



## Co-Creating Participatory and Decolonial Didactic Actions for English Language Teaching in Multigrade Rural Schools

Cristian Camilo Reyes-Galeano

University of Quindío, Colombia

### Abstract

This paper examines the structural and epistemic challenges facing the teaching of English as a foreign language in multigrade rural schools in the department of Quindío in Colombia, territories historically marginalised by centralised educational policies. In these contexts, standardised curricula are imposed that privilege foreign values, render local knowledge invisible and limit the pedagogical agency of rural teachers, who also lack contextualised training and relevant teaching resources. From a critical decolonial approach and through Participatory Action Research (PAR) and the systematisation of experiences, this research *co-constructed* teaching strategies with female teachers, students and families. Over four phases, local pedagogical knowledge was recovered, community dialogues were facilitated and contextualised teaching actions were designed. The findings reveal the transformative power of pedagogical practices when linked to the territory, the female rural teacher's body, and the community as legitimate sources of knowledge. Among the main contributions are the creation of the situated primer *Other Ways*, the consolidation of the *Heliconias Dreamers* Mixed Research Community, and the *re-signification* of English from a critical and emancipatory perspective. This study proposes new paths for teacher training, contextualised curriculum design and the strengthening of rural pedagogical communities that are committed to dignity, resistance and hope as ethical and political horizons for education in and from rural areas.

**Keywords:** bilingual education, decoloniality, foreign language training, participatory research, rural education