INTERACTING WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CLASS AND OFFICE HOURS

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BACKGROUND
Defining “non-native speakers of English”

- Visa students (“traditional” international students)
- Domestic students by paperwork
  - Children of immigrants (“Generation 1.5”)
  - Recent immigrants who are naturalized
- What they have in common:
  - Language issues originating in their native tongue
  - Limited or no prior exposure to academic writing

Remember!
One’s first language is one’s foundation for one’s additional language.
IUPUI demographics

- EAP Graduate and Undergraduate Students’ Countries of Origin in Fall 2012
Why interact?

- Research in language teaching suggests that learning is supported when:
  - Learners interact with teachers and peers around authentic learning tasks in which they have an opportunity to negotiate meaning - linguistic and content (the Interaction Hypothesis, Long, 1990)
  - While interacting, learners have opportunities to receive input
  - While interacting, learners have opportunities to produce (pushed) output

WE WANT INTERACTION

Lack of interaction can delay language development and lower the learner’s self-confidence (linguistic and overall).
Brainstorm (5 min)

1. When you’ve studied another language in another country, what was challenging about interacting in class?

2. As a teacher now, what do you think is difficult for your international students when they interact with peers and instructors in class? What might cause the difficulties you observed?
What influences participation

- Linguistic factors
- Cultural factors
- Personal factors
What influences participation

Linguistic factors
- Low proficiency
  - General
  - Academic
- Speaking
- Listening
- Conversational strategies

Cultural factors
- Beliefs about
  - teacher’s role
  - student roles
  - conversation
  - classroom interaction

Personal factors
- Personality
- Motivation
- Holistic vs. detail-oriented
- Other?
Linguistic factors

PROBLEM
- Low proficiency
  - General
  - Academic
- Speaking
- Listening
- Conversational strategies

SOLUTIONS
- Offer resources: EAP, OIA, University Writing Center, Bepko Learning Center, tutors in the community
- Support learning: class notes, written instructions (clear and concise), lists of key terms, websites, visual aids
- Make time for quick self-assessment exercises in class
- Organize problem-based pair- and group-work in class
- Invite students to office hours
- Adapt the way you speak
- Universal design
Listening

• Listening is not a passive skill
  • Requires concentration
  • Complex cognitive processes are at work when we listen: activation of prior knowledge, decoding of linguistic code and information about the topic
  • In academic contexts, we often read or take notes as we listen

• Challenges for successful listening
  • Noisy or distracting environments
  • Content or language beyond the listener’s current level

• Real spoken language is very messy

LISTEN AND WRITE DOWN WHAT COULD CAUSE TROUBLE
What we teach NNSs about listening challenges

• “Real spoken language is real messy”
  • Contractions
  • False starts
  • Slang
  • Linking & reduction
  • Fillers
  • Ellipsis & assimilation
MICASE

- Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English
  - Transcripts of lectures, advising sessions, study session, seminars, etc.
  - [http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/c/corpus/corpus?c=micase;page=simple](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/c/corpus/corpus?c=micase;page=simple)
Contractions & fillers

Contractions
- Classic
  - can’t, won’t, shouldn’t
    - This “t” is often unpronounced
- Unexpected/infrequent
  - …that book’ll explain it…
  - …these methods’re essential to understand…

Fillers
- Um, er, uh,…
- Words or phrases can also become fillers, like “like” or “actually”
False starts

“No it's not being we don't, yeah. we don't believe it's coming from the mitochondria because the calcium occurs before the gradient changes...we haven't triggered the permeability transition and, the calcium can...we can prevent the calcium response with extracellular key layers.”

Less common in lectures (based on lecturer experience) and more common in advising sessions.
We write academically, but we speak *communicatively*…for native speakers, which means we use slang very frequently.

- “…once you retook the class you did perfectly well. [S3: okay ] which i think might be an important thing to demonstrate to the medical schools but i'm gonna pass the buck and…” (advising session)

- “well the um, the uh uh effective, constituents, are uh phosphates, which *work up to* about two hundred and fifty C, chlorides which *work up to* about four hundred, and sulfides which *work up to* about four hundred and thirty.” (Engineering Seminar)

Examples from MICASE
Linking & reduction

Linking: when sounds at the end of one word connect to the beginning of the next
  • “I seethatyou’re focusing on Nietzsche…”

Reduction: loss of sounds or words in naturally occurring speech
  • wanna, (a)bout

Brief pair activity!
Ellipsis & assimilation

Ellipsis: loss of major grammatical parts of sentence
  • How bout this approach?
  • What of this theory?

Assimilation: when sounds are lost AND words are merged
  • “…so the things that you find underneath the cortex really will tell you a whole lot about how the brain's put together and how it works. wow. okay. it's gonna hafta be four to a brain.”

Brief activity!
Some key strategies we teach NNS

- Listening for stress in spoken language
- Logical organizers/transitions
- Recognizing redundancy
- Honing in on the main idea
- Mapping in notes
- Prediction
- Using other students as a resource
- Asking permission to record lecture
- Being prepared
Strategies professors can implement

In answering questions during lectures:

- Scaffold for students in trying to get a clear answer instead of just asking them to repeat an entire question.
  - I understood everything until the words “...be applied to ______,” but I didn’t understand the words after that.
  - You want to know how this method can be applied to what?

- In other words, repeat what you understood from the student so that she/he can focus when clarifying what she/he said.
Strategies professors can implement

In lectures:

- Build in clear transitions
- Build in pauses
- Build in redundancy
- Enunciate, especially with new ideas
- Mark main ideas (use gestures, intonation, and introductory phrases)
- Design visuals that are clearly labeled and uncluttered
- Interact with visuals while lecturing (ex: point)
- Allow students to record lectures (even suggest it)
Strategies professors can implement

In office hours

• Cultural factors
• Be inviting (consider a mandatory office hour visit)
• Use text interactively
• Diagramming/drawing

• What other strategies do you implement?

• What other challenges have you encountered?
Group Activity

• After watching a few minutes of this Macroeconomics lecture, discuss the following in your groups:

  • What aspects of the lecture you think might be challenging for non-native English speaking students?

  • If you were giving this lecture, how might you modify it to better accommodate non-native English speaking students?

Thank you for your time and attention!

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More examples of reduction and linking occur in this brief dialogue between John and Ann who are talking in the library. The bolded words are spoken more strongly.

1 John: Jaheetyet?
2 Ann: No, joo?

Do you have any idea what they are talking about? Look at the rest of the dialogue.

3 John: Well then, let's avlunch.
4 Ann: Ok, Wherdawannaet?
5 John: Howbout Starbucks?
7 John: I knowhacha mean, but theyav good sandalswiches.
8 Ann: Ok, if yoosayso. Let's go after I finnish my calculus problems.

Can you understand the topic of the dialogue? If you are still having trouble, here is some help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fast Speech</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaheetyet?</td>
<td>Did you eat yet?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, joo?</td>
<td>No, did you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For extra practice in becoming familiar with the sounds of naturally spoken English, listen to your instructor ask you some questions. Choose the most appropriate response for each question from the choices listed a–h. For example, if you hear, “Howja gethatanswer?” you would select responses c. and d. because they are both appropriate responses. You may use the same answer more than once. Some questions may have two appropriate responses.

a. Don’t worry, wekinwait.
b. Downthehall tuhtheleft.
c. Idunno.
d. Lemmeshowya.
e. Iavamap.
f. Iguesso.
g. soccer
h. The storeonthecorner.