

Interculturality and Cultural Identity in Contemporary Peru: Resilience and Transformation in Times of Globalization

*Interculturalidad e identidad cultural en el Perú Contemporáneo:
Resiliencia y transformación en tiempos de globalización*

Date of receipt: 2025-02-28 · Acceptance date: 2025-06-13 · Date of publication: 2025-09-10

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Abstract

Intercultural education in Peru has sought to recognize and celebrate cultural diversity by creating a space for dialogue and mutual learning across different contexts, with a focus on the holistic development of students. This study employed a qualitative approach using the PRISMA method, conducting the search, selection, and analysis of documents related to interculturality, globalization, and Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) within the Peruvian context. The findings revealed that both globalization and education have responded to the need to prepare students from diverse backgrounds to face the challenges of an interconnected world—without losing their cultural identity. This intercultural education has fostered understanding, respect, and inclusion of the multiple identities coexisting in Peru, establishing a foundation for overcoming adversity and navigating official frameworks that, in some cases, hinder intercultural progress.

Keywords: intercultural education, Peruvian identity, culture, globalization, education

Resumen

La educación intercultural en el Perú ha buscado reconocer y celebrar la diversidad cultural, mediante la creación de un espacio para el diálogo y el aprendizaje mutuo entre distintos contextos, con miras a un desarrollo integral de los estudiantes. Esta investigación fue de enfoque cualitativo, método PRISMA, se realizó la búsqueda, selección y análisis de documentos con contenido relacionado con la interculturalidad, la globalización y la Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (EIB) en el contexto peruano. Los resultados demostraron que, en efecto, la globalización y educación se interesaron en cubrir la necesidad de formación de los estudiantes de diferentes orígenes para enfrentar los retos de un mundo interconectado, sin perder su identidad cultural. Esta educación intercultural ha fomentado la comprensión, respeto e inclusión de las identidades que cohabitan en Perú, que a su vez ha producido las bases para sobrellevar las situaciones adversas y eventos oficiales que de alguna manera limitan el avance intercultural.

Palabras clave: educación intercultural, identidad peruana, cultura, globalización, educación

Introduction

One of Peru's defining characteristics is its vast cultural diversity, comprising over 50 Indigenous peoples, each with its own rich heritage, unique languages, traditions, and customs. This diversity is a representative feature of the nation's heritage, making it invaluable. However, it currently faces new challenges brought by globalization—a phenomenon that has connected societies around the world but also tends to homogenize them. From an educational perspective, one of the challenges that arises is the urgent need to adopt policies and practices that promote interculturality.

Globalization has been observed to generate both opportunities and challenges, as it brings different cultures into contact while simultaneously posing risks to local cultures, particularly those that have been historically marginalized or devalued (Anzoátegui, 2020).

Peru has sought to recognize and celebrate cultural diversity through intercultural education, fostering spaces for dialogue among various cultures with the goal of promoting the holistic development of students (Bada, 2020). This educational perspective encourages respect across all sociocultural contexts of the student population, which is essential for strengthening cultural identities and building a sense of citizenship that values diversity as a pillar of social cohesion (Fernández, 2020). For this reason, education must be relevant and meaningful for all Peruvians, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background—an imperative that has driven the implementation of policies aimed at overcoming historical exclusion and inequality.

In the past, Peru's educational system was oriented toward cultural homogenization, promoting a curriculum that prioritized Spanish and upheld a centralized view of culture, history, and values. This dominant cultural perspective left Indigenous languages and worldviews marginalized and forgotten for decades. However, in recent years, a shift has occurred, leading to greater recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity—driven by movements led by Indigenous peoples, academics, and international organizations committed to preserving and promoting ancestral cultures.

Bilingual Intercultural Education (BIE) has become one of the cornerstone policies of Peru's education system, formally established in the General Education Law of 2003. Its goal was to ensure that students from Indigenous communities receive instruction in their mother tongue while also being provided with the tools to learn Spanish and acquire other forms of knowledge relevant to the modern world. The aim is to foster respect for students' cultural identities while strengthening community ties and promoting intercultural dialogue that enriches Peruvian society as a whole.

The purpose of this article is to analyze how cultural identity within the Peruvian educational context is being transformed by globalization, and to identify the strategies being implemented to promote cultural resilience through intercultural approaches. Education is viewed as a key space for the development of values and knowledge, as its central role is to build a society that respects, values, and strengthens cultural diversity. This analysis allows us to highlight both the progress made and the challenges that remain—issues that are vital for the future of the country.

Therefore, the focus of this research is the Peruvian context, particularly in regions where BIE has been implemented over the past twenty years, especially during the period in which efforts to

advance intercultural education have intensified. Additionally, the study examines how government policies and the work of international organizations have influenced this process. It also explores the specific challenges faced by Indigenous communities in preserving their languages and cultures in an increasingly globalized world. Finally, it is important to note that this article did not receive external funding and is based on a literature review of academic sources, government reports, and prior research.

Methodology

This study adopted a **qualitative approach**, which enabled the analysis of the influence of globalization on cultural identity within the Peruvian educational context (Arias & Covino, 2021). The choice of this approach was based on its ability to explore and understand the meanings and perceptions held by the studied participants regarding **interculturality** and **cultural resilience**. Additionally, the **analytical method** was considered, based on the critical review of secondary sources (Hernández & Mendoza, 2018), which allowed for the identification and characterization of practices and challenges related to **Bilingual Intercultural Education (BIE)** in various regions of Peru, as well as the strategies implemented to promote cultural identity in educational institutions.

Likewise, the use of the **PRISMA method** was implemented—a highly effective guideline for capturing all recommended information during documentary research. This allowed for the integration of various theoretical and empirical perspectives, which facilitated a deeper understanding and analysis of how cultural identity within the Peruvian educational setting has been transformed and impacted by globalization. Furthermore, it helped identify which strategies are currently being implemented to promote cultural resilience through intercultural approaches.

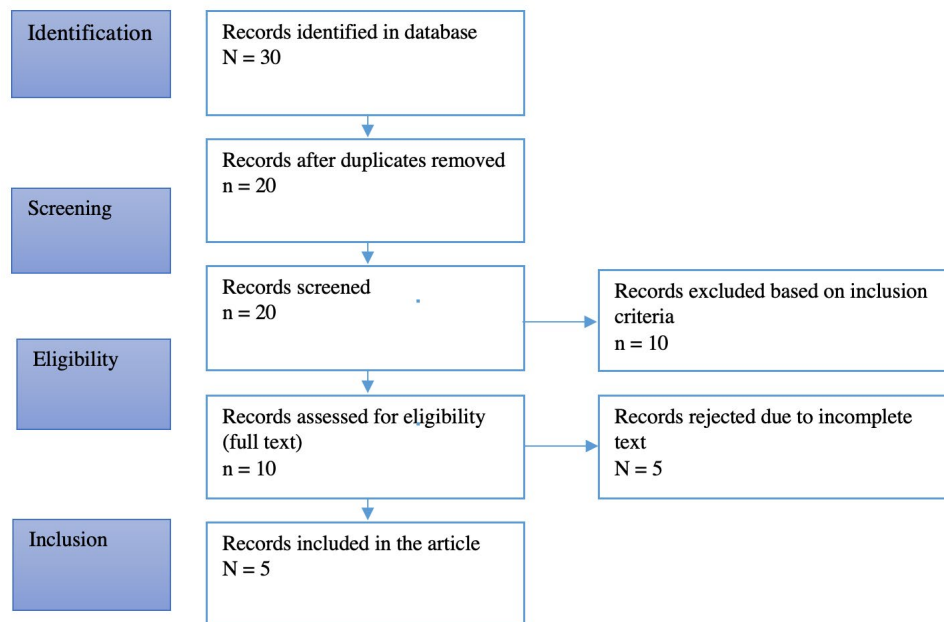
To define the **units of analysis**, scientific documents were selected that provided relevant information on the topic under examination. The **inclusion criteria** for the selected sources were: publications no older than five years, and sourced from platforms such as Scielo, Dialnet, and Google Scholar. The types of documents included were **scientific articles, reports from international organizations, official documents from the Ministry of Education, and empirical studies**. These documents were located using keyword searches.

In summary, the methodology employed in this article combined a **qualitative approach, documentary analysis techniques**, and the **PRISMA method**, which allowed for an in-depth investigation into the relationship between **interculturality, education, and cultural identity** in contemporary Peru. At the same time, it provided a solid foundation for understanding how **globalization has influenced cultural identities**, and what **intercultural educational policies** have been implemented to preserve them.

The **PRISMA flow diagram** used in this article is presented below, following Page et al. (2021):

Figure 1

PRISMA Flow Diagram.



Results

This section presents the results of the review of the records obtained through the application of the PRISMA method. To facilitate clarity, the findings are organized in **Table 1**, which details the indicators assessed in each document:

Table 1*Evaluated Indicators*

Author – Year	Document Title	Methodology	Contributions	Conclusions
(Olaya & Contreras, 2021)	Interculturality in Peruvian Society, 2015–2020	Documentary bibliographic	Since the colonial era, the Afro-Peruvian population has faced various abuses despite its invaluable contribution to Peru's cultural, social, and national development. As part of a country characterized by its multicultural, multiracial, and multiethnic richness, the Afro-Peruvian heritage stands out as a strength that has deeply influenced Peruvian identity, especially in the coastal region. This legacy is reflected in music, dance, literature, cuisine, and even in the slang and character of coastal inhabitants. Additionally, Afro-Peruvians have played a significant role in religious and sports expressions, underscoring their impact on the construction of national identity. It is essential to foster students' recognition of this diversity as an enriching element of Peruvian society.	Interculturality promotes respect for multiculturalism, equality, and dignity of cultural diversity. It is a priority to value the contributions of all cultures present in Peru, especially the Afro-Peruvian culture, which has significantly contributed to the nation and forms part of the intercultural identity.
(Bada, 2020)	Invisibility and Cultural Identity among Indigenous Students of the Amazon	Non-experimental quantitative, descriptive, and comparative research involving indigenous students.	The horizontalization of human interactions aims to promote a dual change in education: one that transforms both the internal development of individuals and established social dynamics. In this context, it is essential to value the ancestral knowledge of Indigenous peoples, integrating it as a foundational pillar for collective learning in society.	In the Awajún and Yanesha communities, a high degree of invisibility was observed regarding cultural dissemination, heritage preservation, and cultural identity, although some attention was given to their language, traditional practices, and sense of belonging. However, the situation differed in the Shipibo-Konibo, Kichwa, and Achuar peoples. Additionally, the educational system does not integrate the native languages of these communities nor recognize their value within the school environment.

(Arévalo, 2023)	Effects of the Program “Chabuca Granda in the School” on Strengthening Cultural Identity in Secondary School Adolescents	Quantitative approach, quasi-experimental design	The educational program “Chabuca Granda in the School” had a positive impact on customs and traditions related to their strengthening and appreciation. It highlights that respect for the culture of other peoples as well as one’s own fosters acceptance and adaptability within communities.	The use of the identity of a figure like Chabuca Granda facilitated the internalization of cultural identity among adolescents and the recovery of customs that were being lost.
(Lazo, 2024)	Cultural Identity and Social Fragmentation: A Critique of Identity Relativism	Documentary bibliographic	The principle of individual freedom is the result of a prolonged historical process, gradually constructed over time. Countless generations have tirelessly worked to achieve this goal, seeking emancipation from constraints imposed by collective structures and totalitarian regimes associated with religious, nationalist, political, territorial, ethnocentric, and especially ideological identities. In this context, adherence to a cultural identity can be considered a superficial and illusory act, as it fosters divisions and tensions within society, affecting its cohesion.	Cultural identity represents an illusion that has generated challenges in contemporary societies, just as it did in the past, and will likely do so with greater intensity in the future. This is because cultural collectivism, relativism associated with identities, and multiculturalism tend to create divisions among people, fostering separation, conflict, and, in extreme cases, harmful practices and acts of violence. Essentially, cultural identity is nothing more than a factor that fragments and disintegrates the social fabric.
(Astorima & Gutiérrez, 2024)	Andean Worldview in Intercultural Education	Documentary bibliographic	The current Peruvian education system operates under an approach that does not adequately reflect the country’s vast cultural diversity. To address this disconnect, the initiative to implement a diversified curriculum at the local, regional, and national levels was proposed. However, in practice, this strategy has not achieved its objectives, mainly because many regions lack the essential resources to design and implement a curriculum adapted to their realities. Additionally, this situation is worsened by academic inefficiency and bureaucratic barriers that limit its effectiveness.	The Ministry of Education must prioritize the implementation of policies that promote interculturality with the purpose of recognizing and valuing Peru’s cultural diversity. This approach seeks to foster respectful and harmonious coexistence among the country’s various cultures, advancing toward education that is inclusive, equitable, and of high quality. In Andean communities, the ancestral worldview remains a living manifestation capable of resisting the influence of external cultures, resulting in a rich cultural syncretism. This context highlights the importance of developing an intercultural educational model based on the Andean worldview, aimed at inspiring both students and teachers to appreciate and deepen their understanding of the cultural legacy of our ancestors.



According to the review and examination of the records included in this article, it is understood that interculturality, by its very nature, fosters and encourages dialogue due to the multiplicity of elements upon which it is argued and reflected within the same context—in this case, the territory of Peru. Therefore, educational spaces where multiculturalism and identity construction converge are appropriate settings to open debates from the perspectives of students, teachers, and authorities. These discourses form part of the contributions of the protagonists in the educational process toward the construction of a genuine interculturality, which manifests itself in the diversity of pedagogical activities.

These considerations align with the ideas of Olaya and Contreras (2021), who recognize the diversity of cultures existing in Peru; thus, there is no single culture due to the coexistence of cultural heterogeneity. In this sense, it is pertinent to specify the recognition of Peru's ancestral asymmetry, which blends with transculturation resulting from the arrival of the peoples who today inhabit this territory. The expectation from this fusion is a process based on tolerance, respect, and harmonious coexistence through a relationship of equality and equity. However, this is precisely the point of disagreement, as the process of interculturality does not always develop as it ideally should.

Similarly, from the perspective of Astorima and Gutiérrez (2024), the practice of the intercultural approach in Peruvian schools has been disappointing, considering that most regions lack the necessary resources to develop a diversified curriculum aligned with interculturality. Added to this are academic shortcomings regarding teacher training and the way the curricular proposal is operationalized to address cultural diversity. Finally, bureaucratic demands often limit and delay these processes.

For Ramírez (2021), Peru is recognized as a culturally rich country with around 50 indigenous groups, now including Afro-Peruvians and migrants from various countries. However, relations between cultures have not always been favorable, as some groups have experienced discrimination, marginalization, or exclusion from a dominant-dominated perspective corresponding to majority-minority dynamics. This author emphasizes new national educational policies that face the challenge of creating curricular models to train intercultural teachers who implement particular didactics that allow for the appreciation and recovery of cultural diversity, thereby educating to form intercultural citizens with a dual dimension—namely, those who respond to the country's needs in correspondence with the context of globalization.

On the other hand, Lazo (2024) addressed in his article cultural identity and social fragmentation experienced by the Peruvian population, which is directly linked to the construction of individual freedom—a hard-fought conquest gradually achieved throughout human history. From his viewpoint, there is another side to this identity process, involving hegemonic collective implications of religious, nationalist, political, territorial, ethnocentric, and especially ideological nature. Therefore, Peruvian cultural identity is inconsistent and insignificant, ultimately contributing to social fragmentation.

However, a different perspective is presented by Merino et al. (2024), who argue that one way to understand Peruvian cultural identity and the recognition of belonging to this context involves

creating outreach and educational programs that include digitalization and research components, with the participation of people sharing the same social space; considering transformations over time and using reflection to understand their origins and history. This leads to a feeling of pride in being Peruvian and fosters self-esteem. This contribution serves as a call to attention regarding technological change, since culture is not only expressed through painting, engraving, and all forms of production that reflect human labor, customs, and thoughts, but collectively shapes and illustrates cultural identity (Arnal, 2020).

In this regard, Arévalo (2023) also proposes in his article the implementation of the educational program "Chabuca Granda in the School," emphasizing its role as a means to rescue Peruvian identity, customs, and traditions in relation to their strengthening and appreciation, which ultimately define the identity of the peoples. The article highlighted respect for the culture of other peoples as well as one's own as a path to community adaptation and acceptance. Along similar lines, Araoz et al. (2021) reported that intercultural aspects applied by teachers in Peru promote the development of students' national identity. This means that the interculturality practiced by teachers significantly contributes to the development of students' national identity.

Also, it is important to highlight the contribution of the article by Bada (2020), who introduces the concept of horizontalization in the field of human relations, especially within the educational context. The author explains how the invisibility experienced by indigenous students in the Amazon significantly affects the construction of their cultural identity. In this regard, he proposes transforming the school environment toward an inclusive culture that fosters changes both in the hearts of individuals and in the social fabric. One way to achieve this is by valuing indigenous knowledge and incorporating it into the curricular proposal within that context.

Similarly, Ruedas (2021) notes in his article that Peru's Bilingual Intercultural Education policies aim to serve indigenous peoples as a pedagogical tool applied in schools but may pose learning difficulties for indigenous children. Through the analysis and interpretation of historical material, it was demonstrated that education policies in the 20th and 21st centuries have been influenced by globalization and transnational organizations, with indigenous peoples not being exempt from these influences. Therefore, it is now a priority to establish quality bilingual education as a valid means of learning for indigenous peoples, moving beyond utopia. In this sense, Peru's Bilingual Intercultural Education serves as a guide to generate more inclusive education, especially for indigenous communities, through a comprehensive approach aimed at strengthening teacher training, adapting curricula, and producing educational materials that guarantee quality learning while respecting the country's cultural and linguistic diversity.

Finally, the contribution of Armes (2023), from a critical perspective, asserts that some studies on Peruvian interculturality fail to address the importance and complexity of truly intercultural education, as they do not consider dominant structures that may exist within classrooms, downplaying the characteristics of various peoples and societies, as well as the use of particular languages and mother tongues. For this reason, the intercultural process in schools must begin by creating equitable conditions that allow cultural freedom for all individuals.

Conclusions

In general terms, globalization and education are processes that go hand in hand and must respond to the need to prepare students to face the challenges of an interconnected world without losing their cultural identity. This requires a pedagogical approach that combines global knowledge with local wisdom, integrating new technologies and teaching methods that promote inclusion. It has been established that Peru is recognized as a pluricultural country with multiple indigenous groups, to which Afro-Peruvians and migrants from various regions are added; however, relations among these cultures have been spontaneous and without pre-established order, often marked by discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion framed by dominant-dominated or majority-minority oppositions.

It is understood that the National Plan for Bilingual Intercultural Education (2021) has greatly contributed to the construction of Peruvian identity and the interculturality process from a more inclusive perspective, especially regarding indigenous peoples. This process possesses a comprehensive approach that seeks to strengthen teacher training, adapt curricula, and produce educational materials that guarantee quality learning respecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country.

Ultimately, interculturality should be considered a necessary component within education at all levels, framed within the understanding, respect, and inclusion of the diverse identities that form part of Peruvian culture. In turn, this will lay the foundations to cope with challenges, combat corruption, or address sociopolitical events that could disrupt the well-being of people within their country.

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