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**UNIDAD ACADÉMICA DE OTRAS MODALIDADES DE
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**CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES
Y EXTRANJEROS**

**“SHORTAGE OF MATERIAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHING
ENGLISH IN ECUADORIAN RURAL SCHOOLS: A
SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW”**

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DE LICENCIADA EN PEDAGOGÍA DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS**

AUTOR: SINCHI SINCHI JOHANNA LIZBETH

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CUENCA-ECUADOR

2025

DIOS, PATRIA, CULTURA Y DESARROLLO



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**“Shortage of Material Resources for Teaching English in Ecuadorian Rural Schools: A
Systematic Literature Review”**

Sinchi Sinchi Johanna Lizbeth

Universidad Católica de Cuenca

Unidad de titulación

Lic. Silvia Tatiana Merchán Ortiz, Mgs.

04 de septiembre de 2025

DECLARATORIA DE AUTORÍA Y RESPONSABILIDAD

Yo, **Johanna Lizbeth Sinchi Sinchi** portador de la cédula de ciudadanía N.º **0107513798**. Declaro ser el autor de la obra: **“Shortage of Material Resources for Teaching English in Ecuadorian Rural Schools: A Systematic Literature Review”**, sobre la cual me hago responsable sobre las opiniones, versiones e ideas expresadas. Declaro que la misma ha sido elaborada respetando los derechos de propiedad intelectual de terceros y eximo a la Universidad Católica de Cuenca sobre cualquier reclamación que pudiera existir al respecto. Declaro finalmente que mi obra ha sido realizada cumpliendo con todos los requisitos legales, éticos y bioéticos de investigación, que la misma no incumple con la normativa nacional e internacional en el área específica de investigación, sobre la que también me responsabilizo y eximo a la Universidad Católica de Cuenca de toda reclamación al respecto.

Cuenca, septiembre de 2025



Johanna Lizbeth Sinchi Sinchi

CERTIFICACIÓN

Yo, **Silvia Tatiana Merchán Ortiz**, certifico que el artículo titulado “**Shortage of Material Resources for Teaching English in Ecuadorian Rural Schools: A Systematic Literature Review**”, fue desarrollado por **Sinchi Sinchi Johanna Lizbeth**, ha sido guiado y revisado periódicamente y cumple normas estatutarias establecidas por la Universidad Católica de Cuenca. Debido a que es una investigación particular con el propósito de cumplir un requisito previo a la obtención del **TÍTULO DE LICENCIADA EN PEDAGOGÍA DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS**

Cuenca, septiembre de 2025



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RESUMEN

Uno de los grandes problemas en las escuelas rurales de Ecuador es que no existen suficientes cosas para enseñar inglés, y esto perjudica cómo les va a los estudiantes en las escuelas y cómo se comunican. Este texto revisa lo que se ha escrito últimamente sobre cómo la falta de materiales para aprender afecta a las áreas rurales de Ecuador. Se utilizó un método llamado PRISMA 2020 para analizar muchos estudios que salieron entre 2020 y 2025 en fuentes como ResearchGate y Google Scholar. Los artículos elegidos fueron puestos en un cuadro para analizarlos. La información que se encontró se dividió en cuatro grupos: qué tanto hay de materiales, cómo afectan las reglas de la escuela, consecuencias pedagógicas y estrategias para mejorar. Se encontró un porcentaje en donde se indica que las escuelas en el campo no tienen libros nuevos, videos, guías para los maestros ni forma de usar la tecnología, y tampoco hay suficientes maestros bien preparados. Todo esto hace que los estudiantes no aprendan mucho (nivel A1–A2 del CEFR). En conclusión, esta falta de recursos es un problema grande que necesita soluciones completas en materiales y capacitación para los maestros, ayudando a que la enseñanza del inglés sea más justa y de mejor calidad en las áreas rurales.

Palabras clave: Ecuador, escuelas rurales, recursos didácticos, enseñanza del inglés, desigualdad educativa

ABSTRACT

One of the major problems in rural schools in Ecuador is that there are not enough resources to teach English, which negatively impacts students' performance in school and their ability to communicate. This text reviews recent writings on how the lack of learning materials affects rural areas in Ecuador. A method called PRISMA 2020 was used to analyze many studies published between 2020 and 2025 in sources such as ResearchGate, and Google Scholar. The selected articles were placed in a table for analysis. The information found was divided into four groups: the availability of materials, how school rules affect them, pedagogical consequences and strategies for improvement. A percentage was found indicating that rural schools do not have new books, videos, teacher guides, or ways to use technology, and there are not enough well-trained teachers. All of this means that students do not learn much (CEFR level A1–A2). In conclusion, this lack of resources is a major problem that requires comprehensive solutions in terms of materials and teacher training, helping to make English language teaching fairer and of better quality in rural areas.

Keywords: Ecuador, rural schools, teaching resources, english language teaching, educational inequality

Introduction

In Ecuador's rural areas, a significant barrier to achieving English learning objectives is the absence of suitable teaching materials: According to the Ministry of Education, many rural schools are devoid of supplies like technology, textbooks, or to properly use visual aids to support the learning of the English language.

This shortcoming is not an isolated instance, but rather reflects a more widespread tendency. Rural schools typically receive less funding and assistance due to inequity. Inconsistencies make it difficult for teachers to deliver top-notch instruction. To ensure that students achieve the required level of English proficiency (Ministerio, 2023).

Additionally, these disparities reduce students' motivation and English proficiency and lead to educational injustices. Lack of access to suitable learning resources frequently causes students to adopt unfavorable attitudes about language acquisition, which can have an impact on their long-term academic and professional results, particularly for students in rural areas.

In a study conducted by Gopining & Mohamad (2024), highlights that one of the main challenges facing English language teaching in rural areas is the lack of prepared teachers, which poses a significant difficulty. Compared to metropolitan regions, rural areas exhibit a more severe shortage of human resources. In the parish of Zumba, in the province of Zamora Chinchipe, a study identified the main limitations as being the lack of specialized teachers, the inadequate use of methodologies, the absence of up-to-date materials, and the insufficiency of teacher training programs. These conditions affect student motivation, promote negative attitudes toward learning English, and limit their academic and professional development opportunities. Likewise, the lack of materials and training increases teacher stress and decreases their motivation, which is reflected

in low student interest in the language. All this evidence shows that this is a difficult and ongoing problem (Martell & Serrano, 2025).

According to UNESCO (2023), the educational poverty is a particularly serious problem in developing countries, is directly related to differences in access to educational resources. Other logistical problems faced by rural schools include inadequate maintenance of scarce resources, insufficient infrastructure, and lack of Internet access. These obstacles sometimes force teachers to improvise or use older materials, which inevitably lowers the standard of teaching. The most recent national assessment conducted by UNESCO in 2017 revealed that most rural students only achieved basic levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (A1-A2), demonstrating the seriousness of the problem (*Council of Europe*, 2001).

By concentrating on the structural factors that restrict access to modern teaching materials, technical instruments, textbooks, and audiovisual resources necessary for efficient language instruction, this field of study adds to the scarcity of English teaching materials. As indicated UNESCO (2023), this study will also look at the institutional, social, and territorial factors that lead to educational inequality in rural areas.

Numerous commentators concur that the issues facing Ecuador's rural schools extend beyond a dearth of current textbooks and include a lack of technology resources and teacher training. Gómez (2024) highlights that schools in rural areas have serious problems teaching English, as there are insufficient resources and teachers are not fully prepared in the specific techniques for teaching this language. Similarly, López-Obregón & Rodas-Auquilla (2022), emphasize that the lack of interest among students in rural areas is closely related to the lack of materials and almost no access to places where learning is fun. In the Zumba area, found that there are no specialized teachers or courses for teachers to update their skills, which makes matters

worse and widens the gap between what students are expected to know and what they actually know (Martell & Serrano, 2025).

These data make it clear that the lack of resources in rural areas is not just an isolated case, but part of a larger problem that perpetuates differences in education between rural and urban areas. Furthermore, what has been written on the subject emphasizes that if there is no equality in access to educational resources, this directly affects the quality of teaching and the results obtained in learning English. Barre & Villafuerte-Holguin (2021), show that between 2019 and 2021, there continued to be significant differences in how English was taught between schools in cities and those in towns, highlighting that the latter lag significantly behind in terms of language proficiency. According to Orosz et al. (2021) found that the poor command of English among teachers and students is not only due to a lack of materials, but also to the fact that institutions do not do much to improve teaching conditions. On the other hand, Sevy-Biloon et al. (2020) emphasize that social and location-related problems, such as poor internet connection and remoteness, put students in rural areas at an even greater disadvantage.

Our review will be confined to literature concerning the constraints of material resources in rural English language instruction, sampling publications from 2015 to 2025. The objective is to gather, clarify, and evaluate documented causes, observed impacts, and documented responding practices, whether carried out in Ecuador or in comparable agrarian and underserved settings.

Methodology

The research has a systematic literature review design and applies the PRISMA 2020 method (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses), according to academic standards and methodological rigor. The objective is to find, evaluate, and synthesize

scientific research on the the scarcity of material resources for English language instruction in rural schools, especially in Ecuador and similar educational contexts, published between 2015 and 2025.

Studies examining the accessibility, application, and effects of teaching resources in rural English as foreign language (EFL) classrooms represent the main focus of the review. ResearchGate, Scielo, and Google Scholar were some of the databases used for the search. The search Prompts and Boolean combinations used were: (“EFL” OR “English teaching”) AND (“rural schools” OR “rural education”) AND (“teaching materials” OR “didactic resources” OR “educational inequality”) AND (Ecuador OR Latin America). Results and journal articles published between 2015 and 2025 in English were analyzed.

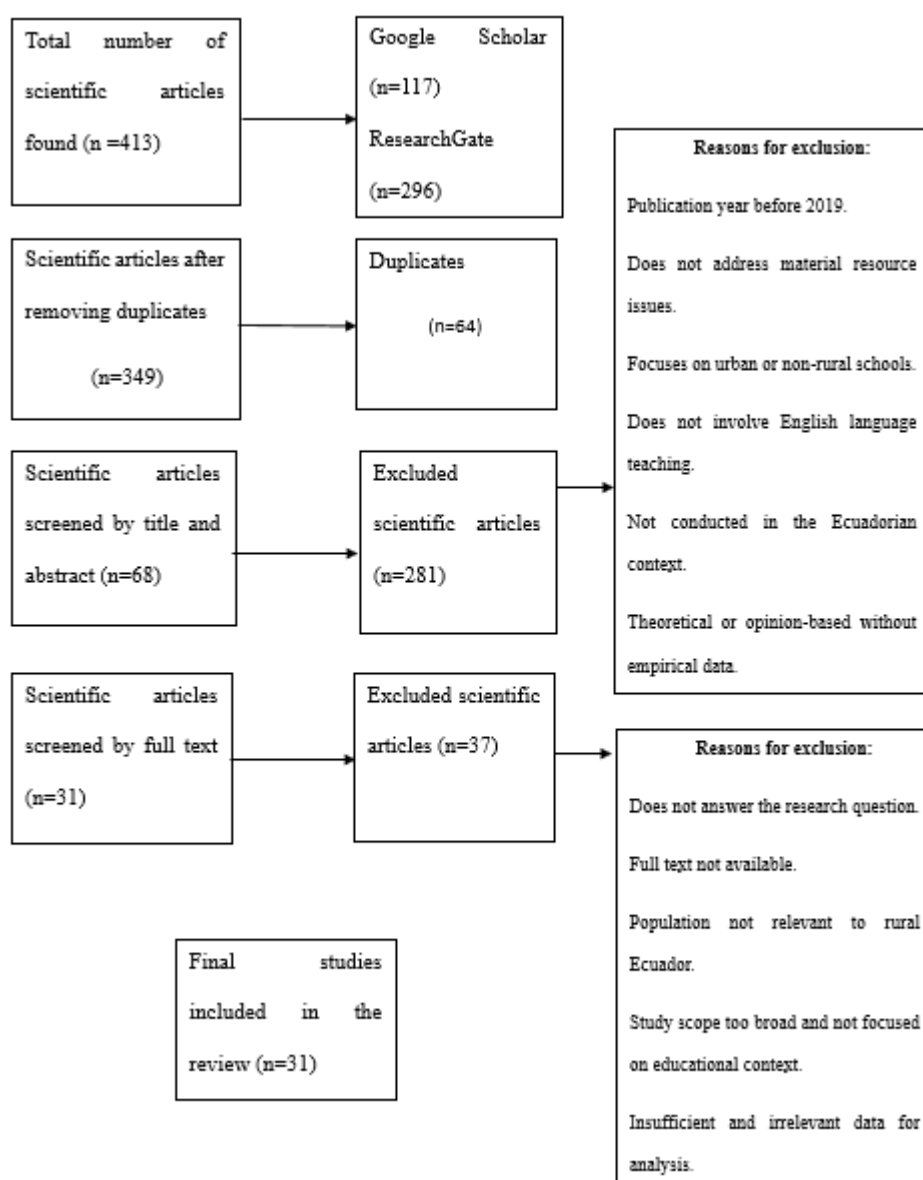
The inclusion criteria for this systematic review focused on selecting scientific articles and academic theses published between 2015 and 2025 that specifically address the shortage or use of didactic materials in English language teaching within rural school contexts. Only studies conducted in Ecuador or in countries with similar educational challenges were considered. Priority was given to peer-reviewed publications with full-text availability, written in either English or Spanish. The selected studies had to provide academic information or a detailed study on the effect of material resources on the teaching-learning process in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom.

The purpose of the exclusion criteria used in this review was to ensure the relevance and quality of the selected studies. Articles that focused solely on urban or private school contexts were excluded, as well as those unrelated to English teaching or lacking discussion on material resources. Publications prior to 2015 were discarded to maintain the temporal relevance of the findings.

A total of 413 scientific articles were found through Google Scholar ($n = 117$) and ResearchGate ($n = 296$). After removing 64 duplicates, 349 articles remained. These were screened by title and abstract, resulting in the exclusion of 281 articles. After this phase, 68 articles were selected for full text review. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 37 articles were excluded, and 31 studies were ultimately included in the systematic review.

Figure 1

Prisma



The articles studied show agreement on how a lack of resources negatively affects English performance in rural schools. Soto et al. (2024) analyzed research on motivation in English teaching and highlighted that a scarcity of resources hinders innovative teaching strategies. Villa & Anabel (2023) found that, in rural schools in Ecuador, the greatest difficulties are the lack of materials and insufficient teacher training, which affects the quality of learning. Barre & Villafuerte-Holguin (2021) confirmed that between 2019 and 2021, differences in English language teaching persisted between rural and urban areas, where material conditions and unequal access to technological resources are crucial.

Similarly, Cronquist & Fiszbein (2017) discussed English language teaching in Latin America, noting that the region in general, and Ecuador in particular, have low levels of proficiency due to low investment in educational infrastructure. López-Obregón & Rodas-Auquilla (2022), focused their research on English language teaching to rural students, showing that students' lack of interest is related to the lack of materials and methods adapted to their context. Findings obtained in Zumba by Martell & Serrano (2025), indicate that the lack of qualified language instructors alongside the non-availability of current pedagogical tools casts the most pressing shadow upon learning outcomes.

Complementary insights were supplied by interviews with teaching and community stakeholders, which already are the subject of additional analysis. According to Orosz et al. (2021), a lack of resources and a lack of institutional support are the main causes of instructors' and students' poor English proficiency. As indicated by Sevy-Biloon et al. (2020) socioeconomic issues including limited internet connection and geographic challenges exacerbate inequality in rural locations. Chillagana et al. (2023) came to the conclusion that while the educational community is aware of the importance of English, the influence of this topic on student learning is limited by the

absence of consistent policies to supply suitable materials. Lastly, Cuesta & Andrade (2024), examined the function of digital platforms, pointing out that while they present a chance, disparities in access to devices and the internet restrict their utilization in rural regions.

Development

Today, the English language is very important, which is why it is included in the curriculum from the earliest school years. However, English language education in rural Ecuadorian schools is threatened by a lack of adequate teaching tools. This shortage affects many, as the lack of technology is an obstacle to teaching. In other words, technological materials are important for teaching, as they are not only a great help to students but also serve as reinforcement material for teachers.

The shortage of teaching materials is a major setback for education. One of the main reasons why rural schools are in this situation is that they do not have the same financial support as urban schools. Another factor is teacher performance, as in some cases their training is limited. All of this means that students are not progressing in their English studies.

In addition to the lack of materials, English teaching in rural contexts is impacted by a shortage of qualified teachers, a human resource constraint that is more critical in rural areas than in cities (Villa & Anabel, 2023). A study conducted in the rural parish of Zumba, Zamora Chinchipe province, Ecuador, identified the main constraints as a lack of specialized teachers, the inadequate use of methodologies, the absence of updated teaching resources, and the lack of training programs (Martell & Serrano, 2025).

These factors are influencing students' motivation to create attitude of dislike to learn English and hampering them to develop both academically and professionally. Likewise, inadequate teaching materials and training add to teacher stress, and take away teachers'

motivation for teaching English, and students do not show interest on the language (Shan & Abdul Aziz, 2022). Cases of similar nature have been reported in the rural zones of other Latin American countries as Colombia, where barriers to training, materials, and specific tools for teaching English are observed (Botero & Galeano, 2022). These observations confirm that the problem is a complex and persistent challenge.

Howard (2024), has a proposal to combine teacher competence and technological availability, while adapting theoretical concepts to the specific characteristics of the classroom. This approach allows for a meaningful and flexible view for teaching English in rural areas, focusing on the demands of both teaching and learning.

The main reasons for the scarcity of resources for teaching Spanish in rural educational institutions are the main focus of this research. It will focus specifically on the challenges posed by the lack of materials and personnel in rural educational institutions in Ecuador. In particular, it will examine the systemic barriers that prevent people from accessing the technology, audiovisual materials, texts, and contemporary teaching resources that are essential for effective language acquisition.

The report argues that the shortage of current English texts and essential audiovisual resources creates serious problems for nearly half of rural schools. Teachers face a major challenge due to their inability to develop engaging lessons, which limits students' resources and prevents them from acquiring critical skills in the classroom. The lack of materials is not only a problem; it is also a clear sign of a very large and very deep inequality. In general, rural areas receive less support, whether from the government or from collaborations, compared to other urban schools. Despite the resources available, parallel studies have shown that the lack of professionals poses a considerable challenge. In rural areas, attracting and retaining language specialists is much less

common than in urban areas, further intensifying inequality. According to Ministerio (2024), 2,223 teachers are needed for the next school year 2024-25, highlighting the magnitude of the shortage of qualified personnel in our education system. This situation limits teachers' ability to deliver effective lessons and hinders students from achieving the required level of English proficiency.

It was also seen how these shortcomings affect the performance of rural students and the ability of teachers to meet the standards set by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (*Council of Europe, 2001*). The lack of teaching resources and up-to-date training programs has been identified as a major obstacle to teaching English in rural areas. These challenges directly affect student motivation, generating negative attitudes toward learning English and limiting their academic and professional development. Similarly, the scarcity of teaching materials and training programs increases teachers' stress and diminishes their enthusiasm for teaching English, which in turn reduces students' interest in the language.

The research highlighted by the UNESCO (2023) delves into the social, institutional, and territorial factors that fuel educational inequality in rural areas. Based on a qualitative analysis, this study focuses on schools in the Ecuadorian Sierra and Amazon regions, thoroughly examining both the causes and consequences, as well as possible strategies to address shortcomings in English language education in these rural areas. The challenges facing Ecuador are similar to those seen in other rural areas of Latin America, such as Colombia, where similar cases arise in terms of English-language teaching and training. This highlights the seriousness and persistence of this problem at the regional level.

This systematic review of the literature addresses the scarcity of material resources for English language training in rural schools in Ecuador, which represents a significant obstacle to

learning and academic progress for students in these areas. The research aims to uncover the root causes, pedagogical implications, and suggested strategies to alleviate this situation.

When it comes to the current state of teaching resources, rural Ecuadorian schools are facing a dire situation. As reported by the Ministerio (2023), over 40% of rural educational institutions are operating without access to updated English textbooks or essential audiovisual materials. This shortage affects much more than we think, meaning it includes a variety of important resources such as multimedia materials, teaching guides, technological tools, and digital platforms. The problem is made worse by a lack of resources and a restricted use of technology. A study in the rural parish of Zumba, in the province of Zamora Chinchipe, Ecuador, specifically identified the absence of updated teaching resources as one of the main limitations (Martell & Serrano, 2025). This situation reflects a broader pattern of systemic inequality, where rural schools consistently receive fewer resources and support compared to their urban counterparts. In addition to the lack of new materials, rural schools face logistical challenges such as poor infrastructure, lack of internet connectivity, and insufficient maintenance of the few materials they do have. These conditions often force teachers to improvise or use outdated content, which inevitably reduces the quality of instruction.

Given this, it is critical to understand how educational policies and strategies affect resource distribution. National education policies play an important role in determining how material resources are allocated, and the current situation in Ecuador highlights some serious shortcomings in their execution, particularly in rural areas. Even though English has been part of the national curriculum since the early grades, rural schools struggle with a lack of proper teaching materials. This problem has been pointed out by the Ministerio (2023), which notes that many rural institutions simply don't have enough resources.

This resource gap starkly illustrates the systemic inequality in how support and materials are distributed between rural and urban schools. According to the UNESCO (2023), these disparities in access to educational resources are a significant factor contributing to learning poverty, a pressing issue in developing regions.

The availability of qualified teachers is impacted by educational policies in addition to material shortages. The severe shortage of qualified staff in the educational system, particularly in rural areas, was brought to light by Ministerio (2024) report of 2,223 teachers' shortage for the 2024–2025 academic year.

The absence of teachers who are proficient in English or familiar with effective teaching methods is a major concern for the “Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages” degree program. This research aligns with an examination of the social, institutional, and territorial factors that lead to educational inequality in rural areas, aiming to inform future educational policies.

The impact of limited resources on education is significant, especially when it comes to learning English in rural areas. This shortage of both materials and qualified teachers really hampers educators' ability to provide quality instruction, making it tough for students to reach the English proficiency levels we expect. Without the right tools, teachers struggle to create engaging lessons, and students miss out on chances to build their communication skills.

Take the latest national assessment from 2017, for example; it clearly shows the issue at hand: most rural students only managed to achieve basic levels (A1-A2) according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (*Council of Europe*, 2001). This has a negative impact on students' motivation and success in learning English in addition to expanding educational disparities. When students do not have access to appropriate educational resources,

they tend to develop negative feelings about language learning, which can damage their educational and career prospects.

In addition, a lack of educational resources and poor education can cause high levels of stress among teachers, reducing their enthusiasm for teaching English, while students show little interest in the language. This pattern has been consistently observed in several studies, including one focused on Zumba, as well as in similar rural contexts in Latin America, such as Colombia, where problems associated with education, resources, and specific teaching tools for English are prevalent. These findings confirm that the problem is complex and persistent (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).

As part of the proposals for improvement and best practices in response to scarcity, the study seeks not only to document the magnitude of the problem, but also to compile and evaluate the strategies, policies, or programs proposed to address material deficiencies in language teaching in rural areas. A central objective of this systematic review is to synthesize evidence-based strategies that have been successfully implemented both in Ecuador and in comparable contexts worldwide.

Among the proposals, the idea of adapting theoretical principles to the specific conditions of the rural educational environment stands out, considering key factors such as teacher competencies and access to technology. This flexible approach, focused on learning and teaching needs, would allow for reflection on English language teaching in these areas from a more effective perspective. The objective of the literature review is to explore how academic study can lead to significant progress in English language teaching in rural communities. The purpose of the analysis of solutions is to examine all the existing shortcomings in English language instruction in rural

areas of Ecuador and similar regions. This research will lay the groundwork for future studies and policy development focused on addressing this educational disparity.

In rural Ecuador, the lack of materials and qualified teachers poses a major challenge to effective English instruction. With outdated textbooks, limited audiovisual resources, and insufficient technology, teachers often have to make do with less-than-ideal content, which ultimately affects the quality of education (Sevy-Biloon et al., 2020). Additionally, logistical issues like poor infrastructure, inadequate maintenance of resources, and unreliable internet access only make matters worse. While educational policies may be well-meaning, their implementation in rural settings has been lacking, resulting in ongoing inequalities between schools in urban and rural areas. The shortage of teachers trained in English exacerbates the situation, as it hinders students' ability to improve their communication skills and command of English. It is essential to address these challenges not only to improve teaching and learning outcomes but also to promote educational equity, ensuring that students in rural areas have the same opportunities for linguistic growth and academic performance as urban students (Aparna & Koolwal, 2025).

The severe lack of resources for teaching English in rural schools in Ecuador is a constant challenge that undermines the quality of education and exacerbates the gap between urban and rural areas. The lack of up-to-date textbooks, audiovisual resources, technological devices, and trained teachers directly affects students' development, effective learning, and their ability to improve their communication skills. Although today's education systems understand the importance of English, they do not apply appropriate solutions in rural areas. It is important to apply solutions tailored to the situations of each location in order to ensure equality and achieve effective English language learning in these rural communities (Kumar, 2024).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The challenges of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in rural areas are specific, particularly for young learners who often have little contact with the language outside the classroom. The lack of trained English teachers, the lack of resources such as technology and materials, the lack of time for teaching, inadequate teacher training, overcrowded classrooms, ineffective teaching methods, and low student motivation are just some of the main obstacles identified by research.

The lack of appropriate teaching resources and technological tools is one of the main obstacles to successful English language teaching in rural educational institutions. This has a direct effect on how teachers can interact with their students and on the final learning outcomes. The main resource, textbooks, are designed for urban schools and do not take into account the specific needs of rural classrooms. This causes a disconnect between teaching strategies and available resources, leading to a lack of materials and poor student performance.

In addition, teachers face several challenges that affect their motivation and ability to apply strategies that support student learning. Due to the low socioeconomic status of families and parents limited English proficiency, students in rural areas often show low motivation and have few opportunities for independent study at home. These combined factors seriously hinder students' ability to learn and become fluent in English, stalling their progress in language education.

To enhance English language teaching in rural areas, we really need to focus on improving teacher training and ongoing professional development. This means creating initial and continuing training programs that consider the unique challenges of multigrade classrooms and rural settings. By doing so, we can boost teachers' language skills, equip them with effective teaching methods,

and promote the use of educational technology and digital resources that fit these specific environments. Additionally, it would be beneficial to develop teaching materials that go beyond the usual textbooks. These resources must be tailored to different skill levels and incorporate practical resources, games, interactive activities, and digital content designed for rural environments, all with the aim of promoting student learning. In addition, it is crucial to involve parents through guidance programs that highlight the relevance of English and offer strategies to support their children's home schooling. This would greatly help students overcome their lack of language proficiency when they are outside the school environment. Finally, we must prioritize the creation of a more favorable working environment for teachers by optimizing their salaries, working conditions, and opportunities for professional growth.

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