

# Contexts, Methodologies, and Teacher and Indigenous Teacher Aids Partnership in the Intercultural Bilingual Education Program in Chile: A Critical Evaluation of the Current Debate

Contextos, metodologías y duplas pedagógicas en el Programa de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe en Chile: una evaluación crítica del estado del debate

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# **Abstract**

Twenty years after the implementation of The Intercultural Bilingual Education Program (IBEP) in Chile, the country still does not have a systematic body of research to address the challenges involved in teaching indigenous languages in schools. In this essay, I review a number of sociolinguistic studies about the situation of indigenous languages in Chile, along with studies and analysis about the IBEP. I present a systematic and critical review of three aspects that are relevant to the teaching of indigenous languages in the IBEP: (a) the contexts in which these programs are implemented, (b) indigenous language teaching methodologies, and (c) teacher and indigenous teacher aids partnership. I discuss the gaps and inconsistencies in the academic debate, which rather than representing divergent theoretical position, illustrate the lack of attention to the bilingual component of the program, as well as the absence of dialogue among scholars interested in this type of policy. I argue that the lack of attention to these three aspects has limited our understanding of the challenges and opportunities the IBEP presents for the teaching of indigenous languages in schools. I conclude by suggesting possible lines of research.

Keywords: Intercultural Bilingual Education Program, sociolinguistic contexts, teaching of indigenous languages, teacher of indigenous teacher aids partnership

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#### Resumen

Tras casi 20 años de la instalación del Programa de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (PEIB) en Chile, aún no contamos con un conjunto sólido de estudios que aborden los desafíos actuales en la enseñanza de lenguas indígenas en los colegios. El presente ensayo se nutre de la revisión bibliográfica de una serie de investigaciones sociolingüísticas acerca de la situación de las lenguas indígenas en Chile y de diferentes estudios y análisis que se han hecho acerca del PEIB. Presento una revisión sistemática y crítica del debate en torno a tres aspectos relevantes para el PEIB: (a) los contextos en los que se desarrollarían los diferentes proyectos de PEIB, (b) las metodologías empleadas en la enseñanza de lenguas indígenas y (c) la dupla pedagógica entre educador tradicional y profesor mentor. Discuto las ausencias e inconsistencias presentes, las cuales, más que representar posiciones teóricas divergentes, ilustran la falta de atención sistemática al componente bilingüe del PEIB, así como la ausencia de diálogo en el ámbito académico interesado en estas políticas institucionales. Argumento que la falta de atención a estos aspectos ha dificultado nuestra comprensión de los desafíos y oportunidades que el PEIB plantea para la enseñanza de lenguas indígenas en los colegios. Concluyo sugiriendo posibles líneas de investigación en este sentido.

Palabras clave: PEIB, contextos sociolingüísticos, enseñanza de lenguas indígenas, duplas pedagógicas

In 1996, following the enactment of Law 19,253 of 1993, the Intercultural Bilingual Education Program (IBEP) was established in Chile for schools with enrolment of indigenous students, mainly in rural areas with a high concentration of indigenous populations. On its website<sup>1</sup>, the Ministry of Education (Mineduc) states that this program «seeks to contribute to the development of the language and culture of indigenous peoples and to the training of intercultural citizens in the educational system.»<sup>2</sup> Various studies (e.g. Fernández, 2005; Forno, Álvarez-Santullano, & Rivera, 2009; Fuenzalida, 2014; García, 2012; Hevia & Hirmas, 2005; Hernández, 2004; Lagos, 2012, 2015; Luna & Hirmas, 2004; Manzo & Westerhout, 2003; Matus & Loncón, 2012; Mineduc, 2005, 2011; Mondaca & Gajardo, 2013; Montecinos, 2004; Pozo, 2014; Quilaqueo, Quintriqueo, Torres, & Muñoz, 2014; Riedemann, 2008; Rother, 2005; Sir, 2008) have roundly criticized the intercultural components of this program, including: its focus on indigenous students, ignoring the fact that intercultural education is also necessary for the majority of the population; its emphasis on rurality, when a significant proportion of the indigenous population now lives in urban areas; its assimilationist nature; the essentialist and static view of the concept of *culture*; its orientation towards the past, which promotes a folkloric view of indigenous matters, with no historical or political contextualization; its tendency to continue favoring Western and colonialist views of knowledge and, therefore, having a strong emphasis on the national curriculum over the modifications needed to address (and incorporate) this cultural diversity in different educational contexts.

However, in these same studies, the various aspects involved in the teaching of indigenous languages and in the bilingual component of the program were not discussed in depth. In fact, they were often overlooked. Although recent studies address these aspects (e.g. Becerra, Hasler, & May, 2013, Quidel, 2011; Quintrileo, Yanez, & Valenzuela, 2013), it is safe to say that, nearly 20 years after the establishment of the IBEP in Chile, we still do not have a strong set of studies and reflections that present the challenges in the development of Spanish-indigenous language bilingualism in a systematic, coherent, and informed manner through the formal teaching of indigenous languages in schools.

In this context, the main objective of this paper is to provide a systematic and critical review of the state of the art in the academic debate regarding the teaching of indigenous languages within the IBEP in Chile. The literature chosen for this review relates mainly to academic papers, postgraduate theses, and official reports whose foci of analysis were both this program and the teaching of indigenous languages, and which were published over the last 15 years.

The three themes that guide the systematization and analysis of the ideas in these studies regarding the bilingual component of the program are: (a) the contexts in which the different IBEP projects are developed, (b) the methodologies used in the teaching of indigenous languages, and (c) the pair teaching

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Mineduc (n. d.)

See Espinoza (under review) for a detailed discussion of the official objectives of IBEP, where its bilingual nature is questioned.

of the traditional teacher and mentor teacher.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the literature review of certain sociolinguistic studies on the situation of indigenous languages in Chile and some of the international literature on the teaching of indigenous languages allowed a counterpoint to be established regarding what was stated by these papers and studies, and the identification of gaps and inconsistencies, which, as I will demonstrate, rather than representing divergent theoretical positions, illustrate the lack of systematic attention to the bilingual component of the IBEP, as well as the absence of dialogue in the academic field on these institutional policies and the situation of indigenous languages in Chile.

I will conclude with a summary of the main points of the discussion and a critical assessment of the debate about these diverse aspects, as well as suggesting possible lines of research. Although this paper is not a discussion of bilingualism or the different types of bilingual education programs for indigenous contexts, I believe that its focus on the aforementioned aspects can contribute to the design and assessment of such programs in Chile.

# Contexts in which Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) programs are implemented

The challenge for any indigenous teaching program in schools is being able to adequately respond to a variety of sociolinguistic situations (Espinosa, 2009; Hinton, 2001; Purdie et al., 2008). In other words, «...the applicability of different programs will vary according to the type of situation» (McKay 2011, p. 298). As I will show in this section, the debate regarding the IBEP has not adequately incorporated the diversity of sociolinguistic contexts in which schools are inserted into this program, nor the contexts in which indigenous children live, they being precisely the group on which the IBEP is focused.

# Contexts with indigenous languages as a second language?

A series of studies state that indigenous languages are the second language (L2) of indigenous children in Chile (e.g. Fernández, 2005; Matus & Loncón, 2012; Mineduc, 2011; Quidel, 2011; Quintrileo, Yáñez, & Valenzuela, 2013). Although the L2 status of indigenous languages is a common phenomenon in various parts of the world (as illustrated by Berlin, 2000; Estay, 2007; King, 2009; Ratima & May, 2011; Romero-Little, 2008), in the case of Chile this generalization does not seem to be entirely supported by the evidence. Merely declaring that indigenous languages are the L2 of indigenous children appears to be a simplification of what may well be a richer and more diverse, as well as more complex, linguistic landscape. On the other hand, stating that the indigenous languages are the L2 of indigenous children implicitly assumes that these children have some knowledge of these languages that would have been acquired after learning Spanish. Various studies (e.g. Espinosa, 2009; Gundermann, González, & Vergara, 2007; Gundermann, Canihuán, Clavería, & Faúndez, 2009; Gundermann, Canihuán, Clavería, & Faúndez, 2011; Makihara, 2005; Zúñiga, 2007) have indicated that, on the contrary, indigenous languages are not part of the linguistic repertoire of the majority of indigenous children, either as a first (L1) or second (L2) language, in urban or rural contexts. Only when they start learning and using them these languages become their L2. This is a conceptual confusion that should be addressed in future studies regarding the IBEP.

# Diverse contexts and sociolinguistic diversity

In contrast, various studies point to the existence of a more diverse and complex sociolinguistic reality. Mineduc, for example, states that the relationship of indigenous children with their languages is more varied:

[...] It is possible to observe at least three different realities of access to the indigenous language: the children who have one of these four languages as a native or familiar language; others who hear the native language solely in the social environment, especially in areas where these languages share linguistic space with Spanish language. Likewise [sic], it is a reality that some children only have the opportunity to hear the indigenous language taught at school (Mineduc, 2011, p. 4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For a discussion on the Indigenous Language Subsector, see Espinoza (under review).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> With this I am not trying to reject the possibility of the existence of indigenous languages' users that have acquired them as a second language (e.g. see Wittig, 2011). I am merely questioning the generalization about the L2 status of indigenous languages among children.

As is clear, this description does not include contexts where indigenous languages are the L2 of indigenous children. Despite the ambiguity in part of its formulation (e.g. the children whose mother tongue is an indigenous language do not hear or speak Spanish, that is, are they not bilingual? Are there areas of Chile where indigenous languages do not share a space with Spanish? Are linguistic spaces really shared or is this a euphemism to refer to the imposition of Spanish? What is understood by linguistic space?) And because of the lack of all reference to studies that support these assertions, this statement is useful because it avoids reducing the sociolinguistic situation of indigenous children and, intuitively, shows a commitment to diversity. Paradoxically, Mineduc provides the same materials and textbooks for these different contexts, which hinders the realization of one of the objectives of the IBEP, which is namely to deliver a culturally and linguistically relevant education.

The linguistic diversity of indigenous communities, particularly the Mapuche community, has also been highlighted by other authors. For example, Catrileo (1997, as cited in Relmuan, 2005, p. 47) argues that «Mapuche population is not homogeneous in their cultural characteristics and, particularly, in their linguistic features. It is possible to find children and adults that are monolingual in Spanish, bilingual of various types, and monolingual in Mapudungun.» Other authors, this time on the basis of information obtained through sociolinguistic studies and questionnaires, have established that the distribution of Mapuche bilingualism is heterogeneous: while Mapudungun is no longer spoken in some areas, in others it is minimally preserved, and in others it remains active (Gundermann, Canihuán, Clavería, & Faúndez, 2009, p. 40). The study conducted by Henríquez (2014) states the same, where the situation of Mapudungun in localities in southern Chile is described, providing different panoramas for each of them: from a community where the majority of the children have the indigenous language as L1 to communities where the intergenerational transmission of indigenous languages has been lost and the children mostly have Spanish as L1. The L1 status of the indigenous languages is also recognized by a Mineduc document. According to this document, «in the case of children whose native language is indigenous, this shall be treated as the first language (L1) until 4th grade. Spanish may be integrated as second language (L2) from the outset...» (Mineduc, 2005, p. 27). Notwithstanding this assertion, the need for teachers of Spanish as L2 is an issue that the literature on the IBEP does not mention whatsoever, despite its relevance to an actual bilingual or transition program of the indigenous language to Spanish, such as Mineduc proposes in this recommendation.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, other authors have suggested the possibility that indigenous children have developed a particular variety of Spanish as a result of asymmetrical contact in different parts of Chile (Espinosa, 2003, 2009; Makihara, 2005; Olate, Alonqueo, & Canihuan, 2013; Olate, Wittig, & Hasler, 2014). Espinosa (2003, 2009) describes the characteristics of Spanish spoken by Aymara children in northern Chile, where *Andean Spanish* is dominant. According to the author, these Aymara children may learn Spanish according to how it is spoken by adults in their communities: a type of Spanish that would display the typical characteristics of a L2 and which may show Aymara interference. To the author, the type of Spanish that these children are learning is a Spanish that diverges from a supposed standard. The idea that indigenous children develop imperfect Spanish is also suggested by Mineduc (2005, p. 12) and Chiodi and Loncón (1999). In contrast to this normativist and purist view of the varieties of Spanish spoken by indigenous communities, in their study of a bilingual rural community, Olate, Alonqueo, and Canihuan (2013, p. 281) propose that «the Spanish spoken by children, youths, adults, and the elderly is an ethnic variety» (see also Olate, Wittig, & Hasler, 2014). Similarly, in the case of Rapa Nui, Makihara (2005, p. 731) explains that the children on Easter Island «are acquiring Rapa Nui Spanish in addition to Chilean Spanish, but they are developing their own Rapa Nui ways of speaking Spanish.»

In short, the sociolinguistic situation of indigenous children and the contexts in which the IBEP would be implemented seems to be more heterogeneous and complex than is often assumed in the literature on this program because: (a) for the vast majority of indigenous children, Spanish is their L1 and is the only language they hear at home and at school; (b) in some communities children continue learning their native languages as L1 and begin to learn Spanish when they go to school (Henríquez, 2014); (c) some indigenous children (at least as Henríquez, 2014, suggests) are learning both their native language and Spanish at the same time (Wittig, 2011, 206 p.); (d) some indigenous children have a *passive* knowledge of their indigenous language, that is, they understand it but not speak it (Makihara, 2005; Villar, 2004);

It is important to underline that these transition programs are characterized by being assimilationist and promoting a subtractive kind of bilingualism (Roberts, 1995, p. 374) where the indigenous L1 is replaced by the L2 majority language.

(e) apparently, in some situations, the speech of these children may also include the use of code-switching (Chiodi & Loncón, 1999; Lara Millapán, 2012; Ortiz, 2009; Zúñiga, 2007); and (f) some indigenous children may use a variety of Spanish which some authors consider to be imperfect and differs from a standard form (Espinosa, 2009; Mineduc, 2005), while others consider that it is an ethnic variety (Olate, Alonqueo, & Caniguan, 2013).

This situation appears to be closer to the complex reality in Chile to which the IBEP should respond. Based on academic studies we cannot simply insert the idea into the debate that indigenous languages are the L2 of indigenous children. This idea is not solely unsupported by the evidence, but also imposes a homogeneous (and erroneous) conception of a complex and varied linguistic reality. Likewise, although a number of sociolinguistic studies have shown that Spanish is the L1 of most indigenous children, they also fail to adequately account for the aforementioned sociolinguistic diversity, mainly because of their quantitative approach and their monoglossic view of bilingualism. Thus, our view of the sociolinguistic diversity of the country, of the dynamics of these communities' speech, and the real linguistic repertoires of members of these communities have been simplified (Moore, Pietikäinen, & Blommaert, 2010), and therefore the challenges facing bilingual education in Chile: each context requires a program with linguistic objectives that are appropriate to every one of them (Oñate, 2005, pp. 164-165; Reyhner, Cantoni, St. Clair, & Yazzie, 1999, pp. xiv, xvii; Roberts, 1995; see also Meakins, 2010, who uses the concept of *linguistic ecologies*).

# Indigenous language teaching: The methodological debate

Various authors have stated that indigenous language teaching in schools with the IBEP has been ineffective (Álvarez-Santullano & Forno, 2008; De la Maza, 2008; Lara Millapán, 2012; Loncón, 2010; Mineduc, 2011; Oñate, 2005; Red EIB Chile, 2015; Relmuan, 2005; Sir, 2008). One line of analysis in the literature on the IBEP has focused on trying to argue that this lack of success is related to a problem with the methodologies used to teach indigenous languages. As I will show, this debate is problematic in several ways.

# Absence of methodologies

Some authors consider that the main problem is the lack of methodologies. Cañulef (1998) states that, in the case of the Mapuche language, «it is not known how to teach, what language materials to provide, how to sequence the difficulties, which achievements to aim for, etc.» (pp. 88-89). This author argues that what need are methodologies of teaching native language as second language. Onate (2005, p. 8) states that the few Mapuche teachers «are not prepared to teach Mapudungun as second language (L2); on the other hand, the C[ultural] A[dvisors] [...] are not prepared to assume this duty [...] due to not knowing more innovative methodologies in this matter...» Meanwhile, after analyzing the specific plans and programs of schools with IBEP, Matus and Loncón (2012) conclude that the teaching of indigenous languages lacks clear indicators of achievement for each level and a methodology for teaching second languages. However, the latter study, by failing to mention the language learning objectives of the official IBEP, understanding what characteristics should have the indicators proposed. Moreover, as this analysis also fails to include information obtained from the observation of classes<sup>6</sup> it does not enable us to know whether the lack of success can be fully attributed to what the specific plans and programs say (e.g. what is stated on paper) and not more profound structural matters of inequality (such as, for example, the absence of native language teachers, the subordination of traditional teachers, and the lack of educational autonomy of indigenous communities). Finally, Lara Millapán (2012, p. 9) argues that one of the problems faced by the teaching of Mapudungun is that it is done using practices that are «too transmissive and reproductive.» This author states that teachers need to be aware of «strategies and tools to teach Mapudungun with a significant focus that favors communicative competence.»

In fact, as Luna (2015, p. 2) states, in Chile «there is a notable scarcity of anthropological and ethnographical studies on school education in the indigenous context.»

## **Traditional methods versus Western methods**

Other authors consider that the lack of effectiveness in the indigenous language teaching is due to the use of methodologies that are different to the traditional forms of language teaching in indigenous communities. According to Relmuan, «the teaching of Mapudungun has been done through teaching methodologies for foreign languages without considering the specific strategies of the Mapuche context» (2005, p. 53). This author provides a description, which is otherwise debatable, of what is understood by a foreign language teaching methodology, which, according to her, is characterized based on knowledge of the alphabet before continuing with the grammatical structure and the development of phonetic practice exercises (p. 54). Meanwhile, Quidel (2011) suggests that that teaching of Mapudungun fails because the methodologies used by teachers (although it is unclear whether she refers to traditional teachers) reflect what she calls a Western approach to language teaching. She states, albeit without referring to studies or theories that support this assertion, that this Western method dissociates the language from the culture and promotes grammatical and structuralist approaches. Becerra, Hasler, and May (2013) echo the assertions of Quidel (2011) and also postulate that the use of typical methods to teaching European languages has been detrimental to the revitalization of Mapudungun. According to these authors, the adoption of these methodologies is related to the high prestige of languages such as English. However, they do not describe these methodologies in detail and do not specifically explain how their use has prevented the revitalization of Mapudungun. Finally, Loncón (2013) also states that teaching indigenous languages differs from teaching a foreign language and the methods of teaching second languages are not entirely useful when teaching an indigenous language. However, in a previous work (Matus & Loncón, 2012) the same author stated that one of the flaws in indigenous language teaching was related to th

This Western approach may differ from what has been called *traditional forms of language teaching* (Loncón, 2013; Quidel, 2011; Relmuan, 2005). According to Quidel (2011), the schools in her study did not include traditional Mapuche practices for language teaching. The author does not discuss in detail what these practices are, but merely refers to the use of the *epew*, for example, which is a traditional Mapuche narrative rather than a strategy for language teaching (regardless of whether the language can be learned and practiced using these *epews*). Cañulef (1998, p. 30) considers that, in the communities where Mapuche children grow up, *«as is expected*, it is learned through practice or contextualized learning where the parents or other adults guide (the children)» (the italics are mine) and this is what would not be incorporated into teaching Mapudungun. Although Loncón (2013) mentions this, she also fails to describe what she calls a *traditional ancestral method* for teaching languages and how this is implemented, according to her, in different schools.

However, what this debate has still not resolved is how to identify these traditional methods of teaching languages, which are supposedly kept alive in the communities (there are no ethnographical or language socialization studies that support this assertion). In this debate, the fact that *«all linguistic communities, including especially minoritised ones, are discursively and ideologically complex»* (Moore, Pietikäinen, & Blommaert, 2010, p. 3) is also not problematized. For example, in her ethnographic research in a Mapuche community in southern Chile, Villar (2004, pp. 60-61) describes the following situation, which can contribute to this discussion and puts into perspective the idealization of traditional ways of teaching languages:

Both parents are bilingual and especially Don Artemio takes time to explain the language to the girls. He often put on different tapes with language courses and made the girls repeat the words after the tapes. The tapes went through the basics as for example, the numbers, the colours, the kinship terms, topography etc. The girls often sat and listened to the tapes for a while, but soon they got bored and wandered off. When the father pointed out that it was not he who needed to learn as he already knew, the girls often mumbled something about, "taking classes some other day".

In relation to this aspect, a question that goes beyond the objectives of this review, also aims to determine who decides what is traditional (in a general way and not solely in terms of learning of the language) and how it is incorporated into formal education processes. This discussion should consider the indigenous people subordination and the asymmetric relationships that even the activitist in the academic world establish with them, as shown by the experience of language internship described in Vergara and Salazar (2012). According to these authors, one the problems that they faced was the following: «In the work with educators, it is necessary to further clarify the importance of educational goals and the need to work with learners in various activities, although these may seem banal and meaningless to some of them (educators). For example, cooking or cultivating medicinal herbs are situations with strong cultural content, but have little value to educators, particularly for women. Performing day to day tasks related to domestic life is very attractive to learners, since it is a novel and dynamic activity. However, for female educators, it was discouraging since these activities are related to staying at home and domestic tasks. It was explained to them that they should guide the learners so that they accomplished these activities. However, more preparation and motivation was required for them to understand the pedagogical objective of the specific activity». Does this view not reflect, specifically, an imposition of the specialists –in their salvage of what they decide is traditional– over the motivations, views, interests, and attitudes of indigenous people?

On the other hand, there are various methods for teaching languages and their development can be explained according to different historical times and the differing views of what language is, who can be considered a speaker, how languages are learned and taught, what is understood by communication, how to determine levels of competence, how language and culture are related, how and why this relationship is emphasized when they are taught, and what the roles of the language teacher and student are (see Richards & Rodgers, 2014). There are no studies in Chile aimed at answering these questions from an indigenous perspective (an exception is Ojeda & Alvarez, 2014, on the social construction of *Chedungun*; see also Lagos, 2015). In addition, at present, the methods for language teaching tend to stress the close relationship between languages and contexts of use and the culture of the different groups who learn and speak them. A clear example of this has been the emergence of the intercultural approach to language teaching (Byram, 1997; Corbett, 2003). So, promoting strict separation and opposition between Western (no matter how questionable this category is) and traditional methods based on beliefs and assumptions about their benefits and problems rather than on the basis of evidence, experience, and informed arguments limits the contribution that a long tradition of language teaching can make to indigenous language teaching (Berlin, 2000; Reyhner et al., 1999, p xvi) and installs a kind of cultural essentialism in pedagogical practices, which, paradoxically, seems to conflict with the promotion of an intercultural model of education.

Finally, one unresolved contradiction in this debate is the following: on one hand, it is claimed that traditional teachers are representatives of the cultural and linguistic traditions of indigenous people and, on the other, there is criticism about languages teaching practices do not respond to the cultural traditions of these same people. How can this be if teaching is the responsibility of those who know the language and the culture of those people?

# Seeking common ground between different traditions for language teaching

In contrast to the dichotomy between traditional and Western methods, in the discussion about the IBEP it is also possible to identify a trend, which seems to be the search for common ground between different traditions. For example, the Mineduc (2011) promotes the use of communicative and semantic approaches along with the oral traditions of indigenous peoples. Meanwhile, Quintrileo, Yanez, and Valenzuela (2013) use the Sauvignon (2002) model of communicative competence to analyze the Proposal of Curricular Bases for the Indigenous Language Sector of the IBEP, which were suggested in 2012. These authors argue that this proposal places a strong emphasis on sociocultural competence on detriment of other skills, according to the Sauvignon (2002) model. Therefore, it is not consistent with the objective of revitalizing indigenous languages.<sup>8</sup> This analysis makes no mention of traditional methods for language teaching<sup>9</sup>

For her part, Loncón (2013) states that the teaching of indigenous languages should include successful methods such as the functional-communicative approach without neglecting any of the specific characteristics of these indigenous languages, such as their oral tradition and community teaching methods.

Finally, certain proposals have been made with the objective of establishing descriptors and indicators for teaching and learning indigenous languages inspired by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, supposedly adapted to local conditions (Loncón & Castillo, 2013). In this proposal, the solution to the problems faced by indigenous language teaching is reduced simply by creating descriptors to define levels of competence (the same ones for all contexts?).

In the literature on the IBEP there are various interpretations regarding the linguistic objectives of the program. For some authors, the IBEP seeks to revitalize native languages, although they do not define what they understand by *revitalization* (Becerra, Hasler, & Mayo, 2013, p. 27; Henríquez, 2014, p. 33; Quintrileo, Yáñez, & Valenzuela, 2013, p. 62). For others, this would enable indigenous people to exercise their right to learn their languages (García, 2012; Montecinos, 2004). Fernández (2004, p. 9) states that the IBEP supports a proposal for the development of balanced bilingualism between indigenous language and Spanish. De la Maza (2008) argues that the IBEP proposes the recovery and development of the Mapuche language, but without defining what is meant by recovery and development. Finally, some authors explain that the IBEP is aimed at the teaching of indigenous languages, but without defining in which manner (Álvarez-Santullano, & Forno, 2008, p. 11; Henríquez, 2014, p. 33; Huircán, 2010, p. 32).

The authors neither explain why the model of communicative competence adopted is the most appropriate, considering that there are other equally complete and appropriate models for this same kind of analysis (see Celce-Murcia, 2007, on the models of communicative competence), which, however, were not originally intended for contexts of revitalization or maintenance of minority indigenous languages (although this is not necessarily the objective of IBEP, Espinoza, under evaluation).

With what is stated in this section, I do not mean to suggest that the solution will come from educational experts from outside the communities. However, I believe that promoting coherent dialogue between both traditions can be more than fruitful. The methodological discussion about the teaching of indigenous languages in the IBEP neglects the fact that, in various indigenous contexts, incorporating Western approaches to teach indigenous languages, along with the active participation and autonomy of the communities involved and the incorporation of traditional knowledge, has been relatively successful and positive (Littlebear & Martínez, 1996; Mellow, 2000; Romero-Little, 2008; Walsh, 2002). Why should this dialogue not be beneficial for teaching indigenous languages in schools in Chile? In this regard, Walsh (2002) stresses that a large part of the literature on indigenous language teaching promotes communicative approaches, although it also underlines that there is variety in this, from the use of the total physical response (see also Cantoni, 1999) to the inclusion of explicit grammatical information. Other authors make reference to the natural approach and cooperative learning (Littlebear & Martínez, 1996), among other approaches.<sup>10</sup> In short, there is not just one way of teaching indigenous languages. Some authors suggest that even more important is the ability to eclectically use different activities from different methods, depending on how well they serve the teaching objectives proposed (Mellow, 2000).<sup>11</sup> Thus, success in indigenous language teaching seems to be related to the appropriate combination of the oral traditions of indigenous peoples and other teaching methods, in addition to fundamental aspects such as the preparation of indigenous language teachers and the autonomy of communities to take responsibility and ownership of their educational processes (Littlebear & Martinez, 1996; Lowe & Walsh, 2004; Romero-Little, 2008), aspects which are far from being achieved in the Chilean educational context, as illustrated by the implementation of pair teaching.

# Teacher and indigenous teacher aids partnership: Traditional teacher and mentor teachers12

The above discussion on the methods of language teaching in the IBEP assumes that there is a specialized audience that can contribute and benefit from it, namely teachers of indigenous languages. However, in Chile these teachers of indigenous languages do not exist (Loncón 2013, p. 49). The official solution has been the creation of teacher and indigenous teacher aids partnership, in which a traditional teacher works under the *supervision* of a mentor teacher. This formula can also be found in a series of other contexts (see Littlebear & Martínez, 1996; Warren, Cooper, & Baturo, 2004). In Chile, the characteristics of this pair teaching vary between one situation and another (Acuña, 2012), which demonstrates the absence of a systematic approach to its implementation. On the other hand, existing studies mostly consist of descriptions of this pair, so it is necessary a more in-depth understanding regarding the methodological, political and epistemological implications of this type of work.

# **Traditional teachers**

There are around 300 traditional teachers in Chile, most of whom are Mapuche (Sotomayor et al., 2015). They are chosen by the communities to work in schools teaching language and indigenous culture. However, as an indication of the low autonomy that indigenous peoples have regarding their education, they also require authorization from the Mineduc. Various studies (Acuña, 2012; Sotomayor et al., 2015; Treviño et al., 2013) offer valuable information regarding the characteristics of these traditional teachers, which should be included in the debate.

In a different experience of the IBEP, a short-term linguistic immersion internship, Vergara and Salazar (2012) explain that it was oriented towards educators who participated «in certain principles of Krashen's monitor model, such as the idea of comprehensible input, the concept of fluency [...] the consideration of the affective filter...»

Regarding this point, but with emphasis on the different texts available for teaching Mapudungun, there is a lucid reflection in Hasler, Mariano, and Salazar (2011), who consider that, while the various texts that exist for teaching Mapudungun may reflect different paradigms (structural versus communicative, for example), they play different roles and, therefore complement each other, rather than being antagonistic. Therefore, some texts may be more useful for teacher training (due to their grammatical approach), while others would be useful in teaching Mapudungun to children

Part of this section also appears in a previous work by the author (Espinoza, under review).

However, it is important to highlight the existence of intercultural teaching programs, such as the degree in Basic Intercultural Pedagogy in the Mapuche Context, offered by the Universidad Católica de Temuco, whose syllabus includes courses on teaching Mapudungun, or the degree in General Primary Intercultural Bilingual Education at the Universidad Arturo Prat. There are also other initiatives promoting intercultural pedagogy, such as the Doctoral Program in Educational Sciences, specializing in Intercultural Education at the Universidad de Santiago de Chile, or the programs that can be seen on Mineduc's IBEP Webpage. However, the latter have a notable emphasis on the intercultural aspect and little focus on bilingual education.

Firstly, while one of their roles is to transmit indigenous language in schools, not all of them are proficient in these languages. This question the idealization of traditional teachers as linguistic authorities. Furthermore, as Cañulef (1998) states, being a speaker does not necessarily guarantee success in language teaching, since knowledge of didactics of language teaching is also needed. Secondly, some traditional teachers have not completed their schooling. This point has also failed to receive attention: Does this represent a conflict to them? How are they perceived by the school community knowing that they did not complete their education (see Lagos, 2015)? Considering that their experience as students was incomplete, how do they feel when returning to an institution that probably prohibited and punished their language and culture? Finally, many traditional teachers have to divide their time between the school and other economic activities for their livelihood (Acuña 2012, p. 18). In other words, they cannot fully dedicate themselves to the exhausting task of teaching their languages, nor develop themselves professionally.

The study by Sotomayor et al. (2015) also provides significant data. First, traditional teachers belong to poor sectors of society. This fact, which is not analyzed in depth by the authors, can be very revealing about the relationship that can be established between ethnic identity, proficiency in indigenous language and social prestige, which in turn can have an impact on the promotion of indigenous language-Spanish bilingualism in schools. Second, some of the educators mentioned in this study have Western religious beliefs. This point underlines the ideological and cultural complexity of the indigenous population, which is avoided in discussions about the IBEP. For example, the tendency is to consider that educators are the custodians of the ancestral knowledge of their peoples and communities, but what is the status of the educators who are Evangelical Christians, for example? Is this necessarily a problem regarding their status as legitimate representatives of a certain cultural tradition, or should this be assumed and incorporated as part of the cultural continuities and breaks in the current indigenous population?

Finally, a Mineduc (2011) study shows that the educators are not independent, that they participate in a community of practice that is external to them, that they are rarely considered in curricular decision-making, and that their salaries are low and their work unstable (see also Lagos, 2015). To this we might add that, having no pedagogical training, educators cannot actively participate in the methodological discussion summarized in the preceding paragraph. This is not the fault of the educators, but rather of a centralized program that is outer to the local realities of schools and which has failed to validate the work that they perform in schools.

#### Mentor teacher

Meanwhile, the teacher-mentor is a teacher with a professional degree. Sotomayor et al. (2015) explain that they should be responsible for providing knowledge of the school culture, as well as teaching knowledge to educators, but they do not discuss the implications of this assertion, which displays the assimilationist and neocolonialist approach of the IBEP: educators must be socialized in a community which is external to them to ensure that they *function* well, to be validated, and for that they need a *mentor* (Lagos, 2015; Pozo, 2014). Moreover, as Loncón (2013, p. 49) says, these mentor teachers do not have knowledge or experience in methods of intercultural and bilingual education and are not bilingual in indigenous language-Spanish either (this is confirmed by the study by Acuña, 2012, pp. 15-16; see also Trevino et al., 2013), which certainly limits the contribution they can make to the work of a traditional educator and the functioning of the IBEP. Similarly, as they are not language teachers, they cannot contribute to the development of indigenous language courses either. However, one cannot blame the mentor teachers, who are asked to implement an educational program for which they were never prepared. As mentioned by Turra, Ferrada, and Villena (2013), many teachers, particularly those who work in indigenous contexts, have not been trained to work in contexts of cultural diversity.

In summary, rather than «tangibly [fostering] an intercultural relationship and feedback between both during the educational process» (Sotomayor et al., 2015, p. 5), as some authors assume this pair teaching promotes a situation of asymmetrical bilingualism (Calaforra, 2003; Thomason, 2001, p. 4), where it is the minority group (in this case consisting of traditional teachers and indigenous students) that must try

With this my intention is not to blame educators who are not totally proficient in their languages. My objective is to criticize the lack of a realist and critical approach that avoids idealizations regarding the educators and which, thus, enables us to better understand the challenges involved in the teaching of indigenous languages in the best possible way.

to function in both languages. Development of bilingualism is neither necessary nor obligatory for the rest of the school community (Lagos, 2015). Thus, it is difficult for the teaching pair to contribute to creating appropriate conditions for the use of indigenous languages in and outside the classroom, and thus extend their usage and promote the development of bilingualism in schools with the IBEP.

Instead, it contributes to perpetuate what Quilaqueo, Quintriqueo, Torres, and Muñoz (2014, p. 274) describe as «the power structures that have perpetuated hegemonic knowledge systems». The literature on the IBEP should shift towards critical discussion of this pair teaching, not only as an instrument for effective teaching of indigenous languages, but also regarding its methodological, political, and epistemological implications.

## **Discussion and conclusions**

We cannot deny the contribution that various studies have made understanding the challenges faced by the IBEP as an intercultural education program. However, most of these studies have not focused sufficiently on the different linguistic aspects involved in this program. The predominant discourse has been about interculturality and that has not allowed coherent discourse on bilingualism and the teaching of indigenous languages in schools. It can be stated that, after 20 years, the debate has not advanced significantly in this regard.<sup>15</sup>

This lack of systematic attention to the bilingual component of the IBEP and the various aspects related, such as those discussed in this paper, has hindered our understanding of the complexity involved in effective promotion of indigenous languages through formal education in schools, which, as has been shown in other contexts, can play an important role in efforts to revitalize and maintain indigenous languages, always in collaboration with the communities involved (Hornberger, 2008; Poetsch & Lowe, 2010).

After this critical review of the academic debate' state on these three aspects (contexts, methodologies, and pair teaching), it can be concluded that: since most of the studies on IBEP do not consider more complete descriptions of the sociolinguistic reality of indigenous children, they do not understand the real challenges of the program, regarding its language goals in each context. These objectives cannot be the same for different contexts and should be linked, among other things, to «the possible uses that the language may have in the diverse community spaces» (Oñate, 2005, p. 11). Clear identification of the sociolinguistic situation of the indigenous population would also help determine the linguistic and cultural elements that the communities could contribute to Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE), since their participation is essential to the success of the program (Oñate, 2005). Similarly, these descriptions underline the importance of including not only indigenous language teachers, but also teachers of Spanish as L2 in certain contexts. In short, the objectives of a bilingual education program should depend on the situation of the language in a community. In this sense, more detailed ethnographic and sociolinguistic profiles are needed of different communities, which are aimed at overcoming the general characterization of indigenous languages at the national level (of a quantitative nature) in order to better understand the sociolinguistic situation in these communities.

On the other hand, the few studies that have addressed the linguistic component of the IBEP have limited their attention to methodological issues, ignoring that this is a context marked by the lack of indigenous language teachers. Furthermore, although there are calls for the need to incorporate second language teaching methodologies, at the same time a radical division is promoted between traditional and Western methods of language teaching. As has been proposed, this distinction becomes unsustainable. The so-called traditional methods have not been identified or described in detail, while the label of Western methods is a generalization that primarily reflects ignorance of a long tradition of language teaching (including the teaching of indigenous languages). This discussion also ignores the fact that, one way or another, the IBEP is already functioning in «teaching spaces specific to the Western repertoire» (Pozo 2014, p. 216), with the possibilities and limitations that implies. On the other hand, this division between traditional and Western methods seems to operate with a homogeneous, idealist, and mainly essentialist view of the communities and their cultural practices and cannot respond to the current indigenous reality (see Luna, 2015, pp. 6-8 for a critical discussion of the consequences of cultural essentialism). This debate also fails to include or acknowledge the new *non-traditional* areas of use of indigenous languages, such as Internet, and their contribution to the language teaching, nor does it involve indigenous children, their interests, their motivations, and their learning styles, for example. Finally, while on one hand it promotes an intercultural approach to learning, where there is dialogue and interaction between cultural elements and the mutual influence of different traditions is recognized, on the other, it promotes strict separation and opposition between different ways of teaching language, where one appears to be superior to the other. Studies on language socialization would contribute a great deal to this debate (as shown by the

A recent example of this is a case study on the implementation of the Indigenous Language Sector (Luna, Benavides, Gutiérrez, Alchao, & Dittborn, 2014), which, while proposing a valuable analysis of the educational resources used and exemplifying the good practices of action research, at no time does it suggest discussing how the teaching of indigenous language takes place in a sector designated for that purpose.

Another point that is beyond the scope of this article, and which has not yet been addressed in all its complexity, is that a thorough knowledge of the communities can also reveal opposition to this program (Abarca, 2004; Álvarez-Santullano & Forno, 2008; Fuenzalida & Casas, 2010, p. 78; Mineduc-Unicef, 2013; Ortiz, 2009).

texts in Duranti, Ochs, & Schieffelin, 2011) in indigenous communities and homes, both in the rural and urban environment. These studies can help us to support (or not) the claims about traditional ways of learning an indigenous language and can also help us understand the cultural and linguistic continuities and breaks in the current indigenous population. They would also aid us in better understanding the relationship between language and culture in these complex contexts (it is possible to find contributions, from a cognitivist perspective, in Becerra, Arriagada, Soto, Vidal, & Kom Pu Lof ñi Kimeltuwe, 2015; see also Pozo, 2014). It would also be interesting to have studies that describe the processes involved in learning indigenous languages that are typologically different to Spanish; for example, what challenges are faced by children who have to learn polysynthetic and agglutinative languages? What does this tell us about their education at schools? A first attempt in this vein in Chile was made by Palma (2008); for other contexts see Kell, 2014; Kelly, Wigglesworth, Nordlinger, and Blythe (2014).

The characteristics of traditional teachers and mentor teachers, and the nature of the relationship they establish, indicate that this teaching pair still has to overcome many obstacles to contribute effectively to an indigenous language course. Success in the teaching of indigenous languages in schools is also related to the autonomy of communities and the control they have over their educational processes (see Luna, 2015, p. 8). Pair teaching in Chile is the opposite of this, and assuming that it reflects an intercultural pedagogical methodology, seems to be too optimistic in the current context. In this regard, I agree with Pozo (2014, p. 215) about his description of the neocolonialist nature of this modality and on his call for critical research that goes beyond mere descriptions of teachers and educators and the work they do.

Finally, I would like to underline the need for dialogue with international indigenous experiences, to learn from their successes and failures in the promotion of indigenous languages in schools, with the similarities and differences seen in each case (as evidenced by the studies of Hornberger, 2008). In this vein, we also need dialogue between those who participate in this debate. One characteristic of the various studies on the IBEP in Chile is the little or no reference to the contributions that each researcher has made to this debate in the Chilean context. This paper has been intended to be a first step in that direction. I believe that this dialogue is essential to give coherence and consistency to our reflections, with the hope that they become contributions for those responsible for educational policies and, above all, for the indigenous communities and the activists, teachers, and students involved in the promotion of indigenous languages through formal education in schools, without forgetting that the future of Chile's indigenous languages does not rest solely on them.

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