

Neoliberal Branding and the Commodification of Language: English as the Language of Success in Advertisements for Language Centre in Pakistan

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Abstract

Neoliberalism, an economic system rooted in free markets and market-driven policies, extends the concept of commodities beyond traditional goods to domains such as language. In this framework, the English language is assigned exchange value and is marketed as a commodity within neoliberal economies. This phenomenon is prominently observed in advertisements of language centers, where English is branded as essential for success. Drawing upon Bourdieu's theory of linguistic capital (1991, 1997), this study adopts an interpretivist paradigm and employs qualitative research methods. English language center advertisements were selected through purposive sampling, and Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodal model (2006) serves as the analytical framework. The study finds that language centers actively promote English

proficiency as a means to empower individuals in the linguistic marketplace. These advertisements consistently portray English as a language of success, positioning it as a gateway to career advancement and personal development. However, some advertisements also employ tactics to influence potential clients by disseminating accurate information.

Keywords: *language branding, linguistic commodification, advertisement representation, English proficiency, neoliberalism*

INTRODUCTION

Neoliberalism is predicated on principles of deregulation, free trade, and privatization within the market. It represents a financial system that advocates for market-driven approaches on a global scale (Kotz, 2002). Within the neoliberal framework, English is regarded as a valuable asset (Grin, 2001), with proficiency in the language being crucial for accessing various opportunities. The significance of English has been augmented due to its social, economic, and symbolic value, positioning it as a commodity within the neoliberal market (Bouton, 2017; Cameron, 2012; Simpson, 2022). In postcolonial countries such as Pakistan, English functions as an official language, thereby reinforcing its importance through its use in education, administration, and governance (Mahboob, 2002). Among the educated and elite, proficiency in English is perceived as a marker of prestige, a gateway to opportunities, and a symbol of social status (Haidar & Fang, 2019). Thus, English plays a significant role in the domains of education, administration, and governance within the country.

In a globalized world, neoliberal ideologies have significantly impacted language policies, education practices, and societal attitudes toward English. In Pakistan, these ideologies have profoundly shaped various facets of society, including language policies, educational approaches, and prevailing perceptions. The pervasive influence of neoliberal ideologies is also evident in the commodification of English, which has been branded as a symbol of prestige, modernity, success, and upward mobility. This branding has further entrenched its commodification through the

proliferation of English-medium schools and English language centers. Proficiency in English has become increasingly valued for various professional jobs, leading to a preference for employees with strong English language skills (Arkoudis, et al., 2014; Park, 2011). This heightened demand for English necessitates significant investment in language acquisition to achieve linguistic capital. However, the promise of linguistic capital is often illusory, as multilingual practices around the world and the resulting social and linguistic hierarchies contribute to social inequalities.

Despite the growing body of literature on the commodification of English, there remains a significant research gap in understanding how the commodification neoliberal branding of English function within a neoliberal context. Multiple studies have examined the commodification of English across various countries and settings (Cameron, 2012; Del Percio et al., 2017; Gray, 2010; Helle & Duchêne, 2016; Park & Wee, 2012; Rahman, 2009; Simpson & O'Regan, 2018; Tan & Rubdy, 2008). However, the representation of English as a commodity and its neoliberal branding in Pakistan - a country with a colonial history and a challenging economic situation where English is often seen as a prerequisite for success - remains underexplored. The study could therefore make a valuable contribution to empirical studies on linguistic branding in postcolonial, non-English speaking countries and offer insights applicable to similar contexts.

The commodification of English and its neoliberal branding reflect its role as a symbol of empowerment, success, confidence, and opportunities within the local linguistic market. Conversely, this commodification also engenders social inequalities, highlighting the need to emphasize the importance of local languages. This study examines how English is represented as a commodity and branded within the neoliberal linguistic market in Pakistan. It is guided by the following research question: How is English represented and branded as a commodity in the neoliberal linguistic market in Pakistan? The study reveals that language centers promote English proficiency as a means to achieve empowerment, confidence, success, and enhanced employment

opportunities within the neoliberal market. Advertisements from various language centers portray English as a key to success, positioning it as a gateway to numerous opportunities for individuals.

Neoliberalism, Language, and Commodification

Neoliberalism is an economic and political system that emerged in the latter part of the 20th century. This system is founded on the principles of free market, privatization of state assets, deregulation, and reduced government intervention in economic activities (Gilbert, 2013; Harvey, 2005). The principle of free market facilitates the allocation of resources, promotes economic growth, and minimizes government interference in market activities. Neoliberalism advocates for the privatization of state assets, wherein government enterprises and public services are transferred into private ownership (Ganti, 2014). This process of privatization is intended to foster entrepreneurship, competition, prosperity, and innovation within society. Moreover, neoliberalism, through deregulation, seeks to remove barriers to entry, eliminates price controls, and liberalize investment policies and trade. It also supports the reduction of taxes on industries and businesses to enhance market adaptability (Steger & Roy, 2010). Central to neoliberal ideology is the emphasis on individual freedom, empowerment, and rights, allowing individuals to pursue career opportunities. This system promotes market-based policies that render various goods and services, including languages, as commodities. (Block, 2017; Harvey, 2005).

Neoliberal policies have expanded the concept of commodification, which refers to the process by which objects that were previously unsaleable become saleable (Duchêne & Heller, 2013; Rubdy & Tan, 2008). This process has altered the ontologies of language, with commodification transforming language into a marketable commodity (Block, 2017). Specifically, in the context of language commodification, English is a focal point due to its extensive use in communication as across various domains, including economic, political, cultural, and social contexts globally and in Pakistan. Consequently, English, by virtue of its exchange

value, can be traded in social and cultural spaces where it is essential for accessing job opportunities and advancing career development.

Theory of Linguistic capital

The theory of linguistic capital, proposed by the renowned French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, conceptualizes language as a form of capital that can be leveraged for social benefits and upward mobility. This theory elucidates how various language skills and resources possess different connotations and values depending on the context and demographic (Bourdieu, 1997; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Linguistic capital is described as a subset of cultural capital, which encompasses cultural acquisition, knowledge, and skills enhanced by educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1991). It refers to the language resources available to individuals and the value ascribed to these resources. These linguistic resources facilitate human interactions and communication while also mediating social power relations within the neoliberal, globalized world (Park, 2011). In contemporary contexts, linguistic capital plays a vital role in shaping power dynamics at various levels - individual, institutional, governmental, and global. The application of the concept of linguistic capital allows for an exploration of how English is commodified and promoted through neoliberal ideologies within the country. This concept helps explain the exchange and use value of English as communicated through advertisements by different language centers across the nation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative research method to investigate the representation of English as a commodity and its branding in advertisements for various English language centers. Qualitative research is characterized by its focus on studying phenomena within their natural contexts, enabling the discovery of meanings through an in-depth analysis of empirical materials, including advertisements, cultural texts, and visual content (Ritchie et al., 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Data collection

Data were collected from advertisements of various language centers, with a primary focus on Instagram due to its high-resolution imagery. The selected centers include the British Council, Berlitz, Domino, and NICON. The British Council and Berlitz are international institutions, while Domino and NICON are local to Pakistan. These centers are prominent in the capital city and attracts candidates from across the country. They offer a range of English language courses, as detailed in Table 1:

Table 1. Detail of courses offered by each language center/council

S No	Language Center / Institute Name	Working Locally / Globally	Courses Offered
1	British Council	Globally	Basic & advanced English language, IELTS, Aptis – English for Organization
2	Berlitz	Globally	In-person language program for kids, Online English learning, IELTS
3	Domino	Locally	Life Skills A1, A2 & B1, Business English, IELTS, and PTE
4	NICON	Locally	Spoken English, Spoken English Executive, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal model, which emphasizes three meta-functions: Representational, Interactive, and Compositional. This model facilitates a comprehensive analysis of visual communication in advertisements, as shown in Figure 1 and explained further below.

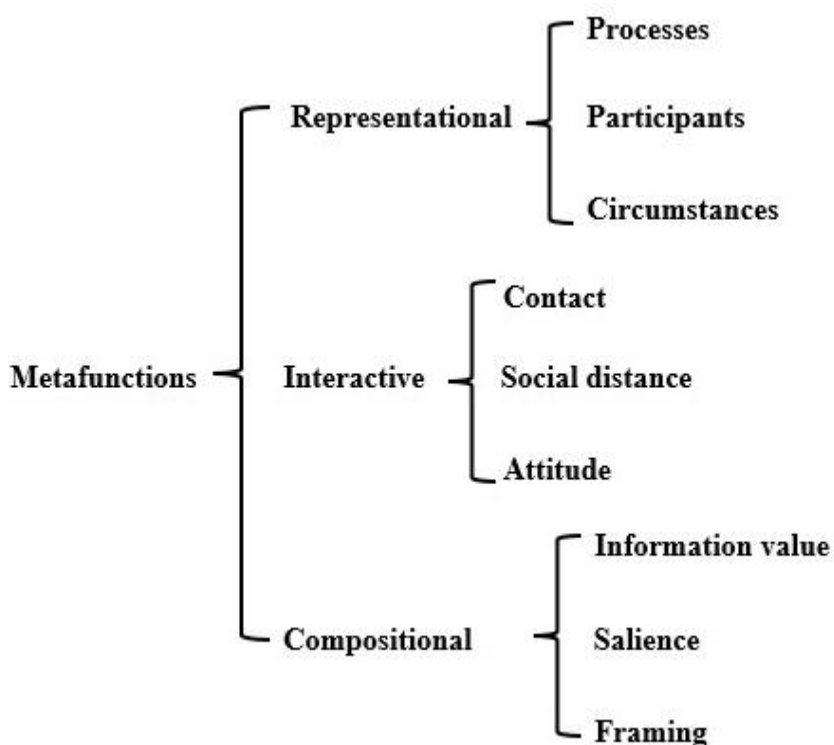


Figure 1. Kress & van Leeuwen's model of multimodality (2006)

Representational metafunction

The Representational meta-function examines relationships within the visual content, categorized into processes, participants, and circumstances (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, 2021). The process is divided into narrative and static conceptual processes. The narrative process is described as dynamic, unfolding events and

demonstrating the progression of actions, while static conceptual process illustrates individuals, objects, and places based on their meanings and structures. In Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) model, the depicted people are referred to as participants and may be categorized as either interactive or representative. Interactive participants include people, places, and things depicted in visual and textual forms. In contrast, representative participants are the creator of the visuals and text (such as photographers, advertisers, and illustrators) as well as their viewers or audiences who engage with them. The final element of representational meta-function is circumstance, which is divided into three types: Circumstance of Means (indicating action carried out with a tool), Circumstance of Accompaniment (representing relationships without a vectorial relation), and Circumstance of Setting (depicting the contrast between foreground and background in the narrative).

International Meta-function

The Interactional meta-function examines the relationships between viewers and images through the dimensions contact, social distance, and attitude (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Contact pertains to the modes of demand and offer directed towards audiences or viewers. Demand involves gestures by actors, such as pouting, smiling, or winking, which engage the viewer directly. In contrast, offer represents presentation of subjects by representative participants for contemplation, allowing viewers to reflect upon and consider them (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Social distance, the second dimensions of interaction, describes the spatial proximity of representative participants within the visual. This can be categorized as close, medium, or long, representing personal/intimate, social, and impersonal distances, respectively. The final dimension, attitude, pertains to the angles from which images are shot. These angles include horizontal perspectives (such as front, oblique, and back views) and vertical perspectives (such as high-level, eye-level, and low-level angles).

Compositional Meta-function

The compositional meta-function analyzes the layout and prominence of elements to construct meaning (Kress & van

Leeuwen, 2006). This meta-function is divided into three components: information value, salience, and framing (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Informational value pertains to the placement of visual and textual elements in the advertisements. Elements positioned on the left and right represent given and new information, respectively, while elements placed at the top and bottom denote ideal and real information, respectively. Salience refers to the prominence of elements depicted in the visual. Elements are made prominent through various techniques, such as enlarging their size, positioning them in the foreground, overlapping with other elements, and using contrasting colors and tonal values. Then, framing addresses the connection and disconnection of elements in the visual. Connection in framing illustrates how elements are integrated or associated with one another without the use of framing devices, vectors, visual shapes, or colors. Whereas, disconnection shows how elements are separated using framing lines, devices, empty spaces, discontinuities in shapes and colors, and other features.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

English Fosters Empowerment and Confidence

Language serves as a medium for expressing thoughts, emotions, ideas, and needs. In particular, English plays a significant role in fostering empowerment and confidence across diverse cultures (Wu, 2018). As a global lingua franca (Melitz, 2018), English endows individuals with empowerment and confidence due to its widespread recognition in the global market (Holliday, 2009). This cultivated empowerment and confidence enable individuals to navigate various professional and cultural environments, thereby enhancing their capacity for effective cross-cultural communication in the modern world.

The advertisement “Empowering Women; We Believe in Creating Equal Opportunities for Women” by Berlitz exemplifies the integration of visual and linguistic modes, as illustrated in Figure 2. In this advertisement, distinct colors are employed to enhance visual appeal and engage the audience effectively. Similarly, the

British Council's advertisement "Corporate English Solution; Helping You Empower Your Workforce" also utilized visual and linguistic modes, with varied color schemes designed to captivate viewers. The subsequent analysis will first examine the visual mode and then address the linguistic mode of the advertisements presented in Figure 2.

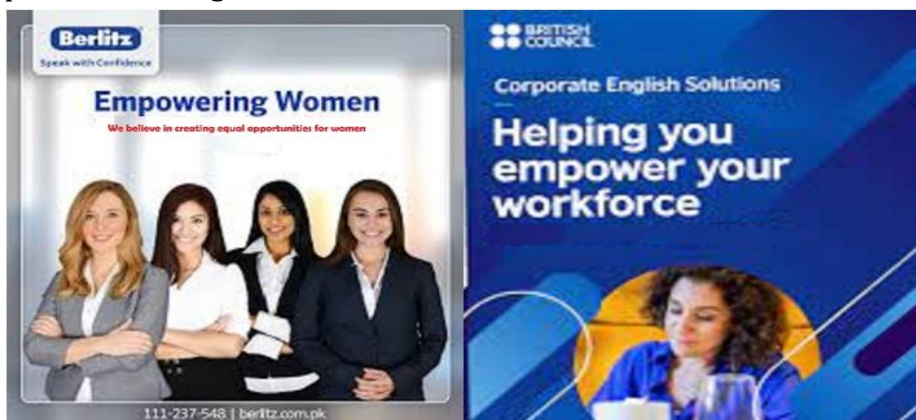


Figure 2. Advertisement by Berlitz and British Council illustrating empowerment

This paragraph provides an analysis of the visual modes employed in the advertisements by Berlitz "Empowering Women" and the British Council "Corporate English Solution: Helping You Empower Your Workforce". The Berlitz advertisement utilizes both visual and linguistic modes. The visual mode features four female participants dressed in white shirts, gray and black coats, and black pants. This visual representation embodies a non-transactional reactionary process, symbolizing the exchange of information. The images in this ad encourage viewers to join Berlitz for English language learning, which is portrayed as a pathway to empowerment. The photographs are captured from a medium close distance, with a frontal horizontal angle and an eye-level vertical angle. These choices indicate social relationship, viewer involvement, and an egalitarian power dynamic between the participants and the audience (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Similarly, the British Council's advertisement also combines visual and linguistic elements. The visual mode showcases a female

representative in a blue shirt, who is engaged with some equipment. This ad demonstrates a non-transactional reactionary process, highlighting the significance of English in the corporate sector. The central positioning of the image, along with variations in font styles, sizes, and colors, enhances its salience. The image is clearly defined, demonstrating strong framing that reinforces the ad's message (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

The analysis of the textual modes in both advertisements—Berlitz's "Empowering Women" and the British Council's "Corporate English Solution: Helping You Empower Your Workforce"—reveals that acquiring English is portrayed as a source of professionalism and empowerment, particularly for women. The Berlitz advertisements, the primary textual element is the phrase "Empowering Women, We Believe in Creating Equal Opportunities for Women". This text underscores the value of English as a tool for empowering women and providing them with equal opportunities in society. By acquiring proficiency in English, women can enhance their linguistic capital, which in turn facilitates access to employment opportunities, education, and global resources. According to Bourdieu (1997), linguistic capital, in the form of English language proficiency, can enhance the employment prospects, thereby contributing to economic empowerment. The statement "We Believe in Creating Equal Opportunities for Women" specifically targets female viewers, advocating for the acquisition of English to foster equal opportunities across various sectors. Berlitz's emphasis on augmenting women's linguistic capital suggests that such development is crucial for academic success and social mobility on a globe scale (Bourdieu, 1991). Thus, enhancing women's linguistic skills not only provides equal opportunities but also affirms and validates these skills as a significant source of empowerment.

The British Council advertisement features the textual element "Corporate English Solution: Helping You Empower Your Workforce", which highlights the role of English proficiency in enhancing workforce capabilities within the corporate sector. This textual element can be analyzed from multiple perspectives –

economic, educational, social and symbolic – in alignment with Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). From an economic lens, the term “corporate English solution” represents an investment in the linguistic capital of the workforce. Through various language training and development programs, corporations enhance their employees’ skills, which are viewed as a valuable asset (Grishnova & Panaseiko, 2021). From an educational perspective, the British Council’s corporate English solution provides workers opportunities to develop their linguistic capital, facilitating their professional growth. Mastery of English can significantly contribute to their effectiveness and success in their roles within the corporate environment. From a social perspective, corporate English solutions enhance employees’ abilities to engage in social interactions and networking. To sum up, corporate English solutions contribute to the development of employees’ linguistic capital, thereby supporting their professional and personal growth within the corporate sector.

The advertisements by the British Council, titled “Be Yourself and Build Your Confidence” and Berlitz, titled “Speak with Confidence” both illustrate the use of visual and linguistic modes, as depicted in Figure 3. The analysis will first address the visual mode of each advertisement, followed by an examination of the textual mode.

The analysis of the visual mode in the British Council advertisement reveals a representative participant - a young girl dressed in a dark gray jacket with a warm cream scarf. The visual mode presents a non-transactional reactional process, conveying information about an English language course specifically designed for young learners aimed at building their confidence. In contrast, the Berlitz advertisement features three female representative participants dressed in various outfits. The visual mode depicts a transactional reactional process, showing the women engaged in confident conversation with one another. The imagery encourages viewers to join Berlitz to improve their English language skills, which, in turn, is portrayed as a means to enhance personal confidence. The images are centrally positioned, emphasizing the

significance of English proficiency. The advertisement demonstrates maximum salience and strong framing to highlight the value of English in fostering confidence.



Figure 3. Advertisement by the British Council and Berlitz depicting confidence

The textual element “Be Yourself and Build Your Confidence” in the British Council advertisement, as illustrated in Figure 3, shows the value of language skills within cultural and social settings (Silver, 2005). The phrase “Be Yourself” implicates self-expression, a crucial aspect of linguistic capital. This concept encompasses not only language proficiency but also the capacity of individuals to establish social interactions and effectively present their identities through language. The phrase “Build Your Confidence” highlights how language acquisition contributes to developing self-assurance. Confidence is a vital component of linguistic capital, enabling individuals to express themselves more efficiently and assertively. The textual message “Be Yourself and Build Your Confidence” aligns with Bourdieu’s notion of linguistic capital, which emphasizes the role of language skills in enhancing one’s position within social hierarchies (Bourdieu, 1977).

The textual element “Speak with Confidence” in Berlitz’s advertisement, as depicted in Figure 3, underscores the significance

of assertive communication skills facilitated by English language proficiency. This phrase reflects to the concept of linguistic capital, wherein confidence in verbal interactions signifies both the mastery of language and the ability to exert influence others through effective communication. Individuals who exhibit confidence in their speech are often perceived as possessing substantial linguistic capital, which enhances their ability to engage with others and strengthens their position within social networks. Moreover, the notion of speaking with confidence also encompasses symbolic capital, denoting the prestige associated with cultural capital including proficiency in language (Bourdieu, 1991, Moore, 2008). This symbolic capital underscores the societal value attributed to effective communication skills. Overall, the textual element “Speak with Confidence” accentuates the critical role of linguistic capital in facilitating social connections and advancing communication competence (Clément et al., 2001).

To sum up, the advertisements by the British Council and Berlitz accentuates the importance of English language proficiency. As illustrated in Figure 2, both the visual and linguistic modes in the advertisements effectively disseminate a message of empowerment through language skills. Meanwhile, Figure 3 demonstrates how the visual and textual elements of these advertisements emphasize that proficiency in English enhances learners’ confidence.

English Language Proficiency: Gateway to Success

Language is a vital tool for communication and plays a crucial role in developing social interaction (Tylén, et al., 2010). English, in particular, is often regarded as a gateway to success, serving functions beyond mere communication. As a lingua franca (House, 2003), English facilitates interactions and communication among people from diverse cultures, religions, and nations. It allows individuals to effectively convey their ideas in academia, societal, and business contexts. Proficiency in English is frequently a prerequisite for success and advancement in both professional and academic environments. It enhances individuals’ ability to attain high academic qualifications, secure desirable employment, and achieve career progression (Haidar & Fang, 2019). Mastery of

English opens numerous opportunities for individuals in higher education, global careers, and the international marketplace. Thus, proficiency in English is portrayed as a valuable asset that empowers individuals to excel in a neoliberal, competitive world.

The advertisement by the British Council, shown in Figure 4, incorporates both visual and textual modes. The visual mode features five participants, while textual mode includes the phrase "Boost Your Chance of Success". Each mode of the advertisement will be analyzed in detail below.

The British Council's advertisement, titled "Boost Your Chance of Success" employs a non-transactional reaction process through representative participants. The visual mode in the advertisement features both demand and offer images. It depicts three female and two male participants, each dressed in garments of varying colors. The images of the female participants are captured from a medium-long distance, while those of male participants are taken from a long distance, reflecting an impersonal relationship with the viewers. The participants are shown from a frontal horizontal angle and a low-level angle, highlighting their involvement and asserting their dominance over the viewers (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Collectively, the visual suggests that success is attainable for all individuals who achieve proficiency in English. The strong framing within the visual underscores the participant's assertiveness and confidence, reinforcing the advertisement's overarching message of empowerment.



Figure 4. Advertisement by the British Council demonstrating English as a language that boosts chances of success

The advertisement by the British Council features the textual element "Boost Your Chances of Success" which can be analyzed through Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital. This concept underscores the importance of language proficiency in general and English proficiency in particular. The phrase 'Boost Your Chances of Success' suggests that proficiency in English enhances individuals' linguistic capital, thereby increasing their potential for success across various domains such as education, employment, and social mobility (Li et al., 2022). Moreover, such proficiency enables individuals to access resources, opportunities, and networks that might otherwise be inaccessible (Silver, 2005). Therefore, mastery of English is portrayed as a significant factor in improving success across multiple fields.

The advertisement by NICON, titled "Speak the Language of Success" incorporates both visual and linguistic modes, as shown in Figure 5. The visual mode features various representative participants, including both males and females, while the textual mode includes the single element "Speak the Language of Success". Each mode of the advertisement will be analyzed in detail below.

The visual mode features a non-transactional reactional process through various representative participants who engage directly with the viewers. The images convey a message urging viewers to learn English as a means to achieve success. The participants are prominently displayed against a grey background to capture the viewers' attention. The images are captured from very close distances, with frontal horizontal angle and eye-level angles, which denote a personal connection, involvement, and a sense of equality with the viewers. The advertisement positions the images centrally to enhance their prominence. Saliency is achieved through diverse font styles, sizes, and colors, as well as through the use of various colors and designs in the images. The overlapping of the images contributes to a strongly framed visual presentation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006). The vibrant images of the learners and the multicolor font styles collectively present English as a language associated with, with overlapping images further emphasizing this notion.

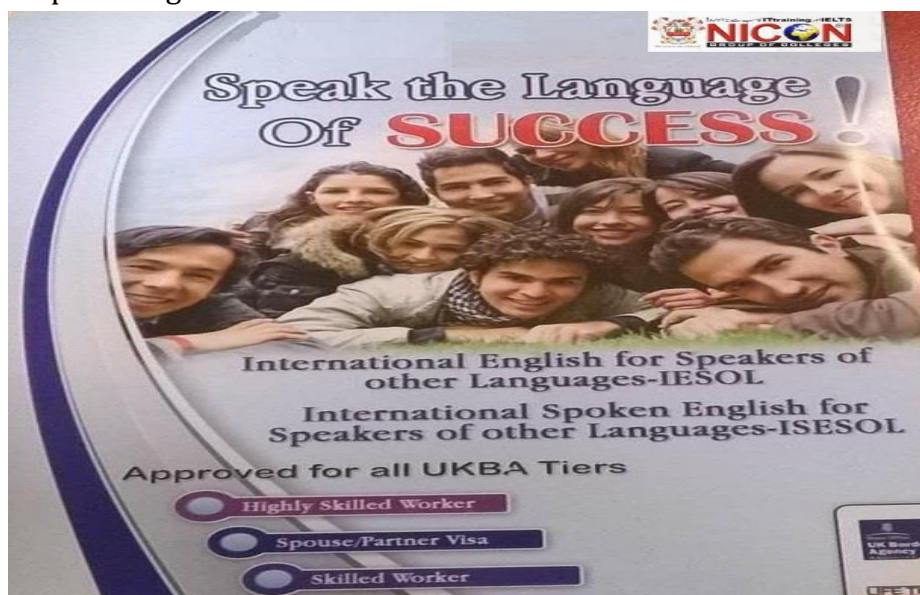


Figure 5. Advertisement by NICON presenting English as a language of success

In NICON's advertisement, the textual mode includes the phrases "Speak the language of success," "International English for speakers of other languages (IESOL)," "International Spoken English for other languages (ISESOL)," approved for all UKBA tiers, highly skilled worker, spouse, and skilled worker. The central textual element, "Speak the Language of Success" emphasizes and brands English as a language associated with achievement. This phrase suggests that proficiency in English is closely linked with advancement and success across various local and global domains. In both local and international contexts, English is recognized as a primary communication tool. Thus, branding English as the "language of success" implies that proficiency in English can significantly enhance an individual's ability to build networks and access opportunities for economic and social advancement. This proficiency is conceptualized as a form of cultural capital and symbolic power, reflecting competencies such as cosmopolitanism and global citizenship, which are highly valued in diverse markets due to the prominence of English (Bourdieu, 1991). The portrayal of English as the language of success positions proficiency in English as a critical form of linguistic capital that empowers individuals to unlock opportunities and assert their identities in dynamic professional and cultural environments (Bourdieu, 1977). However, it is important to note that while English proficiency is valuable, it is not the sole factor contributing to academic, professional, and social success; a range of other skills is also essential.

English Opens Doors to Opportunities

English language proficiency enhances individuals' linguistic resources, enabling them to access a diverse range of people, organizations, and institutions. This proficiency not only broadens individuals' horizons but also expands their career opportunities on a globe scale. In various professional domains, English proficiency is often a prerequisite for career advancement and upward mobility, particularly in Pakistan (Coleman, 2011; Shamim, 2008). Individuals with strong English skills possess a competitive edge in both local or global job market, as they can efficiently communicate

with clients, colleagues and people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, English proficiency provides access to a wide range of educational opportunities, including international scholarships, study abroad programs, and global academic collaborations. Consequently, individuals with robust English language skills are better positioned to unlock numerous career opportunities in both local and international markets.

The advertisement by Domino, titled "Better English More Opportunities" presents both visual and linguistic modes, as shown in Figure 6. The visual mode demonstrates a single representative participant, while the linguistic mode presents the textual element "Better English, More Opportunities". In the visual mode, a female participant is depicted wearing a pink dress with a scarf draped over her left shoulder. She is shown with a smiling face and giving a thumbs-up gesture, while holding a card of Domino Center, indicating her affiliation with the institution. This visual represents a non-transactional reactional process, wherein the participant, through her positive demeanor, encourages viewers to enhance their linguistic skills by joining Domino. The advertisement's visual elements aim to convey a friendly and confident image, utilizing the smiling woman and thumbs-up gesture to communicate a message of empowerment through improved English proficiency. The close-up distance and frontal angle of the image foster a personal connection with the audience, persuading them to consider improving their linguistic skills through the services offered by Domino.



Figure 6. Advertisement by Domino presenting English as a language providing opportunities

The linguistic mode of Domino's advertisement indicates the textual elements: "Better English More Opportunities" and "Pakistan's No. 1 English Teaching Institute." The textual element "Better English, More Opportunities" underscores the notion that enhanced English proficiency can significantly expand individual's opportunities across various fields (Bourdieu, 2011). This phrase conveys that improved English skills can lead to better employment prospects and economic benefits in both local and global markets. From an economic perspective, proficiency in English is positioned as a valuable form of linguistic capital that can facilitate improved job prospects and financial gains (Pan & Block, 2011). The second textual element "Pakistan's No 1 English teaching institute" positions Domino as the leading institution in the country for English language instruction. While this claim may be intended to highlight Domino's prominence, it is important to critically assess its accuracy. Institutions such as the British Council and Berlitz, with their international reputations, often provide more extensive resources and higher quality materials for English language education compared to local institutions like Domino. Consequently, this assertion could be seen as a strategic marketing claim rather than an objective evaluation of quality. Overall, the advertisement leverages these textual elements to brand and

market Domino's services effectively, suggesting that English proficiency not only enhances career and educational opportunities but also positioning Domino as a leading provider of English language education in Pakistan (Kotler, 2001). The textual content emphasizes the transformative potential of English proficiency in creating and expanding opportunities for individuals.

Berlitz's advertisement, "why Learn a Foreign Language" showcases both visual and linguistic modes, as illustrated in Figure 7. The visual mode illustrates a single female participant, while the linguistic mode presents the following textual elements: "Why Learn a Foreign Language: Job Opportunities, Sharpen Learning Skills, Richer Travel Experiences, and Chances to Meet New People".

The visual mode features a single female participant dressed in an orange shirt and a blue jacket, with a headset around her neck. Her image is portrayed in an elated mood, with her arms wide open and a smiling face. This non-transactional reactionary process is demonstrated through the female representative participant. The advertisement uses this image to persuade viewers to learn a foreign language. The image is captured from medium close distance, a frontal horizontal angle, and eye-level vertical angle, representing social connection, involvement, and equality of power with the viewers. Through the depiction of a joyful female representative with open arms, the visual mode encourages viewers to learn a foreign language, particularly English, to enhance job opportunities across various markets.



Figure 7. Advertisement by Berlitz presenting the benefit of learning English as a foreign language

The textual element “Why Learn a Foreign Language” is analyzed through the lens of Bourdieu’s concept of linguistic capital to elucidate the value of language in social and cultural contexts (Bourdieu, 1991). Learning a foreign language, particularly English in this context, cultivates individuals’ linguistic abilities and enable them to articulate their ideas, thoughts, and identity within a multicultural environment. In the advertisement, the linguistic mode highlights the advantages of learning a foreign language and serves to promote the services offered by Berlitz, thereby capturing viewers’ attention (Wilson & Gilligan, 2012). Mastery of English as a foreign language enhances individuals’ linguistic capital, rendering them more valuable and competitive. It also expands their opportunities and employability, facilitating career advancement and upward mobility across various fields. Additionally, learning a foreign language individual sharpens cognitive skills, which enhances intellectual utility and creativity. Proficiency in a foreign language increases cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997), allowing individuals to enrich their travel experiences, engage with multilingual and multicultural communities, and gain insights into diverse traditions and customs. Thus, acquiring English as a foreign language contributes to the development of linguistic capital, which in turn improves job

prospects, refines learning skills, enriches travel experiences, and fosters relationships with new people.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we examined the representation of English as a commodity and its branding within the local linguistic market, utilizing Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital (1991) as the theoretical framework. The analysis of advertisements through this lens illuminated how English proficiency is perceived as a valuable asset. We conducted this analysis on advertisements from various language centers, as presented on their Instagram and websites. The study concludes that language centers advocate for the enhancement of English language proficiency, positioning it as a means to empower individuals and boost their confidence in the linguistic market. These advertisements consistently brand English as a language of success, portraying it as a gateway to employment, higher education, and access to various resources. Furthermore, the advertisements promote English as a form of linguistic capital that enhances social mobility, provides access to various job opportunities, and contribute to the development of individuals' cultural capital. However, some advertisements also present misleading information. Overall, the visual and linguistic modes employed by these language centers comprehensively highlight the economic and social benefits associated with acquiring proficiency in English, underscoring its significance as a form of linguistic capital.

The study contends that exploring the representation and branding of English is essential for understanding the values of its linguistic capital and resources within the local linguistic market. The data obtained from the advertisements of various language centers provide insights into how English is portrayed and marketed in alignment with neoliberal ideologies. Our investigation reveals that meaning is constructed holistically through both visual and linguistic modes. These modes are crucial for constructing and disseminating meanings effectively to viewers through persuasive techniques. The portrayal of English as a language associated with

empowerment, success, and employment opportunities is vividly represented through the images of participants in the advertisements, which effectively capture viewers' attention. This study enhances the understanding of meaning construction and dissemination through a multimodal approach in language center advertisements. It demonstrates how visual and textual elements work together to convey the perceived value of English and its role in achieving personal and professional success.

To conclude, advertisements from language centers promote English as a language of success and encourage individuals to enhance their linguistic resources and proficiency to achieve empowerment, confidence, and access better job opportunities within the neoliberal globalized linguistic market. Future studies could explore various aspects of English proficiency in different contexts and economic systems. Such investigations would provide a deeper understanding of the diverse roles that English proficiency plays across different linguistic markets. While English is essential for navigating countries with a colonial history, such as Pakistan (Haidar, 2019; Haidar et al., 2022) proficiency in English alone is insufficient for comprehensive social and professional development. Other skills can be equally or more crucial; however, language centers often construct a narrative that positions English as the sole key to success, driven by financial incentives.

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