

New Ways International

*English Teaching in Chocó, Colombia and Around
the World*



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Editorial

Following a relatively long period of absence, New Ways International is back again, thanks to the efforts of the academic team of the foreign languages program of the Universidad Tecnológica del Chocó which, after overcoming all sorts of difficulties, made it possible to bring this publication back to life. With this issue, we are pleased to launch an electronic version of the journal, in a modern format, that is available both on the internet (www.pedigitales.com/new_ways) and as an android app that permits reading it offline.

This third edition publishes six articles, five of them reporting results of classroom research and the other one sharing ideas, strategies and technology-based products for teaching English successfully. In his article “EFL in the Primary Classroom: The Ongoing Reality of Chocó”, Dr. Alexander Córdoba analyzes crucial situations that primary school teachers from Chocó have to tackle in the foreign language classroom and describes the social, cultural, political and academic factors that intervene in the teaching of English in the department of Chocó. Oscar Alonso Vásquez Vallejo presents a study to analyze the use of Augmented Reality to foster the learning English experience through multimedia content. Daniel Baldrich Arce and Ana Julia Chaverra report the effects of implementing a Teacher Development Program course in the city of Quibdó (Colombia), with the purpose of making in-service English teachers aware of the need to constantly improve and update their teaching practice. They also present a second article to examine the most common practices of teaching and learning English in the municipality of Quibdó, in order to explain the causes of students’ poor communicative competence upon leaving secondary school. Ana Pinilla Machado and Karen Quiroz Mena deal with the topic of senior students of primary education undergraduate program, contributing to understand problems faced by the senior students with respect to their low command of foreign language teaching methodology. Finally, the article “Juegos didácticos en el aula, estrategia transmedia y tecnología de realidad aumentada: propuestas y productos para enseñar inglés” presents a number of considerations regarding games and the use of transmedia and augmented reality as effective teaching strategies; it also describes how certain teaching products (books and courses) have been used to enrich foreign language methodology with the use of advanced technology.

The Editorial Committee of New Ways International is pleased to deliver this new issue to its readers, hoping to contribute to shed more light for a better

understanding of the English teaching and learning phenomena and also to provide ideas to innovate the teaching practices.

Francisco Moreno Mosquera
Consultant Editor

Research Articles

EFL in the Primary Classroom: The Ongoing Reality of Chocó

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Resumen

Hoy en día, el inglés, ya sea como lengua nativa, segunda o lengua extranjera, establece o determina el futuro de miles de profesionales alrededor del mundo. Siendo consciente de tal emergente fenómeno, el gobierno colombiano ha establecido por ley que los docentes de educación primaria deben enseñar inglés como lengua extranjera. Enseñar una lengua extranjera exige preparación y los docentes de primaria del Chocó están todavía en busca de una solución para alcanzar tal objetivo.

Por lo tanto, este Artículo ha analizado la difícil situación que los docentes de primaria del Chocó afrontan a la hora de enseñar ILE (inglés como lengua extranjera) en el aula de educación básica. Igualmente, y, de manera general ha descrito la existencia de algunos factores sociales, culturales, políticos y académicos que, de una u otra forma, pueden intervenir en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera en la educación primaria del Chocó.

Para la dimensión práctica de la investigación, se aplicaron ambos métodos (cuantitativo y cualitativo). Es decir, se implementó un cuestionario como el instrumento de recogida de datos de tipo cuantitativo y la entrevista y la observación de aula como los instrumentos del corte cualitativo.

El estudio ha revelado que el profesorado en servicio de primaria del Chocó carece de los conocimientos básicos para enseñar Inglés a los niños de dicho nivel; ya que

no cuenta con formación ni lingüística ni metodológica para este fin. En consecuencia, una de las conclusiones del presente estudio se fundamenta en la necesidad que poseen dichos docentes de ser formados profesionalmente para mejorar sus capacidades tanto lingüísticas como metodológicas en ILE.

Palabras claves: Inglés, Lengua extranjera, Aula de primaria, Docentes en servicio, Realidad

Abstract

English either as a native, second or foreign language, sets or determines the coming future for thousands of professionals around the globe today. Being aware of such a salient phenomenon, the Colombian government has established that primary school teachers must teach English as a foreign language. Teaching foreign language demands preparation and primary school teachers from Chocó are still in search of a solution to achieve such a goal.

This Paper has therefore, analyzed the crucial situation that primary school teachers from Chocó face when teaching EFL (English as a Foreign Language) in the primary classroom. Furthermore, it has to some extent, described the existing of some social, cultural, political and academic factors which may intervene in the EFL context of Chocó's primary Education as well.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were applied in the development of the investigation. A questionnaire was implemented as the quantitative data collection instrument and the interview and classroom observation as the qualitative data collection instruments.

The study has revealed that in-service primary teachers from Chocó lack of the knowledge they need to teach English to young children as they are trained neither from a linguistic nor from a methodological point of view. Thus, one of the conclusions of this study is the need the target primary teachers have to receive an in-service training course aimed at improving their linguistic and methodological EFL skills.

Key words: English, Foreign Language, Primary classroom, In-service Teachers, Reality

Introduction

During the last decades English has become a basic necessity to communicate in the modern and globalized world. According to Syam (2012, p: 4), English is currently the most widely spoken language in the world. It is the mother-tongue of more than 320 million people and other 200 million use it as their second language. Besides, English is an important foreign language almost everywhere in the world. In this respect, Kizildag (2009) affirms that English is the world language and serves as the lingua franca for business, education, political and technology contexts (p: 1). Similarly, Rosner & Bolitho (1990) state that these days English language teaching (...) is a local requirement in an era of worldwide information-sharing and commercial exchange (p: 5).

This current reality related to teaching and learning English as a foreign language has persuaded many parents around the world that their children should start learning English early, despite living in nations where children may never use it. As Hill (cited in Rogers, 1990) argues, in many countries parents insist on their children all learning a foreign language, because they believe that it will help them to get a good job (p: 14).

This is a mindset which is logically well founded in relation to the ever-growing awareness people worldwide have come to assume about learning English as a foreign language. No father or mother wants his/her children to be deprived of that opportunity. As early as 1988, Prodromou stated that the introduction of English into the primary school is imminent (p: 37) and that is the ongoing reality today. Early introduction of EFL in the primary classroom has challenged primary school teachers to assume the responsibility of teaching it, although some of them may not be linguistically or methodologically prepared for such a role.

Consequently, all over the world, most countries admit and acknowledge the need to become bilingual nations. Syam (2012) affirms that English is for example, the lingua franca in a vast country like India where too many languages are spoken and so many diverse cultures and ethnic groups co-exist. Cummins & Davison (2007) coincide to state that:

In countries like Nigeria, China, and India, the 'principal Ingredient' of unification and strong unity is the English Language. India, a country of over a billion people, has many hundreds of

local dialects and languages. In such a complicated situation, the State has given English the official language status to facilitate easy communication, (p: 5).

English fulfills a large number of utilitarian purposes including acquisition of knowledge of all kinds in a fast-moving world of informatics and knowledge as the one we live in today (Syam 2012 p: 2). Similarly, Nair et al (2014) have affirmed that the English language is vital for an emerging economy like Malaysia's where they have even included English literature into the EFL syllabus in schools for the past 11 years (p: 1). Though, English has a restricted range of functions in Japan it is taught extensively as a foreign language in the education system and is increasingly employed in international trade, overseas travel and in academic research as well (McKenzie (2010, p: 4). According to this author, the Minister of Japanese education has recognized the importance of English to the future of Japan and to the world in general:

English has played a central role as the common international language in linking people who have different mother tongues. For children living in the 21st century it is essential to acquire communication abilities in English as a common international language. In addition, English abilities are important in terms of linking our country with the rest of the world, obtaining the world's understanding and trust, enhancing our international presence and further developing our nation (p: 9).

Thus, with the English language becoming more significant each day due to globalization and increasing competition among nations, there is an urgent necessity within both, developed and developing countries of training school teachers or educators in charge of dealing with EFL in the classroom.

Colombia is not the exception in this mindset. Using the Common European Framework of References for Languages (Council of Europe 2001) to create the national standards for international comparison, the Department of National Education of Colombia has implemented the National Program of Bilingualism 2004-2019, which includes the new standards of communicative competence in the foreign language. The main aim of the program is the improvement of communicative competence in English in the entire educational system as well as the improvement of national competitiveness. In other words, the Colombian government has understood that mastering English may set or determine the coming future for thousands of professionals in our country.

This English teaching and learning-based research seems to be an undeniable important aspect in today's world because it intended to meet the needs of a wide variety of teachers and students involved in Chocó's primary education system to