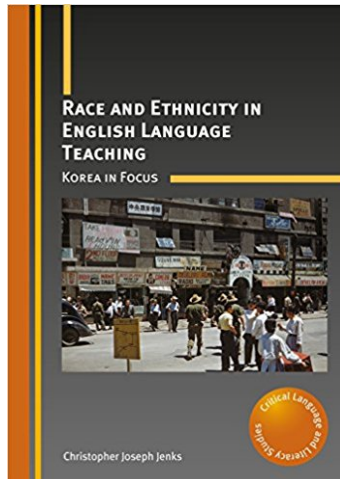AJAL

Book Review

Race and Ethnicity in English Language Teaching: Korea in focus
Christopher Joseph Jenks. Multilingual Matters, 2017. 183 pp. ISBN: 978-1-78309-842-2

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A growing body of literature on race and ethnicity has problematized institutionally or systematically generated racism, arguing that the act of racism is deeply intertwined with social structures rather than individual acts of overt discrimination. In a broader discussion of race and ethnicity, several researchers have indicated that the institutional system of the English language teaching (ELT) industry has become racially discriminatory to a certain extent, promoting White normativity in the ELT profession, and this issue is particularly widespread in South Korea (henceforth, Korea) which recognizes only a small group of countries as English speaking countries. While *Race and Ethnicity in English Language Teaching* primarily focuses on the racialized discourse in Korea, it offers a comprehensive review of the wider literature (in chapters 1, 2, and 3) along with sharp analysis and discussions based on examples from various data sources (in chapters 4, 5, and 6). These analyses are further explored within a global context in Chapter 7 and future research directions are briefly noted in Chapter 8.

In Chapter 1, Jenks highlights the importance of investigating "racism and racialized discourse in the English language teaching (ELT) profession" (p. 1) while tracing the development of several critical approaches to race and racialized discourse. Building on this foundation, Jenks proposes a new model for examining race, ethnicity, and discourse based on an interdisciplinary approach involving anthropology, legal studies, sociology, and political science, and thus sets out to explore "how race, racism, and racialized discourse shape commonsense understandings of teaching and learning in a particular country" in Asia (p. 20), which has not been fully understood. Chapter 2 provides an overview of a wide range of key themes, issues and theoretical concepts

which the reader may find useful as a guide to the study of race and ethnicity. Chapter 3 then discusses the case of the ELT profession in Korea set within a background of micro and macro sociological issues. This chapter is particularly useful for understanding the complex relationship between the English language and Korea which differs from that in other Asian countries such as Hong Kong and India, and makes the book unique in the growing body of critical race discourse studies.

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, Jenks attempts to apply theoretical perspectives of critical race scholarship to empirical investigations or vice versa. In Chapter 4, Jenks clearly demonstrates from interview data and media texts that "White normativity is based on ideological constructs that treat Whiteness as an essential characteristic for good language teaching" in Korea (p. 103). More significantly for his argumentation, the chapter reveals how legal systems related to ELT employment (e.g., immigration law) reinforce the White normativity and possibly cause "racism in the ELT profession in Korea" (p. 103). Building on the current White normative phenomenon in Korea, Chapters 5 and 6 further discuss the racialized discourse based on racial saviorism and capitalism in the ELT profession in Korea. Both chapters provide detailed analyses of how English language can be depicted as the superior language and tool in the age of capitalism with or without "a deliberate act of linguicism and racism" (p. 117) by ELT professionals. The critical discourse analysis conducted in these chapters (Chapter 4, 5, and 6) can be particularly useful for those who are interested in conducting research on race, ethnicity, and discourse in the field.

In this timely study of race and discourse, despite focusing primarily on the ELT profession in Korea, Jenks further develops a more critical and fundamental understanding of racialized discourse and the projection of White normativity in a larger discussion of the global ELT profession which he accomplishes in Chapter 7 where he also specifically addresses the issue of the culture Other in the context of ELT. The chapter also introduces several practical efforts to promote racial diversity and decolonize "White public spaces" (p. 140) in inner-circle countries like the United States including the employment practice, curricular materials, and critical pedagogic approaches to race and ethnicity. Chapter 8 then offers recommendations for future research in the critical race scholarship after having summarized key findings of the current research.

Using Korea as a case study, *Race and Ethnicity in English Language Teaching* provides refreshing and valuable insights into how a system of social structures and actions may cause a racialized discourse and how the ELT profession can be recognized from such views. Since this book elucidates key theoretical models and issues along with providing rich empirical observations, it will be of great value to researchers in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), ELT instructors, and teacher trainers in the ELT industry. Based on a wide range of data sources, this book serves as an excellent reference for anyone interested in critically examining racialized discourse in education and society.

Reference

Jenks, C. J. (2017). *Race and ethnicity in English language teaching: Korea in focus*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

About the reviewer

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