

Editorial

*The need was felt instead, by many of us in the South, to look for different kinds of explanation, not only to gain a more clear understanding of the conflictual social processes that affected our lives but also to assist in re-channeling collective energies toward a better course of action for justice and equity. (p. 1)*¹

Fals-Borda illuminates our path and our vision in many different ways. First of all, we are very clear as to truly understanding what he means by the South; it is us, people from below the equatorial line down to the Antarctic Circle, especially in the Western Hemisphere. We Americans from the South are turning our heads to ourselves to gain a deeper introspection. We are starting to truly perceive who we are, what we are made of, and what our dreams and goals are. We have travelled a long way influenced by truths spoken by others for other contexts. At some point in history we made them fit, or tried rather, into our own background. *Mistake* many would say; *necessity* others would agree; *part of a process* is our understanding. This is true in many different fields of action, including academia.

Our beacons in the construction of knowledge in the field of language learning, teaching and research were until recently academicians from the North, namely the United Kingdom and the United States. Yes, we departed from what happened in similar though different environments and tried to see the connection with what was going on in our particular surroundings. But things started to change. Our ideas, beliefs, and behaviors could be perceived and acted upon in new fashions because there are people from our own territory building new knowledge without feeling different or inferior on intellectual grounds. As Fals-Borda indicates, we are performers of our present and future not only because we understand what is going on but because we have realized the forces that emerge from within.

The publication of works carried out by practitioners, novice teacher-researchers, experienced researchers, and teacher educators evidences the emergence of such forces. The articles that they publish in journals like ours portray what happens in their educational settings, contribute to the development of our professional knowledge, and provide grounds for further actions. Gathering voices from different scenarios and from different teachers' backgrounds is a matter of justice and equity. This way, we can acknowledge

¹ Fals-Borda, O. (1995, April). *Research for social justice: Some North-South convergences*. Plenary address at the Southern Sociological Society Meeting, Atlanta, GA. Retrieved from <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/si/falsborda.htm>.

due recognition to the forces emerging from grassroots teachers as well as to the well-established communities where more experienced educators work.

In this edition we have gathered ten articles whose authors are spread over seven countries, namely: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, New Zealand, Spain, and the United States. This diversity evidences not only the coverage of our readership, but the increasing interest of academic communities in the kinds of works we promote in *PROFILE*.

The *Issues from Teacher Researchers* section begins with two articles regarding teacher education. First, Argentinian teacher María Cristina Sarasa shares with us a narrative research project into the possibilities of classroom-generated stories in an initial English teacher education program. In her work she shows how she conceptualized the participants' written narratives on "unheroic" lives and derives the implications these narrative classroom interventions hold for English language teacher education. Next, Eric Gómez Burgos reports on a study conducted with first year Chilean students of English Pedagogy about the use of formulaic sequences in written and oral descriptions in an English as a foreign language context. As pointed out by the author, students resort to similar formulaic sequences in written and oral texts and many of the expressions generally used in spoken discourse are used by students in written texts.

A Comparison of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) university students regarding learner autonomy comprises the work authored by Colombian teacher Ximena Paola Buendía Arias. Her study sought to gain deeper understanding of this subject matter in learners from different cultures through the identification and analysis of similarities and differences between Chinese and Colombian students from two public universities.

After that, Spanish teacher Isabel Herrando-Rodrigo shares with us a survey-based study that aimed to explore the attitudes of Spanish practitioners and undergraduate students towards English as the vehicular language in the field of medicine and towards medical electronic popularizations as an alternative to medical research articles. The pedagogical implications drawn from the positive results of the study stress the students' awareness of the use of English and the new-born genres or communication channels.

Then, we present the exploratory study carried out by Constanza Tolosa, Claudia Lucía Ordóñez, and Tania Alfonso who aimed at comparing the performance of online tutors of two groups of eleven-year-old beginner students of English in Colombia and Spanish in New Zealand. The article let us get acquainted with the kind of feedback provided by each group of tutors; this feedback was analyzed in terms of language corrected, error input, and types of feedback provided.

In the last article of this section of issues from teacher researchers we can read the report of Itala Diaz's qualitative study. In it, the author describes the training in metacognitive strategies to help beginning young learners with difficulties as to increasing and retaining vocabulary. To do so, the cognitive academic language learning approach instructional model and journaling progress were used and monitored.

The *Issues from Novice Teacher Researchers* section includes a report on the study conducted by Mexican teacher Romero Lara Herrera, who focused on Mexican students' perceptions of learning the history of Mexico in English through content-based instruction. Remarkably, we can learn from this study that despite students' initial rejection to learning the subject concerning the history of Mexico in English, most of them acknowledge that content-based instruction is a meaningful approach to do so.

Three papers have been gathered in the last section, concerning *Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations*. In the first one we can read about the investigation led by Colombian teachers John Jairo Viafara González and Aleida Ariza Ariza who describe an examination of English as a foreign language (EFL) pre-service teachers' professional preparation in connection with their experiences overseas. Interestingly, we learn what student-teachers' experiences reveal about the construction of their intercultural competence.

We continue with the work by Yeferson Romaña Correa on an investigation into the teaching and learning of English to adult learners through the use of Skype™ conference calls. As noted in the results of the study, Skype™ conference calls might be considered as an influential computer-mediated communication tool in order to promote the learners' speaking skill, social interaction, oral reinforcement, and language fluency out of classroom settings.

We close this edition with an article authored by Falcon Dario Restrepo Ramos, who explores previous studies that address the incidental learning of vocabulary in second language acquisition. The revision of key literature in the area contributes to our understanding of vocabulary learning through incidental means, the relationship between reading and incidental vocabulary learning, and the strategies and tasks that promote the incidental learning of vocabulary.

As you can observe from the articles published in this edition, it is possible to ascertain that knowledge comes from many parts of the world. From the 10 articles included in this edition, six are from the Americas, five from countries geographically located south of the United States, two were produced in countries with a tradition as producers of knowledge, and one is from the country that has shaped our own identity because of the transmitted language and culture. Regardless of the point of origin, researchers and writers are struggling to construct a universe in which our thoughts are more important than personal or country-related features without disregarding local contexts from which we can derive lessons in the universe of learning and teaching a foreign language, English in this case.

We hope the works we present in this edition can provide enriching lessons. Enjoy your reading!

María Claudia Nieto Cruz
Journal Director

Melba Libia Cárdenas
Journal Editor