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THE HISTORY AND EXPERIENCES OF ENGLISH TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS IN BOLIVIA

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Bolivia has not been indifferent to the changes in the world panorama that have been brewing since the First and Second World Wars. Franz Tamayo, in his remarkable essay, “The Creation of National Pedagogy,” published in 1910, laid the foundations for specialized education in a language that went beyond Castilian and demonstrated the value of retaining cultural identity by promoting the use of the first language in the study of foreign languages

With a similar vision, the Bolivian state, through the Bolivian Education Code of 1955 and Law 1565 of Educational Reform, recognizes and respects students’ native languages and in turn promotes the gradual teaching of the English language in the public schools of the state’s urban centers. Today, the Bolivian Education Law Project, "Avelino Siñani and Elizardo Pérez," recognizes that education must begin with the mother tongue and that the foreign language must be taught from the earliest school years.

English teachers in Bolivia needed instruction to improve their ELT methodology. A number of organizations hoped to address this need: The Department of Language Careers and the Department of Linguistics within different public universities sought to develop the humanistic skills of their students from modern methods of language training.

It was thus that with the passage of time and amalgamating ideas, the Department of Native and Foreign Languages of the Royal and Pontifical Major University of Saint Francis Xavier of Chuquisaca (RMPSFXCH), headed by Lic. Juan Hinojosa G., outlined what would come to be called the English-Language Teaching Project UK-Bolivia. In 1990, this was sent to the British Embassy in the city of La Paz.

The British Embassy in Bolivia was willing to provide better teaching and learning conditions to Bolivian teachers, so they were willing to pay attention to the needs of those raised by them.

On instructions from the British Embassy, the British Council was immediately placed in the service of language teachers while seeking sufficient resources and funds to deal with the project to be financed by the British Government. Subsequently, arrangements were made for the arrival from London

of Dr. Myra Harrison, ELT consultant from the Department of Overseas Development and Administration, who would visit Bolivia and attend meetings with four public universities.

The results were far from expected. In June 1992, the English-Language Teaching Project UK-Bolivia was formalized by means of a letter sent by R. M. Jackson to then Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Bolivian Government, Mr. Ronald MacLean Abaroa. Cooperation funds and technical assistance for the development of English language teaching in colleges and universities were secured.

The scope of the project would include the following cities and their respective public universities: La Paz, Cochabamba, Sucre, and Santa Cruz initially, later extending to Oruro, Tarija, and Potosí.

Formation of the Bolivian English Teachers Association

The British Government's technical and financial cooperation would have a finite duration, so the British counterpart suggested that language teachers should organize themselves through an entity that could not only unite them as teachers, but could also provide them with training opportunities for continuous improvement. English teachers from the cities of Cochabamba, Sucre, Santa Cruz, La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, and Tarija resolved to found the Bolivian English Teachers Association (BETA) for exclusively pedagogical purposes for the defense and improvement of English language teaching techniques.

From the BETA Principles

Ensure the solid training of our human resources through dynamic instruments to place Bolivian education in line with the demands of the country and world change processes. This is based on the active participation of the cultural enterprise of the community through extracurricular activities endorsed with the declaration of human rights.

Strengthen, dignify, and contribute to the integral education of students of both sexes in English language learning within the principles of national sovereignty, respect, and revaluation of the cultural, historical, and psychosocial values of our people.

Convene congresses, seminars, and conferences actively participating in technical-pedagogical, cultural, and social events.

Represent English teachers in all activities, procedures, and defense before the authorities of the Ministry of Education, etc.

Contribute to, disseminate, and promote the development of technical-pedagogical science and culture in all its manifestations.

Associate to watch and fight for ethical, professional, and moral right and also for teaching and professional improvement.

From the Ends of BETA

Seek the exchange of experiences, correlation, and sequence in English language teaching.

Ensure that the educational system is integrated into the principles of Universal Science, because the human being has the right to equal opportunity to

universal culture and to complete and enrich cultural education and language learning in the service of children, young people, and adults who require this service.

To create and guarantee aspirations by finding the viable path to fulfill the immediate and mediate objectives of BETA.

Supplement texts or booklets about basic or technical English with appropriate vocabulary and lexicology.

Organize summer courses for teachers of specialties, refresher courses during pedagogical holidays or during the school year according to the educational system.

Exchange experiences at teaching or extracurricular events, including application of modern systems in modern English teaching, and share techniques, methods, and procedures within educational technology.

Seek cultural exchange with other similar international organizations, embassies, and ministries.

Procure scholarship procedures for postgraduate studies and specialization.

Seek interdisciplinary relationships with Bolivian universities, particularly with the Faculties of Humanities, with the Language Careers, Institutes of National Linguistics in order to plan improvement and updating courses for English teachers.

BETA Organizational Structure

BETA is entirely and exclusively made up of English language teachers. It is the academic teaching organization of Bolivian English teachers, on a par with excellence, constituted by:

Born Members

National Directory

Departmental Directory

The National Conventions of English Teachers are held once a year in January. These are an opportunity to share educational experiences related to pedagogy, methodology, grammar, phonetics, and the use of new information technologies. See Table 1 for a list of recent BELTA conventions.

Table 1. Recent BELTA National Conventions

Year	Convention	Location	Attendees
2014	19th	Cochabamba; Bolivian Catholic University	800
2015	20th	La Paz; Católica Boliviana San Pablo University	280
2016	21st	Chuquisaca; Royal and Pontifical Major University of Saint Francis Xavier of Chuquisaca (MRPSFXCH)	800
2017	22nd	Oruro; Jesus Maria School	340

Important Achievements of BETA

Among the praiseworthy achievements of BETA as an academic institution that ensures the excellence of English language teaching, we can highlight:

Consolidation to change the National Convention of Teachers of English every year in different cities of Bolivia to involve all English teachers in this country.

The obtaining of a ministerial administrative resolution that allows the English language teacher graduates of the different fiscal universities of Bolivia to enter the national ranking of the teaching profession and consequently to be recognized as foreign language teachers for the Bolivian State.

Success in including the document Curricular Proposal for Teaching - English Language Learning in the education bill, "Avelino Siñani and Elizardo Pérez."

BETA currently has eight departmental subsidiaries throughout the country. Each and every one of them is duly constituted and represented before the national assembly.

BETA as a TESOL Affiliate

Today, BETA members are happy for the opportunity to be part of an international association like TESOL International Association. Since BETA joined TESOL as an affiliate 8 years ago, it has experienced changes. Belonging to an institution that has worked hard for more than 50 years in the latest technological advances with respect to teaching a second language has more than updated BELTA and its members. Today, we have the advantage of having great professionals and experts who are constantly researching and working at the service not only of a whole country but of the whole world—a world that changes every day.

Bolivia still needs to research and work to have a good educational system, and thanks to foreign countries we can feel that we are achieving good results. Being a third world country does not take away the effort of teachers and students to learn and to be better every day. Besides, BETA is proud to be part of an international association where millions of people come together to exchange experiences and discover new cultures. The opportunity to have been in the biggest educational events—TESOL international conventions—motivates and pushes us to be better. Fortunately BETA, with the help of the American Embassy and sponsors, has the opportunity to have great professionals and experts from TESOL International Association in Bolivia to transmit their experiences at Bolivia TESOL Annual Convention.

That is why BETA, which today is called BOLIVIA TESOL, is working more than ever to live up to a new generation with very high goals and to meet expectations in teaching a second language.

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Image 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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Abstract. The article is an attempt at summarizing the most important ESP developments. It first briefly refers to the emergence of the phenomenon of ESP and then goes on to discuss the most important phases of its evolution. The types of ESP, characteristics of ESP courses and the roles of the ESP practitioner have been analyzed in the article.

Key words: English for specific purposes (ESP), English language teaching, types of ESP, the ESP practitioner, ESP students.

Introduction

In the modern world, English has become the most dominant language in terms of use. Its status was consolidated by the spread of cultural ideologies mainly “Globalization” which promotes communication and interaction among people from all around the world.

Today, there are an increasing number of people who are learning English in order to “fit-in” the high demands of global economy and international communication. They are fully aware that English has become synonymous with social, economic and scientific development. Hence governments across the world