Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE):
To Whom Does It Belong in the Peruvian Andes?

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the reasons why governmental and non-governmental institutions, as well as members of the civil society, have failed to establish their aims among the addresses of the Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) model. In Peru, since 1970s, the IBE ‘coordinators’ have had the main objective to ‘educate’ the ‘indigenous’ population starting from ‘their’ native language and culture among others to revitalise its use. My study takes into consideration the speakers of the Quechua language, who have been greatly discriminated against by the larger Peruvian society on the bases of their linguistic and cultural background. At this point, the focus moves onto the IBE addresses: why do these still largely oppose IBE? Combining my fieldwork data and relevant literature, I trace two core issues: the gap between the IBE ‘ideology’ and its tangible applicability and the lack of support among its addresses. Firstly, I take into consideration the IBE discourse(s) promoted through bilingual policies. Secondly, I reflect upon the lack of ‘consciousness’ among the Quechua speakers who do not identify with IBE, which is not perceived as a means of empowerment. Ultimately, the focal point of this paper are the dynamics between two dimensions: the one proposed by the institutions, which insistently enter the communities promoting and proposing IBE through campaigns of ‘sensibilisation’; and the reactions of the Quechua speakers who resist to its applicability. Language policies, the IBE ideology, the pedagogy used and language attitudes are here called into analysis as they contribute to better exemplify the complexity of what I define the ‘IBE system.’
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I shall start my presentation by identifying Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) as it developed in Peru with its aims and objectives so to define a framework to work with.

- IBE is a political and educational programme which has been active in Peru since the 1970s and it has been used to promote the so-labelled ‘indigenous/vernacular’ languages (such as Quechua) and their cultural heritage.

- The institutionalisation of the IBE agenda remains throughout Latin America a matter confined to the indigenous rights and advocacy for indigenous population (García, 2005 [b]: 23). Therefore, the role of international agents (e.g. from USA and Europe),1 have had the greatest impact in influencing the implementation of Peruvian governmental bilingual policies.

- In concomitance with the Washington Consensus2 and the spread of neoliberalism in 1980s, a new ‘economic wave’ started to target underdeveloped countries under the conceptual framework of ‘ethno-development’. The latter recognises the need to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, ethnocide and the remnants of colonialism, hence it urges governments to reaffirm ethnic diversity in the nation, among others, through education (Partridge et al., 1996: [no pp. number]). In this respect, new forms of governmental, quasi-governmental,3 and non-governmental management (such as NGOs), and socio-economic intervention—mostly in the domains of education, interculturality, democratisation—have spread with the aim to create more-equal societies (Laurie and Bonnet, 2000). I argue that IBE falls under this ‘wave’.

- Precisely because IBE is addressed to the oppressed and disadvantaged populations, the participation of the latter in such programmes is seen as the pillar in the development of policies, which can further contribute to increase the quality of IBE (López and Küper, 2000: 4).

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1 Among others, there are the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the German Institute for Technological Cooperation (GTZ), UN, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, etc.

2 See Amsden et al. (2004).

3 The quasi-government, virtually by its name alone and the intentional blurring of the governmental and private sectors, is not easily defined. In general, it is a hybrid organization that has been assigned by law, or by general practice, some of the legal characteristics of both the governmental and private sectors. Furthermore, the term is used in two ways: to refer to entities that have some legal relation or association, however tenuous, to the federal government; or to the terrain that putatively exists between the governmental and private sectors, they occupy a realm between the private and the public. In this respect, a quasi-governmental entity may find it in its interest to assert its private or governmental Status. (Kosar, 2008: 2, 7).
Yet, when compared to Ecuador and Bolivia, the Peruvian Andes are still today lacking grassroots movements, which would support the IBE agenda.\(^4\)

Having said that, the question I pose to myself is: if there is no or little support on the side of the addressees of the programmes, what is IBE all about? Whom does it serve? We are here working with different levels of decision-making agendas, which cannot be separated from the question of power dynamics. In this respect, I shall explain how I approached the phenomenon of IBE starting with exemplifying the notion of ‘power’.

Power is polysemic, it has a multidimensional essence and it can be visible or invisible.\(^5\) In terms of its agency, it can be imposed over which implies domination, expressed to such as voicing people’s rights, established with which denotes collaborative trends or a collective building, and it can rise from within, which is related to self-identity and awareness. In the case of my research, I soon realised that there have been different powers at work, which have not only influenced the functionality or rather affected the non-functionality of IBE. Moreover, they have shaped a proper system what I call the ‘IBE system’ and which I exemplify below.

Under the category of the ‘visible’ I put:

- the IBE discourse(s) traced in Peruvian governmental bilingual polices as well as in the non-governmental organisations including the type(s) of pedagogy used by these entities in applying a bilingual curriculum;
- the tangible applicability of IBE including the implications of technical matters such as the time-frame and the opposing reactions of the IBE addressees;
- the kind of relations established among the parties involved in IBE, which will bring me to reflect upon the notion of ‘interculturality’.

When I analyse the category of the ‘invisible’ I refer to the process of ‘internalisation’ (Ryan and Deci, 2000)\(^6\) of those negative language attitudes, which depict the Quechua language as inferior and less valuable. In this respect, I am interested in how more subtle powers such as ‘linguistic discrimination’ (cf. Howard, 2007: 52-53) affect the most disadvantaged Quechua speakers who, as a matter of fact, continue claiming the use of Spanish on an official level (e.g. education), while professing an exclusive outlook in respect

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\(^{4}\) See García (2005 [b]: 27); Zavala (2007: 35).

\(^{5}\) For further information on the notion of ‘power’ see Lukes (2005) and Gaventa (2006).

\(^{6}\) The process of internalisation is a controversial phenomenon. Among others, it implies that values, which are initially imposed over a person are gradually incorporated into the person’s being so that the latter makes them its own, thus it starts professing them itself (Ryan and Deci, 2000 [a/b]). Although the boundary between agency–passivity–agency cannot be strictly defined or measured, this process must be considered as an influential factor, which does affect people’s choices in respect to language use.
to the use of Quechua. However, I will only briefly dwell on this topic when referring to the types of reactions found among the IBE addresses as it is not the major concern of this paper.

Moving onto the discourse(s), which surround the IBE agenda we can distinguish the ones promoted through Peruvian governmental bilingual policies and those encouraged by non-governmental organisations. In the first case, the discourses as well as the pedagogical practices have fostered assimilationist trends through a ‘subtractive bilingualism’ (cf. King, 2005: 2). Among other things this tendency has been implemented through the transitional teaching model, which implies that Quechua is used in class only as a means to facilitate the conversion of the pupils into Spanish. Although pupils learn how to read and write in their mother tongue (e.g. Quechua) in the first few years of schooling, they will later on shift to the dominant language as these bilingual programmes are applied mostly in primary and rarely in secondary schools. In this respect the type of bilingual education promoted by the Peruvian government has used the native languages only ‘as means and not as an end in learning’ (Cerrón-Palomino, 1989: 30). Furthermore, the Peruvian government has relegated IBE predominantly to rural areas, which continues marginalising, thus excluding the existence of indigenous peoples.

On the other hand, non-governmental organisations have been aiming towards the ‘empowerment’ of the indigenous peoples in terms of ‘self-empowerment’. The maintenance model has been used by various associations with the idea of revitalising the Quechua language, which has been understood as giving power to people. However, as it was mentioned by a pedagogue I interviewed during my fieldwork in 2008 and who has worked in IBE since 1970s:

‘[Los padres de familia] sienten que hay demasiado peso de la lengua indígena y no se da oportunidad a los niños de aprender el castellano y luego salen desaprobados en las pruebas que se toman en castellano’,

(fieldwork data: Lima, 28. 06. 08).

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7 Since the president Alan García Pérez came to governance in 2006, the DINEBI Dirección Nacional de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe became DINEBIR -y Rural. In this respect, IBE has been confined exclusively to the rural context, which was still the case in 2008 when I conducted my fieldwork in Peru (see also Documento de Trabajo’, [not dated]: 19). Hence, the type of bilingual education promoted by the Peruvian government has confined the Quechua language exclusively to the rural context.

8 The maintenance model implies that Quechua is taught as a first language (L1) and Spanish as second language (L2). For further information on this model see Hornberger (1987: 209).

9 Family members feel as that there is a lot of pressure on the indigenous language and that the pupils are not given the opportunity to learn Spanish so they fail in the examinations which are taken in Spanish. In terms of pedagogic work, we have achieved little improvement’, translated by me.
Ultimately, these bilingual discourses and their practices, have not promoted a balanced inclusive bilingual awareness. On the contrary, they have encouraged a type of ‘bilingual consciousness’ grounded in exclusion, which puts languages and cultures into competition. I shall now dwell further on the technicalities of IBE in terms of its tangible applicability.

First of all, IBE projects are not permanent. Usually IBE programmes are applied through the so-called *proyectos pilotos* (pilot projects). The latter run on specific budgets usually based on international funding and once the latter is exhausted, the project and the objectives cease to subsist (Hornberger, 1987: 221). For instance, one of the most known projects the PEEB-P (Experimental Project of Bilingual Education in Puno), sponsored by the German Institute for Technological Cooperation (GTZ) in the 1980s, which was promoting the ‘maintenance model’, was claimed to be a failure after 11 years (Ibid., 1987). Furthermore, projects are scattered, coordinated by ‘networks’ composed by a myriad of Peruvian and international organisations, which have not succeed in establishing a consensus of *what* IBE is in terms of aims and *how* these should be applied. The whole understanding is rather fragmented and inconsistent. This rather erratic and confusing condition has been among others fostered by the fact that the very trainers who should teach future bilingual teachers are not clear about how to be applying an IBE curriculum.10

As it was mentioned by one of my consultants an IBE researcher from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú in Lima:

‘Uno de los problemas de la EIB es que no hay un consenso sobre lo que es la EIB. Y lo demás no hay un consenso sobre para qué es que se implemente la EIB. La gente te repite por inercia, ”bueno para rescatar nuestra identidad”… tiene un rol muy aprendido. Yo trabajaba con formadores de institutos superiores pedagógicos, también he trabajado en escuelitas, con futuros formadores de docentes. Y ellos que son formadores, catedráticos de institutos, tampoco tienen muy claro para qué es la EIB’, (fieldwork data: Lima, 10.11.08).11

Teachers do not identify with IBE. Among other things this is because, the vast majority who work in rural areas did not choose the location as they were sent

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11 ‘One of the main problems of IBE is that there is no consensus on what is the IBE. Further, there is no consensus on why it should be implemented. People answered to you out of inertia “well, to save our identity” … it holds a learned role. I used to work with teachers who used to teach future teachers in higher education and they themselves did not have a precise understanding of the reasons why to apply IBE’, translated by me.
there based on the low score they received in the final exam in order to become teachers (García, 2005 [a]: 118). For instance, in the community of Paqcha (Ayacucho) when I interviewed some family members a mother stated:

‘Está bien el trabajo de EIB. El problema es que las mismas UGELes\textsuperscript{12} se contradicen porque nos mandan profes que no hablan ni entienden el quechua’,\textsuperscript{13} (fieldwork data: 14. 11. 08).

Furthermore, from my fieldwork observations, teachers were not interested in engaging with bilingual education and, as it was also confirmed by a member of the Guara-Guara school (Cusco):\textsuperscript{14}

‘muchos docentes no quieren dedicar más tiempo a la enseñanza de EIB… más sacrificio, más trabajo… el fracaso está entre los profesores’,

(fieldwork data: 18. 08. 08).

Beside these technical matters, one should also consider the internalisation of ‘linguistic discrimination’, which equally affects the ‘IBE system’ as it is presented in the types of responses found among the IBE addressees. ‘Linguistic discrimination’ implies, among other things, that Spanish is socially more accepted and the speakers of this language have advantages over the indigenous languages in most formal contexts. Although Quechua language became official in 1975 co-equal with Spanish (Hornberger, 1987: 208), in general it is still associated with backwardness, lowness, an obstacle to progress; whereas Spanish is identified with prestige, highness and advancement. Even if these are socially constructed assumptions, loaded with symbolic principles as no language variety \textit{per se} is ‘higher’ or better than the other (Godenzzi, 1992: 72), the intrinsic connotations, influence people’s attitudes towards the two languages and the ways they relate to them in their lives. This is when negative language attitudes which among others imply the denial of the use of Quechua in official spheres such as education are fostered. A concrete example can be given by the fact that even if family members are given the opportunity to send their children to a school, which is applying an IBE curriculum; they do not opt for it.

\textsuperscript{12} UGEL stands for \textit{Unidad de Gestión Educativa Local} (Unit of Local Education Management). The UGELs differ from the Regional Departments of Education (e.g. DREA La Dirección Regional de Educación de Ayacucho). While DREA for instance works with educational laws and statistical information, the UGELs monitor the entire educational system in terms of curriculum and training, which can be also in bilingual education. These are both governmental agencies, where there are officials who work on topics related to bilingual education. They also work closely with rural communities. (Firestone, 2006)

\textsuperscript{13} ‘Many teachers do not want to dedicate more time to the teaching of IBE… more sacrifice, more work… the failure is among the professors’, translated by me.

\textsuperscript{14} For privacy reasons I prefer to keep my consultants anonymous.
Another factor I would like to reflect upon, are the relations established among the parties involved in the ‘IBE system’. When in 2008 I conducted my fieldwork in Peru travelling predominantly in the regions of Cusco, Puno and Ayacucho, I soon realised there were divisions among the parties involved. What I mean by this is that, I usually interviewed IBE ‘experts’ such as coordinators, implementers, pedagogues, professors and project leaders in the cities (including Lima); whereas I conversed with the potential ‘promoters’ such as mayors, teachers and the IBE ‘addresses’—the family members and pupils—in schools either in remote villages or in the communities located in the urban outskirts. I learned that the boundaries among these social actors were not only kept divided. Moreover, the relations involved clearly followed a hierarchical top-down approach, which was not freed from paternalistic demeanours. This brings me to explore the notion of ‘interculturality’ and I shall start with a quote from my fieldwork:

‘IBE es posible. Se puede rescatar sensibilizando a los padres’,\(^\text{15}\) (fieldwork data: school member, Paucarcolla-Collana [Puno], 09. 09. 08).

The notion of interculturality has been linked to the idea of ‘sensibilising people’ but what are the implications of this association?

IBE has had among others the objective to break down an *espiritu paternalista* (paternalistic spirit) and shift hierarchical top-down relations of domination present in the Peruvian society.\(^\text{16}\) However, in practice, this has not been necessarily the case. For instance, when I travelled to Huarcaya, a village near Chuschi (Ayacucho) a teacher expressed his opinion with respect to the family members with whom I wanted to chat about IBE. Using a disparaging tone, he asked me why I wanted to talk to *them* about IBE, suggesting I should rather go directly to the local school and talk to teachers about the IBE programmes. Moreover, referring to the padres de familia he stated:

‘Qué saben ellos, ellos no saben nada’,\(^\text{17}\) (fieldwork data: 19. 11. 08).

Likewise, while conducting her fieldwork in Peru, García found similar paternalistic attitudes. In her case, she assisted at how the staff of the Peruvian National Unity of Bilingual Intercultural Education (UNEBI) unanimously stated that the ‘Peruvian indigenous parents just do not know any better’, (García, 2005 [b]: 25-26).

Clearly, there is a gap between the notion of ‘interculturality’ and its practice. Although ‘interculturality’—which is the exercise of the multiculturalist paradigm—implies

\(^{15}\) ‘IBE is possible. It can be redeemed by sensibilising the family members’, translated by me.


\(^{17}\) ‘What do they know, they know nothing!’, (translated by me).
the idea of ‘respect for difference’ and the ‘acceptance of every culture’s various practices’ (Fay, 1996: 239), in practice it avoids and excludes the possibility of a more equal exchange among cultures. Notions of superiority persist. Furthermore, because there is a lack of language maintenance among the disadvantaged Quechua speakers, which implies a ‘collective volition’ (cf. Hoffmann, 1991: 185)—a particular type of power from within in terms of awareness—IBE ‘experts’ who have entered the communities with their trainings and workshops (known as talleres), to promote the so-called programas de sensibilización (sensibilisation programmes), have turned into ‘proselytes’. Workshops have become ‘missions’, which have aimed to convince the IBE addressees about the importance of the maintenance of the Quechua language and culture. In this respect, language and culture are conceptualised in terms of folkloristic products, as ‘objects of arts’ to be saved as opposed to be shared -hence understood- as a ‘field of struggle’ (cf. Bhabha, 1994: 171-173).

I would like to conclude this paper by reflecting upon the question of empowerment in specific by focusing on the notions of ‘help’ versus ‘conscientisation’ and I will start with a quote:

‘We Indigenous people must speak for ourselves … [think for ourselves] … That is the only pattern to true freedom; this is what we must learn and teach to our daughters and sons’, (Hilaria Supa Huamán, in Quintana 2008: 82).

This phrase summarises the fundamental question in terms of power dynamics of the IBE system. Because there is little or no interest on the side of IBE addressees, IBE ‘experts’ and promoters have—in the case of the Peruvian Andes—in practice fostered through the idea of ‘help’ a ‘dependency culture’ as opposed to encourage the process of ‘conscientisation’ (Freire, 1973: 19). The latter implies the awakening of a critical awareness, which would lead the oppressed to strive for ‘freedom’, hence achieve liberation. When applied to the IBE context, this view suggests that if the very IBE addressees do not see that the Quechua language can empower them on an official level, no bilingual policy or IBE programme can convince them of such possibility. On the contrary, IBE ends up imposing values and understandings about the ‘Quechua culture’ and ‘being Quechua’, which can only weaken the potential rise of an ‘inclusive linguistic awareness’ among the Quechua speakers, the only ones, who are experiencing language and culture as a field of struggle. In this respect, the IBE objectives have been ‘lost in translation’.

Ultimately, IBE turns into a ‘palliative’, which does not serve the addressees, but the interests of those institutions, which own and promote its objectives. In this respect, IBE
represents a proper ‘world-system’ (cf. Wallerstein, 2004), which legitimises and imposes a specific ‘truth’ in terms of knowledge and values established in specific parts of the world (such as EU and USA), which are later on ‘injected’ into the so-called ‘underdeveloped third world’. In this respect I shall close this paper by evoking a thought provoking quote, which catches the core of my argumentation:

‘If you came only to help me, then you can go back home. But if you consider my struggle as part of your own survival, then perhaps we can work together’, (Australian Aboriginal woman).
References


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