

Written Accents...

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so it stands to reason that non-native speakers would write in a way that reflects their language background. Sandarshi Gunawardena, the Assistant Director of International Programs and Services at George Mason University, sums up the written accent, saying, "The way you write is not necessarily the language you learn but the values and beliefs and the cultural norms that influence the patterns of thinking that then influence the writing... so there are lots of things that are hidden."¹ Because these discrepancies may be "hidden," it could be difficult to pinpoint them and know when to correct them.

The University of Washington offers some guidelines for professors when assessing writing from non-native English speakers, which can be transferred to communicating in the business world as well. They suggest that you "learn to read through error." That is, don't let the written accent distract you from the thoughts of the writer.² If you feel that it is necessary to mark up the writing, do so sparingly. Mark the errors that you see, but give the writer the freedom to revise on his or her own. If the errors are serious, provide a more detailed explanation, so the writer understands how to improve in the future. The level of direction that you give to non-native English speakers depends on the job that you have and whether editing is part of your duties. It is always critical, though, to value a written accent as a reflection of a writer's background, and to focus on the ideas that the writer presents, rather than insignificant errors.

by Emily Hudson

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Kelly Roden
JMU STC President

A Message from the President

I would like to welcome everyone back to JMU for the spring semester! I hope that everyone had a safe and relaxing winter break, and is refreshed and ready to begin the second half of the year! To start off the new

year, this issue of EmD@sh focuses on expanding our horizon of communicating across the globe with the theme of intercultural communication. Intercultural communication plays an ever-increasing role in the workplace as our lives are interconnected now more than ever. Learning how to work with translators, to market yourself in other cultures, and to use technologies that assist with communication barriers are all important skills to learn when looking to enter the workforce.

Our meetings for this semester will also help to develop skills for the workplace. This semester we will be having our welcome back meeting and an internship providers meeting where various internship providers will come to talk about internship opportunities with their organizations. We will also have a meeting on Illustrator, salary negotiations, job and health benefits, and an HTML competition. We will end with our semester wrap-up meeting where there will be free pizza and an election for the new members of the JMU STC administrative council for the 2015-2016 academic year.

I am happy to continue serving as JMU STC's president for the remainder of the semester. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me at rodenka@dukes.jmu.edu or our Publications Committee Officer Mackenzie Kelley at kelleymk@dukes.jmu.edu. Have a wonderful semester.

10 Tips for Better Intercultural Communication

1. Be open to people of other cultures and their communication styles.
2. Listen and pay attention to what is said. Present yourself in a polite and respectful manner.
3. Think about the other's perspective. Consider how the situation might look to the other person.
4. Try to ignore stereotypes when speaking to someone of a different culture.
5. Find common ground to help break the ice.



Photo courtesy of www.natcom.org

6. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification. Avoid confrontational responses such as "You phrased Topic A in a confusing way," and instead say things such as "I am not understanding Topic A."
7. Avoid acronyms such as "ASAP" or idioms such as "beat around the bush." These are commonly used in the English language, but they may not make sense to others.
8. Use proper grammar and avoid jargon and slang.
9. Pay attention to nonverbal communication. It is often more expressive than verbal communication. However, keep in mind that the nonverbal expressions of other cultures may have different meanings.
10. Give the benefit of the doubt. If someone says something offensive, he or she may not have meant it in the way you took it. Kindly explain your issue.