Bilingual Colombia: What does It Mean to Be Bilingual within the Framework of the National Plan of Bilingualism?

Colombia Bilingüe: ¿Qué significa ser bilingüe en el marco del Plan Nacional de Bilingüismo?

Carmen Helena Guerrero*
Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Colombia

This article is a partial research report of a critical discourse analysis of the document "*Estándares básicos de competencias en lenguas extranjeras: inglés. Formar en lenguas extranjeras: ¡el reto!*" (Basic standards for competences in foreign languages: English. Teaching in foreign languages: The challenge!). The analysis was informed by theory on critical discourse analysis (CDA) and on symbolic power (particularly language as symbolic power). In an attempt to interpret what it means to be bilingual in Colombia according to this document, the data show that 1) Being bilingual means speaking English; and 2) Bilingualism is constructed as a packed, monolithic and homogeneous concept.

Key words: Bilingual Colombia, bilingualism, critical discourse analysis (CDA), symbolic power

El presente artículo es un reporte parcial de un análisis crítico del discurso del documento "*Estándares básicos de competencias en lenguas extranjeras: inglés. Formar en lenguas extranjeras: ¡el reto!*". El análisis estuvo iluminado por teorías en análisis crítico del discurso (ACD) y la teoría de poder simbólico, particularmente la lengua como poder simbólico. En el intento por interpretar qué significa el bilingüismo en Colombia de acuerdo a este documento, los datos muestran lo siguiente: 1) Ser bilingüe significa hablar inglés y, 2) El bilingüismo se presenta como un concepto monolítico y homogéneo.

Palabras clave: Colombia Bilingüe, bilingüismo, ACD (análisis crítico del discurso), poder simbólico

*   E-mail: helenaguerreron@gmail.com
    Address: 555 E Limberlost Dr. Apt. 2073 Tucson, AZ 85705

Introduction

As stated by Phillipson (1992, 2000), the British Council has worked on a campaign to spread the use of English around the world since the early years of the 20th century. This campaign has rendered very positive results (for them) and today English is a widely spoken language; Crystal (2000) estimates that 1.5 billion people use it as a first, second, or foreign language, and it has more non-native speakers than native speakers. Speaking English has been deified as an asset in the sense that it only brings benefits to those who learn it, mainly as the access to a modern world characterized by technology, wider communication, economic power, scientific knowledge, and the like (Maurais, 2003).

Colombia, like some other countries in Latin America and in the world, has adopted language policies aimed at spreading English as a foreign language, the program being "Colombia Bilingual in 10 years". Among the many actions taken by the Ministry of Education (MEN) and the British Council to promote and run the project is the publication of the "*Estándares básicos de competencias en lenguas extranjeras: inglés. Formar en lenguas extranjeras: ¡el reto!*" (Basic standards for competences in foreign languages: English. Teaching in foreign languages: The challenge!)[1]. This document comprises the data to conduct a critical discourse analysis looking at how "bilingualism" is constructed from the perspective of the Ministry of

Education (MEN thereafter) and the British Council (BC thereafter).

The reason to specifically look at these two institutions lies in the fact that both have leading roles in the publication of the "*Estándares*"[2], and the means to control and regulate the circulation of a particular discourse (Foucault, 2005). This study looks at how these two powerful institutions –the MEN and the BC– construct a discourse that redefines what it means to be bilingual in Colombia and, at the same time, regulates its spread through the aforementioned document.

The analysis of data was illuminated by two major theoretical frameworks, critical discourse analysis (CDA) and symbolic power (especially language as symbolic power). The reasons to bring these two traditions together are the following: 1) The very nature of the document (an official guideline with a specific purpose) and the particular context in which it is produced subject the document to scrutiny under the lens of CDA; and 2) One of the main concerns of CDA is the exploration of power relations. In this respect, the theory of language as symbolic power enriches the analysis of the statements made in the document regarding English in Colombia and in the world.

---

[1]   All translations are mine. I tried to keep the grammar and language choices as similar to the original as possible in order not to alter the meaning. For this reason, in some cases the translations sound awkward.

[2]   In fact, on page 2 there is the following statement: Estos Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: inglés están enmarcados en el trabajo que ha realizado el Ministerio de Educación Nacional para la formulación de Estándares Básicos de Competencias y en su Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo en convenio con British Council. [sic] (*Basic standards for competences in foreign languages: English. Teaching in foreign languages: the challenge are framed within the worked done by the Ministry of Education to state the Basic standards for competences and within its National Bilingualism Program in agreement with the British Council*) (The translation is mine).

Critical discourse analysis is now an established approach to discourse analysis that has been around since 1980. Cameron (2005) considers that the main task of CDA is to uncover "hidden agendas" in discourse in order to unveil power relationships. For Van Dijk (2005, p. 352), "CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social problems abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context". Power is at the core of CDA, which makes it different from any other approach to discourse. Fairclough (1995) states that CDA's main objective is to denaturalize ideologies that have become so naturalized that individuals are not aware of them. As such, the purpose of CDA is to show how social structures shape the form of discourse and at the same time how discourse shapes social structures.

Symbolic power is the concept developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. He defines it as "that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it". Symbolic power, in order to be effective, rests on two conditions, to wit: 1) It is based on symbolic capital; this means that only the ones who have recognition (accumulated from previous struggles) can demand respect and, consequently, can count on the other's belief that the view of the world presented by the dominant groups is the legitimate one; 2) It depends on the validity of the view of the world the dominant groups want to impose; this means their view of the world must be founded in reality (Bourdieu, 1989; 2003). In a further explanation of symbolic power, Bourdieu (1977b, p. 117) states the following:

> Symbolic power, being the power to constitute the given by stating it, to create appearances and belief, to confirm or transform the vision of the world and thereby action in the world, and therefore the world itself, this quasi-magical power which makes it possible to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained by force (physical or economic) thanks to the specific mobilizing effect being only effective if it is recognized as legitimate (that is to say, if it is not recognized as arbitrary).

According to this, Bourdieu (1989) concludes that "symbolic power is the power to make things with words" (p. 23) and he explains it with the fact that a group, a class, a region a nation, starts to exist when they are recognized as such by receiving a name, by being differentiated from others.

The ideological perspectives of these two theoretical frameworks indicate that no discourse is neutral; there is always a purpose to serve the interest of specific individual or groups presented in a hidden or subtle way. As my findings will show, the aforementioned document intends to serve the interest of a very few at the expense of the majority by constructing and spreading its own concept of bilingualism.

Research Methodology

The research methodology was framed in CDA, particularly the textual analysis approach proposed by Fairclough (1995, 2001, 2003). Fairclough's approach aims at bridging a gap between discourse analysis inspired by social theory on the one hand, and pure linguistic analysis on the other. In a textual analysis approach these two

perspectives are put together to offer a more comprehensive picture of the analysis of a text.

To develop his methodology, Fairclough draws from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). In an SFL approach, Halliday (1974) establishes three main functions of language, to wit: ideational, interpersonal and textual; Fairclough (1992, 2003) introduces a more explicit social element for each one of them and proposes *identity*, *relational* and *ideational* functions of language. To unpack how these functions are enacted in discourse, Fairclough (2001) designed a methodology that consists of three stages: description, interpretation, and explanation. *Description* deals with linguistic analysis; the second stage, *interpretation,* has to do with an analysis of the text in its relationship with other texts, other discourses, and the background in which it is produced and will be interpreted. This stage of the analysis brings together the formal features of the text and combines it with the analyst's own set of beliefs, assumptions, experiences and background to unveil the meaning of the texts. *Explanation* is the third stage and it is concerned with the analysis of the relationship between texts and the social context to explain how a text can reproduce or contest social structures, especially with regard to struggles over power. These three levels of analysis complement each other and allow the researcher to unpack ideologies that are not apparent
to the consumers of these texts.

Based on Fairclough's methodology to analyze the data, in general terms I observed the following steps:

1. An extensive review of literature about bilingualism, particularly from a sociolinguistic perspective. This was very important to confront what I found in the data with the literature on bilingualism.
2. A close examination of data by reading and re reading the document.
3. A fine grained analysis of sentences and paragraphs to unveil assumptions.
4. A search of other sources to confront my interpretation of data.
5. A categorization of my findings.

Findings

Bilingualism as a concept and as a practice is very complex. In a review of the literature about it one finds multiple issues such as what is bilingualism, how can it be measured, what are the types of bilingualism, who can be called bilingual, what are the effects of bilingualism, what is bilingual education, whose interests does bilingual education serve, and so on. These issues are examined from different fields like linguistics, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, education, and psycholinguistics; also, different ideological positions influence the way bilingualism is conceived, planned for, or constructed (Baker, 2001; Baker & Jones, 1998; Bialystock, 2001; Butler & Hakuta, 2004; De Mejía, 2002; Grosjean, 1982, 1994; Hakuta, 1986; Romaine, 1989).

This complexity has a double effect in the analysis of data because, on the one hand, it provides a full range of points of view from which to examine what

bilingualism means for the Ministry of Education (MEN) and the British Council (BC), or put in other words, what they want it to mean in the Colombian context. On the other hand, this same wide range becomes a constraint because it is not possible, given the time, data, and objectives of this research report, to deal with all the aspects involved in this matter. Bearing this in mind, the analysis presented below is by no means exhaustive; that is, I concentrated only on some aspects of bilingualism and the door is open to continue working on the interpretation of further elements.

Regarding the question that leads this study, three main categories emerged as follows: Bilingualism means speaking English; bilingualism is a packed, monolithic and homogeneous concept; and bilingualism is based on a set of myths. In this paper I will deal only with the first two categories due to space limitations.

Bilingualism Means Speaking English

Starting from the title of the handbook "Estándares", the idea the authors want to institutionalize is that the foreign language to be taught, learned and therefore used by Colombians is English:

1. Estándares básicos de competencias en lenguas extranjeras: Inglés (MEN, 2006, Cover)
2. *Basic standards for competences in foreign languages: English*
3. Formar en lenguas extranjeras: inglés ¡el reto! (MEN, 2006, Cover)
4. *Teach in foreign languages: English. The challenge!*

Having "English" after the colon might mean two things: 1) There are more handbooks in the series that will deal with other foreign languages like French, German, Italian, Chinese, or Hebrew which are the languages usually taught in Colombia (De Mejía, 2006). Notice that by saying "foreign languages" the possibility of "second languages" is excluded, which in Colombia could be any of the indigenous languages spoken[3]. This is the first hint that for the MEN indigenous languages do not represent any sort of capital, in Bourdieu's terms; henceforth, not worthy of investment, incentives, promotion, etc.) Or 2) English encapsulates and represents the ideal of foreign languages and it is more than enough working on it and ignoring other languages (Vélez-Rendón, 2003). It is the second meaning that has been more pervasive. As documented by Vélez-Rendón (2003), despite the fact that Law 115 of 1994 mandates the teaching of a foreign language, most people involved in education assume that Law 115 states that it is English that is the foreign language by default. The same discourse circulates in Japan, where foreign language teaching unambiguously means English language teaching (Kubota, 2002; Liddicoat, 2007). Judging from the context in which this handbook is produced in Colombia, within the framework of the Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo (PNB = National Plan of Bilingualism), more likely the intended meaning is the second. Besides, up to the publication of this article, there are no handbooks in this series that deal with any other foreign language.

---

3 Within the "Estándares" the authors state the difference between foreign and second language. The former is the L2 that is not spoken in the immediate context, usually only in the classroom; the latter is the L2 used for every activity outside the classroom.

The concept that being bilingual means speaking English is further emphasized as these following excerpts demonstrate:

> 3) Ser bilingüe es esencial en el mundo globalizado (MEN, 2006, p. 5)
>
> *Being bilingual is essential in the globalized world.*
>
> 4) En el contexto colombiano y para los alcances de esta propuesta, el inglés tiene carácter de lengua extranjera. Dada su importancia como lengua universal, el Ministerio de Educación ha establecido como uno de los ejes de la política educativa mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza del inglés…" (p. 5)
>
> *In the Colombian context and for the sake of this proposal, English is considered a foreign language. Given its importance as a universal language, the Ministry of Education has established, as one of the core points of its educational policy, the improvement of the quality of the teaching of English…*
>
> 5) El Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo se orienta a "lograr ciudadanos y ciudadanas capaces de comunicarse en inglés, de tal forma que puedan insertar al país en los procesos de comunicación universal, en la economía global y en la apertura cultural con estándares internacionalmente comparables" (p. 6).
>
> *The National Bilingualism Program is oriented toward "having citizens able to communicate in English in such a way that they move the country into universal communication processes, into the global economy, and into a cultural openness with internationally comparable standards.*

In excerpt number 3) the collocation of the phrases "being bilingual" and "globalized world" trigger the idea of replacing the first phrase by "speaking English", because that is the way it is usually structured. The author/s are equating bilingualism with globalization, playing with the assumption that being a speaker of English carries with it the positive

meanings ascribed to globalization like broader communication, economic power, capitalism, multinational companies, foreign investors, better jobs, better living conditions, no geographical boundaries and so forth (Tollefson, 2000; Valencia, n/d)

In excerpts 4) and 5), although the connection between being bilingual and speaking English is made explicit, the authors still rely on assumptions to reinforce their point. Fairclough (2003) defines "assumptions" as how particulars come to be represented as universals. That means that while for some people something might be true, for others it is not. English is portrayed here as the "universal" language, but as stated by Barletta (2007), this is a naïve construction that ignores the fact that in certain parts of the world English is not the first choice as a second or foreign language. In a similar way, the "universality" of English can be challenged within the same Colombian context; a child in a remote area in Colombia might not consider English as the universal language because his/her universe differs from the universe in which English is the only language.

One important characteristic of assumptions is that the author/s of a text establish/es relationships with "what has been said or written somewhere else, with the 'elsewhere' left vague" (Fairclough, 2003, p.40). This is what the authors of the "Estándares" do when they draw on discourses that associate English with "globalization", "modern world", "technology", and the like. The double function of this assumption is that, on the one hand, it serves to strengthen this association as a "universal truth" and, on

the other, the wording in each one of the five excerpts presented above, which are agentless, helps to liberate the authors from the responsibility of being the creators of that association; it was already there, they are just repeating what everybody knows. The same happens with the following quote that starts with "the current world is characterized"; by not having an agent the authors take for granted that the modern world has its current state because it is natural and not because of the influence of various power structures that have legitimized their views of the world.

> 6) El mundo actual se caracteriza por la comunicación intercultural, por el creciente ritmo de los avances científicos y tecnológicos y por los programas de internacionalización. Estas circunstancias plantean la necesidad de un idioma común que le permita a la sociedad internacional acceder a este nuevo mundo globalizado" (MEN, 2006, p. 7).

> *The current world is characterized by intercultural communication, by the growing rhythm of scientific and technological advances and by programs of internationalization. These circumstances pose the need for a common language that allows the international society to access this new globalized world.*

The assumption here is fortified by a semantic relationship of the "problem-solution" type (Hoey, 1983; Fairclough, 2003) in which the authors of the text start by describing "today's world" from a very partial angle, where the current world responds to only one characteristic: scientific and technological progress. Other characteristics of the modern world like war, famine, extreme poverty, new forms of slavery produced by savage capitalism, and others are not included in this account

of "today's world". In the second sentence, they introduce the problem and, at the same time, hint at the solution: We have to gain access to that world through a common language and that common language is English. In the same page, third paragraph, the authors add force to this assertion by explicitly mentioning English as the language that will give Colombians the opportunity to enter the modern world.

In direct opposition to this association of English with the modern world, the other implication is that even though Spanish is the third language with more speakers in the world (outnumbered by English and Arabic) which makes it one of the languages of wider communication (Thomason, 1988; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2001), it is not enough for Colombians to have access to the "current world".

This assumption made by the authors of the "Estándares" contributes to the perpetuation of certain attitudes towards languages; for example, that English is superior (and everything associated with it) and other languages are inferior (and everything associated with them). Grosjean (1982) reports a study about language attitudes conducted by Lambert and colleagues in 1960 in Montreal, in which a group of English-speaking students and a group of French-speaking students evaluated a recording made by balanced bilinguals. The results showed that both groups evaluated the English speakers more favorably than the French speakers. As the nature of the experiment shows, these evaluations do not respond to any inherent characteristic of either language but are the result of socially constructed ideas about the speakers of each language. Ideas like

these have been around for centuries and have influenced or shaped people's opinions (Pennycook, 1998a, 2000; Phillipson, 1992, 2000).

Besides the strategies discussed above, the authors of the "Estándares" reinforce the idea that being bilingual equates speaking English by excluding other languages from their bilingual project. The first big absentees are our indigenous languages. Starting from the title (example number 1), the challenge is to teach "foreign languages". No mention is made of the potentiality and profitability of teaching any of the more than sixty indigenous languages spoken in Colombia at this moment (except on the first page where they are briefly referred to). This type of enrichment bilingualism (Fishman, 1976a, 1977; Hornberger, 1991) is neither considered nor promoted within this project, which is not new if we take into account the fact that since the Spanish colonization of the Americas, the policy has been to make natives speak Spanish; the same policy prevailed after independence when the new republics felt the strong need to construct their national identity, and since the independence leaders were monolingual in Spanish, they adopted the philosophy spread by von Humboldt in 1820s of one nation/one language, and Spanish was promoted as a national identity marker (Escobar, 2004; Mar-Molinero, 2000). Finally, despite the fact that as recent as 1991 in the new National Constitution indigenous communities and minority groups were recognized as legitimate Colombian citizens and their languages recognized as official in the indigenous territories, there is no stimulus for Spanish speakers to learn indigenous languages. By

and large, if indigenous languages were not promoted during those times where their main competition was Spanish, within this new project, their possibilities are even less.

The second group that has been excluded from this project, and which strengthens the concept of "bilingualism equals speaking English", is formed by the other foreign languages that have been taught in Colombian schools and universities; those are French, German, Italian and Hebrew (De Mejía, 2005) and a growing interest in Mandarin. These languages seem to be included in the title, but very soon in the "Estándares", the authors make it clear that the language chosen is English:

> 7) En el contexto colombiano y para los alcances de esta propuesta, el inglés tiene el carácter de lengua extranjera. Dada su importancia como lengua universal, el Ministerio de Educación ha establecido como uno de los ejes de la política educativa mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza del inglés, permitiendo mejores niveles de desempeño en este idioma. (MEN, 2006, p. 1)

> *In the Colombian context and for the sake of this proposal, English is considered a foreign language. Given its importance as a universal language, the Ministry of Education has established, as one of the core points of its educational policy, the improvement of the quality of the teaching of English, leading to better performance levels in this language.*

Some pages further down, the authors state the following:

> 8) Teniendo en cuenta esta reglamentación y haciendo uso de su autonomía, las instituciones educativas colombianas han optado por ofrecer a sus estudiantes la oportunidad de aprender el inglés como lengua extranjera. Con ello pretenden brindar una herramienta útil que permita a niños, niñas, y jóvenes mayor acceso

al mundo de hoy. Este hecho se ve confirmado por los datos suministrados por el Icfes respecto a las pruebas del 2004, según los cuales el noventa y nueve por ciento de los estudiantes seleccionaron el inglés en el examen de estado. (p. 7)

Taking into account this ruling and making use of their autonomy, Colombian schools have opted to offer to their students the opportunity to learn English as a foreign language. With this they intend to offer a useful tool that allows kids and youngsters a broader access to today's world. This fact is confirmed by the figures provided by the Icfes exam in relation to the 2004 test, according to which ninety nine percent of students chose English in the national test.

The regulations referred to in this excerpt is Law 115, issued in 1994, in which one of the objectives of elementary and secondary education is to be able to speak and read in at least one foreign language. The text of example number 8 is constructed in what Fairclough (2003) calls the logic of appearances, which he defines as the tendency of certain types of texts to portray things as given, unquestionable, and inevitable. In example number 8, the authors of the "Estándares" present two events as unquestionable facts: 1) Schools made a free choice because they are autonomous; this meaning it is accentuated by the other words used in the sentence: han optado (have chosen); por ofrecer (to offer); la oportunidad (the chance, the opportunity), all of them loaded with a sense of freedom and choice. 2) Ninety-nine percent of students chose English in the national standardized test. A look at the local context in which these two events took place demonstrates that neither schools nor students have much of a choice.

The teaching of English started informally in Colombia after the end of the Second World War and it became official in 1974. By decree, the teaching of English was established in all levels of secondary school –that is from 6th grade to 11th grade. For a short period of time French was taught in 10th and 11th grade, but then English took over again (De Mejía, 2005). Schools of education, within their modern languages programs, prepared mainly teachers of English. Therefore when Law 115 was issued, schools had to choose English because that was the language their teachers could teach. For students, when the option of a foreign language was open, ninety-nine per cent selected English because this was the language they studied in school. The remaining one percent might be composed of students who attended other private bilingual schools (French-Spanish, German-Spanish, Italian-Spanish or Hebrew-Spanish). All and all, the reasons exposed by the MEN to support their decision to select English for their bilingual project prove to be based on a vicious cycle where the cause originates the effect and the effect is the origin of the cause.

Bilingualism is a Packed, Monolithic and Homogenous Goal

The previous category showed that for the promoters of the PNB, being bilingual means speaking English; the promoters of the project oversimplified the amount of languages that could be learned in a bilingual program and reduce it to one. This same pattern of oversimplification can be found in the way this so called bilingual project is set as a packed, monolithic and

homogenous goal in mainly two areas: who this project is addressed to (and whom it is not) and what is expected to be achieved with it. Due to space constraints, in what follows I will deal only with the former area.

Students as a monolithic population

In relation to the question of who this project is addressed to, on the surface it seems that it is for all Colombian school aged children, as can be seen in the excerpts below:

> 9) Así pues, se pretende que los estudiantes al egresar del sistema escolar, logren un nivel de competencia en ingles B1. (MEN, 2006, p. 6)

> *Therefore, it is intended that students, at the time of finishing school, attain a B1 competence level in English.*

> 10) Los estándares presentados se articulan con esas metas, estableciendo lo que los estudiantes deben saber y poder hacer para demostrar un dominio B1, al finalizar el Undecimo Grado. (p. 6)

> *The standards presented are stated with these goals, establishing what students must know and must be able to do to demonstrate the mastery of a B1 level, alter finishing eleventh grade.*

> 11) Como ya se explicó en la página 6, el Marco Común Europeo propone seis niveles de desempeño. En la Educación Básica y Media, nos concentraremos en llevar a los estudiantes a alcanzar el nivel B1. (p. 10)

> *As explained on page 6, the Common European Framework proposes six levels of performance. For elementary and middle school, we will concentrate on helping students attain level B1.*

The lexical choices in these paragraphs deserve attention. The use of the word "student", within the context of elementary and secondary education (egresar del

sistema escolar, finalizar Undécimo Grado, Educación Básica y Media), triggers two main assumptions. First, that in Colombia every child between five and seventeen or eighteen years old is a student; and second, that every student has access to a good quality education (in the form of time, material and human resources, location, conditions, environment, and the like) and, therefore, every child must be able to attain level B1 at the end of their high school studies.

The first assumption is far from the truth; the promoters of the PNB fail to acknowledge that not all children enjoy the same opportunities or access to education, especially in a society like the Colombian one afflicted by so many social and economic problems. Giving an account of all the situations that keep children out of the school system would make a long list, but here I will just mention a few examples. The disparity between living conditions in rural and urban areas is huge (some schools do not have electric power or water supply); therefore, the possibility of attending school and the quality of education available there vary enormously. In rural areas children are more exposed to the abuse of guerrilla and paramilitia who recruit them for their armies. Human Rights Watch (2005) reports that there are more than 11,000 children fighting in these groups, with at least one out of four being minors, and a huge number of children are under fifteen; these figures are among the highest in the world according to the same report. In some circumstances children can attend school, but usually rural schools (particularly the ones in remote areas) have only one teacher.

Another situation that affects both rural and urban areas the same is child labor (Cortina, 2000; Sarmiento, 2006). According to a report from the Programa Internacional de Erradicacion del trabajo infantil (IPEC), in Colombia one out of five children between the ages of five and seventeen work or are looking for a job (BBCMundo.com, 2005); as a consequence, 13% out of the total population of children between these ages can not attend school and the figures keep increasing each year (Procuraduria General de la Nación, 2005). The latest report produced by Fabio Arias, president of CUT (Central Unitaria de Trabajadores), is that 25% of children work in Colombia; the most usual forms of work are as maids, street vendors, agriculture, and sexual workers; one million four hundred children can not attend school (Caracol Radio, 2008).

An additional group of school aged children excluded from the PNB is the boys, girls and adolescents displaced from their hometowns due to violence. Forced displacement in Colombia is a complex phenomenon whose causes and consequences are multiple so it is almost impossible to generalize them. Nevertheless, some of the most overt causes are dispossession of lands; terrorist attacks; and control by paramilitia, guerrilla, or drug dealers in conducting illegal activities. These three causes are interwoven to create several modalities of forced displacement in Colombia. The official figures do not show the totality of the displaced population and the estimate is two million people; that is, four hundred families. The Red de Solidaridad Social de la Presidencia de la República, RSS, reports that 50% of displaced

people are women, 42% are children under eighteen years old, and 90% are from rural or semi rural areas. According to the same report, the most vulnerable members of the population are women, children, indigenous peoples, and afro-descendents[4] (Forero, 2003; MEN, 2001).

The second assumption, that all students who attend public schools have access to the same kind and quality of material and human resources, is misleading. There are deep differences between public schools in the big cities and those in the small cities; also, just comparing schools in a city like Bogotá, the dissimilarity is enormous (Ayala & Alvarez, 2005). In this sense, it is not the same to learn English in a privileged area in Bogotá where children are surrounded by information in English (stores' names, parents who speak English, cable TV, movies, etc.) and enjoy better school buildings and better resources than learning English in a deprived area in Bogotá, where streets are not even paved, and the family income does not afford proper food, much less any type of entertainment.

The following excerpt supports the assumption that the PNB is addressed to an elite group of students that exists in the minds of the proponents of this project and who could achieve the standards proposed and, thus, profit from "the opportunity to learn English" as stated in example number 8 and reinforced by the following one:

(12) [El inglés] Es la lengua que se usa con mas frecuencia en los medios de comunicación y, por ello, permite acceder a la internet, la televisión,

---

4   While the official figure is two million, ACNUR (Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados) states that the figure is three million people. (Caracol Radio, 2008)

el cine, la radiodifusión, el turismo, los diarios de mayor circulación y las revistas especializadas (académicas, científicas, literarias, tecnológicas y deportivas, entre otras) (MEN, 2006, p. 9)

[English] is the most frequently used language in mass media and, therefore, it allows access to the Internet, television, movies, radio, tourism, newspapers and specialized journals (scholarly publications, scientific, literary, technology and sports, among others).

The "other" group of Colombian children, the invisible group for the PNB, students and non students, will remain excluded from taking advantage of being bilingual (speaking English) because they do not have the economic resources to purchase access to the Internet, cable TV, movies, tourism, and all the other wonders the authors of the handbook mention in the previous excerpt[5]. A program like this will contribute to making the gap between the haves and have-nots bigger, to promoting inequality and injustice, and to maintaining the privileges of the very few (Vélez-Rendón, 2003).

All students will attain level B1 (and along with that, they will become legitimate users of L2)

Another instance in which bilingualism is constructed as a homogeneous goal is in relation to what is expected to be achieved in terms of competence in English. As stated in examples number 9), 10), and 11) the objective is that every student attain a B1 level – the first of two levels to become an Independent user according to the

terminology of the Common European Framework (CEF)[6]. The idea behind this goal is that learners/students can become ideal proficient speakers because language is conceived of as a good that can be obtained and used by anyone at any moment. A conception like this fails to see language as a social practice in which participants are constantly struggling over issues like power or identity because any linguistic exchange implies a power relationship (Bourdieu, 2003). Besides, communication can break down or lead to misunderstandings. Instead, language is portrayed as "neutral", as an instrument for communication that automatically enables its speakers to participate in any linguistic event. Such events presuppose an ideal speaker-hearer interaction detached from social reality where both parts have equal status (Lippi-Green, 1997). Furthermore, it is assumed that there is a direct relationship between competence and performance (as defined by Chomsky, 1965), so learning the rules of the language is enough to allow students to produce flawlessly an infinite number of sentences; or, as one of the assumptions criticized by Tumposky (1984) in the history of behavioral objectives goes, "Successful language learning can be accomplished by mastering pre-specified, hierarchically

---

5   As an illustration, the coverage of Internet broad band in Colombia was 0.8 users out of 100 in 2002 (Ministerio de Educacion, 2007).

---

6   The global scale presented in the CEF states that the independent user:

Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst traveling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. (CEF pg. 24)

arranged, discrete items" (p. 303). The following descriptors help to illustrate this point:

(13) Demuestro conocimiento de las estructuras básicas del inglés (MEN, 2006, p. 19)

I demonstrate knowledge of the Basic structures of English.

(14) Describo algunas características de mi mismo, de otras personas, de animales, de lugares y del clima. (p. 19)

I describe some characteristics of myself, of other people, animals, places and weather.

(15) Uso adecuadamente estructuras y patrones gramaticales de uso frecuente (p. 21)

I appropriately use structures and grammatical patterns of frequent use.

(16) Interactuó con mis compañeros y profesor para tomar decisiones sobre temas específicos que conozco (25)

I interact with my classmates and teacher to make decisions about specific topics that I know.

(17) Participo espontáneamente en conversaciones sobre temas de mi interés utilizando un lenguaje claro y sencillo. (p. 25)

I participate spontaneously in conversations about topics of my interest using clear and straightforward language.

(18) Escribo diferentes tipos de textos de mediana longitud y con una estructura sencilla (cartas, notas, mensajes, correos electrónicos, etc.) (p. 27)

I write different types of texts of medium length and with a straightforward structure (letters, notes, messages, emails, etc.).

These descriptors, as well as all the others used in the standards, are written in present tense, first-person singular; possible implications of this grammatical choice are the immediateness of the mastery of the language. It is here and now when the learner can use it; the fact that the verb is in first person puts the learner in control and gives him/her complete agency not only of his/her learning but also of his/her use of the language. Since the verb is in present and indicative mode (Demuestro, describo, uso, interactúo, participo, escribo), the speaker is situated in a statement that shows that the action is doable; the subject of the sentence indicates or supposes he/she can achieve the action. What it implies in the standards is that the master of the L2 is a fact and that the learner is naturally entitled to use the language anytime and with anybody. This is a very simplistic view even for native speakers of a language. Pennycook (1998) provides the example of a woman in a business meeting who cannot get her point across because she does not speak the men's variety of language. Interpreting this situation from Bourdieu's perspective, it could be said that despite the fact that all are native speakers of the same language, these men do not recognize the woman as a legitimate speaker because she does not have the right sort of linguistic capital. In addition, gender discrimination enters into play as another element that makes linguistic interaction complex and not as simple as implied in the "Estándares".

Although in the standards proposed by the MEN all students are assumed to be legitimate speakers, the truth is that they are not because their legitimacy is not only acquired by speaking the "right" variety of the language, that is, the variety sanctioned and evaluated by the dominant groups as the valuable one and transmitted through the education system (Bourdieu, 2003), but by the persons they talk to. The linguistic form chosen to write the standards

automatically assumes the interlocutors to be cooperative people; the writers of the standards take it for granted that the speaker (student, learner) will be able to perform freely all the activities set in there and in their interactions they can count on the cooperation of the other person/s. Pennycook (2004) considers that this consensual conversation partner can exist in a society seen from a liberal point of view, where the members of the social world share goals and, despite some conflicts, they should be able to interact in a cooperative way. But from a critical perspective, social relations are mediated by class, gender, race, or ethnicity in which power is always present so speakers do not always find a cooperative interlocutor. If the descriptors were written using a different conjugation, for example using modal verbs like *can*, *could*, or *should,* it would diminish the categorical implication of the indicative mood where the capacity and right to use the language falls merely on the speaker.

All students will be equally proficient

Proficiency has been a controversial issue in the field of bilingualism because it is strongly attached to the concept of who can be called bilingual. A very restricted view is Bloomfield's (1933), who defines bilingualism as the native-like control of two languages. This conception would imply the iderejected by Grosjean (1982, 1994) that a bilingual person is conceived to be two monolinguals, which means that the individual must be able to attain, in both languages, the same proficiency and fulfill the same functions a monolingual would do. Now, the concept

of monolingualism can not be essentialized either because all monolinguals do not have the same command of the language; some people master one vernacular variety of the language but not the standard, or vice versa; some are illiterate; or some are literate but do not write/read academic/scientific pieces, etc.

On the other hand, Macnamara (1967) produces a rather open concept and considers bilinguals to be "persons who possess at least one of the language skills even to a minimal degree in their second language" (p. 60). He acknowledges that individuals do not necessarily have to master both languages equally; one person can be equally skillful in the syntactic system of two codes and yet have different abilities in understanding the spoken L2. The question here is what is "minimal" because it can mean different things to different people in different contexts. For Grosjean (1994) "[...]bilinguals [are] those people who use two (or more) languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives" (p. 1656). He explains that his definition ranges from the migrant worker who interacts in the L2 with some difficulty to the interpreter who is fluent in both languages; in between is the spouse who uses his/her first language in some contexts or the scientist who reads and writes articles in the L2 but does not speak it. These bilinguals share one feature in common and it is that all of them use two (or more) languages to lead their lives.

Considering these three definitions, out of many, one sees evidence that proficiency is equally complex; nevertheless, the authors of the "Estándares" set up the goals of the PNB as a packed whole, implying that the proficiency level must be the same for everybody regardless of the needs, resources,

context, socio-economic situation, and/or motivation of students.

The standards are set in five groups (or skills): listening, reading, writing, monologues, and conversation. In each group there are between seven and eleven descriptors; looking at them in a vertical way, it can be observed that each one is *per se* a categorical objective, that is, the descriptors are not flexible and are not written in a continuum where teachers could draw on according to the particularities of their contexts. For example, the following are some of the goals to be achieved in the skill "Conversación" for tenth and eleven grades:

19) Participo espontáneamente en conversaciones sobre temas de mi interés utilizando un lenguaje claro y sencillo. (MEN, 2006, p. 27)

I participate spontaneously in conversations about topics of my interest using clear and straightforward language.

20) Respondo preguntas teniendo e cuenta a mi interlocutor y el contexto. (p. 27)

I answer questions taking into account my interlocutor and the context.

21) Utilizo una pronunciación inteligible para lograr una comunicación efectiva. (p. 27)

I use an intelligible pronunciation to achieve effective Communication.

22) Uso mis conocimientos previos para participar en una conversación. (p. 27)

I use my previous knowledge to participate in a conversation.

23) Describo en forma oral mis ambiciones, sueños y esperanzas utilizando un lenguaje claro y sencillo. (p. 27)

I describe orally my ambitions, dreams, and hopes using clear and straightforward language.

The same pattern is used for the other skills where goals are presented as wholes and students are supposed to achieve them. The assumption of the authors is that all students will be equipped with exactly the same tools and therefore will reach the same proficiency[7]. Once again the conception of learning a language is reduced to learning and applying a set of rules.

Looking at the standards in a horizontal way to see what learners are expected to achieve for each group of skills, one sees that the concept of proficiency as something that can be attained equally in all language skills is apparent, to wit:

24) Identifico la idea principal de un texto oral cuando tengo conocimiento previo del tema. (Escucha, p. 26)

I identify the main idea in an oral text when I have previous knowledge of the topic.

25) Identifico palabras clave dentro del texto que me permiten comprender su sentido general. (Lectura, p. 26)

I identify key words within a text that allow me to understand their general meaning.

26) Estructuro mis textos teniendo en cuenta elementos formales del lenguaje como la puntuación, la ortografía, la sintaxis, la coherencia y la cohesión. (Escritura, p. 27)

I structure my texts taking into account formal elements of the language like punctuation, orthography, syntax, coherence and cohesion.

27) Narro en forma detallada experiencias, hechos o historias de mi interés y del interés de mi audiencia. (Monólogos, p. 27)

I narrate in detail experiences, facts or stories of my interest and of my audience's interest.

---

7   The metaphorical use of "equipped" and "tools" is deliberate to match an instrumental and neutral view of language portrayed along the document.

28) Participo espontáneamente en conversaciones sobre temas de mi interés utilizando un lenguaje claro y sencillo. (Conversación, p. 27)

I participate spontaneously in conversations about topics of my interest using clear and straightforward language.

According to these descriptors students have to develop the same level of proficiency in each one of the skills and this idea is reinforced by the use, once again, of the indicative mood. Proficiency, then, is misunderstood because people, in general, do not have the same level in each of the language skills, and if this is not true for the L1, it is even less true for the L2. Some people might need a high command of listening and speaking skills but very little writing or reading skills; some might be able to explain a complicated scientific issue in the L2 but have trouble explaining their symptoms to the doctor during a medical appointment.

Furthermore it seems that the PNB expects students to develop a proficiency that mirrors that of their L1 because there is no specialization of the functions fulfilled by each language. Both are intended to be used for academic activities and for everyday activities but, in fact, bilinguals do not use their languages in the same way for the same purposes. If this were the case, people would cease to be bilingual (Fishman, 1967; Grosjean, 1994; Romaine, 1999). The following excerpt illustrates this point:

29)…los estándares presentan temas y relaciones con los que los estudiantes ya están familiarizados en su primera lengua. (MEN, 2006, p. 29)

…the standards present topics and relations with which students are already familiar in their first language.

In the same line of thought, between the ideal speaker constructed in the "estándares" and the real learner who faces society with all its imperfections, there is a huge gap because the latter might have trouble interacting in real life with real people. The monolithic concept of language as one fixed system leaves out all the shades language takes on in different speech acts. In the school setting students are exposed mainly to the academic variety of the L2, because the school, in general terms, is an academic setting. In a large monolingual and monocultural context like Colombia, where the majority of students are native speakers of Spanish and are exposed to only the cultural practices of Colombian society, there is very little (or none) opportunity to acquire pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence in the L2 to perform as expected by the PNB.

By and large, the standards described in the "Estándares" are envisaged for an imagined and ideal group of students who differ greatly from the real students who attend schools. The project is offering "tangible benefits of a few but only symbolic ones for the many" (Edelsky, 2006, p. 6).

References

Ayala, J. & Alvarez, J.A. (2005). A perspective of the implications of the Common European Framework implementation in the Colombian socio-cultural context. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal, 7*, 7-26.

Baker, C. (2001). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.

Baker, C. & Jones, S. (1998). *Encyclopedia of bilingualism and bilingual education*. Bangor, GB: Multilingual Matters.

Barletta, N. (2007). *English teachers in Colombia: Identities and ideologies in academic writing*. Unpublished Dissertation. University of Arizona.

BBCMundo.com (2005). Los niños trabajadores de Colombia. Retrieved May 14, 2007, from BBCMundo.com Web site: http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/latin_america/newsid_4520000/4520307.stm

Bialystock, E. (2001). *Bilingualism in development. Language, literacy, and cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bloomfield, L. (1933). *Language*. New York: Holt and Company.eu, P (1977b) *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1977b) Outline of a theory of practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social space and symbolic power. *Sociological theory, 7*(1), 14-25.

Bourdieu, P. (2003). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Butler, Y. & Hakuta, K. (2004). Bilingualism and second language acquisition. In Bhatia, T. & Ritchie, W. (Eds.), *The handbook of bilingualism* (pp. 603-621). Malden, MA, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Cameron, D. (2005). *Working with spoken discourse*. London: Sage Publications.

Caracol Radio. (2008). ACNUR: Colombia es el país del mundo con mayor número de desplazados. Retrieved June 17, 2008, from Caracol Radio Web site: http://caracol.com.co/nota.aspx?id=615947

Caracol Radio. (2008). Cerca de dos millones y medio de menores de edad trabajan en Colombia. Retrieved June 11, 2008, from Caracol Radio Web site: http://www.caracol.com.co/nota.aspx?id=612985

Chomsky, N. (1965) *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Colombia. Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN]. (2001). Educación para desplazados: un derecho y un deber. Retrieved June 1, 2007, from *Al Tablero*, 6 Web site: http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/article-87379.Html

Colombia. Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN]. (2006). *Estándares básicos de competencias en lenguas extranjeras: inglés. Formar en lenguas extranjeras: ¡el reto! Lo que necesitamos saber y saber hacer.* Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional.

Cortina, R. (2000). Global priorities and local predicaments in education. In R. Cortina & N. Stomquist (Eds.), *Distant alliances: Promoting education for girls and women in Latin America* (pp. 179-199). New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Crystal, D. (2000). Emerging Englishes. *English Teaching Professional, 14*, 3-6.

De Mejía, A. M. (2002). *Power, prestige, and bilingualism. Perspectives on elite bilingual education.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, Ltd.

De Mejía, A. M. (2005). Bilingual education in Colombia: Towards an integrated perspective. In De Mejía, A.M. (Ed.), *Bilingual education in South America* (pp. 48-63). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, Ltd.

De Mejía, A. M. (2006). Bilingual education in Colombia: Towards a recognition of languages, cultures, and identities. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal, 8*, (pp. 152-168).

Edelsky, C. (2006). *With literacy and justice for all. Rethinking the social in language and education.* New Jersey & London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Escobar, A. (2004). Bilingualism in Latin America. In Bhatia, T. & Ritchie, W. (Eds.), *The handbook of bilingualism* (pp. 642-660). Malden, MA, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis*. Essex: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power*. Second edition. Malaysia: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse. Textual analysis for social research*. London and New York: Routledge.

Fishman, J. (1967). Bilingualism with and without diglossia; diglossia with and without bilingualism. *Journal of Sociological Issues, 23*(2), 29-38.

Fishman, J. (1976a). *Bilingual education. An international sociological perspective*. Rowley: Newbury House Publishers, Inc.

Fishman, J. (1977). The social science perspective. *Bilingual education current perspectives, 1*, 1-49.

Forero, E. (2003). *El desplazamiento interno forzado en Colombia.* Paper presented at Conflict and peace in Colombia: Consequences and perspectives for the future. Washington, DC. Retrieved June 1, 2008, from Ideas para la paz Web site: www.ideaspaz.org/eventos/download/edgar_forero.pdf

Foucault, M. (2005). *El orden del discurso*. Alberto González T. (Trans.). Barcelona: Fabula Tusquets Editores.

Grosjean, F. (1982). *Life with two languages. An introduction to bilingualism*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press.

Grosjean, F. (1994). Individual bilingualism. In Asher, R.E. & Simpson, J.M. Y (Eds.), *The encyclopedia of language and linguistics* (pp. 1656-1660). Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press.

Hakuta, K. (1986). *Mirror of language. The debate on bilingualism*. New York: Basic Books.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1974). *Explorations in the functions of language*. New York, Oxford, Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Hoey, M. (1983). *On the surface of discourse*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Hornberger, N. (1991). Extending enrichment bilingual education: Revisiting typologies and redirecting policy. In O. Garcia (Ed.), *Bilingual education. Focusschrift in honor of Joshua A. Fishman* (pp. 215-234). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Human Rights Watch (2005). Colombia: Grupos armados envían niños a la guerra. Retrieved May 14, 2008, from Human Rights Watch Web site: http://hrw.org/spanish/docs/2005/02/22/colomb10209.htm

Kubota, R. (2002). The impact of globalization on language teaching in Japan. In D. Cameron & D. Block (Eds.), *Globalization and language teaching*. London & New York: Routledge.

Liddicoat, A. (2007). Internationalising Japan: Nihonjinron and the intercultural in Japanese language-in-education policy. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses, 2*(1),32-46.

Lippi-Green, R. (1997). *English with an accent. Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States.* London & New York: Routledge.

Macnamara, J. (1967). The bilingual's linguistic performance. A psychological overview. *Journal of Sociological Issues, 23*(2), 58-77.

Mar-Molinero, C. (2000). *The politics of language in the Spanish-speaking world*. London and New York: Routledge.

Maurais, J. (2003). Towards a new global linguistic order? In J. Maurais & M. Morris (Eds.), *Languages in a globalizing world* (pp. 13-36). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pennycook, A. (1998a). *English and the discourses of colonialism*. London & New York: Routledge.

Pennycook, A. (1998). The right to language: Towards a situated ethics of language possibilities. *Language Sciences, 20*(1), 73-87.

Pennycook, A. (2000). Language, ideology and hindsight. Lessons from colonial languages policies. In T. Ricento (Ed.) *Ideology, politics and language policies.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Pennycook, A. (2004). Critical moments in a TESOL praxicum. In B. Norton & K. Toohey (Eds.), *Critical pedagogies and language learning.* (pp. 327-345) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Phillipson, R. (2000). English in the new world order. Variations on a theme of linguistic imperialism and "world" English. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *Ideology, politics and language policies* (pp. 87-106). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Procuraduría General de la Nación (2005). Palabras en la celebración del décimo aniversario del comité interinstitucional para la erradicación del trabajo infantil, especialmente en

sus peores formas y la divulgación de la ratificación del Convenio 182. Retrieved May 14, 2008, from Procuraduría General de la Nación Web site: http://64.233.167.104/search?q=cache:l8MR2UmkocwJ:www.procuraduria.gov.co/descargas/eventos/discurso_10anivcomiteIPEC.doc+Programa+Internacional+para+la+Erradicaci%C3%B3n+del+Trabajo+Infantil+(IPEC)+Colombia&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=8&gl=us

Romaine, S. (1989). *Bilingualism*. Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell.

Romaine, S. (1999). Early bilingual development: From elite to folk. In G. Extra & L. Verhoeven (Eds.), *Bilingualism and migration* (pp. 61-73). Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Sarmiento, A. (2006). Una estrategia para aumentar la retención de los estudiantes. Retrieved June 2, 2008, from Ministerio de Educación Nacional Web site: http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articles-122720_archivo_pdf.pdf

Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2001). Linguistic human rights in education for language maintenance. In L. Maffi, (Ed.), *On biocultural diversity. Linking knowledge, and the environment* (pp. 397-411). Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press

Thomason, S.G. (1988). Languages of the world. In C. B. Paulston (Ed.), *International handbook of bilingualism and bilingual education* (pp. 17-45). New York: Greenwood Press.

Tollefson, J. (2000). Policy and ideology in the spread of English. In JK, Hall & W. Eggington (Eds.), *The sociopolitics of English language teaching* (pp. 7-21). Clevedon, England, Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters.

Tumposky, N.R. (1984). Behavioural objectives, the cult of efficiency, and foreign language learning: Are they compatible? *TESOL Quarterly, 18*, 295-310.

Valencia, S. (not dated). El bilingüismo y los cambios en políticas y prácticas en la educación publica en Colombia: Un estudio de caso. Retrieved April 8, 2008, from Bilinglatam Web site: http://www.bilinglatam.com/espanol/informacion/Silvia%20Valencia%20Giraldo.pdf

Van Dijk, T. (2005). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, D & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 352-371). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Vélez-Rendón, G. (2003). English in Colombia: A sociolinguistic profile. *World Englishes, 22*(2), 185-198.

About the Author

Helena Guerrero is a Ph.D candidate in the Second Language Acquisition and Teaching (SLAT) Program of the University of Arizona. She holds an MA in Applied linguistics to TEFL from Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. Her research interests are critical theory, identity and ideology, and critical discourse analysis.