



# “Iyambae”: in search of an emancipatory higher education in the UNIBOL Guaraní and Lowland Peoples

## *“Iyambae”: en busca de una educación emancipadora en la UNIBOL Guaraní y Pueblos de Tierras Bajas*

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### Abstract

In Latin America (LA), to speak of the conditions of possibility that show the construction of an own education in higher education as an alternative to the pedagogical project of modernity and hegemonic capitalism is to refer to localized and concrete educational experiences in the region. The context of diversity corresponds to that of the indigenous lowland ethnics of Bolivia. Now, what are the scope and limitations that particularize the approach of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of the model of the Bolivian Indigenous University (UNIBOL) Guaraní and of the Low Lands Peoples “Apiaguaki Tüpa” that allows to speak of the construction of an own education oriented to the positioning of a Latin American pedagogy? The indigenous, original, ancestral peoples (IOAPs) have printed to this institution the following characteristics: subversion of

the hierarchical configuration, inheritance of the colonial university model; establishment of horizontal relationships in a context of verticality of higher education (HE). As well as, the transformation of the hierarchical, monocultural and hegemonic function into a pluralizing and preserving practice of diversity destined to overcoming inequalities through its valuation, rescue and strengthening of own ethnic, cultural and linguistic elements. In addition to the transit of the supplanting of the presence, voice and actions of the IOAPs to an active and effective role in the construction of a model of HE constituted and constituent of the historical, political and identitarian vision of the indigenous peoples of the low lands performing an emancipatory function.

**Keywords:** Own education, higher education, indigenous peoples, indigenous languages, emancipation, political vindication.

## Resumen

En Latinoamérica (LA), hablar de las condiciones de posibilidad que den muestra de la construcción de una Educación propia en la educación superior como alternativa al proyecto pedagógico de la modernidad y del capitalismo hegemónico es referirse a experiencias educativas localizadas y concretas en la región. El contexto de diversidad corresponde al de las etnias indígenas de tierras bajas de Bolivia. Ahora bien, ¿Cuáles son los alcances y limitaciones que particularizan el abordaje de la diversidad étnica, cultural y lingüística del modelo de Universidad Indígena Boliviana (UNIBOL) Guaraní y de Pueblos de Tierras Bajas "Apiaguaki Tüpa" que permite hablar de la construcción de una educación propia orientada al posicionamiento de una pedagogía latinoamericana? Los pueblos indígena, originario, ancestrales (PIOAs) han impreso a esta institución las siguientes características: subversión de la configuración

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Currently, much of the pedagogy that underpins educational action in Latin American countries suffers not only from an essential foundation in the axiom of inequality (Rancière, 2003). Model assumed and perfected by the pedagogical project of modernity and hegemonic capitalism (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) but also, it institutes the system that it represents, reproduces and disseminates, imposing it as the paradigm to emulate in education. Scheme that keeps other education systems in a situation of submission to the hegemonic model, forcing them to reproduce and perpetuate this inequality.

In education, those who have experienced the processes of inferiorization and minorization have been the indigenous peoples, conceived from indigenist logics (Castañeda, 2006) as incapable to decide their destinies by themselves and even more to conceive, build and carry out their own systems educational (Sarango, 2013). Proceed that has found in higher education, heir to the colony, the perfect reproduction mechanism and naturalization of the relationship of

jerárquica, herencia del modelo de universidad colonial (Weinberg, 1995), establecimiento de relaciones horizontales en un contexto de verticalidad de la educación superior (ES). Así como, la transformación de la función jerarquizante, monocultural y hegemónica en una práctica pluralizadora y preservadora de la diversidad destinada a la superación de las desigualdades a través de su valoración, rescate y fortalecimiento de elementos étnicos, culturales y lingüísticos propios. Además del tránsito de la suplantación de la presencia, voz y accionar de los PIOAs a un activo y efectivo protagonismo en la construcción de un modelo de ES constituido y constituyente de la visión histórica, política e identitaria de los pueblos indígenas de tierras bajas desempeñando una función emancipadora.

**Descriptor:** Educación propia, educación superior, pueblos indígenas, lenguas indígenas, emancipación, reivindicación política.

political, economic, cultural, epistemic and linguistic subalternization of indigenous peoples.

In Bolivia, the state administration, rooted in the coloniality of power (Quijano, and Wallerstein, 1992), historically denied the recognition of two constituent and instituting elements of indigenous nations; their ancestral territories and their free determination (Aparicio, 2009). However, the indigenous struggle, particularly in the lowlands, obtained, in recent decades, important achievements in the attainment of both claims. Advance that configured a suitable space for the concretion of the main proposals of the indigenous route, establishing itself as an alternative social project.

The condition of majority is the one that which allows the indigenous society to offer its interpretative scheme, its knowledge scheme and its political positioning, as an attractive hegemonic possibility and that questions the mestizos our identity. For me, the most interesting politically of the phenomenon of the Indian insurgency, is that it poses for the first time to Bolivian society as a whole the possibility of becoming *Indianized* and of overcoming the external, essentialist and reifying visions of the ethnic (Rivera, 2008).



In the field of higher education, the creation of the regime of indigenous universities, particularly the UNIBOL “Apiaguaki Tüpa”, is the proposal of the indigenous peoples of the lowlands. The transcendence of the educational project lies in the correlation between the educational project and the political and ideological vision proper to the indigenous peoples of the lowlands based on the reconstitution of the ancestral territories, self-determination and the revival of their own historicity. In this framework, the experience develops important elements framed in the construction of an own education.

## 2. Methodology

Since the end of the eighties of the last century, the actions of the indigenous movement, in addition to other confluent factors, brought about important changes in the countries of the region; the official responses of the Nation-State involved processes of institutionalization of diversity in the HE. Proposals that range from a logic of inclusion, integration of the indigenous population (Mato, 2014, p.33) to those from the same IOAPs consisting of self-managing experiences. The difference between the two makes it possible to elucidate the research problem. When non-indigenous people raise the project, then the study would focus on relevance; but, when the proposal emerges from the indigenous people, the present case, the objective is to demonstrate the possibilities and limitations in the process of materializing and consolidating the projection of the political, ideological and cultural vision of these peoples in the HE.

The need to know the particularities that make this university a proposal of indigenous peoples, urged the adoption of ethnographic qualitative research. The exploratory strategy implemented the following techniques: a) The documentary review allowed to access and analyze relevant information of the university. b) The interview was of an unstructured type, in depth, and it was applied under the criterion of greater incidence in

the materialization of the educational proposal. c) Non-participant observation resulted vital to analyze everyday events attitudes of detractors and / or supporters of the model. The instruments used were the field diary, interview guides, such as, the photographic record and voice.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Contextualization of indigenous nationalities and intercultural universities in the Plurinational State of Bolivia

Bolivia is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world; profusion also embodies the ethnic, cultural and linguistic variety. A basic classification of the geographical composition distributes its territory in “highlands” (puna, altiplano and valleys) and “lowlands” (Amazonia, Chaco and eastern plains). Comparing both extensions, 60% of the territory corresponds to the Amazon region (Rivero, 2014), therefore more than an Andean country it must be considered Amazonian. The total population of the country amounts to 10 457 329 inhabitants, of which 44% is indigenous (INE, 2011), a percentage questioned by the drastic reduction compared to the 2001 census where 62% self-identified as indigenous. Bolivia recognizes 36 indigenous nationalities, five inhabit ancestrally in the highlands: The rest, 31 are located in the lowlands. This indicates a greater concentration of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in the lowlands.

The instrumentalization of education originated in the colony and continued in the Republican era always seek the ethnic, political, territorial and symbolic deconstruction of IOAPs imposing a homogenizing educational policy, minorizing and inferiorizing (Choque, 2015) called Indigenismo (Fabre, 1998). Against the current, subalternization provoked the need of indigenous people to appropriate education. For the indigenous movement, the paradox exposed subversive connotations about educa-



tion, assuming it as one of its demands (Rojas, 2003). In this sense, the struggle of the indigenous peoples for their demands has generated important changes in the last four decades. Transformations that reached their highest point with the approval of a New Political Constitution of the State (NPCS) in 2009. Social agreement where the active participation of indigenous peoples set the bases of the new model of State based on the recognition of the plurinationality that it obliges us to meet the demands, needs and expectations of the peoples that make it up.

With the creation of the Bolivian indigenous university regime in 2008, the scenario of higher education undergoes significant changes that promote the State’s obligation to guarantee the rescue, maintenance and development of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity to the indigenous nationalities established in the NPCS:

Higher education is intracultural, intercultural and multilingual, and its mission is the integral formation of human resources with high qualification and professional compe-

tence; develop scientific research processes to solve problems of the productive base and its social environment; promote extension policies and social interaction to strengthen scientific, cultural and linguistic diversity; participate with their people in all processes of social liberation, to build a society with greater equity and social justice (Official Gazette of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2009, p.25).

Also, since 2011 comes into force, the Education Law “Avelino Siñani, Elizardo Pérez» incorporating new elements tending to preserve and strengthen the cultural heritage of the IOAPs. Article 5 establishes principles that will govern education according to the new model of country established by the constitution, noting; “The original indigenous peasant nations and peoples have the right to an intracultural, intercultural and multilingual education throughout the educational system.” This seeks to ensure that the entire educational system contributes to strengthening the unity and identity of indigenous peoples as part of the State Plurinational, as well as the identity and cultural development of its members.

UNIBOL Guaraní and of Lowland Peoples “Apiaguaiki Tüpa”



Located in the community of Ivo, Luis Calvo province of the Department of Chuquisaca, in the original indigenous territory (OIT) Guaraní, is the campus of UNIBOL “Apiaguaiki Tüpa”. From its foundation, this university showed important advances, referring us to the possibility of constructing an insumy education (Medina, 2015) and with it an alternative pedagogy. In this sense, the visualization of the political project of indigenous peoples is essentialized in two basic conditions of life for the indigenous population: territory and emancipation. The vital character of these elements was translated for the indigenous peoples in two imperatives; the first, “the reconstitution of indigenous territories” and the second “the self-determination of these peoples.” Both precepts framed in the resumption of own historicity (Cusicanqui, 2010, p.54).

Under these two ruling principles, the indigenous population generated numerous and diverse strategies of resistance and struggle to face the brutal conditions of socio-community cultural destructuring imposed by the colonial system (Golte, 1980), which meant the usurpation and dispossession of ancestral and indigenous territories. the exploitation of their natural resources. In addition to the submission of the indigenous population to forced labor under conditions of servitude and slavery that lasted almost three centuries, from the arrival of the Spanish until 1825 (Canedo, 2011). Independence, reaffirming its colonial heritage, did not put an end to dispossession and exploitation, intensifying it. Situation that affirmed the territorial reconstitution and self-determination as unequivocal claims of the IOAPs. For the lowland Indians of Bolivia, the millenarian movements (Wachtel, 1973) as the Ivi Marae “land without evil” for the Guaraní; or the Kandire “The Search for the Holy Hill” for the Moxeños constitute the strategy related to the reconstitution of indigenous territories (Lehm, 1991).

The territories are sacred spaces where Guaraní people or families have to take care of and be part of it ... then those three categories is, for

us, it necessarily has to have a territory, right? and if it does not meet those three components, the territory is in conflict, if it is only a small lot for the house, it lacks something, right? It needs to have a crop. But if I have a house and then a crop, it turns out that I’m missing something that is more important, right? which is the greater space that is the sacred place, place for hunting, place for spirituality, for the displacement of people and contact also with other beings, then that is the greater space, then in those three dimensions is understood the territory and good since ancient times we have always been looking for territory as well right? the word search, the search for the Ivi Marae or “Land without Evil” does not mean that we did not have it, right? but it was a permanent being in that space of the earth without evil. At another time if required, when the territory was already worn out, the territory no longer had those three elements was necessary a displacement or spatial use within the space domain over their territories. So that is the vision of the earth without evil, right? for us (E. Camargo, interview, 11/18/2014).

In the same sense, the Iyambae or Iyaambae whose closest meaning refers to a free human being “the unowned” is established as a strategy that encourages the search for self-determination of indigenous peoples. Both precepts historically drive and guide the actions and life of the indigenous population towards the achievement of these ideals.

Iyambae is a condition, it is a human condition, not only of the Guaraní but also of what we say is that the Guaraní is free, without owner, autonomous, free to decide his future freely. That is the Iyambae being, there should not be a boss, and there should not be someone to lead. So that is also the dignity of the people, right? Because the world has now entered there are some that explode and others that ... an exploiter and others that are exploited. So in the Guaraní vision, is not that right? but the sovereign being itself, the person. That is why before we did not have ... a confederation, of the Guaraní before, there was not a ... someone to send the entire Guaraní nation, but every sector,



every community, every person, every captaincy was free, right? At the moment of defending the territory, all of them came together, but then each one of them developed his own life autonomously, did not he? So that is one of the most important issues that we take care of, right? (E. Camargo, personal interview, 11/18/2014).

Driven and directed by these mobilizing utopias the IOAPs have obtained, in the last three decades, important results in the attainment of their fundamental demands. Among the perceptible achievements for indigenous peoples are: 1) They obtained the collective title of 20 715 950.3 hectares from 1990 to 2010 as Indigenous Peasants Native Territories (IPNTs), Fundación Tierra (2011). 2) The election of the first indigenous president in 2006. 3) In 1985, they propose the convocation of the constituent assembly. 4) Participate with other indigenous and civil society organizations in the implementation of the Constituent Assembly from 2006 to 2009. 5) Achieve recognition of the diverse ethnic, cultural and linguistic composition of the country by changing the name of the Republic of Bolivia to that of Plurinational State of Bolivia (EPB). 6) They achieve the constitutionalization of their historical demands as the recognition of the "original indigenous peasant territory" and indigenous autonomy. 7) Obtain direct political representation in the legislative body. 8) Constitutionalize the prior consultation in the Magna Carta.

Given the pre-colonial existence of the original indigenous peasant nations and peoples and their ancestral dominion over their territories, their self-determination is guaranteed within the framework of the unity of the State, which consists of their right to autonomy, self-government, their culture, to the recognition of its institutions and the consolidation of its territorial entities, in accordance with this Constitution and the law (Gazette of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2009.17).

Thus the indigenous movement would have advanced, both in the reconstitution of the

ancestral territories and in the self-determination of the peoples. In this sense, the achievements have resulted in the recognition and revaluation of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of the indigenous nationalities by the Bolivian society as a whole in its different social strata. Fact that allowed agreeing a new social pact under the slogan "never again without the indigenous peoples." In this way, the indigenous peoples have increased their visibility and participation in different political, legal, economic and social areas in Bolivia. Likewise, the election of the first indigenous president of Bolivia in 2006 marks a continuum in the concretions of several historical demands always subject to the mobilizing utopias (Ivi marae and Iyambae). Proper configuration for the establishment of the main proposals of the indigenous way in different social spheres.

In the field of higher education in 2008, three indigenous universities were created: the UNIBOL Aymara "Tupak Katari", the UNIBOL Quechua "Casimiro Huanca", the UNIBOL Guaraní, and the Lowland Peoples "Apiaguaki Tüpa". The creation of these HEIs is part of the broad political vision of indigenous peoples, always oriented towards the ancestral reconstitution of ancestral territories, the self-determination of indigenous nations and the revival of the historicity of indigenous peoples. The creation of this new regime of universities<sup>2</sup> alternating with the classic, conventional universities already existing is justified in the experience of a large part of the indigenous population that had to deal with processes of alienation, loss of cultural identity, prioritization of individual interests and a vision predominantly commercial knowledge, under a monocultural principle (Díaz-Polanco, 2006) that invisibilized and disqualified the knowledge and understanding of the reality produced by indigenous peoples.

Criticism of the regime of public-conventional universities, entrenched in university autonomy, becomes not only of its invariable, reproductive function of inequality rooted strongly in colonial thought (Tünnermann,



2010). But also of the non-existent contribution in the transformation processes undertaken by the majority social sectors since 2004 that culminated with the approval of the NPCCS in 2009, even more prevailing the reticent attitude to the changes advocated by majority social sectors. Negative that reverberated in the need to create indigenous (non-conventional) HEIs correlated to the educational requirements of being, acting and thinking proper to indigenous alterity.

With the start-up of the UNIBOL “Apiaguaiki Tüpa”, the tension between two university models that strive to impose themselves within the institution is exposed. On the one hand, there is the model of a conventional western university, with which public and private universities have been operating since the foundation of the first university in Bolivia. On the other hand, there is the “unconventional indigenous university model” that could be described as the attempt to concretize the idea of higher education proper to indigenous peoples, in this case the lowland indigenous peoples of Bolivia.

In the absence of a pre-established model of indigenous university, but which is under construction, consolidation in the experience of UNIBOL faces the influence exerted by the pre-established conventional model. In this sense, the convergence of both models within this indigenous HEIs expresses its multiple tensions and conflicts in different dimensions, levels and university actors impacting on the constitutive development of self-education at the higher level of education recorded under this HEIs. Such a conjuncture shapes the scope and limits of this experience affecting different constituent components, these are: a) Participation of indigenous peoples in the structure of university governance and current functioning of the university, b) The dialogue and articulation of universal knowledge of western court with knowledge and own knowledge, c) Sociolinguistic dynamics and institutional approach to indigenous languages; and d) the university connection with the communities, organizations and indigenous population.

### **3.2. Participation of indigenous peoples in the governance structure and current functioning of the UNIBOL Guaraní University and the Low Lands peoples**

One of the most visible features of UNIBOL Guaraní since its creation up to now is the involvement of the indigenous population in the project. It currently houses 732 students and 62 teachers. The evidence establishes a qualitative participation as it raises and materializes an academic proposal positioned in the political and ideological vision of the lowland peoples. Quantitatively, the participation of the IOAPs becomes effective, insofar as the educational approach is conveyed in instances of proposal, decision and execution where the participation of indigenous peoples is the majority, defining the institutional course of action. The educational proposal is certainly in charge of the indigenous peoples of the lowlands; both in the governance structure and the administration of resources, institutional and academic management. The same indigenous actors visualize the university as an institutionality created by them. Likewise, the non-indigenous population recognizes this HEI as a strictly indigenous institution.

The Community Board gives the highest instance of decision in the UNIBOL “Apiaguaiki Tüpa”, in the organizational structure. The representatives of each of the indigenous peoples from which the students come from this instance. If there are 12 indigenous nationalities present in the university, there will be 12 indigenous representatives in the council, the directors of each of the four races; Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering PNGE, Forestry Engineering (FE), Eco-pisciculture Engineering (EPE) and Veterinary Medicine (VM). One teacher representative per race (4 teachers), one student representative also for careers (4 indigenous students) and the Rector, indigenous. This composition indicates that the tuition of the university rests mainly



on the indigenous population making deliberative and decisive indigenous participation.

3.2.1. *UNIBOL Guaraní de Tierras Bajas is directly linked to the immediate, immediate and subsequent demands of the indigenous peoples of the Bolivian East*

Under the slogan "for territory and dignity" in 1990 in Bolivia, the indigenous lowland movement called for a march claiming the right of indigenous peoples to the territory. With this march, the indigenous peoples managed to get the government to title them as CLO (Community Land of Origin) three territorial extensions (Lehm, 1991). Since then, more than twenty CLOs to different indigenous nationalities have been recognized in Bolivia.

At this juncture the creation of indigenous universities is a response to the educational needs of the IOAPs linked essentially to the occupation and use of natural resources in their ancestral territories. In this sense, the creation of the four conventional educational programs responds to the constitutional requirement to boost productivity through the HE. Likewise, they correspond to the natural resources existing in the territories: Oil and Natural Gas Engineering, linked to the use of hydrocarbons whose important deposits are located in the indigenous territories of the Guaraní nation. Forestry Engineering, related to the use of existing forest resources in the forests of the Amazon. Engineering in Eco-pisciculture related to the use of the abundant water resources in the Bolivian east. And Veterinary Medicine anticipating the potential of animal breeding.

CLOs. graduates and in the process of qualification



3.2.2. *The indigenous sages in UNIBOL Guaraní and Lowlands*

A highlight of the educational experience is the emergence, in the academic field, of the

indigenous sages, currently in the university are working under this function four wise men that correspond to the indigenous nations: Guaraní, Moxeño, Bésiro and Guarayu. Regarding its functions are several; counselor for students,



educator, expert in indigenous language, also serving as academic and political advisors who guide the governing bodies and institutional management. Of all the functions carried out by the indigenous wise men, two stand out: the first one related to the role of depositories of the knowledge and knowledge of the indigenous peoples and mediators in the processes of articulation between the universal knowledge of the western court and the knowledge and own knowledge. In this sense, the importance of the pedagogical function of the indigenous sage for UNIBOL lies in its potential as an intra-cultural agent in academic processes of curricular design and restructuring of academic plans and programs. Indispensable intervention in the task of promoting an epistemological pluralism (Prada, 2015) in an adverse context, because they are conventional careers whose fields of knowledge are made up of structural science, explanatory methods based on the totality, and the scientific method of cutting Western as a means of validation.

The second function is related to his role as a guide and political adviser in the conduct of UNIBOL, there he becomes a watchman of the community board. Caution that the academic, administrative, social, cultural processes do not contravene the indigenous educational proposal established by the institution. In this sense, it advocates in different instances, especially in academic disputes between technical teachers (anchored in conventional academic formats), teachers of indigenous languages (positioned in the indigenous proposal). And transversal teachers (custodians of the proposal) taking care that the consolidation of the model maintains the characteristics that make it indigenous.

### 3.2.3. *Sociolinguistic dynamics and institutional approach to indigenous languages at UNIBOL “Apiaguaiki Tüpa”*

From the three indigenous universities created in Bolivia, the UNIBOL “Apiaguaiki Tüpa” is

the one with the most ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity. This means to the institution a great difficulty and a real challenge referred to the rescue and strengthening of the indigenous languages of the lowlands. Currently at the University we can find students from 17 indigenous nations, including some students from the highlands, Aymara and Quechua.

However, the complexity involved in revitalizing the use of indigenous languages UNIBOL has assumed this challenge, establishing the subject of indigenous (indigenous) language as trocal in the four races; with the objective of producing research, science and theory from the indigenous language. Thus students can elaborate and theorize from their own linguistic code, as well as construct representations of the productive, environmental context, taking into account their own way of seeing the world conveyed by their language as the main instrument (UNIBOL, 2012).

The approach of the indigenous language in the institution shows difficulties and limitations referred mainly to the impossibility of adequately addressing the great diversity of languages present in UNIBOL. Although the intention is to consolidate a model of revitalization of the lowland languages, this is not possible materially because it implies the hiring of at least thirty teachers only for this curricular axis. For this reason, the institution chose to gradually attend to languages in professional training. Initially it works four indigenous languages of majority use in the students: the guaraní, the moxeño, the bésiro and the guarayu. The other languages will be added gradually in the following years.

Numerically bilingual students (Appel and Muysken, 1997) are few compared to monolingual students in Spanish at UNIBOL. The strategy adopted consists of grouping the students into bilingual Spanish-indigenous languages and monolinguals in Spanish. The first ones arrive at the university with all the linguistic skills in Spanish and certain competences in the indigenous language. In changes the seconds come only



with the mastery of the competences in Spanish (understand, speak, write and read). Both groups approach the language with different purposes during the first two semesters; the bilinguals seek to consolidate the four linguistic skills and the monolinguals begin the learning of the language, this supposes initially the election of one of the four languages offered by the institution. In the third semester, both are merged and form cooperation groups for the consolidation of competences in indigenous language, where bilingual students assume an important role as support in the formation of their monolingual companions. Despite the time dedicated and the strategy adopted to promote the learning of languages, the results are still very limited, at the end of their professionalization the students (monolingual) have not yet managed to consolidate the linguistic capacities in the indigenous language.

#### *3.2.4. Teacher tendency to replicate the conventional teaching function of their own professional training*

All the teachers of the four UNIBOL "Apiaguaiki Tüpa" programs were trained in conventional public universities, their current teaching practice reflects much of their professional training experience characterized by the role of teacher explaining reproductive inequality of intelligence (Ranciére, 2003). Where the active role was focused on the teaching of the teacher, their knowledge, their method, etc. The indigenous university model provides these teachers with the space to transform their teaching experience subordinating intelligences to an emancipating educational practice.

At the moment UNIBOL presents three types of teaching according to the curricular areas: technical teachers, teachers of indigenous languages and transversal teachers. Due to the training of teachers in conventional universities, the explaining model was present in all but with different intensities. Thus, engineering teachers seem to have experimented, acutely, processes of

pedagogical stunning (Ranciére, 2003). The reason refers to the contents of the area of natural sciences strongly structured in the methods of scientific verification. Hence the reluctance to conceive other systems of knowledge as valid, transforming principle of educational practice. On the other hand, the teachers in the transversal area seem to have been less affected by the educational experience of the explaining teacher, due in part to the nature of the contents that correspond to the area of the humanities and social sciences. Their current practice as teachers shows a greater openness to the emancipation of education, in many cases, openly promotes and encourages teachers in the technical area to move from a teaching methodology based on the inequality of intelligences to a methodology of equality of wills. On the other hand, indigenous language teachers, strengthened in their cultural identity, become promoters of the indigenous model.

Negotiations between these types of teachers outline a certain articulation of knowledge, knowledge and languages, not always a product of dialogue but as a result of the struggle to assign a percentage of the distributive rating that reflects not only the domain of knowledge in the technical disciplinary area, but also, the academic use of the indigenous language, the cultural foundation that recovers the historicity itself, as well as the recovery of some knowledge or own knowledge.

#### *3.2.5. The contents of some subjects lend themselves more to the explaining method*

Regarding the contents of the different subjects of the UNIBOL forest engineering career, it is worth mentioning the presence of contents in curricular areas that would justify traditional teaching practices. These contents correspond to the area of natural sciences. Disciplines such as dendrology, edaphology, general botany, plant physiology and others of the forest area, as well as the subjects of physics, chemistry and calculation whose contents are based on rigid methods of verification and scientific classification. Therefore, the weight of



these subjects in professional training is covered by a status of indisputable science compared to other knowledge and knowledge in particular, the indigenous. In this sense, technical teachers often disqualify the knowledge coming from the cultural heritage of the students, refusing to consider them as knowledge, especially in undergraduate research. In addition, the conception of superiority of the “scientific” knowledge of these subjects is transmitted to the students; in this sense, the hierarchy “inequality of knowledge” is replicated. Incidentally, in these subjects the percentage of approval of the course by tradition is lower than in others.

On the other hand, students can also see the weight of an educational trajectory in the school levels, characterized by the pedagogical explaining practice that has disrupted the way of conceiving the learning process. The repercussions of this experience can be perceived in the insecurity that the students show when facing academic tasks where the intervention of the teacher is reduced. In this regard, López (2009) points out that the worst impoverishment is that we have trained the indigenous or indigenous ancestry population as people insecure of themselves, and an insecure subject can not contribute to the development of a country. Likewise, another implication of the educated school experience is that for a large part of the students their learning becomes the explanation of a teacher who has consolidated a large amount of knowledge in the area he teaches. Especially when it comes to the subjects of the technical area.

When asked, what are the characteristics of teachers who teach well? Many respond that they are those who explain better, assigning their learning not to themselves but to the explaining role of the teacher; as well as its accumulation of knowledge of the area and which are constantly updated. The very conception of student learning refers to that process of emptying the teacher’s knowledge towards students, elements that reinforce and maintain the teacher’s explaining role.

## 4. Discussion

Notwithstanding the changes of the State achieved by social movements, especially the indigenous movement. The transformation of higher education in Bolivia has found in the conventional, traditional, autonomous university model of colonial origin an insurmountable obstacle to realize one’s own educational vision. Hence, the reconfiguration of higher education has sought other paths, such as the creation of other university regimes among which are indigenous universities. The institutionality of the Indigenous HEIs transcends the traditional university autonomy, framed in a wider autonomy the “indigenous autonomy”.

In the indigenous higher education project, there is no interpretation of the educational requirements of lowland indigenous peoples. Nor is there an agentive intermediation, since the indigenous themselves are the ideologues, promoters and interlocutors who, through their organizations, transmit, negotiate with the State their demands, needs and educational expectations. Act that has allowed them to carry out their own proposals for higher education. In this sense, the participation of the indigenous population was decisive from the beginning, in the gestation of the idea and creation of UNIBOL “Apiaguaiki Tüpa” and its current development.

The indigenous university actors are clear and assume the difference with conventional public universities, which constitute the initial reference for the construction of an institutional identity. However, resistance to change is observed by some teachers, who, due to their training in conventional HEIs, do not assume the indigenous approach advocated by the institution and indigenous organizations, developing their academic activities in a traditional-conventional framework of higher education. This makes it difficult to consolidate an own model in the HE.

The explicit choice of the superior educational proposal through the indigenous route



allows the actors involved, from the beginning, to identify the demands, needs and expectations that the IOAPs confer on higher education. Fact that empowers the participants to position themselves critically, identifying themselves with the ideological political vision of the indigenous peoples to which the educational proposal of this university responds. Likewise, this affects the involvement and commitment of the university actors in the educational project.

The exclusive attention of the indigenous population in the HE, through the indigenous model, contributes to the clarity of those involved, indigenous organizations, teachers, community, students, authorities of their political, pedagogical and epistemological actions because the aims, objectives and purposes they are directly linked to the achievement of the historical claims of the indigenous peoples and the projection of the semiotic ontological horizons (De Alba, 2009) of the 31 lowland indigenous peoples.

## 5. Conclusions

Since colonial times, indigenous education in Bolivia has been denied and persecuted; it is only in the last four decades that the struggle of the indigenous movement made important advances in various social areas. The consolidation of the indigenous higher education proposal, evidence of this advance in the educational field, shows significant elements in that the features that particularize it correspond to the locus of enunciation of the IOAPs, identify these elements and their articulation logic. It allows to know the course in the construction of an own education whose theorization contributes to the Latin American pedagogical emancipation.

As can be seen, the emergence of the UNIBOL Guaraní de Tierras Bajas is opposed to the supplanting role anchored in inequality, and is rather committed to a pedagogical practice based on the assessment of the knowledge and knowledge of indigenous peoples. This positioning implies a change that guides the institution

in its pedagogical action toward the search for the establishment of links with the communities and the indigenous population of the different lowland indigenous nationalities, valuing them as having a cultural legacy translated into knowledge and technologies ancestral. Cultural heritage that corresponds to each of the indigenous peoples from which the students of this university come, converting them into their bearers. Therefore, the protagonists of the professional training processes (authorities, teachers and students) should aspire to establish a learning methodology that arouses the political, intellectual, cultural and linguistic emancipation of the students.

It should be noted that this pedagogical goal is an important part of the educational project of the indigenous peoples, who have been building projects in Bolivia and other Latin American countries that refer to their own education: that of indigenous-native peoples. Likewise, as one can see, one's education does not imply an essentialization of ancestral indigenous cultures that represents a return to the past. It is more a matter of resignifying the living presence of the indigenous peoples in the current world, giving it its own meaning through the re-take of its historicity. This implies, a necessary interrelation with other worldviews, even hegemonic ones that are modeling current forms of life, seeking to establish a critical interculturality (Walsh, 2002) that allows them to emancipate themselves from the historically imposed cultural, ideological, political and linguistic domain.

The explicit choice of the higher educational proposal through the indigenous route allows the actors involved to clearly identify the demands, needs and expectations that indigenous peoples confer upon higher education within the framework of their historicity. Fact that empowers the participants to position themselves critically, positioning themselves from the ideological political vision to which the educational proposal of this university responds. This has repercussions on the involvement and



commitment of the university actors in the educational project.

## Notes

1. Proyecto subvencionado por el Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT) de México, dentro del proyecto "Construcción de la educación propia en las IES: un estudio comparativo de dos universidades: La Universidad Indígena Boliviana Guaraní y de Pueblos de Tierras Bajas "Apiaguaiki Tüpa" (Bolivia) y La Universidad Veracruzana Intercultural (México)".
2. Artículo 1° del decreto supremo N° 29664 de creación de las tres universidades indígenas bolivianas de fecha 2 de agosto de 2008 "Créase tres (3) Universidades Indígenas Bolivianas Comunitarias Interculturales Productivas-UNIBOL "Aymara", "Quechua" y "Guaraní y Pueblos de Tierras Bajas" como entidades descentralizadas de educación pública superior, bajo Régimen Especial y tuición del Ministerio de Educación y Culturas. Gaceta oficial del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia.

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