INVESTIGACIÓN

Implementation of language policies at the educational institute Santos Ángeles Custodios

Implementación de políticas lingüísticas en la Institución Educativa Santos Ángeles Custodios

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Abstract

Language policies have been a controversial issue regarding the teaching-learning process of English in Colombia. Some authors have mentioned the implications that globalization and the adoption of external agendas have had in the implementation process in the classrooms. The schools and the creators of the policy have tried to design plans for the improvement of the educational conditions and these have had an impact on national exams such as the Saber Tests 11. The purpose of this study is to analyze how the Santos Ángeles Custodios Educational Institution is implementing language policies to achieve good results in the national English exams. The participants in this study were three students, one English teacher and one manager. The categories assigned for the analysis of the data were the linguistic policies, their implementation process and their impact. It was proved that linguistic policies are being implemented to obtain good results at the institution, which can be evidenced through the strengthening of English since primary school, the teaching profile, the use of texts and the instrumentalization of the language. To conclude, English has a great importance in the institution which has opened a door there into new alternatives with respect to English which indicates that there are processes of appropriation.

Keywords

National English Exam; Strengthening of English; Globalization; Implementation of Language Policies; Instrumentalization of the language; Linguistic politic.

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Resumen

Las políticas lingüísticas han sido un tema controversial con respecto al proceso de enseñanza–aprendizaje del inglés en Colombia. Algunos autores han mencionado implicaciones que la globalización y la adopción de agendas externas han tenido en el proceso de implementación en los salones de clase. Las escuelas y los creadores de la política han intentado diseñar planes para el mejoramiento de las condiciones educativas y éstas han tenido un impacto en los exámenes nacionales como las Pruebas Saber 11. El propósito de este estudio es analizar cómo la Institución Educativa Santos Ángeles Custodios está implementando las políticas lingüísticas para conseguir buenos resultados en los exámenes nacionales de inglés. Los participantes de este estudio fueron tres estudiantes, un profesor de inglés y un directivo. Las categorías asignadas para el análisis de los datos fueron las políticas lingüísticas, su proceso de implementación y su impacto. Se comprobó que las políticas lingüísticas están siendo implementadas para obtener buenos resultados en la institución, lo cual puede ser evidenciado a través del fortalecimiento del inglés desde la primaria, el perfil docente, el uso de textos y la instrumentalización de la lengua. Para concluir, el inglés tiene una gran importancia en la institución y hay una puerta abierta para las nuevas alternativas con respecto al inglés lo cual indica que hay procesos de apropiación.

Palabras clave

Examen Nacional de inglés; Fortalecimiento del inglés; Globalización; Implementación de Políticas Lingüísticas; Instrumentalización de la lengua; Política Lingüística.

Introduction

*O*ver the years, there has been a need for an international language to facilitate intellectual exchanges of ideas. Nowadays, with all the recent technological resources and advancements, English has become the language to achieve this. Currently, in the "globalization" process, English takes great significance in communication, culture, business, science, economy, and the internet. For these reasons, Colombia has adopted the English language as a strategy for competitiveness.

*C*olombia began to create different language policies as an answer to globalization. The Ministry of Education decided to adopt the Common European Framework of Reference (2009) as the reference system for learning, teaching, and assessment processes carried in the country (Decree 3870, 2006). Since, it has several programs and plans, the current one being "Colombia Bilingüe." This is a program intended for all institutions in our country, including Santos Angeles Custodios Educational Institution, which is a public and catholic school where our research was carried on. It is an urban, official school that is located *Santa Fe* neighborhood. It is close to *Terminal del Norte*, *Olaya Herrera* airport and *Parque Biblioteca Manuel Mejía Vallejo* library. This neighborhood has a low to medium socioeconomic strata and has issues of delinquency and drugs. According to *El Colombiano* newspaper, it is the center of the selling of drugs in Medellin.

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*D*espite these aspects, the institution has a good physical plant; it has enough classrooms and it counts with technological resources and plenty bibliographical material in English. The classrooms are illuminated and ventilated. Moreover, it has an auditorium, a recreational area, a library, a cafeteria and it is important to highlight that it has an English classroom with computers and three Wi-Fi connections.

*I*n 2015, this school was placed in the 170th place, out of 470 schools (private and public) located in Medellín, in the national test in regards to English, and in the 44th place out 260 public schools. Additionally, it has a document called *Plan of the English Area* which says that they are 2 to 8 points above the national average in English. In elementary school, students have about 2 hours of English per week; in 6th to 9th grade, they have 4 hours; and in 10th and 11th grade, they have 3 hours of English and 1 hour of French. The document states that the institution has suitable professionals, graduated and specialist teachers in each area.

Statement of the problem

*T*hroughout the last decades, language policies issued in Colombia have been analyzed and discussed from different perspectives. Some scholars emphasize the positive aspects and others criticize its de-contextualized guidelines. From the National Bilingual Plan (Plan Nacional de Bilingüismo) to the current plan called "Colombia Bilingüe", some studies have focused on the analysis of these policies and their impact on the education system. One of these studies argue that these policies are de-contextualized, having very little impact in the English learning process as a result (Pelaez & Usma, 2017). However, the authors note that results had improved in contrast to the previous years. In 2007, English was set as part

of the ICFES, now called Pruebas Saber 11, and it became essential to high school students in order to graduate. For that reason, it is necessary to explore what factors have influenced those results in order to preserve them and to keep moving forward since English is a challenge for our context and also for the Santos Angeles Custodios Educational Institution.

Literature review

*T*his is not the first time Colombia experiences the process of learning a language. During colonization times, indigenous communities were forced to learn Spanish language, which was imposed. Now, regarding English, a different variety of programs, action plans and strategies have emerged to achieve some governmental goals about language acquisition. Furthermore, English teaching has become mandatory, especially with the new Law of Bilingualism (1651, 2013) which modifies some articles of the General Education Law (115, 1994) and also compels English as the language to be taught in Colombia (article 8). These initiatives, norms, programs, decrees, laws, for achieving these goals are called language policy. Language policy is the integration of three elements: practices, ideologies and planning towards a language a community has (Spolsky, 2004).

*S*ome of the programs created for teaching and learning English in Colombia before the XXI century were: The English syllabus, the COFE project and the curricular guidelines for foreign languages. In 1982, The English syllabus emerged in order to improve the foreign language teaching and learning; it was introduced for 6th to 11th grade. This reform was addressed to students with low levels or proficiency; then, the COFE (Colombian Framework for English) project was created during the early 90's. This project was focused on local educators across the country. Then, in 1999, the government proposed the Curricular Guidelines for Foreign Languages. These language policies have been the result of the adoption of external agendas (Usma, 2009).

*I*n 2004, the National Bilingual Program (NBP) was created by the now ex-president Álvaro Uribe Vélez, the ex-ministry of Education Martha Cecilia Vélez White, and the British Council. This plan intended that 100% of graduated students from high school would acquire a B1 level of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference, by 2019, in order to be able to interact with the a global. Then, after the government´s transition, the "Programa de Fortalecimiento de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras" (PFDCLE) emerged, but now with a different goal for 2014. The same percent mentioned previously was reduced to 40%. Later, "Colombia Very Well" (PNI) appeared and the governmental aim was that at least 50% of the graduated Colombian students would be proficient in the English language by 2025. Finally, the current National Plan, "Colombia Bilingüe" came up with the ideal of having the 8% competitive citizens in the language by 2018.

*D*ifferent perspectives and opinions in regards to these plans have emerged. Several authors claim that adopting international agendas addressed to different countries for Colombia is a mistake (Ayala & Álvarez, 2005, Guerrero & Quintero, 2009, Usma, 2009). This country is a multicultural region in which there are minority groups that have their own dialects and they speak Spanish as a second language (Valencia, 2013); nevertheless, there is an exclusion of those languages (Usma, 2009; Guerrero, 2008). One of the most widely discussed and salient notions several authors have made emphasis on is the

definition given to the word "bilingual" (Bonilla & Tejada, 2016 y Valencia, 2013), which meaning is limited to being able to communicate only in English and Spanish; Furthermore, a great part of the country is involved in an internal armed conflict, so the idea of learning English is not considered for all the community as a priority (Valencia, 2013).

*O*ther perspective, according to (Sánchez and Obando, 2008), is that language policies are not clear for an English class's development, so the set goals are hardly achieved. Besides, Usma (2009) says that only the private sector has privileged conditions to achieve the government initiatives while, according to Cárdenas (2006), there are few opportunities to use English language for the other sectors because of the lack of investment.

*C*olombian language policies designed plenty of materials for the class development, but unfortunately, those are not contextualized and connected with the realities lived in the different schools. Usma (2005) claims policies are created with a "top-down" perspective, which means they are created only taking into account the governmental necessities, when it should be done focusing on the necessities of the local communities. On one hand, one of the issues teachers face is the difficulty to identify the conditions that affect the teaching and learning process in order to connect policies with the necessities of the context (Maturana, 2011). On the other hand, according to Ocampo (2002), language policies limit teachers' autonomy while they implement the guidelines.

*F*inally, these opinions invite the whole community to appropriate the language policies into the different contexts (Usma, 2015), and recognize the teachers' role as Policy Makers (Ricento, 2009). Language policies must be analyzed under a critical-sociocultural approach, recognizing these language policies as taken from external agendas to be implemented locally, but those should be appropriated and reconfigured for the real conditions a community or school has (Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009).

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Research question

*A*fter some discussions made in class and reading some papers, we discovered that there are a lot of perspectives in regards to the language policies designed for the country, and the results that their implementation have had in the national test. Those are negative answers due to the fact that the goals have been not achieved. Despite that, we think something must be working in the Santos Ángeles Custodios Educational Institution, and we want to analyze how language policies are being implemented and its impact in the Pruebas Saber 11. For that reason, our research question is:

*H*ow is Institución Educativa Santos Angeles Custodios implementing language policies in order to obtain good results in the National Test?

Objectives

General objective

*T*o analyze how Institución Educativa Santos Angeles Custodios is implementing language policies to obtain good results in English in the National Test.

Specific objectives

- To identity the factors that influence English teaching, learning and assessment in the institution.

- To describe the elements and the context in which English teaching occurs.

- To interpret the data collected in order to determine the language policies implementation for having an impact in English in the National Test.

Method

Research methodology

*T*aking into account the main objective, this research, the data collection, analysis and interpretation, were developed under a qualitative approach. According to (Glesne, 2015), a qualitative research is done only with the intention to comprehend and interpret reality lived by people.

*E*ven though this research is a case study, it was developed by a group of researcher in different agencies with the idea of analyzing the different realities schools live; therefore, it is part of a multiple case study. Each researchers' team was in charge of developing the same research, but addressed differently. We kept the same question, same objectives, same literature review, but the study of the real phenomenon brought different results. In a multiple case study, the goal is the exploration and understanding of complex issues (Gulsecen & Kubat, 2006, as cited by Zainal, 2007). The data collected was analyzed under an interpretive paradigm to have a whole understanding of reality and have a meaningful knowledge of the nature of people and culture (Walsham, 1995).

Population

*P*articipants selected for the development of this research provided information to analyze how the language policies are implemented to obtain good results in English in the National Test. In this case study, students from 10th and 11th grade, one English teacher, and the coordinator (called in the institution as "professor-coordinator") were the focus of the research.

*O*ne student from 10ᵗʰ grade and two students from 11ᵗʰ grade were interviewed by the researchers in order to gather information about their experience in the English classroom, students who are in the process of preparation for the Pruebas Saber 11. Students with the best academic performance in the English subject were chosen for the application of the instruments. An English teacher from 11ᵗʰ grade was required for the research to give insight into the process and methodologies his English classes have. Finally, the professor-coordinator (that is, the coordinator of the school) was part of the study, who provided information about the language policies the school is implementing.

Data collection

*F*or the achievement of the objectives, three different actions were carried out:

Class observation

*B*earing in mind the main objective of this research, we wanted to evidence how the different methodologies, diverse factors and practices showed in the classroom contribute to the issue.

Interviews to different participants in the English learning process

*T*hree different semi-structured interviews for the professor-coordinator, English teachers and students were created to gather information about the perspective they have towards the institutional language policies, its implementation in the classroom and its impact not only inside the school, but outside of it. The semi-structured interview was guided by a set of questions designed by the researchers, but during the development of those, different questions emerged. This instrument was intended to initiate a dialogue between the researchers and the interviewee. Dexter (1970, As cited by Bell, 2014) states it is "described as 'a conversation with a purpose'. You need certain information and methods have to be devised to obtain that information, if at all possible."

Documents Analysis

*I*n order to understand how language policy is implemented in the school, we checked and examined some institutional documents as SIEE, the PEI and the Plan of the English Area.

*T*hat data collected attempted to answer the question and determine what the factors that promote the language policies implementation are for obtaining good results in English in the National Test, as well as the connection professor-coordinator, teachers and students have on the given answers.

*S*ome ethical considerations were taken into account. First, the collected information only was gathered with the participants' permission. Second, the participants' identity were protected using pseudonyms; participant were named as participant 1, participant 2, participant 3, participant 4 and participant 5. The "Ley estatutaria de protección de datos" was used for increasing the security towards the use of their personal information. Collected data only was used with academic purposes.

Data analysis

*T*he collected data were analyzed under some categories agreed by the group of researchers involved in the case study and defined by the research question. Evidence was classified and analyzed under three main categories: language policy, the process of implementation and the impact of mentioned items. For the development of the analysis, the categorization was done in a manual way. The identification of patterns was a clue to recognize information for each category and discover the findings, and the elaboration of the conclusion. During the analysis, data was faced in a directed way with the research question.

*T*he two ways we used analyze the information were the data triangulation and the investigator triangulation. On one hand, the data triangulation involves using different sources of information in order to increase the validity of a study. In extension, these sources are likely to be stakeholders in a program—participants, other researchers, program staff, other community members, and so on; while the research triangulation is used of one theory proposed by an investigator in order to interpret the data (Guion, Diehl & McDonal, 2002).

*T*he collected data will be validated through participant validation methodology. This methodology is done when the analysis and interpretations are presented to participants for them to consider how their words (data) match what they intended to say or to what extend their words were accurately captured. Once finished, the data analysis returned to the school, where the participants will check and approve the results and findings.

Results

*A*fter the instruments were applied to students in 10th and 11th grades, the English teacher and professor-coordinator, data were triangulated as we sought to answer the main question of this research, which is how Institución Educativa Santos Angeles Custodios is implementing language policies to obtain good results in English in the National Test. To evidence it, four elements emerged from the data analysis towards the established categories: strengthening of English classes in elementary school education, the teachers' profile, the use of textbooks for the class development and the instrumentalization of the English language.

Strengthening of English classes in elementary school

*T*he focus of this research is to analyze how language policies are implemented to achieve good result in English in the National Test, and for that our instruments were only addressed to the students whose communicative competence in English is better. One of the findings about the English success the "Santos Angeles Custodios" Educational Institution is based on the job done on the primary school education and what could be called as: the English strengthening since elementary school.

*T*his school's results in the "Prueba Saber 11" test have been favorable, and participants claimed these results have been the product of a long process. Each year, high school teachers work for the improvement of learning outcomes. As participant 1 claims: "Buenos resultados realmente, o sea, nosotros estamos pendientes cada año; se sube el nivel y se ganan unos puntos, no digamos que son demasiados, siempre estamos en línea ascendente en inglés". There are strategies to face the challenges teachers face towards the teaching and learning of the language, like the development of tasks, semblances, and other activities, but they affirmed English teaching in primary school is a key for the success students have in secondary school in the National Test.

*I*n the institution, English teaching in primary school is something new. They had not established English as a subject for the young learners, until it was made mandatory in the General Education Law (following the Bilingualism Law from 2013). Since, they have adopted it as part of their institutional curriculum, not only for secondary students, but also for the elementary school students. For this reason, the institution has recently taken action to answer to these mandates. Participant 2 expressed that there had been changes since the implementation of the Law: "antes aquí no había inglés en primaria entonces las niñas llegaban a sexto con un nivel cero y yo pienso que la primaria es fundamental." Even though the school took these actions, participant 2 testified that there are disadvantages because other schools, especially in the private sector, have a stronger English curriculum and investment for kids, and therefore, other schools are in a higher rank in "Prueba Saber 11" test.

*A*s a result, an English syllabus for elementary school students was created for the development of English classes, but as participant 3 said, elementary school teachers are not qualified to teach a foreign language, in contrast with secondary teachers. Most of the students in higher grades have been in the institution since kindergarten, as participant 4 expressed: "he estado aquí desde preescolar; ha sido como una familia para mí... uno ha estado todo el día acá, uno se gradúa". She ensures her elementary school education in the institution was extremely basic. Vocabulary such as animals, colors, and others in English were presented in the early grades offered, and repetition of words was the most common methodology used by the teacher.

*M*oreover, English education that young learners receive is not enough to face the English component in the National Test. As it was mentioned by participant 3:

> Yo me siento segura, pero no es por las clases, sino por lo que uno aprende aparte, afuera. Yo no creo que lo que salga en esas pruebas sea lo que nos han enseñado acá. Yo creo que es muy básico como para prepararnos para eso.

*T*hat means, students must prepare themselves to achieve a better result in the "Pruebas Saber 11" test.

*E*nglish strengthening has been a key for success, but elementary school teachers are not the main reason. Participants claimed is because of the support practicum students from different English teaching programs in the city have given to the institution. English results have improved. In the case of participant 1, he said "hemos traído un muy buen recorrido con los niños de primaria a excepción de este año." This year, they have not had enough practice as in previous years. Without this support, results in the English component of the National Test were probably be affected.

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Teachers' profile

*T*he teachers' preparation in the English area in the "Santos Angeles Custodios" Educational Institution is an aspect, which we as researchers, cannot ignore. They play an important role in students' performance. The teachers' preparation is one of the most controversial issues in education policy, (Ingersoll, Merrill, and May, 2012) fortunately; it is not the case of this school, due to the "Santos Angeles Custodios" Educational Institution counts with prepared professors to practice the teaching labor.

*I*n order to understand the importance of teachers' preparation and their power in the English learning process, Stronge and Tucker (2005) presented some key-qualities of effective teachers. To begin, they state that a teacher should have formal preparation training; participant 1 said that teachers in the school are: "muy calificadas, con estudios en el exterior, personas muy dedicadas al área y personas que de cierta forma han tenido la posibilidad de codearse en otros campos a nivel universitario," which lead us to think that they are achieving this point. To reaffirm this idea, participant 2 said in the interview: "yo soy licenciada en educación inglés- español de la Universidad de Antioquia, estudié y me gusta mucho el francés y entonces hice varios cursos, varios años de francés." She is qualified and trained to teach English, and she is also in a continuous process of learning not only English, but also a third language: French.

*A*ccording to Stronge and Tucker (2005), another significant aspect to explore is having taught for, at least, three years, due to the fact that experience is of great importance in order to know how to teach students better how to learn a language. Participant 2 said: "La experiencia mía es bastante amplia, yo llevo muchos años enseñando inglés…" she states she is teaching English since 1982, which is more than 30 years of experience. Aside from the experience, Stronge and Tucker (2005) also suggests that a teacher should be caring, fair and respectful with the students. As stated by Cámere (2009), "cuando el docente es íntegro conoce su materia, es cálidamente exigente por ser ejemplar, logra el afecto y la admiración de sus alumnos. Su prestigio mueve al alumno a responder con respeto, atención e interés por su curso". Participant 4 made us reflect this ideas, for she has a great relationship with the teacher: "A mí lo que me gusta más de la clase de inglés es como que nos llevamos bien con la profesora, entonces al uno llevarse bien con la profesora, uno aprende más y es más ágil en el inglés."

*T*o finish with the key qualities of effective teachers, Stronge and Tucker (2005) expressed that a good teacher should hold high expectations for themselves and their students. Something interesting is that participant 2 said she wants students to learn not only to pass the subject:

> Yo trato siempre de hacer lo mejor, buscando precisamente que los estudiantes aprendan, porque el objetivo funda-mental es que ellos aprendan, no que ganen, sino que aprendan; y eso es algo que yo les repito todo el tiempo a los estudiantes, si usted aprende, como consecuencia lógica, debe ganar.

*M*oreover, Stronge and Tucker (2005) conclude by stating key strategies to be an effective teacher. They argue that they should dedicate extra time to instruction, preparation and reflection, as indicated by participant 4:

Tuve la oportunidad de tener una beca de corta duración con el gobierno francés para ser un estudio en metodología y perfeccionamiento lingüístico en Francia. Estuve en la universidad de Toulouse, estuve cuatro o cinco semanas en Toulouse y otras en París y eso es todo.

*O*n the other hand, the school does not count with prepared teachers for elementary school, but they have some pre-service teachers in practicum from "Universidad Católica Luis Amigó" to teach English. Participant 1 asserted the necessity of having practicum students to teach English in primary school, and was concerned because more teachers were not coming: "este año nos abandonaron, pero necesitamos esos practicantes y que por favor esa grabación la escuchen, porque necesitamos urgentemente los practicantes, porque hemos traído un muy buen recorrido con los niños de primaria a excepción de este año". He also claims, "necesitamos en este momento en primaria porque nosotros no tenemos docentes calificados para trabajar en primaria esta área tan importante".

*T*he participation of practicum students is not a new phenomenon in the "Santos Angeles Custodios" Educational Institution, and it is important to highlight their mission in the school. They use to help teachers in primary school giving English classes which it is a relevant factor. Due to as (Comfort and Tinsley, 2012) claim "early learners tend to be more intuitive, less anxious and better at acquiring the sounds and rhythms of the new language" and also, "the primary curriculum provides many opportunities which can be exploited for language learning".

*P*articipant 2 asserted that teaching and learning English in primary school is important: "me parece muy importante porque antes aquí no había inglés en primaria entonces las niñas llegaban a sexto con un nivel cero y yo pienso que la primaria es fundamental." Moreover, it could help the school get good results in English in the National test:

ya uno ve que las niñas llegan con una motivación, tienen unas bases que son importantes, o sea no tiene uno que partir de cero y yo siento que eso es bueno porque era una desventaja que tenía el colegio con respecto a muchos otros colegios y especialmente colegios privados, porque es los colegios privados casi desde primerito o segundito, están viendo inglés, entonces el nivel de inglés en los colegios particulares, siempre será más alto que el nivel de inglés en un colegio oficial, entonces se le da mucha importancia en el aprendizaje del inglés en la primaria.

Textbook used in the school

*E*ach language program presented by the government has in its design guidelines that will be useful for teachers when it comes to developing their classes. These guidelines can be useful for teachers' work and students learning process because those are the bases to develop their classes and it serves as a support in the teaching process. Many of these books are not created to be contextualized for all the students in the country; rather, these books are designed with a one-size-fits-all solution. Most of them follow the requirements of international agendas (Usma, 2009).

*I*n this school, the use of textbooks is of paramount importance because it helps the teachers in the development of their classes. The textbooks are used mostly in high school. There are different books that are used in the institution as "Mega Trance" which is for the 8th graders (this book was not given by the government, but they decided to implement it as a lack of material for this grade). For 9th, 10th and 11th

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grade, they used one which it is given by the government, "English please!". These have some advantages and disadvantages that bring consequences in the process of teaching and learning English. Positive aspects mentioned by participant 2 during the interview were:

> ese texto es muy didáctico, ese texto tiene diferentes tipos de ejercicios, unas rutinas muy chéveres porque los estudiantes trabajan distintos tipos de actividades, sopas de letras, hay crucigramas, ósea, hay ciertos tipos de ejercicios que al final de la unidad les permite como retomar todo, les permite autoevaluarse y tienen unos resúmenes en la primera parte que es la parte de adquisición que es la parte de work book.

*T*here are a few of limitations, as the number of books sent to the school for each grade is not enough. as it was expressed by participant 2 in the interview: "para algunos grados no tenemos muchos libros, pero las niñas están dispuestas en fotocopiar las páginas para trabajar en el salón de clase, uno ve la motivación de ellas para aprender". Another aspect is the content. Many times the content proposed by the book is confusing for teachers and students because there is no connection between themes, because some are presented in an isolated manner; furthermore, the activities are out of context and students find it difficult to make connections between previous and current knowledge. As it was claimed by participant 2:

> estamos trabajando con unos textos que mandó el MEN y con esos textos "ladrilluditos" más bien, muy ladrilluditos, tienen demasiadas cosas, son demasiado grandes, saltan de una cosa a la otra, no hay una cierta continuidad y una… no me parece ahí, desde mi punto de vista, mental y simple, le falta una muy buena metodología de trabajo, entonces las niñas no es que se emocionen mucho con ese texto, precisamente por eso, por el tipo de diseño, el dibujo, la letra, los tipos de ejercicios, o sea uno tiene que buscar como por fuera otro tipo de ejercicios para guiar lo que trae el texto.

*M*oreover, these books are so long it is impossible to finish them, leaving students passing the course with gaps because they could not cover all the topics presented in it: "obviamente nunca termina de trabajar ni el uno ni el otro porque son textos demasiado grandes y poco… bueno, didácticos diría yo" (participant 3). The book has monotonous activities which tire the students. Because of this, the teachers are forced to look for other alternatives that motivate students.

*F*inally, the textbooks are useful material that help teachers in their classes because they can guide, motivate and propose different alternatives to be developed in the classroom. However, external agendas adopted are not matching with our context, as Nation and Macalister (2010) suggest that teachers have to identify the needs, deficiencies and desires that the students may have. In order to take advantage of those things and articulate it with the English themes required, those textbooks are not contextualized and cannot be adhered easily to the needs, requirements in the country base on the language.

The instrumentalization of the English language

*L*anguage teaching has been instrumentalized as the world has created the necessity to have its students learn English (Ricento, 2009). As participant 1 said in the interview: "y la misma necesidad que el medio ha creado hace que sea muy importante saber inglés, porque éste abre caminos en la vida laboral". That is why English has been an instrument and it has acquired the importance to be a universal language.

*T*he instrumentalization of language also has taken part in the economic models because everything is thought through the labor, production, and market forces, as it was expressed by participant 1: "Muy necesaria en cuanto a la aplicación en el medio, completamente necesaria en cuanto a lo académico, a nivel laboral". Moreover, students express the necessity to learn this foreign language. According to participants 3 and 4, they are learning English outside the school because they consider that what teachers teach them is not enough to face the current social and labor demands.

*F*urthermore, the plan of the English area designed in the school in order to follow the national language policies has in its justification that learning another language, in this case English, gives possibilities to face the globalization process; as it is expressed in the English syllabus: "con este proyecto pretendemos abrir las puertas a un mundo y despertar en las jóvenes el INTERÉS por aprender nuevas lenguas." This means that English has had an aperture from different disciplines in the world.

*D*ue to the learning of this foreign language, in this case, English has changed the way of thinking in the world; and nowadays, is considered an illiteracy issue, as mentioned by the participant 1:" El medio lo exige, en este momento, creemos que el analfabetismo no es por saber leer o escribir, sino que porque no se sabe inglés o tecnología" that how English has become an essential tool for the humanity because it takes parts in all domains (economic, political, academicals and social).

Discussion

Implications and interpretations

*S*ome considerations that emerged in the interpretation of the findings were:

*T*o begin, each institution has their own characteristic, ideas, beliefs and ways to design a curriculum, but they must follow a set of rules provided by the government. When implementing those, the success of the program will be delimited and can also present some inconsistencies to achieve those goals. A question arises: shall we implement or adapt language policies? It is a question that put us in the role of evaluating the policies proposed by the government in order to detect the weaknesses and the strengths that the program could have in the institution.

*T*he main problem with language programs is that the top-down process of design is affecting the way in which the institutions are implementing the programs. On one hand, these plans are not matching with the real context, and on the other, the goals proposed in the program are unrealistic, according to the percent of the population is supposed to be proficient in the language when they finish their high school. That is why teachers are invited to be policy makers in order to take all those necessities and strengths for the designing the policies aligned with the context (Ricento, 2009).

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*E*nglish has been taken as a lingua Franca and that is why this language is important in the globalization process nowadays. Policy makers must take into account the necessities the community has in order to attend the social, economic and political demands. Currently, the kind of English to be learned h is addressed to economic, social, and political relations, with the aim to take place in the international agendas.

*F*inally, the school where our research was carried out goes beyond the traditional idea of bilingualism. They decided to implement a third language which is French. It benefits students not only to open doors to the globalized world; it can help them to develop their cognitive skills. It is a sample of how members of the educative community can appropriate and create their own language policies inside the institution and thus teachers can become policy makers (Ricento, 2009)

Conclusions and recommendation

*A*s a conclusion, we recommend the school to keep moving forward, because there is hope. The school is doing a good job regarding the process of teaching and learning and how they are appropriating the National Language Policies and the way they are implementing their own Language Policies. The motivation regarding the processes of teaching and learning English is satisfactory at the moment of revising the National English Result of "Pruebas Saber 11" test and they can see how the strategies develop inside the classroom are changing the students' life, not only there, but also outside. They just want to be competent in English and classes at school have been inspiration for being better. We as researchers want to leave these questions for future investigations: What does it happen when schools do not have the sources provided by the government? And how does the learning of a third language affect students in a public school?

Conflict of interest

*T*he authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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