Reflection Paper # 3 APLNG 410

Maggie

For the third session with my language partner, we decided to focus on learning prominence since this is an important pronunciation feature which is quite sensitive to the discourse context and the speaker’s intent. For this time, we chose to switch from working on specific sounds and words to focus on something more general, because we only have three sessions and I think prominence and intonation are also important in communication and need to be addressed for my language partner.

At the beginning, I gave a small lecture to Ali, who is my language partner, and introduced to him the definition of prominence, thought groups, and how to decide which word or phrase in a sentence should be put on prominence with some simple examples. Then we worked on several sentences which I prepared before the meeting: Ali was first asked to mark the thought groups and prominence by himself, and then read the sentence aloud to me. Then we did something similar with what we did in our class: I chose Amy Cuddy’s speech on Ted which I have been quite familiar with and at first only showed Ali its transcript. I asked him to read the transcript and try to mark the thought groups and prominence, and since it’s quite a long transcript so we only focused on the first two paragraphs. Then I showed him the video clip and let him listened twice and mark the thought groups and prominence again with the speech. After this, we took a look at the transcript he had been working on and tried to analyze the differences between his first and second time marking.

For my approach of instruction, I think I spent more time on making him articulate the knowledge which he just learned, since I think it is a knowledge point that he will have better understanding through listening and speaking practices. I sometimes correct his obvious mistakes when we were doing the marking thing, but in other cases I told him that prominence and intonation was pretty much depend on the specific speaker and there is no certain answer for a passage.

This session went pretty well, and Ali felt it useful and he said it is a good strategy to improve his listening and speaking skills and now he would pay much attention to these features when he communicates with others. And it is also a good pre-lesson for our next meeting since we might work on his presentation which he have been preparing for his candidacy exam. We both think what we talked about in this meeting will help him with his presentation to some degree.