

CURRICULUM EVALUATION AND ENGLISH TEXT PRODUCTION IN BILINGUAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

María Estela TINTAYA QUILLE ¹
Carolina LOYOLA SANTOS ²
Ofelia SANTOS JIMÉNEZ ³

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ABSTRACT: This study determined the relationship between the curriculum evaluation of an English program in a bilingual context and text production among fourth-grade primary students in Lima. Methodologically, it was an applied, descriptive-correlational, and cross-sectional study, with a census sample of 135 students and five teachers. Data were collected using a questionnaire (Cronbach's Alpha of 0.911) and an analytical rubric. The results revealed that 60% of teachers perceived deficiencies in curriculum organization, while 86.7% of students scored at the beginning and developing writing levels. It is concluded that a significant relationship exists between curriculum evaluation and writing development, highlighting the urgency of strengthening horizontal integration through the CLIL approach.

Keywords: curriculum evaluation, bilingual education, written text production, educational quality.

¹ Bachelor of Education, Universidad Nacional Federico Villarreal, Lima, Perú. estelatintaya@gmail.com - <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1896-7113>

² Master's Degree in Educational Quality Assessment and Accreditation. Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima, Perú. carolina.santos@unmsm.edu.pe - <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3629-5184>

³ Ph.D. in Education. Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima, Perú. ofelia.santos@unmsm.edu.pe - <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1294-0641>

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, global education has undergone profound transformations driven by globalization, the technological boom, and the need for greater academic and cultural mobility. In this context, proficiency in a second language—particularly English—has become indispensable for developing advanced academic literacy (García and Wei, 2015). In response to these international demands, various educational institutions in Peru have implemented bilingual programs to equip students with strong communication skills from the earliest stages of formal schooling (Ministerio de Educación del Perú [MINEDU], 2016). However, the mere formal adoption of a bilingual model or increased class hours does not, by itself, guarantee excellence in learning unless the correspondence between macro-curricular planning and students' actual cognitive-linguistic performance in the classroom is systematically and empirically evaluated (Richards, 2001).

Among the language skills essential for the consolidation of a second language, written production (writing), specifically descriptive, narrative, and explanatory texts at the early academic level aligned with international B1 standards, stands out as one of the most complex competencies, as it requires a multidimensional and simultaneous integration of cognitive, linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural processes (Hyland, 2019). Contemporary pedagogical literature agrees that writing often lags most and presents the greatest difficulty in immersion school programs, directly affecting students' transition toward complex academic competencies (Cassany, 1999). In light of this challenge, curriculum evaluation—from the perspective of educational quality management and accreditation—emerges as the fundamental strategic and epistemological mechanism for identifying, diagnosing, and correcting the gaps between intended curriculum design, content organization, teaching methodologies, and tangible learning outcomes (Posner, 2005; Stufflebeam and Zhang, 2017).

Conceptually, curriculum evaluation is not limited to administrative or quantitative oversight; rather, it analyzes the coherence among objectives, content organization, learning experiences, assessment, and achieved outcomes. From this perspective, Taba (1962) conceives curriculum development as a systematic process of planning and articulating its

components, while Stufflebeam and Zhang (2017) view evaluation as a tool for improvement and decision-making. Consequently, evaluating a bilingual program's curriculum involves examining the correspondence between its intended design and its pedagogical implementation. Producing written texts in a second language involves a progressive transition from Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) to Qualified Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 2002) and requires explicit strategies for planning, textualization, revision, and feedback (Hyland, 2019).

DEVELOPMENT

Despite growing interest in and the proliferation of language immersion programs in Peru's private education sector, there is limited systematization and scientific evaluation of how curricular structures affect elementary school students' writing skills. People often assume that more class hours directly translate into proficiency in academic writing; however, institutional assessments show the opposite and reveal low levels of achievement in written production.

Given this situation, the following research question arises: How does the curricular evaluation of the English language program in a bilingual educational context relate to the written text production of elementary school students at a private school in Central Lima? This article aims to evaluate the curriculum of the English language instruction program in this bilingual context and empirically establish its direct relationship with students' achievement levels in written text production, providing objective input for institutional decision-making and continuous improvement.

METHODOLOGY

The research used a quantitative approach as an applied study, with a descriptive-correlational focus and a non-experimental cross-sectional design.

Research Objectives

To operationalize the general objective, the following specific objectives were formulated:

SO1: To assess teachers' perceptions of the dimensions of curricular assessment (design, organization, methodological strategies, evaluation, and alignment with standards) in the English program.

SO2: To determine the achievement levels reached by fourth-grade elementary students in the production of written texts in English.

SO3: To establish the associative and inferential relationship between curriculum assessment and student writing production, both overall and by dimension.

Research Design

The study employed a non-experimental, correlational-cross-sectional design. The variables were not intentionally manipulated; rather, the phenomena were observed and collected in their natural setting so that the degree of association between curriculum assessment (independent variable) and written text production (dependent variable) could subsequently be analyzed.

Participants

The study population included fourth-grade elementary school students and teachers from a private school in the San Borja district of Lima. A census sample was used due to the accessibility and completeness of the population; it formally consisted of 135 students (52% boys, 48% girls; aged 9 to 10 years, enrolled in the bilingual program) and 5 English teachers (100% with degrees in education or foreign languages, with an average of 10 to 15 years of experience in bilingual education).

Assessment Tools

Three standardized techniques and instruments were applied concurrently to collect data:

1. Document analysis (checklist): used to evaluate the macro- and micro-level curriculum planning of the English language program.
2. Teacher Curriculum Evaluation Questionnaire: consisting of 20 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), categorized as Poor, Fair, and Good. It assessed 5 dimensions: Design, Organization, Methodological Strategies, Assessment of Learning, and Alignment with Standards (4 items per dimension). Content validity, as judged by 3 experts, yielded an 84% approval rate, and reliability, measured by Cronbach's alpha, reached 0.911, indicating excellent internal consistency.
3. Analytical Rubric for Written Work: a standardized instrument applied to the written work of the 135 students to measure their level of achievement (Beginning, In Progress, Expected Achievement, Outstanding Achievement) in the dimensions of appropriateness, coherence, cohesion, and grammatical correctness.

RESULTS

The descriptive and inferential statistical analyses applied to the collected data revealed significant conceptual and operational gaps in the curriculum components, as well as a critical lag in students' written production skills, and were structured according to the specific objectives set forth.

Table 1

Descriptive results for the "curriculum evaluation" variable based on teachers' perceptions

Curriculum Evaluation Dimension	Poor (%)	Regular (%)	Good (%)
Curriculum Design	20,0	40,0	40,0
Curriculum Organization	40,0	20,0	40,0
Methodological Strategies	40,0	20,0	40,0

Assessment of Learning	20,0	20,0	60,0
Alignment with Standards	20,0	40,0	40,0

It was observed that 60.0% of the teaching sample perceived deficiencies (Poor and Fair levels) in Curriculum Organization and Methodological Strategies, indicating gaps in the program's horizontal articulation.

Regarding Specific Objective 2 (SO2), the evaluation of the “Written Text Production” variable among the 135 students using the analytical rubric revealed a critical concentration in the lower performance levels: 34.1% (46 students) were at the “beginner” level, 52.6% (71 students) at the “in progress” level, and only 13.3% (18 students) achieved the expected level of proficiency. No student reached the “outstanding” achievement category. This demonstrates that 86.7% of the student body exhibits severe limitations in writing and does not meet the academic standard required for this grade level.

Finally, in response to Specific Objective 3 (SO3), the inferential hypothesis was tested using Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient (after verifying non-normality via the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, $p < 0.05$). A direct, strong, and statistically significant relationship was found between Curriculum Assessment and Written Text Production ($\rho = 0.684$; $p < 0.001$). When analyzing the specific dimensions, Curriculum Organization ($\rho = 0.652$; $p < 0.001$) and Methodological Strategies ($\rho = 0.621$; $p < 0.001$) showed the strongest associations with students’ written performance.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Empirical verification and data triangulation show that the organizational and methodological deficiencies identified in the curriculum evaluation are significantly associated with students’ low writing performance. Rejecting the null hypothesis supports the relationship between the organization of the bilingual curriculum and the observed learning outcomes. When a program shows weaknesses in horizontal articulation—as in the

case of 60.0% of the teaching sample rating the curriculum organization as Poor or Fair—it hinders the systematic integration of writing skills. This finding aligns with the CLIL approach developed by Coyle et al. (2010), which emphasizes the planned integration of content and language, and with Hyland (2019), who highlights the need for explicit, process-oriented instruction in second-language writing.

Viewed through the theoretical framework of Flower and Hayes's (1981) psycholinguistic model, writing is a recursive and dynamic act structured around specific mental macroprocesses (planning, textualization, and revision). The results show that when classroom strategies fail, the institution demands a final written product but neglects instructional scaffolding. Furthermore, the findings take on scientific significance when analyzed through Cummins's (2002) distinction between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and qualified academic language proficiency (CALP). Private bilingual schools frequently confuse students' social conversational fluency (BICS) with their cognitive ability to produce complex formal written texts (CALP). Formal writing falls entirely within the domain of CALP, and developing it requires a planned, cross-curricular, intentional curricular sequence that the current program does not implement because it relies on a predominantly normative, summative assessment approach, at the expense of formative feedback.

From a curricular coherence perspective, the program's organizational shortcomings reveal insufficient integration between language instruction and the curriculum's content subjects (e.g., Science or Social Studies). In the CLIL approach, Coyle et al. (2010) point out that effective integration requires articulating content, communication, cognition, and culture; therefore, simply increasing the number of hours of exposure to English is not enough—joint planning is required to promote both language and subject-area learning.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the systematic research process carried out, and in direct accordance with the stated objectives, it is concluded that:

1. Regarding the curriculum evaluation assessment (OE1), it is concluded that there are serious structural and methodological deficiencies in the implementation of the bilingual English program, noting that 60% of teachers critically evaluate the curriculum organization and teaching strategies. This indicates a marked lack of horizontal coordination between language arts and content subjects, which weakens the pedagogical progression of written language learning.
2. Regarding the level of writing performance (OE2), it is concluded that the vast majority of the student population (86.7%) does not meet the desired standards for the fourth grade of bilingual elementary school, falling into the “Beginner” (34.1%) and “In Progress” (52.6%) levels. This gap shows that everyday communicative fluency (BICS) does not automatically translate into academic discourse competencies (CALP), which require explicit procedural support.
3. Regarding the associative and inferential analysis (OE3), it is concluded that there is a direct, strong, and statistically significant relationship ($\rho = 0.684$; $p < 0.001$) between curricular assessment and the production of written texts. Curriculum Organization ($\rho = 0.652$) and Methodological Strategies ($\rho = 0.621$) are the most impactful factors, confirming that inconsistencies in teaching planning and implementation directly limit students’ written performance. An urgent curricular restructuring is required, grounded in the CLIL approach and formative assessment using analytical rubrics.

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