









ORIGINAL

English Validation Model test for access to Higher Education at Postgraduate Level

Prueba del Modelo de Validación de Inglés para el acceso a la Educación Superior en el Nivel de Postgrado

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ABSTRACT

The present documentary study is carried out through a review of the existing models in the validation of the English language to identify the process of access to higher education at the graduate level. It is fundamental to verify the findings that delimit the purpose of the study and highlight the methodological models with which the universities of the country promote decision-making in the entrance to their postgraduate programs by using English as a second language of study between 2024 and 2020. It was fundamental to establish from 30 studies that highlighted the process of validation of English according to international standards of validation and own processes according to the autonomous models that each university in the country determines found in databases of high impact, applying a deductive procedure to establish its line of research that transcends to international levels for being a lingua franca. Their findings detail the evaluation models used in the different English skills, detailing their linguistic and communicative competencies. The review of the art determined how diverse the applications of assessment models and language proficiency among graduate students can be.

Keywords: English; Higher Education; Model; Graduate; Validation.

RESUMEN

El presente estudio documental se realiza a través de una revisión de los modelos existentes en la validación del Idioma Inglés para identificar el proceso de acceso a la educación superior en el nivel de posgrado. Es fundamental verificar los hallazgos que delimitan el propósito del estudio y resaltar los modelos metodológicos con los que las universidades del país promueven la toma de decisiones en el ingreso a sus posgrados al utilizar el idioma inglés como segunda lengua de estudio entre el 2024 y el 2020. Fue fundamental establecer a partir de 30 estudios que destacaron el proceso de validación del inglés según los estándares internacionales de validación y los procesos propios según los modelos autónomos que cada universidad del país determina encontrados en bases de datos de alto impacto, aplicando un procedimiento deductivo para establecer su línea de investigación que trasciende a niveles internacionales por ser una lengua franca. Sus hallazgos detallan los modelos de evaluación utilizados en las diferentes habilidades del inglés, detallando sus competencias lingüísticas y comunicativas. La revisión del arte determinó cuán diversas pueden ser las aplicaciones de los modelos de evaluación y el dominio del idioma entre los estudiantes de posgrado.

Palabras clave: Inglés; Educación Superior; Modelo; Postgrado; Validación.

INTRODUCTION

The English language in contemporary times represents one of the most essential requirements for access to Ecuadorian higher education, and this characteristic is maintained because it transcends its scope to international levels by being a lingua franca. In Ecuador, it is of great interest to establish the desire to break the limits in traditional education, that is why the Council for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CACES) details those Ecuadorian students and foreign nationals who wish to enter a postgraduate study program must prove a level of sufficiency equivalent to B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference according to the study profile to be taken (MCER).^(1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8) In this scientific methodological article, an analysis is collected to evaluate the characteristic effectiveness of validation models of the compiling study models such as diagnostic evaluations and domain evaluations that allow determining the efficacy of the Language.

METHOD

The questions raised by this documentary research were: What are the characteristics of the international assessment model according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages? What assessment methods are applied to measure the knowledge necessary before obtaining a proficiency level? What validation models are evident in the studies collected from the different high-impact journals? What findings are the most significant? In this context, it is imperative to detail the main objective of this article, which was to determine the characteristics of the English language assessment models and the methodological guidelines for validating knowledge.

The following high-quality scientific journal search engines were used to collect scientific articles detailing English language knowledge's validation and measurement models for admission to higher education: Scopus, Web of Science, Science Direct. Upholding a deep investigative approach, inductive and deductive methods were applied to screen a total of 120 scientific articles of high interest published during the years 2024 to 2020, maintaining a filter of contents and methods using the following search words: "English language validation models in universities", "International English tests", "Ecuador and its university autonomy in the English language", "sufficiency of the English language at the university," "TOEFL test and higher education", "learning English at the university". A total of 30 scientific articles were established that clearly and concisely detail the knowledge validation models at the national and international levels. The rest of the articles were not considered due to their content and methodological model, which were not clarified accurately or objectively, and the study.

In detail, the articles with the most significant notoriety were written in English, while those written in Spanish were lower in the years detailed below. Also, those bibliographies were not taken into account. It is also evident that in recent years of publication, there has been an increase in scientific production about knowledge validation models and foreign language proficiency (see table 1).

Table 1. Leaked scientific articles, regarding the English language and validation models at the postgraduate level			
Languages published	Year of publication	Number of related articles	Testing and validation models
English	2025	1	IELTS (International English Language Testing System)
English	2024	15	IELTS (International English Language Testing System)
English	2023	3	IELTS (International English Language Testing System)
English	2022	2	TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)
English	2021	4	TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)
English	2010	5	CAMBRIDGE (Certifications such as FCE, CAE, or CPE), OTHERS
	TOTAL	30	

The analysis proposed based on content and articles of validation models of English for higher education allows to obtain a deep understanding^(9,10,11,12,13,14) regarding preparation for the TOEFL exam to measure knowledge of the English Language and obtain B2 sufficiency, details that as a first step to prepare graduate applicants, it is necessary to reinforce research based on writing at the TOEFL iBT (Internet Based Test of English as a Foreign Language), teachers at this level present the linguistic resources to practice through educational platforms that collect necessary information based on the CERF, the author shows that graduate applicants are guided by teachers trained to explain in depth how to solve the different skills. For example, the study mentions that in activities that have the characteristics of filling in blank spaces in the templates, students are limited to taking notes on the conference. In this phase, no writing activity is carried out. But there is an in-depth analysis.

Theoretical and methodological foundation

The need for English language proficiency in nursing education and nursing practice is widely recognized,

which puts English as a Second Language (ESL) nursing students at a clear disadvantage who face language barriers. International ESL students come from a foreign country on a student visa and speak English as a second language. International ESL students must meet English proficiency criteria during the admission process. (15,16,17,18,19,20,21)

The study “Linking TOEFL iBT® Writing Rubrics to CEFR Levels” shows that the cut-off scores and validity tests of an international standard-setting study are the strong success efficacy for obtaining the highly coveted B2 level. (22,23,24,25)

Researchers determined that adopting B2 as the target level for upper secondary education was a political decision in Germany and Switzerland that was never supported by an adequate standardization phase. Other studies have investigated the suitability of the B2 standard for receptive language skills in Germany. The Measuring English Writing at Secondary Level (MEWS) project was designed as the first empirical study to produce reliable data on whether B2 is a realistic standard for English writing concerning upper secondary education in the two countries. MEWS used the TOEFL iBT writing prompts for usability, reliability, and content validity.

The methodological findings demonstrated in the study used an exploratory sequential mixed method design to explore the feedback effect of the TOEFL iBT and the English Proficiency Exam on test takers’ motivation, learner autonomy, and test preparation strategies. In mixed method research, “the researcher mixes (or integrates or links) the two forms of data simultaneously by combining (or merging) them, sequentially having one build on the other, or by embedding one within the other”. (26,27,28,29,30,31,32) Therefore, quantitative generally analyzes evidence to better understand the findings.

RESULTS

The results reflect a diversity of significant approaches and considerations in validating English for admission to postgraduate studies. The identification of the importance of the B2 assessment represents a recognition of the European standards of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, indicating the relevance of an upper-intermediate level for admission to postgraduate programs. The influence of the proficiency exam noted the type of validation system were conducted through performance-based evaluation with 26,7 %. This model of validation of knowledge is conducted according to the average of knowledge in the target language. With 16,67 %, the ranking is for test evaluation systems applied at universities with their evaluation criteria and rubric. With a performance-based system, speaking 14,33, Performance-Based, Reading 6,67 %, Performance-Based, Listening 6,67 %, each of the different skills in the English Language are evaluated with real context. And the lowest scores with the validating system were: Writing test only 3,33 %, TOEFL, IELTS 3,3 %, TOEFL, IELTS, Cambridge, Performance-Based, Reading 3,33 %. Performance-Based, Writing 3,3 %, TOEFL, Performance-Based, Writing 3,33 %. TOEFL, IELTS, Performance-Based, Listening, Reading 3,33 % and speaking 3,33 %. indicate the consideration of various factors in the validation of English for access to postgraduate studies. Together, these results underline the complexity and interconnection of multiple variables in validating the English language in this academic context. (see table 2)

Table 2. Types of validation system

Types of validation system	Number that applies	Percentage
Performance-Based	8	26,7
University test	5	16,67
Performance-Based, Speaking	4	13,33
Performance-Based, Reading	2	6,67
Performance-Based, Listening	2	6,67
Writing	1	3,33
TOEFL, IELTS	1	3,33
TOEFL, IELTS, Cambridge, Performance-Based, Reading	1	3,33
Performance-Based, Writing	1	3,33
TOEFL, Performance-Based, Writing	1	3,33
TOEFL, IELTS, Performance-Based, Listening, Reading	1	3,33
Speaking	1	3,33
IELTS	1	3,33
IELTS, Reading	1	3,33
TOTAL	30	100

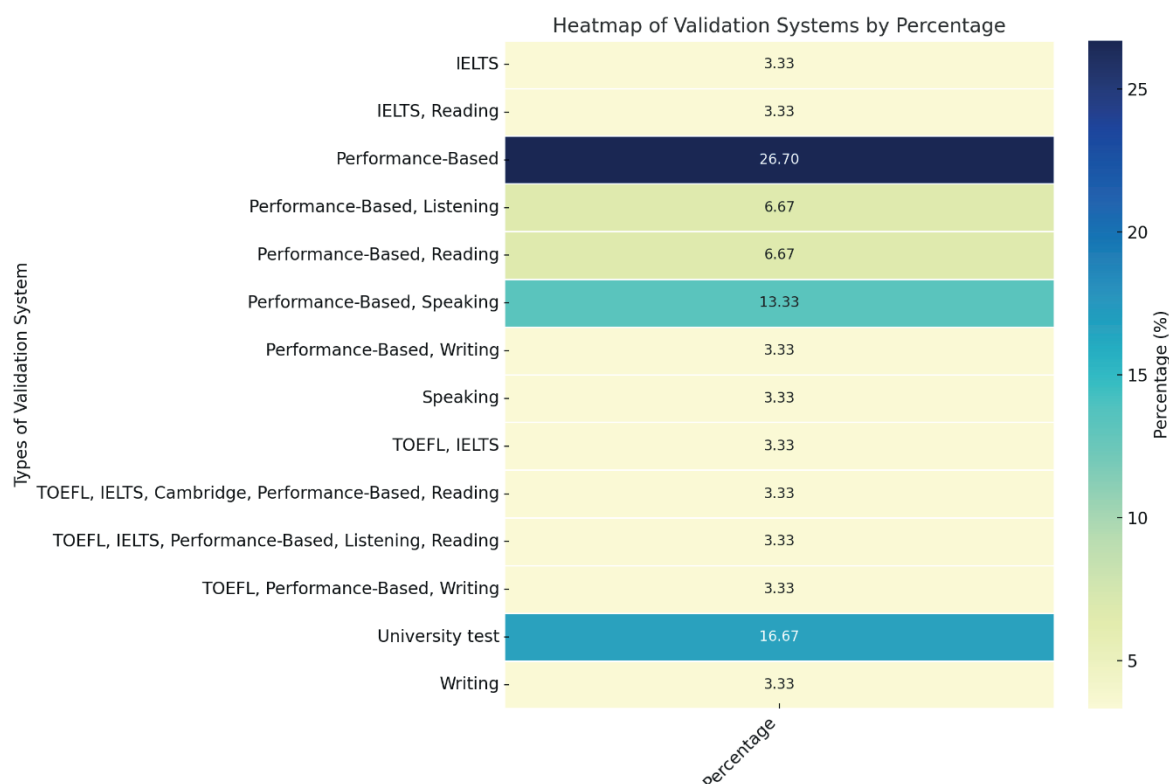


Figure 1. Heatmap of validation system by Percentage

CONCLUSIONS

This study concluded that models for evaluating and validating English language skills are predominantly exploratory due to their evaluative and quantifiable nature, with a focus on assessing English proficiency through various international and national exam models. The descriptive model was found to have the lowest value in the study design, primarily due to its connection with the qualitative model.

The bibliographic review revealed that most published articles, 52%, were hosted on Science Direct, followed by 20% on EBSCO, 16% on SCOPUS, and 12% on the Web of Science. These articles provided detailed insights into the English language validation models for postgraduate admissions. The study further highlighted that the methodological guidelines for validating English language proficiency at an international level were largely shaped by foreign exams such as TOEFL, IELTS, and B2, with universities' autonomous decisions also playing a role.

Additionally, the study verified the techniques and instruments used in data collection across the compiled studies. Structured tests and formal assessments were found to offer accurate performance measurements, while qualitative techniques like interviews and observations provided deeper insights into learning experiences. Continuous monitoring and immediate feedback helped optimize pedagogical strategies, fostering personalized adjustments. These findings offer a solid foundation for future research in the validation of English language skills in postgraduate studies.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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