

2018

Coloniality, and Subalterns in the Colombian English Language Teaching Policy: De-silencing Teachers as Policy Actors

Rosa A. Medina Riveros
University of Massachusetts

Theresa Y. Austin
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/education_working_papers



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [International and Comparative Education Commons](#), and the [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#)

Medina Riveros, Rosa A. and Austin, Theresa Y., "Coloniality, and Subalterns in the Colombian English Language Teaching Policy: De-silencing Teachers as Policy Actors" (2018). *College of Education Working Papers and Reports Series*. 2.
<https://doi.org/10.7275/qr5z-5974>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Education at ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in College of Education Working Papers and Reports Series by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

Coloniality, and Subalterns in the Colombian English Language

Teaching Policy: De-silencing Teachers as Policy Actors

Rosa Alejandra Medina Riveros and Theresa Austin

Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum studies

University of Massachusetts- Amherst

Author Note

Rosa Medina Riveros <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9601-5319>.

Rosa is also an active member of Lectoescriñautas Colciencias Research Group at Universidad Distrital Francisco Jose de Caldas. Paper presented at the International Society for Language Studies

Waterloo, Canada, Friday June 29th, 2018.

We have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to Rosa Medina Riveros,

Email: ralejandrarmr@gmail.com

Abstract

The Colombian government has designed language policies to increase the level of English-Spanish bilingualism in the last decades. In 2014, the Colombian government launched 'Colombia: Very Well', the National Plan of English (NPE) that was created in consultancy with a private firm. This study explores the English Language policy in Colombia through postcolonial sociology analyzing coloniality, imperialisms and subalternities and the connections across transnational agencies (macro level), national actors (meso-level), and classroom teachers' enactments of the policy (micro level). It calls for de-silencing teachers and recognizing them as knowledgeable policy actors.

Keywords: Colombia, Language Policy, Postcolonial Sociology

Coloniality, and Subalterns in the Colombian English Language

Teaching Policy: De-silencing Teachers as Policy Actors

“Language which is his gift to Caliban. It is the very prison in which Caliban’s achievements will be realized and restricted.” (Retamar, 1988, p.13)

The purpose of the study was to explore the current English Language policy in Colombia through the lens of post- colonial theories, specially analyzing the concept-tools of coloniality, imperialisms and subalternities. In Colombia, the English language policy has prompted heated academic debates for the last eight years. A mandated set of standards and two policies have been designed by the Colombian Ministry of Education and other agencies to foster English Learning at all educational levels. The first policy, National Plan of Bilingualism (NPB) was created in collaboration with the British Council and launched in 2006. In July 2014, after acknowledging the low accomplishments as evident in international evaluations of the previous policy, the Ministry of Education hired a multinational firm, McKinsey & Co, and released a new policy National Plan of English (NPE): Colombia Very Well to improve the proficiency levels in the elementary and secondary schools.

Some scholars have pointed out the colonial nature of English, and its links to empire. Motha (2014) asserts that “English is inextricably linked to neoliberalism, colonization and coloniality. Colonization is inevitably linked with race and racialization is inevitable salient in language teaching, but the colonial nature of English remains invisible” (p. 10). Moreover, “English is not neutral not apolitical. Teaching of English associated with whiteness, wealth, power, and cosmopolitanism. English spread it reinforces colonial divisions of power and racial inequalities. The English teaching profession imitates the patterns of colonization” (Motha, 2014, p. XXI).

Concerning neoliberalism and empire, the study of language and language policies cannot be conducted independently of power and economic inequalities and the creation of subalterns due to the implementation and embedded ideologies in the bilingual policy and its implementation: as Kubota (2014) asserts, in neoliberal times, increased attention to power and inequalities as well as collective efforts to resist the neoliberal academic culture need to be undertaken in the study of language.

For the current analysis, the paper provides a reading of the *National Program of English: 2015-2025* Explanation Document by the Colombian Ministry of Education. Studies on the policy used different levels of analysis: socioeconomic, educational, and textual (Guerrero, 2008; De Mejia, 2011; Joya & Ceron, 2013; Usma, 2009; Valencia, 2013). The current study used postcolonial sociology (Boatcă & Costa, 2010). Postcolonial sociology attempts to unveil connections at macro (global), meso (national) levels, and microlevels (communities).

The section describing the context and background of the policy and provides an initial analysis using the following post-colonial constructs as tools: coloniality, imperialism, subalterns, and the critique of developmentalism. Our purpose is to shed light on how the language policy configures English language teaching and educations as instruments of neo-coloniality.

Background of the National Program of English: 2015-2025

The Colombian government has created and implemented language planning efforts at all educational levels to increase the level of English- Spanish bilingualism since the last eight years. The Bilingual National Plan was promulgated in 2006, the same year in which the Free Trade Agreement with the USA was signed. The first policy, Bilingual Colombia was planned for the period 2004 to 2019 with the explicit purpose of improving the quality of English language teaching at all educational levels. The policy set a goal that by 2010 students would achieve a B1 or pre-intermediate level and that teachers would reach a minimum of B2 according to the Common European Framework. By 2019, the students'

school-exit level was expected to grow to a B2 or intermediate level and their teachers would reach at least a B2 level according to the Common European Framework. (Cardenas, 2006)

In July 2014, the Colombian government issued ~~socialized~~ the document “Colombia: Very well” that enacted Law 1651 “Law of Bilingualism”. The program was named English National Plan and it is the result on a private consultancy with the international firm McKinsey & Co. The socialization document presented by the Colombian Ministry of Education and McKinsey & Co shows students’ and teachers’ low exam outcomes of after eight years of the implementation of the first policy National Plan of Bilingualism, as measured by official tests. Two novelties of the new policy with respect to the previous policy are the overt inclusion of the economic sector of the country and more than 13 strategies to reach especially primary and secondary school teachers and students. A more detailed description of the policy is provided later in the forthcoming analysis section. The academic debate towards the bilingual policy in Colombia is currently relevant as some scholars have unveiled issues of cultural domination of the bilingual policy while others have analyzed the first policy and its effects favorably. There are no studies up to date that examine the most recent policy that was launched in July 2014 through the lens of post-colonialism.

During the second period of President Juan Manuel Santos’s term, whose motto was *Prosperity for all: Peace, Equity and Education*, the minister of education was charged with the responsibility to improve the quality of education and fulfill the campaign promises of the re-elected president. *Education the path to prosperity* is the Ministry’s development plan to increase quality [Colombia had the second lowest country scores in the world in the PISA tests for reading, science, and math in 2013]. Last years’ rapid economic growth of the GDP at a rate of 5%, and in the last five years has been attributed to international investment and the sales of oil and coal. Consequently, the growth of the BOP and economic sectors has created a demand for bilingual workforce. The Ministry of

Education has revised and redesigned the previous bilingual policy to serve the demands of the globalized economic sector.

English as the language of globalization and modernity: the discourse of Development and Equity in Colombia: Peace, Equity and Education

In Colombia, the Ministry of Education has presented English as the key to inserting the country in the global economy, this insertion is equated to prosperity and equity in the Education plan *Education the path to prosperity*. The Ministry of Education presents English language learning as tool for reaching development, social equity and accessing knowledge and culture. Evidence of the social discourse is found in the Minister of education assertions on the official website and in the NPE Socialization document: “We are convinced that learning a foreign language empowers the citizens and allows the country to *enter the global cultural dynamic’s and in the knowledge economy*” (María Fernanda Campo. Minister of Education).

Another piece that evidences the discourse about English as a tool to overcome inequality appears in the NPE document, consists in presenting the social motivations for the policy are presented in first place. NPE promises to generate equity, *inclusion, homogeneity, inclusion, cultural exchange, and access to English for all the population from all social strata and learning of other cultures*. (NPE Socialization document, 2014, p. 24). Most agents and citizens would find affinities with this social discourse, but besides this social discourse the NPE policy contemplates more direct interventions in the educational systems that are backing up international economic interests.

Joya and Ceron (2013) affirm that in Latin America, bilingualism has its origins in European colonization and has acquired power because of the wide range of opportunities that communication in the contemporary world can offer. These scholars express a favorable stance towards bilingualism, for them “the spread of English within the bilingual model as a possibility for the development of Latin

American countries does not constitute a very clear perspective in the sense of guaranteeing the inclusion of the entire population”.

Coloniality of English Language Teaching

Quijano (2000) asserts that after the colonial powers physically left centuries ago, the structures of power, control, and hegemony that have emerged during the modernist era, the era of colonialism, have remained from the conquest of the Americas to the present. He understands this set of structures through the concept of “coloniality of power”. The coloniality of power reinforces divisions of power and racial inequity.

Education plays a key role in the spread and maintenance of coloniality. Leonardo (2013) affirms that the colonizer’s method and knowledge imposed and transmitted in the education system is to civilize the inferior –colonized groups. School works through infantilization, and euphemized forms of violence against the colonized knowledge, language, and ways of being and thinking. The result of schooling is the production of a colonized subject who has internalized colonial’s knowledge and language superiority and at the same time admitting its own inferiority, what Leonardo calls as colonial mentality.

Imperial Globality in the policy: Economic, cultural, and linguistic imperialisms

The English language teaching policy in Colombia serves as a vehicle of economic, cultural, and linguistic imperialisms. Though the notion of empire has traditionally being linked to financial hegemony and capitalistic accumulations of economic powers, Lao-Montes (2007) points out that: “modern imperial formations have different dimensions and are defined according to diverse criteria. They can be seen as trading and financial blocs (e.g., Netherlands in the 17th century), or as linguistic-civilizational communities” (p. 29)

With regards to the financial nature of empire in contemporary times. Escobar (2004) asserts that “the new empire thus operates not so much through conquest, but through the imposition

of norms (free-markets, US-style democracy, and cultural notions of consumption, and so forth)" (p. 214). In the Colombian policy, the international trade agreement, and free market policies reiterate Escobar's idea on the imposition of financial norms. It is the shortage of bilingual workforce produced by US style financial policies that has pushed the Government to incentivize English language teaching in the country.

However, financial imperialism does not come along it comes with cultural images that associate empire with Western ideas of modernity, progress and development, *Cultural Imperialism*. The idea of imperial culture as superior more modern and more developed must be accepted along with the imperialistic financial norms. On the subject of cultural imperialism, Said (1993) points out that: "For the enterprise of empire depends upon the idea of having an empire... and all kinds of preparations are made for it within a *culture*; then in turn imperialism acquires a kind of coherence, a set of experiences, and a presence of ruler and ruled alike within the culture." (p.11). Cultural images depicting Anglophone countries as superior, more developed and modern are infused through the official textbooks and media products, selling English as a happy and middle-class white product. Social problems such as racism, poverty and inequity are rarely portrayed in English Language teaching materials, media products like movies or TV, music, and white Anglophone pop -culture.

A subtype of cultural imperialism that outstands in the English, language teaching policy in Colombia is named by Philipson (1992) as linguistic imperialism. "Linguistic Imperialism is a sub-type of Cultural Imperialism. Linguistic imperialism permeates all other types of imperialism, since language is the means used to mediate and express them (Philipson, 1992, p.65). "Part of the cultural sphere that Edward Said alludes to is the linguistic legacy that imperialism has bequeathed to us, and the ways in which this inheritance is being enjoyed down to the present (Philipson, 1997, p.238) The transfer of a dominant language and its culture to speakers of other language usually produces and reproduces linguistic hierarchies and inequalities. At the moment, Colombian English- Spanish bilingualism is still

linked to prestige, elite and better incomes for bilingual employers. Bilingual schools are usually expensive, upper-class urban institutions where elite families send their children, some of these schools provide international certifications such as International Bachelature and exchange agreements with countries like USA, UK or Canada. Public schools on the other hand, face problems of facilities and only count with two to three hours of English teaching per week.

Beyond nation-state: Imperial cultural corporations in the policy

Joxe as cited by Escobar (2004) asserts that:

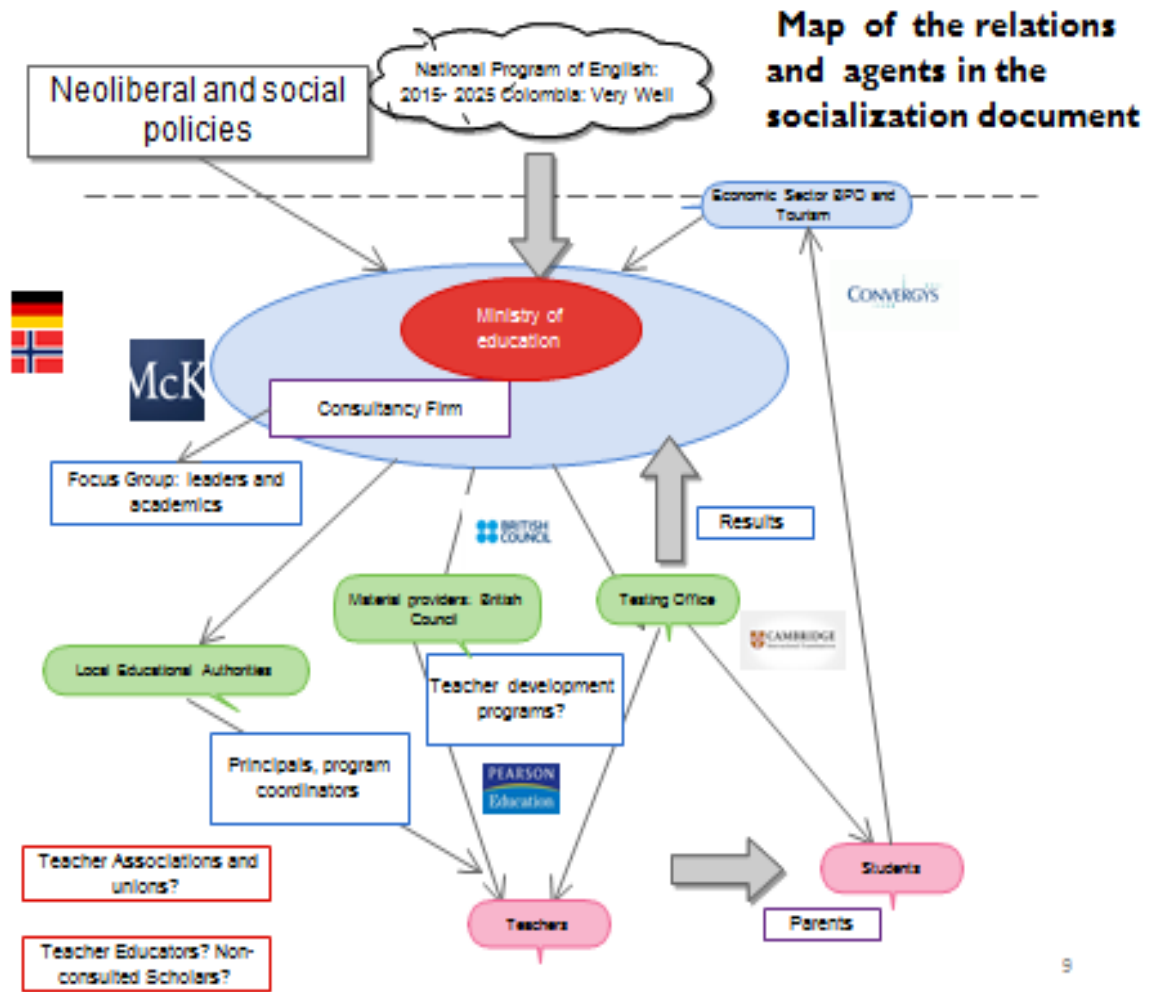
The world today is united by a new form of chaos, an imperial chaos, dominated by the imperium of the United States, though not controlled by it. We lack the words to describe this new system, while being surrounded by its images ... World leadership through chaos, a doctrine that a rational European school would have difficulty imagining, necessarily leads to weakening states—even in the United States—*through the emerging sovereignty of corporations and markets* (Escobar, 2004, 22).

A mapping of the agents in the policy reveals how imperial cultural and managerial multinational corporations are the ones who lead the Government through almost all stages of the policy. The main multinational, cultural corporations in the policy have their headquarters either in USA or UK: McKinsey & Co, the British Council, Cambridge Examination services and Pearson education are some of the corporations involved in the policy.

The graph maps out the main agents that appear in the *National Plan of English*.

Figure 1

Map of the relations of agents in the National English Plan



McKinsey & Company: it is the global management consulting firm selected by the Colombian Government to diagnose and design the National English Plan after the low results of the previous policy. It is a multinational advisor to businesses, governments, and institutions focusing on managerial tools for social impact. The consultancy firm modeled the Colombian language policy from the Norwegian, German, and Chilean models.

British Council is the agency that provides academic and editorial consultancy have been the main

functions of this agency. This agency was hired to design the first policy National Bilingual Plan. In its website, the cultural agency quotes María Fernanda Campo, Minister of Education, Colombia on the subject: "Achievements of Colombia in terms of English competencies development are due mostly to the assistance that the British Council, through its expertise and vast knowledge, has provided us with".

In this excerpt the British Council acknowledges their role in the design and implementation of the policy since the last decade:

The development of an English language policy framework for the country.

The creation of Colombia's first set of basic education standards for foreign language learning.

These standards are currently used by 40 per cent of local education authorities and at least 1,730 education institutions around the country.

A key facilitator in the design of a standardized assessment framework for English language learning based on the Common European Framework of Reference. This assessment framework has been an official part of the state test (Prueba Saber) since 2008. Teacher training and resources. (British Council, 2014)

The role of material designers and providers is not overtly stated neither the NPE document nor on the website. The name of the British Council appears on the back cover of the official teaching guides and books *Bunny Bonita*. The British Council coordinates the editorial project.

On the neocolonial role of British Council relating English Language policy worldwide Philipson (2018) has pointed out that:

The British Council's arguments are a re-run of the imperialism of the colonial age. The assumption is that English is the sole language of globalization, and in everyone's interest, which is patently untrue (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2010). British Council activity in promoting the learning of English is ubiquitous. Its rationale is part political, and part economic since most of the parastatal's budget derives from teaching and examining English.

The third intervention is measurement and assessment. The government measures language having as basis the legitimate language provided in official textbooks and the Common European

Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). The Colombian testing office in collaboration with the British Council will intensify the application of English language tests to all students in third, fifth, ninth and eleventh grade, and the tests will be aligned to CEFR. The document does not clarify who are going to oversee teacher testing or the measurements to be taken in case teachers do not pass such tests.

Other agents include the testing office, the media, and the productive sector. The official testing office is responsible for the design and application of tests to students in collaboration with the British Council. The collaboration between the two entities is not explicit in the document. The press role is developing campaigns to spread the importance of learning English and start including entertainment and educational contents in the language. The productive sector is encouraged to create programs to foster and encourage English language learning among employees.

Colonial Superiority and Eurocentrism: Policy modeled after Germany, Norway, and Chile

Wynter (2003) asserts "this was the relation, in the Americas and the Caribbean, between the European settlers classified as by nature a people of reason *gente de razón* and the non-European population groups "Indians" and "Negroes," classified as "brute peoples without "reason" who were no less naturally determined to be so" (p. 304)

English Language Teaching is inherently related to race and empire. McKinsey & Co has acknowledged modeling the policy after German, Norway and Chile. The work of local scholars within the last two decades on language policy is not even mentioned or referred in the document. It seems that the only knowledge and language validated are the European ones. The language policy intends to follow the European standards from the Common European Framework (CEFR), and proposes to hire "native speakers" to help in the accompaniment of classroom teachers. Teachers and learners experience the implications of these connections. For teachers of English who are not native speakers or white citizens of BANA (Britain, Australia, New Zealand or North America) countries the racialization of English implies fewer job opportunities. Reflecting upon pedagogies and ways to address the

racialization of English are some of the challenges for teachers, readers and studies. Challenging colonial English ideologies and acknowledging that language is not neutral will hopefully result in a better understanding on racial and linguistic inequalities and strategies to fight them from English teaching professionals, learners and scholars.

English, Please! and Bunny Bonita are the textbooks designed in collaboration with the British Council to expose students to “faithful language samples”/ Muestras de lengua fidedignas (NPE, 2014, p. 56). While the policy understands as faithful language samples is not clearly stated, it might refer to the legitimate language samples designed by the British Council. By providing samples of the legitimate language variety represented in official books, the policy seems to suggest that teachers language samples are not faithful enough (and thus inferior) and therefore they need to be surveilled. Six million books will be provided for elementary schools and the last three years of secondary education. The books also include a teacher guide and a structured model of class methodology that must be followed by all schools.

Control over curricular practices, available materials and standardized testing are some of the main mechanisms the National Program of English proposes to transform the current Spanish linguistic hegemony into a Spanish- English linguistic hegemony. The NPE details 13 strategies to take control over the curriculum, the books, teacher preparation and assessment to guarantee that students speak “the best English of Latin- America” as the Minister of Education has asserted in the official website of the Ministry of Education. The strategies to obtain a sense of acceptance of the policy and some of the strategies that intervene primary and secondary schools are going to be described next.

The NPE assumes that it the flux of linguistic and cultural capital at large scale can take the country to a state of progress and development based on Western and Eurocentric standards. What the NPE does not mention is that the convertibility of linguistic capital depends on other factors [social capital, basic needs, violence] and does not directly result in development. Learning English at the

primary or secondary school does not immediately solve social inequity or poverty or classifies the country in the group of developed countries. The ministry of education uses the discourse of English language learning as an opportunity to overcome social inequality and instrument of development to generate affinity towards the policy but also proposes strategies to homogenize and control the educational materials legitimizing the intervention of cultural corporations that work towards the attainment of neocolonial and financial imperialistic goals.

The subalterns of the policy: the silence and homogeneous views of classroom teachers, parents and students in the policy

“Imperialism through global financialization is also a historical silencing of the subaltern”

(Spivak, 1999, p. 311)

In the socialization document, classroom teachers, local scholars, parents, and students are presented in passive roles, in monolithic ways and appear as faceless subjects. Classroom teachers who are supposed to be the agents in charge of spreading the dominant culture and language are not cited in the document. They appear as subjected to interventions such as training, testing, and accompaniment. The interventions included in the NPE policy deal with a system of training and incentives for teachers, the standardization of educational standards, the development of programs at the local level, the supervision of practices and the provision of official books and intensive assessment of teachers and students among others.

The first initiative consists in teacher accompaniment and teacher education. This initiative begins with an initial diagnostic test that will allow the identification of a development route for the English teachers. Depending on the obtained results, the teacher will access 200- 500-hour English language courses and then go to immersion courses or teaching methodology courses to transform their pedagogical practice. At the same time, teachers who show advances in their linguistic level will access different incentives with the aim to recognize their effort and devotion. As well, teachers are going to

attend workshops and be accompanied in their classes, and they will configure learning communities (NPE, 2014, p. 59).

Teacher's role in the NPE is receiving accompaniment, a holistic education incentive, developing learning communities and being tested. Teachers will receive prizes such as laptops, immersion trips on San Andres Island or the USA. The aims of the NPE are to reach 15000 teachers with workshops and a team of 30 educators that will train 300 tutors to accompany teachers in the classrooms (NPE, 2014, 63). The voice of classroom teachers is not represented in the NPE document. The national associations of public teachers and English teachers do not have representation in the NPE document. School principals and language program coordinators do appear as contributors of the NPE document as participants in focus groups and whose ideas, according to the NPE document served as source for the policy. Teachers are the main target of the policy and at the same time one of the most passive agents in the policy making. Their role is to deliver the contents and fulfill the national and international requirements.

Students' role in the policy is also passive. *National Program of English* is in function of the groups that it represents and may have the capacity to intervene the linguistic market with effective results. Although it claims to transform the linguistic habitus and homogenize education with the purpose of social access and equity, it becomes a practice of distinction that keeps the distance between the social groups. According to the policy document, public school students are offered B1 level [*enough English*] to supply the deficit of English-speaking employees in the tourism and business outsourcing sectors. Elite schools would offer more languages and higher levels to their students to pursue academic or cultural goals.

Students' responsibility is becoming aware of the importance of English and reaching by 2025 the B1 [lower intermediate level, only 50% of secondary alumni], this level has been defined as enough for the demand of the population. (NPE, 2014:27). Students are also subjects to testing and in

the end of their secondary education join the workforce in the sectors of tourism and BOP (Business Outsourcing Processes). Parents, as well as students need to become aware of the relevance of English and support their children's learning processes. Studies conducted by local scholars are not referred in the policy document as evidenced in the bibliography.

The initial analysis of the policy revealed the silences of classroom teachers and students in the policy. Some relevant agents are not reflected in the document, for example local studies developed by Colombian scholars are neither referred in the body of the text nor in the bibliography. Teacher educators and scholars at universities in charge of language teacher education are not even mentioned as agents in the document. While the roles of cultural corporations and educational bureaucracies are broadly outlined.

Spivak (2000) affirms that the subaltern does not have a place that guarantees the right to speak. Teachers, students, and parents in the policy appear as silenced targets to be "colonized" through the technologies- interventions of the policy. The subalterns of the policy are silenced, and their knowledge is not allowed to *speak* - appear in the document.

Other possible worlds in response to financial, cultural and linguistic imperialism in the *National Program of English*: Entangling pluriversality, provincialization, localization and radical solidarity

In response to financial, cultural and linguistic imperialisms in the English Language teaching policy in Colombia, we propose entangling pluriversality, provincialization, localization and radical solidarity with teachers, scholars and parents to create alter (natives). Mignolo (2013) asserts that "pluriversality is not cultural relativism, but entanglement of several cosmologies connected today in a power differential. According to Ethnologue (2016) Colombia is inherently pluriversal the number of individual languages listed for Colombia is 89. Of these, 82 are living and 7 are extinct. Of the living languages, 78 are indigenous and 4 are non-indigenous. Spanish is the principal language. (Ethnologue,

2016). It is true that policies and global imperialisms have repercussions at local levels. However, these repercussions should not reproduce cultural or linguistic ideologies that assume that there are inferiors or superiors. Taking up Chakravarty's idea of provincialization, we align with Motha's (2014) proposal of provincializing English. Indeed English teaching is important but it can be as important as any of the 89 languages spoken in Colombia and if budget and policies are made to spread English and Anglophone cultures at schools, the same might happen to spread local cultures, languages and varieties.

Pluriversality can also mean a diversity of pedagogies and resources can serve to resist the homogenization of texts and methods exposed in the policy. Pluriversality may include as well include local teacher knowledges, identities, and linguistic and cultural varieties. Since "Local people develop hybrid codes and identities that represent the challenge of how to negotiate varieties in the national context" (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 200). Teachers' uses of local pedagogies, linguistic varieties, literacies cultures and materials adapted to heterogeneous diverse students in, particular) as alter (natives) to the homogenizing model provided.

New pedagogy and de-colonial radical solidarity (Sandoval, 2013) is needed to subvert the Eurocentric views present in the policy. Despite teachers, students and parents are not voiced in the NPE document and are only depicted as receivers and transmitters of the policy [teachers and students are described from a deficit approach], they need to create their own versions of the policy and try to negotiate a space for the use of English beyond economic goals, teachers can exploit local resources and contextualized practices and materials adapted to heterogeneous students in heterogeneous contexts to provide a balance to the homogenization model provided. Teacher associations and unions need to ask for clear rules in the teacher assessment and accompaniment. It is the role of scholars to nurture academic debates on this policy and look for spaces of possibility and action within the policy. The local governments need to listen and improve the NEP in local programs to hopefully involve

teachers, teacher educators and parents to take a more active role in policy making, design and implementation.

Decolonizing bilingual ideologies in the policy and de-constructing and des-centering paternalistic and Eurocentric notions of development, nativeness “muestras de lengua fidedignas” and Eurocentric models of policy and testing are still pending tasks. Using postcolonial sociology (Boatcă & Costa, 2010) might help the task at the macro global connections across nation states, meso – national levels and microlevels. Ethnographies and narratives of classroom teachers, students and local scholars might help to move the center of the English language teaching policy in Colombia, from imperialistic and multinational corporations to pluriversal local versions.

Martin’s School

About more than a year I accompanied my friend Martin to his school. I met him five years ago at the public university where we taught English as a Foreign Language. At the same time as teaching at the college level, he has taught English at a Public school in a low-income neighborhood in the South of Bogota for more than 15 years. He teaches two weekly hours of English to 8 classes of 45- 48 students on average. He makes less than 9,000 dollars per year, and teaches at two other places to increase his income. There are neither books nor handouts in the cramped classroom, and yet his students do relatively better in English, than in Math or Science as the national standardized tests suggest. A language teaching assistant was brought to school from Poland last year to assist teachers, students as part of the English Language Teaching policy program that has been implemented in the city since 2014. Students, Martin told me, loved her blond hair. Martin traveled to England a couple of years ago thanks to an agreement between the Colombian and the British Government. He tells students stories about his year in England, -he forgets to tell stories about how pricy food and transportation were, that he had to live on spaghetti for some months there or that he had to walk for 1 or 2 hours on snow to reach school where he was teaching Spanish, or that the only things his English and European friends knew about Colombia were Shakira and cocaine. He teaches British songs, and sometimes brings memorabilia with him to the classroom, like his favorite socks with the British flag on them.

You taught me language; and my profit on't

Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you...

(Caliban discourse to Prospero, Shakespeare, the Tempest)

References

- Boatcă M. and Costa S. (2010). Postcolonial sociology: A research agenda. In: Rodriguez EG., Boatcă M. & Costa S. (Eds). *Decolonizing European Sociology: Transdisciplinary Approaches* (pp. 13-32). Routledge.
- British Council (2014). *National English language policy*. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/partner/track-record/national-english-language-policy-consultancy>
- Canagarajah, A. S. (1999). *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Cárdenas, M. L. (2006, September). *Bilingual Colombia: Are we ready for it? What is needed*. In 19th Annual EA Education Conference.
- Chakravarty, D. (2009). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*. Princeton University Press.
- Escobar, A. (2004). Beyond the Third World: imperial globality, global coloniality and anti-globalisation social movements. *Third World Quarterly*, 25(1), 207-230.
- Phillipson, R. (2006). Language policy and linguistic imperialism. An introduction to language policy. *Theory and method*, 346-361.
- Phillipson, R. (2011). English: from British empire to corporate empire. *Sociolinguistic Studies*, 5(3), 441-464.
- Guerrero, C. H. (2008). Bilingual Colombia: What does it mean to be bilingual within the framework of the National Plan of Bilingualism. *Profile Issues in Teachers Professional Development* 9 (1), 27-45.

Joxe, A. (2002). *The empire of disorder*. MIT Press.

Joya, M., & Cerón, A. (2013). Reflections on the process of bilingual education in Latin

America: A perspective from globalization. *GIST Education and Learning Research Journal* 7(1), 230-244.

Kubota, R. (2016). The multi/plural turn, postcolonial theory, and neoliberal multiculturalism:

Complicities and implications for applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 37(4), 474-494.

Lao-Montes, A. (2006). *For analytics of the coloniality of power*. Unpublished Manuscript.

Leonardo Z. (2013). Betwixt and between colonial and post-colonial mentality. In: Maramba, D. C., &

Bonus, R. *The "other" student: Filipino Americans education and power*. Information Publishing.

McKinsey & Co. (2014). *About us*. <http://www.mckinsey.com/>

Mignolo, W. (2012). *Local histories/global designs: Coloniality, subaltern knowledges, and border*

thinking. Princeton University Press.

Mignolo, W. (2013). On pluriversality. <http://waltermignolo.com/on-pluriversality/>

Ministerio de Educación (2017). COLOMBIA Very Well!! Programa Nacional de Inglés 2015-2025

Documento de Socialización. <https://docplayer.es/9062380-Programa-nacional-de-ingles-maria-fernanda-campo-saavedra-ministra-de-educacion-nacional.html>

Motha, S. (2014). *Race, empire, and English language teaching: Creating responsible and ethical anti-*

racist practice. Teachers College Press.

Phillipson, R. (2006). *Language policy and linguistic imperialism*. An introduction to language policy:

Theory and method, 346-361.

Phillipson, R. (1992) *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford University Press.

Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology*,

15(2), 215-232.

Retamar, R. F. (1989). *Caliban and other essays*. Minnesota Press.

- Phillipson, R. (2018). *English, the lingua nullius of global hegemony*. In F. Grin & P. A. Kraus (Eds). *The politics of multilingualism: linguistic governance, globalisation and Europeanisation* (pp. 275-304). John Benjamins
- Said, E. W. (1993). *Culture and imperialism*. Random House.
- Sandoval, C. (2013). *Methodology of the Oppressed*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Spivak (1999). *Critique of postcolonial reason*. Harvard University Press.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. & R. Phillipson (2010). The global politics of language: markets, maintenance, marginalization or murder. In N. Coupland (Ed), *The Handbook of Language and Globalization*, (pp. 77-100). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Usma, J. A. (2009). Education and language policy in Colombia: exploring processes of inclusion, exclusion, and stratification in times of global reform. *Profile Issues in Teachers Professional Development*, (11), 123-141.
- Valencia, M. (2013) Language policy and the manufacturing of consent for foreign intervention in Colombia. *Profile Issues in Teachers Professional Development*, (15), 27-43.
- Wynter, S. (2003). Unsettling the coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom: Towards the human, after man, its overrepresentation--An argument. *The New Centennial Review*, 3(3), 257-337.