

An Exploration of the Historical-Pedagogical Trends in Colombian ELT: Interpretative Analysis of the ASOCOPI/HOW Archive from 1966 to 1985

Una Exploración de las Tendencias Histórico-Pedagógicas en la Enseñanza de Inglés en Colombia: Análisis Interpretativo del Archivo de ASOCOPI/HOW de 1966 a 1985

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Abstract

The field of English Language Teaching (ELT) has undergone significant transformations since 1966, heavily influenced by evolving sociocultural dynamics. This article explores how broader sociopolitical and cultural changes have shaped teacher education and professional development in ELT based on archival work with the very first issues of *HOW*, starting in 1966 (in total, 6 volumes; 52 issues until 1985). Key global phenomena, such as globalization, the digital revolution, and the advocacy for intercultural understanding, have redefined educational priorities and methodologies. Teacher education programs have progressively evolved from traditional grammar-translation methods to more inclusive and communicative approaches. Sociocultural changes have necessitated the incorporation of intercultural competence and intercultural education into teacher education curricula, reflecting the growing recognition of cultural diversity in the classroom. Professional development opportunities have also expanded, emphasizing the need for teachers to adapt to sociocultural shifts and technological advancements. In this regard, *HOW* serves as a valuable repository of these transformations. Given its longevity and sustained contribution to the field, the journal offers a rich archive that documents the evolution of English language teacher education in Colombia, capturing shifts in pedagogical perspectives, research priorities, and policy discussions. By analyzing its contents over time, it is possible to trace how English language teaching in the country has been influenced by these broader trends, and how educators' perceptions, practices, and professional identities have been shaped as a result. *HOW* serves as a meeting point for educators, researchers, and policymakers to foster dialogue, disseminate research, and build an academic community, ensuring ELT evolves with society.

Keywords: HOW, Colombian ELT, pedagogical trends, historical analysis, archival analysis

Resumen

El campo de la enseñanza del idioma inglés (ELT, por sus siglas en inglés) ha experimentado transformaciones significativas desde 1966, influenciadas en gran medida por la evolución de las dinámicas socioculturales. Este artículo explora cómo los cambios sociopolíticos y culturales más amplios han moldeado la formación docente y el desarrollo profesional en ELT, basado en un trabajo de archivo con los primeros números de la revista *HOW* que se remonta a 1966 (en total, 6 volúmenes; 52 números hasta 1985). Fenómenos globales clave, como la globalización, la revolución digital y la búsqueda de la comprensión intercultural, han redefinido las prioridades educativas y las metodologías. Los programas de formación docente han evolucionado progresivamente desde los métodos tradicionales de gramática-traducción hacia enfoques más inclusivos y comunicativos. Los cambios socioculturales han requerido la incorporación de la competencia y la educación intercultural en los currículos de formación docente, lo que refleja el reconocimiento creciente de la diversidad cultural en las aulas. Las oportunidades de desarrollo profesional también se han ampliado, lo que hace hincapié en la necesidad de que los docentes se adapten a los cambios socioculturales y a los avances tecnológicos. En este sentido, *HOW* sirve como un valioso repositorio de estas transformaciones. Dada su longevidad y contribución sostenida al campo, la revista ofrece un rico archivo que documenta la evolución de la formación de profesores de inglés en Colombia y captura los cambios en las perspectivas pedagógicas, las prioridades de investigación y las discusiones sobre políticas. Al analizar sus contenidos a lo largo del tiempo, podemos rastrear cómo estas tendencias más amplias han influido en la enseñanza del idioma inglés en el país, lo que da forma a las percepciones, prácticas e identidades profesionales de los educadores. *HOW* sirve como punto de encuentro para que educadores, investigadores y responsables políticos

fomenten el diálogo, difundan la investigación, construyan una comunidad académica, y aseguren que la enseñanza de inglés evolucione con la sociedad.

Palabras Clave: HOW, enseñanza de inglés en Colombia, tendencias pedagógicas, análisis histórico, análisis de archivo

Introduction

In 2025, the Colombian English Language Teaching (ELT) community is celebrating a significant milestone: the anniversary of ASOCOPI, one of the oldest English language teachers' associations in Latin America, and its academic journal, *HOW*. Founded in 1965, ASOCOPI has played a vital role in advancing ELT in Colombia. The association has built a strong academic community through annual congresses, tailored professional development workshops, and partnerships with national and international publishers. It also recognizes outstanding teachers with awards like the Clare de Silva award.

Between 1966 and 1985, Colombia was undergoing major transformations shaped by social inequality, rural-urban migration, internal conflict, and an evolving national education system. Educational reforms aimed at modernization and diversification of curricula were launched during this time, including the creation of INEM schools (Institutos Nacionales de Educación Media) and the introduction of new language policies. These sociopolitical dynamics not only impacted access to education but also influenced how English was taught, learned, and framed within the national agenda.

HOW, launched in 1966, originally was named *Bulletin of Suggestions for Teaching Foreign Languages* and aimed to provide teaching tips, as stated by its creator, Robert Ilson (see Figure 1):

However, along with the transformation of the ELT field, *HOW* has evolved into a respected academic publication whose goal is “to maintain communication among English language teachers both in Colombia and abroad by offering opportunities for the dissemination of knowledge resulting from educational and research practices that concern English language teaching-learning issues” (<http://bit.ly/3R06eji>). Therefore, the journal has become a venue for sharing research findings and insights from language educators across various levels; it has addressed important themes shaped by Colombian social and political history, including diversity and peace.

Despite the rich history of ELT in Colombia, there seems to be a lack of scholarship that systematically analyzes archival materials to trace the early pedagogical and political conversations in the field. This article aims to fill that gap by providing a historical-pedagogical analysis based on primary documents from the early issues of *HOW*, highlighting how Colombian educators and institutions have actively influenced ELT discourse and policy since the 1960s.

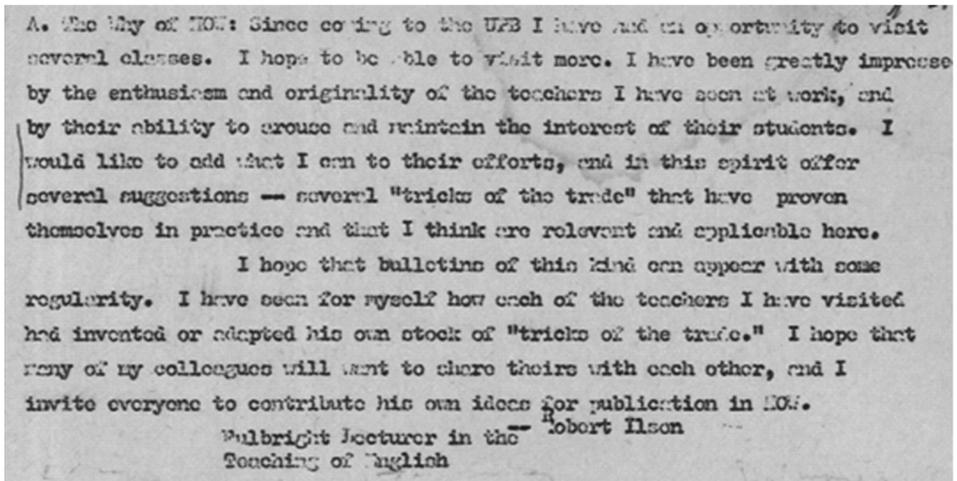


Figure 1. Aim of HOW as Stated in the First Issue by Robert Ilson

HOW serves as an invaluable resource for understanding the historical landscape of Colombian ELT, revealing the continuities, discontinuities, concerns, and interests that have shaped the field. As Giroux and Tremblay (2004) note, human activities, regardless of their antiquity, leave traces that can be analyzed to reflect our ancestors' behaviors, thoughts, and conditions. These traces can be found in various forms, including online content, audio, written documents, and even artistic and architectural works. This article explores key trends and developments in Colombian ELT by examining issues (6 volumes, 52 issues) of *HOW* from its inception in 1966 to 1985. In doing so, it pays tribute to ASOCOPI and *HOW*, the foundational spaces where many Colombian ELT scholars began their academic journeys. As educators and researchers, delving into the Colombian ELT historical and pedagogical threads is crucial.³

The Archive

The corpus for this study consists of issues of *HOW*, starting with the first one from 1966. Working with the archive posed challenges, especially since the earliest issues were

³ We must begin this article by expressing our gratitude to ASOCOPI's Board of Directors and its Administrative Manager, Miryan Cristina Vera. More than just a manager, Miryan has been the very heart and soul of ASOCOPI for many years, nurturing and driving the organization forward with unwavering dedication. As a former president of the Board, I feel truly humbled and honored that the Board and she have entrusted Miguel and me with access to the archive, allowing us to embark on this exploration of Colombian history—a history so rich that it could easily fill more than one article.

mimeographed on kraft paper (see Figure 2). The Administrative Manager preserved the issues from 1966 to 1978 in a pocket file folder, organized by number, to protect them from deterioration. However, due to their age and the poor quality of the paper, some documents were fragile and difficult to handle. To mitigate this, we digitized the documents and saved them electronically.

The second part of the corpus includes issues from 1979 to 1985, which the Administrative Manager compiled into a leather-bound book to prevent further deterioration. These issues were easier to handle as they were formatted like modern journals. These were also digitized for improved accessibility. Initially, we intended to analyze the archive up to 1990 but could not locate five missing issues from that period. Additionally, the archive contained mixed materials, including ASOCOPI newsletters and conference programs, requiring careful reading to filter out irrelevant documents. Consequently, this paper will focus on the issues from 1966 to 1985, aiming to shed light on the journal's history before it was registered in the Open Journal System, where issues from 1996 onward can be accessed (<https://bit.ly/43B58Sy>).

Methodology

As language educators and researchers engaged in teaching and learning environments, we believe tracing and exploring the historical threads of ELT in Colombia is crucial. The richness of the archive we accessed provides ample material for analysis. Initially, we considered various approaches, such as focusing on specific topics and tracking their development over time. However, we faced challenges, including potential gaps in the issues and missing numbers. Ultimately, we decided to organize our analysis by decades, examining the periods from 1966 to 1976 and 1976 to 1985, while highlighting key aspects relevant to Colombian ELT history.

We were captivated by the opportunity to work with this archive, which documents past pedagogical events in English as a Foreign Language in Colombia. We focused on the documents' significance, narratives, meanings, and contributions. Ventresca and Mohr (2005) describe archival methods as a constellation of analytic endeavors aimed at gaining insights through systematic interrogation of documents and artifacts produced by organizations. Their principles emphasize the study of relationships over objects, the shared meanings that underpin social processes, and the configurations that tie these elements into organized activities.

In our study, we focused on examining relationships and uncovering shared forms of meaning, rather than strictly following a set archival strategy. This article highlights key milestones and identifies trends in Colombian ELT as a reflective contribution to the

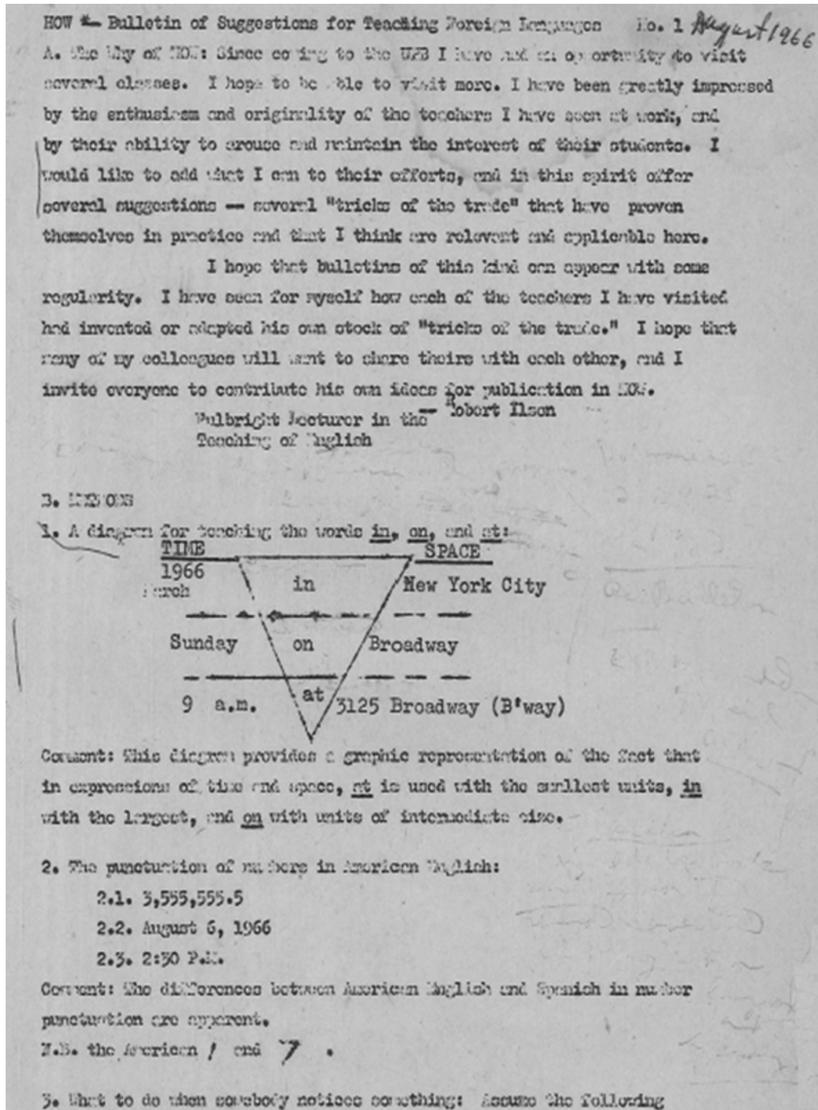


Figure 2. First Page of the First Issue of HOW Journal

Note. The first issue of HOW was produced in August 1966 by Robert Ilson, a Fulbright scholar, established at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana in Medellín. As can be seen, the journal was mimeographed on kraft paper.

field. To guide our exploration, we posed two key questions: (1) What ELT educational and pedagogical trends are present in the selected corpus? (2) What role have ASOCOPI and *HOW* played in language teacher education and professional development in Colombia? Following Giroux and Tremblay's (2004) insights, we recognized the importance of carefully selecting content elements for our analysis. Consequently, we employed a combination of descriptive and content analysis to examine the archive effectively.

Table 1. Methodological Proposal

Choosing the Collection	While we had access to texts published over a range of years, we decided to focus on the period from 1966 to 1985 as an initial framework for exploring teaching and research practices within the Colombian ELT community. Another key reason for this choice is that articles published after 1990 are available for readers in the Open Journal System. This 19-year span provides a representative scope for our analysis, which we recognize will require careful and thorough examination.
Establishing an Archive File	The files of the archive required a description and interpretation of specific aspects. Note-taking alongside the original text, preliminary ideas, and permanent commenting supported making a valuable and meaningful understanding for the community.
Processing the Archive Collection	Although the data had been organized previously, their condition made it challenging to manage, so we digitized the archive to facilitate our work. Most issues were already labelled and numbered, indicating their publication year. We divided the collections into two parts, mirroring the physical organization: One covering 1966 to 1977 and the other from 1978 to 1985. These digital files were saved in a shared drive folder to facilitate collaborative work.

Note: This table summarizes the procedure followed to work with the archival data provided by ASOCOPI. (Own elaboration).

Meyer and Rowan (1977) emphasized the theoretical foundations of collective orders and cultural analysis in archival research, while Meyer and Hannan (1979) highlighted the significance of institutional archival analysis in their studies on education and U.S. national development, employing an ecological approach. Inspired by these perspectives, we view *HOW* as more than a repository of academic articles; it is an evolving archive that reflects shifts in teacher education, linguistic policies, and pedagogical trends over time. Analyzing its contents allows us to access institutional, professional, and ideological developments that might otherwise remain unexamined, offering a historical lens into the evolution of English language teaching in Colombia.

Ecological explanations in institutional analysis emphasize the interplay between organizational, environmental, and technological constraints in shaping collective action. This perspective underscores how human populations adapt to social and institutional environments through structured responses that maximize sustainability. In this light, *HOW* functions as both a product and a reflection of these adaptive processes, capturing how the ELT community in Colombia has responded to shifting sociocultural and educational paradigms. We aimed to explore both the theoretical and pedagogical insights presented in the documents, which revealed various concerns regarding ELT in Colombia during that period.

Findings and Interpretation

This article offers a comprehensive overview of an archival inquiry into key trends and developments in Colombian ELT, as documented in *HOW* from 1966 to 1985. Four central thematic threads are identified, shedding light on the historical processes that have shaped the current state of the field. These include the construction of a community of practice; a discussion of the suitability of various ELT methods for the Colombian context; the critical voice of ASOCOPI through *HOW* in response to language policies promoted by the Colombian Ministry of National Education; and ongoing concerns about language teacher preparation to meet local needs and interests.

Development and Consolidation of an ELT Colombian Community of Practice

In discussing communities of practice, Garrido (2003) suggests that identity development and knowledge development are closely intertwined, with each influencing the other. This interaction occurs through the process of legitimate peripheral participation within the community of practice. Wenger (2001) explains that a community of practice is defined by three key dimensions: a shared enterprise that is collectively understood and continuously redefined by its members, the mutual commitment that binds them into a social group, and a shared repertoire of resources—such as routines, norms, artifacts, language, and styles—that members have built up over time.

HOW was initially founded by Robert Ilson, a Fulbright scholar at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. However, by issue No. 6, it had evolved into an *Inter-university Bulletin of Pedagogical Linguistics*, leading to a rotating editorial responsibility, with various universities taking turns overseeing the publication. These included Universidad Industrial de Santander, Universidad de Los Andes, Universidad del Valle, Universidad del Quindío, Universidad Nacional, among others. This collaborative effort fostered meaningful interaction between foreign and local

professors, all working towards the shared goal of promoting English and advancing the education of Colombian English language teachers. *HOW* also benefited from partnerships with binational centers such as Centro Colombo Americano and the British Council, as well as from publishing houses that began advertising in the journal, such as Oxford University Press, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Longman, McGraw-Hill, Houghton Mifflin, Educar, Voluntad, and more.

HOW has created valuable opportunities to share English language teachers, scholars, students, and administrators' inside and outside classroom experiences. A spirit of trust and active listening has always been central to this process. There is a clear recognition of the need to understand teaching and learning practices in the field, along with a commitment to creating spaces for participation as speakers, writers, or organizers. More than just fostering a sense of belonging, ASOCOPI and *HOW* have shown a deep commitment to collaboration within the community, providing open spaces for sharing ideas, reflecting, and offering constructive criticism. This spirit of openness and engagement has been, and continues to be, the essence of the ASOCOPI Annual Congresses and *HOW*. The following is an excerpt from the 1979 editorial, showcasing the human and organizational qualities that have long defined their work.

What of the future? Through *HOW*, an active and diligent editorial team plans to keep alive for you the spirit of unity, academic enquiry and professional debate which made Congress XV such an outstanding one. We would appreciate any suggestions or constructive criticisms you may wish to make about the current orientation, lay-out and content of *HOW*. Don't be shy about sending us articles, essays, letters or general information, which you think can be used in *HOW*. You don't have to be a Chomsky or a Widdowson to write for us! Indeed, many of those practical solutions and creative thoughts, that you have, may prove just as useful, if not more so, than a lot of the ideas of highbrow linguists. We also wish to remind members of the Editorial Board that their membership is valid only as long as they are participating actively in the planning, collation and publication of *HOW*. (Isabel de Díaz, while Marcia Dittmann is on leave of absence. Editorial *HOW*, 1979, p. 4)

This coincides with what Lamb (2012) outlines as the benefits of Language Teacher Associations (LTAs). They offer essential networking opportunities, provide a platform for educators to connect, share experiences, and collaborate. They also foster professional development through in-service training, workshops, and publication opportunities, helping teachers to refine their skills and advance their professional standing. Moreover, LTAs play a vital role in influencing language education policy. By sharing information on new policies and effective teaching practices, LTAs keep educators informed and engaged with the latest developments in the field. Additionally, they encourage cross-country collaboration, enriching professional practice and reinforcing their value to both members and policymakers.

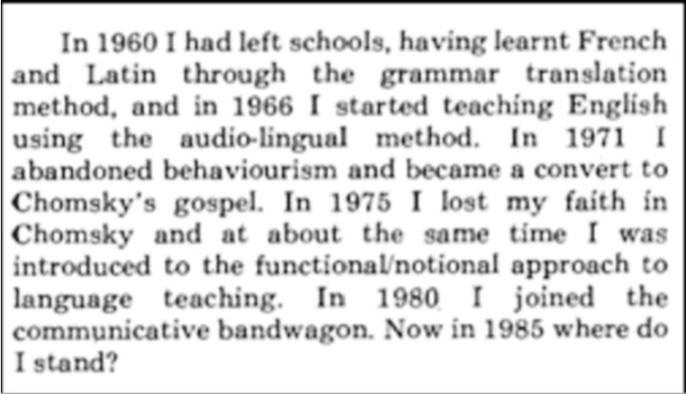
ASOCOPI has played a pivotal role in advancing ELT in Colombia through its sustained commitment to professional development, research, policy advocacy, and the integration of culture in language education. Since its founding in 1966, it has organized academic

events, published resources such as *HOW*, and collaborated with national and international institutions to support teacher training and curriculum development (Bastidas, 2017). The association has promoted teaching standards, reflective practice, and teacher inquiry by facilitating access to current research and fostering professional networks (Lucero & Díaz, 2016). More recently, it has advocated for intercultural competence, culturally responsive materials, and policy alignment with contemporary views of English as a lingua franca (Meadows, 2016), solidifying its influence across multiple dimensions of Colombian ELT.

The ELT Methods Conundrum

This section explores the way *HOW* documented and responded to the evolving landscape of ELT methods in Colombia. By tracing shifts from the audiolingual method and grammar-translation to the communicative approach and post-method perspectives, the journal reveals a community deeply engaged in negotiating the tensions between imported pedagogical models and local classroom realities. To kick off this section, we would like to introduce an excerpt from an article in issue No. 50 (July-Sept 1985) written by George Tunnell. In it, he outlines his professional journey across various countries and reflects on the trends in teaching methods, which eventually took on the status of dogma.

Before the 60s, there was a focus on the audiolingual method; however, in 1978, the Colombian Ministry of National Education published in *HOW*, the *Fundamentos del Diseño*



In 1960 I had left schools, having learnt French and Latin through the grammar translation method, and in 1966 I started teaching English using the audio-lingual method. In 1971 I abandoned behaviourism and became a convert to Chomsky's gospel. In 1975 I lost my faith in Chomsky and at about the same time I was introduced to the functional/notional approach to language teaching. In 1980 I joined the communicative bandwagon. Now in 1985 where do I stand?

Figure 3. Extract from the Article “Some Reflections on a Quarter of a Century of Learning and Teaching Languages”

Note. Tunnell was the Director of Studies at the British Council in Bogotá in 1985. In the article, he describes how his experiences teaching in different countries accounted for the evolution of ELT methods.

Curricular y su Aplicación en los INEM - ITA: Borrador del Programa de Idiomas Extranjeros, which changed the focus from audio-oral methods to reading comprehension since:

3. Los logros obtenidos con los métodos audio-orales, debido entre otras razones al elevado número de alumnos por clase, no han sido satisfactorios.

Figure 4. Extract from ‘Fundamentos del Diseño Curricular y su aplicación en los INEM – ITA’

Nota. “Los colegios INEM (Institutos Nacionales de Educación Media) desde el año 1969, han aportado de manera significativa a la educación en Colombia, a partir de su proyecto de Educación Media Diversificada”. (Taken from <https://www.inemkennedy.edu.co/>)

In 1979, in issue No. 33, George Smith from the International Program in Bogotá advocated for the Silent Way, a method developed by Caleb Gattegno (1976). Two years later, in 1981, Edmundo Mora, a local professor from Universidad de Nariño, revisited this method during the XVI National ASOCOPI Congress. A key development in the 1980s was the rise of the communicative approach. *HOW* issues from 1979 to 1985 featured articles discussing the form vs. function dichotomy, descriptions of the communicative approach, task-centered teaching, and the functional approach. By issue No. 49 (April-June 1984), the journal covered various aspects of the communicative approach, including pair work, communicative games, the use of literature, and communicative language testing. However, other methods were still being explored, such as Community Language Learning, which Professor Jesús Bastidas from Universidad de Nariño, a noted expert in the field, analyzed in comparison to Grammar Translation in a 1983 issue.

In 1994, Kumaravadivelu introduced the concept of “principled pragmatism” (p. 30) in his article on the post-method condition, emphasizing how classroom learning can be shaped by teachers through informed teaching and critical reflection. This concept is reflected in a section of *HOW* called *Language and Life*, where Okley Forbes, a professor from Universidad del Quindío, interviewed both international and national educators about various aspects of ELT. For example, in a 1982 interview, Professor Juan de la Cruz Rojas from Universidad del Valle shared his views on teaching, while in 1981, Liz Moloney, a British Council advisor for Colombia, addressed questions about the different theories influencing ELT at the time, as can be seen in the examples that follow:

The analysis of these *archives of HOW* reveals a dynamic evolution of ELT methodologies in Colombia, shaped by both global influences and local adaptations. From early discussions on the audiolingual method and reading comprehension to the rise of communicative approaches and principled pragmatism, the journal has chronicled key debates and innovations in language teaching.

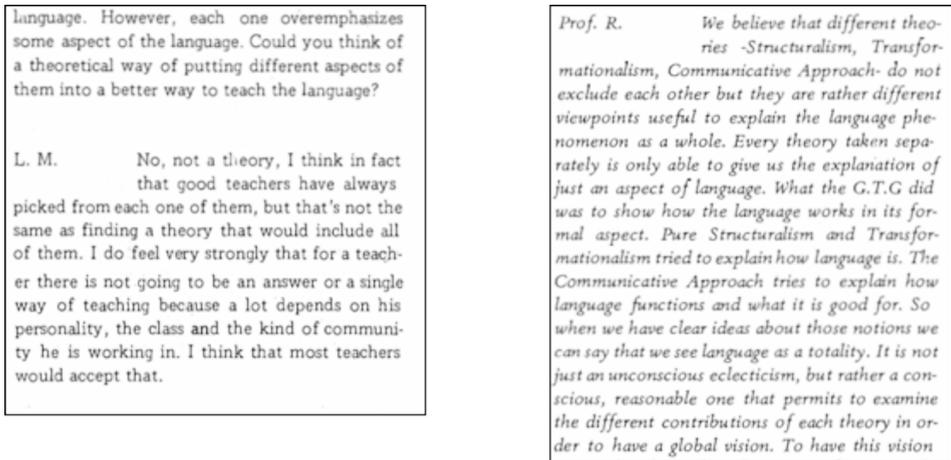


Figure 5. Extract from the Interviews with Liz Moloney and Juan de la Cruz Rojas
Note. These interviews were produced by editor Okley Forbes for a section in *HOW* called Language and Life

Challenging Language Policies with a Critical Perspective

ASOCOPI and *HOW* have played a significant role in both communicating and critiquing language policies issued by the Colombian Minister of National Education. Numerous instances in their publications highlight this ongoing dialogue. One notable example occurred in 1976 when *El Espectador*, a local newspaper (Figure 5), reported on the potential elimination of English from basic education. Jerónimo Gil, then president of ASOCOPI, responded by outlining the drawbacks of such a decision and offered recommendations, including an increase in the number of hours dedicated to teaching English in secondary education.

The dialogue resurfaced in 1983, in issue No. 47, when a letter was sent to the then President of Colombia, Belisario Betancur. In this letter, ASOCOPI emphasized that further reductions in English teaching hours would hinder language learning. They also pointed out the inconsistency of governmental actions, noting that while they were training language teachers, they were simultaneously proposing to cut instructional time. Unfortunately, the response of the Ministry was disappointing; they acknowledged the recommendations but completely ignored the request regarding hourly allocation (Figure 7).

Another critical instance appeared in issue No. 33, published in 1979, which discussed Decree 1337 from the Colombian Ministry of Education. This decree mandated that

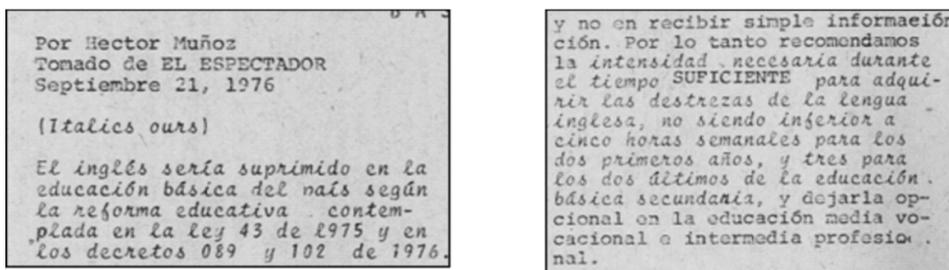


Figure 6. Extract Taken from ‘HOW Supplement on Educational Reform’ Issued in 1976
Note. ASOCOPI’s Board of Directors produced this supplement, pointing out the negative consequences of the decisions and providing recommendations for ELT in Colombia.

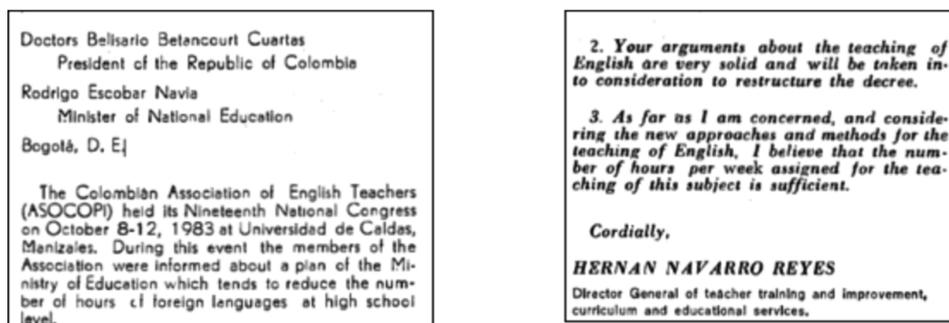


Figure 7. Extract from Letter from ASOCOPI to the President of the Republic of Colombia

Note. ASOCOPI wrote an open letter to President Belisario Betancur (1983) critiquing the language policies issued for ELT in secondary schools.

students would receive two years of English, two years of French, and two years of an optional language, beginning in February 1980 for Calendar A schools and September 1980 for Calendar B schools. ASOCOPI’s Board of Directors responded to this decree by highlighting its shortcomings, such as the disruption of English learning, the necessity of English proficiency for university admission, and concerns about the availability of qualified teachers. They also invited the Minister to engage in a dialogue about the decision, underscoring their commitment to advocating for effective language education.

One final example worth highlighting is issue No. 37, published in Christmas 1980, which outlines the official English curriculum for grades VI to XI in secondary schools.

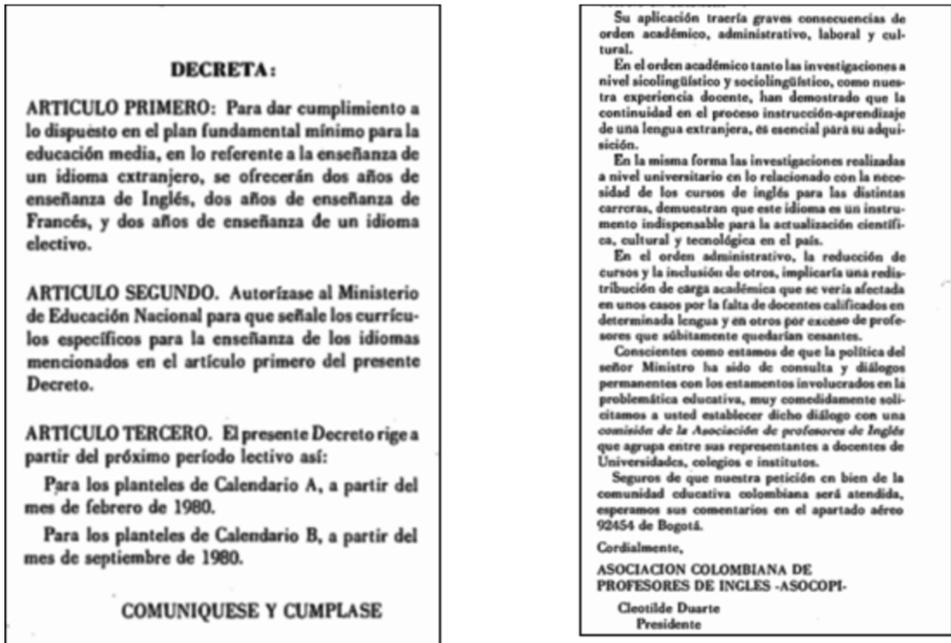


Figure 8. Extracts from Decree 1337 of 1979 and from the Open Letter to the then Minister of Education, Rodrigo Lloreda Caicedo

Note. The decree regulated the teaching of English for middle school and redistributed the hours for foreign language teaching.

In this issue, the Ministry acknowledged the failure of the audio-oral method and how overly ambitious the language proficiency goals had been (Figure 9). This realization led to a shift in focus towards developing reading comprehension skills instead. This highlights that, historically, we have consistently grappled with the challenge of determining the best approach to teaching English in a community where most people are not exposed to the language or do not feel a strong need to learn it.

Little has changed since the introduction of the National Bilingualism Plan in 2004, as foreign models continue to be followed while the national context remains largely overlooked. In this sense, Bermúdez-Jiménez et al. (2014) argue that the guidelines in the Colombian National Bilingualism Program appear to adopt international standards like the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) without public reflection on their relevance to local contexts. These guidelines overlook the diversity of local and regional contexts in the

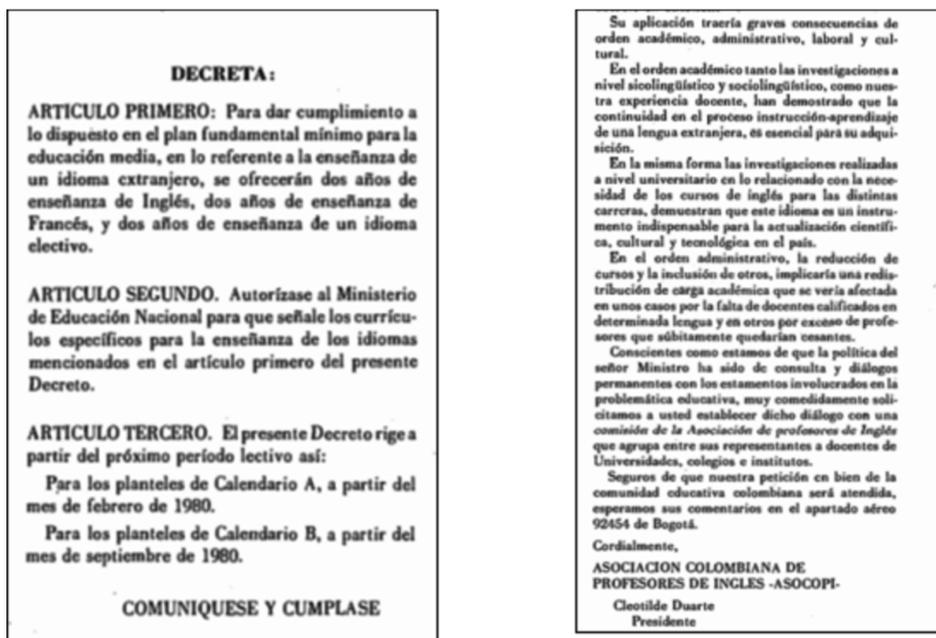


Figure 9. Extracts from the Publication English Teacher Training Presented by Alicia Gutiérrez Zárata, Ely Cardona, Rosario Cárdenas and Sara Gómez de Ardila

Note. The authors belonged to Dirección General de Capacitación y Perfeccionamiento Docente, Currículo y Medios Educativos from Ministerio de Educación Nacional, which oversaw both language teacher training and curriculum design for secondary schools.

face of globalization. Similarly, Areiza (2008) points out that while globalization is often seen as beneficial for economic and cultural development, it tends to disregard individual regions' specific interests and cultures. Vargas et al. (2008) also criticize the basic standards proposed in the program for failing to recognize regional differences, treating the nation as a homogenous entity, and disregarding local cultures and educational contexts.

Language Teacher Preparation

A careful look at the archive shows traces of the evolution of language teacher preparation in Colombia. One of the first articles was written by Clive Taylor, the English Language Officer from the British Council in 1982. Taylor, in issue No. 41 from that year, emphasizes the importance of redesigning teacher-training programs to adapt to the dynamic nature of education and the ever-changing backgrounds and expectations of trainees and

learners. Key components for effective training include understanding the demographics of teacher trainees and the specific teaching contexts they will encounter. Programs should focus on general professional skills, specialized training in English language instruction, and continuous professional development to ensure ongoing support for newly qualified teachers. Suggestions for improvement include gathering information to tailor training, refining selection procedures, redefining language proficiency standards, aligning with current teaching practices, and adapting programs to meet local needs. This comprehensive approach aims to enhance teacher quality and effectiveness in the classroom.

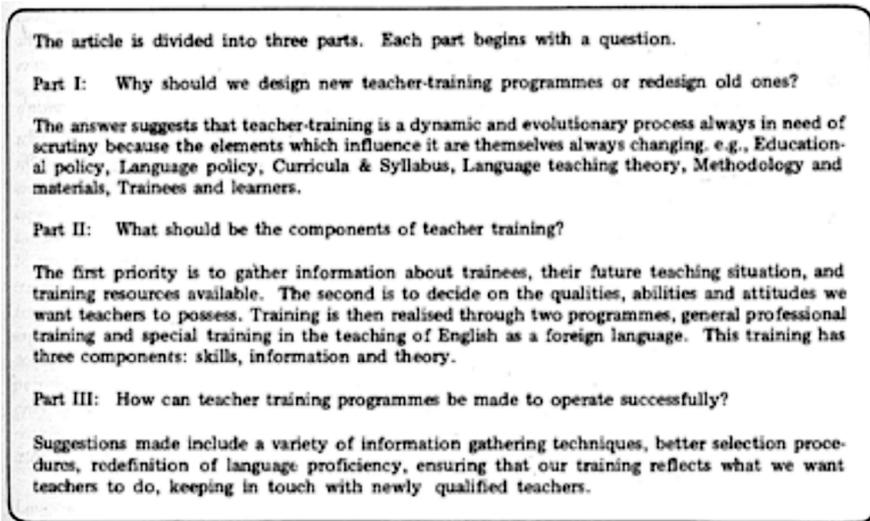


Figure 10. Extract From ‘Designing a Successful Teacher-Training Programme for English Teachers’

Note. Clive Taylor, language advisor from the British Council, summarized the main points in the article about language teacher training.

In the issue No. 41 of 1982, Silvia Valencia, Martha González, and Edelberto Arias from Universidad del Quindío present a curriculum plan for teacher training that emphasizes the integration of learning theories, a cumulative learning experience, and relevance to the realities of students. The curriculum was structured to gradually introduce increasingly complex information, enhancing the maturity and understanding of students over time. Materials were rooted in concrete experiences, starting with simple, engaging texts and progressing

to more complex subjects, which they considered crucial for maintaining motivation and ensuring meaningful learning.

By looking at issue No. 35 of 1980, we learn that the Instituto Lingüístico Colombo-Americano (ILCA) was responsible for English teacher training and material development until its dissolution in September 1976, which led to a temporary halt in English language activities from October 1976 to July 1978. In response to this gap, teacher training initiatives and the development of a secondary-level curriculum resumed in July 1978 at the Instituto Electrónico de Idiomas (IEI) in Bogotá. This reorganization was driven by decrees 088 (1976) and 1589 (1978), which placed the IEI under the Dirección General de Capacitación y Perfeccionamiento Docente, with a focus on training teachers of both foreign and indigenous languages. The primary aim of these efforts was to enhance English teacher training and improve the overall quality of English language education in Colombia.

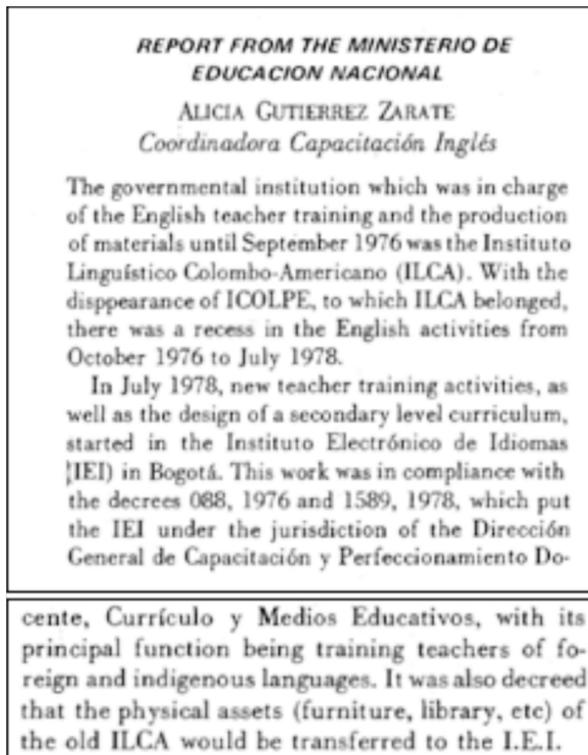


Figure 11. Extract from Academic Reports Published in Issue No. 35, April – June 1980

Note. Representatives from the Ministry explain the changes in the institutions responsible for foreign language teacher training.

This historical information was also reported by Professor Jerónimo Gil Otálora (2013) in his book *Viaje de la memoria por la Escuela de Idiomas 1960-2010*. He narrated that at the former Faculty of Philology and Languages at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia in Tunja, they transitioned from the Grammar-Translation Method to the Audio-Oral Principles Method (ILCA), developed by a team of U.S. teachers and linguists with support from UCLA and the University of Michigan. This innovative approach, created to train English speakers quickly, was used by Peace Corps Volunteers in the 1960s under President John F. Kennedy's program. Volunteers like Leland Northam, Carlos Maeztu, John T. Whelan, and Bruce Edwards – some of them also mentioned in issues of *HOW* and key actors in the development of ASOCOPI – were integral to the program at the university starting in 1962. The ILCA method, based on phonetics and oral language, was implemented using a set of guides from levels one to five, with teachers strictly following these materials. This method emphasized speech as the primary form of language, with teachers providing an oral model and students focusing on phonetic accuracy to mimic native pronunciation.

The I.E.I. offered various training courses for language teachers that focused on improving their English proficiency and teaching methodologies. These included Regular Courses held during the school year in cities such as Bogotá, Cali, and Manizales, scheduled to accommodate teachers' availability. Vacation Courses took place during the June-July and December-January breaks, allowing participation during their free time. The courses were designed to improve both language proficiency and teaching methodology. Each course consisted of 90 hours, including instruction, homework, and evaluations, covering topics such as classroom language and introductory teaching methods. The I.E.I. produced all course materials, including booklets for trainers and trainees, without relying on specific textbooks. A key feature of the program was integrating language improvement and teaching methodology, enabling participants to enhance their language skills while learning effective teaching strategies. The courses emphasized collaborative learning through group and pair work; their goal was to improve teachers' English language proficiency and ability to teach effectively in secondary school settings.

To close this trend, we would like to include a contribution by Okley Forbes, a Professor from Universidad del Quindío, concerning the preparation of foreign language teachers, appearing in issue No. 42 in 1982. First, he numbers the qualities a foreign language teacher should have. He claims that a good teacher is passionate about their work, finding fulfillment in guiding students and creating a positive, engaging learning environment. They are aware of their role as a foreign language teacher and take responsibility for their impact in the classroom. Strong language proficiency is essential, along with a deep understanding of the language structure and usage. Methodological knowledge is also key, as familiarity with different teaching approaches and the psychology of learning allows them to convey information effectively. A great teacher focuses on fostering both communicative and

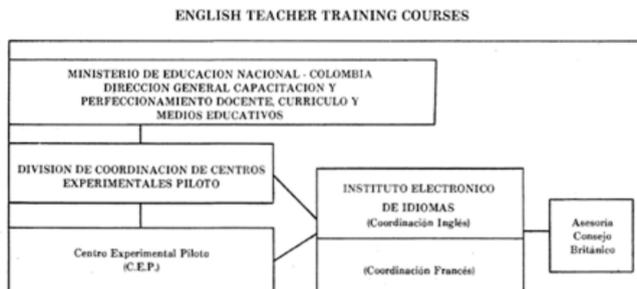


Figure 12. Organizational Structure of the Entities Offering English Teacher Training Courses

Note. The Colombian Government commissioned the Instituto Electrónico de Idiomas to develop training courses for language teachers.

linguistic competence in students, teaching grammar in a functional, context-based way. Lastly, they encourage student engagement, inspiring a sense of responsibility, discipline, creativity, and a strong desire to learn.

Besides, he describes ways to improve the teaching environment for foreign language teachers. He emphasizes the importance of creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom, where teaching is more than just a job, but a comfortable and engaging environment for both teachers and students. It also addresses the issue of teacher motivation, noting that many enter the profession without a strong commitment, which can negatively affect the learning experience. Professional development should be encouraged to improve teaching effectiveness, particularly in expanding teachers' theoretical knowledge and understanding of language and learning psychology. Additionally, students should be held accountable for their learning, with teachers setting high expectations to foster responsibility. Finally, he advocates for using varied teaching methods that prioritize meaningful communication and practical language use over purely grammatical accuracy.

Looking retrospectively at Forbes' model of language teacher education, it is evident that its core concerns—strong linguistic proficiency and a deep understanding of language teaching methodologies—remain central to Colombian linguistic policies today. However, the model also highlights key aspects of modern language teaching, such as meaningful learning, continuous professional development, and student accountability. It is particularly striking to see such a holistic approach emerging at an early stage, integrating elements like intercultural relations, psychological considerations, and learning theories into the preparation of language teachers.

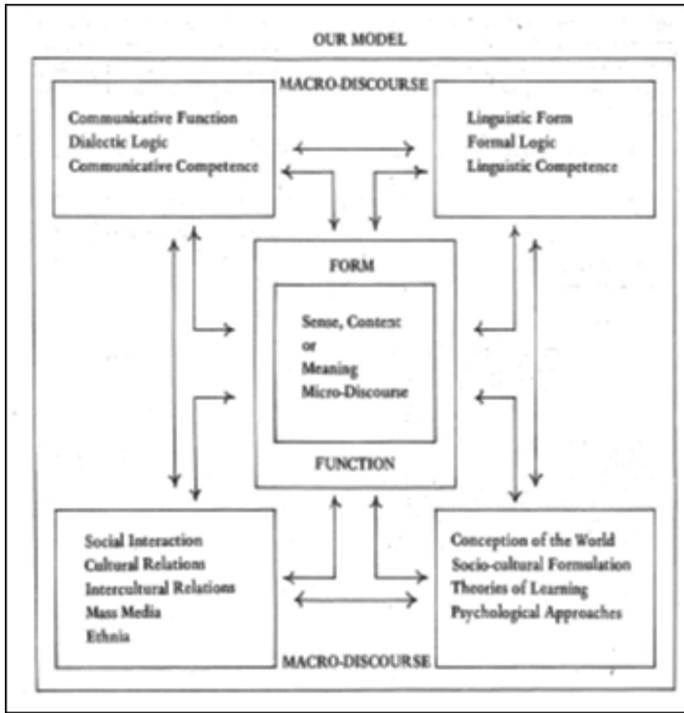


Figure 13. Language Teacher Preparation Model Proposed by Okley Forbes
Note. This model summarizes Forbes' components of a teacher preparation program, informed by the advances in applied linguistics.

144 While foreign advisors played an influential role in shaping early ELT policies and methods, the archive reveals the critical contributions of Colombian educators in localizing and innovating these approaches. Professors such as Jesús Bastidas, Silvia Valencia, and Edmundo Mora not only adopted international trends but also critically examined and adapted them to the Colombian social and educational context, laying the groundwork for the pedagogical practices we see today.

While many aspects of Forbes' model remain relevant, key gaps have become evident when viewed through the lens of ELT developments in Colombia since the National Bilingualism Program in 2004. Notably, the model offered little attention to sociocultural factors such as regional diversity, social inequality, and local educational needs – issues that remain critical today. It also lacked a critical perspective on language policies and their impact

on marginalized communities. Additionally, the integration of technology into ELT, now essential in the digital and AI era, was not yet part of the conversation. These omissions underscore the need for more context-aware, inclusive, and critically engaged approaches in Colombian ELT. The archive reveals that many of the challenges of today have deep historical roots, reminding us that shaping the future of ELT requires both honoring past insights and confronting present complexities.

Further Research

As previously mentioned, the archive is incredibly rich, offering numerous avenues for reconstructing the history of ELT in Colombia. One approach could involve identifying both foreign and local professionals who have contributed to the development of the field, such as professors Jesús Bastidas, Silvia Valencia, Fernando Silva, and Gilma Zúñiga. Their experiences as pioneers could provide valuable insights for shaping current bilingualism initiatives. Another potential line of inquiry involves analyzing the teaching materials, those advertised in the journal and those published by foreign and local professors between 1966 and 1985.

Exploring the connection between the linguistic policies presented in the selected corpus and those introduced after 1985, such as those related to the National Bilingualism Program, could be particularly valuable. Identifying the continuities and shifts in bilingualism goals for English and Spanish would help better understand the path that has led to the current Colombian ELT situation (in which global frameworks like the CEFR are widely adopted yet often applied without sufficient adaptation to local sociolinguistic realities, resulting in persistent regional inequalities and mismatches between policy and classroom practice). Additionally, expanding the focus to include teacher preparation and linking it to the Colombian Framework for English (COFE) project (1991–1997), as Rubiano et al. (2000) discussed, would further enrich this research.

A significant component of the archive is a series of interviews conducted by Professor Okley Forbes during his time as editor. He interviewed prominent local figures such as Beatriz Castillo de Campo, Director of Modern Languages at Universidad de Los Andes, and Gustavo Hernández García, Dean of Humanities at Universidad del Quindío; Juan de la Cruz Rojas, Director of the Languages Department at Universidad del Valle; and British Council language advisors Liz Moloney and Clive Taylor. He also spoke with international experts, including Henry Widdowson, and conducted an intriguing interview with Professor J.R. Webster, senior professor at the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth, who discussed bilingualism in Wales, as well as Mr. Davies, a psycholinguistics lecturer at the same institution. These interviews provide valuable insights into the evolving landscape of language education locally and globally.

Conclusions

Reflecting on the invaluable archive of teaching and learning processes, methods, strategies, and EFL teaching skills over the years in Colombia is crucial for the field. Both ASOCOPI and *HOW* have played a pivotal role in strengthening these areas, while also maintaining connections within the broader ELT community at regional and national levels. What emerges is a dynamic interplay between classroom practices and the broader growth of a community that has significantly enriched English language education in Colombia.

Another significant aspect is the adaptation of teaching methods and techniques to meet students' needs, shaped by their specific contexts. Understanding this allows teachers to plan more effectively, integrating social and institutional interests. The archive analysis emphasizes the importance of lesson planning, activity organization, and addressing students' learning challenges. By assessing these needs, teachers can better manage the classroom and improve the overall learning experience for themselves and their students.

Finally, the archive underscores the importance of amplifying the voices of the community in shaping language programs and challenging or supporting government language policies. The voices of teachers and students in the ELT field have resonated across Colombia, contributing to a collective dialogue that impacts the entire community. *HOW* and ASOCOPI have been instrumental in fostering this dialogue, creating a platform for listening, exchanging ideas, and advocating for change. Their work has inspired political, social, educational, and cultural advancements in the ELT field, demonstrating their lasting influence from 1966 to 1985, and of course, up to now. These historical reflections shed light on recurring tensions in Colombian ELT, such as the adoption of foreign frameworks without sufficient contextual adaptation. The concerns raised in the 1980s about unrealistic proficiency goals, lack of qualified teachers, and exclusion of regional diversity still resonate today, particularly in critiques of the National Bilingualism Program. Understanding these long-standing debates can inform more context-sensitive and equitable language education policies moving forward. *HOW* and ASOCOPI continue to unite the ELT community, reinforcing a shared commitment to co-constructing and exchanging knowledge for the benefit of all.

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