Teacher Education Reform and Subaltern Voices: From Política to Práctica in Bolivia

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In 1994, the National Educational Reform in Bolivia instituted reforms that called for a model of education that held at its center the knowledge and languages of Indigenous people. The types of change called for by the reforms in Bolivia signify major transformations in teacher preparation practices and a concerted emphasis on training in bilingual intercultural education. At the core of such efforts is the notion that hegemonic practices and voices are critiqued and subaltern voices and practices become a base for change. This study examines whether and how this policy has helped to foster the expansion of Indigenous voices and engagement in bilingual intercultural education. It also considers how the Bolivian educational reforms help to develop notions of interculturalism and promote the development of a multilingual and pluricultural nation.

Key words: bilingual intercultural education, Bolivia, educational reform, teacher preparation, voice
considers how the educational reforms help to develop notions of interculturalism and promote the development of a multilingual and pluricultural nation. Attention to these factors in rural normal schools is critical as this is where the majority of Indigenous bilingual teachers complete their preparation as teachers.

In this article, I will first describe the general sociolinguistic and historical context of Bolivia and the educational reform. I will then define the theoretical perspectives that inform the research. I will also provide a description of the Institutos Normales Superiores de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (INS-EIBs) as the main research sites and as the central teacher preparation institutions for IBE. Finally, through Indigenous teacher interview and classroom observation data I will illustrate how the Educational Reform within the context of Indigenous bilingual intercultural teacher preparation helps to foster notions of interculturalism and create spaces for subaltern voices to be heard. It is important to note that the “voices” highlighted are by no means homogenous or unidirectional in how they interpret IBE, and as a consequence create a picture that reflects contradictory understandings and a fair amount of ambivalence. The vacillating nature of these voices underscores a “social and political landscape in which the guideposts are ambiguous and shifting” (McCarty, 2002, p. 196). At the same time they illustrate a resoluteness to advance Indigenous self-determination.

**SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONTEXT OF THE EDUCATIONAL REFORM**

Bolivia is a linguistically and culturally diverse country with 36 Indigenous groups and languages (López & Küper, 2002). Though not all scholars agree on the exact numbers (i.e., Albó & Anaya, 2003, cite 34 Indigenous groups), it is evident that not all of them enjoy the same amount of power (Luykx, 2003a), and many are extremely vulnerable (Ethnologue, 2008).

According to the 2001 census and other sources, 62% of people over the age of 15 defined themselves as belonging to an Indigenous group (López, 2006). Another part of the census determined that there were 46.8% that identified themselves as monolingual in Spanish and a somewhat smaller group who identified themselves as bilingual in an Indigenous language and Spanish (40.8%). A little more than a tenth of the population is monolingual in Indigenous languages (Sichra, Guzmán, Terán, & García, 2007). The rich cultural diversity can be clearly seen in both rural and urban settings (see Table 1).

Though there is a majority Indigenous population, it should be underscored that there are some 29 ethnolinguistic groups comprising only 2.4% of the population. It’s likely that many of these

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indigenous Group</th>
<th>Quechua</th>
<th>Aymara</th>
<th>Guaraní</th>
<th>Chiquitano</th>
<th>Mojeño</th>
<th>Other Native</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>790,436</td>
<td>761,712</td>
<td>43,008</td>
<td>76,806</td>
<td>32,675</td>
<td>41,792</td>
<td>1,746,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>765,205</td>
<td>516,169</td>
<td>35,410</td>
<td>35,410</td>
<td>10,628</td>
<td>33,445</td>
<td>1,396,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,555,641</td>
<td>1,277,881</td>
<td>78,359</td>
<td>112,216</td>
<td>43,303</td>
<td>75,237</td>
<td>3,142,637</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  | 49%     | 41%    | 2.5%    | 3.6%       | 1.4%   | 2.4%         | 100%  |

*Note.* Adapted from Sichra et al., 2007.
groups have few or no young speakers (Ethnologue, 2008), placing these languages at Stage 7 or 8 of Fishman’s (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) for Threatened Languages. This position on the scale underscores the urgency with which action should be taken in revitalization efforts. Indeed, Baker (1996) observes that “the danger of Stage 7 includes positive attitudes towards the language without positive action” (p. 68). Hornberger (2006) reiterates this notion in her discussion regarding the ecology of language perspective in which she states that this movement is about not only studying and documenting potential losses “but also counteracting them” (p. 280). Examining efforts at counteracting these losses is essential to developing our understanding of reversing language shift. The educational reforms in Bolivia are one such effort.

The heterogeneity among and within these groups is immense. For example, Albó (1999) mentions 12 principal sociolinguistic contexts in Bolivia from which he says we can derive at least 40 different linguistic situations if we were to include all “minority groups” (p. 34, author’s translation). The urban/rural distinction and the numerous sociolinguistic contexts are important to consider if we are to take into account Albó’s (1999) assertion that “not all that speak the same language need the same cultural and linguistic policies” (p. 35, author’s translation). Equally important is how language policies affect both language ideologies and use, “but not always with the desired effects. Policies aimed at eradicating vernacular speech have often provoked their resurgence, while policies meant to strengthen subordinated languages may in fact contribute to their decline” (Luykx, 2003b, p. 98).

Bustamante (2005) stresses the difficulty that lies in the classification of ethnic groups given the diverse sociocultural situations in Bolivia. She notes that some groups may prefer terms more closely related to geography. Other ways of distinguishing individuals might make reference to clothing (e.g., de pollera, a traditional skirt) or social class. Further complicating the idea of ethnic groups is the concept of ethnic identity. Bustamante (2005) notes that ethnic identity refers to the participation or membership of a person to a particular cultural group with which they feel a “common destiny” (p. 52, author’s translation), and that people structure their identities from various dimensions in a fluid and dynamic nature.

In this article, the term “Indigenous” will be utilized along with the term “original peoples,” as these are the terms used in the proposed Nueva Ley de Educación Boliviana and in much of the literature about the Educational Reform of 1994 (Ley #1565). The use of these terms, therefore, is intended to index the extreme complexity of the sociolinguistic and sociocultural reality of Bolivia and of the communities in which this study took place.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM**

Though it is beyond the scope of this article to provide a complete history of Bolivia to contextualize the Educational Reform of 1994, there are some significant events that merit mention here in order to better situate the discussion.

Bolivia’s independence from Spain in 1825 did not significantly change the lives of the Indigenous majority who “continued to live in conditions of serfhood until the 1952 revolution led by the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR)” (Luykx, 1999, p. 2). These “serf-like” conditions were not uncontested before the MNR. In the early part of the 20th century there
was what is now known as the “cacique movement” (Albó & Anaya, 2003), which demanded the protection of communal lands and education (in Spanish).

During this time, referred to as the “Integration Period” (Mosonyi, 1998, p. 2), education was seen as a way to “civilize the Indian” (Sichra et al., 2007, p. 6, author’s translation) by teaching reading and writing in Spanish in order to be assimilated to national society. One of the most widely referenced schools of this time is “the escuela ayllu of Warisata, which combined socialist philosophy with Aymara cultural and organizational principles, inspiring similar experiments throughout Latin America” (Luykx, 1999, p. 45).

Around the same time as the establishment of the escuela ayllu, Bolivia’s Chaco War with Paraguay erupted (1932–35). This war had an enormous impact on national educational policy. Soria (as referenced in Luykx, 1999) asserts that language barriers among Aymaras, Quechuas, Guaranís, and monolingual criollos sent to the front “impeded military operations, indirectly causing the deaths of many combatants” (p. 45). The heavy losses, a ratio equal to what the European nations had suffered in World War I (Klein, 2003), underscored for politicians the necessity of the castilianization of the Indigenous population.

In 1952, the revolution that brought the MNR to power also helped to institute various other important changes in the Bolivian landscape among them being agrarian reform, nationalization of the mines, universal voting (up until that point reserved for people who were literate), and free public education. Yet, despite these major changes, the agenda was clearly assimilationist in nature. According to Sichra et al. (2007), “universal free schooling should ‘Bolivianize,’ meaning, teach the Indians to read and write in the nation’s official language, teach about the country and to be proud of it” (p. 8, author’s translation).

As was occurring in other parts of the Americas (Mosonyi, 1998), Indigenous organizations in Bolivia began to question the absence of space for pluralism in the national agenda and they began to “become aware of their culture as an element of political struggle” (Sichra et al., 2007, p. 8, author’s translation). This consciousness was later underscored in the Bolivian National Educational Reform of 1994 (Educational Reform Law #1565), which emphasizes the knowledge and languages of Indigenous people. According to a document from the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, 2002), the law explicitly states that linguistic diversity and social participation as its “main vertebra” (p. 6, author’s translation). These values are further underscored in the proposed Nueva Ley that states as a goal to “develop intraculturality, interculturality and linguistic pluralism for the complete and integral fulfillment of human beings and the shaping of a harmonious society” (Nueva Ley, Article 2, author’s translation). The inclusion of such requires the participation and support of the community. It also calls for new pedagogical approaches and reform in teacher education (López & Küper, 2002).

Though not explicitly stated in the language of the law, the new policy established social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) as the main pedagogical orientation for schools. The focus on constructivism in the reforms is noted by several authors and in other Ministry of Education documents (Alcón, 2005; Pinaya; 2005; Ministerio de Educación Cultura y Deportes [MECyD], 1999). However, the implementation of constructivism has not proceeded without skepticism and misunderstandings. Alcón (2005) in her study of a teacher education program in Warisata notes, “In the Educational Reform there has been a mechanical ‘importation’ of cognitive psychology which has generated some confusion among the teachers” (p. 50, author’s translation). This confusion is a common topic of discussion among scholars and practitioners in the area of bilingual intercultural education (Pinaya, 2005).
Notions of Voice

Luykx (1999), in her ethnographic study of a small teachers’ college in rural Bolivia, remarks, “Despite schooling’s hegemonic function, most would agree that the empowering potential of schooling (and its role as the principal avenue to social and political power) makes it a desirable thing for subordinated populations” (p. 307). Many would echo that assertion. However, just having access to education does not equal power or empowerment. This is also the case when we consider the issue of native language use. Just because a language is permitted and/or possibly even integrated into educational policy does not mean that the population that speaks that language actually has a voice (Ruiz, 1997). In fact, Ruiz, (as cited in Hornberger, 2005), cautioned us against “language planning in which the ‘inclusion’ of the language of a group [might] coincide with the exclusion of their voice” (p. 152).

The notion of voice has long been present in feminist theories (Gilligan, 1982). Other authors such as Medina and Luna (2000) and Quiroz (2001) use it as a framework for discussing Latinos/as in educational settings. In her study of Puerto Rican and Mexican high school students, Quiroz poignantly puts it, “Having a voice means being heard” (p. 60). In Bolivia, where the majority of the nearly 9 million people are Indigenous, “being heard” has potentially very far-reaching and important ramifications.

My own conceptualization of voice in this article is much like that of agency in the sociocultural use of that term (Levinson & Holland, 1996). People’s voices (in this case teachers) are very much connected to their historical and sociocultural contexts, and they often “make specific choices based on their own histories and their evolving professional lives as well as being ‘constrained’ or ‘shaped’ to a certain extent by the contexts in which they find themselves” (Varghese & Stritikus, 2005, p. 75). Another important point to consider is that the notion of “voices” within this definition is conceptually very fluid in that the “voices” are not uniform or unidirectional in the ways in which they manifest themselves.

Urciuoli (1996) in her study of New York Puerto Rican experiences of language, race, and class examines the notion of voice in another manner. She asserts that voices “manifest action” (p. 111). In her discussion of the semiotics of exclusion she notes that:

As language becomes action, concepts become real. Constructions are never “mere” nor are they opposed to reality. They are reality. They frame what we know of physical reality, and they set out the terms of social reality. What we know is mediated through social relations—who we live with, deal with, learn from, talk to. (p. 1)

The above is also illustrative of the notion of voice in the Bakhtinian sense. Bakhtin (1981) proposed that “voices” that engage in dialogue are not voices of isolated individuals without history. These individuals can only be understood in terms of a specific sociohistorical context. Alcón (2005) echoes that assertion:

Taking into account the reality of Indigenous education in Bolivia from a sociohistorical perspective it is necessary to think, and rethink from, with, and for the actors of the Indigenous people. Going beyond changing teaching methods that are centered in the professor’s authority, there also exists the need to revalue the subjects as such—meaning professors and students as subjects with collective
Their voices are not only imperative in the process of their professional formation, but also in the political process of policy formation. Walter Gutiérrez, as quoted in Carmen López’s (2005) examination of bilingual intercultural education in Bolivia, claims that bilingual intercultural education “is a political tool for freedom for our people” (p. 52, author’s translation). López echoes that notion and states that, with the direct participation of Indigenous organizations, bilingual intercultural education can “become a more just and adequate response to educational demands, contributing to the construction of intercultural relations and societies that are more equitable and democratic” (p. 52, author’s translation). This sort of participatory process requires that peoples’ voices be heard, valued, and applied to help to construct their own realities. Hornberger (2006) emphasizes this concept in her discussion of the differences between language maintenance and language revitalization when she asserts that in revitalization work the “relative emphasis is placed on the conscious and deliberate efforts by speakers of the language to affect language behavior, that is, on language planning” (p. 281). Within this definition then, it is imperative that Indigenous voices are an actively engaged in these efforts.

Researchers in countries such as Mexico (Hamel, 2008; Paciotto, 2004) Guatemala (Richards & Richards, 1997), Peru (Freeland, 1996; Hornberger, 2006), Ecuador (Moya, 1990), Bolivia (Benson, 2004; Hornberger, 2000), and the United States (McCarty, 2002) have examined language education policies, and what they mean for Indigenous languages and cultures. This sustained emphasis on maintenance, revitalization, and stabilization of languages and cultures in educational polices requires that this be reflected in teacher training programs. Teachers and teacher trainers must consider Wiley’s (1996) observation that “since language becomes a focal point in social, political, and economic struggles, it is important for applied linguists and language educators to reflect on their roles as active participants in these struggles” (p. 104). As such, teacher trainers must also learn how to make Indigenous epistemologies, voices, and concerns a part of and not apart from bilingual intercultural teacher education programs. Given the demographics of Bolivia, this is a particularly salient point.

Hornberger (2006) refers to the “choices, dilemmas, and even contradictions in educational practice” (p. 279) that are often present in Indigenous contexts where multilingual policies are addressed through bi- or multilingual education. In the Bolivian context, those choices, dilemmas, and contradictions are equally present in the understanding of interculturalism. In the following section I will discuss the notions of interculturalism in order to situate the rest of the discussion.

Notions of Interculturalism

The term intercultural has many definitions and interpretations. This is as clear in the literature as it was in the interviews with teachers, students, and administrators of the Institutos Normales Superiores de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (INS-EIBs), where this research was carried out. Schmelckes (2005) notes that because the term intercultural itself is a concept under construction, it is difficult to articulate a solid definition.
The notion of interculturalism emerged from Latin American social scientists more than three decades ago (Mosonyi & González, 1975). It came out of an educational project designed with an Indigenous population in Venezuela and was further elaborated during a meeting between UNESCO and the Inter American Indigenous Institute (López, 2001). During this meeting, Mosonyi and Rengifo (1986) outlined the theoretical and programmatic foundations of bilingual intercultural education, the first of which being interculturalism. They note that they are not employing the term bicultural because “Human beings are capable of managing different languages and many cultures at the same time” (p. 156). The term bicultural is simply too limited to discuss such complex interactions.

López (2001) explains that interculturalism goes well beyond just the mere teaching of languages. In fact, “it is destined to generate a radical transformation of the educational system within the contexts in which the resource of the language itself lends itself to true innovations in ways of learning and teaching” (p. 8, author’s translation). At the heart of these “innovations” is the notion that learning is socially and culturally situated and that it is a “dialogic proposal” (p. 8).

This is a fundamental difference that is often noted between the notions of multiculturalism and interculturalism. Multiculturalism, interpreted by many educators in the United States, is seen as a way to understand and coexist with minority groups while not disrupting the “American way of life.” Interculturalism, as described by López (2001), examines difference but not “its disappearance under the motto of unity in diversity” (p. 9, author’s translation).

There are scholars, mostly in the area of critical pedagogy, that use the term multicultural much in the same way that the term intercultural is used in Latin America. For example, Giroux and McLaren (1996) look at teacher education through the lens of “cultural politics,” a term they claim allows them to underscore the “political consequences of interaction between teachers and students who come from dominant and subordinate cultures” (p. 317). Their approach highlights the dialogic aspects that are present in intercultural education in terms of examining power and resistance. These dialogic aspects are also present in the way that I utilize voice in this article and as it has been used by others (Hornberger, 2006).

In the following section I will present the methods that I used in carrying out this research and provide the context for how this project was developed.

**METHODS**

This case study of Bolivia’s bilingual intercultural teacher preparation provides an examination of the educational reform policies begun in 1994 and the actual educational practice in teacher education some 10 years after the reforms. The study was carried out between December 2004 and July 2005 among three teacher training schools specializing in bilingual intercultural education in three rural villages of Bolivia: Cororo (Chuquisaca), Santiago de Huata (La Paz), and Llica (Potosí). The following research questions guided this project:

1. What are the norms for Indigenous language use and pedagogical approaches in the INS-EIBs?
2. How do teacher preparation and policy in the INS-EIBs help to foster the expansion of Indigenous voices and engagement in bilingual intercultural education within the context of teacher preparation?
3. How do teacher preparation and policy in the INS-EIBs help to develop notions of interculturalism?

4. What are the INS-EIBs administrators’/educators’ understandings and related discourses regarding IBE?

The INS-EIBs were selected as research sites in consultation with the director of the program Proyecto de Institutos Normales Superiores en Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (PINS-EIB) and Programa de Formación en Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (PROEIB) Andes, Luís Enrique López, and the Bolivian Ministry of Education. The INS-EIBs were three of eight that train bilingual teachers in Bolivia (there are now nine). The remaining five had been the subject of an evaluation by a team of outside evaluators working for UNESCO just five months before I began this study (Hanemann et al., 2005), so it was determined with López that the remaining INS-EIBs were best suited as research sites and would complement the work already done in the other INS-EIBs.

The assistance of the PINS-EIB and, particularly, the director Luís Enrique López, Bertha Barreta, and Esteban Quispe (Aymara and Quechua Specialists in the PINS-EIB) was critical in my ability to “enter” the INS-EIB as a researcher. I had planned to spend at least two weeks at each institution and in each community. The rest of my time was to be spent at the Ministerio de Educación (MINEDU) and PROEIB Andes where I was provided access to the library, a computer, a printer, transcription equipment, and so on. I ended up being able to spend only a week at each institution and making several trips to La Paz and the MINEDU in order to conduct interviews and to consult with Barreta and Quispe on the PINS-EIB. Strikes, roadblocks, and general civil unrest in the country regularly complicated my plans for fieldwork during that time. There were near constant protests and strikes in the whole country, many of which could be attributed to the work of Indigenous organizations and the teachers’ union. After three especially turbulent weeks in May and June of 2005, the president of the country, Carlos Mesa, resigned. According to Sichra, Guzmán, Terán, and García (2007), “In the time of one year, events occurred that were previously unimaginable for many, and probably feared by hegemonic sectors of Bolivian society” (p. 1, author’s translation). Given these events and the fact that I am a woman whose physical appearance might be associated with the mostly criollo hegemonic sector, I listened carefully to the advice of my colleagues about when/where to conduct fieldwork in the INS-EIBs.

Specifically, the findings presented here focus on the concept of interculturalism within the framework of the educational reforms and bilingual intercultural education. Also examined is the notion of voice as it relates to bilingual intercultural education and the representation of Indigenous people (Hornberger, 2006; Ruiz, 1997). It became clear to me during my fieldwork in La Paz at the MINEDU and at PROEIB Andes in Cochabamba that the notions of interculturalism and voice were strands that I should focus on in my fieldwork in the INS-EIBs (field notes, February 14, 2005). Their importance was confirmed in my observations and interviews at the INS-EIBs. I integrated questions regarding voice and interculturalism into my interview guide, which I developed by utilizing questions adapted from King (2001), and from instruments developed at PROEIB Andes for the aforementioned UNESCO evaluation of the PINS-EIB program.

Interviews (Spradley, 1979) and participant observation (Wolcott, 1994) were the main methods employed for gathering primary data in the three schools where teacher trainers (22), preservice teachers (15) and school directors (5) were formally interviewed and taped. I also collected informal interview data during my stay at the school and spoke with numerous preservice
teachers everyday. I conducted all the interviews in Spanish. In addition, I also interviewed administrators and personnel from the Ministry of Education. Some of these were recorded, and some were not depending on the context of the meeting. Finally, secondary data were collected from the schools’ archives and the Ministry of Education. All the structured interviews were taped, transcribed, and coded according to emerging themes and the specific questions in the interview protocol. Two of these themes, interculturalism and voice, will be discussed in this article. A description of the research sites follows to provide a clear picture of the varied contexts in which teacher preparation takes place in Bolivia.

The Normal Schools

The Institutos Normales Superiores en Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (INS-EIBs, or normal schools specialized in bilingual intercultural education) are the fruit of the educational reforms that stipulated that these be transformed from the urban and rural normal schools. The normal schools are essentially teachers’ colleges, in this case located in rural areas. The reforms also established that “the degrees granted should be the same as other professionals with similar education at the level of (or superior to) that of a college degree” (P.INS-EIB, 2004, p. 20). However, it should be noted that a college degree takes 5 years plus a thesis, and, during the time of this study, a degree at an INS-EIB only took 6 semesters to achieve. Under the proposed Nueva Ley all teachers would study for 5 years (Article 49, p. 23). Another consequence of the reform related to the present discussion was the use of 2 distinct curricula, one bilingual and the other monolingual, thus, creating the need for bilingual teacher training. The proposed Nueva Ley underscores the need and calls for teachers that are able to communicate in 3 languages: Spanish, an Indigenous language, and a foreign language (Article 47, p. 23). This particular point seems unrealistic inasmuch as few Bolivian schoolteachers are fluent in a foreign language. It also seems at odds with the Nueva Ley’s strong anticolonialist stance, especially since “foreign language” is widely interpreted as “English” (L. E. López, personal communication, June 3, 2009).

The INS-EIBs in which most of the data were collected are located in 3 different departments in Bolivia. The first, INS-EIB Simón Bolívar, is located in the Chuquisaca department in a Quechua-speaking region in the community of Cororo. Of the 36 Indigenous groups that are a part of Bolivia, the Quechuas are the largest group (30.7%). The INS-EIB is located on an old hacienda, underscoring the colonized past of the region. Cororo is a small town with a population of about 1,200 people (including the students).

According to a sociological study by Yapu (2003), the INS-EIB in Cororo was formed by decree without a prior needs assessment or without considering the historic perspective of the community. He adds, “In reality, the end of the hacienda represents the appropriation of their lands; in this sense, it is probable that the Coreños aspired to acquire Rodriguez’ land that ‘unfortunately’ the Normal came to occupy” (p. 148, author’s translation). The “end of the hacienda” is a reference to the 1952 MNR revolution that institutionalized agrarian reforms. Despite the ill feelings to which Yapu alludes, the INS-EIB has grown substantially every year and has contributed to the development of the town in terms of basic services. For example, there is a health clinic and a telephone office, and many families either rent rooms to students or cook for them. This is especially important as there are 427 students, while there is only space for 50 in the internado (dorm especially for women). The students who can’t find a place to reside in Cororo stay in the nearby community of Morado K’asa. Some of the students are from the latter
community and make the hour walk (round trip) to Cororo every day. This is doubled if they go home for lunch, which many do.

The second INS-EIB, Bautista Saavedra, is located in the community of Santiago de Huata on the shores of Lake Titicaca some 120 km from La Paz. The inhabitants of the town are mainly farmers who dedicate themselves to the cultivation of potatoes and to fishing. It is mostly an Aymara-speaking village, but there are students who are Quechua speakers as well. It should be noted that these students take the language entrance exam in Aymara, making them trilingual. This INS-EIB prepares its students to be primary teachers and teachers specialized in math and natural sciences. It is the largest of the INS-EIB in this study (and the next to the largest INS-EIB in the country) with some 1,644 students.

Finally, the third INS, Franz Tamayo, is located on the Salar de Uyuni (the largest salt flat in the world with some 12,000 square kilometers), in the community of Llica near the Chilean border. Only very recently (June 2004) was this INS-EIB designated as an INS-EIB, thus changing its emphasis from monolingual to bilingual intercultural. It is administered by the Autonomous University Tomás Frías, which also is in charge of the INS-EIB Eduardo Avoroa in the city of Potosí (despite the fact that this city is very far away). Of the three INS-EIB visited, this is the only one administered by a university instead of the Ministry of Education. It has more than 1,000 students, with the largest student/faculty ratio of the 3 INS-EIB in this study. (See Table 2 below for the administrator/faculty/student ratios of the INS.)

The INS-EIB Franz Tamayo trains bilingual teachers, however, in a trilingual setting. The students can become either Aymara-Spanish or Quechua-Spanish bilingual teachers. Some students in the INS-EIB are multilingual, but most only emphasize one of the two Indigenous languages in their studies. Figure 1 shows a linguistic map of Bolivia detailing the location of Indigenous languages.

The curriculum at the INS-EIBs during the time of this study was organized around 4 areas of study otherwise known as the tronco común, the common core, which consists of general education, field experiences and research—an area of specialization (such as science)—and personal formation. These 4 areas are to be covered in 3,200 hours with a remaining 400 that each institute could design depending on their priorities and educational needs of their students (Taylor, 2004). All of the INS-EIBs had a specific course in the Indigenous language, and the INS-EIBs in Santiago de Huata and in Cororo alternated days in which the language of instruction for all courses was in the Indigenous language.

### Table 2
Administrator/Faculty/Staff/Student Ratios (March, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INS-EIB</th>
<th>Total Employees</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Admin. and Staff</th>
<th>No. of Enrolled Students</th>
<th>Fac./Student Ratio</th>
<th>Admin./Student Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INS-EIB Simón Bolivar, Cororo</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2 women, 11 men</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>1:33</td>
<td>1:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INS-EIB Bautista Saavedra, Santiago de Huata</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3 women, 31 men</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1622</td>
<td>1:47</td>
<td>1:108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INS-EIB Franz Tamayo, Llica</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5 women, 14 men</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1104</td>
<td>1:58</td>
<td>1:92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Interculturalism and Fostering Notions of Equity

Many countries in Latin America in their educational reforms or in their constitutions (Bolivia included) define themselves as pluricultural. Likewise, many of these same countries (for example, Mexico and Bolivia) have in place programs that are, at least in theory, intercultural. Sichra & López (2002) provide us with a discussion regarding these terms that elucidates their main qualities in regard to policy implementation. The interpretation they choose is one where educational policies transform relationships between societies, culture and languages from a perspective of equity, and from a relevant and pertinent curriculum. . . . Bilingual intercultural education is a resource for constructing a different pedagogy, one that is significant in pluricultural and multilingual societies. (p. 23, author’s translation)

The notion of equity was also present in one MINEDU administrator’s explanation of bilingual intercultural education, though the way he expressed it did seem to underscore an “us” and “them” kind of mentality (field notes, January 31, 2005). Furthermore, he suggests that the educational reforms in Bolivia actually raised Indigenous consciousness of colonization. My understanding is that Indigenous people are very conscious of their past and engaged in the present.

How does one go from being culturally colonized to a culturally self-determined subject? First, being aware that you are colonized. And that is the contribution of the Reforms. Now the Indigenous know they have been colonized and know what that colonization consists of. And what we are going to do from now on is make sure they have the same tools as everyone else to be self-determined individuals. (Guillermo Mariaca, January 31, 2005)

Though self-determination and the understanding of one’s historical context are both highly desirable, to suggest that the educational reforms in Bolivia have created “equal footing” or that Indigenous people have the “same tools” for negotiating the system is an overstatement. What I would argue they have done is created a space for understanding just how critical new paradigms are for teacher preparation if we are “regimen of subalternization resulting from colonialism” (López, 2005, p. 7, author’s translation).

Depth and Reciprocity of Interculturalism

The ways in which interculturalism manifested itself and was explained by stakeholders underscored the challenges in putting into practice such a theoretical perspective. The following quote is representative of what most professors and students alluded to when asked to explain their understanding of interculturalism. “It’s about knowing, valuing, and respecting a way of thinking. From the language, the customs, traditions, even the way of thinking of a culture. From oneself. Knowing others. Valuing and respecting them. It’s a reciprocal interaction” (teacher interview, April 18, 2005). However, there were some students that noted somewhat superficial characteristics when discussing the notion of interculturalism. In particular one student in his final semester
at the INS was critical when he noted clothing and dances as the main way in which interculturalism was interpreted at the INS in Cororo (Zenon Avalos, March 16, 2005). This was echoed by a teacher at the same INS who said she saw the INS as somewhat “reductionist” in terms of reducing interculturalism to “customs, cultures, and food” (Maritza Nava, March 17, 2005).

It was common to see evidence of cultural traditions and customs during the hora cívica in the schools. In the three schools, hora cívica usually took place in a large common gathering place (with a stage) once a week and appeared to be the place where announcements were shared and accolades were presented. It always began with the Bolivian national anthem. This was where students read poetry in Quechua or Aymara, presented traditional dances, or talked about the importance of culture in general. However, keeping these activities relegated to hora cívica or to the classes where students studied language and culture also keeps notions of interculturalism at the surface level and not necessarily very deep. In fact, these representations in such limited contexts are much closer to a watered-down interpretation of interculturalism than what is intended by the IBE model.

Interviews and the examination written documents regarding interculturalism underscored people’s ability to talk about interculturalism and the educational reforms in very sophisticated and sometimes metaphorical ways. As one official said,

And what the Reform has done this past ten years has been to say “there’s a wall there, how are we getting to the other side?” And so they’ve built a door and they’ve given us the key to that door. And what we have to do now is use this key to open the door from both sides and then we can go to that world and they to this one and we can begin to use this door as a two-way bridge all the time. . . . .

The state continues to be a colonizer. But the ones that have changed are the Indigenous. One. And two, the conditions have changed. The Indigenous have constructed the bridge. They are the bridge. Not the state. (Guillermo Mariaca, January 31, 2005, author’s translation)

The above quote is indicative of the perception of the one-sided nature of bilingual intercultural education. The Indigenous continue to be the ones who concern themselves with interculturalism and bilingualism, while the hegemonic sectors tend not to make them a priority. The comment is also reminiscent of what the former U.S. Director of Indian Education, John Tippenconnic, III, notes about policy development in the United States when he noted that federal policy was highly influenced by the “political wisdom and persistence of Indian educators, Indian institutions, Indian organizations, tribes, and other driving forces behind legislative and executive branch decisions” (in McCarty, 2002, p. 196) and not by the good will of the government.

Despite this recognition and the volumes of scholarship dedicated to the topic of interculturalism and the educational reforms, what I observed in terms of pedagogy was often lacking in putting policy into practice. For instance, some teachers still have students stand when they enter a room (field notes, March 16, 2005). Though this type of greeting was not the norm in the classrooms where I observed, and was openly criticized by a teacher as “antipedagógico” classroom practices in general were not what I considered very dynamic or constructivist in nature. For example, students tended to copy a lot of text and “report” on it without really demonstrating an understanding of what they were presenting. I seldom saw the professors ask for elaboration.

Luís Enrique López (2005) suggests some very concrete skills and knowledge that bilingual teacher educators and bilingual teachers should possess. Much of it has as much to do with
TABLE 3
Structure of Specific Knowledge and Skills Relative to Bilingual Intercultural Education Required for a Bilingual Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Knowledge Related to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, theories and</td>
<td>The interaction between cultures and subaltern/hegemonic languages: contact/conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research results</td>
<td>Cosmovision and Indigenous epistemology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Official” history, culture, and geography analyzed from an Indigenous perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociolinguistic/sociopolitical aspects of language use and function in multilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>societies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language, history, and culture of ethnolinguistic group whose language is used as the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>language of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociocultural diversity and pedagogy: intercultural education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design/practice of bilingual education models and strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws</td>
<td>Indigenous movement and organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legislation and recognition of Indigenous rights at national and international levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language laws/planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and skills</td>
<td>Intensive practice and use of oral/written language of both languages, with emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on subaltern language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research as essential to continuous learning: action research and ethnography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing in the vernacular and development of written code: the construction of a new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relationship with written language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intercultural communication (among Indigenous communities and in society in general)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation and use of bilingual materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Adapted from López, 2005.*

notions of interculturalism as it does bilingualism. His suggestions go well beyond the surface level (see Table 3).

The knowledge and skills outlined by López require educators to be intellectuals and to realize that their role is not a neutral one (Freire, 1998). There was evidence of this in the INS-EIBs. For example, all students are required to carry out research in the communities in which they were doing practicum. They had a course that prepared them for this experience and professors that were designated mentors in the process. The description of the community in this research project was to be written in the Indigenous language of the INS. During a classroom discussion this particular requirement provoked moans from one group of students (field notes, April 5, 2005). Oral classroom participation in Aymara and Quechua was usually quite lively, but producing academic documents in those languages was clearly a challenge and mentioned as such by both students and faculty. In spite of the Indigenous language courses offered, students in Santiago de Huata threatened to strike when they first heard about the new policy of writing part of their research paper in Aymara. Nonetheless, I did see evidence that the production of bilingual materials in the INS-EIBs was a priority. The preservice teachers were excited about using Aymara and Quechua with children in the schools where they were working. Some of them were tenuous in their ability to do so, but felt the use of the L1 at the INS-EIBs and the required study of the L1 were helping to prepare them to use the Indigenous language in academic contexts. It should also be noted that the difficulty of the shift to the required study of/in the Indigenous languages at this level moves
them up Fishman’s GIDS scale and places them at a point at which the language maintenance prospects are much higher (García & Schiffman, 2006).

Another aspect noted in the above table is that of intercultural communication between Indigenous communities and with society in general. I saw one very creative way of addressing this at the INS-EIB Bautista Saavedra. One teacher of Aymara, Ciberio Villasante, was helping to organize radio broadcasts (by the students) in Aymara. The class in which this planning took place was held outside in a beautiful meadow next to a stand of trees. Ciberio had two chalkboards to write on and there was a student who was helping to facilitate the discussion. The radio broadcast was to focus on Andean music and Aymara culture. He framed the discussion within the context of intercultural education and referenced the Reforma Educativa of 1994 specifically (field notes, April 5, 2005).

Another way in which I saw evidence of the specific knowledge and skills referenced in the table above was in conversations with students and the activities in which they engaged. For example, the students in Santiago de Huata invited me to attend their science class on the day they were to dissect a sheep. (Of course, they had to slaughter it first.) Most had stories of how they did this at home with their parents or in their communities. What I observed were students in white lab coats with dissection and science room tools (e.g., microscopes and scissors) combining their academic queries about quantity of blood and vital organs with family stories laced with Aymara. Indeed, their ability to name all the “parts” in Spanish and Aymara and employ content-specific language at this level was impressive. The only word they couldn’t think of (the professor included) in Aymara was “pancreas” (field notes, April 6, 2005).

That same afternoon other students were engaged in the construction of a watia (a small oven made of stones and earth) in the middle of a potato field located on school property. They wanted to eat potatoes with the mutton. These students spoke to me of the importance of maintaining their “ancestral values” and preserving these types of activities. What was most notable about this activity was the students’ ability to integrate their language and culture into the curriculum. Several of these students claimed they were dominant in Spanish but extremely enthusiastic about learning more Aymara and using it in their future classrooms. However, the students were very cognizant of the controversies and challenges of bilingual intercultural education. One student, Hilda, expressed concerns about being able to teach in Aymara. “Parents don’t want Aymara because they think it is going backwards” (April 6, 2005). The former vice-minister of education expressed this similar sentiment in 2000 when she explained that,

parents have begun to demand that their children be taught in Spanish. Perhaps the Reform erred, she says, in emphasizing the indigenous languages to such a degree that bilingual education appeared to the public to be monolingual indigenous language education. (Hornberger, 2002, p. 28)

The notion expressed above is something with which multilingual communities all over the world must grapple. Luykx (2003b) emphasizes that educators need to “work the hyphen between ‘bilingual’ and ‘intercultural’ in a much more serious way, examining how cultural domination operates in the realm of language and devising, together with Indigenous actors, policies that address that domination, in the school and elsewhere” (p. 10). She also asserts that educators that can conceive of language as a cultural practice (like the students building the stove or slaughtering the sheep) as opposed to language as code (using the native language to socialize Indigenous students into non-Indigenous cultural practices) will be more effective in terms of creating a favorable climate for linguistic diversity.
If we neglect to “work the hyphen” there is the danger of perpetuating the view that is held in some Indigenous communities that bilingual-intercultural education is a way to maintain “Indian schools” and ignore the communities’ agency in determining the types of programs they want. Indeed, one professor described communities’ comments in the following way “We know Quechua. How are you going to teach us Quechua? We want Spanish because we want our children to learn Spanish so they can go to the city” (R. M., March 17, 2005, author’s translation). And although this particular professor was convinced of the benefits of biliteracy and bilingualism, he noted, “There are two plans. One is the discursive theoretical plan and the other is the plan of the more pragmatic things” (R. M., March 17, 2005, author’s translation). One of the more pragmatic issues is that of educating communities regarding the EIB model as one that it transformative and not oppressive in nature. Often times the integration of education in the Indigenous language is seen by communities as a way to keep Indigenous people from progressing. This view, and limited formal education in Aymara or Quechua, produced some tension in both professors and pre service teachers regarding the use of the Indigenous Language, which I will explore in the next section.

Ambivalence of Voice

The concept of voice in this article is used to explore the dialogic aspects of the engagement of Indigenous voices in bilingual teacher preparation. In particular, I would like to remind the reader to recall how Ruíz (1997) and Hornberger (2005, 2006) have examined the notion of voice and its relation to language planning. Hornberger (2006) argues that language revitalization efforts are “not so much about bringing a language back, as bringing it forward” (p. 281). The involvement of Indigenous people in determining how this happens at the micro and macro levels is essential if these efforts are going to be successful. Nonetheless, there are on some levels, ambiguities in how the inclusion of language intersects with the notion of voice.

One of these ambiguities and tension lies within the issue of language proficiency at the INS-EIBs. The concern about future teachers’ proficiency in both languages is a concern addressed on various levels in Bolivia. For example, there are workshops for teacher trainers, self-instruction manuals with accompanying videos (Proyecto Tantanakuy, 2003), native text production workshops, and so on. However, Luykx (1999), in her study of a Bolivian normal school, makes a critical point when she notes “Bilingual or mother-tongue education is necessary, but not sufficient (especially if it defines students’ own speech as deficient relative to some linguistic ideal); students’ own speech must be recognized as a source of knowledge and creativity” (p. 308). It was clear from interviews that the INS faculty had somewhat different ideas about this. While one professor privately expressed an obvious inclination toward Spanish asserting that “one language is better” (field notes, April 3, 2005, author’s translation), others were concerned about respecting the multiple language varieties of their students (field notes, April 19, 2005).

The above disputes also arose in conversations with students. In fact, the rejection of L1 instruction by some students in one INS caused me to question their understanding of one of the basic premises of bilingual intercultural education. These same preservice teachers were more concerned about learning English, German, or French since they felt like that would help them more in the world. Again, this was an interesting contradiction to a basic
principle of IBE of which the students seemed to be unaware: the maintenance and revitalization of endangered languages in contrast to the cultivation of a global language. When I asked their professor how she felt about their attitudes towards learning to read and write Quechua, she too expressed some concerns. For example, she wondered why the reform only focused on the majority Indigenous languages and not all of Bolivia’s original languages? I believe the “focus” she is referencing is the lack of materials in most languages. The majority of materials available are in Aymara, Quechua, and Guaraní. She concluded, “Maybe we should just castellanizar [meaning assimilate linguistically to Spanish] once and for all and use the weapon of the enemy” (April 20, 2005). Rather than interpreting her comment literally, I found it to be indicative of how frustrated and ambivalent teachers feel when they are trying to accomplish the reform’s goals in environments that are not always supportive (either ideologically, pedagogically, or resource-wise). Indeed, this particular case could be considered a case where the inclusion of the group was equivalent to the exclusion of voices. Though professors and students did appear to hold Aymara and Quechua in high esteem, their concerns regarding the inclusion of these in teacher preparation was not entirely supported. This is partly because many of the professors themselves did not feel proficient enough in the Indigenous language to deliver content (field notes, April 18, 2005). One professor explained,

You know that in the 50s there was a literacy program, a castilianization program and they castillianized very deeply. I am a product of this. I was monolingual. I didn’t speak or understand Aymara or Quechua because it was prohibited. Well, now everyone here speaks and writes Castilian and now I have learned to speak Aymara and Quechua. Not perfectly, but I can babble. We are all conscious that it is necessary to speak, revalue and rescue these languages. (T. T., April 18, 2005, author’s translation)

I found that the professors and students most concerned about their ability to instruct in the Indigenous language were those at the newest INS-EIB, Franz Tamayo, in Llica. They seemed to still be learning about their new role as an INS-EIB and grappling with what that meant for them in terms of their own professional development and what it meant for their institution as a whole. For example, the professors that taught either Aymara or Quechua expressed that they felt more of a responsibility for the students being able to perform academically in those languages. In addition, though the professors of other subjects did use some Aymara or Quechua in their classrooms, they did not feel totally competent in preparing their courses employing those languages as the language of instruction. In part that had to do with a lack of materials in the institution, but there were also many indications that there was not complete “buy in” at this institution, either by the students or the faculty.

The concerns of students and their professors are not disconnected from the world in which they live. There is an obvious need for future teachers to be very fluent and literate in Spanish. Likewise, if these same teachers are going to be working as bilingual teachers in maintenance programs where the L1 is used to deliver content and to develop literacy, there is also the need that they be fluent and literate in the L1 of the students. At the same time, these preservice teachers also recognize the value of having some level of proficiency in a language such as English. (The point of learning English was often not far removed from discussions, comments,

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1 For a full discussion of maintenance bilingual education and other program models see Baker & Jones, 1998.
and questions regarding globalization.) These are hearty tasks for them to accomplish in just six short semesters. The complexity of it all is not lost on them. Even with the proposed *Nueva Ley* and new requirement of 10 semesters, the challenge is still immense.

**Voice in the Teacher Education Classroom**

Similar to Alcón’s (2005) investigation, I found that the students’ voice was often limited to them making presentations, practically word for word, from photocopied texts. Group presentations were a common occurrence in the INS-EIB, as was their apparent reliance on the photocopied texts. For example, one evening I met with a student who was preparing for a group presentation on the topic culturally relevant pedagogy. He complained that all he had was the photocopied text and that his teacher could not really explain it to him. He claimed that many teachers at the INS were “more vertical than horizontal” and that they get annoyed when students ask questions (field notes, March 15, 2005).

Contrary to the example above, students at the INS-EIB Franz Tamayo did engage very openly in dialogue about interaction between subaltern/hegemonic languages and cultures. When I first met students in a Quechua class they questioned what the relevance was of Quechua or Aymara for me as a researcher. Furthermore, they were quite open in their suspicions that my observations could come back to them in the form of policy (field notes, April 19, 2005). Given that the designation as an INS-EIB was fairly recent in this community, I was not totally surprised by the students’ resistance. Furthermore, I found the fact that they were giving voice to their suspicions of me as positive. It demonstrated their desire to define themselves as active participants in the world (Giroux & McLaren, 1996).

What was clear to me from the above examples was that some of Bolivia’s future teachers that have specialized in bilingual intercultural education (and their professors) do not necessarily believe that bilingual intercultural educational policy is permitting their voices to be heard. Instead, there is still a great deal of suspicion of it as one more neoliberal idea proposed to further dominate the masses in the name of reform. In fact, Morales, the first Indigenous president of Bolivia, made political hay out of this idea before his presidency and upon taking office when he replaced the national director of EIB, Adán Pari (a native Quechua speaker with a master’s degree in EIB from PROEIB-Andes, a foreign-NGO initiative), with a party loyalist. It should also be noted that the *Nueva Ley* is very explicit in its anti-neoliberal and anti-globalization language. For example, it specifically states that at its foundation Bolivian education is “decolonizing, liberating, anti-imperialist, anti-globalizing, revolutionary and transforming of economic, social, cultural, political and ideological structures” (p. 4, author’s translation). More recently, Morales named all Indigenous languages as co-official languages with Spanish in their respective jurisdictions, leaving room for hope for those engaged in IBE. Though this doesn’t guarantee that children will be taught indigenous languages, we do know that “a positive language attitude and ideologies are found to be critical for the long-term stability of a language” (UNESCO, 2003, p. 16) and for the success of language maintenance programs (King, 2001).

Though not all use the same terminology, the cynicism regarding the topic is easy to hear. One teacher put it this way: “The fact that they are bilingual doesn’t mean that they have a voice and a vote in deciding their destiny. We are still in a process” (April 5, 2005, author’s translation). He went on to say that the educational reforms changed the way people talked about things
politically, but that Indigenous people had really just gone from being “exploited to marginalized” and he added that at least “these exploited ones had food to put in their mouths” (April 5, 2005, author’s translation).

Despite the above teacher’s pessimism, the acknowledgement that they are “still in a process” is hopeful. Others recognize that the change has been the result of a struggle. “We have fought hard. Before it was just Western knowledge and there was no Andean knowledge included” (José Montano, March 16, 2005). This comment is reminiscent of Giroux’s (2005) assertion that “education is not a method, it’s an outcome of struggles” (p. 4). The teacher who spoke of the lack of Andean knowledge in the school’s curriculum had been involved in the struggle for authentic materials and voices in the curriculum for nearly two decades. He spoke optimistically of creating materials that reflected the students’ reality. At the same time, he made very clear his understanding of the political situation and struggle that surrounds the topic.

CONCLUSION

Teacher education, as a key component of educational reform efforts in Bolivia and elsewhere, is an area that requires the attention of researchers and policy makers if these efforts are to be successful. Over the past 25 years, educational reforms in countries with large Indigenous populations have highlighted the importance of teacher training in regard to their language policy (Richards & Richards, 1997; Hornberger, 2000). A critical voice often missing in the reform efforts is that of those served by these policies.

Gaining further knowledge about successful bilingual/intercultural teacher preparation is of the utmost importance if we are to better serve “minoritized” (McCarty, 2005, p. 48) students. The knowledge obtained from such research will help us to understand what practices in teacher education settings help to facilitate and encourage bilingualism and biliteracy while affirming our students’ voices. Examining practices in Bolivia that are based upon their educational reform can provide us with important information and examples applicable to other contexts both in and outside of Latin America.

Teacher preparation, be it in the area of bilingual intercultural education or other content areas, must emphasize the knowledge and skills necessary to live in a world that is increasingly pluricultural and plurilingual. The emphasis on these must be within the context of believing that change is possible. Freire (1998) reminded us of this when he wrote:

No one can be in the world, with the world, and with others and maintain a posture of neutrality. I cannot be in the world decontextualized, simply observing life. Yes, I can take up my position and settle myself, but only so as to become aware of my insertion into a context of decision, choice, and intervention. (p. 73)

Subaltern voices are critical in the creation of new educational paradigms. It is in hearing these voices and understanding their importance to living in a just and equitable world that we create educational policies reflective of all our students. Now, perhaps more than ever, we need to learn to live in a world of multiple differences and to find ways to work together in order to ensure the survival of the planet (López, 2001). In terms of bilingual intercultural education, this requires “a greater will and reflection on the part of the INS and the State in order not to reduce the term intercultural to mean Indigenous and leave the national society at the margins.”
Bilingual intercultural education is intended for all Bolivians, not just the Indigenous majority. In fact, this is essential if the reforms are truly going to be successful. However, how or if this will be carried out is unclear. Non-Indigenous students are undoubtedly the ones who have less practice in developing intercultural skills, as they typically are not the ones primarily involved in negotiating linguistic identities and cultural spaces. Hamel (2008) suggests that one way to introduce the topics of intercultural education and cultural diversity for discussion in Elite Bilingual Education (EBE) contexts would be to create general language and intercultural awareness units where topics such as diglossia and language contact issues could be introduced, assuming that the teachers themselves are prepared and well disposed. However, since EBE programs are typically private, that suggestion would really only impact a small number of potential students. IBE for all Bolvians will mean a significant shift in how society views bilingualism. Hamel (2008) rightly posits “that IBE for indigenous peoples can only succeed if assimilationist pressure is removed as a result of significant changes in the dominant sectors of Latin American Society and if these embrace a pluricultural enrichment orientation” (p. 97).

As Lukyx (2000) notes, “new knowledge is seldom produced when all of the involved parties are fully in agreement with each other from the beginning” (p. 167). Educational reformers and policy makers will, therefore, need to avoid being seduced by the reproduction of marginalizing solutions. The inclusion of subaltern voices is critical for beginning to create genuinely new educational reforms that effectively give life to the goals of bilingual intercultural education.

Among the general goals of teacher education in Bolivia is to develop teachers that have a deep understanding of their reality and a true value for the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country (Sichra et. al., 2007). My examination of voice and interculturalism through the words and actions of the teacher trainers and preservice teachers help to illuminate how the participants demonstrated their understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity in a variety of ways and in varying degrees. The findings demonstrate that they use unique ways to implement intercultural education practices that need to be valued and integrated into teacher education programs for all future teachers. The findings further demonstrate that there still exists a great deal of ambivalence regarding education in Indigenous languages.

It remains to be seen whether the proposed Nueva Ley will ever become law and further develop what was begun by the Educational Reforms of 1994 in regard to the preparation of future bilingual teachers. One thing is certain, policy makers and teacher educators in Bolivia will continue to grapple with the many sociolinguistic, historical, political, and economic layers that underlie bilingual intercultural education.

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