

Deconstructing the 'Native Speaker' Ideal in Indonesian Digital Classrooms: A Postmodern Narrative Inquiry at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS)

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Abstract

The “native speaker” ideal has long dominated English language teaching, reinforcing hierarchies of linguistic legitimacy and authority. Yet, as education in Indonesia rapidly shifts toward digital platforms, the urgency to reexamine this ideology becomes critical. In a post-pandemic context where online English learning has redefined interaction, identity, and pedagogy, this study deconstructs the persistence of the native-speaker norm in Indonesian digital classrooms through a postmodern narrative inquiry at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS). Drawing on Derrida’s deconstruction and Lyotard’s critique of metanarratives, it interrogates how teachers and students narrate their identities, anxieties, and negotiations within virtual learning environments. Findings reveal that native-speakerism is both reproduced and destabilized in digital classrooms. Online interaction dissolves the rigid binary between native and non-native English users, highlighting fluid, hybrid, and localized Englishes. Participants negotiate authority, identity, and legitimacy in ways that challenge traditional linguistic hierarchies. The study contributes at multiple levels: theoretically, by extending postmodern thought into digital ELT; pedagogically, by advocating for decolonized and inclusive practices; and socially, by positioning Indonesian classrooms as spaces of epistemic resistance where meaning and identity remain dynamic and unfinished.

Keywords: *Native-speakerism, Digital Classrooms, Postmodern Theory, World Englishes, Decolonized Pedagogy*

Introduction

The “native speaker” ideal has long occupied a central position in English language teaching (ELT), functioning as an enduring marker of linguistic authority and cultural legitimacy. This ideology, which privileges Western varieties of English and marginalizes non-native speakers, continues to shape pedagogical practices, hiring policies, and learner identities across global contexts. In Indonesia, despite the growing presence of World Englishes discourse, native-speakerism persists in influencing student perceptions and institutional practices, with learners often viewing native-accented English as inherently superior (Adalta, 2022; Fang, 2023). However, the rapid digitalization of education accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced profound disruptions to traditional classroom hierarchies and modes of linguistic interaction. Digital platforms reconfigure the dynamics of participation, authority, and identity negotiation in ways that demand critical examination of how native-speakerism operates, persists, or transforms within virtual learning environments (Rini & Nabhan, 2023; Mahmud et al., 2025). Postmodern theory offers a productive lens through which to interrogate these shifting dynamics. Drawing on contemporary applications of deconstruction and critiques of grand narratives, a postmodern framework destabilizes fixed notions of linguistic legitimacy and exposes the constructed nature of the native/non-native divide. Applied to digital ELT contexts, this theoretical orientation enables researchers to examine how meaning, identity, and authority are continuously negotiated and contested in online spaces. In Indonesia, where English functions as a foreign language embedded within complex postcolonial and sociolinguistic realities, such an approach becomes particularly urgent. Yet, despite extensive scholarship on native-speakerism in traditional classrooms, research exploring how this ideology manifests and is challenged within Indonesian digital learning environments remains strikingly limited (Jovic, 2023; Mahmud et al., 2025).

This study addresses this gap by employing a postmodern narrative inquiry to examine how students and teachers at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS) construct, negotiate, and resist the native-speaker ideal in digital English classrooms. Through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, the research foregrounds participants’ lived

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experiences and personal narratives, treating them as sites of meaning-making and epistemic resistance. By situating the analysis within Indonesia's specific sociocultural and educational context, the study contributes to three interrelated domains: theoretically, by extending postmodern thought into digital ELT scholarship; pedagogically, by advocating for decolonized and inclusive teaching practices that recognize linguistic diversity (Fang, 2023; Rini & Nabhan, 2023); and socially, by positioning Indonesian classrooms as spaces where global hierarchies of language can be interrogated and reimagined. Ultimately, this research seeks to reveal how digital interaction both reproduces and destabilizes traditional linguistic binaries, offering insights into the fluid, hybrid, and localized practices that characterize English use in contemporary Indonesian higher education (Adalta, 2022; Jovic, 2023; Mahmud et al., 2025).

Theoretical Review

Native-Speakerism and Its Historical Roots

The “native speaker” ideal has shaped English language teaching for decades, functioning as a standard of linguistic legitimacy and authority. Early ELT models positioned English as a fixed system owned by those born in Anglophone contexts (Phillipson, 1992). This ideology framed native speakers as ideal teachers, correct language models, and authentic cultural representatives (Holliday, 2006). As a result, non-native speakers were often positioned as deficient or incomplete users of English (Canagarajah, 1999). In Indonesia, this hierarchy historically influenced hiring practices, learner attitudes, and classroom expectations (Zein, 2018; Kusumaningrum, 2021). Students often associate “good” English with U.S. or British accents (Fang, 2023). Native-likeness is framed as an aspiration rather than a colonial residue (Adalta, 2022). Despite criticism from scholars advocating pluralized Englishes, native-speakerism remains subtly embedded in institutional discourse (Mahboob, 2018).

From World Englishes to Translanguaging: Challenging Linguistic Hierarchies

World Englishes scholarship disrupted the idea of English as singular or owned by native speakers (Kachru, 1992; Jenkins, 2015). The focus shifted to varieties shaped by local sociocultural contexts. Postcolonial and decolonial scholars further argued that English in the Global South is not a copy of Western English, but a legitimate localized resource (Pennycook, 2007; Tupas, 2020). Recent work moves beyond the pluralization of English into translanguaging, which views language use as fluid rather than separated into named codes (García & Wei, 2014). In Indonesian classrooms, translanguaging practices allow students to draw on Indonesian, Javanese, Arabic, and English to build meaning (Rini & Nabhan, 2023). However, even in translanguaging-friendly environments, native-like pronunciation remains a symbol of prestige (Jovic, 2023). This shows that linguistic pluralism has expanded, but linguistic hierarchy persists, especially in student self-evaluation and peer judgment (Fang, 2023; Nugraha, 2024). This contradiction makes further inquiry necessary.

Digital Classrooms and Shifting Pedagogical Authority

Online synchronous classrooms reorganize interaction, visibility, and authority. Video conferencing platforms flatten traditional classroom spatial hierarchies (Hampel, 2019). Teachers no longer occupy a central physical position of power. Instead, authority is negotiated through screen presence, voice, and discourse (Blume, 2022). Digital spaces also introduce new forms of anxiety. Students report heightened consciousness of voice, accent, and pronunciation when speaking online (Mahmud et al., 2025). Camera, microphone, and chat functions mediate identity performance (Zhao & Jin, 2024). However, digital spaces also open space for identity experimentation. Students can rehearse utterances before speaking, use chat to bypass pronunciation concerns, or selectively present identity (Rizqi & Amalia, 2024). The native/non-native divide becomes both visible and unstable. Synchronous classrooms amplify accent exposure but also democratize participation (Nabhan, 2024). This contradictory dynamic requires deeper theorization.

Postmodern Perspectives on Identity, Meaning, and Legitimacy

Postmodern theory provides a framework for analyzing how identity and legitimacy are constructed rather than fixed. Derrida's (1976) concept of deconstruction challenges binary oppositions, including native vs. non-native and correct vs. incorrect. These binaries rely on power rather than inherent truth. Lyotard (1984) critiques grand narratives, such as the belief that English must adhere to a single global standard. Digital classrooms expose the fragility of such narratives because meaning is negotiated in real time and across multiple linguistic resources. Foucault's (1972) concept of power/knowledge explains how linguistic norms are enforced through institutional discourse. Yet, power is not total resistance always emerges. In Indonesian digital classrooms, authority becomes distributed, identities become fluid, and legitimacy becomes contestable. This theoretical lens aligns directly with examining personal narratives of learners negotiating accent, confidence, and linguistic identity online.

Existing Indonesian Scholarship and the Research Gap

Research in Indonesia has examined native-speakerism in hiring policies (Zein, 2018), learner identity (Adalta, 2022), teacher beliefs (Mahmud et al., 2025), and translanguaging practices (Rini & Nabhan, 2023). However, three major gaps remain:

Table 1 Indonesian Scholarship and the Research Gap.

An example of a column heading	Column A (t)	Column B (t)
And an entry	1	2
And another entry	3	4
And another entry	5	6

Contribution of This Study

This study contributes by:

1. Documenting how native-speakerism persists and transforms in synchronous digital classrooms.
2. Using narrative inquiry to foreground lived experiences rather than attitudes or policy discourse
3. Applying postmodern theory to reveal identity as fluid, hybrid, and unfinished.

This positions Indonesian digital classrooms as sites of epistemic resistance, not passive receivers of linguistic authority.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research design using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method. Articulated by Barkhuizen (2013), is especially valuable in exploring how people create meaning from their personal histories. In language learning, narratives help us understand not just the what of language learning but the why and how the personal, emotional, and social factors that shape learners' experiences. For this study, narrative inquiry allows participants to express their experiences and reflections, particularly as they relate to the evolving perceptions of the "native speaker" ideal in a digital space. Drawing on the theory of Gary Barkhuizen (2013) in Narrative Inquiry in Language Teaching and Learning Research, qualitative research, and specifically narrative inquiry, enables a deep understanding of how people construct meaning through their personal stories. Barkhuizen emphasizes that narrative inquiry, when applied to language teaching and learning, allows researchers to access learners' and teachers' lived experiences and to explore their reflections on their identities and practices within specific contexts. This aligns well with the goals of this study, which seeks to investigate how students at UMS construct their language learning identities in response to the "native speaker" ideal in digital environments.

Barkhuizen and his colleagues argue that qualitative methods such as narrative inquiry are valuable because they provide insights into how people understand their personal, social, and cultural worlds, particularly when studying experiences that may not be easily quantified or understood through statistical methods. By focusing on the personal stories of students, this research highlights the complexity of identity formation and linguistic authority in a digital classroom setting, making it the ideal method for investigating these nuanced phenomena. To guide the analysis of data, this study draws upon postmodern theory, particularly the works of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. (1). Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction (1976) plays a central role in the analysis of the "native speaker" ideal within digital classrooms. Derrida's deconstruction challenges binary oppositions such as native/non-native and legitimate/illegitimate, which are central to the dominance of the native-speaker ideal in language teaching. According to Derrida, these oppositions are not natural or inherent but are socially constructed and serve to reinforce hierarchical power structures. By applying deconstruction to the native-speaker norm, this study aims to reveal the fluid and unstable nature of these categories. It challenges the binary distinction between native and non-native speakers, offering a more inclusive and flexible understanding of language authority. In the context of digital classrooms, Derrida's deconstruction allows the study to examine how the rigid distinctions between native and non-native English users are both reinforced and destabilized through online learning platforms. The flexibility of digital spaces enables students and teachers to negotiate their linguistic identities in ways that challenge traditional hierarchies, making it possible to subvert the dominance of the native speaker. (2). Michel Foucault's concepts of power and knowledge (1972) are also integral to this study's theoretical framework. Foucault argued that knowledge is not neutral but is produced and regulated by power structures.

In the case of language learning, the idealization of native speakers can be seen as part of a larger system of linguistic power that dictates who is deemed "legitimate" or "proficient" in a given language. Foucault's theory of power/knowledge helps explain how the "native speaker" norm operates as a form of power that shapes the ways in which students and teachers understand language proficiency, identity, and authority. This study examines how these power dynamics are enacted in the digital classroom and how students both resist and reproduce these structures. Foucault's ideas on disciplinary power and surveillance are relevant for understanding how students are often taught to internalize certain standards of English, such as the importance of a native-like accent or "correct" usage. However, Foucault also highlights

the possibility of resistance within systems of power. Digital platforms, with their increased opportunities for participation and interaction, can serve as spaces for students to contest these norms and assert alternative understandings of English proficiency, thus challenging traditional power dynamics associated with the native-speaker ideal. Given the study's aim to deconstruct the native-speaker norm, a narrative approach provides participants the space to share personal stories and reflections on their learning experiences. The focus on individual narratives allows for an understanding of how participants perceive the legitimacy of English as it is spoken and learned in a digital context. The objectives of this study are to explore how the concept of the "native speaker" is understood and experienced by students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta within the context of digital English language education. Specifically, the research investigates how these learners interpret, internalize, or challenge the native-speaker ideal in their academic and personal encounters with English. The study seeks to uncover how students actively navigate and reconstruct their linguistic identities in online learning environments, spaces that often blur traditional lines of authority and authenticity in language use. By examining these dynamics, the research sheds light on how digital platforms not only reshape perceptions of what it means to be a competent English speaker but also create new opportunities for learners to assert diverse, localized, and hybrid forms of English proficiency that challenge conventional norms.

The data collection process for this study was carried out through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five students from the English Language Education Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS). Participants were purposely selected based on two key criteria: their active enrollment in an online English language course during the research period and their willingness to share detailed reflections on their digital learning experiences. The interviews were designed to elicit participants' perceptions of the "native speaker" ideal, as well as their insights into how digital learning environments influence their sense of linguistic authority, legitimacy, and identity. Each interview was conducted flexibly to encourage open dialogue and allow new, relevant themes to emerge organically. Core interview questions explored definitions of a "native speaker," the perceived importance of native-speaker teachers, experiences with online English communication, shifts in perceptions of language legitimacy in virtual settings, and suggestions for contextually relevant English teaching in Indonesian digital classrooms. Following data collection, thematic analysis was employed to interpret the interview transcripts and observation notes. This analytical approach enabled the identification and organization of meaningful patterns within the qualitative data. The process began with thorough familiarization, involving repeated readings of the transcripts to gain an initial grasp of the content and emerging ideas. Open coding was then applied to segment the data into meaningful units associated with key themes such as native-speakerism, online learning dynamics, and identity negotiation. These coded data were subsequently grouped into broader themes that reflected participants' lived experiences and personal narratives. The refinement of themes ensured both coherence across the dataset and the preservation of individual variability. Finally, interpretation was framed through a postmodern lens, drawing on Derrida's concept of deconstruction and Lyotard's critique of metanarratives. This theoretical perspective facilitated a critical reading of how digital classrooms function as contested spaces, simultaneously reinforcing and disrupting traditional linguistic hierarchies, while also enabling fluid identity formation and alternative expressions of language legitimacy.

Research and Finding Discussion

This study reveals three interconnected findings that illustrate how the native speaker ideal operates within digital English classrooms at UMS. First, the ideal persists through student perceptions and self-evaluation practices. Second, digital platforms create conditions that destabilize rigid linguistic boundaries. Third, students actively negotiate fluid identities that both reproduce and resist traditional hierarchies. These findings demonstrate that digital classrooms function as contested spaces where linguistic authority is simultaneously reinforced and challenged (Hampel, 2019; Mahmud et al., 2025).

Persistence of the Native Speaker Ideal

Students at UMS continue to associate linguistic correctness with British and American English varieties. This perception directly influences their confidence and participation in online learning environments. Student A explained: "I feel my English is still very 'medok' (Indonesian-accented). When speaking on Zoom, I often mute my microphone because I'm afraid my friends will laugh at my accent." This narrative reveals how native-speakerism operates as a form of internalized surveillance, shaping not only how students evaluate their own English but also how they regulate their participation in digital spaces (Foucault, 1972; Nabhan, 2024). The idealization of native accents extends beyond self-perception to influence perceptions of teaching authority. Student B stated: "*I feel more confident learning with a native speaker teacher. The knowledge feels more 'authentic'.*" This view reflects what Phillipson (1992) identified as linguistic imperialism, where native speakers are positioned as the legitimate owners and arbiters of English. Despite decades of World Englishes scholarship challenging this hierarchy, institutional practices and learner attitudes continue to privilege native-like pronunciation as a marker of proficiency (Fang, 2023; Jovic, 2023). Digital learning materials predominantly feature Western accents and cultural contexts, further reinforcing the perception that authentic English originates exclusively from Anglophone countries (Holliday, 2006). This finding aligns with Adalta's (2022) research showing that Indonesian students consistently evaluate language ability based on proximity to native speaker norms. Student C further

illustrated this perception by admitting: *"I know Indonesian accents are fine, but I still want to speak like a native speaker because it will help my career."* This tension reflects the material consequences of linguistic hierarchies, where native-like English continues to function as cultural capital in employment markets (Jovic, 2023; Zein, 2018). The persistence of native-speakerism, even among students who intellectually recognize linguistic diversity, demonstrates the depth at which this ideology operates within Indonesian educational and professional contexts.

Destabilization of Linguistic Boundaries in Digital Spaces

While the native speaker ideal persists, digital platforms simultaneously create conditions that destabilize traditional linguistic hierarchies. The text-based and asynchronous features of online learning reduce the visibility of accent and pronunciation, which are typically central to native/non-native distinctions. Student A revealed: *"When communicating through chat or discussion forums, I feel more confident. No one knows what my accent sounds like."* This experience demonstrates how digital mediation can disrupt the acoustic markers that typically reinforce linguistic hierarchies (Blake, 2016; Zhao & Jin, 2024). Text-based communication allows students to focus on meaning-making rather than pronunciation anxiety, creating what Derrida (1976) would describe as a space of *différance* where fixed categories become less stable. Digital interaction also facilitates hybrid language practices that challenge monolingual norms. Student D described: *"When discussing in WhatsApp groups, we often use English mixed with Indonesian. Everyone understands, and it feels more comfortable."* This translanguaging practice reflects what Pennycook (2007) terms *"language as local practice,"* where linguistic resources are deployed fluidly according to communicative needs rather than abstract standards. Such practices are increasingly common in Indonesian digital classrooms, where students draw on multiple linguistic repertoires to construct meaning (Rini & Nabhan, 2023; García & Wei, 2014). Exposure to diverse English varieties through international webinars and online content further disrupts the native speaker ideal. Student E reflected: *"After joining international webinars, I realized everyone has an accent. Why should Indonesian accents be considered wrong?"* This realization represents a critical moment of deconstruction, where the binary opposition between correct and incorrect English begins to collapse (Derrida, 1976). Digital platforms enable encounters with multiple Englishes that would be impossible in traditional Indonesian classrooms, gradually eroding the perception that only native varieties are legitimate (Jenkins, 2015; Tupas, 2020). The reorganization of classroom authority also contributes to destabilization. Student B noted: *"In Zoom breakout rooms, we help each other. It feels like we're all learning together, not just listening to the lecturer."* This shift reflects what Hampel (2019) describes as the flattening of hierarchical structures in online learning environments. Digital spaces redistribute pedagogical authority, creating more collaborative and democratic learning conditions where linguistic legitimacy is negotiated collectively rather than imposed from above (Blume, 2022).

Dynamic Identity Negotiation

Students at UMS actively construct fluid and context-dependent linguistic identities in digital environments. Student C explained: *"When chatting in class groups, I use casual English. But when emailing lecturers, I use formal language. It's like there are 'two versions' of me in English."* This performative approach to identity illustrates Barkhuizen's (2016) argument that linguistic identity is not fixed but continuously constructed through social interaction. The digital classroom enables students to experiment with multiple identity positions, adjusting their language use according to audience, platform, and communicative purpose (Rizqi & Amalia, 2024). The physical distance and mediated nature of online interaction reduce the immediate pressure of face-to-face judgment, creating space for experimentation. Student A stated: *"I'm braver trying to speak English in online classes than face-to-face."* This increased confidence reflects how digital platforms can function as protective spaces where students negotiate identity with reduced anxiety about visible performance (Mahmud et al., 2025; Zhao & Jin, 2024). The ability to control camera and microphone settings allows students to selectively present themselves, managing visibility and vulnerability in ways that support identity exploration. Resistance to monolithic native speaker standards emerges clearly in student narratives. Student E asserted: *"What's important in speaking English is being understood and conveying messages clearly. It doesn't have to be perfect like British people."* This perspective represents what Lyotard (1984) would call a *"little narrative"* that challenges the grand narrative of native speaker superiority. Students increasingly articulate alternative criteria for linguistic success, emphasizing communicative effectiveness and contextual appropriateness over native-like accuracy (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 2007). However, identity negotiation remains marked by ambivalence and contradiction. Student D expressed uncertainty: *"Sometimes I'm confused about which English to use. If it's too 'Indonesian,' I'm afraid of seeming unprofessional. If it's too 'Western,' I'm afraid of losing my identity."* This ambivalence demonstrates that while students intellectually recognize the legitimacy of diverse Englishes, they remain constrained by institutional and market forces that privilege native norms (Kusumaningrum, 2021; Mahboob, 2018). The tension between embracing local linguistic identity and conforming to global professional standards remains a central challenge for Indonesian English learners navigating digital spaces.

Theoretical Discussion

These findings can be productively understood through postmodern theoretical frameworks. Derrida's (1976) concept of deconstruction reveals how the native/non-native binary is not a natural linguistic fact but a socially constructed hierarchy maintained through institutional power. Digital classrooms create conditions where this binary becomes less stable, functioning as sites of *différance* where meaning and identity are continuously deferred and negotiated. The hybrid language practices documented in this study demonstrate that Indonesian students' English use represents a legitimate variety rather than a deficient approximation of native norms (Pennycook, 2007; Tupas, 2020). Lyotard's (1984) critique of metanarratives illuminates how native-speakerism operates as a grand narrative that claims universal authority over what constitutes good English. This metanarrative is increasingly challenged in digital spaces, where students develop localized "*little narratives*" that emphasize communicative effectiveness, contextual appropriateness, and linguistic diversity. The erosion of the metanarrative does not eliminate linguistic hierarchies entirely, but it opens space for alternative frameworks of legitimacy to emerge (Fang, 2023). Foucault's (1972) power/knowledge framework explains how native speaker standards function as a regime of truth that disciplines student behavior and self-perception. However, Foucault also emphasizes that power is never total and always produces resistance. The student narratives documented here reveal multiple forms of resistance: questioning why Indonesian accents should be stigmatized, asserting that communication matters more than perfection, and experimenting with hybrid language practices. Digital platforms provide technological and social conditions that support these forms of counter-discourse, even as they continue to reproduce dominant norms through Western-centric learning materials and persistent accent anxiety (Nabhan, 2024; Zhao & Jin, 2024).

Pedagogical Implications

These findings have significant implications for English language teaching in Indonesian higher education. Educators and institutions should develop decolonial pedagogical approaches that explicitly challenge native-speakerism and expose students to diverse English varieties. This includes integrating World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca frameworks into curriculum design, using learning materials that feature Southeast Asian and other non-Western English speakers, and critically examining textbooks and media that privilege British and American norms (Fang, 2023; Mahboob, 2018). Teachers must actively validate local and hybrid English use rather than treating it as an error or deficiency. This means recognizing code-switching and translanguaging as legitimate communicative strategies rather than linguistic confusion, and designing assessment practices that evaluate communicative effectiveness rather than native-like accuracy (Rini & Nabhan, 2023; García & Wei, 2014). Explicit discussion of linguistic ideologies can help students develop critical awareness of how power operates through language, enabling them to make informed choices about their linguistic identities rather than uncritically internalizing dominant norms (Kusumaningrum, 2021). Digital platforms offer significant potential for democratizing language learning if used thoughtfully. Educators should leverage asynchronous discussion forums that reduce pronunciation anxiety, implement peer review and collaborative projects that distribute authority among students, and facilitate virtual exchange programs that expose learners to diverse English varieties (Hampel, 2019; Blume, 2022). Digital literacy should become an integral component of ELT curriculum, helping students navigate online learning environments and understand how digital mediation shapes linguistic identity and authority (Rizqi & Amalia, 2024).

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that suggest directions for future research. The sample consists of only five students from a single institution, which limits the generalizability of findings across Indonesian higher education contexts. Future research should conduct cross-institutional studies with larger and more diverse participant groups to examine how findings vary across different university types, geographic locations, and student demographics. Longitudinal research tracking how student perceptions and practices evolve over extended engagement with digital learning would provide valuable insights into the durability and development of the patterns identified here. This study focused primarily on student perspectives and did not deeply explore the psychological dimensions of accent anxiety, confidence, and identity negotiation. Future research incorporating psychological frameworks could provide richer understanding of the emotional and cognitive processes underlying the experiences documented here (Nabhan, 2024). Additionally, lecturer identities, beliefs, and practices in digital contexts remain underexplored and would benefit from dedicated investigation, particularly regarding how teachers navigate their own positioning within native/non-native hierarchies while teaching online (Zein, 2018; Mahmud et al., 2025).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that native-speakerism in Indonesian digital classrooms operates as a paradoxical phenomenon simultaneously persistent and destabilized, reproduced and resisted. Through postmodern narrative inquiry with five students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, the research reveals how digital learning environments function as contested spaces where traditional linguistic hierarchies are both maintained and challenged. The native speaker

ideal continues to shape student self-perception, confidence, and attitudes toward teaching authority, reflecting the enduring influence of what Phillipson (1992) termed linguistic imperialism. Students internalize native-like pronunciation as a standard of correctness and view Western English varieties as inherently superior, demonstrating how deeply colonial linguistic ideologies remain embedded within Indonesian educational contexts (Holliday, 2006; Adalta, 2022). However, digital platforms simultaneously create conditions that destabilize the rigid native/non-native binary. Text-based communication reduces the visibility of accent and pronunciation, enabling students to participate with greater confidence. Translanguaging practices emerge naturally in digital interactions, reflecting the fluid and hybrid nature of English use in Indonesian contexts. Exposure to diverse English varieties through online platforms gradually erodes the perception that only native accents are legitimate, while collaborative learning formats redistribute pedagogical authority in ways that challenge traditional hierarchies (Hampel, 2019; Rini & Nabhan, 2023). Students actively negotiate multiple linguistic identities, performing different versions of themselves across digital contexts and increasingly articulating alternative criteria for linguistic success that prioritize communicative effectiveness over native-like perfection (Barkhuizen, 2016; Pennycook, 2007). The theoretical contributions of this study extend postmodern thought into digital ELT scholarship in Southeast Asian contexts. Applying Derrida's deconstruction reveals how the native/non-native binary is socially constructed rather than linguistically natural, while Lyotard's critique of metanarratives illuminates how native-speakerism functions as a grand narrative increasingly challenged by localized "little narratives" in digital spaces. Foucault's power/knowledge framework explains both the disciplinary operation of native speaker norms and the emergence of resistance within digital learning environments. Together, these theoretical perspectives position Indonesian digital classrooms as sites of epistemic resistance where meaning, legitimacy, and identity remain dynamic and unfinished (Derrida, 1976; Lyotard, 1984; Foucault, 1972).

Pedagogically, this research advocates for decolonized and inclusive teaching practices that recognize and validate linguistic diversity. Educators must move beyond implicit reproduction of native-speakerism toward explicit engagement with World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca frameworks. This requires curriculum materials that feature diverse English varieties, assessment practices that prioritize communicative effectiveness over native-like accuracy, and pedagogical approaches that validate translanguaging and code-switching as legitimate communicative strategies (Fang, 2023; García & Wei, 2014). Digital platforms should be leveraged strategically to create democratic learning spaces where authority is distributed, multiple Englishes coexist, and students develop critical awareness of linguistic ideologies rather than uncritically internalizing dominant norms (Mahboob, 2018; Kusumaningrum, 2021). Socially, the study positions Indonesian digital classrooms as spaces where global hierarchies of language can be interrogated and reimagined. Students at UMS are not passive recipients of linguistic authority but active agents constructing meanings and identities that challenge traditional power structures. Their narratives reveal ongoing negotiation between recognition of linguistic diversity and material constraints imposed by markets and institutions that continue to privilege native norms. This tension reflects broader struggles within postcolonial contexts to assert local legitimacy while navigating global systems of linguistic capital (Zein, 2018; Tupas, 2020). Ultimately, this research reveals that the shift toward digital education in Indonesia creates both opportunities and challenges for reimagining English language teaching. Digital interaction dissolves some boundaries while reinforcing others, democratizes participation while reproducing anxieties, and enables resistance while sustaining hegemonic norms. The future of English language education in Indonesian higher education depends on whether educators, institutions, and policymakers seize the transformative potential of digital platforms to build more equitable, inclusive, and locally relevant pedagogical practices. By foregrounding student voices and lived experiences, this study contributes to ongoing efforts to decolonize ELT and recognize the fluid, hybrid, and localized practices that characterize English use in contemporary Indonesia. The native speaker ideal may persist, but it is no longer uncontested and in that contest lies the possibility for more just and pluralistic futures in language education.

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