

Teaching Discourse Management in the Language Classroom

Artificial models versus real language?

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- Possible scenarios
- What's out there...
- A couple of activities
- And then there's culture...



If I just keep smiling,
perhaps no-one will
notice



He clearly doesn't know what he's talking about.

How do I stop him?

When we use our 'other tongues' ...

- We get left out of conversations
- Not because we have nothing to say, but we're just that bit too slow
- Or just not quite sure of ourselves

- The native speaker won't wait for us.
- The native speaker becomes more powerful
- As second language users we can become secondary

As other tongue users

We need to learn how to redress imbalances.

We need to learn how to do long turn taking

As educators...

We need to teach how this.

What is out there...

Typical focus

- Interrupting
- Stopping interruptions
- Asking for clarification
- Polite requests
- Polite refusals

< Back

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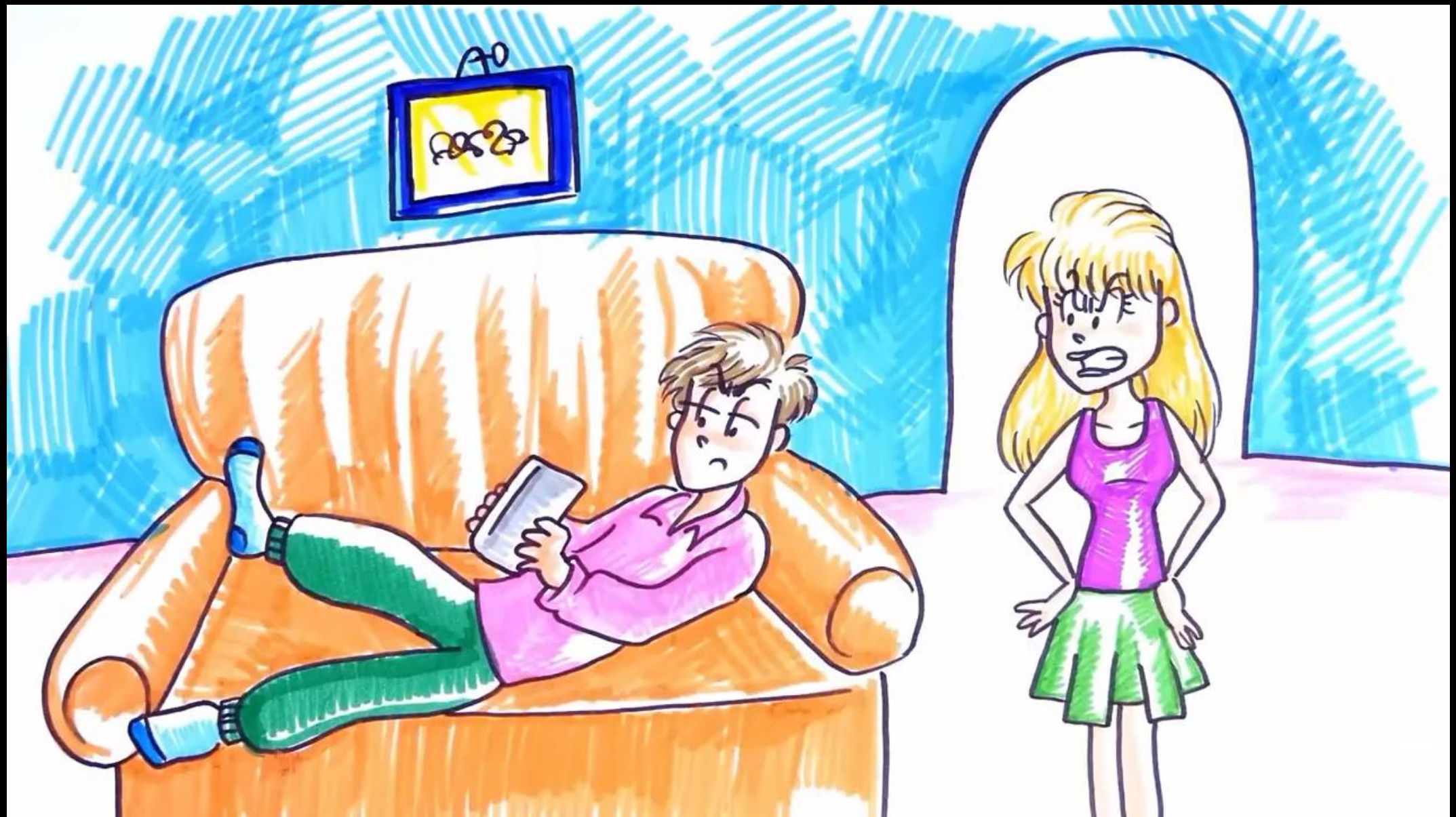
Expressions for interrupting



No responses received yet. They will appear here...

 Poll Everywhere

Logout



- Would you mind repeating that, please?
- Sorry I didn't quite understand
- Can you repeat that please?
- No I didn't get that
- Sorry?
- Pardon?
- What?
- Eh?

Interrupting to Join a Conversation and Share an Opinion

- **Marko:** If we continue to improve our sales in Europe, we should be able to open new branches elsewhere.
- **Stan** (not yet a part of the conversation): I couldn't help but overhear you talking about opening new branches. Do you mind if I add something?
- **Marko:** Of course, go ahead.
- **Stan:** Thanks, Marko. I think we should open new branches no matter what. We should be opening new stores whether or not our sales improve.
- **Marko:** Thank you, Stan. As I was saying, if we improve sales, *we can afford* to open new branches.

- How to manage other people
- How to ask without looking stupid
- How to give yourself time to think

A couple of activities...

Hesitation
'Just a
minute'



- Teaching Grammar
- Dealing with students who think they know it all
- Remote teaching

Putting the list into practice...

- Conversations in 3s
- One person notices the expressions that the others use and feeds back

And then there's culture...

And then there's culture...

- What is the default discourse style?
- What are the normal protocols in that situation?
- How is information organized?
- What reference points are being used?
- What about non-verbal communication?
- How can I fit in?

Default discourse style

- Do people normally talk across each other?
- Do people normally talk about the thing first?
- Do people like to revisit what they've just said?
- Is beauty of expression important?

- Do people tend to use emotive language?
- Do people use reasoning?
- Is the goal of the cooperation more important than the relationship between the speakers?

Coping strategies

- Slow the information flow
- Don't assume you have understood
- Check back information
- Check back for attitude

Checking back without looking stupid

- Don't make it seem important
- Reframe questions as if you are confirming detail
- Offer your interpretation of events first
- Give the other person chance to respond

Intergroup miscomprehension and even hostility arise when each group has failed to interpret the intentions of the other group as a result of misinterpreting its discourse conventions

Scollon 2001

We take an utterance to mean what it would mean in our environment and assume that the world is functioning normally.

- Why do the English never say what they mean?
- I've been in meetings here for the last six years – I've no idea what's been said, I don't know if there was a decision made.
- The way you English talk – it's just not efficient.

- How can I help my learner's communication strategies?
- How can I use artificial models as a scaffolding to real discourse management?

Success in international settings depends on more than language skills alone. Increasingly, successful international careers depend on the ability to successfully navigate regional and organisational cultural differences, as well as the ability to communicate clearly.

Adapted from [Abbeycommunications.com](https://www.abbeycommunications.com) (accessed 10/08/2020)

Thank you

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