



The challenges of primary education in Bolivia: a case study of rural areas in Cochabamba

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Abstract

The author describes the challenges and opportunities of the new Bolivian educational paradigm activated in rural primary schools. She highlights the presence of a significant linguistic and cultural division between rural generations and reflects on the responses offered by educational policies to the socio-cultural and socio-linguistic realities of the country.

Keywords: education, interculturalism, plurilingualism, indigenous peoples, Bolivia

La Autora describe los desafíos y las oportunidades del nuevo paradigma educativo boliviano en escuelas primarias rurales. Evidenciando la presencia de una importante ruptura cultural y lingüística generacional en el campo, investiga las respuestas de las políticas educativas a las realidades socio-culturales y socio-lingüísticas del País.

Palabras clave: educación, interculturalidad, plurilingüismo, pueblos indígenas, Bolivia.

L'Autrice descrive le sfide e le opportunità del nuovo paradigma educativo boliviano attivato nelle scuole primarie rurali. Evidenzia la presenza di una significativa frattura linguistica e culturale tra generazioni rurali e riflette sulle risposte offerte dalle politiche educative alle realtà socio-culturali e socio-linguistiche del Paese.

Parole chiave: educazione, interculturalità, plurilinguismo, popoli indigeni, Bolivia

Introduction

Over the course of post-colonial history, education in Latin America has reflected the social paradigm shifts regarding the position of indigenous peoples¹ in the domain

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¹ In the light of the lack of a universal definition of indigenous peoples, this paper follows the indications proposed by the *Resource kit on indigenous peoples' issues*, issued by United Nations in 2008, which mentions a number of texts which can add to such a definition: the International Labour Office, *Convention 169 on indigenous and tribal people in independent countries*, the *Study on the problem of discrimination against indigenous populations* and the *Working paper on the concept of «indigenous people»* prepared by the Working group on indigenous populations. By comparing these texts, it is possible to draft a series of criteria in order to understand what is referred to when talking about indigenous peoples. The most important and essential aspect is represented by indigenous peoples' right to self-determination: therefore, indigenous peoples are essentially those who identify themselves as such. Moreover, other features which characterize indigenous peoples are: their history of continuity with pre-colonial societies, their attachment to territories and natural resources, their maintenance of «distinct social, economic and political systems» as well as «languages, cultures, beliefs and knowledge systems»,



of human rights and in their social and political representation (López, 2005). Between the 1970s and 1990s, in the light of increasing claims for indigenous rights, governments of the region have gradually implemented policies built on multiethnicity, multiculturalism and multilingualism, as well as on the respect for human rights and, particularly, indigenous rights (López, Sichra, 2008). The concepts of multiethnicity, multiculturalism and multilingualism have an innate connotation related to the idea of the coexistence of *diverse* ethnicities², cultures³ and languages in a same society, with the use of *multi* as an indicator of the presence of *many* in a certain space and/or time (from Latin *multi*, a form of the adjective *multus*, much/many)⁴. These same pillars have been integrated in the field of education, where policies have been re-designed accordingly.

The establishment of the right to have access to an education in indigenous cultures and languages represents an important step towards the linguistic and cultural empowerment of indigenous peoples. In fact, this right has been denied to the majority of indigenous populations living in Latin America, as well as in other parts of the world such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Russian Federation and the United States,

their will to develop their «identity, distinct social, economic, cultural and political institutions» (United Nations, 2008: 8) and, finally, their belonging to non-dominant sectors of society.

² The term ethnicity, as well as race, is extensively debated and its definition is particularly controversial. For the purpose of this study, ethnicity can be defined as a social group that shares common elements such as ancestral origins, traditions, cultures, languages etc. in which individuals feel to belong or they are perceived to belong (Bhopal, 2003).

³ The term culture has been widely defined. According with Hall, culture can be described as «the actual, grounded terrain of practices, representations, languages and customs of any specific historical society [...] the contradictory forms of ‘common sense’ which have taken root in and helped to shape popular life» (Hall, 1996: 439). Therefore, culture is both the set of symbols, values, norms, traditions and languages that a group of people share, both the meanings that that specific group gives them, which distinguish societies and groups of people one another. Hofstede also highlights the collective dimension of culture and the learning process which undergoes the concept: «culture is always learned, not innate. It derives from one’s social environment rather than from one’s genes» (Hofstede, 1991: 6). In this scenario, culturalism is the action of creating cultural meanings (Barker, Jane, 2016).

⁴ Many times, forms using the prefix *pluri* are used as synonyms. According to Moya, epistemologically the two forms are synonyms but some scholars attribute different connotations to them. In fact, multiculturalism usually indicates diversity in a private context, both on a personal and collective level. On the contrary, pluricultural is employed when referring to the public sphere, and it is often connected to the right to exercise cultural rights. From a political perspective, multiculturalism and pluriculturalism seem to be arbitrarily used but their meaning changes according to the speaker. In fact, governments usually distinguish the private dimension of these terms from the public one: multiculturalism or pluriculturalism is the right to exercise cultural rights on a private level, and on the public one when referring to education and religion. On the contrary, for social moments, the political tendency to recognize these rights transforms them from private to public and collective rights (Moya, 1998). Regarding the use of the forms multilingualism and plurilingualism, in some cases a distinction can be made in relation to whether they refer to an individual or the society. In the United States both terms refer to individuals and societies, and, therefore, multilingualism or plurilingualism is defined as the ability of a person to communicate in more than one language, as well as the characteristic of a society to engage in more than one language. On the contrary, in Europe, the Council of Europe distinguishes between multilingualism and plurilingualism, defining the first as the presence of multiple languages in a geographical area, and the second as the variety of languages that an individual can use (Cenoz, 2013).



as the presence of indigenous languages and cultures in education was considered as an obstacle to assimilation and national homogenization (Hamel, 1994). Education in Latin America has passed through different phases and paradigms after the end of colonialism. Hamel defines the first phase as a ‘submersion program’, characterized by the use of Spanish and education methods inherited by the colonial period, aimed to assimilate indigenous populations to the dominant society. This education strategy was replaced during the 1930s and 1940 by the ‘transitional program’, due to the failure of its predecessor. This second phase was initiated because indigenous languages and cultures were no longer seen as a problem, but rather as a useful tool for cultural and linguistic transition. Moya defines this type of education as bicultural and bilingual. In fact, it was conceived on the idea that people could acquire, manage and be engaged in two different cultural and linguistic systems, in a logic in which their mother tongue and culture could be used as transitional tools towards the social dominant language and culture (Moya, 1998). Nevertheless, although keeping a subordinate status, indigenous languages were used in education, in particular during the stage of alphabetization, and the thought that children could learn better in their own language became more popular (Hamel, 1994; López, 2005; López, 2009). This phase corresponds to the birth of Intercultural Bilingual Education Programs, although they were still conceived in a framework of indigenous assimilation.

In the 1980s and 1990s, as a result of the opening process towards the political recognition of indigenous rights and the diverse character of Latin American society, a new educational model emerged in the region. This new education paradigm was based on interculturalism and bilingualism, which were no longer intended in a logic of assimilation but rather in a perspective of dialogue and enrichment. Interculturalism symbolizes the vision of diversity as a resource, which emphasizes the idea of relations and dialogue among cultures. López Hernández and Cuello Daza define interculturalism as «the interrelational process that feeds the recognition of the *other* and the respect of the differences», highlighting the focus on the *process*, exchanges and relations (López Hernández, Cuello Daza, 2016: 374). It is conceived as a «formula of coexistence in the context of diversity» (Bouchard, 2011: 437), where the focus is given to dialogue, exchanges, relations (Kastoryano, 2018). While defining interculturalism, many scholars juxtapose it to multiculturalism, underlying its separative connotations. As a matter of fact, multiculturalism has been defined as a mere recognition of the existence of diversity, a situation in which cultures are distinct groups (Yanasmayan, 2011) and an element that can question national identity⁵ (Kastoryano, 2018). The concept of

⁵ The concept of national identity is part of the broader notion of social identity. Tajfel through his Social identity theory defines social identity as the idea that everyone has of himself in relation to the belonging to a social group which is developed through the interaction with them (Peris Pichastor, Agut Nieto, 2007). In the light of the interactions with different social groups, people can develop multiple social identities, which are all related to a set of emotional and valuable meanings. Social identities allow people to identify themselves as part of a social group (and not part of another), which has peculiar and defining features (Scandroglio, López Martínez, San José Sebastián, 2008). Accordingly, the concept of national identity is related to the self-perception of people as a nation, as well as belonging to a nation, on the base of the sharing of comment elements, such as national symbols, languages, traditions, etc.



multiculturalism has been internationally discussed and its separatist social dimension has been extensively used by far-right movements around the world which have defined it as a deterrent to social cohesion and local culture (Bloemraad, 2011). Definitions of multiculturalism seem to be very polarized between those who perceive the recognition of the multicultural character of societies as the raise of social divisions and those who identify this process as a first essential step towards building inclusive policies. Regarding this last point, analyzing the *Multiculturalism Policy Index*⁶ constructed by the Queen's University (2020) in Ontario (Canada), a great boost to the recognition of multiculturalism and, accordingly, the implementation of multicultural policies can be appreciated in the last decades, as a consequence of the increase of migration dynamics and a social pression for the recognition and safeguard of minorities' rights.

From an education perspective, the *2020 Global Education Monitoring Report* issued by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) highlights the central position that diversity should have in developing education policies and, therefore, the necessity to work towards inclusion. By opposing the US situation where «multicultural education policies [...] have met active pushbacks» (Unesco, 2020: 84) and cultural and assimilation logics are still characterizing many teachers' educational approaches (Alghanmdi, 2017), the report underlines the commitment of countries like Australia and Canada, which have included multiculturalism in their school curricula since 1980, and Europe towards the promotion of inclusive education. In Europe, the European Commission, while recognizing the social diversity of European society, highlights the fundamental importance of fostering and promoting multilinguistic policies, especially in the educational field, as an essential step towards union, inclusion and economic growth.

The last decades have seen the increase of an international push towards the recognition of multiculturalism and multilingualism, both from a social and educational point of view, as well as the empowerment and safeguard of minorities' human rights. Nevertheless, this process has not yet invested completely all the political and social structures and institutions in Western societies, just as it happened in many countries in Latin America, and, especially in Bolivia (Unesco, 2020^a).

Intercultural Bilingual Education programs started to be developed and implemented in Latin American countries with the highest percentage of indigenous peoples, such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru; since the beginning, Intercultural Bilingual Education showed positive results on children schooling, thanks to the use of mother tongue in teaching (López, Sichra, 2008). The implementation of Intercultural Bilingual Education could be seen as an answer to the dramatic phenomenon of

⁶ The *Multiculturalism Policy Index* analyzes the situation of multicultural policies in 21 Western countries focusing on three groups: immigrant minorities, indigenous peoples and national minorities. For each of this group, the index bases its analysis on a series of policies that are defined as «characteristic or emblematic of the "multicultural turn" over the past forty years» (Queen's University, 2020), such as multiculturalism in the school curriculum, inclusion of ethnic representation, bilingual education or mother-tongue instruction, permission of dual citizenship, recognition of self-government rights, recognition of cultural rights, recognition of land rights, official languages status, etc.



indigenous languages loss, too. This phenomenon is caused by several factors among them the lingering effect of colonialism, and, in particular, what has been defined as linguistic colonialism (Plaza, 1989). Globalization⁷, which exposes languages to contact situations in which minority languages and cultures are exposed to different beliefs, values and behaviors, has also had its impact. In this view, globalization is described by scholars as a «predator on smaller cultures, languages and traditional ways of behavior», underlining its negative effects on the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages and cultures (Laoire, 2008: 209). The role of education inside the dynamic of language and culture loss has been extensively discussed among scholars: they have highlighted the fundamental role played by education in revitalizing indigenous languages (Hornberger, King, 1996), especially considering the role it has had in erasing them (McCarty, 1998). At the same time, studies have underlined the importance of including and respecting cultural and linguistic diversity in education systems in order to mitigate «the pressure upon indigenous children to abandon their own voices, languages and culture in order to participate in the broader dominant culture» and to encourage students to develop awareness of democratic values and systems (Landry, 2011: 21).

Nevertheless, when the model of education based on bilingualism and interculturalism was developed and implemented, it was conceived on the idea of indigenous monolingualism and on the geographical projection of indigenous populations in rural areas (López, Sichra, 2008). The increase of rural-urban migration, as well as urbanism (Pereira Morató, Montaña García, 2012), have determined a geographical redistribution of indigenous populations in the region, which appear to be more present in urban areas than in the past. Moreover, the increasing proximity to urban contexts, dominated by the use of Spanish, is accelerating the process of culture and language loss among indigenous populations (Angeles Trujano, 2008). The reasons behind the choice of migrating are manifold: work and education opportunities, better living conditions and better salaries, as well as climate change, which pushes indigenous people and peasants to leave the countryside. All these factors appear to be connected to the need to improve living conditions and increase future opportunities (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2010).

At the same time, indigenous migrant people experienced different challenges in relation to their territorial redistribution and their presence in urban areas as well as in areas of proximity to cities. These obstacles are connected to the difficulties of integration in urban environments and to a certain degree of discrimination towards them which is still present in cities (Abarca Cariman, 2015). The urban environment can threaten the identity dimension of indigenous populations (Oyarce, Del Popolo, Martínez Pizarro, 2009), which could be exposed to a process of assimilation to the

⁷ According to the World Health Organization, globalization can be described as «the increased interconnectedness and interdependence of peoples and countries» (World Health Organization, 2020) which is caused by the acceleration of movements and exchanges of people, goods, services, capital, technologies, ideas and cultures. This phenomenon has been made possible and facilitated by national and international governments and institutions and by the international opening of borders.



urban population and progressive refusal of their indigenous identity, languages and cultures. Therefore, in the light of these scenarios, education needs to give adequate answers to the socio-cultural and socio-linguistic changes caused by the dynamic of internal migration and urban proximity in order to efficiently work towards the empowerment of indigenous heritage and the promotion of inclusion and diversity in the country (López, Sichra, 2008).

1. Law n.70/2010: the introduction of a new cultural and linguistic education paradigm

Together with Guatemala, Bolivia is the country with the greatest number of indigenous people in Latin America (López, 2005). The 2012 census registered that 41.5% of people identified themselves as belonging to indigenous groups, in particular the Quechua (43.9%) and the Aymara ones (38.2%) (Oficina Regional de Educación para América Latina y el Caribe, 2017). These two indigenous groups are part of a total of 33 ethno-linguistic groups present in the country. The presence of people who identify as belonging to indigenous groups is higher in rural areas but is gradually increasing in urban contexts (Plaza Martínez, Carvajal Carvajal, 1985).

The process of openness to the recognition of indigenous rights, as well as their empowerment in the political, social and economic sphere started at the beginning of the 1950s, when a process of democratization started to come about (Heins, 2011). The recent arrival to power of Evo Morales in 2006, the first indigenous president in the country, represented a consolidation of this process, as the new government promoted different reforms in order to further empower indigenous peoples in the country (Espinoza, Sangalli, Dirceu, 2017). His indigenous origins encouraged people to identify with him and his history, and to support him. Archondo describes the figure of Evo Morales as symbolizing the Aymara world *Pachakuti*, namely *the return to 1532*, the year of the arrival of Francisco Pizarro in Bolivia and, consequently, the beginning of colonialism, and to the Andean values which were destroyed during that era (Archondo, 2006). With the arrival of the new president, Bolivia changed its name into Plurinational State of Bolivia, and a reform of the Constitution was undertaken, too (De La Fuente, 2009).

In line with the recent political changes introduced in Bolivia, the education system was reformed as well, through the promulgation of a new education law, enacted in 2010. The new law was called *Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez*, from the names of the founders of the ayllu-school of Warisata (La Paz Department). The choice of the name was deliberate, as the act of dedicating the name of the law to the initiators of the ayllu-school of Warisata underlines and symbolizes the connection between the reformed education system and the experience of the school (López, 2005). In fact, law n.70/2010 reframes the education system in the light of the past experience of Warisata and its core value: the socio-community productive model. The first article of law n.70/2010, reiterating the description of education proposed by the new State Constitution (Article



17 of law n.70/2010, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2010), sets the main characteristics of Bolivian education, describing it, among other things, as universal, democratic, communitarian and free (Article 1.1, 1.5, 1.6 of law n.70/2010). Moreover, the new education law also describes education as intercultural and intracultural, multilingual, de-colonized and characterized by a focus on eradicating discrimination. These features are recalled by Article 3, when it is specified that education is also

intracultural, intercultural y plurilingüe en todo el sistema educativo. Desde el potenciamiento de los saberes, conocimientos e idiomas de las nacionales y pueblos indígena originario campesino, las comunidades interculturales y afrobolivianas promueve la interrelación y convivencia en igualdad de oportunidades para todas y todos, a través de la valoración y respecto recíproco entre culturas (Article 3.8 of law n.70/2010).

Here, the article introduces a new education paradigm based on interculturalism, intraculturalism, and plurilingualism. Education is given the characteristic of respecting cultural diversity, specifying two different aspects of it, with education being both intercultural and intracultural at the same time. Education is now called on to work on these two axes, promoting, indeed, dialogue and revitalizing values and knowledge inside and among cultures. This topic is deepened in Chapter III of the law, titled *Diversidad sociocultural y lingüística (Sociocultural and linguistic diversity)*. The chapter is composed by two articles: Article 6, devoted to interculturalism and intraculturalism, and Article 7, dedicated to linguistic variety. More specifically, Article 6 deals with the topic of diversity inside and among cultures. It defines both aspects and highlights the importance of state's action in promoting dialogue and respect on both dimensions of cultural variety. Moreover, it establishes the implementation of subjects related to the indigenous "world" in schools.

En el currículo del Sistema educativo plurinacional se incorporan los saberes y conocimientos de las cosmovisiones de las naciones y pueblos indígena originario campesinos, comunidades interculturales y afroboliviana (Article 6.1 of law n.70/2010).

In the light of what has been mentioned about the issue of cultural diversity and pluralism, the intercultural and intracultural character of education seems to be synonymous with the promotion of dialogue and exchanges inside and among different cultures in an atmosphere of respect and no discrimination (López, 2009). It is associated with the introduction and reinforcement of indigenous practices and values inside the curricular organization, too (López, Sichra, 2008). Intraculturalism can be defined as a culture that dialogues within itself, which analyzes its inner dimension inside a process of self-valorization and recognition (Aparicio Gervas, Delgado Burgos, 2009). This process of research of the interior dimension of a culture is also recalled by López Hernández and Cuello Daza, defining intraculturalism as related to the singularity of a culture and its peculiarity (López Hernández, Cuello Daza, 2016). In the light of this new connotation, education is asked to answer to two needs: from the one hand, being intercultural, it needs to foster dialogue and exchanges among cultures and



exposing students to the cultural diversity in which they live. From the other hand, its intracultural component encourages a deep reflection on the distinctive characteristics of each culture, inside a process of recognition and valorization.

Article 7 handles the question of languages in school, Firstly, it establishes the beginning of instruction in the mother tongue, in agreement with the linguistic reality of the environment. Afterwards, in view of the linguistic diversity present in the country, the article gives guidelines regarding the teaching of official and foreign languages. It settles the use of vernacular languages as a first language and Spanish as a second language in those communities and groups in which native languages predominate. On the contrary, for those realities where Spanish is the predominant language, the use of Spanish is set as a first language, and native languages as second. Finally, regarding the teaching of foreign languages, the article establishes that since the beginning of education, teachers should introduce foreign languages as a third language (Article 7 of law n.70/2010). In view of what is established by the new education law regarding the question of languages, it is possible to notice how education in Bolivia switched from bilingual to plurilingual. As a matter of fact, law n.70/2010 ended with the combination Spanish-native language, introducing the component of foreign languages as part of the compulsory subjects that students have to take.

It can be interesting to reflect on the different terminology used by law n.70/2010 when referring to cultures and languages. As a matter of fact, the variety of cultures present in schools is not only recognized but an emphasis is also given on the relations among them, by defining education as intercultural. On the contrary, from a linguistic point of view, the new education law acknowledges the existence of different languages inside the school community without clarifying any kind of relation or dynamic among them. However, it is worthwhile to underline that article 7 of law n.70/2010 devotes a position of importance to endangered languages. In this regard, it explains that linguistic policies aimed to revalorize and recover threatened languages will be implemented, with the direct participation of the speakers of those languages.

Figure 1 shows the main changes introduced by law n.70/2010 in the domain of cultures and languages, proposing a comparison between the current education law (Law n.70/2010) and the previous one (Law n.1565/1994). Finally, a further point that deserves attention is the one devoted to social and community participation in education. Chapter IV of the law is dedicated to explaining and regulating social and community participation in the education system. It is described as the active participation of parents and members of the community in order to help the development and improvement of education and its quality, community, and democratic nature (Article 90-91 of law n.70/2010).

As mentioned before, since the choice of its name, law n.70/2010 aims to re-think the education system in light of the past experience of the ayllu-school of Warisata. In particular, law n.70/2010 reiterates the founding principle of the school and it transforms it into the framework of the new education system: the Socio-community productive model. The model is defined as the assembly of actions and activities which



are planned in order to face needs and problems of the community and to empower its productive potential.

Figure 1 - Comparison between the previous education law n.1565/1994 and the current law n.70/2010 on the issues of cultures and languages in schools

Aspects	Law n.1565/1994	Law n.70/2010
Cultures	<p><i>Interculturalism</i></p> <p>Indigenous knowledge, values and traditions are introduced in schools' curricula, together with dialogues and discussions inside classrooms in order to fuel cultural exchanges and confrontations. It is aimed to preserve the intercultural nature of the country</p>	<p><i>Interculturalism and intraculturalism</i></p> <p>Dialogue and exchanges among cultures are promoted, as well as a deep analysis of the peculiarity and distinctive connotation of each culture. Subjects related to the indigenous knowledge, values, traditions and cosmovision are implemented in school's curricula</p>
Languages	<p><i>Bilingualism</i></p> <p>Bilingual education Spanish indigenous language. It is extended to the whole education system since primary education, with the goal of implementing it in all grades. It is implemented in particular in those districts and centers in which students speak an indigenous language as a first language. It aimed to preserve and develop indigenous languages as well as universalize the use of Spanish</p> <p><i>Modalities</i></p> <p>Indigenous language as predominant: the teaching must be in student's mother tongue during the first period of instruction and, in parallel, Spanish must be taught as a second language in order to consolidate students' competencies in both languages; Spanish as predominant: the teaching of indigenous languages is compulsory for students whose mother tongue is Spanish</p> <p>The ultimate goal of Intercultural Bilingual Education consists of promoting the heterogeneous character of Bolivia which guarantees the respect for all Bolivians.</p>	<p><i>Plurilingualism</i></p> <p>Plurilingual education Spanish indigenous language foreign language. It is extended to the whole education system. It establishes the beginning of instruction in students' mother tongue, in agreement with the linguistic reality of the environment. Afterwards, in view of the linguistic diversity present in the country, the teaching of another official language and a foreign language must be implemented</p> <p><i>Modalities</i></p> <p>Indigenous language as predominant: the use of vernacular languages as a first language and the teaching of Spanish as a second language in those communities and groups in which native languages predominate; Spanish as predominant: those realities in which Spanish is the predominant language, the use of Spanish as a first language and the teaching of a native language as a second language; Since the beginning of education, teachers should introduce the teaching of a foreign language as a third language</p> <p>The ultimate goal of Intercultural, Intracultural Plurilingual Education consists of promoting interrelations, coexistence and equal opportunities for everyone, through valorization and respect among cultures</p>

Source: Author's own creation based on the analysis of law n.1565/1994 and law n.70/2010.



The new education law englobes this model as the base on which curricula are built and developed. Concretely, school programs and activities are designed in order to be connected to the community and the territory and they are aimed to improve students' participation and contribution inside the community. Thereby, this model focuses on the relationship between schools and the reality in which students live, promoting local practices and values (Cenda, 2017). The model is mainly represented by the development of a project, defined as the Socio-community productive project, by schools. Therefore, law n.70/2010 re-thinks the education system in a process of recovery of past production practices, in particular related to indigenous groups, and the education experience of the ayllu-school of Warisata and it aims to develop school programs in line with the life of indigenous communities and its forms of production (Osuna, 2013).

Together with the adoption of interculturalism, intraculturalism and multilingualism as founding principles of education, the Socio-community productive model represents the new path undertaken by Bolivian education in order to achieve inclusion, quality and de-colonize the education system (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2014).

This new education paradigm, however, did not escape criticism. In particular, the Socio-community productive model has been accused of being intended as a tool to curb migration from the countryside to the city. Promoting the learning and the development of local practices and skills would encourage people living in rural areas to stay in their communities, demotivating them to move towards urban areas. Therefore, the new education system leads students to choose vocations which are connected to their reality and their local environment, reducing their possibilities and desires to realize different studies or to aspire to pursue a different life (Osuna, 2013).

Bolivia constitutes a unique example in relation to the development of education policies aimed to portray the diversity of the country and respect indigenous people's fundamental rights. Here, multiculturalism and plurilingualism have been identified as innate connotations of the political constitution of the country, as well as the bases of the whole education system. Bolivia, together with Ecuador and Peru, is the only country in Latin America to have modified its political constitution in relation to the recognition of multiculturalism, multilingualism and multiethnicity as fundamental values of the countries, and to have transposed these same elements to its education system (Unesco, 2020^a). Furthermore, Bolivia is a model in the region and elsewhere for the general extent to which multicultural and multilingual education is implemented in the country, the centrality of teachers' training on these topics, the percentage of indigenous students attending schools (Unesco, 2020^a) and the strength of the link between school and community, as well as for the essentiality of knowing indigenous languages in order to work in the public sector.



2. Limits and opportunities of the new education paradigm: a case study of rural primary schools in Cochabamba

The purpose of the study featured in this paper is to analyze the limits and opportunities of the new education paradigm introduced by law n.70/2010, and, thereby, investigate to what extent education in Bolivia is responding to the socio-cultural and socio-linguistic realities of the country. Fieldwork has been conducted in two rural primary schools in the department of Cochabamba, in the province of Germán Jordán, between February and May 2019. In the whole department of Cochabamba, the amount of people who identify as indigenous represents 64% of people in urban areas and 90% in rural contexts, with Quechua being the predominant indigenous group (López, 2005). Analogously, in the two analyzed communities, the majoritarian indigenous group is Quechua (Osio, 2019).

The study was of a qualitative nature, with non-participant and participant observation having been employed during classes, both with and without the presence of a teacher, with the aim of analyzing the implementation of law n.70/2010 in schools. In parallel, semi-structured interviews have been developed with the main education actors: teachers, students and student's families in order to investigate their cultural and linguistic background and their attitudes and perspectives towards indigenous languages and cultures.

The study highlights that education in Bolivia is still facing a phase of change, in light of the adjustments introduced by the current education law, law n.70/2010, enacted in 2010. As a matter of fact, schools and teaching staff are still adjusting and developing the elements introduced by the law, which, for some aspects, deeply changed the essence of education in Bolivia. Among them, interculturalism and intraculturalism, plurilingualism and the development of Socio-community productive projects have been analyzed in order to understand how the core values and innovation of law n.70/2010 are being implemented and developed in rural primary schools. It can be said that interculturalism and intraculturalism, as explained by law n.70/2010, are partially present inside schools. From the one hand, the connection with the community and the environment that surrounds students is well developed by schools, with classes generally being based on the reality that surrounds children, as well as the life in the community (Osio, 2019).

En un contenido trabajamos «conociendo a mi Bolivia», por ejemplo. Entonces, tengo que hablar de los varios departamentos. Allí es cuando pongo las diferentes culturas que tiene cada departamento. Entonces, cada niño identifica de que lugar del departamento es y como se identifica en su cultura originaria. Entonces, no podríamos decir: «todas las cholitas son iguales». Yo de esta forma les decía: «las de La Paz utilizan una pollera larga». Pero hay que respetarlas porque esta es su forma de vestirse. Si, los niños comprendían; hacía que ellos se identifiquen de que cultura están viniendo y cada uno nos respetemos como tal (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).



During different activities, teachers ask students to relate what they learn to what they can see around them and experience in their life, and curricular topics are used in order to introduce children to good habits, which, in many cases, are not present in their daily life. As witnessed in conversations with teachers, in many cases these habits are not spread among the community and they inflict damage to children's health, in particular in the form of dental caries, one of the most common problems among young people in Bolivia.

In this way, the connection between what must be taught in schools and the context in which they are located represents a way to raise awareness among students about health practices that should reach the whole community too. Here, the implementation of the Socio-community productive model plays an essential role. In fact, conceived as a way to connect the school to the community and enrich students' participation and contribution to it, the model focuses on the relationship between schools and the reality in which students live, promoting local practices and values, as well as trying to contribute to the resolution of the main difficulties experienced by the community itself (Cenda, 2017).

El trabajo tendríamos que realizarlo a nivel de toda la comunidad y no como antes cuando era «escuela aquí, comunidad a este lado». Ahora no es así: siempre nosotras profesoras estamos tratando de incluir a la comunidad en la escuela y también la escuela incluirse en la comunidad. Entonces, en eso estamos trabajando. Si, hoy en día estamos logrando que los de la comunidad de aquí se incluyan en nuestras actividades, al menos las actividades grandes que tiene la escuela. Como también la escuela trata de incluirse. Se está incluyendo a las actividades que tiene la comunidad (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

In the case of the analyzed schools, this aspect seems to be well developed. As a matter of fact, in both the analyzed schools, the project is related to problems lived by the community, specifically the cultivation of vegetables in order to teach and introduce children to good eating habits, to which they are not exposed at home, and recycling. According to teachers, the projects were implemented after they noticed that the consumption of vegetables and fruits in families, as well as the practice of recycling were insufficient, and, consequently, affecting children's health and the environment.

Nevertheless, it can be concluded that there are still many difficulties regarding the implementation of indigenous knowledge and practices inside school curricula, as well as intercultural and intracultural dialogue (López, Sichra, 2008). Although school materials usually offer teachers a point of departure in order to develop topics related to diversity in Bolivia, they are not fully used during the teaching. Diversity seems to be portrayed in students' books⁸, as characterized by the presence of different sections devoted to brief presentations of indigenous populations in the country, underlining their history, practices and languages. Looking outside the school curriculum, and therefore, in general to the schools, it can be said that diversity in Bolivia, and especially indigenous populations, is formally represented by the existence of the wiphala, the flag

⁸ The books adopted by both schools are: Vv.Aa., *Luchito y Paolita*, Editorial Luchito, Cochabamba, 2019.



of indigenous peoples, as well as by the presence of different daily moments in which students are called to sing and celebrate national and local hymns.

Regarding the dimension of plurilingualism, it can be said that there are many obstacles in implementing it as established by law n.70/2010. As a matter of fact, article 7 of the law defines the use of vernacular languages as a first language and the use of Spanish as a second language in those communities and groups in which native languages predominate. From the analysis of law n.70/2010, however, it does not seem clear whether the second language should be used as a teaching language or whether it should be approached as a subject itself. Furthermore, neither the process nor the criteria through which the predominant language of a community should be identified and established are clear. In fact, it seems to be defined on the basis of the dichotomy rural-urban, which is related to the idea of territorial monolingualism, according to which Quechua is the dominant language of rural areas and Spanish the one of urban realities.

As a matter of fact, when Intercultural Bilingual Education was developed and implemented in Bolivia, it was conceived on the basis of the principle of territorial and indigenous monolingualism and on the territorial settlement of indigenous populations in rural areas (López, Sichra, 2008). Nevertheless, as mentioned, the phenomenon of rural-urban migration has progressively increased and the criterium of territorial and indigenous monolingualism, based on which linguistic policies in the field of education are conceived, is not representing the socio-linguistic reality of the country any longer.

The communities which have been approached by this study are a clear example of the lack of connection between the linguistic policies established by law n.70/2010 and the socio-linguistic reality. Indeed, the areas in which the study has been developed are both considered rural areas, where Quechua is the predominant language. This is correct if the community in general is considered, since the majority of adults are still speaking Quechua as their first language and many old people do not even know Spanish. However, if we zoom in and consider children, the situation completely changes: a few children are still speaking Quechua as their first language and they are usually migrants who have recently moved to the community, trying to get closer to urban environments. On the contrary, the majority of children has a limited knowledge of Quechua or, in some cases, it is even their second language. Therefore, there is a linguistic generational break which opposes the linguistic characteristics of adults and children inside the same community.

La ley nos dice que tenemos que hablar en lengua materna, ¿Ya? La lengua materna en áreas rurales es el quechua. Eso es lo que nos dice la ley. Pero la realidad es otra [...] Esta es una unidad educativa rural. Yo no podría entrar a mi aula hablando en quechua. ¿Por que? Sé hablar el quechua, pero ellos no me van a responder en quechua, ellos me van a responder en su lengua materna que es el castellano. Porque sus padres le hablan en castellano (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

In this situation, teachers seem to opt for choices based on the linguistic background of children, rather than looking at the predominant or historical language of the whole community. For this reason, in both schools the first teaching language is Spanish and



the second one Quechua. Spanish is used as the only teaching language and it is the predominant language among teachers and children inside and outside the classrooms.

Esto es el área dispersa, entonces... nosotros aquí enseñamos en castellano. Ya no hay quechuas cerrados acá. Ya son castellanizados y muchos no entienden el quechua. Ya no practican mucho, como ya los padres son más modernizados, ya les hablan a los chicos en castellano (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

El castellano. Ahorita la lengua más predominante aquí es el castellano. Como segunda lengua es quechua y tercera el inglés. Entonces, como te digo, prácticamente lo que predomina aquí es el castellano (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

The supremacy of Spanish is also visible when looking at school materials that surround students (Abarca Cariman, 2015): their books are completely written in Spanish, besides the final part devoted to languages, as previously mentioned. Moreover, signs hung in classrooms and around the school are almost all written in Spanish, besides some cases of use of Quechua, mainly for numbers, the alphabet and poems dedicated to the earth, in Quechua, *Pachamama*. Hence, it can be observed how the use of Quechua is confined to basic knowledge or it is connected to the field of indigenous practices and traditions (López, 2009).

Quechua is taught as a subject, as is English, and both languages have the same number of hours during the week. Therefore, there is not a clear distinction between second and third languages, at least on the level of teaching. Moreover, according to timetables which are shown in each classroom, less than two hours per week are devoted to Quechua and in the majority of cases, teachers do not respect the schedule, neither for Quechua, nor for other subjects. Consequently, children do not learn Quechua regularly. Furthermore, considering the assisted Quechua lessons, children mainly learn the alphabet, numbers and some other words always related to the family and the countryside: this confirms the idea that Quechua is contained to basic concepts and to the domestic and rural sphere. As a consequence of this, Quechua is not perceived as a language through which children can fully socialize and communicate since its use is restricted and sector based.

Finally, considering the teaching of English, it must be said that two cases are the most common: either children study some basic concepts such as the alphabet and numbers, or they do not have any knowledge of the language for the whole primary education. The main reason for this is represented by the fact that teachers are not provided with adequate training in field (López, Sichra, 2008).

It can be concluded that the main obstacles to the implementation of plurilingualism as conceived by the law appear to be the lack of clarification about the process of identification of the first and second language, as well as about the modalities of the teaching of the second one. At the same time, the teaching of the second and third language is not efficient due to a lack of training provided to teachers and the schools' materials support (López, 2009).



3. Attitudes and perceptions towards the new paradigm

In order to better understand the limits and the opportunities of the education paradigm introduced by the new education law n.70/2010, it is necessary to investigate education actors' attitudes and perceptions towards it, especially in relation to the role that the law gives them. It can be said that for teachers, their views on indigenous cultures and languages have changed in confronting the past with the present, considering the promulgation of law n.70/2010 as the temporal outstanding element. Indeed, law n.70/2010 represented an essential step in revalorizing indigenous cultures and languages, an issue that, according to teachers, was not present before.

Si, porque hablando de valores, se han perdido mucho. Yo recuerdo cuando era niña, los valores los aprendíamos en casa: los papas son los que nos enseñaban y en la escuela se hacía un seguimiento. Se han perdido mucho las costumbres de nuestros ancestros, nuestros bisabuelitos y todo eso. Ahora se está tomando en cuenta y es muy necesario. Por ejemplo, de la medicina natural antes no se hablaba, por lo que yo recuerdo. Pero ahora, queriendo rescatar todos estos valores se habla de la medicina natural (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

In fact, it seems that education is now enhancing and giving importance to the teaching and learning of indigenous cultures and languages, trying to consolidate the idea of respect and dialogue among cultures and, consequently, overcome discrimination towards indigenous peoples (López, 2009).

Es importante, yo pienso, porque justamente con la educación intercultural, con esta nueva ley, cada cual tiene que ser respetado en la lengua, en el origen, ¿No? Entonces, no podríamos discriminar a nadie y esto va de la necesidad aun de ir a los hospitales o de ir a otro ambiente en el cual tiene que saber hablar quechua (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

Therefore, the presence of policies of inclusion of indigenous cultures and languages in schools is seen as a positive and necessary step towards the acceptance of diversity and, in particular, the appreciation of Bolivians' own cultural and linguistic heritage, which is clearly going through a process of disappearance. Many teachers highlight the opposition between the new education system and the former ones, especially those in which they grew up, characterized by a complete aversion towards indigenous languages. As a matter of fact, multiple times they underline how speaking ancestral languages was attributed to backwardness and lack of education, and exposed people to discriminations. Therefore, students were taught entirely in Spanish and the use of indigenous languages was highly discouraged, both inside and outside the school community. On the contrary, with the new political constitution and the new education law, students are encouraged to speak their mother tongue and cultivate their indigeneity, an essential step for teachers in order to recall Bolivians cultural and linguistic memorial.



A los del pueblo, al hablan castellano, les hacían la burla cuando no podían pronunciar correctamente las palabras. Más antes había discriminación hacia los que hablan lenguas originarias, más se daba paso al castellano (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

Se sienten reprimidos, se sienten como avergonzados de su lengua al hablar en la escuela porque 98% hablan todos castellano y que dos o tres estén hablando en quechua, entonces, los ven como si fueran muy del campo. Entonces, y por no sentirse más discriminados... entonces, tratan aun lo que hablan quechua, tratan de hablar castellano (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

Aqui en Bolivia la gente a veces discrimina su propia gente, a su propia raza. Antes había esta discriminación. Hoy en día ya no hay esta discriminación. En Bolivia ya el idioma quecha se ha implementado como una materia, tanto en los institutos superiores de formación de docentes y también en los institutos de profesionalización y en las universidades. Ya es una materia, es una disposición desde el gobierno, desde el Ministerio de Educación. El boliviano estaba perdiendo sus raíces, y ahora tiene que recobrar, de nuevo (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

El gobierno implementó lo del respecto de los pueblos indígenas que antes estaba olvidado. Pero como ahora hay una ley, incluso se les pide a los oficiales que hablen lenguas originarias (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

Regarding their knowledge of Quechua, the majority of teachers have grown up and/or live in the proximities of urban areas where Spanish is the dominant social language. Therefore, they have usually learnt Quechua inside their family, mainly with their grandparents, in a colloquial way. They express difficulties in managing the language in a proficient way and the importance of having studied it during their trainings and/or through past experiences as professors in remote areas of the country where Quechua is the dominant language.

Más antes no se enseñaba el quechua, castellano no más. Lo que aprendí fue en la casa, con mis abuelos, con mis papas (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

Yo misma aprendí el quechua porque yo no lo sabía. En casa mi madre nunca habló Quechua y mi abuela era la única que lo hablaba. Mi padre hablaba con mi abuela, pero nunca con nosotros. Entonces, para mi también fue una lengua aprendida. Yo aprendí el Quechua en la Normal, en el proceso de mi formación (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

El quechua yo no lo dominaba tan bien. No puedo decir perfecto porque tampoco ahora lo hablo perfecto, pero no lo dominaba tan bien. Entonces, más me era fácil decir el tema primero en Castellano y luego en Quechua (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

The new education law asks teachers to be responsible for recalling student's own identity against their assimilation with everything that comes from abroad. Nevertheless, for teachers it is clear that they cannot do this alone, and that they need the support and help from families (Abarca Cariman, 2015) and mass media in order to succeed in the process of self-revalorization indigenous heritage and indigenous peoples' self-identification (Hassen, 2016; Raymond, McCreanor, Moewaka Barnes, 2017).



Hay influencia de los padres e influencia de los medios de comunicación. Y diría esto porque, todo es en castellano, nada en quechua. Solamente, algunos llegan a la casa y siguen hablando quechua con sus papas. Pero llegan a la escuela y ya cambian (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

Más apoyo. ¿Como podemos entrar [en clase] y decir: «¿Porque no hablamos quechua?». Como está adelante la tecnología, [los niños] ven la televisión toda en castellano. Esto parece que les arrastra. Que lo lindo sería que hubiera programas en quechua. No hay. [Hay] algunas promociones que salen en quechua, pero todo es en castellano. ¿Y el niño en que se está formando? Todo en castellano. Y esto es lo que falta. Del gobierno también falta. Que lindo si hubiera programas en quechua. Pero nunca hay, nunca hay. Solamente a los docentes dicen: «enseñen ya». ¿Pero que va a hacer? La tecnología ya nos está pisando poco a poco. Y esto al niño va arrastrando. Y esto es una barrera para nosotros. ¿De que sirve hoy en día que yo enseñe quechua, si luego sale y sigue solo castellano? (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

Esto [quechua] no hay. En la tele, en la radio. Los medios de comunicación están influyendo bastante. He visto con el otro curso, he visto bastante esto. Copian las cosas que vienen de afuera y no quieren ya las cosas que vienen de su pueblo (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

In this context, it seems necessary for teachers to undertake a process of sensibilization about the importance of the survival of indigenous cultures and languages, mainly for communication purposes, and in order to reinforce people's affection to their roots.

El quechua es una necesidad de comunicación de la gente y el quechua no [se] puede rechazar y tampoco poner a un lado. El quechua es parte de la vida de la persona, es parte de la sociedad. Es bonito el quechua y esto nosotros tenemos que siempre concientizar a nuestra gente. En la comunicación es muy importante y también es interesante como medio de intercambio de experiencias (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

La gente, no sabemos nosotros mismos valorarnos. Entonces, esa es una gran dificultad. Si nosotros nos avergonzamos de nosotros mismos, ¿Qué otro valor nos va a dar otra gente? Ningún otro valor. Entonces, es importante que nosotros aprendamos y sepamos que valor tenemos para tener una estabilidad. No solo de Estado sino también en cuanto a la persona (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).

At the same time, families do not seem to be collaborating in this mission.

Esta parte [con los padres] tenemos dificultades aquí porque no hay mucha participación. Son migrantes y viven de su trabajo: salen en la mañana a trabajar. Hay poca participación. Solo vienen a las reuniones cuando se les llaman, solo esto. Los que viven aquí cerca sí, a veces están. Pero la mayoría trabaja. Hay poca participación, colaboración. Hacemos como podemos con los chicos: has visto con [nombre], hay problemas porque este niño no capta nada. Y los tres que estaban aquí, por ejemplo, no les ayudan: sus padres salen por la mañana y no hay quien les ayuda. Por esto también hay niveles muy diferentes y esta es la dificultad que tenemos (Quote taken from an interview with a teacher, 2019).



Education in families also changed but it did not go in the same direction of the one that took place in schools. In fact, following the spirit of modernity and the appeal of the foreign, parents are abandoning the use and their attachment to indigenous cultures and languages. Parents' attitude and perception of indigenous cultures and languages seem to be ambiguous. On the one hand they emphasize, multiple times, the importance of cultivating and revitalizing them, especially for reasons of communication, children's futures and the dimension of origins. Parents are also aware of the openness towards diversity, multiculturalism and plurilingualism which characterize schools.

Porque anteriormente casi no se hablaba casi nada de quechua, nada de aymara, porque [en] los gobiernos estaban los de la derecha. Entonces había poca manera de hablar quechua, nos trataban feo también la ciudad a los que venían del campo más que todo. Entonces, con lo que venían hablando el quechua, preguntando, les trataban feo. Con este gobierno ha cambiado todo. Ha cambiado todo, y por eso mismo Evo le ha dicho que tienen que aprender los tres idiomas, aymara, quechua y castellano. Pero lo primordial es castellano, después los secundarios quechua y aymara. Es por eso motivo, me parece que ha sacado un decreto para que en los colegios se dicte quechua y aymara (Quote taken from an interview with a student's parent, 2019).

However, they identify this transformation with the coming of Evo Morales, rather than the promulgation of law n.70/2010.

Porque, mira, ahora, como es esto presidente que tenemos Evo Morales, porque se sacó el decreto que tienen que saber quechua, por cierto, y todo el mundo tiene que saber, o sea toda Bolivia (Quote taken from an interview with a student's parent, 2019).

Porque le sirve el quechua, por ejemplo, ahora como nuestro gobierno es de una parte, como se dice, indígena. Si, los profesionales tienen que aprender el quechua y cuando ya son grandes se descuestan más. Incluso que nosotros somos quechua, somos quechuañol porque hablamos quechua y español mezclado, pero quecha es profundo todavía. Querría que les enseñen ambos (Quote taken from an interview with a student's parent, 2019).

Therefore, the openness is seen not as a particular feature of education but more as a change of the entire society.

Parents seem to share a positive attitude towards the teaching of Quechua in schools and the possibility for their children to master the language. However, their role in this process doesn't seem clear. In fact, they agree on the importance of learning and speaking this language at school, but they confine the teaching process of Quechua just to formal education, without considering the positive and essential impact that they could have on it. Therefore, the duty of invigorating indigeneity seems an exclusive burden of schools, which must teach indigenous languages to students and reinforce indigenous cultures, practices and values. During the interviews conducted with students' parents, they showed a sort of ambiguous attitude towards their use of Quechua and Spanish with their children. In some cases, they expressed their habit to use both languages when communicating with their children, an affirmation that tended to be contradicted during the development of the interviews. In this example, a parent is asked in which language he/she communicates with his/her children



Quechua. Casi los dos. Yo les hablo en los dos a veces, en quechua y en castellano [...] Ella a veces no [contesta] tanto en quechua ya cosas que no entiende, entonces me pregunta. Poco habla [quechua], pero entienden. Pero a veces se confunden y mezcla el español y el quechua. Porque casi hace de chiquita estaba hablando Español conmigo. Allí en Cochabamba no le hablábamos nosotros en quechua. Mi marido y yo casi todo en español hablábamos (Quote taken from an interview with a student's parent, 2019).

In this other interview, after having answered that the language of communication in the family is Spanish, a student's parent adds:

Hablo los dos, castellano y quechua. Pero mayormente con ellos es más castellano porque cuando somos entre los tres mayormente hablamos castellano (Quote taken from an interview with a student's parent, 2019).

In this process, parents position themselves as outsiders, not considering, in any moment or aspect, their potential in the process of learning Quechua and, in general, preserving indigeneity. As a matter of fact, they blame society and modernity for the loss, excluding themselves from the sphere of influence and power. They do not identify the linguistic change happened inside the house as the first step towards the loss. Consequently, they do not take into account the possibility of their contribution in approaching and teaching children indigenous cultures and languages (Abarca Cariman, 2015). This attitude is reiterated by the fact that they express a positive attitude towards bilingualism Quechua-Spanish, but this appears to be confined to the school; indeed, they seem to not image the possibility that bilingualism can be rooted in the house and children can learn multiple languages since they were born. Hence, bilingualism is portrayed as a resource inside schools, but as an obstacle to the mastery of the dominant language of the society outside the school, and, in particular, inside the house.

A veces cuando nosotros le hablamos en quechua, ellos aprenden quechua y le dificulta hablar castellano. Es por eso. Entonces después ya, con unos cinco años un poquito hablamos quechua [así que se] vayan acomodándose [...] Mira, en primer lugar, está el español, ¿No? El castellano, porque siempre, cuando el niño crezca, vaya donde vaya, va a hablar en español. Poned que de aquí se vaya a Italia. No va a hablar con quechua [porque] los italianos no le van a entender (Quote taken from an interview with a student's parent, 2019).

Finally, students seem to share a positive attitude and perception towards plurilingualism, in terms of learning languages at school and using them in their daily life. As a matter of fact, they express their will to learn Quechua in order to be able to communicate and deepen their relationship with their grandparents, those who represent the category of people who do not know Spanish. Therefore, the knowledge of Quechua seems to be relegated to a sentimental and familiar dimension, rather than to a wiser idea of origins.

Eso [quechua] si se tiene que aprender porque hay gente que parece que hablan todavía quechua (Quote taken from an interview with a student, 2019).



Son bonitas las palabra [en quechua] (Quote taken from an interview with a student, 2019).

This conclusion can be also supported by the fact that in no occasion students refer to Quechua as culture, identifying and discussing only its linguistic dimension. For these reasons, the main stimuli for students to master Quechua coincides with communication needs which could be fulfilled by their knowledge of Quechua or their grandparents' knowledge of Spanish.

Porque cuando mi abuelita me habla, yo también le quiero hablar en quechua (Quote taken from an interview with a student, 2019).

Nevertheless, although the connection to origins does not explicitly emerge from students' words and behaviors, the attachment to the language spoken by their grandparents can be developed and deepened in order to raise awareness among young generations of the concept of native language.

The idea that family and the house have radically changed during the time is reinforced, and children's linguistic reference seems to have witnessed a similar change: for students' parents the school was Spanish, and the house/family was Quechua. Now, for students the school is still mainly Spanish, but it may be imagined as the only way to learn Quechua, since the house/family is Spanish, too.

Finally, it must be underlined that this new generation of students have greatly interiorized the value of plurilingualism, overcoming bilingualism Quechua-Spanish. As a matter of fact, English has been imposed as third language and students seem to agree with this, motivated by their will to travel. Therefore, there opened its borders and from representing the Spanish city, it progressively became the English world. In this scenario, the knowledge of multiple languages does not appear to be perceived as a matter of exclusionary choices but rather as empowering resources.

porque cuando voy a viajar a Países extranjeros, [allí] hablan inglés, yo no puedo entender (Quote taken from an interview with a student, 2019).

[Uso el inglés] para irme a China (Quote taken from an interview with a student, 2019).

4. Conclusions

Analyzing the results achieved by the study, it can be concluded that primary rural education in Bolivia is still experiencing a phase of change, since the introduction of law n.70/2010. As a matter of fact, professors are still adapting to the adjustments established by the new education law and, probably due to a lack of training (Abarca Cariman, 2015), do have troubles in the adaptation process. Furthermore, the lack of participation and collaboration expressed by teachers in referring to students' parents does not favor the implementation of law n.70/2010 or further improvement of the quality of education.



Therefore, it can be said that rural primary schools are working towards the application of the core principles of law n.70/2010, namely interculturalism and intraculturalism, plurilingualism and the Socio-community productive model, but are having difficulties in their implementation. However, an exhaustive practice of these principles and the achievement of consistent results cannot be possible without the promotion of further training for teachers and processes of sensibilization on the importance of collaboration between the whole society and schools (Abarca Cariman, 2015).

Regarding this last point, an issue that emerges from the results collected by the study is the lack of a collective social action to valorize and incentivize the use of indigenous languages and cultures, inside and outside schools and, consequently, to support the new education paradigm introduced by law n.70/2010 (López, 2009). In fact, a lack of social exposure to indigenous languages and culture seems to be present, discouraging people from embracing their indigeneity or being aware of its presence in the country. Particularly, this failure is reported in mass media where the presence of indigenous languages or issues related to indigenous traditions and habits is really poor. On the other side, there appears to be an important linguistic generational break in rural areas and, thereby, a progressive loss of the generational transmission of indigenous languages. Indeed, parents are increasingly adopting Spanish as the first language of communication with their children. Consequently, children's mother tongue is becoming, in more and more cases, Spanish, at the expense of indigenous languages (Plaza, 1989).

On a less visible and explicit level, the same situation is characterizing the transmission of indigenous cultures, a term through which we refer to indigenous habits, practices, traditions, and values. In light of this scenario, it seems that education policies are insufficiently taking this linguistic generational shift into consideration and that, as it happened in the past, they seem to keep holding on to the idea of indigenous monolingualism.

Law n.70/2010 introduced specific criteria to determine which indigenous languages and cultures must be included in school curricula, according to the dominant indigenous group of the area. A fixed and defined image of indigeneity seems to characterize this education law. Nevertheless, contemporary indigeneity does not have the same delineated features as it did in the past and it seems to be a more and more fluid concept. Indigenous peoples' monolingualism and their geographical homogeneity are not there anymore (López, Sichra, 2008): globalization, urbanism and migration have pushed indigenous peoples towards new cultural and linguistic paradigms which influences and shape their identity (Vignoli, 2004). But they also threaten their indigenous identity if a joint social and governmental action of awareness raising and inclusion of diversity is not nationally pursued (Bustamante, 2013). It seems that Bolivia is working in this direction, although a deeper analysis of socio-cultural and socio-linguistic changes is needed in order to efficiently and comprehensively accomplish this goal.



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