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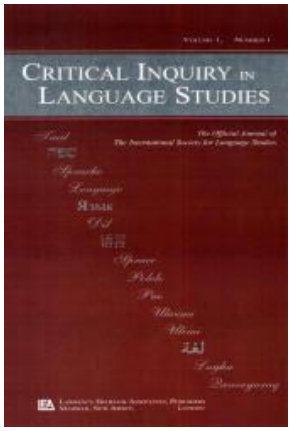

Exploring the language ideology of nativeness in narrative accounts of English second language users in Montreal

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Keywords: language ideology, L2 users, IPA, L2 English, Montreal, Lx

Abstract

The current study qualitatively examines 23 interviews with English second language users focusing on their lived experiences of communicating in the context of multicultural and multilingual interactions in Montreal. The interpretative phenomenological analysis of data reveals two superordinate themes: the idealised native speaker of English, and ambivalent attitudes towards linguistic diversity which uncover the contested and shifting nature of language ideologies. The themes offer a narrative of the ideology of nativeness, intersecting with current studies in multilingual practices in globalised contexts. The authors suggest that the model of idealised native speech creates unrealistic expectations in English second language users regarding their own linguistic performance and their self-image as users of English. The study proposes the adoption of Lx speaker (Dewaele, 2018) in order to challenge the monolingual bias inherent in the native and non-native speaker dichotomy.

The notion of the superiority of native speakers is very powerful in shaping perceptions related to attainment in English language learning that is modelled on an ideal native speaker of English (Holliday, 2005, 2006, 2015; Pennycook, 1998, 2007, 2017). Despite recent studies challenging native speakerism in English language teaching (Schreiber, 2019), the tendency to valorise native speakers of one of the variants of the inner circle (US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, see Kachru, 1996) with the associated idea of their linguistic superiority is still prevalent in English language learners (Hodgson, 2014). The present study employs a qualitative analysis of 23 interviews with multicultural and multilingual English language users in Montreal to illustrate their lived experiences of English language learning and use, in the specific the ways in which the language ideology of nativeness (Shuck, 2006) or native speakerism (Holliday, 2015) has influenced how they perceive themselves as speakers of English in Montreal. The use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse the interview data was employed to generate rich descriptions of participants' experiences and feelings on language learning, in particular their aspirations as language learners and their views on the English language.

The authors align the terminology traditionally related to native and non-native speakers with Dewaele's (2018) use of L1 for native speakers and Lx for non-native speakers, in order to recognise the monolingual bias inherent in the definition of non-native speaker as deficient in relation to the notion of nativeness. The authors regard nativeness as a non-elective socially constructed category (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001) that has shaped the widespread notion that a language belongs to its L1 speakers through the identification between language, nation and race (Shuck, 2006). As a consequence, the ideology of nativeness implies a belief that L1 speakers possess unique qualities involving nationality, ethnicity and race that cannot be acquired by Lx speakers. However, in relating the respondents' narratives and reporting the data

verbatim, the authors will remain faithful to their use of terminology of native and non-native speaker.

The paper opens with an overview of the linguistic landscape of Montreal in order to situate the multilingual profiles of the speakers and their experiences of language use. This is followed by a background on language ideology and nativeness, with a subsequent overview of the relationship between language learning and language ideology in the context of current studies in multilingual practices in globalised contexts.

Montreal

The study was conducted in an English Language Intensive Program at an English speaking university in Montreal. The program consists of eight levels and is primarily designed to prepare students whose first language is not English to enter English language universities or colleges, but unlike most ESL contexts, the language the students are learning is not the dominant language of the immediate community. Students are learning English in a city whose official language is French and within a province that is predominantly French-speaking. Montreal is the most populous city of the province of Quebec with a population of 4.1 million in the census metropolitan region, which is half of the population of the province (Statistics Canada, 2016). Montreal has French as the official language in compliance with the Charter of the French Language which was introduced in 1977 to ensure the position of French as the sole official language of Quebec. The Charter made French the language of work, government, education and the visually predominant language on commercial signs. The figures based on the 2016 Canada census results reveal that French L1 speakers account for 63% of Montreal metropolitan area's total population. The second largest group of people (22%) have non-official languages as their L1. 11.4% of the population speak English as their L1 and 3.6% provided

multiple responses. It can be thus argued that Montreal is not a monolingual French space and that increased diversity and multilingualism provide a space for negotiation of different linguistic repertoires, in the background of the global significance of English, particularly in the labour market (Paquet & Levasseur, 2019).

Language Ideology

The present study refers to language ideology as a set of socially shared beliefs, notions and feelings about language (Piller, 2015). According to Piller, these beliefs are formed in a dialectical relation with wider social forces and interests, and as such they are multiple and contested. According to Piller's definition, ideology is complex and multi-layered, but the aspect that is of interest to this study is that of the legitimation of one dominant view, in the specific the way in which this is internalised and expressed by the participants. This rationalising and naturalising effect of ideology (Silverstein, 1979, 1998) underpins the dialectical relation between language use and social structures (Irvine, 1989; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994) and the common sense aspect of beliefs about language which resist rational explanations (Milroy, 2001). Foucault (1980) favoured the use of the notion of discourse over ideology illustrating the nexus between power and knowledge through a pervasive network that functions at the micro-level of everyday practices. Echoing Foucalt's stance, Irvine (2019) argues for a conceptualisation of ideology as grounded in "a socially-positioned point of view" (p. 68), meaning that ideology is always partial and dependent on the position of an individual in a specific social context. The construction of ideology in discourse is particularly evident in its intersection with race, nation and class. Ruecker (2011) advocates the adoption of race theory in the field of ELT to critically examine the discursive production of linguistic inequalities in relation to the othering of Lx English speakers. Similarly, Schuck (2004) describes the

construction of the ideology of nativeness as connected to wider discourses around immigration, nationalism and race which create an ideological view of the world as "naturally monolingual" (p. 96). In this way, Schuck (2006) continues, the notion of linguistic difference is racialised according to the dichotomies of native/nonnative and standard/non-standard speakers, becoming embedded in public discourse and naturalised in everyday social and linguistic interactions.

Gramsci's notion of hegemony (2005) is employed here in reference to a wider ideological framework that includes the interplay between discourse and the acceptance of a dominant world-view as a self-evident fact that is not subject to scrutiny. Gramsci's (2005) twofold conceptualisation of power addresses the notion both in the traditional Marxist sense of coercive domination and as the spontaneous consent given to dominant groups by virtue of their prestige and of their function in society, or hegemony. In this latter form, ideology is structured as a frame of reference that operates at both the cognitive and emotional levels, thus reproducing the material conditions of capitalist societal formations through education, religious institutions and mass media (Althusser, 2008). The concept of hegemony is crucial in the cultural critique of Hall (1977), establishing the pervasiveness of language and culture in the production and reproduction of existing patterns of dominance. Through hegemony, consent assumes the form of a natural given, a common sense that embodies the internalisation of a particular and dominant worldview which is not acquired through critical reflection but is encountered and accepted as a self-evident truth (Crehan, 2016). The Gramscian notion of hegemony is reflected in Voloshinov's (1973) idea that the principal medium of transmission and crystallisation of ideological thinking and ideological behaviours is language. Voloshinov (1973) viewed language as a dynamic system of social signs that reflect the socio-political order and inform all types of communication between people, present "in every act or contact between people-in collaboration

on the job, in ideological exchanges, in the chance contacts of everyday life, in political relationships, and so on" (p. 19). For Voloshinov language, social intercourse, and the material conditions of society are thus intertwined in producing ideology, meaning that the ideological content of language becomes internalised through socialisation.

Ideology and Language Learning

In relation to ideology and language learning, Kramsch (1997) traces the prestige conferred to L1 speakers to the spoken communicative competence focus on language learning adopted since the 1970s, which was derived from Chomsky's (1967) ideal speaker listener. The idealised figure of a L1 speaker of English appeals to the common-sense notion that L1 speakers are stakeholders of a language who have "special control" and "insider knowledge about 'their' language" (Davies, 2013, p.1). Benzie (2010) and Lindemann (2017) argue that the belief that L1 speakers embody a superior norm that represents an ideal model for language learners, is closely linked to a standard and monolingual ideology which relegates Lx and non-standard speech to a deficit model. The notion of standardisation (Milroy, 2001, 2006) creates an ideal image of a unitary language and a belief in 'correctness' attributed to the prestige form of a language. A number of studies (see Flores & Rosa, 2015; Lindemann, 2017; Lippi-Green, 2012; Piller, 2015; Shuck, 2006) report on this monolingual and standard ideology from the perspective of L1 English speakers. These studies highlight the othering that occurs with the division between standard and non-standard varieties, between L1 and Lx speakers, resulting in the national identification of the English language with a monocultural and monolingual ideal of unity. Furthermore, the critique of the ideology of native speakerism with its accompanying ideal of a monolingual speaker underpins the notion of new speakers (Costa, 2015; O'Rourke et al., 2015). As with L2 English users, new speakers face similar challenges in regards to their perceived

competence and the resistance towards linguistic innovation, hybridisation and code-switching (O'Rourke & Walsh, 2018) in the context of the revitalisation of minority languages, which raises a number of issues relating to the legitimacy of language varieties and the social positioning of language users.

Ortega (2019) reports on the negative impact of this native speaker bias, or native speakerism, which portrays "language learners as doomed to failure" (p.24). This deficit view of multilingualism, Ortega continues, contributes to linguistic insecurity when language learning is equated to the language of idealised monolingual speakers. As May (2019) argues monolingual ideologies are still very powerful in shaping the idea of an ideal community of homogeneous speakers. The identification between language, race and nationality (May, 2019; Schuck, 2006) reveals the ideological nature of nativeness highlighted in the idealised L1 speaker and the accompanying deficit view of multilingual and non-standard language speakers. Adolphs (2005) attributes this discrepancy between an idealised L1 speaker and the reality of language use in its different varieties to four elements: variation in pronunciation, the use of idiomatic expressions in real life situations, spoken grammar as opposed to the written variety of the language, and creativity. According to Adolph (2005), this discrepancy between an ideal language with its concomitant ideal speaker and the reality of language diversity generates a preference for prestige and standard varieties of English because they are more recognisable internationally. This preference reflects unequal global relations in the linguistic domain (Ives, 2009) leading to the hegemonic acceptance of the variety of standard English associated with idealized L1 speakers.

Language classrooms are not positioned in a neutral space but belong to the larger domain of society and culture, where the ways in which people learn a second language is influenced by

factors that are wider than the acquisition of specific linguistic features (Block, 2013; Pennycook, 2001). Beliefs that are transmitted through language teaching and learning such as the binary division between L1 and Lx speakers permeate language learning through the ideal of English-speaking Western language teachers (Holliday, 2005, 2006, 2015; Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2016), and otherise Lx speakers in a deficit position of subalternity (Kumaravadivelu, 2014). Indeed, native speakerism has become a pervasive ideology in English language teaching and learning (Holliday, 2015; Kim, 2011; Phillipson, 2016) even though the distinction between L1 and Lx speakers is a contested one, particularly in relation to the global spread of English (Canagarajah, 2005; Laitinen & Levin, 2016; Pennycook, 2017). The focus on multilingual practices in globalised spaces (Canagarajah, 2013), hybrid Englishes (Pennycook, 2003; Schneider, 2016), and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Jenkins, 2006; Mackenzie, 2014), represents a multilingual or dynamic turn in applied linguistics (Block, 2013; Kubota, 2014) which emphasises multilingualism, hybridity and the decentralisation of English towards the localised practices of the expanding and outer circles (Kachru, 1996). This multilingual competence takes a central role in challenging the ideal image of a monolingual L1 speaker, and providing a new model of English speaker endowed with language skills that facilitate negotiation of meaning in globalised contexts where English is used as a Lingua Franca. Jenkins (2012) defines ELF as a means of communication between people from different language backgrounds, and argues that it differs from English as a native language. Thus, ELF emphasises hybridity and negotiation of meaning in multilingual encounters indicating a loss of prestige of the L1 speaker. However, it can be argued that the focus on language learners from highly literate and higher education backgrounds on which much of research on ELF and second language acquisition is based does not reflect entirely the range of language users in globalised,

neoliberal contexts, therefore underplaying the role played by economic inequality in the spread of English and its accompanying monolingual ideology (Kubota, 2014; Ortega, 2018). As O'Regan (2014) argues, this ideal of a level field between L1 and Lx speakers postulated by ELF does not account for the racial, gender and economic inequality experienced by English speakers and learners in globalised contexts. In this context, it can be argued that the ideology of nativeness can be traced to the well-known theory of linguistic imperialism (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1998; Philippson, 2008) according to which the global spread of English as a dominant language undermines linguistic and cultural diversity, while contributing to the dissemination of neo-liberal ideologies that equate the acquisition of English language skills with success and individual fulfilment. The totalising effect of current economic structures and the creation of a 'neo-liberal citizen', an individual free from the constraints of tradition to create one's own narrative (Block, 2018) fits with the idea of English as a form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984) that establishes L1 speakers as romanticised role models (Bacon & Kim, 2018; Pavlenko, 2001). This role of English in re-establishing old patterns of imperial power in contemporary globalisation practices has been noted in recent research (see Gray, 2012; Kubota, 2011; Park, 2011; Phillipson, 2008).

Beginning with the idea of a superior model based on a homogeneous L1 speaker of standard English that underpins the ideology of nativeness, this study seeks to establish:

1. How are L1 English speakers viewed by Lx speakers learning English in Montreal?
2. What is the impact of the ideology of nativeness on Lx speakers' use of English?
3. How do Lx speakers experience language diversity in their use of English?

Method

Given the nature of the research questions of the present study, a qualitative research design was adopted by employing interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). In IPA, semi-structured interviews allow the in-depth exploration of the chosen theme giving the interviewer opportunities to probe into the participants' lived experiences. This approach stems from the central role attributed by Husserl to personal consciousness in approaching reality through the method of bracketing, or the suspension of judgment regarding a certain object of knowledge (Smith et al., 2009). This entails the intensive and detailed reading of the accounts produced by the participants (Larkin, 2006). The core of the IPA method is to focus on the experiences of a certain event or concern as it is narrated by participants in order to understand their world, a feature which distinguishes this method from discourse analysis (Abayomi, 2017). However, due to the impossibility to achieve a completely transparent narration of the participants' experiences, the intersubjective character of IPA needs to be taken into account, which entails the recognition of the role of the researcher in creating a narrative from the data. A coherent narrative is established in which data is interpreted by the researcher first through close description and subsequently by positioning the initial description within a wider theoretical context. The process can thus be viewed in terms of a double hermeneutics to describe the researchers' journey from the initial encounter with the data and the bracketing of experience, and the subsequent use of a theoretical lens to interpret the phenomenon under observation (Smith et al., 2009). The authors intended to reveal the mediating effect of ideology in shaping the respondents' beliefs about language. As such, the interviews do not reflect the reality of the respondents in a transparent fashion, but reveal language ideology as multiple and contested, and connected dialectically to wider social discourses related to the idealised image of a L1 speaker.

Participants and Procedure

In line with IPA, the selection of participants was guided by specific criteria 1) were aged 18 and above 2) had their first L2 immersion experience after the age of 14 3) spoke a language other than English as their L1 4) started learning English in their country of origin 5) were enrolled in a language course 6) used English daily 6) had advanced spoken proficiency in English to produce in-depth responses required for IPA. The final sample of 23 speakers aged 18-42 years (M = 24.65, standard deviation (SD) = 7.44), 10 males and 13 females, all of whom have met the selection criteria. The L1's of the participants included Arabic (n = 7), Chinese (n = 5), Spanish (n = 4), French (n = 3), Russian (n = 2), Portuguese (n = 1), and Vietnamese (n = 1). The participants' background information is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

Superordinate and constituent themes

Superordinate theme	Constituent theme
The Idealised L1 Speaker	The image of a homogeneous group of L1 speakers of Standard English
	The perceived superiority of inner circle Englishes (North American English and British English)

Ambivalent attitudes towards linguistic diversity	Encounters with L1 varieties not conforming with the idealised L1 speaker, Linguistic insecurity English as a symbolic capital

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a quiet research lab by the second author. Each interview lasted approximately 20-40 minutes and the duration was determined by the participants' willingness to speak. The interviews were recorded using a portable voice recorder. The consent form was given to the participants prior to the interview in order to briefly explain the purposes of the study. In the warm-up part of the interview, the participants were asked for personal details such as age, L1 language and language learning history. The second part of the interview focused on students' attitudes towards different varieties of English, comprehensibility of L1/Lx English, and the use of English as a Lingua Franca (the interview questions are available from the authors on request). Following the interviews, the participants were thanked for their contribution and their time. All interviews were transcribed verbatim prior to data analysis.

Data analysis

The analysis of the data from the interviews proceeded at three levels in order to achieve the double hermeneutics described above, from the initial familiarisation with the data to the final creation of a coherent narrative. Following transcription, the researchers familiarised themselves with the data through repeated readings of the interviews, which was undertaken

separately by both authors in order to strengthen the depth of analysis. Next, the two superordinate themes of the idealised L1 speaker and ambivalent attitudes towards linguistic diversity were identified. A subsequent level of analysis produced a number of constituent themes summarised in Table 2.

The identified themes were then independently audited by the authors to ensure the consistency of the analysis. As one of the main concerns of IPA is idiography (Miller et al., 2018), meaning a preoccupation with the particular, the detail of the analysis is paramount in order to avoid generalisations that undermine the attention dedicated to each individual participant. However, due to phenomenology's commitment to the intersubjective and relational nature of experience the analysis in this paper aims at creating a picture of situated narratives embodied within a common horizon. To preserve the participants' voices, their words are presented verbatim with the original grammar and linguistic idiosyncrasies, and each speaker is indicated with a number as S = n.

Results

Theme 1. The Idealised L1 Speaker

One element that emerges from the first theme is that of an idealised L1 English language speaker, someone who has control and complete mastery of the language and therefore deserving of trust: "I trust people who are native speakers more" (S17). L1 speakers do not make mistakes "Clearly they can transmit the message with no mistakes" (S18) and they have ultimate authority over the language: "They are the source of their language, except in some situation err their language is more clear than the others" (S12). Most respondents express their desire to change their own accent in order to acquire the status associated with being L1 English speakers, even though some recognise that keeping their own original accents would help them preserve their

own sense of identity. This sentiment however is accompanied by an ambivalent sense of the superiority of L1 accents: “Of course we all want to speak perfectly English, but everyone has his roots and we’re all different. Maybe if I was born in Canada, raised in Canada, I was Canadian with my Canadian passport, maybe then they can judge me and say this person can’t speak correctly her national language. But as I’m not from here anyway” (S6). This idealised image of L1 speakers as embodying a superior norm is closely connected to the constituent themes of the superiority of inner circle Englishes and of L1 speakers as a homogeneous group.

L1 speakers of English are identified by the respondents as North American and British, or inner circle according to Kachru’s (1996) classification although preference is assigned to British English and North American English accents: “British accent is very clearly very smart consideration like erm seems very gentleman. It’s just kind of like music” (S1). Other respondents reported that British “is too noble for me. It’s really good for literature or for romantic things” (S5) and that “I think the best accent is the British accent” (S8). Two respondents identified North American as desirable accents: “I don’t know, like I find it cool. They’re similar I think, Canadian accent and American accent to each other, so I think they are both the best English accents. And I don’t like Australian accent” (S9) and “The best accent is the Canadian English is very good and standard. I would be happy to have this accent. I think it’s a very good standard” (S18).

Although there is a widespread recognition of the international nature of English and the fact that it is spoken to interact with both L1 and Lx speakers, the respondents see L1 speakers as their ideal audience: “When I speak to the non-native, I know that we are at the same situation, we are both non-native, so you make a mistake I don’t really care. But when I’m with the native speaker, I really get stressed, because I know that they know perfectly the language” (S6). The

feeling of anxiety at not being able to communicate with L1 language speakers is a common theme in the interviews, which is connected with the two constituent themes of linguistic insecurity and of the deficit view of Lx speakers. Many respondents describe the frustration at talking either too slow or too fast and not pronouncing words clearly when in the presence of L1 speakers: “People can’t understand is just because my pronunciation problem” (S8). Indeed, some respondents measure their success as language learners according to their ability to make themselves understood by L1 language speakers: “I feel a bit more stressed with native speakers, because I’m more afraid they don’t understand my accent. It’s easier for me to speak with non-native speaker than with native speaker. But I also really enjoy speak with native speaker, because when it’s working, I feel really proud of me” (S13).

Theme 2. Ambivalent Attitudes Towards Linguistic Diversity

The vast majority of the participants offer their evaluations of different accents within the inner circle, finding some easier or more difficult than others. For example, for one respondent North American English is preferable to that of British English or Australian English due to its familiarity acquired through popular culture, “people from the US have perfect pronunciation of the words. It’s their English I’m used to hear, it’s the English I learned from TV, music, it’s the English in my mind, is the way it is, if I hear the British English or Australian English it’s sometimes the erm words and pronunciation are hard to get all what they are saying” (S2). English from the expanding and outer circles (Kachru, 1996) is seen by a number of respondents as not conforming to their ideal image of a L1 speaker of English: “I think native speakers are not a big problem for me. Because there are some people that come from another countries like Asia, I think very hard to understand their accent. So I would prefer to talk with a native English speaker from Canada than with an Asian English speaker” (S18). Two other respondents also

report that: “When they speak language is like Indian language it’s not English, you just know the sound is like their language is not like English” (S11) and “Chinese accent is horrible, I don’t think they speak English normally” (S9). A number of respondents worry that communicating with Lx speakers will hinder their acquisition of L1-like accent and competence: “Sometimes I like to speak with the natives, you know they refresh you a little bit, ok I don’t know if this word exists. Sometimes when you are too mixed up with different ethnic people, you tend to get the accent” (S15).

Although L1 speakers of the inner circle are perceived as being superior linguistically, some respondents describe feeling more comfortable when communicating with other Lx speakers because their accents are easier to understand:

> Non-native are easier to understand because they really take to speak more clearly, while native, they speak very quick. For example, when I travel to the USA, I cannot understand very easily what they are saying, ‘cause they speak very quickly. And for example just watching USA television, sometimes they speak very quickly so I think that non-natives they really take their time to think more and to speak more slowly (S6).

Another respondent recalls experiencing the contrast between the variety of English spoken in London with the other varieties of English spoken in the north of England: “I have been in London for a time, for a while, their language is really clear more than the north, but north I had difficulty to try understand them especially people from Liverpool if you know” (S11*)*. Finally, a respondent demonstrates a keen awareness of the position of English as an international language and the importance of being able to communicate with diverse speakers of English: “I think we need to improve our listening to identify these [different accents] because English is worldwide not only native speakers can speak English, everyone can speak English and everyone has a

different accent if you don't understand them well, it's the limit of your English" (S1). In terms of symbolic capital, English is seen as offering improved career prospects and opportunities. It signals progress due to its international profile, and it offers limitless travelling opportunities. As such, English represents in the words of all respondents an important symbolic capital: "It's practiced everywhere, all over the world, all the people speak English that's why. It's like I think it's the language of the future" (S3).

Regarding the specific context of linguistic diversity in Montreal, participants' experiences of the use of English in the city proved controversial. On one hand, the interviewees feel more at ease using English in Montreal as compared to a monolingual L1 context. On the other hand, they came to realize very quickly that English is not the dominant language within the city. Speaker 2 refers to some tension experienced when addressing French-speaking Montrealers in English, "It's difficult sometimes erm where I live it's mainly Francophones, so sometimes it's hard to communicate with the and so I address them in English. I've noticed that they prefer sometimes even to if I talk speak in Spanish" (S2). Another student expresses a similar idea by saying "Montreal is have two official languages English and French. For me I know nothing about French erm but English is also not enough to get into the university. I want to study in University. I need to improve my English more it's not enough" (S1).

Discussion

The aims of the study were to identify how L1 English speakers are viewed by Lx speakers in a multilingual setting, the impact of the ideology of nativeness and their experiences of language diversity in using English. An interesting finding from the analysis of the data is that although respondents are studying English in Montreal where L1 English speakers are the minority, they still subscribe to the ideology of native speakerism. At the same time, some

resistance to this ideology emerges in their ambivalent attitudes toward the idea of the superiority of L1 English speakers.

Two superordinate themes emerged from the data: the idealised L1 speaker and ambivalent attitudes towards linguistic diversity. The first theme indicated that the conflict between the aspiration to an ideal L1 speech and the concomitant feeling of insecurity that derives from not being able to acquire an L1 accent can be ascribed to the unreflexive and unquestioned subscription to the ideology of nativeness. In other words, respondents have internalised the superiority of L1 speech as a self-evident truth, and in line with the ideology of nativeness they narrate their feelings of inadequacy as users of English and their desire to acquire L1-like accents. This finding aligns with Ortega's (2019) argument that the monolingual bias in language learning creates feelings of insecurity illustrated in the portrayal of bilingual and multilingual speakers as defective language users. On one side, many aspire to acquire a L1-like accent, which is identified with the figure of an ideal L1 speaker from the inner circle. On the other side, they share a common feeling that they are not living up to the expectations of a superior norm embodied by L1 language speakers. Bucci and Baxter (1984) define linguistic insecurity as a negative or poor 'speech image' in terms of a bad feeling about the way one talks, which they compare to the feeling associated to having a poor 'body image'. Lancereau and Martines (2018) define interlinguistic insecurity the fear of the listeners' judgment of Lx language users, which creates language anxiety and feelings of inferiority. This deficit view and sense of linguistic insecurity is widely shared among the respondents, particularly in the common striving for validation from idealised L1 speakers.

This study has also contributed to the literature on ELF in Academic contexts (ELFA). The research in this area focuses on academic discourse, practices and attitudes. Our study shows

that international students remain nativelike norm-oriented in their use of English in academic context. This provides support for Jenkins' (2014) observation that academic performance in English-speaking universities is measured against native speaker standards. Such orientation to native speaker norms leads to the feeling of linguistic insecurity in the use of English reported by the participants in this study. These international students seem to view the level of proficiency in English as the main factor that determines Lx users' academic and professional success.

The internalised hegemonic view of L1 speakers becomes apparent through the respondents' narration of communicative exchanges in English while travelling, working in academic circles in a variety of geographical contexts in inner circle countries such as Great Britain, Canada and the US. In these exchanges, some of the respondents have come into contact with a variety of local accents that are not identifiable with the homogeneous standard variety that they identify with the idealised L1 English speaker. In these encounters, they have experienced the contradictory force of the dominant ideological worldview that has shaped their expectations of language interactions in English with idealised L1 speakers. It can thus be argued that the ambivalent positions expressed by the participants in relation to language diversity can be attributed to the tacit nature of ideology (Subtirelu, 2014) and the fact that language ideologies are always multiple and contested (Piller, 2015). As such, language users shift their positioning while they navigate multilingual spaces as illustrated in Theme 2, which may account for the fact that despite regarding L1 speech as superior, some of the respondents also view Lx speech as clearer and easier to understand.

Furthermore, the respondents signal a preference for the varieties that they associate with the notion of an ideal L1 speaker. As a consequence, despite their encounters with diverse users of English, only the variants of Standard North American English and RP British English are

afforded the idealised and privileged status of L1 speech to which the respondents aspire in order to become successful English speakers. This generates unrealistic expectations with the resulting negative self-image as English speakers when they are unable to reach the desired idealised L1 speaker model. As revealed in the interview data, respondents are aware of the important symbolic capital attributed to English while describing the increased opportunities that are attached to learning the language in globalised and neo-liberal economies.

Conclusion and Limitations of the Study

This study contributes to the growing body of evidence on the ideology of native speakerism among Lx English speakers. An interesting finding is that this ideology is expressed by the participants in the context of a multilingual and non-English context such as Montreal, shedding light on the pervasiveness of the ideology of native speakerism and on the contradictory attitudes that this ideology generates in Lx speakers. If the preference for an idealised L1 speaker of a standard and prestige variety of English aligns with similar findings in the literature, the data also reveals the ambivalent nature of Lx speakers in relation to linguistic diversity. Interestingly, the superiority of an idealised L1 English speaker is questioned in some of the respondents' narratives of language use in international contexts, contributing to a level of ambiguity towards the acceptance of a monolingual ideology. However, the superiority and symbolic value attached to the figure of the idealised L1 speaker remains the prevalent theme in the data. It is argued in this paper that the deficit view of Lx speakers and of expanding and outer circles English speakers includes L1 speakers of non-standard and non-prestige varieties of English, which is related to the internationalisation of English and to its role as a symbolic capital. Because the Lx speakers in this study aspire to use English in order to access a number of professions and to pursue international travel and opportunities, they demonstrate a preference

for the varieties of English with the highest symbolic capital. This preference generates unrealistic expectations of language use and of language variation and feelings of insecurity related to themselves as users of English. At the same time, the complex multilingual profile of Montreal and the position of English within its language landscape allow Lx users the opportunity to engage with a multitude of language users and to test their own shifting positioning in relation to monolingual ideologies.

Given that the present study treated very diverse speakers as a homogenous group of participants under the umbrella term of Lx users, the findings are not claimed to be generalisable. Each speaker of each language represented in our study has their own political and cultural background that might have affected their beliefs and attitudes. It is evident from their narratives that there is a multitude of elements that have shaped their lived experiences. Further research probing into LX speakers' lived experiences of language in multilingual and multicultural settings would offer the possibility to deconstruct and critically examine the ideology of native speakerism and to challenge the monolithic perspectives behind the image of idealised monolingual speakers.

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Appendix

Table 2

Interview participants. Background information

Code name	Age	Gender	L1	Nationality	Lx
S1	18	F	Chinese	China	English
S2	35	M	Spanish	Mexico	English
S3	19	F	Russian	Russia	English
S4	22	F	Vietnamese	Vietnam	English
S5	20	F	French	Lebanon	Arabic, Spanish, English
S6	N/A	F	French	Morocco	Arabic, Spanish, English
S7	29	F	Arabic	Libya	English
S8	19	M	Chinese Cantonese	China	English, Mandarin
S9	18	M	Arabic	Jordan	English
S10	22	F	Chinese	China	English, local language
S11	40	M	Arabic	Libya	English

S12	42	M	Arabic	Libya	English
S13	20	M	French	France	English
S14	23	M	Arabic	Saudi Arabia	English
S15	22	F	Arabic	Morocco	English, French
S16	26	M	Chinese	China	English
S17	29	F	Russian/Ukrainian	Russia	English, French
S18	32	F	Portuguese	Brazil	English, French
S19	19	F	Spanish	Venezuela	English
S20	19	F	Chinese	China	English
S21	19	M	Spanish	Venezuela	English
S22	N/A	F	Spanish	Mexico	English, French
S23	N/A	M	Arabic	Libya	English