

Domination and Resistance in Christianized Schooling in Amazon

Raimundo Nonato de Pádua Câncio¹
Sônia Maria da Silva Araújo²

¹Universidade Federal do Tocantins (UFT), Palmas/TO – Brazil

²Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA), Belém/PA – Brazil

ABSTRACT – Domination and Resistance in Christianized Schooling in Amazon. The aim of this study is to demonstrate how Christianized schooling, mobilized by American missionaries, was appropriated by the Waiwai indigenous people from Aldeia Mapuera, state of Pará, in the Brazilian Amazon. Methodologically, this is an ethnographic case study carried out in the Indigenous Territory Nhamundá-Mapuera in Pará, with teachers and indigenous people. At the theoretical level, data analysis is inspired by decolonial theory. The results show that the Waiwai did not passively accept the imposed process, despite understanding schooling as an irremediable value. Practices of domination and resistance, contradictorily, were being established and today they act as instruments of survival.

Keywords: Waiwai. Schooling. Christianization. Domination. Resistance.

RESUMO – Dominação e Resistência na Escolarização Cristianizada na Amazônia. O objetivo deste estudo é demonstrar como a escolarização cristianizada, mobilizada por missionários norte-americanos, foi apropriada pelos indígenas Waiwai da Aldeia Mapuera, estado do Pará, Amazônia brasileira. Metodologicamente, trata-se de um estudo de caso do tipo etnográfico realizado no Território Indígena Nhamundá-Mapuera/PA com professores e sujeitos indígenas. No plano teórico, a análise dos dados se inspira na teoria decolonial. Os resultados mostram que os Waiwai não aceitaram passivamente o processo imposto, não obstante compreenderem a escolarização como um valor irremediável. Práticas de dominação e resistência, contraditoriamente, foram sendo estabelecidas e hoje atuam como instrumental de sobrevivência.

Palavras-chave: Waiwai. Escolarização. Cristianização. Dominação. Resistência.

Introduction

The history of schooling of the Waiwai people, which took place in Aldeia Mapuera, and which we present in this article, is yet another example of how ideas, concepts and western perspectives were introduced in the most diverse colonized cultures in the world, transformed into peripheral ones. This history, defined by scholars of decolonial theory as a process of political and epistemological domination, tries to empty men and women of their subjectivities, making a form of *being* and *knowing* prevailing that prevents them from advancing beyond political independence.

In the specific case of the Waiwai, as it also happened (and still does) with a large part of the world's indigenous populations, qualified for years by the European West as devoid of culture, history did not proceed without resistance, quite the contrary. As we will see, the domination projected by the American Protestant missionaries among the Waiwai, who educated them through Christianization, resulted in social and linguistic transformations that, contradictorily, instrumentalized them to articulate strategies and tactics of resistance.

Methodologically, it is an ethnographic case study, carried out at Aldeia Mapuera, located in the Indigenous Territory (TI)¹ Nhamundá-Mapuera, in the state of Pará, in the Brazilian Amazon, with a qualitative approach. The case study of the ethnographic type has its constitution bases in Anthropology and has been used by educational research and defined, according to André (2008, p. 23), as an “[...] adaptation of ethnography to the study of an educational case”. The author explains that, in education, the dense description must be of the educational process and, for the study to be recognized as ethnographic, it is necessary to emphasize the singular, the particular, be it a person, an institution, an innovative program or a social group (André, 2008).

Following the guidelines of ethnography, we basically use observation and reporting as data collection techniques. The observations and iconographic material were recorded in detail in a field diary. The reports were captured through audio recording, carried out during ethnography. For this article, we present fragments of transcripts of reports from 08 (eight) interlocutors: 06 (six) indigenous teachers and 04 (four) indigenous non-teachers. In order to preserve the anonymity of our interlocutors, throughout the text we identified indigenous teachers as INDPROF 1, INDPROF 2, INDPROF 3, INDPROF 4, INDPROF 5 and INDPROF 6; and indigenous non-teachers such as IND 1 and IND 2.

The text is organized in two different sections, in addition to the introduction and the final considerations presented. In the first section, we bring considerations about the social and linguistic formation of the Waiwai of Aldeia Mapuera, highlighting the complexity of the cultural formation of this people and some aspects of the indigenous language in Waiwai communication. In the second section, we present and discuss the process of schooling the knowledge of Americans among them,

highlighting the outbreaks and disputes around the conditions of production and maintenance of knowledge.

Social and Linguistic Formation of the Waiwai of Aldeia Mapuera

Studies on the cultural background of the Waiwai indigenous people record that it derives from a mixture of ethnic groups originating in Waiwai, Parukoto, Tarumã and Mawayana. For this reason, in a certain context, a Waiwai can call itself Parukoto, as do the Katuena, the Hixkaryana and the Xereu. Thus, the question of who exactly the Waiwai peoples are is complex, both for anthropologists and for the indigenous themselves (Howard, 1993, p. 230). The Danish anthropologist Niels Fock, when conducting field research among these people in the years 1954-1955, noted the difficulty of determining the group due to its mixed origin. However, according to him, the Waiwai are, from an ethnic point of view, dominated by the Parukoto, even though, “[...] from a linguistic point of view, they seem independent” (Fock, 1963, p. 9).

The spelling of the term Waiwai² varies and is also registered as *Uaiuai* by the ethnological literature, whose generic designation refers to several indigenous peoples who came together in a given historical moment and today occupy, in Brazil, an extensive region comprising the South of Guyana (river Essequibo), the East of the State of Roraima (Jatapu and Anauá rivers) and the Northwest of the State of Pará (Mapuera River), in the northern Amazon, a region where the Serra Acaraí delimits the border between Brazil and Guyana. Fock (1963), who studied the Waiwai culture, was among them before the American missionary presence, recorded that Waiwai was a term coined by the Wapixanas to designate an indigenous people who had the lightest skin³. In the Wapixana language, according to the same author, Waiwai has the same meaning as *white flour* or *tapioca*⁴.

In Brazil, the Waiwai occupy an area that encompasses three indigenous lands, TI Waiwai (RR), in Southwest Roraima; TI Nhamundá-Mapuera (AM/PA), in northwestern Pará and northern Amazonas; and TI Trombetas-Mapuera (AM/RR/PA). In the latter is located the Aldeia Mapuera (or Yxamna), the *locus* of investigation of this study. Considered the mother village, it is bathed by the Mapuera River (Mapuera Yewku), one of the tributaries of the Trombetas-PA river. The 2016 FUNAI data, obtained in Mapuera, indicate that only 1,062 indigenous people lived in this village alone, grouped into families that lived in approximately one hundred houses.

The most representative construction of the Waiwai in Aldeia Mapuera is *Umaná*, also called the big house, built in a strategic area not very centralized, where the most traditional meetings and festivals of Waiwai culture are held. Currently *Umaná* has been hosting evangelical services because the Church (Kaan Mím) was demolished to build a more imposing temple. The Church in Mapuera, whose initial construc-

tion was guided by American missionaries, is located in a much more strategic space than *Umaná*.

Regarding the sociolinguistic aspects of the Waiwai of Aldeia Mapuera, it is important to note that they are multilingual, as they live in a border region, occupying territories in Brazil and Guyana of English colonization. The experiences of contact of the Waiwai with other indigenous peoples and with the other inhabitants of the countries where they circulate, enabled them to speak, in addition to their original languages, the languages of other indigenous peoples and also the national languages of the border countries of region.

Meira (2006, p. 160) explains that the Karib language family, of which the Waiwai are originally, has members in several countries in the Amazon region. In addition to Brazil and the countries already mentioned, there are languages of this family also in Colombia and Venezuela. According to the author, the Karib languages are more centered in the North of the Amazon River, unlike the Tupi languages, found mainly in the South of Amazonas. He also highlights that, before the invasion of America, the peoples of this language family also occupied the islands of the Caribbean. With that, we can say that the current distribution of the Karib languages reflects historical exchanges resulting from the relations between the original populations and the European invaders.

Still according to Meira (2006, p. 169), the classification of the Karib family presents several doubtful points. For him, there is a provisional classification where the Waiwai language is linked to the *Parukotoano Group*, from the Guyana branch of the Karib family. Frikel's (1958) linguistic and ethnological classification also shows that the Trombetas River basin was (and still is) inhabited almost exclusively by Karib peoples, although there are still indigenous speakers of languages Arawak, like Mawayana and Wapixana, for example.

Frikel (1958, p. 25) explains that it is highly likely that the names of these groups (among them the Waiwai) are not self-denominations, but are related to the social space, landscapes, and rivers of the region in which they live. The author also deduces that the inhabitants of this region share common nominations, such as those with the ending *yana*, which means *people*, *residents*, or *people*. He explains that derivations such as these may have arisen from names associated with places, such as the Cachorro River (*kachu*), and the denomination of the people who inhabit the course of that river, the *Kachuyana*.

As it is about different peoples, it is necessary to think about what the authors call networks of relationships and changes that crossed these groups over time and reflected in the breaking of the *border lines* that, in a way, could define their identities. Hence to say that the understanding of the spatial distribution of these indigenous peoples, considering their linguistic and cultural aspects, points to the need for further studies on the sociolinguistic aspects of the peoples who lived and still live in the region called Baixo Amazonas.

Thus, it is important to consider the historical process in the reflections about the formation of the words of the Waiwai language, the linguistic exchanges, but it is also important to pay attention, in these relationships, to the situations of linguistic contact and the consequences of this for the social roles played in relations with the interlocutors, mainly for the dynamics of social interactions and cultural processes mediated by language. We can say that the Waiwai language currently spoken in Mapuera is crossed by all these marks, including the marks arising from the relationship of these peoples with English and Portuguese speakers, which presupposes linguistic loans, influences between languages that come into contact, which requires further studies.

Through dialogue with the Waiwai people, we were able to verify that the Waiwai language spoken in Aldeia Mapuera has a significant set of words and expressions from different origins, which refutes the idea of *linguistic purity* among them (Câncio, 2017). These lexical loans may have occurred for different reasons: the need for a word to designate something new within the culture; influence; borrowing expressions from one language, among others.

There are *loans* used to designate objects that did not exist between them before contacting American missionaries. As an example, we cite the terms for orange and papaya: *oranci* and *mamaya*, in waiwai, both assimilated from the terms *orange* and *papaya* of the English language (Câncio, 2017). In these two terms, we can say that there was the suppression of a sound segment in the words, a kind of assimilation of the sounds of a different, non-indigenous language, for the formation of a new word in the indigenous language.

There are words in Waiwai created to name an element or a being foreign to them, because some words initially used by non-indigenous people in that context were not endowed with meaning for the indigenous people, hence the need to be given a new name. As an example, we can mention *Kaan* (God), created to name a being who was, until then, alien to them, because he did not belong to that semantic field. As Câncio (2017, p. 145) observes, in this case, it is not exactly foreignism, but a word created in the indigenous language to situate and name the god of the foreigner, which configures the gap between current religiosity of the Waiwai culture.

When describing the phonological aspects of the Waiwai language, Neil Hawkins (1952) made use of the phonetic alphabet that at the time represented the North American tradition, where the *International Phonetic Alphabet* (IPA) was less used in language description works. There are, therefore, some differences in the most usual way of representing sounds by IPA. In this direction, Acácio (2011) made a detailed phonetic-phonological study of this language, considering that, before it, the only research on Waiwai phonology was that of Neil Hawkins (1952) and Robert Hawkins (1998). In 2002, linguistic missionary Robert Hawkins handed over the Bible to the Waiwai people translated into the indigenous language (Souza, 2014, p. 86).

In situations of contact with Portuguese speakers, the Waiwai need to understand some differences that exist between the sounds of this language and those of the indigenous language. Regarding Portuguese, they were taught to adapt the pronunciation of the word to the phonology rules of the Waiwai language. This understanding and the necessary adaptations demand a greater effort from the indigenous speaker, which is not always well accepted by non-indigenous people, since the initial contact between the two languages causes them some problems. Often the lack of these adaptations in the Waiwai's speeches is understood as a *mistake* for Portuguese speakers, that is, an infraction of the orthographic conventions of the Portuguese language, which makes the indigenous people feel embarrassed, as evidenced in their speeches⁵:

Our students have many problems. For example, in our language we have several sounds. We exchanged the sound of the P of the Portuguese language for the sound of the F, the sound of the L for the R. These exchanges make it very difficult to learn Portuguese [...] it is important to understand that not everyone likes or wants to learn Portuguese, there are students who also like math very much, and when the Portuguese teacher arrives, many of them are disinterested. So, whether to like Portuguese is something individual, it depends on each one (INDPROF 2 report, 11/16/2016).

[...] some sounds of Portuguese are different from the sounds of the Waiwai language. In Portuguese we have the sound of the L, but that sound, in our language, is replaced by the sound of the R (ra). There is no sound (la) in our language. There is also no sound of G in our language, so we substitute the sound of X (xi). So, we have different sounds, and that makes them have a lot of difficulties, until they understand it. They have a lot of difficulty in the Portuguese language regarding the meaning of some words (INDPROF 6 report, 11/22/2016).

Rotacism is quite common among indigenous people who speak Portuguese. As an example, we can observe, very frequently, the exchange of the consonant [l] for the consonant [r] in words, as in *bolacha* > *buracha*. This phonological process⁶ becomes a highly stigmatized phenomenon in cities by Portuguese-speaking non-indigenous people, being an undesirable linguistic behavior for them. When rotacism occurs, the indigenous speaker is generally evaluated negatively, that is, as a subject who speaks Portuguese badly for being careless with the language and laughter is the first manifestation of this disapproval. Such a reaction is almost always associated with the stereotyped view that people have of indigenous peoples.

Among the Waiwai of Aldeia Mapuera, we can say that the use of Portuguese is still little recurrent, if we consider in that context the other languages spoken. Another important aspect is that a Waiwai is rarely monolingual, as the need to communicate with other peoples

means that they always learn other languages. The elderly are mostly multilingual, as they speak, in addition to Waiwai and other indigenous languages, Portuguese and English, bearing in mind that many of them came from Guyana (formerly English Guiana) to Brazil in the mid-1940s. The issue of multilingualism among them can be seen in the following statements:

We currently use the Waiwai language, but first we used the ancient language. Then, when we came to Aldeia Mapuera, we speak a different language. Mawayana, Hixkaryana, Tiriyo, Xerew, Kiyana, among others, came here. Therefore, several ethnic groups lived here. But there was the Waiwai language, and we started to learn this language (INDPROF 3 report, 11/21/2016).

Here we have several languages, we have the general language, which is Waiwai, Mawayana, Tunayana, Wapixana and Hixkaryana. There are several ethnicities, which is why there are several languages, but many languages are rarely spoken and others have even been lost (Report from IND 1, 11/21/2016).

Portuguese speakers in Aldeia Mapuera, displaced from Guyana, are now mostly adults. They came to Brazilian territory as children, founded their villages and made expeditions through Brazilian cities, starting to have more frequent contacts with non-indigenous people. Some of these adults are the current leaders, which requires greater ease with Portuguese and also provides them with more trips to the cities. The lingua franca, the most widely spoken in Mapuera, is the Waiwai language. They defend the maintenance and use of the indigenous language as those who defend their own territory, as can be seen below:

[...] our first language is waiwai. It is part of our customs. We are used to speaking in the indigenous language, we speak between ourselves and the people in the community. We do not want to lose this custom, we want to preserve our culture, and, for that, we keep our Waiwai language in contact with each other [...] (INDPROF 4 report, 06/27/2016).

A variety of Portuguese is also spoken in Mapuera, whose acquisition occurs in adverse conditions, by mostly young people. The limitations resulting from the fact that these indigenous people when adults and the elderly no longer have access to devices that facilitate the learning of Portuguese, generate, in some of them, a potential cultural resistance to the Portuguese language, emphasized in the discourse in favor of maintaining the mother tongue. We found that the most recurrent language, including at school, is the Waiwai language.

Christianized Schooling of Waiwai Promoted by North American Missionaries

English geographer Robert Schomburgk, British geologist Barrington Brown and French geographer Henri Coudreau were the three travelers who made contact with the Waiwai in the 19th century, according to Schuler Zea (2010, p. 3-4), and registered that among these indigenous peoples there was already a wide network of exchanges, which extended to other indigenous groups in the region, through which the circulation of objects, techniques, rituals, and people took place. Howard (1993) comments that in this space of the Brazilian Amazon there was a relationship of exchange between the indigenous people, which even involved interactions with other peoples of the English, Dutch and French Guianas, in addition to Venezuela. This wide exchange network will take place amid a process of coloniality⁷ that deepens from the 19th century when using strategies other than persecution and capture, but religious conversion, the preaching of the Christian faith, which also reached people of African origin displaced to the region of Alto Trombetas-PA, resulting in the formation of villages under religious guidelines. In relation specifically to the border areas in Northern Brazil, Souza (2006) explains that:

There was no institutionalized missionary organization for the catechesis of indigenous nations residing on the border between Brazil and English Guiana, only sporadic campaigns for evangelization, resulting from ecclesiastical communities located in Georgetown. There were also isolated cases of Makuxi Indians [...] who adhered to Christianity due to their short contact with the old Anglican missions of the 19th century, as well as churches of the same denomination, located in villages, small towns and in the capital Georgetown (Souza, 2006, p. 19-20).

Travelers' access to the border areas where the Waiwai people circulated was generally from the North towards the South, that is, through Guyana and not Brazil. This was possible due to Guyana's international relations with the United States since this country is of English colonization. However, Howard (2001) notes that the more frequent coexistence of the Waiwai peoples with non-indigenous people (Karaywa) will intensify from the 1950s, when the North American (protestants) missionaries began to settle on the banks of the high Essequibo River in Guyana. In this relationship, it is possible to perceive mechanisms of control and exploitation that denounce the continuity of colonial forms of social, material, and intersubjective domination, which are striking in the power structures and ways of being and knowledge of Latin American countries (Quijano, 2005). Considering this, the decolonial perspective presents itself as a possibility of rewriting the silenced histories, the denied subjectivities and the knowledge subordinated by modern rationality (Escobar, 2005), the founding face of coloniality.

Caixeta de Queiroz (2015) explains that the first evangelical front among the Waiwai occurred *by hands* of the Hawkins brothers (Rader,

Neil, and Robert Hawkins) and by Claude Leavitt, the latter called by the *Kron* Indians. These missionaries had been active in the region since 1945, but decided to establish themselves among the Tarumã-Parukoto around 1949-1950 (Caixeta de Queiroz, 2015). Ewká, one of the most important shamans for the Waiwai, was the first indigenous person to be converted, through missionary strategies, to evangelical Christianity.

However, Schuler Zea (2010), a researcher in the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) Anthropology Department, draws attention to the relations between the Waiwai and the missionaries, because, for this author, they will occur in different areas, “[...] therefore, this process should not be simply called ‘conversion’ to Christianity but seen in the context of a complex network of relationships with several others, fundamental to the constitution of the Waiwai collective” (Schuler Zea, 2010, p. 8).

On the initial pages of the work *Christ's witch doctor*⁸, Dowdy (1997) uses “[...] a mystical-religious and indoctrinating discourse” to narrate, in a pacification tone, the introduction of new religious moral rules among the Waiwai (Câncio; Araújo, 2018). In the following excerpt we can see how this insertion and the missionary expectation of conversion of the indigenous people were plotted:

[...] the missionaries concluded that if they wanted to win the people, they would have to start by reaching out to men and, through them, women, and children. The proof of being right, this different means of approach, came many times in the following months, starting with the conversion of the most unlikely man in the tribe [Ewká]. This and other interventions - some recognized only belatedly with God's guidance - came through prayer. A man began to pray for the uai-uais in 1926, when, to the world, this tribe was just a name listed in the moldy newspapers of nineteenth-century explorers. Helping to reveal the power of God to these people was a concern of Christians in America, Great Britain and elsewhere - that of relatives, personal friends, churches of origin of the missionaries and their supporting entities, and the Evangelical Mission of the Amazon [...] (Dowdy, 1997, p. 10).

Knowing that there would be no possibility of conversion to the new rules if conducts were imposed, soon the missionaries deduced that the transformation of the indigenous people into Christians would not be successful if the whole group were not dominated to the point of incorporating Christian morality into their daily lives, a political objective of control and subjugation of the missionary project. Unlike common conversion practices among indigenous peoples, missionaries began to invest in a strategic plan to reach everyone based on the acceptance of Christ by Ewká, the main shaman and spiritual leader of the Waiwai. This process was always started with prayers and, like the missionaries, Ewká, once converted, assumed the same behavior as the missionaries, like using the blackboard to teach the alphabet and the

new knowledge about the Christian god to the other indigenous people (Dowdy, 1997).

Regarding a more effective process of schooling the knowledge of Americans among the Waiwai, Souza (2014) notes that missionaries were urgent to put *the role of God* in the Waiwai language,

[...] because the belief in Kaan would be based on the belief of the Book, and the WaiWai representations and conduct would be based on teaching the Role of God. Old Testament Bible stories were translated to reinforce the notions of Christian theology 'becoming a mirror in which the WaiWai could see themselves' [...] reinforcing conceptions about creation, sin, Christ. The interest in the stories increased the desire of many WaiWai to master the art of making paper speak. In addition to the stories, songs served in parallel for evangelization and the reinforcement of Christian dogmas (Souza, 2014, p. 79).

This relationship and contact, which took place between domination and resistance, resulted in an inter-place, based on the differences (Bhabha, 2013) between indigenous people and evangelical missionaries. In the Waiwai Village it is possible to verify that the god Waiwai has aspects related to the Christian faith, but also has strong elements of the indigenous ancestral culture, and an example of this is that this god is spelled with a word created by the indigenous themselves - Kaan.

Another aspect that deserves to be highlighted is that Waiwai pastors preach the Bible in the Waiwai language and are always characterized by elements of their ancestral culture in the ceremonies. In conversations with the indigenous people in Aldeia Mapuera, we found that many of their myths survive in their memories and are expressed in their speeches in everyday situations, as well as in shamanic healing rituals, even though these are today marginalized by virtue of religious fundamentalism preached by the Americans (Câncio; Araújo, 2018, p. 51).

In this game of social forces between different cultures, always mediated by conflicts, the systems of values and truths became relative, they were often questioned and overlapped. The culture of those who had certain control instruments, such as knowledge of the language of those who wanted to convert, had a greater tendency to overlap, given a "[...] set of control mechanisms - plans, recipes, rules - to govern behavior and man as dependent on such mechanisms" (Geertz, 2001, p. 32-33).

So that American missionaries could disseminate their ideologies among the Waiwai, they described, studied, and systematized the indigenous language and later taught it in written form. After that, in order to get them to know Christianity, they translated the Bible into the Waiwai language, a work carried out by the Hawkins brothers⁹. Among others, some teachings of missionaries can be found in the following excerpt:

[...] forgive each other instead of practicing witchcraft, be patient and merciful to others, overcome the habit of lying and stealing, having appropriate sexual behavior. Indians with more than one wife were advised to release all but one. This strategy also aimed to promote new marriages, as the number of men available was greater than the number of women. Each lesson was repeated by the missionaries at other meetings during the week, and for several weeks, until the subject was well memorized by the Indians. At some point, the native leadership itself would have 'discouraged' from performing nightly dances, as it led to the practice of sexual relations outside of marriage and decided to start all the festive meetings in the village with a biblical teaching (Dowdy, 1997, p. 214).

Regarding the rituals practiced by the Waiwai, Fock (1963) reports that before the insertion of the missionaries, two collective festivities of greater expression of the Waiwai cultures, *Shodewika* and *Yamo*, were held. The first occurred when one Waiwai village visited another; the second, when the Waiwai evoked the spirits of fertility through a dance in which they appeared in masks and stayed in the village for several months, performing secret dances linked to the anaconda. Schuler Zea (2010) observes that in both celebrations the myth *Shodewika*, narrated in Fock (1963), counts as a Waiwai couple, invited by the *people animals*¹⁰, went and arrived at a party. The author adds that "[...] the Waiwai not only refer to the *Shodewika* myth, but also continue certain aspects of *Shodewika* festivals, such as the one witnessed by Fock in the 1950s" (Schuler Zea, 2010, p. 10).

Souza (2006) explains that the party known as *Shodewika* related humans and animals. According to him, its origin lies in the myth of a hero of the same name who establishes the levels of contact between the Waiwai and the *animal peoples*. This "[...] ritual had the presence of guests belonging to animal tribes so that they could get married and so that the Waiwaization process could take place" (Souza, 2006, p. 8). During the party there was plenty of food and drink in the village and some people dressed up as animals to stage the hunt and the courage of hunters. It is still possible to highlight cultural marks of these parties in the Christian celebrations of Christmas and Easter, in which the success in hunting is also celebrated.

In turn, Howard (1993, p. 237) draws attention to the *Pawana* ritual, created, according to the author, in the mid-seventies to stage the arrival of visitors who lived more distant, whether human or not. She explains that:

Preparations for the ritual begin six weeks in advance, when patrons are chosen; this time is dedicated to the accumulation of large reserves of beiju and tapioca, as well as to collective companies that repair public land and produce basketry, ceramics, arrows and wooden sculptures, efforts that culminate, in the last ten days, in a collective hunt carried out by the men (Howard, 1993, p. 241).

It is a ritual, among others, that takes place during festivals that last about a week and are currently organized to take place during Christmas and Easter. It is an event in which the Waiwai dramatize their organizing principles from the conception of totality, which surpasses a thought based on smaller units of production and consumption. According to Howard (1993), aspects of parties from other indigenous peoples are involved in the *Pawana* ritual, as well as aspects of the Christian tradition, such as banquets, dances, ceremonial exchanges, and struggles, these introduced in the relationship with foreigners.

An interesting issue highlighted by this same author about this ritual is the staging of common situations in the historical cultural confrontations experienced by the Waiwai in the process of interacting with non-indigenous people in the extensive border territory of Brazil. In their imitations they enact some behaviors of visitors. They always use in this ritual some prop that identifies the *other*, different from *us*, who starts to be subjected in the ritual to comic situations (Howard, 1993, p. 260). In these imitations the Waiwai make little use of verbal language, body expression being the main means of communication. By imitating the *other*, they experience new perspectives, new dialogues, a new way of relating and experiencing things, notes the author.

Staging other people's behavioral gestures implies knowing other perspectives, other ways of being, and this possibility is explored by the Waiwai in the choice of imitations, which are beyond repetition and similarity, since they are more interested in making a difference. It is, therefore, not a faithful imitation of the other, but a caricature that leads them to funny situations, as highlighted by Howard (1993).

It is important to highlight in these ritual attitudes that refer to the control of the Waiwai, the appropriation and manipulation they make of the resources brought by the visitors, and this will occur in the midst of a game of attraction, persuasion, and seduction in the Waiwai relationship with non-indigenous people (Howard, 1993). In these scenarios, the *Pawana*, visitors, "[...] they despise the 'Waiwai' offerings, show greed by insisting on higher payments, they rush into negotiations, accuse their 'waiwai' business partners of being avaricious" (Howard, 1993, p. 246).

For Howard (1993), although improvisation "[...] takes place amidst laughter and noise, being defined as 'joke' and 'farce', it plays on sensitive strings of 'serious' culture", because, for the author, this process of building joy also expresses a way of building society. Howard (1993, p. 238) highlights that the playful staging of the imaginary arrival of visitors shows the continuity "[...] the impulse to stage the principles of production and reproduction of this society, under the new conditions imposed by contact with the West". Dias Jr. (2005), in turn, considers that these opposite scenarios mark a difference, demonstrate how alterity is built between them, and reveal themselves as a way to reformulate and renew the positions and relationships established in that context.

Howard (1993) understands that the *other* for the Waiwai is a challenge to be faced, not something to be avoided. That they understand that through this relationship there is a possibility for them to show their persuasion skills, since this other person may also have attractive resources and powers for them; that point to the historical exchange of material and immaterial resources between the subjects. It is important to note that many dances and festive cycles were transformed by the Waiwai into common events, but such events are always loaded with symbolisms of indigenous cosmology, which marks a position of resistance. This demonstrates that in exchange relations there was not only a process of appropriation of other cultures, but, above all, of hybridization and resignification of ancestral rituals.

The knowledge of the unfolding of some aspects of the rituals practiced by the Waiwai in this process of contact with foreigners is important for us to understand that the Christianized schooling promoted by North American missionaries does not only involve questions related to the process of teaching and learning the indigenous language, but also the dissemination of a set of Christian ideologies that sought to profoundly interfere in indigenous culture, which will occur in a context of disputes that continue to this day. This form of coloniality of Being is closely related to the non-existence and dehumanization of subjects (Walsh, 2007), since for missionaries the indigenous people needed salvation because they lived in sin, they were unable to think and build their own history, arguments used to justify the imposition of Christian morals and ethics.

In this game of social forces, the indigenous language learned by the missionaries was not only used as a vehicle for transmitting information, but it was also used, above all, as an instrument of power that aimed to underestimate and transform the culture of the other. With the knowledge written in the indigenous language, they worked to legitimize that knowledge, since it would be contradictory not to validate it, since they were taught with methodical rigor¹¹.

More systematically, since a large part of the indigenous adults already had the knowledge of writing and reading their own language, the missionaries began to teach Waiwai writing to children at school as well. In this direction, they trained some students to be monitors. Although she arrived among the Waiwai in 1974, it was not until 1976 that missionary Irene Benson started teaching children to read and write at school. At that time, four indigenous monitors were appointed to work with her, who already had a certain command of Waiwai reading and writing.

The missionary then started a literacy process that led the children to read and study the Bible. This teaching process lasted until the 4th grade (5th year). When students reached this last grade, they repeated it in the following years, since they were denied the continuity of their studies. The indigenous teachers say how this happened:

[...] I started to study with her [Sister Irene]. I studied at school, but at school we only studied literacy in the Waiwai language. [...] she also learned to speak our language [...] (INDPROF 6 report, 11/22/2016).

It was she [Sister Irene] who taught us our language, produced, and also helped to produce some written materials about our indigenous language. And it was this material that helped us learn to read the Bible (Report from INDPROF 2, 11/16/2016).

Protestantism-based books, writing and reading become the strongest expression of Western culture in that context. The role of writing, in this process, is an element that is symbolically articulated to social practices, imposing the spelling on the one who sees himself as a graphic artist. The missionaries, for mastering reading and writing, ended up being considered lords of a higher religion. They gathered the necessary instruments to persuade or force the subjects to abandon a set of beliefs and practices in order to adopt new knowledge with the records of Western culture, such as Christianity, which will develop amidst clashes and resistance. In the light of decoloniality, Christian morality, the basis of this process, is configured in a form of epistemic violence and the political/scientific discourse, as understood by Quijano (2005), is now used by American missionaries to mark a hierarchical difference between them and the Waiwai and also to cause the silencing and forgetting of indigenous values and practices.

The introduction of writing among the Waiwai people by evangelical missionaries had the Bible as their main instrument, which became, for many years, the only text read in Aldeia Mapuera, since reading was superimposed on writing, given the pretension of conversion religious. In the process, two seemingly distant worlds - that of the missionaries and that of the indigenous people - intertwined in a power relationship that manifested itself against the indigenous people, mainly due to the demonization and the denial of their knowledge. Everything that did not fit the religious and moral standards defined by Christianity was considered by missionaries to be out of the standard of humanity and civility and was therefore fought against.

Convinced of the need to evangelize the Waiwai, the missionary used the indigenous language to school their knowledge, making Western culture present in that context. It makes the discourse of Christianization, which was previously foreign to the indigenous, become familiar, acquiring meaning among them. This process took place on a daily basis and one of the strategies used to avoid contact between indigenous people and other groups, in order not to jeopardize the *domination* by conversion project, was to keep them under *control*, through the knowledge taught in the writing learning process. An indigenous person tells how the missionary operated:

She didn't teach us English, her language. She said that she would teach only the indigenous language at school, that we should learn only Waiwai, and that we needed to

learn only to read the Bible. But then, another chief said that we should learn at least two languages. Then everything changed again. Sister Irene said that she did not want to devalue our village. She was an anthropologist, which is why she didn't want to devalue us (IND2 report, 11/25/2016).

About the linguistic insubordination movement, which will manifest itself in the escape strategies for the city, when the indigenous people violate the rules imposed by the missionaries, we can say that the Waiwai were motivated by the desire to establish contact with Portuguese speakers and this required knowledge and appropriation of this new language. This desire led them to break the imposed rules and to invest in expeditions to the cities, creating strategies to enter the non-indigenous context. In the following excerpt, a professor addresses one of his expeditions to the city:

He said he would have it checked to see if we were leaving for the city. And he said: you are leaving for the city without any authorization [...] But we told ourselves that we needed to go anyway [...] Two of our friends then suggested that we return tomorrow. I didn't like it when they said that and I said: no, I'm not going back! (Report by INDPROF 1, 06/27/2016).

The expansive project of Christianization Waiwai sought to subordinate the other to strengthen an ideology that will also manifest itself in the vision that the indigenous person starts to build from himself through contact with the non-indigenous person. In a clear counter-hegemonic and resistant attitude, this issue can also be evidenced in the same professor's speech when reflecting on the negative image that hegemonic societies have of indigenous people when they are unable to communicate in Portuguese:

If I didn't know how to speak or write in Portuguese, everything would be much more difficult. It's like I don't know anything, like I'm an illiterate. My situation would be greatly affected, because if we do not know how to speak Portuguese, as well as the indigenous language, we will suffer more prejudices, because people think that we do not have knowledge (INDPROF report 1, 06/27/2016).

In this case, we verified that INDPROF 1, having learned the Portuguese language, did not submit to the control of the speech, nor of the context. Context control can occur, according to Van Dijk (2015), when communicative events, which do not consist only of writing and verbal speech, there is an attempt to monitor the situation that influences the speech. Thus, we can say that the power of influence exercised by a given social group is always related to access to certain material resources that it may have or that may be provided to them by other groups. In the case of forms of coloniality, it is not only about capital or territory, or the appropriation of material resources, but also the possession of symbolic resources, such as knowledge (Van Dijk, 2015).

Even though the North American missionaries used missionary work among the indigenous people as a defense argument, there was always speculation among them that the North Americans were also interested in the mineral wealth of the forest, an issue that is silenced in Aldeia Mapuera. The mission to discipline and organize the indigenous population has always been viewed with suspicion by the indigenous themselves in that context. And that aroused in them other interests, mainly the desire to know where the others came from, those who did not belong to that territory. And that desire caused some Waiwai to be brought to the United States. A teacher expressed this desire to know the place from which those who tried to prevent him from crossing to other non-indigenous territories came from:

In 1981 there was a firm, they arrived in the village because of that. Then I had an idea. Gosh, it would be interesting for me to know where they came from. But in my childhood, there was a rule, Chief Ewká did not let young people go out to the city. There was a policy that was supported by missionaries in the village. It was very rare for someone to leave the village for the city. Among the colleagues, I knew I needed to go to the city (INDPROF 1 report, 06/27/2016).

There is, therefore, an exercise of tutelary power that must be considered in relation to the invasion of indigenous territories, especially regarding the process of dominance exercised in a single direction. If, on the one hand, the missionaries felt free to enter the Waiwai territory, they were not allowed to do so, that is, to enter the non-indigenous territory on the Brazilian side. In these relationships, what is explicit is that hegemonic societies, with greater power of dominance, impose on the other, as in the case of the Waiwai, disciplinary practices articulated with enunciative strategies and tactics that prevent them from exercising, in the opposite direction, the same schemes and processes. This is only possible through clashes and resistances.

The missionary's attempt to prevent other knowledge from being apprehended by the indigenous people, such as, for example, learning the Portuguese language, even if they were in Brazilian territory, is a demonstration of power and attempts at control exercised over the Waiwai. This form of control is reported by the indigenous teacher below:

We learn the indigenous language daily. [...] Sister Irene taught us to write in Waiwai [...] She only taught us Waiwai and very little Portuguese, helped to do some translation of Waiwai into Portuguese and from Portuguese to Waiwai (INDPROF 5 report, 11/24/2016).

The basis of the whole process of teaching Waiwai writing and reading was human perfection, based on the biblical text. The discourse of order was absolute obedience to the scriptures, which took place during a game of hegemonic struggles, forged to legitimize Western knowledge, hide, and deny indigenous knowledge. It is from this

process of overlapping Western epistemology, based on the idea of universality, that people located in specific historical contexts are denied their own epistemologies (Mignolo, 2006). And it is from this silencing of indigenous epistemologies that, for example, the transition narratives, hierarchical hierarchies of modern and traditional societies will result (Mignolo, 2003).

Among the arguments used by the missionaries, there were those that were supported by an ideal standard of being (Câncio; Araújo, 2018, p. 50), since the indigenous people were seen as subjects corroded by sins, as expressed in the following excerpt from Dowdy's work: "[...] you must abandon your sins. Love Jesus and not sin. Do not imitate us; imitate God. Do not be lazy to hear the role of God" (Dowdy, 1997, p. 239).

In this work, Dowdy (1997) points out that in presenting Jesus Christ to the Waiwai, the missionaries did not care "[...] about imposing the harness of Western culture on the Indians whose jungles, rivers, and dress, served their needs very well". In other words, even though aware of the ancestral knowledge of the Waiwai peoples, through Christianized schooling, missionaries invested in strategies to subvert them and impose other knowledge, by comparing cultures. And this can be seen in this excerpt from the missionary's narrative about how the gospel was preached among the Waiwai:

Bam's teaching emphasized the contrasts of the spirit world. - Jesus died on the cross to destroy evil spirits. Jesus cut the bonds and canceled the power of taboos. If he did, how could he live alongside the evil spirits within you? You must choose between Jesus and the spirits (Dowdy, 1997, p. 169).

The new religion, guided by a book, makes learning to read and write the main means for the evangelization and teaching of Christian dogmas the main element for the *consolidation* of a hybrid Western religious logic among the indigenous people, because the elements of the Waiwai culture remain embedded in Christian religious events and in meetings at Aldeia Mapuera (Câncio, 2017).

It is, therefore, from this historical articulation of cultural differences that school knowledge in Mapuera was constituted. Christianity brought them not only a new spiritual knowledge, but a new technology, materialized in the book, in writing and in reading, which had in the sacred scriptures, with all its cultural and ideological content, the process of conversion. Between the knowledge of ancestral spirits and the word of the Christian God, already in possession of the domain of writing and reading, the Waiwai began to reframe and reflect on their identities when recognizing a new authority: that of the writings of the sacred text.

Final considerations

We found in this study that, in the context of Latin American reality, the Brazilian Amazon is marked by historical resistance and com-

bats against the many forms of coloniality produced by agents of capitalist power. The strategies of indigenous Christianization, promoted by missionaries, important agents of colonization in the Amazon, reached the Waiwai and occurred in the wake of this model of power when they were subjected to the practices of coloniality of being and knowledge, resources used for the dissemination and affirmation of knowledge that mobilized values and ideologies as opposed to other epistemic forms of interaction between the Waiwai and the world.

We were able to verify in this study that the religious conversion caused the Waiwai to reevaluate their own cosmological and spiritual universe, sometimes attributing negative values to them. But this process of *conversion* to evangelical Christianity did not take place in a peaceful or consensual way; it will take place in the midst of a complex network of relations with various indigenous groups and between confrontations, clashes, continuities and discontinuities, which competed to form this intermediate space that is the Aldeia Mapuera. In this village there are indigenous pastors who preach the Bible in the Waiwai language while expressing remarkable elements of their ancestral cultures. They carry in their bodies and in their speeches the contradictions experienced and the resistance resulting from this historical-social process.

To understand the process of schooling the knowledge of North American missionaries as a strategy for indigenous Christianization, and to analyze the movement of social and linguistic insubordination in the introduction of writing among the Waiwai people, it was necessary to undertake a vigorous effort to understand the interrelationships that these indigenous people established with the missionaries, who have greater economic power. We understand that the rebellious acts against Christianizing strategies, enlisted by coercion and interdiction procedures engendered by the missionaries, helped to strengthen the Waiwai identity, which also favored the recognition of a group's position of authority in that context.

Even with several attempts to silence the Waiwai knowledge, Christianized schooling took place between clashes and resistance and will develop between acts of rebellion against the oppressive devices used. In this process, the reading of the social organization and the knowledge of some Waiwai sociolinguistic aspects are important because they help us to understand, including the construction of the hybrid Western religious logic currently experienced by the indigenous people in Aldeia Mapuera. The game of hegemonic struggles, forged to deny indigenous knowledge and legitimize Western knowledge among the Waiwai, highlights the Christianization strategies and the outbreaks around the conditions of production, circulation, and maintenance of knowledge in that context.

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Notes

- 1 Based on Gallois (2004), we use the term *Indigenous Land* to refer to the legal-political process of demarcation conducted by the State and *Territory* to refer to the construction of the culturally variable experience of the relationship between indigenous society and its territorial base.
- 2 According to Howard (1993, p. 245), the name Waiwai is related to the *People of Tapioca*. Tapioca is, for them, a sociability food.
- 3 For Howard (2001, p. 46), this color difference between the Waiwai and the Wapixana is due to the greater exposure of the latter to the sun, since they live in a savannah region, where vegetation is low, while the Waiwai live in the through a dense forest, protected by the sun's rays.
- 4 Tapioca or beiju are manioc products prepared by Waiwai women.
- 5 The speeches of the indigenous people used in this study are addressed in the study by Câncio (2017) on the acquisition of the Portuguese language in Aldeia Mapuera-PA.
- 6 Acácio (2011) carried out a study on the phonological aspects of the Waiwai language, which resulted in his master's dissertation in Letters at UFPA.
- 7 Coloniality also implies international power and internal relations within countries, which in Latin America has been called historical-structural dependency (Quijano, 2007).
- 8 Journalist Homer Dowdy visited the villages in Guyana, around 1960. In this work, he narrates the process of converting the Waiwai to evangelical Christianity. Published in 1963, in the United States, the work discusses the trajectory of Ewká, the first indigenous Waiwai to *follow* the teachings of the missionaries and the first to become a pastor.
- 9 The Hawkins had linguistic training and from the first contacts with the Waiwai they wrote down as many indigenous words as they could in the villages (Dowdy, 1997).
- 10 *People animals*, according to Schuler Zea (2010, p. 10), were human in mythical times, "[...] they looked like humans, but at parties they used animal clothes as dance clothes".
- 11 In the history of many unwritten cultures, writing was used to impose and establish a way of speaking, writing, and thinking, which always occurs through disputes and struggles.

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Raimundo Nonato de Pádua Câncio is an adjunct professor at Universidade Federal do Tocantins (UFT). Post-doctorate and PhD in Education from Universidade Federal do Pará (2019); Master in Education from Universidade do Estado do Pará (2008). He is a member of the National Association for Education Research (ANPEd) and professor of the Graduate Program in Teacher Education in Educational Practices at UFMA.

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4791-0269>

E-mail: nonato.cancio@uft.edu.br

Sônia Maria da Silva Araújo is a professor at Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA). She did a Postdoctoral Internship at the Center for Social Studies (CES) at the University of Coimbra (2007-2008) and has a PhD in Education at Universidade de São Paulo (2002). Served as ANPEd's North Vice President, biennium 2017-2019 and works in the Graduate Program in Education at Universidade Federal do Pará.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8240-9704>

E-mail: ecosufpa@hotmail.com

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