Indigenous English and Standard Language Ideology: Toward a Postcolonial View of English in Teacher Education

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Through the analysis and discussion of statements from students' assignments in a required language and literacy development course, this article explores white settler preservice educators' views of Indigenous English, a variety of English spoken by First Nations and Métis in Saskatchewan. In these reflective assignments, students report childhood and school experiences that that they understand as having informed their negative views of Indigenous English. As a result of course information that critically influenced their views of this English language variety, they also report feeling concerned with how ethically and democratically to negotiate language variation in their own future classrooms.

Language as Social Invention

> Before beginning this class I used the term "proper English" all the time. It was the term my teachers used when referring to grammar and word usage in Language Arts. I did not realize that the English used when writing a paper or when wanting to sound professional was influenced by anyone; I just assumed it was the way I was expected to speak. (Student I, 2008)

Viewing English through a postcolonial lens means understanding English language varieties such as Indigenous English not as a rejection of "correctness," but rather as a reconstitution of languages "in more inclusive, ethical, and democratic" ways (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 2). From this perspective, indigenized varieties of colonial languages function as counter-hegemonic discourses to "standard" varieties of English, Spanish, or French, to name but a few. A postcolonial view of English "provides for the possibility that, in everyday life, the powerless in post-colonial communities may find ways to negotiate, alter, and oppose political structures, and reconstruct their languages, cultures, and identities to their advantage" (p. 2). I offer this postcolonial view of English as an alternative to normative views of standard language and the linguistic othering they make possible. The view of language variation presented in this article derives from the understanding that "languages are social inventions that have emerged in the discursive spaces of colonial and postcolonial times' (Clemente & Higgins, 2008, p. 22).

Ideology is a term used in academic writing in a number of possible ways. Canagarajah's (1999) definition, which I use in this article, sees ideologies as our socially constructed views of the world, which in turn produce discourses that "are linguistically manifested in texts" (p. 30). I

refer to socially constructed views about languages in terms of how, where, when, and with whom they should and should not be spoken and written as standard language ideologies. These types of views about what constitutes legitimate language, particularly when held by educational gatekeepers such as administrators, curriculum designers, teachers, and speech and language pathologists, can negatively affect speakers of "illegitimate" languages and language varieties (Bourdieu, 1991). In this article, I am concerned with the standard language ideologies of preservice teachers in a Saskatchewan teacher education program.

Standard language ideologies often operate in an intermeshed way with socially constructed views of categories such as race, gender, and class. In the case of white settler societies—societies established by Europeans on non-European soil whose origins lie in the dispossession and near extermination of Indigenous populations by conquering Europeans—colonialism continues to shape views of these social categories as well as societal policies, practices, and ideologies. British imperialism introduced and imposed the English language on parts of the world where it had not been heard before. One of the effects of the expansion of this colonial language was the creation of new hybrid and indigenized varieties of English so that we can now speak of Caribbean English, African-American English, and Indigenous English among others. Not surprisingly, not all English language varieties are considered equal, and colonial attitudes about proper English manifest in many ways and places in settler Saskatchewan, including in schools.

Before moving to my discussion of standard language ideology and student teachers, I clarify some of the terms that I use. When I first began to explore language variation and schools in my graduate studies, *Indigenous English* was a term I encountered in a 1993 discussion paper by Heit and Blair (1993) about English language dialects and the experiences of First Nations and Métis students in Saskatchewan schools. This particular article used *Indigenous English* to describe the Englishes spoken by First Nations and Métis in Canada. Over the past 10 years, I have also considered terms like *Aboriginal English* and *First Nations English*. Because *Aboriginal English* is a term already in use in Australia to describe Englishes spoken by Aboriginal peoples there and because *First Nations English* does not seem to leave space for the inclusion of Englishes spoken by Métis or Inuit, I choose to use *Indigenous English* to refer to indigenized English varieties spoken by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada. Certainly multiple other terms are possible as probably evidenced by many other articles in this special issue.

Another term that merits explanation is my use of *language varieties* or *Englishes* as opposed to the perhaps more familiar term *dialect*. By positioning one language variety as a language and subjugating another to the position of dialect, a false dichotomy is created in which one particular

language variety is seen as standard and legitimate and thus forcing others to be viewed as nonstandard and illegitimate. The reality is that we all speak dialects of languages, and what makes one more legitimate than the other has little to do with the systematicity of one particular variety and everything to do with the historical and social events that shape societies. My decision to discuss language variation by using terms such as *Englishes*, *English language varieties*, *Indigenous English*, and *Settler English* is informed by my larger goal of disrupting normative colonial discourses about language in favor of a move toward a more democratic and inclusive view of what constitutes legitimate English(es) in settler schools in Canada.

My interest in exploring the influence of education programs on preservice teachers' ideologies about language grows out of two places. The first source is research that I conducted in elementary school classrooms in 2003 and 2006. Both of these ethnographic studies were designed to understand more about (a) the varieties of English spoken by First Nations and Métis students in two Saskatchewan schools; and (b) the practices and perceptions of their schoolteachers and administrators in response to how these students used English. The data that emerged from these studies paint a picture of two school communities operating with deficit views of the English language varieties spoken by the First Nations children involved in my research (Sterzuk, 2003, 2008).

The second source of my interest in the topic of this article is my current position as a faculty member who teaches language and literacies education courses in a Saskatchewan university. I took this position in summer 2007. In my new faculty, I was pleased to find that the teacher education program operated with a critical approach to language education. By this idea of critical, I mean that there was talk of the relationship between language and power, and this talk actually made its way into the materials and courses that we designed for our program. None of the prescriptivist discourses about language that emerged in my classroom-based research seemed to be present in the course syllabi used by my new colleagues, in the discussions during my subject areas meetings, or in the readings that my colleagues and I used in our courses. Of course, these are not the only places where students pick up ideas about language, and arguably our teacher education program may even have the least influence on preservice teachers' views. Yet due to the apparent differences between the views of my colleagues and the views of language that I encountered in my classroom-based research, my interest in investigating this dissonance was immediately sparked.

The research that I present in this article is from a small classroom study conducted in the teacher education program where I am a faculty member. The types of questions I ask are also suited to long-range study of preservice education students as they move through our program and

transition into their teaching careers. I intend to conduct this type of research, but before determining where these students go in their understanding of language variation, I first need a better understanding of their current views of language. Thus in this article I explore my preservice students' views of language and include the following sections: (a) a review of related literature; (b) the design of the study; (c) a discussion of the findings of this research; and (d) my thoughts on some preliminary recommendations for teacher education programs.

A Brief Review of Related Literature

In order to make sense of my students' views of Indigenous English, it is important first to review some ideas that come from academic writing related to standard language ideology and schools and minority language students. Colonialism, settler societies, and identity also make their way into the above-mentioned discussions as it is impossible to separate historical and social events and context from any discussion of language bias. Indeed, what people believe about "proper" ways of speaking and writing has a lot to do with the times in which they live, their locations, experiences, and identities and little to do with the actual characteristics of a particular language variety that has been deemed "proper" or "standard."

Our views of the world and the discourses they produce can have long shelf-lives because discourses (and what they exclude) become normalized. By *normalized* I mean that we can begin to see the world as status quo, normal, natural, and in doing so forget that society is socially constructed and that we play a role in constructing the society we see. What constitutes the "standard" of a particular language is often thought to be "common sense" when it is in fact a highly ideological position. There is an assumption that the variety we label as standard is somehow better, so we assume that the standard variety is the standard because of its high levels of uniformity. The reality is that it is because of the prestige of its speakers that we deem a particular language variety to be more standard than others (Milroy, 2001). In the case of settler societies such as Canada, which are founded on racial hierarchies (Thobani, 2007), the types of Englishes valued or deemed as legitimate are varieties typically spoken by middle-class white settlers. In settler schools, other varieties of English including Indigenous English can often be viewed as a detriment, something that gets in the way of acquiring literacy skills and mastering subject material (Nero, 2006).

I am often asked about whether I advocate an *anything goes* approach to language and literacies education. The short answer is that I do not. I believe that schools need to provide all students with access to language varieties and literacy practices that have been deemed legitimate by society and societal institutions (Delpit, 1988). I do not believe that teaching "standard English" writing is wrong or unnecessary. I believe, rather, that when teachers view students as deficient or delayed in language

development and erroneously believe them to be less capable of developing print literacy skills, then these views of language negatively affect minority-language students. In order to create equitable classrooms in these postnational times, there is work to be done (particularly by teachers) in terms of how they view language.

As I explain, ideologies (socially constructed views of the world) produce discourses that become naturalized or accepted as "commonsense" knowledge. Experiments designed and conducted by Lambert (1967) at McGill University in the 1960s first demonstrated that members of dominant speech communities share a set of unconscious beliefs about minority speech communities. In the case of schools, these beliefs produce school practices that select and reject from the cultures and languages of students (Bourdieu, 1977). Biased language beliefs legitimatize discriminatory school practices. Traditional teaching practices in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms can consign minority language students to failure and to the "perception that they are intellectually incompetent" (Cohen & Lotan, 2004, p. 736).

Biased views about language variation can affect minority-language students in settler schools in a number of ways. English-language arts curricula often include biased learning outcomes about verb structure and vocabulary that can affect students who speak a variety of English that is undervalued by the school community; speech and language testing can erroneously determine speech and language delays and disorders; and teachers can have lowered expectations that may lead, for example, to students being directed toward remedial activities like reading programs that overly focus on phonics to the detriment of other higher-level reading skills like reading comprehension. Any of these outcomes are possible, and unfortunately, they can also occur concurrently. The potential outcomes of such a situation include: minority-language variety students' experiencing difficulty with achieving print literacy skills, thus making success in subject area content difficult; negative effect on the students' perceptions of themselves as learners; and frustration for learners, parents, and teachers over the school's seeming inability to create equitable learning opportunities for all students.

My most recent classroom-based research revealed settler teacher discourses about Indigenous English that positioned its speakers as deficient users of language. When Saskatchewan teachers take up the circulation of dangerous discourses about Indigenous students such as "we're feeling the deficits when they get up to grade 2 or 3. They just can't write a proper sentence because they can't speak, they don't speak with complete sentences," then these classroom teachers do not have the beliefs necessary to plan and implement challenging literacy programs for all their students (Sterzuk, 2009). These types of views about First Nations and Métis students' capacity for language and print literacy development contribute

to making Saskatchewan schools a space where settlers and Indigenous peoples are socialized into their respective colonial roles and divisions of power are maintained. Challenging this deficit view of Indigenous English must be understood as an act of decolonization.

Design and Methodology

This study uses a grounded theory approach to collecting, coding, and analyzing the emerging patterns as they relate to preservice teachers' views of language (Charmaz, 2005). The study was designed to understand better the needs of preservice teachers in terms of their emerging criticality toward language. In order to determine how teacher education might work toward disrupting preservice teachers' prescriptivist views about language, it is first necessary to determine what these students understand about language. Thus the research questions of this study are as follows.

1. What do students enrolled in a course on language and literacy development understand about language variation in Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan schools?
2. Do students report changes in their views of language throughout the course of the semester?

In order to answer these questions, the course assignments of 76 second-year students in three sections of a language and literacies course during one semester were collected and analyzed.

Context and Participants

Student participants were all enrolled in this mandatory course for elementary education during the fall semester. The course was not a teaching methods class: it provided an overview of theory, research, and practice in language acquisition and literacy development with a critical lens. The class met twice a week, each time discussing the readings on the syllabus. Classes were conducted as lectures and group discussions. All 76 students enrolled in the three sections of this course from which assignments were collected shared the same course instructor (me). Students were almost exclusively white settler with the exception of one Cree First Nations student. Most of these students were monolingual except for five who had been enrolled in French immersion education at various times in their primary and secondary education, two who had spent one to two years living in China as ESL teachers and had learned some Mandarin, one who had grown up in a Ukrainian-speaking household, and one who had studied Spanish and spent time traveling in Latin America and had achieved a functional level of Spanish. The students were mostly from rural and urban Saskatchewan with the exception of two, one each from neighboring Alberta and Manitoba.

The goals of this particular course in language and literacy development were to help future teachers: (a) to develop an understanding of

what language is and how language differences work in the classroom to the advantage of some students and to the disadvantage of others; (b) to develop an understanding of first- and second-language acquisition and literacy development across social contexts; (c) to develop an understanding of how classroom language instruction can help to constitute and maintain race, gender, and social class as categories of unequal power relations; and (d) to become familiar with some ways of teaching speaking and writing that work to foster equity and justice in the classroom and world. Course assignments, which are the data source for this particular study, were designed with these course goals in mind.

Procedure

Consent was requested during the first week of classes. All signed consent forms were kept in a sealed envelope in a colleague's office until the final marks had been submitted. In this way, I did not know which of my students were participating in the study throughout the semester that I was collecting their assignments. This procedure was put in place so as to minimize the conflict of interest that could arise from being both instructor and researcher.

Copies of all written assignments were collected from all students throughout the course of the semester. All students submitted two synthesis papers on a course topic of their choice, one final essay on an instructor-approved topic of their choice, two reading responses each week for the duration of the semester, and four reflection letters about their experiences as ESL volunteers throughout the semester. Because of the reflective orientation of all the assignments with the exception of perhaps the final essay, students had plenty of opportunities to learn to connect their experiences to the course topics and readings. Following the end of the semester, I conducted preliminary analysis of documents and coded for reccurring themes in students' assignments. The documents that produced most personal statements about students' views of Indigenous English were the two synthesis papers on topics of their choice. These students' documents, each on average two to three pages long, inform the discussion section of this article.

As I read through the papers for the first time, I took preliminary notes about students' comments about language that seemed to be emerging frequently and that triggered thoughts of relevant literature. These preliminary notes were helpful in guiding me when I returned to the synthesis papers to conduct my in-depth analysis. For this more exhaustive examination of the documents, I read through each student's assignment and made further notes in the margins of the papers when comments were particularly revealing or again reminded me of related literature. Synthesis papers were examined at length on two separate occasions. My goal in approaching the student assignments like this was to extract any

evidence of recurring phenomena that were then examined in an effort to respond fully to each of the two research questions.

Findings and Discussion

A number of patterns emerged in the synthesis papers written by my students. In terms of those related to views of Indigenous English, the following three themes were recurring.

1. Similar childhood and present-day experiences showing evidence of standard language views toward Indigenous English;
2. Concerns about what language variation means for them as future teachers in Saskatchewan;
3. Statements about the changing nature of their views of language.

Other patterns that surfaced involved comments that revealed performances of whiteness, gender, student, and teacher; the development of teacher identity, as well as beliefs in meritocracy. Not all students' papers were concerned with Indigenous English; many chose to write about topics such as learning English as a second or additional language or print literacy development. A number of students' papers in all three course sections did, however, take up the topic of what constitutes "proper" English in Saskatchewan probably because of the assignment of one particular course reading (Sterzuk, 2008) that discusses language variation in Saskatchewan schools. Given that the discussion of that article is situated in the province in which my students live, many were drawn to incorporating this particular piece into their synthesis papers, and as a result to linking their experiences to the ideas discussed in Sterzuk (2008).

The following excerpts are taken from students' synthesis papers that discuss language variation and views of language in schools. Students are not identified by name or other potentially revealing characteristics, but I note that the following comments were all made by white settler female students. None of the comments made by the student who self-identifies as First Nations are included in this article, as perhaps not surprisingly, she offered views of language that did not match the views of the settler students in the course sections. Students' comments are introduced by referring to them as Student A or Student B and so forth. In terms of my analysis, I noted and compared recurring categories between students. The following synthesis paper assignment excerpts all show evidence of the above-mentioned themes related to views of Indigenous English.

Evidence of Standard Language Views

Students writing about Indigenous English in their synthesis papers linked their views to the childhood experience of growing up in Saskatchewan. Student A speaks of her childhood memories of First Nations foster children living in her home and the views of their language that she was "forced" to establish:

My parents have been foster parents since I was 5 years old, and I have grown up with children constantly moving in and out of my home, most of whom were Aboriginal and spoke a "different" English than my family and I. Since all of the children came from troubled homes, this forced me to establish a negative stereotype towards everybody who spoke with the same language variations as those children.

One aspect of whiteness is the desire for innocence (Schick, 2000; Schick & St. Denis, 2003). Student A attempts to distance herself from her views of Indigenous English by describing herself as "forced" to take on this orientation to language. She describes the emergence of negative views of Indigenous English as beyond her control; she had no choice but to view these children as having deficient language because of who they were (or who she perceived them to be).

The next participant, Student B, also points to childhood experiences in terms of analyzing how she came to hold her standard language views towards language.

Along with most prairie raised children, it was easy to believe that my language and the way that I was being taught to speak was "right" and any variation of speech was simply "wrong."

Student B describes it as "easy to believe" that features of other English language varieties were "wrong." The ease with which we take on such views is a common aspect of white settler childhoods. White settler English, foods, cultural practices, and dominance of others all feels normal, mundane, and "easy to believe."

In the following excerpt from another student's synthesis paper, Student C also points to childhood as a source of her views of Indigenous English.

I grew up in a small town with three surrounding reserves and I have seen first hand that Indigenous students speak differently than me. I had never heard this dialect of English referred to as Indigenous English but I have come to realize how important it is for teachers to be familiar with it. I will admit that I graduated from high school thinking that I spoke "proper" English but from the reading and classroom discussions I am realizing that there is no "proper" English, only one of power. The FN students who were my classmates spoke using different terms and were often ridiculed in school for it. I now understand that these children spoke in a different way, not an incorrect one.

In her description of her childhood experiences, Student C acknowledges the illegitimate status afforded to Indigenous English as well as the often unacknowledged settler practice of ridiculing speakers of Indigenous English.

The next excerpt highlights some of the types of educational outcomes made possible by settlers' views of Indigenous English: Student D explains,

I noted that one article was particularly easy for me to relate to. Sterzuk (2008) made it very clear that Saskatchewan is not an easy place for speakers of Indigenous English to be educated. This topic immediately sparked my interest as I was educated in a classroom where approximately 50% of my classmates were First Nations; that meant 50% of my

> classmates spoke "different." I recall many of my peers receiving poor marks on writing assignments. They were handed back their work with red circles and *x*'s on the paper, and yet there was no explanation of why their language was the wrong one.

Although it does not necessarily follow that all her First Nations peers would have been speakers of Indigenous English, it is interesting to note (and alarming if one considers that teachers generally teach how they were taught) that she remembers classroom activities and practices that positioned her First Nations classmates as deficient users of language.

Finally, the following excerpt from Student E also shows evidence of students' awareness of Indigenous English as an illegitimate English language variety in Saskatchewan schools:

> Having attended a community elementary school myself, I have been exposed to several of the conflicts that arise in schools with students who come from different cultural backgrounds. In general, I have noticed that First Nations children who speak an Indigenous English dialect are at a disadvantage in schools, compared to the White settler students. Furthermore, teachers in classrooms of both Indigenous Peoples and White settler children tend to be placed in complicated situations when they are forced to draw a line between whose English variety is right or wrong.

This student's use of the word *disadvantage* shows that on some level she is aware of the positioning that occurs in Saskatchewan classrooms. Student E's statement also shows evidence of the second theme that emerged in much of the students' writing: concerns over what language variation implies for themselves as future teachers.

Concerns About the Implications of Language Variation for Them as Teachers

Students in my faculty of education are aware of their emerging teacher identities. Much of this awareness comes from the culture of our faculty, where students are urged to see themselves as professionals and teachers from day one of the program. Not surprisingly, this type of practice lends itself to students wondering how issues discussed in classes will affect them as teachers. The following excerpts reveal evidence of students considering the potential implications of language variation on teachers.

In the first excerpt, Student A from the above section returns to her childhood experiences as a member of a white settler family that fostered First Nations children.

> As I have read in the articles required for class, this [deficit view of Indigenous English] is a common misconception in society, and I have now been educated to realize that I cannot negatively generalize a group of people simply by the way that they speak. As a teacher, I need to be sure that these stereotypes are not passed on to my students! Whether language variation is present in the school or not, it is inevitable in the world. I need to help my students become aware of language variation.

In the above section, Student A described her views of Indigenous English as not of her making. In the above statements, she indicates that her recent "education" has changed her views about language. Her statement seems to indicate that she sees views of language and negative stereotypes as

something (a) imposed on her and (b) easily shed once new information is provided. Thus she sees her job as a teacher as involving educating her students about language variation.

In the following statement, Student F seems more realistic in terms of the challenges involved with monitoring both her own views of language as well as those of her future students.

> I wonder how will my own speech affect my future students? I will have to be aware that language variations must be treated with sensitivity. I will have to learn how to build English skills to create strong communicators but without damaging students' perceptions of themselves based on language differences. This will be a challenge, but one that I am willing to conquer. It will be up to me to be aware of how I see myself as well as others when looking at language.

Like Student A, Student F sees herself as having not simply a responsibility to change and monitor her own potentially negative assumptions about Indigenous English, but also to educate her own students about language variation. In addition, she sees herself (as do many students whose excerpts are not included here) as having a responsibility to help speakers of Indigenous English bridge differences in language, and in so doing have better access to education. The final discussion section explores the dynamic and changing nature of students' reported views toward Indigenous English.

The Changing Nature of their Views of Language

Many of the students' papers discussed the changing nature of their views toward English. Many students (including those not included in these data) report experiencing a change in how they think about English. Such a change is reported in the following statements from a synthesis paper by Student G.

> Until I took this class, I thought there was such a thing as "standard" English and I thought I spoke it. The truth is, as I now see, that I speak a dialect of English ... The fact that this class changed my views makes me think that University is expanding my mind as it is supposed to. It is changing my views in a way that makes me think that I will be a better teacher. The fact that this class changed these views of mine, as well as at least some of my classmates as I can tell from class discussion, makes me see first-hand that educating teachers of these problems is working

This student describes this introductory class in language and literacy development as having changed her views. In addition, she also reports noticing similar changes in discussions with her peers. No claims can be made about how genuine or lasting these changes are, but it is important to note that this student seems to have developed some meta-awareness about how she thinks about language. This type of awareness in itself should be seen as a positive step.

Like that of Student G, the following excerpt taken from a paper by Student H also shows evidence of acknowledgment of having once held

prescriptivist views of language as well as awareness of changes in how she now views language.

> But I sure was the first one to notice an "error" and correct it in my head. Since beginning this class and listening to people talk around me, I have realized that I have always been way too harsh on other people and their dialect. I am starting to look at it in a whole new way and with fresh eyes.

Again, it would be premature to view the students' new views of language as fixed or static. Nor can I can be sure that these views are anything more than attempts to please their teacher or perform as good students. At a minimum, students do seem to have developed an awareness of their views of language variation as well as an understanding of these views as being socially constructed by the events and experiences around them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Students enrolled in this course demonstrate awareness that they grew up and live in standard language cultures. Many of them report that when they arrived in this course, they believed that they spoke "proper English." Students also report thinking ahead to their own classrooms in terms of how they will negotiate language variation as well as what they can do so as not to pass on negative views of Indigenous English to their own students. These students also report changes in their beliefs about language variation as a result of this course and others at university.

As I write the conclusion to this article, I am left asking myself a number of questions. How real are the changes my students report in terms of how they view language? They are perhaps simply evidence of student performances of a good student or a student who parrots the views of the course curriculum and course instructor. Education students are typically heavily invested in being seen as good students. They are socialized to see themselves as role models, not only in education but in academic, professional, and pop-culture depictions of teachers (Alsup, 2006). In the assignments submitted for this course, none of the students disagreed with the types of critical views of language presented in my courses. I do not believe that three months of my course can erase all their previous experiences as they reported in their papers. How real can changes to their views of language be if they are unwilling to acknowledge their present-day views of Indigenous English for fear of being seen as bad students or racist? Finally, if these changes in ideology are genuine, how lasting are they, and are there ways to bolster them?

In addition to these questions that interrogate the nature of my students' orientation toward language, I am also spending much time considering the hidden curriculum that informs their views of language. Although this course (and others about language and literacy) specifically addresses standard language ideology and attempts to counter normative views of language, I am concerned with what other practices are in place in my faculty that serve to reinforce colonial views of language. Specifical-

ly, I find myself considering the implications of entry requirements for the teacher education program; the Faculty of Education consisting almost exclusively of white setter students and white settler professors; how the lack of a peer-tutoring or a writing center in the faculty positions students; the effect of the faculty language policy; and the types of anecdotal reports about the difficulties of ESL interns during the practicum stages of our program. I also wonder what types of discourses students encounter during the internship portion of their program. What do these types of practices and experiences tell our students about whose language is legitimate and how learning institutions should respond to language variation?

The issues described in this article are not specific to the local context in which I live and work as a teacher educator. As a result of British imperialism and changes in technology and the global market, English can be heard in places like the United Kingdom and Canada, Singapore, India, and thanks to an increasingly unified world system, multiple other places where it is learned as a foreign language. Due to the globalized state of the planet, "polycentricity (many norms of correctness that differ within an easy or uneasy intelligibility)" has emerged, and English has become "a network of interrelated models" (Lo Bianco, 2000, p. 93). Successful communication for many citizens of the world now has less to do with acquiring features of idealized British or Canadian English varieties, and instead requires what Canaragajah (2006) refers to as "multidialectal competence," part of which entails "passive competence to understand new varieties [of English]" (p. 233).

The unified world system in which we live requires another view of communication and of what it means to be a legitimate and competent speaker of English (Canagarajah, 1999; Clemente & Higgins, 2008; Lo Bianco, 2000). Because of increased migration as well as preexisting language variation such as the context described in this article, teacher education needs to respond to these changes and work toward both selecting and educating students who will become democratic and inclusive teachers with less bounded views of language. Changes of this nature are also necessary at the inservice level and in terms of school curricula. Thus more long-term research is needed to determine how best to counter standard-language discourses that continue to circulate in schools and society and in determining how these views of language influence educational outcomes in schools and the lives of minority-English variety speakers like First Nations and Métis students in Saskatchewan schools.

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