

Linguaculture, Cultural Travel, Native-speakerism and Small Culture Formation on the Go: Working up from Instances

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I. Finding a Way In

In this chapter I explore the proposition that English in the world is hybrid in the sense of being varied, multiple and diverse, not because it has moved away from a so-labelled 'native' norm, but by the nature of how it has always been, and presumably as all languages are. After looking at the ideological Centre discourses that say otherwise, I will try to put them aside by means of a deCentred investigation of small instances. To embrace and to apply discipline to the inevitable intersubjectivity of this process, I will employ what has been referred to as analytical autoethnography (Anderson 2006), through which I attempt to lay bare and apply ethnographic discipline to what I see, while at the same time being hopefully sufficiently evocative (Ellis et al 2011) for readers to identify my experience with theirs.

My focus on ideology and discourses is more sociological than sociolinguistic. I will look at the relationship between English and culture but not as how large national cultures are spoken by large languages. Instead, I will seek a deCentred way in through my concept of small culture formation on the go, by which I mean the transient and creative way in which we all engage with the intercultural on an everyday basis from early childhood. It is both a methodology for looking and the location in which the intercultural takes place. This enables a parallel concept of 'small English formation on the go'. Making sense of 'the world' from this 'small' perspective, also connects with what Stuart Hall (1991: 35) refers to as needing "to retell the story from the bottom up, instead of from the top down". This working up from instances in turn resonates with the awareness of the ideological nature of the grand narratives of 'nation' and other large-culture propositions and also of the inaccuracies of methodological nationalism, by which is meant a false preoccupation with always starting with nation, that has grown out of this ideology (Delanty 2006; Mannheim 1936).

[page 101 ends here]

In my own professional and research trajectory I have come to this approach and understanding by means of both fallacious and positive experiences. First, living the linguistic imperialism as described by Phillipson (1992), my very early career, as a British Council English teacher in Iran and then setting up university English curricula in Egypt and Syria, was spent thinking that standards of teaching English were bound up in Western-defined types

of cultural behavior (Holliday 2005). Indeed, English *constructed* as a ‘superior’ language has been the basis of my entire career. Learning through experience that this point of view was fallacious required the development of a postmodern research approach that realized the ideological nature of the structures involved and also the implicatedness of myself as the researcher in trying to work things out (Clifford and Marcus 1986). Digging very deep into my own history in the research was particularly important because I was witnessing neo-racist prejudice about culture and language - the hidden racism that is claimed not to be racist, that some think is by far the most dangerous type of racism (Hervik 2013; Jordan and Weedon 1995; Spears 1999).

II. World English Everywhere

In the World Englishes literature, there are two reassuring and helpful notions that are becoming established. The first is that English is located everywhere - i.e., not belonging to one place and then found problematically everywhere else (Saraceni 2015). The second is that English is hybrid (Schneider 2016). It is only recently that I have become comfortable with the notion of hybridity on re-reading Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall. Whereas before I had felt it to mean ‘imperfect’ and ‘in-between’, I now see that it can be a permanent and indeed desirable state of difficult-to-define and uncertain identities for all of us (Bhabha 1994: 56; Delanty 2006: 33; Hall 1996: 619; Holliday 2018a: 146). This therefore helps us get away from the false idea of purity that has made us think that some Englishes might not be as good as others.

This movement towards a better understanding of what is real - the real hybrid complexity of things - is part of an ongoing struggle to get to the bottom of things in both social science and life, as we are strung between the real and the imagined. To really understand that ‘English’ is socially, politically and ideologically constructed is to keep our-selves in a disciplined way informed by what we see and hear rather than what we are told. Perceptions of English should therefore be unrestricted by dominant and popular discourses, narratives and ideology. This requires keeping a sharp eye on the social construction of things, with a disciplined constructivist research methodology (Berger and Luckmann 1979; Holliday 2016).

At the same time, English is mediated by social structures, education systems, ‘standards’, large culture, small culture and personal identities. Whatever is believed about it, this is very ‘real’ to the people who believe it. Therefore, there is the slight conundrum in the contrast between the clear diversity of World Englishes versus what people might imagine it to be.

III. Cultural Travel and Diversity

One only needs to look around at everyday examples of language and culture to see the clear diversity. Recently my Italian colleague said ‘I will leave my money in Canada’, [page 102 ends here] meaning that she would spend so much while in Canada that she would

have none left. In one of her novels, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2007: 423) has one of her Nigerian characters say 'Did you come out well this morning?' Both of these are phrases that I had never before encountered in my lifetime as a speaker of a particular British English. However, they make perfect sense and break no 'traditional' grammatical rules. While staying with a bilingual Arabic-English family in Syria, I heard a young person, who had just arrived from the US where she was a freshman student, switch, in a matter of hours, from the English she brought from there to the one she spoke in Syria, along with very different body language and cultural references. In all the cases, we have no business as academics to judge or prefer what we expect to what we hear. I am now aware that I use different variations of English when I am with Iranian and Syrian friends or family or with students and colleagues from a range of language backgrounds - who are probably most of the people I interact with. I therefore find it meaningful when Indian Amritavalli (2012) says that her English is just one of the several languages that she speaks, and that despite these being her only languages, she speaks them all imperfectly on a daily basis. Indeed, this reminds us that we all speak all our languages imperfectly. It also resonates when Kamal (2015) reports her Kuwaiti university students using English as part of their identity statement, and when Clemente and Higgins (2008) describe how Mexican University students connect English with their political identity. These few examples contribute to the now common idea that English is used for diverse social and political purposes.

IV. Powerful Branding

In the midst of this diversity, there are however powerful ideological and commercial forces that we should be aware of. Gray's (2010) discussion of how commercial English language textbooks often present an agenda-ridden and simplistic slice of English 'culture' for the purpose of selling an exoticized brand, not unlike Burberry, is a now well-known exemplification of this. While not wishing here to enter into a critique of the concept of English as a lingua franca, it does have to be noted that its conceptualization results from a particular professional-academic discourse of English and pedagogy. Such an observation is no more than an acknowledgement of the way in which professions and academic small cultures are structured everywhere (Bernstein 1971). Hence, there is a particular professional construction of how English might be described and therefore taught based on who is speaking it and under what circumstances which, in this case, may indeed be less naïve than trying to attach it to a narrow slicing of something called 'culture'. However, it also needs to be noted that some people can find that the professional discourse that then grows up around what has been named with the 'ELF' (English as a Lingua Franca) acronym alienating. An example is Vicky Kuo's (2006) critique of English as a lingua franca as culturally bland and patronizing, as she makes the contrary point that her students actually want to work hard to achieve the to them impossible pronunciation of a 'brand' of imagined 'British English' so that they can wear it rather like a Burberry-like brand. What I find significant about her position is that she acknowledges the 'brand' factor in terms of a right of acquisition.

I emphasize again that I do not make these observations about English as a lingua franca to in any way critique the concept, but instead to draw attention to the discursive nature of any claims about English of which all parties who teach, learn, adopt or embrace [page 103 ends here] any aspect of the language need to be aware. Wherever students and teachers use any textbook that purports to represent particular uses or cultures of English, they need all to be aware that the content is a particular, subjective, aligned, slice or brand. Indeed, the content is as much to be critiqued in discourse analysis as it is to be emulated, as I describe in Holliday (2014). English language textbooks are as much examples of a discursive or even political alignment as of models of language - just as any content in any educational curriculum, where hidden curricula are always present (e.g., Anyon 1980).

V. Whether or Not 'Language' or 'Culture' Can Be Owned

This necessary perception of language and culture as always questionable discourse resonates with Saraceni's (2015: 163) discussion of English as commodity or software. He reminds us in this discussion of other metaphors - plant, territory, family, organism - system or practice - spread, colonizing or colonized. One such icon of ownership which is very much of interest to me is to be found within the powerful and pervasive 'us'-'them' ideology of native-speakerism, born in the English-speaking West but evident to greater or lesser degrees everywhere (Holliday 2005, 2018b). Whether it relates to the false imperialist agenda of teaching the cultural Other 'how to think' and 'be civilized', or insinuates a false construction of race and whiteness, it discriminates against people who are labelled as 'non-native speakers', or it leads people everywhere to marginalize themselves by believing that people who are simply labelled as 'native speakers' are superior teachers (e.g., Holliday and Aboshiha 2009; Kubota et al. 2005; Kumaravadivelu 2012), it is an ideologically-driven icon.

Even without getting into such ideology wars, one only has to consider scenarios of extreme linguistic diversity to appreciate the unlikely nature of the 'native speaker' concept. Following her comments cited above, Amritavalli (2012: 54) puts this well with reference to India: "shifting the discussion from the imperial language to our own garden-variety languages may help us separate incidental questions of power and prestige from the genuinely linguistic ones". She goes on to say that she does not feel sufficiently competent to call herself a 'native speaker' of any of the four languages she has to use on a daily basis (2012: 54). Speaking of the same linguistic context, Rajagopalan (2012: 210) makes the opposite yet similar point that "a member of such a society is a 'native speaker', not of this or that language, but of the entire linguistic repertoire he/she uses". He goes on to say that "in so stretching the use of the concept of native speaker beyond recognition we end up revealing its ultimate uselessness and utter dispensability" except for supporting "an openly racist ideology, aided ... by a billion-dollar EFL industry" (2012: 210).

Even where the 'native speaker' label is considered to signify an objective measure in linguistic analysis, as Kuhn (1970) reminds us about the political structures of science, it will have been constructed as such in the early days of the paradigm. Hence, when Kumar-

avadelu (2016) complained that he himself had struggled in his career because of the way in which the 'non-native speaker' label had been thrust upon him, all I could think was that I had never considered *him*, as a friend and colleague, never mind as an established academic in his field, as someone who could be labelled a 'non-native speaker' of English. To me he is just someone who 'speaks English', like most of my family, many colleagues and students, who also just 'speak' English as one of other languages. This observation leads me simply to think that the 'native speaker' label is a bit of professional [page 104 ends here] discourse that has sustained because it is useful within the hierarchies and delineations that pervade the everydayness of work settings. I then think of my British masters students, all experienced teachers, who, when confronted with the possibility of native-speakerism, claim that they do not use the label. Then I hear some of them use it without thinking. Then, a bit of critical discourse analysis would reveal that there was indeed a degree of neo-racism hidden between their lines. I feel safe to make this observation because I have found similar traces of racism in my own ethnographic field notes about students from Hong Kong, even though I already felt myself fully aware of how they were being ideologically positioned (Holliday 2005: 31). We all therefore need to look at ourselves. In a recent blog, I try to do this - to put into writing what I think of the following, probably, very common statement:

'If I want someone to teach my children Russian I will look for a native speaker because they know the real Russian language'. I could easily have said that myself. But when I really think about the sentence I begin to see that 'native speaker' is not an objective category. When I search into what I actually mean, I discover some sort of idealisation. It should not be *any* Russian, but one who fits the image that I have in my mind - perhaps appearance, skin colour, class, accent, name, demeanour, or an image from literature or film. It relates to the branded, exoticised and packaged, 'us'-'them' slices of so-called 'culture' that one can find in commercial textbooks and that we might have been brought up with since primary school. (Holliday 2020: 58)

The overall point that I wish to make here, again, is that the common association between the 'native speaker' label, 'English' and so-called 'culture', *is* real in its presence in discourses of language and culture and the multiple narratives that express it, but that this does not mean that it is real outside these discourses. The strengths and *apparent* reality of these discourses and narratives can be increased immensely through institutionalization, reification, normalization and so on. The apparent solidity of common acronyms such as 'NS' and 'NNS', as perhaps with 'ELF' referred to above, and the establishment of scholarship and sub-disciplines that specialize in the technicalities of researching the native-non-native speaker topic contribute to this in effecting a false sense of reality. At the same time, these 'realities', perhaps rightly, are used in acts of political resistance - the strategic essen-

tialism, often attributed to Gayatri Spivak (Darius and Jonsson 1993), in which 'us'-'them' narratives are inverted and used as ideological weapons against those who invented them.

VI. Interrogating the Discourse

However, appreciating that there is reality in the *existence* of discourses about the relationship between English and culture does not excuse inaction if such discourses promote an essentialist, neo-racist understanding, and if methodological nationalism, as referred to at the beginning of this chapter, enables false science. Action needs to be taken to put such discourses in their place. We all need to do what we can. We need to realize that strategic essentialism is still essentialism, and that imagining that we can 'mean nothing' by using false native-non-native speaker distinctions as though they are innocent is a naïve illusion. One might imagine that it is easy for someone such as me, who has no problem with being labelled 'white', 'male' and 'native speaker', has low stakes in these issues. However, I have also resented, especially early in my career as an English teacher, being thought that this was the main reason for my successful employment rather than my professional training and hard work. **[page 105 ends here]**

I have therefore taken a personal stand by tweeting that "I no longer review research that compares 'native' and 'non-native speaker' teachers as though the groups are real and not imagined" (Holliday 2017). The plea behind this statement, which I believe should be extended to all research around the native-non-native speaker distinction, is that researchers should be aware of, and make it clear in their writing, the discursive and indeed ideological nature of what they are researching. This is also with the belief that research into language, culture and speakerhood would do better if other ways of talking about these issues could be found. I take this stance also from broad, post-modern, constructivist ethnographic disciplines of making the familiar strange, allowing the unexpected to emerge, and interrogating the positionality of the researcher. Within this approach it would be normal to problematize any terminology which characterizes the prominent discourses within the setting being researched with the presumption that they are always socially if not ideologically constructed.

VII. Small Culture Formation on the Go

With regard to getting to the bottom of what might be going on with the relationship between language and culture that might underpin perceptions about English in the world, I would like to come back to the concept referred to at the beginning of the chapter, of small culture formation on the go. This works from the presumption that shared, underlying universal cultural processes are the basis for the way that we all engage with culture on an everyday basis from early childhood, wherever we are (Holliday 2018a). Focusing on this mezzo level of interaction might enable us not only to cut through presumptions about large (i.e., national or ethnic) culture and English, but also to observe how the discourses and narratives that underpin such presumptions operate. Even the distinction between the

cultural and the intercultural blurs. I will illustrate this with two cases, both of which come from the small-up witnessing of everyday events.

VIII. Healthily deCentered by Unexpected English

The first event is a research interview reported in Amadasi and Holliday (2018) in which my Italian colleague, Sara and I conversed with a postgraduate student from another linguistic and cultural background, who, for the purposes of readability in this paper, I will call Beata. Not referring to the country of origin of the student is part of our strategy to 'disturb' the data by trying to see beyond cultural backgrounds that are known to carry prejudicial assumptions, as discussed by Baumann (1996: 1-2) in his study of multiple constructions of culture in the London suburb of Southall. As well as the main findings of the study in which the interview took place, what I wish to note here is my own unexpected experience of being wrong-footed by no longer being able to rely on 'my own English' which I have been brought up to believe to be an unquestionable resource. I think that I might cautiously say that both Sara and Beata were competent users of English - but English that I did not always have a background of certainty with. In my struggle to explain what this is, now that I am trying to resist dominant discourses, surprisingly new understandings begin to emerge. I find this paragraph from Karen Risager useful:

People carry their Danish language resources with them into new cultural contexts and perhaps put them to use in new ways under new circumstances ... For example, [page 106 ends here] when I as a Dane move around the world, I tend to build on my Danish linguaculture, when I speak English, French or German. I therefore contribute to the flow of Danish linguaculture across languages. (2011: 107, 10)

It is of course important to note here that this flow of linguaculture is highly fluid and defined and redefined by personal cultural trajectories within the process of small culture formation on the go on a daily basis. Beata and Sara are therefore both bringing their own cultural experience into their English as part of this transient and creative process. I ask Sara what she thinks about this. She tells me what she thinks about the possibility of linguaculture; and I include all of what she says here in her email because we see her making sense. It is also important to note that she is not a linguist, but a sociologist with most of her experience with young children and conversation analysis:

Is this linked mostly to a figurative use of the language rather than grammatical? Well this is all very complicated, because for me there are multiple levels in which this can be realised. It depends for example whether you are speaking with someone you know well, or someone you barely know. Or again, if the other person is using English to communicate with you but normally speaks another language, for example French, or if I am speaking with some-

one who is totally 'competent' (forgive the term but I don't know how to say it better) in English.

I am thinking more about those times when I am using English to communicate with someone who is also using English as a second language. In those occasions, as English is for both of us a tool to communicate, I think it becomes easier to let our linguaculture enter in the exchange. We both allow each other to draw upon those terms and images we are used to, to express ourselves. At the same time, it's easier to switch to the other two languages, Italian and French for example, to express something better and to give a meaning you might feel will be lost with English as a medium language.

But another situation is the one I have with you for example. I mean, now I know I can let my linguaculture enter more in our conversations, because I know you appreciate this and you don't judge the non-perfection of my English. But I would be careful to use some of those expressions if I am in the UK speaking with someone I barely know.

It might be because Sara knows my views about not using the familiar 'native speaker' label that she does not use that term. Adopting the more unfamiliar term, linguaculture, might just be helping her to explain something else that she had not thought about before - which is the value of moving out of the familiar. The factor of expectation is certainly there in what she says - who you are speaking to and what they expect of you - and that this will be different in settings where English is more commonly spoken. Sara further comments that she will make strategic choices about how far she can bring her Italian linguaculture into her English dependent on her perception of the expectations of the person she is communicating with, and on how 'creative' she feels that she can be. This is not so much 'respecting' what might have been previously considered a 'native speaker' norm, but assessing how far she can be herself. The implication here is that her linguaculture will enrich her English where she feels that she can be creative. Of course, there are also narratives at play here - that speaking English in Britain *is* different. However, what the concept of linguaculture might do is to open something, perhaps unexpected, to do with identity. Sara continues: **[page 107 ends here]**

However, I frequently wonder how and to what extent this is also linked to the ability of discovering new sides of yourself. I probably mentioned this to you already, and I still can't give an explanation to this, but for example to me, it happens to be able of an ironic timing when I speak English more than when I speak Italian. Am I in that occasion trying to adopt another linguaculture? Am I feeling different from the me who speak Italian because of this?

I wish to argue that Sara thinking about 'discovering new sides' of herself and my own wrong-footedness, and trying to think about what was going on with our Englishes without

resorting to the established native-non-native speaker distinction, by trying to make sense of the new concept of linguaculture, are forms of deCentring. In other words, we were stepping outside a Centre, established, structural, and expected way of defining how everything should be. Again I find Stuart Hall the most helpful of the many people who speak about this when he refers to 'the de-centred cultural', which exists at the unrecognized margins (1991: 35). I am taking the liberty of spelling the term with a capital C to emphasize the major existence of the Centre, which could be any dominant discursive force or ideology that constructs the dominant stories of who we are. This could be 'the West' defining the rest of the world with its image of globalization which is driven by global markets (e.g., Bhabha 1994: xiv; Fairclough 2006: 40). A world that is neatly organized around the false concepts of one language, one culture, one nation, serves this Centre convenience. The ethnographer also needs to be deCentred - to observe realities directly rather than as they are imagined by the Centre. Thus, feeling my language was marginalized, even for a moment, helped me to acquire a deCentred position. It increased my criticality and helped me to make the familiar strange. In submitting myself to the linguacultures that Sara and Beata brought to the conversation I am also healthily considering that the cautious, faltering English that Sara refers to can be more productive in the way in which it works to communicate its sense-making and is self-conscious in the way in which it expresses small culture formation on the go. This is why I often think that my students who struggle with English which they construct as a second, third or other language, do far better than students who are complacent with over-confidence that their so-called 'native' language automatically works. Where the researcher needs to deCentre how they look at the world, it helps immensely if they can deCentre their English in how they talk about it. Removing 'native speaker' or 'non-native speaker' from one's language, and perhaps even 'second language', especially the discourse-fixing acronyms NS, NNS, L1 and L2, will inevitably take one's thinking somewhere else. Indeed, part of trying to be deCentred is to disturb the discourse by saying something like 'labelled as' before placing such as 'non-native speaker' in inverted commas.

IX. English in Textbooks

The second event relates back to the issue of English language textbooks. I recently heard an experienced teacher say in a seminar presentation that her students believed that English was an individualist language. She gave the example of their reaction to the content of a textbook. Because of their religion, they found the reference to wine in a party scene culturally taboo. They also found the reference to a woman on the motorway waiting for a breakdown service to attend to her car while her husband was at home cooking impossible in 'their culture'. My first response, which seemed to be shared by others in the seminar who came from the same country as the presenter, was to be **[page 108 ends here]** shocked that students should still think like this, especially regarding the woman on the motorway - denying their cultural diversity with a restricted view of gender roles.

My second response was that the textbook must have been written by an author who was using it as an opportunity to make a point about gender, and that if 'wine' should be excluded from the text because it was forbidden by the religion, 'murder' should also be excluded - and that the teacher should be able to discuss these points with the students. I have written elsewhere about teacher and student strategies for dealing with what they consider to be culturally problematic texts and how to pull students away from essentialist viewpoints (Holliday 2014). Here I want to look briefly at the possible agendas behind the textbook. It occurred to me that what the students were calling 'individualist' might actually therefore be the textbook writer's freedom to play with the text, which they would not expect from a ministry of education approved textbook.

However, after the seminar, when I discussed this further with the teacher, she said that the textbook was written by a ministry of education team who selected and approved texts to include in the book from a variety of sources. This piece of information changed everything. I had been presumptuous to imagine that there was not an integrity in the educational system within which this reported event took place. Nevertheless, it remained clear that the statement, 'students believe that English is an individualist language', could not be taken or left at face value. It is a statement that cannot be let go because it represents a native-speakerist and indeed neo-racist assumption that particular cultural values and behaviours belong to a particular large culture and a language that is falsely presumed exclusively native to it. The details of the circumstances within which such a statement is made always need, as much as is realistically possible, to be laid bare, and in whatever social environment might seem relevant. The place to begin with getting to the bottom of what was going on might be to talk to the students about what they meant, to observe how textbooks were presented to them by the school, their teachers, what was said about it by their wider community of peers, family and the media inside and outside the school. One could also go and talk to members of the ministry textbook team to find out their intentions, agendas, what narratives they were bringing to the task, the policies and structures and the wider environment they were responding to, and so on. Implicit in this investigation would certainly be a search for the discourses that were being responded to or produced. Questions to be asked might be whether the ministry curriculum committee were using the textbook (a) to broaden students' perceptions regarding cultural and gender roles, or (b) to conform to the Centre native-speakerist view that English represents a 'native' large culture and should therefore have 'foreign', 'individualist culture' content. There might of course be a complex mixture of both along with other unexpected and hidden agendas.

Looking at the reported statement about student beliefs in this way is not only what we can do, but also what we must do once the grand narratives of English and culture have been put in their place as ideologically constructed. Seeing the statement as an instance of small culture formation on the go, instead of as an example of the grand narrative that 'English represents a particular culture', both enables and necessitates a very different type of research project. It is rather like Clifford Geertz's (1993: 6, citing Ryle) famous example.

Two boys are seen each rapidly opening and closing one of their eyes. An ethnographic study of the wider group to which they belong produces a thick description of instances of data that indicates that one of the boys is winking to parody the other boy who is blinking to make fun of him in front of the rest of the group. **[page 109 ends here]**

What I am learning from Geertz's example, which underpins the small culture formation on the go approach, is that one should always go to the wider group of people to see what might be going on. It should be a group that is relevant, large enough and small enough to have the richness and to be manageable - small culture with a visible dynamism - on the go - and accessible. A problem with beginning with large culture is that it relies on generalization and imagination rather than experienced instances.

X. Emerging findings

There is nothing particular about the two events above except that they emerged as places where the relation between English and culture could be glimpsed in operation. They were instances of small culture formation on the go that each revealed an aspect of the relationship. In a sense, events that show some sort of aspect of the relationship might be found anywhere where English is used in one way or another by people who are carrying it and fragments of cultural experience from place to place and event to event for a multiplicity of reasons.

On the one hand, when the grand narratives of English and culture are put aside, researchers have more opportunity to find the unexpected. On the other hand, without the grand narratives to create a false image of organized reality, the intersubjective nature of the research and the subjectivity of the researcher is laid bare. A small culture approach has by its nature to be aware of the heuristic nature of 'culture' as an instance of social behavior. This perpetual lack of certainty helps deCentred investigation in which the researcher can be sufficiently wrong-footed to see the unexpected. Hence, in the first event, I am forced to see English differently because I could not use it as expected. In the second event, investigating further my first presumption about the authorship of the textbook makes me realise that I was wrong and reveals a new, more complex line of investigation.

Out of this wrong-footed deCentredness, the two events therefore show the following unexpected aspects of English in the world. (1) English is not confined to so-labelled native-non-native-speaker positions; and looking further reveals the hybrid nature of linguaculture that confounds all expectations. (2) The discourses and narratives surrounding how people perceive the relationship between English and culture are complex and require looking further at the concerned parties and their agendas to see how meanings are constructed.

In Holliday (1999: 255) I make the point that a culture is a slice of social life selected by the researcher for their purposes - in the cases above, which the researcher comes upon by chance. It will however be perceived and understood or not understood at all as cultural by the other people who happen to be there. The study of English and culture, as indeed the study of culture everywhere, is therefore an open-ended exploration of what happens to

be going on from the exigencies of particular detail up - acknowledging that that detail might be seen differently by all the parties involved. If, therefore, someone states that 'this is not English' or 'that is the culture of English', they have to be taken seriously; but it is the reasons for why they construct and reify the particular reality that they prefer, and the ideologies that underpin this, that have to be got to the bottom of. This is very different to confirming the essence of the relationship. [page 110 ends here]

IX. Working Up From Instances

The larger point that emerges from the two cases in this paper is that one must not work down from prescriptions - starting with what might appear to be the established grand narratives of English and culture, but which are in fact ideological. There is no point in trying to pin down, describe, define, measure or compare these grand concepts because they are an illusion. Rather, it is useful to look at how and why they are constructed as such. To do this, I hope that my examples have shown that it is better to work up from instances - to get to the bottom of what is going on between people. World Englishes? All that is clear is that English *is* in the world in a vast and complex multiplicity of different ways and forms. [page 111 ends here]

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