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Decolonizing ESOL: Negotiating Linguistic Power in U.S. Public School Classrooms

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The year-long study that was the context for this article explored the complicated relationship among the shaping of ESOL as a school construct, the historical legacy of colonialism, and the contemporary influence of globalizing forces on the teaching of English worldwide and the lives of multilingual students enrolled in ESOL. In the context of a year-long critical feminist ethnography of four first-year teachers, this data-driven exploration examines each of three interconnected colonialist manifestations within the schools of the study: (1) an embracing of the supremacy of English over other languages, related to the dominance within school walls of a monolingual model of identity; (2) an investment in keeping Self and Other dichotomous, reflected in a construction of the school category of ESOL as Other and deficit; and (3) the promotion of a White, NES, American norm and the consequent marginalization of ethnic minority, NNES, and immigrant status.

Introduction

> *"One of my students who's Chinese started making fun of his own language. The Korean student was asking him how to pronounce something in Chinese, and he started mimicking some of the kids who make fun of his language. I said: 'Why are you making fun of your language?'...He's picked on an awful lot. His accent is very heavy."* (Alexandra, Interview, May 21)

The year-long study that was the context for this article explored the complicated relationship among the shaping of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)[1] as a school construct, the historical legacy of colonialism, and the contemporary influence of globalizing forces on the teaching of English worldwide and the lives of multilingual students enrolled in ESOL. In the previous seemingly commonplace interaction, ESOL teacher Alexandra connected

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her Chinese-speaking student's attempt to distance himself from his language to a stigma he associates with his first language and a shame about his accent. Alexandra noted that this stigma evolved over several months in response to other students' taunts about his "heavy accent." When considering incidents such as this one, it is important for teachers and researchers to connect them to their broader social, institutional, and political contexts in order to understand how discursive practices can make certain ideologies seem natural. ESOL classrooms and indeed the pedagogical discipline of TESOL (Teaching ESOL) frequently serve as a breeding ground for epistemologies and constructs that support colonial-like relationships (Kumraravadivelu, forthcoming; May, 2001; Pennycook, 1998; Lin, 1999; Amin & Kubota, 2004). These include a deep division between native and non-native English speaker identity (Braine, 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999) and a reification of the English language and, consequently, its speakers. For instance, widespread taunting of ESOL students such as the mocking that Alexandra observed ensures that ESOL status remains a marginal category and that the (perhaps hypothetical) "mainstream" American accent (Reagan, 2002) remains not only standard, but also normative and legitimate (Bourdieu, 1977). Furthermore, linguistic and racial hierarchies are intertwined, with accents associated with white speakers assigned a higher degree of prestige than those generally connected to racial minorities (Lindemann, 2003). Racial hierarchies therefore become reinscribed through the taunting. As language minority students join public school communities in the United States, how do their ESOL teachers help them to negotiate messages about racial, cultural, and language and accent hierarchies, which are embedded in a social system that privileges "Western[2] knowledges" and anglocentric domination?

This article has a two-pronged undertaking. In it, I first examine ESOL as a site of struggle. The school construct of ESOL is not purely oppressive. While ESOL is indeed shaped to reinscribe colonial paradigms and epistemologies, the school communities in this study are not composed solely of white English-speaking colonizers who hold all power and NNES ESOL students of color who suffer domination. Rather, ESOL classrooms are host to multiple practices that are simultaneously colonizing and decolonizing. I therefore hope to move beyond a critical analysis of how colonialist messages are produced and sustained through common, taken-for-granted, everyday school-based interactions in ESOL classrooms. I seek to also develop richer understandings of how relations of power are collaboratively shaped by all participants in relation to individual desires, regimes of truth (Foucault, 1990), imagined communities (Norton, 2001), and imagined identities. In examining how social groups use language in relation to power hierarchies, it is important to note that not all members of dominant groups seek to affirm the status quo, nor do "the colonized" always seek to challenge established power structures. Investments and desires are fluid and multiple and fluctuate with context. Moreover, it is not only those in power who determine the distribution of social power. Far from being powerless, inert pawns, those who identify as peripheral play an active role in shaping not only

the margins but the center (Abou-El-Haj, 1997). The distinctions among categories such as periphery and center, dominant and powerless are therefore neither clear-cut nor absolute.

My second goal is to push well beyond a critical analysis of the status quo to explore how four ESOL teachers sought to deconstruct and revise the ways in which ESOL as an institutional construct is shaped. In doing so, I hope to expand understandings about possibilities for change. To this end, I turn to a historically undervalued resource, that is the knowledge of practicing teachers. In examining the ways in which the four teachers in the study positioned themselves in relation to the dominant images surrounding ESOL, I hope to contribute to understandings of transformative practice.

Blatant examples of neocolonialism within educational contexts across the globe include colonial patterns of school administration, distribution of foreign textbooks in former colonies, preferential treatment for immigrant ("expatriate") teachers, and repression of indigenous knowledge within school walls (Altbach, 1977). While current conversations about the historical effects of colonization on modern-day education have examined policies and practices in former colonies (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2002; Lin, 2001; Mazrui, 2002), attention also needs to be paid to the colonial echoes reverberating raucously within schools in imperial powers themselves. For instance, in public schools in the United States, the cultural, economic, sociological, and psychological domination of immigrants, particularly immigrants who are linguistic and ethnic minorities, is a testament to the pervasiveness of subtle colonizing forces. It is important that we not ignore these forces and their accompanying ideologies because they are an integral part of a concerted global effort to preserve the legacy of centuries of colonialism that pervades educational systems in both formerly colonizing and formerly colonized countries.

This article is a data-driven exploration of the experiences of four first-year ESOL teachers in public schools in the United States. I use data as a point of departure in order to embed my analysis in a local and actualized site (Luke, 2001), that is in the lives and experiences of practicing teachers. I explore how the social and discursive shaping of ESOL within schools serves the interests of NESs, magnifies inequalities between NESs and NNESs, and marginalizes ESOL while reinscribing white and English-speaking privilege. I also discuss the ways in which ESOL teachers tried to denaturalize the illegitimate status of ESOL. Several interwoven threads underpin my understandings of postcolonialism in the ESOL context, and in this article I connect each of these to colonial manifestations within the four schools of the study. They are: (1) an embracing of the supremacy of English over other languages, related to the promotion of subtractive English, "deplacing or replacing the mother tongues" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2004) and the dominance within school walls of a monocultural, monolingual model of identity that offers little or no conceptual space for multicompetence (Cook, 1999); (2) an investment in keeping Self and Other dichotomous and separate, with Self superior to Other, reflected in a construction of the

school categories of ESOL as Other, inferior, and deficit and of non-ESOL as an unmarked standard; and (3) the promotion of a White, native-English-speaking, American norm and the consequent marginalization of ethnic minority, NNES, and immigrant status, which is in turn related to the schoolwide construction of ESOL students as outsiders peripheral to both school and American culture.

In the context of a critical feminist ethnography, I explore the irrefutable connections between the historical construction of English speakers and English learners within society at large and the social construction of the category of ESOL within U.S. schools. In all four schools of this study, multilingualism was framed from a deficit perspective, in terms of students' inability to speak English. ESOL faculty's access to resources was limited, and their legitimacy as professionals was questioned. School districts showed a preference for hiring native-speaking over non-native speaking teachers, reinforcing NESs' professional legitimacy and perceived ownership over English (Grant & Wong, in press). ESOL students were disparaged or ignored, and many succumbed to the shame, seeking to conceal their status as ESOL students in a number of ways. ESOL departments were constructed as peripheral and their students as inferior. While the dominant discourses within the schools were ostensibly in favor of diversity, these were overwhelmingly liberal multiculturalist (Kubota, 2004), paying lip service to diversity while surreptitiously coercing assimilation. This marginalization was not exclusive to the schools in this study; ESOL programs across the United States occupy an inferior status in schools' pecking orders (Olsen, 1997; Valdéz, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). To understand the evolution of the inferior status of ESOL within schools, we need to examine it in relation to its larger context because the relationships among ESOL, schools, and identity are imbued in ideology, an ideology that is constructed collaboratively by all who participate in the making of a culture. ESOL did not become subordinate by chance, it was made to become subordinate by a legacy that extends beyond the four schools of the study and even beyond language learning in the United States. The ideology that constructs ESOL is embedded in the historical terrain of the construction of non-native English speaker identity and of the dominance of English world-wide.

Theoretical framework

My interest in the relationship between postcolonialism and education is rooted in my life. My (in)ability to construct myself a seamless identity from multiple ethnicities and nationalities has been a long and unfinished (perhaps endless) journey. As a Sri Lankan born child growing up in Australia while the White Australia Policy (which restricted non-White immigration to Australia) was still in effect, I acquired neither Sri Lanka's official language, Singhalese, nor the language of the ethnic minority group I belong to, Tamil. However, my heritage language loss extends back further than my immigration to Australia, back to British colonial times when my great-grandparents recognized the social and economic advantages of not only fluency in English, but of an English-

speaking identity. They chose to privilege English in their home. Today, both of my parents struggle to communicate in Singhalese and Tamil, and my relatives who continue to live in Sri Lanka speak English as a first language. The negative implications of the language loss are evident to me as I labor as an adult to acquire a language that is somehow my own and yet simultaneously alien. At the same time, English has served me well. It made my parents' emigration from Sri Lanka more likely and provided me with opportunities I might otherwise not have had. My ambivalent positioning towards English and the muddled nature of the colonial and anti-colonial discourses that have whirled around me over the years have intensified my investment in developing a thoughtful understanding of how colonial patterns play themselves out in schools in English-dominant contexts.

Postcolonial representations of English language teaching are often viewed in dichotomous terms as either a resistance or a compliance proposition: either one learns English and accepts its associated ideologies of English supremacy, or one rejects English and embraces instead a first language identity. Pennycook (1999) has written of the tension between teaching for social transformation and teaching for access to power. To implement pedagogies of transformation by rejecting the English language and its accompanying ideals or by inhibiting access to English can leave English language learners further marginalized (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Llurda, 2004). However, pedagogies of access, which can involve learning English and embracing dominant epistemologies in order to succeed, do nothing to challenge an inequitable status quo. Are transformation and access mutually exclusive? How can English learners and teachers accept the double-edged challenge of critiquing a colonial ideology pervasive in English language teaching (ELT; Pennycook, 1999) while simultaneously supporting student access to the dominant language? Canagarajah (1999) has critiqued either/or positioning, suggesting instead that English language learners be supported in transcending linguistic conflict through a reconstruction of languages and identities to the user's advantage. I explore the ways in which the teachers explicitly resisted the deficit construction of ESOL within their school contexts and experimented with various ways to support students' agency and access to a language that affords them power within their communities while simultaneously problematizing the historically embedded arbitrariness and social injustice of the language hierarchy they are enmeshed in. In doing so, I seek a deeper understanding of possibilities for hybridity (Bhabha, 1994; Silva, 2002), for multicompetence (Cook, 1992), and for glocalization (Lin et al., 2002; Luke, 2001).

Methodology

In this study, I used a methodology that supported the ideological underpinning of my quest. Traditional research can be viewed as a colonial act, described by Behar (1996) in this way: "Somehow, out of [the] legacy, born of European colonial impulse to know others in order to lambast them, better manage them,

or exalt them, anthropologists have made an intellectual cornucopia." (p. 4). The methodology I embraced was anticolonial in intention. My purpose was to listen to voices that have traditionally been delegitimized within educational research, that is the voices of practicing teachers. I wanted to disrupt hierarchical constructions of knowledge (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000) in which (usually white male) researchers in academic institutions generated knowledge and disseminated it to teachers, who were mostly female. The representations and interpretations offered here therefore lean heavily on the perspectives, voices, and knowledge generated by the four teachers. This article is part of a larger, year-long critical feminist ethnography that asked about meanings of becoming a language teacher.

Study Partners

My four study partners, Jane[3], Alexandra, Katie, and Margaret, were recent graduates of an M.Ed program in TESOL at a large, publicly funded institution on the East Coast of the United States. Katie and Margaret taught at the elementary level, Alexandra taught middle school, and Jane was a high school teacher. All four spoke English as a first language and had fluency in at least one other language. Jane, Alexandra, and Margaret were white American women, while Katie was Korean-born and adopted as an infant by a German-Irish family who lived in the United States. I had known each for two years before the study began, having taught or co-taught at least one class in each one's master's coursework, coordinated their student teaching experiences, and provided their course advising. I had supported Alexandra, Katie, and Margaret's seminar papers. The demographic information for the four schools of the study is included in Table 1.

Data sources

I learned from my study partners through a variety of data sources, most notably observation field notes; transcriptions of informal, unstructured interviews; and transcriptions of afternoon tea gatherings in my home every two or three weeks over the course of the school year. The afternoon teas were central to my study. My transcriptions of the afternoon teas highlighted, in a way that other data sources did not, the voices of my study partners, the power of the community they formed, and a proximity to their interpretations of their own experiences. In order to privilege the afternoon tea data, I modified Strauss and Corbin's (1990) constant comparative data analysis methodology by coding first the afternoon tea data and then introducing other data only as they related to the themes that emerged from the afternoon tea. (For a more detailed discussion of the ideological implications this study's data analysis, see Motha, 2004). In keeping with my methodological intent, throughout this article I try to present all stories in the teachers' words, overlaying my own representation or those of others only when I am able to do so in the context of the teachers' perspectives.

Table 1. School demographic information.

	Alexandra's school	*Jane's school*	*Katie's school*	*Margaret's school*
Grades	6th-8th	9th-12th	K-6th	K-6th
Total Enrollment	903	2,100	317	489
Racial composition (percent)				
"American Indian/Alaskan natives"	0.3	0	0	0.4
"Asian/Pacific Islanders"	15.6	3.2	15	5.9
"African American"	41.5	70.5	7	35
"White (not of Hispanic origin)"	25.1	6.6	66	46.8
"Hispanic"	17.4	21	13	13.1
"Free or reduced meals" (percent)	37	NA	13.9	30.9
"Limited English Proficient" (percent)	6.3	6.5	28	9.1

NOTE: The county's terminology is used to describe student categories.

Findings and discussion

> *"Some of the central ideologies of current English Language Teaching have their origins in the cultural constructions of colonialism. The colonial constructions of Self and the Other, of the 'TE' and the 'SOL' of ESOL remain in many domains of ELT [English Language Teaching]."*
>
> (Pennycook, 1998, p. 2)

Many interwoven themes connected global-scale colonizing forces to the lives of ESOL students and teachers. For the purposes of this discussion, I explain them within the framework of three broad categories: the dominance of a monolingual, monocultural model of identity in the multicultural schools of this study, the repeated interpretation of the school category "ESOL" as inferior, and the location of ESOL students on the margins of schools culture.

Dominance of monolingual identity

The dominant culture of schooling compelled members of the school community to gravitate towards a monolingual, monocultural English identity. The only legitimate identity available within the prevailing ideology of these four schools was that of a monolingual English speaker. This pressure manifested itself in subtle ways. For instance, Alexandra described the monolingual bias evident in the jeering at ESOL students by a student who was not in ESOL classes. A short hallway separated the classroom from its door, meaning that someone standing in the doorway could not be seen from the classroom. She

often left the door ajar in order to ventilate the classroom. Students would "pass the door and shout:

> 'You can't speak English' into the classroom and play with the light switch at the door."
> "How often does this happen?" I asked.
> "At least once or twice a week." (Alexandra, Afternoon tea, April 10th)

Jane, too, told us of high-school students who had exited from ESOL who mocked current ESOL students for their supposed inability to speak English (Jane, Afternoon tea, April 10th). The taunt "You can't speak English" constructs ESOL students as deficient. Rather than highlighting their multilingualism and the cultural resources they have to draw on, insults such as this one represent an inability to speak English as the sole distinguishing characteristic of an ESOL student. Furthermore, the jeer refutes the vast, complex space between ESOL and non-ESOL and seeks to reinforce the dichotomy between the two categories. Postcolonial theorists have understood the underscoring of binary oppositions to be a cornerstone of colonial discourse (Fanon, 1967; Said, 1978), and in this case it is evident that reinforcing the distinction between the two poles, ESOL and non-ESOL, serves to underscore their unequal status. Patanayak (2000) suggests that "Binary opposites . . . are characteristic of First World thinking . . . [In] the multilingual, pluricultural world . . . there is neither center nor periphery, core nor margin, but a network of relationships." (p. 47). If the ample terrain between ESOL and non-ESOL is ignored, it becomes possible to also deny the advanced level of English proficiency that some ESOL students have achieved and to consequently ignore the question of what makes NES English superior to fluent NNES speech. Ignoring the zone between ESOL and non-ESOL supports the viewing of English language learners in absolute terms, as either English speakers or not, without regard for the developmental nature of the process of language acquisition. This dichotomy between ESOL and non-ESOL is reflective of the mutual exclusivity of the larger social constructions of "native speaker" and "non-native speaker," constructions that works tirelessly to exclude the possibility of multicompetence (Cook, 1991) and to erase the fertile middle ground between the two categories. Blackledge (2002) notes that when a dominant ideology of monolingualism is constructed within multicultural societies, those who do not fit the "monoglot standard" (p. 68) become excluded.

Alexandra perceived a relationship between the taunts and the shame that many of her students experienced about their ESOL standing, adding: "These are kids that *do* take it personally . . . They pull the shades in the windows so that no one across the courtyard can see them because everyone knows [this classroom] is ESOL" (Afternoon tea, April 10th). As ESOL students internalize (Vygotsky, 1978) the voices of others and the shame associated with ESOL status, they come to accept their status as inferior. Alexandra faces a difficult situation. In drawing the shades and hiding their presence in the classroom, her

ESOL students are acknowledging the subordinate status of ESOL within the school, but are also affirming—even perpetuating—it. Agreeing to draw the shades could potentially reinforce the portrayal of her classroom as shameful and interrupt the teacher's attempts to transform the image of ESOL within the school. However, forcing students to open the blinds could disrupt her attempts to make the ESOL classroom a safe and comfortable space. Alexandra negotiated the terrain between her ethical responsibility towards her students and her desire for broader transformative practice. A facile choice between resistance or compliance was not available because the terrain was made multilayered by, *inter alia*, the complexities of ethics and caring (Noddings, 1984; Valenzuela, 1999).

The teachers sought to whittle away at the potency of the monolingual model offered to their students. All four made an effort to refer to their students not only as "ESOL" students but as "multilingual" and "bilingual." They challenged the dichotomy between ESOL and non-ESOL, related to the dichotomy between NES and NNES, in several other ways. For instance, Alexandra found a creative way to challenge the fixity (Bhabha, 1994) of the categories. She developed a "bridge class," a transitional class between ESOL and mainstream English classes. Her students typically clamored to take the ESOL exit test and move to the regular English classes "because of the stigma." (Alexandra, Afternoon tea, April 10th). While the students continued to need the support of ESOL classes (and some even acknowledged this need), the social stigma of receiving ESOL services was so great that it superceded their language learning needs. The students were lured by what Foucault (1979) has described disciplinary power, which works to attract individuals to certain identities and desires, in this case the identity of a non-ESOL student. Ironically, ESOL status, like NNES status, is not an identity that can be cast aside effortlessly. Just as many adults spend many years in futile pursuit of unmarked, accentless proficiency in English, students who have been in ESOL, particularly those in middle- and high-school ESOL classes, will always be marked as associated with the ESOL community by mere virtue of their NNES status, the institutional memory of their previous association with ESOL services, their accent, and often their race. Within public schools, the continuously underscored stigma of ESOL serves to spread effective reinforcement within larger society of the hierarchy between NNES and NES.

With the establishment of the bridge class, Alexandra noted that while leaving ESOL services had traditionally been a desirable goal, the students were now happy to stay in the bridge class:

> "So it's getting to be a status symbol to be in the bridge class . . . The kids wanted to be out of ESOL so badly, but now that there's a bridge class, they want to stay in it. It's like a cocoon, it's like a soft transition." (Alexandra, Afternoon tea, April 10th)

The bridge class played an important role in blurring the distinction between ESOL and non-ESOL, between English speaker and non-English speaker, which blurs the "fixity" of the categories and allows space for inter- and intragroup membership. Bhabha (1994) notes the crucial role that "fixity" plays in colonial discourses. He notes an intense social investment in ensuring that categories and their associated social meanings remain fixed, or rigid. The stereotype, the "major discursive strategy" (p. 66) of fixity, promises that clichés about social categories will have a solidity and permanence that will ensure that they are repeated again and again over decades. In blurring the boundaries between Self and Other, NS and NNES, and ESOL and non-ESOL, Alexandra chipped away at the fixity of those categories and threatened the established hierarchy between them.

Margaret, too, blurred boundaries by accepting responsibility for the learning of students who were not associated with ESOL. She had been troubled by her students' various attempts to hide their connections to ESOL and commented to us that the trend started with her third grade class and carried through the higher grades at her school. She wanted to find ways to challenge the trend. As part of her teaching, she kept dialogue journals with the three ESOL students in one third-grade class. On days that she picked students up for ESOL, she would stand silently at the classroom door until her students saw her, gathered their pencils and books, and moved quietly to the door to walk to the ESOL classroom with her. On Fridays, when she followed an inclusion format, co-teaching with their classroom teacher in their regular classroom, she would collect the journals. She responded over the weekend and returned the journals the following week. As she collected journals one Friday (December 3rd, Field Notes), the students who were not in ESOL asked her:

"What's the journal thing?"
"We write letters back and forth," she explained.
"Can I have one?" asked a native-English-speaking boy.
"Me too?" clamoured another student.
"Me too?"
"Well, I'll have to see about that," replied Margaret.

The following semester, she told me that the dialogue journals had become a tool in her quest to elevate the status of ESOL within the third-grade class:

> So I have three ESOL kids in that class but 15 dialogue journals. And it's really good because I'm always wondering, how do I explain ESOL, and I usually only have one sound-byte to explain ESOL [when I'm picking them up from their classroom], but now kids are asking in the journals!

Five months later, as she was collecting her three ESOL students, a visible change had come over the class. Her presence evoked great interest among other class members, and the native English speaking students would ask to attend ESOL, calling out “Pick me!” and “Can I come?” On one occasion, a boy who was not in ESOL tried to persuade Margaret to take him instead of one of his non-native English speaking peers, asking: “Why can’t we go with you? Why? Why?” and then telling her: “Mrs. Chen, Juan speaks perfect English, why is *he* in your group?” (Afternoon tea, April 10th). Using a simple and serendipitously discovered format, Margaret had posed a challenge to the shameful status of ESOL within her tiny microcosm of society.

Reagan (2000) notes that a common theme in “non-Western educational traditions” is the tendency towards “community-based and communal” (p. 206) learning. Not only is specialized knowledge, including discipline-based knowledge such as ESOL pedagogy, greatly valued in Western nations, but the distinction between those who are teachers and those who are not appears to Reagan to be a Western construction. One effect of Margaret’s strategy is a departure from the epistemologies embraced within her context, which value discipline-based educational specialists, and a movement towards a redefinition of the teaching of all children, regardless of their linguistic heritage, as the social responsibility of all teachers. As a result, the boundaries between school-constructed student categories became diffused. By being willing to widen her vision and look beyond the responsibilities outlined in her contract, Margaret revisioned not only her role, but her students’ place within the school culture.

ESOL as deficit and inferior

The supremacy of a monolingual identity went hand in hand with, and indeed was supportive of, the deficit construction of the category ESOL. All four teachers noticed that students in the upper elementary grades, the middle school, and the high school were ashamed of their ESOL student status. They cited numerous examples of students trying to hide their relationship with the ESOL department and perceiving the end of their need for ESOL services as a desirable victory because it freed them from the stigma of ESOL. In addition, many of the teachers, students, and parents they interacted with revealed similar conceptualizations of the category of ESOL.

The incident that opened this article illustrates how students under pressure to conform can become complicit in their own marginalization. While the self-directed mockery reinforces the stigma of the student’s accent, it also creates a unity with those who mock his accent, and it helps the Chinese student to create distance between himself and the object of his ridicule, that is his language. However, distancing himself from his language does not necessarily detach him from his language identity. W.E.B. Dubois (1903, 1989) has written about double consciousness, “this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.” In a world in which white and NES are normative, it is to be

expected that those who do not conform to the mainstream see themselves through eyes that borrow from a white and English-speaking perspective, an NES gaze.

Margaret, too, noticed that when she joined the school community, some of her students were ashamed of their enrollment in ESOL classes. She told us about one fourth-grade student who ignored her when he was outside the classroom unless the hallway was empty: “If no one else is in the hall, he’s very happy to see me. It’s like something out of a movie. [If other students are present] he doesn’t want anyone to see him!” When class was over, he would furtively look through the doorway, and if he saw other students in the hall, he would hang back and wait in the classroom. Margaret would explicitly dispute his shame, telling him: “You know, you’re bilingual and this is great. You’re so talented!”

The entire communities of the four schools in the study contributed to meanings of ESOL, including not only staff, faculty, and students but also parents of ESOL and non-ESOL students. Margaret sought to challenge dominant conceptions of ESOL by forming relationships with non-ESOL students. She spent spare periods and lunchtimes with NES students who had asked to spend time with her and even agreed to exchange homework assignments with some. She used these opportunities to share information about and demystify ESOL. However, one native English speaking student whom she befriended was the son of the PTA president:

> “His mother came up to me and said: ‘Is something wrong with Patrick? . . . He doesn’t need special services.’” (Afternoon tea, April 10th)

The interpretation of ESOL as deficit was so engrained within the school culture that even the PTA president perceived students needing ESOL as having something “wrong” with them.

Parents of ESOL students, too, revealed deficit understandings of ESOL. In the following example, students’ parents associated ESOL with dependence and weakness. Alexandra described her twin students’ understandings of ESOL as antithetical to “macho,” an understanding constructed collaboratively with their parents:

> Alexandra: Their parents came to family night and asked why their sons were still in ESOL . . . They’re very into being the men. They just want to be macho . . . well, as macho as a 12-year-old can be. They want to be tough, they want to show that they can deal with all these hard-edged classes.
> Suhanthie: And ESOL is not macho? ESOL is handholding?
> Alexandra: Well, it can’t be anything but when there are only 15 kids in the class, and in the regular English class there are 32 or 35. (Alexandra, Interview, October 7th)

In this instance, understanding ESOL to be "handholding" contradicted the "macho" nature of the identity the twins wanted to embrace. For the two students, being "men" implied functioning without the support or scaffolding related to ESOL, being "tough," and being competent to attend "hard-edged classes," so that receiving ESOL services was constructed, for them, as in conflict with being "men." The quest for an identity of adult masculinity was reinforced by their parents, who wanted to see their boys exiting from ESOL. This exchange allows a glimpse onto how meanings of ESOL can be created and maintained within linguistic minority communities. This construction of a desirable male identity as tough and rejecting of support has several ancillary effects. One result is the construction of female as dependent and weak, another is the construction of ESOL as appropriate for students who lack toughness and independence, which is a deficit representation. The characterization of ESOL as feminine is reminiscent of a colonial construction of the colonized as feminine, in particular of the West as ordered, rational, and masculine and the East or Orient as chaotic, irrational, and feminine (JanMohammed, 1985; Said, 1978).

Longing and belonging: ESOL as separate and peripheral

In all four schools in this study, ESOL was repeatedly and insistently constructed as separate within the school culture. The tendency both to enforce the segregation of ESOL students and to underscore the actual construct of ESOL as separate played an important role in the conceptualization of ESOL as inferior and shameful. It is important to note that simply constructing ESOL as separate alone does not automatically cause ESOL to be understood as inferior. Other school categories are conceptualized as separate without becoming inferior, for instance gifted and talented programs. ESOL is constructed as inferior because of the inferior status of non-native English speakers, and constructing it as separate merely reinforces its inferiority.

Valdéz (1996) perceives the division to be deep and to have a tremendous pedagogical effect. She refers to: "two separate worlds: the world of ESL and the mainstream world in which 'real' American schooling takes place." (p. 139). Historically, in the two counties of this study (and in many schools across the English-speaking world), ESOL students were placed in separate "centers" and did not interact with their English-speaking peers until they had achieved a degree of English fluency and, parenthetically, of assimilation. Segregating ESOL students from their English-speaking peers can be detrimental to all students for many reasons. It underscores difference within a system that rewards conformity. It limits ESOL students' access to English language experience. It deprives dominant-group students of interaction with the knowledge and experiences of new immigrants. And it is a poorly veiled form of tracking that keeps ESOL students isolated and then legitimates the resultant hierarchy.

Segregation is, however, a complex issue when applied to ESOL. The U.S. educational system has a long history of struggling with the relationship be-

tween segregation and social justice in the lives of language minority children. The Brown vs. Board of Education ruling in 1954 determined that the “separate but equal” doctrine has no place in public education. As commonsensical as this ruling might appear, it had the effect of giving school systems permission to ignore the language needs of linguistic minority students. School administrators in San Francisco claimed that by providing the *identical* education (that is, instruction in English) to all students, they were providing *equal* education (Crawford, 2000). Parents of Chinese-speaking students disputed this logic and argued that children with different needs have a right to different instruction. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed, declaring in Lau vs. Nichols in 1974 that public schools are required to provide language accommodations to language minority students. In 1981, a federal court ruling, *Castaneda v. Pickard,* spoke more specifically about segregation, determining that the segregation of limited English proficiency students was permissible only when "the benefits which would accrue to LEP students by remedying language barriers which impede their ability to realize their academic potential in an English language educational institution may outweigh the adverse effects of such segregation.” The ruling acknowledged that segregation presented potentially “adverse” consequences and placed some limitations on the unnecessary exclusion of ESOL students from mainstream classrooms. Despite these federal protections, many of the interactions described by the teachers in the study revealed members of the school community to view ESOL students as peripheral, as not wholly belonging. Some examples were blatant, for instance one fifth-grade teacher at Katie’s school who held exclusionary views about the participation of immigrants in U.S. society. Katie arrived at one afternoon tea upset about a comment that Mr. Mecclesfield had made during a conversation with a special education teacher: “And he said, ‘Well [ESOL students] don’t even belong [in the United States] anyway’” (Afternoon tea, November 1st). Later on that evening, she told us of another conversation between Mr. Mecclesfield and a 6th grade teacher:

> They were talking about having sheltered classes to transition the children into the mainstream. And Mr. Mecclesfield’s like, ‘Well I’ve been saying that for years. Just put these kids in their separate class. Have a separate program for them!” He didn’t want them mainstreamed at all, just put them in a corner somewhere and keep them very segregated. (Katie, Afternoon tea, November 1st)

In addition to flagrant examples of segregationist ideologies such as Mr. Mecclesfield’s, many covert practices contributed to the situatedness of ESOL students on the margins of school culture. Margaret was surprised to hear some teachers openly express reluctance to work with ESOL students:

> “They had three teams for each grade level, and all the ESOL students were on one of those teams. And the staff were like: ‘Next year I don’t want to be

> on the ESOL team.' From teachers who I thought were pretty open-minded!"
> Suhanthie: Like who?
> Margaret: Like one teacher who was a contributor to the [new county curriculum revised to reflect diversity training].
> Suhanthie: Why didn't she want to be on the ESOL team?
> Margaret: I think it stretched her too much to try to differentiate. (Afternoon tea, November 1st)

When teachers are inadequately prepared to meet the special needs of second language speakers, they are naturally reluctant to work with them. In this case, the resulting implication was that ESOL students demand an unreasonable or unjustifiable level of effort. Implicit in the teachers' comments was the suggestion that ESOL students require but do not deserve special attention, which makes a deafening statement about who truly has a right to quality education. This representation of schooling contributes to the construction of an underclass, in this case one that includes ESOL students.

Decentering the center, advocacy for the periphery

Part of being an ESOL teacher was being critically mindful of the periphery-center relationship that ESOL departments have with the larger school culture. For instance, the teachers made made connections between their discomfort with the notion of a standardized national curricula and the potential marginalization of students who do not represent the center, in particular, ESOL students. Katie told us of a discussion with an ESOL colleague, Tracy, who believed that a national ESOL curriculum was essential to maintaining "high standards" for learning.

Tracy was saying that ESOL students all need to know the same things around the country, I guess about the language . . . She was saying she wanted every ESOL student to know what their goals were and have [the same] textbook.

> Margaret: Like a national curriculum?
> Katie: Like a national curriculum. (Afternoon tea, June 19th)

Alexandra perceived a national curriculum to be in opposition to attending to the diverse needs of ESOL students:

> If you're talking about standards in which everyone comes out speaking the same language at the end, I think that's an impossible idea for ESOL. I know I couldn't teach under those circumstances. I don't think neighborhood schools are the same or have the same needs.

Alexandra believed that no one curriculum could hold sufficient personal relevance for every student in every class in the country. The idea of a standardized curriculum is a complex one for ESOL students. While it can support all students' access to important learning, a national curriculum that is aimed at all students inevitably treats students monolithically, and in doing so contributes to the construction of a norm, ". . .the implicit referent, that is, the yardstick by which to encode and represent cultural Others" (Mohanty, 1991, p. 55). In seeking to address the elements that the majority of students have in common, a national curriculum cannot help but have a centralizing effect, neglecting the multiplicity of identities represented in the national ESOL population.

Grading policies, too, are connected to the participation of ESOL students in the broader school culture. Alexandra noted that classroom teachers' popular practice of withholding a grade for ESOL students inhibited their motivation. Furthermore, because it establishes separate expectations and requirements for the ESOL students, it sets them apart from the other students and amounts to a subtle policy of exclusion:

> A lot of teachers there have a habit of giving the ESOL kids no grade. I think that undercuts their desire to progress, their self-esteem in the classroom, their feeling of: "Why should I bother?" They get things back with no comments because the teacher thinks: "If I write something they're not going to understand it." (Phone conversation, January 26th)

Neglecting to assign a grade to ESOL students' work can be interpreted as a reasonable accommodation, but it might also appear as dismissive and as signaling to students that their work doesn't matter. Furthermore, the stark disparity between expectations for ESOL students and for the rest of the school population contributes to the construction of ESOL identity as Other.

Alexandra also noticed that some ESOL students were receiving high grades for sitting silently in class. Her classroom teachers would tell Alexandra: "Oh, she's very good, she just sits there and does her work" (Phone conversation, January 26th). Alexandra was dubious: "Is she really doing her work is my question or is she just not being a problem in class?" Rewarding ESOL students for being silent in class discourages their participation (and hence language development) and encourages them to remain on the margins of the class, constructing an outsider identity and diminishing the degree to which they belong to the classroom community. Furthermore, it contributes to the construction of an identity similar to the identity often attributed to NNES adults: quiet, compliant, obedient, and childlike. It is the image of the colonized, the obedient servant ready to take orders, lacking in leadership qualities. Without realizing it, participants in school culture were adopting practices that underscored the "colonial shadow" (Vandrick, 1999).

Teachers of linguistic minority students face a tension. It is unfair to grade them in the same way as their English-speaking peers, but it is simultaneously

unfair to keep them separate. The tension points to the problematic nature of the traditional grading systems revered in public schools. The most popular grading systems establish one global standard, are embedded in a competitive hierarchy, assume uniformity of experience, and encourage homogeneity in learning. They discourage teachers from leaving room for complexity of experience instead of always trying to simplify it so that such experience can fit on a grade scale or percentile. However, the issue is even more complex: while Alexandra argued against uniform pedagogy as seen in a national curriculum and high-stakes testing, she would still like to see her students held to the same high standards as their NES peers. Parallel standards might compel classroom teachers to recognize their responsibility to teach their students rather than having them sit separately in a corner of the classroom playing on the computer or completing worksheets.

Similarly, Katie noted the attempts of some classroom teachers to bar ESOL students from entering into the classroom conversation until their rate of speech was sufficiently fluent to ensure that their participation would not slow down the pace of instruction:

> [s]ome teachers will put them in a corner and say, "Okay I'm not going to let you participate until you can learn enough English to participate" (Afternoon tea, January 24th).

She cited teachers who assigned new ESOL students worksheets to complete alone, who deliberately seated them with students they could not speak with, and who directed them to play alone on computers during class. The irony of these tactics is that it is almost impossible to acquire a language if one is prevented from using it. These strategies keep ESOL students isolated and their focus diverted from their classroom peers. It closes them off from the language learning that could result from their interaction with more fluent speakers of English, and it similarly deprives the other students in the class from their perspectives and their ability to influence the shape of the class's learning.

Linguicide is commonly understood to be the deliberate killing of a language (Hassanpour, 2000). However, a distinction should be made between, on one hand, formal and intentional state control of language and, on the other, governmentality (Foucault, referenced in Pennycook, 2002), or the production of discursive regimes through linguistic, cultural, and educational practices. While U.S. public schools are not intentional actors seeking to extinguish minority languages, some practices and procedures that have been naturalized within the schools of the study keep ESOL students out of the conversation. Van Dijk (2000) offers a more expansive definition: "Linguicism not only involves being barred from using your own language, but also being excluded from or marginalized in communicative events." (p. 73). Schooling practices that ensure that ESOL students' talk does not count exclude them from access to public discourse and ensure that NNESs are not heard.

At Alexandra's school, the ESOL department had been so isolated from the mainstream school culture that Alexandra wasn't informed about a schoolwide International Night.

> Alexandra: At my school, they had an International Night. I didn't even know about it . . . Why wouldn't you include ESOL? Hello?!!!
> Similarly, Alexandra was outraged at school administrators' implication that ESOL students did not have valuable knowledge to share:
> This general call went out asking teachers for names of students they felt could tutor. I sent a list of ESOL kids. And they were like, what can *they* tutor? I was like, they can tutor ESOL and they can tutor their native language. (Alexandra, Conversation, January 24th).

Although students were not deliberately being left out, through each of these interactions, their knowledge and participation in the school culture was becoming constructed as valueless.

Margaret noted that ESOL students were assumed to be ineligible for gifted and talented programs. She sought to challenge institutional structures that did not serve her students well:

> We were given a list identifying the GT (gifted and talented) kids . . . this one teacher was saying: "Can you believe Esmeralda [an ESOL student] is GT? She can't even read and write." So I went down to the chairperson of the committee and asked her to explain all of this data to me. And I thought: "Hmmm. I wonder how you get on the GT committee. This sounds like a committee I should be on." And I asked the chairperson: "Can I be on this committee?" and she said: "Yes." (Margaret, Afternoon tea, March 21st)

Through a structural analysis of access, Margaret was able to challenge the assumed mutual exclusivity of the school categories ESOL and GT. The under-representation of ESOL students in magnet and GT programs is no revelation—a well-worn groove runs from ESOL classrooms to those of the less "academic" subjects (Valenzuela, 1999; Valdéz, 1996), but Margaret's sociological scrutiny of systemic barriers to the GT program is, for her, a way to make a difference for not only one child but on a policy level.

In another example of subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999), the administrators at Alexandra's school encouraged her to provide her students with only a cursory sweep of the material that native English-speaking students would be covering:

> They were like: "You don't even need to bother with the [state] curriculum, just teach them map skills." . . . I was like, why do I have to teach them map skills, why can't I teach them the higher order skills?

Although the intention was, presumably, not to disadvantage ESOL students by making only a perfunctory education available to them, the effect of this unofficial policy would have been to underscore the message that ESOL students either do not deserve or are incapable of benefiting from the same quality and depth of education as their native English-speaking peers. Wallerstein et al (1982) describe "dependency theory," which explains that the world economy is based on a division of labor between a technologically developed center and a poorer periphery, which has ensured the dependence of poorer countries on imperialist countries. They extend this theory beyond economics to ideology. Norms are dependent on non-norms because without something to compare a norm to, a norm has lost its centrality and ceases to be. One way to ensure the continued division between non-ESL as normative and ESOL as peripheral is to minimize the level of education ESOL students receive (in this case, with ostensibly commonsense arguments that underscore ESOL students' supposed deficiencies), preparing them for the lowest rungs of socioeconomic structure and thus ensuring that immigrant children, especially ethnic and linguistic minority children, remain on the margins of the U.S. educational system and, eventually, U.S. society.

Invisibility of ESOL students in school metanarrative

Yet another way in which ESOL students were made peripheral to the school culture was in their invisibility within the grand metanarrative of the school. For instance, one Latino student complained to his teacher that he did not see himself reflected in the school newspaper:

> The school newspaper came out last week. This one kid flipped through it and said: "Ms. Fitzpatrick, this paper is racist!" I said: "Okay, why?" . . . And he said: "It doesn't reflect anything about the hispanic kids, it's all about the American black kids and their music." I said: "Okay, I agree, now what are you going to do about it?" You have to find these small pieces and let them be able to do something with it. I said: "Who are the kids who write for the paper? Do you write for the paper? Do your friends write for the paper?" He said: "No. I should complain." I said: "Do you want to write a letter to the editor?" He hesitated. I said: "Jorge, if you want to write a letter, I'll edit it, I'll help you with the grammar changes." And I said: "You and your friends need to be represented on that paper. You can't sit back and complain about it. That's the first step, realizing there's a problem . . . but you can't stop there."

Jorge drew connections between racial inequality and the absence of hispanics in the school newspaper, and Jane supported his analysis. Rather than simply blaming the injustice of the dominant school culture, the teacher viewed her student as a transformative agent and called him to action.

Alexandra, too, noted the importance of students seeing themselves in larger social representations. She discussed the importance of students being able to see their countries on a map:

> I have a Ukrainian student now. We couldn't even find the outline of his country on the map. So I asked the [appropriate staff member] for a new map. I mean, I have students whose relatives have died over the establishment of these countries! This man said: 'The countries change every day, just change it on the map with a marker.' . . . I wanted to say: 'Don't you see how important it is to see your own country? Are you crazy? You're really stupid.' I wanted to him understand why I need a new map . . . I said: "That's a really interesting response" and I ducked into the bathroom to get a hold of myself. (Alexandra, Conversation, January 26th)

Alexandra's solution was to find an up-to-date map in a Newsweek magazine and provide photocopies to all of her students, thus underscoring the legitimacy of their national identities.

Implications

This study argues (1) for a reconceptualization of language identity, and in particular for a deconstruction of the monolingual model of identity that is so pervasive in the United States, (2) for a revisioning of the categories ESOL and non-ESOL and (3) for school-based action to transform the peripheral status of ESOL within larger school culture.

Reconceptualization of language identity

The weaving of a monolingual, monocultural model of identity is an effort that is contributed to by all members of school communities, so that a deconstruction of this model similarly requires the participation of all members. Such an expectation within public school contexts is likely unrealistic, but a great deal of progress in this direction can be made through teacher education and in-service professional development of teachers and administrators. In many U.S. states, teachers are not prepared to attend to the needs of language minority students. Several states currently require all teachers to take one or two classes in language teaching, literacy, or teaching English language learners. However, the nature of these classes should be called into question. What is lacking in teacher education, both in TESOL and within other disciplines, is a specific and deliberate focus on the role that teachers play in shaping the power relations, access to resources, and positionality of their linguistic minority students. It is not enough that teachers be familiar with second language acquisition theory and be able to name and identify a variety of ESL methods. Kumaravadivelu (2003) advocates for "postmethod pedagogy" which includes a sensitivity to location- and context-specific particularities. All too often, the shaping of ESOL is taught and considered quite apart from its historical context of colonialism and its contem-

porary context of globalization as these relate to white supremacy, English domination, and the valorization of Western culture and forms of knowledge. The inferior status of ESOL then becomes so naturalized that it is not visible without being explicitly pointed out. The study participants frequently encountered classroom teachers whose pedagogy was consistent with an ethic of caring, but who nonetheless reinforced ESOL students' shame about their ESOL status, were oblivious to the consequences of enforcing English Only classroom policies, and underscored the supremacy of native-like English speech. Teachers and administrators should be offered specific guidance about how to make language choices and pedagogical decisions that support possibilities for the evolution of multilingual, multicultural identities.

Professional development and teacher education efforts to highlight the value of multilingualism can contribute towards transformation, and all faculty should be prepared to specifically challenge comments that construct ESOL as deficient when they hear them. Mackie (2003) has suggested that we explore the ways in which our personal desires are shaped by everyday social texts and communities. She provides as example social texts (particularly movies) that relate to race. She proposes that we look at how desire changes when its origins and connection to cultural texts are questioned. ESOL professionals need to be able to identify the relevant everyday texts and scripts that are associated with desirable identities in order to help themselves and their ESOL students to call into question those desires. This is the type of reflective, questioning practice that will support a critical engagement with discourses of colonialism.

Social practices are shaped by language discourses (Tollefson, 2004), so that simply introducing discourses that support "multicompetence," and "multilingualism" rather than "NNES" can change the ways in which children come to view linguistic identity. However, it is important to be mindful that alternative discourses are not an all-encompassing panacea—material facts, including socioeconomic asymmetries, still persist, and the relation between discourse and materiality is not unidirectional.

Blurring the "fixity" of NES and NNES and ESOL and non-ESOL

The mere use of the language "NES" and "NNES" and "ESOL" and "non-ESOL" reproduces false dichotomies inherent within these concepts, making an exploration of alternative lexicon necessary. School faculty and administration should strive to find creative ways of lessening the space between these polar constructs. This article argues for the forging of new school and social identities that are located in the nebulous yet immense area between these categorizations. Data-based scholarship exploring what would these identities might look like is necessary, as is further exploration of what practices would support the development of these identities. The spaces between theoretical constructs can sometimes be fertile and exciting. Lather (2000) suggests that new concepts and understandings can be found in the "cracks," created by the "loss of mastery of the old concepts" (p. 284). Anzaldúa (1987) writes of "borderlands, *la frontera*"

noting that in her experience, “borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them* . . . a borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary” (p. 25). It is not enough to criticize dichotomies, to hold up a megaphone and shout at Western, patriarchal conventions. Rather, the task at hand is to explore alternatives by excavating these *intersticios*: “The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguities.” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 101). In terms that poignantly evoke Freire’s (1999) notion of “unfinishedness,” she says “there is an exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind, in being ‘worked’ on.” (p. 38).

The teachers in this study demonstrated some creative ways to challenge the binary nature of the categories that shaped their schooling lives. Alexandra’s establishment of a class that was neither ESOL nor non-ESOL created the theoretical possibility of space between those two groups. Another effective approach was Margaret’s strategy to become involved with the learning processes of children who were not in her classes. Similarly, teachers who are not assigned to work with ESOL students should accept some responsibility for the learning of those students, contributing towards the development of a more “global-village” approach to education and a diluting of the boundaries between school categories, such as ESOL, gifted and talented programs, and special education. All too often in this study, the ESOL teacher was the only person with an investment in ESOL children and served as the sole liaison among the school administration, the family, and classroom teachers.

However, we cannot depend solely on teacher-instigated versions of these strategies. They need to be embraced at the school and district level in order to ensure that a legitimate space exists for paradigm shifts away from colonialism.

Supporting ESOL students’ belonging within school culture

This study had important practical, theoretical, pedagogical, and policy implications for the question of who truly belongs to a school community and how that belonging is shaped. An inclusion model of teaching is more supportive of ESOL students’ belonging than pull-out programs. It could, in fact, be argued that pull-out programs are a way of circumventing the anti-segregationist intent of Castañeda v. Pickard (1981). In terms of curriculum, the movement towards both a national curriculum and high-stakes standardized testing can be considered a neocolonial push. It compels us see students in relation to a norm and to apply a uniform pedagogy to all children, which necessarily means that diversity is not attended to. Similarly, our assessment and grading schemes need revisioning. Our current grading systems give us only two choices, both of which are unfair and serve to marginalize: to grade ESOL students in relation to students whose English is proficient or to simply not assign them a grade. ESOL students should be encouraged to participate in classroom conversations and the larger school culture. Katie suggested that students who speak no English at all be paired with same-language peers in order to facilitate their communication with

and entry into the school culture. School administrators need to make a special effort to ensure that ESOL students and faculty are not excluded from school activities. ESOL students should be encouraged to take activist positions within their school communities.

Discussion and conclusion

ESOL as it is currently shaped within U.S. public school classrooms serves as an effective conduit for propogating colonialist thought and ideology. How can ESOL be done differently? The practical implications outlined in the Implications section have the potential to influence ESOL, but they cannot stand alone. While taking practical steps to address the troubling patterns of domination within educational arenas, educational researchers and linguists must simultaneously push beneath the theoretical surface of postcolonialism, delving deeper into a structural analysis of how TESOL as a discipline is buttressing and promoting Western-based knowledges in contemporary contexts. Colonialism as a historical construct is tightly connected to the modern-day phenomenon of globalization (Luke, 2001; Kumaravadivelu, forthcoming). ESOL classrooms serve as channels for both local and global discourses, and we are hard pressed to understand the postcolonial sediment that shrouds us without developing an understanding of how current shifts towards internationalization inevitably influence the teaching of English and the construction of ESOL. An understanding of directions for the future needs to be thoroughly embedded in an analysis of local and specific sites, with connections then traced to the global. Luke (2001) suggests that "any effects of globalization can be made intelligible only by analysis of local sites where 'glocalization' is actualized, experienced, appropriated, or contested." (p. 3). The teaching lives of Katie, Alexandra, Jane, and Margaret are an example of one such local site. Because theorizing without grounding theory in classroom realities results in abstract conjecture, I propose that the TESOL profession make a commitment to more data-driven studies that flesh out local experiences. In particular, in order to figure out how TESOL professionals can thoughtfully revision our direction, we need intensive, ethnographic explorations of what reflective and critically minded teachers are doing.

How can learning communities create the possibility of new, hybrid identities? Lin at al (2002) refer us to glocalization, which brings together the local and the global, and propose a paradigm shift from TESOL to Teaching English for Glocalized Communication (TEGCOM). They suggest that if we "reimagine the storylines underlying TESOL and its discourses, we can perhaps rework and destabilize the hegemonic relations in different settings in the world." (p. 312). A first step in this direction is the reconceptualizion of ESOL within the walls of U.S. public schools, which can create possibilities for learning that recognizes multilingual students as full-fledged participants in school communities and society at large, that embraces their epistemologies and experiences as valuable, and that works against the numerous artifacts of colonialism embedded in the fabric of U.S. schooling.

One theoretical implication of this study is that our educational systems need to develop a degree of comfort with ambiguities. However, in forging new and hybrid identities, it is important that we consider the hegemonic history of English. Educators need to have faith that ESOL learners are sophisticated enough "to manage the linguistic and ideological conflicts to their best advantage" and to engage favorably in multiple languages (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 2), but we must simultaneously be "alert to the power of dominant ideology to create illusions of freedom, clarity, and agency." (Canagarajah, 2004, p. 141).

Ironically, while multilingualism, the reason for students' placement in ESOL, itself is an asset, the ways in which ESOL is constructed as a school category establish conditions for school failure among ESOL students. Furthermore, they do so in a way that is seemingly innocent:

> "It suited ELT to define language and teaching as a value-free cognitive activity, since in that way its material and ideological interests in spreading English globally could be conveniently ignored." (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 20)

The four teachers found that in order to challenge the negative understandings of ESOL that were pervasive in their schools they needed to also challenge the global construction of NNESs and to work towards changing the ways in which the institution of schooling viewed ELT.

This study has highlighted the importance of further research that explores what ESOL teachers do in the face of colonizing forces. Through their reflective and thought-provoking practice, Katie, Jane, Margaret, and Alexandra have offered the TEGCOM community numerous possibilities for exorcising the colonial ghosts squatting throughout the U.S. institution of schooling and consequently for transforming the ways in which ESOL is taught.

Notes

1. I use the term "ESOL" in keeping with the language that both counties in the study use to describe their programs.
2. The distinction between Western and non-Western is a blatant oversimplification that I fall into reluctantly and only because I believe it provides a constructive point of departure for identifying and therefore challenging the stereotypes it embeds.
3. All names except my own are pseudonyms.

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