

10 - 12 July 2026

Helsinki , Finland

# Reconstructing English Teaching from the Territory: Participatory Inquiry in Colombian Multigrade Rural Schools

**Dr. Cristian Camilo Reyes Galeano**

*University of Quindío, Colombia*

## Abstract

English Language Education in rural areas of the Global South is often organized through standardized policy agendas that privilege urban assumptions, measurable outcomes, and colonial representations of linguistic competence. Drawing on a doctoral study conducted in five rural multigrade schools in Filandia, Quindío, Colombia, this paper examines how Heliconias Dreamers was configured as a mixed community of research, teacher education, and pedagogical innovation for reconstructing English teaching from the territory. The study adopted Participatory Action Research and systematization of experiences within a critical decolonial framework. Participants included rural teachers, undergraduate students in Foreign Language Education, a researcher-facilitator, families, and schoolchildren. Data were generated through teacher reflexivity journals, walking dialogues, collective resonance meetings, field logs, and reflective portfolios, and were interpreted through critical reconstruction and collective validation. Findings indicate that Heliconias Dreamers functioned as an ethical, pedagogical, and political space rather than as a source of data. The community strengthened mutual accompaniment among teachers, enabled critical engagement with external curriculum guidelines, supported situated planning, and legitimized rural knowledge as a basis for language education. It also fostered a collective teaching agency oriented toward learning, unlearning, and sharing pedagogical practices across schools. The paper contributes to debates on rural teacher education, decolonial language pedagogy, participatory qualitative inquiry, and curriculum work that challenges educational standardization through community-based knowledge production

**Keywords:** Critical Language Education; Curriculum Standardization; Decolonial Pedagogy; Educational Policy; Rural Education; Situated Knowledge