Current Issues in Language Planning

A critical evaluation of the social justice implications of the Colombian government's English-Spanish bilingualism policies

--Manuscript Draft--

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Manuscript Number:	RCLP-2019-0006R1
Article Type:	Original Article
Order of Authors:	Lee Mackenzie, MA
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Abstract:	The National Bilingual Programme was launched in order to promote English learning in Colombia. The failure of this programme and subsequent iterations is well-documented, and research has also examined some of their negative effects for different societal groups. However, a comprehensive study of the social justice implications of Colombia's national bilingual programmes has not been carried out. Using Young's framework "the five faces of oppression", the current paper shows how different groups experience different forms of injustice as a result of the implementation of Colombia's national bilingual programmes and their focus on language as a means to the end of economic development. It is argued that the the Colombian government's policy approach instrumentalises foreign language learning and diminishes the importance of the other purposes of learning a foreign language. Furthermore, this study shows how a lack of consideration of contextual factors from a social justice perspective can lead to shortcomings in policy implementation and the neglect of social justice issues. The conclusion suggests that bilingual policies need not be oppressive and outlines ways to ensure socially just English-Spanish bilingual education in Colombia.

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Introduction

English not only facilitates the flow of capital, goods and labour across national borders (Canagarajah, 2017); it also dominates "the research and knowledge system" (Marginson, 2007, p. 326). As a result, mastery of the English language forms an important component of knowledge capital in a globalised world driven by neoliberalism and is recognised by the governments of developing economies as key to their development (Lin & Martin, 2005). In Colombia, the Ministry of Education (MEN) has been promoting English learning since 2004 through a series of educational programs, the largest of which is the Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo (PNB)[1]. The PNB and its subsequent iterations, which I will refer to collectively as the "Colombian bilingual programmes" (CBPs)[2], comprise a range of initiatives to foster greater linguistic proficiency including the development of instructional materials; the administration of diagnostic tests of English teachers and learners; short-term immersion programmes for English teachers in Colombia and abroad; training programmes for teachers; the development of competencies to be monitored and evaluated; and the recruitment of "native foreigners" from predominantly English-speaking countries to work alongside Colombian English teachers in schools (British Council, 2015; García León & García León, 2012; MEN, 2016, 2017). The most recent version of the PNB, also known as "Colombia bilingüe", was launched suddenly in 2015 interrupting the plan known as "Colombia, very well", which had been announced only five months earlier by President Santos himself (Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016). Although details of the programme remain vague, in 2018

[1] The "National Bilingual Programme" in English.

[2] Cronquist and Fiszbein point out that, "Colombia's national English programs have undergone four name changes in the past decade. However, there is substantive continuity among the programs" (2017, p. 52). Similarly, Bonilla and Tejada-Sánchez comment that there are "no clear distinctions" between Colombia's bilingual programmes (2016, p. 195). Indeed, these name changes have been confusing for scholars and stakeholders (Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016)..

one of its aims was to recruit 1,400 “native foreigners” to teach English in selected secondary schools around the country (Colombia bilingüe, n.d.).

Despite these efforts, the CBPs have generated a significant body of literature, most of which has been critical of the programme (Herazo, Jerez & Lorduy, 2012). While some of this research has explored the unintended negative effects of these language policies and programmes for certain sections of Colombian society (e.g. García León & García León, 2012; Mejía, 2006; Usma, 2009), a comprehensive study of the programme’s social justice implications has, to my knowledge, not been conducted. As such, this paper aims to use Young’s theoretical model, “the five faces of oppression” (1990) to analyse the extent to which groups and individuals within groups are oppressed by the various governmental programs to promote English as a foreign language (EFL) in Colombia.

The section below summarises research into the CBPs before providing an overview of the history of foreign and second language education in Colombia. The rationale behind the CBPs is then briefly analysed. We then turn to Young’s framework to show how different groups experience different faces of oppression as a result of these language policies and programmes. The conclusion will suggest that bilingual policies need not be oppressive and outlines ways to ensure socially just bilingual education in Colombia.

As we shall see, the term “bilingualism” is often taken to mean “English-Spanish bilingualism”. This neglects any other combination of two languages that might be spoken by an individual. In the current study, therefore, bilingualism is understood as “a complex, multidimensional concept that recognises the intercultural character of Colombian society which therefore is inclusive and respectful of the country’s linguistic diversity” (García, 2012, p. 98). As a result, I use the term “English-Spanish bilingualism” to respect other bilingualisms.

Research into the CBPs

As mentioned above, the CBPs have attracted a great deal of criticism (Herazo et al., 2012). Among these criticisms, some of which will be revisited in the course of this paper, are the lack of preparedness of Colombia for a bilingual project on such a scale (e.g. British Council, 2015; Cárdenas, 2006) due to a dearth of qualified teachers with an appropriate level of English (Álvarez, Cárdenas & González, 2011; Estrada, Mejía & Rey, 2015; Sánchez, 2013); a lack of class time devoted to foreign languages (Sánchez & Obando, 2008; Usma, 2009); geographical differences (British Council, 2015), and poorly resourced, overcrowded, and enormously diverse classes (Sánchez & Obando, 2008). Issues with the implementation of the programme have been identified such as the short time frame and the lack of continuity in the teacher training courses offered to English teachers, which has led to prescriptive and instrumental approaches to teacher development (Álvarez et al., 2011; Cárdenas, 2006). Another focus of research has been on the MEN's decision to commission international partners such as the British Council and Cambridge University Press to implement the CBPs, which has led to a lack of sensitivity to local contexts; the marketisation of EFL; the imposition of international standards and tests produced predominantly in the private sector (Álvarez et al., 2011; García León & García León, 2012; Usma, 2009); and a one-size-fits-all approach to teacher training by means of international teaching qualifications such as the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) and the In-service Certificate in English Language Teaching (ICELT) (Álvarez et al., 2011). Finally, others have criticised the MEN's vertical approach to policy formation and enactment (Fandiño-Parra, 2012; Galindo & Moreno, 2008; Herazo et al., 2012). This approach neglects the fact that bilingual education is a multilingual pedagogic process which requires cooperation between the government and other stakeholders (Galindo & Moreno, 2008). Given this approach, it is no surprise that there has been a discrepancy between policy objectives and social conditions in Colombia (Usma, 2009). As a result, although Colombia has seen an upsurge in proficiency rates in recent years

(Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017), the English level of Colombians remains low compared to other countries in the region (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017; Sanchez, 2013). Specifically, EF ranked Colombia 11th out of 17 Latin American countries in terms of English language proficiency, and 60th out of the 88 countries and regions included in their survey (EF, 2019).

Foreign and Second Language Education in Colombia

Perspectives on language and language policy are ideological, and any policy including colonial languages such as English and Spanish demands a consideration of the implications of this legacy (Canagarajah, 2005, 2006). Colombia has used Spanish since the arrival of the Europeans. The Spanish colonizers did take an interest in learning the indigenous languages of the region, but this was predominantly part of a strategy of evangelization, or to progressively impose their language on indigenous inhabitants (García León & García León, 2012). In the 18th Century a programme of Hispanicization was promoted by the Spanish monarch Charles III which prohibited the use of indigenous languages (García León & García León, 2012). After independence from Spain, the post-colonial elites maintained their ties with Europe by educating their children there (Usma, 2009). These children brought with them knowledge and enlightenment ideas which were connected with French, German and English. Thus, "indigenous and Creole languages started to be associated with ignorance and underdevelopment" (Usma, 2009, p. 125).

The Colombian constitution of 1886, which established the Republic of Colombia, strengthened the ties between the Catholic church and the state while also confirming the preeminence of the Spanish language (Gröll, 2009). As such, the original constitution was not representative of the whole Colombian population but rather reflected the interests of a paternalistic ruling class (Gröll, 2009). As Gröll shows, Spanish was instrumental in converting the "savages" (2009, p. 55) in Colombia into "civilised" Christians. Thus, in the

Catholic missionary schools which were charged with educating indigenous communities, all other languages were prohibited (Gröll, 2009). The status of indigenous languages did not change until the constitution of 1991 which officially recognised the languages and dialects of different ethnic groups in Colombia (García León & García León, 2012). As a result, while Spanish is the official language of Colombia, 65 indigenous languages and two Creole languages are also official and protected by law where these are spoken (García León & García León, 2012; Ministerio de Cultura, 2018). In these regions learners receive bilingual education (Ministerio de Cultura, 2018). However, in spite of the introduction of another law in 2010 to promote and preserve indigenous and Creole languages, other Colombian languages continue to be replaced by Spanish (García León & García León, 2012).

Why English?

Added to the historic reasons for the differing status of languages in Colombia are compelling economic reasons. Lin and Martin (2005) explain how English, by granting access to the increasingly competitive knowledge economy (and also, in many instances, to tertiary education), enables social and geographic mobility. This view of English as a tool replicates the neoliberal discourse regarding the importance of "linguistic capital" in the globalised economy (Canagarajah, 2017), a view which also seems to underpin the rationale for the original PNB. As the MEN explains:

> Being competent in English is essential in a globalised world which demands that one can communicate better, open borders, understand other contexts, appropriate and circulate tastes, understand and be understood, enrich oneself and play a decisive role in the development of the country. Being bilingual broadens the opportunities to be more competent and competitive. (2006, p. 3)

In referring to the "development of the country" and being "competitive" and "competent" in a "globalised world", the MEN's rationale for the PNB reflects a view of education as a means to an end (Araujo, 2013; Usma, 2009): in this case, national development. As Mejía (2006) observes, this view has also been adopted by bilingual schools attended by the elite. At the same time, by referencing "self-enrichment" and "understanding other contexts" the MEN seems to at least recognise the intrinsic value of learning a language.

Nearly a decade later, the then Minister of Education Maria Fernando Campo acknowledged the potential for English-Spanish bilingualism to "empower citizens" (MEN, 2014, para. 2), but also focused on the role of education in developing knowledge capital stating that "we are convinced that learning a foreign language empowers citizens and allows the country to insert itself into the global cultural dynamic and the knowledge economy (MEN, 2014, para. 2). What Campo fails to mention, however, is that this "foreign language" is not just any foreign language; she is referring to English.

The British Council, a partner organisation in the formulation and implementation of the Colombia's bilingual programme, provides further evidence of the neoliberal underpinnings of the CBPs, stating their aim as the cultivation of "human capital in order to further the country's economic development" (2015, p. 8). However, the consequences of valuing languages in terms of their usefulness is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it results in the stratification of languages in order of their economic value (Usma, 2009). This, in turn, leads not only to the underappreciation of local languages but also marketises language learning, which benefits a small number of mainly foreign entities (Usma, 2009). Secondly, this rationale ignores that bilingualism is a social phenomenon (García León & García León, 2012). That is to say: as only a very small percentage of jobs or situations require Colombians to speak English in their daily lives, some have questioned the necessity

of a mass project for the teaching and learning of the English language (e.g. Fandiño-Parra, 2012; Herazo et al., 2012).

Iris Young's Five Faces of Oppression

In her path-breaking book Justice and the Politics of Difference (1990), which draws on postmodern, feminist and critical theory (Vincent & Thompson, 2008), Iris Young presents her conception of justice as a set of criteria for identifying oppression. According to Young, domination and oppression are overarching categories which describe injustice (2006). Her theory seeks to encompass the variety of ways in which social groups, or individuals belonging to certain groups, are oppressed since only by identifying forms of oppression can we then take steps to address it (Young, 1990). Young explains how oppression has traditionally been associated with tyranny and conquest, but argues that such a monolithic understanding of oppression neglects that it comes in many intersecting and overlapping forms that are "complex, rather than merely additive" (Shlasko, 2015, p. 350). Young avoids such reductionism by referring to oppression in the plural rather than as an uncountable noun. Since social justice should strive to go beyond a superficial understanding of material realities (Vincent & Thompson, 2008), her framework is therefore particularly useful. The five "faces" or "oppressions" she describes extend the reach of justice to non-material goods such as respect, rights, opportunities and dignity, and thus reveal the limitations of the distributive justice paradigm famously expounded by John Rawls, which has been criticised for being too focused on individuals and the economic dimension of social justice (Fitts & Weisman, 2010). Importantly for Young, such oppression may be inadvertent. As such, it can be caused by "well-meaning people" (Young, 1990, p. 6) as a result of societal practices and relations. For Young, then, oppression has systemic structural causes which cannot be addressed merely by changes in legislation. In focusing on the role of institutions and society in reproducing oppression, Young's theory is particularly useful when looking at policy enactment in educational settings as in the current study. Furthermore, since language "in its

literal sense, is a feature of human collectivities" (Corson, 1999, p. 18) consideration must be given to group needs when evaluating the justness of language policy in education (Corson, 1999).

The five ways in which groups, or individuals within groups, are oppressed are: cultural imperialism, exploitation, powerlessness, marginalisation, and violence. The presence of any one of these "faces" is enough to constitute oppression (Young, 1990). The following sections draw upon the literature to analyse the ways in which the CBPs have led to these five distinct forms of oppression and show how these different oppressions can overlap.

Cultural Imperialism

A key argument against neoliberal globalisation is that is it leading to cultural homogenisation, which is understood as a form of cultural imperialism propagated by the West and the U.S. in particular (Steger, 2017). As a "major form of symbolic expression" (Steger, 2017, p. 80), language takes on special meaning in the cultural realm. English, with over 1.5 billion speakers, is firmly established as the global lingua franca (Graddol, 2003), and therefore plays an important role in the homogenization of local cultures (Phillipson, 1998). Indeed, such is the dominance of English for the global knowledge system (Marginson, 2007) that it is leading to the disappearance of non-European languages and literatures (Steger, 2017).

Young explains that, "cultural imperialism involves the universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm" (1990, p. 54). It occurs when the dominant group's culture is projected as representative of all humanity and the culture of the "other" comes to be viewed as deviant or deficient (Young, 1990). In the previous two sentences, we need only replace the word "culture" with "language" to understand the possible implications of a nation-wide initiative to teach English in a

predominantly non-English speaking country. Indeed, as Phillipson argues, “linguistic imperialism is a sub-type of cultural imperialism” (1998, p. 104).

For evidence of cultural - or linguistic - imperialism we need look no further than the use of the term “bilingualism” by the MEN to refer exclusively to English-Spanish bilingualism (Valencia, 2005). As Valencia writes, “this focus on Spanish/English bilingualism now predominates and the other dimensions of multilingualism and cultural difference in Colombia are often ignored” (2005, p. 1). Thus, the term “bilingualism” refers to English-Spanish bilingualism while the term “ethnoeducation” is used to refer to the bilingualism of predominantly rural indigenous communities (García León & García León, 2012). The CBPs, by ignoring those who, in addition to Spanish, speak one or more of Colombia’s indigenous or Creole languages, devalue non-European languages. Indeed, by not recognising proficiency in other combinations of Colombian languages, and by allocating far more resources to promoting English than these languages, the CBPs are guilty of “linguistic discrimination” (García León & García León, 2012, p. 59). In this sense, Mejía (2006) has spoken of two types of bilingualism in Colombia: one visible and the other invisible. The former has the support of binational entities such as the British Council and the Colombo Americano, as well as transnationals such as Cambridge University Press, and has been accompanied by the development of standards, guidelines, objectives and evaluations, while the latter lacks support and has not been accompanied by any meaningful linguistic planning that might improve the situation of minority languages in the country (García León & García León, 2012; Guerrero, 2010). As such, other Colombian languages continue to fall out of use as new generations of indigenous communities learn Spanish as their mother tongue (García León & García León, 2012). Thus, ironically, the CBPs could be contributing to more monolingualism, not less (García León & García León, 2012).

Exploitation

Neoliberal globalisation has hastened the unequal flow of ideas, skills and knowledge from developing to developed economies (Banya, 2010). Language, as a key component of human capital in the globalised neoliberal "knowledge economy", plays an important role in this process (Canagarajah, 2017). But this process is not merely a matter-of-course: as part of a neoliberal agenda to control mobility for its own purposes, the movement of skilled migrants from low-income countries is incentivised by industries in advanced capitalist societies in order to benefit the economies of the latter (Canagarajah, 2017; Espinoza, 2013). This, combined with severe economic, social and political problems in source nations (Espinoza, 2013) has led to a brain drain of talent from developing economies (Banya, 2010).

How the brain drain constitutes exploitation is made clearer by reference to the following quote from Young:

> Exploitation enacts a structural relation between social groups...These relations are produced and reproduced through a systematic process in which the energies of the have-nots are continuously expended to maintain and augment the power, status and wealth of the haves (1990, p. 14)

For Young, these "energies" consist of "labor and energy expenditure", but she also asks us to consider how else exploitation might involve the appropriation of the efforts of one group by another in such a way as to reinforce the dominance of the latter. The transfer of wealth in the form of human capital from the "have-nots" to the "haves" is an example of such exploitation since the "energy" or "wealth" of the state in the form of investment in education/human capital, as well as the "labour" and resources of individual students, is "expended" in order to "augment the power, status and wealth" of the West.

Although Colombia's economic situation has improved in recent years, in 2011 Colombia was still "a net exporter of 5% of its population with a university or post-graduate degree" (Medina & Posso, 2011, para. 1). Thus the "brain gain" (Lozano & Gandini, 2011, p. 1) of destination countries constitutes the oppression of source countries in the form of exploitation (Agwu & Llewelyn, 2009). This loss is particularly egregious given that many skilled migrants in host countries are employed in jobs below their education level (Lozano & Gandini, 2011). Such exploitation is a distributive injustice which not only maintains western hegemony but also exacerbates existing inequalities between the North and the South (Schiff, 2005). As Young explains:

> The injustice of exploitation consists in social processes that bring about a transfer of energies from one group to another to produce unequal distributions, and in the way in which social institutions enable a few to accumulate while they constrain many more. (1990, p. 18)

The "few" in Young's quote could just as easily refer to the handful of rich nations which benefit from the brain drain. But what role does English play in this exploitation? Medina and Posso (2011) estimate that around one million Colombians were living in the U.S. in 2005. They list Colombians' ability to assimilate into the host culture as one factor in their decision to stay on in the States. English, as the most commonly spoken language in the U.S., clearly plays a role in this assimilation. By promoting English, the CBPs therefore may be making it easier for Colombians to migrate.

Not only does Colombia experience oppression in terms of the outward flow of human capital, but it also suffers exploitation in terms of tuition fees paid to foreign universities. In a document which lays out the basic standards and competencies that the

CBPs claim to guarantee to all Colombians irrespective of their origin or social status, the MEN lists taking advantage of study opportunities abroad as one of the reasons to study English (MEN, 2006). Indeed, in a British Council study, 56% of non-English learners expressed a desire to learn English in order to travel to foreign countries (2015). The same study reports that 23,602 Colombians were studying in foreign countries in 2012, with the majority of these living in the U.S. Moreover, having a university degree increases the likelihood that Colombians will stay on in their host countries (Medina & Posso, 2011). Thus, the promotion of study abroad also contributes to the brain drain.

Organisations such as the British Council, a branch of the foreign office whose initial aim was to "improve awareness of British educational and cultural achievements overseas, in order to attract international students" (British Council, 2016, p. 5) are also complicit in this process of exploitation. As Phillipson notes, English language teaching is a key "export item, a major industry, and not neutral in any sense" (1998, p. 108), with the industry worth an estimated £5bn a year for Britain (Phillipson, 1998). The MEN's decision to make the British Council a partner in the implementation of the CBPs not only allowed the U.K. to attract international students, but also provided a platform for such institutions to sell their "products" (García León & García León, 2012). One such product is the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test, which is jointly owned by the British Council and Cambridge English Assessment. This test costs a little less than the monthly minimum salary (British Council, n.d.), and performs a gatekeeping function since taking it is a requirement for emigration to English-speaking countries and admission to universities in these countries (IELTS, 2018). The consumption of such products not only facilitates the transfer of human capital from Colombia to developed economies but also the transfer of wealth.

A final way in which the CPBs can lead to exploitation can be illustrated by continuing our analysis of the motives behind the Colombian government's promotion of

English. As has been shown, the aims of the CBPs are largely framed in human capital terms. Importantly, though, the linguistic capital gained by becoming proficient in English does not necessarily promote social and geographic mobility since an individual's economic, social and cultural capital are also key determinants of economic success (Correa & González, 2016). Indeed, as Correa and González highlight,

> What has stopped Colombia from insertion into the global market is not its citizens' low level of proficiency in English. It is the multiple socio-economic problems that have affected the country for years, such as its elevated levels of inequity and of internal displacement caused by long-lasting domestic conflict with armed groups, to mention only a few of the problems the country faces (2016, p. 19).

In this regard, as Hurie has shown (2018), learning English also demonstrates a limited potential as a means to promoting peace in Colombia.

So what other motives are there for the promotion of the CBPs? Several scholars suggest that the Colombian government might be more concerned with responding to the demands of neoliberal globalisation than contributing to the well-being of its citizens (Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016; Gómez, 2017; Roldán and Peláez, 2017). Specifically, Bonilla and Tejada-Sánchez remark that the principal objective of the most recent iterations of the PNB is to meet the needs of business leaders by providing a pool English-speaking labourers who, among other things, can be used to "stock call centre franchises" (2016, p. 189). An analysis of an investment promotion agency website supports this assertion. Investinbogota.org exhorts foreign investors to relocate their call centres to Bogotá due to the "competitive salaries" (the webpage states that minimum wage for a bilingual call centre agent is only

$500 per month, excluding social benefits); the number of graduates and English speakers (73% of the Bogota workforce is "bilingual"); tax incentives such as Free Trade Zones and VAT exemptions, and the U.S. Eastern Standard Time Zone (Invest in Bogotá, 2018). In a similar vein, another website encouraging investment in Colombia points out that the government's language programme, Colombia bilingüe, "aims to consolidate the base of bilingual human talent in order to facilitate their employment" (ProColombia, 2019, p. 2). It goes without saying that foreign companies are primarily interested in making a profit, not the socio-economic well-being of Colombians. But without English-Spanish bilingual Colombians willing to work for "competitive salaries", these foreign companies would have no-one to staff their business process outsourcing operations (BPOs) and would consequently lack the means to accumulate such profit. In this "transfer of energies" from the have-nots (poorly remunerated Colombians) to the haves (foreign investors) we have another example of the oppression of exploitation.

Powerlessness

For Young the issue of powerlessness is bound up with labour relations in advanced capitalist societies. As Young explains, the powerless are positioned:

> So that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them. Powerlessness also designates a position in the division of labor and the concomitant social position that allows persons little opportunity to develop and exercise skills. The powerless have little or no work autonomy, exercise little creativity or judgment in their work, have no technical expertise or authority, express themselves awkwardly, especially in public or bureaucratic settings, and do not command respect (1990, p. 22).

Young defines the powerless "non-professional" against the professional, comparing the relative privileges of the latter over the former. Teachers, by having the opportunity to "develop and exercise skills", and by virtue of having some "technical expertise or authority" (Young, 1990, p. 22) have some power. However, Young's analysis was based on the position of teachers in advanced capitalist countries such as the U.S. where, although not firmly affiliated with the dominant class, they do "benefit from the exploitation of nonprofessional workers" (Young, 1990, p. 21). Colombian teachers, by contrast, are from the Global South, which is subject to exploitation from the North. Moreover, graduates of education are poorly remunerated compared to other professionals in Colombia (Estrada et al., 2015). As a result, many English language teachers are not qualified as such, which may help explain why Spanish predominates in foreign language classrooms (Sánchez & Obando, 2008). Taken together, then, although enjoying a status above those of manual or non-professional labourers, Colombian teachers, are, in global terms, powerless.

One specific case of powerlessness concerning the CBPs is reported by Sierra (2015) in her multiple case study of the experiences of four Colombian English teachers in a public university in Antioquia. Sierra writes that the exclusion of such teachers from English language policy decisions situated them as "policy enforcers rather than active and reflexive protagonists" (2015, p. 177). As such, English language teachers shoulder the responsibility for ensuring that their schools meet the policy goals set forth for them by the Colombian government (Cruz-Arcila, 2018) even if these policies are unclearly formulated or unjustified (Roldán & Peláez, 2017). One English teacher from a private school in Roldán and Pelaéz's study into the relevance of the Colombian government's language policies for rural communities succinctly sums up the powerlessness that such top-down policy formation can engender:

> The English language is taught because it has been established as obligatory not because there is a necessity or a real possibility to use it outside the classroom, but rather because it is a manifestation of the power imposed by the system (Roldán & Peláez, 2017).

English language teachers in rural communities experience the powerlessness of this imposition more than those in urban areas because they have to teach a diverse array of subjects in addition to mixed level EFL classes (Ramos & Aguirre, 2016). As Ramos and Aguirre explain (2016), the armed conflict in Colombia has also had a disproportionate impact on rural areas and has brought with it consequences such as displacement, school closures, and the enlistment of children and teenagers.

The imposition of foreign models and discourses by the MEN without the consultation of key stakeholders (Usma, 2009) represents another example of oppression as powerlessness. Two such foreign models are the TKT and the ICELT. Cambridge English and the British Council have administered both these teacher-training programmes in order to improve the quality of English language teaching in Colombia. Due to their limited duration, they focus on the technical aspects of teaching and neglect the transformative power of the teacher to construct his/her reality (Álvarez et al., 2011). Teachers who participate in such training thus become "implementers of programmes imposed for economic or political reasons" (Álvarez et al., p. 23) rather than agents of their own professional development.

As a result of the CBPs, Colombian teachers have clearly suffered from some of the injustices associated with powerlessness including inhibition in the development of their capacities, and a lack of decision-making power in their working lives (Young, 1990). As we shall see, Colombian teachers also suffered a lack of dignity by receiving instruction from

untrained "native" teachers, many of whom also did not speak English as a first language (and who received the same salaries as local teachers). As a consequence, the case for teachers in the public sector suffering oppression as powerlessness grows stronger.

Marginalisation

Young describes those who suffer oppression as marginalization in the following way:

> Not only in Third World capitalist countries, but also in most Western capitalist societies, there is a growing underclass of people permanently confined to lives of social marginality, most of whom are racially marked—Blacks or Indians in Latin America, and Blacks, East Indians, Eastern Europeans, or North Africans in Europe (1990, p. 18).

Although Young was writing at a time when the terms "Third World" and "Indians" were more acceptable, her analysis remains relevant thirty years on. Young attributes much of this "social marginality" to unemployment, which denies these groups of individuals participation in the social life of their respective capitalist countries and subjects them to material hardships, but she also states more generally that "social structures and processes that close persons out of participation in such social cooperation are unjust" (1990, p. 20). Thus, all those who are closed out of participation, be this as a result of a lack of financial resources, or as a result of other factors such as race or gender, suffer oppression as marginalisation.

How this specifically relates to the Colombian government's English-Spanish bilingual policy is made clearer by referring to a British Council study which concludes that, "there is a direct correlation between English language proficiency and educational attainment, private schooling, income and occupation" (2015, p. 8). As a result, Colombians from disadvantaged

backgrounds are provided with few quality opportunities to learn English (British Council, 2015). This is hardly a surprise given that the wealthiest Colombians typically go to private schools, which are better-resourced, have better-qualified teachers, have better infrastructures, and are often English-Spanish bilingual (Álvarez et al., 2011; British Council, 2015; Correa & González, 2016; Sánchez, 2013). Since the majority of such schools are in urban areas, low achievers in English are disproportionately from rural communities where the need for quality education is greater (Álvarez et al., 2011). Indeed, as Cruz-Arcila (2018) concludes in his study into how language policy is understood and enacted in rural Colombia, English language teachers in state-funded high schools work with poorly motivated students in low resource contexts. Students' indifference to English in rural areas, Cruz-Arcila suggests, is due to its lack of relevance in such settings. This echoes the views of other scholars who have questioned the value of a nationwide English language education programme that fails to take into account the specific needs of local contexts (e.g. Fandiño-Parra, 2012; Herazo et al., 2012; Roldán & Peláez, 2017).

The inequality in English language proficiency between well-off and underprivileged students is reproduced at the tertiary level. Despite half of all students in higher education attending private universities (British Council, 2015), private university fees in Colombia are among the highest in the world (World Bank, 2012). Thus, there is fierce competition among the economically disadvantaged for the limited university places on offer in the much more affordable public sector (British Council, 2015). SABER 11[3], the exam used by Colombian universities as part of their admissions process, also evaluates applicants' English (MEN, 2007). As a result, those with limited English proficiency can be "closed out of participation" in tertiary education. The decision to include English as the only language other than Spanish tested by SABER 11 was a result of the institute's desire to comply with the goals of the

[3] Saber 11 is taken by high school students in the eleventh grade prior to entering higher education (ICFES, 2019).

CBPs (MEN, 2007). The CBPs also contribute to marginalization after graduation since employers also take into consideration scores obtained by students on this exam when recruiting ("La importancia," 2016). A lack of English can therefore limit "access to the means of consumption" (Young, 1990, p. 20) because those with low scores on the SABER 11 may also lose out on employment opportunities.

Taken together, the aforementioned factors promote the English-Spanish bilingualism of a privileged group of individuals with sufficient resources to learn English (García León & García León, 2012). This leads to marginalisation of those from low-income backgrounds, who are less likely to speak English, as well as marginalisation of those who are bilingual in languages that do not include English.

Another potential source of marginalisation is the PNB's strategy of recruiting hundreds of "native-foreigners" (MEN, 2017) from other countries to teach alongside Colombian English teachers in state schools. Notwithstanding the positive benefits to English language classrooms of having English-speaking foreigners who do not speak Spanish working alongside Colombian English teachers (see, for example, Rey, 2015), there are several issues with this strategy. Up until 2015, the "volunteers" on these programmes were exclusively from a handful of Anglo-Saxon countries where English is spoken as a first language (e.g. Canada, the U.S., the U.K.) (MEN, 2016). From 2015 onwards, a small number of such "volunteers" were recruited from countries where English is *not* spoken as a first language, although in 2016 the vast majority (521 out a total of 604 teachers) were still from predominantly Anglo-Saxon countries (MEN, 2016). Recruits on one such programme received a "stipend" of $520 per month including numerous other benefits such as health insurance, free accommodation for the first month, a domestic flight to the city of their placement, a completion bonus, and training (Internships Colombia, 2018). This is in contrast to the starting monthly salary for qualified full-time Colombian state school teachers of between $414 and $483 per month ("Cuanto ganan," 2017), and the nearly 150,000

Colombian teachers who received a salary of only $520 per month in 2016 ("La realidad salarial," 2016). In comparison to Colombian state school teachers, these "volunteers", despite being required to have a degree and at least six months teaching experience, do not need a teaching qualification, and also have fewer responsibilities than local teachers. To understand how this might represent marginalisation, we need only consider the reactions of those in the U.K. or the U.S. if hundreds of "native foreigner volunteers" were paid a "stipend" higher or equivalent to that of local teachers' salaries in order to foster the acquisition of a foreign language and thus secure the future prosperity of the nation's children. These "native foreign" volunteers thus have the potential to marginalise Colombian NNS teachers of English who may be "closed out of participation" in the labour market by less qualified NS teachers.

According to the MEN, the decision to recruit "native foreigners" was done in order to:

> Foster motivating cultural environments; to promote dynamic pedagogical methods that allow the students to use English in their educational institutions, and to support the Colombian teachers so that they improve their communication in English. (MEN, 2017, para. 5)

The use of the phrase "native foreigners" is perplexing as it suggests that foreigners can also be "non-native". But the ideologically charged term "native" (Kumaravadivelu, 2016) is in consonance with the hegemonic discourse in ELT of "native-speakerism" (Holliday, 2005). According to this discourse, the "native speaker" (NS) is positioned as an accent-free expert on the English language. This "others" the "non-native speaker" (NNS), who is thus considered inferior, non-standard or non-expert (Holliday, 2005). Native-speakerism

perpetuates the colonialist discourse that the periphery is unable to succeed without the colonial centre's assistance which, as the above quote reveals, comes in the form of expertise and "dynamic" instructional methods (Holliday, 2005).

Here Young's theory shows us how one face of oppression (cultural imperialism) can lead to others (marginalisation), resulting in multiple injustices. Specifically, the oppression of cultural imperialism, which manifests itself in the ideology of "native speakerism" positions the NNS as the deviant "Other". This, in turn, has the potential to restrict the NNS's access to the labour market, which constitutes the oppression of marginalisation.

Violence

Young's fifth face of oppression is violence. Here Young is referring to "random, unprovoked attacks on...persons or property, which have no motive but to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person" (1990, p. 26). Those groups which live in fear of violence, be it through "incidents of harassment, intimidation, or ridicule" (Young, p. 28) can be said to be oppressed.

It would be difficult to argue that the CBPs either sanction or promote such oppression. But, the promotion of western knowledge could be said to constitute a form of "epistemic violence perpetrated against the margins" (Spivak, 1988, p. 283). The commissioning of international organisations such as the British Council and Cambridge University Press; the privileging of NS teachers over NNS teachers; and the adoption of foreign models and discourses of language teaching and learning constitute part of this process, which results in the devaluation or exclusion of local knowledge (Correa & González, 2016; Guerrero, 2010; Usma, 2009).

Conclusion

This paper has critically evaluated the injustices caused by the implementation of the Colombian English-Spanish bilingual policies and programmes using Young's theoretical framework "the five faces of oppression". As Young asserts, the presence of only one of these faces is enough to identify oppression. As we have seen, the implementation of Colombia's English-Spanish bilingual policy reveals evidence of all five faces. Cultural imperialism is present in the exclusion of other Colombian languages besides Spanish from the CBPs. Exploitation is present in two ways: in the flow of human capital and financial resources from Colombia to the North, which the CBPs, by promoting English, contribute to; and in the commissioning by the MEN of organisations such as the British Council, who are thus provided with a platform to sell their own products and advance their own interests. Powerlessness results from the MEN's vertical approach to policy formation and enactment, which has meant that Colombian English teachers, educational institutions and other stakeholders have not been consulted. Marginalisation results from the lack of provision for those from rural communities and disadvantaged backgrounds who, lacking the resources to learn English, may be closed out of participation in tertiary education by university admissions policies and, as a consequence, labour market participation. Finally, the CBPs, by commissioning international organisations instead of national entities condones a form of "epistemic violence" on the part of the West against Colombia. Thus, the CBPs not only reproduce existing inequalities but also leads to greater injustices.

Young's framework has been criticised for lacking theoretical justification and for not offering any fresh insights that cannot already be provided by redistributive and recognitive perspectives of social justice issues (Fraser, 1997). However, Young freely admits that her criteria for determining injustice fall short of a "full theory of oppression" (1990, p. 30). Furthermore, Young's criteria have allowed us to identify "multiple, interlocking systems of oppression" (Shlasko, 2015, p. 350). Not only are all Colombians marginalised by dint of being from the Global South, but within Colombian society other groups such as public

school English teachers, or low-income English learners from rural communities, show multiple levels of marginalisation (Shlasko, 2015). The perspectives that Young's framework offer therefore yield valuable insights into potential injustices that other theoretical lenses may neglect. Another criticism is that Young's analysis focuses primarily on cultural and economic injustices in advanced capitalist societies and therefore may seem culturally bounded. As such, I have attempted to show how her framework can be adapted to the Colombian context.

In order to guarantee equal status for all groups, Young argues, "then laws that single out groups for special attention in order to equalize their status are not only permissible, but may be required" (2002, p. 8). The CBPs, by not specifically making provisions for different societal groups, do nothing to equalize their status. As such, policy-makers would benefit from using Young's framework to enrich their understanding of how any given policy could impact disadvantaged groups.

Given the instrumental thrust of the CBPs, it is hardly surprising that its implementation has neglected social justice considerations. Moreover, as we have seen, injustices may result from ill-conceived strategies for policy enactment. However, it is worth pointing out that oppression does not necessarily follow as a result of the push towards English-Spanish bilingualism in Colombia. In fact, as Amartya Sen (2010) notes, languages such as English grant access to the global marketplace and as such enhance individuals' capabilities. In addition, as history has shown, English is a very versatile language which can be co-opted by speakers of other languages to reflect their identity and thus empower them (Crystal, 2003). There is therefore no reason why learning English cannot transform people's lives in ways that go beyond merely increasing their competitiveness in the knowledge economy. As Phillipson explains:

> The fact that a language can serve homogenizing purposes...does not mean that the language need only serve such purposes: it can be appropriated locally, and potentially serve counter-hegemonic purposes of resistance to the dominant order…(1998, p. 101)

Oppression, as Freire has shown, gives rise to cultures of silence (1985). By giving voice to the marginalised, it may be possible to break free from such cultures of silence. One way to do this would be by adopting a multilinguality perspective to language policy whereby languages are not viewed as monolithic and bounded but rather as variable, fluid and overlapping (Agnihotri, 2014). In this view, all the languages that individuals bring to the classroom are seen as resources rather than barriers to the mastery of English (Correa & González, 2016). Such a standpoint also implies valuing the Englishes spoken in post-colonial regions such as Singapore and the Caribbean as alternatives which reflect the identity and culture of these regions. As Agnihotri writes, "a pedagogy rooted in multilinguality… would ensure the emergence of a society that is marked not only by peace but also by justice, equality and liberty, with care for others" (2014, p. 371). Such a pedagogy may also interrupt the advance of English linguistic imperialism which continues to exclude or denigrate local or non-European languages (Phillipson, 1992). Such a stance, however, would require a paradigm shift in the way that the Colombian government formulates and enacts language policy (Canagarajah & Wurr, 2011).

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An evaluation of the social justice implications of the Colombian government's English-Spanish bilingualism policies

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Abstract

The National Bilingual Programme was launched in order to promote English learning in Colombia. The failure of this programme and subsequent iterations is well-documented, and research has also examined some of its negative effects for different societal groups. However, a comprehensive study of the social justice implications of Colombia's national bilingual programmes has not been carried out. Using Young's framework "the five faces of oppression", the current paper shows how different groups experience different forms of injustice as a result of the implementation of Colombia's national bilingual programmes and their focus on language as a means to the end of economic development. It is argued that the the Colombian government's policy approach instrumentalises foreign language learning and diminishes the importance of the other purposes of learning a foreign language. Furthermore, this study shows how a lack of consideration of contextual factors from a social justice perspective can lead to shortcomings in policy implementation and the neglect of social justice issues. The conclusion suggests that bilingual policies need not be oppressive and outlines ways to ensure socially just English-Spanish bilingual education in Colombia.

A critical evaluation of the social justice implications of the Colombian government's English-Spanish bilingualism policies

Introduction

English not only facilitates the flow of capital, goods and labour across national borders (Canagarajah, 2017); it also dominates "the research and knowledge system" (Marginson, 2007, p. 326). As a result, mastery of the English language forms an important component of knowledge capital in a globalised world driven by neoliberalism and is recognised by the governments of developing economies as key to their development (Lin & Martin, 2005). In Colombia, the Ministry of Education (MEN) has been promoting English learning since 2004 through a series of educational programs, the largest of which is the Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo (PNB)[1]. The PNB and its subsequent iterations, which I will refer to collectively as the "Colombian bilingual programmes" (CBPs)[2], comprise a range of initiatives to foster greater linguistic proficiency including the development of instructional materials; the administration of diagnostic tests of English teachers and learners; short-term immersion programmes for English teachers in Colombia and abroad; training programmes for teachers; the development of competencies to be monitored and evaluated; and the recruitment of "native foreigners" from predominantly English-speaking countries to work alongside Colombian English teachers in schools (British Council, 2015; García León & García León, 2012; MEN, 2016, 2017). The most recent version of the PNB, also known as "Colombia bilingüe", was launched suddenly in 2015 interrupting the plan known as "Colombia, very well", which had been announced only five months earlier by President Santos himself (Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016). Although details of the programme remain vague, in 2018

[1] The "National Bilingual Programme" in English.

[2] Cronquist and Fiszbein point out that, "Colombia's national English programs have undergone four name changes in the past decade. However, there is substantive continuity among the programs" (2017, p. 52). Similarly, Bonilla and Tejada-Sánchez comment that there are "no clear distinctions" between Colombia's bilingual programmes (2016, p. 195). Indeed, these name changes have been confusing for scholars and stakeholders (Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016)..

one of its aims was to recruit 1,400 “native foreigners” to teach English in selected secondary schools around the country (Colombia bilingüe, n.d.).

Despite these efforts, the CBPs have generated a significant body of literature, most of which has been critical of the programme (Herazo, Jerez & Lorduy, 2012). While some of this research has explored the unintended negative effects of these language policies and programmes for certain sections of Colombian society (e.g. García León & García León, 2012; Mejía, 2006; Usma, 2009), a comprehensive study of the programme’s social justice implications has, to my knowledge, not been conducted. As such, this paper aims to use Young’s theoretical model, “the five faces of oppression” (1990) to analyse the extent to which groups and individuals within groups are oppressed by the various governmental programs to promote English as a foreign language (EFL) in Colombia.

The section below summarises research into the CBPs before providing an overview of the history of foreign and second language education in Colombia. The rationale behind the CBPs is then briefly analysed. We then turn to Young’s framework to show how different groups experience different faces of oppression as a result of these language policies and programmes. The conclusion will suggest that bilingual policies need not be oppressive and outlines ways to ensure socially just bilingual education in Colombia.

As we shall see, the term “bilingualism” is often taken to mean “English-Spanish bilingualism”. This neglects any other combination of two languages that might be spoken by an individual. In the current study, therefore, bilingualism is understood as “a complex, multidimensional concept that recognises the intercultural character of Colombian society which therefore is inclusive and respectful of the country’s linguistic diversity” (García, 2012, p. 98). As a result, I use the term “English-Spanish bilingualism” to respect other bilingualisms.

Research into the CBPs

As mentioned above, the CBPs have attracted a great deal of criticism (Herazo et al., 2012). Among these criticisms, some of which will be revisited in the course of this paper, are the lack of preparedness of Colombia for a bilingual project on such a scale (e.g. British Council, 2015; Cárdenas, 2006) due to a dearth of qualified teachers with an appropriate level of English (Álvarez, Cárdenas & González, 2011; Estrada, Mejía & Rey, 2015; Sánchez, 2013); a lack of class time devoted to foreign languages (Sánchez & Obando, 2008; Usma, 2009); geographical differences (British Council, 2015), and poorly resourced, overcrowded, and enormously diverse classes (Sánchez & Obando, 2008). Issues with the implementation of the programme have been identified such as the short time frame and the lack of continuity in the teacher training courses offered to English teachers, which has led to prescriptive and instrumental approaches to teacher development (Álvarez et al., 2011; Cárdenas, 2006). Another focus of research has been on the MEN's decision to commission international partners such as the British Council and Cambridge University Press to implement the CBPs, which has led to a lack of sensitivity to local contexts; the marketisation of EFL; the imposition of international standards and tests produced predominantly in the private sector (Álvarez et al., 2011; García León & García León, 2012; Usma, 2009); and a one-size-fits-all approach to teacher training by means of international teaching qualifications such as the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) and the In-service Certificate in English Language Teaching (ICELT) (Álvarez et al., 2011). Finally, others have criticised the MEN's vertical approach to policy formation and enactment (Fandiño-Parra, 2012; Galindo & Moreno, 2008; Herazo et al., 2012). This approach neglects the fact that bilingual education is a multilingual pedagogic process which requires cooperation between the government and other stakeholders (Galindo & Moreno, 2008). Given this approach, it is no surprise that there has been a discrepancy between policy objectives and social conditions in Colombia (Usma, 2009). As a result, although Colombia has seen an upsurge in proficiency rates in recent years

(Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017), the English level of Colombians remains low compared to other countries in the region (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017; Sanchez, 2013). Specifically, EF ranked Colombia 11th out of 17 Latin American countries in terms of English language proficiency, and 60th out of the 88 countries and regions included in their survey (EF, 2019).

Foreign and Second Language Education in Colombia

Perspectives on language and language policy are ideological, and any policy including colonial languages such as English and Spanish demands a consideration of the implications of this legacy (Canagarajah, 2005, 2006). Colombia has used Spanish since the arrival of the Europeans. The Spanish colonizers did take an interest in learning the indigenous languages of the region, but this was predominantly part of a strategy of evangelization, or to progressively impose their language on indigenous inhabitants (García León & García León, 2012). In the 18th Century a programme of Hispanicization was promoted by the Spanish monarch Charles III which prohibited the use of indigenous languages (García León & García León, 2012). After independence from Spain, the post-colonial elites maintained their ties with Europe by educating their children there (Usma, 2009). These children brought with them knowledge and enlightenment ideas which were connected with French, German and English. Thus, "indigenous and Creole languages started to be associated with ignorance and underdevelopment" (Usma, 2009, p. 125).

The Colombian constitution of 1886, which established the Republic of Colombia, strengthened the ties between the Catholic church and the state while also confirming the preeminence of the Spanish language (Gröll, 2009). As such, the original constitution was not representative of the whole Colombian population but rather reflected the interests of a paternalistic ruling class (Gröll, 2009). As Gröll shows, Spanish was instrumental in converting the "savages" (2009, p. 55) in Colombia into "civilised" Christians. Thus, in the

Catholic missionary schools which were charged with educating indigenous communities, all other languages were prohibited (Gröll, 2009). The status of indigenous languages did not change until the constitution of 1991 which officially recognised the languages and dialects of different ethnic groups in Colombia (García León & García León, 2012). As a result, while Spanish is the official language of Colombia, 65 indigenous languages and two Creole languages are also official and protected by law where these are spoken (García León & García León, 2012; Ministerio de Cultura, 2018). In these regions learners receive bilingual education (Ministerio de Cultura, 2018). However, in spite of the introduction of another law in 2010 to promote and preserve indigenous and Creole languages, other Colombian languages continue to be replaced by Spanish (García León & García León, 2012).

Why English?

Added to the historic reasons for the differing status of languages in Colombia are compelling economic reasons. Lin and Martin (2005) explain how English, by granting access to the increasingly competitive knowledge economy (and also, in many instances, to tertiary education), enables social and geographic mobility. This view of English as a tool replicates the neoliberal discourse regarding the importance of "linguistic capital" in the globalised economy (Canagarajah, 2017), a view which also seems to underpin the rationale for the original PNB. As the MEN explains:

> Being competent in English is essential in a globalised world which demands that one can communicate better, open borders, understand other contexts, appropriate and circulate tastes, understand and be understood, enrich oneself and play a decisive role in the development of the country. Being bilingual broadens the opportunities to be more competent and competitive. (2006, p. 3)

In referring to the "development of the country" and being "competitive" and "competent" in a "globalised world", the MEN's rationale for the PNB reflects a view of education as a means to an end (Araujo, 2013; Usma, 2009): in this case, national development. As Mejía (2006) observes, this view has also been adopted by bilingual schools attended by the elite. At the same time, by referencing "self-enrichment" and "understanding other contexts" the MEN seems to at least recognise the intrinsic value of learning a language.

Nearly a decade later, the then Minister of Education Maria Fernando Campo acknowledged the potential for English-Spanish bilingualism to "empower citizens" (MEN, 2014, para. 2), but also focused on the role of education in developing knowledge capital stating that "we are convinced that learning a foreign language empowers citizens and allows the country to insert itself into the global cultural dynamic and the knowledge economy (MEN, 2014, para. 2). What Campo fails to mention, however, is that this "foreign language" is not just any foreign language; she is referring to English.

The British Council, a partner organisation in the formulation and implementation of the Colombia's bilingual programme, provides further evidence of the neoliberal underpinnings of the CBPs, stating their aim as the cultivation of "human capital in order to further the country's economic development" (2015, p. 8). However, the consequences of valuing languages in terms of their usefulness is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it results in the stratification of languages in order of their economic value (Usma, 2009). This, in turn, leads not only to the underappreciation of local languages but also marketises language learning, which benefits a small number of mainly foreign entities (Usma, 2009). Secondly, this rationale ignores that bilingualism is a social phenomenon (García León & García León, 2012). That is to say: as only a very small percentage of jobs or situations require Colombians to speak English in their daily lives, some have questioned the necessity

of a mass project for the teaching and learning of the English language (e.g. Fandiño-Parra, 2012; Herazo et al., 2012).

Iris Young's Five Faces of Oppression

In her path-breaking book Justice and the Politics of Difference (1990), which draws on postmodern, feminist and critical theory (Vincent & Thompson, 2008), Iris Young presents her conception of justice as a set of criteria for identifying oppression. According to Young, domination and oppression are overarching categories which describe injustice (2006). Her theory seeks to encompass the variety of ways in which social groups, or individuals belonging to certain groups, are oppressed since only by identifying forms of oppression can we then take steps to address it (Young, 1990). Young explains how oppression has traditionally been associated with tyranny and conquest, but argues that such a monolithic understanding of oppression neglects that it comes in many intersecting and overlapping forms that are "complex, rather than merely additive" (Shlasko, 2015, p. 350). Young avoids such reductionism by referring to oppression in the plural rather than as an uncountable noun. Since social justice should strive to go beyond a superficial understanding of material realities (Vincent & Thompson, 2008), her framework is therefore particularly useful. The five "faces" or "oppressions" she describes extend the reach of justice to non-material goods such as respect, rights, opportunities and dignity, and thus reveal the limitations of the distributive justice paradigm famously expounded by John Rawls, which has been criticised for being too focused on individuals and the economic dimension of social justice (Fitts & Weisman, 2010). Importantly for Young, such oppression may be inadvertent. As such, it can be caused by "well-meaning people" (Young, 1990, p. 6) as a result of societal practices and relations. For Young, then, oppression has systemic structural causes which cannot be addressed merely by changes in legislation. In focusing on the role of institutions and society in reproducing oppression, Young's theory is particularly useful when looking at policy enactment in educational settings as in the current study. Furthermore, since language "in its

literal sense, is a feature of human collectivities" (Corson, 1999, p. 18) consideration must be given to group needs when evaluating the justness of language policy in education (Corson, 1999).

The five ways in which groups, or individuals within groups, are oppressed are: cultural imperialism, exploitation, powerlessness, marginalisation, and violence. The presence of any one of these "faces" is enough to constitute oppression (Young, 1990). The following sections draw upon the literature to analyse the ways in which the CBPs have led to these five distinct forms of oppression and show how these different oppressions can overlap.

Cultural Imperialism

A key argument against neoliberal globalisation is that is it leading to cultural homogenisation, which is understood as a form of cultural imperialism propagated by the West and the U.S. in particular (Steger, 2017). As a "major form of symbolic expression" (Steger, 2017, p. 80), language takes on special meaning in the cultural realm. English, with over 1.5 billion speakers, is firmly established as the global lingua franca (Graddol, 2003), and therefore plays an important role in the homogenization of local cultures (Phillipson, 1998). Indeed, such is the dominance of English for the global knowledge system (Marginson, 2007) that it is leading to the disappearance of non-European languages and literatures (Steger, 2017).

Young explains that, "cultural imperialism involves the universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm" (1990, p. 54). It occurs when the dominant group's culture is projected as representative of all humanity and the culture of the "other" comes to be viewed as deviant or deficient (Young, 1990). In the previous two sentences, we need only replace the word "culture" with "language" to understand the possible implications of a nation-wide initiative to teach English in a

predominantly non-English speaking country. Indeed, as Phillipson argues, "linguistic imperialism is a sub-type of cultural imperialism" (1998, p. 104).

For evidence of cultural - or linguistic - imperialism we need look no further than the use of the term "bilingualism" by the MEN to refer exclusively to English-Spanish bilingualism (Valencia, 2005). As Valencia writes, "this focus on Spanish/English bilingualism now predominates and the other dimensions of multilingualism and cultural difference in Colombia are often ignored" (2005, p. 1). Thus, the term "bilingualism" refers to English-Spanish bilingualism while the term "ethnoeducation" is used to refer to the bilingualism of predominantly rural indigenous communities (García León & García León, 2012). The CBPs, by ignoring those who, in addition to Spanish, speak one or more of Colombia's indigenous or Creole languages, devalue non-European languages. Indeed, by not recognising proficiency in other combinations of Colombian languages, and by allocating far more resources to promoting English than these languages, the CBPs are guilty of "linguistic discrimination" (García León & García León, 2012, p. 59). In this sense, Mejía (2006) has spoken of two types of bilingualism in Colombia: one visible and the other invisible. The former has the support of binational entities such as the British Council and the Colombo Americano, as well as transnationals such as Cambridge University Press, and has been accompanied by the development of standards, guidelines, objectives and evaluations, while the latter lacks support and has not been accompanied by any meaningful linguistic planning that might improve the situation of minority languages in the country (García León & García León, 2012; Guerrero, 2010). As such, other Colombian languages continue to fall out of use as new generations of indigenous communities learn Spanish as their mother tongue (García León & García León, 2012). Thus, ironically, the CBPs could be contributing to more monolingualism, not less (García León & García León, 2012).

Exploitation

Neoliberal globalisation has hastened the unequal flow of ideas, skills and knowledge from developing to developed economies (Banya, 2010). Language, as a key component of human capital in the globalised neoliberal "knowledge economy", plays an important role in this process (Canagarajah, 2017). But this process is not merely a matter-of-course: as part of a neoliberal agenda to control mobility for its own purposes, the movement of skilled migrants from low-income countries is incentivised by industries in advanced capitalist societies in order to benefit the economies of the latter (Canagarajah, 2017; Espinoza, 2013). This, combined with severe economic, social and political problems in source nations (Espinoza, 2013) has led to a brain drain of talent from developing economies (Banya, 2010).

How the brain drain constitutes exploitation is made clearer by reference to the following quote from Young:

> Exploitation enacts a structural relation between social groups...These relations are produced and reproduced through a systematic process in which the energies of the have-nots are continuously expended to maintain and augment the power, status and wealth of the haves (1990, p. 14)

For Young, these "energies" consist of "labor and energy expenditure", but she also asks us to consider how else exploitation might involve the appropriation of the efforts of one group by another in such a way as to reinforce the dominance of the latter. The transfer of wealth in the form of human capital from the "have-nots" to the "haves" is an example of such exploitation since the "energy" or "wealth" of the state in the form of investment in education/human capital, as well as the "labour" and resources of individual students, is "expended" in order to "augment the power, status and wealth" of the West.

Although Colombia's economic situation has improved in recent years, in 2011 Colombia was still "a net exporter of 5% of its population with a university or post-graduate degree" (Medina & Posso, 2011, para. 1). Thus the "brain gain" (Lozano & Gandini, 2011, p. 1) of destination countries constitutes the oppression of source countries in the form of exploitation (Agwu & Llewelyn, 2009). This loss is particularly egregious given that many skilled migrants in host countries are employed in jobs below their education level (Lozano & Gandini, 2011). Such exploitation is a distributive injustice which not only maintains western hegemony but also exacerbates existing inequalities between the North and the South (Schiff, 2005). As Young explains:

> The injustice of exploitation consists in social processes that bring about a transfer of energies from one group to another to produce unequal distributions, and in the way in which social institutions enable a few to accumulate while they constrain many more. (1990, p. 18)

The "few" in Young's quote could just as easily refer to the handful of rich nations which benefit from the brain drain. But what role does English play in this exploitation? Medina and Posso (2011) estimate that around one million Colombians were living in the U.S. in 2005. They list Colombians' ability to assimilate into the host culture as one factor in their decision to stay on in the States. English, as the most commonly spoken language in the U.S., clearly plays a role in this assimilation. By promoting English, the CBPs therefore may be making it easier for Colombians to migrate.

Not only does Colombia experience oppression in terms of the outward flow of human capital, but it also suffers exploitation in terms of tuition fees paid to foreign universities. In a document which lays out the basic standards and competencies that the

CBPs claim to guarantee to all Colombians irrespective of their origin or social status, the MEN lists taking advantage of study opportunities abroad as one of the reasons to study English (MEN, 2006). Indeed, in a British Council study, 56% of non-English learners expressed a desire to learn English in order to travel to foreign countries (2015). The same study reports that 23,602 Colombians were studying in foreign countries in 2012, with the majority of these living in the U.S. Moreover, having a university degree increases the likelihood that Colombians will stay on in their host countries (Medina & Posso, 2011). Thus, the promotion of study abroad also contributes to the brain drain.

Organisations such as the British Council, a branch of the foreign office whose initial aim was to "improve awareness of British educational and cultural achievements overseas, in order to attract international students" (British Council, 2016, p. 5) are also complicit in this process of exploitation. As Phillipson notes, English language teaching is a key "export item, a major industry, and not neutral in any sense" (1998, p. 108), with the industry worth an estimated £5bn a year for Britain (Phillipson, 1998). The MEN's decision to make the British Council a partner in the implementation of the CBPs not only allowed the U.K. to attract international students, but also provided a platform for such institutions to sell their "products" (García León & García León, 2012). One such product is the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test, which is jointly owned by the British Council and Cambridge English Assessment. This test costs a little less than the monthly minimum salary (British Council, n.d.), and performs a gatekeeping function since taking it is a requirement for emigration to English-speaking countries and admission to universities in these countries (IELTS, 2018). The consumption of such products not only facilitates the transfer of human capital from Colombia to developed economies but also the transfer of wealth.

A final way in which the CPBs can lead to exploitation can be illustrated by continuing our analysis of the motives behind the Colombian government's promotion of

English. As has been shown, the aims of the CBPs are largely framed in human capital terms. Importantly, though, the linguistic capital gained by becoming proficient in English does not necessarily promote social and geographic mobility since an individual's economic, social and cultural capital are also key determinants of economic success (Correa & González, 2016). Indeed, as Correa and González highlight,

> What has stopped Colombia from insertion into the global market is not its citizens' low level of proficiency in English. It is the multiple socio-economic problems that have affected the country for years, such as its elevated levels of inequity and of internal displacement caused by long-lasting domestic conflict with armed groups, to mention only a few of the problems the country faces (2016, p. 19).

In this regard, as Hurie has shown (2018), learning English also demonstrates a limited potential as a means to promoting peace in Colombia.

So what other motives are there for the promotion of the CBPs? Several scholars suggest that the Colombian government might be more concerned with responding to the demands of neoliberal globalisation than contributing to the well-being of its citizens (Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016; Gómez, 2017; Roldán and Peláez, 2017). Specifically, Bonilla and Tejada-Sánchez remark that the principal objective of the most recent iterations of the PNB is to meet the needs of business leaders by providing a pool English-speaking labourers who, among other things, can be used to "stock call centre franchises" (2016, p. 189). An analysis of an investment promotion agency website supports this assertion. Investinbogota.org exhorts foreign investors to relocate their call centres to Bogotá due to the "competitive salaries" (the webpage states that minimum wage for a bilingual call centre agent is only

$500 per month, excluding social benefits); the number of graduates and English speakers (73% of the Bogota workforce is "bilingual"); tax incentives such as Free Trade Zones and VAT exemptions, and the U.S. Eastern Standard Time Zone (Invest in Bogotá, 2018). In a similar vein, another website encouraging investment in Colombia points out that the government's language programme, Colombia bilingüe, "aims to consolidate the base of bilingual human talent in order to facilitate their employment" (ProColombia, 2019, p. 2). It goes without saying that foreign companies are primarily interested in making a profit, not the socio-economic well-being of Colombians. But without English-Spanish bilingual Colombians willing to work for "competitive salaries", these foreign companies would have no-one to staff their business process outsourcing operations (BPOs) and would consequently lack the means to accumulate such profit. In this "transfer of energies" from the have-nots (poorly remunerated Colombians) to the haves (foreign investors) we have another example of the oppression of exploitation.

Powerlessness

For Young the issue of powerlessness is bound up with labour relations in advanced capitalist societies. As Young explains, the powerless are positioned:

> So that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them. Powerlessness also designates a position in the division of labor and the concomitant social position that allows persons little opportunity to develop and exercise skills. The powerless have little or no work autonomy, exercise little creativity or judgment in their work, have no technical expertise or authority, express themselves awkwardly, especially in public or bureaucratic settings, and do not command respect (1990, p. 22).

Young defines the powerless "non-professional" against the professional, comparing the relative privileges of the latter over the former. Teachers, by having the opportunity to "develop and exercise skills", and by virtue of having some "technical expertise or authority" (Young, 1990, p. 22) have some power. However, Young's analysis was based on the position of teachers in advanced capitalist countries such as the U.S. where, although not firmly affiliated with the dominant class, they do "benefit from the exploitation of nonprofessional workers" (Young, 1990, p. 21). Colombian teachers, by contrast, are from the Global South, which is subject to exploitation from the North. Moreover, graduates of education are poorly remunerated compared to other professionals in Colombia (Estrada et al., 2015). As a result, many English language teachers are not qualified as such, which may help explain why Spanish predominates in foreign language classrooms (Sánchez & Obando, 2008). Taken together, then, although enjoying a status above those of manual or non-professional labourers, Colombian teachers, are, in global terms, powerless.

One specific case of powerlessness concerning the CBPs is reported by Sierra (2015) in her multiple case study of the experiences of four Colombian English teachers in a public university in Antioquia. Sierra writes that the exclusion of such teachers from English language policy decisions situated them as "policy enforcers rather than active and reflexive protagonists" (2015, p. 177). As such, English language teachers shoulder the responsibility for ensuring that their schools meet the policy goals set forth for them by the Colombian government (Cruz-Arcila, 2018) even if these policies are unclearly formulated or unjustified (Roldán & Peláez, 2017). One English teacher from a private school in Roldán and Pelaéz's study into the relevance of the Colombian government's language policies for rural communities succinctly sums up the powerlessness that such top-down policy formation can engender:

> The English language is taught because it has been established as obligatory not because there is a necessity or a real possibility to use it outside the classroom, but rather because it is a manifestation of the power imposed by the system (Roldán & Peláez, 2017).

English language teachers in rural communities experience the powerlessness of this imposition more than those in urban areas because they have to teach a diverse array of subjects in addition to mixed level EFL classes (Ramos & Aguirre, 2016). As Ramos and Aguirre explain (2016), the armed conflict in Colombia has also had a disproportionate impact on rural areas and has brought with it consequences such as displacement, school closures, and the enlistment of children and teenagers.

The imposition of foreign models and discourses by the MEN without the consultation of key stakeholders (Usma, 2009) represents another example of oppression as powerlessness. Two such foreign models are the TKT and the ICELT. Cambridge English and the British Council have administered both these teacher-training programmes in order to improve the quality of English language teaching in Colombia. Due to their limited duration, they focus on the technical aspects of teaching and neglect the transformative power of the teacher to construct his/her reality (Álvarez et al., 2011). Teachers who participate in such training thus become "implementers of programmes imposed for economic or political reasons" (Álvarez et al., p. 23) rather than agents of their own professional development.

As a result of the CBPs, Colombian teachers have clearly suffered from some of the injustices associated with powerlessness including inhibition in the development of their capacities, and a lack of decision-making power in their working lives (Young, 1990). As we shall see, Colombian teachers also suffered a lack of dignity by receiving instruction from

untrained "native" teachers, many of whom also did not speak English as a first language (and who received the same salaries as local teachers). As a consequence, the case for teachers in the public sector suffering oppression as powerlessness grows stronger.

Marginalisation

Young describes those who suffer oppression as marginalization in the following way:

> Not only in Third World capitalist countries, but also in most Western capitalist societies, there is a growing underclass of people permanently confined to lives of social marginality, most of whom are racially marked—Blacks or Indians in Latin America, and Blacks, East Indians, Eastern Europeans, or North Africans in Europe (1990, p. 18).

Although Young was writing at a time when the terms "Third World" and "Indians" were more acceptable, her analysis remains relevant thirty years on. Young attributes much of this "social marginality" to unemployment, which denies these groups of individuals participation in the social life of their respective capitalist countries and subjects them to material hardships, but she also states more generally that "social structures and processes that close persons out of participation in such social cooperation are unjust" (1990, p. 20). Thus, all those who are closed out of participation, be this as a result of a lack of financial resources, or as a result of other factors such as race or gender, suffer oppression as marginalisation.

How this specifically relates to the Colombian government's English-Spanish bilingual policy is made clearer by referring to a British Council study which concludes that, "there is a direct correlation between English language proficiency and educational attainment, private schooling, income and occupation" (2015, p. 8). As a result, Colombians from disadvantaged

backgrounds are provided with few quality opportunities to learn English (British Council, 2015). This is hardly a surprise given that the wealthiest Colombians typically go to private schools, which are better-resourced, have better-qualified teachers, have better infrastructures, and are often English-Spanish bilingual (Álvarez et al., 2011; British Council, 2015; Correa & González, 2016; Sánchez, 2013). Since the majority of such schools are in urban areas, low achievers in English are disproportionately from rural communities where the need for quality education is greater (Álvarez et al., 2011). Indeed, as Cruz-Arcila (2018) concludes in his study into how language policy is understood and enacted in rural Colombia, English language teachers in state-funded high schools work with poorly motivated students in low resource contexts. Students' indifference to English in rural areas, Cruz-Arcila suggests, is due to its lack of relevance in such settings. This echoes the views of other scholars who have questioned the value of a nationwide English language education programme that fails to take into account the specific needs of local contexts (e.g. Fandiño-Parra, 2012; Herazo et al., 2012; Roldán & Peláez, 2017).

The inequality in English language proficiency between well-off and underprivileged students is reproduced at the tertiary level. Despite half of all students in higher education attending private universities (British Council, 2015), private university fees in Colombia are among the highest in the world (World Bank, 2012). Thus, there is fierce competition among the economically disadvantaged for the limited university places on offer in the much more affordable public sector (British Council, 2015). SABER 11[3], the exam used by Colombian universities as part of their admissions process, also evaluates applicants' English (MEN, 2007). As a result, those with limited English proficiency can be "closed out of participation" in tertiary education. The decision to include English as the only language other than Spanish tested by SABER 11 was a result of the institute's desire to comply with the goals of the

[3] Saber 11 is taken by high school students in the eleventh grade prior to entering higher education (ICFES, 2019).

CBPs (MEN, 2007). The CBPs also contribute to marginalization after graduation since employers also take into consideration scores obtained by students on this exam when recruiting ("La importancia," 2016). A lack of English can therefore limit "access to the means of consumption" (Young, 1990, p. 20) because those with low scores on the SABER 11 may also lose out on employment opportunities.

Taken together, the aforementioned factors promote the English-Spanish bilingualism of a privileged group of individuals with sufficient resources to learn English (García León & García León, 2012). This leads to marginalisation of those from low-income backgrounds, who are less likely to speak English, as well as marginalisation of those who are bilingual in languages that do not include English.

Another potential source of marginalisation is the PNB's strategy of recruiting hundreds of "native-foreigners" (MEN, 2017) from other countries to teach alongside Colombian English teachers in state schools. Notwithstanding the positive benefits to English language classrooms of having English-speaking foreigners who do not speak Spanish working alongside Colombian English teachers (see, for example, Rey, 2015), there are several issues with this strategy. Up until 2015, the "volunteers" on these programmes were exclusively from a handful of Anglo-Saxon countries where English is spoken as a first language (e.g. Canada, the U.S., the U.K.) (MEN, 2016). From 2015 onwards, a small number of such "volunteers" were recruited from countries where English is *not* spoken as a first language, although in 2016 the vast majority (521 out a total of 604 teachers) were still from predominantly Anglo-Saxon countries (MEN, 2016). Recruits on one such programme received a "stipend" of $520 per month including numerous other benefits such as health insurance, free accommodation for the first month, a domestic flight to the city of their placement, a completion bonus, and training (Internships Colombia, 2018). This is in contrast to the starting monthly salary for qualified full-time Colombian state school teachers of between $414 and $483 per month ("Cuanto ganan," 2017), and the nearly 150,000

Colombian teachers who received a salary of only $520 per month in 2016 ("La realidad salarial," 2016). In comparison to Colombian state school teachers, these "volunteers", despite being required to have a degree and at least six months teaching experience, do not need a teaching qualification, and also have fewer responsibilities than local teachers. To understand how this might represent marginalisation, we need only consider the reactions of those in the U.K. or the U.S. if hundreds of "native foreigner volunteers" were paid a "stipend" higher or equivalent to that of local teachers' salaries in order to foster the acquisition of a foreign language and thus secure the future prosperity of the nation's children. These "native foreign" volunteers thus have the potential to marginalise Colombian NNS teachers of English who may be "closed out of participation" in the labour market by less qualified NS teachers.

According to the MEN, the decision to recruit "native foreigners" was done in order to:

> Foster motivating cultural environments; to promote dynamic pedagogical methods that allow the students to use English in their educational institutions, and to support the Colombian teachers so that they improve their communication in English. (MEN, 2017, para. 5)

The use of the phrase "native foreigners" is perplexing as it suggests that foreigners can also be "non-native". But the ideologically charged term "native" (Kumaravadivelu, 2016) is in consonance with the hegemonic discourse in ELT of "native-speakerism" (Holliday, 2005). According to this discourse, the "native speaker" (NS) is positioned as an accent-free expert on the English language. This "others" the "non-native speaker" (NNS), who is thus considered inferior, non-standard or non-expert (Holliday, 2005). Native-speakerism

perpetuates the colonialist discourse that the periphery is unable to succeed without the colonial centre's assistance which, as the above quote reveals, comes in the form of expertise and "dynamic" instructional methods (Holliday, 2005).

Here Young's theory shows us how one face of oppression (cultural imperialism) can lead to others (marginalisation), resulting in multiple injustices. Specifically, the oppression of cultural imperialism, which manifests itself in the ideology of "native speakerism" positions the NNS as the deviant "Other". This, in turn, has the potential to restrict the NNS's access to the labour market, which constitutes the oppression of marginalisation.

Violence

Young's fifth face of oppression is violence. Here Young is referring to "random, unprovoked attacks on...persons or property, which have no motive but to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person" (1990, p. 26). Those groups which live in fear of violence, be it through "incidents of harassment, intimidation, or ridicule" (Young, p. 28) can be said to be oppressed.

It would be difficult to argue that the CBPs either sanction or promote such oppression. But, the promotion of western knowledge could be said to constitute a form of "epistemic violence perpetrated against the margins" (Spivak, 1988, p. 283). The commissioning of international organisations such as the British Council and Cambridge University Press; the privileging of NS teachers over NNS teachers; and the adoption of foreign models and discourses of language teaching and learning constitute part of this process, which results in the devaluation or exclusion of local knowledge (Correa & González, 2016; Guerrero, 2010; Usma, 2009).

Conclusion

This paper has critically evaluated the injustices caused by the implementation of the Colombian English-Spanish bilingual policies and programmes using Young's theoretical framework "the five faces of oppression". As Young asserts, the presence of only one of these faces is enough to identify oppression. As we have seen, the implementation of Colombia's English-Spanish bilingual policy reveals evidence of all five faces. Cultural imperialism is present in the exclusion of other Colombian languages besides Spanish from the CBPs. Exploitation is present in two ways: in the flow of human capital and financial resources from Colombia to the North, which the CBPs, by promoting English, contribute to; and in the commissioning by the MEN of organisations such as the British Council, who are thus provided with a platform to sell their own products and advance their own interests. Powerlessness results from the MEN's vertical approach to policy formation and enactment, which has meant that Colombian English teachers, educational institutions and other stakeholders have not been consulted. Marginalisation results from the lack of provision for those from rural communities and disadvantaged backgrounds who, lacking the resources to learn English, may be closed out of participation in tertiary education by university admissions policies and, as a consequence, labour market participation. Finally, the CBPs, by commissioning international organisations instead of national entities condones a form of "epistemic violence" on the part of the West against Colombia. Thus, the CBPs not only reproduce existing inequalities but also leads to greater injustices.

Young's framework has been criticised for lacking theoretical justification and for not offering any fresh insights that cannot already be provided by redistributive and recognitive perspectives of social justice issues (Fraser, 1997). However, Young freely admits that her criteria for determining injustice fall short of a "full theory of oppression" (1990, p. 30). Furthermore, Young's criteria have allowed us to identify "multiple, interlocking systems of oppression" (Shlasko, 2015, p. 350). Not only are all Colombians marginalised by dint of being from the Global South, but within Colombian society other groups such as public

school English teachers, or low-income English learners from rural communities, show multiple levels of marginalisation (Shlasko, 2015). The perspectives that Young's framework offer therefore yield valuable insights into potential injustices that other theoretical lenses may neglect. Another criticism is that Young's analysis focuses primarily on cultural and economic injustices in advanced capitalist societies and therefore may seem culturally bounded. As such, I have attempted to show how her framework can be adapted to the Colombian context.

In order to guarantee equal status for all groups, Young argues, "then laws that single out groups for special attention in order to equalize their status are not only permissible, but may be required" (2002, p. 8). The CBPs, by not specifically making provisions for different societal groups, do nothing to equalize their status. As such, policy-makers would benefit from using Young's framework to enrich their understanding of how any given policy could impact disadvantaged groups.

Given the instrumental thrust of the CBPs, it is hardly surprising that its implementation has neglected social justice considerations. Moreover, as we have seen, injustices may result from ill-conceived strategies for policy enactment. However, it is worth pointing out that oppression does not necessarily follow as a result of the push towards English-Spanish bilingualism in Colombia. In fact, as Amartya Sen (2010) notes, languages such as English grant access to the global marketplace and as such enhance individuals' capabilities. In addition, as history has shown, English is a very versatile language which can be co-opted by speakers of other languages to reflect their identity and thus empower them (Crystal, 2003). There is therefore no reason why learning English cannot transform people's lives in ways that go beyond merely increasing their competitiveness in the knowledge economy. As Phillipson explains:

> The fact that a language can serve homogenizing purposes...does not mean that the language need only serve such purposes: it can be appropriated locally, and potentially serve counter-hegemonic purposes of resistance to the dominant order…(1998, p. 101)

Oppression, as Freire has shown, gives rise to cultures of silence (1985). By giving voice to the marginalised, it may be possible to break free from such cultures of silence. One way to do this would be by adopting a multilinguality perspective to language policy whereby languages are not viewed as monolithic and bounded but rather as variable, fluid and overlapping (Agnihotri, 2014). In this view, all the languages that individuals bring to the classroom are seen as resources rather than barriers to the mastery of English (Correa & González, 2016). Such a standpoint also implies valuing the Englishes spoken in post-colonial regions such as Singapore and the Caribbean as alternatives which reflect the identity and culture of these regions. As Agnihotri writes, "a pedagogy rooted in multilinguality… would ensure the emergence of a society that is marked not only by peace but also by justice, equality and liberty, with care for others" (2014, p. 371). Such a pedagogy may also interrupt the advance of English linguistic imperialism which continues to exclude or denigrate local or non-European languages (Phillipson, 1992). Such a stance, however, would require a paradigm shift in the way that the Colombian government formulates and enacts language policy (Canagarajah & Wurr, 2011).

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