Supporting and Responding to Our Multilingual Students
Share a time when you had to communicate in a language you weren’t completely fluent in.
Goals

- What are your goals for this session?
- Here are the ones we came with:
  - Offer some factors to consider when teaching multilingual students
  - Reflect on best practices for responding to their writing
  - Look at an example writing and discuss strategies for responding
  - Provide an opportunity for discussion on ways to support these students in the classroom through feedback, inclusive assignments, and discussions
  - Share UNST initiatives to support these students
What do we mean by “multilingual student?”
## Three Groups of Multilingual Students

According to Ferris (2009), multilingual students can be categorized into three groups based on their characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Early-arriving Immigrant and Generation 1.5</th>
<th>Late-arriving Immigrant</th>
<th>International Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literate in L1</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Linguistic - Cultural Identification</td>
<td>L2 (English / US)</td>
<td>Mostly L1</td>
<td>L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of American general culture and academic culture</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Very limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English literacy experience</td>
<td>Varies, often primarily in school</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Proficiency Requirements at PSU</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Get high enough score on proficiency exam or finish IELP Academic Track classes with 2.7 GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to learn English</td>
<td>Similar to monolingual English speakers</td>
<td>For integrative and survival purposes</td>
<td>For instrumental purposes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three Important Factors to Keep in Mind
Factor #1: Student Motivation and Goals

English as a Lingua Franca = use of English as a common means of communication for speakers of different first languages.

Based on Kachru (1992)
“Unstable” features of English

- Used less predictably and dependably in speech and writing, especially in ELF settings.
- Either not rule-based or not necessary for communicating meaning in a certain context

Examples

- articles (a, an, the)
- prepositions (of, in, at, etc.)
- subject-verb agreement (*He claims that*…)
- embedded questions (*The committee considered why the ballot measure didn’t pass*, not *why didn’t the ballot measure pass*).
Factor #2: Language’s Dynamic Nature

“Language is not fixed, but is rather a dynamic system. Language evolves and changes... [it] grows and organizes itself from the bottom up in an organic way, as do other complex systems.”¹

“Language is the way it is because of the way it has been used.”²

¹Larsen-Freeman (2006)
²Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008)
Factor #3: Second Language Development
“Language development is no longer seen as a process of acquiring abstract rules [which then get applied] but as the emergence of language abilities in real time.”

“Learning is not the taking in of linguistic forms by learners, but the constant adaptation of their linguistic resources in the service of meaning making in response to the affordances that emerge in the communicative situation, which is, in turn, affected by learners’ adaptability.”

“Language learning emerges from participation in linguistic practices, such practices always being steeped in historical, cultural and institutional meaning systems.”

1Evans(2007)  
2Larsen-Freeman and Cameron(2008)  
3Van Lier(2004)
What are implications for supporting multilingual students and assessing their writing?


