

WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

CHIMA MONEKE CALLS OUT CARNIVAL 'BLACKFACE'

Coach John talks about the outdated practice of 'blackface' which was on show in Carnival.



Chima Moneke (born 24 December 1995) is a Nigerian professional basketball player for Saski Baskonia of the ACB league and the EuroLeague.

At 1.97 m. tall, he plays in the power forward position. He also represents the Nigerian national team in international competition.



Gasteiz Hoy reported that people **dressing up** as Chima was the most popular costume during Carnival this year. Chima himself thanked Baskonia fans but politely pointed out that **donning** 'Blackface' was not the way to show him love.

In January, Madrid's city hall apologised after distributing videos featuring a white actor

wearing blackface as part of Epiphany festivities.

One of the videos also had the man in blackface speaking in a heavy accent - leading to accusations of racism.

Blackface was an historical practice in which black people were **mocked** for the entertainment of white people.

It dates back around 200 years. It is seen as racist and many people find it deeply offensive.

It commonly refers to when someone - typically with white skin - paints their face darker to resemble a black person.

Several politicians and media figures, as well as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, have been embroiled in blackface scandals in the past few years.

Gasteiz Hoy said: "in Spain it (Blackface) is something that is not yet internalised, in recent years the use of black paint to characterise oneself as black has been denounced especially among Anglo-Saxon politicians."

Unfortunately, Gasteiz Hoy do not seem to realise that white people **blackening up** is racist and offensive to black people and not just 'Anglo-Saxon' politicians. Let's hope Chima's dignified response starts to change hearts and minds in our city.

by ECP coach



John Hird

Word list

dress up: (v) to put fancy dress, disguise, etc, on (oneself or another), as in children's games

don: (v) to put on or dress in

mock: (v) to make fun of; to treat with ridicule or contempt:

black up: (v) use make-up in order to imitate the appearance of a black person. The use of such make-up was associated with minstrel shows in the United States from the 1830s until the mid 20th century; it is now regarded as highly offensive

minstrel: (n) one of a troupe of comedians, usually white men made up as black performers, presenting songs, jokes, etc

hurtful: (adj) causing hurt, distress, or injury

to root: (v) to become fixed or established

overtone: (n) an additional, usually subsidiary and implicit meaning or quality

Let's chat about that!

1. Give a summary of the text to your coach and/or classmates.
2. How did Gasteiz Hoy report the use of 'blackface' in Carnival? Were they fair and sensitive about the issue?
3. What did Chima say about people blacking up in Carnival? Do you agree with him?
4. In the last two paragraphs of the text what is the implied criticism of the Gasteiz Hoy article?
5. Read the text on page 2. What is the history of 'blackface'?
6. Do you know any other examples of the use of 'blackface'? How can people be educated on the issue?

THE CONTROVERSIAL & RACIST HISTORY OF 'BLACKFACE'

#1 Blackface is a historical practice that dates back around 200 years. It's seen as racist and many people find it deeply offensive.

#2 White actors would paint their faces black and play caricatures of black people. But it isn't just about painting skin a different colour.

Blackface was a practice in which black people were mocked for the entertainment of white people, and negative stereotypes were promoted across the US and Europe.

In the early 19th Century, white actors called minstrel performers used to paint their faces black and do comedy routines about black people, which were racist.

#3 They would do insulting impressions of black people in very

exaggerated ways - for example, mocking their accent. These depictions were inaccurate, **hurtful** and deeply offensive, but many white people saw it as an acceptable form of entertainment.

#4 It's a tradition **rooted** in racism which is very much about the fear of black people and the laughing at black people. That's why it's still seen as such an issue, whatever the motive.

#5 In 2017, the Atletico Madrid footballer Antoine Griezmann also posted a photo of himself in blackface and fancy dress as a basketball player. Answering criticism Griezmann said: "Calm down everyone. I'm a fan of the Harlem Globetrotters and this is a tribute."

#6 Dr Kehinde Andrews did not accept the 'tribute' argument. "It's

not a benign tradition," he says. "It's almost like they've forgotten where the tradition comes from." "Blackface is a really longstanding issue and negatively racial across Europe. You see it from Shakespearean times onwards, this figure of white people blacking up.

"Black people are seen as inferior and black people are dangerous and that's the root of that tradition - "It's got the same **overtones** which is why people are very upset when people black up."

#7 The use of blackface is an out-of-date practice which is rarely seen these days demonstrating that public attitudes have long since moved on and that crude portrayals of black people should be considered unacceptable in the modern world.