

3E: Observe & Analyze II

Paulette Oke, MA, Lecturer, English [00:00:00] I'd like to pick up from where we left off in the last class when we were talking about how non- English speakers are viewed in today's society. At the end of the last class, Jason, I believe you were making a point in response to that question. I think it'd be a great place to start. If you remember, I asked you to underline it in your notes. Do you still have that, and would you like to share?

Jason, Student [00:00:22] Sure. Yeah, yeah, I was just, I was just making the point that some people tend to think that the imperfect English speakers don't really know what they're talking about. And I find myself doing that sometimes, I think we can all agree that we feel that way. But Tan offers a number of examples where people assumed that her mother was not intelligent, simply based on her, on her basic speech patterns. Even, I mean, even though that she totally reads The Wall Street Journal on the regular. And Tan even felt that her mother's thoughts were imperfect because of her mother's English wasn't perfect. That's messed up.

Paulette Oke, MA [00:00:56] Well, that's a great point, and I like that you used a quote from Tan as evidence to support your point. Thank you for that. Ah, would someone else like to offer another opinion, do you agree with Jason?

Jackie, Student [00:01:07] I disagree. I, I don't think people are making assumptions about Tan's mother's intelligence. Tan shows a few examples in the article where she felt her mother's wishes weren't being carried out, and maybe that was because they truly didn't understand her and they took, she took it as an insult. I don't know, maybe the stockbroker in New York just didn't know where to send the check.

Paulette Oke, MA [00:01:27] That's an interesting perspective, but do you think you should consider the hospital scene? Why would the hospital say they lost her CAT scan if they didn't understand her? Does that change your position at all?

Jackie, Student [00:01:36] No, because it clearly says in the article that the hospital wouldn't give her any information until her next visit. That doesn't mean they thought she was stupid. It just means that maybe they didn't want to give confidential information over the phone.

Student [00:01:46] I see what you're saying, Jackie, and you bring up a good point. But I don't think that the author is intending to imply that people simply didn't understand what the mother wanted. Clearly, she feels like she's not being taken seriously because of her language.

Jackie, Student [00:02:02] But maybe she was just reading too much into it.

Jason, Student [00:02:04] Okay, no, I, I do see your point. However, in the details provided in the text, they're meant to imply that the audience is treating her poorly simply because of her broken English.

Paulette Oke, MA [00:02:20] This is great. I can always count on you three for dissenting opinions. And I want to make sure that we hear from you both, um, you share.

Student [00:02:29] I was just going to say that we talked about this in our study group and we didn't agree. And then we looked at that article you gave us last week, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue." And that seemed to be more helpful in answering the questions from this week.

Paulette Oke, MA [00:02:41] What about it was useful?

Jackie, Student [00:02:42] Oh, she talks about linguistic terrorism, that Chicano people are punished by both American and Spanish-speaking communities for neither speaking correct Spanish nor correct English.

Jason, Student [00:02:54] And perhaps, Tan is being sensitive, yes, but based on Anzal . . .

Paulette Oke, MA [00:03:00] Anzaldua?

Jason, Student [00:03:01] Yes. Anzaldua's point about linguistic terrorism, it really could be that Tan's mother is being punished. So maybe it is both intentionally and unintentionally.

Student [00:03:11] You didn't convince me in study group and you're not convincing me now.

Paulette Oke, MA [00:03:15] Okay, fair enough. Let's move on to another question. And I hope that you are as passionate about this question as you are with the previous. So what are assumptions made on imperfect speakers of English?

Jason, Student [00:03:30] Personally, I think because I read the text, the whole text . . .