EMI Language Tip of the Month – Heteronyms

Heteronyms are words that are spelt the same but have different meanings when pronounced differently. The difference in pronunciation is usually the stressed syllable.

**conduct (verb) vs. conduct (noun)**

The verb conduct means to do or execute and the second syllable (con-DUCT) is stressed.

Example usage: to conduct a survey - to conduct an investigation

The noun conduct means behaviour or manners and the first syllable (CON-duct) is stressed.

Example usage: student’s conduct - inappropriate conduct for an interview

**object (verb) vs. object (noun)**

The verb object means to complain or not approve and the second syllable (ob-JECT) is stressed.

Example usage: to object a proposal – to object to a colleague’s comment

The noun object means a thing and the first syllable (OB-ject) is stressed.

Example usage: a flying object – an unidentified object

Check out this [link to a list of common heteronyms](#) to see numerous other examples.

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**International Classroom Tip**

In last month’s newsletter, we highlighted learning objectives as a key element of structuring a lesson. This month we devote attention to activation methods. A particular benefit of activation methods in the international classroom is the role they can play in reducing language and cultural barriers. Let’s look at an example:

You may have experienced a situation in which you ask students a question to probe what they already think or know about a topic, only to receive no or very limited input. One potential cause of this may be students’ self-perceived inability to give a good answer in English although they may have good ideas brewing in their heads. A typical in-class method to lower such a barrier is **think-pair-share**.

By first giving students time (1 minute) to **think**, they may feel better prepared before **pairing** with a neighbour. This pairing not only gives students a warm-up round to talk through their thoughts in a foreign language, but it also allows them to do it with their peers, which for many is less threatening than speaking out loud with the teacher in front of the whole class. Once students have had time (2 minutes) to pair, they may feel more confident to **share** their insight/answer with the whole group.

Dedicating this minimal extra time during a lecture can enhance both the quantity and quality of student input. In addition, you can tweak this method by having students think and pair in writing (the written medium also helps reduce barriers in a foreign language) as well as have students share via in-class response systems before the class discusses.

If you are interested in learning more about steps and language for setting up such micro-methods in a university setting, check out the EMI [e-module initiating student input](#).
Food for thought

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn” (Xun Kuang, Chinese Confucian philosopher, c. 310-235 B.C.)

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