With the growing number of international students participating in higher education, Canadian universities are becoming increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse. This diversity affects the relationships and learning that occur between English language learners and speakers. Through interviews, dialogue journals, and a researcher diary, this qualitative study concerns six South Korean students’ English language experiences in a Canadian university. Using Davies and Harré’s (1990) positioning theory and Norton’s (2013) understanding of language and identity, this study looks at students’ positioning in relation to their identity negotiations. By framing student experience through what I term moments of tension, similarities and differences across participant experiences reveal evolving and complex understandings of power in communication and English speaker legitimacy. Specifically, while the students in this study were able to exercise their individual agency, this was a limited practice because they were a part of a greater discourse outside their control that positioned them in particular ways. The results of this study indicate student’s desires to be like a native-speaker (Holliday, 2006) and despite their success in their studies, some could not escape the ESL label (Garcia, 2009). Thus, they were always in the process of becoming an English speaker. This study contributes to a body of knowledge on Second Language Education (SLE) research that draws on poststructuralism as its underlying theoretical framework.