

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**



Universidad de El Salvador
Hacia la libertad por la cultura.

**The Importance of Preparing Students of B.A
in English Specialty Teaching Major for Improving
the Level of English in El Salvador.**

Presented by:

*Mariana Lourdes Fuentes Morataya
Carmen Guadalupe Morán Torres
Patricia Lorena Serrano Archila*

To obtain the degree of:

Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés. Opción Enseñanza

Advisor:

Jorge Homero Llanes Márquez López. MA.

San Salvador, El Salvador, Central America. June 4th, 2008.

Authorities from the University of El Salvador.

Ing. Rufino Antonio Quezada Sánchez.

Rector

Arq. Miguel Angel Perez Ramos.

Academic Vice Rector

Mtro. Oscar Noe Navarrete Romero

Administrative Vice Rector

Lcdo. Douglas Vladimir Alfaro Sánchez.

General Secretary of the University of El Salvador:

Authorities from the School of Arts and Sciences.

Lcdo. José Raymundo Calderón Morán.

Dean

Dr. Carlos Roberto Paz Manzano

Vice Dean

Mtro. Julio Cesar Grande Rivera

Secretary from the School of Arts and Sciences

Authorities from the Foreign Language Department

Edgar Nicolás Ayala. MTI.

Head of the Foreign Language Department:

Alexander Sibrian, M.A.

Coordinator of the Graduation Process

Jorge Homero Llánes Márquez López. MA.

Advisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special Thanks:

To God almighty, for providing us with his wisdom and strength, patience and persistence for culminating successfully our university studies.

To our dear parents, family, relatives and friends:

Mariana Fuentes.

To my mother, Idalia Morataya, for believing in me and providing me with all her moral and economic support, for her unconditional love, care and advice during all my studies and all my life projects. To my sisters, Diana Fuentes and Margarita Fuentes, for being my strength and my friends, for giving me support and love in all the moments that I needed. To Maria Vicenta Rodriguez and Francisco Antonio Morataya, my grandparents, who were my biggest support all my life and gave me unconditional love, because even tough they are in heaven they are always looking for me. To Cesar Flores who support me by his love and patience. To all my friends that bring me their friendship and love.

Patricia Serrano.

To my father and Ana Lidia Sanchez for being a source of encouragement and my moral and economic support through all my studies. To my son, who is the reason for my success, for being patient and for supporting me all the times. To my sisters and brothers who gave me words of encouragement to continue until the end of this path. To my friends, Yanira Buruca, Julio Ramirez and Juan Domingo Vasquez, for helping me in all this process for being there when I most needed them.

Guadalupe Moran.

To my mother for her unconditional love and support. To my sister for being my bestfriend and believed in me. To all my relatives and friends for always being there for me . To Alex Zelaya for his time, interest and valuable word of advice.

To our Professors:

We appreciate the effort of all those who shared their academic knowledge and the important aspects that have made us grow professionally. Also to all teachers and different authorities who offered their collaboration in our research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction vi-ix

Argumentative Essay 1

The importance of preparing students of B.A in English

Specialty teaching major for improving the level of English

in El Salvador.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most special qualities that a human has is the ability to speak; it is one of the characteristics that can be a distinction between humans and animals, language is described as the mirror of a culture and there are different languages around the world that give the identity to each country.

Nowadays, learning a foreign language is becoming a key for success and for that reason teachers have to keep in mind that teaching languages is an important profession that helps the society to improve the quality of life.

The verbal communication requires the knowledge of different languages but the most common languages in the world are English, Spanish, French and Chinese. That is why a lot of countries are training their people in order to acquire a foreign language.

This phenomenon is affecting El Salvador and the main cause of this is the globalization which is absorbing the entire world in economic, social and cultural ways. Consequently, people have to be prepared to face the challenge that a new society demands. The globalization is a century long process, tracking the expansion of human population and the growth of

civilization, which has accelerated dramatically in the past fifty years. The globalization is growing around the world and human language constitutes by itself an irreplaceable instrument of communication. The English language is a key for the culture and without this, people can be out of the development of the country.

So far, El Salvador has been suffering frequent changes in the economic and social field. At the moment, people have to master a foreign language because it is a possibility to get better jobs, and opportunities in different areas. Also, it makes people more competitive in the professional field. Salvadorian people know that communication in English represents a key for the future, it is an entry to the economic development in the country and it has to take into account that the illiterates from the new millennium are going to be those who cannot use a computer and do not learn a foreign language. Therefore, one of the most significant conceptions that Salvadorian people have to keep in mind is to be aware about the importance of the English language which is making rich the economic, cultural and social field in El Salvador.

The United States has accelerated the spread of the English language in Central and South America. English is being widely spoken by many people and these are acquiring the English language as a tool to get opportunities in places where English needs it, since globalization is absorbing the industry around the world. While English is not an official language in many countries, it is currently the language most often taught as a foreign language in the world. Some linguists believe that it is no longer the exclusive cultural sign of native English speakers, but it is rather a language that is absorbing aspects of cultural worldwide as it continues to grow. English is the language studied by many people.

As previously stated, the relevance of the modern lingua franca lies not only in the opportunities it provides to English –speaking individuals but also on the necessities it implies for those devoted to the teaching of English through the world. Therefore, there is a need for researching on the field of English language teaching as well as the relationship that might have with the current market labor in our country and the impact that this investigation could have on the people involved in the teaching- learning process.

This work, is based on the current trend of the labor market for the English major undergraduates in our country at the bilingual companies that are coming to El Salvador requiring bilingual people; also it will show the importance that The University of El Salvador has to train professional in teaching English in order to improve the English level of the career graduates that bilingual institutions are requiring in San Salvador, it will show the commitment that the University has directly to the Salvadorian society. Finally it will find out the student's perceptions or opinions about labor market they will work on, and if students are aware about the importance of this career and the value that it has for Salvadorian society.

This essay deals with three important matters concerning the labor market that the students of B.A in English oriented to teaching face once they complete their studies at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. These matters are as follows: What is the relevance of the English language in the current Salvadoran job context? Which are the expectations of the students with regard to the career they are studying? Which are the needs of the companies treated in El Salvador regarding the level English proficiency of their future employees?

***The Importance of Preparing Students of B.A. in English
Specialty Teaching Major for Improving
the Level of English in El Salvador.***

In our country, the boom for teaching The English language is one of the effects of the globalization and for understanding this, it must be understood how important English is in the Salvadorian society. Nowadays, the acquisition of English helps people in two different purposes in globalization context. First, the English language gives Salvadorian people an access to a social development, the aptitude of speaking a foreign language is more important in the communication, because it gives the opportunity for expressing ideas and opinions, people who speak English can get a better professional development not only in private companies but also in public institutions than those who cannot speak English. Second, people have to keep in mind that English language is not only the capacity to communicate, it is also a tool to empower opportunities in different areas.

Frankly speaking, it is highly essential to know the English language for communication. In general, the most popular language is English. In this computer age, English is the only language that most people understand and use. So today, it has become as an ideal language for expressing our feelings.

The importance of English lies on the fact that it is the language of international business, diplomacy, science and professions dealing with communication in every country. This language is also one of the official languages for many international organizations, like United Nations and many other professional companies around the world. Thus, it is used for everything at international academic conferences, news, reports, popular music lyrics, etc. It is used not only for communication between native speakers and nonnative speakers of English but among nonnative speakers. Even though it does not have the largest number of speakers in the world, it is the most widely used language in the planet, and it will be used by more people in the future.

The reasons for the demand of English have surely become clear. To put it bluntly, English is a top requirement for those people seeking jobs and it is often the language in which most of the business of “good jobs” is conducted. One need is to access to at least one half of the world’s scientific literature. It is thus intimately associated with technological aid. Not only is the universal language of international aviation, shipping and sports, but also is there a considerable degree of English use in language teaching and in public communication.

Facing this phenomenon of English use worldwide, the Salvadorian Government has created different programs and institutions that will be encouraged not only to teach English to Salvadorian people in order to increase the economic development in El Salvador but also to have the capacity to know and acquire a foreign language.

The MINED¹ is working to improve the English language in all the study levels. A diagnostic presented by this institution showed a lot of problems in the English teaching and learning process, but the most concerning fact was the fifty percent of four thousand English teachers who were interviewed

¹ MINED (Ministerio de Educación)

revealed to have basic level of English in the four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The study showed that only the twenty five percent of English teachers evaluated were at the advanced level. Also based on this interview, Darlyn Meza, Minister of Education, stated that seven hundred of the four thousand interviewed English teachers have a university degree, although such majors were not focused on teaching English, and the rest are teachers of elementary school who were assigned to English subject matter and they just teach it because they have to.

Since El Salvador is now aware of the importance of English, the MINED is working together with the American School in San Salvador in order to train English teachers and certify them with the purpose of acquiring a high level of English and give them tools for teaching students and improve their knowledge and learning process of the English language.

The CNI² was opened in January, 2006. This institution would be in charge of teaching English, in order to improve the level of English language use in El Salvador. The main goals would fulfill the needs that international companies in this country were requiring to train English teachers in order

² CNI (Centro Nacional de Ingles)

to get the level that they really needed to improve the English language teaching process, to certify people as bilingual with an excellent level of English, and finally this institution would certify teachers with a high level of English. Today the CNI has diverse equipment like video rooms, computer rooms with software and hardware to teach English. Also they have fifteen classrooms with the capacity of twenty students each. This institution has approximately twenty teachers and five hundred students. Both the MINED and the CNI have arrived at the conclusion that the English language is important in El Salvador to increase the economic and social development for people to get professional opportunities, and also to improve their quality of life.

The students of B. A. in English oriented to teaching from the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador are aware about this condition, and that is the main reason why they chose that career. They stated that the importance of English is because of the globalization and that speaking a foreign language makes them more competitive in the professional field. It also gives more opportunities for improvement not only to themselves but also to their country.

The students had different expectations when they choose the B.A. in English major career even though the University of El Salvador only offers the option of teaching English. Based on a research performed by these authors some of them study this career to have different jobs such as teaching, call center operators, airlines employees and translators. Another goal of these students is to travel to an English speaking country. However this situation affects the future teacher that the University offers to the Salvadorian society, because students are not conscious about the role that English teachers represent in this country.

On the other hand, there are some students that want to be teachers at the beginning of the career and they change their expectation because of different facts, like economic situation, their reluctance to be teachers, their desire to travel to an English speaking country and others, like being a translator, or just for having English as a tool for getting a better job.

Students have to realize that they have an essential role in this situation. They have to take into account that all the knowledge provided to them has to be efficient and accurate because they facilitate an important tool for a better development in the professional, social and economic field for other

people. Therefore, they have the responsibility for being updated and doing their best to acquire all the knowledge and using all the techniques and methodologies for teaching English in order to prepare people to face the challenge that the Salvadoran society is demanding. It is also important that students can get the best level of English in order to be good teachers and train others and teach people how to use the language in real situations and help them to communicate their ideas correctly.

At this point, students are knowledgeable that English is an important tool, a key for a social, cultural and economic development; it is not enough to teach English expressions, grammar or sentences if people are not able to fully understand and use this foreign language.

Teachers need different strategies, techniques and methods that help student to really understand meaning and pronunciation. The first instinct as teachers of foreign language is to correct their students' language errors, and if students are afraid of being corrected every time in speaking, students will simply stop communicating in English and, therefore, learning this language.

However, learning and teaching English as a foreign language is not an easy thing emotionally talking, because students will feel self-conscious about their lack of English ability and will thus be reluctant to use this language.

All this knowledge has to help future teachers to understand that El Salvador is facing different changes and have to realize that it is so important to get the highest level of English in order to train or teach people in English as a foreign language, in order to give them more job opportunities and improve the life style of several Salvadoran people, who can have the chance to increase the opportunities in the professional field in El Salvador instead of thinking of immigrating to a different country. The Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, has the responsibility for preparing teachers that will be working hard in order to help people in this career.

It is important to mention that teachers must be trained in order to get good quality of English that the University of El Salvador will provide to the society. However, there are some disadvantages that this Department is facing, such as the lack of opportunities for teachers to obtain scholarships in order to be more efficient in teaching English. So, teachers and students as

future English professionals have the challenge to train people with the level that the society is demanding. It has to be the main goal for the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, to prepare professional English teachers to work in bilingual institutions.

In the Salvadorian environment, English as a foreign language is more than a capacity to communicate. In fact, the control that professionals have on a foreign language enlarges their opportunities for reaching their goals. The Salvadoran Government is aware about it. For this reason, they created PROESA³, which is in charge of providing effective support for international companies seeking to invest in El Salvador. This institution is working closely with INSAFORP⁴, to provide assistance in training workers.

El Salvador has signed free-trade agreements with different countries like Canada, the United States and others, which has led to the establishment of different businesses in our country. These companies are coming to El Salvador and are seeking bilingual people in order to develop their activities as call centers, to mention one example.

³ PROESA (Promoting Investment in El Salvador)

⁴ INSAFORP (Salvadorian institute for Professional Training)

They are requesting people with advanced level of English, who can speak the foreign language in different situations and who can develop the language communication with English Speaking people.

With its strong prospects for continued economic growth, El Salvador is attracting domestic as well as foreign investment, and it is already integrating its economy into the regional and global markets. All these changes and opportunities are given because of an important tool as the English language is in the Salvadorian environment.

Global companies are now choosing this country as the new home for their call center operations, taking full advantage of the country's skilled workforce. El Salvador offers a skilled and customer oriented workforce with a neutral Spanish accent, which is recognized around the world, according to these companies. It is really significant that can be understood that all of this which is growing in the Salvadorian economy deals with the opportunities that a foreign language can bring to a society. Based on this fact, it is important that English teachers be aware about their role.

Many service agencies in El Salvador are offering foreign language resources to their American costumers. Some of these companies are: Atlas Marketing which is a call service agency dedicated to providing companies and organizations in the United States and Canada with Spanish language call center and telemarketing solutions. Even though the companies serve clients in North America, its administrative officers and call center facilities are located in San Salvador, El Salvador.

Also other companies are Sykes Enterprises Inc., Dell and Teleperformance. They have already established operations in El Salvador, each marketing an investment that exceeds five million American dollars. These companies operations were brought to El Salvador through the effort of El Salvador Investment Promotion Agency PROESA, which created a successful strategy in 2001 to attract call center operations.

The Sykes center employed around 400 bilingual staff in its initial phase, while the Teleperformance center employed 160 staff. The Teleperformance staff figure was expected to grow to 1,300 by the end of 2005. Both companies served clients based on the United States. There are a lot of opportunities for people who speak English in El Salvador and the

University of El Salvador has an important role because it is preparing the professionals that are in charge of training bilingual people. Also these professionals are the ones that are in charge of improving the level of English in this country.

These companies are not the only reason for Salvadoran people to learn the foreign language; also there are some bilingual schools that every year are opening their academic services to teach the foreign language. These private schools are looking for full English teachers and the most common problem that these institutions are facing is that not all teachers are fulfilling the level in the foreign language. So they are hiring people that have lived in the United States, even though they have not studied to be teachers. This situation is happening because teachers do not have the fluency in speaking English that these companies are requiring.

Thus, these companies and institutions are giving opportunities to bilingual people in El Salvador, and are questioning the lack of knowledge and experience that these people have in the foreign language. They need people with high level in English to be productive in their institutions.

Therefore, they have to get full English speaking employees for working in different areas but Salvadorian people do not have the level required by them.

The importance of English in El Salvador is imperative if Salvadorans want to compete and distance ourselves from other third world countries. It is the first priority for Salvadoran people to be able to communicate and therefore compete in the common global language, which is English.

Thus far, global companies are following as they are moving their operation offices to third world countries to minimize their costs like: Ford, General Electric, Sony and so on. It becomes an opportunity and therefore it is very wise to be able to offer an English speaking work force ready to communicate in English and to take over the daily operation jobs of such companies.

The benefits would be crucial to our economy and, not to mention healing for Salvadorian society, bilingual individuals would be able to demand better wages from these foreign companies and this will improve the Salvadoran economy that in consequence will lead to a better life style. Salvadorans

could help to lower crime, drug abuse and violence rates. This will also have its domino effect as with lower crime rates, our tourism would improve putting El Salvador in the global market with the leading nations of the world.

Permitting Salvadorian people to fully take advantage of global strategic place (close to the Panama Canal, Mexico, South America and the United States), English could be the key to open the role that Salvadorian teachers play in this whole scenario. El Salvador is focusing on getting the excellence in English language at such point that the companies would prefer.

As conclusion teachers need to be caring and nurturing since it is very difficult to be exposed to the cultural aspects of the English language and not just focus on classroom and English textbooks. It is the teachers responsibility to prepare these students for the task at hand. The teachers should share this same vision as it is not just teaching English to be able to translate and understand songs and movies. It is also to be able to write the script and perform the show. So teachers need to focus on going beyond the classrooms and beyond the textbooks to prepare Salvadorian people for the task at hand.

Also students need to focus on the importance of being English teachers when they are learning it, because the English language in the society will be a key for better life styles and more opportunities in professional fields.

Students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador have to be aware of what the English Teacher career really is, they have to be centered on what they are studying in order to be outstanding in their job and be conscious about the effect that they have on the Salvadoran society. These future teachers have to keep in mind that they will provide a significant tool for Salvadorian people in order to succeed in their every day life.