

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

“...Much work has been done in identifying the distinctive characteristics and assumptions of teacher research, arguing strongly for the contributions that teacher knowledge can make to the educational community of both practitioners and academic researchers”¹

I am very pleased to start the presentation of the seventh issue of our journal by sharing with all of you our latest achievement: the indexation of PROFILE in Publindex – Colciencias, in Category B. With this, the national indexing system for Colombian journals acknowledges our scientific and editorial quality as well as the visibility of our publication. Once more, I should express my gratitude to the advisory and editorial committees as well as to my working team, whose contributions were vital to achieving that goal.

In our search for reviewers from different parts of the world, I am proud to welcome professors Stephen Bax (Canterbury Christ Church University College, UK), Andy Kirkpatrick (University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Institute of Education), Terence Lamb (University of Sheffield, England), Susan Noffke (University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, USA), and Mark Pegrum (The University of Western Australia). I am sure our journal will gain a great deal with the contributions of the new members of the advisory board. Their expertise in language teaching, teacher education, applied linguistics, and research will surely help us monitor the quality of our publication and make it possible to have voices of experienced and novice teachers in future editions.

I should also thank Rocío Monguí and Angela Corredor, who have participated as teacher educators in the in-service programmes we have run in the last two years in our University. Their guidance to encourage some schoolteachers to publish their papers in this number has been really useful.

This issue has evidenced the increased interest our publication has sparked throughout the seven years of existence. More than twenty-five articles received for this issue went through the reviewing process and, in the end, thirteen were recommended for publication. I am sure you will find them interesting and, most likely, applicable to your teaching situations.

We open this number with three articles based on projects carried out by teacher-researchers in public schools in Bogotá. In the first one we read about the designing of a foreign language curriculum which involved a group of

¹ Noffke, S. (1994). Action research: Towards the next generation. *Educational Action Research*, 2(1), 9-21.

elementary and high school teachers interested in improving the English-learning process at a technical school. Then we get acquainted with the development of a small-scale research project implemented in the area of materials assessment and which arrived at determining the criteria a group of fourth graders used when assessing the worksheets provided by the teacher in the English class. On the other hand, the third article of the first section of this issue informs us of the use of songs as an alternative to encouraging secondary-school students to communicate orally in large classes—a challenge many teachers face nowadays.

Connected to the same topic of materials in English language teaching, the fourth article shows that representations of the Anglo-American culture are still favoured in ELT textbooks but that, in most cases, they have been transformed into “international” attitudes. As a result of critical discourse analyses done on textbooks in use in Argentina, the author pinpoints representations of English-speaking cultures found in current textbooks and which open to debate the apparent fairness of English as an international language. The next article, based on a Brazilian context, focuses on the use of learner corpora as a means to investigate the usage of modals in the writing of advanced EFL (English as a foreign language) learners studying at private language schools.

The following two articles correspond to the area of teacher education. An interpretive research that involved language student-teachers from a public university in Brazil tells us how language student-teachers construct their knowledge about language teaching and learning during pre-service teacher education. Then we can find a report on a study regarding materials use in a teacher preparation programme in Colombia and its effectiveness in the practicum. The author also proposes actions to include in local and national teacher education programmes.

We have promoted the publication of papers by new teacher-researchers. This time we can learn about two studies conducted in Colombian teaching contexts. The first one aimed at detecting the learning styles secondary school students with low academic performance used when learning English. Findings provided an account of the role learning styles played in the learning process as well as the factors that allowed students to explore their styles. The second paper refers to a study which explored the development of children’s oral communication in English and the way in which the activities and the teacher’s roles created or expanded students’ opportunities for learning.

The third section of our journal sheds light on a diverse range of issues teachers and teacher-educators often reflect upon or attempt to explore in our daily work. We begin with a paper on motivation. A framework to understand motivation in the TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) field gathers approaches used to conceptualise motivation and then draws on some practical and research implications for second or foreign language learning. The controversy over whether or not the learner’s mother tongue plays a positive role in the foreign/second language learning-teaching context constitutes the core of the following article. After revising the stances of language-oriented

theorists, the author presents some suggestions as to when and how learners' native language can be capitalised on in the process of learning another language.

The last two articles are related to teachers' conceptualisation concerning educational change and pedagogical knowledge. A Colombian educator and his student-teacher analyse the relationship among the concepts of change, transformation, and innovation concerning pedagogical knowledge. To do so, they resort to theoretical information from specialised sources and practical experiences that have taken the shape of thesis and monograph projects. Afterwards, an Australian teacher reflects upon some of the problem scenarios she faced as an EFL teacher in pursuit of professional development and the dilemma over assumed contemporary teaching practices until finding a solution close at hand: using one's own concurrent language learning experiences to inform others of one's beliefs about teaching and learning.

Lastly, I should point out that facing today's challenge of strengthening English proficiency in all educational levels poses key issues in language teaching and teacher education as well as highlights the need to revise how we teach English, in which circumstances, and for what real purposes. Likewise, it is necessary to know with whom we can work to help learners achieve higher proficiency levels and to take advantage of what has been investigated vis-à-vis the teaching profession. All of these and other issues need serious studies and dissemination through publishing. Thus, I extend the invitation to read this issue and to send your contributions to our eighth number.

Melba Libia Cárdenas Beltrán
Journal Editor