

# ENUNCIATIVE (IM)POSSIBILITIES ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE DISCOURSE OF PUBLICITY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTITUTES

(IM)POSSIBILIDADES ENUNCIATIVAS SOBRE A LÍNGUA INGLESA NO DISCURSO  
PUBLICITÁRIO DE INSTITUTOS DE IDIOMAS

(IM)POSIBILIDADES ENUNCIATIVAS SOBRE EL INGLÉS EN EL DISCURSO PUBLICITARIO DE  
INSTITUTOS DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS

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**ABSTRACT:** This work, based on the interface of the studies of Applied Linguistics, of Pecheutian Discourse Analysis and of Bakhtinian concepts of language, aims at analysing the discursive functioning of utterances about the English language in *websites* of private foreign language institutes. Our gesture of interpretation toward the *corpus* seeks to investigate how the *entrepreneurial capitalist discourse* relates to the discourse of *empowerment* and of *motivation* that obliterates and silences an entrepreneurial discursivity through its inscription in a didactic-pedagogic discursive formation, thus producing the effect that the institutes are mainly concerned with educational issues.

**KEYWORDS:** Applied Linguistics. English Language. Discourse of Publicity.

**RESUMO:** Este trabalho, fundamentado na interface dos estudos da Linguística Aplicada, da Análise do Discurso pecheutiana e de concepções bakhtinianas de linguagem, visa analisar o funcionamento discursivo de enunciados sobre a língua inglesa em *websites* de institutos de idiomas. Nosso gesto de interpretação em relação ao *corpus* busca investigar como o *discurso capitalista empresarial*

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se imbrica ao *discurso do empoderamento* e da *motivação* de forma a apagar e silenciar uma discursividade empresarial por meio da inscrição em uma formação discursiva didático-pedagógica, criando, assim, o efeito de que a preocupação principal dos institutos reside em questões educacionais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Linguística Aplicada. Língua Inglesa. Discurso Publicitário.

RESUMEN: Este trabajo, fundamentado en la interfaz de los estudios de la Lingüística Aplicada, del Análisis del Discurso pecheutiano y de concepciones bakhtinianas del lenguaje, tiene como objetivo analizar el funcionamiento discursivo de enunciados sobre la lengua inglesa en *websites* de institutos de idiomas. Nuestro gesto de interpretación del *corpus* busca investigar como el discurso capitalista empresarial se relaciona con el *discurso del empoderamiento* y de la *motivación* de forma a apagar y silenciar una discursividad empresarial por medio de la inscripción en una formación discursiva didáctica-pedagógica, creando, así, el efecto de que la preocupación más importante de los institutos está en las cuestiones educacionales.

PALABRAS-CLAVE: Lingüística Aplicada. Lengua Inglesa. Discurso Publicitario.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This work analyses the discursive functioning of utterances about the English language (EL), conveyed in language institutes advertisements available on their websites, which are not only an effective advertising tool but also enunciative spaces on which the institutes seek to publicize/sell their courses.

The objective of (re)considering the relation between foreign language and media is grounded in the premise that as media is “[...] the pillar of our days” (MOITA LOPES, 2006, p. 93), an “[...] enormous text of the present time” (PAYER, 2005), it is able to construct a social imaginary in which representations (such as mother tongue and foreign language, native/non-native speaker, student and teacher etc), are consolidated and ideologically and socio-historically legitimated.

Observing discursivities embedded in the advertising media context, whose main aim is to sell products, allows us to glimpse how the Institutional Media Discourse (IMD) for the teaching of second languages, as it was named by Guilherme (2004)<sup>1</sup>, signifies the language-subject-teaching-commodity. Furthermore, considering that “[...] the fantasy dimension, enchantment, imaginary relation, will always be present in the subject-commodity relation” (NERY, 2005, p. 14), it is possible to state that the IMD confirms the imaginary, long naturalized in Brazil, that language institutes are the spaces considered legitimized to learn foreign languages (BAGHIN-SPINELLI, 2002; CARMAGNANI, 2009; BRITO; GUILHERME, 2014). In other words, IMD analysis seems to be relevant as it may target the relation that the subject establishes with the foreign language to be taught and learned.

Based on an interface between Applied Linguistics (AL), Pecheutian Discourse Analysis, and the Bakhtinian concepts of language, we sought to understand in what discursive inscriptions the website advertisements may be circumscribed. Our aim was, therefore, to identify the discourses that were embedded in these utterances, and while doing so, identify the constitutive interdiscursivity of this Advertising Media Discourse, in order to problematize how this interdiscursivity may guide the construction of such imaginary about the relation between subject and the English language, regarding the issues to be considered in the teaching-learning processes.

The possibility of considering a “[...] discursive perspective in/of AL” (CORACINI, 2003, p. 29) stems from comprehending the Applied Linguistics studies as inter/transdisciplinary, which allows us to “[...] follow new paths” (BOHN, 2005, p. 16), and investigate “[...] the complexity of issues that we face daily” (MOITA LOPES, 2006, p. 98). Ultimately, such Applied Linguistics is placed “in the tenuous and subtle frontiers where different areas of investigation meet” (GUILHERME, 2011, p. 63) and rethinks the subject in their language constitution, bringing to light their relation with the socio-historical-cultural and the political-ideological.

<sup>1</sup> Guilherme (2004), in her study, problematizes how language institutes, while advertising their courses, may influence the subjects' encounter with the different language that they are learning and may, as well, establish a representation for this insertion of the subjects in that language.

In order to accomplish that, we organized this article as follows: firstly, we refer to some studies that have been discussing the role of the English language on the media, under discursive perspectives. Secondly, we justify the theoretical scope that delineates our work. In the third section, we discuss our gesture of interpretation of utterances about the English Language on language institute websites. Finally, we reach some considerations while discussing the possible recurrence of these discourses in the relation between the Brazilian student and the English language.

## 2 THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, DISCOURSE AND MEDIA

Some authors state that the Brazilian virtual and printed media is “[...] a privileged place for reaffirmation of the national memory of English teaching” (CARMAGNANI, 2014, p. 349), and because of this, it constructs discursivities about foreign language teaching, especially English teaching, which, due to its global status, is associated to a global Economy, and, thus, is “[...] regarded as a key for the door of social mobility both in and beyond national borders” (KUMARAVADIVELU, 2006, p. 135).

Grigoletto (2007), for example, states that some representations about the English language in the discourse of the Brazilian printed media and its recurrence in the identity construction of the Brazilian subject have built a homogeneous discourse about the need of the English language for Brazilians. She points out that this discourse affects the subjects, in a way that they feel responsible for acquiring the language, which enables them to meet the demands of the market.

The Media Discourse for the teaching and learning of languages, according to Carmagnani (2008), has been in accordance with political and economic interests as it plays the role of a control device. From a foucauldian perspective (FOUCAULT, 1990), the author argues that the media uses several tools to present the foreign language as a consumer product, which is capable of enabling the learners to obtain personal and professional success, as it works as “[...] a network that connects the discourse(s) about foreign languages teaching and learning in several institutions (formal Education, language institutes, etc.), for a lot of purposes (for example, market demands)” (CARMAGNANI, 2008, p. 413).

While analyzing some images and the utterances available in language institute *folders*, Jurach (2009) states that there is an effort to activate discourses with the aim of building an imaginary according to which there are some language institutes that are better than others. The media works, therefore, through images and languages to attract a future foreign language learner, and while doing so, it provides them with the sensation that their choices are free and independent from the discursivities constructed by the publicity material.

Similarly, Damiana (2011, p. 885) highlights an ideological domination of language institutes advertisements. For this author, the discursive inscriptions that are constructed by these courses validate the existing power relations between language and culture. There is, therefore, “[...] a representation in the discursive materiality of a social-economical and political framework in which the Portuguese and Brazilian languages are seen as inferior to the English and/or North-American language and culture”).

While analyzing the discourses used in some language institute *billboards*, Guilherme (2004) concluded that the IMD works based on neoliberal assumptions, naturalizing the foreign languages teaching and learning process. Hence, the IMD is based on an idealized imagery of – an inaccessible – language, and teaching and learning processes, which provokes feelings such as failure and frustration on learning and teaching that language.

Based on previous works, such as the one mentioned, it is possible to state that, when the English language is inserted in the Advertising Media Discourses, it is seen as a commodity, and becomes a product to be bought. What is established, therefore, is a relation of exchange and use: the English language is ‘bought’ (as one enrolls in an English course offered by the campaign) in exchange for the promise of professional growth or, for instance, the interaction with people from anywhere in the world. If, on the one hand, this consumer relation would be naturally expected in the advertising field, on the other, it is impossible to deny that the utterances that emerge in this field activate memories about ‘knowing the English language which derive from other fields (such as

Language Teaching Pedagogy, Language Acquisition Theories, Psychology etc), contributing to the consolidation of already problematized concepts from teacher formation and from language teaching-learning areas.

### 3 LANGUAGE, DISCURSIVE MEMORY AND DIALOGISM

Our work is theoretically situated in the Applied Linguistics (AL) field with an interface with the Peuchetian and Bakhtinian perspectives of Discourse studies. This dialogue enables us to understand that the subject is neither the origin nor the source of the produced meanings, once the “already-said” is also regained. This way, he/she is a subject who enunciates, framed by a discursive memory, which is here understood by “[...] a mobile space of division, disjunction, displacement and reinstatement [...]” (PÊCHEUX, 2010, p. 56).

Therefore, we consider the utterances about the English language knowledge in the *websites* of the language institutes are constitutive of the discursive memory of the Brazilian subject and, because of this, while they constitute themselves in these discourses, they move and establish themselves in their relation with the English language.

The discursive inscriptions (un)covered in the utterances provokes meaning effects in the subjectivity of the learner who seeks the idealized language that he/she wants to learn in the *websites*. The future learner is, therefore, led to occupy a subjective position; he/she occupies an established social-historical place and inscribes him/herself in certain discursive formations that reveal the ideology that constitutes him/her.

As Grigoletto (2011, p. 291) states,

[...] postulating the meanings are constituted in the interdiscourse implies they transit the discursive memory as utterances whose origin has been forgotten (this is how the interdiscourse works in discourse) and they keep “offering” segments of identity for the discourse subject. The media is one of the apparatuses that operate in this inscription of identifying “matrixes” for the subject, as it operates on the social imagery construction.

Our study, while problematizing the utterances on the *websites*, understands that language does not convey transparency and homogeneity characteristics; on the contrary, it is its opacity, its tension and its conflictive relations that enable us to establish a different form of meaning and, this way, build interpretations and understand how some produced utterances are constructed to force and control relations.

Language is here understood in its dialogical-constitutive nature, as it is always part of someone else’s movement, in a constant construction process, namely verbal interaction “[...] the fundamental reality of language” (BAKHTIN, 2002 [1929], p. 123). In accordance with what Bakhtin postulates (2003, p. 297), we understand that each utterance

[...] is full of echoes and resonances from other utterances to which it is linked by identity of the discursive communication arena. Each utterance must be seen, before anything else, as an answer to the preceding utterances of a certain field [...]: it rejects, confirms, completes and bases itself on them, assuming them as already known, taking them, to some extent, in consideration.

Thus, we assume that there are discourses that are part of the utterances in the advertisements of the language institute *websites*, producing meaning effects, which (de)stabilize themselves, considering the ideological formations in which these enunciative instances are inscribed.

Therefore, we reinforce we are inscribed in an AL whose purpose is to focus the dialogic-polyphonic nature of language, mainly as far as the production of meanings in the social interaction is concerned.

As language is always marked by enunciation, in the movement of meanings, it is “[...] affected by the cultural traits of the social surroundings in which it is performed” (BOHN, 2005, p. 19), which means it constitutes the meanings socially, historically, and ideologically. Essentially, we are affiliated with an AL

[...] which seeks to problematize issues of language usage in order to better understand them, an AL that proposes interventions with the aim of optimizing the mediated relations by language and, thereafter, an AL that is committed with subjects who are exposed to problems in several situations mediated by language. (GUILHERME, 2013, p. 40)

#### 4 EL, ENTREPRENEURIAL CAPITALIST DISCOURSE AND THE ENUNCIATIVE (IM)POSSIBILITY

##### 4.1. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ROUTE

As we decided to observe a different perspective towards the utterances about EL in language institutes *websites*, we sought to understand how some of the discourses that were materialized in the structure of utterances and images used by them work to attract future learners to “consume” the EL, what, as we have stated, may impact the subject-language relation, and thus, impact the relation that these learners will build in terms of alterity with the studied foreign language.

We understand the advertisement of language institutes may be characterized as a genre where different meaningful materialities (image, speech, sound) are merged, which enables us to understand its functioning not from a complementary perspective (as though one would complement the other), but from an interspersed perspective, in which the incompleteness and contradiction of each materiality cooperate (LAGAZZI, 2011, p. 402).

In order to analyze the IMD manifestations regarding the foreign language teaching, we searched enunciative regularities in the *corpus*, that is, we searched different ways of enunciating that are directed towards the same meaning. This is a way of investigating the “[...] semantic vibrations in common, which tend to construct, in the intradiscourse, the reality of a certain meaning” (SERRANI, 1998, p. 161).

It seems to be notable to reinforce, as analysts, we launch a gesture of interpretation by understanding that

[...] the “same” *corpus* may be described/analyzed in different ways by different linguists. More precisely, we are never confronted by the “same” *corpus*, because while the *corpus* is being constructed, the subjectivity of the one who establishes it emerges, together with the way the theory touches him/her. This implies considering that the structure comprises the hole, prompting space for the manifestation of subjectivity. (BERTOLDO; AGUSTINI, 2011, p. 123)

This means that it is in the alterity researcher-investigation object that an analytical process construction, in its singularity, occurs, which means that the linguistic-discursive materiality here analyzed reflects our historical-ideological stance against an advertising discursivity which circulates socio-culturally in Brazil since the language institutes were created in the 70s.

Besides, we regard the *websites* as Subject Enunciative Instances (SEI), which is a theoretical extension of the Pecheutian notion of subject, proposed by Santos (2009), which refers to the social and discursive places that the subjects occupy in the enunciative processes. The SEI refer to the discursive inscriptions which are constituted in movement, in constant alterity, “[...] besides a memory of meanings (knowledge, events, experiences, models and discursive representations) that intertwine it as a singularized subject-manifestation from and in an interpellative process of the language realization” (SANTOS, 2009, p. 90).

Considering that the purpose of these SEI is to promote/sell foreign language courses, we assume that the *entrepreneurial capitalist discourse* supports the representations about the EL, dialogically working with other discourses. There is, thus, a conglomerate of voices that are evoked (in confrontation) when the instances enunciate about the language. Therefore, in the discursive mechanism,

there is an effort to conceal the utterances that would be characteristic of a business subject-position (whose main interest would be to profit from the sale of the commodity, the English Language), through the inscription in a pedagogical discursive formation, sounding as if the main concern of the institutions was placed in educational issues.

In our gesture of interpretation, we rank two main discourses, which apparently guide, interdiscursively, the functioning of the utterances in order to obliterate the entrepreneurial capitalist discourse: the *empowerment discourse* and the *motivational discourse*. It is relevant to emphasize that these discourses interconstitute themselves, work in an interwoven way and here we separate them for analytical and didactic reasons.

#### 4.2 THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND THE (IM)POSSIBILITY OF EMPOWERMENT

The discourse of *empowerment* functions producing meanings that the English Language taught by the mentioned SEI is a language that grants the learner with an unquestionable status of possibility of interaction with other speakers. Observe:

(01) *Real life, real English – Welcome to the X<sup>2</sup> Experience.*

(02) *English is here, now, right now. Those who learn English want more than reading and talking. They want to interact with the world, take part in what happens and write their own history in an universal (more than ever) language.*

(03) *Do you feel like a fish out of water when the conversation is in English?*

(04) *English courses – studying English at X, nothing will weaken your confidence.*

The first and second utterances, both from the same institution, are presented along with the picture of a teenage girl, who is white and blonde, with a flashing smile and on the background, it is apparently beautiful and organized, clean and full of trees, with a lot of parked cars. This scenario leads us to an interdiscursivity in which there is a reverberation of voices of a stereotype of context of foreign languages teaching and learning, which means that there is a privileged ethnic group which is happy and that comfortably lives in a privileged place.

In the first utterance, it is possible to observe the emphasized use of the adjective *real*, which works dialogically with the discourse (broadly used by the teaching methodologies, for example) that the process of learning a foreign language cannot be artificial, without connection with the language practices that effectively occur in the world out of classroom. While the opportunity to experience reality, through a real language, the SEI, leading to an unambiguous meaning for the term “real”, denies the constitutive heterogeneities of subjects and suppresses the singularity involved in any process of learning another language.

Moreover, the adjective *real*, when in use with the word *English*, tries to impose the interpretation that there is another English which is inferior for not being true. This is reinforced by the fact that the noun phrase *real English* evokes, for the Brazilian subject, a very consolidated imagery about the British Royal Family and their culture. Hence, there is a premise that the British English – as it is royal – translates what is understood by real/true English (as it seems to be the kind of English taught at this language institute). Thus, while studying “this” English at “this” language institute, one is offered an equivalent status (power) to the one of the Royal family.

It is also possible to state that the utterance number 2 reinforces the alleged effectiveness of the *real* English, as it depicts the idea of fast and continuous movement. This idea of speed is granted with their *English is here, now, right now*. This message ratifies the sense of immediacy, which is distinctive of the current social relations, and, thus, moving the relation with the language to the order of constant pragmatism, broadly proclaimed by the neoliberal perspective.

<sup>2</sup> In this work, we use “X” for the names of the language institutes, once our interest is not focused on the identity of the institutions, but on the place that they occupy as meaning producing instances that produce meanings about a foreign language.

In *Those who learn English want more than reading and speaking*, it is noticeable the shift of a very common meaning in the English Language advertising discourse, which is: the emphasis on orality/speaking (GUILHERME, 2004; 2009) as a primary goal of a foreign language learning process. The SEI are seen as an institution that overlaps the instrumentalist perspective of teaching in order to provide the learners with the status of agents, of those who are able to *Interact with the world, take part in what occurs and write their own history in an universal (more than ever) language*. These utterances echo the voices of critical pedagogies, which postulate, among other actions, the need of providing the subject with voice in the educational processes, prompting his/her emancipation.

Therefore, the utterance number 2 evokes the *empowerment discourse*, while it assumes that while the learner masters a *universal* language usage to connect everything to everyone, besides being, first and foremost, a global citizen. The utterance works with the idea of private-universal, once it represents the English language as everyone else's language, but, in the meantime, allows the learner to *write his/her own history*. In this dissonance, it is possible to observe the meaning that there is a unique English language, which is homogeneous and transparent and that, in its immanence, may be learned/acquired by all, anywhere, by the same means.

It seems to be important to emphasize that this effect of inputting the English language learner in the world occurs through the obliteration of the tense and troubled relation in/by language, as though it were possible to, for instance, *write his/her own history* harmoniously. The white girl's happy face in the picture depicts the notion that it is a 'language in which one can be happy' (HASHIGUTI, 2013, p. 50)<sup>3</sup>.

Our aim here is not to deny the possibility that the English language, having assumed the status of international language, more frequently spoken by non-native speakers than by native themselves (GRADDOL, 1999; RAJAGOPALAN, 2004), may enable the interaction of speakers from different parts of the world, but to problematize, firstly, the place of exclusivity which is attributed to this language (as though it represented the only route to *write his/her own history*); secondly, the neutrality status granted to the interactions undertaken by the subjects in this same language.

In the utterance number 03, in the campaign of another institution, we observe the use of a very common idiomatic expression (*Do you feel like a fish out of water when the conversation is in English?*) which reinforces, both linguistically and visually (there is the image of a small goldfish jumping out of water), the sensation of not belonging of the subject that does not speak English. In other words, without the EL, he/she does not have power, he/she cannot take part of the world events; the lack of knowledge excludes him/her, therefore, the subject of this place, which according to institutions, allegedly exists. The SEI, hence, mitigate the exclusion of some subjects while it explores the inscription in the exclusion discourse which, as a general rule, constitutes many of those who learn the EL in Brazil. In other words, the effort is to try to clear the discursive memory that circulates socio-historically in Brazil where language institutes and the opportunity to learn English are not available to everyone.

At last, the utterance number 04, from yet another institution, promises the empowerment in the emotional field with the emphatic statement *nothing will weaken your confidence*, which is accompanied by the images of youngsters flashing smiles on the background. The idea of confidence as far as the English language is concerned is very frequently evoked by the IMD, as a reference to work situations. We could say there is a discourse of fear that establishes the need to learn a foreign language 'very well', in order to avoid constraints mainly when the objective is to seek for a place in the job market. We argue that this is attributable to an emotional empowerment belief, once there is a significant number of studies related to the comprehension of affective aspects concerning the learning and teaching of languages, particularly concerning anxiety. The business capitalist discourse works, therefore, in a way that it offers 'the' solution for the difficulties in the language learning. What is offered, therefore, is the learning of a language that does not actually exist, a language without mistakes, without conflicts, without tensions, a language that is idealized by the subject. This enables us to state that this is the means with which the IMD works, with the aim to challenge the subject to seek for the illusion that 'in that place', it is possible to find the commodity-language which one had been, for long, seeking.

<sup>3</sup> Hashiguti (2013) analyses the pictures (conceived as visual materiality) of bodies and faces, used in English Language textbooks, in order to understand the functioning and problematize their effects for the learning process and for the relation between the foreign language and the subject.

In the studied utterances, it is notable the merging of the *entrepreneurial capitalist discourse* and the *empowerment discourse*, which is ruled by the representation of the English language as an instrument of communication, existing out of the speaker (in spite of being available to be purchased by him/her) and that would work regardless of the socio-historic-ideological conditions in which the utterances occur and the subject him/herself, and this contributes to the production of dichotomies such as true/false; universal/local; confidence/lack of confidence; in/out.

#### 4.3 THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND THE (IM)POSSIBILITY OF MOTIVATION

Another discourse which overlaps the entrepreneurial capitalist discourse is the *motivational discourse*. While inscribing themselves in this discourse, the SEI dialogue with the pedagogical discourse for the teaching of Foreign Languages which, from different perspectives, emphasizes the fact that the student must receive motivation to learn<sup>4</sup>. It is an attempt to mitigate, more than alleged difficulties, the troubled aspects that are intrinsic to the learning and teaching process of a different language, which overlap the simple methodological aspect; and arise from the encounter-conflict with another meaningful materiality.

(05) *Learn English only in 12 months and change your life.*

(06) *There is not much left, but the quick X English course. The only English course designed for 18 months. Designed to teach what really matters.*

(07) *X, the quickest and easiest way to learn English.*

(08) *Speak English Just like you learned Portuguese.*

(09) *X involves the student in the new language.*

(10) *At X, each step forward with your English is celebration.*

(11) *You like it. You learn it. X Definitive English.*

The utterances number 05, 06 and 07 provoke enunciative regularities that foreign language courses are too lengthy, mainly for the fact that the institutions aim at keeping the student in order to rise their profit. The idea of 'more in less time', a symbol of the neoliberal discourse, consolidates the image of a language, as though the learning process could be controlled, measured, or even dated.

Hence, such utterances ratify the immediacy and consumerism phenomenon (BAUMAN, 1998), as they announce that, in a short period of time (*12 months, 18 months, quick*), the learner will be able to learn/consume the EL, and the opportunity to transform his/her life. Observe that the notion of transformation is emphasized in the utterance *designed to teach what really matters*, which allegedly rejects the stance of the business capitalist subject while eliciting the meaning that, as Language Institutes aim at larger profits, they offer courses with irrelevant contents and, thus, they try to keep the student enrolled for longer.

The meanings of victory, success, overcoming and happiness are ratified by the pictures of famous people (a national volleyball team coach and a famous gospel singer, in utterance number 5), which interdiscursively produces the meaning that as the learner decides to study in that institution, he/she will succeed and will be as happy as those famous people. Therefore, it is in this discursivity that the subject will be inscribed and will be led to the language institute, once again, by the illusion that the idealized foreign language learning will occur there. The utterance number 06 is accompanied by the picture of a formally dressed man, whose face is not clearly visible, but whose visiting card written *Gabriel Bittencourt. Almost a coordinator* is clear on the foreground. These utterances, dialogically working with the expressions *There is not much left, but the quick X English Course*, produce motivational effects, constructing meanings that the course was especially designed for those who are almost crossing the finishing line, which symbolizes, in this case, the professional success through the English Language, which would be guaranteed by the SEI.

<sup>4</sup> Check, for instance, the works of Gardner; Lambert (1972); Dörnyei and Ottó (1998); Gómes (1999); Paiva (2011); Ribas (2009); and Ribas and Perine (2014).



The utterances number 07 and 08, both accompanied by young people flashing their smiles, attract us to the alleged facility of learning a new language. The utterance number 07 explicitly does that by using the adjective *easy*; However, the utterance number 08 tries to establish the motivation in the learner as it mirrors the learning of a foreign language and the learning of the mother language (ML), focusing the fact that the entry in another language can be as ‘natural’ as in the mother language, posing ML and FL as pertaining to the same order.

When one characterizes language this way, he/she does not take into consideration the disturbances, the questioning and the modifications that the foreign language provokes in the subject once he/she accepts that the “[...] I from the foreign language is not, ever, entirely the I from the mother language” (REVUZ, 1998, p. 225) and that “[...] the foreign language questions the relation that is already established between the subject and the language. This relation is complex and structuring of the relation that the subject keeps with him/herself, with others and with knowledge” (p. 220).

The utterances number 09, 10 and 11 highlight the alleged concern of institution with the affective aspect of the learning and teaching process of the English language. Thus, in order to overlap the entrepreneurial capitalist discourse, the SEI humanize themselves, presenting themselves as a company that motivates the learner, once his/her well-being is one of the concerns of the company (*involves the student in the new language; you like it*), as well as the investment that he/she makes in the school and in their development in the language (*each step forward with your English is celebration; definitive English*).

## 5 FINAL WORDS

The analyses that we carried out in this work allude to the fact that the SEI, with their advertisements, inscribe themselves in the empowerment and motivational discourses, with the aim to mitigate and silence entrepreneurial discourses. Besides, they also aim to convince the future client that the learning process of a different language is part of an appropriation/acquisition, as though it were a product that one can consume and benefit from.

Our interest to understand how the meanings move in the language institutes advertising campaigns is related to the fact that these instances construct discursivities that reflect in the relation between the Brazilian subject and the English language, prompts effects that the regular school (both public and private), for example, is not a legitimate place for the learning of a foreign language and, thus, language institutes are the only qualified places for this; or even that the process of learning and teaching may occur in a guaranteed and harmonious way (as long as one enrolls in a particular language institute).

It is relevant to state that several studies in Applied Linguistics that work with the notion of empowerment have Paulo Freire’s reflections as reference<sup>5</sup>. For the educator, the empowerment neither consists of providing the other with power nor it is a psychological or individual act; As Freire would point it, empowerment is conceived as an awareness process, essentially related to social and political aspects. It is, therefore, a

[...] process that emerges from social interactions in which we, human beings, are constructed and, while we critically problematize reality, we improve our “awareness”, discover breaches and ideology; that process of awareness provides us with “power” to transform the social relations of domination, and this power leads us to freedom and redemption (GUARESCHI, 2008, p. 166).

Nevertheless, the empowerment discourse defended by the SEI produce an entirely contrary effect when compared to Freire’s, once they are based on the belief that it is possible to ‘obtain’ the language and, thereafter, the power, which is then seen as abstract and neutral entity that does not depend on social-political-ideological relations. As this concept is defended, the SEI corroborate the imagery of a static language, which works on its own, a language which is free from historicity and temporality and, because of this, is depoliticized.

<sup>5</sup> Check, for instance, Silva and Diniz (2014) and Silva (2015).

In terms of the meaning effects deriving from the *motivational discourses*, we can highlight the possible failure in the learning process that is originated from the learners' frustration processes. Enticed by the speed and efficiency offered by the language courses, they ultimately encounter themselves in the complex, tense and conflictive process of learning a different language.

At last, it is necessary to reaffirm that those discourses obliterate the fact that, as the learner of a foreign language is a mother tongue subject, it is necessary to highlight that the encounter with another language is always an encounter-confront of voices, subjectivity, different historical, ideological, social and cultural positions, which ratifies the fact that the subject-foreign language relation is always singular and heterogeneous. Hence, it is not possible to know if while learning the English language, the learner will be involved by the language, or if he/she will speak with confidence, if he/she will write his/her own history (no matter what is understood by this), if he/she will find a good job etc., once the language is opaque, heterogeneous and incomplete, and, thus, mastering it is a matter of (im)possibility.

A discursive notion on AL may contribute to the comprehension of the learning and teaching process as well as the foreign language teachers formation process as "[...] discursive spaces in which multiple voices are evoked from different social spaces and from different discourses" (GUILHERME, 2011, p. 75), problematizing naturalized discursivities that become historically unquestionable.

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