

The teaching voice in rural key: speech accommodation and literacy as mediations of educational quality*

La voz docente en la educación rural: acomodación del habla y alfabetización como mediaciones de calidad educativa



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Abstract

Rural education in Colombia is characterized by significant unequal gaps compared to urban education. Equitable achievements that transcend contextual limitations are required. A determining element is the teacher's discourse in the teaching of reading and writing. The objective was to examine how rural teachers interpret and adapt the quality standards of the Ministry of National Education through communicative strategies adjusted to the sociolinguistic environment. Methodologically, documentary and field research was employed under the ethnographic method, with seven (07) key informants. The findings assert that the teacher's capacity to adapt language and methodologies to cultural reality is vital for meaningful learning. It is concluded that rural teachers' discourse, by integrating and accommodating speech, constitutes the fundamental strategy for quality standards to be internalized and applied during pedagogical practices, transforming them into pertinent and enriching processes.

Keywords: rural education, literacy, mediation, sociolinguistics, educational quality.

Resumen

La educación rural en Colombia está matizada por brechas desiguales significativas respecto a la urbana. Se exigen logros equitativos que trasciendan limitaciones contextuales. Un elemento determinante es el discurso docente en la enseñanza de la lectura y la escritura. El objetivo fue examinar cómo los docentes rurales interpretan y adaptan los referentes de calidad del Ministerio de Educación Nacional mediante estrategias comunicativas ajustadas al entorno sociolingüístico. Metodológicamente, se empleó una investigación documental y de campo bajo el método etnográfico, con siete (07) informantes clave. Los hallazgos permiten aseverar que, la capacidad del docente para adaptar el lenguaje y las metodologías a la realidad cultural, es vital para el aprendizaje significativo. Se concluye que el discurso del docente rural, al integrar y acomodar el habla, constituye la estrategia fundamental para que los referentes de calidad sean internalizados y aplicados, durante las prácticas pedagógicas y las transforma en pertinentes y enriquecedoras.

Palabras clave: educación rural, alfabetización, mediación, sociolingüística, calidad educativa.

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Introduction

The present written discourse is aimed at examining how rural teachers interpret, adapt, and implement the quality benchmarks of the Ministerio de Educación de Colombia (MEN, 2006) in their literacy processes, through communicative strategies adjusted to the sociolinguistic context, from a critical perspective supported by speech accommodation theory and the sociocultural approach. Specifically, it concerns the reading and writing that teachers working in rural areas utilize. As has been noted, the literature has described the existence of a gap in educational quality in relation to the teaching practice that takes place in urban settings. Therefore, it is essential to understand the difficulties faced by teachers who carry out their pedagogical activity in rural areas. Likewise, one must understand how they interpret and adapt the educational quality benchmarks proposed by the MEN (2006) in their pedagogical practice, and within them, specifically those referring to the basic standards of language competencies.

It is necessary to take into consideration that the basic training teachers have received through universities often has an impact on how they approach pedagogical practice concerning the teaching of reading and writing. It must be said that there are notable differences when educators have a pedagogical background as primary education teachers, compared to those who are incorporated into teaching but have non-teaching professions. Hence, notable differences appear depending on the prior and specific training received by those who practice teaching.

Thus, it is necessary to be clear about the knowledge that rural teachers possess regarding the quality benchmarks for teaching reading and writing. Regarding their work, the rural teacher manifests the traces of their professional training, as well as their own conceptions about the teaching process. However, contradictions are evident between these theoretical knowledge bases and the personal beliefs that guide their teaching. This situation is aggravated because some rural teachers are assigned to multigrade institutions without knowing the requirements of the quality benchmarks, since universities do not include these topics in their training programs.

Under this prism, then, the intention has been to examine how the MEN (2006) quality benchmarks are integrated both in the discourse and in the pedagogical practice of teachers working in rural areas. In that context, the rural teacher needs to rethink, reconstruct, and adapt a didactic approach for teaching reading and writing in a context marked by developing their pedagogical practice in multigrade schools. From the point of view of educational needs, Núñez (2010) proposes a change that includes an educational policy. This implies reflecting on how to strengthen rural education with programs that incorporate the culture, knowledge, and interests of the learners. Likewise, the need to empower pedagogical practice by promoting communication open to the student's needs is highlighted.

In this perspective, it must be understood that education in rural areas currently represents a challenge, but it is also an opportunity to achieve social equity, based on the teaching of reading and writing as fundamental competencies for cognitive development and communicability. It is necessary to understand that, in rural contexts, with the diversity of ages and learning levels in multigrade classrooms, it is a priority to incorporate flexible pedagogical strategies grounded in the very principles required by educational quality.

Now, regarding the discursive dissertation derived from the research conducted, it is important to indicate that the teaching of reading and writing in rural areas is based on the principles of educational justice and the right to comprehensive education, as proposed by Freire (1977) and Vygotsky (1978),

who highlight the importance of the sociocultural context in literacy processes. The teaching of reading and writing in these settings requires methodologies that not only transmit knowledge but also enhance critical thinking and the autonomous construction of learning, considering the interconnection between language, identity, and community.

From a methodological point of view, the writing act is justified because it is elaborated based on research that has been developed under the qualitative approach. In congruence with this, ethnography was established as a means of approaching the research object. Now, given that the teacher's discourse regarding their own discursive particularities was taken as part of the inquiry, narrativization was used as part of the analytical process (Biglia and Boent-Martí, 2009, as cited in [Silva Batatina, 2017](#)). For the purposes of information, the informants were seven (07) teachers, distributed into two groups. The first group consisted of four (04) teachers who received studies offered by the [MEN \(2013\)](#) through the "Scholarships for Teaching Excellence" program. Meanwhile, the second group consisted of three (03) teachers with differentiated training. They were selected intentionally, for which specific criteria were established.

This discourse has delved into quality benchmarks, rural education, and teacher discourse. Quality benchmarks, because they establish the guiding epistemological and pedagogical axes linked to rural education. This is important for addressing how it meshes with the social and economic structure, since it is necessary to analyze the relevant mechanisms linked to the needs of teachers working in rural areas. Regarding teacher discourse, reference is made to the communicational process that the teacher includes as part of the interaction with their students. Thus, discourse refers to how the verbal, as well as proxemics and non-verbal language, are oriented to mediate the teaching and learning processes.

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The Quality Benchmarks of the National Ministry of Education (MEN)

In the first years of schooling, the [MEN \(1994\)](#) proposes epistemological and pedagogical orientations for the rural sector. In this context, the teacher must become familiar with and master the texts included in the curriculum to comply with the academic benchmarks that seek progress in student learning, with the purpose of improving student learning.

In this sense, it is essential to know the specific educational policies that concern the characteristics of the rural sector. Indeed, [Ley 115 \(1994\)](#) in Article 64 promotes the fostering of rural education. To such effects: "The National Government and territorial entities shall promote a formal, non-formal, and informal rural and peasant education service, subject to the respective development plans." Thus, it is necessary to recognize the importance of providing attention to dispersed communities, which is a frequent characteristic in the rural sector. This must be done through education. At the same time,



mechanisms are fostered for rural education that allow access to education with special treatment (Mexican Legislation, 2022). However, although the state promotes the training of rural educators, a debt persists in terms of offering a global education equipped with specific technological tools for each population.

In this context, to advance the attention to rural education, in *Los lineamientos curriculares de Lengua Castellana*, the MEN (1998) presents the quality benchmarks, which are linked to the spirit and purpose contained in *Ley 115 de Educacion* (1994). These guidelines offer curricular and pedagogical orientation, based on the approaches of various theorists who guide the educator's work. The document is structured in five chapters, which are succinctly specified below:

In the first chapter, reflection is made on the importance of constant interaction with texts so that the subject appropriates information. In this mediation process, the teacher finds strategies that facilitate discourse comprehension.

In the second chapter, the organization of the curriculum is developed, as it proposes guided teaching through projects. In the third chapter, it delves into the concept of language, aided by specific theories. This structure proposes the development of communicative competencies in conceptualization (reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

Chapter 4: *Los lineamientos curriculares de Lengua Castellana*, focuses on the teaching of reading and writing, approaching the construction of alphabetic code processes. According to the MEN (1998), the development of meaningful systems is proposed, which favor thinking about how the child understands and writes about their environment with their own graphics. From their written production, the child, with their own production, approaches conventional graphics, identifying them in all texts. Over time, this graphics become part of their knowledge and they internalize it. The teacher knows how graphics develop, creating plans, methodologies, and strategies supported by the proposals of Ferreiro, Teberosky, Rincón, and Villegas (as cited in MEN, 1998). Meanwhile, in axis five, considerations are made regarding the development of thought. This approach is based on Vygotsky's proposal to enhance learning through active experiences.

The teaching of reading and writing is contemplated in the *Lineamientos curriculares de Lengua Castellana* of the MEN (1998). In principle, it is expected and hoped that teachers know these guidelines when planning and adapting strategies in congruence with the established postulates for guiding reading and writing. However, in practice, it is observed that although many educators master the curricular guidelines and the theoretical foundation related to these areas, they still face difficulties in articulating this knowledge with their practice. Consequently, the development of reading and writing competencies is reduced to superficial compliance with content, without truly evaluating student progress. This approach prevents fulfilling the teleology established in the curriculum, especially regarding the development of these competencies in the first grades of primary education.

On the other hand, in the *Estándares básicos de competencia de Lenguaje*, the MEN (2006) proposes the development of communicative competencies. That is, actions that allow the student to communicate and interact effectively in their social environment within society. In this sense, teachers guide students to become aware of their context, thus fostering literate and literacy-promoting school environments. In this way, the teacher not only imparts knowledge but also offers the student tools to face their own learning. And here, the speech accommodation theory of Giles et al. (1973: 189) is es-

tablished as a foundation, who have expressed:

Language accommodation then has been seen to be more than just wholly an all-or-none process at least in this experimental situation. Some EC¹ Ss² in the sample were prepared to alternately mix the two languages, thereby shifting the emphasis from one code towards another (a phenomenon akin to the modifications apparent in response matching).

What has been expressed brings together the fundamental idea that human communication is dynamic and active. Therefore, when the speaker performs the accommodative act of their speech, it is not only about choosing a linguistic criterion, but rather establishes a bond and a kind of attunement that leads the speaker to provide an appropriate response, according to their experience with the environment.

On the other hand, the sociocultural approach of [Bourdieu and Passeron \(2008\)](#) is also assumed, aimed at strengthening communication within the classroom, but going beyond the simple relational act of interaction. Therefore, [Bourdieu and Passeron \(2008: 63\)](#) state that:

Reducing the pedagogical communication relationship to a pure and simple communication relationship prevents understanding the social conditions of its properly symbolic and properly pedagogical effectiveness, which consist precisely in hiding the fact that it is not a simple communication relationship.

Likewise, it is appropriate to consider that educational policy, according to Reyes (in [MEN, 1998: 48](#)), proposes a literacy approach through guidelines that propose "a literacy focused on four competencies (reading, writing, orality, and listening)." (translation by the journal). However, transferring this theory to practice in rural contexts implies adapting to multiple challenges. For example, in many rural schools, there is insufficient access to printed materials or digital connectivity, which limits the development of competencies under equal conditions. Despite this, teachers use creative strategies to mediate the content. Thus, the literacy process is guided by the interests and realities of the subject, to develop competencies that go beyond a single meaning.

Undoubtedly, training in literary competencies allows not only the enjoyment and appreciation of culture but also fosters text comprehension. Likewise, it promotes ethical communication, linked to the social environment and open to dialogue, which can be consolidated through classroom projects. Now, linguistic competencies, according to the standards, reinforce teaching, concretized in reading and writing. This is achieved through the organization of thoughts to present them in words that will be written and read.

Another aspect is the sequence and coherence in classroom planning subject to the required demands of changing a curriculum that leads to improved learning. To this end, the question arises: what realistic actions does the teacher need when implementing the teaching of reading and writing by including the standards? In answering the question, [Báez and D'ottavio \(2019: 9\)](#) affirm that the teacher requires "professional training for the educator that allows the learner to make mistakes." While it is true that the construction of contextualized exercises that express reality enables competencies (as set out in the standards), even so, the teacher needs to analyze, understand, and execute competencies correlated with texts that reflect the student's reality.

¹ EC: Controlled Trial or Experimental Group.

² subjects or participants.

A key aspect is the sequence and coherence in classroom planning, aligned with curricular changes that seek to improve learning. This raises the question: what concrete actions should the teacher take to implement the teaching of reading and writing, integrating the standards? According to [Báez and D'ottavio \(2019\)](#), to achieve this, the teacher must receive professional training that allows the learner to learn from mistakes. In this way, the construction of contextualized exercises that reflect the student's reality facilitates the development of competencies. However, the teacher must adequately analyze, understand, and apply these competencies so that the texts used are relevant to the students.

In conclusion, it is necessary to delve deeper into the educational reality that takes place and develops in rural areas and into the specific preparation of teachers who work in these contexts. It is essential that educators who support students in this environment have specialized training in pedagogical theories. In congruence with this, [Ferreiro \(1944: 86\)](#) observes that:

Learning theory of rural pedagogy or theory of rural sociology is easy and fits perfectly within the possibilities of any student. But, specifying that theory in the practice of living is very different. The 'ruralization' of the teacher is a problem of adaptation to the environment; it is a matter of social formation, not intellectual. (translation by the journal).

From the above, it can be said that the true challenge of rural pedagogy is not based exclusively on the intellectual learning of theories about rurality—such as those of sociology or rural pedagogy—but on the teacher's ability to embody those theories in their daily pedagogical act. Internalizing them will contribute to making learning more accessible to the learner; however, translating them into ways of life, sensitivity, and relationship with the rural environment requires a much deeper transformation. The expression "ruralization" of the teacher, for its part, becomes a process of adaptation to the environment that transcends the conceptual and relies on the experiential, on ethical roots, on the affective and cultural part that is typical of the rural environment. It is not only about knowing about the countryside but about inhabiting and living it with meaning; one must understand its rhythms, its resistances, and its forms of symbolic production, as well as the "modus vivendi" of its students and their parents. In that sense, the training of the rural teacher is above all a process of social formation, not merely intellectual, in which the pedagogical is interwoven with the human.

Rural education

Venturing into the study of rural education in these times—as it has been for years—is a vast, necessary, and important task. Several authors have been exploring the notion that education developed in rural settings is as valuable as education developed in urban settings. Thus, as Barba (2011, as cited in [Santamaría-Cárdaba & Sampedro Gallego, 2020: 153](#)) points out: "the rural school is a different reality and a focal point for educational innovation proposals that respond to its own needs." (translation by the journal). And through this unique response to needs, rural education also has an impact on educational equity, which is why teachers face structural challenges in incorporating pedagogical strategies that are adapted to the needs and interests of students and the community in these rural contexts.

Correspondingly, it must be said that rural education faces multiple challenges, as institutional infrastructure is most often not adapted to the required pedagogical demands to accommodate learners and the teacher. Furthermore, teachers who carry out educational work must have a different sensitivity and a willingness to transform processes, since, very often, the teacher training they have received

does not prepare them to share knowledge and generate meaningful learning for students in rural settings. According to [Santamaría-Cárdaba & Sampedro Gallego \(2020: 148\)](#): "the rural school suffers the same economic and symbolic marginalization as the rural environment, but it has great potential as a space for pedagogical innovation and as a driving institution for rural communities." (translation by the journal). This approach highlights the need for educational policies that recognize the specificity of these environments and promote adapted strategies.

For their part, [Mendoza-Ponce \(2024: 151\)](#) points out that "insurmountable gaps still exist between urban education and rural education, given the misguided educational policies both in Peru and in other countries." (translation by the journal). This analysis reveals the urgency of developing proposals that respond to the needs of rural students and foster the revaluation of their cultures and customs, with the purpose of promoting the greatest degree of equity for students in rural settings.

In congruence with this, the contribution of [Carrero Arango & González Rodríguez \(2016: 81\)](#) is valued, who state:

In rural areas, the educational service has been influenced by the socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural conditions of rural populations. In general terms, a rural school can be described as a poor, run-down establishment, with little equipment and poorly functional furniture—conditions that make them seen as uninteresting, and in the same way, the State and policies forget the rural environment. (translation by the journal).

From this perspective, it must be noted that spaces in these classrooms are small, which makes teaching groups of different ages and learning levels difficult. Likewise, the lack of adequate technological resources represents a significant barrier to implementing quality educational policies in these contexts. Then, from a psychoeducational consideration, [Silva Zapata & Rodríguez Bedoya \(2022: 6\)](#) highlight the importance of situated cognition in rural education, stating:

This is how rural education, currently on the Latin American scene, develops under a complex reality, since many of the models through which the teaching-learning process is carried out do not assertively integrate the promotion of necessary elements in the dimensions of participation in educational practices along with individual and social construction in the development context of all rural communities.

This approach suggests that rural education must integrate methodologies that respect cultural identity and community dynamics. In the area of didactic resources, the educator in the rural context faces the challenge of working with several courses with different ages in one classroom. Given this reality, the teacher needs to delimit flexible methodologies that encourage teamwork among peers, with environments that invite students to reflect on their own actions in the development of tasks.

In this sense, it is appropriate to cite [Terigi \(2013: 1\)](#), who points out:

...rural schools offer the opportunity to study the dynamics of learning that occur when content overflows the graded sequence and when children (...) who are at different points in their schooling interact around the same content. (translation by the journal).

This leads to the conclusion that in rural teaching contexts, learning is enhanced through peer collaboration, where the higher grade can teach the lower grade, thus enriching the educational experience. This is linked to the attribute established by [Contreras-Colmenares \(2004: 451-452\)](#), which he

called: coevalness.

[This attribute] (...) has to do with the existence of mediators within the classroom who are contemporaries and have the same needs and interests: that is, they are students, in the process of learning, but who have advanced further than others. Hence, their peers feel more confident approaching them rather than the adults around them. (translation by the journal).

From the above, it can be said that coevalness in the classroom introduces a relational and affective dimension to the learning process, based on generational closeness and mutual recognition among peers. Coevalness, as an educational principle, implies that interaction between students who share formative periods generates a more accessible, dynamic, and collaborative learning space. Given that these are other students, who are classmates, who have advanced further in the process but maintain cognitive proximity with the others, a horizontal mediation is established, in contrast to the traditional vertical relationship between teachers and students.

From a socio-constructivist perspective, this is linked to learning that occurs in a social environment, where knowledge is constructed through interaction with others, especially with those who are in a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). With this vision, coevalness means that more advanced students do not impose knowledge, but rather facilitate access to it from a position of accessible peers, generating trust and reducing the cognitive gap.

This facilitation of learning by peers will be more powerful in terms of its implementation in multigrade schools, a very particular model of rural schools. This model is common in rural areas and communities with low population density, where student distribution does not allow for traditional grade-level organization. In principle, it should be noted that multigrade schools are considered educational institutions in which the same teacher teaches students of different levels in the same classroom.

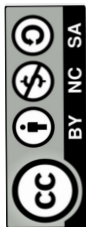
In this regard, Terigi (2013: 1) states: "The multigrade or plurigrade (technically called 'multiple section' in Argentina) is a school section that groups students who are attending different grades of their primary schooling simultaneously with the same teacher." (translation by the journal). Depending on the level, these multigrade schools can serve preschool, basic education, and even secondary education students. Another definitional perspective is provided by González Lira et al. (2021: 352), who state that: "multigrade schools are those where teachers or educational figures serve students from different grades in the same classroom." (translation by the journal).

Based on various investigations, it should be noted that:

...interest in the vindication of multigrade schooling as an educational modality that presents important pedagogical advantages over graded schools, under the premise that this form of school organization can be used in any educational situation and not only due to administrative impositions, since learning communities are configured in its dynamics." (González Lira et al., 2021: 352, translation by the journal).

As expressed, this is a particular characteristic of rural education; however, although they often have limited resources, such as didactic materials or, in some cases, primers that present outdated and decontextualized information, they nonetheless have some prerogatives or advantages from a pedagogical point of view.

With that criterion, it is also important to note that in the last thirteen (13) years in Colombia, several



educational projects focused on improving rural education have been implemented. One of these efforts is the *Proyecto de Educación Rural (PER)*, which began implementation in 2009 (MEN, 2009), through which the governing education body has sought to expand access to quality education from preschool to upper secondary education. Among its strategies is the inclusion of resources such as the "game kit" to strengthen reading and writing processes in a playful manner. And according to the MEN (2009: 1):

The program's objective is to increase quality access to education in the rural sector from preschool to upper secondary, promote the retention of boys, girls, and young people in the educational system, and improve the relevance of education for rural communities and their school populations in order to raise the quality of life of the rural population. (translation by the journal).

Similarly, another implemented strategy has been the *Programa Todos a Aprender (PTA)*, in operation since 2012, which aims to improve teaching quality and learning levels in primary education through actions supporting primary school teachers. This program operates as a large-scale training tactic and also as support for teachers working in Colombian educational institutions, both for those working in rural and urban settings (MEN, 2022).

Now, despite these advances, it is still necessary for these policies to recognize the particularities of working in multigrade classrooms. It is urgent to include training spaces; government programs need to include specific training for multigrade teachers working in rural areas. And that training must include singular and specific orientations on how to promote the fundamental processes of reading and writing.

In that sense, it is necessary to rethink an educational policy that dialogues with the reality of rural education. This implies transforming teacher training, proposing methodologies adapted to remote contexts, with a pedagogical discourse that respects the way of life and the knowledge inherent to these communities for teaching reading and writing. Furthermore, it implies implementing didactic interventions considering the challenges these contexts have, with follow-ups that help advance knowledge processes.

Expectations and reality of teacher training in the rural sector

To speak of teacher training, it is necessary, in this respect, that the educator not only knows the knowledge to be taught but also reflects on how to bring that knowledge into interaction with the learner, so that learning is optimal in the rural context. Likewise, it is important to know that teaching in the Colombian rural sector takes place in multigrade settings. Thus, the teacher knows the context and the effects that teaching has. Furthermore, the educator must consider how the student reads their reality, taking the rural environment as a reference. The provisions of [Ley 115 \(1994\)](#) must be taken into account, since Article 1 states: "Education is a process of lifelong, personal, cultural, and social formation that is based on an integral conception of the human person, their dignity, their rights, and their duties." This precision must also be assumed during the training process of those who will work as teachers. But, likewise, it must be contemplated that permanent, continuous, or professional development training must be an action proper to and consistent with the State. All this with the purpose of supporting the teacher's activity in both the teaching and learning processes.

Therefore, it is necessary to investigate three related aspects of teacher training in dispersed localities.

First, it is essential to analyze how the educational policy of the Ministry of Education (Colombia) is implemented. Second, it is necessary to know how universities train teachers to teach in rural communities. Finally, one must investigate what happens in the teaching practice of the multigrade educator. The answers to these questions must be the subject of constant research and permanent interest for researchers, as they are essential for those dedicated to the study of education, especially in the rural sphere, and in fundamental processes such as the teaching of reading and writing in the first grades of schooling.

Rural education is of great importance to the development of society. Therefore, a more reflective citizenry is needed that connects knowledge to contribute to economic development. However, in this context, a large educational gap is observed, since the training of the multigrade teacher does little to foster an analytical subject who proposes solutions to situations in society.

According to the report on the educational level of rural teachers presented by the Bank of the Republic in Colombia, many educators are professionals (diploma holders, pedagogical career, and postgraduate degrees). However, despite having academic training, the question arises: how do universities train educators, given that the gap in rural education persists? To address this problem, universities need to rethink their programs and create a more critical, analytical profile focused on teaching reading and writing in rural contexts.

The governing body of education needs to provide teacher training in the development of competencies to teach in the rural sector. Likewise, faced with the decrease in certified teachers, professionals from other disciplines have been incorporated into educational work. Among them are engineers, lawyers, economists, whose basic training is far from pedagogical and, therefore, they find it difficult to work with multiple grades in the rural sector. This situation creates difficulties when working with multiple grades, since the lack of specific training in education limits the new teachers' ability to adapt to the particularities of the rural sector.

It must then be specified that teacher training in Colombia is at a crossroads; in a certain way, it is caught between a tension that emerges through a modernizing discourse and structures that resist change. The profile of the reflective, inclusive, and technologically competent teacher clashes head-on with a reality of theoreticist training. There are precarious working conditions and a disconnection from the diverse contexts of the country.

Thus, overcoming this gap, this crack—one might say this existing hollow—is no small task and, therefore, demands more than mere curricular adjustments. Rather, it demands a comprehensive State policy that commits to the dignification of the teaching profession through better salaries and working conditions. Such a state policy must foresee a budget for a determined investment that results in educational quality and the relevance of initial and continuing training programs. Likewise, it must advocate for an evaluation system characterized by a genuinely formative vision and not punitive or sanctioning. Only to the extent that the desired state or "ought to be" is aligned with the real possibilities contained in the "what is," only to that extent can the immense transformative potential residing in the teachers of Colombia be unleashed. And thus it will turn them into the true architects and cornerstone of a society that aims to be more just, equitable, and at peace.

The figure of the teacher is a fundamental pillar in the construction of any national project. In Colombia, a country characterized by deep social inequalities and a historical longing for peace, the role of the teacher acquires a much more important and crucial dimension. In this context, public policies

and academic discourse have shaped a profile of the education professional that tends to be very ideal but is far from the actual performance and training they receive. This situation is marked by concern. This is so because the literature review in various reports reveals a significant distance between this normative construct and the permanent, daily practice of the teacher, derived from the training received.

Upon reviewing the literature, it has been found that in current regulations, linked to academic criteria, there is a multifaceted and highly demanding teacher profile for Colombian teachers, centered on three essential elements. They are:

- a) **The teacher as an intellectual and reflective professional:** Far from being an executor or applier of curricular programs, the ideal to be assumed must be to train an autonomous professional who researches their own practice (Schön, 1983). By conducting this inquiry, the teacher can transcend from pedagogical practice to pedagogical praxis and to metapractice (Contreras-Colmenares, 2021), which becomes a progression from pedagogical practice. Thus, the teacher is expected to critically analyze their pedagogical work and thereby generate situated knowledge and learning from the classroom and actively participate in learning communities to transform their educational environment.
- b) **Agent of inclusion, peace, and social transformation:** In line with the challenges of the post-conflict era and the country's inherent diversity, the teacher is expected to be a cultural mediator and a promoter of equity. Thus, teacher training must provide them with tools to manage the heterogeneity of thought and interests that occur in the classroom; likewise, the inclusion of students with special educational needs is mandatory, and they must develop socio-emotional competencies that foster coexistence and the construction of a culture of peace, thereby transcending what happens in the school space, impacting the community. Regarding the culture of peace, Sánchez Cardona (2016: 64) states that:

Speaking of a culture for peace has its degree of difficulty, since it is first necessary to define in which reference framework the concept of culture is situated and from there, proceed to develop what is understood by peace and consequently, contextualize the theory of the culture of peace in a specific country. (translation by the journal).

This complexity must be assessed in order to situate it in the specific context experienced in Colombia, to be able to understand, first, peace from the situations of conflict, thereby arriving at an understanding of the culture of peace.

- c) **The teacher must be an expert in 21st-century competencies and a technological mediator:** The discourse of supremacy, superiority, preeminence, and predominant hegemony demands a teacher capable of educating citizens for a globalized and digital world. This implies not only their own mastery of critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration but also the ability to integrate Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). In this way, a teacher will be trained who can develop their pedagogical act relevantly. Thus, its unique application as an instrument will be overcome, turning ICTs into true mediational didactic resources that contribute to the construction of meaningful learning.

In congruence with this, teacher training in the Colombian rural sector faces structural challenges that affect educational quality and the preparation of teachers to respond to the needs of their commu-

nities. Expectations often focus on creating programs adapted to rurality, with approaches that integrate local knowledge, contextualized pedagogical strategies, and the strengthening of teachers' professional identity. However, the reality shows that most training programs are designed for urban contexts. Training for teachers who will work in rural areas is left aside and blurred. Added to this is that professionals from various professions who enter teaching will have greater difficulties in facing the teaching of rural education communities.

The discourse of rural teachers in the teaching of reading and writing

We must start from a singular definition of discourse. In that sense, we assume the definitional criterion of Van Dijk (1997: 22) provided as follows: "the term 'discourse' usually refers to a form of language use, public speeches or more generally to spoken language or ways of speaking" (translation by the journal).

In rural settings, the teaching role goes beyond the simple transmission of knowledge and becomes a deeply humanizing and transformative communicative act. The teacher's discourse, in this rural context, should not be neutral. The teacher, therefore, must actively participate in the construction of meanings, the shaping of imaginaries, and the dignification of rural communities. Thus, from this perspective, teacher discourse in rural contexts must integrate theories and pedagogies that recognize its contextual, dialogical, affective, and transformative dimension. In this sense, the role of the teacher in these rural spaces must be rethought.

It has always been considered that, within the classroom, the teacher is generally the one who moderates or directs the execution of actions and guides the strategies to be carried out. Therefore, they are given a highly active role. Thus, they are considered a guide for the processes that take place in the classroom. In that sense, the type of communication the teacher establishes in the classroom defines their teaching role. According to Cabrera Cuevas (2003: 17): "The teacher has the power to define a discourse regarding their communicative relationship. [Therefore] their predominant type of communication is linked to a role of content conductor or learning guide."(translation by the journal).

In correspondence with this criterion, Vygotsky (1985, as cited in Patiño Garzón, 2007: 58):

...assigns a special meaning to the relationships existing between the participants of a process regarding development and learning, due to their impact on the diagnosis of intellectual capacities and the elaboration of a teaching theory that opens a new perspective for action. (translation by the journal)

This implies that the interaction context among members of a learning community, influenced by the role played by the teacher, can, in some way, support or restrict reflexivity and the collaborative construction of learning among all actors in the classroom. Undoubtedly, the teacher's discourse during the mediational process has a great impact on this.

Now, the teacher's discourse is much more than the simple transmission of content. Rather, it is a communicative act devised with intentions, affections, and meanings that constructs a space for human encounter. Van Dijk (1999), for example, considers that discourse, in general, is also an act of power and the construction of reality. Consequently, this implies that the teacher, with their words, not only provides information; on the contrary, in many cases, they shape imaginaries and configure power relations. Thus, "discourse is conceived as 'the complex structures and strategies of text and conver-

sation as they are actually carried out (produced, interpreted, used) in their social contexts" (Van Dijk, 1999, p. 251) (translation by the journal).

Thus, discourse, understood beyond its linguistic dimension, constitutes a situated social practice that shapes and reflects the power structures and cultural relationships that pervade all communicative interaction. According to Van Dijk (1999) himself, discourse should not be conceived as a transmissive form of content or mere transmission of neutral information. Discourse, then, is valued as a form of social action that organizes and legitimizes meanings, reproduces ideologies, and constructs shared realities. This critical perspective is based on the premise that discourses possess a macrostructure—the global organization of themes and main ideas—and also a microstructure—lexical selection, rhetorical resources, and nuances of meaning; these structures (macro and micro) interact in the configuration of a communicative act with transformative potential.

In this sense, the teacher's discourse, particularly in rural settings, must have clarity and awareness that it not only communicates academic content but also mediates between cultures and has the capacity to make visible or silence local knowledge. Thus, the teacher's discourse can become an act characterized by power, to the extent that it reinforces vertical relationships and ignores the cultural richness of the community. On the other hand, it can be taken as a human, humanizing, and dignifying act, insofar as it recognizes and respects the word, the speech, the voice of the rural student. From that perspective, their identity will be valued, and their culture and discursive acts proper to the rural environment will be strengthened.

Rural teacher discourse, therefore, must, in principle, recognize and value local knowledge. Since teachers "...contribute not only their academic knowledge, but also their local and regional knowledge and wisdom" (Dietz, 2010: 65, translation by the journal). Furthermore, discourse must promote and develop dialogicity, which can be achieved to the extent that it promotes the active participation of its students. And finally, the discourse must be marked by affectivity and a deep sense of transformation in its lexicon, without losing its contextual imprint and idiosyncrasy, marked by rurality. Thereby promoting the formation of rural students' identities, which positively affects their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

In rural settings, the teacher's discourse carries an even denser significance. In such settings, the classroom is not separate or isolated from community life, but rather is intertwined with rural dynamics and local worldviews. As Freire (1997) points out, education must be an act of authentic dialogue, starting from the real conditions of the students and not from an urban or technocratic logic that ignores the richness of the rural world. In this regard, Cruz Aguilar (2020: 197) states:

Freire's educational conception is an education that seeks the full and authentic development of the other, because it is constituted to the exact extent that the other is constituted; it is a biophilic act that seeks the full development of freedom, dialogue, communication, development with and through the other. (translation by the journal).

This Freirean vision is consolidated in what is currently known as otherness and alterity. Thus, discourse must be liberating and promote student dialogue and autonomy. Under this prism, it must be noted that it is necessary to understand that teacher discourse in rural spaces must be conceived as a contextualized, dialogical, and situated communicative act. Thus, it can never be a discursive exercise characterized by neutrality or impartiality. It has its own subjective charge. Therefore, it must be inter-



puted that it carries and contains decisions about what and how to say, and these decisions directly affect the way rural students understand and re-signify their world. Consequently, it is essential that teacher discourse in rural settings promotes a dialogical practice characterized by cultural mediation. Under this orientation, the self-esteem, participation, respect, idiosyncrasy, and dignity of rural students will be strengthened.

Additionally, regarding teacher discourse in rural settings concerning the teaching of reading and writing, it is essential to note that, on this topic, teacher discourse is an essential component in teaching and learning processes. In this way, it configures a means that allows students to interact with language and thus develop communicative skills. Likewise, the learner will develop an approach to textual production and reading comprehension in a pleasant, meaningful, and useful way for their actions in the rural community. Consequently, its impact transcends the classroom and becomes a determining factor in the construction of critical thinking and the appropriation of reading and writing practices.

Therefore, the way teachers structure their discourse directly influences students' reading comprehension and written production. To this end, they will employ strategies such as reformulation, open-ended questions, and connection with prior knowledge, allowing a meaningful approach to the text, fostering reflection and analysis. Furthermore, the teaching of reading is not merely a technical matter but is embedded in social and political dynamics that affect its implementation in various contexts.

In rural areas, for example, limited access to adequate materials and lack of specific training in reading processes can generate difficulties in knowledge appropriation. This must be remedied by the teacher through their discursive action and the production of meaningful resources. And in this way, they will promote and consolidate textual production in the classroom. And in that vein, they must overcome the singular and specific conventional action of correcting errors. To do so, they must use effective feedback messages, develop the ability to argue with oral discourse, and perform text analysis, in order to consolidate communicative competencies and develop writing with sense and meaning.

Finally, it is important to value that the discourse of teachers working in rural settings should not be understood exclusively as a means of transmitting knowledge; that discourse must be the way to promote the formation of critical and reflective citizens. In sum, the discourse of the rural teacher, concerning the teaching of reading and writing, is fundamental, decisive, and crucial for the formation of human beings capable of interacting with the world through language, whereby they can also become agents of social transformation. This is the aspiration toward which the rural teacher will tend, since through their discourse they will be a model for their students in the rural setting.

Methodology

The development of this academic discourse is based on the research conducted under the qualitative approach, whose purpose was aimed at examining the quality benchmarks proposed by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (Colombia) and their integration or lack thereof in the discourse of teachers in rural school institutions regarding the teaching of reading and writing as part of literacy. Regarding information collection, the documentary technique was used, and in congruence with this, readings were carried out of: (a) the quality benchmarks of the [Ministerio de Educación Nacional \(2022\)](#), specifically the *Lineamientos curriculares de Lengua Castellana* and the *Estándares básicos de competencia de Lenguaje* with analysis categories, to then seek the integration established by the teacher in discourse; (b) each teacher's classroom plan; (c) the profile offered by the university in the training pro-

vided through the Scholarships for Teaching Excellence program.

In conclusion, the failure to align the training process with the needs of the rural sector in the performance of educational work seriously limits teaching effectiveness. In this sense, [Díaz Barriga \(2019\)](#) argues that the teacher must reconstruct their work and analyze their training. It is true that the teacher needs to transform their thinking in an evolutionary and conscious manner. Therefore, they must transcend methods that have proven insufficient in their teaching process and stand out by including innovative didactics. For this reason and for this purpose, it is essential that teachers receive continuous training. Or, in more recent terms, a professional development trajectory, as a reference to the process of growth and continuous training of a professional within their field of action. This process concerns skills, knowledge, and the adaptive process to changes arising in the work environment.

It is, therefore, a process of renewal that depends on the teacher's willingness to adapt to the continuous change occurring in the knowledge society. Currently, technological innovation calls upon the teacher to train themselves as an autonomous subject and a leader in teaching, ready for daily changes, so as not to be displaced. An example of this is the disruption of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which must be known and mastered by the teacher to support their own processes and also the learning processes of their students. This situation requires a teacher empowered in their profession who researches their classroom practice and integrates into research groups that contribute to deepening the "how" of reading and writing didactics in multigrade settings.

On the other hand, it should be reported that in the development of this article, the use of generative artificial intelligence was reflectively integrated: [Microsoft Copilot \(2025\)](#), [Gemini, Google \(2025\)](#), and [Microsoft Copilot \(2025\)](#) as support tools for organizing ideas, the preliminary structuring of thematic sections, and the exploration of discursive possibilities. This collaboration did not replace critical exercise or academic authorship but was framed within a logic of co-construction that recognizes technological mediation as a creative and epistemically situated possibility.

Therefore, the use of this tool was articulated with an ethical and reflective attitude, privileging the validation of the proposed content, alignment with the selected theoretical framework, and coherence with the pedagogical and methodological approach of the study. In this sense, AI was used as a complementary resource that enriched the academic writing process, without compromising research rigor or the uniqueness of the authors' "sentipensar" (feeling-thinking).

Results on rural teacher discourse in implementing quality benchmarks: their integration

Teachers in remote territories, when implementing the Language quality benchmarks, focus on developing the necessary competencies to enhance teaching. Therefore, in reading and writing practices, they foster situations with a variety of specific elements; that is, they make coherent adjustments to the content so that the learner thinks about and solves situations in their environment. Thus, the proposed contexts lead the subject to analyze, understand, and use these elements for competency construction.

Regarding the *Estándares básicos de calidad de Lenguaje*, the focus is on developing the necessary competencies to enhance teaching. Therefore, the teacher in reading and writing instruction fosters situations with a variety of specific elements; that is, they make coherent adjustments to the content so that the learner thinks about and solves situations in their environment. This pertains to learning



environments that promote the analysis and comprehension of reading and writing to develop competency.

Regarding the category of textual production, the competencies of these processes are focused on the progress of learners' first graphics. Therefore, the teacher recognizes the sound of letters and the purpose this has in constructing the relationship between spoken word and written word. To this end, the teacher studies relevant didactic interventions in competency development, modifies them, and incorporates them into learning. Thus, practices are directed toward systematically enhancing reading and writing so that they can be executed competently by the learner (Kaufman, 2007).

Furthermore, students' writings require the teacher to value prior knowledge (hypotheses) when beginning writing, because by understanding this, a sequence of didactic interventions is outlined aimed at contributing to the approach to conventional writing. In this regard, Ferreiro (2010: 134) considers: "The point is that [the child] writes and knows from their own experience that writing is a useful tool for communicating with others." (translation by the journal). In other words, the rural teacher needs to propose dynamics in which the learner speaks, expresses, and promotes communication competence in correlation with writing. This raises the question: what strategies can the rural teacher implement? In response to the question, didactic interventions can encourage the learner to communicate through writing and elucidate the concepts of a good writer.

To understand the competence developed in textual production, fragments of dialogues and learning guides collectively organized by the teachers with their own training were assumed.

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MV2 S: "We send comprehension assignments home, we make phone calls for the child to read, we ask questions about the reading comprehension they are doing."

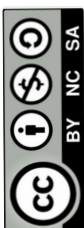
MV2 S: "We ask them to make videos reading and answering the questions sent to them about the reading comprehension of the text they have been given." (translation by the journal)

In relation to the above, the participants proposed different strategies for textual production. In this regard, Lerner (2001) affirms: "This active role is expressed through the deployment of a series of basic strategies" (p. 19). That is, these are considered with the intention of confronting the learner with their own arguments. Consequently, the teacher (**MV2 S**), in the oral expression competency, acted in collaboration with the family for them to model reading for the learner. Perhaps learners talk about it and write their appreciations.

MJ.3 S: "Let's say we are going to work on the toad. The toad. I make a story about the toad, I draw the toad, I make a toad puppet. So that everything is focused on S. Let's sing the toad song. So that everything points to the purpose of the achievement." (translation by the journal)

Incidentally, in the elaboration of written texts, the teacher (**MJ.3 S**) emphasized the repetitive writing of phonemes; that is, the teacher lacked interest in knowing how the learner was progressing. It could be said that in the competency of communication correlated with writing, proposing conscious reflection on this was missing.

Regarding the textual production process, the learning guide was taken to understand its development. Thus, collective work on the didactic resource was evidenced; there they proposed reinforcing



the sound of vowels and learning different phonemes with them. This is how content instruction was presented with a series of activities lacking sequence in the processes. In fact, the actions lacked meaningful construction in competency development. In sum, educating in textual production in the first years of schooling involves processes with a conscious teaching of reading and writing intervention, with a variety of skills intended for textual production.

YS.4 M: "It is not so easy for him/her; we have had to resort to the syllabic method and traditional methods" [first-grade methods].

YS.4 M: "We have a project called kitchen writing; we work with labels. That is, those packages that children have at home."

YS.4 M: "The child reads the label; we have a label reading process, and it was very interesting. The child likes this because they have at home the market packaging that their father buys." (translation by the journal).

In accordance with the above, the rural teacher in teaching practices in the first years of schooling for reading and writing promotes reflection in approaching the construction of the learner's first graphics. To do this, the teacher promotes spontaneous writing without imposing models on the learner (Freire, 2010). To delve into the topic, in the research, participant **YS.4M**, in textual production, developed the competency of discourse creation with experiential situations (through label reading). Although this is a meaningful act for the learner, emphasis is always placed on reading. In fact, textual production lacked actions to enable reflective construction of the word. The teacher was concerned with teaching a phoneme; that is, the development of writing competency processes is not evident, and the same occurred with the other participants.

The research established that 100% of the teachers with their own training, during the textual production process, show a disarticulation between reading and writing. This is because they have deficiencies in didactic strategies that would allow them to provoke in the learner the development of didactic interventions to achieve conventional writing construction. Regarding teachers with training from the [MEN \(2015\)](#) excellence scholarships, 100% of these teachers carry out processes for the learner to achieve reading comprehension competency, but at the moment of textual construction, only 50% promote didactic interventions to carry out these processes. Furthermore, regarding reading and writing, only 25% of the participants promote analysis in the learner to understand the meaning of constructing the written word.

Likewise, during the investigation, it was found that the teaching of reading and writing is included in the *Lineamientos curriculares de Lengua Castellana* of the [MEN \(1998\)](#). Now, it is inferred that teachers study these guidelines when planning and adapting strategies in congruence with the established postulates for guiding reading and writing. However, it is discovered that some educators, although they have knowledge of the curricular guidelines as well as the theoretical foundation related to this practice, lack the ability to articulate this knowledge with classroom practice. Therefore, the development of reading and writing competencies is carried out merely to fulfill content requirements, without considering its achievement or progress in students. Consequently, the teleology established in the curriculum is not being fulfilled, regarding the development of these two language areas in the first grades of primary education.

The rural teacher's discourse must constitute a practice that considers the existing tensions in the context, both historicity and culture. Thus, regarding the quality benchmarks promulgated by the [Ministerio](#)

de Educación de Colombia (1998), this discourse cannot be read as mere technical appropriation, but as a pedagogical mediation that reinterprets, re-signifies, and often resists standardized mandates. This implies that the rural teacher must appropriate and creatively transform the indications provided by the MEN (1998). And by carrying out this transformation, they will articulate pedagogical knowledge, context, and their subjective imprint. Thus, this dimension related to teacher discourse and the quality benchmarks of the National Ministry of Education comes to a close.

Finally, it must be affirmed that the discourse of the teacher who develops their pedagogical act in rural settings must assume the commitment of what Moreno Fernández (1998: 155) calls: "Speech accommodation or adaptation." In that sense, as a theory: "Speech accommodation is concerned with the cognitive processes that occur between the perception of the social context and communicative behavior" (Moreno Fernández, 1998: 155, translation by the journal). It is important to understand that the foundation of this theoretical criterion is the communicative interaction between speaker and listener or interlocutor. This implies that the speaker not only sees their interlocutor but also interprets their perceived identity—age, gender, status, group affiliation—and also the situational framework—formality, hierarchy, intimacy. Therefore, in essence, it refers to how speakers adjust their way of communicating; that is, the adaptation of their own speech depending on whom they are speaking with and the context and social situation in which both find themselves. In this case, the rural setting. This interaction will be nuanced and driven by complex cognitive processes.

Conclusions

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The educator in the rural school must plan and propose meaningful and attractive strategies that impact learners and delve into their interests, according to the rural environment in which they live. They must necessarily be guided by the orientations appearing in the quality benchmarks developed by the MEN. In this way, the rural educator can empower themselves in each of the aspects linked to the teaching of reading and writing.

Teacher training is important, as is establishing relevance that connects their training with the discipline, theory, and pedagogical practice. Thus, they should develop didactic interventions in the classroom that can resolve the disencounters that occur regarding the way reading and writing are taught in a disarticulated, decontextualized, and fragmented manner. In this way, this action emphasizes the particular aspects of reading and writing.

Rural teachers are not passive agents in the implementation of educational policies; rather, they become guides of the discourse that their students must develop. Therefore, it must be recognized that the teacher's discourse is an act of epistemic and political justice. In this sense, a differential, dialogical, and situated perspective is urgently needed in the construction of public educational policies, especially in historically marginalized rural contexts.

Policies tend to focus on universal standards which, although necessary, run the risk of homogenizing processes that require precisely the opposite: diversity, flexibility, and meaning. The case of teaching reading and writing in rural areas clearly demonstrates this: learning becomes more meaningful when it starts from the child's experience, their oral language, their context, their questions. It promotes strategies that value prior knowledge and generate writing as a form of communication.

Rural teachers need to reinterpret quality benchmarks in their educational practice. Therefore, the



MEN needs to promote practical pedagogical spaces with educators for the reconstruction of regional quality benchmarks that include the student's cultural context and their own learning rhythms. This exercise becomes an experience that builds educational policies contextualized to reality.

Speech accommodation, then, is not simply "changing the way one speaks." It is a dynamic and complex process that involves how we perceive our social environment, how our brain processes that information, and how, consequently, we strategically modify our communication to achieve certain interpersonal objectives, whether building bridges, marking differences, or maintaining the status quo. It is evidence of the incredible flexibility and adaptability of human language in its interaction with society.

Finally, it must be affirmed that the teacher's discourse is much more than the simple transmission of content. Rather, it is configured as a complex communicative act, deeply human—the humanistic dimension cannot be lost—that embodies a plurality of dimensions: cognitive, affective, ethical, and symbolic. In that sense, the teacher's discourse—and even more so that of the rural teacher—is an act in which not only pedagogical knowledge converges, but also formative intentions, emotional bonds, and horizons of meaning that are interwoven in each interaction with their students, thereby granting it understandable sense and significance. It is, rather, a communicative act devised with intentions, affections, and meanings that constructs a space for human encounter.

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CRedit autorship statement

Author	
CPJ	Development of the project idea or concept, conducting research and data collection, writing and editing of the content.
CCAF	Methodological advisor and director of research development. Style correction and content editing.

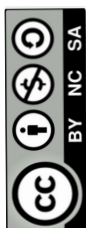
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