

**Conversion of a monolingual school to bilingual: Spanish-English in Barranquilla,  
Colombia**

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## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	9
Context of the Research Problem.....	11
Research Question.....	11
Main.....	11
Objectives .....	12
General Objective.....	12
Specific Objectives.....	12
Rationale for the Study .....	13
Rationale for the Research Problem.....	14
Rationale for the Methodologies to Address the Problem .....	15
Literature Review.....	17
Introduction to the Literature Review .....	17
State of the Art .....	17
Theoretical Framework.....	27
The Effects of Bilingualism .....	27
The Effects of Bilingualism on the First Language.....	27
Effect of Bilingualism on Cognitive Development .....	27
Bilingualism in Children .....	29
Learning Factors .....	30
Cognitive Theory.....	31
Necessary Elements for Bilingual Education in Schools.....	33
Infrastructure and Technology.....	33

Perceptions of Stakeholders.....	35
Subjects to be Taught in the Foreign Language .....	35
Initiation of Bilingual Education .....	35
Teacher Training.....	37
Approaches Used in Bilingual Education .....	37
Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).....	38
Theme-Based Instruction (TBI).....	39
Conceptual Framework.....	40
Bilingualism .....	40
Types of Bilingualism .....	41
Full Bilingualism and Incomplete Bilingualism.....	41
Coordinated and Composite Bilingualism.....	42
Additive and Subtractive Bilingualism.....	42
Bilingual Education.....	43
Types of Bilingual Education .....	43
Enrichment Versus Remedial Programs.....	43
Maintenance Versus Transitional Programs.....	43
Partial Immersion Program.....	44
Types of Bilingual Schools in Colombia.....	45
Bilingualism in Colombia from a Policy Perspective .....	46
Rationale of the Research Study on the Literature.....	47
Research Design.....	48
Introduction to the Research Design .....	48

Methodological Design .....	48
Research Method .....	48
Research Approach.....	49
Context of the Research.....	50
Population and Sampling Procedures. ....	50
Researcher’s Impact. ....	51
Ethical Protocol.....	51
Parents and teachers were informed about this study through institutional mail .....	51
Data Collection Techniques .....	53
Description and Rationale of the Instruments .....	53
Validation of Instruments .....	56
Data Analysis and Findings .....	58
Data Management Procedures.....	58
Categories.....	60
Discussion of the Categories .....	64
Awareness of Stakeholders (Parents, Teachers, Students). ....	64
Requirements of the Ministry of Education for National Bilingual Schools.....	68
Planning and Strategy .....	70
Perception of the Different Actors Involved in the Implementation of Bilingual Education. .....	74
Communication and Community Participation .....	82
Bilingual Education Model.....	89
Level of English.....	91

Human Resources.....	99
Infrastructure and Technology.....	102
Conclusions.....	106
Importance of the Results.....	106
Pedagogical and Research Implications for the Study Field.....	111
Limitations .....	112
Recommendations for Future Research .....	113
References.....	114

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1</b> Stages of Learning.....	32
<b>Table 2</b> Types of Bilingual Schools in Colombia . .....	45
<b>Table 3</b> Emerging Categories.....	60

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1</b> Cummins' CUP 'Dual Iceberg' Model of Bilingualism.....	30
<b>Figure 2</b> Percentage of Population in Agreement with Bilingual Education.....	65
<b>Figure 3</b> Percentage of Population Unaware of the Ministry of Education's Requirements for Bilingual Education .....	68
<b>Figure 4</b> Percentage of Subjects to be Taught in English According to Students .....	75
<b>Figure 5</b> Percentage of Subjects to be Taught in English According to Parents .....	77
<b>Figure 6</b> Percentage of Subjects to be Taught in English According to Teachers.....	77
<b>Figure 7</b> Percentages of Stages at which Bilingual Education should be Initiated.....	80
<b>Figure 8</b> Percentages of Preferences in Grades Preferring to Start Bilingual Education.....	90
<b>Figure 9</b> Teacher's English level .....	93
<b>Figure 10.</b> General Results for Third to Fifth Grade.....	94
<b>Figure 11</b> Proficiency in Foreign Language by Grades .....	95
<b>Figure 12</b> General Proficiency in Foreign Language, Sixth to Ninth Grade.....	96
<b>Figure 13.</b> Proficiency in Foreign Language by Grades .....	96
<b>Figure 14</b> General Proficiency in Foreign Language, Tenth to Eleventh Grade .....	97
<b>Figure 15</b> Level of Proficiency in Foreign Language by Grade, Tenth and Eleventh.....	98

## **List of Appendixes**

<b>Appendix A.</b> Formulario de Consentimiento.....	123
<b>Appendix B.</b> Final Version of Surveys, Focus Groups and Interviews .....	126
<b>Appendix C.</b> Expert Validation Instrument .....	144
<b>Appendix D.</b> Resumen Analítico de Estudio RAE .....	147



## Introduction

This research study arises from the need to offer a better educational offer in the city of Barranquilla, Colombia, consistent with the current trends where bilingualism has become more relevant. The objective is that the alumni of the Buen Consejo School in Barranquilla are better prepared to respond to a globalized world where knowledge and skills are far from how they were acquired in the past. In current times, the correct learning of English is a fundamental element in schools, this as a response to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization that stipulates that schools must respond to contemporary global challenges through education (UNESCO, 2011), for this it is essential that people develop the ability to speak English as it allows them to communicate effectively with people around the world (Nishanthi, 2018).

For the above reason, schools are faced today with a demanding task. In our scenario, bilingualism can be considered a rarity because it is surprisingly innovative and perhaps confusing, as there are many variants and conditions that still need to be clarified and specified. Society wants immediate results from this type of school without having analyzed the requirements and difficulties involved in becoming a good bilingual school (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2006). In addition, in the educational context, the mistake is made of demanding quick answers without first analyzing the factors that condition this type of school, causing some to improvise in the policies and implementation of bilingual education.

The issue of converting monolingual schools to bilingual schools has become more relevant among private schools in Colombia. This type of school has gradually attracted the attention of parents because it generates high expectations regarding the quality of education their children will receive. As Romero argues (MEN, 2005), the introduction of language

instruction in a school is directly related to academic performance and responds to three needs: management of other areas of the curriculum, university requirements for higher education, and the technological, scientific and cultural demands of the labor market. It also means for parents recognition, status, world vision, and better job opportunities for their children in the future due to the acquisition of English in the short term. Because of this need, Buen Consejo School in Barranquilla has decided to change from being a monolingual to a bilingual school. It wants to offer the community where it is located a better educational offer that meets current needs. In addition, to maintaining the excellent academic level it has achieved for many years, it wants its students to finish high school bilingual, in this case English.

Furthermore, it is important to specify the impact of the transition from monolingual to bilingual and how to carry it out. Considering the above, an important aspect that arises is to know if Buen Consejo School is prepared for this transition. Imposing bilingualism in a school that has always taught in Spanish could have bad consequences. For example, the motivation of students to learn may decrease due to a poor level of English, or that it may be difficult for teachers to carry out their pedagogical practices due to lack of training in bilingualism. Therefore, it is significant to conduct previous research to know the necessary elements for bilingualism to be a success.

In 2021 in Barranquilla city, the mayor's office initiated the bilingualism project "Soy Bilingue" in schools and intends to be the pioneer city in bilingualism in Colombia. This program is projected for 12 years, seeking to consolidate Barranquilla as a leading city in bilingualism. It is relevant to point out that this project is planned to be carried out in public schools in Barranquilla, which is why the private school Buen Consejo cannot be left behind. Taking into account that private schools in Colombia have some autonomy, Colegio Buen

Consejo would like to identify the most appropriate strategy to move from monolingualism to bilingualism. In this scenario, it sees the need to initiate in its curriculum a bilingualism program that is at the forefront with the demands and needs that are being presented today in society.

### **Context of the Research Problem**

This research study was carried out at the Buen Consejo school in Barranquilla. This school belongs to the private sector and has a long history of 52 years offering quality education to the community of Barranquilla, occupying good positions in the ranking of the ICFES state tests. This school's teaching model is constructivism. It currently has a teaching staff of 60 teachers and a student population of 600 students. Only the preschool and 1<sup>st</sup> grade of elementary school were considered as the target population for this research study. This school has a fairly high weekly English teaching intensity. In preschool and elementary school students, study 7 hours of English per week and in high school 6 hours. In the last diagnostic test of English level, the preschool students obtained the "Starter" level, as well as the students of 1st grade. Other people involved in this process are the teachers who teach the courses mentioned above. In a diagnostic test in which teachers of areas other than English also participated, it was found that they currently have an English level of A1. To summarize, although there is a high intensity of English classes per week, the school does not classify itself as bilingual since it must comply with the requirements established by the Ministry of National Education for national bilingual schools. This is the reason for the research question set out below.

### **Research Question**

#### ***Main***

What are the most appropriate strategies for the implementation of a bilingualism process at the Buen Consejo school in Barranquilla, Colombia?

## **Objectives**

### **General Objective**

To analyze the most appropriate strategies for the implementation of a bilingualism process at the Buen Consejo school in Barranquilla, Colombia

### **Specific Objectives**

To describe the characteristics of the current situation of the school Buen Consejo with regard to the transition to bilingualism.

To investigate what are the perceptions of the different actors directly involved in the implementation of bilingualism at Colegio Buen Consejo.

To define the most appropriate bilingualism model to strengthen the implementation of bilingual education at Colegio Buen Consejo.

### **Rationale for the Study**

This research focused on the conversion process of the Buen Consejo school in Barranquilla from monolingual to bilingual in the private sector. This school, despite having a high intensity of classes for many years, does not classify itself as bilingual. The students usually finish their studies with a high degree of knowledge in English, which is reflected in the ICFES state tests when they obtain very good scores in this area. However, given the current scenario, it is very important to go a step further and take the risk of becoming a bilingual school. The directors realized this because little by little parents began to ask if Buen Consejo would at some point become a bilingual school because they wanted an extra plus in terms of the education their children receive.

As described above, the directors made the decision of this conversion, but there were many doubts about how to do it and where to start. For this reason, the existing literature was consulted and it was decided to inquire about the perception of the population concerned by this project: parents, students, teachers, and directors.

Consequently, among the beneficiaries of this study are the students who will be able to finish their compulsory studies in a school with the title of bilingual, which will bring them benefits in the future by having a high level of English thanks to a greater contact with this language in real time. Other beneficiaries can be the teachers because working in a bilingual school gives them the possibility of accessing short, medium and long term training related to the learning and reinforcement of English, which is very important in these times and in the long run this will be positive for their curriculum. Another beneficiary of this project is the school itself because thanks to the answers found, it was able to find the most appropriate strategy to become bilingual and did not make decisions lightly that could have affected it academically

and damaged the reputation it currently holds within the community. In addition, the school having the title of bilingual in the future will contribute positively to the transformation of the city of Barranquilla as a bilingual territory since more people will be able to have the ability to speak English and thus enhance the economy. Likewise, the researcher of this project was benefited since he found important findings that contribute to the knowledge related to bilingualism and that will help other schools that also wish to start this transformation path in the future.

Likewise, the Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia benefits from this research, since this study will remain in its database and will serve as a guide for other researchers who have bilingualism as the main topic of their study by relying on local findings, reliable bibliographic references and specifications of Colombian national bilingualism. Finally, this as a whole will benefit education in general in the Colombian territory because by focusing on bilingualism, the research provides specific and contextualized information on the challenges and opportunities in the field of bilingualism in Colombia. This is fundamental to understanding local needs and developing educational strategies that are effective in the Colombian context.

### **Rationale for the Research Problem**

In the globalized world that we currently live in, English has become an essential part of social and professional life. In addition, evidence suggests that English may pave the way for greater economic mobility (Helleseter, 2020). As evidence of this, the latest report provided by the Education First agency shows that the top 10 countries with the best English as a second language proficiency are characterized by a stable economy such as the Netherlands, Denmark and Singapore (EF Education index, 2023). In consideration of this, Colombia is not indifferent to this issue. More precisely in Barranquilla, it continues on the road to become a bilingual city

through the strategies and programs implemented by the District Mayor's Office. A statement given by the current Mayor of Barranquilla on December 2, 2022, he said that in the next four years all of the more than 150 district institutions in Barranquilla will be bilingual. As can be seen, this city wants to be a pioneer in Colombia in bilingualism. A large amount of money is being invested in these programs, so that schools are more prepared and can meet expectations, which demonstrates the great importance that English learning is acquiring at the district level.

On the other hand, in addition to the advantages of knowing English, such as access to the world and to better job and academic opportunities, there are also advantages that are not so obvious in a bilingual education, that is, one that provides the ability to use more than one language. It has been shown that students who are bilingual have greater metalinguistic awareness (Lombardi, 1986), increased cognitive control (increased executive functioning) (Bialystok et al., 2016), and greater mental flexibility (Bialystok & Shapero, 2005).

In order to incorporate the learning of English in educational institutions, it is important to establish the most appropriate methodology to add to the contents of each subject the elements of this English language. From the above, the need arises to identify which are the strategies that have given the best results worldwide in terms of bilingualism in schools.

### **Rationale for the Methodologies to Address the Problem**

Taking into account that the main question of this research is: What are the most appropriate strategies for the implementation of a bilingualism process at the Buen Consejo in Barranquilla, Colombia? It is important to say that in order to pose this question, first a review of the literature is made, which shows the difficulty that many schools have in undertaking the transformation towards bilingualism. Taking into account this situation, it is necessary to propose a research based on a case study with an exploratory approach. In this context, Yin (2014), in his

book "Case Study Research: Design and Methods", points out that case studies are appropriate when seeking to understand contemporary phenomena in depth and when the boundaries between the context and the study phenomenon are not clearly defined. In addition, Yin stresses that case studies are especially useful when addressing "why" and "how" questions. Therefore, first, an analysis is made through surveys that have shown that students and parents are motivated and are willing to accept that the school becomes bilingual, which helps to determine the problem to be solved, that is, to discover the most appropriate strategies for the transition to bilingualism.

Likewise, bearing in mind the characteristics of a case study and upon inspecting the bibliographic references, it is discovered that the focus of this research is qualitative. It seeks to understand the reality under investigation, in this case, on the implementation of bilingualism, it does not seek to prove a hypothesis and it seeks to examine the reality subjectively.



## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction to the Literature Review**

The purpose of this section is to provide a body of literature for this research. It has been necessary to review the existing theoretical background that supports the umbrella concept of this research. A literature review has been made of other undergraduate and graduate theses, from which the information to be presented has been obtained. In order to be clearer and more precise in the information, this chapter is divided into 3 parts: state of the art, theoretical framework and conceptual framework. The first part details 4 national and 4 international research studies related to the topic of this research work, which support and shed light on the approach used for the case study to be carried out. The second part describes and reviews the theories that support this research related to bilingualism, which is why it is exposed about Piaget, 2015 ; Cummins, 1980; Fernández, 1992 ; Lightbown, 2016; Bialystok, 2001; Bowen, 1977 ; Tucker, 1977; Cruttenden, 2020 ; Serratrice, 2018 ; Marsh, 2012 and Brinton, 1989. The third part presents the definitions and concepts related to the topic of this research work.

### **State of the Art**

Research on the transition from monolingual to bilingual schools has gained relevance in recent years, motivated by the need to understand the processes, challenges and benefits associated with this transformation. In this state of the art, we examine research and educational practices that explore the dynamics involved in the implementation of bilingual programs in educational institutions.

“Diseño de la propuesta educativa bilingüe para el gimnasio bilingüe “grow together”  
 [Design of the bilingual educational proposal for the "grow together" bilingual gymnasium.]  
 (Velosa A., Ruiz N. 2016). This research study was aimed at studying and analyzing different

conceptual, methodological and procedural approaches to build a bilingualism proposal that could be applied from kindergarten to transition. Among the characteristics of this research, is that it is framed in the general approaches of the holistic approach since it sought to comprehensively understand the pedagogical, methodological and procedural factors, as well as the actors involved in the construction of the bilingual educational project. As for the research design, the authors framed it as an expost-facto and the method used was the holopraxic one, since it included the stages of exploration, description, explanation and elaboration. For the data collection instruments, two sources were taken into account: documentary and live sources. Regarding the former, a summary sheet was used to select the texts, books and documents to be analyzed with the second instrument, which was a "text analysis". And for the live source, surveys were applied to members of the educational community, i.e., parents, directors and teachers.

In this order of ideas, this research makes the following findings visible: first, learning a foreign language from an early age fosters the development of thinking, critical and autonomous beings in addition to developing aspects such as grammar and vocabulary. Second, it is necessary to create social awareness of commitment and responsibility in promoting the learning of a language from an early age in addition to the later stages. It is also concluded that it is very important to have the involvement of all the components of the school environment such as teachers, administrators and parents in order to raise awareness about the importance of promoting bilingualism and that each one contributes with his or her own vision about it.

It is important to mention that the results of this research are useful for those interested in promoting the implementation of bilingualism within schools and the results found can serve as input for other research in this area. And the present study aims to find the best strategy for

the transition to bilingualism within a private sector school, which is closely related to the above.

On the other hand, the project entitled “Implantación del bilingüismo en Andalucía” [Implementation of bilingualism in Andalusia] (Álvarez Payán., Dolores R. 2017), within its specific objectives highlights the evaluation of the problems encountered in the implementation of bilingualism in order to then make proposals that attempt to solve the needs observed in the implementation of bilingualism in Andalusia. At this point, much can be gained because it is not easy to make the most appropriate decisions when taking this step, which is closely related to my research study. Being a case study, this project consulted the bibliography on the implementation of bilingualism in Andalusia and analyzed the legal framework on which the Bilingual Project is based. According to the project, in Andalusia the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) method is the most widespread method to make this community more multiethnic and multilingual to other languages and cultures. So, to study this situation, the researcher made use of surveys to teachers in order to assess their responses and detect their attitudes and difficulties in implementing this method.

The above gave way to the following findings where it is evident that teachers have an excessive number of students per classroom, which causes that the use of the CLIL method cannot be implemented correctly and that teacher training in this method should be constant. In addition, it was found that the presence of a conversation assistant in the classroom is essential for the correct use of this method. Finally, the results show that the use of more materials related to this method is of vital importance for the correct implementation of bilingualism.

Another project that made contributions in the field of bilingualism is entitled "Plan de Mejoramiento Institucional para la Implementación del Bilingüismo en el Colegio Nuestra

Señora de la Felicidad de Kennedy" [Institutional Improvement Plan for the Implementation of Bilingualism at Nuestra Señora de la Felicidad School in Kennedy] (Navarro A. 2021). This project is presented as a response to the need to offer quality bilingual education to the low-income community; therefore, it was important to structure a plan to identify and implement the type of bilingualism appropriate for the institution. The type of research in which this project is framed is action-research, qualitative and of a practical nature, and the population involved were students, parents, teachers, and administrators. For the purposes of the research, the data collection techniques were a structured single-response survey and a sample of international exams based on Cambridge tests that evaluate writing and reading skills. In addition, use was made of questionnaires with open and closed questions related to the problem question, the hypothesis and the findings of the conceptual framework.

As for the findings, it is established that the training processes for parents and teachers represent a fundamental methodological strategy for the curricular proposal based on bilingualism. It is also established that it is important to know the expectations and needs of the educational community in order to strengthen them and establish bilingualism correctly. And finally, it was found that it is of vital importance to know the capacity of the students in terms of their communicative skills in English, since from these results it was possible to plan and manage the different strategies to improve their performance.

As a reflection, this project allows to see that making the right decisions in relation to the transcendence of bilingualism depends to a great extent on the entities that make up the school environment, i.e., parents, students, directors and teachers. It is very important to know their opinions, their expectations and what they can contribute to the transformation. It should

be noted that the results obtained from this study are valuable to the extent that some steps can be followed that can be used in future projects of the same nature.

To learn about experiences with bilingualism already established in schools, the study entitled “El proceso de implantación del bilingüismo en Science en un centro concertado de Primaria y Secundaria” [The process of implementing bilingualism in Science in a primary and secondary school] (Pérez S., Martínez M. 2019) provides valuable information. This research aimed to study the impact of bilingualism on schools and teachers after its implementation. For this purpose, a multiple case study was carried out, for which semi-structured interviews were conducted with all the teachers who teach the area of science, and the responses were categorized and analyzed using Systemic Networks. It is valuable to note that in the school where this study was conducted, the CLIL approach is used as a means to work on bilingualism among students and teachers. This is an approach that considers the teaching and learning of both the foreign language and other subjects through the second language (L2). Among the findings made after applying the instruments, it was found that the school studied was greatly affected at the organizational and human resources level. In addition to finding that teacher training from the CLIL approach should be constant to develop linguistic competence in the second language, it was also stated that it is that exists among students and their families to pay attention to diversity to avoid problems in school performance or school dropout, which would indicate a possible failure of the Bilingual Schools Program. To counteract this situation, it was found that it is vital to promote the creation of a Leadership model that requires the participation of teachers in order to create spaces for reflection on bilingualism. Finally, and the most important of the findings, it is established that innovations and improvement actions must be in accordance with the particularity of each school, i.e., that each bilingualism program must

be contextualized. This leads to reflect on the type of bilingualism that should be implemented in each school, i.e., programs should not be copied from other schools simply because they have worked. It is important to bear in mind that the population and the context vary from one school to another and, therefore, a rigorous study must be carried out beforehand.

Being more specific at the preschool level in terms of bilingualism, the project entitled “La apropiación, implementación y percepción del currículo bilingüe español – inglés de preescolar en el colegio Jordán de Sajonia” [The appropriation, implementation and perception of the Spanish-English bilingual preschool curriculum at the Jordan de Sajonia School] (González D., López A. 2022) offers valuable information. This project investigated the processes of appropriation and implementation of the bilingual curriculum from the perspective of kindergarten teachers and the perceptions of the educational community regarding the implementation of this type of curriculum. This proposal was based on a qualitative type of research using the case study method. As for the instruments, focus groups were used, non-participant classroom observations and classroom plan documents were requested to teachers and these were worked with groups of teachers, parents and kindergarten and transition students.

Among the findings was that the curriculum should meet the needs of the students, since they have different ways of learning and the contents of the different grades should be connected, as well as the teaching methodologies of preschool and elementary school. It was also found a positive reception by the preschool students to learn English through games. With regard to teachers, it is evident that the success of the bilingual curriculum depends to a great extent on their participation in its construction or modification. This valuable information leads to reflect on how important and vital it is for teachers to participate in the construction of the

curriculum; it is not only a matter for the directors, but success also depends to a great extent on the teachers, who after all are the ones who are in charge of teaching the content and have close contact with the students, which allows for a broader vision of the educational process.

In relation to the possibilities of starting from scratch a bilingual educational center, the project entitled “Estudio de factibilidad para la creación de un jardín infantil con énfasis en bilingüismo Español – Alemán con la opción de tercera lengua Inglés, en el Municipio de Chía”. [Feasibility study for the creation of a kindergarten with emphasis in bilingualism Spanish - German with the option of English as a third language, in the Municipality of Chia.] (Hansen H. 2017) provides important elements. This study focused on doing a market study to identify the quality of the existing educational offer and the existing educational programs. On the other hand, it investigated on the legal requirements in educational, commercial, labor and civil matters to be able to create an early childhood education institute, without leaving aside the identification of the needs and expectations of the population of the sector where the institute is intended to be established. The approach of this study is qualitative and exploratory and the instrument used was the survey, which was applied to parents who are inhabitants of the sector. It is interesting to mention that the population to which the survey was applied belongs to the highest socioeconomic strata of Colombia.

With respect to the findings, it was found that it is of vital importance to use an innovative pedagogical model that is attractive to parents due to the great offer of bilingual educational institutions that currently exist, in the particular case of this proposal, the pedagogical model of silence is offered. On the other hand, the feasibility study methodology applied in the economic sector can also be used for the creation of an educational institution. With this economic project, it can be concluded that in order to create a bilingual institution and

offer an attractive pedagogical model, it is essential to know the context in which it is intended to be established.

Another relevant study is the one entitled "Percepción docente sobre el bilingüismo en centros de Educación Infantil y Educación Primaria de la Región de Murcia" [Teacher perception on bilingualism on Infant Education and Primary Education schools of the Region of Murcia] (Esparza C., Belmonte M. 2019). This case study analyzed teachers' perceptions of bilingual education in Early Childhood and Primary Education schools. To achieve this, a mixed model was used, through a 16-item questionnaire classified into 3 dimensions: impact of bilingualism on the learning of other subjects, teachers' perception of English language learning and the implementation of bilingual centers and programs, and the influence of bilingualism on student learning. The population used to carry out these questionnaires were teachers and the results found were that teachers are in favor of language learning and the implementation of bilingual schools, but do not consider that teaching other subjects through English favors their learning. This allows to reflect on the real need to teach the contents of the subjects in English and on what would be the impact on the improvement of English and the learning of the contents. It is also worth asking whether it is necessary to teach all the subjects or only some of them. Once again, the importance of the context and the target population for the implementation of bilingualism is emphasized.

Finally, a study related to the impact of bilingual education on students is entitled "El impacto de la enseñanza bilingüe en el alumnado de educación primaria: análisis del rendimiento académico y de los intereses por las áreas curriculares" [The impact of bilingual teaching on the primary education pupils: analysis of academic performance and interests by curricular areas] (Ródenas J. 2018). This project was focused on answering whether bilingual



teaching in primary school students has positive effects on increasing both academic performance in the different curricular areas and their interest in actually learning in this way. In order to carry out this study, 310 students from both bilingual and non-bilingual early childhood and elementary school institutions were used, which led to a quantitative-descriptive type of research. The instrument used was the questionnaire on personal interests in the compulsory curricular areas in addition to the grades-academic performance in the compulsory subjects. Among the findings, low rates of academic performance were found in the area of Spanish Language in bilingual centers, as a consequence of the fact that the achievement of basic skills such as the communication of simple messages in English continues to prevail. In addition, it was found that students' interests in a subject will have consequences on academic performance, which leads to paying attention also to the affective part and thus avoiding rote learning. Another finding is related to the educational system, in which rote learning still prevails over problem solving or natural learning of foreign languages. Likewise, the results of the study show that there is a greater interest in learning English on the part of students in bilingual centers.

In this study, it can be observed that the opinion and interests of students and teachers have an important value in the results, which leads to reflect on their active participation at the time of developing the curriculum and not leave it only in the hands of the directors. Likewise, it is good to reflect on allowing a space for students to express themselves in the classroom, where they are the protagonists of their own learning.

All the research studies mentioned above are relevant for the development of the present research study since they permit to generate a detailed vision of how to initiate a process of implementation of bilingualism in schools, as well as the possible effects that this would have

on the academic performance of the students. At this point is where this study seeks to research and discover what are the best strategies to take the right steps towards the transition to bilingualism.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This theoretical framework reviews the key theoretical principles and assumptions that best support and inform the present research study. The purpose of this study is to identify the most appropriate strategies for the implementation of a bilingualism process at the Buen Consejo school. First, some theories related to the effects of bilingualism on the first language are presented, in addition to the effects on cognitive development. Then, some information related to bilingualism in children is presented, taking into account the theories of Cummins and Piaget. Finally, an overview of the two most commonly used approaches to promote bilingualism in schools are presented. Therefore, the theoretical lens framing this study is articulated from the characterization of Cummins' theory of linguistic interdependence and an overview of Piaget's stages of learning. This study will contribute to the change and improvement of the city's education through a correct application of bilingualism in the cognitive development of students.

### **The Effects of Bilingualism**

#### ***The Effects of Bilingualism on the First Language***

It is important to know the effect that bilingualism has on the first language and even more so if it is started at an early age. Studies conducted by Monash University in Australia supported by Canadian research from the 1970s have shown that students have no unfavorable effects on their cognitive or linguistic development when taught in a second language. After a four-year study period, it was concluded that there were no negative effects on native language performance, but that listening skills improved (Fernández, 1992).

#### ***Effect of Bilingualism on Cognitive Development***

Today, there is evidence that our brain is not restricted for linguistic skills and not only for two languages, but also for others. Moreover, linguistic attributes do not remain isolated in

the cognitive system, but are easily transferred and interactive. Interactivity of linguistic attributes refers to the ability to transfer and apply knowledge, skills and strategies between different languages and language components. This perspective highlights the idea that the brain does not treat languages in isolation, but that there is an interconnectedness that can facilitate or complicate the process of learning multiple languages. (Lightbown, 2016). Cummins, based on a model supported by psycholinguistics, assumes the existence of a Common Underlying Linguistic Competence (hereafter CLSC), according to which if learning one language (L<sub>x</sub>) well helps to improve skills in that same language, then those skills are likely to transfer to another language (L<sub>y</sub>) provided there is sufficient exposure and adequate motivation to learn that other language. This exposure and motivation can come from both the school environment and the general environment. For Cummins, the knowledge acquired can be applied in all situations because there is an academic competence that occurs in all languages. That is, a child will find it easier to maintain the second language because he or she feels the need to do so regardless of the context (Cummins, 1981).

Bilingualism can have positive effects on individuals. Recent studies show that bilingualism sharpens and enhances some executive functions (Bialystok, 2001), which means more effective control of action and thought. In addition, bilingualism has been related to more effective controlled processing in children, and furthermore, apparently, the enhancement of executive functions may be due to the simultaneous handling of two competing languages (Bialystok et al., 2005). Adequate bilingualism fosters the development of cognitive and linguistic skills that are often more outstanding than those of monolingual speakers. Bilingualism and its teaching fosters not only abstraction or awareness skills, but also the ability to create new concepts, greater information processing capacity, the development of intellectual

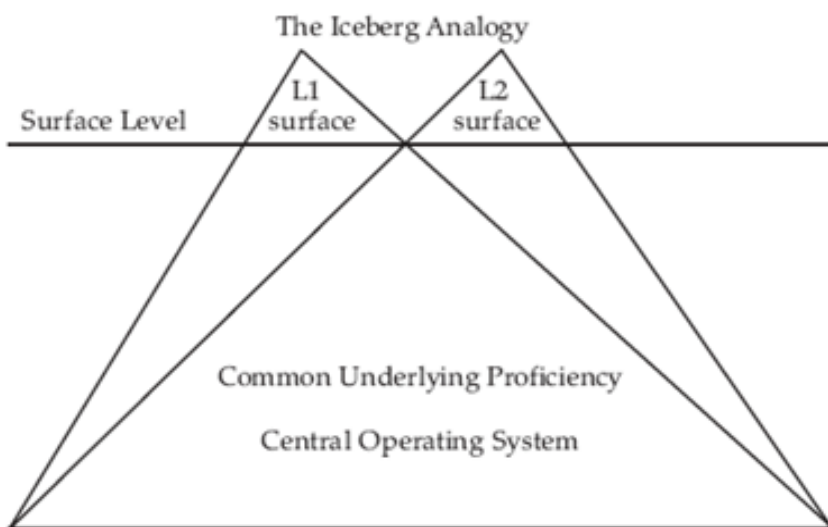
alertness, creativity, and more open and divergent thinking. Its beneficial effects are so notable that they are reflected in those areas of knowledge other than language, due to its direct impact on information management, analytical and argumentative capacity, creativity and, ultimately, on problem solving (Duverger & Jean, 1995).

### ***Bilingualism in Children***

One thing parents may worry about when enrolling their children in a bilingual school is that their first language will be affected, that is, that they will learn the second language more than their first language. But research has shown that there is nothing to worry about in this regard. The level of L2 proficiency that a bilingual child attains is partially a function of the type of proficiency he/she has developed in L1 at the time exposure to L2 begins. This means that the second language development the child acquires depends on how much he/she has developed his/her first language. From the above, it follows that the child must develop the L1 very well before going to school in order for both to be unaffected, one does not want to prevent the L1 from developing and the L2 from being limited (Cummins, 1979). Although, there are superficial elements such as pronunciation and fluency that appear separate, there is a hidden cognitive-academic competence that is common to the languages. For this, Cummins employed the double-iceberg metaphor which is depicted in Figure 1. The surface stuff can be seen, one might say, for example, the accent, but underneath is something much more significant and that is the linguistic ability with a wide range of higher register thoughts that can be used in both languages such as analysis and reasoning. It is important to remember that interdependence theory states that languages in the brain are interdependent, not separate. (Cummins, 1979). Therefore, this makes possible the transfer of cognitive-academic or literacy-related competence from one language to another (Cummins, 1980).

**Figure 1**

*Cummins' CUP 'Dual Iceberg' Model of Bilingualism*



*Note.* Taken from: Cummins, J. (1979). Linguistic Interdependence and the Educational Development of Bilingual Children. *49(2)*, 222–251.

At this point, it is important to point out that the bilingualism we seek to establish in the institution is one where students can develop their thinking skills in both L1 and L2 and for this, it is relevant to be clear that bilingualism does not affect either if used correctly.

### ***Learning Factors***

According to Cummins, in order to make a judgment on the effectiveness of bilingual education, it is relevant to consider the relationship of three important factors: linguistic, sociocultural and school program. Considering the sociolinguistic factors, bilingualism does not cause academic or linguistic backwardness; on the contrary, it can positively influence the progress of both. As for sociocultural factors, Cummins supports the statement of Bowen and Tucker, for whom social factors are more decisive than linguistic and pedagogical ones. For them, sociocultural factors are related to the medium of instruction, which is determined by

social conditions, not by the pre-established notion of the mother tongue (Bowen and Tucker, 1977) Finally, the school program factor is distinguished by the establishment of two types of programs, immersion and submersion. In the immersion program, students start the program with little or no competence in the L2 and the teacher knows the L1 of his students and its culture. Therefore, he or she can identify needs, motivates and reinforces them every time they use the L2 and transmits his or her triumphs to them since he does not discredit the L1, but, on the contrary, accepts its importance and adds it as a school subject. In the submersion program, students are united, i.e., those whose mother tongue is the school language (L2) and those whose mother tongue is another (L1). The teacher thinks that the minority language of the students causes academic impediments and the L2 cannot be learned properly, therefore, it does not reinforce the L1 and its culture, which, brings a feeling of failure among the students and they become frustrated because they cannot communicate with the teacher. In addition to this, the teacher has expectations towards his or her students determined by their culture (Cummins, 1979).

At this point, it is relevant to point out that the type of school program most commonly implemented in bilingual schools in Colombia is that of immersion, since it is expected to strengthen the L2 without detracting from the importance of the students' L1, and one language is not more important than the other, and the students' own cultural values cannot be suppressed simply because they are acquiring the L2 correctly.

### ***Cognitive Theory***

It was the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (2015) who developed the cognitive theory, which classifies learning into stages. To classify these stages, he took into account the child's age, which goes from zero years old to 11 years old onwards, which were named as follows:

**Table 1***Stages of Learning*

The Sensorimotor Stage	At this stage, functional play is part of the children's development and they use their body or objects. They use their senses to get to know the world, that is why babies touch, manipulate, look, listen and even bite and chew objects continuously.	Birth to Age 2
The Preoperational Stage	At this stage, symbolic play, language learning and egocentrism are part of children's development. Children often engage in imaginative activities which they consider on two levels at once: imaginative and realistic. This type of games represents a space for reflection and supervision of their own thinking.	Age 2 to 7
The Concrete Operational Stage	At this stage, to solve problems, the child is already able to perform logical operations.	Age 7 to 11
The Formal Operational Stage	At this stage, the child is able to consider several variables to solve problems in addition to having the ability to use abstract cognitive functions	Age 11 and beyond

For the present research study, the preoperational stage is important because the age of the students at which bilingualism is to be initiated is in that range. At this stage, children begin to understand symbols, but before that they are able to transform or interpret what they have learned, but in a very simple way. Language development begins to occur in addition to imitation of behaviors and analysis of images. From these skills children begin to associate everything with what they have learned. They also begin to discover the world in their own way by their own means.



This stage is also relevant to the present study because according to Piaget (2018), at this point the recognition of environmental sounds and the imitation of noises, sounds and words are part of children's development. In this aspect, learning English is favored because it would then become easier for them. Piaget further states that at this stage words become sentences which is called language. And language is established when symbols are understood and used to express ideas and feelings.

The above, together with other authors who make bilingualism explicit from an early age, show that it is very beneficial for children's cognitive development. According to Cruttenden (2020), exposure to a bilingual environment both at school and in the family nucleus in the childhood stage becomes beneficial because it stimulates their learning and acquisition. Serratrice (2018) expresses that one way to support children to become bilingual is to expose them to an L2 after they have started acquiring a first language. In addition, they are often different. the contexts in which they hear and use their L1 or L2. Often, these children tend to hear their L1 at home and only later are exposed to an L2 when they attend kindergarten or school.

## **Necessary Elements for Bilingual Education in Schools**

### ***Infrastructure and Technology***

The importance of infrastructure and resources in a bilingual school stems from their direct impact on the quality of the education offered and the overall development of the students. Cummins (2008) discusses the development of basic interpersonal language proficiency (BICS) and academic language proficiency (CALP), concepts relevant to understanding how language skills develop in bilingual educational contexts. Adequate infrastructure and appropriate

resources are critical to creating an educational environment that fosters effective dual language learning.

**Active Learning:** well-designed infrastructure and resources allow for the implementation of active pedagogical strategies that engage students in the learning process. For example, classrooms equipped with technology and language-specific materials can stimulate active participation and the development of language skills. Technological platforms can provide adaptive exercises and activities, customizing practice according to the level and individual needs of each student. This facilitates the development of specific language skills, such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (Chapelle et al., 2019)

**Supporting Language Immersion:** The infrastructure of a bilingual school should provide an environment conducive to language immersion, where students are surrounded by stimuli in both languages. This may include well-stocked libraries with books in both languages, classrooms designed for interactive activities in both languages, and common spaces that encourage communication in both languages.

**Multilingual Skills Development:** A well-equipped bilingual educational environment facilitates the development of multilingual skills, which not only includes proficiency in two languages, but also the ability to switch fluently between them. Infrastructure and resources should support structured curricula and activities that promote the acquisition of these skills.

**Inclusion of Educational Technology:** The implementation of educational technology is essential in bilingual education. Modern infrastructure and technological resources can provide interactive tools, educational software and online resources that enrich the dual language learning process.

### ***Perceptions of Stakeholders***

The favorable impressions of educators, administrators, parents, and students are intrinsically linked to the triumph that comes with the successful implementation of the bilingual program. When the various stakeholders experience a positive appreciation, they are more strongly inclined to be willing to engage and collaborate in a highly effective manner in the development and implementation of the bilingual educational process, as Freeman and Freeman postulate in their seminal work (2002).

### ***Subjects to be Taught in the Foreign Language***

As María Estela Brisk states (2014), the choice of subjects to be taught in English in a bilingual school may depend on several factors, such as the specific educational objectives, the needs of the students, and the structure of the bilingual program. However, some subjects commonly selected to be taught in English include science, mathematics, technology and physical education. These subjects are often more amenable to instruction in English due to the presence of technical concepts and terminology that can be effectively transferred.

It is also important to consider the age of the students and their level of English proficiency. Bilingual schools often implement programs that gradually increase the complexity of English content as students progress through their studies.

### ***Initiation of Bilingual Education***

The implementation of bilingual education from the preschool grade is revealed as a fundamental strategy to enhance the cognitive and linguistic development of children. Several studies support this assertion, such as the work of García-Sierra and Rivera-Gaxiola (2019), who highlight that early exposure to two languages promotes greater brain plasticity, facilitating the brain's adaptation to linguistic diversity. By initiating bilingual education at the preschool stage,

the critical period for language learning is capitalized, optimizing the brain's capacity to absorb and process linguistic information effectively. In addition, this approach promotes cultural awareness and openness to diversity, which are essential in an increasingly globalized world. Consequently, the early initiation of bilingual education not only strengthens language skills, but also contributes to the integral development of the individual in a multicultural context.

On the other hand, the gradual implementation of bilingualism in schools is presented as a pedagogical strategy based on several studies that highlight the importance of a progressive approach to maximize students' cognitive and academic benefits. Research such as that conducted by Peal and Lambert (1962) have emphasized the relevance of a gradual transition to bilingual instruction. These authors argue that a gradual approach allows students to develop solid linguistic skills in both languages, avoiding cognitive overload and facilitating better assimilation of curricular content. In addition, the importance of considering individual factors, such as the initial language proficiency level, is highlighted in order to adapt the teaching process effectively. Consequently, the adoption of a gradual approach in the introduction of bilingualism in the educational environment emerges as a strategy supported by research, promoting a balanced development of students' linguistic competencies.

Partial immersion in second language learning, such as English, has the significant advantage of allowing students to gradually become familiar with the target language, which in turn reduces the pressure and stress associated with a fully bilingual program. By exposing students to an environment where some of the content is delivered in the new language, a less overwhelming learning environment is created, facilitating the assimilation of concepts and promoting confidence in the use of the foreign language. According to Cummins' (1981) studies, partial immersion provides students with the opportunity to develop language skills in a more

natural way, as it is progressively integrated into their academic curriculum, allowing for more effective and less stressful learning compared to more intensive approaches. This methodology aligns with the idea that gradual exposure is key to successful second language acquisition.

### ***Teacher Training***

Teacher education and training are fundamental elements when a school becomes bilingual. This is because bilingual instruction not only involves the incorporation of a second language into the curriculum, but also requires a specific pedagogical approach to maximize student learning in both languages. Teachers need to acquire specific skills and strategies to carry out effective instruction in a bilingual environment.

Genesee (2006) examined the importance of teacher training in bilingual contexts and highlights how teachers need to develop specific competencies to adapt to the needs of dual language learners. The research underscores that adequate teacher training is essential to the success of bilingual programs and their positive impact on students' academic achievement.

### **Approaches Used in Bilingual Education**

When we define the term bilingualism, we can state that it is the ability to use, in a frequent way, two languages by the same person, in a locality, region or country. Of these two languages, it is understood that one is the native one, and the second is one learned through academic processes (Lameiras et al., 2015); (Wolff & Marsh, 2007) Beyond the political or socioeconomic benefits that bilingualism can bring to a community, it brings other benefits to students such as the development of attention, creativity and cognitive flexibility (Cummins, 2002) resulting in them being able to solve problems more easily by using the resources of the two languages and this in turn gives them the ability to adapt to a new context (Bialystok et al., 2016).

### *Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)*

The CLIL approach was born from the need to obtain greater mobility in the European Union through the acquisition of greater language skills, taking as an influence the model implemented in Canada in which many students were helped to increase language learning through new approaches (Marsh, 2012). This term was adopted in the year 1994 and since then its use in European countries has been exponential. CLIL is described as the idea of learning meaningful content in knowledge areas such as social sciences, mathematics, art among others, while developing language skills in a foreign language. CLIL seeks to teach two subjects in one: one subject content and one language, and thus encourage bilingualism in schools. This methodology implemented correctly should allow students to effectively learn the target language without making it impossible to learn the content properly (Coyle et al., 2010).

According to one of the precursors of CLIL (Marsh, D., 2010), the implementation of this methodology brings positive results for students. In addition to promoting linguistic competence, it also serves to stimulate cognitive flexibility because students enrich their understanding of concepts by expanding the resources of conceptual mapping. This allows the student to advance to a more advanced level of general learning. Another benefit of this methodology is increased student motivation. Since the learner must voluntarily participate in learning through a second language, it can increase their motivation towards the subjects. By being the protagonist of their own learning thanks to the natural environment that CLIL offers, motivation is enhanced. Students find in this methodology a propitious space to put into practice the language they have learned in theory in an immersion environment. Marsh argues (Marsh, 2010) that it is precisely because of this naturalness that CLIL is successful because it enhances both language learning and the learning of other subjects. In short, there are both cognitive and motivational benefits.

### ***Theme-Based Instruction (TBI)***

This is a type of teaching that increases the use of subject content in the language class. In this approach, classes are structured into topics, which form the fundamental element of the curriculum. In addition, the content material presented by the teacher provides the basis for language analysis and practice. All communicative skills can be developed through different exercises that can be combined from any topic the teacher selects. To achieve this, the teacher's motivation is fundamental to motivate the students after having taken on the responsibility of teaching a topic. In addition, it is important that the teacher has the confidence to teach the topic, and if not, that he or she is committed to studying the topic for as long as necessary.

In traditional foreign language teaching methods, the use of a textbook and workbook is essential, but in classes where the Theme-based instruction approach is used, it is the teacher who designs the materials and activities. In a longer course (a semester or school year), one may start with an overarching topic that encompasses several specific topics, which requires more coordination in preparing materials and relating them to each other. Theme-based instruction is the most widespread form, as it can be implemented with little or no institutional framework and the topics can be diverse. (Brinton, 1989).

## Conceptual Framework

### Bilingualism

Bilingualism can be understood from different approaches. One of them is related to sociology. Soler (1976) states that it is a psychological fact related to the behavior of certain individuals capable of expressing themselves and communicating with the same or similar ease in two different languages. The bilingualism of an individual is not an isolated case, but rather he lives with other people who are also bilingual and live precisely what he lives, using the same languages and sharing them in the same situations. Thus, bilingualism becomes a collective practice and should therefore be treated as a sociological element. Therefore, it can be said that a society is bilingual when its inhabitants normally use two different languages as a means of communication. From the psychological point of view, bilingualism is a singularity of a person's behavior that is characterized by the indifferent use of one language or the other in their communicative developments. Being bilingual is capable of enlarging the interactive picture by the coexistent convergence of a double sociolinguistic capacity: that of being able to communicate in two languages (Abarca, 1981). And from the linguistic point of view, bilingualism is not a phenomenon of language, but a characteristic of its use; it is not a function of the code, but of the message; it does not belong to the domain of language, but of the word, that is, of linguistic behavior (Mackey, 1962).

At the national level, the Ministry of National Education in the booklet of Basic Standards of Competences in Foreign Languages: English, establishes that bilingualism refers to the different levels of proficiency with which a person manages to communicate in more than one language and one culture. These different levels depend on the context in which the person lives. Therefore, depending on the use made of languages other than the mother tongue, these



take the title of being a second or foreign language (Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), 2005).

In the above definitions, two common elements can be identified. The first is that all authors point out the importance of mastering one or more languages and second, that there is a real communication process when a bilingual person has the ability to understand and interact in different social scenarios that require the use of one or more languages.

### *Types of Bilingualism*

Bilingualism is classified according to approach:

**Full Bilingualism and Incomplete Bilingualism.** Incomplete bilingualism occurs when the second language is developing while the first language has already developed, therefore, there is an imbalance of linguistic development of the two languages (Weinreich, 1968). In full bilingualism the person uses his or her mother tongue to understand life, and therefore acts as a monolingual. In this type of bilingualism, unidirectional transfers - from L1 to L2 - are perceived, and it is promoted by the pedagogy of translation that does not allow a clear differentiation of the two systems (Paradis, 1981).

**Coordinated and Composite Bilingualism.** In coordinated bilingualism, the child develops two parallel linguistic systems. For one word, there are two signifiers and two meanings. In this type of bilingualism, the child uses the two languages as if he were monolingual, and at each level of the linguistic structure, there is no mixing between the two languages and there is no interference. (Paradis, 1981). On the other hand, in composite bilingualism, the child has for two signifiers only one meaning, he does not have the ability to discover the conceptual disparities present in the two languages, but to think and communicate he needs both languages.

**Additive and Subtractive Bilingualism.** Additive bilingualism occurs when there are positive attitudes in the person who incorporates the learning of a second language. It is understood as positive attitudes when the acquisition of the second language does not represent a threat to his or her mother tongue and culture and is therefore considered a cultural enrichment. On the contrary, if the learning of a new language is forced and is perceived as a threat to the maintenance of the mother tongue and one's own culture, i.e., it represents a loss of identity, bilingualism can become subtractive (Lambert, 1974).

Emphasizing additive bilingualism, this refers to a situation in which learning and using a second language (L2) does not negatively affect the development of the first language (L1), but rather enriches and strengthens the individual's overall language skills. In other words, additive bilingualism implies that learning and using a second language does not have a negative impact on the development of the first language, but rather adds positive language skills.

This situation is typical when a person learns a second language while maintaining and continuing to actively use his or her first language. It is usually observed in contexts where both

languages are present and valued in the individual's daily life, such as in bilingual households, multilingual communities, or educational settings that encourage the use of multiple languages.

In additive bilingualism, linguistic and cognitive skills are enhanced, as the individual has the ability to communicate efficiently in both languages. This approach contrasts with the concept of subtractive bilingualism, in which learning a second language can have a negative impact on the development of the first language, leading to the loss of skills in that language.

### **Bilingual Education**

Bilingual education occurs when at some point in a student's school career two or more languages are used to teach. Language is not taught as a subject or as a separate language but is used as a means to teach the content of each school subject (Cummins, 2013).

#### ***Types of Bilingual Education***

Bilingual education is classified according to the type of approach.

**Enrichment Versus Remedial Programs.** The purpose of enrichment programs is to enrich the educational experience of students by strongly encouraging bilingualism and bilingual literacy. Remedial programs, by contrast, aim to remediate or compensate minority students for students' lack of in-school language proficiency and typical L1 use on only a short-term basis (Cummins, 2013).

**Maintenance Versus Transitional Programs.** The purpose of maintenance programs is to promote the maintenance and development of minority students' native language proficiency, while transitional programs are designed as a temporary bridge to instruction exclusively through the dominant language of the school and society (Cummins, 2013).

**Partial Immersion Program.** The concept of "partial immersion" in the context of bilingualism refers to an educational approach in which students are exposed to two or more languages on a regular basis, but not necessarily in equal measure. In a partial immersion program, a portion of instructional time is conducted in one language, while the remainder is conducted in another. This approach seeks to foster the development of skills in both languages, allowing students to acquire proficiency in a second language while continuing to receive instruction in their native language.

In a partial immersion program, students may receive instruction in one language for part of the day and in another language for another part (Lindholm, 2011). For example, a partial immersion program might offer instruction in English for half of the day and in Spanish for the other half. This approach is commonly used as a strategy to foster the development of language skills in both languages, especially in contexts where there is a minority language to be preserved or strengthened. Furthermore, as Krashen (1981), in his "input hypothesis" theory, argues that second language learning occurs most effectively when people are exposed to comprehensible and meaningful "input" in the new language. Partial immersion, as implemented in bilingual programs, aligns with this theory by providing students with an environment where the native language and the target language are blended.

The idea is that by exposing students to situations where they need to understand and communicate in the target language, more natural and effective learning occurs. Partial immersion programs seek to create an environment where the student is surrounded by the language they are learning, but without completely excluding their native language.

### *Types of Bilingual Schools in Colombia*

According to a study by Mejía Ordóñez and Fonseca (Mejía et al., 2006), bilingual schools in Colombia are characterized as follows:

**Table 2.**

#### *Types of Bilingual Schools in Colombia*

Colegios bilingües internacionales	Colegios bilingües nacionales	Colegios con inglés intensivo
Schools were founded by foreigners	Schools were founded by Colombians	Schools were founded by Colombians
Schools accredited by a college and university accrediting agency in a foreign country, e.g., Southern Association of Schools and Colleges or IBO (International Baccalaureate Organization)	Students must pass an international foreign language exam in addition to passing the Colombian curriculum.	Students take language proficiency exams during the school years
High intensity of hourly contact with the foreign language in the academic curriculum (more than 50 percent)	There is a high intensity of hourly contact with the foreign language in the academic curriculum (more than 50 percent)	Students take 10-15 hours of English, not necessarily including a core area like Science or Math
Promote a direct contact of their students with the foreign country through exchanges or internships during their schooling	Promote a cross-cultural orientation. They make comparative analyses on aspects of their own and foreign cultures.	Most of the students' further studies are in Colombia
Many of the teachers are foreigners	Most of the teachers are bilingual Colombians	Most of the teachers are monolingual, except the

foreign languages ones

***Bilingualism in Colombia from a Policy Perspective***

Bilingualism has become very important in Colombia; therefore, in 2004 the Ministry of National Education established the National Bilingualism Program in order to strengthen English language learning in schools. Taking into account that language learning is cultural learning, this program is based on three main pillars: language, communication and culture (Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), 2005). This program is established to improve the quality of education at the preschool, elementary, middle, high school, and higher education levels, as a strategy to promote the competitiveness of Colombians and is based on the following: "The mastery of a foreign language is considered a fundamental factor for any society interested in being part of global dynamics of economic, academic, technological and cultural type, and the improvement of the communicative competence in English of a society or population leads to the emergence of opportunities for its citizens, the recognition of other cultures and individual and collective growth" MEN-P. N.B. (2004-2019). In relation to English proficiency, the objective is for students in grade 11 to reach the communicative competencies of level B1.

On the other hand, according to the Ministry of National Education (MEN, 2005), the following requirements must be met in Colombia in order to incorporate the title of "National Bilingual School":

- The operating license or act of official recognition.
- A structured summary of the PEI in accordance with the General Education Law, Decree 1860 of 1994 and other regulations on the subject.
- The curriculum must specify more than 50% of the intensity of contact with the foreign language and the rest in Spanish.

- Submit the student evaluation system, in accordance with Decree 1290 of 2009. It must also be specified as a degree requirement, the approval of an international test of the foreign language object of the bilingual training.

- 50% of teachers must be certified in B2 by an authorized entity.
- Describe the equipment and educational resources for each of the areas and projects: texts and ICT among them, virtual platform. Resources must be adequate and sufficient.

With the above, it is understood that private schools, in spite of having certain autonomy, must comply with the requirements established by the Ministry of National Education. There is no room for improvisations; therefore, in this research work the researcher made a detailed description of the elements in favor of the school in question that comply with the aforementioned requirements.

### **Rationale of the Research Study on the Literature**

The basis of this research is centered on the principles of bilingualism, which is supported by different national and international research. This, in addition to the concepts and ideas of the different authors cited here, are articulated to give even more validity to what is intended to be achieved and which is presented throughout this project.

The authors cited above agree with the positive effects that bilingualism has on children, which will bring many benefits both in the school where this project is to be implemented and in the community of the city of Barranquilla, whose inhabitants are expected to be bilingual in the near future. It is not good to improvise when making decisions about the best strategies for converting a monolingual school into a bilingual one, therefore, it is of vital importance to take into account the experiences of other people and researchers who have dedicated their lives to study the phenomenon of bilingualism.

## **Research Design**

### **Introduction to the Research Design**

Considering the previously mentioned references, this section describes the methodology used to develop this study, starting with a brief description of the methodological design, the research method and the research approach, followed by the context and population on which the project is focused. It also describes the participants and ends with the data collection and analysis techniques applied for the research.

### **Methodological Design**

#### ***Research Method***

Categorizing this project as a case study seems to be the most appropriate to identify the best strategy for implementing bilingual education in this school. A case study is an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit, such as an individual, group, institution, or community (Merriam, 2002). Case studies allow the researcher to establish causes and effects, which can be observed in real contexts (Cohen et al , 2018). In addition, case studies allow the researcher to create analytical generalizations that help to understand similar cases or situations (Robson, 2016). Being more specific, descriptive studies seek to specify the properties, characteristics and profiles of people, groups, communities, processes, objects or any other phenomenon that is subjected to analysis. In other words, they only seek to measure or collect information independently or jointly on the concepts or variables to which they refer, i.e., their objective is not to indicate how these are related. Descriptive studies are useful for accurately showing the angles or dimensions of a phenomenon, event, community, context or situation. In this type of study, the researcher must be able to define, or at least visualize, what will be



measured (concepts, variables, components) and on what or whom data will be collected (persons, groups, communities, objects, animals, facts, etc.). (Hernández Sampieri, R., 2010).

As this study is mixed, qualitative and quantitative in nature, the Selective Sampling of key informants is important as it consists of selecting from the study population those units or samples that can provide essential information for the research study. In this case, the source that provides key information are students and experts since they are directly involved in the problem situation and will help to understand the reality being analyzed (Taylor, 2013).

### ***Research Approach***

The type of approach used in this study is mixed, both qualitative and quantitative, in order to analyze and interpret the data collected. This type of approach is used to explore and understand the meaning that people give to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2018). An important characteristic of qualitative studies is to study events in their natural setting, making sense of or interpreting phenomena by taking into account the meanings people attach to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This research was conducted based on a qualitative analysis with a descriptive approach, in order to understand the perspective and expectations of the participants about the implementation of bilingualism in the school, as well as to delve into their perspectives, experiences, opinions and meanings, that is, the way in which the participants personally perceive their reality (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2010). As part of those involved in this research are human beings, the relevant data were the perceptions, experiences, beliefs, emotions, interactions, concepts, mental images, thoughts, processes and experiences manifested in the language of the participants, whether individually, in groups or collectively (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2010). In addition, this research responds to a descriptive approach because it

seeks to identify the most appropriate strategies for the implementation of a bilingualism process at the Buen Consejo school in the preschool and 1st grade in the private sector.

### ***Context of the Research***

Population: Teachers, parents, students, an expert in bilingual education and the principal of the Buen Consejo school in Barranquilla.

Sample: 30 % percent of the population of teachers, parents and students of the Buen Consejo school in Barranquilla.

**Population and Sampling Procedures.** This research work is based on the diagnostic analysis of the written elements, but individuals were also taken into account, in this case, teachers, students and students' parents and experts. Thirty percent of each of the participating groups was taken into account. The researcher has decided to choose this sample through simple random probability sampling because, as Hernández Sampieri et al. (2010) express, all the people who make up the target population have the same chances of being included in the sample. This means that the probability of choosing a group is independent of the probability of choosing the rest of the groups that are part of the sample. In order to initiate bilingual education, it is necessary to take into account the individuals who are part of the educational act, in this case, parents, teachers, students and experts.

On the other hand, it is important to know the English level of the teachers to subsequently measure the possibilities of success in the implementation of the project. Of the 60 teachers, 8 are language teachers, while the others have taken English courses, but their current level is unknown. The families come from middle and high social strata. According to the information provided by them during the enrollment process of their children, most of them express having university degrees or owning a business.

**Researcher's Impact.** The role of the researcher in this case study was as an external observer since the researcher did not belong to the object of study. Being more specific, his role was direct because it was carried out in the field in immediate contact with reality through surveys, interviews and focus groups and it was possible to describe and study the unique characteristics of the entire process carried out in the research. Similarly, the researcher took the indispensable elements of the data collected to identify concepts and, taking as an essence the characteristics of a case study, conclusions were formulated from the data collected, always having a natural contact with the participants of the sample (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2010)

Likewise, during the unstructured interviews, an informal tone was used between the researcher and the participants in order to make them feel comfortable expressing their feelings about the implementation of bilingual education in the school and thus obtain more natural responses leaving aside the researcher's beliefs and expectations.

**Ethical Protocol.** In order to gain access to the sample, the principal of the Buen Consejo School granted the researcher authorization to conduct this research study. The researcher received approval to apply the instruments to the different participants such as: teachers, students and parents. Likewise, the researcher was allowed access to the results obtained in the English tests that are part of the first phase. In addition, the researcher was allowed access to the school's current curriculum, texts and ICT. Parents and teachers were informed about this study through institutional mail. As for the teachers, they were given the ethical protocol letter in which it was made clear that their answers would not have any repercussions on their employment contract or anything of the sort.

Their participation in this study was strictly voluntary; they could resign or cancel their participation at any time. Withdrawal did not represent at any time an affectation between them

and the researcher or the educational institution and, if they decided to cancel their participation before the end of data collection, the data would be deleted. Measures were taken to preserve the confidentiality of personal information and data obtained in the study. The overall and specific results were only used for research purposes. In no case was your identity mentioned. Only the researcher had access to the computer where all data were stored.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

To determine the perceptions and opinions of the different individuals involved in the implementation project, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and focus groups with teachers and parents were used. On the other hand, focus groups were conducted with a homogeneous sample of volunteer participants, homogeneous because the participants were teachers and parents whose permanence in the institution has been at least five years so that they have a broader knowledge of what the school is today. This allowed the researcher to detail the changes to be made in the school, determine the use of materials, the degree of commitment to this project and the perception of the implementation process. This is coherent with the theoretical framework and the methods of data collection and analysis.

### **Description and Rationale of the Instruments**

This research study corresponds to a case study in which the aim is to find the most appropriate strategies for the implementation of bilingualism in a private school in Barranquilla. Since the case study usually consists of simply observing what happens or reconstructing "the case history" of a single participant or group of individuals, then the interview was used as the data collection technique. As stated by Fontana (2005), the interview in research is a data collection technique in which a researcher communicates directly with participants to obtain information on a specific topic.

In this case, the data collection instrument was the semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview is used in research when seeking to collect detailed and in-depth data on a topic, allowing the interviewer to explore and understand the experiences, opinions and perspectives of the participants in a more flexible way than in a structured interview. This type of interview combines open-ended questions with some predefined questions to ensure consistency

in data collection (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The reason being that during the formal conversation a series of questions were asked and topics that need to be covered regarding the implementation of bilingualism were touched upon. The interviewees were a group of parents, students and teachers, and since they had to answer open-ended questions, then the most appropriate instrument was the semi-structured interview because this instrument offers the opportunity to identify new ways of seeing and understanding the topic in question (Sajjad, S. 2016). Since it is difficult to concentrate during the interview and take notes, then a voice recorder was used to record the data and later analyze the information collected. The type of data to be collected is qualitative since it is not numerical and is descriptive. It is expected to know, from the parents and students, their subjective perception about the implementation of bilingualism in the school, and from the teachers their disposition, attitude and opinion towards working in a bilingual school (Appendix B).

Focus groups is another data collection technique that was used to carry out this research work. According to Krueger (2009), a focus group is a qualitative research technique in which a moderator facilitates a group discussion among selected participants for the purpose of obtaining detailed information on a specific topic. This method is commonly used in social sciences, marketing, and market research to gather data on participants' perceptions, opinions, and experiences. This was done with kindergarten teachers because this is the specific group (delimitation) in which the implementation of bilingualism is to be initiated. In this technique there is a moderator who stimulates the participants to reveal their opinions or attitudes, in this case, in their participation in the bilingualism project. By interacting with this group of five teachers and from the data collected, which are in the form of words and phrases, the aim is to find out "how" to implement bilingualism successfully and "why" it is necessary to make this

decision in the school. In the focus groups, the discussion took place in a relaxing atmosphere, so that the participants could express themselves without any personal inhibitions and since they are young teachers of a similar age, they were able to express themselves without the pressure of having someone older with more experience (Sajjad, S. 2016). The discussion was led by a moderator (the researcher) and the responses were collected through a voice recorder for later analysis. A guide was used to ask the questions. The objective of the focus group is to get to know the opinions, perceptions and feelings of the participants. The moderator's mission is also to facilitate, moderate, listen, observe and analyze. Focus groups are useful for delving deeper into a topic, providing a broader understanding of why the target group may behave or think in a particular way. With this technique, the type of data expected to be collected is qualitative as the information corresponds to perceptions, opinions, attitudes and feelings.

Another data collection tool used was questionnaires. A research questionnaire is a data collection instrument that consists of a series of structured questions administered to the participants of a study with the objective of obtaining specific and systematic information on a topic of interest. Questionnaires can have closed-ended questions (with predefined response options) or open-ended questions. In case studies, questionnaires are used as a tool to collect quantitative and/or qualitative data in a standardized way. Researchers design questionnaires to obtain detailed information on specific variables related to the case study. These instruments allow for efficient data collection and facilitate the analysis of patterns, trends, or relationships between variables (Creswell, 2018).

In this study, the participants of the questionnaires were parents, students, and teachers. The form with the questions was sent to them via the internet through Google forms and a deadline of two weeks was given to answer it.

### *Validation of Instruments*

Validation of instruments used in research is a crucial step to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected. In this study, rigorous instrument validation processes were carried out, including focus groups, interviews and surveys, with the aim of obtaining accurate and reliable information on the most appropriate strategies for the implementation of a bilingualism process at Colegio Buen Consejo in Barranquilla, Colombia. According to Boateng et al. (2018), validation of instruments refers to the process of evaluating and assuring the quality of data collection instruments used in an investigation. This process seeks to confirm that the instruments effectively measure the variables intended to be analyzed and that the data collected are reliable and valid.

The focus groups represented a fundamental tool for obtaining in-depth perceptions of the educational community on the implementation of bilingualism. Similarly, the individual interviews allowed us to explore in depth the perspectives of the key actors in the implementation of bilingualism. And the surveys, being a quantitative instrument, required specific validation to ensure the reliability of the data collected. To validate these instruments, a detailed description of the focus group guide was provided to two experts in linguistics and bilingual education. These experts evaluated the relevance of the questions, the clarity of the instructions, and the consistency with the research objectives. Adjustments were made to the focus group guide based on the experts' suggestions to ensure the appropriateness and relevance of the questions. Similarly, the interview guide was submitted for review by the same experts, who evaluated the coherence, relevance and clarity of the questions and also, the survey questionnaire was sent to the same experts in educational research and survey design, who



evaluated the clarity of the questions, face validity and coherence with the objectives of the study.

## **Data Analysis and Findings**

In this chapter the data obtained through the instruments are presented and analyzed through Atlas.ti. A framework of categories and subcategories is also presented and described, and it is presented how these relate to the theoretical framework which reveals the importance of them in the objective of this research study.

### **Data Management Procedures**

The methodological approach of this project is based on a mixed strategy combining quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a complete understanding of the research topic. Surveys, interview and focus groups were conducted to collect data from different perspectives. Atlas.ti was used to organize and systematize the data. In this study, several instruments were applied with the objective of collecting meaningful data that would shed light on the issue under research. The results obtained through these tools revealed interesting patterns and emerging trends in the study area. In particular, the surveys revealed a broad view of opinions on the research question at hand, while the focus groups and the interviews, for their part, allowed us to contextualize our findings within a broader theoretical framework in addition to providing a deeper insight into the experiences and perceptions of the participants. These data provide a solid foundation for our final conclusions and recommendations in this research study.

To conduct the surveys, a structured questionnaire was developed that included closed-ended questions and Likert scales. The questionnaire was designed to assess the perceptions of students, teachers and parents on how bilingual education should be implemented at Buen Consejo School. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure that the sample adequately represented the target population of the three groups. The sample included students of different grades and ages. In relation to the teachers group, all of them were used, 40 in total, and in

relation to the parents, a sample of different grades was used. The surveys were administered online through Google Forms. Email invitations were sent to potential participants, and a 2-week data collection period was established. The data collected were systematized using Microsoft Excel.

To complement the data, qualitative semi-structured interviews were subsequently conducted with students, teachers and parents. The interview questions focused on gaining a deeper understanding of individual experiences and perceptions of bilingual education. A convenience sample of participants was selected for the interviews. Regarding students, diversity was sought in terms of academic level. Therefore, a student from 1st to 5th grade was invited to be interviewed. As for the parents, one parent from preschool to 5th grade. And as for the group of teachers, all the selected teachers from preschool through 2nd were invited to be interviewed. The interviews were recorded and conducted face-to-face in a normal conversational setting rather than a formal exchange of questions and answers. Finally, the qualitative treatment of these data proceeded, keeping in mind their mostly descriptive nature, using Atlas.ti to systematize the answers given to each question after they had been transcribed. To analyze the qualitative data from the interviews, content analysis was used. Participants' responses were classified and categorized to identify emerging themes and patterns.

Finally, focus groups were organized with students, parents and teachers who had participated in the surveys and interviews. The purpose of these groups was to encourage discussion and interaction among the participants. I formed focus groups of 6-8 participants each, making sure to include a variety of perspectives. Each group met once. The sessions were held face-to-face at a school site and recorded for later transcription and analysis. Questions

focused on key themes identified in the surveys and interviews. As with the interviews, Atlas.ti was used to analyze the content of the focus group data and detect patterns and emerging themes.

In summary, the combination of surveys, interviews and focus groups provided an in-depth understanding of students', parents' and teachers' views on bilingual education and its impact on the school. This mixed methodology helped to enrich this research study and provide a more complete picture of the research topic.

### **Categories**

Within the framework of the research, a detailed analysis of the data collected through the instruments applied with the groups described above is presented in this study. In this context, this study focuses on the identification and classification of emerging categories from the data obtained, which allows for a deeper understanding of the challenges, best practices and trends in bilingual education. These categories are presented and analyzed to contribute to the body of knowledge in this field and provide meaningful recommendations for the improvement of bilingual education programs and policies. The following table presents the research question and the categories, for each category there are two subcategories.

**Table 3**

*Emerging categories and subcategories of the research*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>
What are the most appropriate strategies for	<b>Awareness of stakeholders (parents, teachers, students).</b>	<b>Requirements of the Ministry of Education for national bilingual schools.</b>	<b>Planning and Strategy</b>

<p>the implementation of bilingual education At Buen Consejo school in Barranquilla?</p>	<p>This category refers to the role played by each of the actors involved in the implementation of bilingual education.</p>	<p>This subcategory deals with the policies and requirements that the school must meet in order to implement bilingual education.</p>	<p>This subcategory is related to the analysis of needs and objectives.</p>
	<p><b>Perception of the different actors involved in the implementation of bilingual education.</b></p>	<p><b>Bilingual education model</b></p>	<p><b>Communication and Community Participation</b></p>
	<p>This category is related to the opinion about the methodologies, actions, and subjects that should be taught in English.</p>	<p>This subcategory is related to the selection of a bilingual education model.</p>	<p>This subcategory refers to community involvement in the transformation process.</p>
	<p><b>Level of English</b></p>	<p><b>Human Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Infrastructure and Technology</b></p>
	<p>This category refers to the current English level of teachers and students.</p>	<p>This subcategory is related to the recruitment, training</p>	<p>This subcategory is related to the adequacy of facilities</p>

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and evaluation of	and the acquisition of
bilingual staff	technology and
	bilingual resources.

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The first crucial category in the process of transforming an educational institution into a bilingual school is Stakeholder Awareness. This fundamental phase focuses on raising awareness and mobilizing key stakeholders, which include parents, teachers and students, about the importance and benefits of bilingual education. In the context of this research, awareness-raising becomes a critical factor as it drives the support and cooperation of these stakeholders, who play essential roles in the success of the transformation. When organizing this category, two subcategories emerged: Requirements of the Ministry of Education for national bilingual schools which deals with the policies and requirements that the school must meet in order to implement bilingual education and Planning and Strategy which is related to the analysis of needs and objectives.

In the context of bilingual education at school, the second category of analysis that emerged focuses on the Perception of the different agents involved in the implementation of bilingual education. This category of research stands as a crucial component in understanding the dynamics and challenges inherent in bilingual education. It encompasses the evaluation of the opinions, attitudes and perspectives of the different actors involved in the process of implementing bilingual education, including teachers, parents and students. In particular, it seeks to delve into the assessment that these agents make of the pedagogical methodologies to be used, the specific actions to be carried out in the bilingual classroom, and the subjects that should be taught in English. This category of analysis becomes a fundamental aspect in understanding how

the perception and acceptance of bilingual education can influence its success and sustainability, and ultimately, the quality of the educational experience for students. From this category, two subcategories emerged, the first is the model of bilingual education which deals with the selection of the most appropriate model for the context in which this school is located. The second subcategory is Communication and Community Participation which refers to the participation of the community in the transformation process.

The third category identified in this research refers to the current English proficiency level of teachers and students in the context of the school becoming bilingual. This category is of vital importance, since the success of the implementation of a bilingual program depends to a large extent on the English language proficiency of the key actors involved. In this sense, it is essential to assess the level of English proficiency of both teachers and students, as this will directly impact the quality of teaching and learning in the new educational model. The analysis of this category allows identifying language training needs, designing effective training strategies and ensuring that participants are prepared for a successful transition to a bilingual environment in the educational institution. From this category, two subcategories emerged. The first is Human Resources which is related to the recruitment, training and evaluation of bilingual staff. The second is Infrastructure and Technology which refers to the adequacy of school facilities and the acquisition of bilingual technology and resources.

### *Discussion of the Categories*

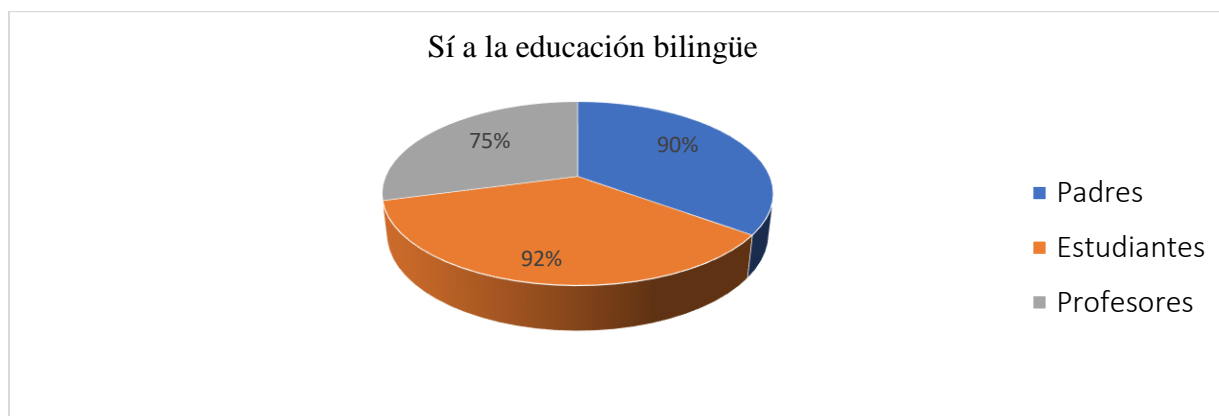
**Awareness of Stakeholders (Parents, Teachers, Students).** The first category discussed in this research on the transformation of the school into a bilingual school is Stakeholder Awareness. In this context, stakeholders include parents, teachers and students, who play a key role in this process. Raising awareness among parents, students and teachers plays a key role in the process of converting a school into a bilingual school. This is because the successful implementation of a bilingual program depends largely on the collaboration and commitment of all stakeholders.

Parents need to understand the academic and cognitive benefits of bilingual education, as well as be informed about the program and their participation in it. Students need to be motivated and willing to learn in two languages, while teachers need to be trained and committed to bilingual teaching. Adequate awareness and effective communication can help mitigate concerns and resistance, promoting an environment conducive to the success of the bilingual program. As Baker states, the active participation of all stakeholders is essential to ensure quality bilingual education (Baker, 2011). All of these stakeholders unanimously agree that the school should become bilingual for a number of shared reasons. Research has revealed a broad consensus among parents, students and teachers regarding the need to convert the school into a bilingual center. According to the surveys conducted, an impressive 90% of parents expressed their support for this initiative, highlighting the importance of providing their children with the opportunity to acquire skills in two languages. In turn, 92% of the students were enthusiastic about the idea. In addition, a solid 75% of teachers supported the proposal. These data support the feasibility and relevance of making the school bilingual.



**Figure 2**

*Percentage of Population in Agreement with Bilingual Education*



First, there is a growing recognition of the importance of proficiency in more than one language in an increasingly globalized world. Parents, for example, value the opportunity to provide their children with an education that will enable them to compete effectively in a diverse and multicultural job market as the following excerpt shows:

*“¡Claro, profe! Los padres, sabes, hoy en día están re pensando mucho la educación de sus peques. Quieren darles la chance de aprender en un ambiente diverso y multicultural para que, cuando crezcan, puedan darle pelea en ese mercado laboral que está a todo ritmo. Como dicen por ahí, cuanto más abierta sea la mente de tus hijos, mejor preparados estarán para el futuro. ¡Y eso es lo que muchos padres buscan!” (Excerpt from Focus Group # 1, Participant 5: parent)*

*[“Of course, teacher! Parents, you know, nowadays are thinking a lot about their children's education. They want to give them the chance to learn in a diverse and multicultural environment so that, when they grow up, they will be able to fight in that job market that is going at full speed. As they say, the more open-minded your children are, the better prepared they will*

*be for the future. And that's what many parents are looking for!”] (Excerpt from Focus Group # 1, Participant 5: parent)*

On the other hand, teachers, aware of the need to adapt to contemporary educational trends, support the idea of a bilingual environment that fosters the holistic development of students as the following excerpt express:

*“Como van las cosas, debemos ser conscientes de la necesidad de adaptarse a las tendencias educativas, debemos apoyar la idea de un entorno bilingüe que fomente el desarrollo integral de los alumnos. Siento que es esencial evolucionar con los tiempos y dar a nuestros estudiantes las herramientas necesarias para tener éxito en un mundo cada vez más globalizado”. (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 3: teacher)*

*[“The way things are going, we must be aware of the need to adapt to educational trends, we must support the idea of a bilingual environment that fosters the integral development of students. I feel it is essential to evolve with the times and give our students the tools they need to succeed in an increasingly globalized world”.] (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 3: teacher)*

Students themselves are also in favor of this transformation, as they recognize that learning a second language will bring them advantages throughout their lives, from academic opportunities to better intercultural understanding as the following excerpt express:

*“Les cuento que estoy súper a favor de que el colegio se vuelva bilingüe. ¡No saben cuántas ventajas nos trae aprender un segundo idioma! En serio, esto es un superbueno. Primero, las oportunidades académicas se multiplican, y no solo en el cole, sino también en la universidad. Además, cuando hablamos dos idiomas, estamos más preparados para enfrentar un mundo cada vez más globalizado. No se trata solo de comunicarnos, ¡es entender otras culturas*

*de verdad! Y eso, es un viaje que vale la pena”. (Excerpt from Focus Group # 3, Participant 6: student)*

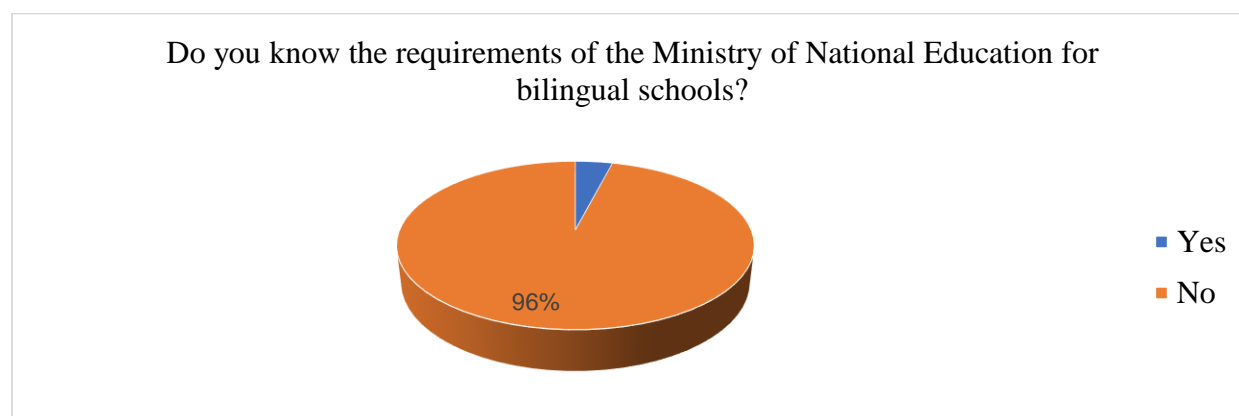
*[“I am very much in favor of the school becoming bilingual. You don't know how many advantages it brings us to learn a second language! Seriously, this is a super good thing. First, academic opportunities multiply, and not only in school, but also in college. Also, when we speak two languages, we are better prepared to face an increasingly globalized world. It's not just about communicating, it's about really understanding other cultures! And that is a worthwhile journey”.] (Excerpt from Focus Group # 3, Participant 6: student)*

In summary, the awareness of all stakeholders is based on the shared belief that the transformation of the school into a bilingual school is a necessary and beneficial development for the entire educational community. The transformation of a school into a bilingual school represents a significant step in the evolution of education, and there are sound reasons to consider this change. First, bilingualism has been widely demonstrated as an effective vehicle for the acquisition of cognitive skills, such as improved memory and critical thinking, as well as for fostering cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding (Baker, 2011). Moreover, in an increasingly globalized world, the ability to communicate in multiple languages is a valuable asset both in the labor market and in everyday life (Smith, 2019). Therefore, the transition to a bilingual educational model is justified not only in pedagogical terms, but also in the context of preparing students for an interconnected and multicultural world.

**Requirements of the Ministry of Education for National Bilingual Schools.** Within the context of transforming a school into a bilingual school, the analysis of the data yielded the subcategory of "Ministry of Education requirements for national bilingual schools". In this sense, it is relevant to highlight that, to a large extent, the educational community involved in this process is unaware of the requirements established by the Ministry of Education as shown in the following graph and excerpt:

**Figure 3**

*Percentage of Population Unaware of the Ministry of Education's Requirements for Bilingual Education.*



*“Es fundamental que todos tengamos claridad acerca de los requisitos que el Ministerio de Educación establece para las escuelas bilingües, ya que esto no solo garantiza la calidad de la educación que ofrecemos, sino también nuestra legalidad como institución”. (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 2: teacher)*

*[“It is essential that we all have clarity about the requirements that the Ministry of Education establishes for bilingual schools, as this not only guarantees the quality of the education we offer, but also our legality as an institution”.] (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 2: teacher)*

These requirements cover key issues such as bilingual teacher training and certification, bilingual curriculum standards, bilingual program assessment and accreditation, and the infrastructure needed to support dual-language instruction. Adherence to these guidelines is essential to ensure that the transition to a bilingual school meets national standards for educational quality. Reviewing the requirements of the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, 2023), the Buen Consejo school must have the following characteristics to become a national bilingual school:

1. The institution does not have close ties with official organizations of a foreign country.
2. The directors are predominantly nationals.
3. The teachers are nationals
4. No direct financial support or secondment of foreign teachers to work in the school.
5. Intensity of contact with the foreign language in the curriculum is more than 50%.
6. Two or more languages are used as teaching-learning media for different curricular areas.
7. Materials and texts can be national or from abroad.
8. Promote an intercultural orientation, that is, a critical comparative analysis of aspects of one's own culture and aspects of foreign cultures.
9. Requires its graduates to pass an international foreign language exam in addition to passing the Colombian curriculum.

In the focus groups conducted, it was found that the school should implement the aspects described in characteristics 5,6,7,8 and 9. Currently the school does not have a contact intensity

of more than 50% of English in the curriculum, only Spanish is used as a language to teach all subjects except English and French, the materials and texts are only national, only a Colombian national culture is promoted, and the graduates only pass the ICFES state exam. This is evidence that the directors must make many changes in their curriculum in order to adapt to the requirements of the Ministry of Education and thus be approved as a national bilingual school.

**Planning and Strategy.** Within the broad spectrum of transforming a school into a bilingual school, the subcategory of "Planning and Strategy" emerges as a critical component that encompasses the careful planning and formulation of strategies fundamental to making this transition successful. One subcategory identified is needs and objectives analysis, a process that helps identify key issues to be addressed on the road to bilingualism. Among the main needs identified, three crucial aspects stand out: first, the need for qualified personnel, including teachers competent in bilingual teaching, as well as support professionals capable of guiding the educational community through this transformation as expressed in the following excerpt:

*“Creo que es fundamental contar con personal cualificado en el ámbito de la educación bilingüe. La enseñanza de dos idiomas simultáneamente es un desafío complejo que requiere no solo competencia lingüística, sino también una comprensión profunda de los principios pedagógicos y de cómo los estudiantes aprenden mejor. Es crucial que los maestros estén bien preparados para afrontar este desafío”.* (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 5: teacher)

*[“I believe it is essential to have qualified personnel in the field of bilingual education. Teaching two languages simultaneously is a complex challenge that requires not only linguistic competence, but also a deep understanding of pedagogical principles and how students learn best. It is crucial that teachers are well prepared to meet this challenge”.]* (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 5: teacher)

This interviewee emphasizes a critical point in bilingual education: the importance of having qualified personnel. In the study by Virginia P. Collier and Wayne P. Thomas (2013), it is emphasized that bilingual education teachers must possess a unique combination of skills and knowledge. This includes a deep understanding of language acquisition theories, as well as the ability to adapt pedagogical strategies to meet the individual needs of dual language learners.

Secondly, the need to develop a strong and coherent bilingual curriculum that allows students to become proficient in two languages without compromising their academic education, as the following excerpt expresses:

*“Si el colegio va a transformarse en bilingüe, entonces es necesario crear un currículo bilingüe, y que este no termine afectando el nivel académico de los estudiantes. No vaya a ocurrir que por aumentar el nivel de inglés el nivel académico disminuya. Este colegio siempre se ha caracterizado por tener un buen nivel académico”.* (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 7: teacher)

*[“If the school is going to become bilingual, then it is necessary to create a bilingual curriculum, and that this does not end up affecting the academic level of the students. It is not going to happen that by increasing the level of English the academic level decreases. This school has always been known for having a good academic level”.]* (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 7: teacher)

In support with what Garcia (2017) mentions, he expresses that there is no need to be afraid of a bilingual curriculum since students who follow a bilingual curriculum not only acquire skills in two languages, but also improve their cognition and problem-solving skills. In addition, bilingual curriculum can be an effective tool to promote inclusion and diversity in

classrooms by allowing students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to benefit from the same curriculum.

And third, there is a need to ensure access to appropriate resources and materials to support the bilingual teaching process as the following excerpt expresses:

*“En mi opinión, la necesidad más urgente en el ámbito de la educación bilingüe es garantizar el acceso a recursos y materiales apropiados. La educación bilingüe es una herramienta esencial para empoderar a nuestros hijos y para preservar y enriquecer. Pero, para que esta educación sea efectiva, es importante contar con recursos didácticos y materiales pedagógicos apropiados que se adapten a las necesidades de los estudiantes”. (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 1: teacher)*

*[“In my opinion, the most urgent need in the field of bilingual education is to ensure access to appropriate resources and materials. Bilingual education is an essential tool to empower our children and to preserve and enrich. But, for this education to be effective, it is important to have appropriate teaching resources and pedagogical materials that are adapted to the needs of the students”.] (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 1: teacher)*

In parallel, the objectives that emerge in this subcategory focus on achieving proficiency in two languages in parallel as shown in the following excerpt:

*“Creo firmemente que la educación bilingüe en los colegios es una herramienta poderosa para preparar a los estudiantes para un mundo cada vez más globalizado. Pero, es esencial recordar que el español, como lengua materna y parte integral de nuestra identidad, no debe ir en detrimento por mejorar en el inglés. La educación bilingüe debería ser una oportunidad para fortalecer ambas lenguas y enriquecer la formación de nuestros estudiantes, no para relegar una en favor de la otra”. (Excerpt from Focus Group # 1, Participant 8: parent)*



*[“I firmly believe that bilingual education in schools is a powerful tool to prepare students for an increasingly globalized world. But, it is essential to remember that Spanish, as a native language and an integral part of our identity, should not be detrimentally affected by improving in English. Bilingual education should be an opportunity to strengthen both languages and enrich the formation of our students, not to relegate one in favor of the other”.]*  
*(Excerpt from Focus Group # 1, Participant 7: parent)*

This interview excerpt highlights the importance of balancing the promotion of bilingualism with respect and appreciation for the first language, in this case, Spanish. This is essential in the context of bilingual education, as it is not only about acquiring skills in a second language, but also about maintaining and cultivating the cultural and linguistic identity of the students as supported by García, Ofelia, and Li Wei (2017) who argue that the balance between languages is fundamental for the success of this educational approach. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of respecting and strengthening students' mother tongue in the process of second language acquisition.

Finally, another objective found is the promotion of effective communication, not only in languages, but also in the context of a bilingual education that fosters interaction and understanding, as shown in the following excerpt from an interviewee:

*“Pienso que además de lograr la fluidez en dos idiomas, otro objetivo importante es la promoción de la comunicación efectiva. No se trata simplemente de enseñar dos lenguas de manera aislada; más bien, se trata de fomentar la interacción y la comprensión cultural. Esto implica que los estudiantes no solo aprendan a hablar y escribir en dos idiomas, sino que también desarrollen la habilidad de comunicarse de manera efectiva en el colegio y ojalá que*

*también en casa. Creo que en este caso los papás tienen una responsabilidad importante también”. (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 1: teacher)*

*[“I think that in addition to achieving fluency in two languages, another important objective is the promotion of effective communication. It is not simply about teaching two languages in isolation; rather, it is about fostering interaction and cultural understanding. This implies that students not only learn to speak and write in two languages, but also develop the ability to communicate effectively at school and hopefully at home. I think parents have an important responsibility here as well”.] (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 1: teacher)*

Smith (2020) emphasizes that effective communication is not limited to languages alone. It also extends to the context of a bilingual education that fosters cultural interaction and understanding. It is crucial that students not only acquire language skills, but also develop the ability to communicate authentically and meaningfully in an increasingly globalized world.

In sum, the subcategory of "Planning and Strategy" stands as an essential pillar in the transformation of a school into a bilingual school, providing the structure and vision necessary to address the fundamental needs and achieve the preeminent goals at this school.

**Perception of the Different Actors Involved in the Implementation of Bilingual Education.** Including the perceptions of parents, students, and teachers when implementing bilingual education is critical for several reasons. These perceptions provide valuable information that can improve the quality and effectiveness of the bilingual education program, while promoting greater stakeholder participation and engagement.

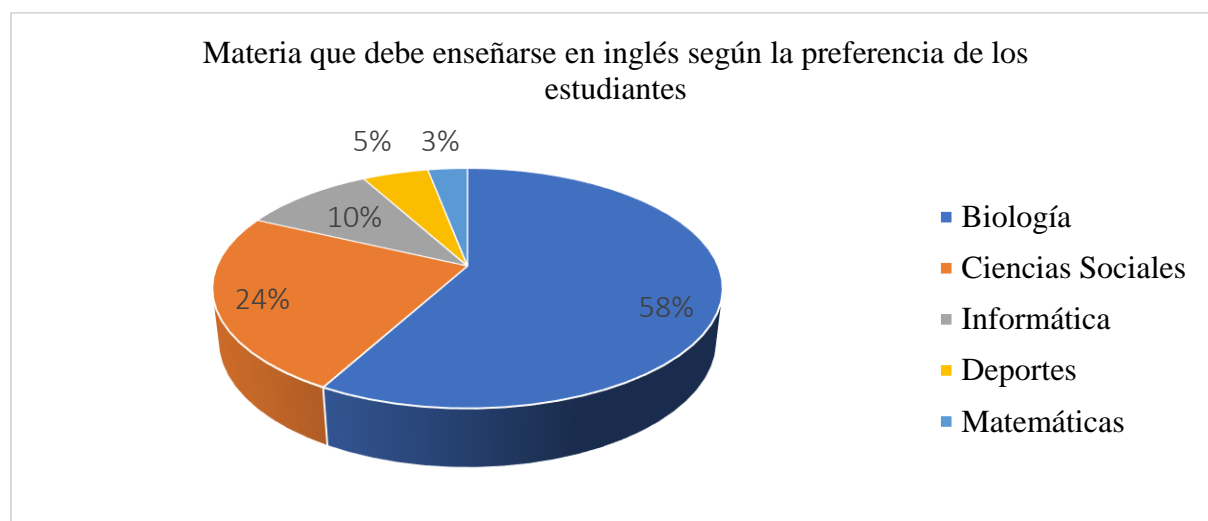
Their insights can help adapt the bilingual program to the specific needs and expectations of each group. This is important because different groups may have different goals and concerns regarding bilingual education. In addition, involving stakeholders in the bilingual educational

process fosters collaboration and communication between parents, students and teachers. This can strengthen the relationship between the school and the community, which in turn can have a positive impact on the performance and satisfaction of all involved (Télez, K. 2007)

This category is related to the opinion about the methodologies, actions and subjects that should be taught in English. The preferences regarding the subjects they would like to be taught in English are known. The results reveal a clear trend in terms of students' favorite subjects.

#### Figure 4

*\* Percentage of Subjects to be Taught in English According to Students*



First, it is noteworthy that the majority of students expressed a preference for having Biology classes in English, with 58% of respondents selecting this subject as their top choice. This finding suggests a strong student interest in learning about natural sciences in a bilingual environment.

In second place, Social Sciences was the second preference, with 24% of respondents indicating that they would like to study this subject in English. This demonstrates a substantial interest in understanding concepts related to society and history in a bilingual context.

In third place, Computer Science obtained a 10% preference. Students seem to value the opportunity to acquire skills in the field of technology in a bilingual environment.

In fourth place, Sports received a 5% preference, suggesting that some students see the benefit of improving their English while participating in physical activities.

Finally, Mathematics was the least preferred to be taught in English, with only 3% of respondents selecting it as their top choice. This may indicate that students view mathematics as a subject that requires a more traditional approach or that learning in their native language is preferred.

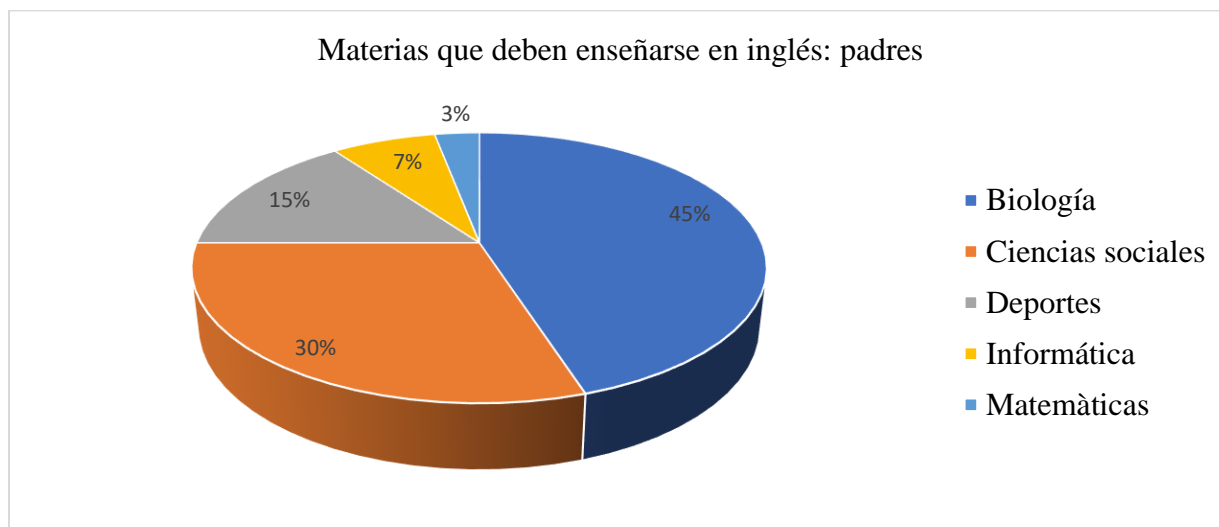
These results provide valuable information that contributes to research on bilingual education at this school. Patterns of student preference regarding the subjects they wish to learn in English can help inform decisions about bilingual program implementation and resource allocation. According to Williams and Fernandez (2018), when students are allowed to participate in choosing the subjects they wish to study in English, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their learning. This intrinsic motivation can lead to better academic performance and more active participation in the bilingual program. In addition, by observing student preferences, schools can allocate resources more efficiently, focusing on the areas of greatest interest and demand. This can help optimize resource utilization and ensure a more effective bilingual program. And when students are allowed to influence the subjects in which they want to participate in English, they are more likely to stay in the bilingual program longer, which can increase the continuity and success of the program.

The results of the survey of parents in the school community regarding the subjects they prefer to be taught in English are very revealing and provide a clear direction for the school's

transformation into a bilingual school. The data collected reflects parents' preferences in terms of priority subjects to be taught in English as shown in the following chart:

**Figure 5**

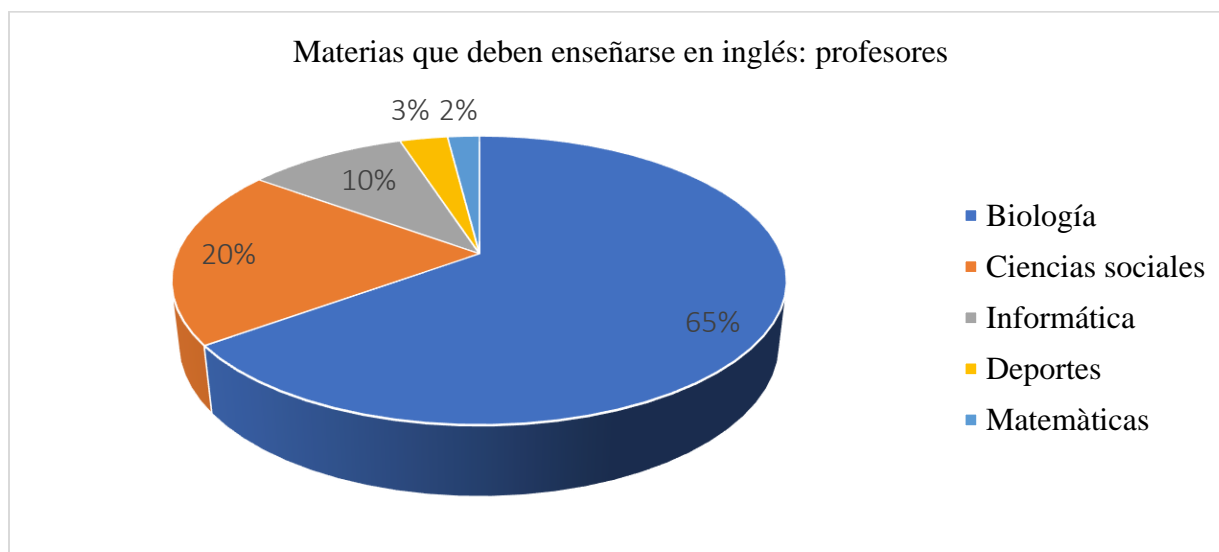
*Percentage of Subjects to be Taught in English According to Parents*



Regarding the teachers, the survey yielded the results shown in the following graph:

**Figure 6**

*Percentage of Subjects to be Taught in English According to Teachers*



The results of these surveys have yielded valuable information. In terms of preferences for subjects to be taught in English, there is a clear pattern. Both biology and social sciences are the most preferred subjects to be taught in English, according to the majority of respondents. This may be due to the nature of these subjects, which often involve scientific terminology and concepts that are common internationally. Teaching these subjects in English could help students acquire a technical vocabulary in a global context.

On the other hand, mathematics was identified as the least preferred subject to be taught in English. This may be due to the perception that mathematics is a highly abstract field and that language does not significantly influence the understanding of mathematical concepts.

In the focus group, notable patterns emerged in students' preferences for the subjects they prefer to learn in English. In particular, Biology and Social Studies are the most prominent subjects in this regard as reflected in the following excerpt:

*"¡Ah, definitivamente preferiría aprender Biología y Sociales en inglés en lugar de Matemáticas! Y te diré por qué. En Biología y Sociales, creo que podré entender mejor los conceptos cuando se explican en inglés. En biología podría aprender muchas palabras nuevas sobre ciencias. Además, en Sociales, es genial aprender sobre la historia y la cultura de otros países mientras también mejoramos nuestras habilidades en inglés. Pero las Matemáticas son un lenguaje universal, y las fórmulas y los números son los mismos en cualquier idioma. En realidad, me resulta más fácil concentrarme en los conceptos matemáticos cuando se explican en mi lengua materna. No quiero cometer errores confundiendo los conceptos, si ya es difícil en español, ¡ahora imagínate en inglés. Así que, sí, Biología y Sociales en inglés sería una elección genial, pero preferiría mantener las Matemáticas en mi idioma para asegurarme de que*

*realmente las entiendo. ¡Eso sería lo mejor para mí!". (Excerpt from Focus Group # 3, Participant 5: student)*

*["Ah, I would definitely prefer to learn Biology and Social Studies in English instead of Math! And I'll tell you why. In Biology and Social, I think I will be able to understand the concepts better when they are explained in English. In Biology, I could learn a lot of new words about science. Also, in Social Studies, it's great to learn about the history and culture of other countries while also improving our English skills. But Math is a universal language, and the formulas and numbers are the same in any language. I actually find it easier to concentrate on math concepts when they are explained in my native language. I don't want to make mistakes by confusing the concepts, if it's already difficult in Spanish, now imagine in English! So, yes, Biology and Social Studies in English would be a great choice, but I would prefer to keep Math in my language to make sure I really understand it. That would be the best for me!"] (Excerpt from Focus Group # 3, Participant 5: student)*

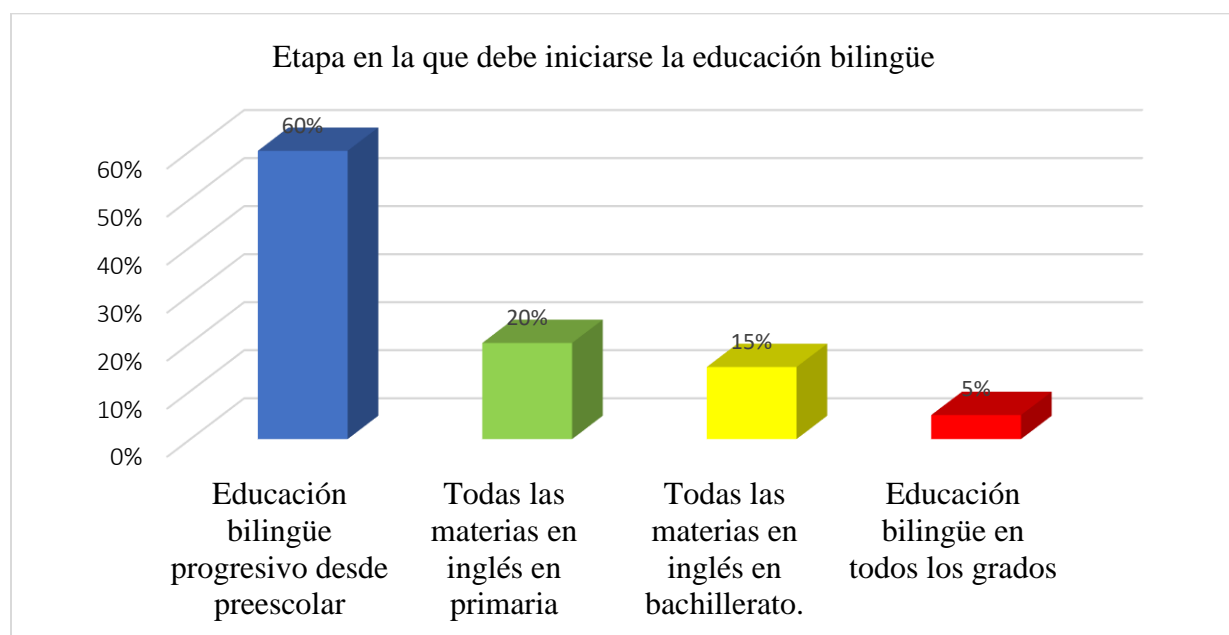
In summary, the focus groups suggest that students prefer to learn Biology and Social Sciences in English. These preferences are based on the wide availability of resources in English, exposure to specialized terminology, and the global perspective that these subjects provide. These findings may be useful for educational planners and teachers designing bilingual programs, as they highlight the importance of adapting content and teaching strategies accordingly. Starting with Natural Sciences and Social Sciences in English can establish a solid foundation for students to develop their language skills. These subjects tend to be more contextual and practical, allowing students to learn vocabulary and concepts related to everyday life situations. In addition, Natural and Social Sciences often involve the application of concepts in real-world situations. By teaching these subjects in English, students can acquire

communicative and conceptual skills that they can apply to everyday problems and scenarios (Garcia, O. 2009).

With regard to the grades in which it should be initiated, the results of the parent and teacher survey provide valuable insights into the implementation of bilingual education in the school setting. The findings reflect a variety of opinions and preferences regarding the grades in which bilingual education should be introduced. Here are the key results along with the corresponding percentages:

**Figure 7**

*Percentages of Stages at which Bilingual Education Should be Initiated.*



Bilingual education starting in preschool. An impressive 60% of respondents supported the idea that bilingual education should start as early as preschool and progress gradually. This high percentage suggests strong support for the early introduction of bilingualism into the school curriculum. This suggests a strong belief in the importance of introducing students from an early age into a bilingual environment, where they can develop their second language skills naturally.



Regarding the option of all subjects in English in primary school, 20% of the participants stated that all subjects should be taught in English during the primary school stage, indicating a significant interest in an early immersion in the language.

In the case of all subjects in English in high school. Fifteen percent of respondents felt that bilingual education should be further intensified by extending it to all subjects during the baccalaureate stage. This finding suggests that the majority of participants believe that bilingual education should be extended throughout secondary education to ensure an advanced level of proficiency in the second language.

Bilingual education in all grades. Five percent of the participants suggest that bilingual education should be implemented in all school grades, which reinforces the idea that this educational modality should not be limited to certain school levels, but should be present throughout the entire academic trajectory.

These results reveal a clear consensus on the importance of starting bilingual education at an early age, with an overwhelming majority favoring this option. These results suggest that there is strong support in the parent-teacher community for early and widespread implementation of bilingual education in school. They also reflect some interest in expanding bilingual instruction throughout schooling. These findings are critical to understanding the parent and teacher perspective on the implementation of bilingual education in school and will provide a solid foundation for the development of future educational policies and school practices.

These findings are supported by leading authors. Progressive bilingual education beginning in preschool is based on several pedagogical principles supported by research in the field of language acquisition and bilingual pedagogy. One of the key arguments for this approach is the idea that early exposure to a second language facilitates more effective learning and greater

proficiency over time. In addition, bilingual education from preschool can have cognitive benefits, such as the development of problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and greater cognitive flexibility. Moreover, second language acquisition is considered to be most effective at early ages, as children are especially receptive to learning new languages during their first years of life. This is known as the "critical window" for language acquisition. There is a correlation between the age of onset of second language acquisition and the level of proficiency achieved. In summary, progressive bilingual education starting in preschool is based on the idea that children are more receptive to language learning at an early age, which provides them with a solid foundation for the mastery of two or more languages (Johnson and Newport, 1989; Bialystok, 2011 et al)

**Communication and Community Participation.** This subcategory refers to community participation in the transformation process. In the process of transforming this school into a bilingual school, it is evident that parents, students and teachers have expressed certain concerns and a degree of inconformity with respect to the information that has been provided so far. Some of the common concerns identified in the surveys and focus groups include:

Language proficiency level: Some students are concerned about their ability to learn and communicate in a second language, especially if they have no previous experience in the language. They also fear that this transition will negatively affect their academic performance. The following excerpt states:

*“Te soy sincera, estoy un poco nerviosa por este rollo de aprender en otro idioma en el colegio. Nunca antes me ha pasado, y no tengo ni idea de cómo voy a lidiar con eso. Me preocupa que no pueda entender ni una palabra al principio y que mi comunicación sea como un cangrejo en patineta. Además, tengo miedo de que esto golpee duro en mis calificaciones.*

*Pero bueno, estoy decidida a hacer lo que sea necesario para superar este desafío y que me vaya bien”. (Excerpt from Interview # 3, Participant 5: student)*

*[ “I’ll be honest, I’m a little nervous about this whole learning-in-another-language thing at school. It’s never happened to me before, and I have no idea how I’m going to deal with it. I’m worried that I won’t be able to understand a word at first and that my communication will be like a crab on a skateboard. Plus, I’m afraid this will hit my grades hard. But hey, I’m determined to do whatever it takes to overcome this challenge and do well”. ] (Excerpt from Interview # 3, Participant 5: student)*

Academic overload: Some students and teachers are concerned about possible work overload due to the addition of a new language to the curriculum. This could lead to stress and burnout. The following excerpt states:

*“Bueno, sí, es emocionante que nuestro colegio quiera ser bilingüe, ¡pero no voy a mentirte, tengo algunas preocupaciones! Incorporar una nueva lengua al plan de estudios suena chévere, pero también puede ser un desafío. Estoy seguro de que nuestros estudiantes serán capaces de manejarlo, pero la sobrecarga de trabajo es una real preocupación. No quiero ver a mis alumnos ni a mis colegas estresados y agotados. Tenemos que encontrar un equilibrio sin agobiarnos. ¡Es un camino que merece la pena, pero también debemos cuidar de nuestra salud mental!” (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 2: teacher)*

*[ “Well, yes, it’s exciting that our school wants to be bilingual, but I’m not going to lie to you, I have some concerns! Incorporating a new language into the curriculum sounds cool, but it can also be a challenge. I’m sure our students will be able to handle it, but the work overload is a real concern. I don’t want to see my students or my colleagues stressed and exhausted. We*

*have to find a balance without getting overwhelmed - it's a worthwhile journey, but we also have to take care of our mental health!"*] (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 2: teacher)

Adaptation challenges: Some students are concerned about their ability to adapt to a bilingual learning environment, especially if this involves changes in teaching methodology and classroom dynamics.

*"La verdad es que estoy emocionada por la idea de que mi colegio se convierta en bilingüe, ¡pero también me da un poco de nervios! No sé si podré adaptarme a un salón de clases donde se habla otro idioma y si van a cambiar la forma en que enseñan. Supongo que es normal sentirse así, pero estoy dispuesta a darle una oportunidad. ¡Quién sabe, tal vez resulta que soy un genio en los idiomas y ni yo lo sabía!"* (Excerpt from Focus Group # 3, Participant 3: student)

*["The truth is that I'm excited about the idea of my school becoming bilingual, but I'm also a little nervous! I don't know if I will be able to adapt to a classroom where another language is spoken and if they are going to change the way they teach. I guess it's normal to feel that way, but I'm willing to give it a chance - who knows, maybe it turns out I'm a genius at languages and I didn't even know it!"]* (Excerpt from Focus Group # 3, Participant 3: student)

Curriculum changes: The introduction of a new bilingual program may involve changes to the school curriculum. Some teachers are concerned about how these changes will affect their classes and curricula as the following excerpt states:

*"Algunos profesores se muestran preocupados por el cambio hacia un currículo bilingüe y cómo estos cambios afectarán sus clases y planes de estudio. Estuve hablando con una compañera y me expresó su inquietud por la transición hacia un enfoque bilingüe en la educación. Comentó que, aunque valora la importancia de la enseñanza de dos idiomas, teme*

*que esta transición pueda afectar negativamente la profundidad de los contenidos que puede cubrir en sus clases. Además, otros docentes han planteado preocupaciones similares sobre cómo equilibrar la enseñanza bilingüe con la entrega efectiva del contenido académico en un entorno ya desafiante”. (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 3: teacher)*

*[ “ Some teachers are concerned about the shift to a bilingual curriculum and how these changes will affect their classes and curricula. I was talking with a colleague and she expressed concern about the transition to a bilingual approach to education. She commented that while she values the importance of dual language instruction, she fears that this transition may negatively affect the depth of content she can cover in her classes. In addition, other teachers have raised similar concerns about how to balance bilingual teaching with effective delivery of academic content in an already challenging environment”. ] (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 3: teacher)*

Teaching challenges: Some teachers are concerned about their ability to teach effectively in a bilingual environment and the need to develop new pedagogical strategies as the following excerpt shows:

*“¡Bueno, mira, estoy emocionado, pero también un poco nervioso por la transición hacia un colegio bilingüe! Siempre he amado enseñar, pero ahora tengo que pensar en cómo hacerlo de manera efectiva en dos idiomas”. (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 6: teacher)*

*[“ Well, okay, look, I'm excited, but also a little nervous about the transition to a bilingual school! I've always loved teaching, but now I have to figure out how to do it effectively in two languages”.] (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 6: teacher)*

Insufficient resources: Some teachers and parents are concerned about the availability of resources, materials, and training needed to successfully implement a bilingual program. The following excerpt states:

*“¡Pues, mira, la verdad es que estoy emocionado con la idea de convertir el colegio en bilingüe, pero no te voy a mentir, también me preocupa un poco! Queremos que esto sea un éxito, pero se necesitan los recursos, los materiales y la formación adecuada para que nuestros hijos realmente saquen provecho de esto. No queremos que sea solo una etiqueta en el nombre del colegio, sino una experiencia enriquecedora para todos”. (Excerpt from Focus Group # 1, Participant 8: parent)*

*[“ Well, you know, the truth is that I'm excited about the idea of making the school bilingual, but I'm not going to lie, I'm also a little worried! We want this to be a success, but it takes the right resources, materials and training for our children to really take advantage of this. We don't want it to be just a label on the school's name, but an enriching experience for everyone”.]* (Excerpt from Focus Group # 1, Participant 8: parent)

Equity and access: There are concerns about whether all students will have equal opportunities in the new bilingual model, especially if some students face additional challenges due to language barriers. The following excerpt states:

*“¡Te cuento que ando algo inquieto porque, con la movida de convertir el colegio en bilingüe, me preocupa si todos los niños van a estar en igualdad de condiciones, ¿sabes? Algunos de los peques podrían tener un poco más de lucha con el inglés, y no quiero que eso los deje en desventaja. Pero bueno, espero que la dirección esté pensando en cómo darles una mano a esos chicos y que todos tengan las mismas oportunidades”. (Excerpt from Focus Group # 1, Participant 2: parent)*

*[“I tell you that I am a bit worried because, with the move to make the school bilingual, I am worried about whether all the children are going to be on an equal footing, you know? Some of the little ones might struggle a bit more with English, and I don't want that to put them at a disadvantage. But well, I hope that the management is thinking about how to give those kids a hand up and that they all have the same opportunities”.]* (Excerpt from Focus Group # 1, Participant 2: parent)

Assessment and standards: Concerns about how students' progress will be assessed in a bilingual environment and whether the same academic standards will be maintained. This excerpt states:

*“Bueno, la verdad es que veo con buenos ojos lo del bilingüismo, pero al mismo tiempo, tengo algunas preocupaciones. Me preocupa cómo vamos a evaluar el progreso de los alumnos en este nuevo sistema. ¡Imagina todo lo que cambia cuando tienes que enseñar en dos idiomas! Y, claro, también me intriga si seremos capaces de mantener los mismos niveles académicos que teníamos antes”.* (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 2: teacher)

*[ “Well, the truth is that I look favorably on bilingualism, but at the same time, I have some concerns. I'm concerned about how we're going to evaluate students' progress in this new system - imagine how much it changes when you have to teach in two languages! And, of course, I'm also intrigued about whether we'll be able to maintain the same academic standards we had before”. ]* (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 2: teacher)

It is important to address these concerns effectively and provide support to students, teachers, and parents during the transition process to a bilingual school. Open communication, training, and careful planning are key to minimizing challenges and maximizing the success of this type of educational transformation (Baker, 2007).

The lack of clarity regarding the strategies and concrete steps that will be taken to carry out this transformation has generated uncertainty in the school community. Parents, in particular, have expressed their desire to be more involved in the process and to have specific details about how the quality of education in both languages will be guaranteed, as well as the impact this transition will have on their children. Similarly, teachers are somewhat uncertain about the pedagogical and logistical implications of this change, which has generated some anxiety among the faculty. The following excerpt is evidence of the above:

*“Bueno, sí, estoy emocionado por la idea de transformar nuestro colegio en un lugar bilingüe, pero tengo que admitir que estoy un poco inconforme con la información que se nos ha proporcionado hasta el momento. Quiero decir, es una iniciativa importante y afectará a todos nosotros: estudiantes, padres y profesores. Pero hasta ahora, siento que no hemos recibido suficientes detalles sobre cómo se llevará a cabo este proceso, cuáles serán las implicaciones para los profesores actuales, o cómo se garantizará que los estudiantes reciban una educación de alta calidad en ambos idiomas. Espero que en las próximas etapas de esta transformación, podamos obtener respuestas más claras y participar activamente en el proceso para que podamos hacer de esta idea una realidad exitosa para todos”. (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 3: teacher)*

*[“ Well, yes, I'm excited about the idea of transforming our school into a bilingual place, but I have to admit that I'm a little unhappy with the information we've been given so far. I mean, it's an important initiative and it will affect all of us: students, parents and teachers. But so far, I feel like we haven't received enough details on how this process will be carried out, what the implications will be for current teachers, or how it will ensure that students receive a high quality education in both languages. I hope that in the next stages of this transformation, we can*



*get clearer answers and actively participate in the process so that we can make this idea a successful reality for everyone". ] (Excerpt from Focus Group # 2, Participant 3: teacher)*

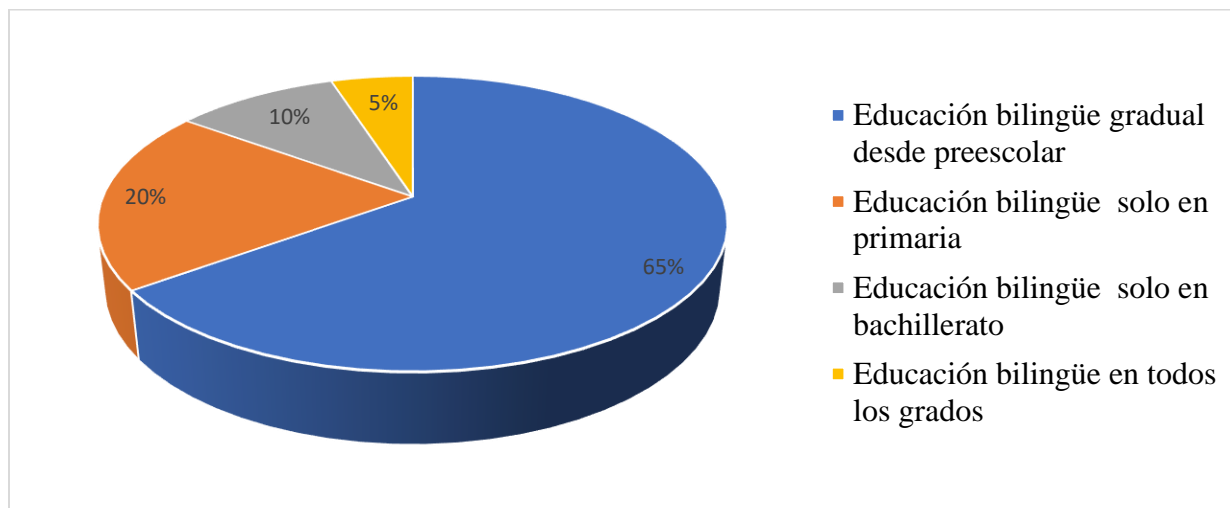
In this context, it is essential to address these concerns effectively, involving all stakeholders in the decision-making process and providing transparent and detailed information to achieve a successful transition to bilingualism. The transformation of an educational institution into a bilingual school is a process that goes beyond the implementation of a simple academic program. It is essential to recognize that the success of this transition depends to a large extent on the active participation and commitment of the entire educational community, including students, teachers, parents and school administration. Bilingual education involves not only the acquisition of language skills, but also the development of intercultural awareness that promotes understanding and respect for cultural differences. Involving the community in this process ensures an environment conducive to learning, the consolidation of a bilingual identity and the formation of global citizens aware of their role in an increasingly interconnected world (Byram, M 2008).

**Bilingual Education Model.** The transformation of a school to a bilingual approach is a process that must be carefully planned and executed, especially when considering several critical factors that influence its success. First, the low scores obtained in the English diagnostic test applied to the school's teachers point to the need to strengthen their linguistic competencies before assuming full immersion in a bilingual environment (Baker, 2011). In addition, it has been identified that the vast majority of parents, teachers and students prefer that the transition to bilingualism be gradual, starting at the preschool level, which supports the idea of adopting a progressive approach.

The results obtained revealed a clear trend as to how bilingual education should be introduced in schools. The majority of the respondents, 65% expressed their preference for a gradual implementation of bilingual education, starting in preschool. 20% of the participants opted for bilingual education only in elementary school, while 10% chose this modality only in high school. Surprisingly, a modest 5% expressed a desire for bilingual education to be provided in all grades from the beginning. These results provide valuable insight into the preferences of the educational community and will serve as a basis for planning and developing a bilingual program according to the needs and desires of all involved. The following graph summarizes the results:

**Figure 8**

*Percentage of Preferences in Grades Preferring to Start Bilingual Education*



Finally, the school's current characteristics, such as its infrastructure, human resources and educational community, must be considered in order to determine the most suitable bilingualism model. In this context, the partial immersion program is presented as the most appropriate option, as it allows the gradual development of the language skills of all involved,

without compromising the quality of education and maintaining a balance between English and the native language.

The partial immersion program, according to Stephen Krashen (1983), is based on the idea that constant and meaningful exposure to a second language in authentic situations is essential for the development of strong language skills. Partial immersion allows students to gradually become familiar with the English language, which reduces the pressure and stress associated with a fully bilingual program and, at the same time, gives them the opportunity to assimilate the language more organically. In addition, this approach is adapted to the school's own current characteristics, allowing for a smooth transition to bilingualism without compromising the quality of education. In summary, the partial immersion program, supported by Krashen's research, presents itself as the most appropriate option to foster effective English acquisition in the educational context of this school.

**Level of English.** This category refers to the current level of English of teachers and students. This category refers to the current level of English of teachers and students. As part of the research on bilingual education in this school, a diagnostic test was conducted with the help of Richmond Publishing Company and the Universidad del Norte, who were asked to use their platforms to evaluate the English level of teachers and students.

The teachers took the test provided by the Universidad del Norte who use the Cambridge test and the students took the test provided by the Richmond publishing house who also use the Cambridge levels. The tests evaluated reading, listening and vocabulary. Each test varied in length and the questions became more complex as participants answered correctly. According to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the six reference English

levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2) are widely accepted as the global standard for grading an individual's language proficiency.

Level A1 involves the ability to understand and use common expressions that are used very frequently in everyday life, as well as simple phrases designed to address immediate needs. At this level, a person can introduce both himself / herself and others, as well as engage in conversations that address personal aspects, such as a person's location, acquaintances and belongings. Your ability to interact effectively depends largely on the other person speaking slowly and clearly and being willing to cooperate. Level A2 involves the ability to understand sentences and expressions commonly used in situations related to important aspects of everyday life, such as basic information about oneself, family, shopping, places of interest and work. At this level, a person is able to communicate effectively in simple, routine tasks involving a direct exchange of information about familiar matters and daily activities. In addition, he/she can describe in a simple manner aspect of his/her past, immediate environment and topics related to immediate needs.

Level B1 implies the ability to understand the main ideas in clear texts written in standard language dealing with everyday topics related to work, education, leisure time, etc. The B1 level also enables you to deal competently with most situations that may arise when traveling in places where the language is spoken. In addition, it allows you to deal competently with most situations that may arise when traveling to places where the language is spoken. It also includes the ability to generate simple and coherent texts on familiar matters or those of personal interest, as well as the ability to describe experiences, events, aspirations and briefly justify opinions and plans. At level B2, a person has the ability to understand the main ideas of complex texts dealing with both concrete and abstract topics, even if they are technical and within his/her area of specialization.

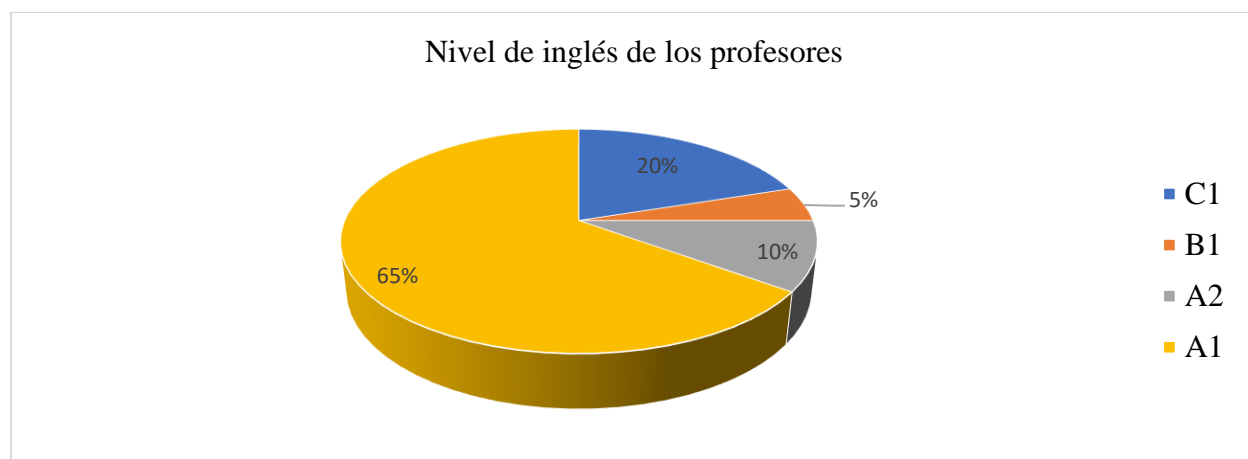
The person can communicate with native speakers fluently and spontaneously, without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and can argue for or against different options on topical issues.

At C1 level, the person has the ability to comprehend long and demanding texts of various types and to detect hidden meanings in them. Can communicate fluently and naturally without apparent effort to find the right words. Possesses the ability to use the language in a versatile and effective manner in social, academic and professional contexts. Can produce accurate, well-organized and detailed texts on complex subjects, demonstrating controlled command of text structure and cohesion. and at C2 level, a person is able to understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and narratives in a coherent way. Can express him/herself spontaneously, fluently and precisely, even noticing shades of meaning in more challenging situations.

The results of these tests revealed a panorama to analyze as shown in the following graph:

**Figure 9**

*Teacher's English level.*



Out of a group of 40 teachers, 20% (8) achieved level C1, suggesting advanced language proficiency. 5% (2) achieved level B1, demonstrating an intermediate level, and 10% (4) achieved level A2, indicating a basic knowledge. However, the vast majority, 65% (26), obtained level A1, indicating an elementary level. It is relevant to note that the teachers who achieved level C1 are mostly permanent English teachers, which highlights the importance of having highly competent experts in teaching foreign languages in the school environment. These findings underscore the need to focus efforts on teacher education and training to strengthen bilingual education in our schools.

Regarding the students, the test was presented by a total population of 112 students, whose English level classification is presented as follows:

**Figure 10.**

*General Results for Third to Fifth Grade.*

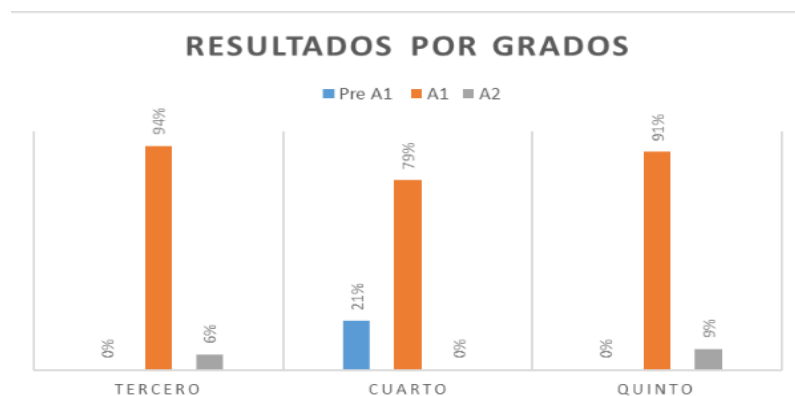


According to the results, the majority of the population (89%) was classified at the A1 level. On the other hand, 5% reached level A2 and 6% were at Pre A1. The results by grade level are detailed below:

**Lower Primary (3rd) and Upper Primary (4th-5th).** The Lower Primary and Upper Primary test was taken by 32 students in 3rd grade, 34 in 4th grade, and 46 in 5th grade. The following graph reflects the classification of the students according to their level of proficiency in foreign language:

**Figure 11**

*Proficiency in Foreign Language by Grades.*



As can be seen in the previous graph, the majority of the population for the three grades classified at level A1: 3rd grade with 94%, 4th grade with 79% and 5th grade with 91%. It is also important to point out that 6% and 9% of students in 3rd and 5th grades obtained level A2 respectively. Finally, 4th grade is the only group that presents a percentage of the population below A1: 21%. Therefore, most of the primary school population is at level A1, with 3rd grade being the group with the highest percentage (94%) at this level.

**Secondary Basic General Results (6th - 9th).** The Secondary test was taken by 193 students. The following graph reflects the classification of students according to their level of foreign language proficiency:

**Figure 12**

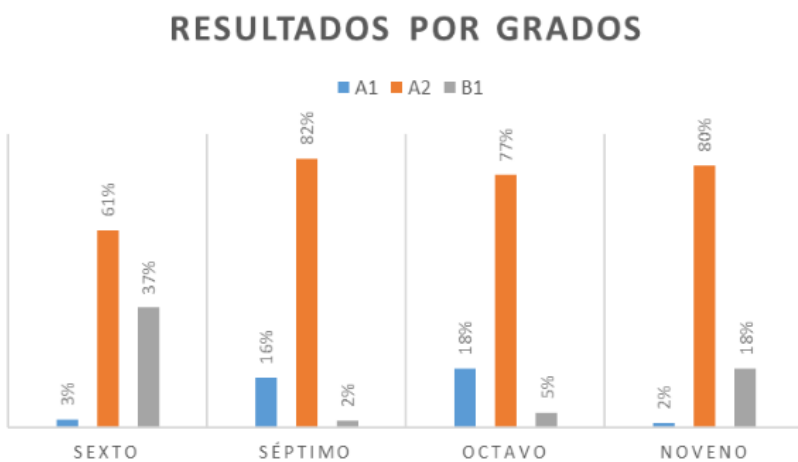
*General Proficiency in Foreign Language, Sixth to Ninth grade.*



According to the above graph, it can be seen that the majority of the population (76%) was placed at level A2, while 15% reached B1 and 7% were classified at A1. The following is a breakdown of the results by grade: The Secondary test was taken by 38 students in 6th grade; 45 in 7th grade; 44 in 8th grade and 66 in 9th grade. The following graph shows the classification of students according to their level of foreign language proficiency:

**Figure 13.**

*Proficiency in Foreign Language by Grades.*





From the previous graph, it can be seen that the majority of the population for all grades is classified at level A2; likewise, level B1 is the next highest level for grades 6 and 9. On the other hand, there are percentages of A1 for all grades, being 8th and 7th the grades with the highest percentages, 18% and 16% respectively. Thus, most of the secondary school population is at level A2.

**General Middle School Results (10th - 11th).** The Young Adult test was submitted by 116 students. The following graph reflects the classification of students according to their level of foreign language proficiency:

**Figure 14**

*General Level of Foreign Language Proficiency, Tenth and Eleventh grades.*



According to the above graph, it can be seen that the majority of the proportion of the language proficiency level is between the B2 (49%) and C1 (41%) levels respectively. Next, 4% classified at level B1 and the rest of the population (6%) is below this last level. The following is a breakdown of the results by grade:

*Young Adults - Middle School (10th - 11th grades)*. The Young Adult test was taken by 59 students in 10th grade and 57 students in 11th grade. The following graph reflects the classification of the students according to their level of foreign language proficiency:

**Figure 15**

*Level of Foreign Language Proficiency by Grade, Tenth and Eleventh.*



From the above graph, it can be seen that most of the population was placed in levels B2 and C1 in both grades; however, level C1 predominates in 11th grade compared to 10th grade. Likewise, it is important to note that levels below B2 are more heterogeneously disaggregated in 10th grade, with no students below A1. Consequently, the majority of the population on average is at levels B2 and C1.

In summary, most of the elementary school population is at level A1, 89%. Most of the high school population is at level A2, 76%, and most of the middle school population is at levels B2 and C1, 79%. Regarding elementary school, students have a good level of English. However, a higher percentage of students should be projected in A2, especially in 5th grade. Regarding secondary school, the students also obtained a good level of English, however, it is necessary to project a higher percentage of students in B1, especially in 8th and 9th grades. As for the middle school population, the students obtained excellent results; therefore, it is necessary to continue projecting similar results.

As stated by Thomas & Collier (2002), it was necessary to previously know the English level of the teachers and students because knowing the English level of the teachers allows designing a training and professional development plan that allows them to acquire the necessary linguistic skills to effectively teach classes in English. This ensures that teachers are prepared to meet the standards and objectives of the bilingual program. In addition, assessment of students' English proficiency is essential to tailor content and teaching methods to their language ability. This ensures that students are able to understand and participate meaningfully in English classes, promoting more effective learning. In addition, knowing existing levels of English helps to identify specific training needs for both teachers and students. This allows targeting resources and efforts more effectively to improve language skills.

**Human Resources.** This subcategory refers to the recruitment, training, and evaluation of bilingual staff. In the context of this research on school-based bilingual education, one of the most pressing concerns that has emerged is related to the English proficiency of most teachers. Teachers who do not have a good level of English, i.e., 80%, acknowledge having a level of English that they consider insufficient, which makes them feel insecure in their performance in a bilingual educational environment. The survey also revealed that 65% of them fear that their low level of English could jeopardize their job stability, as there is a perception that they could be fired for not meeting the required language standards. Therefore, many of the teachers expect the school to provide them with training opportunities and resources to learn and improve their English. As the following excerpt shows, one teacher expressed his concern by saying:

*“Es como si nos pidieran volar sin alas. Si queremos impartir una educación bilingüe de calidad, necesitamos las herramientas adecuadas, y eso incluye la posibilidad de mejorar*

*nuestro inglés. Espero que la administración lo entienda”. (Excerpt from Interview # 2, Participant 3: teacher)*

*[“It’s as if we are being asked to fly without wings. If we want to provide quality bilingual education, we need the right tools, and that includes the ability to improve our English. I hope the administration understands that”.] (Excerpt from Interview # 2, Participant 3: teacher)*

This statement reflects the anxiety and need for support that many teachers experience in relation to their English proficiency. In this context, it has become evident that the majority of teachers at the school have a level of English that is significantly below what would be expected in an institution with aspirations to become bilingual. This finding underscores the importance of having teachers who are not only grammatically and lexically proficient, but also competent in their ability to communicate, teach and assess in English. The hiring of qualified staff and training of former teachers would not only improve the quality of the bilingual education expected to be offered, but would also contribute to the development of strong language skills and confidence in students, preparing them more effectively for a globalized and multicultural world (Genesee, 2006).

For their part, the students are also anxious because many of their teachers do not know English and wonder how they will be able to teach, as the following excerpt shows:

*“Estoy como preocupada por el cambio que va a tener mi colegio si se vuelve bilingüe. La idea suena chévere, pero el problema es que veo que muchos de mis profesores no saben inglés. Creo que aprender o mejorar el inglés sería clave para que esto funcione. Ojalá haya algún plan o apoyo para que ellos también puedan adaptarse. Sería triste que los reemplazaran por no saber inglés”. (Excerpt from Interview # 3, Participant 1: student)*

*[“ I'm kind of worried about how my school will change if it becomes bilingual. The idea sounds cool, but the problem is that I see that many of my teachers don't know English. I think learning or improving English would be key to make this work. Hopefully there is some plan or support for them to adapt as well. It would be sad if they were replaced because they don't know English”. ] (Excerpt from Interview # 3, Participant 1: student)*

Similarly, parents expressed concern about how the school is going to address the teachers' situation and hope that the directors can make decisions that do not affect their children as stated in the following excerpt:

*“No me preocupa que el colegio se vuelva bilingüe. ¡Me parece buenísima la idea, pero la mayoría de los profesores no saben inglés! ¿Cómo van a enseñar en otro idioma si ni siquiera lo dominan? Espero que tomen medidas para capacitar al personal adecuadamente. La educación de mi hija es lo más importante, y no quiero que se vea afectada negativamente por ese cambio”. (Excerpt from Interview # 2, Participant 4: parent)*

*[“ I'm not worried about the school becoming bilingual, I think it's a great idea, but most of the teachers don't know English! How are they going to teach in another language if they don't even know it? I hope they take steps to train the staff properly. My daughter's education is the most important thing, and I don't want her to be negatively affected by such a change”. ] (Excerpt from Interview # 2, Participant 4: teacher)*

In all 3 groups of respondents, there is a common concern about the teachers' level of English. It is evident that it is essential for them to participate in training to improve or learn English so that the quality of education is not affected. Although there is a desire to improve the level of English, quality education for students remains the priority, therefore, the directors must make decisions that take into account their opinions.

As Lyster (2007) emphasizes, the linguistic and pedagogical competence of bilingual teachers is a critical factor in achieving effective dual language learning. In the context of this school, where the implementation of a bilingual program is sought, it is essential to address the gap between teachers' skills and the academic expectations of a bilingual environment. This action would not only improve the quality of English instruction, but also the development of students' language skills, enabling them to achieve a desired level of bilingualism

**Infrastructure and Technology.** This subcategory is related to the adequacy of facilities and the acquisition of bilingual technology and resources. According to the results revealed in the surveys conducted, 55% of the participants revealed that one pressing need that stands out above all others is the adequacy of facilities and the acquisition of bilingual technology and resources. This is a pressing need that constantly resonates with teachers, parents and students. This need is critical, as the school currently lacks the infrastructure and tools necessary for effective bilingual instruction. 77% of teachers stress the importance of classrooms being equipped with the latest technology to support language instruction, while 68% of parents and students surveyed yearn for a learning environment that reflects the standards of bilingual education, as captured in the following excerpt:

*“Primero, es evidente que nuestro colegio necesita una actualización en cuanto a las instalaciones. Porque ajá, para que nuestros hijos reciban una educación bilingüe de calidad, necesitamos espacios adecuados para clases de idiomas y actividades culturales. Esto no solo significa aulas bien equipadas, sino también áreas comunes que reflejen la diversidad de lenguas y culturas que estamos promoviendo. Además de nuevos libros de trabajo en inglés. Además, la adquisición de tecnología y recursos bilingües creo que es importante. Y bueno, en estos tiempos, creo nuestros hijos deben estar expuestos a herramientas que les permitan*

*comunicarse y aprender en ambos idiomas de manera efectiva. Me imagino que esto incluye la compra de equipos tecnológicos y una biblioteca bien surtida con libros en inglés”. (Excerpt from Interview # 1, Participant 5: parent)*

*[“ First, it is clear that our school needs an upgrade in terms of facilities. Because aha, in order for our children to receive a quality bilingual education, we need adequate spaces for language classes and cultural activities. This means not only well-equipped classrooms, but also common areas that reflect the diversity of languages and cultures we are promoting. As well as new workbooks in English. In addition, the acquisition of bilingual technology and resources I think is important. And well, in this day and age, I believe our children should be exposed to tools that allow them to communicate and learn in both languages effectively. I imagine this includes the purchase of technological equipment and a well-stocked library of English books”. ] (Excerpt from Interview # 1, Participant 5: parent)*

During the interviews, students were excited but at the same time thoughtful about the current situation of the school facilities as the following excerpt states:

*“Qué le puedo decir, me emociona la idea del bilingüismo y eso... pero creo que una de las cosas que hay que mejorar es los salones. La idea de aprender en otro idioma es emocionante, pero me preocupa que las instalaciones no estén a la altura de las necesidades tecnológicas. ¿Ahora hay como 3 laboratorios, son 3? Sí, 3 laboratorios con computadores e internet. Creo que debe haber más y los salones normales también equiparlos con cosas en inglés y todo eso”. (Excerpt from Interview # 3, Participant 4: student)*

*[ “What can I tell you, I'm excited about the idea of bilingualism and that... but I think one of the things that needs to be improved is the classrooms. The idea of learning in another language is exciting, but I am concerned that the facilities are not up to the technological needs.*

*Now there are like 3 labs, are there 3? Yes, 3 labs with computers and internet. I think there should be more and the regular classrooms should also be equipped with things in English and all that". ] (Excerpt from Interview # 3, Participant 4: student)*

These findings reflect the reality of this educational institution, where the current infrastructure and resources are not aligned with the requirements of an effective bilingual program. Most requested by parents, students and teachers are classrooms equipped with technology such as projectors, digital whiteboards, high-speed internet access and computers to aid in the teaching and learning of subjects in English. A well-stocked library with books in the target language and access to online resources such as databases. Exchange programs and extracurricular activities in which students can practice English with native speakers and practice English in real-world settings and support programs for students who need English reinforcement, as well as providing resources for parents to support bilingual learning at home.

The least requested was the latest technology; while it is important to have access to educational technology, it is not necessary to be on the cutting edge in terms of expensive equipment. It is essential to have the basics, but it is not necessary to have the latest technology. As well as luxurious spaces. It is not necessary to have luxurious facilities. They agreed that it is better to have classrooms that are functional and allow for effective teaching.

These observations are consistent with Johnson and Swain (2017) who emphasize that investment in adequate infrastructure and resources is essential for successful bilingual education programs. As stated by Baker and Vetter (2017), infrastructure and technology play a key role in a bilingual school for several important reasons. Appropriate technology and infrastructure allow access to online resources such as educational applications, videos and interactive materials in both languages. These resources help students improve their foreign language skills and develop



their language proficiency more effectively. Furthermore, technology allows educators to create personalized learning materials tailored to the individual needs of students. It also facilitates the monitoring and evaluation of student progress, which is essential in a bilingual educational environment.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter is the culminating point of the research, where the findings, analysis and reflections developed throughout this study converge. In this space, the results obtained are synthesized, the implications of the observations made are reviewed and answers are offered to the research question posed at the beginning of this inquiry. This chapter represents, in essence, the consolidation of the knowledge acquired, providing a coherent and reflective closure to the academic work undertaken. It will also address in detail the objectives that emerged from the research, highlighting both the positive aspects and the limitations encountered. Likewise, the connections and contributions of this work with respect to the existing body of literature will be explored, identifying new perspectives and areas of research that could be derived from the results achieved.

### **Importance of the Results**

In the process of this research, the proposed objectives have been achieved thanks to the detection and analysis of the identified categories. The meticulous exploration of these categories has not only provided a thorough understanding of the phenomena studied, but has also provided a solid structure for the development of substantiated conclusions. The identification and classification of these categories have been instrumental in comprehensively addressing the research question: What are the most appropriate strategies for the implementation of bilingual education At Buen Consejo school in Barranquilla?

Regarding the requirements of the Ministry of National Education for national bilingual schools, according to the Ministry of National Education (MEN, 2005), the main requirements established are: 1) More than 50% intensity of contact with the foreign language in the academic

curriculum. 2) Passing an international foreign language exam in addition to passing the Colombian curriculum. 3) Colombian bilingual teachers.

This finding was achieved through an exhaustive literature review and in comparison with the current situation at Buen Consejo School. The review revealed that, at present, this educational establishment does not meet the Ministry's requirement, as it does not incorporate more than 50% English in its curriculum. In addition, Spanish is used exclusively as the language of instruction in all subjects except English and French. Teaching resources and texts are of national origin, promoting only Colombian culture, and graduates only pass the state ICFES test. These findings highlight the need for significant modifications to the curriculum to meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education and obtain approval as a national bilingual school.

In the context of the first specific objective focused on the current characteristics of the Buen Consejo school in its transition to bilingualism, the crucial need to improve teacher training and skills was identified. The diagnostic evaluation revealed that 65% of the teachers have an A1 level in English. Regarding students, 89% of primary school students are at A1 level, while in secondary school, 76% are at A2 level, and 79% are at B2 and C1 levels. Although, primary school students demonstrate a good command of English, it is suggested that a higher percentage be oriented towards level A2, especially in 5th grade.

In addition, it was noted that the current infrastructure and resources do not meet the requirements for an effective bilingual program. Parents, students and teachers expressed the need for classrooms equipped with technology, high-speed Internet access, projectors and digital boards, as well as computers. The urgency of having a well-stocked library in the target language and access to online resources, such as databases, was also stressed. The demand for exchange

programs and extracurricular activities that allow students to practice English with native speakers in real-world settings was evident. The importance of implementing support programs for students who require reinforcement in English, as well as providing resources to parents to support bilingual learning at home, is highlighted. These observations are consistent with the ideas expressed by Johnson and Swain (2017) and Cummins (2008), who highlight the importance of investing in adequate infrastructure and resources to ensure the success of educational programs involving bilingual instruction. In summary, key areas were identified as requiring attention and improvement to optimize the transition to bilingualism at Buen Consejo.

The second specific objective, focused on the perceptions of stakeholders involved in the implementation of bilingualism at Colegio Buen Consejo, reveals a unanimous consensus among parents, students and teachers on the need to convert the institution into a bilingual environment. The surveys reflect a surprisingly high level of support, with 90% of parents expressing their support for the initiative, highlighting the importance of their children acquiring skills in two languages. Students also showed remarkable enthusiasm, with 92% backing the idea. Teachers, at 75%, were solidly behind the proposal. Positive perceptions of teachers, parents, and students are related to the success of bilingual program implementation. When stakeholders have positive perceptions, they are more inclined to engage and collaborate effectively in the bilingual teaching process (Freeman & Freeman, 2002).

One highlight is the preference expressed by the majority of participants (students, teachers and parents) for Biology classes to be taught in English, followed by Social Sciences as the second choice. This pattern evidences a marked interest in understanding concepts related to science and history in a bilingual context, although the subjects selected depend on the specific educational objectives, the needs of the students and the structure of the bilingual program as

María Estela Brisk (2014) states. In summary, the educational community is aligned in its support for the transformation of Colegio Buen Consejo into a bilingual environment, showing a positive receptivity to the proposal and a clear preference for certain subjects in the new linguistic context. In summary, the educational community is aligned in its support for the transformation of Colegio Buen Consejo into a bilingual environment, showing a positive receptivity to the proposal and a clear preference for certain subjects in the new linguistic context.

Another significant finding related to the timing of the start of bilingual education was obtained. There is consensus among parents, students and teachers that bilingual education should begin at the preschool level. All support the idea of starting bilingual education as early as preschool and progressing gradually. This high percentage reflects strong support for the early incorporation of bilingualism into the school curriculum, indicating a strong belief in the importance of exposing students to a bilingual environment from an early age (García, & Rivera, 2019), allowing them to develop their second language skills naturally.

Lastly, as a result of the fulfillment of the specific objectives mentioned above, it is possible to describe the most appropriate bilingualism model proposal to reinforce the implementation of bilingual education at Colegio Buen Consejo. It has been verified that the overwhelming majority of parents, teachers and students express a marked preference for a gradual transition to bilingualism (Peal & Lambert, 1962), with a start at the preschool level. This support reinforces the idea of adopting a progressive approach to implementing a bilingualism model. Consequently, the most appropriate model for this situation must take into account the particular characteristics of the school, such as its infrastructure, available teaching staff and level of English proficiency.

Within this context, the proposal of the partial immersion program emerges as the most suitable alternative. This approach allows the gradual development of the language skills of all involved, avoiding compromising the quality of teaching and achieving a harmonious balance between English and the mother tongue. The suggestion of the partial immersion program is based on Stephen Krashen's (1983) theory, which focuses on immersing students in an environment where the language they are learning is spoken.

The fundamental assumption is that by being immersed in the target language, students will learn naturally and acquire language skills more effectively. This methodology is supported by Krashen's comprehensible input theory (1983), which argues that exposure to comprehensible language is essential for second language learning. In the case of partial immersion, students may have some lessons in their native language, but most of the time they are exposed to the new language to develop their communicative skills progressively.

Partial immersion has the advantage of allowing students to gradually become familiar with the English language, thus reducing the pressure and stress associated with a fully bilingual program (Cummins, 1981). At the same time, it gives them the opportunity to assimilate the language more organically. In addition, this approach is harmoniously adapted to the school's own characteristics, facilitating a smooth transition to bilingualism without compromising the quality of instruction.

In summary, supported by Krashen's research (1983), the partial immersion program emerges as the most appropriate option for fostering effective English acquisition in the specific educational context of this school.

### **Pedagogical and Research Implications for the Study Field**

The conversion of a school to a bilingual model not only has implications at the institutional level, but also sheds light on the need for educational policies that encourage the integration of a bilingual approach in the educational system. The findings of this study suggest that educational policies could benefit from providing incentives and resources for the implementation of bilingual programs. The results obtained demonstrate that the adoption of a bilingual approach can have a positive impact on the academic and cultural development of students, which supports the need for policies that promote linguistic diversity in the educational setting (Baker, 2011).

The study reveals that the transition to a bilingual model requires a pedagogical approach that fosters the development of both the native language and the second language. The findings indicate that teachers play a critical role in the success of this transition, highlighting the importance of ongoing training and support for educators in implementing effective pedagogical strategies for bilingual learning. The successful implementation of bilingual education depends largely on the pedagogical strategies used in the classroom (Genesee, 1999).

From a theoretical point of view, this study contributes to the understanding of learning processes in bilingual contexts. The findings suggest that educational theory should consider the dynamic interaction between the two languages and how this interaction influences students' cognitive and academic development (Cummins, 2008). This opens opportunities for the revision and expansion of existing educational theories, integrating specific elements related to bilingual education.

This study lays the groundwork for future research in the field of bilingual education. The methodology used and the conclusions obtained may inspire more detailed studies on specific

topics, such as the impact of bilingual education on long-term academic performance or the influence of sociocultural factors on students' adaptation to the bilingual model. In addition, comparative approaches between different educational institutions that have adopted bilingual programs can be explored.

### **Limitations**

The present research aims to address the crucial question of identifying the most appropriate strategies for implementing a bilingualism process in a school context. However, as in all research, it is important to recognize the inherent limitations that could impact the findings.

One limitation of this research may be related to time constraints, as the implementation of a bilingualism process in a school is a project that may require long-term planning and execution. The limited time to conduct the research could restrict the depth of analysis of the strategies implemented and limit the ability to capture changes over time. In addition, rapidly changing educational dynamics may make certain results less applicable in the future. Another limitation is that the complexity of implementing a bilingualism process may not be fully captured due to limitations in the depth and context of the research. The inability to comprehensively dive into every aspect of implementation may generate a partial view of the most effective strategies. On the other hand, the presence of unconscious researcher biases could influence the choice of strategies to be studied, as well as the interpretation of the results, and similarly, participants, whether teachers, students, or parents, may have biases in their responses or behaviors, influencing the perception of the effectiveness of the strategies. These biases could distort reality and affect the internal validity of the research.



### **Recommendations for Future Research**

At the conclusion of this study on the most appropriate strategies for the implementation of bilingual education at Buen Consejo School, several recommendations were identified that could guide future research in this field. First, it is suggested to deepen the analysis of the curricular adaptation needed to effectively integrate bilingualism into the preschool and 1st grade curricula, considering the cognitive and emotional particularities of children at these stages. Likewise, the pedagogical implications of specific teacher training for bilingual teaching in early education could be explored in detail, examining how it influences the quality of the educational process. In addition, it would be valuable to investigate the perceptions and experiences of teachers in the bilingual teaching process, identifying possible challenges and best practices to strengthen the quality of the program. These suggestions could contribute to the development of more robust strategies tailored to the specific needs of the Buen Consejo school community and serve as a starting point for future research in the field of early childhood bilingual education.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A. Formulario de Consentimiento

**Nombre del proyecto:** Conversión de un colegio monolingüe a bilingüe: español – inglés en Barranquilla - Colombia

**Investigador:**

Jorge Parra

Barranquilla

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**Propósito del estudio**

El propósito de esta investigación es identificar las herramientas con las que cuenta el colegio Buen Consejo para implementar el bilingüismo en su currículo. Usted ha sido seleccionado para considerar su participación en esta investigación debido a su relación directa con el colegio Buen Consejo en la conversión al bilingüismo. Antes de aceptar participar, te pedimos que leas este formulario y preguntes cualquier duda que tengas si observas algo que no esté claro o si necesitas más información.

**Cómo participar**

En primer lugar, debe permitir que el investigador le envíe por correo electrónico un documento en el que se le pedirá que responda a preguntas abiertas y cerradas. Posteriormente, se le pedirá

que participe en grupos focales para obtener información más detallada y contribuir así a la obtención de la información necesaria para responder al propósito de la investigación.

### **Confidencialidad**

Se tomarán medidas para preservar la confidencialidad de su información personal y de los datos obtenidos en el estudio. Los resultados globales y específicos sólo se utilizarán con fines de investigación. En ningún caso se mencionará su identidad. Sólo el investigador tendrá acceso al ordenador donde se almacenarán todos los datos.

### **Carácter voluntario de la participación en el estudio**

Su participación en este estudio es estrictamente voluntaria; puede renunciar o cancelar su participación en cualquier momento. La retirada no representa en ningún momento una afectación entre usted y el investigador o la institución educativa y si decide cancelar su participación antes de que finalice la recogida de datos, éstos serán eliminados.

### **Riesgos**

El riesgo que usted puede experimentar al participar en este estudio es casi nulo ya que en ningún momento se le pedirá que revele información personal o que pueda afectar su conciencia o ir en contra de su ética. Tampoco se le expondrá a situaciones personales incómodas que puedan avergonzarle o causarle daño. Durante la actividad sólo se te pedirá que reflexiones sobre hechos directamente relacionados con la escuela y que vives a diario.

### **Beneficios**

Los beneficios que razonablemente puedes esperar de tu participación son contribuir a un estudio que puede aportar datos de interés para la comunidad educativa a la que perteneces. Su participación no supone ninguna remuneración económica ni ningún coste para usted.

### **Declaración del investigador**

Este estudio se ha explicado detalladamente al participante. Se ha respondido a todas las preguntas formuladas por el participante y se ha hablado sobre el estudio.

Firma del investigador \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha : 10 abril 2023

### **Consentimiento del participante**

He leído la información proporcionada en este formulario de consentimiento informado. Todas mis preguntas han sido contestadas a mi satisfacción. Acepto voluntariamente participar en este estudio.

Su firma \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B. Final Version of Surveys, Focus Groups and Interviews

### Encuesta para estudiantes

El siguiente instrumento de recolección de datos tiene como principal objetivo el desarrollo de una investigación para la Implementación de la educación bilingüe en el colegio Buen Consejo de Barranquilla, por el estudiante Jorge Parra que cursa el último semestre de la maestría en Mediación Pedagógica en el aprendizaje del inglés de la Universidad Abierta y a Distancia UNAD. La información obtenida será de total confidencialidad y fines académicos. Si está de acuerdo con participar en la encuesta por favor diligenciarla.

**Nombre:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Edad:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Curso:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nivel de inglés:** Ninguno \_\_\_\_\_ Bajo \_\_\_\_\_ Medio \_\_\_\_\_ Alto \_\_\_\_\_

Lea atentamente cada ítem y señale el valor que crea que le corresponde atendiendo lo que señala el primer cuadrante.

1	2	3	4	5
Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Me es indiferente	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo

1	El aprendizaje del idioma inglés es importante.	1	2	3	4	5
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2	Es una buena medida que el colegio Buen Consejo se convierta en bilingüe.	1	2	3	4	5
3	El aprendizaje del inglés es importante para tu desarrollo como estudiante.	1	2	3	4	5
4	La educación bilingüe puede mejorar el nivel de inglés de las estudiantes.	1	2	3	4	5
5	La educación bilingüe mejora las posibilidades profesionales a futuro.	1	2	3	4	5
6	La educación bilingüe incrementa el desarrollo cognitivo.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Con la educación bilingüe se aprende más fácilmente.	1	2	3	4	5
8	La educación bilingüe requiere muchísimo esfuerzo adicional.	1	2	3	4	5
9	La educación bilingüe debe iniciarse desde preescolar e ir	1	2	3	4	5

	avanzando poco a poco.					
10	La educación bilingüe debe implementarse en todos los grados.	1	2	3	4	5
11	La educación bilingüe debe implementarse en todas las materias.	1	2	3	4	5

Si tuvieras que escoger y en orden de prioridad del 1 al 5 (1 la menos importante, 5 la más importante), ¿cuál sería la materia que te gustaría que se diera completamente en inglés?

1	Las clases de biología	1	2	3	4	5
2	Las clases de sociales	1	2	3	4	5
3	Las clases de matemáticas.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Las clases de deportes.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Las clases de informática	1	2	3	4	5



**Preguntas para grupo focal con la delegada de cada grado.**

El siguiente instrumento de recolección de datos tiene como principal objetivo el desarrollo de una investigación para la Implementación de la educación bilingüe en el colegio Buen Consejo de Barranquilla, por el estudiante Jorge Parra que cursa el último semestre de la maestría en Mediación Pedagógica en el aprendizaje del inglés de la Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia UNAD. La información obtenida será de total confidencialidad y fines académicos. Si está de acuerdo con participar en el grupo focal, por favor, responder a las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Qué es ser bilingüe?
2. ¿Te gustaría que el colegio se transformara en un colegio bilingüe? Justifica tu respuesta.
3. ¿Qué materias te gustaría aprender en inglés? Justifica tu respuesta.
4. En tu opinión, ¿cuáles son las ventajas de la educación bilingüe? M
5. En tu opinión, ¿Cuáles son las desventajas de la educación bilingüe?
6. ¿Cuántas horas de tu horario te gustaría que fueran en inglés a la semana incluyendo asignaturas además del inglés?
7. ¿Consideras que la educación bilingüe debe iniciarse con un grado de preescolar, o en todo el preescolar, u otros, ¿cuáles? Justifica tu respuesta.
8. ¿Además de la implementación de enseñanza de materias en inglés, ¿Qué otras actividades te gustaría que se implementara el colegio para mejorar el nivel de inglés y fomentar el bilingüismo?
9. Tienes alguna inquietud sobre la implementación de la educación bilingüe en el colegio?  
¿Cuál?

### **Preguntas para la entrevista con los estudiantes**

1. ¿Te gustaría que en la escuela se enseñara en inglés? ¿Por qué sí o por qué no?
2. ¿Qué materias te parecería divertido estudiar en inglés? ¿Tienes alguna razón especial para elegir las?
3. ¿Crees que aprender dos idiomas en la escuela sería bueno? ¿Por qué piensas eso?
4. ¿Hay algo que no te gustaría si la escuela enseñara en inglés? ¿Por qué?
5. ¿Te preocupa algo sobre aprender en inglés en la escuela? Si es así, ¿qué te preocupa y por qué?

### **Encuesta para profesores**

El siguiente instrumento de recolección de datos tiene como principal objetivo el desarrollo de una investigación para la Implementación de la educación bilingüe en el colegio Buen Consejo de Barranquilla, por el estudiante Jorge Parra que cursa el último semestre de la maestría en Mediación Pedagógica en el aprendizaje del inglés de la Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia UNAD. La información obtenida será de total confidencialidad y fines académicos. Si está de acuerdo con participar en la encuesta, por favor, diligenciarla.

**Nombre:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Área:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grado(s) en el/los que enseña:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Formación académica:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nivel de inglés:** Ninguno \_\_\_\_\_ Bajo \_\_\_\_\_ Medio \_\_\_\_\_ Alto \_\_\_\_\_

Lea atentamente cada ítem y señale el valor que crea que le corresponde atendiendo lo que señala el primer cuadrante.

1	2	3	4	5
Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Me es indiferente	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo

1	Es importante el aprendizaje del inglés dentro de la educación obligatoria.	1	2	3	4	5
2	El colegio Buen Consejo debe implementar la enseñanza de materias en inglés como propuesta de educación bilingüe.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Se puede adaptar la enseñanza de su materia en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
4	La educación bilingüe mejora las posibilidades profesionales a futuro.	1	2	3	4	5

5	La educación bilingüe incrementa el desarrollo cognitivo de las estudiantes.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Con la educación bilingüe se aprende más fácilmente.	1	2	3	4	5
7	La educación bilingüe requiere muchísimo esfuerzo adicional.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Su nivel de inglés es bueno a tal punto que puede enseñar su materia en este idioma.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Usted está dispuesto a aprender o mejorar su inglés con el fin de enseñar su área en ese idioma en una eventual transformación del colegio en bilingüe.	1	2	3	4	5
10	El profesorado se sentirá más motivado al momento de enseñar su área en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
11	La educación bilingüe debe iniciarse desde preescolar e ir	1	2	3	4	5

	avanzando poco a poco.					
12	La educación bilingüe debe implementarse en todos los grados.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Todas las materias deben enseñarse en inglés en preescolar.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Todas las materias deben enseñarse en inglés en primaria.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Todas las materias deben enseñarse en inglés en bachillerato.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Todas las materias deben enseñarse en inglés en todos los grados.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Las materias deben enseñarse 50% del tiempo en español y el otro 50% en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
18	La educación bilingüe afectaría el aprendizaje de las estudiantes	1	2	3	4	5

19	El colegio cuenta con el material necesario para implementar la educación bilingüe.	1	2	3	4	5
20	La infraestructura del colegio es la adecuada para implementar la educación bilingüe.	1	2	3	4	5

### **Preguntas para grupo focal con profesores.**

1 ¿Considera usted que es una necesidad institucional la transformación del colegio Buen Consejo hacia el bilingüismo nacional? Justifique su respuesta.

2. De cara a la transformación hacia el Bilingüismo Nacional, ¿Cuáles considera usted que son las principales necesidades que tiene el colegio con relación al profesorado?

3. De cara a la transformación hacia el Bilingüismo Nacional, ¿Cuáles considera usted que son las principales necesidades que tiene el colegio con relación a las estudiantes?

3. De cara a la transformación hacia el Bilingüismo Nacional, ¿Cuáles considera usted que son las principales necesidades que tiene el colegio con relación al currículo actual?

3. ¿Cuáles considera usted que son las principales decisiones que debe tomar el colegio con

relación a los padres de familia?

4. ¿En qué cosas cree usted que debe invertir el colegio en cuanto a su infraestructura para alcanzar la educación bilingüe?

4. Comparta recomendaciones a la institución de cara a la iniciación de la transformación hacia el bilingüismo nacional.

5. Exprese libremente inquietudes asociadas al Proyecto de Transformación hacia la educación bilingüe.

6. Exprese libremente propuestas asociadas al proyecto de transformación hacia la educación bilingüe.

7. Exprese libremente preocupaciones o riesgos asociadas al proyecto de transformación hacia la educación bilingüe.

8. ¿Cuáles materias ve usted viable para que se enseñen completamente en inglés? Justifique su respuesta.

**Preguntas para entrevista con profesores.**

1. ¿Cuáles considera usted que son las principales necesidades que tiene el colegio con relación al profesorado en el proceso de transición hacia el Bilingüismo Nacional?
  
2. ¿Cuáles considera usted que son las principales necesidades que tiene el colegio con relación a las estudiantes en este proceso de cambio?
  
3. ¿Cuáles considera usted que son las principales necesidades que tiene el colegio con relación al currículo actual en el contexto de la transformación hacia el Bilingüismo Nacional?
  
4. ¿Cuáles considera usted que son las principales decisiones que debe tomar el colegio con relación a los padres de familia en el proceso de transición hacia el Bilingüismo Nacional?
  
5. En el contexto de la educación bilingüe, ¿en qué aspectos cree usted que el colegio debería invertir para mejorar su infraestructura y facilitar este proceso de transformación?



## Encuesta para padres

El siguiente instrumento de recolección de datos tiene como principal objetivo el desarrollo de una investigación para la Implementación de la educación bilingüe en el colegio Buen Consejo de Barranquilla, por el estudiante Jorge Parra que cursa el último semestre de la maestría en Mediación Pedagógica en el aprendizaje del inglés de la Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia UNAD. La información obtenida será de total confidencialidad y fines académicos. Si está de acuerdo con participar en la encuesta, por favor, diligenciarla.

**Nombre:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grado de su hija:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Edad:** \_\_\_\_

**Nivel de formación académica:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nivel de inglés:** Ninguno \_\_\_\_ Bajo \_\_\_\_ Medio \_\_\_\_ Alto \_\_\_\_

Lea atentamente cada ítem y señale el valor que crea que le corresponde atendiendo lo que señala el primer cuadrante.

1	2	3	4	5
Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Me es indiferente	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo

1	Es importante el idioma inglés	1	2	3	4	5
---	--------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---

	dentro de la formación de su hija.					
2	El colegio Buen Consejo debe ser un colegio bilingüe.	1	2	3	4	5
3	La educación bilingüe es la enseñanza de las materias totalmente en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
4	La educación bilingüe es la enseñanza de las materias en español e inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Gracias a la educación bilingüe el nivel de inglés de su hija mejoraría.	1	2	3	4	5
6	La educación bilingüe mejora las posibilidades profesionales a futuro. P	1	2	3	4	5
7	La educación bilingüe incrementa el desarrollo cognitivo de las estudiantes.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Con la educación bilingüe se aprende más fácilmente.	1	2	3	4	5

9	La educación bilingüe requiere muchísimo esfuerzo adicional.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Es viable la enseñanza de las materias en inglés en el colegio Buen Consejo.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Estaría dispuesto a inscribir a su hija en el colegio Buen Consejo si eventualmente se transformara en una institución bilingüe	1	2	3	4	5
12	Desde su rol como padre aprendería inglés para hablar con su hija en su hogar y así fomentar el bilingüismo.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Desde su rol como padre fomentaría el bilingüismo en su hogar a través de actividades como escuchar música o ver películas en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Desde su rol como padre animaría a su hija para que viva	1	2	3	4	5

	experiencias de intercambio con el colegio hermano de Inglaterra.					
15	La educación bilingüe debe iniciarse desde preescolar e ir avanzando poco a poco.	1	2	3	4	5
16	La educación bilingüe debe implementarse solo en primaria.	1	2	3	4	5
17	La educación bilingüe debe implementarse solo en bachillerato.	1	2	3	4	5
18	La educación bilingüe debe implementarse en todos los grados	1	2	3	4	5
19	Las clases de biología son las que deben darse totalmente en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Las clases de sociales son las que deben darse totalmente en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5

21	Las clases de matemáticas son las que deben darse totalmente en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Las clases de educación física son las que deben darse totalmente en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Las clases de informática son las que deben darse totalmente en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5

**Preguntas para grupo focal con el delegado de padres de cada grado.**

El siguiente instrumento de recolección de datos tiene como principal objetivo el desarrollo de una investigación para la Implementación de la educación bilingüe en el colegio Buen Consejo de Barranquilla, por el estudiante Jorge Parra que cursa el último semestre de la maestría en Mediación Pedagógica en el aprendizaje del inglés de la Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia UNAD. La información obtenida será de total confidencialidad y fines académicos. Si está de acuerdo con participar en el grupo focal, por favor, responda a las siguientes preguntas.

1. ¿Considera usted que es una necesidad institucional la transformación del colegio Buen Consejo hacia el bilingüismo nacional? Justifique su respuesta.

2. De cara a la Transformación hacia el Bilingüismo Nacional, ¿Cuáles considera usted que son las principales necesidades en infraestructura que tiene la Institución ?
3. ¿Qué expectativas le genera una eventual transformación hacia el bilingüismo nacional del colegio Buen Consejo?
4. ¿Ve viable la implementación de la educación bilingüe en la institución? Justifique su respuesta.
5. ¿Cuál cree que son los principales riesgos de la transformación hacia la educación bilingüe en el contexto de la Institución?
6. Desde su rol como padre ¿Cómo considera usted que podría ser un agente de motivación y apoyo para su hijo o hija en su proceso de formación Bilingüe?
7. Comparta recomendaciones a la institución sobre qué estrategias se deberían seguir para implementar la educación bilingüe.
8. ¿Desde qué materias propondría que se iniciara la educación bilingüe? Justifique su respuesta.
9. ¿Considera el proceso debe iniciar con un grado de preescolar, con dos grados o con todo el preescolar? Justifique su respuesta.

10. Exprese libremente inquietudes asociadas al Proyecto de Transformación hacia la educación bilingüe.

11. Exprese libremente preocupaciones o riesgos asociados al Proyecto de Transformación hacia la educación bilingüe.

### **Preguntas para entrevista con padres**

1. En el marco de la Transformación hacia el Bilingüismo Nacional, ¿podría identificar las principales necesidades de infraestructura que la Institución enfrenta?

2. ¿Cuáles son sus expectativas ante una eventual transformación hacia el bilingüismo nacional en el colegio Buen Consejo?

3. ¿Considera viable la implementación de la educación bilingüe en la institución? Le agradeceríamos que justificara su respuesta.

4. ¿Cuáles cree usted que son los principales riesgos asociados con la transformación hacia la educación bilingüe en el contexto de la Institución?

5. Desde su posición como progenitor, ¿cómo visualiza que podría desempeñar un papel como agente de motivación y respaldo para su hijo o hija durante su proceso de formación bilingüe?

### Appendix C. Expert Validation Instrument

April, 14<sup>th</sup> April

Dear Mr. Villanueva,

I am addressing you very respectfully to greet you and to tell you that as a connoisseur of your academic trajectory and as an expert in research, I would like to obtain your attention by choosing you as EXPERT JUDGE for the revision of the content of the instruments that I wish to use in the Thesis to obtain the degree of Master in Pedagogical Mediation in English Learning.

The instruments aim to answer the research question What are the most appropriate strategies for the implementation of bilingual education at Buen Consejo school in Barranquilla? In order to determine the validity of the instrument and according to your extensive experience and knowledge, I ask you to mark with an x in the corresponding box that each item deserves. I have attached the instrument and the operationalization matrix of the item considering dimensions, indicators, categories, and measurement scale.

I thank you in advance for your great help and I am completely sure that your expert opinion will serve the proposed objective.

Sincerely,

Jorge Parra



## EXPERT OPINION REPORT OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

- Surname and first names of the informant (Expert): Cenaida Gómez Saenz
- Academic Degree: PhD
- Profession:
- Institution : UNAD
- Position held:
- Name of instrument: Encuestas y grupos focales
- Author of the instrument: Jorge Andrés Parra Villalba
- Program: Pedagogical Mediation in Learning of English.

### VALIDATION

INSTRUMENT EVALUATION INDICATORS	CRITERIA Instrument items	Poor	Marginally	Acceptable	Good	Very
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>1. CLARITY</b>	They are formulated with appropriate language that facilitates understanding.					x
<b>2. OBJECTIVITY</b>	They are expressed in a measurable form.				x	
<b>3. CONSISTENCY</b>	There is a logical organization in the questions					X

<b>4. COHERENCE</b>	The contents are related to the problemquestion.					X
<b>5. RELEVANCE</b>	The information requested is appropriatein relation to the research question.					X
<b>6. ADEQUACY</b>	The quantity and quality of the items presented in the instrument are sufficient.				x	
<b>PARTIAL SUMMATORY</b>						
<b>TOTAL SUMMATORY</b>		28				

### VALIDATION RESULTS

Total quantitative assessment: 28

Opinion: FAVORABLE X MUST IMPROVE \_\_\_ NOT FAVORABLE \_\_\_\_\_

Observations:

Signature



## Appendix D. Resumen Analítico de Estudio RAE

### 1. Información General

<b>Tipo de documento</b>	Tesis de grado de maestría
<b>Acceso al documento</b>	A research report submitted to Escuela de Ciencias de la Educación ECEDU in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Magister en Mediación Pedagógica en el Aprendizaje del Inglés
<b>Título del documento</b>	Conversion of a monolingual school to bilingual: Spanish-English in Barranquilla, Colombia
<b>Autor</b>	Jorge Andrés Parra Villalba
<b>Publicación</b>	2023
<b>Palabras claves</b>	Bilingualism; relevant methodology; bilingual education; transformation; benefits

### 2. Descripción

La presente investigación se enfoca en el proceso de transformación del Colegio Buen Consejo de Barranquilla, previamente monolingüe, hacia un entorno bilingüe en el ámbito privado. A pesar de contar con una larga trayectoria de clases intensivas, el colegio no se ha clasificado como bilingüe hasta la fecha. Los estudiantes, si bien demuestran un elevado dominio del inglés al concluir sus estudios, esto se refleja principalmente en los destacados puntajes que obtienen en las pruebas estatales del ICFES.

En la actualidad, se percibe la necesidad imperante de dar un paso más allá y asumir el desafío de convertirse en un colegio bilingüe. Esta conciencia se originó en la creciente inquietud de los padres, quienes, al percatarse del elevado nivel de inglés alcanzado por sus hijos, expresaron el

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deseo de que el Colegio Buen Consejo evolucionara hacia una institución bilingüe, añadiendo así un valor adicional a la educación brindada.

El punto de partida consistió en una revisión exhaustiva de la literatura, que revela las dificultades que enfrentan numerosas instituciones educativas al emprender la transformación hacia el bilingüismo. Considerando este contexto, la investigación se plantea como un estudio de caso con un enfoque exploratorio. La población objetivo incluyó a docentes, padres de familia, estudiantes, un experto en educación bilingüe y el director del Colegio Buen Consejo de Barranquilla.

La muestra representativa se seleccionó cuidadosamente, abarcando el 30% de la población total de docentes, padres de familia y alumnos del colegio. Este enfoque permitió obtener una visión detallada y representativa de las percepciones, actitudes y expectativas de los principales actores involucrados en el proceso de conversión. A través de entrevistas, encuestas y grupos focales, se exploraron las motivaciones, desafíos y oportunidades asociados con la transición hacia un entorno bilingüe en el Colegio Buen Consejo.

Esta investigación aspira a proporcionar una guía fundamentada para colegios similares que contemplen la transición a un modelo bilingüe, contribuyendo así al enriquecimiento del panorama educativo en Barranquilla y más allá.

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#### **4. Contenidos**

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La presente investigación aborda la compleja transición de un colegio monolingüe a bilingüe en Barranquilla, Colombia, centrándose en la integración de los idiomas español e inglés. En la primera sección, se realiza una exhaustiva descripción del problema, formulando la pregunta de investigación, estableciendo objetivos específicos y delineando el alcance y las delimitaciones del estudio. Además, se justifica la importancia de abordar esta transformación educativa en el contexto local. La segunda parte del trabajo presenta un detallado marco teórico que sustenta la transición a un enfoque bilingüe, explorando teorías pedagógicas y metodologías relevantes. La tercera sección abarca el diseño de la investigación, detallando los procedimientos de análisis de datos y la discusión de categorías emergentes. Se presentan los resultados obtenidos, evaluando su fiabilidad y validez. Finalmente, se destacan la relevancia de los hallazgos, las implicaciones pedagógicas y de investigación, así como las limitaciones inherentes al estudio. Se ofrecen recomendaciones fundamentadas en los resultados obtenidos, concluyendo con reflexiones sobre la transición de un colegio monolingüe a bilingüe y su impacto en el ámbito educativo local.

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#### **5. Metodología**

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Este estudio adoptó un enfoque mixto, combinando metodologías cualitativas y cuantitativas, con el objetivo de analizar e interpretar datos relacionados con la implementación del bilingüismo en esta escuela. La investigación se centró en un análisis cualitativo de naturaleza

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descriptiva para comprender las perspectivas y expectativas de los participantes, incluyendo docentes, padres de familia, estudiantes, un experto en educación bilingüe y el director del colegio Buen Consejo de Barranquilla.

La población objetivo abarcó a los mencionados grupos, mientras que la muestra seleccionada representó el 30% de la población total de docentes, padres de familia y alumnos del colegio. El enfoque del trabajo incluye el análisis diagnóstico de elementos escritos, así como la consideración de las percepciones individuales de docentes, estudiantes y padres de familia. Se ha optado por incluir el 30% de cada grupo participante en el análisis.

La recopilación de datos se llevó a cabo mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas, cuestionarios y grupos focales con profesores, padres y estudiantes. Además, se realizaron grupos focales con una muestra homogénea de participantes voluntarios, específicamente docentes, padres de familia y estudiantes con al menos cinco años de experiencia en la institución. Este enfoque permitió una comprensión más profunda de la realidad escolar, abordando aspectos como los cambios propuestos, el uso de materiales, el compromiso con el proyecto y la percepción del proceso de implementación.

En resumen, este estudio adoptó un enfoque mixto para explorar las perspectivas y experiencias de diferentes partes interesadas en la implementación del bilingüismo en el colegio Buen Consejo de Barranquilla. La metodología combinó análisis cualitativos y cuantitativos, empleando diversas técnicas de recopilación de datos para obtener una comprensión completa de las percepciones y opiniones de los participantes.

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## **6. Resultados**

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La transformación de una escuela hacia un modelo bilingüe no solo afecta su estructura institucional, sino que también destaca la importancia de políticas educativas que impulsen la

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integración del enfoque bilingüe en todo el sistema educativo. Los resultados de este estudio indican que las políticas educativas podrían mejorar al ofrecer incentivos y recursos para la implementación de programas bilingües. Estos resultados respaldan la noción de que adoptar un enfoque bilingüe puede tener impactos positivos en el desarrollo académico y cultural de los estudiantes, subrayando la necesidad de políticas que fomenten la diversidad lingüística en la educación (Baker, 2011).

El estudio también destaca que la transición a un modelo bilingüe requiere un enfoque pedagógico que promueva el desarrollo tanto de la lengua materna como de la segunda lengua. Los hallazgos resaltan la función crucial de los maestros en el éxito de esta transición, subrayando la importancia de la formación continua y el respaldo para los educadores en la aplicación de estrategias pedagógicas efectivas en el aprendizaje bilingüe. La eficacia de la educación bilingüe está estrechamente ligada a las estrategias pedagógicas empleadas en el aula (Genesee, 1999).

Desde una perspectiva teórica, este estudio contribuye a la comprensión de los procesos de aprendizaje en entornos bilingües, sugiriendo que la teoría educativa debería considerar la interacción dinámica entre los dos idiomas y cómo esta interacción influye en el desarrollo cognitivo y académico de los estudiantes (Cummins, 2008). Esto abre oportunidades para revisar y expandir las teorías educativas existentes, incorporando elementos específicos relacionados con la educación bilingüe.

Asimismo, este estudio establece las bases para investigaciones futuras en el ámbito de la educación bilingüe. Tanto la metodología utilizada como las conclusiones obtenidas pueden servir de inspiración para estudios más detallados sobre aspectos específicos, como el impacto a largo plazo de la educación bilingüe en el rendimiento académico o la influencia de factores

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socioculturales en la adaptación de los estudiantes a este modelo. Además, se podrían explorar enfoques comparativos entre diferentes instituciones educativas que hayan adoptado programas bilingües.

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## 7. Conclusiones

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En el análisis exhaustivo de la implementación del bilingüismo en el Colegio Buen Consejo, se han extraído conclusiones fundamentales que delinean el panorama actual y las perspectivas futuras de la institución. La unanimidad de percepciones entre padres de familia, estudiantes y docentes respecto a la urgente necesidad de transformar la escuela en un entorno bilingüe destaca como el consenso primordial. Sin embargo, la limitada incorporación del inglés en el plan de estudios, con un porcentaje inferior al 50%, y la exclusividad del español como lengua de instrucción, indican un desafío significativo en la estructura académica. La carencia de infraestructura y recursos adecuados para un programa bilingüe eficaz y la imperiosa necesidad de mejorar la formación y habilidades docentes emergen como áreas críticas de intervención. La preferencia compartida por la enseñanza de Biología en inglés, seguida de Ciencias Sociales, revela preferencias específicas dentro de la comunidad educativa. Además, el consenso sobre el inicio del bilingüismo desde el nivel preescolar y la preferencia por una transición gradual respaldan la propuesta del programa de inmersión parcial como la opción más apropiada en este contexto. Estas conclusiones proporcionan una base sólida para la formulación de recomendaciones y acciones futuras en pos de fortalecer el programa bilingüe en el Colegio Buen Consejo.

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<b>Appendices</b>	Form of informed consent, Final version of surveys, focus groups and interviews, Expert validation instrument
<b>Advisor</b>	Marcela Diaz

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