

# Tokyo Kasei University Global Education Center 2021 Open Lecture Series: Issues of race and racism in English language teaching

## Description of the series:

Issues of race and racism have been thrust into the public consciousness in recent years. In 2020, public protest was sparked in the US and around the world following the murder of George Floyd and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement. This has led to renewed calls for the examination and dismantling of racist systems of oppression in all areas of public life, and the field of English language teaching is no exception to this. As a field which is based on a history of colonialism and empire, and which is still deeply marked by racial stratification in terms of which people are considered 'authentic' speakers and teachers of the language, it is time for ELT to address its own deeply rooted issues of race and racism. This lecture series aims to raise awareness of these issues, and to start a conversation about how we can challenge them in our institutions and our field.

**Lecture 1 :** Breaking the Cycle of Inequity towards NNEST in Japan

**Speaker :** Jackson Koon Yat Lee

**Date :** Friday 25th June 2021

### Abstract :

This lecture draws on the experiences of the lecturer to explore and demonstrate the intentional and unintentional hardship that non-Japanese Asian teachers (and other non-white English teachers) go through while working in Japan. The lecture will go through the career path of the lecturer chronologically, leading the discussion from ALT to eikaiwa and finally to uni-teaching. Narratives of other NNEST teachers will also be included to bring in more perspectives. The focus is on the visible and invisible pressure felt by such teachers that their students and colleagues might not be aware of. The lecture ends with a workshop/Q&A on what uni teachers/staff (the audience) can do to help support the equity for NNEST working in the ELT industry.



### Bio :

Jackson Koon Yat Lee is a Hong-Kong Canadian who has been teaching English in Japan for over 9 years. His professional experiences in Japan span across different sectors of English language teaching: public school education, eikaiwa conversation school, and university. He is currently the Chair of the Diversity and Equity Practices Committee of JALT and previously served as the President of Gifu JALT Chapter. He has presented on topics regarding NNEST, ELT diversity awareness, and language and identity trauma.

**Lecture 2 :** The Racism of Accent Reduction

**Speaker :** Vijay Ramjattan

**Date :** Friday October 15th 2021

### Abstract :

For skilled immigrants, whose accents allegedly hinder their employability in the English-speaking Global North, "accent reduction" services are promoted as the means to transform their speech from professional liability to asset. While the accent reduction industry purports to help immigrants find employment, it is important to recognize how it sustains and is sustained by racism. This presentation specifically explores how



accent reduction advertising reinforces ideologies of white supremacy and neoliberalism in its attempt to attract a mainly racialized clientele. Such advertising uses accent to “obscure” notions of racial difference and promote the structural irrelevance of race and racism in society. Suggestions on how to combat these harmful messages of accent reduction as well as the industry will be offered.

#### Bio :

Vijay Ramjattan received his PhD in Adult Education and Community Development from the University of Toronto and is a member of the Language, Culture and Justice Hub at Brandeis University. His research interests pertain to the intersection of language and race in the workplace, with a particular focus on speech accent. You can follow him on Twitter: @Vijay\_Ramjattan.

**Lecture 3 :** Pedagogy & Presence: Black Female ELT teachers in Japan

**Speaker :** Avril Haye-Matsui

**Date :** Friday February 4th 2022

#### Abstract :

In this talk, Avril Haye Matsui will share the stories of nine Black women from around the world who live in Japan. This research looks at how the women’s racial and gender identity impacts their lives as foreigners in Japan and what and how they teach. In particular, she will explain how the women use their presence and pedagogy to change Japanese students' ideas of race, nationality, and English language teachers.



#### Bio :

Avril Haye-Matsui teaches at Nagoya city university. Her research areas include gender, Cultural diversity in Japan, teacher identity and student identity. She is also the founder of the support group, Black Women in Japan that has a membership of over 3000 women. She lives in central Japan with her husband and two children.

参加費/Participation Fee : 無料/Free

参加方法/How to join the seminars :

本セミナーはCisco Webexによるオンラインで開催します。実施日数日前までに参加申し込みをされた方にURLをお知らせします。

The seminars will be conducted online using Cisco Webex. The URLs will be informed to the participants by a few days before the seminars.

申し込み方法/Application :

下記のリンク、またはQRコードより申し込みフォームにご入力ください

Please go to the following URL through the QR code and fill out the application form.

<https://forms.gle/WahUKUUmLariUCADA>



申し込み期限/Application Deadline

9 am, Tuesday June 23rd for “Breaking the Cycle of Inequity towards NNEST in Japan”

9 am, Tuesday October 13th for “The Racism of Accent Reduction”

9 am, Tuesday February 2nd, 2022 for “Pedagogy & Presence: Black Female teachers in Japan”

【問い合わせ/Contacts】

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【TEL】+81-03-3961-1861 (平日9:00-17:00/Weekdays 9am-5pm)