



The Development of the English Language Teaching in the High Schools of Ecuador during the last two decades

El desarrollo de la enseñanza del idioma inglés en las escuelas secundarias de Ecuador durante las últimas dos décadas

O desenvolvimento do ensino da língua inglesa nas escolas secundárias do Equador nas últimas duas décadas

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Abstract

Before the year 1912, the English Language Teaching in high schools of Ecuador was completely strange. It was after that year that this language started to be taught in many schools of this country. It became mandatory all over in Ecuador in 1950, under the government of Galo Plaza Lasso. At first, there were fewer hours of English teaching and there were not enough English teachers, but with the course of time, this situation changed favorably. Twenty years ago, the English Language Teaching in Ecuador improved thanks to the project CLADLE, implemented by the Ministry of Education of Ecuador. Later on, the education experienced positive changes when Rafael Correa became the new president of Ecuador in 2007. His government also made some changes regarding teacher and student rights. Now English teachers have to take a TOEFL test and get a B2 level certificate or higher. Fortunately, over the last twenty years, the English Language Teaching in Ecuador has gradually developed, to such an extent that it is now taught in every school, either public, private or parochial schools.

Keywords: Curriculum; mandatory; policies; suitability; availability.

Resumen

Antes del año 1912, la enseñanza del idioma inglés en las escuelas secundarias de Ecuador era completamente extraña. Fue después de ese año que este idioma comenzó a enseñarse en muchas escuelas de este país. Se convirtió en obligatorio en todo Ecuador en 1950, bajo el gobierno de Galo Plaza Lasso. Al principio había menos horas de enseñanza de inglés y no había suficientes profesores de inglés, pero con el transcurso del tiempo esta situación cambió favorablemente. Hace veinte años, la enseñanza del idioma inglés en Ecuador mejoró gracias al proyecto CLADLE, implementado por el Ministerio de Educación de Ecuador. Más tarde, la educación experimentó cambios positivos cuando Rafael Correa se convirtió en el nuevo presidente de Ecuador en 2007. Su gobierno también hizo algunos cambios con respecto a los derechos de maestros y estudiantes. Ahora los profesores de inglés tienen que tomar un examen TOEFL y obtener un certificado de nivel B2 o superior. Afortunadamente, en los últimos veinte años, la enseñanza del idioma inglés en Ecuador se ha desarrollado gradualmente, hasta tal punto que ahora se enseña en todas las escuelas, ya sean públicas, privadas o parroquiales.

Palabras clave: Currículum; obligatorio; políticas; idoneidad; disponibilidad.

Resumo

Os Antes de 1912, o ensino da língua inglesa nas escolas secundárias do Equador era completamente estranho. Foi depois daquele ano que esse idioma começou a ser ensinado em muitas escolas deste país. Tornou-se obrigatório em todo o Equador em 1950, sob o governo do Galo Plaza Lasso. No início, havia menos horas de ensino de inglês e não havia professores de inglês suficientes, mas com o tempo essa situação mudou favoravelmente. Vinte anos atrás, o ensino da língua inglesa no Equador melhorou graças ao projeto CLADLE, implementado pelo Ministério da Educação do Equador. Mais tarde, a educação sofreu mudanças positivas quando Rafael Correa se tornou o novo presidente do Equador em 2007. Seu governo também fez algumas mudanças em relação aos direitos dos professores e dos alunos. Agora, os professores de inglês precisam fazer um teste TOEFL e obter um certificado de nível B2 ou superior. Felizmente, nos últimos vinte anos, o ensino da língua inglesa no Equador se desenvolveu gradualmente, a tal ponto que agora é ensinado em todas as escolas, públicas, particulares ou paroquiais.

Palavras-chave: Currículo; obrigatório; políticas; aptidão; disponibilidade.

Introduction

The Development of the English Language Teaching in the High Schools of Ecuador during the last two decades

Language is one of the most efficient means of human communication. There are more than 6000 languages all over the world. The most commonly spoken languages in the world are Mandarin, Spanish and English. English has been chosen to be the international language because it was formerly spread by the British Empire and is being currently spread by the world domination of the United States. (Linguistic Society of America, 2016)

According to Luo (2007), the English language has undoubtedly become a lingua franca in the current world. That is, the language that serves as a means of communication between people whose first language is not English. According to this author, the globalization has allowed this language to be an international language and has gradually become a tool of knowledge of science and humanities. The Ministry of Education of Ecuador, aware of this reality, started a curriculum reform in 1993 called CRADLE project, applied to the high schools in the country in order to boost the English level in the country.

Because of globalization, most people have chosen to learn English. That is why English is a universal language and the official language of trade. That is, the language everyone has to learn regardless of where he or she are or what language he or she speak at home. If two people from different countries meet, especially if they do not speak the same language, the only language they can communicate in is English as it is the lingua franca in most countries or the world's second language.

The Ministry of Education of Ecuador started a new project: Curriculum Reform and Development for the Learning of English (CRADLE) in July 1992, in order to enhance the level of English of high school students to thus accomplish with the curriculum and make sure that students who complete high school have a B2 level.

The development of the English Language Teaching in the high schools of Ecuador during the last two decades has been satisfactory, according to what we teacher perceive, as the Ecuatorian government has implemented some actions such as the CRADLE project in order to achieve that objective.

Research Questions.

How has the English Language Teaching developed in the high schools of Ecuador during the last two decades?

How many hours of English teaching were there in the past?

How were the English teachers chosen?

How are the English teachers evaluated?

Since when did English become mandatory?

General objective.

To determine the development of the English Language Teaching in the high schools of Ecuador through the reading of documents from the internet in order to identify the government policies implemented by the ministry of education during the last two decades.

Specific objectives.

To analyze the actions detected in the government policies implemented by the ministry of education during the last twenty years.

To present a timeline of the English language teaching in the high schools of Ecuador between the years 1996 and 2016.

Literature Review.

Several studies have been made to determine and analyse the difficulties students face when learning the English language in High Schools. The achievement of this paper aims to enlighten the Ministry of Education by giving them information about the problems students might struggle when learning a foreign language.

As stated in a government textbook about the English language teaching in Ecuador: The Ministry of Education aims at providing Ecuador's students with both the foreign language and the skills needed to succeed in today's globalized world as English is the international language that will allow them to access knowledge and information and that will become an instrument of personal and professional empowerment to build a more prosperous, equitable society. (2015, pp.4)

According to Ana Leon, Ecuador since 1992 seeks substantial and lasting improvement of the English language teaching at the secondary level in the fiscal sector, as stated in the draft English

Curriculum Reform (CRADLE), an Ecuadorian - British bilateral cooperation agreement to learn the language.

According to Wikipedia, due to the political, economic, military, scientific and cultural influence of Britain and the United Kingdom since the eighteenth century, and the British Empire and the United States since the mid-twentieth century, the English language has widespread throughout the world and is the main language of international discourse and the lingua franca in many regions. In the same way, it is used generally as a lingua franca between speakers of different languages in most countries of the world. The English language is also taught as a second language in many educational systems, which over time has provided a culturally superior status to their non-native speakers, because of the influence of the Anglo-Saxon countries in the world. The English language is the official language of many Commonwealth countries, is widely studied as a second language and is one of the official languages of the European Union and many world organizations. (2007)

Past.

According to El Comercio, the English language started to be taught for the first time in public schools in Ecuador in 1912. Before that, there was little or no teaching of the English language in the country. It became mandatory in the 1950's, under the government of Galo Plaza Lasso. (2016) at that time, the problem was the lack of teachers. At first, there were fewer hours of English teaching, but with the course of time, it changed favorably.

In those days, there were cases of English teachers who had very low levels of English proficiency, also students were not given government textbooks, which made their English learning even more difficult, as they had to manage to get those books on their own, as many students don't have any support on the part of their parents due to the poor economic situation our country was in then.

Also, in the days when English started to be taught for the first time in our country, until a few years ago, the education was more teacher-centered in all contexts, harming this way, the quality of education intended for students, as the teachers were the only ones in charge to speak and pass knowledge and information onto their students.

Formerly, the English teachers were not chosen according to their suitability but according to their availability, as many teachers of other fields had to work as English teachers, which caused

a big problem in the educational system because those teachers did not have the knowledge that was right for those specific purposes.

In the past, students were much more respectful towards their teachers and people in authority in schools, and this made the teaching process easier, as teachers had the opportunity to work in a much quieter classroom. It was good that their parents gave the teachers the authority to shape their children in whatever way they thought would be appropriate for the case.

Present.

In 2007, when Correa became the new president of Ecuador, the education in our country experienced some important changes. One of the first things he did was increase the number of mandatory English hours in public schools to five. His government also made some changes regarding teacher and student rights. For example, teachers now have to demonstrate a higher level of English in order to teach. Every two years they have to take a TOEFL test and get a B2 level certificate or higher. The results of the test will affect their ability to find employment.

Student's rights have also changed in recent years, as well as their attitudes towards learning. When they get to school for the first time they think they will not fail the school year, which is learned the hard way, as most of them have a really hard time at the end of the school year, having to deal with most teachers to be given a second opportunity to pass.

Something that has affected the English teaching and education in general, is that students have become less respectful of teachers and schools. There is a general view that learning is not important, this is especially true for English, because students do not have opportunities to use it outside of the classroom. Many of them believe that it is a waste of time to learn another language.

Nowadays, the education in Ecuador is more student-centered, that is; it shifts the focus of instruction from teachers to students, which is beneficial for students as it allows them to interact in the teaching-learning process and therefore acquire knowledge in an easier and better way.

Future.

A short time from now, the English language learning will become much more important, as this language will have the opportunity to be used outside of the classroom; this is because this country is running a campaign to attract tourism and business in order to improve living condition for its people.

Findings.

Before the year 1912, the English language teaching was completely unknown in Ecuador. It was after that year that this language started to be taught in many schools of this country. In the year 1950, the English language teaching became mandatory all over the country. Since then, the English language teaching in Ecuador has grown significantly over time.

Conclusions.

The English language teaching started as an optional subject in High Schools in Ecuador. Fortunately, it has developed gradually over the last 100 years, to such an extent that it is now taught in every school, either public, private or parochial schools.

To help students understand and use of the English language, the Ecuadorian English teachers should use the appropriate learning strategies, as they are a very important tool when it comes to teaching students a second language, especially if it is English, as it is one of the most spoken languages in the world, which is why it has been called the universal language.

No matter where in the world you are or what language you speak, you will always be able to communicate with almost anyone in the world as long as you and the other person can speak English.

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