

Using the “Epistemology of the South” to document the convergence of ethnic bilingualism and mainstream bilingualism in the multilingual identity of EFL teachers belonging to minority groups

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Abstract

Bilingualism in Colombia is often treated as part of a dualism in which ethnic bilingualism (indigenous language- Spanish) and mainstream bilingualism (Spanish- English) are considered almost as mutually exclusive and regulated by a bifurcated tone in the national language policies. Rare as they might seem, there are cases of convergence of these two types of bilingualism that need to be documented; particularly, what concerns the construction of linguistic identities for EFL teachers that are part of indigenous communities. Being bilingual, beyond the instrumental nature associated to it, is ultimately a constitutive of the identity of individuals and social groups. The “Epistemologies of the South” becomes the lens through which one can look at the epistemic violence that normalizes mainstream discourses and makes emic voices that advocate for linguistic diversity invisible. The revision of epistemology instills the need to challenge grand narratives and essentialisms to generate a dialogue between minority group- EFL teachers and EFL student teachers.

Keywords: Epistemologies of the South, Convergence of Bilingualisms, Multilingualism, Indigenous EFL Teachers.

Introduction

In the imaginary of Colombians, bilingualism constitutes a concept that is often linked to instrumental purposes like the insertion of the country into a global economy, the social mobility of the individuals that acquire it, and the amelioration of flaws in the accessibility to the mechanics of production and consumption of academic products. However, bilingualism and, by extension, multilingualism are more than mere traits to be acquired and used as the means to doing, or knowing something: monolingualism, bilingualism, and multilingualism, all signaled by the subjacent term language, are ultimately constituents of the identity and the culture of individuals and societies. With that premise in mind, a study of bilingualism needs to obviate its

instrumental nature, and rather resort to the experiential, the educational, and the existential dimensions that allow to further problematize the epistemological givens traditional to its conceptualization.

In this chapter the reader will understand i) how an area of inquiry unfolded through the academic *experiences* of the researcher, ii) how the literature has constructed and *educated* through discourses on bilingualism that have been normalized and iii) how, despite the binary essentialisms in bilingualism (mainstream vs ethnic), there is a rather convergent multilingualism that is a constituent of the *existence* of individuals who happen to have an ethnic indigenous background (and language) and at the same time have become EFL teachers. The rhetoric of this chapter will then intertwine life stories, existing epistemologies, and emerging epistemologies to propose an academic space from which to advocate for diversity and generate formative knowledge on multilingualism in Colombia.

The story that brought me to the research

In an attempt to document the area of inquiry I will detach slightly from the classic epistemological dichotomy between subjectivism and objectivism and align with Gadamer's phenomenology (2004), which claims that the thing-in-itself is 'rooted' in the events of life and understanding of human beings. This, from an ontology of being, explains that we as knowing subjects are concerned with understanding history as we ourselves are historical (Rheinberger, 2013). Aware of this inter subjectivity in historicity that bridges the once existing dichotomy between knowing subjects and known objects and, consequently, between subjectivism and objectivism, I resort to the narrative following to build up the case of my inquiry, since, even from ancient Greek times Herodotus, the father of history, is known to have exposed the value that a story brings to history.

A story of my research interest in three acts:

The story that helped my current research interest unfold can be told in three acts, and, as when any story depends on the will of the person telling it, the narrative sequence does not necessarily align with the chronological sequence but rather with a sequence of epiphany. This story allows three loops of research events converge together and melt into the emerging grounds for this current research interest.

Act 1 Joao and an undergraduate thesis defense

The departing landscape of the story is a university institution with a major on bilingual education, and chronologically we can be placed in the year 2012 when I was being treated as some sort of novelty, the new ‘acquisition’ of the university. With the natural urge to get me (as the new member of the teaching staff) involved in this parallel mechanics of belonging that is part of the unwritten- code (or so I thought) there was the president of the university boldly inviting me to attend a thesis dissertation taking place that same day. This, besides being uncommon for the short notice, was particularly an unusual petition for a recently hired professor, added to the fact that I was supposed to give a lesson called ‘Principios de investigación’ (Research Principles), whose schedule was almost fully overlapping with the thesis defense.

Yet, I obeyed. It could have just the intrinsic authoritative role of the person who invited me. I admit, however, there was also the curiosity of knowing what a thesis defense in this university could be like, and the opportunistic coincidence of topics between the class I was to teach and the nature of the event (a thesis defense usually reports the results of a study, which could help students starting to learn the basics of research see a finished product). All of that made me just take some 15 minutes to gather my students, give some general directions, and intend, with my whole class, to sneak in the room where I knew the defense would have already started, trying genuinely to cause the minimum distraction possible.

Since the very moment I entered I could not help but standing in awe. It must have been the dress code of the candidate defending his thesis that stroke me first; even when you are new to a place, you already have some frameworks of mind that are dictated by what in Foucault’s terms (2006) could be called normalization. The semi- nudity of Joao, a guy I had pictured as shy from the random interactions at the multimedia lab, was certainly not an expected feature of a candidate to an undergraduate thesis defense. Then, what had seemed rather outrageous found its path to understanding thanks to the slides being shown on the screen, and the talk led by the presenter.

He was reporting on his teaching of English to younger members of his Wuitoto (Huitototo in Spanish) aboriginal community in Leticia (the Colombian capital of the Amazons) and some of the challenges, achievements, and findings resulting from his intervention. The 20- minute session allowed space for questions and comments, and I took the floor to make a public salutation and inquire a bit more about the pedagogical intervention and its coincidence with Joao’s life goals and cosmogony of language and education. Comments were made about multilingualism, the need for transforming realities and

preserving cultures, and the immense heritage of the cultures and identities in play in this case of language teaching. Eventually the session was closed with an autochthonous dance performance, which was cheered with the certainty that the atypical closure would make no harm to his well-structured thesis defense, and that it would be welcome with the respect for diversity, individuality, and socio-cultural identity that the candidate's thesis (and the candidate himself) embodied.

While enjoying the performance, things were fast clicking in my mind. My own life story came to play a role since, just a couple of semesters before, I had finished my work on understanding the linguistic identity of a multilingual individual belonging to a minority group as my graduation thesis requirement for the master's on Applied Linguistics to the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language. It was after this flashback that brought back that other academic event that I understood why the president of the university had insisted on my going to this thesis defense. Our being there, would ultimately be a matter of fate in which everybody would be winning something. The presentation gained solemnity by having a wider audience, the students I had got a notion of the completion of research, and my having witnessed this vindication of cultural difference at the core of the mainstream schooling added to what with time would be shaped as a genuine inquiry towards the interfaces that are often overlooked in the field of ELT (English language teaching).

Act 2 Fidel and the development of an area of research interest

Back in the days in which I was doing the thesis research for my Master's in Applied Linguistics to TEFL, my interest was in documenting how Fidel, a multilingual 'raizal' from San Andrés (Colombia), played an agentive role in constructing his individual and ingroup linguistic identity constituted by a rich linguistic capital: Creole (Bembe as it is known by raizal people from San Andrés), Caribbean English, and Spanish.

Through a rather inter subjective lens, the study documented how in constructing his linguistic identity, he dodged, contested, and sometimes aligned with the ideologies of language generated by multiple *de jure* (practices that are officially and legally recognized) and *de facto* (practices that are enacted "in fact" or "in practice") policies on the prestige of languages and bi(multi)linguicism. In that study there was a narrative made by Fidel himself in which he rendered his identity by resorting to his life events, the multiple voices that dialogued with his experiences, and his understandings; besides, there was a critical discourse analysis, by which I as a researcher unveiled some of the social inequalities enacted through language policies that were

part of the deterministic naturalized discursive structures with which Fidel had to play an agentic role in the construction of his ingroup linguistic identity.

Act 3 A research interest that wants to go further

Little did I know when I was rather witnessing act 1 or playing an academic role in act 2, that my interest in understanding those interfaces beyond English language teaching/learning (namely, those interfaces between multilingualism and cultural identity, ethnic identity, and linguistic identity) would find a new fertile soil in the fact that, about four years ago that, I would be back to the scholar life by pursuing a very enriching PhD on Education with a major on ELT (English language teaching) and I would join their research lines with interest in Power, Inequality, and Identity.

From the moment I was required to write a tentative proposal as an entry requirement for new major of the PhD program, I knew my interest went beyond the idea of language learning and language teaching as exclusive to the scope of the events occurring in a classroom. My intention is to understand languages as something that cannot be detached from the identity of the individuals or social groups that speak (but also use, learn, teach, and preserve) them.

This act three is a less narrative and more problematic one, since its events are still occurring at a rather epistemological level and are still the subject of a conflictive emerging process. Nonetheless, it can be tentatively summarized as a research interest that is revolving around three levels of understanding:

- i. Understanding the development of a linguistic identity by members of ethnic minority groups who (besides being owners of their own in group minority language) pursue their studies to become English language teachers;
- ii. Understanding how such linguistic identity interacts with the seemingly conflictive tasks of preserving the (minority) in group linguistic capital and cultural identity and the task of contributing to the tenets of a national identity that has bet its schooling system to mainstream bilingualism (English- Spanish) as the premise for global inclusion, and;
- iii. Understanding what happens when such discourses of minority in group language identities are brought to dialogue with the mainstream education of EFL pre-service teachers.

Multilingualism is one of the constructs that is implied in the research challenge or eventual research niche (call it problem if you feel identified with the most orthodox term), that I intend to study. Multilingualism in the scientific discourse of the linguistic field has been regarded from a normalizing perspective that shapes the form and the content of the knowledge being produced (and excluding subtly the knowledge that does not abide by those criteria) (De Sousa, 2007). Below, I will briefly refer to some of the normalizing events in the study of multilingualism.

Labeling of multilingualism as a second level object of study: This normalization has resulted from (and become evident out of) the labeling of the study of multilingualism under the umbrella term of SLA (Second language acquisition), as Cenoz and Genesse (1998) have pointed out, which in turn implies that the kind of multilingualism that is often documented is the one that is the result of either the conscious decision of individuals, or the one occurring within the tenets of schooling systems. Conversely, the socially conditioned multilingualism (Apalteur, 1993) which involves the natural ethos resulting from the contact of social groups of speakers of different languages is less studied, even though societal multilingualism is worldwide more the norm than the exception (UNESCO 2003).

There is preference for a particular social domain of multilingualism being studied: When put in a continuum with the local, the regional, the national, and the international as elements of the spectrum, the kind of multilingualism that is documented and promoted is either a) the one that is additive towards the learning of a national language of prestige as informed by the one language-one nation equation (Hornberger, 2002), or b) the one that is additive of a lingua franca, mostly English, which Phillipson (1992) coined as the result of English imperialism.

There is a social hierarchization resulting from the kind of multilingualism being studied: This preference for certain studies, although apparently linked to the kind of intrinsic interests of the field of linguistics, is in the end a symptom of some sort of hierarchization that is ultimately not scientific in nature, but ultimately a gauging of social groups, since as Williams (1977) acknowledge “A definition of language is always, implicitly or explicitly, a definition of human beings in the world”(p. 21).

The fact that the kind of multilingualism that is discussed in the academic community is mostly the one that includes (the learning of) English (or other languages of prestige) as a second language, and is mostly published and

disseminated in English, might generate ideas of core and periphery that are dictated by colonial perspectives which are naturalized in the field of linguistics even when its origin is political rather than intrinsically linguistic (Skutnab- Kangas, 2000).

As Bourdieu claims, “Just as, the level of relations between groups, a language is worth what those who speak it are worth, so too, at the level of interactions between individuals, speech always owes a major part of its value to the value of the person who utters it” (1977, p. 652). Which explains that the overt or covert institutional discursive support to individual languages, generate a different sort of dynamics by which languages become the vehicle and the path to exert symbolic domination, and paradoxically also the vehicle and path to collaborate or resist domination (Heller 1995).

Yet there is space for opposing discourses in the field: It is fair to acknowledge that the mechanics of the generation of a scientific discourse in linguistics has also given space to some opposing perspectives that intend to counter the de-problematization of multilingualism as something institutionalized. To that respect, Skutnabb- Kangas (2000) can be cited as authoring a discourse that claims that the institutionalization of language learning (of English) also generates a linguistic subtractive perspective, and promotes the learning of a new language at the risk of the mother tongue based on an ideological bias that equates this to premises of inclusion, culture, and globalization whereas also causing the violation of linguistic rights and an eventual and progressive linguistic genocide backed up by education. Such risk to the mother tongue is particularly higher to the languages spoken by social minorities that are often overlooked in the mainstream anatomy of society as it can be explained by quoting Mackay “Just as competition for limited bio- resources creates conflict in nature, so also with languages. If a small fish gets in contact with a big fish, it is the smaller which is more likely to disappear” (1980, p. 35).

The kind of knowledge generated in the study of multilingualism has been used more with regulatory purposes than with emancipatory ones: Despite the fact that UNESCO acknowledges that “Language is not only a tool for communication and knowledge but also a fundamental attribute of cultural identity and empowerment, both for the individual and the group” (2003, p 16), a vast majority of the studies that have derived from understanding multilingualism from a SLA (Second language perspective) have rather focused on understanding and facilitating the implementation of bilingual policies through schooling systems with a top down approach.

It is known that language, origin, and history are summoned together as referents that prompt the construction of identity through cultural identification,

within the ethnic, regional, and national groups (Fosztó, 2003). However, in the equation of identity formation the national (and the global) identity is favored monolithically through the homogenization of cultural values, resources, behavior and the sharing of a common interest (Friedman, 2003). Such interest is generated through the economic metaphor of producers and consumers of the language market (Bhat, 2001) beyond the scope of national borders in a global village (de Mejia, 2002). Producers are the agents of linguistic coercion and are the ones who have the means for imposing the monopoly of a language, and the means for generating the literature about how to appropriate it.

Deconstructing the epistemological stances adopted by the bilingualism policies

The fact that multilingualism and bilingualism are established as important referents of nationhood has in turn resulted in the establishment of language policies, that either just by giving a legal framework, or by regulating through the schooling system give or take away prestige and can officialize but also seclude the use of languages. There are some epistemological stances that can be read out of the way bilingualism policies are released, justified, and enacted.

The double standard - Linguistic (and cultural) diversity in the 'de jure', linguistic homogeneity in the 'de facto': It is important to acknowledge that perspectives towards language can be one thing in the *de jure*, which is the way policies are written, and another thing in the *de facto* which is how policies (even against the ones that are written) are enacted. That having been established, heterogeneity, and cultural diversity have often been perceived as a threat to the establishment of a hierarchical structure of the nationhood, which results in the pursuit of *de jure* and *de facto* monoculturalism as a common first attitude hoisted towards linguistic diversity.

In Latin America, for example, this approach was marked by eurocentrism that aimed at the replication of structure and values of colonial authority by appealing to the linguistic subordination and the alienation of local languages based on political circumstances, social interests, and the cultural values of colonial authority (Alarcón, 2007). During colonial times, and even in the times of the emerging republican life, language difference and language biodiversity were regarded as a 'resource for figuring and naturalizing inequality' (Errington, 2001, p. 20) and any sign of cultural, ethnic, or linguistic diversity needed to be suppressed (Hamel, 1997).

Monoculturalism, backed by the proscription of autochthonous languages (like the one emitted by Carlos III in 1770), has historically resulted in the reduction of indigenous and autochthonous populations per se (Moreno, 2006), and despite the fact that certain indigenous languages were used as lingua franca (e.g. náhuatl, maya, quechua, and aimara), language homogeneity and Christianity became the means to fight autochthonous non Europeizing values like polytheism, polygamy, idolatry, and anthropophagi. In the republican times religious missions were not just entitled to work on the descriptive linguistics of indigenous languages (Alarcon, 2007) but also enacted the colonial establishment by institutionalizing Spanish language as the conveyor of culture, and civilization and the language to be imposed (Triana, 1997).

The lack of a clear legal or political status that defended the cultural heritage of minority groups or indigenous groups resulted in the demographic shrinking of indigenous and autochthonous communities, the genocide or intermixing (Triana, 1997), the naturalization of colonial structures with a disguise of a moderate self-regulation and protectionism for indigenous communities, the concentration of labor force serving outsiders' economic interests (Roldan, 1996), and the alienation of indigenous communities from their traditional use of land, thus hindering the practice of their traditions.

The legal revitalization of cultural and linguistic diversity: The attitude towards linguistic diversity as 'a problem' (Ruiz, 1984) seemed to have shifted as a late wave of what happened at the midst of the twentieth century, and as consequence of the post war poly-ethnic immigrations, which nested a global ideological shift towards multiculturalism: the acceptance and even promotion of cultural difference (Lopez, 2000). In Latin America, multicultural awareness was shaped in identity politics and politics of recognition (Assies, 2002), which promoted, at least *de jure*, an agentive role for minorities, indigenous, and autochthonous communities that had been so far rather object than subject of policy making.

The incorporation of indigenous communities into the modernity of Latin American nationhood, was a rather promising panorama which took the Andean Nations to make attempts for "Recognizing the aspirations of indigenous people to assume control of their own institutions and ways of life and their economic development, and to maintain and strengthen their identities, languages and religions within the framework of the States in which they live" as stated in the fifth paragraph of the Agreement 169 of the 1989 on Indigenous People and Tribes in Independent Countries (Organización Internacional del Trabajo sobre Pueblos Indígenas y Tribales en Países Independientes).

This legal framework served in the wording of the recognition of pluriculturalism at the core of the Latin American states' nationhood (Irigoyen 2004) and was followed by the adoption of Constitutions or Constitutional reforms that advocated for recognition of indigenous ethnicity, culture, and right to equality in the last decade of the twentieth century. For example, in 1991, the Colombian Constitution stated in its Article 7: "The state shall recognize and protect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian nation". Similar reforms were established by Perú in 1993, Ecuador in 1998, and Venezuela in 1999, to name a few.

The pledge of this legal framework was that bilingual education would cease to be just an instrument to have minority peoples learn the official language and remediate school achievements, prompting cultural subordination (Puelles, 1997), and conversely aimed at the awareness on the set back and displacement processes generated by the lack of use of and tand prestigious such as Spanish, Portuguese, and English (Hecht, 2009). Besides, the constitutional reforms became a solid ground for Bilingual Intercultural Education (BIE), which pursued cultural revitalization and, consequently language maintenance (Barnach- Calbo, 1998).

The policy bifurcation: Which path towards bilingualism is being taken in Colombia? Having promoted an understanding of the link between language and culture, the legal framework opened a path for the materialization of a disciplinary field that melted Amerindian and Afro-Caribbean linguistic diversity into a broader concept called 'ethno-education' (de Mejia, 2004). However, overall bilingualism (and multilingualism) bifurcated into two distinctive bilingualisms: one based on ethno-education for speakers whose mother tongue is a minority language, and another bilingualism program intended for speakers of Spanish as their mother tongue.

These policies were made evident in the Colombian Decennial Education Plan (2006- 2015). When addressing the goals and quality for Education in the XXI century the plan seems to have assigned two purposes for the two forms of bilingualism in schooling: autonomy and globalization. The first one supposedly enacted by the teaching of Spanish as a second language for indigenous language speakers; the latter (globalization) is materialized in terms of the policy that promotes the learning of (English as) a foreign language. The particularity is that in both cases the core purpose of language learning is a majority language.¹⁵

15 The institutional enactment of language policies that promote majority languages- be them the national or international ones, can be explained by what Castañeda- Trujillo, in this volume, addresses as linguistic imperialism.

The National Bilingualism Program 2004- 2019 is coherent with the policies of global economic insertion taken by Colombia over the last decade and a half, which implied the signing of free trade agreements with the U.S, the European Union, the European Free Trade Association (Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, and Lichtenstein), Turkey, Japan, Korea, Canada (plus the belonging to some economic blocks).

Its vision is based on three premises: i) the competitive attribute and comparative advantage of knowing a foreign language; ii) the idea of ensuring a competence for all, and; iii) the need to develop strategies for the development of communicative competences in English. And it intends to measure achievement by using the Common European Framework of Reference in the pursuit that students of the public sector reach the B1 user band when graduating from high school, whereas English language teachers reach a B2 level, and future English teachers reach C1 upon completing their undergraduate studies (whereas other undergraduates reach a level B2).

Despite having been formulated as just one of the two tasks of bilingual education, the Spanish- English program is the one that has been more documented; policy makers, scholars, and even teachers seem to have tacitly accepted a turn in education policies towards the strengthening of majority language bilingualism, at the expense of the bilingualism nested in ethno-education. Such deference for that type of bilingualism is coherent with the belief that linguistic diversity, considered against the backdrop of a country's economic growth, is negatively correlated to economic growth, whereas the consolidation of a language and/or the learning of a lingua franca is considered a positive factor in the same regards (Alesina & Farrera, 2005).

The convergence of the two bilingual paths is hardly documented: The policies seem to be conceived within an abyssal thinking paradigm (De Sousa, 2007), with little or no space of convergence. On the one hand, there is a strong effort to enrich the pedagogical and linguistic competences of English language teachers. This has generated investments, assessments, trainings, follow up programs and alerts of the distance between the prescribed goals and the ongoing reality regarding the main goals of the program.

On the other hand, the pledge of ethno-education was shifted to additive bilingualism by means of acquiring Spanish as a second language, and since the cultural assimilation makes this language every time closer and more (invasive) accessible to the social spaces of indigenous and autochthonous communities, little documentation has been made about how/whether teachers are being trained to promote minority language- Spanish bilingualism, or a rather subtle shift towards mainstream Spanish monolingualism.

However, some scholars have realized that the apparently big distinction between the two policies is not so clear cut. To that respect it is valid to acknowledge the perspective that puts the two kinds of bilingualism programs in a correlational horizon, thus being able to question the effects that the bilingual national policy may have on the linguistic biodiversity of the country (De Mejía, 2006, Guerrero, 2008).

Also, the convergence between ethno-education bilingualism and majority language bilingualism was documented by Escobar and Gómez (2010) who, by resorting to the narratives of the Nasa indigenous people, made a parallelism that permitted to identify some principles of their bilingualism, and signaled how these principles could eventually become teachings to consider in the understanding of majority language bilingualism.

Another space of intersection between the two kinds of bilingualism was documented by Arias (2014) when conducting research on the case study of a multilingual raizal from San Andrés, and his construction of linguistic identity because of and despite the multiple language ideologies generated by de jure and de facto linguistic policies.

Deconstructing the epistemological stances of identity

Identity as made up of dualism: binary distinctions and continuums:

The epistemological stances commonly associated to the understanding of identity are often a resemblance of the classical dualisms typical in structuralism. Sometimes it seems like if the conceptualization of the sign (signifier and signified) had been extrapolated beyond linguistics into the social sciences for the task of documenting the concept of identity. Inaç and Ünal (2013) acknowledge the dualism identified ('the self'- the individual) and identifier ('the other'- society) as the essential pillars for the mechanics of generating an identity; this approach seems to use the 'I am not X' to facilitate an understanding of 'I am Y'.

Hall (1997) would also address the importance of using binary oppositions and the role of difference as an element of conceptual construction: "Difference matters because it is essential to meaning; without it, meaning could not exist" (p. 234). The notion of 'otherness' has been assigned a pivotal in the construction of identity. Even when conceptualizing social group identity, the recognition of sameness and difference is a main indicator. This representation of identity is also subjected to the bias that emerges from the natural tendency

to ascribe positive features to the social group one is affiliated or ascribed to; thus, accentuating the positive in group self- image and the negative out of group image (Van Dijk, 1998).

The scope of social determinism and individual agency (Bourdieu, 1986) can also be applicable to understanding identity as a construct that has to do just as much with the development of the individual's self-concept as with his/her group memberships (Eckert, 2000; Miller 2000). To that respect, Huddy (2001) explains that the individual perception of the self is shaped thanks to the contact with other ingroup and outgroup individuals, and identity is constantly fluctuating in within a spectrum that places social identity and individual self -categorization as the two ends of the same continuum.

Such continuum, also acknowledged by Jackson (2014), can vary because of the cultural context. There are some cultural contexts with a strong tendency towards individualism, which is defined by Jandt like: 'the dimension of culture that refers to the rights and independent action of the individual' (2007, p. 430). In such contexts the 'I' self is emphasized as identity. Conversely, there are other cultures with an emphasis on collectivism. This concept, also defined by Jandt (2007), means "the dimension of culture that refers to the interdependence, groupness and social cohesion". (p. 426). In such kind of culture, identity formation is signaled by the individual's relatedness to others.

The formation of identity offers space for an agentive role in who determines an individual's identity. In fact, as introduced by Bourdieu's habitus (1986) - and as reiterated by Côté (1996), and Huddy (2001), the individual is in a constant conflictive role between the deterministic reiteration of the habitus, that is the political, social, and cultural structures that determine him/her, but at the same time s/he can play an agentive role in either wielding, forming, or transforming such social structures¹⁶.

The agency and determinism continuum can generate another dichotomy between avowal, "the process of telling other what identity(ies) you wish to present or how you see yourself" (Oetzel, 2009, p. 62), and ascription, which is what others perceive and assign as the individual's identity. This implies that there is a certain agency to adopt a given identity; however, factors such as language, ethnicity, might influence the identity the others recognize and respect on a given individual, even if such identity does not match the individual's preference (Jackson, 2014).

16 The agentiveness in identity does not exclusively take the shape of behaviors; as one might understand from Posada's concept of imagined identities, in this volume, the individuals can also create identities and bonds to social groups out of what is not tangible.

The sacrifice of the emic voice for the sake of scientificity

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better
than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me
about your pain. I want to know your story.
And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it
to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own.
Re- writing you I write myself anew. I am still author,
authority. I am still colonizer the speaking subject and
you are now at the center of my talk.

Bell Hooks (1990, p 241)

The production of knowledge even when regarding aspects that are so intrinsic to human nature as identity, have resorted to traditional dichotomy of the knowing subject and the known object. This implies, that even when the research approaches intend to be ethnologic, anthropologic, or sociologic, the knowledge produced results in the exoticism (Tuider, 2012), which implies that regardless of the emic perspective, the participant is not treated like a subject whose voice can be heard; rather is encapsulated in the otherness and kept at a certain distance of knowledge production, mediated by the researcher's voice.

This otherness and exoticism generates certain mechanics in the production of knowledge based on a normalizing discourse that has mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion (Foucault, 2006). Such mechanisms, also informed by the subject -object dichotomy, make it hard for the researcher agenda and the researched subject's needs to coincide, and results in the reduction of the emic voice of the researched subject to just a source. This researcher - mediation sacrifices the dialogic generation of knowledge and is in turn just an accumulation for dispossession (Harvey, 2003), if one is allowed to make the analogy with economy.

The production of knowledge about identity is intrinsically linked to the understanding of a human being and his/her culture. However, it is permeated by the burden of the human and social sciences to abide by the criterion of scientificity. This makes every human complexity fit into scientific categories established *a priori* (Pinto & Ribes, 2012). Scientificity in the production of knowledge ultimately disguises 'the old hierarchy of racial superiority that determines which form of cultural product or practice is the norm or the deviant' (Kubota, 2001 p 28).

Identity needs to be understood beyond grand narratives and fragmentations: identity(ies) as complex spaces of divergence and convergence

Regarding the study of identity, there seems to be a consensus that an individual's identity is dynamic. Jackson (2014) explained it as: "The identities that people claim and the significance they attach to them may change as a consequence of personal, economic and social circumstances (e.g. study abroad, more intimate intercultural interactions, a higher level of education and wealth, deeper reflection on one's place in the world, more exposure to other groups and societies, interethnic marriage, travel, encounter with racists, etc.)" (p. 133).

This implies that the grand narratives coined in the creation of universal causes (e.g. feminism from a structural perspective), can develop a rather reductionist construction of the self and the other. A critique of universal causes and grand narratives has already been issued by Baxter (2003), who acknowledges that such grand narratives can also pose a threat to individual difference within the in-group identity.

Besides, an individual's dynamic identity might be the result of exposure to multiple and conflicting cultural frames of reference. In cases of multicultural identities (particularly in the case of a multicultural individual coming from a minority culture) there is a trend towards otherness, as dictated by the lens of mainstream cultures. Thus, the multicultural individuals are often regarded as subjects of marginality. Jackson (2014) acknowledges that such marginality might hinder the person's construction of a unified identity due to the conflicting cultural loyalties. He also suggests that, as a reaction, the individual might intend to be in control of making choices and establishing boundaries, thus constructing context intentionally for the purpose of creating his or her own identity.

Multicultural identity is also defined as an identity that transcends the borders of one culture and allows the individuals to feel a sense of belonging and comfort in several cultures (Martin & Nakayama, 2008). It is essential to consider that the multicultural individual is a border crosser who may develop that sort of hybrid (mixed) identities by integrating multiple cultural elements, including languages (Kramsch, 2009; Jackson, 2014). Often the multicultural identity is the result of the individual's agentic or deterministic efforts to reach a global identity. Yet, a global identity is often thought to be linked to the use of an international language as a prerequisite of belonging. Beyond developing a local, regional, or national identity, day by day more individuals are encouraged to afford "a sense of belonging in a worldwide culture" (Arnett, 2002, p. 777).

Block (2007) claims that, as it happens with other forms of identity, language identity can be vowed and ascribed. This means that there is space for a mismatch between the desired language identity, and the language identity perceived by others. Block (2007) defines language identity as involving one or more of the following features: the relationship between the self and the language(s) one has mastered (language expertise), or the relationship between the self and the feelings and attitudes one has towards languages (language affiliation), or the relationship between the self and the language spoken in the community one was born to (language inheritance).

Towards an epistemology of the south

Spivak (1993) acknowledged that the equation of the production of knowledge was often composed of two worlds: A First world or North hemisphere of scientific discourse which is entitled the right to visit and gather data from a Third world or South hemisphere of exoticism. The reference does not need to fully coincide with the geographical terms from which it is borrowed but, often, it does. Thus, 'The North' has generated an ontology and an epistemology of its own (the right one if assessed within a positivistic framework of mind) and the scientists within such epistemology are the ones that translate the voices of those from the South, analyze them, and gain authoring, thus producing knowledge.

The equation presented by Spivak is also problematized by De Sousa (2009), who acknowledges that the lack of social justice is also reflected by the lack of epistemological justice. For him, the marginalization and seclusion of the cognitive practices of those social groups that have been historically victimized is so ingrained within the naturalized system of knowledge production that it often even results in epistemicide¹⁷. De Sousa (2010) also acknowledges that there is a ghost relation between theory and practice, which means that the ones who have generated the most progressive social changes are the ones that have been not merely ignored, but rather made invisible by the scientificity and even by the (Eurocentric) critic theory.

Such level of epistemological injustice is the ground for his proposal of an epistemology of the South that intends not just to make visible the former epistemologies which were made invisible, but also decolonize the production of knowledge, unveil the inequality of power- knowledge relations typical in the North Epistemology, and recognize knowledge practices that aim at social transformation.

17 This Europeizing perspective towards the production of knowledge can be understood as similar in nature to what Samacá, in this volume, has considered result of the abyssal thinking.

Prior to this section, I have presented some of the traditional epistemological stances that regulate the knowledge production (even shaping and being shaped in terms of policies) of topics such as bilingualism, multilingualism, language policies, and identity. Therefore, it is now fair to try to establish the epistemological stances from which I intend to document the issue of my inquiry. The principles that I intend to align by are framed within the epistemology of the South (De Sousa, 2009).

A shift from essentialisms to complex divergences and convergences

As mentioned before, bilingualism, language policies, and identity have often been studied and understood from an epistemology that resorts to essentialism and grand narratives. Essentialism “is the default way of thinking about how we are different from each other. It is however problematic because if we think of people’s behavior as defined and constrained by the culture in which they live, agency is transferred away from the individual to the culture itself” (Holliday, 2005, p 17). The seclusion of the agentiveness can be explained partly because of the classical dualisms that have been embodied beyond structuralism and in the positivistic discourses framing scientificity, even in human and social sciences.

Since I do not just intend to document the case of EFL teachers who belong to indigenous communities, but also to establish a bridge of dialogue between them and Bilingual pre-service teachers, it is fair to acknowledge the cultural contexts we all come from. Such acknowledgement must go beyond all kinds of essentialisms and purisms since, as Said (1993) claims, “Partly due to the existence of colonization, all cultures are related to one another, none is unique and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and not monolithic” (Said. 1993, p 31).

Documenting a person’s cultural identity, but also linguistic, and multilingual identity from an essentialist perspective would be a mistake, since it is such essentialism the one that has bifurcated the language policies as if crafted for abyssal thinking. In Colombia, for example, it resulted in a mainstream bilingualism policy and an ethno-educational bilingualism policy that are treated as if they had no space of convergence. It is worth keeping in mind that it is through the understanding of complex divergences and convergences that new knowledge and transformative practices can gain a space towards visibility.

Therefore, bilingualism, language policies, identity, and even EFL teacher formation, need to question the construction of otherness (Kaltmeier, 2012) by establishing spaces of convergence, and challenging cultural essentialisms (Corona, 2012) and grand narratives (Baxter, 2003).

A shift from the normalized discourse to a sociology of absences

The stratification of the production of a knowledge acknowledged by De Sousa (2009) consistent with a modernist view of knowledge as unitary and static, based on ideas of otherness and essentialism. Corona (2012) also warned that “The cultural essences are hegemonic discursive constructions that intend to classify, hierarchize, and exclude the ones considered ‘naturally’ different” (p. 79). Such hegemonic discursive constructions in the production, the content, and the rhetoric of knowledge, aim at what Foucault (2006) calls normalization.

The fact that, thanks to the normalized discourse regarding bilingualism in Colombia, bilingualism has been studied rather from grand narratives such as majority bilingualism (Spanish- English), and ethnic bilingualism (indigenous languages- Spanish) as two distinctive objects of study, has generated a pseudo- objective discourse with multiple vacuums (e.g. the individual-collective human essence underneath bilingualism, the convergence of the two apparently distinct bilingualisms, and the political biases in the formulation and enactment of language policies, etc.) that need to be documented from a sociology of absences and emergences

De Sousa (2009) defines the sociology of absences as “a transgressive procedure, an insurgent sociology that attempts to show that what does not exist is actively produced as nonexistent, as a non- believable alternative, as a disposable alternative, invisible to the hegemonic reality of the world” (p. 23- Translation mine). Such absences that result out of a hierarchizing monoculture in scientificity leave space for the documentation of an issue that goes beyond what the hegemonic lens has coined as knowledgeable. The fact that a member of an indigenous community can also have a voice on bilingualism and identity beyond the dualism of the two distinct policies, can challenge the abyssal thinking, and will align with Foucault’s (1993) call to create an ethnology of the culture one belongs to, and anthropology of the own.

Breaking the subject object dichotomy: The voice in a dialectic construction of knowledge

The distinction between subject and object is one of the pillars of what has constituted the development of epistemology, and along with it, science.

However, when we deal with human and social sciences the object is not any longer an object, in the strictest sense of the term, in fact one is dealing with other subjects. Such feature already generates an epistemology for social and human sciences and urges for the recognition of intersubjectivity to generate knowledge in those fields.

Thus, there is still an issue of author-ity since, even when this intersubjectivity becomes a principle to produce knowledge, the normalized discourse of research still positions the subjects of research differently. On the one hand, there is a researcher as the subject whose voice (analytic, scientific, academic) is ultimately heard, and that other subject is treated as just a source of data, thus often sacrificing the *emic* voice as something that needs to be translated, interpreted, and shaped by the researcher.

Vasilachis (2006) also acknowledges that the distance between the researching subject and the researched subject varies according to the positioning within the spectrum of positivist and interpretivist paradigms. However, according to her, the lessening of the distance between the knowing subject and the known subject is not necessarily a deep epistemological shift. In this dualism, the knowing subject is given the main role in the unidirectional production of knowledge and is entitled the privilege of discursively construct the known subject. This stratification of subjects in the production of knowledge is what could be understood, in Harvery's (2003) terms as accumulation through dispossession.

The voices of one of the known subjects are underestimated, are made invisible, to use De Sousa's (2009) terms. This is an important aspect to challenge through this study since such voices should not just be considered as a resource, but ultimately aim at a genuine dialectic construction of knowledge. This will imply that the voices would accomplish their performative nature (Rufer, 2012), and be elements of empowerment¹⁸.

This epistemological principle will imply some conscious tasks. For the time being I can think of three concrete ones, that will be better shaped as there is more thorough work on the methodological procedures:

First, there should be a space for dialogue between the EFL teachers belonging to an indigenous community and the EFL pre-service teachers, thus the *emic* voices will be used for a genuine dialogue instead of just as sources to be translated by the researcher (Kaltmeier, 2012; Vasilachis, 2006).

18 Such empowerment could be framed within what, in this volume, Castañeda- Londoño, by resorting to multiple theorists, has named post-abysal thinking.

Second, the researcher should limit the author-ity, and yield a polyphony in narrative, for instance, writing in two (or more) hands (Corona, 2007). That offers space to deal with the other subjects not merely as data sources and researched ones, but rather as coauthors and co researchers.

Third, following Kaltemeir (2012), there should be a dynamic model of interactions that offers space for a dialogic reading, the co- authoring and equal representation of all the subjects involved as co- researchers (e.g. the pre- service teachers, the indigenous EFL teachers, and the researcher). Thus, as well as the doctoral dissertation, which will be a cognitive academic product resulting for this study (where there should be a way to make the other subject voices visible), there should also be another cognitive product authored mainly by the pre-service teachers, and one more authored mainly by the indigenous EFL teachers, which should be crafted to their particular cognitive, social and rhetoric needs.

A shift from vertical to horizontal views of the reality

The production of knowledge is not a mere cognitive act, but also presupposes some ethical, aesthetical, and epistemological dimensions that are implied in the dialogic intersubjective construction of knowledge (Bakhtin, 2010). In fact, the vertical perspective of knowledge production might be disguising 'the old hierarchy of racial superiority that determines which form of cultural product or practice is the norm or the deviant' (Kubota, 2001 p 28).

Besides intending to be sound coherent and rigorous (which would align with the hegemonic regulatory approach towards knowledge), the production of knowledge should ultimately aim at legitimating and making visible the knowledge that historically has been denied and made invisible through a hegemonic perspective of science (Santos, 2009), and to allow the dialogue that has been secluded or made asymmetrical.

This unfairness needs to be contested with a horizontal approach towards the monocultural knowledge production since as De Sousa (2006) acknowledges, and contrary to what seems to be an underlying principle of the positivist approach, science is not independent of culture. Thus, there is the need for an epistemological stance that allows the problematization of cultures beyond purisms and dualisms.

On the one hand, science is not as objective, and culture is not as static, which urges for a more horizontal approach towards the production of knowledge about culture. As Corona & Kaltmeier (2012) claim "Subjects

are not owners of an essential and monolithic culture, and whose identity is defined in opposition to others' but rather by means of the social phenomenon of dialoguing they construct themselves as subjects departing from the relations with others" (p. 13). Besides, "The cultural essences are hegemonic discursive constructions that intend to classify, hierarchize, and exclude the ones considered 'naturally' different" (Corona, 2012, p. 79).

On the other hand, because, added to the asymmetrical systems of knowledge production, intercultural encounters are problematic in their own intrinsic nature. As Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010) word it "Our own culture is to use like the air we breathe, while another culture is like water- and it takes special skills to be able to survive in both elements" (p. 23).

Therefore, in this study it is important to generate horizons of understanding by which culture, EFL teacher formation, and identity are documented beyond any bifurcations in bilingualism. Thus, by creating the dialogue between indigenous EFL teachers and EFL pre-service teachers there is an attempt to resist the epistemological violence that has emerged of the dualism indianity vs modernity (Kapoor, 2004) implied by the bilingual education policies in Colombia.

One could resort to the 'defamiliarization' (Alasuutari, 1995), which is the attempt to see beyond the horizon of the self –evident. Defamiliarization "alerts us to the way that things which at first sight appear obvious and 'natural' are actually the result of social action, social power, and social tradition" (p. 136) and can fit within a framework of 'cultural relativism' which acknowledges that "Information about the nature of the cultural differences between societies, their roots, and their consequences should precede judgement and action" (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010 p. 26).

Nonetheless, it would be essential to acknowledge the issues of power and resistance that occur in the spaces of intercultural contact. This needs to be done to avoid the de-problematization; otherwise, one might end up promoting the 'Liberal culturalism' which 'celebrates cultural differences as an end itself' and results in a bland 'cultural tourism' which obscures 'issues of power and privilege' (Kubota, 2004, p 35).

Therefore, the study should offer spaces for a contrapunctual perspectivism (Said, 1993) that permits the dialectic juxtaposition and a reading of the hegemonic structure and its resistance. A contrapunctual perspectivism would even allow spaces for the problematization of discourses of race. This, considering that racialization itself does not necessarily lead to racism, and that even "a minority and subordinate group can racialize themselves to construct their own identity in positive terms for the purpose of resistance" (Kubota and Lin, 2006, p. 477).

Supporting evidence departing from the existing local literature

The supporting evidence that grounds the need for this study comes from the contributions of some of the local scholars regarding multilingualism and identity, and their resistance to how language policies are being enacted.

The Plan Nacional de Bilingüismo (and its more recent version named English Very Well) has been contested not only in terms of the disposition, the necessity, and the readiness behind the implementation of the language policy (e.g. Sánchez & Obando, 2008), but also in terms of the adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001) due to the fact that it is a standard of measurement created for purposes of mobility and job competition in the territory of the European Union. The mismatch between the Colombian scenarios, nature, and purposes of bilingualism has already been addressed by multiple scholars (Ayala & Álvarez, 2005; González, 2007; Usma, 2009). Also, the effects that the bilingual national policy may have on the linguistic biodiversity of the country (De Mejía, 2006; Guerrero, 2008) have been a matter of analysis.

Regarding this latter factor (the effect of the policy the linguistic diversity of minority groups) the approach of research has not limited itself to understanding how the policy and its exertion through schooling affect the minority language speakers, but interestingly there has even been an effort to document how ELT can benefit from understanding some of the practices of socially conditioned bilingualism that have been experienced by members of an indigenous community.

The study carried out by Escobar and Gómez (2010) combines their reflective literature revision with their description and interpretation of what the voices of two members of the Nasa community from Cauca (one of Colombia's indigenous/minority groups) have to say about their identity, their language, and their thought (in the form of narratives resulting from interviews). This study is of interest, since it shows how language is part of the cosmogony of the indigenous culture of the participants, and how it is even shaped in artifacts beyond the western conceptualization of oral or written tradition. It also shows the participant's perception of Nasa- Spanish bilingualism (subtractive and additive) resulting from schooling and shows parallels with what is happening regarding the teaching of English as an EFL in the classrooms. The authors go a step forward in their interpretation as to even propose some principles that emerged out of the Spanish learning experiences of the Nasa community, and that can somehow be informative of how different EFL teaching practices and ELT beliefs need to be problematized.

Space for the eventual contribution to the generation of knowledge

What Escobar and Gómez have done in the study I cited immediately before aligns with the kind of research I want to conduct; it shares with it the belief that EFL teachers have many possibilities to reflect on and improve their teaching practices by observing what minority group members have to say in regards to their identity (in terms of culture, language, and thought in the case of their study). Also, as in the case of their study, participants are not considered as objects, but rather as co-researchers whose voice needs to be heard and can eventually generate new horizons of understanding regarding bilingualism, identity, culture and EFL teaching formation.

The novelty, and the space where there is a rationale for the development of the study I want to conduct, results from the nature of the participants. The participants are the quintessence of the emic perspective regarding the implications of language policy due to the inheritance of a minority in group identity (e.g. Huitoto) and the ascription to a professional identity as an EFL teacher. The convergence of these circumstances, which makes the case already intrinsic in terms of inquiry for the kind of knowledge that can be generated, coincides with Canagarajah's (1999) urge for the understanding of language hegemony beyond the global perspective, and more into the humane level, as I quote:

It is important to find out how linguistic hegemony is experienced in the day-to-day life of the people and communities in the periphery. How does English compete for the dominance with other languages in the streets, markets, homes, schools, and villages of periphery communities? (pp 41-42).

Well, in the case of an EFL member of a Huitoto community there is a unique lens from which to look at languages in contact and socially /nationally conditioned bilingualism. The second gap where this study could contribute is the generation of a dialogue between the minority community EFL teachers, and EFL student teachers. This intends to promote the development of new horizons of understanding regarding bilingualism, culture, identity, language policies, and EFL teacher formation. The proposal intends to generate spaces for the recognition of value loaded social structures and ideologies that are enacted, exerted, and replicated in the schooling system, but also intends to empower student teachers as individuals who are aware of their agentic role (Bourdieu, 1986) in the construction of a new 'habitus' that counters the mainstream deterministic discourses and social practices.

The risk with regulating a country's linguistic capital by the exertion of national language policies (Tollefson, 1995), as it happens with any discourse that becomes mainstream, is that the tenets of the discourse practice, which will eventually become social practice, are taken as neutral and objective, and might be executed without and beyond the critical component that allows to problematize the effects of such policies in terms of the challenges generated to: i) The construction of the cultural identity of the country; ii) The construction of linguistic identity of majority and minority groups; and, iii) The formation of an English language teacher who understands language addition or subtraction beyond its mere instrumental nature.

The implications of the exertion of the policy should be problematized by the agents involved, particularly those whose identities as individuals and group members, and whose social daily practices, are directly transformed due to such policy. Yet, either their voices are minimized or made invisible by the mainstream or there might be a lack of support from the bottom-up academia. If that is the case, probably the academia, despite also being immersed in the execution of the policy from an *emic* perspective, has not established enough spaces for the dialogue with (minority) linguistically diverse individuals as legitimate sources for the generation of knowledge in regard to what language policies imply to the cultural and linguistic identity of all individuals (minority groups included).

The ELT academia in Colombia has been overly concerned with forming English language teachers who are knowledgeable of the foreign language, as the object/content of their future teaching, and who have ownership of linguistic assets for the construction of a professional discourse (in the first and second languages). This has created a bridge that facilitates the communication with the high stakes (Education and language) policy makers. However, the problem is not only that this bridge sometimes fails to be bidirectional and becomes a channel for the execution of command rather than for the honest dialogue (thus limiting the opportunity for the construction of knowledge that validates the voice of the academia in the (de)construction of policies), but also that the academia has not committed to establishing a similar (or even more dynamic) bridge with the reality of minority groups with diverse linguistic identities.

Paradoxically there are also some individuals whose cultural identity is rooted in a minority background and have developed a profession in ELT. The case, unlikely as it might sound, occurs with EFL teachers who have an indigenous language as their L1, Spanish as their L2, and English as their L3,

with this latter being the object of their professional development. One of such cases is a graduate from a B.Ed. on Bilingualism at a private university institution in Bogotá. He is a member of the Huitoto community from Leticia-Amazonas with a very diverse and invaluable rich linguistic capital (Huitoto as L1, Spanish as L2, Portuguese as L3, and English as L4) and formation in ELT, this latter as consequence of his major.

The case of this Huitoto EFL teacher, just to name one example, could be used as a very informative source for reflection since he is quintessence of the *emic* perspective on how the discourses and social practices of bilingualism generated through the national policies play a role in the identity of both EFL teachers and minority language communities. Learning about his construction of linguistic identity, and how it fluctuates between the deterministic discourse and the agentive role regarding multiple language ideologies, can become a valid source to feed the language teacher education and to stir spaces for the generation of new horizons of understanding.

Through dialoguing with indigenous EFL teachers, pre- service EFL teachers might also find spaces of reflection about their current learning and eventual teaching practice(s) and find a path between the completion of language teaching goals and the recognition of our invaluable linguistic heritage as Colombians and the multiple cultures that are bounded to it (and need to be acknowledged).

The tentative research questions that emerge of this problematic area are:

- How do multilingual EFL teachers from minority cultural groups construct their cultural, linguistic, and professional identity while fluctuating between the deterministic language ideologies resulting from language policies and the awareness of their rich in group cultural and linguistic capital?
- Which horizons of understanding about bilingualism, identity, culture, and EFL teacher formation can emerge out of the dialogue between undergraduate students and indigenous (e.g. a Huitoto) EFL teachers?

Documenting what happens when a channel of communication is opened between indigenous EFL teachers and the formation of EFL teachers might generate a dialogic construction of knowledge that can generate spaces of convergence regarding culture, identity, bilingualism, and even knowledge production. This might generate multiple horizons of understanding that can eventually dialogue with language policies and acknowledge EFL teaching formation as the place where two apparent dissimilar/opposed objectives can be reached: the learning of a foreign language to access the cultures of the world, but also the strengthening of the local linguistic and cultural heritages to be shown to that same world.

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