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# A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN MOROCCO

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This research is motivated by an insistent curiosity to accurately understand the assumption that English Language Teaching is not something of a closed box concerned only with technical matters; rather the operation is over loaded with ideologies among which 'English as a Global Language'. To investigate this very controversial assertion, the study focuses exclusively on a corpus of sixteen popular foreign and national English Language Centers (ELC) operating in Morocco through a critical discourse analysis of slogans, texts and pictorial prompts in those ELCs' websites to explore how the unquestionable assumption of 'English as a Global Language' is being displayed, promoted and reinforced in those websites' pages.

KEYWORDS: English, Global Language, Ideology, Promotion, Supremacy

#### INTRODUCTION

In the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the British Council, Randolph Quirk (1985) firmly asserts in a paper entitled "The English Language in a Global Context" that English is:

The language on which the sun does not set, whose users never sleep. For between 1600 and 1900, speakers of English pushed themselves into every part of the globe (more recently, to lunatic deserts far beyond the globe), so that at this present time, English is more widely spread and is the chief language of more countries than any other language is or ever has been." (Quirk, 1985, as cited in Zughoul, 2002, p. 137).

Indeed, never before has the world witnessed a language spreading so extensively, so rapidly and unquestionably, if not pleasurable, welcomed even within countries like Morocco which is still regarded traditionally a "backyard garden" for France. Yet if this phenomenon is unparalleled, so too is the extent of the triggered debate and disputes over the English language's phenomenal status. To stimulate this unprecedented spread, English Language Teaching (ELT), as stated by Louis-Jean Calvet, has been "in the driving seat, while politics and the economy follow, and are an outcome rather than a tool". That is to say, English Language Teaching constitutes an effective means for the U.S and U.K to maintain their cultural prominence and further their economic interests. In that, Phillipson (1992) points out that "Britain's real black gold is not North Sea Oil but the English language" (p. 48). According to the proponents of this critical view, ELT has been superficially marketed as a transparent, purely-educational and interest-free enterprise, but profoundly is seen as complex machinery that propagates and normalizes certain ELT principles as "common sense assumptions" in a bid to realize socio-political and economic interests. (Phillipson, 1992; Kachru, 1986; Bourdieu, 1991; Pennycook, 1994 & Rajagopalan, 2002). English language teaching is not something of a closed box (Pennycook, 2000, p. 86) or a technical

operation concerned only with methods, competencies, skills, learning styles, drills, activities and so on; rather ELT is implicitly imbued with socio-political and economic ideologies such as: "English as a global language" and "the native-like competence", that is the prime focus of the current study.

The ubiquitous foreign and local English Language Centers (ELCs) are pivotal in promoting those ideologies. In their websites, the ELCs, prompted by profitable incentives and/or socio-cultural interests, implement consciously and/or unconsciously a variety of advertising tactics, linguistically persuasive styles and catchy photos to embellish their commodity so as to grab the visitors' attention, arouse their interests and stir up their mental, psychological and sometimes their instinctual desire.

#### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Language Ideology

In the preface to their book titled "Language as Ideology", Kress and Hodge (1979), described the rationale for creating their work as the necessity they had felt to link history and linguistics. Actually, they tried to fill the gap between language and ideology. In that, two aspects can be pointed to in their discussion of the ideological nature of language. Firstly, they view language as a way of communication as well as an instrument of control because hearers and readers can be both informed and manipulated simultaneously. The second aspect is more of a sociopolitical nature since language as the ideology can be a tool to systematically further the interest of a certain class at the expense of the other

Full of such socio-political characteristics and functions, language is not only a linguistic channel to deliver messages for the sole sake of communication, rather, but it is also tool to control and exercise power over the powerless. Kress and Hodge (1993) conclude that language and power could be interrelated in the sense that "what is said by the powerful is often assumed to be right" (p. 122). These views seem as if they were tailored to describe the Moroccan educational system that has been praising, appreciating and recognizing with great gratitude the external educational and pedagogical initiatives while underestimating and denigrating the Moroccan creativity in the field (Mourada, 2013).

#### The Ideological Aspects of English Language Teaching

In the early nineties, a critical movement, pioneered by Robert Phillipson (1992), emerged, disregarding and questioning all those 'common sense' assumptions, based on the assertion that the English language teaching is never an innocent and transparent process rather it is essentially an imperialist exercise and an extension of empire via a different, more insidious form of control. In his influential book, "Linguistic Imperialism" (1992) Phillipson states that:

The professional discourse around ELT disconnects culture from the structure by limiting the focus in language pedagogy to technical matters, that is, language and education in a narrow sense, to the exclusion of social, economic and political matters. (Phillipson, 1999, p. 48).

Phillipson's main concern is not to show the falsity and invalidity of ELT principles rather to argue that those principles which have been circulated by local and foreign ELT professionals for decades and became well entrenched worldwide have been accepted submissively and without much scrutiny as a set of unquestionable dogmas that in turn constitute what is called the taken-for-granted knowledge of ELT. In this respect, the assumption that 'English as a Global Language', seems one of the widely taken for the granted assumption by teachers, researchers, educators and students as a purely and pedagogically innocent, transparent and ideology-free principle

#### English Language as a Global Language

The phenomenal spread of the English language can be said to have exceeded the status of lingua Francas. In this regard, Fishman (1983) states that the diffusion of English has attained an extent of magnitude that "it is now significantly fostered by the non-English mother tongue world...Third world nations are themselves fostering massive efforts via and on behalf of English". Morocco is a clear case in point for though it has its own well developed standard language that is highly revered and despite feelings of mistrust and suspicion towards the English speaking world, Morocco has been investing too much to improve the status of English within its territories. One of the views that tangibly provide an explanation of this extraordinary spread of English is that of Tollefson's (2000) who states that it is all about the fulfillment of a utopian dream of having a global language that "not only makes international communication more efficient, it also reduces the probability of political conflict resulting from competition among languages" (p. 10). Working for this goal, many artificial languages have been created such as Esperanto and others have been chosen such as Latin and French. However, English became a serious contender for use as the primary language of international communication because of the British Empire of the nineteenth century and, after World War II, the U.S.'s rise to world economic and political dominance. (ibid)

The socio-political factors that led to the spread of English worldwide have been eloquently expressed by David Crytsal (1997) in his influential book "English as a Global Language". His explanation of why English has become a global language is fairly simple, and straightforward. He says:

Without a strong power-base, whether political, military or economic, no language can make progress as an international medium of communication. Language has no independent existence, living in some sort of mystical space apart from the people who speak it. Language only exists in the brains and mouths and ears and hands and eyes of its users. When they succeed, on the international stage, their language succeeds. When they fail, their language fails. (Crystal, 1997, p. 7-8)

The notion of power in the quote above does not necessarily involve military power as it is the case with USA and U.K rather it refers to more effective ways of wielding power as Crystal put it "It may take a militarily powerful nation to establish a language, but it takes an economically powerful one to maintain and expand it" (Crystal, 1997, p.7-8). According to Crystal (2004), "much of the power which has underpinned the spread of the English language in the twentieth century has emanated from America". (p. 127). The aforementioned quotes from Crystal's book summarize the basic ideas in his entire book. Therefore and just from the quotations mentioned, one can feel some sort of normalcy if not legitimacy in the use of whatever means available to spread one's language. Crystal (1997, p. 73) strengthens the global status of English as a "taken for granted" status attributed mainly to "the emergence, by the end of the century, of a climate of largely unspoken opinion" that acknowledges that "English is the natural choice of progress". He explains this spread of English as coincidental, useful and necessary since the English language "repeatedly found itself in the right place at the right time" Crystal (1997, 110).

Crystal's simplified view of the spread of English is totally different from that of Phillipson's (1992) and Pennycook's (1994) who share the idea that the spread of English should not be understood to have come by chance or without monitoring, feeding, support, encouragement, and persuasion from English speaking countries specially the UK and the USA. They claim that the diffusion of English language teaching worldwide can be traced back to the American

and the British neocolonial policies in which ELT constitutes a bridge to political and economic benefits. Hence, there are two main motives behind the spread of English. The first is purely economic since being competent in English represents a "linguistic capital" (Bourdieu, 1991) and the second is purely political since ELT enterprise has become an instrument to exercise "linguistic imperialism" (Phillipson, (1992). Therefore, English language teaching, based on the views expressed above, seems no more an innocent, neutral and purely an educational operation, rather it is overloaded with ideological agendas because the discussion about ELT has shifted towards more political and economic perspectives.

In 1992, the field of applied linguistics welcomed a book that triggered a ferocious debate among scholars about the socio-political aspects of English language teaching enterprise. Robert Phillipson (1992) argues that the global teaching of English was an act of linguistic imperialism. In the introduction of his book *Linguistic Imperialism*, Phillipson clarifies his objectives as follows:

The book explores the contemporary phenomenon of English as a world language and set out to analyze how the language became so dominant and why. It looks at the spread of English historically [...] It looks at the language policies that Third World countries inherited from colonial times, and considers how well "aid", in a form of educational development and English education in particular, has served the interest of the receiving countries and donors and assesses whether it has contributed to perpetuating North-South inequalities and exploitation. It looks specifically at the ideology transmitted with, in, and through the English language and the role of language specialists in the cultural export of English. (Phillipson, 1992, p. 1)

There are so much that can be learned from the so expressive quote above. Actually, Phillipson (1992) follows in kachru's footstepsin making a clear-cut distinction between the dominant Center, represented by the powerful western countries, and the dominated periphery, represented by the underdeveloped countries. This theory of Center-Periphery according to Phillipson

Operates with a division of the world into a dominant center [...] and the dominated peripheries [...] the norms, whether economic, military, or linguistic, are dictated by the dominant Center and have been internalized by those in power in the Periphery" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 52).

In other words, western countries have maintained their colonial roles and status in their formal colonies even after the independence. They are still the ones who monopolize resources, ideas, information and they are also the ones who control and dictate. English, being the most powerful center language, as explained in the previous part, has substituted military machinery to act as a crucial agent in maintaining the center hegemony and supremacy in a neocolonial era. In that, Howatt and Widdowson (2004) note that native speakers of English "continue the tradition of using their language to exercise hegemonic domination, not only, or even principally, by direct military of administrative means, but through control of the media, and of economic, cultural and commercial globalization" (p. 359, as cited in Addison, 2011, p. 58). This operation is referred to as Linguistic Imperialism which is defined as "the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between the English and other languages" (Phillipson, 1992, p.47).

Another striking element in Phillipson's Center-Periphery theory is the notion of "aid". He argues that when the Center exports educational aid in the form of textbooks, teaching pedagogy and expertise, native teachers, materials and so on, they are actually reinforcing their supremacy over the Peripheries instead of supporting them to catch up with the Center. These educational aids are usually followed with a bundle of conditions in a form of advice, suggestions, and plans

that are claimed to lead to development in the educational system if the peripheries abided by under the supervision of the center. Actually, "Anglo-centricity" has become widely noticeable not only in our educational system but in our daily life as well. English language, culture, people, traditions, behaviors are regarded as the norm by which all behaviors of the peripheries are measured. (Phillipson, 19992, p.48). For more understanding of center/periphery dichotomy, it is very useful to go back to the colonization era. The discourse that underpinned Western colonialism, and helped to establish its first foundations was based on the intellectual movement of the Enlightenment<sup>i</sup>. Based on their enlightened sense and the civilized principles associated with it, European intellectuals felt obliged to export those principles to the rest of the world. Smith (1998) argues that this approach inculcates the deep-rooted belief that "as the West had an Enlightenment, so must the rest of humanity" (p. 4). Recently, when Tony Blair (2006, p. 6), called for the adoption of British values: "Our values are worth struggling for. They represent humanity's progress throughout the ages", it was perceived by many critics and politicians as a new form of colonization embedded in liberal imperialism (Pilger, 2003, p. 160, as cited in Addison, 2011, p. 61). The British Council, in accordance with the British general policy, has a similar philanthropic role to "create a different kind of culture where we all share the same goals and values" (British Council, 2006).

In short, according to the views expressed above, it seems that the first image that portrays English language teaching as an educational and a transparent pedagogical process is a little bit different from the actual reality that the teaching of English language transmits unconsciously or consciously certain political ideologies that revolve mainly around maintaining some sort of western hegemony and supremacy over the peripheries which is a neocolonial strategy of imperialism in a post-colonial era.

The conclusion that can be drawn up till now is that the English language is a magic key for people to improve their lives and for countries to establish themselves as fully-fledged economic powers, but one should question this "common sense" statement when thinking of those, either people or countries, who have little chance to possess that linguistic capital. At this point, English, in addition to its bright image of improving people's social and academic status, has another tainted image of creating educational and social hierarchical systems between communities and also within the same community itself. For instance, those who afford the language school's expensive fees are likely to guarantee a good performance in their academic studies and therefore a decent job with high salaries. On the other hand, those who are financially unable to have access to these language centers are usually left behind, facing difficulties in their academic studies and therefore having fewer chances of getting a good profession. The English language has become a means of arranging persons in social strata and classes that result in an "unequal social and economic relationship" (Tollefson, 1991, p. 8-9).

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The prime aim of this research is to provide a socio-political investigation into the ideologies of English language teaching as promoted by foreign and local English Language Centers (ELCs) that are operating in Morocco. The investigation is carried out through the instruments provided by the Critical Discourse Analysis framework. Clearly enough, the study analyzes systematically the content of sixteen popular foreign and local English Language Center's websites to end up either confirming or rejecting the following research hypothesis:

English language teaching is not a transparent process with purely educational and pedagogical objectives rather ELT ready-made formula have been manipulated to sustain the prominence and the hegemony of English which has become a complex socio-political tool to exert power and control.

The data collected constitutes mainly of a corpus of sixteen English language centers' websites pages that are operating in Morocco. For the accuracy and the reliability of the research, the targeted English language centers' websites under analysis were collected from different cities in Morocco to have a holistic and more accurate vision of the how and why English language principles are taken for granted. In this study, a total of sixteen websites pages of popular English Language Centers in Morocco were collected. To illustrate, the study revolves around four websites pages from the American Language Center Meknes, two websites pages from the Center of Language and Culture in Marrakech, two websites pages from the American language Center Rabat, two websites pages from the American Language Center Casablanca, two websites pages from the English Highway Language Center in Meknes and four websites pages from the British council Morocco. Some of these websites have been taken as representative samples to be analyzed critically according to the tools provided by critical discourse analysis to explore the ideologies of English language teaching and more precisely to explore the techniques used by language centers in their websites to promote the concept of "English as a global language". As for the method adopted, the socio-political and pedagogical nature of the research requires mainly qualitative methods to be implemented. Therefore, qualitative procedures were utilized to collect data that are to be mainly impressionistic and interpretive rather than numerical to obtain a holistic picture of ideologies of ELT in Morocco. To analyze data, a critical discourse analysis is used, based mainly on Kress and Van Leeuwen's Multimodal Discourse Analysis. According to Van Dijk (1993) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is:

A type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. (p. 352).

The CDA's definition and its tenets above are the main reasons for opting for this method of analysis. The nature of the study, as well as its scope and objectives, are purely socio-political, investigating the ideological aspects of English language teaching in Morocco and more precisely analyzing the English Language Centers' discourses that are displayed in their website pages. According to Van Dijk (1993) "Since CDA is not a specific direction of research, it does not have a unitary theoretical framework".

The current investigation is totally based on Kress and Van Leeuwen's Multimodal Discourse Analytical framework which is a multifaceted approach to discourse which focuses on how meaning is made through the use of multiple modes of communication as opposed to just language. Advertisements for English teaching and learning are becoming increasingly multimodal. In English language centers' websites, advertisers are using devices from more than one semiotic mode of communication simultaneously to express their voices. According to Fairclough (1995) "Any cultural artifact - a picture, a building, a piece of music – can be seen as a text" (p. 4). That is to say, texts are not always linguistic as they used to be viewed traditionally. In contemporary times, written texts are increasingly becoming multisemiotic. The reason is that written texts incorporate not only photographs and diagrams but also the graphic design of the text, such as layout techniques and typography. These texts are referred to as "multimodal" since they use different

semiotic modes of communication simultaneously to transmit a single idea within a text that is made more glossy, readable, lively, stylish and accessible.

In short, supplementing a semantic analysis of the data collected with a semiotic dimension would be an effective method in bringing out the hidden meanings and hopefully adding up to the overall accuracy and reliability of the whole research.

#### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

### **Background**

Before the emergence of websites, finding a language center and the necessary information about the courses it provides involves considerable inconvenience and traveling time. Nowadays, learners can log on whenever and wherever to get the necessary information both visually and verbally. For language centers, websites provide an attractive sight to advertise their English language courses. In addition to the graphic design of texts, colorful photos, audio, and even video are included in the websites. Thanks to websites that language centers are building a wider audience quickly and inexpensively. Sylvester (2000) states that companies with websites defining them and introducing their services are regarded as "more customer oriented and responsive; more informative; more sophisticated and hi-tech; more geared to a younger market" (p. 239)

At first sight at the website pages under analysis, one can safely state that they are adopting almost a similar platform and orientation. There is, if I may say so, a tradition of elaborating on the language center's mission, staff, class sizes, teaching methodology, teaching materials, and curriculums through providing pictures and more detailed information.

Let's take the American language center as a sample for more elaboration, the homepage of the American language center in Meknes (<a href="www.alcmeknes.org">www.alcmeknes.org</a>) starts with the center's name, logo and it goes on to a general introduction to this site. The homepage provides eleven different graphics with different functions to help students get what they need directly and easily. There is a frequency indicator at the bottom of the homepage that indicates the number of people who have visited this website. This homepage is designed bilingually, with both English and French versions. Therefore, their target audience is people who understand English and French, but not Arabic, Moroccans' language.

The format, layout and the content of these websites are designed in a way to transmit not only pedagogical information but also socio-cultural and political messages that constitute and promote the ideologies of English as a global language and the native-like competence. In the following, I will subject sixteen website pages of seven English Language Centers in Morocco to a critical discourse analysis to understand why what and how those language centers promote the ideology of English language as a global language; then, the same operation will be applied to discover how the ideology of the native-like competence is enhanced by those English language centers.

#### English as a Global Language in the ELCs' Website

In the following, the American Language Center Language centers website and precisely the multimodal discourses in those websites are subjected to a critical discourse analysis to show how the language center portrays the English language, in every single angle in the website, as the panacea that would solve all problems and guarantee Moroccan students a bright future. I will explore the range of implicit and implicit techniques employed to advertise the

English language as a highly valued commodity.

There are three impressions that one feels after a long scan of texts, slogans, and images in the website pages. Firstly, the narrator sounds like an expert who provides insights and guidance to all Moroccans who are in dire need. Secondly, the style of sentences and phrases indicate that narrator is a person of authority, exercising some sort of power and/or control and thirdly, the images, as well as the phrases in the website, are chosen carefully to address the affective sides of the readers.

(The American Language Center, June 2013, http://www.alcmeknes.org, last accessed on June 18, 2013)



Figure 1: A Website Homepage of the American Language Center Meknes

The website page above is the homepage of ALC Meknes. Actually, there are so many elements in the American Language Center website pages that need a critical examination, but the focus in these paragraphs will be on short passages and images because they play a very crucial role in transmitting certain ideologies embedded in the general notion of English as a global language.

A cursory look at the top of right side of the homepage of the ALC website shows that there are two flags representing two languages from which Moroccan visitors can choose the one that they feel comfortable with. These languages are English and French. The surprise is that Arabic which is Moroccans' mother tongue and their most cherished and honored property is excluded, while the French version of the website is under construction. The ideology that is transmitted through this strategy is English as a global language. To explain, providing mainly English language as the only linguistic choice for Moroccan visitors in spite of being aware that Arabic is the most widely used language in Morocco, sends a very significant signal that the English language has reached a degree of popularity and supremacy in so much that even those who can't speak it or read it are supposed to understand it. This is what is referred to as "taken for granted practices" according to Auerbach (1993), or "common-sense assumptions" as stated by Tollefson (1991) or "everybody knows" according to Lightbow (2000, p. 433). Another idea that is worth mentioning here is the fact that there are two opposing trends in Morocco:

An overwhelming majority that strongly favors the exclusive use of Arabic and a minority which is very influential in the decision-making process which tries hard to show "liberalism" and 'openness" and defends the use of the foreign language in some very important domains as higher education. For an understanding of the motives of this minority it is important to go into the psychology of "clientelism", cultural affinity, marginality, ambivalence and the relationship of the conqueror to the conquered" (Zughoul, 2002, p. 145)

This linguistic "mess" is being properly seized by English and French language through their active promulgators in Morocco, including the American Language Center.

Another interpretation of this linguistic preference is what can be labeled as English as a marketing strategy. To explain, for a Moroccan who does not know English and logs on the ALC website to get information about a course, she will keep skipping all the texts in English unquestionably to stop only at a highlighted title, a photo or a price. The fact that those texts are written in English, is supposed to be perceived as able to guarantee the reliability and credibility of the content in the website. This is clearly expressed by Rajagopalan (2002) who points out that the use of foreign words; especially English words "lends an additional aura to the products being offered for sale" (p. 118)

In addition to the linguistic choice strategy used to reinforce the narrator's authority and expertise that are the foundation to take for granted every single thing he says, the presentation of content is also very crucial to advertise a certain commodity. Advertisers aim to ensure that a headline or a slogan sticks in the addressees' minds. The technique used in this regard is highlighting slogans and short paragraphs by color, font, graphics devices, position, and typographical design to ensure that those items advertised become part of the reader's memory.

Cook (2001, p. 219) argues that advertisements involve many voices so that the content and layout of texts can be powerful and persuasive. As mentioned so far, the format and the layout of the language teaching centers' websites collected are almost identical. They all start with the school or the center's name written in a striking large print sometimes in English and Arabic as it is the case in the ALC and English only as it is the case in the Center for Language and Culture in Marrakech and English Highway Language Center, which are centers run by Moroccans. This example reinforces Fishman's (1992) idea that the diffusion of English has attained an extent of magnitude that "it is now significantly fostered by the non-English mother tongue world..... Third world nations are themselves fostering massive efforts via and on behalf of English" (p. 19, as cited in Jeonghye, n.d&Zughoul, 2002, 137)

The voices referred to by Cook are very clear in these websites for the center's name is usually followed by its representing logo and a set of photos passing one after the other with a persuasive slogan, at least four voices from the different genre to express one message. The aim behind the use of both "visual" and "verbal" techniques is to hook the visitor's attention regardless of his/her reading style and preferences. Let's now examine the following two website pages from the center of language and culture (CLC) and the American Language Center Meknes (ALC) websites to elicit the techniques employed to promote and transmit the ideology of English as a Global language.

(The Center for Language & Culture, 2013, http://www.clcmorocco.org/, last accessed on June 19, 2013)



Figure 2: An Extract from the Center for Language and Culture's Website

According to Goodman (1996, p. 39) logos and company names are "visual" and texts are "verbal". In the image above, the website visitor can get the visual portrayal of the voice, because the slogan and the photo are right below the

center's name and logo. The slogan "Today's youth, tomorrow's leaders" sounds as if the narrator is speaking to the reader; the fact that adds another sensory element which is the oral one.

The second image above shows a couple of Moroccan students playing basketball with a special focus on a typical adult student with a smile and determination. Playing basketball in this context is not an innocent inclusion of a sport rather it is an act of exporting the most popular aspect of the American culture to the peripheries and associating it with leadership and prosperity.

The slogan, which is supposed to illustrate the image, is a succinct elliptical noun phrase, shortened with the use of the genitive case to give the compacted statement some sort of musicality so that it can be easily retained and memorized by the visitors. Ellipsis according to (Cook 2001, p.172) is used to achieve two main objectives: to "save space and omit direct appeal". Cook (ibid) also argues that making use of ellipsis in advertisements creates an atmosphere of "proximity" and "intimacy" (p. 173). In addition, Eggins (1994, p. 310-315) points out that elliptical phrases offer "personal experience" that suggests that the addresser "possesses certain knowledge" (ibid., p. 315), which implicitly indicates that there is unequal power between the narrator and the website visitor. The implication is that in spite of the fact that the narrator uses the elliptical statement to avoid any expressions that might reflect power difference and distance he still has some sort of authority and expertise. The slogan in the photo above, if not compacted, could be read as follow: Knowing the English language, Moroccan youth of today can become leaders in the future. This stretched sentence is identical to Kachru's (1986) meaningful statement that explains how English, as linguistic power, has become the key to economic prosperity, he says "Knowing English is like possessing the fabled Aladdin's lamp, which permits one to open, as it was, the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science and travel. In brief, English provides linguistic power" (p. 1). The English language in this slogan and its accompanying image clearly takes us back to Bourdieu's Linguistic Capital that has become a means to social, economic and professional ascension. Now, let's go back to the American Language Center website (Figure: 1) and apply the same framework to analyze the text and image appearing in that website page:

The themes of expertise and authority that are prevailing in the previous homepage are self-evident in the ALC homepage too. The general introduction is preceded by an image of three young men in black suits and three stylish girls dressing in accordance with the current fashion. The photo was made as if it were taken without giving them time to prepare themselves to stand in a steady way to have their photo taken, rather the people are dispersed here and there and one of them is still fixing his tie. This faked spontaneity is a subtle strategy to implicitly tell the visitors to the homepage that the ALC staff is fully engaged, occupied, zealous, and industrious. Also, the manner the characters are posing or modeling with their hands crossed and their chins up indicate self-esteem, pride, and confidence. It is revealing to mention that both language and images can be used to address readers directly or indirectly, language does it through grammatical choices, ellipsis as we have seen before and images do it through the ways in which people stare at the reader. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996, p. 135–153) argue that if a person in the image looks at the reader, it means that he is addressing the reader directly and that constitutes a demand and if he doesn't, it means that he is addressing the reader indirectly, and he just offers information. All the six people portrayed in the image are looking at the reader which means that they are demanding something from the reader. Their demand is made clear in the fourth paragraph of the text below, which is an invitation to join the American Language Center.

In addition to the hidden messages the image conveys, it also prepares the visitors psychologically to receive other cognitive messages that are included in the introduction. According to Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, whenever people use language to interact, it is done in order to establish a specific relationship between them. To establish this relationship, people take turns to speak with different speech roles in the exchange. In the example above, the text is almost a five paragraph narration of the ALC's history between the past and the present. The first paragraph is written mainly to tell the readers that they started from scratch and faced a number of challenges. The aim is not to inform the reader of factual events, rather it is to make the reader sympathize with them. Phrases like "in a small apartment", "only 200 students", "no multimedia" have a kind of magic to gain the compassion of the reader to identify with the ALC Meknes. Therefore, a new relationship between the ALC and the reader is established based on sympathy and compassion.

After a brief account of what the ALC looked like back in 1989, the second paragraph starts with the adverb "now" to take the reader from a moody and depressive atmosphere to a bright and shiny one, the use of past simple in the first paragraph "In 1989 ... there were seven classes ..." and the simple present in the second paragraph "now, the ALC has more than ..." involves the readers and appeals to them as they experience different feelings successively. The reader is supposed to make unconsciously a sort of comparison between the contemporary ALC and that of the past and therefore get impressed at their achievement. Thus, admiring and appreciating this breakthrough is another kind of relationship that is being set up between the ALC and the reader. By so doing, the narrator makes on himself the impression that he is ambitious, patient, and confident and therefore, s/he is in a position to offer services and help.

Apart from the shifts in tenses, Goddard (1998, p. 30) points out that when the addressers use the personal pronoun "we" and/or the possessive adjective "our" to address the reader, it will certainly sound authoritarian. So, in addition to the first kind of relation that was based on sympathy and compassion, another totally different relationship is being built based on inequality in power and knowledge. This idea is very clear in the fourth paragraph in the introductory text in the ALC Meknes website (Figure: 1). The narrator writes that "It is an honor for me to work with the ALC. I follow three directors: Larry McFall, whose hard work began here in the center, David Neusis, a born teacher, and Tariq Alhadi, whose management has led to many improvements in ALC". Mentioning the full names of all the three directors is likely to impress the reader and hook his/her attention. Moreover, by doing so, the center is portrayed as a well-established institution that is directed by strict and trustworthy people who are able to offer effective English teaching.

In addition, the most salient indication of power relationship can be easily identified through knowing who is dominating the talking. In that, the unequal power relationship between the narrator and the reader in the text under analysis is realized linguistically by the narrator's simple dominance of the speaker's role, who keeps, in this context, receiving and retaining information because, as stated by Eggins (1994, p. 193), "When there is a lack of reciprocity, there are unequal status relations"

In the closure of the introduction, the narrator aims at realizing another humanitarian and familial relationship. s/he is actually depicting the ALC Meknes as a unified community that provides its students with a sense of safety and warmth. Right after realizing this relation, the narrator seizes the opportunity to invite the reader to join the ALC Meknes community.

In short, the image is so harmonious with the paragraphs that are also coherent and cohesive. The narrator has been building a different kind of relationships with the reader to prepare him/her for an invitation to join the center. The narrator starts with a sympathetic relationship and appreciating relationship through a power relationship and then ending up with a familial one.

Sapir observes that "the mere content of language is intimately related to culture" (Sapir, 1970, p. 219). Furthermore, sociolinguists claim that there is a tacit interdependency between language and socio-cultural knowledge. When we learn a language we also acquire cultural knowledge of the world, which influences our social being and affects our perception of what constitutes social reality. Halliday (1978, p. 3) notes that "the culture shapes our behavior patterns, and a great deal of our behavior is mediated through language"; Moreover, he observes that "meaning is a social act" (ibid., p. 160) and "The whole linguistic system is value charged" (ibid). Therefore, when globalizing the English language through different techniques used by language centers, they are actually globalizing a western culture with all its components: values, behaviors, philosophy of life, a way of thinking and the way of perceiving the world. In this respect, Petzold (2002) points to the fact that when a country chooses a pedagogical model, there is an acceptance of the beliefs and behaviors of the speakers of that model.

There are a lot of examples in the data collected that can be presented and analyzed, but I will briefly study a meaningful image displayed in the English Highway Language Center homepage (Figure: 3) to prove this point:

(English Highway Language Center, 2013, <a href="http://www.eh.ma/fr/index.php">http://www.eh.ma/fr/index.php</a>, last accessed on June 14, 2013)



Figure 3: A Photo from the Website of the English Highway Language Center

The image above is meant to advertise English teaching services, especially for young learners. According to (Goddard, 1998, p. 114), "Images, like verbal text, do not arrive by accident". Therefore, the image above could be judged as contextually irrelevant if is seen through pedagogical lenses, but if approached from a critical discourse analysis, the image would unveil hidden socio-cultural messages that would help deliver the ideology of English as a global language. The image portrays three young boys in strikingly exotic attires carrying on their backs three blondish girls in tight jeans. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1990) state that "Language explains and amplifies a picture, but the picture has a story of its own to tell" (p. 11). The sky blue wallpaper and the omission of young people's feet from the image give the impression that the six young adults are flying high in the sky.

The notion of "flying" has so many connotations in this context. Firstly, by learning the English language one can reach the highest academic degrees. Secondly, learning English involves a lot of fun, joy, and freedom. Thirdly, learning English is actually one's wings to attain his/her goal easily, quickly and joyfully. The "sky" on the other hand refers to personal freedom and liberty to act without any cultural constraints and obligations. The six young people in the image are meant to represent the Moroccan young generation. They are deliberately portrayed in an "abstract" and

"decontextualized" manner (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1990, p 61–62). By doing so, Kress & van Leeuwen (1990, p. 55) argue that those people in the image become "generic" and a "typical example" and connected with a "particular location and a specific moment of time". When stating that the image is an abstract one, it might be perceived as unreal and fictional, which is the message that the image above doesn't want to send. This is realized through the young people's dark and highly saturated colors of their clothes. In that, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1990, p. 51) state that strong and highly saturated color in images suggests "more real" while muted and softer less saturated colors suggests "less real".

More critically, in the process of globalization that touches on all aspects of the life of Moroccans that ranges from their clothing and eating habits to their philosophy of life that are being reshaped and redefined, the image above can be regarded as a wave among others that implicitly impose western ideas and views on young learners. The image plainly encourages the concepts of "girlfriend" and "boyfriend", which are supposed to be a strange behavior in the Moroccan's culture and a prohibited habit in their religion. This status quo totally contradicts the English Language Teaching National Guidelines that are said to be:

In conformity with the four sets of values outlined in the National Charter for Education and Training; namely, the values of Islam, the values of the Moroccan identity, its cultural and ethical principles, the values of citizenship, and the values of human rights and their universal principles (The Moroccan English Language Teaching Guidelines, 2009)

The aim has been voiced clearly by Hardy (1917) who admits that the objective is:

To transform the primitive people in our colonies, to render them as devoted as possible to our cause and useful to our commerce...the safest method is to take the native in childhood, bring him in assiduous contact with us and subject him to our intellectual and moral habits for many years in succession, in a word to open schools for him where his mind can be shaped at our will" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 114).

Based on this quote, it would be restating the obvious if we admitted that the images, paragraphs, and slogans incorporated in the English Language Centers' website pages are not a transparent and innocent practice of advertising, rather they are posted carefully and intelligently to impose and normalize a certain western behavior to the extent that it becomes no more visible as western behavior. Therefore, it would be safe to state that globalizing English language or believing that English is a global language, actually believes in English culture as a global culture.

Another sensitive area that was not exempted from manipulations is a gender issue. More precisely, the advertisement industry of perfume, clothes, cars... incorporate provocative images or sexual innuendoes into their marketing strategy as a tool to help sell their featured products. The use of women's body in ads has been proven effective to hook customers. In the *Journal of Business Ethics*, Cohan's (2001) states "Advertising is preoccupied with the body and the use of sexuality to play on the physical appetites and pursuit of pleasure by the viewer, which affects the ability of men and women alike to be persuaded".

(The American Language Center Meknes, 2013, <a href="http://www.alcmeknes.org/en/programs/regular.html">http://www.alcmeknes.org/en/programs/regular.html</a>, last accessed on June 13, 2013)

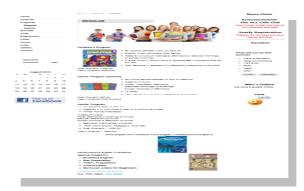


Figure 4: A Website Page from the American Language Center Meknes

The website page above shows a crowd of eleven ALC students holding colorful books and school bags. The use of women's seducing body and beauty as the commercial technique to assist in the marketing of a product is employed in the picture above for out of eleven people in the picture, there are eight blondish girls that look straightforward at the reader with charming and smiling faces. As stated before, looking directly at the reader constitutes a demand according to Kress & van Leeuwen (1996, p. 135–153). All the girls are positioned in the front of the crowd while males were left in the back to the extent that the reader can barely see their faces.

Moroccan students have been tamed and became accustomed to such kind of provocative pictures that used until recently to be embarrassing. Due to globalization or Americanization, the circle will continue and English language centers in Morocco will have the guts and the courage to incorporate more sexually appealing images to advertise their ELT services as long as they keep imitating the English language center in U.S and U.K. The image below is the homepage of the English Language Center Boston:

(The English Language Center Boston, 2013, https://www.elc.edu/,last accessed on June 25, 2013)



Figure 5: The Website of the English Language Center Boston

As mentioned earlier, English as a Global language is made equivalent to the global principles of freedom, liberty, and entertainment. Incorporating nudity in English language centers' websites is likely to make a memorable impression on consumers and force them to pause for a while or even stop to scrutinize the image that targets and appeals to the addresses' sexual instinct. In this regard, Richard F. Taflinger (2006)

Sex is the second strongest of the psychological appeals, right behind self-preservation. Its strength is biological and instinctive, the genetic imperative of reproduction. However, its effectiveness and application are gender-linked. The differences in male and female psychobiology cause different approaches to and perceptions of sex, both the act and its outcome" (p. 1)

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The study, hopefully, uncovers significant findings and critical insights that really confirms the research hypothesis that English language teaching is not a mere technical transparent process with purely educational and pedagogical objectives rather some of the ELT "common sense assumptions" have been well-phrased and manipulated to sustain the prominence and the hegemony of English which has become a complex socio-political tool to exert the West's power and control. In that, English Language Centres in Morocco has been proven, through a critical discourse analysis, to be key players in this process as they have been employing different strategies to promote ELT ideologies to consciously and/or unconsciously globalize the West's narrative and vision of the world.

## **Educational Implication**

It has been shown and proven how the ELCs in Morocco employs different tactics to make of the English language proficiency the panacea that would revitalize the Moroccan educational system and the key to open gates of success and prosperity for Moroccan students. At this point, in Morocco, if a student dreams of being an engineer, architect, economist, doctor ..., his specialization must be purely scientific with little chance to think of learning English. A specialization in the English language will lead to nothing but a normal teacher of English, a translator, a guide. These respected jobs obviously do not reflect the claimed prosperity and success that even the Moroccan ministry of education is discouraging Arts orientation because it is unlikely to meet the requirements of job markets. In a newspaper article (Weekend Australian, 1 March 1997), a professor of history at Melbourne University wrote:

The pressure on schools to teach drug education, physical education and languages has meant history has been deemphasized to such an extent that it's now more important to study a foreign language than to learn about your own country. (Kaplan, 2000, p. xi)

Another idea that is worth mentioning here is that which is related to the ubiquitous English language centers in Morocco and the need to reconsider students' socio-economic capacities. To illustrate, the inadequacy of the Moroccan educational ministry to provide effectively and quality education to Moroccan students compelled the government to hand over responsibility to the private sector, whoseprime and the legitimate aim is to gain profits. As shown in the study, the majority of Moroccan families cannot afford the expensive fees of taking an English course. This status quo creates a sort of inequality between Moroccan students. Now, teachers in their classrooms can find students of the same level, the same age but of different levels in English. Meaning that the teacher can find a brilliant student at all the school subjects, but very poor at English for the sole reason that his family could not send him/her to an English language center. On the other hand, the teacher might find a lazy student with a good mastery of English thanks to that student's materialistic potential that enabled his family to pay for his English courses in an English language center. Pennycook (2000) explains that: rich kids tend to go to private schools and get good jobs, while working-class kids tend to go to poorer state schools and work in the same social and economic positions as their parents. One might simply account for this in terms of good and bad schools: wealthy families can afford good schools, while poorer families have to send their children to schools that provide an education of lower quality. (p. 93)

In addition to socio-economic factors, if this process proceeds, we are likely to have the same old story that the poor get poorer and the rich get richer. Linguistically, we will have a handicapped versus a capable generation, advantaged

versus disadvantaged students, lucky versus unlucky ones. Therefore, to bridge this social gap between Moroccan students, destroy this materialistically constructed educational hierarchy and establish an educational system that recognizes and prioritizes students' cognitive potentials, the Moroccan Ministry of Education should take the necessary measures to tackle the problem of inequality of educational opportunities and provide equal opportunities for all Moroccan students to establish an education that is based on fair treatment and recognition of students' socio-economic capacities. Setting up English clubs that embrace students in their free times, recruiting teachers to help with extra hours and extra-curricular activities in English for the poor students can be useful solutions to help poor students catch up with the rich ones.

As far as teachers are concerned, Moroccan teachers of English should be familiar with the ideological loads of some ELT ready-made concepts and their implications for classroom practices in order to be able to enhance the students' awareness of the implicit ideas in language use. Moroccan teachers of English are kept obsessed with the technical side of the profession (teaching structures, teaching the four skills, Classroom management ...) while neglecting the socio-political sides. The Moroccan library is in dire need to studies that investigate the ELT enterprise from a socio-political and economic perspective. For example, it is urgently needed to conduct empirical researches on the imported textbooks used by English language centers such as New interchange, Mega Series and Touchstone Series, which are fraught with socio-political loads and western values that are spoon-fed and indoctrinated to the impressionable Moroccan students consciously and unconsciously. Teachers are highly recommended to question critically and systematically all the ELT "taken-for-granted" knowledge and develop a new understanding, a new philosophy and a national vision that would be the basis for setting up teaching principles and approaches, recruiting teachers, designing textbooks and so on. English language teachers' mission is very sensitive. They are supposed to raise Moroccans' consciousness and develop in their students the skills and the ability to think critically and act adequately.

Given the fact that English has become a global property doesn't mean restricting its teaching through making frequent references to the U.S, U.K, Canada, Australia ...(Inner Circle /Center Countries), rather teachers, textbook designers, and pedagogues are free to broaden Moroccan students' cultural and linguistic perspectives through recognizing "multiple identities" of English (Kachru, 1997). Accordingly, Moroccan English curriculum needs to include varieties of English and literature from the Outer and Extending Circles (peripheral countries). This would help teachers and students begin to develop respect and appreciation of non-Western languages and cultures.

In commemorating the King's and his People Revolution on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2013, King Mohammed the sixth's speech was totally devoted to a speculation on the pathetic situation of the Moroccan education "what spits me is the status quo of the educational system that has become worse than how it was 20 years ago" (Mohammed the sixth, 2013). In that, he pointed the finger of accusation mainly to "the language of instruction" (ibid) that keeps changing from Arabic in the primary and secondary education to French and English in Higher Education especially in scientific and technical specializations the fact that requires an "improvement of the students' linguistic abilities" so that the student could keep up with his/her studies. In this regard, before taking any hastily rectifying measures, we should first of all settle conclusively the Moroccan linguistic identity. It is really saddening for a country that has a well-reputed, profoundly revered and grammatically and lexically symmetrical and harmonious language like Arabic to keep signing educational agreements with foreign embassies to have their languages taught in Moroccan schools as compulsory subjects in return for political services. Because of these nonsensical agreements, all Moroccan junior high school students have to study French, English, Spanish and sometimes German as mandatory subjects and they are examined in them. One can wonder where are all those

humanitarian approaches and principles that talk about students' needs, their learning styles, their affective filter, their individual differences, their monitor, their LAD. One can even question our national educational vision as an independent country. Why do we teach our students? What do we expect from them? I am afraid that we don't have a collective vision that unites Moroccans from all walks of life. Our educational horizon seems hazy and vague, a status that is insidiously exploited by foreign agencies to further their political and economic interests.

#### **Political and Cultural Implications**

Westernization or Americanization has impacted various aspects of Moroccan lives. If Moroccan stakeholders, who are confided with the mission of maintaining Moroccans spiritual and cultural security, kept cross-handed and passive, our population will be faked copies of the American and the West in general. There are, however, proposals and trends that might change the current situation. First of all, there is a dire need to a genuine political decision to reconsider the status and the importance of Arabic and Tamazight languages and cultures and mobilize all the country's potential to create some sort of harmony and reconciliation between the two languages and ethnicities through launching national debates and sensitizing campaigns to bring about harmony to the Moroccan linguistic scene. Another very easy but meaningful strategy that vindicates the status of Arabic and Tamazight languages and culture is the fact of making them the main languages of publicity for both governmental institutions like hospitals, administrations, schools ... and private shops, cafés, restaurants, hotels, markets. By doing so, we can have grounded languages that can unify Moroccans from all walks of life, reflect their identity and stand as a competitor to French and English.

Back to critical pedagogy, teachers who engage in critical pedagogy never take things for granted. They are so inquisitive and critical thinkers. They challenge and question all the "common sense assumptions" and strive to create new knowledge that is genuine, innocent and compatible with their cultural values and beliefs. In this view, the teacher's role shifts from that of an "apolitical technician" merely transmitting information to a "transforming intellectual" (Giroux, 1991), Thus, teaching is never neutral or apolitical; it legitimizes or challenges a particular discourse that controls social practices. Therefore, to teach critically is "to acknowledge the political nature of all education" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 301). In the Moroccan context, to raise Moroccans' critical consciousness requires, first of all, exploring the linguistic and cultural imbalances and contradictions in our daily social and cultural practices that are taken for granted, and to critically reflect on the values attached to those practices. In this respect, it would be a wise stride to add up Critical Pedagogy as an independent area of study on Applied Linguistics at least to the undergraduate curriculum in order to "help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action." (Giroux, 1980). The integration of Critical Pedagogy in the general curriculum can provide students with:

Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse." (Shor, 1992, p. 129)

# **Economic Implications**

The study unfolds a very striking reality hidden in the apolitical innocent interest-free pedagogical debates. Clearly enough, ELT in Morocco has become a business for local and international companies and agencies to flourish. As

revealed by the study, the British Council's "income for 2004/2005 was £475, 5 million, of which our grant-in-aid from the British government was £172 million". It is clear that these agencies have invested well to gain well. ELCs in Morocco are zealously and subtly making use of all legitimate and illegitimate tactics to brighten and advertise their commodity, attract clients and generate profits.

No one can deny the socio-economic benefits that the English language brings to individuals, organizations, and individuals, but let's just question this assertion more critically: if English is the key to internationalization and modernization, the magic wand for prosperity and the panaceas for socio-economic troubles, former British or American colonies such as Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Nigeria, Liberia, Uganda, and many miserable others should be internationalized, well-developed and civilized. In reality, these countries actually are lagging well behind much of the world in terms of internationalization and development. In stark contrast, countries such as Japan, Brazil, and South Korea have achieved remarkable economic success without sacrificing their national languages and their cultural uniqueness. This contrast shows that the key to socio-economic prosperity and internalization is not determined solely by English language ability.

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