

Editorial

I am very pleased to start by sharing with our affiliates and readership our latest achievement: the indexation of our journal in Publindex-Colciencias. The national indexing system for Colombian journals acknowledged the standards of HOW, as a scientific journal, and for this reason we have been classified in category C.

In Colombia, as in other countries, journals are expected to be accountable for the use of international standards and for their capacity to foster dialogue with academic peers all over the world. This ranking obtained by HOW in the Índice Bibliográfico Nacional Publindex, 2009, acknowledges our commitment to accomplishing those requirements. Thus, this achievement deserves not only dissemination, but recognition for the people who have supported us. I wish to express my gratitude to the advisory and editorial committees as well as to our assistants for their collaboration during the time I have acted as guest editor. I also thank the affiliates of ASOCOPI, who have trusted the work of the association's Board of Directors. Their encouragement has been vital toward attaining this goal!

I should also acknowledge the support and guidance received from the PROFILE Journal. This publication of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia has been kind enough to assist HOW in the different editing and scientific aspects required by academic publications nowadays. The support received from PROFILE is an example of how research groups and Colombian universities can contribute to our association, by sharing expertise and personnel and, thus, making collegiality a reality.

It is our purpose to continue making prospective teachers, practitioners and teacher researchers' voices visible through publishing so that local knowledge circulates and connections among schools and universities become stronger by their knowing each other. This way, all of us learn more about English language teaching and professional development.

The classification granted by Colciencias forces us to do all of these, but also entails harder work to make our publication more visible. ASOCOPI now faces higher challenges: to be accepted in other data bases and indexing systems, to maintain our periodical publication, to motivate more authors to submit their works for coming issues, and to comply with editorial requirements used nowadays in scientific journals. Hence, and as can be seen in this edition, we have incorporated more formal aspects which are required by referencing and indexing systems and which, I am sure, will facilitate access through on-line and library sources. These actions should continue as priorities in the Association's work plans and we count on the collaboration of the Board of Directors, stakeholders, readership, and affiliates.

In tune with our commitment to meet the requirements of indexing and referencing systems and to better guide our readers, we have decided to define the sections of our publication. From now on, we will group the articles around the three main areas that characterize the manuscripts that are often submitted for publication.

I am very pleased to share with our readership the ten papers contained in this volume. They deal with the areas of language skills, pedagogical processes, evaluation and assessment, and language policies in the Colombian context.

The first section gathers six *Research Reports*. We begin with the article by Norbella Miranda and Ángela Patricia Echeverry, who describe and analyse the school infrastructure and resources of private institutions in Cali, Colombia. The authors explain how these two factors relate to the implementation of the Bilingual Colombia Program, a government initiative that aims at reaching bilingualism—in English and Spanish—by 2019. Results shed light on the availability of general resources and the inadequate condition of some infrastructural aspects for teachers to do their best to accomplish that goal.

The following article accounts for an investigation in a high school. Diana Carolina Fonseca and Julie Natalie Parra report on an investigation aimed at identifying how the specific roles played by adolescent students working cooperatively in a Colombian public school were related to their development of speaking skills in English. Interestingly, the findings revealed the role of students' preferences, skills, personality traits, and social strategies in cooperative work and speaking development.

Next, Jennifer Camargo and Jenny Orbezo share with us a study conducted with fifth graders at a public school in Bogotá, Colombia, and which focused on the

relationship between English as a foreign language reading comprehension and life experiences while using the Sight Word Strategy. In this report we can see how comprehension and construction of meaning were generated when students interacted by sharing life experiences.

We continue with an article by Claudia Gómez Palacio, who informs about a qualitative study carried out at a middle school located in The United States of America. The author focused on effective strategies that teachers can use to help ESL (English as a Second Language) students improve their speaking skills and class participation. Findings can become points of reference for other English language teaching contexts. In particular, it was concluded that both communicative and social strategies as well as exposure to independent reading help students improve their communicative skills and class participation.

The fifth article focuses on the construction of social reality through the use of the English language. Pedro Luis Luchini presents a research report on an investigation conducted in two English teacher education programs in Argentina. Speech data were analyzed to see how, through the use of language, pre- and in-service teachers constructed their social reality. The comparison of results lets us learn about the role personal needs and doing academic research have for them, among other issues.

Then, we can find another paper based on an action research report led by Carlos Cárdenas. The study was carried out with members of a Basic English class for adults over 50 at a Colombian public university who engaged in keeping a language portfolio. This, in turn, allowed the researcher to examine its convenience as a self-assessment mechanism and its contribution to senior students' autonomy.

The second section, *Reports on Pedagogical Experiences*, includes a contribution from Iran. Sasan Baleghizadeh and Fatemeh Arabtabar guide our attention towards an alternative for more effective teaching of listening comprehension in English, which entails integrating a process-oriented approach. It is also considered that by encouraging students to employ efficient learning strategies during the listening process and cooperatively evaluating them in class, we can move forward to more successful listening practices.

The third section, *Reflections and Revision of Themes*, presents three articles. The first one, by Marcela del Campo, Martha Isabel Bonilla and Luz Stella Ahumada, explores

the meaning and the possibilities of the evaluation of learning from a formative view. Reflections are raised in order to suggest the importance of moving towards a constructive evaluation that responds to the necessities of our students and to make teachers aware of their role as guides. Additionally, attention is given to the significance of helping students make relevant decisions to achieve meaningful English learning through autonomy.

Afterwards, we have a paper dealing with the issue of elite/folk bilingualism. As Carmen Helena Guerrero states, the article contributes to the ongoing discussion as to how bilingualism is understood in the current Bilingual Colombia Program, also known as National Bilingualism Plan. The author bases her arguments on previous research, theoretical perspectives gathered in various publications, and discussions held at academic events. The reader can get acquainted with reasons the author concludes that the Bilingual Colombia Program uses the term “bilingualism” in a rather indiscriminate way, which shows ambiguity in conceptualization and brings serious consequences in the way it is implemented nationwide.

The theme of English as a lingua franca has also captured the attention of Colombian teachers, particularly in light of current language policies. We close this edition with Diego Fernando Macías’ paper, in which he draws together characteristics of English as a lingua franca –an alternative to English language teaching in Colombia. Considerations concerning aspects such as teachers, methodologies, teaching materials, and culture are used by the author to argue in favor of a more international dimension to the teaching of English in the country.

As always, we hope the articles included in this issue inspire discussions, applications, reflections, and further research. Remember: HOW is interested in maintaining communication among English teachers in Colombia and abroad by disseminating knowledge resulting from educational and research practices concerning English language teaching issues. We invite you to write reports of your works and send your contributions for future editions.

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