AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

AN EXPLORATION OF STRUCTURE AND AGENCY THROUGH THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING INITIATIVE "ACCESS"

by
RUTH KRISTA BONAZZA

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: An Exploration of Structure and Agency Through the English Language Learning Initiative "ACCESS"

This thesis explores teachers' discourse around English language education, and seeks to address the possibility of agency within dominant structure by examining the English Access Microscholarship Program (ACCESS), a US Department of State funded English language learning program in Lebanese public schools. I compare Bourdieu's idea of a restricted agency within habitus, which is echoed within theories of linguistic imperialism, to the idea of more specific and individual performances of agency, as seen in the works by Giroux and Canagarajah. My results consider the questions: How are the English language in Lebanon and global English language education initiatives such as the Access program discussed by those involved? What is the degree of agency within these structures?

Methodology for this work includes unobtrusive research methods, structured interviews with program administrators and teacher trainers, and unstructured, in-depth interviews with ten teachers in the program. Through the discourse of the teachers, I locate three overarching structures: the structure of the English language globally, the structure of the Lebanese public schools where the teachers give the program and finally, the structure of the program itself.

This thesis looks beyond the idea that structure is all-encompassing and wholly dominant and recognizes that there could be moments of resistance or performativity that indicate that teachers can play active roles in choosing which parts of structures to internalize and transmit and are in some ways able to filter programs such as Access to fit local needs without completely subscribing to the program goals.

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Table 1. Access Student Participant Numbers According to Region

Region	Number of students (2009)
Africa	1,841
East Asia	2,077
Europe	1,606
Middle East	11,070
South Central Asia	4,813
Latin America	749

*****Numbers are taken from a speech by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations entitled U.S. Public Diplomacy- Time To Get Back In The Game (United States Senate, February 13, 2009, p. 35).

ABBREVIATIONS

Access: English Access Microscholarship Program

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELF: English Language Fellow

ELT: English Language Teaching

EFFL/ FFFL: English as a First Foreign Language, French as a First Foreign Language

ESFL/ FSFL: English as a Second Foreign Language, French as a Second Foreign Language

ESDP: Education Sector Development Plan

MoE: Ministry of Education

NC: New Curriculum

NSE: New School of Education

RELO: Regional English Language Officer

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TESL: Teaching English as a Second Language

USDOS: United States Department of State

YES: Youth Exchange and Study (Program)

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sociologist of education, Roger Dale, suggests that education is both a symbol and a strategy. Education is tasked with indicating a certain kind of modernity, but at the same time it is a strategy used by the dominant to influence the norms of a population (Dale, 2001, p. 8). Teachers are either applauded for their reformatory skills or blamed for societal failure. Reflecting this divide, academics and practitioners concerned with education have often focused exclusively on either the macro structure of education and the strategies employed by those who mould it or merely the actions of individuals within. I argue that in order to present a more holistic view of education initiatives, and in particular global education initiatives, it is important to look at both the macro and micro levels.

Without this more detailed view, as Antonio Gramsci writes, a dominant hegemonic consciousness that could be contradictory to the beliefs of an individual, is internalized and accepted as natural and unquestionable (Gramsci, 1971, p. 333). This is especially true in global education initiatives which move from "developed" countries to the "developing." Where neoliberal demands are often embedded in "development" and "educational" aid. By being aware of the multiple sides of global education, practitioners and thinkers will be in a better position to separate education from aid.

In this thesis, I look at the ways in which the English Access Microscholarship Program (Access), a United States Department of State (USDOS) funded English education program in Lebanon, is marketed as "development" aid as it normalizes a neoliberal vision of education and whether the actions of those involved can be labeled

as reproduction of hegemonic global linguistic norms and politically charged donor demands, resistance or something else entirely.

To begin, I will introduce the dominant Western structural functionalist assumptions in the field of education and how they have affected international education aid, the debates on the possibility of agency of the individual and the role of the English language in global education. Following this theoretical context, I will outline the methodology of this project, which includes unobtrusive research, structured interviews with Amideast (American-Middle East Educational and Training Services) administrators and the United States embassy and discourse analysis of unstructured interviews with ten teachers in the Access program. In order to consider the multiple structures that these teachers operate within, I will establish a short history of language education in public schools in Lebanon and a detailed description of the Access program. Keeping in mind Kum Kum Bhvani's assumption that 'dominant discourses' are ideas and arguments that "are embedded in social relationships of structured domination and subordination (Griffin, 1993, p. 8)," my results explore the questions: *How are the English language in Lebanon and global English language education initiatives such as the Access program discussed by those involved? Identifying the structures that surround this program from the discourse of the teachers in the program, what is the degree of agency within these structures?* The results are taken from the discourse of the teachers and accordingly broken into three sections: the potential of agency within a global English language agenda, the Lebanese public school system and a donor agenda.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL CONTEXT: STRUCTURE AND AGENCY

2.1 The Structure of Education: The School as a Site of Modernity, Transformation and Neoliberalism

Before discussing the actions and agency of those involved in the field of education, it is first important to examine the emergence and subsequent use within the sociology of education of the idea that education has a particular *function*. Although initially these theories were developed far outside of Lebanon, their impact on the foreign policies of the West, global capital groups such as the World Bank and thus the domestic policies of countries receiving foreign aid are far reaching. It is apparent that ideas from Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parson's structural functionalism to critical education theorists and neoliberal critics, the ideal of the school as a potential site for renovation and change is unquestioned. Although the methods to achieve this aim have been challenged, the premise has not been much altered. In order to examine the actions of those within these structures, I will first lay out the groundwork for the current interest in educational aid as a route to development.

Emile Durkheim, arguably one of the founders of the sociology of education, writes of the potential of the French school to mould model citizens, thus orderly education symbolizes an orderly nation. As a positivist movement towards modernization and progress, education was seen as a means to educate members to be a part of the greater society as well as to create a differentiated and productive workforce (Durkheim, 1961). Without a uniform moral code transmitted by such institutions,

society would be disparate and dysfunctional. "Society, in fact, cannot exist except on the condition that all of its members are sufficiently alike—that is to say, only on the condition that they reflect in differing characteristics essential for a given ideal, which is the collective ideal (Durkheim, 1961, p. 88)." Not a romantic, Durkheim notes that differing characteristics emphasized by sites such as the school are meant to reinforce rather than disband hierarchical society.

American sociologist Talcott Parsons further developed the strategies of schooling in his 1951 book, *The Social System*, published at the time of an American push to enact mass education worldwide to promote democracy (Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysaland, 1992, p. 146). The school as a possible function or strategy to reproduce a certain kind of society was then replicated internationally. Parsons writes,

> "Every society then has the mechanisms which have been called situational specifications of role-orientations and which operate through secondary identifications and imitation. Through them are learned the specific role-values and symbol-systems of that particular society or sub-system of it, the level of expectations which are to be concretely implemented in action in the actual role" (Parsons, 1951, p. 236).

The situational specifications or role orientations found in formal schooling remove an individual from the family's influence and push them toward adulthood. The school can then become a point of leverage against the narratives of a community. According to Parsons, the school also provides "apprenticeships for adult occupational roles" (Parsons, 1951, pp. 239-240). These roles are meant to follow a universalistic achievement system and achievement or progress is seen as a natural and unquestionable goal (Parsons, 1951, p. 95). In other words, although mass education opens the door for a more diverse and bountiful student core, the school is seen to

operate on a meritocratic system where those who work hard will succeed. Parsons does note that not all those within the mechanism of schooling will find their efforts fruitful nor will individuals follow all the principles and norms transmitted to them (Parsons, 1951, p. 240). However, he does not elaborate on why this is not the case, dismissively stating, "But that is another story" (Parsons, 1951, p. 240).

Critical education scholars have picked up on the influence of the structural functionalists, arguing that education as a means to transform a population is used by aid-giving countries as well as organizations such as the World Bank that would like to increase economic leverage and promote a neoliberal trade philosophy. Economists Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell define neoliberalism as a fluid process that attempts to create a space where an ideal of goal capital resplendent with defined and neutralized values can be realized: "an apparently all encompassing "condition" in which market rules and competitive logics predominate, while the political leverage of nation-states recede into insignificance" (Tickell & Peck, 2003, p. 163). As the structural functionalist scholars would argue, education, and mass public education in particular, is an unquestionable symbol of modernity and progress. Neoliberal ethos in turn defines progress in labor/capital terms (increasing personal or national wealth).

Conversely, Marxist educationalists Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis are critical of the idea that the school is meant to create and sort docile workers. "Different levels of education feed workers into different levels within the occupational structure and, correspondingly, tends toward an internal organization comparable to levels in the hierarchical division of labor" (Bowles & Gintis, 1988, p. 3). Using data driven case studies, Steven Klees points out that neoliberal ideals such as emphasis on the individual over the group or nation, encouragement of market philosophies and

increased reliance on foreign assistance for domestic curricula actually increases dependence, props up the neoliberal capital system and spreads inequality (Klees, 2008, pp. 334-335). David Hill writes that education has been co-opted to naturalize the drive to amass personal capital (Hill, 2004, p. 509) and argues that groups like the IMF and World Bank as well as Western governments, try to encourage educational policies that keep the global elite on top (Hill, Summer 2006, p. 19). Phillip Brown and Stuart Tannock agree, writing that the idea of a global meritocracy, which, as Parsons writes, is when working hard indicates success, is a myth that has spilled over into the development of education policies worldwide. Therefore, although global education is often presented as a symbolic and unquestionable step towards modernization, it is actually sorting workers into categories and increases inequality (Brown & Tannock, July 2009).

Scholars point out that neoliberal economic policies are guided by the US and capital institutions such as the World Bank and there is a growing recognition that these policies threaten rather than benefit economies (Brown & Tannock, July 2009; Peck & Yeung, 2003) and national educational systems (Klees, 2008, p. 334). Although global education is often presented as a step towards modernization, these critiques show us that it is neither a-political nor value free. By reflecting on the structure of educational aid and policy, we can look at the ways in which neoliberal philosophies are naturalized by internationally funded programs. This thesis takes into account these critical views, particularly how education is used as a market function as well as to promote relationships of dominance and subordination. However, by looking merely at a structural level, what is happening on an individual level can be overlooked. While

detailed reflection on structure is important to address the hidden assumptions[1] and agendas of educational programs, the actions and discourse of the teachers who are meant to be reproducing these norms are vital as well.

2.2 Individual Action and Agency: Reproduction/Resistance Binary or Multiple and Differentiated?

Despite the expectations of the structure and strategy of education, within the sociology of education there is reference to the supposed duality of theory- also called the structure versus agency debate (Shilling, 1992; Willmott, Mar., 1999). To explore this idea I will address two very different views of the nature of agency; resistance to dominant norms as illustrated in Bourdieu's concept of habitus, or the idea that agency and resistance can be located in individual actions, as can be seen in Henry Giroux's work.

Bourdieu, reflecting on the social capital[2] needed to successfully maneuver through the education system, writes that individuals are influenced by the dominant structures, or habitus, around them. This is a direct critique of the structural

[1] Hidden curriculum, a term used by Michael Apple, refers to the ideology behind classroom ethos and practice. More can be found in the edited volume, *Ideology, Curriculum, and the New Sociology of Education*, Weis, L., McCarthy, C., & Dimitriadis, G. (2006). *Ideology, curriculum, and the new sociology of education : revisiting the work of Michael Apple*. London: Routledge. which examines the continuing relevance of Apple's 1979 book, *Ideology and Curriculum*. In this volume, Dennis Carlson writes that *Ideology, Curriculum, and the New Sociology of Education* was first book that brought neo-Marxist critique into the education debate in the US Carlson, D. (2006). Are we making progress? In L. Weis, C. McCarthy & G. Dimitriadis (Eds.), *Ideology, curriculum, and the new sociology of education : revisiting the work of Michael Apple* (pp. 91-114). London: Routledge..

[2] Understanding and being able to navigate the social system bestows upon an individual social bargaining power; embodied state of social capital. Bourdieu writes that these are "long lasting dispositions of the mind and body" Richardson, J. G. (Ed.). (1986). *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press., emphasizing the innate and intangible nature of this capital. These powers can be used to supply an individual bargaining power in social and economic hierarchies, or in group culture. On a micro scale, access to education or even the ability to function effectively within a school environment is a kind of capital that will add to other forms of capital an individual may possess.

functionalist view that education is meritocratic or universal, as success is defined not by application and hard work, but instead by how well an individual can maneuver through a structure. In his 1984 book, *Distinction*, Bourdieu defines habitus as "both the generative principle of objectivity classifiable judgments and the system of classification (principle division is) of these practices" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 70). Habitus both is the choice of individuals and what informs that choice. He goes on to discuss the actions of those within habitus writing, "it is in the relationship between the two capacities which define the habitus, the capacity to reproduce classifiable practices and works, and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products (taste), that represented social works, i.e., the space of life-styles is constituted" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170). Habitus guides both individual judgment and also the system to make decisions; "a structured and structuring structure" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 171). Education is a structure that informs choice, but at the same time, it guides and is guided by those involved. However, agency is not merely the decision to replicate. According to Bourdieu, actors rarely act outside of dominant structures. Rather, reproduction usually occurs as a consequence of bowing to the symbolic violence of the group's norms. Bourdieu writes that there is potential agency in the school, due to its separation from the political and family spheres (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 199), yet does not go into detail on the environment where this could occur. For the most part, Bourdieu argues that schools impose structures which then reproduce dominant norms.

Bourdieu's theory sets up a dialectic between agency and reproduction, however there are some that criticize the two dimensional vision. In particular, Paul Willis and Henry Giroux present a different version of agency that goes beyond the

dialectic nature of Bourdieu. In the 1970s, Paul Willis conducted an anthropological study within British schools, looking at "lad culture" in opposition to school structure (Willis, 1977). Willis found that there was active resistance and counter culture being created inside the classroom; however, he also acknowledged that the students were actually placing themselves into dominantly prescribed categories (which is arguably a form of reproduction). Carlson states that Willis, by introducing "culturally specific resistances," problematized and expanded the idea of agency (Carlson, 1988, p. 165).

Henry Giroux, an American sociologist focusing on education, further explores this idea of specific agencies and developed a radical pedagogy that challenges the limited notion of agency versus reproduction, suggesting that the school could be an alternative public sphere, separate from the family, economy and politics of the time. He criticizes those who support the agency versus reproduction dichotomy, writing,

> "In other words, there are, on the one hand, radical educators who collapse human agency and struggle into a celebration of human will, cultural experience, or the construction of "happy" classroom social relations. On the other hand, there are radical views of pedagogy that cling to notions of structure and domination. Such views not only argue that history is made behind the backs of human beings, but also imply that within such a context of domination human agency virtually disappears. The notion that human beings produce history- including its restraints- is subsumed in a discourse that often portrays schools as prisons, factories, and administrative machines functioning smoothly to produce interests of domination and inequality. This result has often been modes of analysis that collapse into an arid functionalism or equally disabling pessimism" (Giroux, 1983, p. 4).

Giroux challenges both the school as a symbol of change, but also the school as a site of reproduction, recognizing that there are multiple actors and possibilities within schools and therefore multiple forms and sites of resistance. "Within this dialectic of

domination and resistance and the contradictory experiences and work, there exists a theoretical gap regarding the value and limitations of critical pedagogy whose aim is the transformation of society and the relations of everyday life" (Giroux, 1983, p. 235). Giroux encourages researchers to look beyond the idea of the school as a strategy or symbol and recognize the multiple actions and perhaps small sites of resistance. It is not necessary for the school or those involved with education to reproduce or radically alter society. Instead, they could create alternative spheres both within and outside the school to present alternative norms and values that might not be prescribed by the dominant elite. This debate about structure and the multiple forms of agency can also be seen in English Language Teaching (ELT) theory.

2.3 Structure and Agency in ELT Theory

The many faces of language, particularly the English language, in education have not been overlooked. Within the ELT profession, practitioners and scholars debate the role that language plays in culture and identity formation, echoing the debates of the structure and agency of education that are found in sociology. Even the titles that English is given are diverse: World English(es) (Crystal, 2003; Kachru & E, 2001), English as a Lingua Franca or English as an International Language (Jenkins, March 2006; Saraceni, June 2008). These authors argue that the language has grown into an important tool for cross cultural communication, uncritically accepting the place and importance of English in world education systems. However, as Sohail Karmani writes regarding English versus Arabic use in the Gulf area,

> "It is tempting to take the view… that English found itself "in the right place at the right time" as if to suggest that the arrival of English in the Arabian Gulf

> region was a purely fortuitous affair and as if to imply that Arabic had somehow been in the wrong place at the wrong time. But such a position seems to make light of the fact that it was largely as a matter of political expediency that English was able to spread in the region rather than simply a case of the rise of English satisfying a supposedly insatiable demand for the language" (Karmani, 2005b, p. 95).

Indeed, Robert Phillipson argues that the English language and language learning has dominated school systems, crushing native languages and creating hierarchies of knowledge. Phillipson (Færch, Haastrup, & Phillipson, 1984; Phillipson, 1992, 2008) introduces the idea of English usage and spread as a form of linguistic imperialism. Drawing on Tove Skutnall Kangas' idea of linguistic human rights,[3] Phillipson argues that English, alongside the market economy, democracy and human rights was initially pushed into former communist states and that practice of trying to change ideology with language has continued to today on an even larger scale (Phillipson, 2000, p. 93).

Scholars from the region have also found resonance in linguistic imperialism. Karmani, basing his work in the United Arab Emirates, writes that within US foreign policy, the Arabic language is seen as intrinsically linked to Islam, which is then viewed as a precursor to terrorism. He states that three assumptions guide the foreign push for English language education in the region: that Muslim languages promote militarism, that English is a language "exclusively endowed to promote the values of freedom, democracy, justice, openness, tolerance, decency, and so forth" and finally that Islam is rooted in violence (Karmani, 2005b, p. 264). But, as Karmani points out, there is also a fear that the knowledge will have an unintended consequence. He quotes a 2003

[3] Interestingly, Skutnall-Kangas references the International Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, article III, where the destruction and obstruction of a language is referred to as linguistic genocide Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000). *Linguistic Genocide in Education, or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc..

editorial from the Washington Times; "The last thing American wants is better skilled terrorists" (Karmani, 2005b, p. 266). Karmani fears that TESL professionals will unknowingly be co-opted into this ideological battle and that the ELT profession needs to be self critical and open to new ways of thinking in order for that to be avoided.

Those arguing the hegemonic influence of linguistic imperialism are criticized for not looking at the actions of teachers and the ways in which they manipulate structure for community designated rather than imposed needs. A. Suresh Canagarajah's influential book- *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism*, published in 2000, acknowledges the imperial intent of the spread of the English language, yet criticizes Phillipson for not acknowledging the ways in which some educators use the dominant meta-systems for their own counter hegemonic purposes. Citing his TESOL professional life in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, he emphasizes that language gains meaning through use, and thus speakers and learners have different relationships and reactions to the English language (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 123). In a chapter entitled, 'Negotiating Ideologies through English: Strategies from the Periphery,' he explores the linguistic and political history of Jaffna from colonization to post colonization. He encourages researchers to look closely at the actions within the dominant structure of English and recognize code switching, hybridity and vernacular-ization as resistance (Canagarajah, 2000, p. 128). Alastair Pennycook invokes the potential of hybridity of language and calls the relation between the first language and English "post colonial performativity" (Pennycook, 2000, p. 114). Similarly, in a response to Karmani's paper, Ahmed Kabel writes that despite the cultural and ideological baggage that can accompany language, there is also what he calls, "power potential." "[Power potential] is latent in any language system, ready to be realized to construct, resist and reconstruct discourses and

power of all sorts" (Kabel, 2007, p. 139). Hence both careful study about the influence and spread of the English language combined with reflection on debates about the variety of agencies within structure is needed. As Pennycook writes, "Thus while never losing sight of the very real forces of global capital and media, we need, at the very least, to understand the response to cultural spread and not assume its instant effects" (Pennycook, 2000, p. 117).

In conclusion, dominant theories in the sociology of education as well as ELT theory have presented criticisms of global education and English education, yet continue to hold the structural functional belief of the potential of the school as a cite of change. From the structural functionalism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to critical education theorists, education is seen as a place of considerable influence and has been adopted by neoliberal bearers such as the US government (particularly in the region) and the World Bank. Even so, by emphasizing individual response within structure, critical theorists and self-critical practitioners challenge researchers not to be distracted by the potential of the school for renovation and radical change, but rather to look at potential pockets of resistance to hegemonic philosophies that are being normalized through the school. This thesis looks at the alteration, capitulation or resistance of hegemonic norms that are instilled through education, recognizing both the actions of individuals and the powerful shadows that structures cast. In order to look at potential agency within structure, I explored Access teacher participants' discourse to locate their perceptions of the structure(s) they operate within as well as the ways they respond.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This thesis looks at the policy that created Access and the praxis of those involved. With this in mind, both the formal information gleaned from documents and interviews with program funders and administrators and the personal reactions and experiences of the teachers are of key import.

Gathering research on a program linked to US public diplomacy in the Middle East from within Lebanon is not an easy task, as information is closely guarded. The first problem I encountered was the lack of data available to the public and the reluctance of Amideast officials to talk to me about the program without an interview and "clearance" from the US embassy. Given that initial obstacle, I started my research by looking into the program remotely, comparing it to other country's programs that were more willing to share information.

In this research I employed a variety of research methods with different participants. I used unobtrusive research methods, including document collection, analysis of selected parts of the Access curriculum and observation of Access events. I also used structured interviews with Amideast personnel, US embassy personnel, an international Access teacher trainer and a teacher trainer in Lebanon. The bulk of the research, however, stems from in-depth unstructured interviews with teachers involved in the program. By recording and transcribing the narratives of teachers, I hoped to unlock some of the Access program's layers of intent as well as the individual participants' reactions. Participants in this research are not a representative sample and I am by no means claiming that my interpretations are exclusive. Instead, this thesis is

one interpretation of the actions of those within global and program structures. Indeed, a limitation of this study is that it does not compare the discourse of teachers to their practices in the classroom. Nevertheless, the discourse still presents meaningful insight about the English language in the region as well as the Access program. Following are detailed explanations of the research methods used in this project.

3.1 Unobtrusive research

Unobtrusive research refers to data that is elicited from a situation or from actors without the researcher disrupting the environment. Lee refers to this approach as "eclectic" and "ecumenical" as it encourages an alternative creativity in data collection (Lee, 2000, p. 15). All forms of research are subjected to the influence of the researcher, and for that reason, I use the information obtained through the unobtrusive research as context for the narratives. The unobtrusive data collected includes document collection and research about Access and the Lebanese EFFL and ESFL curricula as well as observation of Access events.

Originally, I intended to look into the curriculum and explore the themes and details of each module in order to see how closely teachers follow the official program. I altered my approach after Amideast officials did not agree to give me the curriculum of the program.[4] I also examined the 1997 English as a First and English as a Second Foreign Language curricula from the Ministry of Education,[5] as it was apparent from the first couple of interviews how big a role the official curricula has in the enthusiastic reception of the program. Finally, I used official documents from the USDOS in

[4] Amideast told me that the reason that they did not want to release the information is because there curricula is not copyrighted, despite it being available to teachers and students. Amideast did say that they would allow me to look at the documents under supervision, however I thought that this would negatively impact the quality of the research and declined.
[5] Also referred to as the "New Curriculum."

Washington, DC as well as correspondence with Access coordinators in Mexico and Russia outlining the intents of the program. By comparing program objectives, it became clear how the program varies throughout the world, this understanding being necessary for the analysis of how this program might be used in ways initially unintended by the donor. This international perspective indicated the multiple layers of the program, including the program's role in US public diplomacy and international development aid.

Finally, at the invitation of Amideast, I was able to attend a graduation ceremony of Access students as well as a teacher training seminar for the new batch of Access "clusters."[6] This allowed me to observe the working dynamic between the teachers and students as well as between the teachers and administrators/ embassy personnel.

3.2 Structured Interviews

In this research project I used structured interviews to talk with program officials in Amideast and the US embassy. All interviews took place between May 2010 and May 2011. The interviews were 60-80 minutes long and geared towards gleaning more information about program specifics in Lebanon as well as the official dogma of the international program. Interviews with Amideast were mainly to gather information, but it was clear after talking to the administrators that they passionately believe in the power of global education aid and that this program is an opportunity for both the students and the teachers. They were very proud that the program offers both English education to students and professional training for teachers. After initial reluctance by

[6] Using a military term, teachers and the embassy referred to Access groups as "clusters."

Amideast to share information about the program[7] and a more formal introduction from a board member, Amideast program officials invited me to attend a teacher training workshop. However, they were still hesitant to give me approval to start interviews without first obtaining clearance from the US embassy.

My interview with the US embassy's Public Affairs Officer was primarily to ensure access to teachers, but resulted in giving me greater insight into the layers of program intentions, particularly the embassy's drive to reduce the rural Lebanese public's animosity towards their foreign policy. To get to the US embassy compound, which is situated on a hill in Aoukar to the north of Beirut, there are a number of car blocks and security checkpoints. Access to the embassy is only given to those with invitations. Once inside the embassy compound, as is the custom with the US embassy in Lebanon, I was not allowed to stray from my escort. The embassy's remote location and the strict security measures stem from security concerns and are a tangible indication they feel there is a need to improve perceptions of the United States through programs like Access.

3.3 Unstructured Interviews

The main participants in this project were teachers involved in the Access program. I used unstructured interviews, or narrative inquiry, lasting 60-150 minutes with ten teachers. All unstructured interviews took place between May 2010 and May 2011. The participants were assured that their participation would be confidential and that no identifying details would be used in the dissemination of the data. This was particularly important in light of the initial negative response from Amideast.

[7] Indeed my research was stopped briefly after Amideast officials banned teachers from talking to me under threat of being dropped from the program

Throughout the text, I use approximate locations (coastal city, rural town in the north, etc) to differentiate the narrators.

The sample population in this study is a non-representative, convenient sample; I met teachers through informal professional networks as well as at Amideast functions. The teachers reside throughout Lebanon in rural and urban and coastal, mountain and valley areas. Many have third jobs in addition to their primary school of employment and Access classes and are overwhelmed with their work load, so I tried to accommodate them as much as possible and conducted interviews in locations convenient to them. Some teachers decided, after the interviews, to take me to their schools, thus giving me a greater understanding of their professional realities. For example, one teacher brought me to the school she teaches at in a coastal city. Pointing to a new pair of garbage cans and a relationally clean street, she explained that she likes the theme of "volunteerism" in the Access program, because it encourages students to start waste disposal and recycling projects in their communities. Another teacher took me to a rural school in the Bekaa and explained that although she does not live in the area, she commutes in order to teach the Access students. Holding her hands up and gesturing to the mountains dotted with red roofed houses, she asked me, "Because how many Americans live here?" Although I have experience in English language teaching, I have no teaching experience in Lebanon. The daily details the teachers were able to share through the sympathetic and reflexive method of narrative inquiry were extremely important and without them, this project would not have been nearly so nuanced.

In this thesis, I stress the "knowledgabilty of actors" and I seek to "uncover the ways in which social actors analyze their circumstances and can share an inter-subjective understanding of them" (Giddens & Turner, 1987, p. 226). I chose narrative

inquiry as a method for exploring teachers' agency within a global structure. The reflexive nature of the method allows for a conversation on the personal biography and linguistic descriptions of the past and present. Narrative inquiry also allows the participant to lead the discussion and for the interviewer to become more of a listener. Digression becomes not only desirable, but essential in maintaining the purity of the recital. Chase writes that narrating life experiences becomes

> "a distinctive form of discourse: as meaning making through the shaping or ordering of experience, a way of understanding one's own or others' actions, of organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 421).

Without listening to the biographical and linguistic memories that the participants felt were important in their lives, it would be impossible to understand the extent to which they see the English language playing a role in their lives, their students' lives and their country. Discussions began with the speaker recounting their life experience with the English language, then their experience in their primary place of employment and finally about the Access program (including participant-led descriptions of the program as well as classroom experiences). Often speakers chose to expand on their school and family life, the changes that they feel they see in Lebanon and the role that language plays in this. At times, there were painful memories. One participant explained that she went back to school at a mature age and in the final year, when trainees are encouraged to shadow teachers and gain hands on experience in the classroom, a close family member passed on, making her graduation and new professional life much more difficult. Many of the teachers also talked about the legacy of the civil war and their experience of teaching and learning during civil unrest. Chase writes that by using

narrative inquiry, the narrator and listener are able to explore the possibility of hegemonic as well as counter hegemonic discourse (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 422). Without this context and background, it would be impossible to see the teachers' current relationships to the English language and the Access program. There is no need to search for the validity of the recital, as it is the shifting nature of discourse that is the most valuable aspect of the method.

CHAPTER 4

PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND LANGUAGE POLICY IN LEBANON

To analyze the influence of global education initiatives such as the Access program, I will first look at the historical and political import of language education in Lebanon and why internationally funded programs such as Access have gained such a hold in the public education sector. The Access program is geared specifically towards "underprivileged" students. In interviews, Amideast and staff at the Public Affairs Office (PAO) in the American embassy expressed that they consider that these students come from public (and therefore lower quality) schools. In this section, I will introduce the school system, language learning and teacher selection in public schools in Lebanon. This serves as context but also indicates the impetus behind educators joining the Access program.

4.1 Languages and Public Education in Lebanon

In his work on the history of education in Lebanon, Nemer Frayha conveniently divides the education system into three stages; Ottoman, French- which introduced mass public education- and the National system (Frayha, 1999, p. 1). Although there were some private sect based education establishments during the time of the Ottoman Empire- in fact, the English medium Syrian Protestant College which has turned into the American University of Beirut was started in 1866[8] and the French medium

[8] In AUB, English replaced Arabic as the language of instruction in 1880. Quoting a source from the time, Ingerson writes that this occurred because "several scholars decided that it was too hard to find

University St. Joseph was started in 1875- national public education at the public level and the Ministry of Public Education were introduced in 1920 during the French mandate period (BouJaoude & Ghaith, 2004, p. 170). John E. Joseph notes that before the Mandate period, generally elite Christians were educated in French and elite Muslims in Arabic, however, once France was in the governate, they quickly added French to all programs (Joseph, 2004, pp. 197-198). Indeed, the Minister of Education was hand chosen by the French and any decision undertaken in the new department was under the direct control of the French counselor (American Consulate General Beirut, 1933, p. 5). According to an unpublished AUB thesis written at the time, evangelical educational institutes that taught in English flourished under this new, more sympathetic system (Johnson, 1948, p. 45). Perhaps due to the influx of foreign funded and directed religious based schools, language was of great interest to the early planners and there was an emphasis both on French language learning, but also on preserving the primacy of Arabic. In a 1928 memorandum there is a section concernedly stating,

> "In [primary] courses Arabic is not even considered a linguistic instrument through which the beginning student can pursue his education; it is rather taught as a foreign language. In reality it is the French language which, by the nature of things, should be taught right from the beginning as a foreign language" (American Consulate General Beirut, 1933, p. 95).

Later in 1931, the Ministry of Public Education (later to become the Ministry of Education) also emphasized that *both* Arabic and French were to be taught in all private schools (American Consulate General Beirut, 1933, p. 96).

Arabic words and phrases equivalent to scientific terminology." The source continues by saying, "This was, however, more of a failing on the part of the scholars than the Arabic language Ingerson, K. (2003). The Heritage and Future of Education in Lebanon. In J. W. Bjorkman (Ed.), *SPAN Lebanon 1963* (pp. 299-358): Xlibris Corporation.."

After Lebanon gained independence in 1943, the public education sector was expanded. Education was altered to produce not just a class based workforce, but a certain type of citizen similar to the type envisioned by the structural functionalists in Europe and the U.S. Frayha quotes the Ministry of Education (MoE) writing, "[Public education in the French mandate] clearly violated the principle of equal opportunity to all students, especially when we know that only students who were good in a foreign language were able to make it to secondary level and pass the official examinations" (Frayha, 1999, p. 2). During the Mandate, Arabic was instated as the primary language and English was incorporated on par with French. Saouma BouJaoude and Ghazi Ghaith write that, revised only in 1968, this education plan posited that the use of French and English was a form of "cultural colonization," reflecting the pro-Arab and nationalistic feelings of the time (BouJaoude & Ghaith, 2004, p. 173). Nevertheless, schooling was still heavily in favor of second language instruction.

The Lebanese civil war severely disrupted all institutions in Lebanon, including the education system. Although much is written about the ongoing attempts to unify through civic or citizenship education (Akar, 2008; Joseph, 2004; Shuayb, 2009), little is written about the specific state of education at this time. In the verbal lexicon, there are common stories of buildings with records being burned, tests canceled and de-standardized requirements. One interviewee remarked that there were some years when she barely attended school. Another explained that part of her desire to study English literature at the Lebanese University and then to become a teacher was because it was the only degree that she could finish without actually attending classes; she only had to show up at the end of the year to take exams. This teacher's family felt that it would be

too dangerous to commute to university on a weekly basis. The relative safety of the teaching profession also meant that teaching became a coveted and valuable position, as workdays were relatively short and teachers were not required to go into work during heavy fighting.

In the Ta'if Agreement of 1989, the idea that the schools could serve a function, this time as part of a strategy for national unity, was again revived. BouJaoude and Ghaith write, "What was needed to overcome the educational problems in post war Lebanon was instilling among the Lebanese youth a sense of national unity and belongingness as well as equipping them with requisite knowledge and technical skills for functioning in the scientifically and technologically advanced world" (BouJaoude & Ghaith, 2006, p. 196). Public schools were seen, not only as a mould for a unified and peaceful Lebanon, but also a place where young nationals could gain the tools for Lebanon to succeed internationally. Languages in particular became an important part of national identity as proficiency in either the English or French language was meant to symbolize a more open nation (BouJaoude & Ghaith, 2006).

4.2 Language Teaching, From the Old to the New Curriculum

Language education in the public schools was further altered by the 1994 "Plan for Educational Reform" and the 1995"New Framework for Education." These decrees set in motion the creation of the 1997 "New Curriculum" (NC) which continues to be recognized by the same name. Public schools were now expected to introduce a second foreign language (Frayha, 1999, p. 3). The revised curricula and assessment structures were meant to foster a more internationally competitive education system. In a doctoral thesis on national unity education in Lebanon, Bassel Akar writes that the NC makes the

school a site to "nurture" a Lebanese identity and in particular, a Lebanese Arab identity (Akar, 2008). This school as a site to nurture a united and specifically Lebanese identity echoes the concerns of previous planners. Educational pedagogy was to change from a more rote learning style to interactive and critical (Shuayb, 2009, p. 3). However, educationalist Maha Shuayb calls into question whether or not changes took place at the classroom level (Shuayb, 2009, p. 3), with the blame falling on the teachers. Documents such as the 2011-2015 MoE Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) imply that the MoE wants to focus on, among other areas, teacher education in the next five years (Ministry of Education, March 2010).

4.3 The New Curriculum and the Expansion of Schools with English as a First Foreign Language

Interviewees remarked that they often feel bound to the official curriculum although, according to my interviews, some school principals support teachers who wish to bring in extracurricular material. At the end of the year, students in grade 9 and grade 12 are expected to take national standardized tests (the brevet and the baccalaureate), so regardless of the quality of outside materials, classes cannot deviate too much from the NC. According to the MoE curriculum, the NC affirms "true and self evident" principles, including that language aptitude must be attained by combining listening, reading, speaking and writing (Ministry of Education, 1995, p. 5). However, teachers involved in this study complain that the NC in both ESFL and EFL emphasize reading and writing while neglecting communication and listening. This curriculum, much to the criticism of many educators, has not been revised since its inception. Some of the teachers interviewed in this project indicated that there are English medium schools that use Arabic in class to communicate their meaning, particularly in the

sciences. All the teachers interviewed were very proud of their students, but, as will be discussed in the Chapter 8, many also admitted frustration at the ministerial requirements in the NC.

The past fourteen years since the NC was introduced have witnessed another more visible current of change; the expansion of ESFL schools. The Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) reported that in the 2009-2010 school year, there were 259 EFFL and 907 FFFL schools (Ministry of Education, 2011). Teachers interviewed also note the increase of English medium schools, mentioning that the number is steadily growing. Studies have articulated that many college bound ESL students see English as a more scientific and global language, while French is primarily cultural and Arabic is used to communicate with friends (Diab, March 2006; Shaaban & Ghaith, November 2000, November 2002). However, a major drawback to these studies is the lack of data from elementary and secondary education in the public schools. The fact that Lebanon teaches so many subjects in a foreign language is not without its critics. Some argue that the Arabic language is being marginalized in academics and therefore knowledge production (Hanafi, May, 2011) and there are some groups that hold seminars and classes to try to promote its use in social, professional and academic realms.[9]

4.4 Increase in English Language Teaching Jobs

The expansion of language programs within schools also meant an increase in job opportunities. The process to become a public school teacher varies from region to region. Some teachers mentioned that it is difficult to find a position, as you have to

[9] For example, the group Fi'l Amr/ Feil Amer.

have *wasta*; connections or "to know the right people." As mentioned earlier, to be a public school teacher during the civil war was considered a good job option because it was a relatively safe profession. After the civil war, it was also valued for its stability. "A public school teacher"- one of my interviewees joked- "will never be fired. A stupid teacher is like the good teacher." While a private school teacher's hours and pay are at the whim of the consumer (the administration and the student), contracted public school teachers are guaranteed a position and hours without having to submit to future evaluations. Three out of the four private school teachers I interviewed expressed their wish to be employed in a public school because of the stability. However, a major complaint, particularly of the non-tenured public ESFL teachers in this study, is that they often have to go from school to school to fill their teaching hours. This is both physically and mentally demanding, as it means unpaid traveling time and the mental and emotional demands of keeping order in an unfamiliar class. Additionally, if teachers are contracted by the schools rather than directly by the MoE, often their salaries are paid only once a year when the school gets funding for extra expenses. Given these complaints as well as those discussed in detail in Chapter 8, it is not surprising that a foreign run language program such as Access is welcomed by the teachers.

CHAPTER 5

ACCESS/ CASE STUDY IN DETAIL

5.1 The Access Program and the USDOS

Access began in Casablanca, Morocco in May 2003 under the initiative of the Bush administration and after reported success, the scope was broadened; as of 2007, Access was instated in fifty-five countries (USDOS, 2007, p. vi) and in 2009, the number jumped to sixty-four[10] (United States Senate, February 13, 2009, p. 35). In a 2009 Tobin paper, outlining strategies for the "war of ideas" against the "Muslim world," Krause and Evera, mention the Access program as geared specifically for this task.

> "The program has reached approximately 44,000 youth in more than 55 countries since its inception. This is a decent start, given the vast size of the Muslim world (1.3 billion people). Language training for foreigners is cheap, and the US should provide it widely, especially for non-elite young people who otherwise could not get training" (Krause & Evera, 2009, p. 112).

The Krause and Evera document emphasizes that language can be used for training and professionalization in predominantly Muslim countries and that this in turn would benefit the United States, by making people less likely to turn to "terrorist" organizations (Krause & Evera, 2009).

Access provides English language and American cultural lessons to *non-elite* students, ages 14- 18 years. In Lebanon, Access is aimed specifically at those attending

[10] Access Syria was stopped in 2006 and is not included in this count United States Senate. (February 13, 2009). *U.S. Public Diplomacy- Time To Get Back In The Game*. Washington DC: US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations..

remote public schools (United States Senate, February 13, 2009, p. 24). The extracurricular program consists of 400 hours of classroom time in a period of two years, combining grammar, reading and writing, speaking and American culture. According to the USDOS Office of the Coordinator for Counter Terrorism, the Access program is meant for Muslims and other "key audiences." It describes the program as a mix of civic education and job training; "students receive language instruction in a civic education context and become more competitive for future job and educational opportunities" (USDOS, April 30, 2008). Access combines learning English with themes including 'civic' education and self-marketing to prepare for the job market, but is also closely watched by agencies involved in counter terrorism and public diplomacy in the Middle East.

5.2 The Management of Access International

Access programs are under the auspices of the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961 which attempts to

> "strengthen the ties which unite [the US] with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations… and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world" (ECA, April 30, 2009).[11]

The Fulbright-Hays act in turn influenced the creation of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of English Language Programs, which liaisons with embassies working with educational institutes in other countries (ECA, April 30, 2009).

[11] There is little public information about the Access program and unless otherwise indicated, the information was taken from interviews with Amideast staff.

Other programs under the Fulbright-Hays Act include Regional English Language Officers (RELOs) and English Language Fellows (ELFs). Both positions contribute to the Access program. The RELO's job is to, through regional embassies, increase the scope and quality of English education. The RELO associated with Lebanon, Jordan and Gaza/West Bank, Iraq, Israel and Syria is located in Amman. RELOs may suggest that different institutions hire ELFs, who work in particular institutions such as universities or school chains. Both the RELO and ELF can contribute to the locations and curriculum of the Access program. In countries without resident RELO officers (such as Lebanon), that role may be given to the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) in the US embassy. In a presentation to the US Committee on Foreign Relations, it was explained that these positions enable the US government to be an "invisible" actor in education policies worldwide (United States Senate, February 13, 2009, p. 12).

Access locations are decided by the USDOS. Initially, the USDOS indicates the region in which they would like to initiate the Access program, then the countries and finally, with the help of embassy officers, administrators create the curriculum and run the daily affairs. Table 1 indicates that the largest numbers of Access students are in the Middle East and there are many other countries included with high Muslim populations. This program is considered a "first step" into subsequent US programs (ECA, 2010-2011, p. 45), such as the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program.

The management of the Access program is described as "flexible" and culturally specific changes in curriculum are left to the regional educational service providers (USDOS, 2007, p. vi). Amideast is the Access service provider/ administrator in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, the West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen

and they report directly to the PAO at the US embassy. Each country has different realities that affect their teacher selection and locations. Correspondence with the Mexican and Russian Access coordinators and RELOs revealed that in most countries, the Access program is carried out in American Corners or Libraries, which are centers identified as areas that hold resources for people interested in the US/ US culture. However, in Lebanon, the teaching locations are in selected public schools. Although Amideast runs several country locations, the administrators in Lebanon explained that the curriculum has been "altered to fit a Lebanese context" and is therefore different from other regional offices' programs. A concern mentioned by both Amideast and a 2009 presentation to the Foreign Affairs Committee is that there are not enough further US directed educational opportunities (either continued contact with the embassy or study abroad programs) for students who complete the program. The Foreign Affairs committee goes further saying that this could result in a "backlash" against America and increased hostility (United States Senate, February 13, 2009, p. 35).

5.3 Access in Lebanon

Access in Lebanon originally started in 2004 and in an interview, Amideast explained that the program was first brought into Lebanon because although there was a great demand for the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program, which brings high school students from developing countries into the United States for a year, non-elite, public school students had an insufficient level of English to be eligible. To combat ineligibility for this program, Amideast explained that the USDOS brought in the Access program. In an interview, the embassy also noted that the program was intended to better the public image of the US in "underprivileged areas" in Lebanon. As Appendices 1 and 2 indicate, areas with high Muslim populations have the most

programs. Additionally, although there are some clusters in predominantly Christian areas, more Muslim students than Christian students are likely to attend public schools.

The international Access program requirements include a minimum number of 180 classroom hours per year, but Lebanese Access boasts 200 hours per year. There are 20-22 students per class and often waiting lists, which indicates that the program is quite successful at drawing in learners. From 2004 until March, 2011, the program had 2,068 students involved in 106 classes (Amideast, 2011a, p. 4). As seen on the map in Appendix 1, the program is spread throughout the country and particularly focused in areas with high Muslim populations. Initially, the program included EFFL students, but as the program matured, they turned to ESFL classes. A program administrator explained that this was because these schools needed more English language attention.

The student selection process includes the teacher and principal identifying a certain number of grade 10 students[12] with consistently high academic levels deemed to be "underprivileged" based on family circumstances (Amideast, 2011b, p. 7). Questions on the application form include parents' monthly income, how long the student has studied English, whether the student is receiving private lessons and whether they know how to use a computer or surf the internet (Amideast, 2009-2011). There are short answer questions on their hobbies, how the use of English will improve their future education and job opportunities and why they in particular should be selected (Amideast, 2009-2011). Students are given text books, class material and a transportation allowance of 1,000 LL/ hour of class. Following, I will describe the school and teacher selection processes, curriculum and extra activities in Access Lebanon.

[12] There were lower levels allowed (grade 7) in Access years 2009-2011, but Amideast officials explained that they decided to stay focused on the older students and thus ended the younger student program.

5.4 School Selection

As indicated on the map in Appendix 1, the Access program is spread throughout Lebanon. There are instances when schools request the program after hearing about it from other schools and other times, the area is chosen by the administrator or embassy. Embassy officials explained that they aim to start the program in areas where public opinion of the United States is low. They further explained that the Lebanese Ministry of Education (MoE) has little influence on the program. Despite being held in public schools and therefore under the jurisdiction of the MoE, the Ministry "rubber stamps" the locations chosen by Amideast and the US embassy, but does not otherwise interfere. If a school turns down the program, officials at the embassy stated that they would soon reconsider after they saw the "success" in other districts. This indifference on the part of the MoE illustrates a lack of control or hesitation regarding American funded programs.

5.5 Teacher Selection

One of the most significant differences between Access Lebanon and Access in other countries is that within Lebanon, Lebanese teachers are employed to teach the program in the public schools. In most countries, the program is taught in language centers by American teachers. Administrators explained that due to the potential civic instability in Lebanon, they did not want to have the classes far away from the students' places of residence. Additionally, there were not enough American teachers in the target-regions, thus they decided to use existing Lebanese English teachers in Lebanon. Some of the teachers already teach in the public schools, and in other cases come from neighboring private schools. This particularity has turned into a point of pride for both

the embassy and administrators. The enthusiastic response from teachers and their influence on the families and communities from which their students come from have made the program stronger. The embassy emphasized that teachers can act as "ambassadors of goodwill." The wages are a considerable benefit as well. Teachers are paid 20USD per hour in the class, and 50USD per extra-curricular activity or teacher training. In total, that is 4,500USD/ year or 358USD/ month. According to an interview with a teacher trainer in Lebanon, a teachers' beginning salary in the public schools is 725USD (or 1,088,000LL) per month. Part time teachers are paid 7.55USD (11,500LL) per teaching hour and in some cases, teachers choose nine month salaries and do not get paid over the summer. Additionally, Access salaries are paid every month, while short term contract teachers' salaries are often paid in bulk every six months or year, which can cause considerable hardships.

Access teacher evaluations are strict and if a teacher is not following the schedule, curriculum or if they do not regularly check in with the administrators, they can be removed from the program. At times, particularly during examination periods, these requirements can be taxing and in fact, many teachers interviewed for this study explained that they were hired midway through the two year program to replace teachers who had quit or been asked to resign. Even so, many teachers have stayed on for years. Teachers and participants in this study emphasized that despite the amount of work, they are pleased by their involvement, particularly because teachers are regularly encouraged to discuss problems with Amideast as well as share their opinion and ideas for the curriculum.

Teachers are also required to attend training seminars, where teacher trainers and ELFs present information and teaching methods. These times are also meant for

teachers to gather in Beirut to get information about the program from Amideast. Finally, select teachers are offered scholarships to attend teacher training/ adult education workshops in the United States. Upon return, teachers are expected to share their experiences and new tools with their fellow Access teachers. Dr. M. Krauss, a teacher trainer in the US, explained that sometimes he teaches online courses as well, but that there is not an international solidarity among Access teachers worldwide. In other words, although teachers in Lebanon are encouraged to share their ideas with other teachers, this is unique to the country.

5.6 Curriculum

As stated previously, the Access program in Lebanon runs for 200 hours per year and 400 hours in total. This is quite an intensive course; often the students will attend the after school classes three or four times a week. The administrators were careful to emphasize, both to me during interviews as well as to the teachers in training, that this program does not supersede regular school classes. Even so, the hours and dedication required is phenomenal. The course is divided into four themes per year including topics such as celebrations, American sports and American history. Class work includes course book work as well as information packets called modules that introduce aspects of American culture or history. The grammar and audio work come from the publisher Pearson Longman's series, *True Colors,* and the modules are created by Amideast staff in Lebanon. Modules include readings, activities and work in the book *Celebration*, which presents US celebrations. A handout for teachers explains that the Access curriculum "will strive to fill the gaps left by public education" by emphasizing reading, listening as well as grammar and writing (Amideast, 2011b, p. 4).

It further states, “A contemporary, cross cultural methodology will also be utilized based on an open, democratic, participatory approach. Students will be encouraged to assist in making class decisions about projects and research. Students will be required to read and prepare assignments outside of class hours.” Administrators emphasize that this approach is one of the perceived differences between Access and the Lebanese EFFL and ESFL curricula (Amideast, 2011b, p. 4). In 2005, when the English Teachers´ association ATEL held a conference entitled Education and Technology: A look at language teaching, the then Deputy Chief of the US Mission also emphasized that English teaching techniques should “promote democracy,” “celebrate individualism,” “move from teacher-centered classrooms to student empowered classrooms,” “promote participation, and questioning,” promote respect, and tolerance, and cooperation,” and “encourage students to express themselves freely” (Murray, 2005). He concluded that these were hallmarks of an American education, stating, “in America, that is what we are all about” (Murray, 2005). These teaching concepts and the latent qualities they hold will be discussed further in Chapter 9.

5.7 Extra-Curricular Activities

The program also mentions that “in addition to improving the students’ English language ability, the program will work to transform its recipients into leaders” (Amideast, 2011b, p. 3)… This can be seen in Access’ six extra-curricular activities per year. According to the 2009-2011 yearbook, activities included certificate ceremonies, “marking the beginning of their journey with the US embassy and Amideast,” a visit to Jeita Grotto to “return home with more pride and appreciation for their country,” field day, a Halloween party at the American University of Beirut and a Thanksgiving Day

party to understand American traditions, films and American hip hop artists, drama and poetry workshops to see a rendition of the American High School Musical, workshops with the group Injaz[13] and a volunteering day (GYSD) in their own community (Amideast, 2011b). A quick glance at the year book shows that each activity looks both "fun" and "desirable" to teenagers as well as filled with lessons on developing a certain kind of personality and continuing education. At the end of the program, students are strongly recommended to join the alumni group, which prolongs contact with the student, as well as apply for collegiate scholarships administered by the American University of Beirut, Hagaizian University and University of St. Joseph and USAID. This thesis closely examines the overt as well as covert offerings of the program, how teachers position themselves and which parts of the program teachers emphasize.

[13] Injaz seeks to promote economic development and the "entrepreneurial spirit" of young people in Lebanon (http://www.injaz-lebanon.org/).

CHAPTER 6

EXPLORING TEACHER AGENCY WITHIN STRUCTURE

6.1 An Introduction to the Teachers

The ten teachers that I interviewed are a non representative convenient sample, meaning they do not necessarily reflect the entire Access teacher population and they were not picked through questionnaires or surveys. I met teachers through professional networks, other teachers and by contacting the schools. There were no gender or age stipulations in this study, the only requirement being that the teachers had to be a part of the Access program. I tried to find teachers that were in varied locations throughout Lebanon; in rural and urban areas as well as on the coast, in cities and valleys. Half of the teachers' primary jobs are in private schools and the remaining teachers teach Access in the public school where they are employed. Most of the teachers in this study have finished one to five years in the Access program, although one teacher had just started. Three participants teach Access in cities, three in large towns and four in rural areas. The demographics of participants in this research were designed to mirror the Access demographics themselves, as can be seen in Table 1. The primary schools of employment were also evenly divided amongst English and French medium schools. Participants all had teaching diplomas or Master Degrees in English Literature. The most experienced teacher had taught for 25 years, while the newest was a teacher who started only two years prior. Each considered themselves a dedicated teacher, and more than once, I heard a comment like, "I chose teaching because I feel that the teacher himself or herself is the most important person in life." or "Health wise, if I stay healthy, I am [teaching] till my last breath. I love teaching. I love it. (…) I can't

imagine myself not teaching, you know? When I think of [the teacher's name] as a person, I think of her as a teacher." These narratives were imperative to this work and I appreciate the time that teachers spent with me.

I recorded and transcribed the teachers' narratives to conduct discourse analysis to explore their response to English as a global structure and the donor's agenda. While interviewing, I noticed that the state of the public schools in Lebanon was a very important topic for the teachers and accordingly restructured my research to be able to include this important facet. Following are compelling patterns that were present in the discourse of the ten participants, indicating that although there are some moments of reflection and discomfort about the program goals and the position of the English language in Lebanon, the trend was general reproduction of the strategy and symbol of English according to a neoliberal economic agenda. After exploring the patterns and commonalities in the narrations, I decided to break the results into the following structure:

- Teachers' discourses surrounding the hegemonic and market driven nature of English as a "global" language.
- The frustration that teachers feel in the public schools and how this frustration has led to the widespread acceptance of the foreign run Access program.
- The multiple forms of agency demonstrated by teachers when they expressed the goals of the program.

By focusing on narrations, I found there were moments in the interviews, particularly when talking about the role that Access plays in the public schools and in teacher development, where the program is being used in ways that challenges the agency versus reproduction binary.

CHAPTER 7

TEACHERS' RESPONSE TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION WITHIN A GLOBAL MARKET DRIVEN AGENDA

After going through personal goals and biographical information and before talking about the Access program, participants in this study discussed the position of the English language. My introduction of the topic in the interviews was vague, deliberately including the position English holds within as well as beyond Lebanon. I felt that this would give participants a chance to indicate whether they believe that the English language has a particular *function*, and if so, what it might be. Participants responded by asserting that English is an active tool in three ways: a way to access higher education, a profitable job and social capital. The vision of the school as a site of transformation- in particular economic transformation- reflects the idea that education through the school is a market driven commodity.

According to the teachers, proficiency in English is a gate keeper for those who want to succeed in home or international markets. This market-driven approach that education leads to personal and national success is echoed in official documents, including the Arab Human Development Report (AHDR) of 2002 which states that there is a gap between education systems and labor markets (UNDP, 2002, p. 3) and that in order to advance, the Arab world should not only increase education opportunity, but make sure that education matches the labor market.

> "A full-employment of development policy should include the goal of providing universal, high quality, development relevant, basic education and ensuring that

> no beneficiary is excluded on account of poverty… Meanwhile, the quality of education including its relevance to context-specific life skills and labor-market requirements needs to be continuously improved at all levels" (UNDP, 2002, p. 11).

According to the 2003 AHDR, English has a function and that function is market-driven, a concept that has trickled down to this project's participants. This report had significant contribution from Lebanese thinkers and has been integrated into the 2010-2015 vision for the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) for general education, released by the MoE. The AHDRs outlined a vision of the current and future state of the region. Some critics call it controversial because it capitulates to the same old Western adage of the problems in the region (Bayat, November 2005) and say that it "condemns Arab culture rather than political structures" (Labidi, 2010, p. 203). One of the key points of the documents includes increasing foreign language learning to compete in the job market internationally and regionally. In terms of the discourse used in these reports, success in life is translated into economic terms (position, job, capital) and learners become workers in training.

However, as Hill, Klees, Tannock and Tabulawa argue in education and Phillipson and Karmani argue in ELT theory, English language proficiency does not necessarily lead to success. In a paper looking at neoliberal influence in education policies in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan, Imed Labidi writes that the changes are being attempted through the guise of soft culture targeting non-elites, but have actually led to "de-historicizing education, discouraging critical and creative thinking and disconnecting learning from reality" (Labidi, 2010, p. 198). The pervasive marketization of education that encourages schools to produce productive workers is

present in the teachers' discourse. As Peter Ives writes in a reflection on Gramsci's hegemony and the English language,

> "In many cases, the very circumstances that provide the incentives for people to 'freely' choose to learn English (economic prospects, political influence, cultural prestige) are the conditions for fragmented, disjointed and episodic 'common sense' where the imposed language, values and concepts will not adequately describe, organize or help them control their daily lives. Learning English may be technically a 'free choice' but it can in fact further entrench cultural, psychological, economic and political imperialism" (Ives, 2009, p. 676).

Indeed, it is important to look into global education phenomena like English language learning and see beyond the "incentive" to what values are being "entrenched" through the program. Using these author's hesitations and critical lenses and by probing the concept of English as a tool with the teachers, I was able to explore teachers' reactions to English within a global agenda. Participants described Arabic as a mother tongue and the English as a tool for success in education, the job market and with social capital.

7.1 Arabic as a Mother Tongue

Despite the prevalence of English and French medium schools, the teachers in this study, regardless of geographic location, presented the English language in Lebanon as a *second* or *foreign* rather than *first* language. They insisted that they and their students see English as a *school language,* while their mother tongue[14], the language that they speak at home and for communication with their community, is Arabic. A teacher explains, "In the Lebanon, we start speaking English at a very early age. In

[14] In this paper, I use Tove Skutnall-Kangas' definition of a mother tongue. Skutnall-Kangas writes that a mother tongue is "the language one learned first," "the language one identifies with/ as a native speaker of, the language one is identified with/ as a native speaker of," "the language one knows best," or "the language one uses most" Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000). *Linguistic Genocide in Education, or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc..

elementary [school], like that. But it is not the language we use at home. It is not the language to communicate. So always stays the language for school." This teacher indicates that while Arabic is considered the primary language, English also has a major role.[15] Another goes further to differentiate between the language of "communication" and business, but admits that the English language is increasingly found in multiple spheres.

> So Arabic is only for Arabic as a language and the social scene. So the role of English as communication. *Ma barif* ("I don't know"). I could say that a couple of years ago, rarely would you use English among students to communicate with each other outside the classroom. But I notice that two years and onwards, even students who you would not expect to use English outside of the classroom would use English to communicate with their friends. Maybe because of the, you know, the internet, the chat, the messages, the MSN."

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the fear that, although the Arabic language is considered the mother tongue, due to its lack of clout in world economic markets and "knowledge" centers, it is becoming marginalized to the point of obscurity has always been a great concern and authors continue to debate the topic(UNDP, 2002) [16] (Hanafi, May, 2011). Participants in this study emphasized that their mother tongue remains Arabic, however, the professed *need* for English indicates that this is an area of tension.

[15] Seeing English as a tool rather than first language is partly due to participants' primary schools of employment. In an article from the Daily Star, journalist Zeina Karam reports that some Lebanese parents use English or French at home, assuming that Arabic can be picked up without assistance Karam, Z. (August 17, 2010). Lebanon Struggles to Retain Arabic in Polyglot Culture. *Daily Star*. Retrieved from http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/Aug/17/Lebanon-struggles-to-retain-Arabic-in-polyglot-culture.ashx#axzz1WoB093J9.

[16] Bayat writes that the AHDR presents an almost schizophrenic account of the Arab world, alternating between trying to present an Arab led vision, yet often switching to "the administrative and spiritless language of the World Bank" Bayat, A. (November 2005). Transforming the Arab World: The Arab Human Development Report and the Politics of Change. *Development and Change, 36*(6), 1225-1237.. Alternating between advocating for policies to protect the Arab language as a language of knowledge production and promoting labor producing education is a perfect example of this.

7.2 English as a Tool for Accessing Higher Education

The participants describe Arabic as a native tongue and the English language as a necessary tool for "success." When asked what constitutes success, many indicated attending university and pointed to the necessity of knowing English to pursue higher education. This vision of the school as a place to produce workers that are able to interface in an international/English environment is in line with the structural ideal of the school as a site of potential transformation.

An ESFL teacher in a coastal area explains that it is the parents' decision whether to send a child to an English or French medium school. She says that her own parents faced the same choice and initially chose a French medium school. As they saw Lebanon increasingly allying with the US, they switched their daughter to an English medium school. She argues that French educated students are at a disadvantage because of the tests that are now required to attend many universities.

> "I see many students that graduate from the French schools and they have to do an extra year just to catch up on the English. Because most of the good universities are in English, you see? Like Balamand University, they require the SATs, the TOEFL. And if you're French educated, it will be very difficult to study for those exams."

A French education is labeled as a burden, while Arabic is not mentioned at all. This is a telling indicator of the marginalization of Arabic in tertiary and higher education. Another teacher in south Lebanon had a similar comment, explaining that the need for English to attend university eclipses French.

> "To a certain extent, now it is the first global language. Not only in Lebanon, all over the world. During the 70s and before, French was dominant. But after that, approximately1980s to 2010 even, English was more popular. Since the

> universities in Lebanon, most of them are teaching in English language so these university's students are directly studying English instead of French and they go to study English again… Well.. [pause] I find it is a requirement now."

English is described as a global language, yet the teacher acknowledges that it is not exactly a choice by using the word "requirement" and indicating that it is a global trend rather than national decision. The necessity of learning/being proficient in English to access higher education was often noted in the interviews, yet proficiency in Arabic was not. It is important to note that one explanation for the lack of attention to the hegemony of English is that critically examining one's own profession is not an easy or desirable past-time. The teachers in this study might have been hesitant to do so, particularly in front of an outsider. One teacher did critically reflect on her decision to teach English, self mockingly saying that she was 'dazzled' by the English language, and that teaching English rather than Arabic was a more glamorous position. Even so, the lack of critical examination or reflection is noteworthy, as it indicates either an absence or reluctance to do so.

7.3 English as a Tool for Job Acquisition

English was also introduced as a tool to obtain profitable employment. All the teachers in this study, whether their primary school was public or private, mentioned that it was necessary to know English to get a high paying job. The mantra is as follows: learn English, go to college, get a high paying job. What was particularly striking about this pattern was the teachers´ belief that higher paying jobs would then indicate or assist in the economic success of the nation. A teacher from a village in the North of Lebanon told me,

> "If you don't know English that is a problem… Plus, English is a universal language nowadays and everybody knows this. I guess nowadays, people know this and realize the importance of this language. I guess this is why even people who are not academically educated, they try to join special seminars and workshops in order to learn English because it is a must. They need it in their conversation, they need it in their business transactions."

This teacher indicates that English is considered "universal," yet at the same time acknowledges that English education is not something that everyone has access to. She also indicates that English is important for non-university degree holders, noteworthy because not all the students in the Access program will go on to attend higher education.[17] A teacher from the Bekaa valley went further and linked better job opportunities of an individual to the betterment of the Lebanese economy.

> "Actually, from a pragmatic view too. Those implementing bilingual programs in Lebanon realized that it's more of an additive, lingual bilingualism. So they would want to push that, at least from a pragmatic level. So graduates could find jobs, from an instrumental base. You can find a job, you can communicate with the outside world for two reasons, because a major part of the economy comes from tourism as well."

The teacher indicates that "they," or those directing economic policies within Lebanon, would like to push graduates to the job market internationally as well as to increase tourism to better the economy. Hence English language is not just for an individual's economic advancement, it is also for the development of the country. English language education becomes a tool for economic success on an individual and national level.

[17] Teachers indicated a number of reasons that students would not go on to attend college, including not having enough money, the school being too far away or in one teacher's case, because the student (female) would be getting married. Participants noted that a lack of monetary resources was the biggest reason why students would be unable to attend.

7.4 English as Social Capital

Finally, participants described English as a signifier of social capital. As mentioned earlier, Bourdieu defines social capital as tools that can be used to access and be mobile in society; keys to maneuverability and success (Richardson, 1986, p. 248). In particular, teachers highlight the English language as a tool to access social *digital* capital. Without English, they argue, the internet, cell phones, modern day social tools, are not accessible. A teacher from a village in the North of Lebanon explains,

> "They even need it in their everyday life. If something goes wrong in the computer, you need to know some English, at least the basics, in order to know how to ask for help. Mobile phones. It is like integrated and incorporated into minor details of everyday life. And I guess people are aware of this phenomenon and because of that, people want to learn the language. And because of that, I guess here in Lebanon, people are accepting it, they are using it and I guess they are pretty successful at using the language in whatever they do."

A teacher from a village in the Bekaa area echoes this comment.

> "Because you know, now America rules the whole world. So everything that comes to us, whether it is facebook or the phone, everything you need to know English. So English is used in everyday life. We need it. It's not a matter of you like it or you don't. We need it. Because if you don't [speak English], there's something missing in your life."

This comment is particularly telling because it points to the role that this teacher sees America playing; a "ruler" of the world and that this country is behind the proliferation of technological gadgetry. This teacher emphasizes the integral nature, the importance in everyday gadgets, while the Bekaa teacher points out the social networking site Facebook, the internet and texting on mobile phones. In both narratives, the role of

English as a tool for social capital is presented as an unassailable, unquestionable "fact." As the Bekaa teacher points out, personal feelings or opposition is immaterial. Another teacher stated that without English, you would feel "dumb," silenced and unable to communicate.

Functionalist theorists that posit education is a natural step towards modernization would no doubt agree with this a-political vision of the English language, where English is dubbed by teachers as a "global lingua franca," an "international language" and a "convenient" language that just happens to be that of a world super power. Neoliberal policy planners such as those in the World Bank would also be delighted by this naturalized "desire." In the interviews, teachers reaffirmed the global mantra that English is a tool for success and that the goal of education is economic productivity (personal as well as national). English as a piece of social capital becomes something that will help speakers interact nationally and internationally through interfaces such as the internet, Facebook and mobile phones.

Given the participants' discourse on the *function* and *use* of the English language and that they describe English as a "tool" for professional, academic and social "betterment," I argue that teachers are reaffirming and reproducing the global neoliberal philosophy that market needs drive education and that English should remain unquestioned as a tool for economic success. Education, in particular English education, is used to create more productive and versatile workers while Arabic, the mother tongue, is steadily leeched from education, economics and social networking. But despite the dominant influence of the English language on norms and education, it is important to further address the reactions of teachers within these systems. If this thesis only reviewed dominant systems and their impacts on individuals, the frustrations

and thought processes behind welcoming foreign funded programs, such as the Access program into the school would be silenced. To better understand the teachers' actions, the following section will highlight the frustrations that teachers feel with what they describe as a lack of materials and professional development available to them in the public school system and why and how they use the Access program to answer the needs in their classrooms.

CHAPTER 8

TEACHER DISCOURSE AROUND PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULA

Despite the apparent capitulation to the market driven uses of the English language, it is important to look at another reoccurring theme in the interviews: the teachers' frustration with the school system and the ways in which the Access program is perceived to overcome these shortfalls. However, the participants' binary emphasis on the "traditional" Lebanese versus the "modern" American curriculum and methodology could lead to the uncritical internalization of many of the latent goals of the program.

As noted in the section 5.5, the Access program realities within Lebanon are different from others in the region. Rather than hiring American teachers to teach the program from within cultural centers or universities, the Access program in Lebanon employs Lebanese teachers. After listening to the teachers' experiences within the schools, it was clear that this experience plays a large role in the enthusiastic reception of the Access program. As mentioned earlier, beginning teachers are paid on average, 7.55 USD (11,500LL) per hour and some teachers are paid only once a year. Both the low wages and uncertain pay period make it difficult for teachers to live primarily off a government school salary. Conversely, Amideast pays teachers monthly and the added amount could be as much as half the salary of a starting teacher. The financial benefit of teaching with Access is a substantial incentive to join the program. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to be involved with other paid and unpaid US embassy

programs or professional training. A few of the teachers interviewed mentioned that they had taken part in training sessions in the US, completely paid for by Amideast.

Within the interviews, teachers also expressed frustration with the NC and the lack of professional development opportunities from the MoE. Conversely, teachers were enthusiastic about the curricular and professional development that the Access program provides them. As mentioned in the earlier section on *Languages and Public Education in Lebanon*, the NC was introduced in 1997. Teachers mentioned that the curriculum in the public schools is "boring," "weak" and disjointed. They expressed frustration with the administration and the lack of input they have in their class' trajectory. One teacher described the process to create the NC, saying,

> "This curriculum was set by a number of doctors or teachers who were asked to work together but unfortunately they did not work together. In the end when they were asked to submit their work, they just go to the internet and they copied and paste and they presented each selection as it is- "I was supposed to present chapter one or unit one." So that is how you find that unit one has nothing to do with unit 2. Or 2 or 3 has nothing to do- each unit stands alone. There is no relation. No sequences between units, there is no continuity between units."

This dual frustration with both the limits of the NC and the inability to alter or change it comes up in other studies as well. Similar dissatisfaction was present in Maha Shuayb's 2009 PhD thesis where she confirms from her fieldwork with public school educators, that many teachers see a lack of continuity in the NC material (Shuayb, 2009, p. 110).

Another complaint expressed by teachers is that the NC is "weak" and focused on "rote learning." Teachers explained that they are held to a curriculum that they feel lacks aural and oral skill development. A teacher in an EFFL school said,

> "So we focus on the writing skills. We don't focus on speaking, reading, communicating, we just focus on writing. So we are not speakers. We do not teach our students how to speak or communicate." Another teacher explains that "The titles [of the themes in the ESFL curriculum] are so interesting! For example, addiction, friendship. But when you are going to read the texts, they are so boring. The texts are so boring you feel the students are not motivated to reading the texts."

Waving her hands in the air, an experienced teacher explosively states, "They come from nowhere, the collections in those books. The curriculum is the ugliest ever." Other teachers complained that they are bound to the official curricula and are often not allowed to bring in extra materials. In three cases, the public school teachers mentioned that their school principal supports their wish to bring in new materials, allocating funds and hiding them if the school is inspected. Even so, the schools are bound to the official exams thus classes cannot deviate too much. Although the private school teachers also expressed frustration with their curriculum, generally they are more at liberty to bring in extra materials to supplement their classes. Their frustration was more aimed at the administration that they felt did not support their roles as teachers. These complaints were present, regardless of geographic location, however, there were some differences in the rural/urban discourse of teachers. Frustration with a lack of classroom equipment was particularly highlighted by the two teachers in the most rural areas in this study. They explained that even if the curriculum had audio activities, they do not have equipment such as a tape or CD player, thus making it difficult to teach languages.

Teachers also described their frustration with the lack of training and professional development available to them in public schools. If training sessions were offered, they were described as boring or "more like lectures." Four of the teachers in this study were at one point involved in other teaching programs or organizations such

as the Association of Teachers of English in Lebanon (ATEL), Association for the Teaching of English (ACT) or the British Counsel because they did not feel supported by the MoE. Only one of the public school teacher participants said that she was satisfied with the training and evaluations that the school provides.

8.1 Modern versus traditional

Conversely, the Access program was described by the teachers as "modern," "new" and "interesting." A new teacher, after describing her frustration with the Lebanese public curricula, explained that the Access program teaches in an "American" and therefore 'modern' way: "They teach the students about the American way. The techniques that are used in America. Not the traditional ways, like in Lebanon. I think the modern ways are better. I think it's [more] modern than we have, it is better than the ways we have." Amideast offers the only programs that teachers can pursue in order to develop professionally. A long time teacher from a small town explains, "They are specialized people. They know the techniques, they know how… So I was so motivated. I wanted to be within this staff. To see how do they teach the language, how they do the steps." As Amideast also administers the testing for entry to universities following the American system, their influence has great weight.

Another teacher, who does not work in the school where she teaches Access, told a story of a student who did not do well in his regular English classes and gained confidence in the English language only after joining the program.

> "Yes! I love them because we had the chance to sit and speak and communicate with [the students]. Usually when it comes to teaching English, first of all you have to let your students love English. I have one example of one student. One of the teachers told him that you are not good at English. And he is an excellent

> student. He has top scores in physics and maths and chemistry and he believed that he's not good at English. It was something that was certain for him. When he started the program, he had bad handwriting, he spoke shyly, "Miss, I don't know English, I don't like English. I'm not proficient at…" So I said, "Ok, let's speak to each other." And I felt that he knows English and I don't know why he got that idea in his mind. And by the end of the program, he was able to speak English fluently, to communicate with people. (…) So thanks to the Amideast and this program, we had a chance to discuss this and change his ideas about his abilities."

This teacher expressed that the Access program provides opportunities to develop that are not offered in public school classes. Most teachers involved in this research said the six Access teacher training sessions per year were a great incentive to join the program. A teacher from a town explained: "Yes, I would never leave Access unless they fire me. Because it is a program that gives you as much as you give. As you said, we do six trainings. At school, they don't do six trainings. So it teaches me as well as I teach the students." Training is often led by ELFs or the Amideast team. Many of the teachers also expressed that they use the themes from the development sessions and Access curriculum material in their home classes, emphasizing that this program spreads beyond the selected students.

In short, teachers presented many complaints with the public school system including lack of materials, poor curriculum and not enough support. Teachers reported that Access provides: materials, curriculum and training. In one respect, the teachers are resisting what they see as "weak" national education, particularly when they subvert the structure by bringing Access curriculum into their primary classrooms. Conversely, the comparisons also encourage hierarchies of pedagogy, as seen in the references to the "modernity" and "progress" of the US curriculum versus the "traditional" and "boring"

ways of the Lebanese curriculum. The discourse highlights that when a teacher revolts against one system (the Lebanese public school system) and jumps into another (the Access program with its structural demands both at the program level and within English as a "global" language) there is need for detailed discussion and reflection on the various intents of education. This section highlights a great deal of frustration that the teachers feel towards their schools. It indicates that teachers are thinking critically about the structures around them and looking for the means to teach in ways they believe are beneficial for their students. Teachers' discourse also indicated that this frustration is one of the reasons that they embrace the Access program. The next section looks deeper into the various goals of the Access program and at what is normalized under the seemingly innocuous banner of "education" aid.

CHAPTER 9

AGENCY WITHIN A DONOR AGENDA

Teachers express that the "modern" and "American" Access program fills a need within the public education system, but as argued in Chapter 1, it is important to be critical of "modernity" as it often holds latent themes. For many critical scholars, the structure of English education programs can be encompassing and rigid. Echoing the concerns of Bourdieu, the strong language describing the political goals of the program could be considered a form of symbolic violence. However, despite the layers of intended goals, as Canagarajah, Pennycook and Kabel point out, what happens at an official level and what is carried out in the classroom can be completely different. With this in mind, after the first section of the interviews that dealt mainly with the teachers' reactions to the position of English globally and in Lebanon, we moved on to talk about the Access program. I encouraged the teachers to tell me about the program as if I had never heard about it before, as well as to outline the program goals in order to explore the idea of agency within a donor agenda.

The Access program has a layered set of goals; reducing perceived threats to the United States as well as spreading values through non-elites, such as democracy, civic education and volunteerism, which are sympathetic to US interests in the area. In the unstructured interviews, I compared goals according to documents from the USDOS as well as interviews with the program administrators and the PAO at the US embassy to the rearranged and altered goals articulated by the teachers. Following Eva Bendix Petersen and Gabrielle O'Flynn's work that promotes looking at the practitioner level and exploring how donor agenda ideology is internalized into "desire" through

education programs (Bendix Petersen & O'Flynn, September 2007, p. 198), I explore teachers' descriptions of the Access program in detail. In the following sections, I will address the Access goals according to the donor and those of the teachers, for instance, learning English, improving the image of the United States, promoting democracy, civic education and volunteerism and student interaction. The most common response was that the program is meant to 1) assist students in learning English and 2) for the United States to improve its image in Lebanon. This deviates slightly from the official goals which also include participating in socio- economic development. I will also address the remaining official goal, which is the spread of democracy. This slight variation from the official goals shows that the teachers have a nuanced understanding of both the program and donor objectives.

I found that the goals articulated by the donors of the program, the USDOS, are for the most part understood and articulated by teachers, however, there is a slight deviance between the descriptions, indicating a surprisingly nuanced understanding and a number of unintended consequences.

9.1 Donor Goals

According to the 2007 Final Report for Access, the main goals of the program are: 1- for students to gain an appreciation for American culture and democratic values, 2- acquire sufficient English language skills to successfully participate in the socio-economic development of their countries, and 3- improve their chances of participation in future US educational exchange programs (USDOS, 2007). This program is geared towards "the Muslim world" and indeed, Appendix 1 shows that the program highlights areas with high Shi'a, Sunni and Druze populations, while areas with Christian

populations are less targeted. Even within the areas with some Christians, the program focuses on the public schools, which generally have predominantly poorer Muslim students. Within Washington DC, many make it clear that this program is a piece of the country's foreign policy; a way to reach and influence populations that they find to be anti-American. A 2010 Senate speech states,

> "Public Diplomacy officials offer high praise for the Access program as it gives the United States inroads into communities that have often been traditionally hostile towards the United States. However, comments from Access parents such as ''our own government doesn't care about educating our children, but the United States does'' are not unusual as children with normally very little hope of advancement in their societies are suddenly offered a language which will greatly enhance their future employment opportunities" (United States Senate, February 13, 2009, p. 35).

This dual theme of influencing "hostile" populations while nurturing a philanthropic image was reiterated in my interviews with the cultural officer and assistant cultural officer at the US embassy in Beirut. However, USDOS wants more than to reduce potential external threats and increase students' marketability. It also wants to address Lebanese politics as well as to create a network of future "leaders" who are amenable to American influence. In an interview with the PAO at the US embassy, I was told that "the idea is to relate to Lebanon's political issues- to honestly address them at an early age. They are old enough to have better understanding of community and society but they are young enough to hope- they do not have hard trenched ideas. They are malleable to outside ideas." These students can act as ambassadors to their communities, sharing a carefully edited version of the United States. This view is also apparent in interviews with the program administrators; however, possibly because Amideast runs multiple testing centers, they emphasized the learning aspect more. The

multiple visions of Access indicate a many layered program agenda. The USDOS indicates that the program is meant to change the opinion of America held by economically disadvantaged Muslim students to improve economic development and reduce threats of violence, the embassy in Lebanon sees the program as a chance to penetrate communities in Lebanon where they can "mould" and mentor students and Amideast, who interfaces with the teachers, emphasizes its "purely" educational aspects.

9.2 Learning English

Not surprisingly, when asked about the goals of the program, teachers responded that the first Access goal is to teach English. Seven out of the ten participants mentioned intensive English education as the first goal of the program. Two out of the remaining three qualified this explanation by saying that it was a program to teach English to disadvantaged students. One teacher explained, "The program briefly is a 400 hour program that aims at first of all, very simply, improving communication skills in English. Improving student's communication skills in the English language, including their presentation skills, their communication skills." In almost the exact same wording, another teacher says, "Number one is improving their English language. It is a good opportunity for them. Don't forget, they take about 200 hours each year. It is a lot of time to spend speaking English." Indeed, the program's hours are rigorous and the teachers recognize that this is a big part of its impact and a key difference to French medium schools with ESFL programs. In an Access teacher training seminar I attended, an Amideast representative emphasized that the program is meant to "enhance" and "strengthen" communication skills, something that they explained is not

carried out in the official curriculum. But language is more than words and this program carries more than mere language. As one of the teachers expressed, "Because everything is through language. If you are giving through language, you are passing a culture. And through this culture you are giving a way of thinking, a life style, a whole life. A structure." Indeed, language is a structure and the following points explore what is present in the program beyond language learning.

9.3 Improving the Image of the United States

More telling than the first stated goal is the second most cited goal; the Access program is meant to improve the image of the United States in Lebanon. This is markedly different from the official goal which reports that the program is meant to encourage students "gain an appreciation of American cultural and democratic values" and more similar to the intentions articulated by the US capital; to reduce terror threats from the "Muslim world." Some teachers mention that the modules are designed to present facets of American life so students will become more aware and understanding of American culture and subsequently, US foreign policy choices. A teacher patiently explains,

> "You see, basically the aim of the Access program is to teach students about the American way. The culture, the history, just to make them more aware. But at the same time, they could see the differences and similarities between the cultures and maybe find a point where they meet. So by the time they finish the Access program, the students will actually know the name of the states, they will know about the constitution. They know about things that the Americans really respect: freedom of choice, you know, things like that."

This teacher emphasizes that the modules present what "Americans really respect" and that by studying this, students will be able to understand and finding a meeting point, indicating that there is already a division. A Bekaa teacher suggests that the program is meant to use cultural exposure to counteract the community's negative views of the United States.

> "To tell them that Americans are not really that different to us. It is healthy to study other cultures, especially in let's say- because for some people politics is an important issue. They might misunderstand the American, um, decisions. Maybe they hear it from their parents, or you know, the society. So from the culturally based goal, the most important one is this- to tell them that they are not very different from us."

Learning about American culture is meant to promote understanding and compliance to US government policy decisions. By indicating that students will learn and become tolerant and understanding, this teacher implies that their parents and the surrounding community are not. This creates a binary; take the program and learn the "right way" or listen to the community and become imbued with the "wrong" way. Other teachers go further than this, saying that the goal of the program is to change young peoples' opinions in order to prevent attacks from the communities on the US/ US interests. A teacher from a populous coastal city explains,

> "I read this in an article not related to Amideast, that the American government is paying a lot of money on these problems because they found out that this is one of the ways they can fight terrorism. Because according to statistics, there are people who terrorize them, they come from deprived, disadvantaged communities, they have nothing to lose. And so they always target rich countries. And this way we educate them and we show them that we're similar and that we have children, we have families, so the big image changes."

This comment shows an understanding of the USDOS and US embassy articulated goals to reduce "terror" threats. Similarly, another participant says that the goal of the Access program is to lessen animosity. "Because if we don't know them, if we don't learn them, we fight with them. So we are learning, we are getting a little bit close to them to know that we are close and not that far, so this is the program." The majority of the teachers emphasize that this is an educational program with a functional quality; to reduce hostility and anti American sentiment.

When pushed on why it is necessary to reduce tensions, teachers sought to rationalize global English learning initiatives like Access as "merely" a tool of a dominant country to maintain power worldwide. For example, one teacher from a rural mountainous area says,

> "First of all the most important thing is the funding- the funding is the American government. And the American people, they say to us in every meeting- thanks for the American people who are funding this program. Because they want to let people, especially those that have maybe a bad idea about America, to improve the idea about it and have cultural interaction.

Here, it is important to note the teacher's fervent reference to the American government and people. Indeed, at both the training and graduation I attended, there were repeated references to the US embassy and the American taxpayer funding the program. The modules that are handed out to students are affixed with an official USDOS stamp and the administration assured me that it is very open about its funding with schools and the communities. Echoing this very public reference to the US and US goals, a teacher from the South of Lebanon relayed in a joking voice,

> "I think when America tries to teach students without- they try to be the gentle and the- do you understand? *'What do you think about America? It is so nice!'*

> *'What do you think about the traditions? They are so nice!'* I think to maybe send all the traditions and language and culture all over the world to stay the biggest country all over the world (italics represent the emphasis added by the teacher in the interview)."

This teacher emphasized the recital with a cajoling voice and ended with an eye roll, indicating that she was not so fooled by this. This visual cue further emphasized that what is being said and what is internalized are not always the same.

9.4 Promoting Democracy

While outlining the goals of the program, teachers did not mention spreading democracy or political goals, as mentioned in the official program. When asked if politics came up in the classroom, one teacher patiently explained that this was an entirely a-political program, a statement that the program and embassy would probably wholeheartedly approve of. However, when talking about their favorite modules, many mentioned political themes, indicating the subtle ways in which politics do indeed come into the program. A teacher from a village in a mountainous area explained that her favorite module is the one which discusses the forefathers. She explains that without people like George Washington, the United States would not have developed into a world power and how this affects her own vision of what politics should be like.

> "But what is so amazing about it is when they teach us about George Washington. And they teach us about how hard he worked and he refused to be the president of America for more than four years and he believed that every person who stayed in the same post on their own would become a dictator. So we have to always instill new blood into our organizations. Also how the Americans worked hard to found America. America is a country that is young in age, but it was able in a very short period of time, to rule the whole world.

> And no decision is taken without the consent and permission of the United States. So you learn the ambition, the spirit to challenge yourself before you challenge anyone else. You have to be able to be a hard worker to succeed in life. You can't just sit and succeed."

This teacher emphasizes catch words and phrases like, "new," "ambition," "spirit to challenge" and hard worker. Another mentions the same module, stating twice that this program instills a sense of planning and management in the students, something that she feels is not present in the Lebanese system or psyche. She explains that she always links the modules to the students' lives in Lebanon. When talking about modules, she also mentions the US forefather theme.

> "I think that the forefathers had the greatest minds. Whoever planned the whole thing. Now, the implementation that is different. But whoever planned the whole thing. I think that the advancement, how they started, how they developed into the country they became- regardless of my opinion on how America interferes with the whole world and the American administration. But I think that the things that they did for the country were great. And that even they put a plan that covered years and years, which is the constitution of the United States and the rights they've given to the people. And I talk about that- "You see how important it is to have a vision? Because if these people were not these people, the current United States would not be the current United States." It has all to do with the plan. We don't have this here."

This idea of challenging political systems and encouraging "fresh blood" is also mentioned in an interview with a teacher from the South of Lebanon.

> "To cancel, not to cancel, to change the ideas of the people, of the students of the youth about Americans. To change the mentality about them. That Americans are not the people who would like to dominate everything, because here they have this idea that they would like to dominate the world, to take over all others. You know, this idea that is in the area. They want to show that they

> are different people, that we are also very civilized. More civilized and cooperative than your people- especially politicians. This is not the clear side, but this is what comes undercover."

This teacher sees the program as trying to pacify community views of the United States, but also emphasizing the difference between the "civilized" US political system versus the uncooperative less civilized Lebanese system. If the Access program is meant to encourage students to find similarities and differences as the teachers expressed, one of the differences is in the political system.

9.5 Civic Education and Volunteerism

Another way in which politics inserts itself into the program is through the emphasis on volunteerism for change. A large part of the program is the volunteering activity, carried out in the second year of enrollment. The students are encouraged to pick a need- usually within a broad topic that Amideast chooses- then plan and implement a project that addresses the need. The planning and implementation, whether it includes talking to officials to put garbage disposal cans in a particular area or bringing books to a local orphanage, is done by the students themselves. They then also have to fundraise within the community to come up with the funds to buy paint, toys or whatever is needed for the particular project. The teachers that I talked with explained that after consulting with Amideast, they authorized, but did not interfere with the projects. A teacher mentioned this when talking about a meeting between her students and the municipality: "When we went to the municipality, I just watched. I mean, I was there, but I just watched. I left it all up to them." Amideast wants the community project to be entirely student led and directed. Another teacher talks in

detail about the volunteering, emphasizing that Amideast wants the program to be continuous and be visible to other students.

> "They have decided on it. Because they have lots of projects in mind. Some said they wanted to plant trees, they wanted to help the poor, they wanted to paint the house of the poor. But they were guided by Amideast in that it must be continuous. They wanted students to benefit from it and to deal with it. They shouldn't stop. They have to water their plants after they plant it. They have to take care of the high school after the program. They have to be a symbol for other students. So this is what they plan."

She also noted that the non- Access students become interested in doing similar projects after watching the program's students. Curious about the impact on the wider community, I asked if the project was visible to other students and what its impact was and she replied that the students continued the project outside Access, "They worked with another teacher who is a permanent teacher in this high school. They planted more trees, they guided their friends. So they are a model now." Using the students as models or guides in the community to affect change is a key part of the Access' goals according to the US PAO. The students are encouraged to change their community. When they graduate, they continue their association with the embassy through other programs or the alumni network and become part of a handpicked group that can speak English, has favorable or at least sympathetic views towards the US, is aware of and desirous of what it perceives as coming from democratic, market driven societies and is motivated to change the status quo in Lebanon. In other words, this group will be amenable agents to affect community views.

9.6 Student Interaction

Deviating from the intended goals of the program, teachers also mentioned that the program provides extracurricular activities and shows students regions that they might not normally access. A teacher explained that a trip to Jeita Grotto could cost a family more than they can afford. Access not only pays for the entrance, they also pay for transportation and food during the excursion. However, the program not only shows students other regions, it introduces them to students from various other regions and confessions. The teachers who mention this explained that their students have little opportunity to interact with students from other areas and that Access is a platform for interaction. A teacher from a rural area explains,

> "You know what? This is an American program which helps the Lebanese communicate with each other. Because they learn we don't have… There are so many students from the North that have never visited the [name of town] region and vice versa. So people in Lebanon have not visited the places in Lebanon. They prefer to travel abroad or they prefer to stay in the city, by the beach or... But the Access program, people from the North can meet people from [the mountain town]. People from the South can meet people from the North. You know? So all the Lebanese people have the chance to communicate with each other. So this is what is special."

Other teachers echoed this, including that through Facebook and text messaging, students were able to stay in touch throughout the program.

A teacher in a large coastal city explained that many of the students in her class come from different sects and although they attend the same schools, they did not interact before joining Access. They propose that Access has become a space that students can discover each other regardless of religious background.

> "Let me tell you one thing, all the kids are from one school. (…) The 17 girls said, we knew each other for a long time but the teachers in classrooms do not provide the students a lot of time to know each other. And what is worse than this, and this is one of the part that makes my country- the Sunni group together, the Christians group together, the Shi'a group together, the Druze group together. People do not speak to each other. They speak only in a superficial…
> It is very sensitive here. And I said, before I started talking about the American culture, I have to introduce the Lebanese culture. They have to know what Ashoura means."

The teachers believe that this is a benefit and it is a way in which they are using the program in ways unintended by the donor.

In conclusion, despite the multiple layers of the program's goals, the teachers discourse showed that they were partly aware of the reasoning behind the USDOS' decision to implement Access in Lebanon. A teacher from a mountainous area summed it as follows:

> "Now if I want my language to prevail actually, I would push it to other cultures. So it would be in the end, eventually, profitable to me. (…) Well, when new language prevails, it means you are accepted by other cultures and economically actually it's good for you because in the end it is for your own interests."

Sympathy for US actions both political and economic, are normalized through the program by repeated references to the value of the US democratic system and encouragement to find "middle ground" between community views and American political policy. When confronted with the goals of the program articulated by the USDOS and encouraged to talk about why this program is in their community in particular, teachers became defensive. I propose that the reaction was partly due to my nationality (American/Canadian), but also because it is uncomfortable to question one's own actions. The teachers described the Access program and its goals according to

their greatest concern: the student. The official program, however, starkly outlines its own goals for the students. One teacher looked at a paper with the USDOS' goals for a couple moments, made a face and then said, "Well, the way I said it was better." Another teacher defensively told me that the program was only trying to get the students into university, nothing else. "So their aim is very, very pure." The Access program not only targets a population that does not normally receive national assistance, it also gives an extra income and training to the teachers. As a recipient and teacher, it is understandably uncomfortable to look too closely. However, it is also clear that the program is used in ways that are different from the USDOS goals. Teachers express interest in engaging their students with volunteering as well as encouraging students from different sects and areas to meet. The program and training provided for teachers fill a professed need and contribute to the teachers primary classrooms. Rather than looking at an overly dichotomous vision of agency as merely resistance or reproduction, it is important to look at an individual's actions as potential sites of performance, where teachers are using the program for their own self designated purposes.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

10.1 Discussion of Contributions

This thesis has explored the question of structure and agency through the teachers involved with the Access program in Lebanon. I discussed: *1) the discourse of the teachers surrounding the structure of the English language on global and local scales 2) the kinds of agency that are being practiced.* Through the discourse of the participants, it was clear that teachers identify a global structure that posits the English language as an unquestioned tool for personal and national economic success, yet there is little reflection on the consequences of this structure. It is, as Karmani writes, as if English was "in the right place at the right time (Karmani, 2005a, p. 95). Describing it as a necessary tool for personal and national economic success, the English language is analyzed by teachers in terms that reaffirm the neoliberal philosophy that education is for market purposes.

However, by merely focusing on the hegemonic structures of the English language, the possible performance of teachers is overlooked. Respecting the knowledgability of actors within structure, this thesis also looked at the interface between the ways the Access program is both using and being used by teachers. Teachers describe their frustration with the public schools' English language curriculum and argue that joining the Access program is a way for them to bring in more materials to their primary classrooms and enhance their own professional development as well as financially beneficial. Yet even as they resist one structure, their discourse also indicates the emergence of a hierarchy of pedagogy: Lebanese/traditional versus

American/modern curricula and teaching styles. Teachers are transitioning from one structure (the Lebanese system) into another (the Access program).

As the sociologist Giroux or the educationalist Canagarajah would point out, the teacher's discourse and actions within these structures are of key import. Bourdieu's sense of agency that occurs only when dominant structure is resisted is too simple. Rather, agency can come in small moments of resistance or performance. By comparing the goals of the program according to the USDOS and the teachers, I discovered that teachers describe the goals of the program as 1) to simply teach the English language and 2) to improve the image of the United States in Lebanon. Political aspects were for the most part neutralized and the latent goals of the program- to reduce terror threats and create a network of young people sympathetic to US interests- are ignored in favor of the programs' opportunities for increasing English language skill, student interaction and volunteering. The differences between the USDOS' program goals and the articulated goals of the teachers indicate that teachers are on some level aware of the programs' political goals, but they still use the program in ways that they see benefiting their students. This finding is more complex than the simple, agency versus reproduction dichotomy. Teachers are both internalizing the "hidden curriculum" of the program, for example the emphasis on political and social change, but at the same time use the program to fit perceived needs. This indicates a diverse idea of agency- that there are potential pockets of performativity or resistance.

10.2 Limitations and Future Work in the Topic

It is clear from the discourse of the teachers that they are very involved and interested in making their classroom more beneficial for their students. However, this

work should not stop at mere analysis. In order to engage the teachers further in this work, I plan to bring them back into the discussion and ask for their feedback on my interpretations. As Michael Burawoy writes, there are moments in research that are political and focused on the system, critical of that system, policy oriented and finally public (Burawoy, 2005).[18] As per Burawoy's divisions, this research has elements of critical thought and I would like to broaden the project to include a more public element. Burawoy explains that public sociology provides researchers a chance to "embark on a systematic back-translation, taking knowledge back to those from whom it came" (Burawoy, 2005, p. 5). Teachers' narrations have been of the utmost importance to this work, thus further work on the subject will include sending a short synopsis of the patterns and conclusions of this thesis to those who were involved with this study. As some of the conclusions were drawn from latent patterns in discourse, I would like to give the teachers the opportunity to give me feedback to my interpretations either by mail or in person. Their response will be used in future publications of this research as well as any future work in this topic. A copious amount of research *on* teachers does not involve the teachers and by taking my interpretations back to the community, I hope to engage their opinions and responses.

10.3 Final Thoughts

This thesis looks beyond the idea that structure is all-encompassing and wholly dominant and recognizes that there could be moments of resistance or performativity that indicate that teachers 1) can play active roles in choosing which parts of structures to internalize and transmit and which parts to minimize and 2) are in some ways able to

[18] More can be found on the multiple faces of sociology in Burawoy ASA Presidential Address in 2004 Burawoy, M. (2005). 2004 ASA Presidential Address: For Public Sociology. *American Sociological Review, 70*(1), 4-28..

filter programs such as Access to fit local needs without completely subscribing to the program goals. However, critical reflection on ELT both on a global scale as well as national is missing from the discourse. Mounir Bashshur reflects on the question of how to mediate between foreign and national interests in education systems in his 1978 book on the education system in Lebanon:

> "We can see from the examples shown that there is near consensus for cultural openness but to benefit from foreign culture not to be dissolved in it. And despite the fact that this was expressed in several different ways and to several varying degrees, it means simply an invitation to trust oneself and identify the goals, after which it no longer matters where these cultures come from since at that point we will know how to take from it what suits us and reject what doesn't. "Being grounded in your own tradition first and then being open to others," as one woman says. This stance is an indicator of mental and moral maturity but also has within it, a feeling that the reality is contrary to that, i.e. as people with Lebanese culture, we are still in need of being grounded in our own tradition" (Bashshur, 1978, p. 107).

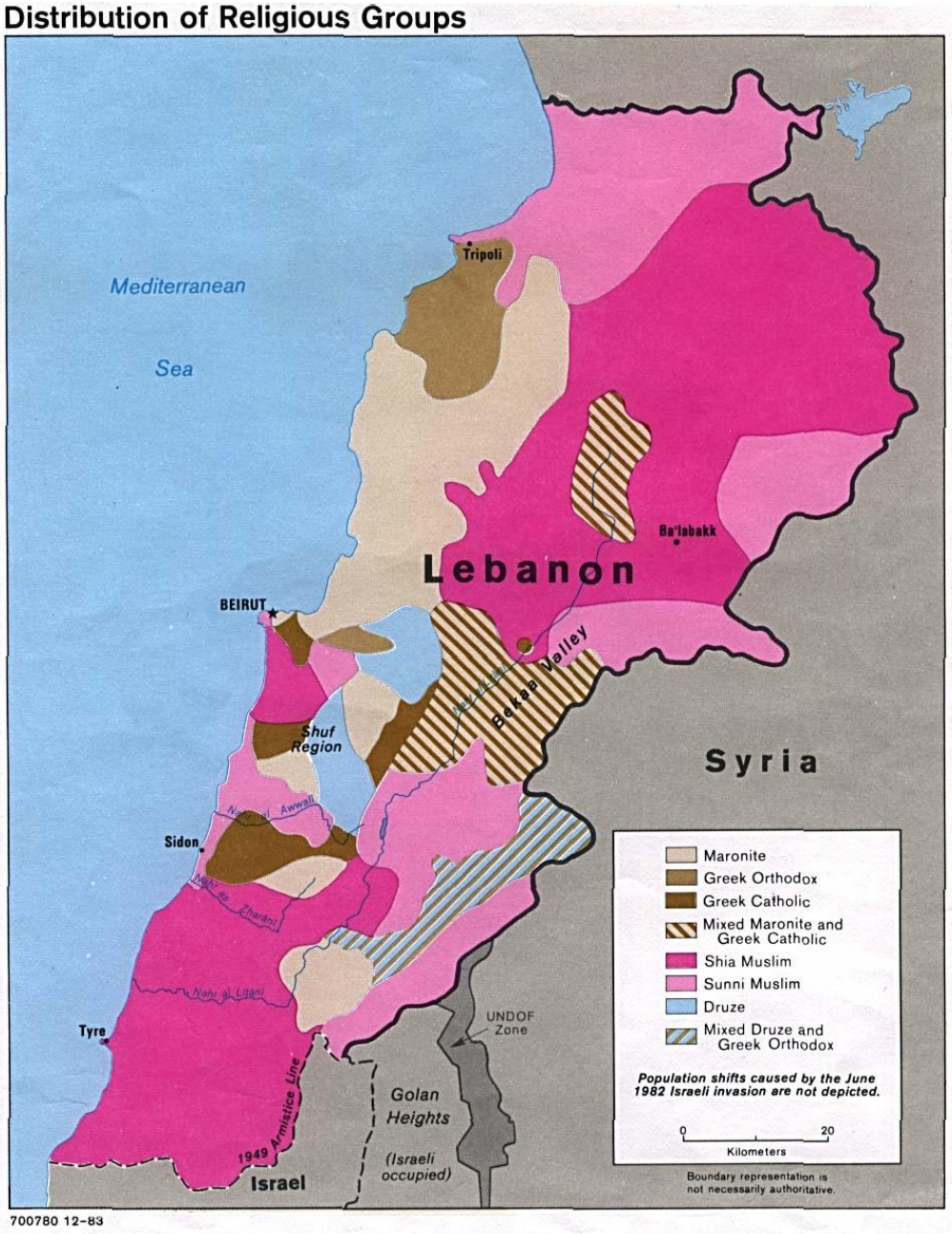
Similarly in this research, by critically addressing the role of the English language in the meta-narratives of development aid and pro-capital sentiment, it is apparent that there are some moments of reinvention and performance on a practitioner level. Even so, there is still a need for more critical and reflexive thought about the multiple effects and goals of global education initiatives. This thesis and proposed future work suggest that engaging with teachers on matters of national language policy is a key step towards reflection and possible alteration of the national education system. This crucial feedback will provide information about system realties that are necessary for any change.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Map of Access Class Locations Throughout Lebanon

*This map is taken from the 2011 Access Yearbook (Amideast, 2011a, p. 4)

Appendix 2 Religious Distribution Throughout Lebanon



*This map is taken from the website globalsecurity.org (Global Security).

Appendix 3 Unstructured Interview Themes

My **aim** is to study the motivations and discourses of different actors in Lebanon around promoting and teaching the English language in English Language Training (ELT) programs, particularly the program: English Access Microscholarship Program (Access), which is sponsored by the NGO, Amideast. How are teachers and school administrators involved in Access conceptualizing English teaching and learning and does it reflect literature on "world language", "dominant ideology" or something else entirely?

Personal Information about Language Acquisition

- Tell me about yourself. Family, parents' education and profession.
- What is your primary language? What other languages do you speak? Why did you start learning English?
- Where did you learn English? What kind of schooling?
- Do your parents or other family members speak English? How often? Was this the same when you were a child?

Professional Information

- How did you become a teacher?
- Tell me about your high school/ college years. What did you study and where?
- What did you do after you left college (if applicable)?
- Tell me about your position at (insert name) school.
- How long have you been teaching?
- How did you start teaching English?
- Tell me about your class (student demographics, what kind of curriculum/ teaching method is used, do you enjoy teaching? Do you feel supported by the teaching community? How do you feel about teaching as a profession? How do you feel about teaching English?). Are you able to alter the curriculum to fit the needs of your class and if so, how? What is the role of the greater community in this program? What is your relationship with the community? Are you in any ELT organizations? Does your school provide training or other opportunities?

Languages in Lebanon

- Talk about the phenomena of the English language.

- Tell me about English language learning in Lebanon.

Participation in Amiedast Access Program

- How did you hear about Amideast? What is Access? What are the program's goals? Tell me about the background, including its history and current funding, etc. What made you decide to participate in the Amideast English Access Micro-scholarship Program?

- Tell me about your Amideast classes (student demographics, what kind of curriculum/ teaching method is used, does the participant enjoy teaching? Why? Do you feel supported by the teaching community? How do you feel about teaching English?). Are you able to alter the curriculum to fit the needs of your class and if so, how? What is the role of the greater community in this program? Do you talk to parents? Does the program provide training or other opportunities for you as a teacher?

- What was your 2009-2010 classes' end of year project? Can you tell me about how it was decided? What did you learn? What did you students learn? What are you thinking about this for this year?

- Why do students join Access? From a student's perspective or parent's perspective?

- What role do you as a teacher play in your primary students' and Access students' lives? Similarities or differences in your regular class?

- According to the 2007 Final Report for Access, the main goals of the program are "(1)for students to gain an appreciation for American culture and democratic values, (2) acquire sufficient English language skills to increase their ability to successfully participate in the socio-economic development of their countries, and (3) improve their chances of participation in future US educational exchange programs." How is this similar or different from the goals that you mentioned? How do your classes address these goals? Can you comment on these goals and which ones you find most important?

- What is impact of the donor on your classroom practices?

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