

Alan Davies: Ostensive Views, Other Views and Native Speakerism, and the Implications of the Latter for English Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This paper sets out to answer two questions by characterizing and deconstructing Alan Davies's seminal views and concepts - especially his ostensive views and his native speakerism - within the context of applied linguistics. Arguing that these are some of Davies's seminal views and concepts, it offers a philosophical framing of his ostensive views and his other views by maintaining that they entail elements of philosophizing and fragments of the postmodern turn in the manner in which they are articulated in relation to applied linguistics. The paper also argues that Davies's views of native speakerism are constructed within a classical binary perspective and, thus, can be construed to be fostering othering non-native speakers. In addition, it situates native speakerism within de-coloniality, epistemic break and de-linking, arguing that a de-colonial framework lends itself well to critiquing native speakerism. On this basis, it contends that there is a need to reconceptualize the notion of native speakerism that resonates with a de-colonial perspective. Lastly, the paper offers implications de-coloniality has for ELT.

INTRODUCTION

In his life time, Alan Davies became a pioneer, a ground breaker, a game-changer, and an influencer in the field of English language teaching (ELT). There is no gainsaying that at one point, he epitomized this sub-field of applied linguistics almost in the same way as Noam Chomsky and Michael Halliday did regarding their respective disciplinary areas. In fact, since the inception of an academic and scholarly career spanning 58 years (1957-2015) (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2015), and throughout the historical trajectory of this career, Alan Davies's ideas in applied linguistics were, in many respects, revolutionary and ground-breaking.

To a legion of his colleagues, his students, and his followers, and to most applied linguists, his views on language testing for English for specific purposes and for English for academic purposes, for example, and some of his conceptual devices such as the native speaker, need no mentioning or exposition. The reason for articulating this sentiment is that, not only are such views and concepts what this paper refers to as his seminal views and concepts, but they have become, I argue, immortalized in the field of applied linguistics in varying degrees. This does mean that such views

and concepts did not/do not court criticism, or did not/do not stir controversy. Far from that! Nonetheless, there is no denying that on a broad canvass pertaining to applied linguistics as a discipline, Davies's name features prominently. For instance, Kaplan (2009, p. 167) points out that since its nascence, applied linguistics boasts two discrete histories: one North American, and another British. He also asserts that even though the two versions followed distinct evolutionary trajectories, Davies was one of the scholars instrumental in the genesis of the British version. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, one need not lose sight of the nexus (and cross-pollination of ideas) existing between the two traditions of applied linguistics at various scholarly platforms and fora. Davies (2007, p. 120) highlights this nexus, subsumed under institutional applied linguistics, when pinpointing that the journal, Applied Linguistics, is jointly produced, edited and sponsored by the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) and the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL).

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, applied linguistics boasts two histories: the North American and the British histories. One could argue that these are also its

two legacies. Nonetheless, this historical trajectory does not include any of the former colonies, especially those for which English serves as one of the official languages, or for which English is one of the languages of teaching and learning, or those for which English is a medium of instruction both as a relic of the colonial past and as a continuing linguistic neo-colonialism in these countries. This historical characterization of applied linguistics is ironic in that it omits all former British colonies for which ELT was targeted as its direct beneficiaries. This historical framing, which omits former British colonies, is critical given that there are other permutations of ELT such as Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) whose intended beneficiaries are former British colonies (Basu, 2013; Castañeda-Londoño, 2019; Hsu, 2017; Migge & Légise, 2007; Pennycook, 1998; Torres-Rocha, 2019).

Based on the foregoing points, the main purpose of this paper is to characterize Alan Davies's ostensive views and his concept of the native speaker and to draw the implications of the native speaker for ELT from a de-colonial perspective. To this end, the paper sets out to answer the following questions:

- How did Alan Davies characterize his ostensive views and his concept of the native speaker?
- How can the concept of the native speaker be deconstructed and what are its implications for ELT from a de-colonial perspective?

OSTENSIVE VIEWS AND OTHER VIEWS

Merriam-Webster: Dictionary and Thesaurus (n.d.) defines the word, ostensive, as, "of, relating to, or constituting definition by exemplifying the thing or quality being defined" (also see Rhodes, 1985, p. 6). In this respect, I hazard to say that most, if not all dictionary definitions of this concept, are likely to be along the same lines. However, there are extended uses of this concept as in "ostensive (ongoing) learning context" (Tomasello & Kruger, 1992, p. 311; also see Lyn & Savage-Rumbaugh, 2000, p. 257), and in "ostensive mode of teaching" (Rhodes, 1985, p. 3; also see Pandit, 1991, p. 133; Sghaier et al., 2016, p. 501). Added to this, is a Wittgensteinian musing of ostensive definition, which posits that words serve as definitional and semantic conduits within a broader language game perspective and that, as such, words need to be explained before their definitions can be understood (Speaks, 2007). However, two points warrant foregrounding in respect of a Wittgensteinian ostension: ostension is neither better nor worse than using a word to explain a word itself; ostension operates either within prelinguistic grammar of activities (ostensive teaching), or within linguistic grammar (ostensive definition). The essence of this Wittgensteinian view of ostension is that there is no canonical articulation of meaning as the meaning of a word inheres in its use (Luntley, 2015; also see Wittgenstein, 1958).

Against this backdrop, Davies opined his ostensive definition within and with reference to the discipline of applied linguistics. In this regard, the following short quotation serves to provide a proper framing of this conceptual device:

What most introductions and collections try to do is to use applied linguistics concerns and activities in order to illustrate and then analyse what applied linguistics methods and purposes are ... This is the approach by ostensive definition: if you ... want to know about applied linguistics, 'look around you' (as the inscription on Wren's memorial in St Paul's Cathedral exhorts) (Davies, 2007, p. 1-2).

Wittgenstein's theorization of language, and especially his theorization of it in terms of language games, has nothing to do with how Davies conceptualized applied linguistics. One thing, his was theorizing language from the standpoint of philosophy of language which was not Davies's prime concern in theorizing applied linguistics, though at times he engaged in it. Another thing, Wittgenstein's language game theory has been appropriated in theorizing language from a postmodern viewpoint. One classic example of the latter is Lyotard's (1984) language game views articulated in *The Postmodern Condition: A report on knowledge*, which are modelled on Wittgenstein's language game theory (Lyotard, 1984; Lyotard & Thébaud, 1985; Peters, 1995). In this regard, it is worth highlighting that in his (2007) *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics: From Practice to Theory*, Davies mentions Lyotard (1984) four times, citing in particular, some aspects of Lyotardian postmodern theory (see Davies, 2007). Furthermore, some aspects of Wittgenstein's views as they relate primarily to words and their meanings, are perceived to have an aura of semantic contextualism (or of semantic relativism) (see Durante, 2016) and, by extension, an aura of postmodernism to them. The same sense of semantic contextualism manifests itself in certain sub-areas of applied linguistics such as composition studies (see Faigley, 1995) and language and text (see Melrose, 1996).

In this case, Davies's stance towards postmodern posturings in applied linguistics is known: he manifestly rejected, or was unapologetically suspicious of them as, for example, in the case of both critical applied linguistics (CAL) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) (see Davies, 2007; cf. Hult, 2008; Pennycook, 2001). Much as this is the case, I want to postulate that despite his dismissive stance against postmodernism and despite his having not been either a language philosopher or a postmodern theorist, there are quanta of philosophizing and fragments of a postmodern turn in some of the views articulated in certain instances of his works. This is particularly the case with his (2007) *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics: From Practice to Theory* (Davies, 2007). For example, his pronouncements about the ostensive views towards applied linguistics as framed in the foregoing quotation have a philosophical ring about them. The definitional polemics of what applied linguistics is or is not has been abundantly dealt with elsewhere (see Davies, 2007; Davies & Elder, 2004; Liddicoat, 2010; Pennycook, 2001, 2004; Spolsky, 2005), and the current paper does not want to rehash it. Suffice it to say that by calling for a delimitation of the discipline of applied linguistics through foregrounding certain ostensive (rational) methods of definition, while backgrounding other (anti-rational) methods of definition (see Davies, 2004; Davies & Elder, 2004; Pennycook, 2001),

Davies tends to play a philosophical game. By extension, his effort in this context entails some philosophizing.

In addition, the sentiments as articulated in the following quotation further exemplify an element of philosophizing and a fragment of a postmodern turn on his part:

In Chapter 6 we discuss the professionalising of applied linguistics, while in Chapter 7 we query how far current philosophical developments in the humanities and social sciences have affected applied linguistics and in particular how influential socio-cultural theory and the various ‘critical’ stances (e.g. critical applied linguistics, critical discourse analysis) are (Davies, 2007, p. 114).

The preceding quotation has some philosophical turn to it. First, one cannot meaningfully query a philosophical development in a given field of study that has a bearing on a given academic discipline without countering that with a relevant or alternative philosophical view. And just doing that - querying that a philosophical development has impacted a discipline - entails philosophizing, or least making counter philosophical postulates. This is what the afore-said quoted text presupposes. It instantiates, if anything at all, some philosophizing on the part of Davies (cf. Davies, 2007). The same applies to the last part of the quotation: one can successfully query how influential a given theory together with its related critical variants is, by engaging in or by offering a counter theory. Again doing so, involves both philosophizing and theorizing even if it is at a meta-philosophical or meta-theoretical level. Similarly, this endeavour represents some philosophizing on the part of Davies. But since critical stances such as CAL, CDA and critical pedagogy are inherently postmodern, or are postmodern by proxy, then, Davies’s endeavour here has a postmodern turn to it. As such, it typifies a fragment of a postmodern turn (cf. Davies, 2007).

With reference to CAL, especially, this postmodern turn by proxy, which also entails philosophizing is further evident in Davies’s sentiment that: “[c]ritical pedagogy, and more generally critical applied linguistics, represents a kind of postmodern version of critical discourse analysis” (Davies, 2007, p. 26). Whether critical pedagogy and CAL can be subsumed under each other (see Bernes & Matsuda, 2006; Photongsunan, 2006), or whether they can be regarded as two separate strands with a critical orientation (see Crookes, 2009), is something that cannot be adequately treated in the current paper. Of course, on the one hand, there are views that align themselves with the first position: that critical pedagogy and CAL are implicated in each other by paying allegiance to the critical tradition associated with neo-Marxism and critical theory (see Bernes & Matsuda, 2006; Canagarajah, 2005; Pennycook, 1990; cf. Rahimi & Sajed, 2014). On the other hand, there are views that adopt a stance resonating with the second position, and which contend that there are permutations of critical pedagogy. These views - and they are a constellation of them - actually embrace the notion of critical pedagogies because of the plural nature they attach to critical pedagogy (see Norton & Toohey, 2004). Additionally, they argue that certain strands of critical pedagogy have a Marxist/neo-Marxist orientation, while others do not (see

especially Crookes, 2009; cf. Norton & Toohey, 2004). That is, critical pedagogies do not share the same roots.

In this case, I align myself with the second position, for I believe, too, that there are different strands of critical pedagogy, and that CAL is one such strand. This leads to another postmodern turn by Davies implied in the last part of the foregoing quotation, about CAL being a postmodern version of CDA. This particular comparison entails both a quantum of philosophizing and a fragment of the postmodern turn. But what is particularly at stake in this philosophical assertion is its thrust: that CAL is a postmodern turn of CDA. This needs to be counterpoised with the quotation cited earlier on, part of which is: “how influential socio-cultural theory and the various ‘critical’ stances (e.g. critical applied linguistics, critical discourse analysis) are” (Davies, 2007, p. 114). If this is the case, then, none of the two can be a postmodern turn of the other as each constitutes a critical perspective of and a critical stance to language use on its own.

However, a quantum leap of philosophizing, which reflects an overt strand of philosophy of language, is evinced by Davies’s (2007) views on ethics as it pertains to applied linguistics. These views represent an instance of moral philosophy framed within language philosophy. Above all, it is moral philosophy as it applies to the discipline and profession of applied linguistics. The following statement encapsulates part of these views:

Ethics, the study of how we are to live, of right and wrong, also known as moral philosophy, has been called ‘the emperor of the social sciences’... Linguistic philosophy, concerned as it was with meaning rather than knowledge, queried the whole basis of ethics, maintaining that ethical statements were essentially circular (Davies, 2007, p. 122).

THE NATIVE SPEAKER OR NATIVE SPEAKERISM?

In addition to the points delineated in the preceding section, Davies needs to be remembered for his notion of *the native speaker*. This is more so because Davies is one of the scholars (see Davies, 1991, 2003; cf. Bonheim, 1998; Coulmas, 1981; Edwards, 2011; Holliday, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2012, 2016; Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 1992; Piller, 2001; Rampton, 1990) who made this notion gain global currency through his views and his writings about it. From the get-go, this notion together with his theorization of it, was likely to cause controversy and court polemics. In his 1991 seminal book, *The Native Speaker in Applied Linguistics*, he sets the tone by proposing three conceptual perspectives of the native speaker: the sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and theoretical linguistic perspectives. From the first perspective, the native speaker is framed as embodying more than simply communicating messages but entailing attitudes and politics as well. Psycholinguistically, native speakers differ from non-native speakers in the manner in which they approach language learning tasks. From a theoretical point of view, three forms of grammar help define the native speaker: idiolects, universal grammar, and the abstract linguistic competence. In this regard, it is the last of these types of grammar

that determines what constitutes the native speaker. There is an interplay between abstract linguistic competence and communicative competence: the latter enables the native speaker to utilize linguistic competence. For its part, communicative competence portrays the native speaker in terms of the ability to employ linguistic competence relevantly in various communicative situations (see Birdsong, 1993; Cf. Davies, 1991).

Within this tripartite conceptual framework, Davies offers descriptive differences between native and non-native *speakerness* throughout his book. One example of this differential description is: "There are indeed some features of native speakerness which can be acquired only in childhood" (1991, p. 80; cf. Legenhausen, 1994, pp. 281-282). And, the other is:

To be a native speaker means not being a nonnative speaker. Even if I cannot define a native speaker I can define a nonnative speaker negatively as someone who is not regarded by him/herself or by native speakers as a native speaker (1991, p. 167).

The first quotation reflects a common leitmotif running through much of second language acquisition literature which posits that certain native language features are amenable to acquisition within a designated critical age, beyond which they become impervious to acquisition. This differentiates between first and second language acquisition processes. A more pronounced, differential description is in the second quotation, which depicts a native speaker and a non-native speaker not only contrastingly, but also on a binary scale. But in this classical binarism, the scale of negativity is heavily loaded against the non-native speaker as he/she does not possess the native speaker's attributes. Reflecting on the same Davies's binary differentiation, Birdsong (1993, pp. 124-125) opines:

As exasperating and circular as this characterization may be, it underscores the knottiness of the problem. There are certain parallels in clinical psychology. Abnormality can be characterized more readily than normality; presumed normals codify normalcy and deviance, the former often as an absence of the latter; the definitions may result in Catch-22-type contradictions ...

It is this quintessential binarism between a native speaker and a non-native speaker that has attracted views that are split down the middle: those that support Davies's standpoint and those that oppose it. And, as characterized by Birdsong (1993) in the foregoing quotation, this binary view is not only provocative and circular, but it also embodies elements of clinical psychology. In this particular clinical psychological construction of the native speaker and the non-native speaker, the former is *the normal incarnate* while the latter is *the abnormal incarnate*. Later on, sensing the opposition to his constructing of the native speaker, Davies opted for this refined view:

My reading of the native speaker concept is that it represents both a reality (some people are native speakers of Language X and some are not) and a myth (the range of types of native speaker of Language X is so great that it is difficult not to include proficient second language

speakers, or native users as they have been called) (Kunanan, 2005, p. 48).

This refined view not only signalled a major tactical point of departure in Davies's conceptualization of the native speaker, it served as a launching pad for his (2003) new book, *The Native Speaker: Myth and Reality*, as well. In fact, the preceding quotation needs to be holistically seen in relation to the following:

I conclude that the concept of the native speaker is not a fiction but has the reality that 'membership', however informal, always gives. Therefore the native speaker is relied on to know what the score is, how things are done, because s/he carries the tradition, is the repository of 'the language' (Davies, 2003, p. 207).

So, what is refined (and new) is the juxtaposing of the real native speaker with the mythical native speaker. The native speaker is a reality in that there are real native speakers of English that exist out there in a real-world situation; but the native speaker is also a myth as there are other speakers of English who use it natively, but who do not speak it natively. A point of departure from the earlier theorization of the native speaker is the coinage of native users of English, and their inclusion in the native speaker realm. There may still be strong reservations about and vitriolic rebuffs and rebuttals of this refined conceptualization of the native speaker (see for example, Bonfiglio, 2013; Lowe, 2015; Mariño, 2011; Rajagopalan, 2007). However, a concession needs to be made that this retrofitted conceptualization represents a significant, even though not radical, jumping-off point from the *original native speaker*. Admittedly, there are still some criticisms to be levelled against this conceptualization, some of which are:

- It is still oppositional – the native user (and analogously the non-native speaker) is still constructed and viewed through the prism of the native speaker
- It is still problematic – autochthonic membership to the native speakerness is the major yardstick against which the non-native speaker is benchmarked since the native speaker is the depository of the language
- It is still elusive – the native speaker (as a real native) is constructed as occupying the real realm (native realism), whereas the non-native speaker (as a surreal native) is hypothesized as inhabiting the mythical realm (mythic realism)
- It is still dichotomous – the native speaker is on the one side of the native speakerness fence, while the non-native speaker is on the other side.

Irrespective of Davies's refined theorization of the native speaker, his dualistic representation of this concept has attracted criticisms from far and near quarters (see for example, Bonfiglio, 2013; Crookes, 2009; Higgins, 2003; Lee, 2005; Lowe, 2015; Mariño, 2011; Rajagopalan, 2007; Shakouri & Shakouri, 2014; Toker, 2012). Some of these criticisms assume, the paper maintains, one or more of the following approaches: periodization; ideological slant; colonial-postcolonial stance; spatial orientation; ethnolinguistic approach; and multiple English varieties paradigm. While these criticisms look discrete, they are, nonetheless, not

necessarily mutually exclusive. Neither are they exhaustive. And their categorization aside, they are in response to and are informed by Davies's conceptualization of the native speaker-the non-native speaker converse. For example, in one instance, in responding to Davies's (2007, p. 160) assertion that, "[u]nderlying many of the remarks made by postcolonial apologists is their failure to acknowledge that English in the world at the start of the 21st century is a special case", Rajagopalan (2007) blends periodization, a colonial-postcolonial stance and an ethnolinguistic view. Firstly, he points out that the historical status of English in the postcolonial era has immensely mutated as compared to the pride of place it occupied a century ago. Secondly, he contends that the (English) empire was an upshot of the *Zeitgeist* of colonialism that promoted a quench for the pure native and for the pure race. This ontological worldview, he maintains, informs Davies's quest for and view of the native speaker and the non-native speaker. The former is, Rajagopalan argues, pure and superior, while the latter is impure and inferior. What can be extrapolated from this line of argument is a sense of both biological determinism and linguistic Darwinism associated with this configuration of nativity and non-nativity. Viewed from a different but related perspective, Shakouri and Shakouri (2014, p. 222) have this to say about this line of thinking: "[i]n traditional concept, birth and situations are determining factors in the definition of native speaker".

On this core, Higgins (2003) critiques the Davian native speaker-non-native speaker dichotomy by combining a multiple English varieties perspective, a spatial (center versus periphery) orientation, an ideological slant, and a colonial-postcolonial stance. First, she stresses that World Englishes scholars often impugn the criteria employed to differentiate between a native speaker and a non-native speaker. She, then, pinpoints that to transcend this dichotomy and the dominant native speaker norms ascribed to the English associated with centre countries, a conceptual device of ownership is needed to interrogate ideological stances toward this English. In addition, she insists that in the postcolonial world, British and American English language criteria are inherently unsuitable to English speakers belonging to the periphery countries.

In other quarters, the Davian native speaker is reduced to native speakerism (see for example, Holliday, 2006; Lowe, 2015; Piller, 2001). Emphasizing this idea of native-speakerism as embedded in Davies's (1991, 2003) theorization of the native speaker and as percolating through the different facets of English Language Teaching (ELT), Holliday (2006) refers to it as a dominant ideology in the ELT industry (also see Basu, 2013; Borelli et al., 2020; Castañeda-Londoño, 2019; Hsu, 2017). In this context, Lowe (2015), critiquing native speakerism, contends that it subtly plays itself out through Western-style approaches and methods which are privileged or valorized over localized pedagogical strategies. It should be noted that native speakerism is, at times, appropriated as a conceptual device to blackguard if not to caricature the purist nativism (the view that language of birth should serve as an ultimate touchstone) in defining the native speaker-non-native speaker dichotomy. It is pre-

cisely because, the paper asserts, this dichotomy assumes an almost wave-particle duality in which the former cannot be constructed without invoking the latter as is the case that configuring the native speaker (with his/her positive attributes) almost always entails invoking the non-native speaker (with his/her negative attributes). Consequently, this binary configuration gets reduced to native speakerism.

DE-COLONIALITY, EPISTEMIC BREAK, DELINKING, AND NEW CATEGORIES OF BOTH THOUGHT AND KNOWLEDGE

In certain quarters of the ELT contexts, native speakerism assumes a discourse often common in most postcolonial narratives. This is the discourse of *othering*. This discourse, mostly articulated and advocated by ELT scholars from postcolonial countries (especially the former British colonies), views native speakerism in terms of tralicious master-slave narratives. Rooted in and inspired by certain strands of both poststructuralism (see for example, Bhabha, 1994) and postmodernism (see for instance, Lyotard, 1984), one of the arguments advanced by these narratives is that: "[i]t is not any more possible to talk about concepts like 'native speaker,' 'culture' or, for example, 'British English' without discussion" (Holliday, 2014, p. 10) in ELT contexts. This implies that native speakerism cannot be construed unproblematically and uncontroversially anymore even for ELT purposes. It also implies that native speakerism has not been dispassionate nor has it been achromatic in its othering and in its objectification of the non-native speaker. Indeed, there is a view that native speakerism is sustained and reinforced by the manner in which structures and systems with not only British-centric English orientations, but with western-centric biases as well, continue employing ELT approaches and methods that tend to dominate the ELT profession (Basu, 2013; Davila, Hsu, 2017; Torres-Rocha, 2019). Such discourses operate not only as hegemonic discourses, but also as master narratives or grand narratives (see Holliday, 2014; Lowe & Pinner, 2016; cf. Kumaravadivelu, 2012, 2016; Mignolo, 2007, 2010).

However, other scholars such as Kumaravadivelu (2016) and Mignolo (2007, 2010) root for a different way of thinking about and managing knowledge (also see Smith, 1999) that the current paper thinks has some relevance to ELT, especially in the post-Davian era. For example, Mignolo (2007, 2010) advocates de-coloniality as an alternative way of looking at the frameworks of knowledge. In this particular instance, de-coloniality – also understood as a *de-colonial option* – entails a break with the project of post-coloniality as sustained by poststructuralism, and with the Eurocentric project of postmodernity. In addition, de-coloniality involves action-oriented, counter-hegemonic strategies, and intellectual tools and social practices that result in an epistemic break (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, 2016; Mignolo, 2007, 2010; cf. Smith, 1999). The latter is about making a break with current epistemes (forms of knowledge) and generating new ones, which better address one's local situation. At the core of the de-colonial option is what Mignolo (2007, p. 484) calls "the grammar of de-coloniality." This refers to

the language undergirding epistemic frameworks generated by scholars regarded subaltern by the frameworks and standards underpinning western knowledge systems (cf. Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2007; Kumaravadivelu, 2016). It is a grammar “grounded in the geo-and body politics of knowledge” (Mignolo, 2007, p. 488). In this sense, it is a grammar of de-colonization of knowledge and of being” (p. 492 that operates from the bottom up, and that critiques “languages and subjectivities that have denied the possibility of participating in the production, distribution, and organization of knowledge” (p. 492).

Related to de-coloniality, and especially to the de-colonial option, is the notion of de-linking. In its Mignolo’s (2007) sense, de-linking is a de-colonial epistemic shift and foregrounds marginalized epistemologies together with their concomitant principles and perspectives. It involves a shift to a geo-politics and body politics of knowledge that denounces the universality of given forms of knowledge as located and centred in particular geo-political polities. Moreover, it entails *pluri-versality* as a preferred perspective to knowledge (also see Kumaravadivelu, 2016; Mignolo, 2010). The notion of pluri-versality requires new categories of both thought and knowledge for conceptualizing the native speaker and for theorizing the field of ELT over which the classical native speaker has had an epistemic and theoretical sway.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ELT

In the context of this paper, and in the light of Davies’s views as highlighted in this paper, de-coloniality has some implications for ELT. First, the dominant narratives informing and undergirding ELT, especially those related to the notion of native speakerism, need to be revisited and reconceptualized, if not re-theorized. This is particularly so as the English-speaking world is no longer one large homogeneous universe: now it comprises universes inhabited by diverse speakers of English dispersed across the globe. Of these diverse global speakers of English, tralatitious native speakers are no longer classically native alone: there are now native speakers of English whose nativity to Englishness is not determinable and distinguishable by racial and ethnic affiliations, and by geo-spatial locations of the centre and the periphery anymore. Such native speakers are globally scattered across the globe, and are neither confined to any centre nor are they restricted to any periphery. A lot of them are globally mobile, and get exposed to different forms of native Englishes, and to other different forms of global Englishes through a variety of global media technologies, and through forms of information and communication technologies.

So, in this melting-pot of Englishes, whose English becomes native, or becomes more native than another? This means that in this kind of English-speaking setup, the universal, monolithic, and quintessential native speaker who is grounded in a particular native land cannot be used as the sole standard bearer of the English nativity anymore. This is where a de-colonial theory – with its concomitant de-colonial grammar – as characterized above, is needed. It is required so as not only to interrogate the classical conception of the Davian

native speaker but also to re-conceptualize the new native speaker of English as defined in the preceding paragraph, and in line with other possible definitions out there. A de-colonial theory is also needed as it propounds an epistemic shift from existing epistemological frameworks that tend to marginalize other forms of knowledge. In the case of this paper, a de-colonial theory is necessary for scholars who want to make a break with or a shift from the current dominant epistemologies in the ELT arena that present a classical conception of the native speaker. It is also necessary for scholars who are willing to frame the native speaker in ways that resonate with and mirror the global and local English-speaking contexts in which he/she finds himself/herself. Such a theory needs to be able to change with the evolving linguistic landscapes of the native speaker: it cannot be static, and impervious to new frames of conceptualizing the native speaker as English itself has not remained invariant over time.

Given the foregoing, the more pertinent and pressing question is: what English is appropriate for ELT purposes? The answer here is that it cannot be the native speaker one as articulated by Davies anymore. The reason why it cannot be the Davian native speaker English anymore is that this version of English is no longer quintessentially purist and pristine: it has been impacted and encroached by other native Englishes and by the different forms of global Englishes in whose midst it exists. This means it is local native Englishes and relevant global Englishes that are appropriate for different ELT contexts. This is the reality of the English-speaking world in the post-Davian era. It is the era characterized by pluri-Englishes (including pluri-native Englishes and pluri-global Englishes). Therefore, and to borrow from Mignolo (2010), this type of the English-speaking setup needs a *pluri-versal* perspective. The idea of pluri-Englishes itself requires different frames of knowledge, different categories of thought, and a different native speaker.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to answer two research questions through characterizing some of what it regards as Davies’s seminal views and concepts, especially his ostensive views and his native speakerism. It has done so through reflecting on how Davies conceptualized and theorized these constructs. In so doing, the paper has also infused its own frames of reasoning through which it has presented its own views. For instance, it has framed Davies’s ostensive views and his other views by arguing that they entail some philosophizing and fragments of the postmodern turn. To this effect, it has provided instances of these two lines of thought relative to certain pronouncements Davies made with reference to applied linguistics as a field of study, and with regard to certain aspects of applied linguistics (e.g., CAL). In addition, it has articulated Davies’s views (both his conceptualization and theorization) of native speakerism, deconstructed them, and framed them within a classical binary perspective. Moreover, it has further explored native speakerism within a framework comprising de-coloniality, epistemic break, and de-linking. Finally, within this framework, the paper has delineated some of the implications that it thinks native speakerism has for ELT.

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