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# The Current Context of the Language of Instruction in Aruban Education

Towards a more inclusive  
Multilingual Education



Lampe, M. (2022). School 1888, The first public elementary school in Aruba [Photograph]. Oranjestad, Aruba.

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### **Abstract**

The present research was conducted to provide a better insight into the current language context and attitudes of students and teachers towards their preferred languages of instruction. Research questions concerned the attitudes of students and teachers towards Dutch as the language of instruction and the current use of the different languages (Papiamentu, English, Dutch, Spanish) in secondary education. Aruban students (n=272) and teachers (n=36) of five different secondary schools participated in a questionnaire. A sub group of students (n=22) and teachers (n=12) were approached for a semi-structured interview. Classroom observations were conducted to determine the actuality of the language situation in secondary schools. The results of this study reveal that Papiamentu is the first language for the majority of the participants. As a result, students are constantly faced with challenges with the Dutch language in school. Furthermore, teachers find it increasingly difficult to teach in only Dutch. Teachers often use other languages such as Papiamentu and English in their lessons in order to aid the students' understanding of the material. Both students and teachers acknowledge the importance of Dutch in the Aruban education but believe that bi-multilingual education would be of greater benefit to the students. Students prefer to communicate in Papiamentu and English and teachers are willing and open to explore and adapt their teaching pedagogies to better cater to their multilingual classroom.

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## 1. Introduction

Aruba is one of the six Caribbean islands that make part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The residents of the islands consider themselves to be multilingual individuals who live in a multilingual society. In the case of the Leeward islands (Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao) the majority of the population speak the local language Papiamentu<sup>1</sup> as their mother tongue. In the case of the Windward islands (Saba, St. Eustatius, St. Martin) the majority of the population speak a local variety of Caribbean/Creole English<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, Dutch has been the official and dominating language in administrative and educational systems since 1636 (Mijts, Kester & Faraclas, 2018; Alofs, 2008). This ramification is owed to 360 years of colonial domination ever since colonial authorities advocated the idea that everyone in the Dutch colonies speak the Dutch language (Alofs, 2008). It was only in 2003 that the Aruban government ensured the recognition of both Dutch and Papiamentu as official languages for Aruba. In 2007, a law was passed by the government of the former Netherlands Antilles that declared Dutch, English and Papiamentu to be the official languages for the other islands (Faraclas, Kester & Mijts, 2019). Additionally, due to migration, tourism, the influence of social media and Aruba's location (off the coast of Venezuela), global languages such as English and Spanish have also become an important part of the island's linguistic landscape (Mijts, Bamberger & Supheert, 2016). Accordingly, the language situation on these islands can be very complex, as the four dominant languages in Aruba all play a role in the individuals' daily communication. According to the latest census figures (2020), the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) found that the majority of the population on Aruba (92%) speak Papiamentu at home. This is followed by English (15%), Spanish (14%) and Dutch (10%).

The different language backgrounds and attitudes towards the individual languages also have important implications on the language in education. Research by Dijkhoff & Pereira (2010) has noted that there is a problem regarding language in education in the entire Caribbean. The purpose of this study is to provide useful and important insights for language policy and planning in education in Aruba. This research takes literature of multilingual individuals and the attitudes of Arubans towards the four languages into account as a means of determining the characteristics of an effective bilingual/multilingual curriculum. In addition to literary research, the study will include a mixed method that includes both quantitative data

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<sup>1</sup> Papiamentu or Papiamentu is a creole language that is largely based on Old-Spanish and Portuguese. It also has a considerable amount of Dutch and English influence. Many linguists are convinced that Papiamentu/u originated from Portuguese and Spanish creole languages that are present on the coasts of West Africa.

<sup>2</sup> A creole version of English is a creole language that, at the time of its formation, had English as its lexifier and serves as the basis for a large part of the creole's lexicon.

composed of a survey and qualitative data collected through interviews and classroom observations.

### **1.1 Problem statement**

In recent years there has been an increase of interest regarding language in education in the Caribbean. Similar to Mijts, Kester and Faraclas (2018), students in Aruba as well as in most of the rest of the islands within the Dutch Kingdom are still being educated in Dutch, albeit it being the fourth most spoken language on the island. Moreover, children who are from Dutch or Surinamese origin are the only ones who have some prior knowledge of the Dutch language when starting school at the age of four (Dijkhoff & Pereira, 2010). On the other hand, the large majority of children are almost never likely to encounter spoken or written Dutch outside of the classroom (Mijts, Kester & Faraclas, 2018; Van der Linden, 2017; Herrera, 2003). This often leaves students who have Papiamentu as their dominant language with a great disadvantage in their educational and academic careers. Students may have a harder time expressing themselves and demonstrating their knowledge, considering they have to do so in the language they know and use the least (Herrera, 2003). This can lead to many missed opportunities for these individuals. Moreover, this can also be seen through the low graduation rates of secondary school on the island. Between the years of 2009-2017 the graduation rates ranged from 42% to 82%. Only one educational sector of secondary school had a consistent rate of 75% and higher (notably the school that is taught in Papiamentu) (Van der Linden, 2017).

Notwithstanding the multilingual nature of the society, not all of the four languages are officially recognized. Bonaire and Curaçao have adopted three out of the four (Papiamentu, Dutch and English), whereas Aruba has only adopted Papiamentu and Dutch as its official languages, despite English having more overt prestige than Dutch amongst many Arubans (Dijkhoff & Pereira, 2010; Mijts, Bamberger & Supheert, 2016; Vasić, 2016). According to Dijkhoff and Pereira (2010), Aruba has been realizing the value of its multilingual society and its rich linguistic history the island has to offer. This has led to several studies as well as research projects that have been initiated to implement bilingual and or multilingual education in primary schools. However, many of the projects have predominantly only looked at the possibilities of Papiamentu and Dutch and not so much with the addition of English as a language of instruction. Because of the island's close proximity to the US and the other English speaking Caribbean islands, as well as English being a global language, it is likewise interesting to investigate the recognition of English in this multilingual society. With this we can hopefully

move forward towards a more inclusive multilingual curriculum that will benefit the students and make the island economically and socially prosper.

### **1.2 Significance of the study**

The results and information provided by this master thesis aim at being beneficial to the different education boards on Aruba as well as Aruban government officials regarding the language planning in education on the island. It will possibly bridge the gap between the literature, the progress that has been made so far concerning research projects and the current language situation at hand. The study can potentially provide a better understanding on the current language attitudes and benefits of a multilingual curriculum.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The main research question pertaining to this study is as follows:

How do the current language context and language attitudes among teachers and students relate to the preferred languages of instruction in Aruba?

The sub-questions to aid in answering the research question are as follows:

1. What attitudes do Aruban students and teachers have towards the languages of instruction?
2. How are the languages (Papiamentu, English, Dutch, Spanish) being used in secondary education in relation to the current language situation on the island?

### **1.4 Organization of chapters**

Chapter 2 presents a literature review and is divided into several sections. The first section discusses the origin of Papiamentu and how the creole language came to be the Aruban vernacular (2.1). The second section describes the language situation on Aruba and discusses several studies that have been done pertaining to language use in Aruban education (2.2). The third section looks at the use of first language/Creoles and their legitimacy in education (2.3). The fourth section presents a brief history on the language planning and policies in Aruba so far, and discusses studies that have investigated and initiated projects for improving language planning and policies in the Aruban education (2.4). The fifth section discusses the position of English in Aruba's linguistic landscape (2.5). Lastly, the sixth section describes the application of multilingual and or plurilingual education and discusses several studies who have implemented bi-multilingual curriculum in their education system (2.6).



Chapter 3 describes the methods used for the present research as well as the amount of participants who took part in the study. Additionally, the instruments (survey, interview and classroom observations) used for this research are further elaborated on. Chapter 4 presents the results of this study. This chapter is divided into statistical results of the questionnaire (4.1), results from the interviews (4.2) and results of the classroom observation (4.3). Chapter 5 discusses and interprets the findings of this study. Chapter 6 provides a conclusion with a brief summary of the research questions, the answers to these questions and addresses shortcomings and limitations of the study. The final chapter (7) offers a proposal with several recommendations based on the studies' findings for a bi-multilingual curriculum reform.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 The Aruban vernacular – Papiamentu**

Aruba is a small island in the Caribbean that lies just off the coast of Venezuela. Its long history of colonization has led to a very peculiar language situation on the island. When the Spanish originally discovered Aruba in 1499, they labeled the island 'isla inutil' which means useless island, due to its barren landscape at the time (Carroll, 2015). Aruba's colonial history has brought not only a variety of different cultures and ethnicities, but languages as well. This resulted in the formation and maintenance of Papiamentu (Fouse, 2002, as cited in Carroll, 2015). Several studies have discussed the different theories on the origin of Papiamentu. According to the monogenetic theory, all creole languages, including Papiamentu, originate from an Afro-Portuguese proto-Creole, which developed as a lingua franca in the coastal areas of Western Africa during the days of the slave trade. In contrast, the polygenetic theory argues creole languages originated independently of one another. Papiamentu is believed to have been developed on Curaçao on a Spanish linguistic base (Alofs, 2008; Pereira, 2018).

In any case, the common view that is shared among these theories is that Papiamentu is a creole language with a vocabulary of mainly Spanish and Portuguese origin, along with Dutch and English, and to a lesser degree where languages such as African and native Indigenous (Caquetio) have also contributed (Wood, 1972; Maduro, 1953 as cited in Pereira, 2018).

Accordingly, Papiamentu developed as a Creole language among African slaves and European inhabitants in Curaçao in order for them to communicate with each other. When the slaves were transported to Aruba, they brought their Creole language of Papiamentu with them. The language further developed through communication between the three main population groups (Portuguese, Spanish Jews, Dutch Protestants) of the island and quickly became the lingua Franca between these groups. This increase in use of Papiamentu, especially in the

higher economic status groups has led to what is known today as the vernacular language of Aruba, Papiamentu (Pereira, 2004 as cited in Carroll, 2015; Herrera, 2003).

According to Carroll (2015), much like in other parts of the world where language is used to identify and differentiate locals from the outsiders, inhabitants have clung to Papiamentu, which has historically been a marker of national identity. Even though Arubans speak a local creole language, the difference between Aruba and other nations with a creole language is that they have been able to add three other languages to their linguistic repertoire (Alofs, 2018; Herrera, 2003; Carroll, 2015). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics and a socio-linguistic survey by Boekhoudt-Croes (1995) over 90 percent of the native born population speak at least four languages to some degree (Alofs, 2008; CBS, 2020; Herrera, 2003). Thus, it can be assumed that Aruba is a multilingual society and most Arubans are multilinguals that commonly use four languages in their daily lives for communication. In addition to the vernacular Papiamentu, which is the language with the most speakers on the island, the second most language dominant group is English followed by Spanish. The language that has the least dominant speakers is Dutch (Herrera, 2003). Dutch is mainly used in the judicial and educational system and is mostly spoken only by migrants from the Netherlands and Surinam (Alofs, 2018). All four languages make up the unique linguistic landscape of the island.

## **2.2 Current language situation**

Up until 2003, before Papiamentu gained its status as an official language alongside Dutch, there were ongoing discussions concerning the relative position of Papiamentu and Dutch as well as the role of English and Spanish (Pereira, 2018). Despite the dominant use of Papiamentu, top-down policies have limited the use of Papiamentu in schools and official government business. High prestige status was given to the Dutch language compared to Papiamentu. Likewise, Carroll (2015) proposes that academic success is often associated with how well an individual is able to express their ideas in Dutch instead of their knowledge of a particular content area. Similarly, Herrera (2003) also states that despite the high number of users of Papiamentu, Dutch is still the primary language of instruction through the students' entire educational career.

While Papiamentu has managed to survive its colonial suppression and achieving a strong position in the community, it has also been criticized by many of its own speakers, resonating the colonizer's voice. Pereira (2018) illustrates this through expressions such as: "*mi dushi Papiamentu*" (my beloved Papiamentu), "*pero e no ta sirbi pa enseñansa*" (however,

it is not suitable for education). Several academics in education and local professionals are convinced that the struggle students face with a foreign language of instruction systematically impedes any learning in the schools. Excluding the students' home language can severely hinder their academic performance. The fact that Dutch, a language that the majority of the children do not know at the beginning of their formal schooling, was often to blame for the low success rates in education and social problems (Pereira, 2018; Van der Linde, 2015). According to the latest information of the Central Bureau of Statistics, 92% of the Aruban population speak Papiamentu, 15 % speak English, 14% speak Spanish and 10% speak Dutch at home (CBS, 2020). Moreover, due to centuries-old cultural, commercial and family ties, Spanish has also been a very familiar language to the people of Aruba. Pereira (2018) claims that the relative ease in the Arubans' use of these languages is a result of the compulsory presence of both English and Spanish in the early schooling of grade 5 and grade 6 respectively.

Nevertheless, Aruba's educational situation has finally been attracting the attention of both Aruban and non-Aruban researchers over the last few decades. Several studies have been conducted on different aspects regarding Language Attitudes and Language Planning on the island (Boekhoudt-Croes, 1995; Pereira, 2018; Mijts, 2021). A survey conducted by Boekhoudt-Croes (1995) on the language use and language needs of the Aruban working population was compared with the languages used in education. Results of the study revealed that Papiamentu, when compared to the other languages present on the island, was used by the majority of the working population. This indicates that Papiamentu is the most important language for communication on the island. Additionally, the survey also confirmed that the three other languages, English, Spanish and Dutch are also commonly used on the island. Aruban individuals frequently use all four languages in their daily conversations (Boekhoudt-Croes, 1995).

Moreover, a study by Silva (2015) investigated the importance and advantages of using Papiamentu when teaching another language. She looked at the language that is being used within the language classroom as well as the attitudes of the different teachers and students towards the use of Papiamentu and translingualism at HAVO/VWO in Aruba. According to her research, the results seem rather contradictory. The majority of the teachers do not find it necessary to use the students' first language in the classroom. However, they admitted to using Papiamentu when explaining new materials to students in order to aid the students' understanding. Further, they also expressed to be open to the idea to use Papiamentu in the lessons if it is beneficial to the students. Additionally, the teachers also expressed that they usually only use the target language, whether that be Dutch, English or Spanish, in combination

with English. A reason for using English according to Silva (2015) is that it is a language that is used a lot by the students and often identify strongly with. On the other hand, the majority of the students indicated that Dutch is the only language that is used during the Dutch lessons and Papiamentu or English are rarely used. Moreover, the textbooks that are used are directed towards students who have Dutch as a first language. In the English lessons, students expressed to prefer the language of instruction to be in English and or Papiamentu as opposed to Dutch. The majority of the students expressed an indifference towards any language of instruction, as long as they are able to understand it. Yet, if they had to choose between Dutch and Papiamentu, they have a preference for Papiamentu. The current study takes a similar approach to Silva (2015) and is aimed at investigating the attitudes of students and teachers on the preferred languages of instruction in Aruban education.

In the same vein, a study by Croes (2015) also explored the value and attitudes of students of HAVO/VWO 3 of Colegio San Nicolas towards Papiamentu and Dutch.

Results revealed that students believe that Papiamentu has its place in the curriculum and value the language as it is the native language of Aruba. Students also believe that Dutch is an important language for many aspects but indicate that Dutch sometimes impedes their learning and understanding of certain materials in the lessons. Croes (2015) states that Papiamentu is noticeably the language of communication in majority situations. English often appears when students come in contact with friends. He concludes that students are open for bilingual education, however compared to neighboring island St. Eustatius, their attitudes towards Dutch are less enthusiastic.

Herrera (2003) found that Aruban individuals often switch languages in mid conversation effortlessly as the audience changes. With the diverse linguistic landscape of the island and the multilingual communication that the marketplace demands, having the ability to interpret has become a valuable asset for Aruban citizens to have.

### **2.3 First language in Education/Creoles in Education**

Little research has been done regarding Creoles as a means of acquiring literacy. The information that is currently available suggests that there is a positive correlation between using Creoles in education and the overall improvement of students' academic performance (Wigglesworth, Billington, & Loakes, 2013). However, according to Siegel (1997), Creole languages are rarely used in formal education because of three reasons. First, they are considered degenerate languages, second it is believed to be a waste of time to use a Creole language when a standard language is assumed to be the key to success in education and

employment and third, using a Creole language will hinder students' acquisition of the standard language. Moreover, Fasold (2014) claims that many people maintain the idea that the language used in dictionaries and language academies is correct and all other version are incorrect, thus reducing the legitimacy of Creoles.

Despite the outstanding language maintenance of Papiamentu, especially in comparison to other creoles, institutionally it remains inferior to Dutch (Van der Linden, 2017). Even though there is a growing interest to teach Dutch as a foreign language, to this day, it is still being treated and employed as if it were the students' first language. In 1988, the Aruban government passed a Policy Bill stating that it is intending to implement a bilingual education system where both Papiamentu and Dutch are the languages of instruction. However, the introduction of other languages that are also widely spoken by the Aruban population was not mentioned. According to Croes (1995), it is equally important and beneficial to reflect on the relation between Papiamentu and the other languages present on the island (as cited in Migge, Léglise & Bartens, 2010).

Cummins (2001) argues that in this era of globalization, a society with access to multilingual and multicultural resources has an advantage with its ability to play an important economic and social role on the world stage. The erosion of culture and language in schools is thus extremely counter-productive for the host society itself. Cummins (2001) also states that there are positive effects of bilingualism on children's educational and linguistic development. When children have a deeper understanding of language and how to use it effectively, they are able to continuously develop their abilities in two or more languages throughout their primary school years (Cummins, 2001). A study done by Brock-Utne (2007) investigated the language of instruction and student performance in two secondary schools in Tanzania and South Africa. At the school in Tanzania, the same topic was taught by the same teacher, first in English or by Code-Switching and then a few days later in Kiswahili. Results revealed that students clearly learned better when they were able to use a familiar language as the language for acquiring new knowledge. Brock-Utne (2007) argues that it is only when the students understand what the teacher is saying, are they able to build on previous knowledge and engage in meaningful conversations. This is in line with Cummins (2001) who claims that the level of development of a child's first language is a strong predictor of their second language development. When children come to school with a well-grounded foundation of their first language, they are able to develop stronger literacy skills in the school language.

Moreover, Igboanusi (2008) found in his study that respondents preferred education in both English and the mother tongue in Nigeria. The majority of the respondents

also indicated that they wanted the use of the mother tongue beyond the first three years of primary education. In the same vein, Cummins (2001) also notes that in Belgium, the Foyer program which develops children's speaking and literacy skills in three different languages (their mother tongue, Dutch and French) in primary school has clearly illustrated the benefits of bilingual and trilingual education. Lastly, Cummins (2001, p.6) argues that "to reject a child's language in the school is to reject the child". When children feel this rejection, they are much less likely to actively and confidently participate in the classroom.

#### **2.4 Language planning and policies in education on Aruba**

Language changes desired by a polity or community requires strategic language planning implementation. There are three viewpoints towards language that can have an impact on the approaches in planning: language as a right, language as a resource, and language as a problem (Herrera, 2003; Appel & Muysken, 1987). Different approaches and types of language planning lead to realizing the desired goals. In Aruba, language planning and education has been heavily influenced by its colonial history. Considering only Dutch schools were being funded, Dutch was encouraged over Papiamentu. This was done due to the opportunities the Netherlands gave to students to study at Dutch universities, which require the ability to read, write and speak in Dutch. This is also presently still the case (Van der Linden, 2007; Herrera, 2003). As colonized people, Arubans learned to despise themselves and their Aruban social and cultural values because for so long they did not have much to say about their governance and education. Albeit, Papiamentu being the majority language in the community, it is often still treated as a minority language in education on the island (Pereira, 2018).

Moreover, dominant-power language or monolingual speakers may discreetly disregard any language planning simply because of the fact that when an individual only speaks one language, the desire or need to speak a second is very limited (Herrera, 2003). Language policy and planning are tremendous complicated matters, and Aruba is no exception to this. Unless exposed to the educational injustices that second language learners are faced with, dominant language speakers have a harder time understanding why language planning is so important in terms of education and language. Language planning that is respectful and fair is key (Herrera, 2003). Language is greatly associated with the history of a community, with its social and cultural life. It is a medium for thinking and behavior. Primary, language determines a person's identity. It is the most important means of communication, expression and contextualization (Pereira, 2018).

Language planning is often carried out when a government enforces a certain policy with regards to language(s) spoken in a nation. The first task is often to determine which language(s) should be appointed as the national language (Appel & Muysken, 1987). Countries are believed to be better off if the official language is the same as the national language. The national language is the language that is spoken by the larger part of the population of a country and not always necessarily the designated language by the law. However, this is hardly ever the case in the Caribbean (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). In many multicultural and multilingual post-colonial countries, language disputes are especially challenging. Pereira (2018) argues that, all too often, the native tongue of the majority of the population is seen as the cause of almost every issue in education. However, the real culprit causing this division is the colonial language that has been enforced on the community centuries back.

When language is seen as an issue, any attempts that are made to change to any existing language practices are perceived as wrong and in need of attention. The belief that language is a problem encourages attitudes that the language at hand lacks value. By seeing language as a right means that speakers of a language have the right to utilize and maintain their language(s) of choosing for their own purposes (Herrera, 2003). A positive contribution to sociolinguistic change can only begin at the attitudes of the Aruban population. Once Arubans are able to shift their doubts, shame, fright and underestimation of Papiamentu, can it be transformed into an acceptance of their mother tongue as a vital part of their heritage and progress as a nation (Herrera, 2003; Pereira, 2018). It is important that education acknowledges and respects the linguistic reality of its community. According to Herrera (2003), since Aruba is a multilingual island, schools should also be multilingual as its local population. Language not only serves as a means of communication, but provides expression and translates the culture of a community. Pereira (2018) argues that there has been an increase of research both nationally and internationally on the importance of mother tongue in education in Aruba. A mother tongue-based multilingual education has been implemented by the *Proyecto Scol Multilingual* and is so far proving to be an effective alternative to the Dutch-only system (Pereira, 2018). While this project is a great step forward, it remains limited to only a few schools and only at primary level.

## **2.5 Position of English in Aruba's linguistic Landscape**

As it has already been established, Aruba has a diverse and peculiar linguistic landscape where most of its inhabitants are multilingual. Even though Papiamentu is the lingua franca on the island, English has not only become a very popular language among the youth but is also

one of the most important languages in Aruba's economy. A vast amount of English-speakers were brought to the island during the oil boom years in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Many of these immigrants resided in the area of San Nicolas, where the oil refinery was also located. Until today many descendants of these immigrants remained with Creole English as their first language (Fouse, 2002). Accordingly, one of the main economic sectors that is of paramount importance to the island is tourism from the United States and Canada (Alofs, 2018). Additionally, both English and Spanish are significant as most programs that are aired and watched on television are networks from the United States and South America, largely from Venezuela (Alofs, 2018).

Notwithstanding English not being an official language of Aruba, according to a study by Bamberger, Mijts and Supheert (2016), most of the written language in the public sphere is in English. Results revealed that Papiamentu is the preferred language among the locals, whereas English is the preferred language and predominantly used in the tourist sector. Additionally, English was also seen to be dominant in all six of the topographical areas in which the research was conducted. Papiamentu is the most present after English. Previous studies on language attitudes on the island indicate that English is not only becoming more popular among the public but in education as well. A study by Dijkhoff and Pereira (2010) established that Dutch is primarily used as the language of instruction on both primary and secondary education, even though both Papiamentu and English seem to be more common than Dutch in the individuals' daily life. In addition, the use of English in higher education has been increasing as well. Likewise, Vasić (2016) investigated the attitudes and preferences for a certain language of instruction of Aruban students at the University of Aruba. Her study revealed that English is perceived as a language with more advantages for the future and is the preferred choice of language of instruction. Moreover, Aruban students also indicated to have a preference for Papiamentu as language of instruction over Dutch.

In contrast, Leuverink (2011) looked at the current language policy and whether it matches the language attitudes of the inhabitants of Aruba. Results indicated that the Aruban population in the sample of her study desired Dutch as the language of instruction in any form of education. English was also seen as important in higher education whereas Papiamentu was not. According to the respondents of the study, Papiamentu provides fewer societal opportunities than English or Dutch. Moreover, Dutch was seen to be necessary in order to pursue higher education. Although a paradox was made clear, respondents seemed to identify the most with Papiamentu, but still choose to often use English. Respondents indicated that English is the language which the next generation will mainly speak. In the same vein, Van der



Linde (2015) reported on the language attitudes of Aruban students in secondary education in regards to the language situation at school, Dutch as a subject and Dutch as the language of instruction. The majority of the students from the schools that participated in the study indicated that Dutch should be the language of instruction with their second preference for English. However, most students also indicated that they mostly speak Papiamentu and English with their friends. Similarly, the study by Croes (2015) revealed that the Dutch language practically has no communicative function. Students expressed that both at home, on school grounds and anywhere else they may find themselves, Papiamentu is the preferred language of communication. English presents itself mostly when interacting with friends and is used in combination with Papiamentu when using social media. In addition, Croes (2015) also states that teachers have indicated that when using multiple languages such as Papiamentu and English when explaining new materials in the classroom, students tend to understand better and much faster. Similar to these studies, the current research makes a further contribution to these existing literature on the attitudes on the language of instruction in Aruban education.

## **2.6 Multilingual – Plurilingual education**

All languages that are used in school, either due to arrangements of the school or as part of the curriculum, are languages that shape students' socialization. All of the languages in some way or form contribute to emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development. However, only the languages that are considered part of the curriculum are recognized by government officials and education boards as languages of education and thus aids in the educational aims that are pursued. The main language of instruction within a school in this case plays a major role (Coste, 2014). The monolingual nature of formal education has frequently had the objective of eradicating subordinate indigenous languages. To this day, many schools, including those on Aruba, have maintained a traditional monolingual habit pertaining to a dominant language of instruction regardless of students' (and society's) multilingualism (Pillar, 2016). Discourse on the type of language education that best fit students, monolingual or bi-multilingual, has been a topic of discussion for quite some time. Schools who choose a multilingual approach are able to use more than one language of instruction and teach the subjects of their regular curriculum in different languages (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). According to Pillar (2016), restricting education to only one dominant language not only limits the language learning of the dominant language itself, but also hinders the development of students' home language. Hindering the growth of the home language by exclusively using the dominant language has negative effects on both language learning and cognitive development

and academic achievement. Additionally, it may also have negative behavioral and economic consequences (Pillar, 2016; Cummins, 2003). This can also be seen in Aruba as Van der Linden (2017) showed graduation rates on the island to be surprisingly low. Likewise, Cummins (2003) argues that when children learn through their home language, they are not learning through a limited sense. He gives an example of the concept of telling time. Children who learn to tell time in their native language are able to understand the main concept of telling time. When subsequently learning to tell time in their second language (perhaps the dominant language of instruction), they do not need to re-learn this concept, they simply acquire new linguistic labels for a skill they already know. Moreover, by adding the home language while learning the dominant language of the school allows students to acquire high-level oral and written proficiencies in both or more languages (Piller, 2016).

The main languages of schools should not only be seen as subjects that are taught but should also serve as instruments for teaching and learning other subjects that contribute to the school's overall aims. Generally, most schools only have one main language of instruction, which often has the official status of national language. However, there are many other situations in which the language of instruction is considered a minority language, or where two or more official languages can both serve as languages of instruction, resulting in bi-/tri- or multilingual education (Coste, 2014). This notion can also be referred to what is known as plurilingual competence. Plurilingualism is defined as the ability to use a number of different languages with the aim of effective communication. It is also one of the goals of the CEFR (Coste, 2014). Therefore, maximum proficiency, for example of a polyglot, is not expected. Rather a range of language skills in which ordinary individuals who have a varied linguistic repertoire in which partial competence have their place and receptiveness to cultural diversity is the goal (Coste, 2014).

Furthermore, one cannot develop a plurilingual curriculum by simply adding more languages. According to van den Akker, Fasoglio and Mulder (2008), in order to design a plurilingual curriculum, an extra dimension should be added to their spider web model. The spider web model of van den Akker (2003) refers to different parts of the curriculum, each concerning a question about the planning and learning by the students. Ideally, they are all connected to each other so that there is consistency and coherence within the curriculum. The different languages in plurilingual education share the same rationale but do not overlap in content and objectives. By connecting various activities, materials and resources to a specific language, an additional competence, the extra dimension that is language awareness, can get its logical place in the curriculum and be acquired by focusing on the similarities and

differences between language structures and cultures (van den Akker, Fasoglio & Mulder, 2008).

A study by Morren (2010) describes the development of a primary trilingual education curriculum in the Caribbean Archipelago of San Andres, Providence and Santa Catalina. The study hypothesises positive academic gains based on the outcomes in other multilingual education projects. Native San Andres, Providence and Santa Catalina Island children who are taught in their mother tongue (Islander English) during their pre-first and first grade school would do better academically in different areas such as social science, mathematics and natural science. During their educational career, the students are exposed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> languages as subjects before needing to master any content material in said languages. At the end of their sixth grade the student is expected to be proficient in all three languages; Islander English, English and Spanish (Morren, 2010).

Finally, Youssef (2002) argues that the language education of children in the Caribbean continues to fall short. Caribbean societies have worked hard to establish their Creoles as independent varieties. This is not just due to their linguistic qualities, but also because the psychological burden as a result of colonialism, is lifted by doing so (Youssef, 2002). Children are more than able to acquire three languages at a time. Denying this violates children's right to appropriate education and undermines any communication between a child and their parents (Cummins, 2001). Individuals who are multilingual do not use their languages independently from each other; various interactions take place between the languages (Cenoz, 1997). According to Cenoz (1997), we must stop seeing linguistically and culturally diverse children as a so called "problem that needs to be solved", and rather be more open to the cultural, linguistic and intellectual resources that children bring to school. We must take advantage of the rich linguistic diversity our society has to offer in order to develop language awareness through comparison of linguistic expressions not only between but within languages. Bilingual educational curriculums are therefore the gateway to allow children to develop these resources fully (Youssef, 2002; Cummins, 2003). It is no longer principal what we can do with a language, but what our languages can do for us (Silva, 2015).

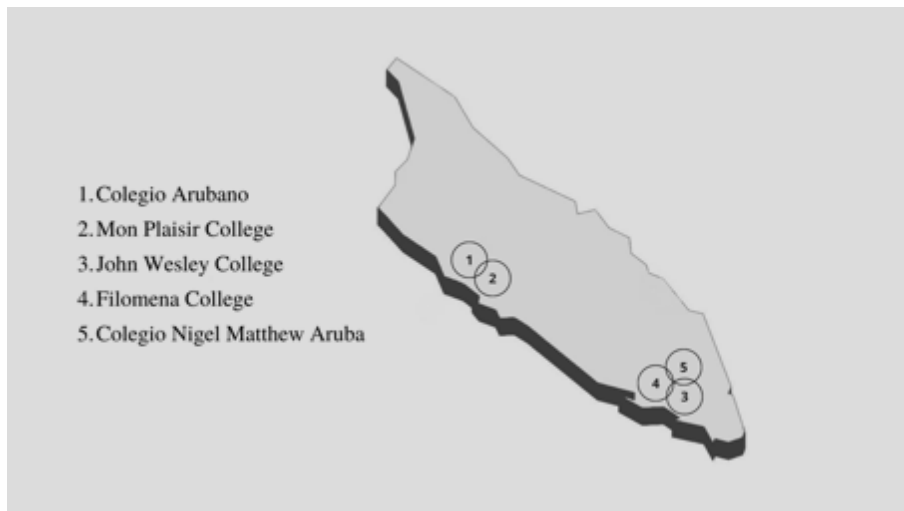
### **3. Method**

In order to investigate the attitudes and opinions on the different languages in education in Aruba, field research was conducted on Aruba in the period of December 2021 and January 2022. Two surveys were distributed among the students and teachers of five different

secondary schools on the island (see subsection 3.2.1). The main purpose of the survey was to collect quantitative information in regards to language attitudes. Mijts, Faraclas & Kester (2013) state that “Data collection by means of a survey is methodologically important, as a substantial amount of information can be anonymously and efficiently gathered from many different participants” (p. 39). However, a survey alone is not able to explain emotions about language. In order to gain in-depth insight into the opinions regarding the survey, a sub group of teachers and students from each school was selected for a semi-structured interview (see subsection 3.2.2). Lastly, in addition to the survey and interviews, classroom observations were also conducted to sketch out the reality of how the different languages are being used among the students and teachers in the classroom. The focus here was on the spontaneous use of language between the students and the teacher (see subsection 3.2.3). Participation in this research was completely anonymous and voluntary. An information letter and consent form was distributed among the schools and participants prior to any data collection.

### **3.1 Participants**

The participants of this study were the students ( $M$  age = 18) and teachers ( $M$  age = 48) of five different secondary schools on Aruba, namely; Colegio Arubano, Mon Plaisir College, John Wesley College, Filomena College and Colegio Nigel Matthew Aruba. A total of 423 survey responses (374 students and 49 teachers) were collected. Moreover, these five schools were chosen as they are located in different districts on the island (see Figure 1) and differ in level of education, namely; HAVO/VWO (senior general secondary education) and MAVO (lower general secondary education). These five schools represent 28% of the secondary schools as Aruba has a total of 18 regular secondary schools (Departamento di Enseñansa Aruba, 2022). This sample was converted into percentages and compared to the total student and teacher population to have a more accurate representation of the research sample. The total student population in regular secondary schools in 2016 was 8.793, and the total teacher population in secondary schools 809 (Departamento di Enseñansa Aruba, 2022). Following the survey, 22 students and 12 teachers were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview.



*Figure 1. Map of Aruba showing the location of the five participating schools*

## **3.2 Instruments**

### **3.2.1 Questionnaire**

Following previous studies on the topic of language of instruction in the Caribbean (Croes, 2018; Mijts, Faraclas & Kester, 2013; Pereira, 2018; Silva, 2015; Peterson, 2015; Van der Linde, 2015) a three part questionnaire was constructed using the online software Qualtrics<sup>3</sup>. Two different versions of the questionnaire was formulated, targeting each group; (1) students and (2) teachers. Prior to completing the questionnaire a consent form was provided in which participants were informed of the study and give their consent. The student questionnaire included the following parts: (1) a set of biographical questions regarding their age, birthplace, parents' birthplace, which school they are attending and grade; (2) a general set of questions concerning their own language use in their daily life; and (3) a more specific set of questions pertaining to Dutch as the language of instruction and the use of the other languages in education. The teacher questionnaire included corresponding questions adapted for a teacher's perspective. Part (2) included multiple choice questions and 4-point Likert scale questions in which participants were asked how likely they were to use a certain language in a certain situation over the other. Participants were able to choose from; i. very unlikely, ii. unlikely, iii. likely and iv. very likely. In part (3) participants were asked to express the degree of their agreement on the statements by indicating their response on a 4-point Likert scale. Every point expressed a degree of agreement, namely, the participants could select from i. strongly disagree, ii. disagree, iii. agree and iv. strongly agree. Moreover, the questionnaire was set up

<sup>3</sup> The questionnaire was constructed by combining parts of the questionnaires used in the studies by Croes, 2018; Mijts et. al., 2013; Pereira, 2018; Silva, 2015; Peterson, 2015; Van der Linde, 2015. This combination was done to avoid any overlap in the current questionnaire.

in three different languages; Dutch, English and Papiamentu. The questionnaire was identical in all three languages and the participants were able to choose in which language they wished to complete it. The student questionnaire was filled out during their regular lessons and in the presence of their teacher and the researcher. The teacher questionnaire was distributed online amongst the teachers. See appendix A for the questionnaires used for this survey.

### **3.2.2 Interviews**

Following the survey, a sub group of teachers and students from all five schools were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. The focus of the interviews was on the experiences students and teachers have with the different languages used during their lessons as well as their opinions on the current language context within education on Aruba. Ultimately, the goal was to stimulate the participants to critically reflect and analyze the problems they face in the classroom pertaining to the language of instruction and avoid the ‘blame game’ discourse where other teachers, students and parents can become easy targets (Faraclas, Kester & Mijts, 2019; Pereira, 2018). The interview questions were constructed as a follow up for the questionnaire and were based on previous studies who have also investigated this topic on Aruba, Curaçao and St. Eustatius (Pereira, 2018; Faraclas, Kester & Mijts, 2019; Peterson, 2015; Silva, 2015). The role of the researcher was to guide the interview by asking questions that are designed to invite the participants to evaluate the root cause of their challenges and point out how other communities who have also faced similar obstacles have taken control of the problems, encouraging the participants to also consider possible resolutions for their current issue at hand (Faraclas, Kester & Mijts, 2019). Participants were free to express their thoughts and opinions in whichever language they desired. Participants’ interview and statements were audio recorded and later translated. Statements were categorized by means of in-vivo coding to identify recurring themes and patterns. The interviews were on voluntary basis and participants were not compensated. See appendix B for complete interview questions.

### **3.2.3 Classroom observations**

The last method of data collection was classroom observations. According to Faraclas, Kester and Mijts (2019; p. 112) “There is no better place to witness how language and education interact than in the classroom itself”. Data was gathered through close and direct observation of the participants in their natural setting. In order to avoid influencing the behavior of the teachers or students as least as possible, the observer, in this case the researcher, remained detached in the situation. With the use of an observation scheme, the focus of the observation

was on the following aspects: Firstly, the spontaneous use of the different languages between student interactions. Secondly, the use of the languages from the teacher. Additionally, attention was also paid to when, why and for what purpose the different languages are being used and language input is provided by the classroom atmosphere. Previous research on language use in the classroom such as Mijts, Faraclas & Kester (2013) served as a basis for this instrument. For this purpose, an observation scheme was constructed using various sources (Faraclas, Kester & Mijts, 2019; Bultynck, Sierens, Slembrouck, Van Avermaet, Verhelst, 2008; Stad gent, n.d). See appendix C for observation scheme.

### **3.3 Procedure**

Prior to data collection, permission was requested from the schools and parents in order for students to participate in the study. Document templates and sample letters from the Faculty Ethics Assessment Committee was used to generate informed consent document. The informed letter and consent form was presented in Dutch as it is currently still the official language in regular secondary education on Aruba. See appendix D for an example of the information letter and consent form. Meetings were organized with all five schools for the researcher to visit in order to conduct the survey, complete the interviews and observe the lessons. Due to the current Covid-19 situation, the researcher was not able to be present every moment the survey was conducted with the students<sup>4</sup>. Teachers and students who participated in the interviews were voluntary and selected at random. Classroom observations that were done were selected at random and the subject matter was not of importance. During the classroom observation the researcher introduced herself and remained detached from the lesson interacting as little as possible with the teacher and the students.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

In order to provide an answer to sub-question (1), a total of 423 survey responses (374 students and 49 teachers) were collected. However, 115 responses were excluded from the final sample due to incompleteness. In the end, 308 amount of survey responses ( 272 students and 36 teachers) were used for the analysis. The teachers who participated in the survey taught the following subjects; Dutch (5), English (3), Spanish (3), Papiamento (1), History (2), Geography (3), Biology (4), Physics/Chemistry (2), Mathematics (2), Religion studies (1), Economics (4),

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<sup>4</sup> Due to the current situation and restrictions of COVID-19, the researcher was not able to be present at all times for the student survey. An email was sent with clear instructions for the teacher, and included the survey links in order for them to distribute the survey amongst the students during their lesson. The researcher remained alert at a distance to ensure enough responses were being recorded through the online software Qualtrics.

Arts/CKV (3), Informatics (2), Physical Education (1). Since summated scales were used, it was important to assess their reliability. The reliability pertains to the consistency and stability of the instrument developed (Creswell, 2010). The reliability of the scales was assessed using the Cronbach's  $\alpha$ 7 (Cronbach, 1951). According to Pallant (2001), a value above 0.6 is considered sufficient reliability. Alpha Cronbach values ranging between 0.6 – 0.8 are considered moderate, but acceptable, whereas values ranging between 0.8 and up to 1.0 are considered very good (Daud, K. A. M., Khidzir, N. Z., Ismail, A. R., & Abdullah, F. A., 2018). The overall reliability for the items was  $\alpha = 0.63$ . No further changes were done for further analysis. Data collected via the survey was analyzed using frequency measures and multiple response analysis through SPSS. Moreover, the results of the semi-structured interviews were divided between students and teachers. Each interviewee was assigned a number and later transcribed by the researcher. In order to identify popular themes, an inductive or “bottom-up” approach was taken by using in-vivo coding. Here, no predetermined codes were used, instead the data spoke for itself to create codes. Next, codes were organized in an excel spread sheet and color coded to determine any recurring patterns and themes (see 4.2). Similar themes were grouped together and the frequency of each code was calculated into percentages to quantify the results. The themes were compared to the literature review to interpret the findings. Lastly, to answer sub-question (2), a similar approach was taken where in-vivo coding was done to identify any recurring patterns and themes in the observation schemes. A summary of the classroom observations is given to sketch out the actuality of how the languages are used by the students and teachers during their lessons. The results of the classroom observation in combination with the survey and interviews were used to interpret the findings.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Demographic characteristics of participants.**

First and foremost, the different amount of survey responses in and of itself is already an indication of the language preference of students and teachers. The participants had the option to complete the survey in their language of choice (Papiamento, English, Dutch). Table 1 shows the language in which the respondents completed the survey. The majority of the surveys filled out by students were completed in English (144), followed by Papiamento (98) and Dutch (30) being the least. The most surveys filled out by teachers were completed in Dutch (24), followed by Papiamento (8) and English (4) being the least.



Table 1. Language in which the survey was completed (N = 308)

	<b>Papiamentu</b>	<b>Dutch</b>	<b>English</b>
Students	98	30	144
Teachers	8	24	4

Moreover, some of the students and teachers' demographic characteristics are presented in Table 2 and 3, respectively. The number of participants is not quite spread equally over the five schools. The majority of students who participated in the survey attend Colegio Nigel Matthew Aruba (39%), Filomena College (27.6%) and Colegio Arubano (22.8%). While most of the students were born in Aruba (79.8%), the birthplace of their parents are spread more evenly between Aruba and outside of Aruba. Only 54.8% and 54.4% of the mothers and fathers were also born in Aruba, respectively. The majority of teachers who participated in the survey work at Colegio Nigel Matthew Aruba (61.1%) and Mon Plaisir College (27.8%). Similar to the students, most of the teachers were born in Aruba (69.4%).

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of students

<b>School</b>		<b>Mean Age per School</b>
Colegio Arubano	22.8%	15.4
Mon Plaisir College	9.6%	13.8
Filomena College	27.6%	13.8
John Wesley College	1.1%	14.7
Colegio Nigel Matthew Aruba	39%	15.8
<b>Birthplaces</b>		
Birthplace student	Aruba: 79.8%	
Birthplace mother	Aruba: 54.8 %	
Birthplace father	Aruba: 54.4 %	

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of teachers

<b>School</b>		<b>Mean Age per School</b>
Colegio Arubano	8.3%	38.7
Mon Plaisir College	27.8%	42.1

Filomena College	2.8%	43
John Wesley College	0	
Colegio Nigel Matthew Aruba	61.1%	43.8
<b>Subject</b>		
Papiamentu	2.8%	
Dutch	13.9%	
English	8.3%	
Spanish	8.3%	
Other	66.7%	
<b>Birthplaces</b>	Aruba: 69.4%	

Note: Other subjects include; Informatics, History, Geography, Economics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Religion Studies, Mathematics, Arts/CKV and Physical Education.

#### 4.1.1 Native language

Participants had to indicate which language(s) (Papiamentu, Dutch, English, Spanish) they considered to be their first language. Answers were not limited to one language and participants were able to choose more than one language if they considered themselves to have multiple first languages. Additionally, respondents were also able to choose the option “Other” to fill in which other language they consider their native language. Languages mentioned were: Tagalog, Haitian Creole, Afrikaans, Sranan Tongo, Chines, Portuguese, and French. Figure 2 and 3 present an overview of the native languages of the students and teachers in this sample, respectively.

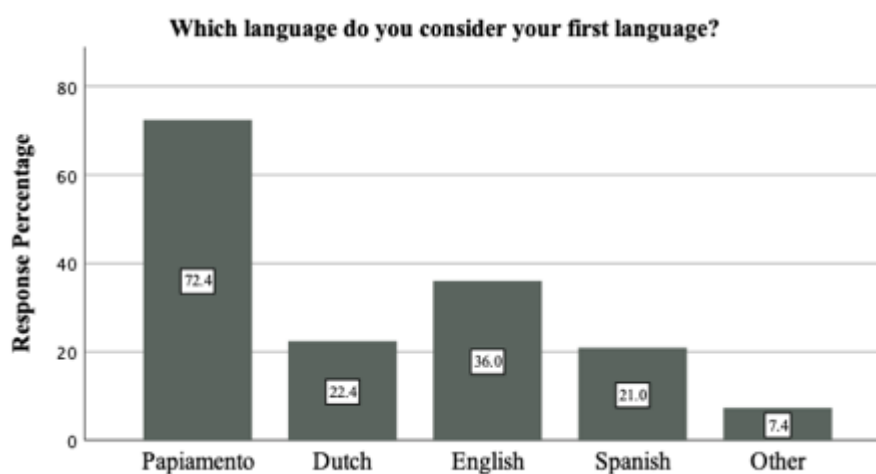
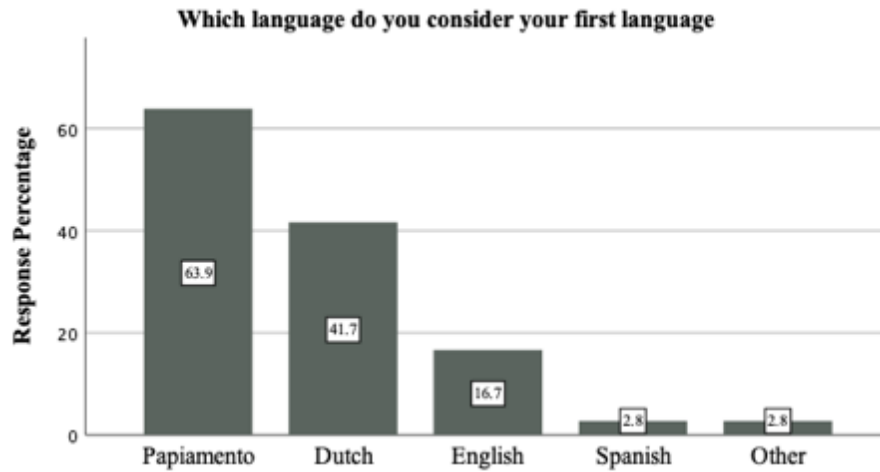


Figure 2. Native language students



*Figure 3. Native language teachers*

As the data in Figure 2 indicate, the majority of the students in this sample considered Papiamentu (72.4%) to be their first language, followed by English (36%) , Dutch (22.4%), Spanish (21%) and Other (7.4%). This is in line with the latest census figures of CBS (2020). Likewise, the data in Figure 3 indicate that the majority of teachers in this sample also consider Papiamentu (63.9%) to be their first language. However, this was followed by Dutch (41.7%) then English (16.7%), Spanish (2.8%) and Other (2.8%). A possible explanation for this might be due to the amount of Dutch teachers from the Netherlands who live and work on the island.

#### **4.1.2 Language Use in Different Situations**

To examine the daily use of the main languages spoken in Aruba, several items were used. First, participants indicated how well they dominate the four languages spoken on Aruba and in which language they can express themselves the best and the least. This is illustrated in Table 4, Figure 4 and 5, respectively. Table 4 shows that the means of the variables are relatively high for both English and Papiamentu. Surprisingly, English scored slightly higher than Papiamentu. This suggests that participants believe to have a greater dominance of English and Papiamentu compared to Dutch and Spanish.

*Table 4. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of the items used to indicate how well participants dominate each language. (1 = Not well at all, 2 = Sufficient, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent)*

	<b>Papiamentu</b>	<b>Dutch</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
How well do you dominate ...	M = 3.16 SD = 0.80	M = 2.59 SD = 0.87	M = 3.25 SD = 0.83	M = 2.18 SD = 1.07

Figure 4 and 5 show participants' responses regarding which language they can express themselves the best and the least. Interestingly, the majority of the respondents indicated to express themselves the best in English (126) the most, followed by Papiamentu (115). The language in which participants can express themselves the least was Spanish (166), followed by Dutch (96).

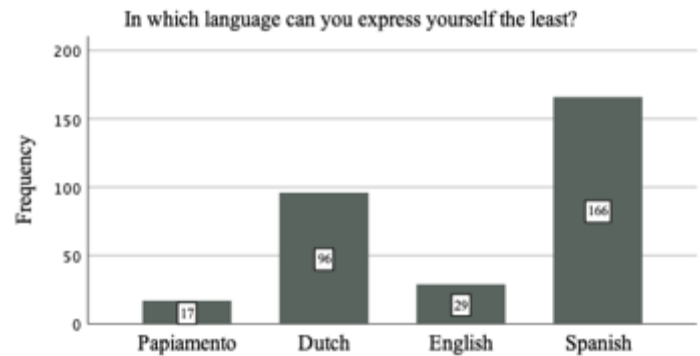
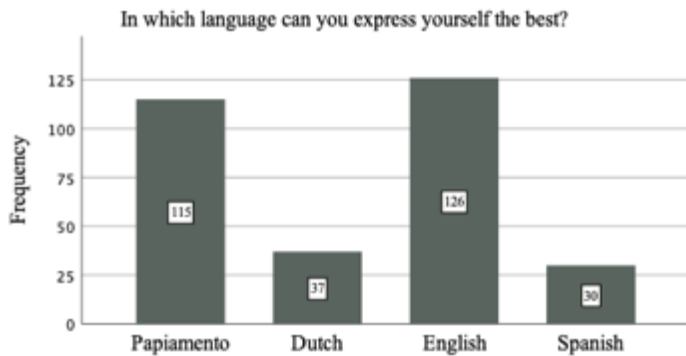


Figure 4. In which language participants express themselves the best

Figure 5. In which language participants express themselves the least

Second, to further examine the daily use of the main languages spoken in Aruba, students were asked to indicate which language(s) they use the most in conversation with different speaking partners. As can be seen in Table 5, the percentages for the use of Papiamentu are very high for all speaking partners. Strikingly, percentages for Dutch were only high for conversations with teachers (34.9%). English scored high for mainly siblings, friends and teachers, while Spanish scored relatively high for conversations with mothers (18.4%).

Table 5. Language use by students to different speaking partners

Which language(s) do you use the most to speak to your...	Papiamentu	Dutch	English	Spanish	Other
Mother	152 (55.9%)	30 (11%)	26 (9.6%)	50 (18.4%)	14 (5.1%)
Father	157 (57.7%)	34 (12.5%)	33 (12.1%)	28 (10.3%)	20 (7.4%)
Brother(s) and Sister(s)	139 (51.1%)	24 (8.8%)	66 (24.3%)	21 (7.7%)	22 (8.1%)
Friends	157 (57.7%)	5 (1.8%)	101 (37.1%)	5 (1.8%)	4 (1.5%)

Teachers	162 (59.6%)	95 (34.9%)	9 (3.3%)	2 (0.7%)	4 (1.5%)
Strangers	216 (79.4%)	4 (1.5%)	44 (16.2%)	2 (0.7%)	6 (2.2%)

Note: Percentages are given in parenthesis. Rows add to 100.

Note: Color marks indicate the highest score(s) per language.

Figure 6 and 7 illustrate the language that is most likely and least likely to be used on a daily basis. The results show that Papiamentu (164) and English (82) are most likely to be used on a daily basis, while Spanish (164) and Dutch (94) are least likely to be used on a daily basis. This is a rather interesting result as one might think that Dutch would be used more on a daily basis as it is the current language of instruction.

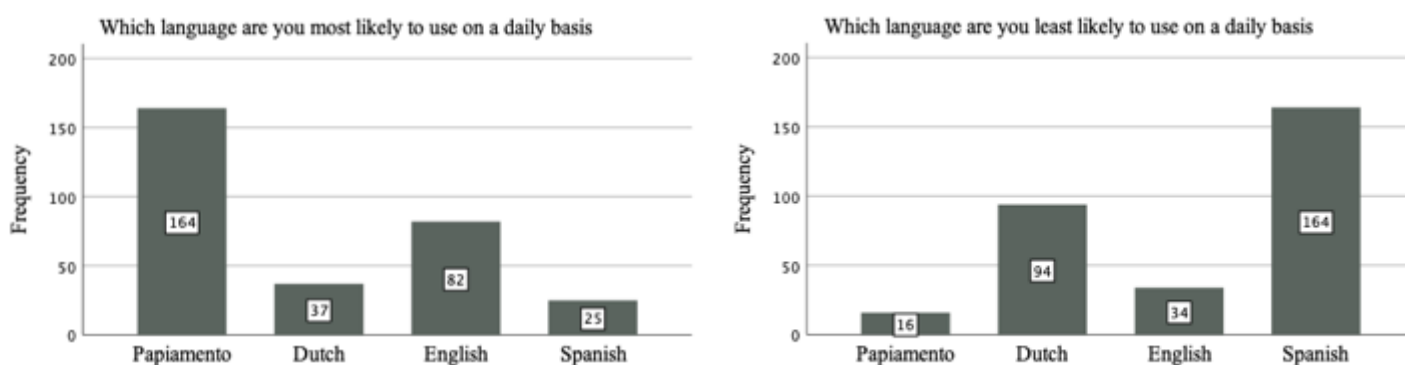


Figure 6. Which language participants use the most on a daily basis

Figure 7. Which language participants use the least on a daily basis

Third, Table 6 provides an overview of various situations in which different languages are used. Participants had to indicate how likely they are to use each language for the given condition. The situations provided were reading, writing and watching television. Results show that English is used the most often in all three situations. Papiamentu and Dutch are often used for writing. There are several explanations for these results. The high use of English could be due to the island's close proximity to the US, tourism and the heavy influence of (social) media. On the other hand, individuals might communicate more on social media in Papiamentu. Additionally, many official documents and school materials are written in Dutch, which could possibly be a reason why Papiamentu and Dutch are often used for writing.

Table 6. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of the items used to examine which languages are most likely to be used in different situations. (1 = Very unlikely, 2 = Unlikely, 3 = Likely, 4 = Very likely)

Situation	Papiamentu	Dutch	English	Spanish	Other
I am most likely to read in ...	M = 2.62 SD = 0.96	M = 2.82 SD = 0.94	M = 3.40 SD = 0.82	M = 2.07 SD = 1.01	M = 1.67 SD = 0.94
I am most likely to write in ...	M = 3.18 SD = 1.34	M = 3.26 SD = 1.51	M = 3.65 SD = 1.20	M = 2.42 SD = 1.26	M = 1.95 SD = 1.25
I am most likely to watch television in ...	M = 2.10 SD = 0.99	M = 2.13 SD = 0.95	M = 3.70 SD = 0.62	M = 2.42 SD = 1.12	M = 1.70 SD = 1.03

#### 4.1.3 Attitudes on language of instruction

In part 3 of the survey, attitudes of students and teachers towards the current language of instruction was measured. Participants were asked to express the degree of their agreement on the statements by indicating their response on a 4-point Likert scale. Table 7 shows that the majority of students (38.6%) in this sample do not find it difficult to follow the lessons in Dutch. 38.2% of the students do not believe that explanations exclusively in Dutch hinder their understanding of the material, while 31.6% believe that it does. Additionally, 42.3% of the students disagreed that teachers should only speak Dutch during the lessons. The majority of the students (41.9%) expressed that they do not like or prefer speaking Dutch in class. Results show that most students (33.5%) are more likely to stay quiet if only Dutch is used in class, while 41.2% of the students indicated that they are likely to participate more in class if different languages are used.

Table 7. Overview of students' response to statements concerning the language of instruction

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I find it difficult to follow the lessons if the teacher only speaks Dutch	69 (25.4%)	105 (38.6%)	56 (20.6%)	42 (15.4%)
It is important that every teacher only speaks Dutch during the lessons	97 (35.7%)	115 (42.3%)	41 (15.1%)	19 (7%)
I would like the teachers at school to speak Papiamentu, Dutch and English in class	7 (2.6%)	35 (12.9%)	134 (49.3%)	96 (35.3%)

I like/prefer speaking Dutch in class	86 (31.6%)	114 (41.9%)	55 (20.2%)	17 (6.3%)
Explanations in Papiamentu are more comprehensible than explanations in Dutch	26 (9.6%)	53 (19.5%)	123 (45.2%)	70 (25.7%)
Explanations in English are more comprehensible than explanations in Dutch	21 (7.7%)	48 (17.6%)	122 (44.9%)	81 (29.8%)
Explanations in Papiamentu encourage me to participate more in class	29 (10.7%)	80 (29.4%)	118 (43.4%)	45 (16.5%)
Explanations in English encourage me to participate more in class	19 (7%)	64 (23.5%)	128 (47.1%)	61 (22.4%)
Explanations only in Dutch hinder me in understanding the materials	46 (16.9%)	104 (38.2%)	86 (31.6%)	36 (13.2%)
If only Dutch is used in class, I am more likely to stay quiet	43 (15.8%)	80 (29.4%)	91 (33.5%)	58 (21.3%)
If more languages are used in class, I am more likely to participate more in class	15 (5.5%)	57 (21%)	112 (41.2%)	88 (32.4%)

Note: Percentages are given in parenthesis. Rows add to 100.

Note: Color marks indicate the highest score(s).

Table 8 shows the attitude of teachers towards the current language of instruction. The majority of the teachers (52.8%) disagreed with the statement that they only speak Dutch when they Teach. Similar to the students, 44.4% of the teachers do not agree that teachers should only speak Dutch in their lessons. Most of the teachers (41.7%) indicated to use Papiamentu in their lesson to explain something new. The majority of the teachers (55.6%) believe that explanations done only in Dutch hinder the students' understanding of the material. Moreover, 52.8% of the teachers believe that students are more likely to participate in class if more languages are used. Further, most of the teachers (61.1%) strongly agree to being open to the idea of improving and exploring different pedagogies to better cater to their multilingual students.

Table 8. Overview of teachers' response to statements concerning the language of instruction

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
When teaching, I only speak Dutch	5 (13.9%)	19 (52.8%)	11 (30.6%)	1 (2.8%)
I use Papiamentu to explain something new in the lesson	5 (13.9%)	14 (38.9%)	15 (41.7%)	2 (5.6%)
I use English to explain something new in the lesson	9 (25%)	15 (41.7%)	9 (25%)	3 (8.3%)
Students find it difficult to follow the lessons if the teacher only speaks Dutch	1 (2.8%)	4 (11.1%)	19 (52.8%)	12 (33.3%)
It is important that every teacher only speaks Dutch during the lessons	12 (33.3%)	16 (44.4%)	6 (16.7%)	2 (5.6%)
I am willing to use Papiamentu or English in my lessons if this benefits the students	0	5 (13.9%)	8 (22.2%)	23 (63.9%)
I notice if I use different languages, the students understand me and the material better	0	1 (2.8%)	15 (41.7%)	20 (55.6%)
The students ask questions in Dutch	6 (16.7%)	15 (41.7%)	11 (30.6%)	4 (11.1%)
The students ask questions in Papiamentu	4 (11.1%)	23 (63.9%)	9 (25%)	35 (97.2%)
The students ask questions in English	4 (11.1%)	14 (38.9%)	14 (38.9%)	4 (11.1%)
I am willing to improve/explore different pedagogies to better cater to the multilingual society we live in	0	0	14 (38.9%)	22 (61.1%)
Explanations only in Dutch hinder the students in understanding the materials	3 (8.3%)	7 (19.4%)	20 (55.6%)	6 (16.7%)
If more languages are used in class, the students are more likely to participate in class	0	4 (11.1%)	19 (52.8%)	13 (36.1%)
I believe it is possible to use different languages simultaneously to teach a new language	0	4 (11.1%)	19 (52.8%)	13 (36.1%)



Using different languages while teaching will confuse the students	15 (41.7%)	18 (50%)	3 (8.3%)	0
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Note: Percentages are given in parenthesis. Rows add to 100.

Note: Color marks indicate the highest score(s).

Lastly, at the end of the survey students had to indicate in which language they prefer to receive lessons in. Participants could choose from the following options; (1) Papiamento, (2) Dutch, (3) Papiamento and Dutch, (4) Papiamento and English, (5) Papiamento, Dutch and English or (6) Other. The option of Other included different combinations that were not listed, such as Dutch and English, Dutch, English and Spanish, Papiamento, English and Spanish, Dutch, Spanish and Papiamento and finally a combination of all four languages. Figure 8 shows that the majority of students (112) prefer to receive lessons in a combination of Papiamento, Dutch and English. A combination of Papiamento and English was also chosen by a fair amount of students (53).

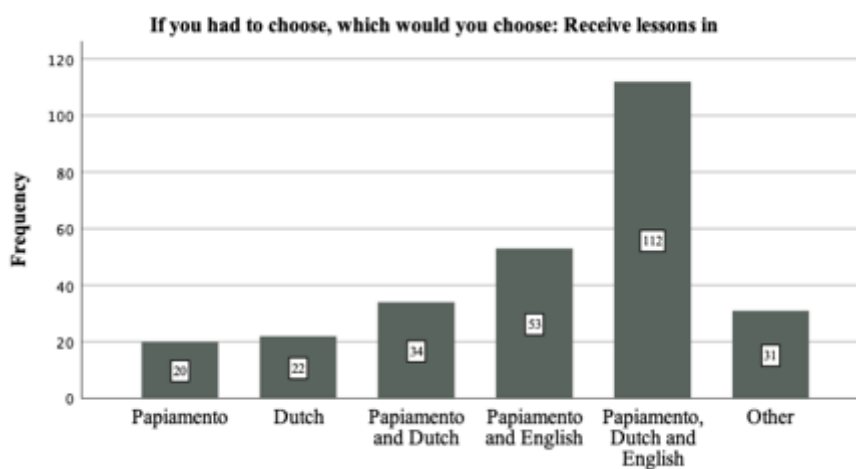


Figure 8. Students' preferred language(s) of instruction

Furthermore, Table 9 shows the language(s) teachers used the most when engaging in social and or informal talk with the students and when enforcing discipline in the classroom. Findings show that Papiamento (69.4%) is used most often by teachers when carrying informal conversation with students, while Dutch (66.7%) is used most often to enforce discipline.

Table 9. Teachers' use language for social talk and enforcing discipline

	Papiamentu	Dutch	English	Spanish	Other
The language I use the most when engaging in social and or informal talk with the students is ...	25 (69.4%)	7 (19.4%)	3 (8.3%)	0	1 (2.8%)
The language I use the most to enforce discipline in the classroom is ...	6 (16.7%)	24 (66.7%)	3 (8.3%)	2 (5.6%)	1 (2.8%)

Note: Other includes a combination of Papiamentu, Dutch and English.

Lastly, Figure 9 illustrates the preferred language(s) of instruction of teachers. Similar to the students, the majority of the teachers (14) indicated to prefer teaching using a combination of Papiamentu, Dutch and English. Another preferred combination was Papiamentu and Dutch (8). Other combinations that were also mentioned, but not part of the given options were, Dutch and English, all languages that are necessary in combination with the target language and Dutch as the first language of instruction with Papiamentu as the second language of instruction for support.

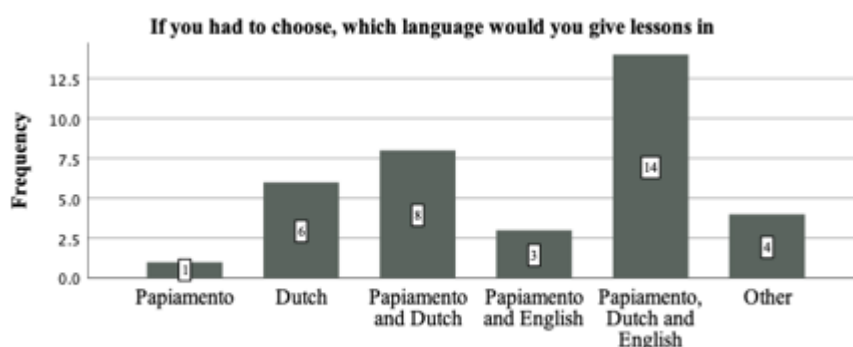


Figure 9. Teachers' preferred language of instruction

## 4.2 Categorization and interpretations from interviews with secondary school students and teachers

### 4.2.1 Interviews with Secondary School Students

The primary aim of the interviews was to achieve a more in-depth look at the opinions and attitudes of both students and teachers on Dutch as the language of instruction and their own personal experiences with the four different languages in education. For the student interviews, three major interrelated themes emerged from the data. Table 10 illustrates the themes and sub-themes: (a) *students' relationship with Dutch and the other languages (struggles with the*

*Dutch language, interests in different languages, preferred languages, interest in Dutch language lessons; (b) students' perception of the four languages (importance of the 4 languages, influence of the 4 languages, studying abroad); (c) opinions on bi-multilingual education and language learning (advantages of bi- multilingual education, disadvantages of bi- multilingual education, attitudes/opinions on improving language learning).* The results of the interviews are summarized below under headings A to C, each of which corresponds to one of the themes and sub-themes listed above. Double quoted passages were taken verbatim from the participants with a translation provided in parenthesis.

Table 10. Main themes and sub-themes from the student interviews

<b>Students' relationship with Dutch and the other languages</b> <i>56% of the Codes</i>	<b>Students' perception of the four languages</b> <i>27% of the Codes</i>	<b>Opinions on bi- multilingual education and language learning</b> <i>17% of the Codes</i>
Struggles with the Dutch language	Importance of the four languages	Advantages of bi-multilingual education
Interests in the different languages	Influence from the four languages	Disadvantages of bi-multilingual education
Preferred languages	Studying abroad	Attitudes/opinions on improving language learning
Interest in Dutch language lessons		

#### **A. Students' relationship with Dutch and the other languages**

For the most part no one displayed any explicit negative emotion towards Dutch. All interviewees understand the place Dutch has in the Aruban education and acknowledged the importance it holds, especially for those who want to continue their studies in the Netherlands. However, the majority of the participants indicated to not like Dutch and prefer to communicate in English or Papiamentu. Interestingly, one participant who has Dutch as their L1 also stated to prefer communicating in English instead of Dutch. Student 8: *“Even though I can speak Dutch from home, I think I would prefer if it was in more languages, because yeah it fits more with me, what I like”*. Students who expressed enthusiasm towards learning the four languages were mainly students who have a general interest in languages. These students indicated that being able to speak multiple languages allows them to communicate more easily with each other and people around the world and recognize the many opportunities it brings. Student 11: *“eta hopi bunita cu bo por comunica cu otro mucha of otro hende den otro pais”* (it is beautiful

to be able to communicate with other children or other people from other countries). Student 12: *“I believe it is a lot of opportunities in other world that I can speak more languages”*. All participants, apart from those who indicated to have Dutch as their first language, reported to struggle with the Dutch language. The challenges that many students encounter with Dutch are in regards to vocabulary, grammar and explanations in Dutch by their teachers. Additionally, participants whose first language is Dutch also indicated to sometimes struggle with textbooks in Dutch. Student 22: *“...Dutch, some of the words are pretty big sometimes but uhm sometimes I use like translators...”*, student 8: *“...they use very high class weird Dutch so then it is harder to understand something that would be super simple if it was just in normal regular spreek taal”* (colloquial language). Lastly, more than half of the participants expressed that they would be more interested in learning the Dutch language if it were taught in a different way. Many participants stated that the way it is being taught at the moment does not motivate them to learn Dutch. Suggestions that participants included are to make the lessons more interactive, communicative, digital and with more explanations and translations from the teacher. Student 9: *“I think more innovative ways like interacting more...”*, Student 19: *“Yes, much more interested, uhm mas bosa illustration mas bosa bo tincu tuma bo tempo...”*, student 22: *“...porta meneer por translate mas like ora e duna les den Dutch e por translate na Papiamento pa hasie mas understandable”* (maybe the teacher could translate more when giving lessons in Dutch, he could translate to Papiamento to make it more understandable).

## **B .Students’ perception of the four languages**

The most striking result to emerge from the student interviews is how strongly the belief is that the natural course for students in Aruba is to study abroad. 17 out of the 22 participants expressed, multiple times, the importance of Dutch for their future. The general consensus is that the majority of students will pursue higher education in the Netherlands. Student 6: *“...the amount of students that are gonna go study further in like Latin America, or let’s say USA or Canada, is very very small, if you were to come to any of the presentations to study in Canada it’s like 10 people, everyone’s gonna go to the Netherlands”*. Notably, students from HAVO had the strongest opinions on this matter compared to students from the other schools. On the other hand, the other participants found Dutch to be less important compared to the other languages. According to these students, English and Spanish are considered more universal, whereas Dutch is only believed to be spoken in the Netherlands. Further, participants also addressed the importance of Papiamento but stated its limitations. Student 7: *“...opleiding wijs hebben we niet heel veel opties op Aruba en met Papiamento kan je ook niet heel veel kanten*

*mee...*” (we do not really have that many options on Aruba when it comes to studies, and you cannot really go anywhere with Papiamentu). Moreover, a common view amongst interviewees was that the languages all have a positive influence on Aruba’s youth. They consider the ability to speak multiple languages to allow them to be more social with tourists, learn from others, have more respect for other cultures, and be overall more accepting of others. Student 8: *“I think it makes us more social, because can literally speak to anybody...also kind of accepting of other people and other cultures”*.

### **C. Opinions on bi- multilingual education and language learning**

When asked about the advantages or disadvantages of implementing bi-multilingual education on Aruba, the majority of the participants could only think of more advantages than disadvantages. Many interviewees expressed that bi-multilingual education would help students understand the subjects better, faster, result in better scores and possibly a higher graduating percentage. Moreover, some participants indicated that it would also allow students to express themselves more competently as they would feel more comfortable and confident. Student 5: *“...the student can choose to get classes in a language they are more comfortable in where they could excel more easily”*. Student 18: *“E bon lo ta cu eta yudabo pasobra si bo no comprende un palabra asina bota comprende den diferente manera”* (the good thing is that if you do not understand a word, you are still able to understand it in another way). Student 16: *“ami ta pensa hopi hende lo score mas halto den puntonan...”* (I think a lot of people will score much higher with their grades).

Nevertheless, interviewees were also skeptical of the challenges bi-multilingual education might bring with it. A reoccurring concern was that by implementing multiple languages students fear that they will not be able to specialize in one language and thus lead to being less proficient in all the languages. Another apprehension students have are that bi-multilingual education might bring confusion to both the teachers and the students. One interviewee argues that this might lead to a lower quality of Dutch that might hinder her later in life when she studies abroad. Similarly, another participant stated that it might create issues when studying abroad as it will not be the same. Student 2: *“... or abo bai afo eno ta bai ta mesun cos, bo no por bai bisa si splicami na Papiamentu paso nan no ta bai sa”* (it will not be the same when you go abroad, you will not be able to say yes explain it to me in Papiamentu because they will not know how).

On the other hand, in spite of these beliefs, 3 out of the 22 students were of the opinion that change needs to start from the source, primary school. These students expressed that

primary school teachers should speak more Dutch and less Papiamentu in primary school. One interviewee argues that her transition to secondary school was much easier because her primary school teachers only spoke Dutch. However, it is also important to note that this participant has Dutch as her L1. Alternatively, another interviewee suggested that Dutch should be taught as a second or third language in primary school. This view was echoed by a participant who attended one of the pilot multilingual primary schools, *Colegio Conrado Coronel*. She explained that it was a multilingual school where they spoke all four languages. She learned everything first in Papiamentu, and later, in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Dutch, English and Spanish were introduced respectively. She indicated that it was easier to understand Dutch because she learned in her native language, Papiamentu, first. She expected the transition to secondary school to be difficult, but to her surprise the switch was quite easy and she believes that it is because she has such a strong foundation of her first language. Student 4: *“I think basis is a good way to teach other languages cause when I learned Papiamentu it was easier for me to understand Dutch because I learned everything in Papiamentu first until 5<sup>th</sup> grade and then in 5<sup>th</sup> grade we learned like Dutch, English and Spanish, and it’s a really easy switch for me, so I think it would be better to have more schools like that in basis”*. In the same vein, Student 1 states: *“mita hanja mester compronde idioma natal bon prome, despues cuminsa hinca otro idiomaan”* (I find that you need to understand your native language first, and then add other languages).

Overall, these results show that students have a rather impartial attitude towards Dutch. All of the students in this sample believe that Dutch is important to some extent, especially for those who desire to continue their studies in the Netherlands. At the same time, the majority of the students do not particularly like Dutch and would rather communicate in Papiamentu or English. A fair amount are of the opinion that they would be more interested in learning Dutch if it were taught in a different way and not treated as their first language. As one student put it: *“it’s weird to assume someone can speak a language when they really just can’t”*. Moreover, many consider English and Spanish to hold more importance than Dutch, as these two languages are spoken worldwide while Dutch is believed to only be useful in the Netherlands. Also, Papiamentu is appreciated and respected but deemed to be limited to only Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao. Lastly, all of the students consider being multilingual of great value and would prefer a bi-multilingual education. They believe it would allow them to excel more in school as they would have the opportunity to express themselves better.

### 4.2.2 Interviews with Secondary School Teachers

For the teacher interviews, three major interrelated themes emerged from the data. Table 11 illustrates the themes and sub-themes: (a) *Teachers' experiences with Dutch (personal experiences with Dutch as a teacher and as a student, perceived attitudes from students towards the Dutch language, Proficiency in the Dutch language)*; (b) *teachers' perception on the use of the four different languages in education (attitudes towards Dutch as the language of instruction, the use of different languages in the classroom and preferred language of instruction, studying abroad)*; (c) *opinions on bi-multilingual education and language learning (benefits of bi- multilingual education, challenges of bi-multilingual education, attitude/opinions on improving language learning)*. The results of the interviews are summarized below under headings A to C, each of which corresponds to one of the themes and sub-themes listed above. Double quoted passages were taken verbatim from the participants with a translation provided in parenthesis.

Table 11. Main themes and sub-themes from the teacher interviews

<b>Teachers' experiences with Dutch</b> <i>30% of the Codes</i>	<b>Teachers' perception on the use of the four different languages in education</b> <i>33% of the Codes</i>	<b>Opinions on bi- multilingual education and language learning</b> <i>37% of the Codes</i>
Personal experiences with Dutch as a teacher and as a student	Attitudes towards Dutch as the language of instruction	Benefits of bi- multilingual education
Perceived attitudes from students towards the Dutch language	The use of different languages in the classroom and preferred language of instruction	Challenges of bi- multilingual education
Proficiency in the Dutch language	Studying abroad	Attitudes/opinions on improving language learning

#### A Teachers' experiences with Dutch

A common view amongst interviewees is that it has consistently become more difficult to teach using Dutch as the only language of instruction. According to the teachers, many students simply do not understand the material or explanations when it is only given in Dutch. One participant (Art teacher) explained that she often spends the entire lesson speaking in Dutch by herself because the students rarely ever reply in Dutch. Likewise another (Biology) teacher

also described a similar situation. She aims to teach her lessons using only Dutch and often times attempts to force her students to reply or ask questions in Dutch, however when she does this the consequences are that students no longer have a question or want to speak up because they simply do not like to communicate in Dutch. Teacher 2 (Biology): *“ik verplicht ze in het Nederlands en ik krijg soms dat ze dan zeggen ‘nee juffrouw dan heb ik geen vraag meer’ en dat vind ik dan jammer want ze vinden het gewoon niet leuk”* (I obligate them to speak Dutch and then sometimes get that they say ‘no miss I don’t have a question anymore’ and I find that unfortunate because they just don’t like it). In addition, some teachers feel that the Dutch limits the students’ development. According to one teacher this results in very passive, scared and unmotivated students. Teacher 11 (History): *“It makes the kids very passive, very not being able to regionalize stuff, just learning things out of their head you know reproducing, uhm scared kids, not happy, not going to school with pleasure, and that’s the main issues I see with Dutch as the instructional language”*.

Conversely, the largest comparison teachers made between their experiences with Dutch now as a teacher as opposed to when they were students, was that Dutch was seen as a must, rules were much more strict concerning the use of Dutch on schoolgrounds and there was less influence of English. Additionally, some expressed to have no issues with Dutch as it is their mother tongue, while others feel that it has somewhat been conditioned in them from a young age. Teacher 12 (Arts/CKV): *“The Dutch language was something more of a, like a must I would say. Het was eerder meer al vanaf de basisschool al een beetje meer geïndoctrineerd...”* (it was more indoctrinated already from primary school).

Many who lived and studied abroad in Netherlands, believe themselves to have a good mastery in Dutch, but always have some doubts. Lastly, while all the teachers acknowledge that students have difficulties with the Dutch language, none of them feel that students have strong negative emotion towards the language. According to the teachers, many students do not like Dutch but rather see it as a must and understand that it is needed for their future studies. The majority of the students do not come in contact with the Dutch language outside of school unless it is their L1. Teachers note that students often prefer to communicate in English or Papiamentu and believe this is due to the strong influence of (social) media. Teacher 12 (Arts/CKV): *“They’re more hoe zeg je dat, in tune with the TikToks and Instagram and stuff like that yeah, social media is everything is in English dus uhm nog een keer het contact met Nederlands is heel erg minimal dus dan ga je niks mee doen”* (they’re more how do you say it, in tune with the TikToks and Instagram and stuff like that yeah, social media is everything is in English so uhm once again the contact with Dutch is very minimal so you do not do anything with it).



### **B Teachers' perception on the use of the four different languages in education**

Interestingly, only 3 out of the 12 teachers who were interviewed indicated to consistently only use Dutch as their language of instruction. Similarly, two other language teachers (English and Spanish) reported to also only use the target language and Dutch in the classroom. Nevertheless, all 5 teachers did admit to using Papiamentu or English during their lessons to translate certain words that students do not comprehend. These teachers expressed a general concern of using other languages in the classroom because it might hinder the students ability when taking exams. Teacher 7 (Economics): *“E disadvantage por ta cu si bo usa Papiamentu, Ingles of Spaans como instructie taal anto ora nan bai traha exam nan no ta bai ta literate enough pa contesta na Hulandes”* (the disadvantage could be that if you use Papiamentu, English or Spanish as language of instruction, when they need to make the exam, they will not be literate enough to answer in Dutch). This view was also echoed by the other participants that also reported to focus on Dutch more due to the exams, however, many of these teachers also often use the other languages during their lessons. One participant (History teacher) stated that his explanations and instructions are always in Papiamentu, as he believes that an Aruban deserves to receive lessons in their native language. He argues that it allows the materials to become more personal to the students which in turn makes it more interesting to them. Nonetheless, he did explain that even though his instructions are in Papiamentu, the materials such as PowerPoints or notes on the board are in Dutch and the students are required to copy these notes in Dutch. This is because once again, the exams are after all in Dutch. Moreover, several of the interviewees mentioned that they often use other languages during their lessons to test their comprehension or to move on faster with the material. Admittedly, many of the participants also expressed another reason why they put so much focus on Dutch is because it is so common for students to continue their studies abroad in the Netherlands. However, one teacher interestingly enough mentioned that Aruban education often limits its students by only catering to one sector, the Netherlands. Even though the majority of students move abroad, some may end up studying in other countries or follow English speaking majors. Teacher 6 (Mathematics): *“Well, back then it was needed because you, the only way to go further in your study was to go to Holland, but now there are so many different ways and I find we should be able to stick to more the global language and mostly that is English and because that you can go all over the world and Dutch is only in Holland you can go study”*.

Alternatively, there was one teacher who reported to using more Papiamentu than any other language in her lessons, due to the subject she teaches (Arts/CKV). The aim of her subject is

to allow students to be able to express themselves in any creative forms and she believes that this can only be done in their native language. She acknowledges the privilege she has with this. Teacher 3 (Arts/CKV): *“Door cu ami ta uza e vak di expresivo anto dus mi mester uza papiamento du sami tin e privilegio ey”* (because I use the subject of self-expression, I need to use Papiamento, so I have that privilege).

Nevertheless, more than half of the teachers had similar thoughts as the students on the limitations of Papiamento. Many believe that the transition would be difficult to study abroad if the language of instruction was solely Papiamento. According to these teachers, Aruba unfortunately does not offer enough studies in higher education which also creates limitations for its students. Teacher 1 (Physics/Chemistry): *“Papiamento lo ta hopi great tambe pero e cos ta nan no por bai hasi verder mucho cune, y bo lo bisa cu bo lo kier si pero mino ta kere ainda ta zo ver mane no tin hopi opleiding na Aruba tampoco”* (Papiamento would be great as well but the thing is they cannot do much any further with it, and you would say that you would want but I don’t think we are that far, like there aren’t many studies in Aruba either).

### **C Opinions on bi-multilingual education and language learning**

A variety of perspectives were expressed when asked about the benefits and challenges of implementing bi-multilingual education on Aruba. The participants on the whole demonstrated to be positive about the idea of bi-multilingual education on Aruba. All the teachers agreed that adjusting the language of instruction to a more multilingual manner will benefit the students immensely. Students will be able to understand the material better, they will have a greater proficiency in writing, reading and speaking, which in turn will lead to better overall results. Teacher 3 (Arts/CKV): *“mita kere si e idioma ta nan moedertaal eta hasi un diferencia hopi grandi y mi ta kere nos lo wak e resultado tambe”* (I believe that if the language is their mother tongue it will make a huge difference and I think we will see that in the results as well). Teacher 7 (Economics): *“The benefits lo ta cu e studiantenan lo ta mas betrokken bij bo vak, y cu bo lo tin miho resultaten tambe”* (the benefits would be that students would be more involved in your subject and that you will have better results as well).

Some interviewees argued that it would also allow students to participate more actively in the classroom, be able to think more critically as they will be more comfortable to express themselves. This allows students to have more fun during the lessons, become involved and genuinely enjoy school more. One participant also commented on how it would make a vast difference for parents as well. Teacher 3 (Arts/CKV): *“elo hasi un verschil hopi grandi, pasomisa di hopi mayornan cu tambe a struggle cu e idioma y nan no lo kier nan yui struggle mane*

anan” (it would make a huge difference because I know many parents who also struggle with the language and they would not want their child to struggle like they did).

However, many teachers also voiced their concerns on the many challenges implementing bi-multilingual education might bring. The main concern was in regards to the materials available. At the moment, all the materials that is used in secondary school is in Dutch, and the students have to make their exams in Dutch as well. Furthermore, some participants also feel that it would bring a great deal of extra work for teachers, as proficient and qualified teachers will be needed. Nevertheless, they understand the benefits it would bring and believe that the extra work would only be temporary. Teacher 7 (Economics): “*Elo vraag hopi di abo como docente, bota prepara bo les den un instructietaal y bo mester ta hopi flexibel pa e momente ey bai vertaal e den nan language of preference zeg maar, dus pa e docente mi ta kere elo ta extra werk in het begin pero mita kere eventually bota custuma*” (It will ask a lot from you as a teacher, you prepare your lessons in a certain language and you need to be very flexible for that moment to translate it in their language of preference, so for teachers I think it would be extra work in the beginning but I think eventually you get used to it). Teacher 12 (Arts/CKV): “*I think, uhm maybe for me, I would need a refreshment for English like English courses, cause I’ve been giving courses like instructions in Dutch for like 12 years already and it’s already imprinted you know what I mean... dus voor mij zou het een beetje moeilijker zijn maar niet dat het onmogelijk is*” (so for me it would be a bit difficult but I do not think it is impossible).

Moreover, two participants also expressed that it could possibly create friction and division between schools. Teacher 2 (Biology): “*...I don’t wanna say divisie, maar dat er echt een splitsing komt van ok wij kunnen Nederlands dus wij gaan naar een bepaalde school en de rest kan geen Nederlands dus die gaan naar een andere school*” (I do not want to say division, but that it will create a split between those who can speak Dutch so we will go to a certain school and the rest that cannot speak Dutch go to another school). Additionally, some interviewees have some apprehension about changing the language of instruction because they fear that if students do not learn any Dutch at school, they will not have the chance to improve as the majority of the population does not come in contact with Dutch outside of school. Teacher 1 (Physics/Chemistry): “*...paso mescos cu ami e mayoria di e mucha ta maak e mee na scol so, buiten school nan no ta maak mee nada den hulandes*” (just like me, majority of the kids only experience Dutch at school, outside of school they do not). Correspondingly, many of the participants believe that the way for students to achieve Dutch proficiency is similar to some of the students’ opinions. They believe that Dutch should be taught as a foreign language,

in a more interactive way that allows students to practice their communication skills. Further, one participant indicated that teachers should be more aware of the students' home language. Many also believe that coming in more contact with the language more regularly outside of the classroom will be of great help as well. Teacher 5 (Biology): *"I believe if they look at more stuff on YouTube that's in Dutch, maybe jeugdjournaal or news those types of stuff or programs or movies in Dutch, it can help them and they can get better, maybe read more as well."* Teacher 11 (History): *"dealing with Dutch outside of class... Unda nan no sa cu nan ta sinjando e idioma ta eynan nan ta sinja, dus na cas, scuchando of wakiendo, wakiendo no, bezig ta wak streaming uhm movies in Dutch, you know looking at, seynan bota sinja, pafo di klas"* (where they do not know that they are learning the language, that is where they learn, so at home or watching movies in Dutch, things you learn outside of the classroom).

In summary, these interview results are consistent with the interview results of the students. The teachers in this sample do not feel that students have any strong negative emotions towards Dutch but do recognize the dislike students have towards the language. Therefore, the general consensus is that it has become increasingly difficult to teach exclusively in Dutch. Many believe that Dutch was much more compulsory during their time at primary and secondary school compared to now. Moreover, the majority of teachers stated that they often use Papiamentu, English and sometimes even Spanish during their lessons because many students would not understand otherwise. However, despite the use of other languages in the classroom, teachers indicated to still put emphasis on Dutch as the students must take their final exams in Dutch and believe that many continue their studies in the Netherlands. Finally, similar to the students, teachers believe that bi-multilingual education would be of great benefit to the students as it will allow them to have a better understanding of the material and in turn increase their success rate. Concerns for implementing bi-multilingual education are in regards to courseware, exams, proficient teachers and the fear of losing Dutch proficiency. Nonetheless, teachers are willing and open to the idea of bi-multilingual education.

On the whole, the experiences and perceptions of students and teachers are quiet similar. Table 12 shows a systematic comparison between the two groups. Both groups are aware of the importance Dutch holds in Aruban education, but in the same breath acknowledge the struggles it brings for the students. Teachers' previous experiences with Dutch during their primary and secondary school years are different to the current students. According to teachers,

in the past rules were much more strict concerning the use of Dutch on schoolgrounds. At the present time, students rarely communicate in Dutch with each other or even with teachers.

*Table 12. Systematic comparison between teachers' and students' experiences and perceptions*

	<b>Experiences</b>	<b>Perceptions</b>
Students	Struggle with the Dutch language. Often do not understand the material or textbooks that are in Dutch. Comprehension and participation is enhanced when other languages (Papiamento and English) are used.	Dutch is important for those who want to study abroad in the Netherlands. Dutch is mostly only important for living in the Netherlands. English and Spanish are more important because they are world languages. Students do not like Dutch and prefer to communicate in English and Papiamento. Students believe bi-multilingual education will be of great benefit to them.
Teachers	Dutch was compulsory during their time at school as a student. Many studied abroad in Netherlands and thus have a good mastery of Dutch. It has become increasingly difficult to teach only in Dutch. Students do not respond in Dutch.	Students do not like Dutch and often communicate mostly in Papiamento with the teacher and a combination of Papiamento and English with each other. Students understand the importance of Dutch for their future. Teachers believe bi-multilingual education is beneficial for the students but are concerned of the many challenges it brings. Teachers are open and willing to the idea of bi-multilingual education.

### **4.3 Secondary school classroom observation**

In order to answer sub-question (2), the main objective of the classroom observations was to describe the actuality of how the different languages are being used by the students and teachers during their lessons. Recurrent themes that surfaced was the extent of Dutch used in the classroom by the teachers, students' interaction with the teacher and each other and codeswitching. The subject lessons that were observed were; Arts/CKV, History, Economics, Physics, Mentor Hour, Biology, English and Dutch.

#### **A. Teachers' use of Dutch in the classroom**

The majority of the teachers who were observed consistently used Dutch as their main language of instruction. Teachers would often start up their lessons in Dutch as well as provide any instructions or explanations in Dutch. Students did not appear to be bothered by this, however nearly all students always responded to the teacher in Papiamento, and even sometimes

English. Teachers frequently had to repeat themselves in Papiamentu after giving their instructions or explanations in Dutch. There was one instance during a Physics lesson in which a student would ask the teacher a question in Papiamentu, the teacher would respond in Dutch by asking “*wat zeg je?*”, the student repeats the question in Papiamentu and the teacher found herself reverting back in Papiamentu. This situation relates back to a comment one teacher made during her interview in which she stated that it has become increasingly difficult to only teach in Dutch compared to 10 years ago. Similarly, during a Dutch language lesson the teacher would react to a student with “*je moet mij in het Nederlands antwoord geven*”, however the student refuses to answer in Dutch. Most students in this class seemed to be very self-conscious and not confident when asked to answer in Dutch. Moreover, classroom management would also regularly happen in Dutch. On the contrary, words of encouragement and compliments such as “*that’s my girl*”, “*hopi bon bota corda si*” (well done you do remember) are in Papiamentu or English. Interestingly, apart from repetition and compliments, Papiamentu would primarily be used during more informal or intimate conversations between the teacher and student. All of the teachers always greeted their students at the start and end of the lesson in Papiamentu. When speaking to a student individually, teachers would switch to Papiamentu or English to either engage in casual conversation or help them with an assignment. An example of this is when a student made a mistake and the Physics teacher approached the student by saying “*kiko a bai fout?, segunmi bo a hasi un tik fout, mustrami kiko ba hasi*” (what went wrong?, I think you made a typo, show me what you did).

Alternatively, 3 out of the 12 teachers almost exclusively used Papiamentu during their lessons. Strikingly, two of those were both History teachers. Even though the PowerPoints and notes on the blackboard was in Dutch, their explanations and instruction were given in almost entirely in Papiamentu, with the occasional reference to specific terms in Dutch. This relates back to a comment made by one of the interviewees that expressed when teaching in the native language, students are able to make the content of the lessons more personal, in which case History is a large part of one’s culture.

## **B. Students’ interaction with the teacher and each other**

The single most striking observation to emerge from the data was the interaction between the teacher and students and each other. Despite the teacher communicating with the students in Dutch, more often than not, students would reply in Papiamentu. Even when students are encouraged to ask questions in Dutch, many struggle to hold a conversation in Dutch. The most surprising aspect of the data emerged during a Biology lesson. The teacher would give

instructions for exercise in Dutch, the material is in Dutch, yet a group of students would work together while exclusively communicating in English. Moreover, a common behavior across all the classroom observations were that students regularly interact with each other predominantly in Papiamentu while merging English in their conversations. This confirms the results of both the survey and interviews in which students feel more comfortable communicating in Papiamentu and English. Conversely, during one of the observations at one of the schools, a small group of Dutch descended students did interact with each other in Dutch. However, these students also appeared to combine their languages, conversing in both Dutch and English or Papiamentu.

### **C. Code-switching**

As mentioned in the previous section, students often merge languages together in their daily conversations with each other. Seeing as Aruba has a multilingual society, the act of codeswitching is no surprise. Code-switching refers to when a speaker alternates between two or more languages within a discourse. This phenomena also presents itself in the classroom. In all cases, teachers and students frequently code-switch between Dutch, Papiamentu and English. An example of this was seen during an Arts/CKV lessons in which students entered the classroom late and the teacher reacted with: “*Bon dia, jullie zijn heel laat, het is niet de eerste keer, hurry up!*” (good morning, you are very late, it isn’t the first time, hurry up). For the most part this seems to happen unconsciously and with the intention of expressing a thought in multiple different ways. This could be either to help find the right words, clarification or emphasis. Similarly, during a History lesson the teacher would often switch back and forth between Dutch, Papiamentu and English. He would start by saying “*awo nos ta bai bespreek paragraaf 2. We zijn bezig met Rusland*” (now we are going to discuss paragraph 2, we are busy with Russia. He then proceeds to show a video and explains “*mi tey mustrabo un video pabo por grasp di con rich y con poor eta., tin un diferencia hopi grandi, a huge difference*” (I am going to show you a video so you can grasp how rich and how poor it is. There is a huge difference). Moreover, one teacher also encourages his students to answer in whatever language they feel comfortable, whether that be one or a mix of all, as long as they just answer and participate in the lesson. Furthermore, the classroom atmosphere in the majority of the lessons also provide many instances of code-switching, with various posters on the walls in Dutch, Papiamentu and English.

## 5. Discussion

The language situation on Aruba can be very complex. It is composed of four frequently used languages, namely, Papiamentu, English, Spanish and Dutch, which all make up for the unique linguistic landscape of the island. Aruba has two official languages, Papiamentu which is the community vernacular and Dutch which is the official language of instruction in schools. English and Spanish also have an important function in society due to the island's close proximity to South and North America and the tourism economy. The purpose of this research was to examine how the current language context and language attitudes among teachers and students of secondary school relate to the preferred languages of instruction in Aruba.

The findings of the present study show that Aruban students and teachers acknowledge the importance of Dutch in the Aruban education. However in the same breath they admit to the many challenges it brings with it. Even though there were no major negative emotions towards Dutch, students expressed a certain dislike towards the language. Survey and interview results revealed that students find it difficult to follow along with the teacher if only Dutch is spoken during the lesson. Ideally, they would prefer teachers to use a combination of Dutch, Papiamentu and English in class as it would encourage them to participate more. This finding is consistent with that of Croes (2015) who examined the attitudes and valorization of Dutch and Papiamentu in education. Students in his study believed Dutch to be important, however admitted to not have a good mastery of Dutch and were of the opinion that it hampers them in understanding the material. In fact, the students in his study also expressed to be more likely to stay quiet when asked to speak Dutch. Equally, the majority of students in the present study indicated to not like speaking Dutch and feel that their level of Dutch often hinders their academic performance. These results corroborate the ideas of Cummins (2001), who argues that the negation of culture and language in schools is seen as severely ineffective for the individual and society itself. He states that children who have a solid foundation in their native language are able to develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language. Additionally, he claims that once children have a deeper understanding of how to use language effectively they are also able to develop their abilities in two or more languages throughout their school years (Cummins, 2001; 2003). Conversely, students recognize the significant relevance Dutch has as it offers Aruban students opportunities for further education in the Netherlands. This is in accordance with previous studies in which Dutch was profiled as the language of academic success that provides individuals with many opportunities in life (Silva, 2015; Croes, 2015; Van der Linde, 2015; Vasić, 2016; Van der Linden, 2017).



Nevertheless, many students also argue that Dutch is mainly only spoken in the Netherlands and believe English and Spanish to hold a greater importance as those are spoken world-wide. Moreover, even though results show that Papiamentu is seen as limited in regards to further studies or opportunities, students still believe it is paramount to know one's native language and give Papiamentu its importance in education as well. This is in line with Vasić (2016) whose data showed that Aruban students were very positive towards Papiamentu, which is very much appreciated in regards to cultural identity. It was stated that it is crucial to learn Papiamentu in order to develop and improve the language. Pereira (2019) argues that there is a strong link between language and the history of a community. It is the most important means of communication, contextualization and expression and is a vehicle for thinking and behavior. Furthermore, teachers' opinions and attitudes were found to be similar to those of the students. Survey and interview results show that teachers are aware of the challenges students face with Dutch as the language of instruction. According to many teachers, compared to when they attended secondary school, rules used to be much stricter and the other languages, especially English, was much less popular amongst their peers. Due to the increasing popularity of the different languages it has become much more difficult for teachers to continuously teach using only Dutch. These findings match those observed by Silva (2015), where teachers agreed that using the native language would help students understand their subject better. Accordingly, teachers are willing to explore and adapt different pedagogies to better cater to the multilingual nature of their students. Nevertheless, many teachers still have their reservations on using different languages in the classroom as all the materials and exams are in Dutch. However, Cummins (2003) states that bilingual educational systems that are well implemented can promote literacy and subject matter knowledge without any negative consequences on a child's language development. He argues that transfer across languages in academic and literacy skills can also occur at more advanced stages (Cummins, 2003). Additionally, two concepts that are meaningful to supporting bi-multilingualism in a learning environment are translanguaging and code-switching. Faltis (2019) describes code-switching as an aspect of translanguaging because it concerns bi-multilingual language mixing of longer chunks of text and speech acts. This also accords with the findings of this study, which showed that both students and teachers frequently code-switch between Dutch, Papiamentu and English. For this reason, a pedagogical approach teachers can adopt is translanguaging as it allows the learners to rely on resources of their differing repertoires to engage in meaningful conversation.

With regard to how the languages are being used in secondary education in relation to the current language situation on the island, there is no denying the multilingual nature of

Aruban individuals. Papiamentu remains the first language of the majority of the participants in this study, following English and Dutch. This is in line with the data of Central Bureau of Statistics (2020). However, it is interesting to note that the students in this study indicated to have both Papiamentu and English as their first language, while the teachers indicated to have Papiamentu and Dutch as their first language. A possible explanation for this might be that English is much more popular amongst the youth compared to for example 50 years ago.

Both groups indicated to use Papiamentu the most on a daily basis and are able to express themselves the best in Papiamentu and English. Surprisingly, findings revealed that the majority of the respondents believe to have a slightly greater dominance of English than Papiamentu. On the other hand, participants indicated to be able to express themselves the least in both Dutch and Spanish, as these were also less likely to be used on a daily basis. Although, a fair amount of teachers also indicated to using a considerable amount of Dutch on a daily basis and are able to express themselves better in Dutch. This may be explained by the fact that the majority of the teachers studied and lived abroad in the Netherlands and therefore feel that they can express themselves better in Dutch. Additionally many teachers often use Dutch as their language of instruction. Further, the findings showed that Papiamentu is the language that is used the most by students in most conversations with speaking partners, followed by English. Dutch is mainly used in conversation with teachers and Spanish with mothers. This is in line Vasić (2016) who also found Papiamentu to be used most by students in their daily conversations. Moreover, these findings are also consistent with the results of the classroom observation. Teachers more often than not are the only ones speaking Dutch in their lessons, while students the majority of the time respond in Papiamentu or English. Code-switching also plays a large role when teachers and students communicate with each other. This once again demonstrates the multilingual nature of Arubans.

Lastly, when asked which language is the preferred language of instruction, both students and teachers responded with a combination of languages. This is consistent with that of Croes (2015) and Van der Linde (2015). However, this is not in line with the findings of Leuverink (2011) whose results showed Dutch to be the most preferred language of instruction. In order to implement a bi-multilingual curriculum in the educational system of Aruba, further longitude research needs to be done. Pereira (2019) argues that neglecting empirical data on the importance of the native language in the development of learning and suppressing the native language goes against all theories on education. It would be interesting to examine to what extent the use of the different languages have an effect on students' academic performances over a

course of several years. Furthermore, the attitudes and behavior Aruban citizens play a crucial role in language planning and policy.

As the multicultural society continues to grow on the island, issues regarding language planning and bi-multilingual education have also received more attention throughout the years. In 2009 a pilot program, *Proyecto Scol Multilingual (PSML)*, had been introduced at two schools of pre-primary level, *Trupial Kleuterschool* and *Colegio Conrado Coronel*, and later in 2012 expanded to primary levels, *Colegio San Hose* and *Colegio Conrado Coronel* (EA, 2022). The program offers Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish from the moment they enter kindergarten up until the end of their primary school. PSML centers on Papiamentu as the language of instruction and initial literacy up to the fourth grade. Dutch is introduced half way through second grade, English in fourth grade and Spanish in fifth grade. In the fifth grade Dutch is introduced as the language of instruction (EA, 2022). PSML is certainly a promising development as it is proving to be an effective alternative to the current Dutch-only system (Croes & Williams, 2017). Lastly, in 2019 an advice note was published on language policy for a new trajectory in general secondary education. This was done at the request of the Minister of Education. Instructions for the *Directie Onderwijs* (DEA) were to provide advice and possible solutions for the current language problems in general secondary education. Three different scenarios (language models) are described: (1) a Dutch-English track for HAVO and VWO, (2) a track where Dutch taught as a foreign language and (3) A Papiamentu-English track for MAVO. These models are further discussed in Chapter 7. The final recommendations of this advice note are to incorporate all three language models. Additionally, measures to solve any language-related problems such as teacher training, contextualized materials and reading promotion should also be taken into consideration. Unfortunately, it has become clear that there would be no financial resources to initiate this trajectory in the academic year of 2019-2020. It is the intention to have any financial issues in place so the implementation of a new bilingual trajectory can start in the following academic year of 2020-2021 for two schools (*Het Schakel College* and *Colegio San Nicolas*) (Scholing-Pietersz & Tromp-Wouters, 2019). So far, only *Het Schakel College* has moved forward with implementing bilingual education in their curriculum. However, Dutch still remains a prominent language of instruction as the final exams must still be taken in Dutch (Schakel College, 2022), which could suggest that it is not as innovative as they might be aiming for after all.

## **6. Conclusion**

The purpose of the current study was to determine how the current language context and language attitudes among students and teachers contribute to the preferred languages of instruction in Aruba. This research included a mixed method approach for gathering information. Quantitative data was collected through surveys which included a total of 308 participants. Qualitative data was obtained through interviews with 22 students, 12 teachers and 12 classroom observations. The results revealed that Aruba is an island filled with cultural diversity with a unique language situation where a great deal of language mixing happens. Despite the ubiquity of the four languages (Papiamentu, Dutch, English, Spanish), Papiamentu remains the dominant language with a prestige unlike other Creoles in the Caribbean. Respondents of this study indicated to express themselves the best in Papiamentu and English as well as use them the most on a daily basis. Dutch seems to be used more among teachers. On the other hand, the majority of the students reported to only use Dutch at school. Students' preferred language of communication is Papiamentu and English. This also seems to be the case in actuality. Classroom observations showed that teachers spend the majority of the lesson speaking Dutch, while students generally respond and interact in Papiamentu or English. Classroom management often happens in Dutch, while informal talk and intimate conversations happen in Papiamentu. Teachers frequently find themselves repeating the same information in Papiamentu because students do not understand it the first time in Dutch. Additionally, the interaction between students mostly occurs in combination of Papiamentu and English.

Moreover, no major negative emotions towards Dutch were expressed by the students in this study. Both students and teachers recognize the significance Dutch holds for Aruban students as it provides many opportunities to study abroad in the Netherlands. However, participants not only acknowledge but also admit to the many struggles Dutch-only education creates for students. Students do not enjoy Dutch and simply see it as a must. A more interactive and communicative approach is believed to motivate students more to learn Dutch. Further, participants indicated that if they had to choose, they would prefer to attend a bi-multilingual school in which a combination of Dutch-English, Papiamentu-English or Dutch, English and Papiamentu were the languages of instruction. Many respondents believe that bi-multilingual education would lead to better results and higher graduation rates, faster and easier comprehension of new subject matters and more motivated students. Reservations about implementing bi-multilingual education include courseware, exams, proficient teachers and the connection with studying abroad in the Netherlands. Despite these concerns, one of the more

significant findings to emerge from this study is the openness and willingness from teachers in regard to bi-multilingual education, which was not the case 15 years ago.

Even though this study contributes empirical evidence to the ongoing debate on bi-multilingualism in education on Aruba, it does have its limitations. For example, the scope of this study was limited in terms of sample size. Only 5 out of the 18 regular secondary schools participated in this study, which also did not include every single student and teacher of each school as participation in the research was on a voluntary basis. This has led to an uneven division among respondents who took part in the survey. Therefore, it is not necessarily representative of Aruba's entire student and teacher population. Moreover, data collected was mainly on the opinions and attitudes. Considering attitudes are often subject to change they may not always be reliable. Even though much of the data was on personal experiences, language proficiency tests could have also provided empirical evidence on the actuality of the different language capabilities.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the study offers a greater understanding on the current language attitudes among students and teachers. It describes the possible benefits the implementation of a bi-multilingual curriculum might have on Aruban students, which Aruban government officials and other public institutions can use for further improvement on language planning and policy in Aruba.

## **7. Recommendations**

After the field work of this research, this final chapter proposes several recommendations for bi-multilingual pilot programs or a curriculum reform that could be implemented in secondary schools on Aruba. The combination of all insights gained from the literature review, language attitude surveys, interviews with both students and teachers and classroom observations has led to the formulation of these recommendations. What emerged from this research suggests that there is a general consensus among students and teachers on the language of instruction in secondary schools on Aruba. The main points that were identified are:

1. A general agreement that the current educational system in place in regards to the language of instruction is not optimal and can be seen through the daily struggles students face with the Dutch language and test results.
2. All agreed that, for majority of the students of Aruba, Dutch is a foreign language and should be treated as such.

3. All had observed that students' attitudes toward Dutch is much to be desired. The current generation has a much closer affinity with Papiamentu and English.
4. All agreed that Dutch needs to remain in the Aruban education as a second or foreign language and that alternative ways of teaching and testing should be introduced.
5. All agreed that the goal of education on the island should be for Aruban students to achieve informal and academic linguistic competence in at least three languages, and teachers are willing to explore and adapt their teaching to better cater to the multilingual society of Aruba.

### **7.1 Recommendation for Curriculum Reform**

Keeping in mind the complexity of language planning on policy in Aruba, this study has formulated several propositions for a possible successful implementation of the transition from Dutch as the only main language of instruction to a combination of languages of instruction (bi-multilingual/plurilingual education) in secondary schools on Aruba. This curriculum advice is based upon the findings of the current study and builds on the advice note of Scholing-Pietersz and Tromp-Wouters (2019) and aims for a more inclusive multilingual approach to education on Aruba.

#### **1. Defining Languages of Instruction and Interaction in Education**

First, an inclusive definition of Languages of Instruction and Interaction in Education must be established. As mentioned in the literature review, Coste (2014) defines plurilingualism as the ability to use several different languages with the aim of effective communication. Schools who choose a multilingual approach strive for the use of more than one language of instruction by teaching the subjects of their regular curriculum in different languages (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). Based on the results of this study, it is evident that a multilingual approach is not only desired but perhaps also needed in secondary education on Aruba. Majority of the participants in this study, both students and teachers, expressed the desire to receive and teach lessons in a combination of languages (Dutch-English, Papiamentu-English, Dutch-English-Papiamentu). Moreover, according to Grommes and Hu (2014), a great deal of research on multilingualism has revealed that it is possible to achieve high levels of ability in more than one language. With this, an appropriate legal framework should be identified for the use of the different languages as the languages of instruction and interaction in Aruban education in order to develop any further language policies.

## 2. Curriculum Reform

Considering the multitude of definitions of the word ‘curriculum’, it can often become difficult to keep a concise focus on its core. In short, the word itself derives from the Latin ‘currere’ meaning ‘to run’ and refers to a ‘track’ or ‘course’ to be followed (Plomp, 2013; van den Akker, Fasoglio, Mulder, 2010). In education, it pertains to a trajectory or course for learning. Additionally, various levels of curriculum are of significance when talking about curriculum development. The levels include: supra (international, comparative), macro (system, society, nation, state), meso (school, institution, program), micro (classroom, group, lesson) and nano (individual, personal) (van den Akker et. al., 2010). Curriculum reform in this case refers to changes that are made to the existing curriculum with the intention of making teaching and learning more meaningful and effective (Potter and Willis, 2021). In regard to this study, the recommendations for a curriculum reform are on the macro and meso-levels. The combination of all insights gained from the survey, interviews and classroom observations serve as a basis for the design principles for a curriculum reform. According to van den Akker et. al. (2010), a great challenge that comes with curriculum improvement is to be able to create balance and consistency between the different components of a curriculum. Van den Akker et. al. (2010) illustrate ten components as a spider web (see figure 10) to identify its many interconnections.

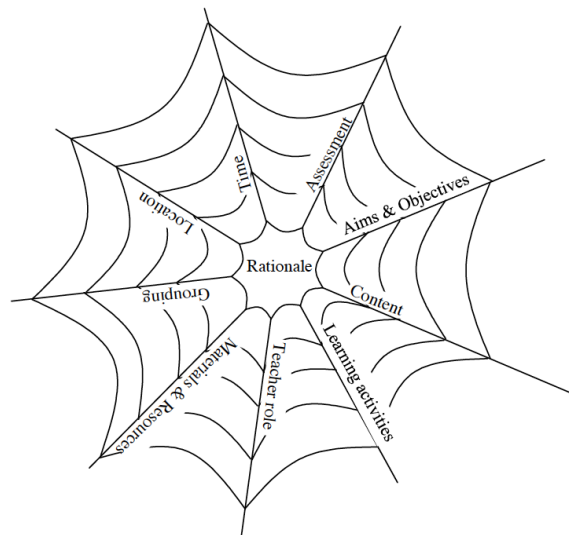
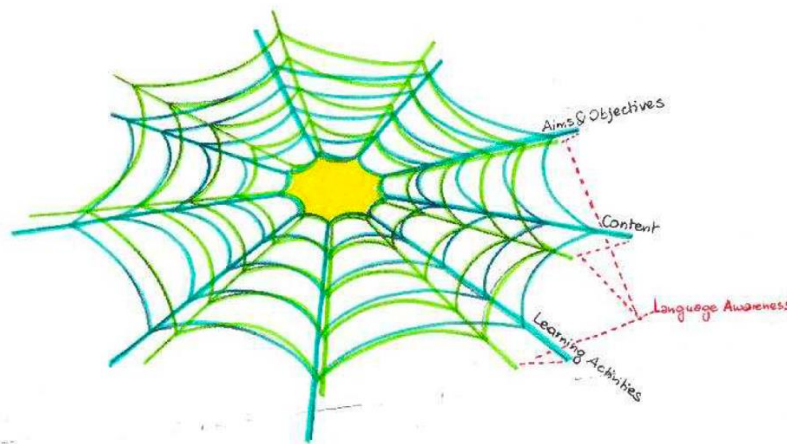


Figure 10. Curricular Spiderweb from “A curriculum perspective on plurilingual education” by van den Akker, Fasoglio and Mulder (2010) p. 8

Van den Akker et. al. (2010) state that at the macrolevel, curriculum documents are often focused on the three components; rationale, aims & objectives and content, while the components of learning activities, teacher role and materials & resources are at the center of the microlevel. Furthermore, careful alignment between the component of assessment and the rest of the curriculum seems to be crucial for a successful change in curriculum. However, as mentioned in the literature review, van den Akker et. al. (2010) argue that one cannot develop a plurilingual curriculum by simply adding more languages. In order to design a plurilingual curriculum, an extra dimension should be added to their spiderweb model, that is, language awareness (see figure 11). By connecting various activities, materials and resources to a specific language, an additional competence, the extra dimension that is language awareness, can get its logical place in the curriculum and be acquired by focusing on the similarities and differences between language structures and cultures (van den Akker et. al., 2010).



*Figure 11. Language Awareness as an extra dimension in the Curricular Spiderweb from A curriculum perspective on plurilingual education (van den Akker, Fagsolio & Mulder, 2010, p. 10)*

Similarly, Sierens and Avermaet (2014) state that by introducing the concept of language awareness, schools are presented with a different way of responding to linguistic diversity. Language awareness not only aims to encourage the explicit knowledge and experience of how and when to use different languages, but also attempts to make students receptive to their linguistic diversity while also creating positive attitudes towards all languages (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). The majority of the students in this study indicated to have more than one first language and are able to express themselves in multiple languages, mainly Papiamentu



and English. By applying the concept of language awareness in the curriculum, students will be able to express their opinions, ideas and feelings in their own language. Sierens and Avermaet (2014) argue that a realistic view of language and the use it has in an education context is paramount in order to introduce language awareness into the school and classrooms.

Furthermore, it is believed that multilingual speakers are aware of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences and similarities. According to Olshtain & Nissim-Amitai (2004), multilingual individuals' capacity to switch between languages and decide which language to use when is a natural extension of their metalinguistic awareness. A school's curriculum should therefore not only encourage but also strengthen this awareness in order to maintain a multilingual abilities (Olshtain & Nissim-Amitai, 2004). The research process has led to the formulation of three design principles that could be added to the existing curriculum as well as offer several possible trajectories as a solution for the language-related challenges identified by the students and teachers in this study.

### **3. Design principles**

The design principles that have been formulated are constructed based on the findings of this study and the components of van den Akker's (2007) curricular spiderweb. Multilingual approaches in instruction, interaction, learning activities, learning materials and assessment are presented on both macro and meso-levels. The three design principles are as follows:

- ◆ *Balanced – Establishing and defining a balanced level for each language studied at school.*

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of students and teachers have a preference on using multiple languages in the classroom. Therefore decisions must be made on which languages will be used when and for what purpose. A similar bilingual trajectory from the Netherlands in which bi-multilingual teaching approaches of content subjects should be applied. The concept of translanguaging should be introduced to teachers. Results of this research revealed that both students and teachers make a great use of code-switching. Teachers can adopt the pedagogical approach of translanguaging to support bi-multilingual education. Either two or three languages will serve as a vehicle of communication, instruction and interaction to ensure the delivery of the learning outcomes outlined in the curriculum. On a macro-level, the curriculum requires the Department of Education as well as education boards to establish aims and objectives that are relevant to a multilingual curriculum. On a meso-level, both school

management and all teachers must be familiar with the aims and objectives. They must come together to agree and define which subjects cover which content, in what language and the extent of cross-language cooperation.

- ◆ *Coherent – Making explicit connections between the different languages, subjects and raising language awareness.*

The majority of the courseware and exams are developed in the Netherlands for students whose L1 is Dutch. However, results of this study have shown that students are constantly faced with challenges due to their textbooks being in Dutch, as it is not the L1 for the majority of the population. According to Krumm and Reich (2013), multilingual education can contribute valuable support to students by developing their learning skills, especially when done in conjunction with a non-language (content) subject. This content subject can then serve as a model and an example of how language awareness can be enhanced in content learning (Krumm & Reich, 2013). Moreover, culturally and language appropriate materials should be acquired and or developed for teaching all subjects at all levels. The students in this study believe that bi-multilingual education will be beneficial as they prefer to communicate in Papiamentu and English. Thus, explicit connections must be made between all languages to show the importance and create positive attitudes towards all the languages. Additionally, an important pedagogy in bi-multilingual teaching is the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). With this approach subject teachers share joint responsibilities for the language acquisition of the students. Subject teachers introduce students to the language associated with a specific subject (Coyle, 2007). However, de Graaff (2013) has suggested to modify the commonly used definition of CLIL by not only focusing on just one target language and make it more applicable to all languages in which education is given, whether that be first, second or foreign. He defines CLIL as: “CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach with an additional focus on language for the learning and teaching of content, which also supports language learning” (p. 11). Based on this definition, adopting the CLIL didactics in the curriculum reform, teachers will be able to better cater to the multilingual students in the Aruban context.

- ◆ *Appropriate – Avoiding any unreasonable demands by matching the level of language competency to the students’ current knowledge.*

The curriculum should relate to the students’ language skills that have been acquired during primary school and their individual language learning experiences.

Linkages between primary schools and secondary schools should be strengthened. According to Scholing-Pietersz and Tromp-Wouters (2019), it is stated in the regulations that all the languages, Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish should be offered in primary schools. This allows for a broader basis to be laid for the continued development of multilingual skills in secondary schools. Students will be able to utilize their existing linguistic resources in order to identify connections and links between the various languages (Krumm & Reich, 2013). Moreover, as previously mentioned, the pilot program *Proyecto Scol Multilingual* is proving to be an effective alternative to the current Dutch-only system. Following this program, secondary schools who choose to adopt a bi-multilingual curriculum allow students to build an even stronger foundation as it continues the development of their multilingual skills previously acquired during their primary school years and raise language awareness in secondary education.

Furthermore, agreements about testing in a bi-multilingual curriculum must also be made. On a macro-level, national accordance and guidelines regarding the testing of students should be described in education laws (van den Akker, 2007). Regardless of the languages of instruction that are chosen, the desired outcome is that all students achieve a basic level in at least three languages (Scholing-Pietersz and Tromp-Wouters, 2019). Meso-level testing pertains to the agreements made at a school level. This should be in line with the vision of the school, the national agreements and the vision on subject and learning areas (van den Akker, 2007). The current curriculum requires students to make a profile choice in the last years of secondary school as preparation for the final exams. These final exams so far are to be taken in Dutch. The bilingual trajectory in the Netherlands also requires students to take their final exams in Dutch, regardless of their bilingual school careers. This is rather counterintuitive for Aruban students (Scholing-Pietersz & Tromp-Wouters, 2019). As identified by this research, for the majority of students, Dutch is not their native language and does not play a significant role in most peoples' daily lives, apart from school. A solution to this is to offer a CXC (Caribbean Examination Council) curriculum. The Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) is an examination board in the Caribbean that operates to provide regionally and internationally recognized secondary school exams. After following a bilingual trajectory, by their 3<sup>rd</sup> year students are able to choose whether they want to follow the CXC curriculum or the current Dutch curriculum (Scholing-Pietersz & Tromp-Wouters, 2019). By providing students with the option to make their final exams in

their language of choice contributes towards a more inclusive multilingual education that is in the students' best interest.

## **7.2 Proposed trajectories**

Taken together the attitudes, opinions and experiences of the participants in this study, the literature review and the formulated design principles, three options are described below for a possible bi-multilingual curriculum reform. Schools can choose to apply the trajectories to their existing curriculum as a pilot program. The proposed trajectories build on the language models suggested in the advice note by Scholing-Pietersz and Tromp-Wouters (2019).

### ***Option 1: Bilingual Dutch-English***

This trajectory includes a similar bilingual Dutch-English trajectory as in the Netherlands. Students will receive half of their content subjects in Dutch and the other half in English. For example, History, Geography and Biology in English, and Mathematics, Science and Physical Education in Dutch. If schools decide to adopt this curriculum, school management and teachers are responsible for deciding what subjects will be taught in which language. The chosen language does not only serve as the language of instruction but also the language of communication. Both teachers and students will speak Dutch and or English with each other. Moreover, language skills are at the forefront of bilingual education. The goal is for students to acquire fluent and adequate command of both languages in order for them to cope independently in different subject-specific contexts and circumstances (Nuffic, n.d). By their 3<sup>rd</sup> year students can opt to continue on an academic track with English as the language of instruction (CXC curriculum), receive Dutch as a foreign language and take their final exams in English or continue with the current Dutch curriculum and take their final exams in Dutch. According to Scholing-Pietersz and Tromp-Wouters (2019), such a trajectory is best suitable for higher levels such as HAVO and VWO.

### ***Option 2: Bilingual English-Papiamentu***

This trajectory is the equivalent of the first option but with English-Papiamentu being the languages of instruction instead. According to Scholing-Pietersz and Tromp-Wouters (2019), a trajectory like this is best suitable for lower level secondary schools such as MAVO and EPB. Students will follow a complete bilingual trajectory of Papiamentu-English in which they take their exams in both Papiamentu (Aruban Exams) and English (CXC). Locally produced exams should be offered in Papiamentu. Additionally, Aruban exams that are in Papiamentu should

be produced to be regionally recognized and valid for students who desire to continue their studies in the region (Caribbean). In this trajectory Dutch is offered as a separate foreign language from the start instead. For students who want to continue their studies at HAVO/VWO or EPI (vocational education), the option to follow an extra track ‘*Profiel Taalvaardigheid Hoger Onderwijs*’ where they can obtain a ‘*Certificaat Nederlands als Vreemde Taal*’ (CNaVT) (Dutch as Foreign Language Certificate) should be included in the curriculum (Scholing-Pietersz & Tromp-Wouters, 2019).

### ***Option 3: Multilingual Dutch-English-Papiamentu***

This trajectory is the most inclusive multilingual option and is suitable for both higher and lower level students of HAVO/VWO and MAVO/EPB. For higher level education (HAVO/VWO), all subjects will be divided equally amongst all three languages. All three languages act as the languages of instruction and interaction. Similar to the other two options, by their 3<sup>rd</sup> year students will have the possibility to continue with the Dutch track in which they will make their final exams in Dutch or the English track (CXC) and take their final exams in English. Papiamentu will remain a mandatory subject in both tracks. Alternatively, for lower level education (MAVO/EPB) offering content subjects for example, 30% in Dutch, 30% in English and 40% in Papiamentu could be a possibility. Students take their final exams in the respective language of the subject (Dutch, English (CXC), Papiamentu). Similar to option 2, students who want to continue their studies at HAVO/VWO or EPI, an extra track ‘*Profiel Taalvaardigheid Hoger Onderwijs*’ where they can obtain a ‘*Certificaat Nederlands als Vreemde Taal*’ (Dutch as Foreign Language Certificate) should be included in the curriculum.

In all cases, Dutch should be taught as foreign language in the first years of secondary school before students can acquire academic competence in Dutch in their final years. All three trajectories should make use of CLIL didactics, and courseware should be appropriate and relevant to the Aruban context. The use of use of translanguaging and code-switching should be encouraged at all times. Additionally, schools should also provide students with the option to take extra (language) exams in addition to the regular exams to obtain a language certificate. Language certificates can include for instance: *Papiamentu*, *Cambridge/TOEFL* (English), *CNaVT* (Dutch), *Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera (DELE)* (Spanish) etcetera (Scholing-Pietersz & Tromp-Wouters, 2019). These certificates are internationally recognized in the case students wish to study or work abroad.

## 7.2 Additional Recommendations for Implementation

Curriculum reform is a complex matter. Problems may often manifest themselves between the intended curriculum, the implemented curriculum and the accomplished curriculum. Tension between conflicting wishes can lead to failed attempts for educational reform. Collaboration between the Government of Aruba, the Department of Education, education boards, school management and teachers are of utmost importance. Based on similar research that has been conducted on the subject matter (Scholing-Pietersz & Tromp-Wouters, 2019; Mijts, Faraclas & Kester, 2013) and the current study, additional suggestions to ensure a successful implementation of either of these options are provided below.

1. Where there are obstacles and questions in the implementation of a system where Papiamento and English also become a language of instruction, reference should be made to the school systems on Saba, St. Eustatius, St. Martin and Curacao who also follow the CXC system and have implemented pilot programs for bilingual education.
2. Teachers in this study have expressed a great amount of interest and willingness to explore and adapt pedagogical strategies to better cater to a multilingual classroom. Therefore, teachers should have dependable and systematic support to address any language issues that might occur. This can be provided through continuous teacher trainings, supervision, coaching and networking with other teachers. The concept of translanguaging should be introduced to and elaborated with teachers as they can adopt the pedagogical approach of translanguaging to support bi-multilingual education.
3. Students should have the opportunity to regular group or individual counselling, to ensure they are fully aware of their options in terms of the different tracks within secondary education and their future plans for further studies after graduation.
4. Parents as well as the general public should be properly informed about the possible new trajectories by means of information campaigns and seminars so that any concerns can be addressed. Additionally, promoting the importance Papiamento and mother tongue education in an effort to break free of any colonial ideologies can be presented through the help of *Fundacion Lanta Papiamento*. FLP is an organization that was founded with the purpose of making Aruban citizens aware of the value of Papiamento, improve and develop the status of Papiamento, both nationally and internationally, increase and deepen the knowledge on all aspects of Papiamento and aid in developing good language planning and policy.

5. Finally, serious consideration should be given by government officials and education boards to the specific investments and sufficient funding that is required for a successful implementation towards a more inclusive multilingual education.

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## Appendices

### A. Student and Teacher Questionnaires



#### Consent

Welcome to the online questionnaire for the study: *The Language of Instruction in Aruba: towards a more inclusive multilingual education.*

You are invited to participate in this study. The goal of this study is to investigate the benefits and attitudes towards multilingual education on Aruba. It aims to provide useful and important insights for the current language policy and planning in education on Aruba.

By participating in this study, you are agreeing to provide the most honest answers you can. Participation in this study is on a voluntary basis and if for any reason you must abandon the survey, you can choose to stop at any time. All responses you provide will be kept anonymous and in a password protected location only accessible by the researcher. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes.

This study is carried out under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Rick de Graaff, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Please contact Prof. de Graaff in case of any questions or complaints: [r.degraaff@uu.nl](mailto:r.degraaff@uu.nl)

By selecting "I agree", you are consenting to the conditions described above.

- I agree
- I disagree

## Part 1 Biographical Questions

What is your age?

I was born:

In Aruba

Outside Aruba, in

My mother was born:

In Aruba

Outside Aruba, in

My father was born:

In Aruba

Outside Aruba, in

Which school are you attending?

- John Wesley College
- Filomena College
- Mon Plaisir College
- Colegio Nigel Matthew Aruba
- Colegio Arubano

Which stream are you in?

- Mavo
- Havo
- Vwo

Which year/grade are you in?

- First
- Second
- Third
- Fourth
- Fifth
- Sixth
- Other

## Part 2 Language Use

Which language do you consider your first language? If you consider yourself to be bilingual or multilingual you can mark the languages of

choice

- Papiamento  
 Dutch  
 English  
 Spanish  
  Other:

Which language(s) do you use the most to speak to your:

	Papiamento	Dutch	English	Spanish	Other
Mother	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Father	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brother(s) and Sister(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strangers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which language are you most likely to use on a daily basis

- Papiamento  
 Dutch  
 English  
 Spanish  
  Other

Which language are you least likely to use on a daily basis

- Papiamentu  
 Dutch  
 English  
 Spanish  
  Other

Which language(s) are you most likely to read in?

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely
Papiamentu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spanish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which language(s) are you most likely to write in?

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely
Papiamentu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spanish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Which language do you like the most?

- Papiamentu
- Dutch
- English
- Spanish

Which language do you like the least?

- Papiamentu
- Dutch
- English
- Spanish

In which language can you express yourself the best?

- Papiamentu
- Dutch
- English
- Spanish

In which language can you express yourself the least?

- Papiamentu
- Dutch
- English
- Spanish

How likely are you to watch television in:

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely
Papiamento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spanish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>				

How well do you dominate:

	Not well at all	Sufficient	Good	Excellent
Papiamento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spanish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Part 3 Language of Instruction

Please state to what you degree you agree or disagree with the statement below

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Textbooks we use in school have little to do with our lives in Aruba	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like textbooks in Papiamento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I like textbooks in Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like textbooks in English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like textbooks in Spanish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it difficult to follow the lessons if the teacher only speaks Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important that every teacher only speaks Dutch during the lessons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like the teachers at school to speak Papiamentu, Dutch and English in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students will get confused if the teachers speak more than 1 language in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like/prefer speaking Dutch in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am allowed to speak Papiamentu on school grounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am allowed to speak English on school grounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am allowed to speak Spanish on school grounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explanations in Papiamentu are more comprehensible than explanations in Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explanations in English are more comprehensible than explanations in Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explanations in Papiamentu encourage me to participate more in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explanations in English encourage me to participate more in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Explanations only in Dutch hinder me in understanding the materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If only Dutch is used in class, I am more likely to stay quiet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If more languages are used in class, I am more likely to participate more in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you had to choose which would you choose: Receive lessons in:

- Papiamentu
- Nederlands
- Papiamentu and Dutch
- Papiamentu and English
- Papiamentu, Dutch and English
- Other

You have chosen to complete this survey in English. Can you explain in short why you chose this language over the other ones?



## Consent

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By selecting "I agree", you are consenting to the conditions described above.

- I agree
- I disagree

## Part 1 Biographical Questions

What is your age?

I was born:

- in Aruba
- Outside Aruba, in

Which school do you teach at?

- John Wesley College
- Mon Plaisir College
- Filomena College
- Colegio Nigel Matthew Aruba
- Colegio Arubano

Which subject do you teach?

- Papiamentu
- Nederlands
- English
- Español

Other

How many years have you been teaching?

## Part 2 Language use

Which language do you consider your first language? If you consider yourself to be bilingual or multilingual you can mark the languages of choice

- Papiamentu  
 Nederlands  
 English  
 Español  
  Other:

Which language do you speak the most?

- Papiamentu  
 Nederlands  
 English  
 Español

Which language do you speak the least?

- Papiamentu
- Nederlands
- English
- Español

Which language do you like the most?

- Papiamentu
- Nederlands
- English
- Español

Which language do you like the least?

- Papiamentu
- Nederlands
- English
- Español

Which language(s) are you most likely to read in?

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely
Papiamentu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nederlands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Español	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which language(s) are you most likely to write in?

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely
Papiamentu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nederlands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Español	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In which language can you express yourself the best?

- Papiamentu  
 Nederlands  
 English  
 Español  
  Other

In which language can you express yourself the least?

- Papiamentu  
 Nederlands  
 English

- Español
- Other

How likely are you to watch television in:

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely
Papiamento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nederlands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Español	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How well do you dominate:

	Not well at all	Sufficient	Good	Excellent
Papiamento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nederlands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Español	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Part 3 Language of instruction

Please state to what degree you agree or disagree with the statements below:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Papiamento is the first language of the majority of the students at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When teaching, I only speak in Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use Dutch to explain something new in the lesson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use Papiamento to explain something new in the lesson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use English to explain something new in the lesson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students find it difficult to follow the lessons if the teacher only speaks Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important that every teacher only speaks Dutch during the lessons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to use Papiamento or English in my lessons if this benefits the students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explanations in Papiamento are more comprehensible than explanations in Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explanations in English are more comprehensible than explanations in Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I notice if I use different languages, the students understand me and the material better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The students ask questions in Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The students ask questions in Papiamento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The students ask questions in English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am willing to improve/explore different pedagogies to better cater to the multilingual society we live in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explanations in Papiamentu encourage the students to participate more in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explanations in English encourage the students to participate more in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explanations only in Dutch hinder the students in understanding the materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If more languages are used in class, the students are more likely to participate in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe it is possible to use differently languages simultaneously to teach a new language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using different languages while teaching will confuse the students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which language do you use the most when engaging in social and or informal talk with the students?

- Papiamentu  
 Nederlands  
 English  
 Español  
  Other

Which language do you use the most to enforce discipline in the classroom?

- Papiamento
- Nederlands
- English
- Español
- Other

If you had to choose which would you choose: Give lessons in:

- Papiamento
- Nederlands
- Papiamento and Nederlands
- Papiamento and English
- Papiamento, Nederlands and English
- Other

You have chosen to complete this survey in English. Can you explain in short why you chose this language over the other ones?

## **B. Interview questions for students and teachers**

### **Interview Questions Students**

1. Do you feel enthusiastic to learn/speak any of the four languages present on Aruba? (Papiamento, English, Dutch, Spanish)
2. What is your opinion on Dutch as the language of instruction in Aruba?
3. What is your own experience with Dutch as the language of instruction in Aruba?
4. Do you think it is important to be proficient in Dutch? What about the other languages, Papiamento, English, Spanish?
5. What is your experience with textbooks in Papiamento/Dutch/English/Spanish at school?
6. Do you think you would be (more) interested in learning Dutch if it were taught in a different way? What way would you prefer it to be taught to you?
7. In your opinion, what kind of influence do the other languages (Papiamento, English, Spanish) have on Aruba's youth?
8. Do you think students should have a say in which language they want to receive lessons in?
9. Do you think if there were schools who offer bi- or multilingual education, would you prefer to choose that over a traditional school that has only Dutch as language of instruction?
10. Should there be schools with a bi- or multilingual curriculum? In other words, two or more languages of instruction? If yes, which languages would you like to be the languages of instruction?
11. What advantages or disadvantages would there be if schools offered multilingual curriculum?
12. Is there any other valuable information you can/want to share on this topic?

### **Interview Questions Teachers**

1. What do you consider are important skills necessary for language proficiency? (e.g reading / writing / speaking)
2. What is your experience with Dutch as a language of instruction in Aruba (as a teacher)?

3. What was your own experience with Dutch as a language of instruction in Aruba and the other language(s) present on the island when you went to high school?
4. Do you find yourself to have a good mastery of Dutch? (Dutch proficiency)?
5. What is your opinion on Dutch as the language of instruction in Aruba and it being treated as the mother tongue in Aruban education?
6. Do you ever use other languages than Dutch in your lessons? If yes, which ones and for what purpose do you use them?
7. How often do you use other languages to explain things to students? Do you ever use the native language or other languages as a tool to test proficiency?
- 8.. What do you think about using the native language (Papiamentu) or other languages in the classroom? (What could be some advantages/disadvantages)
9. What attitudes do you think students have towards Dutch as the language of instruction?
10. What do you think is the best way for students to achieve Dutch academic proficiency?
11. In your opinion, how big of a role would the fact that schools offer education in bilingual or multilingual curriculum play when it comes to enrolment? Please elaborate if possible.
12. What are the challenges of implementing a bilingual/multilingual curriculum? What do you feel is the biggest challenge?
13. What are the benefits of implementing bilingual/multilingual curriculum?
14. What do you feel would be the most suitable choice for language of instruction for children in Aruba ?
15. Is there any other valuable information you can/want to share on this topic?

### **C. Observation Scheme**

#### **Classroom observation**

School:            Grade:            Subject:

Date:              Period/time:

<b>Context</b>	<b>Language Use Observations</b>
Before class (which language(s) does the teacher use to informally talk with the students before class starts)	
Start of the lesson (which language(s) does the teacher use to start up the lesson)	

During the lesson (which language(s) does the teacher use to explain new concepts/the lesson)	
At the end of the lesson (which language(s) does the teacher use to finalize the lesson, give homework etc)	
Classroom Management (Enforcing discipline)	
Student interaction with each other (which language(s) are used when students interact with each other informally, and when they need to do an assignment together?)	
Students interaction with the teacher (are students allowed to use different languages?)	
Classroom Atmosphere (If there are anything hanging on the walls, what language are they in? What other languages are visually present in the classroom)	
Notes	

#### D. Information letter and consent document

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### Informatie over deelname aan het onderzoek

#### Taal van instructie op Aruba: met het oog op een uitbreiding naar meertalig onderwijs.

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#### 1. Inleiding

De school van uw kind neemt deel aan een wetenschappelijk onderzoek naar de taal van instructie in het onderwijs op Aruba. We zouden het fijn vinden als uw zoon/dochter een bijdrage kan leveren aan dit onderzoek van de Universiteit Utrecht. Het onderzoek wordt op het (naam school) uitgevoerd door masterstudent Kristi Lo-Fo-Sang, onder toezicht van Prof. Dr. H.C.J. (Rick) de Graaff ([r.degraaff@uu.nl](mailto:r.degraaff@uu.nl)). In deze brief vindt u alle informatie die u nodig heeft om tot deelname van uw zoon/dochter aan dit onderzoek te kunnen besluiten. Mocht u besluiten dat u niet wil dat de resultaten van uw zoon/dochter in het onderzoek gebruikt worden, kunt u dat laten weten aan de rector (email rector). Indien u hiervoor kiest, neemt uw zoon/dochter dus gewoon deel aan de lessen, maar zullen zijn/haar resultaten niet worden meegenomen in de analyses. De rector zal er zorg voor dragen dat uw besluit aan de



onderzoeker doorgegeven wordt.

## **2. Wat is de achtergrond en het doel van het onderzoek?**

De laatste jaren is er een grote belangstelling ontstaan voor taalgebruik in het onderwijs in het Caribisch gebied. Zoals op de andere eilanden van het Nederlandse Koninkrijk, krijgen leerlingen op Aruba nog steeds onderwijs in het Nederlands, hoewel het de vierde meest gesproken taal is op het eiland. Hierdoor lopen leerlingen die het Papiaments als dominante taal hebben vaak een grote achterstand op in hun onderwijs- en academische carrière. Ze kunnen zich moeilijker uitdrukken en laten zien wat ze weten en kunnen, omdat ze dit moeten doen in een taal die ze het minst beheersen.

Het doel van dit onderzoek is om de voordelen van en de houding ten aanzien van meertalig onderwijs op Aruba te onderzoeken. De resultaten en informatie die door deze masterscriptie worden verstrekt, zijn bedoeld om de verschillende onderwijsbesturen op Aruba en Arubaanse overheidsfunctionarissen ten goede te komen met betrekking tot het taalbeleid en de planning in het onderwijs op het eiland.

## **3. Hoe wordt het onderzoek uitgevoerd?**

Om de benodigde informatie voor het onderzoek te verzamelen, worden de volgende methoden gebruikt:

*Vragenlijst:* Er zullen twee verschillende vragenlijsten worden afgenomen onder leerlingen en docenten. De vragenlijst is bedoeld om vast te stellen wat de huidige houding van de leerlingen en docenten is ten aanzien van het gebruik van de verschillende talen op de middelbare school.

*Interviews:* Naar aanleiding van de vragenlijst wordt een kleine groep studenten en docenten uitgenodigd om deel te nemen aan een semigestructureerd interview. De focus van het interview zal liggen op de ervaringen met de verschillende talen die tijdens de lessen worden gebruikt, en ook op beschikbaar materiaal in het Nederlands, Engels, Spaans en Papiaments.

*Observaties:* Gegevens zal door directe observatie van de deelnemers in hun natuurlijke omgeving worden verzameld. Het doel van de observatie is om een beter begrip te krijgen van hoe de verschillende talen in de klas worden gebruikt door de leerlingen en de docent. *Een belangrijke opmerking is, dat het doel van de observatie is om de frequentie van de verschillende talen die aanwezig zijn te bepalen, en het gebruik van de van elke onderwijstaal te onderscheiden, en NIET om de didactische/pedagogische kwaliteiten van de docenten te bepalen.*

## **4. Wat zijn mogelijke voor- en nadelen van deelname aan dit onderzoek?**

Door de voordelen van en houding ten opzichte van de taal van instructie op Aruba te onderzoeken, zal dit tot resultaat hebben dat de leegte tussen de literatuur, de vooruitgang die tot nu toe is behaald met onderzoeksprojecten en de huidige taalsituatie te overbruggen. Het onderzoek kan mogelijk een beter inzicht verschaffen in de huidige taalhouding en voordelen van een meertalig curriculum.

## **5. Vrijwillige deelname**

Deelname aan dit onderzoek is vrijwillig. Als u toch besluit uw zoon/dochter niet mee te laten doen, hoeft u verder niets te doen. U hoeft niets te tekenen. U hoeft ook niet te zeggen waarom u niet wilt dat uw zoon/dochter meedoet. Ook als leerlingen en docenten besloten hebben om wel mee te doen, kunnen zij zich altijd bedenken en stoppen op ieder gewenst

moment — ook tijdens het onderzoek. Bovendien kunnen zij nadat de leerling heeft meegedaan nog hun toestemming intrekken. Indien zij daarvoor kiezen, zullen hun onderzoeksgegevens niet meegenomen worden in de analyses. De onderzoeksgegevens kunnen echter niet meer verwijderd worden als deze al zijn geanalyseerd.

#### **6. Wat gebeurt er met de verzamelde gegevens?**

Tijdens het onderzoek worden gegevens verzameld. Deze gegevens krijgen een code die alleen met een sleutel naar de deelnemer te herleiden is. Dit betekent dat de onderzoeksgegevens gecodeerd worden opgeslagen en alleen beheerd worden door de onderzoeker (Kristi Lo-Fo-Sang). De onderzoeksgegevens worden opgeslagen en bewaard op een door de Universiteit Utrecht beveiligde server. Wij zijn verplicht de geanonimiseerde onderzoeksgegevens tien jaar te bewaren. Daarvoor geeft u toestemming als u besluit uw school mee te laten doen aan dit onderzoek. De sleutel waarmee gecodeerde gegevens naar deelnemers persoonlijk te herleiden zijn, wordt zo spoedig mogelijk vernietigd. De volgende personen hebben toegang tot de gegevens van de deelnemers: onderzoeker Kristi Lo-Fo-Sang en, indien nodig prof. Dr. Rick de Graaff.

#### **7. Meer informatie over dit onderzoek?**

Voor het stellen van vragen en het inwinnen van nadere informatie voor, tijdens en na het onderzoek kunt u contact opnemen met:

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Masterstudent

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## TOESTEMMINGSVERKLARING voor deelname aan:

### Masterscriptie:

### Language of Instruction in Aruba: towards a more inclusive multilingual education

Ik bevestig als leidinggevende van de school:

(Naam instelling) \_\_\_\_\_ gevestigd te: \_\_\_\_\_

- dat ik via de informatiebrief naar tevredenheid over het onderzoek ben ingelicht;
- dat ik in de gelegenheid ben gesteld om vragen over het onderzoek te stellen en dat mijn eventuele vragen naar tevredenheid zijn beantwoord;
- dat ik gelegenheid heb gehad om grondig over deelname van mijn instelling aan dit onderzoek na te denken;
- dat ik uit vrije wil instem met deelname van mijn instelling.
- dat ik de ouder(s) of de wettelijk voogd van elke potentiële deelnemer voor aanvang van het onderzoek via een individueel overhandigde of toegezonden informatiebrief en bijbehorende toestemmingsverklaring zal informeren over het onderzoek, zodat deze tijdig toestemming voor deelname van hun kind kan geven.

Ik stem er mee in dat:

- de verzamelde gegevens voor wetenschappelijke doelen worden verkregen en bewaard zoals in de informatiebrief vermeld staat;
- er voor wetenschappelijke doeleinden eventueel ook video- en/of geluidsopnamen worden gemaakt.

Ik begrijp dat:

- ik het recht heb om mijn toestemming voor deelname van \_\_\_\_\_ (Naam instelling) in te trekken, zoals vermeld staat in de informatiebrief.

Naam: \_\_\_\_\_ Geboortedatum: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ (dd/mm/jjjj)

Handtekening: \_\_\_\_\_ Datum, plaats: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

### **In te vullen door de eindverantwoordelijk onderzoeker:**

Ik verklaar dat ik bovengenoemde leidinggevende heb uitgelegd wat deelname voor zowel de instelling als de betrokken kinderen inhoudt (alsmede wat de regels zijn omtrent actieve *informed consent*).

Naam:

Datum:

Handtekening:

\_\_\_\_\_