



THE “DISPATCH OF EDUCATION” TO “RURAL COMMUNITIES” FOR “NATIONAL UNITY”: THE MAGICAL BUZZWORDS OF CULTURAL GENOCIDE

“ENTREGAR A EDUCAÇÃO” ÀS “COMUNIDADES RURAIS” PARA A “UNIFICAÇÃO NACIONAL”: AS PALAVRINHAS DE ORDEM DO GENOCÍDIO CULTURAL

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ABSTRACT: In July 2017, as delegates of the Universidade Federal do Acre we were invited to talk at the *I Seminário Internacional de Educación Rural* in Peru, in the cities of Lircay and Lima. In this article, we focus specifically on the debate that took place in Lima, in order to identify epiphanic passages that expose crucial conceptions of “rural” and “bilingual” education and unearth the ways in which these concepts are used as disguising paraphrases meant to depoliticise and efface Indigeneity together with its profound political significance. In order to accomplish this task, we draw upon an unsystematic approach to some principles of corpus linguistics, and combine our first-hand impressions with a review of Peruvian and non-Peruvian literature on the political implications of Indigeneity. We then conclude by identifying a substantially undeclared agenda that envisages the “pacific” and “painless” perpetuation of an ongoing cultural genocide.

Keywords: Indigenous. Rural; Bilingual. Education. Cultural Genocide.

RESUMO: Em julho de 2017, como membros da Universidade Federal do Acre, fomos convidados a apresentar no I Seminário Internacional de Educación Rural, evento sediado no Peru, entre as cidades de Lircay e Lima. Neste artigo, focamos especificamente no debate que houve em Lima, com o intuito de identificar trechos revelatórios que expõem concepções cruciais sobre educação “rural” e “bilíngue”, e desenterram as maneiras em que esses conceitos são usados como paráfrases para despoliticizar e neutralizar a indigeneidade, junta com a sua profunda significância política. Para fazer isso, utilizamos uma abordagem não sistemática à linguística de corpus, misturando as nossas primeiras impressões do evento com uma revisão da literatura peruana e não-peruana sobre as implicações políticas da indigeneidade. Para finalizar, identificamos um projeto não declarado que vislumbra a perpetuação “pacífica” e “indolor” de um genocídio cultural em ato. **Palavras-chave:** Indígena. Rural. Bilíngue. Educação. Genocídio cultural

INTRODUCTION

In July 2017, as delegates of UFAC - Universidade Federal do Acre [Federal University of Acre], we were invited to talk at an academic conference in Peru. The title of the event was *I Sem-*

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inario Internacional de Educación Rural [1st International Seminar of Rural Education]: in order to reach UDEA - *Universidad para el Desarrollo Andino* [University for Andean Development], we left Rio Branco, capital of the Brazilian State of Acre; crossed the border with Peru at Assis Brasil/ Iñapari; arrived in Puerto Maldonado, capital of the Peruvian department of Madre de Dios, where we took a flight to Lima; from Lima, we had to ride for another 12 hours to get to the Andean town of Lircay, department of Huancavelica, where the first part of the event was being hosted.

We purposely took some time and space to describe our route, as the stopover in Lima, on the Pacific coast of Peru, does not do justice to the extreme proximity between the Amazonian settings (i.e., Acre and Madre de Dios) where we had started our journey from, and the Andean Cordillera, where Lircay is situated. Indeed, this compulsory passage from the national Peruvian capital - intended as a “centre” that is both normative and dislocated from the core of our geographical focus - might function as a profound allegory of the experience we are about to report in this article.

Based in Lircay, but keeping its headquarters also in Lima, UDEA self-describes as being “orientated towards bilingual scientific and technological development” (UDEA, n.d.).³ The mention to bilingualism refers to the concurrent tuition in Spanish and Quechua: according to article 48 of the current Peruvian Constitution, approved in 1993, “the official languages of the State are Spanish and, wherever they predominate, Quechua, Aymara, and other native tongues, in accordance with the law”(PERU, 1993).⁴

Now, despite the consolidated movement towards bilingualism in Peruvian education (HORNBERGER, 1989; HYNISJÖ e DAMON, 2016; RODRÍGUEZ LOZANO, 2012), also propitiated by the Government programme known as EIB - *Educación Intercultural Bilingüe* [Bilingual Intercultural Education](DIGEIBIR, 2013), UDEA’s venture towards the inclusion of Quechua in higher education is often described as a unique and pioneering undertaking, to the point that the institution is often described as Peru’s “first bilingual university” (MUÑOZ MONGE, 2017).⁵

Although we acknowledge that part of the economic, social and cultural motives that drive UDEA’s efforts may not just be as straightforward as it is claimed, and that obviously there might be multiple and contradictory interests coexisting within the very fabric of the institution,⁶ the purpose of this article is not staging a critique of UDEA. On the contrary, we do appreciate the institution’s efforts within the community.

The first conference day in Lircay was, in fact, exciting and thought-provoking. The four plenary sessions of the day were composed by a couple of local UDEA speakers, a handful of delegates from Brazilian universities, including the University of São Paulo (USP) and the Federal University of Pará (UFPA), as well as our UFAC delegation, composed by Francisco Bento da Silva and Jesús José Díez Canseco Carranza on top of ourselves. Issues like linguistic prejudice (cf. BAGNO, 1999), coloniality (cf. MIGNOLO, 2009), and the neglect of Andean worldview [*cosmovisión andina*] (cf. GUZÑAY, 2014; BRUN, 2009), abundantly emerged during the sessions. After the sessions,

3 “La UDEA está orientada al desarrollo científico y tecnológico bilingüe”

4 Here we need to clarify that, as Italian citizens (currently living in Brazil), we do not claim to be talking from a higher moral standpoint, compared to the Peruvian Constitution. In Italy, the three main languages that are spoken in our regions of origin - namely Sicilian, Neapolitan and Piedmontese - are not even mentioned by the national Constitution, are not taught at school and are only timidly used in the local media.

5 “primera universidad bilingüe”

6 Elsewhere, we have not been short of critiques on photographer Sebastião Salgado for being affiliated to a mining company; Vale S.A., whose activity is extremely controversial (MESSINA et al, 2018). For the sake of intellectual honesty, here we cannot be reticent about the partnership between UDEA and the Compañía de Minas Buenaventura, especially in light of the diffused resistance of Indigenous communities in Peru against the agenda of mining companies in their territories (cf. SALAZAR-SOLER, 2013, s/p).

we formed a few parallel roundtables with members of the audience. Further issues emerged, such as the idea of an ongoing cultural genocide perpetrated against Andean, Quechua-speaking people. Cultural appropriation was also mentioned, in particular when it was realised that the brand “Quechua” - as a French trademark that only bears a parasitic and exploitative relationship with the cultural and linguistic instances it disrespectfully usurps - was sardonically carved on some of the items (e.g., a water bottle, a rucksack, etc.) that we and other Brazilian delegates had brought along to Lircay.

The second conference day took place after a couple of days, in Lima, at the Peruvian Ministry of Culture. This second day featured presentations by some of the delegates who had already spoken in Lircay, on top of some Peruvian practitioners and researchers with specialisation in the area. In this article, we focus specifically on the debate that took place on that day in Lima.

The conference day in Lima lasted several hours: several speaker panels were followed by intense Q&A sessions, and this led to the formation of a quite large corpus of text. Furthermore, we saw the set of enunciations that sprouted from this variegated and heterogeneous group of people - or, as Wolfgang Teubert puts it, this “discourse community” (2005, p. 13) - as an incredibly coherent and linear organism that, independently from the individual agencies of those who were involved, appeared to be unanimous in at least some of its directionalities.

Despite not using quantitative methods, we could appreciate, in our efforts related to this specific paper, some proximity with the premises and objectives of corpus linguistics. As in the work of Paul Baker *et al*, our aim here is to identify “common categories” (2008, p. 273) that characterise the representation of the particular human groups that are mentioned in the conference. We attempt to fulfil this task as we are aware that “there is no innate universal ontology that makes us all see the world in the same way, and there is even less one that would make us see the world as it is” (TEUBERT, 2005, P. 10); this means that we cannot evince the particular meaning intended by the producers of any discourse outside of the realm of language. All we can do is in fact “search[ing] for paraphrases” (TEUBERT, 2005, P. 11).

What we did is in fact skimming several times through the whole set of recordings that were available to us, in order to identify key periphrastic constructions that revealed objectionable, problematic and/or untenable views about the specific issues and peoples dealt with during the conference. We claim no systematicity in our accomplishment of this task: reiteratively, we did not collect quantitative data, but rather focussed on particular epiphanic moments that, in our opinion, provided significant clues about the mindsets and conceptions of those involved in the production of the corpus.

Also, we do not claim to be staging our critique from a privileged, distant or innocent *locus* of enunciation: we were at the conference and we were fully part of the discourse community as we abundantly interacted with the speakers during the Q&A sessions. Our participation in the Q&A sessions, in fact, orientated the debate towards specific directions, or better, without some specific questions we asked, as it is evident from the next section, some extreme statements and comparisons would not have happened.

INDIGENOUS VS. RURAL/BILINGUAL

It is important to situate Peru’s internal relations within the tension between coast and mountain, a tension that permeates Peruvian cultural and literary production (cf. WOLFENZON, 2010), and that exists in the context of a specific “hierarchised geography”, incarnated by the traditional

tripartition *costa-sierra-selva* [coast-mountain-forest]⁷ (AMES, 2010, s/p). Such territorial division demarcates violent caesuras along the lines of important social signifiers like race, class, ethnicity, language, etc. In this respect, Patricia Ames notes that Peruvian geography “has been charged with cultural meanings and ‘racialised’” (AMES, 2010, s/p). As Cecilia Méndez Gastelumendi puts it, “geographical taxonomies simultaneously establish evaluative racial denominations about human beings” (GASTELUMENDI, 2011, p. 61).⁸ In a totally different context, Joseph Pugliese has coined the term “geocorpographies”, precisely in order to “bring into focus the violent enmeshment of the flesh and blood of the body within the geopolitics of war, race and empire” (PUGLIESE, 2007, p.12).

Specific raced bodies always already evoke particular territories, and vice versa. In this context, the settler colonial nation provokes a double movement that marks the lives of these subjects: on the one hand, assimilation, and on the other hand, rejection (cf. SALAZAR-SOLER, 2013, s/p). In the context of Indigeneity, the whole concept of *indio* “came to be intrinsically associated with the mountains” (GASTELUMENDI, 2011, p. 53).⁹ In this way, emerges the idea that Indigenous people are exclusively the inhabitants of the Andes, and that “the Andes [are] the natural place of the *indios*” (AMES, 2010, s/p).¹⁰ Patricia Ames continue to claim that “one of the results of this organization of the geography and the population is that Indigenous people from the coast and those from the forest disappear from the republican¹¹ geographical discourse” (AMES, 2010, s/p).¹² In other words, Indigenous people are either considered fully assimilated, or discursively confined to the geographical space of the Andes, a space that, in addition, is traditionally considered “substantially as an obstacle and a challenge” (AMES, 2010, s/n).¹³

We were not fully aware of the enormous relevance that these issues had in the Peruvian academic debate when, during the conference, the abundant use of “rural” and “bilingual” concerned us, as these terms appeared to be meant to efface or simplify the complexities involved in the experience of Indigenous subjects and communities within the settler colonial state. Carmen Salazar-Soler shows how, in the face of the multiple categorisations and effacements implemented by the state, the notion of *indio* resists as a meaningful category connected to land fight and social struggles in Peru (SALAZAR- SOLER, 2013, s/p). Bolivian thinker Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui focusses on Indigenous identity in terms of epistemic and political confrontation, articulating precisely the incompatibility between the nation as a white, bourgeois and Eurocentric institution, and symbolic and legal Indigenous systems (CUSICANQUI, 1997). We felt that, during the conference, the “bilingual” and the “rural” were more and more used as terms that served precisely to depoliticise Indigenous identity. During the intervention of a particular speaker, a consultant of the Peruvian Government, we felt that this depoliticisation had become unbearable, and that triggered our question as follows:

7 In other words, the Pacific coastline, the Andean Cordillera and the Amazonian forest.

8 “taxonomías geográficas se constituyen simultáneamente en denominaciones raciales valorativas sobre los seres humanos”.

9 “el término indio pasó a estar intrínsecamente asociado con la sierra”

10 “los Andes [son] el lugar natural de los indios”

11 The passage from the colonial period to the Republic of Peru marks the decadence of the juridical category of *indio* and the beginning of this ambivalent process of assimilation (SALAZAR- SOLER, 2013, s/p).

12 “El vínculo crucial entre los indios y los Andes, según el cual los primeros serían los habitantes de los segundos, y los Andes, el lugar natural de los indios. Un resultado de esta organización de la geografía y de la población es que los indígenas de la costa y los de la selva desaparecen del discurso geográfico republicano”

13 “en gran medida como un obstáculo y un desafío

There is a very clear distinction between the rural and the Indigenous, and that has important political implications. What is the implication of this distinction in this country and in this institution?¹⁴

To this question, the speaker replies by further substituting the concept of “Indigenous” with that of “intercultural bilingual”.

In Peru we are promoting a policy of rural education [...] that will depend on another policy, which is the intercultural bilingual education: this one exists already. To your question, I could reply with another question: is the intercultural bilingual totally rural or is it also urban? And the answer is that in its most part the intercultural bilingual exists in a rural ambit, but it is present in urban contexts as well. In the case of Lircay/Huancavelica, the intercultural bilingual merges with the rural.¹⁵

We then intervene again in the debate, highlighting the political and identitarian implications of Indigenousness, and asking how these implications could be valued in school. After a brief introductory note, that engages with our question, the speaker supplements his reply with a quite problematic comment:

However, I personally believe that at the same time one cannot defend language for its own sake: what is to be done is defending human, social, cultural heritage for what it signifies for humankind and for Peru, as it were, isn't it?¹⁶

What emerges from this statement is precisely the parasitism of the dispositive of the nation and of its deliberately genocidal role towards Indigenous peoples, subjects and cultures. According to the speaker, language is not important in itself, and what is important is any cultural element that can serve as a patrimony for the nation. A set of crucial issues and questions arises here. First of all, who decides what is significant and what is less important? What happens if the nation, or indeed the whole humankind, suddenly decide that all this is no longer important? Are the language and cultural practices of a specific people only interesting if they are also interesting for someone else? Here we connect again with what the same speaker, further on in his speech, calls the “complex issue”¹⁷ of the “right to self-determination”.¹⁸

Now, I work in this field... When you go to a workshop, of a woman that was the equivalent of a secretary of education, the first issue that arises is: there are schools that are bilingual [e.g., Quechua and Spanish] and they want to become monolingual [i.e., Spanish only]. [...] Are you going to force them to speak their own language because you think it is better? In the end, it is a process of social persuasion that it is important to not lose this.¹⁹

Here we agree, in principle, with the speaker, primarily as we believe that everyone has an unnegotiable right to cultural transition that should not be mediated or impeded by means of

14 “Existe una distinción muy clara entre lo rural e lo indígena, que tiene implicancias políticas muy fuertes. ¿Cuál es la implicancia de esta distinción dentro de este país y dentro de la vuestra institución?” All recordings were retrieved from <<https://bit.ly/2IkhhjI>>.

15 “En el Perú se está haciendo la política de educación rural [...], que se va a apoyar en otra política, que es la educación intercultural bilingüe: esta ya existe. La pregunta, yo le podría responder haciendo una pregunta: ¿lo intercultural bilingüe es netamente rural o también es urbano? Y la respuesta es que en buena parte el intercultural bilingüe está en el ámbito rural, pero también está en el urbano. En el caso de Lircay/Huancavelica, lo intercultural bilingüe se mezcla con el rural”.

16 “Pero tampoco yo personalmente creo que tampoco hay que defender la lengua por la lengua: lo que hay que hacer es defender el patrimonio humano, social, cultural por lo que significa para la humanidad e para el [país Z], digamos, ¿no?”

17 “tema complejo”

18 “directo a la autodeterminación”

19 “Ahora, yo que trabajo en la cuestión, cuando tu vas a una oficina, de una mujer que estaba en lo equivalente de la secretaria de educación, la primera queja que hay es: hay escuelas que son bilingües [i.e. Quechua e Espanhol] e quieren ser monolingües [i.e. só Quechua] [...] ¿Vas a obligar lo a que hablen la lengua de ellos porque tú crees que es mejor? Al fin se trata de un proceso de convencimiento social de que es importante no perder eso”

coercive action. But then the speaker seems to accept self-determination just when it entails the abandonment of Indigenous languages. As argued by Victor Vich,

until the present day, Indigenous languages do not have any importance and national education keeps being understood as a deliberate process of de-Indigenization, that is, as a dispositif in charge of leaving behind all the cultural heritage that keeps being conceptualised as “inferior” (VICH, 2010, p. 159-160).²⁰

When, on the contrary, self-determination is intended to imply the possible resurgence of Indigenous languages, the speaker starts making rather bizarre comparisons:

...until we get to how the Basques and the Catalans are: for them it is more important to speak their language than Castilian Spanish... because this is a problem, too, isn't it?²¹

This comparison voices primarily the perpetual fear of the settler colonial state of being dethroned by the very same Indigenous people whose cultural, linguistic and territorial sovereignty it usurped. In this sense, Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese critically discuss the problematic “self-representation of whites as hapless victims who were at risk of losing their hegemonic hold on the country’s key institutions of power” (PERERA; PUGLIESE, 2014, pp. 89-90). Drawing upon Gloria Anzaldúa’s work, we situate the Quechua-speaking populations, alongside the other Indigenous language communities, their lands and cultures in that frightful and constantly effaced territory, constantly feared by the colonisers, that she calls “shadow” (ANZALDÚA, 1999). In Anzaldúa’s work, from the shadows emerges the “Shadow-Beast”, that is, the woman, the Other, the subaltern that populates the nightmares of the male, white, bourgeois oppressor.

Ironically, the speaker articulated this comparison with Catalans in July 2017, just a few months before the Catalan independence referendum held on 1 October of the same year, with all the violence from Spanish authorities that has characterised the election period and the exiles and incarcerations that followed Puigdemont’s declaration of independence on 10 October. In view of this crucial geopolitical conjuncture, then, the speaker’s comparison is at least inconsiderate, as it trivialises an extremely important national self-determination issues as those of Catalan and Basque independence. Parenthetically, it is useful to clarify that the Catalan referendum had already been announced by the time of the conference in Lima.

But even more critically, the speaker demonstrates an a-historic and decontextualised approach to the issue. Comparing the Basques and Catalans, who are among the most wealthy and privileged peoples of Spain, with the impoverished and marginalised populations of the Peruvian Andes is totally preposterous. Furthermore, there is a huge difference between the ways in which Catalan independence politics implicitly relies on whiteness in order to secure a distinguished status from the rest of the population of Spain,²² and the ways in which the very same whiteness operates to confine Andean populations in a positionality of racial others within Peruvian society.

20 “hasta la actualidad las lenguas indígenas no tienen ninguna importancia y la educación nacional se sigue entendiendo como un proceso de franca des-indigenización, vale decir, como un dispositivo encargado de dejar atrás toda la herencia cultural andina que sigue siendo conceptualizada como ‘inferior’”.

21 “Hasta que lleguemos a como son los vascos o los catalanes, que les importa más hablar su lengua que el castellano, porque también eso es un problema, ¿no?”

22 An illuminating source in this sense is Inés Arrimadas’s speech at the Catalan Parliament on 10 October 2017, right after Carles Puigdemont’s declaration of independence (ARRIMADAS, 2017). In her speech, Arrimadas quotes an article by the then Catalan Vice-President Oriol Junqueras, where he relies on untenable notions of genetic distance and proximity to demonstrate the differences between Catalans and Spaniards. For a source based on a deeper historiographical investigation, see Francisco Martínez

Finally, what is silenced here is the colonial violence that lies behind the linguistic hegemony of Spanish, both in Peru and in Spain. This violence is also effaced by other mechanisms that are set in operation by the enunciations that are uttered during the event.

ENTREGAR LA EDUCACIÓN [DISPATCHING EDUCATION]

The cultural, linguistic, political, and implicitly military hegemony of the Peruvian capital Lima on the “rural communities” is understood as a producer of “education” and “national unity”. This became obvious when another speaker, whose speech had been quite reasonable, and whose militancy appeared extremely honest and heartfelt, started using the phrase “dispatch education”²³, or “we need to imagine the service we are dispatching”: here the idea of dispatch evidently unmasks the most common conception that lies behind rural education, namely, the idea that education is something that can be mass-produced in the colonial metropolis, then packed up and dispatched to the most disparate peripheries. This is precisely what Victor Vich identifies as the “fantasy of backwardness” (VICH, 2010, p. 3) attached to the *sierra peruana* [Peruvian mountain(s)]:

The mountains were intended as the place of “barbarity”, of a culture imagined as being inferior, that at best was to be tutelarily “educated” and excluded from political participation [...] On the one hand, the mountains were understood as an empty reality where there is no relevant knowledge, and on the other hand, the coast is conceived as that place that “has got it all” (VICH, 2010, p. 159-160).²⁴

This process of literal “knowledge transfer”, from the coast to the mountain. articulated with its most deliberate colonial implications, is deemed necessary to make students, in the words of the same speaker, “citizen[s] of the world”.²⁵ We could even choose not to engage with this expression, seen that the concept of citizenship is often imbricated with some form of violence, perpetrated precisely against those who do not qualify within the white colonial standards of what is considered as being civic (cf. PERERA, 2014). Additionally, we could also argue that making someone a “citizen of the world” might not have anything to do with liberation and empowerment: it can merely be an excuse to efface histories, neutralise identities, and transforming places, that once might have been centres, into peripheries.

All the same, this speaker demonstrated a sincere political passion and a genuine participation in various crucial struggles, and it is perhaps for this same reason that a member of the audience heavily questioned her:

It was said that in rural areas the curriculum needs to be specific to the rural area in question, with autonomous curricular contents [...] How do we conciliate this with a situation in which all kids need to learn the same things, both in rural and in urban areas?²⁶

As incredible as it may sound, we agree with the preoccupations of this person. Furthermore, we would like to respond to her enquiry by stating that her anxieties are justified, but that the problem here is obviously not Quechua, or Aymara, and so forth: the problem is Spanish. Why is it

Hoyos’s seminal work on the ideas of aryanness and Europeanness that underlie the debate on *catalanismo* between the 19th and 20th centuries, with reference to such authors as Valentí Almirall and Pompeu Gener (HOYOS, 2014).

23 “Entregar la educación”

24 “La sierra fue entendida como el lugar de la “barbarie”, una cultura figurada como inferior a la que en el mejor de los casos había que “educar” tutelariamente y excluirla de toda participación política. [...] Por un lado, la sierra es entendida como una realidad vacía donde no hay ningún conocimiento relevante y, por otro, la costa se concibe como aquel lugar que “lo posee todo”.

25 “ciudadano[s] del mundo”.

26 “Se manifestó que en la zona rural el currículo debe ser propio para la zona rural, con contenidos curriculares propios [...] ¿Cómo conjugar esto con una situación de que todos los niños del país deben aprender lo mismo, tanto en la zona rural como en zonas urbanas?”

that bilingual schools are only contemplated in the rural area? Why are kids from Lima not required to study Quechua?

Here it is important to understand how, through this complex paraphrase, this member of the audience is voicing the tacitly agreed notion that Peru's state and social protocols are (or should be) constructed on the basis of a standard settler colonial, Euro-descendant subject. State, nation and whiteness coincide. A uniformed model of education based on the notion that "all kids need to learn the same things" boils down to a model where settler colonial knowledge, language and protocols constitute the only content that deserves being taught. A crucial gap opens between the ways in which "whiteness enmeshes with law in securing and reproducing colonial and racist forms of biopower" (PERERA; PUGLIESE, 2012, p. 89) and the aforementioned EIB - *Educación Intercultural Bilingüe* policy, to be understood, with all its contradictions discussed above, as a crucial and yet modest contestation of this white law.

FINAL REMARKS

In this essay, drawing upon a corpus of speeches uttered during the Lima day of the *I Seminario Internacional de Educación Rural*, we have attempted to identify epiphanic passages that exposed crucial conceptions of "rural" and "bilingual" education, in order to unearth the ways in which these concepts are used as disguising paraphrases meant to depoliticise and efface Indigeneity together with its profound political significance.

Among other things, we also felt that experts that explicitly identified as members of "bilingual", "rural", and, most importantly, Indigenous communities were not invited to talk at the Lima conference. This lack of representativity appeared extremely odd, in view of the fact that the Lircay day featured a couple of local speakers, as well as involving a substantial participation of the audience in the form of the aforementioned roundtables. This discrepancy happens to allegorically reproduce the *costa vs. sierra* dialectics, whereby, as Patricia Ames puts it,

intercultural services appear to be available for Indigenous users while they remain "in their place", but cease to be available in the city, as if Indigenous people stopped being Indigenous when moving to urban settings (AMES, 2010)²⁷

Incidentally, Ames continues to argue that this is precisely the case when it comes to "rural" and "bilingual" education:

A similar logic can be observed in the case of intercultural bilingual education (EIB), that is basically conceived as a service for rural zones, thus complicating its implementation in urban zones (AMES, 2010)²⁸

In this essay, we have related this fundamental aporia with the notion of cultural genocide, seen as a precise national agenda that is far from being an exclusive prerogative of Peru, but is rather a shared characteristic of settler colonial countries. As a matter of fact, we have drawn upon theoretical contributions that are geographically heterogeneous and do not exclusively address Peru and Andean countries. Reiteratively, as Italian passport holders, we also want to make clear that we perceive the Peruvian EIB policy, as well as the efforts of all those who were involved in the Lima conference, as being much less genocidal than the openly glottophagic politics of Italian, with its continued effacement of regional languages.

²⁷ "los servicios interculturales resultan disponibles para los usuarios indígenas en tanto permanezcan 'en su lugar', pero los servicios cesan de estar disponibles en la urbe, como si los indígenas dejaran de serlo al desplazarse al escenario urbano".

²⁸ "Una lógica similar puede observarse para el caso de la educación intercultural bilingüe (EIB), que se concibe básicamente como un servicio para zonas rurales, complicándose con ello su implementación en zonas urbanas".

While we have productively used the concept of Indigeneity in our paper, we understand that there are fundamental problems related to its use. As explained by María Isabel Remy, “we need to keep in mind that the term ‘Indigenous’ was invented by the Colony” (REMY, 2013, p. 202).²⁹ In other words, this is a term that problematically groups together a multitude of heterogeneous ethnicities, thus overlooking their cultural unicities and defining them solely in terms of their oppositional positionality vis-à-vis the settlers. Similarly, in this essay Quechua has been prevalently mentioned as example of Indigenous language. We understand that this is in itself a problem, in view of the mass Quechuzation operated in Peru during the colonial period (REMY, 2013, p. 203). Nevertheless, we stuck to the concept of Indigeneity by virtue of its political implications in terms of the reclamation of sovereign spaces, which in turn has a lot to do with the use of the language. As for Quechua, we maintained constant references to it as the whole event was shaped around the activities of UDEA in Lircay, and thus the focus was kept mainly on Quechua-speaking communities.

Finally, wrapping up the partial conclusions drafted in the above sections, we identified several paraphrasal strategies that dissimulated a series of underlying categories and undeclared agendas within the debate on what was apparently posited as “rural education”, and was furtherly qualified as “bilingual” and “intercultural”: most notably, the continuous effacement of the very same category of “Indigenous” and “Indigeneity” — an effacement that urgently exposes the “pacific” and “painless” perpetuation of an ongoing cultural genocide as its main undeclared agenda.

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