Drew University
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The Language of Peace?: Understanding the Impact of Peace Corps English Language
Education on Developing Economies

A Thesis in International Relations

by

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Abstract:

Following the implementation of the United Nations' 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, the international community has increasingly prioritized ensuring the development of emerging nation states, especially through the actions of governmental and non-governmental bodies. While the majority of these programs focus on protecting and increasing quality of life through health aid or financial aid, there lacks a unified discussion around how foreign language education may impact these developmental goals. Certain development-focused organizations like the United States Peace Corps have been invited into developing nations for decades under the premise that by providing English language education volunteers, the recipient population would gain a skill set that would increase their capacity for economic advancement and involvement in the international community. So the question arises: *Is English language education an effective tool for economic development in developing countries?* The goal of this thesis is to understand that question. First by dissecting what economic development means, then by looking at why English is considered a tool for development, and finally by analyzing the impact of English language education programs of the U.S. Peace Corps on developing nations in terms of economic and social development indicators.

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I.   Introduction:

For decades, economists, politicians, and humanitarian workers have delved into the often-controversial issue of developmental studies and practices. While many focus on economic development through health- or economic-aid, educational-aid remains a similarly important resource pursued by developing nation's governments. Historically, much of this aid has targeted the goal of raising literacy rates in order to increase their quality of life and economic well being. Rounding into the second decade of the 21st century, with 86% of the global population over 15 years old achieving basic literacy standards, the conversation of development through education has shifted into more diverse goals. One example is the creation of STEM-related programs. A less examined education tool, though one that has been formally utilized by the U.S. government since as early as the 1960s, is English language education.

English language education is often provided by governmental and non-governmental groups. The main goal is to increase the economic status of the recipient nation, thereby reducing poverty and improving quality of life. The motivation for this form of education for developmental purposes stems from the position of English in our increasingly globalized world.

This thesis uses the Peace Corps presence in Colombia following its reintroduction in 2010 as a case study for English language education and its impact on economic development. The United States and the Government of Colombia's commitment to Peace Corps operations shows the weight given to English language

education for development purposes. On the U.S. side, this involves the financial and professional support of English language education operations. On the Colombian side, it includes the pursuit of an ambitious plan to educate a bilingual population that can help the government attract foreign investment. This commitment offers an interesting opportunity to understand the supposed benefits of English language education, while also helping us explore the politics that inform this strategy.

The literature review is divided into two sections. Section One explores the term "economic development," especially focusing on how global efforts and theories of development have shifted over the last five decades. Discussions of economic development are complicated by the issue of determining what the indicators of strong and sustainable economic development are. Is it a larger national gross domestic product? Or does the gross national income matter more? Or is it not actually reflected in the money, but rather the societal consequences of becoming a wealthier state, like increased life expectancy and decreased infant mortality rate? This issue of defining success in development is even murkier for researchers examining the impact of language policy decisions, like introducing English language education, on developing nations.

In the following section, this thesis will explore the prior existing literature on English language education as a tool for development. In addition, I will examine what other benefits or problems and concerns researchers have found in studies of English language education programs in developing nations. Important questions many researchers have asked include whether or not the potential economic benefit of English

language education is simply perceived due to its status as "the language of the business world," as well as whether or not introducing English into a developing community undermines the social power of the local population and lead to increased levels of inequality if introduced at the wrong time or in the wrong form. Seeing as many developing nations have already employed English language education aid, I will also dissect the literature examining the impact it has had on nations like South Korea and China, both of which went through intense periods of so-called "modernization" with a heavy emphasis on English language education.

I will then narrow the focus of the literature review to the English language educational aid conducted by the United States Peace Corps through an examination of the organization's history and practices. Today the Peace Corps operates with six sectors dedicated to different approaches to promoting development, though the education sector was one of the three original sectors and has consistently remained framed as a positive tool for economic development. I will synthesise the literature which demonstrates how this program functions and why it has continued to be supported by the U.S. government and the recipient states since the 1960s.

Through examining the developmental aid in conjunction with English language education and how it applies to the case study of Peace Corps/Colombia, it is evident that English language education can be an effective tool for the goal of economic development.

II. Literature Review:

In order better understand whether or not English language education is a viable tool for economic development it is imperative to engage with the existing literature on the matter. First and foremost, one must comprehend the nuances of development, an often controversial subject that has shifted much since the U.S. Peace Corps was founded in 1961. Then comes the need for an understanding of how foreign language education played a role historically in developmental practices, and more specifically how *English* became the language primarily pursued by developing nations. In terms of this paper's case study, the history and practices of the United States Peace Corps must also be understood. Finally, it is necessary to explain why Colombia requested the Peace Corps' assistance in 1961, why Peace Corps suspended its operations in Colombia in 1981, and its reintroduction coinciding with the Ministry of Education's program Bilingual Colombia 2025. This analysis reveals a lack of consensus on whether English language education results in a positive or negative impact on a state's economic development. Additionally, it demonstrates that much of the support for English language education results from the ideological status of the English language as an economically beneficial language rather than data-backed proof of this claim. The following literature review raises a number of questions that must be considered in the paper's case study. *In what ways might English language education programs provided by the Peace Corps and other development groups need to shift to best address the current needs of developing economies? Does the pursuit and promotion of English language education also promote*

an unfair balance of power in favor of Anglophone states? All in all, however, this literature review demonstrates the need for a new approach for understanding the question; *Is English language education an effective tool for economic development in developing countries?*

A. Economic development and English language education

Nation Building versus Modernization versus Sustainable Development: Shifting conversations and practices in foreign aid in developing nations

Before discussing the role English language education in a state's economic development process, it is important to understand how development efforts have shifted through the decades as well as what the indicators of economic development are. Reviewing the transition of development discourse and practice from the *nation building* of the 1950s-1980s to its sometimes overlapping partner of *modernization* to its most recent framing as *sustainable development* provides a background for what motivates a government to pursue specific development programs, like through language education. In addition, it helps to provide a better context for this paper's case study, as the Peace Corps' education sector has existed and shifted along with the contemporary shifts of developmental aid efforts, and so too have the motivations and practices of its English language education programs. By also examining the existing indicators of economic development, we are better able to define what an 'effective' tool for economic

development looks like in the 21st century and see how these indicators overlap with the stated goals of the Colombian government in their national implementation of English language education.

Following the end of World War II and the subsequent establishment of international organizations like the United Nations coinciding with movements of decolonization, the international community entered a period of great shift in what involvement foreign powers could and should have in other sovereign states. The member states came to the global consensus that another world war should be avoided at all costs, establishing the universal desire to increase stability and peace within and between states. Part of this shift came with a greater focus by economically and politically powerful states, like the United States, to provide foreign aid to what were seen as developing nations so that they could achieve higher levels of education, health, and economic power. These movements toward development were based on two main factors: an emphasis on long-term investments and on the cooperation of sovereign states through international organizations.

During the 1950s through the Cold War period, development was often discussed through the lens of nation building. Nation building refers to the practice in which powerful states to promote their own political ideologies on developing nations through joint efforts of military and economic aid so that they might, in turn, model these states in their own image (Creasey, Rahman, and Smith 2012, 278). This image for the U.S. was replicated through the democratization of states, while the Soviet Union's methods

involved the promotion of communism through its aid efforts. Nation building, however,

contains many aspects negatively associated with neocolonialism, a term used to describe

circumstances in which one state seeks to maintain influence over other states for its own

interests, often through military and economic intervention (Auerbach 2017). As later

discussions of the U.S. Peace Corps will reveal, the roots of the organization were

heavily reliant on the ideals of nation building. Many scholars have critiqued the efficacy

of nation building, noting that the intervention of powerful states did not always result in

more stable and economically advanced states (Creasey, Rahman, and Smith 2012, 278).

Nation building ties in very closely with modernization theory, another frame

through which economic development was considered and which heavily influenced the

use of language in development, as will be discussed later on in this paper. Walt

Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* outlined

modernization theory as a universal development framework that relied on the

assumptions that all nations could undergo similar stages of development as defined by

Western states (Gilman 2018, 133, Fischer 1998, 9). While nation building often had a

direct link between the developing state and a powerful state providing much of the

resources, modernization was more focused on the influence of powerful Western states

rather than necessarily their direct aid and involvement in the process. Modernization

theory placed Western states like the U.S. on a pedestal as the prime example of what a

state should become--reliant on technology, a capitalist economy, involved in global

affairs, etc. This resulted in many states restructuring things like their education systems

in order to fit this mold of modernity, and it also caused these states to be seen as inferior for their so-called backward ways (Gilman 2018, 134).

As the international community has grown more sensitive to power imbalances between the Global North and the Global South, instilled by centuries of colonialism and imperialism, development discussions have shifted to sustainable development, which attempts to give the sovereign states more agency in their own developmental process through better accountability and increasingly data-based practices. The United Nations is a prime example of this shift as its 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) sets a series of goals and assessment mechanisms to encourage development within poorer states, but with an emphasis on doing so in terms of the indigenous populations these goals are meant to benefit.

English language education as a development tool has shifted along with the changes in the development discourse. In terms of the Peace Corps, for instance, it was clearly constructed by the U.S. under the standards of nation building to combat the spread of communism. Recipient states welcomed the organization based on the principles described in modernization theory due to the status of English as a Western or 'modern' language. Today, however, it is practiced so it fits the needs for sustainable development, focusing on the local population's ability to use and teach English to help increase their marketable skills and engage in the global economy.

A History of Language-In-Development

The formal history of language as a tool for development is rather brief in the grand scheme of things. While language has always been used as a political tool to establish a state's power, such as in the case of Great Britain banning the Irish Gaelic language in 1366 to yield control over the population (Cahill 2007, 115), language has only within the last few decades been framed as a potential development supported by governments and NGOs.

The groups that frame language education programs in such a way discuss do so in reference to economic and social development, arguing that the promotion of a global language like English will aid a nation in its ability to participate in the global economy and the international community (Markee 2002, Silverman and Silverman 2011). Throughout the late 1990s and late 2000s, Political scientists (McCormick 2013, Ufier 2015, Hu 2005) and linguists (Lee 2017, Arcand and Grin 2013, Markee 2003, Bruthiaux 2002, Gil and Najar 2015, Jakubiak 2016) alike have heavily debated whether or not this relationship between language education and development exists, and if so, to what degree?

Markee (2002) coined the term *language-in-development* as a new subfield of both language and development studies in which researchers attempt to understand how the introduction of specific languages through foreign language education may influence development. Yet, while a number of researchers agree that language-in-development is an important area of focus for developmental studies, these same researchers acknowledge a lack of consensus on what this research should look like, especially when

approaching it from a quantitative perspective (Markee 2002, Bruthiaux 2002, Arcand and Grin 2013, Ufier 2015, Jakubiak 2016). The lack of consensus on terminology and valid indicators of development results in often contradictory opinions on the impact of language-in-development, and especially that of English language education. Some argue that the relationship between language education and development is made up of too many variables to be conclusively determined (Bruthiaux 2002, Jakubiak 2016), while others argue that there is likely a negative correlation between language education and development (Arcand and Grin 2013). Even more argue that there is a positive connection, especially for English, between language education and a country's economic development (McCormick 2013, Neeley 2012, Ufier 2015). These researchers rely heavily on GDP, GNI per capita, and the UN's Human Development Index as indicators of economic development (Ufier 2015, Arcand and Grin 2013, McCormick 2013). As further exploration of the literature will demonstrate, the pursuit of English language education for economic development has been historically based not on data-backed evidence of its benefits, but instead due to an accepted instrumentalist language ideology depicting English as a culturally neutral, necessary tool for global economic engagement (Kroskrity 1999, 26).

There exists another issue, identified by Pennycook (1998), that much of the discussions revolving around language-in-development confuse two concepts with one another. These concepts are *English for development* versus *English as development*, the former referring to "a process in which increased language capacities ostensibly help

people participate in development projects" and the latter being "a process in which English language learning itself is the developmental goal" (Pennycook as cited in Jakubiak 2016, 248). For the purpose of this paper, I intend to work under the context of *English for development* in order to understand how learning English impacts a developing economy. As it stands, proficiency in the English language is highly regarded by society around the world, however unlike high literacy rates or longer life expectancy which are both respected indicators of development, a state could feature high levels of proficiency English but still not meet other standards of development and so it is not in and of itself an indicator.

Why English?:

The influence of English language ideology

This concept of *language ideology* mentioned above is key to understanding why English language education has been constructed as an economically beneficial tool for development and consequently pursued as such. In Santa Fe in April of 1994, the School of American Research organized a seminar group of linguists to discuss the concept of "Language Ideologies" (Kroskrity 1999, 2). The conclusions of the seminar eventually led to the creation of a book titled "Regimes of Language" in which the scholars published a number of essays with the explicit purpose of understanding the term *language ideology* and integrating "two often segregated domains: politics (without language) and language (without politics)" (Kroskrity 1999, 3). Michael Silverstein (1979) and Judith Irvine (1989) offer two slightly varied definitions of language ideology

that emphasize the importance of speakers' ideas about a language and how they translate into various social phenomena (Kroskrity 1999, 5). As Silverstein's definition applied to linguistic ideologies, which he described as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein as cited in Kroskrity 1999, 5). Irvine defined language ideology as "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Irvine as cited in Kroskrity 1999, 5). These two definitions are important in the following discussion of the English language in regards to the language ideologies, or in other terms, its perceived benefits, it holds in the context of economic development.

The English language is often described as the *lingua franca,* or the common language, of many global industries including the global economy, the travel industry, and the sphere of international relations (Neeley 2012, Crystal 2003, EF EPI 2018, Cronquist and Fizbien 2017, Gil and Najar 2015, Gomez Sará 2017, 141). As such, English holds the status of a *global language*, which is a language that has a special, universally recognized role in every country (Crystal 2003). Through its role as the primary language of longstanding economic and military powerhouses like the United States and the United Kingdom, the English language has gained its own ideology as a language of economic growth and political power. Due to the fact that impact studies have only recently gained importance in international development efforts since the shift toward sustainable development, it stands that the initial use of English as a tool for

development during the 1960s resulted in part through its ideologies promoted through modernization theory. The West represented the modern and so the English language gained this same association (Lee 2017). As practices switched to the sustainable development framework, so too did the framing of the benefits (and ideology) of English. Rather than being the "modern" language, it is framed as the cost beneficial language that will attract more international businesses in our ever globalizing world. By understanding the language ideologies of English, one is able to see why English language education programs have continued to be sought and provided over the decades.

Concerns of the English language ideology

There are two sides to every coin, and in the case of English language ideology, it is important to consider the negative associations with the language as they may reveal potential pitfalls of English language for economic development. For one, there are those who are hesitant and those who are outright opponents of the spread of English because of the power imbalance they believe it creates. Alastair Pennycook (2001) notes in his book *English and the discourses of Colonialism* how the global spread of English began and cemented itself through British colonization and the imposition of U.S. political, military, and social dominance over local populations. Pennycook, along with other scholars, suggests that this has created an inherent connection between the English language and imperialism (Meredith 2011, Pennycook 2001). With this association comes the claim that English is a colonizing language that weakens the power of national and local languages and causes for the 'othering' of their speakers (Meredith 2011,

Pennycook 2001, Gil and Najar 2015). These scholars argue that English can never be culturally neutral, and that by promoting or accepting its introduction as a foreign language in the school system, it perpetuates the power imbalances of its colonial past with the L1 (first-language) speakers holding control over the L2 (second-language) speakers. There are also those who believe that the language ideologies of English as a means to access knowledge, employment, education and stature are not reflective of the reality of the language, and that by perpetuating these things it may jeopardize the status of other languages and the cultures associated with them (Gil and Najar 2015).

That being said, while the history, culture, and potential power associated with the English language are important, the cultural context does not necessarily diminish its economic advantages (Meredith 2011). Even within the Peace Corps, which explicitly promotes cultural exchange in addition to its English language education programs, the English language itself is promoted as little more than a tool for international communication. In South African TESOL programs educators were careful to frame English "as an additional language" so as not to be put in a power or status competition with the speakers' native languages; instead, it was clearly framed as an additional tool, like learning math skills (Meredith 2011). Within this context of English language education programs for economic development, I believe this framing and shift of the language's ideology should be promoted by all educators.

The language of the Global Economy

The language ideology of English as the language of the global economy not only has the effect of motivating states to pursue English language education, but also has real impacts on international business (Nelley 2012, Crystal 2003, Cronquist and Fiszbein 2017, McCormick 2013). A number of studies have been conducted in which business leaders indicated that English language skills are becoming increasingly important as the world continues to become more interconnected. For example, a 2014 study found that 87% of senior human resource managers of multinational companies highlighted English language proficiency as an important skill for their employees (Cronquist and Fiszbein 2017, 9). Another study conducted two years earlier indicated that 68% of executives of international companies believed English was necessary for their company's workforce to expand, coming well above the 8% that listed Mandarin or the 6% that said Spanish (Cronquist and Fiszbein 2017, 9). In a sense, the English language's status as the language of the global economy has resulted in actions that do in fact make it the language of the global economy. International businesses seek English speaking workers, and so English language education may make a state's population more desirable in the global workforce, thereby opening up the state to new business headquarters and job opportunities.

Gaining International Political Power

Beyond the just as with the economic reality of English, the English language holds political power beyond its ideological status that might influence a state begin English language education programming. According to the CIA World Factbook,

English holds an official status in over 50 nations from regions all over the world,

keeping in mind that even more states use English in the same way as an official

language is much larger considering certain countries do not declare official languages,

like the United States (CIA 2019). An official status can mean different things in

different countries, and even within the same country. Normally, the status of "official

language" implies the use of said language in government, law, media, and education,

and thus often becomes essential for a citizen to learn (Crystal 2003). In other cases,

however, a language may only achieve official status within a specific domain, such as

the role of Gaelic in Ireland's law system as little more than a symbol of Ireland's

repressed past under British rule. In an even more interesting case, a language may hold

no official status at all, but remains powerful nonetheless, as is the case within the United

States. So, while the number of "official statuses" for the English language around the

world is significant, it still does not reflect how far spread the use of English really is.

In order to present a general scale of English speakers in the world, Ulrich

Ammon of the University of Düsseldorf conducted a 15-year study published in 2015 that

found 527 million people, or 7.3% of the global population, spoke English as one of their

native languages; though that number is still small compared to the 1.39 billion speakers

of the different dialects of Chinese (Noack and Gamio 2015). While English might not be

the most spoken native language in the world, it is by far the most widespread as the

study reported that English is spoken in 101 countries, with the next closest language,

Arabic, coming in at 60 (Noack and Gamio 2015). What is especially important to note

for this thesis is that 1.5 billion people were currently studying English when the report

was published, indicating that the spread of English is likely to grow (Noack and Gamio

2015). The very real spread of English around the world has given it a perceived strength

that other languages lack, and a language only retains this status if the corresponding

nation holds lasting economic power (Crystal 2003). Some argue that due to these

ideologies defining the English language as the language of the global economy and the

language of international relations, it has become denationalized, separated from its

cultural ties to the U.S. or the U.K. (Gomez Sará 2017, 141).

Fear of the Global Takeover

Though the spread of English as a global language is clear, many scholars beg the

question, *Is this a good thing?* There are some who suggest that the lack of the existence

of a global, or universal, language acts as a handicap for international communication and

they have dubbed this "the international language problem" (Silverman and Silverman

2011). In order to address this international language problem, some have proposed

artificial, or constructed, languages like Esperanto—a language invented under the idea

of having a non biased form of communication between state leaders (Silverman and

Silverman 2011). The appeal for a "global language" is readily understandable, as our

globalizing world has seen an influx in communication between governments, businesses,

and individuals across borders and languages, however it also holds a very real benefit as

working in a common language actually lowers the transaction costs of international trade

(Ufier 2015). It is common practice for international organizations to function under

working languages in order to ease productivity and effectiveness of communication. The

United Nations acts as a prime example of this as it represent 193 nations representing

upwards of 6,000 languages, yet only functions with six working languages: English,

French, Russian, Chinese, Arabic and Spanish (UN Official Languages 2018). These six

languages were chosen based on political and functional reasons, however their selection

inevitably implies a power imbalance toward the regions and nations where these

languages are used. In fact, even within the organization, an imbalance between the use

of English and the other five official languages has been noted, leading to a conscious

effort to "eliminate the disparity between the use of English and the other five official

languages" so that they may "ensure the full and equitable treatment of all official

languages" through a minimum standard for multilingualism that calls for equal web

publication for each language (UN Official Languages 2018).

Opposition to English Language Education for Economic Development

While much research has found a positive correlation between English language

education programs and economic development, and while many governments have put

these efforts into practice for decades, there still exist alternative viewpoints that

challenge the validity and responsibility of the practice. Some have raised concerns that

when a nation puts governmental and foreign aid resources toward English language

education programs, it detracts from the resources toward increasing the population's

literacy rate, something that has significantly more substantial evidence supporting its

positive impact toward development (Bruthiaux 2002). Others have pointed to short-term

English language education "voluntourism" projects as falsely advertising or overstating

their developmental benefits, suggesting that, while not necessarily harmful, they should

be reframed as a cultural exchange rather than an aid service (Jakubiak 2016). Going

even further, there are some researchers who question the validity of the argument that

there is any positive impact on economic development through the establishment of

English language education. In their 2013 study, Arcand and Grin (2013) conducted a

study in which they concluded that there was no clear association between developing

nations with higher English capabilities and higher levels of economic development.

Another critique of the spread of English for economic development comes from

researchers who believe introducing the English language into developing states may

increase the national indicators for economic development, like GDP, but at the same

time increase economic or social inequality within the state due to an inequity in its

practice (Lee 2002, Pennycook 2001, Kroskrity 1999, Markee 2002, Bruthiaux 2002 and

Villegas 2017, 58). This is due to a number of factors, such as the quality of English

language education when it is mandated nationally; wealthier areas will have access to

better materials and educators, and will thus be able to use their English skills to gain

higher paying jobs (Hu 2005). This is believed to be especially true in developing states

still based more strongly on agriculture or manufacturing than the service sector. The

former two sectors rely more heavily on internal communication in the local language

over the use of an international language like English and so only a small portion of

citizens in higher paying service careers connected to the language would benefit (Lee
2002, Markee 2002).

History of States employing English language education for Development

Despite these concerns of potential inequality within a state or the redirection of
aid funds, the pursuit of English language education in non-English-speaking nations has
been ongoing for decades. Looking into two previously conducted case studies, one can
see how developmental discourse and language ideology surrounding English influenced
the incorporation of English language education for economic development well before
formal impact studies began. South Korea has been used as a prime example of English
language education being incorporated into economic development plans, as its
government formally pursued the incorporation of English language education--due to its
status as a global language--during what is described as its period of "modernization" in
the 1960-1970s under President Park Jung Hee's administration (Lee 2017). Through an
examination of English Language Teaching (ELT) Peace Corps volunteers in South
Korea from 1966 to 1981, Chee Hye Lee addresses how English advanced from a simple
means of communication into an ideological construct in which the English language was
treated as "the key to modernity and prosperity" and a way to actively participate in the
international economy (Lee 2017, 74). This ideology was explicitly mentioned within
Peace Corps publications, shown in the 1973 Peace Corps annual operations report,
which stated, "Because Koreans place a high priority on learning English as a social and
economic development tool, the Peace Corps in Korea is heavily weighted toward

training future English instructors and teaching English in the secondary schools and colleges" (as cited in Lee 2017, 74). In addition, despite the initial design of the ELT volunteers to work more closely with local administrators and teachers to assist in creating successful ELT practices that they would be capable of continuing without the presence of American volunteers in the future, the structure of the program set an ideology to ELT itself, giving Native Speakers (otherwise known as L1 speakers) the image as being "crucial" to successful implementation of ELT, thereby creating a perceived dependence on L1 English teachers even after the end of the Peace Corps' presences in South Korea (Lee 2017, 75). The continued presence of English language education in South Korea is noted today, in part, not only for its importance of functioning economically and politically within the international sphere, but also for its impact on class mobility within the nation (Park and Abelmann 2004). With the acquirement of proficiency in English, one gains the status of a more educated and worldly citizen in addition to access to universities of higher acclaim at home and abroad and jobs within industries of higher wages.

A similar literature regarding ELT practices in China exists. While South Korea's period of targeted development using ELT began in the early 1960s, China followed not long after as the first shift in national policies toward the expansion of English language education began in the late 1970s (Hu 2005). ELT too was treated "as having a vital role to play in national modernization and development," but without any data-based studies to support this claim (Hu 2005 5). The Ministry of Education (MOE) included explicit

designs for a national standard for an English language education syllabus in 1978, which

reflected the rationale that English was a tool for engaging in the international sphere

economically, commercially, technologically, and in terms of cultural exchange (Hu

2005). Addressing the individual gains of ELT, some researchers note that, in China

specifically, gaining higher levels of proficiency in English could "lead to a host of

economic, social and educational opportunities" including access to higher education

within China or abroad, better employment opportunities, and social prestige (Hu 2005,

6, Bourdieu 1991). Again, the basis for national policies on ELT were (and still are)

based on *perceived* goals presented by English, namely toward national development, and

though policies shifted to address issues of resources, the overall accepted purpose of the

inclusion of English in national education standards remain even today for international

economic development (Hu 2005).

English language education in Latin America

Just as with the English language education programs in other regions of the

world, Latin America too has an extensive history of English language education,

formally as a tool for *modernization* and *nation building*, but more recently under the

premise that "English proficiency is increasingly necessary for business and international

communication and, in that regard, linked with prospects for economic competitiveness

and growth in the global economy" (Cronquist and Fizbien 2017, 3). In many Latin

American states, English language learning (ELL) is mandatory by law within the public

school systems, and if it is not, it is highly encouraged as the foreign language of choice

(Cronquist and Fizbien 2017). Additionally, the region has many developed plans specifically for ELL with clearly defined standards and objectives for the overall programs, though there lacks standard measurements of reaching these goals within student achievement and teaching staff (Cronquist and Fizbien 2017). That being said, in the 2018 publication of the Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), Latin America was the only region that saw a decline in English proficiency, with only 11 points separating the highest and lowest scoring states in the region, Argentina and Venezuela respectively, making it also the narrowest gap between English proficiency, pointing to a regional issue rather than a state-by-state issue (EF EPI 2018). Some researchers note inadequate resources for school systems as leading poor quality English courses as well as high levels of economic inequality as main factors for the region's lower scores (Cronquist and Fizbien 2017 and EF EPI 2018). As a whole, Latin America is ranked as a "low" proficiency band, with an average score of 50.33 compared to Europe (56.64), Asia (53.49), Africa (53.21), and the lowest scoring region, the Middle East (46.02) (EF EPI 2018). This low proficiency band indicates that the average person is capable of navigating an English-speaking country as a tourist, engaging in small stalk with colleagues, and understanding simple emails (EF EPI 2018).

Due to the underperformance in what assessments exist, there are is a high need for English teachers in Latin America, as well as a high need for better quality in teacher training and professional development (Cronquist and Fizbien 2017). States approach this problem in a number of ways, including programs to send English teachers abroad for

training; immersive programs for training within their borders; and finally, the pursuit of highly trained individuals and better training practices through international support (Cronquist and Fizbien 2017). Colombia is noted as falling under all three of these categories, with the international support coming through a number of programs, but especially through the work of volunteers as educators and classroom and curriculum supporters (Cronquist and Fizbien 2017). An important player in providing these volunteers can be seen in the United States Peace Corps. The following section of this literature review will provide a background on the organization leading into the case study of the Peace Corps in Colombia.

B. The United States Peace Corps

What is the United States Peace Corps?

When the United States Peace Corps was developed in 1961 during John F. Kennedy's first few months in office, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were competing to spread their political ideologies and garner support around the world, particularly in the Global South. As discussed earlier, developmental aid became a key tool for their foreign policy goals, and so both states placed humanitarian workers and educators throughout the world under the pretense of cultural exchange and tools for modernization. The Peace Corps was established for the U.S. to formally arrange humanitarian aid volunteers invited by states around the world to strengthen the global image of American citizens and assist in the development goals of the host state.

The first conception of the Peace Corps was announced on October 14, 1960, when then-presidential candidate Senator John F. Kennedy arrived late at night at the University of Michigan and delivered a speech to 10,000 students (PC History 2019). In this speech Kennedy asked the campus who among them would be willing to promote peace and the image of America by volunteering in the developing world (PC History 2019). "How many of you who are going to be doctors, are willing to spend your days in Ghana? Technicians or engineers, how many of you are willing to work in the Foreign Service and spend your lives traveling around the world?" Kennedy implored, foreshadowing the very first Peace Corps program that would launch just over a year later when 52 Peace Corps volunteers arrived in Ghana on August 30, 1961 (PC History 2019, PC Ghana 2019).

Following this short and low-profile speech, Kennedy won the 1960 election and on March 1, 1961, in one of his first acts as president, Kennedy signed an executive order establishing the Peace Corps (PC History 2019). The organization has been studied as a tool in which the U.S. government has been able to exercise soft power around the world, influencing U.S. relations and the policies of other nations through economic, educational, and medicinal aid (Fritz 1998).

Since 1961 the Peace Corps has operated in 142 countries working in six distinctive sectors: Agriculture, Environment, Community Economic Development, Health, Youth in Development, and Education. Within each sector, three main goals lay

the outline to the entire Peace Corps operations, and have remained unchanged to this day:

1. To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women

2. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served

3. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans

(PC History 2019)

Soft Power Move (or, What's in it for the U.S. Government?)

It is necessary to understand the motives of the U.S. government in its Peace Corps program in order to grasp what costs and benefits a host state must consider before inviting the organization in for English language education programs. For the U.S., even if it were founded with the purest intentions of promoting peace and development with no ulterior motives, the Peace Corps acts as another foreign policy tool. Often when one imagines the U.S. as a powerful state, they picture nuclear weapons, soldiers in military uniforms brandishing advanced technology, or they create some image in their mind of the American economy with big bankers and hoards of cash. However, these images of American power are symbols of *hard power*--military and economic sanctions, or the sticks and carrots of the U.S. government (Nye 2002). The U.S. government has also recognized the essential nature of *soft power* in American foreign policy, which is

understood as a government's foreign policy efforts through less assertive practices such as exposure to American culture, ideology, and institutions so that the foreign powers might align their goals the U.S. (Nye 2002). In other words, the U.S. government recognizes that there are times when it is efficient to threaten force or economic sanctions; however it also recognizes when sharing resources and information can more effectively sway another state to support U.S. desires. And even if this sway is not for a clearly defined goal, the general positive perspective gained through *soft power* influences can help keep peaceful relations for a more stable—and U.S. led—international system.

Soft power is expressed through a number of cultural, ideological, or institutional means (Nye 2002). On the cultural side, Hollywood is a perfect example of a source for the spread of soft power as it depicts and distributes American culture in its most minute details, spreading images of the nation's humanity through films of love and loss. Similarly, other governments, like Canada or the Netherlands, promote action in attractive international issues, like providing economic aid or peacekeeping, to counterbalance their lack of military strength (Nye 2002). In terms of institutions, the U.S. was at the forefront of developing the liberal international economic institutions that operate today, like the International Monetary Fund, the World Banks, and more (Nye 2002). It is through these actions that the U.S. is able to maintain its position of power in the world as other nations become more economically and militaristically powerful.

The Peace Corps was founded on this basis, an idealistic tool of U.S. soft power that worked alongside the ongoing threat of nuclear warfare that more-or-less dominated U.S. foreign policy in the 1960s through the end of the Cold War. From the U.S. perspective, Peace Corps volunteers were meant to advocate U.S. foreign policy and represent American culture. The second and third goals of the Peace Corps remain today rather explicit in this intention as the they emphasize cultural exchange, seeking to better the people of other states' understanding of Americans and Americans' understanding of the people of other states. Ideologically speaking, the Peace Corps as an organization represents the mutual desire for peace between the United States and other nations. In its early years, tensions ran high between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. and it was important for the Kennedy administration to influence as many developing nations as possible away from siding with the Soviets should something happen and send the Cold War into an active world war. By sending young Americans as agents of peace, the U.S. government was able to develop an association between America and aid, friendship, and development, thus showing the stability and progress that could come from democratic nations in line with the American perspective.

Today, the nation building motivation has been removed from the equation, however soft power does no lose its benefits for international diplomacy, and so the Peace Corps continues to operate, though perhaps with a smaller public image than the past. States in the past and present invite the Peace Corps in and allow the U.S. government to continue wielding this power because they expect to benefit from it as

well. So, as my research question begs, *do they gain the benefits, especially the economic ones, that they expect?*

Peace Corps: A stagnant operation in an ever changing world?

One of the major criticisms of the U.S. Peace Corps is that the organization has remained stagnant in its mission despite the vastly different world in which it operates today. The 1960s saw the height of the Cold War and a heavy focus of the U.S. government on stopping the spread of communism, and thus the establishment of the Peace Corps cannot be understood without setting it in this context, as it is widely agreed that the organization was, despite its generally altruistic nature, an instrument in the Cold War (Fischer 1998, 3). It was a time in which *liberal developmentalism* was in its golden age, when nation building was the name of the game, and a Peace Corps volunteer's main role was to promote the process of development and target the hearts and minds of the developing world so as to shift their perception of the U.S. (Fischer 1998, 4).

Despite the fundamental changes in the world over the last 60 years, including the end of the Cold War, the War on Terror, advances in technology, and so much more, the Peace Corps has remained dedicated to its original three overarching goals, as mentioned a few section earlier in this paper (Rieffel 2003, 12). Whether these goals hold the same importance today is a topic of debate for some.

The Peace Corps' first goal, to help a state meet its need for trained manpower for sustainable economic development, stemmed from the belief that "the critical obstacle to

economic growth in the [developing world] was the shortage of people with the skills necessary to run a modern economy" (Rieffel 2003, 15). This belief is very reminiscent of the modernization theory that drove the creation of the organization in that it implies the U.S. alone has these trained professionals or the means to create them. As a result, there are those who critique the Peace Corps as outdated in the 21st century seeing as "virtually all developing countries have established education systems that produce graduates in a broad range of academic fields and technical skills" (Rieffel 2003, 19). Some criticise the label of "trained men and women" in the first goal due to the fact that the majority of volunteers are recent college graduates with no formal work experience (Strauss 2008, Rommann 2013, Reiffel 2003). These critics argue that an organization dedicated to health and economic development should recruit experts to fulfil these roles. However, while there is no doubt that a fleet of volunteers with years of experience would be most beneficial, all volunteers receive intensive specialized training in their sector for an average of three months within their host country prior to being sworn in and beginning their two years of service. In fact, according to the Peace Corps website, the majority of the instructors during pre-service training are locally hired, thereby employing from that pool of graduates produced within the country emphasized by the same critics (PC Volunteer b 2019).

In addition, the mere presence of trained professionals is often not enough in the face of a lack of resources or funding. This matter is aided by hosting Peace Corps volunteers because their presence is entirely funded by the U.S. government, and so they

become a free resource that gives a state more direct access to advanced technology,

practices, or grant applications in the U.S. Going further, while perhaps a Health,

Agriculture, or Environment volunteer could more easily be supplemented with trained

local professionals, English language education volunteers hold the unique position as

native speakers of English as always being beneficial due to the fact that mastering any

language is achieved better through exposure to instruction by native speakers (Rieffel

2003, 19). Of course, criticism of the organization is important as it ensures the host

state's population remains the priority, something that is questionable based on the

historic lack of impact studies conducted by the Peace Corps.

The second goal, promoting understanding of Americans among the populations

of the developing world, is less privy to the question of timeliness due to the fact that

positive cultural exchange is likely to always be considered beneficial. However, some

argue that the Peace Corps does not need to be this mechanism of exchange because

many citizens in the host countries are already exposed to some form of American culture

through the Internet and media (Rieffel 2003, 19). Others disagree, and argue instead that

the Peace Corps should fully embrace its status as an intercultural exchange program,

removing itself from the first goal so that it holds no association with development

(Strauss 2008). These critics suggest that the Peace Corps "the only substantial program

primarily designed to foster personal relationships with people in foreign countries"

because its emphasis on immersion allows for much more contact that people in, say,

diplomatic positions as ambassadors or foreign service officers who spend much of their

time behind embassy walls (Rieffel 2003, 20). Again, though, the English language volunteers remain beneficial even if the Peace Corps shifted away from development as foreign language education is an extremely immersive setting that promotes individual and long lasting cultural exchange.

Finally, some critics argue that the third goal, promoting understanding among Americans of people in the host countries, has not been sufficiently addressed by the Peace Corps throughout the organizations 58 years. They argue that encouraging volunteers after they've returned to work in their local communities and share their stories, or the establishment of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) in 1981 are not enough to justify the continuation of the program (Rieffel 2003, 20). Again, this aspect of the organization is important, however it has been suggested that the Peace Corps does not do enough on this end to justify its inclusion in the mission of the program (Rieffel 2003, 21). There lacks a uniform process of achieving the third goal, though methods have been suggested, including the possibility of a reverse volunteer in which a person from a developing nation could teach their language or a social studies course in an American public school (Rieffel 2003, 23). Here again, however, the English language volunteers remain justified in that their experience teaching English abroad can give them the skills to do the same in their own community with local immigrant populations which would likely entail discussions with other Americans about their work and experiences in service of a host country and its population.

While viable concerns of the lack of change in the three core goals of the Peace Corps exist, the English language education volunteer remains uniquely positioned as a beneficial resource, even outside of the potential economic benefits that this thesis will explore. Of course, the topic of this paper remains the economic impact of English language education, and so with this background on the Peace Corps provided, it is now necessary to understand the ins and outs of the English language educator's role.

Structure of the Peace Corps' Education Sector

The Education Sector has, since the very beginning of the organization, remained the largest program area with the highest number of volunteers active at any given time (PC Volunteer 2018). As of September 2017, 41% of Peace Corps volunteers were operating within the Education Sector, as compared to Health (20%), Youth in Development (11%), Community Economic Development (8%), Environment (8%), Agriculture (8%), and the remaining few volunteers operating within the miscellaneous Peace Corps Response (4%) (PC Agency News 2018). Currently, there are education programs in 50 of the 65 countries with ongoing operations, and of these, seven feature *only* an Education based program (PC Countries 2018).

Education volunteers work in a variety of assignment areas, ranging from primary school through post-secondary education, working as general educators in science, math, literacy, and English language education. Alternatively, Education volunteers may find themselves working outside of the classroom as a teacher trainer or teacher resource

developer, aiding and assisting local teachers in working with new technologies or

teaching methods. Often volunteers will find themselves working within both roles.

Volunteers working as instructors or teacher trainers, depending on their country

assignment, may find themselves placed in small rural schools or larger urban schools,

however they average a 35- to 40-hour workweek (PC Volunteer a 2018). Additionally,

during their 27-month stay, volunteers are expected to work outside of the classroom on a

project deemed critical to the developmental needs of the community (PC Volunteer c

2019). These side projects often involve the development of libraries, technology

resource centers, or afterschool book clubs. Volunteers have also been reported to

provide free instruction for community members in need, such as impoverished children

unable to attend school during normal hours, or adults seeking to hone their English

language skills in a night class.

While the work of Education volunteers varies based on the particularities of the

goals of its host country, there are enough similarities to allow for a comprehensive look

at the sector as a whole. Education volunteers in general help to increase the skills and

knowledge of their students within their subject matter, or by assisting and teaching the

local teachers the best methods for their subjects so that the local staff may employ what

they've learned after the departure of the volunteer.

What do the Critics Say?

Before, I noted some concerns that exist surrounding the perceived stagnation of

the entire Peace Corps and its three main goals, however after better understanding the

role of the Education Sector, one must also understand its specific critiques. Some argue that the Education Sector fails to achieve the organization's goals of sustainable development because many of the projects have remained in the same nations for *decades* (Strauss 2008, Rommann 2013, Rieffel 2003). These critics argue that the nature of a development organization is to become a means to an end for itself; or in other words, a mark of success for a program like the Peace Corps Education Sector would be to reach the point where the host nation no longer requires the presence of volunteers due to its ability to provide quality education through its own trained professionals (Strauss 2008, Rommann 2013, Rieffel 2003). While that may be true for the case of certain areas of education, like STEM subjects or literacy teachers, English language education programs, which are often pursued by host governments, are unique in that there are mastering any language is still greatly facilitated by live contact with native speakers, and so Peace Corps volunteers remain a beneficial source to the host state (Rieffel 2008, 19). The lack of widespread formal impact studies regarding Peace Corps educators is a major aspect as to why their successes or failures are so difficult to determine.

Robert Strauss, former Peace Corps country director in Cameroon, notes that the Peace Corps, in his opinion, suffers from a "confused identity" that results from this failure to record and/or produce results from the individual programs, aside from the small number of real impact studies published by the organization (Strauss 2008). This confused identity, according to Strauss, stems from the Peace Corps' claims to be a development organization and a vessel of cultural exchange. It fails on the development

side because there is a lack of clearly defined and achievable goals, and on the cultural exchange side because volunteers are not adequately trained in how to promote good faith toward U.S. policy and American citizens (Strauss 2008).

The process of becoming a Peace Corps volunteer is another source of critique for the Education Sector in particular. The majority of volunteers have relatively remained from the same demographic since the inception of the organization; newly graduated students in their early twenties with little to no professional background in the work they are sent to complete (Strauss 2008, Rommann 2013, Rieffel 2003, PC Volunteer c 2019). Each country project has its own individual requirements for applicants, sometimes featuring necessary language skills, but for the majority of the Education Sector programs, there is merely a requirement for a Bachelor's degree and tutoring experience—something that was seen as a major shift from when there was no degree requirement at all. The Peace Corps programs feature long lists of "Desired Skills" that involve work experience, but the fact that they are not required emphasizes the belief that relatively inexperienced people can still be successful after the three months of pre-service training. Once a potential volunteer finds a listing they prefer, they simply must upload a resume and a brief motivational statement explaining why they want to volunteer and how they intend to overcome the struggles of working as a volunteer. Should their application be deemed acceptable, candidates are invited for a Skype interview that lasts approximately one hour, during which time the interviewer determines whether or not the volunteer has what it takes to successfully serve abroad in

harsh conditions for 27 months while creating and maintaining many interpersonal

relationships with people who likely speak a language other than the interviewees.

Though this process isn't necessarily intensive, the three months of pre-service training

are, as the trainee is expected to be training 24/7 for the duration of those three months

with no leave. By the end of the pre-service training, if the potential volunteer fails to

meet the expectations of the service, they are not sworn and must return to the U.S.

Focusing in on English Language Education Volunteers

There has been a recent shift within the Peace Corps toward working under an

evidence-based program design, with the most recent Strategic Plan and Annual

Performance Plan of 2018-2022 outlining its first strategic objective as "Sustainable

Change" (PC 2018, 12). This objective highlights a change in what has been a main

source of criticism of the Peace Corps, stating that the organization intends to "Develop

tools and an approach for gathering quantitative and qualitative data on host country

partners' assessment of the Peace Corps' contributions to the local development priorities

that are outlined in logical project frameworks," and these frameworks are intended to

begin for all projects by the fiscal year 2020 (PC 2018, 12).

While a discussion of the Education Sector and existing critiques as a whole is

important, the focus of this thesis is more specifically on the impact of the English

language education subsection. English language education volunteers have been a key

element in the Peace Corps program for the last six decades. The Colombia program in

1961 was the second group of Peace Corps volunteers to arrive in their host country, and

many of the volunteers arrived to help teach the English language, marking it as one of

the oldest and most integral parts of the organization. The reasons why different host

countries invite Peace Corps volunteers in varies for many reasons, however the English

language education programs defined on the Peace Corps website consistently refer to the

host state's desire to increase their population's English language skills in order to

promote the working population in the global economy, thus framing the English

language as a tool for economic development.

In October 2013, the Peace Corps worked with the Center for Applied Linguistics

(CAL) to develop a new Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Certificate

Program. CAL is currently acting as an external consultant to the Peace Corps until

September 2022, reviewing and validating the Peace Corps' TEFL Certificate standards

so that volunteers can undergo a rigorous 120-hour training before entering their position

in the field (PC Benefits 2019, CAL 2019). Under their contract, CAL is also responsible

for conducting annual reviews of trainer credentials and volunteer assessments, thereby

legitimizing the English language volunteers so that they are truly the trained

professionals the Peace Corps advertises to host nations (CAL 2019). The TEFL

Certificate is based on a global standard and includes the following requirements:

1. Pre-departure: Four e-learning modules completed over a twelve-week period.
2. Pre-service training: Ten to twelve weeks of technical, language, medical, and safety and security training, including a practicum of 10 hours of practice teaching.

3. Online learning community: Quarterly online professional development events facilitated by Peace Corps staff at posts.

4. Volunteer teaching: Two years of supervised classroom teaching experience during Peace Corps service.

5. Volunteer evaluation: Rigorous teaching observations based on TEFL Certificate standards to track and improve Volunteers' teaching performance.

6. In-service training: Multi-day training events totaling up to 15 hours of training and practice during Peace Corps service.

7. Certificate: The Peace Corps TEFL Certificate is validated by the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. and recognized both nationally and internationally.

(PC Benefits 2019)

The TEFL Certificate program is not applicable to every post in which English language education is a program. In fact, the case study of this paper, Colombia, is not one of the 11 countries participating in the TEFL program.

III. Case Study: Colombia

History of Peace Corps in Colombia

Year One

When the United States Peace Corps went into operation in the late summer of 1961, 62 volunteers became the second group to ever complete domestic training before heading off to their host nation for the next 27 moths of their life. It was on August 25, 1961, that the first Colombian Peace Corps volunteers graduated from their nine-week

training program at Rutgers University, ready to head to Colombia to begin working as

community development workers (Mullins 1962, 34). A few days later, the group was

briefed at the State Department in Washington D.C., and participated in an interview

session with President Kennedy (Mullins 1962, 34). On September 7, they took a plane

from New York City and arrived in Bogotá to begin an experiment of the U.S.

government's exercising of soft power through the development work of *nation building*,

hoping to spread the ideals of democracy in a world seen as on the cusp of succumbing to

communism.

This was the second Peace Corps group to arrive in their host country, and it was

the first group of volunteers to touch base in Latin America, which would later become

one of the most targeted regions for Peace Corps operations. Though they had

participated in training in the U.S., the 62 volunteers spent another five weeks at the

Tibaitata Experimental Farm, created by the Rockefeller Foundation, just 20 kilometers

from the capital city (Mullins 1962, 34). During these five weeks, volunteers were

lectured in Spanish by different departments of the government that outlined their

specific needs from and expectations of the volunteers (Mullins 1962, 34). The volunteers

met President Lleras, were briefed on what areas they were to be assigned, and then were

off, working on projects ranging from building the foundation of new schools, water

systems, roads, and addressing general health and sanitation issues (Mullins 1962 35). By

January 1962, a number of projects were well into progression, including, an aqueduct

with bridges and two roads in La Union, Narino; a park, public health center, and school

in Minca Magdaleda; a school, sports facilities, and latrines in Tunia, Cauca; and a side project of arranging classes in simple writing and English in addition to the main projects of creating a pure water system in Candelaria, Valle (Mullins 1962, 35).

A section of the "First Annual Peace Corps Report" dedicated to a description of the volunteers' experiences in Colombia describes what was successful and what needed to be changed based on the collaborations between the 62 volunteers and their host country counterparts (Mullins 1962, 36). The report includes a detailed depiction of one volunteer's average routine working alongside his assigned Colombian counterpart, including the meals they shared together as they engaged in the cultural exchange portion of the program. The entry ends with an optimistic note:

> The work is now beginning to roll along to successful advances in community development. The first few months have been perhaps the most difficult in getting things organized. Almost all the work has been in thought and words, but now these are being reproduced in bridges, schools, roads and public health centers. Colombia has a great future. So does the Peace Corps in Colombia. (Mullins 1962, 36).

Problems Arise

The history of the presence of the Peace Corps in Colombia, despite its outwardly idealistic nature, is been riddled with controversy. Throughout the first 20 years in Colombia, Peace Corps Volunteers were split between several different sectors of the organization, including Agriculture, Education, Community Development, and Health

(Roll 2013). During this time, nearly 4,650 Volunteers operated in Colombia, working within rural and urban communities on major projects such as nursing and education reforms (PC Colombia 2019 a).

Personal stories from Volunteers are generally very positive about their experiences operating in Colombia, however Peace Corps/Colombia, throughout its original run, was plagued with major issues of security and stigma. The very first deaths of active Peace Corps volunteers occurred on accident within the first six months of the program when two volunteers were killed along with 28 other passengers on an Avispa airliner (NY Times 1962). The headline "Two Peace Corps Dead To Be Left In Colombia" appeared on May 1, 1962, in the *New York Times*, followed by a short article explaining that the bodies could not be retrieved without the threat of endangering more lives in a potential landslide, along with a note that the Peace Corps Director, Sargent Shriver, made remarks the month prior regarding the potential dangers volunteers might face (NY Times 1962). While these two deaths were not the result of a direct attack, they hold significance as the first fatalities of active Peace Corps volunteers.

In February of 1969, some hostilities between Colombian government officials and Peace Corps Volunteers arose when Governor Mejia Duque of Risaralda Province requested for the immediate retirement of 10 volunteers placed in the city of Pereira apparently per the request of the city's mayor due to accusations that the volunteers were attempting to influence citizens against the president, Carlos Lleras Restrepo (NY Times 1969).

Political instability was a serious issue in Colombia throughout the original

20-year run of the program, and it became increasingly an issue throughout the 1970s

when kidnappings for ransom became common occurrences (Vidal 1978). In 1977, it was

reported in *El Tiempo,* one of Bogotá's newspapers, that kidnappings had broken all

national crime records, with 93 kidnappings reported by the end of that year (Vidal

1978). While Colombia citizens were the primary targets, a raid of a police station in the

isolated area of La Macarena on February 14, 1977, resulted in the kidnapping of an

agriculture volunteer named Richard Starr by a leftist guerrilla group called the *Fuerzas*

Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) (Krause 1980). The guerilla members

made claims that Starr was actually working with the CIA, mirroring a larger conspiracy

that the Peace Corps is a cover for CIA operations (Vidal 1978). The kidnappers first

attempted to use Starr as a bargaining chip, offering to release the volunteer in exchange

for the release of a guerilla member imprisoned by the Colombian government (Vidal

1978). The U.S. government could not concede to these demands or the demands for cash

ransom that followed due to the threat of encouraging more kidnapping, and so Starr's

release did not occur until almost three years to the date of his kidnapping on February

12, 1980, when his mother worked with a columnist, Jack Anderson, to garner $250,000

and arrange a trade with the FARC members (Anderson 1979, Krause 1980). President

Jimmy Carter made a statement the following day thanking him for his service as well as

thanking the Government of Colombia for its cooperation and assistance (Carter 1981).

Before Starr's release, the Peace Corps began to limit where it operated within Colombia,

removing volunteers from the more rural and isolated sections of the country in favor of the major cities in hopes that it would work against the threat of kidnapping (Krause 1980). Starr's kidnapping acted as one of the main factors that led to the closure of the Peace Corps program in Colombia in 1981, marking the beginning of a 29-year hiatus in Peace Corps/Colombia operations.

An additional factor that should be noted beyond the immediate danger to volunteers was the growing climate of hostility toward volunteers within Colombia due to accusations of links between volunteers and drug smuggling. A Colombian film released in 2004, titled "El Rey," demonstrates the widely spread rumors within Colombia that the American Volunteers played a major role in introducing and influencing the production of cocaine (Billings Gazette 2004). These accusations were noted in a 2010 article in *La Semana* regarding the return of the Peace Corps after a 29-year hiatus (Iragorri 2010). According to the article, Víctor Mosquera Cháux, ex-president of the Republic and ambassador in Washington during Virgilio Barco's presidency, was quoted discussing the rumors, stating that it was said Peace Corps volunteers taught locals the chemical procedure for productively extracting cocaine from coca plants (Iragorri 2010). Though evidence of this is primarily anecdotal, the depiction of the volunteers suggests that their relation with the local communities likely was not as positively received as individual reports indicate.

Peace Corps Returns to Colombia

The suspension of the Peace Corps/Colombia program ended after 29 years when, in September 2010, a new agreement was established to reintroduce volunteers solely for English language education aid (PC Colombia 2019 a). The announcement of the return of the Peace Corps in Colombia was cited as an opportunity for economic advancement, as U.S. ambassador in Bogotá, William Brownfield, assured when he noted that increasing one's ability to communicate in English would increase the economic opportunities for Colombians, allowing for more competitive participation in the globalized economy (Maseri 2010). In the first year of the reestablished program, nine initial volunteers were placed between three cities—Barranquilla, Cartagena, and Santa Marta—along the Atlantic coast (Semana 2010). The volunteers were placed in primary and secondary schools working as co-teachers and assisting in providing local teachers and schools with aid to enhance their own ability to teach English as a foreign language.

Due to the unstable political history and the previous security conditions of volunteers in the original 20-year program, the organization took a number of precautions before determining it was feasible to reopen operations in Colombia. The Peace Corps Director at the time, Aaron S. Williams, arranged for assessment teams to determine how suitable the conditions were for volunteers and then proceeded to take extra precautions based on the assessments, initially restricting the volunteers to urban areas, though now the program is described as a rural program operating throughout rural departments of Atlántico, Bolivar, Magdalena, and La Guajira (PC 2013, PC Colombia 2019 b). To date, Colombia has hosted a total of 4,904 Volunteers (PC Colombia 2019 a).

There are currently two projects with 81 active volunteers working primarily in urban areas along Columbia's Atlantic coast (PC Colombia 2019 c). The first project, titled Community Economic Development, focuses on rural economic development through the strengthening of local, family, and individual economies via three basic goals:

1) strengthen the capacities of business owners/cooperatives to increase assets, diversity products and spread sales to guarantee growth and linkages to value chains

2) improve the financial decision-making capacity and money management skills of individuals, households, and businesses

3) strengthen the entrepreneurial behaviors and business skills of youth.

(PC Colombia 2019 c)

The second project is one of more importance for this study, as it is the Education project in which volunteers run the Practical English for Success (PES) program—occasionally still referred to as its former title Teaching English for Livelihoods (TEL)—in order to support the Colombian government's mission "to strengthen the teaching of English in public primary and secondary schools…through a pedagogic emphasis in the co-planning and co-teaching with local teachers" (PC Colombia 2019 c). The volunteers of this project are meant to "promote participatory teaching methodologies centered on students and the creation of bilingual communities of practice in schools using strategies based on innovative communication and technology"

(PC Colombia 2019 c). The English language is described as "a means to enrich one's life," framing it in the context of a "tool" that can be utilized for individual and statewide economic development (Jakubiak 2016, Meredith 2011, PC 2019 Colombia c).

During the original negotiations for the return of English language volunteers in Colombia, it was stated that the TEL project would support the Colombian Ministry of Education's initiative to make all public schools bilingual by 2019 (PC 2013**)**. The program has since shifted so that the PES program is intended to aid in reaching the Government of Colombia's adjusted goal of achieving a bilingual state by 2025 (PC Colombia 2019 c).

The Peace Corps presence in Colombia, while expanding into that second program of Community Economic Development recently, has been strongly focused on Colombia Bilinguë 2025. In October of 2015, a celebration was held in Barranquilla in acknowledgement of 25 years of Peace Corps presence in Colombia despite the fact that these were not 25 consecutive years (U.S. Embassy Bogotá 2015). By this point 4,800 total volunteers had served in Colombia in total, but the 40 most recent volunteers, active since the return of the program in 2010, served solely as TEL volunteers (U.S. Embassy Bogotá 2015).

In April 2016, a group of 26 volunteers began their three-month period of living in rural regions of Atlántico with host families to learn Spanish and about the culture prior to their official two years of service promoting friendship and "helping with the strengthening of the [national] bilingualism; teaching English to teachers and students in

public institutions of the region. Additionally sharing their knowledge of new technologies, methodologies, and innovations, working side by side with Colombian teachers to better the quality of education and to benefit the entire community" (translated from U.S. Embassy Bogotá 2016).

In April 2017, another 27 volunteers entered the state to work with Colombian teachers in La Guajira, Atlántico, Magdalena, and Bolívar under the same mandate of improving the quality of English language education (U.S. Embassy Bogotá 2017). By this point, Peace Corps volunteers had assisted 111 public schools and trained 585 teachers (U.S. Embassy Bogotá 2017). Articles published in local Colombian newspapers regarding the presence of Peace Corps volunteers were generally positive and consistently noted their engagement with the Ministry of Education's goals for national bilingualism (El Heraldo 2014, 2016).

The most recent batch of volunteers arrived in Colombia in September 2018 when 25 new Peace Corps members met with U.S. ambassador to Colombia Kevin Whitaker, Peace Corps/Colombia director Matthew Carlson, and Peace Corps program director Jonathan Drewry for the swearing in ceremony in Baranoa, Atlántico (U.S. Embassy Bogotá 2018). These volunteers, split between the TEL and Community Economic Development programs in Colombia, were placed in the same four districts as the first Peace Corps group to return in 2010, though with the addition of Sucre (U.S. Embassy Bogotá 2018). During the ceremony, while there was mention of the TEL program, a greater focus was put on the Community Economic Development program, especially in

relation to a specific project in Usiacurí, Atlántico, where volunteers work with the

Colombian program SENA Emprende Rural (SER) to improve tourism in the region

(U.S. Embassy Bogotá 2018). This shift works to emphasize one of the projected gains of

a Colombia with higher English proficiency, as tourism is an important part of the service

sector that indicates increased involvement with the global economy.

Colombia Bilingüe 2025

Initially pursued in 2004 and cited on the Peace Corps' *Projects in Colombia*

webpage as part of the inspiration for English language education volunteers in

Colombia, the Colombian government is currently undergoing a statewide pursuit of

bilingual education. Referred to as Bilingual Colombia 2025 on the Peace Corps site and

Colombia Bilinguë in the state's internal discussions, the program focuses on the

Colombian government's promotion of bilingualism in Spanish and English under the

premise that it will enhance the presence of Colombian human capital in the global

economy (Gomez Sará 2017, 139). This desire by the government of Colombia reflects

the ideology associated with the English language as a means for advance in the global

economy due to its status as the global *lingua franca* of the business world. However,

rather than framing as a tool for following Western states into modernization, it is treated

in a more neutral tone with the English language described as a necessary tool for

engagement in the global economy, not because powerful states like the U.S. use it, but

because the entire world uses it.

Colombia has a long history of foreign language education being used as a tool by those in power to instruct the population in whatever language was deemed most useful during said period. For much of its colonial history, under Spanish rule, the institutions attended by wealthy males taught Latin and often conducted much of the general courses in Latin rather than Spanish due to its position of power as the language of education and religion (Gomez Sará 2017, 140). Following the movements for independence in 1810, a number of shifts in the language education were proposed in a politically unstable Colombia, and from these proposals it becomes easy to see how the importance of language and education was recognized even if not every plan was followed through. The year 1821 was particularly important for this due to the fact that in this year, the government mandated the teaching of Spanish as an obligatory subject and its use as a means of instruction in every school, placing it in at least equal footing with the previously monopolized Latin (Gomez Sará 2017, 141). Similarly, in the same year the government highlighted the importance of foreign language education, leading to the majority of the schools teaching either English or French (Gomez Sará 2017, 141). Just five years later, in 1826, students could not graduate from secondary school without having studied both languages (Gomez Sará 2017, 141). A proposal was made to expand the list of obligatory languages to Spanish, Latin, Greek, French, English, and one indigenous language in every primary and secondary schools, however this policy was never implemented (Gomez Sará 2017, 141). During this same period, schools were established within communities with at minimum 30 families, creating an inextricable tie

between the expansion of education at large and language education (Gomez Sará 2017, 141).

While English and French were both taught in the Colombian school system all the way through 1993, English saw more attention notably in the 1940s with the creation of the Colombo-American and Colombian-British centers, and even more so following WWII (Villegas 2017, 57, Gomez Sará 2017, 141). This fact is largely due to the reconstruction of Europe following the devastation of the Second World War in both physical and fiscal terms. As European powers struggled to rebuild their economies, the U.S. led movements for a global economy and the establishment of an international system of politics through organizations like the World Bank and the United Nations. The power of the United States was recognized around the world and so many states worked to position themselves so that they might receive the economic benefits of working with the U.S. (Gomez Sará 2017, 141). It was during this period that many researchers note the transformation of the English language into a global *lingua franca,* separate from American culture and instead a supposedly neutral language for the communication across borders and populations (Villegas 2017, 61 and Gomez Sará 2017, 141). With the English language in such a position of power in the international community, it is readily understandable as to why the majority of Colombian schools chose to teach English over French when, in 1994, the General Law of Education (Law 115) limited schools to one foreign language in their curriculum (Gomez Sará 2017, 141).

Despite the long-term presence of the teaching of English as a foreign language, it wasn't until 2004 that real plans were established to use English as a tool for economic advancement (Villegas 2017, 58 and Gomez Sará 2017, 142). It was in this year that the government began the basics for the standardization of English language education standards in conjunction with national education plans for a bilingual society (Gomez Sará 2017, 142). The belief was that in a world run by an increasingly globalized market, a practical way for Colombia to enhance the competitiveness of its citizens was through educating them in an internationally powerful language (Villegaz 2017 62 and Gomez Sará 2017, 142). The Ministry of Education (MEN) defined the Colombia Bilingual program in 2005 in the policy paper "Colombia Bilingual 2004-2019," referring to the program as the Colombian National Bilingual Education Program, or PNB according to the Spanish acronym (Villegas 2017, 58, Cárdenas and Miranda 2014, 51).

With the establishment of the Colombia Bilingüë 2025 program came the question, *What are the standards of bilingualism?* This question has some to critique in the Colombian government's policy due to the fact that bilingualism was heavily implied to mean proficiency in English as a second language, despite the fact that there are many Colombian citizens already bilingual in the classic sense due to their proficiency in Spanish and an indigenous language (Villegas 2017, 68). Considering this, the standards of bilingualism are defined in terms of measuring English proficiency through the testing of primary and secondary students abilities to speak, read, and write in English (Villegas 2017). The initial program had ambitious goals for English acquisition in accordance

with evaluations under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

(CERF), including high school graduates achieving intermediate level (B1), taught by

English teachers with at least high intermediate level (B2), and Bachelor degree

graduates would reach high intermediate level (B2 + C1), all by 2019 (Villegas 2017, 58,

Cárdenas and Miranda 2014, 57). In layman's terms, the CEFR levels are described as
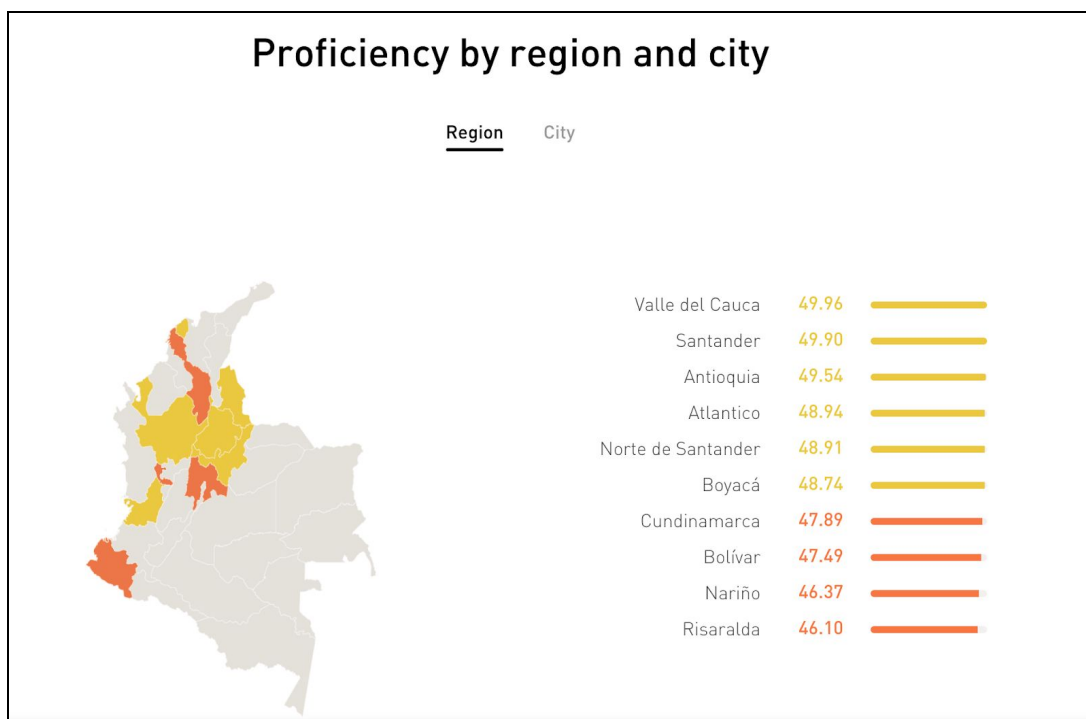
follows:

Basic User: A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows, and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
Basic User: A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to most relevant areas (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate during routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment, and matters in areas of immediate need.
Independent User: B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Independent User: B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue, giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
Proficient User: C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices.

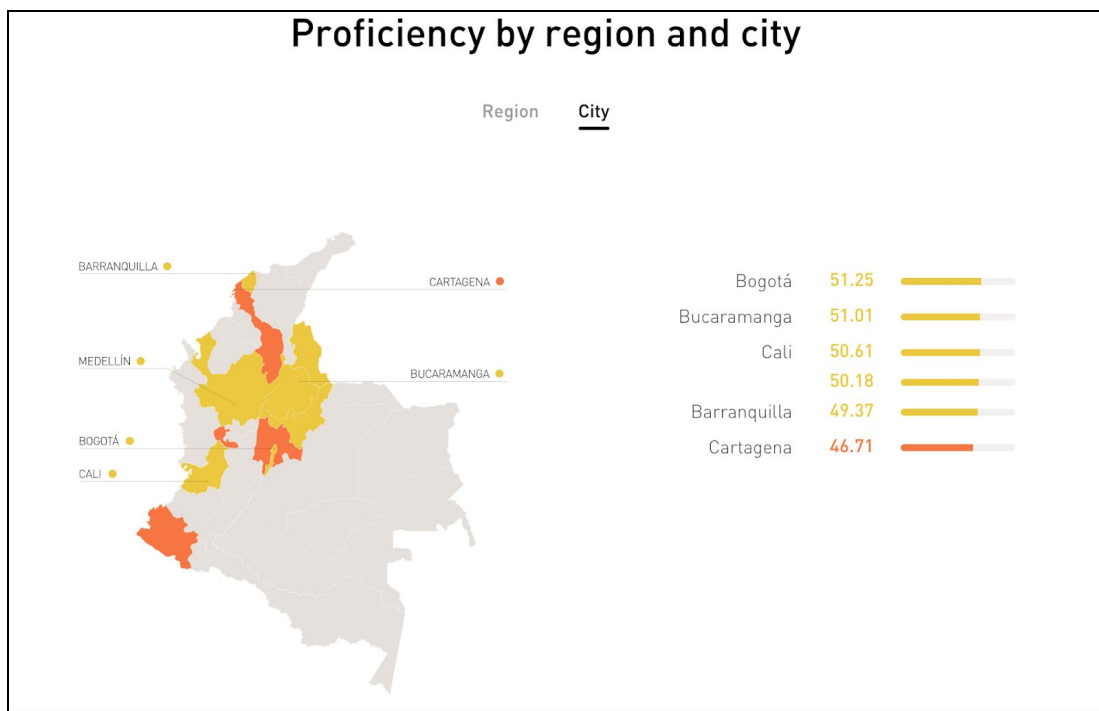| Proficient User: C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently, and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

(quoted from the Council of Europe EF EPI 2018)

Colombia's Bilingual Pursuit by the Numbers:

The most recent updates regarding the PNB program put it in league with the national goal by the Ministry of Education to make Colombia the most educated nation in South America by 2025 (Mineducación a 2019). On their site "Colombia bilingual" is listed as an indicator of education, however according to Education First's English Proficiency Index (EPI), Colombia is categorized as "Low Proficiency" with a score of 48.90, compared to Argentina, the highest ranked Latin American country, with a score of 57.58 (Mineducación 2019 a, EF EPI 2018). Colombia's capital city, Bogotá, demonstrates a proficiency score slightly higher than the national average, 51.25, though it still falls under the Low Proficiency title of the EF EPI (EF EPI 2018). In terms of the CEFR scale, Colombia's average is at a B1 level for adult English language proficiency, and while this may seem to indicate progress toward the initial 2019 goal of high school graduates reaching a B1 level, it must be noted that the state's average actually went down from the 2017 report by -1.07 (EF EPI 2018).

Source: EF EPI 2018 https://www.ef.edu/epi/regions/latin-america/colombia/

Source: EF EPI 2018 https://www.ef.edu/epi/regions/latin-america/colombia/

While the Colombian government has made their goals toward national bilingualism clear, the issue remains of whether or not the development of English language skills will aid in economic development for the nation. While there are many factors to be considered, the figure below represents how the GNI per capita of Latin America in 2017 correlates with the EF EPI scores of the region. As one can see from the graph, as a state's EPI score increases, it is likely that its GNI per capita does as well.
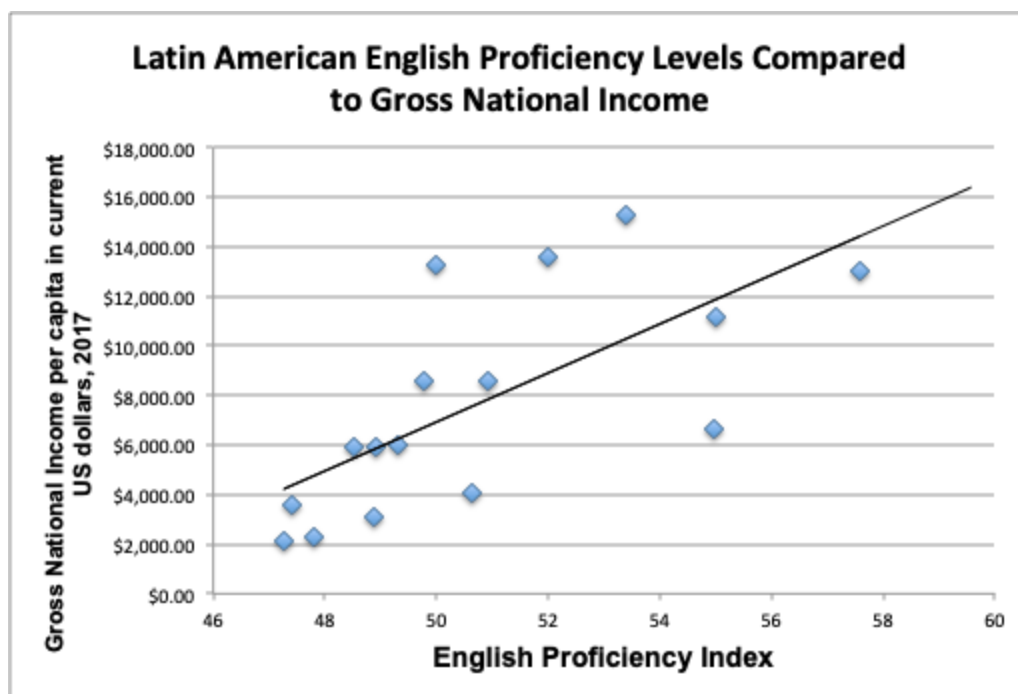
Sources: The World Bank 2017, EF EPI 2018

According to some researchers, English language skills may be linked to economic development, but only when a state's Gross Domestic Product is comprised of industries that employ the use of English (Ufier 2015). For example, as a nation follows standard trends of development, the GDP shifts from being primarily based on agrarian to

manufacturing practices, and then from manufacturing to the trades of goods and service industry (Ufier 2015). The importance of English comes in due to the fact that working in a common language is widely acknowledged to reduce transaction costs of international trade, and as English is the most commonly used language of international trade, it stands to reason that promoting English education would achieve reduced transaction costs (Ufier 2015). Colombia, with approximately 75% of its population living in urban or semi-urban areas, fits within this third stage of economic development as its GDP, broken into the three sectors, is based only 7.4% on agriculture with a much greater reliance placed on industry (31.3%) and services (61.4%) (Index Mundi 2018, PC 2013).

This shift in Colombia's GDP by sector is seen by the increase of approximately 200 foreign companies beginning operations in the state since the formal shifts in their policies to support the national goal of bilingualism (Cronquist and Fiszbein 2017). Tourism and financial services, both falling under the service sector category and requiring proficient English language skills, have especially grown over the last few years (Cronquist and Fiszbein 2017).

In addition, the figure below shows how trends for employment within each sector have changed shifted over recent years. More so than GDP, this reflects the individual's experience, and it is clear that the percentage of individuals employed in the service industry has increased since 2000, and especially since 2004, the year Colombia Bilingüe was first enacted. The agriculture sector is shown to be steadily decreasing,
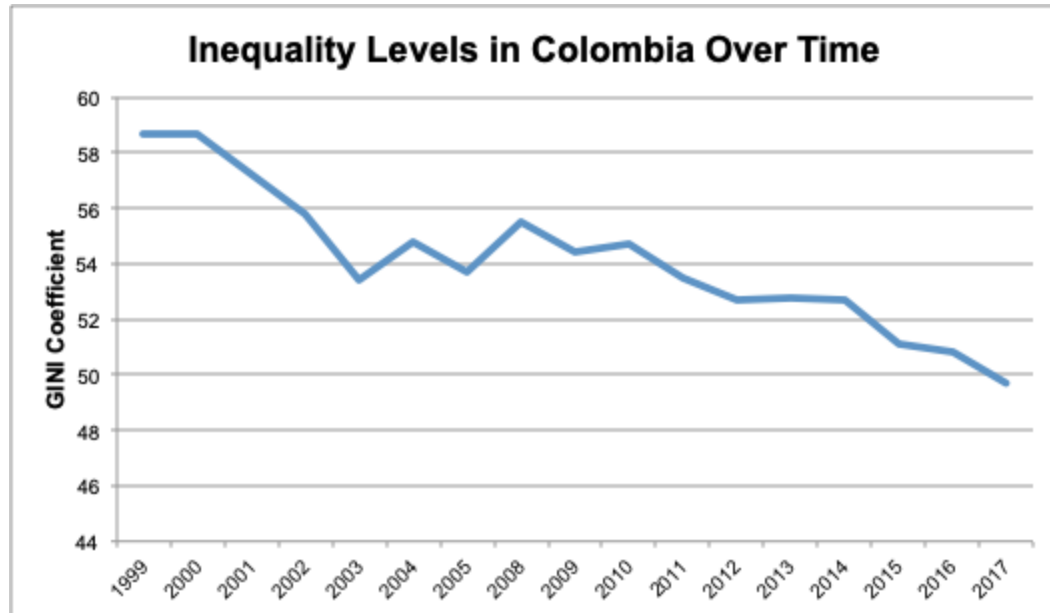
implying a likelihood that less of the state's economy will rely on solely internal

transactions, and thus the English language may become more beneficial to individuals.

Source: The World Bank 2018, https://data.worldbank.org/country/colombia?view=chart
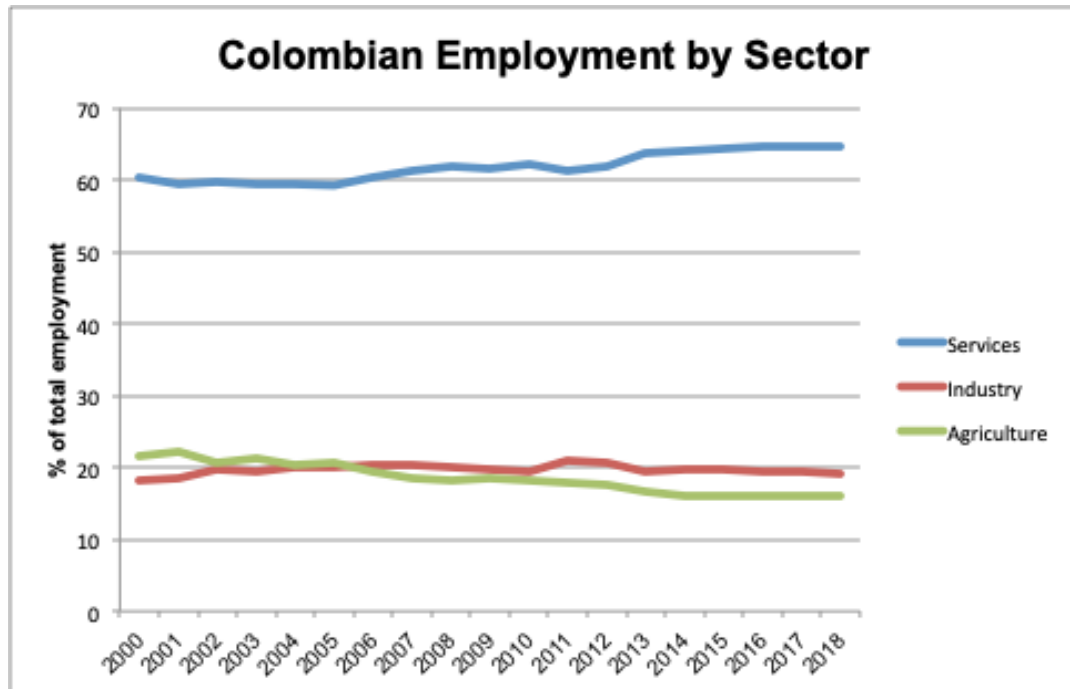
An argument referred to in the literature against English language education in the

pursuit of economic development is that by doing so, a state is likely to face higher levels

of inequality. However, based on the chart below, inequality levels have decreased

despite the active pursuit of English language education by the Colombian government.

Even by going as far as to seek foreign aid in the form of the U.S. Peace Corps in an

effort to reach a bilingual state, the fears of inequality do not seem to be realized. Of

course, it must be noted that influences by education are hardly immediately seen on a

state's economy, and so it should be recommended that further research is done to follow

these trends as the generation in primary and secondary schools from 2005-2015 enter the workforce of Colombia.

Inequality Levels in Colombia Over Time

Source: The World Bank 2017, https://data.worldbank.org/country/colombia?view=chart

An additional fear expressed in the literature review was that providing aid in the form of English language education could potentially take away from efforts to increase literacy, a factor that has been more intensely studied and is widely accepted to impact positive development. However, as the graph below demonstrates, literacy levels in Colombia are well above 90% for both youth and adult literacy standards. In 2017, adult literacy was at an all time high with approximately 95% of the population being reported as literate and an even higher 98.66% of the youth population falling under the same category. While these are the most recent figures, it is clear by the graph the the levels of literacy have remain high over the last 15 years, excluding 2012 and 2013 which were

left unreported. So, it would seem, the Colombian government's focus on English

language education has not decreased the quality of literacy education within the state.

Source: The World Bank 2017, https://data.worldbank.org/country/colombia?view=chart
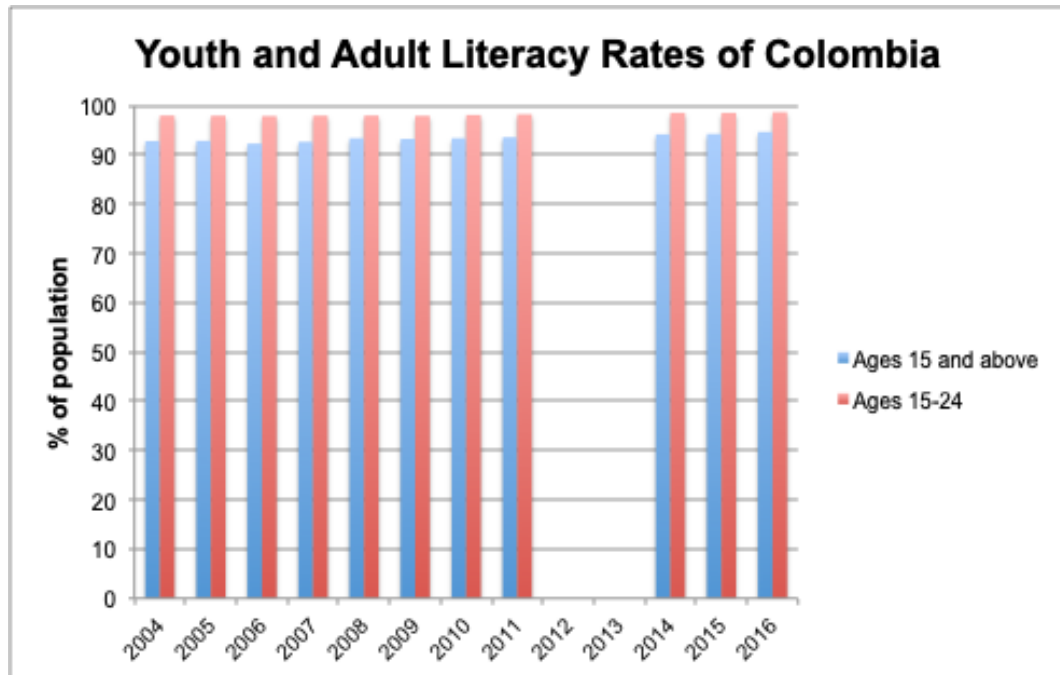
IV. Conclusion and Further Research Recommendations:

As mentioned before, the impacts of English language education within Colombia

are likely not to be fully realized for another decade or so as is the nature of

developmental studies, and especially developmental studies targeted at youth education

as a source of economic change. As it stands now, Colombia is a unique, but likely to be

very telling case study due to its strong, government based pursuit of English language

education. As the Peace Corps begins to mandate regular impact studies, it remains to be

seen how their English language education program in Colombia compares to similar

programs in countries that aren't seeking the same full fledged shift toward English

language studies. Such impact studies would be most beneficial if they were to record how the specific regions with Peace Corps education volunteers compare to those regions without in terms of English proficiency levels, participation in the service sector versus industrial or agricultural, and the GNI per capita of the regions, as well as monitoring how inequality levels shift between the areas.

With what was in the bounds of this research, which admittedly was mainly based on readings of older research projects focused outside of Latin America and insufficient data for close examination of Colombia's EPI scores within the applicable regions, it may be concluded that, in general, English language education can be beneficial for developing economies, assuming they meet certain pre-existing criteria.

Firstly, English language education should only be pursued for development if doing so will not take away from more substantial and long lasting forms of development. More specifically this is in reference to literacy education. The case study of Colombia appears to be on a positive trend partially due to the fact that it had already attained high literacy rates prior to the introduction of a formal pursuit for English language education. For a state that has not yet reached satisfactory levels, I would recommend focusing efforts there first. Another benefit of the Colombia case study was that at least some of its English language education resources came from the U.S. Peace Corps and was therefore funded by the U.S. so the Colombian government could focus their own resources elsewhere.

Secondly, it seems that English language education is likely most beneficial in a state that's GDP and percent of the employed population is based primarily in the service sector, as was the case for and seems to be the trend of Colombia. As noted in the literature review, increases in inequality may occur if the state is still based on agriculture due to the fact that only those who would use English after studying it in school (i.e. primarily service sector workers) would receive the economic benefits of the language.

Thirdly, though I did not go into this myself due to lack of resources, I think the pursuit of English language education, especially via aid groups like the U.S. Peace Corps, should be done with caution in regions with small populations that speak dying indigenous languages. While my paper engages more so with literature that treats English with its ideological status as a tool as the *lingua franca* of the global economy, I do recognize that there exist research that indicates the introduction of a global language can increase the rate of linguistic death for smaller indigenous languages. Thus, I come to another recommendation that should a state pursue English language education for development, they too should put a government-backed effort into protecting and documenting the indigenous languages of their region so as to combat the negative effects. This goes for groups like the Peace Corps that provide English language education, though I have read such practices occurring on the individual level within the organization.

Finally, I recommend more research and focus be given to the impact of foreign language education not only as a tool for economic development in state's with

developing economies, but in general as it pertains to cultural exchange, increased brain capacity, and more. If states around the world are going to continue on this trend for English language education, so too should the United States and other anglophone societies pursue stronger foreign language education within their own domestic education systems. Perhaps this could be achieved how Reifel suggests, with the Peace Corps offering a reverse operation to better achieve its third goal where it would invite language educators from the host countries to teach their own native language in the American public school system for an allotted time.

Overall, based on my case study, I believe the initial pursuit of English language education stemmed from the ideological beliefs associated with English following the U.S.'s economic, military, and political power after WWII along with its and other Anglophone states power and influence in nation building and modernization during the Cold War era. Today, English language education is framed less as a tool specifically for development, and more so as a tool for engagement in the global economy. These two things may go hand-in-hand to a degree, but based on my research, it seems that there is a time and place to increase English language proficiency of a population, and that is only after the state has already achieved certain indicators of development. That being said, it cannot be denied that the presence of the Peace Corps volunteers keeps the pursuit of English language education in the context of development to some degree, though it could be shifted away from that by noting the importance of native speakers as educators over the monetary relief portion of the program. In context of the U.S., English language

education has some clear benefits for promoting American soft power within the host state due to the supportive nature of the program.

In the end, I recognize that there are those who oppose the spread of English under the premise that it promotes an imbalance of power between states of native speakers versus states of non-native speakers, however the reality of the situation is that the language is continuing to spread through English language education programs around the world, and because of this, it is important to consider the best practices for English language education, either as the state pursuing it or the state providing it.
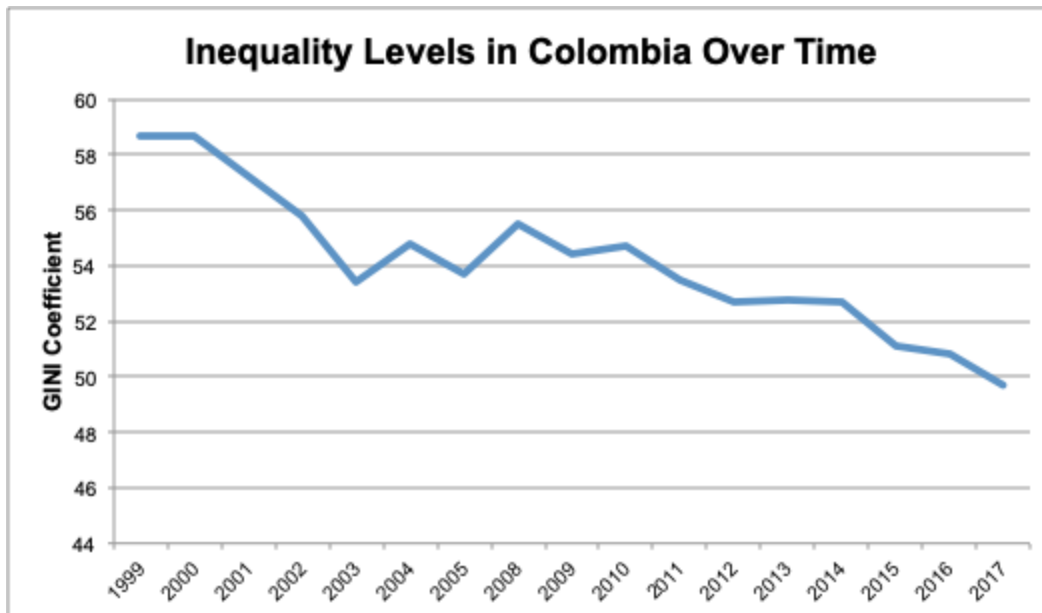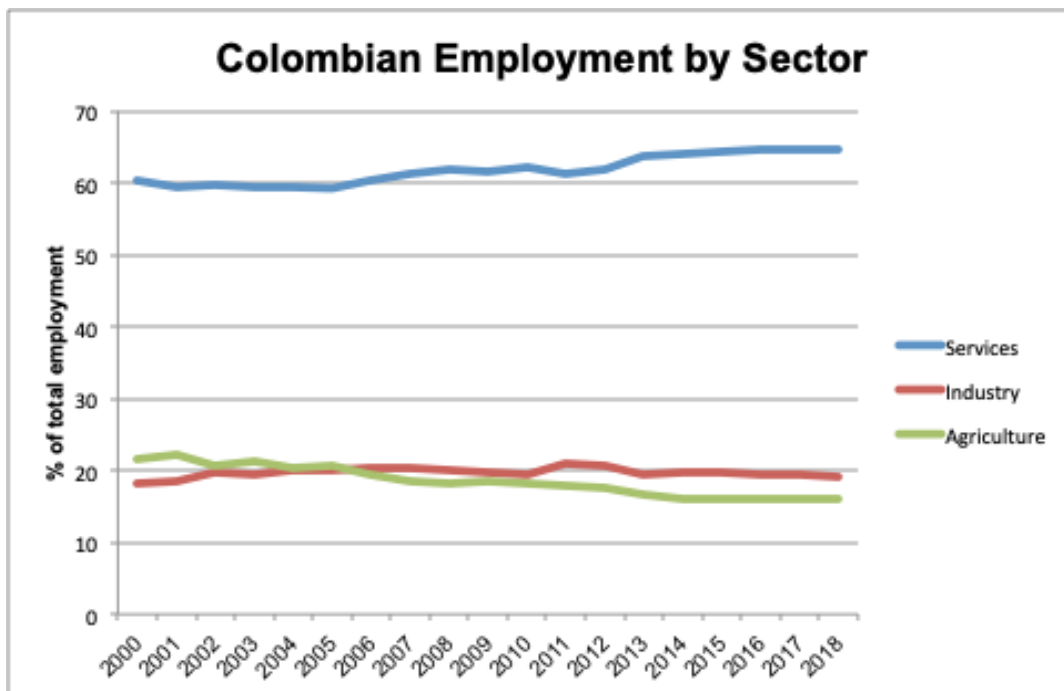
Figures:

Figure 1:

Latin American English Proficiency Levels Compared to Gross National Income
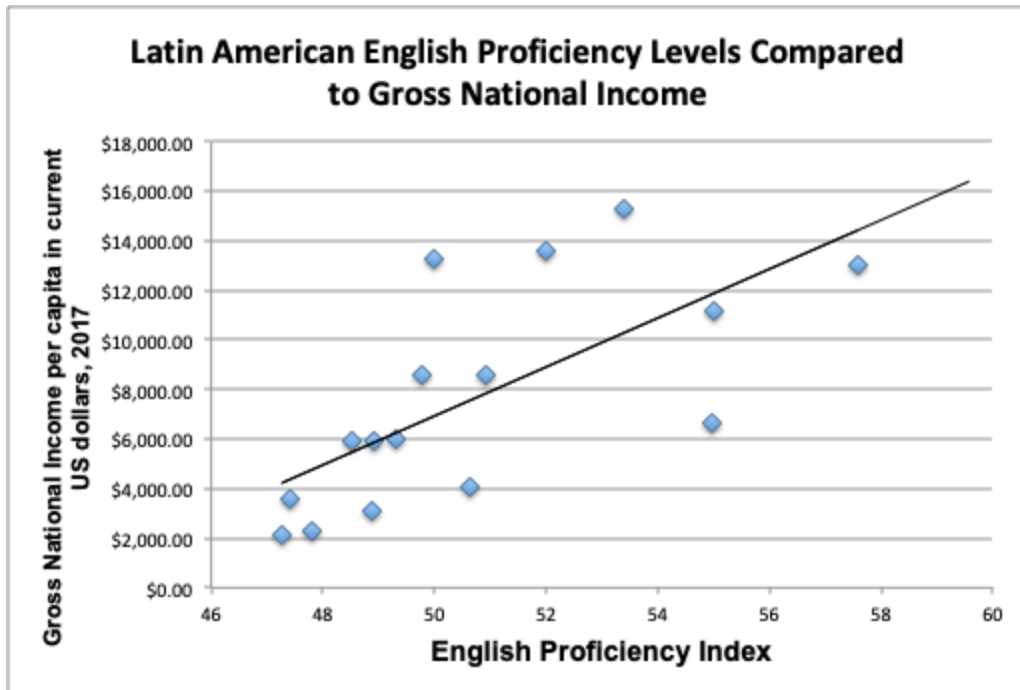
Sources: The World Bank 2017, EF EPI 2018

Figure 2:

Source: The World Bank 2017, https://data.worldbank.org/country/colombia?view=chart

Figure 3:

Source: Source: The World Bank 2018, https://data.worldbank.org/country/colombia?view=chart

Figure 4:

Youth and Adult Literacy Rates of Colombia

Source: Source: The World Bank 2017, https://data.worldbank.org/country/colombia?view=chart
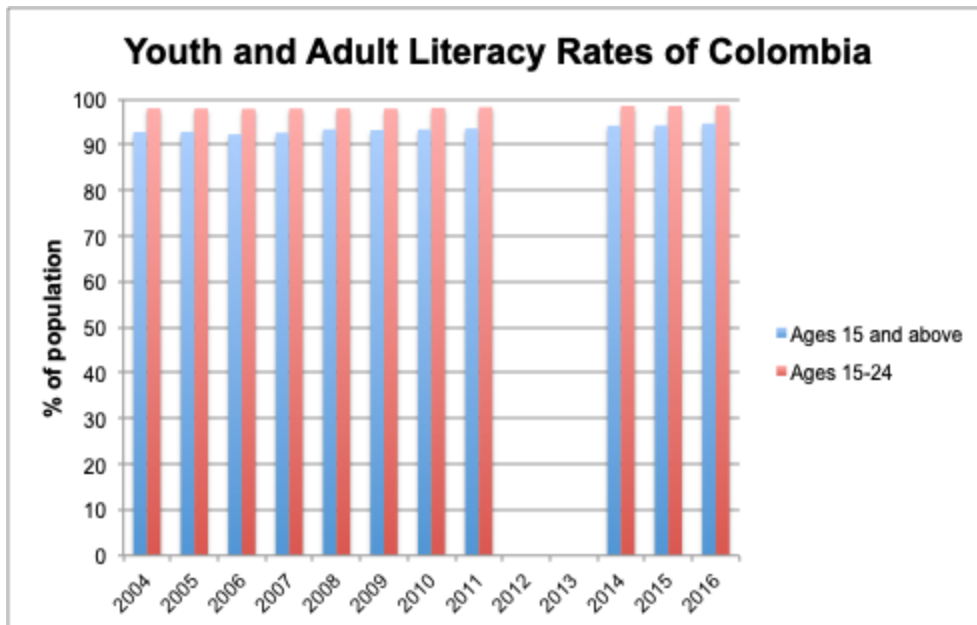
Figure 5:

Proficiency by region and city

Region   City

Region	Score
Valle del Cauca	49.96
Santander	49.90
Antioquia	49.54
Atlantico	48.94
Norte de Santander	48.91
Boyacá	48.74
Cundinamarca	47.89
Bolívar	47.49
Nariño	46.37
Risaralda	46.10

Source: EF EPI 2018 https://www.ef.edu/epi/regions/latin-america/colombia/
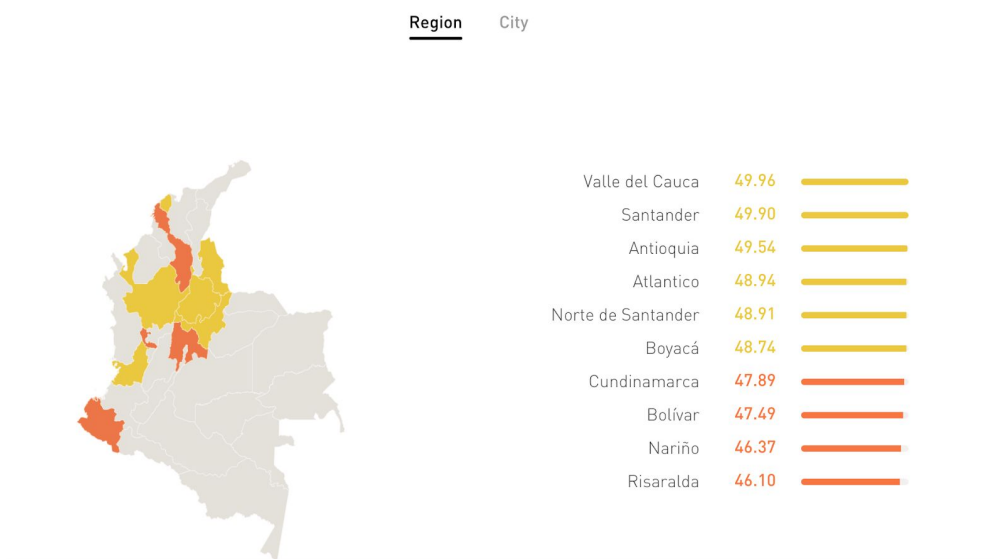
Figure 6:

Proficiency by region and city

Region   City

Bogotá	51.25	
Bucaramanga	51.01	
Cali	50.61	
	50.18	
Barranquilla	49.37	
Cartagena	46.71	

Source: EF EPI 2018 https://www.ef.edu/epi/regions/latin-america/colombia/
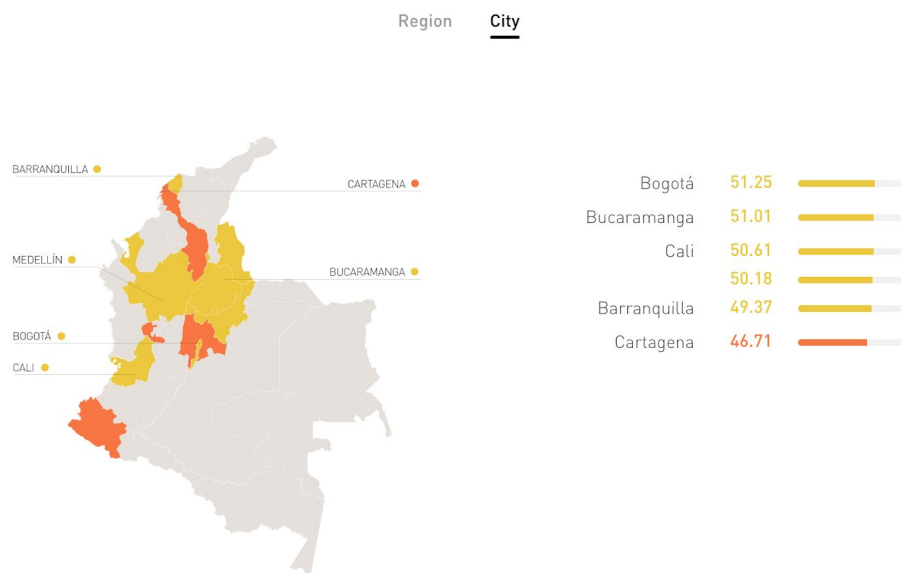
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