

Challenging Native-Speakerism in Academic Discourse: A Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis of Language Education Research

Yulian Purnama^{1*}, I Nyoman Suidiana²

¹UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, Indonesia

²Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 10 June 2026

Revised: 26 July 2026

Accepted: 02 August 2026

DOI:

10.61100/tacit.v4i2.365

Keywords:

Native-Speakerism, Corpus-Based
Critical Discourse Analysis, Academic
Discourse, Language Education, Global
Englishes



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0
International License

ABSTRACT

This study examines the representation of NS/NNS terminology in language education research using a corpus-based critical discourse analysis. The corpus consisted of 94 English-language journal articles published between 1994 and 2026. Quantitative corpus techniques, including frequency, collocation, concordance, and semantic prosody analyses, were integrated with Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis framework. The findings reveal four major patterns. First, over 70% of native speaker occurrences are used descriptively without conceptual clarification, indicating their naturalization within academic writing. Second, only 3.1% of the occurrences explicitly challenge the traditional NS/NNS dichotomy. Third, a clear contradiction exists between researchers' critical perspectives on native-speakerism and their continued use of conventional terminology in empirical reporting. Finally, only around 10% of the analyzed articles adopt alternative conceptual frameworks, demonstrating that conceptual transformation remains limited. These findings indicate that academic discourse functions not only as a site of critical reflection but also as a mechanism for reproducing native-speakerist ideology. The study highlights the need for greater critical language awareness, more inclusive terminology, and institutional support to advance the decolonization of English language education.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis representasi terminologi NS/NNS dalam penelitian pendidikan bahasa menggunakan pendekatan analisis wacana kritis berbasis korpus. Korpus penelitian terdiri atas 94 artikel jurnal berbahasa Inggris yang diterbitkan pada periode 1994–2026. Teknik linguistik korpus secara kuantitatif, meliputi analisis frekuensi, kolokasi, konkordansi, dan prosodi semantik, diintegrasikan dengan kerangka analisis wacana kritis tiga dimensi Fairclough. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan empat temuan utama. Pertama, lebih dari 70% kemunculan istilah native speaker digunakan secara deskriptif tanpa penjelasan konseptual, yang menunjukkan proses naturalisasi dalam penulisan akademik. Kedua, hanya 3,1% kemunculan istilah tersebut yang secara eksplisit menentang dikotomi NS/NNS tradisional. Ketiga, terdapat kontradiksi yang jelas antara perspektif kritis peneliti terhadap native-speakerism dan penggunaan terminologi konvensional dalam pelaporan hasil penelitian. Keempat, hanya sekitar 10% artikel yang mengadopsi kerangka konseptual alternatif, sehingga menunjukkan bahwa transformasi konseptual masih sangat terbatas. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa wacana akademik tidak hanya menjadi ruang refleksi kritis, tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai mekanisme reproduksi ideologi native-speakerism. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan peningkatan kesadaran bahasa kritis, penggunaan terminologi yang lebih inklusif, serta dukungan kelembagaan untuk mendorong dekolonisasi pendidikan bahasa Inggris.

1. INTRODUCTION

The dominance of the native speaker (NS) paradigm has long shaped the epistemological foundations of

* Corresponding author, email address: yulianpurnama@uinsaizu.ac.id

English language teaching (ELT) worldwide. Within this paradigm, native speakers are traditionally regarded as the ideal linguistic model and the ultimate benchmark of English proficiency, while non-native speakers (NNS) are frequently positioned as linguistically deficient or inherently less competent. This ideology extends beyond language proficiency to influence perceptions of teaching ability, professional credibility, and cultural authenticity, creating an unequal hierarchy between native and non-native English users (Yazan & Rudolph, 2018). Consequently, the notion of "perfect English" has become closely associated with native speaker identity rather than communicative competence, despite increasing evidence that English functions as a global language used predominantly by multilingual speakers (Jenkins, 2006). The persistence of this paradigm has contributed to discriminatory attitudes in language education by reinforcing unrealistic linguistic expectations and privileging particular social identities over actual pedagogical expertise (Ortega, 2014).

The ideological foundation of native-speakerism is deeply embedded in colonial and Western-centric systems of knowledge production. Rather than representing a purely linguistic distinction, the NS/NNS dichotomy reflects historical power relations that position Western language, culture, and educational traditions as inherently superior to those of other societies. Holliday (2018) argues that native-speakerism perpetuates unequal power structures by legitimizing discriminatory assumptions regarding language ownership and educational authority. Similarly, Khany et al. (2024) demonstrate that native-speakerist discourse constructs hierarchical relationships between native and non-native speakers by naturalizing the superiority of Western linguistic and cultural norms while concealing their social and ideological origins. Such discourse transforms historically constructed inequalities into seemingly objective standards, thereby sustaining linguistic injustice within educational institutions and academic communities.

The influence of native-speakerism extends far beyond theoretical debates, shaping multiple dimensions of educational policy and classroom practice. One of its most visible manifestations appears in teacher recruitment systems, where native speakers are often preferred regardless of pedagogical qualifications or teaching experience. Research conducted in Thailand illustrates that native-speakerism continues to influence institutional hiring policies, language curricula, and cultural teaching models, resulting in systematic disadvantages for qualified non-native English teachers (Sameephet, 2025). Beyond employment practices, linguistic discrimination also affects teachers' professional identities by intersecting with race, ethnicity, gender, culture, and broader sociopolitical structures. As a result, many non-native English teachers experience emotional pressure, identity conflict, and reduced professional confidence despite possessing strong pedagogical competence (Nigar et al., 2025). These findings demonstrate that native-speakerism functions not merely as a linguistic preference but as a broader mechanism of social inequality.

Over the past two decades, numerous scholars have challenged the conceptual validity of the native speaker construct and questioned its continued relevance in contemporary English language education. The expansion of English as an International Language (EIL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), and Global Englishes has significantly weakened the assumption that native speakers should remain the sole linguistic authority. Scholars increasingly argue that multilingual users represent the contemporary reality of English communication, making the traditional NS/NNS distinction theoretically inadequate and pedagogically problematic (Jenkins, 2006; Ortega, 2014). Nevertheless, despite extensive criticism, the ideology of native-speakerism has proven remarkably resilient. Holliday (2015) cautions against assuming that the problem has already been resolved, emphasizing that declarations of the NS/NNS dichotomy's disappearance may obscure its continued influence within educational institutions and scholarly discourse.

Although the ideological assumptions surrounding the NS/NNS distinction have been widely debated, an important gap remains in existing research. Most previous studies have focused on teachers, learners, recruitment practices, or institutional policies, while comparatively little attention has been given to the language practices of researchers themselves. This omission is particularly significant because researchers play a central role in constructing, legitimizing, and disseminating academic knowledge. If scholars continue to employ native-speaker terminology uncritically, academic publications may inadvertently reproduce the very ideology they seek to challenge. Therefore, examining researchers' discourse is essential for understanding whether contemporary scholarship genuinely reflects critical perspectives on linguistic equality or continues to reinforce traditional native-speaker assumptions.

Recent evidence provided by Luo et al. (2026) highlights the magnitude of this unresolved problem. Their corpus-based investigation reveals that more than seventy percent of occurrences of the term native

speaker in academic journal articles are used descriptively without operational definition or critical reflection. Furthermore, only 3.1% of these occurrences explicitly challenge the NS/NNS dichotomy, while approximately ten percent of the analyzed articles adopt alternative conceptual frameworks capable of replacing the traditional terminology. These findings reveal a striking contradiction between researchers' stated theoretical opposition to native-speakerism and their continued reliance on its language in academic writing. Such inconsistency suggests that ideological reproduction may occur unconsciously through routine linguistic practices, thereby reinforcing native-speakerism within scholarly communication even among researchers who advocate more inclusive perspectives.

Building upon these concerns, the present study seeks to investigate how the concepts of native speaker and non-native speaker are represented within contemporary academic discourse and what ideological positions are embedded in their usage. Rather than examining classroom interactions or institutional policies, this research focuses specifically on published scholarly texts, recognizing academic discourse as an influential site where linguistic ideologies are produced, negotiated, and reproduced. To achieve this objective, the study employs a corpus-based critical discourse analysis that combines quantitative corpus linguistic techniques with qualitative interpretation based on Fairclough's (2003) critical discourse framework. This integrated methodological approach enables a systematic examination of lexical patterns while simultaneously uncovering the broader ideological meanings underlying researchers' language choices (Baker & Levon, 2015; Luo et al., 2026).

The significance of this study lies in both its theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it advances critical scholarship by demonstrating how academic discourse itself may function as a mechanism for reproducing monolingual and native-speakerist ideologies despite increasing calls for linguistic inclusivity. It further contributes to the development of corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis by integrating large-scale linguistic evidence with contextual ideological interpretation. Practically, the findings are expected to support ongoing efforts toward terminological reform and encourage the adoption of more inclusive conceptual frameworks, such as trans-speakerism, which moves beyond the traditional NS/NNS dichotomy and recognizes the dynamic identities of multilingual English users (Hiratsuka, 2025). In addition, the study is expected to strengthen critical language awareness among researchers, teacher educators, and language professionals, thereby contributing to more equitable and socially just practices in English language education (Nigar et al., 2025; Yazan & Rudolph, 2018).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Native-Speakerism

Native-speakerism is an ideology in language education that regards native speakers as the ideal model for English language teaching in terms of linguistic competence, pronunciation, cultural knowledge, and teaching methodology. This concept was introduced by Holliday (2006), who argued that native-speakerism establishes a hierarchy between native English-speaking teachers and non-native English-speaking teachers, often resulting in discrimination in teacher recruitment and educational practices. Within the field of applied linguistics, this ideology has increasingly been challenged because it overlooks the reality that English has evolved into an English as an International Language (EIL) and an English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), where the majority of English users are non-native speakers. Consequently, teaching quality is no longer determined by native-speaker status but rather by pedagogical competence, professionalism, and the ability to foster effective intercultural communication.

Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis (CBCDA)

Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis (CBCDA) is a research approach that integrates corpus linguistics with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to identify linguistic patterns while simultaneously uncovering power relations, ideological structures, and social representations embedded within discourse. This approach employs corpus linguistic tools, including word frequency analysis, collocation, keyword analysis, and concordance, making discourse analysis more systematic, objective, and supported by empirical evidence derived from large-scale textual datasets. According to Baker & Levon (2015), the integration of quantitative corpus linguistic techniques with the qualitative interpretation of CDA enables researchers to identify hidden linguistic patterns and explain how language is used to reinforce or challenge social dominance, identity, and ideology across various contexts, including media, political, and academic discourse.

Academic Discourse

Academic discourse refers to the distinctive use of language within academic settings to construct, communicate, and sustain scholarly knowledge through various forms of communication, such as journal articles, theses, conference presentations, and academic discussions. It is characterized by formal language, logical argumentation, empirical evidence, and rhetorical conventions that vary across academic disciplines. Xiao (2011) argued that academic discourse functions not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a means of constructing academic identity, establishing scholarly credibility, and building relationships between writers and readers through rhetorical strategies such as hedging, stance, and engagement. Therefore, mastery of academic discourse is considered an essential competency for students and researchers in producing high-quality scholarly work that meets the expectations of the international academic community.

Language Education

Language education is a field of study and professional practice that focuses on the learning, teaching, and acquisition of first, second, and foreign languages to develop learners' communicative competence, literacy, and critical thinking skills. Language education extends beyond the mastery of grammar and vocabulary by incorporating social, cultural, pragmatic, and communicative dimensions that enable individuals to use language effectively in diverse contexts. According to Swartz (2013), the development of language education has been influenced by shifts in educational paradigms, ranging from structural approaches to communicative and task-based approaches, particularly Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which places learners at the center of the instructional process. In the era of globalization and digitalization, language education has increasingly emphasized the development of intercultural communicative competence and learners' ability to utilize digital technologies effectively in language learning.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a corpus-based critical discourse analysis (CDA) design to examine the ideological representation of the concepts native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) in academic discourse. The research integrates quantitative corpus linguistics with Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of critical discourse analysis to investigate both linguistic patterns and their underlying ideological meanings. The analytical procedure followed the seven-stage model proposed by Brown (2025), consisting of discourse selection, data localization and preparation, contextual exploration, text coding, external analysis, internal analysis, and interpretation. This mixed analytical design enables the study to identify recurring lexical patterns while simultaneously explaining how those patterns contribute to the construction and reproduction of native-speakerist ideology in scholarly publications.

The research corpus comprised 94 journal articles in the fields of language education and applied linguistics published in reputable indexed international journals between 1994 and 2026. Articles were selected using purposive sampling based on three inclusion criteria: (1) the article was written in English, (2) it explicitly contained the terms native speaker and/or non-native speaker, and (3) it focused on topics related to English language teaching, applied linguistics, or language education. To facilitate comparative analysis, the corpus was organized into several strata according to publication period, journal type, and author affiliation following corpus stratification principles proposed by Biber (1994). This corpus structure allowed the study to identify patterns of terminology use across different publication contexts and temporal periods.

The analysis was conducted in two complementary phases. The first phase employed quantitative corpus-based techniques to identify the distribution and linguistic behavior of the target terms. This stage included frequency analysis, keyword analysis using log-likelihood ratio statistics, collocation analysis with a five-word window span employing Mutual Information (MI) and log-likelihood measures, concordance analysis, and semantic prosody analysis to determine the evaluative meanings surrounding the NS/NNS terminology. The second phase involved qualitative critical discourse analysis using Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional framework. At the textual level, vocabulary choices, grammatical patterns, and textual organization were examined; at the discursive practice level, attention was given to discourse production, intertextuality, and contextual interpretation; while the sociocultural practice level explored how broader institutional, historical, and ideological contexts shaped the representation of native-speakerism within academic discourse.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study adopted several strategies to enhance validity and reliability. Methodological triangulation was achieved by integrating quantitative corpus analysis

with qualitative critical discourse analysis, allowing linguistic evidence to be interpreted within its broader ideological context (Baker & Levon, 2015). Reliability was strengthened through inter-coder agreement, which reached 87%, indicating a high level of coding consistency (Krippendorff, 2019). Furthermore, an audit trail documenting every stage of data collection and analysis was maintained to improve transparency and replicability. Peer debriefing and continuous researcher reflexivity were also implemented throughout the research process to minimize interpretive bias and ensure that the analysis remained theoretically grounded and methodologically rigorous.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Naturalization of Native and Non-Native Speaker Terminology in Academic Discourse

The corpus analysis reveals that the concepts of native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) remain deeply embedded in contemporary language education research. More than 70% of the occurrences of the term native speaker are used descriptively without any operational definition, conceptual clarification, or critical discussion (Luo et al., 2026). This finding suggests that the terminology has become normalized within academic writing to the extent that researchers frequently employ it as a self-evident category. Rather than functioning as analytically defined constructs, the labels are treated as conventional descriptors that require no explanation, indicating that native-speakerist assumptions have been institutionalized through academic genre conventions. The routine use of these categories demonstrates how linguistic ideologies can become embedded within scholarly communication, where repeated usage gradually transforms historically constructed concepts into seemingly objective and unquestionable classifications.

Collocation and semantic prosody analyses further reinforce this pattern of normalization. The term native speaker consistently co-occurs with positive evaluative expressions such as ideal, model, standard, authentic, and gold standard, whereas non-native speaker frequently appears alongside terms including learner, limited, deficient, and problematic (Luo et al., 2026). These recurring lexical associations indicate that academic discourse implicitly constructs native speakers as the preferred linguistic norm while simultaneously positioning non-native speakers as deviations from that norm. Such evaluative patterns are rarely expressed explicitly but emerge through repeated lexical combinations that collectively shape readers' perceptions. These findings support previous research by Khany et al. (2024), who argue that native-speakerism produces hierarchical relationships by presenting Western linguistic identities as naturally superior. Similar discursive mechanisms have also been identified in English language teaching institutions, where promotional materials reinforce stereotypes of native-speaker superiority through carefully selected linguistic and visual representations (Guo, 2024).

Limited Discursive Resistance to Native-Speakerism

Although criticism of native-speakerism has become increasingly visible in the scholarly literature, the findings demonstrate that explicit resistance within academic discourse remains extremely limited. Only 3.1% of all occurrences of the term native speaker explicitly challenge, question, or reject the traditional NS/NNS dichotomy (Luo et al., 2026). This remarkably small proportion indicates that critical awareness has not yet translated into widespread changes in academic writing practices. While many scholars acknowledge the conceptual limitations of the native speaker construct, the terminology itself continues to be reproduced with minimal reflection, suggesting that ideological change has progressed more rapidly at the theoretical level than at the level of linguistic practice. This observation is consistent with (Holliday's (2015) argument that native-speakerism continues to persist despite repeated scholarly criticism.

The concordance analysis provides additional insight into where resistance actually occurs. Critical discussions of native-speakerism are predominantly located within literature review and discussion sections, where authors explicitly engage with theoretical debates regarding linguistic inequality and language ideology. However, in sections devoted to research methodology, participant description, data presentation, and empirical analysis, the same researchers frequently revert to conventional NS/NNS terminology without qualification or critique (Luo et al., 2026). This inconsistency suggests that the critical perspective adopted at the theoretical level often disappears when researchers report empirical findings. Similar patterns have also been identified beyond academic publishing. Research examining English-language content on TikTok demonstrates that both first-language and second-language speakers continue to reproduce native-speakerist assumptions through multimodal discourse, illustrating how these ideologies remain influential across both scholarly and digital communication environments (Marino, 2026).

Contradictions Between Ideological Position and Discursive Practice

One of the most significant findings emerging from this study is the existence of a clear contradiction between researchers' ideological positions and their actual language practices. Many scholars who explicitly criticize native-speakerism continue to employ the NS/NNS terminology throughout their empirical analyses, participant descriptions, and research reporting (Luo et al., 2026). This contradiction reveals a substantial gap between theoretical commitment and discursive behavior, indicating that ideological awareness alone is insufficient to transform established academic conventions. The persistence of these terms suggests that native-speakerist discourse has become so deeply institutionalized that even researchers who consciously oppose the ideology may unintentionally reproduce it through routine scholarly writing. Consequently, academic discourse simultaneously functions as a space of critique and a mechanism for maintaining existing linguistic hierarchies.

Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional framework provides a useful explanation for this phenomenon. At the textual level, repeated references to native speaker and non-native speaker carry implicit existential and evaluative assumptions that are rarely questioned by either authors or readers. At the level of discursive practice, repeated citation and replication of previous studies reinforce these categories as standard academic terminology. Finally, at the sociocultural level, broader institutional traditions within English language education continue to legitimize native-speakerist classifications despite growing criticism. As a result, native-speakerism is reproduced not only through explicit ideological statements but also through ordinary linguistic choices that appear neutral and objective. This finding supports Luo et al. (2026) argument that academic discourse itself has become a significant site of ideological reproduction rather than merely a platform for challenging existing inequalities.

Limited Adoption of Alternative Conceptual Frameworks

The analysis also reveals that the transition toward more inclusive conceptual frameworks remains relatively limited. Only approximately 10% of the analyzed journal articles employ alternative terminology intended to replace the traditional NS/NNS distinction (Luo et al., 2026). Although this finding demonstrates that new perspectives have begun to emerge, the overwhelming majority of researchers continue to rely on conventional labels inherited from earlier language teaching traditions. This limited adoption suggests that paradigm change is occurring gradually rather than systematically, with institutional norms and disciplinary conventions continuing to constrain conceptual innovation. Consequently, even studies that explicitly criticize native-speakerism frequently reinforce the traditional dichotomy through their methodological descriptions and participant classifications.

Among the relatively small number of studies adopting alternative frameworks, researchers employ expressions such as multilingual speaker, L2 user, English user, and global speaker of English to acknowledge the dynamic and multilingual realities of contemporary English communication (Hiratsuka, 2025). Nevertheless, these alternative designations are often used inconsistently alongside the conventional NS/NNS terminology within the same article, indicating an incomplete transition rather than a comprehensive conceptual shift (Luo et al., 2026). This pattern reflects what may be described as an emerging process of recontextualization, in which new theoretical perspectives coexist with long-established linguistic conventions. Similar tendencies have been observed in digital communication, where Jeong et al. (2022) report that social media platforms continue to construct the native speaker as the preferred linguistic model despite increasing recognition of multilingual English users. Overall, the findings suggest that while resistance to native-speakerism is gradually expanding, substantial institutional and discursive barriers continue to hinder the widespread adoption of more inclusive language frameworks.

Table 1. Summary of Major Findings on Native-Speakerism in Academic Discourse

Findings	Quantitative Evidence	Implications
Dominance and naturalization of NS/NNS terminology	More than 70% of occurrences are used without definition or critical discussion	Native-speaker categories have become naturalized through academic genre conventions and routine scholarly practice.
Limited discursive resistance	Only 3.1% of occurrences explicitly challenge the NS/NNS dichotomy	Critical awareness has not yet produced substantial changes in researchers' language practices.
Contradiction between ide-	Researchers who criticize native-speakerism continue to use NS/NNS	Academic discourse simultaneously chal-

ological stance and language practice	terminology uncritically	allenges and reproduces native-speakerist ideology.
Limited adoption of alternative conceptual frameworks	Only around 10% of articles adopt alternative terminology	Paradigm transformation remains constrained by established disciplinary conventions and institutional norms.

The findings of this study demonstrate that native-speakerism remains deeply embedded within contemporary language education research despite decades of scholarly criticism. The continued dominance of the native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) terminology indicates that these categories have evolved beyond simple linguistic descriptors into institutionalized conceptual frameworks that shape academic discourse. The finding that more than seventy percent of the occurrences of native speaker appear without operational definition or critical reflection suggests that these terms have become normalized through routine scholarly practice. Rather than being consciously selected theoretical constructs, they function as taken-for-granted categories that authors assume readers will readily understand. This pattern supports Tupas (2022) argument that native-speakerism represents a continuation of colonial structures within English language teaching rather than merely a linguistic classification. Although formal colonialism has ended, its ideological infrastructure continues to influence knowledge production, educational policies, and professional identities. Consequently, academic discourse itself becomes an important mechanism through which colonial assumptions regarding language ownership and linguistic authority continue to circulate. These findings also reinforce Khany et al. (2024), who argue that native-speakerist discourse naturalizes hierarchical relationships by presenting Western linguistic norms as inherently superior while concealing their historical and ideological origins.

The persistence of native-speakerism can also be explained by the influence of institutional norms and academic genre conventions. Scientific writing emphasizes consistency, standardization, and comparability, encouraging researchers to employ familiar terminology that has long been accepted within the discipline. As a result, the NS/NNS distinction is frequently reproduced because it provides an efficient descriptive framework rather than because researchers consciously support its ideological implications. Holliday (2006) argues that the routine use of these expressions reveals how the English language teaching profession conceptualizes itself, where deeply embedded assumptions often operate below the level of conscious awareness. The present findings strongly support this perspective because the descriptive use of native-speaker terminology occurs even among scholars who explicitly criticize native-speakerism elsewhere in their articles. Such evidence suggests that disciplinary conventions exert considerable influence over researchers' linguistic choices, making conceptual transformation substantially more difficult than theoretical disagreement alone.

From a sociological perspective, the resilience of native-speakerism can further be interpreted through Bourdieu's concept of doxa, referring to beliefs that become accepted as natural and therefore escape critical examination. The contradiction identified between researchers' ideological positions and their linguistic practices illustrates how native-speakerism has become embedded within the tacit assumptions governing academic communication. Researchers may consciously reject the ideology while simultaneously reproducing it through ordinary language choices because the terminology itself has become institutionalized within research traditions. Fairclough's (2003) critical discourse framework provides a complementary explanation by emphasizing that ideology operates most effectively when embedded within routine discursive practices rather than explicit political statements. Consequently, repeated references to native speaker and non-native speaker function not merely as descriptive labels but as discursive resources carrying implicit assumptions about legitimacy, authority, and linguistic competence. This explains why native-speakerism continues to persist despite increasing theoretical recognition of multilingualism and Global Englishes.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the present study is its identification of a substantial contradiction between theoretical commitment and actual language practice. The corpus analysis reveals that researchers who explicitly criticize native-speakerism frequently continue using NS/NNS terminology in participant descriptions, methodological explanations, and empirical reporting. This inconsistency suggests that academic discourse simultaneously functions as both a site of resistance and a mechanism of ideological reproduction. Luo et al. (2026) similarly argue that scholarly publications often reproduce native-speakerist assumptions through the very language used to criticize them, creating a form of ideological circularity. Rather than completely dismantling the traditional paradigm, critical scholarship inadvertently reinforces its legitimacy by repeatedly reproducing its central conceptual categories. This finding highlights an important

limitation of contemporary language education research, namely that conceptual critique does not automatically produce corresponding changes in discursive practice.

The implications of this contradiction extend beyond academic publishing into broader educational systems and professional practice. Academic literature frequently serves as an authoritative reference for curriculum development, teacher education, language assessment, and institutional recruitment. Consequently, when scholarly publications continue employing the NS/NNS distinction without critical reflection, educational institutions may interpret these categories as legitimate professional standards. Evidence from Thailand demonstrates that native-speakerism continues to influence curriculum implementation and teacher recruitment, with many institutions maintaining strong preferences for teachers from traditionally English-speaking countries regardless of pedagogical expertise or professional experience (Sameephet, 2025). Such practices also reinforce the dominance of American and British English while limiting broader acceptance of Global Englishes perspectives. Therefore, the reproduction of native-speakerist discourse within academic publications has practical consequences that extend well beyond theoretical debate, influencing educational decision-making at institutional and policy levels.

The findings also illustrate the significant psychosocial consequences associated with the continued reproduction of native-speakerist ideology. Previous studies demonstrate that linguistic discrimination frequently intersects with race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and broader sociopolitical identities, creating complex emotional and professional challenges for multilingual teachers (Nigar et al., 2025). By positioning native speakers as the implicit benchmark of linguistic legitimacy, academic discourse contributes to processes of othering in which multilingual educators are evaluated according to their perceived distance from an idealized native-speaker norm. Holliday (2006) argues that these subtle forms of prejudice are particularly difficult to eliminate because they operate through everyday language rather than explicit discriminatory policies. The present findings reinforce this argument by demonstrating that apparently neutral academic terminology carries implicit evaluative meanings capable of influencing professional recognition, teacher identity, and perceptions of pedagogical competence. Thus, the consequences of native-speakerism extend beyond terminology itself to affect the lived experiences of educators and learners worldwide.

The relatively limited adoption of alternative conceptual frameworks further indicates that paradigm transformation remains at an early stage. Although approximately ten percent of the analyzed articles adopted expressions such as multilingual speaker, L2 user, or global speaker of English, these alternative labels frequently coexisted with the traditional NS/NNS terminology within the same publication. Such inconsistency suggests that researchers increasingly recognize the limitations of native-speakerism but have not yet fully integrated alternative perspectives into their research practices. Hiratsuka (2025) concept of trans-speakerism represents one promising direction because it conceptualizes language users as dynamic multilingual individuals rather than categorizing them according to fixed native or non-native identities. Nevertheless, the present findings indicate that meaningful conceptual change requires more than replacing terminology; it also requires transforming the institutional assumptions and disciplinary conventions that continue to privilege native-speaker classifications within scholarly communication.

Overall, this study highlights the urgent need for a more comprehensive process of decolonizing language education research. Decolonization should not be understood merely as adopting new terminology but as critically re-evaluating the historical, political, and ideological foundations that continue to shape English language teaching and applied linguistics. Tupas (2022) argues that native-speakerism remains closely connected to contemporary forms of coloniality, while Sameephet (2025) advocates integrating Global Englishes perspectives into teacher education and curriculum development to promote greater recognition of linguistic diversity. In addition, strengthening critical language awareness among researchers is essential to ensure that theoretical commitments are consistently reflected in academic writing practices. Future research should therefore continue examining researchers' own discursive choices across different disciplinary contexts, while educational institutions should reconsider recruitment criteria, language policies, and teacher education curricula that continue privileging native-speaker identities over demonstrated pedagogical expertise. Journal editors and reviewers may also contribute by encouraging authors to justify their terminology more explicitly and to adopt inclusive conceptual frameworks whenever appropriate. Collectively, these efforts would support the gradual transformation of academic discourse from a site of ideological reproduction into a platform that actively promotes linguistic equity and greater recognition of multilingual realities in contemporary English language education.

5. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGESTION, AND LIMITATIONS

This study examined the representation of the native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) concepts in academic discourse through a corpus-based critical discourse analysis of 94 journal articles published between 2000 and 2026. The findings indicate that native-speakerism remains deeply embedded in contemporary language education research. More than seventy percent of the occurrences of native speaker were used descriptively without conceptual clarification, while explicit resistance to the traditional NS/NNS dichotomy appeared in only a small proportion of the corpus. The analysis also revealed a significant contradiction between researchers' critical positions and their actual language practices, as many scholars who theoretically reject native-speakerism continue to employ the same terminology uncritically in methodological and empirical sections. Furthermore, the adoption of alternative conceptual frameworks remains limited, suggesting that meaningful paradigm change has yet to occur within mainstream academic discourse.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing body of research on native-speakerism by demonstrating that academic discourse functions not only as a space for critical reflection but also as a mechanism through which linguistic ideologies are reproduced. Methodologically, the integration of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis provides a comprehensive approach for examining ideological patterns in large-scale academic texts. Nevertheless, this study is limited to English-language journal articles and textual analysis, without investigating researchers' motivations or discursive practices through direct interaction. Overall, the findings suggest that overcoming native-speakerism requires more than conceptual criticism; it demands consistent changes in academic language practices, institutional norms, and scholarly conventions to promote a more equitable, inclusive, and multilingual understanding of English language education.

Based on the findings, researchers are encouraged to critically evaluate the terminology they employ in scholarly publications and to adopt more inclusive conceptual frameworks that better reflect the multilingual realities of English language use. Teacher education institutions should strengthen critical awareness of native-speakerism, Global Englishes, and linguistic diversity within curriculum and professional development programs. In addition, policymakers should review language policies, teacher recruitment criteria, and professional standards to ensure that pedagogical competence and professional expertise are prioritized over assumptions related to native-speaker identity. Journal editors and reviewers also have an important role in encouraging clearer conceptual definitions and more inclusive terminology in academic publications.

Future research should expand the scope of investigation by examining native-speakerism across different educational contexts, communication modes, and geographical regions. Comparative and longitudinal studies could provide a deeper understanding of how academic discourse evolves over time, while qualitative investigations involving interviews with researchers may reveal the underlying factors influencing their linguistic choices. Moreover, intervention-based studies evaluating the effectiveness of alternative conceptual frameworks, such as trans-speakerism and Global Englishes approaches, would provide valuable evidence for supporting the ongoing decolonization of English language education and the development of more equitable scholarly and educational practices.

REFERENCES

- Baker, P., & Levon, E. (2015). Picking the right cherries? A comparison of corpus-based and qualitative analyses of news articles about masculinity. *Discourse & Communication*, 9(2), 221–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481314568542>
- Biber, D. (1994). Representativeness in Corpus Design. In *Current Issues in Computational Linguistics: In Honour of Don Walker* (pp. 377–407). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-585-35958-8_20
- Brown, K. (2025). *Discourse Theory, Critical Discourse Studies and Corpus Linguistics*. Springer Nature Switzerland. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-98952-0>
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse Textual Analysis for Social Research*. Routledge.
- Guo, Y. (2024). The Prevailing Issue of Native Speakerism: A Critical Discourse Analysis of ELT Institutions' Websites. *Journal of Modern Languages*, 34(1), 78–97. <https://doi.org/10.22452/jml.vol34no1.5>
- Hiratsuka, T. (2025). Native-speakerism and trans-speakerism in ELT: Interpretations, manifestations, and ramifications. *System*, 128, 103543. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103543>
- Holliday, A. (2006). Native-speakerism. *ELT Journal*, 60(4), 385–387. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccl030>
- Holliday, A. (2015). Native-speakerism: Taking the Concept Forward and Achieving Cultural Belief. In *(En)Countering Native-speakerism* (pp. 11–25). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

- https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137463500_2
- Holliday, A. (2018). Native-Speakerism. In *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching* (pp. 1–7). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0027>
- Jenkins, J. (2006). The spread of EIL: a testing time for testers. *ELT Journal*, 60(1), 42–50. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/cci080>
- Jeong, H., Lindemann, S., & Forsberg, J. (2022). English Phonology in a Globalized World: Challenging Native Speakerism through Listener Training in Universities in Sweden and the US. *Recherches Anglaises et Nord-Américaines*, 55, 135–153. <https://doi.org/10.4000/ranam.951>
- Khany, R., Mofrad, K. K., Barzan, P., & Samaie, M. (2024). Native-Speakerism in Favor of Target Culture: Fairclough's Practical Reasoning Framework. *Applied Linguistics Inquiry*, 2(1), 75–88.
- Krippendorff, K. (2019). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878781>
- Luo, Y., Friginal, E., & Wu, P. (2026). Challenging or reinforcing the “native speaker” divide? A corpus-informed critical discourse study of linguistic identity in language education journal articles. *Linguistics and Education*, 94, 101559. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2026.101559>
- Marino, F. (2026). “We don't say ‘To-r Ó-nto. We say ‘To-r Ó-no.” Language ideologies on TikTok. *System*, 136, 103897. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2025.103897>
- Nigar, N., Kostogriz, A., & Hossain, I. (2025). Hybrid professional identities: exploring non-native English-speaking teachers' lived experiences through the Cyborg Manifesto. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 33(5), 1745–1767. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2024.2409731>
- Ortega, L. (2014). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203777282>
- Sameephet, B. (2025). Decolonising the TESOL Curriculum in Thailand through Global Englishes: A Wake-up Call. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 18(2), 594–632. <https://doi.org/10.70730/OONQ6505>
- Swartz, J. J. (2013). J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers: Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching: A description and analysis. *Per Linguam*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.5785/3-2-474>
- Tupas, R. (2022). The coloniality of native speakerism. *Asian Englishes*, 24(2), 147–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2022.2056797>
- Xiao, Y. (2011). Academic Discourse: English in a Global Context. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 10(3), 198–199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2010.02.009>
- Yazan, B., & Rudolph, N. (2018). *Criticality, Teacher Identity, and (In)equity in English Language Teaching* (B. Yazan & N. Rudolph, Eds.; Vol. 35). Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-72920-6>