

The Importance of Intercultural Bilingual Education: a Case Study of Chiapas

Juan Emilio Balas Leon¹, Norma Garcés Garcés², Jessica Ivonne Caguana Baquerizo³, & Andres Alberto Chavez⁴

Introduction

Mexico one of the biggest country in Latin America and has 32 states. As a result, there are big cultural differences between all these regions. Regardless all the differences, the isa rigid school system which is intend to be implemented in all the country. Despite of recent changes in government policy to implement indigenous languages into the nation system. (Santibanez et al., 2005), there have been several challenges because access to education still lower for indigenous population (García& Velasco, 2012). Chiapas is a great example of the great cultural and linguistic diversity that is found in education (García& Velasco, 2012) also, as a result of the assortment of instructive arrangements that have been executed by different performers with an end goal to offer intercultural bilingual training (or educación intercultural bilingüe, EIB) to indigenous understudies.

This research will investigate the distinctive endeavors by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and the government to make education acceptable to the needs of the indigenous people by looking at some case studies. We will pay attention to public school and schools that were created by the Zapatistas in order to provided quality indigenous education to their community. Even though, there is a real need of native language education, and that there have been programs implementation. We believe that EZLN has been successful to meet the real needs.

History of EIB in Mexico

Mexico has the most linguist diverse country in the world with more that 77 languages and over 10 millions speakers (Santibanez, 2016).As a result of this diversity, the governmenthave implemented programs to reach indigenous students. However, the implementation of these programs has had a positive impact on indigenous empowerment. Chiapas's population consists of 40% of indigenousspeaking language. and have been affected by linguistic policies (García& Velasco, 2012).Mexico has push hegemony of the Spanish language and European culture. By having a strong centralized education system; the central government controls all aspects of education for the country from curriculum to planning and textbooks (Bermúdez-Urbina, 2015)

Bilingual education was implemented starting in the 20th century, but as a way to improve the understanding from Spanish to Indigenous people. Instead of embracing native language, it was used to promote Spanish (Baronnet, 2013). Policymakers and ministries of education have failed to use bilingual education programs to promote indigenous languages and culture. Although the Coordinación General de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (CGEIB) has made indigenous textbook, they have not been able to make significant changes to improve linguistic and cultural hierarchies.

The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional is another key player to bring bilingual education in Chiapas. On January 1994, this group revolted against the government. The EZLN protested because of "neoliberal policies that ignored the social needs of the Indigenous population" (García& Velasco, 2012, p. 3).

¹Universidad Politécnica Salesiana, jbaldas@ups.edu.ec

²Universidad de Guayaquil, norma.garces@ug.edu.ec

³Universidad de Guayaquil, jessica.caguanab@ug.edu.ec

⁴Universidad Internacional del Ecuador, anchavez@uide.edu.ec

The EZLN was concerned of looking for the impact that these policies would affect indigenous groups such as the education system, health, land ownership and others (Nash, 2009). In particular the EZLN's required for the "the officialization of Indigenous languages and the teaching of those languages in all schools" (García & Velasco, 2012, p. 3).

The EZLN understood that despite their efforts it was necessary the creation of autonomous schools. In 1997 because of the lack of a true implementation by the State government, the EZLN decided to create autonomous schools (Gutiérrez Narváez, 2006; Martínez, 2015). As a result of their effort the program "Semillita de Sol" was created in order to train teachers (Gutiérrez Narváez, 2006). According to Gutiérrez Narváez (2006), there were over 400 primary, secondary and language autonomous schools in all Chiapas which focus was to provide intercultural education to their communities.

Theoretical Framework

The idea of intercultural education focuses on pedagogy that is based on critical thinking and helping students to learn and embrace cultures. By having a multiple vision of their own culture and the "other" and understanding how communication impacts communities. The goal of intercultural learning is to embrace both cultures. According to Straub (1999) it is vital for students to learn competencies by learning their own and other cultures, traditions, and languages in order to be an active part of their community.

Intercultural education can be an empowering tool for children and adults. By better understanding their languages, and their culture; students can be an important part of their communities. Besides all these benefits, intercultural education can also "reconstruct the profound structure of the political economy, culture, and power in the contemporary social situation" (McClaren, 1998, p. 289; Gutiérrez Narváez, 2006, p. 98). When intercultural education is well implemented, students can become active citizens in their communities by using their own language and better understanding their culture (Rebolledo & Miguez 2013). Both the federal government and EZLN have implemented EIB, however the latter has been more successful because their programs have adapted to the needs of their community (Chavez, 2015).

Findings

Public schools

As mentioned earlier, the government has created EIB programs for indigenous students since 1978. While policies have been created nationwide to use intercultural bilingual education, there have been several problems during the implementation, and by reinforcing the hegemony in the country and the idea that "todossomociales" (Martínez, 2015). These programs have provided small results, when helping students to better understand their culture. There have been problems in how educators are chosen and prepared, and the utilization of dialect in the classroom. (Alfonso, 2017)

An important characteristic of the Mexican education system is its centralized nature. Therefore, the ministry of education is entrusted with instructive arranging, the choice of the national educational modules and course readings, and preparing and delegating teachers. This implies instruction isn't adjusted to particular settings or societies at a nearby community, however is rather moderately uniform all through the nation. As Baronnet (2013) writes, "the Mexican State is far from being able to offer...culturally pertinent education to the children of Native towns" (p. 189). In these cases, local communities do not take a genuine interest in the implementation of the EIB schools (Baronnet, 2010). Government has focused on providing access to education but it has failed to make it adaptable to the cultural needs of these communities (Chavez, 2015).

Notwithstanding organization and educational curriculum, teachers at public "intercultural bilingual" schools are frequently prepared insufficiently to give genuine intercultural instruction (World Bank, 2005). This is exemplified in the mentalities and educational practices of the instructors. García and Velasco (2012) found that in spite of the fact that educators are committed to their jobs, they have a tendency to have low expectations for students part of the EIB program. The authors propose that these mentalities come from instructors' perception of impassive endeavors with respect to the state to give satisfactory assets to EIB schools.

Alongside low desires, educators as often as possible have predispositions against Indigenous dialects in a scholastic setting. In interviews with Cruz Pérez (2011) educators depicted Indigenous dialects as obstacles to be overcome and as a less real type of communication than Spanish.

In spite of the fact that educators in State-worked government funded schools may have great goals, their words uncover generalizations and inclinations against Indigenous people groups that are implanted in Mexican culture. Without having more intercultural capabilities themselves, it would be troublesome (and maybe inconceivable) for these teachers to profoundly move the power structure in their classrooms and groups.

At last, government EIB schools don't viably fortify Indigenous dialects. As García and Velasco (2012) compose, while educators are local speakers of an Indigenous dialect, they as often as possible sit-in groups that don't talk a similar dialect in light of the manner by which the SEP allots teachers to posts, which depends on rank instead of coordinating the qualities of instructors with communities. In view of this dialect confound, teachers are as often as possible unfit to utilize their dialect capacities to advance bilingualism and biliteracy in their understudies. What's more, they found that when educators and understudies do talk the same Indigenous dialect, educators don't take after the "fixed language allocation policy" announced by the SEP for bilingual classrooms and that Indigenous dialects "do not constitute an important object of study, and they are not used to teach significant academic content" (p. 10). As such, Indigenous dialects are not in any case educated as a "foreign" dialect, significantly less fused into the educational modules as a dialect of guideline in conjunction with Spanish. Unmistakably open EIB schools are not fortifying Indigenous dialects.

Autonomous schools

Contrary to the EIB program offered at the governmentally administered state funded schools, the Zapatistas' schools have possessed the capacity to offer "solid" intercultural bilingual instruction to Indigenous understudies in Chiapas. By making really self-sufficient schools that are controlled by the groups in which they work, empowering group contribution, utilizing educators from the towns and towns where they instruct, and giving force and regard to nearby Indigenous dialects, the EZLN's schools advance the improvement of radical intercultural mindfulness in their Indigenous understudies (Briseño, 2015)

One of the primary manners by which the Zapatistas' schools can be considered intercultural as per the above definition is their really self-governing nature. As opposed to utilizing a very brought together framework like that of the national government's schools, the EZLN's schools are firmly associated with, and controlled by, the groups in which they work. The basic leadership control for these schools rests with a "community assembly" framed of neighborhood guardians, youth, seniors, and even understudies (Baronnet, 2010). As Baronnet (2013) noticed, the get together controls all parts of the school's activity, from educational programs and materials to picking instructors and guaranteeing that the building and assets are sufficient and in repair. Such a framework enables the schools to remain firmly lined up with the requirements and estimations of the group, as opposed to having an outside system forced from a distant bureaucracy. Also, the utilization of Indigenous dialects in the organization and everyday tasks of these schools has been a critical power for the rejuvenation of those dialects (Baronnet, 2013). The aggregate activity with respect to the entire community to create and coordinate a training framework that fits their requirements advances nobility and pride in their town and culture.

Utilizing educators who are part from the groups in which they instruct is another key element for the EZLN's self-governing schools that is steady with encouraging interculturality. Similarly as with the independent basic leadership structure specified above, choosing educators from the group they are bound to instruct in guarantees that what is educated in the classroom is relevant to the understudies' regular experience and needs (Baronnet, 2010) and that the instructors are conversant in the dialect of the group. This reduces the energy of the authority of the Spanish dialect and predominant European culture in Chiapas, both by concurring appreciation to Indigenous information, personalities, and dialect in a scholarly setting and by permitting individuals from the community to be educators (Bermúdez-Urbina, 2015).

The structure of the organization and the way in which educators are chosen for the Zapatistas' self-governing schools implies that they can give a training that is profoundly intercultural. In making self-ruling schools, Indigenous people group accomplish " affirmation of [their] socio-ethnic and political identities " and enable them to change the power structures that in the past commanded their dialect and culture (Baronnet, 2010, p. 248). The utilization of Indigenous dialects in the organization of the schools and as a dialect of guideline in the classroom has prompted a rejuvenation of those dialects in the groups that have self-governing schools (Baronnet, 2013). By agreeing Indigenous dialect a position of regard and significance in the establishments of the group, the EZLN adds to their rejuvenation.

Conclusion

As mentioned before, there are huge contrasts in the way that EIB has been executed by the State and by the progressive EZLN in the territory of Chiapas. When all is said and done, government-run state funded schools are brought together and unadapted to the neighborhood culture, utilize educators from outside the group, and strengthen the energy of Spanish in Indigenous people group. Then again, the EZLN's self-governing schools are decentralized and changed in accordance with fit the necessities of the group, utilize individuals from the group as educators, and reinforce Indigenous dialects by agreeing them authenticity in a scholastic setting (Sartorello, 2014). Through these measures, government funded schools strengthen the authority of Spanish and the overwhelming, urban-driven European culture, while self-ruling EIB schools fortify and renew Indigenous dialects and societies (Alfonso, 2017). Along these lines, they move toward becoming "ideological instruments of cultural defense" (Baronnet, 2013, p. 199). Albeit both open and independent schools are "intercultural" in name, just self-sufficient schools prevail to giving intercultural training.

While the EZLN's achievement in actualizing EIB in their communities is empowering, the State's inability to do the same is unsettling. The Zapatistas' range of authority is constrained, and a huge level of the Indigenous populace both inside and outside of Chiapas doesn't approach quality intercultural training. Nonetheless, the present national instruction framework appears to be contrary with a few of the means that would should be taken to give this administration. Without decentralization and an attention on nearby needs, being willing to put basic leadership control in the hands of neighborhood groups, and perceiving the authenticity of nearby dialects and societies by and by and not simply logically, the central government will never have the capacity to give really intercultural instruction to Indigenous populaces.

This paper has given a near diagram of intercultural bilingual training in Chiapas, yet there are a few territories not investigated that could give a bearing to future research. For one, more exact information is required on the appropriation of dialect use in both open and self-sufficient bilingual schools, both with respect to the teacher and understudies. What's more, this paper has just inspected the structure and classroom practices of EIB; it is intriguing to analyze results for understudies who go to open and self-governing schools and whether factors like fulfillment, work in the wake of leaving school, and probability of relocation out of the district are influenced by the sort of school went to.

References

- Alfonso, T. (2017). Programas de doble inmersión: educación bilingüe y lenguas minoritarias en Estados Unidos y México. *Pedagogía y Saberes*, (47), 107-119.
- Baronnet, B. (2010). Zapatismo y educación autónoma: de la rebelión a la dignidad indígena. *Sociedade e cultura*, 13(2), 247-258.
- Baronnet, B. (2013). Lenguas y participación comunitaria en la educación indígena en México. *Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana*, 8(2), 183-208.
- Bermúdez-Urbina, F.M. (2015). "From Above or From Below": Constructions and Articulations of an Academic Research Field on Intercultural Education in Mexico. *Revista LiminaR. Estudios Sociales y Humanísticos*, vol. XIII(2), pp. 153-167.
- brindan servicio a la población indígena del estado de chiapas. *Revista Electrónica de*
- Briseño, J. (2015). Entrevistas comunitarias, la recuperación del conocimiento
- Cámara de diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión, Secretaría General. (2013). *Constitución comunitaria desde la escuela. El caso de las Secundarias Comunitarias Indígenas*, Oaxaca, México. Archivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas, 23 (95), <http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v23.2081>
- Chavez, A. (2015). The Effects of Globalization on International Education: The needs for rights to education and rights in education. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 4(3)
- Cruz Pérez, O. (2011). La castellanización y negación de la lengua materna en la escuela education in Chiapas. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education: Studies of Migration, Integration, Equity, and Cultural Survival*, 6(1), 1-18.
- educativa indígena en Chiapas (1994-2004). *Liminar. Estudios Sociales y Humanísticos*, IV(1), 92-111.
- García, O., & Velasco, P. (2012). Insufficient language education policy: Intercultural bilingual

gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/1.pdf

Gómez Zermeño, M. G. (2010). Competencias interculturales en instructores comunitarios que Guatemala. *Theomai*, (19), 135–159.

Gutiérrez Narváez, R. (2006). Impactos del zapatismo en la escuela: análisis de la dinámica intercultural en Chiapas. *Liminar. Estudios Sociales y Humanísticos*, IX(2), 30–42.

Investigación Educativa, 12(1), 1-25.

Martínez, E. (2015). La educación intercultural y bilingüe (eib) en México. ¿El camino hacia la construcción de un ciudadanía democrática?, *Relaciones* 141, pp. 103-131

Nash, J. C. (2009). Desarrollo para unirnos: autonomía y coexistencia multicultural en Chiapas y *política de los estados unidos mexicanos*. Retrieved from website: <http://www.diputados>.

Rebolledo, N., & Miguez Fernández, M.P. (2013). Multilingualism and bilingual education, *Fórum Lingüístico, Florianópolis*, v. 10,(4), p. 342-358 <http://dx.doi.org/10.5007/1984-8412.2013v10n4p3>

Santibanez, L. (2006). The indigenous achievement gap in Mexico: The role of teacher policy under intercultural bilingual education. *International Journal of Educational Develop*, (47) pp. 63–75

Santibanez, L., Vernez, G., & Razquin, P. (2005). *Education in Mexico: Challenges and opportunities*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/documented_briefings/DB480.html

Sartorello, S. C. (2014). La co-teorización intercultural de un modelo curricular en chiapas, México. *Revista Mexicana de Investigación Educativa*, 19(60), PP. 73-101

Straub, H. (1999). Designing a cross-cultural course. *English Forum*, 37(3).

World Bank, 2005 July. Determinants of learning policy note. Report No. 31842- MX. Colombia and Mexico Country Management Unit. Education Unit, 2005. Human Development Department Latin America and the Caribbean Region, Mexico.