The Political Aspects of Positivist ELT Research Articles*

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Abstract

Despite appealing notion of research based language teaching, we argue that scientific way of conducting research on English language teaching (ELT) is problematic since it ignores language learners' subjectivity, instructors' professionalism, practitioners' culture and learning particularity. Positivists pedagogical arguments neglect the social nature of meaning making instructional practices and emphasize objectivity and measurability criteria which lead to instrumental rationality. A critical discourse analysis of practical arguments proposed in pedagogical implications section of empiricist research articles revealed that positivists assumptions manifest themselves as the rules and regulations of carrying out scientific research. These yardsticks give power to the neoliberal tendencies to present reasons as premises of arguments to restrict and control the agency of ELT teachers as well as to deprofessionalize them. Since there is a close affinity between this paradigm world views and neoliberal policies, positivists research articles lead to the domination of neoliberalism on TEFL discourse. This indicates the ideological function of the article genre and awareness of that is crucial for the sake of democratic and fair education.

Introduction

Research on issues of EFL aims to provide language instructors and learners with evidence-based effective pedagogical implications. There has been an increasing interest on the part of researchers to include portions in their research articles (RAs) for the practical implications (Loewen and Sato, 2017) and also an attempt on the part of curriculum planners to incorporate research-based language teaching in instructional program. Besides teachers are willingness to incorporate the results of research findings in their instructional practice to gain emotional supports and overcome their problems with innovative practices (Sato and Loewen, 2019). However, research as any other form of linguistic practice can lead to social, cultural, economic and political domination of one group over others. Although prolific studies have investigated intersection of language/discourse, power and ideology, considering research as a site of struggle is rare, if any.

The purpose of current study is to demystify ideological and manipulative functions of quantitative empiricist research articles(RAs). We endeavor to indicate the affinity between positivist quantitative research articles and neoliberals' interests; how these interests as well as the relevant beliefs and world views are manifested in practical arguments of practical (pedagogical) implications of RAs. These arguments claim for actions and this article attempts to exhibit how the required action can lead to unbalanced relationship between Western neoliberal publication enterprises or policy makers and EFL teachers and students around the world. As Michel Foucault (1991, p. 165) argues:

We live in a social universe in which the formation, circulation and utilization of knowledge presents a fundamental problem. If the accumulation of capital has been an essential feature of our society, the accumulation of knowledge has not been any less so. Now, the exercise, production and accumulation of this knowledge cannot be dissociated from the mechanisms of power; complex relations exist which must be analyzed.

Quantitative method of carrying out research, despite of a large number of criticisms and severe inadequacies, is the dominant way in many fields of social science as Willis (2007: 15) highlights it:

Some researchers and policymakers even consider quantitative research the only *real* research. The recent emphasis on traditional quantitative research in the second Bush administration's Department of Education is one example of an effort to make quantitative research methods based on the scientific method the only way to answer many important questions.

As this quotation reveals, the raison d'être for duration of this method can be the support and volition of politicians and policy makers; this can imply hidden political intentions of this academic genre. Our intention is to unmask the clandestine political aspects of it. To this end, we use critical discourse analysis.

CDA as a research tool

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) became an independent way of teaching and researching in 1970s and 1980s (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). It incorporates discourse (social use of language) to the tradition of critical social science (ibid). Critical studies on the representations of 'Us' vs 'Them' ('In' group vs 'Out' group, 'Self' vs 'Other' and 'We' vs 'They') are abundant in a range of issues such as racism, gender, class discrimination, ethnic bias, region language, and any other social wrong which has a semiotic aspect (KhosraviNik, 2010).CDA is the critique of language-in-action, so we should consider the language and the action (Blommaert, 2005). Language is the abstract form which is referred to as social structure by Fairclough (2010) and the action or event is the concrete level of social life; these two levels are mediated through social practice. In this study the world views, ontological and epistemological and the relevant methodological assumptions of positivists are considered as social structures, research is assumed as social practice and an empiricists RA, mostly practical implications part which is argumentative, is counted as social event(action). These three levels are sites of ideology and power as

Blommaert, (ibid: 24) puts it into words "power, and especially institutionally reproduced power, is central to CDA". Revealing Hidden and evident manifestations of dominance, discrimination, power and control in language are the purposes of analysis (Wodak, 1995).

CDA aims at revealing hidden as well as apparent aspects of language use which contain unjust, ideological and discriminative impact (Meyer, 2001; Wodak, 2001). CDA has an emancipatory responsibility in order to disentangle the dominated group of society form the web of power abuse, force and control by dominant group and give them power and freedom (Wodak, 2001; Titscher et al., 2000; van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 1989). Wodak (2001) believes "One of the goals of CDA is to 'demystify' discourses by deciphering ideologies" (9). This demystification also involves depicting manipulative function of discourse as ways of representation which can be enacted as ways of acting and interacting (genre) or can be inculcated as ways of being (style). The study of relationships between these three aspects of semiotics (discourse, genre and style) and between discourse and other elements of social practice can reveal ideological and manipulative use of discourse.

Research articles as sites of ideology and manipulation
Research article as the argumentative genre, especially practical type, of language use is the object of the study. Argumentation as a complex speech act has an illocutionary and a perlocutionary dimension (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). People use argumentation to do actions and these actions have some effects. These effect can be overt such as producing information about particular subject or they can be hidden. The covert aspects of RAs involve manipulative and ideological functions. Manipulation means to conceal the truth and present reasons to apparently support the claim but actually for the sake of other intentions. It has to do with insincerely speaking, covertly and intentionally attempting to deceive the addressees. It also involves violating the normative appropriateness of actions. Ideologies are meanings which serve the power intentions (Thompson, 1990). Ideology in Fairclough's (1995) term is "unequal capacity to control

how texts are produced, distributed and consumed (and hence the shapes of texts) in particular sociocultural contexts" (p. 1). ideologies are presenting the ideas and beliefs in the interests of a particular group as the public interests (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012).

In determining the manipulative and ideological functions of positivists research articles, we are following Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) practical reasoning framework. They themselves have followed some other theories such as pragma-dialectics (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004), and Searle's (2010) theory of the construction of the social reality by means of speech acts. (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2013, p. 337). Although many scholars (Whitson & Stanley, 1990; Walton, 2013) have highlighted the prominence of practical reasoning in decision making and production of knowledge, this significance is overlooked in TEFL issues. According to Fairclough and Fairclough (2011: 244) there has been no endeavor to study practical arguments in any discursive practice. To reveal ideological and manipulative nature of EFL RAs as well as to fill the mentioned gap, two research questions are proposed:

1. In what way can pedagogical implications of positivist quantitative research articles have   manipulative impacts on their EFL practitioners?

2. How can pedagogical implications part of positivist quantitative research articles have ideological influence on their EFL practitioners?

Significance of these questions is due to the fact that revealing contradictions and power stricken functions of positivists RAs which inform TEFL practices is integral to achieve democratic, just and thriving education.

Method
The framework
As previously mentioned, the applied framework is Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) practical reasoning which more or less draws on

other theories or theoretical categories as is highlighted by them (2013) below:

> Like pragma-dialectics (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004), we see argumentation as a verbal social activity (or a macro-speech act) with an illocutionary and a perlocutionary dimension: people do things by means of arguing, and this activity has effects. Our focus on practical reasoning, critical questioning and action is coherent with this overall pragmatic and dialectical view. We draw extensively on Searle's (2010) theory of the construction of the social world by means of speech acts, … (p. 337).

This framework consists of circumstantial premise, goal premise, value premise and the claim for action. These premises and their related claim are called an argument. The argument is a set of statements in which some (premises) support another one (claim). The value premise which informs the goal and the determination of the context of action is implicit in positivists RA. The goal is the future state of affairs which are inclined to achieve by the arguer. The context of action or the circumstantial premise which is the problematization of the current state of affair is mainly in the introduction section or sometimes restated in the conclusion. The proposed action or the claim is the means to achieve the determined goal(s) whose relation is specified as means-end premise which is presumptive. This framework consists of two stages: analysis and evaluation. At the analysis stage, the reconstruction of the argument was carried out by means of van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2015) transformational operations of deletion, addition and substitution since the mentioned framework does not indicate how to construct an argument (to determine premises and the claim). At the evaluation stage, a number of critical questions are asked to carry out the normative critique to answer the first research question and finally Searle's (2010) social ontology theory is used for the purpose of explanatory critique to answer the second research question (see procedures below).

The sample

To select the sample, purposeful sampling was used and five journals on issue of teaching English or related subjects in applied linguistics were selected, and from them we choose some articles. To make the study manageable and for the limitation of the space, one journal (ELT) was selected. Following the small-sized and purposeful sampling, one article and then an argument was selected from the practical implications section of the RA (See Text below). Although the solicited argument, was mainly from the practical implications section (PIS), the whole article was investigated to acquire a better understanding of the text and to determine the premises such as value which is presented in other parts.

Procedures

The PIS is presented here as Text. A number was assigned to each sentence of Text in square brackets prior to it for easier reference during the analysis and evaluation stages. That number is shown with the reconstructed premise or the claim in Figure 1. The reconstruction of the argument was carried out by means of van Eemeren and Grootendorst' s (2015) transformational operations. We conducted evaluation stage by asking a number of critical questions (three types) to address the first research question for the purpose of normative critique in order to reveal contradictory or rationalization[1] in the reconstructed argument (see evaluation stage). These three types are questions aim at criticizing premise acceptability; questions challenging the argument by casting doubt on relation between premises and the claim; questions targeting at rebuking the claim by clarifying its negative consequences. This stage was followed by explanatory critique which was accomplished through Searle's (2010) social ontology theory and ideology theory to unmask the ideological intentions of the empiricist type of academic discourse (see explanatory critique).

Claim: [1] It is desirable to design instructed early foreign language programs in which students are motivated to experience out-of-school exposure to English.
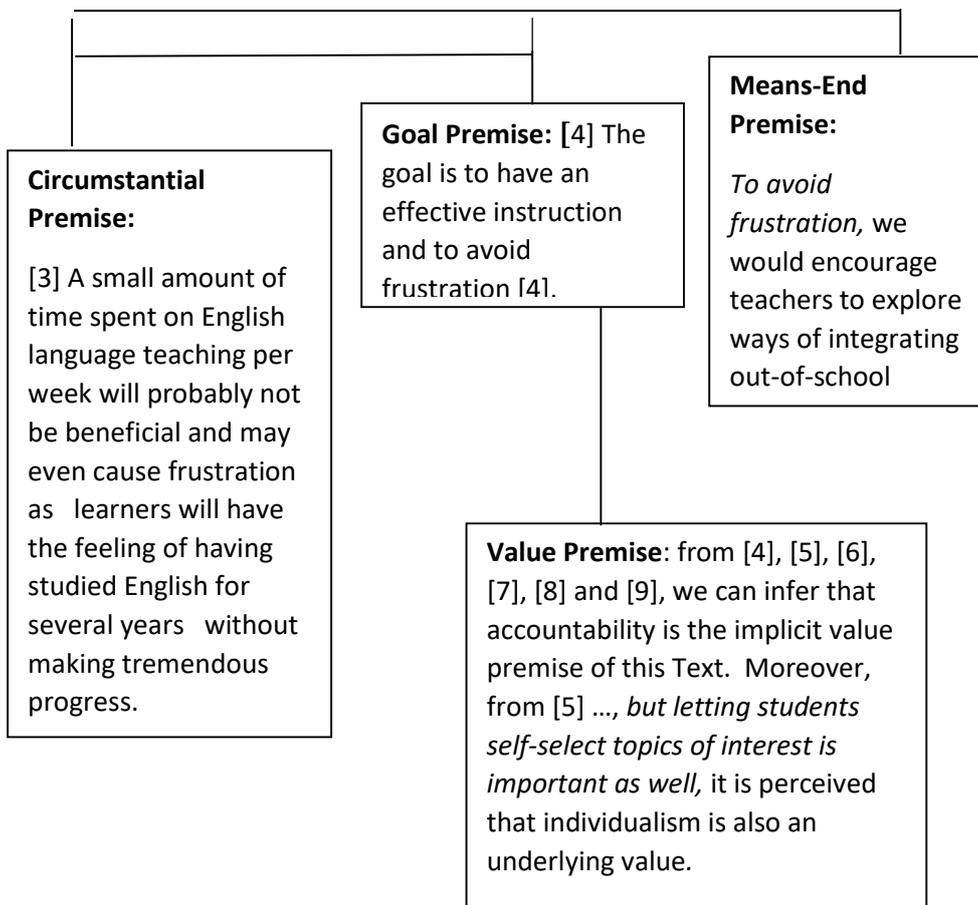
Circumstantial Premise:

[3] A small amount of time spent on English language teaching per week will probably not be beneficial and may even cause frustration as   learners will have the feeling of having studied English for several years   without making tremendous progress.

Goal Premise: [4] The goal is to have an effective instruction and to avoid frustration [4].

Means-End Premise:

To avoid frustration, we would encourage teachers to explore ways of integrating out-of-school

Value Premise: from [4], [5], [6], [7], [8] and [9], we can infer that accountability is the implicit value premise of this Text. Moreover, from [5] ..., *but letting students self-select topics of interest is important as well,* it is perceived that individualism is also an underlying value.

Figure 1. The argument of Text

Quality Criteria

Triangulation of method (Fairclough and Fairclough's, 2012) practical argumentation framework; Searle's (2010) social ontology theory and ideology theory; Eemeren and Grootendorst' s (2015) transformational

operation processes can bring about the rigor of the study. Also, systematically asking critical questions at the evaluation stage brings about the rigor of this study.

Positionality

We have approached this investigation as middle-class, Muslim, and male Iranian, EFL practitioners with a critical inclination. We were born and raised in Iran within Islamic and Iranian culture. Thus, these features of our identities which show complex and multifaceted positionality, may affect our selection of the methodology, evaluation, analysis and assessment of data. By being aware of this reality, we have gone out of our ways to reduce any bias, to be self-reflective on the procedures, results, discussions and to eschew misinterpretation in the critique of the text.

Text

The text to be evaluated is mainly practical implications proportion, also other necessary parts, of Wolf, Smit and Lowie's (2017) article entitled "Influences of early English language teaching on oral fluency" in ELT Journal. The extract of practical recommendation is as follows:

> [1] One recommendation arising from this study is that it is desirable to design instructed early foreign language programs in which students are motivated to experience out-of-school exposure to English, for instance by encouraging students to watch television or videos with English subtitles, or to play online games and explore websites, and to use this as input for classroom activities. [2] In terms of timetable decisions in schools, since exposure is so influential for oral fluency, it may be beneficial to offer a shorter but intensive program rather than an extensive course spread out over several years, regardless of the starting age. [3] A small amount of time spent on English language teaching per week will probably not be beneficial and may even cause frustration as   learners will have the feeling of having studied English for several years   without making tremendous progress (Unsworth *et al.* op.cit.). [4] Based on our findings, and to avoid frustration, we would encourage teachers to explore

ways of integrating out-of-school exposure in early English programmes. [5] Providing structure and teacher guidance is recommended in order to make sure out-of-school input is comprehensible, but letting students self-select topics of interest is important as well. [6] Once teachers know what students are really interested in, they could mine out-of-school input for salient language, lexicalized sentences, and formulaic language. [7] In school, it may also be useful to reinforce vocabulary that students have already encountered outside school, for instance in activities that focus on categorizing, ordering, and selecting words, and by encouraging learners to produce speech utterances based on the words they know but have never used. [8] Teachers could use storytelling and drama activities based on the videos their pupils watch, songs they listen to, and games they play online. [9] Working with tasks and projects that are linked to the world outside school may help teachers to engage their learners and may help learners to develop their English in class (p.9).

Analysis of Text

As mentioned above, at the analysis stage of Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) framework, the reconstruction of the argument is necessary. This reconstruction is carried out via van Eemeren and Grootendorst' s (2015) transformational operations of deletion, addition, substitution and permutation. These operations are roughly correspondent to the answer for the four questions addressed by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2015):

1. what can be left out of the analytic overview (presentation deletion);

2. what should be added to the analytic overview (presentation addition);

3. what should be changed in the arrangement of the analytic overview (presentation permutation); and

4. which formulations must be changed in the analytic overview (presentation substitution)? (P.720)

Carrying out the transformational operations led to the reconstruction of an argument as follows:

Claim
[1] It is desirable to design instructed early foreign language programs in which students are motivated to experience out-of-school exposure to English.

Circumstantial Premise
[3] A small amount of time spent on English language teaching per week will probably not be beneficial and may even cause frustration as learners will have the feeling of having studied English for several years without making tremendous progress.

Means-end Premise:
 [4] we would encourage teachers to explore ways of integrating out-of-school exposure in early English programmes in order to prevent students' frustration and [to provide maximum output].

Goal Premise
The goal is to have an effective instruction and to avoid frustration [4].

Value Premise
From [4], [5], [6], [7], [8] and [9] which mainly require teachers to do something, we can infer that accountability is the implicit value premise of this Text. Moreover, from [5] …, *but letting students self-select topics of interest is important as well,* it is perceived that individualism is also an underlying value.

Since positivist effected studies make a distinction between fact and value by considering their research neutral, determining the value premise is a tough nut to crack. The value is implicit in the text and can be understood following Fairclough (2018) procedure that X causes problem Y so solving X is essential(value). In this text lack of accountability causes the problem and the evaluated study recommends it implicitly. Therefore, we can infer that holding teacher accountable for the learners' learning in classroom or even out of it is the value underlying Text.

Evaluation of Text

Two general types of questions are addressed here to rebut the claim or challenge the argument.

Questions challenging claim

"Will the action really deliver the goal? Is it sufficient in view of the goals?" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012 b, p. 160)**.**

As it is indicated in Figure 1, the claim for the action is: [1] *It is desirable to design instructed early foreign language programs in which students are motivated to experience out-of-school exposure to English* and the goal is to have an effective instruction and to avoid frustration [4]. Exposure to English has been illustrated as "encouraging students to watch television or videos with English subtitles, or to play online games and explore websites, and to use this as input for classroom activities. Early foreign language instruction needs modified input which is slightly above the current competence of learners (Krashen's comprehensible input) in order to help them build confidence and fluency in English (Lightbown and Spada, 1999), while mentioned activities are not modified for the purpose of instruction and can overwhelm the learners. This can ironically lead to the learners' frustration and disappointment. Since the content is far beyond their competence, it hinders learners' progress or well-being. From the phrase "*it is desirable to design early foreign language programs*", we can infer that teachers are responsible to do this task, because lesson planning and designing how to teach are their responsibilities. Moreover, from "*in which students are motivated to experience out-of-school exposure to English*", it can be understood that since teachers should encourage their learners, they should be accountable to perform this responsibility. Thus, the underlying assumption could be students are the customers and they should be provided with the most effective goods and teachers, as sellers, have to serve them. Also, from the "*early foreign language programs" and "out-of-school exposure to English", we can perceive that* the more these customers consume, the better would be the learning situation. On the other hand, learners are considered as students, so they have to follow the instruction provided

by teachers. This provides asymmetrical power relationship between instructors and learners. So, the proposed action is the result of neoliberal impact and it actually does not lead to the goal.

"What alternative means should be considered?" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012 b, p. 161)

The first question challenged the rational acceptability (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p. 98) of the claim by indicating that the claim can impede the achievement of the stated goal and therefore it revealed the requirement for presentation of an alternative claim. This alternative claim thus recommends other actions which are more fruitful to help the learners acquire English. These alternative means or actions can be more context-bound, related to particular needs of learners, possible facilities available to the instructional setting and practicality of the potential actions or options (three operational principles of Kumaravadivela, 2006). These choices can include modified videos, games or other contents provided by instructors and given to the learners to use them at home as further practice to enhance provided input at school. Ignoring above-mentioned principles, and other socio-cultural differences of various situations of teaching English around the world can reveal the neoliberal tendency of globalization by which they can control the world.

Questions challenging the argument
"Is the situation described in a rationally acceptable way?" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p. 67)

Circumstantial premise is [3] *A small amount of time spent on English language teaching per week will probably not be beneficial and may even cause frustration as   learners will have the feeling of having studied English for several years without making tremendous progress.* Intertextuality is carried out through a number of studies to present the background of the research and to support the depiction of this circumstance. Although small amount of exposure is not sufficient in learning English, it cannot cause frustration as it is illustrated in this study. Learning English officially as a foreign language exactly like

other subjects taught at school has its own limitation such as time restriction. The goal should be to increase the quality of teaching through effective teaching strategies. Learners need support and the amount of this support should be more at the early stages of learning than the later stages, as a result, exposure to English, out of school and without the support of instructors, does not lead to learners' progress. Moreover, some studies have enumerated that input provide learners with the possibilities in a second language but does not teach them impossibilities (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). It can exhibit the impact of empiricist which has become common sense in the research methodology. This guides the researchers to conduct particular type of study which is incapable of revealing facts in social fields. This impact makes the researchers to reduce complex social phenomena to specific aspect of them in order to scientifically investigate them, and this complexity reduction can mislead practitioners by depriving them of more appropriate practices.

This type of research is in the favor of neoliberals, since it is evidence-based. It can show productivity and effectiveness by providing some statistics. Some quantitative words and expressions in [3] such as "small amount of time", "per week" and "several years" support the neoliberal assumptions. Different academic subjects are taught at school with more or less the same amount of time allocated to their instructions. If this argument (small amount of time may cause frustration) is acceptable, then school will be a frustration place. Neoliberalism seeks to change the governing ways of the world through changing the cultures of different nations. As language is a cultural issue, the underlying intention of early and out of school exposure to English can be internalizing neoliberal world views in the mind of young learners and alienate them from their own culture.

"Are the values that underlie the action rationally acceptable?" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p. 67). The value of Text can be inferred as accountability is the implicit value premise of this Text. This value is not clearly stated in the text since the underlying assumption (positivist world view) makes a distinction between fact and value by

considering research as an objective, neutral and scientific practice. Contrary to the authors attempt to follow the assumption and to ignore the value, it is, although implicit, present in the study. This accountability is considered as the duty of teachers by stating that [*4] Based on our findings, and to avoid frustration, we would encourage teachers to explore ways of integrating out-of-school exposure in early English programmes.* They are responsible for teaching as is highlighted in [5], [6], [7], [8] and [9]. The burden of accountability has been put on the teachers' shoulders while teaching and learning are complex social phenomena which myriad factors affect them. In some countries teachers teach the contents that they do not have any role in their selection. They also are not responsible for the amount of time dedicated to the language teaching at school.

Another underlying value could be instructors should acknowledge students' individuality. One of the central presuppositions of neoliberalism is "*the self-interested individual:* a view of individuals as economically self-interested subjects. In this perspective the individual was represented as a rational optimizer and the best judge of his/her own interests and needs" (Olssen and Peters, 2005, p. 314). As a consequence, the authors of the evaluated article claim that [*5] Providing structure and teacher guidance is recommended in order to make sure out-of-school input is comprehensible, but letting students self-select topics of interest is important as well*. This proposition shows that learners are considered as individual customers and it is their right to receive the beneficial instructions according to their volitions. Teachers should provide them with this type of instructions. These students are at early ages and they want to choose some out of school programs, it seems that they do not have enough knowledge and experience to do that. Moreover, as the word 'but' shows this proposition contains a type of controversy. On the one hand it gives power to the teacher to monitor, select or alter what learners watch out of school and the second part of it give the subordinated role to teachers and they have to act according to the learners' willingness.

"Should the agent consider other values?" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p. 67). As we have understood from the response to the previous question, the value underlying this study can lead to learners' dissatisfaction, disappointment and frustration, so there is a need to select a value which can bring about learners' enjoyment, motivation, progress and learning. The value can cause discrimination between the learners how have access to the required resources such as internet and those who do not. It also leads to the domination of the media, mostly natively produced, over schools. Moreover, since English games, internet sites and videos are culturally effective and can result in young learners' cultural shock or cultural trauma. So, modified input, suitable for the learners' levels and appropriate for their culture can be more valuable. This input, scientifically modified and culturally appropriate, can be provided at school, under teachers', as professionals, supervision. In this manner it can bring about justice or fairness and eliminate discrimination between the students who have access to the internet or technological devices and those who do not.

Explanatory critique
The determination of circumstantial, goal and value premises and their resulting claim is ideological since they are emanated from a particular paradigm(empiricists), thus they exclude others, create discrimination and domination of scientific-oriented scholars and researchers over teachers and learners. Moreover, this argument supports the political domination of the neoliberals over the world. The circumstantial premise is [3] *A small amount of time spent on English language teaching per week will probably not be beneficial and may even cause frustration as learners will have the feeling of having studied English for several years without making tremendous progress.* Here in this circumstantial illustration emphasis is on amount (small amount of time, tremendous *progress*), *quantity (*per week and several years*)* to present quantitative evidence-based description, something in favor of positivists or neoliberalism, of the circumstance to show there is a need to change.

The means-end premise is [4] *Based on our findings, and to avoid frustration, we would encourage teachers to explore ways of integrating out-of-school exposure in early English programmes.* From this statement, we can perceive that the future state of affairs to be achieved (the goal) can be effective instruction and avoiding frustration [4]. Integrating out-of-school exposure has been used as a way of increasing the amount of exposure because the belief is that increasing the quantity of stimulus will intensify the production of the correct response or behavior regardless of the quality of the stimulus. Many effective factors like learners' intelligent, aptitudes, attitudes, styles, strategies, needs and levels have been ignored. The complexity reduction, showing ideological impact, is a technique employed by scientific research methodology mostly used to study natural phenomena in a specific situation; however, it has been applied to investigate a social phenomenon in a global context. The integration of out of school exposure in early English programs and the effectiveness of instruction can be emanated from the neoliberals' achievement ideology which assume personal attitudes, characteristics and hard work as the effective factors for success and failure. This can obscure the role of social and political issue in this regard and prevent questioning the social and political power which determine these success and failure.

The value, implicit in the Text, is accountability and the acknowledgment of individualism of learners (Figure.1). This value which informs the abovementioned goal, considers learners as human capital as well as customers. As human capital, they should receive the most salient instruction to be equipped with the best quality to act effectively in order to win the competition among the work labor in the global market of TEFL (Apple, 2004). As individual customers, they have some rights, interests and the choice power, which should be acknowledged by the officials particularly teachers as highlighted in [5] *Providing structure and teacher guidance is recommended in order to make sure out-of-school input is comprehensible, but letting students self-select topics of interest is important as well.* Since the neoliberals

believe that governments should reduce their amount of interference in the market in order to attain productivity and achievement, [5] can be a statement affected by this belief. Teachers as the government agents, on the one hand, are responsible to provide the effective instructions for learners and serve them; they, on the other hand, should give freedom to them to practice according to their willingness to increase their proficiency at their own speed for the market demand. This demand has altered the value of English simply as a language for communication to a linguistic capital or commodity which is necessary for the development and economic benefit. This marketization of education leads to the neoliberals' domination.

These premises which originate from the empiricists assumptions support the claim which is in favor of the relevant paradigm. The claim of the argument has been cited as *[1] It is desirable to design instructed early foreign language programs in which students are motivated to experience out-of-school exposure to English.* This claim can result in domination and discrimination. The domination of target language and culture over the mother tongue and the culture of learners by designing early foreign language programs since they have not fully mastered their own language and culture. Also, the domination of the media such as TV, video, games and internet which are not particularly designed for teaching purposes over the carefully prepared and modified textbooks and teachers' instruction, thus this leads to "deprofessionalization of teachers" (Gorur, Hamilton, Lundahl & Sjödin, 2019: 7). The claim has been stated as fact which seems suitable for all learners and instructors without considering their emotions, preferences and needs whereas "when science is no longer confined to the laboratory, and when the consequences of actions are not known, people must have a say in 'scientific decisions" (ibid, p. 9). In this article the consequences of the claim for action are not discussed in a deliberative way in advance. By ignoring the practitioners' voice, and just highlighting the desired outcomes, this text is undemocratic and it acts as a site of exercising power which emanates from the rules and regulations of doing research (deontic power). The problematization of

circumstantial premise [3], determinations of goal [4] and means to achieve the goal [4], are recontextualization of the positivists discourse in the premises of the argument, reasons for action, which lead to particular claim, mainly preselected in the form of hypothesis, restrict the agency of practitioners (Searle, 2010). Purposing an ideal and observable solution appropriate for a particular situation as suitable for all complex and varied contexts all over the world reveals ideological function of the article (ideology theory). This type of research is supported by the neoliberals since it perpetuates, naturalizes and reproduces their world views.

Implications for Language Teaching

This study can give language awareness to instructors and learners about the hidden aspects of RAs as well as any other educational practice and develop their critical thinking to critically evaluate their interactions and instructional practice in terms of domination and manipulation. It is the responsibility of teachers, researchers, syllabus designers and policy makers to empower English language learners in international context in order to be familiar with the clues and signs of power, domination, discrimination, manipulation and ideology in instructional material. We should empower our learners to make the world a better place for living by developing their critical thinking and logical reasoning in order to set goals and objectives to spread justice and equality, evaluate the means to achieve those goals and weigh the consequences of actions they intend to take to acquire knowledge or during their lives.

Conclusion

We can conclude a specific way of tackling language teaching issues, positivism, despite its shortcomings is widely practiced because of social and political support which it receives not for the sake of knowing but for the sake of producing evidence-based document favorable to politicians and policy designers. Neoliberals endeavor to obliterate all the barriers in the implementation of the global economy. Through the globalization of economy and market, they spread their socioeconomic and political dominations over the globe. To this end,

they attempt to change the way people think, see the world and live. Positivist way of carrying out research such as using statistics, being universal, can reproduce and recontextualize their rules, regulations and perspectives in educational discourses, particularly in TEFL discourse. In brief, we can say that "while educational practices cannot simply be reduced to power, they do offer another means to exercise it." (Gorur, etl., 2019: 12)

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