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BILINGUAL INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION: WHAT DO WE STILL NEED TO DO?

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ABSTRACT

Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB) is contextualized based on the curricula developed by the Ministries of Education. The Model of the Intercultural Bilingual Education System (MOSEIB) in Ecuador serves as a foundational reference for the education of 14 indigenous peoples. This system is designed to ensure that instruction is culturally and linguistically pertinent. The organization known as MOSEIB endeavors to promote the development of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills. To this end, it has devised specific curricula for each nationality, integrating phases such as mastery, application, creation, and socialization of knowledge. The methodological approach employed is constructivist, wherein the teacher functions as a facilitator, adapting strategies to the students' prior knowledge and promoting active, contextualized learning in dialogue with the community. The curriculum adapted for the A'i Cofán community is deeply linked to nature and traditions. Essential to the transmission of knowledge are activities such as hunting, fishing, and agriculture. However, concerns have been raised regarding children's disconnection from their environment and the scarcity of early childhood education resources. The preservation of the ancestral A'ingae language is of central importance; however, its incorporation into the educational system is limited. Therefore, it is recommended that efforts be made to strengthen its teaching and train teachers in its use. This study underscores the pressing need to recalibrate the educational curriculum and ancillary resources to align with the cultural nuances of the A'i Cofán community. A pivotal aspect of this recalibration involves the enhancement of school infrastructure and the integration of a pedagogical methodology, "Saberes del Ceibo," which seamlessly incorporates ancestral practices and contextualized materials. This methodology is designed to foster the development of complementary resources, with the overarching objective of enhancing student learning outcomes across all academic years. Furthermore, the methodology's replication in other communities within Ecuador and the region is posited as a potential avenue for disseminating best practices and fostering educational equity.

KEYWORDS: Bilingual Intercultural Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Ministries of Education are responsible for the development of curricula that serve as instructional guides for the teaching and learning process of children and adolescents across all educational institutions, irrespective of their public or private status, and encompass a wide range of educational modalities. However, in the context of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE), it is imperative that these curricula transcend the role of a mere general guide, instead requiring adaptation to the cultural and social realities of each community. This approach entails a profound respect and appreciation for the diversity of identities present, thereby ensuring that education genuinely resonates with students' experiences and traditions (Tong et al., 2024). Intercultural diversity should be regarded as a valuable supplement to the educational environment, facilitating an equitable exchange of knowledge, values, and traditions, fostering mutual respect, and promoting peaceful coexistence on equal terms (García, 2021).

In the context of Latin America, Bilingual Intercultural Education signifies a commitment to indigenous peoples, ensuring the preservation and respect of their languages, worldviews, and cultures. Models have been developed that have been growing and improving, evolving from a mere translation of content to an integration of ancestral knowledge and cultural values into teaching (Díaz, 2024). A number of Latin American countries, including Bolivia, Ecuador, and Mexico, have made notable strides in the institutionalization of this pedagogical approach. However, these nations continue to grapple with significant challenges, such as inadequate resources and the necessity of enhancing the quality of teacher training. Beyond the preservation of native languages, the EIB seeks to foster a sense of inclusion, value, and support for indigenous students in their personal and academic development, while also promoting the active engagement of their respective communities. Accordingly, education has been identified as a significant instrument for the development of more equitable, heterogeneous, and egalitarian societies (López et al., 1999).

The EIB in Bolivia emerged in the 1990s, driven by indigenous peoples with an emphasis on the strengthening of their languages, knowledge, and cultural values. The institutionalization of intercultural, bilingual, and multilingual education, as well as the teaching of English as a third language, was enshrined in two pivotal laws: Law 1565 on Educational Reform (1994) and Law 070 on Education (2010). However, the program faces

several challenges, including a lack of adequate materials, a shortage of bilingual teachers, and bureaucratization, which has limited the direct participation of indigenous communities in its implementation. Despite the EIB's contributions to the promotion of native languages, there has been a decline in their utilization and pedagogy, thereby solidifying Spanish as the dominant language.

In Ecuador, the European Investment Bank (EIB) plays a pivotal role in the nation's educational infrastructure. constitutionally recognized as a means to ensure the right of indigenous peoples to an education in their language and culture, the EIB has been instrumental in supporting the development of indigenous language and cultural education. Ministerial Agreement 0440-13 aims to fortify and operationalize the Model of the Intercultural Bilingual Education System (MOSEIB) within the ambit of the novel Model of the Constitutional State of Rights, Justice, Intercultural, and Plurinational. The country has a bilingual intercultural education system that seeks to integrate ancestral knowledge and promote cultural identity. Nevertheless, challenges persist in the domains of teacher training, the creation of contextualized teaching materials, and the articulation between national policies and local indigenous realities, particularly in rural and Amazonian regions.

Mexico has a long history in EIB, with programs since the mid-twentieth century. Intercultural bilingual education aims to safeguard indigenous languages and foster respect for cultural diversity. The General Law on the Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples, article 11 of which guarantees access for the indigenous population to compulsory education in intercultural and bilingual modalities, promoting respect for linguistic and cultural diversity. Moreover, the Mexican education system has developed materials and teacher training to cater to a great linguistic diversity. However, it faces challenges in the coverage, quality, and effective revitalization of indigenous languages. Community participation is critical, yet its implementation varies by region and ethnic group.

For this reason, the countries previously mentioned have regulations that allow for the institutionalization of EIB as a public policy to recognize and strengthen indigenous languages and cultures. However, challenges related to resources, teacher training, materials, and community participation limit their full development and effective linguistic revitalization. These challenges are common to the SEIBs.

It is imperative to emphasize the necessity of

formulating intervention strategies that acknowledge the wisdom of ancestral communities while concurrently facilitating the development of resources and methodologies to support educators in enhancing the efficacy of learning. The following data is to be highlighted: learning achievements are lower, students with an indigenous language obtain results three times lower than their Spanish-speaking peers, there is scarce relevance analysis of the incorporation of the knowledge of indigenous peoples as curricular content, and methodological strategies that allow for the dialogue of knowledge. However, in numerous instances, it persists within the domain of folklore, while its utilization in educational processes remains constrained (UNICEF, 2021).

This study analyzes the development and application of the EIB in Ecuador, a multilingual and plurinational country with 14 nationalities. Ecuador has been developed through the Bilingual Intercultural Education System (SEIB) of the nationalities and peoples, and its citizens possess both individual and collective rights. The EIB encompasses a wide range of educational levels, from community family early childhood education (EIFC) to higher education. The Bilingual Intercultural Education Model (MOSEIB) is a framework that delineates the contextualization of the EIB. It has been conceptualized within the framework of the construction of a plurinational and intercultural state and in the context of sustainable development (MOSEIB, 2014). It is imperative to examine inclusive and pluralistic educational strategies that foster equal opportunities, cultural preservation, and the comprehensive development of students in multicultural contexts (Chumaña - Suquillo, 2022). An analysis of inclusive education from the intercultural perspective of students supports the development of several strategies to ensure their attention is effective (Delgado, 2019). This study analyzes the A'i Cofán nationality precisely by developing a strategy for childcare based on their ancestral wisdom.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Model of the Bilingual Intercultural Education System (MOSEIB) in Ecuador is the ideological, cultural and philosophical reference that has guided the educational process of peoples and nationalities. The MOSEIB has remained static while the course of history has taken its course, modifying the relations between the social actors of the Ecuadorian reality, has made it possible to strengthen the quality of education with cultural and

linguistic relevance in order to develop the cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills and abilities of students of nationalities and peoples in bilingual intercultural educational institutions. It is a model developed by nationalities and peoples for the full exercise of their collective rights (MOSEIB, 2014).

One of the pedagogical strategies proposed by MOSEIB is to design and implement the SEIB curriculum by nationality, with its respective technical, pedagogical and administrative instruments articulated to the national curriculum and the quality standards proposed by the Ministry of Education. The methodology of the educational model involves resorting to the use of intellectual, intellectual and experiential processes and resources that are summarized in the four phases of the knowledge system that are proposed below:

Knowledge mastery, corresponds to the processes of recognition and knowledge that implies the use of the intellectual resources handled in the development of this product.

Application of knowledge corresponds to the production and reproduction of knowledge. The first involves the use of prior knowledge, the definition of options and the performance of actions; the second involves the analysis of prior knowledge, the definition of options, the use of imagination and execution of actions.

Creation of knowledge corresponds to the development of creation and recreation. Creation involves the use of prior knowledge and the use of imagination, ingenuity, fantasy, and feelings, and recreation is the use of prior knowledge to invent from the discovery of new elements, rehearsal, modification, and the use of imagination, intuition, and meditation.

Socialization of knowledge, the knowledge created and recreated requires validation and evaluation, for this socialization processes are generated that allow feedback to consolidate the apprehension of the new knowledge, given with the methodological proposal. The MOSEIB is divided into teaching units and has been schematized according to the age of the students:

1. The Community Family Early Childhood Education Curriculum (EIFC) is a comprehensive program designed to address the developmental needs of children from birth to age five. The education of children is carried out on the basis of the offer of the Bilingual Intercultural Community Educational Centres (CECIB), on an unschooled basis. The integration of scientific disciplines within the early childhood education framework is imperative within the educational framework of the

A'i Cofán Nationality. In accordance with the pedagogical guidelines established by the MOSEIB, the community educational experiential calendar, the knowledge and knowledge primers, the knowledge harmonizers, the experiential cycles, and the community educational experiential gardens are to be utilized as learning strategies. These strategies are designed to facilitate the development of integrated sciences within the EIFC process, in collaboration with the family and the teacher. The EIFC has established fields of knowledge, from which the knowledge of the integrated learning units is identified. These fields are referred to as harmonizers of knowledge, and they are closely associated with the ways of life that the community has, particularly those that are found in the ancestral territories of the various peoples and nationalities of the country. The particularities of the population's nationalities, as well as the reasons, ways of thinking, acting, and feeling that are characteristic of said population, can be explained through the meaning of each of the following harmonizers: Firstly, the elements of life, land, and territory must be prioritized, necessitating the preservation of natural resources and the environment. Secondly, the significance of family life, community, and social life within a cultural context must be acknowledged. Thirdly, the management of time, space, and the spirituality of the culture must be addressed. Fourthly, the subjects of Science, Technology, and Production are addressed, encompassing the domain of scientific and technological development. The present study analyzes knowledge and cultural identity, with the application of a contextualized approach for the A'i Cofán nationality, whose language is A'i ngae.

2. The Curriculum for Insertion into Semiotic Processes (IPS) is intended to strengthen basic concepts of space and time, as well as gross and fine motor skills for the management of reading and writing codes in the language of the mathematical nationalities and knowledge of the community environment. This stage includes knowledge of their body, emotions and feelings.

3. Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor Strengthening (FCAP) includes the development and mastery of the codes related to reading and writing and mathematics, as well as linguistic skills in the language of the nationalities and oral Spanish as a second language in the knowledge and management of the agroecological and festive cycle of the respective nationality.

4. The Development of Technical Study Skills (TDET) has been demonstrated to enhance capacities and cultivate a taste for study and research.

Furthermore, TDET has been shown to strengthen the development of cultural expressions and appropriate technologies.

The pedagogical approach employed by MOSEIB is rooted in constructivism, underscoring the notion that learning is an active and contextualized process, influenced by social and cultural environments. In accordance with the theoretical framework proposed by Vygotsky and subsequent theorists, the educator assumes the role of a facilitator of knowledge, meticulously adapting pedagogical strategies to align with the students' prior experiential knowledge. MOSEIB structures the process in four phases: first, mastery of knowledge (with sensory-perceptual activities, problematization, development of contents, verification and conclusions); second, application of knowledge in practical contexts; third, creation of new knowledge through creativity and innovation; and fourth, socialization of knowledge through exhibition and exchange in the educational community. This process is executed with deference and appreciation for the distinct languages, with the objective of preserving their vitality and pertinence in educational contexts (SEIB, 2019).

The utilization of educational resources at MOSEIB is imperative to guarantee a pertinent, contextualized, and significant education for students hailing from a diverse array of 14 nationalities and ethnic groups. This model advocates for the development and utilization of didactic materials in the language of the respective nationality. These materials encompass learning guides, local knowledge booklets, experiential calendars, and manuals for chakra upbringing. These materials are designed to integrate graphics, illustrations, practical exercises, and activities that encourage the active involvement of students, families, and teachers (SEIB, 2019). Furthermore, the MOSEIB fosters learning in natural and community environments, including orchards, patios, forests, and cultural spaces. The organization values the incorporation of ancestral knowledge, experiential learning, and environmental resources to bolster cultural and linguistic identity. The utilization of these resources, in conjunction with the provision of teaching support and the engagement of the community, facilitates the establishment of teaching-learning processes that emphasize the exchange of knowledge, creativity, autonomy, and the collective construction of knowledge.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this study entailed the application of a qualitative approach to ascertain

the utilization of educational resources by children ranging in age from 0 to 5 years. This approach was undertaken to facilitate a more profound comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation. The qualitative data were then subjected to a rigorous analysis to identify patterns and themes, as previously described by Hernández et al. (2014). To this end, it was necessary to have a rigorous and systematic information system that determined what information should be collected, who should collect it, at what time, and with what

instruments (Martínez, 2014). The instruments developed included questionnaires administered to teachers, community leaders, and parents or caregivers of children between the ages of 3 and 5 years within the A'i Cofán community. In order to execute an empirical evaluation of the theories delineated (Villarroel, 2024), an operationalization of variables was implemented, as demonstrated in Table 1. This table presents the variables and their study dimensions, from which the various indicators for the collection of information were derived.

Table 1: Operationalization of Variables.

Variables	Dimensions
Family and community	General data (quantitative information) Contribution of the NHC and Early Education for the Family and the Community Actions to promote the affective development of parents towards their children Parent-to-child care application
Identity and knowledge	Worldview A'i Ngae Language and Its Rescue Strategies used by schools to motivate respect for nature.
Relationship with nature	Application of the experiential calendar in the educational field Family and community food base Family experience in implementing organic farming in homes Experience in the application of the MOSEIB - EIFC and Technical Standard (CNH) Protective environments and cultural relevance Relationship of strategies to combat child malnutrition with cultural relevance
Ancestral care	Satisfaction assessment of the NHC system and Early Childhood Education Main reasons why parents send their children to schools Reasons for the migration of students to urban schools Suggestions from community leaders to improve the EIB system Motivations for being educators

The study population consisted of four educational institutions with a population of children between 3 and 5 years old: 1) UECIB G-L Guillermo Quenama: 12. 2) CECIB Mañone: 5. 3) CECIB Los Laureles: 5. and 4) CECIB Canjasie: 6. In addition, the educational community was involved.

4. RESULTS

The A'i Cofán community has historically maintained a profound and vital connection with nature and its environment, a connection that is intrinsic to both the community's traditional practices and its daily subsistence.

Activities such as hunting, fishing, and agriculture are critical economic pillars, and the transmission of this knowledge to new generations is considered an indispensable part of their education.

Nevertheless, there is a degree of concern regarding the extent to which children maintain a connection with their natural environment.

The preservation of traditional culture and values is a shared objective among the community members. The integration of these aspects into educational programming has been demonstrated to foster a sense of cultural identity and belonging

among students.

Teachers underscore the significance of students' understanding and appreciation of traditional clothing and gastronomy as integral components of their education.

The ancestral A'i Ngae language plays a pivotal role in the A'i Cofán identity.

The majority of households employ A'i ngae as their primary language of communication, underscoring the significance of safeguarding this linguistic heritage. However, there is concern about the lack of incorporation of this language in the educational system.

There is a consensus among educators and community leaders regarding the necessity of enhancing the integration and instruction of this language in educational institutions to ensure the preservation of cultural identity.

It is imperative that educators possess proficiency in this language so that children can receive a comprehensive bilingual education.

As demonstrated in Figure 1, which presents statistical data, the efficacy of disparate strategies employed in the context of language education is contingent upon the particular methodology

employed.

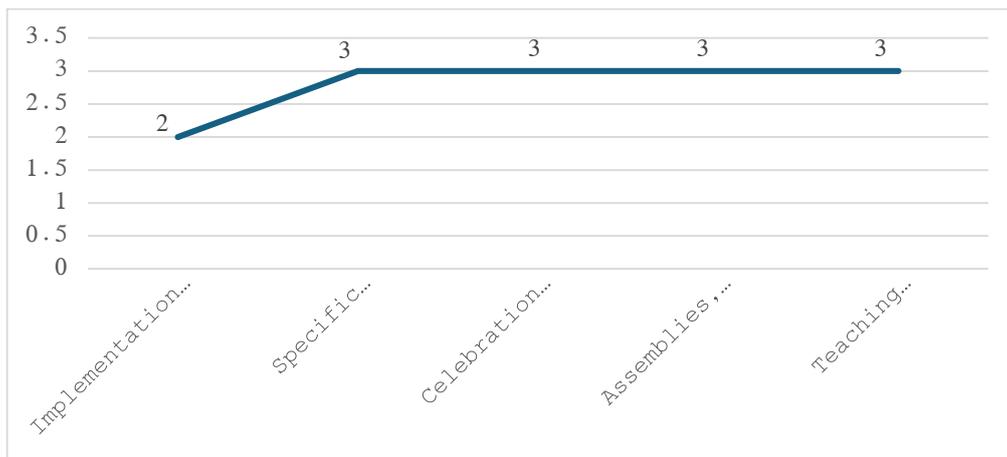


Figure 1: Strategies For Teaching A'i Ngae.

With regard to the education of the youngest, there is a paucity of educational services for those who have not yet enrolled in school. The implementation of specific programs for children from 3 to 5 years of age is recommended, with special training for teachers specializing in early education.

Furthermore, it is imperative to deliberate on the utilization of educational resources to fortify learning, taking into account the context of their wisdom. As demonstrated in Figure 2, which presents statistical data, teachers' opinions are indicative of this phenomenon.

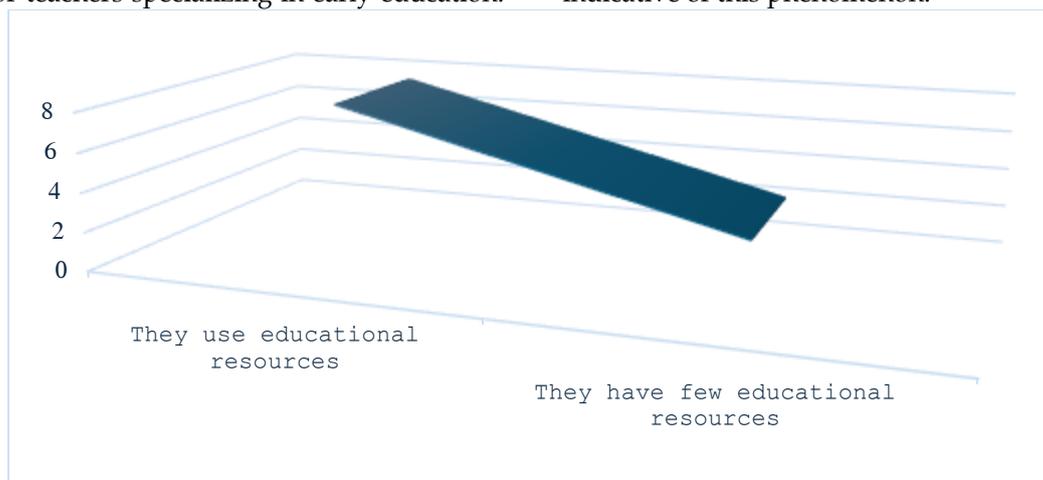


Figure 2: Teachers' Opinions.

The use of educational resources is based solely on books or guides given to children, which are provided by the Ministry of Education, however, as educational resources they mention using certain materials prepared only by teachers, since teachers report not having educational resources with cultural relevance.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The research evidenced the deep commitment of the A'i Cofán nationality to the education of their children. The findings highlighted the urgency of adapting the curriculum and educational materials to their ancestral language and culture. They also highlighted the need to improve school

infrastructure and create contextualized programs for early childhood. These adaptations would guarantee an education that reflects their identity and greater opportunities.

Ensuring their own culturally relevant education, with experiential educational resources for A'i Cofán children, strengthens their sense of belonging and preserves their ancestral heritage. Moreover, it is essential for them to fully exercise their right to a dignified and quality education, which respects their diversity and contributes to their integral development in harmony with their traditions.

The pedagogical methodology "Saberes del Ceibo," developed for the A'i Cofán community with UNICEF's contribution, is predicated on the

practices, knowledge, and knowledge of the ancestral care of children from 0 to 5 years of age from the A'i Cofán nationality from the MOSEIB. The methodology employed to guide teachers through the teaching-learning process has been schematized in a graphic organizer based on the Ceibo tree, an emblematic element of the spirituality of the community. The methodology is complemented by

14 educational resources used by teachers, as well as by parents and/or caregivers, considering the context and worldview of the A'i Cofán nationality. According to the pedagogical methodology "Saberes del Ceibo," the experience that develops educational resources in the context of a community and its replication in other communities in Ecuador and the region could be replicated.

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