Summer 8-1-2023

"THAT FELT WEIRD": INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS' EMERGING CRITICAL AWARENESS OF THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH MICROAGGRESSION

Romaisha Rahman

Romaisha Rahman

Candidate

Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies

Department

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

Mary Rice, Ph.D., Chairperson

Rebecca Blum-Martinez, Ph.D.

Pisarn Bee Chamcharatsri, Ph.D.

Todd Ruecker, Ph.D.

"THAT FELT WEIRD": INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS' EMERGING CRITICAL AWARENESS OF THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH MICROAGGRESSION

by

ROMAISHA RAHMAN

B.A., English, North South University, 2016
M.A., English with TESOL Certificate, University of Dayton, 2018

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

August, 2023

DEDICATION

To all those little girls who are paving their way slowly but steadily all on their own, despite the mountain of obstacles thrown their way.

Know that your faith and spirit don't go unnoticed. Know that your diligence is admirable and a source of inspiration to many. Know that that although good things take time, they are worth working toward. Know that it is only under enormous pressure are diamonds formed— and you, my dears, are pure diamonds in the making.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ever since I gained the liberty to, I have tried to make conscious choices to surround myself with people who are genuine and add value to my life in some way or another. Some of these people I met during my Ph.D. journey, some prior, and some other go way back (emphasis on "way"). Needless to say, there are many people that I am thankful to, far too many to name here, but I would like to acknowledge and honor some people who have proven to be constants in my life. I would like to honor my dad, who although I lost quite early in my life, I learned a lot from. His memories have been one of the major driving forces for me to be where I am today. He was a man of great kindness, humor, tenacity, charity, and wisdom—qualities that I aspire to have. I would like to thank my partner who had had promised me "through thick and thin" all those years ago and has remained true to his words—through my Ph.D. journey and throughout our relationship—to this day. On days that I believe in myself a little less, he reminds me why I should. I would like to acknowledge my close friends who I found and got to know in different stages of my life; they are the reason why I believe family goes beyond just sharing blood. I would like to thank my extended family members, who I came to fully know late in life, but who, nonetheless, have been steady since.

I would like to thank my committee members without whom I would not have been able to bring my work to fruition. Dr. Mary Rice has been kind, attentive, and responsive to me and my work throughout this entire process and has provided me with guidance and feedback that helped me in imagining this research work as it is today. Dr. Rebecca Blum-Martinez has been a thoughtful and inspiring mentor to me, like she has been to so many others, since the beginning of my doctoral program and throughout the process of my

"THAT FELT WEIRD": INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS' EMERGING CRITICAL AWARENESS OF THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH MICROAGGRESSION

by

ROMAISHA RAHMAN

B.A., English, North South University, 2016
M.A., English with TESOL Certificate, University of Dayton, 2018
Ph.D., Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies, University of
New Mexico, 2023

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to uncover and understand international graduate students' experiences with *microaggressions* that stem from *native speaker fallacy*; microaggressions are the subtle discriminatory behaviors executed toward marginalized groups and native speaker fallacy is the false belief that only some "native" English speakers are effective teachers and users of the language. Put simply, this research aimed at unveiling the subtle language-based discriminations that international graduate students experience in their day-to-day lives in U.S. educational settings. To collect data for the study, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was utilized. CIT is a method that allows the researcher to systematically obtain rich and rare qualitative data from participants by encouraging them to reflect and report on "critical incidents" that they have experienced. Data was collected through online demographic survey, in-depth focus groups, and structured written reflections. Analyses of the data show that despite having had experienced language-based

microaggressions and having had had emotional responses to them, the majority of the

participants were unaware if they had the right as humans to feel violated due to those critical

incidents. Eight themes, namely *Gatekeeping English*, *Invisible Hierarchy*, *Sounding*

'Different', *Othering*, *Alienation*, *Implicit Bias with Name and Color*, *Department vs Critical*

Experiences, and *Nonaccountability* were identified in the data that show the deep-rootedness

of native speaker fallacy in U.S. educational settings. I provide elaborate suggestions on how

individuals and institutions can respond to microaggressions stemming from native speaker

fallacy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1
Problem Description

Introduction

Critical Incident: Dialogue

Me: Country names are proper nouns and are treated as singular, but if the reference is to a country's sports team they are usually treated as plural.

Student: Huh? Meaning?

Me: For example, if you refer to Bangladesh as the country, you would say: Bangladesh is, but if you mean Bangladesh cricket team, you would say, "Bangladesh are playing tonight".

Student: I don't think so. How can Bangladesh be "are"?

Me: That's what the rule says. It's because a team is made up of more than one member: it's a group of players. So, team names are usually treated as plural.

Student: Really? Are you sure?

Me: Yes, I am sure.

Student looks at the native English-speaking (mentor) teacher more than once for confirmation.

Native English-speaking teacher: She is the one teaching today (directing the student's attention back to me).

Student looks back at me still shaking his head; almost confident that I am not right.

The above conversation is one of the many instances where my skills as an effective English language user was questioned in U.S. higher education. The conversation took place between me and a student in an Intensive English Program (IEP) classroom in a Midwestern university while I was fulfilling my responsibilities of TESOL Practicum for my Master's in English program. The IEP in this university is a prerequisite for students who could not fulfill the English language requirement of the university upon admission and were, thus, given a conditional admission. The purpose of this IEP is to prepare students for mainstream

classrooms by helping them develop the four English language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—to the university's admission policies' standards.

The program is divided into seven different levels, and each level consists of level-specific classes that aim to hone its students' reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, oral communication, listening, and note-taking skills. Students in the program must graduate one level before moving onto the next. This particular class in discussion was a level 5 class that focused on building note-taking and oral communication skills, and in this particular class period, I was focusing on building notetaking skills of students. I was delivering a lesson on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner& Hatch, 1989) to assist students in developing their English notetaking skills. Teachers at this IEP are expected to take a content-based approach to language teaching and learning. Content-based instruction entails using content from other disciplines to teach language to learners (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). In accordance with that norm, I chose Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which is primarily a topic from cognitive science, to teach the lesson that is in discussion.

The conversation mentioned above happened when I was giving them examples of what bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is, and which people may have more of this intelligence. Since I mentioned sportspersons as an example, the student—a cricket enthusiast—mentioned a cricket match that they were waiting eagerly to watch. The student used the cricket team's name as a singular noun in their sentence, so I saw it as an opportunity to help them see the difference, but the conversation did not go as I had expected. I am an advocate of World Englishes (Kachru, 1991); I would not have personally cared how the student used the team's name grammatically in the sentence provided that they were able to communicate

their thoughts, but since it was an intensive English program which required teachers to provide language input and corrective feedback, I was just fulfilling my responsibilities.

Initially, the conversation and the reaction from the student might not look problematic; it might seem that the student could not quite trust me on my language input fully because I was still just a graduate student who was just student teaching. However, there is room of other interpretations. I have had been with this class from almost the beginning of the term and the students were aware of my credentials as I had given them a detailed introduction about myself when I began teaching.

In the Spring of 2018 when I was teaching in this IEP, I already had over 9 years of teaching experience; out of those 9 years, I had taught English for 6 years to multilingual students in different schools and coaching centers in Bangladesh. I have had worked as an English writer and also had jointly published writing guides for high school English language learners in a well-known publishing house in Bangladesh. I was also toward the end of my master's program in English, and TESOL, which meant that I had accumulated additional experience teaching and tutoring at the undergraduate and graduate levels during my time as a master's student. While pursuing my master's degree, I micro-taught, presented guest lectures, held writing and language skill building workshops, and worked as a graduate writing tutor for two years as part of my graduate assistantship at the university. Therefore, my credentials should not have been an issue in this context; it seemed instead that my status as a user of English was what was being called into question.

I started teaching right after completing my O levels from a British board (American equivalent of high school tenth grade), which was only possible because of how the Bangladeshi private English medium education system operates. I usually appear to be a lot

younger than most teachers with that many years of teaching experience. Hence, in the beginning of the term in this IEP, I made sure that the students, who were of varying age groups, knew that I was sufficiently qualified to be teaching them. Before this incident, I had taught other lessons in the class and also assisted the mentor teacher during student group works. Although most students did not seem to oppose my suggestions, some of them were hesitant to fully trust my language skills. So, when this conflict arose, I felt I knew why it happened. The student looked back and forth at the native English-speaking teacher for confirmation because, *to the student*, I was *not* native to the English language, so my knowledge of the English "must" be limited!

Would this incident have occurred at all if the mentor teacher and my roles were reversed? What if I was a White native English-speaking practicum teacher with 9 years of teaching experience and the mentor teacher was a visibly Brown "nonnative" English speaker with the same number of years of teaching experience? I can say with certainty that the episode would not have transpired; the student would not have looked for confirmation on language input elsewhere if I met the student's personal standard, conception, and (mis)understanding of who a *native* speaker of English is—which is usually fallaciously reserved for people who are visibly White and/or who have Eurocentric features and names and speak with an accent that is popular in "primarily" English speaking countries (Borjas, 2000; Kang et. al, 2015; Rahman, 2018; Thomas, 1999).

What this misconceived image of a native speaker does is that it puts any English speaker who does not fit within that image into the "nonnative" English speaker category, which usually carries a subtractive view toward the speaker (Amin, 1999; Braine, 2010). However, having grown up in Bangladesh—now an independent country but formerly a part

of the Asian subcontinent region that was colonized by the British for almost 200 years (Tinker & Husain, 2022), I am aware that not all "seemingly nonnative" English speakers identify with being nonnatives of the language. With such prolonged history of colonial establishment in a region, the colonizer's language—in this case English—is bound to have some linguistical influence on the people of the region.

Unfortunately, the region in Asian subcontinent is just one example of the many regions that was a former British colony; to name a few other, many regions in Africa and many other regions in Asia were previously colonized by the British Empire (Britannica, 2022). Naturally, English was adopted by many individuals in these regions years ago, and today, many also claim English to be one of their native tongues. For instance, when asked, many people from Nigeria, Singapore, and India do not hesitate to claim English, and rightly so, to be one of their first languages (Earner & Cohen, 2021; Kanwal, 2020). I, too, have met multilingual people from Nigeria and India who list English as one of their first languages or, at times, their only first language.

However, as mentioned earlier, only a specific group of people are considered native speakers and the rest are seen as "nonnative" speakers of English—regardless of their own identification with the language. This tacit categorization often leads people to question the latter group's capabilities and skills as effective users of the English language—a common misconception known as the *native speaker fallacy.*

Native Speaker Fallacy: Definition

The false belief that only certain English speakers can be ideal teachers of the language had been refuted as *native speaker fallacy* by Phillipson in 1992. Phillipson (2016) stated that "in education worldwide [such fallacy] serves to establish inequalities between

native speakers of English and speakers of other languages, and teachers from different backgrounds, irrespective of their qualifications" (p. 86); meaning, native speaker fallacy, directly or indirectly, perpetuates discrimination which has very little to do with teacher qualification and more to do with people's perceptions in the field of English language teaching.

Although decades have passed since the discussions surrounding native speaker fallacy began, the idea that only native English speakers of specific origins can be effective teachers of the language is still prevalent in U.S. educational settings (Choi, 2009); moreover, the effect of this fallacy can be felt in other areas of U.S. academia, that go beyond language teaching, where the credibility of English users who do not fulfill the fallacious standard of a native speaker is questioned because these users are deemed "nonnatives" of the language (Rahman, 2021). Native speaker fallacy in and around U.S. educational settings, at present, is often implicit (Rahman, 2018) and is mostly exhibited in the form of *microaggressions*.

Microaggression: Definition

First coined by Pierce in 1970 and rooted in critical race theory (Sue, 2010), the term *microaggression* encompasses the subtle discriminations that are done towards individuals who belong to minority groups. Since its coinage, the term has been revised by multiple scholars, contextually, to encompass other critical factors like language, immigration, and phenotype—in addition to race—to show the subtle oppression that minority groups often encounter. One such definition has been presented by Sue (2010) where the scholar states microaggression to be "the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or

negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership". Sue's (2010) definition of *microaggression* and Phillipson's (1992) definition of *native speaker fallacy* together can help to shed light on my experience with the student in the IEP classroom that I outlined above.

 The distrust that the student at IEP had toward my English teaching skills was a result of native speaker fallacy and their consequent behavior such as looking back and forth at the mentor teacher and vigorously shaking their head at me afterward was microaggression. They did not verbalize their mistrust toward me but showed me in nonverbal ways that they did not agree with the language input that I had provided. While such microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy may seem minor to an onlooker, these minor incidents in and around U.S. educational settings can build up over time and be damaging for "nonnaitve" English-speaking graduate students like me (Gomez et al., 2011).

International graduate students make up a large percentage of graduate student population in the U.S. (Open Doors, 2021), but, interestingly, there is hardly any research specifically dedicated into understanding the effects of language-based microaggressions that they encounter. Most studies that have been conducted to expose language-based microaggressions have been done in the K-12 settings (Banks et al., 2020; LópezLeiva et al., 2014) or have been coupled with all microaggressions, not specific to language, that international students in general experience in Higher Ed (Ee, 2013; Yeo et al., 2019).

Being a graduate student myself in the U.S. and have been on receiving ends of language-based microaggressions in and around educational settings, it was very important to me to provide international "nonnative" English-using graduate students with a platform in which they could recognize, share, and discuss the microaggressions that they have had

experienced due to their language status. I wanted to focus only on the experiences of international graduate students because graduate students are the population that play the most diverse roles in and around U.S. educational settings. This cohort are not only students but actively participate in scholarly discussions, take up roles of teaching assistants or tutors, fulfill various campus and off-campus responsibilities as graduate or research assistants, have different dynamics in terms of communication with the administration, run many student- and other campus organizations, and are active members of social, cultural, religious, and financial groups that have affiliation with educational settings. Because of the myriad roles they play as graduate students, they have very diverse exposure in and around educational settings and may be subjected to microaggressions that stem for native speaker fallacy from various places.

The reason why it was mandatory for me to identify, expose, and raise awareness against microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy in and around U.S. educational settings is that it not only discriminates individuals based on their language status, the microaggressions have tremendous capacity to impact both mental and physical heath of individuals. Studies in health sciences have shown that with repeated microaggressive encounters of any form, the individuals in the receiving end do not just go through minor emotional distress but become susceptible to severe mental health challenges like depression and are also seen to show posttraumatic stress symptoms—PTSS (Auguste et al. 2021). Microaggression can also lead to decline in physical health and cause health issues related to inflammation of blood vessels (Kendall-Tackett, 2014) and cardiovascular (heart) diseases (Lewis et al., 2006).

Theoretical Framework: Critical Consciousness (CC)

The theoretical framework that I used for my study is *Critical Consciousness (CC).* Critical consciousness is a theory that is highly incorporated in developing culturally inclusive pedagogies in various fields (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Kumagai & Lypson, 2009). However, any research studies have barely used critical consciousness as the sole framework of analysis to study microaggressions against "nonnative" English-using students in the U.S. Interestingly, during a search of literature on microaggression against "nonnative" English-using students, critical consciousness seemed to appear quite often, but the concept was somehow mostly placed under Critical Race Theory (Finan, 2021; Yosso et al., 2009) or other theories (Chan & Coney, 2020). Critical Consciousness has the potential to stand independently as a framework and is slowly being conceptualized as a means of analysis with the development of measures that can validate it (Diemer et al., 2016).

Introduced by Freire in 1970 with the aim to help the so-called Brazilian peasants to "read the world" by "read[ing] the word (as cited in Watts et al., 2011, p.44), critical consciousness has transcended into several educational systems and disciplines around the world with the aim to provide the oppressed with a lens to critically analyze their social conditions and act to change them. Critical consciousness can help both the minoritized and dominant groups to recognize and deconstruct the unjust linguistic, racial, and cultural power dynamics in the society and from that understanding take measures—small or big— to bring about changes.

To provide a better understanding of how Critical Consciousness theory is used in the field of education and how it was helpful for the present study as well, Okazaki's (2005)

study can be revisited. Okazaki (2005) used the concept of critical consciousness to develop a course designed to bring awareness on topics of racism, linguicism, and culturalism toward international students. In the study, Okazaki worked with four volunteering international ESL students to help them identify what stereotyping looked like and how oppression based on language, race, and culture was never and are not acceptable and should not be normalized. Through the study, the author intended to show how international ESL students can easily become the objects of symbolic and physical violence and sometimes not even recognize it.

Put simply, critical consciousness allows to shed light on oppression of any kind. On that account, critical consciousness framework was the best fit for the present study as the sole purpose of my study was to unveil subtle discrimination resulting from language biases.

Settling on a Term

As the current study was centered around the effects of native speaker fallacy, it might seem fairly straight-forward to operate from the domain of the native-nonnative speaker dyad, which characteristically prompts addressing the study participants as "nonnative" speakers of English. However, as previously mentioned, my chosen framework for the study was critical consciousness (CC), and CC aims to view and place individuals in *positions of power*. Therefore, in this study, I wanted to avoid using any terminology of binary nature that would go against the very essence of my theoretical framework as well as the goals of equity that I tried to accomplish by conducting this research; meaning, a term like *nonnative* English speaker, especially in research contexts such as mine, inevitably puts people in a deficient and subtractive status. I certainly wanted to avoid assigning a subtractive label to my participants, given the aim of the study as well as the colonial history of the subcontinent region that I hail from.

It was crucial for me to refrain from using *nonnative* English speaker in this study and configure a more inclusive term (stated and explained later in this section) so as to ensure that a wide range of international graduate students can identify with the objectives of my study and, thus, accept the invitation to participate in my study. Also, since I, myself, share the British colonization history with many other international students and can understand their linguistic journey, it was not only unfair but almost criminal of me to put them into the "nonnative" English speaker category when they refuse to identify with the term.

Nonetheless, my choice to configure a new term for this study was not geared towards invalidating other terminology used elsewhere; meaning, terms like English language learner (ELL), English as International Language (EIL) learners, bilinguals, or even nonnative English speaker (NNES)—among many others— are frequently used in academic and research settings whose purposes are served by the usage of such terms. Each of these terms are context-specific and play their own role in historicization, grounding, and rationalization purposes.

To exemplify, scholars like de Jong chooses to use terms like English Language Learners (de Jong et al., 2013) and bilingual learners (Dubetz & de Jong, 2011) interchangeably and contextually depending on their research setting and needs. Similarly, while Canagarajah (2011a; 2011b) mostly uses multilinguals as the terminology to write about topics of translanguaging in the classroom, Braine (2010, 2014) and Amin (1999) choose to describe themselves as nonnative speakers of English but refer to their pupils of English as foreign-second and/or second language learners, respectively, in their own research and thought contexts.

The allocation of these multifarious and contextual terms does not just end with the "learners" or speakers of English; in the field of linguistics and English language teaching, terms are also dependent on the nuanced schools of thought or as Aya Matsuda (2019) puts it— "these different names indicate different intellectual history and affiliation, but they are more similar to each other than different in their assumptions, visions and suggested practices" (p.146). In the field of linguistics, scholars like Kachru (1985; 1991), Nelson (1995), Yano (2001), and Pennycook (2003; 2009) have problematized the notion of *one* English, independently, and have proposed and promoted the idea of pluralistic Englishes. These Englishes, again, have been given different terminology, namely World Englishes, global Englishes, and plurilithic Englishes among others, which are—once more—thought, context, history, and purpose specific.

Building upon the idea of Englishes, scholars in the field of English language teaching have incorporated further terminology to specify their context, their students, and their purpose. For instance, Aya Matsuda (2018; 2019)—a proponent of Kachru's model of World Englishes (1991)—uses the term Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) to support the usage of the concept of pluralistic Englishes in curriculum design globally (2003). Selvi (2017), another proponent of TEIL, mirrors Aya Matsuda's enthusiasm and share their strategies on how to teach English as an international language in contexts similar to theirs. Mahboob (2018), on the other hand, argues that although TEIL "is a step in the right direction, it is not sufficient" (p.36). Based on the works of scholars like Larsen-Freeman (2001; 2016) and De Bot (2008) on language and/or grammar dynamicism, Mahboob proposes Teaching English as a Dynamic Language (TEDL).

Again, the coinage of terms by different scholars, according to their needs and ideologies, goes to show that there is no one *right* term. As I have already implied before, scholars choose to interchangeably use terms that fit their most recent research agendas and/or tend to sometimes also change their direction of research and thoughts and choose newer terms to identify with. For example, Jenkins (2014) who initially used World Englishes as their ideology, shifted their perspective to Global Englishes as per need. According to the author:

> The term 'World Englishes' was appropriate for a book focusing on Englishes as nation-bound varieties. However, with the recent massive growth in the use of English as an international lingua franca among people from different nations and first languages, the focus has been adjusted to include newer non-nation-bound developments (p.xiii).

I, myself, have used Kachru's (1991) model of World Englishes in my previous extensive mixed-method study (Rahman, 2018) to explain my findings regarding difference in perception between the participants from the Outer and Expanding Circles of Englishes. I have highlighted this difference in one of my published articles as well (Rahman, 2022). Being a member of what Kachru calls Outer Circle of Englishes, Kachru's explanation of World Englishes resonate with me. However, since I am operating from a Critical Consciousness framework in my current study and understand that Circles may blend due to the impact of globalization and many other factors, I wanted to view the international student community as a whole and not in separate Circles that have political meanings attached to them.

I, therefore, looked for a newer definition of Englishes that would go beyond World Englishes (Kachru, 1991), English as an International Language (A. Matsuda, 2003) and English as a global language (Crystal, 2003). The term that most closely relates to my current vision of equity regarding the international student community in the U.S. is how Rose et al. (2021) define Englishes to be. They use Global Englishes with a capital "G" (not to be confused with "global Englishes or English as a global language) as an overarching term to merge many different schools of thought and practices to give the term a highly inclusive paradigm. According to the authors:

> While researchers position their work in different fields, we group these shared endeavours under the broad term of Global Englishes. This is an inclusive paradigm that aims to consolidate the work of WE, ELF, and EIL to explore the linguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural diversity and fluidity of English use and the implications of this diversity of English on multifaceted aspects of society, including TESOL curricula and English language teaching practices. Global Englishes draws on key work from WE scholars (c.f. Kachru, B., Kachru, Y. & Nelson, 2006), ELF scholars (c.f Jenkins, 2006a; Seidlhofer, 2011), EIL (c.f. Alsagoff et al., 2012; Matsuda, 2012) and translanguaging (c.f. García, 2009; Canagarajah, 2013), given their focus on the global use of English (p.159).

Once I decided to use Global Englishes (Rose et al., 2021) as my reference point for pluralistic Englishes, I needed to coin an all-inclusive term to address my then potential participants for the study—international graduate students. With the capital "G" of Global Englishes in mind, which also consists of the "primarily" English speaking countries—like the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and UK—due to the incorporation of World

Englishes within Global Englishes (Rose et al., 2021), I decided to call my study participants global English users with a lower case "g". The reason why I am used a lower case "g" for international global English users is because I needed to make a distinction between the international students who are considered "nonnative" simply because they do not come from "primarily" English speaking countries and the domestic individuals who are considered "native" English speakers even though they do not possess any special English skills that the international students lack.

With the usage of the lower case global English users in this study instead of a subtractive term such as "nonnative" English speakers, I was able to put my study participants in positions of power while still making the distinction between them and the so-called native English speakers. It is also important to note that during data collection, many of my study participants had also often referred to the domestic English-speaking individuals in the U.S. as native English speakers. So, this distinction of global and native English speakers also helped in the reference and presentation of the data. At this time, it is also important to point out that although majority of the participants in the study had said that they have spoken English basically "all their lives" (see Chapter 4), they did not know if they could claim English as one of their first or native languages.

This hesitation in claiming English as their first or native language, as far as I could understand from data analysis and interpretation, was due to two reasons: firstly, since they did not come from "primarily" English speaking countries, they did not know if they had the right to claim English as their own; secondly, they did not have a clear conception of how bilingualism/multilingualism works. Those of us in the filed who are aware of how language acquisition works, we know that bilingualism and/or multilingualism happen in a continuum

(Grosjean, 2013) in that humans do not acquire and use all their languages equally at the same rate, time, and/or in the same setting. Since the study participants were not fully aware of this phenomenon, they did not know how to pinpoint or describe when and how they exactly started acquiring English. As a result, they chose terms like "native" English speakers to refer to individuals who they thought had the "right" to claim English as their first or native language and chose other terms like English as a second or additional language user to refer to themselves.

To bring it to full circle and to reiterate, a ***global English user*** in the current study is referred to any individual who hails from any country other than the "primarily" English-speaking countries—namely, the U.S., the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—and speaks English as their first, second, other, additional, or foreign language. Hence, *global English-using international graduate students* meant the students who, at the time of study, were enrolled in either a master's, doctoral, or a post-doctoral program in U.S. Higher Ed, after the completion of their bachelor's degree either in U.S. or abroad, with an F1/J1 visa, and hail from any country other than the primarily English-speaking countries and speak English as either their first, second, other, additional, or foreign language. This population of students were the only *participants* in the study.

Educational Settings: Definition

Similar to the myriad number of terms used to denote an English user, the meaning of educational settings, too, differs across disciplines and may also vary across research studies of related disciplines (Macartney, 2020; Willmott et al., 2016). Although most researchers do not provide a precise definition of educational settings, their research sites and population give the audience an overall idea of what they mean by educational settings in their specific

studies (Kirves & Sajaniemi, 2012; Stanley, 2011). However, since my study population was international *graduate* students—who engage in many different roles, and my research topic is fundamentally a critical one, I think it is important that I provide an explicit definition that explains what I meant by educational settings in the current study.

Educational settings, in this study, referred to both physical and online places and social and technological networks that one operates from, has created, and/or participates within due to their status of being graduate students in U.S. Higher Education institutions; this definition is a two-part definition in which *places* and *networks* are both considered educational settings, but have slightly different meanings. I describe each of these constituents below:

Educational places

The *places* part of educational settings, in this study, denotes the direct spaces where individuals go to study, work, or make contributions in, to fulfill their duties as graduate students or graduate student employees. Some examples of educational places within educational settings are classrooms, campus organizations, tutoring centers, online classes and tutoring forums, laboratories, libraries, affiliated internship, work, or training places— both on- and off-campus, and overall campus grounds.

Educational networks

The *networks* part of educational settings represents the extended spaces, both academic and social, that graduate students may exist within, contribute to, engage in, or perform at because of their affiliation with U.S. Higher Education institutions and due to their status as students, researchers, scholars, and personnel. Some examples of educational networks within educational settings are conferences, mentoring institutes, student

housings—on- and off-campus, international student host organizations, and student-status associated academic and social meetings.

As I have already mentioned, I used the term *educational settings* to refer to both *educational places* and *educational networks* in this study. Both of these aforementioned constituents of educational settings are human-interaction heavy, which make them predisposed settings in which microaggressions may be executed and experienced. Since international students operate within and navigate throughout educational settings to varying capacities, for the current study, it was helpful to collect and analyze their critical experiences in such settings. To capture the essence of the definition of educational settings that I functioned from in the study better, I used the phrase *in and around* (instead of just *in*) as a preposition of educational settings to give the general idea that I am referring to both *educational places* and *educational networks* in the instances that I used educational settings in this paper. Howbeit, in cases where my reference was limited to academia related matters only, I have used the preposition *within* before educational settings to make that distinction clear.

More Personal Examples of Microaggression Stemming from Native Speaker Fallacy

People usually think of me as a vocal and action-oriented person in academia; meaning, they believe that I speak up for myself and for others when I encounter or see any behavior that is morally unjust. I liked to believe that, too, until I was put in the receiving end of microaggressions. Microaggressions are subtle discriminations and from my experience, it is very hard to confront the microaggressor right away on the spot because the person who experiences microaggressions, at most times, are in shock from the situation or are trying to give the microaggressor the benefit of doubt.

During most of the events in which I faced microaggression stemming from native speaker fallacy, I did not know how to confront the microaggressor without escalating the situation negatively. Even though I knew that the situation was unjust, I did not know how to respond; so, at most times, I just remained silent. However, after every encounter, I felt like I should have said something because what if by not speaking up, I am perpetuating microaggressions? Since I could not go back in time to correct myself, I began to find scholarly platforms such as conferences and publications to speak against native speaker fallacy and microaggressions. I consider myself fortunate because I had a very strong platform—my doctoral dissertation—to voice my concerns about microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy. Microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy can take many different forms in and around U.S. educational settings. The one anecdote that I shared at the beginning of this chapter is just one of the many, many different scenarios. To help readers understand my personal journey and why this study is so close to my heart, I share some of the other incidents, very briefly, in which I experienced microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy and how those incidents have impacted me.

Incident 1

My first year as an international master's student in the U.S. was interesting. I was getting to know the U.S. educational system and exploring what it means to live in this country. As a student, I received a lot of support from my professors and mentors—they were understanding and kind. However, I cannot say the same for all my classmates. Although most of my native English-speaking classmates were supportive, there were some which I could feel tension from, especially a White American peer who was also a colleague. While I tried to convince myself that their behavior alone could not affect how I perceived myself, it

did. I was in many classes with them, and they would always, very tactfully, find a way to ignore any of my scholarly contributions during group works. They would either look away as I spoke, dismissing me, or not jot down any of the comments or suggestions that I made when they were given the responsibility to write down pointers from group discussions. Initially, I thought that's probably how they were as a human, but as I observed them over time, I realized that their behavior toward me was different—not like how they behaved with others in the classroom. Their eye contact and body language were not the same when they would speak to others during group discussions or any other form of classroom communication. What struck me the most was their behavior toward me outside of the classroom; they were mostly always polite to me when we met outside during casual TA gatherings. Nonetheless, they projected a completely different persona when it came to acknowledging my scholarly contributions in the classroom. With time, I began to realize that their actions were deliberate. They probably did not think that my scholarly suggestions were worthy enough to be recognized as they thought of me as a "nonnative" speaker of English.

Incident 2

As a graduate assistant in the English department of the said Midwestern university, my prime responsibility was to tutor writing to graduate students in the university's writing center. Majority of the graduate tutees that I would see were international global English-using students. Although most of the tutees would love working with me, some of them did show resistance because of my global English speaker status. Surprisingly, a lot of them assumed my linguistic and immigration status just based on how I looked or what my name was. I could have easily been born in the U.S. and have had the same name and skin color.

One particular incident which I took to heart was when an international student told my supervisor that they did not want to work with me on their master's thesis because it was a "very important paper" and I surely could not help them because I was a "nonnative" speaker of English. As funny as it might sound, the student never met me or worked with me to make a conclusive statement like that. They resisted working with me simply because they saw my apparently "non-American" name in the email that was sent to them regarding the writing support that was available for graduate students. When my supervisor pushed back and requested the student to give me a chance before making any judgement, they reluctantly booked a tutoring session with me. For what I can say, the first half of the tutoring session was challenging as most of my suggestions were met with a lot of resistance. Although I was finally able to get through to the student, I had to be very patient and work really hard to build credibility, which a native English speaker probably would not have needed to do to prove their worth.

Incident 3

During my doctoral course of study, I tried to take courses that aligned with my research interests; some of these courses were language and literacy, rhetoric, first and second language reading and writing, and teaching and researching in bilingual/second language classrooms among my many other areas of interest. In one such doctoral-level course, I got to know a classmate— a native English speaker—who was an advocate for global English users. I had built a good relationship with them and we had even teased the idea about writing a piece for publication together, sometime in the future. During our whole-class and group discussions in the classroom, they were quite vocal about the struggles that global English users face in and around U.S. educational settings, especially in U.S.

academia. However, during one such hearty discussion, as we were talking about accents and comparing the many different ones, I mentioned that I find it comparatively easier to imitate the American accent than the British one. They quickly commented "I don't think so!". Confused by her reaction, I reiterated that if I had to mimic an accent, I probably would be better at the American one. They repeated their comment again—"I don't think so!". They then persuaded me to pronounce some words after them to prove to them that I could do an American accent correctly. Still trying to wrap my head around why they became so defensive, I did repeat those words after them; the person then snickered and looked away like I did not belong in the conversation anymore.

Although in different settings, these aforementioned individuals behaved microaggressively toward me because of native speaker fallacy. In the first example, my peer did not want to recognize my contributions because of my language status, so they ignored me in the classroom. In the second one, the student came to work with me with a preconceived notion that I was not up to standard to provide feedback on their master's thesis; they tried to resist my suggestions in the beginning but only gave in when they realized that I had something valuable to add to their paper. In the third example, the peer, although being an *advocate* of global English usage, could not tolerate my claim that I said I could imitate the American accent. The way they tried to prove that I could not imitate an American accent—which there is not just one single one (M. J. Matsuda, 1991)—was distasteful and microaggressive. This example goes to show how ingrained native speaker fallacy is in U.S. education and society. It also shows that while some people may claim to be a sympathetic to speakers of Global Englishes, they might not necessarily consider Global English users to be their equal.

The purpose of providing these examples was to demonstrate how common microaggressions are that stem from native speaker and how they can take many different forms in and around U.S educational settings. My research study was necessary because through the research process, I wanted international global English-using graduate students like me to recognize what microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy look like; my aim was to assist my study participants in developing critical consciousness that could help them to become vocal about their own experiences, as well as prevent them from perpetuating the fallacy in any form. I believe that as more and more students become conscious about the issue, they will be able to correct anyone who initiates or perpetuates microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy, which in turn will help international global English-using students to feel more at ease while they get their degrees in the U.S.

Research Questions and Institution Setting

Institution Setting

I wanted to understand the lived experiences of international graduate global English users in-depth. So, I chose to collect my data qualitatively from students of one university only; that way some basic internal and external factors such as location and administrative processes could be kept steady. The university that I invited participants from, for this study, is situated in the Southwest region of the U.S. This institution is known to be a Minority Serving Institution and hosts a high Hispanic population of students. In this paper, I refer to this university as Southwest American University—a pseudonym. It is important to note, however, that institution setting and research setting (explained in Chapter 3) have slightly different meaning in this study. While *Institution Setting* explains the location, mood, and demographics of the institution which the participants of this study were, at the time, students

of, *Research Setting* indicates the target place from which the participants for this study were recruited. More information on research setting is provided in Chapter 3.

Research Questions

As for my research questions, it was substantial that I keep them simple and succinct in order to not complicate things any further for an already complex topic. Therefore, I constructed the two following "to-the-point" questions that I wanted to find answers to through my research. With these research questions, I explored international graduate global English-using students' experiences with microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy. My aim was to first find the answers to these following questions and then generate ideas to design and present tools and protocols that can help individuals and institutions to respond to microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy. My research questions were, thus, as follows:

1. What understandings and overall experiences do international graduate students who speak Global Englishes have about microaggressions in and around educational settings within the ideology of the native speaker fallacy?

2. How do the themes that emerge from international global English-using students' individual and collective reflections of their experiences with microaggressions inform the study about the deep-rootedness of microaggressions in and around educational settings?

Chapter 2
Literature Review

Although there is a huge body of literature in the context of discrimination against international students in U.S. educational settings, no previous research, to my knowledge, have looked into international students' experiences of *microaggressions* solely from the ideology of *native speaker fallacy*, especially one that focuses on the experiences of graduate international students only. On the one hand, studies that addressed native speaker fallacy toward international students in U.S. educational settings mostly focused on the experiences of international teaching assistants and TESOL students (Aneja, 2014; Zheng, 2017); on the other hand, studies that addressed microaggressions executed towards international students in U.S. educational settings mostly aimed at unveiling racial or overall microaggressions that the students experience due to their minority status (Krsmanovic, 2022; Maddamsetti, 2018; Yeo et al., 2019).

Literature search for both of these topics either separately or together did not yield many results that matched the aim of this current study. Hence, to avoid limiting the scope of this literature review, it was more logical that I chose and reviewed research studies that focused on language-based discrimination, to any extent, against international graduate global English-using students. So, I primarily used the key terms *international students in U.S.* and *international student experiences in U.S.* with any and all combinations of the terms: *linguistic discrimination*, *linguicism*, *language-based discrimination, native speaker fallacy*, *microaggression, language bias, graduate students, Higher Ed*, and *educational settings* to find and review related literature.

Surprisingly, review of studies on language-based discriminations against international graduate students revealed that despite the large population of this cohort of students in the U.S., not much research has been done that directly and independently addresses their negative experiences with English language usage. Most of the research studies in the field related to discrimination against this population have either been coupled with undergraduate students (Lee, 2010) or have been conducted to understand struggles, at large, of international graduate students in adapting to the U.S. educational system (Duru & Poyrazli, 2011).

Interestingly, most of the latter research works almost always have been framed and presented in a manner that it appears as though the negative experiences of the international students were most likely due to their "perceived" discrimination in U.S. educational settings. A literature search on the topic shows how frequently researchers use the phrase "perceived discrimination" alongside international students in their titles (Duru & Poyrazli, 2011; Karuppan & Barari, 2010; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). This stance and use of language are problematic because they invalidate the struggles of the international students during interaction with sources outside of themselves.

Therefore, this chapter includes systematic review of literature that are specific to the subtle language-based discriminations encountered by international graduate students in and around U.S. educational settings and that which drew attention to the gap in literature that I, as a researcher, hoped to fill. Although other factors such as race have been briefly touched upon, they were not allowed to take precedence in this sampling since the emphasis of this study was on English language and its resulting discriminations. In addition, because I operated my study from a critical consciousness framework, it was necessary that I remained

on topic, which is language, and let the participants decide if any of the language-based discriminations that they may have experienced had any association with additional factors such as race, gender, nationality, and religion among others.

Also, factors such as race is a whole another complex topic in the U.S. context because of how races are listed and identified by the U.S. Census Bureau; meaning, although some populations are listed as a certain race, many individuals in that population may not fully identify with that race. For instance, people of the Middle East and North Africa are listed as Whites alongside the "original" peoples of Europe in the U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022); however, not all people may fully identify with that classification of themselves (Maghbouleh, 2020). Consequently, any and all information on race and other factors has been covered, addressed, analyzed, and interpreted in the results and interpretation section if the participants had created a link between language-based discriminations and those additional factors that I stated above at any point during data collection.

Incorporation of Terms in Existing Literature

To put the existing literature into the *perspective* and *language* of the present study, in this review, I have used global English user or global English-using student in place "nonnative English speaker", "NNES", and "ESL" students that the studies originally used.

Outline of Literature

This literature review contains the review and analysis of some of the most relevant studies in the field of education that have contributed to the understanding of the experiences of microaggression stemming from native speaker fallacy at the international global English-using graduate students' end. Although the current study is a qualitative study and I heavily

relied on qualitative review of studies, I chose to review some quantitative studies as well because of two distinct reasons. Firstly, the sheer number of quantitative studies that have been conducted to call attention to the challenges of international students in and around the U.S. educational settings. Secondly, acknowledging the quantitative studies and their purposes added to the strength of the current study as it allowed me to expose the gap in literature, regarding language-based microaggressions, that this unique study aimed to fill.

To that end, this chapter has been divided into five separate sections by themes with the purpose of making the review easier to follow. The themes are: 1. Discrimination Against All International Students; 2. Discrimination Against International Graduate Students Only; 3. Invalidation of International Students' Negative Experiences; 4. International Students' Experiences in Authoritative Roles; 5. Experiences of International Graduate Students in Interaction with global English Users. Within each theme, I have presented comparable studies that address language-based issues in and around U.S. educational settings to any capacity in relation to the current study.

<div align="center">

Findings from the Review of Literature

</div>

Discrimination Against All International Students

As previously mentioned, most research studies that investigated the challenges or discrimination faced by international graduate global English-using students in and around U.S. educational settings have grouped both undergraduate and graduate students together as participants. In this section, some of the most relevant studies that have a language component attached to the said challenges have been reviewed.

The first study that I want to address in this section is Lee and Rice's (2007) case study in which the researchers sought to investigate the experiences of all international

students in a Southwestern university. The findings of the research show that there was disparity in the experiences of White native English-speaking international students and non-White global English-using international students. A global English-using participant in the study revealed that they felt discriminated against because of their global English-using status and that they felt "people can say anything they want as long as they won't hurt [anyone], physically" (p.394). The experiences of White native English-speaking international students, on the other hand, seemed to be very different than their global English-using peers. One such participant in Lee and Rice's study quotes:

> Well, I haven't experienced discrimination. But then again, I take a cynical view that I'm a White guy who speaks English. So that makes you less a target form discrimination. But if you're a non-White and you have troubles with the language then, yes, I suppose you can be even singled out (p.393).

Like this participant, many other White native English-speaking international participants in the study made similar remarks. Their general observation was that global English-using international students may be discriminated against more often because of their non-Anglo language and culture.

Participants in Ee's (2013) study reported almost identical experiences. In their study, Ee explored if language proficiency, foreign accent, race, ethnicity, and gender could be some of the reasons why international global English-using students face discrimination. Participants in the study reported that they regularly get discriminated against because of their global English-using status, which included the factors that Ee hypothesized. One participant reported that their American classmates do not want to include them or any other

international students when forming groups for class discussions due to English not being their "first" language.

Similarly, Lee's (2010) quantitative study inquired if international students' experiences at a Southwestern U.S. university may influence them in encouraging or discouraging people from their home country to attend it. On students' experiences in the language front, the researcher found that international students often felt discriminated against by their native English-speaking classmates and instructors and that English language played a role in their negative experiences. The researcher posited that unlike most studies in which the international students are asked to take the responsibility of acculturating into the host country, their study viewed the international students as agents who, based on their experiences, had the power to either negatively or positively influence future student enrollment by their recommendations.

Yeo et al. (2019), although along the same track of thought, took a different approach into understanding discrimination against international students. Through counter-narratives, the researchers examined the experiences of Asian American students who are mistaken as Asian international students. The study provided the researchers insight into domestic students' perceptions of and misconduct toward international students. Among other discriminations, the language specific finding of the study was that native English-speaking students not only make fun of international global English-using students' English accents but also judge their international peers' intelligence and language proficiency solely based on it. In addition, the researchers found that many faculty members, counselors, and staff members also showed condescending attitudes toward international students because of their global English speaker status.

Discrimination Against International Graduate Students Only

In the previous section, I reviewed the studies that grouped undergraduate and graduate students together to make systematic inquiry about the discrimination that global English-using students experience in U.S. educational settings. In this section, I review studies that address discriminations encountered specifically by international graduate global English-using students in and around U.S. educational settings. Out of the five articles chosen for review, the first two primarily focus on language challenges and discriminations faced by international graduate global English-using students and the remaining three briefly mention language biases amongst the other challenges experienced by international graduate global English-using students.

Language challenge/bias focused

Kuo's (2011) research study explored the language challenges faced by international graduate global English-using students at a Southern university in the U.S. Using the survey method, Kuo collected qualitative data in which the students expressed the language issues they face in U.S. academic settings and beyond. Participants in Kuo's study reported that one of the major language challenges they faced in educational settings was that their American classmates "th[ink] they [a]re stupid and not intelligent because they [can] not express themselves fluently in English" (p.40). According to Kuo, communication difficulty in English at the global English-using students' part, despite it being their additional language, is the reason why some Americans look down on them.

Correspondingly, Rahman (2021), in her autoethnographic reflection, also discusses how she experienced language biases from her peers due to her second language speaker status. She shares the example of a native English-speaking classmate and fellow teaching assistant

31

who, very tactfully, regularly ignored any scholarly contributions made by her. The classmate would either look away from her or not jot down any of her suggestions when given the responsibility to take pointers during group discussions. Rahman points out that these subtle language biases can negatively impact on how the global English-using students perceive themselves.

General challenges focused

Lefdahl-Davis and Perrone-McGovern (2015) conducted a two-phase qualitative study to investigate the cultural adjustment experiences of Saudi women international students in the U.S. using grounded theory methods. The researchers conducted the first phase of the study by conducting interviews with female graduate international Saudi women in a Midwestern university to understand their adjustment challenges. For the second phase of the study, the researchers collected data via an online survey that contained open-ended questions. The majority of the participants that responded to the survey were also graduate students.

The researchers found that, among the challenges the participants encountered, feeling disregarded because of their global English-using status was a concern for graduate students. One participant stated that they "feel people do not want to talk to [them] because [they are] international, and . . . won't be able to understand easily" (p.420). Similar sentiments were reflected in Mwangi et al.'s (2018) qualitative study as well. In their study on intersectional understanding of African international graduate students' experiences in U.S. Higher Education, participants, during individual interviews, reported experiencing language prejudice in U.S. educational settings. One participant mentioned receiving complaints about her editing job on campus because as a global English-using student she

should not have been *allowed* to be in an authoritative position where she could make decisions on events involving the English language.

Likewise, Fatima's (2001) study that examined the perceptions of female international global English-using graduate students' adjustment experiences while studying at an urban research university in Southern U.S. found that participants experienced language biases from their native English-speaking classmates and instructors. During the focus group interview, participants frequently used the term "discrimination" (p.42) when issues related to language were discussed. Participants pointed out that many of their classmates did not want to work with them in groups because of their foreignness and global English-using status.

Invalidation of International Students' Negative Experiences

Most of the studies that have covered the topic of discrimination against international students have been conducted from a viewpoint that portrays international students in a deficient light who need adjusting to the host culture to reduce the discrimination done against them. In other words, most studies term the negative experiences of international students as *perceived discrimination* and implies that this said discrimination felt at the international students' part stems from misunderstandings, which they could overcome as they acculturated to the U.S. norms, over time. While these studies are important in terms of providing valuable information regarding how international students adapt to the U.S. educational system and culture, the implied message that discrimination experienced by the students are only "perceived" and can change over time as they adjust to the host culture is very problematic. Interestingly, most of these research studies are quantitative in which the

researchers make assumptions from their quantitative data as to why international students feel discriminated against.

This section of the paper, thus, includes studies that were conducted to understand international students' "perceived" discriminations. Five out of the six studies that have been reviewed are quantitative studies with two of them having international graduate students as their only participants and four having graduate students as their majority participants.

Wadsworth et al. (2008), through their quantitative study, examined the processes that lead international students to satisfying or dissatisfying educational experiences at their American universities. The statistical findings of the research showed English language to be one of the factors why international global English-using students feel discriminated against. The researchers concluded that "international students who use English, consume American popular culture, and interact with Americans may see themselves as becoming more Americanized, resulting in greater identification with US culture" (p. 82) and thus perceiving lesser discrimination. Similarly, Karuppan and Barari (2010) who conducted an empirical investigation to understand international students' perceived discrimination and its effects on learning provided similar conclusions that international students who have higher English language skills can better "insulate[] . . . the harming effects of discrimination" (p. 78) due to their confidence in communicating with others.

Likewise, Poyrazli and Lopez's (2007) exploratory quantitative study that compared the perceived discrimination and homesickness of American versus international students found that international students are at a greater risk of perceiving or experiencing discrimination due to their non-American status, speaking English with an accent, and belonging to a visibly distinct racial or ethnic minority group. The finding was concurrent

with the researchers' hypothesis that level of perceived discrimination predicts their level of homesickness. On the language front of the perceived discriminations, the researchers concluded that international students who have "lower" English language skills have higher levels of homesickness, which implies that students' lower levels of English skills may lead to higher levels of perceived discrimination.

Additionaly, Duru and Poyrazli's (2011) study and Perrucci and Hu's (1995) study that focused on understanding international students' adjustment difficulties and international students' satisfaction with social and educational experiences, respectively, found that language skills played a major role in both the cases. Duru and Poyrazli's quantitative study explored perceived discrimination, social connectedness, and other predictors of adjustment difficulties among Turkish international students; the researchers found that there was negative relation between English language competency and adjustment difficulties. Correspondingly, Perrucci and Hu's quantitative study that explored international graduate students' satisfaction with academic program, academic appointment, and nonacademic social relationships found that there was a strong correlation between language skills and satisfaction. Both studies implied that "higher" English language skills lead to lower perceived discrimination, as well as higher satisfaction in U.S. educational settings.

The only qualitative study in the category of *Invalidation of International Students' Negative Experiences* is of Samimy et al.'s (2011) study in which the researchers conducted a participative inquiry in a TESOL program to examine three global English-using graduate students' journeys from legitimate peripheral participation to fuller participation over the 3.5-year period. The goal of the research was to examine the change in self-perception, or lack thereof, of the three graduate global English-using students before and after completion of an

NNES seminar. From their findings, the researchers conclude that the seminar helped the global English-using students to gain confidence in themselves because they were able to renegotiate their identities as global English-using students through discussions and dialogues on Global Englishes and understanding what speaking varieties of English entails.

International Students' Experiences in Authoritative Roles

Despite decades-long and extensive research on language-based discriminations against international graduate teaching assistants (ITA), this issue is still persistent in U.S. academic settings. ITAs consistently receive lower rating from students regardless of how prepared, well-learned, and proficient they are in English (Ates & Eslami's, 2012; Finegan & Siegfried, 2000). Researchers like Bailey (1983), almost three decades ago, had implied that it may not be ITAs that are at fault here, that it maybe students' preconceived notion and lack of exposure to English varieties (Kang et. al, 2015) that usually lead them to devalue ITAs' teaching and language skills. Nonetheless, the burden and blame are still put just on the ITAs, and they are expected to fully assimilate (Adebayo & Allen, 2020).

Therefore, this section of the paper entails review of studies in the field of education that were conducted to understand experiences of international global English-using graduate students in positions of authority, namely teaching assistantship and traineeship. Three out of the five studies that have been reviewed are qualitative studies in which international graduate teaching assistants' (ITA) experiences are explored and two are quantitative studies—one in which experiences of international graduate counselling trainees' (ICT) experiences are examined and another in which ITAs experiences are investigated.

Jones et al.'s (2020) qualitative study inquired how ITAs navigate and negotiate power dynamics as authoritative figures who belong to the marginalized population in a

predominantly white institution. The findings of the study indicate language to be one of the factors in which the ITAs feel or are made to feel subordinate even when they hold authoritative positions. An ITA participant who was placed in an early childhood education classroom to collaborate with a master teacher stated that the master teacher (a native English speaker) did not value her input because of her global English-using status; although the ITA was pursuing a higher degree and had more teaching experience than the master teacher, the teacher did not want to give the ITA any teaching responsibilities—stating their concern about the ITA's language status.

Similar language-based discrimination is mirrored in Ates and Eslami's (2012) qualitative study in which the researchers assessed online blog entries of three ITAs to gain insight into their experiences of teaching ESL related courses to preservice teachers. Among the other challenges faced by the ITAs, they mentioned that the preservice teachers often made the ITAs' global English-using status to be an issue when in fact they were reluctant to learn and sufficiently prepare for the course. The ITAs were not only evaluated negatively by the preservice teachers but also challenged verbally in-person because of their global English-using status. The researchers assert that this attitude at the native English-speaking preservice teacher' end may be due to their intolerance against varieties of English.

The difficulties encountered by ITA is further reflected in Zhu and Bresnahan's (2021) study. The researchers took a thematic analysis approach in their qualitative study to investigate the stigma experiences of ITAs. Through in-depth semi-structured interviews, the researchers found that different individuals perceived language-based challenges differently: some of them blamed themselves for their lack of English proficiency, while others were confident about their English language skills. However, there was a greater consensus about

ITAs being less favored by their supervisors, the department, and their students because of their global English-using status. One important finding in the study was that even though ITAs were in a position of power, their power was not equivalent to that of the domestic TAs who were favored by the supervisors and the department and given more desirable and solo teaching responsibilities because of their native English-speaking status.

Accent centered language-based discrimination is also very common in ITA literature. It is seen to be made a major issue by students in ITA classrooms with the claim that ITAs are incomprehensible. Kang et al.'s (2015) study that explored the perception of students pre and post contact with ITAs in informal settings prove otherwise. In their study, the researchers worked with two groups of students: one that was introduced to an intervention and the other that was made into a control group. The intervention consisted of the students meeting with ITAs in an informal setting. The researchers found that the students rated ITAs higher in the posttest after the meeting than they did in the pretest. Since the control group could just take one test, as they did not meet the ITAs, the rating provided by the students of that group for ITAs was lower. In addition, students in the intervention group were in consensus that they feel more positively about ITAs and their accents ever since their informal meeting.

Similarly, participants in Fatima's (2001) and Adebayo and Allen's (2020) studies reported that they had been subjected to certain degrees of discomfort due to how their accents were perceived by the students in their classrooms. For instance, an ITA in Fatima's study reported that they may have received a lower score in the communication area of their teaching evaluation because of their accent (p. 42); another ITA in Adebayo and Allen's study, on the other hand, reported that they have been called out by students in the classroom

because of how they had pronounced certain words (p. 76). Adebayo and Allen also pointed out that the ITAs speaking a variety of English—British English for example—which contains words that are not commonly used in the U.S. culture may also add to the challenge that they experience as foreign teachers.

The unequal treatment of global English-using ITAs is also mirrored in Ng and Smith's (2009) study with ICTs. Ng and Smith carried out a quantitative study to assess the perceptions and experiences of international trainees in counseling and related programs. The researchers found that in comparison to domestic counseling trainees (DCT),

> ICTs tend to report higher levels of academic problems, English proficiency issues, cultural adjustment problems, social/relational problems with peers, difficulties in clinical courses, problems fitting in at clinical sites, problems communicating with clients due to language barriers, conflicts with Western understandings and approaches to treating mental health, discrimination by faculty members, and discrimination by fellow American trainees (p. 66).

The researchers provide an explanation for this disproportionate rating given by the ICT and DCT. Based on their personal experiences working with ICTs, the researchers note that ICTs are not afforded equal opportunities like their domestic counterparts, with the assumption that their language skills are not at par like the latter group; not given a chance to speak in class and assigning the ICTs to only specific group of clients are some discriminatory practices that the authors pointed out in their article.

Experiences of International Graduate Students in Interaction with global English Users

Unfortunately, the discrimination directed toward the international graduate global English-using students are not limited from native English speakers only; discrimination

from global English users to other global English users is more common than it may appear (Santana-Williamson & Kelch, 2002; Thomas, 1999). Interestingly, most studies in U.S. educational settings that have covered language discrimination from a global English user to another graduate global English user have mostly been done so in a setting where the graduate student was in an official role such as a tutor or a teacher. There may be some distinctive reasons at play for having such narrow literature that explores global English users' biases toward graduate global English-using students in and around U.S. educational settings.

Firstly, being an international graduate global English-using student myself, I have noticed that most people view international students as identical, even though we come from different countries, speak different languages, have different cultural values and upbringings, and entertain different political and religious views. Although nowhere near identical, the one thing, however, that is common among all the international students is that we are in fact *international* and are viewed as *aliens* (as our visa status states) in the U.S. soil; hence, it is natural that we try to avoid any discord with one another as much as we can and even elude from voicing any discrimination that we face within this group, further encouraging the idea that we are identical.

Hence, researchers who are outside of the international student community and believe all international students to be alike may not be fully aware that language-based discriminatory behavior can also be directed from one international global English user toward another international global English user. On the other hand, researchers who are within the international student community and are aware of the aforementioned issue might

find it in their best interest to stay away from such topics that have the potential to bring about tension in the community that they are themselves a part of.

Secondly, researchers who do take notice of any language-based discriminatory practices within the global English-using international student community and come forward to document them do so from an avenue where data collection is easy; meaning, they mostly choose topics in which at least one party of the international global English-using students is in an authoritative role, and where language-based discrimination is apparent and easier to document. Therefore, in this part of the paper, the studies that are most relevant to the current study and address language-based discrimination from international global English users to international *graduate* global English-using students are reviewed.

Rahman (2018), through their mixed-method study, examined the perceptions of international global English-using undergraduate and graduate students toward their international global English-using writing tutors in writing centers. The researcher collected data through student interviews and an online survey that contained both quantitative and qualitative questions. The findings of the study showed that majority of international global English-using students preferred to work with native English-speaking tutors over global English-using tutors due to reasons like: lack of confidence in the global English-users' skills—due to their preconceived idea of native English speakers being better tutors and, sometimes, due to their own ego in working with other global English users. One study participant commented that they are more willing to work with native English speakers "just because [they are] studying abroad in the U.S., so more or less, [they] think a Native English speaker can be more trusted in terms of improving [their] English skills" (p.20).

Likewise, Zhao's (2017) qualitative study, in which the researcher observed an international global English-using student's interactions with a native English-speaking tutor and an international global English-using tutor found that the student was more cooperative during their session with the native English-speaking tutor than they were with the global English-using tutor. Interviews with the participant revealed that the global English-using student's reluctance came from their doubts regarding the global English-using tutor's tutoring competence. Despite the global English-using tutor adhering better to the writing center policy of placing content over grammar, the tutee preferred the native English-speaking tutor. From the study and from other personal observations, the researcher concluded that many global English-using students judge their global English-using tutors' tutoring abilities simply because of their own skepticism.

Rahman's (2021) autoethnographic reflection also outlines a similar incident in which a global English-using student resisted to work with a global English-using tutor solely because the tutor's name did not look like that of a native English speaker to the student. The student made this judgement about the tutor simply by reading the tutor's name on the email that she received from the writing center regarding the writing support that was available for graduate students. The student insisted that she work with a native English-speaking tutor because her paper was very important and only a native English-speaking tutor would be capable of helping her. Rahman posited that such attitudes at the global English-using students' end stem from the misperception that only native speakers of English are ideal matches for teaching and/or tutoring in the language.

Analysis and Gap in Literature

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the purpose of the current study was to unearth if international graduate global English-using students experience microaggressions in and around U.S. educational settings as a result of native speaker fallacy. The review of studies in the above section demonstrated that most studies that have been conducted to understand challenges faced by international graduate students revolve around various themes of discriminations or "perceived" overall discriminations; majority of the conducted studies aimed to expose discriminations in general, and were not specific to language discrimination. Most of the studies have also grouped together international undergraduate and graduate global English-using students to understand the struggle of international population altogether. The studies that did cover international graduate student challenges, specifically, were mostly conducted to understand the experiences of graduate students in authoritative positions like teaching assistants, tutors, or trainees.

The findings of all the studies do render some valuable data to comprehend how international graduate global English-using students adapt to U.S. educational settings and adopt the U.S. academic culture. However, they fail to provide an in-depth understanding of what international graduate global English-using students actually feel and experience on a day-to-day basis while interacting in English with individuals in and around U.S. educational settings, or while adapting to its Anglo culture. For instance, Lee and Rice (2007) and Ee (2013) grouped together international global English-using undergraduate and graduate students' experiences in their individual studies which, although insightful, do not fully capture the lived experiences of the graduate students; especially when it comes to using English in and around educational settings. International undergraduate and international

43

graduate students are two very different populations because the two programs call for very different interactions with classmates, professors, colleagues, students, tutees, and the department.

Similarly, Wadsworth et al. (2008) and Perrucci and Hu's (1995) quantitative studies explored the discrimination faced by international students. These studies were quantitative in nature which by default does not provide detailed data about what international students feel. In addition, the researchers in these studies used wording such as "perceived" discrimination and discuss their data from a perspective of how international students can better themselves to overcome the challenges that they face in U.S. educational settings. Such a stance at the researchers' end is problematic because it puts all the burden on the international students to acculturate into the host culture and invalidates the "real" and "raw" negative experiences of the students. The language of these studies leaves too much room for the students to be inaccurate—they perceive discrimination, but it may not be. What is needed are studies that unabashedly operate from the premise that students are capable of noticing discrimination and that it is worthy work to document *how they feel* about this discrimination.

Kuo's (2011) and Samimy et al.'s (2011) studies, however, took a more humanitarian approach to bring international graduate students' experiences to light. Kuo, nonetheless, did so with a survey method to collect data which again does not involve interviewing students; as a result, the study failed to provide thorough accounts on the critical events that the students encountered. In case of Samimy et al.'s study, the researchers' target was to assist three international graduate students to evolve and become more confident in their interactions with others over the course of a specific program. Albeit their approach being

very productive, it sends the message that international students are the ones who must be held accountable for their feelings and experiences; that, they are the ones who need to put in all the work to adapt to the U.S. academic culture.

Approaches such as the aforementioned one may unintentionally release the perpetrators that engage in language-based discriminatory behavior from any blame, permitting them to believe that their behavior is harmless or justified. It also puts the entire pressure of acclimatization and acculturation on the international students and normalizes any negative behavior that is directed toward them by the offenders. What is needed are studies that capture the complexities of international students' dynamic communities; after all international students often seek this community among each other (Durrani, 2017).

Moreover, as seen from the existing literature, almost all studies that capture the discriminations against international graduate students in details have been conducted to understand the experiences of students in authoritative positions like teachers, tutors, or trainees; only a few of which solely focused on the language aspect of discrimination against international graduate students. While the studies are very informative, they are limited to a subgroup of international graduate global English-using students. International students may be employed into many other roles apart from just teaching, tutoring, or counseling jobs. They could be members of different university organizations, could be working off-campus in other U.S. educational settings on CPT or OPT (USCIS, nd), could be active members of student communities, could be members of student status-associated community groups, or could just be regular graduate students on scholarships without any jobs. Hence, their exposures and interactions in and around U.S. educational settings are disparate and diverse.

Reviewing these aforementioned studies revealed that there was a gap in literature that needed to be filled. An in-depth understating of international graduate global English-using students' experiences due to their language status was not only important but necessary because this population of students maintain different roles in and around U.S. educational settings and have wide range of interactions with people who are affiliated with such settings.

My study aimed to uncover the language-based discriminations that international graduate global English-using students experience in their daily lives while interacting with others in and around U.S. educational settings. More specifically, the objective of my study was to fully understand microaggressions as felt at the international graduate global English-using students' end due to native speaker fallacy. Studying this population revealed information on how discrimination is enacted and then perpetuated over time. This information was helpful in developing workshops and strategies (presented in Chapter 5) that can mitigate language-based discrimination in and around U.S. educational settings, as well as make international students feel that they are also a valuable part of the academic community.

Why it is Important to Bring Awareness?

As international global English using students are a vulnerable population because of their language status but are expected to take on many different roles in and around U.S. educational settings, they can easily become exposed to microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy. If they are not made aware that these subtle discriminations are real and are a matter of concern, they will not be able to fight against them. The worst-case scenario of this lack of awareness at their part can mean that they themselves may start executing subtle language-based discrimination, either consciously or subconsciously,

believing that it is normal; in a lesser worst-case, they may continue to unknowingly perpetuate such discriminations by refraining from confronting or speaking against them.

Thus, the information that I have gathered from this study is vital in two ways. First, it can help the U.S. educational system gain perspective on what international students actually experience and feel in regard to their English; second, it can help U.S. institutions take necessary steps to create an environment that is more welcoming to international individuals.

Chapter 3
Methodology

As already implied in Chapter 1 and briefly stated in Chapter 2, I took a qualitative approach for my research study. My research questions sought to find what the experiences of international graduate global English-speaking students are regrading microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy. Innately, capturing human experiences in detail in research in itself elicits data collection of qualitative nature. Goodwin and Goodwin (1996) defined qualitative research as the research that "seeks to understand phenomena via induction; to emphasize process, values, context, and interpretation in the construction of meaning and concepts; and to report in narrative form" (as cited in Graue and Karabon, 2013, p. 12). Thus, a qualitative research design for my topic gave me the opportunity to investigate the issue at hand in-depth and contribute meaning to social reality.

According to Merriam (2002), qualitative research can be commonly classified into eight main types: namely, basic interpretive, phenomenology, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, narrative analysis, critical, and postmodern-poststructural. To study my research topic, a phenomenological approach made the most sense among the aforementioned eight qualitative research types. As Critical Consciousness (CC) is the theoretical framework governing my study, an open-ended phenomenological approach to collecting and analyzing data was not only logical but a necessary technique.

Merriam (2002) defined phenomenological study as the form of inquiry that "focuses on the essence or structure of an experience . . . [in order to] show[] how complex meanings are built out of simple units of direct experience" (p.7). In other words, in a phenomenological study, the researcher aims to probe into the consciousness of the study

participants to together unveil, deconstruct, and make meaning of the experiences of the said participant group in a given time, situation, and context. Porter and Cohen (2013) distinguished phenomenological studies into three types: descriptive, interpretive, and hermeneutic. According to the authors, descriptive phenomenology, which is based on Husserl's philosophy, aims "to explore and describe the essential structure of an experience in terms of phenomena" (p.182), whereas, interpretive phenomenology, which is Heidegger's tradition, aims "to reveal frequently taken-for-granted shared practices and common meanings" (p.184). Hermeneutic phenomenology, on the other hand, is described by the authors as being the combination of the two, which follows the tradition of Cohen, Kahn, and Steeves and van Manen (2000; 1997, as cited in Porter and Cohen, 2013).

My research topic and my governing theoretical framework fit perfectly into the interpretive tradition of phenomenology because this form of inquiry is rooted into understanding "meanings [that] are not always apparent to the participants but can be gleaned from the narratives produced by them" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p.728). Microaggression is a subtle form of oppression and is not always evident to the people at the receiving end right away, especially when they do not have knowledge of the concept. Microaggression stemming from native speaker fallacy is even trickier to pinpoint because global English users often have either subconsciously already surrendered their claim over English as seen in Choi's (2009) study or have just, consciously or subconsciously, accepted the fact that they will never be given the same status as native English speakers as found in Samimy et al.'s (2011) study.

Hence, interpretive phenomenology rendered me with a structure with which I was able to help my study participants tap into both their conscious- and subconsciousness and

identify the microaggressive experiences that they had been at the receiving end of because of their language status.

Phenomenological Approach and Critical Incident Technique

Phenomenologically-based research can be designed in a variety of ways (Lester, 1999) depending on the topic of the research and the goals that the researcher wants to achieve. For my research, which is governed by CC, I chose the *Critical Incident Technique (CIT)* as the method of data collection. CIT is the method that allows the researcher to systematically obtain rich and rare qualitative data from participants by encouraging them to reflect and report on *critical incidents* that they have experienced. Critical incidents in CIT can be defined as events—either positive or negative— that an individual has encountered and deem to be significant because the events have affected their lives to a certain degree (Galante, 2014; Hughes, 2008). According to Hughes (2008), the "incidents" in question do not have to be "dramatic" or of massive magnitude but need to be significant and meaningful to the individual who has lived them (p. 2). My research goals aligned with the core protocols of the CIT method inherently in that my aim was to understand those experiences of the participants that had been critical and consequently significant to them.

More on CIT

The first known use of CIT as a qualitative research methodology can be traced back to the works of Sir Francis Galton circa 1880 (as cited in Flanagan, 1954) which was later adapted by the psychologist John C. Flanagan for studying efficient pilot performance in the Aviation Psychology Program of the United States Army Air Forces during World War II (Flanagan, 1954). Since then, CIT has undergone rapid evolution and due to its flexibility as a methodology has become an internationally popular technique to study behavior and

performance in fields such as counselling psychology, education, medicine, nursing education, social work, and social studies (Askeland & Bradley, 2007; Butterfield, 2005; Corbally, 1956; Douglas et al., 2009).

CIT or Critical Incidents-Based Studies in Education

Since my research was based on settings in and around U.S. educational system, it is important to highlight some of the existing studies in education that have been conducted internationally using the CIT method to portray the flexibility and the wide range of usage of the method. The frequented CIT-based studies in the field of education are mostly done surrounding the themes of enhancing teacher performance or improving the services of educational programs. For instance, Shapira-Lishchinsky (2010) used the CIT method to explore teachers' "ethical dilemmas in critical incidents and the emerged responses that these incidents elicit" (p. 648). The end purpose of the researcher was to promote the development of educational programs that can provide teachers with an explicit knowledge of what is considered ethical, or lack thereof, in educational settings involving student sentiments.

Similarly, Angelides (2001) and Galante (2014) have used critical incidents as their data collection tool to aid discussions on toxic school cultures or to encourage the addition of components of self- exploration and intercultural sensitivity in lessons, respectively, to render support to students. Hanhimäki and Tirri (2009), too, have used the CIT method to exhibit, by narration of critical incidents, what types of situations teachers have to deal with in their work; their main aim was to assist teacher educators to recognize how ethically sensitive teaching could be promoted.

Okalief (1976), on the other hand, was focused on bettering the services of programs in educational institutions with the help of CIT. The researcher used CIT to identify

administrative behavior which can encourage or hinder greater accomplishment of the adult-continuing education and community service function in 19 selected Kansas junior-community colleges. Adams and Rodriguez (2020) used critical incidents as a data collection tool in their narrative inquiry methodology to advocate for adding self-reflection and culturally relevant pedagogy in teacher preparation programs.

Almost all the CIT or critical incidents-based studies in the field of education have been done with the viewpoint that the participants are *performers* or *actors* of incidents: individuals who are at the production end of events. To be precise, most of the CIT or critical incidents-based studies in education, like most studies in other fields, sought to understand behavior and experiences with the intention of improving some sort of *performance* (Viergever, 2019). Hence, the present CIT-based study is unique, at least in the field of education, in that its primary objective has been to view participants as *receivers*: individuals who have been at the receiving end of events. To be more precise, the central purpose of this study was to capture critical incidents that the participants experienced as *receivers*, which were initiated by external *actors* or *performers*.

Figure 1

Comparison between previous and the current CIT-based research in education

CIT-based research to enhance performance: Previous reseach
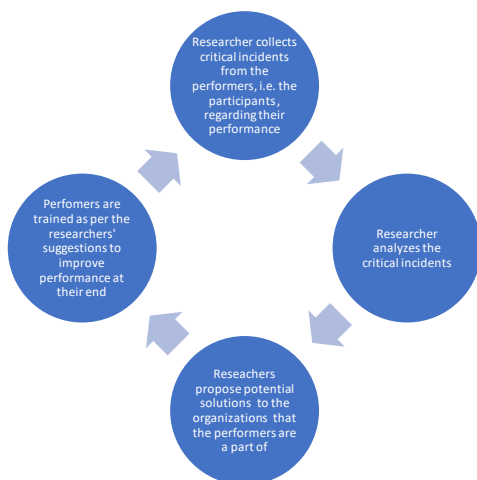
CIT-based research seeking social justice: Current reseach
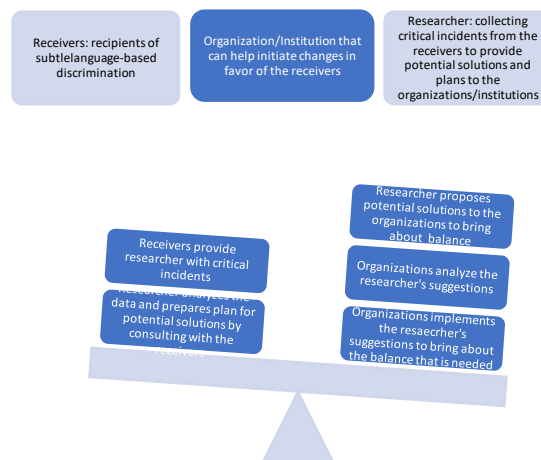
Since my study participants are international students, they often do not want to voice the subtle discriminatory critical incidents that they experience; they fear that they might offend people in the host culture or believe that they might be blowing the incidents out of proportion in their heads because of their lack of understanding of the host culture, or from being homesick. However, as mentioned in the problem description, these subtle but critical incidents can have traumatic effects on students which in turn can lead them to perform poorly in and around educational settings and lead to a decline in their mental and physical health (Auguste et al. 2014; Kendall-Tackett, 2014; Lewis et al., 2006)

Research Strategies

In this section, I provide step-by-step information on how I conducted this IRB-approved study. I explain how I invited my participants for this research—in that how I did my sampling for this study; who my participants were; how I collected data from the

participants; and how I met the trustworthiness measures of qualitative research for my study.

I elaborate on all of these steps in the succeeding paragraphs.

Sampling Details: Population, Setting, and Method

Sampling Population and Research Setting

As my chosen theoretical framework for the study was critical consciousness, I invited my participants to join me in my research rather than *recruiting* or *enrolling them*. My target population was graduate global English-speaking students of Southwest American University who attend two separate international student **Homegroups**. *Homegroups* are volunteer-run community groups from a Christian Community Service Organization (situated at the same city where the study took place) that is committed to helping international students and scholars of all faiths. This organization is a community partner of Southwest American University, and the volunteers of this organization are of diverse age groups and occupations. This organization is an initial point of U.S. contact for many international students and scholars of Southwest American University.

When any international student or scholar, regardless of their faith, arrive at the Southwest American University, the International Student Office at the Southwest American University may direct the student to the volunteers of this organization as a supplementary resource for acclimatization support into the U.S. culture. The international office of Southwest American University may also suggest the student or the scholar to reach out to this organization for temporary accommodation.

When the student or scholar contacts this organization to find accommodation, they are paired with a **host family.** *Host families* are the *family-volunteers* of this organization that welcome the international students to the country and into their homes and do all the needful

to help the students feel that although they are away home, they still have a family in the foreign land. Besides temporary accommodation, the host families also offer transportation and food support to newly arrived international students and scholars.

The students who do not require temporary accommodation or a pairing with a host family are still welcomed to utilize other services of the organization and receive support from the volunteers of the organization. The volunteers of the organization, both the family units and the singles (non-family volunteers), assist the international students and scholars in many ways, such as: answer basic student queries regarding Southwest American University, provide information on how they can move about within the city, help students find apartments off campus, find as well as deliver free or paid furniture to the students' apartments, drive the students to stores or government offices, help them set up a phone or bank account, and provide them with the assistance that is crucial to the students to adjust in the U.S. culture.

The volunteers of this organization continue to provide their support in terms of transportation, moving of houses, trading furniture, airport pick-up and drop-offs, shopping, and many other necessary errands even after the international students have settled in and adjusted to the U.S. lifestyle. In addition, the volunteers together host weekly dinners in one of their houses in the Spring and Fall semesters where international students and scholars, who are members of the Homegroups, have an open invitation to attend the dinners along with their spouses, partners, or peers.

At the time of data collection for this study, there were two Homegroups from this organization who met regularly with the students for weekly dinners and other activities. Each of these Homegroups consisted of about 37-40 active international student members.

Both Homegroups have individual messaging groups on WhatsApp® (a messaging app) by which the volunteers and all the international students within each group stay connected with one another. The number of group members in the Homegroups changes each semester with new student enrollment and existing student graduation. The international students in the groups have the choice to be a part of any one or both of the Homegroups and join them at any time of the year. During the data collection period, both Homegroups hosted regular weekly dinners on Fridays and arranged additional events to celebrate the holidays and other university breaks with the students.

The Homegroups consist of international students of different ethnicities and nationalities, linguistic backgrounds, faiths (Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists among many others, including non-believing personalities), upbringings, and educational trainings. The groups have both undergraduate and graduate international students who are enrolled in different programs at Southwest American University—namely, engineering, physics, computer science, chemistry, economics, humanities, geography, psychology, and education among others. The international students in the Homegroups hail from many different countries, some of which are *primarily* English speaking countries as well, but the participants in my study, as mentioned earlier, were global English-speaking individuals only. The majority of the international students in the group, as a matter of fact, are usually multilingual and global English-speaking students who speak English as either their first, second, other, additional, or foreign language.

Sampling Method: Convenience sampling

I utilized convenience sampling for the invitation process of my study. Definition and details regarding the sampling method are provided below.

According to Etikan et al. (2016), convenience sampling is:

> A type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target
> population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical
> proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included
> for the purpose of the study (p.2).

Although there are arguments against convenience sampling being effective method of
participant recruitment and/or reception as they may run the possibility of producing similar
and biased data, the present study was at a much lesser risk in encountering the
aforementioned issue because of two distinct reasons. The first reason being the diversity of
the participants and the second reason being the aim of the study itself. Below, I expand on
the two reasons to demonstrate why my chosen sampling method did not pose a threat in
biased or identical data collection for the current study.

1. Since Homegroups are highly diverse in that the international students in the groups
   hail from many different places, the chances of similar data collection in this study
   with convenience sampling was low to almost null. Additionally, although I am
   member of both the Homegroups, I am not a highly active member of either of them.
   I have fairly good rapport with the international student members of the group, but I
   am not around them very often except for occasionally meeting with some of them
   during the Homegroup dinners and events; this distance from the participants helped
   to reduce the chances of biased data collection. The sufficient rapport that I have built
   with the international students in the Homegroups over time was actually favorable to
   my study because it is a requirement of phenomenological study. Phenomenological

studies require the researcher and participants to be in good standing with each other so that the data that is collected is sincere and raw.

Moreover, phenomenological studies usually call for the researcher to have some kind of understanding of the participants' experiences; as an international global English-speaking graduate student myself, I fulfilled that expectation. I could identify with the other graduate global English-speaking students—who were the participants of my study—firstly because of my language status and secondly because of being members of diverse cultures that are different from the Anglo-dominant North American culture.

This type of identification at the core level with the participants was a necessity for phenomenological research such as mine because: 1) It allowed me to collect vulnerable and valuable data because of the common connection that I have with the participants; 2) It prevented me from manipulating the data in any way because my participants and I had different upbringings, have different cultural and traditional understandings, and are our own peoples; our perspectives about societies and life in general are not identical. Hence, I did not have control over how the participants perceived experiences and, thus, had no fool-proof way of influencing the data in my favor.

2. Secondly, my study and my data collection method were aimed at uncovering critical incidents that are significant to the participants individually. This factor innately made every participant unique, regardless of their backgrounds, and reduced any form of bias. Humans experience, feel, and react to emotions differently, no matter where they are from; what is critical to one person may vary greatly from what is critical to

another person. Furthermore, the participants of this study were from different educational departments at Southwest American University who have different roles as graduate students. Their interactions with other humans are not identical; so, even when the sampling was convenience-based, the collected data looked very different.

Data Collection

As I briefly mentioned in the sampling section above, I *invited* my participants to join me in the study instead of recruiting or enrolling them. Since my study is a phenomenological study, it was crucial that the invitees understood the objective of my study so they could make an informed decision about their participation in my study. So, the invitation that I designed was an online accept/decline form, created through Google® Forms, that detailed the aim of my study, mentioned the estimated length and duration of the study, and rendered simplified information about the core terminology of my study—namely, native speaker fallacy, microaggression, and international global English-using graduate students.

The purpose of the form was to allow the participants to comprehend the aim of the study and to understand the criteria of participation. The form acted both as an information tool to describe the study, as well as performed as an *accept/decline* tool to allow the potential participants at the time to either accept or decline participation in the study, easily. Once participants accepted the invitation, they were prompted to provide their email address so that I could be in touch with them for the subsequent steps of the study and to provide them with all study-related updates.

The invitation to participate in the study was conveyed to the potential participant group first by a written announcement in mid-September 2022 and then by a verbal announcement in late September of 2022. I discuss the two procedures below:

1. Written announcement: Firstly, I got in touch with two active Homegroup volunteers, one from each Homegroup, and informed them about my study. I gave them all the necessary information about the population I was seeking to collect data from and why. Then I requested them to make an announcement of my study into the Homegroups' WhatsApp® groups on my behalf. There are two specific reasons why I wanted the volunteers to make the announcement to the potential participants on my behalf; first, it would help me to build the community atmosphere that is needed for my phenomenological research; second, it would help me to reduce sampling bias even further which is a concern of convenience sampling.

   I carefully curated a text that briefly touched on the topic of the study, as well as attached the link of the Google® Forms invitation (containing the details of the study) within the text. Both the volunteers read the text and graciously agreed to make the announcement of the study on my behalf into their individual WhatsApp® groups. Once the written announcements were posted, I wrote a comment in each of the WhatsApp® groups to let the potential participants know that I was available, by both phone and email, to answer any queries they may have regarding my research or their participation in the study. I then proceeded to fulfill the steps for the verbal announcement.

2. Verbal announcement: For the verbal part of the announcement, I physically went to the weekly get-together of each group and requested the hosts of the dinner that week

(because they take turns in hosting dinner within their group) to allow me to make an announcement regarding my study. Since the hosts/family-volunteers were already aware of my study from the WhatsApp® group announcements, they graciously allowed me to make the announcements to my target population during dinner time. After the verbal announcements, I once again, but this time on my own, posted the link to the Google® Forms invitation in the two WhatsApp® groups to make it easier for the students to find the invitation link. The international global English-speaking students who showed interest after the verbal announcement or the ones who mentioned that they might have missed the written announcement were all directed to the Google® Forms invitation link on the WhatsApp® groups where they could fill out their information to participate in the research.

International global-English speaking graduate students in the two Homegroups were given two months since the first written announcement, from mid-September to mid-November of 2022, to accept the invitation to participate in the study. During this period, I was always available via phone and email to answer any and all of their queries regarding my research. I wanted the potential participants, at the time, to have a clear understanding of what my study entailed and what their responsibilities would be as participants should they decide to participate in my research.

Steps of data collection:

Data for this study was collected in three distinct steps. The steps were:

1. Demographic information collection
2. Focus group interviews
3. Written reflections

All of these steps are explained in detail in the following sections.

Demographic Information Collection:

As the participants accepted the invitation to participate in my study by leaving their email addresses in the Google® Forms invitation, I sent out a second Google® Forms link to them via email with the intent of collecting demographic information. The form contained a mixture of multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions that I constructed to gather information about the participants' linguistic, geographical, and racial backgrounds. The questions essentially were designed to understand where the participants were from, what languages they spoke, how they identified with English, what their genders were, and what race(s) they were according to the U.S. census. My objective with the demographic information was also to locate common themes and patterns, if any, in correspondence to my study by gender, majors, continents, or race, among other factors, during the data analysis and interpretation phase.

I also included the consent form and IRB information for this study within this Google® Forms form so that the respondents could be aware of their rights as participants. A copy of the Google® Forms form can be found in Appendix A.

Respondents

From the second week of September to the second week of November 2022, a total of twelve people had accepted my Google® Forms invitation to participate in the research and all had had also received the Google® Forms link to provide their demographic information. Out of the 12 participants, 7 were self-identified female and 5 were self-identified male, and hailed from different countries of Asia, Europe, and Africa. All the participants were multilinguals, who at the time of enrollment, spoke at least one other language in addition to

English (Clyne, 1997) and had had lived in the U.S. between at least two months to a little over 7 years (note that the numbers changed during data collection which was a few months later-Table 1).

After mid-November, I deactivated the Google® Forms invitation to end the participant enrollment period; no more participants were invited or accepted after that time. Below, I provide a brief profile of all the participants who accepted the invitation to participate in the study. I will go into details about their backgrounds in Chapter 4.

Table 1
Participant Profiles

Name	Nationality	Graduate Major	Level	Time lived in the U.S. for focus group 1	# of languages spoken
Li MeiMei	China	Civil Engineering	Doctoral	4.5 years	2
Sahan	Sri Lanka	Electrical and Computer Engineering	Doctoral	2 years	2
Swan	Spain	Project Management	Master's	5 months	2
Carole	France	Foreign Language and Literature	Master's	1.5 years	5
Goli	Iran	Mechanical engineering	Doctoral	1.5 years	2
Iseoluwa	Nigeria	Chemistry	Doctoral	5 months	3
Ajay	India	Civil Engineering	Doctoral	3.5 years	5
Mongol ohin	Inner Mongolia, China	Geography & Environmental Studies	Doctoral	5.5 years	4
Louise	France	Languages, Cultures, and Literatures	Master's	1.5 years	3
Everest	Nepal	Economics	Doctoral	7.5 years	3
Alisha	India	Biomedical Engineering	Doctoral	5 months	3
Ludo	Botswana	Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies	Doctoral	3.5 years	4

Focus Group Formation and Interviews:

Focus Groups formation:

Through both the *written* and *verbal* announcements and also the *Google® Forms invitation* during the enrollment period, participants were already made aware that they

would have to meet with me twice in small focus groups during the course of data collection. The challenge was to find a determinant by which to put them into groups, especially because I wanted the groups to remain same during each meeting. As the participants were from very diverse backgrounds in terms of origins, departments, and interactions, any combination of the participant placement in focus groups could work, with the exception of having a uniform gender-based distribution in each group; since I had more female enrollees than male enrollees, I was aware that the groups will have unequal numbers of females and males.

Hence, the most viable option for deciding the placement of participants into the groups, while still maintaining a fair male to female ratio in each group, was trying to group them based on their availability. Since my participants are all graduate students with demanding schedules, I had to be mindful about proposing potential focus group meeting times and, subsequently, form the focus groups; that being the case, it was imperative that I gather adequate amounts of information regarding their availability. So, keeping Thanksgiving break in mind, I created a poll through Strawpoll.com and inquired whether they had more availability to meet for the first interview before or after the break; I sent out this poll via email to the participants.

Results of the poll showed that the majority of the participants wanted the first interview to be after Thanksgiving break and a few before the break; however, some of them were flexible to meet at either time. I, therefore, contacted the participants via WhatsApp® and proposed a few different dates and timings. Finally, based on their availability and also keeping the gender ratio in mind, I placed the 12 participants into 3 groups of 4 and scheduled the first set of focus groups meetings after Thanksgiving break of 2022. At this

time, I had two groups with 2 females and 2 males in each and one group with 3 females and 1 male.

Justification of the Focus Group Number

There are two reasons as to why I divided the participants into 3 groups. Firstly, I meant to keep each group at a steady number of 4 participants because I wanted my participants to feel that all of them had a place and space to speak about their experiences, and that each of them would be given a chance to speak. Secondly, given a research topic as critical as mine, I believed it would be more feasible to moderate turn-taking of participants more effectively if the groups could be kept relatively smaller.

According to Cortini et.al (2019) and Gibbs (1997), focus-group numerosity can vary based on different factors such as, the kind of project, the availability of funding, and the group dynamics. They also imply that there is no right or wrong number of participants in a focus group, and that the exact number of people that must make up a focus group in a given study should be left to the discretion of the researcher of the study. Hence, bearing my research topic, framework, and methodology in mind, I decided 4 people to be the ideal number of participants in each of my focus group.

Focus Group Interviews:

As briefly mentioned above, I met with the focus group participants twice for data collection; I will be referring to the first meeting as Phase 1 of focus groups and the second meeting as Phase 2 of focus groups. Keeping COVID-19 protocols and ease of participation in mind, I conducted both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of focus group interviews via ZOOM®. Phase 1 of focus group interviews were held between the last week of November and first week of December 2022 during which the three individual groups met with me for approximately 1.5

hours each. Phase 2 of focus group interviews took place during the last week of January during which the same groups met with me once again for approximately 1.5 hours each. Both Phases of focus group interviews, with participants' consent, were audio recorded using ZOOM® recording option.

It was crucial for me to conduct the focus group interviews in two Phases because my goals and desired outcomes for the two phases of interviews were slightly different. I elaborate the goals and strategies of the two phases below.

Phase 1 of Focus Group*:* There were three main goals for Phase 1 of the interviews: *contextualization, familiarization, and contemplation.*

Contextualization

Contextualization, according to Shehadeh (2020), is "a way of approaching . . . research project, or linking it to the relevant research and to the setting of the study. Contextualization gives credibility and support to our research project as a whole" (p. 327). Contextualization of my research topic assisted me to stay neutral and unbiased while still allowing me to help my participants to recall microaggressive incidents that they had experienced due to their English as a global language user status. In other words, contextualization permitted me to *jog* participants' memory of any critical incidents related to native speaker fallacy that they had had experienced, without me having to push them into any particular direction to produce data.

According to Shehadeh (2020), contextualization can be done by either referring to existing literature or by referring to the setting of the study or by doing both. I implemented contextualization by doing both. I used a video from an expert on microaggressions for

contextualizing through literature and designed and presented a recall protocol to contextualize through setting. I detail these methods in the following paragraphs.

1. <u>Video by Sue (Oct 4, 2010):</u> As previously implied in the problem description section, I adopted Derald Wing Sue's definition of microaggression in my study. He is a psychologist who has done extensive research on microaggression and is an expert on the topic. Therefore, a video from Sue (Oct 4, 2010) explaining what microaggression is and what it can look like in different contexts helped me to build credibility of my research in front of my study participants, as well as assisted the participants to understand the concept further. In this particular <u>video</u> (hyperlinked), Sue provides many examples of what day-to-day life microaggressive acts look like, in addition to explaining what microaggression is. I chose this video because the examples of microaggressions portrayed in the video show microaggressions based on race, gender, and language. Since the examples are not limited to language-based microaggressions only, they help the participants to understand microaggression as a whole.

2. <u>Recall Protocol:</u> Sue's (Oct 4, 2010) video, although explains microaggression well, illustrates just one example of language-based microaggression which I did not think would be sufficient to help the participants to recall all language-based microaggressions that they had had experienced. Since microaggressions are subtle, people, oftentimes, are not even aware when they experience it. Thus, from personal experience and from the results of my previous research (Rahman, 2018), as well as the information that I gathered from literature review, I created a protocol with concise but many different everyday statements that are microaggressive but have

been normalized because they may not seem discriminatory without in-depth

understanding of microaggressions.

Table 2

Recall Protocol

Theme	Microaggression stemming from native speaker fallacy in and around educational settings	Assumptions about global English-speakers/Lack of awareness about Global Englishes
Unsolicited "compliment"	"You speak really good English." "How long have you lived here (in the U.S)? Your English sounds quite good." "Wow! I love your English accent. Where is it from?" "You don't sound international, or you sound very international."	1. There is only one kind of English, the English that people from Anglo origin speak— the native speakers of the language. 2. You don't look like you come from a place where English could be spoken as a first language.
Silent treatment	Not making eye-contact, looking away, or not paying attention to what an international student has to say during group discussions in a classroom setting. Not wanting to partner with an international student during group work.	1. International students don't know proper English; what will they even be able to contribute to the group assignment? 2. It is too much work to communicate with international students (of non-Anglo origin) because of their lack of understanding of the English language and the "culture" associated with the language. 3. International students (of non-Anglo origin) are not too smart and are too arrogant to learn the ways.

Blatant invalidation	"I don't want to take the so-and-so class with the international TA." "I need a native speaker of English to take a look at my documents, not an international one." "I don't think the international student will be able to help me with my paper/assignment." "I came to U.S. to learn proper English, so I need to communicate with native speakers only."	1. International students (of non-Anglo origin) are not good teachers/tutors/mentors because they are not native speakers of English 2. Only native English speakers (people of Anglo-origin) are real speakers of English and can help me learn the language. 3. native speakers of English must be innately good in academic English as well.
Unnecessary sympathy	"It's okay. English is only your second/foreign language." "You are very brave to come to an English-speaking country for higher education." "It must be very hard for you here (U.S.) since English is not your first language."	1. There is only one kind of English. 2. People of non-Anglo origin must be "nonnative" speakers of English. 3. The multilingual brain is of insignificant value because English is "the" global language.

My hope with this recall protocol was to aid participants to see what language-based microaggressions usually look like and assist them in remembering any language-related microaggressive incidents that they might have had encountered. Since the theoretical framework of my study was critical consciousness, I hoped that the protocol would help the study participants to become aware of the different kinds of language-based microaggressions, aid them to reflect on their lived experiences, and encourage them to share their stories during the focus group interviews and the written reflections.

I sent out both the video link and the recall protocol together to the participants via email when they accepted my invitation to participate in the study. When sending out the individual ZOOM® invitation emails to the three focus groups, I attached the recall protocol to the emails once more to freshen the participants memory on what language-based microaggressions generally entail, as well as to help them recollect their thoughts before the interview.

Familiarization

Familiarization in Phase 1 of focus groups, like the word itself, meant getting the participants acquainted with one another in their respective groups. Since my participants were from the two Homegroups and were recruited through convenience sampling within the Homegroups, most of the participants were already familiar with one another, to varying degrees, especially if they were constant members of the same Homegroup. For that reason, it was my responsibility as a researcher to officially introduce the participants to their specific group members before Phase 1 of focus groups so that if they had any concerns regarding sharing their experiences in front of any member of their assigned group, they could inform me, and I could then initiate a switch. So, I created individual WhatsApp® groups for each of the focus groups, added the designated participants to their specific groups, and made an introductory announcement. I also encouraged them to reach out to me separately if they had any concerns regarding their group placement or otherwise.

The purpose of familiarization in Phase 1 of focus groups was also to further familiarize the participants with the research topic during the interview. In Phase 1 of focus group interviews, I verbally provided the definitions of microaggression and native speaker fallacy, shared the recall protocol on my ZOOM® screen and briefly explained all categories

mentioned in the recall protocol. In addition, to build trust and to express vulnerability during the interview, I drew in some of my personal experiences with language-based microaggressions (the ones that I shared in Chapter 1). My goal with these steps were to provide the participants with a safe space where they could share the critical incidents that they had encountered.

Contemplation

Because of the nature of my study, I wanted the conversations in the focus groups and the data that is produced, at least for Phase 1 of focus groups, to be free flowing. Hence, the first interview followed a fully unstructured style of interview, with no predetermined questions. My objective was to have the participant speak freely about their thoughts on language-based microaggression and their experiences of it, after I had shared my own experiences with it and discussed some of the examples from the recall protocol. I wanted the participants to contemplate the input that I have provided during the interview to produce data that is impartial and complex.

I encouraged participant contemplation both individually and as a whole group in three ways: by asking them—1) to share if they had any similar experience like the ones I shared 2) to think about the examples in the recall protocol 3) to reflect on and react to each other's critical experiences once they began sharing the critical incidents that they themselves had encountered. Since I moderated the turn-taking and the groups were relatively small, every participant received the time and attention to share their experiences.

All the participants in the 3 groups participated in Phase 1of focus groups except for one participant who I had to later release from the study because of their unannounced absence during the interview and their lack of communication and commitment. This

participant, unfortunately, was the only male (self-identified) participant in the focus group

that consisted of 3 females and 1 male. Hence, in Phase 1 of interviews, I had a total of 11

participants—two groups with 2 males and 2 females each and one group with just 3 females.

Phase 2 of Focus Group: Interviews in Phase 2 of focus groups was also loosely

structured. However, unlike the Phase 1 interviews in which my aim was to collect

spontaneous responses mainly through contemplation, I designed the Phase 2 interviews

based on the themes that had emerged during data sorting of Phase 1 interviews. As

phenomenological research is against the presumption of data saturation in that the doctrine

of phenomenology supposes that "one is never finished considering a phenomenon, that new

data can always be obtained, and that one's understanding is always open to new insights"

(as cited in Porter & Cohen, 2013, p. 188), the main goal of Phase 2 interviews was an

attempt to understanding the already collected data further; this was achieved in three ways:

1. *Probing on ideas with potential:* Because of the aforementioned doctrine of

    phenomenology, I only roughly analyzed and grouped the data from Phase 1 of focus

    groups into emerging themes and subthemes to aid Phase 2 interviews. During Phase

    1 focus group data sorting, if any information seemed to be promising to me but

    called for further probing to produce adequate data, I addressed those subjects and

    discussed them more in-depth in the Phase 2 of interviews.

2. *Asking clarification questions:* If any data from Phase 1 of focus groups or from the

    first set of *written reflections* (explained in the following section) seemed to be

    unclear, I asked clarification questions during Phase 2 of the focus group interviews.

    Keeping in line with the tenets of phenomenological research (Porter & Cohen,

2013), I took the time to comprehensively explore some of the data further, that, although sufficiently clear and rounded, had good potential to be expanded.

3. *Cross-checking data and emergent themes*: Data from both Phase 1 of interviews and *written reflections* (discussed in the next section of the same title) were presented to the participants by themes. The participants were then asked to cross-check the emergent themes and provide their input. Based on how the participants reacted or replied to certain themes and subthemes, I asked them follow up questions and encouraged further discussion. Throughout Phase 2, I had to be open-minded about the emergence of newer themes, as claiming data saturation is not an option in phenomenology.

Unfortunately, the participant from Sri Lanka could not attend his Phase 2 of focus group interview because of his increased responsibilities as a graduate student and due to a scheduling conflict; as a result, I had 10 participants—2 females and 2 males in one group, 2 females and 1 male in one group, and 3 females in one group in Phase 2 of focus groups. Nonetheless, I was able to interview the participant separately and have an in-depth discussion. I showed him the emergent themes that I had shown his group members, gave him a summary of what his group members had discussed during the focus group, and asked for his input. He completed all the tasks in the same order as his group members completed in Phase 2 of focus groups.

At the end of Phase 2, I had had collected data from 7 ZOOM® meetings in total—3 meetings in Phase 1 with the 3 focus groups, 3 meetings in Phase 2 with the 3 focus groups, and the 1 one-on-one meeting in Phase 2. This brought the total duration of time spent in the meetings to over 10 hours. Each of the participants who participated in Phase 1 and Phase 2

73

of focus groups and completed the tasks of the study were compensated with a $20 Amazon gift card for their time and contribution.

Written Reflections:

After each phase of the focus group interviews, I requested the participants to write a reflection to outline any additional language-based critical experiences that they might have experienced but had forgotten to report or provide any other information that they might have been hesitant to share during the focus group interviews. I will be referring to the first set of written reflections that the participants completed after Phase 1of focus groups as Phase 1 of written reflections and the second set of written reflections completed after Phase 2 of focus groups as Phase 2 of written reflections. I explain the individual objectives of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of written reflections below.

Phase 1 of Written Reflections: I had four distinct goals for Phase 1 of written reflections. My aim was to: 1) provide a platform to the participants to share the critical incidents that they might not have shared due to privacy reasons or any information that they might have forgotten to mention during the interviews. 2) encourage them to reflect on the focus group interview and to state if and how the interview has helped them in understanding microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy. 3) ask them to suggest themes that they thought were worth exploring in Phase 2 of focus groups. 4) request recommendations to make Phase 2 interviews more productive.

Phase 2 of Written Reflections: In phase 2 of written reflections, I encouraged participants to: 1) comment further on the emerging themes that I shared with them from Phase 1 of focus groups' and written reflections' analysis. 2) mention any and all information

74

that they did not want to share in a group setting. 3) provide suggestions on the potential methods of responding to microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy. 4) state if and how the study has helped them to understand the topic better.

Participants were in consensus that they would prefer to provide their written reflections in Google® Forms because it was less time-consuming than writing their reflections in a Word document and then sending it as an attachment via email. Therefore, I created two individual forms in Google® Forms for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of *written reflections*. The forms prompted them to provide their names and email addresses and answer the open-ended questions that would fulfill my goals for the written reflections. I sent out these Google® Forms links to the participants via email. The questions that were asked in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of written reflections can be found in Appendix B.

I requested the participants to complete the written reflections within three days of the focus group interviews. My reason for making this request was that, since the focus groups acted as a recall for the participants, I imagined that it would be best if they documented their reflections immediately after the interviews, while they were still charged from the conversation that took place within their groups. After Phase 1 and 2 of the study, I had received a total of 21 completed written reflections from the 11 participants—10 in Phase 1 and 11 in Phase 2. The only participant who could not complete the Phase 1 written reflection was the same Sri Lankan student who could not attend Phase 2 of focus groups but volunteered to be interviewed one-on-one later.

Trustworthiness of Research

As a qualitative researcher, I took the following steps to ensure trustworthiness of this research study.

75

Multiple Forms of Data: I collected the data in three distinct formats, also known as data triangulation (Stahl & King, 2020). First, I collected the generic data by asking the participants to provide their demographic information; second, I collected topic-specific data through focus group interviews; and third I collected topic-specific data through written reflections. In addition, there were two phases of focus group interviews during which the same group members met two individual times and had deep discussions on the research topic; this data collection procedure in itself made the study trustworthy.

Members' access to partially analyzed data: During Phase 2 of focus group interviews, I presented the emergent themes from the data and asked participants to reflect on them—both during the interview and during the written reflection; this method of cross-checking data is called member-checking (Birt et al., 2016), which is a process that helps in establishing trustworthiness of research.

Validation through focus groups: "Validating common experiences through focus group interaction" (Jung & Ro, 2019) is a technique in which trustworthiness is established when focus group members validate the experiences of one another. Since my study participants met with one another two times in their own focus groups and showed consensus on most subjects or topics, my study had met this trustworthiness measure as well.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedure

In this section, I provide information on how I utilized phenomenological research strategies to analyze my collected data and how I approached critical consciousness framework to make meaning of the data.

Definition of Terms: Analysis vs. Interpretation

Because my current study is phenomenological in nature, I did not view data analysis and data interpretation as synonymous terms; each of these terms in the current study, carried a slightly different meaning for me. Below, I explain how the terms vary in meaning and why it is important to keep them separate.

Analysis, in this study, meant gathering the collected information and putting them into rough themes with the open-mindedness that they may have to be renamed or reorganized if and when new themes or subthemes appear in Phase 2 of focus group interviews and written reflections. ***Interpretation***, on the other hand, meant how I, from my academic, scientific, and professional knowledge, research skills, personal experiences, and understanding of the society at large assigned meaning to these themes.

The reason why it was important to keep these two terms separate in the current study was that phenomenological research encourages bracketing, which is setting aside of any preconceived ideas and/or scientific points of view until all the data is collected and is at hand (Alase, 2017; Porter & Cohen, 2013); meaning, phenomenological study through bracketing encourages and emphasizes on understanding the text at first as a whole, then in parts, and then in comparison of the parts to the whole (Porter & Cohen, 2013). Hence, I waited to have all the data—the whole text— in hand before I integrated myself into the research data and start assigning meaning to the text—whether in parts or in whole. I only partially analyzed the data—sorted the data into potential themes, to find a prospective direction for Phase 2 of focus group interviews and written reflections

Thus, analysis and interpretation were conceptually different in the current study where the former was utilized in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 and the latter was utilized only

after the completion of Phase 2 of data collection. The procedure of analysis and interpretation is explained in the following section.

Procedure of Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis

After I gathered the demographic information, conducted Phase 1 of focus group interviews, and collected Phase 1 of written reflections, I looked for the overarching themes that were fully apparent from the data that I had at hand. I then put them into broader categories and subcategories. In addition, as I had requested the participants to provide suggestions on themes that were of interest to them, which they would be open to discussing in Phase 2 of focus groups, I went through the written reflections to locate more themes that might have been implied by the participants but may have failed to fully materialize during the focus groups; I then put those themes into potential categories.

I also crossed matched the demographic information with the data from the focus group interviews and written reflections to locate any themes that had been mentioned in passing during the interview and written reflection but had the potential to be discussed much more in details. During this entire process, I refrained from assigning my own meaning to the data and the themes that had had emerged. The purpose of the Phase 1 data analysis was to find enough direction that could make the Phase 2 focus group interviews and written reflections most productive. Phase 1 analysis also allowed me to understand what clarification requests I needed to make during Phase 2 of data collection to be able to answer my research questions most effectively and coherently.

Phase 2 of data analysis also followed a similar order to Phase 1. Once I had the data from Phase 2 of focus group interviews and written reflections at hand, I looked for the

overarching themes, and then put them into categories. This time, however, the process of

categorization was slightly different because I had to cross check the apparent themes of

Phase 2 with the themes that had already appeared in Phase 1. After cross-checking, if some

of the themes from Phase 1 and Phase 2 appeared to be correlated, they were put into the

same category and if needed that category was renamed; in occasions when some themes

showed some correlation but were divergent to a certain degree, they were divided into

subcategories to display the data more coherently. The themes that were newer and provided

new understanding were categorized into new categories with new names. I, once again,

refrained from assigning my own meaning to the data during Phase 2 of analysis stage.

Data interpretation

Once I had the full set of data from Phase 1 and Phase 2 at hand, I began to gradually

make sense of the data; meaning, once I had categorized the data into final themes and

subthemes, I saw the themes as a whole body of information. After that, I referred each

theme to the whole to ascertain if the themes together could answer my first research

question which was essentially about the students' awareness of and overall experiences with

microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy in educational settings. Next, I made

in-depth meaning of the themes individually and crossmatched the themes with one another

to make meaning of the data individually, in parts, and as a whole to answer my second

research question that I constructed to expose the deep-rootedness of native speaker fallacy

in educational settings, and how it is manifested through microaggressions.

This practice of meaning making follows the tradition of *interpretive hermeneutic*

circle in which texts are interpreted as a whole, in parts, in comparison to one another, in

reference to the whole, and as a collective whole—making the analysis a circular process

(George, 2020). As mentioned in Chapter 1, I interpreted the data through the lens of *critical consciousness*, which gave me the avenue to assign meaning to the data from my general, personal, and intuitive understanding of the world.

In Chapter 4, I have presented the themes that emerged from the data of this study as categories, and the subthemes as subcategories. I have put the comparative subcategories under their respective broader category and provided my overall interpretation of them. To make the interpretation comprehensible and to present the data in a cohesive manner, I cited important quotes from the participants—from the focus group interviews, from the written reflections, and also from the additional information that they shared in the demographic information form. I have also shared excerpts from the transcripts, when necessary, for better comprehension of the data and its associated interpretation. To protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, I have used pseudonyms, chosen by the participants themselves, at all times to refer to them or their quotes in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4
Findings and Interpretation

This study explored international graduate global English-using students' critical experiences with microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy. The two research questions that I sought to find answers to through this study were:

1. What understandings and overall experiences do international graduate students who speak Global Englishes have about microaggressions in and around educational settings within the ideology of the native speaker fallacy?

2. How do the themes that emerge from international global English-using students' individual and collective reflections of their experiences with microaggressions inform the study about the deep-rootedness of microaggressions in and around educational settings?

To answer the research questions, data were collected in three ways: demographic information via Google® Forms, two phases of focus group interviews on ZOOM®, and two phases of written reflections via Google® Forms after the ZOOM® meetings. A total of 12 participants accepted the invitation to participate in the study and provided their demographic information. However, for time and scheduling conflict, only 11 participants were able to participate in the remainder of the study.

In this chapter, I share my findings and discuss those findings from a critical consciousness framework. I have divided this chapter into three distinct sections. In the first section, I share the 11 participants' backgrounds using their chosen pseudonyms; in the second section, I share my findings in accordance with the research questions and as per the emergent themes, along with my interpretation of the results; and in the final section, I provide an overall summary of the findings.

Participant Background

1. **Li MeiMei**: Li MeiMei is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Civil Engineering. She is an international student from China. She speaks two languages in total, which are Chinese and English. English is her second language, and it is not an official language in her country. According to U.S. Census, she is Asian by race; she identifies with that race as well. At the time of Phase 1 of data collection, she had had lived in the U.S. for 4.5 years; during this time, she had only lived in the Southwest region of the U.S.

2. **Sahan**: Sahan is a doctoral student in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. He is an international student from Sri Lanka. He speaks Sinhala as his first language and English as his second language. English is not an official language in his country. According to U.S. Census, he is Asian by race; he identifies with that race. At the time of Phase 1 of data collection, he had had lived in the U.S. for 2 years; during this time, he had only lived in the Southwest region of U.S.

3. **Swan**: Swan is a master's student in Project Management in the School of Business. She is an international student from Spain. She speaks Spanish and English, of which Spanish is her first language and English is her second language. English is not an official language in her country. U.S. Census classifies her as White, and she identifies with that race as well. At the time of Phase 1 of data collection, she had had lived in the U.S. for 5 months. During these five months, she had only lived in the Southwest region of U.S.

4. **Carole**: Carole is a master's student in the Foreign Language and Literature Department. She is an international student from France. She speaks a total of five

82

languages, which are French, English, German, Spanish, and Japanese**.** She speaks English as her second language; it is not an official language in her country. She is classified as a White by U.S. Census Bureau, and she identifies with this race. During Phase 1 of data collection, she had had lived in the U.S. for 1.5 years, and during this time she had only lived in the Southwest region of U.S.

5. **Goli**: Goli is a doctoral student in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. He is an international student from Iran. He speaks Farsi as his first language and English as his second language. English is not an official language in his country. According to U.S. Census, he is White in race; he identifies with this race as well. During Phase 1 of data collection, Goli had lived in the U.S. for 1.5 years, and he had only lived in the Southwest region during this time.

6. **Ajay**: Ajay is a doctoral student in the Department of Civil Engineering. He is an international student from India. He speaks five languages in total, which are: Hindi, English, Marathi, Kannada, and Gujrati. Ajay speaks English as his second language, and it is also an official language in his country. U.S. Census classifies him as an Asian, and he identifies with this classification. During Phase 1 of data collection, he had had attended two different Higher Ed institutions, in two different U.S. regions, as a graduate student and had had lived in the U.S. for 3.5 years. He completed his master's degree from an institution in the Midwest where he lived for 2 years before moving to the Southwest to start his doctoral program at Southwest American University.

7. **Mongol ohin**: Mongol ohin is a doctoral candidate in the Geography and Environmental Studies Department. She is an international student from Inner

Mongolia, a province of the People's Republic of China. She speaks four languages, which are Mongolian, Chinese, English, and Korean. Mongol ohin speaks English as her other language; it is not an official language in her country. According to U.S. Census, she is an Asian; she identifies with this race as well. At the time of Phase 1 of data collection, she had had lived in the U.S. for 5.5 years of which 3 years was in the Midwest and 2.5 years, currently, in the Southwest. She completed her master's degree from a Midwestern university before she started her doctoral degree at Southwest American university.

8. **Louise**: Louise is a master's student in the Languages, Cultures, and Literatures Department. She is an international student from France and speaks three languages. Along with speaking French and English, she speaks Spanish. English is not an official language in her country; she speaks English as a foreign language. She is classified as White by the U.S. Census Bureau, and although she matches the bureau's description of race, she is not comfortable checking that box to provide her demographic information because, according to her, in her country, race is not a construct that is used to categorize people. During Phase 1 of data collection, she had had been in the U.S. for 1.5 years, and she had only lived in the Southwest region during this time.

9. **Everest**: Everest is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Economics. He is an international student from Nepal. He speaks three languages in total, which are: Nepali, Hindi, and English. Everest speaks English as a foreign language; it is not an official language in his country. U.S. Census classifies him as an Asian, and he identifies with this classification. At the time of Phase 1 of data collection, he had had

lived in the U.S. for 7.5 years. Prior to moving to the Southwest to pursue his doctoral

degree in 2018, he had lived in the Midwest region for 3 years during which he

completed his master's program and later worked in his field.

10. **Alisha**: Alisha is a doctoral student in the Biomedical Engineering Program. She is an

international student from India. The three languages that she speaks are English,

Hindi, and Marathi. English is an official language in her country, and she speaks it as

her second language. U.S. Census Bureau classifies her as an Asian by race; she does

not identify with this classification. Rather, she identifies solely as a South Asian.

During Phase 1 of data collection, Alisha had had lived in the U.S. for 5 months;

during this time, she had only lived in the Southwest region of the U.S. and only

attended Southwest American University.

11. **Ludo**: Ludo is a doctoral candidate in the Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural

Studies Department. She is an international student from Botswana. She speaks a total

of four languages, which are English, Setswana, IKalanga, and Ndebele. English is an

official language in her country, and she speaks it as a foreign language. U.S. Census

Bureau classifies her as Black or African American by race; she does not identify

with this classification. She identifies with only being African. At the time of Phase 1

of data collection, Ludo had had lived in the U.S. for 3.5 years; during this time, she

had only lived in the Southwest region of the U.S. and had only attended Southwest

American University.

Analysis and Interpretation

This section of the paper is dedicated to answering the research questions through providing an interconnected and cohesive presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data. I have divided this section into multiple subsections in which I address the research questions of this study individually and provide additional details to support why and how microaggression stemming native speaker fallacy is damaging to international graduate global English-using students and why it is vital that we bring awareness against it.

Research Question 1*: **What understandings and overall experiences do international graduate students who speak Global Englishes have about microaggressions in and around educational settings within the ideology of the native speaker fallacy?***

The purpose of this research question was to understand how aware international global English-using students are about microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy in and around U.S. educational settings and if they have been affected by said microaggression. To answer this research question, I have heavily relied on the data gathered from the two written reflections. The guiding questions of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of written reflections were designed to prompt participants' reflection of their understanding about language-based microaggressions pre- and post-participation in this study (see Appendix B: November/December and January Reflection). Nevertheless, I have also thoroughly parsed the data from the focus group interviews and presented all the relevant information that aid in answering the first research question systematically and meaningfully.

TO SPEAK OR NOT TO SPEAK?

Only three out of the 11 participants in this study had some prior knowledge about what microaggressions usually entail—despite all of them having had encountered or

witnessed some sort of *uncomfortable* or *weird* experience(s) due to their English language usage. Among the 3 participants who had some awareness of microaggressions, only 2 had some understanding, although to varying extent, of how language-based microaggression can present itself in day-to-day lives of global English users. For instance, Everest, the international student from Nepal, in his written reflection wrote:

> *I had some knowledge of microaggression but had not reflected on my own experiences or talked to others who had gone through similar experiences. I became more aware of these situations because of this focus group.*

Everest has had been a graduate student of two U.S. Higher Ed institutions in the past 7.5 years. During this time, he has had been a graduate assistant, a tutor, a student manager in a tutoring center, a research assistant, has had worked off-campus, and has had held membership of different student and other university organizations. In the focus groups, he shared quite a few language-focused incidents that were critical to him—the ones that he regarded as microaggression.

However, he also mentioned that despite having had exposure to different educational places and networks, it is hard for him to pinpoint all the many other incidents of language-based microaggressions that he has had either experienced or witnessed. According to him, since the actions of the perpetrators are sometimes very *subtle*, one cannot always identify if a certain behavior is microaggressive. Yet, as we went into deeper discussions about microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy, he was able to recall and share many of the other incidents that had made him feel "confused" or "uncomfortable" at or after the time that they happened.

In one of the written reflections, Everest wrote that "*the focus group helped me to understand the various ways in which it [microaggression] can manifest.*" Like Everest, other participants initially exhibited some uncertainty, undoubtedly of much greater degree, about whether to report some incidents as occurrences of microaggression; their reservation and hesitation were apparent from phrases like *"I don't know if it"* or *"I'm not sure if this is"* before sharing an incident that seemed *negative* or *interesting* to them. An example of this hesitation can be seen in Alisha's comment during one of the focus group interviews when she shared a negative experience that she had had in an educational setting:

> **I'm not sure** *if this is a microaggression or anyone is at fault, but it definitely has been a negative experience. So, when I'm in a group and when I'm speaking, I see that native speakers who are there . . . I can see that they're making an effort to understand me. They make this sort of a facial expression that they're really trying, like really hard to understand my accent . . . it just makes me lose confidence mid-sentence, in way that I start thinking if whatever I'm saying is making sense or not?*

The opening phrase in the above quote that Alisha used to share her critical experience was "*I'm not sure if this is a microaggression";* this is an indication that she is not sure if what she has experienced in the group setting is really microaggression, but the remaining of her statement ascertains that the experience she has had, has left a tremendously negative impact on her performance. Sue (2010) explained that microaggressions can take many nonverbal forms in which a person is thought of as subordinate because of their identity or heritage. When Alisha's negative experience is framed within the ideology of native speaker fallacy, a case can be made that the "native speakers'" behavior toward her during group discussions stems from their belief that global English speakers are not effective users of the language.

Hence, they resort to making facial expressions when she speaks, nonverbally communicating—whether intentionally or unintentionally—that her English is flawed and unintelligible, and this in turn affects Alisha to a great extent.

Alisha is an international graduate student from India who has spoken English *"all her life",* so such nonverbal actions from the "native speakers" lead her to question her English abilities and make her "*lose confidence".* In one of her reflections regarding this study, she wrote,

> *I learned that there are a lot of everyday things that me and other "nonnative" speakers go through and seem to have accepted, which can be a microaggression and may be coming from a feeling of superiority from native speakers. These focus groups helped me identify some specific instances of this and also, helped me in dealing with them.*

Alisha's thoughts in regard to the focus groups' aid in her identification and understanding of microaggressions were mirrored by many other participants in the study. Ajay, another international student from India, for example, wrote in his reflections:

> *I did not know anything about microaggressions and maybe that's why I might have ignored some instances . . . Now I can recognize microaggression and also educate my friends about it.*

Initially, Ajay found it difficult to determine which of his experiences would be considered language-based microaggression. However, as we navigated the discussion on microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy further and as the other participants slowly opened up about their own experiences, Ajay was able to recall and share some of his *uncomfortable* and *unusual* encounters.

TO BLAME OR NOT TO BLAME?

Another recurring concern that was apparent in the data was that of the participants' confusion about how much responsibility they should take about their negative experiences. Since most of the participants were not aware of language-based microaggressions, their negative experiences would lead them to blame themselves for *feeling* emotions or make them go into a spiral because they would start believing that they were incompetent English language users. However, all of them reported that participation in this study has given them new insight into their critical experiences, as well as into the resulting emotional and psychological responses that they have had.

> Louise, an international graduate student from France, in her reflections wrote that:
>
> *In the past, when I would suffer from microaggression, I would tell myself, "you are so sensitive, it's nothing" . . . I didn't know what was microaggression before this study. It helps me understand the environment I'm living in as a "nonnative speaker", because now if I was feeling uneasy in a certain situation, I can now put a word that explains 'why'.*

According to Louise, before this study, when she experienced microaggression, she would blame herself for being sensitive, as she did not know what microaggression was. After participating in this study, she understands that her feelings are valid and that language-based microaggressions are real, and others have experienced them as well. In her reflection, she also added that this study has helped her more than just to understand microaggression; it has given her "*strategies to overcome microaggressions*".

Mongol ohin, an international student from Inner Mongolia, China, wrote something similar to Louise in her reflections:

I realized that when people experience microaggressions, they are often very

confused and blame themself first . . . This focus group introduced me to the concept

of microaggressions, which I had no idea was the problem. Via the focus group, I had

a chance to recall my memories and realized that some of my experiences were

related to microaggressions. Thus, I realized that the confusions and uncomfortable

feelings are reasonable.

During the focus group, Mongol ohin shared a few of her negative but separate encounters, with both native speakers and global English users, during which she was made to feel invisible or incompetent. In all of those instances, she questioned her competence and could not fully comprehend the actions of the aggressors; all she knew was that the encounters left her *confused* and *embarrassed.*

This self-blaming tendency was seen to be mirrored by many other participants in the study. Sahan, who is an international graduate student from Sri Lanka, raises the concern about how his accent may be indiscernible to some people. During the focus group, he shared a language-related incident that had made him *uncomfortable*. This incident took place in an event where both international and American students were invited to socialize. According to him, there was a student in that event who seemed to not understand Sahan's accent at all, so Sahan had to keep repeating himself; he later felt discouraged to continue the conversation altogether. Although he felt unconformable by the student's reaction, he was quick to put the entire blame of the miscommunication on his own English language skills. He stated:

So that was the impression that I got from them. . .Maybe, uh, my accent was not, it's

not very clear to them. That's why they asked me to repeat.

However, when I asked Sahan if everyone finds it hard to understand his accent, he responded with: "*It's not actually all people. There are many people who understand me very well."*

My aim with asking Sahan the question was to help him reflect on the fact that if majority of the people can understand him well and only a few *"cannot",* should he be the only one taking accountability for the *failed* communication that he mentioned from the event?

Carole, another international graduate student from France, shared that sometimes she feels as if she is not taken seriously due to her global English speaker status. She says that, more often than not, her interlocutors interrupt their dialogue to tell her that she sounds cute when speaking English. While she believes that this interruption is not always intentional, it does make her question about her English language abilities, as well as make her feel that she is not thought of as very articulate. She mentioned,

> *I feel like I'm thought of as a child. It's like saying that when a child doesn't*
>
> *pronounce a sentence correctly or mix up the structure of a sentence, it sounds cute*
>
> *for adults.*

Carole's concern is that people may equate this *"cuteness"* as having *"less knowledge"*. She worries that if she does not meet someone's standard of articulation on a subject, they might think that she lacks knowledge of the subject. She finds this experience rather frustrating.

TO BELIEVE OR NOT TO BELIEVE?

During the course of the study, almost all of the participants contemplated their own biases toward native speakers and against "nonnative" speakers, and many of them had *a-h-a* moments where they realized that they might have themselves adhered to native speaker

92

fallacy, at times, which may have resulted in some of their actions being microaggressive. For instance, Swan, an international graduate student from Spain, wrote:

> *I have realized that I can be sometimes the [micro]aggressor, because as I said before, for me, some things are not [micro]aggressions, I say it with good intentions, but I have realized that there are different perspectives to take into account, so it is good to know about this [topic] so we can be aware of how other people may be feeling.*

Swan mentioned that she usually does not mind receiving input on her English if it is done politely, because she wants to improve her English language skills. However, she now understands that people have different language journeys, experiences, and roles, so everyone may not feel how she feels. Her thought-evolution is further noticed when she shares her changing perception about Spanish—her first language. She revealed that she might have held a fallacious belief that her Spanish—the Spanish spoken in Spain—is a purer and better form of Spanish, which is not found in other regions. Nevertheless, this study invited her to reevaluate her position.

Similarly, Goli, who is an international graduate student from Iran wrote in his reflection:

> *I was not familiar with the concept of microaggression. In fact, I believed in [held] native speaker fallacy, thus it felt natural to be treated differently. As timed passed I saw more and more international students that are proficient in English whereas some local people are not!*

According to Goli, before he participated in the focus groups his belief was that native speakers of English were the only people who had expertise in the language, so he did not

think it was unfair when native speakers got preference in terms of English language usage. However, as time went by and he got to hear from other participants in the study, along with meeting more international students outside of the study, he opened his mind to accommodate additional views.

A major transformation is also observed in Li MeiMei's thought process. Li MeiMei, who is an international student from China, mentioned that she looks for a native speaker to review her writing before she submits it for publication. When I inquired if she believes that *all* native speakers are good writers or reviewers, she answered: *"actually, no"*. She mentioned that, oftentimes, journal reviewers and/or editors get fixated on her English grammar and sentence structure when she submits a scientific paper for publication; she said that she thinks that this happens because of her Chinese name. Li MeiMei mentioned that she has a feeling that the reviewers or editors associate her name with English as a second language speaker status, which innately is equated with inadequacy in the language. So, to defend herself and her writing against criticism from the journal, she gets her papers reviewed by native speakers, which, according to her, still falls short for the journals.

However, the focus group discussions have assisted Li MeiMei in reassessing this practice and aided her in realizing that she might have been doing a disservice to the global English-using community by just going to native speakers for paper review. She wrote,

> *The focus group helped me to notice some uncomfortable experience that happened*
> *before were microaggressive, this group helped me to be alert and be brave to stand*
> *up for myself and other international friends.*

The journal reviewers'/editors' fixation with Li MeiMei's English syntax and Li MeiMei in response looking for a native speaker as a defense tactic is a perfect example of how native

speaker fallacy and associated microaggressions are perpetuated; it almost becomes a cyclical process. Li MeiMei's newfound understanding of this cycle has made her a more aware English language user.

TO FEEL OR NOT TO FEEL?

Although the participants may not have had the opportunity to formally reflect on the full range of what microaggressions are, they undoubtedly knew that most of the incidents that they had encountered because of their English language status were not very pleasant. During Phase 1 of focus group interviews, the majority of the participants, at one time or another, used many different adjectives to explain what they had felt—during, after, or both—when they had had encountered a critical incident. While some of the adjectives used by the participants such as "hurt", "embarrassed", and "disappointed" are descriptive in nature and give an overall idea of the emotions felt by them, some other adjectives like "weird" and "uncomfortable" fails to fully describe the actual emotions that they had experienced due to the critical incidents.

Surprisingly, the adjective "weird" was one of the most common words that the participants had used to describe either the nature of an incident or an emotion that they had felt during and after a critical encounter. Being a global English user and a recipient of microaggressions, I almost understood what the participants meant when they said "it was weird" or "that felt weird"; however, as a researcher I knew that I needed to probe further on this: firstly because I wanted clarification on the data; secondly because humans have a tendency to use ambiguous words such as "weird" when they do not know how to explain an emotion (Mental Health is Health, n.d.) or when they are unsure of a situation, and I wanted

the participants to be able to identify their specific emotions; and thirdly because I truly wanted the participants to understand the attributes and effects of microaggressions.

Mental Health is Health website has a dedicated section that describes the feeling of "weird" as "feel[ing] 'off,' different or overwhelmed and can't really pinpoint what's going on"—almost as if one is "second-guessing" themself (Shangrila, 2015). Sue et al. (2007) stated that people who experience microaggression may often just have a "vague feeling that they have been attacked, that they have been disrespected, or that something is not right" (p.277). According to Sue et al., sometimes recipients of microaggression may find it easier to handle overt acts of discrimination than microaggressions because they do not have to second-guess their critical encounters and the accompanying emotions. Since, in most cases, the victims of microaggressions question their own judgement of an incident and the consequent emotional response (Shangrila, 2015), it is highly probable that the word "weird" used by my study participants to describe a situation or a feeling meant that although they felt attacked and were made uneasy by certain incidents; however, they were not sure if they had right as human beings to feel violated.

Therefore, to help my study participants reflect on their language-related critical experiences comprehensively, as well as for me to have a better understanding of the range emotions that they had had felt during the encounters, I did a short activity with them during Phase 2 of focus group interviews, which I am calling the Word Cloud Activity.

Word Cloud Activity

This activity was a short 10–15-minute activity in which the participants were shown a cloud of adjective words and asked to take a moment to note down some words, from the cloud and beyond, which capture how they had had felt when they were faced with critical

incidents. A description of the steps of the activity and the purpose of each step is provided below:

Step 1: I created a separate Google® Docs document for each of the participants in which I highlighted the ambiguous words and the contexts in which the words were used by them during Phase 1 of focus groups and written reflections. I shared the links to the documents with them individually via email during Phase 2 of focus groups. In any case a participant had not used any ambiguous words, they were given general instructions, which I cover in one of the following steps. The purpose of this document was to give a real-time but private journaling space to the participants where they could write down their thoughts and explicate their choice of using specific words when citing a critical encounter. A sample of the Google® Docs template that I created for the activity can be found in Appendix C.

Step 2: I showed them a word cloud that I created using *Free Word Cloud Generator*. This word cloud included a range of words that I chose from: 1) the adjectives that appeared from the data of Phase 1 of focus group interviews and written reflections; 2) some emotions that I had felt when I personally encountered language-based microaggressions; 3) some neutral but descriptive words that facilitated in balancing the word cloud and forming a range.

Figure 2

Word Cloud Shown to Participants
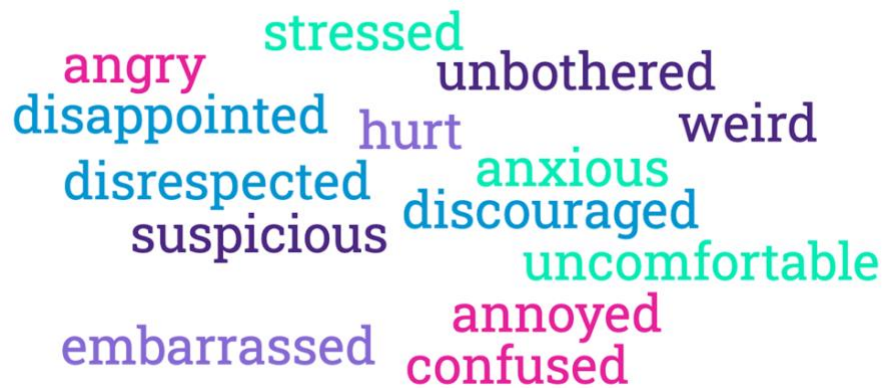
Step 3: I instructed them to describe the ambiguous adjectives that they had used in Phase 1 of data collection and explain them in their own words. I gave them the option to use the word cloud, the internet, and any digital or physical dictionary or thesaurus to choose at least two words to clarify the ambiguous word and associated emotions for each of the critical incidents that they had encountered. I encouraged them to write any additional words, along with their meanings, that may have come to their mind while reflecting on the incidents. I followed this strategy to assist the participants to pinpoint their emotions and feel validated in the process. This technique was also utilized to get a general idea of the range of emotions that recipients of microaggressions feel due to the critical encounters. The participants who had not used any ambiguous words, at any point, were encouraged to breakdown the adjectives in their own words and recommended to choose additional words that they could think of while reflecting on their critical encounters.

After the activity, most of the participants were willing to verbally discuss the adjectives that they had chosen and described in their own words in the Google® Doc. Many of the participants agreed that two words were not sufficient to fully capture the emotions

that they had had felt during and after a critical encounter. The new words that the participants chose to explain the ambiguous words, especially the word *weird,* were "surprised", "suspicious", "confused", "embarrassed", "disrespected", "hurt", "disappointed", and "discouraged". Since the participants explained these adjectives in their own words, each of these words had slightly different meanings but more or less captured how they actually felt during and after their encounters.

Mongol ohin, for example, had previously used the phrase *it was weird* when sharing a particular critical incident in which she felt treated differently; this was when a professor gave individual feedback to all the native English-speaking members of her group but did not have anything to say to her—the only global English-speaking student. Mongol ohin was not sure if she had done something wrong because the professor left her out of the feedback loop, while everyone else in her group received some comments. After the word cloud activity, she clarified that "weird" in that context meant that she felt "embarrassed", "discouraged", "disappointed", and "treated differently". For Alisha, however, when she used *really weird* to share her critical incident, she meant that she was very "confused". Alisha, in her context, was asked to repeat the word "pathway" several times by someone while she was giving a presentation. Since Alisha is a student of Biomedical Engineering, a field in which technical terms like "pathway" are frequently used, she was confused as to why someone would— given her presentation topic—not be able to deduce the word "pathway" correctly, even if there may have been a difference in pronunciation.

During the discussion after the activity, there seemed to a be consensus among members of the focus groups about their emotions being dynamic in that depending on the criticality of each encounter, their emotions may have fluctuated or changed within a given

period of time. For instance, Carole mentioned that she is readily able to let go of some critical incidents that she finds just mildly annoying; howbeit, she goes through *"all the stages of grief"* with some other incidents because those make her feel various emotions like "hurt", "discouraged", "stressed", and "frustrated". Similar to Carole, participants such as Li MeiMei and Ludo stated that their emotional responses depend on the context in which the critical experience is encountered.

One of the major findings from this activity was that the participants of this study seemed to have felt certain emotions, often intense, during instances when their overall abilities and skills as *intellectuals* were, either verbally or nonverbally, questioned because of their global English-speaking status; it did not matter whether the preparator did it consciously or subconsciously. Sue (2010a; 2010b) attested that microaggressions are often committed by people who consider themselves righteous and moral individuals; they are usually not aware of how their words, actions, or behavior affect others. This can explain why most of my study participants were initially hesitant to share their critical encounters or chose to use ambiguous words to describe their feeling despite having had felt intense emotions; they wanted to give the perpetrators the benefit of doubt and steer clear of making any accusations that may have a counterargument—invalidating their emotions further.

This word cloud activity and the discussion that followed allowed the participants to recall additional critical incidents, along with recalling further information for the previous critical incidents that they had already shared. On the whole, this activity built a supplemental platform in which participants felt safe to be vulnerable and validate one another's emotions through the discussions. Below, I provide a snapshot of the adjectives

that the participants chose throughout the course of this study to capture the emotions that

they had felt when they experienced microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy.

Figure 3

Word cloud created from participants' chosen words
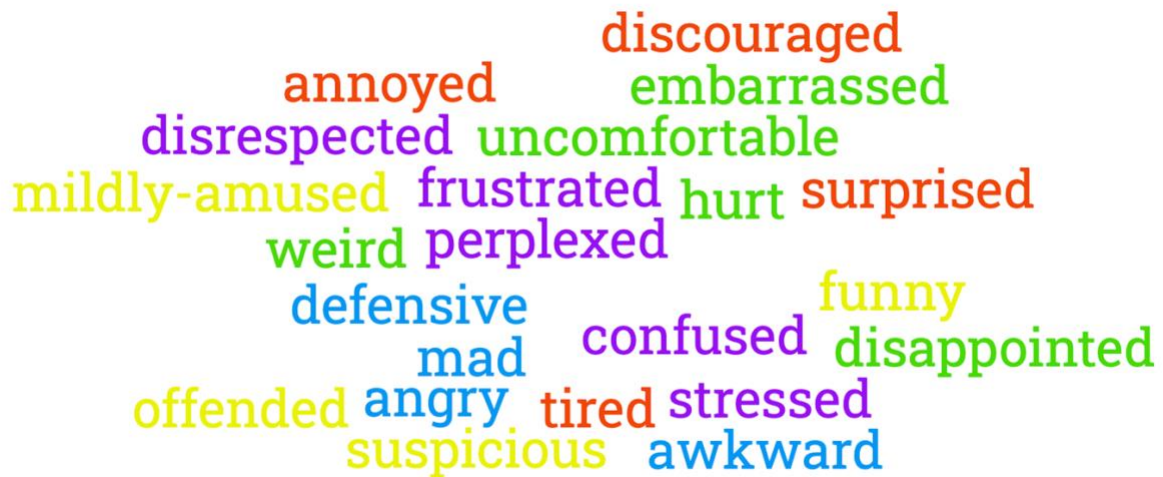
Research Question 2: ***How do the themes that emerge from international global English-***
using students' individual and collective reflections of their experiences with
microaggressions inform the study about the deep-rootedness of native speaker fallacy in
and around educational settings?

The purpose of this research question was to identify recurring themes from the

participants' individual and collective reflections of their critical experiences so as to be able

to decipher how and why native speaker fallacy is held and exhibited in and around U.S.

educational settings. To answer this research question, I parsed the data from the two phases

of focus group interviews, the two phases of written reflections, and the demographic

information.

Once I began to observe the emergence of recurring themes in the data, I grouped

them into separate categories and subcategories and assigned meaning to those categories by

thorough analysis. I have identified a total of 8 themes from the data which I have made into

8 categories, namely *Gatekeeping English*, *Invisible Hierarchy*, *'Sounding 'Different'*, *Othering*, *Alienation*, *Implicit Bias with Name and Color*, *Departments vs Critical Incidents*, and *Nonaccountability*.

Before I present and describe each of the themes, it is important to note that the themes that I identified are focus-group conversation dominant in that most of the data for the themes I recognized came from the participants' conversations with one another and myself within each group during focus group, which I then observed being common across all the three groups while analyzing the data. With that said, it is also important to mention that most of these conversations among the participants were free-flowing, non-linear, and often cyclical in nature in which one or more participant(s) touched on a theme, discussed it a little, digressed to talk about another theme, and at times circled back to some previous themes but in non-linear order. What this means is that the participants did not touch on one theme at a time and move into the next; the emergent themes in the datasets were all intermingled, mostly non-linear but lateral in terms of English-usage and subtle discrimination, which I then I identified, dissected, separated, and systematically regrouped—both from within and across the groups— for easier interpretation, comprehension, and presentation.

Transcript Comparison for Process Clarification

Below, I present some parts of the transcript from each group in Phase 1 of focus groups to display the intermingledness of the themes within and across the focus groups.

Group 1 (Members: Carole, Li MeiMei, and Ludo)

All in conversation below

Carole

Not too long ago, this is the one that pops in mind. I did a presentation in the class, and after my presentation, we still had some time for the class, and the professor wanted someone to read a paragraph, and she made the comments of not a French person.

So, we have two French in the class among six people. And it was really hurtful at this moment because I just did a presentation, and I thought I did well. And having this comment felt like, oh, maybe the professor did not understand me during the presentation, or are tired of hearing our accents, something like that. And so it really hurt both of our feelings but we didn't say anything. And it's just the class, the week after, we were working in pairs and groups, and the other French student—so after we prepare in groups we have to present in groups what we found out about the text— and the American student in her group, started to speak and then the professor said, well, maybe let the French student (saying the name of the French student) speak. The student says, 'Well, no, I'm fine, because he can express himself better than I can', and I think it came from the comments of telling us that they don't understand. Sometimes it feels in those cases that we understand less only because when we try to express what we felt about the text, we don't use the same type of vocabulary or because the other students phrased about that or by this specific comment of not letting us read the text it's just like oh, maybe it's not just the accent.

They really are less good than the others. And so, it was very hurtful and I don't understand where it came from. It was a very surprising and direct experience.

Romaisha

I'm sorry you had to go through that. Even that small comment can actually, like, discourage you from speaking up later on . . . And that has happened to me as well. So why do you think that, I mean, what was going on in your mind? Or right now when you look back to that incident, what do you think made that professor comment like that?

Carole

Yeah, at first because I was the one who did the presentation for the first half of the class or maybe the professor is tired of hearing French accent or tired of hearing or trying to understand what we're saying because of our accent. And so, I thought that was it. And at first, I didn't think much of it when that happened, but then when the student was reading, I was just saying that was so mean for no reason. You don't have to say that. You can just choose the students who is not French and not say why you chose this one. You don't have to make this comment. But I really don't know why because the professor is German. So, the professor is also an international woman

with accent. So, it's not even like an American domestic English type of person who is not aware with accent. So, I really don't understand the comments.

Romaisha

Yeah, it happens, and I have seen that it's not only from domestic to international, it can be from international to international, too, from my experience.

Li MeiMei

Yeah, I actually want to, I actually didn't feel good when you gave the example like 'I want the native speaker to take care of my paper' because I really want, I also try to find native speaker to help me modify my paper or something like that, even though I'm international. But I just feel like, yeah.

Romaisha

Do you think that way we are actually taking the power away from people who can actually contribute to the wellness of your paper or even the community? Like if you're just looking for certain category of people say just native speakers, how do we know that the native speaker will be more helpful than the nonnative speaker?

Li MeiMei

Yeah, actually they don't. I like, I trust Grammarly more than my husband. He's a native speaker, but he always says I don't know any grammar, I don't know any grammar. So that really can't help me about the paper. I always talk with my coauthor, maybe the Americans and maybe international. But yeah, we are good.

Carole

Grammar. They don't learn grammar here, so usually they don't know how to explain to you your mistakes, while other international students learn English as a second language, actually learn the grammar and so know the rules. And so, they may even be more likely to try and explain to you, like the mistakes you make.

Li MeiMei

Yeah, but sometimes we get the comments from the reviewer. Like, we submit some paper—trying to publish, and we get the review, they say 'Oh, you need to improve your English'. They give these kinds of comments. So, I always choose, I have my native speaker co-author or whoever go through it to defend myself. That's my way to

defend. And they [the reviewers] always take it, so I think maybe that's what they want.

Ludo

Yes, I have heard instances similar to what Carole [pseudonym] just explained whereby you are in class. And then for me, it was not the professor, it was the students, two of the students who said 'We never understand anything that Ludo [pseudonym] says. Even if I try to listen'.

In the above excerpt, extracted from Group 1 in Phase 1 of focus groups, we see that Carole describes a classroom incident with one of her professors that had affected her emotionally. Carole doubts that the incident may have been the result of her *accent*. However, as she continues discussion on the topic, she also mentions that global English users may be thought of as less intelligent and dismissed during classroom participation because their English *vocabulary* or *phrasing* choices may not always match what is considered mainstream in U.S. educational settings.

Li MeiMei, on the other hand, circles back to a different discussion about *preference of native speakers* that we had in a previous segment before Carole shared the above incident. Li MeiMei, in this instance, was referring to an example from the Recall Protocol that I had shown them in the beginning of the focus group and then briefly shared with them some of my own experiences of how people, at times, have questioned my writing tutoring ability only because I did not fit into their definition of a native speaker (I have provided a snapshot of this example in Incident 2 in Chapter 1).

Li MeiMei mentions not feeling good—in other words, *feeling guilty* as seen to be implied in the conversation—because she also looks for native English speakers when she needs someone to review her papers. She later explains to Carole that she mainly looks for

105

native English speakers as a defense technique against the language-related criticism that she receives from journal reviewers. After Li MeiMei's comment that primarily focused on *native speaker preference*, Ludo chooses to string back to Carole's classroom incident to share her own classroom experience in which some of her classmates have had been rude to her because of her English *phrasing* and *word choice*.

It is apparent from the excerpt above that the conversations in this group were mostly non-linear. The themes that were touched on did not come in progression but were mostly free-flowing and often circular. For instance, Li MeiMei's comment on *native speaker preference* was not a follow-up on Carole's immediate comment on *accent*, *vocabulary*, and *phrasing*; it was rather a follow-up on a previous discussion. Similarly, Ludo's comment was not a follow-up on Li MeiMei's comment—the last person who spoke; rather, it was a follow-up on Carole's comment who spoke before Li MeiMei.

In this conversation, we can notice that both Carole and Ludo are touching on themes of word-usage and phrasing, which I cover and explain under my identified theme of *Gatekeeping English*. Carole also touches on themes of *accent* and *being silenced* in this conversation which I, with data from across the three groups, have covered and explained in '*Sounding Different*' and *Alienation*, respectively. Contrarily, though Li MeiMei's comment here does not quite flow with the other two participants' comments, the information she provides about her publication concerns here along with the comments that she makes about her Chinese name in a later part of the focus group conversation (together with data from participants of other focus groups) are vital in understanding the name-based language discrimination that global English users experience in U.S. educational settings, which I have covered under my identified theme of *Implicit Bias with Name and Color*.

Group 2 (Members: Mongol ohin, Ajay, Goli, and Louise)

Mongol ohin and Louise in conversation below

Mongol ohin

Um, so I have, I don't know if it's, um, something related to, I think it is. When I first came to the U.S., like the very first class I took, um, so at that time my English wasn't really good. We had this group project, um, I think there were like four people. I was the only non-English speaker. So, um, in the third or the fourth class we had to do this small report. Everybody was going to summarize other people's paper they read. Um, so everybody summarized their papers and after that, the professor kind of, you know, commented and gave advice to each student.

So, the professor kind of gave advice to all three other students except me. Um, I'm not sure if he forgot it or whatever, but at that moment I just felt like, okay, you know, maybe I didn't do so well, so he doesn't have any comment. But it was, it was, at that time, it was very weird. Yeah.

The comment like, okay, short comment. It's like, okay for you blah, blah, blah, and for you blah, blah blah, but like my name wasn't there. So, it was weird.

Romaisha

I mean, that is, I mean, hurtful and weird too. I mean like, you don't feel like, oh I am in the class. See that's the thing. It's like sometimes they don't see us . . . So, Mongol ohin, if I may ask, um, what, what were you summarizing?

Was it articles or each other's papers? Like what?

Mongol ohin

No, it's like, so we each people find a paper to summarize. Okay. And then—you didn't get it. It's like, it's like a paper you find from the Google Scholar or something like that, and then you summarize it and then you report it.

It was not like I find a paper for myself. It's like, uh, one of the group members finds a paper for me and I find a paper for them. Okay? So, it's like a group project, but we report on the paper we read. Which was fine by other students.

Romaisha

Ahhh. I will come back to that. Do you have any other thoughts on this or any other things?

Because I want to, I want to bring it full circle with all the examples we get to at the point, because my purpose of the study is obviously making sure that people are made aware about microaggression because sometimes you feel like, oh, am I taking it out of proportions? Am I, is it in my head? It's, probably, it's not true . . .

Yes, thank you.

Louise

Yeah, so, uh, it's actually happening this semester. So, I'm taking a class, a film theory class, and, um, the teacher, she has really hard time to understand me. So, uh, what I do is I just don't participate anymore because most of the time the other students, they would understand me what I'm saying, but she doesn't, and she really insists like 'I don't understand, what did you say'?

So, at first, after some point I just stopped like just participating in the class and if we were work into groups, I would work with my kids [her classmates] and then I'll be like, okay, you can do the talk . . .

And so, I saw the teacher saw me this week and she apologized, blah, blah, blah, 'I think your accent is beautiful' and she has an accent too because she's not a native, a native English speaker. And so, she said that like she talked for a while and at the end she said, and she even sent an email where she said the same thing. She said, when it comes to reading like difficult sections of theoretical text, she wants native speakers.

And I'm like, it canceled everything you just said, like apologizing about our accent, blah, blah, blah. And then you said to me when it's about the work you want native accent. And uh, so I'm, I was like, Okay.

In the above excerpt from Group 2, we see Mongol ohin sharing a classroom incident where she mentions that her professor provided feedback to all the native English speakers of her group but didn't give any feedback to her—the only "nonnative" English speaker of the

group. Louise, then follows-up with what she believes to be a comparable incident to Mongol ohin's and describes her experience in one of her classes where the professor often subtly dismisses Louise's participation efforts by prioritizing specific *phrasing* and *accent* and directly mentioning to Louise that they *prefer* native English speakers to cover theoretical text.

Although both the incidents are classroom-related, the themes are not fully identical. While Louise's comments, within this short excerpt, revolve around themes of *phrasing*, *accent*, and *native speaker preference*, Mongol ohin's comment provides information on how global English users may be sidelined and given *silent treatment*—whether intentionally or unintentionally— in classroom settings. The information provided by Louise on *phrasing* is more in line with the information provided by Carole and Ludo in Group 1 which I covered under the theme of *Gatekeeping English*. However, Mongol ohin's comment on the professor's indifference and *silent treatment* toward her in the classroom corresponds more to what Carole, from Group 1, mentioned about being *silenced* in the classroom by her professor, which I covered under the theme of *Alienation*.

Again, Mongol ohin's explanation of this incident did not end only after this conversation. She referred to the incident in other parts of Phase 1 of focus groups and also during Phase 2 of focus group discussions and Word Cloud Activity. This pattern, or lack thereof, again goes to show that the nature of experience-sharing and touching on themes were not linear in the focus groups; rather, they were intermingled and mostly circular.

Group 3 (Members: Everest, Alisha, Sahan, and Swan)
Swan, Alisha, and Everest in conversation below

Swan

I was talking with one of my teammates and he, I said to him, I have an exam in statistics, and he said a WHAT? I had to repeat like *statistics*, and I think it's an easy word, you know, like, and he says ohhh statistics, and I said like, yes, that's what I've been saying to you like three times, for three times, you know? So, it basically was like the mock [from the interlocutor] that sucked for me because, you know, it's not similar to any other words.

But for example, um, with other things, a lot of things I'm saying one word and some people don't catch it. And finally, they catch it and it's like, ohhh, this one, and I say yes! So, maybe it's because of my accent. I don't know what is like, yeah. And, but other people they catch it, you know?

So, I think it's not only my problem, it's her problem, it's their problem because maybe they're not used to international. Claire [pseudonym] for example, tells me. 'Yeah. Swan, I understand you almost always'. But, for example, Marvin [pseudonym], you know Marvin? He will not catch me but Claire will, and I'm speaking at the same time, you know?

Romaisha

Yeah, exactly. So, it's not, it's not on us all the time.

Swan

Yeah.

Romaisha

People are not accustomed to listening to many different accents and many different people. So, it's also a practice that they need to do. It's not just us who need to work on our English, and that's what we are here for [this research]. It's just like sometimes we just feel like the pressure is on us. It shouldn't be.

If you're allowing different languages in your lives, you have to also get accustomed to understanding them. Since the door of U.S. is open for international students, or even international expat, like there are so many international people that they allow. Right? Or even immigrants. Then how can you expect just one kind of accent, right? There will be multiple.

Swan

But my class is a master's. I have a lot of international people, so I think because of that, I don't have that much bad experience, you know, because it's not like a full American class.

Romaisha
Yes. Okay. So, that makes the difference because you have a lot of international students in your class?

Swan

Yeah.

Romaisha

So, going off of that, so since we have heard from Swan, do you [everyone] want to add to anything that Swan said? Uh, Alisha you have anything additional to say? I know, um, it hasn't been very long here for you, and I don't want to push you too much, but would you like to add something?

Alisha

Well, so she mentioned [pointing to Swan] how people don't understand specific words. And I have noticed, I had actually had one, one such experience last week when I had to give a presentation and during question answer session, I uh, somebody asked me something and I used the word pathway. But since India has been a British colony, I used the British pronunciation pathway and not pathway like they say in US.

And it was so difficult for that person to understand what I'm saying. That was really weird to me. And I think they're not really used to British pronunciation of things, which Indians, usually Indians kind of have a mixed American and British pronunciation. So, I think they have trouble getting accustomed to that.

And there are a lot of such words in biology, which is my field, and those are all technical words. So, sometimes that forms a barrier in communicating with people.

Romaisha

But pathway is not a very hard word to understand pathway [American pronunciation] or pathway [British pronunciation]. What did it make you feel? Like, what did you feel was it your problem or was somebody else's problem?

Alisha:

Um, well, they asked me to repeat it a few times because it was like some XYZ pathway. So, they asked me to repeat it a few times, and I thought that was really weird.

Romaisha

Thank you for sharing and I'm sorry that, uh, this happens. Like, it's just, I think we just need to be more acquainted with more ways of how people speak, you know, it's just, I'm from Bangladesh and obviously we were the same region being colonized for almost 200 years by the British, so we are also like, um, heavy on, basically mixture of British, but I think with Hollywood and everything's influence, it has gotten us the American accent as well. So, we are a mix . . . Thank you for sharing, Alisha. Um, Everest, would you like to speak regarding that or anything that you would like to add?

Everest

Um, I mean, I also feel like sometimes even the opportunities, so like for some, like in my department or in the departments that I have been before, like in educational settings, so, sometimes like the opportunities such as teaching opportunities or um, like just the load, even if you are a TA, like what kind of tasks they assign you, that also depends on if you're a native speaker or not.

So, you know, like I've seen that because for native speakers sometimes they, you know, assign them to co-teach the classes or sometimes basically some of the students, like to those native speakers call them something like senior TA or something like that. And yeah, so that feels weird.

Romaisha

Yeah. Sorry.

Everest

This kind of stuff you know, like just having the preference for native speaker and then. Uh, also the opportunities too because for Ph.D. students, like in our field teaching is really important because we basically go for the academic jobs, right? So, if you have more experience, then you have more chances to land in those kinds of jobs. But if you don't get to teach, you know, then your opportunities are limited.

Romaisha

Exactly.

Everest

Those kinds of stuff, you know.

In this excerpt from Group 3, we see Swan giving an example of how one of her sports-team members mocked her *pronunciation* of the word "statistics" during a conversation, which she recalled not feeling good about. She then moves on to talk about her concerns of her *accent*. She uses an example to explain how during the same conversation some people understand her while some others don't. Thus, Swan thinks aloud that her accent might not be the sole issue in some of her failed communications; it might also be the fault of the listeners.

Building on to what Swan had shared about her pronunciation incident, Alisha describes an incident where someone asked her to *pronounce* a fairly easy and common technical term in her field many times. Alisha describes feeling weird because of the incident because, like Swan, she wonders if the incident happened because people in the U.S. are not accustomed to the different pronunciations of words. Unlike Swan and Alisha, however— both of whom spoke about *pronunciation* and *nonaccountabilty* of listeners, Everest chooses to speak about how *native speakers* are given *preference* when it comes to assigning work and responsibilities—all while *Othering* the global English users. This excerpt from Group 3

is another example of how the conversations in the focus groups and the themes that emerged have been nonlinear and overlapping.

To exemplify, Everest, in the above scenario, talks about the *preference* that is given to native English speakers, which we have already seen reflected from Louise's account of her professor's statement about preferring native speakers and Li MeiMei's confession on why she looks for native speakers to review her paper. In the section below, I present this theme as *Othering,* and with quotes from the data, explain how people often Other global English users by giving preference to native English speakers and having low expectation of global English users.

Comparably, in the above extract, we see Swan mainly talking about issues regarding *pronunciation* and *nonaccountabilty* of accepting different accents. Alisha, too, is seen to be sharing Swan's concerns of *pronunciation* and *nonaccountability*. Both Swan and Alisha's concern regarding *pronunciation* seen in the excerpt of Group 3 have already been seen to be reflected in Carole and Ludo's accounts in Group 1 and somewhat in Louise's account on *phrasing* issue in Group 2, which I have termed as and explained in *Gatekeeping English*. The theme of *nonaccountability* of listeners that we see from Swan and Alisha's accounts in Group 3 also emerged during other conversations among participants within the three groups and has been a prominent theme across the three groups. I, thus, have termed this theme as *Nonaccountability* and explained what is means and entails.

The aforementioned sequences are just some examples that portray how I have had to distinguish the themes, dissect them from within and across the focus groups, and regroup them together to present them in a cohesive manner that could be easily followed and comprehended by the reader. In the following section, I present the 8 main themes that I have

114

identified with necessary and applicable corresponding direct quotes and statements from the participants of the three groups for easier comprehension. Some quotes and statements fit into more than one category and serve as important indicators of the corresponding category; in those cases, I have referred to these quotes more than once.

Themes and Subthemes

1) Gatekeeping English: Enforcing Mimicry

The theme of *gatekeeping* of English had a strong presence in the collected data—also evident from the transcripts shared in the previous section; meaning, many of the participants reported that at some point of their time in the U.S. as an international graduate student they have been either told to correct their English pronunciation, made fun of because of their English, or ignored and invalidated for using a variety of English. Pronunciation and phrasing (word usage) seem to be the most common tactics by which people, both native and global English speakers, try to gatekeep English—being microaggressive in the process. I provide examples from the data in the subcategories below.

Pronunciation

The majority of the participants shared at least one critical incident regarding pronunciation in which they had either encountered or witnessed microaggression because of English-word(s) pronunciation. Goli shared an incident where he witnessed a native English speaker insisting that an international student pronounce some English words "correctly" because English should be spoken "*properly*". This incident occurred where Goli and other international students were invited to a gathering hosted by a community partner of Southwest American University. According to Goli, he found the demand of the native English speaker toward his international peer unacceptable because the primary purpose of a

language is to *communicate* and as long as that is done successfully, pronunciation alone should not become an issue.

Likewise, Mongol ohin shared an incident in which a global English user, although a 1.5 generation immigrant, made fun of her because of her pronunciation of the word "supplement". During this incident, Mongol ohin and her interlocutor were casually discussing the topic of vitamins and their health benefits to which Mongol ohin mentioned that she takes Vitamin C supplements. Her interlocutor at first behaved as though he was finding it very difficult to understand Mongil ohin's pronunciation of the word "supplement" and later when some moments had passed, he proceeded to say the word *"correctly"* out loud and joked about how Mongol ohin's pronunciation of the word had created the whole confusion for him. Mongol ohin described feeling very *embarrassed* and *confused* by the incident because she said that she was not expecting a reaction like that from him. In the focus group, she contemplated out loud:

> *I don't know if Americans can't really understand two words which are really similar, cause for me, if I was an American? If an international student is saying supplyment or something and we are talking about similar subject related to supplement, then he probably can realize that I'm talking about supplement and won't react that way. . . Like can't they really understand or are they kind of pretending?*

Mongol ohin described feeling disheartened more by the reaction of her interlocutor, especially because he was also a global English user. According to Mongol ohin, this incident confused her and made her question about the motive of the person; it also made her fearful of the word "supplement" because of the *embarrassment* she has had to endure due to the word.

116

Prioritizing Phrasing Over Content

Like pronunciation, the participants also said that they had encountered phrasing-related critical incidents. For instance, Ludo reported that a native English-speaking peer in one of her classes in the English department, which is not her primary department, once made an insensitive comment about her spoken English; the student stated: *"Whenever Ludo [pseudonym] says something, I just close my ears because I never get anything"*. The peer made this comment right after Ludo had finished answering a question that the professor had asked her regarding the day's readings, and it was the peer's turn to answer the question. According to Ludo, since she was the only global English-speaking international student in the class, her peer targeted her and made the comment. Although the professor challenged the student for making such a rude comment in the classroom, Ludo felt very *hurt* and *disrespected* by the student's ignorance; the student, according to her, displayed no understanding of varieties of English. Ludo indicated that it was hard for her from then on to participate freely in that class.

Louise, too, have had multiple negative encounters in one of her classes. Although this particular class was taught by a global English-using professor, the professor consistently *insisted* that she could not understand anything that Louise had to say during whole-group discussions. Although her peers could understand her fully, the professor would often say: *"I don't understand, what did you say?"* Louise noticed that the professor's attitude toward native English speakers was different; when a native speaker would share an idea similar to Louise but with different phrasing, the professor would commend them for their work. Louise felt *discouraged* to participate anymore and concluded that may be her answers were

not meeting the professor's standard of word or vocabulary usage; so she was making assumptions about Louise's knowledge on topics.

In all of the above instances, a gatekeeping tendency can be observed in which the microaggressors are determined to change the recipients' English, either by correcting their pronunciation or by expecting them to speak in a specific manner of English—almost as if asking them to engage in *mimicry* of the native speaker English. Grounded in postcolonial theory, Bhabha's (1984) concept of *mimicry* aims to explain how "colonizers"—people in power— use subtle strategies to manipulate and subdue the "colonized"—marginalized people— in order to preserve their power. According to Bhabha, *mimicry* is the colonizers' "desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (p.126), aiming to create a dichotomy in which one is automatically put at a place of advantage and the other at a place of disadvantage.

When the concept of mimicry is applied to the above contexts of language-based microaggressions, it becomes clear that the gatekeeping tendency of the perpetrators, regardless of their own English status, had transpired from a subconscious need to control the English language and its *global* speakers, and create a clear dichotomy of native vs "nonnative" in which the natives are the owners of the language and nonnatives are the borrowers of the language; and in which one is in a power position to dictate the rules of the language and the other is expected to blindly follow those dictated rules. If Mongol ohin and Goli's examples are taken into consideration, the microaggressors, regardless of their own English status, believed that there is only one way of pronouncing English words; and if the words are not pronounced in that particular manner by the global English users, the users need to be *put in their place*. Similar are the contexts of Louise and Ludo where the

118

microaggressors, again regardless of their own English status, glorified one way of phrasing English sentences while reprimanding the others; a nonverbal and subconscious message sent out to the global English users to yield and mimic.

What is interesting is that English is not even spoken in the same way by the so-called native speakers themselves in the different regions of the U.S. (Clopper & Smiljanic, 2015; Kurath, 1928), let alone by the native speakers of world (BritishCouncilSerbia, 2013); so, why is there this urge to gatekeep native speaker English and deny the existence of Global Englishes (Rose et al., 2021) if not to preserve power through language? Unfortunately, this gatekeeping tactic is not practiced by the native speakers alone; global English speakers play equal part in enforcing mimicry as is seen from the critical incidents of the participants in this study. The question that arises from this practice is that whose language is being gatekept here? If native English speakers are the only true owners of the language, then the proprietorship of the language should only belong to the natives of the place in which the language originated—the English people in England (Widdowson, 2002); not Americans, not all Whites, not Europeans—just the English in England.

The argument, although, that may follow this aforementioned statement is that English people from England had carried the language elsewhere, such as North America, through emigration and, thus, they are still "natives" of the language. To that, my counterquestion would be: *what then of the spread of English through colonization?* As I have already mentioned in Chapter 1, many Asian and African regions have had been former British colonies (Britannica, 2022; Tinker & Husain, 2022) who, at the time, had adopted English and passed it on to the younger generations for survival purposes. So, if English can be claimed by the emigrant people of England as still their *own* despite having had moved and

having had their language morphed into different varieties by coming in contact with other local languages (BritishCouncilSerbia, 2013), English then can also be claimed by the people of colonized nations where the British had brought the language when establishing rule.

English language is then as much of the formerly colonized people as it is of the natives and the emigrants of England—a small trade perhaps, though unintentional but useful at present, for all the things that were *"taken"* from them (BBC, 2022; Dutt, 1992; Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). Nonetheless, it is important to realize that language is dynamic (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013)—ever evolving, and given the current global status of English (Seidlhofer, 2005), there is no way to mitigate, let alone halt, this evolution. So, trying to gatekeep English, claiming it as the language of some specific people, and attacking the global varieties of the language do more harm than good, especially because of the complicated history of English language dispersal. In the current climate, where English is in fact the lingua franca (Seidlhofer, 2005) and where there are many different varieties of English, the language does not and should not belong to any specific group. English should belong to everyone who speaks it (Norton, 1997) and users of English should be able to use the language flexibly without the fear of being criticized.

2) Invisible Hierarchy: Divide and Rule

The theme of a desire to establish an invisible hierarchy through English was also apparent in the collected data. To explain this theme, I would like to first establish what I mean by hierarchy. The Britannica Dictionary provides two definitions for hierarchy: one concerning organizations and the other concerning people. For my study context, the second definition of hierarchy is more appropriate, which is: "a system in which people or things are placed in a series of levels with different importance or status". Unlike mimicry, covered in

120

the previous section, which aims to create a dichotomy—a two-part imbalanced reality, hierarchy aims to systematically put people in different levels of authority—creating a multilevel reality, with uneven power dynamics across the levels.

From the data in this study, it was found that the native English speaking microaggressors showed inclination, whether subconscious or conscious, toward creating a divide amongst the users of global English by placing some global English users above others; naturally putting themselves, the native speakers, at the top of the hierarchy. To clarify the theme of invisible hierarchy in the context of this study, I first illustrate some of the critical incidents reported by the participants followed by an explanation of how the incidents fit into this theme.

During the focus group, Everest narrated an incident during which a native English speaker at first complimented his English and then proceeded to compare his English to other global English users:

> *So, I had this job interview, and I was presenting on a topic in economics. And after the presentation was over, the person from the hiring committee, he came to me and he was like, oh, you have really good English. And I was like, okay . . . So, then we went for dinner, it was a part of the [hiring] process. So, when we went for dinner, he was talking about like other people who came for the interview, and he was basically bad mouthing them. Like that their English was not good, and you know, like just those kind of stuff.*

Everest remembered being confused by this person's remark. Although it sounded like the person was trying to give Everest a compliment, his attitude toward other global English

users made Everest question the true motive of the person; because Everest, too, after all, was a global English speaker.

Similarly, Carole mentioned that native speakers usually tell her that her "*English is better than so and so"*, and the "so and so" are always other global English-using international students. Carole stated that this is rather discouraging because while there seems to be a compliment on the surface, there may be a hidden message that says that her English would never be as good as a native speaker's—despite having known the language for a very long time. Correspondingly, Goli, Ludo, and Ajay also stated that people often praise them for speaking English well: but the question that arises from this situation is that their English is better in comparison to whom?

It is clear from the exemplified critical incidents of Everest and Carole that when native speakers give a global English user a compliment related to their English skills, it is always in comparison to other global English users, and never in comparison to another native speaker; this stance in itself creates invisible levels within global English-speaking graduate student community where some global English users are applauded and the rest nullified for their English usage. This attitude provides noticeable proof of the hierarchization that native English speakers subtly wish to establish—with them, the "natives", being at the top, selective global English users in the middle, and the rest of the global English users at the bottom levels of the hierarchical chain. It is as if English is a tool that only native English speakers know to operate, and by giving an English-related compliment to a global English speaker—who is a multilingual—they are elevating the position of the global English user—because, supposedly, being *proficient* in English is a *higher* achievement than being a *multilingual.*

The global English speaker is expected to be happy with such a compliment from the native English speaker because the native, who is the self-proclaimed *expert* of the language, is *endorsing* the language skills of the global English user, which is a matter of "celebration". Sadly, many global English users may fall into this pitfall and partake in this hierarchization, either intentionally or unintentionally, to have a false sense of belonging and for retaining the authority and benefits that come from being considered "proficient" in English; an example of this is apparent from the critical incidents of the participants that I shared in the previous section in which some of the global English users engaged in *enforcing mimicry* over the global English-using international graduate students—as though doing the bidding on native English speaker's behalf.

Whether we like it or not, English is a tool of power due to historical and political reasons (Phillipson, 1997; 2016) and it is the language of the *now* (P. K. Matsuda, 2022). Because of its worldwide spread, it has become the language of convenience. People use English, and will keep using English, for trade, communication, and other purposes. But, this convenience should not have to be a leverage for a small group of people and a burden for the rest of the world.

3) Sounding *'Different'*: Accent and Associations

One of the most common factors that participants reported experiencing microaggressions against, as also seen in the short transcripts that I shared in the previous section, was accent. Howbeit, the type of microaggressions experienced by the participants varied drastically based on the presumption that the perpetrators had about the region that their accent was from; what this means is that the accent-related microaggressions experienced by the participants of Asian and African origin were vastly different from that of

123

the participants of European origin. While the accents of most of the Asian and African participants were found to be blatantly associated with hardship or poverty by the perpetrators, the accents of the European participants were found to be sexualized by them; both are very problematic, especially within educational settings. In the following subcategories, I explain each of these themes with evidence from the data.

Equating Accent with Hardship

Li MeiMei recollected a negative encounter that she had had with a native English speaker during her first year as a graduate student in the U.S. This encounter took place when she had gone to an English practice corner hosted by a community partner of Southwest American university. The purpose of the English corner was to provide international students with a space to practice their spoken English by talking to a native English speaker for an hour every week. Li MeiMei shared that the second time that she had gone to that space to practice her spoken English, she met a native English-speaking elderly man who during their casual conversation exclaimed: *"Oh, you poor Asian woman! I know your life must have been hard."* Li MeiMei recalled feeling offended and uncomfortable by his comment because she was a well-educated and well-to-do woman from China, and the man still chose to speak to her like that.

Ajay, in fact, shared two incidents, similar to Li MeiMei, in which the perpetrators, based on his accent, had implied that the part of the world he comes from is subpar and he should be glad that he knows English. The first accent-related incident that Ajay shared was of a time when he was walking on campus at Southwest American University and a native English-speaking woman had stopped him to ask for direction to a specific building. After Ajay gave her the direction, the woman asked him *where he was from* and *if he learned*

124

English before coming to the U.S. As Ajay answered that he is from India and he had learned English in India, the woman rhetorically asked: *See, that helps, doesn't it? To learn English?*

The second accent-related incident that Ajay mentioned was from the time when he was pursuing his master's degree in a Midwestern university. According to Ajay, he was having a causal conversation with a professor on campus, who he had not taken any classes with, and the professor had commented something along the lines of "Coming from a Third World Country, it is good that you speak good English." Although Ajay could not recall the entire conversation as it was many years ago for him, he certainly remembers feeling very uncomfortable when the professor chose the term "Third World" to describe where Ajay was from.

In the above critical incidents reported by the participants, the perpetrators engaged in microaggressions because of the assumptions that they had had about the *place* where the accent was from. In all three of the incidents, the microaggressors used phrases and terms like *"Your life must have been hard!"*, *"It helps, doesn't it?"*, and *"Third World Country"* which imply that the recipients must have had a hard or impoverished life in their countries, and it is good for them to know English because the language has made their life better by allowing them to come to the U.S. This false perception that everyone in the "Third World" countries are impoverished, struggling, and facing gender inequality and all people of "First World Countries" are fully developed, thriving, and enjoy gender equality comes from a place of ignorance; not all people of the "Third World" are struggling and not all people of the "First World" are flourishing (Silver, 2021). In reality, some of the wealthiest and most influential men in the world (Dolan & Peterson-Withorn, 2022; Forbes Magazine, 2018) and

some of the most influential women in the world (Forbes et al., 2022) hail from these so-called "Third World Countries".

Paul Farmer (n.d), professor at Harvard Medical School, affirms that to be "First World" does not mean to be the best world in every possible way, "it has pockets of deep urban and rural poverty", he adds (as cited in Silver, 2021). Likewise, gender inequality is a global concern (Ortiz-Ospina and Roser, 2018), and is not just a burden for women in the "Third World"; in fact, many of the so-called "Third World" countries are among the most gender equal countries (Whiting, 2022). So, for people within U.S. educational settings to belittle female international students of certain regions or refer to international graduate students' countries as "Third World" to imply *backward* and/or *poverty-stricken* is prejudiced, and completely unacceptable.

Besides, terms such as "Third World" are dated and have become offensive. What was initially used to denote the neutral parties of the Cold War is now used to connote the countries that the people in the West **falsely** perceive as the only ones struggling, backward, and "poor" (Silver, 2021). Silver explains:

> The idea of a world divided into three domains dates back to the 1950s when the Cold War was just starting. It was Western capitalism versus Soviet socialism. But there was another group of countries. Many were former colonies. None of them were squarely in either the Western or the Soviet camp. Thinking of these three factions, French demographer Alfred Sauvy wrote of "Three worlds, one planet". . . [in which] the "First World" consisted of the U.S., Western Europe and their allies. The "Second World" was the so-called communist bloc: the Soviet Union, China, Cuba and

friends. The remaining nations, which aligned with neither group, were assigned to the "Third World."

What the people in the West need to realize is that the countries that they degrade by calling "Third World" are truly the casualties of colonization (Dutt, 1992; Ocheni, 2012) and the war decisions made by the so-called "First World" (Griffin & Khan, 1992; Westad, 2005); still trying their best to recover from the mess that they did not make. That aside, as stated by Zoellick (2010), the former president of World Bank Group, "we are now in a new, fast-evolving multipolar world economy" (as cited in World Bank Group, 2010) in which countries from all around the world are making significant contributions. So, for people in the West, and especially in my study context— U.S. educational settings— to believe in the superiority of "First World" even today is unjustified.

Sexualization of Accents

Data from the focus groups and the written reflections showed strong evidence that whilst the Asian participants' accents are associated with hardship, the European participants' accents are associated with sexuality. All three of the European participants during focus groups recounted that they have had received comments on their accents being "sexy" at least twice, for some even more, within educational settings since starting their master's program in the U.S. While there seems to be no harm at face-value of such comments and can even be seen as a compliment, it quickly becomes uncomfortable for students when they hear this at school or work—not knowing what the motives of the commenter are.

Carole, who is from France and had had received many such comments, shared that:

When people make comment about my accent being sexy or cute, it makes me uncomfortable as I don't know if people are looking down on me or flirting with me or something in the sort. It's even worse when it happens with a classmate or during dinners with colleagues and so on.

Women of some European countries, especially France, are often seen to be hypersexualized by the media, which sends out the wrong message (Ayuso, 2020). So, the discomfort that Carole feels in her accent being called "sexy", especially within educational settings, is not unfounded. The plethora of research on accents show that people have a tendency of stereotyping others based on accent; whether it is positive stereotyping or negative (Colbert, 2016; Foddy & Riches, 2000; Giles & Sassoon, 1983; Ryan & Sebastian, 1980; Shah, 2019). It seems highly unlikely that the perpetrators in Carole's case were not prejudiced about French women; if they were unprejudiced, they would not be so comfortable in using words like "sexy" when talking to a classmate in graduate school or a colleague at work dinner.

Louise, who is also from France, affirmed the common stereotypes of French women during her focus group reflections. She mentioned that when she goes somewhere people do not usually realize that she is from Europe, until she speaks. Howbeit, as she speaks people seem to become interested in her—trying to guess her accent and romanticizing it in the process. Louise assumes that this happens because of how French people are portrayed on television; all French women are shown as being very *"dressy"* and *"fun"* on TV, which, according to Louise, may be the reason why all French women are thought of and/or viewed that way. When asked if those associations bother her, she answered that it depends on the context, although she confirmed that she feels the most uncomfortable with accent-associations when it comes to academia-related contexts.

Although the critical incidents exemplified above, mostly in the first subsection, can be attributed to the issue of race at the first glance, a thorough analysis of the data and the additional information from the participants demonstrate that the **primary** target of microaggression in all the above contexts was accent of the participants, not race. The reason why I say this is because of what the participants had indicated during the focus groups. For example, Ludo stated that although Southwest American University is a Minority Serving Institution, most of the classes that she takes in different departments rarely have international global English-speaking students, which makes her Botswana accent different than others, and more susceptible to discrimination. According to her, most of her classes, demographically, are Hispanic dominant with Whites being a close second, and although the Hispanic students may identify as multilingual, they still pass as native English speakers because most of them are born in the U.S. and have nuanced accents, if any.

Mongol ohin's reflection further supports that global English users are targeted because of their English accent. During the focus group, she pointed out that when a global English user looks "different"—in that they are a person of color—people are suspicious that the person may be an outsider; but, when the global English user sounds "different" too, to people's standard, they get the *confirmation* that the person is an outsider and, thus, can be treated differently without any repercussion. When one of Ajay's critical incidents is analyzed on a case-basis with that lens, it is observed that the woman asked Ajay *where he was from* only after she heard him speak—after he verbally gave her the direction to the building. Ajay may have looked like an outsider to the woman but until he spoke, she was not sure; she got the confirmation only after he spoke, and then she took the liberty of showing her entitlement. Comparable is the case of Li MeiMei. If she had spoken with an

129

accent of the elderly man's preference, he would probably have thought she was an American and a volunteer at the organization; hence, had not gone through severe *hardship* like the people in the "Third World".

This notion of subordination of the international students because of their global English speaker status has been discussed in length by Jones et al. (2020). From their research findings that also included accent, the authors stated that international global English-speaking students, undeniably, are marginalized in U.S. educational settings because of their English; to that they also added that this marginalization of this cohort of students in *U.S. educational settings* may have different dynamics in that they are put at the bottom of the pyramid, even below the American students of color, because of their *diverse* English.

Even in the case of the European participants, it was their accent that revealed their foreignness, and made them vulnerable to experiencing microaggressions. The participants noted that the microaggressive and sexual comments that they had received were because of their accent, not color—as they are visibly White. According to them, when they are out and about people never seem suspicious of them. However, when they speak, people tend to start treating them differently— for better or for worse. Yet, issues of race cannot be ignored, and I have touched upon that theme in a different section. In this section, I sought to call attention to the covert issues that stem from the diverse accents of international graduate students; I aimed to provide the readers with an understanding of the probable thought process of the microaggressors behind their accent-related microaggressions.

4) **Othering: Considering '*Less Than*'**

The theme of Othering, like I mentioned in the previous section while sharing the excerpts, was also evident in the data. Johnson et al. (2004) define Othering as the "process

that identifies those that are thought to be different from oneself or the mainstream, and it can reinforce and reproduce positions of domination and subordination" (p. 253). In other words, Othering is the process by which an individual assumes a masterful position for oneself and separate oneself from a *'different'* other. Analysis of the participants' reports in this study revealed that Othering of the participants was done in two major ways, namely having low expectation of global English users and preferring native English speakers. I discuss these subthemes with evidence in the following paragraphs.

Low Expectation of global English users

During the focus group, Alisha described an incident which she would not necessarily call as negative, but remembers feeling somewhat "weird" because of it. She shared:

> *Um, so, when I first arrived here, I stayed with a host family, and I have to say they're very nice people and I'm still in touch with them. But then, one day we were playing this word game, and it's like there are words on a card and you have to not say the words and make them guess what the word is. And I could see that, uh, they were intentionally giving me cards which had easier words and I thought that that was a little weird. I know they were trying to be nice and weren't trying to make things awkward. And it's true that there were some words there, which I did not understand cause they were **more America specific**. But yeah, that was a little weird for me . . . I have spoken English all my life, so that was weird.*

Carole recalled a critical incident of an international global English-speaking peer of her department that she felt she needed to address in the context of this study. According to Carole, her peer was chosen by a professor to do the graduation speech of that year, and after

her friend had given the speech, another professor commented that: *"Oh! It went better than I expected. When I heard it was you who was going to do the speech, I wasn't confident."*

Li MeiMei also shared a critical incident in which she felt that the professor was not considerate about his approach with her in the classroom. She narrated:

It was my first semester. Actually, it was my first month at Southwest American University [pseudonym] and it was in my concrete design class. I was the only foreign student in that class. So, my professor, he asked me a question, and I knew the answer, but didn't know how to answer it well in English. He cut me off, he said: 'Oh, you can answer in Chinese. I know some Chinese'. He just said that! I said okay, fine, and didn't say anything. . . I didn't feel good. I felt like he thought I was stupid . . . You think I cannot finish in English?

The three above incidents show different scenarios of Othering, whether intentional or not at the microaggressors' end, and regardless of whether the recipients felt offended. As I defined previously, Othering is the process in which an individual separates oneself from the *'different'* Other because of assumed mastery of oneself. In all the critical incidents reported by the three participants, the native English speakers **assumed** that the English ability of the global English users was limited.

For instance, in Alisha's case, Alisha recognizes that the host family's intentions behind giving her easy English words were not bad, but the problem is that they *assumed* that Alisha would want easy words. For Alisha, who has spoken English *"all her life",* it seemed a bit odd that the family would think that Alisha was not capable to play the English word game without help. She admitted that she did not know some culturally specific American words in the deck, but she knows the English language in general; so, she could not

understand the point of them giving her easy words even when most of the words were not culturally specific. The family, in this case, Othered her because they assumed she was different due to her global English user status.

In Carole's friend's case, after she finished her speech, the professor remarked that her speech went better than he had expected and that he was not confident it would go well. This professor made a negative assumption about the English ability of Carole's friend due to her global English speaker status. Unlike Alisha's case with the host family where the Othering was only nonverbal, in Carole's friend's case, the Othering by the professor was both nonverbal and verbal—nonverbal in that the professor assumed that Carole's friend lacked skill and would not perform well and verbal in that he even verbally expressed his disbelief that she did well; this professor supposed that Othering of a student is okay on the basis of their English language status.

In Li MeiMei's case, the professor may have wanted to be welcoming to Li MeiMei by letting her know that he knows some Chinese, but his approach Othered her and that, too, in more than one way. First, the professor cut her off mid-sentence and did not let her finish her thought, which she felt offended by because she felt that her effort in trying to express herself was being ignored. Second, by asking her to answer in Chinese in a classroom full of non-Chinese students, the professor, inadvertently, made it evident in front of everyone that she may be *lacking* skill in English, or even more. What could have been a bonding moment between a professor who is "nonnative" Chinese speaker and a student who is a native Chinese speaker became an embarrassing moment for Li MeiMei because the professor drew attention on what was *'different'* about her in front of the whole class.

According to Li MeiMei, since she did not have enough spoken English practice in China, she used to have to make some effort in fully expressing herself, verbally, in the beginning of her doctoral program; this, however, has changed over time. When I asked her what she would have liked the professor do instead in that situation, she mentioned that she would have appreciated if the professor let her finish her thoughts in the classroom and later speak to her in private about knowing Chinese; he did not need to assume that she needed help with English before her even asking for any.

Preference for 'Native English Speakers'

Preference of native English speakers was also found to be an aspect by which global English users are Othered by preparators. In this subsection, I would refer to Louise's encounters that I shared in Section 1 and some of Everest's observation to explain how people's preference of native English speakers over global English users within educational settings is due to their Othering tendency of the latter group.

In Section 1, I shared an example in which Louise had numerous encounters of microaggression in one of her classes where the professor—who is also a global English speaker—invalidated Louise's contributions during whole-class discussions because of her global English-speaking status. Louise mentioned that she stopped participating in whole-class discussions altogether after a while because she felt discouraged and could see how the professor preferred native English speakers over global English users. The professor, however, because of complaints from other global English speakers in the class and noticing Louise's reluctance in participating during whole-class discussions, reached out to Louise, both in-person and via email, with an apology to explain how she never meant her students to feel invalidated in her class. Interestingly, though, in her apology, she mentioned that since

some topics and theories are complicated, she prefers native English speakers to go over them in the class. Louise stated:

I didn't know how to react to that because she was saying sorry, but then she said that [about native English speakers]*! And I'm like, you just confirmed like my whole semester.*

Although Louise did not confront the professor regarding her *odd* apology, her suspicion of the professor's bias toward native English speakers and against global English users was confirmed.

Everest, who had been in U.S. the longest in comparison to the other study participants at the time of this study, had many observations to share regarding people's disinclination toward global speakers and preference toward native speakers of English. One of the observations that he made from working in his current department and the other departments that he had been a part of is how global English-using teaching assistants (TAs) do not get as many opportunities to co-teach or teach classes as their native English-speaking counterparts. He also noticed that the global English-speaking TAs were undermined by the students in some departments in that the students made the distinction between the global and native English-speaking TAs by referring to the native speakers as *senior TAs.* As for Everest's role as a student manager in a learning center, he noticed that students would mostly prefer to be paired with a native English speaker for the tutoring sessions and try to avoid the global English-using tutors.

In both Louise's encounter and Everest's observations, a theme of Othering is noticed. The professor in Louise's case openly Othered Louise by saying that she prefers native English speakers to go over certain topics because of her *assumption* that global

English users are not capable of handling complicated topics. Similarly, Everest's observations of students' preference of native English speakers in the tutoring center and in his educational departments—with the *assumption* that global English speakers are not as good—are also acts of Othering. Same is true when global English speakers in some departments find limited opportunities of work because of the *assumption* that they are not qualified to take on the tasks that native speakers can.

Almost all of the participants in this study, at one point or another, voiced a concern that people's overt negative attitude about their English skills may be a translation of their covert negative assumption about their overall skills as graduate students, researchers, teachers, thinkers, and scholars. This concern of the participants has merit because numerous studies show that "nonnative" English speakers in U.S. educational settings are thought of as "less than" in that less intelligent than their native counterparts (Cervantes-Soon et al.; Galvan, 2000; Kuo, 2011; Talmy, 2009).

5) Alienation: *'Unwelcoming'* the Visitors

Many of the study participants reported at least one incident during which they felt unwelcomed by the microaggressor's actions or words; meaning, the perpetrators—whether consciously or subconsciously— made the participants feel that they did not belong in a certain place, conversation, or situation; in other words, they were alienated. As I had briefly touched upon in the transcript section, the two ways in which alienation was done was 1) by giving the participants a silent treatment or 2) showing the participants a silencing attitude. I describe each of the subthemes below with evidence from the data.

Silent Treatment

How I define silent treatment is when people treat individuals of minority groups as if they are invisible or unwelcome in a place, conversation, or a situation—irrespective of whether this treatment from them is conscious or unconscious. One of Mongol ohin's critical incidents for instance—one that I briefly touched up in the Word Cloud activity portion as well as shared in the excerpt section— is a fitting example of silent treatment. In that particular critical encounter, Mongol ohin was assigned to work in a small group with her classmates where they did some of the work individually and some as a group. She and her peers then turned in their work individually to be evaluated independently. When giving verbal feedback based on the submitted work, the professor spoke directly to each of the other three students in Mongol ohin's group but did not speak to Mongol ohin or mention anything about her work; interestingly, all the other members of the group, except Mongol ohin, were native English speakers.

Mongol ohin was left questioning if she had done so poorly that the professor did not give any feedback to her or if it was because the professor did not think much of her to address her. The professor's behavior in this context is questionable and it became so because of his silent treatment toward the only global English user in the group. Everest noted a similar incident that happened to his friend which, according to him, made him feel secondhand emotions.

In the critical incident that Everest reported, his friend, a global English user and a TA, was assigned to work together with a native English-speaking TA by a professor. They were given the responsibility to complete some tasks together and then send them to the professor in the beginning of the following week. Everest's friend tried to reach the native English-

speaking TA during the week but received no response from him. So, when weekend came and he still could not manage a proper response from the TA, he panicked, and completed all the work by himself and sent it out to the professor. The professor, in turn, chastised Everest's friend in a response email for not following instructions properly; he did not think to inquire why there were two separate submissions from the two TAs when there was supposed to be only one and why had Everest's friend also done the other TAs part.

Two issues are visible in this context; the fellow TA did not want to engage with a global English-using international student. So, he chose to not respond to any of his emails properly—alienating him by giving him silent treatment. Secondly, it was Everest's friend who received a cautionary email from the professor while the native English-speaking TA did not face any repercussions. While the TA's behavior was clearly silent treatment, the professor's actions in this context was that of *silencing* which I cover in the next subsection.

Silencing

I define silencing as the process in which people openly make it clear that individuals of the minority groups are not welcome or are subordinate in a place, conversation, or situation. Analyzing Everest's friend example from the previous subsection in terms of silencing, it can be noticed that the professor attempted to silence only the global English-speaking TA who is Everest's friend, and not the native English-speaking TA. Everest's friend did not get a chance to explain himself because he was not given any room to do so. The professor instinctively *assumed* that it was the international student's fault and, thus, rebuked him. According to Everest, his friend did not want to argue with the professor, so he stayed quite; he was basically silenced—alienated—with the power dynamics involved.

Another incident of silencing is that of Carole's in which the professor verbally asked her to not participate in a section of the class. Carole shared:

Not too long ago, this is the one that pops in mind, I did a presentation in the class, and after my presentation, we still had some time for the class, and the professor wanted someone to read a paragraph, and she made the comments of not a French person. So, we had two French in the class among six people. And it was really hurtful at that moment because I just did a presentation, and I thought I did well.

Carole was hurt and confused by this comment from the professor because she was one of the only two global English users in the classroom. Carole wondered if the professor made this comment because she did not do a good presentation or was her professor just tired of hearing a global English speaker. This is another example of how global English users are alienated and silenced. If the professor needed someone else to participate, for whatever *valid* excuse she might have had, she could have just picked a person herself instead of asking for volunteers first and then saying, *"not a French person".*

In all the above examples, the global English users were either silenced or given silent treatment; giving the impression that the participants did not belong within the U.S. educational settings—that they were a burden of some kind. Alienation through silent treatment and silencing is not uncommon in U.S. educational settings. Leki (2001) and Lee's (2009) research have also provided evidence of instances in which "nonnative" English speakers were alienated by the so-called "natives" of the language. The researchers explain that native English speakers' assumed role of the specialist in classrooms often lead them to alienate the "nonnative" English speakers by disregarding or dismissing any and all

139

suggestions, or contributions, made by the latter group. This kind of alienation can leave global English users in a state of confusion, self-blame, and discomfort.

6) Implicit Bias with Names and Color

The topic of microaggressions based on non-Eurocentric names and non-White skin color of global English users was also shared and/or addressed during focus groups by both White and non-White global English-using participants. I provide further information on the name and color-based microaggressions against global English users in the subcategories below.

Name(ism)

Some of the participants in the study shared critical incidents in which the perpetrators associated their names with global English-speaker status and, thus, behaved microaggressively toward them. For instance, Ludo shared a name-related critical incident from one of her classes in her primary department in which a student did not want to work in a group with her and her peers because of their *ethnic* names. According to Ludo, in the beginning of this particular class, the teacher had paired the students into small groups of four from the roster and posted that information onto the university's learning portal. The teacher intended for the students to come to the class, find their group members, and sit together for small group activities. When they came to class, however, one of their listed group members, who was a native English-speaking international student, walked right past them, went to the back of the class, found a different group, and sat with them—pretending she was not a part of the group that Ludo and her other global English-using peers were. Ludo stated:

> *So, in our group, we asked ourselves, 'but it is clearly stated in the group list that it is me, you, you, and you and we are four, but this person is deliberately not coming to*

this group. What is the problem?' So, we decided to ignore because the groups were

on Southwest American University's learning portal [pseudonym] and they were

listed as group one, group two, group three, with a list of student names. And then

finally, when the professor was also concerned that we were only three, and we have

this [other] person. He consulted the person, and the person said: 'No, no! I'm not in

that group. I'm not in that group!'

Ludo speculated that her native-English speaking classmate had already made some negative

assumptions about her and her other global English-using group members from the listing on

the learning portal; so, she neither wanted to sit with them, nor she wanted to work with

them. She added:

If we have the names on Southwest American University's learning portal

[pseudonym] and somebody is not participating, it is a sign that she feels maybe we

are not smart enough to be with her in the group.

The two East Asian participants of the study— Mongol ohin from Inner Mongolia, China and

Li MeiMei from China, despite being in separate focus groups and unbeknownst of each

other's participation, reported almost identical microaggressive behavior from reviewers

during single blind peer review. Mongol ohin wrote in her reflection:

In a single-blind peer review process, I felt that some reviewers judge your writing

based on your name (if you have a non-English name). For example, I received a

comment from a reviewer saying that I have grammar issues although my manuscript

was proofread by several native English speakers before submission.

Li MeiMei also voiced similar concerns regarding the partial review process; during the

focus group interviews, she shared:

Every time I submit a paper and we get the comments from the reviewers, they always

have a comment, like, 'Oh, you should go through your English and grammar', or

something like that. I feel like they just judge my paper based on my name because I

have a Chinese name. Every time! Even though I have a native American [native

English-speaking] coauthor, they are not the first author, so! But we definitely

already had gone through it [the paper] many, many times. But the comments from

the reviewer will always have these comments like 'oh, you need to go through your

paper with grammar' or something like that.

In all the comments from the three participants, a pattern of name-bias is noticed. In Ludo's case, her classmate equated her and her other group members' names with *nonnativeness* to English, which she then further equated with inadequacy and unintelligence; hence, she refused to work with them. Similarly, in case of Mongol ohin and Li MeiMei, the reviewers equate their respective Mongolian and Chinese names with global English speaker status, which they again innately associate with inadequacy in English; hence, they proceed to give them remedial feedback, despite the participants having had gotten their papers reviewed by native English speakers before submission. Findings of research related to names also show that "ethnic" or unpopular names are negatively stereotyped. For example, studies by Harari and McDavid (1973) and Conaway and Bethune (2015), conducted four decades apart, show that implicit bias against names have existed and still exists in U.S. educational settings in that Eurocentric names are given preference and non-Eurocentric names are negatively stereotyped—something that I also personally experienced and already addressed in both Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.

Race(ism)

As I have already mentioned in Chapter 2, race was not the prime focus of my study: firstly because of how race is described and listed by the U.S. Census Bureau versus how some people actually identify themselves (Maghbouleh, 2020); secondly because microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy do not just pertain to race alone, which also is evident in the current research. In the sections below, I first touch upon some of the concerns of the participants, and of myself, and later I delve into the issues of race in language-based microaggressions.

U.S. Census Bureau vs Self

Out of the 12 initial participants (later 11 participants), 2 participants—Alisha from India and Ludo from Botswana, directly mentioned that they do not identify as the race that they are listed as in the U.S. Census Bureau website. While Alisha's argument is that there are major differences among peoples of a single continent—especially Asia, Ludo's objection is all about how the U.S. Census associate peoples with *colors.* Alisha identifies as a South Asian and not just "Asian" and Ludo identifies as just African and not "Black or African American".

Two other participants—Louise from France and Goli from Iran—although are described as "White" by U.S. Census Bureau, both raised concerns because they either did not understand such categorization or did not have any other option to choose from. Louise mentioned that it is not that she does not identify with being White, it is just that race is not something that is categorized like such in her country; on the other hand, Goli mentioned that he did not have any other option to choose from, so he chose "White" as per U.S. Census

Bureau's definition of his origin. So, there definitely is a mismatch between how some participants view themselves and how U.S. Census views them.

global English Users vs Microaggressions

As seen from the examples that I presented thus far, race alone cannot explain microaggressions because microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy does not pertain to specific races. Carole and Louise, Swan, and Goli, who are from Western Europe, Southwestern Europe, and the Middle East (Asia), respectively, are all Whites— whether self-identified or listed by U.S. Census; Ludo is Southern African—listed as Black or African American; Li MeiMei and Mongol ohin are East Asians—listed as Asian; and Ajay, Sahan, Alisha, and Everest are South Asians— listed as Asians. Despite the diverse *races* of the participants, with many being White, many others being "Asian" (East- and South Asians), and one being "Black" (African), their experiences with microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy were not very different in majority of the cases; also, the pattern of discrimination that was noticed was almost always based on their English language usage status.

The participants, too, did not fixate on race, at least not in their own contexts, while reporting their critical encounters. They shared their critical experiences largely from the position of global English users—quite apparent from their frequent references to accent, pronunciation, and phrasing and few references to race. Nevertheless, the intersectionality between *race and language* and *race and perception* cannot be overlooked because, at the end of the day, race is usually a big factor behind discriminatory behavior of any kind, including language, in the U.S. and U.S. educational settings (American Psychological Association, 2012; Kim & Calzada, 2019; Shuck, 2006; Sue et al., 2007). Hence, in the

following paragraphs, I present the data that emerged in relation to race in the current study, along with my interpretation of the data.

Race vs: culture | name | accent

During the data collection phase, two of the White participants, each in a different group, acknowledged that while all global English users are susceptible to experiencing microaggressions because of their English, global English users of color may be a bit more prone to be microaggressed against than their White counterparts. For instance, Carole exemplified:

> *When they see me in the street, they will assume I'm American. And then when I speak, I'm European, it's like, 'oh, I have family who comes from Europe like three centuries ago'. But if you come from a country that they don't know about or that they don't associate with good adjectives, then directly they would assume that you just came here to try and get something from them or something like that. So, they have some association with different countries.*

According to Carole, when she is out and about, people are not suspicious of her being an outsider since she is visibly White. However, when she speaks, people associate her with being European and are generally friendly to her. Similarly, Louise mentioned that when she is socializing, people tend to view her positively and give her compliments on her personality and her dressing sense.

In contrast, Ludo, who is of African origin, does not have the same experience as Carole and Louise when she is out and about. People usually associate her ethnicity with negative traits. To illustrate such association, Ludo recalled a food-related incident when she attended an American wedding. She recollected that an American acquaintance who was also

invited to the event had asked Ludo why she was just eating salad; to this question, Ludo had replied that the other foods were a little sweet for her taste. Her interlocutor must not have liked Ludo's answer because she exclaimed: *"Oh, you and your African food! African food is so unhealthy! Eat American food!"* Ludo stated that the person clearly had no idea what she was talking about because people in Africa eat millet and sorghum as their staples, both of which are gluten-free unlike the unhealthy food that are eaten in the U.S. regularly. According to Ludo, instances such as these remind her that many White people in the U.S. have distorted beliefs about other countries, races, and cultures. She remarked:

> *It is hurting to be living among White people or Americans who are still harboring negative thoughts and negative misconceptions about people of other races. It does not mean that because we are of a different skin color to them, we are dumb, foolish, less intelligent or in some way lower in social status than them. For me as a 'Black' woman, people always have a misconception that we are all poor in Africa, we are starving, and are blessed to be here in the U.S.*

The microaggressor in Ludo's case associated her food and culture with unsophisticatedness because they perceived her culture and race negatively; whereas, Carole and Louise's culture is perceived as modern and progressive, which many Americans want to associate with—as is evident from Carole's statement of how strangers want to bond with her by saying: '*oh, I have family who comes from Europe*'.

This positive association with the White race and negative association with other races was also observed in this study when race intersected with names and accents. As I touched upon in the *Name(ism)* subsection above, non-Eurocentric names was found to be associated with *nonnativeness* in respect to English language, which in-turn was seen to be

equated with inadequacy; this aspect could also suggest that non-Eurocentric names are associated with non-White races which are innately perceived as deficient and, as a result, judged harshly (Harari & McDavid, 1973). Name bias found in this study, as I have already mentioned, is not an isolated finding. Rahman (2018), Conaway and Bethune (2015), Carpusor and Loges (2006), and Cotton et al. (2008) are just a few of the many studies conducted in various U.S. contexts that demonstrate the prominent existence of implicit bias against non-Eurocentric names and favoritism toward Eurocentric names.

In regard to intersection of race and accent in the current study, as I mentioned in the *Sounding 'Different'* section, the initial reaction of people to international students of Asian and African origin is usually not a very positive one in that people may suspect them as being outsiders—despite U.S. being racially and ethnically diverse; this initial *suspicion* quickly turns into a confirmation when the students speak with an accent that is not to the preference of the listener. These listeners then make assumptions about the students, mostly negative ones, like *socially backward* or *impoverished*. Contrary to the Asian and African international students, the European international students are not suspected as being outsiders until they speak with an accent that is not to the preference of the listener. Even after they speak, their accent is not associated with *regressiveness*, rather it is associated with *progressiveness* and, thus, people may sometimes cross personal boundaries and be over-friendly with them and use inappropriate words during conversations.

As I have already discussed in the name and accent sections, both associations are problematic; and as found in the study, all global English users—regardless of race— are treated differently than native English speakers in and around U.S. educational settings. However, the initial suspicion only toward global English speakers of color is, undoubtedly,

147

racist—especially because U.S. is home to people of all races and not just Whites. This attitude of people goes to show how ingrained racism is in the U.S. culture and educational systems where one race assumes the role of the superior while viewing other races as inferior (American Psychological Association, 2012; Shuck, 2006; Solorzano, 1997; Solorzano et al., 2000; Sue, 2010a).

Jones et al.'s (2020) study indicated that global English-using students of color may find themselves at the bottom of the power hierarchy in educational settings, also below the American students of color; this then raises the question of where could global English-using students of European origin find themselves in this hierarchy? This question is difficult to answer without further nuanced research of the intersectionality between race and language and other critical factors such as gender, nationality, uniqueness of names, immigration status, accent-type, level of education, and attires—especially of religious kind that are unfavorable in the U.S. context. When all these factors are considered, there could be major shifts in dynamics within this outrageous, but concealed, *hierarchical* system— with some international global English-using students of color who wear *unfavored* religious attires (in U.S. context) perhaps finding themselves at the bottommost level of this systematic power pyramid.

However, what I can answer from the data of the current study is: international global English-using students of color do feel that they are disadvantaged in and around U.S. educational settings—even to their American peers of color. Also, no significant data on encounters of language-based microaggressions in relation to gender came to the surface in the current study; although, this outcome in the current study does not suggest that there can be no relation between gender and encounters of language-based microaggression

148

experienced by global English users elsewhere. Gender, after all, is a major intersecting factor in racial disparity in the U.S.—as demonstrated by researchers like Wolfe and Caliskan (2021).

Race and Researcher's Dilemma

Since we are on the topic of race, I want to utilize this space to share a little incident that I encountered in Group 2 during Phase 1 of data collection. This incident happened when the participants and I were discussing accent-based microaggressions in-depth. although not specific to the purpose of this study, I deemed it necessary to dedicate a section to this incident as it shows intersection between race, identity, language, and knowledge. The incident was focused on the connotation of *"where are you from?"*. Before I share the incident in detail, I want to draw attention to the fact that *"where are you from?"* was a hot topic of discussion in all the three groups and almost all the participants acknowledged that as soon as people hear their *non-American* accent, they are asked the aforementioned question.

For instance, in Group 1, Li MeiMei remarked how the question—"where are you from?" was used in a conversation group to make her feel like an outsider. That sentiment emerged in response to Carole' statement of how people dismiss global English users as knowers of English.

Carole

So sometimes people try to give a compliment being like, 'oh, your English is better than so and so', and like, what does it mean?

Like, I've been studying [English] for longer. So, I have a degree in France, like a master degree in English. And, and some people come here, they just came for, uh, from like from France and they've just learn English until high school. So obviously,

the English is going to be less proficient cause they haven't studied it as much as I did in like in school.

But that doesn't mean they're less smart. But the way they say the things is like, 'oh, you know, more than…' 'No, I don't.' …

Romaisha

Yeah. Li MeiMei. You want to Contribute something? Okay.

Li MeiMei

Yeah, I, um, maybe because my background is engineering, so I feel like I'm not so sensitive about when people ask, oh, where you from? And definitely I'm not native speaker and I'm proud of, I'm from China, . . . but sometimes I do feel offended. It depends on the context. So, actually in the beginning, the first year when I came here, I tried to join the English Corner.

Uh, it's by [organization name: community partner of Southwest American University]. I don't know if any of you have been there. Like every Monday afternoon or night you can go there and in that one hour you can talk to a native speaker and try to improve English. So, I went there twice and the guy who could be the team member, he's a White old man, he really made me feel uncomfortable.

He really used—Oh White man, you know, White man has a privilege, he's the king of the world—he said 'Oh, you poor Asian woman! I know your life must have been hard!' What the hell? So, I just, I felt so mad at him, I just feel so offended, even though I don't speak good English, or I am not native I came here, uh, for, you know, higher education, but I feel like he's really stupid.

So, I talked, I talked to one of the organizers [of English Corner] . . . She said that the guy really makes people feel very uncomfortable . . .

But, uh, this year another lady asked 'Oh, where are you from?' But you can see, you can feel it. It's from that kind of context or not. So, you can feel cause some people they just try to be mean. So, I asked her where are you from?

In this group, the discussion revolved around the fact that people use accent as a signifier to decide whether someone is an outsider, and to permit themselves to ask *where someone is*

from. Li MeiMei, for instance, was specific about how, although she was proud of being from China, she was incensed with the question "Where are you from?" because it seemed to imply to her that she was not good enough to be in the setting.

The Incident

In Group 2, the group of the aforementioned incident, the discussion on "where are you from?" led to the exploration of how problematic this question can be when asked because of accent or color; especially given the fact that so many immigrants from all over the world, who sound and look different, come to the U.S., and live and work here—many of whom later become citizens or choose to live out rest of their lives in the country, let alone the native Americans who are indigenous to the land and may look and sound different. During the discussion, Goli from Iran, questioned the presumed connotation of "where are you from?" in the U.S. context.

Goli

Um, I don't know why, if somebody asked you where you are from it would be offensive, like, should it be, should we be ashamed of where we are from?

If somebody asked me, uh, based off my accent, asked me, where are you from I will answer, I'm from Iran. Yeah. And it doesn't, like, I don't feel offended . . .

Romaisha

People are proud of where they're from. That's not a problem. The problem arises is when they are asked questions, what are the intentions behind them because, um, for you, it might not be offensive because you're from Iran, but people who are born here and are of color they are asked where are you from? But they're American.

Goli

Okay. And why they should be ashamed if they are, if somebody assumes that they are from another country, why? That's the question.

Romaisha

 Okay. The question is if the White people are more American than the Chinese looking person that's where the offense comes in.

People don't usually ask White people where they are from, but they ask people of color where they're from—they assume that maybe they just immigrated but did not. They were born here. So that's where the problem arises. It's not about your identity or where you come from . . . It's not about that they are not proud of where they are from. But the questions sometimes only come to people who look different than European people or are of English origin.

So that's the confusion if you had any in that area. Yeah.

Goli

So, can I ask another question?

Romaisha

Sure, go ahead.

Goli

If someone is California and some guy ask them, are you from Miami? And they say, no, I'm from California. Should they feel offended?

So, what's the big deal? Like what's the big deal if you are from the U.S. or another region that's two regions in the same globe. Right? In the world. But like, but if you are from California. I think if you feel offended or if somebody feels offended by that question, it's because of themselves, not the guy that asked the question.

Mongol ohin

I think, uh, when an American asks a people of color where are you from, they have this, not assumption, they have this deep feeling like, like they are the owner of the U.S.

You know what I mean? Like, when they ask people like that, they just, uh, feel like, okay, those are people of color, they don't belong here. Even if they born here. And

then they, they have big contribution to the the country. Yeah, that's why people feel offended. Cause it's their country too. They are born here, they are raised here, they work here. Um, you know, they pay taxes. And then why they have to be treated like they're an outsider just cause they're not White.

Romaisha

Thank you for taking over and bringing the point because people go through discrimination here, even if, if they're Americans, and I don't know if you have been to the South, uh, people [of color] go through a lot.

I don't want to just say White, I mean some, some White people, obviously, it's not all, I don't want to generalize—generalizing is not good as well, but they think they're more Americans than people of color. So that's where it comes from, and the idea behind asking those sort questions. That's why I think people take offense, and it is offensive.

Like if you're asking somebody whose generations have been here or even Native Americans—they're more Americans than anyone, but if somebody keeps on asking them, where are you from. Native Americans will have an accent. They will look different. The Native Americans here, I'm talking about indigenous people. They're more Americans.

Yeah. So, is it okay for them to ask them where are you from? Like they will take offense, and it happens. Maybe it hasn't happened to you to that extent, that's why it's harder for you to understand. Maybe also because you, you are White, because that's how you marked yourself in the Google® survey that you present yourself as White.

Goli

I mean, they, they're asking us to because there's no other options for us [in U.S. Census].

Romaisha

Right.

Mongol ohin

Oh, that's interesting

Romaisha

Yeah. So, they're considered White . . .

Goli

Uh, yeah. But when it comes to funding and money, no, I'm not White.

Romaisha

This is the thing. This is kind of the discrimination that people face. That's why I think it doesn't seem to you like that because you're proud to come from Iran, and all of us are proud where WE come from.

But people who are born here and have been raised here, and if they're thought of as lesser Americans than people of certain color that is very offensive, don't you think?

Mongol ohin

Yeah. And also, those people are experiencing this kind of discrimination from the moment they are born. So, that's why they feel offended.

Like they went to elementary school, they might have been treated differently, and then they went to a workplace where they may have been treated differently. That's why. We haven't experienced that from like such a long time. So, we don't, we can't feel them. But you know, that's why I think that's why they feel offended.

That's why there are like so many movements.

Romaisha

Yeah. And I think it's important for us to also, um, I mean obviously we are not going to be offended to that point that they [the immigrants and nationals of color], but I think it's important for us to address it because if we normalize it, because they're asking us, it's also normalizing the struggles that they have been through.

Like, they should be okay with it [discriminatory questions] just because they don't look a certain way. It's okay for them to struggle in elementary school, like Mongol ohin pointed out, or in college, uh, if they look different . . .

And don't you think if you're isolated that way, it might feel bad to you or you might have some kind of mental health issues when you're growing up and having not many friends and you're constantly being asked where you're from, although you are born here. Do you think that makes a difference, Goli [pseudonym]?

Goli

Um, yeah.

Romaisha

Yeah, it's just personal, how we see things. You don't have to agree, but, um, it is very complicated, and it has layers. So, some people take offense, and we shouldn't say that they shouldn't take offense of it.

If you don't take offense, that's great. The people who do, we should acknowledge that it is offensive to them, and we shouldn't demean them for being offended. That's just what we're trying to get to here [in this research]. We don't have to agree on things, but we can respect people's differences, right?

Goli

Yeah, of course. Yes. Um, yeah, maybe I have not encountered very, uh, many situations, right?

While the participants agreed that a question like "where are you from?" is not inherently offensive or malicious in its syntactic nature, it can very well be malicious and offensive in its pragmatic nature—that many would classify as passive aggression (Gómez, 2020). During the focus groups, we made meaning around the underlying purpose of questions like "where are you from?" or "where are you really from?" and the roles they play in Othering; a tactic that is commonly used for stereotyping people and treating them as outsiders—evident from the testimonials of people of color and documented in previous research (Ravishankar, 2020; Zdanowicz & Chiaramonte, n.d.).

155

TO ACCEPT OR NOT TO ACCEPT?

As the discussion moved on to the topic of diversity among international students, participants began to share how people sometimes expect international students from a certain region or country to all speak the same first language or to look the same. To that, I asked the participants if people are usually able to guess correctly what their ethnolinguistic backgrounds are. To this question Goli provided an interesting answer:

> *Yeah! One time I was at a bus station, Uh, it was around 11 PM and it was a bit scary. There was a scary guy in the bus station. He asked me, where are you from? And I was a little bit scared that if I say from Iran, he would like do something to me. I said, I'm from France and he said, 'yeah, you're from Iran, right?' . . . they know because they have seen a lot of samples.*

What's interesting about Goli's story is that he did not want to say that he was from Iran to the "scary" man at the bus station because he was afraid that the man would "do something" to him. Goli shared this particular incident moments after he had argued that people should not be ashamed of where they are from, and people who take offense or are hurt by such questions are problematic themselves. However, Goli hid his own identity when asked where he was from because he did not want to be stereotyped and attacked by the stranger in the bus station. So, the question is: why did it not occur to him that others who are offended by questions like "where are you from?" may have their own fear of being stereotyped or Othered?

Accepting that Critical awareness is a process and cannot be gained over a small conversation, or overnight, and to avoid making Goli feel discouraged to participate further, I

did not see it fit to bring up the argument about "where are you from?" again and make him feel attacked. So, I took a mental note to talk about it subtly in Phase 2 of focus groups. Hence, during Phase 2 of focus groups, after going through the emerging themes of the study with the participants, I pulled up and presented the literature review paper that I had written for my doctoral candidacy examination. The review consisted of analysis of books and articles that highlighted language-based discriminations and many instances of *Othering* done against "nonnative" English speaking students—both international and *domestic*— within U.S. educational settings. The purpose of going through this literature review was to show what systemic discrimination looks like and how American citizens of color are Othered because of their accent or skin color as well.

Goli seemed interested in the review, especially in the portions where *Middle Eastern* students' experiences were emphasized; this could be because he is from the Middle East and the experiences of those students in the review resonated with him. Needless to say, I was quite surprised, and disappointed, when he left the following comment in his second written reflection in regard to the prompt "please provide any comments that you may have on the emerging themes or any other aspect of this research that stood out to you and may help this study to form conclusions" (See Appendix B: January Reflection). Goli wrote:

> *I think someone guessing or asking your nationality based on your accent is not microaggression because there is no humiliating assumptions behind it. You have to be racist to be offended by such a question.*

Although I did not feel any strong negative emotion to the first part of his statement—just slightly disappointed, perhaps, because of his obliviousness to the realities of others while still feeling the need to hide his own identity to *protect* himself, his second sentence sent me

to a spiral. Goli's word choice of "*You* have to be a *Racist* to be offended by such a question" is what confused me the most.

I was not sure what to understand from it. Does by *You* he meant *Me*—the researcher because he felt attacked by me in some way; did he mean *Me* and *Mongol ohin*—because he disliked the fact that two women, that too of color, made a joint attempt to reason with him; or did he mean *You* as *everyone* in the U.S. who may feel rightly offended and Othered by such questions? His comment was especially surprising because despite being a graduate student at a Southwestern University and dwelling in the Southwest—a region that is home to so many native American groups, Hispanic populations, refugees, and other minority groups—he seemed to be unaware of people's experiences and worldviews.

Since I didn't know who he directed his comment to, what he actually meant at that moment, and why he chose such words to share what he believed in, I decided to separate myself from this incident. I reminded myself that development of critical consciousness takes longer for some people, and, thus, took a step back to analyze the overall data that I received from him with a fresh lens. What I realized is that he had given me a lot of data, but some of them seemed to be a somewhat conflicting—an example of which I have already outlined above with the "where are you from" question—and another would be his comment about how a native English-speaking American man tried to "throw him off" by using complicated words during a conversation and then changing this comment to say that, that may not be the case because of his stance on native speakers: *"Americans are pretty nice and not looking for trouble"*. By "Americans", in this context, he meant native speakers of English. This attitude then, may fall under the Invisible Hierarchy theme that I described in a previous section where a global English speaker may have a false sense of belonging with the native speakers

because *he is complimented on his English* and is treated differently than other global English users.

It is also important to keep in mind that he has a much lighter skin tone than many other global English users in different parts of the world, and being from Iran, he is classified as White. So, could it be that his reality is a little different because he is only attacked for his English accent and not immediately looked at suspiciously because of his skin color— similar to what other White participants had reported and what I have described in the subsection titled *Race vs: culture / name / accent* ? Could it also be that he subconsciously feels empowered by and closer to his White man identity in comparison to his global English user identity, so he fails to understand the struggles of people of color? His choice of presenting himself as a French man to the "scary guy in the bus station", despite being Iranian, is another interesting contradiction to his previous comment of "I think if you feel offended or if somebody feels offended by that question [where are you from?], it's because of themselves, not the guy that asked the question".

Although, what did seem to be consistent in his input during the focus groups and in written reflections is his acknowledgement of language-based micoraggression and its harmful effects on different populations. In multiple instances, during the focus group discussions and the written reflections, he acknowledged his previous lack of knowledge on the topic and his newfound understating of it. In his second written reflection, where he wrote the "*You"* statement that had me spiraling (pun intended!), he also wrote:

> *I was not familiar with the concept of microaggression. In fact, I believed in [held]*
>
> *native speaker fallacy, thus it felt natural to be treated differently. As timed passed I*

saw more and more international students that are proficient in English whereas

some local people are not!

His transformation on his beliefs regarding native speaker fallacy and his enthusiasm when I went through the literature review in Phase 2 of data collection indicate a growing consciousness of criticality. It is then also possible that, at the current moment, he finds it easier to only recognize and sympathize with the critical incidents of others that he had himself experienced or witnessed in close proximity but find it difficult to understand the experiences of others that he had not experienced himself; hence, it is sometimes harder for him to understand why certain questions or comments may be triggering for some people. His changed viewpoint on native speaker supremacy—the actual focus of my study—gives me hope that that his position on other factors will also change positively over time as his critical awareness climaxes.

7) Department vs Critical Experiences

The reports from the participants in the study suggest that international global English-using graduate students from departments where there is less human-related work or requires less human interaction may believe that there is little to no language-based microaggressions within their departments. However, such belief of the students does not signify that native speaker fallacy is absent in those departments or within their roles as graduate students; it just indicates that due to less human interaction or due to the structure within which the departments operate, international students may perceive that there is no discrimination based on language.

Hence, the students may disregard the critical factors related to English. For instance, some of the engineering participants in the study, from different branches of engineering,

speculated and/or proclaimed that due to their engineering work being heavily influenced by machines or mathematics and requiring less human interaction, they usually do not encounter microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy within their departments. Although this aforementioned claim may seem to be true, analysis of the data from my study shows that there is a much more complicated scenario at play.

What I have found from the data is that regardless of whether the international students' departments have heavy human interaction or not, some departments—especially some in engineering—operate from a paradigm of English-only ideology (Sharma & Canagarajah, 2020), which global English users believe, or are sometimes made to believe, is the norm. Therefore, they may overlook incidents of language-based microaggression. Below, I highlight examples from the data of two participants who at the time of Phase 1 of focus groups mentioned that they had not experienced any critical incident due to native speaker fallacy in their departments. Howbeit, analysis of the data together demonstrate that their feeling might have been the result of: 1) how they viewed their own English vs native speaker's English; 2) how the division of labor was structured by their departments; 3) or what their roles were in the department.

Example 1: At Phase 1 of focus groups, Li MeiMei indicated that there is not much room for native speaker fallacy in her department because most of the work they do is technical, and their department is not heavy on human interaction. She stated:

So, actually, I do feel, actually, for our people, we don't really depend on English so much because we don't use the communication on our job. So, our job is kind of not two people's job. We do the project and just write the report, and there is kind of template. So, we don't really do anything political or economic or just like you need to manage

your students, or you are a manager. That's more human job. We are more engineering,

more machine. It's just specific. So, like, I only need my own major's English. That's

really good enough because I don't need to talk to people and explain everything. I feel

like it also comes with lower requirements of English.

According to Li MeiMei, the English requirement for her department may be lower because they do not use English as much. Howbeit, when I asked her how the work is divided when they are writing for publication, she mentioned that she prefers the native speakers to do the literature review and her the methodology part. When asked why, she answered: *Because I'm not really good at English. I feel like I'm not as good as them. Yeah, that's why.*

Although Li MeiMei had had received training in English from a very young age, she still believed at the time of the focus group that her English was not as good as the native speakers'. However, when asked if she thought that all native speakers were good writers, her answer was "actually, no". Then it raises the question as to why she surrenders and lets the native speaker take over the extended writing portion of the papers. As I already highlighted in the *Name(ism)* section and when answering Research Question 1, journal reviewers usually give mechanical feedback on Li MeiMei's writing because they equate her name with global English speaker status— despite her native English-speaking colleague doing most of the writing in the paper. Li MeiMei mentioned that she uses native English speakers to write and review her paper as a defense against the journal reviewers. However, the issue may go a little beyond that.

Despite having had known English for this long, why is Li MeiMei feeling that she would not be able to write a paper by herself? Is it something that she sensed in her department? In their research, Minakova and Canagarajah (2020) presented a similar scenario

where the international global English-using scholar did not feel any inferiority because of their English language status because his field did not require him to engage in writing in length. However, the authors raised the concern of why would then the global English-using scholar be so zealous in acquiring "nativelike" proficiency in English? The authors acknowledged that "their deficit thinking about their language proficiency might stem from actual experiences of marginalization" (p.11).

I emphasize this aspect about Li MeiMei's example only because in spite of Li MeiMei saying that she hadn't experienced microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy in her department, she shared a critical incident where a professor had cut her off mid-sentence and asked her to speak in Chinese if she would like (an incident that I covered in the theme of Othering). This makes me wonder if Li MeiMei just overlooked many other incidents of native speaker fallacy in her department because, at the time, she believed in native speaker supremacy while questioning her own skills in English?

Example 2: The second example that I would like to share is that of Sahan's. During Phase 1 of focus groups, he initially mentioned that he did not think that native speaker fallacy was an issue in his department. However, he mentioned:

Uh, in my experience, most of the time, people can't understand my accent. That is the problem that I have had all of these years. Other than that, some people actually appreciate me for the way I am speaking because it is not my native language.

According to Sahan, although this issue with his accent had mostly happened in *educational networks* [defined in Chapter 1], it could also happen in his department as well.

Sahan believes that since he is not a native speaker, people find it hard to understand him sometimes. In this case, like Li MeiMei, despite having had known English for so long,

Sahan doubts his own English skills, and feels relieved when a native speaker appreciates his English. What's interesting is that after hearing from others in the focus group, he stated that since he works as a research assistant and does not interact with people much, he might not have felt the effect of native speaker fallacy within his department that strongly yet, but things might change rapidly if he were to interact with more people. He also added that the people that he usually gets to work with are *"multicultural"* in that other global English speakers, and they do not complain about his accent. So, the question is why was he doubting himself when people usually understand him well? Was it the pressure of sounding like a native (Minakova & Canagarajah, 2020) or was he subconsciously feeling the imbalanced power dynamic between native and "nonnative" English speakers within his department?

It is also important to note that unlike Li MeiMei, who at the time of Phase 1 of data collection had been in her program for 4.5 years, Sahan had only been in his program for two years; this could mean that he had not yet felt the pressure to publish in the U.S. and work with a wider scholar group. So, he might not yet realize the full range of English-only ideology in his department.

8) Nonaccountability: Nonreciprocal Attitude toward Global English varieties

A theme of denying accountability for unsuccessful interactions was also evident in the data across the three groups, which I have already briefly touched upon in the transcript section while highlighting the emergent themes in the excerpt of Group 3. What I mean by nonaccountability is that individuals— native and global speakers alike— show a tendency of being unaccommodating or unaccepting of a global variety of English. Many of the critical incidents reported by the participants seemed to have emerged due to the listener and/or

interlocutors' being nonreciprocal toward understanding English that is different than what they know to be the native English-spoken variety.

For example, Swan posited that although she may have a "strong" accent or some of her pronunciations are different than that of an average native speaker, she has discovered that when she is in a conversation with two people, one person usually understands her, and another does not seem to understand anything. She speculated:

I think it's not only my problem, it's her problem, it's their problem because maybe they're not used to international. Claire [pseudonym] for example, tells me. 'Yeah. Swan, I understand you almost always', but, for example, Marvin, you know Marvin? [pseudonym], he will not catch me. But Claire will, and I'm speaking at the same time, you know?

Claire and Marvin are Swan's acquaintances from homegroup. Claire in an international global English-speaking homegroup member and Marvin is a native English-speaking homegroup volunteer. As seen from Swan's quote above, when she is speaking to both of them in a homegroup event or dinner, Claire usually understands her, but Marvin does not. So, Swan contemplates if her English is the issue or is it that some people, in this case a native speaker, are not accustomed to global varieties of English. Swan added that, unfortunately, she has seen this nonreciprocal attitude toward global English speakers in some of her international global English-using friends as well. She gave an example of one of her international friends who had told her that she was thinking of switching sections to a native English-speaking professor's class because the current class she was in was being taught by a global English user.

Mongol ohin, too, shared a problematic behavior of a classmate in one of her classes. She recounted witnessing one of her native English-speaking classmates rephrase out loud almost all verbal work-directions given by an international global English-using professor—as if the classmate needed to translate the professor's language for everyone in the class despite the professor already speaking plain English. Mongol ohin recalled feeling very uncomfortable in that class because she felt that her classmate's behavior toward the professor was disrespectful. According to her, she did not have any difficulty understanding any of the instructions given by the professor; so, she could not understand why her classmate felt the need to rephrase the professor's sentences so often and make it look like the professor could not speak English properly.

On the theme of nonaccountability and nonreciprocity, Louise mentioned that people are usually very inflexible toward global varieties of English and are quick to blame a global English user for their English. She stated:

> *I have the feeling that people, they have the tendency of putting in on you. Like, 'Uh, because it's the way of you say things.' And I'm like, yeah, but you had the context of it before.*

Louise's complaint is that people are quick to hold global English users accountable for their English and often mock them in the process of doing so; however, they refuse to use context cues or make any other efforts in holding successful conversations with global English users. Mongol ohin also raised a somewhat similar concern. She asked the rhetorical question of whether people actually find it difficult to understand global English users, or if they just *pretend* to have difficulty.

In all of the above examples, a theme of nonaccountability toward global English users' English is apparent—a conscious or subconscious tendency to blame global English varieties while being non-accommodating and nonreciprocal themselves. The nonreciprocal parties seem to not want to put much effort in engaging with or understanding global English speakers. In case of Swan's first example, her international friend usually mostly understands her without difficulty, while her domestic friend refuses to understand her—all within the same conversation. So, should Swan only take responsibility of successful communication when she knows that it is not hard for people to understand her if they actually want to?

Similarly, in Mongol ohin's example, she could understand the professor, but the domestic student made it look like the professor was hard to understand and thus rephrased the professor's sentences out loud in the classroom. This behavior is nonreciprocal for two reasons. First, the student believed that the professor is unintelligible, so they felt the need to repeat their sentences out loud. If the student had done it quietly, it could have shown some reciprocity at their end, but that was not the case—they did it out loud for everyone to hear. Second, the student rephrased the professor's sentences out loud turning toward their peers— as narrated by Mongol ohin—assuming that their classmates needed *saving* from the *professor's* English. This behavior is far from being reciprocal and taking accountability; it is quite the opposite. If the student actually was having difficulty in understanding the professor, they could have paid more attention to the context cues of the discussion and the additional nonverbal cues from the professor. The student was clarifying it for the class out loud, which means the student did not have that much difficulty in understanding the professor; so, why did they assume that their peers needed a translation of the professor's English sentences from a native English speaker? Also, if the professor was actually

unintelligible for the rest of the class like the student was making it out to be, then how did

Mongol ohin, a fellow classmate and a global English user, understand the professor? This

attitude is nothing but the result of being nonreciprocal to global varieties of English.

We see a similar aspect of non-accommodation and nonreciprocity in Swan's second

example with her international friend as well where her friend wanted to switch sections

because she did not want to deal with a global English-using professor. Being global English

user herself, she did not want to put any effort in understanding another fellow global English

user; she inherently assumed that she would be *better off* in a class taught by a native English

speaker. This attitude of perceiving global English-using teachers and users as unintelligible

or deficient—in spite of their skills being comparable to that of the "natives"—is not

uncommon in the U.S. educational contexts (Marvasti, 2005; Plakans, 1997; Shuck, 2006),

mostly because of the dominant native speaker superiority ideology (Cheng et al., 2021).

People are usually intolerant toward global varieties of English because of the ingrained

belief that native variety is better (Marvasti, 2005).

Therefore, participants' complaints on nonaccountability and nonreciprocity of

people in U.S. educational contexts are absolutely reasonable. Since U.S. welcomes

international students to the country, they should also welcome their global varieties of

English and make efforts to make their educational institutions internationalized.

International students should not feel the pressure to adjust their English to be a part of the

U.S. educational system, since the system highly benefits from the presence of its

international student population; these students, in addition to bringing in their diverse world

perspective into U.S. educational system, also bring in sizable revenue (NAFSA, 2022). So,

efforts should be made to train domestic students to recognize and understand global

varieties of English so that they do not hold onto their belief of native speaker superiority (Cheng et al., 2021). Besides, international students are not the only group that speak Global Englishes; most of the immigrants speak Global Englishes as well. If the U.S. prides itself for being diverse because of its immigrant population (Factsheet, 2021), should not be there be more national efforts to reduce language-based discriminations anyway to make the immigrant population feel included?

Although some internationalization actions are being taken in Higher Ed institutions writing programs (Rose & Weiser, 2018), they are not sufficient to mitigate the overt and covert effects of language-based discriminations across programs. What people need to learn is that successful communication is a two-way effort, and only one party should not be held accountable for it. This narrative of two-way effort needs to be normalized in and around U.S. educational contexts, not just for the international student populations but also for all the populations of immigrants. Special training programs that expose students, teachers, and staff to global varieties of English may help to mitigate the effects of nonreciprocity and help the students learn to take accountability for unsuccessful interactions; this in turn may help them refrain from putting blame on others for failed communications. In order to make educational contexts safe and tolerant, these trainings must be available for both the domestic and international individuals in and around U.S. educational settings.

In terms of developing reciprocity in international students and scholars even before they arrive in the U.S., scrutiny is required regarding the type of language proficiency proof that is asked of international individuals by U.S. Higher Education institutions. The most commonly accepted proofs of proficiency are the results of either TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System). These tests

in themselves are problematic because they promote native speaker English and disregard the global English varieties, which in-turn make some of the international students and/or scholars further adhere to native speaker fallacy and view global English speakers of diverse origins negatively in terms of their English-related efficiency.

Quick Rewind of Purpose and Process

The purpose of the current study, as I stated before, was to uncover international graduate global English-speaking students' experiences with microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy. My aim with this study was to help international graduate students reflect on their critical experiences and recognize the effects of native speaker fallacy on themselves and on others. My primary goal for this study was to provide the global English users with a safe space where they could share their experiences without any embarrassment or fear, validate each other's emotions, and recognize that they are not alone in this journey. I fulfilled this goal with the help of focus groups and written reflections where the participants got the chance to not only understand their own critical experiences better, but also learn the strategies to begin their healing journey and to respond to microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy should they experience them in the future. In that same process, I encouraged the participants to identify their own language biases; and I am glad that many of them were able to do so, so that they themselves do not partake in perpetuating native speaker fallacy and associated microaggressions when they find themselves outside of this study and back to their day-to-day lives.

The overall data from the participants revealed that all the participants in the study, in one point or another, have had experienced and/or witnessed microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy in and around U.S. educational settings. All the participants in the

study shared at least two critical incidents, with the majority of the participants sharing much more than just two, in which they experienced or witnessed language-based microaggressions. The participants who reported being on the *receiving end* of microaggressions, which is basically all the participants except just one, indicated feeling some sort of negative emotions due to their encounters. I illustrated the critical incidents and the associated emotions of the participants in specific sections of the paper to form a cohesive narration. I presented the data in correspondence to the order of my research— presenting all the relevant and essential data needed to answer my two research questions individually, but coherently.

In tackling my first research question that aimed at finding out the international students' overall awareness and experiences with microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy, I found that the majority of the participants were unaware of the concept of language-based microaggressions—despite almost all of them having had been recipients of such discrimination. In tackling my second research question that aimed at finding out the themes that illustrate the deep-rootedness of native speaker fallacy, I identified 8 times, namely Gatekeeping English, Invisible Hierarchy, Sounding 'Different', Othering, Alienation, Implicit Bias with Name and Color, Departments vs Critical Incidents, and Nonaccountability. I provided meaning to these themes from a Critical Consciousness point of view that allowed me to incorporate my own understanding of the world, my understanding of my own experiences, my understanding of the collective and individual human experiences, and my skills as a researcher and educator to interpret the data. All of these themes helped me to demonstrate the deep-rootedness of native speaker fallacy in and

around U.S. educational settings in a coherent manner and also shine light on the possible—

subconscious or conscious thought-processes that lead to language-based microaggressions.

This chapter was dedicated to establishing the significance of research that relates to

microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy. The participants' accounts of

language-based microaggressions validates the critical encounters that I have personally

experienced, some of which I shared in Chapter 1. The participants' experiences along with

my experiences provide proof that language-based microaggressions are damaging to

international global English-using graduate students and need to be addressed in length. That

said, in chapter 5, I present and explain the strategies that I have designed and gathered to

help respond to, and raise awareness against, microaggressions that stem from native speaker

fallacy.

Chapter 5
Responding Strategies, Micro-kindness, and Workshops

This chapter is divided into five sections, namely Participants' Suggestions, Responding Strategies, Workshop Plan, Micro-kindness, and Researcher Note. In the first section named Participants' Suggestions, I present participants' suggestions on what they quoted as response strategies to microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy. In the second section named Responding Strategies, I present some strategies that global English users can utilize to respond to language-based microaggressions on an individual level. In the third section named Micro-kindness, I introduce the concept of micro-kindness—a mindfulness strategy—that both global and native speakers of English can make use of to respond to and prevent perpetuation of microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy. In the fourth section that is named Workshop Plan, I outline workshop plan and other strategies that U.S. educational institutions can adopt to respond to microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy.

Finally, in the fifth section titled Researcher Note: 1) I write a brief ending note where I share some thoughts regarding what it is like to be an insider researcher of a topic that aims to fight inequality and discrimination that is subtle but extremely draining; 2) situate myself in the 8 themes that I identified in Chapter 4; 3) share some thoughts on how to utilize the themes in other areas of research; and 4) write a general ending note.

Participants' Suggestions

During Phase 2 of focus group interviews, after the Word Cloud and other activities, I showed the participants a condensed version of the responding strategies that I designed to put in the final draft of this paper. I explained each strategy to the participants and gave justification on how and why the strategy would work to respond to microaggressions

173

stemming from native speaker fallacy. Then, I requested the participants to share their thoughts regarding the strategies that I designed, choose the strategies that they would personally utilize from the list, and suggest any additional strategy that they think maybe helpful. Below, I share, verbatim, what the participants chose or suggested as effective strategies.

Table 3

Participants' choice or suggestion of responding strategy

Name	Suggestion
Ludo	*Silence treatment and patience or answering politely.*
Carole	*I think that making a remark in a joking manner makes the person realize how uneducated and bigoted they sound can work. Not reacting to comments about how an accent sound cute or sexy can also make them awkward and maybe stop saying it. But when the microaggressions happen in class by professor, colleagues, or classmate, people should speak up and be clear about how unacceptable the comments are.*
Li MeiMei	*We need be serious and tell them it's not fun at all to say it that way.*
Louise	*I think first raising awareness about what microaggressions are in a linguistic context and how to alleviate the issue if we are in this situation.*
Goli	*I believe microaggression happens unintentionally, almost in all cases. Education can resolve the problem. Not to mention that international students should be educated as well.*
Ajay	*I would say, more outreach measures and sessions for everyone. Maybe during the orientation week or maybe a workshop and so on.*
Mongol ohin	*First of all, I think the professors should know the concept and avoid doing so in the classroom. And I think international students should also know the concept so that when they experience microaggressions they know how to react.*
Swan	*Many of the times the aggressor is not aware, so if it really bothers us, we should make them notice. If we have confidence, saying directly our perspective. And it is true that if we start tolerating it, then it will be more difficult to change. So sometimes it is better to try to nip the problem in the butt.*
Sahan	*I think being yourself and showing your own identity while learning and improving English in our own style and raising your voice when possible against microaggression and educating other international community about it.*

Everest	*Microaggressions are extremely difficult to spot, especially when they originate from within. Educating people about microaggressions should come first. The second thing we need to do is strive to understand people without passing judgment on them. Additionally, increased exposure to speakers of languages and cultures other than our own helps us become more used to the range of English that exists. We can also do this by reading works of literature written in English by authors from different nations or sociocultural backgrounds or by watching non-Hollywood English-language films.*
Alisha	*Best way to deal with microaggressions would be to educate native speakers. We must identify and acknowledge the instances of microaggressions and use them as teaching/learning moments.*

Responding Strategies

Based on the findings from this study and from the participants' response choice and/or suggestions, in this section, I present some basic responding strategies that international global English using students can use in one-on-one situations when they encounter incidents of microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy. I have divided this section into four overarching themes to group the strategies that may work best under those themes. Under each group of strategies, I have included a note to provide justification of why and how these strategies may work to respond to microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy in and around U.S educational settings.

Theme 1: Someone is surprised by your '*good'* English or Feels the need to compliment your English.

As seen from the in-depth accounts of Carole and Everest, people usually comment on people's English when they subconsciously believe that their English is better than the global English speakers'. They see it is as giving a *compliment*; however, this need to compliment arises due to their subconscious adherence to native speaker superiority or their lack of awareness of Global Englishes. This theme is a tricky one because people, in most cases, are not trying to attack you consciously. They usually compliment or show surprise regarding your English when they are meeting you for the first time or are talking to you for

the first time which they had not done before. In educational settings, these people can be anyone starting from your professor and employer to your classmates and acquaintances.

Global English users usually find this theme to be the hardest to respond to because they do not want to get into a conflict with someone who thought that they were just giving a *"nonnative"* English speaker a compliment. Depending on who you are speaking to, there are a few strategies that you can utilize in these situations to refrain from perpetuating native speaker fallacy. Below, I provide a list of actions, questions, or statements that you can use as your responding strategies.

- **Silent combat**: This is a great strategy when you are in a formal setting or are dealing with people of differential power dynamics, such as professors or work supervisors. Silent combat is the act of going silent after receiving an English-related '*compliment*'. What this basically means is that you do not respond with a smile or say thank you to the person that *'complimented'* your English and move on to other things. It is basically your way of silently staying away from the Invisible Hierarchy that I explained in Chapter 4, as well as silently responding to the native speaker superiority ideology.

- **Complimenting Back**: This strategy can be useful with colleagues, classmates, and any other acquaintances in and around educational settings. When someone '*compliments*' your English, they subconsciously believe that they have the authority to do so. So, if you compliment their English as a response, it will take them by surprise or make them feel awkward. What you can do is politely say, "Oh, your English is good, too."

- **Interjections:** This strategy can be used with anyone depending on your context. Interjection is when you show surprise or confusion as a response to the *'compliment'* you just received regarding your English. You can use verbal words like "really!" or "oh!" along with nonverbal cues like raised eyebrows. Sometimes less is more, so by simply interjecting you can make the commentor rethink their comment.

- **Questions:** You can use this strategy with whomever depending on your context. Ask simple questions in response to their comment. For instance, if someone is surprised by your English or say that "you speak English well", you can ask "Why wouldn't I?". You can also ask "Why do you think so?". Do not sound confrontational, sound curious. That will open up the floor for discussion.

- **Short, but polite statements:** Again, this strategy can be used with anyone depending on your situation. You can use thought-provoking sentences like "I'd be surprised if I didn't speak English well" or "Well, I should because I have spoken English all my life just as you". It is important to be polite during these situations because if the commenter senses any sarcasm in your tone after they had given you what they thought was a compliment, they will get defensive and will not be open to any further discussion.

Justification of the Strategies*:* These little actions can lead the commenter (microaggressor) to think if they have said something wrong. You can get two possible reactions from the commenter in response to these strategies. First, they might seem irritated, confused, or amused but choose to move on to other things or other topics. Second, they may ask you directly if they have said something wrong or if they have offended you in any way. Once they ask, you have your floor to talk about what *'compliments'* or surprise regarding people's

English may insinuate. This would also be a good time to talk about Global Englishes and native/ "nonnative" speaker debate. If they are open-minded, they will be happy to learn; if they are not, they will get defensive. In case they get defensive, you can stop engaging any further and just be proud that you have done your part in responding to native speaker fallacy in that instance; you have at least given them some food for thought.

Theme 2: When a professor or a classmate silences you or gives you silence treatment in the classroom.

As I have illustrated in Chapter 4, this theme heavily affects global English-using international students because silent treatment or silencing from microaggressors make the international graduate students question their own ability in English and their overall capability as students in U.S. Higher Education. As seen from Mongol ohin, Carole, and Everest's friend's cases, all of them felt they did not belong in U.S. educational setting(s). Based on their input, I have designed the two following sets of strategies that you, the global English users, can utilize to respond to silencing and/or silent treatment—one that you can utilize with your classmates and another that you can utilize with your professors.

The reason why there are two separate sets of strategies under this theme is because the strategies that will work with your classmates will be ineffective or unsuitable to use with your professors; firstly because of power differentials and secondly because of the structure and design of courses. The two sets of strategies are, thus, listed separately.

When a professor silences you or gives you silence treatment:

- **Talking to the professor directly but politely:** Depending on how approachable you feel your professor is, you can plan to talk to the professor directly about how their

behavior has made you feel. This strategy works best in face-to-face interactions

because sharing a sensitive topic such as this via email may lead to

miscommunication because of lack of paralanguage (tone, body language, facial

expressions, and more), which may lead the professor to think that you are

antagonizing them. Humans tend to become defensive when they think someone is

being critical of them (Cuncic, 2022), so it is crucial that you remain gentle and

assure them that you are coming from a place of hurt and authenticity. Face-to-face

interaction, again, is not limited to in-person meetings only. It can be done over

ZOOM® or Skype® meetings as well.

- **Mentioning the issue in course evaluation:** Depending on how many international

  global English users are in the class with you, there are two ways of making use of

  course evaluation as a responding strategy against native speaker fallacy. If you are

  the only global English user in the class and mention issues of "nonnative" speaker

  bias or lack of acceptance of Global Englishes, chances are that the professor will

  deduce that it is you. So, you have to be gentle here and avoid language that may look

  confrontational. Just explain the instances when you felt silenced or given silent

  treatment and provide an example what the professor could have done instead to not

  make you feel invisible. However, if there are more international global English users

  in your classroom, you can be more general in addressing you concern or providing

  suggestions to the professor for their future courses; nonetheless, you still have to be

  gentle in your approach. To provide a general suggestion or address a concern, you

  can write something like "the course can be strengthened if the professor

acknowledges global varieties of English and practices more classroom inclusion by taking steps to ensure that global English users feel included as well" and "there was a lack of acknowledgement of global varieties of English when the professor did <u>so</u> and <u>so</u> (examples). If those instances did not happen, I would have enjoyed the class more", respectively.

Justification: Since native speaker fallacy has been normalized, teachers may not realize that they have biases towards native speakers and against global English users, which, however, are clear to you from their actions. So, gently reminding them that English is not just one kind because of its complicated history and dispersal may help the professor to rethink their actions. Teachers usually have to go through trainings on discrimination every year, so talking to them politely about how you have felt because of their behavior, may force them to reevaluate and restrategize their teaching approach. When a professor is comfortable in silencing or giving silent treatment to their student(s), chances are that they have, mostly subconsciously, done it before and no one brought this to their attention out of fear, distrust, and/or embarrassment; so, they do not realize that their actions are problematic and, thus, keep repeating the cycle.

When a classmate silences you or gives you silence treatment:

- **When it happens in a group setting**: When a classmate silences you or gives you silent treatment in a group setting, you can bring attention to it politely by using a combination of statement and questions while in the group setting. **Statement-question** combinations are when you share a thought using a statement and pair it

180

with a follow-up question that has the potential to initiate a response from an individual. For example, some statement-question combinations are can be like "Hey, I feel like I am unable to participate in the group. Have I done anything wrong?" or "Hey, I feel like I am not given much work within the group. I would just like to know why?"

When it happens in a peer-to-peer setting: When silent treatment or silencing happens in a one-on-one interaction, the questions or statement-question combinations can be more specific and direct. For instance, you can say "Hey, I feel like we are not getting along. Have I offended you in any way?" or "Hey, I am not sure what my role is in our group work. Could you please clarify why we are dividing the work as such? Remember, these statement-questions are just a few examples that you can use in group or one-on-one settings. You can modify the questions based on your specific situation of silencing or silent treatment. The purpose of statement-questions is to open up discussion by initiating a response from the perpetrator. Since they are in Higher Education getting a degree, they may have some awareness of what discrimination is. When you use statement-question combinations in a polite manner, there is a good possibility that they will notice their behavior, feel embarrassed, and try not to repeat their actions.

- **Speaking to the professor:** If your classmates are not open-minded and your statement-question strategy does not have an impact on them, you can also plan to speak to the professor. The key is to refrain from choosing words that may sound

181

accusatory. Just let your professor know that you would like to contribute more during group or peer-works but are feeling that you don't have enough space to do so. Again, be gentle. Talking to the professor might encourage the professor to be more involved in dividing the work among students in group-settings or design activities in a way that leaves little room for native speaker fallacy.

- **Mentioning anonymously in the course evaluation:** If you are not comfortable in utilizing either of the strategies, you can mention something in the course evaluation about how you were silenced or given silent treatment by your classmate. This will at least alert the professor about how global English-using students feel in their courses and encourage them to restrategize their peer and group activities. Like I have previously mentioned, be cautious with your choice of words and try not to sound accusatory. The more polite you are with your word choice, the higher the chances are that the professor will pay attention to the issue you raise. Otherwise, they might think you are just complaining about a fellow classmate and ignore the seriousness of the issue altogether.

Justification: By using statement-question combinations, you are prompting a response, which is a tactic for opening up a healthy discussion. You are also subtly pointing out your classmate's discriminatory behavior. If they are thoughtful and open-minded, they will take accountability and learn to work with you. If they are ignorant and do not want to learn, you still have done your bit to respond to microaggression that stem from native speaker fallacy by simply brining their attention to the matter. When a global English speaker remains quite

after such incidents, the perpetrators fallaciously believe that their behavior is nothing out of the ordinary and is justified.

Theme 3: When someone subtly insults you because of your accent/pronunciation or jokes about your accent/pronunciation.

This is another theme that arises a mixture of emotions in global English users—starting from anger and embarrassment to frustration and exhaustion. This theme, however, is a two-part them. The first part of the theme is when someone subtly insults you or say inappropriate things to you based on your accent as we saw in Ajay's and Ludo's case in this study; and the second part of the theme is when someone makes a joke about or has an unpleasant reaction to your pronunciation or accent as we saw in Mongol ohin, Alisha, and Sahan's cases. Since the attacks are verbal, you can also use verbal strategies to respond to this theme. Below, I provide two distinct sets of strategies that you can use to respond to language-based microaggressions. In the first set, I suggest responses that you can utilize to respond to someone's subtle insult or inappropriate language because of your accent; in the second set, I suggest responses that you can use to respond to someone's rude comments or jokes about your accent or pronunciation.

Someone's insult or inappropriate language because of your accent:

- **When someone subtly insults you because of your accent (like saying you come from "Third World")**: In such cases, be it a professor, classmate, colleague, or any other acquaintance, it is crucial that you speak up but strategically. You can ask some response-prompting questions or make some stern statements all while keeping your composure. Some simple questions can

183

be: "What did you mean by that?" or "Could you please define [insert the word that they have used]?" or "How is [word] related to our conversation?". On the other hand, some thought-provoking statements could be: "I don't know what you are implying" or "I am not sure I understand what you a mean" or "That word [mention the word] is inappropriate to use, I believe."

- **When someone uses inappropriate language to describe your accent (like saying your accent is "sexy"):** Again, in cases like this, it is important that you point out that their choice of words is poor, especially when used within educational settings. Like the theme of insult, you can use response-prompting questions or make stern statements to respond to someone's usage of inappropriate language to describe your accent. Some simple questions can be: "Why did you use that word?" or "What do you mean by that word" or "Do you use that word very frequently in academia?"; some thought-provoking sentences, likewise, could be: "That's not a very comfortable word to hear in academia" or "I don't understand what you meant by [insert word] or "That word [mention the word] is inappropriate to use, I believe.".

Justification: When you ask direct questions or make statements in a stern tone, they are sure to notice that you did not like something that they said. At this point, there are two kinds of reactions that you can expect. First, they may get defensive and blame you for misinterpreting their intention or try to subtly insult you a little further. Second, they will explain what they meant and will likely apologize for making a generalization as such. Either

way, you do not have to engage any further if you do not want to. Just understand that small questions or statements like the ones I have mentioned above have the power to make people start thinking about their choice of words or their perceptions of others—whether they show that to you right away or not.

Someone's rude comments or jokes about your accent or pronunciation:

People resort to mocking, correcting, or showing confusion about someone's English when they think they have better knowledge about the language and/or believe English can be spoken and used in one way only. So, to respond to this behavior, you should again ask direct questions in a stern tone or make bold statements.

- **Some questions could be:** "What is so funny?" or "Well, you speak English, so why was it so hard for you to understand the meaning from the context?" or "You think making fun of people's English makes you look cool?"

- **Some statements could be:** "I don't think you realize that there is more than one way of pronouncing things." or "English is not just one kind, you know." or "Others seem to understand me, but you can't. I am not sure why."

Justification: When the attack is direct, you can be direct with your response strategies as well. If they have some common sense, they will feel embarrassed for making fun of you. If not, they will get defensive. Either way, you have given them food for thought. You do not have to engage further if you are not comfortable. However, if you are comfortable in talking further, you can educate them about Global Englishes and native speaker fallacy. Try to keep

your composure while you explain the concepts. The calmer you remain, the better the chances are of them taking you seriously. Also, remember that some people may be difficult by nature and may try to entangle you in a baseless argument. So, before continuing the conversation with someone, make sure you feel safe.

Theme 4: When someone verbally or nonverbally Others you.

As seen from Li MeiMei and Alisha's examples in Chapter 4, Othering is done both verbally and nonverbally. When someone engages in Othering, the conscious or subconscious idea behind it is that the global English user lacks competence in English. In other words, the perpetrator adheres to native speaker fallacy. In instances when you feel verbally or nonverbally Othered by a professor or a classmate, you can use similar responding strategies that I outlined for responding to silent treatment or silencing in classrooms or course settings.

In the cases when Othering is done in a broader educational context, you can use a combination of the responding strategies that I outlined for the previous themes, such as statement-question technique, thought-provoking statements, and/or stern comments depending on the context. For instance, if Othering happens when you are playing a Word or English-related game, as demonstrated in Alisha's case in Chapter 4, you can say "I have known English all my life, you don't need to give me just the easy words unless they are very culturally specific." or "I am noticing that you are just giving me all the easy words. Is there a reason for that? or you can jokingly say "Are you under the impression that I will not be able to handle English words?". You can be creative in your word choice, but it is crucial that you keep your composure and be gentle in your delivery of the chosen words; it is important

to remember that it requires one to be patient and persistent when combatting inequity that is systemic.

Micro-kindness

Just a few months before COVID hit, I randomly dropped by one of my professors' office, who later chaired my doctoral dissertation, to discuss my interest in pursuing a research that solely focuses on language-based microaggressions—namely, microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy. I was one and a half year into my doctoral program and was trying to decide how and where to start to bring this idea to fruition. When I sat in her office animatedly sharing my own experiences with language-based microaggressions and talking about why I thought it was important to acknowledge such discrimination, she listened to me intently, acknowledged the need of such research, and validated my emotions and my thought-process.

After the discussion with her, I felt a boost in confidence in pursuing the topic, but that was not the only thing that I walked out with from her office that day. She had handed me a small piece of paper on which she had written down the word "micro-kindness"; it was the first time that I came across the concept of micro-kindness. While giving me the paper, she briefly explained the concept to me and told me how it is so important for people to be micro-kind, in this unkind world, to fight against discrimination. After I came back home from work that day, I looked into the concept further and was enthralled. I also realized that my professor herself was practicing micro-kindness with me when she took the time to listen to my experiences *attentively* and chose *kind* words to validate my emotions.

The boost of confidence that I had felt in her office was because of the micro-kindness that she had shown me that day. I decided, after some research, that if I ever

succeeded in making microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy my doctoral research topic, I would dedicate a small section in my paper on *micro-kindness*, because I could see how micro-kindness had the potential of being a very good strategy in responding to microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy. Hence, in this section, I explain how both global and native English users can use micro-kindness as a strategy to respond to language-based microaggressions.

Micro-kindness, as defined by Laughter (2014), is "brief verbal, behavioral, or environmental acts of respect, consciously intended to provide a potential space for positive and humanizing interaction" (p.7). Laughter proposed the concept of micro-kindness to help enhance multicultural education, as well as to develop awareness in educators and students. To use this concept as a responding strategy in the context of my study, however, I adapt Laughter's definition and view micro-kindness as: *the process in which one makes small but conscious choices with the intention of being open-minded, empathetic, and nondefensive toward the realities and lived experiences of others*.

In the subsections below, I include some micro-kindness strategies, specific to the context of this study, that one can utilize to reassess their own beliefs and biases in order to respond to microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy; to do that, I have dissected my adapted definition of micro-kindness into three parts, each part representing one adjective from the adapted definition, namely being "open-minded", "empathetic", and "nondefensive". For each of these parts, I provide an individual list of micro-kindness strategies, based on the findings of the current research, that might be useful for responding to language-based microaggressions.

Open-mindedness as a micro-kindness strategy:

- Take a moment to assess where you stand in the native versus "nonnative" English speaker debate.

- Read about Global Englishes and the history of English language dispersion.

- Recognize that there are several varieties of English, none better than the other.

- Acknowledge that the sole purpose of a language is communication, and that English is just one of those tools of communication—nothing more, nothing less.

- Understand that it is your personal choice to *'sound'* like a certain group of English users; that choice should not translate to you judging others if they do not relate to your choice or, in other words, sound '*different'* than your expectation.

- Make a conscious effort to not associate accent or pronunciation with degrading factors.

- Recognize and ***believe*** that multilingualism is greater than only knowing the English language.

- Know that humans are individuals, and speaking English is just a small part of their identity; so, refrain from stereotyping them using the limited knowledge that you have gained about them.

Empathy as a micro-kindness strategy:

- Be patient when listening to someone who speaks a variety of English that is different from the one you speak or consider to be the *norm.*

- Maintain eye contact during conversations with global English users.

- Understand that listening is a skill, too, especially when you are communicating with people from different parts of the world. So, learn to follow paralanguage and context cues to have successful interactions.

- If you would like someone to repeat what they said, be polite when doing so instead of making it seem like it is their fault that you could not understand.

- Watch news, YouTube videos, or other forms of narrations by global English users to understand the range of Englishes that exist.

- Refrain from giving language-related advice unless someone asks you for it.

- If you are a teacher, tutor, or mentor who need to provide language-related feedback, be polite and provide the reason why you think your suggestion is needed to be taken into consideration.

- Utilize your power position to advocate for Global Englishes and global English users.

- Choose to intervene when you witness someone mocking a global English user's English.

- Use words of encouragement, affirmation, kindness, and comfort if a global English speaker shares a negative experience regarding their English.

Nondefensiveness as a micro-kindness strategy:

- Listen to understand not just to reply.

- Be open to listening to and understanding different perspectives. You do not know everything; none of us do.

- Do not get defensive if someone points out that they have been affected by your words or actions. Try to be understanding of their position.

- Know that just because you have been at the receiving of end of microaggressions does not mean you cannot ever be microaggressive to others.

- Learn to take accountability of your negative actions.

- Understand that just because you were unaware of certain things in the past does not mean you cannot start learning now.

- Be open to hearing people's perspective on their language journeys and experiences.

- You may not fully agree with other people's perspectives of the world, but you can still be respectful of the differences.

Workshop Plan

As suggested by Ajay, Everest, Goli, Alisha, Swan, Sahan, and Mongol ohin, educational and awareness materials are a necessity to respond to language-based microaggressions. Hence from the aforementioned participants' suggestions (see Table 3) and as per the request of one of my professors, I have created a workshop plan that Higher Education institutions can utilize in developing awareness against microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy; this strategy can subsequently help in responding to language-based microaggressions in U.S. educational settings.

Workshops are a great tool of education to reach the masses in Higher Ed—professors, staff, and students—in a short span of time. Below, I layout the plan for a general workshop that U.S. Higher Education institutions can use for professional development of educators and staff and to train both domestic and international students. The workshop is divided into four sections: the intent of the *first section* is to explain the purpose of the workshop by grounding it in theories of Global Englishes, native speaker fallacy, and microaggressions; the intent of the *second section* is to problematize some normalized everyday words or

actions and explain how they are microaggressive; the intent of the *third section* is to have a

dialogue around language-based microaggression and its impact on international students;

and the intent of the last section is to provide tips and suggestions to the workshop attendees

on how to respond to microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy. The last

section, although, will look slightly different depending on the audience; meaning, the tips

and suggestions will vary depending on whether the audience are professors, TAs, tutors, and

staff or if they are regular students who do not have such responsibilities.

It is important to remember that the workshop plan that I suggest below is a flexible

model, and institutions have the liberty to adapt the model contextually by consulting

professors and staff of different departments who have knowledge about global varieties of

English, English and power relations, and microaggression. I advise that a professional who

is well-versed in Global Englishes and linguistic imperialism be given the responsibility to be

the moderator of the workshop sessions. I also suggest that the workshop be made mandatory

in the beginning of each year for professors and staff and mandated for students during the

orientation week. The workshops can be live recorded as well with the attendees' permission

and included as a resource in the institution website so that students, teachers, staff, and

community partners can have access to it all year round.

The model that I designed is also flexible in terms of spatiality in that the workshop

can be conducted either in-person on campus or online over any platform like ZOOM®.

Depending on the selection of suggested materials (Table 4; Table 5) by the planner or the

moderator and the size of the audience, the workshop can run between 1 and 1.5 hours.

Grounding

For the workshop to be effective, it is important to use materials that are clear and concise and yet explains the concepts of native speaker fallacy, microaggressions, Global Englishes, and English dispersal—sufficiently. For grounding strategy, a combination of the 3-4 sources included in Table 3 and Table 4 can be used depending on the duration and design of the workshop, as well as the expertise of the moderator. For instance, The source to problematize native speaker English can be either of the following:

- Philip Seargeant: https://youtu.be/E7_pdziYxXs

- The Hyperpolyglot Activist: https://youtu.be/aGJkmICo_t0

The source to describe the reality of Global/World Englishes can be either of the following:

- Purdue OWL: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/multilingual/world_englishes/

- British Council Serbia: https://youtu.be/2_q9b9YqGRY

The source to explain microaggressions can be either of the following:

- Derald Wing Sue: https://youtu.be/BJL2P0JsAS4

- Fusion Comedy: https://youtu.be/hDd3bzA7450

It is crucial that moderator projects the videos or texts into a bigger monitor during in-person workshop or screen-share if the workshop is conducted online. The moderator should take the time to deconstruct portions of the texts and/or videos and put the individual concepts together verbally to make a case as to why language-based microaggressions are damaging to students. This part of the workshop will also be a good space to talk about how English spoken within the U.S. and the other native English-speaking countries are also very diverse in themselves. The moderator can use a video, if time permits, to provide evidence. An example of such video is linked in Table 3.

Problematizing

The second step will be to illustrate some examples of language-based microaggressions and problematize those examples to show why such words or actions are considered microaggression. For instance, the moderator can first choose some sentences or actions from the Recall Protocol (Table 2), such as "your English is very good" or "I don't think the international student will be able to help me with my paper/assignment", display them on the screen, and then explain the supposed assumptions behind such a thought-process. The moderator should then discuss the power dynamics associated with terminology such as native and "nonnative" speaker and explain how those dynamics may play out in their specific educational context.

Dialogue

To respond to microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy, dialogues are necessary—otherwise, as I have explained before, people may feel defensive. Dialogue helps in two ways: 1) helps the moderator to understand if and how much the workshop attendees have been able to understand microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy and 2) continue the conversation by allowing the attendees to ask questions or share concerns. To achieve dialogue, the moderator can form smaller groups and request the attendees to use the Recall Protocol (Table 2) as a guide to start conversations within their small groups regarding the topic; the attendees may be asked to read the examples in the protocol, select a few that caught their attention, and then construct open-ended questions as a team to ask to the moderator. The attendees should also be encouraged to share concerns if they have any so that the moderator can address those concerns and direct the attendees to suitable additional resources if needed.

Tips and Suggestions

In this last step of the workshop, the moderator will provide tips and suggestions to the audience on how to respond to microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy. As I mentioned earlier, the tips and suggestions for students in responding to language-based microaggressions will be slightly different than the tips and suggestions that I designed for professors and staff; the reason being that the professors, TAs, tutors, and staff group have the authority to make changes in their classrooms or workplaces, which students who are not associated with such work do not. Hence, the first set of tips titled *General Tips* will be the same for everyone and the second set of tips titled *Additional Tips for Educators and Staff* will be an added list of suggestions for professors, TAs, tutors, and staff group.

General Tips and Suggestions

The moderator can make a digital handout of the *Responding Strategies* and the *Micro-kindness* strategies that I have described in the two previous sections of this chapter and share the handouts with the attendees, in addition to sharing the handouts on screen and talking about the contents of them. To talk about the strategies, the moderator can make use of the justification that I have provided to explain why and how the strategies have the potential to be effective against microaggressions that stem from native speaker fallacy. Again, depending on the duration of the workshop and size of the audience, the moderator can decide whether to discuss the strategies in-depth or to just go over them briefly—since attendees will already have a digital copy of the handouts.

Additional Tips for Educators and Staff

Professors and TAs can:

- Make a conscious effort to choose readings or other course materials that are written, designed, or presented by speakers of global varieties of English. This strategy helps to make all students feel included.

- Invite global English-speaking guest speakers in the classroom to tackle a course topic. This sends out a message that skills on a subject is not dependent on how a person looks or sounds.

- Give each student a space to showcase their strengths individually.

- Make anonymous mid-term surveys available to students and encourage them to share what they feel about how the class is going. Let them know that the purpose of the survey is just to promote healthy(ier) learning environment. Try not to be offended if they write something unpleasant. Make the adjustments that you feel will best help to address the concerns, if any, raised by the students.

- Try your best to learn your students' names properly and make a conscious effort to address your global English-speaking students in the classroom to make them feel seen.

- Collaborate with international global-English using professors from outside of the U.S. to exchange scholarly ideas, do research projects, or to simply invite them to guest-lecture in your class about course-relevant topics via ZOOM® or other services.

Professors, TAs, tutors, and staff can:

- Host departmental social gatherings where domestic and international students get a chance to mingle.

- Talk about microaggressions during faculty and staff meeting.

- Share information on language-based microaggressions and resources on responding strategies with one another whenever possible.

- Have a departmental shared drive where resources on equity can be dumped. That way everyone has access to them.

- Have your own professional development talks or workshops for awareness purposes and to promote equity.

- Practice micro-kindness with students and others.

Table 4

Compilation of Resources on English Varieties and Native Speaker Fallacy

Source	Link
Robert Phillipson	https://doi.org/10.1080/01434639708666317
Philip Seargeant	https://youtu.be/E7_pdziYxXs
The Hyperpolyglot Activist	https://youtu.be/aGJkmICo_t0
Study Smarter	https://www.studysmarter.us/explanations/english/international-english/world-englishes/
Purdue OWL	https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/multilingual/world_englishes/
British Council Serbia	https://youtu.be/2_q9b9YqGRY
Robert Phillipson	http://www.jceps.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/14-3-4.pdf
TEDx Talks	https://youtu.be/AX8Fhlln7IA
TEFL Equity Advocates & Academy	https://youtu.be/Slpyk6bpMIM
TEFL Equity Advocates & Academy	https://youtu.be/GFRIna9yFx8
NPR Podcast	https://www.npr.org/2021/04/21/989477444/how-to-speak-bad-english
The Atlantic	https://youtu.be/4HLYe31MBrg

Note: Resources on English varieties and language biases

Table 5

Compilation of Resources on Overall Microaggression and Implicit Bias

Source	Link
NPR Podcast	https://www.npr.org/2020/06/08/872371063/microaggressions-are-a-big-deal-how-to-talk-them-out-and-when-to-walk-away
American Psychological Association	https://youtu.be/sW3tFpThHzI
American Psychological Association	https://www.apa.org/monitor/2017/01/microaggressions
PBS Clip	https://www.pbs.org/video/pov-implicit-bias-peanut-butter-jelly-and-racism/
Harvard's Implicit Associations Test	https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html
SPLC Publication	https://www.splcenter.org/20150125/speak-responding-everyday-bigotry
Fusion Comedy	https://youtu.be/hDd3bzA7450
College Educated	https://collegeeducated.com/resources/avoiding-microaggressions-in-classrooms-and-online/
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association	https://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/microaggressions-micro-course-series/
On Our Sleeves	https://www.onoursleeves.org/mental-health-resources/minority-mental-health/how-to-teach-kids-about-microaggressions
Tumblr	https://www.microaggressions.com/
Association for Psychological Science	https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/releases/2021-sept-microaggressions.html
Psychology Today	https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/microaggression

Note: Resources on Microaggression

Other Strategies

Outreach Programs

- To eliminate microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy from the root level, Higher Education institutions can team up with schools in their district to host professional development programs for the schoolteachers and staff. The workshop

198

model that I shared can be simplified and utilized in developing awareness in school-going children and adolescents as well. In addition, the model can be adapted contextually and shared with community partners for more outreach opportunities, and as a strategy to raise awareness against microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy.

- If budget permits or funding is made available, Higher Education institutions along with school districts can design their own flyers, contextually, on Global Englishes, microaggressions, and micro-kindness and share them in their own neighborhoods or distribute them locally through an agent to respond to language-based microaggressions.

Researcher Note

Emotional Toll

While I acknowledge the importance of doing research such as the current one to fight inequality that is subtle and has been systemically normalized, I also have to acknowledge the emotional toll that it takes to be an insider-researcher of such a topic. Being a global English user, who has also been a recipient of language-based microaggressions, I felt very emotionally drained during the data collection period. As one of the study participants, Everest, had called it (outlined in Chapter 4 under Alienation): feeling "secondhand" emotions from the experiences of others. It somewhat felt like I was feeling secondhand emotions as the participants recounted their incidents and shared their associated emotions.

However, that was not just the case; it was a little more than that. While hearing from the participants, not only was I reliving all the critical incidents, of varying intensity, that I had encountered myself, I was feeling a strong sense of responsibility to bring about a positive change for all of international graduate global English-using community. This responsibility felt even bigger when the majority of the participants started reaching out to me to thank me for listening to them, validating their experiences, and being a part of their healing journey—with one participant going as far as to suggesting that she need not be compensated for her time in the study because she chose to do it for the community and was not expecting any monetary gain.

Needless to say, I felt additional emotions when I found out that one participant (outlined in Implicit Bias with Name and Color), in this very study, was not sufficiently open-minded about the realities and perspectives of others—unless those affected him on a personal level. Nevertheless, I am grateful to all the 11 participants for being vulnerable in their own ways throughout the course of this study and trusting me with information that they did not readily share with everyone. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, this study for me was very close to heart and would not have been possible without each of the participants' contributions. My purpose with sharing the emotional toll at my end from conducting this research is not to discourage insider researchers from taking on projects like this. I just want insider researchers to be aware that it is almost impossible to be emotionally detached when navigating topics that are nuanced but seek social justice.

Tying it Together

To tie the findings of this study to my own experiences from a critical consciousness perspective, I believe that my experiences with language-based microaggressions in the last 6

and a half years—as a master and a doctoral student— in U.S. educational settings, can be placed in at least 7 of the themes that I identified to answer Research Question 2. For instance, the incident that I shared in beginning of Chapter 1 with the student at IEP who refused to trust my English input is an example of Othering; the incident in which my classmate frequently ignored me during group works is an example of Alienation; the incident where the international graduate student did not want me as a tutor because on my name is an example of both Implicit Bias with Name and Color and Othering; and the incident in which my classmate challenged me to do an American accent is an example of both Gatekeeping English and Invisible Hierarchy in that she was ready to acknowledge my competence—Invisible Hierarchy, as long as I did not claim to be as competent as her— Gatekeeping English. These are only a few incidents that I have shared in Chapter 1; I have many more which can readily fit into almost all the themes that I identified in Chapter 4.

Applicability of the Identified Themes in Future Research

At this point of the paper, I want to indicate that the 8 themes that I identified in Chapter 4 to illustrate the 8 most common ways in which native speaker fallacy is held and exhibited can also be adapted and used, in part or full, to expose inequality and injustice in many other critical research areas; such as, gender, class, race, and sexuality. The themes can be adapted and used to reveal inequality and injustice in intersectional research as well, such as intersection of gender and language, race and class, and gender and sexuality among many others. They can also be utilized, in part or full, in identity or perception research as a tool to problematize and expose people's fallacious beliefs.

To elaborate, an example of adapting the themes in perception-research could be to problematize people's views when they call someone like me—a Bengali South Asian—

"westernized". What does the term actually imply? What is the thought process of the person when they direct the term toward me? What I find interesting about this term is the underlying assumption of people that the world is still strictly divided into eastern and western. Due to globalization, the lines between the eastern and western world have become very blurry, especially in the urban areas of any country. People of my own and younger generations live in a world that is bidirectional in terms of culture; in which the east may adopt some traits of the west and vice versa. For instance, while the young people of the east may rely heavily on Hollywood movies for entertainment and have great knowledge about the comic universes, the people in the west may rely on lifestyles of the east like doing yoga, applying henna, drinking kombucha, and making kimchi. It is how the younger generations make meaning of the global world.

Yet, people call individuals like me *westernized*, even though the westerners are freely adopting the traits of the eastern world at the same rate, if not maybe higher rate, due to globalization. Why aren't then they told that they are *easternized*? Is it because of power relations again? Is calling me "westernized" some sort of projection or categorization? People who know me well know that I am very much in touch with my Bengali identity, Bangladeshi traditions, cultural and family values, and my faith. But, when outsiders see me, they may see a young woman who is independent and, surprisingly, has knowledge— to whatever extent—about the *western* world; this seems to confuse some of them, because they may be operating from a skewed perception of the *east*.

Comments such as *westernized* are ambiguous and do not solely relate to my language skills, race, capability, or any other obvious critical factor, so I do not allow them to occupy too much of my mental space. However, the comments do feel as though they are equivalent

to the linguistic comments like "your English is very good", which have the potential to be relative to the themes of *Invisible Hierarchy* and/or *Enforcing Mimicry* and the associated power relations that I have described in Chapter 4. In perception or identity research, therefore, one could problematize the term *western*, and explore the term through the themes of *enforcing mimicry*, *Othering*, and *invisible hierarchy* to reveal the power differentials that people subconsciously adhere to when labelling others with certain terminology.

Ending Note

Having travelled to other countries and mostly since moving to the U.S., I have realized that people are generally very similar and different at the same time. What I mean by that is that, oftentimes, our thought process and choices have very little to do with whether we are from the east or the west; because even within one's own race, region, and nation, people are very diverse and complex. I have found many people who are of completely different race and culture but share my values more than some people of my own race and culture and vice versa. Our values come from our upbringings, how we view the world, our understanding of life in general, our experiences of navigating life and relationships, our evolution as lifelong learners, and our desire to grow.

Hence, trying to put label on people or putting them into boxes, especially one that is implicative of relegation, does more harm for the collective humankind than good. Our shared, global objective should be to build a better world—one that is tolerant and free of assumptions. Conducting this particular study, therefore, as my doctoral dissertation project was my small, but very sincere, attempt in trying to be of service to humanity and bring some balance, however little, into the unbalanced world that we all know and experience.

Demographic Information
Consent to Participate in Research

Research Title: International Graduate Students' Critical Awareness of their Experiences with Microaggression

Purpose of the research: You are being asked to participate in a research project that is being done by Dr. Mary Rice (Principal Investigator, PI) and Romaisha Rahman from the Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies department. The purpose of this research is to uncover any subtle language-based discriminations that international graduate students may experience in U.S. educational settings due to their English language status and how those experiences affect them in their day-to-day lives.

You are being asked to join because you are an international graduate (master's, doctoral, or postdoctoral) student in the U.S., with an F1/J1 visa, and hail from a country that is not considered a primarily English speaking country.

This consent form contains important information about this project and what to expect if you decide to participate. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. Your participation in this research is voluntary.

What you will do in the project:

Should you participate in this research, you will:

1. Fill up a short Google Form Survey of demographic information which takes about 8-10 minutes to complete.

2. Participate in two audio-recorded focus groups interviews (of about 5-6 people in each group) two times for 1.5 to 2 hours over ZOOM between the months of November and February.

3. Write a short exit reflection after each focus group to elaborate your thoughts.

Benefits of participation:
There may be no direct benefit to you personally from participating in this study. Your participation, however, may help you gain insight into what language-based microaggressions are and how it affects you and your fellow international students. By the end of the study, you may have the understanding

on how to approach the topic of language-based microaggressions should you or any other individual in your proximity become the recipient of subtle language-based microaggression. Information from the study may also be vital in helping the international student populations and beyond, as well as the U.S. institutions to take necessary steps to create an environment that is safer and more comfortable to international individuals who come to U.S. institutions to get their degrees.

Risks associated with participation: This is a minimal risk research project in which data will be collected online via ZOOM and Google Forms, which eliminates any risk of bodily harm during data collection.

However, since the research topic prompts you to recall some possibly uncomfortable information, there is some chance that you may feel a little uneasy during data collection.

In such cases, you can contact the researcher directly at her email address romaisharahman@unm.edu or her cell phone number: +16314287441 for a chat or reach out to a professional counsellors in the following UNM offices:

Free counselling service: Women's Resource Center

The Women's Resource Center offers FREE in-person and remote (tele-health) mental health care to **all UNM students, staff, and faculty members.**

https://women.unm.edu/services/services.html

Paid counselling service: Student Health and Counseling (SHAC)

http://shac.unm.edu/

Also, although all members of the focus groups will be requested to keep confidential all information discussed in the groups, it is possible that group members may disclose information discussed in the group to others."

Confidentiality of your information: The researcher will take all measures to keep your identity confidential. The bulleted list explains how the researcher will, to the best of their ability, ensure confidentiality.

1. **Google Forms**: The researcher will use their Gmail account to create the forms which is protected by password and

Two Factor authentication. No one other than the researcher will have access to the forms directly. The data, however, will be accessible by the PI for research purposes.

2. **Focus Groups**: Your identity will be kept confidential at all times during and after the research is completed.
The initial research invitation (accept/decline) Google form has the confidentiality statement about protecting the privacy of fellow focus group participants; should you choose to participate in the study, you will be expected to protect the privacy of the other participating members.

3. **ZOOM Conferencing**: The researcher will use their official UNM ZOOM account to conduct the interviews, and to have an added layer of security, participants have to not only use a password to join the meeting, but they will also have to be logged in through their UNM email to be able to join the meeting.

4. **Use of pseudonyms**: Pseudonyms will be used to refer to the participants in any and all my reports, whether verbal or written.

5. **Transcription:** The researcher will use ZOOM transcription services to transcribe the audio recordings, so the transcription will also be solely handled by the researcher and their PI, with no external services involved. If the participants call each other using their real names during the focus group interviews, the researcher will manually replace the real names with pseudonyms if they use those parts of the transcript during reporting of the research.

6. **Data storage:** The audio recordings and written reflections will be stored in the researcher's personal computer that only they have access to. In addition to the computer is password-protected, the data will be stored in a password-protected folder on a Mac which is highly secure. A copy of the data will be stored on One Drive Cloud as a backup, which, again, is only accessible by the researcher and is password protected with Two-Factor Authentication. The data maybe made accessible to the PI when needed.

7. **Wi-Fi network.** The researcher will use a secure Wi-Fi network to connect with you. They will never use public

networks for data collection, so as to minimize any chances of breach of network or privacy of any kind.

No one other than the research team (the researcher and her PI) will have access to all collected data. The researcher will ensure all confidentiality and privacy, to the best of their ability, from their end but cannot ensure the privacy on your end as they cannot control or monitor the devices that you will use to communicate with the researcher or the other participants during the research. The researcher will take all measures to protect the security of all your personal information but cannot guarantee confidentiality of all research data. The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human research may be permitted to access your records. Your name will not be used in any published reports about this project. The researcher is required to take necessary steps, including reporting to authorities, to prevent any instances that may lead to serious harm of yourself or others.

Use of your information for future research: All identifiable information (e.g., your name) will be removed from the information or samples collected in this project. After the removal of all identifiers, the information or samples may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

Payment: Your participation cannot be compensated in monetary terms alone, but you will be given a $20 Amazon gift card for your participation in the research as a token of appreciation from the researcher.

Breakdown of payment: You will receive $10 for participating in the first focus group interview and $10 for participating in the second focus group interview.

Right to withdraw from the research: Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Reach out to the researcher at romaisharahman@unm.edu or +16314287441 for further information regarding withdrawal from the research.

If you have any concerns or questions at any point during the course of the study, reach out to
the researcher.

Romaisha Rahman, University of New Mexico

Email: romaisharahman@unm.edu

Phone: +1 631 428-7441

If you have questions or concern that you would not like to share with the researcher, you can contact the
Principal Investigator (PI)

Dr. Mary Rice, University of New Mexico

Email: maryrice@unm.edu

Office Phone: +1
505 277-0807

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or about what you
should do in case of any research-related harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input, please contact the IRB. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving people:

UNM Office of the
IRB, (505) 277-2644, irbmaincampus@unm.edu. Website: http://irb.unm.edu/

Please help me get to know you better. You need to be signed in to your Google Account to be able to complete the form (this helps you to not lose any progress 😇).

1. Name *

_____

2. Email *

_____

3. Which country are you from? *

_____

4. How long have you been in the U.S.? *

_____

5. How long have you been a graduate student in the U.S.? *

_____

6. How long have you been a graduate student at UNM? *

Note: Question 4, 5 , and 6 are slightly different .

The answers of these questions maybe identical if UNM is the only institute that you have attended as an international graduate student.

_____

7. Which UNM department are you a graduate student of? *

_____

8. What are the languages that you speak/know? *

<u>NOTE</u>*: You don't have to be "fluent" in a language or be able to read and write in a language to state it as one of your languages.*

_____

9. Is English your *

Mark only one oval.

◯ First language?

◯ Second language?

◯ Other language?

◯ Additional language?

◯ Foreign language?

10. Is English one of the official languages in your country? *

Mark only one oval.

○ Yes

○ No

○ Other option (provide explanation in the comment section in the end)

11. What is your race according to U.S. Census Bureau? *

Click here to check U.S. Census Race Explanation

_____

12. Do you identify with the race that is listed for you in the U.S. *
Census Bureau?

Mark only one oval.

○ Yes

○ No

13. If you answered "No" in the previous question (Question 8),   *
please mention the race you feel closest to and why.

For those of you who have answered "Yes" please write N/A in the blank and continue to the next question.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. Gender   *

NOTE: *I only need this information to see if gender, too, may play a role in individuals experiencing language-based microaggressions*

Mark only one oval.

◯ Female

◯ Male

◯ Non-binary

Comment Section:

Use this section to provide any information that you want me to know regarding your demography that will help the research.

Also, use this section if you have selected the third option in Question 10.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Reflection (November/December)

Please answer the following questions to generate additional data for the study. Thank you very much for your input.

1. **Please write your name and email address in the space provided.**

2. **Please share any thoughts, experiences, or information that you have been uncomfortable in sharing during the group meeting or might not have had enough time to discuss.**

3. **Please share what you have learned from the focus group today. Were you aware of what language-based microaggressions are?**

4. **What are your suggestions for our next and final focus group interview?**

   a. What themes should we explore more of in regard to language-based microaggression?

   b. How can we make the session more productive?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

Reflection - January

Please answer the following questions to generate additional data for the study. Thank you very much for your input.

1. Name *

   _____

2. Email *

   _____

3. Please suggest a pseudonym for yourself that I can use to report data in the final *
   paper and elsewhere.
   Tip: Choose a name that is meaningful to you in the context of this study.

   _____

4. Please share if and how the focus groups and this study have helped you to
   understand microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy better.

   *native speaker fallacy: the false belief that only "native" speakers of English can be
   effective teachers and users of the language.*
   *microaggression: subtle discrimination, whether verbal or nonverbal, done toward
   minority groups--either intentionally or unintentionally.*

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

5. What do you think are some of the ways in which we can combat microaggressions stemming from native speaker fallacy as international students?   *

   Side note: In the final paper, I will dedicate a section in which I will mention the suggestions that you make (by using your pseudonym).

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. Please provide any comments that you may have on the emerging themes or any *
   other aspect of this research that stood out to you and may help this study to form conclusions.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

<div align="center">

Appendix C

Word Cloud Activity Worksheet

</div>

Choose at least two words from the list that you are shown (or any other word that is not on the list) to define what you felt when you experienced or witnessed microaggression that we have already discussed in our session. Define the words from your own understanding or how you make meaning of them. You are welcome to take help of the internet or any dictionary to better explain yourself.

<div align="center">

Context of the word

(Specific for each participant from the dataset)

</div>

Words		Meanings Specific to You
First Word		
Second Word		
Optional word		

Optional word		

Appendix D

IRB Approval

OFFICE OF
THE INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD

Date:	09/14/2022
Principal Investigator:	Mary Rice
Protocol Number:	2207010156
Protocol Title:	International Graduate Students' Critical Awareness of their Experiences with Microaggression
Submission Type:	Initial
Committee Action:	**APPROVAL**
Approval Date:	09/14/2022
Expiration Date:	
Review Type:	Minimal Risk
Risk Level:	Minimal Risk
Project Status:	Active - Open to Enrollment

The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board has granted approval for the above referenced protocol. This approval is based on an acceptable risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks to participants have been minimized.**This project is not covered by UNM's Federalwide Assurance (FWA) and will not receive federal funding.**

This approval includes the following:

CV/Resume - PI CV - 0_Rice_CV_2022.docx

Scientific Review Form - Scientific Review Form signed by PI - scientific-validity-review-form.pdf

Questionnaire/Survey - Demographic data collection (along with consent details) - Demographic Information.docx

Recruitment Materials - Invitation to participate in research - Invitation to Participate in Romaisha's Research.docx

Other - Home group definition - Home group definition_Recuitment and Screening.docx

Data Collection - Focus Group Interview Details - Details on Focus Group Interviews.docx

Other - Mental Health Resources - Mental Health Resources.docx

505.277.2644 | Office of the Institutional Review Board | 1 University of New Mexico | MSC02 1665 | Albuquerque, NM 87108

irb.unm.edu

220

OFFICE OF
THE INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD

Protocol - Minor revisions completed - Protocol_Rahman.Revised.docx

Informed Consent Document - Minor revisions completed - Consent.docx

The IRB made the following determinations:

Informed Consent must be obtained and documentation is waived. To obtain consent, use only approved consent document(s).

This determination applies only to the activities described in the submission and does not apply should any changes be made to this research. If changes are being considered, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to submit an amendment to this project and receive IRB approval prior to implementing the changes. A change in the research may disqualify this research from the current review category. **If federal funding will be sought for this project, an amendment must be submitted so that it can be reviewed under relevant federal regulations.**

All reportable events must be promptly reported to the UNM IRB, including: unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others, serious or unexpected adverse events, and noncompliance issues. All sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

If an expiration date is noted above, a continuing review or closure submission is due no later than 30 days before the expiration date. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to apply for continuing review or closure and receive approval for the duration of this protocol. If the IRB approval for this protocol expires, all research related activities must stop and further action will be required by the IRB.

Please use the appropriate reporting forms and procedures to request amendments, continuing review, closure, and reporting of events for this protocol. Refer to the OIRB website for forms and guidance on submissions.

Note that all IRB records must be retained for a minimum of three years after closure.

505.277.2644 | Office of the Institutional Review Board | 1 University of New Mexico | MSC02 1665 | Albuquerque, NM 87108

irb.unm.edu

221

References

Adams, M., & Rodriguez, S. (2020). Using critical incidents to investigate teacher preparation: A narrative inquiry. *Teachers and Teaching, 26*(5-6), 460-474.

Adebayo, C. T., & Allen, M. (2020). The experiences of international teaching assistants in the US classroom: A qualitative study. *Journal of International Students, 10*(1), 69-83.

Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good qualitative research approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies, 5*(2), 9-19.

American Psychological Association. (2012, November 5). *Microaggressions in the classroom: Manifestation, dynamics and impact* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/sW3tFpThHzI

Anderson, M. L. (2004). From Brown to Grutter: The Diverse Beneficiaries of Brown v. Board of Education. *U. Ill. L. Rev*., 1073.

Aneja, G. (2014). Disinventing and reconstituting native speaker ideologies through the classroom experiences of international TESOL students. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics (WPEL), 29*(1), 2.

Angelides, P. (2001). Using critical incidents to understand school cultures. *Improving Schools, 4*(1), 24-33.

Askeland, G. A., & Bradley, G. (2007). Linking critical reflection and qualitative research on an African social work master's programme. *International Social Work, 50*(5), 671-685.

Ates, B., & Eslami, Z. R. (2012). An analysis of non-native English-speaking graduate

    teaching assistants' online journal entries. *Language and Education, 26*(6), 537-552.

Auguste, E. E., Cruise, K. R., & Jimenez, M. C. (2021). The effects of microaggressions on

    depression in young adults of color: Investigating the impact of traumatic event

    exposures and trauma reactions. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, *34*(5), 985-994.

Ayuso, J. W. (2020, July 2). The thin, white lie: challenging the 'French women' stereotype.

    The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jul/02/myth-white-

    parisienne-is-being-challenged-lindsey-tramuta-alice-pfeiffer-and-aissa-maiga

Bailey, K. (1983). Foreign teaching assistants at US universities: Problems in interaction and

    communication. *TESOL Quarterly, 17*(2), 308-310.

Banks, B. M., Cicciarelli, K. S., & Pavon, J. (2020). It offends us too! An exploratory

    analysis of high school-based microaggressions. *Contemporary School Psychology*,

    1-13.

BBC. (2022, August 14). *Partition: Why was British India divided 75 years ago?* BBC

    News. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-62467438

Bhabha, H. (1984). Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial

    discourse. *October*, *28*, 125-133.

Borjas, G. J. (2000). Foreign-born teaching assistants and the academic performance of

    undergraduates. *American Economic Review*, *90*(2), 355-359.

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: a tool to

    enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation?. *Qualitative Health*

    Research, 26(13), 1802-1811.

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2022, March 13). British Empire. Encyclopedia

    Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/place/British-Empire

BritishCouncilSerbia. (2013, Dec 7). *David Crystal - World Englishes.* [Video]. YouTube.

    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_q9b9YqGRY&ab_channel=BritishCouncilSer

    bia.

Braine, G. (2010). *Nonnative speaker English teachers: Research, pedagogy, and*

    professional growth. Routledge.

Braine, G. (Ed.). (2014). *Teaching English to the world: History, curriculum, and practice*.

    Routledge.

Butterfield, L. D., Borgen, W. A., Amundson, N. E., & Maglio, A. S. T. (2005). Fifty years

    of the critical incident technique: 1954-2004 and beyond. *Qualitative Research, 5*(4),

    475-497.

Canagarajah, S. (2011a). Codemeshing in academic writing: Identifying teachable strategies

    of translanguaging. *The Modern Language Journal*, *95*(3), 401-417.

Canagarajah, S. (2011b). Translanguaging in the classroom: Emerging issues for research

    and pedagogy. *Applied linguistics Review*, *2*(1), 1-28.

Carpusor, A. G., & Loges, W. E. (2006). Rental discrimination and ethnicity in names

    1. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 36*(4), 934-952.

Cervantes-Soon, C. G., Dorner, L., Palmer, D., Heiman, D., Schwerdtfeger, R., & Choi, J.

    (2017). Combating inequalities in two-way language immersion programs: Toward

    critical consciousness in bilingual education spaces. *Review of Research in*

    Education, 41(1), 403-427.

Chan, E. L., & Coney, L. (2020). Moving TESOL forward: Increasing educators' critical

consciousness through a racial lens. *TESOL Journal, 11*(4), e550.

Cheng, L. S., Burgess, D., Vernooij, N., Solís-Barroso, C., McDermott, A., &

Namboodiripad, S. (2021). The problematic concept of native speaker in

psycholinguistics: Replacing vague and harmful terminology with inclusive and

accurate measures. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3980.

Choi, S. J. (2009). Symbolic violence of the Native Speaker Fallacy: A qualitative case study

of an NNES Teacher. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 15*(3), 33-57

Clopper, C. G., & Smiljanic, R. (2015). Regional variation in temporal organization in

American English. *Journal of Phonetics, 49*, 1-15.

Clyne, M. (1997). Multilingualism. In C. Florian (Ed.) *The handbook of sociolinguistics* (pp.

301-314). Blackwell.

Colbert, L. (2016). It's how you say it: A study of social perceptions of speech rate and

accent. Honors Thesis. Ouachita Baptist University.

https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/honors_theses/222/

Corbally Jr, J. E. (1956). The critical incident technique and educational

research. *Educational Research Bulletin*, 57-62.

Cotton, J. L., O'neill, B. S., & Griffin, A. (2008). The "name game": Affective and hiring

reactions to first names. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 23*(1), 18-39.

Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. Cambridge University Press.

Cuncic, A. (2022, November). What is defensiveness? *Verywell Mind*.

https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-defensiveness-5115075

De Bot, K. (2008). Introduction: Second language development as a dynamic process. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(2), 166-178.

de Jong, E. J., Harper, C. A., & Coady, M. R. (2013). Enhanced knowledge and skills for elementary mainstream teachers of English language learners. *Theory into Practice*, *52*(2), 89-97.

Diemer, M. A., Rapa, L. J., Voight, A. M., & McWhirter, E. H. (2016). Critical consciousness: A developmental approach to addressing marginalization and oppression. Child *Development Perspectives, 10*(4), 216-221.

Dolan, K. A., & Peterson-Withorn, C. (2022). Forbes billionaires 2022: The riches people in the world. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/billionaires/

Douglas, J., McClelland, R., Davis, J. & Sudbury, L., 2009, 'Using critical incident technique (CIT) to capture the voice of the student', *The TQM Journal, 21*(4), pp. 305–18

Dubetz, N. E., & de Jong, E. J. (2011). Teacher advocacy in bilingual programs. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *34*(3), 248-262.

Durrani, A. (2017, March 21). International Students Are Each Other's Biggest Advocates. *U.S. News*. https://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/articles/2017-03-21/international-students-are-each-others-biggest-advocates.

Duru, E., & Poyrazli, S. (2011). Perceived discrimination, social connectedness, and other predictors of adjustment difficulties among Turkish international students. *International Journal of Psychology*, 46(6), 446-454.

Dutt, A. K. (1992). The origins of uneven development: The Indian subcontinent. *The American Economic Review, 82*(2), 146-150.

Earner, G., & Cohen, R. (Hosts). (2021, April 21). How to speak bad English [Audio podcast episode]. In Rough Translation. NPR.

Ee, J. (2013). He's an idiot! Experiences of international students in the United States. *Journal of International Students, 3*(1), 71-75.

Ee, J. (2013). He's an idiot! Experiences of international students in the United States. *Journal of International Students, 3*(1), 71-75.

Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, 5*(1), 1-4.

Factsheet. (2021, September 21). Immigrants in the United States. *American Immigration Council.* https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-the-united-states

Fatima, N. (2001). International Female Graduate Students' Perceptions of their adjustment experiences and coping strategies at an urban research university (paper presented at the annual meeting of the *American Educational Research Association*, in Seattle, WA, April 10-14.

Finan, R. (2021). *Sociopolitical Liberation through Critical Consciousness: Promoting Well-Being for People of Color Experiencing Racial Microaggressions in an Adverse Sociopolitical Climate* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia]. https://www.proquest.com/openview/fdd9f1e3ed6e7fbf34b55781c8e3ebc3/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y

Finegan, T. A., & Siegfried, J. J. (2000). Are student ratings of teaching effectiveness

influenced by instructors' English language proficiency?. *The American*

Economist, 44(2), 17-29.

Flanagan, J. C., & Schmid, F. W. (1959). The critical incident approach to the study of

psychopathology. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 15*(2), 136-139.

Foddy, M., & Riches, P. (2000). The impact of task and categorical cues on social influence

Fluency and ethnic accent as cues to competence in task groups. In *Advances in*

Group Processes. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Forbes Magazine. (2018). The world's most powerful people. *Forbes*. Retrieved February 22,

2023, from https://www.forbes.com/powerful-people/list/#tab:overall

Forbes, M., Mcgrath, M., Jones, N., & Burho, E. (2022, December 6). The world's 100

most powerful women 2022. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/lists/power-

women/?sh=646593a05a95

Free word cloud generator. Free Word Cloud Generator. (n.d.). Retrieved February 10,

2023, from https://www.freewordcloudgenerator.com/

Galante, A. (2014). Developing EAL learners' intercultural sensitivity through a digital

literacy project. *TESL Canada Journal,* 53-66.

Galvan, A. (2020). *Developing Critical Consciousness: A Grounded Theory Analysis of the*

Experiences of Non-Native English-Speaking Counseling Students in the United

States. [PhD dissertation, Pennsylvania State University].

https://www.proquest.com/openview/a14f63e5f690c3d6773902ee3c5475e0/1?pq-

origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y

Gardner, H., & Hatch, T. (1989). Educational implications of the theory of multiple intelligences. *Educational Researcher*, *18*(8), 4-10.

Gay, G., & Kirkland, K. (2003). Developing cultural critical consciousness and self-reflection in preservice teacher education. *Theory into Practice, 42*(3), 181-187.

George Mwangi, C. A., Changamire, N., & Mosselson, J. (2019). An intersectional understanding of African international graduate students' experiences in US higher education. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 12*(1), 52.

George, T. (2020). Hermeneutics. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/#HermCirc

Giles, H., & Sassoon, C. (1983). The effect of speaker's accent, social class background and message style on British listeners' social judgements. *Language & Communication*. 305-313.

Gómez, C. A. (2020, March 11). "Where are you really from?" *Carlos Andrés Gómez*. Video. [YouTube].https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_raO92IgEs&ab_channel=CarlosAndr%C3%A9sG%C3%B3mez

Gomez, M. L., Khurshid, A., Freitag, M. B., & Lachuk, A. J. (2011). Microaggressions in graduate students' lives: How they are encountered and their consequences. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(8), 1189-1199.

Graue, E., & Karabon, A. (2013). Standing at the corner of epistemology ave, theoretical trail, methodology blvd, and methods street: The intersections of qualitative research. In A. A. Trainor & E. Graue (Eds.), *Reviewing Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences* (pp. 23-32). Taylor & Francis Group.

Griffin, K., & Khan, A. (1992). Globalization and the developing world: an essay on the international dimensions of development in the post-cold war era. *UNDP Human Development Report Office Paper*, (2).

Grosjean, F. (2013). Bilingualism: A short introduction. *The Psycholinguistics of Bilingualism*, *2*(5), 5-25.

Hanhimäki, E., & Tirri, K. (2009). Education for ethically sensitive teaching in critical incidents at school. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 35*(2), 107-121.

Homeland Security. (2011, September 30). What does stem stand for? *Department of Homeland Security*. Retrieved February 6, 2023, from https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2011/09/what-does-stem-stand

Huang Oesch, X. (2020*). East Asian and non-East Asian non-native English-speaking teachers' navigation of identity and experiences as ESL teachers in the US public school system* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign]. https://hdl.handle.net/2142/108330

Hughes, H. (2008) Critical incident technique. In Lipu, S, Lloyd, A, & Williamson, K (Eds.) Exploring Methods in Information Literacy Research. *Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, Australia*, pp. 49- 66

Jenkins, J. (2014). *Global Englishes: A resource book for students*. Routledge.

Johnson, J. L., Bottorff, J. L., Browne, A. J., Grewal, S., Hilton, B. A., & Clarke, H. (2004). Othering and being othered in the context of health care services. *Health Communication, 16(*2), 255-271.

Jones, V., Kim, Y., & Ryu, W. (2020). Intersecting roles of authority and marginalization: International teaching assistants and research university power dynamics. *Journal of International Students*, *10*(2), 483-500.

Jung, H., & Ro, E. (2019). Validating common experiences through focus group interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics, 143*, 169-184.

Kachru, B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk and H. Widowson (Eds.), English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures (p. 11-36). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kachru, B. B. (1991). World Englishes and applied linguistics. In M. L. Tickoo (Ed), *Languages & Standards: Issues, Attitudes, Case Studies. Anthology Series 26.* Retrieved from

https://eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED347791

Kang, O., Rubin, D., & Lindemann, S. (2015). Mitigating US undergraduates' attitudes toward international teaching assistants. *Tesol Quarterly, 49*(4), 681-706.

Kanwal, S. (2020, October 16). India - number of native English speakers 2011. *Statista*. Retrieved June 16, 2022, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/987540/number-of-native-english-speakers-india/

Karuppan, C. M., & Barari, M. (2010). Perceived discrimination and international students' learning: an empirical investigation. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 33*(1), 67-83.

Kendall-Tackett, K. A. (2014). Trauma, inflammation, and racial/ethnic health disparities: 2014 Division 56 presidential address. *Trauma Psychology*, Fall, 18-23.

Kim, Y., & Calzada, E. J. (2019). Skin color and academic achievement in young, Latino children: Impacts across gender and ethnic group. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 25*(2), 220-231.

Kirves, L., & Sajaniemi, N. (2012). Bullying in early educational settings. *Early Child Development and Care, 182*(3-4), 383-400.

Krsmanovic, M. (2022). "Outsiders" Hurting From Within: Racialization, Discrimination, and Microaggression Experiences of International Students. In *Handbook of Research on Opening Pathways for Marginalized Individuals in Higher Education* (pp. 210-224). IGI Global.

Kumagai, A. K., & Lypson, M. L. (2009). Beyond cultural competence: critical consciousness, social justice, and multicultural education. *Academic Medicine, 84*(6), 782-787.

Kuo, Y. H. (2011). Language challenges faced by international graduate students in the United States. *Journal of International Students, 1*(2). 38-42.

Kurath, H. (1928). The origin of the dialectal differences in spoken American English. *Modern Philology, 25*(4), 385-395.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2001). Teaching grammar. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, 3*, 251-266.

Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2013). Techniques and principles in language teaching 3rd edition-Oxford handbooks for language teachers. Oxford university press.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2016). Complexity theory and ELF: A matter of nonteleology. English as a lingua franca: Perspectives and prospects. *Contributions in honour of Barbara Seidlhofer*, 139-145.

Laughter, J. (2014). Toward a Theory of Micro-kindness: Developing Positive Actions in Multicultural Education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education, 16*(2). 2-14.

Lee, J. J. (2010). International students' experiences and attitudes at a US host institution: Self-reports and future recommendations. *Journal of Research in International Education, 9*(1), 66-84.

Lee, J. J., & Rice, C. (2007). Welcome to America? International student perceptions of discrimination. *Higher Education, 53*(3), 381-409.

Lefdahl-Davis, E. M., & Perrone-McGovern, K. M. (2015). The cultural adjustment of Saudi women international students: A qualitative examination. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 46*(3), 406-434.

Lester, S. (1999). An introduction to phenomenological research. Taunton, *UK: Stan Lester Developments*. Retrieved from http://devmts.org.uk/resmethy.pdf

Lewis, T. T., Everson-Rose, S. A., Powell, L. H., Matthews, K. A., Brown, C., Karavolos, K., ... & Wesley, D. (2006). Chronic exposure to everyday discrimination and coronary artery calcification in African-American women: the SWAN Heart Study. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 68*(3), 362-368.

Lopez, K. A., & Willis, D. G. (2004). Descriptive versus interpretive phenomenology: Their contributions to nursing knowledge. *Qualitative Health Research, 14*(5), 726-735.

LópezLeiva, C. A., & Khisty, L. L. (2014). "Juntos pero no revueltos": microaggressions and language in the mathematics education of non-dominant Latinas/os. *Mathematics Education Research Journal, 26*(2), 421-438.

Macartney, K., Quinn, H. E., Pillsbury, A. J., Koirala, A., Deng, L., Winkler, N., ... & Chant, K. (2020). Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in Australian educational settings: a prospective cohort study. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health, 4*(11), 807-816.

Maddamsetti, J., Flennaugh, T. K., & Rosaen, C. L. (2018). Who should teach? A Chinese teacher candidate's understandings of a good teacher and racialised experiences. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 46*(2), 148-166.

Mahboob, A. (2018). Beyond global Englishes: teaching English as a dynamic language. *RELC Journal, 49*(1), 36-57.

Marvasti, A. (2005). US academic institutions and perceived effectiveness of foreign-born faculty. *Journal of Economic Issues, 39*(1), 151-176.

Matsuda, A. (2003). Incorporating world Englishes in teaching English as an international language. *Tesol Quarterly, 37*(4), 719-729.

Matsuda, A. (2018). Is Teaching English as an International Language All about Being Politically Correct? *RELC Journal, 49*(1), 24–35.

Matsuda, A. (2019). World Englishes in English language teaching: Kachru's six fallacies and the TEIL paradigm. *World Englishes, 38*(1-2), 144-154.

Matsuda, M. J. (1991). Voices of America: Accent, antidiscrimination law, and a jurisprudence for the last reconstruction. *Yale Law Journal*, 1329-1407.

Matsuda, P. K. (2022, May 14). Global Englishes in the Era of Global Literacy: Challenges,

    Opportunities and Strategies. Keynote. *International Conference on English*

    Language Teaching, Buriram Rajabhat University, Buriram, Thailand.

Mental Health is Health. (n.d.). Weird. Weird – Mental Health Is Health. Retrieved February

    10, 2023, from https://www.mentalhealthishealth.us/feeling/weird/

Merriam, S. B. (2002). Introduction to qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Practice:*

    Examples for Discussion and Analysis, 1(1), 1-17.

Maghbouleh, N. (2020). From white to what? MENA and Iranian American non-white

    reflected race. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *43*(4), 613-631.

NAFSA. (2022, November 14). *New Nafsa Data Reveal International Student Economic*

    Contributions to the U.S. still below pre-pandemic levels. NAFSA.

    https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/new-nafsa-data-reveal-international-student-

    economic-contributions-us-still-below

Nelson, C. L. (1995). Intelligibility and world Englishes in the classroom. *World*

    Englishes, 14(2), 273-279.

Ng, K. M., & Smith, S. D. (2009). Perceptions and experiences of international trainees in

    counseling and related programs. *International Journal for the Advancement of*

    Counselling, 31(1), 57-70.

Norton, B. (1997). Language, identity, and the ownership of English. *TESOL*

    Quarterly, 31(3), 409-429.

Oaklief, C. R. (1976) 'The Critical Incident Technique: Research Applications in the

    Administration of Adult and Continuing Education', *Adult Education Research*

    Conference, April, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Ocheni, S., & Nwankwo, B. C. (2012). Analysis of colonialism and its impact in
Africa. *Cross-Cultural Communication, 8*(3), 46-54.

Okazaki, T. (2005). Critical consciousness and critical language teaching. University of
Hawai'I *Second Langauage Studies Paper, 23* (2). 174-202.

Open Doors (2021). International Students. *IIE*. https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-
students/

Ortiz-Ospina, E., & Roser, M. (2018, March 21). Economic inequality by gender. *Our World
in Data.* Retrieved February 22, 2023, from https://ourworldindata.org/economic-
inequality-by-gender#citation

Pennycook, A. (2003). Global Englishes, rip slyme, and performativity. *Journal of
sociolinguistics, 7*(4), 513-533.

Pennycook, A. (2009). Plurilithic Englishes: towards a 3D model. Global Englishes in Asian
contexts: *Current and Future Debates*, 194-207.

Plakans, B. S. (1997). Undergraduates' experiences with and attitudes toward international
teaching assistants. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*(1), 95-119.

Perrucci, R., & Hu, H. (1995). Satisfaction with social and educational experiences among
international graduate students. *Research in Higher Education, 36*(4), 491-508.

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford [England]; New York: Oxford
University Press.

Phillipson, R. (2016). Native speakers in linguistic imperialism. *Journal for Critical
Education Policy Studies, 14*(3), 80-96.

Porter, E. J., & Cohen, M. Z. (2013). Phenomenology. In *Reviewing qualitative research in
the social sciences* (pp. 192-208). Routledge.

Poyrazli, S., & Lopez, M. D. (2007). An exploratory study of perceived discrimination and homesickness: A comparison of international students and American students. *The Journal of Psychology, 141*(3), 263-280.

Rahman, R. (2018). *How Trustworthy is She?: Perception of International Students Toward International Peer Tutors in Writing Centers* [Master's Thesis, University of Dayton]. OhioLink. http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=dayton1525176509068285

Rahman, R. (June, 2021). My battle against native speaker fallacy: Is calling it bittersweet enough?. *NNEST Newsletter, TESOL International Association*. http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/tesolnnest/issues/2021-06-24/5.html

Rahman, R. (May, 2022). Expanding the idea of native speaker fallacy in the writing center context. *NNEST Newsletter, TESOL International Association*. http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/tesolnnest/issues/2022-04-28/3.html

Ravishankar, R. A. (2022, October 11). What's wrong with asking "where are you from?". *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2020/10/whats-wrong-with-asking-where-are-you-from

Rose, H., McKinley, J., & Galloway, N. (2021). Global Englishes and language teaching: A review of pedagogical research. *Language Teaching, 54*(2), 157-189.

Rose, S.K., & Weiser, I. (Eds.). (2018*). The internationalization of US writing programs*. Louisville; Colorado: University Press of Colorado.

Ryan, E. B., & Sebastian, R. J. (1980). The effects of speech style and social class background on social judgements of speakers. *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 19*(3), 229-233.

Samimy, K., Kim, S., Ah Lee, J. E. O. N. G., & Kasai, M. (2011). A participative inquiry in a
TESOL program: Development of three NNES graduate students' legitimate
peripheral participation to fuller participation. *The Modern Language Journal, 95*(4),
558-574.

Samimy, K., Kim, S., Ah Lee, J. E. O. N. G., & Kasai, M. (2011). A participative inquiry in a
TESOL program: Development of three NNES graduate students' legitimate
peripheral participation to fuller participation. *The Modern Language Journal, 95*(4),
558-574.

Santana-Williamson, E., & Kelch, K. (2002). ESL students' attitudes toward native and non-
native speaking instructors' accents. *CATESOL Journal, 14*(1), 57-72.

Seidlhofer, B. (2005). English as a lingua franca. *ELT Journal, 59*(4), 339-341.

Selvi, A. F. (2017). Preparing teachers to teach English as an international language:
reflections from northern Cyprus. *Preparing Teachers to Teach English as an
International Language*, *53*, 114-128.

Shah, A. P. (2019). Why are certain accents judged the way they are? Decoding qualitative
patterns of accent bias. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 10*(3), 128-139.

Shangrila, P. (2015). Visceral geographies of whiteness and invisible
microaggressions. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies, 14*(1),
298-323.

Shapira-Lishchinsky, O. (2011). Teachers' critical incidents: Ethical dilemmas in teaching
practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(3), 648-656.

Shehadeh, A. (2020). Contextualizing Your Research Project. In *Professionalizing Your
English Language Teaching* (pp. 327-335). Springer, Cham.

Shuck, G. (2006). Racializing the nonnative English speaker. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 5*(4), 259-276.

Silver, M. (2021, January 8). Memo to people of Earth: 'third world' is an offensive term! *NPR*. https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2021/01/08/954820328/memo-to-people-of-earth-third-world-is-an-offensive-term

Stanley, A. Q. (2011). Benefits of teacher 'connections' in stressful educational settings. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, *16*(1), 47-58.

Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 60-73.

Sue, D. W. (October 5, 2010a). Racial microaggressions in everyday life. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201010/racial-microaggressions-in-everyday-life

Sue, D.W. (Oct 4, 2010b). Microaggressions in Everyday Life. *Wiley* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJL2P0JsAS4&ab_channel=Wiley

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist, 62*(4), 271.

Takenaga, L., & Gardiner, A. (2019, July 19). 16,000 readers shared their experiences of being told to 'go back.' here are some of their stories. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/19/reader-center/trump-go-back-stories.html

Talmy, S. (2009). A very important lesson: Respect and the socialization of order (s) in high school ESL. *Linguistics and Education*, *20*(3), 235-253.

The Britannica Dictionary , . (n.d.). Hierarchy. *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

> https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/hierarchy

Thomas, J. (1999). Voices from the periphery: non-native teachers and issues of credibility. In

> Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 5-15), Mahwah,

> NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Tinker, H. R. & Husain, S. S. (2022). *Bangladesh: History*. Encyclopedia Britannica.

> https://www.britannica.com/place/Bangladesh

U.S. Census Bureau (March 1, 2022). About the Topic of Race. *U.S. Census Bureau: Race

> and Ethnicity Research*, Retrieved from

> https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html

USCIS. "Foreign Academic Students", U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Retrieved

> on March 4th, 2022 from https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/complete-correct-form-i-
> 9/completing-section-1-employee-information-and-attestation/foreign-academic-
> students.

USCIS. (2023, February 6). Immigration and Citizenship Data. United States Citizenship and

> Immigration Services. Retrieved February 23, 2023, from

> https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-and-studies/immigration-and-citizenship-data

Viergever, R. F. (2019). The Critical Incident Technique: Method or

> Methodology? *Qualitative Health Research, 29*(7), 1065–1079. https://doi-
> org.libproxy.unm.edu/10.1177/1049732318813112

Wadsworth, B. C., Hecht, M. L., & Jung, E. (2008). The role of identity gaps,

> discrimination, and acculturation in international students' educational satisfaction in

> American classrooms. *Communication Education, 57*(1), 64-87.

Watts, R. J., Diemer, M. A., & Voight, A. M. (2011). Critical consciousness: Current status and future directions. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 2011*(134), 43-57.

Westad, O. A. (2005). *The global Cold War: Third World interventions and the making of our times*. Cambridge University Press.

Whiting, K. (2022, July). These are the world's most gender-equal countries. W*orld Economic Forum*. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/07/gender-equal-countries-gender-gap/

Widdowson, H. G. (2002). The ownership of English. In *Enriching ESOL pedagogy* (pp. 405-416). Routledge.

Willmott, M., Nicholson, A., Busse, H., MacArthur, G. J., Brookes, S., & Campbell, R. (2016). Effectiveness of hand hygiene interventions in reducing illness absence among children in educational settings: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, *101*(1), 42-50.

Wolfe, R.; and Caliskan, A. 2021. Low Frequency Names Exhibit Bias and Overfitting in Contextualizing Language Models. In Proceedings of the *2021 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing,* 518–532.

Yano, Y. (2001). World Englishes in 2000 and beyond. *World Englishes*, 20, 119-131.

Yeo, H. T., Mendenhall, R., Harwood, S. A., & Huntt, M. B. (2019). Asian international student and Asian American student: Mistaken identity and racial microaggressions. *Journal of International Students, 9*(1), 39-65.

Yosso, T., Smith, W., Ceja, M., & Solórzano, D. (2009). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate for Latina/o undergraduates. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(4), 659-691.

Zdanowicz, C., & Chiaramonte, T. (n.d.). This personal question ticks people off. *CNN*. https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2017/08/opinion/where-im-really-from/

Zhao, Y. (2017). Student Interactions with a Native Speaker Tutor and a Nonnative Speaker Tutor at an American Writing Center. *The Writing Center Journal, 36*(2), 57-87.

Zheng, X. (2017). Translingual identity as pedagogy: International teaching assistants of English in college composition classrooms. *The Modern Language Journal, 101*(S1), 29-44.