

Immersive Environment

1) Male Chinese Scholar

Notes from observer 1:

- Bitten by a snake, check with the doctor to see if it is poisonous
 - Went to Yellowstone with a friend, bitten by a snake
 - Golden ring, half a meter long
 - One golden ring? No, multiple golden rings
 - Are you paying with insurance? Normal travel insurance from travel agency
 - Do I get money back afterwards if I pay now?
 - Symptoms?
 - A little bit itchy hurts a bit
 - Started several minutes after the bite
 - Can't walk anymore after the bite, so had to wait an hour before anyone came
 - Allergies and medications?
 - None
 - Can I prescribe medication?
 - Is medication enough? Should we do surgery?
 - Medication will stop the spreading and come back again if it doesn't spread
 - Post-scenario questions
 - What did you think about it? Awkward? Interesting?
 - If it happened in real life, I would ask the doctor more questions to figure out if it's infected or not
 - Won't be able to describe the snake to the doctor

Notes from observer 2:

- Gave the higher level instruction first in English and explained again in Chinese; asked the participant to first come up with a very detailed description of how he got bitten by a snake, what the snake is like, and how bad was it.
- Smiled and laughed a lot when describing what happened; a lot of gestures; when asked insurance and rejected, embarrassed but laughed it out "I only know the Chinese name"
- Was in a delighted mood and tone in talking in English. Used simply English. "A little bit itchy, a little hurt."
- Do you have any allergies? "I don't know" "No" He understood what the doctor said in English; was able to offer suggestions "do you think I need surgery" was able to get his message across. Asked for confirmation "Really" when the doctor prescribed no

medicine. Ask to follow up questions comfortably. Made quite a few mistakes, but was not very hesitant when speaking. Laughed while talking.

Follow-up Interview Notes:

Q: What do you think about it in terms of the task, was it awkward, interesting? If you faced in the real world, how would you react

1. If it happens, I'll try to capture the snake
2. "To ask as much as details. To help the doctor to determine if the snake is poisonous or not" [made grammar mistakes]

Q: What challenges do you have when communicating

A: "I only know the Chinese name of the snake"

"If I don't know what the snake is and I have to describe what the snake looks like. To specify what kinds of snakes"

Q: Do you have any similar experience (i.e., the snake incidence)?

A: "Yes, it's also about snakes. We were hiking first, and there was a snake. I tried to describe it to my friend in Sweden but had difficulty describing the funny story. I would imagine that if it is a doctor and not a friend"

"I see the snake" Angelica corrected (unintentionally as she recalls) him "you just saw the snake". He repeated "yes I saw the snake"

He also described a time when he experienced difficulty when communicating at an autoshop about cars. He couldn't find the words to describe what he needs.

Q: how do you feel about it?

Ans: "Like a baby... it's like what they say I assume it's right. If they are asking more money I would accept assuming it is correct"

Participant "I'm just curious about the research method. I saw someone posting AI."

M was very friendly and laugh a lot while describing, had a delighted tone and mood. When he was struggling to try to come up with the words or describing what he was trying to say, he laughed and tried to rephrase it in simpler ways by using simpler English to describe situations.

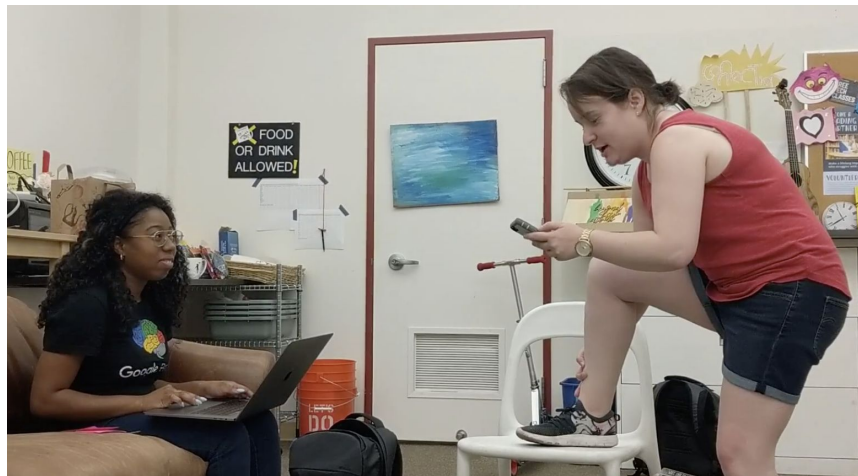
Interesting observations/surprises:

- Made grammatical mistakes and was corrected by the "doctor" (unintentionally) and immediately repeated the correct way to say it. Internalized the feedback quickly and did not seem to be bothered and interrupted.
 - Participant: "Just I see the snake"

- Doctor: “You saw the snake?”
- Participant: “Yah I saw the snake. I saw it’s there. And I try to [hand gesture]”
- Lack of vocabulary for technical terms? Such as car components, and snake species names
- Use gestures to compensate for a lack of words; nodded and said “yah” after finishing his responses signaling the end of the response;
- Acknowledged the disadvantages of the language barrier he is experiencing - that he might be taken advantage of - Q: how do you feel about it? Ans: “Like a baby... it’s like what they say I assume it’s right. If they are asking more money I would accept assuming it is correct”

2) Isabel (4:20 pm)

- Notes:
 - Set up google translate
 - Asked if she should act it out and offered to Act it out
 - Looked up words on google translator on her phone
 - “It’s hard to conjugate verbs when I haven’t done it for so long”
 - Read from google translator and showed the doctor where it was by putting her leg up on the chair



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- Showed fluent Spanish
- Sometimes she responded right away. Sometimes she had long pauses to read from her phone to give a response
- Looked on her phone; paused when reading and frowned
- Doctor asked a question (about insurance)
 - Couldn’t understand the question; frowned and repeated the word quietly to herself. Looked at her phone, typing while frowning (trying to figure out what did the doctor say)
 - Doctor rephrased the question. She looked up, but still on her phone trying to understand.

- Frowned again and asked: “Can you play the last one again”
 - “Ohh” seemed to understand this time. “Si. Cardinal care”
 - Doctor trying to type things out to translate to her
 - “I’m hoping they [the doctors] are doing something because we are having way too long a conversation [laughed]” “plus, depending on what country we’re in they’re not gonna care about insurance (said in a delighted way)” “Or in Europe. [laughed] it’s better news for me”
 - [she was referring to the translation process is very long and that she may “die” from the snake bite]
 - Understood most of the questions and responses from the doctor and was able to respond in spanish
 - reassure herself after said something: “that is a word”
- Follow-up questions
 - I remember better than I thought I would
 - 4 years in high school and took classes in college
 - What motivated you to learn Spanish
 - Had to take language to get into college
 - Wanted to take French but didn't fit in her schedule
 - Had to take language in college, and thought it would be fun to build on it
 - To a point where she can read the literature
 - It's more interesting continuing to learn Spanish than switching
 - When I started to be able to read, discuss and think in Spanish, I just find it is a lot more fun to memorize vocabulary and grammar stuff.
 - Q: During this experience, was there anything that's particularly awkward and hard to translate
 - I had no idea what health insurance was
 - It never comes up to me before.
 - When I was hearing it, it sounds as “do you have security coverage”
 - But when I was translating in my phone I realized it was health insurance
 - I didn't understand the first time when you asked it. Asked to see if A can find that sentence
 - “Somehow I'm out of internet”
 - “Hhh thank you, Stanford” seems to be frustrated that she couldn't find out what it was. But was glad when they found out what she couldn't make sense the first time.
 - Q: what strategies you use?
 - Try to translate words literally, and see if other ones can give clues. Or ask the person to rephrase
 - Q: if something like this happens what would you do
 - I will ask someone who speaks English
 - I would write things down as detailed as possible
 - I think at this point I won't worry about grammar

- I would act things out
- Q: imagine if this is in the context of learning language, how would your thought process change?
 - Depends on what kind of practices you're doing. If it is for real case, I would do the exact things I may do. But if it is just for language learning, then I would pay more attention to grammar, etc. I would look up some words. More focused on grammar and less on speed on communicating ideas.
- If I can tell the entire thing to the virtual assistant then she can translate the whole thing.

Comedy Night (@ 3:10 pm)

1) Female Chinese scholar (sharing negative story condition)

Notes:

- Explained the rules to her - each of us needs to share an embarrassing story while traveling in a foreign country.
- G: I walked into a restaurant and try to order. Nothing is in English. I only have a translator. It's a little embarrassing at and I can't really communicate. Even though I couldn't communicate but was able to get a taste of local life.
- A: I was traveling in Thailand, and I'm a vegetarian. Even though I was ordering Pad Thai, it tastes like fish sauce. Asked multiple times and one person pointed out that they thought they used a sauce without fish sauce but turn out it had some.
- Participant:
 - Shared willingly when it was her turn.
 - Went to tree house coffee. I asked for a burger with beef, and the staff said all burgers are with beef.
 - Asked Glenn is it true that burger implies beef. And Glenn explained to her.
 - G asked how did the staff react
 - "I think he was a little not polite." Feeling that he was thinking "you don't know a burger is with beef." I think she didn't know that I don't know this cultural background.
- Debrief:
 - We try to reframe mistakes as a positive experience and see how that affect people's feeling about mistakes and take risks.
 - Q: how do you feel when we asked you to share your experience after us sharing?
 - "I feel better. Because more people share, they may understand my experience. And if they go to my culture they will understand more"
- Did you have any negative experience with language that you remember?

- I think the first month I was here I'm confident about speaking out. In China what we learned in class is not very practical.
- I think I'm more confident now after I practiced a lot.
- Did you do anything to overcome that?
 - I just wrote in class and joined the discussion group (At Bechtel)
 - Still, I think I'm not confident enough. It's not my mother language. Sometimes I can't find words I want to use. I'm afraid to ask questions because I feel teachers cannot understand what I'm asking.
 - I don't think the discussion group is not very useful. They are also language learners so when we speak we just repeat the same mistakes.
 - I found it's much easier to understand what the professor is saying in a lecture. In the discussion, it's difficult to understand classmates. They speak very fast and use the word "like". I was very confused about why
- Do you think you all have similar problems
 - I think Asian cultures face similar mistakes

2) Andy (sharing positive story condition)

Explain the rules:

- Quietly observing and laughed when heard something funny or the person who's sharing was laughing.
- Pretty attentive to the sharing. Though later reported that 'half of his working memory was used on thinking about what to share later'
- "I accidentally used the wrong gender and she started laughing..." Andy facial expression changed with the speakers' emotion.
- Sharing:
 - Brazil - quickly learn the number to take the bus;
 - First talking with people in English. People can't speak English and tried to get people who speak English to talk to him.
 - He wanted to ask how to take the bus and couldn't communicate with the locals. Tried to show them google maps.
 - People told me to board another bus, not the one I showed on google maps. The bus driver was crazy, and I didn't know what to do. I kept looking at google map the whole time. Was relieved when getting off the bus. Met another Chinese guy and we took a taxi.
 - "It was sketchy" "I was so relieved after getting off the bus"

Interesting observations/surprises:

- **Tension: Google maps vs locals' knowledge but risk misinterpreting their messages due to language barriers**
- About his story: "it's a lot of I don't know."

- “I don’t know if I can I trust google maps or not” should I trust the natives which could be misinterpreted because of the language barrier?
 - “But I’m relying on google map for so many other things. Can I still trust it or not”
 - “When they are giving me different information, which one should I trust. The locals? Cuz I could be misinterpreting this information cuz the language barrier, but they also actually live here, so they do know how things work. **So that’s something that I don’t know**”
- **Sharing is a positive experience**
 - How did you feel when you’re telling your story?
 - “I think it’s funny because it’s after the fact ... the crazier it is, the better a story it is”
 - “As long as I live through it, everything is a positive experience (approach for mistakes in general)” “if it didn’t cost me a leg ... anything short of a leg is ... yah I can look back and laugh”
- Previous stories reminded him of his own mistakes that were most similar to the types of stories that we talked about
 - Two themes from our stories: using words incorrectly and not understanding the cultural norms

Cultural Checker

1. Chinese scholar (@ 2:50 pm; without checker)

Notes from observer 1:

Started out after giving the instructions and tools.

Was offended and asked “what are you doing” when the taxi driver tried to take the money and shake her right hand (which is one of our made-up unwritten rules for this country).

During the ride, asked a first question about when will they arrive. The driver didn’t answer and was annoyed. She laughed awkwardly.

Asked another question and got the same response.

Said multiple times: “what’s your problem”

“I need my change” when the driver didn’t give her change (the unwritten rule is that they need to ask for the change)

When the hotel staff was looking away while trying to shake hands and take her passport, she asked: “where do you looking”. She seemed to be annoyed.

The played ended after she successfully checked in at the hotel.

Follow-up questions

When asked about her experience with the role-play:

"You should explain what you should do in a foreign country"

"You should explain this to me... you're looking away. It's impolite"

G explained that in this made-up country, looking at someone is rude and the norm is not looking.

"Ohh. Yeah then you should explain"

She thinks in other countries people expect foreigners to behave differently. "I don't think people should follow the [local] roles."

Q: Can you describe if you have any experience people ask you to follow cultural roles?

Ans: in Nepal wanted to enter a temple and the monk said women are not allowed. Was frustrated because the monk didn't tell her why. She was upset and looked up in the hotel realizing why.

I just passed the ceremony with 2 male friends and wanted to check it out, and they were able to go, but the monk just said sorry you can't go. It might be the language barrier that the monk didn't explain why to her.

Interesting observations/surprises:

- She wanted to why she couldn't go to the temple and was motivated to find it out online by herself. She seemed to be upset when she had to follow cultural rules and customs.
- She expressed that people should expect foreigners to behave differently, and shouldn't use that against foreigners.
- It seems that she expected the taxi driver and the hotel staff to explain to her why they reacted the way they were reacting, such as looking away when interacting, to her.

2. With Andy (with checker)

- Action: asked the checker (Joyce) a lot of questions:
 - How do I call a taxi?
 - Understood and copied what the checker suggested
 - Called the cab driver over using the suggested gesture



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- What does it mean that he shook my hand?
 - A was confused about why the taxi driver shook his hand but went along.
 - Asked the checker right after when get got the chance



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- What's the normal price of a taxi?
- Can I ask for change if I tip?
 - Good question, wasn't prompted by the situation
 - Given the information that he should tip 10%, he was doing calculation aloud

- Can I just get in the cab now?
- While we're in the cab, are the cab drivers here talkative?
 - Also wasn't prompted by the situation
 - "I like this country" [because he doesn't have to talk to the taxi driver]
- When paying the driver, A remembered to ask for the change, a piece of information he got from the checker earlier.
 - He was also receptive of the handshake this time, though he did not offer the handshake.
- Remembered to shake right hand while giving money, passport, and taking money
- Asking the checker "Have I paid online?"
- When figuring out how much to give to the receptionist
 - "I should ask for 2000 back. Would that be correct?" [ask checker for confirmation]
 - "No" "wait wait, I didn't tip..." [said simultaneously]

Follow up questions

- How did you feel about this situation?
 - "I need this thing" [referring to the checker]
 - Very reassuring; "because this is like the most painful thing while traveling abroad; there are all these cultural traditions, norms that people don't talk about. They just assume that you know things. And if you don't, it is just embarrassing. Nobody is gonna tell you, like, everything. So with this app... it knows every norm in every situation you're in, so you will be able to ... know everything... you wouldn't miss out on anything"
 - If I don't know what I don't know, I can just ask her and she will tell me you should probably ask this
 - What are some examples of things that you were not sure about:
 - First, at the taxi, I was thinking, what are the things I need to pay attention... maybe I should be tipping, how much I should tip, and whether I will be overcharged or not.
 - But at the receptionist, I was just lazy. So I just asked, what else should I know? And she told me you should probably tip too.
 - Were there any parts that were embarrassing?
 - "I don't think so because it was a private experience"
 - I wasn't worried that I was watched, getting help from the virtual assistant
 - No. I don't think so. I feel pretty comfortable asking for help
 - Is there any feature you would want to have?
 - "I like how this gives me just-in-time feedback when I ask for them"
 - "But I think it could also be helpful... like... when I'm about to initiate an experience with a cab driver, the receptionist. **There is just a tab for all**

these common experience. I could just press 1 and it can tell me everything I need to know like taking a cab"

- Could also be helpful to tell information right before you engage in an experience along with the just in time experience
- "But I guess ... that makes it more like the articles that you could actually find online. BUT STILL, that would be helpful in conjunction with the just-in-time feedback that you had that online articles don't provide"
- How should the system respond to "What else should I know?"
 - System get more info/prompt to get more info about the current situation
- See the list of all cultural norms before the trip/on the plane before any contact with anyone, but only what is relevant to the context when in real-time
- Identifying the context is probably the most important thing, zero in on a specific set of information that you provide
 - He said he probably would do research before going on the trip, before actually getting contact with anyone in that country. When I'm in that situation, all I need it's just the things that are relevant for that particular context

3) Isabelle - cultural checker (@4 pm)

- Asked a lot of questions **upfront** about the cultural norms
 - How do I hail a taxi?
 - Once I do that, how do I negotiate the price? Is it a haggling system?
 - Once I get in the taxi and get to the hotel, what's the best way of communicating where I want to go?
 - Should I tell them where to go before I get in the taxi?
 - When told that Smiling at strangers is very rude and smiling at strangers is very rude, said: "Glad you told me that"
 - Asked all of the above before calling the taxi
 - What do I do if I don't have exact change?
 - Didn't ask or recognize the handshaking
 - Said to herself "this is gonna be awkward cuz I don't have the exact changes. OK" and boarded the taxi
 - Ask the checker about talking to the taxi driver, and was told it was considered rude to talk to the taxi driver
 - "What [laughed and surprised]"
 - Asked the checker "... I don't have the exact change" when told that she can ask for the exact number back, she spent some moments trying to calculate the amount
 - When giving taxi driver the money, driver shook her hand but she didn't show confusion.
 - Right before heading to the hotel, asked the checker:

- How do I check in at a hotel?
- Is there anything about shaking hands?
- Trying to confirm things she should know about the check-in process.
- Asked: Do I already have a reservation?
- When trying to pay the receptionist, spend a few moments trying to calculate how much she should ask back.
- Started using handshaking towards the end (after getting to the hotel and interacting for a bit) and laughed and said to the checker “and I need a calculator when traveling in this country”

Follow up questions

- Post experience recap
 - How do you feel about having this thing?
 - “I would be very happy to have it”
 - I Would probably do some research beforehand. Even then it would be helpful to have that for certain things
 - “Now im realizing that it’d be cool if I thought to ask it for total amount of money for change rather than calculating in my head quickly.”
 - Want to ask a question and get a whole debrief about a specific situation
 - “If would also be cool if I can ask one question and just get a whole debrief about a specific situation ... like I don’t have to ask a ton of questions about something.”
 - “So something like ... tell me everything I need to know about ... like hailing and taking a taxi. And you tell me do this do this and you’ll have to shake hand and do this and whatever.”
 - The need for convenience
 - “If you can talk to it that will be nice ... faster than it would take me to actually look something up”
 - “There are probably cultural things that I’m used to that I might revert back to do it if I’m not reminded about it. So it might be helpful to have reminders that come up. Like, oh no, it’s weird to make eye contacts ... just so I’m reminded of those things every so often”
 - What would the onboarding for this be like?
 - Is there a better way to ask a question?
 - It was helpful during the handshaking and at the beginning
- Do you want to know the why behind some customs, such as not tipping over 10%?
 - I think it’s good to know why.

Interesting observations:

- Both indicated they would love to have one.
 - Liked the convenience and just-in-time feedback

- “First, at the taxi, I was thinking, what are the things I need to pay attention... maybe I should be tipping, how much I should tip, and whether I will be overcharged or not. But at the receptionist, I was just lazy. So I just asked, what else should I know? And she told me you should probably tip too.”
- It could be embarrassing if not knowing the unspoken rules
 - “because this is like the most painful thing while traveling abroad; there are all these cultural traditions, norms that people don’t talk about. They just assume that you know things. And if you don’t, it is just embarrassing. Nobody is gonna tell you, like, everything.”
- One user asked all the questions she can think of upfront before trying to get a taxi.
- Both mentioned they probably would have done some research about the country beforehand
 - But suggest this is different from reading an online article
- Both pointed out it’d be great to have a debrief about a specific situation.
- Both proactively follow the local norms and rules once they knew about it.
- Would want to know the why behind the customs, such as why shouldn’t tip over 10%.