

Guyana's Amer-indigenous languages:

The ~~latent political weapon~~
in the ~~war~~ for Guyana's humanity

The emerging creative force in the
making of Guyana's humanity

Objectives

At the end of the workshop we expect that you will:

- ▶ Appreciate the political dimension of the work being undertaken;
- ▶ Appreciate the specific Guyanese linguistic context;
- ▶ Understand that language awareness is itself a vital intangible cultural resource;
- ▶ Understand the importance of language rights advocacy in our work as cultural workers/organic intellectuals;
- ▶ Share your thoughts about this presentation.

Silent Witness: by the Guyanese Lokono artist, George Simon

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From “Ethnologue”
(2019)

The linguistic
demography has
changed since the
creation of this
map.

Creolese
(Guyanese Creole)
is much more
widespread that is
depicted here.

Lokono (Arawak),
Carib and Warrau
are seriously
endangered.



from

The International Centre for Caribbean Language Research



- The main points drawn from the Charter on Language Policy and Language Rights in the Creole-speaking Caribbean
 - Kingston, Jamaica -- January 14, 2011

HUMAN RIGHTS

- ▶ The Charter of the United Nations
- ▶ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- ▶ The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966
- ▶ The American Convention on Human Rights of 1969

BASIC INALIENABLE LANGUAGE RIGHTS

- ▶ The right to be recognized as a member of a language community;
- ▶ The right to the use of one's own language both in private and in public;
- ▶ The right to maintain and develop one's own culture;
- ▶ The right to appropriate speech and language therapy in the event of a citizen suffering from language disorders.

Everyone has the following linguistic rights:

- ▶ to at least initial instruction and literacy in their first language;
- ▶ to learn the territorial languages of the territory in which he/she resides;
- ▶ to learn any other language.

Education and linguistic rights:

- ▶ “Education must help to foster the capacity for linguistic and cultural self-expression of the language communities of the territory where it is provided.
- ▶ Education must help to maintain and develop the languages spoken by the language communities of the territory where it is provided.
- ▶ Initial instruction in one’s first language is crucial as it enhances conceptual development, language acquisition and development, learning in general, and education of the child.

The persistent colonial project: monopolies of language corporate globalization – The case of Guyana

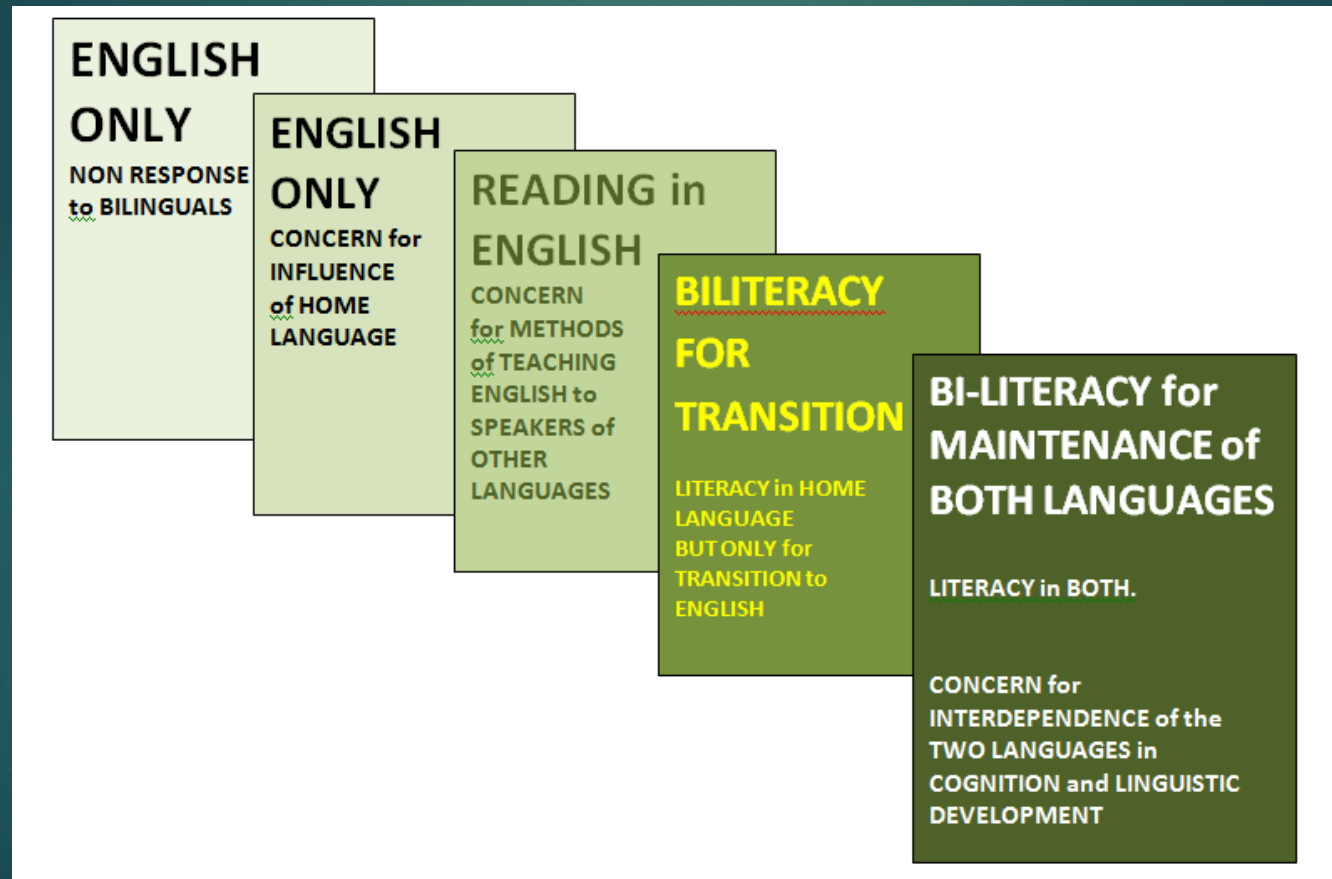


Guyana's Education Goals 1966-2008 expressed as a linear path of “progress”

from Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2008-13

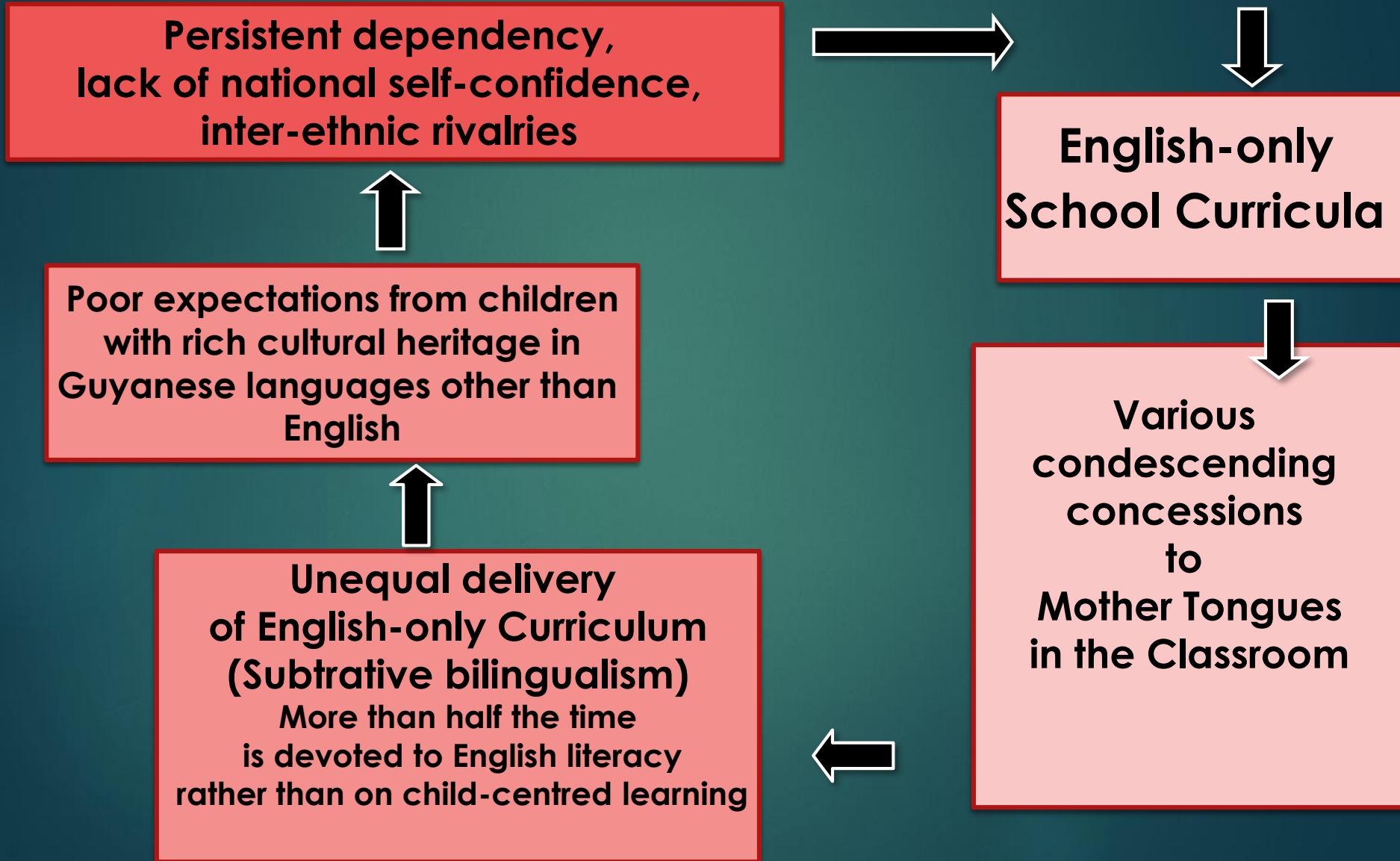
| PERIOD | GOALS |
|-----------|---|
| 1966—1976 | Development of an indigenous curriculum Expansion of educational opportunities |
| 1976—1990 | Free education Extension of access |
| 1990—1995 | Increase in capacity to meet manpower requirements for future economic development |
| 1995—2000 | Free quality education from nursery to age 15 (Basic Education) |
| 2001—2008 | Emphasis on the attainment of better levels of literacy and numeracy in Basic Education Evolution towards a sector approach |

Monoculture of English vs Developmental Bilingualism/Multilingualism



The persistent colonial project: monopolies of language and corporate globalization - The case of Guyana

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“Deschool” society, introduce education

... colonial plantation slaves used their customary subsistence knowledges, cultures, and languages to resist, subvert, and eventually derail the processes of colonization, so are the wage slaves of today utilizing their traditional subsistence ways to undermine the processes of recolonization and the 'monopolies of language' upon which the entire enterprise of corporate globalization depends.