Challenges and coping strategies of EFL teachers in the rural areas of Santander,

Colombia

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Resumen

Título: Desafíos y estrategias de afrontamiento de los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera en las zonas rurales de Santander, Colombia[1*]

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Palabras Clave: Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL), Contexto Rural, Desafíos de EFL, MEN, Estrategias de Afrontamiento.

Descripción:

Esta investigación pretende identificar y registrar los retos y estrategias de superación de los docentes de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL) en las zonas rurales de Santander, Colombia. Para esta investigación de método mixto, los instrumentos utilizados para la recolección de datos fueron una entrevista semiestructurada y una encuesta sobre las experiencias de enseñanza de EFL en las zonas rurales de las provincias de Santander. Los resultados muestran que la enseñanza rural de EFL se ve comprometida por diferentes factores tales como la ausencia de recursos didácticos apropiados, profesores de EFL no preparados, material didáctico desactualizado suministrado por el MEN, condiciones socioeconómicas desfavorables, y poca inversión en infraestructura y tecnología por parte del gobierno. Asimismo, los hallazgos muestran algunas estrategias utilizadas por los docentes, entre ellas la recursividad para conseguir material pedagógico y didáctico para sus clases de EFL, proyectos para fomentar el contacto con el EFL y las culturas de países de habla inglesa, así como el uso del contexto de los estudiantes rurales durante los planes de clase y la implementación de dichos proyectos. Adicionalmente, se requiere más investigación en este campo para proporcionar a los educadores ideas y recursos para la enseñanza de EFL, y de esta manera, avanzar hacia la inclusión adecuada y equitativa de la población rural en los programas nacionales de bilingüismo.

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Abstract

Title: Challenges and coping strategies of EFL teachers in the rural areas of Santander, Colombia[3]

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Key words: English as a foreign language (EFL), Rural context, EFL challenges, MEN, coping strategies.

Description:

This investigation aims to identify and register the challenges and coping strategies of EFL teachers in the rural areas of Santander, Colombia. For this mixed method research, the instruments used to collect data were a semi-structured interview and a survey regarding the EFL teaching experiences in rural areas of Santander's provinces. Results show that rural EFL instruction is compromised by different factors such as absence of appropriate didactic resources, unprepared EFL teachers, outdated didactic material provided by MEN, adverse socio-economic conditions, and infrastructure and technological neglect by the government. Likewise, findings show some coping strategies used by teachers, such as the teachers' recursiveness to get pedagogical and didactic material for their EFL classes, projects to foster contact with EFL and the cultures related to it, as well as the use of the rural students' context during the lesson plans and projects implementation. Furthermore, more research in this field is required to supply educators with insights for EFL instruction and resources and move forward towards the proper and equal inclusion of rural population in the national bilingualism programs.

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Introduction

The upsurging of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has developed a major interest in recent years in Colombia. Therefore, different bilingualism programs have been created and implemented both in urban and rural schools, following international standards levels to measure the proficiency in EFL of students and teachers. The Bilingual Colombia Program (Colombia Bilingüe in Spanish) aiming to improve students' and teachers' English skills, adopted a level classification chart from the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This chart was adapted by the Ministry of Education (MEN by its Spanish initials) with the metalanguage commonly used in Colombia to describe the language proficiency, according to the performance goals expected for each level. Cárdenas (2006) argues that the aforementioned proficiency levels should serve only as a reference and not as an imposition, taking into account contextual issues, such as overcrowded classes, insufficient hours per course, and/or logistic support. The author also remarks that the goal of the BCP was incredibly unrealistic, as bilingualism is a natural and spontaneous linguistic phenomenon that cannot be forced by any governmental program.

In the same vein, the rural community is considered as a vulnerable sector of the population, where its educational opportunities are conditioned by different factors such as low budget investment, precarious infrastructure and sociopolitical issues that make the proficiency levels established by the MEN hard to fulfill. In addition, in rural schools, teachers are expected to teach all the subjects while dealing with all the aforementioned challenges. Also, because of the lack of specialized career development training for rural teachers in their own contexts, it is hard for them to have an emphasis on EFL (Cárdenas, 2006). Thus, in this study we set out to identify and register the challenges of EFL teachers in rural schools in Santander, Colombia, and the

different coping strategies they implement in their teaching practice in order to improve the EFL possibilities for those who they teach.

In order to have a wider perspective of the teaching practices in the EFL classrooms in Santander, Colombia, it is important to have a general knowledge of the department in terms of territory, economics, population, and rate of literacy. Initially, according to Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (MINCIT, 2020) Santander is located in the Andes mountains, and it is characterized by a huge number of rivers, valleys and mountains, a lively and magnificent landscape that occupies an area of 30,537 km². This territory is divided in seven subregions distributed all over the department: Comunera, García-Rovira, Guanentá, Soto Norte, Vélez, Yariguíes, and Metropolitana.

In respect of economics, the main economic sectors of the Santander region are the following: the industry, which encompasses activities such as the production of coffee, dairy, meat and flour, as well as the retail trade, motor vehicle trade, and building market. The Comunera province, located 121 km from Bucaramanga, enjoys a good economic development due its main economic activities based on agriculture and handcrafts. This region had a crucial historical impact due to the insurrection of the Comuneros and the presence of indigenous Guane community. García Rovira province's economic activities are agriculture and handcrafts. Guanentá stands out in terms of agriculture, especially the production of crops of corn, beans, cassava, chili, arracacha, cotton and fique; as well cotton and marble crafting and ceramics.

In Soto Norte, the economy is based on agricultural production of mainly coffee and cotton, in addition to mining extraction. Veléz economy stands out for handcrafting, fruit-derivatives such as sugar, sweets, and cane honey. The province of Yariguíes' economy is based mainly on oil,

livestock and agriculture. Lastly, the Metropolitan province conducts economic activities that go from leather goods and textile manufactures, to agricultural production, namely poultry.

Even though the region enjoys a diverse variety of financial development activities, after an overwhelming scenario hit by the pandemic, the national panorama has shown a GDP growth of -9.0% in the third quarter of 2020. Previously, according to DANE (2019) the department of Santander was positioned as the fourth largest economy in the country with a 6.9% of GDP national growth.

Despite the aforementioned financial growth facts, there are still unsatisfied basic needs, and poverty was ranked in Santander by DANE (2018), with a rate of 31.1%, the highest in the last 8 years. Bucaramanga and its metropolitan area show a poverty rate of 4.6%, positioned in tenth place among the 24 cities below the national average of 9.6%. Nevertheless, the survey results are poor taking into account that only the metropolitan area was tested, excluding the rest of the provinces. In terms of population growth, the report of population and housing census by the above mentioned survey, showed that the provincial capital with the highest growth rate was San Gil (Guanentá province) with a percentage of 2,82%, then Socorro (Comuneros province) remained with 2,01%, Bucaramanga (Metropolitan province) with a number of 1,98%, as the lowest percentage of population growth was Málaga (García Rovira province) with a portion of 1,56%, Vélez (Vélez province) as 1,51%, and Matanza (Soto Norte province) only 0,72%. Notwithstanding, the survey does not include census-taking information from the Yariguíes province.

Furthermore, it is important to identify the main effects of education or the lack of it over the welfare and basic rights of the people. Moreover, the Colombian education system consists of early education, pre-school, basic primary, basic secondary, middle secondary, high school, and

higher education. Among the provinces of Santander, the highest average of educational coverage is presented by San Gil with 164.8% and Bucaramanga is placed in the fourth place, with a rate of 92.9%. In the secondary coverage rate, Matanza ranks in the first place with an indicator of 157.7%, compared to Bucaramanga which has the fifth place with a percentage of 116.2%. As reported by the MEN (2016) there is a number of 1,126 establishments of preschool, basic and middle school at the national level of the official and private sector all over the seven provinces of Santander, Colombia, including the Metropolitan area, institutions that are taken into account along the course of this research project.

The potential categorization of challenges and coping strategies product of this study may become an initial tool for rural teachers to learn from their peers. Also, this categorization may be useful to visualize the conflicting situations that hinder the development of EFL learning in rural contexts and authorities may take action based on this report.

Research questions:

- What are the challenges or difficult situations that rural EFL teachers encounter in Santander, Colombia?
- What strategies do rural EFL teachers use in order to cope with difficult situations?

1. Objectives

1.1 General objective

To identify and register the challenges and coping strategies of EFL teachers in the rural areas of Santander, Colombia

1.2 Specific objectives

To identify and record the main challenges and coping strategies for teaching EFL in the rural sector of Santander.

To design a typology of challenges and coping strategies in the teaching of EFL in the rural area of Santander.

2. Justification

Bilingualism education has been planned to be used as a tool for the economic growth of the country (British Council, 2015: 13). The government, through the implementation of different programs such as BCP created with international references, has tried to expand the coverage of EFL education in the urban and rural communities (Ibid: 14). However, in the literature revised it was noticeable that the rural communities deal with a number of socioeconomic factors that affect not only the students' learning process but also the EFL teaching practice (Ramos & Aguirre, 2016: 214; Yong & Kenneth, n.d: 8). Those factors may vary depending on the context of the region, since every rural community has different characteristics. For that reason, we found it relevant to investigate the challenges and the coping strategies of rural teachers in Santander to have a wider perspective of the issues present in the provinces of Santander: *Comunera, Yariguíes, García Rovira, Soto Norte, Vélez, Mares, Guanentá* and *Metropolitana*. Also, register the particularities of the different rural areas' realities as well as the strategies teachers implement in their EFL classes as little research has been done in this educational field in the rural region of Santander. It is expected that the results help other EFL teachers working or interested in working in rural areas to have an example on how to endure the situations they will face; that not all rural context can be generalized as one, instead, be conscious on how different the realities of the rural communities in Colombia are as well as to take advantage of those realities/context the rural students are immersed in and implement it in their EFL teaching practice to have better outcomes.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Literature Review

Through different bilingualism policies included in the educational system, the Ministry of Education (2004) aims to have citizens with a high English communicative proficiency based on international standards (as cited in Roldán & Peláez, 2017, p. 123). In order to reach this goal, MEN has been supported and oriented by The British Council in adopting the classification level chart of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), through bilingual programs implemented in Colombian institutions (Ayala & Álvarez, 2005, p. 15).

Even though the objectives of the national policies include both urban and rural institutions, there still exists a significant gap between how lifestyles and education standards are projected for both scenarios. A survey that measures the quality of life of the population carried out by National Administrative Department of Statistics — 'DANE' according to its acronym in Spanish— (DANE, 2016) showed that the average years of schooling for a person in the urban areas reaches 10.5 years, whereas a person who lives in the rural sector only reaches 8.4 years. Additionally, 43.1% of young people attend school in urban areas in comparison to only 24.3% of students in the rural context (as cited in Manco, 2017, p. 62).

Also, the standardized and urban-oriented scope of the programs leave aside the real context in which rural communities are stalled. Thus, Santos (2011) highlights the negative impact in the rural culture due to the implementation of urban and standardized educational practices brought to the countryside. In addition, in the research study made in a rural area by Roldán & Peláez (2017) this statement is reinforced by mentioning how these policies have been implemented not for its usefulness but for its mandatory character, showing the power exercised

by the MEN and overlooking the real needs and possibilities of using a foreign language outside of the classroom.

Moreover, it is important to point out how the perceptions of imposed rural cultural stereotypes must be revised and transformed, carrying out the creation of the programs and not be restricted to only agricultural activities but as cooperative work through the interaction between rural schools and the community (Rivera, 2015). Supplementarily, Pérez and Farah (2002) underscored the importance of conceiving the rural context in a wider perspective, including labor such as mining, fishing, or tourism through educational programs, which may allow to show the diversity within these communities. Furthermore, based on Law 115 of 1994, Chapter 4, Article 64, by which the Colombian Congress issues the General Education Law states that rural communities and rural education: "comprenderá especialmente la formación técnica en actividades agrícolas, pecuarias, pesqueras, forestales y agroindustriales que contribuyan a mejorar las condiciones humanas, de trabajo y la calidad de vida de los campesinos y a incrementar la producción de alimentos en el país" [will include especially technical training in agricultural, livestock, fishing, forestry and agro-industrial activities that contribute to improve human conditions, work and quality of life of farmers and to increase food production in the country] (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2014).

Not only the instruction of practical subjects related to learners' daily contexts and everyday interactions can be taken into account in the rural classrooms, but also the implementation of EFL in order to create connections with an international market, which represents better opportunities for students to familiarize the EFL practice with their surroundings. An exemplification of the mentioned above, can be found in the study of Buitrago (2017) where with the application of activities such as planting seeds during the English class, the students' confidence to participate in

class using EFL increased, despite their low English proficiency level, since those activities were related to their daily reality events.

According to Carrero & González (2017) rural schools experience several disadvantages in comparison to urban institutions due to the lack of technological resources, the historical conflict background, precarious living conditions and government neglect. From this point, the author affirms that "se puede describir una escuela en el medio rural como un establecimiento pobre, estropeado, con poca dotación y mobiliario poco funcional, condiciones que hacen que sean vistas como poco interesantes y de ese mismo modo el Estado y las políticas olvidan el medio rural" [a rural school can be described as a poor and damaged institution with scanty resources and limited logistic functionality, which make it look unappealing, hence the government forgets about the rural environment in education policy making] (p.81).

Over time, rural communities in Colombia have been immersed in a socio-historical phenomenon inherited from generations mired in poverty, discrimination and violence, as a consequence of unequal social structures in which the rural aristocracy enjoys a dignified and comfortable life, while the impoverished communities lack basic human living conditions, notably in the areas of education (Manco & López, 2020). The lack of government investment has notoriously affected rural education since teachers are badly paid and there is no investment in adequate infrastructure and teaching resources. For instance, schools in Sutatenza, Boyaca do not have proper conditions and resources to develop the EFL teaching practice as the shortage of didactic tools hinders students' EFL learning (Yong & Kenneth, n.d, p. 10). In addition, the government wants EFL to be taught appropriately, but as rural teachers instruct more than one subject, it makes it a more complicated task to accomplish (Ramos & Aguirre, 2016).

In the view above, in the middle of the 20th century, Colombia made efforts to offer an academic proposal for rural coverage throughout education models such as "Escuelas Radiofónicas Sutatenza" and "La Escuela Nueva" which consisted of radio programs to teach courses related to health, language, mathematics, and agricultural production, fulfilling the education expectations the most vulnerable and remote communities in the country had in that time. Other examples of rural alphabetization programs in Latin America are "The Acceleration of Learning" originated in Brazil, and "Telesecundaria" developed in Mexico (Lozano, 2012).

During decades education and rural areas have been seen as a tedious challenge in which governments made precarious efforts, compared to what the rural populations really needed, and created the above introduced programs as an effortless way to avoid the real human and infrastructure resources required to have a fulfilled learning process, leading us to wonder what would be a real practical and fair way to implement education in such populations in need.

Consequently, it is strictly important to identify the shortcomings of the unequal and oppressive systems from a critical pedagogy point of view in order to reframe established power structures, as well as patterns of inequality. Critical pedagogy aims to teach how to think with a sense of individual social responsibility that leads citizens to expand possibilities towards a fair and democratic life (Giroux, 2009).

Apart from the socio-cultural factors, there are other elements that weaken the learning and teaching processes of EFL such as demotivation of students, a result of the precarious situation of this educational system. As stated by Bastidas & Muñoz (2011), a mixed approach study carried out with eighteen schools and thirty-four Colombian teachers, shows that demotivation is the result of poor teacher methodology, nonexistent syllabus and the lack of didactic materials.

The educational policies proposed by the government such as the "National Bilingualism Program" or The Act 115 are very important in theory and all Colombian citizens should enjoy their benefits. However, further examinations indicate troubles and inconsistencies among those proposals (Bastidas & Muñoz, 2011). A clear example that illustrates this problem is when the government requires the teaching of English in elementary schools, especially in rural areas, without taking into account teachers' preparation backgrounds and national curriculum. The reason for the disconnection of the policies and reality is the refusal of the Ministry of Education to qualify teachers.

3.2. Conceptual foundations

3.2.1 *Critical pedagogy*

According to Chalaune (2021) critical pedagogy and critical thinking represent essential tools for social transformation through the defense of underprivileged populations emphasizing the expansion of justice to wider social scenarios, especially education. One of the main authors of this theory, Paulo Freire (1970) combines religious liberalism and Marxist notions in his publication "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" in which he criticizes the education system that oppress and destroys students' creativity, proposing the liberation of populations throughout education and self and collective awareness as an act of freedom, emancipation, and empowerment (Chalaune, 2021).

Throughout time, a conventional and teacher-centered education had been the predominant path to instruct students, where the teacher's role was mainly to transmit knowledge and students' role was to take the information without questioning, taking into consideration everything but the reality they were immersed in (Sánchez et al., 2017). In contrast, critical pedagogy (CP) and conceptions about children's learning processes and the importance of the cooperative relationship

between the society and the school, developed by scholars such as Henry Giroux and John Dewey among others, have changed the perception of education regarding knowledge construction and application. Moreover, CP aims to decapitalize the educational processes, in accordance with the economical necessities to join the globalization wave, through pedagogical practices based on ethical principles focusing on social change.

Hence, Giroux remarks how significant it is to develop CP in the classrooms to allow students to have spaces where they can be heard and collectively, share opinions, question politics, think about alternatives to fight the great inequality gap in society, and understanding how crucial the role of education is in reshaping the reality (González, 2007). Additionally, for Dewey it is important to consider the school as a society in which the methodologies for the subjects can be designed avoiding imposed assumptions, taking into account how children construct their own knowledge while keeping their experiences and the community's reality as genuine and spontaneous as possible (Dorantes & Matus, 2007).

3.2.2   Escuela Nueva

In order to improve the pedagogical methods implemented in the rural area and overcome the difficulties such as reduced number of teachers and students for each grade, as well as the high dropout rate, a new pedagogical approach called Escuela Nueva was created in 1975, by Vicky Colbert and Oscar Mogollon taking as an inspiration UNESCO's notion of *Escuela Unitaria* (Urrea & Figueiredo, 2018). The basis of this model is a participative, cooperative, student-centered learning in multigrade schools where through worksheets (in Spanish 'guías de aprendizaje') it is possible for rural students to be instructed at their own pace in different subjects by the guidance of the teacher (Colbert, 1999). Also, Escuela Nueva considers the community as a fundamental pillar since it integrates it in the school's activities to enhance students' perceptions

within the rural area because its main objective is not just to follow the curriculum but to transmit valuable knowledge to students.

3.2.2.1 Aceleración del aprendizaje. The Acceleration of Learning was a successful educational model adopted by The Ministry of Education and the Technological Teaching Center of Brasilia in 1995, which offered classroom programs of primary education aimed to rural populations in an effort to eradicate the high rates of school dropout and also the over-age phenomenon in which students who are two or three years older than the average age in a specific scholar grade. Similarly, the educational model Telesecundaria created in 1968 had the objective of providing education and scholarship to rural areas in Mexico through television broadcasts, successfully overcoming illiteracy in the seventies and is still being applied.

According to Huertas, López, & Fonseca (2019), The Programa de Aceleración del Aprendizaje took place in Colombia due to the reflections towards the conditions of education in the country conducted by the Ministry of National Education of Colombia (MEN, 1999), in which certain unfair features were identified; such as 40% of rural children not allowed to attend institutions because of the age gap and its predicaments with the school coexistence caused by experienced violence, forced displacement, poverty, and child labour. Taking into consideration the aforementioned elements, acceleration of learning in Colombia was launched in 2000, drawing on preceding experiences, for instance, Brazil and other different projects around Colombia, for the sake of the construction of local and national peace, piloting the application of the model in Boyacá, Cauca, Caldas, Cundinamarca, Huila, Risaralda, Santander and Bogotá (Huertas, López, & Fonseca, 2019). This initiative considered a political commitment, a pedagogical engagement, and an operative responsibility from all the community members (MEN, 2008).

The Learning Acceleration Program gave rise to the development of seven worksheets that approach different areas of knowledge in an interdisciplinary manner for kids and teenagers in extra-age, leading to the accomplishment of primary school throughout the usage of oral and writing communication, and problem-solving transversality (Gutiérrez & Puentes, 2009). The objectives of the aforementioned program are guaranteeing education for extra-age learners, developing basic competences, and encouraging students' self-esteem. Additionally, as a criterion, the project must contain 25 students per classroom between the ages of 10 to 17 years old, willing to participate and include language, mathematics, natural and social sciences competences.

Nevertheless, as reported by Huertas, López, & Fonseca (2019), there are many issues and concerns identified such as a higher vulnerability of students in terms of violence and forced displacement, strong behavior problems, high dropout rate, and discriminatory practices carried out by learners and teachers.

3.2.2.2 Post-Primaria. Additionally, in line with *Escuela Nueva*, the MEN (n.d) states that the flexible educational model for rural *Post-primaria* education serves young learners in remote areas who have finished primary school and aspire to continue their studies in high school, creating strategies in order to avoid desertion and considering a flexible academic environment.

Moreover, the aim of the Post-Primary education model is to promote health and nutrition programs, and pedagogical projects in order to involve communities into the development of their own educational processes, using resources like an implementation manual, virtual trainings, and multimedia materials for educators; meanwhile students received books per each subject (MEN, nd). In accordance with Cuesta (2008), the post primary model creates real life content to engage the rural communities to carry out a social compromise in which they satisfy their own needs and

reinforce the local identities. Nonetheless, it is important to produce a more explicit communicative education to encompass wider concepts and theories fueling camp research.

During decades, education in rural areas has been seen as a tedious challenge in which governments have made precarious efforts, compared to what the rural populations really needed, and created programs mentioned above as an effortless way to avoid the real human and infrastructure resources required to have a fulfilled learning process, leading us to wonder what would be a real practical and fair way to implement education in such populations in need.

3.2.3   *Proyecto Educativo Comunitario (PEC)*

Proyecto Educativo Comunitario (PEC) was created by the Movimiento Educativo Indígena as an alternative to the Proyecto Educativo Institucional (PEI), and it is aimed not only to indigenous communities, but also to Afro-descendants, Roms and other ethnic groups. PEC is seen as a methodology to achieve educational autonomy, where the interaction between the school and the community is possible, creating the opportunity to build knowledge for all the participating actors, and reinforce their identity within the different territories (Bolaños 2007). Similarly, Gardey (2013) defined PEC as a strategy that transforms education in terms of autonomy and resistance of indigenous groups, considering the life plans of the community and strengthening cultural identity (as cited in Girón, 2017).

Taking into account the relevance of the context in this type of project, the PEC responds to a community problem and suggests possible solutions to specific issues and improve people's lives (Girón, 2017). All of this, following the three stages to correctly implement the PEC. First of all, the diagnosis stage, where it is possible to explore and recognize the problems and needs of the context in which the school is located. Next, in the planning stage, once the problem has been established, the strengths of the school and the objectives of the work plan to be followed are

identified, and the actions to be taken are proposed. Finally, in the evaluation stage, an analysis is made of the effectiveness of the work plan and how it can be improved to solve the problem (Meza 2011).

Several types of PEC are focused depending on the needs of the population, such as community radio stations or investment in cultural and educational groups such as libraries, cinemas, theaters, etc., which reinforce the cultural identity. Likewise, projects that may contribute to economic development like electrification and road developments, or those where the main focus is on enhancing the natural and cultural resources of the community (Girón, 2017). In the PEC, the teacher plays a fundamental role, since they are in charge of identifying these problems to propose alternatives and solutions, from a critical and adaptable perspective to the needs of the school and its environment. Likewise, the institutions need to create the proper conditions to enhance the social interaction among the context of the students, families, and community (Meza 2011).

3.3 Theoretical foundations

3.3.1 *Pierre Bourdieu: Habitus*

As reported by Power (1999), Bourdieu's theoretical framework regarding sociology discusses one of his central concepts: *habitus*. Habitues describe the singularities of human behavior that are related to or imprinted by social structures, such as social class, gender, and ethnicity, educational background, political and ideological beliefs, etc., which shape how individuals live in and perceive the world. Individuals' *habitus* is imposed from childhood through environment conditions set out by communities, for instance gender identity, which deeply roots and attaches people to certain sexual impositions, reinforces negative sexism dynamics and impacts not only intimate insights but the acquisition of knowledge, learning a second language,

for example, which is a merely social act. Additionally, habitus plays an important role in people's everyday practices which involves capital and field, the latter being a structured space ordered in different kind of capitals, like the field of arts, the field of law, the field of science, the field of intellectual, and the field of education (Swartz, 1997).

Swartz (1997) states that Bourdieu proposes the principal forms of coexisting capital; symbolic, social, cultural, and economic. The economic capital is closely related to fortune, affluence, and dominance obtained by the cultural capital embodied in cultural possessions like books, pedagogical materials, education or scholarships investment that are inherited by next generations as a way of social capital for symbolic capital, presented in legitimate forms of lineage and family associations and symbolic physical concepts as the nourishment necessity and its corresponding feeding interactions. Thus, in hostile surroundings alongside poverty and impecunious conditions, schooling processes and cultural capital may be damaged, negatively impacting the acquisition of learning materials, in contrast with affluent families who have access to private education and quality resources. This account corresponds to the unbreakable cycle of social and economic inequality, taking vulnerable generations away from the real purpose of education, ceasing to be a cultural capital to be reduced to an escape from hunger.

In this vein, in rural areas, families with less types of capital and therefore, with a limited *habitus,* for example single parents, find themselves under susceptible conditions and must take benefit from the resources that their setting may provide, basing their incomes on countryside activities such as agriculture, mining, or fishing, and often forcing the kids to child labour and hard work interrupting their education, including the EFL learning processes.

3.4 Legal reference

The Act 115, also known as the General Education Law, was issued in Colombia in 1994. This Act aims to guarantee an appropriate educational setting to fulfill students' needs and interest as a proper right stated in the Political Constitution in the Act 67 (Alcaldía de Bogotá, n.d.). Also, this Act stipulates that all Colombian individuals have the right to basic, secondary, formal and informal education and, through the structure of the educational service, it is established what each of the categories covers, as well as the variation in modalities to the different populations in the country such as ethnic groups, people with motor and cognitive disabilities, social rehabilitation, kids, adults and rural population (Ibid: 3-16).

Nevertheless, the Act 115 of 1994 did not regulate the implementation of bilingual education until the Bilingualism Law (Act 1651) was created in 2013, in which some articles of the Act 115 were modified to improve the practice of ELF for students to develop high communicative skills (Alcaldía de Bogotá, n.d.). Moreover, MEN has created bilingualism policies and, in conjunction with the British Council, a guide with the Basic Competence Standards: English based on the CEFR, to describe the language proficiency, accordingly to the performance goals expected for each grade in the different skills such as listening, reading, writing, monolog and speech to enhance and promote the learning of EFL in the classroom (British Council, 2015).

4. Methodology

4.2. Type of investigation

A mixed-approach has been used for this study. We considered it is the most suitable since it encloses the different features of both qualitative and quantitative approaches as expressed by Cresweel and Plano Clark in 2011 (as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Furthermore,

we followed an ethnographic design that seeks to collect "data in natural settings" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 4) in an effort to have a better first-hand perspective about the reality of the different rural areas of Santander's regional provinces, and also know how the educational practices are developed there regarding EFL learning and teaching challenges.

4.3.Participants description

Firstly, by means of carrying out the quantitative section of this study, 15 rural teachers participated through the use of digital surveys of Google Forms. 12 of them represent females, and 3 are male. Relating to age, 10 participants (66,7%) are situated in the range of ages of 30 to 40 years old, 4 of them (26,7%) are older than 50 years old, and only one participant (6,7%) is placed in the range of 25 to 30 years old. With regard to the area of residence, 11 of the participants (73,3%) manifest to live in urban areas, in contrast to 4 of them (26,7%) who live in rural areas. Additionally, 6 of the participants indicate that they live in the Comunera province, 4 reside in the Metropolitana area, 2 in the province of Yariguíes, and 3 in the provinces of Guanentá, Soto Norte, and Vélez. The main municipalities of domicile of the studied population are located in the department of Santander, being these; Betulia, Bucaramanga, Contratación, El Carmen, El Guacamayo, Floridablanca, Gambita, Matanza, Piedecuesta, Pinchote, Santa Helena de Opón. However, only one person declares to reside in Santana, department of Boyacá.

All participants are rural teachers that reported to work in the department of Santander in the aforementioned provinces. The municipalities where participants teach their classes are Betulia, El Carmen, El Guacamayo, Gambita, Girón, Los Santos, Matanza, Piedecuesta, Pinchote, Santa Helena del Opón, and Suaita. All of the teachers state they work with more than one grade, with classes that include students from first grade to tenth grade. Regarding teachers' academic background, 9 of the surveyed participants possess an English teaching degree, 4 of them have

related studies to some extent, for example, and only 2 of the teachers do not have any English teaching study.

Secondly, in order to perform the qualitative part of our investigation, a semi-structured interview with a series of nine questions was carried out with 5 teachers. The five interviewed participants are rural public-school educators, four women and two men, from remote areas in the provinces of Comuneros, Guanentá, Metropolitana, Soto Norte, and Yariguíes. Participants' ages fluctuate from 25 to 57 years old.

4.4. Context description

As reported by Federación Nacional de Departamentos (FND, 2019), the department of Santander is located in the Andean region in the north of Colombia, with a population of 2,100,704 inhabitants, 51% female, compared to 49% male, of which 76.1% reside in urban areas while 23.9% live in rural areas. According to the Departmental Competitiveness Index, Santander ranks fourth among the most competitive departments in Colombia, standing out in sectors such as basic and secondary education, environmental sustainability and innovation and business dynamics. The region's gross domestic product (GDP) is USD 7,970, which represents 7.7% of the national GDP.

Moreover, the region has an area of 30,537 km2 and a variety of thermal floors with altitudes ranging from 100 to 4200 meters above sea level, temperatures that fluctuate between 9 and 32 degrees Celsius depending on the time of year, and two large hydrographic slopes, which make the department a rich and diverse niche with ecosystems that hold a wide variety of species of fauna and flora, facilitating productivity and economic growth in the area (Minciencias, 2020).

Consequently, in accordance with DANE (2021), the economic sector of the department is made up of activities such as: manufacturing industry, taxes, construction; financial

establishments, real estate and business services. Also, trade, repair, restaurants and hotels; as well as transportation, storage and communications; agriculture, livestock, hunting, forestry and fishing; electricity, gas and water supply; exploitation of natural gas and water; and mining and quarrying. The aforementioned wide productive offer of the department of Santander allows the economic and social development of the population, positioning itself as one of the greatest powers at national level.

The department of Santander is politically constituted by six territorial provinces with a total of 87 municipalities, each one with social, economic and educational inferences mentioned below. In the first instance, the Metropolitana province located in the Rio de Oro valley, is made up of its capital Bucaramanga, and its integrating municipalities; Girón, Piedecuesta and Floridablanca according to Figure 1. It has a population of 1,341,694 inhabitants, noted for its economic participation in sectors such as business, industry, manufacturing, agriculture, food, handicrafts, tourism, textiles and fashion, with a presence in the transportation, mining and construction sectors. The capital city contains a variety of features that positions it as one of the most important and promising growing economies of the country, as well as the 100% educational coverage due to its polycentric and migratory behavior.

Figure 1.

Location of the province Metropolitana, Santander, Colombia.
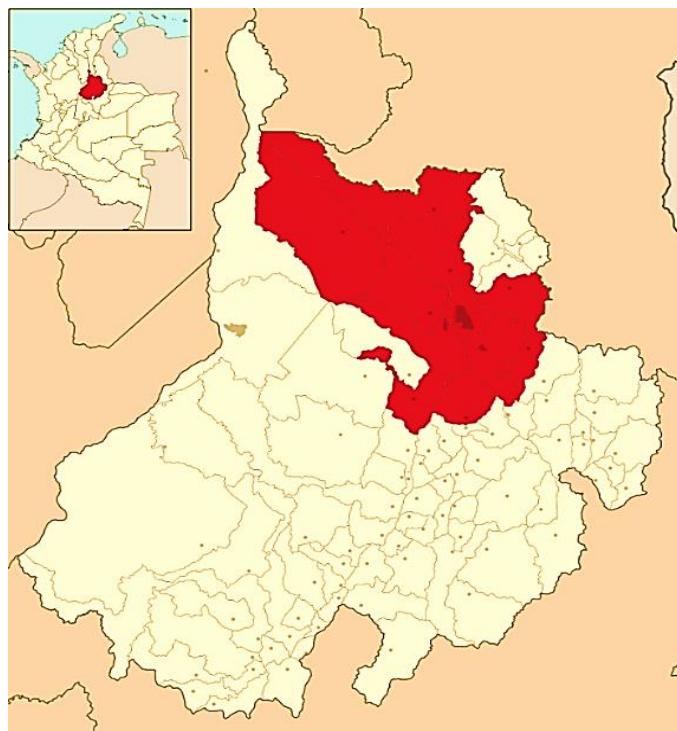
Note. Adapted by Location of the province Metropolitana, Santander, Colombia, Milenioscuro, 2015 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>). CC BY-SA 4.0.

The province of Comuneros, positioned in the southern-central part of the department, has a total of 140,131 inhabitants and it is characterized by its main economic activities based on agriculture and handcrafts, see Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Location of the province of Comuneros, Santander, Colombia.
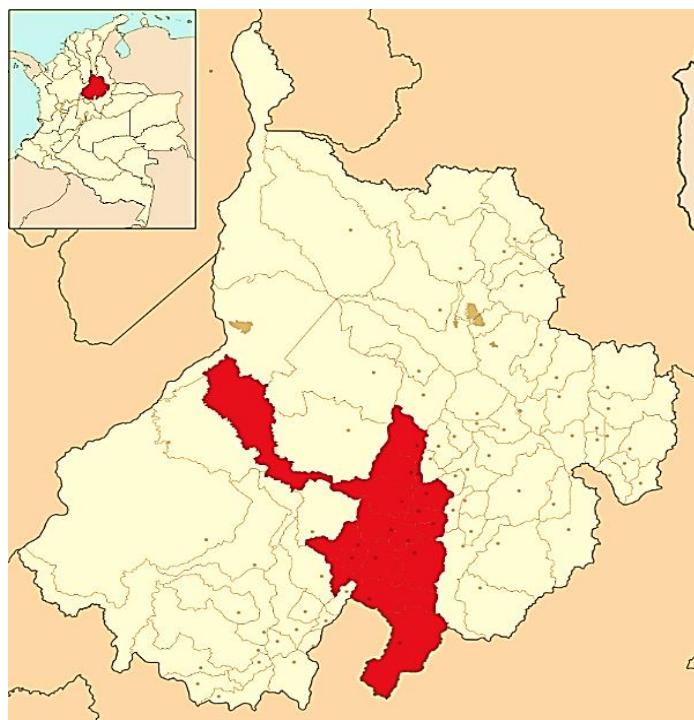
Note. Adapted by Location of the province of Comuneros, Santander, Colombia, Milenioscuro, 2015 (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Colombia_-_Santander_-_Comunera.svg). CC BY-SA 4.0.

This region had a crucial historical impact due to the insurrection of the Comuneros in its capital, the municipality of El Socorro, and the presence of indigenous Guane community in its surrounding towns of Chima, Confines, Contratación, El Guacamayo, Galán, Gámbita, Guadalupe, Guapotá, Hato, Oiba, Palmar, Palmas del Socorro, Santa Helena del Opón, Simacota, Socorro and Suaita. In terms of education, the region maintains a special approach in the training of teachers in the field of research and production through the Information and Communication Technology tools applied to the tourism sector.

On the other hand, Guanentá is a region whose economic activity is based on the growing of arracacha, corn, yucca, beans, chili peppers, fique and cotton; the art crafts in cotton, marble and ceramics, and it has a population of 230,793 inhabitants, as seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3.

Location of the province of Guanentá, Santander, Colombia.
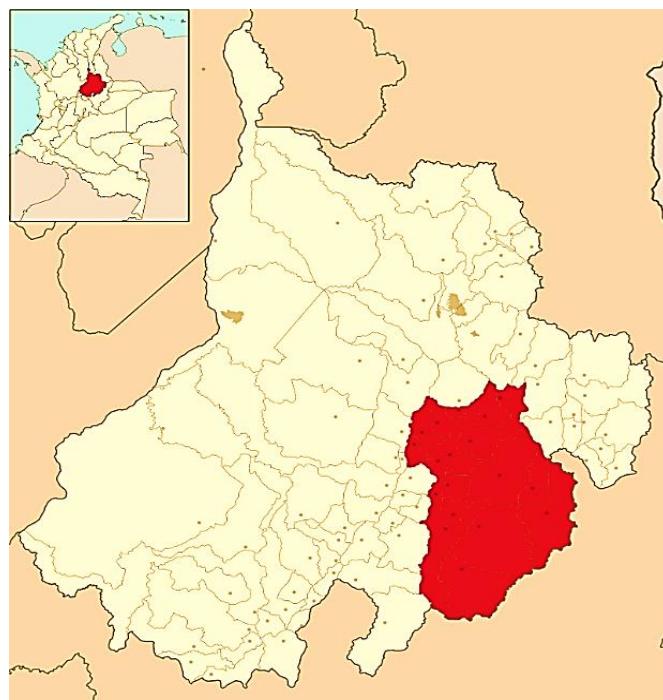
Note. Adapted by Location of the province of Guanentá, Santander, Colombia, Milenioscuro, 2015 (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Colombia_-_Santander_-_Guanent%C3%A1.svg). CC BY-SA 4.0.

The capital of the province of Guanentá is the city of San Gil, is located 96 km from Bucaramanga, with an average temperature of 20 °C, and it counts with a number of 17 municipalities: Aratoca, Barichara, Cabrera, Coromoro, Curití, Charalá, Encino, Jordán, Mogotes, Ocamonte, Onzaga, Páramo, Pinchote, San Joaquín, San Gil, Valle de San José, and Villanueva. The educational models of the region are based on the Escuela Nueva and Traditional Education focused on the innovation and competitiveness for the growth of tourism and ecotourism in the province.

The García Rovira province, placed in the east of the department as detailed in Figure 4.

Figure 4.

Location of the province of Garcia Rovira, Santander, Colombia.

Note. Adapted by Location of the province of Garcia Rovira, Santander, Colombia, Milenioscuro, 2015

(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Colombia_-_Santander_-_Garc%C3%ADa_Rovira.svg). CC

BY-SA 4.0.

The province of García Rovira, is known as an educational center, possesses a number of

173,714 citizens, and enjoys a variety of climates and privileged geography which makes it stand

out in its agricultural activity, as well as in its artistic and handicraft tradition. Its capital city,

Malaga, has achieved promising results in education and health growth over the past 10 years,

which places it among the best provincial cities in the overall ranking. This province embraces the

municipalities of Capitanejo, Carcasí, Cepitá, Cerrito, Concepción, Enciso, Guaca, Macaravita,

Málaga, Molagavita, San Andrés, San José de Miranda and San Miguel.

The Figure 5 shows the province of Vélez.

Figure 5.

Location of the province of Velez, Santander, Colombia.

Note. Adapted by Location of the province of Velez, Santander, Colombia, Milenioscuro, 2015 (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Colombia_-_Santander_-_V%C3%A9lez_(provincia).svg). CC BY-SA 4.0.

Situated in the south of Santander the province of Vélez, has an economy characterized by crafts such as cotton canvas, espadrilles and clay pottery, with 183,466 folks living all over its 19 towns; Aguada, Albania, Barbosa, Bolívar, Cimitarra, El Peñón, Chipatá, Florián, Guavatá, Güepsa, Jesús María, La Belleza, La Paz, Landázuri, Puente Nacional, Puerto Parra, San Benito, Sucre, and Vélez. The canned fruits, sugar, and sugar cane honeys make it stand out among other regions. Unfortunately, its main city performs poorly in education, as well as in business dynamics, research and financial markets.

The Figure 6 shows the province of Yariguíes.

Figure 6.

Location of the province of Yariguíes, Santander, Colombia.
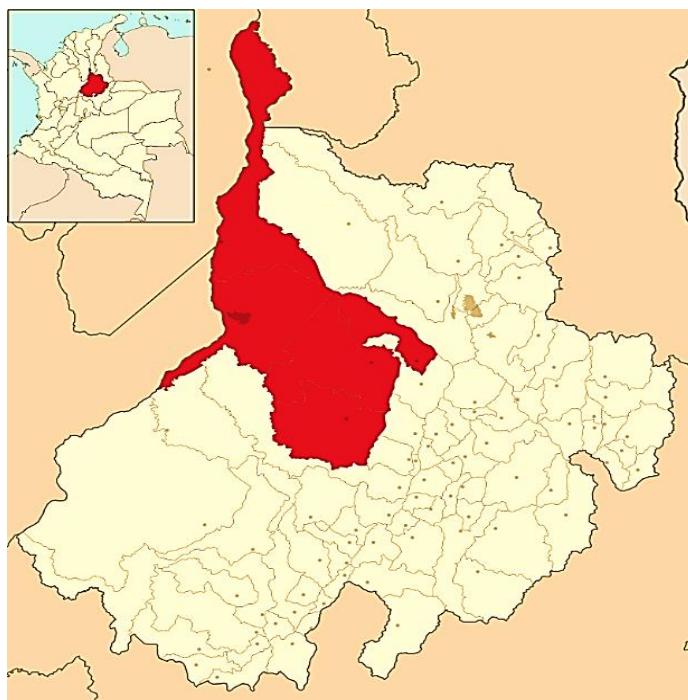
Note. Adapted by Location of the province of Yariguíes, Santander, Colombia, Milenioscuro, 2015 (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Colombia_-_Santander_-_Yarigu%C3%ADes.svg). CC BY-SA 4.0.

The territory of Yariguíes, established at the north-west of the department of Santander, where 520,503 people reside. It has the Special District of Barrancabermeja as its capital (See Figure 6). Its municipalities are Barrancabermeja, Betulia, El Carmen de Chucurí, Puerto Wilches, Sabana de Torres, and San Vicente de Chucurí. The region owes its name to the Yariguíes Indians, past inhabitants of these lands. Moreover, the economy of the sector is based on oil extraction with the ECOPETROL refinery, as well as ecotourism and water sports. Rural education in the Yariguiés province is affected by long distances, child labor, among other circumstances related

to poverty. However, attempts are being made by its Secretary of Education to improve the quality of education in the area.

Lastly, the Figure 7 shows the province of Soto Norte.

Figure 7.

*Adapted by Location of the province of Soto Norte, Santander, Colombia.*
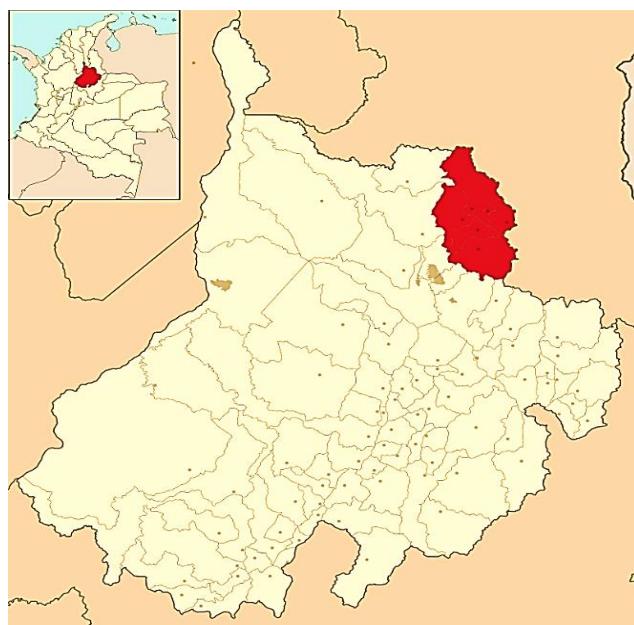
Note. Adapted by Location of the province of Soto Norte, Santander, Colombia, Milenioscuro, 2015 (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Colombia_-_Santander_-_Soto_Norte.svg). CC BY-SA 4.0.

The smallest province of the department, Soto Norte, situated in the north of Santander, possesses a small number of 35.653 inhabitants, and it has an economic development based on coffee and cotton agriculture, leather handicrafts and mining. The municipalities that make up this province are California, Charta, Matanza, Suratá, Tona and Vetas. In respect of education, the region possesses a project called *'Investigadores por Naturaleza'*, promoted by the Vice-Rectory

of Research and Extension of the Universidad Industrial de Santander, which seeks to discover the scientific vocations of children and young people in the zone.

In agreement with Secretaria de Planeación (2014), the general rate of basic and secondary scholarly coverage for the population of Santander is 99%, which corresponds to the school-age population between 5 and 17 years old; however, there is still an unfavorable number of 1,252 young people who do not have access to education due to adverse challenges including the lack of institutions and access routes.

4.5.Hypothesis, variables, and indicators

This research study aims to analyze the influential factors and challenges of EFL teachers in rural areas, and the coping strategies they use. The study has projected the following hypothesis: Socio-economic challenges affect EFL teaching practices in the rural areas of Santander, Colombia. At the end of the study, we may evidence if the hypothesis was validated or nullified. Consequently, the identified variables found in the hypothesis are as follow: the EFL teaching practices in the rural areas of Santander, Colombia, as the dependent variable, and socio-economic challenges, as the independent variable. Eventually, the indicators or observables of the variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

Hypothesis, variables, and indicators.

Hypothesis
Socio-economic challenges affect EFL teaching practices in the rural areas of Santander, Colombia.

Variables	Indicators
	To demotivate students.
Independent variable: Socio-economic challenges (limited resources, historical conflict, and precarious living conditions).	To overload teachers with work.
	To decontextualize policies and reality
	To hinder learning processes
	To decapitalize education.
	To improve students' and teachers' communicative English skills.
Dependent variable: the EFL teaching practices in the rural areas of Santander, Colombia.	To show the diversity within communities
	To improve human conditions.
	To create connections in the international market

4.6.Sampling process

In this mixed study, the sampling method that fits better the accomplishment of a representative sample is the non-probability convenience sampling, since it makes it faster and more accessible for us as students. For the qualitative part of the study, participants were more approachable at the time this research project is conducted therefore, the characteristics of the population can be portrayed to obtain a meaningful data collection (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Similarly, for the quantitative part of the study, the non-probability snowball sampling was used to reach a bigger number of participants, by means of the ones initially contacted by the convenience sampling process. These participants increased the opportunity to build connections within groups with similar features under study, since due to the difficult geographical access, it was hard to contact them on our own (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

4.7. Data collection instruments

The tools designed allowed us to obtain reliable data: a semi-structured interview and a survey. The first instrument enabled us to conduct the collection of different opinions and perceptions from the interviewees in a spontaneous way regarding the topic (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018) in this case, the challenges and coping strategies of EFL teachers in rural areas. Therefore, the type of interview that was implemented is a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions[5] (See Annex A). The second instrument is a Likert-scale survey (See Annex B) as it allows us to collect accurate statistical results that encompass all the participants' answers regarding the rural EFL teachers' features and experiences in the different Santander's provinces. In the survey, closed and multiple-choice questions were introduced.

4.8. Analysis techniques

Taking into account that this project uses a mixed approach, the information analysis was developed following different techniques according to the data collection tools used. The data collected through the semi-structured interviews was codified and organized into different categories related to the challenges and coping strategies used by EFL rural teachers (See Annex

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[5] The interview was taken and adapted from Ferrero & Neira (2019) page 88-90.

C and Annex D). Information from all the interviews was compiled into memos to facilitate the

analysis process and structured into tables according to their category.

Data obtained from the survey was automatically processed by statistical analysis by

Google Forms and then analyzed using the charts and the matrix data (See Annex E)

5. Results

The following results are extracted from the semi-structured interview and the survey

answers taken by the rural teachers in Santander selected for this research study. The qualitative

findings are divided into 9 categories and provided relevant insights from 5 rural teachers'

experiences and ideas during the EFL practice in different rural settings. In addition, for the

quantitative part of the study, 15 teachers participated, answering the forms completely. From the

survey's results we observed 5 categories, which aim to synthesize the answers collected. As

shown below participants' identities are protected at all times, and they are referred to as P. For

example, P1. P2, P3, etc.

5.2. Qualitative findings from interviews

5.2.1. Resources

The first interview is shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2.

Memo 1

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
December 15th, 2022	RESOURCES	Didactic material for EFL instruction	Own resources (bought/made by the teachers).

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
			Lack of investment (by the institution).
			Lack of didactic resources.
			Lack of investment (by the government).
			Lack of internet connection.
			Outdated available material.
			Untrained English teachers.

Table 3.

Raw Data Question 1

Question 1	Answers
¿De cuáles materiales didácticos disponen aquí para clases de EFL? ¿Qué necesitan más urgentemente?	P1: En los colegios rurales tenemos bastantes dificultades en este tema porque pues realmente nos toca lo que los profes podamos y alcancemos nosotros a llevar a las aulas, los colegios casi no invierten en el sentido de tener recursos didácticos, llamativos y demás. Por ejemplo, en nuestro colegio no hay lo del audio que es tan básico, entonces casi todo es con nuestra voz, con nuestros recursos. Si uno como docente puede llevar un micrófono, un parlante, un bafle, listo pero en colegio casi no provee esos recursos.
	P2: En mi escuela manejo los grados de preescolar a quinto y la verdad nosotros no contamos con material pedagógico apropiado para cada uno de los diferentes grupos, teniendo en cuenta el nivel de profundidad que se le debe hacer en cada grado. Hago uso del internet y de algunos libros que he adquirido para las temáticas trazadas desde el plan de área institucional.

Question 1	Answers
	P3: Bueno, el colegio en el que estoy en este momento, por el lugar en donde está ubicado, por las ayudas que da el gobierno pues de verdad no es mucho los materiales didácticos con los que contamos para trabajar con los niños. Ellos lo que tienen siempre son su diccionario, digamos que es una lucha con ellos para que busquen al menos un buen diccionario de inglés-español porque lamentablemente ellos utilizan el diccionario Chicago, y tú sabes que estos diccionarios son obsoletos, nunca han servido para nada. Entonces es una lucha con ellos o intentar decirles que recarguen o que tengan al menos Cambridge dictionary que ellos lo puedan usar y sea como más efectivo el aprendizaje. Ellos no cuentan con un libro de inglés, todas las guías son diseñadas por mi compañera y mi persona. Ellos no cuentan con computadores, con nada, y si de pronto están en la biblioteca eso yo no lo utilizo porque digamos los chicos están interesados en otros personajes que de pronto les aparece digamos que les aparece en un libro un cantante como, no lo sé, una banda como Aerosmith, ellos no van a estar interesados en esto, entonces digamos para qué lo utilizo.
	P4: Quizás a los estudiantes les queda más fácil así sin embargo hay muchas dificultades en la enseñanza del inglés en el área pública sobre todo considerando que por ejemplo no hay material adecuado para primaria y pues de vez en cuando el gobierno envía algo y cuando digo de vez en cuando es que por ejemplo en el 2013 enviaron como unas flashcards que realmente eran muy básicas y solo enfocadas en vocabulario y pues otra cosa es que también tener un material muy bien si los compañeros no tienen el conocimiento suficiente y muchos compañeros no están capacitados o capacitadas porque no son licenciadas enfocadas en inglés. Además de eso no hay nada de materiales por ejemplo acá son 5 sedes rurales y de los materiales mandan uno para que se lo roten entre las 5 sedes Entonces es complicado que se haga uso de ellos. Otra cosa el estado también

Question 1	Answers
	contempla los materiales de manera virtual sin embargo tenemos sedes en donde no hay internet.
	P5: En nuestro colegio tenemos varios recursos didácticos. Uno de ellos es un salón de inglés el cual cuenta con un tablero digital donde proyectó videojuegos, películas, canciones, etc. También contamos con un reproductor de audio para trabajar la parte del listening. En el colegio no tenemos un libro de inglés, pero como yo hago guías por mi propia cuenta y me ayudo de los recursos de la página del ministerio como el libro Way to Go y otros más que se pueden encontrar allí.

The data collected from Table 2 and Table 3 helps us to corroborate what the authors Yong & Kenneth (n.d) and Carrero & González (2017) affirm in their papers about the poor conditions the public rural institutions suffer as a consequence of the lack of government investment. This can be evidenced in the answers, where aspects such as outdated material, untrained teachers and absence of digital resources, leading teachers to design their own, are described. However, data showed that some schools count with proper infrastructure and digital devices for the EFL instruction reflected in English labs, digital boards, school's interactive app; meanwhile the digital era has not arrived in some institutions in where the use of Chicago dictionary and schools library antique books are the main source of EFL information. We believe this should be a matter of interest for either the national and the local Education authorities in order to equally provide the adequate conditions for all the population involved in the EFL practice as it has become an important tool for immersing the country in the global market.

5.2.1.1.**Results.** Data reveals that in terms of resources, in most of the cases, teachers are untrained as EFL professionals and struggle to find resources for the EFL class. Most participants express having no internet connection and a huge lack of resources of all types. For example, P1

mentions the lack of audio resources that are basic for the language development. Participants also need to acquire and design their own resources for classes. Some available material is outdated, for example dictionaries and old EFL books. This phenomenon may be due to the lack of investment by local and national authorities in the education of rural students, as it is pointed out by P1 and P3.

However, in one case, P2 mentions the availability of internet connection and some books in her institution and P5 states that they have access to an English Lab and a digital board, as well as the material provided by the MEN.

5.2.2. *Socio-economic factors vs motivation*

The second interview is listed in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4.

Memo 2

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
December 26th, 2022	SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS VS. MOTIVATION	External incentivisation influence on students' EFL learning process	Family income based on countryside activities
			Family economic issues to get EFL materials
			Dysfunctional families
			Money makers rather than educational growth
			Community identity impacts negatively students EFL exposure
			Parental encouragement: private and public school differences
			Chauvinism

Table 5.

Raw Data of Question 2

Question 2	Answers
¿Cómo afectan los factores socioeconómicos la motivación y el desempeño de los estudiantes en relación al EFL?	**P1**: También se ve bastante afectado. Realmente nuestro niños la mayoría son del campo, viven del agro y de todas las tareas de la granja y demás. Los papás son de pocos recursos, ellos casi no invierten en educación. Por ejemplo, acá pedir un libro es muy difícil, porque no lo compran. Lo que podemos hacer es facilitar el material a través de fotocopias, pero ese material no es muy llamativo que digamos, los libros usted sabe viene a color, traen a veces la parte de los audios, y eso acá es muy difícil. Entonces hay bastante desmotivación por ese lado porque no hay como invertir en materiales.
	P2: Los factores socioeconómicos influyen negativamente en la mayoría de los casos, ya que en la vereda donde laboro hay muchas familias disfuncionales, otras con problemas de alcoholismo y en algunos casos violencia verbal y o física y si a esto le añadimos que la visión que tienen los padres de sus hijos es que terminen sus estudios de post primaria para que empiecen a ser productivos, hacen que no solamente la enseñanza del inglés sino también la de todas las áreas del conocimiento se conviertan en un requisito que se debe cumplir para que cada uno de los estudiantes se pueda vincular al sector productivo.
	P3: En un lugar como la Mesa de Los Santos realmente para mi ha sido uno de los lugares más challenging, llamémoslo así, porque los estudiantes ellos no están relacionados con un contexto en inglés, nunca en su vida. Cuando yo llegué allí digamos que la profesora simplemente les entregaba su trabajo, hacer traducciones y no los ponía como en el contexto con cantantes o películas, entonces ha sido muy difícil porque a ellos simplemente no les gusta, para ellos el mundo se limita a la Mesa de los Santos, y escuchar digamos las novelas que hay

Question 2	Answers
	en Caracol y RCN, escuchan por mucho lo que está ahorita de moda; reggaetón, y a ellos yo les pongo música en inglés y a algunos les gusta pero no es, en realidad he trabajado mucho en la motivación, se ha logrado después de la pandemia un poco mejorar esa actitud de ellos, y cuesta mucho ese trabajo y por lo mismo, lo socioeconómico, los niños nunca han tenido acceso a un curso de inglés, es muy escaso, digamos que de 35 estudiantes ninguno ha tenido contacto, o por lo menos que se pueda desenvolver en inglés en una conversación. El contexto también por ejemplo los papás, no sé si tengas experiencia con colegios privados, es muy distinta la motivación que los papás les dan, a los chicos les pagan sus cursos, les dan viajes al extranjero, pero llegar a este tipo de lugares es muy complicado porque los padres de familia solamente quieren que los niños saquen el cartón para que los niños vayan a manejar una volqueta o si nada que tenga relacionado con el inglés.
	P4: Por ejemplo, uno de qué los niños en la ciudad tienen más contacto más conocimiento de la cultura en inglés entonces la docente se queda sin herramientas para apoyar el proceso Entonces se reduce solamente a las horas que se ven en el colegio qué acá, entonces cuando los chicos no tienen el nivel se vuelve como un círculo vicioso Entonces el profesor para evitar el desgaste se limita a las cosas que puede enseñar en el tablero Cómo gramática o vocabulario Pero entonces el estudiante se encuentra con las reglas gramaticales y pierda el interés Entonces no logra desarrollar sus otras habilidades solamente gramática y es difícil empezar a incentivar algo como él listening a un estudiante de bachillerato cuando en primaria no se le incentivo de manera apropiada y a pesar de que en bachilleratos ya hay una docente especializada ella se enfrenta a que los estudiantes no están suficientemente preparados porque desde primaria no se le incentivó las otras habilidades la identidad los chicos se reducen únicamente a la mina y esta comunidad

Question 2	Answers
	tiene el machismo aún muy reforzado Entonces los niños aspiran a tener novia, mujeres y plata Entonces esto dificulta no solo la adquisición de otro idioma sino la educación en general Entonces lo ideal sería que ellos vieran la relación con la mina un poco más diferente porque ellos no la relacionan con la montaña o a la naturaleza si no solo a la explotación, en cambio las mujeres tienen mas oportunidades de salir porque ellas no trabajan en la mina.
	P5: Bueno, en cuanto al factor económico los estudiantes de esta zona, el pueblo de Betulia, son chicos que están en estratos desde 0 hasta 3, entonces hay personas que tienen muchos recursos mientras que otros no. También algunos papás se ven involucrados y motivados por que sus hijos aprendan inglés mientras que otros están totalmente desentendidos. Así que si, yo diría que el factor social y económico si influye mucho.

The information collected from Table 4 and Table 5 provides a detailed glimpse of the major socio-economic factors common in the rural setting in Santander that affect the EFL learning process. The most relevant result for us was to discover how social practices from past generations are still passed to the new ones perpetuating rural stereotypical conceptions (Rivera, 2015). For instance, as Bourdie stated, the beliefs a community posses are inherit in how their population react and see their reality (as cited in Power, 1999), we can evidenced that fact in the rush of many students to stop their studies to become money makers and continue the families's source of income, gold mining, as in the case of the Vetas municipality as well as the chauvinism practices inherit to the youth ; thus, prevalent in those communities where the main objective is to get a wife and drink beer on the weekends, not letting any room for neither EFL language use in their lives nor their educational growth.

5.2.2.1.**Results.** In terms of socio-economic factors affecting students' motivation and performance in relation to English as a foreign language, findings show that the economy of those regions is mainly based on activities such as farming or mining due to their condition as rural residents, creating an enormous social and economic gap which causes a local misconception of education limited to the local requirements to enter to the labor market in the area. The social factor impacts negatively on children's acquisition of the foreign language evidenced in cultural elements, such as the community's identity. For instance, in the case of P4, which is limited to the local mining sources, where students, male in specific, and community in general do not find any other opportunities to succeed.

The lack of connectivity, a common feature in remote areas, limits the content and media consumption that, according to P3, is restricted to national TV channels and local popular music which affects students' motivation towards the EFL learning. Another critical social factor, stated by P4, is patriarchy, which reduces education to a manner of approaching money to gain power over women, as well as forming dysfunctional families that may submerge students in environments of alcoholism, and dynamics of verbal and physical violence, as reported by P2. Economic inequality and scarcity of resources, in accordance with P1 and P5, also represent a factor that decreases motivation among students due to the absence of investments in education by parents, whose primary source of financial income is farming, which puts rural students at a disadvantage in relation to students from urban areas.

5.2.3. *Challenges*

The third interview is listed in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6.

Memo 3

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
December 30th, 2022	CHALLENGES	Major challenges in the rural EFL teaching practices	Inexistence EFL skills instruction in primary grades
			Untrained English teacher
			Difficulties to reach MEN EFL expectations
			Low hour intensity for EFL lessons
			Lack of parental support due to poor EFL knowledge
			Lack of students' motivation
			Lack of government support
			Lack of rural teachers' motivation
			Disconnection between language and rural context
			No connectivity and insufficient didactic materials

Table 7.

Raw Data of Question 3

Question 3	Answers
¿Cuáles son los principales retos que influencian la enseñanza del EFL en	**P1:** Pues uno de los retos es lograr estar a la par con los niños de la ciudad. Que bueno que nuestros estudiantes se pudieran desenvolver en el área del idioma extranjero cuando ellos salgan a la vida y por algún motivo se tengan que desplazar se encontraran en iguales condiciones con los niños de la ciudad pero ese es un reto

Question 3	Answers
un colegio público en zona rural?	que ojalá se pudiera lograr en algún momento. También la dificultad del hecho de que en las zonas rurales como en las que nosotros estamos no hay docente de inglés para primaria, entonces básicamente el proceso de enseñanza como tal comienza en grado sexto. Primaria pues hay docentes pero que manejan todas las asignaturas y no tienen una preparación muy acertada en el área de inglés por lo tanto a veces enseñan errores o no enseñan entonces si los niños no llegan bastante crudos para secundaria y prácticamente ahí es donde toca empezar, entonces luego ya se hace corto para solo en seis años ubicarlos en los estándares que exige el ministerio de educación nacional
	P2: Los principales retos en la enseñanza del inglés a los cuales me debo enfrentar como docente, fuera de los ya señalados en los puntos anteriores podría ser que el 99 % de los padres de familia no pueden ayudar a sus hijos a reforzar lo visto en clase, ya que no tienen conocimiento de las temáticas que los hijos ven en clase, otro aspecto podría ser la intensidad horaria, ya que solo se cuenta con una hora de clase semanalmente para abordar las temáticas en cada uno de los diferentes grados.
	P3: Ya había mencionado que uno de ellos era la motivación por parte de los estudiantes, igual uno trata de hacer lo que pueda con ellos, otro reto es la falta de apoyo por parte de las gobernaciones, y puede ser que exista el dinero pero a veces no se invierte el dinero el los espacios para poder crear una sala de bilingüismo que cuenten con libros actualizados y motiven la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés, porque a veces no solo son los estudiantes quienes se desmotivan pero también los profesores al verse con tanta energía e ideas, pero las ideas y la energía se quedan cortas al momento de tomar acción porque no hay un apoyo de la entidad grande que lo apoya a uno. Con un colegio rural es muy bueno, la estabilidad y

Question 3	Answers
	tranquilidad de que no hay nadie observando pero si uno sigue siendo un profesor que se impulsa a mejorar constantemente a no estancarse y si uno quiere dar lo mejor de si es un poco frustrante ver la falta de apoyo del estado.
	P4: En mi experiencia la mayor diferencia tiene que ver con el contacto con la cultura con el idioma (música, cine, etc) otras diferencias están más relacionadas con la conectividad o el acceso a diferentes materiales. También hay temas que es complicado enseñarles a los niños de acá Como por ejemplo las señales de tránsito ya que aquí no se ven semáforos en cambio en una ciudad sí entonces Muchas veces esos temas se dan por sentado. Las políticas de bilingüismo no contemplan a las instituciones rurales y no contemplan por ejemplo la falta de conectividad y ahora siento que nos están como marginando más. Además de eso no se tiene en cuenta los recursos y sobre todo no se tiene en cuenta la falta de preparación en la primaria.
	P5: Los retos que más afrontamos acá son a veces la falta de interés de algunos chicos, ya que muchos no le ven el sentido a aprender inglés, entonces es aquí donde yo les hablo, les explico que el inglés tiene mucha funcionalidad y que con él pueden llegar muy lejos. Un reto también puede ser la falta de conectividad, pero después de la pandemia muchos comenzaron a poner internet y ya están un poco más conectados por la cuestión del internet.

While analyzing the challenges of EFL practice in rural areas, it is possible to infer how they have significantly affected the EFL teaching and learning process. The low EFL hour intensity, lack of EFL primary grades instruction and, untrained EFL teachers are just some aspects mentioned by the participants that show the disconnection between the rural education reality and the EFL policies created by MEN. Ergo, such situations might lead to demotivation according to

Bastidas and Muñoz, (2011). Based on it, we consider that, since MEN has attempted many times to create suitable proposals for EFL learning in Colombia, all the issues and features presented in the rural areas must be taken into account, in order to fulfill their ambitious bilingual expectations and finally, have a successful bilingualism program, in where we agree with Cardenas (2006), regarding how the Basic Competence Standards: English should not be used as a compulsory proficiency level measure, but rather, as a canon reference for students and teachers EFL communicative skills.

5.2.3.1.**Results.** There are several major challenges that influence EFL teaching in the public schools in rural areas in Santander, in which one of the most significant features hindering the EFL teaching practice is the lack of exposure in students' early academic years due to the low hour intensity for EFL lessons. Moreover, P1 states, there are no trained English teachers in primary grades, causing poor development of learners' EFL skills during their later encounter with the subject. The State's negligence towards rural public schools also causes other challenges, such as the absence of connectivity and insufficient didactic materials to support EFL teaching practice. As a consequence, it becomes hard to reach the ambitious expectations imposed by MEN through the Basic Competence Standards: English. Thus, there is a decrease in teachers' motivation, since they cannot rely on digital or didactic materials to support their activities aimed at improving students' EFL skills. P2 also highlights the lack of parental support due to poor EFL knowledge to reinforce at home the topics seen in class, so students do not receive immediate feedback.

5.2.4. *Teaching method and strategies*

Table 8 and Table 9 show the category and the developed interview.

Table 8.

Memo 4

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
December 28th, 2022	TEACHING METHODS AND STRATEGIES	Methods and resources used to increase motivation in EFL classes	Issues that affects EFL teaching
			Use of platforms and interactive resources
			Slow internet connectivity at school (institution principal support)
			Lack of internet connection at students' home due to geographical location
			Family economic issues to access internet connection
			Low hour intensity in EFL instruction
			Lack of language immersion outside the classroom
			Creation of resources with relatable content (audios)
			Games
			Use of life experiences into EFL lessons
			More listening, less speaking
			There is no didactic material provided by MEN (more focus on high school contents)
			Own resources (books)
			Use of English music

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
			Students do not find a connection with English songs
			Videos with simple situations
			Fill in the blank exercises
			Lack of digital resources
			Use of context from a meaningful and different perspective
			Old-school materials to avoid dependence on digital resources
			Selection of topics of interest
			Modify activities into more interactive ones

Table 9.

Raw Data of Question 4

Estrategias de adaptación/superación	
Question 4	**Answers**
¿Qué estrategias utiliza o siente que son efectivas para afrontar los retos en la enseñanza del EFL y aumentar el interés o la motivación de los estudiantes?	**P1:** Bueno, hoy en día es favorable para nosotros el uso de la internet a través de la cual uno encuentra diversidad de plataformas virtuales tan ricas en nivel interactivo para trabajar con el joven. Hay muchísimo material y prácticamente de ahí es de donde uno se apoya, saca, lleva, pero bueno, el trabajo a veces queda corto porque en el colegio hay un poquito de conectividad y algo se puede hacer pero ya cuando uno deja tareas para la casa, si uno les comparte links para que los niños pueden interactuar, no ellos dicen que en la casa ya no podemos porque en la casa no tenemos internet, vivimos alejados donde no llegan la señal, o también por la economia no podemos

Estrategias de adaptación/superación	
Question 4	**Answers**
	hacer recargar para tener acceso entonces es bueno pero es limitado para nosotros, para el área rural. En el colegio algo se tiene porque el rector gestiona para que haya, pero ya para la casa ya no, y en el colegio el tiempo es escaso porque con cada grupo se tiene sólo 3 horitas a la semana, pero a los niños les gusta, todo lo que sea virtual y sea de juegos, que tenga sonido y música a ellos les llama mucho la atención y les encanta trabajar la parte virtual y hay mucho en inglés, realmente hay bastante material.
	P2: Yo procuro como te decía, mis estudiantes no tienen mucho contacto con el inglés en sus contextos de vida, yo lo que procuro hacer es mezclar, si vamos a hacer un listening hacer lo que llamamos "relying" creo que es así que se llamada que es cuando nosotros mismo creamos nuestros audios con mis compañeros, digamos no van a ser conversaciones acerca de dos extranjeros si no que puede ser acerca de hablando de los Santos "¿qué hiciste las vacaciones anteriores? Ah, fui a San Gil", si algo que sea llamativo para ellos, o hablar acerca de los cantantes que a ellos en la actualidad les guste, porque uno puede buscar un audio en internet, no quiere decir que siempre lo utilice pero es una estrategia que me ha funcionado y a los niños como que se sienten un poco más cercanos a la realidad de ellos. En cuanto a otras estrategias intento implementar mucho los juegos, a veces incluir experiencias de vida de otras personas con el inglés, como cambia la vida para ellos, sería eso, no se me viene a la mente en este momento otras estrategias.
	P3: Bueno para que los estudiantes tengan más contacto con el idioma hablado entonces me enfoco más en ejercicios no tanto de speaking Sí nomás de listening sin embargo material de base para inglés no hay en el colegio cómo los materiales qué establece el estado Porque casi todo está enfocado al bachillerato entonces utilizó un libro que se

Estrategias de adaptación/superación	
Question 4	**Answers**
	llama english for everyone que compré por amazon que tiene pocos ejercicios y son más repetitivos. También uso música en inglés aunque a los niños casi no les gusta y no se conectan con eso o uso videos con situaciones no tan complejas Y antes cuando teníamos internet me gustaba usar ejercicios de completar qué se encontraban en internet, pero ya no tenemos ni internet ni computador o sala de informática. En mi opinión sería utilizar situaciones un poco más específicas a su contexto Porque cuando uno piensa en llevar la práctica del inglés al contexto uno imagina situaciones de El día a día cómo ir a la tienda, ir a la cafetería etc, pero aquí los niños no viven eso aquí solamente se vive una realidad Que es trabajar en las minas y muchas veces tanto el gobierno como aquí en en la región se quieren buscar nuevas oportunidades Entonces se podría utilizar un contexto como el turismo Y de esa manera se desliguen un poco más de la mina Así que se debe contextualizar más al territorio Y en este caso específico Sería bueno relacionarlo con la parte económica del territorio entonces Más allá de ver el inglés en el contexto del día a día es que ellos puedan realmente utilizarlo. En cuanto a materiales, yo creería qué para enfocarlos más a cada realidad a cada institución rural habría que olvidarse un poco de los materiales impresos, o de los materiales que necesiten conectividad o equipos y volver un poco a lo básico Cómo al hablarlo actividades de speaking o más de hacer cosas que no dependen de todo eso que carecen las instituciones como internet, impresión equipos etcétera
	P4: Una de las estrategias para aumentar el interés y la cual me ha funcionado mucho ha sido el hablarle a ellos, como le dije anteriormente, enseñarles que es muy práctico hablar una segunda lengua. También con mi compañera, la otra profe de inglés, ellos nos ven hablando las dos y claro, ellos se motivan a tener algún día una

Estrategias de adaptación/superación	
Question 4	**Answers**
	conversación fluida como las que tengo con la profe, y creo que ahí es donde ellos más se motivan a querer comunicarse en inglés de forma fluída.
	P5: En mi clase funciona motivarlos a hablar de temas que les gusta, temas más de actualidad, también les encanta jugar, porque ellos se distraen muy rápido así que eso les sirve bastante, así que trato de que cada actividad pueda ser modificada a un juego, por ejemplo si vamos a aprender vocabulario en inglés, intento crear algo más interactivo.

5.2.4.1.**Results.** It was found that teachers in rural areas use different methods to help increase student motivation by using available resources and in some cases, obtaining their own. P2, mentions that he prefers to create his recordings in English, talking about relatable topics of the students' region. Similarly, P3 suggests that it is important to use the context of the students from a different perspective, in his case, not focusing on mining, which is the main source of income in this region but focusing on tourism where it would be possible to make real use of English; however, he also mentions that there is no available material from the MEN since it is mainly focused on high school levels. Therefore, he had to obtain a book from Amazon to teach his classes. Similarly, P4 mentions that one strategy she uses is to talk to students about the usefulness of speaking a foreign language; likewise, her students are motivated by seeing their teachers speak English fluently.

The use of games, music, and videos are other strategies that teachers affirm that students enjoy, some of these can be found on the internet. In the case of P1, it is possible because the institution has internet connection; however, several factors hinder the use of these digital resources in some rural areas. P1 also states that there are not enough hours for EFL teaching in

the timetable and there is a slow internet connection at the school. In addition, P2 reaffirms that there is a lack of language immersion outside the classroom by students. Taking this into account, P3 suggests that it is necessary not to rely on these virtual resources and use resources such as speaking or hand's-on activities, perhaps because the lack of connectivity is a common aspect in rural communities as well as the lack of digital resources such as computers or English lab as in the case of this participant.

5.2.5. *Context usefulness*

Table 10 and Table 11 show the category Context Usefulness and the developed interview.

Table 10.

Memo 5

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
December 28th, 2022	CONTEXT USEFULNESS	Disconnection in the academic contents from rural students' reality	Contents need to be adapted to students' real-life context
			EFL use towards students' community identity
			Use of students' daily specific situations
			No real interest from students in learning English speaking countries culture

Table 11.

Raw Data of Question 5

Question 5	Answers
¿Considera que el uso de elementos del contexto rural en los contenidos de la clase	**P1:** Siempre toca adaptar los contenidos al contexto porque en su gran mayoría los libros vienen en contextos de los países de habla inglesa. Bueno, eso sirve porque los niños aprenden de la

Question 5	Answers
es eficaz en el proceso de aprendizaje de EFL?	cultura de allá, pero si es necesario adaptarlos a nuestro campo más exactamente. Por ejemplo, nosotros estudiamos uno de los temas que es el uso de las rutinas diarias, en los países de lengua inglesa los niños normalmente empiezan el dia a las ocho de la mañana, aquí los niños empiezan el día a las tres o cuatro de la mañana, y las tareas que hacen son ordeñar la vaca, ir por la leña, traer el agua, mientras que allá es desayunar leche con kellogs, mientras que acá los niños es caldito de papa entonces es algo totalmente diferente y si hay que adaptarlo. Pero bueno, uno se acopla a eso y lo toma por el lado positivo de que aprendan de la cultura de otros países.
	P2: Si, claro. Totalmente, no es lo mismo llegar uno y hablarles de Adele a hablarles a ellos de Bad Bunny que es lo que les gusta en este momento o no sé, de todo ese tipo de cantantes que hay, al menos jugar con ellos así sea con su biografía o tipos de música, algo que los atrape, que los identifique.
	P3: En mi opinión sería utilizar situaciones un poco más específicas a su contexto Porque cuando uno piensa en llevar la práctica del inglés al contexto uno imagina situaciones de El día a día cómo ir a la tienda, ir a la cafetería etc, pero aquí los niños no viven eso aquí solamente se vive una realidad Que es trabajar en las minas y muchas veces tanto el gobierno como aquí en en la región se quieren buscar nuevas oportunidades Entonces se podría utilizar un contexto como el turismo Y de esa manera se desliguen un poco más de la mina Así que se debe contextualizar más al territorio Y en este caso específico Sería bueno relacionarlo con la parte económica del territorio entonces Más allá de ver el inglés en el contexto del día a día es que ellos puedan realmente utilizarlo.

Question 5	Answers
	P4: Si, es muy importante y eficaz el uso de elementos del contexto de ellos en el sector rural. Por ejemplo, yo a veces los pongo a investigar cosas de otras culturas y ellos solo buscar y copy and paste, no hay como una investigación real, mientras que cuando los mando a investigar o hacer trabajos referente a la región de ellos se ven mucho más motivados y ya tienen que hacer más porque la información de Betulia no toda está en internet, entonces sí, claro, es muy importante el ajustar los contenidos al contexto de ellos.
	P5: Me parece que usar su contexto ayuda mucho, pero a veces es difícil porque todos los materiales están enfocados en otras realidades, o muchas veces no hay materiales, entonces toca trabajar con lo que se puede, mirando qué aspectos del lugar en donde viven se pueden usar para la clase o hacer algún proyecto donde se pueda dar un aporte a la comunidad.

Table 10 and Table 11 can be could confirm that there exists disinterest from part of the rural students towards the English speaking countries' culture, since rural students cannot find any connection in those cultures to portray their own reality, taking into account that the country is excluded from European culture as English does not belong to Colombia society culture. That statement is supported by Buitrago (2017), who affirms that even though students' EFL skills are not high, when topics of interest and related to their reality are addressed, they are willing to participate during the EFL activities.

Furthermore, following the post-primary model to decreased the high school level dropout rate and involving the critical pedagogy perspective, we think it would be assertive a more fitting educational content created from and for rural students, taking into account what academic features are more suitable for each rural community characteristics of their own instead of the mandatory

curriculum imposed by the MEN. Also, we suggest to implement community based activities also known as PEC to reinforce their rural identity through solving-problem projects, where rural students can be aware of the social issues within their community and work together with teachers guidance to find the best solution using close reach resources while practicing and improving their EFL proficiency.

      5.2.5.1.**Results.** According to teachers' perspectives, the use of context in EFL classes can be effective and meaningful for the students' EFL learning process, as mentioned by P4, who also comments that by making use of topics related to students' reality, they are more involved and motivated. Likewise, P2 highlights the relevance of students feeling identified with the topic being addressed. Findings also reveal that there are aspects to consider regarding the proper use of context within the class; for example, P1 mentions that many books are focused on topics from English-speaking countries; therefore, students can have an insight regarding other cultures and lifestyles different from theirs. However, P1, P3 and P4 emphasize that it is imperative to adapt the themes to specific situations so the language can be used in rural students' real-life scenarios. In addition, P4 remarks that when dealing with contents from other cultures, he has noticed that students do not feel interested in researching in depth. As a method to achieve contextualization, P5 points out that he tries to look for familiar aspects of the students' background and use them in his lessons, as well as develop projects that help their community.

5.2.6. Pedagogical model

      Table 12 and Table 13 show the category Pedagogical Model and the developed interview.

Table 12.

Memo 6

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
December 30th, 2022	PEDAGOGICAL MODEL	Classroom distribution in rural schools	Multigrade classrooms- EN
			Untrained EFL teacher
			Monograde classrooms often in principal urban institutions
			Students density in classroom affects EFL process
			Classroom management issues due to mixed-age classrooms
			Multi-subjects teachers
			Subject matter do not work in the primary teaching process in rural areas

Table 13.

Raw Data of Question 6

Question 6	Answers
¿Cuentan con aulas multigrado en la institución? De ser así, ¿cuántas son y cómo están constituidas? ¿Cree que este modelo de multigrado es provechoso para los estudiantes?	**P1:** Tenemos las dos modalidades; en la rurales que son las que se contemplan alejadas de la sede A si son aulas multigrado donde tienen incluso los cinco grados en un solo salón. Como te decía allí es donde están los docentes que no han tenido una preparación de inglés y a ellos les toca como el torero, a mirar cómo pueden defenderse y es muy poquito lo que ellos les pueden llevar a los niños en inglés. En la sede principal si

Question 6	Answers
	tenemos los grados separados y pasa lo mismo, no hay un docente de inglés para asumir la asignatura académica.
	P2: No, aquí están en sus grados separaditos, cada quien en su nivel separado. Tenemos de 19 a 38 estudiantes, y obviamente el número de estudiantes afectan mucho en el aprendizaje del inglés. Me parece muy difícil un escenario así no tanto por el número de estudiantes si no por el hecho de tener estudiantes de 11 años y de quince años, entonces es muy difícil manejar esto.
	P3: Sí claro para contextualizar en rural se trabaja más que todo a la escuela nueva o sea máximo 2 salones Así que las o los docentes pueden el tarado más de un grado Y eso pasa en todas las sedes Rurales de acá por otro lado acá en la urbana si tenemos aula por grado y su docente por aparte pero por ejemplo hay una diferencia Cómo la cantidad de estudiantes que se ven acá y las que se podían ver por ejemplo en bucaramanga. Y bueno actualmente yo soy docente de aula del grado cuarto es decir yo doy todas las clases y bueno cuando muchos de los docentes estaban era más que todo licenciado en básica primaria Entonces el rector empezó como a mirar en qué área nos sentíamos más cómodos Entonces yo por eso escogí Pues el área de inglés y pues de español pero debido a la virtualidad eso no funcionó y pues este año en julio volvimos a presencialidad en el colegio y pues entonces decidimos otra vez dividirnos por aulas porque nos pareció en presencialidad más fácil hacer eso que dividirnos por áreas entonces nuevamente en primaria decimos que enfocarnos más en ser docente de aula
	P4: No, acá no contamos con eso. Tenemos los grados cada uno en su salón.

Question 6	Answers
	P5: En nuestra institución contamos con salones multigrado y cada profesor está encargado de dictar varias materias, no hay un profesor de inglés en específico. Siento que a veces es difícil porque no se puede dar mucho enfoque a cada materia y como a veces hay muchos estudiantes y de varias edades, el ritmo de aprendizaje es distinto.

Regarding the pedagogical model implemented in public rural schools, we notice that most of the answers described the use of Escuela Nueva for classroom distribution. Data showed that, multigrade classrooms function based on mixed-age students and in some cases, overcrowded classrooms that difficult classroom management towards EFL instruction; in addition, Colbert (1999), stated how the implementation of 'guías de aprendizaje' by the guidance of teachers, facilitate students' learning process yet none of the participants clarify their use in their teaching practices.

Moreover, as Colbert (1999: 119) mentioned, in this model the teacher is in charge of teaching several subjects, which also was evident during the interviews, hindering proper subject coverage. Therefore, we agree with Ramos & Aguirre (2016: 212) in their statement about how difficult it is to reach EFL objectives in public rural schools due to multi subject teachers, likewise, we consider of relevance the findings regarding the lack of official EFL trained teachers, added to the late English language exposure students have in primary grades. We find pertinent that the local government examines the characteristics and challenges of each rural region to make a reconstruction of the curriculum in order to reduce the educational gap among the municipalities and successfully implement pedagogical models as Escuela Nueva.

5.2.6.1.**Results**. Regarding the pedagogical model used in the rural area, it was found that multigrade classrooms are the most prevalent. P1, P3, and P5 comment that in their institutions

they use multi-grade classrooms, also known as Escuela Nueva, where they also assert there are multi-subject and multigrade teachers. P3 highlights that although during virtuality there was an attempt to implement subject matter teachers, this did not work in primary grades; as a result, they went back to multi-subject teachers. On the other hand, P4 and P2 point out that in their case, they have monograde classrooms in the rural area, while P1 and P3 allege that only the main headquarter or the urban institution has this type of model. Other aspects found in rural areas, as mentioned by P1, are that teachers are not trained in English; therefore, they do not bring enough English content to their classes. In addition to that, P2 explains that student density and mixed-age classrooms affect the learning process of EFL, while among the difficulties, P5 acknowledges that the subjects cannot be adequately addressed and there is a significant difference in the learning pace of the students.

5.2.7. *Community's role: Positive and negative outcome*

Table 14 and Table 15shows another category and the developed interview.

Table 14.

Memo 7

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
December 27th, 2022	COMMUNITY'S ROLE: POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE OUTCOME	Social support impact in the EFL learning	Parental illiteracy due to low educational level
			Community support for EFL instruction
			Parental encouragement towards/against students EFL learning process
			Lack of students EFL exposure

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
			Community Identity reflects students disposition to learn EFL
			Untrained EFL teachers with limited English knowledge
			Minimal language use within students context

Table 15.

Raw Data of Question 7

Question 7	Answers
¿Cree usted que la comunidad juega un rol activo en el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes?	**P1:** Bueno, entendida la comunidad como los padres de familia de pronto no mucho porque el nivel educativo de ellos pues es bajo, la mayoría de padres de familia escasamente si tienen la primaria o saben leer y escribir, entonces ellos para asesorar tareas no están preparados. Si les dirán a los niños ¿bueno ya hicieron la tarea? pero tanto como mirar y ayudar no, es bien complicado.
	P2: Claro, la actitud de todos, no solamente de los profesores y los estudiantes, también es importante la visión del rector frente a la lengua extranjera, la visión de los papás, si los papás creen que es importante y los impulsan en este proceso obviamente tiene algún efecto ya sea a corto o largo plazo en sus vidas entonces sí es importante el apoyo y la ayuda de la comunidad.
	P3: Es muy difícil que los estudiantes aprecien la importancia y el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma ya que también el encuentro que ellos tienen con el idioma es muy poco. Por ejemplo, aquí los estudiantes no escuchan música en inglés pues ellos están expuestos a otro tipo de música como la música

Question 7	Answers
	popular. Entonces el contacto con el inglés es casi nulo, la identidad de los chicos se reduce únicamente a la minería y el oro. Esta comunidad tiene el machismo aún muy reforzado así que los niños sólo aspiran a tener novia, beber, y plata. Entonces, esto dificulta, no sólo la adquisición de otro idioma como el inglés, sino la educación en general.
	P4: Si, la comunidad tiene un rol importante en el aprendizaje de inglés de los estudiantes. Un ejemplo de esto son los profes no solamente de inglés si no de todas las materias que están entrando a ellos se les exige saber inglés también, entonces he visto que muchos profes recién graduados de la universidad llegan al colegio y tienen un conocimiento del inglés más fresco, claro, ellos no lo hablan perfecto, pero tienen una noción. También los padres de familia, el apoyo que ellos les dan. Hay unos padres que dicen "no, cuando yo estaba en el colegio era malo para el inglés" entonces los niños llegan con eso en la cabeza diciendo que ellos son malos porque los papás también lo fueron, entonces esto sí es crucial para la motivación de ellos aprender.
	P5: El inglés sí es importante y tiene relevancia. Incluso los padres se sienten contentos de que acá haya un docente de inglés, ya que son muy pocas las instituciones rurales que tienen docentes que pertenezcan al área o sean licenciados en inglés. Por ejemplo, acá antes dictaba inglés la profesora de Lengua Castellanas y por más que ella hiciera un buen trabajo, esta no era su área. Desde que llegué, los padres me han dicho que sus hijos se sienten muy entusiasmados por la clase de inglés, que sus gustos musicales han cambiado y que les gusta verlos tratando de hablar en inglés, que los hace sentir orgullosos porque ellos no tuvieron la oportunidad de aprender

Question 7	Answers
	ni los números ya que tuvieron que empezar a trabajar desde muy pequeños.

The data collected from Table 14 and Table 15 help to corroborate that the average years of schooling in the rural area are low as education is not the main focus of the families but earning money through their land which explains the high drop-out rate (Huertas, López, & Fonseca, 2019:24-27). Also, the information lets us know how context could affect students' perceptions towards the English language and in some cases, it can be seen as the learning of it is irrelevant for their life projects; therefore community's support or lack of it, can influence whether the EFL learning process is achieved or not.

5.2.7.1.**Results.** It can be inferred that there is a meaningful impact on how the EFL learning process happens depending on the community perception towards the language. Most of the participants state how having support from parents help students to have better disposition in learning EFL. However, P1 and P4, comment that parental illiteracy could hinder parents' encouragement as they are unable to help their children with homework or corrections.

In addition, P5, says that having an untrained EFL teacher with limited English knowledge has not the same impact in the teaching practice as an English teacher would. Moreover, the community identity can perpetuate certain customs that go from generation to generation such as the music they listen to or their beliefs, and do not leave any pertinent space for the use of EFL in the near future. As P3 informs, students' main focus is to continue with their family business (gold mining), find a wife, and drinking; actions that do not allow any exposure with the English language.

5.2.8. *Interest vs usefulness*

Table 16 and Table 17 show the category Interest VS Usefulness and the developed interview.

Table 16.

Memo 8

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
December 30th, 2022	INTEREST VS USEFULNESS	Students' willingness towards EFL learning	Students doubt EFL learning relevance for their life projects
			Students are reluctant to EFL learning
			English as a tool for future opportunities
			EFL summative outcome incentives students interest
			EFL not relevant for school administration
			Lack of EFL exposure due to community identity/practices
			Some students self-taught EFL at home
			Opportunities to access to higher education

Table 17.

Raw Data of Question 8

Question 8	Answers
¿Los estudiantes muestran interés y disposición en aprender EFL?	**P1:** Pues no mucho. La verdad en este medio uno ve que el inglés para ellos no es significativo, entonces no lo aprenden de esa manera, quizá lo que aprenden hoy ya mañana lo olvidan porque no es significado, porque pensarán el inglés aquí ¿para qué?, de pronto no encuentran en el inglés como la oportunidad

Question 8	Answers
	de salir, de buscar nuevas oportunidades, pese a que se les habla mucho del tema, del valor agregado que tiene manejar un segundo idioma, uno encuentra bastante desmotivación para hacerlo. Si uno ve que les gusta pero como para que ya lo quieran asumir y aprender e interactuar en ese idioma pues es muy poquito, muy poquitos niños lo hacen.
	P2: Bueno, un estudiante siempre va a mostrar interés por aprender pero eso depende de lo que a él más le guste. Uno llega a un salón y encuentra personas con diferentes motivaciones o niveles de motivación en cuanto al inglés entonces ahí es cuando uno entra como profesor a hacer el papel de uno, a jugar a ser el actor, porque uno se convierte prácticamente en un actor, para tratar de llamar la atención de los estudiantes. Si muestran disposición, obviamente muchos lo hacen por respeto, no te voy a decir que no, muchos lo hacen más no porque les guste, pero una persona siempre va a estar dispuesta a aprender algo nuevo, y en el caso del inglés ellos les llama mucho la atención, como yo te decía, yo les cuento a ellos historias de personas que lograron superarse y que uno conoce que venían de trabajar en el campo, y porque tiene uno que, disculpa la expresión, joderse el día en el campo al rayo del sol porque eso es lo que a ellos les gusta, ir a trabajar allá y ganarse cierto pesitos, a de pronto uno ir a trabajar al campo pero ya teniendo una ingeniería o algo que tenga que ver con el campo, si algo diferente y que les dé ingreso mejores. En este caso acá con el turismo, hay mucho movimiento y ellos se encuentran muchas veces con extranjeros y llegan a contarme como "profe, intenté comunicarme de tal manera, pero ya después no fui capaz" ellos muestras la frustración ya por lo

Question 8	Answers
	menos intentan, muestran que ahí se dan cuenta que todo en la vida es de aprendizaje.
	P3: Los estudiantes no le ven la importancia de la asignatura y por la parte administrativa de la situación tampoco, porque le han quitado horas. Entonces lo ven más como relleno pero pues dicen que es importante para conseguir más oportunidades pero a la hora de la práctica a la materia le quitan horas o se pierden convenios, entonces la comunidad en general no le ven la importancia a aprender un segundo idioma. Pero esto también tiene una base porque básicamente lo que muchos estudiantes quieren es graduarse e ir a la mina a sacar oro. Es muy difícil que los estudiantes aprecien la importancia y el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma ya que también el encuentro que ellos tienen con el idioma es muy poco. Por ejemplo, aquí los estudiantes no escuchan música en inglés ya que ellos están expuestos a otro tipo de música, cómo la música popular, así que el contacto con el inglés es casi nulo.
	P4: Si, bastante, diría que todos los estudiantes quieren aprender y tienen disposición. Me he dado cuenta que muchos de ellos demuestran interés en clase con palabras que aprenden ellos en la casa de videojuegos, también hay unos que hacen cursitos, escuchan música o ven películas, y los ve uno como más interesados y participativos.
	P5: Sí, la mayoría de mis estudiantes tienen mucho interés en aprender inglés**.** También tienen la intención, la idea de continuar sus estudios, o desarrollo académico en una institución superior, así que trato de abarcar diferentes temáticas para que ellos tengan una perspectiva más amplia. Ellos tratan de aprender en casa y a veces, llegan a clase a

Question 8	Answers
	decirme las nuevas palabras que han aprendido o las nuevas series que están viendo. Les gusta mucho que les recomienden canciones para escuchar en sus tiempos libres o mientras hacen las tareas.

The information collected in Table 16 and Table 17 gives a better glimpse of how the EFL practice is overlooked by students who do not find any affinity with the language and its usefulness outside the classroom. However, there are students that, thanks to the capitalization of EFL, expose themselves to English media to reinforce their EFL skills in order to get better future opportunities for either accessing higher education or earning money through it.

Likewise, we agree with Rivera's point of view (2015), as it is noticeable that the EFL teaching is not focused on the implementation of new practices to overcome the rural stereotypes, that are perpetuated not only for the urban communities, but also, for the government authorities as the try to focus rural education on technical agro-industrial labor as described in the Act 115 of 1994 and not on expanding students horizons through the instruction of diverse cultural scenarios through EFL. We believe that rural knowledge is relevant for students to acquire but as a choice, and not as mandatory; also, EFL instruction may be a significant exposure for rural students to new cultures immersion.

5.2.8.1.**Results**. Findings reveal that the majority of the students do not show any real interest in learning EFL more than having good grades to pass the subject. Most of the students are reluctant to learn EFL as it is not relevant in their life projects. As it is stated by P3, part of their community identity is in gold mining; therefore, students want to graduate in order to start working in the mines to have economic income. Also, school administration plays an important role, they preach about how important is the learning and teaching of EFL yet, their actions are not

coherent to their discourse, the hour intensity of EFL teaching in schools is lower than average leading to a significant lack of students' exposure with the English language. However, P4 and P5 express how most of their students are keen to learn EFL, even outside of the classroom. In some cases, students are willing to self-teach English at their homes through video games, songs, movies, English courses or series. Furthermore, students' interest in the EFL learning is high as it is often seen as an opportunity to get better jobs and to have access to higher education.

5.2.9. School EFL projects

Table 18 and Table 19 show the last category and the developed interview.

Table 18.

Memo 9

DATE	CATEGORY	CODE	SUBCODES OR SUBCATEGORIES
December 31, 2022	SCHOOL EFL PROJECTS	EFL practices in school to enhance students' exposure	Bilingualism project
			Newspapers to share messages in English
			Bulletin board with important events in English
			SENA alliances to increase EFL instruction
			English day
			English week
			Updated context-based material provided by local government along with teacher training

Table 19.

Raw Data of Question 9

Question 9	Answers
¿Existen proyectos institucionales que tengan énfasis en EFL?	**P1:** Pues nosotros manejamos un proyecto de bilingüismo y lo que tratamos de hacer es que cada actividad que se haga en el colegio tenga su participación en inglés. Por ejemplo, el día del idioma entonces si bien es cierto que se celebra el día del idioma español pues como es el día el idioma que haya una intervención en inglés, llámese una obra de teatro, una participación de una canción o unos juegos. Por ejemplo, el periódico escolar es una publicación que hacemos cada año y allí publicamos una página en ingles donde los niños, bueno son muy poquitos, algo se hace, pero uno quisiera que fuera más donde escriban un cuento un poema o hacer unos juegos. En el periódico mural también celebramos por ejemplo las fechas especiales como es amor y amistad, Halloween, día de la madre, los motivamos a que escriban tarjeticas, a que se envíen mensajes en inglés, para eso yo les creo un tablero virtual donde ellos puedan publicar esas creaciones, es así como en lo poquito que hemos avanzado y también le he metido bastante el hombro en que se aprendan canciones en inglés. Eso es lo que hemos hecho, pero como te digo no encuentra la motivación para que ellos participen, la motivación es escasa.
	P2: No en el momento. Con la gobernación en mi colegio hace un año exactamente estamos trabajando en cómo establecer una conexión con todos los profesores de colegios que tienen como inclinación al turismo, entonces nos han como reclutado a todos para entrenarnos nuevamente y entregarnos un material de

Question 9	Answers
	estudio más actualizado para trabajar con los niños. Ese proyecto de bilingüismo se está haciendo en este momento, ahora el rector inscribió al colegio con el SENA para que los chicos tengan más intensidad del inglés. Ya el rector dijo que si entonces es como algo en Call Centers, entonces está planteando la posibilidad de que el colegio esté vinculado a un curso del SENA en el que ellos puedan tener un entrenamiento intensivo el otro año y pues probablemente consigan un trabajo y pues yo los estoy también como motivando mucho para que miren que hay gente que ganan mucho dinero. No tanto como para meterlos por ese lado si no que ellos vean no solamente el aprendizaje del inglés sino una ganancia económica.
	P3: Existe un proyecto del ministerio, es una aplicación en la que se puede jugar y hacer muchas actividades, ahorita no recuerdo el nombre. Sin embargo, nosotros no manejamos esa. Ya a nivel del colegio está el día del inglés que es en septiembre. Ese día participan muchos estudiantes, sobre todo los que van mal o necesitan nota porque saben que haciendo parte de las actividades uno les da una nota y ahí tienen la oportunidad de pasar. Ese día de verdad es muy bonito y ve uno el compromiso y la motivación de los estudiantes por hacer las cosas bien.
	P4: Lo que nosotros hacemos es la semana del inglés. Allí lo que se hacen son actividades lúdicas, presentaciones de los chicos en donde bailan y cantan. También, se hacen stands para que se hablen de cosas culturales de los países en donde se habla inglés. El año pasado, hubo un stand del Reino Unido y los chicos se disfrazaron como guardias de la realeza, fue muy bonito. Y lo más importante es que se divierten mientras aprenden.

Question 9	Answers
	P5: En nuestra institución educativa, la intensidad horaria es muy bajita. Nosotros tenemos dos horas a la semana y así se me haría muy difícil alcanzar ciertos objetivos con mis estudiantes así que, lo que hacemos es conmemorar ciertas celebraciones representativas del idioma inglés como acción de gracias, San Valentín, Halloween, etc., y el English Day. Nosotros tenemos el English Day que ayuda a que los estudiantes participen pues esto les ayuda a subir la nota de inglés. Es muy enriquecedor ver como se esmeran por ser parte de esto.

The information collected regarding the EFL practices to enhance students exposure in rural public schools showed that teachers try hard with the resources they have to teach EFL in a meaningful and fun way to students. Rural EFL teachers manage to create diverse EFL projects for the whole school focused on increasing EFL students' production and exposure to English speaking countries' cultures.

However, it is imperative to make changes in the schools plan de area to incentivize rural students' interest towards the EFL learning practice with contemporaneous topics, along with projects where students can also impulse their creativity as a way to highlight their cultural identity, so it can be possible to avoid the oppression as Freire (1970) mentioned, by using education to emancipate minority groups. Based on that, from our point of view, it is important for educators to recognize the usefulness of a critical thinking perspective during the teaching practice, so students can visualize EFL not as a compulsory subject aim to be passed but by the true value it can have for their academic and personal growth.

5.2.9.1.**Results**. The data collected shows that there are multiple activities that teachers implement to engage students in the EFL learning. P1 and P4 mention bilingualism projects such

as English week, where students can show their abilities in artistic showcases and bulletin boards to share messages in English to the school community.

Also, English days to engage the cultural aspects of EFL through stands with major features of English-speaking countries. Besides, P2 mentions that there is an interest to increase the English instruction by the institution through Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA) alliances as well as updated context-based material provided by local government along with teacher training to enhance tourism.However, despite these attempts to enrich the language learning process, the students are still reluctant and discouraged against EFL learning. In addition, P3 and P5, state the major motive in students' participation towards EFL related activities is to obtain extra points and higher grades to avoid subject failure. These challenges and coping strategies of teachers of English as a foreign language in rural areas of Santander, Colombia, are detailed in Figure 8. (See Annex F).

Figure 8.

Codification of qualitative findings.
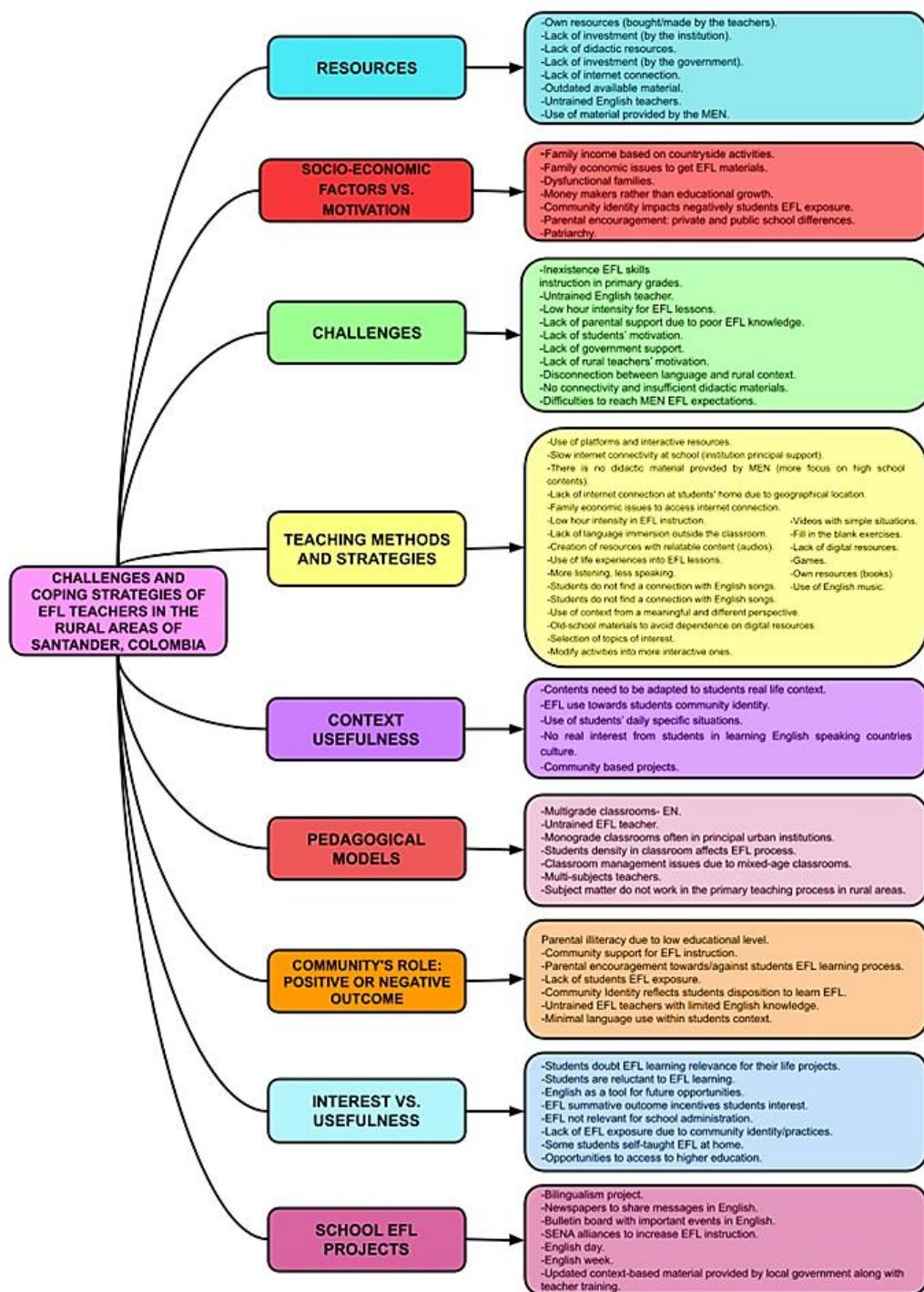
5.3.Quantitative findings from survey

5.3.1. Resources

Regarding the materials used in EFL classes, participants' preference is led by digital resources (66,7%, 10 answers) such as the British council platform, *lyrics training*, Breaking New English website etc., followed by the design of their own materials (60%, 9 answers). It was also shown that teachers implement material found in MEN's bank supply within their website like *English, please!* (60%, 9 answers) as well as *Way to go* (40%, 6 answers). Last but not least, with 6,7% YouTube videos (1 answer), interactive worksheets from the internet (1 answer), school's interactive app and the book *In Sync* (1 answer) are chosen as a support to their EFL classes as seen in Figure 9.

Figure 9.

Resources frequently used in EFL classes.

M1. Seleccione el material que ha utilizado o utiliza actualmente en las clases de inglés
15 respuestas
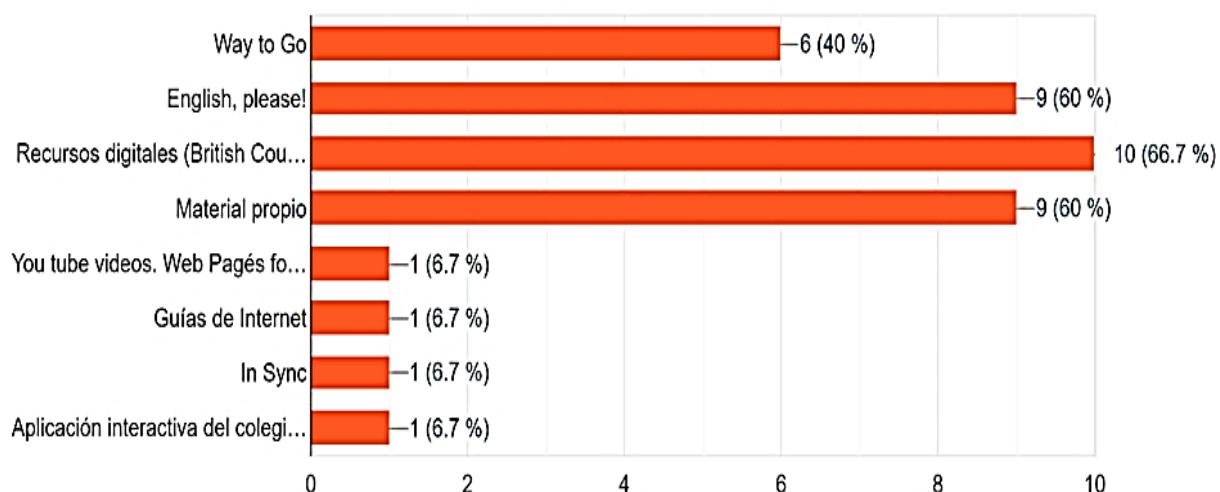
Moreover, participants were asked about extra didactic resources they often resort to during the EFL lessons to enhance students' English skills. Among the results, as seen in Figure 10, it is evident that all participants are keen to use worksheets (100%, 15 answers) to teach EFL. However, the implementation of videos (80%, 12 answers), songs (80%, 12 answers) and dictionaries (73,3, 11 answers) are also chosen as a popular option to assist the EFL lessons while games (53,3%, 8 answers), text books (46,7%, 7 answers), websites (33,3%, 5 answers) and reading books (26,7%, 4 answers) received the lowest percentage of choice.

Figure 10.

Didactic resources EFL rural teachers use.

M2. Seleccione los tipos de recursos que utiliza con mayor frecuencia en su salón de clase
15 respuestas

Recurso	Respuestas
Juegos	8 (53.3 %)
Videos	12 (80 %)
Guías	15 (100 %)
Libros de texto	7 (46.7 %)
Diccionarios	11 (73.3 %)
Canciones	12 (80 %)
Libros	4 (26.7 %)
Websites	5 (33.3 %)
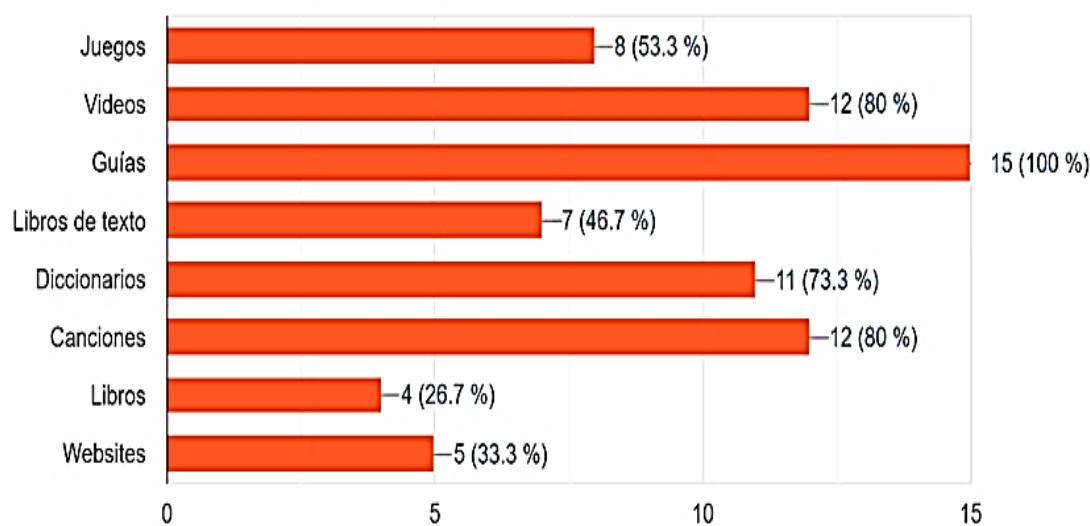
5.3.2. Logistics of EFL teaching settings

It was a matter of interest to know the logistic aspects of the rural public institutions, where the participants work, to support the EFL classes. As can be seen in Figure 11, for this instance it was obtained that the most common option selected is computers (80%, 12 answers) along with

internet connection (60 %, 9 answers). Additionally, some institutions count with technological devices such as video beam projectors and speakers, each with 7 answers (46,7%); yet the less common gadgets are TV (40%, 6 answers) and digital board (6,7%, 1 answer). On the other hand, two participants claimed that the rural public schools do not have any of the devices mentioned above.

Figure 11.

Digital resources for EFL instruction.

C3. ¿Con cuales dispositivos y recursos tecnológicos cuenta su salón de clase en presencialidad? Puede seleccionar una o más opciones.

15 respuestas
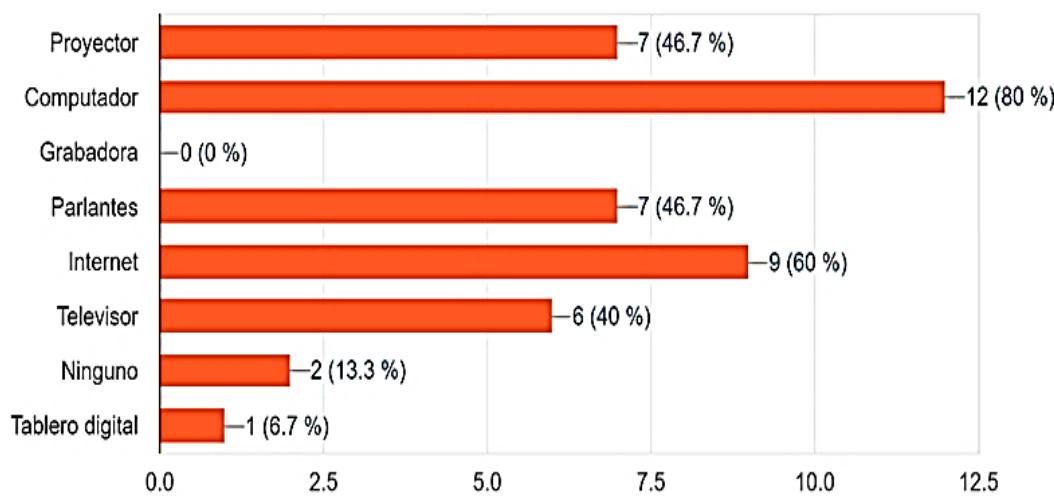
5.3.3. *Main challenges in public rural institution regarding EFL*

In this section, it is important to highlight major aspects present in the rural schools in Santander that hinder the EFL process concerning students, teachers and the very same institution. It can be inferred by the participants' answers in the Figure 12 that the main factors are the lack of English teaching training (86,7%). According to one answer (6,7%), it is especially the case of

primary grades, and the deficient investment for didactic materials and technological devices in

rural school areas (66,7%).

Figure 12.

Factors that hinder EFL practice.

C7. ¿Cuáles de los siguientes factores considera que dificultan la enseñanza del Inglés en las zonas rurales? Puede seleccionar una o más opciones.

15 respuestas
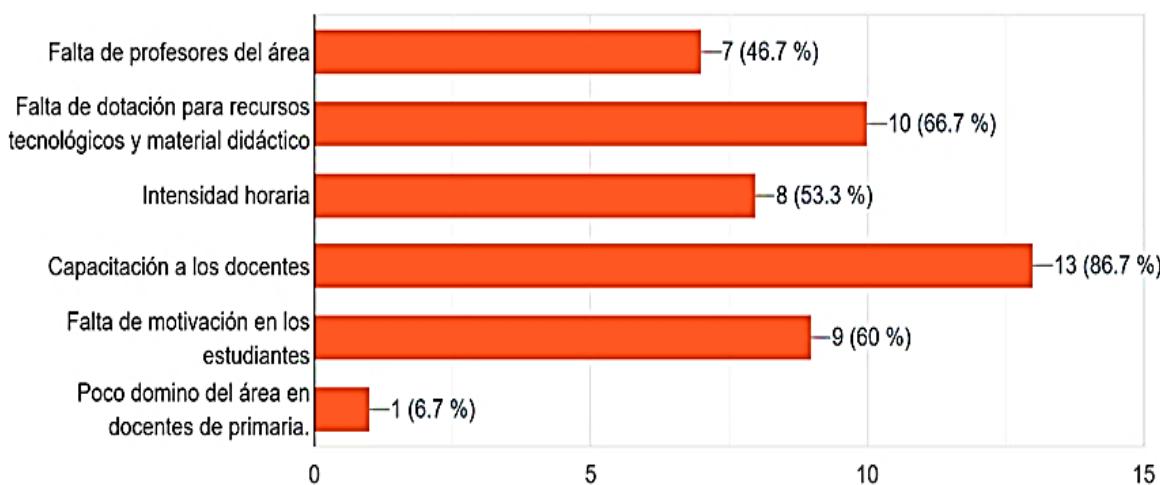
Furthermore, other results in the survey remarked the low interest of students towards

English learning (60%), the poor focus on the English subject due to the absence of EFL

designated teachers (46,7). Not to mention how significantly low the number of hours for

English instruction is (53,3) where it can be as frequent as 4 hours (13,3%, 2 answers) to only 1

hour (6,7%, 1 answer) per week. This is reflected in Figure 13.

Figure 13.

EFL hour intensity.

C4. ¿Cuántas horas para la enseñanza del Inglés reciben los estudiantes semanalmente?
15 respuestas

1 hora	—1 (6.7 %)
2 horas	—4 (26.7 %)
3 horas	8 (53.3 %)
4 horas	—2 (13.3 %)
5 horas	—0 (0 %)
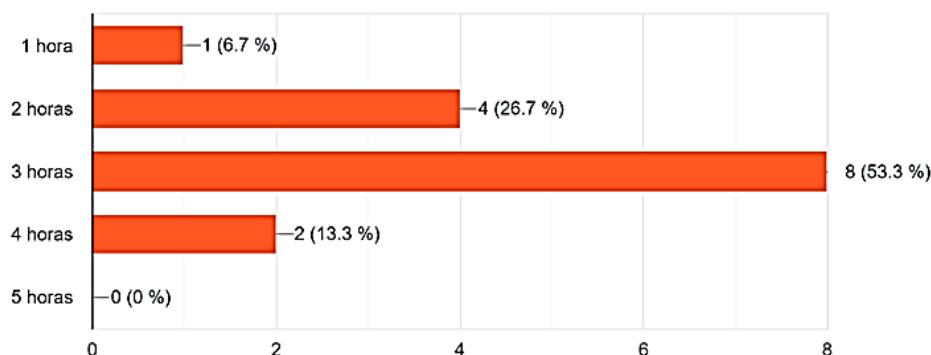
Note. own elaboration.

As noticed in Figure 14 the density of students that can be more than 15 students per classroom (53,3%) together with the number of EFL teachers, usually only one (60%, 9 answers) for the whole institution instruction.

Figure 14.

Number of EFL teachers in rural schools.

C5. ¿Con cuántos docentes del área de Inglés cuenta la institución?
15 respuestas

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Docente Multigrado- todas las áreas

26.7%

60%
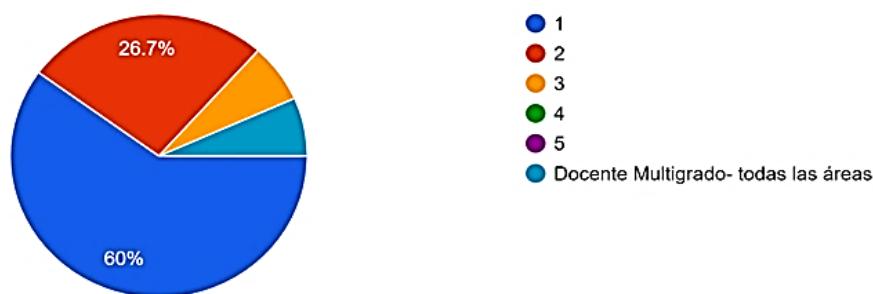
Note. own elaboration

5.3.4. *Social factors influence on EFL practices*

This part of the survey aims to mention the social factors that jeopardize the EFL

practice, since they have a strong influence not only on the rural students EFL proficiency but

also on the teaching process.

Figure 15 illustrate several aspects the participants point out that are present in their rural

setting such as lack of investment to improve deteriorated satellite infrastructures that interfere

with stable Wi-Fi, mobile data and phone signal (73,3%). Also, government negligence mirrored

on the deteriorated routes to access rural public institutions (60%), the precarity budget towards

community limited resources (66,7%) and forced displacement (20%) are of relevance to have a

better understanding of rural areas' reality and the significant impact they have on how EFL

education is performed.

Figure 15.

Major social factors in rural communities.
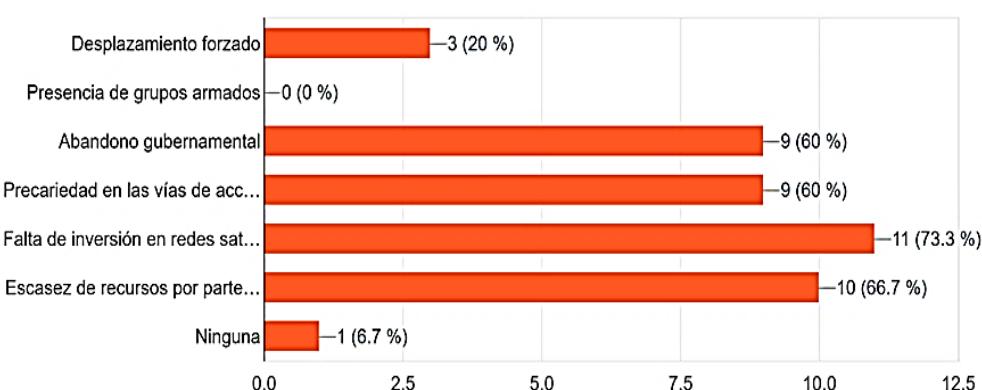
5.3.5. Students' context usage for EFL teaching

Taking advantage of rural students' context is a useful strategy to improve EFL skills; however, according to the results collected in the survey, expressed in the Figure 16 participants' answers indicate that not all the teachers (20%) implement student context as a teaching tool for their class contents and activities. On the other hand, 8 out of 15 participants (53,3%) affirm to make a connection between the context and their lesson plans, thus it is possible to create the proper conditions for an adequate language use by involving rural areas features in the EFL topics to make them relatable for students and their community reality practices.

Figure 16.

Use of students' context for EFL teaching.

C9. ¿Se hace uso del entorno en el que los estudiantes viven para relacionar su aprendizaje del inglés con su contexto?
15 respuestas

Sí
No
A veces

20%   26.7%

53.3%
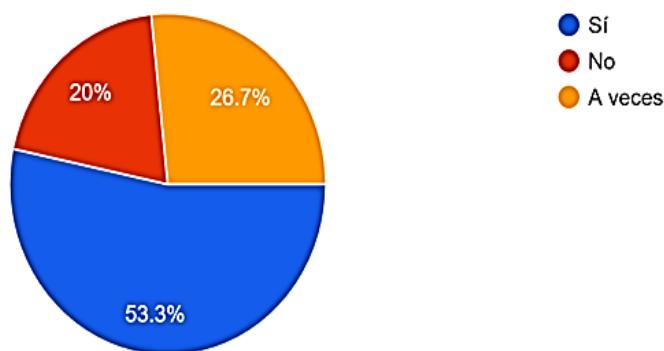
Note. own elaboration

5.3.6. Analysis and discussion

Findings reflect the claims of Yong & Kenneth (n.d) and Carrero & González (2017) regarding the origin of the poor conditions of public rural institutions: they are mainly caused by lack of government investment. Participants state that some of the main causes of poor rural

education are outdated material, untrained teachers and the absence of digital resources. These conditions not only create an unmotivating environment for students but also lead the teacher to a place of improvisation and isolation. For instance, most institutions provide their teachers and students only with limited resources such as the *Chicago dictionary* and outdated/decontextualized English instruction books. These are students' only source of input. However, data showed that it is the case that very few schools count with proper digital and material infrastructure for the EFL instruction. Some of these assets are English labs, digital boards, and interactive Apps. Consequently, the lack of proper English learning impairs students to access both the professional landscape at a local level and the global community at a worldwide level.

Given these conditions, we consider structural changes that align with the Nueva Escuela approach must be carried out. In this approach, the lack of technological and human resources may be alleviated by a worksheet-based approach where students can learn in an interactive, multigrade and unrushed way (Colbert, 1999).

In general, poor infrastructural conditions stem out of a poor socio-economical context. Findings also let us take a glimpse of the major socio-economic factors common in the rural setting in Santander that affect the EFL learning process. We discovered that in the economic and social activity of most rural schools, English is underestimated because most employment does not require academic training. For instance, in the case of the Vetas municipality, students are motivated by a patriarchal idea to drop out of school to work in the gold mining business to enact the provider role of the family.

Learning English is pointless to access such jobs. This may explain the high dropout rate (Huertas, López, & Fonseca, 2019). This creates a never-ending cycle where students give up school in order to work and create families where the same motivations are transmitted. Power

(1999) explains this through the idea of *habitus*, which is a system of heritable structures that may be intrinsically connected to social conditions and related to cultural capital such as education. In this sense, since education and English learning are not conceived as valuable by their heritable structures, which are defined by the economic activity of their sector, students will tend to attend EFL classes demotivated and eventually drop out. In order to improve this landscape, we support Buitrago (2017), who affirms that even though students' EFL skills are not high, when topics of interest and related to their reality are addressed, students are willing to participate during the EFL activities. In this vein, topics related to students' economic activity should be addressed in EFL classes.

Poor socio-economic conditions result in a defective curriculum, which is expected to produce standardized results. Aspects such as the number of hours per week dedicated to EFL, lack of English instruction at the primary level and untrained EFL teachers are some of the curricular aspects mentioned by the participants that impede a proper educational and emancipatory learning environment to happen. Despite these precarious conditions, students from public rural schools are also expected to accomplish ambitious bilingual expectations set by the MEN. In this view, education and English learning become a result-based process that does not consider students' contextual and individual differences. In regards to this perspective, Cárdenas (2006) proposes that English proficiency levels should be referential and not impositional due to the impact that circumstantial factors may have on students' learning process.

Although schools in rural areas face many challenges for EFL instruction, teachers use several coping strategies to overcome them. They tend to create their own EFL material to solve the generalized lack of resources in those areas. As well, this material tends to be aligned with students' reality as proposed by Pérez & Farah (2002), who stress the relevance of including

diverse activities such as fishing, mining and tourism within the curriculum of rural public schools. For instance, it was identified in the findings how teachers encourage students to change their perspective about the idea of gold mining as the only source of economic income in Vetas, Santander. Such discussions, which are held in English, address the environmental impact of mining and propose tourism as a viable alternative while providing students with meaningful contextually-based input. We encourage teachers from rural public schools to conduct activities that resemble the previous example. For example, though community-based activities, also known as PEC, students can reinforce their rural identity through problem-solving projects, that help students to be aware of the social issues within their community and work together with teachers' guidance to find the best solution using close reach resources while practicing and improving their EFL proficiency.

Concerning the pedagogical model implemented in public rural schools, findings show that most of the answers described the unsuccessful use of Escuela Nueva for classroom distribution. Colbert (1999) argues that in this model, the teacher is in charge of teaching several subjects to students of diverse age and academic backgrounds, which hinders proper subject coverage. According to data, multigrade classroom's function based on mixed-age students and in some cases, overcrowded classrooms may lead to difficult classroom management towards EFL instruction.

In this regard, we promote Colbert's (1999) implementation of *guías de aprendizaje* because along with the guidance of teachers, they have been proven to facilitate students' learning process. None of the participants claimed to use them in their teaching practices. We recommend the local government to examine the characteristics and challenges of each rural region and

reconstruct their curriculum, considering the theoretical basis of pedagogical models such as Escuela Nueva, in order to reduce the educational gap among these municipalities and urban cities.

In spite of this poor, demotivating and anachronic landscape, there are some students that, thanks to the capitalization of EFL, expose themselves to English media to reinforce their EFL skills in order to get better future opportunities for either accessing higher education or profiting. According to Rivera (2015), this knowledge acquisition is not motivated by a change of paradigm to overcome the perpetuated rural stereotypes and expand students' horizons through the instruction of diverse cultural scenarios through EFL. For this reason, despite the academic and cultural potential of public rural schools, the government still tries to dictate rural education exclusively as plain agro-industrial labor, which is described in the Act 115 of 1994.

We believe that rural knowledge is relevant for students, but it should be optional. Also, EFL in rural students can create culturally and linguistically competent global citizens that can share and get to know other cultures. As said before, the cultural potential of learning English can link students to today's globalized and multicultural world. However, we suggest some curricular changes must be made. Although rural EFL teachers manage to create diverse EFL projects focused on increasing EFL students' production and exposure to English, few of them focus on the cultural potential of learning English.

For this reason, it is imperative to make changes in the schools' *plan de area* to incentivize rural students' interest towards the EFL learning practice with contemporaneous topics. As well, we encourage teachers to implement projects where students can also foster their creativity while expressing their cultural identity. In this way, according to Freire (1970), students could face a non-oppressive educational setting by performing education as an emancipative act. Based on that, from our point of view, it is important for educators to recognize the usefulness of a critical

thinking approach during the teaching practice, so students can visualize EFL not as a compulsory subject aimed to be passed but as an enriching experience for their academic and personal growth.

6. Conclusions

In this mixed study we tried to examine the challenges and strategies rural teachers deal with regarding the EFL practice in different rural schools of the provinces of Santander, Colombia. Based on the data collected from teachers' interviews and from surveys, we can infer that rural EFL instruction is jeopardized by several factors, creating an unsuccessful EFL process outcome. Aspects such as lack of proper didactic resources, untrained EFL teachers, decontextualized and outdated pedagogical material, socio-economic factors within the community, government negligence on infrastructure and logistic support through technological devices, among others, are some of the challenges mentioned by the participants affecting rural EFL education. These prevent public rural schools from fulfilling the ambitious MEN bilingualism goals (See Annex G).

Notwithstanding the above, we also found the several coping strategies rural EFL teachers implement to overcome the aforementioned challenges, depending on the features of rural communities in Santander. For instance, it was evident how some teachers buy and create their own resources to deal with the absence of suitable didactic and pedagogical EFL material to meet students' needs, especially in primary grades. Likewise, diverse EFL projects were mentioned by the participants such as English week in which students are in touch with English speaking countries' culture and English day where students show off their EFL skills through artistic shows and creations. In addition, it is of relevance to highlight how significant the use of students' context is on the creation of relatable content, as they can apply EFL knowledge in pro of their community (See Annex H).

Finally, in order to test the initial hypothesis that socio-economic challenges affect the EFL teaching practices in the rural areas of Santander, Colombia, we contacted rural teachers to obtain first-hand information regarding their EFL teaching practice. Therefore, our hypothesis is validated based on the data collected where it was evident the meaningful influence in those variables on how rural teachers impart their EFL classes.

It is hard to make a generalization in the sense that all rural communities experience the same conditions because our sample was not representative, since we only cover a small part of the rural schools in Santander. Therefore, further research needs to be done in this field to not only provide teachers with the right EFL training and resources for a successful lesson implementation, but also guarantee the contextualized inclusion of the rural communities in the adjustments of bilingualism programs in which all the Colombian population have the same opportunity to learn English as a foreign language.

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Annexes

Annex A. Interviews with teachers.

Escuela de Idiomas

Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés

Trabajo de Grado, 2022

Challenges and coping strategies of EFL teachers in the rural areas of Santander, Colombia

Objetivos: Esta investigación tiene como objetivo identificar y registrar los desafíos y estrategias de adaptación de los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera en las zonas rurales de Santander, Colombia.

Fecha de la entrevista: _____

Entrevistador(es): _____

Recursos

1). ¿De cuáles materiales didácticos disponen aquí para clases de EFL? ¿Qué necesitan más urgentemente?

Retos y aspectos socioeconómicos

1) ¿Cómo afectan los factores socio-económicos la motivación y el desempeño de los estudiantes en relación al EFL?

2) ¿Cuáles son los principales retos que influencian la enseñanza del EFL en un colegio público en zona rural?

Estrategias de adaptación/superación

1. ¿Qué estrategias utiliza o siente que son efectivas para afrontar los retos en la enseñanza del EFL y aumentar el interés o la motivación de los estudiantes?

2. ¿Considera que el uso de elementos del contexto rural en los contenidos de la clase es eficaz en el proceso de aprendizaje de EFL?

Modelo Educativo

3. ¿Cuentan con aulas multigrado en la institución? De ser así, ¿cuántas son y cómo están constituidas? ¿Cree que este modelo de multigrado es provechoso para los estudiantes?

4. ¿Cree usted que la comunidad juega un rol activo en el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes? ¿Cómo?

Motivación

5. **¿**Los estudiantes muestran interés y disposición en aprender EFL? ¿Por qué?

Enseñanza del Inglés como lengua extranjera

6. ¿Existen proyectos institucionales que tengan énfasis en EFL?

Annex B. Teachers' survey

- **Teachers' survey:**

  https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfqzwChAmTVshbihuPaBq0jgl7H3zP5m24Y16Hr6UD0NlK-SQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Annex C. Interviews coding process.

CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES OF EFL TEACHERS IN THE RURAL AREAS OF SANTANDER, COLOMBIA

PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

COMMUNITY'S ROLE: POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE OUTCOME

INTEREST VS USEFULNESS

SCHOOL EFL PROJECTS

CODES

Classroom distribution in rural schools

Social support impact in the EFL learning

Students' willingness towards EFL learning

EFL practices in school to enhance students exposure

SUBCODES

-Multigrade classrooms- EN.
-Untrained EFL teacher.
-Monograde classrooms often in principal urban institutions.
-Students density in classroom affects EFL process.
-Classroom management issues due to mixed-age classrooms.
-Multi-subjects teachers.
-Subject matter do not work in the primary teaching process in rural areas.

-Parental illiteracy due to low educational level.
-Community support for EFL instruction.
-Parental encouragement towards/against students EFL learning process.
-Lack of students EFL exposure.
-Community Identity reflects students disposition to learn EFL.
-Untrained EFL teachers with limited English knowledge.
-Minimal language use within students context.

-Students doubt EFL learning relevance for their life projects.
-Students are reluctant to EFL learning.
-English as a tool for future opportunities.
-EFL summative outcome incentives students interest.
-EFL not relevant for school administration.
-Lack of EFL exposure due to community identity/practices.
-Some students self-taught EFL at home.
-Opportunities to access to higher education.

-Bilingualism project.
-Newspapers to share messages in English.
-Bulletin board with important events in English.
-SENA alliances to increase EFL instruction.
-English day.
-English week.
-Updated context-based material provided by local government along with teacher training-

● **Access link:**

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1PRjCtWHsDMmFJfykRIObDCrAfFsps_AEpax
8aDXxYZI/edit?usp=share_link

Annex D. Survey data matrix

- **Survey response to teachers:**

  https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10KZ9bABI9CgSA2dZIS5mj0ZVG9Wxipqm0_

  2rfR0Swo4/edit?usp=sharing

Annex E. Qualitative findings figure

- **Access Link Qualitative Findings:**

  https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1H1s4MamTuFr0mRMoNGTkdxOhvQOA0vB6S

  MU4EkLkCOE/edit?fbclid=IwAR2SNpbDU56bVbQC3DWsoXdUTsEWlwfyvym3OM

  4CsL1z6bY31p4g9JE_jxk#slide=id.g1ce14835336_1_0

Annex F. Typology of challenges
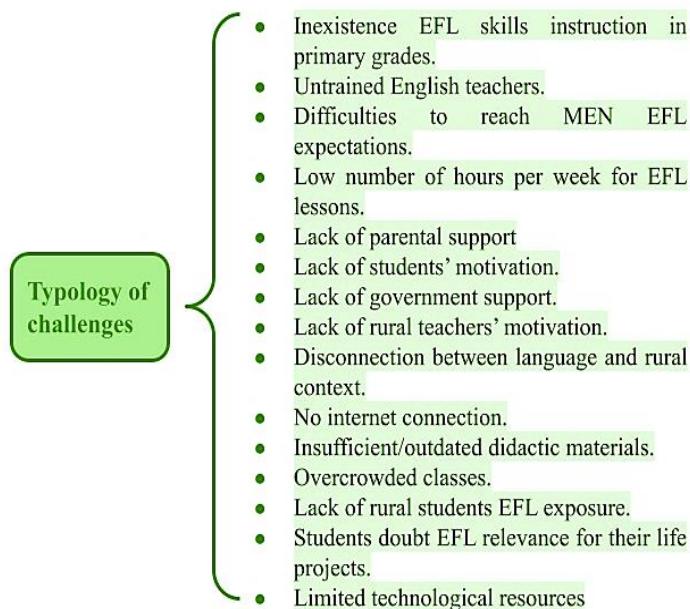
- **Access Link (typology of challenges):**

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1d_b2dv_Ucw63iH4X7eY20cnIzFa4uKKi-

yuAQOB4UcI/edit?usp=sharing

Annex G. Typology of teachers' coping strategies

Typology of teachers' coping strategies

- Use of platforms and interactive resources.
- Creation of resources with relatable content (audios).
- Games.
- Use of life experiences into EFL lessons.
- More listening, less speaking.
- Own resources (books, bought material/made by the teachers).
- Use of English music.
- Videos with simple situations.
- Fill in the blank exercises.
- Use of context from a meaningful and different perspective.
- Old-school materials to avoid dependence on digital resources.
- Selection of topics of interest.
- Modification of activities into more interactive ones.
- EFL use towards students community identity.
- Use of students' daily specific situations.
- Community based projects.
- Bilingualism projects.
- Newspapers for students to share messages in English.
- Bulletin board with important events in English.
- SENA alliances to increase EFL instruction.
- English day.
- English week.
- Updated context-based material provided by local government along with teacher training

- **Access Link (typology of teachers' coping strategies):**

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1umr8jYzJup0A3Trf7jv9zWcsmEDG4o7BkklHXluw1So/edit?usp=sharing

Annex H. Consent

Escuela de Idiomas

Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés

Trabajo de Grado. 2022

Challenges and coping strategies of EFL teachers in the rural areas of Santander, Colombia

Consentimiento Informado

Información

Has sido invitado(a) a participar en la investigación **Challenges and coping strategies of EFL teachers in the rural areas of Santander, Colombia.** Esta investigación tiene como objetivo

identificar y registrar los desafíos y estrategias de adaptación de los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera en las zonas rurales de Santander, Colombia. Tú has sido seleccionado(a) porque eres docente de Inglés en colegio rural.

Los investigadores responsables de este estudio son los estudiantes Cristian Felipe Forero Moncada, Ingrid Vanessa Echeverri Rodriguez y Carol Gisela Rodriguez Silva del programa de pregrado Licenciatura en lenguas extranjeras con énfasis en Inglés de la Facultad de ciencias humanas de la Universidad Industrial de Santander.

Para decidir participar en esta investigación, es importante que consideres la siguiente información. Siéntete libre de preguntar cualquier aspecto que no te quede claro:

Participación: Tu participación consistirá en una entrevista virtual en Español de nueve (9) preguntas con una duración aproximada de media (30) minutos. En la entrevista se abordarán temas acerca de la enseñanza del Inglés como lengua extranjera y las estrategias de adaptación/superación teniendo en cuenta el contexto rural de la institución. Para facilitar el análisis, esta entrevista será grabada. En cualquier caso, tú podrás interrumpir la grabación en cualquier momento, y retomarla cuando quieras.

Beneficios: Tú no recibirás ningún beneficio económico directo por participar en este estudio. Sin embargo, tu participación permitirá generar información para identificar y registrar los principales desafíos y estrategias de adaptación para la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en el sector rural de Santander.

Voluntariedad: Declaras que conoces esta investigación y has autorizado tu participación. Además, tendrás la libertad de contestar las preguntas que desees, como también de detener tu participación en cualquier momento. Esto no implicará ningún perjuicio para ti.

Confidencialidad: Todas tus opiniones serán confidenciales y mantenidas en reserva. En las presentaciones y publicaciones de esta investigación, tu nombre no aparecerá asociado a ninguna opinión particular. Se utilizarán seudónimos para referirse a los participantes; la información será utilizada con fines educativos y los datos serán manipulados únicamente por los investigadores

por el tiempo que dure la investigación.

Conocimiento de los resultados: Tienes derecho a conocer los resultados de esta investigación. Para ello, puedes contactarnos a nuestros correos electrónicos y/o Whatsapp.

Datos de contacto: Si requieres mayor información, o deseas comunicarte por cualquier motivo relacionado con esta investigación, puedes contactar los investigadores responsable de este estudio:

Ingrid Vanessa Echeverri Rodriguez
Teléfonos: 3008525012
Correo Electrónico: vanecheverri27@gmail.com

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Teléfonos: 3213691914
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Cristian Felipe Forero Moncada
Teléfono: 3107659791
Correo Electrónico: foreromoncadacristianfelipe@gmail.com

También puedes comunicarte con la profesora, directora de nuestro proyecto:
Heidy Alegría Gutierrez León
Universidad Industrial de Santander
Teléfonos: 634 4000 Ext. 1374
Correo Electrónico: hagutier@uis.edu.co

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Yo, _____, acepto participar voluntariamente en el estudio **Challenges and Coping Strategies of EFL Teachers in Santander, Colombia**

Declaro que he leído (o se me ha leído) y he comprendido las condiciones de mi participación en este estudio. He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas y han sido respondidas. No tengo dudas al respecto.

_____   _____

Firma Participante   Firma Investigador responsable

Lugar y fecha: _____-

Este documento se firma en dos ejemplares, quedando una copia en poder de cada parte.

- **Access link. Consents signed for the participants:**

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zEaXshOR-W7a0OH5xbr5GWO9GLw76cmi?usp=sharing