

Editorial 2023-2

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In the field of English language education in Colombia, teacher-researchers have studied various topics. The insights of those studies have re- or constructed knowledge that leads to visions of English language education in the country. Colombian journals that have specialized in publishing studies of this kind become relevant in the construction of such knowledge and visions. *HOW* keeps its work on making teacher-researchers' studies come into the light for the construction of knowledge about English language education in Colombia.

In this issue, for example, Angela Patricia Velásquez-Hoyos and Lizeth Andrea Martínez-Burgos present an article about the impact of exchange programs on English language skills and teaching methodologies. These teacher-researchers emphasize intercultural awareness and its role in personal and professional development. By presenting the results of a narrative inquiry study on exchange programs, as part of the professional development of eight former participants of the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant -FLTA- program, the authors portray how cross-cultural interaction and understanding cultural differences are part of the participants' experiences in that program. They conclude that the FLTA program fostered personal and professional development as English language teachers in their home countries.

Another study in this new *HOW* number refers to the role of language pedagogy in redefining attitudes toward gender identity. Under this line, Karen Tatiana Camargo-Ruiz and Daniel Aponte-Moniquira present a study that explores individual gender realities and constructions in teaching practices. Thus, the study on the embodiment of femininities and identities in language pedagogy fosters resistance and resurgence against gender paradigms in teaching. These teacher-researchers used a narrative inquiry approach to inspect two language teachers' life stories in an initial teacher education program. They conclude that

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femininities, embodied in teachers' practices, provide a broader spectrum of individual gender realities and constructions.

As embodiments can be related to hegemonic aspects of teacher gender identity, so are factors influencing students' emotions, such as academic load and personal life. Anthony Ceron and Norbella Miranda talk about this topic in their article to realize that there are palpable connections between emotions and language learning processes. These teacher-researchers study the presence and impact of emotions in language learning by using a mixed-method study on students' emotions while participating in conversation clubs in English at a public university in Colombia. The significance of emotions in the development of oral skills within conversation clubs contributes to the understanding of language learners from a broader perspective in the field of English language education in Colombia.

The study of emotions parallels the study of perceptions in English language education. Language education not only refers to teaching or learning, but assessment is also a remarkable part of it. This is the part that Frank Giraldo, Daniela Escalante-Villa, and Daniela Isaza-Palacio refer to in their article, particularly about the role of language assessment literacy in English language teachers' understanding of assessment practices. Thus, there is value in test analysis and collaborative tasks in English language teachers' professional development. By case-studying teachers' perceptions of an online assessment course's contents, activities, and impact, these teacher-researchers highlight that test-analysis tasks made English language teachers aware of what language assessment is and do, subsequently, of their mistakes in assessment processes. From this study, several recommendations for improving language assessment literacy courses can be accounted for.

Marta Isabel Barrientos-Moncada, Natalia Andrea Carvajal-Castaño, and Hernán Santiago Aristizabal-Cardona also refer to the professional development of English language teachers in Colombia; but in their article, they do it to make more visible the need for contextually relevant and differentiated professional development programs. In their article, they stress the challenges in EFL teachers' professional development in the Eastern region of Colombia. Since EFL teachers' professional development in Colombia has been characterized by top-down policies, teachers claim for more ongoing and contextualized programs that differentiate school levels and instructional material design and adaptation available in the local communities. The implications for educational institutions and further research denote that there should be more localized and coherent professional development programs for English language teachers in the country.

In their article, Marian Lissett Olaya-Mesa and Willian Alexander Mora also highlight the importance of English language teachers' professional development in early education for the enhancement of classroom teaching practices. Through a qualitative study under the exploratory paradigm, these teacher-researchers study elementary-rural-school English

language teachers' perceptions and attitudes affecting the incorporation of English in their teaching practices. They found frustration, motivation, and lack of expertise as the main perceptions that interfere with the participating teachers' teaching practices. They conclude that professional development strategies to identify teachers' perceptions and attitudes affecting their English language teaching should be incorporated to improve teaching practices in the classroom.

There is an international contribution to this new *HOW* number. It talks about the measurement of text readability and its appropriacy for language proficiency levels. Benjamin Carcamo's article comes from Chile. He accounts for the differences between classic readability indices and language-specific indices between the new EFL Chilean textbook and the readability level of the texts used in the Cambridge B1 preliminary exam to check their appropriacy. The results of his study revealed that, even though the classic readability indices show a similar level of difficulty in the texts of these two sources, the specific index for second language learning shows a statistically significant difference. There are subsequent implications for local and international language education standards since the texts in EFL textbooks can be more difficult to read than the ones learners are supposed to read in classrooms or exams.

These seven articles in the new *HOW* number highlight several crucial insights that hold significant importance for the journal's reader community. Exchange programs on English language skills and teaching methodologies underscore the role of intercultural awareness in personal and professional development; this is valuable for educators and institutions aiming to enhance language education through cross-cultural interactions and understanding. The intersection of language pedagogy and gender identity sheds light on how teaching practices can redefine attitudes towards gender, fostering resistance against traditional gender paradigms in education. Emotions play a pivotal role in the development of English-language oral skills; thus, there should be more language learning environments that consider learners' emotional experiences.

For the professional development of English language teachers, there are three significant insights. The first is about how language assessment literacy can emphasize the value of test analysis and collaborative tasks to enhance improved assessment practices and a better understanding of assessment processes. The second addresses the need for contextually relevant and differentiated professional development programs for English language teachers that consider the unique challenges faced by teachers in different regions. The third insight underscores the significance of understanding teachers' perceptions and attitudes to improve classroom teaching practices, particularly in elementary-rural schools. Finally, the measurement of text readability and its appropriacy for different language proficiency levels brings implications for both local and international language education standards to align instructional materials with learners' abilities.

Each insight contributes to a more comprehensive and effective approach to English language education, catering to the diverse needs and challenges faced by educators, teachers, researchers, and learners in different contexts. *HOW* invites its readers to consider the studies presented in this new number, and previous ones, in further research and curricular or academic environments.