

Editorial

“(...) Research communities: academic researchers belong to research communities in which they disseminate their research at conferences and through publications” (p. 114).¹

Welcome to the second issue of our thirteenth volume. With this publication we reach the sixteenth edition of our journal and continue moving forward towards meeting the challenges academic journals face nowadays to reach a target audience.

The increasing interest of teacher-researchers, universities, research agencies and educational authorities in making research results, innovations and knowledge public poses questions in regard to the existence of conditions that support periodical publications. Besides counting on the necessary resources, we need to make certain that we are not only working towards the fulfilment of deadlines to get a new issue published. In addition to that, we consider it paramount to sustain a community composed of readers, contributors, reviewers and supporters for, as pointed out by Burton and Mikan, research communities are one of the features of academic research. As the authors explain, academic researchers belong to research communities which provide opportunities to make their work visible. One of them is through publications.

This might sound obvious, but finding spaces to have their work published and getting in touch with peers who have common interests are some of the challenges faced by less experienced researchers and new teachers. Likewise, it is a challenge for practitioners who work in places where publications containing classroom research, reflections and innovations in English language teaching (ELT) are inexistent or only open to experienced professionals or to the ones who belong to prestigious institutions. In some scenarios, prospects to engage in publication processes are scarce. In others, the publication culture does not have a long tradition.

We hope we can continue sharing the works contributed by teachers of English from different academic backgrounds and countries through the print and electronic versions of our publication. The last one can be downloaded from our website. Readers can also share with authors and editorial boards their impressions about our publication by participating in the conferences we organize to launch each issue or via e-mail. This way, we want to keep in touch with the ELT community we aim to reach.

¹ Burton, J. & Mikan, P. (1993). Teachers' classroom research: rhetoric and reality. In J. Edge & K. Richards (Eds.), *Teachers develop teachers research* (pp. 113-121). Oxford: Heinemann.

This issue contains twelve papers derived from research and innovation projects. They are connected to the areas of English language teaching (ELT) through the use of technological tools and learning strategies, discipline-related problems and challenges, pre and in-service teacher education, the development of metacognition among students, and the implementation of bilingual education programmes in English as a foreign language (EFL) settings.

The *Issues from Teacher Researchers* section groups ten articles about studies conducted in six countries. The first three articles are related to the exploitation of technology in English language teaching, an area still in need of documented experiences. We open our publication with an action research report. This time, Gloria Rojas tells us about the work done with ninth grade students of a public school in Colombia in order to foster students' communication in English through the writing of blogs. It involved doing some in-class activities or in the computer room, and independent work, according to students' arrangements of extra-curricular time. These [arrangements] let the author document how students communicated through writing blogs and the nature of the interaction that took place when using them.

Subsequently we have the paper by Gurleen Ahluwalia, Deepti Gupta, and Deepak Aggarwal on the use of blogs in a college in India, with the purpose of supplementing in-class language learning activities. This was done through a language laboratory program in which forty-two first year engineering students were introduced to blogs and instructed to use them for recording their laboratory work.

Afterwards, we can find an analysis of the views of twenty-six pre-service and eight in-service English teachers in Hong Kong concerning the information technology courses in their teacher education programmes, as examined by Chi Cheung Ruby Yang. The findings of the study show the role software applications and technological integration plays in the course outline plus the paramount role of PowerPoint as an application in teaching. Questions are posed with respect to the role information technology courses play in the preparation of teachers to teach with it.

Then, Josefina Quintero Corzo and Odilia Ramírez Contreras address a topic of common concern among school teachers: facing discipline-related challenges in the classroom. The authors report an action research study on how a group of teacher-trainees created and tried varied strategies to help them overcome indiscipline in English as a foreign language classrooms at public schools in Colombia as well as the challenges faced.

Phatic communion is the theme of the next article written by Gabriela Ayala González, Miguel Adrián Leonel de Cervantes Orozco, Víctor Daniel González Cabrera, Faviola Romero Mayoral and Gerrard Edwin Mugford Fowler. The authors collected classroom data in five contrasting teaching contexts in Mexico to investigate how language learners engage in classroom small talk and how teachers respond to such interactional opportunities. The analysis of the information provided arguments

to conclude that phatic communion plays an important role in establishing, developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships between teacher and learners which can be seen in terms of solidarity and support.

The following two articles deal with the study of metacognition as a means to foster speaking and reading skills in contexts of English as a foreign language. With respect to the first one, Claudio Díaz Larenas informs us what was found in an exploratory investigation that sought to analyse eighth and twelfth graders' knowledge of speaking strategies to communicate in English in public, semi-public and private schools in Chile. The implementation of a communication strategy inventory revealed students' perceptions of knowledge of speaking strategies and peculiarities of results in connection to the type of school they belong to.

The paper by Fatemeh Khonamri and Elahe Mahmoudi Kojidi is based on a study in Iran around the relationship between metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and comprehension monitoring of a group of students majoring in electronics. The use of a questionnaire, think-aloud protocols, error detection and retrospective questions let them identify the strategies students chose to tackle academic reading tasks as well as the combined effect of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and reading ability of those texts on language learners' comprehension.

Three articles concerning bilingualism are gathered next. First, Irasema Mora Pablo, M. Martha Lengeling, Buenaventura Rubio Zenil, Troy Crawford and Douglas Goodwin report on the results of a study aimed at exploring students' and teachers' reasons for using the first language within the foreign language classroom at a public institution in Mexico. Through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews carried out with French and English teachers, they concluded that the participants recognized the use of the first language as positive and part of the teaching and learning process. In contrast, few students do not like the use of the first language in the classroom and are fond of the use of the target language only by the teachers.

An investigation conducted at a Colombian public university with eleven deaf students in different academic programs who did not receive English instruction as part of their professional training is the theme of the article by Olga Lucía Ávila Caica. The study entailed identifying the effect of using Internet resources as support for the design and development of a blended English course for deaf university students. The readers will get acquainted with relevant information as regards what can work well for deaf students and the difficulties that can interfere with their English learning.

After that follows the article by Claudia Lucía Ordóñez, who presents the results of a study on the impact of a curriculum that connects learning events in Spanish and English in authentic communicative performances during the first year of the implementation of the curriculum in a private school in Colombia. The results revealed positive changes in the language learning environments of the school, the teachers' ideas about language and language learning, and the students' communicative skills and

ways of learning. The author also introduces the concept of *education for bilingualism* to replace that of *bilingual education* used in Colombia, which she considers ineffective in the country's mostly monolingual context.

I wish to draw our readers' attention to the problematic aspects those three articles address: the use of the mother tongue in Spanish speaking contexts, the attention given to minority groups –like deaf learners– and the monitoring of curricula that integrate the languages involved in bilingual education. These aspects shed light on the necessity of examining classroom practices and language policies. This is particularly important in Latin-American contexts where there is an increasing emphasis on raising standards in English language teaching and learning and on promoting bilingualism at local and national levels.

We continue with the section *Issues from Novice Teacher Researchers*. It includes an article by Jhonatan Perdomo Toro, Ángela Milena Rico González and Nury Catherine Huepa Salcedo, who focus on describing and analyzing how autonomous learning emerges in a group of Colombian third graders' socioaffective practices as reconstructed in written narratives. Besides these documentary evidences, the authors carried out classroom observation and interviews. The information gathered through them showed that children are able to recognize and reflect on the causes and consequences of situations thanks to the use of different socialization forms implemented by their parents. Those forms, in turn, help them become aware of their duties and reveal that social interaction, with family as the main contributors, is essential in children's development of autonomy.

We close this edition with an article in section three of our journal by Rocío Mahecha, Stella Urrego and Erika Lozano: *Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations*. The authors give us the opportunity to learn about the innovation they conducted in a public high school in Bogotá, Colombia, where they monitored text coding and double entry organizer as strategies that could help students improve reading comprehension of texts in English. They concluded that, even though they only explored what happened while developing two reading workshops, both teachers and learners could see improvement in reading comprehension and positive reactions towards the learning processes the project brought about.

As mentioned in our previous publication, the number of papers submitted for evaluation purposes has increased. This poses more challenges in the evaluation processes which are possible thanks to the support of the members of the advisory and editorial boards, as well as our assistants. Furthermore, it implies counting on more reviewers. On this occasion I am pleased to welcome four new collaborators, namely: Professors Maria Cristina Arancibia Aguilera (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile), Darío Luis Banegas (University of Warwick, UK & Ministry of Education of Chubut, Argentina), Kate Mastruserio Reynolds (University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, USA), and Yvonne Marcelle Saulny, Universidad Pedagógica Experimental

Libertador-Maracay Campus, Venezuela. I am sure their participation will also help us maintain the quality of our publication, comply with the requirements a scientific journal demands and foster the participation of teachers of English in the work we lead in our journal.

We hope you find the manuscripts gathered in this Volume 13 No. 2 interesting and, hopefully, feel encouraged to send your contributions to upcoming issues. Collaboration in sharing our journal with other teachers involved in the ELT field is very much appreciated.

Melba Libia Cárdenas B.
Journal Editor