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A Critical Examination of the Imperialist Discourse “English as a Necessity for Success” and its (Re)production in the Mexican Context

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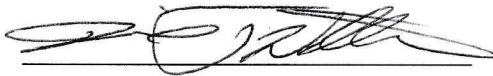
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CONTEXT

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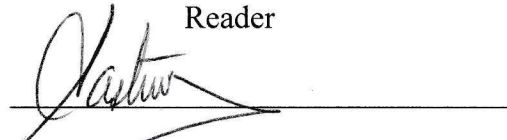
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Abstract

This thesis aims to critically explore the type of discourses that have become prevalent in convincing non-native speakers of English into believing that this language is a gateway requirement for economic and social prosperity in postmodern Mexico. This research also aims to examine how English as a Foreign Language learners in Mexico report the role that the ideological tenets of these discourses have played in their lives as non-native speakers who need English to attain certain professional and social goals to achieve “success”. The methodology employed is a critical perspective to discourse analysis, i.e., CDA (Fairclough, 1989, 1995). This methodology will examine the microstructures of the national language policy texts and relate them to the extent to which language policy consumers reproduce or counter the discourses embedded in the texts.

The critical analysis of the language policy discourse uncovered some interesting patterns employed by the policymakers to devise the policy and inculcate English as foreign language implementation in the Mexican educational system, i.e., English as a necessity for better employment opportunities, international communication, business, social mobility, and equality and inclusiveness. Subsequently, English language learners were interviewed to explore the extent to which they reproduce the discourses of ‘English as a necessity for success’ and to what extent they confirm the ‘validity’ (or truth value) of the discourses uncovered on the Mexican national language policy. The interviews analysis revealed that the discourses generate different expectations that might open the door for some yet become quite problematic for most.

Key words: English Imperialism, critical discourse analysis, language policy

Dedication

The completion of my master's degree is one milestone of a personal journey, a journey that has not been traveled alone. I could never have reached this accomplishment without the support of family, friends, and colleagues.

First and foremost, I want to dedicate it to my parents, Virginia and Ramón, who have provided unconditional love and support throughout every step of the way. Thank you, mom and dad!

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

The position of English in the world today, and the uses we make of it, give English the status of the language for international communication worldwide. Crystal (2000) and Nunan (2001) agree that one of the prevalent discourses in the spread of English is that it gives unlimited access to the wonders of the modern world in the form of science, technology, money, power, international communication, intercultural understanding, and entertainment, among several others. Thus, learning English is regarded as a key to access all these unlimited benefits that can eventually be converted into economic profits (Bourdieu, 1986). The economic benefits of learning English are overtly expressed in various documents whose arguments are social mobility, job promotions, job opportunities, and in general, a better economic future. They imply that speaking English is the only form of (cultural/linguistic) capital needed to succeed while obscuring the fact that other qualifications are needed to compete for jobs (Guerrero, 2010). These discourses that present English as a beneficial tool for economic improvement have been distributed and continue circulating thanks to those who hold power (Foucault, 2005). However, critical scholars “question the widespread ideological view of English as a tool for gaining individual economic opportunity, and instead argue that the spread of English is part of wider social, political, and economic processes that contribute to economic inequalities” (Tollefson, 1995, p. 2). Pennycook (2000) refers to this phenomenon as the “structural power of English” (p. 108), and for him, its implications –and causes– are a covert and subtle type of imperialism. Canagarajah (1999) and Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) agree with Pennycook’s view and refer to the global spread of English as linguistic

imperialism, by which such scholars imply a process where an unequal division of power is produced and maintained according to a division between groups on the basis of language.

English is a multimillion-dollar business for the inner circle countries –countries where English is the native or major language– (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1998), but that fact is never made evident in the campaigns to spread English around the world. Hiding their own economic interest grants international agencies, like the British Council, the symbolic capital they need to exert symbolic power (Guerrero, 2010). Hence, the economic interest of the institutions that provide the service of spreading English over the world is hidden. Additionally, when educational institutions exhibit any type of link with economic or monetary activities, they are strongly judged because they fail their philosophy and are serving the interest of the capitalist world (Fairclough, 1995). Instead, the discourses they use on the importance of the need for English are related to globalization, international communication, publications, competitiveness, and others of the like (McKay, 2003; Shohamy, 2006). Thus, speaking English is promoted worldwide as a “credit card to success” (London, 2001, p. 403) and Mexico is not exempt from this trend. In light of this context, the present study seeks to examine, through a critical discourse analysis (CDA), “the relations between discourse, power, dominance and social inequality” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 283), existing in postmodern Mexico in relation to the institutionalized discourses about the supposed need for English.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The notion that English is a prerequisite to economic and social prosperity has become prevalent in postmodern Mexico. In response, an industry has emerged with a focus on allowing people to meet this prerequisite and pass through the filters that provide them with

the opportunity to fill positions where economic gain is more likely. Nevertheless, the institutionalization of the ‘need for English’ is not a morally neutral state of affairs, and many actors in the profession of English Language Teaching (ELT) could be unwitting accomplices in language-based repression/discrimination of professionals all over Mexico. Consequently, the purpose of this study is two-fold. First, it is intended to explore the discourses that have become prevalent in convincing non-native speakers of English into believing that this language is a gateway requirement for economic and social prosperity. Second, it aims to examine how English as a Foreign Language learners report the role that the ideological tenets of these discourses have played in their lives as non-native speakers who need English to achieve certain professional and social goals. To achieve this purpose, the current study seeks to analyze, through CDA, the national language policies that require non-native speakers of English to achieve distinct levels of proficiency in this language. The study adopts this methodological stance because CDA does not only describe, but it also interprets and explains the relationship between the form (i.e., grammar, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics) and the function of language (i.e., how people use language in different situations to achieve an aim), while exploring hidden power in discourse in relation to wider social and cultural formations (Rogers, 2004). Additionally, this study intends to examine, through the conduction of interviews, the extent to which English language learners reproduce the discourses of ‘English as a necessity for success’ and to what extent their interviews actually confirm the ‘validity’ (or truth value) of these discourses. Thus, in order to analyze the interview data, this study will also use a CDA approach because, as Fairclough (1995) asserts, to be critical means to make opaque ideologies and interconnectedness of things visible through analysis, and to criticize

connections between properties of texts and social processes, and power relations, which may not be evident to people who produce and interpret texts.

1.3 Rationale

As previously discussed, English is the international language for an array of purposes. However, González Fernández (2005) points out that “its use is being discriminative and unfair in different aspects” (p. 85). According to her, these aspects have been discussed in academic circles, but the general public's ideas are not being considered. Thus, if Mexican professionals are, indeed, the subject of discrimination based on which language they (do not) speak, a better understanding of how English Imperialism is institutionalized in Mexico is necessary. An increased awareness of how English Imperialism is nested within popular and institutional discourses may allow ELT professionals, particularly those who profit from these discourses, to practice with increased consciousness. While studies do exist on how English Imperialism functions in non-English speaking societies (Guerrero, 2010), no such study has examined the institutionalized discourses that permit these practices to function in Mexico. Consequently, this research could raise social awareness and reflection about the supposed necessity to learn the English language, conveyed through the dominant discourses of ‘English as a necessity for success’.

1.4 Research questions

In order to explore the issues previously mentioned, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What discourse strategies are employed by the authors of the national Mexican language policy that ideologically define ‘English as a necessity for success’ in Mexico?
2. What are the linguistic features of institutional discourses that ideologically define ‘English as a necessity for success’ within the Mexican national context?
3. How do the aforementioned discourses intertwine economic and social prosperity into the ideology?
4. How do participants affected by English as a Foreign Language policy (re)produce and/or resist these dominant discourses?
5. How do the participants’ personal history and experience with English affect the discourses that they express about ‘English as a necessity for success’?

1.5 Chapter conclusion

The current chapter provided a general overview of the worldwide role of the English language. It also outlined the general aims of the study while presenting the context and objects of the investigation. Moreover, it established the research pertinence within the field of critical discourse analysis and attempted to provide a rationale for performing the study. Finally, the related research questions were defined. The study will now move forward as follows. Chapter II will provide a review of the literature relevant to the current study. It will examine previous works related to the subject matter and the linguistic area of the research. Hence, it will present the general concept of discourse and discourse analysis and introduce CDA as both a theoretical and analytical framework for this study, as well as other supporting theories. Chapter III will introduce the methods of data selection, collection and analysis, and the nature of the analysis will be explained in detail. The

context and participants of the study will also be described. Chapter IV will present the results of the study and will offer a discussion of the results obtained. The results section will contain the results of the analysis, which will detail and justify the conclusion and provide a discussion of salient results. Chapter V will provide the summary and conclusions of the research and the implications that it may have on its context. Moreover, it will highlight the limitations of the study and will offer directions for further research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter will review the theoretical underpinnings of the study. Its purpose is to provide the theoretical basis to support the methodological and analytical procedures that allow the study to draw conclusions about the issues it seeks to explore. As such, it provides a discussion of the following issues: linguistic and discourse imperialism, language policies, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

2.1 Predominant paradigm of English as *lingua franca*

As discussed in Chapter 1, the global spread of the English language is “pervasive as it is linked to education, politics, economics, science and technology, culture and the media” (Ljungdahl, 2004, p. 3). Since this spread is of utmost relevance to this research, the following section attempts to explore this notion more thoroughly within the context of the current investigation.

Besides being present in most dimensions of societies, Graddol (2001) asserts that one of the major functions of English worldwide is that “it provides an international language for communication” (p. 27), also known as *lingua franca*. Critical frameworks employed to examine the English language globally often portray its spread as natural, neutral and beneficial and somehow free of economic, political and ideological constraints. Pennycook (1995) expands on this view when stating that the predominant paradigm is that the spread of English is:

“commonly justified by recourse to a functionalist perspective, which stresses choice and the usefulness of English, and that consequently, its diffusion is: natural (although its spread was initiated by colonialism, since then it has

been an accidental by-product of global forces), neutral (unlike other, local languages, English is unconnected to cultural and political issues), and beneficial (people can only benefit by gaining access to English and the world it opens up).” (p. 39)

Nevertheless, as some critics have stated (Clapton, 2018; Descarries, 2014; Duranti, 2011), language is never a neutral means for communication because contextual factors are inextricably tied to it, and it can never be entirely divorced from culture or politics. This statement also applies to the English language. Additionally, the spread of English is not always beneficial. It may marginalize other languages, particularly where English becomes dominant at the expense of indigenous languages (Ljungdahl, 2004). Cooke (1988) suggests that the spread of English threatens indigenous languages and that it acts as a gatekeeper to employment and economic opportunities. English's gatekeeping function determines in many countries around the world “inclusion into or exclusion from further education, employment, or social positions” (Pennycook, 1995, p. 40), which promotes global inequalities and structures of dependency. To refer to this issue, Cooke (1988) uses the metaphor of the Trojan horse to describe the way that English may be welcomed initially in a country but then cause concern as it dominates the native language(s) and cultures. Thus, although throughout its history, English has played a major social and cultural role in the countries where it has been introduced and has been welcomed as a *lingua franca*, some observers have argued that English, and the profession which promotes it (English Language Teaching), carry imperialistic influences (Cooke, 1988; Phillipson, 1997, Canagarajah 1999).

2.2.1 Linguistic Imperialism of the English Language: advocates and critics

Galtung (1980) argues that the world can be divided into two domains: the Center (the powerful Western countries) and the Periphery (the developing ones). According to Canagarajah (1999), the Center refers to “technologically-advanced communities where English is the primary language” (p. 4). For him, this term is synonymous with ‘Inner Circle’, from Kachru (1986). Canagarajah goes on to explain that the Periphery refers to communities where English is “of post-colonial currency such as Barbados and India” (p. 4). He furthermore adds that he uses the term ‘periphery’ to adjust Kachru’s discussions on ‘Outer Circle’ –countries affected by the spread of English–, and on ‘Expanding Circle’ – where English is accepted as the international language of communication and taught as a foreign language. Phillipson (1992) shares Galtung’s and Canagarajah’s views and describes the imposition of one country’s language on another along with its cultural, social and political models as a movement from the “core” (the country which imposes the language) to the “periphery” (the countries in which language is imposed or promoted as a second language). Additionally, these scholars agree that language is the medium through which the elite of the Center regulates the Periphery and plays a crucial function by providing the link between the dominant and the dominated groups and is representative of the basis upon which the notion of linguistic imperialism is built.

Linguistic imperialism is a subtype of linguicism, a term coined by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) to draw parallels between hierarchization on the basis of ‘race’ or ethnicity (racism, ethnicism), gender (sexism) and language (linguicism) (Phillipson, 1997).

Phillipson (1988) defines linguicism as “the ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both

material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of their language (i.e., of their mother tongue)” (p. 339). Similarly, Harris (2004) asserts that linguicism is the practice that divides a group of people based on the unequal distribution of power and resources based on language, adding that it may occur when a country has a policy of supporting several languages, but only one language dominates the education sector. Moreover, linguicism may be “overt or covert, conscious or unconscious, in that it reflects dominant attitudes, values and hegemonic beliefs about what purposes particular languages should serve, or about the value of certain pedagogic practices” (Phillipson, 1997, p. 240). According to Phillipson (1988), linguicism is best seen within the broader context of linguistic imperialism.

The subject of linguistic imperialism was raised in different works, especially during the late 1970s and 1980s (Greenbaum, 1985; Kachru, 1981, 1986; Phillipson, 1988; Quirk & Widdowson, 1985). However, Phillipson's book (1992) “gave it a name and provoked a heated debate that still continues in the scholarly circles” (González Fernández, 2005, p. 87). Phillipson (1988) defines linguistic imperialism as “an essential constituent of imperialism as a global phenomenon involving structural relations between rich and poor countries in a world characterized by inequality and injustice” (p. 339). Giles and Middleton (2007) also propose their own definition by stating that linguistic imperialism is a form of colonialism that occurs through the medium of language, where the language of the majority colonizes minority languages. However, Phillipson (1992) refers more specifically to the English linguistic imperialism as “the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (p. 47). Hence, English linguistic

imperialism occurs when English, which could be called major or primary language, is dominating minor languages, which causes structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages and those who speak it and not.

Despite the prevailing opinion of seeing the spread of English as a form of linguistic imperialism, the agency behind this spread “is differently understood by many” (González Fernández, 2005, p. 88). Thus, while many scholars agree with the view that “the spread of English remains inextricably interwoven with its economic and social origins” (Holborow, 1993, p. 358), others believe that English was "at the right place at the right time" (Crystal, 1997, as cited in Phillipson, 2000, p. 105), and reject the idea of linguistic imperialism. These scholars believe that English's dominance is not due to specific language policies, but rather as a side-effect of the spread of English and American powers through colonization and globalization (Spolsky, 2004). Crystal (2003) expands on this idea and explains that, although there was some control behind the spread of English in the first moments of colonialism, that is not the case nowadays, while asserting that those views are too simplistic and outdated. His words are worth quoting at length:

"Anachronistic views of linguistic imperialism, which see as important only the power asymmetry between the former colonial nations and the nations of the 'third world,' are hopelessly inadequate as an explanation of linguistic realities. They especially ignore the fact that 'first world' countries with strong languages seem to be under just as much pressure to adopt English, and that some of the harshest attacks on English have come from countries which have no such colonial legacy. When dominant languages feel they are being dominated, something much bigger than a simplistic conception of power relations must be involved." (Crystal, 2003, p. 23)

Rajagopalan (2000) goes a step further and maintains that Phillipson's ideas of linguistic imperialism have led to a guilt complex among English language learning and teaching (ELT) professionals. Additionally, he argues that Phillipson's theory is patronizing in its implication that developing countries lack independent decision-making capacity (to adopt or not to adopt ELT).

In conclusion, it could be argued that, while those who agree with Phillipson's ideas see choices about language as externally imposed, the other group sees them as personal choices. However, although both sides present a respectable argument to describe the global spread of English, linguistic imperialism is indeed an ever-present threat arising from the global spread of English, even when English is welcomed as a lingua franca. As Ciprianová & Vanco (2010) argue, the emergence of English as a global language results from "the deliberate effort of native English speaking countries, mainly the United Kingdom and the United States of America, to promote English around the world" (p. 124). Thus, regardless of which stance is the most appropriate to describe the global spread of English, whether it is purposeful or coincidental, a certain number of people are indeed negatively affected by the phenomenon. These people are shepherded by the discourse that speaking English 'opens doors' and it is a 'credit card to success', which has been distributed and continues circulating thanks to those who hold power and make a profit of it. This discourse is what Pennycook (1995) refers to as discourse imperialism.

2.2.2 Discourse Imperialism

Pennycook (1995) argues that there is a difference between what Phillipson (1992) refers to as linguistic imperialism -or what Pennycook prefers to name *English in the world* (1995), and discourse imperialism, or what he calls *the world in English*. Pennycook explains that

the former is the spread of the English language itself, while the latter refers to the expansion of a certain discourse dictated by the West, but, most importantly, a discourse written in English, which guarantees the supremacy of some countries over others. This form of imperialism is much subtler and, therefore, dangerous (Phillipson, 1992). Such a discourse is the source of regular inequalities in all fields: economics, politics, education, culture and communication (González Fernández, 2005). English expands simultaneously with this discourse, making English the "language of international capitalism" (Pennycook, 1995, p. 43). He does not consider the spread of this language as something beneficial and neutral, but as something related to massive discrimination in the world. Skutnabb-Kangas's (2000) further adds that this spread is at the root of much injustice, identity and educational problems, and linguistic genocide.

In the same light, Fairclough (1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995) gives great importance to discourse in power relations. He argues that social interaction of all kinds is carried out through language. Hence, "power relations are (...) exercised implicitly in language" (1992a, p. 6). He further adds that power can be found *in* and *behind* discourse (1989, p. 43). He explains that, on the one hand, power *in* discourse occurs when there is some kind of domination in the message, in the text (oral or written) as such: there are constraints on *who* can say *what* to *whom*. On the other hand, power *behind* discourse are hidden forms of control. With this term, he identifies domination at a higher level, in the society itself where the text is produced: "the whole social order of discourse is put together and held together as a hidden effect of power" (1989, p. 55). According to González Fernández (2005), these forms of control lead to hidden imperialism. However, she argues that the expansion of English cannot be considered as a complot theory, but as the result of a series of interwoven

factors and a “complex process brought about by those who actively promote the language and those who consciously choose to learn it” (McKay, 2002, as cited in González Fernández, 2005, p. 89). She further adds that no language is considered imperialistic, nor sexist or racist, and it is only a mirror reflecting the structure behind it. Thus, as Pennycook suggests in his work, the most appropriate term to describe the spread of English should be *discourse* imperialism.

As previously discussed, in the circulating discourse about the importance of speaking English, the prevailing idea is the economic benefits it provides. This type of discourse impacts so strongly on people’s perceptions about the importance and reasons to learn English that not being able to speak English is equated with being illiterate in the global world (Velez–Rendón, 2003). This discourse has become so prevalent that people from all walks of life, from academics to the security guards of an apartment complex, utter it with absolute certainty. No one questions the validity of that statement, and whoever does so might be out of their minds (Guerrero, 2010). Unfortunately, it is very difficult to counter these discourses because they circulate in different fields of the society. Consequently, the more they circulate, the stronger they become. Nonetheless, it is very narcissistic and egocentric to think that speaking an important language like English is the key to solve all our problems. What is even worse is that “this narcissistic and egocentric thought is not of one individual but the thought of a governmental office, and it is imposed to a whole nation regardless of the potential consequences” (Guerrero, 2010, p. 306). Those who propitiate the circulation of this discourse forget that if English is, indeed, a good asset to obtain certain benefits and profits, it is not the only condition to do so. As Guerrero argues, “simply speaking English is not enough; other forms of cultural capital are

necessary (other qualifications certified by an institution like diplomas or degrees): social capital (belong to the right sort of social network) and economic capital” (p. 306). The theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1986) on capital will help shed light on this issue.

2.3 English as a form of capital

According to Bourdieu (1986), capital can present itself in three fundamental guises:

“as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations (‘connections’), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility” (p. 16)

Bourdieu (1991) expands on this theory and adds two other forms of capital: the linguistic and the symbolic capital, considering the latter as linked with legitimacy, authority, and prestige. He further adds that, unlike economic capital, linguistic, cultural, and social capital function as symbolic capital.

Pennycook (2001) asserts that different forms of capital give people access to and position them into “relatively autonomous fields” (p. 123), which is “determined by the quantities of different types of capital they possess” (Thompson, as cited in Pennycook, 2001, p. 123). These types of capital acquire different values because of “the relations of power and knowledge in different social fields” (p. 123). Park and Wee (2015) exemplify this idea. For instance, by speaking the standard variety of a language, instead of a dialect, people are likely to be seen as well educated, good-mannered, and suitable for a respected

job. In that sense, the ability to command the standard accent can be seen as symbolic capital because “the speaker comes to be recognized (or rather, misrecognized, as Bourdieu emphasizes) as carrying prestige due to that ability” (p. 28). In this case, the linguistic competence of the speaker may be “seen as cultural capital, as such competence most likely comes from his or her upbringing within a particular social context, but we may also distinguish it as linguistic capital, to highlight the special role language plays in the market” (p. 28).

In Bourdieu’s theory, language plays an essential role because it can be thought of in terms of capital conversion, mainly economic capital. As he puts it, “every type of capital is reducible in the last analysis to economic capital” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 24), and this includes linguistic capital. Just as capital in the economic sense means money that can be used to make more money, the point about linguistic capital is the other kinds of profit it can bring. Thus, language becomes a type of capital for the person who speaks it because not only does it function as an instrument of communication, but also because it takes on a social and symbolic value. Concretely, language is given a specific value because agents in that field allow one form of capital –linguistic capital– to be converted into another (Bourdieu, 1991). Park and Wee (2012) expand on this idea. They argue that language is a key example of how power relations shape the convertibility of capital in the market. However, they claim that:

“The value of such linguistic resources is not determined by some rational mechanisms such as supply and demand. Instead, the laws of price formation are grounded upon practical relations of social power. That is, varieties and practices that are indexically linked with powerful speakers come to be valued

more highly than others not only because those speakers have greater institutional control to promote the value of their languages but also because the symbolic power accorded to them is transferred onto their utterances, transforming them into valued symbolic capital” (p. 28).

In the educational market, it is the state, through the school system, who regulates and imposes language and that all linguistic exchanges are measured against the official language. Hence, those who speak the mainstream language are granted a high value in the educational market and those who do not have a proportionally lower value (Bourdieu, 1991). Consequently, a type of silent (symbolic) violence is exerted on those who, due to their social class, ethnic group or region, fail to meet the linguistic demands imposed on them at schools (Lin, 1999; Pennycook, 2001). In other words, linguistic habitus is measured against the linguistic habitus of dominant classes, and when students do not achieve the valued standard, they are decried and devalued instead of taken into account (Bourdieu, 1991). Consequently, instead of school helping students from lower socioeconomic classes to increase their linguistic capital, it condemns them to educational failure—not due to their lack of learning abilities, but because of their disparities in linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991; Gee, 2008). This is what occurs in the case of the English language in non-native English countries schooling system.

As previously discussed, English is associated with the language of power, learning, science and civilization. Thus, a nearly universal ideology manifests itself in the belief that "hard currency" cultural capital in the form of English competence is needed for technological advancement, employment opportunities, national progress and international travel (Niño–Murcia, 2003). This type of discourse impacts people’s perceptions about the

importance and reasons to learn English. Consequently, people who want to acquire English knowledge are generally motivated by the convertibility of their cultural capital into economic capital. Parents also insist that their children learn English because that knowledge will provide a good monetary position. Additionally, English is promoted as the language of equity because “speaking English gives equal opportunities, particularly in the economic field” (Guerrero, 2010, p. 301). This discourse of equality has influenced language policy decisions in most non-English speaking countries. Nevertheless, the fact is that English “contributes to the delivery and perpetuation of privilege and inequality because it only favors the advantaged groups who have access to the right sort of linguistic capital” (Guerrero, 2010, p. 301). This inequality in the access of ways to learn English takes place in most of the non-English speaking countries where English is introduced as a mandatory language to learn in order to obtain certain qualifications. There is an enormous difference in opportunities to learn English between people who attend public under-funded and overcrowded schools and attending elite private schools (Tollefson, 2000), and Mexico is not an exception to this trend. The sections below will provide definitions of ‘language policy’ and how it is implemented in Mexico.

2.4 Defining language policy

Many scholars have attempted to provide a definition of what language policy is (Cooper, 1989; Johnson, 2013; McCarty, 2011; Ricento, 2010; Schiffman, 1996; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 1991). They have different points of views regarding what language policy entails. Schiffman (1996) and Spolsky (2004) point out that language policy covers many layers such as those from government laws to communities of language practices. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) state that language policy regulations are introduced

by authorities, while Schiffman (1996) and Spolsky (2004) argue that speakers are also responsible for their language practices. McCarty (2011) and Tollefson (1991) have a more critical notion of what language policy may mean. On the one hand, McCarty (2011) is interested in the multilayered composition of the language policy and the interaction among speech communities to negotiate language policies. On the other hand, Tollefson (1991) has shed light on the ideological tensions such as power and inequality that may be the result of language policy implementation. Nevertheless, despite the different perspectives they have, the definitions they have proposed might seem incomplete. According to Torrico (2016), one of the most overarching definitions is proposed by Shohamy (2006):

“Language policy (LP) is the primary mechanism for organizing, managing and manipulating language behaviors as it consists of decisions made about languages and their uses in society. It is through LP that decisions are made with regard to the preferred languages that should be legitimized, used, learned and taught in terms of where, when and in which contexts” (p. 45).

Shohamy (2006) further claims that language policy “acts as a manipulative tool in the continuous battle between different ideologies” (p. 45). These manipulations occur on a number of levels and in a number of directions but especially in relation to the legitimacy of using and learning certain language(s) in given contexts and societies and their forms (corpus), i.e., how they should be used (pronunciation, lexicon, grammar, genre, etc.). Thus, language policies refer to “specific documents, laws, regulations or policy documents that specify these language behaviors” (p.45).

As previously mentioned, there is currently no unified theory of language policy (Roux, 2012). However, several frameworks have been developed to explain the ways in

which policies have certain effects in specific contexts (Phillipson, 1992; Tollefson, 1995). Ricento and Hornberger (1996, in Roux, 2012) propose an approach that views language policies in terms of layers. They use the metaphor of an onion to represent a language policy with layers of agents, levels and processes. At the outer layers of the onion (policy) are its objectives, articulated in legislation at national level, operationalized in guidelines at local level. This layer concerns the role of the state in the development and the implementation of the language policy. The guidelines are interpreted and implemented in institutional settings (middle layer) such as schools, government offices, businesses, book publishers and education consulting services. In each of those settings or contexts, individuals (inner layer) interact. Hence, classroom practitioners need to be prepared according to the language policy being developed or implemented. At each layer (national, institutional and interpersonal), characteristic patterns of discourse (oral and written) that reflect goals, values and personal identities can be found. These discourses are structured by ideologies. Within each layer, competing discourses create tensions in the formation and implementation of a policy (Roux, 2012). Roux (2012) further affirms that the middle layers of the policies show the economic forces influencing, if not determining, the language policies. According to her, these forces come from private universities, software enterprises, book publishers, and the leading role of the multinational academic empire. Thus, her main claim is that the real LP of a political and social entity should be observed not simply through declared policy statements but rather through a variety of devices that are used to perpetuate language practices, often in covert and implicit ways. If we take a closer look to the language policy implemented in Mexico, we can see that the onion approach also applies to it.

2.4.1 Language policy implemented in Mexico

In Mexico, Spanish is the *de facto* official language of the government and the first language of 90% of the population. It is Mexico's national language because of its historic and legislative functions. However, Mexico is a linguistically complex country because, apart from Spanish, there are also 62 recognized indigenous languages, which are minority languages. Only 28 of these languages have more than 10,000 speakers (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2007). The fact that only a small percentage of the Mexican population speaks any of these indigenous languages is why it was not until 2003 that the Congress recognized indigenous languages as national languages with the same validity as Spanish (Terborg, Garcia, & Moore, 2007). Furthermore, they approved the General Law of Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which protects about six million Mexicans who speak indigenous languages. Additionally, the Ministry of Education created an office for indigenous education, teacher training and language learning materials.

According to Baldauf and Kaplan (2007), Mexican language policy with respect to minority languages falls into three main approaches: Incorporation, Integration and Participation. They claim that:

“Policies of incorporation are typically policies formulated by the non-indigenous population and defined as unilateral, unidirectional and having a single goal – the assimilation of indigenous people into the nation as a whole. Policies of integration develop from the understanding that education alone is necessary but not sufficient to assimilate indigenous peoples into national life so that educational policy must be enhanced with actions designed to stimulate social and cultural development. Governmental attention to the indigenous sector of the population was oriented to

corrective action, especially with regard to land rights (...) Policy making of the third type, participation, creates a space in which government may act; the indigenous communities and NGOs are all actively engaged” (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2007, p. 20).

Nonetheless, despite the support that indigenous languages receive from the government, the use of indigenous languages and customs is regarded as outmoded and obsolete; Baldauf and Kaplan (2007) further argue that the pressure to discard the ‘outmoded and obsolete’ is encountered directly daily in the workplace and indirectly from the younger generation attending schools in which indigenous peoples are underrepresented and subjected to discrimination.

With respect to the teaching of foreign languages in Mexico, in 2008 the Ministry of Education initiated the Integral Reform of Basic Education (IRBE). It introduced new language policies that include national languages plus English, given the role of English as the world’s lingua franca in commerce, academia and technology. The Reform considered as one of its challenges in elementary school “the continuous and efficient learning of a foreign language -English- as a state determined program” (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2008), and developed the National English Program for Basic Education (NEPBE) in 2010. The NEPBE’s aim is providing a curriculum for basic education, designing the teaching materials, and planning and implementing teacher training programs (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011). The program purpose is that the students participate in different activities that involve the production and interpretation of oral and written texts, of everyday, academic and literary nature, to be able to satisfy basic communication needs in familiar situations. The program includes a set of standards, based on the standards of the Common European Framework (CEF). Additionally, the Integrative Reform of Junior High

School Education (Reforma Integral de la Educación Secundaria, RIES, 2005), states that, while they are aware of the existence of these pilot programs, SEP's main concern is with the quality of English lessons at the secondary level (RIES, 2005). Students are required to study English at the rate of three hours a week (90 to 100 hours per grade). The program expects the teacher to emphasize social practices of language through experiential learning in order to achieve learner autonomy. This is designed to ensure that by the time students complete their secondary education, they have developed the pluri-lingual and pluri-cultural competence necessary to successfully handle the communicative challenges of the globalized world and respect their own culture as well as that of others (Moore, 2012).

In 2014, the NEPBE merged with other programs to form the Program for Strengthening the Quality of Basic Education (Programa para la Fortaleza de la Calidad de la Educación Básica, PFCEB, acronym in Spanish). Currently, this program is known as the National English Program (Programa Nacional de Inglés, PRONI, acronym in Spanish). In 2015, the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness along with the organizations taking part of the movement *Inglés para la competitividad y la movilidad social* (English for Competitiveness and Social Mobility) created the document *Inglés es posible: Propuesta de una Agenda Nacional* (English is possible: Proposal of a National Agenda) with the aim of raising awareness about the importance of developing a strategy to strengthen the learning of the English language in Mexico. Subsequently, the National English Strategy [ENI] was published on July 20, 2017. ENI describes a language policy on learning English in Mexico called *inglés para todos* (English for all), referring to inclusiveness. The Strategy is based on the curricular elements for English as a foreign language defined in the plan and compulsory education study program *Aprendizajes Clave para la Educación Integral* (2017).

The Strategy proposes that in twenty years, that is the year 2037, Mexico must train students in the English language to have the ability to understand, write texts and be understood in any part of the world (ENI, 2017, P.1).

While English has penetrated into the Mexican educational language policy of elementary and high school levels, it has also do so in higher education. According to a report by the British Council (2015) on the English language policy in Mexico, English language skills are increasingly seen as important to facilitate internationalization of universities in areas of student and staff mobility, research collaboration and partnerships and international staff and student recruitment. Staff and students having insufficient foreign language skills are seen as a real threat to comprehensive internationalization. Since English has become the predominant language of scientific publication globally, higher education students must attain a certain level of English before they can graduate. However, many Mexican universities do not have an institutional English program, nor do they centralize the process of assessing students' English language levels. Many institutions charge an additional fee for students to gain English qualifications. Thus, it is now common practice that students must attain a minimum of around 450 points on the institutional Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the equivalent on other internationally recognized English tests if they are to be eligible for graduation. The report further discusses that policies of this kind reflect the pressures that Mexican universities are facing. They are now required to provide measurable evidence of their educational quality if they are to accredit their educational programs, and therefore, to compete for the allocation of funding.

The previously explained Mexican legislation on Spanish as the *de facto* language and indigenous and foreign languages constitute the outer layer of Ricento and Hornberger's "onion" approach. Subsequently, we have the institutional settings which comprise the middle layer of the onion. According to Roux (2012), private rather than public universities have played an important role in the implementation of the foreign language learning policy. The Mexican Ministry of Education has provided teacher training to NEPBE teachers through institutions such as Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey and Universidad Jesuíta de Guadalajara. Other institutions involved in the implementation of the policy are the Office of English Language Programs for Mexico and Central America of the U.S. Department of State, in charge of designing English language tests and training examiners; and the British Council, not only involved in the design of the NEPBE program but has also promoted the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT). This test has been included in the list of standardized tests for language teachers, together with the TOEFL, the KET (Key English Test) and PET (Preliminary English Test) by Cambridge University. Additionally, book publishers also influence the ways in which a program is implemented. A variety of textbooks are bought by the Mexican Ministry of Education to support the English language policy. Among the book publishers are Fernández Educación, Heine Cengage Learning, Macmillan Publishers, Nuevo México, Richmond Publishing, Santillana, Trillas and University of Dayton Publishing (Roux, 2012).

Finally, at the inner layer, we find the individuals who interact. Roux (2012) further adds that teachers of the NEPBE program seem to be "more concerned with the acquisition of qualifications and the attainment of the standards mandated by the educational

authorities, than with becoming reflective practitioners that evaluate their teaching, identify problems, find solutions and try new ways of teaching” (p. 191). She asserts that Mexican education authorities and scholars neglect the disparity between these practices and the new developments in the field of professional development in foreign language education and language education policy. Instead, “the model of professional development that the policy promotes focuses on the accumulation of hours in short, isolated courses and the gathering of certificates and diplomas” (Roux, 2012, p. 191). Regarding the English language policy in higher education, Vázquez, Guzmán and Roux (2013) claim that the underlying assumption of this policy seems to be that by setting this target for students, they will be encouraged or forced to improve their proficiency level in English. Nonetheless, these authors assert that failing to attain the necessary level of English often prevents students from reaching their academic potential.

2.4.2 English language and inequality in Mexico

As discussed in the previous section, several countries have introduced new language policies that are multilingual and include national languages plus English, and Mexico has followed the same trend. However, this fact may then raise the question of what the implications for Mexicans are. Baldauf and Kaplan (2007) claim that in Mexico, “social inequality is a part of everyday life (...). The population may be generally divided into three strata: indigentes [extremely poor], pobres no indigentes [poor but not extremely poor] and no pobres [not poor]” (p. 15). Thus, household income is a marker to have access to any type of education. Hence, when it comes to English learning, there are two sides of the coin. On the one hand, we have middle and upper-class Mexican parents who send their children to bilingual schools. These parents place high value on learning English at school

and think that learning this language will be an asset in the future for finding a job (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2005). They invest considerable amounts of money so that their children can learn English from early childhood. Depending on the curriculum and on the type of education system that the school follows, children learn basic English most of the time, but in a few schools, they become truly bilingual (González Robles, Vivaldo Lima, & Castillo Morales, 2004). According to the British Council (2015), there are two types of private schools with English-language curricula: the bilingual school, where children begin to learn English at three years old, at first full-time and then in primary and secondary school reduced to two or three hours per day; and the bicultural school, where children spend 50% of their time learning English. On the other hand, we have urban parents from lower economic groups who also share the same ideas about the importance of English nowadays, but they lack the resources to pay for private education for their children. Consequently, those children who study in public schools will probably not learn any other languages than Spanish (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2007). In conclusion, those with highly educated parents in higher income brackets have a significant advantage over those who have other backgrounds.

Meanwhile, a study of the language competence in English of first year students (4,690) in institutes of higher education in Mexico City and the surrounding area (González Robles et al., 2004) has revealed deficiencies in the teaching of English at elementary and secondary levels on the basis of the results obtained in a test of English language competence. The results of a study conducted by González Robles et al. (2004) on the language competence in English of first year students in institutes of higher education in Mexico City show the correlation between the type of education the sampled students

received and their level of proficiency in English. The study sampled students from nine universities, both public and private. The results show a significant difference between the results of private universities and public ones. 95% of the students who had studied in public elementary, junior and senior high schools failed the test. 89.7% of those who had studied in mixed public failed the test. Finally, 63.3% of students who studied in purely in private schools failed the test. The differences would seem to be caused by inequalities in such conditions as:

- access to bilingual schools and environments (exchange programs, travel, extracurricular language classes, English bilingual environments at home, and satellite television);
- type of primary and secondary school;
- quality of language teaching in those levels and schools, and
- parental background.

Hence, cost and access are reported as the main barriers to learning English (British Council, 2015). Nonetheless, these two indicators are not the only obstacles that people trying to learn English find on their way.

Baldauf and Kaplan (2007) affirm that when students enroll in higher education, most universities offer English courses. However, some students only attain a level not higher than high-intermediate, which leaves them out of the competition for scholarships. Additionally, students who are excluded from the system, usually at the end of their studies, will look for language courses to pass the ‘language test requirement’ (reading comprehension only) in order to get their degrees. “Sometimes they do not get their degrees because they do not pass the language test!” (p. 167). Inequality then continues once the

students enter the job market, where they face the fact that English is also a requirement for obtaining some of the best jobs. Even if English is not the language of work, it is often a stipulated requirement. Thus, the need to speak English to progress and attain higher levels of education can frame learning English as an obstacle rather than an opportunity, which is one of the principal foci of the current study.

However, as the British Council concludes in its report (2015), the complex and unequal development of Mexican society reinforces the notion that there is no substantial need for the majority of Mexicans to learn English. This fact may then raise the question of why this language is mandatory at all educational levels in a country like Mexico where only Spanish and other indigenous languages are official. Hence, the clearest answer to this question is that English is mandatory in Mexico as a result of linguistic/discourse imperialism coming from the middle layer of Ricento and Hornberger's onion. The middle layer of the language policy implemented in Mexico clearly shows the economic forces influencing, if not determining, the language policies. Such forces come mainly from the multinational academic empire, i.e., the British Council and the Office of English Language Programs of the US. Thus, as Tollefson (1991) correctly points out, language policies favor majoritarian or dominant interests at the expense of minority and non-dominant interests. Nonetheless, as Haugen (1973) argues, language diversity is not a problem unless it is used as a basis for discrimination. Therefore, although Mexican society usually considers learning English as an additional economic and cultural value, the mandatory learning of this language becomes a problem since it may lead to language-based inequality and discrimination. This is the reason why Tollefson (1991, 2002, 2006) observes language policy from a critical point of view when asserting that "language policy is one mechanism

for locating language within social structure so that language determines who has access to political power and economic resources. Language policy is one mechanism by which dominant groups establish hegemony in language use” (Tollefson, 1991, p. 16). This definition introduces his Critical Language Policy framework, which will be discussed in the section below.

2.4.3 Language policy from a critical perspective

Before expanding on the Critical Language Policy framework proposed by Tollefson (1991, 2002, 2006), a better understanding of what ‘critical’ means and what critical theory entails is needed. ‘Critical’ refers to the field of critical linguistics, which generally examines work that is influenced by critical theory. Critical theory includes work by scholars such as Bourdieu (1991), Foucault (1979), Tollefson (1991, 2002, 2006), Pennycook (1990, 2001), Luke (2002, 2004), among others. Their work generally investigates the processes by which social inequality is produced and sustained, and the struggle to reduce inequality to bring about greater forms of social justice. Tollefson (2006) states that critical theory has a practical intent: “to uncover systems of exploitation, particularly those hidden by ideology, and to find ways to overcome that exploitation” (p. 44). Consequently, critical linguistics entails social activism, which means that “linguists are seen as responsible not only for understanding how dominant social groups use language for establishing and maintaining social hierarchies, but also for investigating ways to alter those hierarchies” (Tollefson, 2002, p. 4). Thus, within the field of critical linguistics, research and practice are inextricably linked through this important social and political role for linguists and their work. Moreover, critical theory emphasizes the relationships among language, power, and inequality, which are held to be central concepts for understanding language and society.

Therefore, in critical approaches, “language shift is understood not as an incidental and natural outcome of language contact but rather a manifestation of asymmetrical power relations based on social structures and ideologies that position groups – and their languages – hierarchically within a society” (Ricento, 2006, p. 15).

Language policy researchers influenced by critical theory are then interested in how social inequality is reproduced and sustained. Tollefson (1991) criticizes the traditional approach to language policy research. He claims that this approach is characterized by the assumption that language policies are usually adopted to solve problems of communication in multilingual settings and to increase social and economic opportunities for linguistic minorities and are believed to be useful for integrating linguistic minorities into mainstream socioeconomic systems. In contrast, he proposes a critical approach, the Critical Language Policy (CLP) framework, which acknowledges that language policies often create and sustain various forms of social inequality, and that policymakers usually promote the interests of dominant social groups at the expense of minority and non-dominant interests. For Tollefson (1991), language policy is a tool for power and a gatekeeper for access to political power and economic resources. In critical theory, power – which refers to the ability to control events in order to achieve one’s aims – is seen as implicit in all social relationships. Hence, in CLP research, “power is implicit in the policymaking process, and language policies are seen as an important mechanism by which the state and other policymaking institutions seek to influence language behavior” (Tollefson, 2006, p. 46). Consequently, Tollefson (1991) maintains that language policy is inseparable from relationships of power and argues that language policy research “must focus on the mechanisms by which minority languages are restricted to specific domains” (p. 202), thus

legitimizing the domination of some groups while marginalizing others. He further adds that a critical perspective on language policy assertively investigates “how language policies affect the lives of individuals and groups who often have little influence over the policymaking process” (Tollefson, 2002, p. 4).

In addition to arguing that language policies favor majoritarian or dominant interests, Tollefson (1991) and Luke, McHoul, and Mey (1990) argue that these interests are often implicit and enmeshed in hegemonic ideologies, which have become widely accepted, commonsense ideas, especially in Western societies. Hence, the goal of critical scholars interested in promoting social and economic equality is to uncover these ideologies and associated policies in order to bring about greater forms of social justice. In order to uncover these implicit ideologies, an analysis of language policy documents is necessary.

Two conceptualizations that originate from critical theory are applied to language policy research. They are policy-as-text and policy-as-discourse (Ball, 1993). On the one hand, Ball defines policy-as-text as:

“representations which are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actors interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context). A policy is both contested and changing, always in a state of ‘becoming’, of ‘was’ and ‘never was’ and ‘not quite’” (Ball, 1993, p. 11).

On the other hand, Ball (1994) suggests that a policy is not only a text but also a mechanism by which power is exercised through “the production of truth and knowledge, as discourses” (p. 21). Hence, he problematizes policy-as-discourse by arguing that social

actors misinterpret processes of policy interpretation and enactment due to the state control of schools and, therefore, the ability to manipulate institutions by means of discourse. Thus, the policy has the power to establish by means of discourse what is normal. However, the focus on interpretation and enactment of a language policy tends to overshadow the discursive control that these documents may have in a community.

A discourse analysis of policy documents from a critical perspective may help expose patterns in the construction of those discourses and the discursive strategies its authors use, which may influence and enact behavior (Torrico, 2016). Research shows that some crucial principles from CDA such as power and ideology are embedded in language policy documents (Tollefson, 1991; Pennycook, 2002). Consequently, CDA is the most relevant approach within the field of discourse analysis to conduct data analysis for this research.

2.5 CDA as a field of enquiry

Critical discourse analysis draws from work carried out in the area known as critical theory (see section 2.4.3). According to Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000), discourse, which is an opaque power object in modern societies, is made more visible and transparent by critical discourse analysis. As a result, CDA has become a very important research tool which moves beyond a surface – level examination of discourse to show how discourse can produce and hide deep structure relations of power and inequality.

Richardson (2007) defines CDA as a theory and method analyzing the way that individuals and institutions use language. Similarly, Fairclough (2001) claims that “CDA analyses texts and interactions” (p. 26). However, he argues that CDA “does not start from texts and interactions. It starts rather from social issues and problems, problems which face

people in their social lives, issues which are taken up within sociology, political science and/or cultural studies” (p. 26). Hence, as discussed in Chapter 1, critical discourse analysts focus on relations between discourse, power, dominance and social inequality and how discourse (re)produces and maintains these relations of dominance and inequality (van Dijk, 1993). Therefore, CDA addresses broader social issues than traditional discourse studies. It attends to external factors, including ideology, power and inequality, and draws on social and philosophical theory to analyze and interpret written and spoken texts. As Fairclough and Wodak (1997) put it, “what is distinctive about CDA is both that it intervenes on the side of dominated and oppressed groups and against dominating groups and that it openly declares the emancipatory interests that motivate it.” (p. 259).

Additionally, Wodak and Meyer (2009) claim that what sets CDA studies apart from other discourse studies is that questions are asked differently since scholars in CDA present themselves as advocates for social groups facing discrimination. Consequently, as Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak (2011) argue, CDA cannot be viewed as ‘dispassionate’ and ‘objective’ as other social sciences, rather it is a ‘committed’ science that interferes in social practice.

According to Blommaert (2005) the duty of CDA researchers is to improve the social-theoretical foundations for practicing discourse analysis as well as for situating discourse in society. In order to do that, “CDA takes two directions, and these are the problems CDA researchers are mainly interested in. They are theories of power and ideology and an attempt to overcome determinism” (p. 27). Power, from a Foucauldian point of view (1980), is the plain oppression of the powerless by the powerful. He states that power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or as something which only

functions in the form of a chain. Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organization, and individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application (Foucault, 1980). Ideologies, according to Fairclough & Wodak (1997),

are particular ways of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, relations of domination and exploitation (...)To determine whether a particular (type of) discursive event does ideological work, it is not enough to analyse texts, one also needs to consider how texts are interpreted and received and what social effects they have. (p. 275)

Determinism, specifically linguistic determinism, is a theory that states that the social reality that people achieve is directed by the language they are communicating (Sapir & Whorf, 1956, in Weatherall, 2002). In other words, language impacts thought and behavior and shapes social reality. Thus, on the one hand, some CDA researchers aim to make explicit the relationship between language, ideology and power in discourse. Wetherell, Taylor and Yates (2001) state that the goals of CDA are to find out which structures of text and talk play a role in reproduction of power and domination. In the same line, according to Wodak and Meyer (2009), CDA is interested in the analysis of “relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control manifested in language” (p. 10). Its purpose is to research critically about social inequality which is expressed and legitimized by the use of language. On the other hand, for some other CDA researchers, the goal of CDA is to comprehend, make explicit and combat social inequality. Consequently,

With such *dissident research*, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality. This is

also why CDA may be characterised as a *social movement* of politically committed discourse analysts. (van Dijk T. , 2015, p. 466)

From this point of view, CDA not only aims to expose the use of language as a means of power abuse, but also as a method to resist it. A critical perspective on discourse analysis, then, explores the relation between language use and the social and political context in which it occurs. It does so in a way that deals critically with the norms and expectations of particular discourse communities, raising issues of social, economic and political concern, ultimately attempting to change reality.

2.5.1 Applying CDA to this study

CDA is being applied in many different areas where power and inequalities are found, with the intent of repairing and fighting against misuse of power. This often takes place where a victim can be found, but this does not have to be the case. For researchers, CDA offers a powerful arsenal of analytic tools that can be deployed in the close reading of editorials, op-ed columns, advertisements, and other texts, (Huckin, 2002) such as language policies. According to Johnson (2014), language policies have always entailed power relations, because when put simply it is just one group of people telling other groups of people what languages to use, because they have or want to have the power to do that. The fact that the discourse is unique does not negate the need to examine it more closely. Taylor (2004) argues that CDA

is particularly appropriate for critical policy analysis because it allows a detailed investigation of the relationship of language to other social processes, and of how language *works* within power relations. CDA provides a framework for a *systematic*

analysis – researchers can go beyond speculation and demonstrate how policy texts work. (p. 436)

For these reasons, a CDA approach will be used in the current study for data analysis, particularly, Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional model because it seems to be the most suitable.

The 3D model and framework proposed by Fairclough (1989, 1995) introduces three aspects for the critical analysis of any discourse or text. This model consists of three inter-related processes of analysis tied to three inter-related dimensions of discourse (see figure 1)

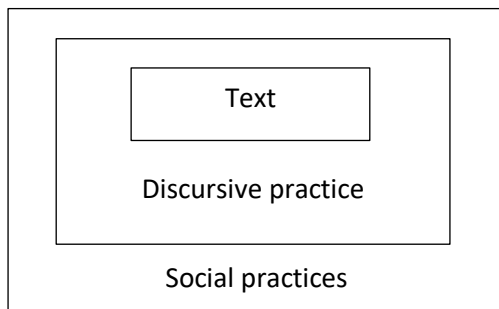


Figure 1. CDA model developed by Fairclough

The 3D model can be described as follows:

- 1 The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts).
- 2 The processes by means of which the object is produced and received (writing/ speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects. (Discursive practice)
- 3 The socio-cultural conditions which govern these processes. (Social practices)

Text is analyzable as socio-economic and political factors influence the discursive practices in the society. According to Fairclough, each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis:

- 1 text analysis (description),
- 2 processing analysis (interpretation),
- 3 social analysis (explanation).

In the analysis, linguistic properties of texts are described (text analysis), the relationship between the productive and interpretative processes of discursive practice and the texts is interpreted, and the relationship between discursive practice and social practice is explained (Fairclough, 1995). That is, the description phase consists of linguistically analyzing the text as meticulously as possible on the textual level. The interpretation phase consists of reading between the lines of the text to what function it is actually trying to accomplish, and what is not being said in the text but is assumed or taken for granted. The explanation phase consists of spelling out the beliefs and reasons that have shaped out the text. Fairclough (1989) described the objective of this approach as a contribution to the general rising of consciousness of exploitative social relations, through focusing upon language.

2.6 Chapter conclusion

Having presented a discussion of the relevant themes that surround the current investigation in the form of a literature review, the study will now move on to chapter 3, which is the methodology section. Chapter 3 will present an overview of the investigation's design and methodological processes regarding the collection and analysis of data.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the design of this investigation and its subject matter. It begins with the set of research questions that the present study seeks to address, followed by the method employed for data analysis, a description of the data and the population used and concluding with issues related to ethical procedures.

3.1 Research questions

The questions that this study proposes aim to define what ideological concepts and values are attached to the discourse of ‘English as a necessity’ in Mexico. The objective is to account for issues of power and ideologies embedded in the language policy documents existing in Mexico that consider English as the main foreign language to be taught in the country and how these ideologies impact the popular discourse about the importance of speaking English. The research questions already outlined in Chapter 1 are repeated for convenience:

1. What discourse strategies are employed by the authors of the national Mexican language policy that ideologically define ‘English as a necessity for success’ in Mexico?
2. What are the linguistic features of institutional discourses that ideologically define ‘English as a necessity for success’ within the Mexican national context?
3. How do the aforementioned discourses intertwine economic and social prosperity into the ideology?
4. How do participants affected by English as a Foreign Language policy (re)produce and/or resist these dominant discourses?

5. How do the participants' personal history and experience with English affect the discourses that they express about 'English as a necessity for success'?

3.2 Data collection and analytical method

This research uses a qualitative approach. Commonly, the techniques for collecting data in qualitative methods include interviews, observation, document analysis, and focus group discussion (Williams, 2007). In the present study, the researcher uses the techniques of document analysis, observation, and interview to analyze the discourse of English as a necessity. The document analysis method is used because the researcher gains the data source from the official websites of the language policymakers in Mexico. The three principal national language policy documents used in Mexico were collected from these websites using purposeful selection as the sampling technique. The researcher tries to observe and examine the data source based on its phenomena. The phenomena existing in this research are about the language used in language policy documents that persuade people into believing that English is necessary. By observing systematically, the researcher revealed the three-dimensional model of Fairclough's theory in this research, and the results are significant using this method.

As stated in Chapter 2, Fairclough's model to perform CDA proposes a three-stage method: description, interpretation and explanation. In the description phase, the analyst takes the text into small pieces and analyses the text's syntax, metaphors and rhetorical devices. In the interpretation phase, the analyst maps out how the text constructs and displays power relations. In the explanation phase, the analyst describes the broader social currents and ideologies that have affected the writer of the text. Fairclough (1992b) also describes the concept behind his method with another three-dimensional definition of

discourse. It is divided into text, discourse practices and social practices, where each is integrated into the former. Thus, discourse practices encompass texts, while social practices include both. Text is used for any recorded events of communication, while “discourse practices means the established ways of using texts in a society, and social practices include both use of text and other social relations” (Fairclough, 1992b, p. 200).

In order to assess the validity and reliability of this research, the principle of triangulation as understood by Cicourel (1974) is used. The use of triangulation implies that different analytical tools for data analysis are employed to answer the research questions. Even though the goal of using this multi-methodological framework to triangulate the data is to minimize the possibility of being overly biased, Wodak and Meyer (2009) claim that

rigorous “objectivity” cannot be reached by means of discourse analysis for each “technology” of research must itself be examined as potentially embedding the beliefs and ideologies of the analysts and therefore guiding the analysis towards the analysts’ preconceptions. (p. 31)

3.3 Data description

The data sources for the present study consist of the three main language policy documents in Mexico and semistructured interviews conducted with six current English language learners who live in this country and speak Spanish as their native language.

3.3.1 Language policy corpus for analysis

In summary, the corpus for analysis includes the following language policy documents, which are part of the PRONI:

I. Inglés es posible: Propuesta de una Agenda Nacional (Inglés para la Competitividad Social, 2015)

This document aims at raising awareness about the importance of developing a strategy to strengthen the learning of the English language in Mexico. It was created in 2015 by the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness along with the organizations taking part of the movement *Inglés para la competitividad y la movilidad social* (English for Competitiveness and Social Mobility). These organizations are the following: Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior, Asociación Mexicana de Maestros de Inglés, Gobierno de Australia en México, British Council, Cámara de Comercio Británica, Cambridge English Language Assessment, Cengage Learning, Comisión México-Estados Unidos para el Intercambio Educativo y Cultural, Confederación de Cámaras Industriales de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Confederación Patronal de la República Mexicana, Consejo Coordinador Empresarial, Consejo Empresarial Mexicano de Comercio Exterior, Inversión y Tecnología, Coordinación Estatal del Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica del Estado de México, Education First, Embajada de Estados Unidos en México, Embajada del Reino Unido en México, English Society, Fundación Televisa, Institute of International Education, Instituto de Fomento e Investigación Educativa, Instituto Mexicano para la Competitividad, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, International House México, Programa Interdisciplinario sobre Política y Prácticas Educativas, SYNELOG Mexico, The Anglo Mexican Foundation, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, and Worldfund.

II. Estrategia Nacional de Inglés (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2017)

This is the main English language policy implemented in Mexico in 2017. It delineates how English will be taught in Mexico, who will learn the language and how. It determines the resources that will be invested in spreading the language in Mexico. It also elaborates on how teachers and trainee teachers will be trained and by whom. Additionally, it discusses assessment and achievement based on international language performance parameters.

In order to carry out this strategy, it was necessary to train teachers in teacher-training schools and public universities to consolidate study programs with the aim of providing students with better thematic contents and trained teachers. Inclusion of indigenous students who learn English as a third language is intended. The strategy also offers an introduction to teaching English in telesecundaria y telebachillerato with multimedia materials and a teacher-training program in elementary education in order to enhance the teachers capacity to teach a foreign language.

III. Aprendizajes Clave para la educación integral: Lengua Extranjera. Inglés.

Educación básica. (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2017)

This is the curricular proposal for the teaching of English in the Educational Model, which has been implemented since the 2018-2019 school year. This proposal is aligned to the CEFR standards and takes the national standards developed by the SEP as a reference, which are equivalent to those of the European Council.

3.3.2 Semistructured interviews

The data collection instrument used in this study to triangulate the data from the language policy documents was a semistructured interview (Appendix A) administered to current English language learners. The interview questions were developed after the analysis of the

language policy documents was complete. Once the researcher had the five themes that emerged from the documents, she wrote the questions that would guide her conversation with each participant. The questions were carefully conceived in order to elicit descriptive responses as the researcher asked participants to tell her about their personal experiences and opinions about English as a necessity in Mexico, taking into consideration the five emerging themes from the LP documents (i.e., English as a necessity for better employment opportunities, international communication, business, social mobility and equality and inclusiveness). The researcher used the semistructured format to clarify participants' responses when needed by suggesting that they specify examples or describe experiences. Interview Question 1 and its follow-up questions explored whether they believed learning English was important nowadays from a professional, economic, social, and personal point of view. Interview Questions 2 and 3 examined why they were currently learning English and if they believed English would be useful in their lives. Interview Questions 4 through 6 asked if they had ever felt resentful, hindered, or discriminated against from a professional, economic, or social point of view because they were expected to speak English and they did not. Interview Question 7 inquired whether they were thinking of taking any English certification and the reason behind it. Interview Question 8 examined their most honest opinions and feelings about the necessity to learn English nowadays. The assessment of content validity includes using experts to evaluate and rate elements of the instrument used based on the instrument's relevance and representativeness to the content domain (Almanasreh, Moles, & Chen, 2019). To assess the validity of the interview questions, the researcher asked an expert (her supervisor) to confirm the ability of the interview questions to answer the research questions and fulfill the purpose of this study. The expert pointed out wording that suggested the researcher's assumptions or implied the desired response and

questioned sentences that needed clarification or elaboration. The researcher revised those questions and reviewed her study for other words that made assumptions or implied bias and sentences throughout the study needing explanation or further development. Although the researcher used open-ended interview questions, the expert recommended that she revise the form of the questions to elicit a broader range of responses from participants and gave her examples. The expert also recommended that she ask some questions in a general way and use follow-up questions to suggest the participant pinpoint specific examples and descriptions of experiences.

3.3.2.1 Participant selection

The population used in this study was composed of current English language learners who the researcher (in her role of English teacher) teaches privately. The sampling strategy used was a purposive maximum variation sampling technique (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016), also known as heterogeneous sampling, which is used to capture a wide range of perspectives relating to the thing you are interested in studying. Maximum variation sampling is a search for variation in perspectives, ranging from those conditions that are viewed as typical to those that are more extreme in nature. Conditions mean the units (i.e., people, cases/organizations, events, pieces of data) that interest the researcher. These units may exhibit a wide range of attributes, behaviors, experiences, incidents, qualities, and situations. The basic principle behind maximum variation sampling is to gain significant insights into a phenomenon by looking at it from all angles. This can often help the researcher identify common themes that are evident across the sample. Benoot et al. (2016) further argues that in a purposive sampling strategy, participant selection relies on the criteria and judgment of the researcher, which can be prone to researcher bias.

Consequently, it is pertinent to explain the process for selection of participants in this study. The current study was conceived before the pandemic caused by COVID-19 stroke in Mexico in March 2020. The original idea was to conduct the interviews across three different language institutes located in Puebla. However, when the pandemic started, this idea was no longer possible. Thus, the researcher had to change the focus of the population explored to make the study feasible. After thorough consideration, she decided that, given the wide range of attributes, behaviors, experiences, and backgrounds that the English students she taught privately had, she could gain significant insights into the phenomenon in question by looking at it from different angles. Since the determination of sample size is contextual and partially dependent upon the relevancy of the scientific paradigm under which investigation is taking place (Boddy, 2016), the researcher invited her seven private students to participate in this study. Six out of the seven students agreed to participate in the research. Nonetheless, one of them did not agree because of a lack of time to take the interview.

3.3.2.2 Procedure for interview data collection

When the researcher contacted each participant, she briefly explained the research process. She worked with each participant to identify a mutually convenient time to talk. She sent a volunteer confirmation email with the consent form attached that describes the interview details. On the interview day before starting, the researcher asked the participant for consent to record the interview. During the interview, she used Zoom technology and a voice recorder to record the interview. The participant responded to interview questions (Appendix B), while the researcher wrote field notes. The researcher confirmed data with the interviewee by asking clarifying questions, as needed, during the interview. At the end

of each interview, the researcher thanked the participant for their assistance. After the researcher transcribed all six interviews, she sent participants a “thank you” email, including a copy of their interview transcript. The researcher asked participants to review their interview transcripts and alert her to any errors or corrections.

3.3.2.3 Ethical procedures

The researcher protected the participant’s rights using protocols that fostered the enforcement of ethical principles. She first sought the approval of the participants and provided participants with the consent form. Before beginning the interview, she asked each participant to respond to having read the consent form verbally with the words, “I consent”. Throughout the recruitment, data collection, and reporting process, the researcher kept participants’ identities confidential. She assigned each participant a pseudonym that the participants chose themselves. The researcher removed participant names from all print data and removed the email addresses of participants from her computer system now that the study is complete.

3.3.2.4 Participants’ profiles

To better understand why the participants of this study have certain ideologies regarding the need for English in postmodern Mexico, a look at their backgrounds would be pertinent in this section.

- **Participant 1 (Ronnie)**

Ronnie is a female in her 60’s who lives in the city of Puebla in Central Mexico. She comes from a middle-class family and has always attended private/public schools. When she finished high school, she decided to pursue her studies to become a teacher in a teacher-

training university. After finishing her undergraduate studies, she started her career as a teacher. A few years later, she pursued a master's program in education, which she completed successfully in 2 years. Until then, her undergraduate and postgraduate education had never required her to learn English. Consequently, since she was not interested in this language or required to do so, she never learned it. However, several years later, when she was already in her late 50's and decided to pursue a Ph.D. program, she learned that, by the end program, she needed to present an English certification accrediting a B1 level of proficiency in order to graduate. She entered the program, and throughout the four years it lasted, she always stood out as a splendid student, but despite knowing she would need it by the end of the program, learning English was never a priority for her during those years. She explains that this lack of interest in learning English during the program resulted from never having any subjects taught in English or English as a subject throughout those four years. Nonetheless, only six months before her graduation date, she realized she needed to start learning English, or her chances of obtaining her Ph.D. diploma would considerably decrease, as having an English certification was a requirement. Thus, she searched for a private teacher and started learning English. Encountering English for the first time in her 60's was a stressful experience for her. Her emotions were mixed. On the one hand, she needed English to graduate, or all the years of enormous effort during her Ph.D. program would be worthless. On the other hand, she wished she did not have to be doing that. She felt frustrated with herself because she waited until the last moment to start learning a language, and because she was a very slow language learner and thought she would never make it on time. y a stroke of good fortune, the pandemic halted the administration of language certifications. Hence, she was able to "certify" her B1 level with

a letter from her teacher. It is worth noting that it was unlikely that she would have certified her English or earned the PhD were it not for these extraordinary conditions.

- **Participant 2 (Jean-Pierre)**

Jean-Pierre is a male in his early 30's who lives in Mexico City, the capital of Mexico. He comes from a lower socioeconomic background and has always attended public schools. When he was in middle school, he became interested in the French language. He took a semester of French and fell in love with it. Therefore, he continued taking French during six years throughout middle and high school, but English never called his attention. After finishing high school, he pursued undergraduate studies as a petroleum engineer. As soon as he started his major, he realized that English was an essential part of the program since a large amount of the bibliography was written in this language. Throughout his major, he struggled with English. He was reluctant to learn it because he did not like it. However, he took several courses in different institutes such as Harmon Hall and The Anglo and attained an A2 level. After graduation, he entered the job market and realized that his level of proficiency was not enough to obtain a well-paid job in his field. Consequently, he looked for a private teacher to help him achieve a B2 level and ultimately become eligible for better job positions.

- **Participant 3 (Jaycee)**

She is a female in her late 20's who lives in Tamaulipas, a northern state in Mexico bordering the United States. She comes from a lower socioeconomic background and has always attended public schools. Her first encounter with English took place when she was in the second grade of elementary school. Since that moment, English caught her attention,

and she was always very interested in learning the language. However, throughout her primary and secondary education, the English programs did not have the necessary quality to learn the language properly. When she finished high school, she pursued studies as an industrial engineer. During her undergraduate program, she continued taking English, but the classes were not quality either. When she was a sophomore, she was required to undergo her training period in a company where some of her superiors were U.S. citizens who did not speak Spanish. One day, one of these superiors tried to converse with her about a work-related issue, and she could not communicate with him because her English was not sufficiently advanced to even understand what he was asking her to do. The embarrassment she felt after this incident made this moment a turning point in her life. She realized that she needed to learn English if she did not want to feel ashamed and frustrated anymore when a similar situation occurred. Subsequently, she continued her English classes in private institutes and with private teachers alongside. A few years later, she won a scholarship to study English in California, the United States. She describes the time spent in California as her most fruitful period learning English as not only was she learning it at school, but she was also exposed to the language outside the classroom. After her return to Mexico, she applied for a position as a Launch Materials Analyst in an important company in Tamaulipas, where 80% of the time, English was used to negotiate with stakeholders from the U.S. Thus, the English skills that she acquired during her years of private English classes and the time she spent in the U.S. were essential in her being a strong candidate for the position and ultimately being hired. She is currently working in this company, and although she can communicate perfectly with the company's clients, stakeholders, and associates, she feels that her English is far from perfect. Consequently, she continues taking classes with a private teacher.

- **Participant 4 (Carrie)**

She is a female in her late 30's who lives in Mexico City. She comes from a middle-income family and has only attended private schools. Since elementary school, she always attended bilingual schools where she learned Spanish and English simultaneously. By the time she finished high school, her English was sufficiently advanced to apply for a major in Food Service and Restaurant Administration at one of the top-ranked private universities in Mexico. Throughout her undergraduate studies, she continued learning English and became slightly more proficient. At the end of her program, she took a TOEFL exam to certify her English knowledge and obtained a satisfactory score to graduate yet was not satisfied with her English proficiency. After graduation, she decided not to pursue a career as a food service and restaurant manager but as a sales manager at an armored car manufacturer. During the years that she has worked for this company, her English skills have been adequate to fulfill her duties, such as closing deals with clients who do not speak Spanish and going to armored cars expos given in the English language. However, Carrie continues to feel self-conscious about her speaking skills. For her, English is something that she needs to master to feel like she belongs in her social circle, where everybody speaks English perfectly. Carrie expresses the belief that in Mexico, at least in her social circle, an English *faux pas* is cause for loss of face.

- **Participant 5 (Ryan)**

He is a male in his late 30's who lives in Veracruz, a state in Central Mexico. He comes from a low-income family and has always attended public schools. He has been studying English all his life. He started learning the language when he was in elementary school and continued through middle and high school. When he finished his secondary education, he

entered a Business Administration program. During his undergraduate studies, he continued to learn English. Since the program did not offer quality English classes, he decided to study the language in private institutes. Throughout these years, he bounced from one English language institute to another, never being able to learn English beyond an A2 level. After years of blaming his teachers, he thought that probably the problem was him not being good enough at learning languages, so he quit. After graduating from his BBA program, he opened his own business based on the production and distribution of mineral salt for livestock and common salt for cheese making. A few years later, he had the opportunity to become an international commercial pilot, which was his lifelong dream. However, during his program, he realized that, if he wanted to fly internationally, he needed to learn English. Once again, he searched for private institutes and resumed his English learning. After two years in training, he graduated from his piloting program successfully. Nevertheless, he could still not speak English. To date, Ryan is still struggling to learn English and has not been able to begin his career as an international commercial pilot.

- **Participant 6 (Dana)**

She is a female in her early 20's who lives in Estado de México, a state in Central Mexico. Dana comes from a low-income family and has always attended public schools. She first began learning English when she was in elementary school, but she never liked it. During middle and high school, she would always skip English classes. She always managed to pass the exams, but her English knowledge was almost nonexistent. When she finished high school, she pursued studies in the field of Business and International Commerce. Throughout her undergraduate program, she had to take English courses. Nevertheless, she

was still reluctant to learn the language. After she graduated (very recently) and started looking for a job, she realized that English was required in most positions she wanted to apply for. Consequently, after feeling frustrated about all the years she wasted not learning English, she looked for a private institute and began to learn the language. Dana has been studying English for two months and has still not been able to enter the job market.

3.4 Chapter conclusion

In Chapter 3, the research design and methodology were outlined. This included data collection and analytical method, data description, instrumentation, participant selection and their profiles, procedures for data collection, and issues related to ethical procedures. The work will now continue to chapter 4, where the findings of the data analysis will be presented.

Chapter 4. Results

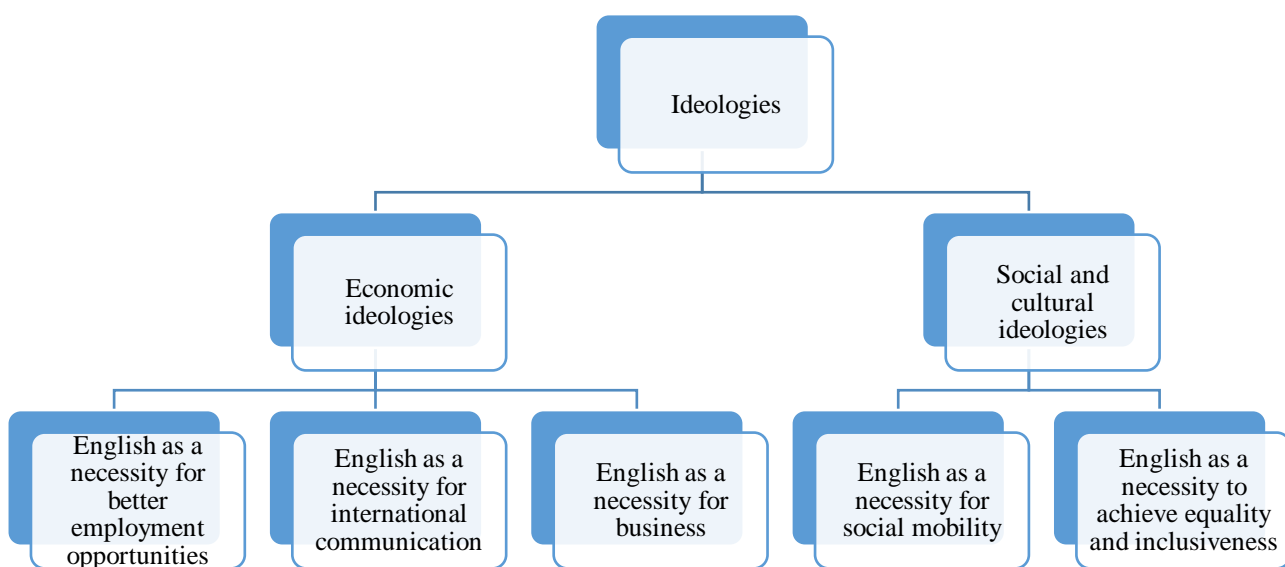
The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine the characteristics of institutional discourses that ideologically define ‘English as a Necessity’ in the postmodern world. This chapter presents information on the data analysis related to the language policy documents under examination and participants’ interviews and presents the findings from the study related to the research questions.

4.1 Data analysis

Before analyzing the language policy documents, it was necessary to read the three documents in order to get an overall view of each one. It is important to highlight that even though every single document that composes the data was thoroughly read, i.e., its macrolevel, the analysis is limited to the selected sections, i.e., micro-level. Regarding the micro-level of analysis, the passages chosen were those that dealt with anything that might refer to ‘English as a necessity’, its justification and the ideologies behind it. The analysis is focused on the reasons given by the language policymakers regarding the need for English in the Mexican context. Conversely, the discourses that described teaching methodologies and materials, language contents and other curricular aspects were not included in the analysis. These texts may be regarded as the pedagogical discourses that belong to the educational field and this research does not intend to elaborate on the teaching and learning processes, or outcomes to which these documents may refer. Consequently, all the passages containing direct or noticeably indirect references to ‘English as a necessity’ were isolated and divided into analytical units of discourse. All the passages were organized under headings denoting from which text they had been extracted. This allowed for the analysis to be focused, while also maintaining a clear focus on the subject matter. Subsequently, the

passages were categorized into themes or underlying discourses. The process of analyzing the data uncovered five themes. A summary of the ideologies, which have emerged from data analysis are provided in the Diagram 4.1 below:

Diagram 4.1 Ideologies emerging from data



After the themes/ideologies had been uncovered, Fairclough's (1989, 1995) method was used to analyze the data. Hence, the first step was the text analysis. Analysis of texts includes linguistic analysis, and semiotic analysis of, for instance, visual images (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). However, since the current analysis is focused on the language policy documents text only, it involved linguistic analysis in terms of vocabulary, grammar, semantics and pragmatics (Fairclough, 1995). Before turning to the linguistics analysis as such, it is important to make explicit the means used to produce it. Essentially, the researcher used a checklist based on Halliday's *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*

(1985). This is also the basis for Fairclough's key questions for text analysis (1989). In simple terms, one has systematically to examine:

1. Lexicalization
2. Patterns of transitivity
3. The use of active and passive voice
4. The use of nominalization
5. The choices of mood
6. The choices of modality or polarity
7. The thematic structure of the text
8. The information focus
9. The cohesion devices

These are Halliday's grammatical resources for ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings (see Halliday, 1978). Before performing the analysis, it was difficult to know what aspect of the grammar was going to be the most fruitful when analyzing these texts, thus, it was essential to examine all the aspects. The researcher looked for patterns that emerged across these linguistic functions. Because it is not possible to include a detailed analysis of every aspect of the grammar analyzed, the researcher decided to choose the grammatical aspects that yielded the most fruitful data on this text, i.e., modality, the use of active and passive voice and nominalization.

The second step was analyzing the discourse practice present in the texts. Fairclough (1995) highlights that discourse practice in the framework mediates between text and the sociocultural practice. According to Fairclough (1992b), "any discursive 'event' (i.e., any instance of discourse) is seen as being simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of

discursive practice, and an instance of social practice” (p. 3-4). For the operationalization of these theoretical considerations, Fairclough (1995) developed an analytical framework, drawing on the concepts of interdiscursivity, intertextual chains, and manifest intertextuality. As proposed by Fairclough, interdiscursivity is an analysis of how genres, tenor, mode, and dimension of text in discourse are articulated together. Interdiscursive analysis is a central and distinctive feature of this version of CDA. It allows to incorporate elements of context into the analysis of texts, to show the relationship between concrete occasional events and more durable social practices, to show innovation and change in texts, and it has a mediating role in allowing one to connect detailed linguistic and semiotic features of texts with processes of social change on a broader scale. ‘Intertextual chains’ involves producing media texts or the transformation which texts undergo in production and consumption. ‘Manifest intertextuality’ analysis focuses on the borderline between text and discourse practices in the framework. Compared to linguistic analysis, which is descriptive, manifest intertextuality analysis is more interpretive in nature. This is due to the many layers of meanings being added to or taken away from the text. In order to interpret the discourse process of a particular text, one needs to unpack the different layers or text within the text itself (Fairclough, 1995).

The third step involved the analysis of the social practice of the language policy documents. Fairclough (1995) explains that this analysis consists of three parts: economic, political (concerning issues of power and ideology), and cultural (concerning questions of value and identity). Similarly, van Dijk (2001) justifies that social, political, and cultural organization of dominance also implies a hierarchy of power, that is, some members of

dominant groups and organizations have a special role in planning, decision-making and control over the relations and processes of the enactment of power.

4.2 Findings

Before moving to the findings, it is important to clarify a few aspects. In all phases of analysis, the researcher tried to be totally explicit on the reasons for the selection of texts for analysis to keep it as transparent as possible. Themes were analyzed in order from largest to smallest, counting both total amount of text and in how many policy documents the theme was mentioned. The results of the text analysis are presented thematically (Table 4.1). The subtitles indicate discursive themes observed in each language policy document when grouping concepts as mentioned above, and the text excerpts are used as examples of them. Quotations were copied from the original texts. The researcher did not change any spelling or grammar.

Table 4.1: Frequency of discourse themes

Themes	Language policy documents where the themes are found	Total number of mentions
English as a necessity for better employment opportunities	Inglés es posible, Estrategia Nacional	19 mentions
English as a necessity for international communication	Inglés es posible, Estrategia Nacional, Aprendizajes Clave	16 mentions
English as a necessity for business	Inglés es posible, Estrategia Nacional, Aprendizajes Clave	8 mentions
English as a necessity for social mobility	Inglés es posible, Estrategia Nacional	7 mentions
English as a necessity to achieve equality and inclusiveness	Inglés es posible, Estrategia Nacional, Aprendizajes Clave	3 mentions

4.2.1 English as a necessity for better employment opportunities

An in-depth examination of the LP documents revealed that the relationship between English and its alleged necessity in the job market was the most prevalent theme. The relationship between English and better employment opportunities for those who speak it is mentioned in the three language policy documents a total of 15 times. This prevalence is a strong indicator that this issue holds a central position among the reasons why English should be studied in Mexico. Simultaneously, this issue is one of the prevalent worldwide discourses of English as a necessity (as discussed in Chapter 1), demonstrating that the discourse is also reproduced in this country.

Most of the text found referring to this advantage that English brings along with it is introduced by using modality. According to several linguists (Lyons, 1977, 1983, 1994; Hermerén, 1978; Coates, 1983; Perkins, 1983; Palmer, 1986, 1990), the domains of modality are constituted by semantic areas such as possibility, necessity and prediction (knowledge or epistemic “modality”), on the one hand, and permission, obligation and volition (“deontic” or “root” modality), on the other. From a Hallidayan point of view (1970), “modality....is the speaker’s assessment of probability and predictability. It is external to the content, being part of the attitude taken up by the speaker” (p. 349). Nonetheless, this “reductionist” view of modality will not be used in this analysis, since it “obscures the fact that deontic modality can nevertheless be regarded as a form of participation of the speaker in the speech event” (González García, 2000, p. 121). Consequently, the following examples can better illustrate the use of modality from its more comprehensive viewpoint to refer to English as a necessity for better job opportunities.

Asimismo, debe considerarse que, en el contexto de globalización económica en que nos encontramos inmersos, la demanda de personas calificadas ha aumentado. Especialmente se buscan profesionistas que tengan dominio del idioma inglés puesto que es necesario para comunicarse con productores, proveedores y consumidores no sólo de Estados Unidos y Canadá, sino de otras partes del mundo (Inglés es posible, p. 10)

[Likewise, it must be considered that, in the context of economic globalization in which we are immersed, the demand for qualified people has increased.

Professionals who have command of the English language are especially sought since it is necessary to communicate with producers, suppliers and consumers not only from the United States and Canada, but from other parts of the world.]

In this excerpt, we find the use of modality in both sentences. Here, the locutionary agent (the writers) involve themselves in the utterance by using an epistemic modality that involves their knowledge or beliefs. In this case, the writers *consider* that knowledge of English in a globalized context is *necessary* to communicate with producers, providers and consumers not only from English-speaking countries but from all over the world. However, from a semantic point of view, this excerpt can be classified as an unevidenced assertion since the writers do not provide any evidence as to why they make such a claim. This might be why the writers use modality as a means to hedge. According to Vlad (2019), hedging is appropriate for making significant claims, adding a degree of vagueness, imprecision or tentativeness. The type of hedging used in this excerpt is “evidence of epistemological honesty, of one being unable to state things with absolute certainty” (p.147).

Additionally, the “dominio del idioma inglés” [mastery of the English language] in the second sentence is placed in the position of the object to the subject “profesionistas” [professionals] within the dependent clause, which at the same time is the object of the main clause “se buscan” [are sought after]. The main clause is an agentless passive (‘agency’ is seen as the role of the social actor performing the action, i.e., the person or group looking for English as a qualification in professionals). The writers introduce the sentence with the word “especialmente” [especially], presenting it to the readers as a special qualification needed to find a good job opportunity, but does not specify *who* searches for professionals with mastery of the English language. Thus, the writers express information via a grammatical structure that does not provide direct reference to the actors and affected participants of an action. According to O’Halloran (2005), in these cases, the writer ‘mystifies’ (omits) the role of social actors in the depictions of events. He further argues that the omission of agency in texts has potential ideological effects on readers by reducing their comprehension of the social actors involved in an action. Their capacity for omitting or backgrounding agency for actions is seen as central to their perceived power to encode ideological meanings subtly.

Other examples of the use of modality are the following:

los individuos pueden incrementar sus posibilidades de ascenso laboral
(Estrategia Nacional, p. 15)

[individuals may increase their chances of career advancement]

Asimismo, se ha observado que a mayor nivel educativo disminuye la probabilidad de emplearse en el sector informal de la economía por lo que es posible inferir que las personas que tienen algún nivel de dominio del inglés se

benefician de mejores salarios porque sus empleos se encuentran en el sector formal y en puestos que demandan mayor capital humano. (Inglés es posible, p. 11)

[Likewise, it has been observed that the higher the educational level of a person, the lesser the likelihood of being employed in the informal sector of the economy, so it is possible to infer that people who have some level of English proficiency benefit from better salaries because their jobs are in the formal sector and in positions that demand greater human capital.]

In both examples, the writers also use modality to hedge a claim for which they do not present any evidence. The first example is a very straightforward use of modality: “pueden incrementar sus probabilidades” [may increase their probabilities]. However, the second example is relatively more complex. “Es posible inferir” [it is possible to infer] implicates that the inverse correlation the writers try to present as ‘the higher the educational level of a person, the lesser the likelihood of being employed in the informal sector of the economy’ being equal to ‘having some sort of English knowledge means earning better salaries because the jobs that require English are found in the formal sector’ is utterly unsupported. Apart from not presenting any evidence, this assertion also raises two questions. First, is a person who has some knowledge of the English language considered having a higher educational level, and therefore, sufficient to be employed in the formal sector of the economy and earning a higher salary? Second, does that assertion mean that a person who does not know English should be considered having a low educational level, and therefore, not being able to get a job in the formal sector of the economy? The conclusion the researcher draws from this excerpt is that how the information is presented

leads the reader to mistakenly believe that the only qualification needed to obtain a well-paid position in the job market is the knowledge of English while concealing the fact that other qualifications are necessary to find higher salary positions in the formal sector. Although the use of modality as a means of hedging reigns in unevidenced assertions related to ‘English as a necessity for better employment opportunities’, there are some arguments that hedge without using modality. Instead, they present “evidence” for their assertions in an authoritative voice. An instance is as follows:

De acuerdo con datos de British Council (2014a), las personas que han estudiado el idioma tienen claro que existen beneficios derivados de ello. La mejora de oportunidades laborales es la segunda razón más mencionada por la que se decide estudiar inglés en México. (Inglés es posible, p. 11)

[According to data from the British Council, people who have studied the language are very aware of the benefits derived from it. Better job opportunities is the second reason most mentioned to study English in Mexico]

This excerpt describes part of a study conducted by the British Council in Mexico in 2014. As explained in the language policy document cited above, the study included a survey to Mexicans in which one of the questions was to select the motivations leading them to study English. From the first sentence, we can observe how the writers start with the prepositional phrase “de acuerdo con” [according to], which is used when writers want to refer to official evidence such as statistics or reports or an opinion that is not theirs. Consequently, after the writers have used this phrase, they feel confident that anything they say immediately after that will be considered not their opinion but somebody else’s in agreement with theirs. Thus, the writers feel free to say without hedging that “people who

have studied the language are very aware of the benefits it brings along with it”. However, if we read the subsequent sentence, we perceive that the writers refer to “better job opportunities as the second reason most mentioned to study English in Mexico”. This sentence may leave us wondering why they omit the first reason. Thus, if we examine closely the chart presented in the British Council report on the reasons to study English in Mexico (see Chart 1), we realize that the reason with the highest percentage is “era obligatorio en la secundaria” [it was mandatory in middle school].

Chart 4.1 Motivations to study English in Mexico, 2014

Gráfica 5. Motivaciones para estudiar inglés en México, 2014. Porcentaje.



Fuente: British Council (2014a)

Taken from *Inglés es posible*, p. 12

What the writers did here is known as ‘cherry picking’. Also known as ‘suppressing evidence’, or ‘the fallacy of incomplete evidence’, ‘cherry picking’ is the act of pointing to individual cases or data that seem to confirm a particular position while ignoring a significant portion of related and similar cases or data that may contradict that position (Klass, 2008). Thus, in this example, we appreciate how the writers intentionally ignore

that most of the participants in the study, far from choosing to study English, were required to do so since it would prove particularly inconvenient to support their argument.

4.2.1.1 Interview data: English as a necessity for better employment opportunities

While the document analysis is revealing regarding the primary discourse strategies employed by text producers to promote the ideological position ‘English as a necessity for better employment opportunities’, the interview data from participants paints a complex picture of how such discourse is adopted, interpreted, and (re)produced by consumers. Five out of six of the interviewees axiomatically reproduced the discourse which claims that English is essential in increasing professional opportunities (see section 4.2.4 for definition of an axiom). Some examples are provided below:

Dana: estadísticamente está demostrado que [hablar inglés] aumenta en un 40% la posibilidad de conseguir un mejor empleo

[it is statistically proven that speaking English increases your chances of getting a better job by 40%]

Jean-Pierre: el inglés es de los idiomas más hablados en todo el mundo sin importar en qué país te encuentres, aparte de abrirte temas laborales por la misma cuestión de la globalización

[English is one of the most widely spoken languages around the world, no matter where you are, and it provides you with job opportunities due to globalization]

Ryan: es la lengua que más se habla en el mundo y nos abre fronteras para cuando tú estás buscando algún trabajo

[it is the most spoken language around the world, and it opens doors when you are looking for a job]

Jaycee: *“Personalmente considero que hay una gran brecha entre las personas que no hablan inglés y las personas que sí hablan. yo diría que es demasiada esa brecha... Una brecha de oportunidades... me refiero básicamente profesionales”*

[Personally, I consider there is a big gap between the people who do not speak English and the people who do. I would say the gap is huge...an opportunity gap...basically professional]

Carrie: *Sí, sin duda, o sea, entre mejor hables inglés, más oportunidades tienes de crecer en cualquier trabajo.*

[Yes, undoubtedly, I mean, the better you speak English, the more opportunities you have to grow in any job]

Interestingly, while hedging is a common strategy used by authors within the language policy documents, hedging is completely absent in four out of the five examples of discourse reproduction above. As we pointed out previously in this section, hedging allows top-down, powerful discourse producers to evade responsibility for unevidenced assertions, adding a degree of vagueness, imprecision, or tentativeness to the claims (Vlad, 2019). However, as the discourse trickles down and is reproduced by its consumers, the hedging disappears and is replaced by axiomatic assertions.

On the other hand, one participant explicitly rejects the discourse. Ronnie acknowledges awareness of “the discourse of English for better employment opportunities” yet simultaneously resists it by saying:

Ronnie: dependiendo a qué se dedique el profesional... y si sus acciones están en el ámbito internacional, claro que [el inglés] es indispensable, pero si las acciones están en el ámbito nacional, se trabaja con sujetos del habla del idioma español, y se interviene en estas comunidades educativas pues hay una gran diferencia. Es decir, habría diferentes niveles de necesidad de la implicación de aprender el inglés.

[Depending on what one does...if one works within an international context, English becomes indispensable, but if you work with Spanish speakers within the national setting, and your contributions take place within these communities, then it's a different story. In short, there are different degrees to which people need to learn English.]

This example of resistance is in stark contrast with the other five participants who embrace and reproduce it largely unhedgedly. If we compare the utterances of Ronnie and Carrie, the phrase “in any job” is in direct contrast with the phrase “depending on what one does”. This difference in perspectives highlights the complexity of how ideological positions within society might be interpreted by diverse consumers on a cline ranging from simple adoption-reproduction to appropriation-resistance (Fairclough, 1989). An examination of the participants’ profiles may shed light on the differences in interpretation of distinct ideological positions throughout all the sections of analysis within this chapter.

In the example above, it is worth noting that Ronnie is considerably older than all the other participants. She remembers a time when professional success was not supposedly tied to English proficiency. Furthermore, her professional context in Special Education within the public sector does not require the use of English. Finally, her successful completion of a doctorate degree was almost impeded by the need to possess a B1 English certification. These collective elements of her profile greatly facilitate her ability to adopt a resistance stance towards the dominant discourse of English. In fact, Ronnie explicitly rejects the notion that improving her English proficiency would result in increasing her job opportunities or economic situation when she says:

Ronnie: no lo creo, porque yo soy una maestra que trabaja en escuela mexicana, no se requiere que sepa el inglés.

[I don't think so, because I am a teacher who works in a Mexican school, it is not required that I speak English.]

Such resistance to this particular discourse, 'English is necessary for better employment opportunities', would be quite difficult for the other five participants to adopt, which becomes clearer as we examine their personal/professional profiles. Ryan's career as a pilot makes English particularly important to his professional trajectory. He expresses his frustrations somewhat emotionally that his inability to certify his English has become a true obstacle to his professional advancement when saying:

Ryan: mi sueño siempre había sido ser piloto comercial y si yo no domino el inglés yo no voy a poder desempeñar mi profesión como un piloto comercial

[my dream had always been to be a commercial pilot and if I do not master English, I will not be able to carry out my profession as a commercial pilot]

Similarly, Jean-Pierre reports that in the field of engineering, his opportunities to apply for higher paying positions within his company are dependent upon adequate English proficiency and/or certifications. He emphasizes the fact that his economic advancement has been hindered due to a lack of English:

Jean-Pierre: Bueno, en la cuestión laboral tan solo en los sueldos que se manejan ya con un inglés conversacional o certificado son alrededor de 40 000, 50 000 pesos que, a final de cuentas, pues ya es una mejor calidad de vida económicamente a la que tengo actualmente, y con ese tipo de ingresos pues puedes cumplir tus necesidades tanto básicas como darte ciertos lujos.

[Well, regarding the job market, the salaries offered to people who have a conversational or certified English are around 40,000, 50,000 pesos which provides you with a better quality of life than the one I currently have, and with that income you can meet your basic needs as well as afford other things.]

Finally, Carrie, whose private education exposed her to English from an early age, provides us with a very different perspective. Her interest in taking English classes is not tied to professional needs because her English is sufficiently functional to meet her occupational goals. Carrie would like English to provide her with increased social stature more than professional competitiveness (see section 4.2.5 for further discussion).

Carrie: No estoy en señas. Si tengo que prepararme para una presentación, pues me la aprendo, de memoria, ya sé qué decir. Si tengo que irme de viaje, pues sé pedir en un restaurante perfecto, en un avión no es complicado. Si estoy en una mesa sé dónde entrar y qué decir. O sea, sí la puedo librar. Pero está más padre fluir muy bien para que la seguridad esté mejor.

[I don't need to mime. If I have to prepare for a presentation, well I learn it by heart, I already know what to say. If I have to go on a trip, I know how to order perfectly in a restaurant, on a plane it's not complicated. If someone is waiting for me at a table, I know where to go and what to say. I mean, yes, I can get by. But it is nicer to speak more fluently so that I feel more confident.]

As previously stated, the interview data paints a picture of complexity regarding the way the discourse of English as a necessity for better employment opportunities is (re)produced, interpreted, and consumed. We see that, in fact, the mainstream discourse produced in the “outer layer” in the form of national language policy can be resisted (or not) by particular actors in the “inner layer” under certain conditions. Furthermore, we see that the discourse is not necessarily ‘entirely true’ nor ‘entirely false’ for all individuals within the Mexican context. In fact, two participants seem to have experienced the ‘benefits of learning English’ regarding employment while two other participants have ‘suffered the consequences’ of having not learned, while another participant perceives English as irrelevant to her professional advancement. There does not seem to be an objective truth regarding the ‘benefits that English brings to professional/economic opportunity’. All these participants are framing the issue differently, which could be seen as competing ideologies. Two of the ideological positionings are different sides of the same coin, ‘English as a

professional gateway' (Carrie) versus 'English as a professional obstacle' (Jean-Pierre & Ryan), while Ronnie creates a novel discourse that might be described as 'English as irrelevant'.

Fairclough's (1989) notion of how dominant classes exercise power through "coercion" (forcing others to bend to your will) and/or "consent" (convincing others that your will is in their own best interest) becomes relevant to our discussion here. It is important to note that "consent" is largely an unconscious process. Fairclough (1989) is worth citing at length

Institutional practices which people draw upon without thinking often embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimize existing power relations. Practices can often be shown to originate in the dominant class or the dominant bloc, and to have become naturalized. (p. 33)

In large part, when participants were asked in general terms about the importance of English in today's world, they appeared to reproduce the canonical, 'common-sense' discourses in axiomatic terms. However, several participants' seemingly consensual agreement regarding their need to learn English eventually transformed into an acknowledgment that "coercion" was at least part of the reason that they were actually pursuing the goal of learning this language. It is clear that whether or not participants consider English to be an obstacle or a benefit in their lives, they are familiar with and able to reproduce the "outer-layer" discourses surrounding the 'benefits for all of learning English'. It is unclear as to whether the participants who are reaping actual benefits from being proficient in the language are in an unaware state of manipulated "consent" or

whether they simply recognize the “blessings” that speaking English has brought to their lives. This complex competition of ideological postures, depending on the participants’ backgrounds, is a pattern that continues through the subsequent analyses.

4.2.2 English as a necessity for international communication

The second most mentioned theme in the language policy documents analyzed was the need of English for international communication. Some of the arguments of this theme are that since English is regarded as the worldwide lingua franca, it is necessary for intercultural and academic communication and for access to information and technology.

Below we find some examples:

El dominio de una lengua ampliamente utilizada en un contexto globalizado empodera a las personas disminuyendo barreras de conexión con el mundo y acceso a la información. (Inglés es posible, p. 12)

[Mastering a widely used language in a globalized context empowers people by reducing barriers to connection with the world and access to information]

El aprendizaje de otros idiomas no únicamente nos permite conectarnos con la información que es útil para innovar, comprender nuevas tecnologías e invertir en capital humano especializado, también propicia el aprendizaje de nuevas culturas. (Inglés es posible, p. 13)

[Learning other languages not only allows us to connect with information that is useful to innovate, understand new technologies and invest in specialized human capital, it also encourages the learning of new cultures.]

In both excerpts above, the authors employ the use of nominalized phrases as subjects “el dominio de una lengua ampliamente utilizada” [mastering a widely used language] and “el aprendizaje de otros idiomas” [learning other languages] followed by explicit references to its importance to attain power [“empodera a las personas”], access information useful to innovate [“conectarnos con la información que es útil para innovar”], understand new technologies [“comprender nuevas tecnologías”] and learn about new cultures [“el aprendizaje de nuevas culturas”]. The use of nominalization, as it occurs with agentless passives, is another type of “exclusion” (Van Leeuwen, 1996). This process involves “sentences, or parts of sentences, descriptions of actions and the participants involved in them, turned into nouns, or nominals” (Kress & Hodge, 1979, p. 20). In these cases, ‘dominio’ (a noun) in the first excerpt comes from ‘dominar’ (verb) and ‘aprendizaje’ (a noun) in excerpt 2 comes from ‘aprender’. In both excerpts above, information is compressed into a noun like “dominio” and ‘aprendizaje’ (someone masters or learns English) and this deletion of participants (the ones who master or learn English), diverts readers’ attention away from who these participants should be. The absence of social actors in nominalization is seen to hide them from view, such that, although we know that there was an actor, the specific identities of both have been lost. “We can guess about their identity, but we can never be certain” (Kress & Hodge 1979, p. 21). This latter observation is the key to the ideological significance of nominalization. Since the writer has expressed information through a grammatical structure that does not provide direct reference to the actors, the absence of these elements is considered to be a deletion, a transformation not only of a proposed underlying structure, but of a sentence which should have been there. Kress and Hodge (1979) argue that “Showing less means someone else is seeing less. And seeing less means thinking less.” (p. 22). This argument presupposes that the lack of

explicit inclusion of participants affects reader comprehension. They further add that the actor deletion argument is essentially based on the fact that the agents which are deleted via nominalization require the generation of inferences by readers. These inferences may vary, and even in cases when the actor is easily recoverable by inference, the existence of the (human) actor is suppressed:

The effect of the deletion is to take these people entirely for granted... This is not a trivial omission... The 'economy' of not mentioning these agents has the further effect of suppressing their existence. It takes a stand on the issue being described. (Kress & Hodge, 1979, p. 25-26)

Even though social actors may be named elsewhere in a text, and thus recoverable by inference, these instances of backgrounding are still seen as significant for their role in "reducing the number of times specific social actors are explicitly referred to." (van Leeuwen 1996, p. 41)

In the first excerpt, the authors use the verb "empodera" [empowers], which according to the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española (DRAE) means "Hacer poderoso o fuerte a un individuo o grupo social desfavorecido" (Real Academia Española, 2021). Hence, if we analyze the meaning of the word "empoderar" in this context, we realize that the authors are attempting to make the readers believe that learning a foreign language will confer power to those who are at a disadvantage in society. In the second excerpt, the authors use the verb "permitir" [allow]. Billig (2008) suggests that 'allowing' and 'permitting' are usually activities ascribed to human agents, and a grammatical structure related to either of them is said to permit actions to occur or not occur. In this

case, the verb “permitir” is ascribed to an inanimate agent (other languages). Thus, learning other languages will allow access to information, technologies, and new cultures. The implication is that without foreign language learning, such access is impossible or highly unlikely. This is at best a tenuous claim. At first sight, we could think that the message that the authors are trying to convey is that learning any foreign language will help people thrive in society. Ironically, if we look closely, we see that both excerpts are under the heading of “Inglés como herramienta de acceso al conocimiento” [English as a tool to access knowledge], which implies that not any foreign language will open doors to knowledge, information, technology and culture; it must be English.

Another instance of how the authors assert that English is essential for international communication, mainly in academic circles, is the following:

La generalización del uso de TIC ha reforzado el papel del inglés como el lenguaje de facto para quienes buscan que sus producciones orales y escritas trasciendan fronteras. (Estrategia Nacional de Inglés, p. 17)

[The generalization of the use of ICT has reinforced the role of English as the de facto language for those who seek that their oral and written productions transcend borders.]

In this excerpt, the authors use a nominalized phrase as a subject anew “La generalización del uso de TIC” [The generalization of ICT use] followed by the verb “ha reforzado” and the object “el papel del inglés como el lenguaje de facto”. Then, we have a prepositional clause “para quienes buscan que sus producciones orales y escritas trasciendan fronteras”. The noun “generalización” comes from the verb “generalizar” [generalize], which implies

that ICT has become very public and common. The authors then use the verb “ha reforzado” [has reinforced] which suggests that this generalization has made the role of English stronger as a de facto language for those who want their oral and written works to transcend borders. According to Habib (2014), de facto means “in practice but not necessarily ordained by law” or “in practice or actuality, but not officially established” (p. 2). Hence, the language policy authors’ statement leads to a conclusion: even though it is not mandatory, if authors want to have their research findings read by the relevant international scientific community, they have to publish in English. According to Hammel (2007), the thrust for English as the only world language in science blurs the hegemony of a single national state, the USA, (although we might also add Great Britain) under the label of ‘globalisation’ and creates the ideology that English has already become so international that it neither belongs to any country, nor is it controlled by any group of native speakers. Nonetheless, he further argues that this tendency saves the Anglophone countries and their speakers a significant investment in capital, effort and time by not learning other languages, while it perpetuates an asymmetric power relation between the Anglophone native speakers and their non-native counterparts in international communication. Along these lines, Hammel (2007) asserts that

Very often native writers of English find it easier than non-natives to have their work published, even if their contribution adds little to the field, just because they are capable of formulating their papers in mainstream conventional discourse styles. Conversely, we often hit upon real jewels of inspiring research formulated in other languages that are fully integrated into the sophisticated research traditions of, say,

French, German or Spanish social and philosophical thought that may never reach the English language market or appear only years later. (p. 68)

Consequently, the focus on English blurs the view of the existence of important and well-established circles of international academic communication outside English.

As seen in this excerpt, the justification for choosing English as the foreign language that Mexicans have to speak is connected to a kind of bilingualism enrichment (Spanish and English), whose purpose deals with international communication. The statements in the examples presented above are axiomatic: English is the language that gives access to international communication, and in this case, access to knowledge, culture, science, and technology. Hence, the only valued knowledge is the one produced (and spread) in English. A vicious circle is then being created: everything needs to be translated into English because that is the language people speak, and people learn English because everything is produced in English. Nevertheless, what seems to be a legitimate and innocent incentive to promote the learning of a foreign language (English) is, in fact, a strategy to build on assumptions already constructed in other contexts of the language policy documents. In these sections, there is no mention of economic advantages connected to learning English. However, the decision to impose English in Mexico stems from mere economic interests led by the logic that if Mexico wants to have a better economy, it needs to participate actively in the consumption of knowledge and that English is the currency that makes it possible.

4.2.2.1 Interview data: English as a necessity for international communication

The interview data, again, paints a complex picture as we examine the participants' views regarding the beneficial access that English grants to education, technology, and new cultures (i.e., international communication). It is worth pointing out that two of the interviewees report that English posed a direct threat or impediment to their academic advancement. Jean-Pierre and Ronnie provide us with the most explicit data in this regard when saying:

Jean-Pierre: *los artículos científicos de hoy en día tanto laboralmente como en la licenciatura vienen en inglés la mayoría, al menos en mi área. Entonces esperan eso, que traigas esa herramienta [hablar inglés] ...y no la traía, entonces entraba en frustración*

[Nowadays, most scientific articles for both work and school are written in English, at least in my field, so they expect you to speak English, that you have this tool, and I didn't, so I felt frustrated.]

Ronnie: *Sí lo considero que hay incomprensión del sistema educativo mexicano para solicitarlo [hablar inglés] porque habría que valorar las circunstancias de cada estudiante y qué implicaciones tiene la carrera porque si no traducimos ni un artículo en inglés en todo el doctorado entonces, ¿por qué solamente se pide al final como requisito?*

[I do believe that there is a lack of understanding from the Mexican School System when implementing an English requisite because they would need to evaluate the

circumstances of each student and the English language demands of the educational program that they study. If we didn't use even one article written in English during the entire doctorate, why is it just required at the end?]

While Jean-Pierre was able to manage his situation with engineering contents in English during university and successfully passed all his courses, he perceived the practice of using articles in English an unnecessary and frustrating obstacle to overcome. Ronnie, on the other hand, advanced through an entire Ph.D. program in Special Needs Education, including her doctoral thesis, only to discover that her professional exam could not be scheduled until she certified a B1 proficiency level in English. Both Ronnie and Jean-Pierre push back against the mainstream discourse about the 'need for English in education' in the examples above. Jean-Pierre produces a counter discourse that appeals to fairness and the frustration that students feel when they are not able to access scientific information in their native language. Ronnie actually challenges the validity of the mainstream discourse, claiming that English as a graduation requisite is unthoughtfully implemented to a general population of students who largely have no need for the language.

Carrie and Dana provide a very different perspective on the dominant discourse concerning the 'need for English in education'. Both express approval (possibly 'consent' in Fairclough 1989's terms) towards the notion that nowadays English is a requirement for higher education in Mexico when saying:

Carrie: No, [las certificaciones de inglés] no [me han] frenado, pero por ejemplo estas certificaciones, hay escuelas donde no te dejan graduarte si no presentas el examen... Yo creo que sí debe ser obligatorio porque México es un país

tercermundista y parte de los países de primer mundo es que la gente habla más de un idioma. Entonces estaría increíble que México en su educación pudiera hacer que todos los habitantes del país hablen una segunda lengua y que se tenga que presentar exámenes y certificaciones, que la gente se tenga que preparar. O sea, para mí se me hace una muy buena idea.

[No, English certifications have not stopped me, but for example, these certifications, there are schools where they won't let you graduate if you don't take the exam ... I think it should be mandatory because Mexico is a third world country and part of first world countries is that people speak more than one language. So, it would be incredible if Mexico in its educational system could make all the country's inhabitants speak a second language and take exams and certifications, people would have to prepare. I mean, it seems like a very good idea to me.]

Daphne: En primer punto, como lo mencionabas, en qué tan de acuerdo estoy con que pidan certificación, con que pidan la experiencia o el hablar el inglés lo veo muy, muy, muy bueno. Creo que a veces académicamente nos falta que nos exijan un poquito más. Aquí en México, nos hace falta que nos exijan un poquito más y pues qué mejor con mejores estudios, mejores preparaciones, idiomas.

[First of all, as you mentioned, to what extent I agree that they ask for a certification, that they ask for experience or already speak English, I see it as a very, very, very, very good idea. I think that sometimes we need to be demanded a little more from the academic point of view. Here in Mexico, we need them to demand a little more of us and what better way than with better studies, better preparations, languages.]

We might consider the excerpts above as paradigmatic examples of discourse reproduction (Fairclough, 1989). Daphne paints a utopian picture of Mexico's potential transformation from the third world to the first world if it were to transform from a monolingual to a multilingual society. The message parrots excerpts from the language policy documents that imply that solely English has such transformational powers on developing nations. Dana goes even further in her expression of approval that Mexicans are forced (or 'coerced') by outside actors to certify English proficiency as a graduation requisite. She repeats the word "muy" [very] four times during this expression of approval, "I see it very, very, very, very good." She maintains the identity of the outside actor ambiguous by eliding the subject of the sentence when saying, "*Aquí en México nos hace falta que nos exijan un poquito más.*" This ellipsis has a similar effect as the passive voice used in the language policy documents as discussed in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2. In English, we might translate the subject into the undefined "they". She may not be exactly sure 'who' is "demanding a little bit more" from Mexicans, but she is in definitive agreement as she again uses repetition as a tool for emphasis, this time repeating the entire clause twice. While the meaning of her message is not entirely clear, she seems to be implying that Mexicans tend to be complacent, and a little push from outside forces is desirable.

The contrast between the discourses that are (re)produced from these four participants might again be explained by examining their personal profiles. Ronnie again demonstrates the most robust example of resistance to the mainstream discourse. The threat English posed to her Ph.D. probably acts as a catalyst for her directly challenging the validity of a national language policy that she believes lacks 'common sense' in its widespread implementation. Jean-Pierre, who also perceived English as threatening to his academic

success, recognizes that “in his field” the dominant discourse might ring true, yet he produces an addendum to the discourse which characterizes it as unfair and frustrating. Carrie, having always studied in bilingual, private schools, perceives English as an advantage rather than a threat to her educational success, and consequently, imagines English as the great equalizer between the first and third world. Possibly most interestingly, Dana who is our youngest and least experienced participant, seems eager to express her belief in the mainstream discourses and reproduces them in a hyperbolic manner. At the time of the interview, English had neither facilitated nor hindered her educational achievement, making her enthusiastic approval of the necessity of outside intervention in Mexico a purely theoretical tenet, void of personal experience.

Also interesting within the interview data is the participants’ interest in the area of culture, even though the actual language policy documents address the issue in only a cursory manner. In fact, most of the participants mention ‘English as an access to foreign culture’ as a benefit of learning English that they would sincerely appreciate. We see a few examples of their reports below:

Ronnie: *tal vez creo que permite ampliar las nociones del mundo, es decir, una vez ver una película en inglés, entender la cultura, tal vez leer un libro en inglés...para ampliar, insisto, el bagaje cultural (...) Entonces es algo que me aporta a la cultura americana. Aumenta mi acervo cultural, pero hasta ahí.*

[Maybe I think it allows expanding notions of the world, that is, once watching a movie in English, understanding the culture, maybe reading a book in English ... to

expand, I insist, the cultural baggage (...) So it's something that allows me to learn about the American culture. My cultural knowledge increases, but that's it.]

Jean-Pierre: *Te genera nuevas oportunidades en empresas transnacionales y por ende también conocer nuevas culturas o personas.*

[It provides you with new opportunities in transnational companies, and for knowing new cultures and meeting new people]

Dana: *[el inglés] te abre a conocer distintas culturas.*

[English opens doors to knowing new cultures.]

Ryan: *Porque [el inglés] nos abre las fronteras a otros países y poder comunicarnos con otras personas.*

[Because English opens our borders to other countries and allows us to communicate with other people.]

The participants seem to conceptualize culture in a classic sense, i.e., the ability to travel, access art and literature, and exchange ideas with people from different ‘cultures’ for the sake of enjoyment. Again, we find a mismatch between the authors of LP (the “outer layer”, who seem to place little importance on English providing ‘access to classic culture and enjoyment’, and the “inner layer” of consumers (English L2 learners), who recognize it as a potentially meaningful benefit.

In conclusion, the participant discourse surrounding ‘English as a necessity for international communication’ (i.e., education, technology, and culture), seems to again

represent competing discourses (ideologies) that are largely contingent on the participants' background and past experiences with English. Regarding experience, depending on whether the participants' experience has been positive or negative, they tend to either reproduce or resist the dominant ideological positions. Interestingly, naïveté (or a total lack of practical experience with the discourse in action) seems to reproduce the most hyperbolic, unhedged examples of the dominant discourse. Again, participants who reproduced the dominant discourses produced less hedged assertions about the benefits of English than the authors of "outer layer" language policy documents; however, examples of resistant discourse contain quite careful hedging as they push back against dominant ideologies.

4.2.3 English as a necessity for business

A third central theme in relation to the necessity of English is its usefulness for business. This relationship is mentioned a total of 8 times in the three language policy documents, making it a central tenet of the top-down 'English as a necessity for success' discourse in Mexico. Thus, one of the main arguments of the three documents is to create policy that makes English learning mandatory in Mexico so that the country can better participate in international business. An example is provided below:

Para insertar a México en las cadenas productivas globales, tener acceso al acervo de información y talento mundial e identificar modelos de negocio vinculados a la tecnología e innovación es necesario hablar un idioma común—en la actualidad ese idioma es el inglés. (Inglés es Posible, p. 8)

[In order to insert Mexico into global production chains, have access to the world's wealth of information and talent, and identify business models linked to technology and innovation, it is necessary to speak a common language - currently that language is English.]

In this excerpt, the opening word is “para” [in order to], followed by three non-finite clauses, the impersonal structure “es necesario” [it is necessary], and ending with the object “hablar un idioma común” [to speak a common language]. Then, we have another clause introduced by a dash which purpose is to clarify that the common language needed nowadays is English. The three non-finite clauses indicate three different purposes that could be accomplished if English were spoken in Mexico. From this excerpt, we can infer the authors are trying to convince the reader that the only way these three ‘givens’ can be attained is only if Mexicans learn how to speak English. Two of the givens are “insertar a México en las cadenas productivas globales” [insert Mexico in the worldwide productive chains] and “identificar modelos de negocio vinculados a la tecnología e innovación” [identify business models related to technology and innovation], which are directly related to the alleged significance of speaking English not only for business, but also for the insertion of the country in the global economy. This excerpt is another example of unevidenced assertion since the writers do not provide any evidence as to why they make such a claim. Another example of unevidenced assertion related to the importance of English in the business field and how this could lead to the country’s insertion in the global economy is the following:

el inglés es una herramienta indispensable para el posicionamiento de las empresas en cadenas de producción y distribución a nivel global. (Inglés es Posible, p. 13)

[English is an essential tool for positioning companies in global production and distribution chains]

In this excerpt, the authors open the sentence with the subject “el inglés” [English] followed by a linking verb “es” [is] and a subject complement. Subject complements follow a linking verb, and they are normally an adjective or a noun that renames or defines in some way the subject. Hence, in this case, the authors are straightforwardly and unfoundedly defining English as an essential tool to place companies in worldwide production and distribution chains.

If we put the two ideas provided in the previous excerpts together, we perceive that speaking English is presented as not only leading a country to success in the business field, but also to the inhabitants who speak it to be members of an imagined community that resides in the global village (Anderson, 2006). Anderson (2006) coined the term *imagined community* to offer a definition of *nation*, and explains that “it is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6), and he further explains why community: “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (p. 7). Consequently, two main assumptions can be drawn from these excerpts. First, if Mexicans are able to communicate in English, they automatically “belong” to the imagined community of English speakers that enjoy the benefits attached to that language. These benefits translate mainly into economic profits. Thus, if we interpret it in the light of Bourdieu’s concept of convertibility of capital (1986), this means that by acquiring the linguistic capital of a highly valued language in the linguistic market

(English), Mexicans will have better job opportunities, as discussed in the previous section. The second assumption stems from the first, and this is that as the result of adding up the individual profit, Mexico will belong to the international community with the same status as that of the first world countries. Nonetheless, the authors of these language policy documents overestimate the role of English in the development of the country and point to it as the sole element that will bring progress to the nation. The statement above is a cause-effect construction that presents the insertion of the country in the global economy as a natural consequence of the ability of its citizens to communicate in English, when clearly other elements are necessary to do so (Bourdieu, 1986). In order to belong to the ‘elite’ nations of the world and to be recognized as one, multiple and complex elements need to be in play, not only promoting the learning of English among the citizens.

4.2.3.1 Interview data: English as a necessity for business

As we examine the interview data related to “English as a necessity for business”, we should distinguish between the current category and “English as a necessity for better employment opportunities” (section 4.2.1.1). The mainstream discourse that surrounds ‘English for business’ refers to English as means of a *collective*, national transformation, while the discourse surrounding ‘English for better employment’ describes how English provides better employment opportunities to *individuals*. The dominant discourse promoting ‘English for business’ conceptualizes a Mexican English-speaking population as human capital that will not only allow Mexican companies to better participate in the international market but also attract foreign companies to relocate in Mexico. The two discourses are linked and work in tandem to create an argument similar to the metaphor that ‘all ships are lifted up by a rising tide’, and English will ‘rise the tide’. In many ways, this

is the discourse with the most ‘vested interest’ for the elite because they are the actors who most directly benefit from a labor market that possesses the right skills to participate in an international market yet receives wages that are relatively low compared to those paid in the first world. The elite are the ‘big ships’ that are lifted up to billionaire status in the rising tide, while their employees are the ‘little boats’ that rise up with them earning better wages.

None of the participants in this study are aspiring billionaires representing the ‘elite’. Ryan is the only entrepreneur participating in the study, who started a remarkably successful national business selling salts. However, his motivation to learn English is not related to his business. In fact, he explicitly rejects the utility of English related to his ability to do business in his case when saying:

Ryan: como dueño de una microempresa no utilizo el idioma [inglés] porque mis clientes son de mi zona en México, ellos no hablan inglés, pero si me quiero desempeñar como piloto el primer filtro que hay que pasar es una entrevista en inglés.

[As a micro-business owner, I don't use the English language because my clients are from my area in Mexico, they don't speak English, but if I want to work as a pilot, the first filter to pass is an interview in English.]

The excerpt above makes clear that Ryan is aware that not all businesses need English. It is quite clear to him that his clients are Spanish-speaking Mexicans and English has no utility in his highly successful business of eleven years. Ryan’s motivation to learn English

actually stems from his desire to become a high-skilled employee for an international airline, which he continually emphasizes throughout the interview:

Ryan: *mi sueño siempre había sido ser piloto comercial y si yo no domino el inglés yo no voy a poder desempeñar mi profesión como un piloto comercial*

[my dream had always been to be a commercial pilot and if I do not master English, I will not be able to carry out my profession as a commercial pilot]

We see that Ryan actually has trouble (re)producing the discourse of ‘English as a necessity for business’, even though he, like all of the participants, is very apt at (re)producing its counterpart discourse, ‘English as a necessity for better employment’. In fact, we might expect the discourse surrounding ‘English as a necessity for business’ to be reserved for national policymakers and billionaires, who ironically, do not usually need English to accomplish their goals, yet do need to convince the wider Mexican populace to speak English for these goals to be realized. However, in order to ‘persuade’ the populace, the discourse of ‘English as a necessity for business’ needs to be widely disseminated and understood, and we have evidence that this is the case. In fact, several of our participants demonstrate their awareness of this discourse, and the excerpt that we examined from Carrie in the previous section (4.2.2.1) is probably the most salient example:

Carrie: *Yo creo que sí debe ser obligatorio [aprender inglés] porque México es un país tercermundista y parte de los países de primer mundo es que la gente habla más de un idioma. Entonces estaría increíble que México en su educación pudiera hacer que todos los habitantes del país hablen una segunda lengua.*

[I think learning English should be mandatory because Mexico is a third world country and part of the first world countries is that people speak more than one language. Then it would be incredible if Mexico in its educational system could make all the inhabitants of the country speak a second language.]

As previously discussed, in the excerpt above Carrie constructs a discourse where she imagines that through foreign language education, Mexico can join the first world international community. She engages in what Anderson (2006) describes as imagining your community as residing in the “global village” (p. 6). She seems to know that Mexico, at present, is not part of this exclusive community, yet believes that if English were widely spoken in Mexico, the nation could take part in this “fellowship of the elite” (Anderson, 2006). Jaycee, although to a lesser extent, produces a similar discourse when saying:

Jaycee: *Si quieres ser una persona competitiva a nivel mundial ya no solo en tu país o ciudad tienes que estudiar inglés*

[If you want to be a globally competitive person not only in your country or city, you have to study English.]

Both of these participants recognize the role of English in international business within a globalized society. Jessi recognizes that Mexico has not yet achieved membership as she proposes that the global pandemic has created new policies in multinational corporations regarding *home office*. She hopes that this will allow people like her to gain employment, even though Mexico has not met the “English speaking threshold” that would normally be required for such corporations to hire people in her national context. Jaycee explains:

Jaycee: *Bueno básicamente después de la situación que estamos viviendo actualmente a nivel mundial muchos trabajos, por ejemplo, se van a mover a la modalidad de home office y definitivamente aquí se abre una oportunidad para que puedas trabajar, ya no solo para México o para EE. UU., sino que desde tu propia casa puedes trabajar para cualquier otra parte del mundo. Y, nuevamente, regreso al punto inicial donde mencionaba que el inglés es uno de los idiomas principales y que definitivamente aunado a la situación actual del home office o el teletrabajo, te va a dar muchas oportunidades para que trabajes desde casa.*

[Well, basically after the situation that we are currently experiencing worldwide, many jobs, for example, are going to change to the home office mode and definitely, in this case, an opportunity opens for you to work, not only for Mexico or the United States, but from your own home you can work for any other part of the world. And, again, I return to the starting point where I mentioned that English is one of the main languages and that, along with the current situation of the home office or telecommuting, it will give us many opportunities to work from home.]

To conclude, it is important to remember that the discourse surrounding ‘English as a necessity for business’ is a particularly elite discourse that is usually linked to ‘English as a necessity for better employment opportunities’. The discourse involves ‘attracting foreign investment’ (which provides better employment opportunities for middle class people) and ‘joining the first world’, yet it is often in conflict with first world corporate discourses that describe ‘relocation to exploit cheaper labor’. The issues surrounding these discourses are again complex. It is true that a rising tide lifts up all ships, but smaller boats that are anchored to the bottom sink when the tide rises too high and too fast, making the metaphor

overly simplistic. The current section demonstrates that our participants who are most directly involved in international business are quite aware of the dominant ideology concerning ‘English as a necessity for business’ while the remaining participants largely leave this discourse to national policymakers and economists and focus on the resulting ‘employment opportunities’. That said, the discourse that promotes ‘English as a necessity for business’ must circulate and be generally accepted in order for these policymakers to achieve their goals and interpreting the goal of ‘joining the global village’ as axiomatically positive is a vital requirement of this discourse. However, it is worth remembering Anderson (2006) as he explains that “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (p. 7). None of our participants resisted this discourse, which may be an indicator of how effective it is, particularly with participants who have little experience with the creation of national policy and/or multinational corporate business.

4.2.4 English as a necessity for social mobility

The fourth most mentioned theme in the language policy documents analyzed was the need of English for social mobility. This theme is positively related to economic growth, which can be attained by means of better employment opportunities. However, the notion of social mobility goes beyond economic prosperity and includes notions like social stature and prestige within a community. According to Munandar (2015), social prestige is distinct from occupational prestige which is associated with income and wealth. Macionis and Plummer (2002) exemplify how university professors gain high social prestige but lower income in Sweden and Canada. This example shows how social prestige is discriminated from occupational prestige (wealth). Consequently, in this section, while recognizing the

link between social mobility and better employment opportunities, we primarily focus on the way English supposedly provides a gateway to membership into a generally higher social stratification. Some examples are provided below:

El dominio del inglés es también un motor de movilidad social. (Inglés es Posible, p. 8)

[Mastery of English is also a motor for social mobility]

dominar el inglés permite a estudiantes ampliar sus opciones de estudios superiores en universidades de renombre internacional. (Estrategia Nacional de Inglés, p. 15)

[Mastering English allows students to expand their options for higher studies at internationally renowned universities]

In both excerpts, the author uses nominalized phrases as subjects (identical to the strategy used in section 4.2.2) “el dominio del inglés” [mastery of English] and “dominar el inglés” [mastering English] followed by either explicit or implicit references to its importance to achieve upward social mobility. In these cases, ‘dominio’ (a noun) in the first excerpt comes from ‘dominar’ (verb) and ‘dominar’ in excerpt 2 is a verb turned into a nominal. In both excerpts above, information is compressed into a noun like “dominio” and a nominal like “dominar” (someone masters English) and this deletion of participants (the ones who master English), diverts readers’ attention away from who these participants should be.

In addition to the use of nominalization, we also notice that these extracts constitute axiomatic assertions. According to Merriam Webster (2021), an axiom is “an established rule or principle or a self-evident truth”. In other words, an axiom is a statement that is taken to be true, to serve as a premise or starting point for further reasoning and arguments.

Fowler et al. (1979) note that official discourse, such as the language policy documents under analysis, often uses nominalizations in this way, thereby conveying that present social arrangements are objective, unchangeable things. Thus, far from using modality as a means to hedge, the authors are now bluntly asserting ‘facts that everyone should know’.

In the first extract, the axiomatic assertion is stated via a relation of subject-complement joined by a linking verb. Linking verbs connect subjects with their subsequent descriptions. The description that comes after a linking verb is called a subject complement. Hacker and Sommers (2017) explains that subject complements complete—or complement—the subject of a sentence by either renaming it or describing it. A subject complement can be a noun or adjective, or it can be a phrase functioning as one of these parts of speech. This is what occurs in the sentence “El dominio del inglés es también un motor de movilidad social.”, where “el dominio del inglés” [the mastery of English] is a nominalized subject followed by a linking verb “es” [is] and the subject complement “también un motor de movilidad social” [also a motor for social mobility], a noun phrase.

The second extract, “dominar el inglés permite a estudiantes ampliar sus opciones de estudios superiores en universidades de renombre internacional” [Mastering English allows students to expand their options for higher studies at internationally renowned universities], in a similar but more implicit manner, suggests that the mastery of English ‘allows’ students to broaden their choices to pursue higher education in worldwide renowned universities. As discussed in section 4.2.2, ‘allowing’ and ‘permitting’ are usually activities ascribed to human agents, and a grammatical structure related to either of them is said to permit actions to occur or not occur. As in section 4.2.2, in this extract, the verb ‘permitir’ [allow] is ascribed to an inanimate agent (English), we realize that the writer’s aim is to

convince the reader that learning English is the way to allow students to attend internationally distinguished higher education institutions, which will eventually lead them to upward social mobility. Nonetheless, this idea raises one question. If these language policy documents are written by Mexican authors, do they consider that students who attend higher education institutions in Mexico will not have the opportunity to succeed in life? Additionally, this extract is categorical in the sense that it excludes the possibility that any other foreign language can give access to scholarships and internships as well. English speaking countries are not the only ones that offer these opportunities; there are programs all around the world, even within South America and Spain, so Mexicans would not need to learn a foreign language. Consequently, although English can be a plus, it is not necessarily the language in which students will be tested and taught. As observed anew, both extracts analyzed in this section present ‘the mastery of English’ as the key to success in life, by achieving upward social mobility. They imply that speaking English is the only form of cultural and linguistic capital required to succeed while obscuring the fact that other qualifications, such as being intellectually and professionally competent, are needed to do so (Guerrero, 2010).

4.2.4.1 Interview data: English as a necessity for social mobility

The interview data relating to ‘English as a necessity for social mobility’ indicates that most of our participants are aware of the discourse that claims that English can be a gateway, not only to economic prosperity, but also to enhancing social prestige. In line with Yong and Campbell (cited in Nielsen, 2003), they perceive English as an international language that acts as a social and economic mobilizer. On the other hand, we also see one participant (Ronnie) rejects this ideological stance within the discourse. Again, biography

plays a role in how participants embrace or resist the discourse of ‘English as a necessity for social mobility’, particularly in regard to social stature within a particular community.

The interview excerpts represent different degrees of awareness towards and investment in the ideological propositions represented within the discourse of “English as a necessity for social mobility” on the parts of the participants. Examining Jaycee’s excerpt, it is difficult to ascertain whether her reference to a “better quality of life” as a result of speaking English focuses solely on the economic aspect or whether social stature is included in this characterization. She does, however, use the word “access”, which seems to reference a gateway that may be more than purely economic. Her interview excerpt can be seen below:

Jaycee: [me refiero] también a una mejor calidad de vida, más fácilmente.

Definitivamente no porque no hables inglés no puedas acceder a una, pero definitivamente facilita demasiado ese proceso.

[I also mean a better quality of life, more easily. Definitely not because you don't speak English you can't access one, but it definitely makes that process way easier.]

Jean-Pierre seems to embrace the mainstream ideologies within the discourse a bit further as he mentions various purposes for the study of English such as for better employment and prestigious education. It is interesting to see that learning English for those purposes carries a general goal, which is aimed at gaining a better life. Jean-Pierre believes that learning English gives him the advantage of being able to communicate in a global context from which he will have an opportunity to access international education and multinational companies as well as build global networking.

Jean-Pierre: creo que es buen ejemplo de para qué te sirve el inglés porque te crea conexiones tanto culturales y por qué no en un futuro, pues a lo mejor estudiar un posgrado en otro país (...)a final de cuentas, pues ya es una mejor calidad de vida (...) Te genera nuevas oportunidades...[de] conocer nuevas culturas o personas

[I think it's a good example of what English is good for, because it creates both cultural connections, and why not in the future, maybe studying a postgraduate degree in another country (...) at the end of the day, it is already a better quality of life (...) It generates new opportunities for you to meet new cultures or people.]

Dana is quite clear as she expresses the belief that speaking English provides access to “associate with people who are better than you”, which allows one to experience “personal growth” as well as “better earnings”. She believes that English could open the door to “work in another country” and “experience new things”. Dana seems to idealize the social advantages to which English could hypothetically grant her access, possibly due to her lack of real-world experience with these discourses. She, again, produces an unhedged and hyperbolic version of the mainstream discourse, which can be seen below:

Dana: al momento de relacionarte con gente, tener un entorno de gente más de lo que tú eres es como te ayuda a crecer. Entonces, en lo personal, yo decidí estudiar inglés por cuestión laboral, pensé más en ello por cuestión de ganar más y de poder, en algún momento, trabajar en otro país, poder conocer otras cosas.

[When interacting with people, having an environment of people who are better than you is how it helps you grow. So, personally, I decided to study English for

professional reasons, I thought more about it because I wanted to earn more and be able, at some point, to work in another country, to know new things.]

Carrie is the participant who is most invested in the ideological tenet of ‘English as a necessity for social mobility’, which she makes clear when saying “socially, [English] is something very important to me”. An examination of her personal profile may provide insights into her strong belief that speaking English is a requisite for access to increased social stature. Carrie’s history with private schools and prestigious universities has exposed her to a more elite social circle in Mexican society, where she claims that “in all of the gatherings in Mexico, Spanglish is very common” and “if you have bad pronunciation in English, they’ll eat you alive”. Her socioeconomic status is considerably higher than the other participants of this investigation. She perceives that English plays an important role in participating in the social elite of Mexico. She comments explicitly on this theme when saying “it’s about belonging. You can’t belong to a tribe where everyone speaks English, and you don’t”. From her point of view, English is a symbol of prestige and modernity and a means of “social ascension” and/or maintenance.

Carrie believes that English is not only a path to social inclusion but may also pose a threat to speakers who do not manage the language perfectly. She makes her belief clear that poor English pronunciation may be “just cause” to shun the inadequate language user from the circles of the elite when saying “[in my circle] everyone speaks more English than Spanish, so you can’t get left behind...it’s like a MUST, you have to speak English perfectly, always!”. Her comments on this subject are extensive and worth citing at length below:

Carrie: *[el inglés]es algo que socialmente para mí es muy importante. En todas las mesas en México es muy común el 'spanglish'. Con mis amigas del norte, todas hablan más inglés que español, entonces no puedes quedarte abajo de eso, creo yo (...) para mi entorno es como un "must", debes hablar perfectamente inglés, ¡siempre! Tu pronunciación tiene que ser muy buena. El mexicano, si no pronuncia bien las palabras en inglés es mal visto. Si llega un francés y habla mal inglés, no es mal visto o un español que habla mal inglés. Pero un mexicano que pronuncia mal inglés se lo comen vivo (...) [para mí] es de pertenencia el tema, no puedes estar en una tribu en donde todos hablan inglés - por tribu me refiero a un grupo social donde te mueves - y tú no.*

[Socially, English is something very important to me. In all the gatherings in Mexico, Spanglish is very common. My friends from the north all speak more English than Spanish, so you can't get left behind, I think. (...) For my circle, it's like a "must", you have to speak English perfectly, always! Your pronunciation has to be very good. If a Mexican does not pronounce the words in English well, he/she is frowned upon. If a French person arrives and speaks poor English, it is not frowned upon, or a Spanish person who speaks poor English. But if you're a Mexican who pronounces English bad, they'll eat you alive (...) For me, it's about belonging, you can't be in a tribe where everyone speaks English - by tribe, I mean a social group where you move - and you don't.]

Finally, Ronnie provides our only example of resistance to the discourse of 'English as a necessity for social mobility'. Her personal profile, again, lends insight into her ability to produce counter-discourses to the mainstream. She is older, more mature, and more

established than the rest of the study's participants, and when asked if speaking English would enrich her social life in any way, she replied quite simply:

Ronnie: *no convivo con gente que hable inglés, convivo con gente que habla español y no está en mi entorno social, el hablar con personas de habla inglesa.*

[I do not live with people who speak English, I live with people who speak Spanish and speaking with people who speak English is not in my social circle.]

Notions of 'social ascension' do not seem to even occur to her as she answers in a quite practical and honest fashion. While she does not provide a strong critique of the tenets of 'English as a necessity for social mobility', as she did with some of the other discourses associated with the need to learn English, she does reject the notion outright.

To conclude, most of our participants believe to different extents that if they speak English, they will get better paid jobs and gain social prestige that lead to upward social mobility, which will improve their quality of life. With the exception of Ronnie, they consider the pathway between English and social mobility to be strongly linked. Our participants are learning English for their social goals as well as their occupational goals because it plays a significant role in their potential social mobility. They trust that English will open opportunities to engage in more prestigious global participation, grant access to better paid jobs and gain higher status in society. However, they should question the real significance of English in contributing to their social mobility since English alone is certainly not sufficient to achieve this goal. After all, Bourdieu's (1991) claims the English language has become a valued linguistic currency which is a form of cultural capital.

Nonetheless, English will only contribute to social mobility if it is combined with other dominant forms of cultural capital.

4.2.5 English as a necessity to achieve equality and inclusiveness

The fifth and final most mentioned theme in the language policy documents under analysis was the necessity of English to achieve equality and inclusiveness. In these documents, English is promoted as the language that gives equal opportunities to people, especially in the economic field. Some examples are provided below:

La enseñanza del idioma inglés puede ser una herramienta de inclusión social y económica de los sectores más desprotegidos de la población actual al mundo globalizado. (Inglés es Posible, p. 12)

[Teaching English language may be a tool for social and economic inclusion of the current population's most unprotected sectors to the globalized world.]

Las coyunturas sociales, económicas y culturales de la actualidad exigen un dominio cada vez más temprano de la lengua (inglés) por lo que su enseñanza desde los tramos iniciales de la formación obligatoria disminuye los factores de desigualdad y exclusión, al acercar a la mayor parte de la matrícula nacional a la conversación globalizada. (Estrategia Nacional de Inglés, p. 16)

[Today's social, economic, and cultural situations demand an increasingly early mastery of the English language, so its teaching from the initial stages of compulsory education reduces the factors of inequality and exclusion, by bringing most of the national enrollment closer to the global conversation.]

In the first extract, the authors employ the use of a nominalized phrase as subject “la enseñanza del idioma inglés” [teaching English language], followed by the verb phrase “puede ser” [may be], and the direct object “una herramienta de inclusión social y económica de los sectores más desprotegidos de la población actual al mundo globalizado” [a tool for social and economic inclusion of the current population’s most unprotected sectors to the globalized world]. The use of nominalization (as discussed in sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.4) diverts the reader’s attention from the agents who perform the action, in this case “la enseñanza del idioma inglés” [teaching English language]. Additionally, the writers also use modality “puede ser” [may be] to hedge a claim for which they do not present any evidence, making this claim vague and imprecise. The type of hedging used in this excerpt is epistemological as the authors are unable to state things with absolute certainty. Finally, if we analyze the direct object “una herramienta de inclusión social y económica de los sectores más desprotegidos de la población actual al mundo globalizado” [a tool for social and economic inclusion of the current population’s most unprotected sectors to the globalized world], we see how the authors present English as *a* tool for inclusion, both social and economic, of those who are at a disadvantage in the current globalized world.

In the second extract, we have a sentence composed of two finite clauses which express a cause-consequence relationship introduced by the causative connector “por lo que” [because of this]. The subject of the first clause is the noun phrase “Las coyunturas sociales, económicas y culturales de la actualidad” [Today's social, economic, and cultural situations], followed by the verb “exigen” [demand] and the direct object “un dominio cada vez más temprano de la lengua” [an increasingly early mastery of the language], referring to the English language. The subject of the second clause is “su enseñanza desde los tramos

iniciales de la formación obligatoria” [its teaching from the initial stages of compulsory education, referring to English], followed by the verb “disminuye” [decreases], the direct object “los factores de desigualdad y exclusión” [factors of inequality and exclusion], and the non-finite causal clause “al acercar a la mayor parte de la matrícula nacional a la conversación globalizada” [by bringing most of the national enrollment closer to the global conversation]. In the first clause, the authors give the noun phrase “the current social, economic and cultural situations” the characteristics of an animated being capable of performing actions, in this case, demanding an increasingly early mastery of the language. According to the authors, this is the reason to teach English from the initial stages of compulsory education, because it will eventually lead to decreasing inequality and exclusion. This statement constitutes an axiomatic assertion as the authors provide no evidence for such a claim.

If we examine closely both excerpts provided above, we notice that the authors are trying to make the readers believe that, by learning English at school from a very early age, children will have more opportunities to be successful members of the society as they become adults. However, they do not mention that speaking English is not enough to be included in society or to achieve equality. In fact, English contributes to the delivery and perpetuation of privilege and inequality because it favors the advantaged (not the disadvantaged) groups who have access to the right sort of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). As Tollefson (2000) asserts, the discourse of equality has influenced language policy decisions under the premise that speaking English gives equal opportunities particularly in the economic field, but this ideology blurs the recognition of the inequality to the access of ways to learn English. There is a significant difference between attending public under-

funded and overcrowded schools and attending elite private schools, and Mexico is not an exception. Some elite private bilingual schools offer intensive English classes (half day content lessons given in English), and others offer content instruction in both English and Spanish. Hence, those students with highly educated parents in higher income brackets have a significant advantage over those who have other backgrounds. Therefore, students who attend public schools where English is very poorly taught will be unable to engage in a multilingual work environment (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2007). Thus, for these children in disadvantaged positions, English will not be a key to equality and inclusion but rather to inequality and exclusion because it will become a gatekeeper that determines who can have access to certain types of employment and economic future and who will not.

4.2.5.1 Interview data: English as a necessity to achieve equality and inclusiveness

As the previous section pointed out, authors of language policies often justify mandatory English language teaching within national curriculums under the auspices that English is necessary to achieve equality and inclusiveness for societies' most vulnerable populations. However, critical scholars point out that inequality, discrimination and exclusion are obviously the other side of the same coin. In order to explore this proposition, the participants were asked if they believed that they had ever been the subject of discrimination as a result of their English proficiency. The data reveals perceived linguistic discrimination is prevalent among non-native speakers of English in Mexico, regardless of one's educational background and/or social status. We say 'perceived' discrimination because we do not believe that it is important that the reader agree that they experienced genuine discrimination. These participants believe that they were discriminated against,

which is a sufficient threshold for the current study. We provide the interview excerpts below that relate how different participants perceived this discrimination.

Ryan describes feeling discrimination due to not understanding English while boarding a plane in Rome, Italy. As previously mentioned, Ryan is a successful entrepreneur, and even though he does not consider himself to socialize in the most elite circles of his community, he is financially stable enough to travel to Europe. Regardless of his financial stability, his lack of English in an airport resulted in a flight attendant telling him that he could not board a plane if he could not understand the emergency procedures that would be given in English. While he eventually boarded the plane, he describes feeling great shame and embarrassment as a result of this incident, which is described in his own words below.

Ryan: Solamente una vez me sentí discriminado. Viajaba yo de Roma a Holanda y antes de abordar el avión, yo con un familiar, la sobrecargo dio instrucciones antes del abordaje y yo no entendí pero la persona con la que iba sí entendía inglés, entonces ella se acercó y le dijo “es que el no sabe inglés pero yo te entendí yo le voy a explicar”. Y ella le mencionó que yo no podía abordar el avión porque yo no sabía inglés, entonces si pasaba una emergencia qué iba a pasar conmigo, cómo iba a entender los procesos de evacuación de una aeronave. Y la verdad al principio sí me molesté, pero me sentí muy mal. Me sentí muy chiquito en ese momento, me dio mucha vergüenza sinceramente me dio mucha vergüenza.

[Only once did I feel discriminated against. I was traveling from Rome to Holland and before boarding the plane, I was with a family member and the flight attendant

gave instructions before boarding, and I did not understand, but the person I was with did understand English, so she approached him and said, “the thing is that he doesn't know English but I understood you and I'm going to explain to him”. And she mentioned that I could not board the plane because I did not know English, so if an emergency happened, what was going to happen to me? How would I understand the evacuation processes of an aircraft? And the truth is, at first, I did get upset, but I felt very bad. I felt tiny at that time, I was very ashamed, honestly, I was very ashamed]

Dana also reports that she believes that she was discriminated against due to her lack of English proficiency. She uses the word, “rejected” for a job opportunity because she did not meet the minimum “50% English” proficiency. We can see her testimony on this issue below:

Dana: sí ejemplo ahorita, que ya estoy egresada de la licenciatura en comercio, yo ya estaba buscando mudarme de empleo y este sí se me rechazó la oportunidad por cuestión de no tener mínimo el 50% de inglés...[me] sentí mal.

[Yes, for example, right now, that I am already a graduate of the Bachelor of Commerce, I was already looking to change my job and I got rejected because I did not have at least 50% of English ... I felt bad.]

Jaycee also reports feeling discriminated against when losing a promotion opportunity within her company to a native speaker of English. This example represents a recognizable form of workplace discrimination because Jaycee believes that her experience and qualifications were more advanced than the native-speaker competition's. Her English also met the standard to perform the job, resulting in her belief that the position was awarded to

the native speaker only because of his/her “nativeness”. Jaycee describes the incident in her own words below:

Jaycee: En mi segundo trabajo yo solamente me dedicaba al área de análisis de información. En ningún momento se hablaba inglés. Sin embargo, yo deseaba tener la oportunidad de acceder a un nivel más alto en cuanto a mi desarrollo profesional ya que era muy temprano, pero yo quería ir avanzando lo más rápido posible de nivel profesional. Yo aún estaba estudiando y yo ya quería salir estudiada, pero con lo importante, aunque fuera recién graduada. Entonces se abre la oportunidad de trabajar como customer service y tenía que hablar un mínimo de un 80% de inglés debido al puesto que yo desarrollaba yo era una de las candidatas. Sin embargo, al llegar a la entrevista en inglés, a pesar de que mi inglés ya no era tan malo como al principio porque ya me encontraba estudiando, prefirieron darle la oportunidad a una persona que habla inglés nativo a pesar de que sus conocimientos en cuanto al desarrollo de información no eran tan buenos...ahí me sentí discriminada.

[In my second job, I was only dedicated to the area of information analysis. English was not spoken at any time. However, I wanted to have the opportunity to access a higher level in terms of my professional development, but I wanted to advance as quickly as possible to the professional level. I was still studying, and I already wanted to get out of school, but with the most important knowledge, even if I had just graduated. Then the opportunity to work as a customer service opened and I had to speak a minimum of 80% English. Due to the position that I was developing I was one of the candidates. However, upon arrival at the interview in English, even though my English was no longer as bad as at the beginning because I was already studying,

they preferred to give the position to a person who spoke native English even though their knowledge in terms of the development of information was not so good ... there I felt discriminated against.]

Jean-Pierre also felt discriminated against when he got into university. As we previously described in the section 4.2.2.1, Jean-Pierre believed that it was unfair that he was expected to manage academic content about his career through an English medium like academic articles. Jean-Pierre, himself, is not certain that this example qualifies as discrimination. Yet his uncertainty warrants inclusion in the current study:

Jean-Pierre: No sé si llamarle resentimiento o discriminación (..) te exigían o esperaban eso de ti [que hablaras inglés], que trajeras esa herramienta y no la traía, entonces entraba en frustración.

[I don't know if calling it resentment or discrimination (..) they demanded or expected that of you, that you spoke English, that you had knowledge and I didn't have it, so I got frustrated.]

The case of Carrie was already described at length in section 4.2.4.1 regarding social mobility. She makes clear in that section that her primary motivation for learning English is to avoid social discrimination and promote social inclusion. We see in her example that regardless of how much access to elite education you may have experienced, some people are not particularly apt language learners. She is aware of her deficiencies regarding the speaking skill, particularly pronunciation, which causes her anxiety towards the potential discrimination within her social circle. The transcripts below, which have already been presented in section 4.2.4.1 are worth examining again at length:

Carrie: *[el inglés] es algo que socialmente para mí es muy importante. En todas las mesas en México es muy común el 'spanglish'. Con mis amigas del norte, todas hablan más inglés que español, entonces no puedes quedarte abajo de eso, creo yo (...) para mi entorno es como un "must", debes hablar perfectamente inglés, ¡siempre! Tu pronunciación tiene que ser muy buena. El mexicano, si no pronuncia bien las palabras en inglés es mal visto. Si llega un francés y habla mal inglés, no es mal visto o un español que habla mal inglés. Pero un mexicano que pronuncia mal inglés se lo comen vivo (...) [para mí] es de pertenencia el tema, no puedes estar en una tribu en donde todos hablan inglés - por tribu me refiero a un grupo social donde te mueves - y tú no (...) En mi entorno no se perdona que pronuncies mal o con ese acento latino, que la gente de Hollywood lo hace, eso se ve muy mal.*

[Socially, English is something very important to me. In all the gatherings in Mexico, Spanglish is very common. My friends from the north all speak more English than Spanish, so you can't get left behind, I think. (...) For my circle, it's like a "must", you have to speak English perfectly, always! Your pronunciation has to be very good. If a Mexican does not pronounce the words in English well, it is frowned upon. If a French person arrives and speaks poor English, it is not frowned upon, or a Spanish person who speaks poor English. But if you're a Mexican who pronounces English bad, they'll eat you alive (...) For me, it's about belonging, you can't be in a tribe where everyone speaks English - by tribe, I mean a social group where you move - and you don't. In my circle, it's unforgivable that you pronounce badly or with that Latin accent that people in Hollywood have, that's frowned upon.]

To conclude, as we saw in the analysis of LP documents, the discourse of equality and inclusiveness that can be achieved through English has influenced language policy decisions under the premise that speaking this language gives equal opportunities not only in the economic field but also in society. However, this ideology does not take into account two essential aspects related to the learning of English. First, the ideology blurs the recognition of the inequality to the access of ways to learn English. As narrated by Jaycee, Jean-Pierre, Dana and Ryan during their interviews, they have perceived discrimination due to their lack of proficiency in English. We might argue that this situation has been influenced by their public education, where English is taught poorly. Nevertheless, Carrie, having access to the “right” sort of education where English is taught from a very early age, is still not proficient in the language and feels afraid of being discriminated against in her social circle at some moment. Consequently, the second aspect, which stems from Carrie’s case, is that having a privileged education is not sufficient to achieve proficiency in English, and one can still feel vulnerable to discrimination.

4.3 Chapter conclusion

In Chapter 4, the data analysis of the study was presented. Both the text analysis as well as the interview data analysis were discussed in detail. The investigation will now present Chapter 5, which presents a discussion of the study’s key findings as well as the study’s limitations and directions for further research.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

The current chapter provides a discussion of the key findings of the study as well as the investigation's limitations and directions for further research. It is meant to provide a global conclusion to the study in relation to how the data analysis shed light on the research questions, keeping in mind the scholarly literature that provided a theoretical basis for the methodological procedures of analysis and interpretation.

This study intended to explore through text analysis the mainstream discourses that have become prevalent in postmodern society (in the form of language policies) that English is a gateway requirement for economic and social prosperity for non-native speakers of this language. It also set out to examine how participants report the role that the ideological tenets of these discourses have played in their lives as non-native speakers who need English to achieve certain professional and social goals. In order to explore these aims, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What discourse strategies are employed by authors of National Mexican Language Policy that ideologically define 'English as a necessity' in Mexico?
2. What are the linguistic features of institutional discourses that ideologically define 'English as a necessity' within the Mexican National Context?
3. How do the aforementioned discourses intertwine economic prosperity into the ideology?
4. How do participants affected by English as a Foreign Language Policy (re)produce and/or resist these dominant discourses?

5. How do the participants' personal history and experience with English affect the discourses that they express about English as a necessity?

5.1 Discussion of key findings

The study examined the manner in which the dominant discourse strategies of ‘English as a necessity for success’ are realized linguistically within the Mexican national language policy. The analysis uncovered that Mexican LP presents English as a key that gives access to “wonderland”. The LP document analysis revealed 5 principal ideologies as to why English should be studied in Mexico, i.e., for better employment opportunities, business, international communication, social mobility and equality and inclusiveness. A brief summary of the main strategies employed to present these ideologies will be provided below:

- **Modality:** The most salient strategy used was hedging, mainly used to introduce unevicenced assertions. This strategy was achieved through modality. As previously discussed, modality is a linguistic tool mainly used to hedge a claim for which no evidence is presented. Thus, when the authors wanted to make significant unevicenced claims related to the discourse of ‘English as a necessity for success’, they added a degree of vagueness, imprecision or tentativeness through hedging.
- **Agentless passives and nominalization:** These are two different strategies employed throughout the language policy documents yet their linguistic purpose is similar. On the one hand, we have agentless passives, which, as argued by O’Halloran (2005), writers use as a tool to ‘mystify’, or omit, the role of social actors in the depictions of events. On the other hand, we have nominalized clauses, which, similarly to

agentless passives, do not provide direct reference to the agents involved in an action. Both strategies aim to suppress the existence of these actors and the affected participants. Thus, when the authors wanted to subtly encode ideological meanings related to ‘who’ was responsible for expressing the ideological tenets of ‘English as a necessity for success’, they used agentless passive and nominalized sentences.

- Cherry picking: Although found in just one explicit instance throughout the language policy documents analysis, it is worth pointing out that this strategy aims to directly overlook evidence that could lead to a complete picture of the case presented. When analyzing a survey conducted by the British Council on the main reasons to study English in Mexico, the authors purposefully ignored the main reason to do so was the mandatory character of English in school, and they just ‘cherry-picked’ the reason that was convenient to confirm their particular position of how English is necessary for success.

The PRONI, through its LP, places English as the magic recipe that will solve Mexico’s and Mexicans’ economic, social, and intercultural problems. They try to convey the idea that speaking English grants everyone access to the wide range of advantages associated with this language, which are strongly related to converting cultural and social capital into economic capital, as described by Bourdieu (1986). Even though the stated aim of the PRONI is to give equal opportunities to less privileged groups, the result is quite the opposite, as the interviews data analysis demonstrated.

The ideological tenets that accompany ‘English as a necessity for success’ have been demonstrated in the analysis section to be largely misleading if not mythical for most of the people affected by them. From that point of departure, the consequent discourses that are

constructed (i.e., English for better employment opportunities, business, international communication, social mobility and equality and inclusiveness) generate different expectations that might become true for some, yet quite problematic for most, as was the case with the majority of our participants. These discourses were heavily reliant on the intertwining of ‘the promise of economic prosperity’ into the ideology, which is later seen as a solution for almost every problem that Mexico faces in the postmodern world. The analysis indicated that these discourses, when framed in their most generalized versions, are largely taken up and reproduced in axiomatic terms, making them difficult to counter as they circulate unbridled throughout different fields of society. In other words, when asked general questions about the importance of English in the modern world, participants would reproduce unhedged statements from the dominant discourses regarding the economic and social advantages of speaking English. The less experience that one actually has with English and its influence on professional and social advancement, the more axiomatically they seem to reproduce these mainstream, dominant discourses. The discourses are adopted almost reflexively.

It is only when individuals experience adversity as they come into contact/conflict with specific dimensions of the dominant discourses that signs of resistance emerge. Such counter discourses, on the other hand, are usually strongly hedged and individualized as a specific instance rather than a general principle. The individual profiles and life experiences of each participant had a strong influence on the manner in which they reproduced and/or resisted distinct ideologies within the discourses. All the participants resisted at least one dimension of the larger discourse, ‘English as a necessity for success’ during the interviews. The participants with the lowest English proficiency, when asked to reflect on

the different ideological tenets of the dominant discourse, began to produce discourses of resistance, reporting ‘English as an obstacle to success’ in most of the dimensions of the dominant discourse (i.e., for better employment opportunities, business, international communication, social mobility and equality and inclusiveness). The oldest, most established, and most mature participant challenged the dominant discourse most easily in almost every dimension of its ideology. The youngest, least experienced participant, on the other hand, reproduced unhedged, hyperbolic versions of the dominant discourse throughout her interview. While increased success as an English learner seemed to increase agreement with the mainstream discourses associated with ‘English as a necessity for success’, English was viewed as a threat to social exclusion and discrimination by even our most proficient participants. Ultimately, each discourse associated with ‘English as a necessity for success’ has an alternate discourse that can be produced through resistance, proposing “English as an obstacle for success”. They are always two sides of the same coin.

It is also worth noting that not all the mainstream discourses associated with ‘English as a necessity for success’ are equally accessible to the general populace. The discourse of ‘English as a necessity for business’ seems to be reserved for a particular class of elite authors such as government officials and international economists. We see that the “inner layer” consumers of this discourse, such as English language learners, are aware of this discourse and understand it, yet do not reproduce or resist it. This may be true to a lesser extent of all the discourses associated with ‘English as a necessity for success’ (i.e., for better employment opportunities, business, international communication, social mobility and equality and inclusiveness). While ‘English as a necessity for better employment

opportunities' seems to be highly accessible to all of our participants, 'English for social mobility' seemed to be a somewhat foreign concept to our oldest and most established participant. In short, some of the dominant discourses associated with the virtues of English may be more accessible to a wider audience than others.

In conclusion, in such a complex, competitive, plurilingual, pluricultural world like the one we currently inhabit, it is very idealistic to think that speaking a widespread language like English is the key to solve everyone's problems, including Mexico's and Mexican's. But what is even worse is that this ideology is not of one individual but the thought of a governmental office, and it is imposed on a whole nation regardless of the possible consequences it may have.

5.1.1 The role of English Imperialism in the Mexican context

The current study dedicated significant effort to the examination of 'English Imperialism' and suggested that Mexico's National Language policies regarding English as a Foreign language, particularly the inclusion of the discourse 'English as a necessity for success', might contribute to English Imperialism in the Mexican context. Throughout the analysis, however, conscious effort was taken to avoid using the term as it is somewhat 'loaded' and controversial within the scholarly literature. That said, the work would not be complete if we did not provide a reflection on the issues and consider whether these discourses contribute to and build on unequal power relations within Mexico, which could be considered part of the "expanding circle" (Canagarajah, 1999).

We might begin by reminding the reader that ‘English Discourse Imperialism’ might be considered as the expansion of a certain discourse dictated by the West, but, most importantly, a discourse written in English, which guarantees the supremacy of some countries over others (Pennycook, 1995). Hence, ‘English Discourse Imperialism’ occurs when English, which could be called major or primary language, is dominating minor languages, which causes structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages and those who speak it and not. Our data analysis revealed that the varying degrees of our participants’ English competency clearly provided advantages and disadvantages to their possibilities of achieving ‘success’ regarding their professional and/or personal goals. Furthermore, their personal histories confirmed that access to more or less ‘elite’ opportunities and experiences that allowed them to acquire cultural capital, which resulted in their ability to acquire increased English proficiency as a form of linguistic capital, seemed to have a direct impact on their views about the ideological tenets of ‘English as a necessity for success’. In other words, the study’s participants who had the opportunity to attend private, bilingual schools or were granted scholarships to study English abroad managed the language at a considerably higher proficiency level than those who did not, and consequently, reported their lives as having been enriched by their ability to speak English. Conversely, the participants who were granted less opportunities to learn the language reported significant adverse effects on their lives as a result. Put simply, it seems that ‘English as a necessity for success’ may have an adverse effect in perpetuating the preexisting imbalance of power relations between more and less privileged members of a society like Mexico. That said, all of the study’s participants produced a discourse that proposed ‘English as a threat’ in at least one of the ideological tenets outlined in the discourse of ‘English as a necessity for success’, whether it be in a professional dimension,

social dimension, or both. As such, it is worth noting that ‘English as an obstacle to success’ is a discourse that was recognized by all of the study’s participants, making them all potential victims to the threat of ‘English Imperialism’.

It is also worth pointing out that ‘English Imperialism’ will begin with the most ‘elite’ discourse associated with ‘English as a necessity for success’, which is the ideological proposition that ‘English is necessary for business’. This discourse proposes that in order for Mexico to enter the international ‘tribe’ of first world, ‘modern’ countries, they must reach an English-speaking ‘tipping point’ that allows Mexico to fully participate in international business with an increased presence of transnational corporations, accompanied by their better paying jobs that require a bilingual workforce. This discourse is reserved for the elite, such as international economists and government officials. It must be understood by the ‘inner-layer’ consumers of ‘English as a necessity’ but is rarely reproduced or resisted by these consumers. This is a discourse of the powerful, and its purpose is to convince the less powerful that ‘the benefits of English’ will trickle down to them if ‘English as a necessity for business’ is realized. In the terms of this investigation, these benefits will take the form of ‘English for better employment opportunities’, ‘international communication’, ‘business’, ‘social mobility’ and ‘equality and inclusiveness’. In the parlance of postmodern times, these benefits take the form of access to ‘modernity’ (i.e., more money, first world services, and the like). It is somewhat clear that the discourse of ‘English as a necessity for success’ does constitute ‘English Discourse Imperialism’ because in its most general form, when asked the question ‘Is it important to speak English in modern times?’, our participants answered with an unequivocal “yes!”, accompanied by epithets such as “without a doubt”, “100%”, “unquestionably”. When asked “why?”, they reproduced various elements of the discourse of ‘English as a necessary

for success', often in more emphatic terms than the language policies that prescribe the discourse at a national level. It is true that all of our participants could produce counter-discourses of resistance to the dominant ideologies within these national language policies, depending on their individual profiles and experiences with the English language, both positive and negative; however, inevitably, all of our participants found themselves in a position where they had no choice but to succumb to 'English as a necessity to success', which is why they were taking English courses. Whether their motivations included 'saving face' within the social circles of the Mexican elite, meeting the requirements of a Ph.D., or qualifying for a promotion that would "allow one certain luxuries as well as meet their necessities", English had become an obstacle to overcome for all of our participants, all of whom live in a Spanish speaking country and, most of whom, had no real need to speak English in their daily lives, personal or professional (with the exception of Jaycee).

Asymmetrical relations of power seem to be the most obvious motivation for the creation of such language policies in Mexico. Much like 'trickle-down economics', where the rich and powerful argue that as they get richer and more powerful, everyone benefits, so goes the discourse of 'English as a necessity for success'. It is a discourse of the powerful to create an ambiance where greater riches and more power can be accumulated. There may be a certain amount of truth to the metaphor that 'all ships, great and small, are lifted up in the rising tide', and English undoubtedly provides benefits to many people who are able to manage it within Mexican society; however, the number of people who are anchored to the bottom and drown in the 'rising tide' should not be overlooked and forgotten. The discourse of 'English as a necessity for success' leaves far too many Mexican citizens behind, and this is a reality that should not be overlooked in the wake of a dominant discourse that sweeps over Mexico proclaiming the virtues of speaking English.

5.2 Limitations

As with most studies, the design of the current study is subject to limitations. While there are undoubtedly more limitations that exist, the most evident are listed below:

1. The number of participants that were interviewed only consisted of six individuals, who supposedly represented maximum variation. That said, “maximum variation” is a cliché in and of itself. No two individuals are alike, and the study’s richness and complexity would have increased considerably if more participants could have been interviewed.
2. The number of interviews per participant was also limited. Revisiting the participants with additional interviews until it was believed that the data sources had been saturated might have provided the researcher with further insights into the subject of inquiry.
3. The principal National Language Policy documents within the Mexican context were analyzed, yet many more documents exist, which espouse and influence English learning curriculum at state and local levels. A more extensive document analysis would have enriched the outcomes of the study.
4. All methodological choices contain and conceal vested interests. The decision to employ Critical Discourse Analysis presents inherent strengths yet also limitations to the study.
5. Multiple perspectives on analysis are considered the gold standard for ensuring reliable qualitative analysis. Only two analysts were able to collaborate on the fourth chapter of the current study. Allowing the participants to examine and opine on the analyses of the current study would have again enriched the results.

5.3 Directions for further research

This study could be a starting point for further research. A few ideas are proposed below for researchers who might be interested in engaging in a similar vein of investigation:

1. The current study examines how national language policy affects consumers of that policy, and how the discourse is reproduced and/or resisted. Future studies might consider how international language policy documents are reproduced at national levels as well as how these policy trickle down to state and local levels.
2. The current study was focused on how discourses surrounding the virtues of English are consumed and reproduced in the Mexican context. A similar examination of these discourses in distinct international contexts might provide interesting insights into the issues surrounding the current investigation.
3. The current study examined the effects of a dominant discourse on a supposed “maximum variation” of participant types. A more in-depth examination of the effects of these discourses on specific populations such as “the successful language learner”, “the unsuccessful language learner”, “the privileged language learner”, among others, would provide additional insights into how different groups of people respond to these dominant discourses.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Interview guide for individual semi-structured interviews

1. ¿Crees que es importante aprender inglés en estos días? ¿Por qué? / ¿Por qué no?
[Do you believe that it is important to learn English nowadays? Why? /Why not?]
 - a) ¿Hablar inglés te permitiría comunicarte mejor en tu entorno social o laboral?
[Would speaking English allow you to better communicate in your social or work settings?]
 - b) ¿Hablar inglés te ayudaría a mejorar tu situación económica?
[Would speaking English help you to improve your economic situation?]
 - c) ¿Hablar inglés crearía más oportunidades sociales para ti?
[Would speaking English create more social opportunities for you]
 - d) ¿Quieres aprender inglés desde una perspectiva verdaderamente personal?
¿Por qué? ¿Por qué no?
[Do you, from a personal perspective, actually want to learn English?
Why/Why not?]
2. ¿Por qué estás tomando clases de inglés?
[Why are you taking English classes?]
3. ¿Hablar inglés sería útil en tu vida? ¿Podrías dar algunos ejemplos específicos?
[Would speaking English actually be useful in your life? Could you give some specific examples how?]
4. ¿Alguna vez te has sentido resentido porque se espera que aprendas inglés? ¿Por qué? ¿Cómo?
[Have you ever felt resentful that you are expected to learn English? Why/How?]
5. ¿Sientes que la necesidad de aprender inglés alguna vez te ha frenado económica o socialmente?
[Do you feel like the need to learn English has ever held you back economically or socially?]

6. ¿Alguna vez te has sentido discriminado social o profesionalmente porque tu inglés no es lo suficientemente avanzado?
[Have you ever felt like you were discriminated against socially or professionally because your English isn't advanced enough?]
7. ¿Tienes pensado tomar algún examen para certificarte en inglés? ¿Por qué?
[Are you thinking about taking any English proficiency certification? Why?]
8. ¿Cuáles son tus opiniones/sentimientos más honestos sobre la necesidad de aprender inglés?
[What are your most honest opinions/feelings about the need to learn English?]

Appendix B. Interviews transcripts

Below are the transcripts of the interviews conducted for the purpose of this study. They appear in the original language they were performed (Spanish).

Appendix B.1 Participant 1 (Ronnie)

I = Interviewer

R = Ronnie

I: ¿Crees que es importante aprender inglés en estos días?

R: Yo creo que habría distintos niveles de utilidad para aprender el inglés dependiendo a qué se dedique el profesional y, si sus acciones están en el ámbito internacional, claro que es indispensable, pero si las acciones están en el ámbito nacional, se trabaja con sujetos con habla del español, con el idioma español y se interviene en estas comunidades educativas, pues hay una gran diferencia. Es decir, habría diferentes niveles de necesidad de la implicación de aprender inglés.

I: ¿Entonces crees que hablar inglés te permitiría comunicarte mejor en tu entorno social o laboral?

R: No es necesario, tal vez creo que permite ampliar las nociones del mundo, es decir, una vez ver una película en inglés, entender la cultura, tal vez leer un libro en inglés, ¿no? Pero para ampliar, insisto, el bagaje cultural, pero para intervenir en el lugar donde yo me desempeño no es necesario.

I: ¿Y crees que hablar inglés te podría ayudar a mejorar tu situación económica?

R: No lo creo porque soy una maestra que trabaja en una escuela mexicana. No se requiere que sepa el inglés, no tenemos alumnos que hablen inglés porque trabajamos con niños con discapacidad y con maestros mexicanos y no es necesario.

I: ¿Y crees que hablar inglés te crearía más oportunidades sociales?

R: Tal vez sí, pero no convivo con gente que hable inglés, convivo con gente que habla español y no está en mi entorno social el hablar con personas de habla inglesa.

I: ¿Entonces quieres aprender inglés desde una perspectiva verdaderamente personal?

R: No, lo hago porque es un requisito.

I: ¿Por qué estás tomando clases de inglés entonces? ¿Es un requisito para qué?

R: Un requisito para lograr mi examen profesional de doctorado en educación. Yo tengo 63 años y entonces los maestros en servicio mexicano tenemos la oportunidad de buscar una universidad donde, a pesar de la edad, podamos lograr nuestra meta de lograr un doctorado. Entonces estudié dos licenciaturas, una maestría. Para mí regresar al aula y encontrar todos

estos nuevos lineamientos como TOEFL constituyó un verdadero reto. Pero, insisto, lo estudio porque es un requisito.

I: ¿Entonces no lo haces por voluntad propia? ¿Lo haces porque te lo exigen o algo así?

R: Lo hago por iniciativa personal e insisto es un reto. Tú siendo mi maestra, lo tengo que decir, me parece importante, que depende mucho del maestro o la maestra de inglés. En tu caso, la comprensión de mi situación ha permitido que logre avanzar. Los materiales que utilizas me han permitido conocer Estados Unidos, no lo conocía. Me identifico mucho con Martin Luther King, con sus causas, entonces es algo que me aporta a la cultura americana. Aumenta mi acervo cultural, pero hasta ahí.

I: ¿Entonces crees que hablar inglés podría ser útil en tu vida?

R: No necesariamente, no. Entiendo que en alguna medida es útil porque voy a tener que escribir artículos científicos y nos piden el *abstract*, entonces el aprendizaje del inglés sería orientado a la materia del trabajo, desarrollar ese vocabulario académico, pero no más allá de eso, como requisito

I: ¿Alguna vez te has sentido resentida porque se espera que aprendas inglés?

R: Sí, considero que hay incomprensión del sistema educativo mexicano para solicitarlo porque habría que valorar las circunstancias de cada estudiante y qué implicaciones tiene la carrera porque si no traducimos ni un artículo en inglés en todo el doctorado, entonces ¿por qué solamente se pide al final como requisito? ¿Por qué entonces no integran el inglés en el plan de estudios del doctorado? ¿Por qué no se incluye como una materia más que permita entonces sí la formación en las licenciaturas, en las maestrías, el doctorado como una segunda lengua necesaria? Entonces sí habría una verdadera política educativa para que más allá de prepararse de manera rápida para un TOEFL, sí habríamos de comprender y entender, no solamente el idioma, sino la cultura.

I: ¿Sientes que la necesidad de aprender inglés alguna vez te ha frenado económica o socialmente?

R: No.

I: Para conseguir un mejor trabajo, por ejemplo.

R: No.

I: ¿Alguna vez te has sentido discriminada social o profesionalmente porque tu inglés no es lo suficientemente avanzado?

R: No, porque en mi ámbito no lo requerimos.

I: ¿Entonces cuáles son tus opiniones y sentimientos más honestos sobre la necesidad de aprender inglés?

R: Que no solamente se debería pedir como un requisito para obtener un grado académico y colocar al estudiante en una posición de un reto enorme. Te lo piden al final del doctorado cuando ya tienes también el proceso simultáneo de la elaboración de tesis y otras implicaciones académicas inherentes a eso, muchas horas de lectura, de reescribir y entonces empieza uno a sentir angustia, mucha angustia y piensa uno, bueno, si haciendo mi mejor esfuerzo para lograr una buena tesis, pero si no logro el inglés no lo voy a lograr, no voy a ver cumplida mi meta. Entonces lo ideal es que lo aprendamos dentro del sistema educativo. Además, estudiar el inglés de manera particular en cualquier institución educativa es carísimo en México. Entonces es esa sugerencia que es importante destacar.

I: ¿Entonces crees que el inglés más que ayudarte te ha frenado un poco?

R: Sí, yo digo que ha retardado el proceso de titulación. Bueno, lo retrasó un poco por esa circunstancia. Pero lo importante es que el estudiante alcance la meta y yo me fijé una meta y dije no me importa el tiempo que requiera para estudiarlo, lo tengo que lograr, pero claro, que diversas teorías hablan acerca de que para que el aprendizaje se dé, debe haber condiciones de voluntad del estudiante, debe haber interés.

I: Entiendo. Última pregunta, ¿tienes pensado tomar algún examen para certificarse en inglés?

R: No creo, tal vez tal vez en un año, en año y medio, tengo el interés más de leer una novela en inglés, de lograr recitar un poema en inglés, cosas que vayan con mis intereses

I: Pero me comentabas al principio que era requisito tomar el TOEFL. ¿Entonces por qué ya no tienes pensado tomar el TOEFL para certificarte, como requisito para obtener tu diploma de doctora?

R: Bueno, porque se encuentran oportunidades de ir salvando esos requisitos.

I: ¿Encontraste una manera de que te aceptaran sin pasar por el TOEFL?

R: Dado que estábamos en pandemia y que no había oportunidades de hacer el examen de TOEFL porque se suspendió, entonces nos autorizaron a que podíamos entregar una constancia de estudios de lo que estábamos estudiando hasta ese momento, y entonces con esas constancias de estudios, sí cubrí el requisito, pero hubo diferencias dado la pandemia y entonces afortunadamente no se podía presentar el TOEFL. Entonces se logró una constancia de que estaba estudiando el inglés contigo.

I: Entonces al principio comenzaste a tomar clases de inglés conmigo porque tu objetivo era aplicar al examen TOEFL y obtener la certificación. Eso es lo que entiendo, ¿verdad? Y luego pudiste obtener una constancia donde certificaban que estabas tomando clases y ya no tuviste que presentar tu examen de TOEFL.

R: Así es.

Appendix B.2 Participant 2 (Jean-Pierre)

I = Interviewer

JP = Jean-Pierre

I: ¿Crees que es importante aprender inglés en estos días?

JP: Sí, demasiado, por la circunstancia de un mundo globalizado. Entonces yo creo que es muy importante en estos días, manejar el idioma.

I: ¿Puedes expandir un poco más tu idea?

JP: Claro, bueno, no sé si mis datos me fallan, pero el inglés es de los idiomas más hablados en todo el mundo sin importar en qué país te encuentres, aparte de abrirte temas laborales, por la misma cuestión de la globalización. También es muy importante para comunicarse, tan solo para viajes. O sea, por cualquier motivo que tú suelas salir del país es muy importante manejarlo. Es una herramienta, yo creo, que esencial.

I: ¿Entonces crees que hablar inglés te permitiría comunicarte mejor en tu entorno social o laboral?

JP: Sí, en ambos, yo creo. Te genera nuevas oportunidades en empresas transnacionales y por ende también conocer nuevas culturas o personas, que a lo mejor hablan un lenguaje nativo, no sé, como francés u otro tipo de idioma del propio del país, pero al final de cuentas, siempre va a estar el inglés como una herramienta para usarlo.

I: Muchas gracias. ¿Crees que hablar inglés te ayudaría a mejorar tu situación económica?

JP: Sí, yo creo que va de la mano, en mi caso que estoy en el área de Ingeniería, en la mayoría de las empresas transnacionales o privadas como se les conoce en México, un requisito indispensable es el manejo del idioma y no tan solo por certificaciones, que va de la mano, sino también tratar con clientes, o bueno, en mi caso, que es ingeniería, con otro tipo de trabajo y comunicarse en inglés, o sea, más que la certificación, pues al final de cuentas es *speaking* y todas las herramientas que el idioma utiliza.

I: Me comentas que trabajas en el área de ingeniería, ¿qué tipo de ingeniería?

JP: Bueno, yo estudié ingeniería petrolera. Ahorita estoy en el área de una empresa financiera, pero igualmente en todos los casos donde realicé mis prácticas profesionales y también actualmente, para subir de puesto y para cambiar de empresa, te piden el inglés, certificaciones o mínimo tener un inglés avanzado, un inglés conversacional, digamos.

I: ¿Entonces te lo piden como requisito para qué exactamente?

JP: Ya sea para ingresar a una empresa transnacional o para subir de puesto en la empresa actualmente donde estoy, cualquier de las dos.

I: ¿Crees que hablar inglés crearía más oportunidades sociales para ti?

JP: Sí, yo creo que sí. Tanto sociales como laborales, crea más oportunidades en ambos entornos. Al final de cuentas, al mejorar económicamente también mejora tu calidad de vida.

I: ¿Cómo crees que económicamente el inglés pueda mejorar tu calidad de vida?

JP: Bueno, en la cuestión laboral tan solo en los sueldos que se manejan ya con un inglés conversacional o certificado son alrededor de 40 000, 50 000 pesos que ya es una mejor calidad de vida económicamente a la que tengo actualmente, y con ese tipo de ingresos puedes cumplir tus necesidades tanto básicas como darte ciertos lujos.

I: ¿Entonces desde tu punto de vista personal verdaderamente quieres aprender inglés o lo haces como un requisito para obtener un mejor puesto de trabajo?

JP: No le voy a mentir. Al inicio de mi vida estudiantil, yo cursé 6 años en la secundaria o prepa, como le quiera llamar, de francés, no me gustaba el inglés. Cuando ingreso a la universidad, mis primeros contactos con el idioma, yo creo que tiene que ver mucho tanto con tu perspectiva como con los maestros, yo al inicio no me gustaba lo hacía por el requisito. Digamos, lo hacía por lo que se necesitaba en el entorno laboral. Recientemente, yo creo que hace 2 años a lo mucho o tres, me empezó a gustar y ya lo hacía por gusto. Ya no lo hacía pensando en un requisito laboral o para viajar, sino lo hacía por gusto. Pero tiene que ver con que entré a un instituto de Anglo, que ahí una maestra tenía dinámicas más divertidas, menos tediosas y me cultivó ese gusto por aprender el idioma. Y también con la última maestra, que actualmente curso el inglés es de la misma manera. Entonces yo creo que ya dejé de un lado el pensar en el inglés como un requisito nada más, sino también por gusto.

I: ¿Entonces actualmente porque estás tomando inglés? ¿Por gusto o por requisito?

JP: Por ambos, puedo considerar que por ambos. Primero por gusto, y al final de cuentas, me ayuda al requisito para crecer laboralmente, pero por ambos podríamos decir.

I: ¿Entonces crees que hablar inglés sería útil en tu vida?

JP: Sí, ya cambió mi perspectiva.

I: ¿Me podrías dar ejemplos específicos? Ya me hablaste de tu situación económica que podría mejorar por conseguir un mejor trabajo. También te interesa porque podría ampliar tus contactos sociales. ¿Tienes algún otro ejemplo que te gustaría añadir o solo serían estos ejemplos los que sientes que serían útiles en tu vida?

JP: Pues yo creo que va de la mano con lo social. Primero, porque he conocido personas de otros lados en chats internacionales y crea como un lazo. Entonces el inglés, aparte de que lo vas practicando, creas como ese tipo de conexiones en otros países donde puedes digamos llegar a conocer a la persona físicamente y ya abrirte ese panorama de tener a donde llegar. Lo he hecho con dos personas puntuales, es a través del inglés, o sea, porque no con español. Creo que es un buen ejemplo de para qué te sirve el inglés porque te crea

conexiones tanto culturales y por qué no en un futuro, a lo mejor estudiar un posgrado en otro país.

I: ¿Alguna vez te has sentido resentido porque se espera que aprendas inglés? O sea, estamos en un país que es totalmente de habla española. Bueno, también están incluidas las lenguas indígenas, pero son lenguas minoritarias. Entonces el español es la lengua oficial de México. ¿Te has sentido resentido porque se espera que aprendas inglés?

JP: Yo creo que sí. Al final de cuentas, bueno, ves a compañeros de trabajo y anteriormente en la universidad con ese tipo de...no sé si llamarle resentimiento o discriminación de que esperan ese tipo de cuestiones o sea que tú ya manejes el inglés. Retomando lo que le mencionaba, yo no estudié el idioma hasta entrar a la universidad y varios de mis compañeros ya lo manejaban porque de cierta forma ya lo habían estudiado en la prepa o estaban cursándolo en algún instituto. Entonces como que te exigían o esperaban eso de ti, que ya lo manejaras, que ya no preguntaras pues a lo mejor algo básico, y más porque los artículos de hoy en día, tanto laboralmente como en la licenciatura, vienen en inglés la mayoría, al menos en mi área. Entonces esperan eso, que traigas esa herramienta o esa cualidad si lo queremos ver así, y no la traía, entonces entraba en frustración, yo creo eso, no sé por qué, pues porque no traía ese antecedente.

I: Entonces te has sentido, según lo que me dices, ¿frustrado y discriminado porque se espera que aprendas inglés, porque se espera que ya lo hables?

JP: Exactamente. Yo creo que hoy en día esperan eso, yo creo, más desde niños. Pero sí, sí esperaban eso.

I: ¿Entonces sientes que la necesidad de aprender inglés alguna vez te ha frenado económica o socialmente? ¿Ha sido un freno para ti?

JP: Sí, en varias situaciones, sí.

I: ¿Me podrías dar algunos ejemplos?

JP: Claro, económicamente, en lo laboral, a lo mejor me he estancado, si lo queremos ver así porque yo he tomado varias clases de inglés, en diferentes institutos o con maestras y nunca he finalizado, nunca me he certificado. Entonces por ese tipo de aspectos nunca he podido crecer laboralmente o encontrar nuevas oportunidades porque siempre llevo como un nivel básico o intermedio, entonces económicamente ahí. Yo creo que me he estancado.

I: Desde el punto de vista laboral me dices, ¿verdad?

JP: Sí

I: ¿Y social?

JP: Pues situaciones puntuales, como muy chistosas. En viajes ya sea de vacaciones o en convenciones o congresos casualmente conoces personas de otros países que hablan inglés, me ha tocado tanto de Estados Unidos, pero también como de otras regiones como

Inglaterra. Entonces como que te frena para entablar una conversación a lo mejor no llegar a una contratación laboral, sino poder comunicarte, porque a mí lo que me pasaba o me pasa todavía un poco ahorita es que entiendes lo que te están diciendo, pero no puedes responder rápido, te quedas pensando qué responder y como que las personas también se desesperan “pues lo veo que me entiende, pero no sabe qué responder”. Hay varias oportunidades donde me pedían instrucciones de dónde está esto o en dónde puedo encontrar esto y pues no respondía.

I: ¿Entonces cómo te hace sentir esto?

JP: Pues no frustrado, pero sí un poco desesperado, de no poder tener una conversación fluida si no nada más recibir la información, pero no responder, no poder conversar con esa persona por mucho que uno quiera.

I: Me dijiste que no estás certificado, ¿verdad? Que han pasado varios cursos, pero nunca lo has concluido y por tanto nunca has obtenido una certificación, ¿me decías eso?

JP: Sí, la última vez ya había llegado al curso de preparación para TOEFL donde ya no ves gramática sino *tips*. Pero no, ese curso nunca lo terminé y ya no pude certificarme.

I: ¿Y por qué es que sientes la necesidad de certificarte?

JP: Primero, bueno, yo creo que la única razón es la cuestión laboral porque algunos trabajos te piden una certificación. De manera personal, no lo vería como una necesidad, sino hablarlo, comunicarme, pero sí en la cuestión laboral, sí es necesario certificarte.

I: ¿Entonces no basta con hablar inglés en el plano laboral o pasar una entrevista en inglés? ¿Tienes que obligatoriamente presentar una certificación?

JP: Sí, en dos empresas en particular he visto este tipo de cuestiones. Una se llama ...y la otra se llama...ahí sí es forzoso la certificación. En algunas otras, o sea pocas, pero sí hay algunas donde nada más te piden inglés avanzado, pero no te enuncian como tal una certificación, nada más te piden inglés avanzado, que me imagino que es pasar la entrevista. Bueno, eso es lo que yo esperaría porque no te pide alguna certificación en particular.

I: No te piden el papel, por así decirlo.

JP: No, pero en otras sí.

I: ¿Entonces tienes pensado en algún momento certificarte?

JP: Sí.

I: ¿Por esta necesidad que me comentabas para mejorar tu situación laboral, tu sueldo?

JP: Sí.

I: Pero si fuera por opción personal, no. Es lo que entendí. ¿Es así?

JP: Si no fuera de la mano, digámoslo así, conseguir un empleo y la certificación, pues no es de que me conformaría, pero mi objetivo sería mejor hablarlo bien, tener mucho vocabulario y entablar una conversación dejando de lado la certificación.

I: ¿Cuáles son tus opiniones, tus sentimientos más honestos, más sinceros sobre la necesidad de aprender inglés?

JP: ¿Mis sentimientos? Yo creo que algo ha evolucionado demasiado actualmente, lo digo porque ya desde niños, o al menos en varias escuelas públicas, pensando en particular en una prima, les enseñan desde la primaria y yo creo que eso es bueno, o sea, mis sentimientos al día de hoy yo creo que entre más te prepares desde más chico, mejores oportunidades vas a tener en el futuro, en la universidad, laboralmente. Entonces yo creo que ya es una necesidad, el inglés ya no es una opción como antes, como hace algunos años. Que era como, no sé si llamarlo elitista, pero era más difícil el acceso a ese tipo de educación. Creo que ahorita ha sido más accesible y, por ende, también la mayoría de las personas mínimo ya tienen un nivel. Bueno, no sé si todas, no sé cuánto porcentaje en México, pero, no sé cómo se diga, anglicismos que manejamos aquí. Entonces ya mínimo las personas tienen, yo creo, que palabras así, como *money*, como ese tipo de cosas más arraigadas. Entonces un básico, digámoslo así.

I: ¿Entonces tu opinión es que el inglés es necesario?

JP: Sí, ya no es como una opción más.

Appendix B.3 Participant 3 (Jaycee)

I = Interviewer

J = Jaycee

I: Primeramente, me gustaría preguntarte, ¿crees que es importante aprender inglés en estos días?

J: Sí

I: ¿Por qué?

J: Porque considero que el inglés es el idioma principal a nivel mundial, que es el que más se habla o uno de los que más se habla y definitivamente si quieres ser una persona competitiva a nivel mundial, ya no solo en tu país o ciudad tienes que estudiar inglés.

I: ¿Entonces, crees que hablar inglés te permite comunicarte mejor en tu entorno social o laboral?

J: Sí

I: ¿Por qué?

J: Bueno, en mi trabajo regularmente lo utilizo, de hecho, lo utilizo un 85% del día y definitivamente, bueno, personalmente, considero que hay una gran brecha entre las personas que no hablan inglés y las personas que sí hablan. Yo diría que es demasiada esa brecha.

I: ¿Una brecha de qué tipo? ¿Me podrías explicar?

J: Una brecha de oportunidades. Una brecha de ideología también, de la oportunidad de conocer otras lenguas y por supuesto una brecha económica. También una brecha donde pudieras tener la oportunidad de trabajar para otros lugares que no fueran exactamente el lugar dónde naciste o dónde vives actualmente.

I: Cuando me hablas de brecha de oportunidades, ¿a qué oportunidades te refieres?

J: Me refiero básicamente a profesionales, pero también a una mejor calidad de vida, más fácilmente. Definitivamente no porque no hables inglés no puedas acceder a una, pero definitivamente facilita demasiado ese proceso.

I: ¿Entonces crees que hablar inglés puede crear oportunidades sociales y mejorar la situación económica de las personas que lo hablan?

J: Facilitar el acceso, sí.

I: ¿En tu experiencia, te ha ayudado a crear más oportunidades sociales, a mejorar tu situación económica?

J: Sí, claro.

I: ¿Puedes expandir esta idea?

J: Inicialmente cuando no hablaba inglés, ya tengo tiempo estudiándolo, mi sueldo, no sé, máximo pudiera ser una cuarta parte de lo que actualmente estoy ganando. Sí considero que si hablas inglés, independientemente de tus estudios, puedes acceder a que las empresas apuesten un poco más económicamente por ti.

I: ¿Entonces quieres aprender inglés, o sea, mejorar tu inglés en tu caso, desde una perspectiva verdaderamente personal?

J: Es correcto.

I: ¿Entonces es por esta razón que estás tomando clases de inglés o alguna otra razón que te motive?

J: Es completamente personal. Una, soy una persona sumamente competitiva, siempre estoy buscando qué estudiar, qué aprender, cuál es la tendencia en cuanto a información económica, tecnológica, intelectual. Lo que sea. Me gusta mucho estudiar, me gusta actualizarme en información y por supuesto, algo que también he notado mucho, es que muchas de las investigaciones están a veces solo en inglés, información muy valiosa, *papers*, están en inglés, entonces también considero que por la parte intelectual facilita mucho.

I: ¿Para acceder a la información que está en inglés?

J: Es correcto

I: Entonces ya sé que me hablaste un poco sobre tus oportunidades desde que empezaste a aprender la lengua, cómo tu salario se cuadruplicó. ¿Tienes algún otro ejemplo que me pudieras dar de cómo hablar inglés ha sido en tu vida o sería útil si lo perfeccionas?

J: Bueno básicamente después de la situación que estamos viviendo actualmente a nivel mundial, muchos trabajos, por ejemplo, se van a mover a la modalidad de *home office* y definitivamente aquí se abre una oportunidad para que puedas trabajar, ya no solo para México o para EE.UU., sino que desde tu propia casa puedes trabajar para cualquier otra parte del mundo y nuevamente, regreso al punto inicial donde mencionaba que el inglés es uno de los idiomas principales y que definitivamente aunado a la situación actual del *home office* o el teletrabajo, te va a dar muchas oportunidades para que trabajes desde casa.

I: O sea, desde tu punto de vista sería útil desde la perspectiva laboral, la perspectiva para acceder a información. Muy bien. ¿Sientes o alguna vez te has resentido porque se espera en algún punto de tu vida que aprendas inglés?

J: No que aprenda, pero sí que ya lo sepa.

I: ¿Me podrías explicar un poco más esta situación? ¿Qué ocurrió?

J: Vivo muy cerca de Estados Unidos, por lo tanto, es muy común aquí que las personas sepan inglés o que en las compañías de repente vengan personas de fuera, crucen el puente

y se regresen. Entonces hablando de una ocasión, tuve la oportunidad de escuchar a una persona que no hablaba nada de español y para mí fue un momento sumamente vergonzoso, y lo digo abiertamente, que se dirigiera directamente a mí, confiando en mis habilidades intelectuales y yo no fuera capaz, siquiera de responder lo que él me estaba diciendo. Entonces no voy a decir que perdí la oportunidad, pero definitivamente pude haberlo hecho directamente.

I: ¿Este suceso fue en México o Estados Unidos?

J: México

I: ¿Y me podrías decir por qué te sentiste mal? ¿Si estando en México se esperaba que tú hablaras inglés y no él, español?

J: Sí, porque era sumamente laboral. Yo aún me encontraba estudiando y tuve la oportunidad de laborar prácticas en una empresa internacional donde se me dio la oportunidad de acceder a cierto nivel de la empresa y en una de las visitas de corporativo, una persona se dirige directamente a mí para hablar algo acerca de mi trabajo, de cómo estaba llevando a cabo la información, de cómo estaba llevando a cabo el análisis y a pesar de que era mi trabajo, yo no fui capaz de responderle, ni siquiera entendí qué me estaba diciendo.

I: ¿Entonces se suponía que tú hablaras inglés ya para trabajar ahí?

J: No necesariamente, pero me hubiera ayudado mucho en ese momento.

I: ¿No piensas que esa persona debía haber hablado español si estaba en México?

J: No, es lo mismo que si yo voy a otro lugar espero que los demás me entiendan. La persona no venía buscando quién hablaba, quién hablaba, simplemente se estaba dirigiendo a alguien y la persona no fue capaz de entenderlo.

I: ¿Entonces si fueras a Francia, a Alemania esperarías que los franceses y los alemanes hablaran español?

J: No tanto, pero si no sé alemán, definitivamente voy a tratar de hablar español y esperar que alguien pueda entenderme.

I: ¿Entonces alguna vez te has sentido discriminada, social o profesionalmente porque tu inglés no es lo suficientemente avanzado?

J: Sí.

I: ¿Me puedes poner ejemplos de qué pasó?

J: En mi segundo trabajo yo solamente me dedicaba al área de análisis de información. En ningún momento se hablaba inglés. Sin embargo, yo deseaba tener la oportunidad de acceder a un nivel más alto en cuanto a mi desarrollo profesional ya que era muy temprano, pero yo quería ir avanzando lo más rápido posible de nivel profesional, vaya, yo aún estaba estudiando y yo ya quería salir estudiada, pero con lo importante, aunque fuera recién

graduada. Entonces se abre la oportunidad de trabajar como *customer service* y tenía que hablar un mínimo de un 80% de inglés. Debido al puesto que yo desarrollaba, yo era una de las candidatas. Sin embargo, al llegar a la entrevista en inglés, a pesar de que mi inglés ya no era tan malo como al principio porque ya me encontraba estudiando, prefirieron darle la oportunidad a una persona que habla inglés nativo a pesar de que sus conocimientos en cuanto al desarrollo de información no eran tan buenos.

I: Y entonces ahí fue que te sentiste discriminada.

J: Sí, claro que sí.

I: Una pregunta, ¿tienes pensado tomar algún examen para certificarse en inglés, una vez que termines con las clases de inglés?

J: Sí, y, de hecho, tengo entendido que cada dos años pierde validez, por ejemplo, el TOEFL y la verdad como bien lo dije me gusta mucho siempre estar estudiando, siempre estar actualizada. Entonces, ¿qué más me representa que estar tomando certificaciones en su debido tiempo?

I: ¿Por qué sientes que es necesario tomar una certificación? ¿Por qué no te basta con saber inglés?

J: Porque en el mundo de la industria los datos hablan. No importa qué tan bien puedas desarrollar una conversación, si no tienes cómo comprobarlo. Por ejemplo, si comparo el hablar el idioma inglés con una persona que estudió mecatrónica que tiene el conocimiento, pero no tiene certificado, ¡vaya! Por ejemplo, lo llevo al área de seguridad, puedes decir que sabes manejar un montacargas, por ejemplo, donde ponen vidas en riesgo, si no saben hacerlo de la manera correcta. Entonces independientemente que sepas y que seas capaz de comprobarlo con conocimiento, si no tienes un papel que te certifique llegas a generar algún accidente, la empresa directamente puede meterse en problemas, incluso legales, porque no contrató a alguien que comprobara sus habilidades con algún estudio previo.

I: Entonces crees que las certificaciones son importantes, no basta con el conocimiento, sino también hay que tomar la certificación, pagar por ella. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

J: Estoy de acuerdo

I: ¿Cada dos años?

J: Hablando de inglés, no forzosamente cada dos años, pero sí estar constantemente realizando no sé alguna certificación de *listening* o alguna certificación de algo que te lleve a comprobar que sigues estudiando inglés o que durante cierto periodo estuviste actualizando, de hecho, es la palabra que estoy buscando, el actualizar la información. De nada te sirve haber estudiado algo si a los 2 años, 3 años no lo volviste a retomar, no sirve un papel que no tiene validez a la hora de la práctica.

I: ¿Crees que el inglés debería ser obligatorio en México?

J: Y en el mundo. Definitivamente aquí donde vivo es la creencia que se tiene, no sé si es cultural.

I: ¿Dónde vives?

J: En Tamaulipas.

I: Ese es un estado fronterizo con Estados Unidos, ¿cierto?

J: Es correcto, frontera con Estados Unidos. En empresas siempre se ha dicho que el inglés es el idioma a nivel mundial, entonces ¿por qué negarles a los mexicanos algo que puede abrirles las puertas en todo el mundo cuando lo que queremos es que se desarrollen?

I: ¿Entonces crees que sería negárselo a los mexicanos o imponérselo?

J: Negárselo. Definitivamente hay temas como economía, como el manejo del SAT donde las escuelas no te los enseñan o el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico, por ejemplo, no hay ninguna materia. Y los niños crecen con una ideología, donde vas a la escuela y te lo aprendes, no vas a la escuela, lo analizas y empiezas a vivirlo,

I: Entonces desde tu punto de vista debería ser obligatorio el inglés

J: Sí.

I: Entonces última pregunta. ¿Cuáles son tus opiniones y sentimientos más honestos sobre la necesidad de aprender inglés?

J: El inglés y bien hay un dicho muy conocido, creo yo que dice que el inglés te abre muchas puertas. Creo que el inglés al igual que las matemáticas te abren demasiadas puertas. Si bien en algún momento llega a cambiar, bueno. Pero definitivamente actualmente, el inglés es uno de los idiomas más importantes. Entonces una persona que no sepa inglés es una persona que, aunque quiera, va a batallar más para desarrollarse a nivel profesional y a nivel mundial, aunque tengas una empresa pequeña, aunque tengas un negocio pequeño. Si quieres hacerlo crecer internacionalmente vas a necesitar a alguien que hable inglés.

Appendix B.4 Participant 4 (Carrie)

I = Interviewer

C = Carrie

I: ¿Crees que es importante aprender inglés en estos días?

C: Totalmente, de acuerdo, sí, muy.

I: ¿Por qué?

C: Porque ya estamos muy globalizados y entonces es como el idioma universal. A donde vayas se habla inglés, en el trabajo, en todos lados.

I: ¿Entonces crees que hablar inglés te permitiría comunicarte mejor en tu entorno social o laboral?

C: Sí, sin duda, o sea entre mejor hables inglés, más oportunidades tienes de crecer en cualquier trabajo.

I: ¿Me puedes poner algunos ejemplos?

C: No sé, si me tienen que mandar a una capacitación o a dar una presentación, a X parte de Estados Unidos, necesito hablar inglés. Si me toca ir a una expo o a una feria en Alemania, tengo que hablar inglés que es como el idioma universal. Hay muchos tecnicismos, al menos en la industria en la que trabajo, todo es en inglés.

I: ¿En qué industria trabajas?

C: Automotriz, pero en el tema de blindaje de autos.

I: ¿Entonces crees que hablar inglés te ayudaría a mejorar tu situación económica?

C: Sí, definitivamente sí, te abres más puertas. No sé si en esta industria porque aquí el blindaje de coches no es algo que se venda mucho en América del Norte llámese Estados Unidos, Canadá o Europa, pero sí se vende o sea vendemos mucho a Medio Oriente y son negociaciones que entre mejor hables inglés mejor las puedes cerrar.

I: ¿Entonces cómo ayudaría hablar inglés a mejorar tu situación económica?

C: Tendría más apertura en nuevos negocios en otras partes del mundo, oportunidad de vender más.

I: ¿Entonces crees que hablar inglés, aparte de lo que me comentas de la económica y laboral, crearía más oportunidades sociales para ti?

C: Sin duda, o sea, podría comunicarme mejor con gente o sea personas de otras partes, ¿no? Sin ningún problema.

I: ¿Entonces quieres aprender inglés desde una perspectiva verdaderamente personal?

C: Sí, completamente, sí. Mira yo llevo estudiando inglés toda mi vida, como te había comentado cuando empezamos las clases. Pero por X o por Y no practicas todo el tiempo y se te olvida y cuando te das cuenta dices “no se me puede olvidar” porque es algo que socialmente para mí es muy importante. En todas las mesas en México es muy común el *spanglish*. Con mis amigas del Norte todas hablan más inglés que español. Entonces no puedes quedarte abajo de eso, creo yo.

I: ¿Entonces es por eso por lo que estás tomando clases de inglés o hay algún otro motivo?

C: Por mí, por estar más segura y cómoda en cualquier entorno tanto laboral como social.

I: ¿Entonces, sí crees que hablar inglés sería útil en tu vida?

C: Sí, sin duda sí

I: ¿Alguna vez te has sentido resentida porque se espera que aprendas inglés?

C: Pues no resentida, sino, pues es que en mi caso ha tenido que ser así, porque tengo esa relación con el inglés desde muy chiquita. Ya lo mío ha sido: hablaba, después no hablaba, después lo dejé. O sea, no resentida, más bien como un deber ser.

I: ¿Entonces lo sientes como si fuera un deber?

C: Totalmente, sí

I: ¿Entonces crees que esta necesidad de aprender inglés y hablarlo alguna vez te ha frenado económica o socialmente? ¿Ha sido un freno para ti porque no lo hablas totalmente avanzado?

C: No, no, no, porque no sé qué pasa, pero cuando estoy en un tema social, soy más fluida y no he tenido una complicación por eso.

I: ¿Entonces con tu nivel de inglés nunca te ha frenado?

C: Pues no, porque puedo salir, ¿sabes? No estoy en señas. Si tengo que prepararme para una presentación, me la aprendo de memoria, ya sé qué decir. Si tengo que irme de viaje, sé pedir en un restaurante perfecto, en un avión no es complicado. Si estoy en una mesa sé dónde entrar y qué decir. O sea, sí la puedo librar. Pero está más padre fluir muy bien para que la seguridad esté mejor.

I: ¿Alguna vez te has sentido discriminada social o profesionalmente porque tu inglés no es lo suficientemente avanzado?

C: Sí.

I: ¿Me puedes poner los ejemplos en los que te has sentido así?

C: Pero por mí, no porque la gente me diga algo. Para mi entorno es como un *must*, debes hablar perfectamente inglés, ¡siempre! Tu pronunciación tiene que ser muy buena. El mexicano, si no pronuncia bien las palabras en inglés es mal visto. Si llega un francés y

habla mal inglés no es mal visto o un español que habla mal inglés. Pero un mexicano que pronuncia mal inglés, se lo comen vivo.

I: ¿Y sabes por qué ocurre esto cuando en México la lengua oficial es el español? Bueno aparte de las lenguas indígenas, pero el español es la más hablada.

C: Uno, por la cercanía con Estados Unidos y dos, porque vas a colegios bilingües como yo. No se perdona que pronuncies mal o con ese acento latino, que la gente de Hollywood lo hace, eso se ve muy mal.

I: ¿Entonces asististe a colegios bilingües cuando eras chica?

C: Toda la vida. Sí, te digo que lo mío está mal. O sea, toda la vida, en la UDLAP llevaba la mitad de mis materias en inglés. He hecho el TOEFL como tres veces.

I: ¿Entonces crees que el inglés debería ser obligatorio, o sea como parte del currículo, en las escuelas mexicanas?

C: Sí, totalmente, y lo es en todas las privadas.

I: ¿En las privadas dijiste? ¿En las públicas no?

C: No sé las públicas, pero me imagino que han de dar un inglés muy básico. Imagino.

I: ¿Y por qué crees que tenga que ser obligatorio cuando en México se habla español?

C: Porque México es un país súper agringado y muchas cosas.

I: ¿Agringado? ¿Qué significa esto?

C: Tenemos mucho la influencia de Estados Unidos, entonces mucho de nuestro vocabulario es *spanglish* y en ciertas regiones del país es mucho más marcada. Por ejemplo, en el norte, tú te sientas con mis amigas norteadas y te mueres. Desde mi punto de vista, no está bien el hablar *spanglish*, o hablas español o hablas inglés. lo otro es algo que no está bien. Culturalmente, no debería estar bien, pero sí está bien, como *cool*, pero una persona muy estudiada lo ve como lo peor. Te puedo decir una frase, déjame pensar: Güey, ¿viste la *movie*? Está súper *cool*. ¿Viste el *outfit* de la chava? Está increíble.

I: Sí te entiendo, lo he escuchado. Bueno, ¿entonces tienes pensado al terminar el curso de inglés y así o en un futuro tomar algún examen para certificarte en inglés? Me dijiste que ya has tomado TOEFL tres veces. ¿Por qué has hecho esto?

C: Lo he tenido que tomar por la escuela. Uno fue en la escuela. Otro lo tomé para entrar a la universidad. Luego otro lo tomé cuando terminé la universidad porque me quería ir a estudiar a una universidad en Estados Unidos. Un intercambio o algo quería.

I: ¿Y las veces anteriores que lo tomaste por qué fue? ¿Era un requisito?

C: Sí, y para entrar a la UDLAP. Porque cuando entras a la UDLAP te dicen vamos a ver si entras a qué nivel de inglés o ya pasas a estudiar otro idioma. Yo entré al más alto de inglés un semestre y después me metí a francés. Pero luego dejas de practicar totalmente y ya, no sabes nada.

I: ¿Y cómo te sientes con respecto al hecho de que no basta con saber inglés o no baste con demostrar tus conocimientos de inglés, sino que además tienes que presentar una certificación, o sea un papel que diga que tú sabes inglés, y el nivel de inglés que tienes? ¿cómo te sientes?

C: ¿Sabes qué? Yo tengo un tema, porque esos exámenes los paso, porque estudio y me preparo y todo. Pero tengo más temas con la fluidez de hablar que con los exámenes. Para mí, está bien porque los paso con un puntaje decente. Porque me preparo para eso. Me preocupa más, y es para mí más importante, hablarlo que presentar la certificación sinceramente.

I: Y estas certificaciones, según entiendo nunca te han frenado para estudios o nada aquí en México. ¿Es así?

C: No, no frenado, pero por ejemplo estas certificaciones, hay escuelas donde no te dejan graduarte si no presentas el examen. En la universidad, la gente que no había hecho el TOEFL, lo presentaba para poderse graduar. O hay carreras donde tenías que pasarlo con cierto porcentaje de puntos para poder entrar a esa carrera.

I: ¿Y qué crees con respecto a esto? ¿Que sea obligatorio para graduarse de la universidad en un país donde el habla es española? ¿Por qué crees que esto es obligatorio?

C: Yo creo que sí debe ser obligatorio porque México es un país tercermundista y parte de los países de primer mundo es que la gente habla más de un idioma. Entonces estaría increíble que México en su educación pudiera hacer que todos los habitantes del país hablen una segunda lengua. Y que se tenga que presentar exámenes y certificaciones, que la gente se tenga que preparar. O sea, para mí se me hace una muy buena idea.

I: ¿Entonces estás de acuerdo con esto?

C: Sí, claro

I: Bueno, última pregunta. ¿Cuáles son tus opiniones y sentimientos más honestos sobre la necesidad de aprender inglés en la actualidad?

C: Es de pertenencia el tema.

I: ¿De pertenencia? ¿Puedes explicar un poco esto?

C: Sí, no puedes estar en una tribu en donde todos hablan inglés, por tribu me refiero a un grupo social donde te mueves, y tú no. O sea, tienes que formar parte de tu preparación y pues sí, el trabajo. O sea, las habilidades que te puede dar esto para poder crecer y avanzar más.

I: ¿Entonces para ti aprender inglés es algo positivo?

C: Sí, sin duda. Positivo, muy positivo.

Appendix B.5 Participant 5 (Ryan)

I = Interviewer

R = Ryan

I: ¿Crees que es importante aprender inglés en la actualidad?

R: Sí es importante.

I: ¿Por qué?

R: Porque nos abre las fronteras a otros países y poder comunicarnos con otras personas, bien visitando algún otro país, ya que es la lengua que más se habla en el mundo y nos abre fronteras para cuando tú estás buscando algún trabajo, pues poder prepararte con algún diplomado algún curso que a lo mejor ese ponente es una persona de alguna parte del mundo, pero habla inglés y tú estás interesado en tomar el curso que está impartiendo este ponente, pero si no sabes inglés, ¿cómo te vas a poder preparar? Entonces considero que el inglés es hoy en día es fundamental en nuestras vidas como profesionistas y creo que también como crecimiento personal.

I: ¿Crees que hablar inglés, aprender inglés, te permitiría comunicarte mejor en tu entorno social y laboral?

R: Claro que sí. Abriría mis oportunidades en una empresa porque me podría mandar a lo mejor el área en el que me desempeño a poder representarla a otro país o mandarme algún curso de capacitación y ser un mejor empleado o destacar como jefe de área, no sé, eso es lo que equivale.

I: ¿En qué te desempeñas?

R: Yo tengo un negocio propio y fabricamos sales minerales para el ganado y distribuimos sales blancas. Soy intermediario de sal blanca para la elaboración del queso. Y soy piloto comercial y estudié licenciatura en administración de empresas.

I: ¿Crees que hablar inglés te ayudaría a mejorar tu situación económica?

R: Por supuesto y estoy totalmente convencido de que lo es. Mi primera carrera como lo mencioné soy licenciado en administración de empresas y eso me ha ayudado a poder crear y poderle dar las bases a mi negocio y poderlo llevar a mantener centro de mercado en estos 11 años que hemos estado trabajando, pero mi sueño siempre había sido ser piloto comercial y si yo no domino el inglés, yo no voy a poder desempeñar mi profesión como un piloto comercial porque es parte fundamental para poder entender el proceso de operación de una máquina y también dentro de los espacios aéreos todo se maneja en inglés. Entonces creo que es algo fundamental en nuestra vida profesional.

I: ¿Crees que hablar inglés, aparte de lo que me comentas de tu situación económica, te podría crear más oportunidades sociales?

R: Por supuesto, tomando como referencia lo de la carrera como piloto comercial, claro que sí. Estoy convencido que voy a ganar más dinero, mis ingresos van a incrementar, voy a conocer más gente más preparada que yo que me va a contribuir en mi preparación profesional y personal y creo y estoy convencido que esa línea que marca el saber inglés y el no saber inglés estoy convencido que me va a ir muy bien, por eso es la necesidad de aprender esta lengua.

I: ¿Entonces también quieres aprender inglés desde una perspectiva verdaderamente personal?

R: Claro, definitivamente personal, como empezar a conocer esta lengua y porque me quiero desarrollar profesionalmente lo mejor posible y en mi caso como piloto porque quiero ser un piloto seguro para los pasajeros que llegue a transportar

I: ¿Entonces es esta la razón por la que estás tomando clases de inglés?

R: Es la razón por la cual, porque quiero crecer personal y profesionalmente.

I: ¿Alguna vez te has sentido resentido porque se espera que aprendas inglés?

R: Sí por supuesto, en particular me considero una persona que me cuesta mucho trabajo entender el inglés y he tomado muchos cursos de inglés y a veces siento que avanzo, no avanzo, pero sí, más de una vez, quiero ser sincero, me he sentido resentido y frustrado con el idioma, conmigo mismo, a veces culpaba al maestro, pero estoy convencido de que el maestro pone lo mejor de él, simplemente que yo no sé qué pasa conmigo, entonces sí lo he sentido muchas veces, muchas veces. Pero no quito el dedo del renglón como decimos coloquialmente. Yo soy una persona muy, muy constante entonces, yo no voy a dejar de estar queriendo aprender inglés día a día.

I: ¿Entonces sientes que esta necesidad de aprender inglés te ha frenado económica o socialmente?

R: Al momento, el día de hoy, no me ha frenado porque no he estado en un proceso de reclutamiento como tal para mi carrera como piloto comercial. Como dueño de una microempresa no utilizo el idioma porque mis clientes son de mi zona en México, ellos no hablan inglés, pero si me quiero desempeñar como piloto, el primer filtro que hay que pasar es una entrevista en inglés cuando me vaya yo a postular y creo esa va a ser mi primera frustración si no logro entablar una conversación con un reclutador.

I: Entiendo. ¿Entonces alguna vez te has sentido discriminado social o profesionalmente porque tu inglés no es lo suficientemente avanzado?

R: Sí, totalmente, solamente una vez me sentí discriminado. Viajaba yo de Roma a Holanda y antes de abordar el avión, yo con un familiar, la sobrecarga dio instrucciones antes del abordaje y yo no entendí pero la persona con la que iba sí entendía inglés. Entonces ella se acercó y le dijo “es que él no sabe inglés, pero yo te entendí yo le voy a explicar”. Y ella le mencionó que yo no podía abordar el avión porque yo no sabía inglés, entonces si pasaba una emergencia qué iba a pasar conmigo, cómo iba a entender los procesos de evacuación

de una aeronave. Y la verdad al principio sí me molesté, pero me sentí muy mal. Me sentí muy chiquito en ese momento, me dio mucha vergüenza sinceramente, me dio mucha vergüenza, pero pues eso me dio a regresar a México y pensar “tengo que estudiar” y eso siempre lo tengo presente, ese momento de mi vida lo tengo muy presente. Cada vez que me acuerdo me duele. Yo por eso todos los días busco algo, mi familia, mi esposa y mi hija saben inglés. Mi hija ya me rebasó. También esa es otra que me tiene...me da gusto porque es mi hija está en inglés obviamente, pero también me frustra porque es mi hija, es más chica que yo y ya me rebasó. Entonces esas son las dos situaciones.

I: Entonces han sido situaciones sociales. ¿Profesionalmente no te has sentido discriminado?

R: Profesionalmente no. Con la primera carrera y el negocio no, con la de piloto tampoco, solo he presentado un solo examen de certificación aeronáutica. Tomé un curso, afortunadamente lo pasé. Me preparé para ese curso, hubo una guía y bueno, lo presenté y porque estudié se me hizo fácil y lo pasé. Pero no me sentí discriminado.

I: ¿Fue un curso de inglés?

R: Sí, de inglés técnico aeronáutico.

I: ¿Entonces me dices que te certificaste en esto, pero cuentas con alguna certificación o tienes pensado tomar algún examen para certificarte en inglés?

R: Cuento hoy en día con una certificación en el medio de la aviación. Tenemos seis niveles de certificación en inglés. Es el inglés mundial técnico que se maneja, se maneja del 1 al 6 y dentro del 1 al 3 no eres operativo y tienes que volver a tomar el examen y prepararte otra vez para volver a tomar el examen. Dentro de los operativos son el 4, el 5 y el 6. Esta ocasión yo obtuve el número 4, entonces yo tengo que hacer el examen cada 3 años para poder conservar esa capacidad de nivel 4 nivel técnico o así dentro de la aviación.

I: Es una certificación técnica. De otro tipo de certificaciones, dígame TOEFL, IELTS Cambridge, ¿de esas no tienes pensado tomar?

R: Sí quiero tomarlo porque quisiera tener una certificación mundial para poder llevarlo en mi currículum.

I: ¿Esta certificación para qué crees que te serviría, para tu currículum para encontrar trabajo?

R: Sí, para mi currículum. Como preparación personal y creo que al estar plasmado en mi currículum voy a demostrar que tengo dominio de la lengua.

I: Muy bien, entonces última pregunta. ¿Cuáles son tus opiniones y sentimientos más honestos sobre la necesidad de aprender inglés?

R: Considero que necesitamos aprender inglés si queremos primeramente como profesionales crecer. Si somos personas que día a día tenemos la misión de ser mejores tanto personalmente como profesional y considero que manejar o tener conocimiento de

esta lengua nos va a ayudar a abrir fronteras con personas, con trabajo, con alguna oportunidad que nos espera en un futuro y poder crecer nuevamente, aunque redunde tanto personal como profesional. Nosotros estamos en un puesto y gracias al inglés, podemos irnos a trabajar... a lo mejor la empresa tiene una sucursal en otro país y nos van a pagar el doble. Entonces gracias a esa lengua vamos a poder mejorar nuestra economía y abrirnos posibilidades de mejorar nuestra vida. Esa sería mi opinión.

Appendix B.6 Participant 6 (Dana)

I = Interviewer

D = Dana

I: Primero me gustaría saber, ¿crees que es importante aprender inglés en estos días?

D: Claro, por supuesto.

I: ¿Por qué?

D: Estadísticamente está demostrado que aumenta en un 40% la posibilidad de conseguir un mejor empleo. En mi caso yo estudié, tengo una licenciatura en lo que es comercio internacional por lo que conlleva a tener que aprender y saber idiomas para poderme comunicar con proveedores, con las personas, con los clientes del medio en el que voy a estar interactuando. Entonces, como te comento es para mi carrera indispensable sin embargo para otros campos, otras ciencias de igual manera creo que es totalmente importante porque te abre a conocer distintas culturas, e incluso a las personas al poderte comunicar con ellas, con estos distintos idiomas, que no sean tu lengua natal, obviamente te abre las puertas a nuevas oportunidades

I: ¿Entonces crees que hablar inglés y aprender inglés te permitiría comunicarte mejor en tu entorno social y laboral como me comentas?

D: Es correcto,

I: Ya me comentabas un poco del tema laboral, ¿cómo crees que te permitiría comunicarte mejor en tu entorno social?

D: En mi entorno social es para poder tener mejores oportunidades, como te comentaba, es decir, el tú poder hablar inglés, creo que en cualquier lugar que tú vayas, incluso ser tan solo bilingüe, pues destacas al solamente poder hablar un idioma, hay diversidad. Te pueden ofrecer crecimiento y desarrollo personal. También el tener la facilidad o el hablar tal cual dos idiomas, creo que también de igual manera agiliza tu mente. Entonces es una capacidad que incluso no todos la tienen, no a todos se nos da.

I: Entonces me dices que no a todos se nos da. ¿Te incluyes en ese grupo que según tú “no se les da”?

D: Pues más o menos me es difícil. Incluso por la cuestión que yo estoy estudiando es porque sé que el día de mañana me sirve, se me dificulta, desde que académicamente que me daban la clase de inglés, era como de poca importancia, yo tenía poco interés. Sin embargo, como te comenté, puedes tener un mejor sueldo, mejores oportunidades de poder que te den un trabajo fuera del país, de igual manera personalmente ya el día que tú desees viajar, tienes la forma de poderte comunicar. Imagínate ir a algún país y tener otros idiomas, es como te mueves. Es puertas abiertas, conocer de todo.

I: ¿Entonces quieres aprender inglés desde una perspectiva verdaderamente personal o por trabajo?

D: No, personal. Sí, desde poder cantar, poder comunicarme con la gente, salir como turista a algún otro lado y poder comunicarme con la gente, hacer petición, ir a algún restaurante y poderme comunicar y que me entiendan, sería una idea fabulosa para mí.

I: ¿Entonces es por esta razón que estás tomando clases de inglés o tienes más razones aparte?

D: Es correcto, es todo en general. Te digo cuestión personal, cuestión de crecimiento laboral, para agilizar la mente. Creo que mi idea de igual manera es no quedarme siempre con algo, si no tomar cursos de todo, así sea de cómputo, de inglés, etcétera todo, todo, todo es de aprendizaje y qué mejor que distintos idiomas para conocer también la cultura.

I: Me hablas de distintos idiomas, ¿entonces estás aprendiendo otros idiomas aparte del inglés?

D: Apenas voy comenzando. Acabo de terminar la carrera y ahorita ya me voy a dar el tiempo necesario al 100% en idiomas. Mínimo, mínimo dos o tres idiomas que se me dé la oportunidad. Digo, sí se me hace algo complejo mas no imposible, sí debe ser muy complejo, pero con las ganas se va a poder.

I: Perfecto. ¿Entonces alguna vez te has resentido porque se espera que aprendas inglés?

D: ¿Cómo?

I: O sea, ¿en algún momento te has sentido resentida porque se espera que aprendas o que ya hables el inglés? ¿Alguien ha esperado eso de ti y te has sentido resentida de cierta forma?

D: Conmigo misma, pude haberlo hecho desde muy atrás, de cuando ya me daban la oportunidad. Como te lo comenté, en mis escuelas desde la primaria yo ya llevaba inglés y no le puse el interés necesario hasta cuando ahorita ya de grande vi que realmente es de importancia. Yo decía pues el inglés es “ay, aquí no se habla inglés”. Entonces ya cuando lo ves a nivel crecimiento sí le tomas importancia. Entonces sí me lamento no haberlo puesto interés desde tiempo atrás porque incluso tuve la oportunidad de tener un *teacher* personal y no lo aproveché, pues no tenía el interés en ese entonces, pero sí tuve... Si pudiera haber tenido la oportunidad de ahorita estar más avanzada.

I: ¿Entonces crees que la necesidad de aprender inglés alguna vez te ha frenado económica o socialmente? ¿Ha sido un freno para ti?

D: No, yo misma me puse la barrera y creo que sí, ahorita es como un poquito más a nivel económico, porque si veo que en cualquier lugar donde tú puedas ayudarlos, a una empresa a traducir los idiomas, pues es muy bien pagado. Incluso no teniendo una licenciatura, pero en un *call center* algo por el estilo o tú traduciendo, tú recibiendo llamadas en inglés en otros idiomas es muy bien pagado porque muy poca gente aquí en México lo habla.

Entonces están escasas las oportunidades, están escasas las personas que hablan inglés, pues es mejor remunerado.

I: ¿Alguna vez te han discriminado social o profesionalmente porque tu inglés no es lo suficientemente avanzado?

D: Sí.

I: ¿Me puedes poner ejemplos de lo que ha pasado?

D: Sí, ejemplo ahorita, que ya estoy egresada de la licenciatura en comercio, yo ya estaba buscando mudarme de empleo y sí se me rechazó la oportunidad por cuestión de no tener mínimo el 50% de inglés.

I: ¿Y cómo te sentiste con respecto a eso?

D: Pues mal. Siento que si lo piden es porque hay gente de mi edad que ya lo habla, que ya lo domina, incluso un 80 o 100% pero nunca es tarde para poder aprender.

I: ¿Y entonces cuando termines tu curso de inglés tienes pensado tomar algún examen para certificarse en el idioma?

D: Sí, incluso este mes comienzo, este es mi primer curso que estoy tomando y pretendo acercarme a 2, 3 instituciones o profesores personales distintos. Creo que cada persona es excelente para poder enseñar, pero siempre se aprende algo distinto de alguien. Entonces sí pretendo 2, 3 personas más, empaparme muy bien, muy bien, muy bien, y de ahí obviamente certificarme porque todo ese diploma, pudiera decirse, te sirve a nivel laboral.

I: ¿Entonces crees que contar con una certificación es importante?

D: Sí

I: ¿Y cómo te sientes respecto a esto? ¿Qué piensas de que, para aplicar un trabajo, para culminar estudios, para titularte, para todos estos asuntos te pidan una certificación? O sea, no baste con que tú hables el inglés sino también tienes que invertir dinero, invertir recursos en tomar una certificación.

D: En primer punto, como lo mencionabas, en qué tan de acuerdo estoy con que pidan certificación, con que piden la experiencia o el hablar el inglés lo veo muy, muy, muy, muy bueno. Creo que a veces académicamente nos falta que nos exijan un poquito más. aquí en México nos hace falta que nos exijan un poquito más y pues qué mejor con mejores estudios, mejores preparaciones, idiomas. Te digo, es conocer la mente se agiliza, aprendes a tomar mejores decisiones, aprendes a poner a trabajar tu mente. Yo una vez le preguntaba a alguien que es bilingüe “y cuando tienes pensamientos, ¿los piensas en inglés o en español?”. Entonces tu mente ya solita agiliza a tener otras oportunidades, otras ideas. Entonces yo lo veo muy acertado, que las empresas te pidan tanta experiencia porque te ayudan a ti misma a exigirte. Entonces de eso estoy sumamente de acuerdo. Aunque ahorita se me están cerrando muchas puertas y muchas oportunidades por ello, creo que me están ayudando a exigirme a mí y de la parte de la certificación pues es literalmente un papel. Al

final del día, aunque tengas un título, tengas cédula o certificación en algo, no te avala que tú puedas ser bueno ejerciendo algo. Sin embargo, pues es tal cual un papel que te avala de algo. Pero creo que, aunque no tuvieras la certificación y lo hablaras al 100% pues no te quita nada.

I: ¿Entonces crees que deberían hacer que las certificaciones fueran algo obligatorio?

D: Eso sí se me hace algo un poco irrelevante, un papel.

I: ¿Irrelevante en qué sentido?

D: Irrelevante en la cuestión de que no fuese necesario, a lo mejor con un tipo de examen diagnóstico creo que les bastaría. Sin embargo, algunas empresas sí lo notarán como de gran importancia, a lo mejor como una titulación. Podrías haber tenido o tienes la experiencia en ingeniería, pero si no estás titulado es lo que más les pesa a las empresas, un papel, pero yo creo que sería poco relevante, pero estoy de acuerdo, para tener esta noción de ello.

I: Entonces última pregunta que me gustaría hacerte. ¿Cuáles son sus opiniones y sentimientos más honestos sobre la necesidad de aprender inglés?

D: Mi opinión más honesta sobre aprender inglés... Como te comentaba, en lo personal mi mayor avaricia es ganar bien. De hecho, yo anteriormente cuando iban a iniciar una licenciatura iba a escoger derecho. A mí siempre me ha gustado agilizarme. Me ha gustado trabajar con otras personas y con cuestiones nuevas, entonces dije, “¿sabes qué? El derecho o psicología no me van a dar para mucho. Yo necesito o mi idea es salir de aquí del estado o del país, entonces es aprendiendo idiomas y con esta carrera de comercio internacional pues ¿qué mejor?”. Al momento de relacionarte con gente tener un entorno de gente más de lo que tú eres es como te ayuda a crecer entonces en lo personal. Yo decidí estudiar inglés por cuestión laboral, pensé más en ello por cuestión de ganar más y de poder en algún momento trabajar en otro país, poder conocer otras cosas.