Teaching World Englishes to Undergraduates: Tensions and Pedagogical Insights
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Drawing on existing research and current local and global rationales about internationalizing, this project addresses tensions that emerge in the teaching of World Englishes at the undergraduate level. The presenters analyze how students understand and verbalize issues in current World Englishes debates and become better listeners of English dialects.

Communication/Linguistics 005: Global English and Communication
Purpose of the course: To help close the communicative gap by getting students to think about language and culture in a more critical way
- Attitudes towards accents
- Responsibility of the communicative burden

Course description: *This course introduces you to the pluralized nature of English, as in Englishes. As English is becoming a world language, the dominant language by which much of the business and science world functions, it has become imperative for us to openly address what this widespread phenomena means. We humans are using it in different ways for different purposes and we need to catch up with its variations to participate successfully as global citizens.*
- *What has prompted this surge towards English?*
- *How are globalizing currents propelling English forward?*
- *What issues in communication arise as we encounter people who speak English differently from us?*
- *Should we be moving towards certain 'standards of usage' regarding English use so that we can all understand each other?*
- *In what ways are we called on to 'listen' differently?*

Course logistics:
- Weekly class time: 2 lectures (1 hour each); 1 discussion section (2 hours)
- Major assignments: Group project presentation, individual research term paper, reflective essay for final exam
- Homework assignments: IPA transcription practice, reflections on assigned readings
- Discussion section activities: Listening activities to improve discerning and listening abilities, discussion activities to encourage and facilitate critical thinking about topics

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
Introduction	IPA and transcription		Varieties of English	Intelligibility and comprehensibility	English and Intl. Teachers		Varieties of English		English as a lingua franca

Methodology:
- One quarter (Spring 2013) of action research, consisting of: classroom observations, field notes from teaching discussion sections, lesson plans, and student work
- Thematic coding and analysis, guided by statistically significant findings from survey data, culminating in a fine-grained analysis of focal students

Findings: Survey
- Online survey given in Week 1 and on the final exam
  - 91 students took initial survey, 54 took final survey
- Students rated 25 statements on a 4-point scale of agreement (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree)
- Responses converted to numerical scores (strongly agree = 1, somewhat agree = 2, etc.) and class-wide means compared from initial to final survey
- Selected results:

Statement	Initial mean (*SD*)	Final mean (*SD*)	Agreement change
I (meaning you, the person taking this survey) speak English with an accent.	2.47 (*1.11*)	1.83 (*0.80*)	sig. **increase** (t_{138} = –4.03, $p < .0001$)
It's always up to speakers to make themselves more comprehensible to listeners.	2.09 (*0.74*)	2.63 (*0.90*)	sig. **decrease** (t_{95} = 3.75, $p < .0005$)
Foreign-accented TAs/professors are less knowledgeable.	3.95 (*0.23*)	3.70 (*0.63*)	sig. **increase** (t_{61} = 2.70, $p < .01$)
Everyone should try to speak American English.	3.12 (*0.80*)	2.98 (*0.76*)	nonsig. increase (t_{116} = –1.04, $p = .30$)

Findings: Inflection points

(1) Aviation English
- *Purpose*: Encourage students to think about miscommunication, specifically in connection with issues of intelligibility
- *Readings*: Tajima (2004); Bellorini & Vanderhaegen (1995)
- *Discussion section activities*:
  - Small-group discussions about Tajima (2004), first considering: *In which scenarios might it be an advantage to be a non-native speaker?*
  - Language policy drafting for ATC (air traffic control), discussing: *Would you make one language (such as English) mandatory for all flights in all airspace? What language level would you require?*
- *Student responses*:
  - Discussed causes and effects of miscommunication
    - *"I don't think I would put my trust in even the most skillful [non-native English speaking] pilot if I were in that situation because of this potential for disaster. It's strange because I find foreign accents entertaining, and I love to hang out with foreigners…. However, in a situation like this, as upsetting as it sounds, I would not trust them at all." (PH, reflection on Tajima reading)*
  - Considered accommodation and the communicative burden in a concrete scenario
    - *"In this life or death scenario I think people can modify their speech if there are large enough benefits and consequences of using that strict language." (AS, reflection on Tajima reading)*
- *Points of tension*: Managing students' responses to a tense video on pilot miscommunication

(2) International teaching assistants (ITAs)
- *Purpose*: Expose students to wider issues surrounding ITAs--ultimately, in hopes of alleviating the bias that contributes to the communication gap between undergraduates and ITAs
- *Readings*: Boxer & Tyler (2004); Gravois (2005)
- *Discussion section activities:* Discussion of experiences with ITAs, discussion of Rubin (1992)

- *Student responses*:
    - Recognized bias without personally assuming greater communicative burden
        - *"The students should bring any concerns to the ITA's attention in order to better help him or her understand the cultural norms in America." (CG, reflection on Boxer & Tyler)*
    - Framed personal experience with ITAs in terms of the communicative burden
        - *"Being an inner circle English speaker does not give me a free pass; I need to put in the effort to actively adapt my speaking and listening expectations so as to have successful interactions and communications." (AS, final exam)*
- *Points of tension*: Preventing crystallization of students' prior negative attitudes toward ITAs (Villarreal 2013)

(3) Listening activities
- *Purpose*: Expose students to several varieties of English and reveal the systematicity of pronunciation (and grammar) variations to (enable) them to recognize and adapt to patterns
- *Discussion section activities:* IPA transcription, listening for unfamiliar sounds, analysis of systematicity
- *Student responses*:
    - Recognized systematicity inherent in language varieties and thought about phonetic detail
        - *"From this lesson, we discussed that different forms of language are systematized. In other words, if a person listens long enough and hard enough to a certain accented variety of English, he or she will begin to pick up on patterns that make the speaker much easier to understand. Out of this, I concluded that all individuals in a conversation should put in the effort to both speak and listen to the best of their abilities." (CG, final exam)*
    - Engaged in "ear-tuning" experience(s)
        - *"After the multiple listening exercises in discussion, I realized that I can enhance my communication with someone who speaks with an accent by tuning my ears to their pronunciation differences and looking for patterns in them." (JJ, final exam)*
- *Points of tension*: Inadvertently reified a certain way of pronouncing words (the SAE way) as the correct way; contended with "rightness" of IPA transcriptions

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