Native speakerism (?!): (Re)Considering critical lenses and corresponding implications in the field of English Language Teaching

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Abstract

Within English language teaching (ELT), critical scholarship has paid ever-increasing attention to identity, experience and (in)equity, and thus to privilege-marginalization: *where* it comes from*, how* and *why* it manifests, *who* (potentially) experiences it, and *what* might be done to address inequity in (and potentially beyond) the profession. This dialogue is intertwined with broader attempts in the field to account for the complexity of identity and interaction in settings around the globe. In this article, I discuss how categorical apprehensions of identity, experience and privilege-marginalization, and approaches to (in)equity, have framed discourse within critical scholarship. I then survey how more recent work has called into question many of the critical "assumptions" (Pennycook, 2001) both shaping and shaped by such theory and inquiry. This scholarship contends that critical lenses predicated upon categories of being, while calling attention to idealized nativeness embedded in ELT, fail to account for the contextualized, sociohistorical negotiation of privilege-marginalization within and transcending communities around the globe. Next, in order to contextualize and unpack these divergent lenses, I provide a review of critical dialogue attending to Japan, both in and beyond ELT, noting in conclusion how privilege-marginalization within ELT is intertwined with the sociohistorical negotiation of "selfhood" and "otherness" pertaining both to Japanese society and Japan and "the world beyond." I close by briefly commenting on future directions for critical scholarship in ELT, and the challenges facing, and yet to be faced by, its stakeholders.

Keywords: critical scholarship; privilege-marginalization; ELT; Japan

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Introduction: Privilege, Marginalization and the Field of ELT

The modern field of English language teaching (ELT) emerged out of imperialistic attempts to impose essentialized[1] ways of being, knowing, speaking, sounding, thinking, and ordering the world, upon local peoples (Pennycook, 2007) in places including Ireland, Pakistan, the U.S., Nigeria, Malaysia and Hong Kong. This epistemic violence, one of the many forms assault has taken, was intended to create colonial subjects, control their minds and exploit their resources. The "idealized nativeness" inscribed in English teaching, first affording authority and privilege to select, white members of English society, has served as a foundation for subsequent colonial agendas (Motha, 2014), ranging from American actions both within and beyond its borders, to those, for example, in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa.

In ELT, locals positioned as "non-native" English learners, users and (eventually) instructors (or "NNESTs"), faced the devaluation, denigration and forcible erasure of their ways of knowing and being. This was directly linked to their lived experiences negotiating identity and community membership within society at large. The *monolingual principle* (Howatt, 1984), the notion that ELT should occur solely in English, leading to the fallacy that the "native speaker of English" (NEST) is best equipped to teach (Phillipson, 1992), reinforced the field's focus on idealized nativeness, thus privileging individuals positioned as "native." ELT thus both reflected, and contributed to shaping, individuals' larger communal and societal negotiations of who they "were/are," and "can" and/or "should" be or become as language learners, users and instructors, and as members of the community/ies in which they lived, worked, and studied (Rudolph, 2016).

Though talk of the "post-colonial" certainly abounds in and beyond ELT scholarship, there is nothing "post" about the "colonial." Within ELT, essentialized and idealized "nativeness" continues to be inscribed in large portions of the theory drawn upon, the tools for research employ, the materials created and bought, and the approaches to classroom practice teachers take. Together with colonialism, movement of people, ideas, money, finances and technology is spreading the neoliberal notion that English is "the" default global language and is of the utmost necessity to acquire. Colonialism and movement have resulted in the emergence of new contexts, varieties, functions and users of "English."

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[1] *Essentialization* relates to the subjective construction (or acceptance and perpetuation) of static notions of "pure," "correct," and "valuable," in terms of identity, language, culture, and place (Rutherford, 1990).

Simultaneously, critical scholarship has attempted to apprehend, problematize and address the essentialization and idealization giving shape to the field's sociohistorical foundations. Criticality is not uniform, however, in terms of the scope of what it seeks to problematize, and how and why, as well as what it leaves unproblematized or advocates, knowingly and/or unknowingly. In this article, I discuss how categorical apprehensions of identity, experience and privilege-marginalization, and approaches to (in)equity, have framed discourse within critical scholarship. I then survey how more recent work has called into question many of the critical "assumptions" (Pennycook, 2001) both shaping and shaped by such theory and inquiry. This scholarship contends that critical lenses predicated upon categories of being, while calling attention to idealized nativeness embedded in ELT, fail to account for the contextualized, sociohistorical negotiation of privilege-marginalization within and transcending communities around the globe. Next, in order to contextualize and unpack these divergent lenses, I provide a review of critical dialogue focusing on Japan, both in and beyond ELT, noting in conclusion how privilege-marginalization within ELT is intertwined with the sociohistorical negotiation of "selfhood" and "otherness" pertaining both to Japanese society and Japan and "the world beyond." Finally, I close by briefly commenting on future directions for critical scholarship in ELT, and the challenges facing, and yet to be faced by, stakeholders in the field.

Historical, critical approaches to privilege-marginalization

Dominant Critical "Assumptions" in ELT

Rudolph, Selvi and Yazan (2019) contend that within criticality in ELT, a few notable "assumptions" (Pennycook, 2001) have been normalized relating to identity, experience and (in)equity. These include:

1) *identity, experience, knowledge, and skills, can and should be apprehended categorically ("NEST"/"NNEST"); privileged/marginalized; monolingual/multilingual);*
2) *how and why inequity manifests can and should be discussed and addressed categorically, and in terms of "the global field";*
3) *essentialized and idealized nativeness in English, and questions regarding the ownership, learning, use, and instruction of English, are at the heart of critical concern; and*
4) *English is central to conversations regarding attention to the complexity of negotiated identity and interaction in theory, inquiry, and practice* (pp. 349-350).

Yazan and Rudolph (2018) identify two key lenses drawn upon within critically-oriented ELT scholarship, which are generally underpinned by such assumptions: the lens of "juxtaposed nativeness" (e.g., Medgyes, 2001) and the "NNEST Lens" (e.g., Mahboob, 2010).

Work employing the lens of juxtaposed nativeness contends that both "natives" and "non-natives" have strengths they can draw upon in classroom practice that make them both "valuable." While "native speakers" may be "ideal models" for students, "NNESTs" speak their language and have endured language learning, and can thus empathize with and support students more effectively. The lens thus juxtaposes the native speakerhood of "NESTs" against the local nativeness and idealized non-nativeness of "NNESTs." Scholarship employing the lens of "juxtaposed nativeness" refers both implicitly and explicitly to a "local NNEST" when discussing local language practice in the classroom. This lens thus simultaneously a) advocates for idealized nativeness in English *and* local languages, and b) contends for the value of "local NNESTs" teaching English in local language, in contrast to the monolingual principle.

Scholars drawing upon the "NNEST Lens" advocate for problematization of idealized nativeness in English, in the interest of challenging the monolingual principle, critically-practically accounting for the complexity of negotiated identity and interaction in a world marked by movement, diversification and hybridity, and cultivating a more equitable profession. While problematizing static, essentialized apprehensions of "language," "culture" and "place" (and as a result, of "purity," "correctness" and "value"), the NNEST Lens nevertheless views "identity" categorically. Through the lens, "NNESTs" are described as embodying "multilingualism, multiculturalism, and multinationalism" (Mahboob, 2010, p. 15). This category is juxtaposed against a "native speaker" who largely remains undertheorized, other than being imagined as white, western, monolingual and monocultural, and often male (e.g., Braine, 2010). The NNEST Lens draws upon Holliday's (2005, 2006) conceptualization of *native speakerism*, or the active perpetuation and maintenance of idealized nativeness in English, to explain manifestations of privilege and marginalization. Holliday (2005, 2006) apprehends native speakerism as a globalized discourse, emanating from "the West," privileging and marginalizing individuals categorically, and universally. "Native speakers (NSs)/NESTs" reap the rewards of nativeness in English personally-professionally, while "NNSs/NNESTs" find their identities and abilities marginalized. Holliday (2009) notes that marginalization includes the Othering of "NNESTs'" (and those "native-speaking" individuals from former colonies, who are nevertheless positioned as "non/not-natives") localized linguistic, cultural, ethnic, political, and religious ways of being and knowing. Native

speakerism is the vehicle for perpetuation of the *native speaker fallacy* (Phillipson, 1992), and the reason for the ongoing maintenance of idealized nativeness in English in theory, research, professional activities and associations, the design and publishing of materials, teacher education, language and education policymaking, assessment, and classroom and hiring practices.

In the interest of addressing the Othering of individuals positioned as "non-native," scholars utilizing the NNEST Lens have called for a problematization of idealized nativeness in English, native speakerism and the corresponding native speaker fallacy in globalized ELT. This has been referred to as the "NNEST movement" (Braine, 2010, 2013). As Ruecker and Ives (2015) contend,

> the NNEST movement is premised on the notion that NNESTs have been constructed as inferior to NESTs as English language teachers. The participants in this movement recognize that NNESTs continually face various forms of prejudices stemming from schools, students, and even governments, leading to pay inequalities, decreased job opportunities, and more (p. 739).

Interestingly, scholarship (e.g., Braine, 2013) and professional communities (e.g., the TESOL NNEST interest section) associated with and/or positioned within the NNEST Movement, have also included work by scholars employing the lens of juxtaposed nativeness, which on the subject of the problematization of idealized nativeness in English, seems conceptually incompatible. As mentioned above, however, the two lenses greatly overlap in terms, for instance, of affordance of local language ownership and use to "local" NNESTs (e.g., Mahboob & Lin, 2018; Medgyes, 2001), the categorical apprehension of identity, experience, knowledge, skills and inequity, and a desire to move beyond the monolingual principle.

The influence of critical discourse associated with the NNEST Lens extends far beyond the framing of privilege-marginalization. Scholarship exploring the complexity of negotiated identity and interaction, in "fields" such as *English as a lingua franca* (or more recently, *English as a [multi]lingua franca)* (e.g., Dewey, 2014), *Global Englishes* (e.g., Galloway, 2017), and *English as an International Language* (e.g., Sharifian, 2009)*,* often foundationally references (directly, indirectly, and with divergent terminology) the origin, nature, spread, and manifestation of idealized nativeness, native speakerism, and the native speaker fallacy, as apprehended through the NNEST Lens. Thus, as with the NNEST Lens, voices within such scholarship at times work to destabilize essentialized

notions of "language," "culture" and "place" and even "identity," while retaining categories of being and knowing to apprehend and potentially address privilege-marginalization, as it relates to the "episteme" (Galloway, 2017, p. 21) of idealized nativeness in English in globalized ELT.

Challenging Critical "Assumptions" and Their Implications

A growing body of critical scholarship, underpinned by social constructivist, critical realist, postcolonial, postmodern and poststructural theory, is challenging critical "assumptions."[2] This work is largely predicated on the apprehension of identity as dynamically, sociohistorically and contextually negotiated in interaction, thus rejecting fixed, essentialized views of identity. Erling (2017), for instance, takes issue with the essentialization of the "native speaker," identity-wise:

> I could not help but note that while that critique of the native speaker teacher recognizes the multifaceted identities of non-native-speaker students and teachers, it often does not accord the same value to the identities of native-speaker English teachers. They are often lumped together in the discourse as unskilled, insensitive, and crass, regardless of the cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and professional diversity that can be found among them (p. 96).

Ellis (2016) and Rudolph, Yazan & Rudolph (2018) note that the multilingual identities of teachers positioned as "NESTs" are wiped away by their being positioned in the essentialized category "native speaker." Houghton and Rivers (2013) detail how teachers positioning themselves and/or positioned as "native speakers," find themselves lumped together and confined in the essentializing category of "native speaker," resulting in their personal-professional identities being stripped away, individual knowledge, skills and experiences being devalued, and in their professional isolation and marginalization, at times, within ELT in Japan. Charles (2017), Rivers and Ross (2013), and Weekly (2018) highlight both the complexity of identity, and the fluidity of experienced privilege-marginalization, on the part of teachers positioned as "(inauthentic) native speakers," linguistically, culturally, ethnically, religiously, geographically. Additional scholarship has extended the conversation regarding contextually and fluidly experienced privilege-marginalization (e.g., Aneja, 2016; Park, 2017), to include teachers

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[2] This work has, at times, been positioned within the "NNEST Movement" though it takes issue with the categorical apprehension of identity, experience and inequity; a point noted and problematized in recent publications (see Yazan & Rudolph, 2018).

positioned as "NNESTs" (e.g., Manara, 2018; Rudolph, 2012; Rudolph, Yazan & Rudolph, 2018).

Select work has moved conversations regarding privilege-marginalization beyond idealized nativeness in English. This scholarship conceptualizes individuals' negotiations of identity as learners, users and instructors of English, as sociohistorically and contextually linked to their negotiations of who they "are," "can," and/or "should" be or become in the community/ies in which they live, work and study (e.g., Rudolph, 2016; Yazan & Rudolph, 2018). Such work is transdisciplinary, drawing upon literature from fields including cultural anthropology, sociology, and history, exploring identity, experience and inequity within communities and societies in which ELT-related conversations regarding privilege-marginalization are situated. This scholarship therefore links negotiations of "nativeness/non-nativeness" and "nativeness/not nativeness" within ELT, to negotiations of "Us/not-Us" in communities and societies, as well as "Us/Them (in terms of the world beyond)" (e.g., Houghton & Rivers, 2013; Rivers, 2016; Rudolph, 2012; Rudolph, Yazan & Rudolph, 2018; Toh, 2016). Through such a lens, the "native speaker construct" relates as much to localized constructions of essentialized and idealized nativeness and community membership, for instance, as it does to idealized nativeness in English.

Collectively, scholarship problematizing critical "assumptions" in ELT, takes issue with the categorical approach to conceptualizing identity, experience, knowledge and skills, as the imposition of categories actively strips people of voice, whether unintentionally or as a (bi-)product of identity politics in and beyond ELT. This includes the silencing of critical scholars viewed as dissenting from "the norm" (Toh, 2018). Additionally, this work both indirectly and directly underscores the fact that contexts (e.g., "Korea") and positions within those contexts (e.g., teacher at a private children's language school; university professor) are conflated (Yazan & Rudolph, 2018) in the interest of discussing the privilege-marginalization inscribed in hiring practices (see Ruecker & Ives, 2015 for one example of conflation).

Scholarship specifically seeking to apprehend identity, experience and inequity beyond idealized nativeness in English, and beyond the artificially imagined bounds of ELT, poses even more profound challenges to criticality. As idealized nativeness, native speakerism and the native speaker fallacy are imagined as flowing from "the West," the involvement of local actors and discourses of identity in giving shape to who individuals "are," and/or "can" or "should" become in and beyond contextualized ELT, is overlooked and erased, freeing them from responsibility for privileging

and marginalizing (Rudolph, Selvi & Yazan, 2019). On this topic, I would argue there is another important issue for discussion: the concept of *agency*. Agency has been conceptualized and explored through a wide range of lenses in critical scholarship in ELT (see Deters, Gao, Vitanova & Miller, 2014), and fully unpacking these different apprehensions is beyond the scope of this article. I would assert, however, that agency is most often exclusively viewed as an emancipatory capacity to act. This results in a couple of related issues. First, individuals and groups (e.g., professional associations and special interest groups therein) may be enabled to problematize select manifestations of privilege-marginalization, while preserving their own authority and resources at the same time (Rudolph, Yazan & Rudolph, 2018). Second, teachers positioning themselves and others, and/or positioned, as "NNESTs" and "NESTs," may incidentally or purposefully fail to account for their positionality beyond the essentialized categories of "NEST/NNEST" (Yazan & Rudolph, 2018), leading to privilege-marginalization being apprehended in a contextually detached vacuum (see Fang, 2018, p. 125).

Additionally, and for some, controversially, this approach to criticality is both implicitly and explicitly calling into question the largely exclusive affordance of an intersectional lens (accounting for multiple, intersecting layers of marginalization) to apprehend and attend to the lived experiences of individuals positioning themselves and/or positioned as "NNESTs" as per the discourses of the "NNEST Movement." This essentially mirrors Jennifer Nash's (2008) critique of Kimberle′ Crenshaw's (1991) theory of *intersectionality*. In an article commenting on the strengths and shortcomings of Crenshaw's theory seeking to apprehend the multilayered lived experiences of black American women, Nash (2008) notes that it is inscribed with paradoxical tension, as it: 1) introduces intersectionality to specifically theorize the identities of black women, and 2) speaks of intersectionality as a generalizable theory of identity. Nash subsequently contends that Crenshaw's scholarship does not account for the fluidity of constructed and negotiated privilege-marginalization:

> One 'so what' question that remains unexplored by intersectional theorists is the way in which privilege and oppression can be co-constituted on the subjective level. That is, while intersectionality purports to describe multiple marginalizations (i.e. the spectre of the multiply-marginalized black woman that haunts intersectionality) and multiple privileges (i.e. the spectre of the (heterosexual) white man that haunts intersectionality), it neglects to describe the ways

in which privilege and oppression intersect, informing each subject's experiences (pp. 10-11).

Nash concludes that, "In conceiving of privilege and oppression as complex, multi-valent, and simultaneous, intersectionality could offer a more robust conception of both identity and oppression" (p. 12). Scholars challenging the critical use of categories of identity to apprehend identity and experience in and beyond ELT, have similarly contended for the value of accounting for all individuals' contextualized accounts of negotiating privilege-marginalization. This relates in part to the increasingly documented and acknowledged notion that individuals positioning themselves and/or positioned as "NNESTs" are marginalized, and indeed privileged, in diverse, sociohistorically contingent, contextualized ways. This also pertains to more recent scholarship exploring the lives of individuals positioning themselves and/or positioned as "NESTs" who experience marginalization linguistically, culturally, ethnically, religiously, politically, socioeconomically, nationally, and in terms of gender and sexual preference. An important point to note, is that tension exists regarding the place of teachers positioning themselves and/or positioned as "white" and "western," and in particular, "male." Appleby (2016), for instance, affirms a personal struggle over whether to afford discursive space to "white, western" male teachers in Japan to voice their experiences wrestling with privilege-marginalization, due to their default privilege. While probing this topic deeply is beyond the scope of this article, I will touch upon the subject in subsequent sections, noting why it is an issue of critical concern.

Furthermore, this line of critical scholarship offers a few key additional critiques of the dominant critical lenses within ELT. First, such work posits that criticality in ELT is largely detached from transdisciplinary dialogue and social movements attending to contextualized, sociohistorically manifested privilege-marginalization shaping (and shaped by) ELT. Additionally, critical assumptions embedded in ELT have largely left the neoliberal supremacy of English (Pennycook, 2007) unproblematized, purposefully or otherwise, along with the centrality of "English," in dialogue relating to bi-/multi-/pluri-/trans-lingualism in terms of assessment and practice (e.g., Flores, 2013), and national policies equating bilingualism with English and one dominant "national" language (e.g., Guerrero, 2008; Guerrero & Quintero, 2009). This has contributed to the marginalization of alternate conceptualizations of literacy and language education in settings around the world (Darvin & Norton, 2015), to the active essentialization of (national) identity at the expense of local minority groups and languages (e.g., Heinrich, 2012), and to ignoring the negotiated complexities of identity and interaction wherein English "use" may be limited or nonexistent

(e.g., Kubota, 2013). This is complicated by the intertwining of governments, publishers, and professional organizations, resulting in the perpetuation of the "primacy" of "English." Ultimately, as Rudolph, Selvi & Yazan (2019) assert, this reveals (purposeful or not) "a lack of self-reflexivity within criticality in ELT regarding how its lenses and trajectories align with neoliberal, imperialistic and colonial discourses around the globe (p. 350)."

Much of what I have written here thus far, is theoretical and abstract. In order to contextualize the conversations and tensions within criticality, I next discuss how identity, experience and (in)equity have been conceptualized in and beyond ELT in "Japan." I have chosen to focus on Japan for a few reasons. First, Japan is where my wife and I (both American citizens) have lived and worked for a total of 14 years, and Japan is where our two daughters were born and have been raised, attending public school for the duration. Additionally, a large (and arguably disproportionate) portion of critical scholarship attending to privilege-marginalization in (and beyond) ELT, focuses on the Japanese context, providing a robust and worthwhile literature to survey.

A Snapshot: Critical Explorations in Japan, in and Beyond ELT

In this section, my task is not to provide a comprehensive review of all literature that might be positioned as "critical" in Japanese ELT. Instead, I aim to shed light on critical dialogue relating to *where* privilege-marginalization comes from*, how* and *why* it manifests, *who* (potentially) experiences it, and *what* might be done to address inequity in (and potentially beyond) the profession in Japan. To do so, I begin with how the sociohistorical negotiation of identity has been apprehended through a range of critical scholarship.

Critically-oriented scholars working in the fields of anthropology, sociology, archaeology, history, biology, sociolinguistics and education, have richly documented Japan's history as a site of movement, diversity and hybridity, from time immemorial (e.g., Morris-Suzuki, 1997; Sugimoto, 2009). Such diversity is linguistic, cultural, ethnic, genetic, socioeconomic, political, religious, geographical, and relating to gender and sexual preference (e.g., Burgess, 2012; Chapman, 2008; Morris-Suzuki, 1997; Sugimoto, 2009; Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008). Collectively, this scholarship has laid the foundation for apprehending ELT as bound up with the construction and perpetuation of a shared national identity beginning at the end of the Edo period (1603-1868), and heightening during the Meiji

period (1868-1912). Before the Meiji period, the Tokugawa *bakufu* (feudal military government) had maintained a 200-year period of *sakoku,* or forced closure. *Sakoku* was intended to control the movement of people, ideas, goods and information in and out of Japan, to maintain a ban on Christianity, and to consolidate power over people and territory. *Sakoku* ended with the forced opening of Japanese ports to Americans in the 1850's. During this time, political and ideological tensions and clashes eventually resulted in an imperialistic, oligarchic government, with the Emperor Meiji "re-established" as its figurehead; this was termed the Meiji Restoration. In order to unite and control the people groups of Japan, to confront modernization and to assert participation in the international community, the Meiji government, in concert with political, economic and social forces, set about constructing a shared national identity (Lie, 2004).

The formation of national identity, and the corresponding demarcation of what was and was not "Japanese," included a revision of education (the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education) (Khan, 1997), the creation of *kokugo* (national language), the promotion of a new *hyoujungo* (standard language) based upon a sociolect of Japanese in Tokyo, the development of gendered language (Inoue, 2002), and the marginalization of the six distinct languages of the Ryukyu Islands (modern Okinawa prefecture and Amami Island, Kagoshima Prefecture) following the region's annexation, and also marginalization of other dialects of Japanese in politics, the media and education (Heinrich, 2012).[3] Additionally, during the 1870s, the government began work to establish a modern family registry system (*koseki seido*) to identify the national population (*kokumin*), which was later paired with the Civil Code (*minpo*) and Nationality Law (*kokuseki*) to establish the bounds of "national identity" (see Chapman & Krogness, 2014). The *koseki* (family registry) linked individuals to place, and emperor to nation, as did the creation of state religion based on a version of Shinto (Hardacre, 1989). Influenced by Social Darwinism and eugenics, a dominant, essentialized construction of Japaneseness also emerged, co-mingling culture and "ethnicity" (Robertson, 2010). Sugimoto (1999) argues culture and ethnicity was combined with nationality to form the "NEC equation" (p. 81). These essentialized constructions and discursive perpetuations of "Japan" and "Japaneseness," labeled *nihonjinron,* posited linguistic, cultural, political, educational, philosophical, religious, geographical, ethical, ethnic, and even physiological sameness/uniqueness in

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[3] This was coupled with annexation of the Bonin (Ogasawara) Islands and subjugation of its diverse population (Chapman, 2009), as well as of Korea, Taiwan and Manchuria (Chapman, 2008). The Ainu are also a distinct and historically subjugated people.

Japan (Befu, 2001, 2009; Sugimoto, 1999).[4] Robertson (1998) and Befu (2009) further contend that the formation of national identity has resulted in a reductionistic nostalgia of past and place.

The construction of an essentialized "Self," simultaneously included the construction of "Otherness." In the Meiji period, this involved attempts at facilitating linguistic, cultural, religious, and educational detachment from Asia (Sugimoto, 2009), and the juxtaposition of an essentialized Japaneseness against an essentialized, idealized West, and the knowledge, skills, thinking, speech, and behavior of an imagined, idealized "native speaker" of English (Kubota, 2002; Rudolph, 2016). The "native speaker" is most often conceptualized as white, Western, monolingual, middle to upper class, American or "British," and largely male (Kubota, 2002). Following the end of World War II, English became exclusively associated with globalization and participation in the global community, reinforced by the discourses of idealized Japaneseness -first political, economic, and educational- which had subsequently become the dominant social means by which to apprehend identity, with regard to Japaneseness/not-Japaneseness within Japanese society, and Japaneseness/Otherness in terms of the world beyond.

Connecting With and Interpreting "History" (?)

It is generally agreed, critically and otherwise within ELT-related scholarship in Japan, that neoliberal English language education (e.g., Kubota, 2011, 2013), predicated on essentialized and idealized nativeness in English (and, for some in Japanese), is largely equated with education to equip learners for participation in the global community as global human resources (*guroubarujinzaiikuseinokyouiku*). The differences between critical lenses lie in whether this equation is problematized, and if so, how and why, critically-practically speaking.

Some scholars draw on the discourses of essentialized Japaneseness/Otherness and do not problematize idealized nativeness (in English or Japanese), but rather argue against the monolingual principle, and the native speaker (of English) fallacy, implicitly and explicitly. Tajino and Tajino (2000) and Oga-Baldwin & Nakata (2013), for instance, contend for the different ways "NESTs" and "(Japanese) NNESTs" complement each other in the classroom, drawing upon their assumed categorical strengths as native speakers of English and Japanese. Scholarship has highlighted how the lens of juxtaposed nativeness is a dominant mainstream discourse in university-level ELT in Japan, wherein the majority of part-time and full-

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[4] The discourses of homogeneity, were, and continue to be, challenged and perpetuated by Japanese and non-Japanese alike (e.g., Manabe & Befu, 1992).

time faculty members are Japanese, with a limited number of "native speaker" teachers (the majority of whose identities correspond with idealized nativeness), and that each "group" of teachers are most often assigned roles and corresponding value categorically in the workplace (e.g., Houghton & Rivers, 2013; Rudolph, 2018).

Additional scholars appear, at first glance, to problematize idealized nativeness in English. This work (e.g., Shibata, 2009) is underpinned by the belief that "English" is the de facto global language/lingua franca, and the means by which Japanese people might interact with the "world beyond." This work retains the idea that though there is a "correct" way to be or become an English user (and implicitly, a user of Japanese), Japanese users of English should affirm their deficient "Japanese variety of English" (Shibata, 2009, p. 21). On this note, Rivers (2018) also points out that there exists, in Japanese academia, a discourse of nativizing "Japanese English," grounded in the nationalistic juxtaposition of "Us/Them."

The majority of critical scholars focus on a problematization idealized nativeness in English, noting the native speakeristic marginalization of "(Japanese) NNESTs" and privileging of "white Western teachers." Appleby (2016) and Lowe and Kiczkowiak (2016) have attended to the privilege of "white Western males." Appleby (2018) also examines how the privileging of western men is tied to the privileging of men in general, in the Japanese workplace. These researchers interestingly note that such teachers may experience fluid, professional privilege-marginalization due to their positioning as "native English speakers/non-Japanese," yet debate whether such privilege is real or worthy of accounting for. Appleby (2016), though drawing on poststructural theory, notably does not account for the lived experiences of "white Western males" (and their partners/families) negotiating membership in Japanese society. In a piece entitled "Decentering Whiteness in TESOL," Stillar (2019) discusses how his perspective of privilege-marginalization in the field of TESOL was shifted by the comments of an African American colleague who challenged his white, western colleagues' claims of marginalization in Japanese society and ELT therein. Stillar contends the field of TESOL is in need of: a) acknowledging and attending to white privilege, and b) problematizing the whiteness within, and white gaze ubiquitously shaping, the field.

Other scholars have sought to problematize "native speakerism" by focusing on the fact that many varieties, functions, users and contexts for English exist, and that students should be equipped to interact in English as a (multi) lingua franca (e.g., Ishikawa, 2017; Murata, 2015; Murata & Jenkins, 2015, Ng, 2018) or English as an International Language (e.g., D'Angelo, 2012; Hino, 2017, 2018a, b; Yano, 2011). Such work, at times, advocates for the incorporation of diversity into English as a Medium of

Instruction (EMI) (e.g., Hino, 2017; Murata, 2018), while other authors recognize EMI's "value," yet worry about the othering of alternate linguistic and cultural resources (e.g., Iino, 2018).[5] Oda (2018) and D'Angelo (2018) discuss the creation of two separate and highly unique programs (the Center for ELF at Tamagawa University, and the College of World Englishes at Chukyo University), intended to address native speakerism in the field of ELT in Japan and account for the complexity of interaction in the global community. While highlighting such diversity and complexity in terms of English, such scholarship has, however, largely left the narrative of a "homogenous" Japan, and essentialized, idealized Japaneseness, untouched. In the majority of such work, "globalization" (or movement) is most often imagined (either implicitly or explicitly) as largely shaping Japan from the late Edo Period, forward (e.g., Hino, 2018a, b; Yano, 2011).

Alternately, select scholars have sought to apprehend manifestations of privilege-marginalization in ELT, as bound up with the sociohistorical negotiation of "Japanese/not Japanese within Japan," and "Japanese/Other." In such scholarship, ELT is conceptualized as shaping and shaped by globalized *and* localized discourses regarding who people "are" and "can" and/or "should" be and become as English learners, users and instructors, and as members of Japanese society. Such work posits that ELT serves to perpetuate idealized and essentialized Japaneseness and the notion of a "homogenous" Japan, contrasted against an idealized Otherness/nativeness in English (e.g., Bouchard, 2017; Heinrich, 2012; Houghton & Rivers, 2013; Houghton, Rivers & Hashimoto, 2018; Kubota, 2002, 2017; Liddicoat, 2007; Rudolph, 2016; Toh, 2015, 2016, 2019). The findings from such scholarship include:

*Privilege and marginalization manifest fluidly, and in diverse ways, in and across contexts and professional positions in "Japan," in the lives of teachers. Privilege-marginalization is intersectionally experienced, and can be linguistic, cultural, ethnic, religious, national, political, socioeconomic, and related to gender and sexuality (e.g., Houghton & Rivers, 2013; Houghton, Rivers & Hashimoto, 2018; Nagatomo, 2012, 2016; Piggin, 2016; Rudolph, Yazan & Rudolph, 2018);

*Teachers can be fluidly marginalized-privileged as, for example, "non-native speakers" of English/"native speakers" of Japanese (e.g., Houghton & Rivers, 2013; Rudolph, 2016);

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[5] EMI has become increasingly popular, critically and otherwise, in Japanese higher education (see Toh, 2016).

*Japanese and all other stakeholders in ELT may marginalize teachers positioned as "idealized native speakers," "inauthentic native speakers," and "non-Japanese NNESTs" (e.g., Rivers & Ross, 2013; Rudolph, 2018; Toh, 2019);

*Teachers whose identities do not correspond with idealized nativeness in English or Japanese are largely absent at the university level, and/or face degrees of marginalization (e.g., Rudolph, 2018), though they are increasingly employed in other positions (e.g., in language schools and as assistant language teachers in public schools) (Hino, 2018).

*"(Near)nativeness" in Japanese is a common hiring criterion for university positions, and the majority of positions are staffed by Japanese teachers (e.g., Rivers, 2016; Rudolph, 2018);

*Overt and covert policy, and corresponding practice, both shape and are shaped by essentialized and idealized notions of Japaneseness and Otherness (in terms of within and beyond Japan) (e.g., Liddicoat, 2007; Toh, 2019);

*"Non-Japanese" teachers may be multilingual and use Japanese personally-professionally (Rudolph, 2018; Simon-Maeda, 2011);

*At the university level, roles for teachers most often correspond with idealized nativeness in English and idealized Japaneseness. This includes who "can" and/or "should" use local language, what subjects they might teach, and their ability to gain tenure-track or tenured positions (Houghton, Rivers & Hashimoto, 2018; Rudolph, Yazan & Rudolph, 2018; Toh, 2016);

*Classrooms are characterized by diversity (e.g., linguistic, cultural, ethnic, religious), and students may find themselves marginalized by the discourses of essentialized and idealized nativeness in English and Japaneseness (e.g., Rudolph, 2016);

*Japanese and other teachers can face marginalization due to their identities and (critically-oriented) activities coming into conflict with perpetuated notions of idealized nativeness in English/Japaneseness (e.g, Oda & Toh, 2018; Rudolph, Yazan & Rudolph, 2018);

*Teachers who position themselves in ways that transcend category, in terms of identity, and experience, may face pushback from other critical scholars (see Rivers, 2018; Rudolph, Yazan & Rudolph, 2018; Toh, 2018);

On a side and yet important note, select work here, in tandem with the transdisciplinary work above, problematizes the centrality of English in mainstream and critical scholarship, by highlighting statistics related to movement in and out of Japan (e.g., Kubota, 2013; Rudolph, 2016, 2018). Data from 2017 includes the following: In tourism to Japan, 87% of individuals were from Asia (with China, Taiwan Hong Kong, and South Korea the largest groups), while Americans (4%), and individuals from the "United Kingdom (UK)" (>1%) were few in number (JNTO, 2019). 64% of visitors arriving for business were from Asia, while 12% were American, and less than 1% were from the "UK" (JNTO, 2019). Additionally, in 2017, 75% of Japanese individuals travelling abroad for tourism and business, did so to destinations in Asia (JTB, 2019). 80% percent of the foreign nationals (medium/long-term and special permanent residents) living in Japan are Asian (the majority of whom are Chinese and Korean), while 10% are from Brazil and Peru, 3% are North American, 3% are European, and less than 1% are from Oceania (see Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2016). According to the Japanese Ministry of Justice (2018), 85% of naturalized citizens were from Korea (5,631) and China (3,088). 92% of internationals enrolled in *all* forms of tertiary education were from Asia, with the top ten groups being China (42%), Vietnam (19%), Nepal (8%), South Korea (7%), Taiwan (4%), Indonesia (2%), Thailand (2%), Sri Lanka (2%), Malaysia (2%), and Myanmar (1%) (JASSO, 2018). Many of these individuals living, working, and studying in Japan are using Japanese (whether as a first language or lingua franca), in addition to English as lingua franca. Thus, interaction may occur in English, Japanese (and in other languages as well). Furthermore, as noted by scholars including Kubota (2013), interaction outside Japan may occur in Japanese, Chinese, and other languages, in conversations that may include limited or no English use.

What Do We Learn?

What can we learn from the above-mentioned scholarship and data pertaining to Japan? I contend there are a few specific things. Accounts of privilege-marginalization should not be detached from the contextualized, sociohistorical negotiation of identity, lest they lose descriptive and transformational power. Is idealized nativeness in English a dominant discourse in Japanese ELT? Yes, most definitely. These discourses, however, are bound up with the societal negotiation of selfhood and otherness. Failing to address equally or exceedingly powerful discourses of Japaneseness is, I would argue, a flaw and research bias embedded in approaches to (in)equity in the Japanese context apprehending identity and experience categorically. Critical scholarship drawing upon categories does not account for the contextualized complexity of *where* privilege-

marginalization comes from*, how* and *why* it manifests, *who* (potentially) experiences it, and *what* might be done to address inequity in (and potentially beyond) the profession, locally and globally. Additionally, critical scholarship leaving the sociohistorical construction and perpetuation of essentialized and idealized Japaneseness unaddressed, is, I would assert, complicit (unintentionally or not) in perpetuating essentialized, nationalistic discourses of identity that serve to marginalize alternate ways of being and becoming in Japanese society. Such critical scholarship focused on Japan (and shaping the field of ELT in general), I would further posit, is implicated in perpetuating the monolingual myth related to Japan, thus erasing its multilingual and multicultural past, present and future. Additionally, the majority of scholarship in Japan, critical and otherwise, is implicated in maintaining the neoliberal supremacy of English.

Concluding thoughts

Grounded in the preceding discussion, I believe that critical scholarship's imposition of essentializing categories to apprehend identity and experience can be detrimental to its (assumed) goals of empowerment and emancipation. That being said, critical scholarship problematizing categories must also be mindful of not stripping away the voice of individuals who position themselves in ways that align with, for instance, the NNEST Lens. Kubota (2019), noting the value of and issues with categories of being, further acknowledges the power of categories to afford individuals and groups the means to organize and seek equity and liberation. Yet, as I have noted above, categories can serve to Other in powerfully marginalizing ways (while concomitantly privileging). Additionally, Pennycook (2018) problematizes the notion that Northern/Western critical gazes (ontologies, axiologies, epistemologies, theories, practices, agendas) can and/or should account for the contextualized, sociohistorical complexity of negotiated identity and interaction. Kubota (2019) notes how critical scholarship can serve to perpetuate the preeminence of dominant, critically-oriented Western gazes and agendas, while purporting to address oppression brought about by Northern/Western hegemony. I believe this can apply to theories relating to "native speakerism" and even "whiteness," that do not account for history and context. I contend for a criticality that is academically transdisciplinary, decentralized, sociohistorically contextualized and connected to the community in which it is situated, and for one that prompts individuals toward self-reflexive attention to positionality; to what frames our seeing (Lather, 1993).

Acknowledgements

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