Running Head: Ideology of Private Language Schools

Ideology in the Discourse of Montreal-based Private Language Schools' Websites

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ABSTRACT

The Canadian language training sector is a booming industry for those interested in capitalizing on the worldwide demand for English, such as private language schools. Thus, this study analyzed the websites of two Montreal-based private language schools to elucidate how these schools use discursive and visual resources to advance their ideology. Defined as a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1992; Paré, 2002), ideology is the way in which the schools are acting discursively in order to serve their for-profit interests. Specifically, the study investigated how both schools manage the tension between their claims to educational legitimacy and their business concerns. The study used analytical strategies from Fairclough's (1992, 2003) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Kress and van Leuuven's (2006) visual grammar. Findings revealed that the schools further their ideology by positioning and legitimating themselves as educational institutions, and commercialzing non-educational services (e.g., sightseeing tours) promoted as having second language (L2) developmental value.

RÉSUMÉ

Le secteur canadien de l'enseignement de langues est une industrie florissante qui profite à ceux qui sont intéressés à miser sur la demande mondiale pour l'anglais, comme les écoles privées. Cette étude analyse les sites Web de deux écoles de langue privées montréalaises et examine comment celles-ci utilisent des ressources discursives et visuelles pour soutenir leur idéologie. Définie comme une pratique sociale (Fairclough, 1992; Paré, 2002), l'idéologie est la façon par laquelle ces écoles agissent discursivement pour servir leurs intérêts financiers. Plus spécifiquement, l'étude se penche sur la façon dont ces dernières gèrent la tension entre la légitimité éducationnelle qu'elles revendiquent et leurs préoccupations d'affaires. Pour ce faire, l'étude mobilise les stratégies analytiques « Critical Discourse Analysis » de Fairclough (1992, 2003) et la « grammaire visuelle » de Kress et van Leuuven (2006). Les résultats révèlent que les écoles consolident leur idéologie en se présentant et se légitimant en tant qu'institutions éducatives, ainsi qu'en offrant des services non-éducatifs (e.g., tourisme) dont elles font la promotion en soutenant qu'ils favorisent l'acquisition d'une langue seconde.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in English is a highly valued asset in today's globalizing world. Indeed, the demand for English in different spheres of human activity (e.g., business, international communication, technology) and the widespread belief in the personal benefits that it can bestow upon its users (Pennycook, 1998) have turned English into a much sought-after commodity. As a result, the field of English language teaching (ELT) has become a booming industry for those with vested interests in its promotion (Pegrum, 2004; Phillipson, 1992), such as private language schools.

In Canada, the private language school market generates CAD $8 billion dollars per year, according to 2001 estimates by the departments of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (CAPLS, 2004a). Indeed, the prosperity of the private language market motivated Industry Canada to launch its year-long Language Industry Program (LIP) in April 2006. With a budget of CAD $400,000, this government-funded program subsidizes private language schools with up to CAD $10,000, should they wish to improve their marketing techniques (www.strategies.ic.gc.ca). This suggests that the interest of private entrepreneurs and the Canadian government in private language schools' is in their commercial growth instead of their educational objectives.

Thus, one may well raise the question as to whether these businesses carrying the "school" or "*académie*" label are concerned with teaching or selling English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) instruction, or both. This juxtaposition between business and education creates an aura of ambivalence, leading to questions such as how compatible business and educational aims are or whether or not ESL/EFL education is subservient to the vested interests of private language schools. The incompatibility may

lie, for example, in how private language schools juggle the resource demands involved in ensuring high-quality educational standards (e.g., hiring ESL teachers who are university graduates) versus the for-profit interests of the schools as businesses (e.g., hiring English native speakers with no university-level ESL teaching degree). If private language schools are businesses, how do they persuade a potential clientele of their educational legitimacy? How do these schools act ideologically to create a representation of ESL instruction that serves their for-profit objectives? How do they legitimate and sustain that representation of ESL instruction? How do they manage the contrast between their for-profit objectives and their claims to educational legitimacy?

Consequently, my purpose in this study is to elucidate the ideology that Canadian private language schools are advancing discursively; ideology being a form of social and discursive practice (Fairclough, 1992; Paré, 2002) whereby these schools act upon the world and others in order to serve their interests. Likewise, I will examine how these schools manage the tension between their claims to educational legitimacy and their business status. To do so, I will explore the websites of these schools, taking into account that the Internet is not only a relatively affordable marketing and communication tool (Berthon, Pitt & Watson, 1996) but also an engine of social transformation (Jones, 1999). In light of what I have argued and discussed so far, I ask the following questions:

1. What is the ideology that private language schools advance discursively on their websites?
2. In advancing their ideology, how do private language schools negotiate the tension between their claims to educational legitimacy and their for-profit commercial status?

Driven by these research questions, the study will provide insights into the private language industry in Canada. This is needed at a time when claims regarding the role that the private ESL sector plays in helping shape the knowledge and skills of Canadians and people worldwide (Plante, 2005) are being advanced from two fronts.

One of the fronts has the Canadian Association of Private Language Schools (CAPLS) as the main stakeholder. In a document presented to the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on International Student Issues, CAPLS (2004) proposed to build a national policy agenda for the industry. Specifically, CAPLS envisions its program as a market plan to support the entire spectrum of the industry (e.g., student recruitment, visa processing), thus making up for the gap created by the lack of federal and regional entities. Through the program, CAPLS advocates a self-regulating framework whereby industry practices, professional standards, and accreditation criteria will be "in the hands of the industry itself" (p. 6). But more importantly, the program is a platform to position CAPLS as "well suited to take the lead in the development of a self-regulating framework...because the association operates across geographic jurisdictions in Canada" (CAPLS, 2004a, p. 4). Lastly, the association recommends taking the private education industry as a product for export and working cooperatively with provincial, departmental and industry agencies, if Canada is to remain competitive in the global language training industry.

The other front has the Canadian government acting through different agencies, namely Industry Canada and Statistics Canada; an example being Plante's (2005) report released through Statistics Canada. On the whole, the document emphasizes Canada's strong ESL/FSL training capabilities as internationally marketable assets. In this sense, the Canadian private Education Services sector is instrumental in developing and

exporting the knowledge and skills "necessary" for today's world. According to the document, the industry not only provides Canada with a substantial source of revenue but also "helps" foreign economies - particularly in emerging and/or developing countries - to meet the global skills needs so that the latter can successfully reach their labor-market-related objectives as well as attain economic growth.

Further, Plante's (2005) document claims that the private sector can provide specialized training services alongside traditional education, especially at postsecondary level (e.g., universities). This argument placing public and private education almost side by side seems to support CAPLS' (2004a) request that the federal government grant private language schools "access to the privileges [e.g., public funding] currently enjoyed by the public postsecondary schools who [sic] also offer international language training services" (p. 6). This suggests that private language schools would be entitled to receive Canadian taxpayers' dollars not only as an industry but also as educational institutions, which in turn would give these schools further ground to make claims to educational legitimacy.

All in all, one can observe that the Canadian private language school sector looks in exceptional shape. Not only is it fast developing economically but it is also consolidating as a reputable network of private businesses. However, one may well wonder whether and to what extent the industry is truly committed to an educational cause, other than selling ESL/EFL as a commodity. For example, neither CAPLS's (2004a) policy paper nor Plante's (2005) report discusses - or even mentions - matters related to second or foreign language (L2/FL) teaching and learning (e.g., curriculum planning, teacher education), despite the latter being the industry's *raison d'être*. These facts indicate that the industry's prime interest is in commercializing L2/FL instruction.

1.2. *Outline of the Thesis*

In the current chapter, I discussed the flourishing business that the Canadian ESL market represents for all those with a particular interest in its commercial growth. Doing so allowed me to contextualize the study and to provide a persuasive argument as to why investigating the ideology that private language schools are advancing is a worthwhile object of study.

In Chapter 2, I construct the conceptual framework upon which this thesis rests. I begin by defining key theoretical constructs (e.g., ideology and hegemony) that allow for gaining insight into the ideological pillars of the ELT industry. Likewise, I survey recent studies that have looked at the way in which ELT suppliers (e.g., private language schools) promote and commercialize ESL products through graphic as well as web-based media. Further, I delineate my approach to discourse and web-based discourse analysis by drawing upon elements from Fairclough's (1992, 1995, 2003) approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Kress and van Leeuven's (2006) visual grammar

In Chapter 3, I will discuss methodological procedures, including research questions, research context and data collection instruments, as well as data coding and analysis. I will provide a thorough account of the analytic toolkit that I will use for conducting an Internet-based critical discourse analysis of private language schools' websites.

In Chapter 4, I will present both a quantitative report and a detailed analysis of verbal and visual components (e.g., written discourse, imagery), in light of the coding categories and the analytic toolkit articulated in Chapter 3. The presentation of results will also include a selection of web-page samples to show how private language schools use

discourse, visuals, and hyperlinks to advance the ideology that serves their for-profit interests.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the findings of the previous chapter, based on the conceptual framework articulated in Chapter 2, in order to answer the research questions driving the study.

Finally, in the concluding chapter, I will summarize the study, speak about its limitations and implications, and suggest likely avenues for further inquiry

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As discussed in the introduction, the Canadian private language school market is a substantial source of revenue for private entrepreneurs, chiefly devoted not to foster second language (L2) educational objectives but to advance their for-profit interests. Further, I showed that a sector of the language industry (i.e., CAPLS) is advancing claims that legitimate the association as the lawfully self-governing body best suited to regulate the private language industry in Canada.

In this chapter, I discuss the widespread beliefs and practices upon which the industry rests, and the pivotal role of discourse in legitimating its deeds and status. To do this, I elaborate on the concept of ideology and hegemony, linked to a view of discourse as shaping and being shaped by relations of power (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). This discussion will prepare the terrain for examining some commonly-held assumptions in the field of ELT, and how these have contributed to not only strengthening the imperial status of ELT globally (Canagarajah, 1999; Phillipson, 1992), but also benefiting those with a vested interest in its promotion (Pegrum, 2004, Phillipson, 1992), such as private language schools. A final but no less important objective is to delineate my approach to discourse and articulate a discourse analysis framework, suitable for this study.

2.1 *Ideology as a Social and Discursive Practice*

If one is to consider private language schools as part of the ELT apparatus, it seems relevant to gain insight into the underlying ideological fabric that shapes and sustains the industry. Thus, my purpose in this section is to provide an account of how *ideology* will be conceptualized in this study. I delineate a functional definition of

ideology that draws upon and integrates some current views on the issue, namely those of Fairclough (1992, 2003), Foss (1996), and Paré (2002).

Ideology, in van Dijk's (1998) view, is a rather "fuzzy" term to define; or, as Paré (2002) suggests, it is a somewhat unstable term that has come to mean different things to different people. In a broad sense, ideology has been conceptualized as a system of beliefs and values that informs how one perceives and discursively constructs certain aspects of the world (Foss, 1996; Gee, 1996, van Dijk, 1998). However, some social theorists (e.g., Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2003; Foss, 1996; Paré, 2002) have suggested that ideology implies more than just an array of norms and values inherent in the engendering and structuring of attitudes. Ideology, Foss (1996) points out, has to been seen as having concrete existence, as being embedded in social institutions, such as schools. Further, ideology, as Paré (2002) suggests, has to be regarded as a *social practice*, as a way of acting in the world that allows certain groups "to construct and maintain privilege, knowledge, prevailing values, relations of power and so on" (p. 58). Social practice here refers to the articulation of diverse categories of social constituents (e.g., discourse, social relations, the material world) linked to a particular sphere of social activity (Fairclough, 2003), such as the promotion/commercialization of ESL instruction.

What transpires from the latter is that ideology is a form of power (Fairclough, 2003). But rather than a form of coercion, power is characterized as means of control exercised by certain social groups - or *elites* in van Dijk's (1998) terms - over other ones, so as to make the latter do what is best for the benefit of the former (van Dijk, 2000). Access to and control over not only the material world (e.g., money or land) but also a wide range of discourse genres (e.g., political, academic, promotional) enables the elites

to advance "their ideological position so that it becomes naturalized" (Pennycook, 2001, p. 81). This latter issue, the naturalization of ideology, can be better fleshed out by referring to Gramsci's (1971) conception of *hegemony*.

Specifically, hegemony describes a situation whereby an ideology becomes naturalized (i.e., hegemonic) by rendering it as common sense, by reaching popular consent - or "at least acquiescence" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 45), instead of imposing it onto others by coercive means. Consent, the key concept in Gramsci's theory, can take the form of an implied silence on a certain hegemonic practice or a more overtly identifiable demonstration of acceptance. But the important point, according to Starke-Meyerring, is that internally, "the subject accepts what the hegemonic group's ideology presents as being in the interest of the social formation as a whole" (p. x). A hegemonic ideology implies a prevailing way of seeing the world; it regulates what others perceive "as natural or obvious by establishing the norm...[it] provides a sense that things are the way they have to be as it asserts that its meanings are the real, natural ones" (Fairclough, 2000, p. 295). And discourse, being a practice inextricably interwoven into the very fabric of social practices (e.g., the commercialization of ESL instruction), is instrumental to fulfilling such a normalizing function.

Normal, taken-for-granted discourse, according to Foss (1996), helps maintain the dominant ideology, while rendering any other challenging discourse as abnormal. For example, one discursive strategy used by power groups – in this case private language schools – to advance their dominant position and legitimate it is making claims or assertions in the form of *assumptions*. According to Fairclough (2003), assumptions are discursive constructions of (certain) aspects of the (mental) world presupposed or implied

as logical and universal. In his view, the key contribution of assumptions to maintaining and improving the elite's ideological position lies in their presenting particulars as universals, in (c)overtly evaluating "what is good or desirable" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 55), needless to say, what is favorable to the dominant minority.

Taking into account the concepts discussed above, one can gather that claims asserted as universal or common ground are crucial to sustaining and legitimizing the ELT apparatus. It is crucial to this issue, then, that we scrutinize the assumptions advocated by the industry and that ultimately contribute to its legitimization.

2.2 *Assumptions of the ELT Industry*

From a historical perspective, Phillipson (1992) identifies the 1961 Commonwealth Conference on the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) at Makerere, Uganda, as the key event that laid the structural base upon which much of the ELT industry was to rest. Underneath its "benign" purpose (e.g., developing means to maximize the efficiency of ESL teaching; Phillipson, 1992), the covert aim of the conference was to extend the former British colonies' dependency on the central authority by means of stipulating how ESL was to be conducted and according to whose standards. The outcome of that conference was the *Makerere Report*. Implicit in this document was a series of dogmas or tenets that came to "represent influential beliefs in the ELT profession" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 184). Phillipson (1992) succeeded in unearthing the tenets that he redesignated as a series of *fallacies*. These are the

monolingual fallacy, the *native speaker fallacy*, the *maximum exposure fallacy,* the *early start fallacy*, and the *subtractive fallacy.*[1]

The first dogma, the monolingual fallacy, stipulates that English should be the sole medium through which ESL/EFL is to be taught. This presupposes that maximum exposure to the language maximizes and "guarantees" learners' developmental process, whereas allowing the learners' mother tongue in the classroom is seen as counterproductive. To expand Phillipson's claim that this dogma is fallacious, one may well cite Swain and Lapkin's (1998) research conducted in Canadian French-immersion classrooms.[2] In their study, the investigators showed that students resorted to their mother tongue (i.e., English) as an effective tool to talk about the target language (i.e., *metatalk*, Swain & Lapkin, 1998), and thus tackle certain linguistic problems they encountered while carrying out a communicative task. Far from being counterproductive, the use of the mother tongue, according to Swain and Lapkin, can be an effective language developmental strategy.

Apart from being a pedagogical matter, forbidding students to use their mother tongue is also an ideological one that mirrors the existing – and unequal, I may add – power relations in a broader sociopolitical framework (Auerbach, 1993). In the same critical line, Canagarajah (1999) has argued that the classroom use of the L1 or

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[1] Not all the fallacies outlined above are applicable to the Canadian private language school context. The early start (i.e., ESL instruction will render better results if children are exposed to English early in their lives) and subtractive (i.e., the assumption that standards of English will decrease if other languages are used, respectively) fallacies are not contemplated within the scope of this study, for they seem to apply better to former British colonies (e.g., Tanzania, Singapore) where English was the dominant language.

[2] Lapkin (1998) defines French immersion as "a program designed for students whose first language is not French, in which French is the language of instruction for a significant part of the school day, that is, several or all subjects are taught in French" (p. xv).

vernacular can be seen as an artifact of political contestation against hegemonic English-Only policies. His research in Sri Lankan classrooms shows that teachers and students' linguistic code-switching back and forth from English to the vernacular (i.e., Tamil) serves not only as a strategy to cope with complex linguistic structures, but also as a means to signify solidarity and group membership. Further, switching from the "official classroom language" (i.e., English) to the vernacular (i.e., Tamil) is, according to Canagarajah, a way of sneaking the vernacular into the classroom, which counterbalances "the Anglo-centric domination of the center [i.e., England] through its monolingualist policies" (p. 144).

Secondly, underlying the native speaker fallacy is the belief that the ideal language teacher is a native speaker of the language. Despite the lack of empirical evidence, the native speaker (NS) as the model to look up to is still tacitly and indisputably accepted worldwide as the absolute judge of what is and what is not acceptable in the language (Phillipson, 1992). Phillipson goes on to argue that untrained or unqualified native speakers are *potentially a menace*, in that they may lack a thorough knowledge of the workings of the language (e.g., grammar).

In a survey of NSTs and non-native-speaking teachers (NNST) working in different countries, Medgyes (1996) shows that both groups have equal chances of success as English teachers. He also argues that English language proficiency, the aspect in which the NNSTs appear to be not as qualified as their NS counterparts, is the one that may in fact place NNSTs at an advantageous position. Thanks to their own experience as (second) language learners, NNSTs can stand as realistic models that L2 learners can look up to. Medgyes asserts that compared to NSTs, NNSTs may be both better qualified

to teach certain L2 learning strategies and more empathetic to the linguistic challenges that L2 learners are likely to encounter. Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) recent survey of university-level ESL students' preference for NSTs or NNSTs confirms Medgyes' (1996) claim. Even though their study shows that 60% of the participating students still prefer NSTs, especially in areas related to pronunciation, speaking, vocabulary, and English culture, 70% of the participants highly value NNSTs to teach grammar and to provide strategies for learning English. Further, this sector of the participants expressed their concern "about the lack of professional qualifications and ability to deal with the teaching of grammar on the part of NSs" (p. 235).

Despite this evidence, the NS paradigm is still privileged in the ELT job market. What is controversial about this issue is, I would argue, that NSs, with or without a teaching certificate issued by a well-established academic institution (e.g., universities), are being hired for the mere fact that English is their mother tongue. McKay (2003) argues that having a staff of English native speaker "teachers" (NSTs) entitles these schools to charge substantially more. Not having a NST staff may, on the other hand, put these commercial ESL/EFL schools at a disadvantage, as they (may) run the risk of losing their clientele (Medgyes, 1992). The corollary of this argument is that for private language schools, NSs are worth more than (better) qualified NNSTs (Medgyes, 1992).

Finally, the *maximum exposure fallacy* seems to echo some popular cliché slogans, such as "longer is better" or "quantity is important". Accordingly, this dogma stipulates that the longer the exposure to English, the more students, and especially low-proficiency-level ones, will improve their performance in the target language. To contest this tenet, Phillipson draws upon Panattanayak's argument (1981, cited in Phillipson,

1992) that well-thought out teaching material as well as properly trained ESL teachers are more important than the length of exposure to the second language (L2). A further argument against this fallacy can be found in some second language acquisition (SLA) studies (e.g., Swain, 1981; Cummins, 1983, cited in Reeder, 1999) suggesting that sheer amount of time does not necessarily predict successful language developmental outcomes. Likewise, Phillipson stresses that comprehensible and appropriate input (Krashen, 1985) is more important than its amount, for input plays an instrumental role in triggering learners' cognitive mechanisms.[3] All in all, the significance of this tenet for private language schools is that it provides them with an appealing argument to supposedly validate the instructional effectiveness of their intensive ESL programs, and attract prospective clients accordingly. But most importantly, private language schools find this tenet a persuasive means to get clients to study English for the longest time possible, thereby allowing these schools to make more profits.

What one can gather from the facts discussed so far is that the Makerere Conference's legacy (i.e., the fallacies exposed by Phillipson) has largely contributed to forming the ideological foundations for the ELT industry. However, those commonly held assumptions or fallacies cannot be taken as the sole motor propelling the economic expansion of the ELT industry. One also has to consider that the boom of the industry is largely due to the merger of ELT and the business sector, or, rather, the takeover of ELT by the corporate world. Evidence of this marriage of convenience can be found in the

[3] Krashen's (1985) claim that "a language 'emerges' on its own as a result of building competence via comprehensible input" (p. 2) raised a great deal of controversy among many SLA researchers (e.g., Mitchell & Myles, 1998; Swain, 1990), who criticized it not only for being vague and imprecise, but also for being based on findings from young children first language (L1) acquisition research. They argued that providing school-age and adult L2 learners with comprehensible input only is not enough to account for how an L2 can be acquired. Research has shown that oral production or *output* (Swain, 1985, 1993) and corrective feedback received during interaction (e.g., Long, 1996; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 1998) are more effective in facilitating L2 development than comprehensible input.

practices and discourses characteristic of advertising (e.g., the use of visuals) drawn upon by some ELT-mongers to promote their products on the market.

2.3 *Promoting English Goods*

One of the ways in which ELT suppliers promote their goods is by emphasizing the allegedly intellectual, financial, and professional benefits that learning English entails. In surveying recent graphic advertisements, Pegrum (2004) observed that the advantages of learning English are repeatedly overstated, while its drawbacks (e.g., the privileging of English over other languages) are disregarded. He identified eight overarching categories or *keywords*: 1) *native* (i.e., the notion that the purest English is that taught by native speakers), 2) *modernity* (i.e., English associated with efficiency, science, and technology), 3) *self-development* (i.e., learning English as the key to a better economic future), 4) *life* (i.e.. English equated with the attainment of Western life goals), 5) *individualism* (i.e., English as a synonym of self-development and life experience), 6) *discussion* (i.e., the attainment of communication skills), 7) *global* (i.e., English promoted as the "natural" world's *lingua franca)*, and 8) *product* (i.e., English seen as a *coveted linguistic capital*).

In the same vein, Niño-Murcia's (2003) exploratory study in Peru sheds some light on how the global need for English instruction is hammered into Peruvians' minds through advertising. She states that the Peruvian media (e.g., television and important newspapers with national circulation) is saturated with the "advertising discouse of English instruction...reflect[ing] a worldwide rhetoric in which globalization is presented...as a global market wherein capital flows via a lingua franca: English" (Niño-Murcia, 2003, p. 136). For Peruvians, according to this advertising discourse, English is a

key that opens a world of opportunities, namely jobs and immigration. This situation has paved the way for the booming of the Peruvian private language instruction market. Offers for ESL instruction abound at the level of formal private language schools for children from affluent families, and less expensive average-to-low quality commercial language institutes. Niño-Murcia reports that the 2001 edition of Lima's yellow pages featured 147 offers for private language instruction, 69 of which were offers for ESL programs. In addition, self-teaching-easy-English instructional packages "are widely available in market stalls for prices in the range of US$0.30" (p. 128), for those unfortunates who cannot afford to pay for private instruction.

As people worldwide increasingly regard English as the key to personal and economic success, ELT centers offering rapid and easy-to-learn ESL programs continue to mushroom. Cristobal and Llurda (2005) report that many private language schools in Catalonia, Spain, promise fast and effective ESL courses in order to lure those language learners who may have experienced frustration and boredom in traditional L2/FL instructional settings. For these schools, the bait to seduce potential clients is offering flexible timetables, allegedly high quality language teaching thanks to their staff of English native-speakers (McKay, 2003; Phillipson, 1992), and multimedia language laboratories, thus adding a touch of modernity.

On the whole, Pegrum's (2004), Niño-Murcia's (2003) and Cristobal and Llurda's (2005) studies are illuminating in that they show how advertising strategies coupled with widely-accepted assumptions of the personal benefits that English can bestow upon its users (Pennycook, 1998) are capitalized on by ELT providers to advance their for-profit interests. However, these studies scrutinized only printed advertising (e.g., specialized

ELT magazines or newspapers). They did not consider the ways in which the Internet (i.e., the World Wide Web/WWW) as a marketing communication tool (Berthon, Pitt & Watson, 1996) can be used to showcase English private instruction. The question arises: to what extent do potential students turn to the Internet for information about ESL programs?

A statistical report issued by CAPLS (2004b) reveals that potential clients seem to prefer getting information about language schools through friends and acquaintances or through authorized agents operating in diverse parts of the globe, notably East Asia and Latin America. However, many of the clients participating in the survey also stated that they learned about the schools on the Internet or that they used it to corroborate or to expand the information obtained from agents or acquaintances. Further, as Yarymowich (2004) argues, the Internet is crucial for private language schools to disseminate their advertising discourse to the four corners of the world, and thus overcome the great physical distance that separates them from their clientele. All in all, this evidence suggests that the WWW is an effective medium through which private language schools can build their public image and market their language programs.

2.4 *Private Language Schools on the Web*

As suggested in the previous section, the Internet enables ELT providers, through their websites, to showcase their products and reach a vast population of potential customers. To obtain proof that the Internet is a common practice among ELT providers, one only need use any popular Internet browser, such as Google or Yahoo, and enter some key words, such as "English as a second language" or simply "ESL". Almost instantaneously, these powerful search engines can retrieve a seemingly infinite list of

links to websites featuring everything from ELT material (e.g., textbooks) to ESL programs at private language schools, notably in English-speaking countries (e.g., Canada).[4]

This over-saturation of offers for ESL instruction has created a highly competitive market. To lure a fee-paying clientele, private language institutes must strive to make their products look more preferable than – or at least equally acceptable as - those of the competition (Weilbacher, 2003). In addition to promoting easy-to-learn English courses (Cristobal & Llurda, 2005; Niño-Murcia, 2003), some private language schools are offering other services (e.g., sightseeing tours) that have no or very little instructional value. Yarymowich's (2003) content-based analysis of some Canadian private language schools' websites sheds further light on this issue.

Yarymowich argues that private language schools are being increasingly shaped around a set of practices that incorporates L2/FL education and other recreational or cultural activities into a packaged holiday or vice versa. To provide evidence of these practices or *language tourism*, she undertakes a multi-level discourse analysis of the distinctive form-content features of language tourism marketing. Specifically, she explores three discourse genres present in the majority of the web-based texts surveyed: photographic images, testimonials, and the "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs) format. Likewise, she uncovers the ideological assumptions and recurrent themes that appear as prominent in the discourse of private language schools.

Depending on the target clientele's age and nationality, visual texts generally feature young, visibly diverse students smiling and hugging one another as well as school

[4] For example, a Google search conducted on August 1st, 2006, retrieved 5,110,000 hits for the entry "ESL in Canada", whereas the search using the entry "English as a second language" retrieved 215,000,000 hits.

staff. The harmonious ambiance conveyed by visuals may be intended "to allay any fears on the part of the students with respect to whether they will feel at ease and fit into the strange, new environment to which they propose to travel" (Yarymowich, 2003, p. 37). Thus, the significance of visuals lies in their potential of "enabling" students to not only sample or experience the product before purchasing it (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998 cited in Yarymowich, 2003) but, at a glance, also develop ideas as to what an overseas language school may look like. But apart from images of satisfied students, Yarymowich reports that language schools' web sites also include pictures of local attractions and architectural landmarks; the underlying message relates to the pleasure of discovering while studying abroad.

At the level of written discourse, the testimonials involve current as well as former students' opinions about the school. Whether or not those comments were actually made by students, their purpose may be intended as a means to add a measure of legitimacy. To convey the impression that these indeed come from the students' mouths – or pens - the comments are usually written in the first person singular and include spelling or grammar inaccuracies, supposedly proving that the comments were not written by native speakers. The FAQs section features readily hands-on information about language schools, their prices and cancellation policies, or procedures to obtain a Canadian study visa. As Yarymowich (2003) states, the FAQs are "far from being neutral…[m]any in fact reflect assumptions about what constitutes a good school and/or learning experience" (p. 44). In fact, the answers usually have to do more with details concerning the school location and its amenities than with study programs.

Lastly, the author focuses on the ideologies and assumptions that language schools advance in order to construct their view of the foreign language education experience. To do so, she resorts to four overarching discourse categories, which she labels: a) *flexibility*, b) *pleasure*, c) *prestige* and *academic excellence*, and d) *family* and *home away from home*.

Flexibility accounts for all those references to a school's willingness to accommodate students' needs by offering, for example, multiple course study options (e.g., intensive or "super-intensive") that students can take at the school's premises or on line from home. Pleasure features refers to the effortless task of foreign language learning while enjoying formal and/or recreational activities – with the emphasis on fun. Prestige and academic excellence relates to the way in which language schools seek to establish their legitimacy by incorporating academic discourse, so as to "counterbalance an image that is entirely bound up with pleasure and adventure" (p. 51). Prestige seems to be achieved, for instance, by featuring the logo of an association to which a language school belongs (e.g., CAPLS), choosing an impressive sounding name (e.g., Academie Linguistique Internationale), or highlighting the number of years a school has been on the market. Family and home away from home discourse makes reference to family and community life, thereby promising not only authentic human contact with the host community (e.g., staying with a Canadian family), but also the emotional support that students will find if homesick.

On the whole, Yarymowich (2003) provides a well-organized description of what information private language operators are deliberately choosing to communicate to their clients and in what way(s) they are doing so. Moreover, her study suggests that, on the

whole, private language schools' web sites appear not to differ from each other significantly in terms of structuring on-line texts - both written and visual - intended to be accessed by potential clients (i.e., students or students' sponsors, such as a parent or relative). However, her study is largely based on a content analysis of the texts produced by Canadian private language schools, without fully accounting for how these schools create texts and set up liaisons amongst the textual components by orchestrating a wide repertoire of discourse features. One way to scrutinize this matter and substantiate it further is to use an approach to discourse analysis that allows one to establish links between the text and broader social issues. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is such an approach.

2.5 *Approaching Discourse*

Discourse, in its everyday sense, is usually conceived of as a form of language use (e.g., public speeches), particularly spoken language (van Dijk, 1997). But this common sense definition is far from that employed in CDA. Gee (1996), who uses the capitalized form of the word Discourse to differentiate it from its everyday meaning (i.e., discourse as language in use), defines Discourse as the diverse ways in which one behaves, interacts, values, thinks, believes, speaks, reads, and writes. These "ways of being [and acting] in the world" (p. viii) are concrete realizations and manifestations of the many roles that coexist in oneself. Figuratively speaking, Discourses form part of one's social wardrobe, from which we select and put on a particular cloak in order to fit in, as the social situation demands it.

However, one's many Discursive cloaks (i.e., roles), which Gee regards as representing one's multiple identities, are often at odds with each other. In his view,

"certain identities, and their concomitant ways of talking, acting, and interacting may well conflict with each other in some circumstance, in which different people expect different identities from the person" (Gee, 2005, 21). This suggests that to look at the multiple roles that private language schools construct for themselves and others involves considering what Discourse(s) the schools enact in a particular circumstance, whether their Discourse(s) is/are suitable for and expected in that particular circumstance, and whether and how those Discourses are at odds with each other.

Fairclough (1992, 2003) conceptualizes discourse on two levels of abstraction. On an abstract dimension, discourse can be used as a mass noun to mean using language (including visual images) as a social practice (e.g., using language as part of a job, such as bartending; Locke, 2004). This characterization of discourse is related to Gee's *D*iscourse discussed above. On a concrete level, discourse (used as a countable noun) denotes "[a] particular way of representing aspects of the world - the processes, relations and structures of the material world, the 'mental world' of thoughts and beliefs...and the social world" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 124).

Considering my interest in unearthing the ideology that private language schools advance discursively to make claims to their legitimacy, I am adopting the view that discourse is both an individual activity and a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1992). Discourse is a practice whereby individuals not only represent their beliefs, values (Gee, 1996) and aspects of the world (Fairclough, 2003), but also act upon the world to fulfill their objectives (Fairclough, 1992; Paré, 2002). Thus, to investigate how discourse is used by these schools to further their for-profit interest, I draw on Fairclough's (1992)

CDA model. Rather than a method, CDA is an approach to discourse analysis that both provides a description of

> discursive practices and [shows] how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief, neither of which is normally apparent to discourse participants. (p. 12)

Discourse, within the Faircloughian CDA framework, is regarded as being a *social practice* and as being manifested linguistically in the form of written or spoken text; these two dimensions being mediated by a third one called *discursive practice* (see below). Discursive practice, Fairclough (1992) argues, does not differ from social practice, but is "a particular form of the latter. In some cases, the social practice may be wholly constituted by the discursive practice, while in others it may involve a mixture of discursive and non-discursive practices" (p. 71). Thus, the analysis of a given discourse entails focusing on the socially and discursively intrinsic nature of any text.

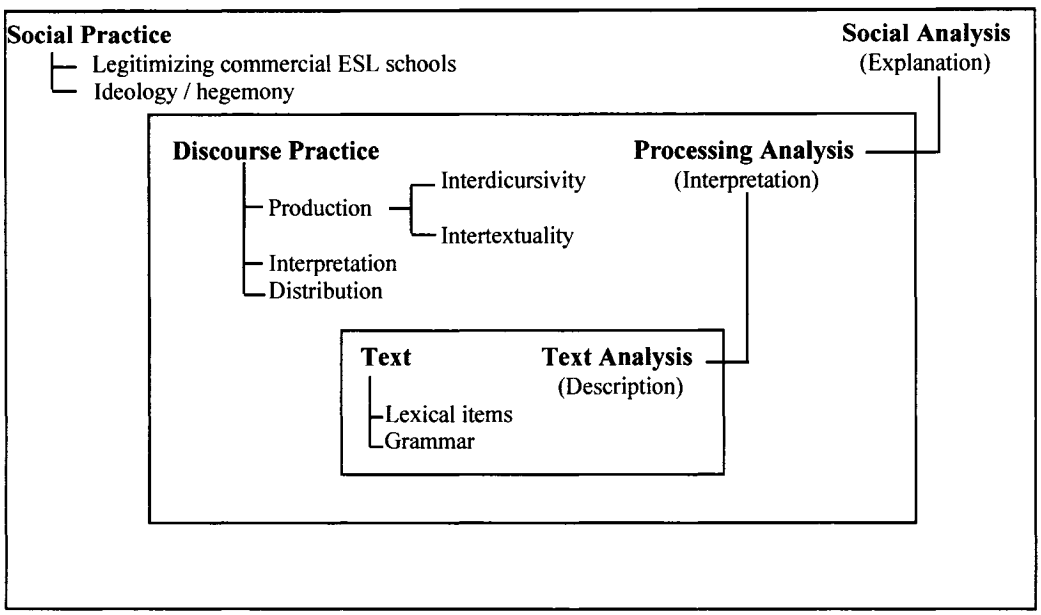


Figure 2.1 *Fairclough's Dimensions of Discourse and Discourse Analysis* (1995)

At the level of social practice, Fairclough analyses discourse in connection with ideology and power, and the social and contextual conditions that have given rise to a

particular text (e.g., the promotion and commercialization of ESL programs). As discussed earlier in the chapter, ideology implies more than a system of values and beliefs. It has "material existence in the practices of institutions, which opens up the way to investigate discursive practices as material forms of ideology" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 87). Thus, language use (i.e., discourse) can be regarded as doing some ideological work (Fairclough, 2003) in that it serves to advance the vested interests of particular groups (e.g., private language schools). One way in which private language schools use discourse to achieve their objectives is by making claims to their legitimacy in the form of assumptions (i.e., taken-for-granted assertion about particular aspects of the world; Fairclough, 2003), such as these schools' claim to be legitimate high-quality education providers.

At the level of discourse practice, Fairclough's approach focuses on how a given text is produced, interpreted, and distributed, in relation to the sociopolitical framework within which the text is generated. Put simply, text production refers to the elements that go into the configuration of a given text. Text interpretation involves the way in which readers process a text and construct their own meanings of it, as well as the extent to which readers subscribe to or contest those meanings. Text distribution entails the way a text is transformed into other types of text, thus becoming part of an intertextual (Fairclough, 1992) chain (e.g., information about study programs in brochures).

In order to explore the way in which private language schools use discourse to advance their particular interests, I will examine what the elements that configure these schools' discourse are. Fairclough (1992) identifies and differentiates two text-production elements: interdiscursivity and intertextuality.

Interdiscursivity, the supporting structure of discursive events, is the way in which a text is constituted by conventions from other discourse domains or *orders of discourse* (Fairclough, 1992). Roughly defined, an order of discourse is the "grammar" not of language, but of discourse (i.e., language in use). Specifically, "it is the set of practices associated with an institution or social domain, and the particular relationships and boundaries which obtain between these practices" (Fairclough, 2000, p. 170). The order of discourse of schools, for example, entails certain discursive practices (e.g., delivering class instruction, recruiting students, holding meetings, or writing reports), which can be contrastively or complementarily related to each other; the borders between them being relatively closed or open. However, Fairclough (2000) argues that due to pressure exerted by factors extrinsic to schools (e.g., the free-market economy), the traditional order of discourse of education is being reshaped "by its shifting relationships with other orders of discourse" (Fairclough, 2000, p. 171). An example is the extent to which private language schools "borrow" the personalized style characteristic of modern advertising (Fairclough, 1992) to address their prospective students, thereby giving origin to a hybrid text constituted by elements of both domains.

Intertextuality, according to Fairclough (1992), "is basically the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth" (p. 84). The texts of others can be explicitly marked as coming from an external source (e.g., using quotation marks and reporting verbs, such as "say"), or unmarked and merged in the current text. An example of the former is the extent to which a private language

school includes favorable opinions about the school that are overtly attributed as coming from (former) students (i.e., testimonials).

Finally, at the level of text (i.e., spoken or written language), Fairclough's approach entails an analysis of, for example, lexical items (e.g., word meaning), grammar (i.e., the combination of words into clauses and sentences), cohesion (i.e., how clauses and sentences are connected), and text structure.

In more recent work, Fairclough (2003) expands his earlier view of CDA by considering it as an approach that views language, including other forms of semiosis (e.g., visual images), as an inherent part of social life. This broader conception of CDA seems to be more suitable for the purpose of this study, for it includes an analysis of how written language and visuals (e.g., photographs, graphs, videoclips) are combined on websites to represent certain views of the world, which are promoted as the "natural" state of affairs. Therefore, taking into account that the analysis of websites involves both verbal language (i.e., sentences, words) and visual images, *text* will encompass not only "any instance of language in use" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 3) but also visual images. Henceforth, a text will be regarded as a *semiotic unit* of verbal and visual meaning (Halliday & Hasan, 1985 in Locke, 2004).

However, Fairclough does not provide a suitable framework to analyze visuals. Thus, to complement and to expand Fairclough's CDA approach, I use Kress and van Leeuven's (2006) work on how to read and interpret images.

2.6 *Towards an Expanded CDA Framework*

Kress and van Leeuven's (2006) approach to visual design aims to describe how portrayed elements (e.g., people, places, and things) are connected to form *visual*

statements of varying degrees of complexity and extension, just as the grammar of language "explains" how words are linked to make meaningful entities (e.g., sentences or texts). The authors argue that language and visuals, which the authors call *semiotic modes*, have unique and specific ways of realizing meaning: in other words, language and visuals have different meaning-making potentials and limitations. To illustrate their point, they suggest that what one can express linguistically through one's choice of words or syntactic structure can be visually realized by one's use of color or compositional structure. Further, the authors contend that contrary to popular assumptions, visual language is not transparent and universally understood by all in the same way, but culture specific.

Visuals, according to Kress and van Leeuven (2006), have to be seen "within the realm of the realization and instantiations of ideology...as means for the articulation of ideological positions" (p. 14). Thus, one of the purposes of their *visual grammar* – and the one that is the most useful for the purpose of this study - is to scrutinize the socially motivated aspects of visuals, the interests that visuals are serving, and the assumptions embedded in images. To do this, the authors draw upon and adapt Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG; 1985 in Kress and van Leeuven, 2006) which sees language as fulfilling three metafunctions simultaneously: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational metafunction refers to the array of choices that are favored to represent reality and experience. The interpersonal metafunction concerns the particular social relations between the producer, the receiver, and the (object) being represented that are enacted in visuals. The textual metafunction is the realization of textual meanings.

Using Kress and van Leeuven's SFG-based analytical framework to look at visuals may make it possible to reach a better understanding of the motivation that may drive private language schools to selectively include and privilege certain pictures on their websites.

2.7 *Conclusion*

My purpose in this chapter has been to gain a deeper understanding of the ELT industry, focusing specifically on the private language school market, and to develop a theoretical lens through which I can examine the ideological constructs and practices of this sector of the industry. Part of this undertaking involved delineating a working definition of ideology as entailing more than a system of values and beliefs advocated by elite groups (van Dijk, 1997). It is a social practice (Fairclough, 1992; Pare, 2002) that has material existence in social institutions (Foss, 1996) and is instantiated in discursive practices. As a normalizing tool, discourse enables dominant groups to win people over to their way of representing reality by achieving popular consent, instead of resorting to coercive means (Foss, 1996; Fairclough, 2003). Accordingly, by advancing their ideology discursively and naturalizing it (Pennycook, 2001), dominant groups can attain and sustain their hegemonic position, and legitimate it.

Adopting such a perspective on discourse and ideology, I regard the beliefs underlying the ELT profession, or Phillipson's (1992) fallacies, not as being merely theoretical constructs, but as having concrete existence in current practices and promotional strategies advocated in the field. For instance, by advertising a NST staff, private language schools not only endorse the belief that native speakers make the best L2 teachers (i.e., Phillipson's native speaker fallacy), but also have an argument for

charging substantially higher fees to clients (McKay, 2003). Pegrum's (2003) survey of current advertisement in printed media (e.g., magazines), and Yarymowich's (2003) content-based analysis of the discourse on Canadian private language schools' websites further confirm this trend.

Last but not least, I laid out my rationale and approach to discourse and discourse analysis by drawing upon Fairclough's (1992, 2003) CDA framework. But more than discussing the different discourse analytic tools, I have broadened the CDA framework by incorporating further tools to analyze visuals and the implications of hyperlinks on websites. I have found Kress and van Leeuven's (2006) work not only compatible with the CDA framework I have selected as research methods, but also instrumental for shedding some light on the issue that I will investigate: the ideology that private language schools are privileging on their websites in order to position themselves as legitimate educational institutions and thus attract potential clients.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

In the preceding chapters, I showed that the Canadian private language industry is a niche for both private entrepreneurs and the governments. Evidence that private language schools represent an investment opportunity is the $ 400,000-dollar subsidy granted by the federal government, through Industry Canada, to help promote the development and the global competitiveness of the private language market. Yet, despite carrying the "school" label, private language schools have more affinity with the corporate world than with the educational milieu.

Thus, I will further examine the education-business antithesis by analyzing the discourse on private language school's websites. Specifically, I will expose the ideology that these schools advance discursively to further their claims to academic legitimacy, and thus counterbalance their for-profit business status. Drawing upon the notion of ideology as a social practice (Fairclough, 1992, 2003; Paré, 2002), I look at the way in which these schools are acting discursively not only to create a particular representation and signification of ESL instruction (i.e., the school, study programs, and services), but also to legitimate and sustain it. In light of this, I will address the following research questions:

1. What is the ideology that private language schools advocate on their websites and how is it advanced discursively?
2. In advancing their ideology, how do private language schools negotiate the tension between their claims to educational legitimacy and their for-profit commercial status?

To answer these questions, I analyze written and visual texts by using an expanded version of Fairclough's (1992, 2003) CDA framework that incorporates elements from Kress and van Leeuven's (2006) visual grammar. Accordingly, this expanded CDA framework will allow me to examine how texts are orchestrated on the websites of private language schools to emphasize - or deemphasize – their academic and business concerns.

3.1. *Rationale for the Research Context*

A *prima facie*, Montreal, located in the predominantly French-speaking province of Quebec, does not appear to be an ideal research context for my purposes, as it is not accurately representative of an English-speaking environment. Even though the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) grants English and French equal status as official languages of Canada, the Québec National Assembly recognizes French as the only official language of the province (*Charte de la langue française*). A powerful and effective piece of legislation, the *Charte*, popularly known as *Bill 101*, represents Quebec's decision to maintain its French culture in an ocean of English. Specifically, Bill 101 grants French the status of official language in Quebec for just about every aspect of public life in the province, such as government, the judicial system, education, advertising, and business. Taking this context into account, one could argue that a potential clientele to be immersed in a truly English environment may not be enticed to study at a private language school in Montreal.

Notwithstanding those facts, there are several factors that position Montreal as an appropriate research context. First, it is the second largest city in Canada and one of the preferred urban centers in which landed immigrants choose to settle (Belanger &

Malenfant, 2005). Secondly, being the site of some of the most prestigious English- and French-speaking universities (e.g., McGill University or Université de Montréal) locally and abroad, it attracts thousands of students from the four corners of the world.

Last but not least, what makes Montreal a suitable research context is precisely its predominantly French-speaking environment. Such a linguistic environment arguably puts Montreal-based schools at a disadvantage, compared to their counterparts located in truly English-speaking cities (e.g., Toronto). Therefore, one may speculate that to attract students, private language schools in Montreal have to be more persuasive in their promotional strategies. For example, they may put emphasis on Montreal's linguistic diversity or its widely promoted *joie de vivre* spirit that can be seen in the internationally renowned summer festivals (e.g., The Montreal International Jazz Festival). In emphasizing advantageous characteristics of Montreal while de-emphasizing or overlooking others (e.g., the extremely cold winter of Quebec), private language schools not only make Montreal a selling point that serves their for-profit agenda, but also promote themselves in a favorable light and lure clients accordingly.

3.2. *Rationale for Website Selection Criteria*

In this study, I chose to concentrate on those websites belonging to schools that are affiliated with CAPLS, and are also truly-Montreal based. The rationale for choosing affiliation to CAPLS as one of the criteria is twofold. First, CAPLS is an established and well-structured association constituted by a network of schools (n = 97 from coast to coast) that share and look after their common interests (i.e., to make profits). Second, the association enjoys considerable prestige locally and internationally, thanks to its close ties with federal agencies (e.g., Canada's Foreign Affairs and International Trade;

www.itcan-cican.gc.ca) and with other independent, non-for-profit organizations (e.g., the Canadian Education Centre Network/CEC; www.cecnetwork.ca). Both of these government and private organizations aid CAPLS in promoting and marketing Canada as a study destination for overseas students. Thus, by advertising their membership in CAPLS, private language schools can further strengthen their profile as purportedly legitimate and reputable language learning institutions to persuade prospective clients.

Of all the members of CAPLS, I will focus on the websites of two Montreal-based private language schools: Academie Linguistique Internationale (A.L.I.) and Point3 Language Center. As stated above, because this study focuses on the Montreal market, I consider a school as truly Montreal-based if it "stands on its own"; in other words, if it does not belong to a network of schools located throughout Canada or worldwide. Of the 10 schools affiliated with CAPLS that operate in Montreal (see Appendix A), only these two can be considered as being from Montreal; the rest have branches in major urban centers in Canada and abroad. For example, International Language Schools of Canada (ILSC), established in Vancouver, has branches in Toronto and Montreal. Global Educational Opportunities Services (GEOS) has branches in Canada and other world locations, such as Australia or Spain, among others.

3.3 *Data Collection Instruments*

One methodological issue revolves around how to preserve the dynamism of the web (i.e., web-based sources are potentially ephemeral and constantly changing; Mautner, 2005) and its multimedia aspect, as some websites can be regarded as a combination of text and television (Mitra & Cohen, 1999).

To overcome this concern, I took advantage of developments in software applications that enable Internet-based researchers to "capture" websites, as they "exist" at a given moment. Such software allows the researcher to work off-line when selecting the data for subsequent analysis, while making sure that the artifact to be analyzed remains unaltered. After considering a recent discussion about this type of software on the Association of Internet Researchers' (AoIR) website (www.aoir.org), I chose the free-downloadable HTTrack Web Copier (www.httrack.com) to capture A.L.I's and Point3's websites "as they are", which I retrieved on January 21st, 2006. This software allowed me to download the websites from the Internet to a local directory on my computer, while maintaining the original websites' link configuration, both internal (i.e., within the same site) and external (i.e., across websites). Further, it allowed me to get HTML and images (e.g., pictures, graphs) and exclude those that I deemed as unnecessary for my research purposes, such as PDF files containing printable application forms or archives describing extra-curricular activities.

3.4. *Phases of Data Coding and Analysis*

3.4.1 *Exploratory Phase*

As stated earlier, the motivation driving this study is to examine how two CAPLS-affiliated private language schools from Montreal (i.e., A.L.I. and Point3) use discourse, visuals and hyperlinks on their websites, in order to further their ideology. Related to this question is the question of how A.L.I. and Point3 manage the tension between their claims to legitimacy and their for-profit business concerns.

With this research purpose in mind, I explored A.L.I.'s and POINT3's websites in order to identify the discourse types that configure the web-based marketing texts and the

mode used to represent each discourse (written language and/or visuals). Likewise, I set out to pinpoint the hyperlinks featured on the websites.

On the basis of my exploration, I devised the following categories to account for discourse:

1) Education: includes any discourse making reference to A.L.I's and Point3's academic prestige and authority, as well as their language-developmental goals, description of study courses, and instructional approach. Visuals include institutional logos or pictures of, for example, teachers and students.

Category	POINT3	
Education	Students are expected to participate fully.	

2) Travel & Leisure: pertains to the discursive and visual promotion of tourism (e.g., Montreal as an internationally chosen destination for travelers) and similarly related activities (e.g., visits to museums), as well as social activities or events (e.g., parties).

Category	A.L.I.	
Travel & Leisure	Group outings, evening events and weekend trips are an integral part of a fun-filled social scene at A.L.I.	

3) Business: includes textual instances that pertain to the discourse of the enterprise, customer-service and promotional advertising domains.

Category	POINT3	
Business	We arrange homestay and other accommodations…we arrange transportation from the Montréal Dorval airport, if desired.	

4) Mixed Statements: include any discursive or visual instance characterized by a mix of elements (e.g., lexical items) pertaining to the discourse types referred to above, such as Education (underlined instances) and Travel & Leisure (italized instances).

Category	A.L.I	POINT3
Mixed Statements	The basic program is an excellent way to combine studying and *traveling.*	Study Semi-Intensive English…and *take to the slopes every afternoon*!

3.4.2 *Data Coding Phase*

The second step of my research involved using the categories described above to code both written and visual text as well as hyperlinks that converge on A.L.I.'s and POINT3's websites. To facilitate the task of coding written and visual text, I fragmented the text into manageable units or textual instances. I used odd numbers for A.L.I and even numbers for POINT3 to differentiate the textual instances extracted from each website. Instances of written text included full sentences and clauses, correct or not (e.g., "At POINT3, we take learning seriously"), and noun phrases (e.g., "Fun social and cultural activities"); the dividing line between each written instance being the period. Instances of

visual texts included pictures, institutional logos, drawings and graphics, such as pie charts.

The rationale for fragmenting written and visual data into quantifiable units is that it allows me to provide a quantitative description of the proportion of occurrence of each discourse type as well as the mode of signification (i.e., written or visual) used to represent each type. In this sense, it is imperative to clarify that the aim of quantifying written and visual instances is not to perform a statistical analysis (e.g., correlation or chi-square), which is beyond the purpose of this study. Rather, using percentages to account for which discourse and which mode of signification are emphasized – or de-emphasized – will be useful for discussing how private language schools manage the tension between educational objective and business concerns.

3.4.3 *Data Analysis Phase*

The third step of my research entailed articulating the analytic toolkit to tackle the issue that I set out to investigate: the ideology that A.L.I. and POINT3 are advancing discursively to serve their for-profit interests, and the way in which they use discourse to further their claims to educational legitimacy and counterbalance their for-profit commercial status. To address these questions, I drew on a selection of analytic tools from Fairclough's (1992, 2003) CDA framework and Kress and van Leeuven's(2006) visual grammar. From Fairclough's framework, I used the notion of interdiscursivity to examine the tension between education objectives and business concerns, and intertextuality and assumptions to investigate A.L.I's and POINT3's claims to legitimacy. From Kress and van Leeuven, I used their SFG-based visual grammar to analyze the ideational (i.e., the favored visual representation of reality and experience) and

interpersonal (i.e., the social interaction enacted between the author of, the participants in and the reader of visuals) components.

First, Interdiscursivity entailed looking at the types of discourse or features from different discursive domains that are drawn upon in the text. In this study, a focus on interdiscursivity involved examining the relationship-tension between academic discourse and any other discourse atypical of the educational domain (e.g., Travel & Leisure), or the way in which textual instances are constituted by a blend of elements from different discursive domains. In this latter sense, the Mixed Statements category was instrumental in examining the mixing of discourses at a micro level (i.e., the level of the sentence).

Second, interextuality, the presence of other "voices" or texts within a given text (Bazerman, 2004; Fairclough, 1992, 2003), entailed looking at the way in which the discourse of others (e.g., students) is represented on the websites and contributes to advancing a particular representation of A.L.I. and POINT3. Drawing upon Fairclough's (1992, 2003) work, I used the following categories: *manifest intertextuality* and *implicit intertextuality*, which he redefined as assumptions in his 2003 work.

Manifest intertextuality, the first category, includes:

1) Direct discourse representation: claims to faithfully reproduce the actual words of the original source Indirect discourse representation.

Direct discourse representation	 "It's a great city and a great school. I really enjoy meeting people from other countries." (www.studymontreal.com)

2) Indirect discourse representation: claims to reproduce not the exact words but the meaning of the original text in a fashion that reflects the text author's

interpretation of events, thereby blurring the boundaries between the voices of the current author and that of the author of the quoted text.

Indirect discourse representation

Nilia is a rare hybrid -- part teacher, part professional musician. (www.point-3.com)

A methodological dilemma arises in relation to visuals. One aspect of this dilemma concerns those testimonials (i.e., direct discourse representation) accompanied by pictures portraying their alleged author. This kind of discursive-visual mix may well be analyzed as interdiscursive mix. But in this case, my interest is in analyzing this instance not as interdiscursivity, but as a move on the part of A.L.I. and POINT3 to over-emphasize the genuineness of the source. The other aspect to consider is that pictures are analyzable as visual intertextuality or visual rhetoric. Conducting such an analysis is, however, beyond the scope of this study. Except for the case in which pictures are combined with instances of discourse representation, visuals will be analyzed as examples of interdiscursivity and assumptions (see below).

The second category, implicit intertextuality, comprises claims representing thoughts and opinions that are (vaguely) attributed to others yet have been recontextualized to represent generalized attitudes.

Ex.: Our ESL programs are very popular among international students and students from Canada. (www.studymontreal.com)

The other form of assumptions includes presupposed or taken-for-granted claims and assertions about particular aspects of the world promoted as the natural state of things (Fairclough, 2003). Assumed or presupposed meanings, Fairclough (2003) argues, can be seen as being of particular ideological relevance for those involved in power relations to

portray particulars as universals, thereby achieving and sustaining their dominant position. Assumptions, then, stand as fundamental for exposing the claims to legitimacy that A.L.I. and POINT3 are improving on their websites. Drawing upon Fairclough's (2003) taxonomy of assumptions, I will analyze:

a) Propositional or factual assumptions: involve claims about what is, can be, or will be.

    Ex.: Study with Canadians. (www.studymontreal.com)

b) Value assumptions: refer to those claims about what is good or desirable. They can be triggered by, for example, adjectival and adverbial modifiers that denote or connote evaluative meanings.

    Ex.: Live and learn English while experiencing the adventure of a lifetime. (www.point-3.com)

To analyze visuals, I draw on Kress and van Leuuven"s (2006) SFG-based approach to interpreting visuals not as fulfilling a merely illustrative function (see also Kress, 1998), but as constituting and conveying ideological statements advancing a particular portrayal of A.L.I. and POINT3 as legitimate. Using their Hallidayian approach to reading and interpreting images, I see visuals as representing the world of experience and ideas (i.e., ideational metafunction), and enacting interpersonal relations (i.e., interpersonal metafunction), both of which are instantiated in visual texts (i.e., textual metafunction). As mentioned above, I also connect visuals to assumptions, for I regard visuals as reflecting and furthering assumptions through a different textual mode.

3.5 *Conclusion*

In this chapter, my purpose has been to develop a well-structured methodology, suitable for shedding some light on the issue that I set out to investigate: the education-

business tension on the websites belonging to A.L.I. and Point3, the two Montreal-based private language schools affiliated to CAPLS that I have chosen to analyze. Developing the methodology for this study has implied not only articulating the research questions to drive the study, but also laying out my rationale as regards the research context, the criterion for selecting websites, and the virtual data collection instruments. But perhaps the most significant point in this chapter has been the adoption, adaptation, and integration of elements from diverse approaches into an effective CDA toolkit for the purpose of this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of A.L.I.'s and Point-3's websites. The first section of the chapter reports quantitative data in terms of the number of web pages analyzed, the percentage in which each discourse type (i.e., Education, Travel & Leisure, and Business) occurs on both websites, as well as the mode (i.e., written language or visual) used to represent it. The quantified data is supported by a detailed linguistic analysis of selected text samples that illustrate how each discourse category is realized in the text. The second section presents an interdiscursive analysis of sample web pages, in order to show the tension between educational and non-educational discourses. The third section presents an analysis of the testimonials and taken-for-granted claims in terms of interextuality and assumptions, showing how these discursive strategies are used by A.L.I. and POINT3 to make claims to legitimacy, and thus advance their ideology.

4.1. *A.L.I.'s and POINT3's Websites in Numbers*

A.L.I.'s and POINT3's websites feature 46 and 31 web pages, respectively (refer to Table 4.1 on p. 43). As for A.L.I.'s website, the web pages selected for analysis represent 82.61% of the total. The remaining 17.39% left unanalyzed comprises web pages pertaining to ESL teacher certification programs (*n=2*), on-line application forms (*n=2*), and start dates and tuition fees (*n=4*). As regards POINT3's website, the analysis included 24 web pages, which represent 77.42% of the total (*n=31*). Those web pages not analyzed (22.58%) refer to intensive French L2 programs, private ESL programs and ESL programs for corporations (*n=3*), teachers' testimonials (*n*=1; NB the teachers' testimonials on POINT3 are all included on one webpage, yet this webpage was analyzed

for its intertextuality; see below), start dates schedule (*n=1*), and on-line registration forms (*n=2*). Because this study focuses on ESL programs offered to international as well as Canadian individuals, the pages aforementioned, such as those advertising French L2 or teacher training programs, were omitted from the analysis.

Website	**A.L.I.**		**POINT 3**	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
Web pages	*46*	100	*31*	100
Selected for analysis	*38*	82.61	*24*	77.42
Unanalyzed	*8*	17.39	*7*	22.58

Table 4.1 *Total Number of Web Pages*

The texts on each of the web pages selected from each website were then segmented into instances of written and visual text, in order to quantify them. Instances of written text included (error-free) sentences (e.g., "At POINT3, we take learning seriously") or noun phrases (e.g., "The best language school in Montreal"). Each unit of written text is separated from one another by a period. Instances of visual text comprise pictures, institutional logos, drawings and graphics, such as pie charts. The rationale for quantifying and tabulating instances of written and visual discourse was to provide an overview of how many instances correspond to the Education, Travel & Leisure, Business and Mixed Statements categories. Doing so allowed me to observe which discourse(s) is given more emphasis quantitatively on each website and thus provide further evidence to substantiate the interdiscursive analysis of sample web pages.

Insofar as A.L.I.'s website is concerned (see Table 4.2 on p. 44), the data show that the discourse categories of Travel & Leisure (39.65%) and Business (35.64%) together represent 75.29% of 512 textual instances of the 38 web pages analyzed. The Education discourse category represents only 10.16%. The remaining 14.84% corresponds to instances of Mixed Statements, a category that includes text samples

characterized by a mixture of elements from Education, Travel & Leisure, and Business. With respect to POINT3's website (see Table 4.2), the data reveal that, similar to A.L.I.'s website, both Travel & Leisure (37.10%) and Business (37.75%) take up 4.85% of 302 textual instances, while Mixed Statements and Education represent 15.94% and 11.98%, respectively.

A.L.I.

Textual Instances *n= 512*

Travel & Leisure		Business		Education		Mixed Statements	
n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
203	39.65	*183*	35.74	*52*	*10.16*	*76*	14.84

Written		Visual		Written		Visual		Written		Visual		Written		Visual	
n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
20	9.85	*183*	90.15	*130*	71.04	*51*	27.87	*44*	84.62	*8*	15.38	*74*	97.37	*2*	2.63

POINT3

Textual Instances *n= 345*

Travel & Leisure		Business		Education		Mixed Statements	
n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
128	37.10	*121*	35.07	*41*	11.88	*55*	15.94

Written		Visual		Written		Visual		Written		Visual		Written		Visual	
n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
94	73.44	*34*	26.56	*114*	94.21	*7*	5.79	*39*	95.12	*2*	4.88	*55*	100	*0*	0

Table 4.2 *Quantified Textual Instances on A.L.I.'s and POINT3's Websites*

Table 4.2 shows that the majority of instances of written and visual discourse on both A.L.I.'s and POINT3's websites belong to the tourism and business domains, whereas educational discourse occurs in very small percentages. Furthermore, not only are educational and non-educational matters given almost the same emphasis quantitatively on both A.L.I.'s and POINT3's websites (e.g., 10.16% and 11.88% for Education; 39.65% and 37.10% for Travel & Leisure), but they also occur in nearly equally disproportionate ways. The data also suggest that, although they are completely independent of one another, A.L.I. and POINT3 seem to be driven by the same market-driven rationale as to which aspect of the school is to be given more prominence.

One way to explain this common trend on A.L.I.'s and POINT3's websites is that in being affiliated with CAPLS, both schools must abide by the association's norms and standards requiring that its members provide high-quality student services outside the traditional classroom experience (e.g., sightseeing tours, accommodation with homestay families). These percentages suggest that A.L.I.'s and POINT3's concern is with advancing their for-profit commercial interests, and that they do so by emphasizing business-related matters (e.g., accommodation services).

At the level of written discourse, student services are emphasized through references to Travel & Leisure and Business (see Table 4.3 on p. 46). First, travel and leisure discourse is characterized by statements of fact in the present tense highlighting positive attributes (e.g., "...a warm, vibrant ambiance...") and generalized attitudes, feelings and emotions (e.g., "Montreal exudes..." or "Montrealers love..."). Pictures include students or people engaged in some kind of social activity. The pictures on both websites mostly show happy students having a good time at a bar (sample 3), enjoying themselves doing some outdoor activities (sample 4), or experiencing "true" Canadian traditions, such as tasting maple syrup at a sugar shack in Quebec or watching a First Nations Peoples festival (samples 5 & 6, respectively). In addition, both schools dedicate an entire web page not only to promote Montreal as a renowned touristic destination, but also to portray Montrealers as fun-loving and welcoming of visitors (samples 1 & 2). This choice of visuals indicates that promoting Montreal's charms and other entertainment- and tourism-related activities is a niche for these schools.

Category	A.L.I.	POINT3
Travel & Leisure	[1]Montreal exudes a warm, vibrant ambiance, which will charm the most demanding visitor. [3]  [5] 	[2]Montrealers love to celebrate…the best nightlife…countless festivals and special events… [4]  [6] 

Table 4.3 *Travel & Leisure Discourse Samples*

Second, business discourse (see Table 4.4 below) characterizes those written instances that create a customer-service experience (samples 7, 8 & 11) or that emulate the discourse of advertising (sample 13). Linguistically, these discourses are realized in imperative sentences making a direct appeal to students (e.g., "Feel free to compare…"), the personalization of the school and the students (e.g., we, you), or in verbs that connote notions of customer service support (e.g., help, "provide, arrange).

Category	A.L.I.	POINT3
Business	[7]We…help you find an apartment near the school…provide free internet access, welcome you at the airport…and help you contract medical insurance.	[8]We arrange homestay and other accommodations…we arrange transportation from the Montréal Dorval airport, if desired.
	[9]All host families are carefully selected by our Homestay Coordinator, and are inspected according to strict criteria.	[10]All subsequent rental fees should be paid directly to Tour Trylon. Please note that prices vary according to season.
	[11]Our educational advisors will help you to choose the language program that is most suited to your particular needs. Regular follow-ups between students, teachers, and counselors guarantee that each program meets your expectations.	[12] Note that there is a $185 accommodation change fee if you decide to leave your homestay early.
	[13]**A.L.I.** offers very attractive prices to international students. Feel free to compare, our prices are among the cheapest in Canada.	[14] 
	[15] 	[16] 

Table 4.4 *Business Discourse Samples*

Other instances of business discourse include the formal wording and structuring of statements found in legal contracts stipulating the regulations by which student-clients have to abide (samples 10 & 12). Visually, business discourse is reflected in pictures promoting services to students, such as apartments (sample 15), accommodation with a host family (sample 18), or luxurious cars for airport pick up (sample 16). In this way, the customer-service experience created through written discourse is further emphasized by the visual mode (Kress & van Leeuven, 2006).

Educational concerns (see Table 4.5 below), on the other hand, are reflected in discourse used to describe study programs and the requirements that students must meet in order to successfully achieve the program objectives, for example participating in class, doing homework or passing exams (see samples 18, 20 and 21 in Table 4.5 on p. 54). At the sentence level, educational discourse is marked by vocabulary characteristic of schools, such as classes, students, tests, language program or homework (samples 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, & 24).

Category	A.L.I.	POINT3
Education	[17] For all students attending A.L.I., **Core Classes** are a mandatory component of any language program. [19] A minimum IELTS score of 5.0 is required for direct entry into the program. [21] An exit test with a **final mark of 70%** must be completed to pass to the next level. [23]  [25] 	[18] Students are expected to participate fully [20] Reading and writing exercises are homework requirements and practice tests are given along the way… [22] As students work on the different areas to be tested, they are required to reflect upon how the language works. [24] Point3's classes are arranged into three distinct classes that focus on accuracy, comprehension, and fluency. [26] 

Table 4.5 *Educational Discourse Samples*

Other sentence-level features that characterize academic discourse as "impersonal, distant and conservative" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 144) include addressing students in the third person (e.g., "As students work on the different areas to be tested, they are required to reflect upon how the language works") and using passive voice sentences to create a formal and impersonal tone (e.g., An exit test must be completed...). Visual instances portray images of classrooms, empty or filled with students and teachers interacting actively (samples 25 & 26). A.L.I. goes further than including pictures of classrooms, teachers and students by portraying the picture of a diploma that resembles those issued by recognized and well-established universities (sample 23). Accordingly, by fully exploiting the visual mode, A.L.I. can make claims to educational legitimacy.

The text samples expounded so far are relatively explicit, in the sense that they convey information only about a specific domain and seem to be emphasizing that particular domain only. Yet, as Table 4.2 above shows, there are other textual instances in which elements from Education, Travel & Leisure and Business are subsumed under a hybrid textual mix or Mixed Statements (refer to Table 4.6 on p. 49). At the level of the sentence, this mixing of discourses is realized by merging lexical items pertaining to the domains of education (e.g., *learning*, *immersion*), travel and leisure (e.g., experience the Canadian way of life), and business (e.g., *highly recommended*, *optimize*). In other cases, the imperative mood characteristic of promotion and advertising is used as the matrix into which elements from Education and Travel & Leisure are embedded (sample 32). The visual mix includes graphics (samples 31 & 32) used in the business world to provide information about educational concerns (e.g., description of language study programs) at a glance.

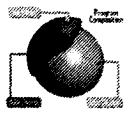
Category	A.L.I.	POINT3
Mixed Statements	[27]The basic *program* is an *excellent way* to combine *studying* and traveling. [29]Homestay is *highly recommended* for *students* who want to *optimize* their *learning* through total *immersion* and experience the Canadian way of life.	[28]*Study* intensive *ESL* in beautiful Montreal! [30]Adventure *programs*...**Our** commitment to making *learning* exciting is what this *program* is all about
	[31] 	[32]Live and *learn English* while experiencing the adventure of a lifetime. *Professional* adventure guides *teach* everything needed for wilderness survival!
	[33] 	[34]**Our** *teaching* and *administrative* staff are *highly qualified*, and are *dedicated* to making **your** *learning* environment as conducive to *learning* as possible

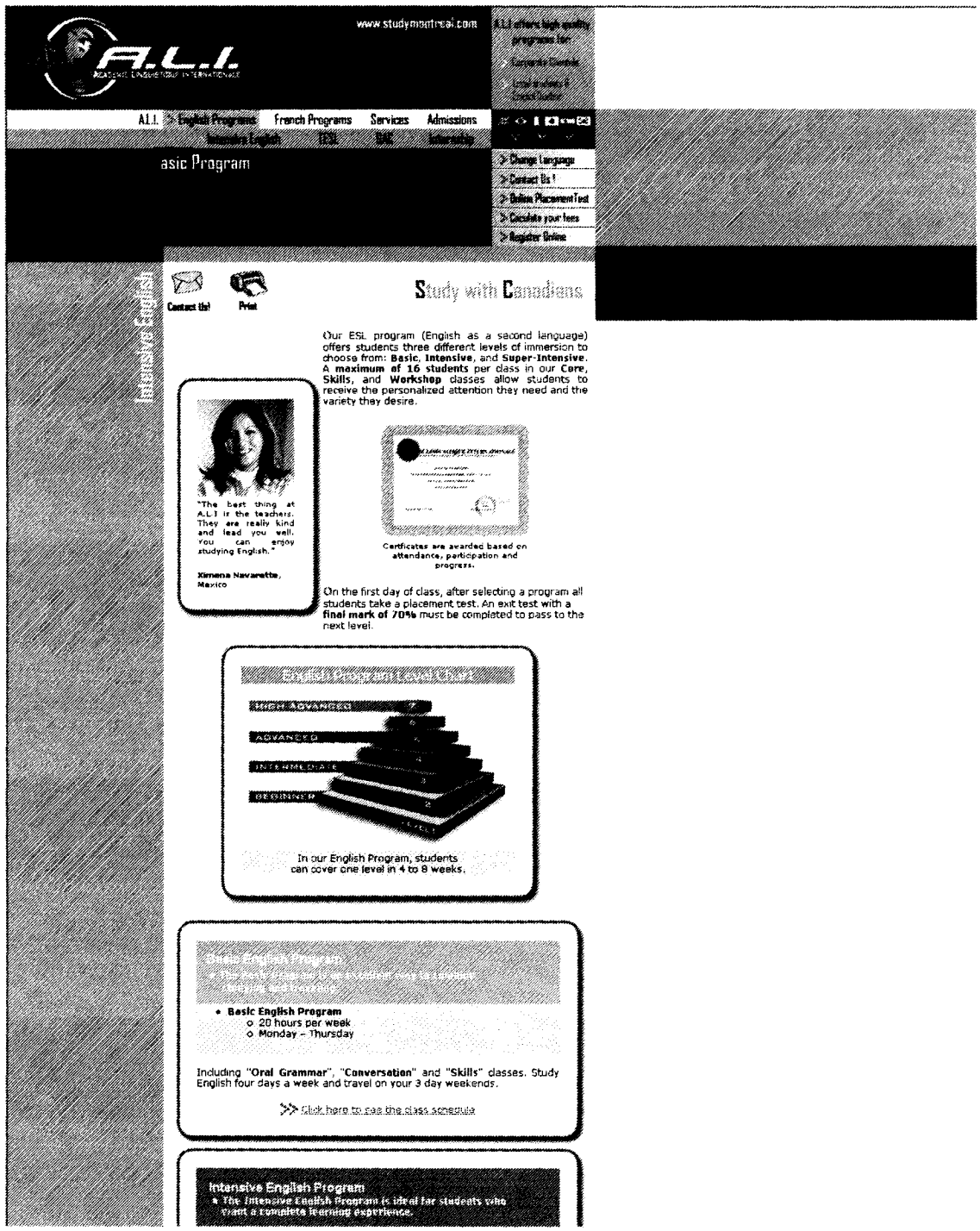
Table 4.6 *Mixed Statements Samples*

The quantitative and qualitative data reported provide an overall description of the differential emphasis that educational and non-educational discourses receive on the websites. However, the data do not show specifically how these contrasting discourses are used and merged on the web pages to construct a coherent representation of ESL instruction that both appears legitimate and serves the for-profit interests of A.L.I. and POINT3. One way to shed light on how this mixing of discourses advances and legitimates A.L.I.'s and POINT3's ideology is to approach this discursive phenomenon from an interdiscursive stance.

4.2 *Interdiscursive Mix on A.L.I.'s and POINT3's Websites*

The analysis of interdiscursivity, as Fairclough (1992, 2003) points out, allows for exposing the different social practices (e.g., teaching and selling ESL instruction) and social relations (e.g., school-student, seller-purchaser) that are instantiated in the web-based texts, and that allow A.L.I. and POINT3 to further their for-profit concerns. This phenomenon is illustrated and discussed below by means of three web page samples extracted from both the websites. I chose to report these web pages for they are representative of the mixing of discourses that I aim to expose.

The first sample (35; see below) from A.L.I.'s website concerns the offer of different English programs and the purpose and content of each course.



Sample 35 *Intensive ESL Program on A.L.I.'s Website*

Foregrounded on the page are A.L.I.'s institutional logo, a picture of a diploma awarded by the institution, and a pyramid-shaped graphic depicting the different levels of language proficiency targeted in the program. What also stands out is the picture of a smiling student, as well as two written textual instances in large fonts ("Intensive English", "Study with Canadians").

Because of their saliency, visuals can make information available at a glance and thus provide A.L.I. with an effective strategy to convey a more powerful and immediate message to clients. Indeed, the visual mode appears to be an effective tool for A.L.I. to foreground its image of educational prestige and legitimacy, which is achieved by including the picture of a university-like diploma. In this sense, Kress and van Leeuven (2006) argue that the information conveyed through visuals cannot be translated exactly into the written mode. There is not a one-to-one relationship between the way in which one can make meaning out of visuals and the way in which one expresses that meaning linguistically (i.e., what lexicosemantic choices one makes to code the message conveyed by visuals).

At the level of written text, educational discourse is realized through two distinctive lexicogrammatical features. One of these features is the use of lexical items (i.e., vocabulary) characteristic of schools, such as "classes", "tests", and "language program". The other one is the use of impersonal sentences in the passive voice to express obligation and requirements (e.g., "Certificates are awarded..."An exit test must be completed..."), and third-person nouns and pronouns when addressing (prospective) students (e.g., "On the first day of classes...students take a placement test"); these two latter structures emulating the formal tone characteristic of academic institutions.

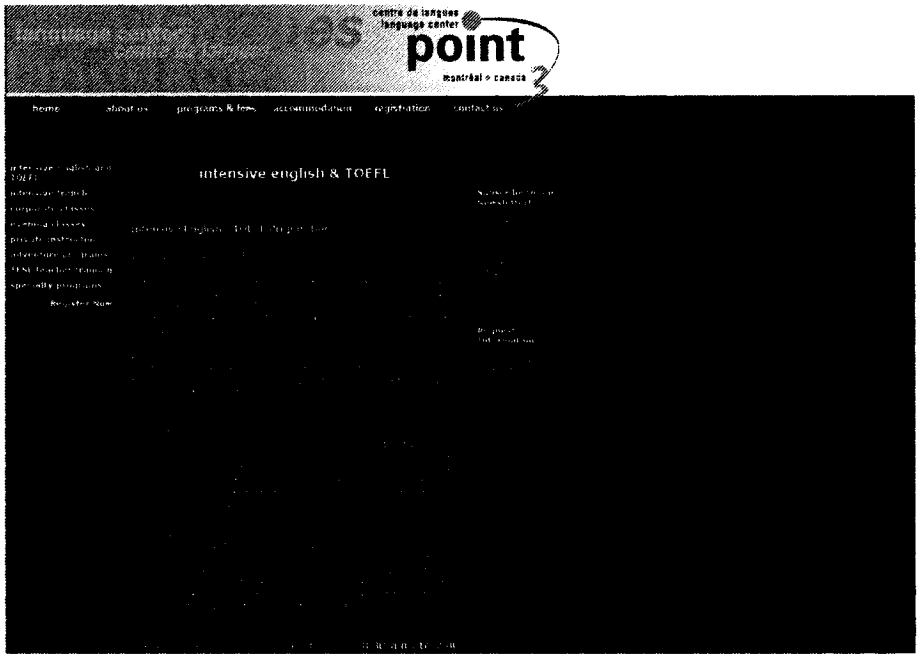
However, the image of academic authority that A.L.I. is seeking to convey through this discourse is toned down by including a student's opinion praising the kindness and helpfulness of its teaching staff, thus positioning academic rigor in a context of customer orientation. Further, the discourse of educational rigor and authority contrasts with other textual instances positioning A.L.I. and potential students in a customer-service relationship (e.g., "A maximum of 16 students per class allow students to receive the personalized attention they need and the variety they desire"). In other cases, educational discourse serves as a matrix into which discursive elements of tourism and promotional advertising are embedded (e.g., "The Basic Program is an excellent way to combine studying and traveling.").

The other two samples (36 & 38 on page 53) are taken from POINT3's website. The former provides information about its intensive English program, such as course objectives and subject matter covered. The latter refers to the promotion of L2 instruction and "adventure tourism"[5]. Yarymowich (2003) also discussed this phenomenon as *language tourism*: the incorporation of L2/FL education and other recreational or cultural activities into a packaged holiday or vice versa.

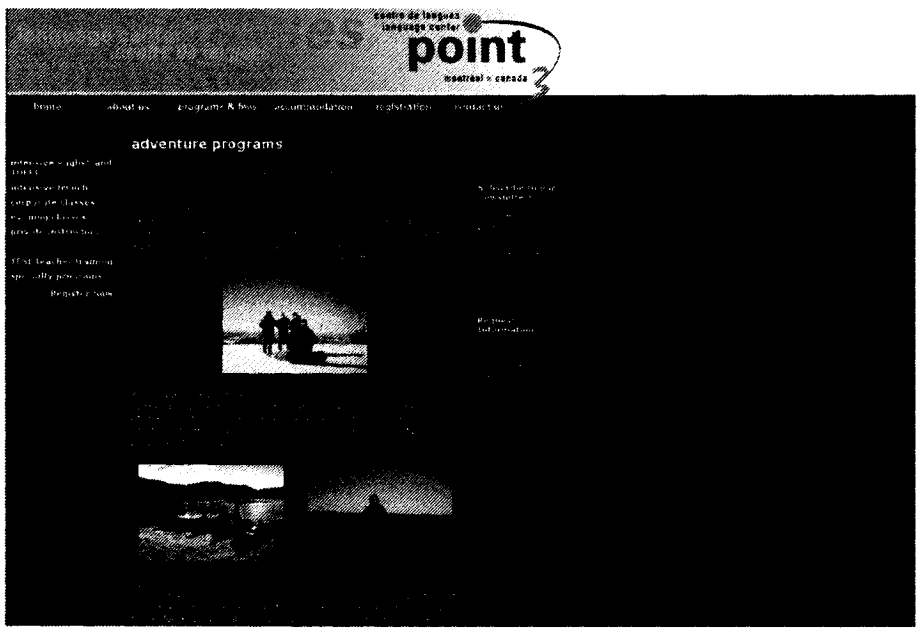
Sample 36 is discursively homogeneous given that the sample focuses on educational concerns mostly. At the level of the sentence, these elements comprise the jargon of L2 instruction (e.g., "accuracy", "fluency", 'comprehension"). Similar to A.L.I.'s webpage, passive voice constructions add the tone of formality and distance that characterizes traditional academic institutions (e.g., "students are expected to participate

[5] Adventure tourism is a kind of niche tourism that involves exploring or traveling to remote areas and performing "acts that require significant effort and grit and may also involve some degree of risk" (www.en.wikipedia.org).

fully). Save for one instance where students are addressed directly ("you"), the formal tone is used to refer to students in the third person.



Sample 36 *Intensive English Program on POINT3's Website*



Sample 38 *Adventure Programs on POINT3's Website*

Sample 38, on the other hand, is heterogeneous, characterized by the mixing of discursive elements from tourism, customer-service and education. Different from sample

36, this web page foregrounds pictures of students in a naturalistic environment, similar to those found in travel brochures. The only reference to education is the insertion of vocabulary of classrooms (e.g., "study English", or "learn"). Other than that, the entire page promotes a holiday. There are also features of advertising in imperative sentences making a direct appeal to clients (e.g., "Take a look at...", "Live and learn..."), and, as shown above, the use of direct address as a marker of informality (Fairclough, 1992). By describing the course programs and requirements, POINT3 is positioning itself as an educational institution. Yet, it is also functioning as a tour operator, for example, by showcasing services that have nothing to do with what one would normally expect of a school.

These web pages reveal the intricate discursive mixing of education (i.e., rigor and authority), the private sphere (i.e., the student's testimonial), advertising (i.e., visuals), customer service (i.e., providing students what they need and desire), and tourism (i.e., study English four days and then travel). Not only does this mixing of discourses construct A.L.I. and POINT3 in numerous and contradictory roles (e.g., a school, travel operator, service supplier), but it also positions potential students in opposite ways as well (e.g., students, vacation planners, clients). Interestingly, not all these roles are explicitly constructed on the websites. Nowhere on both websites are prospective students and both A.L.I. and POINT3 referred to as clients and suppliers, respectively. Such business-oriented roles are implied in discursive instances enacting a commercial relationship between the schools and students, such as textual instances where the schools offer students the possibility of studying during the week and travel at the weekend (sample 35). Above all, these findings seem to indicate that constructing

covert sales-oriented stereotypes of ESL instruction, school and learners is key for these schools to advance their for-profit interests while concealing their commercial status.

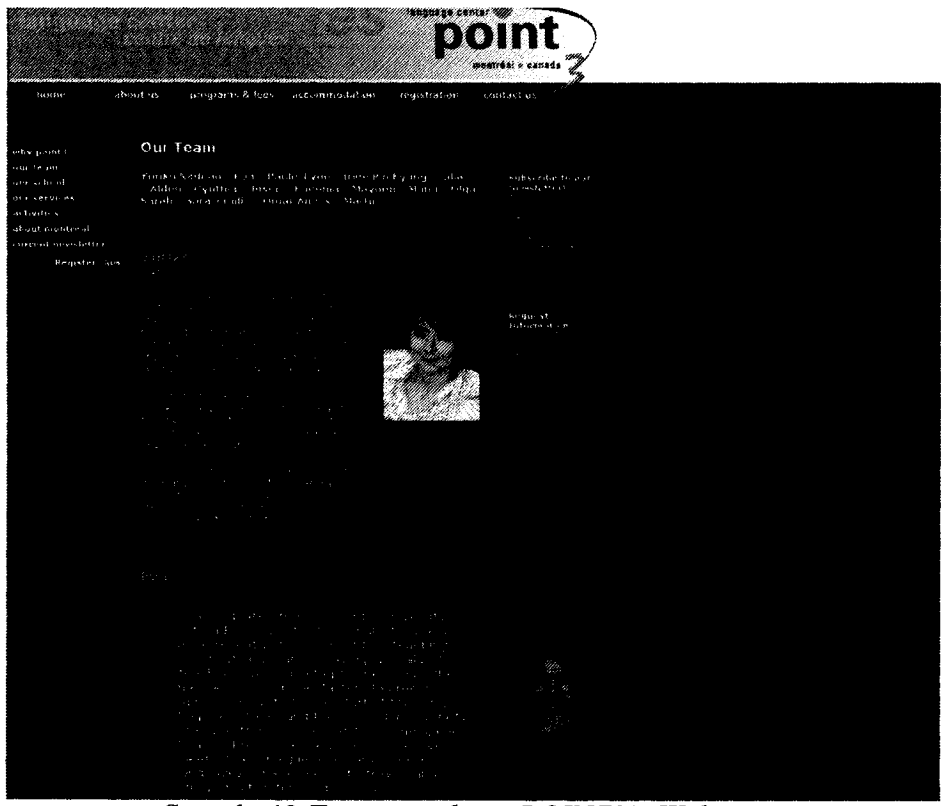
4.3 *Voices Legitimating A.L.I. and POINT3*

The voices and pictures of (current) students and teachers (i.e., testimonials) are strategic resources used by A.L.I. and POINT3 to claim legitimacy and serve their ideology. The analysis of the testimonials on both websites involved looking at whose voices are privileged and how these are represented through both the written and the visual modes. Central to this analysis were Fairclough's (1992) categories of direct and indirect discourse representation, and Kress and van Leeuven's (2006) systemic functional approach to examining the sociointeractional process between the author, the text and the reader (i.e., interpersonal dimension) enacted by the visual component.

As for the voices represented, A.L.I. cites students' opinions - except one case in which the voice of the school's activity coordinator is quoted (refer to Table 4.7 on p. 56), whereas POINT3 includes those of its owner and some member of its teaching staff (see sample 40 on p. 56). On A.L.I..'s website, each testimonial is presented as a verbatim report of a (student's) opinion, which is explicitly marked as coming from an external source by means of quotation marks. On POINT3's website, on the other hand, the only voice represented directly is the school owner's. Teachers' voices, by contrast, are represented indirectly or paraphrased - perhaps by the school's owner or the website author/designer. In representing teachers' voices indirectly, the website author may have deliberately chosen to report a particular aspect of the original report and incorporated his/her own perspective into the original by changing its syntax and wording to emphasize that aspect or the aspect that is convenient for the school.

Testimonial	Status	
[37] "We've come to know each other through English, even though we have different cultures and languages. It's a miracle. And then I made precious friends and memories."	Student	
[39] "It's a great city and a great school. I really enjoy meeting people from other countries."	Student	
[41] "Are you looking for a fun and exciting experience? Do you want to learn language OUTSIDE of the classroom? At ALI you can do both! No matter what the season, Montreal offers year round activities to fulfill your adventurous spirit. Don't just learn a language - live it!"	Act. Coordinator	

Table 4.7 *Testimonials on A.L.I.'s websites*



Sample 40 *Testimonials on POINT3's Website*

The testimonials on A.L.I. emphasize the sharing experience and the warmth and beauty of Montreal. The content of the quotes highlight the entertaining aspect of ESL, not its educational value (e.g., "are you looking for a fun and exciting experience?"). Further, the testimonials describe A.L.I.'s teaching staff only as helpful and kind

("...teachers are kind and lead you well..." see sample 35 above), which seems to increase the customer-service experience that A.L.I. is promoting.

The testimonials on POINT3's website, on the other hand, stress the credentials of its teaching staff, in order to foreground the school's image of academic prestige: "Eva graduated from Concordia University..." (sample 40). However, the testimonials also describe teachers as fun-loving and adventurous, highlighting the good interpersonal and communication skills valued in today's market world: "She [Eva] also likes to travel and enjoys multicultural experiences" (sample 40). Representing teachers as academic figures and as people persons further exacerbates the contrasting roles in which POINT3, through its teachers, is constructing for itself.

As both Table 4.7 and Sample 40 show (see p. 56), each testimonial is accompanied by a close-up photograph of the author to whom the quote is attributed, which can be interpreted from two different angles. Firstly, these pictures can be seen as strengthening claims regarding the authenticity of the source. In the case of A.L.I., for example, featuring pictures of students can be a means to add a touch of transparency, emphasizing that these opinions emanate from the students, not the school. Secondly, photographs can be viewed as increasing the immediacy and presence of the represented voice. Indeed, these photographs portraying teachers and students looking directly at website viewers' eyes are, according to Kress and van Leeuven (2006), creating "a visual form of direct address" (p. 117). In this simulated face-to-face – or rather face-to-screen – interaction, viewers are explicitly acknowledged and addressed by means of a *visual you* (Kress & van Leeuven, 2006). Yet, what is represented is a one-way interaction, for the viewer is not given the opportunity to reply.

As the findings of this section indicate, A.L.I. and POINT3 can advance claims to legitimacy and prestige by acting indirectly through the voice and virtual appearance of certain students and teachers. Likewise, the schools are making these students the voice of authority certifying or validating the quality of the school and the services it provides. Also, one may argue that by taking advantage of the photographs of teachers and students, A.L.I. and POINT3 can put on a human face, thereby personalizing a faceless institution.

4.4 *Assumptions on A.L.I.'s and POINT3's Websites*

A further textual resource used by A.L.I. and POINT3 to serve their ideology is to make assumptions (i.e., representations of reality as the normal state of affairs) in the form of written and visual statements. Underlying the analysis of written statements as assumptions was Fairclough's (1992, 2003) view of assumptions not only as presenting taken-for-granted information (i.e., presuppositions), but also as forms of intertextuality. Drawing upon Kress and van Leeuven (2006) SFG-based approach, the analysis of visual statements focused on the ideational component of pictures, that is the particular view of reality and experience that A.L.I. and POINT3 represent and favor on their websites.

As presuppositions, written statements were analyzed in light of Fairclough's (2003) classification of assumptions into: a) existential (i.e., assumptions about what exists), b) propositional (i.e., assumptions about what is, can be or will be the case), and c) value (i.e., assumptions about what is good or desirable). Table 4.8 (refer to p. 59) includes assumptions illustrating these categories.

Existential assumptions, triggered by linguistic items marking definite reference (e.g., "the", "our"), are made up of the claims that there are such things as ESL (sample

51), classes (sample 55), personalized attention and variety (sample 55), and a Canadian way of life (sample 57). What is also assumed is the existence of an English native speaker standard in terms of pronunciation, intonation and use of idiomatic expressions (sample 50).

Category	A.L.I.	POINT3
Written Statements as Assumptions	[51] Our ESL…courses are very popular amongst international students and students from Canada [53] At A.L.I. we understand that while studying in Canada, international students have very specific needs. [55] A maximum of 16 students per class in our Core and Workshop classes allow students to receive the personalized attention they need and the variety they desire. [57]Excursions to popular local attractions allow students to build their confidence while discovering Montreal and the Canadian way of Life! [59] To ensure that our local students receive quality instruction A.L.I. hires teachers who are: native speakers of the target language…dynamic and interesting.	[46]At POINT3, we take learning seriously. [48] Students enjoy nicely decorated , sunny classrooms [50]This class (comprehension class) develops students' ability to understand native English speakers' pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation, as well as the idioms that are routinely used. [52] Montrealers love to celebrate…shoppers will appreciate our underground city.

Table 4.8 *Written Statements as Assumptions*

Propositional assumptions generally cued in the text by means of factive verbs (i.e., verbs like "understand" followed by a that clause denoting a fact), include the claim that international students have needs and that those needs are specific (sample 53), yet what those specific needs are is not made explicit. Other propositional assumptions encompass assertions such as the popularity of ESL courses (sample 51) and a stereotyped description of Montrealers as bilingual (sample 57) and fun-loving (sample 52).

Value assumptions, cued by the verbs "develop" (sample 50) and "allow" (sample 57), include the claims that "understanding and using English native speakers" (50) and

"building confidence" (57) are desirable. It is worth noting, however, that desirability tends to be explicitly stated through lexical items emphasizing positive qualities of the schools, such as the adjectival modifier "popular" in sample 53 ("our ESL courses are very popular..."), the adverbial modifier "seriously" in sample 46 ("...we take learning seriously), or the verb "love" in sample 52 ("Montrealers love to celebrate").

As forms of intertextuality, these assumptions were examined in terms of the voices and texts that A.L.I. and POINT3 are implicitly or vaguely alluding to in their claims, and how this discursive strategy serves to further their for-profit objectives. One way in which assumptions can be seen as working intertextually is by establishing a relation of contrast with an implied competitor, in order to emphasize difference: "At POINT3 we take learning seriously" (sample 46); "Our ESL programs are popular..." (sample 51). Another way is by echoing what students have presumably said somewhere – perhaps in opinion surveys, yet what is represented is a vague generalization of students' comments: "Students enjoy nicely decorated classrooms" (sample 48), "students...receive the personalized attention they need and the variety they desire" (sample 55). A third way is by incorporating some stereotyped descriptions of Montrealers ("Montrealers love to celebrate"), and the widespread belief in the native speaker model ("This class develops students' ability to understand native English speakers' pronunciation..."; "A.L.I. hires teachers who are native speakers of the target language).

These two latter examples reflect the native speaker as the model to follow, which, as Phillipson (1992) argues, is a key construct underlying the ELT industry. Relying on native speakers enables these schools to avoid having to hire highly qualified

– and perhaps expensive – ESL teachers (native speaker or not) and also to ensure clients that they are going to receive authentic English instruction from "the experts". In addition, the claims that learners' goal is "to understand native speakers" (sample 50) excludes the fact that many overseas students may be more likely to interact with speakers whose mother tongue is other than English than with English native speakers.

The visual mode further contributes to advance A.L.I.'s and POINT3's favoured representation of ESL school and students. The pictures in Table 4.9 below emphasize the schools' socially welcoming and entertaining atmosphere (samples 3, 5, 61 & 54), the very-important-people (V.I.P) services offered to students (samples 14 & 16). Interestingly, samples 14 and 16 presuppose a well-to-do student clientele wishing to enjoy first-rate services, such as limousine rides and accommodation with an upper-middle class family.

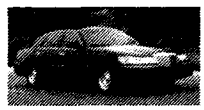
Category		A.L.I.		POINT3
Visual Statements as Assumptions	[3]		[14]	
	[5]		[16]	
	[61]		[54]	

Table 4.9 *Visual Statements as Assumptions*

The pictures above can be seen as foregrounding what students supposedly need and want (i.e., fun and pleasure). From a different perspective, one can interpret these visuals as moves on the part of A.L.I. and POINT3 highlighting certain aspects of the schools in order to attract students and thus make more profits.

The findings of this section showed how A.L.I. and POINT3 use the written and visual mode to make assumptions advancing the schools' image of prestige, efficiency and reliability that best serves their interests. This allows them to position themselves as the right candidate to satisfy what (prospective) students "need" and "want". In creating a need and providing the means to satisfy that need, these schools can advance their for-profit objective, and can also legitimate their business practices by claiming that it is students who claim to have needs.

4.5 *Conclusion*

This chapter provided a detailed description of the discourse and visuals that configure A.L.I.'s and POINT3's websites, based on quantified data and discourse analysis samples of written and visual text extracted from each website. The chapter showed how A.L.I. and POINT3 aim to advance their for-profit ideology (research question 1) and manage the contrast between business and educational concerns (research question 2) by using discourse strategies (e.g., testimonials). These discourse strategies were analyzed as forms of interdiscursivity, intertextuality and assumptions, both written and visual.

First, the findings of the interdiscursive analysis exposed the hybrid nature of the websites and the tension created by the mixing of different discourse types: educational, tourism and business. Such interdiscursive mix not only constructs schools and students in roles that are at odds with each other (e.g., educational institutions vs. travel operators; students vs. vacationers), but also represents ESL instruction in opposing ways (i.e., as a rigorous yet entertaining experience). Secondly, the findings of the intertextual analysis of and testimonials revealed that A.L.I. and POINT3 use the voice and virtual appearance

of (former) students and teachers to further their claims to legitimacy and prestige and to attract prospective students. Last, the analysis of assumptions showed that both A.L.I. and POINT3 use the written and visual mode to make assumptions that emphasize the schools' image that best serves their for-profit interests. Hegemonic assumptions of the ELT industry, such as the native-speaker paradigm (Phillipson, 1992) or that maximum exposure to the language can guarantee L2 development, serve the schools to normalize a view of ESL instruction.

The findings summarized above will be further discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the findings from the previous chapter, based on the conceptual framework articulated in Chapter 2. First, the discussion will first focus on the multiple and contradictory roles (Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 1996, 2005) in which discourse and visuals construct A.L.I., POINT3 and students on both language schools' websites. Secondly, one tackle the ambivalent ways (i.e., academically rigorous yet fun and easy-to-do) in which ESL instruction is represented through the visual and written modes. Likewise, this section will account for how certain widely accepted dogmas of the ELT industry, which Phillipson (1992) defined as fallacies, contribute to sustaining the schools' representation of their ESL programs as educational and legitimate. Thirdly, the discussion will look at how ESL is being advanced by both schools as a legitimate, for-profit academic enterprise. Finally, the conclusion will draw on the discussion from the previous sections in order to answer the two research questions that motivated this study: 1) what is the ideology that private language schools advance discursively on their websites? and 2) in advancing their ideology, how do these schools manage the tension between educational an non-educational concerns?

5.1 Constructing Contrasting Roles of Language School and Students

Findings regarding the linguistic and visual analysis of textual instances and the interdiscusive analysis of web pages revealed that the mixing of discourses not only creates hybrid texts but also constructs both A.L.I. and POINT3 as well as (prospective) students in multiple and contradictory roles. This finding confirms Fairclough's (1992, 1995) assertion that one of the effects resulting from the emergence of hybrid discourse is

the opposing ways in which text producers and readers are positioned. Similarly, this finding also supports Gee's (1996, 2005) view of the multiple and often contradictory Discourses (i.e., language + other stuff, such as value systems, ways of acting, interacting, and so on) that coexist in oneself and that one uses to construct one's and others' identities in a given circumstance.

On their websites, A.L.I. and POINT3 aim to build their image of educational legitimacy and excellence by incorporating elements and practices typical of academic settings (e.g., study programs, rules of admission and conduct, testing students) into their discourses. In addition, each school uses different strategies to strengthen their image of educational prestige, namely featuring the credentials of members of its teaching staff (POINT3's sample 40: "Eva graduated from Concordia University") or including the picture of a diploma which resembles those issued by publicly recognized universities (A.L.I.'s sample 35).

Their image of educational prestige and authority contrasts with other roles they also fulfill, such as travel operators (e.g., they organize social gatherings and sightseeing tours) and customer-service providers (e.g., they offer medical insurance, help students find accommodation). Students' and teachers' testimonials (A.L.I. and POINT3, respectively) also contribute to amplifying the business and entertainment dimensions of A.L.I and POINT3. Students' opinions of A.L.I. as a "great place to meet people from other countries" (sample 39) and POINT3's teachers portrayed as dynamic, extroverted, and helpful can be seen as enacting highly valued qualities in today's globalizing economy: pleasure, self-development, interpersonal skills and dynamism.

At the level of written text, one component that creates this aura of ambivalence is the personal pronoun "we" used to identify the school. In samples [8] and [46] below, POINT3's roles of customer service provider and rigorous school are subsumed under the pronoun "we", which may well leave one wondering which "persona" of POINT3 is addressing clients: the academic authority or the service supplier?

> [8] We arrange homestay and other accommodations...we arrange transportation from the Montréal Dorval airport, if desired.
> [46] At POINT3, we take learning seriously.

To tease POINT3's personas apart and expose the contradictory roles of the school, one can compare passive voice sentences (18) reflecting the distance and impersonality of academic discourse (Fairclough, 1995) with imperative sentences (32) from advertising discourse, directly appealing to customers through an implicit "you":

> [18] Students are expected to participate fully.
> [32] Live and learn English while experiencing the adventure of a lifetime.

From Gee's (1996, 2005) perspective, the many roles in which private language schools position themselves reveal the multiple identities which private language schools build for themselves and others by means of using language and "other stuff" (e.g., ways of interacting) in a given the context. However, according to Gee (2005), "certain identities, and their concomitant ways of talking, acting, and interacting, may well conflict with each other in some circumstance, in which different people expect different identities from the person" (p. 21). Gee's point can be illustrated by means of two instances of written text extracted from one of A.L.I.'s web pages (sample 35) describing the choice of ESL study programs offered to students .

> [a] An exit test with a final mark of 70% must be completed to pass to the next level.

> [b] A maximum of 16 students per class in our Core, Skills, and Workshop classes allow students to receive the personalized attention they need and the variety they desire.

In example [a], A.L.I.'s enacts its Discourse (i.e., identity) of educational institution by positioning itself as the academic authority setting the standards and requirements by which students must abide, and drawing upon activities typical of the school domain (e.g., testing students). This Discourse coheres with the context and purpose of the web page, which is to describe ESL programs and their instructional objectives, and it is also the kind of Discourse that one would normally expect of an educational institution. But in example [b], A.L.I. enacts its customer-service Discourse by portraying itself as willing to cater to students' needs and desires and providing exclusive treatment. Through this Discourse, A.L.I. simultaneously positions the school as a business and addresses potential students as clients (e.g., we guarantee personalized attention; we satisfy your needs and desires). Interestingly, words such as "provider", "client", "customer" or "purchaser" are not made explicitly at all in this Discourse of A.L.I.'s. Avoiding explicit reference to students as clients and the school as provider can be interpreted as A.L.I.'s move to cover up its commercial status in a supposedly educational context.

As shown by examples [a] and [b] above, the merging of business and educational concerns results in a hybrid Discourse in which A.L.I's academic authority committed to observing high educational standards clashes with its customer-service identity devoted to satisfy clients' needs primarily. The resulting hybrid Discourse can be seen as co-opting (prospective) students in two ways simultaneously: by persuading them that A.L.I. is a legitimate educational institution and by positioning the school as a service provider.

Regarding prospective students, they are represented as students, fun-seeking vacationers, and clients. In written discourse, they are referred to and indirectly identified as students by means of the generic plural noun "student", which signals formality (sample 18). As customers, they are directly addressed by means of the personal pronoun "you" and the possessive adjective "your", a marker of informality typical of modern advertising (Fairclough, 1992). Such a shift from the impersonal and generic term "student" to the more direct personal pronoun "you" reveals the contrasting identities in which students are positioned in written discourse.

> [18] Students are expected to participate fully.
> [34] We want you to enjoy your stay at POINT3 Language Center, so we have created an environment that helps you relax.

Positioning students as discerning customers and giving them the freedom of choice, Fairclough (1992) argues, reflects the pervasive influence of the world of marketing and consumerism in almost all spheres of human activity. In a customer-provider relationship, the power is allegedly in the hands of the customer, who has the money to decide and command; yet one may well wonder in this case whether "this shift in power is cosmetic or substantive" (p. 117). Considering this claim by Fairclough, it may be argued that student-clients, having the purchasing power, appear as the ones in power. Yet, from a different angle, one may argue that the schools may be making clients believe that they have the choice and the power, when it is actually private language schools that are constraining clients' choices, by providing only those that will best serve the for-profit interests of the schools. In other words, A.L.I. and POINT3 can be regarded as doing what is in their clients' "best" interest, when it is the schools that benefit the most.

The different roles in which prospective students are represented on A.L.I.'s and POINT3 websites are also advanced through the visual mode, chiefly pictures. According to Kress and van Leeuven (2006), pictures do not merely reproduce reality, but "produce images of reality which are bound up with the interests of the social institutions within which the images are produced, circulated, and read" (p. 47). Considering the for-profit ideology of both schools, it is small wonder then that almost all the imagery on both schools' websites emphasize market-oriented stereotypes of students. For example, the quantitative data showed that of the 244 visuals on A.L.I.'s website (refer to Table 2 on page 52), eight pictures depict students participating in what one may describe a typical educational activity, such as doing homework, working at the library or in class (sample 25 from A.L.I.). By contrast, 234 pictures portray students as fun-seekers enjoying themselves at a bar (sample 3), adventurers in the exhilarating outdoors (samples 3 & 37).

On POINT3's website, the same trend obtains. Of 43 pictures, only 2 feature educational concerns, for example sample 26 showing an empty yet cozy classroom. The remaining 41 emphasize tourism- and business-related, such as sample 14 portraying a limousine offered to those students requesting transportation from the airport to their homestay. Considering its ideational (i.e., the favoured representation of reality and experience) and interpersonal (i.e., the social interaction represented), the picture of the limousine can be regarded as enacting the customer-service experience that POINT3 offers to its students by giving them V.I.P. treatment. This picture conveys an image of exclusivity, showing students how they are going to be treated by POINT3.

Taking advantage of the saliency of visuals, A.L.I. and POINT3 can not only convey vivid and appealing images telling their international clientele what the study-abroad experience will be like, but also make clients virtually taste the product before the purchase (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998, in Yarymowich, 2003). What one is left wondering is to what extent images advertising limousine rental services or sightseeing tours in Quebec may be appealing to those (prospective) students who live in Montreal and neighbouring areas (e.g., Longueuil).

5.2 *Contrasting Representations of ESL Instruction*

The findings also revealed that ESL instruction is ambivalently represented as a rigorous yet fun-and-easy-to-learn undertaking. On the one hand, portraying ESL as a rigorous educational activity involves requiring that students abide by school policies (e.g., speak only English; A.L.I.), attend classes, do homework, participate fully in class, and pass exams. These requirements and practices, characteristic of traditional classroom instruction, allow for representing ESL courses as being based on a sound pedagogical rationale, thus assuring students that they will not find anything very different from the typical classroom activities they are used to doing (e.g., making in-class oral presentations, writing compositions).

To emphasize the educational quality of their ESL programs, A.L.I. and POINT3 adhere, both subtly and explicitly, to hegemonic constructs of the ELT industry, which Phillipson (1992) regards as fallacies. Specifically, these fallacies stipulate that the best avenue to learn an L2 is prolonged exposure to the language (i.e. the maximum exposure fallacy), English as the sole medium of instruction (i.e., the monolingual fallacy) and English native speakers as teachers (i.e., the native speaker fallacy).

First, the maximum exposure fallacy is reflected in the intensive or super-intensive ESL programs based on an overloaded schedule (100 to 150 hours a month) and that supposedly lead to proficiency. Visually, the fallacy is emphasized by means of the pyramid-like graphic (samples 7 & 35 from A.L.I.) depicting all the levels of instruction taught and the ones that learners have to pass in order to become proficient in the language. The pyramid can be interpreted as implying that learning a second language is a matter of passing levels and that getting to the top is the desirable goal. This implies that the longer A.L.I. and POINT3 can persuade students to study at their school, the more profits the schools can make.

Second, the monolingual fallacy is reflected in the way in which A.L.I. exhorts or kindly compels students to speak English at all times by making them sign an "English-only" policy contract. The message implicitly sent to students is that using their mother tongue is counterproductive for their L2 developmental process, a claim that some SLA researchers (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 1998) have contested. The issue that arises is how learners who share the same L1 can be "forced" to speak English when the L1 will naturally emerge (see Tarone & Swain, 1995).

Third, the native speaker fallacy is reproduced in course objectives that aim to develop learners' ability to "understand English native speakers' pronunciation" (sample 50 from POINT3). Not only does this goal perpetuate the native-like model as the norm but it also invites learners to subscribe to it. This leads me to wonder why course objectives do not aim to develop learners' sensitivity and appreciation for non-native-English speakers' pronunciation.

Further, the concept of nativeness and, therefore, authenticity or purity (Pegrum, 2003), I would argue, also applies to the stereotype of Canadian family that is being promoted on the websites of private language schools. Such a stereotype, Yarymowich (2003) suggests, seems to be based on the four-member-two-pet model that characterizes Western, white, North American families of European descent. Implicit in the Canadian model, I would add, is that the family must have (one of) the two official languages, English and/or French, as the mother tongue(s). This stereotype of what a Canadian family is or should be like excludes the multiethnic character of Canadian society, which is largely based on immigration and/or interethnic marriages (e.g., a family may well be of Japanese and Italian descent and speak English as mother tongue or may have obtained the status of Canadian and not be native speakers of English of French). Advertising accommodation services as "truly" Canadian enables A.L.I. and POINT3 to guarantee students "maximum exposure to the language" in an "English-only" home environment inhabited by "native speakers". Thus, Canadian homestay families are assets for these schools to emphasize that their ESL instruction is not solely confined to the traditional classroom.

On the other hand, ESL is described as something that students can do fast and almost effortlessly, for example while hiking in the wilderness (sample 38 from POINT3). Indeed, central to representing fun and easy-to-learn ESL courses is the promotion of extra-curricular activities (e.g., going to a pub for drinks) as "exciting ways of learning languages OUTSIDE the classroom" (sample 41 from A.L.I.). Instead of selling traditional classroom-based ESL courses, the schools are selling a whole learning experience or adventure in, for instance, the exhilarating Canadian outdoors. Extra-

curricular activities or ESL programs in which students learn English while hiking in the forest may be regarded as a means to mitigate or to conceal the fact that L2/FL learning is in fact a complex phenomenon. Indeed, emphasizing the supposedly L2 developmental value of outdoor activities seems to be not only the perfect bait to attract those student-clients who "buy into" this discourse but also the argument that private language schools need to legitimate their business activity as educational.

Seen through the Gramscian conception of hegemony, A.L.I.'s and POINT3's claims to educational legitimacy are moves toward winning popular consent (e.g., from clients), not by coercion but by appealing to common sense arguments (e.g., the implication that native speakers make the best L2 teachers) and suggesting choice (e.g., language instruction, accommodation, skiing trips, night outings, accommodation or medical insurance). Yet, these apparently common sense arguments (i.e., that learning English is something one can easily do while vacationing) only serve the vested interests of the schools. Written and visual discourse function as the normalizing tool (Foss, 1996) that serves to *naturalize* (Pennycook, 2001) A.L.I.'s and POINT3's particular representation of ESL instruction as a composite of both language study objectives (e.g., developing students' ability to understand native speakers' speech) and practices that have very little or nothing to do with education (e.g., selling limousine rides and medical insurance, or taking students out for drinks).

As discussed in this section, both schools aim to create a particular discursive and visual representation – or representations – of ESL instruction that will cater to and satisfy learners' specific needs and wants. This representation includes promises of instant satisfaction and the offer of a wide array of high-quality and exciting language

study programs (e.g., A.L.I.'s intensive, super-intensive, and super-skills language programs). Such a representation of ESL instruction can be seeing as persuading prospective students that services, such as sightseeing tours or accommodation with a Canadian Homestay family, are an integral part of learning an L2/FL. The point here is not to question whether or not outside-the-classroom activities foster learning. Public educational institutions also organize extra-curricular activities, like visits to museums or sightseeing tours, for both educational and recreational purposes. Plainly speaking, one can also argue that any life event or experience learning can have some learning or instructional value. However, the issue is that private language schools promote recreational activities and services as educational (refer to sample 27 on p. 57) in order to serve their for-profit interests.

5.3 *Private Language Schools as Legitimate Educational Ventures*

As shown in the study, A.L.I.'s and POINT3's discursive and visual representation of themselves, students and ESL instruction are mostly structured around the world of markets and commodities rather than the educational milieu. This trend is symptomatic of a market-driven transformational process that many – formerly purely – public domains (e.g., education and health) have been undergoing: *commodification.*

According to Fairclough (1992), "commodification is the process whereby social domains and institutions, whose concern is not producing commodities in the narrower economic sense of goods for sale, come nevertheless to be organized and conceptualized in terms of commodity production, distribution and consumption" (p. 207). In light of this, one should not be surprised by the fact that ESL instruction has been reconceptualized and treated by the private language industry as a sellable commodity.

After all, private language schools, just as any other form of private ownership, are mainly concerned with making profits by commercializing ESL instruction. What is at issue is that, the claims to educational legitimacy that the Canadian private language industry advances, despite its for-profit commercial status,

As discussed early in the study, one of the claims to legitimacy refers to the key role that private education providers, along with traditional state-run educational institutions, play in helping to shape the knowledge and skills of not only Canadians but also people worldwide – mainly in developing countries – to have access to the opportunities of the global job market (Plante, 2005). The other is CAPLS' argument requesting the federal government that CAPLS' members receive public funding just as not-for-profit, publicly funded institutions (e.g., universities). This latter claim seems to not only position for-profit private language schools as legitimate educational institutions but also make them worthy of receiving Canadian taxpayers' money as educational institutions, in addition to the subsidy the private language school sector receives as an industry (e.g., Industry Canada's Language Industry Program).

Further, the claim above can be taken as evidence that the boundaries traditionally separating public from private domains or education from business are being challenged by those with a vested interest in making profits out of education, such as private language schools. By commercializing ESL education while making claims to educational legitimacy, private language schools contribute to undermining the distinction between for-profit and not-for-profit, publicly funded education in people's minds. Because of this confusion between public and private may lead, some people may be co-opted by this ideology to think that private for-profit education can fulfill an

inherently social role, just as public education, when, in point of fact, it is subservient to the vested interests of private entrepreneurs.

5.4 *Conclusion*

Having discussed the findings, I now aim to answer the research questions that I set out to answer:

1. What is the ideology that private language schools advance discursively?
2. How do they manage the tension between educational and non-educational concerns is managed in web-based texts?

As regards the first research question, it can be argued that private language schools' ideology is to advance their for-profit objectives in two ways: commercializing ESL study programs and non-educational services which are nonetheless promoted by the schools as having some kind L2 developmental value. This ideology aims to position themselves as legitimate academic institutions deserving of public support while also maintaining their for-profit commercial status in order to receive public funding as an industry. In this way, private language schools' ideology contributes to blurring the boundaries between education and business. This leads me to claim that the market-driven ideology of private language schools is of a subversive nature, for it opens up the way to also view publicly funded, not-for-profit education as an industry.

With respect to the second research question, the findings suggest that A.L.I. and POINT3 aim to manage the tension between their claims to educational legitimacy and their image of pleasure and customer-service experience by using a repertoire of discursive and visual strategies, such as testimonials or pictures. Through the voices and pictures of happily satisfied clients, for example, private language schools intend to

persuade prospective students of the schools' socially inviting atmosphere or high quality personalized services, and thus counterbalance the schools' discourse of academic rigor (refer to sample 35 on p. 58). Yet, rather than balancing the equation, these opposing discourses create multiple and contradictory roles for schools and students as well as ambivalent representations of ESL instruction. As a result, people are left to their own devices to discern whether private language schools are academic institutions, businesses or both. But on the other hand, the tension between educational and business concerns can be interpreted as being deliberately created by private language schools to serve their for-profit ideology in two ways. Private language schools can co-opt people by selling education to those who see the schools as educational institutions and fun and pleasure to those who see the schools as service providers.

In the next chapter, I will summarize the study, speak about its limitations, and suggest avenues for further research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter begins with a short review of the study, whose purpose was twofold. One of the aims of the study was to expose the ideology that for-profit private language schools advance discursively and visually on their websites (research question 1). The other aim was to analyze the way in which these schools manage the tension between their claims to educational legitimacy and business concerns (research question 2).

Chapter 1 stated the rationale for examining how ESL instruction has been appropriated by private entrepreneurs who capitalize on the worldwide need for English to serve their business objectives. Likewise, the chapter contextualized the study by providing a bird's eye view of the Canadian private language industry. In addition, it showed that a sector of the industry, organized into CAPLS, is advancing claims to not only regulate the industry but also be entitled to the same public support (e.g., funding) that post-secondary institutions (i.e., universities) receive .

Chapter 2 articulated the conceptual framework to analyze the ideology in the discourse of private language schools' websites. First, the chapter drew upon Fairclough's (1992) and Paré's (2002) conception of ideology as a form of social and discursive practice whereby certain groups act upon the world in order to legitimate and sustain their position. Linked to the notion of ideology was discussing hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) as the naturalization of a particular ideology and discourse as the normalizing instrument through which this naturalizing process is achieved (Foss, 1996). Second, the chapter analyzed dominant assumptions and practices in ELT, which

Phillipson (1992) defined as fallacies. SLA studies (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 1998) were used to further support Phillipson's arguments that those assumptions are indeed fallacious. Pegrum's (2003) survey of current advertisement in printed media (e.g., magazines), and Yarymowich's (2003) content-based analysis of the discourse on Canadian private language schools' websites confirm this trend. Third, Chapter 2 discussed Gee's (1996, 2005) notion of discourse (i.e. language in use) and Discourses (i.e., language + "other stuff"), Fairclough's (1992) CDA approach, and Kress and van Leeuven's (2006) SFG-based model to analyze visual.

Chapter 3 laid out the rationale for choosing Montreal as an appropriate research context and A.L.I.'s and POINT3's websites, and described the software used to capture both websites. In addition, it provided a detailed account of the exploratory, coding and data analysis phases of the study, as well as the analytic categories for the examination of the discursive and visual components. The toolkit included Fairclough's (1992, 2003) notions of interdiscursivity and intertextuality, and Kress and van Leeuven's (2006) Hallidayian-based view of visuals as having an ideational (i.e., the favored representation of reality and experience) and interpersonal (i.e., the social interaction between the author of, the participants in and the readers of visuals) components.

Chapter 4 presented the results of the written and visual analysis of A.L.I.'s and POINT3's websites. It provided quantitative data showing that not only do non-educational discourses predominate but they also occur in almost equally disproportionate on both websites. Results obtained from the interdiscursive analysis of sample web pages allowed for exposing the tension between educational and non-educational discourse, the contrasting roles in which the schools and students are

constructed, and the ambivalent ways in which ESL is represented on both websites. Findings regarding intertextuality suggested that A.L.I. and POINT3 use others' voices and images (e.g., students' testimonials with close-up photographs) as a strategy to claim academic authority and educational legitimacy. Further, the findings revealed that some claims and assertions reproduce certain fallacious beliefs and assumptions in ELT (e.g., the native speaker standard; Phillipson, 1992), which contributes to sustaining hegemonic ideals as to how ESL is to be conducted.

Chapter 5 used the conceptual lens constructed in Chapter 2 to discuss the findings of the preceding chapter. The first finding discussed in this chapter was the contradictory roles in which both private language schools and (prospective) students are constructed discursively and visually on the schools' websites. The second finding entailed discussing the educationally rigorous yet fun-and-easy representation of ESL instruction. Next, the discussion of both findings led to put forth an argument that for-profit ELS instruction is a symptom of the commodication process that formerly public domains, such as education and health, are undergoing. Further, the discussion suggested that this form of commodified education blurs the boundaries that clearly differentiated public from private and education from business. As argued, not only may this confusion lead some people to mistakenly perceive that for-profit schools can fulfill the same social role that publicly-funded, not-for profit educational institutions do, but it also subtly challenges the very idea of what constitutes education.

6.1 *Limitations of the Study*

Given that there is not a monolithic way of making sense of texts, my one-sided interpretation of A.L.I.'s and POINT3's websites is perhaps one of the limitations of the

study. Having invited participants who understand how ideology and hegemony work through written and visual discourse would have allowed for comparing and contrasting different views of and approaches to interpreting web-based texts, and thus provide a less subjective analysis of the websites.

A second limitation pertains to the analytic strategies I drew upon in order to examine the web-based discourse of both private language schools. Although Fairclough's CDA model and Kress and van Leeuven's visual grammar allowed for interpreting how discourse and visuals are combined to form ideological statements, this model did not supply the analytical resources to account for structural components of the Internet, such as hyperlinks.

A third limitation is the small sample size of websites (n=2) selected for analysis. Even though my purpose was to look at those CAPLS-affiliated private language schools which are only located in Montreal, a larger sample would allow for providing better substantiated claims.

6.2 *Contribution and Implications for Future Research*

This study contributes to the field of Critical Applied Linguistics (CALx; Pennycook, 2001) by providing an in-depth insight into the highly profitable market that the ELT industry has become for those with a vested interest in the promotion of English, such as English-speaking countries and private language schools. In this way, the study can be seen as enlarging the body of research looking at issues such as English as an imperial language (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999; Phillipson, 1992), the alleged personal benefits that it can bestow upon its users (Niño-Murcia, 2003; Pennycook, 1998), or the NS-NNS dichotomy in ELT (McKay, 2003; Medgyes, 1992, 1996; Phillipson, 1992).

Also, the study expands research conducted from a CDA perspective in two ways. First, the study draws upon a methodological toolkit that integrates linguistic-based (Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2000, 2003) and visual-based (Kress & van Leuuven, 2006) strategies. Second, focused on web-based texts, the study can be seen as answering Mautner's (2005) plea for more web-based corpora in CDA studies.

As regards CDA, Fairclough (2003) suggested that such an approach to discourse analysis can be better substantiated by ethnographic analysis of interviews. Thus, inviting participants to contribute with their perception of themselves, the schools and the kind of ESL instruction being offered at these private language schools is one of the possible avenues for future research. Indeed, the follow-up research that I intend to conduct will combine enthnographic methods and the CDA-visual grammar toolkit that I articulated in this study.

In addition, the expanded model of CDA can be further enriched by incorporating the work of critical Internet researchers looking at hyperlinks as rhetorical devices (Burbules, 1998) and the emergence of *blogs*[6] as new forms of participatory action (i.e., Starke-Meyerring, in press). As regards the latter, one potential area of research may be to investigate whether certain private language schools invite students to participate on their websites by allowing students to take to the blogs, instead of reproducing what students have said somewhere, some time.

Also, researchers interested in expanding the findings yielded by this study can focus on a larger sample and examine whether and to what extent the same discursive

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[6] "At their core, blogs, or web logs, are web sites whose main component consists of a list of—usually date-stamped—postings, which can include text, photos (photoblogs), videos (vlogs), podcasts, or visual and textual messages from mobile devices (so-called moblogs or mobile blogs)" (Starke-Meyerring, in press)

phenomenon obtains on other private language schools' websites. Analyzing a larger sample of websites may allow for providing a more representative reality of how for-profit private language schools use discourse and visuals to serve their business objectives.

A critical aspect of the Canadian private language industry that, in my opinion, needs to be investigated in more depth is CAPLS's request that the federal government not only allow the association to regulate the industry, but also consider CAPLS' members as post-secondary education institutions (e.g., universities). This may allow private language schools to claim and have access public funding as educational institutions, in addition to the subsidies the private language training sector is receiving form the federal government through Industry Canada. At a time when the federal and provincial governments are cutting down on public funding to schools and universities as well as students and researchers, investigating why for-profit language schools are deserving of taxpayers' money is an issue worth investigating further.

As argued in the study, the commodification phenomenon is not unique to ESL education. Entrepreneurial models are also colonizing public-funded schools (see Apple, 2001; Luke, 2003) and higher education institutions (Fairclough, 1995; see also Giroux, 2003), which are gradually emulating the organizational structures of businesses. This worldwide trend is contributing to a gradual undermining of important ideological bases of what "education" means. Thus, more research is needed not only to investigate this critical issue further, but also to counterbalance the hegemonic discourse of corporate education in an increasingly globalizing English-speaking world.

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