EMI Language Tip of the Month — Tricks to emphasize points

In last month’s newsletter, we showed the use of signposts as one tool to ease students’ cognitive load when attending a lecture in a foreign language. However, there is more than one way to skin a cat. Let us look at two simple language techniques to help underline important points during a lecture:

1. Adding the auxiliary verb do to your positive statements

   Standard statement: The data show that there are correlations.
   Emphasized statement: The data do show that there are correlations.

   Standard statement: We can see here that a reaction occurred.
   Emphasized statement: We can see here that a reaction did occur.

2. Adding the phrase at all/in the least to adjectives in your negative statements

   Standard statement: The data results are not conclusive.
   Emphasized statement: The data results are not at all conclusive.

   Standard statement: The argument is interesting but not convincing.
   Emphasized statement: The argument is interesting but not in the least convincing.

In addition to these little add-ons in your spoken English, stressing the added words heightens the effect. If the point is worthy of extra emphasis, a brief pause at the end of the statement can add the Ha-Ha effect. In the end though, context is also vital and adding these words depends on what comes before and after the statement.

International classroom tip

The flipped, or inverted, classroom is one in which lectures are recorded and students view the recordings before class, thus freeing up in-class time for more learning activities, discussion and questions. While the verdict is still out on the efficacy of flipped classrooms, there are some benefits of the flipped classroom for students learning content in a foreign language:

   1. students can double-check new words before class
   2. students can prepare better questions since they will have had time to think about them in advance
   3. students can control the pace of the lecture (for example, double check a new word, rewind the recording when a word is not phonetically clear, take better notes)
   4. students can internalize the language of the lecture by speaking about and applying the covered concepts during class instead of just listening to a teacher lecture the whole time

In the end, all teaching and learning involves teaching and learning language of a specific field. The flipped classroom is an approach to increase student’s exposure to and active use of the language of the field.

Food for thought

If you are considering flipping your class, check out some videos offering useful advice from those who have flipped their classrooms:

5 things I wish I had known when I flipped my class
What if students don’t watch the videos?

If you wish to unsubscribe to this newsletter click here