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1. Introduction

The terms 'native' and 'non-native speaker'[1] have caused considerable controversy in the field of ELT, a field in which claims to ownership of English have been much problematized and critiqued (e.g. Hall 2012; Holliday 2005 and Holliday 2015; Medyges 1994; Pennycook 2001; Phillipson 1992 and Phillipson 2008). Such critiques argue that because English is widely used internationally, it is not owned by any one group (Widdowson 1994) and with its many varieties has become the 'property' of all. Hence, it has also been suggested that English has no 'native-speakers' because 'native-speaker' English has little relevance to the varieties of English used as a global language (Rajagopalan 2004: 111). Despite this, 'native' and 'non-native' labelling persists in discourses of ELT and linguistics in general, even though the term '*non*-native' has been criticised for its connotations that a person is lacking, for instance, in terms of linguistic competency and proficiency (Holliday 2015). However, Matsuda (1999:4) argues that being 'native' simply assumes a more "fortunate" position than being 'non-native'.

This assumed legitimacy of 'native-speaker' teachers positions those classed as 'non-native' as insufficient in some way. Holliday (2015:11) refers to this insufficiency as a form of 'disbelief in the cultural contribution of such teachers, and argues that this labelling is linked to the global politics of ELT and the promotion of the 'native-speaker' teacher. Hence, it could be argued that concepts of being 'native' or 'non-native' have been constructed through the recognition that English as a global language is both a powerful and lucrative asset (Chowdbury and Le Ha 2014; Pennycook 1999), and that, as stated by Kachru and Nelson (1996:17), "English is the paradigm modern language of political and economic power".

[1] I follow Holliday's (2005) use of inverted commas to show concern over the use of 'native' and 'non-native' labels in discourse

Although there has been considerable research highlighting the politics embedded into 'native-speaker' discourses, teachers using English as another language continue to experience prejudice. Indeed, through working alongside, and training teachers from different contexts, I have heard and witnessed forms of marginalization linked to factors such as origin, accent and appearance. These instances emphasise the continued need to challenge discourses and prejudices which in fact 'de-professionalise' ELT by endorsing inequality instead of valuing teachers' pedagogical skills and linguistic competencies.

This paper analyses some of the challenges arising through 'native-speakerism' that teachers who are labelled as 'non-native' have faced and examines how native-speaker networks have had direct influence on them. I examine perceptions of 'native-speakerism' expressed by four teachers of English of different backgrounds drawing on theoretical concepts of 'being' and 'becoming' by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). I then unravel instances in which the constructs of 'native' and 'non-native' have impacted on these teachers by using a socio-materialist approach to analysis, (Fenwick et al. 2011), specifically Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Latour 2005), which focuses on the relations of humans and non-human actants in a 'network' of interactions. I analyse how constructs of 'native-speakerism' (Holliday 2015) are formed as networks which impact on teachers in their professional roles.

2. Literature review

Much research focusing on 'native' and 'non-native-speaker' teachers has been triggered by the publication of key work by Paikday (1985), Medyges (1994) and Braine (1999), provoking discussions around issues linked to marginalization, protectionism and racialism. In this literature review, I provide a brief analysis of themes emerging through this research, highlighting assumptions frequently associated with the 'native-speaker'. I then focus on studies that have analysed teacher qualities from both teacher and learner perspectives, according to them being 'native' or 'non-native'. These studies have emphasised attributes of 'non-native' teachers, yet also reflect

frequently assumed stereotypes and prejudices. I thus examine research which challenges these stereotypes by focusing on alternative teacher identities and the re-positioning of 'non-native' teachers. I argue that ELT as a profession now needs to move beyond these labels of 'native' or 'non-native' by rejecting the premises through which these constructs gain power.

English is undoubtedly a 'shared' language across the globe, and as well as there being more users of English as a second language (L2) (Crystal 2012), 80% of English teachers are L2 users of the language (Canagarajah 2006). Because English has evolved and spread through its many varieties, it is not 'owned' by 'natives' of English-speaking countries using what is frequently termed 'standard' English (Faez 2011:380). Instead, it has been argued that the 'native-speakers' of its many varieties also have voices in matters regarding the language (Widdowson 1994), and can claim degrees of ownership and become legitimate users (Higgins 2003).

However, inner circle English (Kachru 1990) is still considered superior through perceptions that 'native-speakers' are more reliable producers of a language (Ba Doan 2016; Llurda 2004). Such views, however, indicate a form of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992) which, according to Holliday (2015:12), is "at the core of the idealisation and promotion of teachers who are constructed as native-speakers".

To be acknowledged as a 'native-speaker' requires acceptance by the group that created the concept (Kramsch 1997), and hence access is restricted for the benefit of its members. As Pennycook (2012: 85) argues, the 'native-speaker' is in fact "a proxy for other things; discriminatory hiring practices along racial lines, for ideas of standard language imbued from birth rather than inculcated through education, for prejudicial categorizations of the language spoken by others".

Being a native –speaker is frequently attributed to factors such as proficiency, self-ascription and acceptance by others (Davies 2003) and also inheritance (Rampton 1990). However, these categories become easily blurred when considered with individuals living in multi-lingual environments, or in societies which place different

values on English, and where there are the influences of transnational affiliations and more fluid social boundaries (Canagarajah 2007: 924).

Moreover, judgements by others are crucial in gaining access as a language user in a particular group, and membership to a native-speaker group may be restricted if an individual fails to perform to fit social and linguistic standards or to meet expectations in terms of accent, linguistic proficiency, or even appearance. Understandings of 'native-like' competence, are therefore socially situated, changing with social discourses in a particular environment (Choi 2016: 75).

Some studies have examined attributes of 'native' v 'non-native' teachers, building on early work by Medyges (1994) whose analysis identified complementary strengths in terms of skills and knowledge. Ma (2012) investigated the self-perceptions of teachers of English in Hong Kong and their views of native counterparts. Her study found that 'native-speakers' were considered to have greater linguistic strengths, while local teachers were more pedagogically aware of learner needs, echoing Medyges' (1994) point that pedagogic skills are comprised of knowledge of learners and context, as well as pedagogic expertise. Other studies have similarly found that from teachers' self-perspectives, local knowledge and learner awareness are important attributes in supporting learners (Brutt- Giffler and Saminy 1999; Doguncay-Aktuna, 2006)

To examine learners' perspectives of 'native' v 'non-nativeness', Cheung (2002) investigated the attitudes of students from seven universities in Hong Kong. The findings reflected a similar assumption that language proficiency and cultural knowledge were particularly valued among 'native-speaker' teachers while local teachers were appreciated because of their greater empathy, shared cultural backgrounds and stricter expectations.

Research into learner preferences (Diaz, 2015; Lagabaster and Sierra 2005; Ma 2012) has also highlighted accent and pronunciation as assets of 'native-speaker' teachers. Golombek and Rehn Jordan (2005:517) show how beliefs about the superiority of 'native-speaker' accents act as a gate-keeper to inner circle English. Their study

investigates how two ‘non-native’ teachers assert their legitimacy as practitioners in ELT, by focusing on their strengths and thus challenging accent ideologies. This work advocates Cook’s (1999) notion of multi-competent users, which encourages individuals to adopt alternative identities as teachers, a concept endorsed by Pavlenko (2003) in her investigation into imagined identities of bilingual teachers of English.

Assumptions that ‘native-speakers’ have inherited a superior linguistic proficiency through birth (Rampton 1990) seems to be a regular basis for recruiting teachers (Hall 2012). However, as Pennycook (2012) points out, proficiency comes from education and experience not birth, and, so ‘native-speakers’ cannot be assumed to have superior proficiency in all skills. Moreover, some people become more proficient in a language at different times in life, through changing professional or personal needs. In a study of L2 users of English and German, Pillar (2002) argues that adult L2 users can achieve high levels of proficiency as *expert* users through motivation and agency. Pillar uses the notion of *passing* as a ‘native-speaker’ to analyse participants’ linguistic competences based on their own self-appraisals of performance. ‘Passing’ therefore refers to the performance enacted through encounters; each encounter raises different challenges and success is based on responses of those involved. This concept has since been developed by Pennycook (2012: 94) with his term “resourceful speaker” which emphasises how L2 users aim to pass in different communication situations in ways that ‘seem to work’, but are also subjective to how a user is perceived by others. In order to move beyond ‘native’ and ‘non- native’ labels, it is necessary to raise awareness of alternative identity opportunities to empower teachers and challenge forms of marginalization. As Park (2012) argues, such awareness raising needs to become more firmly embedded into teacher education programmes, especially given the popularity of MA TESOL courses in English speaking countries with international students. Park’s study of five East Asian students on a US MA TESOL programme examines linguistic marginalization experienced by the participants, exemplifying how their self-perceptions as ‘non-native’ impacted on their engagement with the

programme. Park argues that such programmes need to better reflect the diversity of English and its users, and embed opportunities to explore alternative teacher identity options.

In a more recent study, however, Choi (2016) focuses on English-Korean bilinguals in a North American university arguing that learners in such contexts may have alternative goals to achieving 'native-like' proficiency. Government initiatives in South Korea have led to the recruitment of teachers from English speaking countries fuelling the belief that such teachers are linguistically and pedagogically superior, thus "framing South Korean teachers as people who need support from language experts" (Choi 2016: 74). The participants in the study worked as graduate assistants supporting international students in the university, and faced challenges including being labelled as 'non-native' in university policies and having to undergo screening of their linguistic capability. Despite this, Choi found that the participants perceived academic knowledge and skills to be more valuable than goals of 'native-like' proficiency and chose not to be controlled by ideological labelling, instead emphasising their bilingual competences.

Despite the fact that many learners use English as an international language or Lingua Franca (Firth and Wagner 1997), numerous language institutions continue to adhere to 'native-speaker' frameworks (Llurda 2004). Such adherence can however lead to cultural conflicts when extended to teaching practices imposed without considering local contexts. The assumption that 'native-speakers' are better able to teach oral skills communicatively, for instance, is challenged by Holliday who uses the term "cultural disbelief" to critique how 'non-native' teachers are assumed to lack these skills (2015:13). *Cultural disbelief* also ignores how local teachers may be better able to adjust communicative language teaching (CLT) in accordance with local student expectations and needs. Indeed, there have been various initiatives by governments in countries such as China, Hong Kong, Thailand and Japan to introduce CLT initiatives (e.g. Baker 2008; Hu 2002; Hui 2005; Littlewood 2007; Yu 2001), and in

some cases ‘native-speaker’ teachers, to enhance teaching and learning. Research by Hui (2005) in China, for instance, highlights both its benefits and drawbacks, particularly the conflicts emerging from assumptions of superior knowledge rather than acknowledgement of the complexity of local context (Canagarajah 2006). Similarly, a study by Tsui (2007) traces the identity shifts of a teacher who was uncomfortable with CLT initiatives in the Chinese system, highlighting the complex networks of local and wider influences and how the teacher interacted with or resisted them.

Taking a post-structuralist perspective, Rudolph et al (2015: 39) argue that the construct of the ‘native-speaker’ is “glocal”, shaped by an interplay of both local and global discourses. Hence, local learner preferences of native-speaker models and recruitment practices of language institutions are influenced by local prejudices and marketization, as well as anglo-centric ideologies. As argued by Mora-Pablo (2015:121), constructs such as native-speakerism are shaped by stereotypes which are set “against each other in a contest to win approval of the dominant society”. In her study set in Mexico, she shows the differing levels of challenge (appearance, accent) teachers face, and how, through their continued marginalization in language departments, some felt they did not meet student expectations of the *ideal teacher*. Similarly, studies on employment practices by Selvi (2010) (also Ali 2009; Mahboob and Golden 2013) highlight the discriminatory discourses of job advertisements in some contexts, and shows how local teachers are placed at a disadvantage through prioritising origin over skills and qualifications (Braine 2010). However, despite this breadth of research, constructs of ‘native-speakerism’ still impact on the self-belief and professional development of teachers. Through this study, I provide examples of such instances, and trace how ‘native-speakerism’ acts to disrupt teachers’ professional lives. I argue that both people and material objects are influential actants of ‘native-speakerism’ and show how these link to form ‘native-speaker’ networks. I use Actor Network Theory (ANT) as an analytical tool, to examine how these networks ‘become mobilized and sustained to produce powerful effects’ (Fenwick et al. 2011: 95) through

their promotion of ‘native-speakerism’. I also draw on work by Deleuze and Guatttari (1987) to consider perceptions of the ‘native-speaker’ and explore the possibility of ‘becoming’ a ‘native-speaker’ teacher.

The study is based on the following research questions:

> ***1.How do teachers of English (using English as another language) understand the term ‘native-speaker’?***
>
> ***2.What impact has the construct of the ‘native-speaker’ had on them professionally? How has it shaped their perceptions of self as teachers?***

In the next section, I first discuss the theories drawn on in this study and clarify key concepts relevant to my analysis.

3 Theoretical Basis of the study

3.1 Being or Becoming a ‘native-speaker’

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) express their concept of ‘becoming’ as ‘rhizomatic’, as a process of change within an assemblage (or network), a process which is unpredictable in the direction it takes. Assemblages form through linkages between human and non-human (material) objects, which are continually forming, reforming, extending or breaking. Importantly, becoming is not a process of imitation, or identification:

> *‘Becoming is a verb with a consistency of its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, ‘appearing’, ‘being’, equaling’ or ‘producing’* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 261).

Hence, in ‘becoming’ an agent of an assemblage moves into the territory of another, thus re-shaping itself while also re-shaping the assemblage. Therefore, through a process of *deterritorialization* the properties of the assemblage change through the movement of elements within it. *Becoming* is thus explained as “dynamic conceptions of processes in continual transition”, in contrast to *being* as “static conceptions of things” (Grosz 2005:10). To analyse the participants’ responses to my first research question, I theorise the ‘native-speaker’ as either a state of *being*, something which

cannot change, or as a gradual *becoming* of acceptance into native-speaker networks. I also challenge the assumption that *becoming* a 'native speaker' is a desirable goal for teachers, and question the basis of 'native v non-native' labels.

3.2 Socio materialism

The *assemblage* conceptualised by Deleuze and Guatarri shares a similar relational view of the world as ANT, in that both relay the significance of the socio-material, the role of both humans and non-humans in creating action (see Muller and Schurr 2016). Positioned under an umbrella of post-humanism (Ferrando 2013), sociomaterialist approaches place equal emphasis of the role of material things (objects, artifacts, technologies), as being entangled with humans in social encounters (Fenwick et al. 2011). Therefore, in educational research, socio-materialism provides resources to investigate relationality, regular patterns and also unpredictable responses and changes in areas of educational activity (Fenwick, et al. 2011: 2). ANT examines education as "a network of practices" (Fenwick, et al. 2011: 95), and follows a sociomaterial orientation through its focus on relationality, and its emphasis that both humans and non-humans have equal potential to exert influence in heterogeneous networks, a feature referred to as *symmetry* by Latour (1999 and 2005). Hence, if we think of a classroom as a network, teacher, students, books, whiteboard, and smartphones are *potentially* equal actants that come together to form *actors* and become a performing part of the (lesson) network (Fenwick et al. 2011: 98). ANT also emphasises the processes which promote expansion and growth of a network (Callon and Latour 1981), which in turn enable certain networks to become powerful through the people and material objects they attract. Thus, an analysis of 'native-speaker' networks, examines the actants which are attracted to them, and how these contribute towards their power. Actors' gain power through the linkages they make with others (Fenwick and Edwards 2010: 129), thus, ideologies, practices and policies work together to strengthen a network, hence, 'native-speaker' networks become powerful actors through, for example, employment policies, promotion of 'native-speaker'

teacher strengths, and accent ideologies which are integrated within them. These networks have "solidified their power in ways which continue to affect the movements and identities" (Fenwick et al. 2011: 101) of teachers in different contexts.

Networks require on-going *work* in order for links to be sustained (Fenwick and Edwards 2010: 4), and for them to become stronger. When new connections are made, a process of change or translation occurs (Latour 1987), and, therefore, in this study, I am examining how native-speaker networks act to include or restrict those who can be translated into a 'native-speaker', and on which assumptions this translation is based.

4. Methodology and data collection

Qualitative methodology offers a recognition of the multiple possibilities and subjectivities influencing a social situation. It facilitates "a contextualisation of events" (Fox and Alldred 2014), and from a sociomaterial perspective, the material as well as humans are recognised in all research interactions (Fenwick and Edwards 2013). Focusing on how learning and teaching emerges through networks, ANT has been useful in ELT contexts in analyses of the influences of technology such as video-making in classrooms (Dagenais et al 2013), computer-assisted language learning (Hingleman and Gruba 2012) as well as transnational literacy curriculum design (Zhang and Heydon 2016), and to analyse aspects of teacher training in mainstream education (Trummons 2010). It has not, to my knowledge been used in research related to 'native-speakerism'.

ANT emphasises the non-linearity of events in research processes and it is from this *messiness* in an assemblage or network that ideas, concepts and thoughts emerge (Kon-Ljungberg and Barko 2012). It "traces the orderings and disorderings that become entities" (Fenwick and Edwards 2013: 54-55), and produce actors in multiple forms, which supports my aim to examine how constructs of 'native-speakerism' act on teachers in different ways.

Interviews are frequently used tools for identifying relations and their effects in a

particular research assemblage (Fox and Alldred 2014) and as used by Zheng and Heydon (2016), to “trace the constituents of the networks” examined. Rather than provide a method, ANT shows the effects of asking certain questions (Fenwick, et al 2011: 122), thus each interview is unique. Findings are created not just through interactions of the researcher and researched (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 107), but with material things such as technologies, questions, recording devices and the institutional setting (Fox and Aldred 2014: 6), and signals other than language, such as emotions, pauses and movement (MacLure 2013). The aim of interviews was to provide a space to “learn from the actors without imposing on them an ‘a priori’ definition of the world” (Latour 1999: 20), not only about what they do, but also how and why. The interactions between myself, the participants and other actants produced the particular directions or flows (Fox and Alldred 2014) unique to each session. Interviews thus facilitated an analysis of diverse networks as expressed through participant narratives (Fenwick et al 2011: 123) and an exploration of unpredicted directions.

4.1 Data collection

To begin this section, I provide an overview of the participants’ learning and teaching experiences as background for the subsequent discussions.

Ken is a teacher from Vietnam in his late twenties. He started learning English when he was nine years old, and also attended a private language school between ten and sixteen. He continued studying English throughout his formal education, and did his degree in English Language, and trained to be a teacher at university. Hence, in the final year, his degree included practical lesson planning and periods of supervised teaching practice in high schools. He found the school system somewhat ‘*restrictive*’ and so after graduating, he taught in a university delivering TOEFL exam preparation classes for two years. He wanted to further his expertise, and hence enrolled on an MA in the UK. Upon completion of his course, he gained employment with an EAP

Services provider in the UK, where he had been teaching academic and general English on pre-sessional courses for a year at the time of data collection.

Libby, a Chinese teacher in her mid-thirties, learned English in middle school from the age of eleven. She continued studying English through high school, and then attended a university specialising in teacher education. Her degree focused first on English language and language learning theories, and then in the 3rd year included more practical elements related to teaching methodology and skills. In her final year she did supervised teaching practice in middle schools. When she left university, Libby taught for four years in a middle school, and since then has worked for an English language newspaper, developing English language materials for teenagers. She also gives private instruction to children and teenagers. She came to the UK to do her MA for one year, which included a teaching practicum module.

Gail, is also from China and is in her late thirties. Like Libby, she started learning English in middle school when she was eleven, and continued through high school before studying for a degree in English Language. She first encountered a 'native-speaker' teacher at the age of twenty-one, when a British teacher took classes of oral English, which she enjoyed as he pushed students to speak in English. The third and final year of her degree focused on practical skills, as well as theory, and she did supervised teaching practice in middle schools. After this, Gail started to teach English in a university, where she has continued to teach academic English at both preparatory and first year level for eleven years.

Jay, also from China, is in her early forties and similarly learned English through the Chinese school system and at university, where she also trained to be a teacher. Upon graduating, she began teaching English in a university, mainly preparatory English courses of general English to prepare students for an entrance exam. She continued for five years and then decided to do an MA and took a three- year break, during which

time she also stayed with friends in New Zealand to improve her language skills through ‘immersion’ in an English-speaking environment. Jenny then returned to China and found a job as an English teacher in another university, where she has taught academic English for seven years.

Ken and Libby had studied on an MA TESOL course I taught on, while Jay and Gail had spent a year in the university as visiting scholars. Therefore, I had already established a relationship with the participants before conducting this study, which may have influenced their willingness to participate.

Upon receiving expressions of interest to participate, I emailed individuals an information sheet and a consent form providing ‘distance’ and time for people to request additional information. Finally, I had four agreements and once I had arranged convenient times and places for the interviews, I sent the following questions to the participants five days in advance:

1. **What is your idea or definition of a ‘native-speaker’ of English?**

2. **Can you think of any instances when the concept of ‘native-speaker’ v ‘non-’native-speaker’’ teachers has impacted on you as a professional teacher?**

Each interview was scheduled for an hour, using the above questions, but with additional prompts to provide a flexible interview framework. Two interviews were conducted face-to-face in meeting rooms on campus, and the other two were on Skype as the participants had returned to China. It is acknowledged that the integration of Skype into the research ‘assemblage’ changed the interview process. For instance, audio and video quality sometimes impacted on the flow of the discussion, and we agreed to turn off the video to avoid issues with ‘frozen screens’ (Deakin and Wakefield 2014: 610). Our familiarity was helpful at such points. All interviews were conducted

in a private space to minimise intrusions (Seitz 2015) and recorded.

I used NVivo11 as a transcribing tool initially, at the same time noting potential key points, and then exported the documents to Word format so that I could print and read them away from the screen. I drew on suggestions made by Maxwell (2005) who advocates the importance of reading as an initial step in analysis to become closer to data and stimulate possible directions of interpretation. I re-listened as I read and made some 'amendments' to the script in order to ensure accuracy of representation. I also annotated certain points to remind me of items of similarity or difference in the discussions and any accompanying non-verbal communications. These amendments and annotations were transferred to the scripts saved in NVivo, and memos created to summarise key points in each. The use of memos retains contextual ties to the data (see Beekhuyzen et al 2010), and also records for future reference, and these helped me identify links between interview discussions.

I first analysed participant expressions and examples of 'native-speakerism' as *being* or *becoming*. Then although each participant brought different experiences to the interview, I identified four common themes which linked them. These were Linguistic knowledge; Ideals of accent; Native v non-native proficiency and Employment. Participant responses were thus linked to one (or more) of these themes and I then created *maps* of experiences for each theme, drawing together data from different participants and thus avoiding viewing interview networks as 'unitary entities' (Fenwick et al 2011: 126). Mapping was a useful tool as it recognises possible realities rather than singular representations, facilitating explorations of linkages within and across experiences (see de Freitas 2012; Martin and Kamberalis 2013).

5. Findings and Discussion

Here, I first discuss participants perceptions of 'native-speakerism' (RQ1) as either a form of *being* or *becoming*. I then show how 'native-speaker' networks acted upon the

participants by analysing their experiences (RQ2). These examples are organised under themes of linguistic knowledge, ideals of accent, native-v non-native proficiency and employment.

5.1 Perceptions of native-speakerism

5.1.1Being a 'native-speaker'

Both Libby and Ken considered origin and language use to be important aspects of 'native-speakerism', emphasising the significance of birthplace and L1:

> *'So possibly, the person who is born here, brought up here, and err speaking this language all the time….' [Libby]*

> *' ..when I think about 'native-speaker's of English as teachers I think of someone whose mother tongue is English..' [Ken]*

Hence, *being* a 'native- speaker' indicates origin in an English-speaking country or environment where English is spoken as a first language, and is a status constructed through interactions with other mother tongue speakers. Native language ability is developed through social interaction and through the *affective tie* with which people associate language to social and cultural situations (Pennycook 2012: 84). Much of this early development happens covertly in the home environment (or is *black-boxed* in ANT terms) until gradually interactions are extended into wider networks of schools and communities. These performances of recognised social interactions create a trajectory appropriate to certain contexts, a norm built out of "an indefinite number of possibilities" (Latour, 1992 cited in Michael, 2017: 41). Hence, according to Ken and Libby, being a 'native-speaker' implies developing linguistic resources and social knowledge from birth and interacting with an English-speaking environment. Their views were reinforced by labels of 'native-speakerism', and by challenges to their 'legitimacy' as users which had emphasised their being 'non-native'.

Becoming a 'native-speaker'

Rather than considering 'native-speakerism' as a state of *being*, both Gail and Jay expressed the possibility of *becoming* a 'native-speaker' given certain circumstances. The dynamics of *becoming*, is described by a process in which any assemblage "changes in nature as it expands its connections" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:8). Therefore, as Gail and Jay emphasised, a person can become a 'native-speaker' through interacting in an English-speaking environment and gaining knowledge about language, traditions and culture:

> *'…[someone who] has lived in English speaking countries for a long time so he's kind of familiar with the English language , I guess, also traditions and the culture and the English way of thinking' [Gail]*

> *'I mean like a Chinese person, who goes to England or America, and if they speak English at home and school, I think they are 'native-speakers'. [Jay]*

This view resonates with Davies' (2003) notion of *native* as a social construct, through which identity and membership are connected to social attitudes and linguistic judgements in a particular speech community. Thus, becoming a 'native-speaker' involves developing both a high level of linguistic competence (Mukherjee 2005, cited in Pennycook 2012: 83), and a familiarity with social and cultural traditions. Jay referred to "thinking in English" as a key identifier of a 'native-speaker', but, reflecting on some of her Chinese origin friends born in New Zealand, noted that people growing up in bilingual environments develop this ability in both languages, and could be a 'native' of both.

Gail believes the ability to think in English, is developed by an accumulation of experiences, which shape how a person responds in certain situations and shares performance strategies (Davies 2003: 202). To exemplify her point, she drew on her

experiences of British humour, which she had gradually become more familiar with through being in the UK:

> *'….we can hardly understand English jokes, but sometimes we can (understand) for some jokes, if we have some background, the history, some knowledge of the culture…..'*

Thus, according to Gail, understanding a joke gains acceptance into a 'native-speaker' network, but this requires *investment* (Norton-Peirce 1995; Norton 2012) into learning both language and about culture. However, given that this investment is made, it could be argued that anyone has this potential.

5.1 Impacts of Native-speakerism

5.2.1 Linguistic knowledge

As well as using English as an L1, Ken stressed the need for a 'native-speaker' to have at least a basic knowledge of appropriate language use:

> *'You have got to have some kind of knowledge about the basics of English and you use grammar quite properly to a certain extent…..'*

Ken understands this knowledge as instinctive rather than explicitly learned, a view underpinned by Chomskian notions of linguistic competence (Canarajaragh 1999; Sato 2009), through which a 'native-speaker' is considered to have complete innate competence in language (Pennycook 1994: 175). This notion of i*nstinctiveness* is important, not least because it is used by some 'native-speaker' teachers as a tool to assert authority over language use. In classroom interactions, for instance, teacher utterances such as '*As a 'native-speaker' I would say X…*' or '*X sounds correct*' are embedded into native-speaker networks claiming linguistic legitimacy, yet not always supported by knowledge.

Ken felt he could never be considered a 'native-speaker' because he relied on learned knowledge rather than instinct, which he had experienced to be more frequently questioned by students and colleagues, a view also expressed in a study by Ba Doan (2016) in SE Asia. Conversely, participants in Ma's (2012) study valued both *ability to explain grammatical points* as a local teacher strength, and *intuition about language* as a 'native-speaker' strength implying Ken, influenced by discourses which position 'learned' knowledge as lesser, underestimated the value of his learned knowledge to students.

Similarly, Jay believed that the preference for 'native-speakers' to teach spoken language stemmed from a widespread belief among learners in the *innate* knowledge of 'native-speakers' to know how to use language. At the same time, Jay noted that learners had little confidence in 'native-speakers' ability to explain language, and expected a clearer explanation from Chinese teachers. Hence, while 'non-native' speaker teachers are assumed to lack instinctive linguistic knowledge, Jay argued that they have a '*personal and deeper understanding*' of grammar and do not '*take it [language] for granted'*.

However, Jay often felt under pressure to answer all her students' language questions and, like a participant discussed in Liu and Xu's (2011) study of Chinese EFL teachers adapting to curriculum change, she felt guilty when not able to offer a detailed answer. She also became demoralised because students would support a 'native-speaker' on queries over language, even though she could offer equal or even more precise linguistic explanations. Hence, despite her knowledge, Jay believed that her lack of language instinct challenged her legitimacy from her students' perspective, and restricted her enrolment into 'native-speaker' networks, demonstrating how engrained beliefs within networks operate to create marginalization (Fenwick et al 2011).

5.2.2 Ideals of accent

Libby also emphasised language use in her definition of a 'native-speaker', but focused on spoken language and accent. She defined a 'native-speaker' as someone who speaks a *standard* form of English:

'…..not as standard as Queen's English but close to BBC English..'

Libby thus acknowledges that while 'Queen's English' is an ultimate ideal, BBC accents are a more realistic standard of a 'native-speaker' network. Although standard English is difficult to define, with varied perceptions of s*tandard*, as Hall (2012: 114) notes, references to standard or good English persist and the 'native-speaker' is assumed to be superior in providing ideal models. Accents are thus judged according to evaluators pre-conceptions and social prejudice of accent, race and status (Choi 2016), highlighting how *standard (and BBC) Eng*lish is an ambiguous concept. However, Libby adhered to her belief in 'BBC English' as an ideal, even though she doubted her ability to reach it.

Therefore, Libby considers her accent and that of other Chinese users of English to be '*deficient'* because '*it is not like BBC English'*. She traces this belief back to her English lessons at school, which were taught by Chinese teachers who, she says, '*cannot have a good accent'*, a prejudice linked to beliefs that a *good* accent can only be obtained through interacting with 'native-speakers' whose accents are considered "clear and easy to understand" (Ba Doan 2016: 73). Instead of valuing exposure to a range of accents as demonstrated by participants in a study by Huang (2014) in the US, Libby believes she would have a more acceptable accent if she had been taught by teachers using English as an L1. This belief, was endorsed by Jay's former teacher who told her "*try your best to speak like a 'native-speaker''*, advice which undermined not only Jay, but the teacher as an L2 user.

Accent ideals, therefore, create prejudices which act to de-legitimize teachers. Golombek and Rehn Jordan's (2005) study on two Taiwanese Students on an MA

TESOL course in the US, shows how the participants' English language abilities were judged by their intelligibility with 'native-speakers', which deeply affected their self-confidence. Thus, prejudices against L2 user accents produce negative judgments of deficiency, and classify individuals as *outsiders* (Lindeman 2003). Indeed, Libby believes she recognises a user of English from another country because she '*cannot understand them quite well',* due to the other's non-familiar accent (Moussa and Llurda 2008). She is thus prejudiced against others in the same way she feels prejudiced against as a teacher; for instance, she described how, in a teaching practice class, she believed her Chinese accent created a barrier between her and the multi-cultural learners. However, although some work has indicated that students prefer a 'native-speaker' accent (e.g. Butler 2007; Kaur and Raman 2014), other studies of learner perceptions have shown teacher accent to be of less concern to students, particularly over time, providing they found speech intelligible (Liang 2002; Moussa 2006). Finally, teacher accents vary widely irrespective of origin, and stereotypical ideal accents are not clear-cut attributes of English L1 speakers; accent is developed through education and experience.

5.2.3 Native v non-native proficiency

All of the participants demonstrated self-awareness of their language proficiency, and tended to position themselves negatively against perceptions of ideal 'native-speaker' proficiencies embedded within their professional networks, undermining their own linguistic skills. However, during our discussions, Ken acknowledged that there are "*many types of 'native-speakers"* and their linguistic proficiency depends on how individuals interact with language. As an example, he talked about a British friend who works as a travel agent, and tends to use spoken language more frequently than written:

> *' …he speaks on the phone a lot and hardly writes anything down, so when he*

actually writes something, I look at it and think 'Oh there's a mistake in spelling here, punctuation, and err run on sentences…'

While Ken's friend uses oral skills in his job to liaise with customers, the need to write is less important. Therefore, having, what Ken calls an *instinctive* knowledge about language does not ensure a high level of accuracy in all skills, as shown by the inaccuracies of his friend. Indeed, Ken realised that he had a greater ability to recognise accurate English in a written text, which he attributed to the time and energy he had invested into developing writing skills to become an *expert* user. Similarly, in a study by Reis (2011) a Chinese teacher challenged the view that 'native-speakers' automatically had these skills by telling his students that writing is a learned skill and that they could become proficient writers through hard work. Hence, challenging beliefs of linguistic superiority promoted through 'native-speaker' networks as something assumed through birth (Pennycook 2012), highlights how any learner can become an effective user.

As well as written proficiency, further doubts of language competence emerged from the discussions. For instance, Gail exemplified how she doubted her ability to interpret text after an experience in a restaurant in the UK. This had a resounding impact on her confidence, because she had met a barrier when trying to understand the unfamiliar genre of menu language. Thus, Gail could not interact with the menu and believed this was because of her 'non-native' language skills, rather than just a different use of language, causing her to question her effectiveness:

'……as a non-'native-speaker' I am missing….you know I can't teach my students real English, like I mentioned, authentic English that they can use when they are in a foreign country like the UK'

Despite her efficiency in dealing with the situation by asking the waiter for recommendations, Gail believed she had failed to *pass* into the restaurant network

because of her unfamiliarity with the menu, a *material prop* (Law and Singleton 2000: 771) which challenged her performance. The menu therefore allows or restricts participation in the restaurant network, showing how material things "act, together with other type of things and forces, to exclude, invite, and regulate particular forms of participation" (Fenwick and Edwards 2010: 7)

Such a seemingly ordinary object of daily life had an immense impact (Fenwick and Edwards 2010: 6) on Gail's self-belief, and influenced by assumptions of 'native-speaker' abilities, she became insecure in her own competencies. However, the fact that customers irrespective of their origin ask for clarification of menus, suggests that this is not an innate skill of 'native-speakers'. Rather it suggests that interpreting menus is a skill that is developed through repeated interactions in restaurant networks, and that given appropriate opportunities over time, anyone could 'act' effectively in a restaurant.

5.2.4 Employment

Ken and Jay both gave accounts of negative impacts of native –speaker ideologies embedded into employment practices. Ken described how in some countries, such as Vietnam, there is a preference for 'native-speaker' teachers, as it is '*good for P.R. and marketing'*. This bias is based on the pre-conception that learning a language from a 'native-speaker' is more effective, and hence 'native-speakers' become a "sales icon" (Holliday, 2015: 13). Certain institutions recruit only 'native-speakers' in response to perceived market demands (Ruecker and Ives 2015) inflating both the fees of institutions and expectations of learners. As shown in Reis's (2011) study some 'non-native' teachers believe their students expect to see a 'native-speaker' teacher in their class and doubt themselves as practitioners. Thus, according to Ken, being a native teacher of English offers the '*kind of privilege we don't have'* and his job opportunities in Vietnam were limited by rights of access to the networks constructed through

recruitment policies which filter teachers who have a passport from an English speaking or inner circle country (Selvi 2010), and place nativeness above qualifications in ways which are racially discriminatory (Ruecker and Ives 2015).

Jay also had experiences of employment discrimination, when applying for teaching jobs in New Zealand. She suspected she was often rejected because she was Chinese, despite her qualifications and experience. Even if she had an interview she felt at a disadvantage because she did not look like a stereotypical white teacher of English. Indeed, even her friends who had been born in New Zealand, faced similar rejections:

> *'…they are Chinese but they were born in New Zealand, they can be classified as a 'native-speaker' but because of appearance I think they have more difficulty finding teaching jobs'*

In certain contexts, concepts of appearance strengthen 'native-speaker' networks by resisting those who do not conform to expected stereotypes. In order to gain access, features such as being fair, white-skinned, blue-eyed, are assessed (e.g. Mora Pablo 2015), and individuals are rejected if they do not fit into the expected appearance of a 'native-speaker'. Hence, institutional policies and preferences "racialize" individuals (Aneja 2016), strengthening the power of 'native-speaker' networks.

Such prejudice relates to the marketing discussed with Ken; appearance, is a marketable asset for language institutions. These practices are described as neo-racist by Holliday (2015:15), as teachers are valued by features stereotypically (though inaccurately) linked to that race. Hence, potential teachers, as exemplified by Jay's New Zealand friends, are rejected on account of appearance, and thus are not enrolled into the ideal 'native-speaker teacher' network that some institutions promote. This exemplifies how recruitment policies or employment contracts are forms of "technology that embed knowledge from both networks that produced it and networks that have established its use, possibilities and constraints" (Fenwick et al 2011: 99). Hence, the

requirements of a teaching role are manipulated according to those institutional forms of power which racialize job specifications and contract negotiations.

Employment practices also endorse inequality through an imbalance of salary. For instance, Ken felt he was unfairly marginalised when he discovered that native-speakers were paid 3 times as much as him in his own country:

> *'I think that's kind of unfair because we are doing the same job equally well'*

Money thus exerts privilege in 'native-speaker' networks; a 'native-speaker' network attracts more money and prestige, hence as consumers of education, students believe because they are paying more they will benefit from superior teaching. Conversely, in certain contexts, a 'non-native' network attracts less money, and hence is less powerful. This volatility of 'power' and its effects resonates with Foucault's analysis of power:

> '..as the process which through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or system'. (Foucault, 1990, cited in Sheldon, 2015: 210)

However, Ken, drawing on his own experiences, argued that many factors impact on learner achievement, including motivation, interactions with resources and technologies as well as teachers. These come together to create "a collective sociomaterial enactment" (Fenwick 2015) which influences learning in multiple ways. Therefore, Ken believes that having a 'native-speaker' teacher is no guarantee of learning; indeed, although he had never been taught language by a 'native speaker', he had still achieved a high IELTS score.

Thus, Ken felt his professional skills and the knowledge were not valued, even though by taking his local knowledge of learning into teaching situations, he could more sensitively adapt his teaching to learners than teachers from other countries:

'……like a teacher from England who gets them to like stand-up and speak in class, make a presentation..[..] ..that may produce some adverse effects on the students.'

His views linked to Libby's concerns that CLT would be resisted by her students in China, especially weaker learners. Le Ha (2008) discusses CLT as a colonising force, which may not be appropriate to classrooms in countries such as Vietnam. In such situations, 'native-speaker' networks which oppose traditional teaching methods and values may face resistance when recruiting the actors needed to maintain their power. Such resistance is seen in Canagarajah's (1993) study of Tamil students who resisted content and methodologies in a British course-book because they had no interest in the culture and discourses of British English. As both Ken and Libby argued, local knowledge is important to blend new and traditional, an approach supported by Lewis and McCook (2002) in their study of Vietnamese teachers implementing elements of communicative teaching in their classes. These points show how in education systems, "spaces and disjunctures" open up when global policies and procedures are applied locally (Fenwick and Edwards 2010: 89). Local networks resist colonising forces, but if used towards active production of different forms of hybridity (Edwards and Usher 2008) lessons can be effectively adapted to enhance the "contingent interactions of classroom activity" (Fenwick and Edwards 2010: 89).

6. Conclusion

This study provided some insight into how teachers perceive the construct of the 'native-speaker' and the implications of this belief on their own development. Even though Jay and Gail consider 'native-speakerism' as a network accessible through 'becoming', all participants had faced situations in which they had been challenged by 'native-speaker' networks, which caused them to question their legitimacy as teachers

and users of English. The study showed how ‘native-speaker’ networks acted to de-stabilize their professional self-belief and limit development as teachers in their own and wider contexts. The ANT analyses of these instances showed how material objects (menus, money, employment policies) as well as ideologies are actants of ‘native-speaker’ networks and had powerful effects on the participants. Moreover, although superior linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge are assumed to belong to ‘native-speakers’, by unravelling these networks, it was possible to demonstrate the unfounded and prejudiced nature of these, and instead endorse views that the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in a given situation are linked to experience and education (Pennycook 2012).

Because ANT focuses not on the scale of things, but on things being connected, mediated related and local (Latour 1999:18), the examples analysed remained close to local sites of participant experiences, while recognising links to wider-reaching constructs of ‘native-speakerism’. These analyses demonstrate the continued need to challenge the constructs of ‘native’ and ‘non-native-speaker’ in ELT and to expose how these act on teachers’ professional lives exerting prejudice. Primarily, these challenges need to be addressed more explicitly in teacher education programmes (as argued by Park 2012) through emphasising the value of multilingualism, of sensitivity to local contexts, and the diversity of ELT as a profession, and by moving beyond the act of categorising teachers on the basis of origin by rejecting the use of ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ labels. Individuals would therefore enter the profession with a much broader view of its diversity, and hopefully ‘act’ in ways which endorsed equality in their teaching networks, especially as potential managers and recruiters of the future. Although there has been some protest against prejudicial employment practices (e.g. British Association of Applied Linguists) this clearly needs to be supported unanimously by all who consider themselves professionals in the field. These steps will gradually reduce the power of ‘native-speaker’ networks as they fail to recruit

actants to support their expansion.

This study is limited by its scale, and it would be useful to extend both the timescale and number of participants to examine in more depth further reaching impacts of native-speaker networks on teachers' professional lives and identify changing perceptions over time. Including participants of more varied cultural backgrounds would also bring different perspectives to explore.

However, the study demonstrates the power of 'native-speakerism', and endorses the need for scholars and teacher educators to continue to challenge its influences in order to establish equality and respect for teachers' contributions to the profession irrespective of their origin.

8014 words

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