

Analysis of the Institutional Language Program as a mechanism for teaching the English language

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Abstract:

Today's world is in an environment of globalization where command of the English language is essential to develop activities that require working relationships with English-speaking professionals. That is why the preparation of professionals who speak the English language is increasingly necessary. At present, universities have consolidated institutional strategies so that students have an English program that allows them to obtain linguistic abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The objective of this work is to analyze English teaching strategies in the university environment. In this way, the Institutional Language Program of the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo was analyzed as a strategy for teaching the English language in university students. In the results found, it is observed that the implementation of this program allows graduates to obtain level B1.

Keywords:

Institutional Language Program, PIL-UAEH, TOEFL, English proficiency

Resumen:

Today's world is in an environment of globalization where command of the English language is essential to develop activities that require working relationships with English-speaking professionals. That is why the preparation of professionals who speak the English language is increasingly necessary. At present, universities have consolidated institutional strategies so that students have an English program that allows them to obtain linguistic abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The objective of this work is to analyze English teaching strategies in the university environment. In this way, the Institutional Language Program of the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo was analyzed as a strategy for teaching the English language in university students. In the results found it is observed that the implementation of this program allows graduates to obtain level B1.

Palabras Clave:

Programa Institucional de Lenguas, PIL-UAEH, TOEFL, dominio de inglés

Introduction

Currently the world is involved in an exchange of cultures through globalization where individuals have the opportunity to enter cultures outside the context of origin. The fact that individuals migrate to other entities implies having knowledge of a second language, for example, English. According to [1], English is the most widely spoken language in the world in 2022, with more than

1,400 million inhabitants. As reported by [1] of the English speakers, 26.1% are native speakers and 73.9% have learned this language as a second language. As can be seen, the English language is the most widely spoken language in the world, and it is used in different contexts, such as political, economic, social and cultural, allowing millions of people in the world to communicate effectively [2].

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On the other hand, globalization allows the creation of new links worldwide between governments, companies, government or educational institutions, etc.

In [3] it is stated that the importance of the use of a foreign language with a focus on English has gone from being a privilege to a necessity in different contexts (political, economic, social, cultural, etc.). As a result of globalization, the English language has become the universal language for business [4].

Some authors show the importance of studying English as part of academic training at various educational levels.

Among the opinions analysed, [5] indicates that English is the most widely taught language worldwide, where countries such as China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Brazil and Mexico are found, to name a few. In the case of Mexico, the educational system contemplates the teaching of English from secondary education, pre-university and university levels [6].

Likewise, [7] considers that having knowledge of English allows access to more current and complete information on any specific topic, since most scientific, academic and technological texts are written in English.

Regarding the importance of learning English during to university preparation, opinions have been found in other investigations.

In the first place, it is important to mention that the student who learns English will have more and higher quality job opportunities, as well as the opportunity to move to an English-speaking university during their academic training. As mentioned in [8], a professional has real possibilities of entering the workplace not only because of the knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies that he acquires in his training, but also because of their knows a second language such as English.

It is really important that universities establish strategies to achieve excellence in the training of trained professionals in the specific areas of their profession, with solid knowledge of a foreign language, specifically English, as it is considered a universal language in all the surroundings [5].

This allows the opening of labor doors to professional and facilitates the improvement of opportunities.

In this context, and given the importance of mastery of a second language by degree students, this work aims to analyse strategies or methodologies for teaching English at the university level in order to expose their effectiveness.

In the following section, an analysis is carried out and some specific characteristics of the Institutional Language Program of the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo are presented as a strategy for teaching the English language among other languages.

The world of work requires professionals who have the ability to communicate in a second language. Teaching English in the university system allows you to acquire skills that impact the development of students and thus contribute to the workplace where they are.

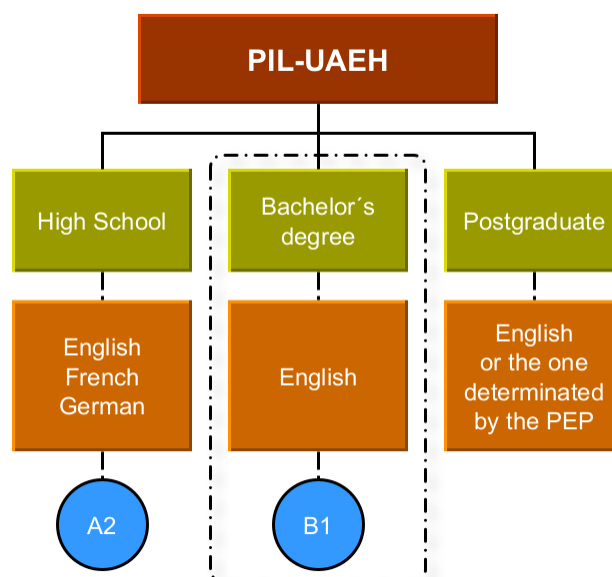
This section presents an analysis of the Institutional Language Program of the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo (UAEH), known as PIL-UAEH [9].

The PIL-UAEH program is based on the UAEH Educational Model and is aligned with the 2011-2017 Institutional Development Plan.

As part of the language proficiency strategy, the PIL-UAEH program establishes the English language as a compulsory subject in all UAEH educational programs.

Focusing on the mastery of languages in the English language, the mastery of the B1 level of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is established as an institutional objective in university students.

In Figure 1, the structure of the PIL-UAEH program is show.



Source: Own elaboration from PIL-UAEH Program

Figura 1. PIL-UAEH program structure.

The PIL-UAEH program takes as a reference the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which establishes the obtain of level B1 during English training in the degree.

The program establishes that the undergraduate student acquires the command of English linguistic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Once the student obtains these skills, they acquire specific benefits that are described below:

- The student is able to identify the main points of clear texts, for example, in work, study or leisure situations.

- The student has the opportunity to deal with situations that may arise while traveling to places where their mother tongue (Spanish) is not spoken.
- The student is able to produce simple and coherent texts on topics that are familiar to him or in which he has a personal interest (music, movies, etc.).
- The student can describe experiences, events, wishes and aspirations, as well as briefly justify his opinion or explain his plans.

On the other hand, the PIL-UAEH program establishes a series of subjects to achieve the skills mentioned above and thereby reach the B1 level established by the CEFR. Figure 2 shows the courses taken during six semesters. The subjects are taken from semester 1 (S1) to semester 6 (S6), that is, from the moment the student enters the degree program, they study the English language and maintain permanent progress while advancing in their academic training.

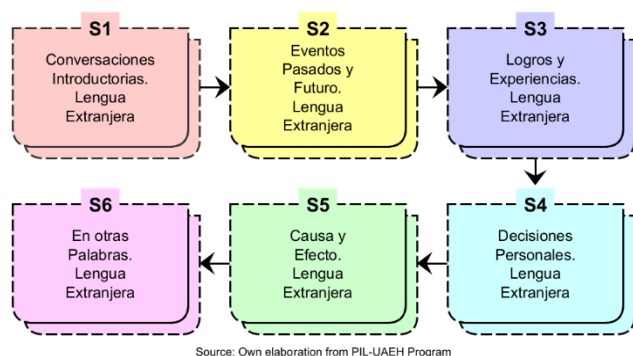


Figura 2. Subjects of the PIL-UAEH program undergraduate level.

The content of the subjects ranges from a general conceptualization of the English language to English for academic and work purposes. The content of the PIL-UAEH program, in relation to the English language, is distributed in 64 class hours during each semester, 4 class hours per week, for a total of 384 hours to be studied during six semesters where the student develops their English training.

In order to strengthen the processes and development of students in the practice of the English language, the PIL-UAEH English program provides the space of the Language Self-Learning Center (CAI) where students have real and virtual scenarios available in interactive and autonomous way. This space allows students to increase listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Another of the services offered by the CAI enabled space is the application of the diagnostic exam derived from Test Of English as ad Foreign Language (TOEFL).

In order to ensure the efficiency of the PIL-UAEH English program, the diagnostic evaluation is established, which establishes two objectives. In the first place, to know the language level of English in the students. On the other hand, identify the strengths and weaknesses in the English domain. This allows implementing remedial strategies to solve the problems detected.

Among the evaluations carried out within the program are: placement exam and CEFR level exams at levels A1, A2, etc., this strategy makes it possible to know the real command of the English language of the students. With this trajectory, it is guaranteed with greater opportunity to meet the objectives of the program.

Another analysis carried out on the PIL-UAEH English program was related to the results obtained by the program and that have an impact on the fulfilment of the objectives.

Accordingly, an analysis of the implementation of the PIL-UAEH program at the undergraduate level is presented below.

Figure 3 shows the results of the application of the diagnostic exam, for graduation purposes, to students who completed their six-semester training in English in the period January-June 2022.

As can be seen, of a total of 103 exam applications, 67% obtained level B1, while 33% obtained level A2.2 according to the TOEFL framework.

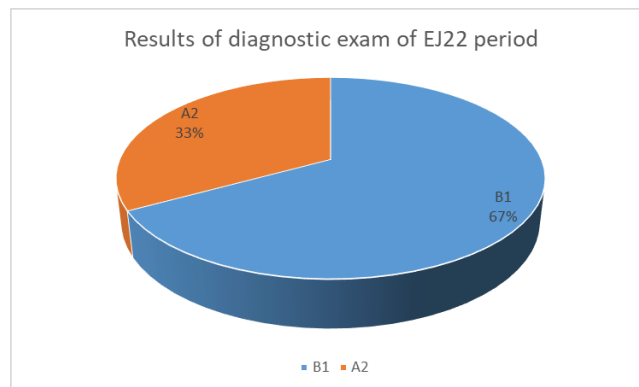


Figura 3. Results of EJ22 undergraduate level diagnostic exam.

During the period July-December 2021, the application of the English exam evaluation was carried out for higher level degree purposes. The results found in Figure 4 are satisfactory given that 33% of those evaluated obtained level B1, while 67% managed to obtain level A2.2 of TOEFL. These results consist of the application of 203 exams to students who passed the six semesters of English studies.

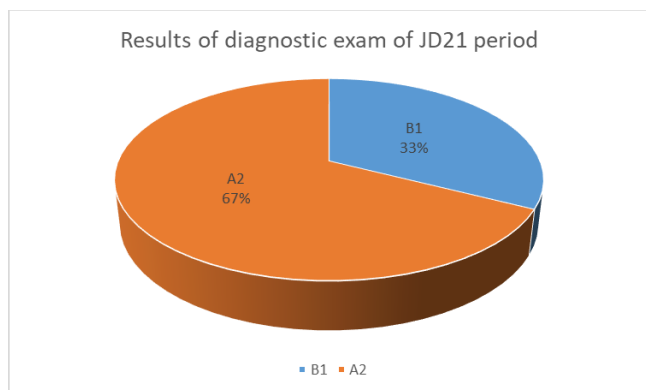


Figura 4. Results of JD21 undergraduate level diagnostic exam.

Another analysis carried out includes the period from 2017 to January-June 2021, it is important to mention that during this period a total of 528 exams were applied. Figure 5 shows that 45% of the results obtained of B1 level, while 55% obtained an A2.2 level.

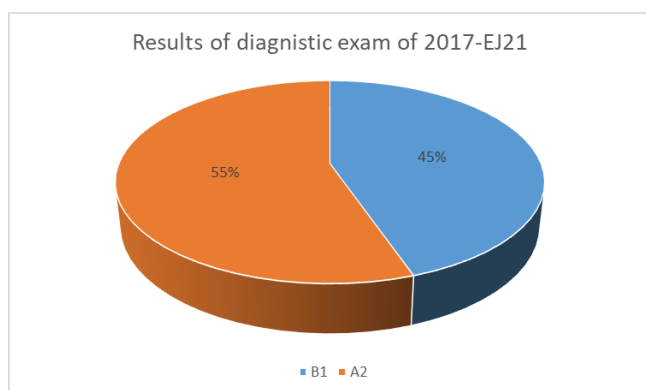


Figura 5. Results of 2017 to EJ21 undergraduate level diagnostic exam.

In the analysis shown in the previous figures, it can be seen that it consists of different evaluation periods. Likewise, the substantial improvement of the results can be seen from Figure 5 to Figure 3. With these results, it can be assumed that it is due to the strategies implemented by the PIL-UAEH program itself, since it is established that, during the diagnostic evaluations, the weaknesses of the students are detected and with this, remedial strategies are implemented to improve the results.

Conclusions

The objective of this study is to analyze the Institutional Program of Languages of the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo as a mechanism for teaching the English language.

Derived from the institutional approach where mastery of the B1 level of English of the CEFR is established as an objective for undergraduate studies in the Educational

Programs of the UAEH, it has been observed that the results obtained in the analysis carried out are satisfactory and meet the standards for Obtain the corresponding English certifications of the graduates.

With these results, it is possible that the students obtain the generic competences of communication, training, critical thinking, creativity, collaborative leadership, use of technology in the English language and in terms of specific competences, the students obtain competences of linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive and strategic.

In this sense, the UAEH Institutional English Language Program guarantees that graduates obtain the linguistic skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

In this way, graduates obtain knowledge of English that allows them to venture into companies, institutions and jobs that require the ability to communicate in the most widely used language worldwide for any type of activity where the use of a second language is concerned.

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