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Raciolinguistics Through a Historical, Global, and Intersectionality Lens

This article first provides a framing of how raciolinguistics exists in the world despite global progress in the past century. Raciolinguistics is then defined within a historical context that leads to Europeanness versus non-Europeanness (white or nonwhite) differentiation, social hierarchies, racial oppression, and modern-day linguistic violence. The second section addresses language education in relation to an additive approach, raciolinguistic approach, or provincializing English. The third section introduces linguistic profiling within Spanish-speaking Latinx communities. In the fourth section, I share some of my experiences as a cis gendered Black man speaking Japanese in Japan and my experiences being a Black man speaking English in the United States. Finally, I include activities for educators and students that can be used to move towards anti-racist teaching and learning environments. In conclusion, there is always action that needs to be taken to resist complacency and to engage with anti-racist pedagogy in classrooms and teacher training.

Keywords: Raciolinguistics, intersectionality, teacher training, English language learner

Introduction

Even as societies and nation-states take steps to create greater access to equitable educational learning environments for students and educators alike, problems such as linguistic profiling, racial discrimination, sexual harassment, and white supremacy continue. These problems will continue and metastasize from the "real world" to the "classroom" unless we as language educators examine, question, and critique the real and perceived identities that we actively or passively construct, depending on our positionality, locale, time, and relation to the people and communities around us.

Over the past 100 years, human beings have made dramatic advances in technology, increased rates of life expectancy, eradicated preventable diseases, and brought millions of people out of poverty. Yet the same systems that have created wealth, amenities, and convenience for some have also widened the wealth gap and digital divide. Insidious capitalistic institutions, which are intertwined with systemic racism, have created conditions that jeopardize the immediate future of human civilization. Although the creation of borders and nation-states in some ways created greater stability and peace when compared to previous systems of governance, the nation-state has also perpetuated nationalism, colonialism, imperialism, and government-sponsored discrimination, and violence. How is it possible that billions of people around the world have access to almost all information that has ever been created in human history and yet there are still wars, conflicts, acts of violence, and hate predicated on race? This article focuses on the concept of raciolinguistics, which examines how language and race are actually co-

dependently intertwined and reliant on each other and how some linguistic styles are considered appropriate and the norm by a dominant group while other linguistic styles are considered deviant.

Methodology

In this article, I apply the raciolinguistics lens to critical reflection and counterstories, and I share activities for educators to deepen both their and their students' understanding of raciolinguistics. To illustrate the contextuality of raciolinguistics and highlight how raciolinguistics is influenced by historical events and cultural contexts, I share my stories from inside and outside the U.S. To humanize the concepts, I compare my own experiences in the U.S. and in Japan as a racialized body, native speaker of English, and as a second language speaker of Japanese. Personal narratives help to clarify complex concepts related to race and language that are otherwise abstract and cognitively inaccessible to many people. As a multiracial and racialized educator who has worked on three different continents, North America, Asia, and Europe, I articulate these varied experiences through the interplay of intersectionality, cultural and historical contexts, and geographic locations.

Purpose

The purpose of this article is for educators to deepen their understanding of raciolinguistics and for educators, particularly monolingual native English-speaking educators, to examine the perpetually shifting, complex, and multiple identities of English-language speakers; identities that are dependent on positionality,[1] geographic location, race, and social relations. To better serve English language learners, educators need to undergo a process of self-reflection and seek discomfort. Through a continual process of self-reflection and embracing discomfort, educators can grow in empathy and face their own biases and privileges thus better enabling educators to serve English Language Learners (ELLs) in their entirety as complete individuals even from the first day of school. Teaching is an act of service and in order to serve others, educators must first examine themselves. Sometimes this requires an uncomfortable process, but it can lead to growth.

Theoretical Framework: Raciolinguistics

To understand raciolinguistics, we must first define race. Race is a social construct that has no basis in biological reality (Hastings & Jacob, 2016). The concept of race emerged and evolved from the capitalist institution of the African slave trade, which involved four continents over the course of more than 400 years. Today *racism* is the residual and pervasive consequence of the invention of race. It is entrenched in every aspect of our lives—whether we acknowledge it or not. *Linguistics*, in its simplest form, is the study of any component and overlapping characteristics of all languages.

Raciolinguistics aims to bridge the imagined divergence between race and language. A more detailed definition of raciolinguistics is "to race language and language race (Alim, 2009)—that is, to view race through the lens of language and vice versa—in order to gain a better understanding of language and the process of racialization." (Alim et al., 2016, pp. 1–2). Raciolinguistics aims to examine the relationship between language and race, constructs of race, Blackness, and whiteness, and their relation to systems of colonialism and institutional racism that benefit from these social constructs. Some remnants of these constructs are alive and well in educational policies that strategically disenfranchise Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, purposely including or excluding certain historical narratives and voices from textbooks, and in the overall pedagogical framing and standardization of what is considered "good" and "bad."

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[1] Positionality refers to how over time, a person's identity and position in society changes and is fluid which grants or denies them access and power in society.

The term *raciolinguistics* was first introduced and became popularized in 2015 by two academic scholars, Nelson Flores and Jonathon Rosa. In academic literature it is referred to as both a "perspective" and an "ideology." Flores and Rosa present the term *raciolinguistic perspective* "which theorizes the historical and contemporary co-naturalization of language and race" (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 621). They define five vital components of a raciolinguistic perspective:

1. historical and contemporary colonial co-naturalizations of race and language;
2. perceptions of racial and linguistic difference;
3. regimentations of racial and linguistic categories;
4. racial and linguistic intersections and assemblages; and
5. contestations of racial and linguistic power formations.

Alim, et al. (2016) writes, "What does it mean to speak as a racialized subject in America?" This question underscores raciolinguistic goals to address: how the language of racialized subjects in America is often devalued, considered illegitimate, and in need of being corrected by a white perceiving and listening subject. According to Rosa and Flores (2017), a raciolinguistic perspective aims to interpret the exchange of race and language within the historical context of nation-states, colonial governments, the hierarchies between whites and non-whites, and colonizers and the colonized. Raciolinguistics examines the continual reemergence of historical institutions of colonialism that differentiate "between Europeanness and non-Europeanness-and, by extension, whiteness, and non-whiteness" (p. 622). Through the invention of race, Europeanness became the zenith while non-Europeanness became the nadir. This positioning and process of socially constructed identities allowed Europeans to justify the colonization of non-Europeans.

The social construct of race supported and/or created the following ideologies: center and periphery (whiteness being positioned at the center and all non-whites positioned on the periphery), racialized top/bottom social hierarchies, human and subhuman, appropriate and deviant, perfect monolingual English speaker, an imperfect bilingual long-term English learner, and even *semilingualism* or *languagelessness* (Rosa, 2016). Consequently, from indigenous populations in the colonization of the United States to the enslavement of African slaves to Latino/a students who are bilingual, or "imperfect" bilingual long-term English learners or "perfect" monolingual English speakers, language has been used to define and subjugate these racialized bodies and communities through the "white gaze" and the white "speaking and listening subject." (Flores & Rosa, 2015, pp. 150–151). In addition, a raciolinguistic perspective recognizes that even for monolingual, non-European English speakers, there are racist, oppressive institutions that prohibit and limit access to resources and social mobility.

Flores and Rosa (2015) introduce the "white gaze" and the "white speaking and listening subject." These terms represent "an ideological position and mode of perception that shapes our racialized society" (p. 151). The white seeing, listening, and speaking subject is the subjective standard to which the language of non-whites can be perpetually judged and critiqued because there is a mythical, perfect, monolingual speaker of English which is always white (typically middle class and cis gendered male) and is expressed by Europeaness. The raciolinguistic perspective examines the notion that whiteness equals normative, appropriate, purity, standard English, and even human. Thus, racialized bodies are always deviant, impure, deficient in English, and subhuman.

Raciolinguistics and supporting perspectives take into account history, colonialism, slavery, hierarchies, and race as a social construction. The purposeful delineation of race and language and the construction and categorization of race only perpetuate discriminatory actions and covert forms of

institutionalized racism in classrooms, boardrooms, and in all spaces. An example of institutionalized racism in an educational context is in Carl Brigham's designing of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, or SAT. Carl Brigham realized "that what his tests showed, instead of intelligence, was the test taker's ability to speak English, attend good primary schools, and demonstrate a strong familiarity with white culture" (Oluo, 2020). It is through investigating the connections between race and language that the raciolinguistic perspective aims to deconstruct white supremacy and reposition the "white gaze" on itself. Counter-narratives that are rooted in raciolinguistics are critical in questioning and dismantling anti-Black linguistic racism.

Language Education—Reemergence of Whiteness and Non-Whiteness

Flores and Rosa (2015) illustrate how appropriateness-based approaches to language education are implicated in the reproduction of racial normativity by expecting language-minoritized students to model their linguistic practices after the white speaking subject, despite the fact that the white listening subject continues to perceive these students' language use in racialized ways. Bear in mind, "it is well-known that Whites will hear 'accent' even when objectively, none is present, if they can detect any other signs of a racialized identity" (Hill, 1998).

My own language use, as a Black boy, was first subjugated to racialization when I was a young child. My best friend in elementary school was Oscar (pseudonym). We were the only two Black boys in our 3rd grade classroom, and we were conveniently seated together in the back corner of our classroom. That was 1987. A third Black boy, Karl (pseudonym), became a friend of ours in speech therapy class. From 3rd grade to 5th grade, Oscar, Karl, and I were the only three Black boys at our elementary school in Santa Monica, California, and we were also the only three boys who were conveniently identified as having speech problems. While other children might have felt a stigma of going to speech therapy class, I always looked forward to these sessions, because it was a time I could just relax. While other kids were playing or studying something else, the three of us were practicing our "r" sounds, "s" sounds, and combination sounds. Oscar was a mischievous skinny class clown with a big grin. He could make anyone laugh at any time and about almost anything. Karl was a thick, and at times, serious kid who dominated any sport he played. He could kick the ball the highest and throw the ball the farthest. And I'd like to say that I was just a quiet and amiable boy who chose to play the flute because it was easy to carry. I was pragmatic. I could read music and play a woodwind instrument at 7, but I couldn't pronounce the letter "r" in the precise way they, the state, the school district, and teachers, wanted me to pronounce it. Or was this a perceived differentiation where none existed and a way to impose a racial identity upon the three Black boys in the elementary school? The three of us cracked jokes as we took turns having our voices recorded on magic sheets of paper that went through a recording machine. I am sure we made our speech pathologist earn her salary. Although we did not have the vocabulary to clearly articulate it, even as children, Oscar, Karl, and I were keenly aware of the racial optics and found humor in the fact that the three of us, the only Black boys at school, needed speech therapy. The humor that we developed and used during our speech therapy sessions was our playful way of coping, and possibly even resisting and opposing the linguistic critique of how we pronounced specific sounds in the English language, which was the first and only language that we spoke in our homes. Upon reflection in my adulthood, I wondered if I was placed in this special speech class based on the racial biases of the teachers and the school system, and was the differentiation in our pronunciation created by the same teachers and school system that was responsible to confirm our racial identities as Black boys?

What are the odds that the only students who had speech deficiencies were also the only three Black boys at the school? This was not a coincidence nor was it a mistake. This was an example of how raciolinguistics manifests in the mundane interactions of everyday life. The way three little Black boys

pronounced the letter "r" and the letter "s" may have been unconsciously perceived by our teachers, the school, and even the state, as a rejection of white communication norms and standards. Thus, not only the color of our skin, but our voices and speech patterns posed a threat to the invisibility and normalcy of whiteness. Our language, and maybe even our existence, were seen as deficient. Surprisingly, I experienced the opposite of this in my adulthood when speaking Japanese as a second language in Japan. I was scrutinized less as an American and speaker of Japanese as a second language in Japan than I was as a Black male native English speaker in the United States.

In high school, for example, different English teachers thought that English was my second language because of my "word choice" or "sentence structure" when writing papers. Yet, I was born and raised in the United States, and I, unfortunately, grew up in a monolingual English household and, for the most part, monolingual English-speaking communities.

Raciolinguistics can be applied to education, because there is a constant tension between language usage, imagined and real identities, power dynamics between different languages and users of those languages, and the construction of race. Whether one examines the education and experiences of long-term English learners, heritage language learners, or Standard English learners, raciolinguistic ideologies affect all of these groups (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

Whether It's the Raciolinguistic Perspective or Provincializing Approach, Students Are Racialized

Though not identical, there are parallels between the raciolinguistic perspective's critique and limitations of an additive approach to bilingual education and Suhanthie Motha's idea of *provincializing* English. An additive approach is a component of multicultural education and it aims to add or include the narratives, experiences, and accomplishments of racialized and minoritized groups in teaching and curriculum. Provincializing English seeks to support in learners and teachers a critical analysis of the ways in which language is racialized and colonized (Motha, 2016). It provides an understanding of how different varieties of English and other languages are ascribed different meanings and situated among networks that reinforce class and economic divisions of power within a history of slavery and colonization (Motha, 2016). A raciolinguistic approach and provincializing English both require the acknowledgment of history, positionality, and location to be anti-racist. Rosa, Flores, and Motha all recognize that language is racialized and colonized and that this perpetuates passive racist behavior and systems of inequality. Evidence of this can be seen in inequitable grading practices and standardized tests that privilege white ways of speaking and knowing, thereby unfairly and intentionally creating academic barriers to historically marginalized BIPOC communities. Language-minoritized students are expected to adopt the linguistic practices and norms of the white speaking subject, even though language-minoritized students are racialized by and will still be seen as deficient through the "white gaze."

Racism in Systems or Not:
Black and Speaking English in America vs. Black and Speaking Japanese in Japan

Like raciolinguistics, *translanguaging,* using multiple languages at once to convey a thought*,* puts into question the standardized conventions that schools teach and test. Additionally, both raciolinguistics and translanguaging challenge the socially constructed hierarchies of languages. As long as schools and boards of education use language as differentiating identity markers, the power remains with these institutions which support social hierarchies that are rooted in a dichotomy of dominance and subordination, standard and deviant, and in the case of the United States, whites and non-whites.

Linguistic Profiling

A closely related concept to raciolinguistics is *linguistic profiling*. In a 2019 TEDx Talk, *The Significance of Language Profiling*, Dr. John Baugh stated, "Linguistic profiling occurs when a person is denied access to otherwise available goods or services by phone, sight unseen, based exclusively on the sound of their voice . . . meaning, you differentiate based on sound and you act in a discriminatory way." The consequences of linguistic profiling extend far beyond commercial services or products being denied or professional barriers.

In the classroom, linguistic profiling may present itself as Black children using Black Language (BL) or African American Vernacular English (AAVE), for instance saying: "ax" instead of "ask," "ain't" instead of "isn't," he "be" instead of he "isn't," and being corrected so that they fit in and use White Mainstream English (WME), considered "standard" English. This racialization of "standard" English centers whiteness and WME while at the same time promoting anti-black linguistic racism. *Anti-black linguistic racism* refers to the linguistic violence, persecution, dehumanization, and marginalization that Black Language (BL) speakers endure when using the language in schools and in everyday life (Baker-Bell, 2020). As far as language education, this framework suggests that only a language pedagogy that centers Blackness can dismantle anti-black linguistic racism and white linguistic hegemony (Baker-Bell, 2020).

Linguistic profiling occurs within Spanish-speaking Latinx communities as well. Some children become bilingual, and on the other hand, in some Spanish-speaking Latinx households, there are parents who see speaking Spanish, or even a Spanish accent, as a way for racism to be used against them and their children. Consequently, they stop using Spanish in order to assimilate into the larger hegemonic English-speaking society, and today you can find Latinx children who became monolingual English-speaking students. Despite the effort of some Latinx Spanish-speaking parents to try to protect their family from linguistic profiling, these monolingual, English-speaking Latinx children are sometimes placed in ELL classes, and these children miss vital time with their fellow classmates who are learning reading and math skills. The frequency of this mistake during the school day differs among communities in California and New York versus communities in Texas, Florida, or Vermont because of the geographic locations, access or limitation to resources, and the diversity of the communities. My grandfather, an Afro or Black Cuban, was born in Cuba and spoke Spanish growing up, immigrated to the United States, and learned to speak English when he was young. When he had children of his own, he only spoke to his children in English. My African American father and his siblings became monolingual English speakers. My grandfather, right or wrong, being Black and his children being Black, knew that his children would face racial profiling and linguistic profiling. Although he couldn't control the Blackness of his children, he could control what language they spoke or didn't speak at home. This story of language and identity erasure is all too common for those who are racialized. Those who are not racialized are privileged to acknowledge and even embrace their linguistic and cultural identities. Intersectionality is like a Venn diagram that weaves together different forms of privileges and oppressions that create an identity at a specific place and point in time. Whether my grandfather thought about it or not, his identity as a Cuban immigrant, a member of a socioeconomic working class, and a Black man who was an English language learner and native Spanish speaker, were all factors that contributed to how he navigated the United States in professional and public spaces as well as in private spaces as a father and a husband.

Instead of racial profiling, according to Boutte, Earick, and Jackson (2021), pro-Black linguistic policies objectives are to promote greater linguistic nuance and diversity in classrooms and beyond in other social, cultural, and political spaces. The goal of pro-Black linguistic policies is to facilitate the pluralization of classrooms and in larger societies. There is a need to adopt pro-Black linguistic policies and practices. With that in mind, they write:

Anti-racist Black language pedagogues welcome and teach about fluidity in language rather than teaching that WME should be used in formal spaces and AAL relegated to informal spaces. Using pro-Black pedagogies, both languages would be viewed as co-parallel languages which could be simultaneously used in the same settings (code-meshing). Indeed, a dynamic interplay between AAL and WME should occur. Using critical discourse analyses of President Barack Obama's use of language, Alim and Smitherman (2012) demonstrated his fluency with code-meshing as well as the verbal dexterity found among Black youth. (p. 236)

If the ideas of fluidity in language and code-meshing from the quote above were considered and applied by my grandfather (and countless other immigrants) as he raised his children in the United States, it is quite possible that his children, my father, aunts, and uncles, would be bilingual instead of erasing a part of their linguistic and cultural histories and identities and replacing them with only the dominant language, English. However, that may not have been a safe option because of the linguistic racism and violence they would have likely faced.

A Vacation from Racism:
In Japan, I Was a Foreigner, in Macedonia, I Was an American, and in America, I Am Black

Having had my written and spoken English corrected countless times by teachers and peers alike in the United States, it was an unexpected experience to have my Japanese communication skills praised even though it was a second language for me. "*Nihongo wa jouzu desu ne*!" and "*Nihongo wa pera pera ne*?" are phrases that I heard countless times throughout my time in Japan. These phrases mean, "You speak Japanese well!" and "You're fluent in Japanese, right?" What is interesting and amusing is that I heard these phrases within my first year in Japan when I spoke very little and very basic Japanese. I also heard these phrases right after meeting Japanese people and after only saying a simple sentence or two in Japanese with grammatical or vocabulary mistakes and a clear non-Japanese accent. Regardless of my accent and obvious mistakes when speaking, Japanese people (with the exception of some sassy elementary, junior high, and high school students) rarely openly criticized how I spoke Japanese and this is an example of how my language was received and interpreted based on a Japanese cultural context.

One such encounter involved my Japanese being mocked by high school students in Japan in 2015. I was asked to be a substitute teacher for several days at a public technical high school because the foreign English teacher who usually worked there was sick. At this point in time, I had lived in Japan for over seven years, and I was an intermediate-high speaker of Japanese; my listening comprehension abilities were at least at the same level as my speaking abilities. Since there is a small percentage of foreigners, a smaller percentage of western foreigners, and an even smaller number of Black foreigners in Japan and in that prefecture, in particular, it was quite unusual for the students to see an American speak so well in Japan and in their class. The vast majority of students at this technical high school were boys. One class I taught had around 40 students with maybe only three girls in the class. To begin the class, my Japanese counterpart allowed her students to ask me questions, ideally in English but also in Japanese, and she said that I could respond in English or in Japanese if I felt comfortable doing so. The first student asked me a question in Japanese, so I responded in Japanese. I don't recall the question, but the class was surprised that I both understood the question posed in Japanese and the fact that I could reply to the question in Japanese. Another student asked me a question in Japanese, but this time the student asked me a question using a fake, "hyper foreign accent," most likely based on the fact that I spoke Japanese with an accent. As he asked the question, many of the boys in the classroom started to laugh. They laughed, not because of the question he asked me, rather because of the *fake accent* that he used in asking the question. At this moment, possibly unknowingly, this student had weaponized my accent and used it

against me. In some ways, it was a tense moment. My Japanese counterpart looked at me apologetically. I paused, smiled, let the laughter die out, and I responded to his question in Japanese. However, I took a chance, leaned into my accent, and I spoke Japanese with a "hyper foreign accent," just as this student had asked me his question. Once again, the class started to laugh. However, I was in control of the students' laughter because I leveraged my accent to my advantage instead of letting my accent be leveraged against me. After answering the question in this satirical and stereotypical way, I returned to speak Japanese in my natural accented way and made it clear to the student who asked me the question, and to the rest of the class, that an accent does not equal ignorance. And I told all of them in Japanese that if they spoke English, all of them would speak with a Japanese accent, and if they were not in Japan, they would be foreigners. In this brief exchange with this class, I had turned my accent, which was initially used against me, back on the class. This teachable moment helped them to shift their thinking about accents, positionality, and contextuality.

Although people in Japan were sometimes surprised that I could speak Japanese, as stated above, the process of learning Japanese evolved and took a lot of time, energy, and patience. Especially when I was at the beginning or intermediate stages of learning Japanese, some Japanese people simplified their language, or I may have asked (in Japanese) for someone to use easier vocabulary and to not use a formal style of language called *Keigo* so that I could better understand what was being said to me.

Although every conversation in Japanese was challenging for various reasons, these were equally rich and rewarding experiences because the Japanese interlocutors were willing to meet me where I was linguistically and slow their pace, thus allowing me to understand more, and be more connected to the local community that I called home. As I continued to learn Japanese, I could relate on some level to what ELLs have to do to achieve some level of English communication and comprehension competency. I believe my experiences of learning Japanese have contributed to my being a more empathetic TESOL educator than if I hadn't had the challenges of living in Japan and learning Japanese as a second language.

Typically, when a Japanese person critiqued me when I spoke in Japanese, it was done in very specific cases when I used a word that had a radically different meaning than I realized, and/or it could be considered extremely offensive or rude, so I was corrected in those moments. In most situations, however, Japanese people may have remained silent and abstained from openly critiquing my Japanese-speaking abilities, because they clearly recognized me as not being Japanese and being a foreigner in Japan. Therefore, the accent I had and the mistakes I made when speaking Japanese were considered acceptable and possibly even interpreted as "cute" and/or endearing by some Japanese people. When Japanese people, who I did not know, spoke "*at* me," quite often they said, "*Gaikokujin da*!" or "*Gaijin da*!" or "*Sei ga takai*!" The first two phrases mean, "There's a foreigner!" with the second sentence holding a slightly derogatory connotation. The third sentence means, "That person is tall!" On rare occasions, Japanese people said, "Kokujin da!" or "There's a Black person!" Usually, this phrase was used by Japanese children, and the term "*kokujin,*" or "Black person," is not at all a derogatory Japanese term.

It is easier to be a foreigner in Japan than it is to be Black in America. This does not mean that there is no racism or xenophobia or linguistic profiling in Japan because there is. However, these social and cultural problems do not manifest the same way in Japan as they do in the United States. On Japanese television programs, for example, the depiction of non-Japanese people is often one-dimensional, simplistic, and the American or Chinese accent that people speak in Japanese is often exaggerated to a point that the accent itself is the source of humor for the Japanese listening and watching audience. In this case, and in this context, the normative "white gaze" is replaced with the "Japanese gaze" and the "Japanese listening subject." As stated earlier, the "Japanese gaze" and the "Japanese listening subject"

typically did not include demeaning, offensive, or threatening language or conversations that were prevalent in verbal micro-aggressive statements and or conversations that were harder to deal with in America.

Being a foreigner in Japan was a vacation from racism for me for many reasons. My American accent and the way I spoke Japanese were not questioned or seen as deficient. When I spoke with Japanese people face to face, they communicated with me as their equal and did not speak to me as an inferior. Although my Blackness was not always acknowledged in Japan, my Blackness was not seen as threatening by my Japanese neighbors, colleagues, and even strangers, as my Blackness often is perceived by others in the United States. Although Japan has a history of 20th century imperialism in Asia, the United States has a history of slavery and institutionalized racism for centuries. These two nations have two different historical trajectories that position me radically differently as a Black man.

Just as my blackness is interpreted differently depending on geography and cultural context, so is whiteness. My predecessor, in my first position in Japan, was a man from Quebec, Canada, with blond hair and blue eyes, and he was white. My Japanese neighbors and colleagues often mistakenly called me by his name when I first arrived. I initially found the confusion by my Japanese neighbors and colleagues both fascinating and perplexing. I often thought, "How is it that my Japanese neighbors and colleagues keep confusing me with a white man? I am a Black man. We look nothing alike." In time, I realized that it wasn't that my Japanese neighbors didn't see that I was Black or that my predecessor was white. My Japanese neighbors and colleagues saw both of us as non-Japanese and as foreigners. Our status as foreigners in Japan was the identity marker that trumped all other identities, at least in the eyes and minds of most Japanese people. In Japan, I was a foreigner, first and foremost. Based on a decade of experiences of living and working in Japan, I would rank some of my apparent identity markers for how Japanese people identified me as follows: 1) Foreigner 2) Tall 3) American 4) Black. If I were to rank some of my apparent identity markers for how most Americans would identify me, I am confident that my Blackness would be first or second on this list and not fourth, and similarly, my Canadian predecessor would be identified as white. This story about a Black American and white Canadian identities being interpreted and flattened to simply "foreigner" by Japanese in Japan demonstrates the relationship between intersectionality and contextuality.

Black in America: An Impossible Balancing Act

The experiences of being accepted as a Black man in Japan, were counter to my daily experience of being Black in America. The first and dominant factor in identifying me and other Blacks in America, no matter your gender, light-skinned or dark-skinned, proficient English speaker or not, you are identified as Black with all the preconceived critiquing, judging, and categorizing that encompasses being Black. While living in the U.S., I experienced comments such as:

> "What are you? But where are you really from? Were you born in the United States? You are so very articulate. You don't talk black. But you're not *Black* Black. He is not like the rest. He's different. Stop acting white! He's an Oreo."

These statements and questions are just a few examples that demonstrate stereotypical constructs of race, language, and identity. The notions and assumptions of Blackness, according to the white gaze and white listening subject, are at odds with and even diametrically opposed to the realities of being Black in America. As a Black person in the United States, one is caught in between being considered "too Black" and "not Black enough," depending on the social context. What level of performance is needed to be accepted in white America? What qualifiers determine my Blackness, and

who determines those? If, as a Black person in America, I speak in a way that is disarming and in a "formal" way, does that make me less Black in the eyes of whites because of the stereotypes they hold? And on the other hand, would some Black people consider me acting "white" if I spoke in a "formal" way?

To be white and to express oneself as white in America is considered normal, average, and the standard. Whereas racialized groups and bodies in the United States are scrutinized, monitored, and marginalized for everything from the clothes that are worn to how one fashions their hair and to the words that are used and how they are used.

Conclusion

The late South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." Similarly, if TESOL educators and all educators do not engage in discomfort, pull back the curtain to examine the past and the present, self-critique, self-examine, build empathy and acknowledge the complex lives and rich experiences of minoritized speakers and ELLs of diverse linguistic variances, then we will fail before we even begin. To take it one step further, under a different contextuality and positionality, the teacher should become the student and the student should become the teacher. Through personal reflection and examining how different identities and life experiences interact with each other, we can become better educators. At some point, we must ask ourselves, "How can we examine the intersectionality of different identities and life experiences so that we become better educators?" Raciolinguistics has the potential to not only examine, but also to disrupt some systems of oppression: racism, sexism, patriarchy, colonialism, and classism. ELLs, regardless of gender, race, nationality, or country of origin, must constantly traverse, balance, and navigate multiple identities and realities, some projected by the self and some constructed by the society at large. By doing the following activities, educators will be able to better understand the realities of ELLs and be better prepared to have honest conversations about race, power, and privilege.

Activities for Educators and Students

The following is a list of questions and activities that educators can use to self-critique and examine the past and present. One overarching, broad purpose that these activities share is to help participants change their view of internalized and institutionalized racism. It is my hope that these activities will help not only TESOL educators, but all educators to be honest with themselves and their peers, and then take the necessary steps to be more empathetic anti-racist educators. Since educators are also students of anti-racist work, all of the following activities can be used for educators in teacher trainings, as well as in TESOL classrooms with ELLs. These activities require an advanced level of English vocabulary, comprehension, and oral communication skills. The following activities alone will not change the systems of internalized and institutionalized racism in the classroom because anti-racist pedagogy requires a constant and active state of examining, questioning, and reimagining, and not just passively resisting or opposing. However, by engaging in these activities, we can actively question, confront, and disrupt systems of oppression. These activities are relatively simple, but they give students and educators alike permission to have conversations about intersectionality and multiple identities. Although these conversations may not come easily to start or to facilitate, our ELL students want them. Furthermore, we, as TESOL educators have to facilitate these conversations because it is necessary to disrupt anti-Black linguistic racism that benefits from silence and invisibility.

Mapping My Personal Identity

Audience: Students or Teachers

Goal: This activity can serve as a starting point to help participants identify unexpected connections and build community after discovering they have similar characteristics and life experiences.

Description: This is an ideal activity to do on the first day of class so that students can recognize that other students who may ostensibly seem and appear different, may actually have similar characteristics and life experiences. This is a relatively low-stakes and low-pressure activity that can serve as a starting point to help participants identify unexpected connections and to build community. It is especially necessary for participants of different racial, gender, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds to build trusting and intimate, but professional relationships before discussing more complex topics and engaging in activities that address structural racism. If doing this activity with educators, it would be ideal to group adults from an organization who identify differently, usually do not interact with each other, or who hold different responsibilities.

1. Pull out a notebook. (Make sure it's a notebook you'll want to keep coming back to, one that you can carry around with you.) For the next five minutes, write down everything you can think of that makes you who you are. You're creating a list of your identities.

   Example: I am…

Cis female	An English speaker	Stubborn	Bread baker
Black biracial	A sister	Resistant	Glasses wearer
Light skinned	Curly haired	Optimistic	Thin
A twin	Allergic	A creator	A drama kid
A daughter	Always cold	A chocolate lover	An extrovert
Tall	A reader	Freckled	

2. Create your identity map. Grab a piece of plain paper or continue in your notebook. Write your name in the center and, from there, place your identities all around you. Feel free to illustrate as this is your map.

Source: Jewell, T., & Duran, D. (2020). *This Book Is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, And Do the Work*. Clarion Books.

Social Identity Wheel

Audience: Students or Educators

Goal: 1) To encourage students/educators to consider their identities critically and how their identities are more or less keenly felt in different social contexts; 2) To illuminate how privilege operates to normalize some identities over others; and 3) To sensitize students/educators to their shared identities with their classmates as well as the diversity of identities in the classroom, building community and encouraging empathy.

Description: Whether it is with students or educators, this activity should be done after the activity, *Mapping My Personal Identity* (see above). Participants need to have an established level of trust before doing this activity. Let participants choose who to do the activity with. The facilitator can encourage

them to do the activity with a friend. The facilitator should also make it clear that participants only talk about the social identity markers that they feel comfortable talking about with others.

Option A: This can be done as an independent activity where students answer the questions on their own and then the facilitator lead a whole-class discussion.

Option B: The facilitator can post the different social identity categories around the room and have participants go through the questions on the handout, moving to the identity that best answers the question. Participants can then discuss with each other who chose the same identity. The facilitator can then lead a debrief after the activity.

Option C: In combination with Option A or B, have participants complete the *Personal Identity Wheel* as well. Review Social Identity Groups, which is part of the Social Identity Wheel and is a vital to providing context and clarity when completing the Social Identity Wheel. As a class, note additional examples of the different social identities presented.

Social Identity Groups may include, but are not limited to the following: Gender, Sex, Race, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Religion/Spirituality/Faith, Social Class, Age, (Dis)ability, Nation(s) of Origin and/or Citizenship, Tribal or Indigenous Affiliation, and Body Size/Type

1. Students will answer the five questions:
   a. What identities do you think about most often?
   b. What identities do you think about least often?
   c. What identities would you like to learn more about?
   d. What identities have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself?
   e. What identities have the greatest effect on how others perceive you?
2. Why is it important to critically reflect on our identities?
3. What is the value in completing activities like this in our class?

Source: Adapted for use by the Program on Intergroup Relations and the Spectrum Center, University of Michigan.

Self-Critique Questions for Educators

Audience: Educators

Goal: The goal is for educators to begin to identify gaps and blind spots in how they teach, design curriculum, interact with students, and make appropriate changes.

Description: This activity requires that educators get comfortable being uncomfortable. Educators should ask themselves these questions at the start of a new term or whenever they are about to work with a new group of students. Ideally, educators should find a quiet space and set a timer for 30 minutes to write out their answers. Educators should write down the first things that come to mind and write without self-censorship no matter what surfaces. This honest self-reflection is critical for educators to move beyond the status quo of their pedagogy.

1. How am I acknowledging my implicit biases?
2. Am I aware of how internalized racism impacts my teaching?
3. What am I doing to acknowledge the history and consequences of colonialism and institutionalized racism and its impact on students, in particular students of color?

4. How does my curriculum and teaching style examine and include the experiences and realities of all of my students?
5. What can I do differently to grade with equity?
6. What am I doing to make students feel included and safe?
7. How can I teach every student and not just some students?
8. What assumptions do I have about students, particularly racialized groups?
9. Do I have any friends who look like the students that I teach? If not, what can I do to change that?
10. Do I make student groups diverse, or do I segregate students?
11. Am I intentional in putting myself in uncomfortable social spaces so that I learn and grow as an educator, or do I reside and retreat to my comfort zone?

The Student I Least Want to Teach/The Person I Least Want to Be

Audience: Educators and Students

Goal: Build empathy for students who may be seen to have disadvantages academically, socially, or otherwise. Further, it can highlight the importance of support systems for all students.

Purpose: 1) Change views of internalized and institutionalized racism and 2) to stimulate small and large group discussion about what it means to be in a minority group. It helps get "stereotypes" out in the open so that they can be discussed. Also, to consider what mitigating factors might lessen the impact of being in that group. This lesson can build empathy for students who may be seen to have disadvantages academically, socially, or otherwise. Further, it can highlight the importance of support systems for all students.

Description: Whether this activity is done with a group of educators or students, since this activity involves a level of vulnerability that many may find intimidating, it should not be done at the start of a training or on the opening days of a new term. The participants should first develop some trust relationships among each other. It may even be better to have participants group off according to how they racially identify themselves.

Directions:

1. Print out the following statements: a) Single Mom in mid-30's with two small children and a full scholarship; b) New student from South America who doesn't know anyone at school or in the neighborhood; c) African American student who went to a predominantly Black high school; d) Wheelchair-using student who is a senior computer science major; e) Gay student with a good support system on campus.
2. Post signs with the statements in different areas of the room.
3. Ask participants to walk around and read the signs then stand behind "the student they would least want to be."
4. Once participants are at their selected locations, have them discuss with other people in their group why they chose the specific "The student I least want to teach/The person I least want to be."
5. After several minutes of small group discussion, go around and ask for at least one member of each small group to explain their choice to the entire group.
6. Repeat this process with a new task and get people to stand beside the person they would most want to be.

7. Ask each group to discuss the emotional components of their choice. Ask them to discuss the relationship between their choice and their stereotypes. What categories might be useful?

Source: Activity adapted from the University of Houston, Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

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