. 6925) as well as introduce media literacy in terms of performing searches on sites such as skyscanner and booking.com. While T. knew how to navigate the Qantas website ("T.: Yeah. I'm looking at my flights now. / Milica: Are you on flight? What website are you looking at? T.: Qantas.", ll. 7023-7027), these online searches were new terrain for him ("Milica: Qantas, yeah. You can go on, um, a website called skyscanner or Webjet and you can see all the different companies, so it doesn't have to necessarily be Qantas", ll. 7028-7029). As evidenced by the

examples cited above, the notion of cultural knowledge has been employed in as wide a sense as possible to encompass the panorama of experiences which emerged as topics of discussion between T., H. and Milica. Similarly, multimodality has purposely been conceptualised broadly enough to accommodate its various actualisations in SET.

### **6.3.3 Example Three: Moving from Tandem to Translanguaging Tutoring Using Multimodality**

As stipulated by the college hosting the follow-up study and in line with the intent to place this research project into the service of the participating students as expressed in the methodology (see part 4.1 of this dissertation), Milica assisted H. in the completion of a summative assignment. The two excerpts chosen for illustrative purposes here are both taken from the fifth session. They are representative of the interactions between H. and Milica during all four sessions (see Appendices 33-36) when they worked on H.'s history assignment. The assignment dealt with the topic "Racism against Chinese workers in the gold mines" (see Appendix 47 for history assignment task sheet). Helping H. with a specific assignment meant that Milica could not follow the tandem format at all in these sessions. In excerpt H, Milica offered to act as a scribe to help H. get started on the assignment.

#### **H. Starting the essay: Introducing the dictation-scribing technique**

- 8113 Milica: The essay. Um, have you started that at all?  
8114 H.: Nah.  
8115 Milica: That's okay. Do you, um... are you gonna do it?  
8116 H.: Yeah.  
8117 Milica: Okay. What do you... you reckon you'll write in there? [points to an exercise  
8118 book] Cause even though you don't have your iPad, we can just, um, um, we can take  
some notes and write out like a plan for it?  
8119 So... what do you, what do you know about it so far? If you want, I'll write down  
8120 some notes for you? And you tell me what to write. Do you wanna do that? {Educator  
scribing}  
8121 H.: Yeah.  
8122 [paper rustling]  
8123 Milica: So... what are you gonna call the essay? {Educator-initiated vocab elicitation  
Eng}

- 8124 [6 seconds pause]  
8125 Milica: Maybe just the topic that it is? {Educator-initiated vocab elicitation Eng}  
8126 H.: Yeah.  
8127 Milica: Yeah? So, what? {Educator-initiated vocab elicitation Eng}  
8128 H.: Racism against Chinese gold diggers European.  
8129 Milica: Yeah, awesome. Racism against Chinese, what did you say, sorry?  
8130 Reinforcement educator} {FB-clarification request educator}  
8131 H.: Gold diggers.

Using multimodality has been Milica's chosen approach to validating oral, informal English or Aboriginal English. As I outlined in chapter four, García's (2009) definition of multimodality as "language interaction taking place on different planes ... that is, different modes of language (visual as well as print, sound as well as text, and so on)" (p. 54) has been a useful basis of my analysis. The students-educator tandem model encompasses multimodality through input (through the materials proposed by the tutor) and output (the students' reactions and responses to these materials).

After H.'s hesitant start on the topic, evidenced in his frequent one word replies throughout the excerpt, the multimodal strategy chosen by Milica was to value the oral mode of gaining and communicating knowledge. Milica consistently used the pronoun "we" to emphasise their collaborative way of working in her initial explanation of how they would proceed (l. 8134, l. 8135, l. 8148, l. 8278). However, the onus was on H. to provide the content ("So... what do you, what do you know about it so far?", l. 8119). Milica offered to act as a scribe: "If you want, I'll write down some notes for you? And you tell me what to write. Do you wanna do that?" (ll. 8119-8120), H. immediately accepted this offer. However, the ensuing exchange remained driven by Milica's elicitations of phrases and words to get started. When H. offered a title, Milica used reinforcement to validate his response. Milica asked for clarification in a subtle way (l. 8129) to give H. the chance to add a more precise and accurate word at the end of the title. H.'s initial suggestion *Racism against Chinese gold diggers European* is his rephrasing of the information presented on his history teacher's task sheet (see Appendix 47) minus the preposition. There are two possible interpretations for this



omission. H. could have been using Aboriginal English at this moment. In Aboriginal English, prepositions are often omitted (Malcolm, 2013, p. 276). It is also possible that H. had not fully grasped the topic yet and simply repeated the words he could remember from the task sheet or the discussion in class. Milica had no difficulty understanding the intended meaning that Europeans were racist towards the Chinese gold diggers but asked H. for clarification as she continued her scribing. Throughout this excerpt, Milica used the colloquial register in verb forms (“what are you gonna call the essay?”, l. 8123) and the informal “yeah” (l. 8129), thus aligning her communicative choices with those preferred by her tutees. Further along in the same session, exemplified in excerpt I, Milica and H. focused on adding some details to H.’s arguments in what was to become the body paragraph of the essay.

### **I. Working conditions in the gold mines**

- 8475 Milica: So what did we sorta learn about that? {Educator-initiated vocab elicitation Eng}
- 8476 H.: Uh, hot in summer, cold in winter. {Student uptake}
- 8477 Milica: So how would you describe the working conditions? {Educator-initiated  
8478 vocab elicitation Eng}
- 8479 H.: Uh, in the summer it was freezing for them working and raining. {Student uptake}
- 8480 Milica: So, in general the working conditions were ...? Good? Bad? {FB-elicitation  
educator}
- 8481 H.: Bad for them. {Student uptake}
- 8482 Milica: Pretty bad? Yeah. And then we’ll say why they were bad. So in summer, what  
8483 do you reckon? What was it? {Reinforcement educator} {Educator-initiated vocab  
elicitation Eng}
- 8484 H.: It was hot for them. Sweaty. {Student uptake}
- 8485 Milica: It was hot and sweaty for them. {FB-recast educator} {Educator scribing}
- 8486 H.: Mhm.
- 8487 Milica: Is that it? Do you wanna finish the sentence or keep it going?  
8488 {Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng}
- 8489 [T. hums]
- 8490 H.: Finish it there.

Milica continued to use multimodality as a way to guide H. from spoken to written expression as she asked him to paraphrase the information from the video. Throughout this excerpt, Milica retained informal ways of communicating, the same as in excerpt H (“wanna”; “sorta”). Since this exchange took place a little further into the session, H. had become more

confident and contributed more independent phrases in standard English vocabulary. Grammatically, from the perspective of Standard Australia English, his utterances needed rephrasing when Milica wrote them down as exemplified by her recast (“H.: It was hot for them. Sweaty. / Milica: It was hot and sweaty for them.”, ll. 8484-8485) to which H. only replied: “Mhm.” in an acknowledging way. This minimal response incited Milica to enquire about his syntactic intentions (“Milica: Is that it? Do you wanna finish the sentence or keep it going?”, l. 8487). The metalinguistic moment represented in this brief exchange is exemplary of most discussions surrounding the history assignment.

In session five, it became clear that Milica provided very extensive scaffolding which seemed to be what was required to assist H. with this task. Milica’s speech turns were longer, more elaborate and {Educator-initiated vocab elicitation Eng} occurred as frequently as 199 times in the entire fifth session which lasted 50 minutes. Milica preformulated sentences in SAE which H. then adopted and/or adapted, even if his adaptations were minimal in some cases (“Milica: So, in general the working conditions were ...? Good? Bad? / H.: Bad for them.”, ll. 8480-8481) indicating an emerging appropriation of the words used in the essay planning work.

H. often only replied briefly in the affirmative with a colloquial “yeah” or “yep” to confirm that he understood the basic information and wanted it included in the notes that Milica was scribing for him. Out of a total of 780 of Milica’s speech turns, 54 moves have been coded as {Educator scribing} in sessions five, six and seven. Milica validated H.’s comments and ways of expressing himself in his way by frequently using phrases like “in our own words” (e.g. l. 9322, l. 9750, l. 9822, l. 9875, l. 9949, l. 9964, l. 10320) and “How would you say it?” (l. 9570, l. 9983, l. 10320) and encouraging the conversational style.

Whenever H. struggled, Milica reverted back to the conversational, oral register to prompt H. to continue his reflection (e.g. “How would you just say it to me in conversation?”, ll. 10147-10148). Her continuous use of such explicit elicitation phrases triggered H.’s authentic verbal responses conform to Widdowson’s (2009) observation: “With elicitation,

you will get actually performed language behaviour” (p. 195). Similarly, García and Kleyn (2016) have explained that they start any lesson or unit planning in this way: “we imagine what it would be like to educate and develop students' language performances if we started with the students' own internal language repertoire, rather than from the external definition of the language of school” (p. 45). This is exactly what Milica did in activating the oral expression skills of H. in the history assignment. Starting from verbally expressed ideas gleaned from a video – a choice which again privileged the oral mode over the written mode – H. was able to express his ideas on the given topic in a way he was comfortable with as part of his “internal language repertoire” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 45). Milica had introduced the idea of her writing down the information for her tutees already in various sessions (“Tell me”, l. 4593, l. 8120, l. 15890, / “Do you want me to write it?”, ll. 8145-8146).

The success of the technique was evidenced in the fact that H. stayed engaged in the academic work for most of the time which had not been the case in other sessions or in class. H.'s progress on the history essay stood in contrast to the preconceived ideas that some of the existing staff seemed to harbour about the two students not staying on task or actually “doing any work” (Milica, personal communication, December 1, 2019). One teacher who dropped into the third session actually remarked that he had never “seen him [H.] do work before” and then specified “This is good, I've never seen him doing some work.” (l. 7256). The positive outcome, an essay awarded a grade of C in H.'s schooling history at the college, has shown that this level of scaffolding was necessary to lead H. to the successful completion of an assignment which had been unprecedented in H.'s time at the college (see Appendix 49 for feedback from H.'s teacher).

After sessions one and two of the follow-up study, no more clearly structured tandem exchanges were recorded. Three factors leading to this situation were influential. The first factor was the institutional and methodological expectation to prioritise the students' actual school work and use SET to facilitate this. This is what Milica did in the first two sessions when she tried to elicit lexical knowledge about the Daly River languages. The second

influential factor was related to the students' behaviour. Difficulties in engaging the students in any homework completion were apparent throughout the follow-up study. Students did not often volunteer information about the homework to be completed (e.g. l. 3306, l. 4021, l. 13493). Playing games, watching videos or listening to music on their school ipads were some of the distractions which occurred in every session. Milica intervened 63 times with explicit disciplining reminders with mixed results. In some sessions, especially from session ten onwards, Milica resorted to games like Hangman as a way of engaging the students in a form of literacy work (e.g. l. 13566, l. 13569, l. 14186, l. 14196, l. 14203, l. 14278).

The third, and perhaps most significant factor was Milica's perception of "Pidgin English" or Aboriginal English as a communicative choice, not a variety of English or a named language in itself that she could learn through the SET model. Not pursuing this linguistic aspect of SET meant that she focused her attention on other aspects of Indigenous culture, such as the preference for verbal exchanges rather than written expression. This has been foregrounded in the two excerpts (H and I) in example three. From the point of view of reciprocity, the learning which occurred for Milica was this recognition of the oral mode in the sense of multimodality as a translanguaging strategy. Milica affirmed: "these are all your notes, you know, like, I know I wrote it for you, but you said it, you thought of it", l. 9519). The learning outcomes for H. encompassed lexical and metalinguistic elements as well as strategies of learning how to learn. H. orally contributed vocabulary in SAE and learnt how to use videos as sources of information and note-taking based on guiding questions to tackle a research essay task ("Milica: So we'll, I'll number these questions for you actually, and then we'll write some notes down for them here.", l. 10278). At the end of the sixth session, as a way of eliciting H.'s feedback on her approach, Milica summed up:

- 9670 Milica: So do you, do you think it's easier to do it like this when you have all  
9671 your notes and stuff?  
9672 H.: Yeah.  
9673 Milica: Because this is **all** your work. You know what I mean? We just found  
9674 a, sort of a way to organize all our, all our knowledge and then put it in the  
essay.

Milica's culturally sensitive decision to give ample opportunities for verbal learning was also obvious in her choices of games like the noun-verb-adjective classifying game (see Appendix 32 for complete session transcript and Appendix 46 for materials used) and the paraphrasing activity (see Appendix 37 for complete session transcript and Appendix 48 for task sheet).

From the perspective of reciprocity, it remains difficult to ascertain whether learning was balanced for both parties as intended in tandem. Most definitely, unlike in the SET elaborated in chapter two, linguistic learning was greater for the student in this case. Milica's learning pertained more to her own teaching strategies and cultural insights (see part 6.4.3). Through her work with H., Milica learned to devise alternative ways of approaching the research essay assignment. The history assignment is thus an example of reciprocity because linguistic and academic gain occurred for H. and professional learning occurred for Milica as a teacher specialising in culturally sensitive pedagogies for Indigenous students.

The follow-up study also shows how the original tandem principle of autonomy had to be adapted in the student-educator-tandem model to guided and scaffolded exchanges, initiated and organised by the educator during a fixed time within the school's evening tutoring programme (chapter two, table 2.1.). It is perhaps most appropriate to conceptualise Milica's approach as a SET inspired way of tutoring during which she made use of translanguaging strategies (see chapter seven, part 7.1).

## **6.4 Conclusions Combining Quantitative and Qualitative data**

### **6.4.1 Conclusions on Stancetaking**

Variations of Milica positioning herself as a learner and asking the students to peer-teach on three occasions (l. 4414, l. 6637, l. 8815) and H.'s initiative to peer teach (l. 10764, l. 10773, l. 12708, l. 12710) have shown the range of teaching actions that can emerge when

SET techniques are used. Following the reciprocity principle of tandem learning, Milica cast herself in the role of the student at some points in the study. On a word level, the similarities between SAE and the variety of Aboriginal English spoken in Daly River were obvious as the explications by H. in excerpt A have shown. Throughout the first session, Milica continued to ask for some simple expressions and lexical items to learn for herself, but the words provided by the students remained the same as in SAE:

But um, I wanted to um, I wanted to know a bit about your language, because I like learning about different languages and things like that, but now you're telling me every word I ask is the same [laughs]. So that's okay. So, I'm going to write some of this down actually. (ll. 3535-3538)

The above quotation has shown that Milica was astonished by this, but maintained an interested attitude with her tutees (see l. 3538), strengthening her position as a learner who needed to take notes. In the position of the learner, Milica also asked for reassurance and inviting feedback as exemplified in Excerpt A on a lexical level ("M.: Mum? And dad? ... Mum and dad is the same?", ll. 3326-3329), in excerpt B in the context of geographically locating a place ("M.: Northern Territory. That's right. So that comes up to about here? Is that right? ... Am I doing this right?", ll. 3586-3588) and in excerpt C on a phonetic level ("M.: Um Moorin...purra? Is that right?", l. 4041).

It was mostly in remarks about culture that students confidently offered to share their knowledge (see Excerpts D and G). Session ten provided an isolated example of explicit stancetaking when H. explained the location and natural details of a place in Arnhem Land ("Milica: Alright, well that's what we're going to watch this video. We're gonna learn. H. is obviously an expert so / H.: Yes, I am an expert. / Milica: We're about to master it, too.", ll. 12639-12640). Given that H. was able to elucidate Milica on a place of interest, Cahill's Crossing, it appears like this has provided him with an opportunity to position himself as an expert. Milica's statement aimed at making learning a shared activity ("We're gonna learn", l. 12639) including herself and T. in the learning.

The frequent discipline reminders (63 times during the 15 sessions), along with explicit statements like “I’m responsible for your safety” (ll. 14575-14576), a request to eliminate “swear words” and “slang” from a hangman game (l. 14476) and to use complete sentences (e.g. l. 12689, l. 12758) have reinforced Milica’s position as an educator in charge of learning and behaviour throughout all fifteen sessions. The attitudes H. and T. displayed when they were off task may be considered illustrations of their autonomy. This is not the kind of autonomy known in traditional tandem, but rather the students’ initial choice to participate in the tutoring session and if at all, to what extent to engage in the activities proposed. Not sharing the set homework with Milica in most cases (see e.g. l. 13492) is a way of escaping the social structure set by the school, perhaps even a way of asserting their difference. The deviant behaviours, which on one occasion culminated in truancy, can also be interpreted as a way of showing resistance to the dominant Australian culture represented in the position of the tutor in the conventional school hierarchy.

Another aspect which reaffirmed Milica’s position as educator was her regular use of scaffolding strategies. In the glossary accompanying the Languages framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Foundation to year 10 sequence, scaffolding is defined as:

Support provided to assist the learning process or to complete a learning task. Scaffolded language support involves using the target language at a level slightly beyond learners’ current level of performance, and involves incremental increasing and decreasing of assistance. Task support provides assistance to perform just beyond what learners can currently do unassisted, to progress to being able to do it independently. Scaffolding includes modelling and structuring input in ways that provide additional cues or interactive questioning to activate existing knowledge, probe existing conceptions or cue noticing and reflecting. (<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10->

curriculum/languages/framework-for-aboriginal-languages-and-torres-strait-islander-languages/pdf-documents/).

Milica's scaffolding involved providing guiding questions, offering sentence extensions and linking words, especially during sessions focused on developing literacy in English (see Appendices 38 & 39) and completing written assignments (see Example three). Even though Milica chose a non-authoritarian approach and used chocolates or lollies at the end of some sessions as motivators and rewards, the understanding on the students' side of her role as an academic support person has remained clear. Not only did they address her as "Miss" or "auntie" (e.g. l. 13955, l. 15412), but Milica remained the English expert as shown for instance during session 9 (see Appendix 38) when she assisted in decoding more complex vocabulary or syntactic structures in a fill the gap manner (ll. 11665-12036).

In total, 478 educator-initiated moves were recorded. Out of these, 71 were {Educator-initiated decoding}, out of which 65 pertained to decoding in English and only six to decoding in ancestral languages of the Daly River region. The category of {Educator-initiated vocab elicitation} moves was coded 199 times with a vast majority of moves (194) aiming at eliciting vocabulary in English and only five aiming at vocabulary in the students' home languages or the ancestral languages of the Daly River region. Finally, the most commonly used educator-initiated move was {Educator-initiated metalinguistic} which was recorded 206 times with 197 moves aiming at metalinguistic aspects of English and only nine moves directed at discussing metalinguistic aspects of the students' home languages or ancestral languages.

As underlined by these quantitative observations, all the sessions were educator-dominated with Milica doing most of the talking to move the sessions towards some literacy learning in written or spoken SAE. The asymmetry of the situation was not counterbalanced by a switch as is normally the case in tandem learning. A preference for working collaboratively became apparent on many occasions (e.g. "Milica: Alright, we'll do it together", l. 13757; "Milica: Let's do it together", l. 13761). In the final feedback which



Milica elicited in session fifteen, working together was also perceived as a positive element, even though H.'s answer remained vague: "Milica: ... how did you guys find it, working together and helping you with work and homework and all that? What did you think of it? Honestly? / H.: Oh good, like ... I don't know, yeah", ll. 17593-17595). Despite the necessary disciplinary and pedagogical interventions, Milica felt she had taken on a peer role in some way (see Appendix 52).

In sum, however, interchangeability of roles has not been evidenced in this data set. The clear roles of Milica as the educator and H. and T. as the students remained largely unchanged. The status of SAE as opposed to what the students have called "Pidgin English", as if this label implying inferiority had been accepted by H. and T., might have a lot to do with the irreversibility of roles throughout the follow-up study. I will now turn to feedback techniques as a pertinent area in which stancetaking concretely comes into its own.

## **6.4.2 Feedback Techniques**

Feedback has been linked to students' motivation (see Dörnyei, 2001, pp. 142-143) and therefore is an integral part of the SET model. There were 359 corrective feedback moves overall, only fifteen of these moves came from the students. In line with my analysis of stancetaking in the follow-up study which confirmed Milica's posture as clearly in charge of instructing H. and T., Milica made ample use of corrective feedback to assist her tutees in their literacy development.

However, in not commenting about the code-switching between Standard Australian English and Aboriginal English, Milica followed Palmer et al. (2014) in not maligning codeswitching, but considering it as normal and socially meaningful (p. 759) in the context of the tutoring lessons. Milica has thus welcomed the students' existing literacy/oracy into the classroom (see Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016, p. 465).

### **6.4.2.1 Clarification Requests**

Milica used clarification requests frequently (85 times overall) because she found it difficult to understand her students, especially when they spoke fast. In one debriefing (Milica, personal communication, October 15, 2019), Milica explained that she felt the biggest difference between SAE and what the boys had called “Pidgin English” was on a phonetic level. When H. and Milica started to work on written tasks, the grammatical differences between SAE and the Daly River “Pidgin English” came to the fore even more. This realisation contributed greatly to understanding the writing avoidance Milica, the students’ class teachers and the teachers interviewed during the exploratory study have so often observed (see chapter 5, part 5.1.4.2/Appendix 29). The students used clarification requests only three times. This happened when they were faced with new vocabulary such as “melody” (l. 8304), “inspiration” (l. 11075) and “racist” (l. 7785).

### **6.4.2.2 Explicit Correction**

Across the entire data set, explicit corrections were the most frequently used category of feedback recorded: 156 times in total. During session ten, H. corrected T. on the pronunciation of a river crossing’s name (Cahill’s Crossing), taking on a peer teacher’s position for a brief instant (“H.: Not Charlie’s!”, l. 12708). The students’ explicit corrections pertaining to ancestral Indigenous languages were limited to sessions one and two (see Excerpts A and C). Otherwise, explicit corrections were only used by Milica. This highlights the fact that opportunities in which the students could actually use their knowledge to assist Milica for linguistic items were rare.

### **6.4.2.3 Recast**

Milica provided some reformulation in Standard Australian English to change her tutees’ initial utterance which can be described on a continuum between Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English. This was evident in her scribing activity during the history

essay sessions: “H.: It was hot for them. Sweaty.” (see Excerpt I, l. 8484). Since an isolated adjective cannot stand on its own in written SAE, Milica recast as she scribed: “It was hot and sweaty for them. Recasts were only used 21 times overall, with 16 educator moves coded as recasts. Session twelve contained some instances of recasts as the students used the present tense form *decline* instead of *declined* during the hangman game. Milica did not correct them explicitly, but recast (l. 14442) instead. Regardless, the students continued to use the verb in the Aboriginal English way of the present tense (see Malcolm, 2013, p. 274). H.’s lexical error using *words* when he means *letters* (l. 14890) was also corrected by Milica as a recast (l. 14893) and uptake occurred at this instance. However, H. repeated the same error (l. 14937) 3 minutes and 45 seconds later, showing that uptake was only momentary and did not result in permanent repair.

In session ten, during a homework assignment in Religious Education which consisted in the composition of a prayer, Milica used recast throughout the prayer writing exercise (e.g. l. 13161). For instance, Milica used recast to correct the Aboriginal English omission of the third person -s in the form *tip over* (l. 12884) and then recast with emphasis when H. omitted the plural -s (“relationship/s”, l. 13166).

Pronunciation was the only concern in the five instances in which students used recast, exemplified when Milica read the names of the ancestral languages of the Daly River region in the second session:

- 4278 Milica: It’s um. Oh, I think, it’s that one. Let me just find it... Uh, this one?  
 4279 See here? Magati Ke? Name. And then /marinǰa/. {Educator-initiated decoding HL}  
 4280 H.: /marina/. {FB-recast student}  
 4281 Milica: How do you say it? {Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL}  
 4282 H.: /marina/. {FB-recast student}  
 4283 Milica: /marinǰa/  
 4284 T.: /marina/ {FB-recast student}

#### 6.4.2.4 Reinforcement

Milica was by far the participant using the most reinforcement, confirming her role as educator wanting to create a “positive learning space” (l. 4999) rather than student receiving instruction and feedback. Out of 211 reinforcement moves, 204 were used by Milica. Excerpt B has shown examples of the students using reinforcement like a teacher would. The seven reinforcement moves the students deployed were only possible in the specific tandem situation, identical to the students’ use of recasts (see 6.4.2.3 above). A clear knowledge deficit existed for Milica who was unfamiliar with the named languages of the Daly River region. The students were able to address this knowledge gap through their individual (linguistic) knowledge repertoire and when Milica was successful in her uptake, they responded with reinforcement (e.g. “Milica: /marɪjə/ /marɪjə/ but that’s the M and then the, um, MP was... what was the MP? Murrinhpatha. H.: Oh yeah.”, ll. 4285-4287).

#### 6.4.2.5 Elicitation

Overall, elicitation occurred only 38 times in the data set making it the second least used feedback category. A pertinent example was session eight where Milica used elicitation to model the concept of paraphrasing verbally:

- 8584 Milica: And why is that? They would find more gold than the Europeans  
8585 because ... {FB-elicitation educator}  
8586 H.: Because they were like, they were good gold miners, gold diggers.  
{Student uptake}

Else, Milica used elicitation to incite students to try and spell words in English, for example:

- 4988 Milica: C-E-A-L {FB-elicitation educator}  
4989 H.: C-E-A-L-I-N-G-S

The students did not use elicitation since their range of agency in actual teaching and feedback moves was limited due to the nature of the tutoring sessions.

#### 6.4.2.6 Metalinguistic Moments

Metalinguistic feedback played the third most important role in terms of quantifiable data. Milica used 52 out of the 55 recorded {FB-metalinguistic} moves. In addition to the 207 {Educator-initiated metalinguistic} moves, however, metalinguistic discussion emerged as the most significant element of the tutoring sessions with 259 metalinguistic moments overall. Along with the 141 instances of Milica scribing for the students, which is itself a metalinguistic act where spoken, at times informal English is rendered into written SAE through various degrees of scaffolding. This finding has reconfirmed Milica as the participant in charge of linguistic instruction. In line with Milica's perception of Aboriginal English as a functioning informal way of communicating in English, the vast majority of her metalinguistic initiatives (197) pertained to features of English. Only ten {Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL} moves were recorded.

Examples of metalinguistic moments were varied. In an attempt to reflect back upon some of the SAE errors in H.'s history essay and provide some explicit correction paired with metalinguistic feedback, Milica explained the basic concept of tense in English (l. 13572). She used the "grammatical metalanguage" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 47) of past, present and future tense. Even though H. refused to edit his history essay again to improve on this aspect of English grammar, he acknowledged his understanding of the terminology when he stated: "I get what you mean" (l. 13588).

For any specific spelling work, Milica also gave explicit corrections along with metalinguistic feedback, such as in session ten: "so God's gotta be a capital G for starters." (l. 13059). In another instance, Milica encouraged T. individually to use complete sentences to practice academic expression: "say it all nice on your own" (l. 10807).

During the hangman game in session twelve, Milica's name was one of the chosen words. This prompted a brief exchange on Serbian spelling (l. 15164) as an isolated instance of metalinguistic discussion across languages. This example confirmed the mutual interest in each other's personal and cultural circumstances facilitated by the tandem format.

#### **6.4.2.7 Student Uptake**

The category {Student uptake} was particularly salient for the follow-up study as it allowed me to capture to what extent both, H. and T., showed understanding and learning in their responses to Milica's various initiatives, pertaining to metalinguistic, lexical or decoding moves. 241 instances of student uptake were recorded. Together with the 152 {Student decode Eng} and 55 {Student decode Eng partial} moves, 447 instances in which students responded to Milica's teaching initiatives. Compared to the 478 educator-initiated moves, this presents a balanced exchange in which students successfully engage in the learning activities proposed by the tutor.

#### **6.4.3 Conclusions on Intercultural Learning in SET**

Milica had initially made a few attempts to learn specific vocabulary in the students' home language (see Excerpts A and B). Given the limited results in terms of her being able to learn some simple vocabulary and phrases from H. and T., she did not pursue this linguistic dimension any further in her tuition sessions. This meant that for her own learning, Milica focused more on cultural learning than on the exchange of linguistic skills. Retaining the terminology most prominently used in tandem literature, I have followed Bechtel's (2003) definition of intercultural learning in tandem as "das Ereignis einer kulturell und individuell spezifischen, einmaligen, in dieser Form nicht wiederholbaren Begegnung zweier Tandempartner" [the event of a culturally and individually specific, unique and non-repeatable encounter of two tandem partners] (p. 367).

Conform to Bechtel's (2003) findings, often, everyday living experiences (p. 322) were the basis of exchanges between H., T., and Milica (see Excerpts D and E). As shown in excerpts D and F, without assuming representativity of the information exchanged (Bechtel, 2003, p. 366), the participants in the recorded SET exchanges could take into account regional and local versions of culture (Reymond & Tardieu, 2001, p. 28). Especially at the start of the

tandem work, Milica used questions to tap into the cultural knowledge her students held and were willing to share. Milica had proposed the book *Marri Ngarr and Magati Ke plants and animals: Aboriginal knowledge of flora and fauna from the Moyle River and Neninh areas, North Australia* (Nambatu et al., 2009) in the spirit of providing culturally relevant materials (Ebe & Chapman-Santiago, 2016, p. 60). Prompted by this book, T. and H. explained details about the edible waterlily, hunting episodes, how to light a fire (l. 5976) and further into the sessions, details about the footie rivalry between the neighbouring communities of Peppimenarti and Palumpa (ll. 15471-15475), crocodile behaviour (ll. 13014-13018) and mummies – they recounted the experience of seeing a person “wrapped up” during the flood in Daly River (l. 14286).

To learn more about “whitefella culture”, the students asked Milica about “running writing” (l. 14318), writing commonly referred to as Victorian cursive script in Australia (<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/Pages/handwriting.aspx>). After locating the countries Australia and Serbia on google maps, T. and H. used street view to locate their homes and those of their close family in Daly River to show Milica (“My nana’s place”, l. 14090). Milica continued to show interest in their community life and extended the conversation to specific features of the river (“So can you swim in the river?”, l. 14077) and her tutees community school (l. 14097).

The rich vocabulary used verbally by H. when it came to describing a fish (e.g. “gills”, l. 6392) is evidence of stronger verbal expression skills and more in depth knowledge of animal anatomy (see also Trudgen, 2000, p. 109 for comparable observations in Arnhem Land communities) compared to written expression which is valued by the education system.

Another noteworthy aspect of intercultural learning has been the students’ interest in Milica’s Serbian background. Using maps and online tools such as google earth as resources, reciprocal learning occurred between the students and Milica about countries of origin and their geographical features. Between the first and the eleventh session, H. had retained the name of Milica’s birth country and participated in the brief locating activity (l. 13932), then

learning about the distance and travel time between Serbia and Australia (l. 14168). This sustained interest in each others' cultures was one of the features which emerged in the follow-up study. A total of 96 moments of sharing of cultural information were recorded in this data set. H. and T. contributed 66 of these examples. About 50 percent of these examples were independent, unsolicited contributions, unprecedented by any {Educator request cultural knowledge} moves which were only recorded 27 times. The students clearly felt comfortable as cultural experts sharing chosen aspects of cultural knowledge.

When Milica gave the students a choice between four articles in session nine, the students selected those articles that dealt with culturally relevant topics: a crocodile attack in the Northern Territory and the ban on climbing Uluru (l. 11586 and l. 11643). The other two articles in Milica's selection were about football and the bush fires in New South Wales and Queensland. Football and general news had also come up in conversation as topics that interested the students (see Appendix 51). However, when given a choice, the students preferred the topics of wildlife and sacred sites.

What is commonly known in Indigenous education as "the shame factor" (see Oliver et al., 2013, pp. 236-237) became evident when Milica asked H. about the grade he received for the essay. Instead of saying the grade he got<sup>20</sup>, H. claimed he got a grade F (l. 11312). This understatement was not commented or reflected upon by Milica. As such, the "shame factor" seemed to be an elusive element of intercultural learning for Milica.

To sum up, Edmondson and House (1998) have found, intercultural learning does not occur in a different way from language learning or any other learning (p. 162). It therefore seemed logical to consider intercultural learning as a valid part of the tandem project in its format of SET. Edmondson and House (1998) have also explained that intercultural learning could potentially take place outside the realm of foreign language learning (p. 164), making it easy to consider Milica's pedagogical choices a necessary adaptation of SET with an

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<sup>20</sup> There is a discrepancy of one grade between the grade H. verbally reported to Milica (B+) and the final grade of C confirmed by his history teacher (see Appendix 49). This might have been due to different components being assessed at different times in class alongside the written work, e.g. participation in class discussions.



emphasis on intercultural learning. Milica's use of multimodality is one example of her successful cultural learning.

#### **6.4.4 Conclusions on Multimodality in SET**

Based on a field study in a Tiwi Island community, Rennie (2013) has reminded us that Indigenous children have a variety of reading practices available to them in addition to text-based literacies, such as reading “the environment, the water, the body, dances and various artworks” (p. 161). Therefore, Rennie's recommendations for effective pedagogies have included embracing literacies “beyond print literacy” (p. 165), “learning by watching, participating, listening and talking”, and maintaining high expectations (p. 167; see Dörnyei, 2001, p. 137). Rennie has also warned that educators should not value independent learning over collaborative or shared learning (p. 167). Rennie's evidence-based conclusions require a multimodal understanding of approaching literacy in Indigenous education.

Milica has enacted all of Rennie's recommendations at various moments throughout her tutoring sessions. Early on in the sessions, it became obvious to Milica that her tutees did not feel confident expressing themselves in written form. Milica has acknowledged the writing avoidance as being rooted in a cultural preference for what she has referred to as “yarning/orality” (see Appendix 52: post-lesson notes from October, 29, 2019). In session three, H. openly stated “I don't like writing” (l. 5053). Milica reminded H. and T. that writing was a way to make learning visible and that without the students writing, she could not “see any work being done” (l. 5921). She based her pedagogical choices on the students' preference for the conversational, oral format by including videos as much as possible where students learnt by watching, listening and paraphrasing (“Many Roads: Stories of the Chinese on the Goldfields of Victoria” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXiJpJpJduo>; “Tourists find themselves surrounded by 30 saltwater crocs in the outback” <https://youtu.be/8ojzUCDR6lg>).

The saltwater crocodile episode Milica proposed for a reading and paraphrasing activity is about a famous tourist destination: East Alligator River in Kakadu National Park. One particular river crossing is a well-known spot for crocodile watching. During the monsoonal season, part of the road can be flooded, allowing crocodiles to come close to cars. At one instance, around 30 crocodiles were spotted when a tourist car attempted to cross the river.



Figure 6.6. Tourists at Cahills Crossing, Northern Territory  
(<https://www.news.com.au/travel/australian-holidays/northern-territory/tourists-find-themselves-surrounded-by-30-saltwater-crocs-in-outback/news-story/fb5ec58d61d2684844a58672c16aea94>)

In the video “Many Roads: Stories of the Chinese on the Goldfields of Victoria”, the hardships of Chinese workers in the mines and the racist attitudes of European miners are retold by historians. The video focuses on the 1850s, the height of the Gold Rush in the Australian state of Victoria. Many of the Chinese workers in Victoria at the time were indentured labourers but many also came to Australia freely, lured by the gold. Due to the harsh environment and the difficult entry conditions, solidarity and collaboration developed among the Chinese miners who formed a sort of brotherhood in the face of discrimination.

For the history essay, H. was tasked with researching the “respective experiences of

both the European Colonists and Chinese Migrants upon their arrival to Australia” (see Appendix 47 for assignment task sheet) using the example of racism during the gold rush. Even though Milica acted as a scribe, she maintained high expectations because she only noted down the outline of the essay: the final typing up and editing remained the student’s task: “Milica: Can you think of a point, H.?... Just anything really like whatever, if you just write everything you know down, then when you actually type it up you can organise a bit better if that makes sense? So you can have this like next to you and then you’re typing and you can look and be like ‘oh I’ll talk about that’ and then write it up” (ll. 8141-8144).



Figure 6.7. Chinese Gold Miners in Australia (<https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/immigrants-and-emigrants/many-roads-chinese-on-the-goldfields/>)

In her essay writing support work, Milica delved into the area of multimodality using what she has described as the "talking-transcribing" technique (see Appendix 50, E-mail from 5th of Nov. 2019). To bridge the gap between spoken English with some structures of Aboriginal English and SAE as expected in this history essay, Milica offered to act as a scribe. Milica’s “So how would you put that in a sentence?” (e.g. l. 8346) or “In your own words” – an expression used 15 times overall (e.g. l. 9438, l. 9750, l. 9822) – were {vocab elicitation} moves. These moves encouraged the students to use SAE as it would be written to express their ideas and rephrase what they had stated verbally. This enabled H. to voice his own thoughts without any additional concerns about spelling.

To gather information on the essay topic, Milica also put forth the spoken mode by

giving H. a choice between reading an article or watching a video on this topic. He initially opted for the video which showed again that the audio-oral mode was preferable. Since the focus of the assignment was to aid the students in developing research skills, this option was in line with the academic requirement set by the teacher. When Milica made the offer “We can write both.” (l. 8421), she used the pronoun “we” to indicate a joint effort in written production. Using a variety of modes such as videos, note taking and dictation, Milica assisted H. in completing the essay writing task. Once the task had been completed, Milica explicitly stated: “Yeah, but you know what helps your mind a lot? When you teach somebody else” when she asked H. to explain to T. how they had proceeded to finish the assignment. Here, Milica invited H. to use the oral mode for enhanced learning and gave explicit instructions on learning how to learn.

In session eight, Milica reconnected essay writing strategies with the more general skill of paraphrasing and conducted an entire activity alternating reading and speaking (see Appendix 48 for materials used for the paraphrasing activity). The verbal paraphrasing was clearly a strength for H. who said that he wanted to “start talking” (l. 10713). In session nine, Milica modeled verbally summarising the key points or contents of articles read (ll. 12049-12170).

In order to ensure the “talking-transcribing” technique could be used as a sustained and independent practice by the students, Milica pointed out the Microsoft Word dictation tool. Both students were aware of this option from an application on their tablets (l. 11512). Unfortunately, they did not seem to access this function in their lessons perhaps due to feeling shame. Nevertheless, Milica’s efforts are indicative of an actualisation of a “transformative stance”. This “transformative stance” will eventually enable the students’ full language repertoire, in this case the orality of informal English with elements of Aboriginal English, to transform the existing language hierarchies in the college (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 21).

## 6.4.5 Conclusions on Building Rapport Through SET

Effective rapport building was evidenced throughout the follow-up study. Milica and the students displayed mutual interest in each other's background and lifeworlds. At various points in the follow-up study, the students asked Milica about topics as diverse as university (l. 5345), her future plans (l. 13753), where she lived (l. 10694) and her favourite music (l. 11346). This finding is in accordance with evidence collated from the teacher interviews that were part of the exploratory study (see chapter 5, part 5.1.2; see Appendix 28). In line with Bryan's observations (see chapter five, part 5.1.2), the students in the follow-up study also tried to establish whether they and Milica had any common acquaintances, especially because one of their sisters attended the same university as Milica at the time (l. 5361).

In terms of sharing personal information, H. and T. told Milica about their aspirations of working in mining or engineering (l. 6247, l. 10772). From an emotional point of view, after a truancy incident, H. confessed wanting to restart his life so he could be like a "kid" and "get away with things" (l. 10575). Milica was also able to find a commonality with T.: Both of them are interested in art (l. 3284, l. 9627). Milica learnt about T.'s personal style of painting when he showed her many of his art projects (e.g. ll. 9631-9649). Using indirectness, H. also shared with Milica that T. successfully performed a song during a whole school event. Telling Milica about T.'s performance meant praising T. but not putting the spotlight on him or shaming him (l. 12407) which is a practice congruent with Janet's explanations (see chapter five, part 5.1.3). The culturally sensitive use of this indirectness relates directly to motivational strategies, such as "avoiding face-threatening acts" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 142). It highlights yet again Dörnyei's (2001) conclusion that "the study of motivational strategies is still a largely uncharted terrain in L2 education" (p. 144) and I would add even more so in Indigenous education.

At this point, it remains difficult to ascertain whether this kind of openness in

conversation was due to the smaller group configuration (see chapter two, part 2.4.4/Figure 6.1.), Milica's and the students' personalities, the SET approach or any combination of these factors. However, from observations recorded by Milica about other teachers' experiences working with the two students, it is clear that Milica succeeded in establishing positive relationships with both her tutees in a way that had not been possible for other staff (see Appendix 52, post lesson notes from October 24, 2019).

The same as Darwin-based Science teacher Victoria (see chapter 5.1.3.2), Milica also experienced a form of linguistic alignment early on. Her utterances in excerpt C have illustrated this when she dropped the article ("Milica: Is that, um, Daly River map?", l. 4083) in line with her students' use of grammar in the style of Aboriginal English ("H.: Yeah, this is Daly River map. You got Wadeye there", l. 4084). Throughout the fifteen recorded sessions, Milica used more simplified grammatical forms and slang expressions suggesting a desire to reach more equal and common ground with her tutees. Milica's frequent use of casual verb forms like *wanna* instead of *want to* (304 occurrences in the entire corpus), *gonna* instead of *going to* (268 occurrences in the entire corpus), *gotta* instead of *got to* (73 occurrences in the entire corpus), *tryna* instead of *trying to* (four occurrences in the entire corpus) and the pronoun *youse* (seven occurrences in the entire corpus) to signify the second person plural is evidence for her continuous linguistic alignment with T. and H. *Youse* is a particularly salient example as it presents an overlap between informal Australian English and Aboriginal English (see Malcolm, 2013, p. 273).

Students also used informal grammatical forms, but less than Milica. This can be explained because the students' speech turns were less frequent overall (*wanna*: 46 occurrences; *gonna*: 37 occurrences; *gotta*: 38 occurrences; *tryna*: five occurrences; *youse*: one occurrence). Furthermore, to connect with her tutees, Milica used informal English expressions such as "C'mon, pop your phone away" (l. 14794), "Look at you go, mate" (l. 10418) or "Look at you, you smashed it!" (l. 9856) when referring to H.' completion of a part of his history assignment.

Despite many positive findings indicating a good rapport between Milica and the two students, one incident of truancy occurred in week five of the project. Milica noted: “didn’t have a lesson tonight as the boys didn’t feel like coming” (see post lesson notes from November 11, 2019, Appendix 52). Milica started the next session, session eight, by showing empathy after the truancy situation (“Milica: Feeling better tonight than last night? / T.: Nah. / Milica: Hey? Not really? Did something happen at school?”, ll. 10443-10445). She continued by asking if she could do something differently “Am I the problem?” (l. 10447), showing self-reflectiveness and a willingness to learn from the students and adjust her way of working with them.

From a stancetaking perspective, this truancy incident has confirmed that H. and T. are still firmly positioned as students. Truancy is one of the behaviours within their sphere of agency and an illustration of what Back (2007) has pointed out in his considerations on sociological research: the participant’s right to withdraw from any research project (p. 155). From Milica’s perspective, the tandem learning model did not seem the reason for the students’ refusal to participate in tutoring on this particular occasion. As so often in Indigenous education, it is important to keep in mind the multicausality of what educators often perceive as difficult student behaviour (Disbray, 2014a; Maher, 2012; Oliver et al., 2013, p. 230; Lea, Thompson, McRae-Williams & Wegner, 2011). On a positive note, H. and T. invited Milica to some end of term activities (see Appendix 44) which has shed light on their appreciation of her work with them over the course of the term.

## 6.5 The Educator's Perspective in the Follow-up Study

### 6.5.1 Using SET to get to Know Each Other

#### 6.5.1.1 Findings

Milica started her first session with an introduction of herself using a photo of her family and speaking about her home language. She then asked the students directly about their home languages. Milica admitted apologetically that she was unable to clearly understand her students' response to her initial question due to their pronunciation. Following the model of SET as used in the exploratory study, Milica made an effort to elicit vocabulary in the students' home languages on five occasions. Milica was surprised when her attempts to learn some basic words in her tutees' home languages with the goal of being able to introduce herself in the language resulted in the students telling her that these words were exactly the same as in English (Milica, personal communication, October 15, 2019). To document her own insights and learning, Milica took notes after each tutoring session (see Appendix 52). In these post-lesson notes, Milica typed up the following dot points after the first lesson:

- established interests as being fishing, hunting, football
- I think another 2-3 lessons of just talking and getting to know each other are vital to build rapport and relationship to ensure learning can occur... if I start the unit [see Appendix 53 for unit plan] tomorrow, they won't be focused or engaged so by the time it gets to writing the song (the end of the unit) they won't really know what they are doing?
- I didn't get to incorporate their language much although I really tried – need to brainstorm ways I can do this better because nearly all the words I asked about are the same in English.

During our first debriefing, after having listened to the session recording, I clarified



for Milica that the students called their home language *pidgin English* and that this might be their way of referring to the Daly River variety of Aboriginal English. Milica did not follow up on what exactly the students had identified as their home language, but she noticed the distinctly different pronunciation of words in English which often led to her having to ask for clarification (see table 6.2. for quantitative details). In a debriefing with me on October 18, 2019, after the first three sessions, Milica mentioned that she felt uneasy about having to ask for clarification frequently since this could be seen as offensive and devaluing the students' way of speaking English. Milica was also aware that among themselves, the two students spoke much faster and often in a way that was incomprehensible to her (Milica, personal communication, October 15, 2019).

During a game of hangman in one of the last sessions, Milica suspected that T. might have used another language:

T.: [incomprehensible utterance]

Milica: Alright. ... Did you say something in another language? {FB-clarification request educator]

T.: Mh?

H: Shush, wait!

T.: I said [name of the school]

H.: He said [name of the school], yes it is? (ll. 14348-14353)

However, T. did not clarify this for Milica and stated that he guessed the name of the college was the hangman word in question. This isolated instance remains as elusive to me in transcribing as it did to Milica during the actual session. The question remains open whether the [incomprehensible utterance] was a fast way of speaking Aboriginal English or whether T. indeed knew another language which he simply never told Milica about when she first asked the students. This example is a reminder of Back's (2007) insight that research participants' agency means they can choose to opt out of a study (p. 19). It also confirms the students' opportunity in SET to make an autonomous choice as to which kind of linguistic and/or cultural information is shareable with a non-Indigenous person (see chapter 2, part 2.4.3). The reasons why students might not want educators to know the languages they speak may have to do with wanting to retain a language unintelligible to those in positions of authority around

the school, a secret language which may be used for communicating amongst themselves. The students' agency in this situation is a form of autonomy not taken into account in scholarly work on tandem learning which has to do with logistical differences. SET is used within institutional settings, in the case of the two studies presented here, in boarding schools. Original tandem is more flexible and not necessarily tied into existing institutional language learning patterns as it mainly caters for mature, self-motivated learners (see chapter two, part 2.2). In contrast, in the scenario faced by H., T. and Milica, there is limited progress that could be made with a linguistically focused tandem model, highlighting the potential of (inter)cultural learning instead.

Milica confirmed that the publication *Marri Ngarr and Magati Ke plants and animals: Aboriginal knowledge of flora and fauna from the Moyle River and Neninh areas, North Australia* (Nambatu et al., 2009) was more effective in connecting with the students. Instead of zeroing in on the linguistic aspects of the book, the ancestral vocabulary for plant and animal names, the illustrations prompted both students to talk about their hunting and fishing experiences. Milica felt that these were experiences they could relate to the illustrations in the book. Nevertheless, Milica reported that the first session felt “slow-going” apart from the discussions on hunting and fishing based on the book when the students “came to live a bit more” (Milica, personal communication, October 15, 2019). In the notes Milica took after the second session (see Appendix 52), she documented a positive change:

- boys were much more talkative tonight
- looked at the book [Nambatu et al., 2009] more
- they know about the MP language but don't speak it, although it's more west

In the same entry, Milica also recognised the need to “integrate language” perhaps through a “revitalisation approach”. However, she did not follow up on this idea.

In her last entry “Final Thoughts” in December 2019 Milica wrote:

I realise now it took me the entire term to build this rapport with them. If I had another term to work together, I think we could have achieved a lot of learning goals, but unfortunately the timing didn't allow for that. H.'s work improved significantly, considering he completed three assignments, whereas I think T. began to build the foundation of literacy learning for himself. Ideally, I would have preferred to work 30 mins with each of them individually, one-on-one. This would have been especially helpful for T. who tended to not try as hard because he knew H. would put him down when he got something wrong. H., on the other hand, is dominant and likes to be in control of the lesson – having T. there would often push him to 'show off' and get distracted. Overall I think the term went well, however there is certainly room for improvement in terms of behaviour management, but this is highly dependant on rapport building and getting to know the students.

Milica concluded her reflections on the two last sessions on a similarly positive note: “- they asked me to come back tomorrow just to hang out βshows [*sic*] we have built rapport and they enjoy my company which is really nice.” Her final session with the students was spent playing table tennis, hangman and watching a game of cricket before farewelling them before their flights home for the holidays (see Appendix 52).

### **6.5.1.2 Analysis of Findings**

Milica's own language learning experience as an ESL student in Australia seems to have informed her understanding and appreciation of the SET model. Milica quickly identified three key principles when implementing SET:

- the discrepancy between dialectal usage of a language versus the way the language is represented in dictionaries and other (school) materials (see chapter three, part 3.3.2)
- the significance of having a dictionary available to look up the meaning of words in

one's home language and then in English

- the emotional benefit of seeing one's home language displayed in a school environment (see Candelier, 2008, p. 72; García & Li Wei, 2014, pp. 126-127; Voise, 2018, p. 3)

In terms of assessing how useful the SET approach was when getting to know students, Milica's notes and comments highlighted that her interest in their home community and the use of materials about Daly River provided good opportunities for getting to know each other. Milica also described the format of "just talking and getting to know each other" for a further few lessons as "vital" to build a good rapport, highlighting the verbal mode. She saw this initial rapport building as the foundation for any future academic progress the students could make with her assistance. Since Aboriginal English is a spoken not a written communicative choice, Milica was able to take this on board and adapt her educational style accordingly. As a result, in the second session, a positive change was that "- boys were much more talkative tonight" (Appendix 52).

After my clarification on October 15, 2019 during our first debriefing regarding *pidgin English* and its actualisation as Daly River Aboriginal English, I would have expected Milica to follow this lead. According to the SET model, after establishing what the students' home languages are, the educator needs to search for materials in these languages, in this case Aboriginal English, to plan for subsequent sessions (see chapter 2, part 2.3.2). Despite her awareness of second-language acquisition, her open-mindedness regarding Aboriginal cultures and languages and her familiarity with the SET model, Milica did not think of this on her own accord.

This points to a tendency described by Malcolm (2013) who has identified a common assumption among educators that "Aboriginal English speakers ... are speakers of Australian English" (p. 267). Malcolm has also reminded us of the ongoing debate whether or not to actually classify Aboriginal English as a language, a dialect or a creole (p. 268). Milica

noticed that the two boys' way of communicating was different from the academic norm expected at the school, but she did not view their variety of Aboriginal English as a language per se that could be learned by an outsider to their community like the languages in the exploratory study.

In her post-session notes from session two, Milica realised the need to “integrate language” to stay true to the SET model. She noted that this might be done through a “revitalisation approach”. The recordings of the sessions and her subsequent notes do not show any further exploration of this idea. This suggests that practicability and reunitability of this goal with the students' academic programme (history assignment, geography powerpoint presentation, writing a prayer) were not self-evident for Milica at any point. However, Milica commented that throughout her sessions with the students, she increasingly adapted her way of speaking English to theirs using more “slang” (Milica, personal communication, November 16 2019), thus echoing Victoria's comments as detailed in chapter five, part 5.1.3.2. This self-reflective observation has been supported by the data analysis presented in part 6.4.5.

Milica's considerations on orality versus writing were evidenced in her tentative description of the importance of dictionaries (“I don't know, how can I say it without being like offensive, like valued almost”) during our first training session. Milica was very aware of how easily one might slip into a discourse of judgement or even superiority when comparing written languages such as English to Australian Indigenous languages where writing has been a secondary concern. Privileging the oral mode in conducting her tutoring sessions was Milica's way of recognising, valuing and integrating the students' home languages. Rather than seeking out grammatical or lexical features of Aboriginal English, Milica focused on what she most quickly observed: the students' more positive response to conversational learning compared to written work.

Relating back to the welcoming multilingual word wall of her primary school days in Adelaide, Milica regretted that the school lost the opportunity to use her project to create more visibility of the variety of languages represented by the Indigenous student cohort. By

excluding other Indigenous students, one of whom spoke the traditional Tiwi language (L. 4310), the Director for Wellbeing for Indigenous students had unwittingly dismissed this option. This left the feeling that the college might have taken the project as an opportunity to remove two students who were seen as potentially troublesome and disruptive to the learning of others from the common tutoring programme. Apart from being thanked numerous times for her work with H. and T., Milica did not receive any detailed feedback from the Director for Wellbeing for Indigenous students.

## **6.5.2 The Importance of Knowing Students’ Origins, Family Connections and Identifying Common Acquaintances**

### **6.5.2.1 Findings**

During the training sessions, Milica showed awareness of the importance of using culturally relevant topics, such as talking about family, an important priority in both, Serbian and Indigenous cultures, for building a rapport with students (personal communication, August 20, 2019). While the linguistic avenue had not proven fruitful, the map and the illustrations in the book by Nambatu et al. (2009) opened an avenue to talking about the students’ home community. Milica wrote in her post-lesson notes: “- they perked up when I mentioned Daly river [*sic*] and started showing me photos [on their phones] and explaining parts of the town etc”.

During our debriefings from the second week until the end of the project, Milica commented that she felt more and more like she was being accepted “as a friend or peer” rather than a figure of authority. She was connecting with the students through jokes and “feeling comfortable to be silly”. The aspect of the students being very comfortable with her, joking before and after the actual tutoring session remained as a strong impression as Milica re-emphasised in the debriefing of the final week of the project on December 1, 2019. In the

same debriefing, Milica also laughingly reported that they had called her “auntie”. As a general observation, Milica found that her tutees “react badly to authority and disruptions of the sessions by other teachers coming in and asking whether they are on task” (personal communication, November 1, 2019). Therefore, in addition to constantly encouraging the students, evidenced in the 204 reinforcement moves, Milica also identified another successful strategy: “to give a choice rather than dictating what needs to be done” (personal communication, November 1, 2019).

When Milica proposed culturally relevant texts such as the articles on a crocodile attack and issues surrounding tourism in the Uluru area of Central Australia, the students were willing to tackle texts above their level of comfort in terms of literacy and vocabulary (personal communication, November 16, 2019). During the debriefing after this session, I suggested that Milica explore the topic of sacred sites and English names versus Indigenous language names for sites (such as Uluru which is also referred to as Ayers Rock; Daly River which also has the name Nauiyu) around the Daly River area with the students.

Milica explained that due to disruptions and frequent difficulties engaging the students, she was not able to follow up on many of the ideas we discussed in our debriefings. Once Milica stated explicitly that her difficulties implementing SET were due to “the unpredictable nature of this” (personal communication, October 21, 2019). She was referring to the integration of the project into existing structures and academic projects at the college and an incident of truancy (see Appendix 50). As an alternative to the existing tutoring programme, Milica pointed out the “Nunga room” as a culturally sensitive approach. This is a specific physical space provided by some South Australian schools as a safe place for individual Indigenous students to get either academic or psychological support during the school day (Macgill & Blanch, 2013, p. 145).

It is possible to view SET as a systemic actualisation of the Nunga room. Like a portable Nunga room, SET can be brought to any classroom or tutoring space. However, SET has been developed to give non-Indigenous educators some tools to working more effectively

with their Indigenous students. In contrast, the Nunga room is staffed by Aboriginal Community Education Officers (ACEOs). Macgill and Blanch (2013) have explained: “ACEOs support Indigenous students within an Indigenous community frame inside the contact zone of the school” (p. 145). More specifically, “many ACEOs build on the extended family model of reciprocity in order to develop mutual trust and respect with Indigenous students. ACEOs build and re-enforce relationships with their students in the safe space of the Nunga room” (Macgill & Blanch, 2013, p. 146). Moreover, “ACEOs operate as parents’ in-situ for Indigenous students as their support work in an Indigenous ethics of care model assumes parental responsibilities that go beyond their job description” (ibid., p. 147). While a non-Indigenous person cannot assume such roles, SET aims to equip educators with a linguistic and cultural understanding which can facilitate a similar provision of support for Indigenous students.

### **6.5.2.2 Analysis of Findings**

On an interpersonal level, connecting through jokes and “feeling comfortable to be silly” were essential rapport-building elements Milica had identified and used. Echoing Teresa’s findings (see part 5.1.3.1/Appendix 29), Milica felt her peer-like relationship with H. and T. was key to “getting them to do any academic work at all” (personal communication, November 16, 2019). The term *auntie* is of particular significance. In Indigenous cultures, it is normally used as a term of respect for an elder or family member (<http://www.indigenousteaching.com/glossary-terms>). The students’ spontaneous use of this term has further illustrated a certain level of respect and closeness between themselves and Milica.

Even though the students did not contribute vocabulary from any specific traditional Indigenous language, Milica was still able to benefit in terms of cultural learning. Milica expanded her knowledge of the Daly River region as the students explained about the ancestral languages and where they were located. Milica noted this as new knowledge for



herself during session two (“the MP language ... it’s more west”), using the acronym MP for Murrinhpatha consistent with Nambatu et al. (2009).

As I have explained in chapter two, the current literature on intercultural learning has placed importance on being able to relativise one’s own cultural stance in order to achieve acceptable forms of agency in the target culture (Kleppin 2002, p. 168; Kleppin, 2003, p. 192; Quivy & Tardieu, 2002, p. 36; Steinmüller, 1991, p. 14; Woodin, 2010, pp. 45-46). For Milica, this was the case when she learned that the oral mode of teaching and learning (“yarning”, post-lesson notes from October 29, 2019) was the most effective way to assist her tutees. This practice stood in contrast to her own experience of education in Australia when in her university course, she had to submit written assignments (Milica, personal communication, August 20, 2019). Li Wei (2014) has termed this “co-learning”, defined as a process “where multiple agents try to adapt to one another’s behaviour so as to produce desirable outcomes that would be shared by the contributing agents” (as cited in García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 112). To be effective, co-learning involves “unlearning of cultural conditioning” (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 112). Similarly, positioning spoken and written language as equal contributors in academic learning has allowed Milica to assist H. in the completion of “three assignments”. One of these assignments had the positive outcome that H. “got a B+ for his essay!” (post-lesson notes from November 12, 2019). This was a considerable feat when compared to this student’s previous academic record at the college as reported to Milica in conversation with other staff (personal communication, November 16 & December 1, 2019; post-lesson entry from October 24, see Appendix 52) and explicitly by a teacher who commented: “This is good, I’ve never seen him doing some work.” (l. 7256; see also part 6.3.5).

As an extension of intercultural learning, and as elaborated by Byram et al. (2017) intercultural citizenship “occurs when people who perceive themselves as having different cultural affiliations from one another interact and communicate, and then analyse and reflect on this experience and act on that reflection by engaging in civic or political activity” (Barrett,

2016, p. vii). Even though the explicit engagement in the civic or political arena is not part of the tandem concept, Milica has mentioned that she would like to continue to offer her services to the college even after the end of the project (personal communication, December 9, 2019).

In terms of logistical implementation of SET, it is clear from Milica's comments that her position as an outsider coming into the school for the tuition sessions presented additional challenges. This was the case particularly when students experienced difficulties during the day and refused to attend tuition lessons. Flexibility was a major factor in all phases of the implementation of SET. The necessity to flexibly integrate the project into existing institutional structures such as the after-school boarding tutoring programme at the research site was a primary condition. The tutor's flexible attitude regarding students' behavioural responses to various challenges has also been vital. Such flexibility represents another facet of intercultural learning (see Hagan, 2008). Milica persevered, seeking out ways in which she could make SET work for her specific situation. In doing so, she demonstrated the kind of "creativity" Calvert (2010) has asked of educators to ensure the success of the tandem model for any particular student cohort (p. 179). This creativity also led to Milica's approach combining verbal and written expression to bridge the differences between Aboriginal English and SAE.

## **6.5.3 Using Students' Home Languages to Support SAE Literacy Development**

### **6.5.3.1 Findings**

After her first two weeks implementing SET, Milica stated: "It seems like the boys have to catch up on ten years of schooling". She recognised that therefore, "they would be difficult in class" (personal communication, November 1, 2019). During an initial meeting with the Director for Wellbeing for Indigenous students, Milica had been told that most Indigenous students at the college did not enjoy writing. This writing avoidance came to the

fore in a general refusal to share set homework with Milica. During two debriefings, Milica commented explicitly on her students' writing avoidance ("they just refuse to write", personal communication November 1, 2019), at times in an emphatic way ("T. does not like writing **at all**", personal communication, November 16, 2019). Milica nevertheless maintained that she had high expectations of her tutees to produce some written text, even during paraphrasing games (see Appendix 48 for paraphrasing worksheet).

Milica decided not to insist on homework being shared. She did not want to become a figure of "authority" since she found this approach "would not work". Instead, Milica explained that her way of helping students would be to validate their preference to "verbalise English" as a valid approach for academic work (personal communication, December 1, 2019). During the second session, Milica used a game to introduce and reinforce some basic grammatical terminology (verb, noun and adjective). She observed that the students responded well to the game format. They were able to grasp the grammatical concepts and practise spelling of increasingly complex vocabulary at the same time (Milica, personal communication, October 18, 2019). As a follow-up activity, I suggested Milica integrate heritage language words from *Marri Ngarr and Magati Ke plants and animals: Aboriginal knowledge of flora and fauna from the Moyle River and Neninh areas, North Australia* (Nambatu et al., 2009) into this game. Milica did not manage to do this since a history assignment for H., an essay on racism towards Chinese miners during the Gold Rush, took priority in the following session.

In her essay scaffold, Milica first elicited knowledge about the topic verbally after watching the youtube video "Many Roads: Stories of the Chinese on the Goldfields of Victoria" together (Horrocks & Nemo, 2017). She then wrote down H.'s oral English which was "grammatically questionable" (Milica, personal communication, November 1, 2019). In her post-lesson reflection on October 29, 2019, Milica noted:

- came to a compromise re: [regarding] his essay: he will tell me the content and I'll write the notes out for him

- This allowed me to combine yarning/orality into his learning
- we watched a video about the Chinese gold miners during the gold rush and how they were treated by the Europeans, stopping the video every so often to go over what information we had just gotten
- scaffolded this learning to him and aimed to create a safe, comfortable learning environment where he felt at ease to discuss his knowledge on the topic: i [sic] did this by encouraging him to have a go and consistently reminding him it's okay if you don't know and it's okay if you even get something wrong – these tutoring lessons are where we make mistakes and learn so then you know what to write in your essay
- i [sic] wrote his sentences word for word and will show G. [H.'s history teacher]

This assignment was completed using what Milica had termed the "talking-transcribing technique" which had helped H. write "around 200 words in 15 mins" (Milica, personal communication, November 5, 2019).

I suggested that Milica use this as an opportunity to point out the differences between grammatical features of Standard Australian English and Aboriginal English. Milica immediately pointed out the difficulty H. had experienced distinguishing singular and plural of verb forms (was and were in particular) and tenses (personal communication, November 16, 2019). When Milica followed up on this in the following week, she was only able to touch on the concept of tense briefly. H. refused to look at his essay again because he considered this assignment "done". He was therefore not interested in editing (Milica, personal communication, December 1, 2019). However, the direct feedback Milica received from H. as recorded in her post-lesson notes from December 2, 2019 was: "- H. said he learned about paraphrasing which I was really pleased with because it showed he retained some of the concepts I taught him."

Despite this encouraging feedback, Milica was critical about the group composition. Milica often stated that the boys were distracting each other, especially H. teasing T. about his less advanced academic skills. This discouraged T. from participating in some of the

activities: “- T. isn’t comfortable reading especially around H. who is much more proficient” (see Appendix 52, post-lesson notes from November 14). Later in the same week, Milica wrote: “- H. is very discouraging and calls him dumb etc so I don’t think T. wants to ‘risk’ making a mistake and tends to just say “i [*sic*] don’t know” more often than not”. Milica expressed uncertainty about how to tackle this issue: “- not sure how I could fix this as our lessons are always together... if I could have a one-on-one with them each, it would be so much better for both of them” (post-lesson notes from November 18, 2019). Milica often emphasised that she really appreciated both H.’s and T.’s personalities, however, found it difficult to work with them both together in the same room. Echoing Teresa’s main point about one-on-one instruction (see chapter five, part 5.1.4.1), Milica reiterated this in the last debriefing on December 1, 2019 in the final week of the project.

In the same debriefing, Milica reflected on the school’s choice to have her work exclusively with two students who spoke Aboriginal English and exclude students who spoke their traditional languages such as Tiwi. Milica came to the conclusion that the Director for Wellbeing for Indigenous students might not have known which home languages the students from Daly River spoke. She felt this was “disappointing”, but highlighted the fact that more awareness was needed about the linguistic background of Indigenous students in boarding schools (Milica, personal communication, December 1, 2019).

### **6.5.3.2 Analysis of Findings**

The findings have shown that the absence of a pervasively spoken traditional Indigenous language identified as home language by H. or T. led Milica to work on orality as a mode of communication for academic purposes. Despite my suggestions for follow-up activities using words from *Marri Ngarr and Magati Ke plants and animals: Aboriginal knowledge of flora and fauna from the Moyle River and Neninh areas, North Australia* (Nambatu et al., 2009), Milica did not feel confident to incorporate Murrinhpatha, Marri Ngarr or Magati Ke into her sessions. Milica was more comfortable working on ways of

validating orality as a way of working academically. As a trained primary teacher, this might have been more within her sphere of experience, the same as the constant encouragements and scaffolding she successfully employed when helping H. to complete his assignment. Milica's mention of scaffolding connects with Teresa's observations as detailed in part 5.1.4.2.

These findings indicate, that even with training in the SET model and intermittent monitoring (see Nancy-Combes, 2005, p. 113) throughout its implementation, it might not be a natural choice for every educator to seek out ways of treading on the new terrain of Indigenous languages, especially in a case where the students themselves do not identify as active speakers of such languages. Another reason for ideas and suggestions not being put into practice might have been the fast-changing rhythm of the sessions following our debriefing where H.'s history teacher introduced an assignment that needed to be completed (see Appendix 47 for the actual assignment task sheet).

Milica came into the scenario without any preconceived ideas about the students' ability other than what she had been told by the Director for Wellbeing for Indigenous students, i.e. that the students did not like writing and had comparatively low literacy levels. An exact level of literacy for the two year 9 students would be difficult to ascertain given that the students did not produce written text in class, but spoke English well enough to negotiate their daily life at the college and could decode texts. The fact that the Director for Wellbeing for Indigenous students who was primarily in charge of overseeing H.'s and T.'s progress did not know these students' home languages is an indication of how useful SET techniques might be for anyone working with Indigenous students in any capacity.

Liaising with teachers and pastoral care personnel to optimally support students during tutoring sessions emerged as a desirable condition for SET projects. From the educator's point of view, an open communication channel might have helped to create the more effective situation of working one-on-one with each student to optimise the flow between tuition work and classroom work. A one-on-one approach might have helped to optimise the level of English literacy support possible through the student-educator format of integrating the

students' preferred way of communicating verbally, including elements of Aboriginal English. This seems to be especially relevant in the case of T. who, according to Milica's last reflection, only started to develop basic skills ("began to build the foundation of literacy learning for himself"). However, as outside researchers, we must tread carefully. It is understandable that Milica chose not to impose her views and preferences after only working at the college for a short time.

## **6.6 SET and Aboriginal English: Limitations and New Potential**

In contrast to the students in the exploratory study which has served as a basis for training Milica in the SET model, T. and H. did not identify as speakers of an Indigenous language other than "pidgin English". They used this phrase to designate Aboriginal English as spoken in Daly River. This has placed the follow-up study in the context of issues surrounding educational provisions for speakers of Aboriginal English in Australian schools.

Kerwin and Issum (2013) have reminded us that "Aboriginal English does not readily translate into Standard Australian English" and if educators do not acknowledge this, it could lead to difficulties of Indigenous students at school (p. 11). Similarly, Malcolm (2013) has stated that "Aboriginal English cannot be understood as an informal stylistic variant of Australian English" (p. 272) and therefore, "it would be educationally invalid to assume Australian English, without significant bidialectal support, as an appropriate medium of instruction or learning for speakers of Aboriginal English" (pp. 277-278). Malcolm (2013) has presented morphosyntactic evidence to support the call for specific education support for students speaking Aboriginal English (pp. 277-278). So far, Aboriginal English seems to have been relegated to the realm of an inferior variety of English and left unacknowledged in classrooms. The problem remains: "While there is indeterminacy about the status of Aboriginal English there will be indeterminacy about what educational provision to make for

its speakers” (Malcolm, 2013, p. 277).

The ambiguity surrounding the status of Aboriginal English has made it difficult for Milica to involve H. and T. in language-based tandem exchanges. As evidenced in her written post-lesson reflections and statements during our debriefings, Milica was unsure how to react to her tutees language use. Even though she was aware of their varied communicative adaptations, e.g. speaking faster among themselves in a way that was often incomprehensible to her, Milica did not take this observation to the next level required by SET. She did not independently seek out materials such as the morphosyntactic analysis Malcolm (2013) has provided (pp. 273-277). When Milica did refer to Malcolm’s (2013) comparative list in the very last session, this was because I had shared the article with her. While the article briefly captured the students’ interest, the discussion about it remained anecdotal in nature – it lasted only 47 seconds – and somewhat stilted (ll. 17603-17616).

This highlights the fact that learning Aboriginal English in the same way as other Indigenous languages such as Tiwi, Maung or Iwaidja might not be an intuitive step for practitioners wanting to implement the SET model. By the same token, Aboriginal English might not be seen as a language or way of communicating that students would wish to teach to or share with to an outsider. In the case of H. and T., both students were able to adapt their way of communicating to an approximation of informal Australian most of the time when directly speaking to Milica. This use of English was different from the speed and vocabulary H. and T. used to talk to each other and points to their ability to adapt their way of communicating according the interlocutor and situation as many plurilinguals are able to do (Narcy-Combes et al., 2019, p. 10). A significant reconceptualisation of Aboriginal English and an explicit inclusion in training sessions might be a way to address this. This gap in the present study points to an area deserving further exploration in future research in this field.



## 6.7 Benefits of SET: An Evaluation of the Follow-up Study

In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the sessions, the students responded in minimal terms when asked directly (ll. 17495-1751656). The features of SET which emerged during the follow-up study were:

- The educator's choice of culturally relevant, multimodal materials from the students' home community such as the photos used (see Appendix 46) or the Daly River book (Nambatu et al., 2009) have triggered interest, facilitated conversations and assisted rapport building.
- Interpersonal involvement in the relationship which develops between the educator and the students due to mutual interest in each other's lifeworlds.
- Intercultural learning occurred on a reciprocal basis.
- Cultural learning took the place of language learning for the educator.
- Milica's interest in cultural details and facets of life in Daly River opened up a new communicative space in which students felt comfortable to share more and more about their experiences. T. and H. also became open to completing some academic tasks which they had never achieved before during their time at this boarding school.
- A balance between educator-initiated moves and student uptake indicated the overall success of the educator's literacy activities in terms of added learning for the students.
- Measurable progress in academic outcomes has remained anecdotal, but still significant in the light of the previously non-existing record of any traceable academic work. H. achieved the most academic progress when he received individual scaffolding and academic support during sessions five, six and seven. The visible and measurable evidence of this achievement was a completed history essay for which H. received a grade of C on the scale from A (highest grade) to F (lowest grade).
- H.'s final feedback is significant because he mentioned "paraphrasing" (l. 17602) as a

skill he learnt during the tutoring sessions. Like T., he affirmed that if Milica was to work with them again, she should continue to work in the same manner (l. 17516).

## Conclusion

In the follow-up study, I wanted to provide evidence pertaining to two aspects of the SET model:

- (a) how the specific characteristics of SET for Indigenous languages have been actualised in a new context, implemented by an independent tutor.
- (b) what benefits students and educators may be able to draw from this model of teaching and learning.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data has shown that stancetaking remained a complex area during the follow-up study. Despite various conscious choices to present herself as a learner and peer, Milica remained in the educator role of relative authority throughout the sessions, possibly also for reasons of language status as explained in part 7.4. The use of feedback has confirmed this conclusion.

The two students participating in the follow-up study identified as speakers of Aboriginal English. Milica's interpretation of the tandem format showed a sensitivity regarding the students' preference for verbal task completion, however, did not include any specific attention to or study of features of Aboriginal English. SET thus functioned as a way to enhance intercultural understanding between Indigenous students and a non-Indigenous educator.

Moving between spoken Aboriginal English and written SAE was one of the most salient features of the follow-up study. During her sessions with H. and T., Milica had to employ various multimodal strategies for bridging the gap between spoken and written varieties of English. The occasion on which this type of multimodality was most prominent was H.'s history assignment which Milica and H. worked on over a few sessions (sessions

five, six and seven) with a successful outcome. Whether the SET format alone can account for this measurable academic progress is difficult to ascertain at this stage. Further explorations on the interpretation of the SET model in contexts where the participating students identify as speakers of Aboriginal English are needed.

# **Chapter 7: A Comparative Analysis of the Exploratory Study and the Follow-up Study**

Et pendant que l'on s'arrête sur ces concepts provisoires, ne l'oublions pas, la recherche continue. Ce constat fait que l'on doit être extrêmement modeste concernant ce que l'on a tendance à appeler 'résultats', pour la recherche en Didactique comme pour la recherche en Sciences Humaines en général, vu l'extrême diversité, complexité et variabilité de l'objet. [And while one finalises these provisional concepts, let us not forget that the research continues. This declarative statement means that one needs to be extremely modest concerning what one tends to call results in didactics research as well as in Humanities in general, given the extreme diversity and variability of the research object.] (Vasseur, 2007, p. 30)

## **Introduction**

The different contexts and modalities surrounding the implementation of the SET model in the exploratory and the follow-up study will form the basis of a comparative analysis in this chapter. In concordance with Narcy-Combes (2005, p. 120), this comparative analysis will refine the theoretical framework of SET which I have put forth in chapters two and three. In the first part of this chapter, I will explain the differences in delivery of SET as an enrichment and stand-alone activity (exploratory study) and as a model embedded into after-school tuition sessions (follow-up study). In part two of this chapter, the juxtaposition of quantitative and qualitative findings from the two studies will be centred around the topics of stancetaking, feedback techniques, intercultural learning, multimodality and rapport building.

In part three, I will explore the lessons learnt from the two studies and suggest areas for improvement. I will conclude by examining the hypothesis that students and educators can benefit from using SET techniques on a linguistic, intercultural and social-emotional level.

## 7.1 Differences in Linguistic Backgrounds of Students, School Contexts and Implications for the SET Model

The format of delivery in both studies has been to integrate SET into existing pedagogical support structures for boarding students. In both schools, an after-school tutoring programme was already in place. SET was offered during this tutoring time. However, the different logistical and institutional conditions in the two schools led to distinctly different modes of implementation of the model in the exploratory study conducted in 2016 in Darwin compared to the follow-up study in 2019 in Adelaide. The main differences have been summarised below:

	<b>Exploratory study</b>	<b>Follow-up study</b>
<b>School context</b>	A co-educational Catholic boarding school in Darwin, Northern Territory with approximately 50 % Indigenous students	A Catholic boarding school for boys in Adelaide, South Australia with a low percentage of Indigenous students
<b>Time of implementation</b>	August 2016	October to December 2019
<b>SET implementation</b>	By the researcher/PhD candidate as a stand-alone activity within the ITAS (Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme) programme after school.	By an independent tutor integrated within the after-school tutoring sessions to support ongoing academic work.
<b>Students' year level and age</b>	Year 7, ages 11-13	Year 9, ages 14 and 15

	<b>Exploratory study</b>	<b>Follow-up study</b>
<b>Students' home languages</b>	All four students spoke one or more Indigenous languages as their home language/s	Both students identified as speakers of "Pidgin English"
<b>Students' level of SAE (according to ACARA, 2015, p. 16 &amp; p. 20)</b>	Beginning (students are learning English for the first time, with little or no foundation in continuous, formal education; they can speak one or more languages/dialects other than English, but have little or no experience with print literacy in their first language)	Emerging (students have a growing degree of print literacy and oral language competency with English; students can speak one or more languages/dialects, including basic English, and have a growing knowledge of print literacy in English; they understand and participate in classroom behaviours and school routines)
<b>Materials developed/used</b>	Vocabulary mind maps, posters, dictionary excerpts, online Indigenous language resources, e.g. LAAL	Milica's family poster to introduce herself, a book about the flora and fauna in the Daly River region, ESL worksheets, google maps, youtube videos, news articles.
<b>Actualisation of tandem principles</b>	<p><u>Reciprocity</u>: Tutor helps students with homework and receives language instruction in return.</p> <p><u>Autonomy</u>: Tutor initiates language learning and is in charge of organising the learning process. Within tandem sessions: Students assist the tutor with learning their home languages. Students take teaching initiatives momentarily.</p>	<p><u>Reciprocity</u>: Tutor assists with assignments and proposes literacy activities and receives cultural information in return.</p> <p><u>Autonomy</u>: Tutor attempts to initiate language learning and is in charge of organising the learning process. Within tandem sessions: Students provide minimal linguistic responses but volunteer cultural information.</p>
<b>Feedback sought</b>	Implicit and spontaneous explicit feedback.	Explicit feedback verbally elicited by the educator in the last session of the project.

Table 7.1. Differences in Implementing the Exploratory Study and the Follow-up Study

In terms of logistical and conceptual implementation of the SET model, two areas merit in-depth discussion: the notion of tutoring and the actualisation of tandem principles. Tutoring is to be understood as after-school academic support related to class work, based on the somewhat elusive notion of one-on-one “*accompagnement*” [accompaniment] of a learner on their educational journey with a view to accessing the world of professional work as its final outcome (Paul, 2009, p. 94). In Bruner’s (1966/1974) view, the role of the tutor has been defined as helping the student to learn how to solve a problem autonomously and to correct one’s own mistakes. Gradually, the students will become less and less dependent on the tutor’s help. In order for this independence to occur, the way the tutor corrects a student has to be adapted to the student’s abilities (p. 57). Bruner has also used the notion of tutoring to describe parental accompaniment of a child during language acquisition (pp. 20-21) and has associated tutoring with learning in a community which fosters spontaneous learning and learning from models. This learning community is based on reciprocity or complementarity of its participants, the learners (pp. 122-123).

Tutoring is not an unproblematic concept as revealed by Paul (2009) who has found that: “*Ce qui se dégage, c’est le poids posé sur l’individu en termes d’implication et de responsabilisation, le tout se jouant dans un contexte pragmatique où ce qui compte est ce qui est concrètement évaluable*” [What shows is the weight placed on the individual in terms of implication and responsabilisation, all played out in a pragmatic context where what counts is what is concretely assessable] (p. 102).

This means pushing an individual towards the reality of measurable assessments rather than helping them to become an actor in their own right within the learning scenario. This potentially disadvantageous tendency of tutoring pointed out by Paul is countered by the practice of SET, even if its implementation is only of momentary nature integrated into conventional academic tutoring. What Paul (2009) fears, a more passive role of the tutee (p. 102), is a concern which might emerge from the heavily scaffolded essay writing sessions recorded as part of the follow-up study. However, when Milica asked what H. had retained

from their sessions, he immediately mentioned “paraphrasing” (l. 17602). Due to a lack of data about H.’s further academic development after the tutoring *cum* SET techniques, it is not possible to draw conclusions about the long-term success of Milica’s pedagogical choices because they were based on an assessable outcome, what Paul (2009), has termed: “ce qui est concrètement évaluable”(p. 102): the completed essay.

It is important to note that the ethical expectation of both tutors, myself and Milica, was to use the SET projects to support ongoing academic work within the set times of the respective after-school tutoring programmes. As a former colleague and accepted ESL/literacy specialist, the school in Darwin allowed me to spend time with the students exclusively in the tandem format provided other homework had been dealt with, hence the relatively small corpus. The students in the exploratory study were in year 7 and attended designated English support or ESL classes during their normal school day. Their overall level of English was a lot lower compared to the two year 9 students participating in the follow-up study. For the year 7 students, the homework to be completed consisted mainly in ‘fill-the-gap’ worksheets, spelling or small-scale research activities (see Bible study homework sessions transcript, Appendix 15).



Figure 7.1. SET Model Implemented During Tutoring Programme

Figure 7.1. represents the SET model as implemented in the exploratory study at dedicated times during the tutoring sessions, but clearly set apart from the other tutoring activities. SET thus became a stand-alone literacy enrichment activity which took place once homework assignments had been completed. Reciprocity was ensured since I had helped the students with their homework before they helped me learn some vocabulary in their home languages. The individual SET sessions lasted between a few minutes to half an hour. Most of



the sessions took around 15 minutes where we worked on one specific topic, e.g. family vocabulary or animal vocabulary.

In contrast, the two students in year 9 were expected to complete longer research assignments with assistance (see Appendix 47 for history assignment task sheet). This has meant a different starting point compared to the exploratory study. Four factors led Milica to devise ways of working with the two students that were incongruent with the SET model as developed in the exploratory study. The increased academic workload of students in year 9, their seemingly functional level of conversational English and the absence of a traditional Indigenous home language, combined with our ethical commitment to conduct the study with the benefit of the participating students as a priority meant that Milica only used the originally proposed student-educator format in her first two sessions with the students. The subsequent sessions are better described as a tutoring approach with integrated student-educator moments.

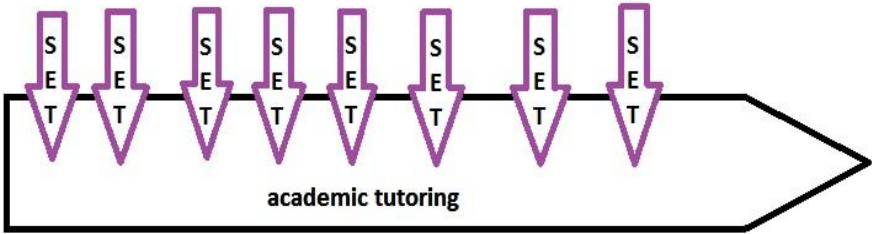


Figure 7.2. SET Moments Integrated Within Tutoring Sessions

Figure 7.2. shows SET as integrated within academic tutoring sessions. The arrows (SET) represent incisions in the ongoing line of tuition activity. They show that academic tutoring can go on while short moments of tandem-inspired interactions take place when opportunities for exchange arise. These tandem moments might not last more than a few seconds or a few minutes and might be viewed as digressions from the academic topics to be dealt with. These tandem moments are defined by reciprocity and mutual interest in a topic discussed which has a real connection to the participants' lifeworlds. In the follow-up study, these moments were mostly related to the participants' places of origin, the natural

surroundings there, some customs and to a lesser extent, to family members. This view of reciprocity is reminiscent of Rogers' (1969/1974) findings that educator characteristics such as "being real" and being interested in one's students as people, thereby meeting them on the same level, person-to-person (pp. 107-108) are beneficial to learning. At the same time, Rogers (1969/1074) has advocated wanting to listen and wanting to be listened to as indispensable components of successful teaching and learning encounters (pp. 214-218). These components are made possible through the mutual interest expressed by educator and students alike in the SET moments described in Figure B and exemplified in the data of the follow-up study. Through her questions about the students' home community, its geographical features and the homes of family members, Milica signalled that she valued the interpersonal nature of their relationship and their communicative style (see Rogers, 1969/1974, p. 229).

Reciprocity was evident in the sessions where Milica and H. worked on the history assignment but it was not as obvious as during the exchanges of the exploratory study. H. and T. were the beneficiaries of linguistic (spelling, note-taking, essay-writing techniques, paraphrasing) help whereas Milica benefitted in terms of intercultural learning. This tendency of exploring other areas in which the principle of reciprocity can bear importance has also been evidenced in a survey of recent studies on tandem practices (see Tardieu & Horgues, 2020b, p. 271). Milica's learning encompassed multimodal ways of validating orality in her teaching practice and the multiple facts students shared with her about the geography, flora, fauna and customs of some regions in Australia's Northern Territory traditionally owned by Indigenous peoples. Reciprocity was further actualised in Milica's adaptation of her way of speaking, moving away from Standard Australian English in favour of more colloquial forms. Aligning with her students' use of informal English, this is another example of reciprocal action in the tutoring sessions.

Due to the students' age and motivational disposition, both modes of implementation relied on the educator for organisational and didactic initiative thereby reducing the principle of autonomy to choices and contributions the students could add within the given frame.

Similarly, in their recent overview of international studies on tandem, Tardieu and Horgues (2020b) have concluded that: “Tandem learner autonomy now appears as an idealised target which in reality is never fully reached as the learning process is most of the time anchored in some educational structure to a greater or lesser degree” (p. 270). However, “the principle of autonomy is not incompatible with institutionalised forms tandem learning” (p. 271).

In sum, it seems useful to consider SET not so much as a model which has to follow the same format in all contexts but rather as a malleable format. SET can take on various forms as required by the circumstances. In the exploratory study, SET took the form of set sessions where languages were learnt and taught. In the follow-up study, the tandem moments were an approximation of this form, best described perhaps as an attitude of respectful interest which broke down the asymmetry inherent in student-educator relationships at least momentarily. This SET attitude can allow for mutually instructive exchanges in any institutional context that brings Indigenous students and non-Indigenous educators together. Therefore, this attitude can be integrated in any form of teaching and learning encounters, classrooms or after-school tutoring settings (see chapter eight, part 8.1). As Tardieu and Horgues (2020b) have concluded: “Ultimately, the choice of the most appropriate tandem partnership depends heavily on the learner’s profile, objectives as well as the learning context” (p. 275).

## **7.2 A Comparison Between the Features of SET in the Exploratory Study and the Follow-up Study**

The differences in context account for the marked quantitative discrepancies between the features of SET as deployed in the exploratory study versus the follow-up study:

	Category	Subcategory	Occurrences in the exploratory study	Occurrences in the follow-up study
1	Educator-initiated decoding		133	69
		Educator-initiated decoding Eng	17	65
		Educator-initiated decoding HL	116	4
2	Educator-initiated vocab elicitation		20	199
		Educator-initiated vocab elicitation Eng	1	194
		Educator-initiated vocab elicitation HL	19	5
3	Educator-initiated metalinguistic		105	206
		Educator-initiated metalinguistic Eng	37	197
		Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL	68	9
4	Student teaching vocab HL		97	1
5	Student decode Eng		24	152
		Student decode Eng partial	2	55
6	Student decode HL		87	1
		Student decode HL partial	17	0
7	Student-initiated metalinguistic		30	24
		Student-initiated metalinguistic Eng	22	23
		Student-initiated metalinguistic HL	8	1

	Category	Subcategory	Occurrences in the exploratory study	Occurrences in the follow-up study
8	Translation-verification		33	0
		Translation-verification student	4	0
		Translation-verification educator	29	0
9	Translation-confirmation		39	0
		Translation-confirmation student	33	0
		Translation-confirmation educator	6	0
10	Student request cultural knowledge		0	6
11	Educator request cultural knowledge		4	27
12	Student sharing cultural knowledge		29	66
13	Educator sharing cultural knowledge		4	30
14	Educator scribing		2	141
15	Student MMw		33	1
16	Student MMv		0	2
17	Student MMd		3	1
18	FB-metalinguistic		41	55
		FB-metalinguistic student	23	3
		FB-metalinguistic educator	18	52
19	FB-recast		61	21
		FB-recast student	47	5
		FB-recast educator	14	16

	Category	Subcategory	Occurrences in the exploratory study	Occurrences in the follow-up study
20	FB-clarification request		36	85
		FB-clarification request student	18	3
		FB-clarification request educator	18	82
21	FB-elicitation		20	38
		FB-elicitation student	4	0
		FB-elicitation educator	16	38
22	FB-explicit correction		56	155
		FB-explicit correction student	27	1
		FB-explicit correction educator	29	154
23	Reinforcement		151	209
		Reinforcement student	71	5
		Reinforcement educator	80	204
24	Student uptake		17	240

Table 7.2. Quantitative Comparison of Moves

I will now examine this quantitative comparison in the light of the SET features which have guided my analyses for the two individual studies in chapters five and six: stancetaking, feedback techniques, intercultural learning, multimodality and rapport-building.

## 7.2.1 Stancetaking

In both studies, students and educators took on instructing and learning postures flexibly as required by the respective interactional context. Conform to the SET model presented in chapter two, both educators remained in charge of orchestrating the actual

learning, demonstrated in the much higher number of turns and educator-initiated moves overall. With more mature students attending higher year levels, it is thinkable that some of this responsibility may shift over to the students' side.

For the students, the concept of perceiving themselves as experts in their home languages was not an easy step to take in either study. However, due to their linguistic backgrounds, it was a more realistic possibility for the students in the exploratory study. There was a marked difference between H.'s choice of words when talking about his home language at the beginning of the follow-up study ("Pidgin", l. 3291) and the students in the exploratory study who readily identified themselves as speakers of Iwaidja, Maung, Kunwinjku, the Yolŋu matha variety Gupapuyŋu or a combination of these languages. The students in the exploratory study used the possessive "my language" (l. 434, l. 2688, l. 2730, l. 2786) comfortably (four times overall).

One feature of SET identified during the exploratory study sessions was a preference for working with a peer. In contrast, the grouping of the two students together in the follow-up study was not a choice but a decision made by the school. For H. and T. working cooperatively was difficult. Only isolated instances of peer teaching initiatives by one of the students, H., were recorded (l. 10764, l. 10773, l. 12708, l. 12710). Students using explicit teacher talk such as recorded in some instances in the exploratory study data (see chapter five, Excerpt G) has not been observed in the follow-up study data. Only once, in session ten, H. openly stated "I should be teaching" (l. 12731) and H. filled in the gap for T. (l. 12775). In the entire follow-up study corpus, these instances remained more of an illustration of this particular students' personality rather than a clear feature of the tutoring model used.

In terms of the educators' postures, a high degree of variance of assuming the learner's role has become evident. To ensure the students' academic progress, Milica concentrated on the academic task at hand. Milica proposed a document on features of Aboriginal English (Malcolm, 2013) to her students only in the very last session at the end of the term and school year, at my specific instigation. This was one of 18 explicit attempts Milica made to acquire

some knowledge of her students' way of communicating. In the exploratory study, 203 educator-initiated moves pertained to the students' home languages. The most obvious explanation for this discrepancy, as elaborated in chapter six (see part 6.5.1), is Milica's view of Aboriginal English as a variety of English and not a language she could learn. Furthermore, the idea of prioritising H.'s and T.'s academic progress under often challenging behavioural circumstances meant that Milica might have placed her own language learning on a lower position in her list of priorities. A difference in educator personalities may also account for the different pedagogical choices in positioning oneself. It is likely that the two training sessions might have been insufficient in enabling a newly trained teacher to implement a model like SET in a setting where Aboriginal English replaced the Indigenous languages present in the exploratory study.

## **7.2.2 Feedback Techniques**

Stancetaking and one's ability to give feedback are intertwined. The quantitative results in both studies show that feedback was used in very different ways. As the observations on stancetaking suggest, Milica's role as a tutor meant she used feedback more frequently than I did in the exploratory study where I also received varied feedback from students on the materials I proposed, my decoding and my pronunciation of their home languages. The focus on academic development and specifically the development of H.'s and T.'s academic expression in English meant that there was a paucity of tandem moments. The students had little opportunity to provide Milica with corrective feedback and no translation moves were recorded in the exchanges.

## **7.2.3 Intercultural Learning**

Kleppin (2003) has pointed out the need for reciprocal questions in order to fully harness the intercultural learning potential of tandem (p. 190). In both, the exploratory study



and the follow-up study, educators and students asked each other varied questions about their lifeworlds. While sharing of cultural knowledge was a by-product of the linguistic sessions of the exploratory study with only 29 instances recorded, inter-cultural learning seemed to take the place of language exchange in the follow-up study. Students shared 66 items of cultural knowledge with Milica. Cultural awareness increased even though a language exchange in the way the exploratory study had indicated did not happen because Milica did not learn specific vocabulary items or grammatical structures in the home language of her students. This meant that cultural learning took the place of linguistic learning. In this form, SET is conceptually related to Peace Tandem or *Interkultur Tandem* (Dialog/Peace-Tandem, 2019) described as a tandem practice in which “es wird nicht 'Sprache gegen Sprache' getauscht, sondern 'Sprache gegen Kultur'. Sie kann also auch in Gebieten oder Situationen eingesetzt werden, wo das 'echte' Sprachtandem nicht möglich ist, beispielsweise zwischen Flüchtlingen und Einheimischen.” [there is no exchange in the form ‘language for language’, but ‘language for culture’. This form of tandem can also be used in areas or situations where the ‘real tandem’ is not possible, for example between refugees and locals] (Dialog/Peace-Tandem, 2019, p. 145). While open conflict is not an obvious issue in the recorded interactions, the intercultural significance of SET is evident from a postcolonial angle as explicated in chapter three (see part 3.1). SET in its intercultural dimension can help avoid neo-colonialist tendencies, attitudes and practices.

## **7.2.4 Multimodality**

Multimodality was an important feature in both studies. In the exploratory study, multimodal elements were represented as input, through the proposed materials (vocabulary mind-maps based on photographs or drawings, dictionary extracts, texts in Yolŋu matha and Kunwinjku) and as output in the students’ reactions to these materials (decoding, reading, annotating words with translations, proposing alternative spellings, rectifying spellings,

adding new words and drawings.

In contrast to the exploratory study, multimodal choices in the follow-up study pertained to a validation of the oral mode for academic work. This validation was made possible through Milica's scribing and proposing watching videos as an alternative source of researching information. As Bruner (1966/1974) has suggested, ideally, an educator becomes the partner in a student's inner dialogue (p. 121). This has been exemplified in Milica's essay writing scaffolding technique where she used questions to elicit additional detail from H. to accomplish the essay writing task. Students' multimodal contributions in the follow-up study were only represented in H.'s uptake of Milica's note-taking when he typed up the final draft of his essay. The double-bind in which the educator found herself during the follow-up study, where English as a lingua franca was used successfully for communication but was not sufficiently developed to reach the academic standard expected during written tasks inscribes the SET model in the evolving area of tandem studies with a lingua franca (see Tardieu & Horgues, 2020b, p. 272).

## **7.2.5 Rapport-Building**

In both studies, it appeared that the interest educators showed in the students' lifeworlds made working together more effective. In my short time in the evening tutoring programme, the senior teachers' findings relating to building rapport as explicated in chapter five (see part 5.1.3.2) were confirmed. Similarly, as an independent tutor, working with students she had never met before, Milica quickly built a certain level of familiarity with H. and T. by employing these strategies, often interspersed with other literacy or academic work. Mutually enriching, authentic conversations took place. Linguistic acculturation was noticeable in the follow-up study in the alignment of Milica's way of communicating using more informal grammatical and lexical choices. In the exploratory study, I also opted for

informal English through verb forms (wanna: used 11 times; gonna: used three times), though not as pervasively as Milica.

Despite the generally positive working relationships between students and educators during the exploratory study and the follow-up study, students became distracted at times. This has been observed by other researchers who have analysed tandem interactions between students where laughter and an unwillingness to perform the tasks at hand became evident during some peer interactions (see Verplaetse-Manoïlov, 2017, p. 393). Again, it is useful to consider unruly behaviours as ways of opting out of the study (Back, 2007, p. 19). They are perfectly legitimate student responses.

## **7.3 Lessons Learnt, Limitations of the Model and Areas for Improvement**

### **7.3.1 SET: Model and Implementation**

A juxtaposition of the proposed SET model and the features which emerged has shown convergence and divergence between the model and its practical implementation in two different settings. The following table summarises the process of development of the SET model and shows its malleability. In the left-most column, I have included short descriptions of the original tandem principles. The second column shows the main modifications I developed from the outset, before trialling the model. The two columns on the right show the features which emerged based on how the model was actualised in practice during both studies, the concrete characteristics of SET.

Original Tandem Principles	Main modifications of Tandem characteristics in the SET model	Features of the SET model during the exploratory study	Features of the SET model during the follow-up study
<p><u>Autonomy:</u> Range of competencies of any learner to plan, check and evaluate their learning activities in terms of content as well as process (Little, 1996, p. 23)</p>	<p>Educator initiates and organises sessions during a fixed time within school programmes and contact hours.</p> <p>Students opt to participate in the tandem, decide on shareable knowledge (linguistic and cultural) and can make autonomous additions to the proposed materials.</p>	<p>Educator initiates the sessions and remains in charge of organising the learning in tandem exchanges during a fixed time within school programmes and contact hours.</p> <p>Students sometimes opt out of the tandem and pursued unrelated activities.</p> <p>Students choose shareable aspects of their culture and contribute those to the sessions.</p> <p>Students make autonomous multimodal additions to materials.</p>	<p>Educator initiates the sessions and remains in charge of organising the learning as part of students' academic tuition during a fixed time within school programmes and contact hours.</p> <p>Students sometimes opt out of the tandem (one instance of truancy and many instances of unrelated activities).</p> <p>Students choose shareable aspects of their culture and contributed those to the sessions.</p>
<p><u>Reciprocity:</u> “Successful learning in tandem is based on the reciprocal dependence and mutual support of the partners; both partners should contribute equally to their work together and benefit to the same extent” (Brammerts, 1996, p. 11).</p>	<p>Linguistic benefit initially is probably greater for the non-Indigenous educator; social-emotional benefits should be equal.</p> <p>Intention for students and educators to work as partners, but established roles of student and teacher/tutor may be difficult to disregard.</p> <p>Tandem pair might be replaced by a more fluid constellation of two or</p>	<p>Linguistic benefit is greater for the non-Indigenous educator.</p> <p>Established roles of student and tutor remain largely in place.</p> <p>Fluid and flexible constellations of tandem or tridem replace the original tandem pair.</p>	<p>Linguistic benefit is greater for students.</p> <p>Established roles of student and tutor remain in place.</p> <p>Fluid and flexible constellations of tandem or tridem replace the original tandem pair.</p>

	more students working with the educator (see translanguaging education in chapter three).		
<u>Nativeness:</u> The assumption that the target language is the mother tongue of the tandem partner.	Simple English is used as a lingua franca to facilitate exchanges about the students' Indigenous home languages and cultures and discuss features of SAE in return.	Students use English as a lingua franca when sharing linguistic and cultural information with the educator.  Educator uses English as a lingua franca to discuss features of SAE in tandem activities and in students' homework.	Students used English as a lingua franca when sharing linguistic and cultural information with the educator.  Educator uses English as a lingua franca to discuss features of SAE in tandem activities and in students' homework.
<u>Learning through mutually agreed ways of correcting:</u> Correcting every single mistake can be overwhelming and discouraging (Brammerts & Hedderich, 1996, p. 53).	Corrective feedback on educator's pronunciation or orthography in the students' Indigenous home languages used by students spontaneously.  Educator provides feedback on the students' use of English.	Students use a variety of corrective feedback techniques on educator's pronunciation or orthography of vocabulary or short sentences in the students' Indigenous home languages (see chapter five).  Educator provides feedback on the students' use of English as needed.	Students use a small number of corrective feedback techniques on educator's pronunciation of a few words in students' ancestral languages (see chapter six).  Educator's linguistic alignment.  Educator provides feedback on the students' use of English as needed.
<u>Intercultural learning and language awareness:</u> Tandem allows to move from linguistic and cultural ethnocentrism towards an appreciation of other languages and cultures (Quivy & Tardieu, 2002, p. 36).	Increased cultural awareness and language awareness for all participants.	Increased cultural awareness (Australian "whitefella" culture and students' home cultures) and language awareness (SAE and students' home languages) for all participants.	Increased cultural awareness (Australian "whitefella" culture and students' home cultures) and language awareness (SAE and students' home languages) for all participants.

Table 7.3. Adaptation of Tandem Principles and Features in SET

## **7.3.2 Limitations of the SET Model and Areas for Improvement**

As some behavioural issues have shown, SET is not a magical solution to creating an ideal learning space without distractions or disruptions. Students came into the tandem space after a long day at school and things outside of Milica's or my control might have influenced their responses and behaviours at certain times. Being guests at schools where we were not employees but outsiders conducting an independent project meant we had relatively little influence over the group configuration. The interpersonal tensions between students which were very noticeable during the follow-up study could not be effectively addressed due to an absence of communication between the tutor and the school administration and boarding house staff. As a result, one of the students, T., received considerably less support on actual academic tasks than his peer, H. who appeared more dominant during the sessions.

A preliminary presentation of the project to staff at the school could have opened communication channels between Milica and the students' subject teachers to ensure a more effective approach to tackling homework assignments. In the absence of this, Milica relied on the students showing her the work to be done and they often claimed there was no homework. Milica's different implementation of the model in the context of Aboriginal English has shown that two training sessions might have been insufficient to impart the idea of investigating the students' ways of communicating and questioning one's existing ideas. It seems like a lost opportunity for the tutor in the follow-up study to delve into the realm of existing research on Aboriginal English during her work with H. and T.

A form of training where Milica would have been able to observe me for a few sessions including during my lesson preparation time might have been more effective. Alternatively, rather than being completely withdrawn from the follow-up study, I could have acted as a co-tutor and prepared materials with Aboriginal English as the target language. This

could have been a way of mentoring Milica and taking the actual research and material preparation out of her hands to enable her to focus exclusively on session delivery.

In a context as diverse as education catering for Indigenous students in Australia, SET cannot be put forth as a universal strategy to suit all students. More formal ways of gathering feedback, e.g. by using a questionnaire could have informed the further development of the SET model.

The volume of data of both studies combined has remained small. Therefore findings are indicative rather than conclusive. The fact that only boys participated in both studies has created an involuntary gender bias of sorts, but was unavoidable due to the logistical ramifications. Furthermore, the lack of a control group has meant that more conclusive statements on the benefits of the SET practice are not possible at this point.

As the cases of Indigenous boarders at the Catholic college in Adelaide showed (example of P., from the Tiwi Islands and others), some were succeeding without targeted, individual assistance. However, for students who found academic work and an academic context in general difficult to work in, the model has proven to provide a useful starting point for effective rapport building. Certainly, the small group configuration also played a role in this effective rapport building. Working one-on-one with students is not easily emulated in regular classroom settings, making the need for a concentrated effort to use a model like SET in after-school tutoring all the more obvious.

I will conclude by examining to what extent the hypotheses I proposed at the start of the project can be validated through the analyses. For ease of reading, I have split up the different elements of the hypothesis and matched them with the evidence showing the extent of their validity.

Hypotheses	Validity
<p>Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators can benefit from using the tandem approach if tandem is modified to cater for the specificities of oral languages and Indigenous types of knowledge.</p>	<p>The modifications made to the principles of autonomy and reciprocity were effective in adapting the tandem model for Indigenous education in urban boarding schools.</p> <p>The adaptation of the tandem pair to accommodate the constellation of educators and one or more students working cooperatively was effective and observable in both studies.</p>
<p>SET can provide a way of implementing ACARA's stipulation to include Indigenous languages in everyday school life thus contributing to reconciliation through the integration of all languages and cultures represented in a group of learners.</p>	<p>SET ensures the validation of Indigenous languages in school contexts. On a practical level, many urban boarding schools face the situation of a plurality of languages spoken by students where none or not enough native-speaking teachers are available (see Hickling-Hudson &amp; Ahlquist, 2003, p. 86). One-on-one or small group instruction in the SET format can address the variety of languages represented in the classroom because the students themselves become the teachers of their home languages (see chapter 8.1 for practicalities of this).</p>
<p>Significant benefits for the participants can result from an implementation of SET on a linguistic, intercultural and interpersonal level.</p>	<p>Apart from the measurable academic outcomes, feedback elicited spontaneously throughout the exploratory study and targeted feedback elicitation during the final session of the follow-up study suggest an overall positive reception of the SET concept.</p>

Table 7.4. Validation of Hypotheses

## Conclusion

The different settings, institutional expectations and linguistic backgrounds of students involved in the respective studies have changed the way SET has been implemented. A stand-alone version of the model and an integrated version of SET have been posed as adaptable varieties of this tandem learning model based on mutually interested, respectful interactions between non-Indigenous educators and Indigenous students.



Common to both studies was the momentary interchangeability of roles (who is teaching and who is learning) depending on the specific situation and topic under discussion, although this was more observable in the exploratory study due to the more frequent opportunities for students to perform teaching actions. Reciprocity was ensured as all participants experienced an increase in learning, albeit in different areas and not only related to language learning. Especially in the follow-up study, intercultural learning played an important role for the educator. As suggested in the student-educator model, the educator largely remained in charge of orchestrating the teaching and learning sessions from planning to providing study materials. This was also mirrored in the comparison of data on feedback techniques. The original tandem principle of autonomy has therefore remained a vision for implementation of SET in the future.

Multimodality was actualised in different ways in both studies. In the exploratory study, students were actively engaged in multimodal meaning-making in their response to the materials proposed which were also multimodal in nature. During the follow-up study, the educator found multimodal ways to bridge the gap between the students' verbal ability and their written expression skills in SAE. The educators' consistent interest in the students' backgrounds, cultural knowledge and interests proved beneficial for building rapport with the students in both studies. Language awareness increased for all participants.

Limitations of both studies existed in terms of behaviour management, eliminating gender bias and gathering data from a control group. An area for improvement was the specific situation of Aboriginal English as the target language in the follow-up study which could have been addressed more effectively during the training sessions.

Despite these shortcomings, once tandem principles have been adapted and moulded into the SET model, Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators can enjoy benefits in linguistic and intercultural learning which relate to positive interpersonal experiences.

# **Chapter 8: A Vision for Implementing SET on a Larger Scale**

## **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will present some practical suggestions for the various parties involved in a larger scale implementation of the SET model. In the first part of this chapter, I will present some options and recommend some steps for educators wanting to use the model. A close comparison between the curricular requirements brought forth by the Australian national curriculum authority, ACARA and the SET model will add concrete documentation to these suggestions. Different outcomes apply to SET used with speakers of an Indigenous language and speakers of Aboriginal English. Therefore, I have included documentation about using SET in first language and in a language revival scenario.

In the second part of this chapter, I will examine the implications on a broader, institutional level. I will first consider the role of governmental agencies. Then, I will propose a possible training format to use with educators. In the final part of this chapter, I will provide an outlook for the future of SET in the light of my action research agenda.

## **8.1 Recommendations for Educators**

The various benefits presented in chapters five, six and seven make SET a useful tool for any non-Indigenous person working with Indigenous learners. The model is not only useful from the point of view of increasing their linguistic and cultural knowledge, but also from an interpersonal point of view. To what extent educators have the freedom to integrate the model will depend on institutional and other curricular requirements. Generally, three modes of delivery are envisageable:

- (1) in-class use of the tandem model

(2) use of SET in after-school tutoring programmes

(3) use of SET during pastoral care time

For in-class implementation of SET (1) in subjects like ESL/EAL, English or SOSE (Studies of Society and Environment), a rotational system could be used where students are grouped according to their home languages and tasked with the creation of teaching materials based on a topic of their choice or a topic suggested by the educator. This would be possible in a middle or senior school setting where students have reached sufficient basic literacy levels to navigate the online resources proposed in chapters two and four (e.g. LAAL or AuSIL). The class teacher could accompany each language group or individual student for part of the lesson and assist where needed. In a subsequent session, the groups could teach each other and the teacher respectively allowing for a mutual appreciation of the linguistic wealth existing in the class.

The use of SET in after-school tutoring (2) and pastoral care time (3) can take the forms proposed in chapter seven as an integrated or a stand-alone activity (see part 7.1).

The requirement to integrate Indigenous languages into their teaching is a non-refutable argument for educators to attempt an implementation of SET. Various links between the SET model and ACARA's guidelines exist.

Firstly, SET gives each student a voice and a part in the project like ACARA's general framework which

potentially caters for all Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages, irrespective of the ecology<sup>21</sup> of each language, whether it be a language of everyday communication used by a community, a language at any point in the continuum of revival or one of the many creole languages that have evolved through the history of language contact in Australia. (<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10->

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<sup>21</sup> ACARA has defined language ecology as “a view of languages as living entities that require enabling environments and relationships with other languages to thrive and to be passed on between generations.” (Glossary, p. 9)

curriculum/languages/framework-for-aboriginal-languages-and-torres-strait-islander-languages/what-is-the-framework/).

ACARA has proposed a threefold programme to address the needs of first language learners, second language learners and speakers of languages that are being revived. The sequences of achievement all include the caveat that the standards are generic in nature and therefore adaptations will be necessary.

Secondly, SET reflects a few of the key terms pertaining to Indigenous language curricula identified by ACARA. These key notions are intercultural language teaching and learning, language ecology and lexical bias.

Intercultural language teaching and learning defined as framed by the understanding that language and culture are dynamic, interconnected systems of meaning-making; that proficiency in an additional language involves cultural and intercultural as well as linguistic capabilities. The focus is on developing communicative proficiency and on moving between language-culture systems. It includes the reflexive and reciprocal dimension of attention to learners' own language(s) and cultural frame(s).

(ACARA, Glossary, p. 8)

It seems as though this definition could be applied to the SET model without any modification. Reciprocity, one of the defining principles of tandem, is explicitly mentioned. On the one hand, non-Indigenous educators might not reach high levels of language proficiency in the various languages represented by the students in their classrooms, pastoral care or tutoring groups, due to English being used as a lingua franca in the SET model. On the other hand, intercultural proficiency might be within easier reach for educators setting out on the learning pathway proposed by SET.

In any case, educators using SET demonstrate a positive awareness of language ecology. Language ecology includes “the profile and acceptance of the language in the wider community, and education systems that align with the values of particular groups of language

speakers” (ACARA, Glossary, p. 9). By inviting Indigenous languages into the daily teaching and learning routines through SET, non-Indigenous educators raise the Indigenous languages profiles within the school community. Through a bottom-up approach, these educators prepare the ground for the entire education system to integrate the values inherent in the Indigenous languages of the school community.

Through the use of some archival and historical materials, SET also enables a close examination of lexical biases, defined as

Language interests, intentions and conceptions or misconceptions among some (particularly early) researchers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages that resulted in uneven treatment of their vocabularies. For example, the languages are highly developed in the areas of family terms, totemic relationships and Australian flora and fauna, but these areas were often inadequately recorded because little was known at the time about them. (ACARA, Glossary, p. 10)

While a few discussions of this nature have become evident in the exploratory study (see Excerpts I and L), it can be expected that through a more sustained use of SET involving a wider range of (student-created) materials, many discrepancies between non-Indigenous linguists’ perceptions and actual language usage would be uncovered. Ultimately, this is an area of discussion pertaining to language awareness and the post-colonial pillar of the theory on which I have based SET. Through the use of materials that could be considered as controversial due to their potential neo-colonialist tendency, a discussion about the languages ideology (see Makoni and Pennycook, 2007) and what it meant for Indigenous languages in Australia would be in order. Whether such a discussion can ensue with the students would depend on their level of English. In any case, this awareness is an important step in the educator’s’ journey to increasing their own intercultural sensitivity. From a practical point of view, though, introducing the students’ home languages other than through the use of texts might pose significant logistical problems and also oppose the goal of creating language

equality - which includes making languages visible in the greater school community. I will now turn my attention to how educators can establish concrete links between SET and the framework for Australian languages proposed by the national curriculum authority.

### **8.1.1 Recommendations for Educators of Indigenous Students Speaking Indigenous Languages**

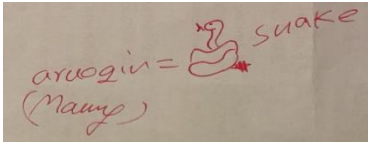
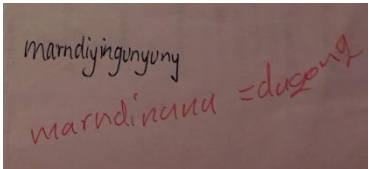
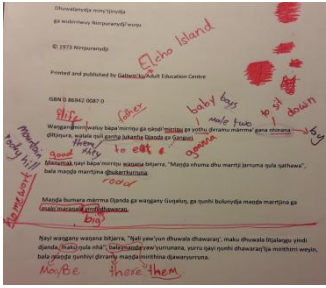
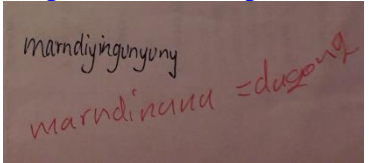
The SET model provides opportunities for students to work towards several achievement standards from the ACARA framework. The following overview is based on the scope and sequence document catering for students from years 7 to 10 in the “L1 pathway” (for pdf see <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/framework-for-aboriginal-languages-and-torres-strait-islander-languages/>).

This document applies to students whose first language is being taught at school. While this is not exactly the case in SET, the curricular strands of the “L1 pathway” best reflect the situation and knowledge of students in urban boarding schools who speak Indigenous languages at home. When I included evidence from the data sets in the following overview, it is important to note that some of the evidence only pertains to emerging skill sets. Depending on students’ literacy levels overall, in their home languages and/or English, the outcomes listed in the L1 pathway may only be achieved in an indicative way, on a developing level. The descriptions I have included here are intended for the year 7 to 10 age-groups, conform to the students’ profiles in the exploratory study (year 7) and the follow-up study (year 9).

I have argued in chapters six and seven that, for the purpose of SET, Aboriginal English can be considered as a language in its own right. Therefore, the L 1 outcomes described in this table can apply to students who identify as speakers of Indigenous languages or students speaking Aboriginal English. Consequently, the examples I have chosen by way of

illustration are from both, the exploratory study (in blue colour) or the follow-up study (in italics). When examples were from both studies, I did not use any colour-coding.

Description of targeted outcomes (L1 Pathway)	Opportunities to achieve these outcomes through SET	Evidence from the data sets of the exploratory study and the follow-up study
<p><u>Communicating for socialising:</u></p> <p>Engage in inclusive and respectful discussion that involves commentary, analysis and reflection on shared experience, such as that of learning and using the language in the school setting. (p. 1)</p>	<p>Respectful and inclusive discussion are at the core of the SET model as I defined it in chapter two: “SET offers ways for non-Indigenous educators to appreciate and integrate their students’ home languages into their teaching practice.” and “In the larger institutional context, SET allows for Indigenous languages to become heard and visible in the school community, and therefore a valuable and valued component of school life.”</p>	<p><i>Milica: So, how would you introduce yourself? If you were to say hello for example.</i>  <i>T.: Yeah.</i>  <i>Milica: How?</i>  <i>T.: Hello.</i>  <i>Milica: Hello? Oh, interesting... pretty, pretty similar to English, yeah? What about how we say mum and dad? ...</i>  <i>T.: Mum.</i>  <i>Milica: Mum? And dad?</i>  <i>T.: Mum, yeah. Pretty similar language. Mum and dad and stuff, yeah. (Chapter six, Excerpt A)</i></p>
<p><u>Communicating in order to inform:</u></p> <p>Obtaining, processing, interpreting and conveying information through a range of oral, written and multimodal texts; developing and applying knowledge. (p. 1)</p>	<p>Multimodality emerged as a defining feature of SET during the exploratory study.</p> <p>Multimodality was applied in the “talking-transcribing” technique of the follow-up study.            SET enables students to use a range of texts and apply their knowledge of their home language when teaching a non-Indigenous educator.</p>	<p><b>Use of multimodal mind-map-like vocabulary posters.</b></p> <p><i>Use of videos and maps as sources of information to get to know each other, to prepare for a research essay and for further paraphrasing activities.</i></p>
<p><u>Communicating in order to inform:</u></p> <p>Convey information about events, experiences or topics of shared interest, using different modes of presentation to suit different audiences and context. (p. 1)</p>	<p>Students adapt their way of speaking to the necessity of using ELF during SET to suit the educator who represents a non-Indigenous audience wanting to learn about Indigenous cultures and languages in a school context.</p> <p>Topics of shared interest are at the core of tandem (see Bechtel, 2003, p. 367) and SET.</p>	<p>English was used in the form of varying approximations to SAE in both studies.</p> <p>Topics of shared interest included: hunting, animal life, family and places of origin.</p> <p>Multimodality featured in both studies.</p>

Description of targeted outcomes (L1 Pathway)	Opportunities to achieve these outcomes through SET	Evidence from the data sets of the exploratory study and the follow-up study
<p><u>Communicating and creating:</u></p> <p>Create a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts involving real/imagined contexts and characters. (p. 2)</p>	<p>Students annotate materials in multimodal manner in an instructional context.</p>	 <p>Students used drawings to enhance the vocabulary posters. (Chapter five, Excerpt D)</p>
<p><u>Communicating through translating:</u></p> <p>Moving between languages and cultures orally and in writing, recognising different interpretations and explaining these to others. (p. 2)</p>	<p>Students annotate materials in English and in their home languages, experimenting with spelling and explaining decisions about spelling.</p>	 <p>R. spelled <i>marndiyunguny</i> as <i>marndinunu</i> and added the English <i>dugong</i> (Chapter five, Excerpt D)</p>
<p><u>Communicating through translating:</u></p> <p>Produce short bilingual/multilingual texts such as digital stories, comics, animations, blogs and contributions to community newsletters. (p. 2)</p>	<p>By adding translations to the texts in home languages proposed by the educator, students produce bilingual versions of these materials.</p>	 <p>M. added many translations of key terms to the original text, producing a glossary. M. laid the foundations for producing a bilingual story. (Chapter five, Example three)</p>
<p><u>Understanding systems of language:</u></p> <p>Understand and explain sound patterns in the spoken language, representing these patterns with an expanding repertoire of written symbols and conventions. (p. 4)</p>	<p>The SET model necessitates the explanation of language features by students as part of their teaching role. I have defined this in chapter two: “Through the tandem sessions, students discover their home languages as written languages with possible creative uses in terms of spelling and multimodality.”</p>	<p>M.’s explanations of a letter in Yolŋu matha and how it is written: /ŋ/ or capital D (ll. 1902-1914)</p> <p>The dugong example was another reflection of this (see chapter five, Excerpt D)</p> 



Description of targeted outcomes (L1 Pathway)	Opportunities to achieve these outcomes through SET	Evidence from the data sets of the exploratory study and the follow-up study
<p><u>Understanding systems of language:</u></p> <p>Develop and use (meta)language to analyse a range of grammatical structures in their language(s) and English. (p. 4)</p>	<p>Through frequent metalinguistic discussions initiated by the educators, students are invited to share and imitate the “grammatical metalanguage” (Lyster &amp; Ranta, 1997, p. 47) the educators model.</p>	<p>Do. explicitly acknowledged the plural as a concept known to him (l. 2178) in the Yolŋu matha reading tridem.</p> <p><i>During English literacy activities in the follow-up study, H. used terms like noun, verb and the tenses which shows student uptake (e.g. Appendix 43).</i></p>
<p><u>Understanding language variation and change:</u></p> <p>Understanding how languages vary in use (register, style, standard and non-standard varieties) and change over time and from place to place. (p. 4)</p>	<p>SET necessitates the creation of materials from scratch based on dictionaries which were often compiled in the 1970s or 1980s.</p> <p>Inevitably, some words need discussion as they might not be known to the generation of speakers involved in SET.</p>	<p>Discussion of the word <i>ganguri</i> (see Chapter five, Excerpt L) - a possible example of ancestral vocabulary in Yolŋu matha.</p> <p>Varieties of Yolŋu matha spoken in different places: “M.: Like Elcho Island and Milingimbi, like same language. ...And Ramingining is different language” (ll. 1684-1687).</p> <p><i>Students switching between Aboriginal English spoken among themselves and informal SAE when speaking to the tutor.</i></p>
<p><u>Language awareness:</u></p> <p>Analysing and understanding language and culture as resources for interpreting and shaping meaning in intercultural exchange. (p. 5)</p>	<p>Intercultural learning is inherent in all tandem work (Bechtel, 2003, p. 12; Kleppin, 2003, pp. 190-192).</p>	<p>Kinship terms can have nuanced meanings in many Indigenous languages as explained by senior teacher Janet: “When they say ‘mum’, well what mum are they talking about?” (see part 5.1.4.4)</p>

Description of targeted outcomes (L1 Pathway)	Opportunities to achieve these outcomes through SET	Evidence from the data sets of the exploratory study and the follow-up study
<p><u>Language awareness:</u></p> <p>Understand and apply cultural norms, skills and protocols associated with learning, using and researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. (p. 5)</p>	<p>One of the desired outcomes for SET participants is that they can feel more at ease living and working in the target culture (see e.g. part 2.4.3).</p> <p>During the material preparation phase, educators come into contact with cultural protocols such as presented on the various websites.</p>	<p>When preparing materials, I came across notes like this: <u>“Respecting ownership:</u> Stories and pictures in this archive belong to the Aboriginal language owners, creators of the materials and their descendants. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander users are advised that this website contains names, images and voices of people who have passed away.” (LAAL)</p>
<p><u>Understanding the role of language and culture:</u></p> <p>Analysing and understanding the role of language and culture in the exchange of meaning. (p. 5)</p>	<p>Intercultural learning is part of my definition of SET in chapter two: “SET can be defined as a model for cooperative, intercultural language learning between Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators.”</p>	<p><i>Milica and H. discussed a kinship term:</i>  <i>H.: Never heard of Godsister before.</i>  <i>Milica: Yeah, it’s like a thing we have in our, in our Serbian customs, we say we’re cousins...”</i>  <i>(Chapter six, Excerpt F)</i></p>

Table 8.1. Linking National Curriculum and SET for Students Speaking an Indigenous Language

The first two columns of this table could be used as an initial unit planning document for teachers wishing to use SET. The examples in the last column could then be replaced by evidence of outcomes. Many of these outcomes could also be evidenced through examples from the follow-up study. However, the data from the follow-up study can also be explored from the perspective of language revival as a potential curricular pathway.

## **8.1.2 Recommendations for Educators of Indigenous Students Speaking Aboriginal English**

As stated on the ACARA website by Edwards, Dharawal language and culture revitaliser:

Language curriculum provides an important place for Aboriginal knowledges, dreaming stories, belief systems, and material culture. It is also a pathway for young people on their journey to becoming leaders and future Elders. Language allows us to weave the past into the future, one sentence at a time. (<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/framework-for-aboriginal-languages-and-torres-strait-islander-languages/what-is-the-framework/>)

By being involved in material creation and teaching either individually or with peers, students could participate in curriculum creation through SET. Students could thus contribute significantly to the maintenance, reinvigoration, revival or any kind of promotion of their home language depending on where on the continuum of language change or shift it is situated.

When working with students who identify as speakers of Aboriginal English, educators and students might want to explore the avenue of language revival. Various opportunities present themselves through the use of SET, keeping in mind that “the Achievement Standards in the Language Revival Learner Pathway will be shaped by the current progress of language revival for a particular language, and by the amount of vocabulary and variety of language structures available for teaching and learning” (ACARA, 2015, p. 1).

Again, I have included the descriptions for the year 7 to 10 age-groups, conform to the year level (year 9) of the students who participated in the follow-up study.

<b>Description of targeted outcomes (LR Pathway)</b>	<b>Opportunities to achieve these outcomes through SET</b>	<b>Indications of such opportunities in the data set of the follow-up study</b>
<p><u>Communicating for socialising:</u></p> <p>Engage in activities that involve collaboration, planning, organising, promoting and taking action. (p. 13)</p>	<p>Creation of SET materials collaboratively; creation of word walls or other signs for around the school in the target language/s.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p><u>Communicating in order to inform:</u></p> <p>Convey information about Country/Place<sup>22</sup>, events, experiences or topics of shared interest, using different modes of presentation. (p. 13)</p>	<p>Materials including pictures or photos can be used in SET to start a conversation about Country/Place.</p>	<p>A book about and maps of the Daly River region in Australia's Northern Territory including ancestral language information, a brief exchange about how languages relate to Country took place:</p> <p>Milica: Do you know Murrinhpatha?  H.: Nah, that's like for East, Keats.  ... It's like West where we're from.  (Chapter six, Excerpt C)</p>
<p><u>Communicating and creating:</u></p> <p>Engaging with imaginative experience by participating in responding to and creating a range of texts, such as stories, songs, drama and music. (p. 14)</p>	<p>Any mode of creating in the target language/s can be incorporated into SET with an instructive purpose.</p>	<p>Milica suggested writing a song in the students' home language/s:</p> <p>Milica: ... But just to explore that sort of writing about, about yourself. Would you like to do something like that?  H.: Yeah. ...  Milica: Um, no, I forgot the name. It's called "Marryuna".  T.: Marry, think Baker Boy. / H.: Baker Boy.  Milica: Yes. Yes, that's the one. Oh, you know it?  T.: Yeah. ... I like the new lyrics he made. (ll. 3777-3795)</p>
<p><u>Communicating through translating:</u></p> <p>Create bilingual texts for the wider community in collaboration with others. (p. 14)</p>	<p>When creating materials collaboratively with the educator, English translations need to be added to the texts in ancestral home languages.</p>	<p>n/a</p>

<sup>22</sup> Country/Place are capitalised in the official ACARA documentation as they are key concepts in Indigenous culture. I have maintained this spelling convention in my own elaborations.

<b>Description of targeted outcomes (LR Pathway)</b>	<b>Opportunities to achieve these outcomes through SET</b>	<b>Indications of such opportunities in the data set of the follow-up study</b>
<p><u>Identity:</u></p> <p>Consider and discuss their own and each other's ways of communicating and expressing identity, reflecting on how the language links the local, regional and national identity of its speakers with the land. (p. 15)</p>	<p>Through researching materials in and about the ancestral languages represented through students' home communities, such links between language and identity can enter the discussion, e.g. through relating the authors of certain resources to Country and family.</p>	<p>When sighting the book by Nambatu et al. (2009), T. and H. explored the portraits of the contributors, identifying members of their families:</p> <p>H.: Oh, yeah. Mofu. That's our grandmother, that one there.  Milica: That's your grandfather?  H.: Yeah, nah, that one. Grandma.  Milica: Oh, grand, grandma. Sorry. I didn't see the picture.  H.: Yeah. And this one here.  [shows Milica the photo of his grandmother] (ll. 4118-4122)</p>
<p><u>Reflecting:</u></p> <p>Participate in intercultural interactions and consider own reactions when engaging with Elders and community members and resources. (p. 15)</p>	<p>Through the use and creation of culturally-relevant materials in SET, such interactions are possible.</p> <p>In an urban boarding school, inviting Elders might not be possible, but resources can be sought out.</p>	<p>When sighting the book by Nambatu et al. (2009), T. and H. identified people in the community who contributed to this publication:</p> <p>H.: Mark Crocombe.  Milica: Do you know him, too?  H.: Yeah.  Milica: How cool!  T.: He's stayed at Port Keats. Didn't he?  Milica: He lived at Port Keats?  H.: Yeah.  T.: I think he did.  [mumbling as T. looks at all the people in the book]  Milica: Is there more people?  H.: Trisha Mapura.  Milica: So your grandma still lives in Daly River?  H.: Yeah.  Milica: Uh, your mum's mum or dad's mum?  H.: Nah, like sister's nana. (ll. 4126-4140)</p>

<b>Description of targeted outcomes (LR Pathway)</b>	<b>Opportunities to achieve these outcomes through SET</b>	<b>Indications of such opportunities in the data set of the follow-up study</b>
<p><u>Understanding systems of language:</u></p> <p>Understand and explain the sound patterns in spoken language and use developing phonemic awareness to represent these patterns in written form. (p. 16)</p>	<p>The SET model necessitates the explanation of language features by students as part of their teaching role. This explanation can occur through the use of corrective feedback when students still have some knowledge of isolated words in ancestral languages.</p>	<p>H. and T. corrected Milica on the pronunciation of a language name from their region:</p> <p>Milica: ... Magati Ke? Name. And then /mariŋa/. {Educator-initiated decoding HL}</p> <p>H.: /mariŋa/. {FB-recast student}</p> <p>Milica: How do you say it? {Educator-initiated metalinguistic HL}</p> <p>H.: /mariŋa/. {FB-recast student}</p> <p>Milica: /mariŋa/</p> <p>T.: /mariŋa/ {FB-recast student} (ll. 4278-4284)</p>
<p><u>Understanding systems of language:</u></p> <p>Expand vocabulary and understand and use a range of vocabulary sets and grammatical structures that are available in the language. (p. 16)</p>	<p>Through creating and working with bilingual materials in the SET sessions, students and educators expand their vocabulary and knowledge of grammar.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p><u>Language awareness:</u></p> <p>Understand and apply cultural norms, skills and protocols associated with learning, using and researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. (p. 17)</p>	<p>During material creation, certain websites, such as LAAL, AIATSI or AuSIL, will contain warnings about the correct protocol which can then be discussed.</p>	<p>n/a</p>

Description of targeted outcomes (LR Pathway)	Opportunities to achieve these outcomes through SET	Indications of such opportunities in the data set of the follow-up study
<p><u>Understanding the role of language building:</u></p> <p>Investigate and explain techniques used to build language, considering challenges involved and understanding their role as contemporary documenters of language. (p. 18)</p>	<p>Once students are comfortable in expert roles as emerging speakers or custodians of ancestral languages, students might be able to examine morphological and lexical developments in ancestral languages through SET, even suggesting modernised versions of the language/s (see Hinton, 2011, p. 311).</p>	<p>n/a</p>

Table 8.2. Linking National Curriculum and SET for Students Speaking Aboriginal English and Exploring Ancestral Languages

Many of the curricular outcomes are linked to the creation of materials, which, as Hinton (2011) has reminded us is “a pioneering process that involves the development of new models of language teaching” (Hinton, 2011, p. 308). SET is one such new model which can serve in language revival or revitalisation programmes. The comparative table can again be used by educators wishing to explore this area of language work with their students.

## 8.2 The Role of Governmental Agencies

If practised on a wider scale, SET could break down existing linguistic and cultural barriers over time and therefore present a solution to many of the problems some Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators in Australian schools face. For this to become a reality, educational authorities in Australian states and territories would need to take this model on board and promote it to schools. This promoting of SET should include state schools and the private sector where many Indigenous students attend schools that are affiliated with the church, as the two colleges hosting the SET projects have exemplified. Such an initiative would allow schools to become actively involved in the maintenance of

linguistic diversity as desired by scholars in the field of heritage language education (see Hinton, 2011, p. 307; Lee & McCarty, 2017, p. 423; Lie, 2003, p. 274).

Over the years, many programmes targeting the improvement of educational outcomes for Indigenous students have been deployed on a national and federal level in Australia. Many of these initiatives required significant funding for materials, training and programme evaluation. The whole-school and whole-region approach established for the QuickSmart programme, deployed across schools in the Northern Territory, yielded positive results. QuickSmart has evolved for over ten years to address the needs of middle-schoolers to enhance numeracy skills in urban and remote schools with a large number of Indigenous students (Pegg & Graham, 2013, p. 131). SET would be an attractive option in comparison.

As a simple, reproducible model, it requires mainly a change of attitude on the teachers'/educators' side. Apart from some initial training, no additional funding would be required for its implementation across schools. Teacher training in effective pedagogies takes on all the more importance, though, to equip educators with an understanding of the SET attitude, an attitude of respectful interest. The SET attitude enables mutually instructive exchanges in any educational context where Indigenous students and non-Indigenous educators work together.

### **8.2.1 Training for Educators**

The differences in implementation of SET between the exploratory study and the follow-up study underline the need for training to ensure the SET model can be useful to schools, education departments or teacher training divisions of universities. If compared to large scale initiatives like Accelerated Literacy (Tyler, Robinson & Bartlett, 2009, p. 4), a similar training module could address these issues. This would be training conducted over several days comprising theory sessions, listening to recorded examples of practice,



cooperative material preparation, and discussion with other educators plus ongoing mentoring once educators are implementing the model in the field.

In theory sessions, the foundations of the SET model as outlined in chapters two and three would have to be presented in a concise, practice-oriented manner. Listening to recorded examples from the existing corpus (exploratory study and follow-up study) could then illustrate how the theoretical considerations have been actualised in practice and how the SET model can address ACARA's outcomes in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

Tables 8.1. and 8.2. would serve as starting points for initial unit planning. Educators could then start material preparation as fit for their cohort of students. A general template for SET implementation would follow these seven steps:

**Step 1:** Find out which named languages the students use as home languages or otherwise identify with. This can be done with the help of maps (e.g. <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>).

**Step 2:** Create basic materials on topics of shared interest, e.g. posters or flash cards on vocabulary concerning family, flora, fauna and landscape features; attempt to address the aspect of multimodality by including pictures, illustrations or photographs to give the materials an authentic, personal touch.

**Step 3:** Pay attention to the cultural protocols when accessing information about the students' home languages. Develop awareness through reading sensitivity statements such as provided by AIATSIS: "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this website may contain images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material. Some material may contain terms that reflect authors' views, or those of the period in which the item was written or recorded, but may not be considered appropriate today. These views are not necessarily the views of AIATSIS. While the information may not reflect current understanding, it is provided in an historical context."  
(<https://aiatsis.gov.au/sensitivity>)

**Step 4:** Depending on the mode of SET delivery, e.g. in-class, during pastoral care time (if applicable at the school), or during tutoring, set up the room accordingly if need be (groupings of chairs/tables).

**Step 5:** Implement the SET model by sharing unit plan (duration; assessment, if applicable), rationale of reciprocal learning and initial materials with students. Explicitly invite students' contributions to enhance the materials.

**Step 6:** Start working towards learning goals in the respective languages.

**Step 7:** Evaluate the unit together with students upon completion or anecdotally throughout the process of implementation by seeking students' feedback.

Table 8.3. Implementing SET in Seven Steps

Throughout my elaborations, I have emphasised the flexibility of tandem and SET guidelines. This flexibility is equally important when devising training modules. Depending on professional contexts, the general suggestions outlined here might have to be adapted to suit the particular local circumstances. The intensity of training might also vary depending on whether SET is envisaged as a whole-term literacy unit delivered over a number of weeks, (generally eight to ten weeks), or as a “getting-to-know-you” activity (see Milica’s suggestions in chapter six, part 6.1.2) planned for a few lessons at the start of the school year. To sum up, a reproducible model of SET would function in this way, regardless of mode and length of delivery:

Sequence of teaching and learning actions to be taken	Student	Educator
Investigating language and identity	Providing information about their home languages if this information is considered shareable.	Asking about the students' home languages.
SET session planning		<p>Creating age-appropriate, multimodal materials to use as a starting point for SET.</p> <p>Refer to relevant unit planning document (see tables 8.1. and 8.2.) or ACARA website (<a href="https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/framework-for-aboriginal-languages-and-torres-strait-islander-languages/">https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/framework-for-aboriginal-languages-and-torres-strait-islander-languages/</a>)</p>
First SET session	Responding to proposed rationale if level of English allows; deciding on level of comfort in the teaching role with regard to the proposed material.	Explaining programme rationale of reciprocal language learning and showing base set of materials (e.g. simple family poster as a way of introducing oneself).
Subsequent sessions	Contributing to language learning and creation of materials in a culturally appropriate way using for example drawing, writing or speaking as desired.	Gradually giving more responsibility for learning goal setting and creation of further materials to the students to act on the second tandem principle of autonomy.
Ongoing: Continuous evaluation of language learning	Monitoring one's own progress and giving feedback to the educator on their learning.	<p>Explicitly inviting corrective feedback from students and providing them with feedback about their use of ELF as needed.</p> <p>Elaborating on the unit plan as appropriate.</p>
End of project	Explaining the pros and cons of using SET.	Eliciting feedback about the SET way of working together. Planning further SET projects according to feedback; share SET project insights with colleagues.

Table 8.4. SET General Template

This general overview emphasises what remains unchanged from the established notion of tandem: the general defining elements of improving linguistic knowledge in authentic communication with a fluent speaker while finding out more about the tandem partner, their interests and their cultural background (Brammerts & Calvert, 2010, p. 27). Depending on students' self-regulatory skills and command of English, the suggested activities might be performed at a competent level or at an emerging and still developing level. Even after a short time, educators using SET would be enabled to do two things:

1. To explain certain features of English better in contrast to Indigenous languages, as evidenced in the animal names mind map.
2. To develop a self-reflective stance towards their own practice through an appreciation of the complexity of students' home languages and the unique challenges Indigenous students face in the ESL/EAL classroom.

If educators become more conversant in the students' home languages through regular use of the SET model, this would equip them to confidently liaise with students, parents and other members of the school community in their respective home languages.

SET also enables a critical reappraisal of the status of the students' ways of communicating particularly as opposed to SAE (Standard Australian English) posed as the norm by educational authorities. It will be important for educators to reflect upon the ways in which they view their students' home languages and if this changes at all during the tandem exchanges. Such changing views could mean an increase in understanding the complexity of the students' home languages. Consequently, educators would feel an augmented appreciation of the difficulties students may face when learning English through EMI without the tools readily available in other LOTE (Languages Other Than English) classes such as dictionaries and other bilingual materials, such as texts with glossaries.

## 8.2.2 Sharing Results as the Final Step in Action Research

Narcy-Combes (2005) has underlined the importance of sharing the results of action research (p. 112). One article has been published in the course of this PhD project (see Charon, 2020). This article received praise from a scholar at Charles Darwin University in Australia working on the online teaching of Kunwinjku. As a future step in completing the action research cycle and sharing the final results, a website could be envisageable to make the SET model accessible to educators around the world. Due to the sensitivity of the data recorded, I would prefer not to make the corpus public on such a website. I would rather make it available to other researchers at personal request or on an adequate research platform.

The advantages of such a website could be the potential to exchange with other non-Indigenous educators working in Indigenous education internationally. Due to the fact that more languages/linguistic communities than not have experienced the effects of Eurocentric naming, SET lends itself to an application even wider than the Australian context. The universal principles of SET can act upon “the very material domain of language effects” (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p. 22). SET can thus be applied in all areas of the globe where speakers of Indigenous languages are educated by people who do not have an understanding of these languages. The geographical areas where SET could be of benefit extend to regions where colonial schooling practices have resulted in “disruption of intergenerational language transmission mechanisms and cascading negative impacts on children's' well-being, and academic achievement, and on Indigenous peoples' social, emotional, and cultural attachments to their heritage identities” (Lee & McCarty, 2017, p. 423). This includes North America, Central America, South America, Africa, the Nordic countries in Europe with their Saami population.

On a local level in Australia, I shared the results of the exploratory study with the education department of the Northern Territory by phone and e-mail in September 2019.

Unfortunately, I have not received a response yet. I will still continue with this approach and contact other education departments in Australia to inform them of my work. Another avenue for sharing the SET model would be to approach university-based teacher training course coordinators to make the findings of my research available in this way.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have first outlined some of the settings in which educators could opt to implement SET. To this purpose, I have established the links between SET and the national curriculum framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. I have compared the features of SET to this framework first from an L1 perspective and then from a language revival perspective with students speaking Aboriginal English in mind.

Evidence from the data collected during the exploratory study and the follow-up study has illustrated how SET helps educators to address many of the curriculum outcomes and thus enhance their professional practice.

Through governmental and institutional support, the tandem model I have proposed could be adopted as an official programme and as such be implemented across a wider range of schools and a greater geographical area. To enable such a larger scale implementation, accompanying training modules would be needed. I have suggested the general format of such training, presenting a seven-step process from initial investigations into students' home languages to preparing materials and working through tandem sessions in the classroom.

Finally, I have presented my vision for putting into practice to final step in the action research process: sharing the findings discussed in this dissertation with a wider audience through scholarly publications, a website or through initiating personal contact with stakeholders in Australian education.

# CONCLUSION

## Overview of the research process

This research project was motivated by two personal teaching experiences in Australia's Northern Territory. These experiences made me wonder whether an English-only approach, put forth by stakeholders and governmental agencies nationwide, was a suitable way to address existing communication problems in Indigenous education.

I first tried to understand the situation through its history. Through examining historical documents, I found that some successful language learning happened in a spirit of reciprocity between non-Indigenous missionaries, teachers and their Indigenous students and friends during mission times. This is a positive detail during a period in Australian history when unspeakable atrocities were inflicted upon Indigenous persons by members of the church and the active mission societies. In the 21st century, two national initiatives explicitly aim at language equality: it is one of the goals in the Closing the Gap initiative and, more specifically, the 2016 curriculum framework developed by ACARA, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. The curriculum framework provides some outcome descriptors and a general scope and sequence for the integration of Indigenous languages into everyday teaching. These findings have informed the development of a model of reciprocal language instruction I have chosen to call SET.

To lay a theoretical foundation for the SET model, I have drawn on postcolonial theory, critical pedagogies as proposed by Freire, Illich and explicated by Bourdieu and the developing field of heritage language education. The most apt theoretical framework for SET overall is translanguaging theory. In terms of language acquisition in multilingual children, the assumption that one complex repertoire exists where certain communicative features are activated by multilingual children to act in various social contexts is fundamental to translanguaging. SET is also based on the idea that educators must actively support the child's performance in named languages by drawing on the entire communicative repertoire of their

students (García & Kleyn, 2016). Three basic understandings of language acquisition processes underpin these principles. Firstly, in translanguaging, the shared understanding is that languages are socially constructed concepts, not linguistic realities, as proposed by Makoni and Pennycook (2007) in the ideology of language disinvention. Secondly, instead of aspiring to linguistic accuracy represented by a native-like norm of language, teachers and learners focus on communicative functionality. Thirdly, through the practice of translanguaging, educators become critically aware of the sociopolitical reality linked to the linguistic diversity represented in their classrooms (García & Li Wei, 2014; García & Kleyn, 2016).

To investigate these processes in the SET model, I have decided on an action research approach. Action research seemed the most suitable form of research to ensure the social agenda outlined in the theory part could be respected and maximum benefit for the participating students could be ensured. The field work of this research project was conducted in two phases. In 2016, I implemented SET at a school in Darwin to test the model's feasibility and to document its features. I worked intensively with four students in year 7. The students were speakers of Maung, Iwaidja, Kunwinjku and Gupapuyngu, a variety of Yolngu matha. All students had developing levels of literacy in Standard Australian English. Our interactions were audio-recorded since video-recording was disqualified on ethical grounds.

The exploratory study yielded a corpus of three hours and seven minutes. I transcribed this audio data using Word. Apart from student-educator interactions I used interviews with four senior teachers as an additional layer of data. This has allowed me to verify whether SET was in line with proven strategies used by experienced practitioners in the field on Indigenous education. As a second step, I wanted to trial the SET model in a different setting without being directly involved in its implementation. The purpose was to ascertain the transferability of the model to a different context. Finding a school willing to host the follow-up study was challenging. In 2019, Milica, an independent tutor, worked with two students at a boarding school in Adelaide using the model. I trained Milica in SET based on the features and



procedures I had used during the exploratory study in Darwin. In the follow-up study, conducted over eight weeks, I wanted to gain insight into two aspects of the SET model:

(a) How the specific characteristics of SET for Indigenous languages were actualised in a new context, implemented by an independent tutor.

(b) What benefits students and educators may be able to draw from this tandem model.

The follow-up study with its corpus of 11 hours, 29 minutes and 45 seconds offered a different picture of the SET model in its use with speakers of Aboriginal English. After transcribing and coding all the data, I juxtaposed the findings from the exploratory study and the findings from the follow-up study. This allowed me to develop a more refined model of SET which could then be linked to the concrete descriptors provided in the ACARA curriculum framework. As a final step, the model could be proposed to educators and education departments in Australia.

### **Answering the research question and addressing the hypotheses**

With the research question “To what extent can Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators benefit from tandem learning in an urban Australian boarding school?”, I have attempted to contribute to closing two research gaps. Firstly, the ongoing search for effective, culturally sensitive pedagogies in Indigenous education and secondly, exploring tandem learning for oral, Indigenous languages. The hypotheses I have developed are:

- (1) With some adaptations to the conventional tandem model as I have proposed it in chapter two, students and educators can benefit from using SET techniques on a linguistic, intercultural and social-emotional level which relates positively to the development of effective interpersonal relationships.
- (2) Implementing SET can help non-Indigenous educators to work with their Indigenous students in a way that is consistent with the national policy framework (ACARA, 2015) and meaningfully include Indigenous languages and cultural knowledges into their day-to-day teaching.

### Hypothesis (1):

The two studies have shown that tandem learning in the SET model can help non-Indigenous educators to interact with their students in a mutually instructive way. In order to make the most of tandem learning in the context of urban boarding schools, I have proposed modifications to this traditional model. These modifications relate to the status and established roles inherent in any student-teacher relationship, the institutional setting and the languages involved: oral Indigenous languages, English as an additional language and English as a lingua franca. A comparison between the two models shows the modifications which were necessary regarding the conceptual and practical aspects of tandem when working in Indigenous education.

#### **Tandem learning**

Traditionally, the tandem model of language learning is associated with the attributes of lifelong, open, self-directed and cooperative learning paired with authentic intercultural communication. Tandem learning means an exchange in which both partners perceive and experience themselves as language learners (Bechtel, 2003; Brammerts, 1996; Brammerts, 2010; Brammerts & Calvert, 2010; Kleppin, 2003; Reymond & Tardieu, 2001).

The principles of autonomy and reciprocity define traditional tandem learning. Each learner is autonomously responsible for their own linguistic progress in terms of goal setting, choice of materials and staying on task and motivated. Reciprocity pertains to ensuring each partner benefits equally from the linguistic exchanges in terms of time allocated to each language and effort spent in supporting each other in their learning. This happens through non-systematic, but commonly agreed ways of providing corrective feedback or employing other beneficial teaching and learning actions. The tandem pair, in its various adaptable constellations, can sometimes be supported by a third party advisor, usually a teacher, coach or tandem specialist working at a university or a professional language learning centre (see Tardieu & Horgues, 2020).

## SET

SET can be defined as a model for cooperative, intercultural language learning between Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators where the starting context and learning goals of each participant differ significantly in terms of linguistic proficiency. The participants' linguistic expertise creates an asymmetrical relationship. English has to be used as a lingua franca when students meet the educator more than half way linguistically to complete the tandem tasks.

For Indigenous students, SET offers opportunities to own and share cultural and linguistic information appropriately. Through the tandem sessions, students discover their home languages as written languages with possible creative uses in terms of spelling and multimodality. By explaining language features and cultural details to a non-Indigenous person using English as a lingua franca, students practice their English and expand their language awareness. SET allows for Indigenous languages to become heard and visible in the school community. It thus contributes to the promotion and maintenance of Indigenous languages and cultures in larger institutional contexts.

Through practising SET, educators position Indigenous languages as a valuable and valued component of school life. The pedagogical attitude educators develop in the process of preparing material resources and engaging in tandem learning with their students is the basis of greater language awareness and equality. From an interpersonal point of view, SET is useful to build effective, positive relationships between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous educators.

### Hypothesis (2):

As the above description of SET shows, the model has many links with the general guidelines and the concrete descriptors of outcomes in the framework for Australian languages. This provides grounds to validate hypothesis (2):

<b>ACARA (2015)</b>	<b>SET</b>
Caters for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages	Is adaptable to all languages represented in any given student cohort.
Intercultural learning	Includes elements of cultural and intercultural learning.
Critically examining colonial representations of Indigenous languages	Invites educators and students to critically look at the language materials they gather and adapt. Students can point out differences between the linguistic norms represented in those materials compared to today's spoken language and propose modifications and alternatives.
Targeted outcomes for the L1 pathway: Communicating, Understanding and Language Awareness	Sets the framework for students and educators to communicate in a mutually respectful way, promoting reciprocal linguistic and cultural understanding as well as language awareness (see part 8.1.1 for details and examples).
Targeted outcomes for the LR (language revival) pathway: Communicating, Understanding, Identity, Reflecting and Language Awareness	Sets the framework for students and educators to communicate in a mutually respectful way, promoting reciprocal linguistic and cultural understanding as well as language awareness. Invites students to reflect on their identity as custodians of endangered Indigenous languages and cultural knowledges (see part 8.1.2).

Table 9.1. Integrating Indigenous Languages into Teaching Through SET

### **Weaknesses and limits of the dissertation**

The suggested model of SET only has relevance in urban Indigenous education where, at the time this dissertation was written, a lack of Indigenous language teachers has necessitated the presence of non-Indigenous professionals. SET is a practical pedagogical tool in this reality. SET cannot immediately change the underrepresentation of Indigenous teachers

in urban Australian schools. However, through increasing students' language awareness and feelings of proficiency, it can plant the seeds for Indigenous students to pursue teaching careers, including careers in language teaching specifically.

I have developed the SET model as a non-Indigenous educator. In the process of my research, I have tried to respect cultural protocol to the best of my knowledge. I have discussed the ambiguity inherent in the use of materials which have largely been compiled by non-Indigenous persons, thus possibly perpetuating a colonial attitude. In their ideology of disinventing and reconstituting languages, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have revealed the inadequacies of pervasively accepted named languages to represent linguistic reality. Named languages reflect colonial, socio-political motives. The ideology of disinventing languages highlights the weaknesses in Australian named languages, mostly documented by non-Indigenous community outsiders. Some of the students' metalinguistic comments during the exploratory study provide evidence for this concern. Students described that delineating one language from another seemed controversial due to the realities of some lexical overlap, for instance in Maung and Iwaidja (see chapter five, Excerpt I). To avoid using existing language materials, it could be envisageable to start from scratch and ask students to conduct a teaching task, such as teaching basic vocabulary, purely orally. The recordings would then have to serve as a basis for the educator's language learning.

In terms of evaluating how effective the SET model was, I relied on anecdotal feedback in the exploratory study. An evaluation of improved literacy outcomes was embedded in the Yolŋu matha reading tandem in the form of a bilingual worksheet. Similarly, student feedback was elicited verbally and informally by Milica, the tutor in the follow-up study. In both studies, questionnaires, a control group or data about students' literacy performance in various subjects after the project could have helped to gain a more nuanced understanding of how students benefited academically. For such measures to be meaningful, though, SET should be used over a longer period of time and with a larger cohort.

In the follow-up study, both students used a very close approximation of informal Australian English in their interactions with Milica, making it difficult for Milica to notice specific features of their way of communicating in Aboriginal English. This confirms that the use of ELF is indispensable for SET, but highlights the specific situation in which students' verbal communication skills in English are perceived as functional in a school setting. Milica made several initial attempts to elicit some basic phrases and vocabulary in the students' home language. Student responses were minimal due to the similarity in lexicon. As a result, Milica did not understand Aboriginal English as a way of communicating or a language *per se* with specific features she could learn. Milica therefore did not proceed to seek out materials about features of Aboriginal English to bring into the sessions. Milica's reaction to the students' use of English and her subsequent choices to focus more on cultural learning for herself indicates a need for more guidance. A mentoring format in which I could have prepared some materials in Aboriginal English for Milica to study with her tutees might have redirected the learning towards more linguistic aspects. Instead, Milica's implementation of the SET format showed a sensitivity regarding the students' preference for verbal task completion.

The complexity of Milica's task in the follow-up study is two-fold. This complexity relates to the status of Aboriginal English which in itself is undetermined and Milica's focus on standard Australian English as the target language for the students. Valorising orality has been one way Milica was able to break away from the strong monolingual tradition which is inherent in second language learning and teaching and traditional tandem. Through the use of named languages as a basis for the language and culture exchanges, SET has not managed to leave the monolingual bias behind completely. It is only through a critical view and an open-minded discussion of archival and externally documented language materials that SET participants can develop a nuanced understanding of using tandem learning in the localised contexts of Indigenous languages in Australia. Once the processes of language hegemony and linguistic imperialism are understood, SET can promote a multilingual view of language

teaching and learning. This paradigm shift has been observed in other tandem settings and seems to be part of the evolutive process tandem learning is currently undergoing (Tardieu & Horgues, 2020a, p. 8).

Being researching guests at the respective colleges in both studies meant certain logistical limitations existed which made it impossible to eliminate gender bias. It also meant we could not be as effective in managing distractions for the participating students as we would have liked to. Due to a relatively small volume of data (14 hours, 36 minutes and 45 seconds) and the lack of control groups in both studies, it remains uncertain whether the benefits observed can be solely ascribed to the SET model or whether they could be the result of educators showing a genuine interest in students' home backgrounds, languages and cultures.

### **SET as a conceptual tool for educators**

Despite these weaknesses, it is possible to conclude that once tandem principles have been adapted and moulded into the SET model, including a flexible constellation encompassing more participants than the original tandem pair, the model presents a practical way of integrating Indigenous languages into the educational experience of Indigenous students in urban boarding schools. Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators benefit from linguistic learning, intercultural learning and experience positive interpersonal relationships. As the different settings, institutional expectations and linguistic backgrounds of students involved in the respective studies have illustrated, SET has to be understood as an adaptable format. It can be a stand-alone activity or integrated within ongoing tutoring sessions.

Tardieu and Horgues (2020b) have concluded that “Tandem remains a concept in itself, a set of essential principles that can materialize into various configurations” and ask for a view of the original principles “in a pragmatic rather than dogmatic perspective” (pp. 276-277). The student-educator model is actualised in mutually interested, respectful interactions

between non-Indigenous educators and Indigenous students. These interactions vary in frequency and length depending on the context of implementation, thus making SET a flexible model (see chapter seven, Figures 7.1. and 7.2.). The following figure summarises the features of the SET model regardless of how it is practised:



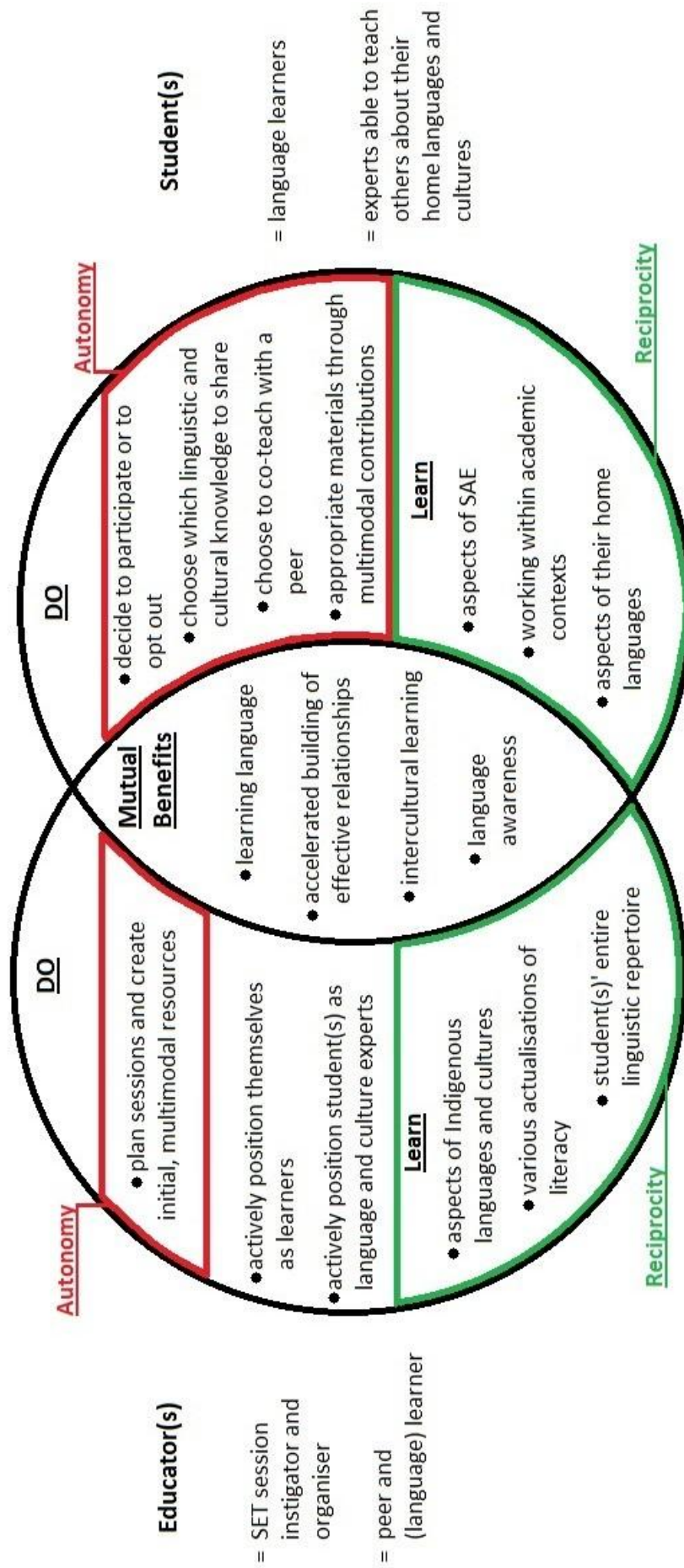


Figure 9.1. Overview of the SET Model

As figure 9.1. illustrates, SET implies a temporary interchangeability of roles (who is teaching and who is learning). Depending on the context, as shown in the follow-up study, reciprocal learning can apply to different areas and related not only to language learning. Elements of intercultural learning were documented in the exploratory study, but were especially significant in the follow-up study. In the follow-up study, cultural learning replaced the language learning component almost completely for the educator.

The original tandem principle of autonomy has undergone significant changes in SET. Autonomy encompassed students' choices of how to contribute to the materials the educators had prepared, decisions about which knowledge was shareable and the choice to participate or opt out of the literacy activities proposed by the educators. An implementation of SET over a longer period of time or with older Indigenous students with more advanced self-regulatory skills would grant students' a wider variety of autonomous choices. Students could choose topics, learning goals and be involved in or in charge of the creating or selecting study materials.

Multimodality was actualised differently in both studies. Students in the exploratory study employed various ways of multimodal meaning-making. Students' contributions included drawing, spelling and translating in response to the multimodal materials I had proposed. During the follow-up study, the educator's scribing and use of videos as sources of information for research tasks were multimodal choices. These choices helped to bridge the gap between the two students' verbal communicative ability and their less developed written expression skills.

Language awareness increased for all participants. The most salient aspects of language awareness for the educators included understanding some of the linguistic complexities of oral Indigenous languages, the colonial imprint regarding their documentation and the cultural protocols implicit in their use. Educators also became aware of the implications of these factors in an urban school setting where Indigenous students are taught exclusively in English. Students develop language awareness in their explorations of written

materials in their oral home languages and through witnessing various language learning strategies as demonstrated by the educators. Students may also notice language change through studying archival materials in their home languages which may contain ancestral vocabulary. All data collected confirmed that an educator's consistent interest in the students' backgrounds, cultural knowledge and interests proved beneficial for effectively building rapport.

### **Perspectives for further research**

There are ample opportunities for further research based on the SET model. Using the approach over a few school terms could enable an analysis of the long-term effects of practising SET. Questions to address in the Australian context could include: (1) To what extent can SET help educators to explain certain features of English in contrast to Indigenous languages? This question would aim at enhancing literacy instruction in ESL/EAL classes. (2) To what extent will educators feel empowered to confidently liaise with students, parents and other members of the school community in rehearsed exchanges in their home languages? (3) What evidence is there of educators developing a self-reflective stance towards their own practice? (4) What effects does the continuous practice of SET have on the whole school community? (5) What effects does the continuous practice of SET have on students' overall academic performance? (6) What effects does the continuous practice of SET have on students' self-perception, their perception of school and their perception of their own cultures and languages? (7) Which assessment and self-assessment tools could enhance the practical use of tandem in institutional settings?

To answer such questions, gathering student feedback about the model in a formalised manner would be indispensable. If consent could be obtained and was justifiable on ethical grounds, video-recordings of SET sessions could enhance the multimodal dimension of the present analysis as suggested in other linguistic studies with a strong multimodal orientation

(see Morgenstern, 2014; Morgenstern & Beaupoil, 2015; Morgenstern et al., 2016; Morgenstern, 2019).

From the angle of postcolonial scholarship, another research perspective is offered by the fact that more linguistic communities than not have experienced the effects of Eurocentric naming. To contribute to Makoni's and Pennycook's (2007) ideology of language disinvention and reconstitution, it could be helpful to research the effects of the student-educator practice in all the regions where colonial schooling practices have resulted in "disruption of intergenerational language transmission mechanisms and cascading negative impacts on children's' well-being, and academic achievement, and on Indigenous peoples' social, emotional, and cultural attachments to their heritage identities" (Lee & McCarty, 2017, p. 423). SET can thus be applied in all areas of the globe where speakers of Indigenous languages are being educated by people who do not share these languages.

An application of the SET model in other plurilingual teaching and learning contexts is also envisageable. In Europe, for example, migration has added linguistic diversity to many classrooms which has not necessarily been taken into account by the majority of existing pedagogical practices (see Forlot, 2012). The use of SET techniques could reinforce the innovative tendencies of "intercompréhension, éveil aux langues, didactique intégrée, contrastivité métalinguistique" [mutual comprehension, language awakening, integrated didactics, metalinguistic contrastivity" Forlot (2012) has identified as goals of numerous researchers and pedagogues in France who want all educators to take into account the plural nature of contemporary French society (p. 112).

It is my hope that the model can inspire educators and researchers alike to explore its potential in as broad a context as possible to contribute to greater language equality, greater intercultural understanding and awareness and ultimately greater wellbeing students and educators of diverse origins.

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# **Le Tandem élève-éducateur avec des élèves indigènes dans les internats urbains en Australie - Deux études de cas en pédagogie du translinguaging**

## **Résumé**

### **Mots clés : élèves indigènes, Australie, tandem, tutorat, translinguaging**

Cette recherche vise à étudier et rendre-compte du potentiel de l'apprentissage en tandem entre des élèves indigènes<sup>1</sup> et des éducateurs non-indigènes. Depuis 2016, l'intégration des langues indigènes est devenue une exigence officielle pour toute l'Australie. Grâce à un modèle de tandem créé spécifiquement dans lequel les élèves enseignent leurs langues à leurs éducateurs non-indigènes, je propose une manière d'avancer vers l'égalité des langues dans des internats urbains australiens.

Les bases théoriques de ce modèle tandem rassemblent la pédagogie ELF, la théorie du translinguaging telle que élaborée par García et Li Wei (2014) et García et Kleyn (2016), la pédagogie critique et l'éducation en « heritage languages ».

Afin de répondre à la question de recherche « dans quelle mesure des élèves indigènes et des éducateurs non-indigènes peuvent-ils bénéficier de l'apprentissage en tandem dans un internat urbain ? », j'ai choisi la recherche-action. J'ai d'abord testé le modèle de tandem pour lequel j'ai choisi le nom de « student-educator tandem » (SET) avec quatre élèves âgés de 11 et 13 ans internes dans une école de Darwin en 2016. Les langues des élèves sont le Kunwinjku, le Maung, l'Iwaidja et le Gupapuyŋu. Cette étude exploratoire a fait émerger une gamme de stratégies d'enseignement et de feedback.

Une étude de suivi dans un internat à Adélaïde a été mise en place en 2019 par une tutrice indépendante. Les deux élèves (de 14 et 15 ans) participant à cette étude ne parlent aucune langue indigène ancestrale, mais se définissent comme parlant l'anglais dit « Aboriginal English ». Au lieu d'un apprentissage linguistique, c'est la construction effective d'une relation interpersonnelle et le développement de compétences interculturelles qui se sont révélés comme étant les principaux bénéfices du modèle de « student-educator tandem » dans ce contexte.

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## **Student-Educator Tandem with Indigenous Students in Urban Australian Boarding Schools - Two case studies in translinguaging pedagogy**

### **Abstract**

#### **Key words: Indigenous students, Australia, tandem, tutoring, translinguaging**

This research explores the potential of tandem learning between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous educators. Since 2016, the integration of Indigenous languages into all school curricula has become an official requirement for all Australian states and territories. In a specifically devised tandem model in which the students teach their home languages to their non-Indigenous educators, I propose a practical way of moving toward language equality in urban Australian boarding schools.

In its theoretical underpinnings, this tandem model brings together English as a Lingua Franca pedagogy, translinguaging theory as elaborated by García and Li Wei (2014) and García and Kleyn (2016), critical pedagogies and heritage language education.

To answer the research question: "To what extent Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous educators can benefit from tandem learning in an urban Australian boarding school?", I have chosen an action research approach. I first trialled the tandem model which I have chosen to call "student-educator tandem" (SET), with four students between the age of 11 and 13 in a boarding school in Darwin in 2016. The students' home languages were Kunwinjku, Maung, Iwaidja and Gupapuyŋu. During this exploratory study, a variety of teaching and feedback strategies have emerged.

A follow-up study at a boarding school in Adelaide was conducted in 2019 by an independent tutor. The two students (aged 14 and 15) participating in this study did not speak any ancestral Indigenous languages, but identified as speakers of Aboriginal English. Instead of language learning, effective interpersonal rapport building and intercultural competencies development emerged as the main benefits of the student-educator tandem model in this context.

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<sup>1</sup> J'ai choisi le terme « indigène » dans ma traduction du résumé malgré les connotations négatives en français afin de rester fidèle au terme « Indigenous » en anglais. « Indigenous » est le terme de référence utilisé de manière inclusive dans le contexte australien pour les personnes aborigènes et celles qui sont d'origine des Torres Strait Islands (Burridge et al., 2012, p. 7).