

**NEGOTIATING NATIVISM:  
MINORITY IMMIGRANT WOMEN ESL TEACHERS  
AND THE NATIVE SPEAKER CONSTRUCT**

**by**

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**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the  
University of Toronto**

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## **Abstract**

### **NEGOTIATING NATIVISM: MINORITY IMMIGRANT WOMEN ESL TEACHERS AND THE NATIVE SPEAKER CONSTRUCT**

Doctor of Philosophy, 2000

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The "native speaker of English" is such a powerful construct, one so deeply embedded in myth, that it is inimical to sober inquiry. In this dissertation, I argue that the native speaker is a linguistic manifestation of nativist discourses that position visible minority immigrant women in Canada as being nonnative to the nation and, thus, as being nonnative speakers of English. I also argue that linguistics as a domain of study and a theory about language competence arises from a similar set of social relations within which nativism arises.

Drawing on a study of eight immigrant women teachers who have taught or are teaching English as a second language (ESL) to adult immigrants in the Toronto area, I demonstrate that the ideological relationships within which immigrant women find themselves are heavily structured by the dichotomy of native speaker and nonnative speaker. Using data from the interviews with the teachers, I illustrate how their negotiation of linguistic nativism is central to their identity formation and to their

pedagogies, and show how the native speaker concept informs their lived experience as ESL teachers in Canada.

Emphasizing the interconnectedness of all oppressions, I argue that accents, like race, are socially organized, are a linguistic manifestation of nativism, and constitute a new and effective form of racism. I argue also that the native speaker is imagined as having a White accent, one that is associated with speakers of Inner Circle Englishes.

On the basis of this research, I raise questions about the validity of the native speaker model that is used in Settlement ESL programs in Canada, and suggest that the native-nonnative speaker dichotomy be dismantled and the native speaker norm be reconceptualized. Furthermore, I suggest how to rethink teaching of English-as-a-second-language programs in Canada that make transparent the nonlinguistic underpinnings of the native speaker construct in order that both native and nonnative teachers can make informed pedagogical choices.



*In loving memory of my mother, Ismat Setha,  
for whom English was an Aladdin's lamp*

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Preamble**

A smart knock on the door of my student office. A graduate student whom I often see at departmental seminars and parties popped his head inside the door and said, "Do you know any native speakers [of English]?" He had a sheet of paper with 20-odd sentences and phrases, and he wanted a native speaker to go through them. I offered to look at them. He reluctantly handed me the sheet. I did not find it difficult to give him the "correct" answers -- indeed, the problems and questions were so simple that most teachers of English as a second language (ESL) of the higher levels, where there is emphasis on colloquialisms and where you are supposed to have a "feel" for the language, could easily answer them. I pointed out a few phrases that I would not use, and others that I considered to be acceptable. He thanked me and, as he was leaving, said: "Would a native speaker agree with you on these suggestions?"

I do not know what this Ph.D. candidate did with my input, but I suspect that he did not use it and that the only reason he let me look at the test was out of politeness. This seemingly innocuous incident was one of many that left me, first, puzzled about my "nonnative speaker" status and, second, wondering what the significance of the native speaker is. There was very little at stake here -- this was not a job, and there was no financial remuneration; no, the student was asking for free, volunteer work, and hence it was even more puzzling that he should "reject" me. The first question that comes to mind when I think of such incidents is: What linguistic knowledge does a native speaker of English have that someone who has studied English for many years does not/cannot have?



In other words, what is the definitive distinction that this student was trying to voice? And why did the student assume that I am not a native speaker of English? Is it because of my race -- that I am a visible minority woman? Is it also because I have a Pakistani accent?<sup>1</sup>

In situations like the above, when students put up notices and send e-mails asking for native speakers to help in a study -- without pay, I must point out -- I am left wondering whether I should volunteer. But when I have -- our department encourages student collegiality -- I have *never* been contacted, which makes me feel like an imposter in my claim. Such seemingly trivial daily, weekly occurrences drive home the message to me that my education in English language schools in Pakistan as well as the use of English in my daily life does not qualify me to lay claim to full competence in English outside Pakistan. As a member of Pakistan's postcolonial middle/upper-middle class, I, like my siblings, went to English language schools where Urdu, when permitted, was stigmatized. English was also privileged at home, and especially for intellectual conversations and debate. English was, and still is, an obvious marker of class, privilege, and status in Pakistan as in a number of former British and American colonies, where it continues to be very much part of the linguistic scenario.

Of course, students cannot be entirely blamed for coming to the conclusion that anyone who is not from the countries where English is spoken as the dominant language - - namely Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada -- which are, in Kachru's (1992) terminology, the "Inner Circle," is a *learner* of English. The student's

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<sup>1</sup> There is no one Pakistani accent. Accents in Pakistan, as in Canada, are on a continuum. This is a point I develop later in this thesis (see 2.1.5, 3.4, and 7.3). Here I am referring to how my accent indicates that I did not grow up in Canada and the implications of this fact.

views are confirmed and reaffirmed by the institute where both he and I are graduate students. "My university" -- for how else can I refer to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT), where I did my master's degree and am now doing doctoral work? -- has taken a similar approach to applicants to its Teacher Education programs who are not from Inner Circle countries. On the fourth floor of OISE/UT, I recently found a bright yellow flyer listing English language proficiency requirements for applicants to Teacher Education programs. By way of preamble, the flyer says that teacher candidates must "demonstrate a high degree of proficiency in both oral and written English" because the language of instruction in these programs is English and because successful candidates receive certification to teach in schools where English is the language of instruction (OISE/UT, 1998, p. 2). And hence OISE/UT requires that applicants to its Bachelor of Education Degree (B.Ed.) Program give "evidence . . . of their oral and written proficiency in English" (p. 2). And what is the evidence required by OISE/UT? The flyer says that applicants have to satisfy one of the following criteria, and I quote this in full:

(a) their mother tongue or first language is English,

OR

(b) they have studied full-time for at least three years (or equivalent in part-time studies) in a university where the language of instruction and examination was English and which was located in a country where the first language is English,

OR

(c) they have achieved the required level of proficiency on one of the tests in English language as outlined in section B (i-iv) of this pamphlet. (p. 3)<sup>2</sup>

These conditions of admission imply that despite my two master's degrees in English from Karachi University, Pakistan, and experience of teaching English at that university,

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<sup>2</sup> In this flyer, dated July 1998, OISE/UT stipulates similar English language proficiency requirements for its other Teacher Education programs. For details, see Appendix A.

I would not be considered for admission to this program unless I did one of the required tests, because Pakistan "is not a country where the first language is English. Therefore if one has studied in Pakistan (even if it was in English) the first language of the country is not English and therefore they must take the test."<sup>3</sup> At a structural/institutional level, this rule shows the university's refusal to validate the different linguistic conditions under which Englishes have become institutionalized outside monolingual Inner Circle countries, and thus denies the validity of the indigenized varieties of English (IVEs) of former British and American colonies -- for example, Ghanaian English, Nigerian English, Pakistani English, and Filipino English. We can interpret this regulation to mean that the university presumes that, as a group, candidates who live and study in societies where English is the first language have the degree of proficiency in both oral and written English required of teacher-trainees who will go on to teach in English language schools in Canada (see OISE/UT, 1998, p. 2),<sup>4</sup> whereas candidates from any other society are presumed, as a group, not to have such proficiency, and hence it becomes the responsibility of the individual candidate to provide proof of proficiency in English. The main point here is not whether I could convince the university of my proficiency in English and hence not have to do the test (see Appendix B), but rather that the university

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<sup>3</sup> This information was conveyed to me in an e-mail correspondence by an officer at OISE/UT's Initial Teacher Education Programs. I had a lengthy e-mail correspondence on these language requirements with various officers of the Initial Teacher Education Programs. For details of this correspondence see Appendix B.

<sup>4</sup> OISE/UT's definition of "mother tongue" and "first language" was clarified to me as follows: "The two terms are intended to mean the same thing and in this regard, each is supposed to explain the other. The definition which would apply to both terms would be: 'the language that you learned *at home* (my emphasis) as a child'" (e-mail communication, Initial Teacher Education Programs, OISE/UT). See Appendix B for details.

actively promotes the view among its community of educators and students that a) English remains a language of Inner Circle countries and b) if an individual has not grown up and/or studied in Inner Circle countries, it is valid to presume that this individual cannot have acquired enough English skills to teach in a school in Canada.<sup>5</sup> It is then easy to see how students at this institute continue to use the divisions created by the binary terms of first language-second language and native-nonnative speaker.

And the unkindest cut -- very close to the B.Ed. brochures on language proficiency tests -- was an advertisement from the CANLINK Company on the Job Ads/Employment board that said: "Teaching English in Korea . . . Requirements: Native English Speaker."<sup>6</sup> This advertisement came as a surprise to me; although I have seen similar advertisements in the local newspapers, I thought that universities would not -- could not -- advertise such jobs on the basis that they are discriminatory.

Such reminders of my constructed nonnativeness at OISE/UT give me an understanding of the social organization of ESL programs in Canada and insight into my experience as an ESL instructor in Toronto. I have taught ESL to adults in Toronto in both credit and noncredit courses in programs run by community colleges and by school boards. There were many differences in these programs in terms of goals, duration, and curriculum. The students in these programs varied in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, linguistic background, level of education, ability in English, and length of stay in Canada.

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<sup>5</sup> It makes me wonder if Booker Prize-winner Arundhati Roy, who has always lived in India, would be required to do an English proficiency test if she were to apply for admission to the B.Ed. program.

<sup>6</sup> I saw this job advertisement on May 16, 1999. I do not know how often such positions are advertised on the bulletin boards outside OISE/UT's Registrar's office, which is located on the fourth floor of OISE/UT's building at 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto.

A common thread in these very different teaching situations was that many of the students murmured the term "native speaker" with awe. I received the message that however hard I might work at preparing competent lessons, my teaching could not be as good as that of a native speaker. The discomfort of having to use tapes with "native speaker" accents for students to model themselves on, the ignominy of students storming out of the class and demanding a "real" English teacher, the embarrassment of having to rely on supervisors to pacify angry students with an unconvincing "All our teachers are very qualified . . ."

### **1.2 Situating the Study**

I consider the above-described experiences of being a linguistic Other to be directly related to my being constructed as a nonnative speaker of English. The "native speaker of English" is such a powerful construct, one so embedded in myth, that it is daunting to attempt to disentangle fact from fable.<sup>7</sup> As Nayar (1994) puts it: "Generations of applied linguistic mythmaking in the indubitable superiority and the impregnable infallibility of the 'native speaker' has created stereotypes that die hard" (p. 4). This mythmaking, I suggest, is not only about language competence, but is deeply embedded in discourses of racism and colonialism that inform both individual and institutional understandings and evaluations of speakers of IVEs. The more recent critical literature says as much. For instance, Kachru (1997) considers the native speaker to be a linguistic

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<sup>7</sup> *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1982) defines myth as a "traditional narrative usually involving supernatural or fancied persons etc. and embodying popular ideas of natural or social phenomena etc." (p. 670). Williams's (1983) *Keywords* is useful here; he points to the seventeenth-century derived words of "myth" and "mythos" -- for example, "mythological," and "mythologize," which meant "fabulous narration" (p. 211). The echoes of fabulous narrations appear to be ringing in many twentieth-century usages of the term native speaker.

colonial construct; Pennycook (1998) comes to a similar conclusion in that he sees the native speaker as yet another legacy of colonialism; and Paikeday (1985), commenting on who is seen as a native speaker, says that when people recruit "native speakers" of English, the term appears to be a codeword for White Anglo-Saxon protestants. The instances that I have described above -- the graduate student who wanted a native speaker to give an intuitive "right" or "wrong" to the 20-odd phrases and sentences on his protocol, the ESL students who feel that their lives will change if their teacher is a native speaker, the university's regulations about what constitutes the appropriate English language environment for its teacher-trainees -- suggest that the native speaker represents more than linguistic competency to them. But what *are* the other qualities that native speakers have and nonnative speakers do not have? It would seem that the native speaker construct is embedded in the larger discourses of *nativism*. Before I explicate what I mean by nativism, I need to show how this concept has been used by social scientists and historians.

### **1.3 Discourses of Nativism, Native, and Native Speaker**

Writing in the context of the United States, Higham (1965) defines nativism as "intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign . . . connections" (p. 4). Specific nativistic hostilities and antagonism might change, says Higham, but through each separate hostility there is the "connecting, energizing force of modern nationalism" (p. 4). Higham identifies the main strands of American nativism to be Anglo-Saxon, anti-Catholic, and anti-radical -- non-Anglo-Saxons posed a racial threat, Catholics posed a religious threat, and the immigrant revolutionary posed a political threat (pp. 4-11).

Palmer (1982) explicates his use of the concept of nativism as an analytical tool to explore and analyze patterns of prejudice in Alberta. He argues that "nativism" has wider applicability than "racism"; that it encompasses attitudes toward white ethnic and religious minorities that cannot accurately be described as racist since socially distinguished races are not involved. For Palmer, nativism has more analytical power than either prejudice or bigotry since neither of these terms looks at the underlying importance of the relationship between nationalism and the development of hostile attitudes toward minorities. Palmer therefore defines nativism as "opposition to an internal minority on the grounds that it posed a threat to Canadian national life" (p. 7). Palmer adds that just as in the U.S., in Alberta "underlying all the different varieties of nativism was a distrust of difference, a sense that minority groups which attempted to maintain separate identities diminished the national sense of identity and posed a challenge to prevailing ideals and assumptions" (p. 10).

### **1.3.1 Linguistic Aspects of Nativism**

While nativism as a concept is usually theorized in this way, I am interested in looking at the *linguistic* manifestations of nativism. I take the position in this thesis that the native speaker concept is embedded in discourses of nativism; and that nativist discourses are being mobilized through the native speaker of English. In this thesis I will examine what the native speaker stands for in the common imaginary and explore racial minority immigrant women's encounters with discourses of the native speaker and of nativism. I am interested also in critically examining the social organization of ESL in Canada, in which site the native speaker is held up as the standard, and the effect of this standard on those minority immigrant women teachers who are constructed as nonnative

teachers. For this project, I also need to take into account their encounters with English in their home countries and their encounters of nativism outside ESL in Canada.

Fiction writer Bharati Mukherjee, who is originally from India and now lives in the U.S., grounds much of her fiction in her encounters with nativism in Canada from 1966 to 1980. She distils her experience of being a linguistic and racial Other in her (1985) short story "Hindus."<sup>8</sup> In this story, we meet a well-assimilated, upper-class East Indian woman named Leela who lives in the United States. Leela tells the reader that her job at a publishing house is "menial," but she has the "soothing title" of Administrative Assistant. One day, a White colleague of similar low standing in the publishing house says to her:

"I had no idea you spoke Hindu. It's eerie to think you can speak such a hard language. . . . I keep forgetting that you haven't lived here always."

Our protagonist doesn't respond, but thinks:

I keep forgetting it too. I was about to correct her silly mistake . . . but then I thought, why bother? Maybe she's right. That slight undetectable error, call it accent, *isn't part of language at all* (my emphasis). I speak Hindu. No matter what language I speak it will come out slightly foreign, no matter how perfectly I mouth it. There's a whole world of us now, speaking Hindu. (p. 140)

The protagonist expresses well what I am saying: that mouthing English perfectly does not automatically put the speaker in the native speaker category. A racial minority

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<sup>8</sup> In the introduction to the collection entitled *Darkness*, Mukherjee tells the reader that in the years she spent in Canada (1966 to 1980), "I discovered that the country is hostile to its citizens who had been born in hot, moist continents like Asia" (Mukherjee, 1985, p. 2). "Hindus" is among those stories in this collection that were written when she was living in Montreal and Toronto and were "difficult to write and even more painful to live through" (p. 2). She explains why the experience was so painful: "In Canada, I was frequently taken for a prostitute or shoplifter, frequently assumed to be a domestic, praised by astonished auditors that I didn't have a 'sing-song' accent. The society itself, or important elements in that society, routinely made crippling assumptions about me, and about my 'kind'" (pp. 2-3).



immigrant woman's English is heard as the English of a nonnative speaker, of a foreigner. In these few sentences Mukherjee is able to capture the essence of nativism; for, as Leela says, the undetectable error that constructs her as immigrant, foreigner "isn't part of language at all."<sup>9</sup>

As I am arguing that the native speaker concept is embedded in nativism, I need to explicate the connection between native and native speaker of English. Hence I will first give an etymology of the word native to the present time and then show how the concept of native was adopted by applied linguistics. I then show that the native speaker concept and its two "handmaidens" of first language and mother tongue are intricately interwoven with the concept of nation and with the exclusions that both Higham (1965) and Palmer (1982) cite. Since my study is on how nativist discourses that are manifested through the native speaker construct impact on visible minority immigrant women, I will focus on race in my discussion.

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<sup>9</sup> Linguists are not above making the "silly mistake" of confusing Hindu with Hindi. In what appears to be an enlightened approach to the Englishes of the former British and American colonies, Markee (1993) writes: "Many indigenous African and Asian languages (such as Arabic or Hindu) [sic] have High varieties which are phonologically, lexically, syntactically and discursively inaccessible to uneducated users of the Low varieties of these languages" (p. 350). Is it that the writer does not know that Hindi is a language and a Hindu is a person who follows the religion of Hinduism? Hindi is spoken by 275 million people and is thus one of the world's leading languages (*Contact*, 1999, p. 14). Markee's article appeared in the prestigious journal, *World Englishes*. If the writer of the article does not know the difference between Hindi and Hindu, then the whole article is flawed. If the editor who edited and proofread this article does not know this fact, that, too, is problematic. Could it be that to linguists in Inner Circle countries, anyone who does not have membership to the Inner Circle speaks "Hindu"? That, to them, there's a whole world of English-speaking people who speak Hindu? -- thus demonstrating that the linguistic concepts that they use for decreeing the validity of a particular variety of English are steeped in nativism?

### **1.3.2 "The Native" and the Nation**

This section illustrates and defines how the word native has been used and how the meaning has changed. I will first give a brief etymology of the word native, and then historicize and contextualize the meaning era by era. Nativist discourses determined which use of native was dominant and in which site. As this thesis explores the relationship between nativism/native speaker and visible minority immigrant women, many of whom are from the Third World<sup>10</sup> and former British and American colonies, my interrogation of the term native will start from the time of British colonization of Asia and Africa.

According to Williams (1983), "native" is among these words that "are applied in particular contexts in ways which produce radically different and even opposite senses and tones" (p. 215). A positive social and political sense, as in "native land," "native country" was strong from the sixteenth century onwards (Williams, 1983, p. 215), which can be linked to the sociopolitical scene in Europe -- this was a time of intense nationalism and saw the rise of the European nation state. However, with political conquest and colonization, native also began to develop a pejorative meaning. It is possible that the peoples encountered with colonization were originally called native in a descriptive sense, simply to state that they were native to their land. As the action directed to the people who were native to, say, India/Hindustan was one that produced them as inferior, less civilized, and subjugated, over time the term in that context would

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<sup>10</sup> I do not use the term "Third World" unproblematically. Said (1994) has pointed out that the binary divisions of Third World-First World signify dominated and dominant. My use of these binaries in this thesis is an attempt to make transparent the continuing power inequalities between the two spheres that make it possible for the First World to produce and maintain such dichotomies as native-nonnative Englishes and native-nonnative speaker. In addition, my insistence on saying "Third World women" is to indicate that discourses of nativism continue to construct Nonwhite immigrant women living in Canada as Third World inhabitants, signalled by the status of nonnative speaker that is ascribed to them.

come to be inflected by these relations of subjugation by a foreign power. It is also worth noting here that the set of social relations that typified colonialism and that produced "the Native" did not exist to such an extent prior to this era. Williams (1983) points to the parallel but opposite usages of "native" in this era of colonialism and imperialism: it was particularly common as a term for "non-Europeans" but it also continued to be used to refer to inhabitants of Britain and North America, and native remained a "very positive word when applied to one's own place or person" (p. 215), a sense that is apparent even today. The context made clear who the native was, and which meaning was to be activated. It is apparent that what made this term pejorative or not pejorative is whether the person being referred to was White or Nonwhite. Presumably, the children of British people living in India were not called natives of India.<sup>11</sup>

It is worth noting a few other writers on the usage of this complex word. It becomes clear from these writers' views, as from etymologies of native, that the dominant meaning of this term at a particular time is a reflection of the dominant ideology of that time. As the focus of my investigation is women from the Third World, a significant era in the etymology of native is that of Britain's imperial expansion and colonization of the peoples of Asia and Africa. Brah, a Ugandan Asian woman living in England, emphasizes that the ways in which indigenous peoples are discursively constituted is variable and context-specific (Brah, 1996, p. 190). Brah's major arguments are as follows: During imperial conquests "native" developed pejorative connotations; in the British Empire the transformation of the colonized from native peoples into "the Native" implicated structural, political, and cultural process of domination, with the effect that the word

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<sup>11</sup> I owe this insight to sociologist Liza McCoy. Personal communication, December 3, 1999.

native became a codeword for subordination (pp. 198-199). She indicates that the British diaspora in the colonies consisted of English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh people and was not homogeneous in terms of class and gender, but these differences were elided by discourses of Britishness as the term "British" assumed a position of superiority vis-à-vis the Native (pp. 190-191), so that: "The Native became the Other" (p. 191).

The word native was used unproblematically for the indigenous peoples of the British colonies by British colonial rulers from all shades of political views, and this use was reflected by publications of that era. I cite below a few such instances. The Sanskritist Monier Monier Williams, pointing to the vast gap in perceptions of British rule by the educated elite and the masses in India, said: "I have found all intelligent Natives generally satisfied with our rule . . ." (cited in Viswanathan, 1989, p. 184, n. 37). Edmund Burke, whose views of the British role in India were different from Monier Monier Williams's and who asked for a strengthening of Indian institutions as a bulwark against British imperialism, also referred to the indigenous people of India as "natives" when he asked that steps be taken to "form a strong and solid security for the natives against the wrongs and oppressions of British subjects resident in Bengal" (cited in Viswanathan, 1989, p. 27).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The word native as used by the British in this era or at least in this domain had extremely negative connotations. Viswanathan's (1989) genealogy of English literary studies cites examples of English-speaking Indians who so completely identified with the ruler that they also refer to their fellow Indians "distantly, even contemptuously, as 'the natives'" (see Viswanathan, 1989, p. 140). One such example cited by Viswanathan is in an essay by Nobinchunder Dass, a student at Calcutta's Hooghly College, who was asked to respond to the topic, "The Effects upon India of the New Communication with Europe by Means of Steam." His essay includes the sentence: "[England] not only carries on commerce with India, but she is ardently employed in instructing *the natives* (my emphasis) in the arts and sciences, in history and political economy, and, in fact, in every thing that is calculated to elevate their understanding, meliorate their condition, and increase their resources" (see Viswanathan, 1989, pp. 139-140, p. 47n). The participation in English of the majority of the women whom I have interviewed for this study, that is, those who

The use of "native" in British Parliamentary Papers reflected the common usage of this word in England at this time. Quirk and Stein (1990) state that the word "native" was used with "imperial meanings"; people who were born in West Africa or India were "'natives,' but hardly people who were born in Kent or Scotland" (p. 68); Quirk and Stein see the "curious use and tone of the word 'native' as a linguistic reflex, or a linguistic manifestation of the racism that was freely expressed in that era" (p. 68). The editors of *English Today* ("Who are the Natives Now?," 1986) make a similar point; by way of example, they offer the following description from Dickens's (1848) *Dombey and Son*: "The Major . . . went one Saturday growling down to Brighton with the native behind him." They then say that it is clear that the native was Black. Their second example of such undisputed usage of native is in Dickens's (1853) *Bleak House*; the editors comment that "Mrs. Jellyby can talk of 'educating the natives of Borioboola-Gha, on the left bank of the Niger,' and everybody can appreciate exactly what nuances go with the term" (p. 14).<sup>13</sup>

I will now try to show how "race" becomes an issue that will bring us to an understanding of how racial minority immigrants from Third World countries are today seen as outside the nation. Nativist discourses mobilized the other core meaning of native as one connected to a place by birth -- against all foreigners. According to Quirk and

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are from former British colonies, will have been shaped by these social relations; I am giving these details as useful background for understanding the nuances detailed in their profiles (Chapter 4).

<sup>13</sup> Here I am documenting how the word native as Other gets pulled into everyday language, so that in the absence of mention of a place, we know who the native is. The second example from Dickens -- "the natives of Borioboola-Gha" -- shows a similar usage as in "the native of Kent or Scotland." But the first example from Dickens -- "The Major . . . with the native behind him" -- is a very different kind of usage because this native is no longer associated with a place. "The native" is enough to identify the person as Nonwhite.

Stein (1990), disparaging language was not used only for people with "brown or black faces" (p. 78); racial stereotyping was applied to all "'foreigners' and was virtually always hostile, accompanied by hostile terms to match" as reflected in early twentieth century popular literature in Britain and especially the United States (p. 78). Which groups of people were constructed as foreigners? The popular literature of the time used racial terms such as *wop*, *frog*, *kraut*, *polak*, and *yid*, among others, and the terms "applied to black people were no worse in their grossness and contempt -- *coon*, *nigger* . . . *kaffir*, *wog*" (Quirk & Stein, 1990, p. 78). Here I need to reflect briefly on the meaning and history of the category "race" in Britain, Canada, and the United States, a concept I develop in Chapter 2 (see 2.1.5). Many theorists (e.g., Brah, 1996; Frankenberg, 1993; Miles, 1989, 1993) consider race to be a social construction rather than a biological category. For Frankenberg (1993), race is socially constructed rather than being an "inherently meaningful category . . . one whose meaning changes over time" (p. 11). Underscoring the instability of racial categorization, Frankenberg notes that in the United States, Jewish Americans, Italian Americans, and Latinos have, at different times and from varying political standpoints, been viewed as both "white" and "nonwhite" (p. 11). Like Frankenberg, Brah (1996) emphasizes that race is socially constructed, and points to the process of racialization, whereby any number of markers, such as skin colour, culture, or gene pools may be summoned as signifiers of race (p. 155). Brah notes that certain forms of racism will single out biological characteristics as indicators of supposed racial difference, while other forms may highlight cultural difference as the basis of presumed racial boundaries between groups (p. 155).

I have above established that it is not only people with "black or brown faces" (Quirk & Stein, 1990, p. 78) who have historically and still continue to be constructed as

racial Others, and as being nonnative to the nation. Within this framework I will now focus my discussion on how the word native came to exclude those groups of people now constructed as "people of colour," or "visible minorities." It would seem that decolonization and the resulting influx of racial minority immigrants from the former British colonies and the other Third World countries precipitated the invoking of the meaning of native as one connected to a place by birth. Brah (1996) is useful here in that she explicates how the "native" discourse impacts on racial minorities living in Britain - and by extension other metropolitan centres -- today. In the British colonies, she says, the indigenous people of the then colonies were excluded from "Britishness" by being subjected as natives. Brah then goes on to discuss how this particular nativist discourse is played out in present-day Britain. She argues that the term native remains an underlying thematic of racialized conceptions of Britishness: In racialized imagination the former colonial Natives and their descendants settled in Britain are not British *precisely* because they are not seen as being native to Britain: "They can be 'in' Britain but not 'of' Britain" (p. 191). Brah thus emphasizes that whereas in the British colonies the 'colonial Native' was inferiorized, in Britain the 'metropolitan Native' is constructed as superior. She points out that in both cases nativist discourse is being mobilized but with opposite evaluation of the group constructed as the native (p. 191).

As my study is situated in Canada, I need also to look at how the White European settlers understood themselves in relation to the fact of the prior existence of indigenous peoples in territories in North America. Canada started as a colony of the British and French, and hence we can say with some certainty that the European settlers referred to the indigenous peoples of Canada as the natives, just as they did to the indigenous peoples of India, Malaya, Uganda, and Kenya. This usage occurred within the context of

colonial relations; although the British modes of administration of their colonies were not homogeneous, the East India Company in India and the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada were both operating within a similar set of colonial relations vis-à-vis the indigenous peoples of India and Canada. Historically the two societies took different routes. India became independent, but Canada is a country where most of the people are immigrants, and so the terms "Native peoples" and "Native Canadians" can either be used to indicate that these peoples were present on these territories before any Europeans arrived, or that such peoples are still in some way marked as subordinate and colonized natives within a superior in-migrating culture whose members are now just as native or locally born as members of the Six Nations.<sup>14</sup> Brah (1996) gives another perspective on this issue; she indicates that the invocation of indigenous or native status is not confined to discourses of nationalism. As example, she cites the case of Native Americans or Native Australians (and, I add, Native Canadians) who may also adopt a native subject position, but their aim is different in that the native positionality becomes the means of struggle for these indigenous peoples in their fight against historic exploitation and dispossession (p. 191). As this nativist discourse is not directly relevant to my project of tracing the connections/links between nativism and the native speaker of English, I do not need to detail this argument.

I have in this section contextualized the two main contradictory and opposite meanings of native. Both usages of the word still exist, but it is clear that at present, as Brah points out, nativist discourse is being mobilized to construct a superior metropolitan native. In the next section I indicate how this nativist discourse in terms of, as Williams

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<sup>14</sup> I am basing this analysis on similar observations made by the editors of *English Today* (1986) about the original inhabitants of the United States (p. 14).



(1983) puts it, a positive word when applied to one's own place or person, entered the fields of linguistics and applied linguistics to produce the native speaker and the nonnative speaker.

### **1.3.3 Historicizing the Native Speaker**

The main issue that I address in this section is: When and how did the concept of the native speaker of English come into being? I also ask how this concept is embedded in nativist discourses. I will take a linear approach and first show how the concept of native speaker arose although it was not mobilized till decolonization was imminent; next, I will link the native speaker concept with the imposition of English in the British colonies, and then look at how the concept was mobilized in the era of decolonization. Pennycook (1992) argues that linguistics is a European cultural form and that it is important to understand the construction of the concept of language as it has evolved in both Europe and North America because the concepts used in modern linguistics have their origins in language as understood in Europe (p. 96). He states: "The notion of language as it grew up in Europe was intimately tied to the growth of the nation state" (p. 96), and historicizes this statement thus: At this time, the new post-Renaissance states made concerted attempts to wean citizens from the church as also to strengthen their hold over diverse groups of people by developing the concept of a homogeneous ethnicity, and hence the "fundamentally important notion of a language as a shared means of communication between this homogeneous national/cultural group was born" (p. 97). He adds that the notion of a language as a homogeneous unity shared by the inhabitants of a nation state was finally to be taken up and given a "'scientific' blessing as the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of linguistics in its modern form" (p. 97).

Pennycook (1992) takes the position that linguistics and applied linguistics developed as fields because they were interested in the controlling and discipline of the English language (p. 76), and suggests that originally the focus was to produce and maintain clear distinctions between the lower and upper classes in England (pp. 90-91). I will look more closely at standardization in the next chapter (2.1); here it suffices to say that standardization became important in order to discipline and standardize a language that had been introduced to the elites in Britain's colonies. It becomes clear that linguistics as a domain of study and as theories about language competence and language acquisition were located within the same relations of Eurodominance that produced the superior native of Kent, Scotland, and York, and the subordinate native of Asia and Africa. Hence, linguistics as a way of knowing about language arises from a similar set of relations within which nativism arises. However, the need to mobilize the nativist discourse of native speaker was not yet required, because these acts of exclusions in England were on a class basis, that is, between native speaker and native speaker. Now I need to trace how the concepts of native, native language, and native speaker became part of the field of linguistics.

Writing in the context of the status of English in postcolonial India, Ahmad (1992) points out that this is the first time that large communities from various ex-colonial countries are gathering in metropolitan centres in such a way that large segments of these communities are making historically new demands for inclusion in the professional middle class and its patterns of education, employment, social valuation, and consumption (p. 81). It is significant that the first recorded use of the term "native language" surfaced when the new world order was being established between the two world wars, and when decolonization was imminent, and when the concept and notion of who is native to a

nation state became important. According to Davies (1991) the first recorded use of native speaker is the following definition by the American linguist Leonard Bloomfield: "The first language a human being learns to speak is his native language, he is a native speaker of this language" (see Bloomfield, 1933, p. 43). Cook (1999), drawing on Bloomfield's definition and Davies (1996) identifying this factor as the "bio-developmental definition," argues that being a native speaker in this sense is an "unalterable historic fact; individuals cannot change their native language any more than they can change who brought them up" (p. 186). Cook indicates that such a definition is similar to that of modern sources such as *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* and *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary* (see Cook, 1999, p. 186). This suggests that the definitions of native speaker that are commonly accepted at present are grounded in Bloomfield's stipulation that a person's native language is the language that they learn *first*.

Such definitions emphasize that native speakers have an intuitive grasp of their native language. In its entry on native speaker, the *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* makes the point that in generative transformation grammar "the intuition of a native speaker about the structure of his or her language is one basis for establishing or confirming the rule of the grammar," adding that a native speaker is said to "speak his or her native language 'natively'" (as cited in *English Today*, 1986, p. 15).

What is noticeable about such definitions is that they emphasize conditions and qualities such as a) birth, parentage, childhood, and b) intuition, and these meanings appear to be embedded in the original meaning of native as "natural." Davies (1991) draws attention to the fact that the cognate of native is "naif" (both through Old French) meaning natural, with "the sense of not being able to help it" (p. ix). The emphasis in

these widely accepted definitions is on the intuition of native speakers, who, it is suggested, cannot help knowing what they do about English. This element of intuition is also obvious in Chomsky's (1965) definition of native speaker; for Chomsky, competence in a language has to do with *intuitive* knowledge of what is grammatical and ungrammatical in a language.<sup>15</sup>

As the term native speaker is intricately interwoven with the concepts of first language and mother tongue, I now take a brief look at these terms. Stevens (1992) says that the terms "native language," "mother tongue," "primary language," and "first language" are often used interchangeably (pp. 27-28); usually the primary language is the language used by the child's mother, which is why the conversational label "mother tongue" is often used (p. 35). And hence a native speaker of English is constructed as one whose first language, mother tongue, and primary language are all the same. These concepts reiterate the ideology that language is tied to *inheritance*. Writing specifically about the English language, Rampton (1990) says that among the implications of being

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<sup>15</sup> According to Searle (1974), Chomsky concludes from his work in linguistics, which centres around the way in which children appear to have the intuitive ability to know what is grammatical and ungrammatical, that his theories vindicate the claims of the rationalists who claim that human beings have knowledge that is not derived from experience but is prior to all experience. Empiricists, on the other hand, believe that all knowledge comes from experience (p. 19).

Cowie (1999) gives a detailed analysis of Chomsky's theory of innate ability or linguistic competence. She uses the term "nativism" to mean that a particular trait is innate, and suggests that Chomsky's views on language learning exemplify a nativist view of language learning (pp. viii-xi). According to Cowie, Chomsky goes further than asserting that a faculty for language learning exists; for Chomsky, "the language faculty incorporates . . . the principles of Universal Grammar" (p. ix). However, Cowie cautions against accepting a nativist view of language learning in toto for a number of reasons, among them being that "*we really do not know how language . . . is learned*" (p. ix).

Cowie's use of the term "nativism" to mean that a particular trait is innate is not to be confused with the way that I am using the terms "nativism," "linguistic nativism," and "nativist discourses" in this thesis.

the native speaker of a language and having it as your mother tongue are that a particular language is inherited, "either through genetic endowment or through birth into the social group stereotypically associated with it" (p. 97), and that there is a close correspondence between being a citizen of a country and being the native speaker of one mother tongue (p. 97). As in the definitions of native speaker that I have cited earlier, Rampton argues that another implication is that those who are considered to inherit a language are presumed to have a high level of proficiency in the mother tongue, and that there is a clear distinction between those persons who have a particular language as their native or mother tongue and those who do not (p. 97).

To summarize the main points that I have made in this section:

1. The concept of native speaker has its origins in the nation state and is closely associated with "native," that is, those people seen as belonging to a nation and, in the case of English, who belong to the Inner Circle countries.
2. The concept of native speaker, native language, or primary language, as also of first language and mother tongue, are grounded in the thinking that a native speaker is one who "can't help it" -- that they intuitively know English. This intuition is tied to the fact that their mother tongue or first language or primary language is English.
3. These definitions emphasize birth, heredity, innateness of linguistic qualities.
4. A strong association is made between certain groups having these qualities.
5. The prescribed linguistic conditions, such as a homogeneous language community and having English as a mother tongue or language of the home, are applicable mainly to Inner Circle societies.

In this section I have established that the native speaker concept is embedded in nativist discourses that position only Inner Circle speakers of English as having legitimate claims to belonging to the nation state of Canada and of having English (and French) as their native language.<sup>16</sup>

#### **1.4 Rationale for Study**

In the above discussion I have established that the native speaker concept is embedded in nativism and in nativist discourses that have historically positioned and continue to position certain groups of people as not being "real" Canadians although they are citizens of Canada. My main point is that certain groups of people, including people from former British colonies and Third World countries, are not imagined as being part of the nation state of Canada. To borrow Brah's (1996) words in the context of England, racial minority immigrants are seen as living "in" Canada, but are not seen as being "of" Canada. Taylor (1997) points out that non/belonging for ethnicized and racialized immigrants is obvious when we look at *who* gets hyphenated *when*. While Anglo-Saxon immigrants are rarely hyphenated as groups, "many Canadians of colour are entirely accustomed to being asked where they come from or where they were born, regardless of whether they are first, third, or twentieth generation Canadian" (pp. 24-25).

The incidents that I have cited in the first section of this chapter (1.1) as well as the literature that I cite in this chapter lead me to think that my experiences in ESL, with acquaintances, and with my university are more than my personal trajectory; that they are

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<sup>16</sup> Some of the arguments that I am making in this thesis might well apply also to French, which has the status of being Canada's official language along with English. But as my thesis is on English, I will not pursue that line of inquiry.

symptomatic of discourses of nativism that pervade Canadian society in general and ESL in particular. Hence I decided to do a study that would develop an understanding of such discourses. A few facts about the racial makeup of Canada are helpful here in order to situate this study. In the decade after World War II, one-half of all Canada's immigrants came from the United Kingdom. During the late 1960s, a series of reforms in immigration policy was introduced that resulted in more immigrants coming from countries other than U.K.<sup>17</sup> Hence, according to the *Toronto Star* ("All the King's Horses," 1999), in 1994, only 2% of Canada's immigrants came from the U.K. (p. J1). Within Canada, the City of Toronto attracts a large number of the immigrants who come to Canada. Approximately 48% of Toronto's population are immigrants, and by the year 2001, foreign-born residents will comprise the majority of the Toronto population (City of Toronto, 1998).<sup>18</sup>

This ethnic and racial diversity among the immigrant population is reflected also in the linguistic diversity of Toronto's population. During recent years more than 50% of immigrants entering Canada annually could speak neither English nor French -- the two official languages of the country (Ashworth, 1992, pp. 35-49). Settlement services provided by the government for new immigrants include assistance in terms of general orientation, housing, employment, citizenship preparation and language training in English or French; in the context of English this free language training is referred to as

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<sup>17</sup> There is great deal of literature that indicts Canada's immigration policies as racist. (See, for example, Calliste, 1989; Cohen, 1994; Daenzer, 1993; Schecter, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> The "City of Toronto" comprises the following six municipalities: Toronto, Etobicoke, York, East York, North York, and Scarborough.

"Settlement ESL."<sup>19</sup> Many Canadians and new immigrants see language training as the central issue in settlement (Burnaby, 1992, p. 122); and this is the primary impetus behind the key federal official language training program for adult immigrants, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), which provides language instruction in English and French for new immigrants usually for their first three years in Canada. In addition to LINC, a wide range of official language training options are available for English as a second language (ESL) or French as a second language (FSL). In Ontario, where a large proportion of new immigrants settle, a variety of service providers offer ESL and FSL classes.<sup>20</sup> Over 200 organizations provide ESL/FSL to adult immigrants in Ontario alone; nearly two-thirds of the providers were located in the Toronto Area (Power Analysis, 1998, pp. 10-11).<sup>21</sup>

Again, a few statistics about ESL teachers are useful here to provide a local context to my study. The overwhelming majority (86%) of teachers of Settlement ESL courses offered as LINC/ESL are women, says the Power Analysis (1998) study (p. i); it adds that 35% of the teachers in Ontario are "not native speakers of English" (p. 54), with instructors in the City of Toronto being by far the most likely to have a native language other than English -- over 40% (p. 54). The definition of native speaker-nonnative speaker of English used in this study was based on "the first language" that the

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<sup>19</sup> See Burnaby (1992, pp. 122-137) for details of these services.

<sup>20</sup> According to the Power Analysis (1998) study, there are very few FSL programs in Ontario. However, the figures include FSL programs.

<sup>21</sup> The Power Analysis study determined the areas by using the first letter of the postal code. Thus the City of Toronto in their study included all areas where the postal code begins with an "M"; and these areas are: Toronto, Etobicoke, York, East York, North York, and Scarborough.



instructor learned.<sup>22</sup> Such statistics and judgements about native and nonnative speakers are problematic and are part of the "problem" that I am investigating. However, such statistics do establish that a) the ESL teaching force in Toronto is multiracial and multiethnic and b) many such teachers would be confronted with nativist discourses as ESL teachers. Keeping in mind the association of native speaker with nativism and nation, I thought the Settlement ESL classroom for adult immigrants would be the ideal site for my exploration into how the discourses of native speaker and nativism manifest themselves. It was also clear to me that I should have as participants visible minority immigrant women teachers since these women, who are positioned by discourses of nativism as being Other and nonnative to Canada, are teaching immigrants how to "settle" in Canada through ESL classes that are an integral part of the settlement programs offered to new immigrants; the content of these ESL programs includes life skills and settlement/integration.<sup>23</sup> Hence my participants are visible minority women who grew up in the Third World, immigrated to Canada as adults, and have taught or are teaching Settlement ESL to adult immigrants in Toronto. These are women whose backgrounds are similar to mine in that English was a major language in their lives in their countries of origin and continues to be a major language in their lives in Canada. I have detailed some of their investments in English in the participants' profiles (Chapter 4); these profiles help frame why these women become ESL teachers, and how they see themselves in relation to the native speaker.

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<sup>22</sup> This information was conveyed to me by the principal investigator of the study, Bob Power, in an e-mail dated August 25, 1999.

<sup>23</sup> The Power Analysis (1998) study states that "life skills were a part of nearly 80% of the classes; settlement/integration was also a focus of 61% of classes" (p. iii).

### **1.5 Research Questions**

My research questions are as follows:

1. How is nativism, in particular the concept of the native speaker, manifested in the context of ESL?
2. How do visible minority immigrant women teachers of ESL negotiate nativism and the native speaker construct?

This research will be of benefit to those who

- a) are interested in understanding how discourses of nativism are played out through the native speaker construct in English Language Teaching (ELT) in general and ESL for adult immigrants in Toronto in particular,
- b) welcome insight into the pedagogies and resistance strategies employed by visible minority immigrant women teachers of ESL and those constructed as nonnative speakers against nativist discourses as manifested through the native speaker construct,
- c) are searching for ways to reconceptualize ESL without the native-nonnative speaker binaries.

The significance of this study is not limited to language learning and language teaching; it contributes also to the literatures on race studies, gender studies, and power relations in First World societies.

### **1.6 Organization of the Dissertation**

In this chapter, I have described the problem, located myself as the researcher, and indicated in brief how I will go about conducting my inquiry, after which I have given a concise description of the local context in which my participants are living and in which they teach ESL. In Chapter 2, I provide the theoretical standpoints that inform my thesis.

I locate my study within the larger framework of postcolonial relations of power in general and immigrant women in Canada in particular. In the first section, I examine in some depth the status of New Englishes and the major discourses on native and nonnative speakers as well as on native and nonnative accents. In the next section, I show how minority immigrant women are located in the Canadian labour market, and look at the salience of ESL both as employment and as an opportunity to learn. I distinguish between the circumstances, barriers, and challenges faced by women who have low proficiency in English, and those, like my participants, who are proficient in English. I look at how the differences articulated by the native speaker-nonnative speaker dichotomy impact on minority women ESL teachers in Canada in particular. I then indicate the contribution my thesis will make to the existing knowledge in these fields.

In Chapter 3, I explore my subject position and lay out the methodology employed for this study. In Chapter 4, I introduce the eight teacher participants in the study: Arun from India, Dina from Surinam, Fayza from Egypt, Iffat from India and Pakistan, Jane from China, Patsy from Kenya, Tasneem from Pakistan, and Violet from Jamaica.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 illustrate how the participants negotiate the native speaker construct in their locations as immigrant women and as ESL teachers. Chapter 5 identifies the reasons and the processes by which Iffat, Jane, Tasneem, and Fayza come to the position that they are not native speakers. Chapter 6 illustrates the ambivalence Arun and Violet feel about their native speaker identities when they are confronted with messages in Canada that they are not native speakers. Chapter 7 focuses on why and how Dina and Patsy can state that they are native speakers of English.

In Chapter 8, I first summarize the findings of my study. Then I discuss the implications of this research for ESL for adult immigrants in Canada in particular and for

English Language Teaching (ELT) in general. The chapter looks at liberatory nonnative pedagogies by which to transform the ESL classroom and outlines a curriculum for ESL teacher training programs.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

In this chapter I locate my research within the larger framework of language and power in general and visible minority immigrant women ESL teachers in Canada in particular. This chapter is divided into four sections. In 2.1, I examine the status of New Englishes and the major discourses on native and nonnative speakers, which I use to help contextualize my study. In 2.2, I examine the different challenges faced by minority immigrant women in Canada with low proficiency in English and those with high proficiency in English. In 2.3, I indicate how my research takes these bodies of knowledge further.

#### **2.1 The Native Speaker and Postcolonial Relations of Power**

I need to situate my discussion of native-nonnative speakers, native-nonnative Englishes, and standard-nonstandard accents within the larger inequitable social relations symbolized by the terms First and Third World. Although I am primarily interested in examining the encounters of Third World women with discourses of nativism and the native speaker after decolonization, I need also to look at the linguistic manifestation of power within England before England became an imperial power.

According to Fairman (1986), language is not used only for communication, it is also used as an "instrument of political and social power" (p. 13). Fairman argues that this observation is applicable wherever users of a particular language or language variety are favoured -- by way of example, he cites Russian in the USSR, Swahili in Tanzania, and what he terms as "refined" English in Britain (p. 13). Fairman gives examples from early nineteenth-century Britain to drive home his point that language was used to maintain and

justify inequities between the upper and working classes. He draws on Olivia Smith's classic *The Politics of Language, 1791-1819* -- a crucial era in that this was the period just before English was introduced in British India and hence the issue of disciplining and standardizing English was relevant only within England. At that time in England only men with property had the right to vote. People from the working classes and those without property began petitioning Parliament for the right to vote. Noting the low status of the signatories on the petition, Parliament rejected most of them on the grounds that the language was not "refined" but "vulgar" (O. Smith, 1984, as cited in Fairman, 1986, p. 13). Citing these instances of inequities as described by O. Smith (1984), Pennycook (1992) argues that a series of dichotomies was constructed on the basis of language in a particular way to serve specific cultural political goals. The main dichotomy that is apparent is that those who spoke refined English were seen as moral, civilized, and rational, while those who spoke vulgar English were seen as emotional, irrational, and materialist; thus, using the refined version of English bestowed on the speaker desirable qualities, while those who spoke vulgar English were seen to have the above-named undesirable qualities. I am citing these cases of how language was used to maintain inequities and create a set of dichotomies in nineteenth-century England because, as Pennycook (1992) points out, these dichotomies organized around language had great significance when taken up within the discourses of colonialism (p. 91).

Although these discourses on language also impacted on how the British viewed the indigenous languages of the countries they colonized, I will restrict my discussion to the impact of such discourses on the varieties of English that became indigenized in the countries that were colonized by the British. In his discussion of standardization and linguistics, Pennycook (1992) argues that the spread of English under colonialism led to

the question: Who would discipline the language (p. 87)? Conceding that there was already a great deal of prescription in England, he argues that a) the growth of linguistics in this period of imperial expansion resulted in rigorously disciplining the language even more than before, and b) the standardization of English became an imperial mission (pp. 88-89).

It would not be inaccurate to say that although English was introduced by England in her colonies in the nineteenth century -- first in India and then in other colonies -- "nonnative Englishes" were produced only 50 years ago, that is, at decolonization, when England and other Inner Circle countries had to differentiate between the Englishes of the Third World and the Englishes of the First World. There were two main reasons why this distinction was considered necessary. The first reason was that England wanted to continue to discipline and control the English language. Kachru (1985) argues that the discourse of native-nonnative speakers is grounded in the original owners' concern to a) have the exclusive prerogative to control the standardization of English, and b) have "mother English" as the referent for the Englishes that were becoming institutionalized in the former British colonies in the aftermath of colonization. The second impetus for producing and mobilizing this concept is linked to the migration of people from the former British and American colonies to First World countries. As I have pointed out in Chapter 1 (1.3.2), concepts of nativeness and nonnativeness became significant with decolonization when the natives of India, Kenya, and other former colonies came to live in England and, subsequently, in Canada and the United States. In Chapter 1, I have indicated that discourses of who is native and nonnative to these societies produced people from the former colonies as nonnative to First World societies and as Other. Similarly, I argue, the concept of nonnative Englishes created a set of dichotomies

between Us and Them, such that the natives of England became synonymous with speakers of refined or native English, while the natives of India, Kenya, and other former colonies became synonymous with speakers of vulgar or nonnative English.

In order to ground my discussion of native-nonnative speaker issues, in this section I will first give a comprehensive background on the status of English as a world language; in particular the status of English in the former British and American colonies. I will then examine power inequalities that create the dichotomy between native and nonnative speakers, after which I will show how a visible minority woman's race and gender intersect with her Third World status to construct her as an immigrant woman with a nonstandard accent.

### **2.1.1 English in the World**

Crystal (1997) remarks that in 1950 the notion of English as a world language was no more than a dim possibility, but now World English exists as a political and cultural reality (p. vii). Most statistics on users of English are given according to Kachru's (1992) widely accepted model, which divides English users in the world into three concentric circles representing the "types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts" (p. 356). In Kachru's division, the Inner Circle -- as I have mentioned in Chapter 1 -- refers to the traditional bases of English and includes Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.S.A., and the U.K. Kachru's Outer Circle involves the earlier phases of the spread of English in former British and American colonies, where the language has become part of a country's major institutions and plays an important role as a second language, and which are also known as English as a second language (ESL) countries; examples of Outer Circle countries are Ghana, Kenya, and



Tanzania in Africa, and India, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka in Asia. The Expanding Circle or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) countries involves those countries that do not have a history of either British or American colonization, where English does not have an official status, and the use of English is comparatively restricted; this Circle includes countries such as China, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Poland, and Saudi Arabia (see Kachru, 1992, pp. 356- 357),<sup>1</sup> as well as a steadily increasing number of other states (Crystal, 1997, p. 54).

Crystal's updated (1997) figures for users of English are as follows: 337 million people in the Inner Circle, or those who speak English as a first language; another 235 to 350 million in the Outer Circle, who speak English as a second language; while the figures for those who speak English as a foreign language are estimated to be as low as 100 million and as high as 1,000 million (pp. 60-61).<sup>2</sup> Although, as linguists have pointed out, it is difficult to give correct estimates for speakers of English,<sup>3</sup> one fact is

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<sup>1</sup> Not all countries fit into the Inner/Outer/Expanding Circles model: for example, South Africa and Jamaica, as their situations are complex in terms of the English-using populations and the functions of English (see Kachru, 1992, p. 362n).

<sup>2</sup> Crystal (1997) points to the difficulties in getting correct estimates for the following reasons: 1) There is no agreed-upon yardstick as to how great a command of English is considered acceptable to count as a speaker of English. 2) No estimates are available for many countries. 3) In other countries, for example, India, Malaysia, and Pakistan, even a small percentage increase in the number of speakers thought to have a "reasonable" command of English would considerably expand the grand total of ESL users. 4) The estimates for Expanding Circle countries vary greatly because of the different definitions used for a speaker of English. Crystal adds that the role of EFL countries in accounts of English will increase dramatically in the twenty-first century because of the spread of English in countries with the largest populations, for example, China, Russia, Indonesia, and Brazil (pp. 60-61, p. 130).

<sup>3</sup> Phillipson (1999) cautions that Crystal's (1997) story of globalizing English is "Eurocentric and triumphalist" (p. 268) and needs "very careful scrutiny" (p. 266). Phillipson's main objection appears to be that Crystal's "loyalty is to linguistics" and hence does not interrogate the role of colonialism and globalization in the spread of English (p. 266). This is a valid critique as Crystal does not engage with such issues. However, Phillipson does not question Crystal's figures of

undisputed: There are more speakers of English outside the original "mother tongue" countries of the Inner Circle than in these countries, for the speakers of "nonnative" Englishes in ESL and EFL countries together total between 450 million and 1,350 million. The latter estimate leads Kachru (1996) to claim that there are "four nonnative speakers of English for every native speaker" (p. 24).

### **2.1.2 Third World Englishes**

In this discussion of nonnative Englishes, along with using Kachru's (1992) model, I will draw also on Phillipson's (1992) division of English users into "core English-speaking countries" for the Inner Circle and "periphery-English countries" for the Outer and Expanding Circles (p. 17), as this division foregrounds the power inequality between these two groups of English users. Phillipson explains his division thus: ESL and EFL countries are peripheral in the sense that "norms for the language are regarded as flowing from the core English-speaking fountainheads" (p. 25) and the "target in language teaching is English as it is spoken in one of the core English-speaking countries" (p. 25).<sup>4</sup> Thus he clearly lays out the dichotomy that has been established between Inner Circle Englishes, or "native" Englishes, and the Englishes of the rest of the world, known commonly as "nonnative" Englishes.

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nonnative speakers of English. (For details of this critique, see Phillipson, 1999, pp. 265-276.)

<sup>4</sup> Phillipson (1992) uses the core-periphery metaphor as these terms are used in analyses of the relationship between "the dominant rich countries and dominated poor ones" (p. 17). Conrad (1996) argues that the model of core/centre-periphery is becoming increasingly problematic in that it does not represent emerging realities of the late twentieth century -- a reference, it would seem, to emerging transnational cultures and flows of capital. But despite the obvious shortcomings of these binary opposites, I am self-consciously using these terms to reflect the hierarchical power relations embedded in these divisions, much as I use the binary opposites Third World and First World.

I need to make the distinction between native and nonnative Englishes even more specific than Phillipson's core-periphery division, which, although useful in foregrounding the power inequality between the two spheres, elides distinctions between those periphery countries such as India, Kenya, and Jamaica, which have indigenized varieties of English (IVEs) that have been institutionalized in local settings, and those countries such as Poland and Russia, which are not making claims to having such a variety. There are two main points worth noting about the distinction between native and nonnative Englishes. First, although common-sense usage of the term nonnative Englishes applies to all varieties of English acquired and spoken outside the Inner Circle countries, IVEs such as Caribbean English, Filipino English, Indian English, Nigerian English are distinct varieties of English that have evolved and are laying claim to being different, but valid varieties of English (see, for example, Kachru, 1990a; Lowenberg, 1992; Phillipson, 1992; Sridhar & Sridhar, 1992);<sup>5</sup> these Englishes have a clear colonial past and are also referred to as Third World Englishes (see, for example, Kachru, 1966; Fairman, 1986). Second, this division is along racial lines. The population of core English-speaking countries is predominantly White while the population of the former British and American colonies is predominantly Nonwhite, and hence in this thesis I also use the terms White Englishes for native Englishes and Nonwhite Englishes to refer to nonnative Englishes. My point here is that although we do have White nonnative writers such as Vladimir Nabokov and Joseph Conrad who have produced texts in English that are recognized as great writing, they are *individuals* who have linguistic and literary talent and had to overcome native

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<sup>5</sup> However, this situation is rapidly changing as there is more English in some EFL countries than in some ESL countries (Crystal, 1997; Phillipson, 1992).

speakers' prejudice against nonnative speakers.<sup>6</sup> But I am concerned primarily with how the category of nonnative Englishes has been created and mobilized to subordinate the institution of Nonwhite Englishes. Simply put, the struggle is between White First World Englishes and Nonwhite Third World Englishes.

Before I explore some of the issues that have been identified in the debates on native and nonnative Englishes, I need to briefly look at how English became part of the linguistic scene of Third World countries, both those with a history of British or American colonization and those without such a colonial history. We can trace the origin of the spread of English to the Education Act of 1835, which made the British responsible for the education of all people in India. However, they focused their attention on the middle classes that were recognized by the British as continuing to exert power over the people (Viswanathan, 1989, p. 7); this English-for-the-elites policy in India resulted in further stratifying an already stratified society, bestowing power and privilege on those with English. The policy of providing English education for the elites that was used in India was adapted for the other colonies, thus changing forever the stratification of African societies. Mazrui (1978) points out that African countries, like India, were socially stratified before colonization, but the colonial impact -- not only with Britain, but also with Germany and France -- transformed the natural basis of stratification in Africa (p. xiii). Instead of status based on, say, age, "there emerged status based on literacy . . ." and "the very process of acquiring aspects of the imperial culture came to open the doors first of influence and later of affluence itself" (p. xiii). As in India, "the road to

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<sup>6</sup> Virginia Woolf was disparaging about Conrad's nonnative accent, claiming that "he was 'a foreigner talking only broken English'" (cited in Cook, 1999, p. 195), while Robert Graves commented thus on Nabokov's English usage: "His one error lies in arrogating a native-born's right . . . to do what he likes with the language" (cited in Christophersen, 1988, p. 18).

office and the key to advancement was thus to be through the English language" (p. 30). English became an obvious marker of being from the upper classes in all the British colonies. Ngugi (1985) describes the privileging of English at school level in Kenya. Selections from primary into secondary schools were made through an examination in which all six subjects, ranging from Nature Study to Maths, were written in English, and nobody could pass the exam if they failed the English-language paper. English was equally privileged at the university level, leading Ngugi to conclude: "English was the . . . magic formula to colonial elitedom" (p. 115).

The British flag came down in India and Pakistan in 1947, but the empire of English continued almost unchanged in these countries; the continuing high status of English is apparent in Bannerji's (1990) description of her education. Being from the upper classes, she went to a school that served the children of the ruling class and that was considered a good school because everything was taught in English. The vernacular - Bengali -- was of such low priority in her high school in the then East Pakistan that the school did not even have a teacher of Bengali; when she decided to "take it as a subject" for the U.K.-based Senior Cambridge exam, a teacher had to come from another school to tutor her for two hours a week (Bannerji, 1990, p. 37). The continuing hegemony of English in all spheres in postcolonial Pakistan and India makes Bannerji conclude: The legacy of colonialism in modern India, as in pre-independence India, was that "the way to advancement lay through proficiency in English and collaboration with Colonial State and Western capital" (Bannerji, 1990, p. 38). Alibhai-Brown, a Ugandan Asian Muslim woman, indicates in her (1995) autobiography that the English curriculum of India was replicated in the former British colonies and protectorates in Africa. The hold of the English language appears to have been at least as strong in Uganda as in India. East

African Asians had by the 1960s thought that they were superior to those who had not left the Indian subcontinent. Why? Because "We spoke English with a better accent, we had been colonised for much longer, we were therefore better" (Alibhai, 1995, pp. 104-105).

There does not appear to be much argument that English was introduced in the colonies as a "vital appendage of British colonial rule, one that was to be used as an instrument of oppression, alienation, and marginalization of the indigenous peoples (Dissanayake, 1993, p. 337). After decolonization, the situation is more complex, and there are two main schools of thought on how and why English has remained a dominant language and is even more entrenched in the former colonies at the turn of the twentieth century than it was under colonization, and why, as well, non-British and non-American colonies, for example, China and Japan, have also embraced English. I will summarize the major points made by the two groups. According to Phillipson (1992), the current status of English as a world language has been the result of very deliberate policies. He indicates that since the mid-1950s, it has been British and American government policy to establish English as a universal "second language" in order to "protect and promote capitalist interests" (Skuttnab-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989, p. 63). Pennycook (1992) takes a similar stand but points out that although the United States was directly involved in widespread education in English in Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam, its real influence internationally has been in the post-war era (p. 132). According to Pennycook, the United States is "more responsive to a world of global economic interdependency and largescale development initiatives than the British (p. 132)," and thus the United States "consolidated their power through a vast array of institutions, political, economic, academic, cultural, and so on" (p. 132). Like Phillipson and Pennycook, for Tollefson

(1991) the "penetration of English" into major economic and political institutions on every continent is a result of "the economic and military power of English-speaking countries and the expansion of the integrated global economic market which they have dominated" (p. 82). Hence these three writers make the argument that Britain and the United States followed deliberate policies of economic imperialism all over the world, and this economic imperialism is tied up with English.

A very different line of thinking as to why English is spoken by more than 400 million people in Periphery countries (see Crystal, 1997) is presented by Fishman, Conrad, and Rubal-Lopez (1996), who explore the position that perhaps English should be reconceptualized, from being an imperialist tool to being a multinational tool. These writers make the argument that English may be the *lingua franca* of capitalist exploitation but not of imperialism or neo-imperialism per se. For example, Fishman (1996) suggests that "English may need to be re-examined precisely from the point of view of being post-imperial (that is, in the sense of not directly serving purely Anglo-American territorial, economic, or cultural expansion) without being post-capitalist in any way" (p. 8). Fishman takes the position that as English is still spreading in the non-English mother-tongue world, we need to see if there are "forces or processes that transcend the English mother-tongue world itself and which may also be contributing noticeably to the continued spread and entrenchment of English in non-English mother-tongue countries" (p. 3). Similarly, in the same book, Rubal-Lopez (1996) suggests that variables other than colonialism might exist in both former British and American colonies as well as countries without a history of such colonization, which would be "an indication that colonization is not the major force that has impacted on the spread of English in former colonies (p. 38). Fishman, Conrad and Rubal-Lopez's (1996) book suggests that if the spread of English

is not tied to colonialism, then perhaps colonial discourses of the supremacy of the native speaker are not part of the learning of English in both former colonies and non-colonies.

Although the history of English is different in the former British and American colonies from that of the countries that were not colonized by these two powers, at the end of the twentieth century, English represents status, privilege, and mobility in the former colonies or ESL countries, and this is largely true also of the non-colonies or EFL countries. Despite the fact that English was imposed in the former British and American colonies, it is now considered to be an indigenous language (see Ahmad, 1992; Bisong, 1995), and the middle and upper classes of these countries continue to send their children to educational institutions where English is privileged. In the non-colonies, English does not yet have an official status and its use is comparatively restricted, but, as Crystal (1997) notes, English is becoming institutionalized in these countries.

I have so far provided a descriptive expository picture of the global situation of English at the end of the twentieth century. Now I need to look at the main issues that are involved in debates on native-nonnative Englishes.

### **2.1.3 Language as Power**

The important characteristics of IVEs are, first, they have their own rules and norms, and, second, as they are used daily in particular settings, they have developed new linguistic features at all linguistic levels, and these linguistic innovations have become de facto norms for English usage in those countries as these linguistic innovations have become nativized (Lowenberg, 1992, pp. 108-109). The main issue regarding IVEs is whether they are different or deficient varieties of English. The essential question in the native-nonnative English debate, according to Phillipson (1992), "is the nature of the



relationship between the standard English of core English-speaking countries and periphery-English variants" (pp. 25-26). Historically, native speakers have decided whether a variety of English is valid, but, as a number of linguists have pointed out, the rules they use to decide on the validity of a particular variety of nonnative English are culturally and linguistically biased (see, for example, Kachru, 1992; Sridhar & Sridhar, 1992) and embedded in the field of linguistics, which is closely linked to English (Pennycook, 1992, pp. 114-115). Kachru (1992) takes the position that any deviation from mother English in the IVEs has been termed not a difference but a mistake or error by native speakers of mother English, for the norm that they use is that of English as used in native contexts.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Lowenberg (1992), in an indictment of core countries' marginalization of IVEs, says that although there have been many advances in English language testing, relatively little attention has been paid to the variability inherent in the linguistic "norms" for English that are generally tested. He argues that when identifying these norms, "most researchers in testing appear to assume implicitly that the benchmark for proficiency in English around the world should be the norms accepted and used by 'native speakers' of English" (p. 108). Lowenberg takes the position that such an assumption is not universally valid.

This nonacceptance of Third World Englishes is clearly grounded in First World linguists' stance than there is only one English, not several Englishes (see Phillipson, 1992, p. 26). A look at the main arguments against nonnative Englishes is warranted here. As Quirk is an extremely influential player in this debate -- he has been knighted for his work on language -- I will look at the main points that he makes in his debate with

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<sup>7</sup> A number of Third World linguists have taken up various aspects of this debate. See, for example, Y. Kachru (1994); S. N. Sridhar (1994); Sridhar and Sridhar (1992).

Kachru over the question of standards for English. First, Quirk (1989, 1990) dismisses any attempts at acceptance of these new varieties of English as "liberation linguistics" and insists that standard British English should be the norm internationally. Second, in the context of propagating this standard for English language classrooms everywhere, Quirk (1990) emphasizes that only native speakers should be the authority in establishing correct usage on the basis that natives have "radically different internalisation [of the first language]" and hence nonnative teachers need the native speaker as referent (p. 7). Kachru (1991) points out that Quirk's insistence that standard British English be the norm internationally is unrealistic and misguided as it ignores the reality of World Englishes. Christensen (1992) is more critical; he sees Quirk's concerns for standard English as an attempt to "propagate the standards of a minority, privileged group of language users" (p. 13) and makes a connection between Quirk's insistence on a standard with similar moves in nineteenth-century England, which I have referred to earlier in this chapter (2.1), when the British Parliament refused to accept petitions because of the language in which they were framed (p. 13). Discourses of nonacceptance of nonnative Englishes are obvious also in today's English-only movements in a number of Inner Circle countries. In England, Phillipson (1992) sees them being reflected in the Kingman and Swann Reports with their emphasis on assimilation (p. 20). In the United States, Canagarajah (1999) sees a similar stance in the groups that are lobbying for a constitutional amendment that would establish English as the official language of the United States (pp. 81-82).

It is worth reiterating that language *is* power. As Kachru (1990b) points out, American English (AE) was also not liked when it first came into being, but now AE is accepted because of the power and superiority that the United States has acquired in many areas and therefore even the speakers of "'mother English' in Britain have become

tolerant of the encroachment of AE into their English" (p. 144). Acceptance of Indian English, Singaporean English, Ugandan English, that is, the Englishes of the Third World, seems remote as, simply put, India, Singapore, and Uganda do not have the power of the United States.

Against this background of nonnative Englishes, I return to my examination of native speaker issues that I touched on in Chapter 1 (1.3.3).

#### **2.1.4 Native Speakers and Nonnative Englishes**

Canagarajah (1999) argues that the "very label native speaker is questionable" because "with the existence of indigenized variants of English developed in postcolonial communities, many here [in the First World] would consider themselves native speakers of these Englishes" (p. 78). Canagarajah is making a valid point; however, as McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil (1992) tell us, "There is no point in pretending that certain kinds of English are not *perceived* to be superior" (p. 5). By way of example, the writers say that many Americans, for instance, will tell a speaker of British English that his or her speech is "better" than theirs, and the news readers of the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation seem to parody BBC English in an attempt to emulate the British model (p. 5).

Thomas (1999), who coordinates an Academic English program in a community college in the United States, makes a similar point when she theorizes why people compliment her on her English even after she has told them that she is a native speaker of Indian/Singapore English. She argues that such compliments stem from the fallacy that there is only one kind of English, "the right kind -- the kind spoken by people belonging to the 'inner circle'" (p. 7) -- Quirk's (1989, 1990) concerns regarding standard English appear to be reflected in Thomas's encounters with Americans. Davies (1991) is helpful

in understanding the social organization of English programs that ensure that Thomas has such evaluations of her Singaporean English. Davies demonstrates how linguists are complicit in propagating a particular understanding of the terms native speaker and nonnative speaker. "Such use," he says, "is of course not intended to be exact, rather it is an appeal to common sense, to use a difficult and uncertain concept which is at the same time a useful piece of shorthand" (p. 7). He then goes on to give a few examples of this shorthand in appeals frequently made in academic settings in the U.K.: "We need 10 native speakers for a test on Friday" and "I am looking for 3 non-native speakers to help with a questionnaire" (p. 7). Davies points out that such short-hand appeals cause offence for a number of related reasons. One such reason is that "what is not stated is that what is typically being referred to is being a native speaker of *English*" (p. 7); second, such requests ignore the fact that everyone is a native speaker of some language; and third, such requests deny that a highly proficient nonnative speaker may be indistinguishable from a native speaker in terms of what is required from such respondents (see Davies, 1991, p. 7). Davies is correct when he says that what is often meant by native speaker in these contexts is the deliberate exclusion of those who could be seen or who see themselves as being native speakers (p. 7) -- for example, people from Singapore, Nigeria, or India who see themselves as native speakers (p. 7).

Clearly, linguists who write such requests are saying that only an Inner Circle variety of English qualifies a person to be a native speaker. Linguists and academics are thus reflecting their Quirk-like views of nonnative Englishes, which are reflected at an individual level in Thomas's (1999) experience in TESOL and at an institutional level in the regulation by teacher programs in Canadian universities that applicants who are from non-Inner Circle countries need to prove that they do indeed know enough English to

teach in a Canadian school (see 1.1). And, hence, one can say that despite attempts by Third World linguists (e.g., Braine, 1999; Kachru, 1990b, 1992; Y. Kachru, 1994; Sridhar & Sridhar, 1992) and, I add, a few First World linguists (e.g., Lowenberg, 1992; Pennycook, 1992; Phillipson, 1992) to have IVEs accepted as valid varieties of English, the hegemony of Inner Circle Englishes is so strong that when you hear someone say "He is a native speaker" there is no mistaking that a) the language being referred to is English<sup>8</sup> and b) the variety of English being referred to is an Inner Circle English.

I have in Chapter 1 given some of the defining characteristics of the native speaker, such as emphasis on birth, citizenship, nation, and inherited qualities, or, as Rampton (1990) puts it, of birth rights, and the connection between native speaker and a certain "social group" (p. 97). It is significant that there is no widely accepted definition of the native speaker (see Davies, 1991). The parallel cannot go unnoticed -- there is no official academy for standardizing English and hence those with power decide which English is the right English (see Fairman, 1986, pp. 13-14). In the same way, as there is no definition of the native speaker those with power decide who is not a native speaker. An effective way to exclude certain groups of speakers of English from native speaker status is to specify the linguistic conditions under which native speakers are supposed to operate. In this context, I need to examine the terms "first language" and "mother tongue" because they are partly synonymous with native speaker. Like the term native speaker, these terms are "surrounded by an aura of mystique and are heavily loaded with emotional connotations" (Christophersen, 1988, p. 15). Let us look at what these two concepts connote, and at the use and misuse of these terms. Phillipson (1992) points out that the

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<sup>8</sup> Note my opening sentence in Chapter 1. The graduate student said, "Do you know any native speakers?" He did not need to specify "of English."

term mother tongue is ambiguous as it can refer to the language of the biological mother or father or to a local language (p. 39).<sup>9</sup> When used in the former sense, mother tongue takes on strong tones of birthing, parenting, and an unbroken heritage that is passed on from mother to child. Let me now look at what first language implies. It cannot go unnoticed that the linguistic conditions under which nonnative Englishes are acquired are radically different from the conditions under which native Englishes are learned. One such condition is that in nonnative situations, English might be learned by a child in an educational context and not from the mother/father, and that, in fact, the child's parents might not speak English, and hence English is not the child's mother tongue or first language.

Another significant difference is that English in nonnative settings is, as Kachru's (1992) title, *The Other Tongue*, makes clear, often the second, third, or *n*th language whereas traditionally, native Englishes were learned in a monolingual situation where the native language, first language, and mother tongue were one and the same, but the linguistic conditions in Inner Circle societies are somewhat different now. Phillipson (1992) makes the point that functional bilingualism or multilingualism at both the individual and societal level can be found throughout the world; however, in Inner circle countries the pattern is predominantly one of monolingualism. He notes that the trend towards monolingualism has been partially checked in a few Inner Circle countries, for example, Canada, where the supremacy of English has slowly given way to a

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<sup>9</sup> See Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) for more on the term mother tongue. She argues that this term does not reflect the reality of multilingual societies and peoples and suggests that the defining criteria for mother tongue should be many, including origin, function, competence, as well as self-identification and identification by others; in addition, she argues that the individual can have more than one mother tongue (pp. 12-57).

comprehensive French-English bilingual policy (pp. 17-18). Drawing on Cummins and Danesi (1990), Phillipson notes that in recent years some official support has also been given to the maintenance and cultivation of Canada's many "heritage" languages of both immigrant and indigenous minorities (p. 18). In addition, as Paikeday (1985) points out, multilingualism is now noticeable at an individual level in cosmopolitan Inner Circle cities such as New York, London, and Toronto, where there are many immigrant families who use a non-English language in the home while the children acquire native speaker-proficiency in English by using English in schools and outside the home (pp. 21-22).<sup>10</sup> These changing sociolinguistic conditions in Inner Circle societies make it clear that monolingualism as a sociolinguistic condition of "native speakerness" is questionable. However, Nayar (1994) emphasizes that one of the defining features of the native speaker continues to be that he or she be monolingual (p. 3).

Pennycook (1992) links this bias toward monolingualism to linguistics; he points out that thought on linguistics from Saussure through to Chomsky and till the present has taken monolingualism to be the norm; he sees this view as being "clearly rooted far more in the language myths of Europe" (p. 100). Crystal (1987) notes the resilience of these language myths when he says that people brought up within a western society often think that the monolingualism that forms a routine part of their existence is the normal way of life for all but a few "special" people. "They are wrong" states Crystal (p. 360), adding that multilingualism is the natural way of life for hundreds of millions all over the world (p. 360). Kachru (1990a) makes this point more strongly when he asserts that

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<sup>10</sup> Paikeday (1985) is thus questioning whether a native speaker's proficiency in English is related to their "mother tongue," that is, the language spoken by the mother. However, I find his insights equally relevant to my interrogation of the concept of monolingualism.

"monolingualism is an aberration, and multilingualism is the norm" (p. 16). Phillipson (1992) is critical of this monolingual approach on similar grounds (p. 19, 23). He notes that grassroots bilingualism or multilingualism is an essential feature of Anglophone countries in the Third World (p. 19, 23). Like Pennycook (1992), he considers monolingualism in English teaching to be "the natural expression of power relations in the colonial period" (p. 187), a system that still remains a dominant model in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) today, despite such strong criticism. Drawing on Skutnabb-Kangas (1994), he sees the emphasis on monolingualism as drawing sustenance from the view on bilingualism in the first half of the twentieth century, when bilingualism was -- and still is, he says -- associated with "poverty, powerlessness, and subordinate social positions" (p.187).<sup>11</sup>

The above discussion makes clear that the conditions stipulated under which a native speaker operates are radically different from the conditions under which English is learned and used in nonnative contexts. Linguists (e.g. Ellis, 1994; Stern, 1983) have marshalled enough evidence to show that second/third languages are acquired in an inherently different way than the first language, and I am not disputing that there is a difference in the process of learning a first language from that of subsequent languages. My questions are these: Why is so much value being ascribed to this difference? Of what significance is this difference to a person's work as an ESL teacher? How is a teacher a better teacher, or a worse teacher, on the basis of English being her first language or second/third language? And what knowledge does a person for whom English is a mother tongue or a first language have that a person for whom English is a second or third

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<sup>11</sup> Cummins (1989, 1996) makes similar observations on bilingualism in the context of Canada and the United States.



language is presumed not to have and not to be able to acquire? Clearly, concepts of first language, mother tongue, and native speaker, like monolingualism, are, as Pennycook (1992) says, rooted in the language myths of Europe (p. 100) and not reflective of the different linguistic conditions under which English is acquired by the vast majority of the world. But the aura of mystique that surrounds these concepts adds to their resilience and hence, despite criticism (e.g., Cheshire, 1991; Ferguson, 1992; Rampton, 1990), they continue in circulation. Discourses of first language and mother tongue continue to be evoked to exclude those who, as Davies (1991) points out, could be constructed as being native speakers (p. 7), that is, Nonwhite speakers of IVEs. This brings me to my discussion on how race, gender, and Third World status intersect to produce minority women living in the First World as having nonstandard accents, and to my discussion of accents as a new, effective form of racism.

### **2.1.5 Race, Accents, and New Racisms**

I have in Chapter 1 indicated that nativist discourses continue to construct Nonwhite immigrant women as Other and as outside the nation. This discussion will focus on the social organization of race in Inner Circle countries and the parallel processes by which minority immigrant women become constructed as nonnative to the nation and nonnative speakers of English in ESL. But first, let me spell out how I am using the concept of race in this thesis.<sup>12</sup>

In my exploration of the Native in Chapter 1 (1.3.2), I indicated that many theorists (e.g., Brah, 1996; Frankenberg, 1993; Miles, 1989, 1993; Ng, 1981, 1990) call

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<sup>12</sup> I began my interrogation of the concept of race in my critical etymology of the Native in Chapter 1.

attention to the organization and arrangement of racial relations of domination and subordination, and consider race to be a set of social relations in which they emphasize the simultaneity of the impact of race, class, and gender in shaping the lives of women of colour, rather than produced out of the single axis of gender domination or patriarchy. They thus emphasize the interconnectedness of all oppressions. Brah (1996), for example, specifies that racism, like ethnicity, nationalism, and class, represents gendered phenomena (p. 154). McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) make a similar point when they say that minority women and girls have radically different experiences of racial inequality than do their male counterparts because of the issue of gender (p. xix). Emphasizing that race is a social construction, Brah (1996) points to the process of racialization, whereby markers such as skin colour, physiognomy, or culture may be used as signifiers of race. She thus characterizes racism as the "subtext of innate difference that implicitly or explicitly serves to denote a group as a 'race'" and concludes that racism constructs racial difference (p. 155). McCarthy and Crichlow's (1993) analysis of race as a social construct emphasizes a similar point: that racial differences are "produced" (p. xix), and draws on Said's (1985) argument that such differences are "the product of human work" (cited in McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993, p. xix).

Within this understanding of race as a set of fully social relations, let me now look at the encounters of minority immigrant women with racism in Canada. Ng's (1981, 1990) work is useful here in that she looks at the social processes whereby a person comes to be labelled as an immigrant and as ethnic (Ng, 1981, p. 101). According to Ng (1990), although the term "immigrant women" refers to women with a particular legal status, in everyday life only certain groups of women are seen to be "immigrant women" by members of society, and these are "'visible minority' women, women who do not

speak English or who speak English with an accent (other than British or American), and women who work in low-paid menial jobs" (p. 21). Ng concludes that the "common usage of the word embodies class, ethnic and racial biases" (p. 21) and that it is almost synonymous with "visible minority women" (p. 22). Ng indicates how racism and sexism as systems of oppression and domination in Canada produce minority women as Other (p. 22). The concept of minority women being Other is echoed by Brah (1996) in the context of Britain. She writes that in Britain "racialised discourses of the 'nation' continue to construct people of African descent and Asian descent, as well as certain other groups, as being outside the nation" (p. 3).

A marker of being an immigrant woman and of being nonnative to Inner Circle societies is an immigrant woman's race. This experience of Otherness is reproduced in ESL through the imagining of the native speaker as White; in both sites race is socially organized to produce this Otherness. I argue that the concept of the native speaker as White pervades all aspects of ESL programs in Canada as it influences the teaching, classroom materials, and relations between the teacher and learners. Let me now look at how a minority immigrant woman teacher's race impacts on her *lived experience* in ESL, in which site, as Rockhill and Tomic (1995) state, the referent is "White, Anglo, male" (p. 210). Here I need to discuss the findings of an earlier study for which I interviewed five minority immigrant women teachers of adults ESL students. The findings of the study indicated that these teachers believe that some ESL students make the assumptions that a) only White people can be native speakers of English and b) only native speakers know "real," "proper," "Canadian" English (see Amin, 1997). The findings of my study regarding race concur with those of Rampton (1990), who says that one of the connotations of being a native speaker of English is that a particular language is inherited

either through genetic endowment or through birth into the social group that is stereotypically associated with it (pp. 97-98). Rampton alludes to the race and ethnicity of the group in question when he comments that the English of the *ethnic* Anglos is still there in the background as the central reference point when deciding on the validity of the new Englishes (p. 97). The race of the idealized native speaker is spelled out by Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997), who, building on Rampton's earlier (1990) research, argue that there is an "abstracted notion of an idealised native speaker of English from which ethnic and linguistic minorities are automatically excluded" (p. 546). Leung, Harris, and Rampton appear to be saying that even visible minorities who are born and have grown up in the First World are not seen as native speakers.<sup>13</sup>

I have so far established that the referent of the ESL classroom is the White native speaker, and suggested that the minority teacher's race positions her as Other, an obvious marker of which is her race. I will now look at another marker of being nonnative -- having an accent that is different from the norm of the Canadian ESL classroom. I argue that accents, like race, are socially organized, are a linguistic manifestation of nativism, and constitute a new and effective form of racism. I need to first lay out what "accents" symbolize in our society. Questions I ask in this section are: Who is constructed as having an accent? And, like the native speaker, what does accent represent in the national imaginary and in English Language Teaching (ELT)? First I will look at various definitions of the term "accents." Matsuda (1991) states: "Everyone has an accent, but when an employer refuses to hire a person 'with an accent,' they are referring to a hidden

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<sup>13</sup> Although the focus of this thesis is minority *immigrant* women, as race is implicated in the native speaker construct, the discussion in this chapter in some instances includes minority women who grew up in Canada.

norm of non-accent" (p. 1361). Matsuda then explicates this norm of non-accent: "People in power are perceived as speaking normal, unaccented English. Any speech that is different from that constructed norm is called an accent" (p. 1361). What are the ramifications for individuals who are seen as having accents? In the course of her work as a law professor in the U.S.A., Matsuda listened to a number of stories about people who had been born outside the U.S.A. and had been denied a particular job in the U.S.A. because of having a "heavy accent"; she came to the conclusion that "accent discrimination is commonplace, natural, and socially acceptable" (p. 1348). Lippi-Green (1997) takes this line of argument further when she says that at present "accent serves as the first point of gatekeeping" into American society because it is no longer legal to discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, race, and homeland, and hence "accent becomes a litmus test for exclusion" (p. 64). She thus establishes that accents are a legal and acceptable form of exclusion of certain groups of people who do not have the constructed norm of accent. The next issue is to find out which group of people this is. Thuy (1979) expounds that if one speaks with an accent influenced by a prestige language or with an accent peculiar to an ethnic group that is historically successful in the United States, this accent is "readily considered a stamp of approval, if not a symbol of prestige and respect" (p. 5), while the foreign accent that is peculiar to the language of a less successful or respected minority group can "lead to some sort of stigma" (p. 5). Citing the case of a young Columbian man who was attending accent-reduction classes, which he considered to be his last hope to win some acceptance in the United States, Lippi-Green (1997) states: "It is not *all* foreign accents, but only accents linked to skin that isn't white, or which signals a third-world homeland, that evokes such negative reactions" (pp. 238-39).

These analyses establish that the accents of racial minority women living in the U.S.A., and, by extension, in other metropolitan centres of Inner Circle countries, evoke negative reactions tied to their Third World status. Now let me look at native speaker discourses on accent, and at a particular accent as being among the set of characteristics that are socially held to represent the native speaker. Till recently even critical linguists who questioned the native speaker concept (e.g., Cheshire, 1991; Rampton, 1990) did not address dominant assumptions that pervade ELT about the accent that a native speaker is supposed to have. But now there is a small body of scholarship that interrogates issues of accent and pronunciation vis-à-vis the native speaker. For example, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999) argue that "national origin and accent" are crucial characteristics that are socially held to represent those of the native speaker (p. 416). I would go one step further and say that a native speaker is imagined as having a White accent. Here I am drawing on my (1994) study that indicated that accents associated with Inner Circle countries such as Britain, the U.S.A, and Canada have a higher status than accents associated with Nonwhite countries such as India, Kenya, and Singapore (see Amin, 1994).<sup>14</sup>

I now need to elaborate on how I define White accents. By this term I mean those accents associated with Inner Circle countries. It can be argued that this term is not correct as there are many Nonwhite people who have grown up in these countries and who, therefore, speak with a White accent. Although my study does not address the impact of the native speaker on minority teachers who are first/second generation Canadian and who therefore speak with a Canadian accent or a White accent, I will look briefly at this aspect. I have earlier in this section cited Ng (1990), who points out that

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<sup>14</sup> There is also a hierarchy among accents associated with White English-speaking countries. As that point is not directly relevant to my study, I will not develop it.

minority women are constructed as immigrant women on the basis of their race and seen as Other; Edwards (1979) argues that views of a person's language often correspond to views of the social status of language users (p. 79); thus minority women who have grown up in Canada might be constructed as having a nonstandard accent.<sup>15</sup>

Now I will look briefly at the focus in ESL in Canada and the U.S.A. on teaching the "right" accent and "correct" pronunciation. Goldstein (1999) notes that the conference program of the 32nd Annual TESOL convention held in 1998 listed a "substantial number of presentations . . . on 'accent reduction'" (p. 598); similarly, the publishers' display had demonstrations of expensive, sophisticated audio and computer programs to help ESL teachers and students "eliminate their accent" (p. 599). Goldstein questions the value of emphasizing a certain accent and pronunciation in the ESL classroom and frames her concerns around Lippi-Green's (1997) argument that accent reduction projects give adult learners the message that the only barrier to success for them is their accent. Lippi-Green considers holding out such an implied promise wrong on two counts a) it is not possible for adults to completely eliminate their accent;<sup>16</sup> b) discrimination will not disappear because they will still be discriminated against on the basis of race and ethnicity (see Goldstein, 1999, p. 599). As a concerned White ESL theorist and practitioner, Goldstein considers these to be important issues because if the premise of teaching accent and pronunciation is false and pedagogically unsound, then it raises larger questions for her

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<sup>15</sup> The term White accents is inexact also because immigrants from Eastern European countries are racially White, but they do not have White Inner Circle accents.

<sup>16</sup> Lippi-Green (1997) grants that it is possible to adjust an adult's accent to some degree, and that accent reduction courses, if done well by teachers trained in phonology and phonetics, may be able to reduce a student's accent but not change it, because it is not possible to substitute one phonology for another consistently and permanently (pp. 50-51).

as to which varieties of spoken and written English should be used and taught in ESL classrooms (p. 599). This is of course a valid concern and one that requires that accent reduction and pronunciation exercises be further interrogated as pedagogical tools. However, for my project it is more pertinent to look at the impact of such accent-reduction discourses of empowerment for students on their minority immigrant teachers, who, in all probability, *do* have one of the stigmatized varieties of accents that students are being encouraged to unlearn in order to succeed in Canada. To put it in a nutshell: Minority teachers are placed in the position of having to urge their students *not* to speak and *not* to model themselves on their teacher!<sup>17</sup>

This preference for White accents is reflected also in the teaching materials of the ESL classroom. Until the 1980s, British accents were highly valued in the Canadian ESL classroom, but more recently American and Canadian accents are increasingly being held up as the model.<sup>18</sup> However, in my ESL teaching experience a Nonwhite accent, say, an Indian accent or a Trinidadian accent, was *never* held up as the model or even as one of the models. It is therefore not surprising that ESL students should feel that they are being shortchanged by a Nonwhite teacher with an accent that is considered nonstandard by society and by the ESL classroom. Immigrant teachers from the Third World are further disempowered because whenever a native speaker is required, for example, for making

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<sup>17</sup> I have made a number of presentations on accents and minority teachers' constructed nonnativeness at TESL conferences in Canada. At most of these presentations, a White supervisor expresses concern that he wants to promote his Nonwhite teachers but that he cannot do so because the students complain that they do not want to learn the wrong accent. Such supervisors appear to be unaware of their role in the disempowerment of both students and minority teachers.

<sup>18</sup> I am not suggesting that there is only one British or Canadian or American accent. There is a variety of accents which might be recognized as "Canadian." Some of the accents identified and identifiable as Canadian are more prestigious than others. The same can be said of British and American accents.



teaching materials such as audiotapes for the language laboratory, their "accent" disqualifies them from being considered for such projects. In effect, they are disqualified by their race and accent from being considered authentic English teachers.

### **2.1.6 Consequences of Being A Nonnative Teacher**

Throughout this chapter and especially in my discussion of race and accent, I have been addressing some of the symbolic consequences of being constructed as a nonnative teacher. I now look at some of the more tangible material consequences of being a nonnative teacher of ESL. First I will look at the ramifications of this status inside the classroom and then at the employment prospects and career options for nonnative teachers.

For Widdowson (1994), "there is no doubt that native speakers of English are deferred to in our profession. What they say is invested with both *authenticity and authority*" (my emphasis) (p. 386). In addition, he says, "native-speaker expertise is assumed to extend to the teaching of the language" (p. 388), so that native speakers "not only have a patent on proper English, but on proper ways of teaching it as well" (p. 388). As I have pointed out elsewhere (see Amin, 1999) this association of the native speaker with "owning" the subject matter of the ESL classroom -- that is, the English language - - and having the expertise to teach this subject matter positions the minority teacher as an unauthentic teacher. This positioning as unauthentic teacher has not gone unnoticed by minority teachers. The teacher participants in my study, which I have referenced earlier (2.1.5), said that a) they were constantly judged and compared unfavourably with White teachers and b) felt disempowered by their students' stereotype of an authentic ESL teacher as a White person (see Amin, 1999).

Similar experiences have been documented by minority teachers in other situations and countries. For example, Thomas, a Singaporean Indian woman who teaches in the United States, identifies her race, language, and accent as factors in her initial nonacceptance by her students. She says that nonnative teachers often find themselves in situations where they have to establish their credibility as ESL/EFL teachers (Thomas, 1999, p. 5). Drawing on Braine (1999), she points out that this nonacceptance is also from nonnative students because "We usually learn to value what we see valued and to undermine what we see undermined" (p. 8). The impact of such experiences on the teacher's identity formation is laid out clearly by Thomas. She says that the constant challenges to her credibility make her "apologetic, nervous about my ability to succeed, and sometimes even lead to a kind of paranoia born of experience" (p. 9).

Kamhi-Stein (1999), a teacher-educator of foreign students who come to the United States to train as ESL/EFL teachers and then return to their countries, notes that the messages of what a nonnative teacher cannot do, stands in the way of nonnative speakers realizing their full potential as they limit their career choices. Some of her teacher-trainees tell her that as they speak what they call "'a deficient variety of English,' they are qualified only to play the role of assistants to native English-speaking teachers" (p. 149). Hence one of the consequences of this international hegemony of the native speaker of White Englishes is that native speakers of the indigenized varieties of English - Indian English, Kenyan English, Singaporean English -- are seen and may see themselves as speakers of deficient varieties of English and hence self-impose limits on their aspirations.

I have above sketched the impact of being constructed as nonnative on the identity formation of minority teachers and teacher candidates. I now look at how the discourse

of native speaker as ideal teacher in both core and periphery countries impacts on nonnative ESL/EFL job hunters. Norton (1997) concluded after she saw a number of advertisements at the 1996 TESOL convention in Chicago that called specifically for a "native English speaker" (p. 422) that the relationship between native and nonnative ESL teachers is not only symbolic, it has significant material consequences (p. 422). Braine (1999) notes some such material consequences for himself in both periphery and core countries. After qualifying as a teacher in Sri Lanka, he worked as a teacher in the Middle East, where teachers from Britain, whose teacher qualifications were a three- or six-month teaching certificate, "were paid twice the salary of highly qualified and experienced English teachers from the Indian subcontinent" and also received housing and other benefits (p. 22). When Braine moved to the United States to do graduate studies in TESOL he had 14 years of experience teaching English. He applied for a tutor position at the university's language centre and "was turned down almost instantly" (p. 22), while native speaker classmates who had no teaching experience were hired for these positions (p. 22).

Discussing the effect on his career of being constructed as having a nonnative accent on his career, Canagarajah (1999) argues that although Centre academic institutions show more leeway than their Periphery counterparts in that they will consider applicants with "native speaker ability" rather than insisting that only those seen as native speakers will be hired, "native speaker linguistic ability" is often "interpreted narrowly to mean Center-based pronunciation or accent" (p. 83).<sup>19</sup> As the manifestation of native linguistic ability is determined by superficial linguistic signs, he argues that even this comparatively

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<sup>19</sup> Canagarajah (1999) uses the term Centre for the countries of the Inner Circle; his definition of Periphery includes all other "historically recent users" of English (p. 79).

flexible terminology does not guarantee teaching positions for Periphery professionals (p. 83) who do not have Centre-based accents. Canagarajah suggests that Centre universities and institutes that train graduate students in M.A.s and Ph.D.s in Teaching English as a second language (TESL) and foreign language education are complicit in upholding and promoting a particular accent and pronunciation as a necessary qualification of an ESL teacher, which in effect *disqualifies* nonnative teachers from these jobs. He concludes: "Not only do Center institutions make money on training Periphery teachers, they eventually exclude them from these professions in order to monopolize the jobs" (p. 84).

## **2.2 Immigrant Women and English**

This section looks at how visible minority immigrant women are located in the Canadian labour market, and in particular raises issues that are relevant for understanding the salience of ESL as both employment and an opportunity to learn. I first map out where immigrant women are in the labour force and look at the central issues that are identified in this body of literature. I then go on to look at the similarities and differences between the *lived experience* of women who lack proficiency in English and are therefore potential ESL learners and those who, like my participants, are teachers of ESL. While this section focuses on *visible minority* immigrant women, as I am using proficiency with English as the organizing principle in the presentation of my argument, at times the discussion involves White women who have immigrated from non-English-speaking countries. These women might have low literacy or belong to the professional class in their own countries, but as they are not proficient in English, their employment patterns in Canada show similarities with minority immigrant women with little English.

I need to give a short rationale for the dichotomy that I am imposing on this discussion of immigrant women. First, there is a parallel with the way I have organized and analyzed the data of my participants in that I have divided my participants into categories of whether they see themselves as native speakers or not. Second, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of language as a potential resource and as a means for gaining access to material resources is pertinent for my inquiry since it frames the differential experience of those immigrant women with high proficiency in English and/or French -- the two official languages of Canada -- and those with low proficiency in either of these two languages. Bourdieu emphasizes that languages do not possess an intrinsic value; the official language/s of a state represent linguistic capital because they provide access to material resources such as employment and earnings (cited in Luong, 1985, pp. 946-47). Third, a number of studies (e.g., Anderson & Lynam, 1987; Boyd, 1992; Ng & Estable, 1987; Stasiulis, 1987) link the over-representation of immigrant women in low-paid, menial jobs to their lack of proficiency in English and/or French. As I am interrogating issues around English in this thesis, my discussion will focus more on those women who lack proficiency in English.

There is a growing recognition within Canadian scholarship that there are significant divergences in the experiences of White and Nonwhite immigrant women (e.g., Ng, 1990, 1993; Stasiulis, 1987). Earlier in this chapter, in my discussion of the social organization of race and accents (2.1.5), I have looked at the legal and commonsense understandings of the term immigrant woman. To reiterate the main points of that argument: Ng and Estable (1987) indicate that in government data, "the term 'immigrant' is often used interchangeably with 'foreign-born,' and includes all persons who were born outside the country" (p. 29). However, they add, the common sense usage of this term is

very different -- it "generally refers to women of colour, women from Third World countries, women do not speak English well, and women who occupy lower positions in the occupational hierarchy" (p. 29). Ng and Estable elaborate thus: A cleaning lady, a black or Asian woman, or a woman who speaks with an accent are considered to be immigrant women, regardless of how many years they have lived in Canada; conversely, a White, English-speaking university professor from the United States is not generally perceived as an immigrant woman in the common-sense usage of this term, even if she is legally a landed immigrant. Ng and Estable (1987) thus point to the intersections of race, class, and language as significant factors in determining the experience that an immigrant woman will have (p. 29); clearly, there are significant differences between the immigrant experience of Nonwhite and White women in Canada.

### **2.2.1 Women with Limited English**

Ng and Estable (1987), drawing on studies conducted in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal (e.g., Chud & Fortes, 1974; Arnopoulos, 1979; Janke & Yaron, 1979; Ng & Das Gupta, 1980), point out that most commonly non-English-speaking and Nonwhite immigrant women are recruited into three kinds of industries and services. Firstly, they are recruited into private domestic and janitorial services by and for members of the professional class such as lawyers and doctors. Secondly, immigrant women are found in the lower strata of the service industries, including restaurants, cleaning, and janitorial services, as well as the food industry. Thirdly, they are found in the lower echelons of the manufacturing industries, such as light manufacturing in textile garment and plastic factories, and in the retail trade (p. 30).

A few statistics are useful here to map immigrant women's participation in the Canadian labour market. Data on the foreign-born populations hosted by several developed countries show that there are as many, if not more, migrant women than migrant men (Zlotnik, 1995, p. 232); and in Canada, women accounted for 51% of the nearly four million foreign born persons enumerated in 1981 (p. 231). Their overall labour force participation has been consistently higher than that of Canadian-born women, say Ng and Estable (1987), who cite a 1985 Statistics Canada study that found that the labour force participation rate for immigrant women was 55.6%, compared to 52.1% for Canadian-born women (Ng & Estable, 1987, p. 30).

Stasiulis (1987), drawing on Boyd (1986), Estable (1986), Ng and Ramirez (1981), argues that the "multiple disadvantages" faced by immigrant women centre on the two interlinked factors of dependent immigration status and restricted access to official language acquisition (p. 7). She points out that almost two-thirds of immigrant women enter Canada as dependents of male migrants, primarily husbands, adding: "Because of the fiction maintained in the immigrant classification scheme that only 'independent' immigrants are headed for the paid labour force, the consequences of the dependent status are pandemic in marginalizing and subordinating immigrant women in the labour force" because dependent immigrants are not eligible for any form of assistance for up to 10 years and hence are dependent on their husbands or sponsors for that period (p. 7).

Like Boyd (1984) and Jamal (1998), Stasiulis (1987) sees immigration policy as directly linked to the state's support of a household defined by a male breadwinner and a financially dependent wife, and considers the dependent status for immigrant women as replicating this model by forcing dependency of immigrant women on their husbands (p. 7). Within this patriarchal system, immigrant women's reproductive labour, defined

as the various "physical, emotional and educational tasks involved in bearing and raising children, as well as those which go into sustaining the material and emotional well-being of adults" (Nestel, 1996, p. 1), follows the same trend as that of Canadian-born women. Working immigrant women, like Canadian-born women, have a "double day" and bear primary responsibility for childcare and household work in their families; hence the relatively flexible hours of part-time domestic work and of night shifts make such employment comparatively attractive for this group of women as they can juggle childcare and household responsibilities (Ng & Estable, 1987, pp. 30-31).

As the overrepresentation of immigrant women in low-paid jobs has been closely linked to their lack of facility with English, English is seen by anti-racist scholars as a means to upward mobility for this group of immigrant women. As the focus of these scholars' work on this group of immigrant women has been on how to increase their access to state-funded ESL programs (e.g., Boyd, 1992; Parades, 1987; Stasiulis, 1987), it would be helpful to repeat a few points about the social organization of Settlement ESL that I made in Chapter 1 (1.4). As I have mentioned, during recent years more than 50 % of immigrants entering Canada annually could speak neither English nor French (Ashworth, 1992, pp. 35-49). Settlement services provided by the government for new immigrants include language training for up to three years -- and language training is seen by many as the central issue in settlement (Burnaby, 1992, p. 122). Scholars in this field consider immigrant women's barriers to accessing state-funded intensive ESL programs to be of two kinds. The first set of barriers is directly related to the legal status of the majority of immigrant women as "dependents"; sponsored women who intend to enter the labour market may receive language and skill training at government expense but, unlike independent migrants, are not entitled to training allowances (Stasiulis, 1987), and thus



this group of women has limited and tenuous access to inadequately-funded ESL programs. The second set of barriers to full participation in language training is related to women's reproductive work. This set of barriers includes the constraints imposed by a full-time course schedule, unsatisfactory or non-available childcare (Goldstein, 1994), and poor transport (Parades, 1987). The writers mentioned in this section (e.g., Anderson & Lynam, 1987; Boyd, 1992; Ng, 1993; Stasiulis, 1987) look at English as a means of empowerment for women with limited English, and hence there is a strong discourse of empowerment in Settlement ESL, and immigrant women -- like immigrant men -- look at English much as people all over the world appear to do -- a phenomenon that led Kachru (1992) to use the metaphor of English as an Aladdin's lamp. Adult immigrant women are encouraged to go to ESL classes to acquire the tool of English in order to change the material conditions of their lives, and thus they have high investments in their ESL class and in having a teacher whom they consider able to give them with the tool of Canadian English. However, as I have shown in the first chapter and in the first section of this chapter (2.1), minority immigrant women are constructed as not speaking standard Canadian English and as having nonstandard accents. As I have argued elsewhere, there is a connection between adult learners' attitudes to their minority teachers and their investments in learning English (see Amin, 1997, pp. 580-81). One of the unintended consequences of the emphasis that is being placed on English as a means of empowerment for immigrant women is that immigrant women teachers of ESL might be seen by their adult learners -- immigrant men and women -- as not being able to provide them with the tool of Canadian English. The native speaker norm of Settlement ESL programs gives students the message that their immigrant teachers deviate from the norm.

### **2.2.2 Women with High Proficiency in English**

Stasiulis (1987) points out that immigrant women in Canada from various non-European groups are distributed across the class and occupational structure; she considers these class divisions within Asian, Black, and other racial categories to be artifacts of selective immigration policy which, since the early 1960s, has been recruiting from the professional classes in Third World countries (p. 6). The challenges that this group of women faces are in many ways different from those faced by immigrant women with less education and less proficiency in English.<sup>20</sup>

While acknowledging that the employment prospects are particularly grim for those women who are not fluent in English or French, Anderson and Lynam (1987) add that a woman's education in her country of origin does not necessarily stand her "in good stead in the Canadian labour force" (p. 67), and many women who were professionals in their home countries/countries of immigration experience "downward career mobility" on their arrival in Canada because a) their credentials are not recognized, b) there are few chances of becoming qualified in their professions, and c) economic necessity makes them accept low paying, dead-end jobs (pp. 67-68).

In this group are the women who become ESL instructors. As I have pointed out in Chapter 1 and earlier in this chapter (2.1), English is a dominant language among the middle and upper classes of the Third World, and especially in the former British and American colonies. Hence many of the women who come to Canada have high proficiency in English. Among them are school teachers and university teachers who

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<sup>20</sup> I must emphasize that I am not equating less education with low proficiency in English. There are many immigrant women in Canada who come from countries where English is not a dominant language, for example, China, Poland, and Russia. These women might have been members of the professional class in their home countries.

might become ESL teachers in Canada. How and why do these women become ESL teachers? There appear to be two main reasons why ESL attracts minority immigrant women. The first reason is that women with teaching qualifications and degrees from the Third World have difficulty in getting their work experience and degrees recognized (Ng, 1990) and in getting the required accreditation to teach in public schools in Canada. Competition is high for these positions as schools in Canada offer teachers "enviable working conditions, with long-term stability, reasonable pay, good benefits, and solid union protection" (Power Analysis, 1998, p. 62). ESL outside the public school system is so far not regulated and degree requirements are less rigorous. A number of organizations in Canada offer TESL certificate programs,<sup>21</sup> and hence it is possible for immigrant women who are proficient in English to take a TESL course and then find part-time ESL work. These TESL courses also serve the purpose of providing Canadian men and women with the required certificate for lucrative teaching jobs in countries such as Korea and Japan. Advertisements for such positions can be found in Canadian newspapers, on noticeboards in universities, and on e-mail lists; some of them specifically ask for a native speaker, and perhaps it is such job advertisements that make Paikeday (1985) say that in certain contexts the term native speaker appears to be a codeword for White Anglo-Saxon protestants. There are many anecdotes of Nonwhite teachers who have been denied an interview when it became clear to the prospective employer that the "Canadian" job applicant was not White. Many of these prospective employers request a picture of the applicant; this can be seen as a way of screening out Nonwhite applicants. These lucrative positions that attract White Canadian teachers mean that ESL positions

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<sup>21</sup> See Sanaoui (1997) for details of such programs in Ontario.

in Canada are available, especially those that are part-time, paid by the teaching hour, and hence offer low financial remuneration. The second reason why minority immigrant women decide to become ESL teachers is that, just like women with less English, they bear primary responsibility for reproductive labour, and hence the relatively flexible hours of part-time ESL work makes this field comparatively attractive for this group of women.

A few statistics will establish that ESL is a gendered field in Canada. As I have indicated in Chapter 1 (1.4), the overwhelming majority (86%) of teachers in the federal Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and provincial ESL programs in Ontario are women (see Power Analysis, 1998; p. i). The average age is 45.1 years. About 94% of teachers in the Power Analysis (1998) study had formal ESL qualifications, nearly 80% had a university degree, and 87% had taken at least one professional development course related to ESL (p. iv). The typical teacher had 9.3 years of ESL teaching experience (p. iv). It is clear that the typical ESL teacher has a good deal of experience teaching ESL and has university education. Does this imply that teachers of Settlement ESL are permanent employees, have benefits, and earn a good wage? The answer is no. The Power Analysis study found that only 29% of LINC/ESL teachers were permanent employees; the majority (67%) were on contracts, which generally lasted for the school year. The rest were working without any contract (p. 62). Nearly 40% of the teachers had no benefits. As opposed to their counterparts teaching in the regular school/college system, most ESL teachers had no collective agreement (p. 62).

I have earlier in this chapter indicated that ESL in Canada is a raced and gendered field and that there are many negative consequences of being a Nonwhite, nonnative teacher, among them being constructed as having an accent on which adult immigrant learners should not model themselves (2.1.5). Although minority immigrant women who

have the linguistic capital of English have many more choices in employment than do women with little English, the social organization of ESL replicates to some extent the social organization of Canadian society whereby the interlocking oppressions of race, gender, class, and of being seen as immigrant women, construct both classes of women as Other.

### **2.3 Significance of the Study**

As this is an interdisciplinary study and uses concepts from the fields of applied linguistics, race studies, and gender studies, it will make a significant contribution to scholarship in a number of fields. I list below some such areas.

#### **2.3.1 Native Speaker**

My study makes the following contribution to the literature on the native speaker:

- a) The critical literature (e.g., Amin, 1999; Braine, 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Pennycook, 1998) questions the native speaker construct. My study takes this line of questioning further as I argue that the native speaker construct is embedded in discourses of nativism.
- b) The literature on the experience of being a teacher who is a nonnative speaker is dominated by male writers (e.g., Braine, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999; D. Liu, 1999; J. Liu, 1999). In addition, these linguists theorize their experience mainly in the context of the United States. My study gives thick descriptions of women teachers' experience of being constructed as nonnative in the context of Canadian ESL.

- c) My study will add a Canadian perspective to the growing body of scholarship on pedagogies employed by nonnative teachers. Kamhi-Stein (1999), Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999), and D. Liu (1999) have provided insight into the context of the United States; similarly, Tang (1997) describes nonnative pedagogies in Hong Kong. While I do not wish to suggest that all nonnative teachers' pedagogies are identical, I would argue that many of the challenges they face are similar. Nonnative teachers can, therefore, get insight from the resistance strategies and pedagogies employed by the women in this study.

### **2.3.2 Immigrant Women**

Scholars writing on minority immigrant women (e.g., Brand, 1993; Carty & Brand, 1988; Estable, 1986; Ng, 1990) detail how minority immigrant women in Canada negotiate race, ethnicity, and immigrant status, but do not look at how minority women's "nonstandard" Englishes/accents -- Ng (1990) makes passing reference to this -- is one of these interlocking oppressions. My study shows, first, how the native speaker construct that is embedded in discourses of nativism works in concert with racism, sexism, and colonialism to foreground minority women's immigrant status and, second, how minority women negotiate these various oppressions, thereby adding to the burgeoning literature on resistance strategies employed by minority women against racism in Canada (e.g., Bobb-Smith, 1998; Jamal, 1998).

### 2.3.3 ESL

My study will make a contribution in the following two areas of ESL:

- a) Much of the literature on ESL is written from the perspective of White teachers (e.g., Goldstein, 1991, 1994; Rockhill & Tomic, 1995; Peirce, 1993, 1995). My study looks at the social organization of ESL in Canada from the perspective of Nonwhite, nonnative immigrant women teachers. This thesis invites policy makers, administrators, and teachers of ESL to re-examine their notion of ESL, and to re-evaluate their emphasis on standard English, standard accent, and native speaker. In particular, I offer a critique of Settlement ESL that will make all those involved with this aspect of settlement work look at their policy and administration with new eyes. As I have indicated earlier in this chapter (2.1.5, 2.2.2), the discourse of empowerment through the acquisition of Canadian English is problematic for a number of reasons, all related to the emphasis in Settlement ESL on the importance of acquiring a Canadian/British/American accent. As Lippi-Green (1997) argues, it is not possible for adults to consistently and permanently change their accents, and that even if adult immigrants could change their accents, the intersection of race, gender, Third World status, and class would be factors in the continuing disempowerment of immigrant women (see 2.1.5). Settlement ESL planners, advisors, and teachers would get insight into how such discourses of empowerment for immigrant women with limited English marginalizes minority immigrant ESL teachers, and would find my account of nativist discourses in ESL thought provoking and be encouraged to re-evaluate their programs.
- b) My study offers insight into pedagogies employed by Nonwhite women teachers in the context of Canada. As I have indicated above, there is a growing body of

literature on nonnative pedagogies, but this literature does not look at race as a factor. Considering that Canada has a growing Nonwhite population, we can say that the ESL teaching force will see the numbers of Nonwhite teachers grow in the near future. These teachers would benefit from reading about "successful" and emancipatory nonnative pedagogies used by Nonwhite teachers who build their pedagogies on an acknowledgment of their Nonwhite, nonnative status, rather than follow the constructed norm of White native speaker pedagogies.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have located my research within the larger framework of language and power in general and visible minority immigrant women ESL teachers in Canada in particular. I first examined in some depth the status of New Englishes and Third World Englishes and the major discourses on the native speaker. I then looked at the different challenges faced by minority immigrant women in Canada with low proficiency in English and those with high proficiency in English. I went on to examine the social organization of Settlement ESL for adult immigrants in Canada and examined some of the critical literature by White applied linguists in this field. Finally, I indicated how my research takes these three bodies of knowledge further. In the next chapter I explore my subject position and lay out the methodology employed for this study.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

As outlined in Chapter 1, the purpose of my research is to investigate how nativism, in particular the concept of the native speaker, is manifested in the context of ESL in Canada and how visible minority immigrant women teachers of ESL negotiate this linguistic manifestation of nativism. I want to situate my study as an exploratory study into how minority immigrant women negotiate nativism as ESL teachers. This chapter outlines the research methodology used for this study and foregrounds the researcher's subject position.

#### **3.1 Conceptual Framework of the Study**

In broad terms I situate my study ideologically within the larger framework of postcolonial relations of power. My study is ideologically informed by the scholarship of, among others, Canagarajah (1999); Kachru (1990b, 1992); Nayar (1994); Pennycook (1992, 1998); Phillipson (1988, 1992); K. Sridhar (1994); Sridhar & Sridhar (1992), all of whom take the position that the native-nonnative speaker dichotomy is grounded in the unequal power relations between the First and Third World, and that indigenized varieties of English (IVEs) are different, not deficient, varieties of English (see 2.1).

Kubota (1999a), in her review of Pennycook's (1998) investigation of colonial discourses in English and ELT, considers the significance of this work for applied linguistics to be "profound" (p. 772). However, she notes: "What is absent is an investigation of the role of women in discourses of colonialism" (p. 772). While most of the questions she poses are about the role and subject positions of White women of the

Empire in discourses of colonialism, she also asks: "How have discourses of colonialism influenced the role of female English teachers and researchers in applied linguistics" (p. 772)? Kubota adds that as "females outnumber males in the field of L2 teaching,"<sup>1</sup> these are important issues that anticolonial critique needs to explore further" (p. 772).

This critique is applicable not only to Pennycook's (1998) work but to much of the literature that I have cited above. This analytical literature is male dominated; and while I consider the significance of this whole body of work for applied linguistics to be profound, it does not explore the gendered experience of women ESL teachers who are constructed as nonnative speakers of English, and hence the voices of women from the Third World who actually experience linguistic nativism are missing. There is a long history of omissions of the voices of subordinated groups. Feminist researchers (e.g., Haraway, 1988; Lather, 1991) note that subordinated groups have always had their experiences constructed and given meaning by dominant groups. It is against this history of social injustices that the Personal Narratives Group (1989) encourages researchers to get the narratives of nondominant groups.<sup>2</sup> While emphasizing the use of personal stories as a valuable form of data collection, the Personal Narratives Group also points to the importance of getting the insights of subordinate groups on issues that affect them:

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the Power Analysis (1998) study found that 86% of the teachers of federally funded and provincially funded English language training programs for adult immigrants in Ontario were women (pp. i-iv). However, the percentage of male teachers might be somewhat higher in countries such as Korea and Japan than in Canada, as the former offer high salaries to attract "native speakers."

<sup>2</sup> The Personal Narratives Group is a research group affiliated with the University of Minnesota's Centre for Advanced Feminist Studies. The Centre was established in 1983 to "facilitate and co-ordinate feminist scholarship, to serve as a gathering place for members of the large feminist community in the area, and to provide a place where individuals could work together on common problems" (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 8).

Personal narratives of nondominant social groups (women in general, racially or ethnically oppressed people, lower-class people, lesbians) are often particularly effective sources of counterhegemonic insight because they expose the viewpoint embedded in dominant ideology as particularist rather than universal, and because they reveal a reality of life that defies or contradicts the rules. (p. 7)

### **3.2 The Methodology of the Study**

I ground my study methodologically in the following three research traditions: a) feminist ethnography (e.g., A. Cameron, 1990; Conway, 1996; Gluck & Patai, 1991; Haraway, 1988; Kirby & McKenna, 1989; Lather, 1991; Maguire, 1987; Oakley, 1981; Personal Narratives Group, 1989); b) critical ethnography (e.g., Anderson, 1989; Sheper-Hughes, 1992; Simon & Dippo 1986); and c) anti-racist philosophy (e.g., D. Cameron, 1992; Connolly, 1992; Essed, 1987, 1991; hooks, 1991, 1994; Spivak, 1987). Although these are seen as distinctive traditions, I consider them to be ideologically similar. When designing my study on nativism and also during the process of data collection and interpretation/analysis, I kept in mind the following principles of critical research from the above-mentioned traditions: First, I was mindful that I, as the researcher, am not in any way outside the research and that I am implicated in the production of data and also the findings (Simon & Dippo, 1986; Lather, 1991). Second, when deciding on an appropriate form of data collection, I kept in mind that I wanted to give voice to groups that have been marginalized and suppressed (Spivak, 1987; Personal Narratives Group, 1989). Once I decided that open-ended interviews with minority teachers would be the ideal form of collecting data for my study, I was mindful of how to conduct interviews on egalitarian principles, so that the interviews would be dialogues between two people of relative equality (Essed, 1991) and where the researcher regards her subjects as co-

participants rather than as a data collection instrument (Oakley, 1981). And last, throughout this project I was self-conscious of the power differential between me as the researcher and the teachers as subjects of my study and tried to mitigate this power at every stage of the study (Essed, 1991; Lather, 1991; Oakley, 1981).

### **3.2.1 The Sample**

Much of the critical literature on Settlement ESL programs in Canada is written from the perspective of White teachers (e.g., Goldstein, 1991, 1994; Peirce, 1993, 1995; Rockhill & Tomic, 1995), and here, as in the above-cited critical literature on the native speaker, the voices of Nonwhite teachers are missing. I decided to give voice to the teachers who directly experience linguistic manifestations of nativism by having as my participants minority women teachers who teach ESL in Canada rather than, say, White linguists or White supervisors of the programs where these women teach. I first thought of interviewing minority immigrant women with experience of teaching English literature in Canada. But one concern there was: How many Third World women would I find who teach English literature in Canadian colleges and universities? In addition, I thought that ESL teachers would be more aware of the issues that I am interrogating than teachers of literature as the discourses of the native speaker are very much present in ELT (see Pennycook, 1992). My view is corroborated by Patsy, who is one of my participants.

N:     Okay. So tell me, all these years, first in England and then in Canada, did people ever make any remarks about "Oh! You speak such good English!"

P:     Oh, yes. Gosh, yes.

N:     Like who? And what kind?

P: Perhaps people have always been doing this, but in the past six years -- since I started teaching ESL -- that's when I became very sensitive, tuned in to people making remarks about my level of English, or what they considered the standard of English I have.

I next need to address my rationale for choosing as participants women who have taught or are teaching Settlement ESL. There are two reasons for this. First, that is the field within ESL with which I have the most experience, and hence I would be able to engage with the narratives at an experiential level. Second, I thought the Settlement ESL classroom for adult immigrants would be the ideal site for my exploration into how the discourses of native speaker and nativism would manifest themselves because of the association of native speaker and nativism with nation (see 1.4). Hence, the research participants are visible minority immigrant women who are teaching or have taught Settlement ESL to adults in Canada. The women whom I interviewed are originally from China, Goa, Egypt, India, Iran, Kenya, Jamaica, Pakistan, and Surinam. I wanted participants from different racial and ethnic backgrounds because adult ESL classes in Toronto are taught by teachers from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds (see Power Analysis, 1998, p. 55). Presumably, many of these teachers are immigrants and from a number of countries. To provide a strong profile of immigrant ESL teachers' lives, I tried also to find women of different ages, and at different stages of their careers; therefore some of my participants are comparatively new in the profession -- for example, Violet has been in Canada for only a year and has taught ESL for a few months as a volunteer, while Iffat worked for 30 years in this field and has recently retired. Their ages range from the late thirties to the sixties. Most of the women self-identify as being from the

middle/upper-middle class.<sup>3</sup> All the women have university education. At the time of the interview, they were living in Toronto.

### **3.2.2 The Interviews**

I gave a great deal of thought to what would be a good way to unravel some of the links between Settlement ESL programs in Canada and nativism. A questionnaire sent to between 50 and 80 ESL teachers would not have provided the complex and intricate information that I was looking for about the participants' *lived* experience of linguistic nativism. Semi-structured interviews seemed to be the most appropriate way to capture the voices and acts of ESL teachers from the Third World living in the First World and teaching in First World classrooms as well as to investigate their encounters with nativism. In addition to the interviews, I considered observing the teachers in the classroom to see how they interacted with students, what their pedagogies were, and what kinds of racism students manifested. But I decided against classroom observation for the following reasons: 1) My study is about the teachers' perceptions of how they experience nativism; and 2) From my own experience in ESL teaching, I know that many of the students who do not want to be in a minority teacher's classroom leave after the first class -- when they see that their teacher is not a "Canadian."

I began my interviews with two minority teachers who I identified with the help of TESL Toronto and TESL Ontario. The rest were chosen through "snowball" sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 70). The first few participants suggested colleagues and friends who would be willing to be interviewed. Although ten women were interviewed,

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<sup>3</sup> I asked the women to identify their class location. However, I did not ask them for the criteria by which they were ascribing a certain class status to themselves.

I decided to eliminate the presentation of the data of two women from this dissertation. The first interview that I have not used was one with a teacher of ESL/Computer Skills. After doing the initial phone conversation, I had reservations about interviewing her because her teaching subject was somewhat different from that of my other participants. But as she was from Iran, and I wanted very much to get participants from as many countries as possible, I decided to interview her. However, it became clear during the interview that her responses to my questions on the ESL classroom were more from the position of a teacher of Computer Skills than of ESL; her perspective was not helpful as she could not or would not engage with native speaker issues in the interview. The second interview that I did not use was one with a participant from Goa. I eliminated this interview because that particular participant raised issues that were thematically repetitive in relation to those teachers whom I present in these pages.

I now address the interview process. Following an initial short phone interview, in which I established that the women met the requirements for participants (e.g., that they were Nonwhite women/women of colour/visible minorities,<sup>4</sup> that they immigrated as adults, that their ESL teaching experience was with adults in state-funded programs and not in private schools), I conducted individual interviews with the women between March 1998 and July 1999. The interviews were conducted either in the women's homes or in their work-related spaces. They lasted between two and three hours and were tape-recorded. I also took notes just in case the tape recorder did not record properly so that I would be able to reconstruct the interviews from my notes.

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<sup>4</sup> The category of "visible minorities" is not an easily defined and established category as I have pointed out in earlier chapters (see 1.3.2 and 2.1.5). I asked potential participants if they identified as visible minorities and accepted their self-identification.

The women were asked to talk about their participation in English in three sites: 1) in their home country; 2) in Canada, but outside ESL; 3) as ESL teachers in Canada. Prior to conducting the interviews, I wrote out a list of topics that I wanted to discuss with the participants in each of these sections. In the first section, I tried to establish how much English the participants used in their home countries -- in both public and private spheres -- and the status of English in relation to indigenous languages. For example, was English privileged over other languages in the school? At home? If so, in what situations? I also tried to find out how much the participants held up the native speaker as the norm in their home countries.

In the second section we discussed how and why the participants came to Canada and their impressions of their immigration experience. While the questions were focused on the participants' language-related experiences, I also asked them how and why they became ESL teachers. In this context, I asked them about how they went about "settling" themselves in Canada -- getting their degrees and work experience from outside Canada accredited and validated, looking for work, what kind of training they had to get in order to become ESL teachers.

Section 3, that is, ESL, took up at least half of the interview time. This section was divided into subsections. In the first subsection, I asked a number of probing questions aimed at finding out the following:

What were students' perceptions of an ideal ESL teacher in terms of race and native speaker status?  
 How did students react to having a Nonwhite teacher?  
 To what extent did students accept the participant, and when did this start happening?

The second subsection of questions was aimed at finding out the participants' views on the following issues:



To what extent is the native speaker the norm in Settlement ESL?

What was the participant's understanding of who is a native speaker and who is not?

Did the participant identify as a native speaker, or as a nonnative speaker? And why?

What accents did the participant consider to be Canadian accents?

Did the participant think that the native speaker knows English better than nonnative English speakers?

The third subsection focused on the participant's response to the stereotypes and racism that she might have experienced in ESL. An integral part of this subsection was a discussion of the participant's pedagogy as I consider the participant's pedagogy to be a response to such experiences. In my exploration of pedagogy I was interested only in pursuing native and nonnative issues. The main questions to each participant in this section were:

What materials did she use?

Did she hold up the native speaker as the norm? If so, in what way? If not, what exactly did she do?

Was she able to find materials that were satisfactory? And if not, how did she make these materials? And what did she consider when making her own materials?

What messages did she want to give students about nonnative teachers?

The issues and questions in all three sections arose out of my own experience and hence were weighted towards participants from former British colonies, women who were fully competent in English as new immigrants in Canada. I knew in advance that some of these questions would not be applicable for participants from EFL countries, and that other questions would arise during the interview, and used these questions only as a loose guide for *all* the participants.

My interviews were open-ended, and this format was conducive to dialogue as was the relative equality between the participants and me. According to Essed (1991), most social scientists "study down" rather than "study up," but feminist social scientists

strongly encourage research among equals, so there is a non-hierarchical relationship between researcher and informants -- shared experiences, social equality and natural involvement with the problem (p. 67). The participants and I share a few similarities. First, all my participants save Fayza, like myself, were proficient in English when we immigrated to Canada. Second, we are visible minority women who immigrated to Canada as adults and have experience of teaching Settlement ESL. Third, we share to varying degrees a history of native speaker hegemony.

Despite the power differential embedded in researcher-researchee relations (see Conway, 1996, pp. 72-73), at times a mutual learning relationship developed between the researcher -- me -- and the women because of our similarities. I found the interview process enlightening: I was surprised at the different positions that my participants took; and these different positions, analyses, and interpretations made me rethink my own understanding of the significance of the native speaker in ESL, what a native speaker symbolizes to minority women teachers, and what constitutes resistance to inequities in ESL. These varying positions made me realize that despite our similarities, my participants and I had different interpretations of native-nonnative speaker issues. However, it was possible for these differences to be aired because of the relative equality between my participants and me.

The teachers' insights helped me take new directions in the study and look for new interpretative tools. Initially, I was puzzled by the participants who said that they brought their nonnative status to their students' attention and built their pedagogies on their nonnative status, but then I felt liberated. For example, Tasneem said that she encourages her students to learn English by telling them that her own first language is not English, that her mother does not speak English and hence English is not her mother tongue, and

that she is a *learner* of English. Similarly, Fayza tells her students with pride that she was also an ESL student in Canada just like her students. I was inspired by Dina's oppositional stance to understandings of the native speaker as White, as also by how she disrupts stereotypes of the right accent. In sum I felt empowered when I learned about the various ways in which these women build effective pedagogies on their constructed nonnativeness and how they use this positioning of nonnative speaker as resistance to the stereotype of native speaker as being the ideal teacher.

Although I feel that I learned more than my participants did from these dialogues, some of my participants informed me that the interviews did have an effect on them in that they had so far not given much thought to terms and concepts such as first language, mother tongue, native speaker, accent, Canadian, that their TESL training had not troubled these terms at all, and that the interview process was a catalyst in their troubling of these concepts.

### **3.2.3 Sharing the Narratives**

Feminists are bringing issues of exploitation of participants to the forefront of academic discussion (Gluck & Patai, 1991; Lather, 199; Oakley, 1981). I have mentioned that there was relative equality between my participants and me. However, I am conscious that as the researcher, one associated with a university, I have the power to decide what to use of the interviews. I kept in mind Oakley's (1981) caution that we should look at our participants not as data but as participants, and be self-conscious about how we use the information that they have given us about themselves (p. 46-58), information which might make their identities obvious to readers and thus be potentially harmful to their careers. The participants were therefore informed in writing that they could withdraw

from the study after seeing the transcripts of their interviews. I was mindful not to run with the data, not to take the steamship home (Patai, 1991). Once I had transcribed the transcripts in full, I tried to mitigate the power differential at this stage of the process by inviting my participants to look at the transcripts and to correct and delete any information that they did not want to be made public. Several of the participants chose to carefully go over the transcripts and made minor corrections. One participant was horrified when she read the transcript of her interview. Although she did not deny saying what was on the transcript -- the interview was tape recorded and transcribed in full -- she felt that she had revealed too many details and these should be removed. While I was anxious to lessen the power that I had as the researcher, who would finally choose which aspects of the narratives to present in my thesis, I was also mindful that my participants had classes to teach, lessons to prepare, and reproductive responsibilities -- all the participants have children -- and might not want this extra burden; hence I did not make it a condition of their participation that they had to go over their transcripts. Here I took my lead from Gluck and Patai's (1991) observation that despite feminist desires for methodology that attempts to share power between the researcher and her subjects, researchers should also guard against burdening participants with what might be the researcher's desire for affirmation (p. 92).

### **3.3 Organizing Themes for Data Analysis and Presentation<sup>5</sup>**

The next challenge was how to do justice to my participants' narratives, to present the women as fully formed subjects. The interviews with the 10 participants yielded

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<sup>5</sup> The organization of this section is loosely modelled on the data analysis section in the methodology chapter of Peirce's (1993) thesis.

approximately a thousand pages of transcribed data. I followed the process of qualitative analysis known as "reduction" and "interpretation" (Marshall & Rossman, cited in Creswell, 1994, p. 154). To elaborate: I took the voluminous information and *reduced* it to, among others, the following themes: "Native Speaker Norm in ESL Classroom," "Participants' Experiences of Racism," "Challenges Faced by Minority ESL Teachers," "Resistance Strategies," and "Pedagogies." But I was not sure how to go on to the next stage, that is, of *interpreting* the information, because I could not find a satisfactory schema to do so (see Creswell, 1994, p. 154).

I was now confronted with the task of how best to organize this data to address my two thesis questions. I felt that the collation of data in chapters on the above-mentioned themes did not do justice to the narratives as I was not able to produce a composite picture of each participant by this approach, and reach the final goal of qualitative analysis: "the emergence of a larger, consolidated picture" (Tesch, cited in Creswell, 1994, p. 154). The semistructured nature of the interviews meant that I had focused on different aspects of the participants' lives as ESL teachers. While I was able to find enough relevant data for each participant for most of the themes, the richness of the women's texts was lost in this approach, as the women's actions became decontextualized. For example, such an organization of the data meant that it was not clear why a participant chose a particular pedagogy and resistance strategy as a response to her encounters with nativism. Readers would have been puzzled by why Patsy tells a student who does not believe she is the teacher to get out of the classroom while Iffat tolerates 30 years of racism from her students. It also became difficult to give a comprehensive picture of why Arun feels her students cannot respect her *because* they think she is an ESL learner while Fayza bases her pedagogy on her subject position of

having been an ESL learner. In sum, I found that organizing the data in this way made me lose sight of the women's composite experience of nativism in various sites that interfaced with their lives as ESL teachers.

I thought of then presenting the participants' data either country by country, or according to whether they were from Outer Circle or Expanding Circle countries. But I realized that this slotting of participants in categories did not explain either their particular experience of nativism or how they negotiate it. I then decided to organize the data on each woman separately, and to write a chapter on each of the teachers. While poring over the transcripts and going over all the above-mentioned steps, I found that I was making comparisons and contrasts between how the participants positioned themselves vis-à-vis the native speaker. By looking at the transcripts in this manner, it became apparent that taking up the data in relation to how the participants positioned themselves vis-à-vis this distinction was a useful organizing principle or schema for *interpretation*, that is, the second integral part of the analysis. This schema had the following advantages. First, while the earlier way of organizing the data made the participants disembodied and historical, this organizing principle of native-nonnative speaker identities made it easier for me to trace the relation between each participant's experiences, actions, and resistance strategies, which also situated them historically. Second, this organizing principle meant that I was comparing the experience of only two or three or four participants at a time, and hence I was able to give a more comprehensive picture of the women's lives in Canada.

I need to emphasize that the native-nonnative speaker division is not a categorical distinction that I am naturalizing; rather, I am using this distinction as a way of organizing my data. ESL in Canada, as in the rest of the English-speaking world, is

socially organized along the native-nonnative speaker dichotomy. These women mediate and negotiate this construct differently, depending on a variety of factors, such as their participation in English in their home countries and their encounters with nativism in Canada. I consider the women's negotiation of the native speaker construct to be central to their identity formation and their pedagogies.

### **3.4 The Researcher**

Simon and Dippo (1986) urge that we researchers should recognize "our implication in the production of data and thus must begin to include ourselves . . . in our analyses of the situations we study" (p. 200). Similarly, Lather (1991) stresses the importance of positionality and reflexivity in postmodern research when she notes that researchers should account for the ways in which "our invested positionality shapes our rhetoric and practice" (p. xvii). This theoretical view compels me as the researcher to make transparent my location and my investments in this study. My decision to study this field is informed by my location as a middle/upper-class Pakistani heterosexual woman who has participated in the English language, first from a position of relative power in postcolonial Pakistan and subsequently from a position of less power in Canada, where I have experienced a degree of Otherness vis-à-vis standard native English and standard accents.

In Chapter 1, I indicated that at decolonization, the upper classes of the British colonies became the new oppressors of their countries and that these classes were and continue to have great investments in English. I belong to this class and to one such family in urban Pakistan. This class maintained power and status by giving importance to family name, pedigree, old money, and family occupation. English was, and remains,

an obvious marker of this class difference. As the hunger for English (Kachru, 1990b) is very much visible in Pakistan, English is taught to a varying degree in all schools, ranging from the free government schools to schools for low- and middle-income families to convent schools where the medium of instruction is English. Many schools where low-income families send their children use Urdu as the medium of instruction but advertise themselves as "English-medium" in order to coax parents to pay higher tuition. The English taught at the convent schools that I attended for 14 years was not just *any* English. It was modelled on British native speaker English, perhaps to make even more conspicuous the chasm between the classes. It seems to escape native speakers' attention that nonnative speakers are not a homogeneous entity. The continuum of English in Pakistan is such that at one end are those speakers of English who are products of government schools and Urdu-medium schools and whose English has the cadence, stress patterns, and intonation of a local language, say, Urdu, Sindhi, Punjabi, or Pushto. At the other end is the English taught at the convent schools -- the ideal here was clearly Received Pronunciation (RP), emblematic of which was the BBC. The ghost of Macaulay haunted the corridors and the classrooms: We were supposed to speak only English and local languages were looked down on or laughed at. Those girls who shone in the English class had a reputation of being intelligent and cultured; those who did well in Urdu were either ignored or identified as being from a lower class.

However, within the walls of the convent schools, it was made clear that native speakers were the real and true speakers of English, and Pakistanis could never make such a claim. We understood that White people were native speakers. I realized much later that many of the nuns who ran convent schools in Pakistan were not English, but perhaps Italian or Belgian, and hence not native speakers. Similarly, the native speakers in convent



schools in Pakistan did not have RP, as they came from Ireland, Scotland, or Wales (see Kachru, 1990b, p. 88).

I went on to do two master's degrees in English -- in literature and then language. During the latter program, the native speaker was no longer a phantom presence but a flesh-and-blood person, embodied by the visiting White scholars who flew into Karachi to give a few talks. The language laboratory that we frequented for our phonetics course was headed by a White man, but again, he might not have been a native speaker. What I do remember is that a great deal of effort went into ridding students of the pollutant half-*v*/half-*w* sound of Urdu and trying to replace it with two distinct sounds -- *v* and *w*. Students' attempts to say "very well" resulted in either "very vell" or "wery well." A bizarre phrase that I still remember from the tapes was, "She's Welsh." Most of the students repeated into their tape recorders, with feeling, "She's V/well-ish!" Convent-educated students stood out in the language laboratory because they had almost won the battle against the *v/w*.

The native speaker, though the norm for the phonetics course, did not affect me in any material way that I was aware of then, because I was not in competition for jobs with native speakers. In fact, I don't think it even occurred to any of us that we could be presumptuous even to teach fellow Pakistanis to say "She's Welsh."

I am not aware even now if there was then resistance to the native speaker norm through using an indigenized variety of English. Resistance, if at all, was practised by those among us who went to study in England and the U.S.A, and came back thinking that English was the master's tool and hence not to be used. But there was a small problem here: these England-returned young men -- and some young women -- could speak Urdu only at a conversational level, rather than at the level of debate and discussion

and hence had to curse English *in* English. Similarly, I do not recall any struggle to have the local English recognized as a valid variety of English. Baumgardner (1993) appears to be mocking the examples of Pakistani English that he found in English language newspapers during his stay in Pakistan. When living in Pakistan, I would probably have considered these nativisms to be "incorrect English" or "Urdu-English." No one then said that nonnative speakers can, and do, speak equally good English as native speakers. I conflated native speaker with good English, and nonnative speaker not as different, but deficient. Kachru (1992) is insightful on such experiences and attitudes. He identifies the following four stages in the development of nonnative Englishes: 1) non-recognition of the local variety; 2) the local model is somewhat recognized but is still low on the attitudinal scale; 3) slow recognition of the local variety as the norm; 4) recognition of the local variety (pp. 56-57). According to Kachru, South Asian societies began to approach the fourth and final stage only 20 years or so ago (p. 57) -- after I left Pakistan. The observations that I have made about my experiences and attitudes to English in Pakistan would probably fall in the first and second stages of South Asian Englishes.

I would describe my initial language-related experiences in Canada, in the late-1970s, as difficult, as I was constructed as Other to the norm of native speaker English and native speaker accent. These encounters with linguistic nativism had an extremely negative effect on my identity formation as I felt that my years of experience as an announcer and news reader in English on Radio Pakistan and my two master's degrees in English seemed to be wiped away overnight by being identified as a speaker of nonnative/nonstandard English. My different experiences of English, in Pakistan and in Canada, especially the connotation that the native speaker can lay more claim to being fully proficient in English than a nonnative speaker ever can -- inform this study. I

assumed that my participants, especially those who had grown up in postcolonial societies, would have a similar understanding of the native speaker. I first found it puzzling, then liberating, that my participants from postcolonial societies were not weighted down by their nonnative speaker status. This opened up new vistas for me because I realized that there are many narratives possible for speakers of nonnative Englishes, and that my narrative is only one such narrative.

### **3.5 Limitations of the Study**

The first limitation of the study is that it is narrowly focused on Settlement ESL for adult immigrants. Apart from government-funded ESL programs for new immigrants, there are also ESL programs run by private schools and universities for adult immigrants who are not eligible for government-funded language training. Another kind of ESL program is that offered by private schools and universities for foreign students. My study primarily gives insights into how nativism is linguistically manifested through the native speaker in Settlement ESL, and some of these insights might be applicable to other ESL situations. However, there might also be significant differences in minority teachers' encounters with nativism in those situations. In addition, ESL is the most obvious site for investigating the native speaker construct. This linguistic manifestation of nativism could also be investigated in a number of other fields where language proficiency is necessary, for example, the English literature classroom or the newsroom.

Second, the ESL teaching force in Canada is highly multiracial, multiethnic, and multilingual (Power Analysis, 1998, p. 55). My study is geographically limited to women who are originally from China, Goa, Egypt, India, Iran, Kenya, Jamaica, Pakistan, and Surinam; it does not provide data on teachers from all the countries that Canada's

Settlement ESL teachers come from. In addition, my study has only one participant from the Anglophone Caribbean -- in contrast to five from Outer Circle countries and three from Expanding Circle countries.

Third, I was unable to find participants from different class backgrounds/affiliations. The English language is very much a language of the upper and upper middle classes in many countries outside the Inner Circle, and therefore most of my participants are middle and upper middle class. The two exceptions are a) the sole participant from the Anglophone Caribbean, where English is a first language or mother tongue for the majority of the people, regardless of class, just as it is in, for example, England, the U.S.A., and Canada, and b) the participant from Surinam.

Fourth, my study is limited to minority *immigrant* women. I hope future studies will investigate nativist encounters of minority women teachers of ESL who were born and grew up in Canada. While sharing a commonality of being constructed as Other on the basis of race, an obvious difference would be that the latter group of women would presumably have "Canadian" accents, and hence their experience and negotiation of the linguistic manifestation of nativism would be different from the participants in my study.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Introducing the Subjects**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I set the scene descriptively by sketching portraits of my participants that highlight the role of English in their lives in their home countries. This information is relevant in that it indicates who these participants are, what their education is, and how much English they had when they were growing up. As my study investigates how these women negotiate the native speaker norm in their work as ESL teachers in Canada, the profiles provide background information about their participation in English in their home countries that would throw light on why they position themselves differently from each other vis-à-vis the native speaker and how they negotiate the native speaker construct. In Chapter 2 (2.1.1), in my discussion of the status of English in the world, I drew on Kachru's (1992) widely accepted model, which divides users of English outside the Inner Circle into Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle countries. I went on to emphasize that while the term nonnative Englishes is commonly used to refer to all Englishes learned and used outside the Inner Circle countries, the native-nonnative Englishes struggle is between the Englishes of the Inner Circle and the indigenized varieties of English (IVEs) of the former British and American colonies, or the Outer Circle (2.1.2). It seems logical to present my participants' stories according to this division; this division helps to contextualize the role played by English in the social organization of my participants' lives in their home countries and how this might inform their understanding of what the native speaker symbolizes and how they negotiate such discourses. I wish to make two related points here. First, I do not want to make any direct

links between the women's participation, or lack of it, in English in their home countries and how they negotiate the native speaker norm in the ESL classroom in Canada. Second, in this division of participants into those from former British and American colonies and those who come without such a colonial history, I do not want to essentialize the women as monolithic Colonized Woman and Non-colonized Woman. But an argument could be made that the participants who have participated in English in postcolonial societies and who are speakers of IVEs might negotiate the native speaker differently from the participants from EFL countries who have not experienced the aftermath of British colonialism and hence for whom the experience of learning English was different. Although I agree with Phillipson (1992) that labelling countries as English-as-a-second-language (ESL) and English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) societies is not a particularly useful or accurate dichotomy because in some EFL countries there is more use of English than in ESL countries, I am merely using this division to paint in broad strokes a picture of the use of English in my participants' lives. According to Kachru's grouping, the Anglophone Caribbean countries do not fall into any of these groups (Kachru, 1992, p. 362n), so I will look at the sole participant from the Caribbean separately. Hence my three groups are:

- a) The Outer Circle or ESL countries
- b) The Expanding Circle or EFL countries
- c) The Anglophone Caribbean<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Anglophone Caribbean countries are similar to Outer Circle countries in sociolinguistic terms in that they have a history of British colonization.

## **4.2 The Outer Circle**

Of the eight participants whose narratives I present in these pages, four are from Outer Circle countries. According to Kachru (1992), English is a strong second language in these countries. As at least one of the profiles shows, for some people in these countries English is a first language, but for purposes of presenting the participants' profiles I will stay with this division. In this section I introduce you to Arun from India, Tasneem from Pakistan, Patsy from Kenya, and Iffat who grew up in India but lived and worked also in Pakistan.

### **4.2.1 Arun**

Arun is a Brahman, an upper-class woman from India. She went to an English language school in India, "one of the top five in Bombay. It was very expensive." She describes the school thus: The students wore a uniform, and there was strict discipline. They had to speak only English, with the exception of the daily class devoted to Hindi and another to Sanskrit. These languages were compulsory subjects, but not for the children of the foreign diplomats who formed 3 to 4% of the school population. They could study any other language, such as French or German. Ninety-five percent of the teachers were white British people who were settled in India. Hindi and Sanskrit were the only subjects taught by Indian teachers.

The tuition fee for this school was high, but Arun's father, who had a well-paid job with a multinational company, could afford to have the three children -- Arun and her younger sisters -- study in this school. He died when Arun was twelve, and the relatives advised Arun's mother to move the children to another school as she could no longer afford the high tuition fee and other school-related expenses.

A: But my mother said, "No, I'll do what I can to keep them there," and she sacrificed her whole life to keep us in English schools. But the fee and the other expenses at this school were so high that after some time my mother realized that she wouldn't be able to keep them [my sisters] in this school, so she then sent my younger sisters to a less expensive English-medium school. I am the oldest, and only had a few years left so I stayed on. I was probably the poorest child in the school.

Regarding the status of English in her home, Arun said that the languages used by the family were English, Hindi, and Punjabi. At the dining table, the conversation was both in English and Hindi. "With my dad, with my mom, we spoke Punjabi and Hindi, and with my sisters, I spoke in both English and Hindi." Arun considers herself to be "totally bilingual." She and her siblings write letters to each other in English, and their telephone conversations are also in English; the language she uses in corresponding with her mother by letter or on the phone is Hindi, although "I can talk to her in English, too."

Arun is highly educated. She says that her school had a very high standard. After doing twelve years of school, which led to an Indian School Certificate, she did a B.A. in English and Economics, and then an M.A. in English Literature. Then she started a Ph.D. in English Literature; her thesis on imagery in T. S. Eliot's poetry was "95%" done when she moved to Canada, and her thesis supervisor still keeps urging her to complete it.

She has a great deal of experience of teaching English in India. She taught English at the university, where she had "a lot of respect," and was in high demand as a tutor of English and other subjects for the children of rich Indian families who used to send a chauffeur-driven car to fetch Arun to their homes for the tutoring sessions.

At 20 Arun married an Iranian who had come as a student to India to study architecture when the Shah was in power. Shortly after, Ayatollah Khomeini came into



power, so Arun's husband-to-be couldn't go back to his home country and became a political refugee. Arun had a successful life as an English teacher, but her husband was not allowed to work and was unhappy that he was losing his architectural skills, so he immigrated to Canada in the later 1980s. In order to survive financially, he started working at a minimum-wage job at a convenience store. Arun and her two children joined him a year later. Arun was then 30.

#### **4.2.2 Tasneem**

Tasneem is 40. She is from an upper-middle-class family and grew up in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, where she went to a prestigious English medium convent school run by British nuns. For Tasneem, English was very much the language *only* of the classroom. Much of this interview was done in Urdu: Although I asked most questions in English, she would switch to Urdu. Despite the very Anglocentric atmosphere in both her school and college, "I hardly ever talked in English with my friends. It was Urdu," she said, adding, "And even when we were master's students in English literature, outside the class my friends and I talked in Urdu." She recalled that if anyone in her group tried to talk in English, "Friends would make fun of us and say, 'Who do you think you are? An *angrez* (Britisher)?'" At that time Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was in power, who was the first ruler of Pakistan to wear Pakistani clothes in public, make his speeches in Urdu, and talk of a national identity symbolized by Urdu. At home Tasneem spoke Urdu with her family members and Punjabi with the servants. Tasneem's parents and members of her extended family with whom she lived emphasized Urdu poetry and literature. "My parents are highly educated and know English, but they wanted their own identity -- they still remembered the British," she explained.

After school, she went to an exclusive college for women where her majors were Economics and Philosophy, but ended up doing an M.A. in English literature "because of my plans of going into the civil service [of Pakistan]." Tasneem was advised that English literature would help her write a good civil service exam. Although Pakistan became an independent country in 1947, many institutions, and especially the government service, remained steeped in colonial thinking much after decolonization. However, her plans of joining the civil service did not materialize. Like many women from her social class, the "career" that her family chose for her was that of a wife. The month she was going to take her exam, she got engaged; the husband her parents found for her was working as a lawyer in Saudi Arabia, so she had to "ditch all my plans" of civil service. They got married and she moved to Saudi Arabia in 1985. This was a time when many people from Pakistan, both from the middle/upper middle class and the working classes were moving to the oil-rich Gulf states where they could earn much more than in Pakistan.

She was a housewife and a full-time mother to her two young sons for the next few years. When the younger boy started going to school, she did volunteer work as a teacher's assistant in the expensive American-Saudi school they attended. Most of the teachers were White, from the United States or Britain, and were on handsome salaries and perks. Pakistanis worked only as volunteers; there was only one Pakistani teacher at the school teaching Religious [Islamic] Studies. Tasneem explained why the school hired only White teachers for these well-paid jobs:

T: In private schools, people prefer white teachers because they have to pay a lot [in tuition]. For the government school and the Pakistani embassy school the tuition would be 200 riyals a month. When I started sending my sons to the American school, we had to pay 2000 riyals a month

for each. The difference is so great, that when you're paying so much people want to have *gora* (white) teachers.

N: What about a non-white teacher who has studied in America or Canada?

T: Well, there weren't many openings. If people had come here, and they wanted a teacher with a B.Ed. who had been teaching . . . I didn't know any people [Pakistanis] who were teachers, who were *capable* (my emphasis), and they wouldn't take just anyone. You had to have a B.Ed.

Despite the restrictions on women, Tasneem found work as a teacher at a Saudi school. Ninety percent of the students in the school were Saudis, and the rest were students from other Arab countries. Almost all the teachers were Arab and the medium of instruction was Arabic. English and French were taught as subjects. She described the social conditions and the salaries in Saudi Arabia and said that the differential salary scales are institutionalized. They have First, Second, and Third Country Citizens. Pakistanis are awarded the status and salary of Third Country Citizens – the lowest in the hierarchy. Second Country citizens are the Arabs and the British. Americans and Canadians as First Country citizens earn the most.

T: White teachers were getting higher salaries [than us]. They calculate it this way: They want to know your nationality, your passport, where have you studied. If you've studied in Pakistan the salary is less, if you've studied abroad, the salary is more. And then where have you taught. Where have you got most of your work experience. I was a Pakistani teacher who had trained only in Pakistan, so my salary was about 3,000 riyals. But if I had been from England, my salary might have been 4000 or 5000 riyals, and if I had been from North America, my salary might have been 5000 or 5,500. So it's a combination of your nationality, passport, education, and experience. That's the way most schools calculate your salary. They might not say it officially or they might say it. But this wasn't so only in schools. It was so in other organizations too. They too judge you on all these things and give you a salary accordingly.

In her 10 years in Saudi Arabia, Tasneem taught only in her last three years, first as a volunteer, and then as a teacher on a Third Country salary. In 1995 she and her family immigrated to Canada. Her husband shuttled back and forth for the first year while she and her sons established residence in Toronto. Although in Pakistan she didn't wear the hijab as it was not customary for women from her class to do so, in Saudi Arabia she followed the custom of wearing a modified hijab, a silk scarf that she would drape around her head. She continues to wear the hijab in Canada.

#### **4.2.3 Patsy**

Patsy, 44, grew up in Nairobi, Kenya. She is the only one of the women I interviewed -- including the two whose stories I am not presenting in this thesis -- who is monolingual. She thinks that she has been hearing English from the minute she was born -- her mother is from Goa and her father is Portuguese, and they spoke English with each other. She relates that speaking English is a "very common thing" in Goan households.

She recalls that she knew many Goans in Nairobi who had English in their homes, who wrote extremely good English, and spoke a dialect of English. She compares that linguistic situation to that of some of her Jamaican students in Toronto who speak Patois. Patsy says that although she recognizes Goan English, she can't speak it. Her parents didn't speak the Goan dialect, and she didn't pick it up either.

P: Or if I did pick it up, I think I may have made a cautious effort to extract it.

N: When did you do that?

P: Probably when I was little. For even when I was in Kenya, we were sent to very British schools. You would be

ostracized had you spoken the same way many of the other girls did speak at the time.

Patsy described her schooling. The primary school was a co-ed parochial school and "very Catholic." Secondary school was an all-girls, non-Catholic school that was "less English" than the primary school in that there were a lot more Indian people in this school. She explains why: This was the late 1960s, just a few years after Kenya got independence -- Kenya became an independent country in 1963 -- and hence, as she puts it:

P: There were people moving into schools that were previously the domains of whites only. So what was happening is that as more and more coloured people moved into these schools, the white people saw their value diminish, and so a lot of the white students left. These were the children of the families who were settled there, and they moved back to, for example, England. Or they would move to schools that still hadn't been invaded (laughing).

N: The schooling that you had. Was it considered middle class, or very upper class?

P: It was pretty upper middle. Certainly you had to pay, you had uniform, but then everybody had a uniform, but these were *nice* uniforms. All the teachers were from overseas.

N: Oh? That must have been expensive. So the fee, tuition, must have been expensive?

P: Yah. And then in high school, it was exactly the same. In high schools, the makeup of the school population was even more monochromatic in that it was more white than in [primary school].

It seems that although Kenya was by then an independent country, many British families stayed on, and hence the milieu in these schools did not change. The administrators of the prestigious schools continued to be British, or at least followed the British curriculum,

as the school offered both O level and A level exams that were set by the University of Cambridge.

Another sign of the unchanging times was that local languages continued to be devalued and French continued to be privileged:

P: In secondary school, they started to teach Swahili, and I really wanted to learn it, but I was picked as one of the bright kids, so I was sent off to learn French and I was, like, I want to learn Swahili. "Nanananana, you've got to go that class," they said. So it was all very, very regulated.

At present, says Patsy, English and Swahili are the two official languages of Kenya, but English is the language used in business and industry. In the cities, she explained, the two languages co-exist, but outside the urban areas there is more English than Swahili. According to Patsy, this is because Kenya has "280 languages or so, with different roots, and they're the languages of the different tribes." Members of these tribes, she said, would rather speak English than Swahili, as they consider Swahili a political language while English is politically neutral.

Patsy was considered a very good student at school. Her O levels results were so good that the University of Nairobi chose her as one of six students for an exchange program with Makerere University in Uganda. The political situation in Uganda was then dangerous, so her parents decided to pay for Patsy to study in England instead. Patsy related that she got admission to London University very easily based on her O level and school grades. There, she "mucked around," got bored, and went to another university for a while. She left when she got a job as a librarian "very easily," with an employer who was willing to pay for Patsy's training, which got her a certificate in librarianship from the British Library Association. While living in England, Patsy got married to an Englishman, a book editor. They moved to Canada in 1983.

#### **4.2.4 Iffat**

Iffat is in her sixties. She was born and grew up in India when it was a British colony, and hence Iffat's story encapsulates British colonial education more than my other participants' stories, perhaps even more than Patsy's. She went to an English school for only the first three grades. She doesn't remember how exactly the school was organized, but she recalls that she studied such English nursery rhymes as "Little Bo Peep," "I'm Going to London to Look at the Queen," "Mary Had a Little Lamb," -- the same poems with which my sisters and I grew up. Iffat's parents were middle class, not wealthy, and the English schools were expensive, so she, her brother, and her two sisters went to local schools that were more affordable. There was a lot of English even in these schools.

I: All the subjects were in English. But it was not, say, a convent school. Convent schools were different. They were totally English. We studied History and Geography in English, also Science. But when we were outside, playing, we didn't speak English.

Iffat recalls that she was always very interested in English:

I: English was very important then. It was still colonial times . . . I had something special for English. I wanted to be very good in English. Some kind of a hang up about English. This psychological feeling that this is it - English, Britain, London. We used to dream about going to London. I think it was very deep psychological empowerment.

N: Was there a lot of emphasis on English in your family?

I: No, not in our family. But as a child I was surrounded by English. Generally in the country, there was a lot of British imperial domination. You knew, if you are to be somebody, you've got to know English . . . And we looked to English, to England, for everything . . . London. We knew London better than maybe Delhi, where I lived.

No one else in her family -- either her brother or her two sisters -- was that "keen" on English. She was the youngest child and bookish. She thinks that there is some connection

between her being considered intelligent and academic and her pursuit of studies in English. She thinks her father might have put her in an English school either because by that time he realized that it was important for his children to know English or because he noticed that she was the most studious of his children.

I: I was very ambitious right from the beginning. I had this ambition to do something, and I had a very intense personality. I was ambitious, and my ambition was somehow related to English.

Some of her interest in English may well have been inspired by her father, whom Iffat was very attached to, as she was very little when her mother died. He was "not very fluent in English," but, as Iffat recalls:

[H]e did have a British accent, which I remember (laughing). Must have developed it at some point, as he worked with Britishers. We used to go to clubs, like tennis clubs, and there would be all these Britishers there. And I'd want to be able to speak like them, with them (voice rising, laughing). [There's] something psychological about it. I just *loved* English.

But while Iffat dreamed of being in England and speaking English like a British woman, the language of the home was Urdu, and they spoke Urdu, listened to Urdu music as well as Urdu *shair-o-shairi* (poetry).

Iffat got married at age 18. Her husband taught in the Philosophy Department at Delhi University and shared Iffat's love of English literature. He encouraged Iffat to study further. She did a B.A. in philosophy, Urdu, and English, and then an M.A. in English literature from Delhi University. In order to give their children a better chance in life, in 1960 the family moved to Lahore, Pakistan, where both Iffat and her husband taught at the university for the next five years. Iffat's husband then moved to Toronto to do a Ph.D. in philosophy, and Iffat won a scholarship to do a postgraduate diploma in linguistics and



language teaching in England. The children stayed with family members in Pakistan for the year. She moved to Toronto with her three children in the mid-1960s.

### **4.3 The Expanding Circle**

In Kachru's (1992) model, the Expanding Circle or English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) countries involves those countries that do not have a history of either British or American colonization, where English does not have an official status, and its use is comparatively restricted. The participants from the Expanding Circle whose data I present are Fayza from Egypt, Dina from Surinam, and Jane from China.

#### **4.3.1 Fayza**

Fayza, aged 50, is a fair-skinned Egyptian woman. She habitually wears dresses. Nine-tenths of the population of Egypt is Muslim, and Fayza is a member of the small minority of Christians in Egypt. She describes herself as "middle, upper middle class." When she was a little girl, children from the upper middle class used to go to private French-medium schools.

F: My brother and my sister went to French school before my father died because we had enough income to pay for their fees. But after my father passed away, and my mother had only a small pension, she couldn't send us to French school. So from a private school, we moved to a public school.

N: And the fee in the French school was much higher?

F: Yes, of course, in private schools there, just like here, you have to pay more. The Arabic schools were free. But they were good schools. We had good teachers. We were happy.

The medium of instruction for all subjects at the public school was Arabic as that was and still is the official language of Egypt. From Grade 7 onwards, English and French were taught as foreign languages. Students had an hour-long English class three times a week, as also in French. The teachers who taught all these subjects, including English and French, were Egyptian. Fayza recalls that she spoke only Arabic at school as well as at home.

After graduating from high school, she enrolled at Cairo University to study Psychology and Economics, and here too the medium of instruction was Arabic. She was 19 and in her second year at the university when she got married. It was common in her social circle to marry at this age. As was customary, she dropped her studies.

Her husband was employed by a Canadian company as a public relations officer. Over the next few years he worked his way up to a managerial position. The couple and their two children immigrated to Canada in 1967, and Fayza's husband got a well-paid job right away with the same company in London, Ontario. At the time of immigration Fayza was in her mid-twenties.

As she had used English only for reading and writing purposes in Egypt, Fayza recalls that when she came to Canada, she had "problems" with English:

I couldn't communicate in English. It was tough, and I had to go back to school to learn the language to help me do my everyday activities. I became an ESL student. I was taking English classes in the evening and I was trying to do my grade 13 so I could get into Teachers' College. I studied ESL for one year.

#### **4.3.2 Dina**

Dina is approximately 50 years of age and has two children, a girl and a boy, who are in their twenties. She is dark-skinned and fifth-generation East Indian. She grew up

in a working-class family in Surinam, which used to be a Dutch colony till 1952, when it became part of the Dutch Royalty and then became an independent country in 1975.

As a child Dina used to speak Urdu, Hindi, and Taki-Taki with her parents and siblings. She started learning Dutch when she was six years old and began school, for the medium of instruction in the schools was Dutch. The teachers hit them with a rod if they caught them speaking any language other than Dutch in school. As she and her eight siblings grew older, she recalled, they talked to each other in Dutch, but continued to speak to their parents in Hindi, Urdu, and Taki-Taki.

Schooling till grade 6 is compulsory in Surinam. The system of education is one of public schools where the tuition is pro-rated according to income till Grade 6. After that, students of this small country, which had a population of 450,000, when Dina was a student there, had to compete with each other to secure a place in high school.

From Grade 7 to Grade 12, they had to study three other languages -- English, French, and German, just like students in Holland. According to Dina, she did not know any of these languages, including English, till then. They had six hours of instruction per week in each language. I asked her to describe the English class. She could not remember details, but recalled that the lesson consisted of reading and writing exercises. Every year, they had to take both a written and an oral exam. While all the teachers in the elementary schools were Surinamese, the teachers who taught them languages in high school were either Surinamese who had studied abroad or expatriates.

Dina recalls that she was "very smart and had a photographic memory, so I got very high marks" in school. After completing high school, she won a scholarship to study at the University of Amsterdam where she spent six years studying to be a dietitian and a teacher of Family Studies. She estimates that degree to be the equivalent of a Canadian

B.A. and B.Ed. She recalls that the language of instruction at the university was Dutch, and they were expected to write their assignments in Dutch, but most of the textbooks were in German. In addition, just as in high school in Surinam, students had to continue attending classes in German, French, and English.

In Holland, she met her husband-to-be, who is half-Dutch, and who was then working as an accountant. After getting married, they moved to the U.S.A. where he was posted by his employers. Dina taught English as a supply teacher in elementary schools during the three years that they lived in Chicago. In 1970 the posting ended, and the couple immigrated to Canada. There was a shortage of school teachers in rural Canada and Dina easily found work with a school board in rural Manitoba where she taught for seven years while her husband upgraded. The couple then moved to Toronto.

#### **4.3.3 Jane**

Jane was born in the 1960s in Shanghai at a time when, according to her, China was in economic and political turmoil. Her parents had "positions of responsibility" in the government, and were "busy, busy, busy," so Jane and her siblings, like many of their peers, spent most of their childhood years as boarders at kindergartens and schools.

As a child she spoke only Mandarin like the rest of her family, but she became the first person in the family and among the first in her city to speak English as a result of Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972. She recalls that one of the changes in the aftermath of Nixon's visit was that the Chinese government decided to orient China to the western world and hence English replaced Russian in the school curriculum in 1972. From Grade 3 on, students received two hours of English instruction a week, but as

nobody spoke English at that time, the teachers were teaching both themselves and students, recalls Jane.

Jane considers herself lucky to have had a teacher who came from a family that was educated in the U.S. and therefore spoke English. Jane and the teacher became friends, and so Jane learned a great deal more English than the other children. Her father, like the other government officials, encouraged his daughter to study English to uphold the family tradition of teaching. Jane's grandfather was a schoolmaster, but when her mother and aunts were children, girls were not supposed to go to school and hence could not become teachers. Thus the family dream passed on to Jane. "My parents said, 'You have to learn to be a teacher.' And I said, 'Okay.' And they said, 'Be an English teacher.'"

At age 12, Jane took a mandatory test to see whether she did indeed have an aptitude for English. As nobody spoke English, she recalls, for the language aptitude test the candidates had to imitate different kinds of sounds, and put sounds and tones together without knowing which language the sounds represented. Jane passed the competitive nationwide test and was admitted to one of only two existing schools of foreign languages. She received very intensive training in English at the boarding school over the next four years from teachers who spoke "very good English." These included university graduates -- family members of professors who, during the Cultural Revolution, had been sent to the countryside to be re-educated by the peasants. The other teachers were Chinese people who had been living overseas but who went back to China after the founding of the People's Republic. According to Jane, "They were excellent teachers. They spoke English like native speakers."

The curriculum was basically skill-based, with a focus on listening and oral English. She recalls:

The English I learned was British English, and we used Linguaphone. I used to speak with a strong British accent. Even now, when I get nervous, I switch back to that accent.

According to Jane, at that time EFL materials were dominated by the British, but since then, there are more American textbooks in China. The British Council provided almost all the materials for her program; additional reading exercises were from *Peking Review*, which was the English translation of the daily newspaper. However, the focus of the program was pronunciation and listening, with the aim being to sound like native speakers.

J:     So I'm not the only one who speaks like this. So I came to Canada, nobody believed that you're just from China, and you speak English like this. I wasn't really the top student, I was just one of the students. Some of them, their accents were really London English. It was kind of funny when they spoke English, because it's a Chinese face.

After graduating from the language institute, Jane took a nation-wide university entrance examination, in seven subjects including English. She passed the exam, and studied for four years at Beijing University's Foreign Languages department; then went on to teach there while she did a master's in Teaching English for Special Purposes. In the late 1980s she was awarded a scholarship by an Ontario university to do an M.A. in English. At the time of the interview in 1998, she was completing her Ph.D. in Linguistics.

#### **4.4 The Anglophone Caribbean**

Violet is the only participant in this study who comes from a society which has English as a first language. Violet is from the Anglophone Caribbean. The Anglophone Caribbean includes the following islands: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Guyana on the mainland of South America (see Nero, 1997, p. 585).

##### **4.4.1 Violet**

Violet, age 35, grew up in Jamaica. She came to Canada in 1997 with her teenaged daughter and joined her husband who had been living here for five years. Jamaica was a colony of the British till 1962, but the British influence, according to Violet is evident even now, and English continues to be the official language.

N: Tell me when you started speaking English. I suppose always?

V: Yes. English is our first language, but we have a dialect, it's called Patois. Most people use the dialect when speaking - broken English. It is not accepted in written form . . . in schools, colleges.

N: Not even in Jamaica?

V: No. In writing, in schools, colleges, it is not accepted. It is only accepted in speaking, and depends on who you're speaking to. If you're speaking with friends, they accept it. But if you're teaching, sometimes teachers use it to get a point across. But writing? Definitely English.

N: So when you were in school, college there -

V: It's English. You have to write in standard English. [Patois] is accepted in spoken form, but not in written form.

N: So it's almost like two languages?

V: Sometimes the words might sound alike but in writing it is different. The pronunciation sounds alike, but if you're writing Patois, it's totally different [from standard English].

At home with her parents, she spoke Patois. "And even with your friends when you meet them, you say, 'What happen, man?'" She said that many Jamaicans tend to write as they speak and hence they "have problems" writing standard English. Violet recalled that in Jamaican schools teachers found it difficult to make students write standard English. She herself did not have difficulty writing English because she used to read a lot and so she knew what was acceptable written English.

Violet's father was a farmer. The life of poverty she describes is in stark contrast to the lives of the other participants, save Dina, in this study. Violet says that although she and her nine siblings grew up "very poor," her father "was adamant that we [all go to school]." All 10 children went to inexpensive government schools or "secondary schools." According to Violet, "Students who were not so much at ease with educational ways, not very bright, they went to secondary schools." In the literature class they studied a number of Caribbean writers, for example, Naipaul, a few African writers -- she remembers reading Achebe, and also American writers. She recalls that Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* was on the course, as were such British nursery rhymes as "Little Bo BEEP" and "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary." The English curriculum also included some works by Keats, Wordsworth, and Shakespeare. She explained that these British poets formed a much bigger part of the English curriculum in the "high schools" or the more expensive schools.

School was 13 years and led to an O level certificate. Then she went on to Teachers' College for four years, which got her a teaching diploma. She started teaching



in 1985 in a high school. While still teaching, she enrolled at the University of West Indies as a part-time student and did a B.A. She then worked as a guidance counsellor for the next 10 years. Her salary, combined with her plumber husband's, was enough for them to be able to afford to send their only daughter to an expensive high school where she studied a great deal of Shakespeare and the teachers emphasized standard English.

Violet discussed her own attitude toward Patois as a teacher.

N: As a teacher, were you strict about it [not accepting Patois]?

V: You had to correct it. Because when they were writing external exams, Patois is not accepted. Even when they do technical skills and technical exams, it is not accepted, so you *have to* (original emphasis) correct.

We talked about Jamaicans' attitudes toward Patois and English. She explained that a few university professors have been making demands that Patois be given status as a language; some even want to make it the official language of the country, but the upper classes want to keep English as the official language and argue that it is important for their children to learn to write in standard English. I asked Violet what her views on this matter were. She replied: "To be honest, I'd rather stay with English [than Patois]," her reason being that communication between the various parishes of Jamaica would be easier if English were the official language. In the same way, she feels that Jamaicans need to speak and write English in order to communicate with visitors from Canada and the United States.

In 1997 she came with her teenaged daughter to join her husband who had been in Canada for five years. One of the reasons for coming to Canada was because her daughter wanted to go to university.

#### 4.5 Contextualizing the Narratives

Fishman, Conrad, and Rubal-Lopez (1996), in a book appropriately entitled *Post-Imperial English: Status Change in Former British and American Colonies, 1940-1990*, explore the position that perhaps English should be reconceptualized, from being an imperial tool to being a multinational tool. For example, Fishman (1996) suggests that "English may need to be re-examined precisely from the point of view of being post-imperial (that is, in the sense of not directly serving purely Anglo-American territorial, economic, or cultural expansion) without being post-capitalist in any way" (p. 8). Their 653-page book appears also to be an attempt to disentangle English from the British and American colonization that it is so linked with in the memories of that generation that lived postcolonialism -- the participants in this study included. Rubal-Lopez (1996) points out that there is much information being generated about former British and American colonies and no corresponding information about non-British and -American colonies because the many studies that take the approach of linking colonialism and English do not make comparisons between colonial and non-colonial countries (p. 38). She suggests that variables other than colonialism might exist in both colonies and non-colonies, which would be "an indication that colonization is not the major force that has impacted on the spread of English in former colonies" (p. 38). By way of example, she points to China as a polity in which English is spreading rapidly; the writer suggests that China's plans for economic development and modernization are variables that might be of equal or greater significance for the spread of English in China than colonialism has been in some parts of Africa (p. 39).

My reason for citing these authors is this: If English today in Outer and Expanding Circle countries is not tied to colonialism, then are colonial discourses of the supremacy

of the native speaker not part of the learning of English of my participants in their home countries? In sum, to what extent can discourses of colonialism be identified in the learning of English in their home countries and other sites that I have described in their profiles above? Although English represents status, privilege, and mobility in all three Circles today, are nativist messages of the supremacy of the native speaker tempered, diluted by other factors in the non-colonies? Pennycook (1998) looks at how the practice of colonialism permeated the cultures of both colonial and colonized nations and argues that English remains a language to which colonial discourses still adhere. He says that a consequence of such colonial discourses is the dichotomy between native and nonnative speaker and the elevation of the former over the latter (p. 156). These profiles do not directly address the participants' understanding of the native speaker in their countries, but they clearly show that schools in the former British and American colonies for the elites were socially organized to produce the White native speaker as being the authority on the language. I have in Chapter 2 (2.1.2) indicated that English language schools in Pakistan in the era after decolonization continued to promote English as the language of civilization and culture while at the same time denigrating local languages. I have also identified this particular discourse of native speaker supremacy as being part of my education (3.4). The status awarded to English in my participants' schools leads me to conclude that my education was similar in this detail to the participants from former British colonies, especially Arun, Tasneem, and Patsy, who studied in convent schools. Patsy's story makes this clear; the administrators of her school were British as was the curriculum, and the exams are set and graded by the University of Cambridge. No doubt the native speaker norm was upheld in the school in order to groom students for this exam. In her genealogy of English literary studies, Viswanathan (1989) draws attention

to the "imperial mission of educating and civilizing colonial subjects in the literature and thought of England, a mission that in the long run served to strengthen Western cultural hegemony in enormously complex ways" (p. 2). This British curriculum continues almost unchanged in the former colonies as the profiles of Arun, Iffat, Patsy, Tasneem, and Violet show.

The participation in English of the women from the non-colonies follows a different pattern from that of the women from the former colonies. Fayza's education and participation in English in Egypt is somewhat representative of how the middle and upper classes participate in English in Expanding Circle societies. Fayza was not introduced to English till she went to secondary school. From Grade 7 onwards, English and French were taught as foreign languages. Fayza spoke only Arabic at school and at home. Her narrative also indicates that French had at least equal if not more status than English in the Egypt of that time. Similarly, Dina was not exposed to English in Surinam till Grade 7. Students in her school had to study English, along with French and German, as foreign languages from Grade 7 to Grade 12. But while Dina studied these three languages in school, she did not use them outside the school. Her primary languages continued to be Urdu, Hindi, Taki-Taki, and Dutch. Hence neither Fayza nor Dina learned English as children and their use of English was restricted to the classroom. Their narratives do not indicate that they received messages about the superiority of the native speaker of English as children although they might have had such messages about the French and Dutch native speaker respectively when they were in elementary school. Jane's high participation in English is unusual in an EFL context. She indicates this when she says that she was the first person in her family and among the first in her city in China to speak English;

she went on to attend one of only two schools of foreign languages in China where the British native speaker was the model.

How my participants negotiate the native speaker norm as ESL teachers in Canada is the focus of my discussion in the next three chapters. In Chapters 5, 6, and 7, I provide an in-depth analysis of the data obtained from the eight participants, which foregrounds the multiple ways in which they negotiate linguistic nativism.

## **Chapter 5**

### **"I Am Not A Native Speaker"**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This is the first of three chapters where I examine my participants' words regarding their encounters with nativism and the native speaker construct as ESL teachers in Canada. As pointed out in Chapter 3, the native-nonnative speaker dichotomy is not a categorical distinction that I am naturalizing; rather, I am using this distinction as a way of organizing my data and providing a composite picture of each participant because I argue that the ideological relationships within which immigrants find themselves are heavily structured by these concepts. I consider the women's negotiation of the native speaker construct to be central to their identity formation, and, hence, for the purpose of discussion, in these three chapters I have grouped subsets of the participants in terms of similarities in their views on the native speaker; more specifically, they are grouped according to their answers to the question: Do you consider yourself to be a native speaker?

In the presentation of these narratives I have focused on language, but any investigation of how minority immigrant women teachers of ESL negotiate the native speaker construct should investigate the racism, sexism, and exclusion that they experience; thus I look also at some such experiences that my participants foregrounded in the interviews. I take the position that the women's views on native speaker issues are informed by the dominant discourses of English in the following three sites: a) as subjects in their home countries and the countries where they immigrated from, b) as minority women in Canada, and c) as ESL teachers.

The powerful regulation of minority women is evident in the women's narratives, but what is also evident is the multiple and contradictory ways in which they negotiate this distinction by adopting strategies of accommodation and resistance. The stories give insight into practices of dominance, and how we minority women resist. It becomes apparent from the interviews that for some of the teachers, issues of race and culture, of nation and belonging, are intertwined in their definition of native speaker, while others base their definition on the language they were first socialized in, or on demonstrated competency in English. Some of the teachers, it seems, reproduce to varying degrees in their pedagogy dominant understandings of native speaker supremacy, while others have developed strategies to effectively address their learners' needs and concerns; strategies that are emancipatory for students and teachers.

A word about how I have presented these narratives. In each of the stories I identified particular themes that seemed to give the greatest insight into that woman's life in Canada. This does not mean that there are no other commonalities among participants' stories. There have to be. For example, a common theme is racism. All my participants reported experiencing, on a continuum, nonacceptance and exclusion, by students and/or colleagues as well as by people outside their profession. But the purpose of this study is not to document racism, and hence I have reported examples of overt racism in only a few instances. One such instance is in Iffat's story; as her students' rejection was a constant theme over her 30-year career, I feel it is important to theorize why she had this experience. While the racism in Iffat's story is located in the classroom, in Arun's narrative I have identified the nonacceptance by potential employers in her early days in Canada as having a strong impact on her identity formation as well as on her pedagogy.

Most of my participants indicated that some of their students initially reacted negatively to having a Nonwhite teacher, so much so that the students decided not to come back. While I have indicated in Chapters 1 and 2 how the native speaker construct pervades both ESL and ideologies of the nation and have briefly looked at how ESL students are positioned in the discourse of language and empowerment (2.2, 2.3), I have not adequately examined how the students' investments in proper English impact on their attitudes to their minority teacher. As I have argued elsewhere (see Amin, 1997), there appears to be a strong connection between the attitudes of the students -- many of them new immigrants -- to Nonwhite teachers and their investments in learning English. What are some of these investments? As Rockhill and Tomic (1995) point out, new immigrants who are learning English are defined as "other," as "culturally and linguistically inferior" (p. xi); the discourse of ESL is such that it promises liberation once one has acquired English (p. 210). I have indicated in Chapter 2 (2.1, 2.2) that New Canadians are invested in what they term "Canadian English." To appreciate what "Canadian" English symbolizes to New Canadians, I turn to Peirce's (1993) study in which she examines the complex interrelationships between relations of power, identity, and language learning of immigrant women. Peirce brings out how much immigrant women want to "speak like them [the dominant group]" (p. 1) to negotiate their social identity. Peirce argues that English should be seen not primarily for its instrumental value, as Ng (1990) does, but as constitutive of and constituted by social identity (1993, p. 69). It is clear that ESL learners have a great investment in learning Canadian English (see Amin, 1997).

In these narratives I have tried to find a connection between a teacher's positioning vis-a-vis the native speaker and her pedagogy. I look also at how my participants "teach back." My participants are aware of the stereotypes of the ideal teacher



that exist in English Language Teaching (ELT), as of the nativist discourses that construct them as Other to the ideal teacher, and this awareness informs their pedagogies. In this chapter I present and analyze the language-related experiences of the four women who say that they are not native speakers. By identifying as nonnative speakers, it may appear that Iffat, Jane, Tasneem, and Fayza are passively accepting the identities that have been constructed for them by dominant discourses. But I believe that that is not so. Their words reveal that each woman has found effective strategies to negotiate nativism in the ESL classroom from the position of nonnative speaker. It is to these four women that I now turn.

## **5.2 Iffat**

Thirty years of nonacceptance by her ESL students in Canada have made Iffat's life a Prufrock-like existence. For Iffat, decision, indecision, lies in the dilemma: To aspire, or not to aspire, the initial *p* in such words as "Peter," "pauper," and "pickle." This is a question that worries her a great deal, because she knows that either way -- whether she aspires or not -- there are consequences. Should she try to say "Pheter" the way a "native" British or Canadian speaker of English would, or dare she pronounce it the way many people in Pakistan and India do, without the aspiration? This seemingly minor decision is emblematic of how she finds herself situated within ESL. She explains why she stays with the unaspirated *p*.

I: It's partly a decision, partly a habit. Now, if I want to do the aspiration, I'll have to do it consciously.

N: So what?

I: Being a teacher, I know that the amount of aspiration that I put in it may not be correct. I will over aspire it.

N: Right. Right.

I: I know that, even then, no matter what I do, I'll be labelled. I won't have that right aspiration which comes from knowing the language from the cradle . . .

N: Oh, interesting. So you don't do it at all?

I: I may use a little . . . but I know that a lot of Pakistanis and Indians use it in the wrong places. They know there's an aspiration but . . . For example, they'll pronounce "happen" as "happhen."<sup>1</sup>

N: Oh, you mean put the *h* sound in the middle rather than -

I: Exactly.

N: That's funny!

What Iffat is describing is not an uncommon phenomenon. For example, Fanon (1952/1967) describes the efforts his fellow countrymen from the Antilles make when in France, to speak French like French people. Fanon notes that Martinique Negroes have a reputation for not pronouncing the *r*, and hence, in order to compensate, a Martinique Negro will "go to war against it [the *r*]" (p. 21). Such a man is so desperate to learn to pronounce the *r* like French people that he spends hours working at this sound by reading aloud for hours (p. 21). But of course he cannot get it right, with sad, amusing results. Here, Fanon tells us the story of a Martinique man who, as soon as he landed in France, went to a bar and called out with great self-confidence, "Waiterrr! Bing me a beeya." Comments a sardonic Fanon: "Resolved not to fit the myth of the nigger-who-eats his R's,

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<sup>1</sup> In English the only significance of the aspiration is that it is a marker of being a real speaker of English. It makes no difference to comprehension or to the meaning of the word, unlike in Urdu or Hindi, where, for example, "put" is a noun and means "thigh," while "phut" means "tear," as in "My skirt is torn." Similarly, "kaana" means "one-eyed male," and "khaana" means "food."

[this Negro] had acquired a fine supply of them but allocated them badly" (p. 21), much like the Pakistanis and Indians Iffat knows who aspirate the wrong *p* or aspirate too much. Fanon's Negro who allocates his *r*'s "badly" and Iffat's acquaintances who allocate a little puff of air to the *p* in "happen" appear to be hyperadapting, whereby speakers of one variety attempt to adopt features from another variety, "but overdo it, overgeneralizing from correspondences they have noticed between the two varieties" (Trudgill, 1992, p. 37). It seems that Iffat's acquaintances have correctly analyzed the differences but cannot realize them.

Hearing her countrymen and countrywomen "mispronounce" such words, Iffat thinks she shouldn't try to aspirate initial *p*, as she might not be able to make the sound correctly, and it will become even more obvious to her students that she is not a native speaker. Alibhai Brown (1995) describes the hold the aspirated *p/t/k* had over her life as a schoolgirl in Uganda. I do not know whether she intended the irony of this story: She is good in English and wins elocution contests at her English medium school. She wins largely because she can aspirate initial *t* and *p*, unlike the other Asian children; the judges are English men and women who mispronounce the participants' names (p. 69). I, on the other hand, have still not won the war against *v* and *w* as Urdu does not have a *v* or a *w*, but a sound that is half-*v* and half-*w*, and hence I have to contort my mouth to pronounce a word like "vowel." As an ESL teacher, one has to make many a reference to vowels. Each time I did, I felt nervous that I might say "wowel" or "vowel," and be "found out."

Because Iffat is very involved with the Pakistani/Indian community, the decision/indecision to aspirate and sound native-like or not to aspirate and sound Indian/Pakistani, is not made in only an ESL situation. She is worried that her friends would say that she

is putting on airs if she began to make little puffs of air with initial *p/t/k*. Fanon makes a similar point about the Antilles native returned from France who speaks with a Parisian accent. He is laughed at. Iffat does not have to return to India to experience this mockery. There is a thriving Pakistani and Indian community in Toronto, one which would chastise her: "Stop trying to be an *angrez*," much as Tasneem's peers did in the college she attended in Lahore, Pakistan (see 4.2.2).

Iffat's narrative is strewn with descriptions of her students' rejection of her, a point I will discuss after giving a few relevant details of her life in Canada. When she moved to Canada with her graduate-student husband and two children in the 1960s, she was able to get ESL work very easily. The first place she applied for a job was a government organization that held ESL classes for new immigrants. She had an informal interview, showed her degrees, and was hired right away. She theorizes it thus: ESL was not formalized, linguistics was just getting recognized as a discipline, and she had a background in linguistics from England. She didn't have "any problems" with her colleagues. As she has indicated, she was the only one among her colleagues with a master's degree in English and formal qualifications in linguistics, and from England at that, and so I suggest that her colleagues awarded her respect on that basis. I asked her what it felt like to be a South Asian woman in Toronto in those times.

- I: People were very kind. I think people on the street couldn't figure out where I was from. They often said, "You could be from Italy, Portugal." In that sense, yes I was a visible minority, but not that visible because I could be mistaken for a South American. I think that did make a little difference [to my not having bad experiences], the fact that I spoke English and that I didn't look totally Asian.

Iffat emphasized that there were very few South Asians in Toronto at that time, and that people might not even have known about South Asians. But although she started by saying that she had positive experiences with people, it became clear a little later in the interview that she had a number of complex, negative encounters.

N: Were people surprised when you told them that you were from Pakistan/India?

I: Yes. Sometimes people used to say, "What do you do?" I would say, "I teach English." They wouldn't say anything, but you could see surprise in their faces. Being an immigrant and teaching immigrants right here. I remember one of the British women at our tennis club. She said, "Oh, you have the cheek to teach English." I said, "I'm more qualified than a lot of Canadians and Britishers here." And this woman said, "Oh, I'm joking."

In the context of British schools, Rampton (1988) maintains that Indian and Pakistani students who are proficient in English continue to be put in ESL classes because of what is termed their "deceptive fluency" (pp. 503-529). In arguing for ESL training for such students, educators, according to Rampton, unwittingly subscribe to the imperial stereotype of *babu* for Indians and Pakistanis (p. 514). The stereotype of *babu* was developed during colonial rule in India; here Rampton gives the *Oxford English Dictionary's* definition of *babu*:

A native Hindoo gentleman; also (in Anglo-Indian use), a native clerk or official who writes English; sometimes applied disparagingly to a Hindoo or more particularly, a Bengali with a superficial English education. (cited in Rampton, 1988, p. 513)

Commenting on the colonizers' attitudes to the nativized Englishes of South Asians, Kachru (1990b) states that these varieties of English "provided a storehouse of hilarious linguistic anecdotes to be related in the 'white only' clubs . . . [and] the mythical 'Babuji' became the source of such linguistic entertainment" (p. 22).

Referring to an earlier study by himself, Rampton (1988) talks of the "sweeping and impressionistic manner" in which the features supposed to characterize "deceptive fluency" are identified (p. 514). "As an analytic concept it has operated over the last 15 years or so in a kind of indeterminate half-light, shuttling between teacher intuition and committee verdict without ever making its real status plain" (p. 514). He sums up by saying that "judgements of proficiency in English remain highly subjective and unstandardised" (p. 515). Rampton gives a number of reasons why ethnically Asian children are considered never to speak "normal" English, which are all related to the fact that ESL in Britain cut its teeth on children of Asian parentage, who remain prototypical ESL learners in the public and professional mind (p. 515). There is further evidence of this anti-Indian/Pakistani sentiment among the dominant group, evidence that indicates that minority groups too may be touched by this prejudice. Rampton refers to data derived from fieldwork carried out in one neighbourhood in a town in the South Midlands in 1984-85 that focused on 23 eleven- to thirteen-year-old boys of Indian, Pakistani, Grenadan, and Anglo parentage. Data on perceptions of ESL students came from responses to a questionnaire, which, among other things, gave informants a chance to rate the individuals and groups around them in terms of their proficiency in English. There was quite a lot of disagreement between the responses of the 15 informants of Asian descent and the 6 of Anglo and Afro-Caribbean descent regarding the Indian and Pakistani boys' English. In general, children of Asian extraction regarded Indian and Pakistani peers as speaking normal English, whereas ethnically Anglo- and Afro-Caribbean informants were more equivocal in their ratings (Rampton, 1988, p. 504).

One cannot come to any conclusions about the perceptions of South Asians in Britain from this small sample, but in the absence of any other evidence or information,

the sample indicates prejudice against South Asians and the refusal to believe that they can be proficient in English. Indeed, Rampton (1988) suggests as much: He says that the six monolingual and bidialectal boys who rated the South Asian boys' English equivocally may be partially touched by the *babu* stereotype, "though probably a good deal less than most," adding: "Only a brief glance at press or TV reveals the wide prevalence and strength of pejorative sociolinguistic images of South Asians" (p. 508).

The British woman at the Toronto tennis club was no doubt touched by the imperial stereotype of *babu*; Iffat's students' attitudes to her reveal that this stereotype is part of the fabric of ESL in Canada too. Iffat's many degrees in English could not compensate her students for what they saw: a visible minority woman, the only Nonwhite teacher in the school. Her students reflected the view of the British woman at Iffat's tennis club: "You have the cheek to teach English." Iffat named one ethnic group after another who "were very hard on me." One such group was from a neighbouring country to Pakistan.

N: Like what did they say?

I: "Oh, you're Pakistani."

N: Uh huh.

I: And they, they'd sort of imply that, "Look here, we are in Canada and I'm being taught English by a Pakistani."

But in the multiracial class that she habitually taught, it was not only students of colour who were "hard" on her.

I: East Europeans would say, "Ohhh. So you're from Pakistan." They'd just sit there and make me feel sort of bad that, you know . . .

N: It's hurtful.

- I: Yeah.
- N: How did you deal with this, Iffat? Like, did you address it at all?
- I: I sort of continued my work and you know sometimes, if they really bothered me a lot, then I would just sit down with them and say, "Look, if you don't like this class, there's many schools you can go to." I said, "I'm the teacher here. They're not going to change the teacher for you. But if you want to go to another school, that's fine. Go look for another place." Things like that. But it was uncomfortable . . . And sometimes they wouldn't say anything. Just sit there, looking at me.
- N: Yeah. Glaring at you and all sort of -
- I: Yeah.
- N: Yeah, that I'm familiar with.
- I: Yeah. Yeah.
- N: So your, your problem with students, over the next twenty or thirty years, did the situation with the students remain the same?
- I: Yes, it did remain the same. Because there were all these new immigrants coming in. And every time there would be a revolution somewhere, we would have a whole bunch of new students.

The students at this school were new immigrants, and as Iffat taught the beginners, her students were often those who were very new in Canada. She says that as the program was only three months long, she could not tell if the students' idea of an ideal ESL teacher changed after they had been in Canada for some time -- whether, in fact, this thinking was reinforced by living in Canada or lessened. In Chapter 2 I made the point that the hegemony of the native speaker is worldwide by drawing on Canagarajah (1999), who says that Periphery employers hire only native speakers (see 2.1. 6). As a volunteer teacher in Poland in the mid-1990s, I had difficulty in convincing my employers of my



credentials, and when I was doing my master's degree in English in Karachi, the White native speaker was our norm. All these are signs that Iffat's students might have come with the view that the White monolingual native speaker is the ideal English teacher.

However, it appears that Iffat's unforgivable flaw was also her strength. She recalls that her students were pleased by what they considered her "British accent." As English in South Asian countries is modelled on British English, many South Asians who have studied in British-style schools sound more British than American. Iffat found that the power of the raj was still there. Just as she idealized the British accent as a young girl, so did her students. As she puts it, her "British accent struck them more than anything else" about her speech, thus reflecting the hold of all things British, especially the BBC, over the Third World and also Eastern Europe. Iffat's students may have been disappointed when they heard English being spoken on the streets in Canada -- so unlike the BBC. Iffat recalls that they sometimes said to her, "American English is not what we want. We want to study British English." Many of the students also liked Iffat because, like them, she was familiar with British grammar. I recall that my familiarity with British grammar often won me grudging approval from my students. However, ESL teachers tell me that now a number of their students do not want British English. They want what they term "American English." I consider this an indication of the hegemony of American culture, a sign of what Appadurai (1996) describes as "the little defeats that explain how English lost the Empire [to the U.S.A.] in postcolonial Bombay" (p. 1).

I then asked Iffat if in her opinion, she is a native speaker:

I: No, I'm not.

N: So who is a native speaker of English?

I: A native speaker of English is a person who is born to parents who speak that language. That is important. And perhaps lives in that environment. But even if you don't live in an environment where that language is spoken [you are a native speaker]. But, definitely, you have to be born to parents who speak that language.

N: So for instance, a British couple who grew up in India. Their child was born in India. So that child would be considered a native speaker of English?

I: That's what I had in mind.

Iffat added that she does not consider second/third-generation South Asian children in England to be native speakers on the basis that although they are surrounded by English, their parents probably speak South Asian languages in addition to English.

When she started teaching, people's negative comments did not bother her very much. It would seem that at that time she was seeing herself as she was seen in India and then Pakistan, as a respected teacher of English. Over the years, as wave after wave of new immigrant students gave her the same message -- that she was *not* a good English teacher -- her resistance strategy was to stay with the lower levels where there is less conversation and where her British idiom and grammar were an asset. She realized that in the higher grades there was more emphasis on conversation, and the students had more invested in learning to speak Canadian English, which she could not do, whereas in the lower levels the emphasis was on grammar and teaching a few words of vocabulary every day. She was extremely qualified to do so because of having studied grammar and also having a degree in linguistics. She opted to keep teaching Levels 1 and 2, that is, beginners, and stayed with those levels for the rest of her career.

Hence, her students' rejection seems to have shaped Iffat's career. My experience of ESL indicates that teachers teaching the higher levels of English are considered to be

better teachers than those teaching lower levels and bilingual programs. Iffat and her colleagues started seeing her as a teacher of the lower levels. But in her location as teacher of lower-level students, Iffat developed a great deal of materials for these levels; in addition, she produced materials for a bilingual Urdu-English program to be used by the Urdu-speaking community in Toronto. These strategies helped her to feel that she was a successful ESL teacher. In addition, her studies in linguistics helped her frame her students' attitudes toward her. She states categorically that she is not a native speaker, and she knows that her students also have the same understanding of native speaker -- the definition given by linguists in the 1960s when she was a student of linguistics, but one that critical scholars (e.g., Cheshire, 1991; Ferguson, 1992; Kachru, 1990b; 1992; Phillipson, 1992; Rampton, 1990) question.<sup>2</sup>

In sum, Iffat has chosen a teaching situation where the students can focus more on writing and where she keeps producing new materials for them for which she has won modest recognition by her profession. This is a situation where whether she aspires, or doesn't aspire, *p*, *t*, and *k* may not have as many ramifications as it would if she were teaching the higher levels.

### **5.3 Jane**

The first thing you notice about Jane is that she has a strong British-sounding -- not British -- accent, but it is also obvious that she has learned English as a foreign language. I noted also that she sounds very different from the constructed norm of accent

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<sup>2</sup> Such definitions stipulate that a person is a native speaker of the language that he or she learned first, and emphasize birth, heredity, innateness of linguistic ability. I have discussed these definitions in Chapter 1. (See 1.3.3)

in Canada. Mindful of my own experience of Otherness because of my accent, I asked Jane how people in Canada responded to her speech when she was a newcomer.

J:       Wherever I went at that time, nobody believed that I just came from China. . . . Wherever I went, everybody praised me. "You speak such good English." So my impression of Canadians is that they're very encouraging and very nice. I knew my English wasn't really that good.

Why did everyone say to Jane, "You speak such good English," when Jane herself says that her English wasn't "that good"? A probable explanation is that Jane has acquired a high status British-line accent that framed and elevated the proficiency she manifested in face-to-face situations. In addition to Jane's high-status accent, I see these compliments as being linked to her status of foreign student. Brah, a Ugandan Asian woman who studied at an American university and then came to live in Britain in the 1970s, when Idi Amin's expulsion of South Asians made her a stateless refugee, theorizes the difference in her American and British experience thus: In the United States, she was a "'foreign' student, a visitor on a temporary sojourn" (Brah, 1996, p. 9). Part of that experience was not being called names although Black Americans were called "nigger" (p. 9). But within weeks of being in London, she had been called a "Paki" (p. 9). She comments: "Britain's imperial history had already 'situated' me. . . . I was now constituted within the discourse of 'Paki' as a racialised insider/outsider, a post-colonial subject constructed and marked by everyday practices at the heart of the metropolis" (p. 9). Jane came to Canada as a foreign student and was situated by those who paid her these lavish compliments as a visitor on a temporary sojourn, contrasted with the immigrant identity ascribed to my other participants. A foreign student is one who does not make claims to nationhood, and hence nativist discourses would be played out differently in such situations, as Brah's encounters as a foreign student in the United States indicate. Related to Jane's foreign

student status are the situations in which she received such compliments. In her study of adult immigrant ESL learners' views of pronunciation and accent, Chang (1999) found that all but one of her participants "were effusive in their description of Canadians as patient, kind, helpful listeners" (p. 11). The only participant who had a negative experience was the participant who went out in the world of employment, and had a job training program where she apprenticed as a department store clerk. When it came time for the supervisor to provide an evaluation of this trainee, she told the trainee: "You need to go to school and study English more" (Chang, 1999, p. 11). Chang, while acknowledging that there might have been problems other than accent at work in this situation, contrasts this experience with the other participants' positive encounters with Canadians and concludes that those who reported positive encounters had not yet been placed in "powerless positions such as seeking employment" (p. 11), and searching for employment is a situation where prejudice against foreign accents has been documented (Sato, cited in Chang, 1998, p. 6). Chang thus locates speaker-listener relations within the rubric of power, an issue I return to a little later when looking at Jane's views on accents.

While Jane and I were discussing her students' concept of an ideal native speaker, she said that the main reason for students' rejection of some immigrant teachers is because they can't understand them.

J: For [my students], it's more how well you speak the language [than whether you are born in Canada]. . . . Let's face the fact that some people speak with an accent that makes it difficult for other people to understand them. . . . If you have an accent which makes it difficult for people to understand you . . . that might cause concern from the students' part because they find it difficult to understand you.

Jane goes deep into the subject of comprehension. She does not think race is an issue for students, but comprehension is:

- J: Let's forget the racial issues. I've heard students say, "Hey I just can't understand the teacher." From a student's perception, that's a real concern. But if you look at it from another perspective, you can say that's prejudice because there are different kinds of English. Of course there are some people who have prejudice against you, but there are also practical concerns. I have a friend. I have to say her English is not very good. . . . The point is students find it difficult to understand her. Do you think it's a practical concern, or is it [prejudice]?

For Jane, the issue of accents seems to be personal. I should take into consideration the fact that in China she spent year upon year learning a particular way of speaking English, on the basis of which she accrued symbolic and material benefits in China and continues to do so among her community in Toronto. Hence she says:

- J: I speak with an accent. I do. But as an instructor, it doesn't matter what accent [you have], but you have to speak clearly and fluently.

Is this a case of the lady doth protest too much? Is Jane trying to convince herself that her accent *is* good enough? I probed further:

- N: Have you heard this term being used by students -- "Canadian accent?"
- J: They say that most of the time. The English they hear on TV, the English they hear around them they recognize as Canadian. And anyone who is deviant from that norm is graded. But from the instructor's perspective, the closer you are [to that norm], as long as you speak clearly, I don't think there should be any problem between you and the students. But if you are far away [from that norm]. . . . I gave you the example of my friend. She needs to improve her English first. In that case, the students' response [is based on her accent which makes it difficult for students to understand her. But you can generalize it and say that they don't like her because she is Chinese. They don't like her because she speaks with an accent. You [meaning Nuzhat,

the interviewer] speak clearly, but with an accent. There are lots of people who don't speak clearly and fluently, and that also could be put under the umbrella of accent.

Jane is making a number of points here. One major point that she seems to be emphasizing is that her friend does not speak clearly, and therefore students find it hard to understand her, and hence, for Jane, the issue is one of intelligibility. But would Jane make a similar criticism about a white Canadian teacher? One issue that this incident raises is how much of the onus for comprehension is on the listener and how much on the speaker, an issue I touched on in my discussion of accents in Chapter 2 (2.1.5), but that I need to explore further in light of Jane's concerns about intelligibility. Chang (1998) is useful in this context. She explores the position that intelligibility is partially "in the ear of the listener" and is a "further complication to already subjective standards" on intelligibility and accent (p. 5). According to Chang, the question that arises is how much the listener should adapt to an accent, or how much the speaker should adapt their accent to the listener. "Who is called upon to make the adaptation often comes down to who holds the power" (p. 5) argues Chang, and to exemplify this argument, she contrasts the hypothetical example of a manager who is deciding whether to hire an employee with an accent, as opposed to a reporter interviewing United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan (pp. 5-6). Matsuda (1991), whom I've cited in my discussion of accents in Chapter 2 (2.1.5), makes a similar point. During the course of her work as a law professor, she represented marginalized clients in court, those who were born outside the U.S.A., and noted that those listening to these cases tended to tune out because, she says, they did not ascribe importance to her clients (pp. 1333-1339).

The discussion moved from accent and intelligibility to whom Jane considered a native speaker.

N: To you, who is a native speaker of English? Can you define this person?

J: All I can say is I have never and will never claim myself to be native speaker because English has never been my first language and never will. And I believe I will never achieve the real native fluency. I can teach all kinds of courses. I learned English in an academic setting, so I always have confidence in an academic context. But language is more of a feeling. And I have never learned the [English] language with feeling. I have learned it as a tool. Although I have the fluency, for me, there is no emotion involved. I never learned English to swear, to show my love. It's not that I can't speak fluently. I can. And I do write much better than lots of native speakers, but because of the emotional part, I will never claim myself as a native speaker.

Jane learned English only in the context of her school and did not use English either at home or in social contexts. She makes the point that she can speak English fluently but distinguishes between someone who has acquired fluency in a language in the context of a school and someone who *feels* in English. Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) would agree. Drawing on Malmberg (1972), Hansegard (1972), among others, she makes the case that the language learned first is different from any language learned subsequently (p. 48). She argues that many bilinguals say that their second language, learned later in life, feels "colder, more alien, less rich in words, less subtle and on the whole poorer" (p. 49). By way of example, she tells us about Matti Lautkoski, whose mother tongue is Finnish but who is bilingual after living in Sweden for 20 years. When Matti hits his thumb with a hammer it doesn't help him to swear in Swedish, but as soon as he swears in Finnish his finger starts to hurt less as he is able to "mobilize within himself the energy he needs to cope with the pain" (p. 51). Such anecdotal evidence of being able to feel more in one's first language has to be seen in light of Skutnabb-Kangas's (1981, 1990) passionate advocacy for maintaining minority students' mother tongues and not having them



eradicated by majority languages. As she herself points out, her statements about the importance of the mother tongue are "fairly strong," have aroused much controversy, and she is using this anecdotal evidence as a starting point for further discussion (p. 50).<sup>3</sup>

But even if one can feel more in the language one learned first, of what use is such a distinction between a native speaker and nonnative speaker? Why is so much value ascribed to this difference, that a native speaker can feel more in English than a nonnative speaker? My main question here is: Is a person who learned another language before they learned English in any way a less effective ESL teacher than a person who learned English as their first language? Jane makes the point that she can "write much better than lots of native speakers," a craft that should hold her in good stead in the classroom. Is this craft not more important for an ESL teacher than whether she can, as Jane says, swear in English?

Although Jane's views are similar to Iffat's in that they do not consider themselves to be native speakers, *whom* they include in the native speaker category is different.

Iffat's definition excludes me from being a native speaker; Jane expresses a more

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<sup>3</sup> It is with some trepidation that I express my disbelief of these views expressed by such a renowned scholar. However, I wish to make two observations here: First, I, for example, can feel and express a whole variety of emotions equally well in both Urdu and English; the situation decides which language I express them in. Of course, this is merely anecdotal evidence, but should not my experience carry the same weight as Matti Lautkoski's? Second, at a more empirical level, the depth of emotions expressed in *Lolita* makes me think that the author of this book, Vladimir Nabokov, who learned English as a foreign language, must have been able to feel such emotions, at least vicariously, in English.

Similarly, there is no shortage of postcolonial writers who express a range of emotions through their writings in English of which Shakespeare would approve. One such *tour de force* is Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. However, I am on weak ground here because English might very well be the first language that Roy learned although she has always lived in India. The same might be true of two other postcolonial writers of East Indian origin who have won recognition for their fiction, Salman Rushdie and Rohinton Mistry.

complex view of this issue and does not make the dichotomy that Iffat does. "I would consider you to be a native speaker, because you have the fluency in the language to show your feelings," she says, but adds:

Whether we admit it or not, there are different kinds of Englishes, and the English *you* speak sounds different from the people who are born here. You don't speak Canadian English. You speak, for example, Indian English.

Jane is making the point that English is not a monolith; she accepts that there are valid indigenized varieties of English -- rather than deviations from the norm of White English -- and hence to her, there are native speakers of, say, Indian/Pakistani English just as there are native speakers of, say, American English. But does she give equal status to these indigenized varieties of English, or does she think they are inherently inferior to White English? Is she touched by the stereotype of babu English? These are questions that I would have liked to ask her, but felt that the power differential embedded in researcher-researched relations would not permit such a dialogue. Instead, I asked Jane to describe her Bilingual Mandarin-English class.

J:     Bilingual, they are from my culture, so they perceive me as a bridge between the two worlds. You feel you are highly appreciated. You bring the two worlds together.

Jane feels successful in the Bilingual class primarily because her students and she share a common language, culture, and ethnicity. She is a cultural interpreter and thus a "bridge between two worlds" for her Chinese students, which her students appreciate. Tang's (1997) study offers insight into the strengths of bilingual teachers who share the first language of their students. Tang is writing in the local context, that is of Cantonese-speaking teachers teaching English in Hong Kong, but her findings are relevant to Bilingual ESL programs in Canada. The teachers in Tang's study reported that having a

common mother tongue is a useful instructional tool in teacher-student interaction. In addition, some students in the lower levels and "weak learners" asked them questions in Chinese inside or outside the classroom. Some of the respondents reported also that their experiences as ESL learners gave them a privileged understanding of the problems and weaknesses of their students (p. 578). Tang adds that nonnative teachers can empathize with their learners and can thus attend to their errors, especially those that are due to transfer from their first language (p. 579). Tang's findings concur with Widdowson's (1994) view that nonnative teachers can be more effective than native teachers in certain situations (p. 387). In the context of Canada, a study of Settlement ESL programs for adult immigrants in Ontario shows that 14% of ESL teachers are fluent in "Chinese" (Power Analysis, 1998, pp. 54-55), and that 23% of ESL students in Ontario first learned to speak "Chinese" (p. 82).<sup>4</sup> Assuming that many of these adults were at some time in

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<sup>4</sup> The Power Analysis Study (1998) refers to the language as "Chinese." Similarly, Tang (1997), whom I've also cited in this section, says the daily "social interaction of the people [in Hong Kong] is accomplished in Chinese" (p. 578). The Chinese people may not describe their own language/s as "Chinese." In mainland China, the term they use for the standard language -- what many of us call Mandarin -- is "pu tong hua," literally the "common" language. Roughly the same language is called "guo yue" by Taiwanese. In fact, "pure" Mandarin was associated with the Qing dynasty that ended this century and has been substantially modified and standardized since then. Today, Mandarin is a standard much the same as BBC English as in England. There are hundreds of dialects throughout the country, and Cantonese, which has the status of language for most, is spoken in Gaundong province near Hong Kong. Because of the idiographic nature of the writing system, everybody can read the same texts even though they might not understand each other. Hence, in this sense there is a tendency to homogenize speakers based on common literacy and transpose this oral language. In Hong Kong, when people speak "Chinese" it is almost exclusively Cantonese, but that will in all probability change in the future. Regarding Bilingual ESL programs offered in Toronto, most of them are Cantonese-English, but there are also programs and classes that have both, especially in areas or programs that have a large group of Taiwanese students. In the last few years, immigration from the People's Republic of China (PRC) has increased, which has led to more bilingual Cantonese/Mandarin classes. The above detailed information was conveyed to me in an e-mail communication on April 27, 2000 by Brian Morgan, who has a great deal of experience in teaching ESL to ethnic Chinese students in Canada and has also taught EFL in PRC.

Bilingual ESL programs, we can say that Jane's feelings of success are probably common among teachers of Bilingual ESL programs for ethnic Chinese students. The same can also be said of a number of other Bilingual ESL programs in the province as, according to the Power Analysis (1998) study, Settlement ESL teachers in Ontario "seem to have a knack for languages," and 56% of them are fluent in a language other than English (p. 55).

Along with sharing a first language with students, the teachers in Tang's (1997) study felt that they had a better command of grammar than native speakers, which empowered them as teachers. Jane has similar strengths, which she builds on in the TOEFL class she teaches to a multiracial group.

J: Even a native speaker might find it difficult to teach TOEFL, how to analyze the grammatical questions. I knew I had expertise, and so the TOEFL class was a very positive experience too. Very demanding, but I like that.

She went on to describe the high investments students have in the TOEFL class.

J: Because they have to go to university. They know what they want. Once you give it to them, they know you're a good teacher. The students in this class . . . had a very good education, but they needed a Canadian certificate. These people knew what they wanted. Once you were there, after one lesson, they knew whether you were a good teacher or not. Because [TOEFL] is so task specific. Either you have it or you don't have it. They can simply ask you one question, and they know.

Jane knows English grammar well because she herself had to study it, and hence she could answer her students' questions. She used to teach TOEFL in China. She touched on the fact that in a non-Bilingual class, some of her students may have preferred a white teacher. But instead of letting that pull her down, she builds on her strengths as a non-native teacher to be a successful teacher of a unilingual class.

Jane then described some of the materials that she uses in the LINC Bilingual programs where, she explained, the themes and topics prescribed are related to the process of settlement, but there is no prescribed book, so she can choose her own materials. She said that she chooses topics in consultation with the students, thus ensuring that the information is relevant. She self-consciously uses tapes with a variety of accents, and this signals to me her acceptance of non-Inner Circle Englishes and accents. I have earlier cited Jane on her students' understanding of a Canadian accent:

The English they hear on TV, the English they hear around them they recognize as Canadian.

Jane is giving her students the message that they should rethink their understanding of a Canadian accent to include those voices and those accents that they do not hear on mainstream television and radio.

#### **5.4 Tasneem**

Tasneem's life in Canada is regulated by her construction as a Muslim, as well as by her race and accent. I cite one such example of this regulation. The practicum requirement of the TESL program she completed at a Toronto community college was that she observe an ESL teacher and do a practice-teaching assignment. She had to find her own placement. She described her efforts to find a placement at a community centre near her house where ESL classes were offered. She went there, wearing a hijab. Although in Pakistan neither she nor her friends wore a hijab, in Saudi Arabia she followed the custom of her social circle that women cover their hair. Tasneem bought a number of silk scarves to match with her Pakistani ensembles, and even now she drapes a silk scarf around her head.

T: The woman was very polite. So I asked if I could observe. She was hesitant. She kept putting me off - saying next week, next week. My time for the practicum was running out. She gave me other teachers' phone numbers.

N: So what do you think was happening there?

T: She didn't want me there. I thought she was behaving like that because I'm a Muslim.

According to Hoodfar (1993), assumptions about Muslim women that pervade Canada are based on the racism and biases of the colonial powers. One such assumption is that the veil equals ignorance and oppression, and all members of the Muslim community, and in particular veiled women, are suffering the psychological and socioeconomic consequences of these views (p. 5).

However, Tasneem is not sure if being seen as a Muslim was the only reason why the woman, an experienced teacher, would not let Tasneem observe her class. When she phoned other centres for a placement, the response appears to have been divided along racial lines:

T: If the person on the phone was Pakistani or Indian, she would talk to me nicely, and she would say, "Okay, come over and we'll see which class you can observe." But if it was someone else, they were not keen.

Khan (1995) says that being East Indian in Canada often means being seen as inferior and belonging to a decadent culture and civilization (p. 130). It would seem that Tasneem's "East Indian" accent triggered an unwelcoming response in people on the phone who were not South Asian (see Chang, 1998). Ultimately only South Asians responded sympathetically to Tasneem's request to observe a teacher and to do her practice-teaching assignments; without a placement she would not have been able to get her TESL certificate.

Perhaps it was the exclusion that Tasneem experienced in finding a placement that made her decide not to wear the veil and not to look East Indian when she went to a university for an admission interview.

T: For the first time I wore pants when I went to that university for my interview, and I was very, very uncomfortable. But [I did it] because someone told me that you have to dress like them because otherwise it means that you're not adaptive. You're not adaptive to the new society. And if you're not adaptive, you'll be a hindrance anywhere. I feel it reflects on your personality that way.

Tasneem doesn't specify who the "someone" is who told her "to dress like them." But it is not an uncommon experience for Muslim Pakistani women to receive such advice. Khan (1995) notes that the positioning of women like Tasneem as Indian/Muslim/colonial has roots in the colonization of India and that the racism such women experience is linked to a particular form of Orientalism (p. 142). One of the participants in Khan's study, an Indian Muslim woman named Rabia, is offered advice by a prospective employer about her braided hair. "If she [Rabia] wanted a job, he advised, she should cut her hair" (p. 142). "Rabia cut her hair" (p. 143). In the same way, Tasneem discarded the veil and wore pants to show that she was "adaptive." Like the Muslim Indian participants in Khan's study, Tasneem felt pressured to conform in order to signal that she was "adaptive."

There are messages from other sites that Tasneem recognizes as telling her that as a South Asian, she is outside "Canadianess," this time because of language competence. She described an incident in the literature course that she took at an Ontario university:

T: When we got our first literature assignment back, somehow a colleague saw my grade. When she saw that I had got an A, it was a *shock* to her. She said, "Oh, you've got an A?"

I was thinking, I've done my master's in English literature, and this is just a B.A. (laughing). She was really shocked. This woman was a white Canadian, much younger than me. Most of the students in that class were white. And most of the students had a similar perception of me. And when I spoke out in the class, they were taken aback.

Some research indicates that South Asians in Britain may face even more racial prejudice than Afro Caribbeans (see Swann Report, 1985, p. 31). A study by the British Home Office Study Group of racial attacks on South Asians in certain areas of England concluded that "compared with white people, both blacks and Asians suffer disproportionately from racially motivated attacks, and the Asians worst of all" (cited in Swann Report, 1985, p. 32). This negative perception of Indians and Pakistanis is reflected in the attitudes of the dominant group in Canada. Handa describes the experience of growing up as a South Asian in Canada:

Where being brown means being treated as outsider, as less smart, called "Paki" or "Pun-jab," made invisible, taught to self-hate, to hide, to lie, to feel shame. . . . I was the only person of my kind, the only India/n in the class. I would think, "Yes, there is something wrong with me." (Sheth & Handa, 1991, pp. 70-71)

Handa's treatment by the other children reflected the dominant groups' perception of South Asians. A survey of Canadian teenagers revealed that "East Indians and Pakistanis are commonly associated with a number of socially undesirable stereotypes" (Bibby & Posterski, 1985, pp. 136-39). The survey showed that 49% of the respondents considered Blacks "bright" compared to only 41% who considered East Indians/Pakistanis "bright."<sup>5</sup>

While it is out of the scope of my study to analyze why there are so many negative

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<sup>5</sup> The data is compiled from the national survey entitled *Project Teen Canada*, which was conducted over four months in 1984 from the University of Lethbridge; both the writers of this book, Bibby and Posterski, were involved in the survey. For the purposes of this survey, 3,600 teenagers aged 15 to 19 in Grades 10 to 12 across Canada were pursued: they were randomly selected to fill in questionnaires on a voluntary basis.



stereotypes of South Asians, it is puzzling that only 41% of the respondents considered this group "bright" -- in fact they fared only better than Canadian Indians in this respect - - when Toronto board surveys show that the performance of South Asian students in the Toronto board schools is consistently higher than that of both White and Black students. For example, Wright and Tsuji (1984) found that the proportions of students from South Asian, White, and Black backgrounds in Advanced levels were 58%, 54%, and 36% respectively. A subsequent survey, *The Every Secondary Student Survey, Fall 1987*, (Cheng, Tsuji, Yau, & Ziegler, 1989) showed that South Asians are more likely to complete more credits than Whites or Blacks. If academic performance is an indicator of intelligence or "brightness," then the Toronto board studies indicate that South Asian students are as bright or brighter than the dominant group, yet this is not how they are perceived by their peers, if we are to go by Bibby's and Posterski's (1985) findings.

The Swann Report reports similar academic performance for South Asian school students. It gives the findings of the National Foundation of Educational Research (NFER) as: "Most of the studies point to performance levels on the part of Asians that either match or exceed those of indigenous peers" (see Swann Report, 1985, pp. 64-65). But this academic performance does not seem to change how South Asians are perceived in England. According to Rampton, there is a derogatory picture of Indians and Pakistanis as having "unrealistically high career aspirations" (Swann, 1985, Bhachu, 1985, quoted in Rampton, 1988, p. 516).<sup>6</sup> The students in Tasneem's class were reflecting pervasive

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<sup>6</sup> I use the term "South Asian" in this thesis to refer to people from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In the British publications, the term "Asian" is used as a collective term to cover a wide range of ethnic minorities whose cultural roots emanate from the Indian sub-continent -- Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan -- although some came to Britain from East Africa and elsewhere. Sri Lankans are not included in this group. However, in the Toronto board surveys referred to in this section, the term "South Asian" refers to people from Afghanistan,

stereotypes of South Asian women as not bright. In Iffat's story, I have indicated that South Asian English is still constructed as *babu* English. As the subject was English literature, Tasneem was expected neither to be familiar with English literature nor have penmanship. By getting an A in an English literature class, Tasneem ruptured the other students' stereotypes that Nonwhite women cannot be fully competent in English.

Such prejudice against Muslim/East Indian women, of which a marker in Tasneem's case is her dress and accent, appears to be the main reason that the only ESL work she was able to get, just like her practicum, was at a South Asian community centre. While completing her TESL certificate, she applied to a number of organizations for ESL work, but "I got responses only from South Asian organizations." At this job, which she still had at the time of the interview, she is paid for teaching two-and-a-half-hours daily, five days a week. Tasneem says she has an advantage in a South Asian agency because she speaks Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, and some Arabic. She puts the lack of response from mainstream agencies down to what she terms as her "disadvantages."

T: My accent is a disadvantage. And my hijab is a disadvantage.

N: But you still want to wear it?

T: Yes, I want to wear it.

In this South Asian agency where most of her students are from various South Asian countries, Tasneem says that she feels accepted by her students. Like the majority of my participants, she said that some of her students did not want a minority teacher; that they wanted the "mystique of a Canadian teacher." Her analysis of why her students accept her despite her status of non-Canadian and nonnative speaker draws attention to

the connection between students' investments in ESL and their acceptance, or lack of it, of a minority teacher. The majority of her students are

housewives who don't have much ambition. . . . They're just sitting at home and they just have to pass an afternoon. If you're paying money for the courses . . . then you'll go more for a white teacher. . . .<sup>7</sup> Or if you're going to go to university. . . . But most of my students don't go for college admissions or anything like that. So maybe that's why they are not so keen [on a white teacher]. . . . And if they're going on to college, or if they're professionals [it might be different]. Even the professionals I taught, they didn't intend to go to college/university. They were doctors and teachers. They knew (with a small laugh) they're not going to get anything here - they are not going to get a respectable job in Canada, so they were not really looking for any job.

At the beginning of this chapter I made connections between ESL students' investments and their attitudes to their minority teacher. Peirce (1993) says that for immigrant women English should be seen not primarily in its instrumental value, as Ng (1990) does, but as constitutive of and constituted by social identity (Peirce, 1993, p. 69). However, Tasneem seems to be gesturing more towards Ng's analysis. There could be another reason for why Tasneem was accepted by her students while Iffat was not. This reason became apparent when I asked Tasneem if her students indicated that they wanted a White teacher.

T: They [the students] don't have that choice when they come here. Maybe when they have a choice it's different. Here the choice is between the teacher who is Chinese and me. There are no white teachers here, and no people even in the administration.

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<sup>7</sup> One of the messages that Tasneem received in Saudi Arabia was that in the more expensive private schools where parents pay high tuition, they prefer White teachers. In addition to making the connection between her students' lack of investments in higher education and their acceptance of her, she seems also to be saying here that a Nonwhite, Pakistani teacher is good enough for her students because they are not paying for the courses. If they were paying, it would be a different matter.

N: That's a good point. Whereas where I was teaching, there were white teachers.

Tasneem teaches ESL at a South Asian community centre and most of the employees are Asian. Samimy and Brutt-Griffler's (1999) research indicates that nonnative teachers may feel less disadvantaged if they are not working with native teachers. A Russian participant told the researchers that he "never had a problem professionally" because of his nonnative speaker status when teaching English in Russia; he added: "There were not many native speakers around to feel competitive toward them" (Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999, pp. 138-139). Although the participant appears to be saying that his teaching improved because he did not feel he was competing with native teachers and hence his students accepted him, I suggest that there are other dynamics here. The students might well have wanted the mystique of a native speaker teacher just like Tasneem's students, but there were no native teachers in that institute and hence they accepted their nonnative teacher. This is similar to my experience in my master's program at Karachi University; the British native teacher had us in thrall, but we accepted our Pakistani teachers mainly because we were not given a choice between a Pakistani teacher and a native teacher. But unlike the ethnic Russian teacher of English and unlike Tasneem, Iffat worked in an institute where, at the beginning of her career, she was the only Nonwhite, hence nonnative, teacher and, later, one of very few Nonwhite teachers. The majority of the employees at that institute, teachers, administrators, and those involved in the placement and registration of students, were White. Iffat's students had friends and relatives who were in the classroom of native teachers, and hence her students knew that they could realize their dream of having a native teacher. But not Tasneem's students, unless they went to another agency.

Although Tasneem feels accepted by her students, she has, as I have shown, experienced Otherness in a number of sites. This experience has made her mindful of the negative messages that her students are receiving about their social identities as ESL learners. She offers them encouraging words. For example, in her LINC class she has students from other countries, and she describes how she is an agent in their empowerment.

T: Some of my Chinese students say that English is very difficult, and I tell them: You can learn it. I learned it. I wasn't born speaking English. My mother doesn't speak English. We learned English in school.

Tasneem is stressing two related points: First, that English is not her mother tongue and, second, that English can be learned, thus rupturing the discourse that you have to be born in an English-speaking family in order to know English well and that English has to be your mother's or father's first language. She is telling her students: Don't give up. I did it, and so can you -- much-needed words of encouragement to adult students who often feel that learning English well is an impossible goal. Clearly, Tasneem has embraced a nonnative position as one from which she can effectively negotiate her teaching.

The discussion of her pedagogy led to a related discussion -- Tasneem's views on her ownership of English.

N: Do you consider yourself a native speaker?

T: No, I don't.

N: What about this woman you mentioned earlier -- Mary, the Black ESL teacher from the U.S. Would you consider her a native speaker?

T: No, I don't. Maybe I'm still brainwashed from my childhood. A native speaker for me is always a British person.

N: Does it have to be a white person?

T: Britishers *are* white.

N: Well, what about all the South Asians who were born and grew up in Britain - and also Canada?

T: I wouldn't call them native speakers. I would call a white Britisher a native speaker (laughing).

Tasneem appears to be making the point that only White British people are native speakers, a lesson that she first learned, like I did, in Pakistan, but a lesson that has been reinforced for her outside Pakistan. The second point is that, as Brah (1996) says, South Asians are seen as being nonnative to Britain and hence they can be *in* Britain but not *of* Britain (p. 91); this is similar to Tasneem's encounters with nativism in Canada that position her as nonnative to Canada. Perhaps that is why she emphasizes that Britishers are White. She is thus making transparent the nativist discourses that position Nonwhite immigrants as being nonnative to the nation, in Canada and in Britain. But she is also showing her resistance to such nativist messages by her self-construction as a nonnative speaker of English. In Chapter 1 (see 1.1), when discussing how Canada disenfranchises Third World Englishes, I gave the example of a recently imposed requirement that non-Inner Circle applicants to Canadian universities are expected to take an English proficiency test because one of the criteria for recognizing an applicant's English language proficiency is that the applicant's university education be in a country "where the first language is English" (see OISE/UT, 1998, p. 2). For the first 20 years or so after decolonization, the official language of Pakistan was English, but when Tasneem was a university student the official national language had switched from English to Urdu. As a newcomer in Canada, she took the test prescribed by the Ontario university where she sought admission. Some time later, when she applied for admission to a teacher training program at another university, they asked her to do a different English proficiency test.

Tasneem told the university's counsellor that she should be exempted from this test because she had a master's degree in English (from Pakistan), a TESL certificate, and had also passed an English proficiency test. The counsellor said that they would exempt her if she would write on her application form that her first language was English. Tasneem refused:

And I said, "But that's *not* my first language. It can never be my first language." And she said, "You should put it as your first language because you've been studying it for so many years."

Ultimately, the program administrators did agree to exempt her from the English proficiency test based on her file, her grades, her degrees, and speaking to her in English. This incident signals Tasneem's resistance to the dominant perceptions of the terms native speaker, first language, mother tongue. She was disrupting dominant understandings of these terms by saying: "My first language is not English. My mother tongue is not English. I am not a native speaker of English. But my spoken and written English is at least as good as yours." Much as Iffat refuses to aspirate initial *p/t/k* to show her resistance to the native speaker norm, Tasneem's self-identification as nonnative speaker of English is resistance to nativist discourses that position visible minority immigrant women in Canada as racial and linguistic Others.

### **5.5 Fayza**

Fayza is the only one of my participants who has also been an ESL student in Canada; hence her views of being a Third World woman in Canada are from two locations -- that of being an ESL learner and that of being an ESL teacher.

N: Do you remember your first experience in Canada?  
Language wise, not knowing English, I mean.

F: It was difficult. The Canadians are very gentle people. In 1967 [when I came here], they were so tolerant, and I was so happy to be in this relaxed atmosphere, it helped me a lot to not be afraid, not be intimidated. I was encouraged to take lessons, and do something about my situation.

Being fair skinned, middle/upper-middle class, the wife of a professional, living in a up-market neighbourhood in London, Fayza socialized with upper-middle-class Canadians. She did not perform the degenerate Arab, and wore dresses, thus indicating her similarity to western culture and that she is Christian. The only "qualification" that she didn't have to be read as middle class in Canada was her lack of English proficiency, and hence Fayza's middle-class friends "encouraged" her to go to ESL classes, "to do something about [her] situation," that is, become truly middle class, and one of them. Fayza was encouraged by her upwardly mobile husband in her quest to learn English, and she "decided immediately to go back to school."

Although Fayza emphasized throughout the interview that her experiences in Canada have been positive, and that Canadians are "very gentle," and "tolerant," when discussing her students' desire to adopt Canadian/western ways, she said this about her initial experience in Canada:

F: At the beginning, I was shy, because I couldn't communicate. And I thought, people here think I'm no good. What am I doing here?! I can't do anything. I cannot speak, I cannot find work because I don't have the language. So I felt depressed.

"I'm no good," is what Fayza gleaned from the experience of being a new immigrant with limited English. However, once she started learning English, she felt she was accruing symbolic benefits:

F: But once you get your education straightened out, and your training is done, you find a job, and you start to build self-confidence, then you gradually start to realize that you are



actually a very good person, because you have so many challenges, and you have overcome all those challenges, and people look up to you and say: "She came a long way."

The earlier refrain of "I'm no good" takes on a different meaning here when she describes the stages that new immigrants with limited English like herself go through. When finally such a person has learned enough English to find work, according to Fayza this woman wins the admiration of people, and hence English brings immigrant women both symbolic benefits, such as friendship and status, and material benefits such as a job (see Peirce, 1993, pp. 8-10). But it seems that Fayza's reasons for learning English go beyond such symbolic and material benefits. Embedded in the perception of an immigrant not knowing English is the belief that such a person has not internalized the "higher and better" civilization based on Macaulay's premise that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia (cited in D. Smith, 1963, pp. 337-338); the Macaulayan thinking that pervades ESL classes and no doubt pervaded the program that Fayza attended, as also a Grade 13 course in English literature where she was introduced to Shakespeare, made her feel that she needed to internalize the "higher and better civilization." This wish stayed with her for many years and when her husband was posted to Greece, she decided to do a BA in English literature there:

F: That was four years and a fulltime course. And then I decided to get my master's, because I like it so much. I found it so fascinating to know something about English writers and novelists, specially Shakespeare.

I argue that the English degree represented symbolic benefits to Fayza because she made it clear in the interview that while many of her classmates in Greece went on to get a certificate in teacher training in order to get a job, she started a master's program in

English literature because she "didn't really care about jobs" as her husband had a well paid job.

Fayza expressed in her interview that middle-class people in Egypt have a similar relationship to French as people from former British colonies do to English, and so I asked her about her understanding of who is a native speaker of French, and if she considered the French-speaking upper classes of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia to be native speakers:

F: The people in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, yes, they speak French fluently, and they know the language. In fact they know French more than Arabic. But they still live with their families, and they are still in Algeria/Tunisia, and they are still having their own culture, the Arab culture that they grew up with. And this is part of them. The language is another part. If they want to get both parts, they have to live in France, to live with a French family, to know their reactions, their body language, the way they react, the values they believe in. Each culture has its own values and traditions. We all speak the same language -- English -- but when we go home, it's a different story. Right? Maybe some of the values are universal. You can transfer them from one place to another. But there are also some values that are so closely related to your religion. . . . I consider all this to be a package.

For Fayza then, race and culture appear to be determinants of native speaker status although she does not specifically say so. She appears to think that if an Algerian couple live in France, their child would not be a native speaker. However, she identifies the criterion not as race, but as culture:

F: No matter how much you learn the language, you have to know the culture part of the language. There is tradition, there is way of doing things. You don't learn it all when you learn a new language. But if you're born, say, of this language, then you have both aspects, the culture aspect and the language aspect.

Which culture is the culture of the English language? Traditionally, the culture associated with English was the Anglo-Saxon culture. But now that English is no longer the language only of Anglo-Saxons, the culture/s associated with English are many. Kachru (1985) observes: "As this transmuting alchemy of English takes effect, the language becomes less and less culture-specific" (p. 20). Writing in English and presenting non-Anglo-Saxon cultures is a struggle that a number of postcolonial writers have taken on in an attempt to decolonize English *through* English. Twenty years ago, Salman Rushdie voiced this struggle thus: "Language, like much else in the newly independent societies, needs to be decolonized, to be made in other images, if those of us who use it from positions outside Anglo-Saxon cultures are to be more than Uncle Toms. And it is this endeavour that gives the new literatures of Africa, the Caribbean, and India much of their present vitality and excitement" (Rushdie, cited in Dissanayake, 1993). Rushdie can take heart as a number of postcolonial writers, for example, Chinua Achebe, Rohinton Mistry, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Arundhati Roy, and Sara Suleri have successfully shown that English can take the weight of Anglo-Saxon cultures. The recognition that these writers have won is an indication that the non-Anglo-Saxon cultures that they present in their writings are increasingly being accepted as English cultures. However, this does not mean that the Macaulayan thinking has been entirely eroded, and hence when Fayza refers to the culture of English, it might well still be White Anglo-Saxon culture.

This association of native speaker with Whiteness and a particular culture is reflected in Fayza's definition of a native speaker of English. Like Tasneem's, Fayza's definition appears to exclude Nonwhite people. But while Tasneem considers only White British people to be native speakers, Fayza's definition is more inclusive:

Native means like someone who has been born and raised and got education in Canada. Like completely pure Canadian. It's very hard to say "pure," because none of us is 100% purebred, but more Canadian than us. They are probably white, they have been raised here, born in Canada. Maybe of European origin.

Fayza acknowledges that some of her students want a native speaker teacher, but sees this desire not as a rejection of herself but as a desire that is grounded in pragmatism. Perhaps she is thinking of what she wanted from *her* ESL teacher. As she says, she has been "through the whole system, as an ESL student, as an ESL teacher," and "on the way, you pick up on all these ideas." She is vocal on this point:

[The students] think the right way to learn English is to learn from a native who speaks English as his mother tongue. So, they're after fluency, they want to speak spontaneously, and they think a native speaker can provide them with all this.

Fayza believes that many students prefer a native speaker, but, like the nonnative teachers in Tang's (1997) study and Jane in my study, she considers it a strength for the teacher to come from a similar culture as her students as she would be sensitive to the students' culture. However, Fayza is not referring to any particular national culture here, but the experience of being nonnative, immigrant, visible minority. She makes the point that a native speaker may not be as sensitive to students' needs as a nonnative ESL teacher:

F: Sometimes native speakers miss this point. Some of them overlook the needs of people coming from different cultures because they themselves are not visible minority, so they lack this experience. And since Canada is a multicultural country, it's very important that we promote this respect for other cultures.

She points a finger at native speaker teachers also for not working hard enough:

F: Not all [native speakers] are good teachers. [Students] would come and tell me they were a bit disappointed in [a native speaker's] class because she was Canadian, native

speaker, but she was not so keen, she was not prepared. They were not happy, and they dropped out.

Fayza is making the same observation as Widdowson (1994), who chastizes native speakers for their self-construction as having intrinsic ability in teaching English solely because of their native speaker identity.

Fayza brings in a strong anti-racist approach to her pedagogy. She says that students have desire to be just like Canadian. She refers to her students' internalized racism, and that they are in a hurry to forget their roots and totally assimilate. She tells her students that as a new immigrant and as an ESL student she too wanted to erase her roots, and draws on her experience to caution them that "people respect you more when you respect yourself."

F: But they [students] have to know also that they have to keep their identity. When you come to Canada, it doesn't mean that you have to be Canadian, that you have to have everything like a born Canadian. Like you have to want his values, his traditions, his language, everything. You have to keep your identity. Identity is very important. Your roots are very important. Your culture is very important. It's important to learn the language, and all aspects of the language, and know something about the Canadian culture. Because we are living in Canada, and we are all Canadians, and this unites us. But you have also to realize that your roots and traditions and values are important. You don't have to erase this and say no, no, no, forget about all this, I want to be like this person, like this native in everything. Noooo! And even if you try, you cannot run away from what is within you, what you inherited. It's part and parcel of you. And if you try to go against it, you will be miserable. You will end up with nothing at the end.

N: Is this what you think students are trying to do?

F: The students, they come here, they are in a hurry, they want to be recognized and integrated, and part of this society, and that's why they want to destroy their identity completely, their values, and they want to identify with this native completely. Some of them even imitate their way of

talking, the way they dress, even if it doesn't suit them. But they *want* to be Canadian.

It appears, then, that as Fayza makes connections between language and culture, she recognizes also the self-hatred that her students suffer from, a self-hatred she recognizes because she experienced it as a new immigrant. Fanon (1952/1967) makes reference to the inferiority complex that is part of the psyche of colonized people and the behaviour of such a people when they come face to face with the language of the civilizing nation or the culture of the mother country. The colonized, Fanon says "is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards," and hence "becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle" (p. 18). Although Fayza may not be talking literally of students who come from former British colonies -- some, like herself, may feel more ambivalent to French, but English is now the world language that has eroded cultures and languages even in countries that were not American/British colonies. In that sense, then, I suggest, English represents the language and culture of the colonizer.

Fayza talks also of immigrants who want to show off to their friends in the home country that they are now from this superior culture.

F: They . . . go back and show they are different, they are better than -

N: Go back? You mean to their home country?

F: Yes, to their native country, and brag about being Canadian. When they go back for holidays, they want to brag and say, "Look at us. We are different. We look better." Because they look up to the western culture.

In Pakistan we refer to such people as *beentos*, as in, "I've been to the States," and mock their new ways. Fanon has a great deal to say about the black man who has lived in

France for a length of time and returns radically changed. "With great reserve our 'new man' bow[s] slightly" (p. 20) while the local greeting is a wide sweep of the arm, to signal that he is no longer of the jungle, he is of White culture (Fanon, 1952/1967, pp. 18-20).

It did not come as a surprise to me when all the participants told me that they believe that teachers should have a great deal of training, and not just a two- to three-month TESL course, and therefore they have all spent a great deal of time upgrading in teacher training institutes. They also talked about how hard they work to produce good, effective lessons. But this message came through poignantly and clearly in Fayza's interview, for she explains *why* she has to work so hard:

F: I was so conscientious. When you become a teacher, and it's not your native language, after all, it's your second language so you become so conscientious, and you want to do your best to compensate or to make up for that or to make them feel that they have achieved their goal somehow. You don't want to disappoint your students, right? Then you get a good feedback sometime. You don't get it directly sometime. You hear it from other sources. Oh, they were so happy, and they think they have made a good progress with you than with so-and-so native speaker.

N: You seem like a very hard working and conscientious person. Would you have done the same [gone to such pains] if you were teaching, say, Arabic? Or was it because you were teaching English and you felt that somehow you had to.

F: Yes, I would have done probably the same if I were teaching Arabic. But in a more relaxed [way]. No doubt about it, it's a challenge, teaching English, because you have to know more about the culture. Before you give it to your students, you have to dig deep and go beyond. You have to know what you are talking about. So you have to be very well prepared. It doesn't come to you spontaneously, automatically. No matter how long you have learned the language, no matter how long you have been using the language, still you have to be aware of all aspects

of the language. But with your own native language, sometimes you take it for granted.

N: Did you have any problems with your students? Like, did they tell the supervisor that they want a white teacher?

F: Yes. True. But eventually not so many of them do that. These are adult students, and they are looking for a good teacher to help them with their language difficulties. They soon realize that it's not just the colour of the skin [that they should go by]. Is she a good teacher? That is the bottom line. Your reputation gets around. I had a big class. Maybe in the first class, you don't have enough, but eventually it will grow if you continue what you are doing. If you are a dedicated teacher and you are doing a good job, then the word gets around and then there will be no problem.

Fayza's hard work is grounded in her thinking that she has to compensate for not being a native speaker. Although this thinking might be problematic, it is common among non-native teachers (see, for example, Kamhi-Stein, 1999) because of the unrealistic -- written or unwritten -- goal of many ESL/EFL programs worldwide that students should learn to speak like native speakers (see Kachru, 1990a; S. N. Sridhar, 1994). The many hours of hard work that Fayza puts in to overcome her perceived deficiency have helped to make her a popular and successful teacher.



## Chapter 6

### "Maybe I Am, Maybe I'm Not"

#### 6.1 Introduction

A number of participants posed the question in different ways: To what extent can I, as a woman of colour and having learned English outside the Inner Circle, claim "ownership" of English? The concept of owning a language is problematic as we are using a concept that normally applies to property. How can one claim ownership of English? If I say: "I own English as much as a native speaker," what exactly does this sentence mean? And what is the basis of my claim? Who decides whether my claim to owning English is valid?<sup>1</sup> Such questions have engaged a number of linguists (e.g., Nayar, 1994; Norton, 1997; Widdowson, 1994). In their discussion of what comprises ownership of English, these scholars prominently look at native-nonnative identities and ideologies and power dynamics between these two groups, and hence the discourse of ownership of English can be said to be another variant to the discourse of nativism. For example, the central question that Norton (1997) engages with is the extent to which English "belongs" to White native speakers of standard English or to all the people who speak it, regardless of linguistic and sociocultural history (p. 409). For Nayar (1994), power dynamics between native and nonnative speakers form the "crux of the ownership issue" (p. 4). Widdowson (1994) critiques native speakers for considering themselves to be the custodians of standard English and of the right pedagogy on the basis of being born to English.

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<sup>1</sup> These insights and questions come from Roger Simon, who is on my thesis committee. Personal communication, August 25, 1999.

A few examples will illustrate how I am using this term in the context of the struggle by nonnative speakers in Canada to be considered fully competent in English. The native speaker in Canada would be said to own English in that he or she is the final arbiter on the language; they decide what is correct English and what is incorrect. Such a person would then decide whether to accept the sentence, "D'you want a coffee?" as correct, or whether they would rule that it should be corrected thus: "D'you want a cup of coffee?" (because coffee is not a countable). Such a judgement would be accepted by his interlocutors as being a valid judgment. On the other hand, if a nonnative speaker, despite many years of studying and learning English grammar, is not able to convince her interlocutors of her judgement -- that she accepts the first sentence as perfectly correct because a) it is comprehensible and b) it is common usage -- in this situation a nonnative speaker does not own English as much as a native speaker. Another example is the use of "Between you and I" by many native speakers for "Between you and me." As I tend to be prescriptive -- which I consider to be linked to insecurity stemming from my ascribed nonnative speaker status -- I would not accept the former phrase as correct. However, I do not think my judgement would be accepted as my interlocutors would point to the use of "Between you and I" by very educated native speakers.<sup>2</sup>

My participants appear to be addressing the following issues and asking the following questions:

1. To what extent can a Nonwhite immigrant woman, who is a speaker of English, claim to own English?
2. To what extent can a nonnative speaker claim to own English?

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<sup>2</sup> I have borrowed this example from Cook (1999, p. 186). Cook considers this phrase to be "nonstandard," while I consider it to be incorrect.

3. Who decides whether a particular speaker owns English? The speaker? Or the speaker's interlocutors? Or both?
4. To what extent is teaching ESL an art/craft that can be learned, one that is not linked to native- or nonnative-speaker status?

It seems that all the participants are addressing these issues and, to a varying degree, trying to disentangle the association of native speaker with rightful owner of English. This chapter looks at the language-related experiences of Arun and Violet. While asking these questions and disentangling ownership of English from native-speaker and nonnative-speaker status, these two participants also indicate that their ownership of English as minority immigrant women continues to be contested. The narratives illustrate the ambivalence that Arun and Violet feel about their identities as users of English when their encounters with nativism give them the message that they are second-class speakers of English.

## 6.2 Arun

Arun's narrative revolves around the impact on her social identity of being constructed an "imposter" (Bourdieu, 1977) in her claim to ownership of English. In India, Arun's sense of herself stemmed from her identities of Brahman, English teacher, and Ph.D. candidate in English literature. The experience of being a newcomer in Canada destabilized Arun emotionally and spiritually mainly because she was constructed as not knowing English.

N: When I came here, I felt I didn't know English.

A: Exactly. I would pick up the *Star* to find work and call people. I said once, "Are there any strings attached?" and the woman said, "What?" And I thought that something is wrong with my English, that maybe this phrase is incorrect. You know (voice rising), you start doubting yourself. You just think you have to learn a new language all over again. All over again. Initially somebody would say, "Oh, you have an accent," so you'd think

there's something so wrong, that you are not acceptable, that you'll never be able to get these jobs. And especially the way you look too, you think that you lack so many things. Your accent is not correct.

You can hear the shock and horror in Arun's voice as she relates this incident. "Are there any strings attached?" she asked a potential employer on the phone, referring perhaps to a bonus that the potential employer had advertised in the newspaper. The woman's response was "What?" thus signalling to Arun that she spoke either wrong English or that she had such a heavy accent that it was not possible to understand her, a message that was confirmed by many of Arun's early encounters in Canada with people on the street and other prospective employers. I was puzzled by the response Arun got to her question, "Are there any strings attached?" and tested it in three different situations -- but with people I know well -- to see if it is indeed not a common Canadian expression, but my friends understood it. Why, then, did the woman on the phone not understand Arun? Peirce's (1993) work, although it is written in the context of ESL learners, suggests an explanation, because, as Arun tells us many a time, she is socially constructed as an ESL learner. Peirce builds on Bourdieu's (1977) notion of "legitimate discourse" whereby he argues that a number of conditions have to be met for a legitimate discourse to take place. The conditions that are most relevant in this context are his concept of appropriate speaker, as opposed to an imposter, and of legitimate receiver. Peirce uses this concept to explain the breakdown in communication between co-workers Gail, an anglophone Canadian, and Eva, an immigrant language learner. Peirce suggests that the breakdown occurred because Eva had been exposed as an "imposter" (p. 198), adding that as Eva did not have the knowledge that Gail assumed Eva should have, Eva was thus positioned as an "illegitimate receiver" of Gail's utterance (p. 198). Similarly, I suggest that Arun's accent exposed her as an imposter, and hence she was positioned as an

illegitimate receiver of the prospective employer's utterance. Peirce tells us that "as soon as Gail recognized that Eva was an imposter, she brought closure to the conversation" (p. 198), and the woman on the phone did the same with Arun by saying, "What?" And just like Eva could not claim the right to speak because she accepted the subject position of "imposter" (pp. 198-199), Arun could not claim the right to speak because: "I thought that something is wrong with my English, that maybe this phrase is incorrect." Peirce places such social interactions within the larger discourse of which Eva and Gail are a part, a discourse that must be understood, not only in relation to the words that were said by Eva and Gail, but in relationship to "larger, inequitable structures within the workplace, and Canadian society at large" (p. 199) that considers immigrant language learners as illegitimate speakers of English (p. 199). Again, I argue that there is a parallel in Arun's and Eva's positioning in that although Arun is not a language learner, she is a) constructed as not knowing good English and b) she is marginalized by society as an East Indian immigrant woman. Hence I argue that the breakdown in the conversation between Arun and the prospective employer happened for the same reasons that Peirce offers for the breakdown in the conversation between Eva and Gail.

Arun's interview indicates that these unequal social relations of power were replicated in many subsequent situations over the next few years and that she accepted the subject position of "imposter" in these situations. The effect of such experiences made Arun doubt that she could claim to be a legitimate speaker of English:

A: It's like a choking situation. You feel [after speaking it all your life] that it's no good, as if it's a different language, and you have to learn it all over again. And unless and until you can learn it again or you can speak well, it's better to keep shut or talk to people who won't point out your mistakes.

N: It's enough to silence you.

A: Yes, for me literally, for some time, it was like a choking sensation.

As Arun was doing doctoral work in English (on imagery in T.S. Eliot's poetry), it seems reasonable that she should lay claim to being a legitimate speaker of English. But her claim was rejected. Her categorization as an East Indian, and as someone who does not know proper English, combined to produce her location as an immigrant woman in Canada. In this location, she was stripped of her qualifications, of her identities of English teacher, of her Ph.D. candidacy in English literature. According to Weedon (1987), "Language is the place where . . . our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is *constructed*" (p. 21). The central role that language plays in the relationship between the individual and the social is clearly visible in the narratives of all my participants, but it is more poignant in Arun's case because an integral part of her sense of herself (see Weedon, 1987, p. 32) till she came to Canada was that of English being *her* language. The adverse effect of her initial language-related experiences in Canada on her social identity is a recurrent theme in her story:

A: Yes, it's a very painful process. Because you're somebody back home, and then you become an absolute nobody here. From knowing a language, you become like a kid, like a baby learning all over again. Like an ESL student. And then you lose respect for yourself. I had a lot of respect at the university [in Bombay]. I had no self-esteem left [in my early days in Canada]. I could never think I could apply for a job, for anything to do with academe ever again.

I noted once again that she referred to her construction as an "ESL student," and as she conveyed similar messages a number of times in the interview, I will address this issue, a little later in this narrative. But first I need to look at the impact of her initial work experiences on her identity formation. Arun explained that as her husband was working in a convenience store, they could "barely make ends meet," and hence she *had* to find a job. She described one such job:

A: I would go for telemarketing, and the way people would [treat you] . . . you go through a shock. A sixteen-year-old kid would tell you, "Hurry up, you haven't got any orders yet" (mimicking the girl).

In her study of South Asians in England, Brah (1996) notes that some of them found work in manual occupations, and insofar as they were likely to get unskilled jobs that White workers did not need or wish to do, the Asians would occupy a very low position in the occupational hierarchy. "As ex-colonial subjects Asian workers could be regarded as inferior even by unskilled white workers" (p. 29). In these situations, there was little opportunity for cultural exchange between White and Asian workers, one of the reasons being that many South Asians did not speak English. However, says Brah, "racism was often a bigger barrier than language" (p. 29). Arun seems to have experienced such racism in this unskilled/semiskilled job, as in many others that she tried in her first year. This was not unlike the Ugandan Asians who came to settle as refugees in Britain when they were expelled by Idi Amin and who experienced both racism and being cut off from their community support (see Brah, 1996, p. 34). Arun initially responded by withdrawing into herself, overeating, and feeling despondent. But after a period of depression, she was able to draw on her identities of a Brahman/upper-class Indian woman, academic, and English teacher in order to resist the oppressions she was experiencing in Canada:

A: I thought, this is a dead end. So I thought that instead of choking and suffocating at home, I would apply to universities. It would be something you know.

Hence she applied for admission to a Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program offered at an Ontario university. The strategy Arun employed to empower herself - to go to university -- is similar to the one described by the participant "Rana," in Conway's (1996) study of single-mother students in Canadian universities. Rana is "an upper-class,

educated, well-respected journalist" from India who, when interviewed by Conway, had been rendered a "low-income, single-mother student" at a university in Ottawa by the racism she encountered in Canada (p. 220). Rana tells Conway: "[T]here is a fair amount of emphasis on education and university learning and stuff. It's quite respectable in my culture" (p. 287) - this culture being middle class Indian culture. Rana decides to go to university in Canada as a way of getting back some of the status that she lost by coming to Canada. As a doctoral candidate she has legitimacy with her children's teachers; before that, she was seen as a single mother, a woman of colour (p. 287). I suggest that like Rana, Arun's strategy of self-empowerment is embedded in the same upper-middle-class culture of India, where young women go to university to maintain the class status of their families and not to find well-paid employment.

However, the admission process to the TESL program reinforced the message that Arun was getting from other sources that she was an ESL learner. In Chapter 1 I have referred to the English proficiency tests that Canadian universities demand of applicants from certain countries, and in Chapter 5 I have indicated that Tasneem had to do such a language test. But while Tasneem appears to have tolerated the first test as yet another hurdle (she objected to the second one), for Arun the test symbolized the identity of ESL learner that was being constantly ascribed to her, and was yet another marker of her low status in Canada: "I said to myself, 'See how unacceptable everything about us is.'" The test reiterated the message that she had received from the woman on the phone -- that she was making false claims to owning English.

Despite these negative messages, the TESL program empowered Arun enough to go on to do a B.Ed. Just like Rana in Conway's (1996) study who says that getting good grades



at a Canadian university empowered her because she realized that she was an intelligent and capable woman, Arun explained:

It was a way of validating that your English can be understood. Just getting A pluses and saying to myself, I'm worth something. Even though I was very shy to talk to people, in my journals and assignments I did very well. I was doing research.... For assignments that would take [others] 20 hours, I would spend more than 200 hours.

Although Arun felt gratified that her hard work resulted in her professors recognizing that she was a good student and knew English, she indicates that her success in a Canadian university was not enough to completely combat the messages of being Other that she received in other areas of her life, and hence she has accepted to some extent the subject position of imposter regarding her claim to English. This subject position became obvious when I asked her if she considered herself a native speaker of English. She replied: "What I would consider and what others would consider are totally different." This comment indicates that a) Arun is aware that she is being positioned as an imposter, as someone who has to take an English language test and b) acknowledges that the dominant group has the power to decide whom to allow into the Inner Circle of Native Speakers. For Arun, then, the judge of who is a native speaker is not herself but the gatekeepers of the Inner Circle.

I have in Chapter 5 indicated that the focus of the interviews was not to document racism or prejudice; but as this was a recurrent theme in Arun's story -- as in Iffat's -- and is interrelated with native-nonnative speaker identities, these instances need to be mentioned and theorized. I will now therefore look at the recurrent theme in Arun's narrative that she was considered to be a language learner and the impact this construction had on her.

A: Students ask me a lot of questions: "Where did you learn English?" "You've learned English well." "How many years did it take you to learn English?" "How long have you been in Canada?" These are the first reactions, because right away

when they find out that I'm not from Canada, [they think] I might be lacking in some way. It might be accent or proper Canadian English.

N: But what if the teacher was a visible-minority woman who was born in Canada or came here as a child?

A: It would still be the same. The initial response would be, "Oh, she who herself has learned, how can she teach us?"

Arun is making three points. First, students want a Canadian teacher. I have addressed this issue in the introduction to Chapter 5 when I examined the connections between students' investments in Canadian English and their attitudes toward their minority teacher. Second, students think of Arun as a person who has learned the language and therefore cannot teach it. They are thus reflecting one of the strongest tenets of English Language Teaching (ELT), that the ideal teacher is one who has been immersed in English from birth. The third point follows from the second -- that if you are not born in an English-only environment, you cannot ever learn English well enough to teach it and definitely not as well as a native speaker. The question I want to address about Arun's students' prejudice is this: Why do they not want a teacher who they think has learned English, rather than having been born into it, while Tasneem's and Fayza's students do (see 5.4, 5.5)? There is a growing body of literature that shows that a person who has been a language learner can be a better teacher in certain situations than a native speaker or someone who has not formally learned English (see Tang, 1997; Widdowson, 1994). There are two possible explanations for Arun's experience of rejection. First, it appears that the Inner Circle has been successful in promoting the mystique of the elusive native speaker in ESL in Canada as well as among new immigrants. In this context it is worth citing Davies (1991) who points out that there is *no* definition of the native speaker; the only definition seems to be negative, that is, the "native speaker would be someone who is *not* a learner" (p. x). To me, the significance of this negative definition

is that "ESL learner" is construed as a static, unchanging identity, and there is no possibility of moving from the identity of ESL learner to that of native speaker; hence Arun's students think that she cannot be a *teacher* of English. Second, Arun's experience suggests that a teacher's self-positioning impacts her pedagogy. Both Tasneem and Fayza bring to their students' notice that they are nonnative speakers; Fayza builds on her not-so-distant identity of ESL learner in Canada and presents herself as "proof" that one can indeed move from the category of ESL learner to ESL teacher. But for Arun, the identity of ESL learner ascribed to her by her students is disempowering. Perhaps she subscribes to some extent to the belief that the native speaker is the rightful owner of English and the rightful owner of ESL pedagogy. I am suggesting that Arun's pedagogy in her early years of teaching ESL in Canada was built on the norm of native speaker that she appears to have followed in India. As she became aware of the nativist discourses that positioned her as an illegitimate nonnative teacher of English, she slowly began to build a pedagogy that did not follow the native speaker norm.

I have earlier mentioned that after an initial period of depression, Arun was able to develop resistance strategies to combat the racism she experienced. Her later pedagogy is testimony to that resistance, as she was able to use her nativist encounters to develop an anti-racist pedagogy with the goal of student empowerment. One example of this empowering pedagogy is that she ruptures the discourse that if you don't know English, you have not been exposed to what Macaulay called a higher and better civilization, a discourse that, it appears, still exists in Canada and perhaps also in the students' home countries. From the participants' profiles, which I presented in Chapter 4, it is clear that many schools in the former British colonies used to equate English/European languages with high culture and intelligence and might still do so to some extent today. For example, Iffat told us that she was considered the

intelligent and studious one in her family, and those qualities were somehow associated with her love of English. Patsy indicated that the association of European languages with culture and intelligence did not vanish when the British left Kenya, for in her school the academically inclined students were streamed into French classes, while those who were considered less promising studied Swahili. Similarly, the discourse of the schools that I attended in Karachi was that doing well in the English class indicated that you were intelligent, whereas the girls who showed proficiency in Urdu were demonstrating their working-class background. Such a discourse probably existed among the upper classes in India when Arun lived there, and Arun herself might have subscribed to such views. But after having experienced being Other on the basis of the language that she had always considered *her* language, Arun now attempts to rupture the discourse that equals English with intelligence and high culture:

A: I tell my students who have low self-esteem, that if you don't know English well, it doesn't mean that you're a lesser human being. I'm so good at building up their self-esteem, because we (Nuzhat and Arun) have been there once. And in spite of knowing the language, imagine this happened to us, so just imagine what happens to people who don't speak the language. How much self-esteem do they lose! It's crushing! If it can be [crushing] for me, a person who was teaching at the university, who comes here and feels like a nobody here . . .

Arun appears to miss that it may be more crushing for her to be constructed a learner than for her students because of the position she occupied in India. However, this experience of being Other has sensitized her also to interracial and interethnic tensions among her students, and she addresses these tensions in a nonthreatening way. Among the materials that she has found effective in addressing and diffusing these tensions is a film called *Eye of the Beholder*:

- A: A death takes place, and four witnesses describe this incident and the person who was killed. All of them are wrong. We talk in class about our perceptions and generalizations, which we turn into facts. I give them the example that supposing a Vietnamese person did something bad to me. Next time I see a Vietnamese, my brain will send signals right away. . . . If I have a bad experience with the second Vietnamese, then I'll generalize, and after four-five such experiences, I'll make it a fact. I talk to them about how we get prejudices and generalizations. And so they realize where their prejudices come from.
- N: Are you doing this only [to address students' racism against other students] or is this also your way of dealing with what's happening to you?
- A: Exactly. It serves my purpose too. I believe in it very strongly, and I can make people see for themselves. There's a reason for these prejudices. They have roots. For example, I have Polish students who are not liked by another group. And there are historical reasons for these dislikes. After these exercises they learn how to respect everybody. That's what I want them to do before learning English -- to have respect for everyone in the class.

At the end of the interview Arun traced how she had come to a new self-positioning vis-à-vis her claim to English. She talked of how many immigrants never recover from the dislocation of the immigration experience, and as a result, "something within them dies and it's too late." She described her own experience: in her early days in Canada, she said, there was nobody to show her "the light" and so "a miracle had to take place." She continues:

- A: I guess I was very lucky that the miracle happened. Even though it happened after three or four years, it did happen. So I was very fortunate.

In light of the fact that we were discussing our claim to English, I consider this miracle to be Arun's realization that despite the nonnative status that is now ascribed to her, she realizes that her claim is valid. As Arun made a number of references to how much she still "loves English literature," at the end of the interview I asked her if she would consider doing a

Ph.D. in English in Canada. Her response was: "The motive and incentive has died in me." But that does not mean that she has lost interest in participating in English. She now wants to take on "something completely different, which is writing. I want to write a book," she told me, thus signalling that although she is no longer able to draw on her identities of Ph.D. candidate, scholar of T.S. Eliot's poetry, teacher of English literature, she can continue to draw on the identity of legitimate speaker of English.

### 6.3 Violet

Nero (1997) notes that many Anglophone Caribbean students who move to the United States are placed in remedial writing or ESL classes, and many of them are surprised and insulted by their placement (p. 587). Violet's initial experience of English in Canada appears to have been similar to that of the Caribbean students that Nero describes. While she was going about the long process of getting her degrees from Jamaica evaluated and trying to get a licence to teach in public schools, she noted that the newspapers were saying that there were few jobs in teaching but many more jobs for computer-literate people. She started thinking about changing her profession and hence enrolled in adult school to do courses that were advertised as computer courses. But then she found out that there was a large English-as-a-second-language/English-as-a-second-dialect (ESL/ESD) component in this program, and therefore decided to "quit" school:

- V: I said, "No way I'm going back to learn English. I know English. I'm going back to where it's just a computer course."
- N: Why on earth were you learning English again?
- V: Yes! That's what I say. Go back to school which is like a high school situation, to do English again? I said, "No!"

Dina, whose narrative I discuss in the next chapter, draws attention to the discourse in Toronto ESL of English-speaking Caribbean immigrants as not speaking "proper" English. She was hired to teach ESD courses, in which the students were immigrants from the Anglophone Caribbean. It is easy to understand Violet's anger: she had studied in English-medium schools all her life, and now she was being positioned as an ESL learner. Violet's experience of trying to find work in Canada and settling herself shows that she, as an Afro Caribbean woman, cannot escape the dominant perception of Black women as domestics (Brand, 1993; Collins, 1990; Henry, 1992; Bobb-Smith, 1999) and of speaking "bad" English (Nero, 1997).

N: You didn't try to get any work like telemarketing?

V: Yeh. I went and I did an interview for selling on the phone and the lady said she'd call, but she didn't. That one didn't call me.

While Violet was spared Arun's experience in telemarketing of having a 16-year-old supervisor who made her feel inadequate (6.2), it is puzzling that the interviewer did not call Violet back, as telemarketers usually work on a commission basis. The interviewer's decision might have been informed by the fact that Violet's English has a Patois inflection and also by the stereotype of Blacks as domestics. Violet said that the only work she was able to find in her first year was in a school cafeteria.

V: The job entails everything. You have to cook. You have to clean, you have to take stock. You have to transfer goods from one fridge to the other. When goods come in you have to pack them in the fridge. You have to do your inventory. You have to leave work and you have to go to the bank sometimes, you go to the bank, you have to wait a long time to deposit your money. Nothing, you don't get paid for anything. You have to do the banking. You have to cook, you have to cash, everything. You are given five hours from 8:00 until 1:00, and it doesn't matter what you have to do, you are not paid one cent for no overtime.

N: And how much money were you getting paid?

V: Eight dollars per hour.

According to Brand (1993), the kind of work Black women in Canada do today indicates that the types of work ascribed to them "have not changed significantly from the time that Black people landed in the Americas as enslaved labour"(p. 275). She considers the labour market to consist of "'white men's work,' 'white women's work', and 'nigger work,'" and argues that the types of work that Black women in Canada do today is a continuation of "nigger work," which has its roots in slavery and in the ascription of "less-than-human characteristics to Black peoples" (p. 275). Black women in Toronto primarily work in service jobs, factory work, the food and service industry, and more recently in low-level clerical jobs (p. 275). This concentration of Black women in low-paid, low-status jobs leads Henry (1992) to comment: "The traditional live-in work that Black women have performed in the private sphere has now become routinized in the public sphere as day work" (p. 23).

Violet's narrative indicates that her construction as domestic worker impacted on her attempts to establish herself as a school teacher. She took the job in the cafeteria in the hope that it might lead to work as a supply teacher in the same school. But it would appear that the cafeteria job reinforced the dominant perception that she was doing the kind of work that Black women are expected to do. This perception became obvious when she went to government-sponsored job searches and career-assistance programs.

V: Government people are saying to me, "No work is bad work. You have to change your field." I'm saying, "Teaching's what I like. And teaching's what I can do. Why should I be forced to change my field and do something totally different?"

It appears that government employees in these programs also see her as having unrealistically high aspirations, making her feel humiliated and dejected.



- V: It's degrading to know you have gone to university, you have done your master's, you are qualified and all you can get is going to a factory to work for six-eighty-five. . . . It's not fair. It's not fair.

The long process of getting her degrees recognized and the bleak prospects for Black teachers that, according to Violet, make many Jamaican teachers give up their profession, make her conclude that racism is institutionalized in Canada:

- V: I don't think the government really cares for immigrants who come with qualifications from other countries. They don't look at those as being of any importance. I guess if you were coming from United States it would be different, but I don't know why they have this phobia that people who come from other countries, if it's not a First World country like Canada, United States, or England, we are not qualified.

After she had been in Canada for a few months Canada, Violet realized that she might not be able to teach in a public school and hence enrolled in a TESL program. She recalled that there were a number of students of colour in the TESL program and some of them spoke very good English.

- N: And the teachers - were they all white?

- V: Yeah. All white.

- N: And the presenters and all?

- V: All white.

- N: That's a bit annoying isn't it?

- V: (with a laugh) They didn't get any coloured, you know, people in.

Rockhill and Tomic (1995) have pointed out that the referent of ESL in Canada is White (p. 210). Similarly, the referent of TESL in Canada is also noticeably White, as Violet's experience indicates. I suggest that Violet's TESL experience brought home the message to her that she was excluded from being an ESL teacher in Canada because of being Nonwhite.

This message was also conveyed to her by the paucity of Black ESL teachers. My reason for asking Violet to participate in this study, although she had taught only as a volunteer in Canada, was because I was unable to find any other Black ESL teachers of adult immigrants. This lack of Black ESL teachers might well be related to the immigration patterns of Caribbean people where mainly domestics were permitted entry, the construction of Caribbean women as speaking broken English, and of being construed as being more adept at the kind of work described above by Brand (1993) and Henry (1992).

I argue that the construction of legitimate TESL teacher as White compounded Violet's existing ambivalence about her status as English speaker. Her ambivalence is shared by many people from the Caribbean, as indicated by the title of Nero's (1997) article, "English is My Native Language . . . or So I Believe." Building on Winer's (1993) work, Nero takes the position that although the majority of Anglophone Caribbean people speak some variety of English-based Creole, they continue to label their language as English, at least in public domains, because Creole is associated with low status. "Caribbean people live and migrate with this dual linguistic identity" (p. 587). But contrary to Nero's observation, Violet indicated a number of times during our conversation that she does not consider Patois to be inferior to English: "We speak a lot of Patois. But . . . we don't see it as being a problem or anything." She thus corroborates Milroy and Milroy's (1985) point that the "function of non-standard language as a marker of group identity . . . is deeply rooted in the language behaviour of communities everywhere" (p. 111). In this context, they draw on Labov (1980), who argues that the increased use of Black English in the U.S.A. is a powerful symbol of community identity, and on V. K. Edwards (1981) and Hewitt (1982), who make a similar argument to explain the increased use of Creole in England (cited in Milroy & Milroy, 1985, pp. 111-113). Hewitt notes that the use of Creole is not limited to children of

West Indian heritage; cases of Turk and Greek children using Creole are not uncommon in the United Kingdom, and there is a notable trend among White, British, working-class children to acquire Creole (Hewitt, cited in Milroy & Milroy, 1985, p. 113). Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997) report a similar phenomenon in their argument that so-called native speakers do not necessarily use standard English (p. 554). While the above-mentioned scholars report such usage among children and teenagers in England, Violet reports such an experience with an adult in Toronto. In fact, this was the only time that anyone in Canada has directly remarked on her English:

- N: Let's say, white Canadians. Did any of them ever pass any remarks about your English, that you speak Patois or something like that?
- V: Umm, no. No. . . . Like I met a [white] lady and she was saying, "Jamaicans speak a lot of Patois," and you know she said she like the sound. She tried to get some of, adopt some of them, like she would say, "Ya man," and "What a one." Stuff like that, you know.

During our conversation, Violet moved between two positions -- that of native speaker and that of nonnative speaker. Her self-positioning seemed to be related to her experiences. For example, when referring to her work as a teacher in Jamaica where she reinforced standard English and when she related the incident where the White woman in Canada told her she liked Patois, Violet suggested that she considered herself to be a speaker of standard English and hence a native speaker of English. But when she described her experiences of being placed in an ESL/Computer class, I inferred that she saw herself as a speaker of only "bad" English and hence not a native speaker. However, although she remained tentative regarding her status of native speaker, she was adamant that the native-nonnative speaker dichotomy is irrelevant:

V: I don't really go for this thing about native speaker of English. English is English. You speak English, you speak English. French is French. You speak French, you speak French! As long as you can speak the language, fine! It doesn't matter whether it was the first word you hear or it was the last word you hear, or you learned it along the way.

N: Absolutely.

V: As long as you can speak it, fine.

I have earlier indicated that at the time of the interview, Violet had not been in the classroom as a paid ESL teacher, so I asked her to think of how she would teach English in adult school to Patois-speaking students. She wrote down some common Patois expressions, and told me how she would "correct" them.

1. Mi naw com a school tomarow.  
I am not coming to school tomorrow.
2. Falla mi guh ovea de suh!  
Follow me over there.
3. Mi nah talk to you 'cause you nuh ha much sense.  
I am not going to talk to you because you don't understand anything.

Violet's emphasis on teaching her students the English that is normative in Canada signals that she sees her primary goal as an English teacher as giving her students the linguistic tools that will help them function in this society. Her stand appears to be that if she tells adult immigrants who have come to Canada to escape poverty that they should stay with Patois on the basis that their English is as good as the dominant group's English, she is doing them a disservice, for she is not giving them the English that is accepted by the dominant institutions and that will get them admission to higher education and employment. In sum, she considers it empowering for her students to have the tool of appropriate English. Delpit (1988) would concur. Noting that the Black community in the United States was very angry when well-intentioned, White liberal educators introduced "dialect readers" in schools, she comments

that these "were seen as a plot to prevent the schools from teaching the linguistic aspects of the culture of power, thus dooming Black children to a permanent outsider caste" (p. 285). While Delpit favours validating students' first language/s in the classroom, like Violet she considers it necessary to teach marginalized minority students in the U.S. the codes or rules for participating in what she terms the "culture of power" (pp. 282-283). Among these codes are "ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting . . . as success in institutions . . . is predicated upon acquisition of the culture of those who are in power" (p. 283).

Here it is worth noting that Violet used a similar pedagogy in Jamaica (see 4.4) because standard English has arguably a similar status in the class-stratified society of Jamaica as it does in Canada. According to Violet, many parents in Jamaica who could not go to school because of poverty send their children to school with the expectation that the children will learn standard English, which will help them secure good jobs. It is worth noting here that Violet and her husband invested a great deal of their modest incomes in educating their daughter in a traditional high school where only standard English was permitted. The daughter's ambition to become a doctor might be related to her education in a school where most of the students were from the middle classes.

Violet's pedagogy is embedded in her experience of growing up in crushing poverty in Jamaica. I find Carr's (1994) insights helpful in locating Violet's pedagogy. Carr takes the position that Patois -- he refers to it as "Patwah" -- is a language, but the language only of lower-class Jamaicans, one which is "rigorously expelled from official discourse" (p. 165), and hence children from poor families are disadvantaged in schools as they have to learn another language, while for middle-class children it is a question of reading and writing in the language that they and their families speak (pp. 164-165). He adds:

To be unable to speak English is to be found lacking in a society dominated internally by a postcolonial patriarchy controlled by the English-speaking elite/bourgeoisie, and externally by patriarchal imperialist countries like the United States, Japan, China, and England. Access to the English language and institutional education allow one to enter the track of upward mobility in the private and public spheres. (Carr, 1994, p. 165)

Nero (1997) makes a similar point: The history of slavery and British colonization in the Caribbean has forced the continued interaction of standard English and Creole in a lopsided arrangement that has privileged the standard variety and stigmatized Creoles (p. 586). Standard English, then, has a similar meaning in Jamaica as it does in a number of former British colonies (e.g., Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan), where the working classes see it as an alchemy. Hence Violet's pedagogy has to be seen in the context of her growing up in poverty and her belief that as a teacher it is incumbent upon her to give the tool of standard English to adult immigrants from the Caribbean, many of whom also grew up in poverty, so that their children are not doomed to do what Brand (1993) describes as "nigger work."

Violet is basing her argument for "correcting" her compatriots' English on the grounds that they do not have literacy skills. However, her thinking seems to be embedded in the principle that was upheld at the "Black English Trial" in Ann Arbor. The parents of Black children who were "progressing extremely badly at school" (Milroy & Milroy, 1985, p. 114) argued that the school authorities had not taken account of a variety of factors that prevented the children from making normal progress (pp. 114-115). In 1979, the Michigan courts ruled that Black English is, indeed, an identifiably different language system from that of standard English and that public schools presuming to teach Black children must present these children with teachers and language studies positively oriented to the distinctive language skills these children bring into the classroom (Jordan, 1989, p. 31). Violet's situation is different because she is teaching adults, but the fundamental principle appears to be the same. Like the parents

at Ann Arbor, Violet is arguing that in order to survive in a White society, her compatriots need the tools of White society, that is, the variety of English that is acceptable in Canada.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> While agreeing that dominant linguistic and cultural codes need to be taught to linguistically and culturally different students, Kubota (1999b) cautions that these codes should not be taught based on colonialist or assimilationist discourses; instead, the teaching of the dominant code should be grounded in a critical understanding of the following principles: a) all languages (and varieties of languages) and cultures are equal; b) learning the dominant linguistic and cultural codes should not result in the loss of one's cultural and linguistic heritage; c) learners can appropriate these codes to advocate linguistic and cultural equality in the wider society (p. 29). Kubota proposes this pedagogy of critical literacy in the context of schools in Japan, but it is as applicable in any situation where there are ethnic, cultural, or linguistic minority students. For a detailed discussion of such pedagogical issues, see also Kubota (1998).

## Chapter 7

### "I Am A Native Speaker"

#### 7.1 Introduction

The four participants whose narratives I presented in Chapter 5 negotiate nativism from the position of nonnative speaker, while the two participants whose narratives I presented in Chapter 6 remain ambivalent on their status as they feel that owning English requires validation from self and others. All these six participants have shown how they disentangle issues around effectiveness as an ESL teacher from the status of native or nonnative speaker and emphasize that teaching is a learned craft/art and being an effective ESL teacher is not tied to the teacher's status of native or nonnative speaker. However, the two participants whose narratives I present in this chapter identify as native speakers and hence raise issues that I have not so far addressed.

Drawing on Kachru (1997), Pennycook (1998), Paikeday (1985), all of whom have questioned the validity of the native speaker as a linguistic construct, I have been arguing all along in this thesis that the native speaker is a linguistic manifestation of nativism, and hence minority teachers are negotiating sexism, racism, colonialism, and Third World status, with all its implications of subordination. However, this does not mean that my participants take the same position. For some of them, the native speaker is only a linguistic construct. Cook (1999), too, takes this position. For Cook, a native speaker of English is one whose first socialization is with English. Building on Ballmer (1981), among others, she says that this is a *defining* characteristic of a native speaker, while proficiency and expertise are *incidental* characteristics and assumptions (pp. 186-187). Cook emphasizes that native speakers do not necessarily know better English but their



learning process of English is different (pp. 186-188). I return to this point below when I discuss monolingualism. To Cook, adults could never become native speakers "without being reborn" (p. 187). Davies (1991), for whom proficiency and expertise are not incidental characteristics but the *defining* characteristic of a native speaker, rejects Cook's view that the native speaker is "uniquely and permanently different from a nonnative speaker" (p. 45), and argues that the native-nonnative speaker categories are fluid, and thus it is possible for a nonnative speaker to acquire native linguistic competence and pass from nonnative speaker status to that of native speaker (p. 95).<sup>1</sup> Like Davies, Dina considers proficiency in English to be the defining characteristic of native speakerness and hence suggests that it is possible for a nonnative speaker to become a native speaker.

These varying positions on the native speaker raise another set of questions: If English is a person's native language in the sense that Cook uses, and they speak a nonstandard variety, are they then native speakers of English? In my discussion of Violet's language experiences (6.3), I cited Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997) who report that young, White so-called native speakers do not necessarily use standard English (p. 554). And what if such a person grew up never having learned "correct" English? Both Randolph Quirk and Prince Charles have expressed dismay at the declining standards of English in schools in England (cited in Pennycook, 1992, p. 111).<sup>2</sup> A related issue is about what status to ascribe to the monolingual speaker of English. Patsy, whose narrative

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<sup>1</sup> Another way of summing up the two main positions on what the native speaker concept represents is to differentiate between what the term denotes -- the language that a person learns first -- and the connotations of proficiency and expertise that this term has taken on.

<sup>2</sup> It is not clear to me whether by declining standards, Prince Charles and Randolph Quirk mean that these students choose to use nonstandard English, or whether they speak and write grammatically incorrect English.

I present in this chapter, is the only monolingual participant in my study. Monolingualism, as I have pointed out earlier (see 2.1.4) is common in Inner Circle societies but is unusual in societies where nonnative Englishes are used. If a person knows only English, is she automatically given native speaker status, on the basis that everyone has to be a native speaker of some language? Cook (1999) offers insight on these interrelated questions. To her, first, fluency in English is not a defining characteristic of the native speaker, and hence Helen Keller is a native speaker of English who has to communicate by other means (p. 186); second, native speakers might not be aware that their speech is different from the status form, as shown by the growing use of the nonstandard "Between you and I" for "between you and me" even by newsreaders (p. 186). Hence Cook appears to be saying that native speakers might, or might not, speak standard English or correct English, and that the speaker's fluency or proficiency in English is not relevant to the distinction.

## **7.2 Dina**

Dina's narrative is strewn with words, phrases, and sentences about the importance of the English language in the lives of her family ever since the family moved to Canada. An example of this multilingual couple's investments in English is that both husband and wife took a vow of monolingualism upon entry into Canada:

N: When you first met, what language did you and your husband speak together?

D: I spoke Dutch with him.

N: And you've switched to English since then?

D: When we came to Canada, we totally switched to English. We were not speaking Dutch. And when the children were born and so on. . . . My philosophy has been that English

became a very big thing for both of us, my husband and myself. We did not speak anything else at home either.

N: Do you speak to your children only in English, or Dutch and English . . . ?

D: English. English, strictly.

N: So they don't speak Dutch?

D: No. They took Dutch classes and they know enough Dutch so that they will understand and answer back in English. It's a decision we made a long time ago that it was very important for them to do well in English . . .

Dina appears to believe that the family will benefit from using only English, that is, being unilingual rather than bilingual. I do not think that this switch to a unilingual family life is based simply on the premise that speaking other languages "interferes" with learning the target language, English in this case -- a theory of language learning that many of us ESL teachers accepted, and put into practice by using only English in the classroom and by encouraging students to speak English at home. This practice of language teaching has come under criticism in recent years by, among others, Phillipson (1992), and is linked to the five tenets of language teaching ratified at the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language, held at Makerere, Uganda, in 1961; tenets that Phillipson critiques as being an outcome of the unequal power relations between Centre and Periphery countries and between dominant and dominated languages (Phillipson, 1992, pp. 183-215). Dina grew up bilingual/multilingual, speaking Dutch, Urdu, Hindi, and Taki-Taki; from Grade 7, she had to study English, French, and German in school. Her husband, who is half-Dutch, and grew up in England, is also multilingual, and the couple's main language with each other used to be Dutch till they moved to Canada, and hence it would have been easy for the family to continue speaking Dutch at

home as well as English. Dina's narrative describes an immigrant couple that "chose" to become totally assimilated. The switch from being a multilingual family to having only English as the language of the home raises these questions: To what extent are the first language/s and culture/s of immigrants accepted in Canada? What pressures do new immigrants feel to assimilate? Cummins (1996) points out that there used to be a great deal of prejudice against bilingual people, prejudice that is reflected in the U.S. context in the current opposition to bilingual programs (pp. 27-45). For Cummins (1992, 1996), public schools' rejection of students' languages and cultures depicts in micro the macro dynamics of the broader society's rejection of cultures and languages other than those of the dominant group. I look now to why Dina thinks she and her family are advantaged by being constructed as unilingual. Dina's narrative gives many clues on this point. The most significant one is the story of the problems her son, who has his mother's dark complexion, had in school.

D: I had this conversation with my son's teacher who kept saying to me, "No dear, I mean, what is your mother tongue? What's the kid's mother tongue?" And I kept saying, "Their mother tongue is English." And they would correct me, because they had seen me, and my son has my [dark] complexion. . . . My daughter, on the other hand, has my husband's complexion. . . . So when people see [my son], they say, "Oh, here is another East Indian." I had this conversation with my son's teacher, and at one point she said to me, "Well, if you're lying to me [that English is not his second language], it's going to come out in his testing."

Dina clarified that her children were put in this position because the family had recently moved to Ontario from Manitoba. Both her children had been tested in Manitoba and both scored very high in the intelligence tests. When the family moved to Toronto, Dina's son was put in the "basic" "general" stream. Dina objected to his placement, and hence the school administrators agreed to test him in "English and Math and so on" and he "came

back with an IQ test of 140 . . ." She said that her daughter did not receive this differential treatment because she is fairer, and the school authorities thought she was White.

I can only speculate why the teacher was so strident in her attempts to find out which language was Dina's son's mother tongue, and in her insistence that English was not his mother tongue. Perhaps she was touched by the many negative stereotypes of bilinguals, such as that they have language problems. By being able to state that the language of the home was English, Dina was trying to impress on the teacher that her son was an intelligent boy with high morals. As Willinsky (1984) points out, standard English is associated with high intellect and morals (pp. 4-9).

Dina is cognizant of the status of White and Nonwhite people in Canada. Referring to the differential treatment given to her dark son compared to that experienced by her fair daughter, Dina said:

D: It seems that if you're classed as a visible minority, the automatic assumption is that you can't speak English. And if you do speak English, you do not speak proper English versus if you have white skin.

Hence Dina's experience corroborated the finding of my study in which English skills were associated with Whiteness (see Amin, 1994, 1997). The reaction by her son's teacher was not an isolated incident. Her workplace reflected a similar understanding of who can dare to claim ownership of English:

D: The students were quite alright. It was more colleagues who were under the impression that in order to teach English as a second language to student and in order to teach *proper*, you have to be born, raised an English speaker. One got the impression, although nobody came out openly and said it, that you have to be white, Canadian in order to teach ESL properly.

It is worth noting that Dina emphasizes that her students accepted her from the start. Her acceptance by the students right from the beginning is puzzling because it is so unlike the experience of many of the other participants, especially Iffat. It could be that the students were not as problematic as Dina had expected them to be based on what she had experienced outside ESL, say, from her son's teacher, and what other minority teachers had led her to expect based on their experience. But while Iffat seems to have been accepted by her colleagues probably because she was the only one with a degree in linguistics, Dina found her colleagues' idea of an English teacher to be that of a White person who had grown up in an English-speaking home. But she did not passively accept her colleagues' stereotypes of a legitimate English speaker and English teacher. This is indicated by how she positions herself vis-à-vis the native speaker:

N: Do you consider yourself a native speaker of English?

D: (decidedly) Now I do. At the time when I first started [teaching ESL], I didn't.

She made the point that once English became well entrenched at home and replaced all other languages, she slowly became a native speaker. I then asked Dina her definition of native speaker.

D: To me, a person, whether you are born, raised here, or you came as an immigrant and you have mastered the language, you should be a native speaker. A person who has mastered the language and is able to speak, understand, do whatever needs to be done in the language, that person should be classified as a native speaker of any language.

Dina's views on who is a native speaker indicate that she thinks any person with proven competence in English can "pass" as a native speaker. Hence her definition is different from that of Iffat and Tasneem's, for whom race is a determinant, and from Fayza's, who considers a particular culture a prerequisite for anyone claiming to be a native speaker.

Dina is interpreting a native speaker to be one who is fully competent in English rather than one whose first language is English. As I have pointed out earlier in this chapter, Davies (1991) takes a similar stance and argues that it is possible for a nonnative speaker to acquire native linguistic competence, and hence, he concludes, nonnative speakers can choose native speaker membership (p. 95). For Davies, the native speaker boundary is attributable as much to nonnative speakers as to native speakers because to him the distinction between a native speaker and a nonnative speaker, "like all majority-minority relations, is at bottom one of confidence and identity" (pp. 166-167). However, in this definition Davies does not take into account the unequal power relations inherent in majority-minority relations that are replicated in the relations between those who can unquestionably identify as owners of English and those who are seen to be second class speakers of English.

Dina's views on which accents are accepted as being good accents in Canada are similar to her views on who is and can be a native speaker. I told her that I think that part of the reason that I am constructed as a nonnative speaker of English is because of my non-Canadian accent. Her indignant response was:

D: Sure it's a Canadian accent. It's all relative. If you go to Alberta, they would pick out an Ontarion just like that, and say you're from Ontario, because your accent is different. . . . If you're from Nova Scotia, your accent is different. So there are those slight differences in intonations. So who is speaking the right accent, and what is the right accent?

Here Dina is taking the position that all accents are equally good; that, in Toronto, for example, a Pakistani accent has similar status — or lack of it — as a Nova Scotian accent. She appears not to subscribe to the dominant discourse that some accents have higher status than others in Canada, just as she disrupts the dominant discourse on who can be

a native speaker. At one level, she appears to be arguing that seeing yourself as having the right accent is (as Davies argues in the case of who is a native speaker) "at bottom one of confidence and identity" (see Davies, 1991, pp. 166-167). At another level, this position is being offered as a normative one, one that is counter to her experience of racial marking being taken as an indicator of a nonnative and therefore inferior English competence, and one that comes out later in the interview. Dina is making the following points:

- a) My accent, her accent, *are* Canadian accents.
- b) My accent, her accent, are accents as Canadian as those associated with Nova Scotia or Alberta.
- c) The comments on my accent are similar to that of a Nova Scotian visiting Ontario or British Columbia being told that he or she sounds Nova Scotian.

Interestingly, Dina is the only one of the participants to comment on the nonhomogeneity of English competence in Canada. I see her comments to be related to the fact that she is the only one of the participants who has lived in a province other than Ontario. Dina taught English in a school in the U.S. before moving to Manitoba where she worked for many years as a school teacher, and during which time she and her husband toured the neighbouring provinces. Dina and I were having this conversation in the context of teaching ESL in Toronto, and the accent that students aspire to in Toronto may be quite different from the accent that students in, say, Vancouver, aspire to, thus reflecting the differential value ascribed to different regional accents in the different provinces of the country. I consider it significant that Dina took the position that there is no differential value ascribed to Nonwhite accents vis-à-vis White accents, especially in light of what she said later in the interview.



D: I think that when people hear me speak without seeing me -  
 - on the phone -- they will never, ever be able to say that  
 I'm of East Indian background. Yet when they see me, then  
 they say, "Oh, it's you" (sounding disappointed). "Where  
 are you from? You don't have an Indian accent."

Perhaps Dina is only making the point that she does not have an "Indian accent" and not that Indian accents have low status in Canada. But what comes out in this statement is the disappointment that people show when they meet her in person after having talked to her on the phone. While Arun is constructed as an illegitimate receiver in phone conversations because her interlocutor can recognize her Indian accent (see 6.2), Dina is constructed as a legitimate speaker and receiver because she does not sound Indian. This particular experience throws doubt on Dina's view that all accents are given equal value in Canada and indicates that a White accent gives you the power of reception (Bourdieu, 1977) more than a Nonwhite accent.

I would argue that Dina's claims that anyone can become a native speaker and that all educated accents are accepted as Canadian accents are normative but not necessarily empirical and have to be seen in light of the awareness that she has in terms of who is constructed as a Canadian. I would argue also that her views reflect not the reality, but her vision of a utopian Canada, where there is no nativism and where race, accent, and immigrant status do not exclude minorities from the nation. In our discussion of what students mean when they say "White Canadian," she said that "the terminology would be used for a WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) -- that you have to be of British background," thus signalling that Britishers still enjoy a higher status in Canada than other White people, for example. I found it significant also that later in the interview she emphasized that among the accents that students have difficulty in understanding are some regional British accents:

D: Students will tell me that that teacher has a very thick accent and I can't understand what she's saying. A lot of times British teachers feature amongst those teachers that the students say they don't understand.

N: And the accents that they find easy to understand would be . . . ?

D: It would be a Canadian. . . . Not the British accent, but more the Canadian accent, if there is such a thing . . .

While Dina is not able to define the Canadian accent, she feels that her speech would be included in students' idea of a good English speaker/teacher. She said: "They [the students] want to talk like me. Like their teachers, like everybody in the streets. Like a Canadian." Her pedagogy is grounded in this awareness of who is constructed as being a full citizen of Canada and who is considered a legitimate teacher of English. As immigrants have to face the stereotypes of what is a valid and acceptable accent, Dina focuses on disrupting the stereotype of what accent a teacher or a person of authority should have. She often makes her own tapes so her students will get used to and accept different accents. On some of these tapes, she uses her own voice; most tapes use what I've termed "White" accents, and thus she is disrupting students' thinking that their minority teacher's accent is different from the accents they hear on the tapes, which sound authoritative. In order to give her students the message that there is no one acceptable accent, she and her colleagues get together and put their voices on tape.

Dina's self-assessment as being a competent ESL teacher seems to have been a factor in her popularity with her students.

D: I think they [the students] saw me as: Well, she [Dina] has gone through the system - I made it a point to tell them that English is my second language. That it was not my mother tongue.

Whereas Arun felt that acceptance was hard to come by because her students did not want someone who, like themselves, had studied English, Dina found it a pedagogical asset that she and her students shared the experience of being ESL learners. As Arun grew up as a member of the English-speaking elite in India, it was essential to her identity formation to be seen as a native speaker and not as a language learner. English does not have the same social status in Surinam as it does in India; perhaps if Dina were teaching Dutch to new immigrants in Holland, she would be hurt if they did not consider her a native speaker. But for Dina, English is a tool that she has acquired, and she is proud of this achievement. Her students are inspired by having such a teacher on which to model themselves. Dina's pedagogy is similar to Tasneem's, who used a similar strategy to encourage her students -- by telling them that one does not have to be born in an English-speaking family in order to learn English -- and like Fayza's, who brings to her students' notice that she was an ESL learner like them and is now being acknowledged as fully competent in English by being employed as an ESL teacher.

Dina works hard at nurturing her students in every way possible. As she is multilingual and familiar with a number of cultures, she uses these qualities to establish an environment conducive to language learning:

D: They loved [being in my class] because they could converse with me in their own language, so if there was a problem, they would come to me, and I could understand their culture. It was as if I was an ally to them, rather than an enemy. And I still have contact with a lot of my former students.

N: Did any of them get into professions?

D: A lot of them now have professions. A couple went to university.

She described a particular class where her students were Iranians, ethnic Chinese people from Hong Kong, and Koreans, and where she felt particularly successful:

D: And, since I knew their culture and religion and customs, it was, "Oh, yes, you understand what I'm talking about. How important Ramadhan is, how important Eid and Nauroze are."

One of Dina's successful pedagogical strategies to forge community with her students is to show her familiarity and acceptance of their institutions -- institutions that are not validated by White Canada. Tang (1997) and Widdowson (1994) both indicate that nonnative teachers can be more effective than native teachers in certain situations. Jane (5.3) said that she was successful in the bilingual class because she shared a common language, culture, and ethnicity with her students. While Dina did not share the languages of all her students, they had many commonalities. As she puts it, "It was as if I was an ally to them, rather than an enemy."

Dina's belief that she and her family are accepted as Canadians is captured by her construction of herself as a native speaker. Although her narrative indicates that she and her son have experienced racism and discrimination on the basis of looking East Indian, she sees herself as an assimilated, native-speaking Canadian without an East Indian accent who is a highly successful ESL teacher and whom her students want to emulate. She says of her husband and herself:

D: We never had the luxury of having rich parents. Neither me, nor my husband. We came to Canada as immigrants. And I mean immigrants. So you build your life.

Dina has realized the immigrant dream.

### 7.3 Patsy

Patsy speaks so beautifully that one feels compelled to listen. The magic that the BBC World service had for me in my childhood and teen years came alive in her presence. A number of my participants talked about the hold that a British accent had for them when they were growing up. For example, Iffat felt its power at the tennis clubs she used to go to with her father in British India, Jane described the British accent students at the language institute in China aspired to, and Tasneem said that the British teachers at her school in decolonized Pakistan epitomized a native speaker accent to her. While dialoguing with Patsy, I felt that these participants would accept Patsy's accent as the equivalent of the British accent/s that have such mystique for them. And hence Patsy has what Bourdieu (1977) calls, "the power to impose reception (p. 75), while Arun is unable to meet the conditions of a legitimate discourse, for, although she has an upper-class Indian accent, it is not a BBC accent (see 6.2).

Patsy says about herself: "Chutzpah, that's what I've got. Chutzpah."<sup>3</sup> She reminds me of the Indian writer Bharati Mukherjee, as self-described in her (1981) article "An Invisible Woman." In this article, Mukherjee writes about her adjustment from life as an upper-class woman in India to her new status of immigrant woman in Canada and then the U.S. Referring to her class privilege in Calcutta, she writes, "I never doubted that if I wanted something -- a job, a scholarship -- I could get it. And I did. I had built-in advantages: primarily those of education, secondarily those of poise and grooming" (p.

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<sup>3</sup> "Chutzpah" is a slang or colloquialism from the Yiddish. Its first known usage in English was in 1892 (as "chutzbah"), but this word has come into popular usage recently. The *New Statesman* used this term in a story on John Kennedy in 1968. The report said that "Kennedy can go into Watts in his short-sleeves, into working-class quarters with his gut Catholicism, and into a whole range of theoretically hostile environments with nothing more than chutzpah" (cited in *OED*, 1989, p. 209).

36). An example of Patsy's "built-in advantages" is her British-style education, which gave her status both in and outside Kenya. Like Mukherjee, she has the poise and grooming that were taught by British teachers and that therefore are recognized as such in Canada. Perhaps it is a combination of her BBC voice and this cultural capital that have given Patsy what appears to be a charmed life. Just as things seemed to fall into her lap in England, where she was easily able to get admission to a prestigious university (4.2.3), in the same way doors seem to open for her in Canada. Like Mukherjee, Patsy does not seem to doubt that if she wants something -- a job, admission to a university, she can get it; like Mukherjee, she did and continues to get what she wants. For example, soon after she arrived in Canada with her husband she easily found work as a library technician. She then decided to go back to university for an undergraduate degree and did not have any difficulty in gaining admission: her A level certificate from Kenya was recognized by the Canadian university because the exam is graded in England. As soon as she completed her undergraduate, she decided that she wanted to teach ESL. She phoned an ESL centre and was informed by a support staff person that the centre was not hiring in the near future. Patsy related that while other prospective employees could not even get to talk to the program director, Patsy was able to engage her in a fifteen-minute phone conversation. The director invited Patsy to come into the office and fill out an application form that would be put in the job bank for any upcoming openings. She got the first job she applied for, despite not having a TESL certificate.

N:     Okay. So tell me, all these years, first in England and then in Canada, did people ever make any remarks about, "Oh! You speak such good English!"

P:     Oh, yes. Gosh, yes.

N:     Like who? And what kind?

- P: Perhaps people have always been doing this, but in the past six years -- since I started teaching ESL -- that's when I became very sensitive, tuned in to people making remarks about my level of English, or what they considered the standard of English I have.

I seemed to have touched a raw chord, because she continued to talk about people's reactions to her speech:

- P: The thing that really hurts awfully is when other ESL teachers, and it's not students, who will remark on my English. First of all, the assumption is that English is not my first language. And second, the assumption is that I learned it from somebody. That it's basically not mine. It's borrowed. That someday it'll go back. You know.
- N: (laughing) To where it rightfully belongs!
- P: It's that feeling you get from people. And it, and it breaks my [heart].
- N: Do they actually say that? What do they say?
- P: They'll come up to you and say to you, "Oh, what a lovely accent." Or they'll say, "You do speak English very well." And I'll say, "Well, why do you even remark? I mean I teach English, for God's sake!"

I asked her if she often received such comments outside an ESL situation.

- P: Oh, yes. In stores especially. When I first came here. I remember, I'd sort of talk to somebody. I'd ask for something and the person [would react]! I remember the first time this happened. I'd asked her where something was. The woman's mouth fell open and she said, "Oh, that accent! It's so beautiful! It's so beautiful." And I said, "Oh, thank you." And she just stood there, and she said this to me. And then she turned around and, and continued doing her work. And I said, "Oh, sorry." You know, she got blinded.

Although it might well be the enduring power and mystique of the BBC voice that affected the salesperson, just as it affected me, I suggest that the saleswoman had a different referential frame for Patsy than I did. I noted that Patsy speaks more clearly than

most people, both Nonwhite and White, and thought that she would make a good radio commentator. But I suggest that the attention that Patsy received from the salesperson was not for this reason. Patsy looks East Indian, and hence when the woman saw her she expected to hear what she considers to be an Indian accent. Hence, although the woman exclaimed: "Oh, that accent! It's so beautiful! It's so beautiful!" I argue that this cannot be considered a compliment, for what is the standard of accent that this woman is using? We note that her "mouth fell open" and that she "just stood there." As Patsy puts it, "She got blinded." By what? By Patsy's dark skin? This person might well be contrasting Patsy's accent with that of other East Indians, who, by inference, have terrible accents. In addition, such a comment indicates to me that the speaker does not know that just as accents in Canada are on a continuum, with some being closer to the accents habitually heard on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) than others, in the same way there is a continuum of accents in the former British colonies, and Patsy's accent is very close to British English, an indicator of her British schooling and her exposure to British people all her life.

But it is not surprising that this particular salesperson has a particular view of South Asian accents, as pejorative sociolinguistic images of East Indians are common in Canada. For example, a recent episode of the popular television show *Seinfeld* showed a Pakistani restaurant owner who spoke with such an exaggerated Pakistani accent that it appeared that he had modelled his accent on the self-styled Indian accent used by Peter Sellers in his song "The Ladies of Calcutta." While the Pakistani restaurateur made only a few appearances on *Seinfeld* -- he was deported to his home country for living illegally in the U.S. -- the children's series, *The Simpsons*, perpetuates such stereotypes on a regular basis. One of the main characters in this series is "Apu," a shopkeeper from India.



My 11-year-old son finds Apu amusing and sometimes talks like him in jest. He does not seem to realize that his mother's accent is the accent that is being essentialized by and through Apu.

The "compliment" that the woman gave Patsy is similar to when a white Canadian will confide in me after getting to know me somewhat well: "You know, you are not like other Pakistanis." In both cases, the person making the comment is using a referent that is steeped in colonialism. While I might give an uncomfortable smile because I do not want the person involved to know that I feel humiliated, Patsy challenges those who dare to make such comments to her.

P: "Why would you even remark on my English?" I ask them.  
 "Does everybody come up to you and say, 'You speak English very well'? Why is it okay for you to assume that I will accept this without comment?" So I challenge them when they do this.

In a way Patsy's experience of being complimented on her English is the opposite of Dina's run-in with her son's teacher who will not believe that the language of the home is English, but in a way it is similar as both the teacher and the people who compliment Patsy associate good English with Whiteness. Dina and Patsy negotiate this nativist experience similarly in that they disentangle good English from Whiteness. Patsy sees such comments as being similar to those that appear, at face value, to express the opposite sentiment:

P: And those are the ones that actually will acknowledge that a) you speak English and b) you speak it well. It's the other ones who will refuse to believe that you speak English at all by simply looking at you. And that kind of thing often comes from the students, who, of course, have been fed a steady diet of white Canada and white ESL teachers.

I will address how Patsy deals with her students' prejudice a little later in this narrative when I discuss her pedagogy. Patsy's narrative indicates that she is aware that much of her charmed life is because of her marked British English. However, the constant comments on her linguistic ability and her accent appear to have sensitized her to her students' language experiences. The privilege she enjoys as a speaker of BBC English and that opens doors for her appears to trouble her, and she has taken an advocacy position for her students, a position that is evident in her views on the native speaker.

N: In your mind, are you a native speaker of English?

P: Yes. Definitely, yes.

She sounded uncomfortable about talking about her own status and steered the conversation toward a discussion of her students who, she said, did not need to be in an ESL class:

P: I have people in my class for whom English is a first language. They're from the Caribbean. You know, those are native English speakers as well.

She went on to make the point that "there are many dialects of English," which, along with her expressed view that people from the Anglophone Caribbean are also native speakers, indicate to me that she thinks that Canada should accept not just British English, but other varieties as well. In this context she talked about the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program that she attended. Like Violet (6. 3), she commented that all the instructors at the TESL program were White, and the program did not question, much less disrupt, the association of Whiteness with legitimate English teacher. Patsy noted also that her program did not trouble such terms as mother tongue, first language, and native speaker. In this context, it is worth citing Tollefson, who, in his (1994) review of Phillipson's (1992) *Linguistic Imperialism*, urges that Phillipson's

critique of the five widely accepted tenets of ELT -- one of them being that the ideal teacher is a native speaker -- "be required reading in teacher training programmes" (p. 177). Similarly, Kamhi-Stein (1999), writing in the context of the U.S.A., argues that the increase in the numbers of nonnative speakers enrolled in TESOL M.A. programs warrants that the curriculum be modified to integrate discussions related to nonnative speaker issues. As in the U.S.A., the enrolment of Nonwhite men and women in Toronto TESL programs is increasing; while I was one of very few visible minorities in my TESL program in 1990, Patsy, like Violet, said there were quite a few visible minority students in her course.

Patsy's anti-racist stance as reflected in her views on who owns English is also reflected in her pedagogy, the thrust of which appears to be to demystify Whiteness. She self-consciously disrupts dominant visual images that depict only White people in positions of authority.

P: I'm very sensitive to the fact that a lot of materials are biased . . . that employers and teachers are shown as white. If I can get material, especially visual material because it's so powerful, that depicts black people in positions of authority, I'll use it. But if I can't and if I'm stuck with stuff that shows only white people in authority, I point out to my students, that this does not necessarily reflect reality . . . that any of you, and me, any of us could be in that position. So I do try. But it's difficult to get stuff [that is like that].

N: Oh. Good for you.

In a similar vein, Patsy ruptures her students' stereotypes of who is a Canadian and reminds them that Nonwhite people also are Canadians and that they too should be included in nation making. When, for example, a student says that his sister has a "Canadian" boyfriend, meaning a White person, Patsy responds thus:

- P: I say, "A Canadian? A Vietnamese Canadian, a Pakistani Canadian?" And the student will say, "No, no, no. A Canadian." I then keep asking them questions such as what the Canadian boyfriend looks like and they realize that what they have in mind when they say Canadian is not what I have in mind when I say Canadian.

While Fayza works on her students' internalized racism and tries to build their self-esteem, Patsy addresses their racist behaviour directly, with chutzpah. When new students refuse to believe that she is the English teacher, she addresses such situations publicly so that the other students will also get the message that minority women can be legitimate teachers of English. To one such student, who, says Patsy, announced in front of a number of students, "I want a teacher who speaks English," she replied:

- P: I said, "Get out of my classroom! Right now! I don't want you in here." His eyes flew open and he said, "I just wanted to see if I could register." And I said, "No, I'm sorry. I will not have you in my class." And I took him out of the class and told him off some more.

Here Patsy found herself in a situation described also by other minority teachers (e.g., Braine, 1999; Thomas, 1999); this is a situation that minority teachers are unsure how to negotiate, as is evident in these narratives. For example, neither Iffat nor Arun would employ Patsy's strategy of open confrontation with students. One has to have chutzpah to do so. By addressing the students' racism publicly, Patsy was trying to dispel her students' stereotypes of valid ESL teacher as White and emphasizing to her students that Nonwhite women can be valid ESL teachers. It is clear that she takes the responsibility of "being in a position of challenging and dismantling people's views of what [an English teacher] should be" very seriously.

Patsy's privileged position has made her think deeply of what her role is in the classroom:

P: I feel I can do something new. I'm in charge of channelling people's thoughts. I'm in a position of making or breaking all kinds of [stereotypes]. And you know, I'm in the position of providing a good role model for them.

Patsy's challenging behaviour made me conclude that she dismantles people's assumptions about English being a White language from the oppositional stance of a Nonwhite person. A big clue to her stance is her brief statement: "Chutzpah, that's what I've got. Chutzpah." Her very use of this word indicates her oppositional stance to Whiteness. Although she has the linguistic ability and the accent to "pass" as a native speaker despite her East Indian looks, she has chosen the stance of "brazen impudence" that is the hallmark of a person who has chutzpah (see OED, 1989, p. 209).

The interview with Patsy left me feeling a little unsettled. She has been speaking English from the time that she was born and everyone in the family spoke English, so she has always been in an English milieu. She is monolingual, the only one of my participants who speaks only English, and if I had to judge my participants' spoken performance in English, I would give first ranking to Patsy. Of all the participants I felt that this was the person who would be recognized as a native speaker by students, other teachers, and people she meets in shops and on the street. Questions that arose for me are: Is there some validity then to the connections made by linguists between monolingualism and being a native speaker? In Chomskyan linguistics, monolingualism is an integral part of the abstraction involved in obtaining the idealized native speaker (see Chomsky, 1986). In the introduction to this chapter, I raised a few questions on the status of monolingual speakers of English. Patsy's monolingualism makes me wonder: Can a person claim more ownership to English if she does not know any other language? Would Patsy's English be less good if she also spoke, say, Swahili? Is her English so good because she is

monolingual and hence there is no "interference" from another language, or because of her privileged schooling? I was left with these questions.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Confronting Nativism**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

I have in this thesis explored visible minority immigrant women ESL teachers' experience of being constructed as nonnative speakers of English in Canada. I have argued that the native speaker is a linguistic manifestation of nativist discourses that position Third World women as nonnative to Canada. To recapitulate the major themes that I have identified in this thesis: In Chapter 1 I have looked at discourses of the native, native speaker, and nativism, and indicated that the interlinked concepts of native speaker, first language, and mother tongue are intricately interwoven with the concept of nation. In Chapter 2 I have located my discussion of the native speaker within the larger framework of language and power, and have shown how the English language has historically been used to maintain and justify inequities between dominant and subordinate groups. Then I have indicated that nonnative Englishes were produced at decolonization when the need arose to differentiate between Third World Englishes and First World Englishes. In Chapter 2 I have also pointed out that the indigenized varieties of Englishes (IVEs) have a clear colonial past and are spoken by Nonwhite people, and, hence, the native-nonnative speaker debate is a struggle between White First World Englishes and Nonwhite Third World Englishes. A theme that is apparent throughout the thesis and that I directly address in Chapter 6 (see 6.1) is the association of the native speaker with having ownership of English. The focus on birthright, inheritance, and intuition in definitions of the three interlinked, almost synonymous, terms of native speaker, first language, and mother tongue position native speakers as the rightful owners of English

while making spurious similar claims by nonnative speakers. Chapter 4 profiles the participants and highlights their participation in English in their home countries in order to throw light on why they negotiate linguistic nativism differently from each other. Chapters 5 to 7 illustrate the women's experiences of linguistic nativism in Canada and make the point that nativist discourses are not confined to ESL. These three chapters describe the challenges the participants face in their profession and how they respond to these challenges.

I need to emphasize that this thesis has been an investigation into the *gendered* experience of minority immigrant women ESL teachers. As pointed out in Chapter 1 (1.3.2) and Chapter 2 (2.1.5), many theorists (e.g., Brah, 1996; Frankenberg, 1993; Miles, 1989, 1993; Ng, 1981, 1990) call attention to the organization and arrangement of racial relations of domination and subordination, and consider race to be a set of social relations in which they emphasize the simultaneity of the impact of race, class, and gender in shaping the lives of women of colour. Brah (1996), for example, specifies that racism, like ethnicity, nationalism, and class, represents gendered phenomena (p. 154). I have indicated throughout the thesis that ESL is a gendered field in Canada -- the overwhelming majority (86%) of teachers in the federal Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and provincial ESL programs in Ontario are women (see Power Analysis, 1998; p. i) -- and have argued that one of the reasons why minority immigrant women decide to become ESL teachers is that, just like Canadian-born women and immigrant women with less English, they bear primary responsibility for reproductive labour, and hence the relatively flexible hours of part-time ESL work makes this field comparatively attractive for them.



A word now on how I interpret the women's identification with the native speaker or nonnative speaker. One possible interpretation would be that the women who self-identify as nonnative speakers are colluding with dominant stereotypes of minority women; those who say that they are native speakers are making oppositional moves to these stereotypes; and the women who remain ambivalent on their status are staying out of the debate. But I think that it would be too simplistic to say that Patsy and Dina's stance that they are native speakers is an oppositional move; that Iffat, Jane, Tasneem, and Fayza are colluding because they accept the dominant perception of them; and that Arun and Violet are taking a neutral stand. I need to point out that the teachers might understand the concept "native language" as "first language" in the sense of which language they learned first, and hence the participants who learned English as their second or third language might well be reflecting this understanding in their claim not to be native speakers of English. I see the different positions that the women take vis-à-vis the native speaker to be equally valid responses and strategies to resist linguistic nativism in ways that empower themselves and their adult learners, who also experience Otherness as learners of English. *All* the teachers offer resistance to varying degrees to the native speaker model as promoted by the profession. Although one cannot make a direct connection between the women's self-positioning vis-à-vis the native speaker and their experience of nativism in Canada and their participation of English in their home countries, it would seem that both those sets of experiences inform the women's self-positioning.

In this chapter I first examine the participants' pedagogies. Then I provide a comparative analysis of how the participants from former British colonies and those from countries without a history of British or American colonialism experience and negotiate

nativism in Canada. I next discuss the implications of my findings for English Language Teaching (ELT) in general and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs in Canada in particular, after which I suggest further areas of research.

### **8.2 Nonnative Pedagogies**

The women's experiences in ESL, although different in detail, indicate that discourses of colonialism continue to adhere to English in Canada, and that these discourses interlock with racism, sexism, imperialism, and the women's Third World status to discredit their claim of being valid ESL teachers. But the data show also that the participants feel that they are effective teachers despite their initial nonacceptance by their students and colleagues and despite being constantly judged against the native speaker norm. Even Iffat, who faced a great deal of racism from her students for over 30 years, did not leave me with the impression that she felt she was an ineffective teacher. The nonnative speaker identity ascribed to the teachers is a potential site of disempowerment, but the narratives indicate that regardless of how they position themselves vis-à-vis the native speaker, the teachers build effective pedagogies on their ascribed nonnative status. One such pedagogical strategy common to many of them is that they build community with their students on the basis of their commonalities and thus provide the social conditions identified by Peirce (1993) as conducive to language learning. In a bilingual class, having a common mother tongue is a useful instructional tool in teacher-student interaction (Tang, 1997, p. 578), and hence Jane, who speaks Mandarin, feels effective in her Bilingual Mandarin-English class. Dina is multilingual and is familiar with a number of cultures, and hence her students "loved" being in her class. Fayza builds on the shared painful experience of immigration with her students that made them feel

ashamed of the cultures and languages that they brought with them. While building community with their students on their shared experience of having experienced Otherness in Canada, the teachers also build their pedagogies on an experience that is associated with being a nonnative speaker -- the experience of having been ESL learners -- and this experience provides them with a privileged understanding of the problems and weaknesses their students face in learning English (see Tang, 1997, p. 578).

Not only do the teachers build their pedagogies on their nonnative speaker status, they also use this status to actively disrupt native speaker discourses. The first such strategy employed prominently by Dina, Fayza, and Tasneem is that they bring to their students' notice the fact that they have learned English, a strategy eloquently captured in Tasneem's words to her students: "I learned [English]. I wasn't born speaking English. My mother doesn't speak English." By positioning themselves as having acquired English rather than having it as a mother tongue or first language, the teachers show that being fully competent in English is not tied to native speaker status, thereby disrupting centuries of mythmaking about the innate and biological ability of native speakers to intuitively know English.

Another way that they demythologize the native speaker is with the materials that they bring into the classroom. Aware of the Settlement ESL classroom's norm of native speaker accents, Dina often makes her own tapes on which she uses a variety of voices, including her own, so that her students will learn to accept different accents as valid accents. Like Dina, Jane self-consciously uses tapes with a variety of accents, thus encouraging her students to rethink their understanding of a Canadian accent. While Dina and Jane disrupt audio/aural stereotypes of the native speaker by using nonnative accents, Patsy self-consciously disrupts dominant images that depict only White people in

authority by actively searching out visual materials that depict minorities in positions of authority. Arun scours libraries for materials that will make her students aware of their internalized racism. Both Patsy and Arun are thus trying to decentre the White native speaker as the only valid ESL teacher.

What do the participants' pedagogical strategies mean in terms of decolonizing the ESL classroom? Here I turn to Simon (1992), who distinguishes between "pedagogy" and "teaching" (p. 56). According to Simon: "When we teach, we are always implicated in the construction of a horizon of possibility for ourselves, our students, and our communities. . . . To propose a pedagogy is to propose a political vision" (pp. 56-57). Simon emphasizes that we teachers need to concern ourselves with the enhancement of human possibility whereby we encourage our students to "envisage versions of a world that is 'not yet' -- in order to be able to alter the grounds upon which life is lived" (p. 57). The participants in my study have opened up possibilities for their students, for nonnative teachers, and for all those involved in ESL by showing that a) while native speakers are privileged by our profession, nonnative speakers can also lay valid claim to full competency in English and thus to ownership of English, and that b) good pedagogy is not the province of the native speaker, but is dependent on learning the craft or skill of teaching ESL. These are big steps toward the empowerment of nonnative speakers, both students and teachers, for, as Widdowson (1994) has pointed out, the association of the native speaker with ownership of English and good pedagogy is a dominant discourse of ELT (pp. 386-388). The teachers' nonnative pedagogies have implications for ESL, and especially for the education of teacher-trainees, implications that I address later in this chapter (see 8.4).

### **8.3 Negotiating Identities**

In my thesis I set out to address the two following questions:

1. How is nativism, in particular the concept of the native speaker, manifested in the context of ESL?
2. How do visible minority immigrant women teachers of ESL negotiate nativism and the native speaker construct?

On the basis of the data from my research, it is possible to suggest that the participants from former British colonies (henceforth referred to as colonies or former colonies) experience linguistic nativism in Canada differently from the participants from countries without a history of British colonialism (henceforth referred to as non-colonies).<sup>1</sup> I address this difference in terms of the two research questions; first, how nativism manifests itself in Canada for the participants from former colonies and non-colonies; second, how the participants negotiate the particular form of nativism that they face. There are many similarities in how the women from former colonies, namely Arun, Iffat, Tasneem, Patsy, and Violet, experience and negotiate nativism; but many significant differences in how they experience and negotiate nativism compared to how the women from non-colonies -- Dina, Fayza, and Jane -- experience and negotiate nativism.

#### **8.3.1 Manifestations of Nativism**

The data appear to suggest that the participants from non-colonies experience what I term a more "benign" form of linguistic nativism. For example, as a newcomer Jane is often complimented on her English. "You speak such good English," people say to her,

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<sup>1</sup> The former colonies include both Kachru's (1992) Outer Circle and the Anglophone Caribbean societies (i.e., former American and British colonies), while the non-colonies are the countries of Kachru's Expanding Circle. However, there are no participants in this study from former American colonies.

while Jane's own evaluation is that her English is "not that good." These compliments make Jane feel that Canadians are "very encouraging and very nice." Similarly, Fayza reports positive experiences with "Canadians" both before and after she learns English, which leave her with the impression that "Canadians are very gentle people." Dina's experiences are less positive, and I address them later in this section when I discuss the race of the participants. But while Jane and Fayza report positive encounters, Iffat, Arun, and Tasneem are positioned as racial and linguistic Others. Iffat does not win acceptance from her students over a 30-year career. In a similar vein, the British woman at the tennis club says to Iffat: "You have the cheek to teach English!" Iffat notes that people were very kind to her when she moved to Canada but says that they thought she was either Italian, Portuguese, or South American, and not South Asian/East Indian. Arun's East Indianness impacts on how people respond to her claim of knowing English. A potential employer says, "What?" to Arun's telephone enquiry: "Are there any strings attached?" - an expression that I tested in three different situations to see if it is an uncommon expression in Canada, but my friends understood it. "You have an accent," she was often told in her early years in Canada. Tasneem faces institutional nonacceptance of her claim to English in that she has to do an English proficiency test. She does one test, but when she applies for admission to a fulltime program at another university where she has done English literature courses and has got good grades, she is asked to do yet another English proficiency test. The other students are surprised at Tasneem's good grades. Violet relives the experience of many immigrants from the Anglophone Caribbean when she finds herself in a course with a large ESL/ESD component. However, I need to differentiate between Violet's experience of nativism and that of the East Indian participants. The only time that anyone directly remarks on Violet's English is actually a positive experience.

A White woman says to Violet that she likes the sound of Patois and wants to learn a few Patois expressions, and this makes Violet feel good about her identity as a speaker of Patois. Perhaps this incident can be interpreted as an example of the "benign" form of racism experienced also by Jane and Fayza.

Comparatively few such positive experiences are reported by the women who are of East Indian origin, except for Patsy, whose narrative I address later in this section. One cannot come to any definite conclusions about the experience of immigrants from former British colonies, especially as Violet is the sole non-East Indian participant and has not been in the Canadian ESL classroom except as a volunteer; but in the absence of any other evidence or information it is possible to say that the data suggest that East Indian women face more sociolinguistic prejudice than other groups. An indicator that East Indianness is a factor in the form of nativism that is manifested is that of the three participants from the non-colonies, only Dina relates negative experiences, partly from her colleagues but mainly from her son's teacher. Dina's son is constructed as an ESL learner and as a "Basic" stream student on the basis of his East Indian looks, while Dina's fair-skinned daughter does not receive any such differential treatment from her teachers.

Perhaps we can say that East Indian women continue to be positioned to some extent as *babus*. I have indicated in Chapter 5 (5.2) and Chapter 7 (7.3) that images of the *babu* are very much part of the consciousness in both Britain and Canada. Rampton (1988) says that in England ethnically South Asian children are considered never to speak "normal" English; he sees such perceptions of South Asian boys as being embedded in the *babu* stereotype (pp. 508-514). Similarly, in Canada, Bibby and Posterski (1985) have shown that East Indians are commonly associated with a number of socially undesirable stereotypes (pp. 136-139). Pejorative sociolinguistic images of East Indians are noticeable

on television. For example, the children's series, *The Simpsons*, perpetuates such stereotypes on a regular basis. In Chapters 5 to 7 I have indicated that the participants from former colonies demonstrate a higher competency in English than do the participants from non-colonies. Perhaps we can say that the women from the first group lay more claim to "owning" English, in the way that I have defined this concept (see 6.1), than do the women from the second group; and the particular form of nativism that the former face is linked to their claim of having full competence in English and thus of owning English as much as native speakers.

The form of nativism that the East Indian women in my study experience might well be linked to the continuing hegemony of the British in Canada, especially in Toronto, where this study was conducted. Hurst (1999), writing in the *Toronto Star*, suggests that despite their reduced numbers, people of British descent may still hold considerable power in Canada and especially in Toronto. In 1971, 60% of Toronto's population identified itself as British by birth or background, whereas the 2001 census will likely show that numerically the British are now just one minority among many (p. J1). Hurst's main point seems to be that Toronto may be less overtly a British town than it used to be, but British people continue to have a great deal of power in this city. She cites sociologist Raymond Breton as saying that economically and politically, British people in Toronto "are still never far from the centre" (p. J2). The Britishness of Toronto might well be a factor in how the participants from former British colonies experience nativism.<sup>2</sup> While American English is making inroads in a number of other countries --

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<sup>2</sup> As pointed out earlier in this chapter (Footnote 1), none of the participants in this study are from former American colonies, and hence it is difficult to say whether the particular encounters with linguistic nativism experienced by the participants from former colonies is related to their status of being from former Anglophone colonies, or tied to their status of being from former



for example, Korea -- and many younger adult students in ESL classes now appear to show a preference for what they consider "American" accents, there are a number of indicators that British accents have a high status in Canada. I have earlier in this thesis said that Iffat is almost "forgiven" for being a nonnative speaker because she has had exposure to British English (see 5.2), and that the high status of British English explains to some extent why Jane, who has modelled herself on British tapes, is often complimented on her English (see 5.3). The high status that British people and institutions enjoy in Toronto/Canada explains why Patsy, despite her dark looks that construct her as an East Indian woman (although she is of Goan-Portuguese parentage), leads a charmed life in Toronto, just as she did in England. I have earlier noted that Patsy is constantly complimented on her British accent and have suggested that her claim to owning English is not challenged partly because of her BBC-style accent (see 7.3).

I want to reiterate that the women's encounters of linguistic nativism are not only with British people. British views of people from the Indian subcontinent appear to have become normative in Canada. This phenomenon is a further indication that nativist discourses of the colonial Native, of the *babu*, that started in England during the era of colonization, have become transplanted in Toronto, and perhaps other cities in Canada. In sum, the narratives of the East Indian participants suggest that their experience in Canada is a re-enactment of the colonial encounter.

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British colonies. In other words, is the main reason that they encounter such severe nativism the fact that they acquired English in a former colony that is English-speaking and hence speak an indigenized variety of English (IVE)? Or is the main reason for this severe nativism tied to the fact that the women are from former British colonies and the British influence in Canada, especially in Toronto, is still strong?

### **8.3.2 Negotiation of Nativism**

The second research question that I set out to address is: How do visible minority immigrant women teachers of ESL negotiate nativism and the native speaker construct? In order to address this question, I now look at the differences and similarities in how the participants from former colonies and those from non-colonies interpret and respond to their encounters with nativism. I wish to signal here that the women are not passive recipients of nativist acts but that they have agency in how they negotiate nativism, and that this negotiation is a continuous process of interaction between self and environment. In Chapter 2 (2.1.2) I have argued that although the history of English in the former British and American colonies is different from the countries that were not colonized by these two powers, at the present time English represents status, privilege, and mobility in both former colonies and in non-colonies. Fishman, Conrad, and Rubal-Lopez (1996) attempt to disentangle the spread of English from British colonization in former colonies; for example, Rubal-Lopez argues that variables other than colonialism might exist in both colonies and non-colonies, thus indicating that colonization is not the major force that has impacted on the spread of English in former colonies (p. 38). This line of argument suggests that if the spread of English is not tied to colonialism, then perhaps colonial discourses of the supremacy of the native speaker are not part of the learning of English of my participants both in former colonies and in non-colonies. Furthermore, the argument has been made that even the use of nativized Englishes is resistance to colonial discourses of English (see Canagarajah, *in press*). Hence, depending on how nativized the English of the participants from former colonies was and is, one can also suggest that their very use of English was an act of resistance to colonial discourses in their home countries.

However, the particular ways in which the women from non-colonies negotiate nativism in Canada suggest that native speaker discourses in non-colonies are different from those in former colonies. A few examples from the narratives illustrate this difference. An indicator that Jane's investments in English are of a different kind than, say, Arun's is that while Arun's encounters with nativism have a devastating effect on her identity formation, Jane takes a pragmatic approach to students' rejection of some immigrant teachers. She says that students do not reject a teacher on the basis of race, accent, and nonnative speaker status, but because some immigrant teachers do not speak clearly and hence students cannot understand them. As I have pointed out in Chapter 5 (5.3), I consider Jane's analysis to be problematic as she does not locate speaker-listener relations within the rubric of power, unlike Chang (1998), who explores the position that intelligibility is partially "in the ear of the listener" and is a further complication to already subjective standards on intelligibility and accent (p. 5). But Jane's explanation of some students' behaviour towards minority teachers is also an indication of her survival strategy: stories of ESL students rejecting ethnic Chinese teachers do not affect her social identity to the extent that such rejection impacts Arun's social identity.<sup>3</sup>

Jane's definition of a native speaker is more inclusive than Iffat's. She accepts the indigenized varieties of English as valid varieties and not deviations from the norm of Inner Circle Englishes. Her definition of native speaker included me -- as a speaker of Indian English, she said. It was not clear whether she ascribed lower status to the latter; if she did, she did not voice this thought. The narrative that Jane constructs for herself

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<sup>3</sup> A possible interpretation of Jane's survival strategy is that she is denying racism, but I think that Jane does not consider students' rejection of some Chinese teachers as being motivated by racism; rather, she thinks the teachers are at fault for not speaking clearly.

within English is different from Arun's. To Jane, English is a language that she has learned well, a skill that won her symbolic and material benefits in China. But her identity formation appears to be less affected by discourses of native speaker supremacy than are the identities of some of the participants from former colonies.

Jane's trajectory is unusual in that she was the first person in her family and in her village to speak English. She studied English at one of China's two schools for foreign languages. Fayza's participation in English in Egypt is more representative than Jane's of how the middle and upper classes of Expanding Circle countries participate in English. From Grade 7 onwards, English and French were taught as foreign languages, and students had an hour-long English class three times a week, as also in French. Fayza spoke only Arabic at school and at home, and English was not a dominant language in Fayza's life till she came to Canada. Although she did not have much exposure to French -- her father's early death meant that the family could not afford the high tuition fee charged by French schools -- she indicated that French had a high status in Egypt when she was growing up, and hence nativist discourses of the native speaker of French, not English, might have been a strong influence in her life. Fayza acknowledges that some students do want a native speaker, but puts this down to their desire to learn to speak English like a native speaker. Although that thinking is problematic, the point I am making here is that Fayza does not see students' preference of native speaker teachers as a rejection of herself. She does not let the students' preference impact on her career, unlike Iffat who confines herself to teaching the lower levels throughout her long career. Neither does Fayza become depressed by her students' preference for native speakers like Arun does.

I consider Dina to be more insider/outsider than the other participants. English replaced Dutch as the language of the home as soon as this family moved to Canada -- which suggests that Dina and her family chose to become totally assimilated by using the dominant language of English Canada. Yet she brings a strong anti-racist approach to her pedagogy, thus indicating that the native speaker does not have her in thrall. She appears to be untouched, or at least unconvinced, by nativist discourses of birth, inheritance, and intuition as being necessary conditions/qualities of a native speaker. She considers the native speaker category to be a fluid one, entry into which is decided by the individual on the basis of his/her proven competence in English. The fact that she grew up in a former Dutch colony is directly relevant to her negotiation of nativism in Canada. She started learning Dutch when she was six years old and the medium of instruction in school was Dutch. English was introduced along with French and German in Grade 7. It is possible that Dina internalized nativist discourses of the native speaker of Dutch, first in Surinam and then in Holland, but that similar discourses of the native speaker of English left her relatively unaffected.

Now let me look at how Arun negotiates nativism. She was shocked and depressed by her initial experiences in Canada, by people's nonacceptance of her English. A good indicator of Arun's investments in English is her interpretation of students' construction of her as one who has learned the language. While Tasneem, Dina, and Fayza's strategy for empowering students and themselves is to bring to their students' notice the fact that they were also at one time learners of English, for Arun the identity of ESL learner ascribed to her by her students is disempowering. Arun expresses a sense of great loss: She realizes that the chauffeur-driven car that was sent by rich families in Bombay to bring her to their homes for tutoring sessions is a thing of the past. The chauffeur-driven

car that will no longer be sent to fetch Arun represents not only the loss of earnings but the many symbolic benefits of being seen as owning English and hence being a much sought-after English tutor. This sense of loss is captured in her description of the adverse effects of her initial language-related experiences in Canada on her social identity: "Yes, it's a very painful process. Because you're somebody back home, and then you become an absolute nobody here."

While Fayza and Jane see students' preference for a native speaker as being pragmatic, Iffat appears to interpret this preference as a rejection of herself. She has great difficulty in negotiating her teacher identity and responds by retreating to teaching the lower levels. Although Iffat attended an English language school for only three years and Urdu was a dominant language in her home life, she says that she was considered academic and intelligent, and those qualities were somehow associated with English. Hence her participation in English is very different from Tasneem's, for whom also Urdu was a dominant language. Tasneem's parents were involved in the independence movement of Pakistan and actively opposed English as a tool of British colonialism. They sent their children to English language convent schools because these schools were seen to be of a high standard, but gave their children the message that the important language for the family was Urdu. Hence Tasneem's investments in English are tempered by her family's political stand on English, as also by the family's high investments in Urdu.

What then to make of how Patsy negotiates nativism? So far, one of my arguments has been that the earlier a participant started using English and the more she used English in her home country, especially if she grew up in a former colony, the more likely she is to have internalized nativist discourses of the supremacy of the native speaker. As Patsy knows only English and English was the language of both home and school, it is possible

that in Kenya she internalized colonial messages even more than Arun did in India. But unlike the other East Indian participants, both in England and in Canada, Patsy experiences what I have termed a benign form of nativism. While Arun is told in many ways that she epitomizes the colonial Native, Patsy is told in many ways that she is the antithesis of the Native. Patsy's anti-racist negotiation comes out of this particular manifestation of nativism.

Violet has not been in the classroom in Canada as a paid ESL teacher, and hence it is difficult to theorize how she would negotiate nativism. Her narrative is different from those of the other participants also because she grew up in poverty and was positioned as Other in postcolonial Jamaica, which is controlled by an English-speaking elite, and hence she has been negotiating a form of nativism all her life from the position of a speaker of Patois. She self-identifies strongly as a speaker of Patois.

The above-cited examples of how the women negotiate nativism indicate that as English has spread differently all over the world, there is no single narrative and no single positioning for Third World women who participate in English. Hence each woman negotiates nativism in Canada in a unique way. However, I consider it significant that there are more commonalities than differences in the narratives that Arun, Iffat, Tasneem, Patsy, and Violet construct for themselves. Similarly, Dina, Fayza, and Jane have chosen narratives for themselves within English that also have more commonalities than differences. The women from the former colonies have in common the fact that English has been institutionalized in the social fabric of their countries for many generations and hence to varying degrees their identities are intertwined with English. According to Weedon (1987), "Language is the place where . . . our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is *constructed*" (p. 21). The central role that the English language plays in

the relationship between the individual and the social is visible in the narratives of all my participants, but is more visible in the narratives of the women from the former colonies, especially in Arun's, because an integral part of her sense of herself (see Weedon, 1987, p. 32) till she came to Canada was that of English being *her* language.

English is a newer language and is still not institutionalized in non-colonies and hence the participants from these countries understandably do not have the same investments in English as the participants from former colonies. Another commonality is that the participants from former colonies appear to be impacted by native speaker discourses that are linked with British colonialism more than the women from the non-colonies. Perhaps it can be said that the narratives of Arun, Iffat, Patsy, Tasneem, and Violet appear to contradict Rubal-Lopez's (1996) thesis that colonization may not be the major force that has affected the spread of English in former colonies. The fact that nativist discourses appear not to be so strong in the narratives of Fayza, Dina, and Jane suggests that colonization was and is a major force in the spread of English in former colonies.

#### **8.4 Implications for ELT**

As noted above, the data indicate that, to varying degrees, the teachers do not use the native speaker as their model; rather, they have built effective pedagogies based on their difference and on their ascribed nonnative speaker status. But while the teachers are trying to decolonize the classroom, the extent to which they can transform ESL is limited by the confines of their profession. Although the native speaker norm is being questioned by linguists (e.g., Braine, 1999; Nayar, 1994), many ESL/EFL programs worldwide continue to have as a goal that students learn to speak like native speakers (Kachru,



1990b; S. N. Sridhar, 1994); hence, in Canada ESL teachers are expected to follow the native speaker norm. In this section I will look at the ramifications of my study for our profession. First I will address the responsibilities of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and then suggest a re/visioning of teacher training programs in Canada that would result in a re/visioning of Settlement ESL programs.

#### **8.4.1 TESOL'S Responsibilities**

One term that is "overdue for compulsory retirement" in linguistics, according to Christophersen (1988) is "'native' as used in phrases like 'native language' and 'native speaker'" (p. 15). Christophersen suggests also redefining the terms "first language" and "mother tongue" on the basis that they are misleading and confusing. A person's mother tongue may or may not be their mother's tongue, nor is a person's first language always that which they learned first, because first can mean either the language the person learned first or the language that is first in importance (p. 15). Cheshire (1991) and Ferguson (1992) have made similar arguments. Noting the validity of this argument, Rampton (1988) has suggested that conventional notions of the native speaker of English be replaced by the three notions of *language expertise*, *language inheritance*, and *language affiliation* of all learners in any ESL classroom, rather than attributing a particular first language or mother tongue to them. The narratives of the participants of my study indicate that such a reconceptualization of these concepts is indeed long overdue, because the native speaker model is not a pedagogically sound principle in all contexts. For example, a common argument made in favour of using the native speaker norm in higher levels is that students want to learn idiomatically appropriate language and to appreciate the cultural connotations of the language (see Phillipson, 1992, p. 194). But

according to Phillipson, nonnative speakers can learn these qualities through teacher training (see Phillipson, 1992, p. 194). My position in this thesis has been that the native speaker-nonnative speaker division is not solely based on proficiency and that nonnative speakers can be, and many are, proficient in English.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, the native speaker model divides the profession according to a caste system and should therefore be eliminated (Kachru, 1990a; Pennycook, 1992; Phillipson, 1992). TESOL should therefore actively dismantle the native speaker-nonnative speaker dichotomy. Such an initiative, as Widdowson (1994) has recommended, should involve an inquiry into the craft of teaching ESL/EFL, for, as the participants have shown, teaching English well is not a racial or biological quality but a craft, a skill that has to be learned. Phillipson (1992) makes a similar point when he asserts that teachers are made rather than born (p. 194) and "the untrained or unqualified native speaker is potentially a menace" (p. 195).

This inquiry should address the interlinked issue of World Englishes. English has evolved away from its original base of Inner Circle societies and has become indigenized in a number of postcolonial countries. I have noted earlier (2.1.3, 2.1.4) that there is no official academy for standardizing English, but historically native speakers have decided whether a variety of English is valid. However, as Kachru (1992) and Sridhar and Sridhar

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<sup>4</sup> One obvious example of a nonnative speaker in the Canadian context who underscores this point is writer Rohinton Mistry. Mistry has won a great deal of recognition for his fiction in Canada and internationally, and, according to many definitions, he is a nonnative speaker. Mistry is of East Indian origin, grew up in Bombay, India, and immigrated to Canada as an adult. I do not know whether the University of Toronto (U of T) made him do an English language proficiency test when he applied to attend English literature courses on the basis that he learned English in nonnative settings (see Appendix B). It is ironic indeed that U of T has hailed Mistry as one of their own -- Mistry's photograph graces the utility posts of the streets of U of T's downtown campus along with Margaret Atwood -- while it continues its policy of testing applicants who have learned English in nonnative settings.

(1992), among others, have argued, the rules that they use to decide on the validity of a particular variety of nonnative English are culturally and linguistically biased. Kachru (1992) adds that any deviation from mother English in the IVEs has been termed not a difference but an error by native speakers of mother English, for the norm that they use is that of English as used in native contexts. What then can TESOL do in terms of validating the different varieties of English that exist outside Inner Circle countries? Quirk (1989, 1990) has dismissed any attempts at acceptance of these new varieties of English as "liberation linguistics" and his stand continues to be that standard British English should be the norm internationally. Kachru (1991) considers Quirk's insistence to be unrealistic and misguided as it ignores the reality of World Englishes, and has suggested a dialogue on the issue of international standardization. Such a dialogue is much needed now in order that ESL/EFL programs worldwide can have a clearer direction in terms of which variety of English is the best model for a particular context. I see TESOL's role in such an initiative as ensuring that the unequal power relations between the First World and the Third World, which are a big factor in the stigmatization of Nonwhite Englishes (see 2.1), are not reproduced.

#### **8.4.2 Re/visioning TESL Programs in Canada**

Kamhi-Stein (1999), a teacher-educator of foreign students who come to the United States to train as ESL/EFL teachers and then return to their countries, notes that the messages of what a nonnative teacher cannot do stands in the way of nonnative speakers realizing their full potential, as they limit their career choices. Some of her teacher-trainees tell her that as they speak what they call "'a deficient variety of English,' they are qualified only to play the role of assistants of native English-speaking teachers"

(p. 149). Hence one of the consequences of this international hegemony of the native speaker is that nonnative speakers may see themselves as speakers of deficient varieties of English and hence self-impose limits on their aspirations. As the discourses of the "indubitable superiority and the impregnable infallibility" (Nayar, 1994, p. 4) of the native speaker appear to be particularly disempowering for new teachers, I suggest that a curriculum that would attempt to overcome these potentially disempowering discourses in teacher education programs is a meaningful first step towards shaping an ESL classroom that can be a site for dismantling the native-nonnative speaker dichotomy.

I now make suggestions for the training of new teachers, both native speakers and nonnative speakers, that will encourage them to explore new models and new pedagogies. I need to point out here that except for Violet, the participants are not new to this profession; that, as teacher-trainees and as new teachers they might have used the native speaker model because that is the model actively promoted by TESL programs in Canada; and that they have had to create and develop their own nonnative pedagogies in order to be effective teachers. Although I have termed their pedagogies "nonnative," I wish to emphasize that both native and nonnative teachers can learn from these pedagogies, as the thrust of these pedagogies is to do away with the native-nonnative speaker dichotomy.

According to Tollefson (1995), until recently most TESL programs in the United States focused on second language acquisition, teaching methods, and linguistics, without placing these fields in their sociopolitical context. More recently, he says, some of them have begun to address sociopolitical issues (p. 1). We cannot say the same about TESL programs in Canada. Sanaoui's (1997) *Directory of ESL Teacher Preparation Programs in Ontario* lays out the curriculum of these programs, and it is clear that by and large they do not address sociopolitical concerns. For example, there is no acknowledgment of the

existence, much less validity, of the IVEs. Concepts such as first language, mother tongue, and native speaker are not interrogated, and thus in many ways these TESL programs are helping to maintain the status quo. My anti-racist curriculum encourages trainees not to privilege the native speaker because the native speaker construct does not have a sound linguistic basis and hence a pedagogy based on this norm is not always effective. In addition, the native speaker model is a way of Othering those seen as nonnative to English and nonnative to the nation. Pedagogies that make the native speaker the norm are upholding not good pedagogy, but an unequal division between White First World teachers and teachers from the rest of the world. This nonlinguistic underpinning of the native speaker has to be made transparent in TESL programs so that both native and nonnative teachers can make informed choices about what to teach and how to teach.

The discourse of "empowerment" through the acquisition of a Canadian/British/American accent is problematic. Lippi-Green (1997) argues that it is not possible for adults to eliminate their accents, and that even if adult immigrants could change their accents, the intersection of race, gender, class, and Third World status would be factors in their continuing disempowerment (pp. 50-64). Goldstein (1999) therefore questions the value of emphasizing a certain accent and pronunciation in ESL (p. 599). In addition, such accent-reduction discourses of "empowerment" for students are disempowering for their nonnative teachers who may have one of the stigmatized accents that students are being encouraged to unlearn in order to succeed in Canada. Hence, both good pedagogy and social justice demand that TESL programs trouble this discourse of "empowerment" through native speaker accents.

So far I have been addressing the needs of all teacher trainees. Now, I will look at how TESL programs can equip nonnative trainees for the special challenges that they

will face in this profession. Kamhi-Stein (1999) makes a strong case for integrating instruction on issues related to nonnative speakers. She argues that TESL programs should allow future teachers to develop an understanding of their assets, beliefs, and values, and should also promote an improvement of the teacher-trainees' competencies. In such a cross-curricular approach, instruction provides teacher-trainees with many opportunities to examine their nonnative speaker status in relation to theories of language acquisition, methodologies, and curriculum design, and also cultural and social factors affecting second language development (pp. 147-155). Such a curriculum would be a meaningful attempt to counter discourses in ELT of the native speaker as being the best model.

### **8.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

In the above section, I have recommended that ESL in Canada be reconfigured, and these recommendations have been linked to decentring the native speaker in the classroom and in teacher training programs. I consider that decentring the native speaker worldwide and training teachers to interrogate sociolinguistic constructs embedded in native speaker mythologies will lead to a measure of empowerment for minority teachers. However, as I have argued that the native speaker norm is a linguistic manifestation of nativism, doing away with the native speaker will only do away with the *symptoms* of discourses and practices that construct minority immigrant women as permanent Others. The data from this study appear to confirm Pennycook's (1998) thesis that colonial discourses continue to adhere to English. Rubal-Lopez (1996) says that as a number of studies on the spread of English have as their primary focus the relationship between colonialism and English-language spread, these studies do not make comparisons between colonial and non-colonial countries, and hence there is considerably more information

being generated about former British and American colonies and no corresponding information about non-colonies. She urges that comparative studies of colonial and non-colonial countries be carried out in order to reveal the existence of common significant variables in these groups of countries (p. 38). As pointed out earlier in this chapter, Rubal-Lopez is throwing doubt on the common contention made by, among others, Pennycook (1992) and Phillipson (1992) that colonialism is the most powerful force in the spread of English in former colonies (p. 38). My study suggests that colonialism was and still is a powerful force, perhaps the most powerful force, for the spread of English in the former colonies, as colonial ideologies seem to be ingrained more deeply among these participants than among the participants in non-colonies.

The comparative studies suggested by Rubal-Lopez would be useful in investigating to what extent native-speaker discourses are present in these two groups of countries and to explain the apparent lack of such discourses in non-colonies. In a way it is puzzling that the participants in my study who are from non-colonies appear to be less in thrall of the native speaker than the participants from former colonies, as there are First World ESL/EFL "experts" living and expounding the supremacy of the native speaker in both Outer and Expanding Circle countries. I am puzzled also because most of the job advertisements that I have seen for "native speakers" in the *Globe and Mail* are from prospective employers in Expanding Circle countries such as Korea and Japan. Similarly, in Saudi Arabia Tasneem experienced the hegemony of the White native speaker, although couched in First, Second, and Third Country divisions, a division which impacted Braine as a language teacher in the Gulf states. He writes that White native speaker teachers with minimum teaching qualifications were paid more than highly qualified and experienced teachers from India (Braine, 1999, p. 22). These examples

indicate that native speakers are considered to be superior as teachers to nonnative speakers in at least some Expanding Circle countries.

My study points also to the necessity of an examination of the English curriculum in former colonies. In her genealogy of English literary studies in India, Viswanathan (1989) drew attention to the "imperial mission of educating and civilizing colonial subjects in the literature and thought of England, a mission that in the long run served to strengthen Western cultural hegemony in enormously complex ways" (p. 2). Although Viswanathan's genealogy explicitly eschewed an account of how (East) Indians responded to the imposition of English studies and indeed to British colonialism -- through collusion, resistance, or both -- her study indicates the extent of the cultural and linguistic hegemony of English and English literature among the elites in British India. For example, English-speaking Indians so completely identified with the rulers that they also referred to their fellow Indians "distantly, even contemptuously, as 'the natives'" (p. 140).<sup>5</sup> The English curriculum continues almost unchanged in the former British colonies as the profiles of Arun, Iffat, Patsy, Tasneem, and Violet show (see Chapter 4). It is worth investigating to what extent if at all the existing English curriculum continues to spread native-speaker discourses in former colonies. The English curriculum in schools in English Canada used not to be very different from the curriculum described by the participants from former colonies in that it used to focus more on British writers than on Canadian and American writers. Further research is required to explore to what extent and in which sites nativist discourses of the native speaker continue to exist in Canada.

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<sup>5</sup> I have cited one such example in my critical etymology of the Native in Chapter 1 (see Footnote 12).



### **8.6 Concluding Remarks**

This thesis has been an investigation into the multifarious ways in which minority immigrant women teachers of ESL construct narratives for themselves within English and the multifarious ways in which they negotiate nativist discourses. In my inquiry I have used a framework through which the participants' subjectivities are seen in their negotiations of linguistic nativism as they resist, but also collude with colonialism, imperialism, sexism, and racism. The narratives are necessarily contradictory as the women try to construct narratives of their own positioning within English. The stories give insight into how the multilayered determinants embodied in the native speaker construct regulate the lives of ESL teachers who are seen as nonnative speakers of English. But what is clearly evident in these narratives is the multiple ways in which the women offer resistance to practices of dominance. Reflecting on the responsibilities of journalists, cultural critic Jay Rosen says that people in the media make public narratives, and hence it is reasonable to ask about their social responsibilities as story-makers. "We want a story that leaves us with some hope," with an "intelligible" ending, one we can understand, judge, and that tells a larger tale "as we try to make sense out of our collective life" (see Rosen, 1994, p. 111). These teachers' narratives are not public narratives in the way that Rosen is using this term. But they are stories that serve an equally important purpose. These stories of resistance to the native speaker and nativist discourses and of setting up a counter-discursive paradigm in ESL show strategies from which we can learn of resistance not only in ESL but in any struggle against oppression and dominance. As a minority woman who grew up in a former British colony and acquired English in a nonnative setting, as an East Indian woman, and as a teacher of ESL, I am inspired by these narratives of struggle, hope, and resistance. These narratives

tell a larger tale than ESL: By decentring the native speaker of English, these teachers are not only decolonizing ESL and decolonizing English -- they are also decolonizing our collective imaginary.

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Ontario Institute for Studies in  
Education  
of the University of Toronto

## English Language Proficiency Requirement

for  
Application and Admission  
to  
Teacher Education Programs

- Bachelor of Education
- Diploma in Technical Studies
- College of Teachers Special Students



### D. INFORMATION ABOUT THE TESTS WHICH ARE ACCEPTABLE AS EVIDENCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Information about the content of tests, test dates,  
test requirements and applicable fee may be  
obtained as follows:

1. TOW (Test of Written Proficiency)  
TOP (Test of Oral Proficiency)

NOTE: TOP and TOW are not being offered for  
1998-99. Results for tests taken previously can  
be submitted.

2. TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)  
TWE (Test of Written English)  
TSE (Test of Spoken English)  
Educational Testing Service  
P. O. Box 6151  
Princeton, New Jersey  
U.S.A., 08541-6151

Telephone: 609-921-9000

website: [www.toell.org](http://www.toell.org)

3. IELTS (International English Language Testing System)  
University of Cambridge  
Local Examinations Syndicate  
1 Hills Road  
Cambridge, U.K. CB1 2EU  
website: [www.ielts.org/index.html](http://www.ielts.org/index.html)

• Applicants may also contact their nearest British Council  
Office.

• The only North American IELTS test site is at Conestoga  
College of Applied Arts and Technology in Kitchener,  
Ontario. Information regarding scheduling for IELTS at this  
location may be obtained by contacting the IELTS  
Administrator at 519-748-5220, ext. 603.

4. MELAB (Michigan English Language Assessment Battery)  
English Language Institute  
Testing and Certification Division  
3020 North University Building  
The University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, Michigan  
U.S.A. 48109-1057

Telephone: 313-764-2416/763-3452

e-mail: [melabelium@umich.edu](mailto:melabelium@umich.edu)

website: [www.lsa.umich.edu/ell/melab.html](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/ell/melab.html)

• A Toronto MELAB Test Centre has been established at  
Room 2045, New College, University of Toronto. Information

regarding scheduling for MELAB at this location may be  
obtained at 416-946-3942. Registration for testing at the  
Toronto site must be done through the Toronto Centre, not  
through the English Language Institute at the University of  
Michigan.

Applicants to the Bachelor of Education or Diploma  
in Technical Education programs, who feel that they  
require further information concerning our English  
Language Proficiency requirement may wish to  
contact:

OISE/UT  
Office of the Registrar  
Preservice Teacher Education Programs  
Admissions Unit, Room 132A  
371 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2R7

Telephone: 416-978-8833

Fax: 416-971-2755

e-mail: [preservice\\_admis@tednet.oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:preservice_admis@tednet.oise.utoronto.ca)

Applicants who will be taking Continuing Education  
courses as Special Students and who feel that they  
require further information concerning our English  
Language Proficiency requirement may wish to  
contact:

OISE/UT  
Office of the Registrar  
Continuing Education Unit, Room 132C  
371 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2R7

Telephone: 416-978-5988

Fax: 416-971-2755

e-mail:  
[aq\\_regoffice@tednet.oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:aq_regoffice@tednet.oise.utoronto.ca)

English is the language of instruction for all courses in the teacher education programs at OISE/UT, with the exception of some Modern Language Education courses. Consequently, to be successful in these courses and in the Practicum of the preservice teacher education program, candidates must demonstrate a high degree of proficiency in both oral and written English.

As well, successful candidates receive certification to teach in schools where English is the language of instruction, and where the primary obligation of the elementary and secondary school teacher is to meet the needs of the learner. To do this effectively the teacher must be able to communicate effectively in English, the students' language of instruction. OISE/UT is committed to producing graduates who possess strong English language skills to meet these needs, and who will also be competent and effective role models in the use of oral and written English.

Thus, all applicants to the Bachelor of Education and Diploma in Technical Education Preservice Teacher Education Program, as well as Ontario College of Teachers Special Student applicants to the Continuing Education Program are required to give evidence to OISE/UT of their oral and written proficiency in English.

#### A. ACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

##### •For Applicants to the Diploma in Technical Education

All students applying for admission to the OISE/UT, Diploma in Technical Education Preservice Teacher Education Program, must satisfy one of the following criteria:

- (a) their mother tongue or first language is English,  
OR
- (b) they have studied full-time for at least four years (or equivalent in part-time studies) in an English language school system located in a country where the first language is English,  
OR
- (c) they have achieved the required level of proficiency on one of the tests in English language as outlined in section B (i-iv) of this pamphlet.

##### •For Applicants to the Bachelor of Education Degree Program

All students applying for admission to the OISE/UT, Bachelor of Education Preservice Teacher Education Program must satisfy one of the following criteria:

- (a) their mother tongue or first language is English,  
OR
- (b) they have studied full-time for at least three years (or equivalent in part-time studies) in a university where the language of instruction and examination was English and which was located in a country where the first language is English,  
OR
- (c) they have achieved the required level of proficiency on one of the tests in English language as outlined in section B (i-iv) of this pamphlet.

##### •For Ontario College of Teachers Special Students Applying to the Continuing Education Program

All teachers seeking Ontario Certification who have been directed by the Ontario College of Teachers to take professional courses at a faculty of education, and who apply for admission to the OISE/UT, Continuing Education Program to complete such requirements must satisfy one of the following criteria:

- (a) their mother tongue or first language is English,  
OR
- (b) they have studied full-time for at least three years (or equivalent in part-time studies) in a university where the language of instruction and examination was English and which was located in a country where the first language is English,  
OR
- (c) they have achieved the required level of proficiency on one of the tests in English language as outlined in section B (i-iv) below.

#### B. ACCEPTABLE TESTS AND REQUIRED SCORES

NB: All tests must have been taken within 3 years of the date of application to OISE/UT.

- i) An official statement of the results of TOP (Test of Oral Proficiency) showing a minimum score of 7.0 and TOW (Test of Written Proficiency) with a minimum score of 3.0.

NOTE: TOP and TOW are not being offered for 1997-98. Results for tests taken previously can be submitted.

OR

- ii) An official statement of results of TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) for either the new computer based test or the previous paper-based test. These two tests, although equivalent, use different grading scales. Applicants who take the computer based test must submit an official statement of results showing a minimum score of 250, and also have a minimum Essay Rating Score of 6.0, as well as the TSE (Test of Spoken English), with a minimum score of 55.

Applicants who have taken the paper based test must submit an official statement of results showing a minimum score of 600, and the TWE (Test of Written English), showing a minimum score of 6.0, as well as the TSE (Test of Spoken English), showing a minimum score of 55.

OR

- iii) An official statement of results of IELTS (International English Language Testing System) showing an overall band score of 7 and no band score of less than 5.

OR

- iv) An official statement of results of MELAB (Michigan English Language Assessment Battery), showing a score of 92 and also the Oral Interview component, showing a rating of 4.

#### C. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING EVIDENCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

The deadline for submitting evidence of oral and written proficiency in English will be the same as the deadline for submitting transcripts and the Applicant Profile to OISE/UT for the respective Bachelor of Education and Diploma in Technical Education Preservice Teacher Education Program application/admission cycle. In the case of the Continuing Education applicants the deadline would be that which is published for each session.

## Appendix B

### E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS, OISE/UT

On Fri, 18 Jun 1999, Preservice Admis wrote:

namin@oise.utoronto.ca writes:

Dear Registrar,

Could you please tell me when the English Language Proficiency tests as outlined in a yellow brochure were institutionalized for teacher candidates? I would also appreciate a date for this brochure, as I am citing it in a paper I am writing on language testing.

Many thanks.

Nuzhat Amin  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto  
E-mail:namin@oise.utoronto.ca

>>>> The current policy concerning English Language Proficiency was passed by the former FEUT Faculty Council in March, 1994 and took effect for the 1995-96 academic year. Please note that the English Language Proficiency Requirement applies to all applicants to the one-year initial teacher education programs at OISE/UT. Most candidates satisfy this requirement without the necessity of taking a formal language proficiency test.

The most recent version of the English Language Proficiency Requirement pamphlet was prepared in July, 1998. You can verify the revision date of the pamphlet copy which you are using as a resource by looking at the bottom of the last panel of the pamphlet.

Sincerely,  
Initial Teacher Education Admissions  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto  
Registrar's Office, Initial Teacher Education Programs Admissions Unit  
252 Bloor St W, Room 4-455, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6  
ph: 416/926-4701  
fx: 416/923-7834  
Check out our website! [www.oise.utoronto.ca/admissions](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/admissions)

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On Tue, 9 Nov 1999, Preservice Admis wrote:

namin@oise.utoronto.ca writes:

Dear Registrar,

I would appreciate the following information on the English proficiency requirements which are outlined in the yellow brochure. Please note that my thesis is on World Englishes (my supervisor is Jim Cummins), and that is why I am interested in this information.

In the section on the Bachelor of Education degree program, Clause A says that applicants should have English as their "mother tongue" or "first language."

1) Please clarify how you define these terms.

>>>> The person spoke English as their first language in their home as a child.

2) Who decides if the applicant's mother tongue or first language is English? Can an applicant from, say, India, merely state that her mother tongue/first language is English? Or do you interview her?

>>>> We take the applicant's word for granted. Some people from India do learn and speak English as their first language in the home. They do sign a form stating all their information is correct. It is of no benefit to the applicant to lie on the application form.

The next question is about Clause B which states that the applicant should have studied in a university where "the language of instruction and examination was English and which was located in a country where the first language is English." Could you please elaborate on this point?

1) Does the applicant only have to be from a university where the "language of instruction/examination was English?"

>>>> Yes, and in a country where the first language is English.

2) Or does that university also have to be in a country where the first language is English? That is, do applicants have to satisfy both requirements?

>>>> Yes

3) How do you decide whether the first language of the country is English? What are the criteria?

>>>> E.g. Canada and U. S., the first language is English.

As a case in point, I would like to ask you about applicants from Pakistan, where I grew up. How do you deal with applicants who have had their education in Pakistan?

>>>> It is not a country where the first language is English. Therefore if one has studied in Pakistan (even if it was in English) the first language of the country is not English and therefore they must take the test.

Please note that I need to be very clear on this information as I might use some of it in my thesis on World Englishes.

I would appreciate a detailed response.

Many thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Nuzhat Amin

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On Wed, 10 Nov 1999, Preservice Admis wrote:

namin@oise.utoronto.ca writes:

Dear Registrar,

Thank you very much for the prompt reply. I have one more question. It is not clear to me how you are using the terms "first language" and "mother tongue."

A. What is your definition of "mother tongue"?

B. What is your definition of "first language"?

I would also appreciate it if I know who I am corresponding with. If I reference this information in my thesis, I need to say who gave me this information. Hence I would like to know your name.

Many thanks.

Nuzhat Amin

>>>> The two terms are intended to mean the same thing and in this regard, each is supposed to explain the other. The definition which would apply to both term would be: "the language that you learned at home as a child."

This definition was borrowed from the University's undergraduate admission requirement in 1994. The original drafts of the policy only used the term "first language". The term "mother tongue" was added to define/clarify the meaning of "first language". They really are intended to be used inter-changeably.

This response was prepared by Ian MacLeod (Assistant Registrar & Admissions Officer, Initial Teacher Education Programs, OISE/UT).

The response dated November 9 was prepared by Ellen Wasserman (Admissions Counsellor, Initial Teacher Education Programs, OISE/U).

The response dated June 18 was probably prepared by Ian MacLeod (Assistant Registrar & Admissions Officer, Initial Teacher Education Programs, OISE/UT)--or at least in consultation with Ian MacLeod.



## Appendix C

### TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

#### Transcript Notation

[ ]	: Author's information added for clarification
...	: Material deleted
-	: Interruption, change in thought
<i>Italics</i>	: Emphasis in speech
N	: Nuzhat
A	: Arun
D	: Dina
F	: Fayza
I	: Iffat
J	: Jane
P	: Patsy
T	: Tasneem
V	: Violet

#### Participants' Oral Quotations

Extracts from the participants' oral data do not necessarily appear in the order they were spoken. I have removed many of the pauses and "ums."

#### Confidentiality

All names and places have been changed to protect the identities of the participants.