

Decolonizing Foreign Language Teaching in Multicultural Contexts: Perspectives from Guatemala and Colombia

Cristian Camilo Reyes-Galeano

University of Quindío, Colombia

Abstract

This presentation examines the meaning of teaching foreign languages in a decolonial perspective in multicultural contexts, focusing on the specific case of Guatemala and Colombia. To address this issue, an exhaustive analysis of relevant academic literature was conducted, focusing on studies that examine the intersection between foreign language teaching, decolonial theory and cultural diversity. In addition to the literature review, findings were supplemented with qualitative data obtained through ethnographic interviews and field diaries with rural teachers in Guatemala and Colombia. These interactions allowed contextualizing and enriching the understanding of the specific dynamics that influence foreign language teaching in multicultural environments, from the perspective of those directly involved in the educational practice. By integrating evidence from the academic literature with the experiences and perspectives of rural Guatemalan and Colombian teachers, this systematic work offers a comprehensive and enriching view on the meaning and challenges of teaching foreign languages in a decolonial key in multicultural contexts such as Guatemala and Colombia. The findings derived from this review reveal the complexity of teaching foreign languages in a context marked by cultural diversity and persistent colonial dynamics. It highlights the tensions between dominant educational policies and decolonial aspirations for linguistic and cultural justice. Finally, this presentation seeks to contribute to the international debate on language education and the decolonization of knowledge, highlighting the importance of considering contextual particularities and the voices of local actors in the formulation of more inclusive and equitable educational practices.

Keywords: educational practices; linguistic diversity; multilingual education; rural education; self-determination