



Linguistic Racism

Not everyone who speaks English is treated the same way. What happens when language or accent discrimination creeps in to our conscious and unconscious – and what do we do about our biases?

Recently an ESPN commentator Stephen A. Smith questioned the “box office appeal” of player Shohei Ohtani. Ohtani, who plays for the Los Angeles Angels uses an English translator as his native language is Japanese. “The fact that you got a foreign player that doesn’t speak English, believe it or not, I think contributes to harming the game to some degree.”

As I reflect on the nature of this comment and others like it, the very least that I, and others like me, can do is to become aware of its harmful effects and reduce the ways that we contribute to it. Individual acts of thoughtfulness can’t dismantle a multitude of racist acts.

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