

The neoliberal blow to English Language Teaching: Deconstructing the *Teacher Academy* program in Chile

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Abstract

Imposed by force and shock during Pinochet's dictatorship, Chile became the first laboratory for radical free-market experiments. Neoliberalism policies in education have created a system of castes and socioeconomic segregation that is also present in the English language teaching. Drawing on Sen's Capability Approach, particularly the conceptualizations of capabilities (or opportunities and freedoms) and functionings (or valued beings and doings), this presentation aims to deconstruct the *Teacher Academy* (TA) program – a neoliberal professional development venture that entails the *re-education* of teachers from the public sector by their colleagues from elite private schools on how to teach the English language to public-school language learners. A series of electronic documents (newspaper articles, open letters, a video, and official documents from the Chilean Ministry of Education) were critically analyzed following a document analysis research approach. I argue here that the Teacher Academy program is problematic because it privatizes knowledge construction and perpetuates the neoliberal model rooted in Chile with the idea that what comes from the private arena is always better than what the public world can offer.

Keywords: Neoliberal education; ELT; Chilean school system; Capabilities; Functionings