



Prestigious language, pigeonholed speakers: Stances towards the ‘native English speaker’ in a multilingual European institution

Veronika Lovrits¹  | Julia de Bres²

¹University of Luxembourg, Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg

²College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Massey University/Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa, Wellington, New Zealand

Correspondence

Veronika Lovrits, Université du Luxembourg, Maison des Sciences Humaines, 11, Porte des Sciences, 4366 Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg.
Email: veronika.lovrits@uni.lu

Abstract

Critical sociolinguistics has demonstrated that the social construct of the ‘native speaker’ has a strong impact on people's lives, but research on ‘native speaker effects’ in the workplace remains rare. This article examines such effects from the perspective of four ‘native English speaker’ trainees on temporary contracts in a multilingual European Union institution in Luxembourg. Applying the framework of sociolinguistic stance to interview data and drawings, we examine how the participants position themselves towards the ‘native English speaker’ construct at work, and how they think others position them. According to our participants, ‘native English speaker’ positioning confers privilege but restricts opportunities, demonstrating that the interest of a multilingual organisation in using the ‘native English speaker’ as a resource does not automatically provide a powerful position to ‘native English speaking’ workers. Our results featuring trainees in precarious labour conditions raise broader issues regarding the precarisation of language work in the EU.

KEYWORDS

English, linguistic commodification, multilingualism, native speaker, precarity, stanceRésumé

Des recherches sociolinguistiques critiques ont révélé que la construction sociale de « locuteur natif » influence fortement la vie des personnes. Pourtant, les recherches concernant les

« effets du locuteur natif » sur le lieu de travail sont rares. Le présent article examine ces effets depuis la perspective de quatre stagiaires « anglophones natifs » avec un contrat à durée déterminée dans une institution multilingue de l'Union européenne au Luxembourg. Appliquant le cadre de la position sociolinguistique (sociolinguistic stance) aux données des interviews et aux dessins, nous analysons comment les participants se positionnent par rapport à la construction d'« anglophone natif » au travail et comment ils se sentent positionnés par les autres. Selon nos participants, ces positionnements confèreraient des privilèges mais réduiraient également des opportunités; ainsi, l'intérêt d'une organisation multilingue à recourir à des « anglophones natifs » en tant que ressource ne place pas automatiquement ces travailleurs dans une position de pouvoir. Nos résultats – qui présentent des stagiaires en conditions de travail précaires – soulèvent des questions plus larges de précarisation du travail linguistique dans l'Union européenne.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Answering the call for critical examination of 'native speaker effects', that is, implications 'of the ideological premises of the notion "native speaker"' (Doerr, 2009, p. 39), this article investigates the social construct of the 'native English speaker' through the lived experiences of four 'native English speaking' trainees in a multilingual European Union (EU) institution in Luxembourg. Given the indeterminacy and ideological load of the 'native English speaker' and its uncertain role in the power dynamics of workplace communication, we analyse sociolinguistic stance (Jaffe, 2009) to identify how being constructed as a 'native English speaker' shapes the experience of temporary junior staff in a multilingual team. Stance in our discursive approach represents a socially shaped nexus linking ideological inputs and consequent practices through first-person reflective accounts. Our social actor-centred inquiry was based on semi-structured interviews incorporating visual data (drawings of metaphors) and supported by ethnographic observation—an innovative mix providing rich insights linking personal experience to issues of broader sociolinguistic concern.

Critical investigation of 'native English speakers' has mainly focused on the macro picture of language ideologies favouring them (Pennycook, 1997; Phillipson, 1993) or on individuals disadvantaged by being 'non-native English speakers' (Doerr, 2009; Kabel, 2009; Swan, Aboshiha, & Holliday, 2015; Wei & Hua, 2013). We add the perspective of 'native English speakers' who are generally considered to benefit from their sociolinguistic status. Our key contribution is applying a critical sociolinguistic lens to our interviewees' experience, in the context of the workplace, where critical approaches to the 'native English speaker' construct remain rare (Codó, 2018; Kubota, 2011;

Lønsmann, 2017). Specifically, we argue that our participants experience both privilege and precarity via their construction as ‘native English speakers’.

Our participants’ ambivalence towards the ‘native English speaker’ construct may surprise if viewed from a macro-structural perspective ascribing ‘native English speakers’ the upper hand. It makes sense, however, when considering employees in low-status, unstable positions where being a ‘native English speaker’ is a central part of their role. As we will show, ‘native English speakers’ can in such circumstances be subject to similar processes of linguistic banalisation (Duchêne, 2011) and commodification (Heller, 2010) as speakers of other languages. Despite aligning with a discourse of English as the indispensable language for work success (Kubota, 2011), our participants construct their status as ‘native English speakers’ as conferring both advantage and disadvantage, with significant ‘native speaker effects’.

In the following sections, we present our conceptualisation of the term ‘native (English) speaker’ as a social construct and its relation to conditions of precarity, commodification and banalisation. We describe the institutional setting and data that constitute our research focus and present our analytical framework of discursive stance. We then focus on how our participants position themselves towards the ‘native English speaker’ construct and how their stances interact with their position of both privilege and precarity. We show that being constructed as a ‘native speaker’ is a mixed bag for them, with the positives (in symbolic value, status, prestige and authority) not necessarily outweighing the negatives (in the nature of their work, identity, language experiences and relationships).

2 | THE CONSTRUCT OF THE ‘NATIVE (ENGLISH) SPEAKER’

We approach the ‘native speaker’ as a social construct (Berger & Luckmann, 2001)—a broadly recognised set of expectations naturalised over time to become considered as fact, obscuring ongoing processes of social construction. The ‘native speaker’ construct is tied to language ideologies, which we conceptualise as ‘the perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group’ (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 501). Pennycook (1994) identifies the following associations with ‘native speakers’ among the general public: the language is the standard variety of a named language, it is associated with particular nation-states, whose citizens are automatically competent in this variety, and their competence encompasses all domains. ‘Native speakers’ are assumed to master a single set of linguistic skills intrinsic to a homogenous population (Doerr, 2009; Pennycook, 1994). This ideal of homogeneity is manifested not only in a ‘national culture’ mirrored in the national language (which, as Kramsch (1998) points out, encompasses both observable and imagined cultural patterns) but also in ignorance of social stratification of speakers (Rampton, 2003). The ‘native speaker’ construct operates within dominant ideologies of monolingualism. Linguistic nationalist ideologies claim the state ruling over the native language should be monolingual and individuals should have only one native language (Yildiz, 2012). When linguists try to identify who a ‘native speaker’ is, an arbitrary set of features emerge—the language of parents, language of education, duration of exposure or acquisition in childhood, among others (Davies, 2006). These criteria lead to multiple groups to whom the label¹ ‘native speaker’ may or may not be applied. While critical linguistics has established that it is possible to acquire more than one ‘native’ language (Davies, 2006), the ideological prerequisite of innate monolingualism in a standard language exerts a strong influence on constructions of linguistic legitimacy and competence (Doerr, 2009). According to Davies (2006), the decisive aspect of who counts as a ‘native speaker’ rests not in linguistic criteria but in ascription of this label based on autobiography, that is, being a ‘native speaker’ is a linguistic identity claim.

Specifying the 'native *English* speaker' as our object of analysis entails further sociopolitical dimensions. Critical sociolinguists have envisaged English as ruling a language hierarchy, due to its perceived global predominance (Crystal, 2003; Pennycook, 1997). From this standpoint, any person perceived as a 'native English speaker' bears power derived from mastery of the language. Use of English by others increases the individual power of linguistic 'natives', facilitating language expansion (Phillipson, 1993). The dominance of 'native English speakers' in multilingual environments is an axiom of post-colonial deconstruction of sociolinguistic structures (Pennycook, 1997). The ideologies of international communication without borders (Kayman, 2004), the global 'knowledge society' (Hornidge, 2013) and the indispensability of English for global business (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009) all assume a hegemonic position for English. Research has revealed that this presumption does not always hold true, however. In multilingual European workplaces, English can be a mere 'transit language' (Fredriksson, Barnes-Rasmussen, & Piekkari, 2006), a 'common communicational minimum' (Gunnarsson, 2014) or one language among others, while 'local languages' or 'native languages' are often preferred (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Gunnarsson, 2014; van der Worp, Cenoz, & Gorter, 2018). Even where English plays a central role, 'native English speakers' do not always have the upper hand in interpersonal exchanges at work (Lønsmann, 2017). To understand why, we must consider how 'native English speaker' status interacts with broader patterns in contemporary labour conditions, as we do next.

3 | PRECARIETY, COMMODIFICATION AND BANALISATION IN LANGUAGE WORK

The global working world is characterised by precarity, in which 'informal, temporary, or contingent work is the predominant mode of livelihood' (Kasimir, 2018). The market metaphor has become a 'dominant way to frame all manner of day-to-day activity' (Block, 2017, p. 39). Individuals are encouraged to adopt the ideology of the 'entrepreneurial self' (Garrido & Sabaté-Dalmau, 2020) or 'neoliberal worker' (Barakos, 2019), a lifelong project in which they are responsible for developing and promoting themselves as 'bundles of skills' (Urciuoli, 2008) that can respond to the dynamics of market change (Barakos, 2019). Meanwhile, the globalised economy has led to an increasing role for language as both a tool and product of labour, resulting in the phenomenon of the 'language worker'. Speakers and languages acquire differing levels of value in the labour market via processes of linguistic commodification (Heller, 2010), a phenomenon particularly relevant to English as a prestigious language (Block, 2017). Language skills become 'the responsibility of the worker who wants to strengthen her/his employability through investments and skilling by and of the self' (Kraft, 2020, p. 4) and employers resort to 'linguistic banalization' (Duchêne, 2011), considering languages as something 'natural'. They benefit from the language skills of their employees without these transferring to employees' salary or professional mobility (Duchêne, 2011). Unlike in other cases, the presumed skills of the 'native English speakers' in our study are explicitly valued by the employer. As we show, however, expectations of linguistic skill are symbolically attached to the construct of the 'native English speaker', making an individual's skill level irrelevant. This represents another form of linguistic banalisation. Moreover, while the linguistic tasks linked to the 'native English speakers' in our study were discursively constructed as precious for the workplace, this did not result in a paid position that valued these tasks institutionally.

Precarious language workers, such as call centre operators, back-stage airport employees and construction workers, experience high levels of linguistic exploitation (Duchêne, 2011; Heller, 2010; Kraft, 2020). Recent studies expand this picture to include language workers in more privileged

professional situations. Barakos (2019, p. 184) found language trainers in an Austrian language education company 'caught up between privileged and precarious working conditions', in which their appreciation of developing a flexible and creative skill set was counterbalanced by their anxiety about job insecurity. Codó's (2018) English language teachers in Barcelona had easy access to jobs conferring prestige 'embedded in global language ideological inequalities that value native English speakers over non-native ones', but simultaneously faced 'the precarisation and flexibility inherent to most ELT jobs', including very low salaries and long working hours (Codó, 2018, p. 437). Kubota (2011) notes that Japan-based companies tend to hire cheaper agency workers for exclusively English-related tasks. Commodification of languages clearly also negatively affects 'native English speakers' and 'elite multilinguals' (Barakos & Selleck, 2019). Our participants are speakers of what is constructed as one of the most powerful languages in the world, but they are also 'neoliberal workers' valued for their assumed skills in a highly commodified linguistic resource. As we explore, this potentially exposes them to processes of linguistic commodification and banalisation.

4 | DATA

Our data derive from a study of workplace communication at an EU institution in Luxembourg. Luxembourg provides an interesting site for investigating language in the workplace due to its multilingual situation. Bordered by France, Germany and Belgium, its four official languages (French, German, Luxembourgish and German sign language) are used regularly in everyday life. Its favourable economic situation has resulted in increasing migration, with people of non-Luxembourgish nationality now comprising 48% of the resident population of 602,000 (STATEC, 2018). This includes historical migration of Italians and Portuguese, alongside more recent arrivals working in multinational companies and EU institutions. There are cross-border workers from France, Germany and Belgium, who account for 45% of the workforce (STATEC, 2018). Most of these come from France and French-speaking Belgium, so French has become the main lingua franca while English plays an increasing role within multinational companies (Horner & Weber, 2008).

The workplace concerned also operates within the EU language context. Multilingualism is promoted via European language policies, and EU institutions are theoretically expected to function multilingually. In practice, language use varies from monolingualism to multilingualism (Wodak, 2013) and implicit policies often support a strong position for English. The workplace in this research is a unit of an EU institution servicing the EU as a whole. At the time of the research, several languages were common in day-to-day conversation there. All staff were comfortably multilingual, could speak at least three languages and could make educated guesses in others. There was no explicit language policy but the implicit policy clearly favoured multilingual practices. Nevertheless, the unit had a special (informal) position for 'native English speakers'. The reasons for this elevation of English—and those who speak it—were never made explicit during the research.² Implicit language policies are no less powerful than explicit ones and, while the reasoning behind this policy remained opaque, it had a clear impact on our participants' perception of their role.

Most of the work undertaken in English was for the unit's website, for which trainees of various national backgrounds were responsible. 'Frontstage and backstage' communication (Kankaanranta, Karhunen, & Louhiala-Salminen, 2018) was multilingual, but only texts in English were proofread, for no explicit reason. Texts written by trainees who were not 'native English speakers' had to be proofread by a 'native English speaker' trainee, and permanent staff could also use this facility. Everyone was theoretically supposed to contribute their 'native' skills but, as only the English output was checked, a disproportionate part of the 'native English speaker' trainees' work was focused on

these linguistic tasks. As the website was regularly updated with new articles in English, the ‘native English speaker’ trainees did proofreading every day, consuming 20%–30% of their working time. They had not expected this to be part of their role, it necessitated more complicated time management and involved ‘uncreative’ work compared to other trainees. When no ‘native English speaking’ trainee was present, proofreading of English texts fell to the permanent staff (of whom none were ‘native English speakers’ but many were linguists or translators), who preferred to avoid this.

Our data collection focused on four trainees meeting the criterion of both identifying and being identified by others as ‘native English speakers’ (following Davies, 2006). They were university graduates in their late twenties and thirties, with previous work experience in journalism or communications who spoke at least one official EU language alongside English. Ben and Kate spent their traineeships together, before Lucy and then Florence³. Ben was Irish and had studied journalism, languages and translation to Masters level in Ireland. He had worked in journalism and publishing, and was attracted to the traineeship to develop his language skills and explore the international labour market. Afterwards, he worked as a content writer in Luxembourg, before returning to an editorial position in the United Kingdom. Kate was Maltese and had studied communications and translation to Masters level in Malta, before working as an English teacher and in communications. She was a keen traveller and Luxembourg was on her list to visit. After the traineeship and further travel, she worked in communications in Malta. Lucy was British and studying journalism during the traineeship, having previously been an au pair in Europe. She saw the traineeship as part of her studies and proceeded to a Masters degree in international studies. Florence was British and had studied translation and languages in England and Europe before working as a journalist and writer in Portugal. She wanted to work in a large and stable institution after years of freelancing. She then worked in communications in Brussels, before returning to freelance in Portugal.

The participants undertook their traineeships for various reasons, including working abroad, developing their language skills, enhancing their education, visiting somewhere new and experiencing work in an EU institution. They could be seen as *élite*, successful ‘global employees’ (Barakos, 2019), ‘university-educated, work experienced (...) mobile for the purposes of work (...) flexible, responsible entrepreneurial agents whose profile, identity and status are not only indexed by their multiple language skills but also by their willingness to be subjects of change and movement’ (*ibid.*, p. 189). On the flipside, their working conditions reflect the nonlinear and precarious careers common among the mobile middle-class workforce (Barakos, 2019). They were employed full-time for a fixed term of 5 months on the minimum wage. They had health insurance and access to a subsidised canteen, but had to find housing in an expensive city. Overall, they occupied the least important position in the unit, with the lowest remuneration, job security and future employment prospects.

The data was collected over several phases. The first author spent 6 weeks at the workplace throughout 2018 as a university intern, meeting all four participants as colleagues. While this period does not form part of the data, it gave the researchers a well-grounded understanding of language practices in the workplace. Subsequently, individual semi-structured interviews were undertaken with the participants. Agreement to participate was obtained from the individuals themselves, the research focusing on their personal experiences rather than institutional policy, and they participated in their free time. Care was taken to ensure their anonymity, although they considered risks to be low, given their short period of employment. The interviews covered their views on language practices and the role of the ‘native English speaker’ in the workplace and were the main source of information for the identification of stances.

The data collection concentrated on one main interviewee, Florence, who was doing her traineeship at the time. A longitudinal approach was taken to progressively explore her perspective across the course of her traineeship. This involved two in-person interviews, in November and December 2018.

In January 2019, she participated in a semi-structured interview by email to identify any changes in her views. To explore the wider relevance of the findings, the three former trainees (Lucy, Ben and Kate) were asked to participate remotely. Their participation was concentrated in 1 week in February 2019, when they took part in a written and a Skype interview with the first author. The data collection finished with a fourth interview with Florence via Skype in February 2019, after her traineeship had ended.

While the interview data were primarily verbal, visual elements in the form of drawings were also included. Drawings can elicit the personal, subjective and emotional aspects of participants' language experiences [de Bres, 2017] and metaphors can enrich analysis of sociolinguistic stance (McEntee-Atalianis, 2013). After the initial interview with Florence, the first author drew metaphors to depict the situations in which 'native English speakers' potentially find themselves, based on discourses about the 'native speaker' in the research literature⁴. Florence then drew her own metaphor during the second interview. The drawings were discussed with the other participants in the subsequent interviews. This triangulation across participants and methods served to widen the scope of our insights. The final dataset encompassed three longitudinal and three one-off interviews totalling six hours of recordings, four written interviews and ten drawings. While the research represents a small case study, the richness of the data allows in-depth insights into the participants' experiences as 'native English speakers' at this specific workplace, with potential broader relevance.

5 | ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

We analysed our data using the theoretical framework of sociolinguistic stance (Du Bois, 2007; Jaffe, 2009). Stance is a 'uniquely productive way of conceptualizing the processes of indexicalization that are the link between individual performance and social meaning' and constitutes a source of individual action (Jaffe, 2009, p. 4). It encompasses identity claims, beliefs, assessments, appraisals and other forms of evaluation and positioning. 'Second-order stances' are taken to mis/align with the (inferred) stances of others, and generalisations shift epistemic authority from an individual to a societal level (Jaffe, 2009).

Most research on stance investigates stance-taking turns in conversational interactions, either focusing on (socio)linguistic features (Du Bois, 2007; Kärkkäinen, 2003; Wu, 2003) or broader topics of social and political discourse (Englebretson, 2001; Haddington, 2004; Jaffe, 2009; Liu & Stevenson, 2013; McEntee-Atalianis, 2013). Taking the latter discursive approach, we analyse stances similarly to Coupland, Holmes, and Coupland (1998), tracking the effects of broader societal discourses in the dynamics of individual reflections in interviews. Specifically, we critically analyse how the 'native English speaker' construct serves as a discursive link between language ideologies and their practical implications in our participants' working life. Juxtaposing expectations, interpretations and (reported) actions and considering them in all their complexity and dynamics, our stance analysis offers explanations that enrich the perspectives provided by traditional analyses of the separate factors at play (language ideologies, attitudes or positioning).

We deconstruct stance into three constitutive features (Du Bois, 2007). The first feature is the *object of stance*. We look at how the 'native English speaker' as the object of stance is both socially constructed and treated as fact by our participants. The second feature is *positioning*. We examine how our participants position themselves towards the 'native English speaker', both affectively and in terms of power relations. The third feature is *mis/alignment*. Here we compare our participants' stances with stances they infer and expect from others. Although we only learn of others' stances from our participants' perspective, they are key to our participants' own second-order stance-taking, and thus have

strong analytical value. Being dialogic and performative in nature, stance is not transparent and must be inferred (Jaffe, 2009). We had to be careful in our interpretations, taking into account researcher positionality, the potential stakes for our participants and limitations in information about the broader context in which they took their stances. We aimed to track prominent, relatively stable (habitual) stances, checking that those selected were not fleeting but represented a 'stance style' (Jaffe, 2009).

The analysis was a continuous process following each element of data gathering. It was limited to utterances related to the 'native English speaker' as an object of stance. In every interview, topics from previous interviews were included to check if the interviewees shared similar reflections or sought to contradict, adjust or build on those of the others. They were asked for additional comments when inconsistencies appeared, or when the pattern differed from the others. Florence, the main interviewee, was an active partner throughout the analytical process. She read the transcripts and preliminary analyses and her comments showed she understood the research as a means of discovering information relevant to her work experience. Her dedication was evidenced by her openness to discussing difficult topics and her willingness to reflect deeply on her sociolinguistic status. The data collection design meant the other participants did not have as much time for reflection, and their memories had faded since their traineeships had concluded, but they often related to Florence's observations. This helped to identify patterns common to the experience of 'native English speakers' in this workplace.

6 | RESULTS

Having described our methodology, we proceed to the results of our analysis. We seek to determine how ascription of the 'native English speaker' label shapes the work experience of people in temporary junior positions in a multilingual EU institution. To do so, we examine the three aspects of our participants' stances towards the construct of the 'native English speaker': the object of stance, stance positioning and misalignment of stances. In examining these points, we especially attend to how our participants' situation of mixed privilege and precarity influences their stance towards the 'native English speaker' in the workplace.

6.1 | 'Native English speaker' as the object of stance

The 'native English speaker' was treated by our participants as a natural, uncontested social fact. They associated it with a *geopolitical affiliation* but did not mention the same countries. The Irish and Maltese interviewees saw the 'native English speaker' as a phenomenon encompassing more than one state. In contrast, the two British interviewees perceived the 'native English speaker' as linked to Britain (which they often equated to England, in line with their own national origins).

For all interviewees, it was necessary to cross national borders to realise that a 'native English speaker' status was salient, it making no sense to think of oneself as a 'native English speaker' at home. Aligning with Bourdieu's (2001) model of competition on the linguistic market, our participants saw their 'native-ness' as a *socially valued label* assigned when working abroad. They felt they had a competitive advantage and had been selected for their 'native English speaker' status. In reality, this is unlikely, as the selection principle for EU institution traineeships is merit having regard to geographical balance (EPSO—European Personnel Selection Office, 2005). Nevertheless, they were convinced that the unit particularly appreciated 'native English speakers', which may conceivably have influenced their assignment to it after recruitment. Ben expresses his sense of being selected for this reason in the extract below:

Extract 1⁵

B: I thought- I felt that I kind of- it became clear to me that [the fact I was a “native English speaker”] was the main (.) reason [for getting the job] and I probably hadn't even thought of it as much of a skill?

Like as being a “native English speaker”

Like I think I do have a good level of language

I try to use (..) like ah language well um and I- I enjoy writing and editing, things like this but (..) just the fact that just that being a “native English speaker” that was kind of like a skill in itself...

Ben indicates that he separates his actual language skills (‘I think I do have a good level of language’) from the ‘native English speaker’ label (‘being a native English speaker that was like a skill in itself’). This is how all participants approached the ‘native English speaker’ construct—as disconnected from their individual language skills. This discrepancy is salient for the process of linguistic commodification, in which the employee is stripped of their individual characteristics and transformed into a generic language resource buyable in the labour market under the label ‘native English speaker’. Since these ‘native’ linguistic skills are constructed as inherently present in every citizen of the nation-state, the employees’ actual quality of language skills is obscured and no longer a personal mark of distinction. These skills need not be provided by a professional specifically paid for this purpose, thereby fuelling linguistic banalisation. Indeed, when the interviewees reflected on what linguistic performance actually distinguished ‘natives’ from ‘non-natives’, the ambiguity and questionable value of the ‘native English speaker’ construct was exposed. While ‘non-natives’ were reportedly able to keep up with the ‘natives’ in language practices at work, the crucial ‘native’ aspect was the perceived instinctive ability of a ‘native English speaker’ to refrain from making ‘huge/terrible’ mistakes. Nevertheless, repeatedly asked, none of our participants could recall encountering any ‘detrimental’ mistakes at the workplace, or give an example of one. They rather referred to the potential social consequences of breaching a linguistic norm, such as being laughable, making the unit look bad, causing someone to lose their job, etc. In effect, a ‘non-native’ English text adjusted by a ‘native English speaker’ had symbolic rather than linguistic value; it had the ideological stamp of approval of a ‘native English speaker’.

We can identify the interviewees' first reflections on the process of linguistic commodification and banalisation of their individual linguistic performance in the way they clearly separated their language skills from their definition of the ‘native English speaker’, accompanied by an underlying negative affective evaluation. Faced with this situation, they had to choose which stance positions to adopt in response.

6.2 | Stance positioning

Among a variety of more fleeting discursive positions, our participants repeatedly took two stable positions. The first was constructing the ‘native English speaker’ as a *valuable language resource* ‘used’ for the good of the team, ‘providing’ English. This was sometimes accompanied by a positive affective evaluation of this status as ‘prestigious’, embedded in neoliberal ideologies linked to linguistic commodification and the presumed global superiority of English. They saw the tedious nature

of their proofreading tasks as balanced by positive recognition from their superiors, and approached it as a form of 'noblesse oblige' (Bourdieu, 2001). They all noted that the head of the unit had a habit of celebrating the presence of 'native English speakers' at work. Kate comments on this as follows:

Extract 2

K: You're being kind of a called on by the superior as- as the (..) kind of saving the day moment because (..) like we need this it's not something that is just there and we make use of it at times but it's something essential for- for the- for the- for the- for the wellbeing so to speak linguistic wellbeing of the unit.

Kate expresses the prestige she embodies in this role from the perspective of the 'non-native English speaking' unit ('we'), addressing the imaginary 'native English speaker' first as 'you' ('you're being kind of [...] called on') and later as 'this' and 'it' ('we need this', 'it's something essential'). This depersonalisation of the 'native English speaker', while here expressed as a positive affective evaluation of 'its' useful presence in the workplace, was a recurrent theme. Often, the participants associated this with a more negative affective evaluation, involving being 'pigeonholed', as Florence put it:

Extract 3

F: ... it became clear that ah what- what- people wanted from me ahm (..) at work and- that was being an English speaker you know doing (..) a "native English-speaking" role as a result.

Um and um I was maybe feeling slightly pigeonholed by that?

Like as in it felt quite limiting

Using the same words as Ben in extract 1 ('it became clear'), Florence signals a realisation that simply 'being an English speaker' was highly valued at work, but she distances herself from this construct, framing it as a 'role' that others wanted her to play. Both Ben and Florence claimed that excessive emphasis on the 'native English speaker' as a resource narrowed their presence to a mere representation of English at the workplace, rather than an individual with a range of skills and attributes. Ben expressed this as follows:

Extract 4

B: So (..) I don't really know how I felt about that at the time? Because I'd like- I'd like to think that it was (..) my experience and my studies (..) my (..) professional experience to that date.

Ben's positioning implies regret ('I'd like to think') that his individuality was erased by something he had not even considered a skill (see also extract 1). Transformation of an individual person into a mere linguistic resource constitutes linguistic commodification and is one of the salient 'native English speaker' effects in our research.

Reflecting on the practical implications of their positioning as a valuable resource, three participants referred to the unexpected limitation of their potentially multilingual experience to active work in English only. Florence, Ben and Lucy had all hoped to practice their strongest foreign language

working in the EU institution. For Ben and Florence, this was French, and for Lucy it was German (Florence also knew basic Portuguese). In practice, none of them had the opportunity to use these languages. In Extracts 5 and 6 below, Lucy and Ben extend their position of a valuable resource to a *monolingual* English resource, accompanied by an affective evaluation of disappointment:

Extract 5

L: It's difficult and it's really frustrating and it makes it so hard to learn anything

Uhm (.) and then eventually I do think it just- like it just made me lazy because I was like (.) well (.) I won't even bother trying because you know they're just going to switch to English anyway.

Extract 6

B: That [using French at work] would have been quite a good opportunity to do in a professional path that I didn't really happen to have because everything just goes back to English.

Like Florence feeling 'pigeonholed', Lucy and Ben express disappointment that their 'native English speaker' status worked against their aspirations of personal and professional linguistic progress, leaving them feeling demotivated and restricted to an 'English bubble'. Gearing and Roger (2018) observed a similar pattern, describing the unwanted monolingual life of 'native English speakers' in Korea as an 'English cocoon'. This positioning appears to be embedded in the ideology of 'elite multilingualism', representing a desired personal development towards a multilingual status that would serve as an 'access code to a local, national or global perceived elite (way of life)' (Barakos & Selleck, 2019, p. 362). As a result of their disappointment, Lucy, Ben and Florence went so far as to talk about themselves as 'monolingual', although they had to know other languages to get the traineeship.

Kate provides an exemplary contrast in this regard. While she personally constructed herself as a 'native English speaker', she inferred the stance of her colleagues as constructing her primarily as 'bilingual (and) Maltese'. This reveals the ideologies of linguistic nationalism inherent in the 'native English speaker' construct. The practical effect was that, while Ben and Kate felt they had comparable linguistic skills, Kate was spared the proofreading tasks most of the time. Meanwhile, her skills in English enabled her to enjoy comfort and social recognition at work:

Extract 7

K: I had the best of both worlds(.) so (.) it was- it was perfect for me because I had- had- I had (laughing) kind of the status but (.) didn't have the burden as much

Kate did not resist the positioning she inferred from her colleagues because the effects were favourable. While tasks assigned to the 'native English speaker' were presented as a consequence of privilege, the tasks themselves were best avoided. In this extract, Kate also implies—from the fleeting position of an outsider, since she otherwise participated in the interview as a confidently self-ascribed 'native English speaker'—that the legitimate (Bourdieu, 2001) 'native English speakers' inhabit 'another world' in the workplace. Given that other Maltese and Italian speakers were present in the unit at that time, and one of

the projects was running in Italian, Kate used Italian and Maltese at work, as well as English. Thus, unlike the other trainees, Kate was able to exist in both monolingual and multilingual worlds.

The second salient position adopted by the participants was that of an *ultimate linguistic authority* responsible for the quality of English language outputs. This invokes language ideologies attributing the highest level of language skills to the 'native English speaker' from particular nation-states where English is dominant. This perceived 'native speaker' authority is embedded not only in observable patterns linked to sociohistorical context but also in a 'culture of the imagination' (Kramsch, 1998, p. 8). When it came to vertical employee–superior relationships, the interviewees acceded to these language ideologies affording them power over the linguistic outputs of the 'non-natives'. This made sense within the framework they used to define the 'native English speaker' and their ultimate linguistic authority was never openly questioned by the permanent staff (although a text proofread by a 'native English speaker' was occasionally adjusted by a senior). The participants experienced this superior positioning of 'native English speakers' as a key source of prestige. It was more complicated in the context of horizontal relationships between trainees, however, where it could induce competitiveness. The participants' stance positions on the sociolinguistic authority of 'native English speakers' were typically followed by recollections of either friendly sharing and swapping of tasks between trainees (in Ben and Kate's case) or painful interpersonal conflict (in Florence and Lucy's case, as discussed further below).

Florence distanced herself from the position of ultimate linguistic authority over English from the outset. In response to the first author's drawings, she refused the hierarchy represented by metaphors of a king and a climber making a victory gesture on a mountain top, leaving other climbers behind, with this explanation:

Extract 8

F: I wouldn't see it in terms of (.) being the most powerful- as more than everyone (.) rather like as turning the same direction. It's like- which is like- (.) I see that as a turn- (..) like everyone turning the same (voice fading out)

R: /Mhm/

F: /direction/

Florence positions herself here as simply a team member, not personally having power but aligning with the ideology of English as a powerful language. This attempt to distinguish her personal 'native English speaker' power from the power she attributes to the English language was a recurring theme in her interview and will be discussed further below. Florence's egalitarian stance may be an attempt to deal with the incongruence of her high status of 'native English speaker' and her low status of trainee. She commented that her 'native English speaker' status led to collegial relationships being cast aside in an atmosphere of competition, in which the advantage of her position of ultimate linguistic authority became a downright disadvantage:

Extract 9

F: (..) I didn't see it [the "native English speaker" status] as um (.) something that could be seen as a (..) competitive aspect

Um (.) and then (..) or (.) the- that would be something that could be- (..) kind of work with me but also work against me...

In this extract, Florence does not identify with the 'native English speaker', using 'it' to distance herself from the object of stance, like Kate in extract 2. Florence attributes agency to the 'native English speaker', stepping between her and her 'non-native English speaker' colleagues, working both 'with' her and 'against' her.

Lucy also sought to avoid positioning as an ultimate authority over English. In this context, both she and Florence referenced the ideology of linguistic 'integration'. Lucy observed:

Extract 10

L: I think that people already have a bad view of English people not integrating (.) and I don't think Brexit has helped. So I think I was just conscious of- I don't want to you know kind of live up to the sort of horrendous stereotype that people have.

Lucy's stance enacts a counterposition to a stereotypical stance she expected people in continental Europe to take towards the 'native English speaker'. Florence took a similar position, referring to her perception of a typical British aversion to learning languages, from which she distanced herself. They both claimed they consciously tried not to assert linguistic dominance or 'preach English' in the workplace, to avoid giving credence to the stereotype of English people abroad who made no effort to 'integrate'. While this stance did not have an explicit grounding in this workplace, Lucy and Florence drew on it repeatedly in their reasoning and interpretation of language practices, as we show in the next section. As the two English trainees, Lucy and Florence seemed particularly invested in constructing their personal identity as 'cosmopolitan' (Garrido, 2020) in contrast to the stereotype of the 'monolingual English abroad'. Neither denounced the imagined 'native speaker' authority as such but rather positioned themselves as the 'cosmopolitan' type of 'native English speaker' who does not *claim* a 'native speaker' authority built upon notions of linguo-cultural 'authenticity' and legitimacy (Kramsch, 1998).

6.3 | Misalignments of stances

In this final section, we analyse a pattern of misalignment linked to the power position of the 'native English speaker' in the workplace. The context is Lucy and Florence's distress that their Spanish-speaking fellow trainees often spoke Spanish in their presence (in different teams at different times), even though they did not understand Spanish and could not participate in the interaction. Florence considered learning Spanish to be able to participate more fully at work, but concluded that she had limited time and motivation to do so, the internship being only a few months long and her perceiving no need for Spanish in the future. Despite feeling surprised and disappointed by the use of Spanish in their presence, Florence and Lucy were reluctant to ask their colleagues to switch to English. In terms of stance analysis, they first imagined what stance their Spanish-speaking colleagues would take if they asked for English. Concluding that their colleagues would consider them stereotypical 'native English speakers' who expect everybody to speak English, they decided not to request English in favour of constructing their 'cosmopolitan self'. Lucy prioritised this identity unconditionally, renouncing English and communication altogether, and allowing her colleagues to finish the project in Spanish. Florence resisted abandoning her participation so easily and hinted to her colleagues via several days of passive-aggressive behaviour that she found the situation uncomfortable. When this

failed, she staged a scene within her superior's earshot in which she theatrically pushed for English. Going by Florence's account, she was marginalised in this situation, but the reaction she recounts also draws on a position of privilege, of which she may not have been fully cognisant. She did not want to be seen as a monolingual 'native English speaker', but she did want her colleagues to speak to her in English, which she viewed as showing they valued her as a colleague. She considered her co-workers' potential motivations for resisting English, that is, that they might be uncomfortable working in this language, but she nevertheless expected them to limit their Spanish in the interest of a good working relationship. She leant on her privileged position as a 'native English speaker' in demanding English from her colleagues in front of her superior.

Both Lucy and Florence experienced exclusion and a loss of harmonious relationships as a result of their actions. Florence summarised her feelings in a metaphor she drew of her 'native English speaker' status at work, shown in Figure 1.

Florence commented on this drawing as follows:

Extract 11

F: That it's in the Arctic (.) that- that's obvious. (smiling)

And then you have like lots of (..) little bits almost like they would fit into it that they break off

R: Mhm!

F: And they're like just like around (.) but floating. (...)

Uhm and it's like (.) the polar bear has the biggest part of the ice (..)



FIGURE 1 'Lonely polar bear' by Florence

..

F: Maybe that (.) that (.) that as in- (..)

You hold the key (.) in a way (.) within the wor- within (..) this workplace

R: Mhm

F: you know in terms of like the “native English-speaking” (.) role

Um (.) and that gives you like a bigger (..) part of the ice

But (sigh) (.) it's more what people perceive- that- that people perceive that you have a bigger part of the ice (.) it's not necessarily what (..) a lot of the time what I would perceive is - that I have the biggest part of the ice (..) like I feel that I- it was like- I'm standing on it but in terms of what I view around me (.) like in terms of ice- like I see myself as being (..) almost separate from the others.

R: Mhm

F: As in that I see all the broken bits of ice around me (...)

But (..) I don't know (.) maybe (...) that in the end that's not necessarily what other people who are viewing at me see

We see that Florence separates the power she attributes to the English language (the ‘biggest piece of ice’) from the power of the speaker, who is perceived as ‘[having] a bigger part of the ice’ but is actually merely ‘standing on it’. She positions herself as privileged by her status as a ‘native English speaker’ but simultaneously as lonely and disconnected from her colleagues, as she gazes at the ‘broken bits of ice around [her]’. She misaligns with the stance she infers from her colleagues, indicating a disconnection between her own feelings and ‘what other people who are viewing at me see’ (sic). From her phrasing and sad tone of voice, we infer that she finds herself in an isolated social position that she directly links to language ideologies accompanying the construct of the ‘native English speaker’. She infers a stance among her colleagues of the overriding importance of English, but she partially misaligns with this stance—dissociating this perceived importance from her individual power in the workplace. Her affective evaluation hints that she wishes to be a part of friendlier horizontal relations (a member of the workplace community) or at least have the ambiguity of her status recognised (gain some sympathy, maybe also from the researcher). This highlights the main thread winding through our participants' accounts—the wish to be treated as a whole person with an individual skill set, rather than an objectified representative of the English language. Florence was not alone in her stance towards the ‘native English speaker’ construct. Lucy later chose this drawing as the only one that aligned with her own stance towards her ‘native English speaker’ status, particularly referring to the feeling of loneliness linked to language use at work.

7 | CONCLUSION

This article has explored how the experience of being constructed as a 'native English speaker' shapes the work experience of people in temporary junior positions in a multilingual EU institution. In examining this question in a workplace context, we depart from the predominant focus on education as a context for investigating 'native speakers'. Our methodology of longitudinal interviews and drawings enabled us to obtain rich data on our participants' experiences, which we analysed using the framework of sociolinguistic stance (Jaffe, 2009) from a discursive perspective. We have gained insights into the motivations and rationalisations behind everyday sociolinguistic practices at this workplace, and demonstrated a link between the micro-level of individual experience and macro-level processes of employment precarity and linguistic commodification. The lens of stance was especially helpful in accessing the complexities of the trainees' ambivalent status, showing how they at times associated themselves with the 'native English speaker' construct and at other times distanced themselves from it, and how their positionings drew on more broadly circulating language ideologies. Our innovative incorporation of the visual research method of drawings alongside interview data within a stance analysis framework proved particularly fruitful for identifying similarities across participants, accessing deeper and more personal reflections (de Bres, 2017), and exploring the broader ideological implications of our social actor-centred perspective.

The key novelty of our findings lies in the critical angle we have brought to bear on the paradox of precarity versus privilege experienced by our participants. They experienced significant 'native speaker' effects (Doerr, 2009) from being constructed as 'native English speakers' at work. Their discursive distancing from the 'native English speaker' construct is explained by the complexities inherent in their attempts to manage the relationship between their 'native English speaker' status and their precarious position in the workplace. On the one hand, as self-avowed neoliberal citizens they were drawn to construct the 'native English speaker' as a valuable resource, assigning them symbolic value in the labour market and enhancing their prestige within the institution. On the other hand, the ideologies associated with the 'native English speaker' construct exposed them to tedious linguistic tasks, objectified them as linguistic skills rather than people, and limited their work experience to an 'English bubble'. This clashed with their aspirations towards 'elite multilingualism' (Barakos & Selleck, 2019) as another neoliberal resource, leaving them frustrated in their attempts to construct a 'cosmopolitan self' (Garrido, 2020) in contrast to the stereotypical monolingual 'native English speaker'. Their discursive positioning led them to place the 'native English speaker' in a hierarchy above the rest of the team, aligning with the ideology of the superior importance of English over other languages, thereby raising their personal status in the institution. They constructed their position of an ultimate linguistic authority as functioning in their favour when it came to the appreciation of their superiors, but as negatively affecting relationships with fellow trainees. The interviewees from Ireland and Malta were able to downplay their prestigious position to foster cooperative and egalitarian relations with their non-'native English speaking' colleagues. In contrast, the British participants, who more keenly felt the impact of monolingual ideologies, experienced conflict and exclusion, which they directly linked to their 'native English speaker' status. Being ascribed this status thus affords privilege, but also has costs. Our participants found themselves in a complex position balancing conflicting demands, with limited capacity or incentive to resist their objectification as 'native English speakers' and the consequent banalisation of their linguistic skills. The 'native English speaker' label backfired, as the language skills they offered seemed to become the banal result of being born and raised somewhere, and the actual linguistic quality of a text in English was trumped by the mere fact that a 'native English speaker' had checked it.

What, then, can we conclude from our study in relation to the interaction between precarity and ‘native English speakers’? The scenario at this workplace can be framed as a case of banalisation of the language skills of precarious employees, in which the institution benefits from the provision of English at the expense of the interests of ‘native English speaking’ employees. From this perspective, it is clear that ‘native speakers’ of a globally dominant language like English are susceptible to the negative effects of linguistic commodification, alongside speakers of less dominant languages, at least under certain work conditions. This characterisation, however, misrepresents the privileged position of our trainees, who, despite the challenges they faced at work, claimed to be satisfied with their traineeships, enjoyed their stay in Luxembourg, and went on to pursue further international positions in which their work experience may have contributed to their recruitment. Their ability to do so was likely partly due to the high value of the linguistic commodity they had at hand—their perceived ‘native English skills’—which, (crucially), along with their other professional skills, education and experience, put them in a position of privilege a far cry from that of other precarious language workers⁶.

The greatest negative effects in this case may not be the impact on the individuals involved but rather the part this scenario plays in the continued facilitation of the banalisation of language work, its relationship to labour precarity and the commodification of the ‘native speaker’ more broadly. Although it remains unclear how the apparent habit of securing a ‘native English speaker’ for this unit originated and how this is linked to official EU policies and unofficial practices, we believe it points to a broader pattern of the precarisation of language work in the EU. Within a neoliberal context, EU institutions have been pushed towards internal economisation by national states, just as entrepreneurs face financial pressure from their shareholders. The resultant cost-cutting includes transferring language work from structural positions to cheaper freelance workers (Kubota, 2011) or low-paid ‘native speakers’ (Duchêne, 2011; Heller, 2010; Kraft, 2020), which finds its end point in the ‘amateur’ language work of the ‘natives’. Beyond the EU context in particular, our results point to patterns that are likely to be relevant in many other workplaces where English (or another language) is ideologically elevated but simultaneously banalised to the point where securing a professional linguistic service is considered unnecessary.

The symbolic elevation of the ‘native English speaker’ is not only harmful to both ‘native English speakers’ and others in this workplace, it is just one more brick in the edifice of global English, which, in the larger scheme of things, will always benefit the few at the expense of the many⁷. In this respect, beyond the findings in relation to this particular case, our study more broadly suggests the perseverance of dominant language ideologies that elevate English over other languages, and the ‘native’ varieties above all. Such ideologies provide a weighty backdrop to the dynamics of particular institutions, even when not explicit in institutional policy. As individually precarious ‘native English speakers’ struggle to offset the negative consequences of their sociolinguistic status by the prestige it affords them, they reinforce the golden cage for those who follow them. Broadening out from the existing critical examination of the ‘native speaker’ construct in education, further research into the perspective of other ‘native speakers’ in comparable workplaces (both within and outside the EU) and other unpaid ‘native’ language work would be useful, to further examine how linguistic advantage and disadvantage interact under particular conditions of work.

ORCID

Veronika Lovrits  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4831-8785>

ENDNOTES

- ¹ While we generally use the term ‘construct’ to refer to our object of analysis (the ‘native English speaker’), we use ‘label’ when emphasising the ascription of this construct to a specific person or group of people and ‘status’ when we consider power relations linked to the construct.
- ² An idea emerged in the interviews that the ‘native English speakers’ were placed in the unit to make the English of ‘non-native’ colleagues more ‘authentic’. A text was not considered professional if it contained breaches of standard linguistic norms. We inferred from our participants that the head of the unit was particularly concerned to avert criticism of English language output from above in the institution.
- ³ All names are pseudonyms and some details of the participants’ profiles have been changed to ensure anonymity.
- ⁴ These metaphors included: a missionary; a king in armour; a knight leading an army fighting a three-headed dragon/ language mistake; an umbrella shielding people from rain; a tourist visiting the EU; a person relaxing in the gym while others exercise; a person deciding which direction to take following their own interests versus those of others; a person reaching a mountaintop, leaving others behind; and a group of mules, only one bearing a load of papers.
- ⁵ Transcription conventions are as follows:

?	= rising intonation
.	= falling intonation
(<i>laugh</i>)	= paralinguistic features
<u>this</u>	= stress
(.) (..) (...) (5s)	= pauses of varying length
[]	= implicit reference
//	= overlapping speech
-	= truncated speech
R:	= researcher
F:	= Florence (British), the main interviewee
L:	= Lucy (British)
B:	= Ben (Irish)
K:	= Kate (Maltese)

- ⁶ In other situations, ‘native English speaker’ workers are clearly exploited (Codó, 2018).
- ⁷ Kraft (2019, p. 13) observes of a Polish language broker on a Norwegian construction site: ‘the broker’s struggle to reach a position of privilege from a position of precarity enables the continued precarity of the majority of migrant workers’.

REFERENCES

- Angouri, J., & Miglbauer, M. (2014). ‘And then we summarise in English for the others’: The lived experience of the multilingual workplace. *Multilingua*, 33, 147–172. <https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2014-0007>
- Barakos, E. (2019). Multilingual language trainers as language workers: A discourse-ethnographic investigation. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 19, 184–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2018.1487971>
- Barakos, E., & Selleck, C. H. (2019). Elite multilingualism: Discourses, practices, and debates. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 40, 361–374. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2018.1543691>
- Bargiela-Chiappini, F. (2009). *The handbook of business discourse*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.

- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (2001). *Sociální konstrukce reality*. Praha, Czechia: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury. (Orig.: The Social construction of reality. 1966. Anchor Book).
- Block, D. (2017). Political economy in applied linguistics research. *Language Teaching*, 50, 32–64. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444816000288>
- Bourdieu, P. (2001). *Le Langage et le Pouvoir Symbolique*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. (Orig.: Language and Symbolic Power/Ce que parler veut dire. 1991. Harvard University Press).
- Codó, E. (2018). The intersection of global mobility, lifestyle and ELT work: A critical examination of language instructors' trajectories. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 18, 436–450. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2018.1482905>
- Coupland, J., Holmes, J., & Coupland, N. (1998). Negotiating sun use: Constructing consistency and managing inconsistency. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 30, 699–721. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(98\)00055-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(98)00055-1)
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Davies, A. (2006). The Native speaker in applied linguistics. In A. Davies & C. Elder (Eds.), *The handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 431–450). New York, NY: Blackwell Publishing.
- De Bres, J. (2017). Singing is the first thing that came into my head: Emotions and language maintenance among Filipino migrants in New Zealand. In M. Marra & P. Warren (Eds.), *Linguist at work. Festschrift for Janet Holmes* (pp. 137–158). Wellington, New Zealand: VUW Press.
- Doerr, N. M. (Ed.). (2009). *The native speaker concept: Ethnographic investigations of native speaker effects*. Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter.
- Du Bois, J. W. (2007). The stance triangle. In R. Englebretson (Ed.), *Stancetaking in discourse. Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction* (pp. 139–182). Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Duchêne, A. (2011). Néolibéralisme, inégalités sociales et plurilinguisme : L'exploitation des ressources langagières et des locuteurs. *Langage Et Société*, 136(2), 81–108.
- Englebretson, R. (Ed.). (2001). *Stancetaking in discourse*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- EPSO—European Personnel Selection Office. (2005). *Careers at the European institutions*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Fredriksson, R., Barner-Rasmussen, W., & Piekkari, R. (2006). The multinational corporation as a multilingual organization: The notion of a common corporate language. *Corporate Communications*, 11, 406–423. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280610713879>
- Garrido, M. R. (2020). Language investment in the trajectories of mobile, multilingual humanitarian workers. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 17(1), 62–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1682272>
- Garrido, M. R., & Sabaté-Dalmau, M. (2020). Transnational trajectories of multilingual workers: Sociolinguistic approaches to emergent entrepreneurial selves. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 17(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2019.1682245>
- Gearing, N., & Roger, P. (2018). 'I'm never going to be part of it': Identity, investment and learning Korean. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 39, 155–168. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2017.1323909>
- Gunnarsson, B. L. (2014). Multilingualism in European workplaces. *Multilingua*, 33(1-2), 11–33. <https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2014-0002>
- Haddington, P. (2004). Stance taking in news interviews. *SKY Journal of Linguistics*, 17, 101–142.
- Heller, M. (2010). The commodification of language. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 39, 101–114. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.104951>
- Horner, K., & Weber, J.-J. (2008). The language situation in Luxembourg. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 9, 69–128. <https://doi.org/10.2167/cilp130.0>
- Hornidge, A. K. (2013). Wissen-fokussierende Wirklichkeiten und ihre kommunikative Konstruktion. In R. Keller, J. Reichertz, & H. Knoblauch (Eds.), *Kommunikativer Konstruktivismus* (pp. 207–234). Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.
- Jaffe, A. (Ed.). (2009). *Stance: Sociolinguistic perspectives*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Kabel, A. (2009). Native-speakerism, stereotyping and the collusion of applied linguistics. *System*, 37, 12–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.09.004>
- Kankaanranta, A., Karhunen, P., & Louhiala-Salminen, L. (2018). “English as corporate language” in the multilingual reality of multinational companies. *Multilingua*, 37, 331–351. <https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2017-0077>
- Kärkkäinen, E. (2003). *Epistemic stance in English conversation: A description of its interactional functions, with a focus on 'I think'*. *Pragmatics and beyond, new series*, 115. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins.

- Kasimir, S. (2018). Precarity. In F. Stein S. Lazar M. Candea H. Diembier J. Robbins A. Sanchez & R. Stach (Eds.), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, (pp. 1–14). <https://doi.org/10.29164/18precarity>
- Kayman, M. A. (2004). The state of English as a global language: Communicating culture. *Textual Practice*, 18, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236032000140131>
- Kraft, K. (2020). Trajectory of a language broker: Between privilege and precarity. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 17(1), 80–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1682256>
- Kramsch, C. J. (1998). *Language and culture*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Kroskrity, P. V. (2004). Language Ideologies. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 496–5517). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Kubota, R. (2011). Questioning linguistic instrumentalism: English, neoliberalism, and language tests in Japan. *Linguistics and Education*, 22, 248–260. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2011.02.002>
- Liu, L., & Stevenson, M. D. (2013). A cross-cultural analysis of stance in disaster news reports. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 36, 197–220. <https://doi.org/10.1075/aral.36.2.05liu>
- Lønsmann, D. (2017). A catalyst for change: Language socialization and norm negotiation in a transient multilingual workplace. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 27, 326–343. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jola.12162>
- McEntee-Atalianis, L. J. (2013). Stance and metaphor: Mapping changing representations of (organizational) identity. *Discourse and Communication*, 7, 319–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481313494498>
- Pennycook, A. (1994). *The cultural politics of English as international language*. London, UK: Longman.
- Pennycook, A. (1997). *English and the discourses of colonialism*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Phillipson, R. (1993). *Linguistic imperialism* (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Rampton, B. (2003). Hegemony, social class and stylization. *Pragmatics*, 13, 49–83.
- STATEC. (2018). *Luxembourg in figures 2018*. Luxembourg: STATEC.
- Swan, A., Aboshiha, P., & Holliday, A. (2015). *(En)countering native-speakerism: Global perspectives*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Urciuoli, B. (2008). Skills and selves in the new workplace. *American Ethnologist*, 35, 211–228. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2008.00031.x>
- van der Worp, K., Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2018). Multilingual professionals in internationally operating companies: Tensions in their linguistic repertoire? *Multilingua*, 37, 353–375. <https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2017-0074>
- Wei, L., & Hua, Z. (2013). Translanguaging identities: Creating transnational space through flexible multilingual practices amongst Chinese university students in the UK. *Applied Linguistics*, 34, 516–535.
- Wodak, R. (2013). Multilingualism in EU institutions. Between policymaking and implementation. In I. de Saint-Georges & J.-J. Weber (Eds.), *Multilingualism and multimodality: Current challenges for educational studies* (pp. 81–99). Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense.
- Wu, R. J. R. (2003). *Stance in Talk*. Amsterdam, NL: John Benjamins.
- Yildiz, Y. (2012). *Beyond the mother tongue: The postmonolingual condition*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press.

How to cite this article: Lovrits V, de Bres J. Prestigious language, pigeonholed speakers: Stances towards the ‘native English speaker’ in a multilingual European institution. *J Sociolinguistics*. 2020;00:1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12431>