

How Silent Are The Silenced? The Indigenous Characters' Voices in J.G. Farrell's Empire Trilogy

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J.G. Farrell siedelt seine Empire-Trilogie an drei Wendepunkten britischer Kolonialgeschichte in Indien, Irland und Singapur an, wobei der Fokus der Handlung auf den britischen Figuren liegt. Obwohl die indigenen Bevölkerungen seltener in den Blick rücken oder ihre Stimmen zu Gehör bringen, sind ihre Stimmen und ihr Schweigen differenzierter strukturiert, als es scheint, wie dieser Beitrag anhand der von Sternberg vorgeschlagenen Kategorien literarischer Mehrsprachigkeit zeigt: Die Darstellung der Stimme und Rede der indigenen Figuren folgt dem Grad ihrer Loyalität gegenüber der Kolonialmacht, was eine durch imperiale Machtansprüche geprägte Perspektive unterstützt, aber auch Raum bietet, diese auszuhöhlen.

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1 Introduction

British imperial history provided James Gordon Farrell with events that created the backgrounds and settings against which his characters would “undergo” history (Guptara 1982: 728). *Troubles* (T, 1970) takes us to Ireland in the years 1919-1921 to witness how the events preceding Irish independence affect the lives of the Anglo-Irish Spencers, who run a once famous hotel, as well as their guests and the local residents. In *The Siege of Krishnapur* (SK, 1973), Farrell revisits India in 1857 during the rising of Indian soldiers, the sepoys, against the colonial power. *The Singapore Grip* (SG, 1978), by contrast, is set in the 1940s in the Far Eastern metropolis, where the European characters' focus on business and pleasure diverts their attention from World War II. Although the novels are set in colonies, their plots tend to focus on the British characters – which has been read as both typical of the colonial point of view and as its subversion (cf. Ross 2005) –, whereas indigenous characters are assigned far less space and much quieter voices. While this is consistent with the colonial perspective that neglects the indigenous populations, Ferns (1994: 119) stated that the use of voices and silence “becomes in Farrell's hands another tool for” questioning colonial attitudes. Based on Sternberg's (1981) framework for representing polylingualism in texts, my analysis of this “tool” reveals that voices and silence are assigned to indigenous characters according to their loyalty to colonial rule. Different degrees of loyalty can therefore be allocated to different varieties of English as well as indigenous languages, while silence and pre-verbal expression embody threats to colonial superiority, which is undermined throughout the novels. I will first provide an overview of the novels, before very briefly commenting on notions of superiority within the context

of postcolonial studies and presenting my extended version of Sternberg's approach. The term 'indigenous' is used here to refer to the original inhabitants of Ireland, India and Singapore, while my take on the notion of voices covers all utterances, including direct and reported speech, written, spoken and sung modes, as well as elements of pre-verbal and pre-syntactic expression, for example "as sound that is the direct expression of emotion, [...] as sound that is utterance without meaning" (Hampson 1990: 17). Silence, in turn, is the absence of any sound.

2 A Brief Outline of Farrell's Empire Trilogy

In all three novels, a community of mainly British characters residing in a colony is joined by a newcomer from Britain who is eventually made to witness the crisis of colonial rule against the backdrop of ongoing events. In *Troubles*, Major Brendan Archer travels to the deteriorating Majestic hotel to discuss his engagement to Angela Spencer, whose father, Edward, owns the hotel. Once he is there, the Major comes to know the guests, mostly impoverished old British ladies, the Irish staff – among them the eccentric butler Murphy and Séan Murphy – as well as several characters from the nearby town of Kilnalough, for example Sarah Devlin and Dr Ryan who both advocate the Irish cause. He also gets to meet Máire Noonan, an Irish woman whom Edward's son marries and settles down with. Although the Major leaves the hotel, his sense of responsibility makes him return and stay. In *The Siege of Krishnapur*, news of the mutiny among the sepoys forces George Fleury to stay in Krishnapur, where the Collector, Mr Hopkins, and the Magistrate, Mr Willoughby, do their best to provide shelter to those who flee to the residency. Fleury engages in defending the residency by assisting Lieutenant Harry Dunstaple, while an indigenous audience gathers on the far bank of the adjoining river to cheer and celebrate the ongoing spectacle. Hari, the maharajah's son and an enthusiast of Britishness, by contrast, shows his solidarity and – along with his Prime Minister – moves into the residency, which the British can only defend by literally using everything they have. In *The Singapore Grip*, World War II interferes with Walter Blackett's plans for the jubilee of the Blackett & Webb rubber company, as does the death of his partner Mr Webb. To Walter's distress, Mr Webb's son, Matthew, who comes to Singapore, takes little interest in both the business and Walter's daughter Joan, instead falling in love with Vera Chiang, a refugee of Sino-Russian descent. Major Brendan Archer, in turn, has taken residence in Singapore and sets up a Fire Unit of volunteers – among them Chinese expatriate Mr Wu – when the Japanese attack.

3 “[I]f ‘everybody’ meant the natives as well”¹: The View on Indigenous Population(s) and Culture(s) within the Framework of Post-Colonialism

Colonial spaces, like Farrell's settings, are essentially contexts of dominance as the colonial power aims to justify its rule by establishing a difference between itself and the colony (Bhabha 1994: 100). It assigns importance and superiority to everything related to itself construing everything and everyone else as lacking these arbitrarily chosen qualities (Corzo-Duchardt 2015: 407). The colony is therefore established as different from its ruler, as its 'other' (Reckwitz 1996: 122); this 'otherness' moulds the view, arbitrarily directing it at selected aspects or alleged standards in order to legitimise colonial presence as a needed 'beneficial' intervention. Everything questioning or contradicting this view is suppressed making the perspective appear a mirror of reality when in fact it constructs reality as given and true (Corzo-Duchardt 2015: 407; Reckwitz 1996: 121; Bhabha 1994: 153).

Contradictions, however, keep surfacing to disrupt this neatly shaped colonial perspective, necessitating constant adjustment. The alleged superiority and the colonial perspective therefore have to be permanently reclaimed within the steadily evolving context, which faces two challenges: on the one hand, the concept of difference cannot be abolished as doing so would deprive the claim of superiority of its justification and reveal the arbitrariness of the colonial point of view. On the other hand, Bhabha (1994: 122) points out that the image of the inferior 'other' assigns a zeal for copying the coloniser to the indigenous population in order for them to develop into the coloniser's very double, but the 'other' cannot be allowed to become equal and is construed as safely lodged in a constant endeavour to perfectly imitate the coloniser – a project that permanently fails. It is thus perceived, controlled through and authorised by the requirements of the coloniser's view. The 'authorised other's' (Corzo-Duchardt 2015: 405; Bhabha 1994: 122) imitation of the coloniser is an integral but threatening part of the concept: perfect imitation must be avoided as it would abolish all difference – a threat embodied by Vera Chiang's excellent English which irritates the officials (*SG*: 50, see section 5.3) –, while exaggerating the coloniser's features exposes them to ridicule (Bhabha 1994: 123, 153; Sasani 2015: 327).

The little space granted to indigenous characters' voices can be read as them being ignored, denied the right of speech and thus silenced. On the one hand, this complies with the coloniser's perspective; Ferns, on the other hand, reads it as an even stronger reference to oppression and an intentionally limited, selective colonial perception (Ferns 1994: 119). Ezzaher (2003: 11), again, refers to Fanon who interprets the indigenous population's use of the colonizer's language as complying with colonial oppression, but a de-

¹ *SK*: 318.

piction of them deficiently mastering the coloniser's language can also be read as suggesting their inferiority and ridiculing them. For Bhabha, their individual way of speaking the dominant language embodies their constant endeavour to reach the level of native mastery and their permanent failure to attain it. Their speech, nevertheless, contributes linguistic varieties to the coloniser's language, thus disturbing its predominance and questioning its authority.

4 Multilingual Worlds and Polylingualism in Texts

Farrell's settings present the coloniser's language and the language(s) of the indigenous population(s). They qualify as multilingual as the contact between languages is characteristic of multilingual situations (Riehl 2014: 9). Even if such 'contact' means the separation of these languages, it points towards the existence of several tongues which the coloniser's perspective can ignore and silence but not extinguish. They may resurface at any moment to challenge the dominant language, as multilingual situations are not static but change incessantly (Roche 2013: 160). Consequently, they develop, characterised by varying uses of languages and switching between registers, varieties and tongues, depending on the speakers' command of the language(s) and the situation. This can be observed in literature just as in real life, where it forms a focus of sociolinguistic research. In literature, however, the represented multilingual situations differ considerably even from written and thus planned multilingual units of text in real life (Gardner-Chloros & Weston 2015: 183). Sternberg (1981) accounts for this difference by referring to the sociolinguistic dimension of real life as multilingual and employing the term 'polylingual' to denote textually represented language contact (Sternberg 1981: 222). In polylingual texts, usually one language can be distinguished as dominating the text and as the language into which elements representing other languages are translated, at least to some extent. Thus, the representation "may or may not be multilingual" (Taylor-Batty 2013: 40), rendering a "heteroglot experience [...] into a largely monoglot text" (Hampson 1990: 15), a strategy to which Sternberg refers as the homogenising convention. Its counterpart, referential restriction, is a mechanism for eliminating any aspect of polylingualism by restricting "the represented world to the limits of a single, linguistically uniform community whose speech-patterns correspond to those of the implied audience" (Sternberg 1981: 223). Vehicular matching, in contrast, juxtaposes units of text written in different languages (nearly) without any "bridging links, interscenic summary or possibly no more than inverted commas of quotation" (Sternberg 1981: 224), typical, for example, of conference proceedings. Between the poles of vehicular matching and the homogenising convention, Sternberg identifies four strategies of incorporating polylingualism into texts (selective reproduction, verbal transposition, conceptual reflection, and explicit attribution) which provide the framework for looking at the indigenous populations' voices in Farrell's novels.

4.1 Sternberg's Strategies of Incorporating Polylingualism into Texts

Selective reproduction and verbal transposition intersperse the dominant language of the text with elements of other languages which are discernible as different. Selective reproduction refers to the existence of another language by inserting elements which do not require profound knowledge of their source languages – for example the Prime Minister's greeting "Namaste" (*SK*: 83) in the maharajah's palace in Krishnapur – because these elements do not usually convey any crucial information. Furthermore, explanations can be provided by the text as in the case of the explosive in *Troubles*: "In Irish they call the stuff 'Bas gan Sagart' – 'Death without the priest'." (*T*: 420). Verbal transposition, in turn, contributes linguistic interference from all areas ranging from phonology to syntax as well as cultural aspects. Thus it creates utterances which clearly differ from the standard of the dominant language, be it due to ill-formedness or to being marked as non-standard, colloquial, dialect, or even a mere translation of a culturally bound expression, which alludes to yet another language's presence in the background. In *Troubles*, the cook's Irish English is clearly discernible from British English, even if one is not aware of 'divil' being characteristic of Irish English pronunciation (Hickey 2004c: 6): "The divil's below!" (*T*: 366). The same holds true of the overuse of the conditional (Hickey 2007: 145), which might seem unexpected but does not render the maid's question incomprehensible when she "asked if he would be the Major Archer?" (*T*: 20). Idiolect, in turn, marks Hari's speech:

'Very frankly, Mr. Hopkin' (although Hari correctly referred to 'Mr and Mrs Hopkins', he had a habit, distressing to the Collector, of reducing each separately to the singular), 'very frankly, it is all "as clear as mud" to me. Please to explain these questions.' (*SK*: 148)

Conceptual reflection denotes "underlying socio-cultural norms, semantic mapping of reality, and distinctive referential range" (Sternberg 1981: 230) that are contributed to the text. They do not differ from the dominant language, but may appear incongruent or odd and their identification requires "various kinds, degrees and combinations of reading-competence" (Sternberg 1981: 230). Thus the servant "hastening up from the depths of the compound under a black umbrella" may surprise the reader when "he shook it vigorously as if to shake off drops of sunlight" (*SK*: 59), until one decodes this as the imitation of a perfectly normal gesture in British weather conditions transformed to India.

Explicit attribution and the homogenising convention also represent elements of polylingualism in the dominant language, with explicit attribution, however, mentioning the language, for example, in the case of Gaelic (also referred to as Irish in *Troubles*) and "a circle for Irish-speaking people" (*T*: 118), instances of "rapid discussion in Hindustani" (*SK*: 48), the bleeding snake's marks "which [...] seemed to resemble Chinese ideographs" (*SG*: 68) or the servant "who was cooing reprovingly in Hokkien (or in Cantonese, for all Matthew knew)" (*SG*: 265). The homogenising convention, in turn, refers to the exchange of information without mentioning the language, while it is obvious that it

must happen in a different language to the dominant tongue, for example, when Raffles “wasted no time [...] in negotiating for the island with an alarmed native” (SG: 4) upon arriving on Far Eastern soil, when “that wretched maid must have spread the news below stairs” (T: 381) or when “a pamphlet called ‘Read This Alone – And The War Can Be Won’” is issued to the Japanese soldiers (SG: 223). Similarly, Hari probably does not argue in English when he

and his father, the Maharajah, had had a disagreement over the question of loyalty to the British. Hari [...] had insisted on leading the Palace army to their defence [...] He had made a short speech on this topic, summoning the army and the Prime Minister to follow him. (SK: 148)

4.2 Elements of Code-Switching, Pre-Verbal Expression and Silence

Code-switching and thus “the juxtaposition of two languages” within a certain unit of speech (Weston & Gardner-Chloros 2015: 196) can be observed in multilingual situations as well as polylingual literary contexts. Although it is most easily detected when occurring as selective reproduction or verbal transposition, it can be contributed to the text through all of Sternberg’s strategies (Sternberg 1981: 230). Code-switching can bridge lexical gaps in the dominant language and point to a character’s polylingual background and proficiency or to the influence of other voices. Furthermore, it can create comic effects or indicate development as in *The Siege of Krishnapur*, where elements of other languages inserted into the text to furnish the picture of India become less frequent as the focus is closing in on the besieged, as if linguistically mirroring them fighting for their lives and stripping themselves off the objects that represent the civilisation colonial rule has brought to India.

Elements of pre-verbal expression such as laughter and howls as well as silence represent counterpoints of verbal utterances, and they are included into the analysis as they contribute crucial aspects to the representation of the indigenous characters’ voices in the trilogy. Cheers and laughter expressed in the pub in Kilnalough (T: 88) and while watching the siege in Krishnapur (SK: 255) undermine the claim for colonial superiority. The sepoys’ “stomach-turning” howl (SK: 174) is a yet more concrete threat to colonial authority, while the humming of the native Christians, who are turned away from the safety of the residency, again questions the claim of British moral superiority and fiduciary responsibility (SK: 125, 127). In this context, singing to a melody as an embodiment of verbal expression represents the transition to pre-verbal utterances and thus a means of resisting and questioning colonial power. This is mirrored in the natives’ humming as well as in the Kilnalough pub when the local regulars cheer as they take over the singing of the British national anthem. While adopting the language of the coloniser, they even pose as conductors, thus turning the demonstration of superiority into humiliation (Wessel 2016: 137). Silence, again, embodies aspects of the colonial perspective as well as resistance. It

points to the characters being ignored and silenced, but it can also be read as undermining authority through the characters remaining silent rather than using the dominant language.

5 The Voices of the Silenced

Although the indigenous characters are not always heard talking, they do communicate and, at times, exclude the British characters when a “hasty conference of the Chinese” (SG: 173) or “a rapid exchange in Hindustani” (SK: 83) are taking place, or when, in India, the British wonder “how the blessed natives got to hear of it [i.e. unrest among the sepoys] before I did” (SK: 62). The indigenous characters’ use of varieties of the colonial power’s British English points to polylingual proficiency, while the British find themselves at a loss with their monolingual competence. This is exemplified by the Major who “had resolved to cultivate the cook, spend sufficient time with her to get to understand her dialect, accent, or speech-infirmity, whichever it was (he suspected that there might be something wrong with her palate)” (T: 76). To Fleury, likewise, the English of the Indian plain is “not of a sort he was able to understand” (SK: 46) and, during the Fire Unit’s rehearsal, Matthew comically fails to decode Mr Wu’s “inconsistent distinction of /l/ and /r/”, which is typical of Singaporean and South Chinese English (Hickey 2014: 285; Melcher & Shaw 2011: 174):

‘When climbing radder glasp lounds not side of radder,’ explained Mr Wu to Matthew.
‘What?’
‘Glasplungs!’
‘Good heavens! You mean, your own? Or someone else’s?’
‘That’s right,’ said the Major, approaching swiftly. ‘You should always hold the rungs, or the “rounds” as we call them, rather than the frame of the ladder. (SG: 156).

Mr Wu’s Asian English marks him as different from the British, which can be read as construing him as an inferior character or as questioning colonial superiority by contributing another variety to the linguistic standard. Matthew, in turn, is ridiculed by his lack of insight and turned into a ‘funny foreigner’ in his own comfort zone (Taylor-Batty 2013: 69), that is the space where he represents colonial power. This space within the colonial community along with the sphere outside and the sphere of characters wandering between the two constitute the three linguistic spheres that can be distinguished in the texts. They are rooted in colonial settings furnished with a layer of local colour ranging from hardly noticeable in *Troubles* to frequent instances of selective reproduction and thus code-switching to bridge lexical gaps of English in *The Siege of Krishnapur*. This, however, becomes less frequent during the course of the siege (see section 4.2). In *The Singapore Grip*, these elements are limited to a few expressions like “*syce*... you know, chauffeur” (SG: 104) or “*makan* [which] means ‘grub’ by the way” (SG: 112), besides names of places and dishes (SG: 165, 181) and expressions related to “the arts of love” (SG: 408). As the sphere outside the colonial community is shaped by elements of multiple languages, their scarce occurrence in the colonial setting embodies the need to differentiate both spheres.

5.1 The Sphere inside the Colonial Community

The colonial community's space can be viewed as the grounds of the hotel in *Troubles*, the "Residency compound" (SK: 16) in *The Siege of Krishnapur* and the wealthy suburb of Tanglin in Singapore. In *The Singapore Grip*, it can also be perceived as a kind of social space for British characters moving around the town. Within this sphere, life heavily relies on mostly indigenous servants who, in Krishnapur, "defect one by one" (SK: 207). They are talked to (SG: 151, T: 382), "shouted deafeningly to" (T: 158), summoned, ordered (T: 258, 320) and mocked (SK: 61). At times their reaction is rendered – "Yes, Tuan," (SG: 104) – at other times they just "point towards the building" (SG: 151). Often their reaction is not even mentioned, which can be interpreted as both quiet consent to the colonial situation and silent resistance, for example, when Murphy "melted back into the darkness" (T: 363).

The indigenous characters are assigned a voice according to their loyalty to the British and their speech is rendered through the homogenising convention, explicit attribution and verbal transposition, the latter marking the speech as different – a difference that the colonial perspective interprets as inferiority, as mirrored by the Major's hypothesis on the cook's speech (T: 76, see section 5). The Irish servants' speech, however, is in Irish English as revealed by the pronunciation of 'divil', the overuse of the conditional (see section 4.1), fricatives replaced with dental stops – "Fourt' floor" (T: 221) – and the habitual *do* (Hickey 2007: 19), as in: "A gentleman does be at the door" (T: 146). In *The Siege of Krishnapur*, the Sikhs, whose loyalty is repeatedly stressed, speak their own language and provide a translation into a pidgin which, again, can be viewed as different: "'Sahib. Yih achcha jagah nahin!'", one of the Sikhs said to him. 'No good place, Sahib. Come quick.'" (SK: 121). The narrative voice and the British characters use British English when translating similar instances that usually refer to knowledge of India (SK: 110, 126), which can be read as claiming authority not only over the colony but also over the knowledge about it.

The pidgin used by the native pensioners defending the residency (SK: 165), and the speech of the Mohammedans, who are "more reliable than Hindus or native Christians" (SK: 73), is rendered through selective reproduction. The speech of Abdallah, a servant, who "although he enjoyed Mr Willoughby discomfited, was saddened that it should be Hindus who gained advantage over him" (SK: 100) and tells a joke, hardly differs from British English. Eurasian characters, again, are "quietly living" in the compound (SK: 252) and defending the residency as are the indigo planters. They seem to have melted into the crowd of nameless British characters, their loyalty appears to be taken for granted and they are possibly viewed as less inferior than the natives outside. In Singapore, the "warm feeling" ascribed to the Blacketts' older servant mirrors loyalty as "a bond of sympathy between him and Walter when it came to the behaviour of the younger generation" (SG: 55).

Similar to the decreasing frequency of code-switching in *The Siege of Krishnapur*, Irish English in *Troubles* gradually develops into Irish, finding its way from outside, where it is represented by the Irish speaking circle (see section 4.1), into the colonial community, where the linguistic predominance of English is breached when a maid sees one of the girls drunk: “The poor thing is *stōshus!*” (*T*: 349). Irish is further introduced by information about the explosive (see section 4.1) and the song sung by Murphy before burning down the hotel. This final act of linguistic resistance is rendered as selective reproduction without translation as the crucial information consists in the choice of the language (*T*: 439) and places Murphy at the transition to pre-verbal expression, the predominant mode of the Irish characters in the outside sphere. The shifting of Gaelic into the hotel is paralleled by the Sinn Fein entering: while in the beginning, the phantom of a Sinn Feiner is hunted (*T*: 26), the caterer O’Flaherty, “a Sinn Feiner by conviction” (*T*: 376), is later hired for the ball.

The loyalty of the Sikhs also turns out to be limited when they refuse to share the water with the British and try “to dig a well” (*SK*: 360), an event reminiscent of the maharajah’s servant who throws away the glass Fleury has drunk from (*SK*: 85) – both incidents point to attitudes shared by Sikhs and Hindus despite all their differences. Again, the Sikhs’ project is associated with knowledge that could have helped the besieged, had the Sikhs been asked as “they were beginning to shovel up wet earth” (*SK*: 360), which again undermines the colonial claim of the authority over knowledge about the colony.

5.2 The Sphere outside the Colonial Community

The sphere outside the colonial community is characterised by silence, pre-verbal utterances and, in *The Singapore Grip*, by a multitude of different languages “from which an occasional word in English detached itself” (*SG*: 191). In *Troubles* the indigenous population is depicted as ragged (*T*: 174, 386), poor (*T*: 278) and mostly silent, which also holds true for Séan Murphy, who works in the grounds of the hotel and is hardly heard speaking. Moreover Máire whispers in her friend’s ear (*T*: 58), and the women’s argument while searching the dustbins for food goes largely unnoticed. The perception of the Irish as an indistinguishable mass is mirrored by Edward not recognising the maids outside the hotel (*T*: 124) and the Major’s prejudice about “Irish girls” (*T*: 58). The aspect of silence as representing danger and hostility is embodied by the silence that prevails during the attack on Edward (*T*: 255) and that greets the British at the pub (*T*: 88). The fact that Murphy is sent to talk to the locals (*T*: 195) also points to them opposing colonial presence by not speaking. In the pub, however, they humiliate the party from the hotel (see section 4.2).

In India, the native Christians’ humming poses a threat to colonial superiority as do the sepoys’ dreaded “howling warcy” (*SK*: 341) and their “heart-breaking wail” (*SK*: 344) along with the indigenous audience’s laughter and cheer (see section 4.2). Even before

the siege, the landowners unmask the claim of power as hollow by staging a charade of respect:

The landowners remained silent out of polite amazement [...] To spare the Magistrate's feelings they feigned expressions of sorrow, alarm, of despair at the prospect of this coercion... but when the Magistrate had at last ridden away, though not before he was out of earshot, they shouted with laughter, held their sides, and even roiled in the dust in undignified glee. (SK: 99)

Similarly, the claim of military authority is ridiculed when Harry's limited linguistic proficiency turns him into a helpless and comic figure like Matthew (see section 5):

A laborious parley was taking place, Harry's grasp of the language being limited to a few simple commands, domestic and military. He was becoming exasperated and beginning to shout; soldiers are notorious for reacting badly when their will is opposed. Yet though the man flinched slightly at every fresh outburst, he stood his ground. They might have continued like this for some time, Harry shouting, the native flinching [...]. (SK: 45)

The Collector, again, gains some insight into silent resistance and detachment by singing, as displayed by the Hindu crossing the road (SK: 91) and the Prime Minister, who

was singing softly to himself when the Collector came in. [...] He realized that there was a whole way of life of people in India which he would never get to know and which was totally indifferent to him and his concerns. (SK: 248).

The sphere outside the Singaporean colonial community is characterised by spoken and written "English, Tamil, Dutch, Cantonese" (SG: 561) as well as Malay (SG: 174), French and a few instances of Japanese (SG: 254) mirroring the shift from a more clear-cut world order of 'traditional' colonialism to its dissolution and the constant blurring of differences. This is also displayed by the local variety of English that unites elements such as the omission of articles, the absence of *be* and specific use of prepositions typical of Malaysian, Singaporean and Chinese English (Hickey 2004b: 564, 569).

5.3 A Glance at Characters Wandering between Both Spheres

Characters who cross from one sphere to the other, for example Murphy, Hari and Vera, display features of both spheres' predominant forms of communication and therefore reveal the distinction between the colonial power and the indigenous populations to be arbitrary, which clearly disturbs the colonial view: the "most suspicious thing about Miss Chiang [...] was that she was extremely well-educated and spoke excellent English!" (SG: 50). Not even her outward appearance seems to differ greatly from Joan's, moreover "her clothes fitted Miss Chiang to perfection without the least alteration" (SG: 51). In contrast, Hari, who can be regarded as the embodiment of the Indian educated in the British way in Macaulay's sense (Melcher & Shaw 2011: 143), even sharing views with "Fleury's own relations in Norfolk and Devon" (SK: 86), cannot just slip into the other sphere, but is torn between them. He ends up being held hostage by the British, whom he admires so

much. Ironically, this act serves to remind Hari of his inferiority and use him as a shield since the sepoy's are "careful to avoid hitting with their cannons [...] the spot where Hari was quartered" (*SK*: 207). It also unites the aspect of exploiting the indigenous population and the coloniser's hopes to be 'protected' by those exploited. Hari's voice is rooted in the sphere of pre-verbal grunting and wincing (*SK*: 94, 95) as well as in the community's sphere. Indeed, he might be the character with the highest polylingual proficiency in the novel.

In *Troubles*, Murphy's polylingual competence is alluded to as he is "known for speaking seditiously in public houses" (*T*: 186). His speech is interspersed with elements of verbal and pre-verbal expression alike, the latter increasing from "wheezing some information" (*T*: 104) to "laughing hideously" (*T*: 111), smiling, chuckling and leering (*T*: 221, 363, 382), which pre-verbally mirror his gradual shift towards the use of Irish and thus his resistance.

Sarah and Dr Ryan also criticise colonial attitudes in Irish English, which however shows fewer characteristic features than the servants' speech and points to them as being viewed as less different from the British. The Major and Edward, in turn, both temporarily adapt to features of Irish English (*T*: 226, 426), which reveals the notion of superiority encoded in the distinction between varieties to be arbitrary. This also holds true of the Major's speech in *The Singapore Grip*. He adapts to the servant's variety when asking him "Cheong, what thing trouble?" (*SG*: 313) and tries to master a "list of useful Malay phrases" (*SG*: 343) rendered as selective reproduction with a translation (*SG*: 342), thus completely unmaking the difference established between the standard of the colonial power and its 'other'.

6 Conclusions

Despite not always being heard, the indigenous characters in Farrell's novels do indeed speak, however their voices and speech as well as pre-verbal utterances and silence are assigned according to their loyalty to the British or the lack thereof. At the same time, such depiction is sensitive to linguistic varieties and different ethnic or religious backgrounds within the indigenous population. The polylingual situation develops and shifts according to a pattern that associates the indigenous characters' use of a variety of English with their assertion of colonial superiority and loyal consent to colonial rule ranging from assimilating to the British to the point of nearly yet not completely melting into their community (as the Mohammedans, the Eurasians, the planters and the servant using the umbrella (see section 4.1) do) to linguistically marked difference. This difference can be read as disrupting colonial predominance with the indigenous characters' own mother tongues symbolising resistance to the colonial power which, in turn, is threatened by pre-verbal utterances and silences. Not only do Farrell's indigenous populations speak; once the focus turns to them, their speech and their silence also mirror the constant reclaiming

of the position of power by seemingly supporting colonial superiority while, simultaneously, undermining it.

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