



Analysis of Intercultural Bilingual Education In Indigenous Communities: A Case Study In Regular Basic Education

River Chávez Santos¹ , Yuri Reina Marín² , Einstein Sánchez Bardales³ , Omer Cruz Caro⁴ , Angelica María Carrasco Rituay⁵

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Corresponding Author:

Omer Cruz Caro

Oficina de Gestión de la Calidad, Universidad Nacional Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza de Amazonas, Perú. Email: omer.cruz@untrm.edu.pe

Abstract: Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) seeks to provide an educational experience that respects and values the cultural and linguistic diversity of indigenous peoples. This study aimed to analyze the implementation of IBE across initial, primary, and secondary education levels in indigenous communities of the Amazon region. A qualitative methodology was employed, involving interviews with teachers at all three educational levels, representatives and specialists from the Local Educational Management Unit (UGEL), parents, and leaders of native communities (Apus). The research, focused on the Awajun and Wampis communities, uncovered a complex educational landscape marked by pedagogical challenges, institutional constraints, and an urgent need for cultural preservation. Findings indicate that the current education system contends with serious obstacles, including inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, student disengagement, and low parental involvement, while striving to implement an intercultural model that integrates traditional knowledge, reinforces cultural identity, and promotes bilingualism. Rather than functioning solely as an educational framework, IBE in these communities operates as a form of cultural resistance and identity preservation.

Keywords: Intercultural Bilingual Education, Regular Basic Education, Indigenous Communities, Cultural Identity, Educational Management

1. Introduction

Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) has emerged in response to the specific educational needs of Indigenous communities, which have historically experienced cultural assimilation and linguistic marginalization within traditional education systems. In this context, key questions arise: How is IBE implemented in regular basic education within Indigenous communities? What factors facilitate or hinder its effectiveness as an educational model and strategy for cultural preservation? While educational reforms have contributed to reshaping the landscape of Indigenous education, significant barriers remain, particularly the limited availability of learning materials in native languages, insufficient specialized teacher training in IBE, and institutional frameworks that often fail to fully accommodate the cultural and linguistic particularities of Indigenous peoples.

Bilingual education is increasingly adopted as a pedagogical approach (Scherzinger & Brahm, 2023), typically involving the use of two or more languages in the teaching and learning process (Wright & Baker, 2017). In Indigenous contexts, IBE represents a complex yet vital initiative (Gómez-Zermeño, 2018; Zhu & Zhang, 2024). It emerged to address the longstanding exclusion of Indigenous cultural and linguistic identity from mainstream education systems (Jiménez & Ávila, 2024).

According to UNESCO (2023), Latin America and the Caribbean are home to over 800 Indigenous peoples, encompassing approximately 58 million individuals. The largest Indigenous populations reside in Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, and Bolivia, together accounting for over 80% of the region's Indigenous population, around 34 million people (ONU, 2022; World Bank, 2023). In Mexico, 23.2 million people identify as Indigenous, with over 7.1 million speaking an Indigenous language. Guatemala has an estimated 6 million Indigenous people, while (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), 2024). Bolivia counts around 5.6 million individuals from 36 officially recognized Indigenous groups (Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024). In Peru, approximately 5 million people, about 25% of the population, belong to Indigenous groups (PNUD, 2024).

As of 2024, Peru recognizes 55 Indigenous peoples 51 located in the Amazon and 4 in the Andean highlands. These communities speak 48 native languages and are pri-

¹ Escuela Profesional de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe. Universidad Nacional Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza de Amazonas, Perú
^{2,3,4,5} Oficina de Gestión de la Calidad, Universidad Nacional Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza de Amazonas, Perú.

-marily distributed across 11 departments, including Cajamarca, Amazonas, San Martín, Loreto, Ucayali, Huánuco, Pasco, Junín, Ayacucho, Cusco, and Madre de Dios (Estado Peruano, 2024). Indigenous communities are a vital part of Peru's national identity, reflecting its cultural and linguistic richness (Domínguez & Pulido, 2023; IWGIA, 2024).

Indigenous peoples are typically defined as those whose mother tongue is an Indigenous language and who speak Spanish as a second language. Historically, they have been linguistically marginalized by a national education system that operated almost exclusively in Spanish (Cueto et al., 2012). This exclusion is particularly acute in rural areas (Dirección de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe, 2015), contributing to persistent disparities in literacy, educational attainment, and poverty levels between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations (INEI, 2018). To address these inequities, the Peruvian government undertook a comprehensive redesign of its bilingual education system in 2011–2012, culminating in the national IBE program (Posso, 2023).

Despite some progress, particularly in countries like Mexico, structural barriers such as discrimination and limited recognition of Indigenous cultural contributions remain pervasive. These issues continue to undermine the effectiveness of IBE and are reflected in the consistently lower educational outcomes of Indigenous children compared to their non-Indigenous peers (Hynsjö & Damon, 2016). In many cases, Indigenous children have historically received instruction only in the dominant language, usually Spanish, while their own languages and cultures were excluded (López, 2014). Although bilingual and Indigenous language education programs have expanded across Latin America in recent decades, challenges related to equity and quality persist (Cortina, 2014).

In Peru, IBE is a national policy under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (MINEDU), which collaborates with Regional Education Directorates (DREs) and Local Educational Management Units (UGELs). While MINEDU is responsible for developing educational materials, it often delegates their preparation to bilingual teachers. Occasionally, Indigenous elders and cultural experts are also involved to ensure linguistic and cultural accuracy. DREs and UGELs distribute these materials and monitor their use in IBE schools (UNICEF, 2024).

The Amazon region, home to diverse Indigenous groups such as the Awajún and Wampis, has seen notable growth in IBE implementation, particularly through the training of bilingual Indigenous teachers (Limerick & Hornberger, 2021). Since the 1990s, teacher training programs have sought to equip educators with the skills necessary to teach in Indigenous languages and apply intercultural pedagogies (Bermúdez & Seminario-Hurtado, 2022).

However, challenges remain. Educational materials in many Amazonian languages are still inadequate, and community involvement in designing and managing IBE programs is often limited (F. M. Aguilar et al., 2023; Lovón et al., 2020). While transitional bilingual education, starting with Indigenous languages and gradually shifting to Spanish, has been implemented, many communities advocate for a maintenance model that preserves their native languages over the long term. Persistent discriminatory attitudes toward Indigenous languages and cultures also impede the full realization of IBE's goals.

Given these complexities, this study seeks to analyze IBE implementation at the initial, primary, and secondary levels in Indigenous communities in the Amazon. It adopts an educational lens that values and preserves Indigenous languages and cultures while promoting access to Spanish and universal knowledge. By examining these cases, the study aims to identify the strengths, limitations, enablers, and barriers inherent in current IBE implementation and contribute to improving intercultural education policy and practice in Peru.

2. Theoretical Framework

Intercultural education is recognized as both a human right and a social responsibility that promotes individual development within the framework of diversity, participation, and equality. It integrates core values and ensures equitable access to social rights within the educational sphere (Chávez et al., 2024; Pérez, 2016). The principal aim of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) is to offer a culturally and linguistically inclusive education for Indigenous peoples, equipping them with the tools to thrive in dominant society without compromising their cultural identity (Vidal et al., 2022). IBE is grounded in an intercultural approach that fosters dialogue and interaction between cultures on the basis of equality and mutual respect (Chamiquit, 2021). This model involves using the Indigenous mother tongue as a primary language of instruction, especially in the early years of schooling (Czarny & Briseño, 2021).

The concepts of interculturality, decolonizing education, and critical pedagogy together form an integrated framework aimed at transforming education to be more inclusive and equitable. Interculturality, in particular, serves as a bridge to decolonial pedagogy by encouraging the recognition of diverse cultural perspectives and challenging dominant, often Eurocentric, narratives (Amoretti et al., 2023; Granados-Beltrán, 2016). By dismantling hegemonic structures, interculturality contributes to a more accurate and just representation of marginalized voices. In parallel, critical pedagogy promotes the interrogation of societal norms and power structures, urging learners to reflect critically on their historical and social contexts, especially those shaped by colonial legacies (Sheppard, 2021; X. Wang, 2025). When applied in teacher education, these approaches cultivate professionals who are better equipped to address cultural diversity and inequality in the classroom (Kellner, 2023).

Practical applications include integrating culturally diverse materials and creating dialogic spaces that challenge dominant narratives (García & Sámano, 2019; Sheppard, 2021). Nonetheless, critics caution that without thoughtful implementation, these frameworks risk becoming overly abstract or disconnected from the communities they intend to serve. Despite such concerns, the convergence of interculturality and critical pedagogy remains a promising pathway toward a more equitable and reflective education system.

The ongoing debate between transitional and maintenance bilingual education models underscores differing views on the role of native languages in education. Transitional models prioritize rapid acquisition of the dominant language, often at the expense of the native language, whereas maintenance models emphasize the concurrent development of both, recognizing the native language as a key cultural and pedagogical asset (Andrade & Zavala, 2019; Hasanzade, 2024). A growing body of research supports the maintenance model, highlighting its effectiveness in strengthening cultural identity, improving academic performance, and fostering a sense of belonging (Gómez-Zermeño, 2018; Hynsjö & Damon, 2016; Quichimbo et al., 2023; Reina et al., 2024; Ruiz et al., 2025). In contrast, transitional models have been criticized for promoting subtractive bilingualism and for framing linguistic diversity as a barrier to integration (Czarny & Briseño, 2021; Manosuthikit, 2018; A.-L. Wang, 2023). Thus, the choice of bilingual model is not only pedagogical but also political, it reflects broader ideologies about inclusion, assimilation, and identity.

In Peru, IBE is institutionalized as a core strategy for delivering quality education to Indigenous populations, tailored to their cultural and linguistic realities. Following a national consultation process with Indigenous communities, the National Plan for Intercultural Bilingual Education to 2021 (MINEDU, 2016) was approved in 2015, outlining strategic objectives for IBE implementation. The IBE Service Model offers three pedagogical pathways, strengthening, revitalization, and urban settings, each designed to reflect Peru's diverse sociocultural and linguistic contexts (MINEDU, 2018). At the curriculum level, it promotes the integration of traditional Indigenous knowledge with scientific and Western knowledge to ensure culturally relevant teaching (Castro et al., 2021). This integration also supports the use of native languages alongside Spanish, thereby reinforcing both cultural identity and the competencies needed to function in broader societal settings (MINEDU, 2024).

Equally critical is the preparation of educators who are both technically trained and culturally sensitized to the communities they serve. For this reason, many initiatives focus on training bilingual Indigenous teachers (Quichimbo et al., 2023). IBE not only aims to improve learning outcomes (Kvietok, 2023; Vigil, 2022) but also addresses broader structural issues, such as reducing child labor. Evidence shows that IBE can lower the likelihood of Indigenous children entering the labor market prematurely by 12 to 18 percentage points (Posso, 2023). Nonetheless, challenges persist, particularly in rural areas where the contextualization of subjects such as mathematics and science remains difficult (H. Liñán et al., 2023). Despite growing recognition of IBE's role in preserving cultural heritage, many families still lack a clear understanding of its principles. This gap underscores the need for enhanced communication between schools and communities and for continuous teacher development (Meza & Asipali, 2023). Overall, IBE is a vital instrument for achieving educational equity, cultural justice, and the full realization of Indigenous rights in Peru's national education system (Añaños & Herreras, 2023; Oyarce-Cruz, 2022).

At the level of basic education, IBE has shown a positive impact on both access to education and the preservation of Indigenous cultures (Laura-De La Cruz et al., 2023; Velarde et al., 2023). Parents in these communities acknowledge the value of IBE in safeguarding their languages and traditions, and many believe it offers better academic prospects for their children (Meza & Asipali, 2023). Culturally integrated curricula, particularly in mathematics and science, help engage students and promote deeper learning (H. Liñán et al., 2023). Access to education also correlates with lower poverty rates, as evidenced in regions such as Huánuco (Calero & Faustino-Jesus, 2023). Still, considerable challenges remain, especially in remote areas where limited access to technology and educational resources exacerbates existing inequalities (Back et al., 2022).

Importantly, IBE is not a benevolent gesture toward Indigenous peoples; it is a matter of justice for communities long marginalized by mainstream systems (Meneses et al., 2022). IBE ensures linguistic rights, facilitates access to culturally relevant education, and empowers Indigenous peoples to be agents of their own narratives. It provides space for strengthening language, reinforcing identity, and cultivating a sense of territorial belonging (Abba & Streck, 2019). Crucially, IBE does not reject engagement with other cultures, it prioritizes Indigenous heritage while fostering openness to national and global diversity (Ccencho, 2024).

The integration of Indigenous knowledge and multilingual education is essential for preserving cultural identity while promoting broader sociocultural development (Santos et al., 2024). Indigenous Amazonian communities continue to advocate for educational approaches that respect linguistic diversity and incorporate traditional wisdom. Successful localized programs illustrate the potential of IBE to foster meaningful community engagement and transformation (Morales-Lopez et al., 2024). However, ongoing tensions between Western educational paradigms and Indigenous worldviews remain a central challenge (Giamb Bruno et al., 2024; Oyarce-Cruz, 2022; Zapata & Centurión, 2023).

Despite extensive scholarship on intercultural education, there is a notable gap in studies that specifically examine regular basic education at the initial, primary, and secondary levels in Indigenous communities.

Recognizing the documented shortcomings and consistently low performance in national assessments (MINEDU), this study aims to address that gap by analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, and barriers in the implementation of IBE, particularly in the Amazonas region. The research aspires to contribute actionable insights to inform policy reforms and improve academic outcomes for Indigenous students.

2.1. Bilingual Intercultural Education in Peru

Although Spanish is the official language of Peru, the country is home to rich linguistic diversity, with 48 native languages spoken by more than 4.4 million people belonging to 55 recognized Indigenous peoples. Of these languages, four are spoken in the Andean region, Quechua being the most widespread, followed by Aymara, while the remaining 44 are spoken across the Amazon basin. These native languages, defined as those that existed prior to the expansion of Spanish and that continue to be spoken today, preserve the cultural heritage and communicative traditions of Indigenous communities, despite the predominance of Spanish (Aguirre, 2023).

According to the 2017 National Census, 22.2 million Peruvians (82.6%) speak only Spanish, while 3.7 million (13.9%) primarily speak Quechua, 444,389 (1.7%) speak Aymara, and approximately 210,000 (~1%) speak other Indigenous languages. Speakers of Indigenous languages are concentrated in the Andean and Amazonian regions (INEI, 2018). In some rural districts, over 95% of the population speaks an Indigenous language as their first language, and about 20% of Peru's rural population is composed of communities that are 85% or more Indigenous (Posso, 2023). For context, in the predominantly rural department of Apurímac, more than 75% of households are Indigenous, compared to just 5% in the capital city, Lima.

There is a strong correlation between indigeneity and poverty. The most recent data show that 33% of the Indigenous population lives in poverty, compared to 22% of the non-Indigenous population (INEI, 2018). Moreover, the regions with the highest poverty rates, Huancavelica (82%), Apurímac (76%), Ayacucho (72%), and Puno (67%), are also those with the highest proportion of Indigenous-language speakers (Directorate of Intercultural Bilingual Education, 2015).

In 2016, the Ministry of Education (MINEDU) approved the Sectoral Policy on Intercultural Education to ensure the right to receive education in accordance with one's culture and mother tongue. However, the implementation of this policy remains limited due to budgetary constraints, a shortage of qualified teachers, and insufficient training, both for in-service and pre-service educators (Condori, 2024).

Currently, 1,240,000 students, approximately 20% of Peru's school population, are served under the Intercultural Bilingual Education model, receiving instruction in their native languages (MINEDU, 2024). These students are taught by 100,498 bilingual teachers across more than 26,000 educational institutions nationwide, which helps reinforce both linguistic heritage and cultural identity (Aguirre, 2023). According to MINEDU reports, nearly 400 titles, including textbooks and supplementary materials, have been distributed in 43 native languages such as Quechua, Aymara, Achuar, Ashaninka, Awajún, Bora, Matsigenka, Nomatsigenka, Shawi, and Shipibo-Konibo (MINEDU, 2024).

Despite this progress and the formal recognition of cultural diversity, educational policies in practice often continue to reflect Western-centric paradigms that marginalize Indigenous knowledge systems (F. M. Aguilar et al., 2023). Teachers frequently encounter challenges in effectively implementing IBE, particularly due to a lack of resources and training needed to adapt curricular content to local cultural contexts (H. Liñán et al., 2023). While the expansion of IBE marks a significant step forward, the persistent dominance of mainstream educational models continues to obstruct the full realization of culturally equitable education in Peru (Andrade & Zavala, 2019; Zapana, 2021).

The national plan, ratified under Ministerial Resolution No. 629-2016-MINEDU, reports notable progress in the last five years, particularly in teacher development and the expansion of intercultural education at the national level. Key achievements include the implementation of the IBE service model and pedagogical framework, with coverage extending to 46.5% of early childhood programs, 50.5% of primary education, and 1,503 secondary institutions, indicating growing institutional commitment to cultural diversity in education (MINEDU, 2022).

However, results from the Census Evaluation of Students (ECE) conducted by MINEDU reveal persistent disparities between native and non-native students. Non-native students consistently outperform their Indigenous peers in reading comprehension and mathematics, largely due to greater access to educational resources and more favorable learning environments (MINEDU, 2019). Indigenous students continue to face structural disadvantages, including limited educational infrastructure, language barriers, and socioeconomic challenges (Gobierno del Perú, 2019). To address these gaps, the Ministry of Education has launched targeted initiatives, such as IBE programs and rural infrastructure improvements, but significant differences in academic performance remain between the two groups.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a flexible method suitable for various types of qualitative data, such as interviews, focus groups, and multimedia sources, making it ideal for multidisciplinary research (Saunders et al., 2023). It allows researchers from different academic

backgrounds to engage effectively with qualitative data without requiring extensive theoretical knowledge (Squires, 2023).

This approach offers a comprehensive view of intercultural education in Indigenous communities by providing a structured framework for data analysis. It includes systematic steps such as data familiarization, coding, categorization, and theme development, which ensure methodological rigor and coherence (Cernasev & Axon, 2023; Christou, 2022; Kogen, 2024; Majumdar, 2022; Rosairo, 2023; Rose et al., 2023). Through the identification and interpretation of patterns, thematic analysis facilitates an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences (Goyanes et al., 2024; DeJonckheere et al., 2024).

The study received ethical approval from the Council of the Faculty of Education and Communication Sciences at the National University Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza (UNTRM), under Resolution No. 210-2024-UNTRM/FECICO dated May 14, 2024.

3.1. Study population

The study population consisted of 31 IBE teachers (E), 23 UGEL representatives (U), 45 parents (PF), and 15 representatives of Indigenous communities (Apus) (A).

All participants engaged voluntarily. However, one limitation was that most interviews were conducted in Spanish, which reduced participation from monolingual Indigenous parents. Reaching all targeted teachers also posed challenges, as many reside in remote communities with limited or no internet access, making coordination and scheduling difficult. Nevertheless, full participation was achieved from UGEL representatives and a large majority of the teachers and parents who were proficient in Spanish.

Connectivity constraints in these communities, often accessible only via river transport, further limited mobility and communication. Although translation was not required, some interviews lacked fluency, which impacted the richness and spontaneity of responses.

3.2. Data collection

Data collection was carried out through the application of a semi-structured interview, which aims to collect information to analyze Intercultural Education in native communities at three levels (initial, primary, and secondary). These three levels correspond to regular basic education in Peru according to MINEDU.

The interview was validated by the judgment of three experts (a sociologist, an anthropologist, and a pedagogue). A reliability of the interviews with a value of 8.6 was also obtained, using the Iramateq software, demonstrating that the textual corpus is reliable. The reliability of the interviews, particularly when they are analyzed with the Iramuteq software, is a significant aspect of qualitative research. Such statistical software improves the reliability of qualitative data by providing systematic analysis tools that help categorize and visualize the themes derived from the interviews (Oliveira et al., 2020). This software supports several analytical methods, including lexicometric analysis and top-down hierarchical classification, which contribute to the robustness of the findings from semi-structured interviews (Chaves et al., 2017; Mennani & Attak, 2024).

To determine the reliability (k) the following equation is applied:

$$k = \frac{\text{Number of occurrences}}{\text{Number of forms}}$$

$$k = \frac{10,304}{1,193}$$

$$k = 8.6$$

Accordingly, the interviews applied were reliable in obtaining information on intercultural education in native communities.

3.3. Data analysis

Data were analyzed using Iramuteq software with an R extension. This tool enables detailed statistical analysis of textual data, ensuring consistent theme identification across multiple interviews (E. Aguilar et al., 2022; Souza et al., 2018).

Thematic lexical analysis of the interview corpus revealed the most frequently cited terms, summarized in Table 1 and illustrated through a word cloud (Figure 1). These results reflect core concerns expressed by participants, particularly around teacher training, intercultural pedagogical practices, and student learning. The findings form a foundation for interpreting the recurring challenges in the implementation of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) within Indigenous communities.

The word cloud (Figure 1) highlights the prominence of terms such as *education*, *training*, and *learning* across participant responses, indicating that concerns related to pedagogical quality and teacher preparedness are central to the implementation of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE). The appearance of terms like *intercultural*,

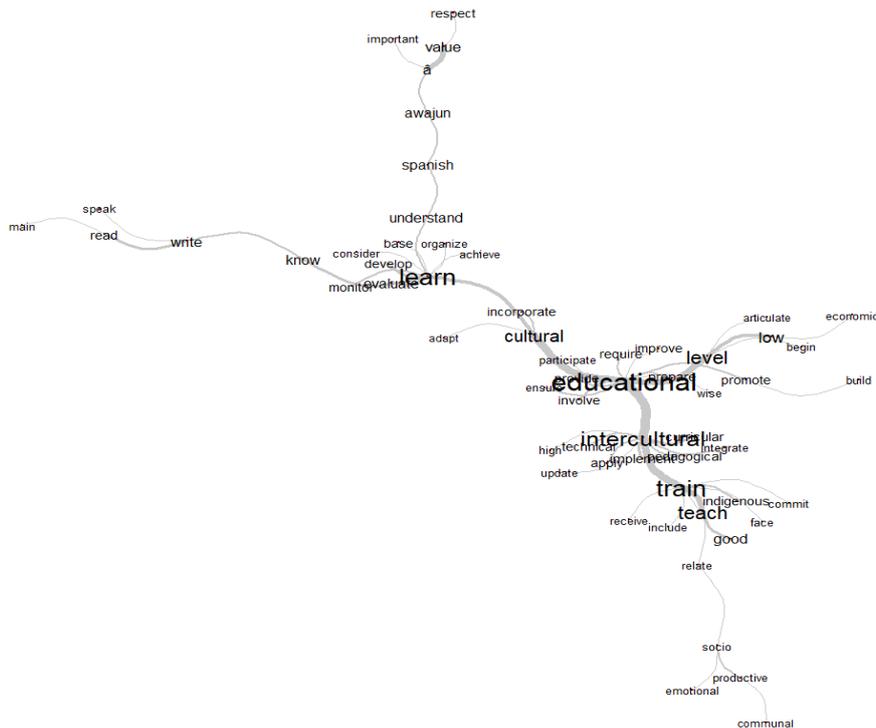


Figure 2: Similarity tree showing co-occurrence patterns between key concepts in IBE implementation. Source: Data analysis in Iramuteq.

To further examine the structure of the discourse, a Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) was performed using the Reinert method. The resulting dendrogram, shown in Figure 3, categorizes the corpus into five distinct thematic clusters:

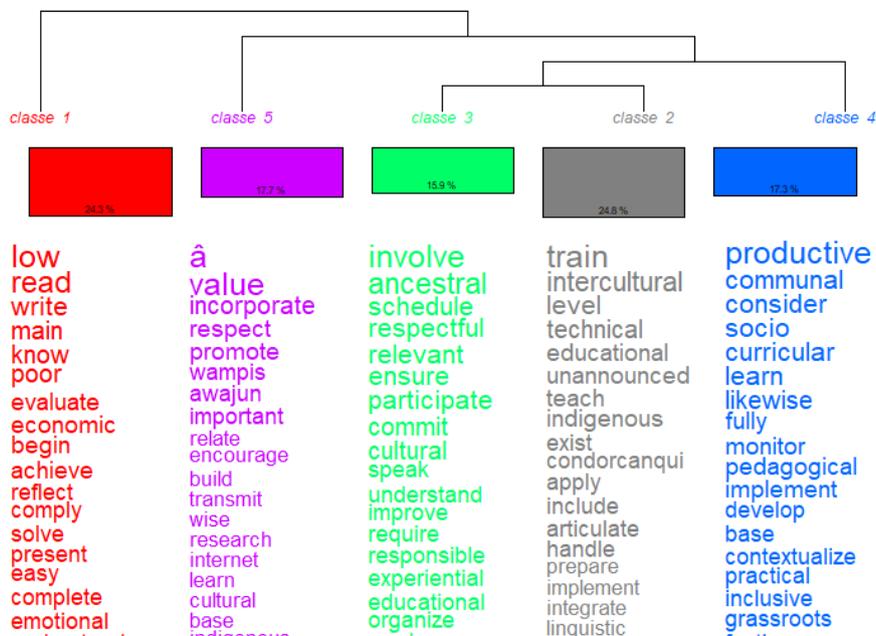


Figure 3: Dendrogram of thematic classes from Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) analysis. Source: Data analysis in Iramuteq.

- **Class 1 (24.3%)** centers on intercultural education and teacher training. It includes frequent references to educators, the use of native languages, pedagogical strategies, and the need for continued professional development, highlighting the foundational role of trained teachers in delivering effective IBE.
- **Class 2 (24.8%)** focuses on pedagogical activities and experiential learning. Terms such as *allowing*, *activities*, *exchange*, and *events* suggest that participatory and dynamic learning methods are highly valued in culturally responsive teaching.

- **Class 3 (15.9%)** emphasizes cultural reinforcement and community recognition. It includes discourse related to strengthening local identity, preserving traditions, and promoting social cohesion, underscoring education's role in cultural transmission.
- **Class 4 (17.3%)** pertains to cultural expressions and symbolic identity markers. References to the Wampis language, traditional attire, and local practices illustrate the integration of cultural elements into both curriculum and daily life.
- **Class 5 (17.7%)** relates to multilingual educational services and institutional engagement. It highlights the coexistence and instructional use of Awajún, Wampis, and Spanish in schools, reflecting the operational aspects of managing linguistic diversity in IBE delivery.

In addition, a factorial analysis was conducted to map the semantic dispersion of key terms within the corpus. Figure 4 presents the resulting factorial plane, illustrating contrasting pedagogical and epistemological orientations in IBE discourse.

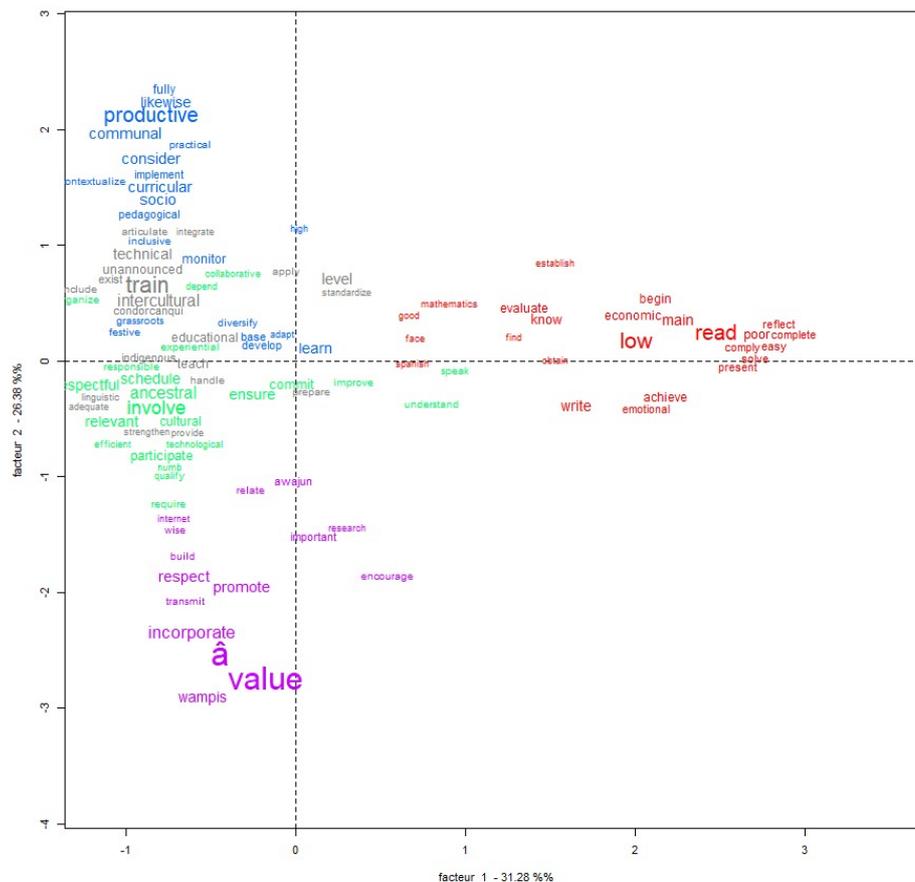


Figure 4: Factorial map showing semantic dispersion and conceptual tensions in IBE discourse. Source: Data analysis in Iramuteq.

In addition, a factorial analysis was conducted to map the semantic dispersion of key terms within the corpus. Figure 4 presents the resulting factorial plane, illustrating contrasting pedagogical and epistemological orientations in IBE discourse.

On the left side of the map, a cluster of terms, *fully*, *productive*, *community-based*, *consider*, *curricular*, points toward a collaborative, culturally grounded approach to education. This perspective emphasizes the integration of Indigenous knowledge, collective learning, and culturally aligned curricular design. It supports the finding that the IBE model seeks to “strengthen cultural identity, preserve native languages, and integrate traditional knowledge into the curriculum.” The goal is to create an educational experience rooted in Indigenous heritage and worldview.

Conversely, the right side of the map features terms such as *reading*, *reflecting*, *complex*, *major*, and *economical*, which represent a more individualistic, academically oriented, and potentially standardized model of education. These concepts reflect broader parental aspirations for education that not only maintains cultural identity but also equips students with globally relevant skills and knowledge.

Bridging terms such as *value*, *Wampis*, and *incorporate* suggest efforts to synthesize these two approaches, preserving Indigenous knowledge while ensuring students gain access to formal academic content and competencies. This dual orientation reflects the central tension identified in the study: the need to balance

community-based, culturally responsive education with the demands of a standardized, performance-driven academic system.

Overall, the factorial analysis visually represents the core dynamics of IBE implementation, capturing the inherent trade-offs and challenges of delivering equitable, inclusive, and contextually meaningful education within Indigenous communities.

4. Results

4.1. Challenges in the Classroom

In the context of native communities (Awajun and Wampis), teachers reveal a complex panorama of educational challenges, highlighting the low self-esteem and lack of interest of students that impact their academic performance. Teachers perceive them as having difficulties in reading, writing, and comprehension since they describe a scenario where students have a limited learning capacity, characterized by their disorder and low motivation, a situation that is aggravated by the low participation and support of parents.

...Students have low self-esteem, are disorganized, and have little ability to grasp... (E:1)

...The main challenges are for children to learn to read, understand, and write in classes in Awajun and Wampis....(E:6, 10)

...Disinterest of parents towards their children... (E:8)

Educators mention that there is a lack of resources, through the absence of libraries, inadequate educational materials, and poor infrastructure, which are obstacles to quality education; however, intercultural bilingual education occurs in a context where pedagogical challenges far exceed the tools available to address them.

...Preparing worksheets is difficult because there is no library to promote research.... (E:7.4)

...The main challenge is that the student does not master Spanish 100%, and as a teacher, we try to reach the student and make them understand and repeat to achieve our goal... (E:24)

In interviews with teachers, it is mentioned that many students from native communities, such as those who speak the Awajún and Wampis languages, can speak their native language, but face difficulties in writing it. This challenge is pointed out as a major obstacle in the educational process, as it limits their development in fundamental areas such as reading and writing.

...The most important thing is that boys and girls like Awajún and Wampis know how to write well without difficulty in their language and also their speech... (E:2)

For many educators, the distance and inaccessibility of certain educational institutions constitute a significant obstacle to pedagogical support and continuous monitoring. Likewise, the lack of financial resources limits the hiring of specialized teachers, which negatively impacts the quality of education and the ability to meet the needs of communities. In addition, high rates of sexual harassment and violence are observed, which further aggravate the educational context in these localities.

...Normally or rarely, teachers are accompanied because the UGEL Condorcanqui lacks financial means.... (E:20)

...Lack of budget. Cases of sexual harassment and violence. Spanish-speaking teachers who do not care about knowing the culture, language, and customs... (E:7, 9)

4.2. Incorporation of cultural knowledge and traditions

Teachers of intercultural bilingual education have developed innovative pedagogical strategies to incorporate the knowledge, values, and cultural traditions of the community, through educational projects and comparative narratives, they also mention that they actively incorporate knowledge, values, and traditions of the community in their teaching practice, even involving community leaders in the teaching process.

...Knowledge, values, and traditions are incorporated through the project... (E:2, 4)

...Transmitting to the students the importance of traditions, in this way making them value their mother tongue... (E:15)

The teaching methodology focuses on generating learning experiences that contrast Awajun culture with Western culture, allowing students to value their cultural identity; this not only seeks to represent ancestral heritage but also to strengthen students' sense of belonging, transforming the classroom into a space for intercultural dialogue.

...In teaching classes through stories comparing the Awajun culture with the Western culture..... (E:3)

The design of educational materials, such as books and workbooks, incorporates distinctive cultural elements of indigenous communities, including stories, customs, and ancestral knowledge. Likewise, educational programs

are adapted to reflect and preserve the cultural richness and traditions of these communities, strengthening their identity and promoting an inclusive and contextualized pedagogical approach.

...The MINEDU, with the participation of indigenous teachers, prepares materials such as workbooks for the native language and distributes them to each UGEL... (E:21)

...The treatment of language and the use of materials are reflected in the annual planning, incorporating productive activities and local cultural values.... (E:5)

4.3. Promotion of Native Languages

The promotion and appreciation of the native languages of Awajun and Wampis is a strategic element in the educational practice of the teachers of these communities. The educators mention that they implement methodologies that cover oral communication, reading, and writing in the native language, with the aim that the students not only develop linguistic skills but also build a bond of pride with their culture.

...The strategies applied in the native language are oral communication, reading, and writing... (E:1.5)

...Students feel comfortable using their mother tongue, encourage the use of their language, and in the work, we use authentic materials.... (E:19)

For parents, the native language represents much more than a means of communication; they mention that it is a fundamental cultural heritage that must be preserved and transmitted to new generations. They recognize the importance of their children not only learning the Awajun or Wampis language but also valuing it as an element of identity. Some parents emphasize the richness of being multilingual, highlighting the importance of mastering not only their mother tongue but also Spanish, which they consider a strategy for integration and development.

...It is phenomenal because it is our mother tongue that is now recognized as a national language in Peru, and it is a source of pride for our culture, which is why it is very important for them.... (PF:1)

APUS community representatives view the native language as a sacred element of their cultural heritage, which is connected to their worldview and relationship with the land. For them, keeping the language alive goes beyond communication; it represents an act of cultural resistance and a means of preserving traditional knowledge. They emphasize that language is a conduit for transmitting respect for nature, traditions, and collective memory, considering it a fundamental element for maintaining the cultural integrity of their people.

...It is very important to maintain our language because it is a source of communication. Our culture maintains our tradition based on respect for our Mother Earth, which is sacred... (A:1)

The Ministry of Education (MINEDU) actively promotes the training of teachers with a comprehensive command of indigenous languages, both in oral and written expression. This initiative seeks to respond to the cultural needs of indigenous communities, where classes are taught in languages such as Awajun and Wampis, especially at the initial and primary levels. Through this approach, the aim is not only to preserve linguistic heritage but also to provide students with an education that values and respects their cultural identity, making it more meaningful and effective.

...In the communities, it is mostly required that teachers at the initial and primary level be bilingual, and for schools, a teacher of the indigenous language is assigned who must teach in all grades... (E:20)

...Teaching in the mother tongue (Awajún and Wampis) for initial and primary levels (E:7)

4.4. Community and Parent Participation

Parental participation in the educational process is a complex challenge for teachers in the Awajún and Wampis communities. Although they mention that they hold regular meetings to report on the academic progress of students, educators find little participation; despite this, teachers say that they seek strategies to involve families, holding meetings, dialogues, and encounters that seek to strengthen the link between school and home. However, the lack of interest of some parents persists as a significant obstacle to the comprehensive development of students.

...It is to have meetings every month so that they know what level their younger children are at in terms of learning... (E:3, 10)

...We keep them informed about their children's progress, but many times the students' parents do not come to the IE.... (E:19)

...There is a lack of commitment, there are few who support their children's learning... (E:23)

APUS mentions that education is a holistic process of cultural transmission, where the community plays a fundamental role and that its participation goes beyond the academic, focusing on the teaching of traditional cultural practices, language, dances, and clothing. They consider that their educational responsibility involves transmitting comprehensive knowledge that connects young people with their cultural heritage.

...We participate by teaching them good cultural practices, language, dances, clothing, and distribution of educational materials, among others..... (A:1)

Parents and community leaders play an active role in education by joining associations such as APAFA and school committees. Through these bodies, they collaborate in planning, decision-making, and organizing cultural and educational activities. They also participate in the development of educational inputs, such as the community calendar and situational diagnoses, as well as in workshops and meetings that strengthen the link between school and community, promoting inclusive and culturally significant educational development.

...Parents participate in the APAFAS and in the formation of committees that help in the management of educational institutions... (E:7)

...Parents actively participate in planning cultural activities and training workshops... (E:13)

4.5. Training and teaching resources

Teachers express an urgent need for specialized training, particularly in areas such as mathematics and science, that will enable them to address the specific challenges of intercultural bilingual education. The main demand is for contextualized training workshops, which not only address academic content but also develop skills for working in culturally diverse environments.

...It would be necessary to hold a training workshop on mathematics, CTA.... (E:1)

...Focus on bilingual intercultural education, use of authentic and relevant resources for the native community, and incorporation of technology to improve access to education.... (E:19)

Teachers emphasize the importance of having teaching resources that are not only up-to-date but also specifically adapted to the reality of native communities. There is consensus on the need to develop materials through a collaborative process involving community consultation, expert review, and participation of local leaders. The lack of contextualized materials is identified as a significant limitation to the effectiveness of teaching, hindering the connection between the school curriculum and the cultural reality of students.

...All teachers at the initial, primary, and secondary levels could be trained at least once a month in teaching resources, and structured and unstructured resources could be used... (E:8)

4.6. Current policies and programs

Education specialists reveal a complex picture regarding the implementation of intercultural bilingual education (IBE) policies. They acknowledge the existence of programs such as IBE 3 and PRONOEI, designed to integrate the culture and language of native communities into the educational curriculum. However, they identify critical limitations in their implementation, mainly associated with budgetary restrictions and a lack of resources that hinder the effectiveness of these initiatives.

...They adapt according to the reality of our community with the regional curriculum... (E:6)

...The support shows us that books, libraries, and school spaces don't count... (E:16)

Teachers maintain a critical stance regarding current educational policies. They perceive a significant lack of institutional support and accompaniment, which generates a scenario of partial and deficient implementation of bilingual and intercultural education programs, where the lack of infrastructure and adequate resources emerges as a fundamental obstacle that limits the materialization of a truly inclusive and contextualized approach.

...So far, there is no sign of the presence of educational authorities, they come to comply, and the teachers do their best with the limited resources available.... (E:26)

Representatives of the Local Educational Management Unit (UGEL) present a fragmented and contradictory view. Some point to concrete efforts such as bilingual school programs, teacher training, and promotion of community participation. However, other informants question the continuity and real application of these policies, suggesting that they often remain as initiatives on paper without sustained implementation.

...Some of the policies and programs include the creation of bilingual school programs, training of bilingual teachers, community participation in the educational process, development of educational materials in the native language, and promotion of culture.... (U:3)

...Courses and training with virtual modules, since there are problems in some communities with connectivity (internet).... (U:12)

4.7. Challenges and Needs of the UGEL

The Local Educational Management Unit (UGEL) reveals a complex web of problems, from the economy, lack of professionals, and the lack of motivation of teachers; these are challenges that they have to improve bilingual intercultural education.

...Lack of budget. Cases of sexual harassment and violence. Spanish-speaking teachers who do not care about knowing the culture, language, and customs.... (U:7)

...Teacher training with a bilingual intercultural approach. Teachers should believe that it is possible to implement IBE because I see them as demotivated. Having specialists with training or knowledge of IBE.... (U:10)

...Have trained, determined, and committed professionals, responsible for providing quality education.... (U:8)

The teaching perspective emerges as a space of tension where the contradictions of the educational system are condensed. The narrative of lack - precarious infrastructure, insufficient technological resources, decontextualized materials - is not only a story of material needs but an expression of symbolic violence that delegitimizes local knowledge. When a teacher points out the absence of educational authorities beyond protocol events, he or she is denouncing a mechanism of institutional distancing that reproduces colonial hierarchies in the educational space.

...The main challenge is the diversity of students, followed by the lack of material... (E: 14)

...Materials and infrastructure.... (E:25, 11)

The perspective of UGEL specialists focuses on the lack of bilingual specialists, insufficient training, and low motivation for documentation, but these are not technical deficiencies, but symptoms of a system that has not managed to decolonize its structures of thought and educational organization.

4.8. Academic performance

Academic performance in the context of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) is configured as a complex ecosystem of social interactions, where multiple socioeconomic, cultural, and pedagogical factors converge. The ENLA assessment reveals not only academic results but also the deep structural inequalities that permeate the educational system in Indigenous communities.

Teachers interpret low performance as a multidimensional phenomenon, where malnutrition, family fragmentation, and socioeconomic precariousness intertwine to configure limited educational paths. Teacher interviews not only describe a learning problem but also expose the consequences of a system that reproduces the conditions of marginalization of indigenous communities. Low academic performance emerges as a symptom of broader processes of social exclusion. It is not just about results in standardized tests, but about the capacity of the educational system to generate conditions that allow the development of students' potential in their cultural context.

...Most of the students are at the basic level due to a lack of food and little interest from their parents in their children's learning... (E:9)

...Low level, due to the economic situation, family conflict, not having a good connection with others, lack of concentration, emotional problems... (E:15)

...It is relatively low because many of them do not have a good education in primary school and have eating problems, dysfunctional families, or social problems such as drugs.... (E:16)

Parental expectations reveal a fundamental tension: they want an education that is simultaneously universal and particular. They want their children to have access to global knowledge without losing their cultural anchorage, and to be competent in multiple knowledge systems without renouncing their original identity; this demand represents a radical educational project that questions traditional models of integration and assimilation.

...It is phenomenal because it is our mother tongue that is now recognized as a national language in Peru, and it is a source of pride for our culture, which is why it is very important for them... (E:1).

5. Discussions

This study provides a critical perspective on Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) in Indigenous communities in Peru, highlighting the persistent gap between national education policies and their implementation in rural contexts. Despite normative advances, such as the National IBE Plan (MINEDU, 2016) and the Educational Service Model (MINEDU, 2018), structural limitations endure. These include insufficient teacher training, a lack of culturally relevant materials, and weak educational infrastructure. These findings are consistent with previous observations by Gómez-Zermeño (2018) and López (2014), who emphasize the enduring disconnect between intercultural theory and educational practice. Moreover, the study reinforces concerns raised by Arias-Ortega et al. (2019), noting that policies often fail to address the specific sociocultural realities of Indigenous communities, while educational materials rarely incorporate local knowledge (Bartosh, 2021). Similar issues are reported in other contexts, such as Madrid, where bilingual programs face challenges around inclusion and teacher preparation (Arias-Ortega & Previl, 2023; Sotoca, 2021). As Gómez (2018) and Björk (2007) argue, effective IBE must move beyond superficial gestures to become a genuine strategy for equity and cultural empowerment, integrating both intercultural and bilingual dimensions coherently.

Another key insight relates to curriculum design. Although MINEDU proposes integrating Indigenous and scientific knowledge (Castro et al., 2021), teachers report lacking the tools and training to meaningfully realize this goal. Subjects like mathematics and science remain abstract and disconnected from students' lived

experiences, a concern also identified by H. F. Liñán et al. (2023) and Bartosh (2021). This disconnect hinders student engagement and limits the development of critical thinking grounded in cultural worldviews. Teachers and parents alike articulated a desire for education that is both locally rooted and globally relevant, a dual aspiration reflecting the tension between cultural preservation and national integration (Meza & Asipali, 2023; Morales-Lopez et al., 2024). This tension, as noted by Gómez-Zermeño (2018) and Zhu & Zhang (2024), presents an enduring challenge. While Jiménez & Ávila (2024) discuss historical processes of cultural assimilation, the current findings reveal persistent barriers such as low student self-esteem, inadequate infrastructure, and poor teacher preparation. These realities support Giambruno et al. (2024)'s assessment of the clash between Western educational practices and Indigenous cultural preservation, particularly in the difficulty students face in relating to a curriculum that does not reflect their sociocultural context.

The integration of Indigenous knowledge, advocated by Castro et al. (2021), is evident in the partial but promising initiatives led by teachers. These include educational projects rooted in community traditions and leadership, echoing Vidal et al. (2022)'s call for culturally respectful education. The promotion of native languages such as Awajún and Wampis aligns with Chamiquit (2021)'s emphasis on intercultural dialogue based on mutual respect. However, limitations in teaching materials and bilingual methodologies persist.

One of the most critical findings is the presence of bilingual teachers who, despite being certified in their native language, lack adequate pedagogical training to meet the demands of authentic IBE. This situation severely compromises educational quality in Indigenous communities, as teaching is often reduced to language proficiency without corresponding pedagogical depth, contextualized lesson planning, or local knowledge integration. Quichimbo et al. (2023) stress that IBE requires culturally competent educators trained in pedagogies that reflect and incorporate Indigenous worldviews. This deficit, reflected in low learning outcomes, echoes H. F. Liñán et al. (2023)'s warnings about the urgent need for teacher training strategies that integrate sociocultural contexts, especially in STEM subjects. Reducing the teacher profile to mere language certification undermines the broader intercultural vision proposed by Czarny & Briseño (2021) and reinforces the dominance of Western paradigms, as critiqued by Andrade & Zavala (2019). Bridging this gap calls for targeted policies to establish comprehensive training pathways combining intercultural pedagogy, context-specific didactics, and material development, alongside sustained in-service training and a certification system that assesses both pedagogical and cultural competence, not just linguistic proficiency. Only through such reforms can IBE evolve from a theoretical model into a practical tool for strengthening identity, learning, and development among Peru's Indigenous peoples.

From a policy perspective, the findings urge a renewed national commitment to IBE that extends beyond language inclusion. First, reforming teacher education programs is crucial. These programs must integrate intercultural pedagogy, subject-area didactics, and participatory curriculum design, echoing proposals by Kellner (2023) and Granados-Beltrán (2016) grounded in critical and decolonial pedagogies. Second, IBE implementation must institutionalize meaningful community participation, not as symbolic consultation, but as active co-creation of the curriculum and governance structures. Third, curriculum reform should be rooted in local knowledge systems, treating Indigenous languages not merely as tools of communication but as repositories of identity, knowledge, and values.

The results also reinforce the need for continuous, context-specific teacher training, as emphasized by Quichimbo et al. (2023), and align with H. F. Liñán et al. (2023)'s call to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into the curriculum. Although the Local Educational Management Units (UGEL) recognize this necessity, implementation remains limited, revealing the lasting influence of Western-centric pedagogical models (Andrade & Zavala, 2019). Persistently low academic achievement levels correspond with disparities noted by Hynsjö & Damon (2016), threatening the core objectives of IBE, to promote both cultural identity and tools for social mobility (Meza & Asipali, 2023; Vidal et al., 2022). This disconnect between legal frameworks and actual classroom realities persists despite the progressive intercultural approach promoted by MINEDU (2024).

Implementation of IBE policies, as Meneses et al. (2022) argue, should be understood not as a favor but as a right rooted in educational justice. Nonetheless, this study confirms that budgetary constraints remain a major barrier to the effectiveness of programs like IBE and PRONOEL. These findings support F. M. Aguilar et al. (2023)'s critique of how educational policies continue to marginalize Indigenous knowledge through a Westernized lens. The superficial implementation of IBE, where teacher training is reduced to language certification, demonstrates a failure to engage with the complexity of education in Indigenous contexts.

Parents' expectations, which prioritize not only academic development but also values and practical skills, reflect a holistic educational vision that aligns with IBE principles. Yet, the widespread perception of limited learning progress and underprepared teachers reveals a significant gap between community aspirations and current educational realities. This study contributes to the field by documenting the limitations of top-down IBE policy implementation and by illuminating the daily pedagogical and cultural negotiations teachers undertake. These findings underscore the urgent need for a structural transformation in how IBE is conceptualized, delivered, and sustained, one that genuinely incorporates Indigenous knowledge systems, emphasizes culturally responsive teaching, and fosters robust partnerships between the state and local communities to ensure meaningful educational justice.

Although this study provides valuable insights into the implementation of IBE in Indigenous communities, several methodological and contextual limitations must be acknowledged. First, the qualitative nature of the research, relying on semi-structured interviews, restricts the generalizability of findings. Second, access to remote communities was hindered by geographic isolation and poor connectivity, which limited the participation of some teachers and parents, especially monolingual speakers of native languages. Third, as most interviews were conducted in Spanish, the depth and nuance of expression may have been reduced for participants whose first language is not Spanish. These factors may have influenced the breadth and richness of the data. Nevertheless, the study offers a grounded, context-sensitive understanding of the challenges and possibilities of IBE, while highlighting the need for future research using broader, multilingual, and mixed-method approaches.

6. Conclusions

Education in the Awajún and Wampis communities is shaped by multifaceted challenges that extend beyond conventional learning difficulties. Teachers operate in environments marked by low student self-esteem, widespread disinterest, limited academic achievement, and inadequate educational infrastructure. The situation is further exacerbated by minimal parental involvement, contributing to an especially difficult teaching and learning context. Addressing these issues requires a coordinated effort to enhance teacher preparation, ensure the cultural relevance of educational materials, and promote active community participation in educational governance. Collaboration between educational authorities and Indigenous communities is essential to advancing a model of quality education that respects and celebrates cultural diversity.

A strong link between education and cultural identity is evident in the Awajún and Wampis communities. Despite prevailing challenges, parents demonstrate a firm commitment to their children's learning and to the preservation of their language and cultural heritage. However, meaningful improvements in teacher training and overall educational quality are urgently needed to secure better opportunities for future generations.

The current education system reveals significant limitations in the implementation of IBE-related policies. Budget constraints, lack of institutional support, and the partial rollout of educational programs result in pedagogical initiatives that often remain theoretical rather than practical. The absence of contextually adapted teaching materials remains a major barrier to delivering truly inclusive and culturally relevant education.

The situation of teaching in IBE highlights a fundamental disconnect between policy frameworks and on-the-ground realities. Language certification alone does not ensure the delivery of quality intercultural education. A comprehensive approach is needed, one that integrates pedagogical training, deep cultural knowledge, and a strong commitment to preserving Indigenous identity.

Academic underperformance should be understood as a reflection of deep-rooted structural inequalities. Beyond standardized test scores, poor student outcomes are closely tied to factors such as malnutrition, poverty, family fragmentation, and the limitations of an educational system that has historically overlooked the cultural diversity of Indigenous populations.

Teachers express a pressing need for specialized training that equips them with the skills necessary for effective bilingual intercultural education. This includes access to pedagogical tools that go beyond academic instruction to facilitate meaningful engagement in culturally diverse settings and to acknowledge and incorporate local knowledge systems. Currently, there is a shortage of educators who are both bilingual and professionally trained in IBE, as many are employed solely on the basis of language proficiency.

Finally, the educational aspirations of parents reflect a transformative vision, one in which global knowledge is harmonized with cultural identity. They envision an education that empowers young people to navigate multiple systems of knowledge without compromising their heritage. This model of education stands as a project of cultural resistance, recognition, and social transformation, challenging traditional paradigms of integration and assimilation.

Given the limitations identified in this study, future research should explore the long-term impacts of teacher training interventions on student outcomes in IBE contexts. Comparative studies across other Indigenous communities in Peru and Latin America could also offer broader insights into effective models of intercultural education. Additionally, incorporating mixed-methods approaches and conducting interviews in native languages would enrich the data and provide deeper cultural perspectives. Investigating the role of community-led curriculum development may further reveal strategies to strengthen culturally responsive education.

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About the Author(s):



River Chávez Santos, Administrator, with Post-doctorate in Ethics and Social Responsibility and Human Rights, Doctor in Education Administration and Master in Education Sciences with mention in research and Teaching, graduated from Alas Peruanas University. He is a full-time professor in the Faculty of Education and Communication Sciences at the National University Toribio Rodriguez of Mendoza of Amazonas.



Yuri Reina Marín, industrial engineer, with a Master's degree in Supply Chain Management, graduated with a doctorate in Sciences for Sustainable Development. Full-time associate professor at the National University Toribio Rodriguez of Mendoza of Amazonas, with more than 18 years of experience in higher education at universities such as ESAN and the National University of Cajamarca.



Einstein Sánchez Bardales, He has a degree in Tourism and Management from the National University Toribio Rodriguez of Mendoza of Amazonas. He also holds a Master's degree in Social Communication, specialising in Communication for Development, from the University Complutense de Madrid. Has worked in academic quality in universities, accreditation processes, licensing and market studies for creating undergraduate and graduate programmes in both private and public universities. He is currently a Candidate Doctor in Science in Sustainable Development at UNTRM.



Omer Cruz Caro, Agroindustrial Engineer from the National University Toribio Rodriguez of Mendoza of Amazonas, with a Master's degree in Engineering with mention in Project Management, with experience in public and private projects and research.



Angelica María Carrasco Rituay, Graduate in Business Administration from the National University Toribio Rodriguez of Mendoza of Amazonas, with work experience in public investment projects and research.