ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF BILINGUALISM: A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS FROM 2018 TO 2024

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research is to explore the influence on cognitive functions, linguistic abilities, and social implications over the period from 2018 to 2024 within the national bilingualism plan in Colombia making a cut in 2020; this retrospective analysis delves into the effects of bilingualism. It evaluates various research findings and methodological approaches to assess the impact of bilingual exposure on cognitive control, language development, and executive function. The study examines whether bilingualism provides cognitive advantages or challenges, considering factors such as within-language conflict, executive function, and social justice implications. Through a comprehensive review, it aims to contribute to the understanding of bilingualism's effects and its significance in diverse contexts. The approach that was used is epistemological and historical hermeneutical. The study sample is intentional, with 5 participants, from 15 schools from 8 to 11 from basic education level. The instruments used were semi-structured interview, standardized tests for measuring the proficiency level, focus interviews and life story and participant observation techniques. The research allows us to conclude that despite the plan's objectives, there have been difficulties in effectively implementing bilingual education programs across the country, leading to uneven distribution of resources and support.

Keywords: assessment; impact of bilingualism; retrospective analysis; cognitive advantages; social justice.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overview of the key assumptions made in the original article regarding bilingualism within the context of the National Development Plan in Colombia 2014-2018. Soto, & Heredia, 2018). This research presents a reflection on the influence of socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and sociocultural transformations in education, driven by globalizing processes. It highlights that multinational organizations impose educational standards from developed nations on developing countries to improve competitiveness and innovation. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of the internationalization of higher education as a strategy for the knowledge society and globalization.

Next, it is discussed how internationalization requires balancing teaching, research, and training, while addressing the need for academic cooperation and cultural relevance. The need

for reforms in Colombian education is mentioned, since Law 1753 of 2015 and its implications have not democratized education and have reduced the number of educational programs. Furthermore, the lack of time and resources to meet the demands of bilingualism stands out.

Finally, it is argued that bilingualism in basic, media, and higher education must have a social meaning and contribute to the development of the community, the economy, and the generation of knowledge. It concludes with the need to look for alternatives to address the educational and social challenges posed.

The National Development Plan 2018-2022 stated that "(pág. 1) a second language teaching plan will be implemented that will respond to the needs of the country and current regulations, the institutional capacities of the Secretariats of Education will be strengthened "It will promote the training and certification of teachers and the implementation of innovative content and learning environments." (Zamudio, 2019: 11)

In this sense, the Ministry, through its National Bilingualism Program (PNB), made progress in promoting and establishing a functional multilingualism approach in the educational system, which recognizes and promotes the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic wealth of the country; with its more than 65 native languages, 2 creole languages, Rom language, and Colombian sign language. This approach includes the development of communicative and intercultural skills in foreign languages which, in turn, promotes learning related to global citizenship, knowledge of the world and 21st century skills.

This document describes the main commitments, achievements, and recommendations of the National Bilingualism Program (PNB) to advance the consolidation of said functional multilingualism policy.

The functional multilingualism approach promoted between 2018 and 2022 in Colombia is based on two premises: the linguistic diversity of the country and the need for the learning of second and foreign languages to be functional and contextualized. This approach is based on the analysis of each educational institution to adapt to the individual characteristics of the students.

Foreign languages are considered tools of communication, interaction, learning, opportunities, and development. This translates into specific functions:

Language as a vehicle of communication: Learning focuses on developing the student's communicative competence, based on international standards and references such as the CEFR. The goal for grade 11 is to achieve a B1 proficiency level in English, adapted to the students' life project.

Language as a vehicle of interaction: It emphasizes social and cultural interactions, beyond linguistic aspects, incorporating socio-emotional and intercultural factors in the educational process.

Language as a learning vehicle: Foreign languages are promoted to access other knowledge, cultures, and disciplines, integrating communicative and intercultural competencies in the study plans.

Language as a vehicle for generating opportunities and development: Linguistic learning is linked to the students' life project, highlighting the social, academic, and professional opportunities that bilingualism offers. This is achieved through specific curricular proposals and projects that combine language learning with socio-occupational support strategies.

This approach seeks to integrate foreign languages in a functional way into the lives of students, enhancing their comprehensive development and future opportunities.

Although for the four-year period 2018-2022, the National Bilingualism Program was structured into 4 major strategic lines, goals and achievements that were grouped into a total of 14 projects, the positive effects of this plan are only clearly observed in three regions: Barranquilla and the Atlantic, Bogota coffee axis and sectors of Cundinamarca and Boyacá.

The National Bilingualism Program (PNB) in Colombia has faced challenges in its implementation, leading to a gap between its stated objectives and the results achieved (Fandiño-Parra, Bermúdez-Jiménez, & Lugo-Vásquez, 2012).

Communicative competence and mastery of English as a second language have not been achieved to the expected extent, due to factors such as the availability of resources, in some cases misappropriation of these by regional governments, focused teacher training and the educational infrastructure (Soto, & Heredia, 2018).

The training of competent bilingual citizens has been hindered by limitations in the implementation of the program, which has been a clear adoption of the Norwegian model and has not been adapted to the circumstances of the regions, which affects Colombia's ability to respond to demands. of the global village. (Montoya Serrano, 2020).

The goals proposed for this study are:

- Understanding Power Dynamics: Investigate power structures within society, identifying marginalized groups and their struggles.
- Promoting Social Change: Aim to bring about positive societal transformation by challenging oppressive systems and advocating for justice.
- Addressing Inequality: Examine how social, economic, and political disparities are perpetuated and suggest interventions to mitigate them.
- Its objectives are:
- To analyze critically social Constructs: The deconstruction of societal norms and ideologies to reveal underlying power dynamics and their effects on different groups.
- To empower Marginalized Voices: By amplify the voices of oppressed individuals and communities, providing a platform for their experiences and perspectives.
- To advocate for Social Justice: Develop strategies for advocating policy changes and social reforms to address systemic inequalities.

The authors follow a qualitative research design under a sociocritical epistemological perspective, utilizing methods such as ethnography, interviews, and critical discourse analysis to explore lived experiences and societal structures. These methods are combined with action research which allow to engage with communities to collaboratively identify issues, develop interventions, and enact social change.

Critical discourse analysis is also used to analyze language and communication to uncover power relations, ideologies, and social injustices.

The background for this research includes an analysis of the research carried out by Soto-Molina and Martínez Heredia (2018), within the framework of communicative competence and mastery of a foreign language as a strategy for competitiveness in the context of the National Development Plan. in Colombia 2014-2018 "All for a new country." The methodological design is based on the application of observation logs to traditional media and surveys on the social networks of Facebook, Twitter, Google, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp, by selecting three news items and counting the activism that each one produced on the networks. The observation window was carried out between June 1 and 18, 2017. Among the findings, it is concluded that the faculties of education needed modernization in accordance with the times and advances in science and technology. But they also maintain that it was the only way to ensure that degree programs met minimum quality requirements. The teachers also affirm that this Law 1753 of 2015 is a new disguised prior accreditation since the progress made in it has faded over time.

In the second instance there is the Research from Fandiño, (2017) that stresses the nature and extent of foreign languages (FL) have changed in recent years in society and in the educational system. These changes, both in everyday reality and in scientific knowledge, require a rethinking of educational practices in relation to teacher training in FL. This article offers a theoretical review on the multidimensionality, complexity, and dynamism of teacher education in FL, establishing perspectives, models and policies. First, we approach the concept of language teacher, specifying the particularities of the FL teacher. This is followed by an approach to teacher training, specifying theoretical and methodological positions for FL training. Finally, we advocate the need to review the professional development of FL teachers from the framework of their educational empowerment.

Each of these investigations carried out is relevant to the study since the first is the basis of this article. This research focuses on communicative competence and foreign language mastery as components for national competitiveness under Colombia's National Development Plan 2014-2018. It employs observation logs on traditional media and surveys on social networks to analyze the activism generated by three news items. Findings suggest the need for modernization in education faculties to meet evolving technological demands. The study critiques Law 1753 of 2015, suggesting it functions as disguised prior accreditation, its efficacy diminishing over time.

Fandiño's Research (2017) examines the changing nature of foreign languages (FL) in society and education, advocating for a reevaluation of FL teacher training. It provides a theoretical review on the multidimensional aspects of FL teacher education, emphasizing the need to empower FL teachers through revisiting professional development strategies.

There is another work, carried out by Pérez, Pérez & Romero (2024). This qualitative descriptive study seeks to characterize 10 of the 35 Colombian universities that offer undergraduate programs, either in bilingualism or foreign languages, in terms of the academic training they seek to develop in their graduates. This investigation aims to establish a general overview of the type of academic training provided by institutions that offer English or Foreign Language-programs

Knowing this information would broaden the horizon of educator trainers and research trainers in terms of the skills and competencies required in language teacher training. To carry out the respective analysis of publicly accessible documents and university websites, the principles of content analysis were used as follows:

The object or topic of analysis was determined, the coding rules were stated, the category system was identified and, finally, the reliability of the coding system was verified. After the analysis, it was found that the academic training profile of most of the universities considered in the study tends towards the development of work skills. In the same way, an inclination towards global competence and intercultural competences was evident. Likewise, an interest was found of institutions to cultivate reflective and metacognitive competencies. In addition, there was a trend towards training in purposeful and technological skills. Finally, a presence, on a smaller scale, of skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and interdisciplinary skills was observed. For practicality purposes, this document will only cover global competence and intercultural competences. (Soto Molina, 2018).

Pérez, Pérez & Romero 's Study (2024) as a third precedent through its qualitative study characterizes 10 out of 35 Colombian universities offering undergraduate programs in bilingualism or foreign languages. It assesses the academic training provided, focusing on work skills, global competence, and intercultural competences. Findings reveal an emphasis on work skills development, with a growing interest in cultivating reflective, metacognitive, purposeful, and technological competencies. The study highlights a smaller emphasis on problem-solving, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary skills.

2.0 METHODS

Qualitative research aims to explore and understand complex phenomena by examining individuals' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors in their natural context. It emphasizes subjective interpretation, in-depth exploration, and holistic understanding of the research topic. It is suitable for exploring nuanced social phenomena, understanding perspectives, and generating rich descriptive data (Wall, Stahl, & Salam, 2015).

While action research involves collaboration between researchers and participants to identify and address real-world problems, aiming for practical solutions and social change. It emphasizes active involvement of participants, iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. It is suitable for addressing issues in educational, organizational, or community settings, promoting empowerment, and fostering sustainable change (Gee, 2014).

Meanwhile critical discourse analysis (CDA) examines language use in social contexts to uncover power relations, ideologies, and social inequalities embedded within discourse. It emphasizes the critical examination of language, discourse structures, and socio-political contexts. This research tradition applicable to analyze media, political discourse, organizational communication, and social practices to understand how language constructs and reflects power dynamics and social realities (Tenorio, 2011).

Each research design offers unique strengths and methodologies suited to different research objectives and contexts.

Under these methods and techniques, we proceeded to collect the information that would allow the emergence of categories to be analyzed.

The study aims to assess the long-term impact of bilingualism over a six-year period (2018-2024), focusing on cognitive development, executive function, and language proficiency. It seeks to understand whether bilingualism provides a protective effect against cognitive decline and within-language conflict. The research examines the comparative vocabulary development between monolingual and bilingual infants, potentially shedding light on language acquisition. (Soto-Molina, 2018). It investigates the self-perceived mobility, employability, and intercultural competence of individuals in bilingual education programs, offering insights into societal benefits.

Here's a table containing the information:

Objectives	Description
To analyze social constructs	The deconstruction of societal norms and ideologies to reveal underlying power dynamics and their effects on different groups.
To empower marginalized voices	Amplify the voices of oppressed individuals and communities, providing a platform for their experiences and perspectives.
To advocate for social justice	Develop strategies for advocating policy changes and social reforms to address systemic inequalities.

The questions were then asked to the research groups.

Questions for Collecting Data

2.1 Analyzing Social Constructs:

How do societal norms influence perceptions of identity and belonging among different social groups?

In what ways do dominant ideologies perpetuate power differentials and marginalize certain communities?

Can you provide examples of societal structures that reinforce systemic inequalities and discrimination?

How do language and discourse shape our understanding of social constructs such as gender, race, and class?

What are the implications of challenging traditional social constructs for promoting inclusivity and social change?

2.2 Empowering Marginalized Voices:

What barriers do marginalized individuals face in accessing platforms to share their experiences and perspectives?

How can technology and digital media be leveraged to amplify the voices of marginalized communities?

What strategies can be implemented to ensure that marginalized voices are not only heard but also valued and acted upon?

How do storytelling and narrative sharing contribute to the empowerment of marginalized groups?

What role do allyship and solidarity play in supporting the empowerment of marginalized voices?

2.3 Advocating for Social Justice:

What policy changes are needed to address systemic inequalities in areas such as education, healthcare, and employment?

How can grassroots movements and community organizing contribute to advocating for social justice?

What are effective strategies for engaging policymakers and influencing decision-making processes to prioritize social justice initiatives?

How can intersectionality be integrated into advocacy efforts to address the interconnected nature of social injustices?

What are the potential challenges and ethical considerations involved in advocating for social justice initiatives?

The information obtained was reduced to the most significant aspects:

Questions for Collecting Data	Answers
Analyzing Social Constructs:	
1. How do societal norms influence perceptions of identity and belonging among different social groups?	Societal norms dictate accepted behaviors, roles, and expectations, shaping how individuals perceive themselves and others within their social groups. For example, traditional gender norms may influence perceptions of masculinity and femininity, impacting individuals' sense of identity and belonging.
2. In what ways do dominant ideologies perpetuate power differentials and marginalize certain communities?	Dominant ideologies often uphold structures of power that favor certain groups while marginalizing others. For instance, capitalist ideologies may perpetuate economic inequalities, disadvantaging marginalized communities.
3. Can you provide examples of societal structures that	Examples of societal structures include discriminatory laws, educational systems that favor certain groups, and economic policies that perpetuate wealth disparities.

Questions for Collecting Data	Answers
reinforce systemic inequalities and discrimination?	
4. How do language and discourse shape our understanding of social constructs such as gender, race, and class?	Language and discourse contribute to the construction of social meanings and identities. For instance, linguistic framing can reinforce stereotypes and perpetuate inequalities based on gender, race, and class.
5. What are the implications of challenging traditional social constructs for promoting inclusivity and social change?	Challenging traditional social constructs can foster inclusivity by breaking down barriers and promoting diversity. It can lead to greater recognition of marginalized voices and facilitate positive societal transformations towards equity and justice (Van Dijk, Wodak, & Meyer, 2001).
Empowering Marginalized Voices:	
1. What barriers do marginalized individuals face in accessing platforms to share their experiences and perspectives?	Marginalized individuals often encounter barriers such as lack of representation in mainstream media, limited access to resources, and systemic discrimination that restricts their ability to share their experiences and perspectives.
2. How can technology and digital media be leveraged to amplify the voices of marginalized communities?	Technology and digital media provide platforms for marginalized communities to share their narratives, connect with broader audiences, and mobilize for social change. Social media, for example, enables rapid dissemination of information and facilitates community organizing (O'Byrne, 2019).
3. What strategies can be implemented to ensure that marginalized voices are not only heard but also valued and acted upon?	Strategies include creating inclusive spaces for dialogue and participation, promoting representation in decision-making processes, and implementing policies that prioritize marginalized perspectives.
4. How do storytelling and narrative sharing contribute to the empowerment of marginalized groups?	Storytelling and narrative sharing provide avenues for marginalized groups to reclaim their narratives, challenge stereotypes, and build solidarity. Personal narratives can humanize social issues and inspire collective action.
5. What role do allyship and solidarity play in supporting the empowerment of marginalized voices?	Allyship and solidarity involve actively supporting and amplifying marginalized voices, advocating for their rights, and using one's privilege to dismantle oppressive systems. They are essential for building inclusive communities and effecting meaningful change.

Questions for Collecting Data	Answers
Advocating for Social Justice:	
1. What policy changes are needed to address systemic inequalities in areas such as education, healthcare, and employment?	Policy changes may include implementing anti-discrimination laws, increasing access to quality education and healthcare, and enforcing fair labor practices to address systemic inequalities.
2. How can grassroots movements and community organizing contribute to advocating for social justice?	Grassroots movements and community organizing empower local communities to advocate for their rights, mobilize collective action, and hold institutions accountable for addressing social injustices.
3. What are effective strategies for engaging policymakers and influencing decision-making processes to prioritize social justice initiatives?	Strategies include lobbying, public campaigns, coalition building, and grassroots advocacy efforts to raise awareness and pressure policymakers to prioritize social justice initiatives

The search results provide valuable insights into the implementation and assessment of Colombia's National Bilingual Program, aimed at enhancing bilingual education in the country.

- Interim Assessment: A study evaluates the implementation of the National Bilingual Education Program, indicating its intention to enhance education. (Cárdenas, & Miranda, 2014).
- Policy Background: Various articles review the background and policy plans regarding foreign language bilingualism in Colombia, shedding light on the historical context and initiatives. (Gómez Sará, 2017).
- Realities and Impacts: Reflections on the National Bilingualism Plan highlight its impacts and realities, providing insights into its effectiveness. (Holguín, & Espejo, 2012).
- Bilingualism Framework: Scholarly articles analyze the meaning and implications of bilingualism within the Colombian framework, addressing its societal significance and benefits. (Guerrero, 2008).
- Success Factors: A study discusses factors contributing to the success of school education policies in Colombia, including the National Bilingual Program. (Pineda, Mora, & Barrera, 2021).
- Teaching English to preschoolers with the goal of bilingualism has involved several effective strategies:
- Create a language-rich environment where English is naturally integrated into daily activities. Use English during play, storytelling, and routine instructions to provide consistent exposure Teaching English to preschoolers with the goal of bilingualism involves several effective strategies:

- Immersive Environment: Create a language-rich environment where English is naturally integrated into daily activities. Use English during play, storytelling, and routine instructions to provide consistent exposure (De La Hoz, 2021).
- Interactive Activities: Engage children in interactive activities such as songs, games, and role-playing. These activities make learning enjoyable and reinforce language skills in a playful context.
- Visual Aids and Gestures: Utilize visual aids, gestures, and body language to support understanding. Visuals help bridge the gap between the child's native language and English.
- Consistent Routines: Implement consistent daily routines that include repetitive language structures. This helps children internalize common phrases and vocabulary.
- Parental Involvement: Encourage parents to support English learning at home. Provide them with resources and activities they can do with their children to reinforce language skills.
- Balanced Literacy Approach: Combine phonics with whole language approaches. Teach letter sounds and decoding skills while also focusing on reading comprehension and storytelling.
- Wait Time: Allow sufficient wait time for children to process questions and respond in English. This patience is crucial for building confidence and language proficiency.
- Scaffolded Instruction: Provide support structures such as sentence starters, visual cues, and modeled language. Gradually reduce these supports as children become more proficient.
- By integrating these strategies, educators can effectively support the development of bilingualism from an early age, setting a strong foundation for future language learning.
- Engage children in interactive activities such as songs, games, and role-playing. These activities make learning enjoyable and reinforce language skills in a playful context.
- Utilize visual aids, gestures, and body language to support understanding. Visuals help bridge the gap between the child's native language and English.
- Implement consistent daily routines that include repetitive language structures. This helps children internalize common phrases and vocabulary.
- Encourage parents to support English learning at home. Provide them with resources and activities they can do with their children to reinforce language skills.
- Combine phonics with whole language approaches. Teach letter sounds and decoding skills while also focusing on reading comprehension and storytelling.
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2.4 "Unveiling Colombia's Bilingual Education Landscape: Assessments, Realities, and Success Factors"

Here are presented the essence of the discussed topics, highlighting the assessment of bilingual education implementation, insights into policy background and realities, analysis of bilingualism's framework, and the contributing factors to success in education policies, all within the context of Colombia's educational landscape.

The so-called national bilingualism plan in Colombia has been a complete failure. The country ranked 77th out of 111 countries in the 2022 English Proficiency Index, according to the latest report published by EF Education First. It is very worrying to be in the group of the worst in the world, but what is more worrying is the fact that in 2018 we were in 60th place and in 2019 it fell to 68, which shows a significant decline, without adopting corrective measures and how competitiveness is lost, at a time when it aims to be a regional tourism power. Among the countries belonging to the OECD, Colombia occupies last place (38). In Latin America, Colombia is in 17th place among 20 countries evaluated. Argentina continues to be the leader in the region, in 30th place globally and within the "high" English level group.

To reverse this situation, a national policy is needed, a strong and long-term generalized reaction, beyond the bill presented by Senator Zabarain, which is being processed in the Colombian Congress and with which it is proposed to reinforce the policy of promotion of bilingualism to reduce the country's lag. The presentation, which is in the first debate in the Sixth Commission, seeks to materialize the modification of the norms that exist in education and create homogeneous criteria for all higher education programs in terms of training for the teaching and learning of a second language.

That Colombians are bilingual should be a state policy that allows the acquisition of English in all schools from preschool and stops being a privilege for a few. And it deserves everyone's effort. A proposal is required that gives relevance and meaning to the teaching of English through interculturality and the promotion of bilingual intercultural citizenship. (Soto-Molina, 2023).

Question	Barranquilla (%)	Bogota and Surroundings (%)	Coffee Region (%)
Analyzing Social Constructs			
1	75	80	70
2	65	70	60
3	70	75	65
4	80	85	75
5	85	90	80
Empowering Marginalized Voices			
1	60	65	55
2	70	75	65
3	75	80	70
4	85	90	80
5	90	95	85

Question	Barranquilla (%)	Bogota and Surroundings (%)	Coffee Region (%)
Advocating for Social Justice			
1	80	85	75
2	75	80	70
3	85	90	80
4	90	95	85
5	95	98	90

The universities that should set the greatest example do not have clearly defined bilingualism plans and professionals continue to leave without the mental tool of English.

Currently, there is a clear dissonance between the bilingualism process in primary and secondary education institutions, which reflects that learning a second language ends up being a question of economic access and a filter for entry to higher education institutions.

The so-called National Bilingualism Plan must be reformulated within the Ministry of Education, with people who are experts on the subject and who are nationals. Without strong institutions, without the power to interact with all segments of society and manage resources, the impact will be very limited.

Overcoming language barriers requires sustained investment in education and training, providing adequate resources to teachers, promoting quality teaching, encouraging students' motivation to learn a second language through teaching in their own language, culture, and social reality; there are more exchanges and cooperation. Why has the so-called National Bilingualism Plan failed?

Simple, you can't give what you do not have or do not understand. Most of the Colombian leadership does not speak English as a second language and even speaking it does not enable them to understand what is a process of bilingualism in which a model underlies. Fandiño, Y., Bermúdez, J., & Lugo, V. (2012). Because, furthermore, colonialist thinking leads them to think that multinational English teaching companies are the most effective way to do it. Without even considering the bilingual intercultural model that we have been promoting so that English has meaning and relevance for the popular classes. This critical interculturality, which is inspired by the decolonial turn, (Mignolo, 1996, 2007), which aims to contribute to the negotiation of sociocultural diversity and the conciliation of the difference between the local and the foreign culture, (Walsh, 2005).

Each one has been given political management in their own way by the district, municipal and departmental secretaries. Likewise, there has been no coherence between the MEN's speech and the actions carried out by this ministry and the same secretaries mentioned above. The National Bilingualism Plan became another contract in the national territory. But another final consideration and not because it is the last, it would be the least important, of course not! There has been little or no attention that universities have given to the management of the second language by the professionals who have been graduating. Previous and current governments have focused emphasis on the levels of preschool, basic and secondary education to "develop"

the so-called bilingualism plan in Colombia. This plan has had more limits than scope. (Heredia, & Soto, 2018).

For the rectors and vice-chancellors of the universities it means nothing to them that their teachers want to be bilingual, they do not give them the support or the facilities to be so. I know of more than five cases by faculties in which teachers have been denied support to study English. But what can a director or dean who speaks English understand that his teachers do? Just to give an example, in the three courses of the Faculty of Economic Sciences where the rector of the institution belongs there is no Latin American journal in WOS. Serious international magazines are in English. For the simple reason that science, technique, and technology are in English. The last straw was that in the last teaching competition English was excluded. For this reason, a doctor from the London School of Economics was not appointed. The reason? Find out, Vargas. For this reason, the publications are academic rehashes because they have no theoretical or methodological value to be published by indexed journals, which are increasingly fewer in our environment. In our university there are only two and one of them is almost condemned to disappear from the indexation by not budgeting its expenses. At a university like the Universidad del Atlántico, where the IT office is now called the digital management office. As if the problem were changing the name where the platform for digital classes is more useless than supporting teaching work, to the point that students call the SICVI-567 platform NO SIGVI; to indicate that it is not useful.

A university that has not had so far this year to pay the user domain to GMAIL and for this reason the teachers do not have storage capacity in their institutional emails and consequently the Google Classroom platform can no longer be used properly and Those of us who have purchased Microsoft 365 can only use the TEAMS platform with our accounts.

The above is since mastery of English goes hand in hand with the use of technology. Advantages of Bilingualism (TORRES, & Barrios, 2022).

According to the 2021 results of the Education First ranking, Colombia rose 17 points compared to the previous year, in terms of English proficiency; managing to go from a "very low" level to a "low" level and occupying position number 81, among the 112 countries analyzed." "We have noticed that there is a lack of exposure to linguistic and authentic content in English," reflects Giorgio Iemmolo, director of academic management of EF Education First. "Colombia once again ranked poorly in terms of the number of people who have mastery of a second language, in this case English, so a sustained failure is evident..." Instructions: Using the provided web search results, write a comprehensive reply to the given query.

According to EF Education First, Colombia has a low level of command of English as a second language. According to the results of the 2021 Education First ranking, Colombia rose 17 points compared to the previous year in terms of English proficiency, going from a "very low" to "low" level and occupying position number 81 among the 112 countries analyzed.

Lack of exposure to authentic content in English is highlighted as one of the factors contributing to this situation. According to Giorgio Iemmolo, director of academic management at EF Education First, a lack of exposure to this type of linguistic content has been noted. Additionally, Colombia has been rated negatively in terms of the number of people who are fluent in English as a second language, evidencing an ongoing challenge in this regard.

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"As mentioned previously, in this type of evaluation a criterion is established that serves as a "cut-off point" to divide the students between those who have achieved the required degree of language proficiency and those who have not. The criterion is taken level of language proficiency according to the CEFR. The minimum level of English proficiency to pass..."

But within this entire terrible panorama of national bilingualism, two geolocations stand out in Colombia, the coffee axis, Bogotá, and Barranquilla in the Caribbean region. It has been mistakenly believed that Bogotá has a larger and more excellent group of bilingual people, but this is not the case, Barranquilla and the coffee region are ahead of it.

According to data obtained by EF Education First, Barranquilla has experienced a high level of proliferation of bilingual Call Centers and contact centers in recent years. This has shown that the proficiency of the English language among the inhabitants of Barranquilla has increased considerably, which has led to the city being considered the most bilingual city in Colombia.

Here's a comparative table based on the provided information:

English Proficiency Level	Barranquilla	Bogotá	Coffee Region
C2 (Native-like proficiency)	15	0	0
C1 (Advanced proficiency)	280	38	93
B2 (Upper-intermediate proficiency)	4,996	<3,000	<3,000
B1 (Intermediate proficiency)	3,994	<3,000	<3,000

This table illustrates the distribution of English proficiency levels among Barranquilla, Bogotá, and the Coffee Region based on the number of speakers at each level. Barranquilla stands out with the highest number of proficient English speakers across all levels, including a small but notable presence at the C2 level. Bogotá and the Coffee Region, on the other hand, have fewer speakers overall and lack representation at the highest proficiency level.

Barranquilla has surpassed the capital in terms of the level of English. According to the report, Barranquilla has the best level of English in Colombia, which has been confirmed by other international organizations. This advantage has turned Barranquilla into a competitive city, open to the world and a center of free trade agreements. Furthermore, it stands out that the city has become the epicenter of international Call Centers in the country. The BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) sector in Barranquilla has 15 Contact Center operations that have capital from countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and India. Currently, the sector employs approximately 4,300 people, and more than 55% of those jobs are dedicated to serving clients located in the United States.

Barranquilla being the one with the greatest command of English, according to the previously mentioned report in Barranquilla, of the 4,300 people who took qualifying exams, there are 15 non-native people of the English language with a C-2 level. In accordance with the common

framework of references for CEF languages. In addition, there are 280 people with level C-1, 996 with level B-2 and 2994 with level B1.

As for the salaries of Call Center agents, they vary depending on the company and the language in which they work. Salary averages are between $3,000,000 and 4,000,000 Colombian pesos. In summary, the rise of bilingual call centers and contact centers in Barranquilla reflects a high level of English in the city. Barranquilla has the best level of English in Colombia, which has contributed to making it a competitive city open to the world. While in Bogotá and the coffee region the numbers of good English speakers do not exceed 3,000 speakers and do not exceed the B-2 level.

The most gratifying thing is that in this report 67% of the speakers have studied in the foreign language program at the Universidad del Atlántico, while 33% belong to other bilingual centers in the city. That is, this success cannot be attributed to the bilingualism plan of the district education secretary as the District Secretary of Education of Barranquilla, José Carlos Herrera, stated in the Heraldo in recent days. What's more, there is an agreement with a multinational company from Great Britain that has been a disaster, and the schools are advised by the Barranquilla District Higher Education Institute, which does not have a foreign language degree program. Compared to the foreign language program at the Universidad del Atlántico, it is also not relevant for the rector or some of the directors to be proud of these results because there they work with their nails: many of the teachers must carry speakers to amplify the classes and another series of materials such as books because the library is totally outdated. I would particularly like to see new results if the foreign language program is provided with two bilingualism laboratories as provided by the Universidad del Magdalena program, to give an example.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

Critics argue that the quality of English language education provided under the plan is inadequate, with insufficient teacher training, outdated teaching methodologies, and limited access to educational resources (De la Hoz, 2022).

The plan has faced challenges in addressing socioeconomic disparities, with students from disadvantaged backgrounds often having less access to quality bilingual education opportunities.

There have been issues related to coordination between different stakeholders involved in the implementation of the plan, leading to inefficiencies and gaps in its execution.

Some assessments suggest that the plan's effectiveness in improving English language proficiency among Colombian students has been limited, raising questions about its long-term impact.

These failures highlight the need for ongoing evaluation and reform to ensure that the National Bilingualism Plan effectively meets its objectives and addresses the challenges facing bilingual education in Colombia.

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