"We could say that I fought rather than thought my way into the topic."

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Native-speakerism and the complexity of personal experience: A duoethnographic study

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Abstract: This paper presents a duoethnographic study into the effects of native-speakerism on the professional lives of two English language teachers, one "native", and one "non-native speaker" of English. The goal of the study was to build on and extend existing research on the topic of native-speakerism by investigating, through dialogic interaction, the complex ways in which this ideology can influence the lives and career trajectories of individual language teachers. We show that the effects of native-speakerism can vary greatly from person to person based on not only their "native" or "non-native" positioning, but also on geography, teaching context and personal disposition.

Subjects: Research Methods in Education; Equality & Human Rights; Teachers & Teacher Education; Applied Linguistics; Language Teaching & Learning

Keywords: native-speakerism; duoethnography; native speaker; non-native speaker; English language teaching; critical applied linguistics; enthography

1. Introduction: Native-speakerism in ELT

Native-speakerism is a term coined and described by Holliday (2003, 2005, 2006), which is used to refer to a widespread ideology in the English Language Teaching (ELT) profession whereby those perceived as "native speakers" of English are considered to be better language models and to embody a superior Western teaching methodology than those perceived as "non-native speakers". This ideology makes extensive use of an "us" and "them" dichotomy where "non-native speaker"

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Native-speakerism, or the belief that a "native speaker" embodies not only the English language, but also Western teaching methodology, and as a result is better suited to teach it; is a topic of increasing interest to EFL and ESL teachers. Likewise, the ways in which power, privilege, and prejudice interact in the field of English language teaching is the subject of much research. This research has, however, created "grand narratives" in which the effects of the ideology ore over-simplified and generalised. This paper shows how the complexity of personal experience can disrupt these narratives, highlighting the influence of geography, teaching setting, and personal disposition. As native-speakerism research gains footing among those outside the academic community it becomes important to offer different scholarly perspectives on the issue for public consumption, and as such we believe open access to the data in this paper to be in the public interest.

teachers and students are seen as culturally inferior and in need of training in the "correct" Western methods of learning and teaching. Native-speakerism also makes extensive use of what Holliday (2005) calls "cultural disbelief" (see also Holliday, 2013, 2015); a fundamental doubt that "non-native speakers" can make any meaningful contributions to ELT.

Holliday's initial description of native-speakerism as an ideology that benefits "native speakers" to the detriment of "non-native speakers" has been recently criticised by Houghton and Rivers (2013b), who, in their edited volume (Houghton & Rivers, 2013b), show that "native speakers" can also be affected negatively by the ideology. Consequently, native-speakerism can now be understood as an ideology which, while privileging the knowledge and voices of Western ELT institutions, uses biases and stereotypes to classify people (typically language teachers) as superior or inferior based on their perceived belonging or lack of belonging to the "native speaker" group (Holliday, 2015; Houghton & Rivers, 2013a).

The word *perceived* is very important here, because scholars recognise now that speakerhood, similarly to race, is not a biological, but rather a socially constructed trait (Davies, 2012; Faez, 2011; Holliday, 2013, 2015; Inbar-Lourie, 2005; Piller, 2002). Indeed, Davies (2003, 2012) points out that linguistically speaking, there are no grounds to maintain the distinction between "native" and "non-native speakers". It appears rather that speakerhood is assigned on the basis of social and contextual factors such as ethnic background, nationality (Bonfiglio, 2010; Singh, 1998), accent, name (Ali, 2009), and willingness to self-identify as a "native speaker" (Inbar-Lourie, 2005).

Sociolinguistic research also shows that speakers might find this dichotomy simplistic and misrepresentative of their linguistic identities (Faez, 2011; Piller, 2002). Moreover, Holliday (2013, 2015) warns that we should beware of treating the two labels as if they were objective, measurable and value-free, since in ELT being deemed a "native speaker" is often a very subjective and political matter. For example, people can have their speakerhood denied based on characteristics such as race, whereby only those who are white and Western-looking are perceived as "real" native speakers (Amin, 1997; Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Liu, 1999). Ali (2009) even shows that "native speakers" whose names do not "sound" Western might be treated as "non-native speakers" and denied employment opportunities.

As a result, we follow Holliday's (2005) suggestion and use "native speaker" and "non-native speaker" in inverted commas to indicate to the reader, and to remind us as writers, that the terms are subjective, ideological and value-laden. While we would ideally like to avoid using the terms altogether, or use one of the alternatives suggested over the years by different scholars (Cook, 2001; Jenkins, 2007; Paikeday, 1985; Rampton, 1990), our own professional trajectories in ELT have also been so profoundly shaped by us having been classified and referred to as "native" and "non-native speaker" teachers, that we feel it is necessary to use and problematise the terms in order to untangle the biases and prejudices behind them.

2. Justifying a duoethnographic approach to native-speakerism research

Until very recently, many of the studies concerning the effects of native-speakerism on the professional identities of English teachers have been quantitative. For example, Reves and Medgyes (1994), Llurda and Huguet (2003), Sifakis and Sougari (2005) and Kaur and Raman (2014) all studied teachers' self-perceptions using questionnaires. While Ma (2012) adopted a mixed methods approach, the interviews following the questionnaires were semi-structured and could not allow for a deep and contextualised exploration of the issue. When it comes to students' perceptions of "native" and "non-native speakers", the vast majority of studies are also quantitative (Chun, 2014; Javid, 2016; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Moussu, 2002, 2006, 2010). While there are qualitative studies focusing on English teachers' lived experiences and influences of native-speakerism (Aboshiha, 2015; Hansen, 2004; Liu, 1999, 2004), they are still the minority. Furthermore, we have been able to identify only three autoethnographic studies. Hansen's (2004) and Liu's (2004) accounts focused on the experiences of "non-native speakers" teaching English in an ESL context in the US, while Canagarajah's

(2012) study portrayed his struggle to acquire what he then perceived as superior Western ELT knowledge. Consequently, this study aims to contribute towards filling the qualitative gap in research, especially as far as autoethnographies are concerned; and the geographical gap, since the two authors have taught in Asia, Europe and Latin America, but never in the US. This is important, as we identify several ways in which specific contextual factors can influence the operation of native-speakerist ideology, and therefore believe it is important to expand the scope and geographical specificity of native-speakerism research. However, in order to show the complexity of native-speakerist ideology, we decided to conduct the study using a duoethnography, which as far as we know has not yet been employed in applied linguistics, ELT or native-speakerism research.

Duoethnography, as a form of qualitative research, is underpinned by a constructivist paradigm or worldview. This paradigm focuses on individual's lived and subjective experiences, and acknowledges researchers' beliefs and values as forming a part of the research process (Creswell, 2013). This emphasis on the subjective and individual forms the basis of duoethnography, since it seeks to circumvent the crisis of representation in qualitative writing (the difficulty in authentically representing the voice of another person or group) by allowing people to present and explore, through dialogue, their own experiences. While this research approach is autobiographical, the authors are not the topic of the duoethnography, but the site of the research (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). In other words, duoethnographers explore how the topic (e.g. native-speakerism in ELT) was experienced by them, and how the researchers' lived experiences serve to reinterpret and reconceptualise the theme of the study (Sawyer & Norris, 2013).

It could be argued that such an approach might introduce a fundamental bias into the data since both researchers, who are at the same time participants, know that the dialogue will be used as data for research. Nevertheless, as with other constructivist approaches, the conclusions and results do not purport to be universally true, objective or replicable, but rather suggestive (Creswell, 2013). In other words, participants' recollections retrieved through a duoethnographic dialogue do not aim to accurately reflect or represent one true external reality (if such exists), but rather the subjective lived experiences of the researchers. The reader can then decide whether these experiences are transferable to their particular context (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Furthermore, duoethnography acknowledges that beliefs are not static and distinct entities (as postpositivist researchers might claim), but fluid, changeable and often emerge from social interaction and are influenced by sociocultural and geographic context (Dufva, 2003; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003). Hence, through dialogue, duoethnographers aim to question and reconceptualise their own subjective beliefs which form the topic of the research (Sawyer & Norris, 2013).

Furthermore, duoethnography is a research method that seeks to explore "narratives of superiority and oppression" (Sawyer & Norris, 2013, p. 7), through which people internalise structures of injustice (Said, 1993). Narrative inquiry is crucial because it facilitates understanding of individual experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and of the human world (Polkinghorne, 1988). These narratives surround us and permeate our daily lives, often remaining hidden within what appear as acceptable and normal discourses (Sawyer & Norris, 2013), and as such require a reflexive and self-reflective mode of inquiry to fully understand. This resonates very well with the problem of native-speakerism in ELT, which according to Holliday (2005) is so deeply embedded within ELT that it has become practically invisible. Indeed, Braine (1999) writes about *invisible* barriers which hinder professional opportunities of many "non-native speakers"; while Hansen (2004) talks about the *invisible* "non-native speaker". Also, the exploration of such individual narratives allows for a deeper understanding of the ways in which this ideology affects the lives of teachers.

Duoethnographers are also concerned with social justice causes and the ways in which structures of privilege and oppression influence people in different social spheres. In the field of ELT, native-speakerism is a concept describing just such a structure of privilege and oppression. In addition, according to Sawyer and Norris (2013), duoethnography can promote social change and social justice by disrupting the dominant metanarratives (see also Norris & Sawyer, 2012). This is crucial in the

case of native-speakerism because, as both Kumaravadivelu (2016) and Kamhi-Stein (2016) note, despite over two decades of research documenting inequalities between "native" and "non-native speakers" in ELT, native-speakerism is still very widespread, influencing the professional lives of language teachers.

The two of us, as English language teachers, have been placed by the discourses of our profession into two distinct groups: "native speaker" and "non-native speaker" teachers. We recognise that this distinction is more social construct than scientific reality (Davies, 2003, 2012, 2013), and yet our placement into these two groups inescapably influences our experiences in, and perceptions of, the profession. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that the terms "native speaker English teacher" and "non-native speaker English teacher" refer to a reality borne of socialisation into the field, rather than a measurable difference on which such a division is based. Our different socialisations into the field give each of us a perspective on the industry which is unavailable to the other, and which we believe we can best make available to each other (and, by extension, to our readers), through reflexive, dialogical, and critical interaction. Duoethnography is an approach which allows for such an interaction, and which we felt would allow us to explore the effects of native-speakerism from a different viewpoint, and to critically challenge our assumptions of its effects through dialogue and the sharing of experience.

3. Study aims and methods

The aims of the study were to extend existing research by exploring the similarities and differences in terms of how native-speakerism has affected the professional lives of two teachers who were at the same time the sites and the authors of the study. Robert is a teacher who was born in Britain, and moved to Japan at the age of 22 to teach English, where he has remained since 2008. Marek is a Polish-born teacher of English who has taught in several different countries, in both Europe and Latin America. We are both currently undertaking our PhD studies on the topic of native-speakerism in ELT. We aimed to explore through this study the complexities of native-speakerism and show from a more nuanced perspective how it shapes the experiences of ELT professionals in differing ways that are often context-dependent. We also wanted to show that duoethnography could be a powerful tool for disrupting narratives about these issues.

Since duoethnography as a method emerged only a decade ago, we started by exploring the literature to see how it has been employed so far in other fields. As Sawyer and Norris (2013) note, a key feature that differentiates duoethnographic writing is that the voice of each of the researchers is highlighted and made explicit. Duoethnographers create "[p]olyvocal texts presenting multiple perspectives on a phenomenon" which are "most often written in a theatrical script format" and "permit readers to witness two or more people both in conversation and thinking about their conversation" (Sawyer & Norris, 2013, p. 75). Duoethnographers collect data through multiple recorded (written or taped) interactions, which are then carefully analysed and coded by topic. Finally, the data are written up in the form of constructed dialogic texts, divided by headings into themes (Madden & McGregor, 2013; Sawyer & Liggett, 2012). While the dialogues presented in duoethnographies are constructed, and through their dialogic format are open to a more general audience than other forms of scholarship, the themes and examples on which they are based are identified through a rigorous process of data collection and interpretation.

In this study, we used online conversations via Facebook and Skype to gather data. This method was chosen since we live on two different continents (Asia and Europe). We met regularly at least once a week to discuss the impact of native-speakerism on our careers and saved the text from each interaction, eventually building up a large store of data consisting of roughly 20,000 words. Facebook turned out to be more convenient than Skype, because we could leave short messages for each other at any time without having to wait for the other person to be online, which due to the time difference proved very effective.

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After the first two weeks of discussion online, we examined the data and used thematic analysis to identify emerging themes. We then focused more closely on four of the themes which seemed to need further exploration: stereotypical beliefs about "native" and "non-native" speaker teachers, the effects of native-speakerism on our careers, issues of self-confidence and professional standing, and the ways in which we became aware of native-speakerism. We continued the discussion with a focus on these four topics for another two weeks, and then proceeded to construct dialogues based on the data we had gathered. Using the text from our real-time discussions as a basis, we rewrote and constructed semi-fictional dialogues, salted with contextualising sources, and preceded and followed by reflective introductions and conclusions, which explicitly identified the key points and findings from our research. We will begin the presentation of this data starting in the following section.

4. Comparative fallacy: Essentialising "native" and "non-native speaker" strengths and weaknesses

In the first section of the dialogue, we aim to show how our personal experiences disrupt the common narrative in ELT which claims that "native" and "non-native speakers" have essentialised strengths and weaknesses. This narrative has led to a creation of what could be thought of as regimes of truth (Selvi, 2014), whereby all "native speakers" are good at teaching communication skills, but awful at teaching grammar; while on the other hand, all non-native speakers' are good at teaching grammar, but bad at teaching communication skills. Such arguments are profoundly native-speakerist in nature, yet widely accepted as true and objective in ELT. They lead to situations where classes are assigned based on the teachers perceived belonging to one of the two groups and the particular teaching behaviours, or strengths and weaknesses which are ascribed to that group, without any consideration for the skills of individual teachers (Breckenridge & Erling, 2011; Hansen, 2004; Houghton, 2013). Consequently, we feel that it is necessary to start with this section as it sets the scene for the following dialogues.

Robert: Do you think that "native" and "non-native speaker" teachers really have distinct strengths and weaknesses, as many researchers suggest? (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Chun, 2014; Medgyes, 1992).

Marek: I can see where they are coming from. However, while there's a grain of truth in this notion, it is unhelpful and harmful when we use it to generalise and label all members of a particular group with a set of fixed characteristics. For example, it sounds preposterous that someone might want to employ a mechanic only because they are German. Yet, such a preposterous situation is commonplace in ELT.

Robert: "Native" and "non-native speakers" are classified and labelled based on a range of essentialist characteristics. And while this research strand has been criticised by scholars (Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Selvi, 2014), these views are still very much present and widespread in ELT. If you start scrutinising them, though, it becomes apparent that they're based on essentialist notions. For example, as a "native speaker" I am supposedly not very good at empathising with students. However, when I started attending Japanese classes it made me much more sensitive to the feelings and experiences of students in class, especially as I spoke to the other students (it was a multilingual group) both inside and outside of class, and saw how radically their personalities could change in a classroom setting (anxiety, lack of motivation, dislike of the teacher, etc. all being factors). You must have had a similar experience having learnt English and other foreign languages, that you are able to empathise with your learners, right?

Marek: You see, this is how deeply ingrained these stereotypes are. As a "non-native speaker" I am supposedly very good at empathising with my students, because of my own language learning experience. I really doubt I am, though.

The main reason is probably that I learn languages relatively quickly. I have never really struggled and the whole enterprise has always seemed pretty logical to me, so I actually find it difficult to empathise with learners who find languages difficult. Or who are lazy, or unmotivated. Or who sit quietly and never say a word in class. Of course, I try to encourage them, but deep down, I am puzzled.

However, I do think that learning a foreign language yourself is an eye opener. It should be a must for all teachers. However, I do not necessarily think that as a "non-native speaker" you can better empathise with your learners because of your own "struggle" to learn English. The fact that you learned a foreign language, does not mean you will be able to understand someone who finds language learning challenging. And "native speakers" can and do learn foreign languages too.

Robert: I am actually a terrible language learner. Highly motivated, but also struggle to get beyond intermediate in Japanese, even after nearly 8 years here. I get extremely stressed in lessons, easily flustered and embarrassed, and don't retain new language easily. So that experience of struggling to learn Japanese radically changed my approach to teaching, and also made me question my assumptions of monolingualism, for example.

In this exchange, we can see how notions of essentialised strengths and weaknesses of "native speaker" and "non-native speaker" teachers, which serve to uphold practices of inequality in the profession, are not born out by our personal experiences; indeed, are contradicted by them. While Marek, as a "non-native speaker" is supposedly more empathetic with his students, as a strong language learner this does not come naturally to him. For Robert, on the other hand, his own experiences of language learning have made him much more empathetic towards his learners. We see here that narratives which support the ideology of native-speakerism are, when examined on a personal level, unsustainable. The complexity of personal experience revealed by this dialogic interaction between two teachers serves to demonstrate that these "crude taxonomies" stand as little more than stereotypes. Nevertheless, these stereotypes are still widely used and upheld as common sense in ELT, having a profound impact on career trajectories of native and non-native speakers, as well as on their self-confidence, which we discuss in the following two sections.

5. Different effects on career trajectories

In this section of the dialogue, we discuss some of the ways in which native-speakerism, and the inherent stereotyping of "native" and "non-native speakers", has affected our careers, and show how both of our careers have been affected in different ways. Typically, native-speakerism is seen as benefiting "native speakers" and having a negative effect on "non-native speakers" (Holliday, 2005, 2006). However, we will try to show that this is not always the case by demonstrating some of the complexity inherent in a person's individual experience of, and response to, encountering this ideology.

Marek: Would you say that as a white "native speaker" from an Inner Circle (Kachru, 1992) country you had an advantage at the beginning of your career? That's what the literature would seem to suggest (Amin, 1997; Holliday, 2005; Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Phillipson, 1992).

Robert: At every point of my career, I would say. In Japan I have certainly been able to get jobs more easily as a consequence of being considered a "native speaker" (Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013; Rivers, 2013), I haven't been expected to learn the Japanese language. In fact, I have even been discouraged from doing so. For example, I was able to get a job teaching full-time at a language school despite getting most of the questions wrong in the interview and having no previous post-certification teaching experience, and I have always been able to ask Japanese staff to do administrative tasks for me, though I am making a conscious effort to do as much by myself now as I can. Having said that, I think there have been times when native-speakerism has negatively affected me, but there are no times when the negative effect has been stronger than the positive effect.

Marek: So you are saying that even though there might be some slight disadvantages to being a white "native speaker", the benefits are far greater. How do you then feel about Houghton and Rivers (2013a) reconceptualisation of native-speakerism? In their book (Houghton & Rivers, 2013b), they show that being a white "native speaker" in Japan can really hinder your professional opportunities.

Robert: I think Houghton and Rivers are right in a way. There is definitely a sense in which "native speakers" are seen as disposable, and not taken as seriously as other educators, at least in some settings. For example, the idea of "native-speakers" as resources (Hashimoto, 2013) or "living tape recorders" (Miyazato, 2009), valued primarily for their cultural significance, almost as a piece of realia, is very true. On the other hand, I think there is a sense in which Houghton and Rivers (2013b) overplay the issues. To bring in an analogy, gender-related issues can affect men (higher rates of male suicide, maternal preference in child custody cases, etc.), but it would be a mistake to say that sexism is something that affects men and women equally. Similarly, I think you can acknowledge that native-speakerism can affect "native speakers" in a negative way, but I do not think you can say that they are the main or even equal victims of it.

Marek: In addition, while native speakerism can affect both "native speakers" and "non-native speakers", just as sexism can affect men and women; the negative effect on "native speakers" seems to me to be contextually and geographically limited, mainly to Japan and Korea, with a few examples in other countries, such as Petrie's (2013) research on discrimination in Italian universities. The discrimination against "non-native speakers", on the other hand, is much more widespread and affects employment prospects (Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Selvi, 2010), pay (Doan, 2014), self-confidence (Bernat, 2008; Suárez, 2000) and negative perceptions from colleagues, students and superiors (Braine, 2010; Llurda, 2005; Mahboob, 2010).

Robert: Does it affect all "non-native speakers" in the same way or to the same degree?

Marek: Definitely not, although this is the impression you might get when reading the literature. I have personally only ever experienced it in the recruitment sphere when I was turned down for posts because of my mother tongue. This can be very frustrating and demotivating, especially if you are highly qualified and experienced. However, I have never experienced "I-am-not-a-native-speaker" syndrome (Suárez, 2000), nor felt inferior. Neither have I ever felt any discrimination from my colleagues or students. I would say that we need to be careful when making sweeping generalisations such as "all 'non-native speakers' are discriminated against in ELT", as this can create a false sense of victimhood and obscure how native-speakerism affects both "native" and "non-native speakers" in numerous different ways, both positive and negative.

Robert: In a way this was one of the primary reasons for writing this duoethnography—to show the complexity of the influences native-speakerism exerts on individuals. It still sounds counter-intuitive, though, that native-speakerism could have affected you in any positive way. Could you give an example?

Marek: I guess it is not that obvious, and for a while I never thought it had. But now I realise native-speakerism did have some positive effects on my career. For example, I would not be sitting here talking to you and writing this paper. The discrimination I faced when applying for ELT jobs prompted me to take action. I started writing articles, first for ELT newsletters and magazines, and now also for academic journals. I set up *TEFL Equity Advocates*, a website to promote equal professional opportunities for "native" and "non-native speakers" in ELT. I enrolled on a PhD in TESOL programme and my thesis is on native-speakerism in Polish ELT. I do not think I would have ever done any of that if there was no native-speakerism in our profession. While on different occasions my career was hindered as I was turned down for ELT jobs based on my L1, this discrimination has also propelled me forward and made me develop professionally.

Robert: So in a sense, experiencing native-speakerism allowed you to construct a professional or academic identity as you acted against it. In the same way that the people of former colonial territories have used English to "write back" and express their own voices (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2003; Pennycook, 1994), you have managed to use your experience of native-speakerism to create a name for yourself in opposition to it. That is an interesting example of how an individual can subvert the narrative.

From this dialogue, we can see that the influence native-speakerism exerts on the careers of "native" and "non-native speakers" is a complex one and might very much depend on the context. While we agree with the reconceptualisation of the ideology conducted by Houghton and Rivers (2013a), which shows that both groups can suffer its negative effects, it is important to remember that similarly to sexism, native-speakerism does not affect the two groups equally. Furthermore, we also came to realise that the influence of this ideology on "non-native speakers" does not always have to be negative.

6. Professional standing and self-confidence

In this section of the dialogue, we discuss issues of self-confidence and professional standing caused by native-speakerism in ELT, and attempt to show how these issues have influenced us in different ways. We aim to show that similar effects can be felt by teachers due to native-speakerism, even if the process in each case is not the same. We also show that native-speakerism is so deeply embedded in the thinking of all ELT professionals that "native" and "non-native speakers" might misrepresent the situation or experience of the other group due to essentialist stereotypes.

Marek: Another important difference is the effect native-speakerism has on self-confidence and self-esteem of teachers. For example, few "native speakers" would say they struggle with their self-esteem or confidence as a result of native-speakerism, I think. On the other hand, "non-native speakers" often suffer from these issues, and may even engage in "self-discrimination" as a consequence (Bernat, 2008; Medgyes, 1983; Suárez, 2000).

Robert: Actually, I disagree—I think that self-esteem and confidence issues are really the biggest problem for "native speakers" caused by native-speakerism.

Marek: That sounds a bit counter-intuitive to me. Aren't "native speakers" supposed to be in a position of authority over the language and teaching methodology?

Robert: Maybe it would help to give an example: When I started one of my first jobs, my colleagues and I (three young British guys) invested a huge amount of effort in designing a syllabus based on teaching principles, research, and a needs analysis we had conducted. What we came up with took a lot of effort, and we were quite proud of our work. It was well-structured, and covered academic and creative writing, cultural studies, and discussion skills. However, the students' reaction was lukewarm; "we want *eikaiwa* (English conversation) classes. That's what native speaker teachers are for!" seemed to be the underlying message. Many of our managers had the same attitude, and felt that we should be doing *eikaiwa*, otherwise what's the point in having "native speakers"? In Japan this is a theme that comes up again and again; foreigners are just for communication practice, or entertainment (Amundrud, 2007; Shimizu, 1995). As Hawley Nagatomo (2016) says, foreigners teach *eikaiwa*, while the Japanese teach *eigo* (English—meaning grammar, etc.). We very much felt like we were not taken seriously as teachers. We got good, well-paid jobs, and were put up in free apartments, but professionally we were not taken seriously, and that had an impact on our confidence and sense of self-worth.

Marek: It sounds very similar to the accounts in Houghton and Rivers (2013b) and I imagine it must affect confidence a lot. Having said that, it seems to me that it affects your confidence in a different way to how a "non-native speaker's" confidence would be affected. In your case, you are not seen as a teacher. In a typical "non-native speaker" case, the problem might have more to do with linguistic confidence, and authority in the classroom. For example, students, and even colleagues, doubting your linguistic expertise.

Robert: While I agree to an extent, my colleagues and I also had people doubting our linguistic expertise. For example, students would go and check the grammar we taught them with one of the Japanese teachers, because as far as they were concerned, "'native speakers' aren't good at grammar, they just have good intuition." I think the central core driving this is the perception of "native speakers" as resources, rather than experts. As texts, rather than as interpreters. So perhaps it is not that obvious at first that "native speakers", just like "non-native speakers", might suffer from insecurity and can have their linguistic authority challenged and questioned, but it does happen.

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I am curious, though, if you have ever suffered from the typical self-confidence issues "non-native speakers" are reported to suffer from (Bernat, 2008; Medgyes, 1983; Suárez, 2000)?

Marek: In a way, yes, but not to the extremes that it has affected some "non-native speakers" I have spoken to or read in literature about. Some of these "non-native speakers", despite the fact their English is impeccable, still think it is not good enough; not "native-like" enough. And as a result, they think their teaching is also not good enough.

One area where I have felt (or imagined I felt) students doubting in my ability to teach, though, has been with high-proficiency students. You can sense they are out there to test you in the first few classes, i.e. "let's see what this Pole can teach me about English!" This is something that happens at the beginning of the course—you have to prove yourself to the learners, which is something I do not think a "native speaker" has to do.

I would also say that students are less accepting if a "non-native speaker" does not know something. For example, if a new word comes up that the teacher does not know, I feel a "native speaker" can get away with saying they do not know, but in my case I feel some students are thinking that if I was a "native speaker" I would know the word.

Robert: So you said that the typical issues of low self-confidence and self-esteem many "non-native speakers" suffer from (Bernat, 2008; Suárez, 2000) haven't affected you as much as other teachers. Why do you think this is?

Marek: First, the schools I have worked for seem to have treated both "native" and "non-native speakers" more or less equally. I mean, there was no overt prejudice or discrimination, no strict division of classes similar to the one you mentioned in your context in Japan. I also never felt that I was a second class citizen, so to speak. There was also an atmosphere of equality and collaboration between both "native" and "non-native speaker" teachers.

In addition, it is important to be well-prepared for your classes, especially if you are a "non-native speaker", because you need to develop the linguistic authority and show your students that you do know English very well, and that there is a lot they can learn in your classes.

Robert: So it seems that native-speakerism affects self confidence in both "native" and "non-native speaker" teachers, but for different reasons. For "non-native speakers" it is based on a perceived lack of linguistic authenticity/authority from students or from the teachers themselves.

Marek: And for "native speakers" it can be a lack of professional respect from colleagues who see you as "just another expat native speaker", alongside the pressure that as a "native speaker" you MUST know everything about the language, the culture, the vocabulary, etc.

In this dialogue, we can see how our experiences of being labelled and treated as "native" or "non-native" speaker teachers have affected our self-confidence. Both of us experienced challenges to our self-confidence as well as to our professional standing and authority, but this was experienced in different ways. For Marek, this was experienced as a perceived lack of trust on the part of students or colleagues due to not being a "native speaker", and therefore not being an authentic voice on the language (Lowe & Pinner, 2016). For Robert, the experience was of being perceived as being an authentic voice, but not an authoritative voice. This demonstrates the extent to which the effects of native-speakerism in the lives of individual teachers are mediated by which category ("native" or "non-native") they are placed into, and their own personal and professional dispositions and circumstances. This section also highlights the fact that our experiences are so coloured by which side of "native/non-native" divide we fall on, and the stereotypes associated with each of the sides we discussed in the first section of the dialogue, that we are less aware of the ways in which similar experiences may be felt by those on the other side, since we tend to view the other's experience not as it is, but as it should be according to native-speakerist stereotypes. It should also be noted that both of us are white, European teachers, and that native-speakerist stereotypes and their consequences

may be amplified for other teachers from different ethnic backgrounds (Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013; Romney, 2010; Ruecker & Ives, 2015).

7. Different ways of becoming aware of native-speakerism

In this section of the dialogue, we will critically examine the ways in which we each became aware of the issue of native-speakerism from our two positions as a "native" and a "non-native speaker". This dialogue aims to show how issues of native-speakerism and putative speakerhood can serve to influence how the two groups, as they are understood in native-speakerist discourse come to notice and understand the ideology.

Robert: Something occurred to me as a result of this conversation, which I think could be quite relevant. Namely, I think my awareness of native-speakerism and prejudice in ELT was a process of intellectual exploration. I bought Phillipson's (1992) book *Linguistic Imperialism* from a shop in Tokyo simply because it had an interesting title. I was, at that time, completely unaware of critical issues in ELT, and my exposure to them came about as I read that book, and then started to explore the other connected literature—Canagarajah (1999), Holliday (2005), Pennycook (1994), and so on. I had experienced some challenges to my professional identity as a result of native-speakerism, which we discussed before, but none of them threatened my livelihood. If anything, they made life easier for me because I was not given much responsibility and could teach my classes without the worry of appearing incompetent. What I am getting at is that I had the luxury of feeling my way into the topic intellectually. In a way, my becoming aware of critical issues in ELT was a quite pleasant process of intellectual inquiry. In contrast, you were thrown into it through experiences of professional discrimination. Do you think this colours our approaches to the topic? For example, my way of thinking about critical issues is quite academic and abstract, where you seem to have taken a more academic-activist route.

Marek: I had never thought about it like that, but you might be right. I went from activism to a more critical and academic approach. I only slowly started reading things later. For a long time at the beginning, I had not read a single academic article on the topic. I was not even aware that research on native-speakerism existed, let alone a whole academic field. When I wrote my first article for EL Gazette (Kiczkowiak, 2011), it was a result of my frustration and anger at the state of ELT, which seemed to value an accident of birth over any qualifications, experience, teaching skills or linguistic proficiency; rather than of any formal academic exploration of the issue. So we could say that I *fought* rather than *thought* my way into the topic.

If I can ask you, though, why did you continue exploring the literature on the topic? As you say, your position as a white "native speaker" from the Inner Circle must have been pretty comfortable, so there was no real need to question the status quo, was there?

Robert: No, but I have always been interested in questions of inequality. Also, I became aware of some of these attitudes and beliefs after the Tohoku earthquake in 2011, when I started to notice what some (and I stress "some"—certainly not all) of my fellow teachers were saying about Japan and Japanese people. I felt there was a certain arrogance and entitlement in some of what was being said, especially considering what has just happened to the country and to the families of the Japanese people we worked with. For example, some of the part-time "native speaker" teachers at my institution used to complain about how Japanese people had no idea what they were doing in terms of English teaching, and suggested they should bring in more foreign teachers to sort things out, among other complaints that seemed culturally chauvinistic or arrogant. I felt that some of these people had very little idea of how things actually worked. They did not realise how qualified and intelligent the Japanese teachers were, and of how privileged they themselves were as mostly underqualified monolingual teachers. I started to notice that, and to notice some of those same attitudes in myself as well, and that pushed me to read and investigate more deeply into the topic.

cogent ·· education

Marek: In a way then, the earthquake was an "awakening" for you in the same way that facing dis-crimination in ELT employment for the first time was for me. However, because of your rela-tively privileged position, you went about exploring literature on native-speakerism at your own pace; while on the other hand I *fought* my way into the topic as my professional oppor-tunities depended on my being able to overcome the ideology.

In this dialogue, we see two very different trajectories emerge. For Robert, his position as a "native speaker" allowed him to take a route whereby the process of investigating critical issues in ELT in general, and native-speakerism in particular, was an intellectual, and even pleasant activity. It also came in the form of critical reflection on his views after hearing them reflected in the views of those around him. For Marek, on the other hand, interest in the area was forced by experiences of profes-sional discrimination, and the academic awareness of research in the topic was preceded by activ-ism against injustice. We show here how even the process of becoming aware of native-speakerism in the profession is itself influenced by native-speakerism, experienced by some as an academic subject that they choose freely to explore, and by others as a forceful intrusion into their profes-sional life.

8. Discussion and conclusion

In this study, we have attempted to approach the effect of native-speakerism on the lives of indi-vidual English teachers through the research approach of duoethnography. Our intention was to use critical and reflective dialogic engagement in order to investigate some of the complexities inherent in the ways that native-speakerism may manifest itself in the lives of individual teachers. While the ideology described by Holliday (2005, 2006) shows very well that there has been a profound bias in ELT toward those *perceived* as "native speakers" and towards teaching methodology and materials which originate in the "native-speaking" West, it has been rightly criticised by Houghton and Rivers (2013a) as one-sided and failing to acknowledge that the prejudice based on one's speakerhood can also negatively affect "native speakers". Nevertheless, the articles collected in Houghton and Rivers (2013b) might give the impression that native-speakerism usually benefits "non-native speakers" to the detriment of "native speakers", which would be Holliday's original description in reverse, and thus open to the same criticism of being too one-sided. Consequently, while the reconceptualised definition of native-speakerism (Holliday, 2015; Houghton & Rivers, 2013a) is helpful as an overarch-ing theory, we feel it is necessary not to overlook the complexities and differences in how this ideol-ogy will be experienced by different ELT professionals, and to also study it through more ethnographic lenses.

In this duoethnography, through our interactions and dialogue, we identified four key themes which highlighted some of these complexities as experienced by the authors: stereotypical beliefs about "native" and "non-native" speaker teachers, the effects of native-speakerism on our careers, issues of self-confidence and professional standing, and methods of becoming aware of native-speakerism. In each of these cases, we have shown that the effect of native-speakerism on the professional lives of language teachers can be very varied and nuanced, depending not only on context and geography, but also on such factors as personal disposition and unpredictable events. For example, Marek's ability to use his experiences of facing discrimination as a "non-native speak-er" teacher to find his own professional voice suggest that native-speakerism does not always have to be a negative force, but that it can propel individuals to develop professionally in order to fight the ideology. In addition, while Robert's experiences of native-speakerism do confirm that it can also have an adverse effect on the careers of "native speakers", our reflections lead us to think that as with sexism, even though the discrimination can be experienced by both groups concerned, the negative effect on "non-native speakers" is far stronger and more widespread.

9. Future directions

We believe that in order to understand the processes and effects of native-speakerism in detail, more qualitative work needs to be carried out into the effects the ideology has on the lives of indi-vidual teachers. Such research will help us to understand the complexities of this ideology at work in

our profession, and help us to tackle it more fully. In order to do this, research methods which are personal and provocative, and which can be read and appreciated by audiences beyond academia, will help to spread awareness of such issues. Duoethnography seems to be a suitable means of such investigation since it allows two individuals to question their assumptions and prejudices they might have in a way that may not be possible in an autoethnography.

For a very long time, native-speakerism has been unwittingly utilised to divide and position ELT professionals into dichotomous and fixed camps of "us" and "them", which has spawned a very long list of stereotypes and deeply ingrained manners of thinking about the "other". Consequently, a duoethnography can allow "native" and "non-native speakers" to work together to attempt to tackle the native-speakerist stereotypes they might have about one another, and to promote understanding. The reflexive and dialogic nature of the method can also lead to questioning some of the regimes of truth which native-speakerism has created (Selvi, 2014).

In this study, we could only look at four of the ways in which native-speakerism has affected us. As a result, future research in this area could focus on other areas which are also profoundly influenced by the ideology, but which we did not touch upon, such as teaching methodology, teacher education or teaching materials. In addition, scholars could further problematise the areas we have discussed here, since it is inevitable that different individuals in different teaching contexts will have experienced them differently.

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