

Twenty-Five Years Travelling the Publication Road: The *Profile* Journal Life Story

Veinticinco años recorriendo el camino de la publicación:
la historia de vida de la revista *Profile*

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This article presents the life story of *Profile*. The story is based on an ethnographic case study that aimed to understand the viewpoints of *Profile*'s new writers and reviewers regarding the role of scientific journals in fostering communities in the knowledge society. To gather information, I relied on personal reflections from my experience as the creator and editor of the journal, along with documentary evidence (published issues, regularly collected statistics, editorial workflows, and communications with editorial teams and various bodies of Universidad Nacional de Colombia, which funds the publication). The story illustrates the inception, development, and primary challenges that need to be addressed to ensure its continuity.

Keywords: article publication, life story, *Profile* journal, scientific journals, teacher-researcher

Este artículo contiene el relato de vida de la revista *Profile*. El relato surge de un estudio de caso etnográfico que buscó conocer las percepciones de escritores noveles y evaluadores de *Profile* respecto al papel de las revistas científicas en la generación de comunidades en la sociedad del conocimiento. Como fuentes de información empleé una retrospectiva personal de mi trabajo como creadora y editora de la revista, así como evidencias documentales (números publicados, estadísticas que se recopilan regularmente, flujos editoriales, comunicaciones con equipos editoriales y con diversas instancias de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, que financia la publicación). El relato muestra la gestación, la evolución y los principales retos que es preciso enfrentar para asegurar su continuidad.

Palabras clave: docente investigador, publicación de artículos, relato de vida, revistas científicas, revista *Profile*

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Introduction

In honor of the 25th anniversary of *Profile*, it is important to reflect on the milestones achieved and consider the future of the journal. With this in mind, I aim to provide a brief overview of what it entails to publish a scientific journal and hopefully encourage participation, especially of new authors, in this editorial endeavor that has persisted for a quarter of a century with the help of many individuals. My experience as an editor, along with my teaching and research pursuits, has allowed me to address the concerns of English teachers, particularly those working in challenging environments and seeking strategies to solve problems or broaden their knowledge. This could be through participation in teacher education programs or by simply referencing studies published by colleagues.

At local level, *Profile* aims to inspire the merging of the roles of teacher and researcher and to promote academic writing as a tool for professional development. Broadly speaking, as a scholarly publication, the journal helps to build a knowledge community of English teachers with common interests and challenges. The following story is based on my experiences interacting with participants in teacher education programs, as well as with authors and reviewers for the journal. It also draws from my own inquiries into editorial work and academic writing.

Beginning and Evolution of the Profile Journal

In Colombia, in the late 1990s, Cárdenas from the PRO-FILE Research Group in the Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras, at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, was promoting the concept of action research by teachers through the establishment of a journal. Launched in 2000, *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development* provided (and still does) a publication forum, initially for teachers who had been introduced through the university's professional development programmes to concepts of action research, but later for teacher researchers and

teacher educators from a wide range of international backgrounds. The journal was unique in its concern to “share results of classroom research projects, reflections and innovations undertaken by teachers of English as a second or foreign language . . . teacher educators and novice teacher-researchers” and to address itself mainly “to an international readership of pre- and in-service teachers” (see *Profile* homepage: <https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile>). (Burns, 2019a, p. 170)

Since 1995, I have been responsible for writing and coordinating teacher development programs at Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá Campus, designed for primary and secondary English teachers. The program's curriculum comprises three modules: developing communicative competence in English, methodology updating, and action research. The action research component also involves innovating to change or understand teaching contexts and working collaboratively to create projects that provide better learning opportunities.

Professors from the Department of Foreign Languages and guests from other institutions in Bogotá participate in these programs, which foster collaborative action research and innovation to collectively evaluate our teaching practices. Teachers are encouraged to systematize and make their work public and understandable to other educators and to contribute to the professional knowledge in English teaching and teacher education. The projects implemented by teachers are mainly shared by three means: written reports, a local symposium that started in 2005, and the journal *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*. In these dissemination settings, teacher educators have been instrumental in promoting teamwork for classroom project development and guiding teachers in report writing.

The conviction that greater dissemination of teaching research was necessary planted the seed to launch the *Profile* journal in September 2000. Initially, it was projected as a dissemination journal for schoolteachers to publish articles about their innovations, reflections,

and experiences in action research. It was also conceived as a forum for papers written by teacher educators on pedagogical and linguistic or educational policy issues related to the English language.

Professor Anita Elizabeth Rodríguez Reyes suggested the name *Profile* in 1999 to accompany the subtitle of the new publication's name (*Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*). That same year, I formed my research group, which included the assistant (then a bachelor's student) Yudith Martin and me. I adopted the name PROFILE (PROFesores de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera = Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) to denote the meaning of the group leading the publication. I believed that this meaning of *Profile* also captured the true essence of the journal since it was conceived for the Colombian context, where English is primarily a foreign language and in no way intended to confine professionals in the area to a single profile.

The initial purpose of the journal was to contribute to the professional development of English teachers by publishing the results of action research projects carried out by school teachers who participated in the aforementioned continuous teacher education program. Little by little, the journal captured the interest of the local English language teaching community. Likewise, the School of Human Sciences, and the Vice-President's Office for Research of Universidad Nacional de Colombia worked in strengthening the editorial quality of its periodical publications. *Profile* strived to achieve international standards such as the criteria for publishing, editorial boards, a style sheet, editorial processes, exchange with other journals, timeliness in periodicity, and open access to all contents. Notably, these standards have helped *Profile* stay in line with other journals focused on research in English teaching.

The journal's increasing popularity among the English teaching community prompted it to welcome teachers from different educational levels and countries. As a result, starting in 2003, during its fourth year of publication, *Profile* began featuring articles by authors from other countries.

Over its 25-year history, 696 authors from various countries have contributed to the journal (refer to Table 1).

Table 1. Origin of the Authors Featured in the Journal Between 2000 and the First Half of 2024

Nationality	<i>n</i>	%
Colombia	420	60.3
Mexico	60	8.6
Chile	45	6.4
Iran	34	4.8
Spain	24	3.4
USA	21	3
Argentina and Brazil	17 each	2.4 each
Türkiye	16	2.2
Ecuador	7	1
India and Indonesia	6 each	0.8 each
Australia and the United Kingdom	5 each	0.7 each
Italy and Cyprus	3 each	0.4 each
Slovakia	2	0.2
China, Malaysia, Portugal, Ukraine, and Uruguay	1 each	0.1 each
Educational level where they serve	<i>n</i>	%
University	567	81.4
Public/state schools	98	14
Private schools	17	2.4
Language centers	11	1.5
Education offices	3	0.4

N = 696

Over time, the journal consolidated its mission and vision. In 2004, the journal established the three sections that still define it today: *Issues from Teacher-Researchers*, *Issues from Novice Teacher-Researchers*, and *Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations* (see Table 2). Then, in 2008, it shifted from being published annually to biannually, and in December 2017, it added a third issue as a supplement.

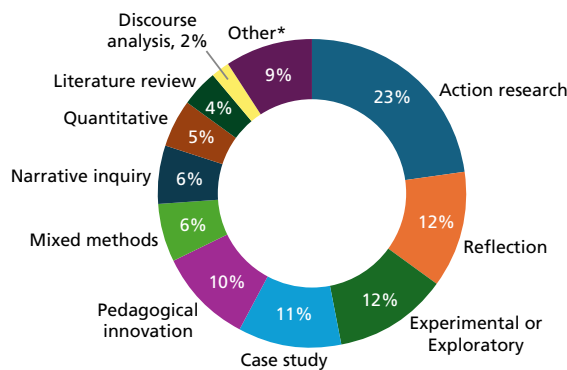
Table 2. Articles by Section Published in the Journal between 2000 and the First Half of 2024

Section	No. of articles
Articles published before the definition of the sections	42
Issues from Teacher-Researchers	327
Issues from Novice Teacher-Researchers	56
Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations	93
Total	518

Note. The number of articles is less than the number of authors published in the journal (696) since there are articles with multiple authors.

Currently, the journal shares the work of authors who are schoolteachers, teacher-educators, novice teacher-researchers, and professors from various countries who have participated in research and innovations in local or broader contexts. Furthermore, although we have maintained our interest in disseminating action research, we have also welcomed other research perspectives, as well as reflections and literature reviews (see Figure 1). This is a result of the journal’s increased national and international visibility.

Figure 1. Research Types in the Articles Published in the Journal between 2000 and the First Half of 2024



*Autoethnography, content analysis, corpus analysis, critical research, descriptive/interpretative study, document analysis, ethnographic study, grounded theory, needs analysis, observational study, phenomenological study.

The journal is available in both print and electronic versions, which has helped us attract more authors and readers. This is evident, for instance, in the number of visits to the official website between 2008 and 2023 (see Table 3). Additionally, referencing and indexing systems

display visibility metrics and policies for the journals hosted on their platforms.

Table 3. Visits to the Journal Website Between 2008 and 2023

Country	Sessions
Colombia	220,474
USA	49,387
Mexico	23,130
Philippines	19,325
Indonesia	19,134
Spain	15,355
United Kingdom	14,322
China	12,498
Chile	12,370
India	11,437

Source: Google Analytics

Visibility of the Journal in International Databases and Indexes

At *Profile*, we have made efforts to increase our visibility in international databases and indexing and abstracting systems. This is evident in our gradual entry into these systems (refer to Table 4), which has contributed to the journal’s greater institutional and external recognition and visibility. As shown in Table 4, the journal was included in the National Indexing System of Colombia in 2006 with category B, which it maintained until December 2009. From January 2010, it advanced to category A2, the second

highest in the Colombian ranking, and remained in this position until January 2015, when it achieved the highest category: A1.

Table 4. Key Moments in the Visibility of the *Profile* Journal in Indexing and Abstracting Systems (IAS) and Databases

IAS	Accepted
Ulrich's Periodicals Directory	2004
MLA International Bibliography	2005
ERA	2005
Latindex	2006
Publindex	2006
DOAJ	October 2007
SciELO	June 2008
LLBA	March 2009
CLASE	November 2009
EBSCO	April 2010
Redalyc	June 2010
Informe Académico Academic OneFile	July 2011
REDIB	September 2012
SciELO Citation Index	February 2014
ProQuest	May 2014
DIALNET	June 2014
ERIC	January 2015
LatAm Plus	March 2016
Emerging Sources Citation Index	June 2016
IRESIE	October 2016
ERIH Plus	December 2016
Scopus	June 2018
Scimago Journal Rank	June 2020
Catálogo 2.0 de Latindex	March 2023

In Colombia, it was striking that the journal attained the highest ranking in Publindex, which recognized it as the country's most important publication in English teaching. However, as of 2017, a

new journal classification model came into effect that prioritizes the impact index (impact factor in the Journal Citation Report and the Scimago Journal Rank) of the scientific journal as the leading quality indicator, regardless of the relative quality of each paper published therein. This change harmed many Colombian scientific journals. That year, *Profile* was reclassified into a lower category: B. Despite this, *Profile* fared better than many other national publications, as most of them were placed in the lowest category (C) or lost their classification entirely.

In 2010, the journal was submitted to Scopus to gain more international visibility. This first attempt was unsuccessful, as the journal was rejected in 2012, after the evaluation period. We had to wait five years, until 2017, to submit the journal again. Finally, in 2018, the journal was accepted. Recently, alongside this search for visibility, the evaluation model of Colombian journals (Publindex) has exerted considerable pressure, as it is openly inclined to better classify Colombian publications included in the Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) or the Journal Citation Report.

Although Scopus and the SJR receive valid criticism from the international academic community for being restricted and monopolizing and for some journal evaluation systems giving preferential use to bibliometric data (as in Colombia) from such sources to assess publication quality, being included in a database like Scopus can provide another tool for analyzing the evolution of scientific publications. This is especially important for determining visibility, which is ultimately the primary goal of any scientific journal. This has been the main driver for the *Profile* editorial team: to share the research work carried out by teacher-researchers in teaching English as a foreign or second language with the broadest possible community.

In June 2020, the SJR for 2019 was published, and, for the first time, *Profile* made an appearance

in the report. We were placed in quartile 2 of the “linguistics and language” category and quartile 3 of the “education” category. This recognition, along with being indexed in the Emerging Sources Citation Index and Scopus, has influenced the national evaluation processes, which, as mentioned, are now governed by the place journals hold in these two indexes. Following the 2020 classification, the journal was promoted to category A1.

Editorial Team and Management

Over the course of twenty-five years, *Profile* has received institutional support from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and many individuals: the editorial team, reviewers, and, of course, authors. The contribution of the first two has been crucial in maintaining regular publication, increasing visibility, striving for higher quality standards, and solidifying the journal’s mission and vision (see Table 5).

Table 5. Evolution in the Journal’s Structure and Participants

Issue No. and changes	Vol. 1, 2000	Vol. 5, 2004	Vol. 12, No. 2, 2010	Vol. 26, No. 1, 2024
No. of pages	68	170	194	216
Sections	Four sections: (a) Issues from teacher educators (b) Teaching English in primary schools (c) Teaching English in secondary schools (d) Teaching English to adults	(a) Issues from teacher-researchers (b) Issues from novice teacher-researchers (c) Issues based on innovations and reflections	(a) Issues from teacher-researchers (b) Issues from novice teacher-researchers (c) Issues based on innovations and reflections	(a) Issues from teacher-researchers (b) Issues from novice teacher-researchers (c) Issues based on innovations and reflections
Authors	Twenty-five Colombians for thirteen articles (seven articles co-authored by two or three)	Fifteen Colombians for seven articles (four articles co-authored by two or three) One article by each of the following: 1 Brazilian 1 Indian 1 Hungarian 2 Slovaks (co-authored)	Thirteen Colombians for nine articles (four articles co-authored by two) One article by each of the following: 1 Indian 2 Iranians (co-authored)	Nine Colombians for four articles (co-authored by two or three), four Spanish (with one article co-authored), two Argentines (co-authored), two Brazilians (co-authored), three Turkish (co-authored), and four Ecuadorians (co-authored)

Issue No. and changes	Vol. 1, 2000	Vol. 5, 2004	Vol. 12, No. 2, 2010	Vol. 26, No. 1, 2024
No. of pages	68	170	194	216
Editorial teams	A team: three members, all Colombians	Two teams: • Editorial Advisory Board = eight members (five Colombians, two Americans, and one Peruvian) • Editorial Committee = six members (five Colombians and one British)	Three teams: • Editorial Committee = four members (2 Colombians, one American, and one Brazilian) • Scientific Committee = 27 members (7 Colombians, 5 British, 4 Americans, 3 Australians, 2 Mexicans, one Italian, one Uruguayan, one Indian, one Chinese, one Portuguese, and one Spanish) • Editorial Review Board = 16 members (7 Colombians, 2 Americans, 2 Brazilians, one Italian, one Polish, one Spanish, one British, and one Venezuelan)	Three teams: • Editorial Committee = eight members (three Colombians, two Americans, one Australian, one Spanish, and one Brazilian) • Scientific Committee = 15 members (4 Colombians, 3 Mexicans, 3 British, one each from Chile, Italy, Uruguay, Portugal, and Peru) • Editorial Review Board = 70 members from the following countries: Colombia (10), USA (8), Spain (8), New Zealand (7), Brazil (3), Chile (4), Australia (2), Canada (3), Iran (2), Mexico (3), Poland (3), Argentina (2), UK (2), Taiwan (2), Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Norway, Portugal, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Romania, Vietnam

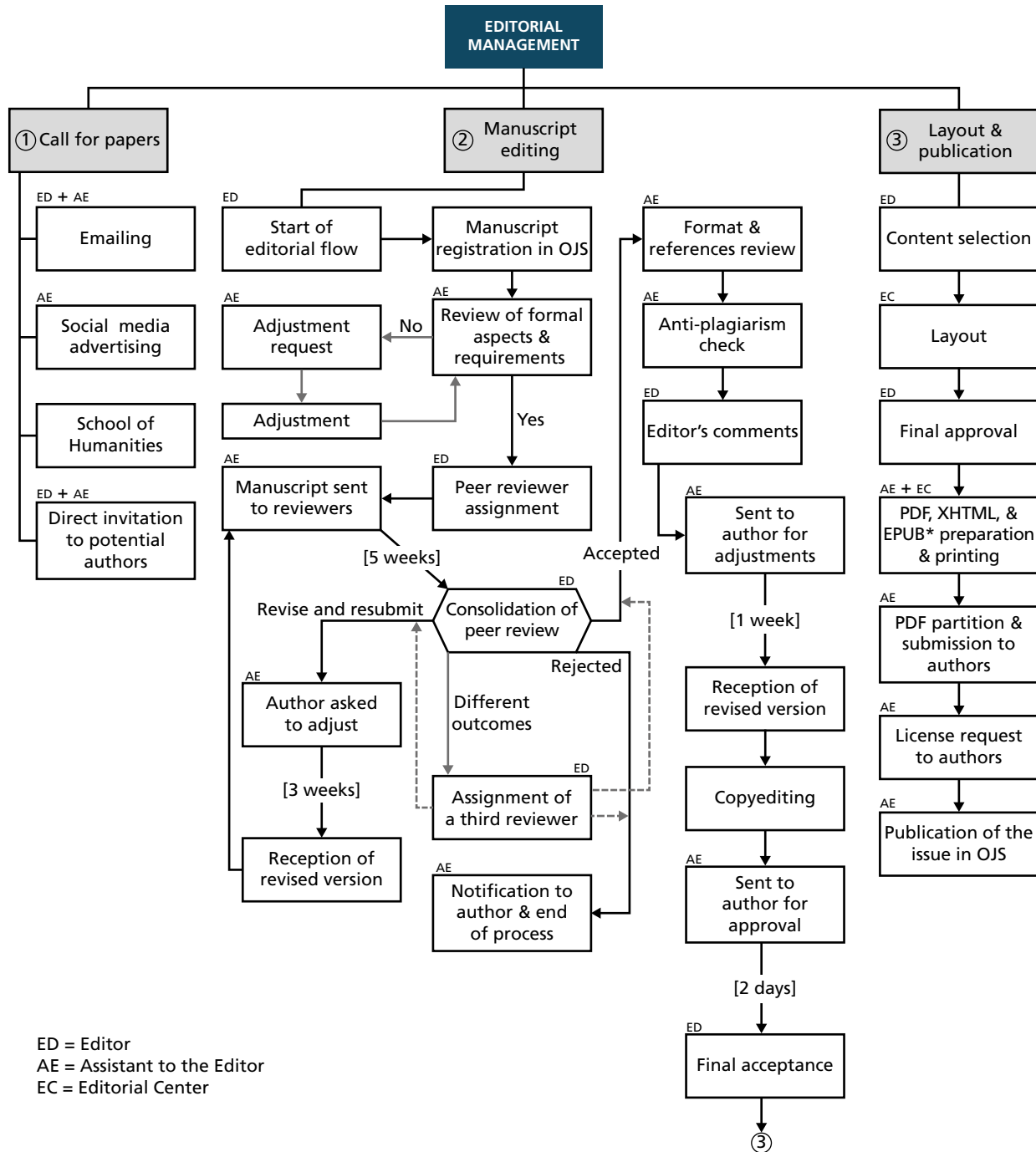
The involvement of academics in the journal's boards has resulted from various factors. They have been directly invited when I met them at conferences, through academic presentations based on my research or editorial work, and via electronic communications. In some cases, academic peers have made direct offers to support us. However, like in all university-published journals, board members do unpaid work, and their participation depends on their schedules. While some show consistency in responding, suggesting, and evaluating, others exhibit intermittent engagement, and a few remain silent or refuse to evaluate. Eventually, we have learned to overcome these circumstances, persuade, allow for longer response times, and appreciate the connections we have; silence is interpreted as a lack of interest or time to remain on the boards.

Prominent academics have highlighted the work and unique qualities of the journal (Borg, 2010; Burns, 2010, 2019a, 2019b; Johnson & Golombek, 2011, 2018; Sharkey,

2009). This recognition has extended to conferences and electronic communications. The journal's openness to authors from diverse backgrounds and its dedication to researching and publishing issues on teacher education, English Language Teaching (ELT), and innovations in educational settings are acknowledged. In 2022, the Colombian Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (Minciencias) awarded *Profile* with the *Ángela Restrepo Award for Excellence in Science, Technology, and Innovation* due to its outstanding scientific publications and contribution to strengthening the National System of Science, Technology, and Innovation. In doing so, Minciencias aims to make visible the track records of researchers and institutions from various knowledge domains.

The journal's evolution has also made it possible to consolidate the action pathway or editorial flow. As seen in Figures 2 and 3, the workflow includes two large areas (editorial management and visibility), each comprising a series of stages and actions.

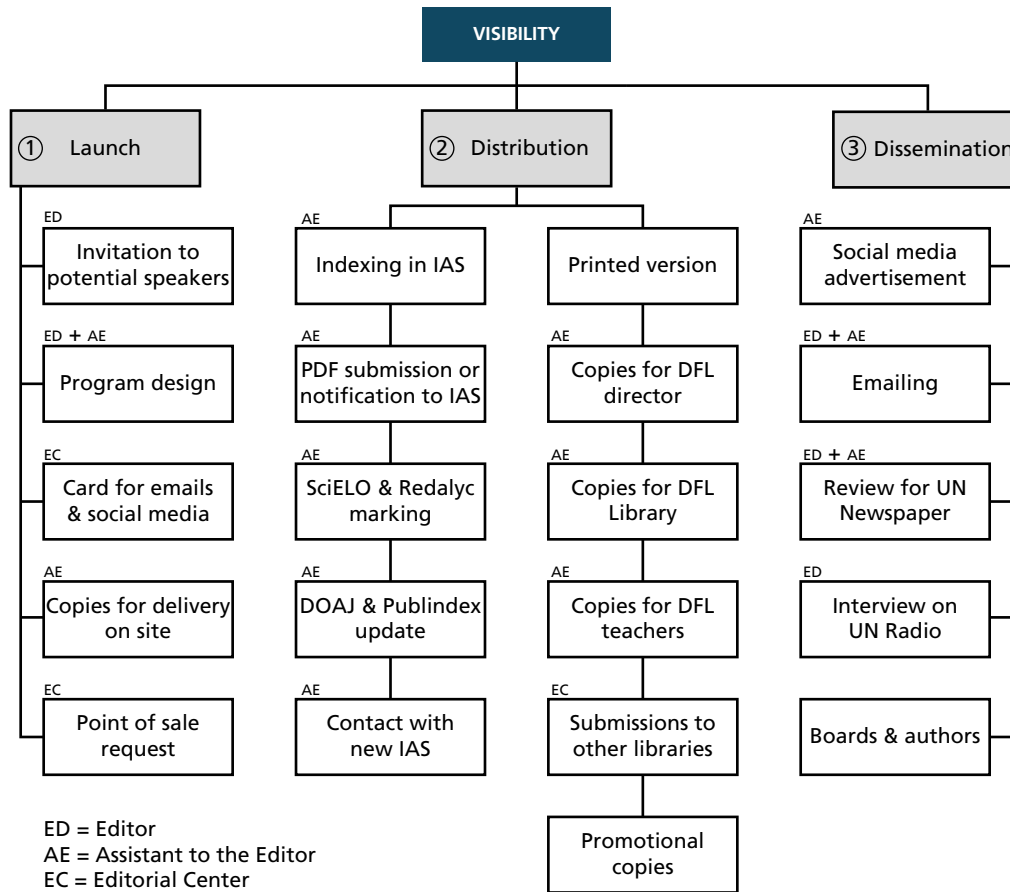
Figure 2. The Editorial Management Workflow of *Profile* Journal



*PDF, XHTML, and EPUB formats refer to the three most common types of electronic files for viewing content on different devices. Additionally, XHTML makes it easier for search engines to compile better the metadata of articles published online.

OJS = Open Journal Systems

Figure 3. Visibility Strategies for *Profile* Journal



Note. IAS = Indexing and Abstracting Systems; DOAJ = Directory of Open Access Journals; DFL = Department of Foreign Languages; UN = Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Overcoming Difficulties and Searching for Continuity

The life of *Profile* has not been without obstacles. Between 2010 and 2014, it faced difficulties because the necessary resources were not allocated promptly. The introduction of the role of journal director, in addition to mine as editor, bolstered the administrative management. Prior to this change, administrative duties were solely the responsibility of the editor. From September 2011 to January 2024, Professor María Claudia Nieto Cruz, a co-investigator of the PROFILE Research Group and an active editorial team member since 2002, served as

director. Starting in 2015, guidelines were unified in the School of Humanities of Universidad Nacional Colombia to ensure the financing of the editorial teams that support the journals, promote interaction between them, and improve the processes associated with publications (information systems management, participation in calls, and dissemination, among others). These guidelines have allowed stability in the support team for editorial management.

Another difficulty concerns the continuity of the second section of the journal. When created in 2004, it sought to provide a space for new teacher-researchers

from Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Initially, the authors were my undergraduate students, whose work I accompanied from project formulation to publication. I hoped other students would also be motivated by my colleagues, but that was not the case. Over time, and thanks to extensive dissemination, we managed to attract the interest of graduates from other universities. Furthermore, we concluded that the writing activity is more friendly and viable when a more experienced co-author is involved. We then introduced the option for manuscripts co-authored with mentors to be submitted. In 2019, we decided that the second section should feature articles by new writers from graduate programs. In all instances, due credits have been given and, when published in co-authorship, the spotlight has been on the new writer.

As you may remember, the journal began by giving a voice to schoolteachers. At the outset, I conceived of writing an article as a final requirement of the professional development program. After a decade, in an interview I conducted to investigate the nature of research by primary and secondary teachers, a teacher who participated in one of those programs made me think that I should reassess this requirement (Cárdenas, 2004). Thus, in the subsequent programs, we have provided guidance for writing classroom project reports and individual support to those who wish to organize an article. The same applies to new teachers or authors who want to showcase their graduate work. As the editor, I work with the editorial assistant to communicate with authors who submit the initial version of their manuscripts. Our goal is to address any questions they may have before they formally submit their work or to provide initial feedback to those who have already made a submission. For the latter, we emphasize issues needing further rigorous work before manuscript review, just as I do when some colleagues share their undergraduate students' first sketches or final reports with me. The co-researchers of the PROFILE Research Group and, as mentioned, the editorial assistant have played an essential role in this

work. Lastly, it should be noted that, despite having an editorial assistant since 2003, his active participation in supporting authors has taken place in the last ten years.

The journal faces various challenges. Firstly, it is important to provide training for academics who will serve not only as peer reviewers for the journal but also as managers of the editorial processes it requires.

Secondly, while the School of Humanities at Universidad Nacional de Colombia has made efforts to ensure regular publication of its journals and to maintain stable support teams, the resources available are insufficient. Additionally, there are concerns about the conditions under which editorial assistants are hired, which can lead to high turnover and impact the continuity and quality of processes.

Profile has encountered the challenges of getting journals published in extramural or peripheral countries like Colombia where government policies have created tensions in the academic sector. The ethical, utilitarian, and mercantilist implications of the citation parameters, which significantly determine the classification and visibility of publications and their contributions to the advancement of science, are being questioned. *Profile* has not focused on obtaining citations or being included in rankings. As stated in its vision,

It is a publication mainly concerned with sharing the results of classroom research projects, reflections and innovations undertaken by teachers of English as a second or foreign language as well as by teacher educators and novice teacher-researchers. Starting from the assumption that our professional knowledge is enriched by different members of our academic community, the journal welcomes papers from different parts of the world, diverse educational levels and wide-ranging contexts. In sum, the *Profile* journal belongs to the area of education; it deals with topics regarding the learning and teaching of English as a second or foreign language and teacher education in the same field. It is addressed to an international readership of pre- and in-service teachers. (<https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile/about>)

In recent years, there has been pressure to increase the exogamy of authors publishing in Colombian journals. There is also a preference for publications from institutions or authors outside of the country. Our publication was created to showcase the work of local teachers, so we have a higher number of Colombian authors. We have no plans to reduce this percentage, as our goal is to raise the visibility of local academic communities and promote academic writing. Nonetheless, our efforts have generated international interest, as seen in the increased reception rate of articles and the geographic diversity of authors who are able to publish with us.

Moreover, although we continue exploring different forms of dissemination (social media, radio notes, and events such as the launch of new issues at conferences), we are concerned about the effectiveness of these channels. Thus, an improvement action plan was devised (Cárdenas, 2022a). It covers the two large fields comprising the editorial flow to produce each new journal issue: editorial management and visibility. The first encompasses (a) the call for papers, (b) the editing of manuscripts, and (c) the layout and publication. Additionally, three post-publication phases are considered to achieve visibility: (a) launch, (b) distribution, and (c) dissemination.

Dissemination then becomes our greatest challenge. It involves publicizing every new issue because, paradoxically, the fact that a journal like *Profile* publishes in English only does not ensure greater appreciation or smoother access to international databases and indexing systems.

The uniqueness of *Profile* lies in the fact that, from a Latin American context where English is a foreign language, it publishes articles in English on teaching this language. Despite the perceived advantages for visibility that publishing in that language has, it has been a challenge for *Profile* to carve out a space among mainstream journals (Anglo-Saxon journals) that perhaps are perceived as possessing the “authoritative”

viewpoint on the topic. Hence, the inclusion of the journal in international databases also empowers, in some way, Latin American authors (who historically represent the majority of contributions) to join that community of experts and offer valuable points of view, given the particularities of their educational contexts.

For the journal team, inclusion in international or regional databases such as Scopus or Redalyc indicates that *Profile*'s prestige is growing and that the local, regional, and international academic community is recognizing it. This is also an incentive for our authors, as it increases the chances of their articles being read and cited, thus adding to the construction of knowledge in the field.

More importantly, we are focused on impacting readers through the dissemination of articles. The ideal scenario is that its contents be part of teacher education programs. We also expect that its contents can be taken into consideration in the reflections of professional and academic communities, as well as in the works published by new and seasoned writers across various media for disseminating science and knowledge of our area. As we celebrate 25 years of sustained publication, we hope to keep *Profile* as a platform for us to “listen” to the voices of English teachers with diverse professional paths who share a passion for research, innovation, reflection, and publishing the outcomes of their work in those fields!

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