

## THE DESIDERATUM OF A SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDITOR

That which represents the desire of those who perform editorial tasks in scientific and technological periodical publications is rather varied and at times hard to pinpoint. Of course, first of all are the expectations of an outstanding quality, an impeccable style, an absolute timeliness, numerous submitted papers... There are a myriad of details, perhaps minor ones but that are able to fill the day to day editorial activity, and on which the characteristics of the received materials from the authors of the submitted papers have a marked influence.

We allude to things that might seem trivial to some, such as could be following the instructions indicated in the guidelines to authors, which include aspects concerning extension and structure, or about the way to cite papers and to list the used references. There are no universal rules and each journal uses those that are preferred. In the case of *Interciencia*, for instance, the references listed are written after a minimalist model that is applied uniformly to all the material.

The reactions of the members of a journal's editorial team, as well as those of the consulted referees, can be affected negatively, in detriment of the authors, by the formal errors present in a manuscript. Particularly are attention-getting those due to carelessness, evidenced in the lack of observance of the published guidelines or, even worse, in grammatical and orthographic errors, sometimes simple typos. In current times, when typing is done with word processors that include review options, the requirement of a linguistic culture is low.

The cultural level of the scientific community is, obviously, very heterogeneous, a fact to which is added the existence of idioms and expressions that can become very different and even opposing and incomprehensible. Such is the situation in Latin America, where there is simultaneously

a strong cultural identity and a strong cultural diversity. In the case of a journal that aims to be a dissemination medium for the scientific community of the whole region, as does *Interciencia*, it is necessary to consider the existing differences and the convenience of the universalization of language use. Regarding English, a language in which a reduced proportion of manuscripts is received and published, the situation is less heterogeneous, although often received papers have to be returned to the authors due to the deficient use of the language.

We consider that one of the main cornerstones of the editorial labor, as well as being one of its charms and motivations, is its pedagogic aspect. The careful work of editing the material accepted for publication is one of the requirements that give coherence to a journal, at the same time that it constitutes an important teaching element, especially for those young researchers who are starting their careers.

When dealing with the editorial chores of a scientific journal it is not possible to ignore the matter of peer review. The most important bottleneck in the editorial process is perhaps the willingness and effectiveness of the specialists that are consulted as referees for the received manuscripts. Some are rather well inclined and some are not. Many do not respond in due time, holding up editors and authors, who are often pressed for publication. Certainly, one of the desires of those who perform editorial duties is that the referees also show enthusiasm and celerity in the important and pedagogic service that they provide to science and technology. Fortunately, many do so.

MIGUEL LAUFER  
Editor