

University of Southampton Research Repository

Copyright © and Moral Rights for this thesis and, where applicable, any accompanying data are retained by the author and/or other copyright owners. A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge. This thesis and the accompanying data cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder/s. The content of the thesis and accompanying research data (where applicable) must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holder/s.

When referring to this thesis and any accompanying data, full bibliographic details must be given, e.g.

Thesis: Author (Year of Submission) "Full thesis title", University of Southampton, name of the University Faculty or School or Department, PhD Thesis, pagination.

Data: Author (Year) Title. URI [dataset]

University of Southampton

Faculty of Humanities

Modern Languages

**Mexico's foreign language policy: the implications of dominant
ideologies in ELT**

Volume 1 of 1

by

Yonatan Puón Castro

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2021

University of Southampton

Abstract

Faculty of Humanities

Modern Languages

Doctor of Philosophy

Mexico's Foreign Language Policy: The Implications of Dominant Ideologies in ELT

by

Yonatan Puón Castro

When the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed in 1993, Mexico started what some have called 'neoliberal period' in domestic policy making. This, in addition to the OECD and World Bank recommendations, imposed a neoliberal agenda which was materialized through a series of 'strategic' reforms (tax, labour, energy and education). In the education domain, traces of neoliberalism can be found in curriculum (competency-based), teacher labour rights (the weakening of trade unions), and ELT. Drawing from a political economy (Block, 2018 & Holborow, 2015) and Lo Bianco's (2009) three-dimensional CDA approach to LP, public discourses (official documents and speeches) and institutional practices were analysed to identify the ideological orientations which underpin Mexico's government policies and, consequently, its English language policy and how the institutional practices reproduce the ideology underpinning Mexico's English language policy. Findings indicate that official documents and public discourses served the purpose to a) introduce the neoliberal agenda as a desired scenario for domestic policies and b) legitimate the implementation of neoliberal policies and strategies. Developing from this, the official ELT documents and public discourses analysis revealed that the contemporary ELT programmes a) legitimise the necessity of implementing English, as a public policy, by reducing it to a desired labour market skill, which resonates with the characteristics of a commodity, b) represent an extension of neoliberal strategies in education, particularly regarding teachers' labour rights and c) have created a very profitable language qualifications and teacher training market for transnational ELT companies.

Table of Contents

Mexico’s Foreign Language Policy: The Implications of Dominant Ideologies in ELT.....	i
Table of Contents	ii
Table of Tables	vii
Table of Figures	ix
Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship.....	xi
Acknowledgements	xii
Definitions and Abbreviations.....	xiii
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Rationale	1
1.2 My interest in this research	3
Research aims.....	4
1.3 Research questions	4
Chapter 2 Research Context	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Neoliberalism and ELT in Latin America	7
2.3 Neoliberalism in Mexican education	9
2.3.1 A brief historical overview	9
2.3.2 OECD recommendations on Mexican education.....	10
2.3.3 World Bank interests in Mexican education.....	11
2.4 English as a foreign language in Mexico	12
2.4.1 Early years of English language instruction	12
2.4.2 The National English Programme for Basic Education	13
2.4.3 The National English Program.....	16
2.4.4 The National English Strategy	16
2.5 Neoliberalism and ELT in Mexico	17
2.6 Historical funding for ELT public programmes	19
2.7 Higher education ELT policy.....	21
2.8 2018 presidential elections: Political and ideological implications	22
Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework	25

3.1	Introduction.....	25
3.2	Defining neoliberalism	25
3.3	Globalisation and education	27
3.4	Neoliberalism and education	29
3.5	Language ideology.....	31
3.6	Historical approaches to language ideologies	32
3.7	Language and neoliberal ideology	33
3.8	Approaches to language and neoliberal ideology.....	34
3.9	Language policy and planning	37
3.10	Approaches to Language Policy and Planning.....	37
3.11	Neoliberalism and LPP.....	38
3.12	Neoliberalism and ELT	39
Chapter 4 Methodological Approach		43
4.1	Introduction.....	43
4.2	Political economy as framework of analysis	43
4.3	Methodological approach	46
4.3.1	Key concept analysis: public documents and public discourses	46
4.4	Institutional language practices and public discourses	50
4.5	Participants.....	51
4.6	Interviews.....	51
4.7	My position as researcher	52
4.8	Methodology NOT 'method'	52
Chapter 5 Public texts, public discourses, and language practice		53
5.1	Introduction.....	53
5.2	Key concept analysis: public texts and public discourses	54
5.2.1	Mexico's structural reforms: legitimisation through public texts and public discourses.....	54
5.2.1.1	Macro organisations (OECD)	55
5.2.1.2	Structural reforms: public discourses	58
5.2.2	Mexico's education reform: legitimisation through public texts and public discourses.....	62

5.2.2.1	National Development Plans	62
5.2.2.2	National Education Plans	66
5.2.2.3	Education reform: public discourses	69
5.2.2.4	OECD: key concepts in public texts	72
5.2.2.5	Enactment of key concepts in Mexico's education documents	75
5.2.3	Mexico's ELT policy ideological orientations: public texts and public discourses.....	78
5.2.3.1	OECD: Languages in a global world.....	78
5.2.3.2	Contemporary ELT programmes and neoliberal ideology: official documents and public discourses.....	80
5.2.4	Quality assurance agencies and ELT	94
5.2.5	ANUIES and ELT.....	96
5.3	Institutional language practices and public discourses	97
5.3.1	Teacher training school stakeholders.....	98
5.3.2	Public university ELT stakeholders.....	104
5.3.3	National English Program.....	107
5.3.4	State of Puebla BIS university: teachers of English.....	109
5.3.5	Private school parents	111
Chapter 6	The legitimisation of English for economic prosperity	113
6.1	Introduction	113
6.2	The 'key' role of English, as a marketable asset, for economic prosperity	114
6.2.1	English as a skill for competitiveness in the labour market	115
6.2.2	English as language human capital	117
6.2.3	The promise of English for social mobility and economic prosperity.....	119
Chapter 7	Conclusion	121
7.1	Introduction	121
7.2	Answering the research questions	121
7.3	RQ1 and RQ2: Ideological orientations.....	122
7.4	RQ3 and RQ4: Language ideology.....	123
7.4.1	Neoliberal strategies associated with English language policy	123

7.4.2	Teacher’s rights	123
7.4.3	ELT programmes in basic education: a profitable market	124
7.4.4	Language qualifications.....	125
7.4.5	Teacher training	126
7.5	RQ5: Ideology enacted in institutional practices	127
7.6	Implications for indigenous languages policy	127
7.7	Concluding remarks.....	128
7.8	Limitations	131
7.9	Further research.....	132
	Appendix A Online questionnaire for parents	134
	List of References.....	137

Table of Tables

Table 1 Public English language programmes budget since 2009.....	19
Table 2 National Institute of Indigenous Peoples budget	21
Table 3 OECD documents used for analysis	55
Table 4 National Development Plans used for analysis	62
Table 5 National Education Plans used for analysis	66
Table 6 Parents' perceived importance of English	111
Table 7 Authorised language qualification centres	125

Table of Figures

Figure 1 NEPBE teaching cycles	14
Figure 2 Teaching cycles distribution in basic education	14
Figure 3 Time per session according to cycle	15

Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Yonatan Puón Castro

Title of thesis: Mexico's foreign language policy: the implications of dominant ideologies in ELT

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before

Signature: Date: May 3, 2021

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my sponsors Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla and PRODEP because, without their academic and financial support, I would not have been able to study a quality program like this.

I would also like to express my most sincere gratitude to Clare Mar-Molinero for her guidance, patience and support crucial to accomplish this research.

My colleagues and friends whose words of encouragement were vital in moments of stress and doubt.

My family, Karina, Yon, and Alo: YOU ARE MY INSPIRATION!

Mom, dad, Lydia, Ernesto: Thank you for everything!

Definitions and Abbreviations

PELT.....	Primary English Language Teaching
ALADI	Latin-American Integration Association
AMLO	Andrés Manuel López Obrador
ANUIES	Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior(National Association of Higher Education Institutions)
BIS	Bilingual, International and Sustainable Technological University Model
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDS	Critical Discourse Studies
CENNI.....	Certificación Nacional de Nivel de Idioma (Foreign Language Accreditation)
CIEES	Comités Interinstitucionales para la Evaluación de la Educación Superior (The Interinstitutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education)
CLP	Critical Language Policy
CNDP	Colombian National Development Program
CNTE.....	Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación
CONACYT	Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (National Council on Science and Technology)
COPAES	Consejo para la Acreditación de la Educación Superior
EL	Economics of Language
ELL.....	Early Language Learning
ELT.....	English Language TEaching
EOD	English Opens Doors
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
IMCO	Instituto Mexicano para la Competitividad (Mexican Institute for Competitiveness)
IMF.....	International Monetary Fund

LPP	Language Policy and Planning
NAFTA	North America Free Trade Agreement
NDP	National Development Plan
NEP	National Education Plan
NEP	National English Programme
NEP	National English Programme
NEPBE	National English Program in Basic Education
NES	National English Strategy
NIIP	National Institute of Indigenous Peoples
OECD.....	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PELT	Primary English Language Teaching
PRI.....	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolution Party)
SEP	Secretaría de Educación Pública (Ministry of Public Education)
SNTE.....	Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement
UNAM	Universidad Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WB	World Bank
WC	Washington Consensus

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Rationale

The contemporary economic and political world order, in which markets, more than ever, dictate nations' economic, political, and social policies, has spread its influence on education. Although education has historically been a nation's treasure through which ideologies (i.e., socialism vs. capitalism) have been implemented (sometimes imposed), legitimised and perpetuated, education systems have succumbed to globalised neoliberal strategies which aim to weaken nations' control over public services.

The liberalisation of markets has transcended nations' economic models to the public education systems aiming at creating a profitable market within this domain. Latin American countries, for example Chile, have openly encouraged the privatisation of higher education and the implementation of a Primary English Language Teaching (PELT) programme for the past two decades. This language policy movement has been in part generated by 'discourses that connect globalisation, English and national development' (Hamid, 2010, p. 290).

Furthermore, Sayer (2015a) points out that such global expansion of English:

in Latin America and elsewhere of incorporating PELT [Primary English Language Teaching] in national public education curricula creates a sense that, linguistically, one must keep up with other "emerging market" countries or risk becoming less competitive in the global marketplace. (p. 51)

Nevertheless, at beginning of the XXI century, a group of Latin American countries (Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela and Bolivia) led the 'turn to the left' movement which challenged the neoliberal economic policies (Stoessel, 2014). For instance, since Evo Morales took office in 2005, his government implemented an anti-neoliberal political economy by increasing the public investment in infrastructure, nationalising key companies and, in the education and public service, promoting a multilingual language policy which was granted constitutional status in the first article of the Political Constitution of the Plurinational State. Such language policy marked a strong step to recognise Bolivia's multiculturalism and multilingualism and, at the same time, to provide the egalitarian status that native languages deserve. By the same token, Laime (2013) also explains that the Bolivian political constitution 'states that the plurinational government and the regional governments will use two official languages. The regional governments must use their own native language and Spanish' (p. 6). Bolivia's multilingual language policy can be interpreted as both a symbolic and tangible position

Chapter 1

contesting the spread of neoliberalism and, PELT programmes in Latin America. In this context of clashing political ideologies, the following lines introduce the Mexican case.

Porfirio Díaz [30th president of Mexico, 1884-1911] famous quote 'Poor Mexico, so far away from God and so close to the United States' becomes more relevant than ever, due to Mexico's strong economic dependency on the United States. Such economic dependency and weakness became evident during the recent North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) renegotiation requested by US president Donald Trump who imposed aggressive import tariffs on Mexican goods, especially steel and aluminium, to load the dice in his favour. It would be accurate to claim that Mexico has encouraged this uneven relationship with the Northern neighbour since former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari signed NAFTA in 1993. Only one year later, Mexico signed its membership to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the government implemented the privatisation of the state banks and the railroad system. The new millennium brought the second neoliberal wave in the form of official discourse promoting structural reforms. The first structural reforms, fiscal and labour, were passed by the congress between 2010 and 2012 and, by 2013, the energy and education reforms had been implemented. Along with the structural reforms thrust, particularly the education reform, Mexico implemented an ambitious PELT programme in 2009 which steadily expanded, with several academic drawbacks, both in its coverage and budget in the 32 Mexican states. Generally speaking, the implementation of the National English Program in Basic Education (NEPBE) has been accepted by students, teachers, and parents, in part, because it represents the very, and only opportunity for public preschool and primary school students to learn English. Nevertheless, a close look at the NEPBE introductory statement 'by the end of secondary education student will have developed their multilingual and multicultural competencies needed to overcome the communicative challenges of the globalized world' (NEPBE curricular foundations, p. 2) poses a contradiction: does the NEPBE really promote multilingualism? Whose 'communicative challenges' in the globalized world? If the program promotes English language learning in basic education, why not simply restrict its scope to Spanish-English bilingualism and biculturalism?

At least two speculations might be made. First, the fact the 63 indigenous people's linguistic rights were officially recognized, as a consequence of the Zapatista movement,¹ could influence official discourse by softening the prevalence of English in public education. Second, English, de facto global language, carries more ideological connotations than that of facilitating the communication of speakers around the world. In this context, this thesis aims to analyse the ideological orientations which sustain Mexico's language policies, with emphasis on the English Language

¹ The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional declared war on the federal government on 1 January 1994 fighting for recognition of the Mexican indigenous peoples' rights.

Teaching (ELT) policy. The relevance of this research lies in the necessity to understand whether and how a dominant economic model, such as neoliberalism, and its accompanying ideology influence language policy and its underlying economic, political, social, and educational implications.

1.2 My interest in this research

My personal interest in this research lies in two main factors. On the one hand, I have been an active ELT practitioner in higher education for the past 17 years, so I have had the opportunity to oversee local teacher training projects and work collaboratively with public education English language teachers. During these years, I have regularly participated in professional development conferences (i.e., TESOL international and MEXTESOL) in the field of ELT, and I have enthusiastically adopted textbook series from British and American publishing houses in my English classes. Additionally, I have embraced language qualifications as an indispensable professional credential for my career, and I have encouraged my language students to achieve language qualifications under the belief such credentials would create better professional opportunities for them. Looking back at my role as an ELT practitioner, I am convinced that my utterly and uncritical support to such ELT practices was moulded by the education and language policies in which English has been constructed, among other attributes, as a social mobility asset and a human capital trait.

2009 was the year when I started to superficially question the ELT practices I was involved in. The National English Program in Basic Education was launched in that year, and I started to notice an excessive involvement of ELT companies and the British Council in the decision-making (i.e., teacher training, textbook selection, and language qualifications) of this programme. I always believed that, despite their expertise in ELT, these companies lacked the grass roots knowledge (students and teachers' backgrounds and teacher training practices) to adequately operate the programme. Nevertheless, I lacked the vision to soundly understand why the government had historically favoured ELT companies over local researchers and public universities which might be explained by the argument that while applied linguistics '...has become more interdisciplinary, ELT has become more narrowly focused' (Block et al., 2012, p. 8).

On the other hand, the fact that I was raised in a region in which opposition (i.e., unions and social protests) is very acute has given me a perspective which encourages questioning the status quo and social awareness. In addition, Mexico has gone through a social, political, and economic antineoliberalism movement which led to Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador to the presidency in 2018, and that has imposed an antineoliberalism discourse in the public official agenda and media in general.

The combination of these two factors, my growing interest to understand the excessive involvement of private corporations in the ELT public education programmes and the growing antineoliberal discourse in the public agenda, has led me to break my own mindset, dominated by an ELT perspective, to pursue an interdisciplinary approach from the applied linguistics perspective which will be thoroughly described in the following chapters. Considering this, I recognise that, although my insider perspective is an advantage to gain entry in the research context, I am aware that this could also lead to a biased interpretation of the data. Hence, instead of overseeing this risk, I have recognised it and sought to conduct this research within the parameters of a theoretical and methodological framework to maintain objectivity.

Research aims

This research aims to

- analyse the ideological orientations underpinning Mexico's language policies, specifically the ELT policy in public education.
- understand the vested interests of all the stakeholders, private and public; local and international, involved in the planning, development, and implementation of the contemporary ELT policy in Mexico.
- explain why and how dominant ideologies permeate in the institutional practices (i.e., discursive, planning, design and implementation) regarding ELT and ELT training in Mexico.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions which guide this research are:

- What are the ideological orientations which guide Mexico's language policies? and
- How are these ideological orientations enacted/incorporated/reflected in Mexico's language policies?
- What are the language ideologies underpinning Mexico's ELT policy?
- How are these language ideologies enacted in Mexico's ELT policy?
- Are the underpinning language ideologies incorporated in the institutional discourse of Mexico's ELT policy? And, if so,
 - Do the institutional practices reproduce and perpetuate the language ideologies underpinning Mexico's ELT policy? and

- What are the institutional practices which reproduce and perpetuate the language ideologies underpinning Mexico's ELT policy?

In the following chapters, the context of research, theoretical framework, research methodology and analysis, discussion, and implications are presented. Chapter two, context of research, describes how neoliberalism has shaped Latin American government policies, with special emphasis on education policies. This is followed by an account of the impact of neoliberalism on Mexico's public policies, including education and the ELT contemporary policy. In chapter 3 a discussion of the most relevant theory which frames this research is presented. First, I discuss how globalisation and neoliberalism have influenced education systems. Next, since the concept of ideology, particularly neoliberal ideology, is central to the orientation of the research, language ideologies, approaches to language ideologies, neoliberal ideology are discussed in detail. Finally, a discussion of language policy and planning, neoliberalism and language policy and planning and neoliberalism and ELT is presented. Chapter 4 describes the type of methodology which will be adopted and the stages in which the research will be divided. In Chapter 4, I present the findings drawing from Critical Discourse Analysis and political economy as a framework of analysis. Chapter 5 describes how public texts, public discourses, and language practice have been used to legitimise the implementation of neoliberal domestic policies (i.e., key reforms) including the contemporary ELT policy. In chapter 6, a discussion of the key findings is presented and, in chapter 7, the implications and suggestions for further research are discussed.

Chapter 2 Research Context

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe the context of the present research. First, a panorama of neoliberalism in Latin America, with emphasis on ELT policies, is presented. This is followed by a description of the neoliberal interests in Mexican education. The final section offers an overview of English foreign language teaching with an emphasis on the contemporary English language teaching programmes in Mexico.

2.2 Neoliberalism and ELT in Latin America

Historically, the implementation of a large-scale early language learning (ELL) policy has responded to different factors. Johnstone (2010) has identified three main ‘waves’ of ELL policy implementation. The first wave included various countries and the UK and went from the 1960s to 1970s. The second wave, which began in the mid-1980s or early 1990, was strongly promoted by the European Commission and Council of Europe to encourage teachers’ exchange of experiences in many countries. The third wave, a contemporary policy, is characterized by a strong emphasis on the implementation of Primary English Language Teaching (PELT) for younger learners (preschool and primary school).

An analysis of various countries’ (China, Malaysia, Taiwan, Chile, Bangladesh, and Vietnam) contemporary PELT programmes illustrates that the ‘...discourse of PELT policies is clearly framed in neoliberal terms’ (Sayer, 2015a, p. 49). Additionally, Sayer (ibid) argues that the contemporary expansion of PELT represents a shift from elite bilingualism to macroacquisition which, from a neoliberal ideological perspective, enhances the notion of that English is a key skill for individual’s² social mobility and economic development of a nation.

Since the 1990’s, several Latin American countries have adopted a neoliberal-driven political economy favouring tax, energy and, of course, education reforms (Walton, 2004 & Gwynne, 1997). One of the associated strategies of neoliberal education reforms is what Enever and Moon called the ‘global revolution’ of PELT in Asia, eastern Europe, and Africa (2010). Thus, it is not

² I consciously use the term ‘individual’ to emphasize the neoliberal notion of individualism

Chapter 2

surprising the increasing number of Latin American governments which have implemented massive PELT programmes as a mechanism, at least ideally, to promote economic growth.

In the light of this, the analysis of official documents (i.e., ELT programmes, decrees, and National Development Plans) is valuable to describe the ideological underpinnings of Latin American PELT. For instance, Correa and Gonzalez (2016) explained that:

the Colombian government has been promoting the teaching of English from primary school in the hope that this will ensure high levels of English by the end of secondary school, and make Colombian citizens more competitive in the global market. (p. 18)

This claim is clearly stated in the 2010-2014 Colombian National Development Program (CNDP) which set the principles for the development and implementation of a massive English programme: National Bilingualism Program. This official document reemphasizes the importance of English as the instrument to ‘...increase the probabilities to get a better-paid job in the labour market...’ (p. 81) and laid the foundations for the recently implemented: National English Programme (NEP) or Colombia Very Well. The NEP objective, regarding ELT, is to continue with the massification of English which started in 2006 with the National Bilingualism Program.

In Chile, English language teaching became compulsory in public schools in 1996, but it was until 2004 that the government issued a decree for the creation of a massive ELT program: English Opens Doors (EOD). The rationale which sustains the implementation of the EOD states that higher English levels will contribute to access to better jobs, scholarships, and mobility and, in the context of international commercial agreements, social and economic development (Education act 81, 2004). In 2012, the government expanded the EOD programme by implementing the English language instruction since 1st grade of elementary school instead of the prior 5th grade. The social acceptance for the expansion of ELT was backed up by the ‘social aspirations of becoming a developed and bilingual country supported by the view of English as a commodity to access economic development’ (Barahona, 2016, p.12).

The move towards the macroacquisition of English reached Argentina in 2007 as a result of the 2006 Education Act which promoted the expansion of compulsory foreign language learning at the elementary level in public schools (Porto, 2016). In the light of this, Porto (ibid) has pointed out the influence of the human capital education model and Progressive Education in Argentina. Additionally, she argues that the motivation embedded in language education ‘particularly in English because of its significance as a language of international communication, is seen as empowering and instrumental to development’ (p. 8). Although inconsistencies regarding the implementation of the program exist, legislation has regulated the mandatory teaching of English at the primary and secondary levels throughout Argentina.

While the purpose of this section is to highlight the influence of neoliberal ideology on the contemporary implementation (third wave) of massive PELT policies in three Latin American countries, it is also pertinent to acknowledge that the revised documents also recognise, at least theoretically, the relevance of multilingualism to develop values, tolerance and interculturalism. Notwithstanding this, the three PELT strategies seem to be structured from and because of economic-driven motives and the desire to situate English as a tool for economic development. Furthermore, it is important to point out that English language teaching, in the three countries, is not a new endeavour; on the contrary, its implementation dates back from, at least, three decades, yet, due to the focus of the present section only PELT policies have been discussed.

2.3 Neoliberalism in Mexican education

The implementation of neoliberal domestic policies in Mexico is the consequence of a steady and concerted official process which was backed up and promoted by macro-economic organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank. In the following sections, I will describe the interests of such organisations in the Mexican education system.

2.3.1 A brief historical overview

In 1993, former president of Mexico, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, announced the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as the economic and social panacea which would drive Mexico into the first world elite. By signing this agreement, Mexico had officially opened the doors of globalisation and neoliberalism regarding the implementation the economic and social policies for the decades to come; in short, the neoliberal agenda, as planned by the Washington Consensus, had finally been given the opportunity to promote the liberalisation and denationalisation of public services, traditionally provided by the government, such as water, health care, roads and, certainly, education. As McGinn states, 'Governments no longer control their national economies, and the implementation of national policies depends on co-operation from corporations and other governments' (p. 43, 1997). This policy continued to be steadily promoted by the subsequent presidential terms. Up-to-date, Mexico has signed 32 reciprocal promotion and protection of investments agreements with 33 countries, 10 free trade agreements spanning 45 countries, 9 partial scope and economic complementation agreements within the framework of the Latin-American Integration Association (ALADI) and it is a member of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP). The intrinsic implications of becoming a member of the 'global' economy on national education systems are manifested at various levels.

The first attempt towards the alignment of education with a global and neoliberal ideology can be found in NAFTA chapters 12 and 16. Although such chapters are intrinsically related to Border

Trading of Services and Temporary Entry of People, they had an immediate effect on the '...national regulations in matters of professional certification and indirectly in accreditation of degrees' which are clear signs of a training-oriented model for labour (Barrow, Didou-Aupetit & Mallea 2003). In the education context, the Mexican government has gradually promoted strategies (a competency-oriented curriculum reform, a strong emphasis on an entrepreneurship model in public education, and, only during former president Peña Nieto term, the creation of 26 Bilingual, International and Sustainable Technological Universities) to ultimately instrument a labour-oriented education reform. As Hampton and Silva note (2008) 'Motivated by the neoliberal impetus of the 1980s, the Mexican government initiated several reforms in its economic and social sectors, which in 1992 reached the education sector' (p. 37). Furthermore, in 1994 Mexico became an OECD member which, in addition to the commitment to liberalise the economy, accelerated 'the [purposefully] alignment of public education funds with local or regional corporate needs, especially in technical education, providing justification for the growth of two-year technical colleges' (ibid). Thus, it can be argued that Mexico's membership to NAFTA and OECD in addition to the World Bank (WB) recommendations regarding education, are the key factors which have enhanced the influence of the neoliberal agenda in the Mexican education system and its eventual reform.

2.3.2 OECD recommendations on Mexican education

The OECD is one of the most influential agencies regarding the implementation of the neoliberal agenda in developing countries. Thus, it is not surprising that its aims explicitly state the types of actions expected from member governments to instrument:

- Today, we are focused on helping governments around the world to:
- Restore confidence in markets and the institutions that make them function.
 - Re-establish healthy public finances as a basis for future sustainable economic growth.
 - Foster and support new sources of growth through innovation, environmentally friendly 'green growth' strategies and the development of emerging economies.
 - Ensure that people of all ages can develop the skills to work productively and satisfyingly in the jobs of tomorrow. (OECD, 2018)

It is evident a strong emphasis on the development of 'skills for the future' and two salient implications can be drawn from this skill-oriented principle: 1) there exists an industrial private sector which demands workers with very specific skills to produce and accelerate the accumulation of private profit, and 2) the education sector needs to be reformed to meet the need of a skill-trained workforce.

In 2017, the OCDE published the Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report for Mexico and its very first opening line, which states 'Skills are the foundation upon which Mexico must build future growth

and prosperity' (p. 3), is very revealing regarding the contemporary structural reforms undertaken by the Mexican government. It seems as if the OECD worked as a promoting but also validating agency for the so-called structural reforms in Mexico and elsewhere. But not only does this report seek to promote a skill-oriented economy but also reveal the neoliberal ideological conception of individuals as capital of the capital by claiming that 'Now is the time to harness Mexico's skills and human capital to drive further innovation and inclusive growth for the future' (p. 3). Nevertheless, fostering a skill-oriented economy, which according to the OECD generates growth, prosperity, and wellbeing, can only be achieved through concerted government action. Consequently, it is evident that the Mexican government has aligned its strategic actions to meet the OECD recommendations regarding the reform of the education system:

To this end, the aim of current educational reform in Mexico is in line with OECD recommendations to create a more inclusive society through giving equal opportunities to everyone, and reducing poverty while providing quality education to all Mexicans. (OECD, 2017 p. 14)

The demand to train citizens to fit into this skill-oriented model requires the government to reform the education system and, consequently, to 'develop education and training programmes that are relevant to students and the labour market' (OECD, 2017, p. 3). Hence, the Mexican government has created, since the 90's, technical High Schools (i.e., CONALEP, CECATI, CBTis, and CECYTE) and two-year technical colleges (Polytechnic Universities) all over the country, which is a clear sign of the influence of the neoliberal agenda in education over the Mexican education system.

2.3.3 World Bank interests in Mexican education

Higher education in Mexico has also been the subject of the neoliberal agenda and, perhaps, the most influential organization in this sector has been the WB. Delgado and Saxe (2014) pointed out the impact of the WB loan system by conditioning higher education research and development to promote capitalist interests. According to the WB, the modernization of a country has to be based 'on specialization and technical criteria geared at satisfying the needs of foreign multinational enterprises having their maquila development and the workforce specifications it needs as central tasks' (p 20). Hence, an economic model which relies on a specialized workforce on technical skills has several implications for higher education. For example, National Council on Science and Technology (CONACYT) and the National Autonomous University (UNAM) have been under pressure 1) to conduct academic research oriented to satisfy the demands of the private sector and 2) to develop curricula which aligns with the need to train workers with the accurate needs for the industry. This trend to impose the neoliberal agenda in the Mexican education system reached its ultimate form during the 2012-2018 presidential term which was successful in passing

and implementing economic, labour, energy, and education reforms, opening those strategic sectors for private investment and management. In 2014, based on the PISA³ 2012 OECD standardized assessment results for Mexico, former president Peña Nieto signed the Education Reform decree which aimed to ‘improve the quality of teaching.’ The educational reform centres its attention on the professionalization of teachers’ competencies, the improvement of learning outcomes through international standardized tests (PISA), and the ongoing evaluation of teachers’ teaching skills as a tool for promotion. However, dissident views (i.e., Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación) claim that such education reform responds to a neoliberal agenda on education, which seeks to train the labour force with the necessary skills to create human capital for the neoliberal capitalist interests. Thus, English language teaching in Mexico cannot be analysed separately from the neoliberal interests which seek 1) to liberalise the education sector, 2) to promote the private capital investment and profit making from education and 3) to create skilled workforce for the capital. Then, the following section contextualizes the development of the Mexico’s ELT strategy in public education.

2.4 English as a foreign language in Mexico

To describe the accelerated growth of ELT in public education, this section includes a brief overview of the history of English language teaching in public education followed by a description of the contemporary implementation of massive English language programmes in basic education and higher public education.

2.4.1 Early years of English language instruction

English language instruction was introduced in public schools by former president Plutarco Elias Calles in 1926. The 1926-1931 curriculum included a two-year foreign language instruction in which French was still taught in public secondary schools due to the influence of the French La Salle order and its schools during the late 1800 and early 1910’s. Nevertheless, the 1932-1935 public secondary school curriculum completely disregards foreign language teaching to put more emphasis on citizenship and arts and culture subjects. Foreign language teaching, mostly English, was reincorporated in the 1936-1940 curriculum within the three years of secondary instruction and, although the number of instruction hours has been restructured over the years, English language teaching (ELT) has prevailed in public education ever since (SEP, 1986).

³ Programme for International Student Assessment developed by the OECD to assess the learning performance of basic education students’ performance.

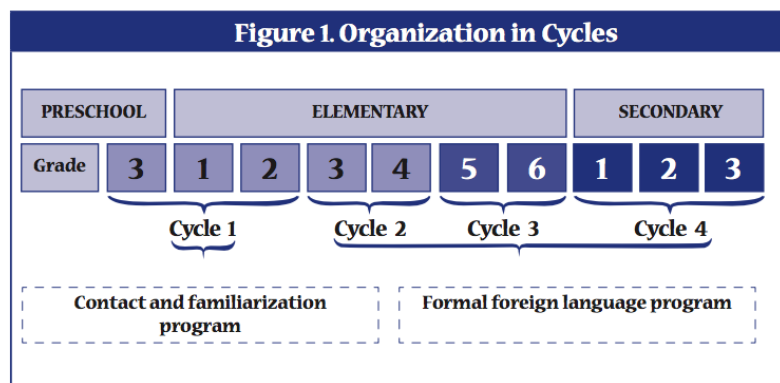
Despite the uninterrupted inclusion of ELT in the secondary curriculum since 1936, it was only in 1972 that a specific ELT curriculum was designed and implemented, and it took 20 years for it to be updated in 1993. The 1993 ELT curriculum represented a shift of attention from an emphasis on structure and translation to a communicative approach; nonetheless, in 2000 an exploratory study was conducted in 100 secondary schools revealing that little change in practice had taken place. Thus, a new secondary school ELT curriculum, with emphasis on the experiential learning model with emphasis on the social practices of the language, was launched in 2006.

2.4.2 The National English Programme for Basic Education

The implementation of Primary English Language Teaching (PELT) in public schools cannot be understood without a brief description of the political context from 2000 to 2012. Since the Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party), right-wing ideology, won the presidential elections in 2000, the international political and economic context has intensely influenced Mexico's domestic policymaking. In addition, Mexico's OECD membership and the World Bank loans strongly influenced the implementation of key structural reforms. The first signs towards a neoliberal thrust in Mexico's domestic policymaking can be found in the 2001-2006 and 2007-2012 National Development Plans which stressed the necessity to implement structural reforms. Similarly, the corresponding National Education Plans stated the urgency for the instrumentation of an education reform and its accompanying neoliberal strategies (i.e., teacher competency accreditation and focus on labour-oriented demands).

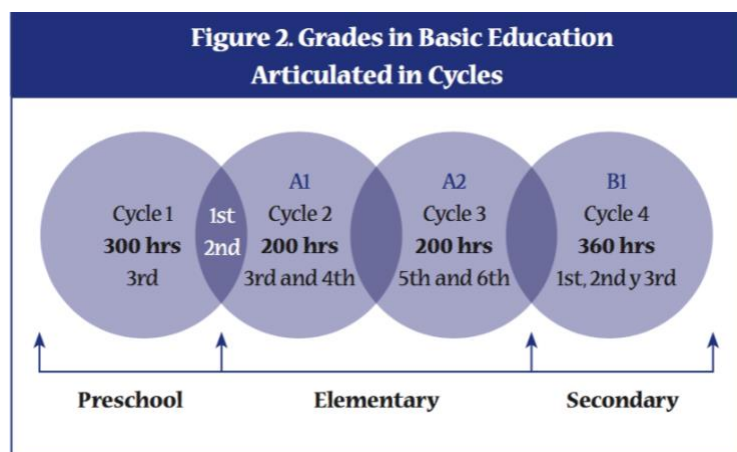
In 2009, the Ministry of Public Education (henceforth SEP) launched the Integral Reform of Basic Education which aimed to 'increase the quality of education and students' academic achievement; provide them with resources for their well-being so that they contribute to the nation's development' (Programa Sectorial de Educación 2007-2012, p. 11). In the light of this, the National English Program for Basic Education (NEPBE) was, in its pilot stage, launched in 2009. The significance of NEPBE is that, for the first time, public preschool and primary students would receive English language instruction. NEPBE (2010) is organised in 4 cycles (familiarisation, approximation, acquisition, and consolidation) which encompass the three levels of basic education and the cycle distribution is shown in the following figure:

Figure 1 NEPBE teaching cycles



In terms of methodological orientation, NEPBE is founded, like Spanish literacy, on the social practices of the language which must be developed through specific activities with the language. The Common European Framework of Reference served as the parameter to establish the content and the times to attain each achievement level. The following figure outlines the achievement levels and estimated hours per cycle:

Figure 2 Teaching cycles distribution in basic education



As can be observed, NEPBE includes a total of 1060 hours and they are distributed throughout the cycles as shown in the following chart:

Figure 3 Time per session according to cycle

Chart 4. Time and number of weekly sessions for the English language subject

Cycles 1 to 3	Cycle 4
Preschool and Elementary	1st, 2nd and 3rd grades Secondary
Three 50-minute sessions	Three 40/45-minute sessions

The impact of the program has been evaluated by SEP (2015), the British Council (2015) and the Non-profit organization ‘Mexicans First’ (2015). Some of the key findings are outlined here:

1. Coverage: Overall 18% of the schools were participating in the programme; 15% of preschools, 17% of primary schools and 45% of secondary schools. In terms of students’ participation in the programme, only 35% of students were taking English; 27% of preschools, 27% of primary schools and 61% of secondary schools (British Council, 2015, p. 22).

2. Professionalized teachers’ shortage: In 2011, there were 18, 834 teachers in the programme. Nevertheless, it was estimated that 308,826 teachers were needed to achieve 100% coverage. The limited number of teachers results in them overseeing a high number of groups: up to ten (Mexicans first, 2015, p. 77).

3. Teachers’ insufficient language competence: NEPBE establishes that the minimum level of proficiency is B2; however, based on Mexicans First’s teacher profile evaluation, 52% of the teachers did not reach a B1 level (Mexicans First, 2015, p. 94). The distribution of proficiency levels among teachers was 15% of A0, 24% of A1, 13% of A2 and 48% of B1 or higher.

4. Students’ insufficient language achievement levels: Mexicans First (2015) assessed third grade (end of NEPBE cycle 4) secondary students from 11 states, and the results revealed that only 3% of the students achieved the expected level (B1) at the end of secondary education and the vast majority, 79%, reached an A0 level (a level created by SEP to characterize a lack of knowledge of the language). Only 13% reached an A1 level and 5% an A2 level.

Although the findings, particularly of Mexicans First, can be questionable due to certain methodological pitfalls (i.e. it is impossible to draw categoric conclusions in terms of secondary students’ achievement level within the NEPBE curriculum for, by the time the assessment was applied, 6 years had only gone since its implementation, and it would take 10 years for a student to go through the four cycles of the program) in the design of the study, they, along with the SEP and British Council conclusions, have served as the basis for recommendations and, consequently, actions to consolidate the programme.

2.4.3 The National English Program

In December 2015, by presidential decree NEPBE was administratively transformed into the National English Programme (NEP). By the end of 2016, NEP's coverage was expected to reach 33,093 basic education public schools (preschools, primary and secondary) with a total number of 9,009,937 students. Along with the objective to increase its coverage, the NEP launched four specific actions, which are based on the 2015 NEPBE federal evaluation (Diagnóstico del Programa S270) key findings, outlined here:

1. Develop and increase students' and teachers' English proficiency through the production and distribution of education resources for the teaching and learning of English.
2. Reinforce and/or certify teachers' language proficiency and teaching competencies through international academic standards.
3. Promote students' international language accreditation processes in conditions of equity for all.
4. Provide support for the implementation of English in public preschools and primary schools.

In terms of curriculum, NEP does not include the implementation of a new one; on the contrary, it explicitly states that one of its objectives is to promote the former (NEPBE cycles) English curriculum. Thus, NEP represents an administrative reform whose primary aim is to provide financial support for resources (i.e., textbooks, equipment, and software) and the specific actions outlined above. In a broader perspective, NEP actions seem to be a confirmation of international organizations (i.e., OECD reviews of evaluation and assessment in education: Mexico 2012) recommendations regarding education: development of a skill-oriented curriculum and an increasing teacher and students' accreditation strategy.

2.4.4 The National English Strategy

The National English Strategy (NES) was announced by SEP in 2017 with the ambitious objective to achieve 100% ELT coverage across all levels of compulsory education (preschool, primary, secondary, and preparatory) in 20 years. Unlike NEPBE and NEP, the National English Strategy incorporated a strong ELT component for Escuelas Normales (teacher training schools for public education) and was planned to undertake three specific actions: 1) curriculum design and articulation across levels, 2) students' and teachers' language accreditation, and 3) teacher training in ELT. In February 2018, the federal government sent a clear message regarding the

relevance of NES by hiring 646 full-time ELT teachers who were assigned to the teacher training school system all over the country.

Regarding its curriculum, it is based on the former NEPBE proposal: social practices of the language, language learning environments and an organisation by cycles. Nevertheless, the most salient aspect is that its organisation was expanded from 4 to 5 cycles. In terms of objectives, cycles 1, 2 and 3 also adopt NEPBE curricular parameters. Cycle 5 includes the 3 years of preparatory education (prior level to higher education) and, by the end of this cycle, it is expected that students achieve the Common European Framework of Reference B2 level.

Students' and teachers' international language qualification is a key element for NES. The goal is that, within the next 20 years, every basic education teacher achieves a C1 language qualification and a C2 for preparatory teachers. In the case of students, it is expected that every student obtains a B2 qualification at the end of compulsory education. The teacher training school students (pre-service teachers) will be taught English with the goal that they become bilingual preschool, primary, and secondary school teachers.

Cambridge Assessment English has played a very important role in the design, planning and delivery of teacher training processes since the implementation of the 2006 secondary curriculum and, over the years, and it increased its involvement in the NEPBE and NEP teacher training programs. In the case of NES, Cambridge Assessment English became the academic advisor for the Escuela Norma curriculum design and teacher training provider. The tendency, in my view, is that Cambridge Assessment will maintain a steady involvement in the teacher training, both for language competency and teaching methodology, and language qualification processes.

2.5 Neoliberalism and ELT in Mexico

In the case of foreign language policy, English has become, as described in the preceding sections, in practice the prevalent language in public education. The dominance of English in the Mexican education system can be explained by a variety of factors: Mexico's geographical location, economic dependence on the United States, or the role of English as the international language for communication and academia. Although all the aforementioned factors might have played a significant role in the prevalence of English in public education, it could also be claimed the contemporary ELT policy embodies a complementary strategy of Mexico's structural reforms,

particularly the education reform, promoted by the former three governments. In 2009, PELT became a strategic programme when SEP launched the National English Programme in Basic Education to, on the one hand, expand coverage of ELT in public preschools and primary schools and, on the other hand, coherently organize the learning objectives and outcomes in each level of basic education. In 2012, Enrique Peña Nieto, took office and, in 2015, NEPBE was transformed into the National English Programme, which continued the implementation of NEPBE's academic guidelines, to promote EFL teachers and students' international language qualification, production of learning materials and expansion of coverage in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades of elementary school (Agreement 20/12/15, National English Programme Rules of Operation). In 2018, the same government launched a new strategy to reach universal ELT coverage in public education: The National English Strategy. Although the constant amendments in the foreign language policy can undoubtedly be criticized, it also reflects that, regardless of the political party in power, not only has ELT become a key component in the structural reforms (economy, energy, and education) but it has also steadily grown both in coverage and budget. Public acceptance of contemporary ELT policy might be explained mainly due to the socially constructed perception that learning English is a key element for a successful personal, academic, and financial life.

While ELT is not new to Mexican public education system, there has been a recent move towards its massification in public education over the past decade (NEPBE, NEP, NES). This accelerated implementation of ELT can be explained by what Richard (2009) calls the 'third wave' of international Early Language Learning (ELL) development which responds to 'National [and international] decisions to choose English as the language for international interaction may also be identified as politically motivated where English is increasingly seen as a generic skill' (p. 6). Sayer (2015) has also identified the influence of neoliberal ideology in Mexico's ELT policy in basic education:

It is clear that the PNIEB in Mexico is part of a trend towards the proliferation of public PELT and is intricately linked to a neo-liberal discourse of English lingua franca, globalization, and economic opportunity. (p. 269)

The contemporary large-scale implementation of PELT in the Mexican education system has been accompanied by textbook and material development, teacher training and language accreditation strategies exclusively carried out by American and British firms (publishing houses and language accreditation and training centres). This represents a growing ELT juicy market which, before the massive PELT implementation, remained limited to private schools and language institutes (elite bilingualism). Moreover, SEP, through its official media, has no regrets showing off its partnership with Cambridge Testing Services, just to mention one, regarding strategic actions such as teacher

selection process, language accreditation and teacher training for the recently launched National English Strategy.

The motivations behind the contemporary massification of ELT in Mexico are evidently aligned with a neoliberal agenda for education which, among other aims, seeks to create a workforce with the necessary skills to function within a globalised economy. In this token, the three ELT programmes appear to be instruments to promote and to legitimise the idea that English is an utmost needed human capital skill to become a global citizen. Although the role that English language programmes have been given in the past two decades suggests traces of neoliberalism in their conception and implementation, a closer look at the funding these have been allocated might be eye-opening to understand their relevance.

2.6 Historical funding for ELT public programmes

Describing the funds that the ELT public programmes have been assigned during the past and present is an indispensable step to describe the relevance this language has gained over the past ten years. The historical description starts in 2009 since this is the year the NEPBE was launched, and the funds represent the local currency: Mexican Peso.

Table 1 Public English language programmes budget since 2009

Year	Public English Language Programmes	Budget	Increment from the previous year
2009	National English Programme in Basic Education	\$ 91,593,990	NA
2010	National English Programme in Basic Education	\$ 301,369,787	209 %
2011	National English Programme in Basic Education	\$ 58,528,495	-80%
2012	National English Programme in Basic Education	\$ 770,580,599	1215 %
2013	National English Programme in Basic Education	\$ 797,550,920	3 %
2014	Fortalecimiento ⁴	\$ 800,000,000	.3 %
2015	Fortalecimiento	\$ 800,007,987	.00008 %
2016	National English Programme	\$ 789,024,100	-1.3 %
2017	National English Programme	\$ 789,024,100	0 %

⁴ Programa de Fortalecimiento de la Calidad en Educación Básica was created in 2013 and implemented in 2014. Its aim was to contribute to improving the educational achievement of elementary school students through school-focused strategies that support teaching staff in generating conditions for learning, with an emphasis on reading, writing and math. One specific objective was to support local educative authorities so that they can implement second language (English) study processes in public basic education schools. The budget for the official English language programme was operated through this programme in 2014 and 2015.

2018	National English Programme	\$ 826,808,745	4.6 %
	National English Strategy	\$ 800,000,000	-3.1 %
2019	National English Programme	\$ 800,000,000	0 %
	National English Strategy	\$ 800,000,000	0 %
2020	National English Programme	\$ 726,788,246	-9.2 %
	National English Strategy	\$ 800,000,000	0 %

As the previous chart shows, since English was established as key element of public basic education, federal funds for ELT have been granted steadily. Noteworthy is year 2012, when the budget for ELT was increased by 1215 %. In the same year, Enrique Peña Nieto, who firmly promoted structural reforms, took office as president of Mexico; hence, ELT in public education seems to represent a key strategy for that government. In 2017, almost one year before presidential elections, former Secretary of Public Education Aurelio Nuño announced the creation of the National English Strategy with a starting 800 million pesos budget. Since that year, two ELT programmes (NEP and NES) have been operating with almost 1600 million pesos of federal funds.

According to the NEP regulation operations, its allotted funds can be spent in the following areas:

1. Programme evaluation: implementation, textbooks materials (up to 25 % of funds)
2. Teachers' salary (up to 80 % of funds)
3. Teachers' training: language accreditation, congresses, conferences, and other resources. (up to 60 % of funds)
4. Students' training: language accreditation. (up to 60 % of funds)
5. Administration: per diem and travel allowances.

Although the steady funding allocated to the ELT illustrates the importance that English has had over the past decade, two key aspects regarding its implementation are worth explaining. First, teachers have been hired under outsourcing contracts which means they only get short-term contracts keeping them from obtaining full benefits as regular teachers. Second, teachers and students' language qualification represent a fundamental aspect in public education ELT programmes. These two elements resonate with two neoliberal strategies in education: limitation or elimination of teachers' rights (Delgado-Ramos and Saxe-Fernández, 2014) and the commodification of language (Heller, 2010; Holborow, 2018a).

2.7 Higher education ELT policy

The prevalence of English, as the dominant foreign language, is not restricted to public basic education; on the contrary, it has become the most relevant language in public higher education. In this section, two cases, which illustrate the prevalence of English in higher education, are presented: The Bilingual, International and Sustainable Technological University Model (BIS) and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) language policies.

The BIS model was created in 2013, by former president Peña Nieto, to promote the “internationalization of Polytechnic Universities” based on a pedagogical bilingual approach (English Spanish) with emphasis on English. The aim of this model is to:

promote the internationalization of polytechnic universities and it [its model] is oriented to address the labour market demands which requires a more competitive answer to meet the export industry’s need of bilingual personnel with high technical skills. (Nuevo Modelo Educativo: UP-BIS, p.2)

By the end of the Peña Nieto administration in 2018, 26 BIS technical and polytechnical universities had been opened in 17 states, most of which were located next to industrial clusters such as Audi in the state of Puebla and Honda in the state of Guanajuato.

By the same token, public higher education institutions (HEI) ‘... have long had EFL programmes for their students...to help [them] acquire a good working command of English so that they have increased access to professional information’ (Davies, 2008, p. 80). One decade later, the National Association of Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES), which works as an academic advisor for tertiary education, reassured the relevance of English by recommending the ‘diversification and facilitation of options to access foreign language learning, particularly English’ (ANUIES, 2018 p. 125). Nevertheless, for many public HEIs, English still represents a challenge for internationalisation as the OECD explains:

Internationalization needs not only the active participation of tertiary education institutions but a range of system wide policies. These policies should include more flexible curricula and internationally recognized credits to facilitate two-way student mobility; a greater commitment, as part of courses and programmes, to international materials; an increase in the number of courses offered in English. (OECD, p. 113)

Over the past decade, a vast number of public HEIs have opted to establish English proficiency as graduation requirement for undergraduate programmes and as entry requirement for graduate programmes. According to the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness (IMCO), a non-profit organisation which evaluates public policy, 85 % of HEIs have established English as a graduation

requirement for undergraduate programmes and 70 % require, at least, a B1 or B2 CERF language level (IMCO, 2015). Hence, HEIs have aimed to ‘make sure most of their students achieve a language qualification by the end of their studies’ (IMCO, 2015, p. 27).

A good example to illustrate the prevalence of ELT, over any other foreign language, among HEIs is the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla institutional development plan 2017-2021 in which some of the actions to promote its internationalisation state that:

- students must obtain English language qualifications in the intermediate and advanced levels
- teachers must obtain English language qualifications
- text and multimedia resources in English must be included in the lesson planning. (BUAP, 2017, p. 4-5)

By the same token, obtaining a language qualification has become a key element for public and private HEIs. In 2013, IMCO pointed out that ‘in the last 10 years the number of people who have taken the TOEFL ITP exam has steadily increased’ (2015, p. 28). This tendency has been further accentuated in the recent years as the British Council explains:

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 recognised English tests if they are to be eligible for graduation. (2015, p. 25)

The prevalence of English in Mexican higher education obviously responds to academic-related factors such as access state-of-the-art to information published in English, the internationalisation of public and private universities and student mobility. Nevertheless, ELT has also created a huge market for language qualification, teacher training and material development processes. This, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, aligns with neoliberal strategies in the education system in Mexico and elsewhere.

2.8 2018 presidential elections: Political and ideological implications

The 2018 presidential elections represent a threshold in terms of the ideology underpinning foreign and domestic policymaking. Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador won, in his third run, the presidential office. During the campaign, he openly criticised the implementation of, what he called ‘neoliberal reforms’, the Energy and Education reforms and promised to cancel and reverse their instrumentation. His intentions were taken more seriously when, during his first speech as president at the swearing-in ceremony, he strongly emphasized the negative impact of the energy reform, in terms of low economic growth, and the education reform, in terms of teacher repression. A few days after he took office, the new international Mexico City airport construction cancellation was voted and approved. On December 12, 2018, Lopez Obrador signed an initiative to cancel the education reform, which was implemented more as labour and teacher evaluation

strategy by former president Peña Nieto. According to Esteban Moctezuma, the current Minister of Education, the new education strategy aims to promote values, civic education, history, culture, arts, and environmental education in the mandatory education curricula. By the same token, the creation of 100 new universities, which will be strategically built in the poorest regions of the country, was announced. Although an official position concerning foreign language policy has not been presented either in public events or media, a bicultural and bilingual education strategy, with emphasis on indigenous languages and Spanish, has been announced to promote egalitarian education. Thus, the expansion of NEP and NES is still unclear, yet both programmes are still being budgeted and delivered.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the central themes for this research and provides an analysis of the recurring debates on how ideologies (i.e., economic, and social models) and language ideologies have shaped, and continue to shape, the planning, design, and implementation of language policies globally and, particularly, in Mexico. Since neoliberalism is a core theme in this research, the first section critically discusses how this term is characterised in different forms: as an economic theory, as a new form of capitalism, as a 'discourse' and finally as an ideology (Holborow, 2012). Second, the globalisation and neoliberalism models will be discussed; in particular, their ideological influence on the education policies around the world. This discussion will be followed by a description of the impact of neoliberal ideology on language ideologies, particularly the role of English as the de facto language of neoliberalism. The implications of the influence of English, as the language of the neoliberalism, on language policy and planning will be further examined (Pennycook 1998; Holborow 1999; Heller 2010).

3.2 Defining neoliberalism

The need to solve the economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s, in Latin America, allegedly caused by excessive state market regulation, trade unions' involvement in decision making, and the nationalisation of industries, was fulfilled by an economic model which encouraged, among other strategies, less state intervention, privatisation of public services, and the weakening of trade unions. The roots of this neoliberalism can be traced back to the 1950's Chicago School of Economics, but its wide-spread implementation took place in the 1980s with Reaganomics or Thatcherism (Hall, 2011). This alternative economic doctrine 'suddenly came to occupy all available social space and belief in the market was embraced across the political spectrum, from neoconservatism to social democracy, which was now renamed as the pro-market Third Way' (Holborow, 2012, p. 16). Explaining why neoliberalism became so broadly popular can be understood by the premise that the accumulation of capital by few would eventually pour down to the lower layers of society, the poorest, as a natural process of the market. In fact, as Holborow points out (2012, p. 16) 'While it was ascendant, world trade more than tripled and world output doubled' which might explain why this economic model became so prevalent in almost every corner of the world. Furthermore, agencies such as the OECD and the World Bank played a key role in the global spread of this model by promoting the implementation of market-oriented policies in almost every corner of the world (Bouhali, 2015 & Zajda 2015).

Nevertheless, the shortcomings of this model became apparent during the economic crash of 2008 when, suddenly, the premises in which neoliberalism flourished and laid its dominance; for instance, state deregulation, collided with reality. The formerly unwanted state intervention was mostly welcomed and promoted to bail out, with public money, the banking system during that economic crisis. These contradictions 'have dramatically exposed the neoliberal myth of the retreating state' in Mexico and elsewhere since 'it has become even more difficult to sustain the view that globalisation has done away with states, when the state's lifeline to capital became clear for all to see' (Holborow, 2012, p.18). The Mexican bank bailout, known as FOBAPROA5, is a clear example of the contradiction of this model since the Mexican state rescued a banking system which was nationalised in 1982, privatised in 1990, and bailed out in 1994. Despite the evident contradictions of the model, in Mexico, neoliberal policies (i.e., labour, tax, energy, and education reforms) steadily grew and consolidated during the 2000's and 2010's. Thus, the fact that despite that the economic model has itself found in an intrinsic contradiction between its premises and reality, its prevalence, to this day, makes it difficult to exclusively define it as an economic model. In fact, adopting an economic model definition does not necessarily account for the consequences of its implementation not only at the policy level but, rather, at the political and ideological ones.

In this context, defining neoliberalism as an economic model is not sufficient to completely understand how it has become so prevalent despite its evident contradictions. In other words, it is necessary to adopt an approach which not only describes what it is but what it does and how it does it. Fairclough's (2002) description of globalisation as 'enacted and inculcated' through English and a global 'order of discourse', spread by corporations, governments, and international agencies such as the OECD and the WB, represents an alternative to explain the prevalence of neoliberalism to this day. In other words, as Holborow (2012) points out "neoliberalism is often understood as being discourse-generated" (p. 22). Representing neoliberalism as a discursive practice and discourse might be useful to explain that it is more than an economic model, and that discourse, in fact, has played a key role for its global hegemony. For instance, the incorporation of discursive corporative practices (i.e., terminology such as costumer instead of student, advisers instead of teachers, and city manager) is a common practice both in educational and governmental domains. It may also be claimed that these discursive practices have reconfigured not only the terminology but the purpose and mission of entire systems. For example, in education systems the commonly used terms 'quality of education' and 'human

⁵ A contingencies fund created in 1990 by the Mexican government and the then dominant political party PRI to attempt to resolve liquidity problems of the banking system in that country.

capital' convey several neoliberal reconfigurations of the education system, the role of teachers and students.

Nevertheless, Holborow (2012) notes that it might be problematic to identify 'neoliberal ideology as a discursive event [for this] inevitably draws...towards the analysis of individual texts and it is micro-analysis which tends to take precedence'. Hence, the analysis of individual texts could only emphasize 'what is coherent more than what is non- representative, contradictory or uncertain' of an ideology (p. 23). Moving from a text-based analysis towards an approach seems the necessary if applied linguistics seeks to unveil the interplay between neoliberalism, society, and language.

It is in this context that Holborow (2012) has claimed that 'ideology is an indispensable theoretical tool for our analysis of neoliberalism and language' and, particularly, to explain the 'contradictions between what neoliberalism says and what actually happens' (p. 29). This type of analysis could bring to light how neoliberal ideology constructs an ideal world order which not only seeks to impose an economic model but market values in everyday life. Therefore, it can also be claimed that neoliberalism has not only become a dominant economic model but also a dominant ideology. Thus, adopting ideology as a tool for analysis would also be useful to describe how language, particularly English, has become a key instrument for the enactment and inculcation of this ideology. Furthermore, as Holborow (2012) explains, 'The value of the notion of ideology is that it links views of the world with social relations and social class and sees the source of dominant ideas not in structural terms but arising from social relations themselves' (p. 31). Considering this, characterising neoliberalism not only as an economic model but also as a dominant ideology is essential to bring into light how market values have become so prevalent in social, educational, and individual domains. Particularly, in the education and English language teaching domains neoliberal ideology and its values have found a niche in which market values have been imposed but at the same time found a fertile soil to flourish, grow, and ripe its principles and practices.

3.3 Globalisation and education

The advantages of the global era, linked to an unprecedented use of information and communication technologies to access and to share information, cannot be refuted. Nevertheless, globalisation is more than a model that has detonated the access of knowledge at anytime and anywhere and the rapid communication for the benefit of society. This model carries an ideological market-oriented paradigm which impinges every single layer of state policymaking. As Soudien (2015) explains:

It would be naïve in the extreme to discuss globalisation outside of a consideration of capital flows, trade relations and market arrangements, but there is a good deal more to it. An

economistic reading of it misses the cultural, social, political implications of globalisation. (pp. 77-78)

By the same token, it can be argued that globalisation is not simply a model which imposes the market-capitalist principles in the states' economies, its agenda responds to what Zajda (2015). has described as 'a new dominant ideology of cultural convergence, which is accompanied by corresponding economic, political, social, technological and educational transformations' (p. 105). Without overlooking that globalisation is a model which influences various layers of foreign and domestic policymaking, this section describes how education systems have aligned with globalisation and neoliberal ideologies. Globalisation has extended the transformations implemented in local economies to the educational domain. Such transformations are characterized by budget cuts and an open participation of the private sector in education. Thus, the globalisation principles in education are manifested by:

policies [which] have included moves to decentralise and privatise public school systems. The prescriptions offered by these powerful agencies are supposed to enhance the equality, efficiency, and quality of education. (Arnove, 2015, p. 95)

The interests of macro international agencies, specifically economic governing bodies, on education are far from simply promoting quality of education for all. As Arnove stresses:

In the realm of education, globalisation further refers to the closely entwined economic and education agendas and policies promoted by the major international donor and technical assistance agencies, namely, the World Bank, [and] the International Monetary Fund ... While conservative in nature, these policies are frequently denominated 'neoliberal.' (2015, p. 95)

Under this premise, education systems are transformed to create a workforce with the necessary skills which the labour market demands. Consequently, governments, whose economy is highly influenced by their membership of the OECD or the World Bank, seem not have an option regarding the fate of their education systems. As Zajda describes:

the policies of the Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD), UNESCO, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) operate as powerful forces, which, as supranational organisation, shape and influence education and policy around the world. (2015, p.121)

The ideological impact of the global agenda on education can be observed through, on the one hand, a shift from the historical objective of education as a social equalizer system to a model which seeks to develop the required individual competencies to 'function' within this model, and, on the other hand, the implementation of international standardized learning outcome assessment systems. For instance, among the OECD member nations, a shared agreement is that:

the major goal of education is to enhance the individual's social and economic prospects. This can only be achieved by providing quality education for all. Students' academic achievement is now regularly monitored and measured within the 'internationally agreed framework' of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). (Zajda, p. 120)

At the core of the 'quality education for all' model is the ideological neoliberal principle which defines education as '...a good or commodity, and when all consumers can choose, the quality of the goods and services improves' (Holger, p. 41). This reconceptualization of education implies that the 'Marketisation of the field of education can, in this view, be partial – the ownership and delivery are private, but the owners or their customers receive public funds' (Ibid). Additionally, the macro international agencies (OECD, WB and IMF), economic governing bodies, have advocated for the decentralisation and privatisation of public-school systems (Arnové, 2015). However, for a system which has traditionally, at least in Mexico, been so jealously run by the state and public education teacher unions, the implementation of this ideological global and neoliberal agenda cannot take place without resistance. Although such agencies are not educational advising bodies by nature, their suggestions have functioned as validating arguments for the instrumentation of major neoliberal-oriented education reforms. Commenting on the direct relationship between globalisation and neoliberalism and education, Zajda (2015) has stated that 'Such hegemonic shifts in ideology and policy are likely to have significant economic and cultural implications for national education systems, reforms and policy implementations' (p. 122). As will be described in the following sections, the neoliberal agenda represents an additional factor which has had a major influence in the instrumentation of structural reforms (labour, tax, energy, and education) in Mexico.

3.4 Neoliberalism and education

As described in the previous section, the globalisation ideology has transformed the traditional notion of education from a social equalizer to a commodity which can, and must, be privatised in order to guarantee 'quality of education for all.' But the transformation of public sectors is much more evident by analysing the effect of the neoliberal agenda, which is characterised by an aggressive instrumentation of a capital-oriented ideology, in education.

Kumar and Hill (2009) state that the neoliberal agenda overtly requires governments to promote 'The privatization of public services, the capitalization and commodification of humanity' (p. 1). This ideology has been backed up by supranational financial agencies, which exercise pressure on governments for the liberalisation and privatisation of public services, like housing, education, and water, traditionally provided by governments (Rikowski, 2002b). Therefore, it is not surprising that many countries, including Mexico, have now open 'Public services such as health care, childcare, public assistance, education, and transportation ... to the rules of the market' (p. 31). According to the neoliberal ideology, the participation of the private capital in public services is the necessary condition for a healthy economy.

The neoliberal model has been successful in subordinating education to international market goals (Mulderrig 2002; Levidow 2002). In this context, international organizations such as the OECD or the WB 'argue that problems of education are mainly due to poor management, dilapidation of resources, lack of freedom of choice, out-dated curricula, and ill-prepared teachers' (Domenech and Mora-Ninci, 2009, p.151). Under these adverse circumstances, governments have, frequently with no alternative, opted to instrument neoliberal strategies in education such as:

privatization schemes, massive dismissals of teachers, lowering of real incomes, decentralizing of services, changes in the curriculum towards more accountability, and higher standards in the direction of unreachable student achievements, accompanied by the sordid involvement of banks and private enterprises in the public affairs of education. (ibid)

The role of the OECD and WB has been decisive to implement the neoliberal agenda in education particularly in developing countries. In the case of Latin America, the Washington Consensus (WC) represents one of the earliest applications of the neoliberal agenda after two decades (70's and 80's) of economic crisis in the region. As Castellani points out (2002), Latin American countries were required to implement:

guidelines for the adjustment and stabilization of programs as the only solution for tackling the economic problems of the region, noting that its points of view should not be questioned because they were regarded as optimal. (p. 91)

The relevance of the education sector both to train a skilled workforce to satisfy the needs of the market and to open a new 'educational' market did not remain unnoticed. The WC included a section, specifically dedicated to education, arguing that:

in order to overcome the current educational crisis the markets must be strong while the state sector should weaken. Therefore, decentralization and privatization of services are promoted as fundamental policy measures for the education sector. (Domenech & Mora-Ninci, 2009, p. 153)

As will be presented in the subsequent section, this is exactly what has occurred with the Mexican education system. But before the Mexican case is explored, it is necessary to delineate what it is that the neoliberal ideology pursues from the liberalisation and privatisation of education.

Hatcher 2006b (cited in Hill & Kumar 2009) has described the two central objectives for schools under this model:

The first aim is to ensure that schooling and education engage in ideological and economic reproduction. National education and training policies in the business agenda for education are of increasing importance for national capital. The second aim—the business agenda in schools—is for private enterprise, private capitalists, to make money out of it, to make private profit out of it, to control it. (p. 21)

Under this premise, the private capital seeks to make a profit out of education, but the ideological and economic reproduction of neoliberalism seems to be a much more elaborated aim to achieve.

Thus, education becomes not only a means to get profit out of but an indoctrinating system which pursues ‘to make schooling and higher education subordinate to the personality, ideological, and economic requirements of capital, and to make sure schools produce compliant, ideologically indoctrinated, procapitalist, effective workers’ (Kumar & Hill, 2009, p. 21). In the light of this, supranational financial bodies have also urged governments for the instrumentation of education systems which a) respond to the need of a global market workforce and b) train those workers with the basic competences, or skills, necessary to adapt to the demands of the market. A clear example is the OECD’s vision (1998) for the XXI century education:

It is more important to aim at educational objectives of a general character than to learn things which are too specific. In the working world, there exists a set of basic competences—relationship qualities, linguistic aptitudes, creativity, the capacity to work in a team and to solve problems, a good understanding of new technologies—which have today become essential to possess to be able to obtain a job and to adapt rapidly to the evolving demands of working life. (p. 218)

The OECD overtly stressed the necessity for a competence-based model of education which address the demands of the ‘working world’, and it seems to lay the foundations for the neoliberal the concept of human capital. The privatisation of education systems has been promoted since the early 90’s, first by international economic organizations and accompanied by its member governments. Although this move towards a neoliberal education system started almost three decades ago, the macroeconomic agencies interest in education has not ceased. As Domenech and Mora-Ninci (2009) explained ‘In the field of education, specifically, the World Bank (WB) shows a renewed willingness to continue with those reforms initiated during the 1990s, forcing the implementation of a new political agenda in the current decade’ (p. 151). Since the 90’s, Mexican governments, regardless of political ideology, have attempted to liberalise and privatise the energy, health, and labour sectors, but it was only during the Peña Nieto administration (2012-2018) that a major step forward toward their privatisation of education has been taken: the education reform. In Becker’s view, individuals are free agents who weigh the cost of the education and training as they seek to make themselves more competitive on the job market. The self is seen as a bundle of skills in which individuals invest in a rational and calculating way (cited in Block & Gray 2016, p. 483).

3.5 Language ideology

The diverse ways in which language and ideology intersect have been a focus of attention for applied linguists. Three main concepts which account for this relationship have been proposed: linguistic ideologies (Silverstein, 1976, 1979), language ideologies (Heath 1989; and Hornberger 1988a) and ideologies of language (Joseph & Taylor 1990). Broadly speaking, linguistic ideology has been used to explain the linguistic structure in relation to beliefs about language. Silverstein

defines linguistic ideologies as 'sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use' (1979, p.193). Language ideologies, conversely, have been used in a more socially oriented aspect; Irvine (1989, p. 255) defined this term as 'the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests.' Finally, the term ideologies of language has been used with an emphasis on the '...burgeoning historiography of public discourses on language' (Woolard 1998, p. 21). Although each of the terms represent different theoretical and inquiry strands, contemporary work has drawn on interdisciplinarity, as complementary to applied linguistics, to account for how a dominant ideology (i.e., economic, political, and social) relates to and influences language. Thus, the interrelatedness between economy, politics and language will be discussed in the following section with the intention to draw attention to a contemporary debate: language and neoliberal ideology.

3.6 Historical approaches to language ideologies

Woolard (1998) summarised the main approaches of inquiry in the field of language ideology. The first one is an approach to language ideology which accounts for the connection between language use and structure. According to Woolard (1998, p. 32), this approach explains how 'ideology can quite actively and concretely distort the linguistic structure it represents'. The second inquiry approach to language ideology is the Ethnography of speaking which has given 'attention to ideologies of language, primarily in the neutral sense of cultural conceptions, particularly those embodied in explicit metalinguistics' (p. 35). Language contact and conflict represent the third approach to language ideology inquiry. Recurrent topics within this approach are 'language maintenance and shift, contact-induced linguistic change, the linkage of language to ethnicity and nationalism, language attitudes, and language planning and development' (Woolard 1998, p. 35). Policy, purism, and standardization constitutes the fourth approach to language ideologies. This approach deals with topics such as linguistic correctness, language as a resource, public regulation of language and postcolonial language planning. Literacy and orthography is another approach to account for language ideology. This approach is particularly interested in describing how literacy is shaped by political, social, and economic forces in diverse communities. The historical studies approach 'focuses more on normative ideas about rhetoric than on those concerning grammar, but it demonstrates just how closely linked these topics were' (Woolard, 1998, p. 48). Finally, the colonial language ideology approach seeks to explain, from the study of colonialism perspective, how the linguistic, ideological, and social forms are intertwined.

3.7 Language and neoliberal ideology

Neoliberalism, as an economic model, has been imposed on almost every national economy around the globe. Free trade, market liberalisation and an aggressive promotion of structural reforms have been the strategies among national economies adopting this model. Moreover, this model has not only impacted the macro and micro economy; on the contrary, its influence can be observed on a nation's social, educational, and political structure. In the language domain, Gramsci (1971) and Bourdieu (1991) laid the foundations to the study of language and power and the ideological 'uses' to which language can be subjected. In the past 30 years, scholars (Gal 1989; Fairclough 2006 & 2012) have turned their attention to the pervasiveness of neoliberalism and its ideology on language. In the case of language and neoliberal ideology, Heller (2010), Block (2014 & 2018) and Holborow (2007, 2015) have advocated for an inquiry strand which accounts for the impact of ideology on language (language policy and planning, language ideology and the marketisation of language). Hence, this section presents the arguments which sustain this argument and sets the theoretical framework which orients my research. In this context, Block, Gray and Holborow (2014) claim that:

one blind spot in the interdisciplinarity of applied linguistics has been political economy and in particular a detailed critique of neoliberalism as the ideology driving the practice of economics by governments and international organisations today. (p.1)

In the light of this, they advocate for applied linguistics to open a theoretical strand which explores how the neoliberal ideology has used language as the instrument to impose its principles and sustain its strategies not only in economy but also in every layer of human activity. As they explain:

there is one gaping hole in the work of many applied linguists today, it is in the way that so many either ignore the economic and material bases of human activity and social life, or only deal with and incorporate these bases into their work in the most cursory of manners. For applied linguistics to be truly socially constituted, it must take full account of the political economy of contemporary capitalism – a political economy which encompasses both social classes and their ideologies. (p.4)

The debate proposed by Block, Gray & Holborow (2014) incorporates political economy as the key element to illustrate how neoliberalism and its ideology has permeated, not only the economic and social layers, but also language and how language has become the vehicle through which such ideology manifests and replicates. Describing the motivations which underpin official policy planning, policy making and, ultimately, policy implementation necessarily entails a profound understanding of the ideology (or ideologies) which influences those processes.

The relationship between language and ideology has been discussed by Gramsci (1971) and Marx (1991); for both, a dominant ideology is manifested and reproduced through language. From a

Gramscian perspective, Holborow (2014) pointed out that 'both ideology and language are linked...to the question of social consciousness. [thus] Language represents our potential to form a general view of the world' (p. 3). According to Holborow, a Gramscian view of ideology can be useful to describe how a dominant ideology, in this case neoliberalism, is expressed, implemented, and reproduced through language (2014). Furthermore, following Marx and Engels ([1846] 1998), Block (2018) notes that 'ideology emerges as the ideas of the ruling become the ruling ideas, serving to explain, justify and defend the status quo and those who hold power in society' (p. 68); hence, it is through language that the ruling 'common sense' becomes undisputed and reproduced. Additionally, by explaining how language is discursively repacked as a commodity and describing the metaphorical personification of the market, Holborow (2014) argues that 'language and ideology are coextensive; both develop in concrete social situations, both involve social dialogue, and both affect social consciousness' (p. 127). She goes on to explain that:

Insofar as both language and ideology involve the ability to generalize beyond the particular and the present, to make abstractions about the world in which we live, they overlap and are interconnected. (2014, p.4)

Holborow and Block concur that language represents a key element to explain how a dominant ideology shapes society's common sense; thus, an exhaustive understanding of ideology becomes crucial when accounting for the underlying motivations of any official policy in contemporary times. As Holborow (cited in Block 2018) asserts that 'we have ideology as a driving force in society and one that helps to keep the current dominant version of capitalism (neoliberalism) alive' (p. 68). Thus, addressing the connection between language and ideology becomes the first step to understand Mexico's contemporary ELT policy and planning ideological underpinnings.

3.8 Approaches to language and neoliberal ideology

As stated in the previous section, a current debate in the study of language and ideology is the role of political economy to account for the implications of the neoliberal ideology on language. In the light of this, Block (2018) has identified five areas of sociolinguistic inquiry (1) the English divide; (2) language in the workplace; (3) economics of language; (4) language and tourism; and (5) Critical Discourse Studies ([CDS]; Critical Discourse Analysis [CDA]) which adopt the political economy approach.

According to Block (2018), the English divide research strand accounts for the role of English as the language of the elite and how the learning of it, or, in other cases, the limited access to it, can lead to issues of inequality and social class stratification. The second strand, 'language in the

workplace' examines the economic value of language in job markets. The expansion of the notion of language, formerly studied as a means of communication and marker of identity, to a valued job skill has been termed 'language commodification'. Arguing why language as a commodity represents a current research strand, Heller (2010) noted that:

the recent interest in language as commodity points to a specific and emergent form of this exchange value and requires explanation on two levels. One level relates to the extent to which forms of exchange (standardized language for jobs, for example) that used to be treated discursively as matters of breeding, taste, intellectual competence, good schooling, or rational thought are now treated as directly exchangeable for material goods, and, especially, for money. (p. 102)

As Block (2018) points out 'there is little doubt that language is now treated as a skill that, in effect, can be bought and sold in job markets' (p. 14). One of the most evident examples of how language is regarded as a commodity is call centres which have been studied in India, Pakistan and the US-Mexico border zone.

The research strand focused on the relationship between economics and language is known as Economics of Language (EL). Grin (2003) explains that EL as a research strand is 'located somewhere in a virtual territory bordered not only by economics, but also by policy analysis, the sociology of language, sociolinguistics, and the education sciences' (p. 2) and he goes on to point that:

The thrust of most recent research in this area is on the identification of the main sources of benefits and costs, from the perspective of individuals and of society, attaching to various policy alternatives, and to propose estimates of the order of magnitude of such benefits and costs (p. 25).

Furthermore, Block (2018) explains that 'EL researchers have explored links between economic variables such as salary, productivity, costs, sales, profit, and market share (and the more global concept of 'economic efficiency'), and language-related variables' (p. 18). An important aspect to consider is that EL research does not exclusively account for the economic value of English but also how linguistic diversity can have an impact on economic activity, language policy and planning and education policy around the world.

Block (2018) notes that language and tourism represent a focus of research which deals with '...how aspects of local and global economies are linked to language policies and practices in the tourism industry' (p. 20). In addition, he identifies two strands of language and tourism research: cultural commodification and mobile elite tourism. Finally, after explaining the all-encompassing outlook of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), Block (2018) notes that CDS '... has always sought not only to analyse discourse, but also to challenge dominant ideologies and propose changes in power relations in societies' (p. 24). According to Unger (cited in Block 2018) CDS theoretical and methodological outlook:

draws not just on linguistics but on critical theory, sociology, politics, psychology and cognitive science, among others. [and] In terms of application, CDS has widely been applied to different social, political and cultural phenomena that are not necessarily only to do with language, and indeed this has also been seen as an indispensable orientation when analysing complex social problems. (p. 24)

But perhaps the most salient characteristic of CDS, as opposed to Critical Discourse Analysis, is that CDS 'has always sought not only to analyse discourse, but also to challenge dominant ideologies and propose changes in power relations in societies' and its scope includes '... issues related to inequality... [and its] focus seems to be more on oppression and marginalization than oppression' (Block 2018, pp.24-25).

Another CDS research strand is grounded on Fairclough's 'market metaphor' discourses; in this sense, Park's (2013) and Gunarsson's (2010) studies deal with the 'neoliberal management discourses' in workplaces in Japanese and Sweden companies respectively. By examining the prominence of neoliberal terms in education and society arenas, Holborow (cited in Block 2018) 'shows how these and other constructs become agents of ideology as they help form and shape our ways of understanding the world around us and events in it' (p. 26).

As discussed in the previous sections, the fact that neoliberalism, as an economic model, has its roots in economic consensus and interests, mostly supported by the United States and the United Kingdom, has naturally resulted in the use of English as *de facto* language of this model. Thus, it is not surprising that the neoliberal economic strategies, which have been implemented in many countries around the world, have also permeated the education domain. The ultimate goal is to weaken the nation state and to strengthen the market, and education represents another domain for neoliberal strategies to be implemented. Hence, it is worth noticing that sociolinguistics has turned its attention to four research strands (the English divide, language in the workplace, economics of language, language and tourism) which include the English language as a key aspect of to describe neoliberal ideology and language interconnection⁶. Language policy and planning cannot be excluded from the implications of the neoliberal economic strategies and its accompanying ideological orientations. Particularly, it is the case of English language instruction in countries in which knowing the language represents, or at least that is the constructed expectation, access to better jobs, academic and social mobility, promotion of tourism, and, in general, a 'better life'.

⁶ See Block (2018) for a detailed summary

3.9 Language policy and planning

Language policy and planning (LPP) represents a key theme in the theoretical framework of this thesis given one of the purposes of this research is to focus on how the neoliberal ideology underpin Mexico's language policies. Ager (2001, p.5) defines language policy as 'official planning, carried out by those in political authority, and has clear similarities with any other form of public policy. As such, language policy represents the exercise of political power' Due to the fact that the present research focusses on an official language policy, it is necessary to acknowledge that when conducting research about language policy, it is desirable to explore the political, economic and social dimensions for they can provide scholars with information about 'what is at stake, why it matters, and what effect particular policies or policy approaches might have on such debates' (Ricento, 2006, p. 8). In addition to adopting a holistic approach to account for LPP, describing the principal models to LPP becomes crucial. Hornberger (2009) reminds us that there exist three main models for LPP: Status planning, acquisition planning and corpus planning. Status planning focuses on the uses of language; for example, officialization, nationalization and standardization. Acquisition planning centres on the users of language and the language's formal role in society. Corpus planning copes with processes of standardization of code.

Given that this research aims to account for the influence of the neoliberal ideology on Mexico's English language policy and planning, Critical Language Policy (CLP) represents another important theme for the theoretical framework. Tollefson (2006, p. 42) defines CLP as 'A critical approach [which] acknowledges that policies often create and sustain various forms of social inequality, and that policy-makers usually promote the interests of dominant social groups.' He goes on to describe the CLP nature of inquiry by explaining that 'Such research is fundamentally opposed to positivist approaches that emphasize the researcher's 'objectivity' and distance from the 'subjects' of research. In its concern for social change and social justice, CLP research highlights ethical questions of policy, as well as of research methodology' (ibid.). CLP, therefore, constitutes a methodological possibility to analyse the contemporary ELT policy in Mexico.

3.10 Approaches to Language Policy and Planning

Hornberger's (2013) summary of approaches to language policy and planning (LPP) provides a brief, yet useful, historical LPP overview. First, she describes status planning as 'those efforts directed toward the allocation of functions of languages/literacies in a given speech community.' Within this type of LPP, language officialization, nationalization and standardization can be included. The second category, corpus planning, is described as 'those efforts related to the adequacy of the form or structure of languages/literacies'; this category includes standardization

of corpus and standardization of auxiliary code. Finally, acquisition planning, refers to the ‘... efforts to influence the allocation of users or the distribution of languages/literacies, by means of creating or improving opportunity or incentive to learn them, or both’ and includes reacquisition, maintenance, shift, and foreign language/second language/literacy (p. 28). Although a foreign language policy can be indeed a means of ‘creating or improving opportunity or incentive to learn’ a language, it would be rather naïve to assume that is always the fundamental motivation of foreign language policy in planning. In addition to the ‘traditional’ approaches, Hornberger (2013) points out three emerging emphasis in LPP: ideology, ecology and agency which draw on the work of critical scholars such as Phillipson and Tollefson and postmodernists like Pennycook and Canagarajah. In addition, Ricento (2000) has noted that the incorporation of ideology, ecology, and agency in LPP research, has amounted to its contemporary theory. Provided the context of this research, at this point it becomes necessary to account for the relationship between neoliberalism and LPP.

3.11 Neoliberalism and LPP

The impact of neoliberalism on LPP is observable in status, corpus, and acquisition planning, and its effects range from language choice, language loss, to foreign language planning. In the latter case, Ricento (2015) points out that ‘English is often promoted by its advocates as a social ‘good’ with unquestioned instrumental value’ (p. 1). This widespread assumption is supported:

in many non-English dominant countries that by using English as a medium of instruction, or as a core subject in the curriculum, individuals and societies will reap benefits, be they material, psychological, strategic, symbolic, or all of the above. (Ricento 2015, p. 3)

Nevertheless, overemphasizing that an English as a foreign language policy is the door to social mobility, access to better education and, therefore, better jobs, and a vehicle for global communication, overshadows the economic and ideological orientations which underpin such policy. As Codó (2018) explains:

little attention has traditionally been paid in the field of LPP to issues of political economy, thus often producing naïve accounts of the role of language in relation to the promotion of social justice. (p.468)

In the contemporary neoliberal world order, describing the foreign language policies, particularly English, ideological orientations could also shed light on how such policies might have a negative impact on native languages. As Ricento (2015) points out:

Currently, there is not enough understanding of how the interests and values of transnational corporations, and the policies of states and international organizations that support those interests and values, may influence the trajectory and fate of [indigenous and foreign] languages. (p. 27)

A comprehensive analysis of neoliberal ideology and language policy and planning, in particular, the contemporary the massification of ELT elsewhere, has to draw on other disciplines such as sociology and political economy. As Codó (2018) states:

To investigate LLP in neoliberalising institutional spaces, it is thus necessary to understand its entanglement with emergent socioeconomic, political, and moral orders, as well as to investigate the conditions, constraints, and possibilities of language policy in specific institutional locales. (p. 469)

The arguments presented in this section concur with Fairclough's, Holborow's and Block's in the sense that a sound analysis of the relationship and impact of neoliberalism in language and, in this case, LPP can only be attained by drawing from a variety of disciplines and, specifically, political economy. Finally, based on discussion of key concepts in this chapter, the methodological analysis for this study draws on political economy as the guiding theme to account for the ideological orientations underpinning Mexico's language policies, specifically, the English as a foreign language policy. This is by no means a simplistic endeavour. As Bale (2015) warns 'Calls to root language study within a political-economic framework are easy to make; identifying the contours of a specific political-economic context is a more difficult task' (p. 82). In the light of this, three essential insights from political economy need to be accounted for to avoid an over simplistic analysis:

First, any consideration of global political economy must be historical, that is, historical problem (Lukács 1971: 157). Second, distinguishing between what is new and what endures across various historical iterations of capitalism requires analyzing the system as a whole, not merely as a succession of individual nation-states or economies. Finally, a key methodological challenge to GPE analysis is avoiding economic reductionism, that is, deriving all social phenomena directly from economic relations. (Bale, 2015, p.82)

This section has described the type of methodological orientation that is needed to address the research objectives of the present study. It is clear that any research endeavour which aims to shed light on the impact of neoliberal ideology in LPP has to adopt a critical and historical perspective and draw from other disciplines, more specifically political economy, to shed comprehensive conclusions.

3.12 Neoliberalism and ELT

As has been stated in the previous sections, the present study aims to unveil the ideology behind Mexico's ELT language policy. Thus, an overview of studies which account for the influence of neoliberalism on ELT becomes relevant to situate my study within a research strand of growing interest. This contemporary field of inquiry mostly draws from critical perspectives methodologies and seeks to unravel how neoliberalism has shaped ELT textbooks content and design, teacher training programmes, and teachers' and students' attitudes towards English and the construction of new identities regarding the idealisation of English as an asset for better opportunities.

Chapter 3

Drawing from CDA, Babaii and Sheikhi (2018) selected a corpus of American and British textbooks and analysed the content of ELT textbooks used by thirty private institutions in Iran. One of the arguments that underpins this study is that 'English teaching materials are regularly revised and developed to respond to the (new) needs and interests of the learners – the customers, in fact' (p. 251). This resonates with the market-oriented neoliberal ideology which encapsulates individuals not as people but as customers. Their findings indicate that 'The [ELT] materials are meant to legitimize and advertize neoliberal, market-led life style' (p. 261). Hence, one of the salient implications from this study is that:

Such materials have this potential to train a generation of educated people with a considerable knowledge about money, fashion, celebrities, company affairs, etc. but with little knowledge about other important aspects of life which are not connected to money. (pp. 252-253)

Similarly, Copley (2018) analysed the ideological position of ELT textbooks in order to understand '... the ELT industry, its strategic role in the political economy of neoliberal globalization, and the practices that it promotes' (p. 47). His conclusions lead to claim that ELT has not only become an instrument of neoliberalism but '... in many respects is strategically positioned within it' (p. 59). Both studies conclude that neoliberalism not only has influenced ELT textbook production, due to the growing massification of ELT elsewhere, but also has become an efficient medium through which the individualist and market-oriented lifestyle, distinctive features of neoliberal ideology, becomes legitimised and reproduced.

Exploring how marketization, a characteristic feature of neoliberalism, has influenced teacher preparation programmes in England, Block and Gray (2016) concluded that what initial teacher education programmes, in the field of ELT, actually promote is 'a workforce capable of delivering a standardized product into the educational marketplace, capable of using basic tools of the trade such as textbooks – but with little...reasoning skills' (p. 491). They further explain that 'language teaching itself– ...[has] become more routine, uniform and predictable. We thus see Taylorist tendencies in initial teacher preparation programmes' (p. 485). A salient implication is that a strategically trained ELT workforce is what the market needs to a) implement massive English language teaching programmes, b) consume ELT materials and resources, and c) carry out large-scale teacher and student accreditation strategies elsewhere.

West (2019) analysed the influence of neoliberalism on white, male, native English speakers (NES) teachers' moral construction within a neoliberal context of education (Korean hagwons). His aim was to 'investigate teachers as they construct moral selves in the neoliberal context of private English language institutes'(p. 1). Drawing from narrative analysis, he discovered that

'Teachers...took moral stances focused largely on an individual, rather than social, sense of justice, while also failing to fully interrogate privilege and the way it influences their moral stances' (p. 39). Teachers' moral seems to be influenced by the commodification, resulting in high marketability, of white NES teachers in Korean private institutions, and other features of individualism inherent to neoliberal ideology.

The private school (eikaiwa) advertising in Japan has been studied by Simpson (2018) from a multimodal analysis approach. Using commodity fetishism as framework of analysis, he argues that the English is not what advertising sells as a commodity but rather the lesson itself. Thus, it is by the commodification of the lesson that advertising positions the student as the homo oeconomicus. As he explains 'within the recontextualization of eikaiwa in advertising, one sees neither labour, nor the lesson-commodity, but rather representations of entrepreneurial selves who have successfully produced their own satisfaction' (p. 516). Self-satisfaction and individualism are two common features promoted by neoliberal ideology and, as the study shows, are inherently present in the advertising of English language learning private schools in Japan.

Warriner (2016) analysed the influence of neoliberal ideology on '... the policies and practices prevalent' in an ESL programme for refugees in the United States. The feature which makes this study distinctive from the previously presented is that it explores the impact of neoliberal ideology on shaping refugees' mindsets in a native English-speaking country. From a critical perspective, her analysis describes 'how ideologically laden policies and practices limit the identities and trajectories imagined for and ascribed to adult learners of English' (p. 496).

Warriner's contribution can be summarised as follows:

although English is viewed as a powerful form of linguistic capital (by the students, the teacher, the administrator in this programme), an analysis of what transpires outside of school (Warriner 2007b, 2009) makes clear that English language learning does not automatically result in the kinds of access and opportunity that are promised by the ideology. Neoliberal discourses that permeate and sustain ideologies of language that privilege and value English language learning above all disguise the fact that individual effort and achievement are important and necessary but not sufficient in the quest for economic security or social mobility. (p. 506)

While Warriner's contribution highlights how the policies and practices of an ESL programme could promote a misleading notion that learning English is the only way to a successful life, Lee's (2016) study on the English ideologies of Korean early study-abroad students' parents in Gangnam describes how English represents a symbolic characteristic inherent to status and prestige. Using CDA as a framework of analysis, he concluded that 'English was used ... for maintaining the social position and vested interests represented by their address: Gangnam' (p. 44). A further interpretation of this study might be that English is used as the utmost needed commodity not to reach economic security but to maintain social status and prestige. He also draws attention to

Chapter 3

further '... problematising and undermining the neoliberal ideology that assumes English is equally accessible by all in a more fundamental way' (p. 47).

The previously described studies represent a current research strand on the implications of neoliberal ideology on ELT in diverse contexts and topics. A distinctive characteristic among all is that they adopt a critical perspective as a framework of analysis for it not only serves to bring into light the variety of ways in which neoliberal ideology has influenced ELT but also, by exposing its impact, to explore ways in which it can be contested. Additionally, all the authors draw attention to conduct more research on this strand to explore how other aspects of ELT may be influenced by neoliberal ideology. Particularly relevant to my study, Warriner's conclusions raise the question whether ELT policies might be promoting the same misleading promise that 'English opens doors' elsewhere. Therefore, exploring the ideological underpinnings for the proliferation of massive ELT programmes in Latin America, particularly the Mexican case, represents an area of attention. In the following chapter, I will present the methodological orientation, based on a political economy approach, for the present study.

Chapter 4 Methodological Approach

4.1 Introduction

This thesis studies, at its core, neoliberal ideology and its impact on language policy and planning, which as a research strand has been contemporarily explored from the cultural political economy (Fairclough, 2006), political economy (Holborow, 2015; Block, 2018) and global political economy (Bale, 2015) frameworks. In the following sections I will describe the theoretical grounds which sustain my adoption of a political economy methodological approach. This will be followed by a description of the levels of analysis, type of data and analysis approach for each one.

4.2 Political economy as framework of analysis

Language and power, as a research strand, has been explored from various perspectives. Bourdieu's (1991) 'Language and Power' represents a shift from looking at language 'as an object of contemplation' towards a view which aimed to treat it 'as an instrument of action and power' (p. 37). Drawing from a critique of the structuralist view of language, Bourdieu's contribution lies in the recognition that language use and formation is embedded with historical, social, and political conditions of power and control.

The relationship between social power and discourse can be analysed from the macro level and the social micro level. From the macro level of analysis, which is my interest, one approach of analysis focuses on describing how 'symbolic elites' (i.e., journalists, writers, academics) play a central role in 'the ideological supporting framework for the exercise or maintenance of power in our modern, information and communication societies' (Van Dijk, 1989, p. 23). Without overlooking that social power is achieved by means of economic and governmental mechanisms, this framework of analysis underscores that 'the exercise of power and its maintenance is ideological,' thus, 'it is crucial to analyze the strategic role of discourse and its agents (speakers, writers, editors, and so on) in the reproduction of this form of sociocultural hegemony' (Ibid). Acknowledging that language is an extraordinary mechanism of social control and domination implies that studying such aspect necessarily transcends the traditional discursive level of analysis. Hence, an integrative approach to the influence of discourse on ideological domination would opt for a combination of 'the analysis of discursive (sub)genres and communicative events in social situations. Such 'situation analysis' requires an integration of both discourse analysis and social analysis' (Van Dijk, 1989, p. 30).

The integration of social studies and applied linguistics as a framework to study the relationship between language and dominant discourse and ideology has been explored by Fairclough (2006), Holborow (2015), and Block (2018). Drawing from a Critical Discourse Analysis stance, Fairclough (2006) explains that it is through discourse, particularly neoliberal discourse, that international agencies, such as the International Monetary Fund, 'attempt, with some success, to push and inflect aspects of globalization in particular directions' (p.5). Thus, a critical analysis of discourse must:

approach language as one facet of social life which is closely ... interconnected with other facets of social life and is therefore a significant...aspect of all the major issues in social scientific research—economic systems, social relations, power and ideology, institutions, social change, social identity and so on. (Fairclough, 2006, p. 8)

In this context, Fairclough developed a CDA approach which 'in researching discourse as a facet of globalization [adopts] a form of 'cultural' political economy' (p. 23). Holborow's (2015) *Language and neoliberalism* introduces the idea that the study of language and neoliberalism must be approached from the ideological perspective rather than discourse analysis. Developing from Gal's (1989) *Language and Political Economy* arguments in which 'the gap between linguistics and political economy [as] a reminder of the radical critique prevalent within linguistics at the time' is discussed, Holborow (2015) points out the necessity to go beyond discourse or power in language analyses to adopt a more ideological-oriented type of analysis 'to account for the political implications of language as social action... [and] to include political economy and its relationship – both material and ideological – to language' (p. 14).

Similarly, Block (2018) points out that, in the field of sociolinguistics, the incorporation of political economy '...has been framed as a field of inquiry that focuses on and analyses the relationship between the individual and the society and between the market and the state,' and asserts that:

there has been a marked rise in the number of scholars in the humanities and social sciences who have weighed in with regard to the effects of neoliberal economic policies and practices. (p. 39)

Block (2018) has also identified five different research strands which integrate sociolinguistics and political economy: The English divide, language in the workplace, economics of language, language and tourism and Critical Discourse Studies. An emerging research strand, which advocates for the incorporation of political economy and sociolinguistics, examines the relationship between language and ideology, specifically neoliberal ideology. In this sense, Block, Gray and Holborow (2014) argue that 'one blind spot...of applied linguistics has been political economy and in particular a detailed critique of neoliberalism as the ideology driving the practice of economics by governments and international organisations today' (p. 1). As neoliberalism is a

hegemonic model, at least in the Western hemisphere, which has deeply influenced a vast number of nations' economies, education systems, and structures of society in favour of its ideological-driven interests, studying language and ideology (more specifically neoliberal ideology) '... must take full account of the political economy of contemporary capitalism – a political economy which encompasses both social classes and their ideologies' (Ibid, p. 4).

From the preceding paragraphs it is evident that Fairclough, Holborow and Block have recognised the necessity for the incorporation of social studies, more specifically political economy, in language research in general. Although Fairclough does acknowledge the ideological implications of discourse, he adopts a CDA approach to account for language and globalisation. In contrast, Holborow and Block opt for a research strand which underscores the role of neoliberal ideology mainly because 'the notion of ideology, as distinct but also interacting with language, allows us to better understand the dynamic of social relations of which the makers of language are part' and, with this in mind 'Ideology, in the Marxist sense, with its constant reference to wider social power, helps maintain this vital proportionality and therefore remains an indispensable tool in any critique of power in society' (Holborow, 2007, p. 7).

As mentioned above, Block (2018) has outlined five research strands which integrate sociolinguistics and political economy. The field of English language teaching and learning has also, as with education in general, been influenced by neoliberalism. For the last three decades, English language teaching and learning has become and consolidated as a very profitable business for many transnational companies. As Phillipson (1992) explained 'The spread of English has not been left to chance, and language pedagogy has played part in this process' (p. 6). In the scientific publication domain, Hamel (2007) describes the dominance of English over other formerly accepted languages (French, German and Japanese) for publication particularly in the 'pure' natural sciences. Thus, recognising that 'the ELT industry is an area of applied linguistics activity in which language and political economy come together in ways that it would be unwise for the field to ignore' (Block, Gray and Holborow 2014, p. 9). Under this premise, adopting an approach, which integrates political economy and applied linguistics, as a framework to analyse the implications of neoliberal ideology on Mexico's economy, education reform, and contemporary English language policy represents an appropriate alternative to address the aims of the present study.

Since the aim of this study is, on the one hand, to account for the ideological orientations underpinning Mexico's foreign language policy, and, on the other, to describe the institutional

practices which reproduce such ideology, multi-layered approach of analysis is required. Thus, Lo Bianco's (2009) three-dimensional CDA approach to LPP becomes a useful tool to address the aims that guide this research. This approach views LPP 'as an ensemble of activities' which include public texts, public discourses and performative action. Lo Bianco describes public texts as 'accommodations (language policies and plans) particular to given settings and times, and reflect prevailing political and ideological forces'. Furthermore, public discourses 'are the dynamic here-and-now discussions about language, which might seek to entrench or enact those accommodations and performative action refers to:

the practice of language use, both those uses of language only focused on conveying messages, therefore mundane, and the usage of language for socialisation of the young, therefore teaching, or other professional enactments of language policy intentions, such as interpreting and translating, language research, dictionary writing etc. (2009, p. 102)

4.3 Methodological approach

Drawing from the language and political economy research strand, this study aims to answer five research questions which will be addressed from two levels of analysis. The first level of analysis seeks to identify the ideological orientations which underpin Mexico's government policies and, consequently, its English language policy. The second level of analysis intends to identify whether and how the institutional practices reproduce the ideology underpinning Mexico's English language policy. Hence, it is essential to conduct a rigorous analysis which includes a horizontal (public texts, public discourse, and language practice) and chronological description of instances in which the dominant ideology is enacted, legitimised, and reproduced. The horizontal analysis aims to describe the interrelatedness of public texts, public discourses and language practices for the enactment, legitimatisation, and reproduction of a dominant ideology. The chronological analysis, on the other hand, describes the steady process of legitimising a dominant ideology, particularly in public texts and public discourses. In this context, the first level of analysis encompasses instances of public texts and public discourses (Lo Bianco, 2009) and aims to describe how these interrelate to legitimate and reproduce a dominant ideology. The second level includes language practices and public discourses (Lo Bianco, 2009) to account for the legitimisation of institutional practices which enact and reproduce the dominant ideology.

4.3.1 Key concept analysis: public documents and public discourses

At this point, it becomes crucial to illustrate the type of analysis which will be adopted to characterise Mexico's contemporary economic and education ideological orientations. Drawing from Holborow's (2014) neoliberal keyword analysis, this level of analysis seeks to identify the most salient key concepts which depict the neoliberal ideology within Mexico's public policies

towards economy, energy, labour, and education. The analysis includes 4 key concepts: Quality of education, education reform, human capital, and certification⁷. The key concept analysis seeks to explain how neoliberal policies and strategies have, on the one hand, been implemented in Mexico's domestic policy as a result of the policy and strategy recommendations by macro-organisations. Consequently, neoliberal policies have been legitimised by a) the adoption of a neoliberal discourse found in public official documents and speeches and b) the instrumentation neoliberal policies and strategies in education but more specifically in the contemporary ELT agenda.

The first level of analysis is divided in three sub levels of analysis. First, a characterization of Mexico's economic, social and education models and its underpinning ideology is required. This analysis will entail a description of the role which a macro international organisation (OECD) has played in shaping Mexico's domestic policy (economy, society, and education) over the past three decades. Developing from this, an identification and description of the specific public policies, with emphasis on education, which have emanated from the macro-organisations' suggestions are crucial for the description of this first sub level. The analysis includes the following key documents:

1. OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: MEXICO (2012)
2. OECD Education Policy Outlook: Mexico (2013)
3. OECD Skill Strategy Diagnostic Report (2017)
4. World Bank Country Partnership strategy for the United Mexican States (2013). Promoting labour markets for inclusive growth with emphasis on strategies 63-67

As discussed in chapter three, OECD, among others, represents and has promoted the neoliberal interests in several developing countries including Mexico. Hence, this sub level of analysis also includes an analysis of the strategies, recommendations, and suggestions, in terms of domestic policy, described in the previously referred documents and former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), Vicente Fox Quezada (2000-2006) and Enrique Peña Nieto's (2012-2018) public speeches. Furthermore, this level of analysis will draw on CDA with emphasis on the identification of key concepts, sentences or phrases which endorse neoliberal orientations in

⁷ Although I refer to language qualifications (exams), I used the word 'certification' here because it is the direct translation from the documents that will be used in the analysis chapter. Nevertheless, I will use language qualifications elsewhere.

Chapter 4

Mexico's domestic policy. It is expected that by including these two sources of data, a horizontal and chronological connection between public texts and public discourses, concerning the legitimisation and implementation of neoliberalism in Mexico's contemporary domestic policy, can be illustrated.

The second sub level of analysis includes a historical review (2001-2006, 2007-2012 and 2013-2018) of the National Development Plans (NDP) which have defined the social, economic, and educational policies for the past three presidential terms. These official documents were selected not only because they embody the years in which Mexico steadily adopted the macro-organisations recommendations but also because a critical analysis of each will shed light into the ideology underpinning Mexico's domestic policy. In addition, this complementary analysis of official documents includes the National Education Plans (NEP) which accompany every NDP and delineate the specific education policies to be implemented in every term. The following key documents will be analysed:

1. 2001-2006 National Development Plan

(First time the opposition, National Action Party, won a presidential election)

2. 2007-2012 National Development Plan

(Second term for the National Action Party)

3. 2013-2018 National Development Plan

(The former ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party wins the presidential election and implements the so-called structural energy and education reforms).

The analysis of these documents will serve both as a historical review of the official thrust towards the implementation of structural reforms since 2001 and as an indicator of how discourse has been used to legitimate the implementation of such reforms. A closer analysis into the education policy will include the following key documents:

1. 2001-2006 National Education Plan

2. 2007-2012 National Education Plan

3. 2013-2018 National Education Plan

These documents have defined the ideological orientations and specific strategies (i.e., teacher training, skills development, and language qualifications) promoted by the Mexican government in the public education system. It is expected that this analysis sheds light upon the alignment between the macro-organisation recommendations, Mexico's national and education policies.

As in the previous sub level, this also includes an analysis of former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), Vicente Fox Quezada (2000-2006) and Enrique Peña Nieto's (2012-2018) public speeches to describe how their public discourses also served the purpose to legitimise the implementation of an education reform which, as will be explained in chapter five, was used as a labour reform to gain political control of the teachers' union.

The last level of analysis will seek to identify the key concepts and discourse which unveil Mexico's ELT agenda ideological underpinning. This sub level of analysis will include the contemporary (2006 – to-date) ELT official documents: programmes, decrees, federal agreements, and reform and public discourses. The analysis will include the following key documents:

OECD: Languages in a global world.

2006 ELT secondary programme

2006 ELT reform

2009 National English Language Programme (NEPBE) Curricular Foundations

2015 NEPBE diagnosis

2015 National English Program decree

2017 National English Strategy

Sorry: English language learning in Mexico

Quality assurance official documents

University of Puebla: 2017-2021 Institutional Development Plan

2019-2014 National Development Plan

CIEES quality assurance methodology

The University and Higher Education Institutions Association: Vision and Action 2030

Basic Elements for the English Language Teacher Training Programme: ANUIES

UTBIS mission and vision

Chapter 4

These documents have defined the specific strategies (i.e., teacher training, programme and materials development and student and teacher accreditation) regarding the ELT policy in the past 12 years. It is expected that this analysis illustrates the alignment between the macro-organisation recommendations, Mexico's education policy and ELT strategy.

In addition to the previous public texts, this level of analysis includes public discourses delivered by the following key stakeholders:

- Juan Manuel Martínez's, former NEPBE coordinator, public speech
- Aurelio Nuño, former Secretary of Public Education, National English Strategy presentation speech
- Claudio X. Gonzales, former Mexicans First president, TV interviews regarding ELT in Mexico.

As will be described in the subsequent chapter, these public discourses illustrate how the neoliberal ideology permeated the ELT domain not only in the use of key concepts but also in the implementation and legitimisation of neoliberal strategies in the public English programmes. Overall, this level of analysis will shed light into the horizontal and chronological construction of a neoliberal oriented economic, social and education domestic policy in public text and public discourses. Drawing from this, it will be possible to account for the ideology which underpins Mexico's ELT language policy.

4.4 Institutional language practices and public discourses

By analysing language practices and public discourses (Lo Bianco, 2009), the second level of analysis aims to identify and describe the institutional practices which reproduce Mexico's English language policy's ideological underpinnings. The institutional ELT practices range from specific programmes (language qualification and teacher training programs, emphasis on English over other foreign languages, curricular orientations, etc.) to stakeholders' discursive practices which, consciously or unconsciously, enact and reproduce the ideological orientations sustaining Mexico's English language policy.

Hence, the analysis includes instances of public discourses taken from official speeches, talks and promotional videos and language practices (Lo Bianco, 2009) which, in this case, were obtained

through interviews. A total number of seven interviews were conducted with the following key stakeholders:

1. Teacher training school in central Mexico
 - a) Academic affairs coordinator
 - b) English language department coordinator
 - c) English language teacher
2. Public University in central Mexico
 - a) Secretary of Academic Affairs
 - b) Language department director (BA and MA programmes)
 - c) School for Foreign Students director
3. National English Programme in Basic Education in Southern Mexico (public education)
 - a) Academic affairs assistant
5. Bilingual Technological University English language teacher.
4. Private school parents

4.5 Participants

All the participants, who were interviewed, voluntarily participated in this research and signed a consent letter. They were selected because of key position they hold in their institution and their involvement in the implementation of ELT programmes. The rationale to include participants from different contexts and roles lies in the need to gather insights which reflect as many perspectives as possible. This will help to either find recurring patterns or contrasting opinions regarding the focus of the study. All the participants' identities have been kept confidential to guarantee their anonymity and pseudonyms were used when referred to in the following chapters.

4.6 Interviews

Interviews with the participants were conducted following guiding questions from a semi-structured questionnaire which had been previously approved by the University of Southampton research Ethics committee. In addition to the interviews, 137 parents, whose children attend private schools, participated in the study by answering three simple questions regarding the importance of English. All parents voluntarily answered the seven questions in an online questionnaire (Appendix A).

4.7 My position as researcher

When drawing from a qualitative perspective, as I do for this research, Mason (2002, p.7) warns that:

researchers should constantly take stock of their actions and their role in the research process, and subject these to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of their 'data'. This is based on the belief that a researcher cannot be neutral, or objective, or detached, from the knowledge and evidence they are generating. Instead, they should seek to understand their role in that process. Indeed, the very act of asking oneself difficult questions in the research process is part of the activity of reflexivity.

Considering this, I consider it essential to state that, although throughout the entire research process I have had an insider's perspective because I am an ELT practitioner (teacher and coordinator), I have sought to maintain myself as distant as possible by adopting the framework of analysis described in the previous sections. This does not mean that the neither the data nor the analysis draws on 'pure' and objective research; on the contrary, my own reflections and insights are present in the analysis but within the parameters, I believe, of the framework of analysis.

4.8 Methodology NOT 'method'

The research methodology proposal does not aim to use a single method of analysis since, in order to account for the ideological orientations underpinning Mexico's language, and, specifically, ELT policy a transdisciplinary political economy and applied linguistics framework will be adopted. Considering this, Fairclough (2012) explains that a 'Methodology is to be understood as a transdisciplinary process of theoretically constructing the object of research for a research project; particular methods are selected according to how the object of research is constructed' (p. 13). As described in the above, section 4.1 will adopt a political economy framework of analysis for the first sub level of analysis in addition to a neoliberal keyword analysis (Holborow, 2015). In section 4.2, a critical analysis (Tollefson, 2006) of Mexico's language policy models and ideological orientations in relation to the macro international and national economic and education models will be conducted. Section 4.3 includes a critical analysis of the institutional practices which legitimise and reproduce the ideological orientations underpinning the Mexico's English language policy and a CDA of the operationalisation (Fairclough, 2012) of neoliberal discourse among stakeholders. The previously described multilevel and transdisciplinary approach resonates with Fairclough's idea of methodology, instead of a single method, and with the methodological proposal and framework of analysis for the present study.

Chapter 5 Public texts, public discourses, and language practice

5.1 Introduction

As described in the methodological approach, the study is divided in two levels of analysis. The first level of analysis seeks to identify the ideological orientations which have underpinned Mexico's domestic policies, particularly education policy, and, consequently, its English language policy whereas the second level of intends to identify whether and how the institutional practices reproduce the ideologies underpinning Mexico's English language policy.

The first level of analysis includes public texts and public discourses (Lo Bianco, 2009). The public texts analysis aims to identify the influence of neoliberal ideology on Mexico's ELT policy; thus, in order to accomplish this, it is crucial to establish that a) the implementation of contemporary domestic policies in Mexico responds to macro organisation interests, b) Mexico's education reform represents an extension of the neoliberal strategic reforms package, and c) the contemporary ELT programmes have been instrumented as, mainly, complementary strategies to the neoliberal agenda in Mexico. The public discourses analysis seeks to elucidate how key concepts, present in key stakeholders' speeches, were recurrently used to legitimise the neoliberal ideology underpinning Mexico's domestic policy.

The second level of analysis includes public discourses taken from official speeches, talks and promotional videos and language practice (Lo Bianco, 2009) instances obtained from interviews with public university, teacher training school, the National English Programme stakeholders, and parents. This will bring light into how the neoliberal ideology has permeated the institutional discursive practices regarding ELT.

Adopting Holborow's (2014) key term analysis, five key concepts (reform, quality of education, human capital, certification, and labour market) were chosen to conduct the public texts and public discourses analysis in order to elucidate how the neoliberal ideology has underpinned Mexico's domestic policymaking, which ultimately materialised in reforms and, consequently in a massive ELT strategy.

As described in the context chapter, Mexico's contemporary domestic economic policy has been influenced by the NAFTA agreement and its membership to the OECD, both in the early 90's, and, in a broader perspective, the Washington consensus's goals. In the following section, a closer analysis of OECD documents, with emphasis on key concepts, is presented since this organisation has been a leading influence in Mexico's domestic policy making. As it is expressed in the OECD official website 'Mexico signed the Convention founding the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development on 18 May 1994, thereby pledged its full dedication to achieving the Organisation's fundamental aims' (OECD, 2018). Thus, establishing whether the OECD recommendations have been translated into actual domestic policies and strategies needs to start by delineating what those specific recommendations are.

5.2 Key concept analysis: public texts and public discourses

One of the most significant reasons to adopt a political economy methodological approach lies in the idea that it is only through 'political economy and in particular a detailed critique of neoliberalism as the ideology driving the practice of economics by governments international organisations today' (Block, 2014, p. 1) that the influence of neoliberal ideology on Mexico's ELT policy will be unveiled. Considering this, this section describes how, through a CDA approach, key concepts in public texts and public discourses are discovered to have been used to promote, implement, and legitimise neoliberal-driven policies in Mexico. The analysis software Nvivo⁸ was used to identify the key concepts in all public texts. This software was useful to identify the key concepts within all the public texts and the context in which they were used. Texts were uploaded in the software and, by using the word finder function, the key concepts were identified and grouped in nodes which facilitated selection, and analysis of the key concepts according to the context in which they were used. Throughout the analysis, excerpts will be presented in Spanish, the language of publication, and translations will be inserted as footnotes.

5.2.1 Mexico's structural reforms: legitimisation through public texts and public discourses.

As has been described in the previous chapters, the characterisation of the impact of a dominant ideology on a language policy requires the adoption of a political economy approach. Drawing

⁸ Qualitative analysis software useful to import data from virtually any source, analyze it with advanced management, query, and visualization tools, ask complex questions of your data to identify themes and draw clear conclusions, achieve more robust research results in less time

from this, this sub level of analysis aims to describe the interrelatedness between the OECD documents and official discourses to promote, implement, and legitimise structural reforms.

5.2.1.1 Macro organisations (OECD)

The OECD publishes yearly country reviews on a range of topics such as health, skills, employment, and education. Hence, six OECD documents, which review various aspects of Mexico’s domestic policy, were analysed:

Table 2 OECD documents used for analysis

Title	Year of publication
Invitation to Mexico to accede to the convention on the organisation for economic co-operation and development	1994
Improving schools’ strategies for action in Mexico executive summary	2010
Education policy outlook Mexico	2013
Policy priorities to upgrade the skills and knowledge of Mexicans for greater productivity and innovation	2015
OECD skills strategy diagnostic report: Mexico	2017
Towards a stronger and more inclusive Mexico an assessment of recent policy reforms	2017

As previously stated, Mexico’s membership to OECD has conditioned domestic policy making to achieve the organisation’s fundamental aims. It is, thus, essential to describe how OECD has been involved in promoting the reforms package in Mexico. The following excerpt illustrates it clearly:

The OECD has accompanied and supported the Mexican government in the design, development, and implementation of many of **these reforms**. Since 2013, more than 40 publications on Mexico have been launched, analysing the country’s challenges, and **proposing policies** to address them. In many cases, these analyses were complemented by hands-on support to implement legislative and institutional changes and make reform happen. This was not only to the benefit of Mexico, but also to the OECD. Through this constant interaction the OECD learned a great deal and improved its capacity to support countries in their **reform efforts**. (OECD, 2017, foreword)

Chapter 5

As evident in the preceding quote, OECD overtly acknowledges having played a key role in both the development and implementation of reforms in Mexico through a ‘hands-on’ involvement in changing the legislation and institutions, which represented an obstacle for the OECD interests. The organisation’s interests to promote the reforms are clear in the following passage:

Mexico’s **reform intensity** over the recent past has been impressive. Each of the reforms has been wide-ranging in scope and is intended to address the main challenges in its respective sector. The OECD was **strongly committed to Mexico’s reform agenda** and **supported** it in many ways. (OECD, 2017, p. 1)

Even though OECD, in fact, explicitly acknowledges having encouraged, accompanied, and supported Mexico’s key reforms, this is not a firm argument to sustain that Mexico’s education reform has been driven by neoliberal ideology. Consequently, a closer analysis on the OECD influence on Mexico’s education reform and accompanying strategies is essential. Framing Mexico’s contemporary education reform within neoliberal ideology necessarily implies tracing an overt connection between education and labour market interests over the past years. As can be observed in the following excerpt, in 2010, the OECD addressed the urgent need to promote an education reform and ascribed it as an opportunity in economic and social terms:

Education reform is too important to the future of Mexico to be left to educators alone. The OECD Steering Group therefore urges the creation of a broader “guiding coalition” of top political, corporate, university and civil society leaders that will step forward and take responsibility **for championing these reforms** in the public arena, advocating for adequate and equitable funding, and holding key education stakeholders accountable for results. Without a highly skilled and motivated workforce of teachers and school leaders capable of dramatically improving outcomes for Mexico’s young people, the nation’s ability to increase **economic opportunity** and **social mobility** will be severely compromised. Failure to invest in the comprehensive reforms proposed here in teacher policy and school leadership would, in the long run, be much more costly to Mexico’s future than the investments recommended now. (OECD, 2010, p. 12)

It is evident that, back in 2010, the OECD did not aim to promote an innovative education model or curriculum transformation; on the contrary, their immediate goal was to create a public agenda on the need for an education reform which, as facts revealed, turned out to be a labour reform. Furthermore, the intention to orient the education reform to economic interests became crystal clear in 2015, when the OECD stated that:

Fully unleashing the country's potential and lifting productivity also in the sectors that are lagging behind requires a comprehensive programme to improve the **skills** of all Mexicans, both at school and in the **labour market**. To this end, the objective of the education reform to increase the **quality and relevance of education** is key, as is motivating students to pursue education. (OECD, 2015, foreword)

From the previous quote it is noticeable that OECD conceives the education reform as the mechanism to create a labour market force which, in theory, would increase Mexico's productivity. Boosting productivity and, therefore, Mexican economy is an aspiration of any government, yet it can be claimed that the education reform overemphasizes market-oriented goals in detriment of areas of development such as the appreciation of arts and culture. By 2017, when the reform package had already been passed and implemented, it was clear that Mexico's education reform was driven by the OECD recommendations:

Mexico's **education reform** is well-aligned with previous OECD policy recommendations. They include putting students and schools at the centre of the education system, **implementing a new curriculum** and raising the quality of the teaching profession. (OECD, 2017, p. 4)

The idea of putting students and schools at the centre of the education system, although convincing, was not very innovative. In fact, the 2007 education models had already proposed it, yet with unsuccessful results. Teacher accountability was still at the core of the education reform and now incorporated the idea of a new curriculum. Not surprisingly, in 2017, the 'new' curriculum included the implementation of a National English Strategy, to finally accomplish the objective of "making Mexico bilingual", which meant that every public education student had to learn English as a foreign language. But the education reform was also promoted as key to achieve Mexico's long-desired goal: poverty reduction:

... the aim of current **educational reform** in Mexico is in line with OECD recommendations to create a more inclusive society through giving equal opportunities to everyone, and reducing poverty while providing quality education to all Mexicans. (OECD, 2017, p. 14)

Again, it is almost unthinkable to disagree with the idea of building an education system which can provide quality of education to all Mexicans; however, a relevant question has to do with what 'quality of education' means and whether this education reform responds to the needs of a nation or, as it appears, to the macro-organisation interests. Hence, a closer analysis at the past

three National Development Plans would be helpful to identify whether the OECD interests, particularly in education, are indeed enacted in Mexico's official documents.

5.2.1.2 Structural reforms: public discourses

The importance of public discourse for a critical analysis of language policies has been described by Lo Bianco (2009) since it represents 'an essential component of all language planning because formal declarations are not always implemented, and sometimes involve political rhetoric, interests and ideologies' (p. 3). Thus, this section aims to present how public statements, such as presidential speeches, debates, and interviews, serve the purpose to legitimize and reproduce a neoliberal ideology in Mexico's domestic policy, in particular the education system and ELT strategies.

As in the previous section, the first level of analysis involves a description of the discourse used to promote the transformation or reform of Mexico's domestic policy. A steady narrative to put in the public agenda the necessity to 'transform' domestic policy can be found in the opening presidential speeches of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), Vicente Fox Quezada (2000-2006) and Enrique Peña Nieto (2012-2018). Former presidents Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000) and Felipe Calderón's (2006-2012) speeches were not included in this analysis since the former only used the key concept 'reform' to address a transformation of the electoral system and the latter did not deliver a speech in his swear in ceremony.

Former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari negotiated, promoted, and signed NAFTA in 1993. During his term, the steel and sugar industry, state banks the telephone company were privatised. The speech delivered during the swear-in ceremony reveals a predisposition to privatise key sectors, which resonates with neoliberal principles:

El Estado cumplirá con su responsabilidad, atendiendo el gasto social y la productividad de las entidades estratégicas y prioritarias; la inversión pública será clave para la recuperación, no por su monto, sino por su destino; alentaremos la actividad que realicen los particulares y **promoveremos las condiciones para que como lo establece la Constitución el sector privado contribuya al desarrollo económico y social.**⁹

⁹ The State will fulfill its responsibility, attending to social spending and the productivity of strategic and priority sectors; public investment will be the key to recovery, not because of its amount, but because of its purpose; we will encourage the activity carried out by individuals and we will promote the conditions for the private sector to contribute to economic and social development, as established in the Constitution.

By stressing the strength of private companies, he highlighted the key role that the private sector would play in his term:

En la recuperación, **la inversión del sector privado desempeñará un papel fundamental**, dada la considerable **salud y fortaleza financiera de sus empresas**; factor primordial en el crecimiento serán también las exportaciones no petroleras; expandiremos el mercado interno, aumentando el empleo y fortaleciendo gradualmente en la recuperación, el poder adquisitivo de los salarios; alentaremos la actividad del sector social a través de modalidades eficaces para la producción, la solidaridad y el desarrollo de la nueva base social.¹⁰

Vicente Fox was the first president emanated from an opposing political party (National Action Party). His legitimacy was backed up by a 42.52 % of votes and high social approval. His term started with the social perception that he would improve the economy and fight social injustice. During his opening speech, he revealed the ideology, which was not very different from the preceding presidents, underpinning his agenda:

La alternancia no va a cerrar por sí sola el proceso de transición. Invito, a todos cuantos tienen competencia para conducir la **Reforma del Estado**, a que juntos propongamos al país las iniciativas necesarias para un cambio sustantivo de régimen político. Procedamos con sensatez y valentía a demoler todo vestigio de autoritarismo y a edificar una genuina democracia.

La Constitución que nos rige, ha sido excesivamente deformada. Necesitamos reconstruir el consenso nacional de largo plazo, en torno a una ley suprema, acorde con nuestras mejores tradiciones y con los requerimientos del Siglo XXI.

Estabilidad política y cambio democrático se condicionan de manera recíproca. Es prácticamente imposible aislarlos sin perder eficacia y es una ilusión suponer que se dará el uno sin la otra.

Juntos debemos encontrar la fórmula para abordar todos los cambios que la nación demanda, sin perder la eficacia en la conducción del gobierno.

¹⁰ Private sector investment will play a key role in the recovery, given its considerable financial health and strength. The company's investment, given the considerable health and financial strength of its companies; a major factor in growth will also be driven by non-oil exports; we will expand the domestic market, increasing employment and gradually strengthening the purchasing power of wages; we will encourage social sector activity through effective modalities for the production, solidarity, and development of the new social base.

Para garantizar una democracia eficaz y una eficacia democrática, asumo el compromiso de promover **siete reformas medulares**, recogidas durante mi campaña presidencial como el mandato de cambio de los mexicanos.¹¹

In fact, his speech represents the first public acknowledgment to launch strategic reforms:

Una reforma que consolide el avance democrático, para que toda persona pueda hablar con libertad y ser escuchada.

Una reforma que avance en el combate a la pobreza y en la igualdad social, para que ninguna madre carezca de dinero suficiente para comprar la leche de sus hijos.

Una reforma educativa, que asegure la formación del **mejor capital humano** y para que ningún joven en nuestro país así sea el de condición más humilde se quede sin alcanzar su proyecto educativo por falta de recursos.

Una reforma que garantice el crecimiento con estabilidad en la economía, para que nunca más nuestros jóvenes tengan que dejar su hogar y emigrar a otro país.

Una reforma que descentralice facultades y recursos de la Federación, para darles mayor vitalidad a los Estados, los Municipios y las comunidades.

Una reforma que asegure la transparencia y el rendimiento de cuentas en la tarea de gobierno, para anular la corrupción y el engaño.

Una reforma que abata la inseguridad y cancele la impunidad, para que toda familia pueda dormir tranquila.¹²

¹¹ Political alternation alone will not close the transition process. I invite all those who are competent to lead the State Reform to propose together to the country the necessary initiatives for a substantive change in the political regime. Let us proceed with wisdom and courage to demolish all vestiges of authoritarianism and to build a genuine democracy.

The Constitution that governs us has been excessively deformed. We need to rebuild a long-term national consensus around a supreme law in accordance with our best traditions and the requirements of the 21st century. Political stability and democratic change are mutually conditional. It is practically impossible to isolate them without losing effectiveness, and it is an illusion to suppose that they are mutually reinforcing. One or the other will happen without the other. Together we must find the formula to address all the changes that the nation demands, without losing the effectiveness the nation demands, without losing effectiveness in the conduct of government. To guarantee an effective democracy and democratic efficiency, I assume the commitment to promote seven core reforms, reforms, which were presidential campaign as the Mexican people's mandate for change.

¹² A reform that consolidates democratic progress, so that everyone can speak freely and be heard. A reform that advances in the fight against poverty and social equality, so that no mother lacks enough money to buy milk for her children. An educational reform that ensures the formation of the best human so that no young person in our country, even those of the poorest, is left without achieving his or her educational project due to lack of resources. A reform that guarantees growth with stability in the economy, so that never again will our young people have to leave home and emigrate to another country. A reform that decentralizes powers and resources from the Federation, to give greater vitality to the States, Municipalities, and communities. A reform that ensures transparency and accountability in the task of government, to get rid of corruption and deceit. A reform that tackles insecurity and cancels impunity, so that every family can sleep peacefully.

It is the first time that the term reform was used so extensively and emphatically by a Mexican president during his first official speech. This is indicative of the ideology underpinning Vicente Fox's public policy. In addition, the human capital key concept is used to call attention to the need for an education reform. Enrique Peña Nieto's first speech as president reveals the relevance of structural reforms:

Gracias a la solidez de nuestras instituciones, a la realidad irreversible de nuestra democracia y a la solidez de sus finanzas, México ahora está listo para despuntar en el mundo del Siglo XXI. Así, lo reconocen ya, observadores políticos y económicos, nacionales y extranjeros.

Celebro el ánimo que prevalece en los actores políticos para **concretar reformas** que sirven a México. Muestra de ello, es la reciente aprobación a la Reforma Laboral y a la Ley de Contabilidad Gubernamental.¹³

Worth noting is the emphasis put to the term 'transformation' by Enrique Peña Nieto. It could be argued that it is used as a euphemism to conceal the neoliberal ideology underpinning his public policy agenda:

Es tiempo de romper, juntos, los mitos y paradigmas, y todo aquello que ha limitado nuestro desarrollo. Por eso, convoco hoy a todos los mexicanos, a las mujeres y a los hombres, de todas las regiones y de todas las edades, de todos los orígenes, a ser parte de esta gran **transformación**.

Transformar a México significa vencer los rezagos. **Transformar** a México implica mover todo lo que se tenga que mover: la gente, la mentalidad, las instituciones.

Hay que **transformar** a México, para que cuando nuestros hijos crezcan, disfruten de un país más grande y mejor del que hoy tenemos.

Seamos, todos, parte del México que no le tiene miedo a la **transformación**, del México dispuesto a trascender y a dejar huella. Nuestro país, nuestra Nación, necesita de todos.¹⁴

¹³Thanks to the strength of our institutions, the irreversible reality of our democracy and the soundness of its finances, Mexico is now ready to stand out in the world of the 21st Century. This is now recognized by political and economic observers, both domestic and foreign. I celebrate the prevailing mood among political actors to carry out reforms that serve Mexico. An example of this is the recent approval of the Labor Reform and the Governmental Accounting Law.

¹⁴ It is time to break, together, the myths and paradigms, and all that has limited our development. That is why today I call on all Mexicans, women and men, from all regions and of all ages, from all origins, to be part of this great transformation. Transforming Mexico means overcoming backwardness. Transforming Mexico implies moving everything that needs to be moved: the people, the mentality, the institutions. Mexico must be transformed so that when our children grow up, they will enjoy a bigger and better country than the one we have today. Let us all be part of

A recurrent discourse to position the need to transform, through structural reforms, Mexico's domestic policy has been presented in this section. This accompanying discourse to official documents serves to stress the imperative need to implement neoliberal policies in Mexico. Since public discourses have much media coverage, they have an overarching impact on the public opinion towards these strategies.

5.2.2 Mexico's education reform: legitimisation through public texts and public discourses.

The rationale to describe the steady and constant legitimisation of an education reform lies in the fact that Mexico's ELT policy is embedded within the education system. Thus, this sub level of analysis includes National Development Plans, National Education Plans, and former presidents' speeches in which the necessity to implement an education reform is promoted and legitimised.

5.2.2.1 National Development Plans

As described in the context chapter, ELT has been dramatically massified in basic public education in the past decade. In the light of this, analysing whether the education sector has been driven by neoliberal interests is fundamental to elucidate the ideologies underpinning contemporary ELT strategy. Hence, 'education reform' represents the most suitable key concept to establish the link between the OECD interests and Mexico's education policy ideological orientations. Before presenting the discursive analysis of the use of 'education reform' in the former and current National Development Plans, it is necessary to present the frequency in which this key concept appeared chronologically:

Table 3 National Development Plans used for analysis

National Development Plan	Frequency
2001-2006	2 mentions
2007-2012	1 mention
2013-2018	4 mentions
2018-2019	2 mentions

the Mexico that is not afraid of transformation, of the Mexico that is willing to transcend and leave its mark. Our country, our Nation, needs everyone.

It can be claimed that the 2001-2006 NDP timidly discussed the idea of implementing an education reform. Instead, it was presented as an ideal scenario to promote social equity, holistic and quality of education:

El Plan establece los objetivos que permitirán realizar los cambios medulares que este gobierno impulsará: cambios que consoliden el avance democrático, que abatan la inseguridad y cancelen la impunidad, que permitan abatir la pobreza y lograr una mayor igualdad social; una **reforma educativa** que asegure oportunidades de **educación integral y de calidad** para todos los mexicanos; cambios que garanticen el crecimiento con estabilidad en la economía, que tengan como premisa fundamental ser incluyentes y justos; cambios que aseguren la transparencia y la rendición de cuentas en la tarea del gobierno y que descentralicen las facultades y los recursos de la Federación. (PND, 2001-2006, p. 12)¹⁵

Nevertheless, a more detailed description of the education reform aims directly resonates with one specific OECD recommendation: teacher accountability:

Esta estrategia de **reforma educativa** descansa en el principio de que al tener mayor capacidad de iniciativa y autoridad en la toma de decisiones, y al existir una mayor participación de la sociedad civil en el avance educativo, el **rendimiento de cuentas de las escuelas, los maestros y las instituciones** se volverá una práctica común y un mecanismo para garantizar la calidad y el impacto educativo, al mismo tiempo que constituirá un paso más en la emancipación general de México y los mexicanos. (PND, 2001-2006, p. 49)¹⁶

As the previous quote shows, the government seems to have opted for teacher accountability as the only mechanism to guarantee quality of education. This, in turn, raises the question of whether an education reform should only aim to promote and implement teacher accountability strategies (i.e., hiring and permanence evaluation), putting aside curriculum and textbook development, parental involvement and creation of better equipped facilities. The 2007-2012

¹⁵ The Plan establishes the objectives that will make it possible to carry out the fundamental changes that this government will promote: changes to consolidate democratic progress, to reduce insecurity and to end impunity, to reduce poverty and to achieve greater social equality; an education reform that ensures comprehensive and quality educational opportunities for all Mexicans; changes that guarantee growth with stability in the economy, that have as a fundamental premise to be inclusive and fair; changes that ensure transparency and accountability in the work of the government and that decentralize the powers and resources of the Federation.

¹⁶ This educational reform strategy is based on the principle that with greater initiative and authority in decision making, and with greater participation of civil society in educational progress, accountability of schools, teachers and institutions will become a common practice and a mechanism to guarantee quality and educational impact, while at the same time constituting a further step in the overall emancipation of Mexico and Mexicans.

NDP only mentions the education reform key concept once, but it represents the first attempt to point the education towards the labour market interests:

Igualdad de oportunidades instrumentos y políticas de educación, pues los elementos principales de una **reforma educativa** a plenitud están aún por dar sus resultados más significativos. Aún persisten rezagos de consideración en el sistema educativo nacional. Los más importantes son la falta de oportunidades de gran parte de la población para acceder a una **educación de calidad**, y a los avances en materia de tecnología e información. Otro reto ligado al anterior es superar la desvinculación entre la educación media superior y superior y el **sistema productivo**. (PND, 2007-2012, p. 177)¹⁷

In this case, an explicit connection between middle and higher education goals and the productive system, a subtle way to refer to the labour market, is made in the last part of the passage, yet, again, not categorical to determine the neoliberal ideology underpins such arguments. The 2013-2018 NDP not only mentions the education reform key concept more times than the preceding NDP but also capitalizes the concept as an indicator of its importance:

La implementación de la **Reforma Educativa** aprobada por el Honorable Congreso de la Unión al inicio de la presente Administración requiere de un esfuerzo de coordinación importante. La gobernabilidad democrática alcanzada ha generado acuerdos importantes en materia de educación. Gracias al apoyo de legisladores, gobernadores, líderes políticos y ciudadanos, esta **Reforma** fue aprobada y promulgada en sólo tres meses. (PND, 2013-2018, p.)¹⁸

Clearly, the education reform is given the same status as the Congress by capitalising those as proper names. This illustrates how important this reform was for the Peña Nieto administration. In fact, this represented one of the very first legislative reforms emanated from the Pact for Mexico promoted by his administration. A salient aspect which is worth pointing is the fact that this NDP is the first to explicitly incorporate three of the five key concepts guiding this analysis (education reform, human capital, and quality of education):

¹⁷ Equal opportunities, educational instruments and policies, since the main elements of a comprehensive education reform have yet to yield their most significant results. There are still considerable lags in the national education system. The most important are the lack of opportunities for a large part of the population to have access to quality education and to advances in technology and information. Another challenge linked to the previous one is to overcome the disconnection between secondary and higher education and the productive system.

¹⁸ The implementation of the Education Reform approved by the Honorable Congress of the Union at the beginning of this Administration requires a significant coordination effort. The democratic governance achieved has generated important agreements in the field of education. Thanks to the support of legislators, governors, political leaders and citizens, this Reform was approved and enacted in only three months.

La **Reforma Educativa** es un paso decidido para desarrollar el **potencial humano** de los mexicanos con **educación de calidad** a través de tres ejes de acción fundamentales. En primer lugar, se busca que los alumnos sean educados por los mejores maestros. Con el Nuevo Servicio Profesional Docente, ahora el mérito es la única forma de ingresar y ascender en el servicio educativo del país.¹⁹

Along with the promulgation of the education reform, the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education was created, which resonates with the 2010 OECD recommendation of ‘holding key education stakeholders accountable for results’ (p.12), as a teacher accountability mechanism, but, in practical terms, used as a cudgel to gain control over the teachers’ union.

Para ello se otorgó plena autonomía al INEE y se creó un **sistema de evaluación**. Finalmente, fomenta que la educación se convierta en una **responsabilidad compartida**. Con la **Reforma Educativa**, directivos, maestros, alumnos y padres de familia podrán tomar decisiones conjuntas para mejorar el proceso educativo en cada plantel. Esto se traduce en otorgar mayor autonomía de gestión a las escuelas²⁰

The idea of privatising education is, for the first time, ambiguously implied by suggesting that ‘education should become a shared responsibility’ which could be interpreted as if the government was trying to break loose from the constitutional obligation of providing ‘free and laic education for all Mexicans’. Moreover, a reaffirmation that this education reform was conceived as the instrument to achieve quality of education by connecting higher education with the labour market demands is evident in the following passage:

Esta preocupación está contenida en el espíritu de la **Reforma Educativa** y constituye parte integral del plan de acción de un **México con Educación de Calidad**. Este plan de acción también responde a la demanda de este mismo grupo de participantes, en relación con la necesidad de **vincular universidades e industria**, así como la importancia de alcanzar una mayor **inversión en Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (CTI)**.²¹

¹⁹ The Educational Reform is a determined step in developing the human potential of Mexicans with quality education through three axes of fundamental action. First, it is expected that students be educated by the best teachers. With the New Teaching Professional Service, now the merit is the only way to enter and ascend the education system of the country.

²⁰ To this end, INEE was given full autonomy and an evaluation system was created. Finally, it encourages education to become a shared responsibility. With the Education Reform, managers, teachers, students, and parents will be able to make joint decisions to improve the educational process on each campus. This results in greater management autonomy for schools.

²¹ This concern is contained in the spirit of the Education Reform and is an integral part of the action plan of a Mexico with Quality Education. This action plan also responds to the demand of this same group of participants, in relation to

This sub level of analysis has illustrated some indications of neoliberal interests in the education sector. For instance, an explicit connection between education and the productive sector is made. Additionally, a sign that the government intended to shift the responsibility of education to the teachers, which resonates with one of the OECD's recommendations, can be observed. In the next section, the National Education Plans are analysed to identify whether the neoliberal interests permeated the education sector in the past three presidential terms.

5.2.2.2 National Education Plans

The previous sections have been useful to illustrate that, on the one hand, Mexico's domestic policy, particularly the so-called structural reforms, have been underpinned by OECD recommendations. In particular, a consistent narrative encouraging a reform package, which was constitutionally passed by the political agreement "Pact for Mexico" promoted by former president Peña Nieto, has been identified. In the light of this, the next level of analysis includes three National Education Plans (NEP) to identify whether the neoliberal ideology is enacted in these documents. Before presenting the discursive analysis of the use of 'education reform' in the former National Education Plans, it is necessary to present the frequency in which this key concept appeared chronologically.

Table 4 National Education Plans used for analysis

National Education Plan	Frequency
2001-2006	1 mention
2007-2012	1 mention
2013-2018	4 mentions
2017 Modelo educativo para la educación obligatoria	23 mentions
Hacia una Nueva Escuela Mexicana (2019)	7 mentions

The fact that the term 'education reform' progressively and increasingly appears in the NEPs could indicate that a narrative to encourage its implementation was steadily constructed. Nonetheless, to confirm this, it is essential to conduct a closer analysis of how this term was used throughout those NEPs. The 2001-2006 NEP timidly mentions the term education reform,

the need to link universities and industry, as well as the importance of achieving greater investment in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI).

perhaps, attempting to position, in the public agenda, the challenges to be overcome for its successful implementation: resistance and centralisation:

El proceso de **reforma educativa** es reciente y de una gran complejidad; este hecho y las **resistencias derivadas** de su gigantismo y excesiva centralización son factores que explican –en parte– el hecho de que varios de los **cambios promovidos** aún no se expresen en la consecución de sus objetivos finales.²²

It is not clear whose resistance the government refers to but, based on the 2010 OECD recommendation for teacher accountability and the creation of the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education in 2013, it can be argued that it is teachers and, more specifically, the teachers' union the government refers to. Furthermore, the 2007-2012 NEP points out the need to implement an education reform based on 'diverse evaluations' which, according to former president Felipe Calderon, have revealed the deficiencies of the Mexican education system; nevertheless, the origin of those evaluations which advocate for an education reform is not clear:

Por eso, una de las prioridades del Gobierno del Presidente Felipe Calderón es ofrecer a niños, jóvenes y adultos más opciones educativas, con independencia de su condición económica, social, ideológica, de género, etnia o región. Tenemos que enfrentar de manera simultánea los retos de la calidad y la equidad. **Diversas evaluaciones** muestran las graves deficiencias que aún tiene nuestro sistema educativo. Maestros, padres de familia, empleadores y los propios alumnos están insatisfechos con los resultados alcanzados hasta ahora. Para responder a sus necesidades y demandas, así como a los **requerimientos de la sociedad del conocimiento y de la globalización**, vamos a impulsar una profunda **reforma educativa**. Con ese fin, promoveremos la evaluación de todos los actores y procesos. Pondremos en marcha instrumentos innovadores cuyos resultados nos sirvan para diseñar e implementar acciones y programas eficaces, que permitan tanto reafirmar y extender los logros, como corregir deficiencias y limitaciones. **Evaluaremos para mejorar.**²³

²² The process of education reform is recent and of great complexity; this fact and the resistances derived from its gigantism and excessive centralization are factors that explain—in part—the fact that several of the changes promoted are not expressed in the achievement of their final objectives

²³ Therefore, one of the priorities of the Government of President Felipe Calderón is to offer children, young people, and adults more educational options, regardless of their economic, social, ideological, gender, ethnic or regional status. We must simultaneously face the challenges of quality and equity. Various assessments show the serious deficiencies that our education system still has. Teachers, parents, employers, and their own students are dissatisfied with the results achieved so far. To respond to your needs and demands, as well as to the requirements of the knowledge society and globalization, we will promote a profound educational reform. To that end, we will promote the evaluation of all actors and processes. We will put in place innovative instruments whose results help us to design and implement effective actions and programmes, which allow both reaffirming and extending achievements, as well as correcting deficiencies and limitations. We will evaluate to improve.

Addressing the knowledge society and globalisation demands represents an additional argument to support the implementation of an evaluation system for education stakeholders which ultimately turned out to be an instrument to gain control over the teachers' union. Once the education reform was passed by the congress, the Peña Nieto administration introduced the right that every child must get "quality of education" as can be seen in the following passage:

... con la reciente **Reforma Educativa** que elevó a rango constitucional el derecho a una **educación de calidad**. Los tiempos que vivimos nos obligan no sólo a asegurar un lugar en la escuela a todas las niñas, niños y jóvenes, sino que exigen garantizarles el logro de aprendizajes relevantes, formarlos para integrarse plenamente a una sociedad marcada por el conocimiento, **el cambio tecnológico, la innovación y la globalización**. El Plan Nacional de Desarrollo establece entre sus cinco metas nacionales un México con **Educación de Calidad**. Éste es el propósito que inspira el Programa Sectorial de Educación que aquí se presenta: que cada alumno sea capaz de aprender a aprender y aprender a convivir.²⁴

From the previous excerpt it is evident that the need for an education reform was constructed around the idea that such reform would provide students with quality of education which, consequently, would grant access to the knowledge society. In addition, it is noteworthy the capitalization of the terms Education Reform and Quality of Education which, on the one hand, indicates the importance this government assigned to both, and, on the other, how such capitalization seems to send the message that one (education reform) essentially leads to the other (quality of education). In addition, the knowledge society and globalisation demands, as in the former NEP, represent a central argument to encourage the education reform. Quality and competency assurance are two key aspects of Peña Nieto's education reform:

Con la **Reforma Educativa** y en el contexto de la Ley General del Servicio Profesional Docente, la SEP desarrollará un plan integral de diagnóstico, rediseño y fortalecimiento del Sistema de Escuelas Normales Públicas, con el propósito de **asegurar la calidad y competencia** de los egresados formados en las escuelas del sistema garantizando su vinculación, congruencia y pertinencia con las necesidades y requerimiento del sistema educativo nacional. (NEP, 2013-2018, p. 12)²⁵

²⁴ ... with the recent Education Reform that raised the right to quality education to constitutional status. The times we live in require us not only to secure a place in school for all children and young people, but they demand to guarantee them the achievement of relevant learnings, to train them to fully integrate into a society marked by knowledge, technological change, innovation, and globalization. The National Development Plan establishes among its five national goals a Mexico with Quality Education. This is the purpose that inspires the Sectoral Education Program presented here: that each student be able to learn to learn and learn to live together.

²⁵ With the Education Reform and in the context of the General Law of the Teaching Professional Service, SEP will develop a comprehensive plan of diagnosis, redesign and strengthen of the System of Public teacher training schools,

An additional key element of Peña Nieto's education reform became quality and competency assurance, yet teacher quality evaluation was exercised as a cudgel against the strong teachers' unions (SNTE and CNTE). As Keck (2015) explains:

... the move to teacher control is evidenced by the consolidation of the National Institute for Educational Evaluation's remit to evaluate teacher quality and provide the necessary criteria to make decisions on performance related pay, advancement or dismissal for individual teachers. (p. 5)

It is not a coincidence that a central element of Peña Nieto's education reform aimed to weaken the teachers' unions by constraining their labour rights. This resonates with how '...neo-liberalism has attempted to shift the focus of responsibility and accountability from the state to its citizens, and the field of education is no exception' (Keck, 2015, p. 4).

In this section, I have used excerpts from three NEPs to illustrate how the OECD recommendations on education have been gradually but efficiently implemented; first, by socially constructing the need to implement an education reform. Then, once passed by the congress, the accompanying neoliberal strategies such as weakening the teachers' unions, creating teachers' control systems and an overemphasis on globalisation and labour market demands were instrumented. Although there is concrete evidence to claim that Mexico's domestic policy has steadily been driven by neoliberal ideology, enacted in form of OECD recommendations, a connection between the reforms, education reform and ELT strategy has yet to be drawn. Thus, the quality of education, certification, labour market and human capital key concepts will be analysed to establish whether there is a connection between the neoliberal ideology interests in education and, therefore, the ELT strategy in Mexico.

5.2.2.3 Education reform: public discourses

In the preceding sections, National Development Plans and National Education Plans serve to describe the recurrent narrative to promote and legitimise the implementation of an education reform. This section describes how official speeches have also served the purpose to position the necessity for an education reform. First, Carlos Salinas de Gortari's speech in which he opts for a euphemism (transformation) to promote changes in the education system:

with the aim of ensuring the quality and competence of graduates trained in the schools of the system guaranteeing their linkage, consistency and relevance with the needs and requirement of the national education system.

Instruyo al Secretario de Educación Pública para que convoque en el plazo más breve a maestros, padres de familia y organizaciones responsables, y en el marco de la libertad de educación se integre un programa que permita realizar la **gran transformación del sistema educativo**, sin el cual el país no podrá modernizarse ni alcanzar la equidad. ²⁶

The intention to implement a neoliberal education reform became evident during Vicente Fox' term. Not only did he explicitly state the concept 'education reform' but also defined it as the way to develop Mexico's human capital:

Una reforma educativa, que asegure la formación del **mejor capital humano** y para que ningún joven en nuestro país así sea el de condición más humilde se quede sin alcanzar su proyecto educativo por falta de recursos.²⁷

Connecting national growth and progress to human capital development is very reductionist position which unveils the neoliberal ideology underpinning Enrique Peña Nieto's education policy as this passage shows:

Séptima decisión. Ha llegado el momento de la **Reforma Educativa**. Una nación basa su desarrollo en la educación. El **capital humano** es la base del desarrollo y progreso de un país; ésta es la razón por la que corresponde al Estado la rectoría de la política educativa. ²⁸

Enrique Peña Nieto's term lacked legitimacy due to the highly questioned campaign and elections. Hence, only two months after being elected, he signed the education reform which was backed up by the Pact for Mexico:

²⁶ I instruct the Secretary of Public Education to call on teachers, parents, and responsible organizations to be called upon as soon as possible, and within the framework of freedom of education, to integrate a programme that enables the great transformation of the education system, without which the country cannot modernize or achieve equity.

²⁷ An educational reform, which ensures the formation of the best human capital and so that no young person in our country, even the poorest one, to be left without achieving their educational project because of lack of resources.

²⁸ Seventh decision. The time has come for an Education Reform. A nation bases its development on education. Human capital is the basis of a country's development and progress; therefore, the State is responsible for the rectory of education policy.

Reitero mi reconocimiento público a los Legisladores federales y estatales, por el sentido de responsabilidad y urgencia con el que actuaron. El gran propósito de la **Reforma** que hoy he promulgado es **convertir a la educación en la fuerza transformadora** del país.

Para ello, esta reforma, como aquí ya se ha explicado con toda amplitud, tiene tres grandes ejes de acción: **Primero lograr que nuestros alumnos sean educados por los mejores maestros**. Nuestros niños y jóvenes merecen profesores capacitados, responsables y cumplidos. Y con ese fin, se habrá de crear el Servicio Profesional Docente.

La reforma contiene reglas claras, para que el mérito profesional sea la única forma de **ingresar, permanecer y ascender como maestro, director o supervisor**. Éste es un cambio de fondo para quienes forman parte del servicio educativo. Su trayectoria no estará sujeta a criterios discrecionales, lo que le dará certidumbre y garantía.

Desde el Palacio Nacional envío mi más sincero agradecimiento y reconocimiento a todos los maestros de México por haber abrazado la elevada misión de formar a nuestros niños y jóvenes. En cada salón de clases, ustedes contribuyen a la edificación de un mejor país. Y por eso, el alcance de esta Reforma Educativa que hoy he promulgado. Aparte Segundo eje: hacer de la **evaluación un mecanismo eficiente para mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza**. Para ello, la reforma eleva a rango constitucional al Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación, y le otorga plena autonomía.

Además, ordena la creación de un **Sistema Nacional de Evaluación Educativa**, que tomará en cuenta las condiciones y desafíos que enfrentan los maestros en su realidad cotidiana.

Y tercero: mejorar las condiciones para la formación integral de todos los alumnos del país. Con este fin, **la reforma fortalece la autonomía de gestión de las escuelas**. Ahora la propia comunidad educativa, directivos, maestros, alumnos, padres de familia, podrán tomar decisiones conjuntas para mejorar la educación, a partir de las necesidades específicas que tenga cada plantel educativo.

En suma, con esta reforma constitucional el Estado mexicano asume plenamente la acción rectora y reguladora que le corresponde en esta materia, para que de esta manera podamos acelerar la transformación educativa que el país demanda y necesita. Además, se reafirma el carácter público, laico y gratuito de la educación que imparte el Estado mexicano. **Esta reforma** es el primer paso para avanzar hacia una **educación incluyente y de calidad**, a la altura de nuestros tiempos.²⁹

²⁹ I reiterate my public recognition of federal and state legislators for the sense of responsibility and urgency with which they acted. The great purpose of the Reform that I have enacted today is to make education the transformative force of the country. To this end, this reform, as has already been explained in full, has three main axes of action: First to get our students educated by the best teachers. Our children and young people deserve trained, responsible, and committed teachers. And to that end, the Teaching Professional Service will have to be created. The reform contains clear rules, so that professional merit is the only way to enter, stay and ascend as a teacher, principal, or supervisor. This is a change of substance for those who are part of the educational service. Their trajectory will not be subject to discretionary criteria, which will give you certainty and guarantee. From the National Palace I send my sincere thanks and appreciation to all the teachers of Mexico for embracing the lofty mission of training our children and young people. In

What is salient from the previous passage is that Enrique Peña Nieto publicly delineates the neoliberal ideology underpinning this education reform. First, an aggressive evaluation for teacher selection, permanence and promotion process was used as a cudgel against teachers, which resonates with the OECD recommendation for teacher accountability described in previous sections. In addition, a self-management system for public basic education schools was launched, which opened the door for the privatisation of public education. The education reform became more a labour reform within the education system to control over the teachers' union and the political power it represented (and still represents). The fact that the new curriculum was presented in 2017, 4 years after the promulgation of the education reform and 1 year prior to the end of this administration, reveals that this reform did not aim to improve the curriculum, infrastructure or teaching and learning conditions. On the contrary, great emphasis was put on blaming the teachers for all the education system flaws.

5.2.2.4 OECD: key concepts in public texts

Establishing a link between Mexico's structural reforms and key concepts as a mechanism to instrument neoliberal strategies is crucial to connect contemporary ELT strategies with the neoliberal ideology. The first sub level of analysis includes excerpts from two OECD reports on Mexico in which the key concepts 'quality of education', 'human capital', 'labour market' and 'certification' are used. In the first excerpt, it is evident that the structural reforms are conceived as a major step towards the achievement of quality of education in Mexico, yet a more detailed analysis is needed to elucidate the education priorities in the light of the education reform:

each classroom, you contribute to building a better country. And that is why the scope of this Educational Reform that I promulgated today. Apart second axis: make evaluation an efficient mechanism to improve the quality of teaching. To this end, the reform elevates the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education to the constitutional rank and gives it full autonomy. In addition, it mandates the creation of a National Educational Assessment System, which will consider the conditions and challenges teachers face in their daily reality. And third: improve the conditions for the integral training of all students in the country. To this end, reform strengthens the management autonomy of schools. Now the educational community itself, managers, teachers, students, parents, will be able to make joint decisions to improve education, based on the specific needs of each educational campus. In short, with this constitutional reform, the Mexican State fully assumes its guiding and regulatory action in this area, so that in this way we can accelerate the educational transformation that the country demands and needs. In addition, the public, lay and free nature of the education provided by the Mexican State is reaffirmed. This reform is the first step towards advancing towards an important and quality education, at the height of our times.

Recent reforms, such as the Pact for Mexico (2012) and the Reform of the Mexican Constitution (2013), have strengthened commitments in education. These initiatives seem promising in terms of raising **education quality in Mexico**, but more time is needed to fully evaluate the impact of these changes.

As can be seen in the previous passage, 'key reforms' are celebrated for they are perceived as the necessary instrument to achieve the quality of the education system. Nevertheless, it is in this passage that the OECD overtly suggests that education should be oriented towards the labour market needs:

Considerable efforts have been made recently to improve the **quality of education**, and provide all students with stronger education foundations for further education in life. Mexico has increased the number of compulsory education years by making early childhood and upper secondary education compulsory. **Key reforms** are now being implemented to improve the equity and **quality of the system** in areas such as teacher quality and school leadership as well as to strengthen school autonomy, resources and evaluation. Mexico needs to continue its efforts to raise the quality of compulsory education and also make it more relevant to students' needs by **strengthening the link with the labour market**.

The labour market requires a workforce with specific skills which can be quantifiable. Hence, the human capital concept embodies the measurable characteristic needed for any skill to be assigned a market value. Considering this, this concept not only becomes fundamental to underpin the education reform but also the labour reform and accompanying laws:

For **education reforms** to succeed in Mexico, they need to be conceived as a national priority, framed by consensus and long-term policies, and capable of enduring through successive administrations to ensure continuity. The new Productivity Law is a good step in the right direction as it promotes a long-term vision, in which **investment in human capital plays a key role**. **Education reform should be a nationwide effort** sustained by national and state authorities. Other key stakeholders such as the teacher unions, academics, civil society and parents must also be involved in the process. There is plenty of scope for the federal and state governments to precisely define the distribution of responsibilities in order to maximise results.

Government investment in the Mexico's human capital, as a national priority, cannot be questioned; particularly when human capital development could promote social mobility and, consequently, economic growth. In this context, the fact that the most prestigious science and technology higher education programme (CONACYT) became the instrument for human capital

development at the post grad level illustrates the direct connection between education and labour market interests:

In recent years, the Mexican government has expanded its initiatives to address the innovation challenge. CONACYT programmes are aligned around the goals of formation, consolidating, retaining and activating high-level **human capital**. For example, scholarships are focused on the formation stage and represent about one-third of CONACYT's total budget. In the consolidation stage, the national system of researchers has about one sixth of the budget. Other important programmes consolidate high-level **human capital**, such as postdoctoral stays. The repatriation programme is in place to recover high-level human capital. CONACYT has also started an ambitious programme for young researchers called "Cátedras CONACYT". In addition, there are programmes that encourage the activation of **human capital in labour markets**. For example, the innovation stimulus programme provides additional resources to firms that are linked to higher education institutions or research centres. This encourages consolidated researchers to contribute to the technological modernisation of firms. (OECD, 2017)

This thrust towards human capital development, by investing millions of pesos in such programmes, could indicate an under emphasis on other aspects of human development (such as arts, culture, values, etc.) and, as a result, an overemphasis on training programmes which focus on skill development for the labour market. Once the education outcomes have been encapsulated in a set of human capital skills, a quality control mechanism needs to be instrumented: accreditation. Skills accreditation represents the ultimate quality control mechanism to ensure human capital skills effectively address the labour market demands. Hence, it is not surprising that the OECD explicitly states a direct connection between education programmes and skills accreditation:

Fully unleashing the country's potential requires a comprehensive strategy to better equip students with the skills demanded by employers and to strengthen the active labour force by providing continuous training. The importance of **skills and human capital** has been recognised as a **priority for the Mexican Government**. Therefore, the NPC has developed three high-impact strategies: 1. Lifelong Skills Strategy, in collaboration with the OECD, to ensure that Mexican people will have the skills needed to move toward higher productivity and higher value added economic activities while contributing to more inclusive economic growth and development. 2. Sectoral strategy, which consists of developing binding recommendations on high-employment and high productivity economic activities. The NPC works to strengthen school-business linkage, dual formation, relevant **education programmes**, and **skills certification** in the auto parts, aerospace, retail and energy sector, among others. 3. Regional strategy,

complementary human capital policies are developed by the NPC to form the technical and transversal skills required by the productive sector in the special economic zones.

The legislative work to pass the education reform represents the first step towards implementing a set of strategies oriented towards the instrumentation of labour market interests in the education system or, as President Lopez Obrador states, the neoliberal policy in Mexico. In the next section, I will describe how these key concepts have been presented as desired characteristics of the education reform to implement a market-oriented neoliberal ideology in education.

5.2.2.5 Enactment of key concepts in Mexico's education documents

Although neither the National Development Plans nor the National Education Plans define what is meant by the quality of education certain key concepts can be identified as characterising features of quality of education. In the first place, the 2001-2006 NEP emphasizes the need to connect education to demands of the modern world and globalisation of the economy:

El conocimiento y su aplicación se vislumbra como base del desarrollo y factor que determina el nivel de vida de comunidades y naciones. Por eso se considera prioridad nacional y propósito central de toda sociedad brindar acceso a una **educación de calidad** al mayor número posible de personas. El acceso a la educación no debe restringirse a una sola etapa de la vida, sino que debe ser una oportunidad que debe ofrecerse a lo largo de toda ella, pues la **educación para la vida** y el trabajo es motor del desarrollo humano, así como **exigencia del mundo moderno**, de la **globalización de la economía** y de las profundas transformaciones que experimenta nuestra sociedad en todos los órdenes. La educación a lo largo de la vida se vislumbra, pues, como uno de los grandes retos al que habrán de enfrentarse las sociedades del futuro. En nuestro país, la educación para la vida y el trabajo debe tener como meta atender, ante todo, el grave rezago educativo, pues gran parte de la población no termina su educación básica.³⁰

Nevertheless, defining quality of education to respond to the exigencies of the globalised economy is vague in its objectives. Therefore, digging a bit deeper to understand the real reasons

³⁰ Knowledge and its application are seen as the basis of development and a factor that determines the standard of living of communities and nations. That is why, it is considered a national priority and the central purpose of any society to provide access to quality education to as many people as possible. Access to education should not be restricted to a single stage of life but should be an opportunity that must be offered throughout it, for education for life and work is the engine of human development, as well as the demand of the modern world, of the globalization of the economy and of the profound transformations that our society undergoes in all orders. Education throughout life is therefore seen as one of the great challenges facing the societies of the future. In our country, education for life and work must be in the goal of addressing, above all, the serious educational lag, because much of the population does not finish their basic education.

to implement an education reform is necessary. Thus, orienting the education aims towards training individuals who, apart from being socially responsible, can incorporate into the labour market is one of the education reform objectives as stated in the 2001-2006 NDP:

Objetivo 5 Ofrecer servicios **educativos de calidad** para formar personas con alto sentido de responsabilidad social, que participen de manera productiva y competitiva en **el mercado laboral**.³¹

The education-economy connection does not necessarily have to imply a negative connotation, on the contrary, it is evident that one of purposes of any the education system is to orient its goals towards forming citizens capable of applying specific skills in the secondary and tertiary sectors. Nevertheless, the tendency to reduce people to human capital overlooks the importance of other aspects of holistic education such as values, citizenship, and the humanities in general. Additionally, the fact that the NEP suggests higher education be a strategic medium to increase Mexico's human capital indicates that the education reform seeks to put labour market interests first as the following passage reveals:

La **educación superior** es un medio estratégico para acrecentar el **capital humano** y social de la nación, y la inteligencia individual y colectiva de los mexicanos; para enriquecer la cultura con las aportaciones de las humanidades, las artes, las ciencias y las tecnologías; y para contribuir al aumento de la **competitividad y el empleo** requeridos en la economía basada en el conocimiento.³²

Once the necessity to orient the education system towards the human capital production, required by the labour market, has been established, labour-competency accreditation represents the next step to materialize neoliberal interests in education. It is through accreditations that the required skills can be measured and verified. Accreditations also represent a very reliable instrument to assess the alignment of the education system to market-oriented interests:

³¹ 'Objective 5 To offer quality educational services to train people with a high sense of social responsibility, who participate productively and competitively in the labour market.'

³² Higher education is a strategic means of increasing the human and social capital of the nation, and the individual and collective intelligence of Mexicans; to enrich culture with the contributions of the humanities to the arts, sciences and technologies; and to contribute to increasing the competitiveness and employment required in the knowledge-based economy.

Establecer, en todos los subsistemas, estructuras curriculares modulares y flexibles que hagan posible las salidas laterales para que los **alumnos se incorporen al mercado laboral** y/o reingresen a la escuela, así como para proporcionarles una **certificación de competencia laboral**.³³

By 2013, the education reform had been passed and not only had accreditation models been implemented as quality control instrument for students, but also as sort of political cudgel against teachers; specifically, the teachers' union. The National Institute for the Evaluation of Education was created as a mechanism to guarantee quality of education; mainly by promoting teacher evaluation through accreditations:

La **evaluación será un instrumento** de la mayor importancia para guiar la tarea de mejoramiento continuo. Si bien es indispensable combinar armónicamente todos los factores que intervienen en la construcción de una **educación de calidad**, es innegable que la actividad docente constituye la pieza de mayor valor para el proceso educativo. Solo con los maestros podremos llevar a cabo la tarea de mejorar la educación pública.³⁴

In addition, Peña Nieto's structural reforms can be defined as the culmination of a neoliberal reform agenda, which started in 1993, in Mexico's domestic policy. In particular, the education reform became the instrument through which the Mexican education system satisfied the labour market demands:

Fortalecer la cooperación **educación-empresa** para favorecer la actualización de planes y programas de estudio, **la empleabilidad** de los jóvenes y la innovación. Realizar periódicamente estudios, **diagnósticos y prospectivas del mercado laboral para orientar la oferta educativa**. Crear un sistema de seguimiento de egresados para brindar información sobre las áreas de **oportunidad laboral** en los ámbitos nacional y regional.³⁵

³³ Establish, in all subsystems, modular and flexible curriculum structures that make side departures possible for students to enter the labour market and/or re-enter the school, as well as to provide them with a certification of job competence.

³⁴ The evaluation will be an instrument of the utmost importance to guide the task of continuous improvement. While it is essential to harmoniously combine all the factors involved in the construction of a quality education, it is undeniable that teaching activity is the most important piece for the educational process. Only with teachers can we carry out the task of improving public education.

³⁵ Strengthen education-enterprise cooperation to promote updating curriculums and programmes, employability of young people and innovation. Periodically carry out studies, diagnoses, and prospects of the labor market to guide the educational offer. Create a graduate monitoring system to provide information on areas of job opportunity at the national and regional levels.

Perhaps the most illustrative way to illustrate the connection between the neoliberal interests and Mexico's education reform is by showing how the OECD interrelates education with labour market demands and the accreditation of skills:

Raising educational attainment alone will not be enough. **Skills** must also be relevant to the needs of the **labour market**. To improve the **labour market** relevance of its **education and training system**, Mexico has expanded private sector involvement, increased the number of apprenticeships, and raised the supply of training and vocational programmes. The **labour reform** enhanced the **certification of skills** and led to the creation of commissions to promote training.

In sum, the precedent analysis not only describes how Mexican key reforms are underpinned by the OECD neoliberal interests but also the gradual and efficient construction of the specific strategies such as a direct connection between the labour market interests and the education system and labour sector. The education reform works as the instrument to put some neoliberal strategies in practice: weakening the teachers union, promoting the development of human capital at the service of the labour market and quality control mechanisms such as skills accreditation. Nevertheless, it is still crucial to establish a link between the neoliberal interests, articulated in the education reform, and the contemporary ELT programmes in Mexico. Thus, before analysing contemporary ELT official documents, I reckon necessary to present how are languages, particularly English, perceived by the OECD.

5.2.3 Mexico's ELT policy ideological orientations: public texts and public discourses.

In the preceding sections I have described the influence of public texts and public discourses on Mexico's policy making. Particularly, the neoliberal orientations which underpin Mexico's structural reforms implementation have been unveiled. Nevertheless, in order to confirm whether neoliberalism represents the ideology orienting Mexico's ELT policy, it is crucial to analyse the public texts and public discourses which sustain ELT in Mexico. Thus, this sub level of analysis begins with a description of the role the OECD assigns to languages, particularly English, in the global world. This is followed by an analysis of key ELT documents and speeches which describe the role of English according to official discourse.

5.2.3.1 OECD: Languages in a global world

The justification to include a section dedicated to analysing the OECD viewpoint of the role of languages in a global world lies on the purpose of the study: identify the ideological orientations underpinning Mexico's ELT programmes. Hence, a thorough examination of the OECD's position

towards the role of languages in the contemporary world is fundamental. Since the OECD seeks to promote economic growth by suggesting the implementation of reforms, policies, and strategies, establishing whether the organisation assigns second language learning an economic value is vital. OECD's *Languages in a global world: learning for better cultural understanding* (2012, p. 202) clearly describes the commodified role of language in a globalised society:

Since globalisation is the free movement of people, products, money and ideas, the value of languages to individuals and to society has probably changed with such flows. Therefore, the **language assets** of a country as well as the **language components of human capital** of individuals could provide comparative advantage in a **globalising world**.

As the previous excerpt reveals, the OECD explains that the value of languages has changed in the recent years. Now, languages have become an added value of people's human capital; thus, learning foreign languages could enhance social mobility for citizens, and economic development in the globalised world. The globalisation of economy has caused, among other things, that second language proficiency is valued as an economic asset or human capital given the economic benefits for those who master one or more foreign languages as the OECD vehemently explains:

If learning a language responds, among other things, to a rational decision defined by cost-benefit calculations, the returns from language acquisition would have to compensate the costs, for this decision to be realised. In that respect, the framework is similar to any other type of "**human capital**" investment. Thus, from an economic perspective, **language is a skill** that must be treated as **human capital** due to the fact that: a) it is non-tangible, "embedded capital", non-transferrable b) it has to be created by sacrificing resources – time and financial resources, and c) its manifestation through labour market participation has measurable returns and can also make consumption itself more productive.

As presented in the previous sections, human capital development must be guaranteed by the government; thus, the education sector embodies the ideal system to achieve this aim. In terms of language as a human capital, second language learning policies represent the best way to increase the number of second language speakers. This economic logic indicates that, second language proficiency, encapsulated as human capital, will enhance productivity and economic growth:

The efficiency aspects of **language-related policies** have to do with the individual returns of language acquisition and the impact on productivity, which links it to social returns. Like other dimensions of education and investment in **human capital**, individual decisions potentially have externalities, i.e. have an impact on the aggregate **performance of the economy**.

The suggestion that money, individual or governmental, ought to be spent on language learning is clear and appealing. If learning a second or third language means better opportunities, governments must seriously consider the allocation of funds in the education system to promote second language learning as a human capital skill with direct benefits in labour market productivity and the economy in general:

Labour market demands with regard to linguistic skills have changed appreciably in recent decades, and more especially over the last few years. Outside the English-speaking countries, anybody recruited at or above “a certain level” is now expected to be able to express himself/herself at least in English (assuming it is not his/her mother tongue) or in Globish, and even in one or more other languages – this is often what “**makes the difference**” between two candidates for the same post, whose respective qualifications are otherwise judged to be equivalent. In other words, the time (up until the 1970-80s) when **mastering a non-native language (mainly English) was considered to be a “plus” belongs to the past and has given way to a situation in which not mastering English is seen as a “minus”** – a real social and economic shortcoming, in fact – whether or not English is really needed for the job in question. The impact of these **labour market** practices on the language learning/teaching market and the consequence **of labour market** outcomes on social representations is ...

The OECD acknowledges that, due to labour market demands on second language skills, English has been positioned as one of the most, if not only, valued language skill in the market sector. The fact that English has gained such power in economic terms could have deep implications in developing countries which seek to increase economic growth by investing in human capital development. Thus, education systems are the perfect scenarios in which massive English language strategies can be implemented to satisfy the labour market needs of a bilingual (English and a native language) workforce.

5.2.3.2 Contemporary ELT programmes and neoliberal ideology: official documents and public discourses.

As explained in the context chapter, ELT was officially incorporated in public secondary education by Plutarco Elias Calles in 1926. Although the ELT in secondary education suffered curricular modifications shifting from the structural model to the communicative and then a social practices

approach, it was only until 2009 that ELT was incorporated in primary schools. This massive ELT strategy, although socially accepted, lacked the necessary human and financial resources to succeed, and it could be argued that the implementation of ELT in public primary schools was part of what Johnstone (2010) calls the third wave of ELT: strong emphasis on the implementation of ELT for preschool and primary students. In a detailed analysis of the contemporary ELT policy in Mexico, Sayer (2015) describes this policy as part of a neoliberal discourse which links English to globalisation and economic opportunity. In this context, this section will describe how contemporary English language teaching in Mexico is underpinned by the OECD agenda which, as described in the precedent sections, has been gradually constructed, implemented, and legitimised during the former three federal governments' domestic policies.

Despite the socially constructed idea that learning English translates into better educational and economic opportunities, there have been voices, such as the 1994 Zapatista movement, who have drawn much more attention to the linguistic rights of Mexican indigenous peoples. Thus, positioning English as the most essential foreign language in the Mexican education system entails political and social implications. Hence, the gradual but steady construction of English as THE privileged foreign language in Mexican public education can be found in the 2001-2006, and 2007-2012 NEPs. Although both NEPs timidly mention English once in each document, there is a direct inclination towards ELT as they both use the same expression "mainly English" when encouraging foreign language learning in higher education:

- El dominio de lenguas extranjeras, **principalmente del inglés**. (Programa Nacional de Educación 2001-2006, p. 201).
- Alentar la enseñanza de, al menos, una segunda lengua (**principalmente el inglés**) como parte de los planes de estudios, y propiciar su inclusión como requisito de egreso de la educación superior.³⁶

In this context, it is important to keep in mind that NEPBE was launched in 2009 and that this ELT programme represented the first articulated official effort to bring English to public preschools and primary schools. Although, in general, it was a socially accepted programme, it needed to be legitimised in order to maintain and increase its budget. In a public conference, Juan Manuel Martínez (2014), former NEPBE coordinator, describes the benefits to learn English mainly in economic terms:

³⁶ Mastery of foreign languages, mainly English. Encourage the teaching of at least one second language (mainly English) as part of the curriculum and encourage its inclusion as a requirement for egress from higher education.

- The principal causes that led to the proposal of the National English Program in Basic education as a public policy to teaching English are the following:
- Professionals who are fluent in English can secure a salary 30 to 35% higher than those who are not.
- English is an agent of social mobility; it increases **human and cultural capital**.
- Learning English helps so increase personal income; it becomes a vortex to attract foreign investment
- When you implement a public policy to teaching English, it is expected to at least have impact. Three kinds of different impacts. Social impact, economic impact, and individual impact.
- Students who learn English contribute to overcome cultural barriers between countries. Students' mobility. Growth and evolution of societies. Diminish the gap between public and private schools.
- The economic impact, for example, English has acquired value as a **linguistic capital**. It has been calculated that it increases Mexico GMP. In the tertiary sector of the economy. In 0.7 to 1.2 percent. This represents 27 billion dollars a year. In other words, Mexico loses 27 billion dollars a year, if English is not established as a public policy in education. When speaking of the cost of English and the cost of not teaching it, this is what we meant. Just imagine this quantity, to have social development in Mexico.
- Another economic impact, greater flexibility in the commerce, greater Access to the economies of the wealthier nations.
- Individual impacts: promotes personal development, greater opportunities for social mobility, access to better jobs, possibility of attaining higher education and postgraduate studies at international recognized universities.
- Service-related economic sectors often have a strong demand for people who are proficient in one or more foreign languages.
- Increase **accountability through teacher certification** processes. International certification for teachers and students.
- It is necessary to make it very clear to all stakeholders that learning English is not only a political issue, but a social, cultural, and, why not to say it, economical one.

From the previous excerpt it is evident that English is assigned with economic attributes which resonates with the capitalist commodification of language which 'acts as a resource to be produced, controlled, distributed, valued, and constrained' (Heller, 2010, p. 108). In addition, the idea behind this is that English has an inherent economic value that can be added to the individual's human capital and possessing such commodity will result in better job opportunities and social mobility. By the same token, accreditation is depicted as the panacea for teacher

accountability, an OECD recommendation described in the previous sections. A salient aspect to point out is that this public discourse not only aims to legitimise the implementation of English in public schools, but also the neoliberal ideology underpinning the education reform and ELT strategy.

As explained in the previous sections, Peña Nieto's education reform was successfully passed by the congress in 2012, and, for the first time, the ELT is explicitly included as an essential part of the education reform:

La **reforma educativa** es un componente importante para mejorar la calidad de vida y crear una economía sustentable. En el ámbito de **inglés dentro de la reforma educativa**, el gobierno de México está comprometido a **eleva los estándares de la enseñanza del idioma inglés en todo el país**, reconociendo los beneficios de aprender inglés para sus ciudadanos y sociedad. En el sistema educativo, este compromiso se concreta a través del Programa Nacional de Inglés (PRONI), que ha movilizado un gran número de acciones para mejorar la enseñanza del inglés, el currículo, los materiales educativos y la evaluación.³⁷

In 2007, Mexicans First, a civil society organisation, was founded by a group of Mexican businesspeople. Its goal is to promote and defend the right to education of all Mexican children, so one of their actions is to write reports on various aspects of public education. In 2015, the report 'Sorry: English language learning in Mexico' was published with the aim to 'transform English language learning in Mexico' (p. 5). According to Mexicans First, ELT has been 'scarcely, poorly, and tardily' implemented (Sorri, 2015, p. 73). The press conference report presentation was followed by a series of media appearances of its president Claudio X. Gonzales (2015), a prominent businessman linked to the Institutional Revolution Party (PRI) and Televisa³⁸, in which he offered the following statements:

³⁷ Education reform is an important component in improving quality of life and creating a sustainable economy. In the field of English, within education reform, the Mexican government is committed to raising the standards of English language teaching throughout the country, recognizing the benefits of learning English for its citizens and society. In the education system, this commitment is realized through the National English Program (PRONI), which has mobilized a large number of actions to improve the teaching of English, curriculum, educational materials, and evaluation.

³⁸ Media corporation historically linked to the ruling parties PRI and PAN and has played an important role in shaping public opinion in favor of federal governments.

Interview 1

Tenemos que volver el inglés un tema prioritario en la educación nacional la única verdadera solución y tenemos que empezar ya es preparar a los maestros del futuro para que sean maestros bilingües tú no puedes tomar una o dos horas con un disque maestro de inglés y pensar que los niños y los jóvenes tendrán buenos resultados.³⁹

Interview 2

Tenemos una Secretaría de Educación Pública que está mintiendo a los padres que le está mintiendo a los jóvenes y luego la reprobación bien en la vida porque esos jóvenes se presentan pensando que dominan el inglés a conseguir un trabajo que requiere el inglés y por supuesto que no les dan el empleo porque no lo dominan.

... a lo largo de los últimos 5 años estos programas de inglés y el pago de los maestros que hay en el país de inglés nos ha costado 33 mil millones de pesos a los mexicanos es una cifra estratosférica de recursos invertida para que para que sólo 3% tengan dominio bueno parece como tú dices un fraude una simulación terrible ya el examen pisa hace algunos años el examen internacional vino a desnudar al sistema educativo nacional diciendo que 3/4 partes de los jóvenes de 15 años también no comprenden bien lo que leen y alrededor de 4/5 partes no tienen el dominio de las matemáticas y de las Ciencias ahora este examen viene de nuevo a desnudar a ese sistema educativo y a demostrar que no se está aprendiendo suficiente en las escuelas públicas del país pero que sí nos está saliendo muy caro a los mexicanos ese sistema porque en ningún otro rubro nos gastamos más que en el educativo. Entonces mucho gasto muy pocos resultados hay algo mal aquí es un diseño que de alguna manera siempre beneficia al adulto siempre beneficia al que recibe la quincena pero no está atendiendo a la comunidad escolar no está atendiendo al niño no está atendiendo el joven **tenemos que transformar ese sistema educativo** por eso la reforma al tercero constitucional y a la legislación secundaria que es fundamental implementar en este momento yo creo que oponerse con estos resultados a que **reformemos** ese sistema pues **me parece criminal**.⁴⁰

³⁹ English language learning has to be a priority for the national education system. The only and true solution is, and we must start right away, to prepare the teachers of the future so they can become bilingual. You cannot expect that one or two hours with a fake teacher of English will bring good results.

⁴⁰ There is a Ministry of Education that is lying to the parents, to the students; hence, the failure is in life because when young people apply for a job, believing that they master English, which requires English skills and, of course, they do not get it because they do not master the language.

In the past 5 years, these programmes (ELT) and the EL teachers' salary has cost the Mexican people 33 thousand million pesos. This is a stratospheric figure of invested resources, what for? For only a 3% of students with the required level of English. Well, it looks like a fraud, a terrible simulation. A few years ago, the PISA exam, an international exam, uncovered that ¼ of 15-year-old students do not understand what they read and that around 4/5 do not master math and sciences. Now, this exam [Mexicans First English exam] uncovers this education system and shows that there is not sufficient learning in public education, but this is a very expensive system for Mexican taxpayers because there is no other sector with more public investment than the education sector. Hence, there is a high investment and low results, something is wrong with that. This is a model that always benefits adults, always benefits those who get a salary [referring to the teachers] but who are not attending the school community, not attending the child, not attending the youth. Therefore, **we have to transform the education system** and that is why it is fundamental to implement the

Mexicans First role in this picture is twofold. On the one hand, they used the 'Sorri' report to severely criticise the results of public English language programmes, but, on the other hand, they use their conclusions to actively and openly back up the implementation of Enrique Peña Nieto's education reform by adopting a position which largely blames teachers for the poor results in education. Mexicans First explicit support in favour of the education reform serves as a legitimising factor for a government whose legitimacy was largely questioned and had a low social support. Moreover, the report (2015) is used as a platform to relaunch the macroacquisition of English as they explain:

Train and select adequate English teachers to learn the language

This is the hardest aspect: not only must we require teachers of English who fully meet the profile requirements (as has been said, for basic education, B2 is the lowest acceptable proficiency level but the intention is to have more teachers with a C1 or above level) but also an intensive teacher, who already meet the C1 level, selection process is required. Moreover, the ideal scenario is that, for the future teacher selection process, 'specialist English teachers' (as the official discourse call them) are no longer hired but a transition so that the head teacher can teach in English in a dual immersion model is ideal. The 4th grade teacher would be teaching some topics in Spanish (or one of the native languages, like Nahuatl) and others in English.

It was only in 2012 that the National curriculum [for teacher training schools] included four English levels. It is expected that with four hours of weekly instruction distributed in five semesters every student teacher achieves a B2 proficiency level...Definitively, the real change will be achieved when every teacher training school student is required a B2 proficiency level as an admission requirement...if the teacher training curriculum does not reflect upon and achieves multilingualism, the preschool and primary levels will never do.⁴¹

Mexicans First conclusions indicate that NEPBE and NEP have been a waste of financial and human resources with very poor academic results in terms of language proficiency achievement. Hence, they advocate for adopting a different approach, yet still a macroacquisition one, towards ELT in Mexico. In this context, teacher training schools are the perfect scenarios to relaunch ELT by implementing an aggressive English language programme for the future teachers at public basic education schools. This, ideally, would create the necessary conditions to implement a dual immersion program in basic education schools. Another aspect to consider is that, based on the

amendment of article 3 of the constitution and its complementary legislation. I believe that opposing, with these results, to reforming **the system** [education], in my opinion, is a **crime**.

⁴¹ Personal translation.

'Sorri' report conclusions, Mexicans First underestimate teachers of English credentials by stating 'In Mexico, we have a failing English language learning system, in which diplomas cannot be taken seriously' (2015, p. 117). This statement clearly aims to facilitate the implementation of teacher examination processes which resonates with the teacher accountability models proposed by the OECD.

Two years after Mexicans First presented the 'Sorri' report, Aurelio Nuño, former Minister of Education, acknowledges English represents a central part of the education reform and announces a strong ELT emphasis in compulsory education along with an accreditation agenda:

La **Reforma Educativa** que impulsó el Presidente Enrique Peña Nieto nos da la oportunidad de hacer este cambio. A partir de ella, hemos podido construir una visión compartida de la educación que necesita el país. Después de amplias consultas y numerosos foros con diversos sectores de la población, se hizo público el Modelo Educativo. Este contiene un nuevo planteamiento pedagógico, que requiere la reorganización del sistema educativo y de sus políticas públicas. En suma, considera los pasos que debemos seguir todos, autoridades, maestros, padres de familia, estudiantes y la sociedad en general, para lograrlo. El **inglés es la lengua global** del siglo XXI. En este sentido, además de reforzar el aprendizaje del español y las lenguas indígenas, el **Nuevo Modelo Educativo fortalece el inglés** para toda la educación obligatoria alineando el currículo a estándares nacionales e internacionales. La visión es que, dentro de 20 años, todos los mexicanos puedan terminar su educación obligatoria hablando inglés con una **certificación de reconocimiento internacional**.⁴²

Moreover, the fact that the OECD is explicitly referred to in the National English Program as a validating argument for positioning English in the education reform agenda and the language which promotes social development is noteworthy:

Adicionalmente, como señala la **Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económicos (OCDE)**, enseñar inglés fortalece la competencia comunicativa de las y los estudiantes. Su promoción debe ser sostenida a lo largo del trayecto educativo buscando su aprendizaje efectivo una vez concluido éste. Por ser la lengua más utilizada en intercambios entre personas de diversos países, su dominio consolida y

⁴² The Education Reform promoted by President Enrique Peña Nieto gives us the opportunity to make this change. From it, we have been able to build a shared vision of the education that the country needs. After extensive consultations and numerous forums with various sectors of the population, the Educational Model was made public. It contains a new pedagogical approach, which requires the reorganization of the education system and its public policies. In short, consider the steps we must all take, authorities, teachers, parents, students, and society at large, to achieve this. English is the global language of the 21st century. In this sense, in addition to strengthening the learning of Spanish and indigenous languages, the New Educational Model strengthens English for all compulsory education by aligning the curriculum to national and international standards. The vision is that, in 20 years, all Mexicans can finish their compulsory education by speaking English with an international recognition certification.

estimula el desarrollo de personas al disminuir las barreras de conexión con el mundo, brindar mayor acceso a la información. El **idioma inglés** resulta además de gran utilidad en procesos de innovación y, en **consecuencia, contribuye al mejoramiento y diversificación de la sociedad.**⁴³

The evidence indicates that, once the official narrative successfully constructed the education reform as indispensable to achieve quality of education, English was positioned as a key element not only for the academic benefits of speaking a foreign language but also for the social mobility it allegedly brings about. Nevertheless, this cannot be taken as a categorical argument to assert this ELT strategy serves a neoliberal agenda; thus, accounting for the English-human capital and English-labour market relationship would corroborate whether contemporary ELT in Mexico is underpinned by neoliberal ideology. The argument that English is a valuable linguistic capital, which increases individuals' human capital, is not only found in Mexico's ELT official documents. However, the fact that the English-human capital relationship is overtly discussed in official documents during the Peña Nieto administration cannot go unnoticed. First, the National English Program describes the importance of ELT as a key element to strengthen Mexico's human capital as the following passage illustrates:

El PRONI se orienta al cumplimiento de lo dispuesto en el PND, que en su apartado de "Introducción y Visión General", numeral 2 "Diagnóstico general: México enfrenta barreras que limitan su desarrollo", establece que un México con Educación de Calidad requiere **robustecer el capital humano** y formar mujeres y hombres comprometidos con una sociedad más justa y más próspera, por lo que el Sistema Educativo Mexicano debe fortalecerse para estar a la altura de las necesidades que un mundo globalizado demanda."⁴⁴

Likewise, the National English Strategy validates the idea that public investment in English is desirable if human capital development, which will consequently enhance productivity, is to be achieved:

43

In addition, as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) points out, teaching English strengthens the communicative competence of students. Its promotion must be sustained throughout the educational journey seeking its effective learning once it is completed. As the most widely used language in exchanges between people from different countries, its dominance consolidates and stimulates the development of people by reducing barriers to connection with the world, providing greater access to information. The English language is also very useful in innovation processes and therefore contributes to the improvement and diversification of society.

⁴⁴ PRONI is oriented towards compliance with the provisions of the PND, which in its section of "Introduction and Overview", numeral 2 "General diagnosis: Mexico faces barriers that limit its development", states that a Mexico with Quality Education requires strengthening human capital and training women and men committed to a fairer and more prosperous society, so the Mexican Education System must be strengthened to meet the needs of a globalized world demand."

El **dominio** de una lengua extranjera como el **inglés** representa una inversión en **capital humano** y social. Los recursos que destina el Estado para financiar la educación pública, en particular, en la **inclusión de la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera en el plan y programas nacionales y su implementación efectiva en las aulas**, suponen un valor agregado para la formación de las y los estudiantes. Autores como Jiménez señalan que una lengua, en este caso el inglés, además de ser un bien o un recurso, puede ser considerada como un factor productivo que **puede estimular el crecimiento** y ser, por ende, fuente de capital social.⁴⁵

English as a human capital element is a fundamental argument in favour of the planning, implementation, and promotion of a compulsory ELT programme in public education. This is an indicator of an economic oriented macro acquisition policy with neoliberal implications. Thus, the English-labour market relationship is additional factor which might characterise the neoliberal orientation of contemporary ELT in Mexican public education. As in the English-human capital analysis, it is during the Peña Nieto administration that the English-labour market connection is found in official documents. The following three passages illustrate this connection:

En ese tenor, el PRONI atiende lo previsto en el PND en su Enfoque transversal (México con Educación de Calidad), Estrategia I “Democratizar la Productividad”, que establece como una de sus líneas de acción fomentar la adquisición de capacidades básicas, incluyendo el manejo de otros idiomas, para incorporarse a un **mercado laboral competitivo a nivel global**

Así, **enseñar el inglés** en el SEN desde los niveles iniciales permitirá a las y los estudiantes mexicanos ver en estos espacios de excelencia opciones reales para iniciar y fortalecer su educación superior. Ello les posibilitará además ser parte de redes académicas y profesionales altamente innovadoras. El inglés tiene efectos positivos no sólo en el trayecto formativo, sino también una vez que se transita al **mercado laboral**. Comunicarse con éxito—de manera oral y escrita—en inglés puede **incrementar la empleabilidad de las y los trabajadores**.

Aunado a esto, la formación obligatoria en una **lengua como el inglés** tiene **beneficios importantes en la economía** pues fortalece la formación académica de los individuos, dotándolos de diversas competencias necesarias en el actual **mercado laboral**.)⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The mastery of a foreign language such as English represents an investment in human and social capital. The resources allocated by the State to finance public education in the inclusion of the teaching of a foreign language in the national plan and programmes and their effective implementation in the classroom, add value for the training of students. Authors such as Jiménez point out that a language, in this case English, in addition to being a good or a resource, can be considered as a productive factor that can stimulate growth and therefore be a source of social capital.

⁴⁶ In this tenor, PRONI addresses what is envisaged in the PND in its Cross-Cutting Approach (Mexico with Quality Education), Strategy I "Democratizing Productivity", which establishes as one of its lines of action to promote the

By 2017, Aurelio Nuño's speech revealed the underpinning neoliberal interests to launch the National English Strategy:

... esta estrategia nacional de inglés no se puede entender en el vacío. Esto es parte de un proceso muy profundo de cambio educativo que inició **con la Reforma Educativa**, que ha continuado de manera señalada con la construcción del Nuevo Modelo Educativo.

No se trata ya afortunadamente de una **cuestión ideológica** que es un paso necesario y práctico que tiene que hacer nuestro país. El inglés es el idioma más hablado en el mundo. Es el idioma en el que se construye la ciencia, el idioma de las artes a nivel internacional, de la diplomacia, del comercio, de los negocios, de la política, de todo lo que ustedes quieren.

Y en un mundo cada vez más globalizado gracias al cambio tecnológico, en que cada vez hay más contacto entre diversas naciones. En donde cada vez hay más inversiones mutuas de diversos países. En donde cada vez más hay intercambios de trabajo y educativos, no hablar inglés es quedarse fuera y rezagados de un mundo global en pleno siglo XXI.

Y eso es un lujo que México no se puede dar. Y eso lo sabemos y lo entendemos todos y ya se dieron aquí muchas cifras, pero yo quiero hacer énfasis, hincapié en algo que es obvio, pero que a veces no vemos: **buscar que todo México hable inglés**, es una política de inclusión y de justicia.

Es una política de inclusión como país, porque si todos los habitantes de este país hablamos inglés, México se va a insertar con mucha mayor eficacia en el mundo global y México podrá ser un actor cada vez más importante y tener beneficios para México y contribuir más al mundo.

Pero es también una política de equidad y de inclusión a cada uno de los mexicanos. Un mexicano que habla inglés, en promedio, puede tener un empleo ganando entre **35 y 50 por ciento** más que un mexicano que no habla inglés.⁴⁷

acquisition of basic capacities, including the management of other languages, to enter a globally competitive labor market. (Rules of Operation of the National English Program for fiscal year 2017, p.5). Thus, teaching English at the SEN from the initial levels will allow Mexican students to see in these spaces of excellence real options to initiate and strengthen their higher education. This will also enable them to be part of highly innovative academic and professional networks. English has positive effects not only on the training journey, but also once it is transported to the labour market. Communicating successfully—orally and in writing—can increase the employability of workers. In addition, compulsory training in a language such as English has important benefits in the economy by strengthening the academic training of individuals, equipping them with various necessary skills in the current labour market.

⁴⁷ ... this national English strategy cannot be understood in the void. This is part of a very profound process of educational change that began with the Education Reform, which has continued in a marked way with the construction of the New Educational Model. This is not, fortunately, an ideological issue that is a necessary and practical step that our country must make. English is the most spoken language in the world. It is the language in which science is built, the language of the arts at the international level, diplomacy, commerce, business, politics, everything you want. And in an increasingly globalised world thanks to technological change, where there is more and more contact between different nations. Where there are more and more mutual investments from various countries. Where there are increasingly exchanges of work and education, not speaking English is staying out and lagging a global world in the 21st century. And that's a luxury that Mexico can't afford. And we all know and understand that, and a lot of figures have already been given here, but I want to emphasize, emphasize something that is obvious, but sometimes we don't see: seeking all of Mexico to speak English is a policy of inclusion and justice. It is a policy of inclusion as a country, because if all the

It is worth noting that Nuño's statement explicitly states that the National English Strategy emanates from the education reform implemented in 2013. In addition, he uses the fashionable discourse of equity and inclusion as a rationale to legitimise its implementation. Furthermore, he points out English represents a key factor to obtain a higher salary which is practically the same argument offered by former NEPBE coordinator Juan Manuel Martinez in 2015.

Based on the previous passages, it would be naive to affirm that both the National English Programme and the National English Strategy were exclusively planned and implemented as educational policies towards promoting quality of education for all. On the contrary, the evidence indicates that the contemporary ELT programmes (NEPBE, 2009; PRONI, 2012; NEP, 2017) are part of a broader strategy to respond to neoliberal driven interests vested in Mexican domestic policy; more specifically in education.

The English-human capital and English-labour market connection cannot be completed without a model which serves as quality control mechanism for language skills: accreditation. Mexico's contemporary ELT strategy contemplates international English language examinations which serve as quality control mechanisms as the following passages show:

inhabitants of this country speak English, Mexico will insert the world much more effectively and Mexico will be able to be an increasingly important player and have benefits for Mexico and contribute more to the world. But it is also a policy of equity and inclusion for each of the Mexicans. A Mexican who speaks English, on average, can have a job earning between 35 and 50 percent more than a Mexican who doesn't speak English.

Nuestra visión es que, dentro de 20 años, todos los mexicanos puedan terminar su educación obligatoria hablando **inglés con una certificación de reconocimiento internacional**. En otras palabras, queremos que tengan la capacidad de comprender y redactar textos complejos, y puedan darse a entender en cualquier parte del mundo.

b) Fortalecimiento académico y/o en su caso **certificación académica internacional de docentes y asesores/as externos/as especializados/as** en el dominio del idioma inglés así como sus competencias didácticas en la enseñanza, de las escuelas públicas participantes en el PRONI.

c) Promover procesos de **certificación internacional** del alumnado en el dominio del idioma inglés, en condiciones de igualdad para **alumnas y alumnos**.

En este sentido, además de reforzar el aprendizaje del español y las lenguas indígenas, el Nuevo Modelo Educativo fortalece el inglés para toda la educación obligatoria alineando el currículo a estándares nacionales e internacionales. La visión es que, dentro de 20 años, todos los mexicanos puedan terminar su educación obligatoria hablando inglés con una **certificación de reconocimiento internacional**. En otras palabras, queremos que tengan la capacidad de comprender y redactar textos complejos, y puedan darse a entender en cualquier parte del mundo. ⁴⁸

As language accreditation is assumed as THE ultimate mechanism to guarantee quality of education in ELT, a massive accreditation strategy for teachers and students was implemented since the beginning of the contemporary ELT strategy in 2009. In addition, as the following passage reveals, public expenditure in English language accreditation has steadily grown and was expected to increase:

Toda vez que las condiciones de estudio, la edad de los estudiantes y los aspectos contextuales en México son diferentes y diversas con respecto a aquellas contempladas para la definición del MCER, se determinó crear estándares de dominio y competencias de inglés, así como escalas descriptivas, de manera que fueran pertinentes para las y los estudiantes y docentes mexicanos. Se establecieron además periodos de

⁴⁸ Our vision is that, in 20 years, all Mexicans can finish their compulsory education by speaking English with an international recognition certification. In other words, we want them to have the ability to understand and write complex texts, and to be understood anywhere in the world.

b) Academic strengthening and/or, where appropriate, international academic certification of specialized external teachers and advisors, as well as their teaching skills in teaching, of public schools participating in PRONI.

c) Promote international certification processes for students in English language professed, on an equal footing for students.

In this sense, in addition to strengthening the learning of Spanish and indigenous languages, the New Educational Model strengthens English for all compulsory education by aligning the curriculum to national and international standards. The vision is that, in 20 years, all Mexicans can finish their compulsory education by speaking English with an international recognized certification. In other words, we want them to have the ability to understand and write complex texts, and to be understood anywhere in the world.

tiempo de exposición al idioma inglés con sus respectivas equivalencias a los marcos de referencia antes mencionados. Lo anterior supone un **robustecimiento del proceso de certificación vigente**.⁴⁹

The academic and professional benefits of language accreditation are undeniable. Nevertheless, official ELT documents present language accreditation as the instrument which guarantees quality of education in ELT, and that seems to be the justification behind the steadily growing public financing on it.

As described in the context chapter, contemporary English language teaching in Mexico has increased its coverage in compulsory public education. Since 2009 ELT was incorporated in preschools and primary schools and, in 2017, a very ambitious National English Strategy was launched at the national teacher training programme system. In addition, the Ministry of Education has partnered with the British Council, Cambridge Assessment and the U.S. Regional English Language Office to support material development, teacher training and curriculum development. Albeit the human and material resources invested in the ELT programmes, the poor language proficiency achievement has been documented (Sorri report, 2015), yet the budget allocated to these programmes steadily increased until 2018. The reason behind supporting and expanding ELT in public compulsory education does not seem to be based on academic evaluation and attainment; on the contrary, this tendency towards positioning English in public education, as the preceding sections have shown, responds to neoliberal interests in Mexico's domestic policy and, more precisely, the education system. To support this argument, I will summarise the main findings of the preceding sections.

Although it took 12 years to be officially constructed and legally approved, Mexico's education reform is well-aligned with the OECD key reform recommendations to develop Mexico's human capital skills in a global world. The education reform was used to hold teachers accountable of the education results, and, consequently, to weaken the teacher's union (the strongest and largest in number or members).

⁴⁹ Since the conditions of study, the age of the students and the contextual aspects in Mexico are different and diverse from those contemplated for the definition of the CEFR, it was determined to create standards of English proficiency and competencies, as well as descriptive scales, so that they were relevant to Mexican students and teachers. Periods of exposure time to the English language were also established with their respective equivalences to the aforementioned reference frameworks. This implies a robustness of the current certification process.

Since the implementation of the National English Program (formerly known as National English Program in Basic Education), it has been used to sustain human capital development which responds to a labour market neoliberal agenda. In 2017, the Ministry of Education launched the National English Strategy whose main aim was that, within 20 years, all public education students become bilingual and obtain an international accreditation. The accreditation model is a twofold mechanism for, on the one hand, it serves as quality control instrument, and, on the other, it validates citizens hold the English language skills demanded by the labour market.

Furthermore, it is necessary to clarify that the neoliberal agenda in ELT has not only influenced compulsory education and the teacher training system; in contrast, it expanded its influence on higher education language policy. As an example, the Technological University Bilingual International and Sustainable model (UTBIS) was opened in 2012, and, by 2018, 26 UTBIS were operating in 17 states. The UTBIS model offers English-Spanish instruction in its first year of studies which is then switched to an only English instruction in all content courses. Moreover, in its Vision and Action 2030 publication, the University and Higher Education Institutions Association clearly states that second language learning, mainly English, must be promoted and facilitated in public higher ed system. This resonates with the University of Puebla 2017-2021 Institutional Development Plan which states that:

... the university should aim to form...students with the soft competencies **required by the labour market**...such as leadership, critical thinking, responsibility, creativity, ethics, perseverance, digital literacy, goal orientation, oral and written communication skills [in Spanish], teamwork, **and English.**

Up to this point the document analysis has focused on the official documents emanated from three former federal governments which concentrated their efforts to promote and implement structural reforms: energy, labour, tax and education. In 2018, presidential elections were held and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) became the first leftist president to take office in Mexico. This is relevant for not only did AMLO use an anti-neoliberal discourse in his campaign, but also in the swearing-in ceremony speech. He affirmed that ‘today, we begin a change of our political regime’ and pointed out the ‘inefficiency of the neoliberal economic model...[which] has not resulted successful, not even in quantitative terms’ and characterised Mexico economic policy from 1983 to date within the “neoliberal period’. His anti-neoliberal policy discourse led AMLO to promise a series of counter reforms in which the education reform is included. Thus, a preliminary analysis of the current domestic policy, with emphasis on education is presented. In

concordance with the previous analyses, the 2019-2014 NDP is included in the analysis of the 'reform' key concept:

Durante el **periodo neoliberal** el sistema de educación pública fue devastado por los gobiernos oligárquicos; se pretendió acabar con la gratuidad de la educación superior, se sometió a las universidades públicas a un acoso presupuestal sin precedentes, los ciclos básico, medio y medio superior fueron vistos como oportunidades de negocio para venderle al gobierno insumos educativos inservibles y a precios inflados, se emprendió una ofensiva brutal en contra de las escuelas normales rurales y en el sexenio pasado se operó una **mal llamada reforma educativa** que era en realidad una **contrarreforma laboral**, contraria a los derechos laborales del magisterio y orientada a crear las condiciones para la privatización generalizada de la enseñanza... Ante esta circunstancia, el gobierno federal se comprometió desde un inicio a mejorar las condiciones materiales de las escuelas del país, a garantizar el acceso de todos los jóvenes a la educación y a revertir la mal llamada **reforma educativa**.⁵⁰

The previous passage not only reflects AMLO's anti-neoliberal discourse but also blames 'the neoliberal period' for implementing strategies which sought to privatise the entire education system. In addition, the current NDP announces the cancelation of the 'falsely named' education reform since it was mainly used as a control mechanism for teachers. AMLO's anticorruption and anti-neoliberal crusade has just begun; by implementing some counter reforms. The extent to which his policies will transform the regime is still to be known, but the Minister of Education, Esteban Moctezuma, has announced the New Mexican School as the accompanying education policy for the current federal government; nevertheless, the complementary official documents have not been published which limits their analysis.

5.2.4 Quality assurance agencies and ELT

This level of analysis encompasses the description of the influence of quality assurance agencies on higher education practices. The Interinstitutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES) started to evaluate the quality of higher education in Mexico in 1992. Although there exists another quality assurance agency (COPAES), CIEES is the largest agency in Mexico.

⁵⁰ During the neoliberal period the public education system was devastated by oligarchic governments; it was intended to end the gratuitousness of higher education, public universities were subjected to unprecedented budgetary harassment, basic, middle and upper-middle cycles were seen as business opportunities to sell the government useless educational inputs and at inflated prices, a brutal offensive was launched against normal rural schools, and in the past six years a bad education reform was operated that was actually a counter-reformation, contrary to the labour rights of the Magisterium and aimed at creating the conditions for the widespread privatization of education... In the face of this, the federal government undertook from the outset to improve the material conditions of the country's schools, to ensure access for all young people to education and to reverse the so-called education reform.

The methodology for evaluation includes 5 axis, 12 categories and 49 indicators or parameters.

The process of evaluation is composed of four stages:

1. A higher education institution or program writes a self-evaluation (self-study) based on forms and guidelines provided by CIEES.
2. A team of external evaluators (peers) trained by CIEES visit the institution or program and produces a report.
3. The appropriate committee meet, deliberates, checks, values and arrives to a conclusion over the quality of the institution or program.
4. CIEES delivers the report to the HEI and (if is it the case) awards a *Reconocimiento or Acreditación*.

At this point it is essential to clarify that CIEES evaluations are conducted only by request of the education programme. Another important aspect to point out is that the report includes areas of opportunity or recommendations to improve the quality of the programme. On the other hand, since it is not the purpose of this section to provide with a detailed description of the methodology axis, categories, and parameters, I will focus on category 4 “Activities for integral education” which specifically includes foreign language as a key element:

Indicator 4.2 Additional languages teaching

1. The education programme, which establishes in its profile of graduation or curriculum, additional language learning must specify the expected proficiency level from the students.
2. The education programme must establish additional language proficiency level students must meet during the duration of their studies and for their professional development.
3. The education programme must encourage graduates’ competitiveness through external certifications, generally relate to the profession or discipline.

The fact that CIEES includes the additional language indicator in the evaluation instrument has originated a tendency to create foreign language departments, where they did not exist, and to increase, where there did, the number of foreign language hours and to implement student and teacher language accreditation programs. Certainly, higher education institutions (HEI) are not required to be evaluated by CIEES or COPAES; nevertheless, participating, and obtaining a good evaluation, is a requirement to be granted federal funds for the quality of higher education. The

influence that quality assurance agencies has had on HEIs, regarding ELT, will be discussed in institutional language practices level of analysis.

5.2.5 ANUIES and ELT

The National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES for its acronym in Spanish) is:

a plural, non-governmental association that gathers the main higher education institutions in the country, whose common denominator is its will to promote the integral betterment of the teaching, research and extension of culture and services. (ANUIES, 2019, para. 1)

This association is composed by 197 public and private universities and higher education institutions. The significance of ANUIES in Mexican higher education can be observed both in the political and academic spheres. Politically speaking, ANUIES members normally participate in the federal budget discussion in the congress and, academically, its recommendations are commonly used as guidelines for quality assurance and curricular innovations. Regarding ELT, the 2030 ANUIES vision and action guidelines state that, in order to promote educational innovation, its affiliates must 'Diversify the options and facilitate students' access to a second language, particularly English' (p. 125). The recommendation to promote English is justified by the argument that 'In the context of an increasing academic and professional internationalisation, being competent in a foreign language (especially English) becomes very relevant' (Catalogo de las Buenas Prácticas, 2019).

In 2015, ANUIES called a group of ELT experts to conform an Academic Committee to work towards the improvement of English language teaching in Higher Education and, in 2016, the first National Conference of English Language Teaching Specialists took place at the University of Guadalajara with the objective of presenting the English Language Teaching Best Practices Manual. In 2019, the second conference took place at Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM) with the aim of developing an innovative teacher training proposal from ANUIES English language teacher affiliates' insights. At this point, it is essential to point out that I was invited to participate in this conference, so some of my comments from this point on are also from the insiders' perspective.

The first aspect that caught my attention, in relation to this study, was an email asking every participant to read two documents to be ready for the participation in the roundtables. The first one is a national English language teacher profile survey from ANUIES affiliates, and the second one was the OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 which, in my opinion, is very revealing in the sense that the most important Higher Education Association in Mexico sustains a national English language teacher training strategy based on a macroeconomic organisation recommendation, which has been ideologically challenged by the current president of Mexico. In

addition, a closer look at the 'Basic Elements for the English Language Teacher Training Programme' confirms that the OECD was a key reference to support the English and internationalisation of curriculum connection which is one of the ANUIES 2030 strategic objectives. All in all, it is evident that ANUIES positions English as a central element to achieve the long-desired internationalisation of the curriculum goal, and, at an ideological level, it is an association that sustains its decisions, at least regarding ELT, to the macroeconomic organisations such as the OECD.

5.3 Institutional language practices and public discourses

The second level of analysis includes public discourses taken from official speeches, talks and promotional videos, and language practice (Lo Bianco, 2009) instances obtained from interviews with public university, teacher training school, the National English Programme stakeholders, and parents of primary, secondary, and preparatory students who take English regular English classes in private schools. This will bring light into how the neoliberal ideology has permeated the institutional discursive practices regarding ELT.

This analysis aims to identify whether key stakeholders' discursive practices reproduce the ideology underpinning Mexico's English language policy. Ten stakeholders from four different institutions voluntarily participated in the interviews. The common factor among these institutions is that they all have a coherent English language programme (curriculum, teachers, and a large number of students) and, at least two of them are the medium of instrumentation of the most recent English language programmes in the public education system: The National English Strategy (teacher training schools) and the National English Program in Basic Education. In addition, 137 parents voluntarily answered a six-question questionnaire regarding importance of English in their children's academic preparation. At this point, it is crucial to describe the analytical approach adopted to illustrate the operationalization of the neoliberal ideology with key stakeholders. As stated in the methodology chapter, Fairclough's (2006) CDA approach with cultural political economy serves as the basis for analysis. Fairclough's (2006) argument elucidates the rationale which supports this approach:

Economic change began to occur when the discourse was operationalized, implemented, put into practice. Some of the terms and categories in this discourse (particularly 'outsourcing', 'a marketing and branding strategy') are on one level ideas, but ideas that only have an impact when they are operationalized through changes in organizational practices and structures. (p. 2)

In the light of the findings presented 5.2, it is evident that, within Mexico's official documents, the neoliberal ideology has transcended the economic domain and has impinged the social and

education policies and strategies. Yet this is not enough to claim that this ideology has been operationalized, particularly in Mexico because there will always be resisting forces such as social leaders and organisations, unions, and political parties; thus, an association between the policies and strategies delineated in public texts and promoted through public discourses and actual institutional practices must be traced. Consequently, although the central interest of this study lies on the ideological domain, the interview analysis seeks to identify the three aspects of the operationalization of discourse: enactment, inculcation, and materialization. Fairclough (2012) defines enactment as “new ways of interacting”, inculcation as “new ways of being (identities)” and materialization as “new ways of organizing space in architecture.” In the following excerpts I aim to describe how national and international education agencies have shaped the institutional practices of a teacher training school and a public university.

5.3.1 Teacher training school stakeholders.

In the first excerpt, Maria, language department coordinator, describes how the most recognised quality assurance agency for higher education (CIEES) and an international English language agency (Cambridge assessment) have shaped the institutional social practices of a teacher training schools:

Este programa se creó en 2017. Este... primero como una necesidad, a partir de una necesidad mm... Cuando nosotros tuvimos ehmm... evaluadores aquí por parte de **CIEES**, se nos hizo esa observación con respecto al **idioma inglés** y las certificaciones, entonces los directivos en su momento crearon este programa.⁵¹

The previous excerpt resonates with the “quality of education” key concept described in section 5.2. Mexican higher education is evaluated by CIEES which not only evaluates but also provides recommendations in order to meet the higher education quality standards. In this case, the recommendation to implement a coherent English language and accreditation programme reconstructs the institutional practices in the teacher training school by creating an institutional language department (with a strong emphasis on English) which, it could be claimed, represents the materialization of a neoliberal discourse in the form of a new institutional hierarchy and processes. This reconstruction of social space aims to position English in the centre of an

⁵¹ This program was created in 2017. Umm, first as a demand, from a demand...mmm. When we [teacher training institution] were visited by evaluators from CIEES (Interinstitutional Committee for the Evaluation of Higher Education), they made a recommendation regarding English and examinations, it was then that the administrators created this program.

institutional language policy which, on the one hand, seeks to inculcate the market value of English and, on the other, to enact a long-lasting idea (Lo Bianco's performative action) of English as a much-desired asset for students and parents. In the following excerpt, the academic affairs secretary of a teacher training school, Juan, acknowledges that the implementation of the National English Strategy in teacher training schools responds to:

Por otra parte, su implementación [Estrategia Nacional de Inglés] significa que debemos cumplir con los indicadores de calidad establecidos por agencias nacionales e internacionales las cuales, actualmente, indican que los maestros de hoy deben tener diversas habilidades, por ejemplo, tecnológicas y el manejo de una segunda lengua.⁵²

Although it is not clear what are those international and national agencies he refers to, if we look back to Maria's quote, CIEES might be the national agency being referred to. This draws attention to the fact that national and international agencies not only promote the recontextualization of reality through an order of discourse (Fairclough, 2006) which legitimates neoliberal strategies such as the implementation of English, justified by the 'English opens doors' argument, but also its operationalization by a) creating a new department which specifically seeks to promote English language learning at an institutional scale and b) promote a massive language accreditation strategy mandated by both the Ministry of Public Education (as explained in section 5.2) and the quality assurance for higher education agency which is evident in Maria's comment:

Bueno CIEES pide hacer vínculos con las escuelas especialistas en la enseñanza del inglés, en este caso del francés para promover capacitación, cursos y sobre todo se va hacia la certificación del idioma, entonces nosotros no teníamos ehh... docentes certificados o bien los pocos que... que estaban certificados, a lo mejor ya tenían vencida la certificación o habían hecho una certificación de un nivel más bajo del que tenían actual y alumnos pues eran muy pocos la verdad los... los certificados. Ehh... con respecto a la Estrategia Nacional de inglés lo que se pretende en esta estrategia es formar amm... a los alumnos para que... para que ellos en un futuro sean los que den las clases de inglés en básica.⁵³

⁵² On the other hand, it [the implementation of the National English Strategy] means that we must meet quality assurance indicators established by some national and international agencies which, currently, state that contemporary teachers must have diverse skills, for example, technology and the mastery of a second or third language.

⁵³ Well, CIEES recommends collaborating with English language specialists ... courses and more importantly language qualifications, at that time we did not have umm [language] teachers who had a language accreditation or few had an expired one or held an accreditation with a lower language level than the one they currently have, and, regarding the students, few had a language qualification. Umm, regarding the National English Strategy, it aims to provide teacher training school students with the English language skills so that they teach English in basic education.

Language accreditation is not an isolated manifestation of the neoliberal strategy in ELT. In fact, it is only a branch of a much larger strategy: the macroacquisition of English as a neoliberal strategy (Sayer, 2015a). In this sense, Juan's insights are very revealing:

Uno de los objetivos es alinear el programa de la Escuela Normal con los de la educación básica. El programa de reforma de la educación básica establece la enseñanza de una segunda lengua [únicamente inglés] como elemento obligatorio para los niños de la educación básica. Por lo tanto, el propósito de alinear el programa, de las escuelas normales, de los profesores en formación, con estas habilidades es que ellos puedan atender el programa de educación básica porque, cuando terminen sus estudios, tendrán que enseñar con base en ese programa [que incluye la enseñanza de inglés].⁵⁴

As suggested by Nuño and Mexicans First, teacher training school's student teachers should become bilingual and, as a result, be those who will teach English in all levels of public education. This is a clear example of how an ideology has been materialized in the form of the National English Strategy and uncritically reproduced by stakeholders.

The curricular innovation, which introduces English as a mandatory class for teacher training schools, was implemented in 2018. In the same year the National English strategy was launched with the objective that 'within 20 years all Mexicans complete the compulsory education speaking English and with an international language accreditation [Cambridge]' (Estrategia Nacional de Inglés promotional clip, 2017). Former Minister of Public Education, Aurelio Nuño, described the new macroacquisition approach, but this time launching English language learning in the public teacher training system:

... lo que estamos buscando es construir una planta sólida docente, de maestros que quieran ser maestros porque tienen esa vocación, profesionales bien formados en el absoluto dominio del inglés y que lo puedan transmitir al resto de los maestros y ellos, a su vez, a los niños.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ One of the objectives is to align the teacher training institution curriculum with those of basic education. The reform of the basic education curriculum establishes the second language instruction [only English] as a mandatory element for basic education children. Therefore, the purpose of this curricular alignment is that we provide, from teacher training education, from pre-service teacher education, with these skills so that they can attend the basic education curriculum because when they [pre-service teachers] finish their studies they will have to teach according with the basic education curriculum [which includes English language instruction]

⁵⁵ What we [Ministry of Public Education and Federal Government] are envisioning is to build a solid teaching force that have the teaching vocation, well-trained professionals with absolute mastery of English and able to transmit it to the rest of the teachers [teacher trainers] and, consequently, to the children.

At this point, it is key to highlight that the system's goal is not only to materialize English as the key for economic success but, even more importantly, to create a teacher force which inculcates this idea in the further generations. At its core, it seems evident that the ultimate goal of neoliberal ideology is to perpetuate and to ensure the prevalence its principles by using a new and eager generation of public education language teachers formed by a neoliberal economic, political, and education system. Evidently, this is neither a simple nor a quick process to undertake; thus, quality assurance agencies in combination with education reforms have created the adequate conditions to materialize English language programmes in public basic education specifically geared to ensure the prevalence of English in basic education along with a very profitable ELT industry (i.e., textbooks and language examinations). Nevertheless, it must not be overlooked that neoliberal ideology, as any other dominant ideology, seeks to be prevalent and perpetuated, so the new generations of bilingual teachers seem to fit this objective just fine.

After a year of the National English Strategy implementation, Maria, teacher training school language department coordinator, points out a key inconsistency in the programme scope:

Aquí hay un detalle en la licenciatura no se les enseña inglés para dar clases, es decir, no se les enseña una metodología de la enseñanza del inglés. Ehh... el inglés que se les enseña es para ellas, para el conocimiento general, para certificarse y cuando a ellas se les pide que den inglés, entonces aquí viene un pequeño ehh... problema, se crea un conflicto interno porque son expertas en enseñar a niños, pero no son expertas o no conocen como enseñar inglés.⁵⁶

The rationale underpinning the National English Strategy, as Aurelio Nuño (2017) explained, was that all Mexicans become bilingual in twenty years. Consequently, the aggressive in-service and pre-service (teacher training school students) language accreditation strategy is justified as a quality assurance mechanism. Nevertheless, as Maria notices, teacher training school students are being taught general English which does not necessarily translate into effective language teaching. In the light of this, although it could be erroneous to naively promote a programme which has an inherent contradiction: focusing on language proficiency development and language accreditation for teacher training school students as the first step to pursue the 'bilingualism dream,' from a neoliberal market-oriented ideology it makes perfect sense. This resonates with

⁵⁶ Here's a problem...in the B.A. program [teacher training institution], they are not taught English to teach the language, that is, they are not trained in English language methodology. Umm, the English they learn is for themselves [communication], to gain general knowledge, to obtain a language qualification and, so when they are asked to teach English, there's a problem, an internal conflict arises because they are experts in early childhood education but not in English language teaching.

Holborow's (2012), claim that one thing is what neoliberalism promises and what it actually does in the sense that the government promotes a bilingual society but is, in fact, creating the conditions for an ELT market to grow, and, simultaneously, inculcating its ideology through a new generation of public education teachers. The Ministry of Public Education and Cambridge Assessment alliance constructed and legitimated the need to create an ELT teaching force with native-like language proficiency and its corresponding international accreditation. Thus, it is evident that English becomes a market that must be exploited, especially when a private English language specialist agency has the ELT monopoly in Mexico, to ultimately control an emerging and growing market: ELT methodology training for teacher training school teachers.

At this point of analysis, it is convenient to highlight that the National English Strategy was launched in the last year of the Peña Nieto administration (2017-2018), once the education reform had already been passed and the teacher union was under government control which could explain why Aurelio Nuño did not have any inconvenience to explicitly acknowledge the active involvement of Cambridge in the planning, design, and implementation of this strategy as the following quotes reveal:

Yo quiero hacer énfasis en varias cosas, pero particularmente en una. Aquí ya hablamos y Mercedes [Director Regional de las Americas, Cambridge Assessment], a quien agradezco mucho y a la Universidad de Cambridge, hizo una muy buena descripción del trabajo para cambiar, como lo hemos hecho con todos los planes de estudio, el currículo, de inglés de cómo se enseña el inglés en México.

Ha sido un trabajo conjunto, de gran calidad, avalado por la Universidad de Cambridge, que también nos va a ayudar a cambiar y a transformar el currículo y el enfoque pedagógico de cómo se enseña inglés en las escuelas normales, no nada más en las escuelas.⁵⁷

Today, I announce that more than one thousand teaching positions are ready for English language teachers which will be available through open competition, the first stage will be in August and whoever wants to participate will have to go through two stages: first, they will have to obtain the highest score in the University of Cambridge exam, and those who obtain the desired score will have to take a second exam similar to the Teaching Professional Service.

⁵⁷ I want to emphasize a few things, but specially one. Here, we have talked and Mercedes [Regional Director Americas, Cambridge Assessment], to whom I thank so much and the University of Cambridge, did a good description of the work to change, as we have, every syllabus, curriculum, of how English is taught in Mexico. It has been a collaborative work, of great quality, validated by the University of Cambridge [Cambridge Assessment], which will also help us change and transform the curriculum and pedagogical orientation of how English is taught in teacher training schools not only in schools [basic education].

The strategic control, granted by the Ministry of Public Education, that Cambridge Assessment had over the National English Strategy planning, development and instrumentation is clear and resonates with what Kumar and Hill (2009) call 'a business agenda for education corporations that allows edubusinesses to profit from national international privatizing activities' (p. 21). Such agenda has been socially justified by the operationalization of the discourse of 'English is the global language' and 'English provides better job opportunities' as Nuño and the National English Strategy affirmed:

Y en un mundo cada vez más globalizado gracias al cambio tecnológico, en que cada vez hay más contacto entre diversas naciones. En donde cada vez hay más inversiones mutuas de diversos países. En donde cada vez más hay intercambios de trabajo y educativos, no hablar inglés es quedarse fuera y rezagados de un mundo global en pleno siglo XXI.

Hablar inglés no sólo abre fronteras para el empleo, sino para conocer otras culturas, para comunicarse con otras personas, para tener una vida más plena.⁵⁸

Back in 2009, when the National English Program for Basic Education was launched, there was not an official announcement, perhaps, in part, because the federal government did not have the control over the teachers' union, but in 2017 there was an official ceremony to announce the National English Strategy, and the minister of public education was accompanied by the Cambridge Assessment Regional Director Americas and the president of the teachers' union. This can have the symbolic representation that the federal government overtly promotes private control over its most important ELT programme and that, due to the Education Reform implementation, there would be very little or inexistent opposition towards the teacher training and students and teacher accreditation processes.

One salient advantage of adopting a CDA approach, with political economy as backdrop for analysis, to describe the workings of neoliberal ideology is that it not only helps us to elucidate the operationalization of the ideology through specific strategies (i.e., design and implementation of English programmes, language qualifications strategies, and teacher training) but also the reasons behind creating key alliances, in the case of Mexico and Latin America with Cambridge Assessment, that will ensure the materialization and inculcation of such dominant ideology. This

⁵⁸ In the context of a more globalised world, due to the technological change, in which the communication among more diverse nations is more common, in which shared investments from different countries is more common, in which there are more work and education exchanges, not speaking English represents being out and left behind in the global word of the twenty-first century. Speaking English not only opens the employment borders but also lets you communicate with others and access their cultures for a better life.

resonates with the rationale, described in section 1.2, in which I described my interest to understand the strategic role of international ELT agencies in designing, implementing, and evaluating the cotemporary ELT programmes in Mexico.

Although it would be debateable to claim that every ELT programme in Mexico is underpinned by the neoliberal ideology based on insights from the National English Strategy stakeholders, analysing the insights from public university stakeholders would provide this study with a broader perspective to corroborate or not what the previous analysis has drawn. Thus, the following section presents insights from three public university ELT stakeholders.

5.3.2 Public university ELT stakeholders

A public university in the south of Mexico was selected for it is one of the largest public higher education institutions in the country and it has an institutional ELT programme and a B.A. and M.A. in ELT. Three stakeholders were interviewed: the academic affairs secretary, the language department director, and the school for foreign students' director. The three interviewees are proficient in English and have had teaching and administrative positions within the university. To illustrate the vested interests that international ELT agencies have had in public higher education, insights from the Academic Affairs Secretary will be presented in discussed.

At this point, it is necessary to describe that the Academic Affairs Secretary previously held two important positions: Language Department Director and International Affairs Director. This academic and administrative background explains the reason why the interviewee has been involved in several decision-making processes regarding ELT in this university. The following insights, hence, narrate the chronological development of an articulated ELT strategy since the late 90's:

... con las nuevas tendencias educativas y los nuevos lineamientos a nivel internacional en la UNESCO, este aprender un idioma, es una herramienta importante para la formación del estudiante ... entonces, empieza a ver las orientaciones muy claras de idiomas, y por primera vez a partir de 1999 rallando ya casi con 2000 ... realizamos todo el cambio del modelo educativo a nivel universidad entre el 97 y el 99, y cuando se implanta en el 99, es obligatorio para todas las facultades aprender al menos inglés I e inglés II.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ ... with the new education tendencies and the new international guidelines from UNESCO, language learning is considered to be an important tool for student development...so we noticed a tendency towards foreign languages and, for the first time, by 1999 almost 2000...a new education model was developed

The justification to implement English, as a mandatory class, comes from an international agency, and, apparently, it served as a strong argument to break stakeholders' resistance towards implementing the language and losing credits from the curriculum. Nevertheless, the inclusion of mandatory English classes required a careful planning regarding the methodological approach and the programme goal and objectives. In this sense, the collaborative work with the British Council seems to have been used as a key validating factor to implement a four-skill syllabus:

... entonces a mi me llamaron para hacer la planeación [of a new English language programme], y acompañados del Consejo Británico por hablar de las cuatro habilidades, y una serie de cosas, porque todo el mundo quería seguirse amarrando a la cuestión de los objetivos específicos y a la comprensión de la lectura.⁶⁰

It is essential to point out that this university was the first to create a self-access centre for language learning in Mexico, this seems to have been possible due to the institutional and federal support in collaboration, again, with the British Council:

... el rector que es un psicólogo muy informado, dijo vamos a traernos el proyecto [en 1999] de los centro de auto-acceso por que esto puede ser la punta de lanza para empeararlos hacer más independientes ... y entonces empezamos a planear toda la cuestión de los centro de auto-acceso, también acompañados de la Secretaria de Educación Pública y del Consejo Británico.⁶¹

The British Council was also involved in the development of the first, so far only, English language test owned and offered by a public university in Mexico. This exam can be used for proficiency and placement purposes and is also registered in the National English Language Level Accreditation (CENNI) system, which is recognised by the Ministry of Public Education:

between 1997 and 1999, and in 1999, when it was implemented, every school had to offer English 1 and 2 as mandatory classes.

⁶⁰ ... so, I was asked to work in the planning [new English language programme], and in collaboration with the British Council, I encouraged a four-skills syllabus because almost everyone still wanted to focus on ESP and reading comprehension.

⁶¹ ... the rector is a very well-informed psychologist and said 'let's bring the self-access centre project [in 1999] because it can become a cornerstone to promote autonomous learning ... so we started planning the self-access centre project in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Education and the British Council.

... entonces nuevamente allí acompañados del Consejo Británico y la Universidad de Cambridge, desarrollamos el EXAVER durante casi nueve años, trabajamos muchísimo con ellos, estamos muy satisfechos, y ahora este examen nos guía y tenemos el examen de nivel, de colocación, que es un examen que ahora nos piden muchísimas universidades.⁶²

What, undoubtedly, represented a great opportunity for this public university in the late 1990's, to implement and develop an innovative English language programme, which included new syllabi, a self-access centre and, ultimately, its own English test, also seems to have been aligned with a national movement towards the implementation of English in public universities as THE ticket to board the 'internationalisation train'. The British Council served as the validating agency to implement a macroacquisition model of English in this public university, which was replicated by the vast majority of state public universities in Mexico. This resonates with a Fairclough's idea (2006) operationalization of discourse in which a new organization of English language curriculum, the creation of language centres, and the development of a language examination are materialized. Nevertheless, this resonates with the previous section in the sense that materialization of discourse does not represent the ultimate goal of neoliberal ideology; on the contrary, such materialization represents the underpinnings for the enactment and inculcation of this ideology which, in this particular case, are observable in the form of the internationalization of higher education dream. This internationalisation trend has also been encouraged by the quality assurance agencies as the interviewee noted:

... pero para el 2000 nosotros ya estábamos resolviendo toda esta corriente todas estas tendencias de la UNESCO en la educación, donde la importancia del aprendizaje del idioma, una mejor formación integral, y entonces yo siento que allí los organismos pues que se están manteniendo al día, empezaron a integrar cuestiones de internacionalización, aprendizaje de idiomas, pero es que el aprendizaje de idiomas se convierte en un indicador clave en formación integral, en internacionalización, en cuestión de paz, en cuestión de muchas cosas, entonces las universidades ya no puedes hacerse, voltearse para otro lado, tienen que integrar el aprendizaje obligatorio del idioma.⁶³

⁶² ... so, again, in collaboration with the British Council and the University of Cambridge [Cambridge Assessment], we developed the EXAVER for nine years, we worked a lot with them, and we are so proud of it and now this test is a guide and we also have a proficiency and placement test, which is requested by many universities.

⁶³ ... by 2000, we were responding to the education tendencies emanated from UNESCO, in which foreign language learning, integral education, so I think that it was then that the quality assurance agencies...started to integrate internationalisation aspects, foreign language learning. That is why foreign language learning becomes a key indicator in students' integral education and internationalisation.... thus, universities cannot longer overlook this aspect and must integrate mandatory foreign language learning within their curriculums.

This comment suggests that quality assurance agencies have been a key factor to promote foreign language learning, basically English, in the higher education institutions curriculums. The previous comment resonates with the one presented in the previous section, by the language department coordinator, who explicitly acknowledges how the institutional language programme emanated from the quality assurance agency (CIEES) recommendations. Based on the previous discussion, Hatcher's (cited in Kumar & Hill, 2009) argument, who described that the capital agenda for schools is twofold, becomes relevant:

The first aim is to ensure that schooling and education engage in ideological and economic reproduction.... The second aim—the business agenda in schools—is for private enterprise, private capitalists, to make money out of it, to make private profit out of it, to control it. (p.21)

Up to this point, the analysis sheds light to claim that the ELT strategies implemented in a teacher training school and a higher education institution are aligned with economic reproduction, based on the document and interview analysis. Additionally, it can be claimed that, on the one hand, it is underpinned by a neoliberal ideology and, on the other, international ELT agencies have been successful in controlling the market and making huge amounts of money out of it, especially from language accreditation and teacher training processes.

Considering this, it becomes evident that an essential condition for a dominant ideology is the materialization of its principles, but even more importantly its enactment and inculcation through systems, such as ELT programmes, meticulously articulated for that purpose. The articulation of this system draws from inner and outer agents (i.e., CIEES and British Council) whose main purpose is to assure validity to its principles to be unquestionably operationalized and reproduced.

5.3.3 National English Program

As described in the context chapter, the National English Program (NEP) replaced the National English Program in Basic Education (NEPBE) in 2015. NEP adopted NEPBE's curriculum for public basic education schools. The following quotes emanated from an interview with the assistant coordinator of NEP in the south of Mexico. When asked about the broader system in which the NEP is framed, he expressed:

... el programa nacional de inglés busca acoplarse a la **estrategia de las nuevas reformas** ... de hecho el nombre del programa es reciente porque hubo una modificación que incluyeron objetivos nuevos, estos objetivos desde mi punto de vista como profesor de inglés, específicamente se basan en una política de la enseñanza del inglés, no solamente a nivel nacional, sino que se están apegando a ciertos requerimientos, que arcan algunas instituciones como la **UNESCO o como la OCDE**.

Por una parte, considerando como la **OCDE influye de manera directa como se ejecutan ciertas...** la **OCDE posee unos lineamientos muy claros enfocados a la preparación de los estudiantes** con miras al futuro ... para insertarse en un **mercado laboral** más exigente. Considero que efectivamente la **OCDE influye** mucho en la forma en que se desarrollan y en la forma que se dictaminan algunas **reformas en la parte educativa** ... uno de los objetivos más claros y que creo que mucho docentes, muchas autoridades educativas conocen, es que preparemos a los estudiantes para afrontar el **mercado laboral tan demandante** que existe ahora, por muchos factores, uno de ellos la **globalización**.

... uno de los objetivos que maraca las reglas de operación es que **se certifique tanto a los alumnos como a los docentes** ... esto sirve de referencias para ver el desarrollo que han tenido, principalmente, los alumnos ... y si tomamos en cuenta eso, que la **OCDE quiere observar que haya muestras claras de que se están logrando avances**, pues esto se muestra a través de estas **certificaciones**.⁶⁴

The interviewee's comments reveal that, at least from his viewpoint, there is a direct connection between the OECD, the education reform and NEP. In fact, he refers to the labour market demands and how NEP's goal serves the purpose to provide students with those skills required by the globalised labour market. Another salient aspect is his perception regarding the accreditation of students and teachers' language skills as an OECD driven process. It is relevant to mention that the interviewee's comments, albeit uncritical, provided an informed perspective of the broader policies and agencies which influence the NEP. This well-informed opinion might be due to two factors. On the one hand, teachers from the state of Oaxaca have historically been more critical and opposing towards the official structural reforms. On the other hand, the interviewee, unlike many NEP coordinators, holds a B.A. and M.A. in ELT and is currently studying a second M.A. in

⁶⁴ The National English Programme aims to align with the **new reform strategies** ... in fact, the programme's name is recent due to a transformation of its objectives which...in my opinion as a teacher of English, are based on the English language teaching policy, not only at a national scale but also aligned with the requirements of certain institutions such as the **UNESCO or OECD**.

On the one hand, considering that the **OECD directly influences how certain...the OECD sets clear guidelines for the education** of students for the future...in order to insert themselves in a demanding **labour market**. I think that, in fact, the **OECD greatly influences** the way in which **education reforms** are implemented and developed...One of the most obvious objectives, which I think many teachers and administrators are aware of, is to prepare students for the current **demanding labour market** due to many factors, particularly **globalisation**.

One of the programme objectives, according to the rules of operation, is for **both students and teachers to take a language examination** ... this is used as a reference to assess students' English language learning ... and if we take this into consideration, the **OECD requires solid evidence of students' language learning progress**, and this is achieved through **language qualifications**.

critical language studies. Thus, the combination of these factors seems to play a role in the insightful interviewee's point of view.

An additional aspect to highlight from the previous excerpts is that the assistant coordinator connects English to the labour market demands and language accreditations to OECD which might indicate the enactment of neoliberal ideology in public discourse. This suggests that the role that, at least at the stakeholder's level, neoliberalism has grown roots to operationalize and reproduce its ideology through an articulated education system and, particularly, ELT programme.

5.3.4 State of Puebla BIS university: teachers of English

As explained in the context chapter, the BIS (bilingual, international, and sustainable) higher education modality was created in 2012, under the Peña Nieto administration, in order to meet the 'expectations generated by the real economic and social context, requiring a new formation of skills and knowledge...since the current call and demand is of professionals with internationally competitive profiles' (Campus-BIS, 2020). Most of the 21 BIS universities are located near or within automotive and manufacturing clusters and the fact that the BIS university of the state of Puebla was built within the Audi automotive cluster is not a coincidence. During the opening ceremony, Aurelio Nuño (2017) stated that:

Las universidades tecnológicas y particularmente las bilingües son las que tienen la tasa de empleabilidad más alta de todo el país. No hay ninguna otra Universidad, ni pública ni privada, que tenga la tasa de empleabilidad tan alta como estas universidades. La universidad del Retoño está también **dirigida al sector automotriz...la oportunidad que están viviendo va a transformar sus vidas.**

Vean el ejemplo de sus compañeros que están aquí en la universidad y como gracias al estar en una **universidad de calidad** como esta en donde **van a aprender inglés van, a aprender alemán y van a encontrar un buen empleo y van a poder desarrollar su vida.**⁶⁵

Nuño's speech highlights that studying in a BIS university will result in high economic returns. He also acknowledges that it is part of an official strategy to orient the BIS curriculum to meet the labour market demands which is confirmed by the state of Puebla BIS university (2016) promotional video:

⁶⁵ Technological universities, particularly the BIS modality, have the highest rate of employability all over the country. There is no other university, either public or private, with such a rate of employability as the BIS modality. As the university of "El Retoño", the curriculum of this university is oriented towards the automotive sector...the opportunity you have is going to transform your lives.

Look at the example of your peers who are here this university and how thanks to studying at a quality university like this one, where they will learn English and German, and they will find a good job and they will have a better life.

Las exigencias de las empresas son más altas cada día hablar otro idioma haber estudiado en el extranjero incluso algunas nos exigen tener experiencia. La UTBIS es la única opción que ha logrado entender la demanda de las grandes empresas... su concepto educativo único e innovador en América Latina con la posibilidad de incorporarnos al clúster automotriz y de autopartes textil químico entre otros su modelo nos ofrece un aprendizaje del idioma inglés desde el primer cuatrimestre ... además nos da la oportunidad de estudiar en diferentes universidades alrededor del mundo y certificarnos en inglés y alemán. ⁶⁶

In the light of this, the following quotes emanated from interviews, with BIS university EFL teachers, regarding the BIS mission, role of English in the curriculum, and language qualifications:

Role of English in the BIS modality:

English is considered the tool by which students develop interpersonal relationships by means of a second language. It also constitutes an **opportunity to get better job opportunities** as well as the chance for mobility programs.

Mission:

To create **bilingual** students who can find a **job easily in the automotive industry**

To prepare **bilingual professionals** able to face the challenges of a **global manufacturing industry**.

Language accreditations in the BIS modality:

Because on that way they can be **hired easily**.

The previous quotes exemplify how public texts and public discourses are so influential in shaping the language practices of, in this case, language teachers. The machinery to instrument an ideological reproduction is multi-layered and all-embracing in its scope. English is used to coercively orient policies and its accompanying budgets to satisfy the labour market needs of multinational enterprises such as Audi in this case.

Moreover, the BIS technological universities embody a clear example of the operationalization, and, more specifically, the materialization of discourse (new ways of organizing space in architecture) in which English enacts the principles of neoliberal ideology and serves as the instrument to reproduce it. Finally, it must not be overlooked that the BIS model is only one part

⁶⁶ The industry sector demands are higher every day: speaking a foreign language, abroad studies and even work experience. The BIS modality is the only one that has understood the big industries demands...its innovative curriculum allows students to work in the automotive, textile and chemical clusters and English language learning is offered since year one ... also, you can also get a language certification in English and German.

of a larger model which seeks to favour transnational corporations with long-lasting tax breaks and a well-trained labour force within reach.

5.3.5 Private school parents

One of the lowest layers for analysing the enactment of an ideology is the largest target population it seeks to influence. In the ELT domain, parents and students' perceptions might bring light into the language practices that reproduce the ideology underpinning Mexico's contemporary ELT strategy. Thus, a group of 137 parents were asked three simple questions regarding the importance of English in the social, academic, and labour market areas. The following chart includes the perceived importance of English in the aforementioned domains:

Table 5 Parents' perceived importance of English

Importance of English	
Domain	Agreement
Social	77%
Academic	95 %
Labour market	97 %

As the previous table shows, parents perceive English as an asset; hence, investing in their children's education is essential; especially if they are provided with English language instruction for the future. This section includes the quotes from parents' responses regarding the relevance English has for the labour market domain:

- 'It depends on the labour market my son will choose, but **English always helps**'
- '**Essential tool** to access the labour market'
- 'It is a **requirement** to apply for a job'
- 'It is **indispensable** for work'
- 'It's **mandatory** to apply for any job'
- 'The majority of companies and jobs **require mandatory** English'
- '**Job opportunities** are always better if you speak English'
- 'A person who speaks the language can **get better global jobs** and not stay in the local'
- 'Because nowadays the communication between companies is mainly in **English**'
- 'Because there are more job and entrepreneurship **opportunities** for those who speak it and **better salaries**'
- 'Nowadays companies demand those who can speak English. It's **mandatory**, a second language is a plus in order to get a **higher salary**'

- 'I do not know what my son will chose as a profession, but I do know that he **needs tools and English**, and other languages, should not be an obstacle for him'
- 'Because nowadays...by mastering English we have, as I said before, greater access to information. This is an **advantage** when applying for a job and there are also companies which **require it**'
- 'If we do not speak English we're screwed, we need at least English to have better **opportunities**'⁶⁷

The word choice elucidates that English is assigned with a great value to access better job opportunities and salaries. The use of the adjectives 'mandatory', 'essential', 'indispensable' and 'required' to describe the association between English and the labour market reveals that the discourse, which assigns English with a market value, contained in public texts and public discourses is largely reproduced by parents' language practice. This indicates that there is social acceptance, at least among participants, that English is an agent of social mobility and that its mastery opens doors for better opportunities and salaries. Therefore, it can be claimed that investing in this commodity is not a question of elitism but rather a necessity which must be fulfilled as early as possible.

Furthermore, parents' responses clearly enact the neoliberal ideology regarding English (i.e., an asset for social mobility) at the time that inculcate its ideology in younger generations and materializes new ways of organisation by ensuring parents and students invest more time (private courses) and money (textbooks and language accreditations) to become proficient in the language to be prepared for the labour market demands. Nevertheless, it would be naïve to claim that neoliberalism only seeks to create the conditions for a profitable market to flourish, and for more new consumers to be sustain it. The stakeholders' analysis has shed light into the need to clarify that the operationalization of discourse (Fairclough, 2006) represents only the platform for neoliberal ideology to be legitimised and reproduced. Thus, stakeholders cannot be regarded only as the agents through which this dominant ideology is operationalised but, more significantly, through which it seeks to be legitimised and perpetuated.

⁶⁷ Personal translation

Chapter 6 The legitimisation of English for economic prosperity

6.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, a comprehensive analysis of how the implementation of 'key' structural reforms (energy, tax, labour, and education) was carried out, through a steady process of construction, using official documents and public discourses since 2000. Furthermore, Mexico's official English language policy was characterised as an extension of neoliberalism. In this chapter, I will start with a summary of the main findings presented in chapter V. In the following sections, the discussion will centre on providing specific instances of how public texts and public discourses have been concertedly used to position English as a) a marketable asset, b) a skill for competitiveness, c) human capital, and d) a necessary skill for social mobility and economic prosperity.

In the previous chapter, data was analysed, using CDA, to describe how Mexico's contemporary ELT policy has been instrumented as an extension of a set of neoliberal domestic policies and strategies in Mexico. This instrumentation was planned, designed, and implemented from different angles and institutions by successive governments for, at least, 18 years (2000-2018).

As described in chapter 2, when Mexico endorsed the OECD guidelines, back in 1993, the federal government officially opened Mexico's domestic policies to the global world. This decision implied that a series of domestic policies, aligned with the OECD demands, had to be implemented. Nevertheless, due to domestic opposing forces (i.e., teacher trade union, political parties, and leaders of opposition), the implementation of these policies was a long term, yet steady, concerted process. Considering this, official documents and public discourses served the purpose to a) introduce the neoliberal agenda as a desired scenario for domestic policies and b) legitimise the implementation of neoliberal policies and strategies. Developing from this, the official ELT documents and public discourses have revealed that the contemporary ELT programmes a) legitimise the necessity of implementing English as a public policy, by reducing it to a desired labour market skill, which resonates with the characteristics of a commodity, b) represent an extension of neoliberal strategies in education, particularly regarding teachers' labour rights and c) have created a very profitable language qualifications and teacher training market for transnational ELT companies. At the deepest level, data indicates that institutional practices not

only endorse the ELT policy, but they also reproduce the ideal role that official documents have assigned to English: a labour market skill for social mobility. Moreover, ELT programmes not only represent an extension of neoliberal strategies in education, but their implementation enacts neoliberal policies, regarding teachers' labour rights, and promote the commodification of language by creating a very profitable language qualification and teacher training market for transnational ELT companies.

As presented in chapter 2, early ELT programmes have been implemented in several Latin American countries such as Colombia, Chile, and Brazil in the past two decades. Hence, it is necessary to point out that the Mexican context has not been immune to the massive Primary English Language Teaching wave. In these countries, including Mexico, English language teaching and learning has been promoted through public official documents and discourses as a key aspect for both individual and national economic development. Taking the ELT programme 'English opens doors' as an example, Torrico (2016) claims that 'the instrumentalisation of English, [and] the commodification of the foreign language' responds to 'the neoliberal reasoning' which 'is the result of 40 years' exposure to an economic, political and cultural hegemonic common-sense arguments' (p. i). By the same token, by analysing ELT policy documents from three South American countries, Díaz-Maggioli (2017) argues that 'while at the level of overall rhetoric there is an attempt to re-signify keywords, at the level of process there are still some pervasive Neoliberal influences that may jeopardize the indigenization processes for these policies. In the Mexican context, Sayer (2015a) describes the implementation of PELT 'as part of the phenomenon of adopting education programs that align with and support neoliberal policies' (p. 41). In short, this neoliberal English language policy, I argue, is part of a global thrust to, consciously or unconsciously, inculcate and replicate the idea of English as a vehicle for economic prosperity both at a national and individual level. Thus, the following sections provide a detailed description of how such legitimisation has been steadily implemented by using official documents and public discourses throughout succeeding federal governments.

6.2 The 'key' role of English, as a marketable asset, for economic prosperity

Moving English from the 'elite' (private bilingual schools) to the 'mass' (public primary schools) could be interpreted as a strategy which promotes social justice and egalitarian education, but, when analysing the educational practices that have been implemented, it becomes clear that English is rationalised as a commodity; for example, constructing the idea, in official documents and public discourses, that mastering English skills will trigger individual and social economic

development resonates with such an argument. As Block (2018) explains ‘the positioning and valuing of English-language competence, as a must-have, marketable skill, is a worldwide phenomenon (p. 12). A phenomenon which, as will be described in the following sections, is introduced, and legitimised in official documents and public discourses. Considering this, four key concepts are recurrently used to construct the idea of English as an economic asset: skill, social mobility, economic prosperity, and linguistic capital.

6.2.1 English as a skill for competitiveness in the labour market

The social perception of English as a skill for competitiveness has been steadily constructed by a variety of texts from official documents and public discourses. These texts have been used to a) legitimise the need to develop skills to ensure a solid human capital, and b) to present the idea that English is a necessary skill to compete in the labour market. Gazzola (2016) explains that the economic value which has been assigned to language skills finds its roots in Human Capital Theory and that its rationale is constructed around the idea that:

Language skills are...a type of ability that contributes to economic prosperity, an asset that increases the competitiveness of European companies, and a form of human capital that can positively affect citizens’ employability. (Cited in Holborow, 2018, p. 62)

The influence of OECD on Mexico’s domestic policy making is not limited to recommendations to implement key reforms in the economic, labour, and education systems. On the contrary, as described in chapter V, it has gradually introduced terms, such as ‘skills’, which became common in official Mexican documents such as the National Development Plans and National Education Plans (NDP and NEP), and reproduced by social practices:

Now is the time to harness Mexico’s *skills* and human capital to drive further innovation and inclusive growth for the future (Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report for Mexico, p. 3)

Regional strategy, complementary human capital policies are developed by the NPC to form the technical and transversal *skills* required by the productive sector in the special economic zones. (OECD skills strategy diagnostic report: Mexico, 2017, p. 184)

From the previous extracts, it becomes clear that ‘skills’ are central to the OECD interests to implement neoliberal strategies in Mexico. Nevertheless, once such recommendations had been made, they needed to translate into specific domestic policies, as explained in section 5.2.1, which were gradually legitimised in official documents and public discourses. A recurrent use of the term skills throughout NDPs and NEPs is evident:

Por esto resulta necesario poner en práctica políticas sociales y económicas que les permitan actualizar sus **habilidades y capacidades** para participar con éxito en actividades productivas y gozar de niveles más altos de seguridad y calidad de vida. (NDP 2000-2006, p. 74)

Se diseñarán mecanismos para que la población más desprotegida tenga acceso a una educación de calidad que le permita desarrollar sus **capacidades y habilidades** para vincularse de manera efectiva con el **mercado laboral**. (NDP. 2007-2012, p. 153)

Una educación de calidad entonces significa atender e impulsar el desarrollo de las **capacidades y habilidades** individuales...y se prepara para la **competitividad** y exigencias del mundo del trabajo. (NDP. 2007-2012, p. 182)

Las **habilidades** que se requieren para tener éxito en el **mercado laboral** han cambiado. (NDP. 2013-2018, p. 60)⁶⁸

As is evident in the previous excerpts, skills are directly related to concepts such as labour market and competitiveness. This resonates with the 'motto of human capital theory... 'learning equals earning' (Holborow, 2018, p. 523) which favours the idea that education systems have to implement curricular innovations to develop labour-market skills such as the competency-based curriculum. The idea that English represents a necessary skill for the labour market is manifested in the following excerpts:

the internationalization of polytechnic universities and it [competency-based model] is oriented to address the **labour market** demands which requires a more competitive answer to meet the export industry's need of **bilingual** personnel with high technical **skills**. (Nuevo Modelo Educativo: UP-BIS, p.2)

There is a Ministry of Education that is lying to the parents, to the students; hence, the failure is in life because when young people apply for a job, believing that they master English, which requires **English skills** and, of course, they do not get it because they do not master the language. (Claudio X. González, 2015)

⁶⁸This is why it is necessary to implement social and economic policies that allow them to update their skills and capacities to successfully participate in productive activities and enjoy higher levels of safety and quality of life. Mechanisms will be designed to give the most unprotected population access to quality education that allows them to develop their skills and abilities to effectively link up with the labour market. Quality education then means serving and boosting the development of individual skills and abilities... and prepares for the competitiveness and demands of the world of work. The skills required to succeed in the labor market have changed.

In the education domain, English has also been positioned as a necessary skill not only for language teachers but teachers in general as the following excerpts illustrate:

On the other hand, it [the implementation of the National English Strategy] means that we must meet quality assurance indicators established by some national and international agencies which, currently, state that contemporary teachers must have *diverse skills*, for example, technology and the mastery of a second or third language.

Well, CIEES recommends collaboration [teacher training institutions] with English language specialists ... courses and more importantly language accreditation, at that time there were any [language] teachers with a valid language qualification, few had an expired one or held a one with a lower language level than the one they currently have, and, regarding the students, few had been examined. Umm, regarding the National English Strategy, it aims to provide teacher training institution students with the *English language skills* so that they teach English in basic education.

One of the objectives is to align the teacher training school curriculum with those of basic education. The reform of the basic education curriculum establishes second language instruction [only English] as a mandatory element for basic education children. Therefore, the purpose of this curricular alignment is that we provide, from teacher training education, from pre-service teacher education, with these *skills* so that they can attend the basic education curriculum because when they [teacher trainees] finish their studies they will have to teach according to the basic education curriculum [which includes English language instruction].

What is evident from these excerpts is that English has been constructed as a key skill for both the labour market and the education system. This resonates with the OECD recommendations, thoroughly described in depth in section 5.2.1.1, in the sense that skill training is a key element for the economic development of Mexico. Additionally, the influence of Human Capital Theory can be clearly traced in the sense that English represents not only a skill which ensures individual competitiveness in the labour market but in the entire education system by legitimising the idea that English language skills are necessary for a better education system.

6.2.2 English as language human capital

A skill becomes a commodity when it is possible to measure the economic returns of investing in it. As Holborow (2018) puts it, 'language consists of benefits and costs, economic returns and 'the self-sorting of individuals across levels of human capital' (p. 62). Considering this, English has been

rationalised as an asset in which governments, but mainly individuals must invest in. This argument is evident in the role that the OECD assigns to languages in the global world:

If learning a language responds, among other things, to a rational decision defined by cost-benefit calculations, the returns from language acquisition would have to compensate the costs, for this decision to be realised. In that respect, the framework is similar to any other type of **“human capital”** investment. Thus, from an economic perspective, **language is a skill** that must be treated as **human capital**. (Languages in a global world: learning for better cultural understanding, 2012, p. 93)

The efficiency aspects of **language-related policies** have to do with the individual returns of language acquisition and the impact on productivity, which links it to social returns. Like other dimensions of education and investment in **human capital**, individual decisions potentially have externalities, i.e. have an impact on the aggregate **performance of the economy**. (Languages in a global world: learning for better cultural understanding, 2012, p. 92)

As described in section 5.2.3.1, the OECD rationale is that languages, dominant ones, add value to human capital and, thus, official language policies must be implemented to enhance individual and social economic prosperity. By the same token, official ELT documents describe the key role of English to strengthen Mexico’s human capital and, hence, justify the major investment in a massive ELT policy in public education:

El PRONI se orienta al cumplimiento de lo dispuesto en el PND, que en su apartado de "Introducción y Visión General", numeral 2 "Diagnóstico general: México enfrenta barreras que limitan su desarrollo", establece que un México con Educación de Calidad requiere **robustecer el capital humano...** (Reglas de Operación del Programa Nacional de Inglés para el ejercicio fiscal 2017, p. 4).⁶⁹

El **dominio** de una lengua extranjera como el **inglés** representa una inversión **en capital humano y social...** Autores como Jiménez señalan que una lengua, en este caso el inglés, además de ser un bien o un recurso, puede ser considerada como un factor productivo que **puede estimular el crecimiento** y ser, por ende, fuente de capital social. (Estrategia Nacional de Inglés, 2017, p. 15)⁷⁰

⁶⁹ PRONI is oriented to compliance with the provisions of the PND, which in its section of "Introduction and Overview", numeral 2 "General diagnosis: Mexico faces barriers that limit its development", states that a Mexico with Quality Education requires strengthening human capital...

⁷⁰ The mastery of a foreign language such as English represents an investment in human and social capital... Authors such as Jiménez point out that a language, in this case English, in addition to being a good or a resource, can be considered as a productive factor that can stimulate growth and therefore be a source of social capital.

As explained in section 5.2.3.2, Mexico's English language programmes not only discursively reproduce the OECD notion of language as an economic asset, but, at its core, a neoliberal idealisation of language as human capital is legitimised. Nevertheless, investing in language capital does not necessarily translate into economic development. As Holborow explains:

Certainly, there is some economic value which can be associated with language knowledge and skills but the shoe-horning of language into a human capital commodity is too simplistic: it artificially isolates language from a range of accompanying skills, it masks questions of social power and of who reaps the profit from language skills in the workplace and perhaps, more worryingly, implies a strangely reductionist view of language (2018, p. 63).

The oversimplification of language as a human capital trait promotes the idealisation of English as a vehicle for social mobility which is an aspect to be discussed in the following section.

6.2.3 The promise of English for social mobility and economic prosperity

As the rationale of English as a necessary skill for the labour market is inculcated, the accompanying idea that English represents an agent of social mobility is constructed and reproduced as the following excerpts show:

English is an agent of **social mobility**; it increases **human and cultural capital**.

Individual impacts: promotes personal development, **greater opportunities for social mobility**, access to better jobs, possibility of attaining higher education and postgraduate studies at international recognized universities.

The economic impact, for example, **English has acquired value as a linguistic capital**. It has been calculated that it increases Mexico GMP. In the tertiary sector of the economy. In 0.7 to 1.2 percent. This represents 27 billion dollars a year. In other words, Mexico loses 27 billion dollars a year, if English is not established as a public policy in education. When speaking of the cost of English and the cost of not teaching it, this is what we meant. Just imagine this quantity, to have social development in Mexico

English is positioned as a desired and necessary skill to access better job opportunities and social mobility due to the alleged economic returns of mastering such a skill. This resonates with Warriner's (2016) findings in which she claims that immigrant 'students make great efforts to study English and to fulfil the requirements of the programme ... because they believe that such skills...will facilitate their access to economic self-sufficiency and social mobility' (p. 506).

Nonetheless, Holborow (2018) affirms that:

Language understood as a human capital commodity assumes that society is made up of equal individual market actors and has a functioning meritocracy which allows upward social mobility. However, present employment trends show that higher skills do not automatically attract higher earnings. Salaries are usually set around average earnings in that sector, and where they fluctuate it is largely due to macro-economic factors. (p. 64)

The premise that English is an agent of social mobility aims to position this language as an asset which boosts individual economic prosperity, but it does not account for the macro and micro economic variables which regulate the salaries of specific industries and economic sectors. Moreover, positioning English as a desired human capital skill conceals a neoliberal strategy implemented in the education sector: producing a labour force with skills, including English, required by the labour market which, in the Mexican context, includes the automotive, manufacturing, assembly and service industries. As Rincones, Hampton and Silva (2008) explain:

Technical education based on competencies that are appropriate to the export-oriented private manufacturing sector is a strong priority in Mexico's education system. Multinational corporations have migrated to Mexico and established maquiladoras because of the existence of large pools of inexpensive labor and favorable economic policies through tax breaks. Educational curriculum and public educational funds have been diverted to fill the needs of these foreign economic entities (p. 41).

As explained in chapter 2, by 2018 twenty-six Bilingual, International and Sustainable (BIS) Technological Universities had been launched since Peña Nieto took office in 2012. The BIS model was specifically created to address the highly trained labour force needs of multinational industries, especially the automotive sector. Although it is fair to say that this industry offers competitive salaries, compared to local industries, it is also true that they have settled in Mexico due to the appealing tax breaks, accessible labour force supply, and land donation to build their industrial clusters. The government concessions that transnational companies have obtained, including an English-speaking labour force, reveal how neoliberalism has influenced Mexico's economy and education

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

At this point, it is crucial to restate the research questions that orient this study. This is particularly important to assess whether the data, presented in the previous chapters, has addressed and responded the research questions. The first section below sets out the research questions again and provides a brief explanation of how they are discussed. In the section following that, I will explain the ideological orientations underpinning Mexico's language policy, based on the data presented in chapter 5. Following this, I will describe the ideology which underpins Mexico's ELT policy. Then, I will explain how such ideology is enacted in the institutional practices of key stakeholders. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the impact of the current English language policy on the indigenous languages policy. Finally, I will discuss the implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research.

7.2 Answering the research questions

This research set out aiming to respond to the following questions (henceforth RQs):

- 1) What are the ideological orientations which guide Mexico's language policies? and
- 2) How are these ideological orientations enacted in Mexico's language policies?
- 3) What are the language ideologies underpinning Mexico's ELT policy?
- 4) How are these language ideologies enacted in Mexico's ELT policy?
- 5) Are the underpinning language ideologies incorporated into the institutional discourse of Mexico's ELT policy? And, if so,
 - a) Do the institutional practices reproduce and perpetuate the language ideologies underpinning Mexico's ELT policy? And
 - b) What are the institutional practices which reproduce and perpetuate the language ideologies underpinning Mexico's ELT policy?

In the following sections, I will discuss the insights which respond RQ1 and RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4, and RQ5 in separate sections.

7.3 RQ1 and RQ2: Ideological orientations

As the previous chapters have made it clear, this research has focused on Mexico's foreign language policy, particularly, English language policy. Therefore, the extent to which RQ1 and RQ2 are responded to is limited to English language policy in public education and does not include insights regarding the ideological orientations of Spanish and indigenous languages policies. Nevertheless, these research questions served as the backdrop to adopt a political economy framework of analysis which has proven useful to elucidate the ideological orientations underpinning the contemporary English language policy in Mexico.

In this context, uncovering the ideological orientations which underpin Mexico's language policies undoubtedly require a) the acknowledgement that any government policy is underpinned by an ideology which is usually grounded in models of economy, and consequently b) an analysis of the notion of nation that former federal governments have had since 2000. Considering this, as described in chapter two, Mexico officially opened its doors to neoliberalism when the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect in 1994. During the subsequent presidential terms, several attempts to reform key sectors (i.e., labour, tax, energy, and education) were increasingly implemented and accompanied by the closure of unions such as the electricity company (Luz y Fuerza del Centro) union and the privatisation of the banking, train, and telecommunication systems.

As explained in chapter 3, neoliberalism seeks to privatise and decentralise services formerly controlled by the state in pursuit of more efficient services provided by private companies. By the same token, the education system not only represents a very profitable sector for private companies, but, I argue, also the means by which an ideology might be inculcated and reproduced. Thus, the analysis of public texts and public discourses reveals that neoliberalism, manifested in the form of an education reform, bilingual technological universities and a competency-based curriculum which favour human capital development, underpins the education system and, consequently, Mexico's English language policy. The enactment of neoliberal ideology in Mexico's English language policy can be described on two levels. On the one hand, there exists evidence of a massive and very profitable ELT market which private companies have taken advantage of, and, on the other, English has been positioned as a key skill for academic, and more idealistically, economic prosperity.

7.4 RQ3 and RQ4: Language ideology

The enactment of neoliberal ideology in Mexico's ELT policy is twofold. The massive implementation of ELT in public education and, more recently, in teacher training institutions, created a huge market for private ELT companies which has been legitimised by institutional discourse, as described in chapter 6. Considering this, the following sections describe neoliberal strategies enacted in Mexico's ELT policy.

7.4.1 Neoliberal strategies associated with English language policy

The impact that NAFTA and the World Bank has had on privatisation of the Mexican education system has been described by Aboites (2007) and, more specifically, by Delgado-Ramos and Saxe-Fernández (2009) as 'the "best" science and technology development that the country can develop is one subordinated and controlled by multinational corporations under the NAFTA and WTO policies and expectations' (p. 20). Considering the ELT domain, the influence of the neoliberal ideology is not only expressed by the idealisation of English as a commodity but also by the policies which have accompanied the massive implementation of English in public education: degradation of teachers' rights and the creation of a language qualification and teacher training market which is mostly controlled by transnational ELT corporations.

7.4.2 Teacher's rights

When the Peña Nieto education reform was implemented in 2013, it immediately faced an aggressive resistance by one of the most important teachers' unions: CNTE. The strong disapproval toward this reform was grounded in its aim to deregulate teachers' rights by evaluating teacher's performance through standardized tests which ultimately would be used to provide short term contracts or lay off teachers. The dismantlement of teachers' unions to degrade their rights is a common neoliberal strategy. As Del Percio and Flubacher (2017) point out:

These changes [reforms] have brought about not only a precarization of labor for employees in education, including teachers, curriculum coordinators and administrators who are asked to produce and guarantee quality and excellence under increasingly unstable and fluctuating work conditions (p. 6).

Since the implementation of the NEPBE in 2009, teachers of English have been hired based on probationary contracts as 'external consultants':

Apoyo para los procesos de estudio de una segunda lengua (inglés). La SEB ofrecerá los contenidos y materiales básicos para los procesos de estudio de una segunda lengua (inglés). Asimismo, apoyará a las AEL con el pago de **asesores/as externos/as**.⁷¹

The implications of giving teachers probationary contracts are numerous. First, teachers usually receive their salary after two or three months after they start teaching (Ramírez, Pamplón & Cota, 2012). Second, they do not have access to public health services and other benefits such as access to governmental housing grants and bonuses. Third, in many cases they are not considered part of the school teaching staff for they only work by hours or part-time sometimes in more than one school (Mendoza & Puón, 2013). Finally, teachers are put under intense pressure to achieve curricular goals, regarding students' expected proficiency levels, under adverse working conditions.

7.4.3 ELT programmes in basic education: a profitable market

Deregulating sectors (i.e., health, water, and education), formerly the responsibility of the state, creates new markets for the capital to profit from. Regarding the education sector, Kuma and Hill (2009) point out that:

... the capitalist class globally have: (a) a business agenda for education that centers on socially producing labor power (people's capacity to labor) for capitalist enterprises; (b) a business agenda in education that centers on setting business "free" in education for profit making; and (c) a business agenda for education corporations that allows edubusinesses to profit from national international privatizing activities. (Kumar & Hill, 2009, p. 2).

Additionally, as discussed in chapter five, the commodification of English reduces language to a bundle of limited American vs British English varieties which overlooks ethnicity, race, religion, and backgrounds of English speakers in the world. Such reductionism serves not only as the basis of the idealised English speaker but also as the cornerstone of a very profitable market (i.e., textbooks, language examinations, and teacher training) for the American and primarily British ELT industries.

⁷¹ Support for the study processes of a second language (English). The SEB will provide the basic content and materials for the study processes of a second language (English). It will also support AELs with the payment of external advisors.

7.4.4 Language qualifications

In 2011, the Ministry of Public Education created the Foreign Language Accreditation (CENNI, 2011) as an official instrument ‘to assess, credit and certify foreign languages and Spanish as a foreign language knowledge and aptitudes’ (p. 3). A relevant aspect to highlight is that CENNI is not an assessment instrument per se; on the contrary, it merely serves as a validating instrument of the scores, level, or band which individuals obtain by taking a test from an authorised language qualification centre. During its first year of creation, CENNI validated the scores from four language qualification centres: The University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, Trinity College London, ETS, and RedNova Consultants (p. 29). By 2020, the number of authorised language qualification centres has steadily and significantly increased which might be explained by the profitable market that English qualifications represents:

Table 6 Authorised language qualification centres

Provider	Number of exams offered
University of Cambridge - ESOL Examinations	21
RedNova Consultants-Macmillan - Publishers, S.A. de C.V.	3
Institute of International Education	2
Trinity Collage London (ELT Services, S.C.)	1
Pearson Education de México, S.A. de C.V.	11
Universidad Veracruzana	3
Oxford University Press México S. A. de C. V	2
BEO Education and Travel Group S.A. de C.V.	1
Global E-Learning Consulting Latinoamérica, S.A. de C.V.	1
ITEP México	1
UKS ELet (English Language e-Test)	1
British Council	1
Cambridge Michigan Language Assessments (CaMLA)	7
Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)	2
REVIEW QUALITY S.A. DE C.V.	3
SDSU TESTING AND TRAINING CENTER, A. C. (SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY)	2
Colegio de Profesionales en la Enseñanza del Inglés A. C. (COPEI)	1

Currently, there are 17 authorised centres which, in total, offer 63 tests for young and adult learners. In addition, these tests assess only the British and American English varieties. Another relevant aspect to point out is that only two tests are normally recognised by international universities as proof of English language proficiency: IELTS and TOEFL IBT. The rest of tests are

mainly, not exclusively, for language diagnosis, placement, and accreditation purposes. On the other hand, two aspects stand out from the list. On the one hand, there are only two national centres: Universidad Veracruzana and COPEI and, on the other, only EXAVER is the language test co-designed and administered by a national public university sector.

7.4.5 Teacher training

As ELT has expanded in basic education and teacher training institutions, teacher training represents a market which has mainly been cornered by American and British institutions (Ramírez, Pamplón & Cota, 2012). In this context, Cambridge English Assessment has served as an academic adviser for the Ministry of Public Education during the planning, design, and implementation of the National English Programme in Basic Education. In addition, this strategic alliance led to the National English Programme curricula revision and a collaboration to design and launch the National English Strategy both in 2017. The key role that Cambridge English Assessment has played in during the past ten years is revealed in the following excerpt:

La Universidad de Cambridge asesorará el diseño del currículo de enseñanza de inglés en la educación obligatoria y el trayecto de inglés para la formación normalista, en el marco de los acuerdos establecidos entre esta institución inglesa y la SEP. (Estrategia Nacional de Inglés, p. 70)⁷²

In addition to Cambridge English Assessment, the Ministry of Public Education has also promoted collaboration agreements with the Canadian, American, and British Embassies to ‘implement best practices to strengthen ELT all over Mexico’ (Estrategia Nacional de Inglés, p. 70). Although seeking expert advice for the planning, design and implementation of national-scale English language programmes seems the reasonable thing to do, the transnational ELT companies’ agenda includes creating a market and, at the same time, providing what this market needs: academic advising, teaching, and learning materials, language assessment instruments and teacher training. As this market is created by the government, public funds must be allotted to fulfil the teacher training needs; thus, language institutions such as The Anglo, International House, and publishing houses such as Oxford, Cambridge University Press, National Geographic, Cengage, MacMillan have designed teacher training programs not only seeking to take advantage of the federal budget but also to position their materials and exams and teaching methodologies in public schools.

⁷² The University of Cambridge will advise the design of the English teaching curriculum on compulsory education and the English journey for teacher training institutions, within the framework of the agreements established between this English institution and the PMI.

7.5 RQ5: Ideology enacted in institutional practices

As explained in chapter 4, Lo Bianco's (2009) three-dimensional CDA approach, which includes the analysis of public texts, public discourses, and performative action, was adopted to address the research questions. Performative action has to do with the 'enactments of language policy intentions' (p. 102). Performative action analysis shed light into how neoliberal ideology is incorporated in institutional practices and reproduced by the education sector stakeholders.

In section 5.3, I explained how neoliberal ideology is prevalent in the institutional practices of English language teachers, administrators, and parents. The data not only reveals that the implementation of English language programmes and language examination processes is a common and uncontested practice in basic education and higher public education. The massive implementation of these strategies indicates that English has been legitimised as an essential element in the public-school curriculum; hence, in the academic and professional domains. In addition to these strategies, there exists an institutional discourse aiming to position English language learning as key to better opportunities and social mobility which is ultimately reproduced by parents' perceptions regarding the assumption that English plays a key role in their children's academic and professional success, as described in section 5.3.4.

Based on the evidence presented in chapter 5 and 6, it would be naïve to assume that the neoliberal ideology only seeks to assign English a fundamental role in the basic education and higher education curriculum, although it is true that such a key role has been constructed along with the implementation of other neoliberal policies, such as the education reform. In the light of the evidence discussed in the previous chapters, I argue that it is clear that the implementation of massive English language programmes represented the first step in a gradual process of legitimising the neoliberal practices, such as the creation of a very profitable ELT market, but more importantly the reproduction of an ideology which commodifies language and sells it as a strategic asset for better opportunities and social status.

7.6 Implications for indigenous languages policy

As described in the context chapter, English language teaching in public education has been allotted federal funds since the implementation of NEPBE in 2009. Such funds steadily increased year after year until 2018, and, during the same period, the budget for indigenous languages steadily decreased. Attention has been drawn (Reyes, Murrieta & Hernández, 2011) to the possible social and academic inequalities that teaching English in public primary schools might

cause among indigenous language speakers. In addition, Terborg and Moore (2006 p. 204) advocate for ‘...an ecological vision of the interactions between Spanish, international languages and indigenous languages...’ for a language policy and planning which accounts for the complexity and diversity of the language situation in Mexico. On the other hand, Hamel (2008) claims there is not direct relationship between the status of English as international language and indigenous languages loss and replacement. Nevertheless, the status of English as the language of neoliberalism raises a deeper issue: teaching English to speakers of indigenous languages serves as the instrument in which neoliberal ideology is promoted.

7.7 Concluding remarks

This research has described how neoliberalism has shaped education policy and, particularly, foreign language policy since 2009. Although the political and socioeconomic context has changed due to the current self-proclaimed anti-neoliberal federal government, the implications of this study are still valid since the ELT programmes, planned, designed, and implemented in accordance with the neoliberal ideology, still prevail today. First, I will describe the broader education policy implications which will be followed by the social implications and will conclude with those at individual level.

English is undoubtedly a global and shared language for science, tourism, and communication; in fact, this project is a clear example of it. Thus, I do not intend to refute this argument; nonetheless, the analysis presented in chapter 5 has described how macro institutions such as the OECD and the World Bank, domestic policies emanated from three presidential terms, and institutions, such as the Ministry of Education, have enacted and materialized strategies to promote neoliberal oriented policies such as foreign language policy in public education which, de facto, became an English language policy in public education. This policy was rapidly accepted by students and parents, in part due to the English-open-doors propaganda in media and official discourse. However, the teaching of English in public pre-schools and primary schools has lacked an essential element for its success: teacher labour stability. In fact, teachers have been treated as ‘external consultants’ since the genesis of this policy. The contradiction to, on the one hand, spread the idea that English represents a key element in the national curriculum, but, on the other, to treat English language teachers as “external consultants” resonates with the neoliberal strategy to weaken teachers’ unions by implementing a simulated outsourcing model to a vast majority of English language teachers. A similar strategy was implemented by the Peña Nieto education reform which imposed short term contracts, with very limited labour rights, to new basic education teachers.

Despite the flaws in the implementation of a massive English offer in basic public education policy, English gained more relevance in higher education when the Bilingual International and Sustainable Polytechnic University system was created and strongly supported by the Peña Nieto administration (2012-2018). This was followed by the implementation of the National English Strategy in 2018. By the end of 2018, English had become an official education policy across all levels of public higher education.

The emergent market, created by the massification of English in public education, required ELT experts to address the demand for teaching materials, language examinations, and teacher training, so private ELT corporations such as Oxford publishing, Macmillan, ETS, and Cambridge Assessment gladly fulfilled this need. This evidently resonates with the capitalist agenda in education whose 'aim...is for private enterprise, private capitalists, to make money out of it, to make private profit out of it, to control it' (Kumar & Hill, 2009, p. 21).

Nevertheless, the scope of the neoliberal agenda is not limited to profit from the emergent ELT market but also, at the ideological level, to use English to inculcate a large segment of students, who previously had no access to foreign language classes, with a particular worldview which promotes individualisation and a desire to build one's human capital to become desirable assets for the labour market. At the social level, this policy has reproduced the notion that English represents the vehicle through which labour opportunities and social mobility will take place, albeit this is a misconception for linguistic skills is only one of the several skills employers value from a potential employee. This social construction, partially caused by the massification of ELT in public education, contributes to the idealisation of English as a highly valued skill and leads parents, students, and professionals to invest in English language instruction and examinations to access a higher social and academic status.

Individuals are, thus, driven to invest significant amounts of time and money in additional English lessons, materials, and examinations to prove they have mastered the required English level to be valued by the labour market. In addition, English has, de facto, become a graduation requirement for most undergraduate students and an entry requirement for graduate studies. Hence, those who aspire to better academic opportunities are also trapped in a similar cycle: investing time and money on English. It is evident that the system has created a model which reproduces the idea that English is a vehicle for social mobility and, at the same time, imposes it as a requirement for those individuals who seek better academic opportunities. Nevertheless, the same system has failed to provide those individuals with the quantity and quality of English language instruction, perhaps, because, by maintaining a failing English language policy, private corporations will

benefit from the never-ending English language market. Hence, the ideological reproduction that individuals are responsible for their own professional and academic success fits right in this scenario: having better opportunities relies in one's spending of time and resources.

In the previous chapters and paragraphs, I have presented a detailed analysis from which the following conclusions can be drawn a) during the 90's and 2000's, Mexico's domestic policies have been driven by neoliberalism, b) Mexico's education policy and reforms are aligned with its ideology, and c) Mexico's English language policy is an extension of these policies and, consequently, its ideology. Nevertheless, it is my personal interest to stress out that the main contribution of this study is not what neoliberal ideolog does but how it does it, and, to explain this, I will use the following lines.

The political economy approach combined with CDA to elucidate the ideological underpinnings of Mexico's contemporary ELT policy has proven useful to reveal the workings of this ideology to legitimise and perpetuate itself. The present study has shown how public texts, public discourses, and language practices (Lo Bianco, 2009) have been subjected to a steady process of discourse operationalization (Fairclough, 2006) which has resulted in the strategies (i.e., ELT programmes, language qualifications, etc.) described in the previous sections. Nonetheless, this dominant ideology not only seeks to materialize (Fairclough, 2006) its principles, but, more significantly, it seeks to achieve their perpetuation to maintain its dominance. Hence, the research has also aimed to shed light into how the ideology permeated the education system, and, particularly, the ELT programmes to create a teacher force and students who will ensure the perpetuation of its principles.

Another salient claim that can be drawn is that this dominance is inherently contradictory, which resonates with Holborow's (2012) arguments, with its own principles for its perpetuation depends to a great extent on the government to create and sustain the policies and strategies which perpetuate not only its policies and strategies but also its principles. Such strategies are not only geared to the construction of systems of consumerism, but also to the construction of ideological affiliated systems and individuals who unconsciously reproduce its principles, who will consequently ensure the perpetuation of it.

My perspective is that contemporary English programmes must be understood as a) carefully constructed systems in which the principles of neoliberal ideology are operationalized and legitimised, and b) systems for the creation of agents, mainly teachers, students, and parents, of ideological reproduction and perpetuation. However, it must be noticed that the principles of any dominant ideology are contested by opposing forces which occasionally have the opportunity to

institutionally change it. This is the case, as I mentioned in previous chapters, of the current Mexican government.

Before the 2018 presidential elections, the neoliberal policies, emanated by former governments, remained unchallenged, but as described in chapter 3, Lopez Obrador signed an executive order to ban Peña Nieto's education reform. This is not only a political but a symbolic message to stakeholders. Hence, there seems to be, at least, two alternatives to counteract the neoliberal strategies imposed in the foreign language policy. On the one hand, the government seems to be trying to balance the influence of English on public education by creating and investing in more indigenous language programmes. Although there exist academic forums to discuss language policy and planning in Mexico such as the Simposio sobre política del lenguaje and the Grupo de Acompañamiento a Lenguas Amenazadas, a grassroots movement to challenge the influence of neoliberal ideology on education policy and foreign language policy needs to be evoked by incorporating critical language policy and planning and critical education policy in, both, the teacher training schools and higher language education curricula.

7.8 Limitations

Since the aim of this study was to identify the ideology which underpins foreign language policy in Mexico, its scope is limited to the analysis of official documents, discourses and institutional practices which enact and reproduce the neoliberal practices. Thus, the stakeholders' beliefs regarding foreign language policy and its accompanying strategies were not accounted for; therefore, the findings do not shed light on stakeholders' practices to either contest or reproduce the official foreign language policy. In addition, as previous studies have demonstrated the influence of neoliberalism can also be traced in teacher education models (Block & Gray, 2015) and textbooks (Babaii & Sheikhi 2018, Copley 2018), two areas of analysis which were not addressed in this study.

Although the great impact of NAFTA, now known as USMCA, was described in the context chapter, the analysis did not account for the broader geopolitical impact of the Mexico-US relations on education and, specifically, ELT. For example, there exist entire communities in the states of Puebla, Michoacan, Zacatecas and Guanajuato in which learning English is, indeed, considered an asset for those regular legal and illegal immigrants who work in the United States or Canada on a seasonal or permanent basis. In addition, English has also become a factor, yet not the only one, of social mobility for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of automotive industry workers in states such as Puebla, Guanajuato, Aguascalientes and Nuevo Leon; then, the advantages that

English brings to specific segments, specially highly skilled and qualified workers and immigrants, of society cannot be disputed.

The socio-political context in which this study has been conducted seems to be slowly changing. As explain in the chapter 3, in 2018 Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador was elected President of Mexico and the impact of his anti-neoliberal economic, social and education policies is yet to be assessed. Nevertheless, the state of Puebla Ministry of Education has recently announced that the National English Programme is going to be put on hold due to the lack of funds to operate in 2021, although other states are still funding the program. This could be interpreted either as a sign that English language teaching is not a priority for the federal government, given most funds are provided by the federal administration, or that the budget cuts, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, have negatively affected the distribution of funds to programmes such as NEP.

7.9 Further research

Block et al. (2012) have pointed out the growing detachment of ELT practitioners from applied linguistics and critical theory. In this context, I expect that this research opens a discussion among and within ELT administrators, researchers, teachers, and students about the relevance of informing our practice from a language policy and planning perspective. Furthermore, this discussion could lay the foundations to reflect upon the construct of language ideology and its relationship with ELT programmes and policies.

As a quality assurance for higher education evaluator, I have had the opportunity to evaluate several higher education ELT curricula, and one common factor among all these is the lack of courses or themes related to language policy and planning. The genesis of many ELT higher education programmes in Mexico cannot be imagined without the involvement of agencies such as the British Council, the Regional English Language Programs Office, and Cambridge English, so, after conducting this study, it does not seem to be a coincidence the evident detachment of these programmes from applied linguistics, which has resulted in a narrowly focused field mainly concerned in teaching methodologies, student motivation, and proficiency levels. Thus, to bridge this gap, it is crucial to promote a well-informed discussion which might be sustained in the following research strands.

In terms of foreign language policy, English was a key element during, what Lopez Obrador calls 'the neoliberal period'; hence, although Peña Nieto's education reform has been reversed, it is still unclear whether English will remain to be the, de facto, language for foreign language policy in public education or whether such tendency will be reversed or institutionally challenged. Personal communication with teacher training English language teachers indicates that the

federal funds for language examinations and teacher training were not allotted during the 2020-2021 school year. Thus, a logical path to follow for forthcoming research will undoubtedly have to address the impact of the current anti-neoliberal ideology on the English language programmes. As the current government endorses an anti-neoliberal ideology battle open in several fronts, including education, the first and foremost research strand must account for the extent to which the operationalization of the anti-neoliberal discourse will disseminate and permeate the education and ELT domains. As any other ideology, the anti-neoliberal ideology will seek to be enacted, materialized, and inculcated in the form of policies and strategies, yet the neoliberal ideology and its advocates will not resign without contestation; hence, studies that focus on the discourse and key terms used to enact and inculcate the current government's anti-neoliberal ideology might shed light to the extent to which this discourse permeates macro and micro layers of society.

The discussion in the previous sections has made it clear that the influence of neoliberalism on ELT programmes extends its scope to accompanying strategies such as language examination and teacher training processes, yet textbook content and teacher training on methodology represents a domain of ideological enactment and inculcation. Therefore, a plausible research strand might address whether ELT textbooks are designed to reproduce principles of neoliberalism such as individualism, entrepreneurship, and self-fulfilment.

Moreover, it is not a secret that transnational ELT companies have a great influence on teacher education models, so these circles of ideological reproduction must not be overlooked.

Particularly, given that these models tend to dehumanize teachers to turn them into uncritical ideological reproduction agents. Additionally, students' and teachers' beliefs regarding the construction of English as an agent of social mobility and human capital trait represents an additional research strand which must be accounted for.

To conclude, I believe that specific actions, from a critical perspective, such as seminars, course content development, undergraduate and graduate research projects can be promoted to account for the impact that language policies and language ideologies have on ELT practice. As an example, the institution I teach in has incorporated an introductory course on "The Mexican education system and language policies" in which I participated in the design and evaluation. This seems to be a propitious time to bridge the gap between ELT and applied linguistics in the Mexican context, and more specifically, to form former, current, and future generations of critical ELT practitioners.

Appendix A Online questionnaire for parents

Inglés en la formación académica.

Este cuestionario tiene la finalidad de conocer sus opiniones respecto al idioma inglés y el desarrollo académico de su hijo(a). Agradecemos el tiempo que toma para responderlo y le informamos que toda sus respuestas serán confidenciales.

***Obligatorio**

1. ¿Por qué razón o razones decidió inscribir a su hijo(a) en el colegio que actualmente estudia? *

2. En su opinión, ¿Cuáles son las fortalezas académicas del colegio en que estudia su hijo(a)?

3. ¿Considera que el idioma inglés es necesario para el desarrollo académico de su hijo? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Sí
- No
- Tal vez

4. ¿Por qué? *

5. ¿Considera que el idioma inglés es necesario para que su hijo se desenvuelva en la sociedad? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Sí
- No
- Tal vez

6. ¿Por qué? *

7. ¿Considera que el idioma inglés es necesario para que su hijo se desenvuelva en el mercado laboral? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Sí
- No
- Tal vez

8. ¿Por qué? *

Este contenido no ha sido creado ni aprobado por Google.

Google Formularios

List of References

- Aboites, Hugo (2007) 'Tratado de Libre Comercio y educación superior. El caso de México, un antecedente para América Latina', *PERFILES*, 29(118), pp. 25–53.
- ADN opinión (2015) La entrevista con Sarmiento: Insuficiente nivel de inglés. 13 February. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PPaRQnRN0> (Accessed: 15 January 2019).
- Ager, D. (2001) *Motivation in language planning and language policy*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2020) *Convenio para el fortalecimiento de las lenguas indígenas. Conferencia presidente AMLO*. 13 February. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3sT09lyeLc> (Accessed: 15 January 2019).
- ANUIES (2019) *Programa de formación en la enseñanza del inglés, Catalogo de buenas practicas*. Available at: <https://catalogo-buenas-practicas.anuies.mx>.
- ANUIES (1998) 'La Educación Superior en el Siglo XXI', *Revista de la educación superior*, pp. 55–73.
- ANUIES (2018) *Visión y acción 2030. Propuesta de la ANUIES para renovar la educación superior en México. Diseño y concertación de políticas públicas para impulsar el cambio institucional*. Mexico, D.F. Available at: http://www.anuies.mx/media/docs/avisos/pdf/VISION_Y_ACCION_2030.pdf.
- ANUIES (2019) 'Misión, Visión y Objetivos Estratégicos - ANUIES', *Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior*. Available at: <http://www.anuies.mx/anuies/acerca-de-la-anuies/mision-vision-y-objetivos-estrategicos>.
- Arnove, R. F. (2015) 'Globalisation and Public Education Policies in Latin America', in Zajda, J. (ed.) *Second International Handbook on Globalisation, Education and Policy Research*. Second. New York: Springer, pp. 93–104.
- Babaii, E. and Sheikhi, M. (2018) 'Traces of neoliberalism in English teaching materials: a critical discourse analysis', *Critical Discourse Studies*. Routledge, 15(3), pp. 247–264. doi: 10.1080/17405904.2017.1398671.
- Bale, J. (2015) 'Language Policy and Global Political Economy', in Ricento, T. (ed.) *Language policy and political economy: English in a global context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 72–96.
- Barahona, M. (2016) 'Challenges and accomplishments of ELT at primary level in Chile: Towards the aspiration of becoming a bilingual country', *education policy analysis archives*, 24(82), pp. 1–29. doi: 10.14507/epaa.24.2448.
- Barrow, C. W., Didou-Aupetit and S., Mallea, J. (2003) *Globalisation, Trade Liberalisation, and Higher Education in North America*. New York: Springer.

List of References

- Bianco, J. Lo (2009) 'Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Language Planning (LP): Constraints and Applications of the Critical in Language Planning.', in Le, T. and Short, M. (eds) *Critical Discourse Analysis: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. 1st edn. London: Nova Science Publishers, pp. 101–118.
- Block, D. (2017) 'Political economy in applied linguistics research', *Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press, 50(1), pp. 32–64. doi: 10.1017/S0261444816000288.
- Block, D. (2018) 'A short history of political economy in sociolinguistics', in Block, D. (ed.) *Political Economy and Sociolinguistics: Neoliberalism, Inequality and Social Class*. 1st edn. London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, pp. 1–30.
- Block, D. (2018) 'Political economy: Background and approach', in Block, D. (ed.) *Political Economy and Sociolinguistics: Neoliberalism, Inequality and Social Class*. 1st edn. London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, pp. 31–47.
- Block, D. (2018) 'Some thoughts on education and the discourse of global neoliberalism', *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 18(5), pp. 576–584. doi: 10.1080/14708477.2018.1501851.
- Block, D. (2018) 'Stratification, inequality and social class', in Block, D. (ed.) *Political Economy and Sociolinguistics: Neoliberalism, Inequality and Social Class*. 1st edn. London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, pp. 75–102.
- Block, D. (2018) 'The neoliberal citizen: Conceptualizations and contexts', in Block, D. (ed.) *Political Economy and Sociolinguistics: Neoliberalism, Inequality and Social Class*. 1st edn. London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, pp. 103–136.
- Block, D. (ed.) (2018) 'Inequality, class and class warfare: Discourse, ideology and "truth"', in *Political Economy and Sociolinguistics: Neoliberalism, Inequality and Social Class*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 137–168. doi: 10.5040/9781474281478.ch-006.
- Block, D. (ed.) (2018) 'Neoliberalism: Historical and conceptual considerations', in *Political Economy and Sociolinguistics: Neoliberalism, Inequality and Social Class*. 1st edn. London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, pp. 49–74.
- Block, D. and Gray, J. (2012) 'The marketisation of language teacher education and Neoliberalism', in Block, D., Gray, J., and Holborow, M. (eds) *Neoliberalism and Applied Linguistics*. 1st edn. New York: Routledge, pp. 114–143. doi: 10.4324/9780203128121.
- Block, D. and Gray, J. (2016) "'Just go away and do it and you get marks": the degradation of language teaching in neoliberal times', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. Routledge, 37(5), pp. 481–494. doi: 10.1080/01434632.2015.1071826.
- Block, D., Gray, J. and Holborow, M. (2014) 'iNtroductionN', in Block, D., Gray, J., and Holborow, M. (eds) *Neoliberalism and Applied Linguistics*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–13. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soton-ebooks/detail.action?docID=957230>.

- Block, D., Gray, J. and Holborow, M. (2014) 'Introduction', in David Block, Gray, J., and Holborow, M. (eds) *Neoliberalism and Applied Linguistics*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–13. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soton-ebooks/detail.action?docID=957230>.
- Bouhali, C. (2015) 'The OECD neoliberal governance: Policies of international testing and their impact on global education systems', in Thashika Pillay, Lynette Shultz, Abdi, A. A. (ed.) In *Decolonizing global citizenship education*. 1st edn. Leiden: Sense Publishers, pp. 19–129.
- Brunner, J. J., Santiago, P. and Guadilla, C. G. G. and L. V. (2008) *OECD Reviews of Tertiary Education Mexico, OECD Reviews of Tertiary Education Poland*. Paris: OECD. doi: 10.1787/9789264065550-pl.
- Campus-BIS (2020) *Página principal*. Available at: <http://www.utd.edu.mx/campus-bis> 2020 (Accessed: 14 September 2020)
- Castellani, A. G. (2002) 'Implementación del modelo neoliberal y restricciones al desarrollo en la Argentina contemporánea', in M. Schorr, A. G., Castellani, M. D., and Sánchez, D. D. (eds) *Mas allá del pensamiento único*. Buenos Aires: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales.
- CIEES (2018) *Metodología 2018 para la evaluación y acreditación de programas educativos*. Mexico, D.F.
- CIEES (2020) *CIEES in English*. Available at: <https://ciees.edu.mx/ciees-in-english/> (Accessed: 20 February 2019).
- Codó, E. (2018) 'Language Policy and Planning, Institutions , and Neoliberalisation', in Tollefson, J. W. and Pérez-Milans, M. (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Language Policy and Planning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–19. doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190458898.013.27.
- Comunicado (2020) *El Presidente Andrés Manuel López Obrador anuncia la creación de la Universidad de las Lenguas*. Mexico, D.F.
- Coordinación General de Universidades Tecnológicas y Politécnicas (2013) *Nuevo Modelo Educativo UP-BIS*. Mexico, D.F. Available at: <http://www.gob.mx/sep/documentos/nuevo-modelo-educativo-99339>.
- Copley, K. (2018) 'Neoliberalism and ELT Coursebook Content', *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 15(1), pp. 43–62. doi: 10.1080/15427587.2017.1318664.
- Correa, D. and González, A. (2016) 'English in Public Primary Schools in Colombia: Achievements and Challenges Brought about by National Language Education Policies', *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24(83), pp. 1–30. doi: 10.14507/epaa.24.2459.

List of References

- Davies, P. (2008) 'ELT in Mexican higher education should be mainly ESP, not EGP', *MEXTESOL Journal*, 32(1), pp. 79–92.
- Delgado-Ramos, G. C. and Saxe-Fernández, J. (2014) 'The World Bank and the Privatization of Public Education: A Mexican Perspective', *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 3(1), pp. 1–33.
- DGAIR (2011) *Norma CENNI*. Mexico, D.F.
- Diaz-Maggioli, G. (2015) 'Ideologies and Discourses in the Standards for Language Teachers in South America: a corpus-based analysis Gabriel', *University of Bath Department of Education Working Papers Series*, 9, pp. 1–31.
- Domenech, E. and Mora-Ninci, C. (2009) 'World bank discourse and policy on education and cultural diversity for Latin America', in Hill, D. and Kumar (eds) *Global Neoliberalism and Education and its Consequences*. 2009th edn. New York: Routledge, pp. 151–170.
- Espirál (2015) *El inglés en la educación mexicana*. 8 April. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMfJCUFOM2I> (Accessed: 15 January 2019).
- Fairclough, N. (2006) *Language and globalization, Language and Globalization*. New York: Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9780203593769.
- Fairclough, N. (2012) 'Critical discourse analysis', in Gee, J. P. and Handford, M. (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. 1st edn. New York: Routledge, pp. 9–20.
- Federal, P. E. (2007) *Plan nacional de desarrollo 2007-2012*. México, D.F.: D - Gobierno de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Presidencia de la República.
- Flubacher, M.-C. and Percio, A. (eds) (2017) *Language, Education and Neoliberalism: critical studies in sociolinguistics*. Bristol: Multilingual matters.
- Gal, S. (1989) 'Language and political economy', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 18, pp. 345–367.
- Generales, D. and Mexicanos, E. U. (2002) 'Secretaria de educacion publica', *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, 2018, pp. 176–202.
- Gobierno de Aguascalientes (2018) *Palabras Juan Manuel Martinez Garcia Coord Sectorial de Operacion Estrategica de la SEP*. 8 June. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMfJCUFOM2I> (Accessed: 15 January 2019).
- Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Grin, F. (2003) 'Language Planning and Economics', *Current Issues in Language Planning*. Informa UK Limited, 4(1), pp. 1–66. doi: 10.1080/14664200308668048.
- Gunarsson, B. L. (2010) 'Multilingualism within companies: An analysis of company policy and practice in a diversity perspective', in Kelly-Holmes, H. and Mautner, G. (eds) *Language and the market*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 171–184.

- Gwynne, R. N. (1997) 'Neoliberalism and Urban Development in Latin America', *Verf*, p. 182. Available at: <https://www.routledge.com/Neoliberalism-and-Urban-Development-in-Latin-America-The-Case-of-Santiago/Boano-Vergara-Perucich/p/book/9781138123694>.
- Hall, S. (2011) 'The neoliberal revolution', *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture*, (48), pp. 9–27.
- Hamel, R. E. (2007) 'The dominance of English in the international scientific periodical literature and the future of language use in science', *AILA Review*, 20(1), pp. 53–71. doi: 10.1075/aila.20.06ham.
- Hamel, R. E. (2008) 'La globalización de las lenguas en el siglo XXI', in Hora, D. da and Lucena, R. M. de (eds) *En política lingüística na América Latina*. João Pessoa: Ideia Editora Universitaria, pp. 45–77.
- Hamid, O. M. (2010) 'Globalisation, english for everyone and English teacher capacity: Language policy discourses and realities in Bangladesh', *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 11(4), pp. 289–310. doi: 10.1080/14664208.2011.532621.
- Heller, M. (2010) 'The commodification of language', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 39, pp. 101–114. doi: 10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.104951.
- Hill, D. and Kumar, R. (2009) 'Neoliberalism and its impacts', in Hill, D. and Kumar (eds) *Global Neoliberalism and Education and its Consequences*. 2009th edn. New York: Routledge, pp. 12–29.
- Holborow, M. (1999) *The Politics of English: a Marxist view of language*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Holborow, M. (2007) 'Language, ideology and neoliberalism', *Journal of Language and Politics*, 6(1), pp. 51–73. doi: 10.1075/156921507781509635.
- Holborow, M. (2014) 'Neoliberal keywords and the contradictions of an ideology', in Block, D., Gray, J., and Holborow, M. (eds) *Neoliberalism and Applied Linguistics*. New York: Routledge, pp. 33–55.
- Holborow, M. (2014) 'What is Neoliberalism?', in Block, D., Gray, J., and Holborow, M. (eds) *Neoliberalism and Applied Linguistics*. New York: Routledge, pp. 14–32. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soton-ebooks/detail.action?docID=957230>.
- Holborow, M. (2015) 'Language and neoliberalism – issues and framework', in Holborow, M. (ed.) *Language and Neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–12.
- Holborow, M. (2015) 'Language and the market metaphor', in Holborow, M. (ed.) *Language and Neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge, pp. 52–70.
- Holborow, M. (2015) 'Markets, metaphors and neoliberal ideology', in Holborow, M. (ed.) *Language and Neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge, pp. 34–51.
- Holborow, M. (2015) 'Neoliberalism and Language as a commodity', in Holborow, M. (ed.) *Language and Neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soton-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1975319>.

List of References

- Holborow, M. (2015) 'The neoliberal reinvention of entrepreneur', in Holborow, M. (ed.) *Language and Neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge, pp. 71–95.
- Holborow, M. (2018a) 'Language skills as human capital? Challenging the neoliberal frame', *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 18(5), pp. 520–532. doi: 10.1080/14708477.2018.1501846.
- Holborow, M. (2018b) 'Language, commodification and labour: the relevance of Marx', *Language Sciences*. Elsevier Ltd, 70, pp. 58–67. doi: 10.1016/j.langsci.2018.02.002.
- Holborow, M. (ed.) (2015) 'Implications for understanding ideology in language', in *Language and Neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge, pp. 127–131. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soton-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1975319>.
- Hornberger, N. (no date) 'Language Planning Orientations and Bilingual Education in Peru', *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 12, pp. 14–29.
- Hornberger, N. H. (2009) 'Multilingual education policy and practice: Ten certainties (grounded in Indigenous experience)', *Language Teaching*, 42(3), pp. 197–211. doi: 10.1017/S0261444808005491.
- Hornberger, N. H. (2013) 'Negotiating methodological rich points in the ethnography of language policy', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2013(219), pp. 101–122. doi: 10.1515/ijsl-2013-0006.
- IMCO; COMCE (2015) 'Inglés es posible'. Available at: http://imco.org.mx/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/2015_Documento_completo_Ingles_es_posible.pdf.
- ImpulsoTV1 (2016) *Universidad Tecnológica Bilingüe Internacional Sustentable*. 5 May. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WiJzqITKzYk> (Accessed: 15 January 2019).
- Irvine, J. (1989) 'When Talk Isn't Cheap: Language and Political Economy', *American Ethnologist*, 16(2), pp. 248–267.
- Irvine, J. T. (1989) 'When Talk Isn't Cheap: Language and Political Economy', *American Ethnologist*, 16(2), pp. 248–267. doi: 10.4324/9780429496288-17.
- Johnstone, Ri. (2010) 'An early start: What are the key conditions for generalized success?', in Janet Enever, J., Moon, A., and Raman, U. (eds) *Young Learner English Language Policy and Implementation: International Perspectives*. Reading: Garnet Publishing Ltd., pp. 31–42. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2010.06.004.
- Joseph Zajda (ed.) (2015) *Globalisation, Ideology and Politics of Education Reforms*. 1st edn. New York: Springer. Available at: <http://www.springer.com/series/6932>.
- Joseph, J. E. and Talbot, J. T. (eds) (1990) *Ideologies of language*. New York: Routledge.

- Kathryn A. Woolard (1998) 'Language Ideology as a Field of Inquiry', in Schieffelin, BB, Woolard, KA, & Kroskrity, P. (ed.) *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 20–86.
- Kumar, R. and Hill, D. (2009) 'Introduction: Neoliberal Capitalism and Education', in Hill, D. and Kumar (eds) *Global Neoliberalism and Education and its Consequences*. 2009th edn. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–13.
- Laime, T. (2013) 'Language policy in Bolivia', *Repositório Institucional da UNILA*, (1–12).
- Lee, M. W. (2016) "'Gangnam style" English ideologies: Neoliberalism, class and the parents of early study-abroad students', *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Routledge, 19(1), pp. 35–50. doi: 10.1080/13670050.2014.963024.
- Levidow, L. (2002) 'Marketizing higher education: neoliberal strategies and counter-strategies', in Robins, K. and Webster, F. (eds) *The Virtual University? Knowledge, Markets and Management*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 227–248.
- Mason, J. (2002) *Qualitative researching*. 2nd edn. London: SAGE Publications.
- McGinn, N. F. (1997) 'The impact of globalization on national education systems', *Prospects*, 27(1), pp. 41–54.
- Mendoza, J. and Puón, Y. (2013) 'The Challenge of Teaching English in Public Schools: Beyond Academic Factors 1', *MEXTESOL Journal*, 37(3), pp. 1–11.
- Mexicanos, C. General de los Estados Unidos (2018) *Decreto por el que se expide la Ley del Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas y se abroga la Ley de la Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas*. Mexico, D.F.
- Mexicanos, G. D. L. E. U. (2001) *Plan nacional de desarrollo 2001-2006*. México, D.F.
- México, G. de (2019) *Plan nacional de desarrollo 2019-2024*. CDMX.
- Ministerio de Educación (2017) *Decreto 81*. Santiago.
- Mulderrig, J. (2002) 'Learning to labour: The discursive construction of social actors in New Labour's education policy', *Anglistik und Englischunterricht*, 65, pp. 123–146.
- NABE 2014 San Diego Conference (2014) *National English Program in Basic Education (NEPBE) - Dr. Juan Manuel Martínez García*. 3 April. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k56DzNPk_TA (Accessed: 15 January 2019).
- O'Donoghue, J. L. (2015) *Sorri: el aprendizaje del inglés en México*. Mexico, D.F.
- OECD (1994) *Invitation to Mexico to accede to the convention on the organisation for economic co-operation and development*. Paris.
- OECD (2010) *Improving schools strategies for action In Mexico: Executive summary*. Paris.

List of References

- OECD (2013) *Education Policy Outlook: Mexico*. Paris. doi: 10.1787/9789264225442-en.
- OECD (2014) *Economic Policy Reforms 2015: Going for Growth*. Paris. doi: 10.1787/9789264208780-en.
- OECD (2015) *Mexico policy priorities to upgrade the skills and knowledge of mexicans for greater productivity and innovation*. Paris. doi: 10.1016/0965-1748(92)90028-D.
- OECD (2017) *OECD Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report Mexico*. Paris. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/centrodemexico/inicio>.
- OECD (2017) *OECD work on education and skills*. Paris. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/youth.htm>.
- OECD (2017) *Towards a stronger and more inclusive Mexico an assessment of recent policy reforms*. Paris. Available at: www.oecd.org/mexico/.
- OECD (2020) *OECD Mexico*. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/mexico/>.
- Park, J. (2013) 'Metadiscursive regimes of diversity in a multinational corporation', *Language in Society*, 42(5), pp. 557–577.
- Pennycook, A. (1998) *English and the Discourses of Colonialism*. New York: Routledge. Bauer, L. et al. (2000) *Ideology, politics and language policies*. Edited by Thomas Ricento. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Phillipson, R. (2009) *Linguistic imperialism*. New York: Routledge.
- Pierre Bourdieu (1991) *Language & Symbolic Power*. 1st edn. Edited by J. Thompson. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Porto, M. (2016) 'English Language Education in Primary Schooling in Argentina', *education policy analysis archives*, 24(80), pp. 1–29. doi: 10.14507/epaa.24.2450.
- Pública, S. de E. (2017) *Mensaje del secretario de Educación Pública, Aurelio Nuño Mayer, durante la reunión con, Discurso*. Available at: <https://www.gob.mx/sep/prensa/mensaje-del-secretario-de-educacion-publica-aurelio-nuno-mayer-durante-la-presentacion-de-la-estrategia-nacional-de-ingles?idiom=es>.
- BUAP. (2021) *Plan de desarrollo institucional 2017-2021*. Puebla.
- Ramírez Romero, J. L., Pamplón Irigoyen, E. N. and Cota Grijalva, S. (2012) 'Problemática de la enseñanza del inglés en las primarias públicas de México: una primera lectura cualitativa', *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación*, 60(2), p. 12. doi: 10.35362/rie6021321.
- Republica, G. de la (2013) *Plan nacional de desarrollo 2013-2018*. México, D.F.
- República, G. de la (2015) *Reforma Educativa*. Mexico, D.F. Alcántara,
- Republica, P. de la (2020) *Ciudad de México contará con universidad para enseñanza de lenguas indígenas, anuncia presidente en Milpa Alta, Comunicado*.

- Reyes Cruz, M. D. R., Murrieta Loyo, G. and Hernández Méndez, E. (2011) 'Políticas Lingüísticas Nacionales e Internacionales Sobre La Enseñanza Del Inglés En Escuelas Primarias', *Revista Pueblos y fronteras digital*, 6(12), p. 167. doi: 10.22201/cimsur.18704115e.2011.12.126.
- Ricento, T. (2000) 'Historical and theoretical perspectives in language policy and planning', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 4(2), pp. 196–213. doi: 10.1111/1467-9481.00111.
- Ricento, T. (2015) 'Political economy and English as a "global" language', in Ricento, T. K. (ed.) *Language policy and political economy: English in a Global Context*. 1st edn. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 27–47.
- Ricento, T. (ed.) (2015) *Language policy and political economy: English in a global context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ricento, T. K. (ed.) (2006) *An introduction to language policy: theory and method*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Rikowski, G. (2002) *Globalisation and Education*. London.
- Rincones, R., Hampton, E. and Silva, C. (2008) 'Teaching for the Factory: Neoliberalism in Mexican Education', in Compton, M. and Weiner, L. (eds) *The Global Assault on Teaching, Teachers, and their Unions: Stories for Resistance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 37–43.
- Santiago, P. et al. (2012) *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education*. Paris.
- Santos, J. M. et al. (2014) Plan Nacional De Desarrollo 2010-2015 Tomo I. Bogotá D.C.
- Santos, J. M. et al. (2014) *Plan Nacional De Desarrollo 2010-2015 Tomo I*. Bogotá D.C.
- Sayer, P. (2015a) "'More & Earlier": Neoliberalism and Primary English Education in Mexican Public Schools', *L2 Journal*, 7(3), pp. 40–56. Available at: <http://repositories.cdlib.org/uccllt/l2/vol7/iss3/art3/>
- Sayer, P. (2015b) 'Expanding global language education in public primary schools: the national English programme in Mexico', *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 28(3), pp. 257–275. doi: 10.1080/07908318.2015.1102926.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública (2011) *Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica Segunda Lengua: Inglés*. Mexico, D.F.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública (2011) *Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica Segunda Lengua: Inglés Fundamentos curriculares*. Mexico, D.F.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública (2013) *ACUERDO número 706 por el que se emiten las Reglas de Operación del Programa de Fortalecimiento de la Calidad en Educación Básica, Diario Oficial de la Federación*. Mexico, D.F.

List of References

- Secretaría de Educación Pública (2017) *Palabras de Aurelio Nuño - Inauguración de la Universidad Tecnológica BIS del estado de Puebla*. 12 January. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJFb2otLqYg> (Accessed: 15 January 2019).
- Secretaría de Educación Pública (2017) *Presentación de la Estrategia Nacional de Inglés*. 11 July. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQLRdboxZhU> (Accessed: 15 January 2019).
- Secretaría de Educación Pública (2017) *Whiteboard-Presentación de la Estrategia Nacional de Inglés*. 11 July. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcDEfmlmZgs> (Accessed: 15 January 2019).
- Secretaría de Educación Pública (2019) *Acuerdo educativo nacional implementación operativa: Estrategia nacional de mejora de las escuelas normales*. Mexico, D.F. Available at: <https://www.dgespe.sep.gob.mx/public/ENMEN.pdf>.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública (2019) *ACUERDO número 11/03/19 por el que se establecen las normas generales para la evaluación del aprendizaje, acreditación, promoción, regularización y certificación de los educandos de la educación básica, Diario Oficial de la Federación*.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública. (2001) *Programa Nacional de Educación, 2001-2006 : por una educación de buena calidad para todos un enfoque educativo para el siglo XXI*. Mexico, D.F.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública. (2007) *Programa Sectorial de Educación 2007-2012*. Mexico, D.F.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública. Secretaría de Educación Pública (2013) *Programa Sectorial de Educación 2013-2019*. Mexico, D.F.
- Shirley Heath (1989) 'Language Ideology', *International Encyclopedia of Communications, Vol.2*. Oxford University Press.
- Silverstein, M. (1976) 'Shifters, linguistic categories, and cultural description', in Basso, K. and Selby, H. (eds) *Meaning in anthropology*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, pp. 187–221.
- Simpson, W. (2018) 'Neoliberal fetishism: the language learner as homo oeconomicus', *Language and Intercultural Communication*. Routledge, 18(5), pp. 507–519. doi: 10.1080/14708477.2018.1501845.
- Soudien, C. (2015) 'Working with the Discontentment Around Globalisation: In Pursuit of the Promise of Education', in Zajda, J. (ed.) *Second International Handbook on Globalisation, Education and Policy Research*. Second. New York: Springer, pp. 77–104.
- Stoessel, S. (2014) 'Giro a la izquierda en la América Latina del siglo XXI: Revisitando los debates académicos', *Polis (Santiago)*, 13(39), pp. 123–149. doi: 10.4067/s0718-65682014120000007.
- Terborg, R., Landa, L. G. and Moore, P. (2006) 'The Language Situation in Mexico', *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 7(4), pp. 415–518. doi: 10.2167/cilp109.0.

- Tollefson, J. W. (2006) 'Critical Theory in Language Policy', in Ricento, T. K. (ed.) *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 42–59.
- Torrco Ávila, E. M. (2016) *Discursive construction of the English language policy implemented in Chile (2003-2010)*. University of Southampton.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1989) 'Structures of Discourse and Structures of Power', *Annals of the International Communication Association*. doi: 10.1080/23808985.1989.11678711.
- Walton, M. (2004) 'Neoliberalism in Latin America: Good, Bad , or Incomplete ?', *Latin American Research Review*, 39(3), pp. 165–183.
- Warriner, D. S. (2016) "'Here, without English, you are dead": ideologies of language and discourses of neoliberalism in adult English language learning', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. Routledge, 37(5), pp. 495–508. doi: 10.1080/01434632.2015.1071827.
- West, G. B. (2019) 'Navigating morality in neoliberal spaces of English language education', *Linguistics and Education*. Elsevier Ltd, 49, pp. 31–40. doi: 10.1016/j.linged.2018.12.004.
- Zajda, J. (ed.) (2015) *Second International Handbook on Globalisation, Education and Policy Research*. Second. New York: Springer.