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A Colombian Network of Language Journals

Since 1965, the Colombian Association of Teachers of English (known as Asocopi, an acronym in Spanish) has always looked to contribute “[to] the betterment of English Language Teaching [ELT] in Colombia by means of promoting quality educators.”³ Its objectives have mainly aimed at networking opportunities, updating about language teaching matters, and struggling to take part in the decision-making about language teaching national policies. In the last three decades, Asocopi has become stronger by promoting social service, teamwork, quality teacher training, and developing academic and research opportunities among English language teachers nationally and internationally (Lucero & Diaz, 2014). Certainly, for the Colombian ELT community and Asocopi’s members, this hard work has strengthened the sense of belonging to an association for academic and innovative work in the country.

In its pursuit of organizing activities to support English language education in both pedagogic and linguistic competencies, Asocopi has strived to create a collaborative culture for collective inquiry into best practices for English language teaching, learning, assessment, and research for the Colombian ELT community. Its well-known annual conference, webinars, special interest groups, newsletter, and journal (HOW) have been open spaces for

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³ Taken from Asocopi’s official website, <http://asocopi.org>.

sharing knowledge, dissertations, and workshops. Asocopi keeps on enhancing not only its affiliates, but also English language educators, teachers, researchers, teachers-to-be, and partners, locally and globally, for self-efficacy and autonomy in their practices.

Congruent with these premises, Asocopi and its journal HOW have looked for initiatives that foster collegiality and mentoring for enhancing advances and reflection in English language education and the spread of its knowledge. HOW's biannual publication, meet-and-greet events, and Asocopi's Newsletters are examples of these initiatives. Their mutual purpose is to increase the acknowledgment of situated or innovative teaching practices that strengthen the image of the Colombian ELT community, internally and externally. Indeed, the country demands accountability for its needs, which eventually can lead to the organization of its communities to a clear horizon over English language education practices. Contributions to these initiatives integrate each member's work into Asocopi and HOW. As a result, there is identification with the association and its journal development as its community improves its profiles and practices.

Particularly, HOW has encountered challenges in the editorial process and the accomplishment of the national regulations for specialized journals over the past few years. At the 2022 Asocopi Annual Conference, Miryan Vera, Asocopi's Administrative Manager, talked with Edgar Lucero, HOW's editor, about facing such challenges. Through this dialogue, the apparent lack of communication among the Colombian specialized journals' teams in the field emerged as one of the various challenges. This realization led to the idea of creating a *Colombian Network of Language Journals* initially aimed at fostering collaboration among journals and editors in the field, facilitating the exchange of corresponding information and knowledge, and enabling the strengthening of the journals.

In June 2023, Myrian and Edgar sent the first invitation to 22 Colombian specialized journals in the field. The invitation gathered enthusiastic responses and participation from numerous colleagues for the creation of the network (e.g., Correa, 2023). By this 2024 first semester, there is the active participation of nine journals' editors and assistants: HOW, Folios, Íkala, Colombian Applied Linguistics, GiST, Enletawa, Profile, Avances en Educación y Humanidades, and Enunciación. With six meetings conducted so far, Asocopi and HOW have been the platforms to talk about and disseminate pertinent information about the network creation to active members. During these sessions, all participants have collaborated on various proposals and outlined several ideas for the network consolidation and future development in 2024.

In agreement with Borgatti and Foster (2003), a professional network is an organization that enables access to content, experts, and (local or) global connections with fellow peers. As a *Colombian Network of Language Journals*, we are consolidating how the network can function and how corresponding information can flow in it for the Colombian ELT community.

Thus far, we are sure to be a network putting forward a comprehensive editorial approach, supporting academic publishing processes, and representing the community before (non) governmental entities at local, national, and international levels. For these purposes, we need constant interaction with the community's needs and challenges through permanent sharing activities, continuous mutual learning, and the use of effective communication tools. As Espinoza-Castro et al. (2018) suggest, we, as a network, want to share work and projects with common objectives and purposes, and with solid horizontal communication between the different participants of the community.

The *Colombian Network of Language Journals* looks to hold collaborative structures for continuous improvement and, as Siemens (2008) suggests, 'meeting challenges' requested by the Colombian ELT community regarding the editorial approaches, purposes, and processes. The network's success depends on its capacity to (1) promote and sustain the essence of professional growth (Stoll & Seashore, 2007), and (2) value the knowledge brought to the community (DuFour et al., 2006) on these matters. By holding collective and reflection-oriented purposes, in the future, the network can affront and, why not, reinvent editorial and academic publishing processes enriching the essence of the Colombian ELT community. We hope to expand the *Colombian Network of Language Journals* by engaging in diverse activities that not only benefit the journals and editors but also bring advantages to authors, reviewers, and readers alike.

Articles in this 2024-1 Issue

We have the pleasure of presenting seven research articles and one reflection paper in this HOW's new number. Five of those research articles are by Colombian authors and the other two are from Chile and Saudi Arabia respectively. The reflection paper is from a local scholar.

The first research article, by William Ricardo Ortiz-Garcia and Zulma Carolina Navarrete-Villarraga, reports the results of a qualitative action research study conducted with children from a private Colombian institution. This study gives evidence that the participating children developed different processes simultaneously, considering the revised Bloom's taxonomy. Those processes included performing more flexible cognitive and knowledge pieces while learning, developing cognitive processes with greater emphasis on the levels of 'apply' and 'analyze', and developing procedural and metacognitive knowledge. The second research article, by Ana Gutiérrez-Rojas and Nayibe Rosado-Mendinueta, aims to explore listening assessment in a Colombian private language institution and its potential connection to students' underperformance in listening proficiency tests. The study reveals that despite the curriculum's holistic listening development goals, there is a misalignment in

the way listening is approached during the English language course. This situation becomes a factor that contributes to students' underperformance in listening comprehension.

The third research article describes the factors that enhanced students' construction of arguments when participating in culturally infused discussions at an undergraduate English as a foreign language British Culture course. Pablo Vergara-Montes and Luzkarime Calle-Díaz show that the factors facilitating the construction of arguments could potentially be peer scaffolding, previous knowledge, connection to participants' reality, and curiosity and inquiry. The fourth research article explores teaching practices and pedagogical experiences to foster well-being in English language student-teachers. By using a series of narrative events extracted from an action research methodology, Diego Ubaque-Casallas states that the participating student-teachers engage in thought-affective and well-being pedagogies, which coexist with traditional language pedagogy but are not cognitive-oriented. The fifth research article explores six reading strategies to engage students in more dynamic reading with workshops about the cross-curricular approach among ninth graders at a public school. Rubiela Cruz-Roa demonstrates that using reading strategies facilitates the development of critical reading in students and contributes to improving their knowledge of English.

Maria-Jesus Inostroza A. and Leslie Werlinger B., from Universidad de Concepción, Chile, are the sixth research article's authors. They present a study reporting the findings of action research that explored the contribution of board games, memory, and bingo on pre-kindergarten students' oral expression when participating in English lessons. This study shows that students increased their English oral production when such games were implemented in their lessons. Yaseen Ali Azi, Sami Abdullah Hamdi, and Mohammed Ahmad Okasha, from Jazan University, Saudi Arabia, are the seventh research article's authors. This experimental study uses information literacy and discourse analysis to develop English as a foreign language learners' critical reading skills while verifying information on social media. The results show a significant improvement among the experimental group compared to the control group when trained in evaluating a set of false news using information literacy and discourse analysis skills.

The reflection paper is about addressing emotional aspects in the second language learning processes by Luis F. Cisneros. This article addresses elements such as motivation, attitudes, levels of anxiety, acculturation, ethnicity, and personality that can bring up positive outcomes along the language learning stages in ESL/EFL classes.

We hope that the articles in this HOW's new number continue captivating your knowledge and curiosity to explore various current interests of English language researchers. The invitation to join HOW as readers, as well as authors, will always be on.

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