

Teacher Training In Colombia From A Historical Perspective

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to make a historical review of teacher training in Colombia with respect to the development of its competence, taking the period between the sixteenth century, when the first attempts at teacher training were made, and the major educational reforms of the twenty-first century, which have greatly influenced the formation of the profile of the foreign language educator. Finally, a historical review is made on the teaching of foreign languages in the educational processes of the country, influenced by social and political phenomena throughout history. As a methodology, the sources were selected and organized chronologically and a division of three major periods framed by the events of the country's history and the milestones of the teaching profession was established.

Key words: teacher training, teaching competencies, teacher education, teaching, and historical perspective.

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es realizar un recorrido histórico de la formación docente en Colombia con respecto al desarrollo de su competencia, tomando el periodo transcurrido entre el siglo XVI, tiempo en que se dan los primeros intentos de formación docente hasta las grandes reformas educativas del siglo XXI que han influido grandemente en la formación del perfil del educador de lenguas extranjeras. Finalmente, se hace un recuento histórico sobre la enseñanza de las lenguas extranjeras en los procesos educativos de país influenciada por los fenómenos sociales y políticos a través de la historia. Como metodología se seleccionaron y organizaron las fuentes cronológicamente y se estableció una división de tres grandes periodos enmarcados por los acontecimientos de la historia del país y los hitos de la profesión docente.

Palabras claves: formación docente, competencias docentes, formación del profesorado, docencia y perspectiva histórica.

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar uma panorâmica histórica da formação de professores na Colômbia no que diz respeito ao desenvolvimento da competência do professor, tomando o período entre o século XVI, quando foram feitas as primeiras tentativas de formação de professores, e as grandes reformas educativas do século XXI, que influenciaram grandemente o perfil do educador de línguas estrangeiras. Por fim, é feito um relato histórico do ensino de línguas estrangeiras nos processos educativos do país, influenciado por fenômenos sociais e políticos ao longo da história. Como metodologia, as fontes foram selecionadas e organizadas cronologicamente e estabeleceu-se uma divisão em três grandes períodos enquadrados pelos acontecimentos da história do país e pelos marcos da profissão docente.

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Palavras-chave: formação de professores, competências dos professores, formação de professores, ensino e perspectiva histórica.

Introduction

Throughout its history, Colombia has undergone major social and political changes that have had a fundamental impact on education. These transformations have had a direct impact on developing teachers' professional competencies. A historical review of teacher training shows that the demands are becoming more demanding as there is a growing concern to offer quality education that meets the needs of changing societies and the demands of the globalized world. This article presents an overview of teacher training in Colombia from a historical perspective.

After selecting and organizing the sources, we established a division of three major periods framed by the events of the country's history and the milestones of the teaching profession. This documentary review enabled the authors to create a narrative that traced the beginnings of teacher training in the country in the sixteenth century, as well as the changes that occurred in subsequent centuries, which were influenced by the political and social history of the country. Finally, a brief review was made of the history of English language teaching in Colombia and the creation of the first English language programs in Colombia and policies aimed at the development of bilingualism policies throughout history.

This review shows the evolution of the teacher's profile throughout history from the first attempts at training that corresponded to an informal education governed by the principles of the Catholic Church for cultural colonization with few demands on the teacher's profile, which were more focused on the human and religious formation of the educator.

Political transformations led to think of a more comprehensive teacher training with including sciences, arts, and pedagogy, influenced by first world countries such as France and England. The industrial revolution and advances in science and technology lead to transforming viewing education and, therefore, training its professionals with including technological competencies.

Although training in foreign languages was present since colonial times, first with teaching Spanish to indigenous people, and later with the teaching of modern languages such as English and French; it was the great political changes worldwide that allowed a major transformation in education, with including bilingualism policies and global competencies for new professionals that mark a stage transform teacher training that gives rise to educational reforms and increasing demands in this profession. In the 21st century, globalization has significantly strengthened, to the point where the MEN evaluate academic mobility as a requirement for higher education programs.

This article is part of the doctoral thesis entitled "A look at the profile of teachers of foreign language degree programs in Colombia in coherence with the training proposals of higher education institutions". The article aims to open a space for reflection and awareness of the teaching profession and its major transformations throughout history.

Early attempts at teacher training in Colombia.

Teacher training in Colombia dates to colonial times, from the mid-sixteenth century to the beginning of the Wars of Independence Helg (2001). Since 1550, there had been some first attempts at teacher training. For this purpose, convents could instruct priests and amateurs who taught grammar and reading. However, these spaces did not correspond to a formal

education, but were necessary and adapted to make the indigenous people adopt the culture of the Spaniards.

For this reason, education was initially in charge of the Catholic Church (Nieto, 2017). Religion and Christianity mediated this first form of education. Some religious orders exercised teaching. The first teachers focused their teachings on a marked scholastic formation and depended on the Church. The primary purpose of the first schools was to educate the children of the colonizers, who professed the Catholic religion.

The *encomenderos*² had the obligation to finance *encomienda* schools for the Indians, where they taught them to speak Spanish, the Catholic religion, and some manual skills. However, the state did not monitor this education, and frequently the landowners failed to comply with the obligation to educate the Indians. As Helg (2001) mentioned, this education turned into a quick and superficial evangelization.

During the 16th century, the government created the first schools for the descendants of Spaniards. At this time, private elementary schools were established to educate the children of high-ranking Creoles and Indians, the cost of each one depended on the classes the children took, Spanish, reading, writing and arithmetic, however, the focus of the teaching was centered on catechism and religion, Helg (2001).

The secondary schools were in the most important cities of the country: Bogotá, Tunja, Pamplona, Buga, Pasto, Cartagena, Mompox and Medellín. Only the children of Spaniards, who could prove the purity of their blood, had access to these institutions. The same occurred with two universities founded later, one by Jesuits and the other by Dominicans, where law, philosophy and theology were taught, Helg (2001).

Later, with the expulsion of the Society of Jesus from Latin America in 1767, the state began to regain control of education. It could be said that from 1770 to 1800 a first profile was established for those who wished to obtain the title of teacher. Acevedo (1984) states that to become a teacher, it was necessary to pass an exam that measured knowledge in reading comprehension, writing skills and some mathematical operations. Besides this knowledge, it was indispensable to fulfill some requirements, such as being recognized for being a good religious and demonstrating a holy and kind image. Race was also considered, a requirement was to be a white man, of good manners, good physical appearance and without bad habits. The selection of the teacher was subject to the blessing of a priest who accredited his virtuousness. Subsequently, through a contest, a slate was selected to choose the person with the best scores. Bayona & Urrego (2019).

Education in the eighteenth century was influenced by European thought and currents, thus the intellectual and cultural movement known as Enlightenment that originated in Europe in the mid-seventeenth century, which influenced the American continent and of course the education of the time, Pérez & Gallego (2019). Education now had to be oriented to the dissemination of science, physics, history, and astronomy, putting an end to the scholastic style. Perez & Gallego (2019) state that since then, the phenomenon of globalization and its impact on societies is given beginning and recognized, reaching beyond geographical boundaries.

² In the past, the *encomienda* was the name given to the person who, by Royal Grant, had indigenous people entrusted to him in any of the Spanish territories of America and the Philippines. The *encomendero* was the head of part of a colonial institution called *encomienda*.

The state gained autonomy during the period of independence 1810-1819 and focused on developing educational processes according to the needs of each region, thus promoting sciences and arts. At this time, curricula were created to develop competencies in reading, writing, geometric drawings, Christian doctrine and civics, branches of science, agriculture and industry, Bayona & Urrego (2019).

Between the XIX and XX centuries, Colombia lived a period of civil wars and struggles between political parties. The school system was in decline and failed in its mission to provide citizens with schooling. Human and financial resources were not available and because during the war, it was chosen to evict schools to adapt them as improvised barracks. Gallego (2018). These facts led to the fact that at the end of the century, about 80% of the population remained illiterate. Gallego (2018).

After independence, in 1822, Simón Bolívar and the other political leaders were concerned about the promotion of education since the illiteracy rate was too high. Under the direction of Fray Sebastián Mora, the first normal school was opened in Santafé de Bogotá, the Lancasterian Method of Mutual Teaching was implemented, and the republican schools were created with a Lancasterian pedagogy. This was a peer-to-peer teaching method, more advanced children taught other children with less academic progress. Drawing, grammar, and sewing were taught, Simón Bolívar, García (2021) brought from France this model.

During this period, teachers in the provinces and parishes had to be trained to reproduce it in their towns or cities with their colleagues. Around the same time, the teaching methodology to be maintained in these educational centers was discussed. Some expressed their preference for maintaining the religious and values formation, while others preferred to promote the educational models brought from France and England. In 1822, the first normal school in the country was created in Santafé de Bogotá, under the direction of Fray Sebastián Mora, adopting the Lancasterian method, by which time 90% of the country's population was illiterate.

Between 1842 and 1845, during the presidency of Pedro Alcántara Herrán and the Minister of Education Mariano Ospina Rodríguez, the projects of teacher training and the idea of elementary education with the Lancasterian method were retaken. The normal schools were reorganized to prepare the teachers who would teach in primary and secondary schools. Given the shortage of teachers and their lack of preparation, in 1844, the Normal Schools were institutionalized in the capitals of each department, which were institutions dedicated primarily to the training of teachers, Calvo (2004).

During the mandate of Francisco de Paula Santander, an educational reform was developed, and schools were established in each of the religious convents with the purpose of forming good Catholics. With the Constitution of 1853, absolute freedom of education was instituted. Years later with the conformation of the United States of Colombia from 1861 to 1886 a mission of German pedagogues arrived in the country to train teachers and technical education was organized and implemented, Patiño. (2014).

More than 20 teacher training colleges were organized in the country (12 for boys and 11 for girls), around this time the Tunja teacher training college was created and the preparation of teachers with the principles of traditional and Catholic pedagogy began. Mariano Ospina asked the Jesuits to once again direct secondary education. This German mission was composed of nine foreigners who managed to organize more than twenty normal schools Calvo (2004). Three normal schools were founded in Bogotá, two for boys and one for girls).

In 1870, with José Hilario López in power, the possibility of a secular federal state was offered, which implied the guarantee of freedom of worship, and the church was placed under the surveillance of the state and the Jesuits were once again expelled. It is important to mention that education, as it is known today, has been the result of a series of changes

that took place to have an education according to the needs of society. Thus, in the United States of Colombia, the educational reform of the seventies of the 19th century was characterized by an integral concept of education.

The training of teachers in Colombia was based on pedagogical conceptions consistent with the development of science, governmental educational policy, and an understanding of the purposes of the State. Decree 429 of 1893, better known as the Zerda Plan, determined the duration of five years after primary school to obtain the title of teacher, Torres (2009).

Teacher training in Colombia during the twentieth century.

As part of the country's constant concern to improve the quality of education, in 1903, an educational reform was undertaken to restructure the school and university system. Within the framework of this reform, education is divided into 1) primary, 2) secondary, 3) industrial, 4) professional and artistic levels. For the year 1925, the inclusion of German pedagogues was again considered. Thus, the second German commission arrived, and the organization of Colombian education was left in the hands of three experts: Carl Glockner, in charge of restructuring the elementary and primary schools; Karl Decker, the secondary school; and Anton Eitel, the university. In the same year, Ovidio Decroly founded the Escuela Nueva, Helg (2001).

In 1903, the creation of normal schools for men and women was ordered in each departmental capital, these were focused on the training of teachers to work in primary education and technical training. Around this time, the Tunja Teacher Training College for Boys was created, which was an important antecedent in the creation of the current Pedagogical and Technological University of Colombia. With these changes in the education of the time, the State test to measure the quality of education appeared for the first time in 1930, Parra (2004). In the 1930s, the first faculties of education appeared. This was the beginning of a process of strengthening teacher training, and for this reason the faculties of Education Sciences were created.

With the second mission of German pedagogues, brought by the government of Pedro Nel Ospina, to advise different educational entities in the country, the first faculty of male and female education in Tunja was created. The German professor Julius Sieber, who was part of this German commission, made significant contributions to the training of high-quality teachers using the active teaching method, Parra (2004). Since then, the Faculty of Education Sciences became the first educational center in the country to lead a research conscience, this was created according to Decree 1379 of 1934 (July 5), as mentioned by Parra, L (2016). The current National University is the first to establish the Faculty of Education in Bogota in 1933.

The Faculty of Education for men in Tunja is created, and the Faculty of Education for women in Bogota, in the pedagogical institute for young ladies. By 1935, the National Pedagogical Institute and the Faculty of Education of the National University of Bogota were merged into a single Faculty of Education in Tunja, the latter being the only and main seat, Parra, L (2016).

The union of these three faculties creates the Escuela Normal Superior de Colombia, which would later give rise to the pedagogical university. In Tunja, the Universidad Pedagógica de Colombia is created, currently called Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia.

With the creation of the Escuela Normal Superior, teacher training profiles were defined, where, in addition to the pedagogical and didactic skills that qualify them for teaching, a high development of scientific and investigative skills is emphasized as a requirement to ensure comprehensive educational processes. The teacher of the Escuela Normal Superior should be a scientist in his specialization and not a simple instructor; know

scientific and investigative methods and be a high-level pedagogue who directs the teaching-learning process with high quality (Ocampo, 1978).

The creation of the faculties of education, the creation of the pedagogy departments began in the 1960s. Between 1933 and 1936, the professional titles of Licenciado were created, which demanded a whole analysis and an intellectual exercise by the graduates. In 1936, with the second educational reform under the mandate of President Alfonso López Pumarejo, through this reform, freedom of worship and freedom in teaching were established, initiating a more formal process in the training of teachers. A recognition for teacher training and work begins, "human and social sciences are recognized as the legitimate ways of interpreting education" (Ramos, 2019, p. 43).

In the 1940s, the Escuela Normal Superior was a milestone in teacher training, which offered pedagogical training after the academic baccalaureate degree and granted the title of normalista superior, which qualifies for teaching. This educational institution had as its objective the training of educators for the preschool and elementary school levels. The first one was founded in 1936 by the then President Alfonso López Pumarejo. Subsequently, the only two pedagogical universities in the country emerged from it: the National Pedagogical University and the Pedagogical and Technological University of Colombia, which began to strengthen the educational landscape in terms of teacher training. This is the beginning then to the appearance of the Faculties of Education and the continuation of training in the Normal Schools, Ramos (2019).

In the decade of the fifties (50s) of the twentieth century, the Pedagogical University of Colombia appears in Tunja, created according to Decree 2655 of October 10, 1953, in the government of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who served as rector was the German Julius Sieber. This university was created based on a German model. In 1954 the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Femenina was founded in Bogotá, created by Decree 547 of February 23, 1954, its first director was the German Francisca Radke. Ramos (2019).

These universities were conceived as trainers of technicians with a specific professional function in the country. In this sense, they were developed in three functions: 1) To provide students with the necessary knowledge to develop a particular science. 2) Interpretative function: this implies the development of the capacity to discern between the most pertinent knowledge to teach according to the teaching purpose and the best way to present it to the student. 3) Inquisitive function, which refers to research. Figueroa, C. (2006).

The evolution and development of the faculties of education constituted a great advance in the training of teachers in the country and an advance in scientific development given by the needs of specialization of teachers, however, with the emergence of the faculties of education, the teacher training colleges began to lose prestige and quality. Teachers trained in teacher training colleges began to be displaced from teaching at the secondary level, Restrepo (2010).

In the 1950s and 1960s, Colombia entered a period of social and economic progress, which of course had a positive impact on education. At this time, higher education had an important development, the idea of "human capital based on the link between education and economic progress" (Ramos, 2019, p. 45) gained strength.

At the end of the 1970s, there was a change that affected the Normal Schools. Through Decree 1419 of 1978, the title of Teacher, historically offered by these institutions, was changed to "bachiller pedagógico" (pedagogical bachelor). With this provision, the MEN weakened the Normal Schools and strengthened the Faculties of Education. In this way, the aim was to professionalize teacher training, no longer as teacher educators, but as graduates with specific disciplinary knowledge, Jiménez (2019).

The normal schools stopped training normal teachers for basic primary education, the training focused on training pedagogical baccalaureates with a more technical level of training, as mentioned by Jiménez (2019). Henceforth, the units dedicated to the training of teachers in higher education in the country are the faculties of education which reached an important hatching since the sixties of the twentieth century.

At the end of the nineties of the twentieth century, 681 programs dedicated to the training of educators were offered in Colombia, of which 399 programs corresponded to undergraduate degrees in education, 244 to specialization, 37 to master's degrees and there was a doctorate, Jurado (2016).

With the 1991 Constitution, significant changes were made at the level of democracy for Colombians, education was recognized from its social function and as a fundamental right of every citizen. Subsequently, the General Education Law of 1194 managed to generate a social and intellectual movement of teachers. Regarding the profile of the teacher, Article 68 of the 1991 Constitution mentions that teaching will oversee professionals with recognized ethical and pedagogical suitability and guarantees the professionalization and dignity of the teaching profession.

Likewise, Law 115 of 1994 defines the educator as a guide in the teaching and learning processes of students "in accordance with the social, cultural, ethical and moral expectations of the family and society" (Jiménez, 2019, p.99). For its part, Article 109 makes references to the purposes of educator training. This article mentions the training of educators of high scientific and ethical quality, with competence in the development of pedagogical theory and practice as a fundamental part of their disciplinary knowledge.

Teacher training in the 21st century

The twenty-first century marks a stage of great transformations in education influenced by the phenomenon of globalization, although this phenomenon had already accompanied education since colonial times and throughout the history of education in Colombia, since many of the educational transformations received European influence.

During this time, European currents, especially France and England, strongly influenced Colombian education. During this XXI century, the phenomenon of globalization was presented with much more strength to the point that academic mobility becomes one of the requirements in higher education programs at the time of being evaluated by the MEN, Martínez (2016). Another aspect that has influenced the training of teachers in this century is the use of technology applied to education, here appear the academic proposals of virtual education and educational informatics scenarios as support to face-to-face proposals.

From now on, we begin to think of citizens who develop competencies that enable them to respond to global demands. Of course, we take into account the training profile of the teachers who guide the educational processes of the new generations. Martínez (2016) points out that education becomes a trans-national concern. In this context, the training of competencies and the profile of the teacher-trainer are becoming increasingly important in view of the growing demands of the market.

Globality and its impact on education, higher education programs initiated the implementation of new strategies and programs led by the Ministry of National Education. In this context, in 2004, the National Bilingualism Program PNB (2004-2019) emerged in Colombia, and the Common European Framework of Reference for the teaching and evaluation of foreign languages was adopted. Fandiño (2012) states that the main objective of the PNB is to have citizens capable of communicating in English, with internationally comparable standards, which will insert the country in the processes of universal communication, in the global economy and in cultural openness.

Next, Article 21 of Law 115 mentions the acquisition of conversational and reading skills in the foreign language. From this moment on, the teaching of English became much more compulsory in Colombia and marked the beginning of strategies to promote its teaching. In 2004, the MEN established the National Bilingualism Program, whose main objective is to promote the learning of English, as well as to improve the quality of English teaching. In 2006, through Decree 3870, Article 2 refers to the adoption of the international reference.

In 2007, the basic competency standards for primary and secondary education were published based on the recently adopted Common European Framework. Since 2015, several strategies focused on students, teachers, Education Secretary, and official educational institutions have been promoted. This is how Colombian policies have defined bilingualism in Colombia Spanish-English.

The MEN, as the entity responsible for guiding the educational processes of teacher training, sponsors programs for teacher qualification, which is how a document called Colombian system for educator training and policy guidelines was prepared in 2013. This document raises as a fundamental point the training of educators. There, the need to train an education professional and an expert in the management of process and procedures is exposed, Pupo, M. (2019). The quality of education and the quality of teacher training are articulated. In this sense, the MEN (2013) affirms that the educator in his professional performance must ensure pedagogical, disciplinary, didactic, evaluative, and investigative knowledge of his teaching field.

In the second decade of this century, the MEN's Project for the Strengthening of English Language Degree Programs was born in association with the British Council, whose objective was to contribute to the strengthening of foreign language degree programs as a determining factor in the training of English teachers in the country. This program was divided into three phases, beginning with a diagnosis, followed by the implementation of an improvement plan, and ending with an evaluation that showed the state of the programs in the academic, research and didactic processes of both teachers and students. This project provides important inputs which are considered for the reforms that are given to degree programs in the second decade of this century.

In 2014 the MEN, in association with the National Accreditation Council (CNA), the Intersectoral Commission for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CONACES), the Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education (ICFES), and the Colombian Association of Faculties of Education (ASCOFADE), published the guidelines for bachelor's degree programs in the country. These guidelines define the competencies of teachers. The teaching profession is shown as the art of combining disciplinary knowledge with pedagogy and didactics, accompanied by research processes that enable student learning in different learning contexts. In addition, emphasis is placed on the development of competencies in English as a foreign language.

Subsequently, resolution 2041 of February 3, 2016, appears and the following year there is a surprising change and resolution 18583 of September 15, 2017, appears, which repeals the previous resolution. The degree programs must define training profile where curricular criteria such as comprehensiveness, flexibility and interdisciplinarity are made explicit so that the new foreign language teachers develop values and ethical attitudes to carry out educational processes in a democratic manner and with respect attending to diversity and difference. In the two resolutions, the MEN define four training components: 1) General Foundations Component, 2) Specific and Disciplinary Knowledge Component, 3) Pedagogy Component, 4) Didactics of the Disciplines Component.

Among the competencies to be considered in teacher training, the following are mentioned: human competencies, competencies in the development of specific knowledge, competencies in ICT, mathematical, logical process, pedagogical competencies, competencies in didactics of disciplines, research competencies, competencies in mother tongue and foreign language. A distinction is made here between the level of English that a graduate in foreign languages must reach and a graduate in another field of education. The former must certify a level of C1 while the latter must reach B1 according to the descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Likewise, these resolutions define the denominations that the degree programs must have from now on.

Table N. 1 Denominations of bachelor's degree programs in Colombia

Denominación	Área Obligatoria y Fundamental
Licenciatura en Educación Física, Recreación y Deportes	
Licenciatura en Educación Física y Deporte	Educación Física, Recreación y Deportes
Licenciatura en Educación Física Licenciatura en Deporte	
Licenciatura en Recreación	
Licenciatura en Educación Religiosa Licenciatura en Teología	Educación Religiosa
Licenciatura en Filosofía Licenciatura en Filosofía y Letras Licenciatura en Ética y Valores	Educación en ética y Valores Humanos
Licenciatura en Humanidades y Lengua Castellana Licenciatura en Literatura y Lengua Castellana Licenciatura en Literatura Licenciatura en Español y Filología Licenciatura en Español e Inglés Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Licenciatura en Español y Lenguas Extranjeras Licenciatura en Filología e Idiomas Licenciatura en Bilingüismo	Humanidades, Lengua Castellana e Idiomas Extranjeros
Licenciatura en Matemáticas	Matemáticas
Licenciatura en Tecnología e Informática Licenciatura en Tecnología Licenciatura en Informática Licenciatura en Diseño Tecnológico Licenciatura en Electrónica	Tecnología e Informática

Note: The table shows the denomination of the degree programs according to MEN resolution 18583 on September 15, 2017.

The evolution of undergraduate programs in foreign languages

The teaching of English in Colombia appears in 1820. Bastidas & Muños (2017) state that this fact was perhaps because of political and social situations being experienced which led to the conformation of a British legion with about five thousand English soldiers as a strategy to strengthen the army commanded by Simón Bolívar with the aim of achieving the independence of Colombia. Besides this fact, Simón Bolívar had visited London and the close relationship he had with the English army, as well as several writings he wrote in English to make known the political situation of Colombia. Mosquera (1954) quoted by Bastidas and Muños (2017).

Around 1826, by a decree of October 3, Spanish was made official as a language in schools and other languages such as French, English, German and Italian were included in the educational system. However, very minimal learning results were observed, given

that the methodology used was based on learning the structures of the language without comprehension.

There was a historical fact that marked the beginning of the teaching of English in the country, this was due to the arrival of British and Dutch Puritans to the coasts of San Andres and Providencia, especially the Dutch were the ones who started teaching English to the inhabitants of these islands during the seventeenth century. However, at that time English was a language that still lacked prestige in comparison to other languages.

However, Stansfield (1972) states that the teaching of languages in Colombia was primarily due to the inclusion of Latin in the curricula. Subjects had to be taught in Latin, for the time both academic texts, speeches and sermons were delivered in Latin, both teachers and students had to speak Latin inside and outside the classrooms of schools and higher education, since Latin was constituted as the official language of education. The study of foreign languages was made mandatory in high school, and so by decree No. 1238 of 1892, Latin was established as the language of instruction for three years, Greek for the following two years and then students could choose between learning English or French during the last two years.

By the year 1933, there was an educational reform, and it was here when Latin began to lose position, it was declared that French would be compulsory for five years and Latin and English for four years. The language that then became more relevant was French. Progressively Latin continued its depreciation process, it was reduced to three years in 1936, and to two years in 1939. With the Second World War (1939-1945), English regained importance, and in 1944, its teaching was made compulsory during the six years of secondary education and the number of hours of class per week was increased.

Years later, French regained importance and a balance was achieved in the teaching of English and French. In 1974, according to Decree 080, the teaching of English as the only foreign language for all secondary education was established. Subsequently, Decree 1313 of 1979 established the mandatory teaching of French during the last two years of high school. The decree of April 24, 1982, reintroduced the teaching of a foreign language only in the six years of high school preparation.

By 1984, French was no longer taught. Thus, French has gone through periods of peak and decline, however, it has been gradually reappearing in language institutes, colleges and in foreign language degree programs. These abrupt changes in the inclusion of foreign languages in Colombian education are evidence of a lack of clear policies, ignorance of the social and cultural reality of the country, and decision making driven by particular or political interests. Between 1966 and 1998, government policies established the mandatory teaching of English for primary and high school; in higher education, institutions were autonomous in deciding whether to include English in their curricula or not. However, given the social trends of the time, such as the influence of the United States in Latin America and especially in Colombia, several institutions decided not only to strengthen these competencies but also to create language institutes and later, degree programs in foreign languages dedicated to train English teachers.

Currently, English in Colombia continues to be the official foreign language of instruction. This is reinforced with the appearance of the General Law of Education in 1994, whose articles 21, 22 and 23 emphasize the need to learn at least one foreign language from the first levels of primary school. Here a compulsory area in the curriculum dedicated to the teaching of foreign languages is also created. By 1934, the teaching of English was influenced by the British Council which is established in Colombia as a representative body of British institutions, and with the aim of achieving better relations between Britain and other countries, however, before the British Council, other institutes dedicated to the

teaching of English had already operated, Stansfield (1972) cited by Bastidas & Muñoz (2017).

Until today, the British Council has overseen guiding and accompanying projects to strengthen the communicative competence of English in the country. In the 1950s, the Alliance for Progress project influenced the teaching of English. Through this initiative, North American citizens was facilitated "as cultural promoters through the peace corps" Ramos (2019.p. 49).

In 1958, in MEN founds the Instituto Electrónico de Lenguas, which was later named Instituto Electrónico de Idiomas (IEI), an entity in charge of teaching English in the country, as well as training English teachers, Bastidas and Muñoz (2017). These historical events have created the need to train teachers in foreign languages and thus the creation of bachelor's degrees in this field of knowledge.

In 1961, the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia opened the first language program in the country. Later, in 1964, the Universidad del Atlántico made a similar offer with the degree program in Philology and Languages Ramos, (2019). During this decade, universities such as Pontificia Javeriana, Universidad de Nariño, Universidad del Quindío, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Universidad de Antioquia, Universidad INCCA and Universidad del Tolima joined the initiative, considered as the pioneers in offering bachelor's degrees in foreign languages and related subjects.

Since then, both public and private higher education institutions have offered bachelor's degree programs in foreign languages and related subjects. At present, there are about 45 bachelor's degree programs in this field, according to data from SINIES (National Higher Education Information System) for 2023. Within the framework of bilingualism policies in the country, the constant changes in the country's policy and global trends have influenced these programs, Ramos (2019). However, the teaching of foreign languages in Colombia continues to be an object of concern today, as well as the training of teachers in foreign languages, despite existing policies and initiatives of the national government. Betancourt B. and De Sarmiento, M. (2024) affirm that

Throughout the history in Colombia there have been good initiatives to strengthen English language. However, it is clear the existence of different programs that sometimes one overlaps the other, which shows little clarity in the language policies and lack of well-defined objectives. (p. 1281).

As we have seen, Colombia has had an important trajectory in teacher training, especially in including foreign languages in the curricula, since the colony until nowadays, the national government has included policies to strengthen the competences in a foreign language in the population. However, there is still room for improvement since the results are still deficient. On the one hand, there are still opportunities for improvement in teacher training. According to a research conducted by Cely (2023), it was found that teachers in undergraduate programs in foreign languages still struggle to develop skills that enable them to teach. To achieve a high level of English proficiency, it is crucial for Colombia to create clear policies that prioritize inclusiveness and avoid redundancy to achieve a good level of English as the current policies are not clear and may not achieve a good performance in English language communication skills, Cely Betancourt y Urrutia Ramos (2024).

Conclusions and discussion

Thus, teacher training in Colombia has gone through several phases throughout history, from the first attempts at teaching influenced by European culture and tradition, through the creation of the teacher training colleges in 1822, as the first institutions accredited to train teachers in the country, to 1934 with the creation of the first faculties of education.

The profile of the foreign language teacher has gone through several stages of change. The first foreign language programs-oriented teaching through traditional methodologies, such as grammar and translation. To become an English teacher, it was only necessary to have a high level of proficiency in the language. In the 1970s, the inclusion of technology in education implied that the teacher, besides his or her communicative skills in the language, also had to develop technological skills. Likewise, bilingualism policies are increasingly demanding the level of language that teachers must have Miranda (2015).

English teaching policies in Colombia are not recent; as mentioned, English teaching has been included in Colombia since colonial times. Even though bilingualism programs have been officially known since 2004, Colombia has had a long tradition of teaching English and even French as a foreign language since colonialism as Betancourt B. and De Sarmiento, M. (2024) mentioned.

It is worth reflecting on what has happened to the teaching and learning processes of this language that have been in place for more than five centuries? It is well known that the results of tests applied to students finishing high school and higher education show low results. The purpose of achieving a bilingual country is still a dream.

Educational policies in Colombia have advanced significantly to achieve a quality offer. The Colombian Ministry of National Education in the latest guidelines for degree programs (2014) and resolution 18583 of 2017, proposes the training of foreign language teachers with high communicative competencies in the target language, which allow them to ensure good teaching models in the language; pedagogical and didactic competencies that allow them to employ relevant and effective strategies to ensure the academic success of their students; all this articulated to research processes where the teacher becomes aware and attentive to the situations or possible problems in their classroom and leads them to make proposals to improve possible situations in the educational context.

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