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# Textbooks as ‘Neoliberal Artifacts’: A Critical Study of Knowledge-making in ELT Industry

## Abstract

The present study examined the traces of neoliberal ideology in O-level English language textbooks taught in elitist private schools in Pakistan that follow the UK-based international educational system administrated by the University of Cambridge under the General Certificate of Education (GCE). Analysis in the study was informed by Fairclough's CDA writings. Moreover, Bourdieu's views on neoliberalism were also considered to shed some light on neoliberal ideology in the textbooks. Findings suggest that several neoliberal themes were evident in the textbooks under scrutiny, including marketization, consumerism, branding, celebrity culture, competition, individualism, self-responsibility and self-entrepreneurship, mobility, new ‘Othering’ strategy and English as a neoliberal skill. Based on the findings, we argue that the global ELT industry that produces teaching materials, including textbooks for the periphery is a major contributor to the neoliberal world order maintained by the local (political) elite in the government(s) e.g., Pakistan in case of the present study. The textbooks prepare learners for a competitive world rather than a world based on cooperation, mutual progress, and happiness. The study thus questions such neoliberal hegemony encoded in the textbooks and argues for critical examination and selection of the materials for contexts where English is taught as a foreign language.

**Keywords:** Neoliberalism, O-Levels, Textbooks, English Language, ELT industry

## Introduction

The use of English as a medium for knowledge transfer in a variety of fields, including art, science, technology, and business, has contributed to its significant status throughout the world. As a result, the need for English instruction and learning has grown over time. In fact, there are currently many EFL textbooks as well as a wide range of teaching materials available worldwide aimed at satisfying the diverse needs of the global EFL community. However, the textbooks published both locally and globally are not devoid of ideological agendas. In this vein, the textbooks produced in the English-speaking world for diverse uses, including the formal educational contexts, such as O-level administered by the university of Cambridge under General Certificate of Education (GCE) are not neutral objects. Instead, they impart certain values and ideologies to their users. According to Apple (2006), it is naive to assume that classroom knowledge is impartial. In CDA research, ‘texts’ are believed to have an ideological effect (see Fairclough, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2001; Fowler et al., 1979). Based on the ideological effects of the textbooks, some language scholars have established how discourses in the textbooks construct social identities (Wodak et al., 2009; Young, 2003; Gao, 2021).

A growing body of research on textbooks and ELT shows how textbooks, specifically global ELT materials, tend to promote neoliberal ideology (for example, Chun, 2009; Gray, 2012; Copley, 2018; Babaii and Sheikhi, 2018). A majority of textbook studies in Pakistan have focused on state-sponsored textbooks examining discourses of nationalism, religion, and militarism (Rahman, 2002; Aziz, 2010; Qazi, 2020). In a few recent studies, however, neoliberal working through ELT has been unraveled (see Manan, 2021; Author(s), forthcoming). The study by Manan, using the neoliberal governmentality as a conceptual

framework, examined teachers and students in fast-growing English language academies in Pakistan, whereas Author(s)., (forthcoming) explored the neoliberal workings of US-funded global English language training programs. Yet it remains unclear how this neoliberal ideology manifests itself in Pakistan's elitist private schools, which follow the O-level Cambridge system unlike the government schools that have their local examination boards in each province of the country. Choosing O-level English language textbooks was based on the fact that elitist private schools with O-level Cambridge system produces a class of people with a western cultural outlook (see Rahman, 2002) as well as occupying space in the global marketplace. This is why O-level education in Pakistan focuses on preparing students to study abroad, such as in English-speaking countries, with the goal of either settling overseas or assuming privileged positions back at home. This study fills the gap with a significant contribution to the scholarly literature on neoliberal ideology being promoted in the global ELT industry which is a recent phenomenon (see Block, Gray & Holborow, 2012).

The current study draws on Fairclough's CDA writings (see Fairclough, 2001, 2010, 2014, 2015). As an analysis tool, CDA aims to expose power ideologies permeating society and contributing to unequal power relations (Fairclough, 2010). Language is used to generate and disseminate neoliberal ideology (Fairclough, 2002). As a problem-driven approach, CDA seeks to provide solutions to societal ills from a discursive perspective (Fairclough, 2010). Further, Bourdieu's (1995) elaborate view on neoliberalism is used to explain neoliberalism's key principles: individualism, competitiveness, and anti-collectivist approach with the market as its center. The following sections explain neoliberalism as a theory followed by neoliberal ideology and its basic tenets as adopted in our study. Then, we discuss our methodology, present our results, and conclude with suggestions and implications for global contexts.

## **Neoliberalism**

David Harvey explains that neoliberalism is an economic theory that believes individuals can achieve greater success by exercising entrepreneurial liberties and skills within an institutional framework featuring free markets, free trade, and private property rights (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). According to Holborow (2015), the origin of neoliberal practices can be traced back to a small group of advocates in the 1940s, who were inspired by the Austrian political and economic philosopher, Friedrich von Hayek. They shared a fondness for the laissez-faire entrepreneurship of the nineteenth century, which they believed had been destroyed under Nazism and communism. These ideas emerged during the 1970s economic crisis. In response to Margaret Thatcher's individualistic politics and Reagan's use of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to provide aid and debt to the global south under conditions of implementing neoliberalism, this economic practice spread around the world (Holborow, 2015). Neoliberalism emerged as a response to stagnant economic conditions in the 1970s in the face of labor and social challenges faced by capitalism (Cox and Nilsen, 2014). Copley (2018) argues that neoliberalism was the answer to an economy in trouble.

Although Jalalian and Rahim (2021) contend that neoliberalism is difficult to define, scholars, however, agree that it is a new phase in capitalism that views socio-economic and cultural aspects of human life through the lens of market and financial benefits (e.g., Treanor 2005, Harvey 2005). A neoliberal rationality, according to Xiong et al. (2018), is hegemonic, in which markets are the only means of organizing social and economic life. Neoliberalism, they explain, differs from classical liberalism in that the state uses its machinery to legitimize and guarantee the market's scope. In Holborow's (2012) view, neoliberal principles have become ingrained in public and private life to the point where it is impossible to imagine life without them.

Depending on its interaction with colonialism, imperialism, and globalization, neoliberalism takes on different forms (Fairclough, 2002; Harvey, 2005).

Neoliberalism views the world as a 'vast supermarket' with citizens as 'customers' (Apple, 2012). Each individual in such a world is engaged in a market transaction, competing with each other in every sphere of life (Treanor, 2005). As the cornerstone of neoliberalism is the market (Babaii and Sheikhi, 2018, p. 250), several other factors have emerged from it. Among them are privatization of public assets, such as education, and creation of dominant values, such as accumulation of capital, individualism, consumerism, and competition (Harvey, 2005). Giroux (2005) argues that in neoliberalism, either everything is for sale, or it is looted for profit. Holborow (2012, p. 15) describes neoliberalism as 1) an economic theory; 2) a new type of capitalism; 3) a discourse and 4) an ideology. We refer to "neoliberalism" as an 'ideology' in our study.

### *Neoliberalism as an 'Ideology'*

In addition to being an economic theory, neoliberalism is an ideology that encompasses all aspects of human life, including social, cultural, and political issues. In this study, Bourdieu's elaborate position on neoliberalism is used as an ideology. Holborow (2015) asserts that Bourdieu (1998) was the first sociologist to see neoliberalism as a coherent ideology, and to see how it worked through language. In his view, neoliberalism entails the destruction of collectives in favor of a free-market logic. In Bourdieu's view (1998), proponents of free markets presented market logic as a time-tested scientific theory that could not be contested. In their view, the market was competitive, flexible, and individualistic and free of opposition. Bourdieu (2000) elaborates that market logic is imposed upon society through 'strong discourse' which claims the necessity of market logic.

According to Chomsky (1999), neoliberal ideas encompass US and international financial institutions' designs that liberalize trade and privatize state assets. In Neoliberalism, class-based identities are replaced with a group of people competing for their own interests. As Holborow (2012, p. 29) argues, neoliberalism misrepresents reality because it is promoted by the dominant class in order to preserve its economic interests. Thus, it presents distorted versions of reality as universal truths. Neoliberal ideology operates at two levels: institutional and individual (see Esposito and Perez, 2014). At the institutional level, policy is designed to achieve free movement of capital through trade, commerce, production, and technology transfer; however, at the individual level, individuals adapt to market demand. This is why neoliberalism is more than a macroeconomic policy. This means everyone accepts the supremacy of the market, even at work and in social life (Copley, 2018, p. 3). According to Fisher (2009), capital follows people even while they are dreaming and has therefore engulfed the social, political, and economic spheres.

### *Constituent Characteristics of Neoliberal Ideology*

Neoliberal ideology in a text or discourse can be better understood by examining its various characteristics. Copley (2018, p. 5) identified consumption, market neutrality in social relations, and individualism restricted to self-interest as key characteristics of neoliberalism. Becker (1983) argues that linguistic instrumentalism and human capital have replaced the discourse of collectivism. The goal of communication in such a scenario is to maximize self-interest (Bernstein et al., 2015). The neoliberal ideology promotes privatization (Bori, 2021, p. 10) and mobility of goods and services (Harvey, 2005) and prepares entrepreneurs to market

their own skills (Dardot & Laval 2013). Neoliberalism encompasses competition, individualism, consumerism, and personal loss/gain (Esposito and Perez, 2014), together with branding (Babaii et al., 2018). Branding involves commanding attention to gain consideration in the marketplace. A pervasive feature of Neoliberalism is the branding of people, places, institutions, and languages (e.g., see Lury, 2004; Ritzer, 2007). As Lury (2004, p.4) notes 'the brand mediates the supply and demand of products' in the current economy. In a neoliberal discourse, privatization, mobility, entrepreneurship competition, consumerism and branding of products and services are prominent themes.

'Celebrity culture' is also at the core of neoliberal ideology (Gray, 2012; Mendick et al., 2018). Celebrities in neoliberalism are used to promote success stories based on personal hard work and self-made content and have their influence on public consciousness (Rojek, 2001, cited in Gray, 2012). Mendick et al., (2018, p.4) argue that the governments construct aspiration nations through policies by establishing dominant notions of success and happiness while overlooking the range of hopes that the young people hold in different local contexts. Another important feature of the neoliberal movement is its endorsement of cosmopolitanism and selective multiculturalism (Babaii et al., 2018, pp. 250-251). The neoliberal view of education has promoted individualism and competition rather than cooperative ethics (Block et al., 2012, p. 6). Neoliberalism promotes an individual responsibility system in which people deserve what they get, and those whose choices are wrong bear harsh consequences (Bernstein et al., 2015, p. 4). Thus, the neoliberal ideology reveals itself via the presence of celebrities as successful entrepreneurs, and biased and selective multiculturalism. Competition prevails over cooperation with each individual being told that he or she is responsible for their own success or failure without acknowledging structural bottlenecks. We will treat neoliberalism as an ideology in textbooks under analysis in the present study by considering the basic conceptions of neoliberalism as an ideology with a specific focus on Bourdieu's position on neoliberal ideology together with Fairclough's writings on CDA and neoliberalism.

### **Neoliberal Ideology in English Language Textbooks**

According to Gray and Block (2014), modern ELT textbooks reinforce Neoliberal ideologies. In ELT coursebooks, social relations are depicted as socially constructed and the dominance of certain social groups is given legitimacy. According to Gray (2012), language coursebooks promote a neoliberal ideology that links success with consumerism and English language learning. A study by Chun (2009) evaluated an Intensive English Program (IEP) that incorporates English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Using a multimodal analysis of the website and textbook of the university program, he found that brochures on the website marketed a high-end lifestyle to students. Students are treated as consumers and purchasers by fancy advertisements. In addition, communication skills and emotional intelligence have been emphasized in the textbooks (Holborow, 2007) along with caring capitalism as the main theme. Based on interviews with senior ELT publishers and an analysis of guidelines for authors of ELT textbooks, Gray (2010) concluded that the textbook's content was not accidental. He reported that teachers also identified ideological elements in global coursebook contents and found the celebration of philanthropic capitalists as problematic. In another study, John Gray shows how ELT coursebooks represent celebrities as a part of the neoliberal worldview. He argues that entrepreneurs and self-made individuals began to be viewed as ideals in ELT books (Gray, 2012, p. 103).

Similarly, Copley (2018) analyzed ELT coursebooks of the past 40 years to see what changes were made with the advent of Neoliberalism. The study found that ELT coursebooks have undergone profound changes in recent years. In contrast to earlier books that emphasized teamwork, the newer ones influenced by neoliberalism emphasize individuality. In textbook production, the sociocultural and political context influences the content (Apple, 1993), and some values and beliefs that are promoted may be alien to learners from other cultures (Curd-Christiansen, 2017). In textbooks, language use is usually routinized and geared toward stereotyped cultural settings (Bernstein, 2015, p. 7). Babaii et al. (2018) analyzed ELT materials in Iranian private schools using Fairclough's CDA model. They found several themes popularized in textbooks, including competitiveness and consumerism, marketability, individual productivity, branding and non-critical multiculturalism. Bori (2021) studied two English courses at Serbia's private language school for unemployed students. Students' beliefs and actions regarding the role of English and the use of global English textbooks over local textbooks revealed heavy influence of external socioeconomic and political factors caused by neoliberalism.

## **The Present Study**

The present article is part of a larger study at Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro Pakistan. The data was collected from Oxford University Press (OUP) O-level English textbooks used in elite schools in Sindh province. Each Oxford Progressive English (OPE) book contains ten units. Grade-9 OPE consists of thirty-seven texts, while grade-10 OPE include forty-one texts. Among the texts are news reports, journals, fiction, autobiographies, poetry, and so on. Moreover, each textbook ends with an examination practice section. For this study, all texts excluding poems were analyzed. Choosing elitist private schools was based on the fact that they follow a UK-based Cambridge System and teach Oxford Progressive English as part of the English compulsory course as opposed to government schools and colleges that follow national curriculum and textbooks developed by local textbook boards in each province of the country.

<b>Textbook</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Edition</b>
Oxford Progressive English (OPE)	9	Rachel Redford	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2016
Oxford Progressive English (OPE)	10	Rachel Redford	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2016

Table 1 Information about textbooks

## ***The Study Objective***

- To examine the presence of neoliberal ideology in O-level English Language Textbooks and the role of language in promoting it

## ***Context of the Study***

Pakistan as a postcolonial country is the context of the present study. English language teaching in the country is divided between private and public systems, each with its own ideological and pedagogical orientation. Elite English medium schools, for instance, teach English to a specific class of students to instill western values (Rahman, 2002; Shah and Pathan, 2016). In contrast, private non-elite English medium and state-mandated education systems have been argued to transform learners' subjectivity and identity into national subjects (Nayyar & Saleem, 2005; Rahman, 2010; Qazi, 2020). The country is divided into four major provinces, namely Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The present study has selected the English

language textbooks which are taught in elitist private schools of Pakistan that follow O' level Cambridge System as discussed below.

### *O' Levels Education System in Pakistan*

UK-based O-level education system is recognized worldwide, including in Pakistan. In Pakistan, it is equivalent to matriculation. The exam is administered by the University of Cambridge under the General Certificate of Education (GCE). The O-levels in Pakistan are divided into two years, called O-1 and O-2. However, some schools include three years to give students a pre-O level background. In some cases, students may be able to complete their O-levels in one year if they opt to take all eight papers instead of splitting them into three subjects in the first year and five subjects in the second year. Among these papers, English is a compulsory subject. One of the major reasons for selecting GCE O-levels over Pakistani matriculation boards is the recognition of the former as the standard for applying to universities abroad. Students seeking admission to undergraduate programs in a foreign country, especially the United Kingdom, often seek GCE qualifications. International educationists design its curriculum to meet the modern educational needs of students in order to compete in the contemporary world. O-level courses are mostly chosen by upper-class and upper middle-class students in Pakistan due to their higher fees.

In order to take O-level exams, students do not necessarily need to be enrolled in a school; therefore, private candidates are only required to pay the exam fees. Due to this, students primarily receive private tuitions instead of school instruction during O-levels in Pakistan. However, students still attend school to socialize with their peers. Tutoring O-level subjects is also a highly lucrative business since fees range between PKR 15000 and PKR 50,000. Exams are held twice a year, in May/June and October/November. Students may appear in May or October, but most schools prefer students to take exams in May. If candidates fail the exam the first time, they may reappear in the same year for a second attempt. Exams are conducted by Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) in Pakistan. The CIE grades O-levels on a six-point scale from A to E where A stands for the highest and E shows the lowest point. According to the Pakistan Exams & Refund Policy Manual 2021-2022 published by British Council, fees vary between PKR 15,750 and PKR 25,000 for each subject. Hence, O-levels are almost impossible for middle- and lower-class students to choose over matriculation.

### **Method of Analysis**

We identified neoliberal ideology deductively using themes from literature that helped us trace instances in the selected sample of textbooks which were analyzed with the help of Fairclough's writings. Fairclough (2010) argues that CDA as an analysis method is designed to expose the ideology of power that has become naturalized in society and has resulted in unequal power relations. He contends that neoliberal ideology is generated through discourse and spread through language (Fairclough, 2002). In his CDA writings, discourse and society are dialectically connected, which means they influence each other. Fairclough (2010, 2014) offers a theoretical and methodological lens to examine the semiotic characteristics of neoliberal ideology. A CDA, thus, investigates how discourse produces ideological dominance, racism, sexism, economic disparity, and bias in the favor of economic privilege. In the present study, we have drawn on Fairclough's (2001, 2015) three-dimensional model (see Fig 1) to analyze the textbooks in terms of tracing neoliberal ideological instances.

Fig 1 Fairclough's three-dimensional framework

Through Fairclough's three-dimensional model, we seek to deconstruct the exploitative power relations mediated by language. The analysis of the text is done at three levels: description, interpretation, and the explanation. The first stage requires the analysis of word choices, grammar, and structure of text that are ideologically determined (Fairclough, 2001). The second stage deals with the pragmatic processes, commonsense assumptions, background knowledge involving the text and the text producer. The explanation takes into account the larger socio-political interventions involved in text production (see Fairclough, 2001, 2015). A detailed description of how the model was used can be found in our analysis. As the three-dimensional model is a very detailed framework, we have not used all categories in the current study. As a result, we have chosen categories that are appropriate for our data. For example, experiential, expressive and relational values of the formal features of the language are combined with the pragmatic processes e.g., context, presupposition, frame, script, topic etc. and larger socio-political aspects of the social order underpinned by neoliberal ideology. As Fairclough (2001) pointed out, the method is not a holy writ; its use is determined by the data and questions that guide the study.

## Results and Discussion

The findings of the current study are presented in the form of themes that have emerged from our analysis of the data. The table 2 and 3 show the percentage of each theme collected based on the total excerpts found in the selected textbooks reflectively followed by the detailed discussion of the themes in the light of Fairclough's CDA writings and existing literature on neoliberal ideology in the textbooks.

Table 2 Oxford Progressive English (OPE-9) themes

Table 3 Oxford Progressive English (OPE-10) themes

## Marketization/Branding/Consumerism

The market is at the heart of neoliberal ideology. In a market-driven discourse, consumerism is naturally elevated above other social ideals (Babaii and Sheikhi 2018, p. 261). It is through this market logic that everything worth making a profit is transformed into a brand to be consumed regardless of its necessity and true value to people (Fairclough, 2005). In neoliberal era, the public has evolved from being 'active citizens' to being 'passive self-interest consumers.' In Excerpts (1), (2), & (3), we have identified instances of market-driven discourse, branding, and consumerism extracted from the selected English language textbooks for the purpose of our analysis.

1.	With advance sales of 350,000 on Amazon UK and delivery planned for 500,000 copies UK-wide, marketing hype had forecast that HP6 would be the Books Sensation of All Time.	OPE-9, p.21
2.	Harry Potter merchandise refers to all the things to be bought in the shops which are a spin-off, or connected with, Harry Potter books, such as toys, games, clothes, rucksacks and so on. Such merchandise <u>nets or gains enormous</u> sums of money for books, such as the Harry Potter ones.	OPE-9, p.23
3.	In what way can Harry Potter be considered similar to the world-famous food chain, McDonald's?	OPE-9, p.23

The three excerpts refer to the world-famous 'Harry Potter' book series. This series is valued in pure market terms in excerpt 1. As such, the text producer reiterates that Harry Potter's series is the best-selling book of all time. Bourdieu (1998) considers this as incontestable market logic. Book marketing in neoliberalism extends beyond selling copies furthering the concept of 'branding' with other materials to be sold in conjunction with books (see Fairclough, 2005, for branding in neoliberalism). Excerpt 2 illustrates this market rationality. Branding and consumerism are direct results of book marketing. According to Fairclough (2002), text producers can reinforce their stance by rewording, overwording, and utilizing synonyms. The same technique is used here to highlight similar products and their results. A word like 'enormous' shows the text's evaluation of reality, what Fairclough calls 'expressive value' attached to formal language features (Fairclough, 2015, p. 135). It builds an impression about a certain amount of money to make an impression on readers. The money-making argument in text (2) is framed within the context of market logic, in which books are valued according to how much money they make. Babaii & Sheikhi (2018) contend that anything related to monetary gain and employment is valuable in a market-driven society.

As a result of marketization, Mumby (2016) notes that some (branded) commodities become famous labels. A consumer's devotion to a brand is seen as a natural emotion. As Gauthier et al., (2013, p. 11) contend privatization policies and deregulation of public space, media, and institutions have resulted in brands being present everywhere, including in schools, museums, and other public places. In this vein, textbooks contribute significantly to this "normalizing" process in the ELT sector. As shown in excerpt 3, the Harry Potter book series is compared to one of the biggest food chain brands. The sentence mode is 'interrogative'. This results in the interpreter's response as simply elaborating the text producer's experiential value (Fairclough, 2015, p. 150). It is presupposed that the interpreter is familiar with the large western food-chain MacDonalds, so she can easily compare it to Harry Potter (see Fairclough, 2015, p.164, for presupposition). MacDonalds and Harry Potter are tied together to reinforce their value in neoliberal market. Likewise, neoliberalism values even pets for their financial benefits. Holmes is the name of the animal in Excerpt 4. The buffalo owner speaks for his animal purposefully, eliding human agency (Fairclough, 2015, p.140) for the fate of these animals to be exploited for profit. This text enacts a relation of the animal in the neoliberal market business by overemphasizing the use of terms like 'star' and 'buffalo meat business' ultimately leading to its consumption.

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4. But Holmes will never end up as bison burgers. He's got his future mapped out. He's become a star in the buffalo meat business OPE-9, p.54
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Excerpt 5 blow discusses one of the main tactics of neoliberalism, namely the division of people into winners and losers based on 'skills.'

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5. The top 1 percent of a country's population can today capture 18 per cent, or even more, of the national income. This is the Winner Take All economy where small differences in skills can mean large differences in returns. It has become possible because technology has increased the size of the market that can be served by a single person or firm. OPE -9, p.26
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The text employs 'can' as an expressive modality (Fairclough, 2015, p. 144) showing how the writer is offering one interpretation of reality with almost authority over the truth by establishing a relation between national income and 'skills' that best suit to the neoliberal forces, e.g., technology. In the writer's view, skills turn individuals into assets through which they can own more than anyone else. Intertextually, these 'skills' are linked to technology and the market, indicating that they relate to the use of technology to enhance marketability.

Researchers across a range of disciplines have argued how neoliberalism creates ideological demands for the global workforce, forcing people to prove that they possess the necessary skills and qualities for success (Walkerdine, 2003, p. 244) in a global economy characterized by severe competition, where social safety nets are eroding or completely lacking (Walkerdine, 2003). Excerpt 6 also portrays the same neoliberal logic that deforestation is inevitable because of financial necessities. The writer holds two opposing viewpoints on the reality of deforestation – one that it has slowed down, while the other that it will continue to happen due to financial realities. It is given as a common sense (Fairclough, 2001) that this will happen because of ‘financial realities’ (Bourdieu, 1998). Thus, in the text, the writer maintains that marketization of trees is more important than the life and habitat of the forests.

6.	<b>Obviously</b> , the quickest solution would be to simply stop cutting down trees. Though deforestation rates have slowed a little in recent years, financial realities make this unlikely to happen. A more workable solution is to manage forest resources by balancing cutting with the planting of enough young trees to replace the older ones in any given forest.	OPE-10, p. 87
7.	These areas have benefited enormously from the introduction of this <b>generous tree</b> . In northwestern Argentina 140,000 tons of <b>prosopis</b> logs are harvested annually for furniture and high-quality flooring, in Gujarat, India, 9000,000 kilo of popis charcoal are produced for sale in Indian cities, whilst in Haiti the charcoal industry supports 150,000 people.	OPE-10, p. 80

According to the author, the exploitative industries who are responsible for cutting down trees to produce furniture and other necessary materials benefit everyone as shown in the excerpt 7. A huge neoliberal industry is painted as 'optimistic' in this whole excerpt. As Bourdieu (1998) argues that the market logic is imposed on society through 'strong discourse'. For a tree '*prosopis*', the animate adjective 'generous' conveys that it is giving and beneficial. According to Babaii & Sheikhi (2018), overstated adjectives increase the persuasiveness of a notion, as illustrated by the use of the adjective 'generous' above.

## Celebrity, Aspiration & Philanthropy

People need attention in the marketplace to exist in the modern economy, and this is where the idea of a celebrity is born. Gray (2012) discovered celebrities in several ELT textbooks, including artists, politicians, actors, and models. They are portrayed not only as receiving public attention, but also as earning a fortune through ‘celebrity fame’. The excerpt 8 creates a high-level image of J.K Rowling, highlighting all the material assets possessed by the famous writer.

8.	J.K. Rowling is in another altogether different league. She has the books and also the <b>films, the video games, and the toys and globalization</b> , both economic and cultural, which means that her <b>words, films, and products</b> are translated, transmitted, and transported everywhere.	OPE-9, p. 26
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According to Gray (2012, p.102), celebrities are being marketed as business owners and he cites, for example, J.K Rowling as a billionaire author. There is a neoliberal scheme of things in this excerpt, for instance, films, video games, and toys solely meant to earn money and fame. Through overwording and synonymy, the text producer emphasizes the reality as a neoliberal fact (Fairclough, 2015, pp. 131-133). People with these material possessions are supposed to have huge success. Excerpts (9) and (10) show some instances of celebrity, aspiration and how they link to philanthropy.

Excerpts	Source
9. He visited the injured in hospital and auctioned his <b>fabulous \$45,000 shorts with its waistband sewn with 24-carat gold thread</b> .	OPE -10, p. 99

10. The Sicilian aviator and ornithologist Angelo d'Arrigo claimed that he followed the dream of Icarus. Flying was his passion and 'No Limits' was the logo on his helmet, and his email address. After a career as an instructor in skiing, hang-gliding, and paragliding, he turned to competitive sports, and when he withdrew from that circuit after years of world titles, he returned to Italy... it was here that he organized his annual charity 'Carnival Fly' to raise money for the children's charities which were dear to him
- OPE -10, p. 90

The excerpts 9 and 10 illustrate how celebrity culture is used to create philanthropic images. The excerpt 9 depicts Amir Khan's philanthropic side and economic fortune. His image is created as a humanitarian worker through an event process of declarative sentence which Fairclough (2015, p.138) defines as a process which answers questions such as what happened, or what the subject did. Fairclough calls such events ideologically determined. Text producers select such statements to establish reality about specific events. Using formal features of declarative sentences and adjectives like 'fabulous', the event process reinforces the neoliberal ideology involving philanthropy work done by a celebrity. Neoliberalism links celebrity with fame, philanthropy, and wealth. Similarly, excerpt 10 sets the tone for the rest of the text, revealing, according to Fairclough (2015), the overall views and directions. In mentioning Angelo d' Arrigo's unwavering pursuit of his dreams, an inspiring image is created. The text depicts the bravery and diversity of interests of a man who has achieved many titles through competitive sports. Nevertheless, the end of text is interesting since he joins the philanthropy club after a long life of fame and hype. As a result, readers become more accustomed to thinking of charity as a 'good deed' rather than problematizing social structures needing it at all. Charity conceals the agency of global capitalistic market forces that exploit the poor. Weis (2001, p. 38) notes that charitable choice as a neoliberal strategy frees governments and market forces of responsibility for social justice.

## Competition

According to Treanor (2005), every human activity in the neoliberal world order is a market transaction, conducted in competition with every other being. Market is universally viewed as a competitive arena in which individuals seek to maximize their benefit. Consequently, the market produces other values such as rivalry, individuality, profit-making, productivity, and monetary calculations of loss and gain. Neoliberalism, however, is not just about competition in the economic sense, but also impacts people's social and private lives. The following excerpts show this competitive spirit in social and private sphere of people's lives.

11. How could you make your character come alive for the reader? Think of details which would make the character 'real'. For example, perhaps the girl has a younger sister who is her parents' favorite and is much cleverer and prettier than she is.
- OPE -9, p. 45

The excerpt 11 begins with an 'interrogative form' to create curiosity in the minds of readers. Then the text producer moves towards commanding the readers using direct imperative verb e.g., 'think' and using the second person pronoun 'you' to create a dialogic text. According to Fairclough (2015, p.143), the use of 'you' as indefinite pronoun by text producer is an attempt to establish a sort of relationship of solidarity with the readers that removes the gap of impersonality. However, the following sentence creates a sense of competition by using words, such as 'favorite' and comparative adjectives 'cleverer' and 'prettier'. Using a comparison, the text develops an impression that competition and jealousy are normal. As the reader encounters such a competition in the text, he or she starts to naturalize it in their daily lives since the text seems to reinforce their background knowledge about such competition already prevailing in their social worlds. Fairclough (2001) argues that these assumptions need to be demystified and denaturalized since they reinforce neoliberal values, such as competition leading to

strengthening of the neoliberal social order. The following excerpt (12), (13) and (14) show a similar sense of competition as discussed.

12.	There is great competition between students, which encourages them to study, Sinje explains. She is able to bear the stress, but not all students can cope with the relentless demands on them.	OPE -10, p.121
13.	Topping out on Everest was the <b>greatest</b> day of my life.	OPE -9, p. 134
14.	'Losing was <b>not</b> an option', he said. "It is a matter of honor," he explained with only half a smile.	OPE -10, p. 100

Rather than creating an environment where students can cooperate, excerpt (12) shows how competition acts as a motivational factor for students. The presence of competition in the classroom does not facilitate a healthy academic environment since it results in a loss of teamwork, collaboration, and cooperation among students. The dominant values of competition within the specific order and type of discourse (e.g., classroom discourse) strengthen the neoliberal ideology. Neoliberalism encourages people to reach, literally, the highest point on earth, as shown in excerpt 13. With the 'action process', the text producer keeps the achievement of the subject as the most important part of the information (Fairclough, 2015, p. 141). Using the superlative form 'greatest' shows that the speaker values this achievement above all else. Being the best is glory in a neoliberal world. As Esposito and Perez (2014) note, money or success are often equated with status and happiness nowadays, and these concepts are called significant aims in neoliberalism. In excerpt (14), they are said to lose their honor if they lose the competition.

### Individualism, Self-responsibility, and Self-entrepreneurship

According to Esposito and Perez (2014), 'market ideals' determine what is commonly considered to be logical, responsible, or fruitful behavior. Among them are individuality, self-reliance, consumerism, and personal gain/profit (p. 420). Taking responsibility for one's actions and being self-employed are direct results of individualism and relying on oneself is the result of neoliberal market logic.

15.	The mobile is great for me as an electrician. Before, I had to rely on a middleman, but now I'm my own boss and in direct contact with clients.	OPE -9, p. 117
16.	Whatever <b>you</b> can do or dream you <b>can</b> do it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it <b>now</b> " An inspiring statement! Do you agree with it?	OPE -10, p. 54
17.	He has taught me to become independent and able to make my own decisions.	OPE -10, p. 155

Technology plays a vital role in neoliberalism's agenda for self-entrepreneurship as shown in excerpt (15). As Xiong et al. (2018) point out, neoliberalism promotes individual entrepreneurship and favors it. Individualism is not confined to what people earn independently, but rather goes even farther into the mindset that everything they do benefits them directly, regardless of any consequences. Gray (2010) observed several instances in international ELT textbooks praising individuality and capacity to care for oneself. Babaii & Sheikhi (2018) also expose the ego-centrist individualism worldview, which holds that you should only take care of yourself. Mayo (2015, p. 2) describes this as 'unbridled individualism' in her research on education under neoliberalism. This individualism is most important factor in Neoliberal world order, which trains people to be self-sufficient rather than developing a society where people learn to co-exist, share and support one another.

In excerpt 16, the interrogative pronoun is followed by the second person pronoun 'you' as a way to establish a connection with the reader. 'You' is used in the text to establish a connection with the reader and remedy the impersonal touch (Fairclough, 2015, 143). Furthermore, the modal verb 'can' establish a relationship of assertiveness and power between the text producer

and the interpreter (Fairclough, 2015, p. 144). *Boldness* is demonstrated as possessing certain qualities to persuade the reader to use it in practice. A neoliberal world sees it as anomalous to let someone else decide for you, as illustrated in excerpt 17. Gray (2010) suggests that the proponents of New Capitalism advise people to exercise their choice and only do work they enjoy. The neoliberal values of independence and decision-making are emphasized to show that youngsters, despite their naivety and lack of experience, should be given free-hand and should not be commanded by adults. Young adults who are consumers of these textbooks value the neoliberal notion of 'independence' (see Fairclough, 2015, p. 169). Bourdieu (1998) described this as a programmed destruction of collectives in which each individual is left to take care of himself.

## Mobility, New 'Othering' Strategy and English Skills

Bori (2021, p. 125) argues that neoliberalism promotes mobility as a desirable labor practice, positioning the worker as a neoliberal worker willing to switch professions frequently to handle new professional obstacles. As excerpt 18 below shows, mobility in a neoliberal order is specifically related to moving toward developed parts of the world. Multiculturalism is one of the great promises of neoliberalism.

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18.	Throughout its vast network of schools, orchestras and choirs which now extends to all 23 provinces in Venezuela, around 500,000 members make music and find themselves transported from the barrios to <b>another world</b> with all of its <b>possibilities and promises</b> .	OPE -9, pg. 110
19.	Holiday brochures are fun to read and offer all kinds of exciting trips all over the world. In <b>some</b> parts of the world, information brochures on excursions and entertainments have been written in English, but the English is often full of errors.	OPE -9, pg. 128
20.	<b>Older</b> girls have lessons in English conversation and how to present themselves to <b>best advantage</b> .	OPE -9, pg. 65

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In Venezuela, the music school prepares artists to move to 'another' world. The promise of this 'another' world is elaborated to be full of possibilities. As the artists were part of a world of hopelessness and poverty initially, the world of possibilities and promises is left to the reader's imagination to be accepted as one of fortune and wealth. Neoliberal discourse usually portrays the less developed countries and their cultures negatively (Babaii et al., 2018). The same impression of 'othering' strategy is created out of Venezuela, which Apple (2006) identifies as 'the most conservative type of multiculturalism' (p. 179).

Mobility as a neoliberal concept is also discussed in the context of travel and holidays through travel agents. The writer opens with an optimistic expression and uses persuasive present tense in order to convince the reader of the connection between tourism and English (Fairclough, 1989). To attract tourists, travel companies use holiday brochures as neoliberal marketing tools. Babaii and Sheikhi (2018, p. 255) mention in the textbooks a narrative about an 'adventure holiday firm' as a neoliberal byproduct that was not present in traditional villages. Holidays that were once private matters of family life must now be handled by companies that ensure a pleasant experience (Babaii et al. 2018). An excerpt criticizes the same brochures for inaccurate English use in a judgmental tone. A further consequence of neoliberalism is shown in the emphasis on English skills. Use of the indefinite pronoun 'some' to refer to the locations, particularly non-native contexts where the brochures reflect an 'Othering strategy' based on superiority of native (Standard English) and is used to gain people's support without offending them. As Pakistan is a non-native country, the expression 'English often full of errors' is used in textbooks for the similar purpose. The excerpt (20) also presents English as a global (neoliberal) life skill, whereas the excerpt (21) explains how English enables empowerment.

Copley (2018) found that to increase their chances of landing a job, students are made to believe that they must continually improve at everything they do. Learning English is part of this process. In the text (21), Learning English is portrayed as fundamentally an important skill that can transform learners' life, empower them in the social world, solve their problems in a new country.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined neoliberal discourses in O-level English language textbooks taught in elitist private schools in Pakistan published by Oxford University Press. Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model was used to identify how linguistic structures in textbooks reflect Neoliberal ideology. Several neoliberal themes were evident in the textbooks under review, including marketization, consumerism, branding, competition, celebrity, fame, aspiration, individualism, self-responsibility, self-entrepreneurship, mobility, and othering. The study establishes that the uncritical adoption of foreign-aided textbooks is problematic since they are not neutral. Instead, they detach learners from their local contexts and values by transforming them into 'neoliberal subjects'. Bourdieu (1998) identifies this as an invasion of social collectivity that damages its fabric, creating a world of self-interest, competitiveness, consumerism, Otherisation, and celebrity fame. ELT textbooks and materials have been radically influenced by Neoliberalism. This study therefore argues for a critical intervention in elitist schools in Pakistan to teach English as a foreign language. Moreover, EFL textbooks should be carefully chosen to suit learners' local (social) contexts and realities when teaching the language.

The study findings have global implications for English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching context. Today's globalized world has given the ELT industry the upper hand. Because of its colonial roots, the English language maintains its position in new forms of hegemony, such as neoliberalism which is retained by the governments e.g., Pakistan in this case to establish and maintain the space for the local (political) elites since their children in Pakistan attain education in such elitist O-level Cambridge systems to prepare either for settling in foreign countries or holding privileged positions in the country. As a result, English language learners lose their local identities, values, and cultures due to this dominance of English as an industry. Accordingly, the study advocates for critical intervention at the local level in English language pedagogical practices. Fairclough's critical language awareness (CLA) can be incorporated into the pedagogical training of EFL teachers to enable them to question and challenge dominant ideologies and discourses embedded in textbooks. It allows teachers to read critically about texts they encounter. A critical understanding of how language contributes to social injustices and inequalities for EFL learners in postcolonial societies requires de-socialization as a key component of current pedagogical practices. As opposed to what we found in the study, we need to develop teaching materials that train learners to integrate into a collaborative social environment where they can support one another rather than emerge as self-regulating individuals. It is likely that such a society will lead to peace and social progress. What we need is a new world order that promotes cooperation, happiness, and progress for all. It is possible for ELT to contribute to this effort by providing inclusive materials rather than inciting capitalistic narratives.

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