CSD 232 • Descriptive Phonetics
Eulenberg/Farhad

Fall Semester 2010

Multicultural Considerations
In Descriptive Phonetics
Why is it important to study multicultural and multilingual issues?

- Other languages affect the learning of English.
- Language is an expression of culture.
- Effect of culture on language not predictable.
- Clinicians can misinterpret speakers’ behaviors.
- Clinician needs to know how culturally based beliefs can conflict with clinician’s culture.
Cultural Differences

- Respect for authority
- Attitudes toward time
- Attitudes toward learning English
- Attitudes toward disabilities
- Attitudes toward gender
Nonverbal Behaviors

- Eye Contact - gaze may be considered polite and attentive or rude and aggressive
- Touching - touching may be offensive or welcome
- Proximity - body distance: friendly or unfriendly
- Approval - gestures of approval are not universal and may be misunderstood
Verbal Behaviors

• Use of Prosodic Variations - narration may involve a different register of voice, not representative of typical speech
• Talking - clinician must avoid interpreting child’s silence or lack thereof
Interaction Protocols

• Turn taking
• Accounting for shared knowledge - cultures vary on whether retelling is expected
• Conversational openers - personal questions may be rude
• Discourse rules - the rules of how to tell a story differ from culture to culture
Styles of Speech

• Dialects - variations within a language
  – regional - geographic and linguistic factors
  – standard (may not be the most frequently used)
  – nonstandard - term often given to dialects spoken by marginalized groups
  – foreign dialect
  – bidialectal: alternation between two dialects
Registers

- Formal
  - honorifics
- Informal
- Talking to children
- Talking to foreigners