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Authors

Bryan, Kisha

Romney-Schaab, Mary

Cooper, Ayanna

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The Illusion of Inclusion: Blackness in ELT

The field of TESOL has experienced a renewed interest in the role of race in language teaching and learning within the context of the recent “racial reckoning” in the US. As a result, the field has seen a plethora of DEI position statements, initiatives, and publications on race, racism, and anti-racism over the past two years. However, the persistence of linguistic, racial, and cultural hegemony, bias, discrimination, linguisticism, and marginalization leads us to ask whether inclusion is an illusion. In answering this question, we describe the effects of this illusion in two areas: ELT curriculum and materials (Grant & Wong, 2008) and faculty hiring practices (Romney, 2010). With critical race theory and raciolinguistics as frameworks, we discuss the policies and practices that continue to marginalize Black TESOL professionals and disadvantage Black pre-service teachers and English learners. We conclude the essay with recommendations for effective DEI and actionable allyship.

Keywords: anti-racism, critical race theory, diversity equity and inclusion (DEI), raciolinguistics, race

Introduction

There has been a long tradition of scholarship that examines the implications of race, racism, bias, and hegemony in education. However, it is of recent that the fields of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and second language pedagogies (SLP) have begun publishing and promoting research that apply race-critical lenses to language teaching and learning. Research that addresses the language education-race nexus has waxed and waned over the years. The murder of George Floyd, however, seems to have been the impetus for a renewed interest in the role of race and social justice in language pedagogy.

In addition to the myriad position statements calling for an end to anti-Black racism, special journal issues were (re)released; new calls for paper and grant proposals to study anti-Black racism were published; and social justice-themed conferences, webinars and Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI)-related initiatives were carried out—all in an attempt highlight the long existing problem of race(ism) in language and literacy education (Bryan & Gerald, 2020).

Curtis and Romney (2006) and Kubota and Lin (2006) are seminal works that highlight the need for critical discussions of race in (English) language teaching, and there is burgeoning public scholarship that focuses specifically on English learners of African descent (Bryan et al., 2019; Bryan, 2020; Cooper & Ibrahim, 2020). Von Esch, et al. (2020) provides the most recent (and extensive) analysis of research on

race and language teaching. They highlight five interconnected themes within race and English language teaching (ELT) scholarship: a) standard language ideology and racial hegemony (Lippi-Green, 2012; Malsbury, 2014; Nero & Stevens, 2018; Orzulak, 2015); b) the idealized native speaker with racial labeling (Grant & Lee, 2009; Nero, 2006; Rivers & Ross, 2013; Taylor-Mendes, 2009; Yamada, 2015); c) racial hierarchies of languages and language speakers (Anyia, 2017; Collins, 2017; Kubota & Catlett, 2008); d) racialization and teacher identity (Varghese et. al., 2016; Vitanova, 2016); and e) race-centered approaches to pedagogies and educational practices (Michael-Luna, 2009; Roy, 2016).

In this conceptual essay, we highlight the “illusion of inclusion” that is so prevalent across grade levels, educational contexts, and geographic spaces within the ELT profession. Educational researchers have used the phrase “illusion of inclusion” to describe color blindness in teaching, and the subtle ways that dominant systems appear to adequately address issues of race and racism while at the same time minimizing it (Gallagher, 2008; Vasquez Heilig, et al, 2012; Turnbull, 2014). Our goal is to focus less on decentering whiteness or promoting people of color (quite the catch-all term that in some ways has further marginalized African Americans), and more on calling out policies and practices that promote white supremacy and/or ignore anti-Black racism. We argue that it is our non-Black colleagues who are in positions of power to consider the need for Blackness and the effects of anti-Blackness in two broad areas that are among the most visible in the profession and arguably the most important – ELT curriculum and materials (Grant & Wong, 2008) and faculty hiring practices (Romney, 2010). The essay begins with a brief discussion of the authors’ beliefs and subjectivities as supported by critical race theory and raciolinguistics. What follows is a critical discussion of the policies and practices that marginalize the expertise of African American TESOL professionals and disadvantage Black pre-service teachers and English learners. We conclude the essay with recommendations that make allyship less performative and more actionable.

Theoretical Framework

At this juncture, it is important that we acknowledge our position as African American ELT professionals. Our lives are powerfully mediated by race and fundamentally shaped by our racialized consciousness and identities. Throughout our respective careers, we have each questioned the role that our racial identities (and the ways in which we use the English language) have played in situations where we were selected (or not) for mentorship programs, employment, or professional development opportunities. We have each criticized entities of our admittedly diverse profession that hardly ever promote people with our experiences that look like us. It is our belief that discussions of the ways in which Black people, specifically African Americans, are often subjected to the illusion of inclusion in ELT must consider raciolinguistics and critical race theory (CRT). Aspects of both theories can assist in providing an analysis of the experiences of Black ELT professionals and language learners as well as provide guidance in destructing illusions to make the ELT profession more inclusive.

Raciolinguistics and Critical Race Theory in a Nutshell

Raciolinguistics was first popularized by Flores and Rosa (2015) and elaborated on by Alim et. al. (2016). It highlights the socially cyclical relationship between race, racialization, and language; language as used to construct race (i.e., languaging race), and perceptions of race influence how language is used (i.e., racing language). A central concern of raciolinguistics is to understand the complex meanings and implications of speech coming from a racialized subject.

This framework has been utilized particularly well to better understand how sociolinguistic variation is intertwined with social and political factors. Of particular importance are the ways in which

‘appropriateness’ has been defined by the language of the dominant culture. As such, this results in the construction of raciolinguistic ideologies that uphold certain linguistic practices as normative and others as deficient (Ramjattan, 2019).

Raciolinguistic theory was built on and espouses many of the tenets of CRT. As previously mentioned, TESOL scholars have drawn on CRT to critique and understand the propagation of Whiteness as a norm associated with native English speakers (Kubota & Lin, 2006; Liggett, 2014; Curtis & Romney, 2006; Romney, 2010; Von Esch et al., 2020).

There has always been a need for the voices of Black ELT professionals to be heard, as our experiences are reflective of many of the tenets of CRT (see Table 1). Discussions on the social constructedness of race as well as the importance of considering intersectionality in discussions of race have been recently revived through recognition of the systemic and exclusionary nature of racism. One clear example is the experiences of Black ELT educators that have often been ignored. The TESOL profession has a responsibility to acknowledge and address the experiences of ELT professionals who are navigating their careers. Where the nexus of race, privilege, language, and current sociopolitical contexts intersect is how ***we will use our unique “voices of color” to tell our stories.*** We encourage readers to consider ways that they can ***contribute to changes*** that must occur if the ELT profession is to be as inclusive as it professes to be. Critical race theorists believe that minoritized peoples are in a better position to share the impact of racism because we experience it directly (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Through our experiences, we will illustrate the ways in which ***racism, both conscious and unconscious, is a permanent component of US American life*** and the ELT profession. In addition, we will show how anti-Black racism (intentional or unintentional...who knows?) has stifled the upward mobility of some Blacks in the ELT profession and has resulted in ELT curriculum and materials that do not affirm nor acknowledge language learners of African descent.

Table 1
Themes and Tenets of Critical Race Theory

CRT Themes/Tenets	Definition	Historical & Contemporary Sources
Permanence of racism in the U.S.	Racism, both conscious and unconscious, is a permanent component of U.S. American life	Bell (1992); Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995); Liggett (2014)
Interest convergence	Significant upward mobility for Blacks is achieved only when the goals of Blacks are consistent with the needs of whites	Bell (1980); Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995); Kelly (2018); Dorner & Cervantes-Soon (2020); Palmer (2010)
Differential racialization	When the dominant society racializes different minority groups in different ways at different times, in response to its shifting needs	Delgado & Stefancic (1998); Motha (2016); Han (2014)

Intersectionality	Considers the intersection of race and other identities	Crenshaw (1991); Romero (2016, 2017); Collins & Blige (2016); Migliarini & Stinson (2021)
Counter storytelling and the 'voice of color'	Highlighting the voices of the marginalized by countering majoritarian narratives that have been assumed as factual	Matsuda (1995); Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995); Delgado & Stefanic, (2001); Solorzano & Yosso, (2001); Cooper & Bryan (2020); Lin et al. (2004)
Social change critiques colorblindness and meritocracy	Knowledge learned through examination of racial inequality should be used for social justice and make social change	Crenshaw (1998); Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995); Curtis & Romney (2006); Kubota (2002)

Note. Adapted from Horsford (2010).

Adding (Black) to ELT Curriculum

In addition to what students learn about English, how to understand and use it, the ELT curriculum has the power to exert a huge amount of influence over the way ELs perceive the English language and the people who speak it. From the field of *Raciolinguistics*, we understand that certain Englishes, because of their norm-providing status, are upheld as more prestigious, authentic, and valuable than those which have not been included in the traditional ELT canon. Despite the fact that English is a world language, with native, non-native, and World English speakers on every continent and practically every country, and people of color as the majority of its speakers (Romney, 2010), the ELT curriculum has traditionally centered Whiteness of the Inner Circle (Kachru, 1985). This has largely been accomplished by the ways in which English is modeled, especially through language teaching materials. Students generally believe that their teachers have selected the best materials, and therefore whatever their teachers don't use has less value (Romney, 2021) and less legitimacy. One result is that most students worldwide perceive English as the language of the White Inner Circle, and other uses and users of the language as less legitimate.

A common assignment for both pre-service and in-service educators is to learn about English learners (ELs) through case studies, interviews, videos of classroom instruction and the like. The chosen curriculum, resources, assignments and assessments are at the discretion of course instructors. These courses and professional learning experiences have also contributed to anti-Black sentiments across the field of TESOL. For example, one frequently used website hosts approximately 20 short interviews of English learners in grades K-12 for educators to view and learn from. All except one of the students featured, an Asian girl, are Spanish speakers. Unfortunately, there are no English learners of African descent included in the portraits.

Textbooks and professional learning publications designed to support teacher capacity to serve linguistically diverse learners are also commonly void of Black educators or Black ELs. One recent publication that we reviewed encourages an assets-based approach to teaching multilingual learners centered around critical strategies. Regrettably this book, like similar books about advocating for ELs, does not have any mention of Black ELs included as part of the student portraits or Black teachers interviewed. Bryan (2020) highlighted the need for teacher preparation programs to find and adopt materials that

include the experiences of Black immigrant students and the characteristics of Black Englishes (e.g., AAVE, Nigerian English, Caribbean Englishes). She stated,

I challenge TESOL programs to highlight intersectional identities, theories of “becoming,” and the central role that language plays in shaping ideas of race as well as the role that race plays in shaping ideologies regarding immigration and language acquisition. We can only expect teachers to do what we have taught them to do. If we want them to be inclusive, we need to show inclusivity in our curriculum. (p. 118)

An ELT curriculum that does not reflect the diversity of the English language and its speakers does a number of disservices to its students. One is that it perpetuates harmful stereotypes, linguicism, and bigotry by conveying the idea that only one English language is valid, and it delegitimizes the notion of diverse Englishes, all of equal value. By extension, it endows the native speakers of that variety of English with a superior position vis-à-vis all other speakers, (i.e., White native speakers of Inner Circle English are elevated as the “idealized NS). Another disservice is that it conveys a distorted image and an inaccurate concept of the demographics of the English language. This is especially problematic in an ethnically diverse state like California and in a heterogeneous country like the US, where practically every English in the world is represented through immigrants, visitors, the communications media, as well as the popular culture. Moreover, failing to provide diverse models of English does not reflect the real world, which is inhabited by many Englishes, so students will not be prepared to understand diverse English speakers.

We believe that the most harmful effect of an Inner Circle-centric, Whitewashed curriculum is that it denigrates the linguistic self-image of ELs by marginalizing non-native and/or non-White English speakers, especially those of African descent.

ELT Faculty: Mirrors, Windows, or Sliding Glass Doors?

The “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors” metaphor has been used extensively in multicultural literacy (Bishop, 1990). Bishop maintained that texts can serve as mirrors of students’ cultural identities and experiences. They also function as windows into other cultural circumstances through the other individuals’ perspectives and experiences. The students’ imagination then transforms the window into a “sliding glass door” as they step into worlds created by the texts’ words and/or images. While this metaphor can be easily used to support our argument regarding the need for a curriculum that is intentionally inclusive of Blackness, we apply this metaphor (specifically mirrors and windows) to K-12 teacher and higher education ELT faculty positions.

Teachers in any educational context play a pivotal role in forming their students’ vision of what they are learning. In many ways, they are mirrors as they personify the curriculum. Students will tend to draw certain *conscious* or *unconscious* conclusions about what they are studying based on who is teaching it—and who is not. Given that most English language teachers in the U.S. are White native speakers, students tend to develop certain beliefs about the language. They often come to perceive it as belonging to those who sound—and look—like their teachers. They may come to perceive the only legitimate use of English as being limited to the ways in which their teachers use it. Therefore, to help students gain a more balanced view of the English language (i.e., providing windows) in terms of its worldwide dimensions, a diverse and inclusive ELT faculty that reflects the worldwide demographics of the English language is necessary. However, such a diverse faculty is rare in the U.S. And a faculty that includes Black English language teachers is even more unusual, especially in higher education.

The origin of the low numbers of Black English language teachers in the U.S. is due in large part to the low numbers of MA students in TESOL, and even lower numbers of Black scholars who are TESOL teacher educators. With few role models—mirrors—and recruitment efforts by MA TESOL programs, few Blacks enter the profession in the U.S. (Mahboob, 2006). Therefore, low numbers are perpetuated. In addition to low numbers of Blacks with master's degrees in TESOL entering the profession, employment discrimination is another inhibiting factor, especially outside of the U.S., where discrimination is not usually illegal (Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Wongsamuth, 2015). Here, we are mainly referring to countries where Black people are neither indigenous nor native, where relatively few Black people live, or where Blacks may be even more oppressed than in the U.S. In many of these countries, there is a high demand for English language teachers. A few factors are responsible for employment discrimination outside the U.S. One is the perception that Inner Circle White native speakers are the only legitimate, and therefore the best, speakers of English, and another is the perception of Blacks and other people of color (PoC) as speakers of non-standardized dialects of English, and as inauthentic speakers of English. In addition, the image of the highest status native speaker of English as being an Inner Circle White person is more powerful than a teacher's actual qualifications. Because Black English language teachers do not conform to the image of the speaker many ELs and employers hold, especially in the international community, Black English language teachers are at a disadvantage. Even in the U.S., where employment discrimination is illegal, Black candidates for English language teaching positions are still sometimes discriminated against.

More broadly, one reason why Black people are perceived negatively by prospective employers and students, especially in the international community, is the *Permanence of Racism*, particularly as seen in the portrayal of Blacks in the popular entertainment culture, where negative stereotypes still abound. Through *Differential Racialization*, other PoC are exoticized, demonized, or otherwise demeaned. The vast majority of images of Africans and Africa are those of “exotic” animals, war, corruption, starvation, disease, and poverty. The vast majority of images of African Americans are those associated with crime, sex, underachievement, violence, and poverty. Positive images are largely limited to sports. All these images are projected worldwide through films, TV, music, and the Internet. Because Black people, in and outside of Africa, are often treated as a monolith, when Black ELT professionals, no matter how qualified, apply for positions, they are connected—consciously or unconsciously—to the negative perceptions seen in the media. One result is discrimination. This is one way in which racism, both *conscious* and *unconscious*, is systematized, (i.e., it becomes a *permanent component of U.S. American life*).

DEI in Language Program Administration: The Same Sad Song

English language program directors, program managers, or supervisors usually require an advanced degree, leadership licensure and prior teaching leadership experience. The leaders are responsible for numerous areas related to assuring success of ELs including that the civil rights mandates are known and adhered to by the local education agency. They also work closely with other district leaders and departments, principals, and family engagement initiatives. The United States Department of Education in partnership with the Department of Justice and the Department of Civil Rights released guidance in the 2015 “Dear Colleague letter” outlining civil rights obligations. Oftentimes, those hired to serve in leadership positions are non-Black educators. From rural to urban settings, public, independent and charter schools lack Black educators who are leading English language programs. This is problematic as it affirms the discriminatory hiring practices and the lack of racial and ethnic diversity of leaders who are responsible for linguistically diverse mostly non-white students. Some examples are when local education agencies hire from within, selecting from only the White candidates; when they require applicants to be bilingual instead of as a preferred skillset; and when they require a certain number of years of experience. This is especially problematic because Black educators are often not afforded the opportunity to serve in

leadership capacities. Similarly, Cooper and Bryan's (2020) qualitative research explored the experiences of female Black EL professionals. Their findings noted the participants as having feelings of isolation, marginalization and presumed incompetence despite being highly credentialed and experienced in the field.

Race, DEI, and Professional ELT Organizations

Nowhere is the diversity of the TESOL profession more evident than in the professional development arena, where there is a lack of African Diaspora English language teachers. The diversity of the TESOL profession is most clearly visible (in the U.S. and worldwide), in the attendance at the annual international conventions of the major TESOL professional development organizations. ELT professionals from all over the world, including people of color, are amply represented. This creates an impression of inclusion until the number of Black professionals present at such events is considered, and it is observed that few of the people of color are Black. At this point, it becomes clear that inclusion is an illusion. Beyond attendance, the inclusion of Black scholars as invited and plenary speakers has also been infrequent. This has a particularly deleterious effect on the TESOL profession because it creates the impression that Black scholars have not contributed to the field. Thus, it is unlikely that they will be considered for plenaries and other prominent roles, and in this way their invisibility and exclusion is perpetuated. Membership among Black ELT professionals in these organizations has also been low. Even if there is a plethora of Black EL teachers in Africa and the Caribbean, it is financially difficult, or impossible, for them to be members of these organizations and to attend the annual international conferences abroad. Without this visibility and participation, their presence in and contributions to the profession are routinely ignored by the rest of the ELT world.

Until recently, these organizations have tended to be reactive rather than proactive—probably because anti-racism has not been among their priorities—in spite of ample evidence of the existence of racism in the profession. In clear examples of *Interest Convergence*, one way in which professional development organizations have been known to react to specific, egregious incidents of racist behavior, has been to issue anti-discrimination statements, which tend to cast them in a favorable light. Among these statements are examples of what *raciolinguists* would refer to as “*racist language*” in oblique references to Black people. Such statements have not traditionally addressed anti-Black racism, sometimes avoiding explicit references to African-American victims of racism as “Black” (e.g., when referring to George Floyd), and sometimes failing to consult their Black members when formulating such statements. Moreover, these organizations have traditionally not extended their anti-discrimination efforts beyond statements and have not specifically targeted racism in these efforts. Through *Intersectionality*, anti-Black racism has tended to be dissolved into racism directed at other people of color and/or other forms of discrimination (e.g., native speakerism, homophobia, religious bigotry, etc.). The intention here is not to invalidate or diminish the effects of the racism and discrimination experienced by other people of color and other marginalized populations. However, when anti-Black racism is absorbed into other forms of racism and other types of discrimination, it is not always addressed. This is an example of how Black people are further marginalized. Professional ELT symposia, and webinars have also committed the act of modern-day segregation by not intentionally seeking out Black scholars, experts, authors, and practitioners who are highly qualified to contribute to the work of advocating and educating others about ELs. Instead, other scholars of color from various non-Black racial groups are invited to serve as keynotes and invited speakers. An example of this was in 2018 when a prominent institute of higher education in the New England area hosted a summit about English learners in K-12 settings. Of the five speakers, all except one was a woman of color, but not Black. The rest were white females. Interestingly, the summit was hosted in the state where over 10% of the EL population is identified as Black and where two local education agencies have a high concentration of Black ELs (U.S. Department of Education,

National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). These instances, although not intentional, have inadvertently contributed to the *illusion of inclusion* by celebrating “linguistic diversity for all” and by championing “equity for all,” but current practices further marginalize Black educators, students, and our experiences.

Concluding Recommendations

The issues that we present in this essay may seem trivial to some. To some readers, they may even lack credibility because many of them are anecdotal and there are no statistics to back up many of our claims (but isn’t that the nature of injustice?). We simply ask that our non-Black ELT colleagues 1) believe our experiences and stories, 2) be intentional about DEI so that actions are not only in their best interest or the interest of their organization, and 3) consider the ways in which ethno-racial hierarchies result in anti-Blackness amongst people of color. We conclude with reflection questions and anti-racist practices that make allyship less performative and more actionable.

Anti-Racist Practice #1: Examine and Critique Curriculum & Materials for Blackness

Are there characters of the African diaspora (Africa, Caribbean, U.S. South America, etc.) in the materials that you use? Are the language samples and case studies that you ask students to review inclusive of African voices and languages? Who are the authors of the ELT books and articles that you assign? The ELT curriculum can empower students in many ways. One of them is through the implementation of culturally relevant materials and pedagogy. This consists of centering the students, their countries, cultures, and communities, in the materials and pedagogy. In this way, an anti-racist curriculum will affirm, acknowledge, and empower ELs, including those of African descent. For many students in marginalized communities, there may be very few, if any, sources of affirmation outside of the classroom and outside their own communities. For Black ELs, the classroom may be one of the only positive reflections of themselves that they will find outside of their homes and communities.

We not only ask that you critique the curriculum, but we ask that you call out anti-Blackness in society and the media. It is anti-racist to be explicit about how the English language may be weaponized against immigrants, people of color, and ELs, i.e., *how language is raced, and how race is languaged*. For example, Black protesters are often referred to as “rioters.” Even when protests organized by Black and Brown people are peaceful, they are often labeled as “riots.” The term “riot” evokes feelings of fear and an anticipation of destruction. Similarly, there is hardly an instance when a group of White men are labeled “thugs.” Instead of being described as “thuggish,” they are often described as “rowdy” and “mischievous,” even when they are looting, turning over cars, and starting fires (Bryan and Gerald, 2020). Teach students (K-12 and pre-service teachers) ways of responding to and addressing racialized language when they are the targets, such as when members of their communities are referred to as “illegals” rather than “undocumented” or “out of status.” It is an anti-racist part of the essential English language education for ELs to learn to recognize not only explicitly racist language, but more implicitly *how language is raced, and how race is languaged*.

Anti-Racist Practice #2: Examine and Critique Hiring Processes that Disadvantage Black ELT Professionals

What are the identities of the members of the ELT search committees on which you have served? Do any of the PoC identify as Black? Do the members only seem to favor or support the experiences of candidates with their own identities, experiences (and educational pedigree)? Are the requirements for the positions equitable and easily achievable for candidates of diverse backgrounds? As ELT professionals, we relish in the fact that our profession is diverse but ignore the elephant in the room—the fact that we very seldom

consider the non-traditional experiences of Black candidates who might not meet some of the rigid standards set forth to disqualify already marginalized candidates. It is anti-racist to stop perpetuating the status quo by requiring that search committees be diverse in identities and experiences, seeking out qualified Black candidates (because they do exist), and broadening the definition of bilingualism so that the abilities and language experience of candidates who are proficient in other Englishes are honored. Providing students with inclusive and diverse faculties to teach them starts with anti-racist hiring processes.

Anti-Racist Practice #3: Use Your Privilege for the Benefit of the Profession

Are you responsible for recruiting graduate students in TESOL (or a related discipline) to your program? Do you have grant funds to support students' matriculation or attendance at conferences? Are you an active member of a regional or international ELT association and can serve as a mentor to students who want to get involved? Do you have colleague-friends who are in positions of power? If so, you have privilege and can make a difference! It is anti-racist for ELT faculty in more established graduate programs to consider partnerships and outreach to students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). If Black undergraduates are informed about TESOL programs and careers, and if they could be encouraged (and appropriately mentored) to pursue graduate programs, they might be more attracted to TESOL graduate programs. Many TESOL professionals in the U.S. initially became interested in the TESOL field, or entered it directly, through experiences studying abroad, working abroad (e.g., in the Peace corps), or majoring in foreign languages as undergraduates. These are areas where few Black students tend to be found. If more Black students are encouraged to enroll in foreign language and study abroad programs, mentored effectively and fairly when they do, perhaps more would also become interested in the TESOL field. It would be anti-racist to break the vicious cycle of low enrollment in undergraduate "feeder" disciplines and experiences that lead to enrollment in TESOL graduate programs.

Anti-Racist Practice #4: Hold ELT Professional Development Organizations Accountable

Do you have an association or organization that you refer to as your professional home? What is their stance on anti-Black racism? How is their position evidenced throughout the policies and practices of the organization? It is our belief that the major ELT professional development organizations could elevate anti-racism and condemn anti-Blackness by doing more than issue statements. Their statements, reports, etc., give the illusion of not only inclusion, but also of improvement, when the reality is that these organizations take no anti-racism, or actions against anti-Black racism. They could take advantage of their privileged, highly visible position of authority in the ELT field by actively advocating for anti-racist policies in education in the U.S. and abroad, where race-based employment discrimination is not only unchallenged but accepted. For example, they could issue anti-racist standards regarding curriculum, teaching, materials, and hiring practices. They could also exert considerable influence over publishers that fail to include diverse Englishes in their materials.

Perhaps more significantly, these professional development organizations could provide forums in which to elevate the contributions of Black TESOL professionals (and members of other marginalized groups) by holding their subgroups (affiliates, special interest groups, etc.) accountable for incorporating anti-racist practices in their activities. They could also provide opportunities for those who want to learn how to incorporate anti-racist practices in their pedagogy to learn how to do so.

Authors

Dr. Kisha Bryan is Assistant Professor of Education in the Department of Teaching & Learning of Tennessee State University. Her research focuses on Black adolescents' intersectional identities and the role of language, literacy, and racial ideologies in identity construction. She is the author of several publications.

Mary Romney-Schaab is a retired educator who spent over 40 years teaching English as an additional language in Spain and the US. She has an Ed.M. in Instructional Media, an M.A. in the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages, from Columbia University; an M.A. and B.A. in Spanish.

Dr. Ayanna Cooper, U.S. Department of State English Language Specialist alumna and current TESOL Board Member. She is the author of several publications including And Justice for EL, Black Immigrants in the United States (co-editor with Ibrahim) and serves as Language Magazine's Pass the Mic Series editor.

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