

Editorial

Following the action plan proposed by our publication and ASOCOPI's Board of Directors, we have moved forward to consolidate our publication according to the parameters issued by Colciencias, the Colombian research agency, and Publindex –its division in charge of the evaluation and classification of scientific journals. As you might know, its regulations are in tune with current trends in international periodicals.

I am very pleased to share with our readership that Publindex has confirmed –in its latest evaluation– the classification of HOW into category C. This means not only a great satisfaction, but serves as a steering force to make our journal more solid. To do so, we have decided to delimit the three sections that have characterized it since the issue for 2010. Furthermore, we have started to include a higher number of articles so that more contributors have the possibility to get published. This way, we want not only to comply with Publindex's requirements, but to provide wider opportunities for teachers and teacher-researchers. All of these modifications have posed greater challenges and demanded more work on the part of the editorial teams and the reviewers, whose support is very much appreciated.

This edition contains twelve articles. All of them have been written by Colombian authors who invite us to read about the teaching of English in primary, secondary and university settings. Likewise, we can come across studies and reflections concerning teacher education programmes and the roles and competences of teachers of English.

We have gathered seven articles in the *Research Reports* section. To begin, we have two research reports that focused on English language teaching issues in two private Colombian universities. First, Adriana Maritza Rivera Barreto's work tells us about a study regarding the writing process with university students. Along the description of the different stages designed to help students improve writing, she informs us about the role of the teacher's feedback in achieving that goal. Then, we can read about Carlo Granados Beltrán's study. He shares with us an account of the pedagogical intervention that sought to examine what happens when we include content in language classes by means of project work at university level. We can also learn about the research project he conducted to monitor such experience, the results of students' and teachers' evaluation of it, and the advantages and limitations found in said teaching context.

Next, we present the work by Ingrid Liliana Bohórquez Suárez, Mary Mily Gómez Sará and Sindy Lorena Medina Mosquera. As we can read, they studied the characteristics of the negotiations that took place among seventh graders when working in pairs to develop speaking tasks in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes in a public high school in Bogotá. As described by the authors, such negotiations entail four main steps: Establishing a connection with a partner to work with, proposing practical alternatives, refusing mates' propositions, and making practical decisions.

Following that one we have an article on the topic of code-switching. This time, Edgar Lucero informs us how he concentrated on university students' use of code-switching as a means to know a target language equivalent of a word in their mother tongue –Spanish. This was done by following the ethnomethodological conversation analysis and the speech act analysis, which let him examine the phenomenon from the perspective of the interactional pattern that the code-switching situation creates: Request-provision-acknowledgement sequence. As the author highlights, the insights of his work shed light on pedagogical implications in the dynamics of classroom interaction and the way language learners and teachers negotiate meaning in class.

Another article concerning content-based instruction is included in this issue. This one, by Erica Gómez Flórez, Jhon Jaime Jiménez Díaz and Sergio Alonso Lopera, involved the observation of the processes of a joint venture between the School of Microbiology and the School of Languages at a public Colombian university. The results of the study show the role played by that methodology on the improvement of a group of university students' level of English, mostly their speaking and listening skills.

We close this section with two articles that focused on the teaching of English in Pasto, Colombia. First, we can find the article by Jesús Alirio Bastidas and Gaby Muñoz Ibarra, who developed a diagnostic study in order to report on the state of English language teaching in primary schools in that city. As can be read in their report, classroom observations, a questionnaire and interviews were used to depict the situation. The results showed that the teachers' methodology and their command of the English language, together with the lack of an English syllabus, didactic materials and the children's lack of motivation, are critical areas that have to be taken into consideration for the betterment of English learning in primary schools. Second, we present a research report by Helda Alicia Hidalgo Dávila and Magda Lucy Caicedo Vela. They provide a description of a study that focused on content-based methodology. Their investigation was carried out with a group of children from public schools with the purpose of testing some materials designed by a group of professors who considered that content-based instruction materials could be an option to motivate children to learn English and could also serve as a tool for language acquisition through subject matter contents. I am sure these two articles will contribute to the examination of language policies

and teaching practices in Colombian contexts aiming at strengthening the teaching of English in public schools.

The second section of this edition has three *Reports on Pedagogical Experiences*: two of them are about the use of technology in English Language Teaching (ELT), and the other one deals with teacher education. Yakelin Salinas' article derives from an exploratory investigation on the role of teachers, students and discussion boards while implementing project work in a Colombian public university virtual environment. The author describes the steps followed in the pedagogical intervention of project work developed with a group of students from a virtual program at a public Colombian University and pinpoints key suggestions for teachers and teacher-researchers interested in implementing similar teaching practices.

In the next article, blended learning in the teaching of English as a foreign language is depicted as an educational challenge by Carol Anne Ochoa Alpala and Eliana Edith Roberto Flórez. They examine some integrative components of blended learning and how they have been applied in several studies done in different contexts. They also gather key pedagogical considerations to bear in mind when designing, implementing and evaluating this teaching option.

Finally, Jahir Aguirre Morales and Bertha Ramos Holguín share with us their pedagogical proposal to help pre-service teachers acquire skills to eventually develop their critical skills. In their work we come across the analysis of relevant issues related to critical pedagogy as well as the way they used movies connected to educational themes and readings based on critical pedagogy. Likewise, we can get acquainted with the procedures they used to generate class discussions in order to analyze educational topics from a critical perspective.

Finally, the *Reflections and Revision of Themes* section offers two contributions. Firstly, Héctor Alejandro Galvis addresses an issue that can contribute to the discussion and implementation of ELT frameworks and policies in Colombia. The author presents critical views concerning the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) in Colombia. Among the salient points we find in his work are the identification of important cultural differences and some reasons that the approach proposed in the CEFR may bring up when considering aspects like language instruction and the use of computer technology, among others. As the author stresses, works like this are expected to nurture further studies and examinations on the issue in question and, hopefully, to engage teachers and researchers in the construction of a locally-made framework that responds to the local contexts.

We close this edition with John Jairo Viáfara's article, which reviews salient issues with reference to efforts being made by scholars to increase the impact of new technologies in the preparation of educators. As the author pinpoints, in the past ten years we have witnessed developments in four major trends: collaboration in computer mediated communication,

teachers' attitudes and performance towards education programs, autonomous learning and project work. We hope this paper motivates more scholars to dig into those tendencies and publish their reflections and findings in the HOW journal too.

The HOW Journal and ASOCOPI wish to invite its affiliates, teachers of English and students of BA programmes to contribute to our publication. Please keep in mind that you can support HOW by sending your reflections, reports on pedagogical experiences and investigations and by spreading the word about our work.

Melba Libia Cárdenas B.

Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá campus

Guest Editor