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BILINGUALISM: BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

By Valentina Acosta Peña (8th semester FIGRI student, the World in English elective)

Money, politics, language, religion... All these elements could be seen as barriers to exchanging knowledge and developing ourselves beyond our community. Nevertheless, among the previously mentioned barriers, there is one that is different from the others: language. While money, politics and religion are created and supported by society, language is a more natural element of identity. It is true that language is a social construction, but it is also the most natural one as it differentiates us from other species of animals.

Language is an expression of culture, traditions and identity. Currently, there are more than 7,000 languages in the world, and we can say that each language represents a different set of cultures and traditions. As languages differentiate us from other cultures, they could also create barriers in a globalized world which is driven by the idea of being "citizens of the world". There is magic and beauty in each language, but when you can't communicate this creates a barrier: an intangible wall rises between people, meaning that sharing ideas is not possible. In this context, bilingualism enables knowledge and ideas to be exchanged among people that speak different languages and therefore, people that have different cultures, traditions and identities. It empowers people

through a sense of empathy triggered by the exchange of historical meanings and the values of each community.

Nevertheless, there is one specific thought about bilingualism that is worth assessing. It is commonly said if you want to communicate and share ideas in another language, it is paramount to use and strictly respect grammatical structures, tenses and conjugations among others. What is at the core of bilingualism is the understanding of the reality that surrounds other languages: the sense of its traditions and its perspectives of the world. Bilingualism goes beyond grammar and vocabulary; it is a connection between cultures.

Language is the bridge to understand other people, and their joys, sorrows, achievements and struggles. It is not necessary to be strict with the use of grammatical rules to really communicate. Consequently, it is essential to rescue the human part of language so that it does not lose its utility. The magic of bilingualism is that it breaks down the most common and natural barrier in the world. Through bilingualism it is possible to transform a language from a barrier to a tool.

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Hello!

Thank you for joining us for issue 23 of Ink, Externado University's English-language magazine! We hope you enjoy the articles we've collected for you this time. Many thanks to all our contributors for taking part! It's always great to have a variety of articles from students of different levels and faculties. If you'd like to send an article for the next issue, then please ask your English teacher or send us an email. We also have many other articles on our Ink Magazine blog:

inkenglishmagazine.blogspot.com.co

Enjoy!

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Contributors come from a variety of different faculties and English levels:

Valentina Acosta Peña, Daniela Alarcón Aguilera, Cristian David Bastidas Correa, Alejandro Bohórquez-Keeney, Nubia Buenahora, Paula Alejandra Carranza, J. Alexis Chacón Gallego, María Alejandra Cuéllar, Yasnyr Estévez Quebradas, Nicolás García Garzón, Daniela Gúzman Vargas, Juan Fernando Muñoz González, Cedric Mutebi, Angélica Salinas & Mabel Tautolo.

The idea of Ink is to display pieces of writing, in English, by members of the Externado community. As we try to maintain authors' originality as far as possible, you may find some minor mistakes in the articles. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Externado University.



Being rich doesn't mean having everything, but needing less

By Nubia Buenahora (5th semester FIGRI student, Interculturality elective)

After finishing high school, I stayed in touch with a couple of friends. One of them, Valentina, is one of the most altruistic people I've ever met. She is involved in tons of activities with different foundations back in Bucaramanga and always encourages everyone around her to contribute. So, one day, she asked me if I would like to join her and work with people in need. That's how I spent my Friday night downtown in Bucaramanga's industrial neighborhood.

In this area there are no houses, stores or bars, only factories. So, late at night, this deserted sector is where most of the city's homeless people go. It's the perfect spot for Valentina's group to go down and do their work with "miseritos", which is how they call the indigents. At midnight, they start handing out bread, chocolate, clothes and basically anything they have collected during the

week. I took my batch of bread and began to hand it out, thinking it would be a good deed, and perhaps a boring one. But, it happened to be much more than that.

Since it was my first time, I wanted to see what the other volunteers were doing, and when I turned my head, I noticed a certain understanding between them and some of the miseritos. They were calling them by their names, nagging them about promises they had made but hadn't kept, or just chatting with them. They even had an emergency kit and, despite being anything but doctors, had no problem healing their injuries with the deepest interest in the miseritos' wellbeing.

Then, as I turned back to continue with my duty, I could feel the person to whom I had just given a piece of bread hugging me. I was stunned. My whole life, I've been surrounded by this idea that homeless people could be dangerous or try to steal from you. For this reason, the situation I was facing took me entirely by surprise. I hugged

him back and, a few minutes after, I got used to the rhythm of the activity and learnt a lot from them.

Most of the miseritos find shelter in drugs or ended up in the street because of it. Therefore, not every person responded in the same way: some were enraged when we offered them a cup of hot chocolate, while others just kept thanking us or making jokes. The reaction that surprised me the most occurred when our "shift" was coming to an end. By mistake, I was giving one man an extra piece of bread. He could have taken it, but instead, he told me he had already eaten and that the extra piece of bread could satisfy someone else's hunger. I asked myself if I would've done the same thing in his place.

That man didn't need much, but he was just grateful that he didn't have to go to sleep on an empty stomach. Overall, it was a nurturing experience. I had the opportunity to observe tremendous acts of generosity and greatly modify my notion of homeless people.



ONE LAST CHANCE (A LETTER TO LELA)

By: Alejandro Bohórquez-Keeney (FIGRI lecturer)

One last chance, that's the only thing I asked for. You appeared when I least expected it: surprisingly, a name I knew from a long time ago was asking me for a class, and then we ended up being the closest of friends, so suddenly. I saw a beautiful face with a glowing smile, not only because of your looks, but something beyond them that gave me a peek into the wonderful person you are. I couldn't believe I finally got the chance to meet you and realize that what they said about you wasn't even close to all the beauty in your soul.

One last chance. We walked together in the halls of this university, the one that made it possible for our paths to cross, talking about all our crazy stuff, wild projects, or something as simple as the day-to-day life of a teacher. While I talked with my fast-paced fiery rants, you kept your cool and calm demeanor, but never in a detached way; yours was a calm spring of loving understanding. We were a couple of oddballs who managed to share their quiriness: complementarity was never so fun, and freakishness such a high quality.

One last chance. And then, also very suddenly I got a call I never expected to receive, telling me that you were gone and would never come back, while at the same time I felt a crumbling inside me, leaving a void that has yet to be filled. They told me that you looked so calm, as if still sleeping. Your tranquility turned from a spring to a vast ocean, but this time I couldn't go with you and the fire is starting to spread all over me. Nonetheless, burning the world won't bring you back and it won't fill the void that you left behind, even though it runs wild asking for just one last chance.

One last chance. I have also been told, and I am pretty sure about it, that you left a big gap in your team of English teachers. I was there when they said their goodbyes, and they are missing a bright light that shone in the department. Students are going to miss a cool teacher one who searched for interesting ways to teach this language, and who maintained a youthful spirit willing to use a love for comics, movies, fantasy literature among other neat stuff to get close to her students. New students will never know what they missed. Fellow teachers are going to remember your kind smile and loving way of doing things. You are one of a kind, so we need one last chance.

And I need one last chance. I need one last chance to give you one of those bear hugs that you so loved and cherished. One last chance to look into your sweet eyes and sweet smile and tell you how important you are to me, and how I treasure all our moments together, laughing, imagining, sharing our music, and even the low points or when one of us had to deal with the other's sadness. One last chance to tell you that even in my grouchiness I never stopped caring deeply for you. You really made my life easier and brighter just with your presence. One last chance to say how much I love and care for you and want to see you smile one last time. But you went away so quickly that I did not have that chance, so I write to you with all my heart, because I want to think that somehow you know all of this.

Good bye Andrea, Good bye Lela, you are sorely missed.

Beyond Stereotypes:

Changing Perspectives after an Academic Exchange

Five students from Externado de Colombia University travelled to Detroit, Michigan, in the United States from July 7th to 15th 2018, as they got a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: a full scholarship to attend the Ralph Bunch Summer Institute at Wayne State University. This allowed them to enhance their knowledge about the challenges faced at community level concerning pressing issues such as high levels of poverty and racial division, among others, in this American Midwest city. Through the summer program Building Peace upon War, an initiative from the Faculty of Finance, Government, and International Relations, Externado de Colombia University won the highly competitive grant from the State Department - 100,000 Strong in the Americas - making this a reality. In exchange, seven students from our counterpart in the United States attended our summer program, likewise fully funded, and having the chance to know the dilemmas faced by Colombian society. They were able to see how the implementation of the peace agreement reached in La Habana is unfolding, amid deep political divisions. Their academic experience was complemented by a field visit to the Llanos Orientales. Here are the testimonies of students from Externado de Colombia University who attended Wayne State University. We couldn't be prouder of them!

Cristian David Bastidas Correa Eighth semester FIGRI student

My trip to the US was a huge opportunity to learn about the diversity of this country, as I met people from many different backgrounds, cultures, and religions; all of whom had a great sense of patriotism. Also, we did not only share experiences related to conflict resolution and peace building, but creative ideas and good practice regarding different issues which we have in common, in spite of being from different countries. At the Ralph Bunch Summer Institute in Wayne State University, I discovered, through the voices of its citizens, Detroit's history and how this city contributed to the United States' "dream society". This experience helped me out to understand that, despite the crisis this city went through a few years ago, an empowered community can transform every problem into an opportunity, with actions and cooperation, as small as this may seem.

J. Alexis Chacón Gallego Third year Law School student

The US is presented as a "dream" society, which all other countries, already permeated by globalization and Americanization, should and/or want to imitate in one way or another. However, I had the possibility to study first hand their deep social problems such as poverty, racism, violence, and xenophobia, among many others, while attending the Ralph Bunch Summer Institute at Wayne State University. This experience allowed me to expand my frontiers of knowledge and capacity for action, as the most valuable discovery was that we share similar problems with roughly the same causes, enabling me to conclude that it is quite useful and efficient to find joint solutions to tackle them. It was also clear for me how salient the issue of civil rights is in the United States, even nowadays. Finally, on a personal note, it is impossible for me not to share the fact that my visa expedition process for the United States was a miracle. I had my visa interview, approval, and issuance during



From left to right: J. Alexis Chacón Gallego, Daiyana Chaparro Pedraza, Jonathan Infante, Estefanía Gómez Guzmán and Cristian David Bastidas Correa, of the Summer program Building Peace Upon War. Photo Credit: Cristian David Bastidas Correa.

the same day, in a record time of 30 minutes. It goes without saying, I was beyond happy as I was able to travel the next day to Detroit, United States, with my brand-new Colombian passport and my brand-new visa.

Cedric Mutebi

Third year Honors Public Health student - Wayne State University

"It's Colombia, not Columbia": a phrase I found myself repeating too often upon my return to the states after 10 immersive days in Colombian history, politics, and culture. In my 20 years of learning (with a lot more to go), this exchange program has been the best academic experience of my life. The ability to delve completely into a history, often mis-told or uninformed, in the way that we did, completely transformed the way I look at Colombia, the international arena (politics, economics, and international relations), and the justice system. And seeing a great amount of parallels to Detroit, I have come back to teach others about the Colombian peace process and what we can do to bring justice and peace to our communities. And doing all of this while experiencing Colombian culture made this one of the best experiences of my life.

Mabel Tautolo

Forth year Global Studies student - Wayne State University

Traveling to Colombia was the first time I had left the United States, and it was the most incredible experience I have ever had. Experiencing Colombian culture, trying to understand the tough road towards peace, and making incredible lifelong friends are what made my time in Colombia truly unforgettable. The course work was unique and gave us an insight into the many aspects of the history of conflict in Colombia, as well as the process towards peace. Meeting with so many people who had been affected by the conflicts of Colombia's past was the most powerful tool in helping us understand that Colombia's civil war was not about good versus bad, it was need versus need. Learning about how people felt, and how necessity dictated their actions, gave us a framework for understanding the complexities and struggles implementing a peace process.



Biocommerce: new investments for the Post-conflict

Article originally published on the El Libre Pensador blog in August 2018
(by Paula Alejandra Carranza, FIGRI student)

lishes, as one of its aims, environmental sustainability, in the following terms: "We need a society for which environmental sustainability is a priority and a practise as an essential element of wellbeing and as a principle of equity for future generations." It also highlights instrumental aspects, which are essential to advance towards sustainable development and the conservation of natural capital.

Postconflict: An opportunity for biocommerce

Within the framework of the implementation of the Havana agreements, the panorama of environmental conservation and sustainable development offers great potential for Colombia's postconflict period.

Green logic applied to the market

Biocommerce, also known as the green market, has come to represent a particularly ambitious investment option during the last ten years. The Colombian government has focused on taking care of the environment from a perspective which aims to be both sustainable and economically viable at the same time. Its emphasis is therefore on taking advantage of goods and services which promote sustainable use, while also conserving natural resources.

The environment has been a focal point for Colombian governments over the last 15 years, and this is why green market initiatives have been set up, geared towards the development of businesses based on natural biodiversity. For this reason, in 1998, Colombia set up the first national biocommerce programme in the world, under the direction of the Alexander von Humboldt Institute, and with the support of the Environment and Sustainable Development Ministry, along with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

In 2002 the National Strategic Green Market Plan was created, with the objective of having access to new markets, with wholly Colombian products that link four strategic areas: sustainable usage, clean development, industrial ecoproducts and ecotourism. For this reason, after creating different strategic plans, a consolidated roadmap was created between 2002 and 2010, integrating various mechanisms of action, going from natural biodiversity to national production policy, which were included in the National Development Plan (2010-2014): Prosperity for All. This estab-



of land distribution, it's almost impossible to use these territories for such activities.

Strengthening peace through green logic

It's worth asking how these green businesses can contribute to the articulation of plans proposed at the negotiation table in Havana. The initiatives based on green markets and biocommerce would support the comprehensive distribution of land for the postconflict period, and aid the recuperation and conservation of areas.

It's important to try to recover the land, and use it in an appropriate way. These processes need to be coordinated between governments, productive sectors and communities, and both the necessary environmental factors for long-term sustainable development and the vocational use of the land for the productive potential of the population need to be taken into account. This previous point means framing what we think of as rural beyond agriculture and developing local models of sustainable biodiversity.

Institutional strengthening is fundamental for the success of these green markets and all the production chains that can be implemented in medium- and long-term. Strengthening this economic sector means understanding biodiversity as patrimony, along with putting in place bold innovation policies, better use of environmental authority and the promotion of pre-existing instruments, such as certifications of origin and empirical evaluations of sustainability.

A new way of working within the environmentally sustainable productive sector can therefore be the basis for development and the effective distribution of land in Colombia, which then creates value chains which can be connected to diverse private sector organisations. The objective here is to transform the national production apparatus with environmental and sustainable alternatives. At the same time, the use of green markets and biocommerce give the country the opportunity to reorganise and transform the legal apparatus that limits the implementation of these strategies in protected areas. This would greatly widen the spectrum of success for the post-conflict landscape from both a medium- and long-term perspective.

IDENTITY MAP AND DISCRIMINATION:

HOW EXPOSED ARE YOU TO EXCLUSION?

By Cristian David Bastidas Correa
(8th semester FIGRI student, the World in English elective)

Identity is not a unidimensional concept; it has a lot of characteristics which combine to create this idea. The main point is that these factors of identity could be used as a pretext to exclude or to be excluded. Identity is used as an instrument of power and dominance. For instance, discrimination based on gender is a significant issue in society. People's behavior demonstrates that we are still living in a predominantly patriarchal society and that our attitudes replicate discrimination practices in our daily lives. All these practices increase inequalities between men and

women. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that there are so many reasons that are used to justify exclusion besides gender. Unequal relations are related to the idea of dominance in a hierarchical society in which identity is the determining factor of your social position.

There is an instrument called the "identity map", which is part of the dominator model and is a tool to understand how every single component of your identity could make you an agent of violence or a victim of oppression. Think, for example, in your physical features like skin color, disability or sex. If you are a white man you are in a dominant position in relation to a black woman. Also, socioeconomic position and owning class could be a factor of discrimination, the rich on one hand and poorest on the other. Even language has been used in a violent way to exclude: if your English is not considered "standard" English or you have an accent, you could be judged.

Racism and sexism are types of discriminatory attitudes based on your identity map and the more different you

are, the more exposed you are to being oppressed. Also, you have some characteristics which people do not usually recognize as segregation factors. For example, religion, education or even age. This is the most dangerous thing because it is an invisible problem, but this has justified a lot of violence and massacres throughout history. The crusades, the Jewish holocaust, racism in the United States and hate crimes, are all related to identity as a tool of power. It is important to recognize differences and understand that identity must not be an instrument to increase power or justify violence. Instead, this should be part of the recognition of our differences as human beings and individual development.

Finally, I would like to show you that we can identify both profiles based on an identity map. For instance, you can identify your primary excluded identity as a young middle-class Hispanic man of color. But you also have a primary dominant identity if you are a straight man with formal education whose religion is Christianity.



THE INVISIBILIZATION OF MENTAL ILLNESS

By Daniela Alarcón Aguilera
(2nd semester Social Communication student, the World in English elective)

Throughout the years, mental illnesses have been considered not only a forbidden topic, but an invisible one. This rejection increases the damage that mental illnesses cause to people and it makes society forget about the importance of mental health.

According to the American Psychiatric Association, a mental illness is defined as "a health condition involving changes in emotion, thinking or behavior (or a combination of these). Mental illnesses are associated with distress and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities," which means that mental illnesses are directly involved with how we feel and how we react to the environment and social conditions we live in.

Although this definition sounds global, there are many people that consider mental illnesses as a joke or they even classify people with a mental illness as "crazy" or as people who are just going "through a stage". Before getting into the conceptions society has around mental illness, it is important

to understand why people started thinking that way and why they do not see this condition with the necessary concern.

One of the main reasons people do not see mental illness as a serious topic and stigmatize it, is because of the ignorance around the topic. According to experts, there is a kind of cycle effect when it comes to ignorance of mental illnesses. The British Journal of Psychiatry affirms that "the less people know about mental disorders, the more likely they are to be afraid or confused by them". In consequence, people prefer not to talk about it and they create a stigma around people that suffer from mental illness, so these people start feeling rejected when they should be receiving help, causing this issue to become worse.

In addition, there are people who know about the existence of mental illness, but they see it as a joke. This is because they think "if it is not physical, it isn't true," and what they don't know is that, according to science research, mental health is something that affects the development of the whole organism,

so it can actually affect the way the body functions. In spite of the fact that there is still a lot of ignorance concerning this topic, there are also many mental illness foundations around America and the world. These organizations help people that are going through a mental disorder, and support them as they recover and become rehabilitated.

In conclusion, mental illness is a very important issue that must be taken seriously and society should be aware of the consequences that ignorance and rejection causes people with mental health issues. Everyone has to deal with his or her own problems, but they should not do that on their own; people that are struggling with their mental health should receive professional support and acceptance from society.

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Our experience of the CFA

By Nicolás García Garzón, Daniela Gúzman Vargas, Juan Fernando Muñoz González & Angélica Salinas
(10th semester FIGRI students)



"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence" Ray Kroc

For us, the experience of being in this contest can be summarized by persistence. Persistence to get ahead with the analysis of a company when it seemed impossible; to receive each feedback as fuel to move forward with more strength rather than as an obstacle; to learn something new every day and to develop it in the best way so it was reflected in our work. Although the long hours of work could be exhausting, the desire to see the final fruits of the project were the permanent impulse that motivated us to continue and maintain a constant level of dedication, which ultimately led us to have a great performance in the local round and finally to be victorious.

This contest is a challenge and more than that, it is a set of opportunities, where the knowledge, the will, the desire to learn and to show the skills that we have acquired throughout the semesters are put to the test. That being the case, this forced us to give the best of ourselves, especially in terms of teamwork. This was an experience that allowed us to work together, and although we hadn't worked together before, we now know we can count on each other in moments of laughter as in those of crisis. It is important to remember that once the team is formed, it resembles a cell, a living organism, where successful work is achieved when each of the elements work together.

The CFA Research Challenge is an experience that changed our lives, not only because we faced an important challenge that allowed us to grow as professionals and acquire academic skills, but because we left a family, formed by a group of students, mentors and parents, that after months of effort saw the emergence of work that was the result of the commitment and contribution of each one of the members of this family. Feeling the pressure to represent one of the best financial faculties in the country and all the uncertainty that comes over you by entering your name for this great challenge doesn't make it easy to start. However, as you move forward you see how your effort and dedication manage to build a work of surprising dimensions, that you did not even imagine yourself achieving at the beginning and of which you will feel very proud. Create it and defend it, because in the end it is the fruit of all the contributions of a group and of an arduous effort: it is your "baby". We can only wish the upcoming teams the greatest success in this experience: enjoy it, do not be afraid and never limit yourselves. Believe it when you tell them they have everything necessary to overcome the regional round. They have each of us to support them in everything they need.

What's changing in the English Area?



You might have heard about a few changes happening in the English Area recently. Well, it's no secret: we're evolving to give you a better class of English class!

We all live in a world that's connected by technology, where English – not just UK or US English, but world English – is the link that lets us communicate and travel. For this reason, we're focusing on virtual elements for our classes. Many of our English classes now use the Externado's system of virtual classrooms, and this will become more and more common in coming semesters.

This system means that, wherever you are, you can connect with English and work on exercises to be a better English user. Which leads us to another key factor: autonomy. Externado students are some of Colombia's brightest students, so autonomous learning gives them the opportunity to focus on what's useful for them.

We also want our students to be able to use English in a real-life, practical way, so skills work and project work are also increasingly important for our classes. English is about more than just grammar and vocabulary: it's communication, and it is life.

Join us as we walk forward into a new future for our English Area, and our students.

A HIDDEN PARADISE IN A GORGEOUS CITY

By María Alejandra Cuéllar
(2nd Semester Tourism student, level 4 English)

Bahía Solano is located in the northwest of Colombia, in the Pacific region, in the department of Chocó. It is a beautiful place where you can appreciate the contrast between the beach, the jungle and the sea.

This small town gives you one of the most attractive experiences, where you can see big humpback whales, turtles, bears and dolphins so close to you. There you can do ecotourism, adventure and natural tourism.

This is one of the only places in the country where you can do a lot of activities such as hiking, diving and snorkeling. You can

also visit the national natural park of Utria or go to the city of Mutis to see the "Salto del Chocolate" and the pool of the love.

Other places that you can visit are the beach of the Almegal where you can see the volcanic black sand and enjoy a peaceful environment. If you want to visit another beach, you can go to Huina, also called "The Gold Beach", due to the golden color of its sand that is the perfect place to do snorkeling and see the coral.

So, if you want to travel to know a new place you have to visit this wonderful place, completely natural, quiet, and full of gorgeous animals. This is located in our country and is a natural wonder.

Sources: Vargas, A. (2018). Bahía Solano, un paraíso por descubrir en medio de la selva y el mar. Retrieved from <https://travelgrafia.co/blog/bahia-solano-paraíso-escondido-en-medio-de-selva-y-mar/>

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