

Reflections on the Role of Indigenous Languages in the Context of Bilingualism Policies in Colombia

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ABSTRACT

Colombia is one of the most diverse countries in cultural and linguistic terms, with 68 indigenous languages in different regions. However, because of the bilingualism policies implemented in the country and the decision to promote the teaching of English as a foreign language from a homogenization perspective, a great majority of languages have been disappearing over time, which affects the cultural and historical legacy that these languages allow. The trends of the globalized world have provoked non-English-speaking countries into starting bilingualism plans to enter the dynamics and requirements for new professionals. However, these initiatives have been detrimental to the cultures of the countries themselves. In Colombia, the teaching and preservation of aboriginal languages have been omitted to introduce foreign languages. The national bilingualism programs launched in Colombia during the last decades are focused on linguistic homogenization, leaving aside the cultural and linguistic richness of the country, which affects the communities that have a minority language and are in danger of extinction. This is qualitative research with a descriptive documentary research methodology whose main objective was to analyze the policies of bilingualism in Colombia and their impact on preserving aboriginal languages. A review of bilingualism policies, ethno-education policies, and academic offers in higher education were reviewed from the perspective of descriptive-documental research. The research results show that bilingualism policy decisions have favored the inclusion of modern languages, leaving indigenous languages at a disadvantage. A review of the academic offerings of higher education in modern languages and ethno-education shows that the latter is very limited while the former is increasing, as well as the reduction of aboriginal languages in the country and the lack of educational opportunities and teaching training for the indigenous population.

Keywords: indigenous languages; bilingualism; bilingualism policies; ethno-education

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Reflexiones Sobre el Rol de las Lenguas Indígenas en el Contexto de las Políticas de Bilingüismo en Colombia

RESUMEN

Colombia es uno de los países más diversos en términos culturales y lingüísticos, con 68 lenguas indígenas en diferentes regiones del país. Sin embargo, debido a las políticas de bilingüismo implementadas en el país y a la decisión de promover la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera desde una perspectiva de homogeneización, una gran mayoría de lenguas han ido desapareciendo con el paso del tiempo, lo que afecta el legado cultural e histórico que estas lenguas permiten. Las tendencias del mundo globalizado han provocado que los países no angloparlantes inicien planes de bilingüismo para entrar en la dinámica y requerimientos de nuevos profesionales. Sin embargo, estas iniciativas han ido en detrimento de las culturas de los propios países. En el caso de Colombia, se ha omitido la enseñanza y preservación de las lenguas aborígenes para introducir lenguas extranjeras. Los programas nacionales de bilingüismo lanzados en Colombia durante las últimas décadas están enfocados a la homogeneización lingüística, dejando de lado la riqueza cultural y lingüística del país, lo que afecta a las comunidades que tienen una lengua minoritaria y están en peligro de extinción. Se trata de una investigación cualitativa con metodología de investigación descriptiva documental cuyo objetivo principal fue analizar las políticas de bilingüismo en Colombia y su impacto en la preservación de las lenguas aborígenes. Se revisaron las políticas de bilingüismo, las políticas de etnoeducación y la oferta académica en educación superior desde la perspectiva de una investigación descriptiva-documental. Los resultados de la investigación muestran que las decisiones políticas de bilingüismo han favorecido la inclusión de las lenguas modernas, dejando en desventaja a las lenguas indígenas. La revisión de la oferta académica de educación superior en lenguas modernas y etnoeducación muestra que estas últimas son muy limitadas mientras que las primeras van en aumento, así como la reducción de lenguas aborígenes en el país y la falta de oportunidades educativas y de formación docente para la población indígena.

Palabras clave: lenguas indígenas; bilingüismo; políticas de bilingüismo; etnoeducación

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INTRODUCCIÓN

Over time, indigenous languages have been disappearing due to social, political, and economic factors. UNESCO (2003) affirms that at least 50% of the world's 6,000 languages have lost speakers. It also states that by the end of the 21st century, dominant languages will replace about 90% of all languages. There are 13 linguistic families in Colombia with over 60 languages, and 44 native languages have been disappearing through the years of the time of colonization of what is today Colombia.

Although Colombia has policies that promote the preservation of indigenous languages and respect for their cultural identity, bilingualism policies are contradictory and have not been implemented under the Political Constitution of Colombia of 1991. On the one hand, the laws and policies of Colombia recognize the inclusion of aboriginal languages as part of bilingualism policies, yet when bilingualism plans are enacted in the country, it largely excluded aboriginal languages, which shows incoherence in public policy.

The policies of bilingualism in Colombia, as established by the Political Constitution of Colombia (1991) determine the acquisition of conversational and reading elements in at least one foreign language and the understanding and ability to express oneself in a foreign language (L. 115, 1994, art 21,22). It is fundamental for educational institutions to teach a target language, considering all the elements necessary to gain the foreign language more effectively, giving greater importance to them. Bilingualism policies in Colombia have defined the learning of English as a foreign official language. Since the constitution of 1991, Colombia has given great importance to including English as the official foreign language for the teaching and evaluation process in all educational institutions. This is how the bilingualism programs launched in Colombia promote the learning of English as a foreign language.

In this sense, we can affirm that the bilingualism policy in Colombia has excluded the 68 aboriginal languages that exist in the country that are part of the cultural variety of the country. According to a report presented by Trillos (1996) cited in Castillo et al., (2005), there are only 7 bachelor's degree programs in ethno-education that are offered by 6 universities: Universidad del Cauca; Universidad de la Guajira; Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia,

Universidad de la Amazonía and Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. This is a very low number compared to the number of degree programs in foreign languages in Colombia.

According to the report presented by Trillos (1996), as cited in Castillo et.al, (2005), the population taking part in these training processes comprises indigenous, afro-Colombian and mestizo people, belonging to the aboriginal groups of the regions. This shows that these bachelor's degrees have not been promoted and made known to the entire population, the number of students reported by the study is low, around 370 students in the entire country. Triviño & Palechor (2006) affirm that the creation of ethno-education legislation has resulted from the permanent struggles of our people and not the passive will of governments.

Another important factor to consider is that people think that learning a foreign language in Colombia has a great impact to get better jobs and educational opportunities, because of globalization and the cultural opening. British Council (n.d) identified that:

Colombians have different perceptions about learning English as a foreign language. According to some surveys carried out, of the 1,000 Colombians surveyed, 47% think that there is a very strong link between English and the best employability opportunities that exist. Besides, 48% of the participants consider that this language is associated with better access to education and better income when entering the labour world (p.1).

We can infer that in Colombia, the population is unaware of the diversity of languages that exist in the country, and they ignore their own culture. The academic offers in Colombia are exclusive, because we have not thought them through in greater detail in vocational training according to the needs of the regions and the existing ethnic groups. Valencia et.al (2016) affirm that the formal education offered in Guainía's educational institutions is devastating for the culture of the different ethnic groups that inhabit this territory. It is important to remember that the purpose of teaching cross-cultural competencies is to free people from their own cultural logic and idioms to engage with others and listen to their ideas, which may involve belonging to one or more cultural systems, Cely-Betancourt (2023).

In this sense, we hope this research article makes essential contributions to the future teachers of English and makes them more aware of their own culture and the existence of other languages. It also contributes

to language programs to reflect on the importance of communication as a fundamental tool in all societies; We cannot deny that the existence of indigenous languages plays a vital role in the defence of human rights and peace.

This paper presents a overview of Indigenous languages in Colombia, including some policies in ethno-education. Some considerations about bilingualism policies and the current situation of indigenous languages in Colombia are also considered. This article shows the first advance of a research project that aims to investigate Colombian bilingual policies in coherence with the linguistic diversity and richness of the country. As teachers of foreign languages, it is an aspect that deserves to be reflected on.

Indigenous languages in Colombia

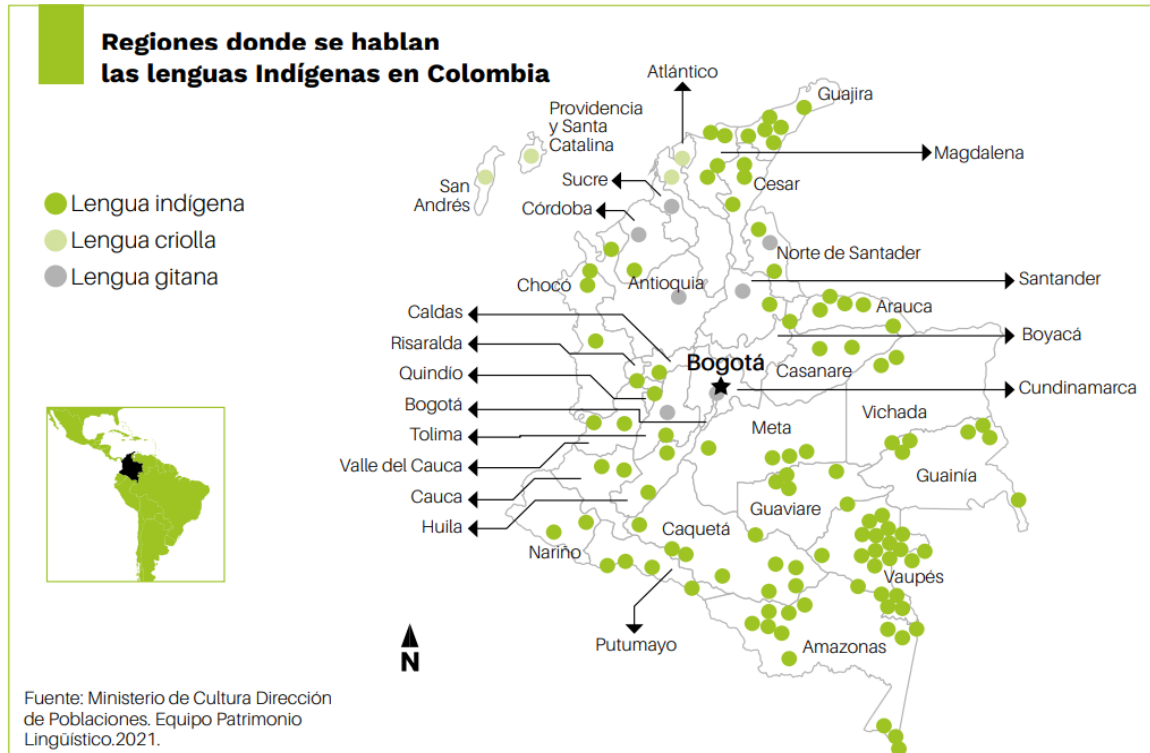
Indigenous languages are those languages spoken by native communities; likewise, these types of languages are used specific codes as a communicative tool that makes them unique since, in these, we can find all the cultural and historical wealth that contributes to the identity of each Colombian. According to the Ministry of Culture (2022), an indigenous language is an Own Language that, in case of the full exercise of this, contributes to the survival of the communities and is a communicative tool based on the world view of each community.

Besides, a mechanism of protection and resistance includes ancestral, cultural, and own symbology. The Ministry of Culture (2022) defines indigenous languages in the law of languages 1381 of 2010 as those spoken in actual communication by the ethnic groups of the country. According to Rincon (2016), Amerindian communities who have inhabited Colombia spoke native languages, and they bring linguistic traditions, for this reason, they allow expressing the innumerable experiences of the communities to which they belong.

According to Ministerio de Cultura (2022), in the Ten-year plan for native languages (Plan Decenal de Lenguas Nativas en Colombia), states “Colombia, as a country characterized by its ethnic diversity, cultural and territorial, has the existence of 65 indigenous languages, 2 Creole languages , and the Romanesque language”, (p.9). It is mentioned that almost in all departments of the country, there is at least a native language. Based on the above, we can mention that it scattered indigenous communities and languages throughout the country, providing all its cultural wealth.

Figure N. 1 shows the region in Colombia where aboriginal languages are spoken. As seen on the map, indigenous languages are located around the country where people belonging to each community speak Indigenous language, creole language, and gypsy language.

Figure N. 1: Regions in Colombia where aboriginal languages are spoken



Note: The map shoe indigenous communities in Colombia, the information was taken from Ministerio de Cultura (2022, p.24). Plan decenal de lenguas nativas de Colombia.

Indigenous languages in Colombia are divided into “language families” according to their structural and grammatical similarities, which have been discovered over the years. Colombia’s indigenous languages have a wide range of phonetical, phonological, syntactical, and semantical structures that have made it possible to classify them into linguistic families and a group of isolated languages. There are 13 language families, according to Caro y Cuervo (2022) as cited in Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia (2022). There are another 10 languages that do not belong to a specific family, because their linguistic structure and grammar differ from the others, they are called “Isolated or Independent languages, Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia (2022). We know that the reason for this great diversity is the geographical location of Colombia in the far north of Latin America. It is an obligatory place for the migrations that could cross the continent and a favourable territory for receiving a diversity of human groups because of its two coasts on two oceans and a wide network of rivers, Landaburu (2004).

The role of the indigenous languages in Colombia is transcendental because it allows us to understand the inhabitant and community worldview, which is called cosmogony. Considering the above, the knowledgeable and indigenous authority Higinio Obispo, Secretary-General of the ONIC (2019) affirms that languages can be represented as a symbolic figure frame thought and knowledge since this allows us to express our ideas to generate different political, and social, cultural, and even spiritual positions. Language helps us to understand the historical background each community has since language describes our origins, who we are, how we think, and how those thoughts have been configured.

Understanding the vision that everyone has of the world and their perception of it, makes us more understanding and tolerant people, understanding their reality allows us to know their individual being, to be respectful, and therefore to build healthier social relationships that promote well-being and tranquillity. Perhaps the most important thing is to understand that every human being is unique and has a distinct reality and life history that allows us to understand the way they act in different situations.

Ethno-Education

We understand it as a strategy that provides relevant learning opportunities for groups or communities that have a territory, a culture, a language, and community socio-cultural practices. According to the General Education Law (1994), the concept of “Ethno-education” refers to groups or communities that integrate nationality and that have a culture, language, traditions, and autochthonous jurisdictions. Education must be linked to the environment, the production process, and the social and cultural process with respect for their beliefs and traditions. The Ministry of National Education of Colombia (s.f) mentions that the aim of Ethno-Education is to position intercultural education in all schools and colleges of the official and private sectors of the country so that all children and families understand that Afro-Colombian, indigenous and gypsy cultures are part of the roots of our nationality. It should move towards intercultural. In this sense, schools should promote activities to distinguish and respect different cultures to recognize our nation’s diversity.

The policy for ethno-education aims to develop cultural identity, interculturality, and multilingualism to respond to the characteristics, needs, and aspirations of ethnic groups. We should note that the most relevant aspects of the Ethno- Education policy are associated with: Teacher’s training, both pre-service

and in-service; Research; Publication of Ethno- Education materials; Diffusion of the policy; Advice and follow-up to the Secretaries of Education and educational institutions; Strengthening of community processes; Protection of the languages of ethnic groups; Definition of educational investment in groups. However, it has already been a constant concern for linguists; some programs seek to rescue cultural identity, among which we can mention: INALI (National Institute of Indigenous Languages) in Mexico, the Ibero-American Institute of Indigenous Languages (IIALI) and, in Colombia the Ministry of Culture. According to Betancur (2017), these institutions aim to contribute to the recognition that indigenous languages should have by Colombian society since we consider these languages the cultural diversity of the country, and these identify us as Colombians.

We consider Colombia the third country in Latin America that has more linguistic diversity after Brazil and Mexico; We estimated that 44 native languages have been disappearing through the years of the time of Colonization. According to the United Nations Organization for Education, Science, and Culture (UNESCO) (s.f), nearly six thousand languages are spoken, and one language disappears from the world every 15 days.

We consider that the concepts and guidelines in ethno- education are developed to get successful educative processes according to the Colombian educational system; however, it is necessary to go beyond the policies and start projects much more robust to withstand the aboriginal languages and reflect on the offer of programs to train teachers in foreign languages and the programs offered to train graduates in ethno-education.

Here the balance is inclined towards training in foreign languages such as English and French, among others, and there is a low academic offer for teacher training in teaching languages and aboriginal languages. As Castillo et.al, (2005), citing Trillos (1996), there are only 7 bachelor's degree programs in ethno-education that are offered by 6 universities, which is low considering the number of the native population in Colombia. According to the population census carried out by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), in 2018, there were 115 indigenous communities living in Colombia, with a total population of 1'905,617 people, and the indigenous population makes up 4.4% of the country's total population, Ministerio de Cultura (2022). This is evidence of the lack of educational opportunities and teaching training for indigenous population.

A brief overview of bilingualism

Various definitions of bilingualism have been found from different points of view among experts. Bloomfield (1933), as cited in Bermudez and Fandiño (2012) states that Bilingualism is the ability to master two languages like a native speaker and produce well-formed statements that carry meaning. According to Weinreich (1974), bilingualism is considered the process of using two languages alternately. For Siguán & Mackey (1986), a bilingual speaker is a person who, besides the competence in their first language, has a similar competence in another that can be used with such efficiency. The Ministry of Education in Colombia defines bilingualism as the different degrees a speaker performs, communicates, and interprets one language and its culture, as it is stated in National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (2006). Based on the above, it can be said that bilingualism refers to the use of another language that is not the native one in different contexts and for different purposes. A bilingual speaker is a person that is competent to convey information in different contexts of real life in both languages. It allows us to interpret and understand other cultures through each language.

METODOLOGÍA

This research is based on a qualitative approach and a descriptive documentary methodology. Documentary research, as a scientific procedure, aims to reach a critical knowledge about a phenomenon, Hoyos (2010). The results are therefore not seen as a finished product or an answer to research questions, but as a starting point for further research. For this research, documentary research was carried out by means of identification, selection, and organisation to go deeper into the topic addressed. Documentary analysis allows familiarisation with databases, collection, and selection of articles on bilingualism policies and the status of aboriginal languages, which implied the determination of categories and the assignment of codes respectively. Categories and the assignment of codes respectively, organising this process by units of analysis. The stages to be followed are delimitation of the topic, search and selection of sources, the selection of categories and subcategories, the careful reading of articles and the writing of the final paper, Hoyos (2010).

RESULTADOS

After the analysis of the data, the results are presented in the following categories: 1) Bilingualism policies from the national policy; 2) results of bilingualism policies; 3) The state of aboriginal languages

in Colombia and 4) The academic offers to train teachers in aboriginal languages in Colombia.

1) Bilingualism Policy in Colombia are inconsistent in their conception of bilingualism.

At both the international and national levels, there are policies that promote the preservation of aboriginal languages and respect for the cultural identity of the people. The Human Rights, proclaimed by the United Nations in 1948 (UN, 2008), offer key guidelines for general education that also cover indigenous groups. In this declaration, Article 26 stands out, which states that the right to education is enjoyed by all persons, regardless of ethnicity, race, colour, gender, or origin.

In Colombia, there are policies that promote the preservation of indigenous languages, however, The Political Constitution of 1991, especially in articles 7 and 10 states that the State recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian nation. Spanish is proclaimed as the official language of Colombia. The languages and dialects of ethnic groups are also official in their territories. The education provided in communities with their own linguistic traditions shall be bilingual, (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991). In the same way, articles 13, 63, 68, and 70, the general framework for the rights of the ethnic populations of the Colombian territory is included, these policies promote better integration of the indigenous communities into the national context preserving their customs and language, in the same way, the political constitution provides the legal framework for bilingual education of indigenous peoples.

It is fundamental to recognize the significant focuses of this program, Cardenas & Miranda (2014) states that it has three lines of work. The first one refers to Ethno-education which includes bilingual education to indigenous communities where the aboriginal language is the native one, and the second language is Spanish. The second one, the Flexible model of education, has a regulation of language schools for professional, educational, and personal development purposes. The third one is called Teaching English, which is the major focus of this program. It promotes the improvement of English teaching in bilingual and monolingual schools to achieve better results in communicative competencies.

Even though the Colombian Magna Carta recognizes the existence of indigenous languages and bilingual contexts, the bilingualism programs launched during the last decades do not recognize the existence of indigenous languages and bilingual contexts. Over the years, these policies have come into contradiction because they have focused on strengthening communication in English as a foreign

language. Fandiño et al. (2012) mention, “The National Bilingual Program (PNB) has been consolidated as a strategic project for the improvement of educational quality, in particular for the improvement of the teaching of foreign languages in Colombia” (p.3). It can be said that the project applied by the Ministry of Education since 2004 is a strategy to improve and reach bilingualism in Colombia. Likewise, since this program was implemented, it has been proposed to consider the needs and gaps for getting better results by the students and teachers for the international standards in English teaching, for the students to manage this language for everyday life and professional purposes (Fandiño, Bermúdez & Lugo (2012).

Based on the above, the bilingualism policies in Colombia are interested in improving the communicative competencies in foreign languages (English), including different strategies to get better results on international standards for Colombian students. Moreover, ethno-education is one of the main focuses of this program, including them as native languages for indigenous communities, although these languages are recognized in the bilingualism policies, they do not have a transcendental role that allows the strengthening of them as methods of learning in Colombian education. Carrillo (2016) affirms that the proposed strategies had little concern for minority languages and gave a major emphasis on a foreign language (English). This fact, of course, caused a broad debate about what was expressed in the 1991 Constitution and what was done in practice in indigenous communities, Carrillo (2016).

2) Spanish-English bilingualism has not been successful according to international results.

Although Colombia has made efforts to promote bilingualism understood as Spanish English, the results have not been favourable. A study made by the EF English Proficiency Index (2021) analysed the results of adults who took our English tests in 2019. Countries were classified according to their level of proficiency in five levels. Colombia was classified in the group of countries with very low proficiency and occupied 20th place among the 22 countries examined in Latin America.

Regarding bilingualism in Spanish-indigenous languages, some regions such as Guajira have implemented bilingualism in indigenous communities where the results are not encouraging. In a study done by Carrillo (2016), it was found that in 2012, 32% of indigenous students who were evaluated in Spanish as a second language, scores showed the lowest level; in 2013, when 66% of them scored insufficient. This fact is undoubtedly one of the indicators that shows that the way in which the teaching

of Spanish as a second language is being carried out in the indigenous educational centres of La Guajira needs urgent changes, Carrillo (2016).

3) Aboriginal languages in Colombia on the edge of extinction

Aboriginal languages have been lost over time due to various economic, social, cultural, and religious factors. This is also due to the very subjugation to which the native-speaker communities are subjected. UNESCO (2003) affirms that at least 50% of the world's 6,000 languages are losing speakers and about 90% of all languages could be replaced by dominant languages by the end of the 21st century. The danger of language extinction may be the result of external forces, such as military, economic, religious, cultural, or educational subjugation, or it may be caused by internal forces, such as a community's negative attitude toward its own language. Many indigenous people feel disadvantaged in social status with their culture and believe that their languages are not worth safeguarding. They abandon their language and culture in the hope of overcoming discrimination, securing a livelihood, and improving their social mobility or integrating into the global market, UNESCO (2003).

Indigenous languages have been in danger all over the world, however, the most critical continents are Europe and America. According to the World Bank (2019), some of the causes of endangered languages are related to poverty, social exclusion, political conflicts, and lack of recognition of indigenous rights. Another important cause that languages are disappearing is because of the lack of speakers they have and the lack of motivation to promote their learning. In the educational context, only foreign languages like English are taught because of globalization and its aspects. This domain of foreign languages has negatively affected aboriginal people since few people are interested in learning them because they do not recognize the importance and relevance of these languages to culture and identity.

Alarcon (2007) affirms that the indigenous people were considered wild beings that were only conquered by the Spaniards, it also covers a cultural background since they preserve and stand out for their linguistic diversity and are recognized as multilingual. In the same way, Alarcón (2007) states that indigenous societies in Colombia do not have enough funding and vision to claim and build a linguistic policy to support these languages nor a plan to strengthen their autonomy and socio-cultural integrity. The prejudiced concepts of indigenous communities and the use and study of these languages were not allowed because they were considered insignificant and did not give any cultural, social, or linguistic

contribution to the country. In this way, speakers of these communities have been disappearing and there is no cultural transmission for linguistic enrichment. According to León (2012), ingenious languages do not have a vital role in Colombian bilingualism policies since they are underestimated because they do not provide job and educational opportunities, like a foreign language, English. For this reason, there is no investment in the development of these languages at a national level.

In Colombia, indigenous communities have been marginalized and ignored by the government and society. As a result, most of these communities live in poverty conditions and forced displacement because of the exploitation of natural resources, and armed groups. There are five nearly extinct languages with less than 50 speakers, but most are passive, so they understand but cannot speak) and 19 endangered languages (Betancur, 2017).

Studies carried out for the Atlas of Indigenous Languages in Colombia by the Caro y Cuervo Institute's 2000, in Colombia survive 13 linguistic families, which are described below:

Table N. 1. Linguistic families in Colombia and speakers

Linguistic Family	Number of languages	Number of speakers
Chibcha	7	2212
Arawak	7	355 958
Peba-yagua	1	241
Caribe	3	132
Quechua	1	7779
Tupí	2	373
Chocó	2	106.288
Guahibo	4	46.558
Sáliba-piaroa	2	1.083
Macú-puinave	5	6.897
Tucano	17	21.204
Uitoto	2	4.466
Bora	3	439

Note: The table shows the 13 linguistic families in Colombia and the number of speakers. taken from Ministerio de Cultura (2022, p.24). Plan Decenal de lenguas nativas de Colombia.

León (2012) states that Indigenous languages play a fundamental role in our country since they contribute to the development of our Colombian identity and contain a cultural, historical, and linguistic richness that identifies us as a nation. From this point, language plays a fundamental role because it is

part of the ancestral roots of any linguistic community. If those languages disappeared, this could be a genuine tragedy to humanity and its cultural factors. It is undeniable that languages allow cultural traditions, knowledge of our ancestors, and even history, enriching our existence and essence. All these aspects have been built for years and generations and, our cultural background is in danger if these disappear. In sum, it is important that we, as humans, should be aware of the importance of these languages in our communities to preserve the culture that identifies us.

4) The academic offers for the training of teachers in ethno-education are reduced, depriving the indigenous communities of professional training.

One way to preserve Aboriginal languages is to train teachers to promote their teaching. Unfortunately, unfortunately, in Colombia, the number of degree programs in ethno-education is small compared to the academic offerings in foreign languages with an emphasis on English. As mentioned at the beginning of this article there are only 7 bachelor's degree programs in ethno-education that are offered by 6 universities.

Table N. 2: Bachelor's Degree programs in Ethno-education in Colombia

University	Bachelor's Degree Program
Universidad del Cauca (1996) ⁵	Licenciatura en Etnoeducación
Universidad de la Guajira (1996)	Licenciatura en Etnoeducación para Básica.
Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira (1995)	Licenciatura en Etnoeducación y desarrollo comunitario. Licenciatura en Educación indígena.
Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia (2000)	Licenciatura en Etnoeducación.
Universidad de la Amazonía (1991)	Licenciatura en Lingüística y educación indígena.
Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (2000)	Licenciatura en Etnoeducación.

Note: The table shows the number of bachelor's degree programs in Colombia, information taken from Castillo et.al, (2005)

As can be seen, the bilingualism policy is not implemented according to the law and there is also little governmental will to promote bilingualism strategies. The academic offer for teacher training in ethno-education is limited and far from the academic offer for teacher training in foreign languages. Today we see that the situation of the indigenous communities is one of complete abandonment, these communities continue to be marginalized without government support and with few opportunities for

educational training. At this point, it is important to mention that identity is an evolving process that should be considered inside the classroom and somehow might be co-constructed, Sotelo & Prieto (2020).

CONCLUSIONES

The current situation of aboriginal languages is worrying. Over time, these have allowed cultural and historical factors that are indispensable for our identity as Colombian people, and they are disappearing little by little. It is significant to mention that this situation has not been only because of the irrelevant role these languages have in the bilingualism policies, however, there are other external factors, such as the lack of protection by the government and the society, which have directly affected these communities. Nevertheless, recognizing these languages in the bilingualism policies might have a positive impact since these can be officially protected and promoted for study.

A worrying aspect is that despite policies in ethno-education, these have not been fully implemented. From the offer of bachelor's degree programs, it is observed that the academic offers in higher education, are much stronger in the training of teachers in foreign languages such as English, French, or Portuguese than in the training of teachers to teach aboriginal language.

The policies of bilingualism must be reformulated and promote the creation of much more inclusive policies, considering the real needs of the population. There is a need to create and promote more bachelor's programs in ethno-education that will allow more teachers to be trained to teach Aboriginal languages. On the other hand, it is important to create bachelor's programs in Spanish as a second language to be included in the country's bilingualism programs. indigenous groups in the current context learn the mother tongue but find it necessary to learn the majority language as well. Bilingualism policies in Colombia such as the PNB have been directed almost exclusively towards elite bilingualism, which consists of a significant investment of resources for English language learning policies and little for the teaching of Spanish as a second language.

In Colombia, there are gaps in the bilingualism policy. Although national policies include in their policies the preservation of aboriginal languages and respect for cultural diversity, this is not carried out. There is a gap between the policy and the educational reality of indigenous communities that have been excluded from bilingualism programs. These programs have favoured the inclusion of modern

foreign languages and have excluded indigenous languages, which has led to a detriment to the cultural identity of the people.

DISCUSSION

National policies regarding bilingualism in Colombia are questioned, not only because of the situation of aboriginal languages in Colombia but also because the bilingualism programs have been more concerned with promoting the teaching of foreign languages such as English than with promoting the preservation of indigenous languages. On the other hand, it is also questioned the fact that Colombia, being a Spanish-speaking country, has not given importance to the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language for indigenous populations. The Spanish classes taught in Colombia are seen from the perspective of the mother tongue, and it was only a few years ago that training programs in Spanish as a foreign language began.

The bilingualism plans that have been created in the last decades, completely disregard the provisions of the Colombian Constitution. The bilingualism plans have focused on the vision of Spanish-English bilingualism, leaving the aboriginal languages completely absent from the linguistic policies, which contradicts what is stated in the Political Constitution of 1991.

The existence of regulations is not enough; it is necessary to manage the implementation of them. There is evidence of the existence of bilingualism policies that include the indigenous population, but these policies are not implemented and only remain policies written on paper that are distant from the reality experienced by the communities.

The policies of bilingualism must be reformulated and promote the creation of much more inclusive policies, considering the real needs of the population. There is a need to create and promote more bachelor's degree programs in education that will allow more teachers to be trained to teach Aboriginal languages. We find a country with failed policies on bilingualism.

On the one hand, bilingualism understood as Spanish English has not obtained the desired results; on the contrary, its results are the lowest among Latin American countries. On the other hand, the populations that have developed bilingualism between Spanish and aboriginal languages have not been satisfactory either, the results show that the indigenous populations have a very low level in Spanish as a second language. This shows the need to create programs for teaching Spanish as a foreign language

to the indigenous population and to implement more degrees in ethno-education. Finally, rethink the Spanish-English bilingualism programmes according to the needs of the population and the characteristics of the communities.

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