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"Sometimes My Tongue Stucks with Fluency": International Students' English Needs at a Higher Education Institution

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Abstract

We investigated international students' (ISs') English learning needs in terms of language tasks organized by reading, writing, listening and speaking, and their confidence in their ability to perform said tasks. We also investigated university resources ISs suggested for increasing their cultural and linguistic adjustment to campus. A survey and focus group interviews uncovered that ISs' top needs were in the area of reading, but they were also the most confident in that area. Students expressed the lowest amount of confidence in understanding cultural references and jokes. ISs suggested conversation groups, buddy programs, and movie clubs as helpful university resources.

Keywords: international students, English for Academic Purposes, needs analysis, higher education, student supports.

Introduction

Universities in the United States host around one million international students (ISs) annually, comprising 4.6% of all students in higher education. ISs contribute to the United States and its universities in many ways. First and foremost, they are a big source of tuition revenue (Martirosyan, et al., 2019; Andrade, 2009; Perry, 2016), and contributed $28.4 billion to the US economy in 2021 (NAFSA [Association of International Educators], 2021). They are a low-cost labor force in universities that assist professors in teaching and research. Furthermore, ISs contribute to domestic students' cultural awareness and provide opportunities for intercultural learning, which prepares their peers to enter multicultural workplaces (Cheng et al., 2004; Perry, 2016). Conversely, ISs often do not find the atmosphere of universities in the US culturally and linguistically welcoming. They face many challenges as they adapt to university life in the United States, which may prevent them from thriving both socially and academically (Chavajay, 2013). ISs have reported that the support they receive from the university is a deciding factor in choosing one university over another (Cho & Yu, 2015; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). A crucial part of such support should be the continued development of ISs' English skills.

Research shows that acquiring a level of academic English that will allow an individual to engage in all aspects of academic life at a university takes significant time and effort. Academic English is not only a matter of learning grammatical structures or casual speaking skills, although these are typical foci for students who learn English as a foreign language in overseas institutions (Hartshorn, Hart, & McMurry, 2019; Ockey et al., 2014). English proficiency tests typically used for college admissions such as the TOEFL or IELTS tests have limited value in assessing whether students will be successful with tasks such as reading textbooks or research journals, writing lab reports and research articles, giving oral presentations,

and listening to lectures. Academic English also includes the types of oral/aural interactions needed for office hours and group projects, or for understanding crucial expectations around assignments and evaluation. These language tasks all require a sophisticated understanding of complex, often discipline-specific vocabulary, text structures, and conventions. In addition, using English nimbly in social situations and acquiring an understanding of the local culture is crucial for students' adjustment to university life. Learning English is therefore not only a linguistic, but also a sociocultural challenge for students (Evans & Andrade, 2015). Therefore, it is important that students have opportunities to continue developing these skills at their receiving university (Martirosyan et al., 2019).

This study seeks to uncover university international students' stated needs for learning and using English on and off campus. We investigated ISs' English needs across the four main language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and their confidence in performing language tasks under each skill, as well as their perceptions of resources and programs universities should offer to support their adjustment to campus life. Using a needs analysis questionnaire, the viewpoints of 138 ISs were elicited. Next, two focus group interviews with a total of 14 ISs were conducted to more closely examine their English needs and opinions about university resources. The research questions that guided this study are:

1. What are ISs' English language needs and confidence with the four language skills?

2. What are ISs' views on university programs and resources that could support their continued English development and adjustment to the university?

As the number of ISs in U.S. universities continues to grow, it is important for universities to learn how best to support them. The results of our study can help university leaders, instructors, and staff improve their practices and services for ISs.

Literature Review

Challenges Faced by International Students

Upon entering U.S. universities, ISs are faced with a myriad of educational, sociocultural, and linguistic situations that may differ greatly from the kinds of experiences they have had in their previous institutions. One of these is the difference in the type of learning in which ISs are expected to engage. The educational system in many of these students' countries is based on rote memorization and repetition without a focus on group work and interaction, which is more typical for U.S. universities (Kennedy, 2002). In some cases, class participation is a required and graded part of a course. There may also be a greater emphasis on the use of technology for communicating in a course, which may be an additional challenge. Adapting to the language demands of these new learning experiences may prove difficult for ISs who have not previously used English for such purposes.

Another challenge hindering ISs' cultural and linguistic adjustment to campus is the lack of interaction between ISs and domestic students (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). Domestic students may hold perceptions of ISs as not being linguistically and socially capable of presenting themselves (Parks & Raymond, 2004), while ISs may limit their interactions with domestic students to asking for directions or discussing everyday events instead of seeking deeper emotional connections, which they may develop with fellow ISs (Bulthuis, 1986; Chavajay & Skowronek, 2008; Poyrazli, et al., 2004). For example, Chavajay (2013) showed

that ISs view domestic students as a source for everyday information transportation and courses but do not reach out to them when they feel lonely and homesick. This lack of communication between locals and internationals can cause stress, homesickness, and anxiety in ISs, which in turn contributes to their lack of social adjustment and limited opportunities to use and develop English in deep and meaningful ways (Ebinger, 2011; Johnson & Sandhu, 2007; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Rienties & Nolan, 2014). It also limits ISs' opportunities to learn cultural references, jokes, and social customs, which have also been found to be challenging to learn (Sawir et al., 2012).

Lastly, many ISs feel powerless and insecure during their stay in the U.S. because of their dependence on the receiving institution. ISs' visa status, education and career future, and even financial resources are often determined and maintained by their university (or for doctoral students, advisor) directly (Hwang et al., 2016). There is great pressure on ISs to focus on research and coursework that help them maintain those resources, often at the expense of other, more social activities or non-mandatory English courses that might ease ISs' adjustment to campus.

University Supports for International Students

Universities have responded to ISs needs to some degree by implementing different supports to help their ISs adapt to the new situation faster and more easily. In a recent study, Martirosyan et al. (2019) investigated the websites of 20 U.S. universities with the highest number of ISs to see the types of support these universities provide for this population. The support categories the authors uncovered included a) English language program supports, b) Academic support and student success initiatives, such as tutoring services, academic tips, advising, and counseling services, c) Targeted writing support which includes writing centers

and writing consultants, d) Social and cultural events such as heritage and culture celebrations and weekly coffee hours, e) Professional development workshops which include job, tax, and financial management knowledge and strategies, and finally, f) Family member programs like daycare and English classes. However, this variety of services is unlikely to exist at universities that serve fewer ISs or that do not have a long tradition of serving this student population.

Some of the best ways to help ISs adjust to the linguistic and cultural landscape of their new campus includes purposeful ways of facilitating interactions between them and domestic students. Telbis (2013) suggests universities connect ISs to a person on campus who shares a cultural background with them prior to their arrival in the United States. After the arrival, Telbis (2013) suggests peer programs in which a domestic student is paired with an IS to help the new student assimilate into the culture and educational system more easily. Such peer programs also offer opportunities for authentic language use. For more targeted academic peer support, Korobova & Starobin (2015) suggest mentoring programs.

As an IS's first substantial contact at the receiving institution is typically a professor, universities also need to devise ways of increasing the cultural and linguistic competence of faculty who work with ISs (Perry, 2016). For example, professors might consider simplifying their language and defining culturally specific terms they use when talking to ISs (Lin & Scherz, 2014), or supplementing their instruction and assignment directions with video in addition to written materials (Habib et al., 2014). Professors also need to develop intercultural sensitivity and competence to effectively navigate cross-cultural encounters with ISs and to appreciate the linguistic and cultural assets ISs bring with them (Jin & Schneider, 2019; Nieto & Zoller Booth, 2010). However, faculty will likely need training in these areas (Jin & Schneider, 2019).

Even when universities do provide supports for ISs, it is crucial that ISs are able to actually become aware of them. Hence efficiently advertising the resources is as equally important as providing the resources. Sherry et al. (2010) suggest including all of the necessary pieces of information in a mandatory orientation session for ISs.

Theoretical Framework

In our study, we drew on the work of scholars who have examined language development as a sociocultural process that takes place during social interaction between individuals within particular cultural contexts (e.g., Gee, 1992, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). Recognizing that ISs enter novel sociocultural and -linguistic contexts upon enrolling in U.S. universities is an important way to acknowledge the multiple and complex tensions and challenges associated with these students' English learning and use.

Method

Participants

Participants of this study were ISs enrolled at a university located in the Northeast of the United States. 862 ISs were invited to participate in the survey, and of these, 138 completed it. The survey included a separate item for collecting the emails of the students interested in participating in a focus group. 39 ISs showed interest in participating in the focus group interviews, and from that population, 14 participated.

ISs who participated in the survey were mostly from India, China, Turkey, and Nigeria, and were studying at the doctoral level. Computer science, biomedical engineering, and

mechanical engineering were the most common majors. Tables 1, 2, and 3 provide more information about the participants' demographics.

Table 1

Survey participants' demographic information

Time in the US		Level of study	
Item	**Number**	**Item**	**Number**
0-6 months	30	Bachelors	21
7-12 months	18	Masters	29
13-24 months	13	Doctoral	43
3-5 years	25		
6 years or more	3		
No data	49	No data	45

Table 2

Survey participants' country of origin and languages spoken

Countries of origin		Languages spoken	
Item	**Number**	**Item**	**Number**
India	44	Hindi	26
China	11	Telugu	13
Turkey	5	Chinese	10
Nigeria	5	Turkish	7
Iran	3	Spanish	5
Bangladesh	2	Bengali	4

Columbia	2	Marathi	4
South Korea	2	Persian	3
Greece	2	Urdu	3
Pakistan	2	Yoruba	3
Haiti	1	Punjabi	2
Saudi Arabia	1	Greek	2
Denmark	1	French	2
Cameron	1	Korean	2
Peru	1	English	1
Hungary	1	Tamil	1
Thailand	1	Igbo	1
Vietnam	1	Portuguese	1
Philippines	1	Danish	1
Brazil	1	Khmer	1
Kenya	1	Vietnamese	1
Cambodia	1	Filipino	1
UK	1	Thai	1
		Hungarian	1
		Haitian	1
No data	47	No data	41

Table 3

Survey participants' fields of study

Field of study	Number
Computer science	20
Biomedical engineering	9
Mechanical engineering	9
Business	7
Plastic engineering	6
Biology	4
Civil engineering	4
Public health	3
Chemical engineering	3
Physics	2
Psychology	2
Polymer science	2
Chemistry	2
Environmental engineering	2
Pharmaceutical Sciences	2
Education	1
Global studies	1
Accounting	1
Electrical engineering	1
Mathematics	1

Procedures

The survey used in this study was adapted from Soodmand Afshar and Movassagh (2016) needs analysis questionnaire, which includes four main parts for each of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). The 43-item survey was administered through Qualtrcis and sent to ISs in the March of 2022. The survey asked ISs to rate the need for and their confidence with specific language tasks, organized under the four main language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. For example, an item under reading was "read textbooks in my field." An item for writing was "write research articles for journals." An item for listening was "listen to students when I am a T[eaching] A[ssistant] or an instructor." An item for speaking was "speak to the professor in class." An additional block of questions asked ISs to respond to items about language tasks that did not clearly belong to any one of the main language skills; an example item in this block was "Accurately use and understand vocabulary specific for my field." For each task, ISs rated both their perceived need for performing the task and their confidence level in performing the task on a scale from 0 (no need or no confidence) to 100 (need all the time or extreme confidence). At the end of the survey, open-ended comments about the IS experience and student demographics were collected (see Tables 1-3).

The survey was followed by two 90-minute focus group interviews conducted in May 2022. Gift cards were offered as incentives for both of these data collection stages. The focus groups explored themes from the survey, including question prompts related to the challenges experienced by students with the different language skills and their suggestions for the university's services for supporting their English language acquisition. The focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The transcript analysis consisted of several rounds of qualitative coding conducted by the two authors. The initial round of coding

was conducted separately to increase the validity and reliability of the findings, followed by several data analysis meetings to hone the final coding.

Findings

First research question; ISs' English language needs and confidence

Here, we report the survey findings by the four main language skills. The results of the survey showed that ISs' top language needs by skill fell under reading. This is perhaps related to the amount of time particularly doctoral students spend reading textbooks or articles. However, the differences in need between the four language skills were very slight, ranging from a low of 78.38 for speaking to 81.35 for reading (a range of 2.97). Table 4 reports the means of the ISs' needs and confidence in each skill.

Table 4

Means of ISs' needs and confidence in each language skill

Listening skill		Speaking skill		Reading skill		Writing skill	
Need	Confidence	Need	Confidence	Need	Confidence	Need	Confidence
79.31	80.14	78.38	75.48	81.35	83.93	79.09	81.18

Examining the respondents' confidence with each skill, Table 4 shows that this ranged from a low of 75.48 in speaking to 83.93 in reading (a range of 8.45). That is, the variance in students' confidence was greater than the variance in their perceived need for each skill.

It is particularly interesting to note the means in the area of speaking. This was the only skill in which students, on average, rated their need for the skill as greater than their confidence with the skill (78.38 and 75.48, respectively). As noted above, ISs also felt the least confident in

speaking compared to the other three skills. This lack of self-confidence in speaking skills was also evident in their responses to another item of the survey, which asked about their need for and confidence in pronouncing English. The mean for ISs' perceived need for this item was 82.28, while the mean for confidence was 76.74. The following excerpt from one of the ISs in the focus group is a representative example of ISs' frustration with pronunciation:

> Also, I once had a situation at the rec[reation] center asking somebody for a sanitary pad, and she didn't get it. Maybe I didn't ask it right, or you call it differently here. I literally asked her like four times in a row. And then I almost gave up. But she said, can you show it to me? And I had to Google it and show it to her. When she saw it, she said the same thing. She said "sanitary pad." I was just thinking, did I just not say it right, or pronounce it right, that she didn't get it before? So, she knew the word, but she just didn't get it when I said it. So maybe the way I said it was different from what she had heard before or the way she says it.

Succinctly, a student in the survey expressed their difficulties with pronunciation: "sometimes my tongue stucks with fluency" [sic]. Some students had even experienced microaggressions due to their perceived accent. A student in the survey wrote, "I have an Indian accent and I don't intend on changing it. But [I] recently got feedback that I should. I am not comfortable with that."

Another challenge related to productive skills (speaking, writing) that ISs in this study reported was the accurate use of specialized and academic vocabulary. Here, specialized vocabulary refers to the specific terminologies related to each field of study, and academic vocabulary refers to the vocabulary used in academia in general. For specialized vocabulary, the mean of the IS's need was 83.16, and the mean of their confidence was 73.08, which represents a

large difference (10.08). For the academic vocabulary, the students' needs mean was 83.71, and their confidence mean was 77.51. All in all, the ISs face various issues when it comes to speaking, many of which can be traced back to challenges with their vocabulary repertoire and pronunciation differences.

Regarding receptive skills, both the students' need and their confidence was the highest in reading. Examining the individual language tasks, both the highest level of perceived skill (87.74) and the highest level of confidence (91.41) were reported for the same item, "read emails from my professors or from my students." This represents the pervasiveness of this mode of communication in academia. Although the ISs felt more confident with their receptive skills, they also mentioned some difficulties. Some of the lowest means of confidence were reported for two items in the last block of questions, "understand hidden meanings when people are not direct about something they say or write" (70.06), and "understand jokes, puns, and cultural references" (the lowest mean of confidence in the survey, 64.14). One of the participants in the focus group interviews explained the repercussions of her inability to understand domestic students' jokes:

I couldn't find a lot of friends here. Not in natives. Because they have their own community and jokes. We can't maintain our status, like joking in a way that they understand that... in the class they make jokes, but we don't understand those.

Similarly, a survey respondent expressed challenges related to culture: "Sometimes it is very hard to get the meaning from the other students or professor. I could not express myself well during the class because [of] the culture." Such sentiments represent the complexity of using a new language within a new sociocultural context and frames of reference.

Second research question; ISs' suggestions for improving university resources

During the focus group interviews ISs expressed many ideas for university resources that could help them learn English. For learning to write, ISs mentioned smart online writing assistants that help improve the punctuation and grammar of sentences, such as Grammarly. ISs said it would be a great help for them if the university could provide them Grammarly Premium for free. In addition, ISs suggested the university offer an academic writing course. One of the ISs noted that such an initiative had once been offered in her department:

> I actually took an academic writing course at the university which helped me in English, like writing theoretical, technical papers. Like I understood that spoken English is different and technical writing English is different, so that course helped me. It would be great to have similar courses at the university.

The student noted that such support should be offered regularly at the university rather than the departmental level. Interestingly, most ISs in the focus group were not aware of a service that the university did offer for writing: the writing center. This speaks to the fact that even when services and structures are in place, students need to be effectively informed of them.

For learning to speak more fluently and to understand cultural references and jokes, several of the ISs mentioned the facilitative role of conversation groups. They suggested conversation groups should be moderated by a native speaker of English and have a specific topic each week. Alternatively, ISs suggested that the conversation group could take the form of a movie club. After watching a movie, a discussion could be held about the cultural references in the movie, parts or words they did not understand, or their general thoughts about the movie. This would help them learn new cultural and language skills while watching a movie and interacting with domestic students. Some ISs also thought buddy programs, which would pair up

an IS with a domestic student partner for informal conversation, would be beneficial. One of the ISs talked about the affordances of such a program he had attended while studying in Spain:

> First of all [they] start by telling you like the culture of the country and suggest you some music. So that helped me a lot, especially for Spanish, in six months I would do everything in Spanish, but at the beginning it was so hard, I knew nothing in Spanish.

When asked about existing clubs and activities on campus, ISs mentioned that club and association gatherings and university events not only gave them insights into their specific fields, but also helped them practice their English. One focus group participant described attending events in her field:

> My department, they do a lot of women in tech, women in STEM, and leadership talks. I think these are great places to go to, to meet people who are like, you know, people who have the same interests. I think that that's one place you'll feel comfortable, [it's] easy to pick [up] things and just meet new people.

Lowering the threshold of going up to new people and interacting in English was an important feature of such activities. However, ISs also noted that they often did not have the time to attend clubs or other activities because of the amount of work particularly doctoral students were performing between their own studies and research and their graduate assistantships. They noted that keeping their advisor happy was often more important than attending social events.

Discussion

As discussed in the findings, the ISs in this study had the most need but also the most confidence in the area of reading, while speaking was identified as a slightly lower priority but also an area where ISs felt less confident. It is typical of the IS experience in U.S. universities

that while they come into daily contact with written English through their studies and research, there are fewer opportunities to engage in rich language use while interacting in spoken English, particularly with domestic students. Even when ISs do interact with domestic students, they may face challenges due to differences in pronunciation or in understanding cultural frames of reference, which the ISs in this study had experienced firsthand. These are not the type of skills that are measured by English proficiency tests used for admission or that are typically a focus of English as a foreign language instruction at ISs' sending institutions. Therefore, filling gaps in English when it comes to the more social and sociocultural aspects of language use may prove more difficult than improving aspects of academic English, such as vocabulary. The findings of this study align with those of previous literature, which has identified befriending domestic students as a challenge for ISs due to similar factors(Bulthuis, 1986; Chavajay, 2013; Chavajay & Skowronek, 2008; Poyrazli, et al., 2004).

It is illustrative of these challenges that most of the proposed solutions to improving their English and thereby adjusting to campus life ISs identified were related to spoken English. Conversation groups, buddy programs and movie clubs, while not academic in nature, could help ISs increase their understanding of the cultural references and jokes that domestic students use and therefore increase ISs' confidence in interacting with others socially (cf. Sawir et al., 2012). Increased social interaction between ISs and domestic students might also help improve ISs' fluency with the local pronunciation of English, while simultaneously bringing domestic students into more frequent contact with different pronunciations of English, which might help reduce the negative perception many U.S. monolingual English speakers still hold against "accented English" (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010).

Ultimately, to meet the needs of their audience, any supports and services offered by the university need to be effectively advertised and made easily accessible to ISs. In our study, for example, the writing center was a long-standing service provided to students at the university, but it was not well known among ISs. Other activities, such as student clubs, were often inaccessible to ISs due to a lack of time in their schedules. We recommend that universities consider IS orientation as a year-long process and continue to inform students of available supports throughout the year rather than merely during a single start-of-the-semester orientation. We also recommend that events and meetings be flexibly scheduled for different days and times of day to accommodate different schedules. While the ISs in this study did not bring up professors' cultural and linguistic competence, we agree with previous research in recommending that university faculty be better trained to meet the needs of ISs (Perry, 2016). Universities should also consult ISs themselves about their needs and proposed solutions, as we did through this study. As the number of ISs in U.S. universities continues to grow, it is important that campuses turn their attention to the unique needs of this student population. The importance of a better integration of ISs to U.S. campuses in terms of their cultural and linguistic adjustment cannot be overstated, and will ultimately benefit both the ISs and their receiving institutions.

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Appendix: Survey

By moving the sliding scale, please indicate how MUCH you need each skill and how CONFIDENT you feel with each skill.

Listening Skills in English

Q1. Listen to group or partner conversations in class

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q2. Listen to the professor in class

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q3. Listen to other students outside of class, such as in a study group

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q4. Listen to multimedia such as instructional videos or webinars in my field

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q5. Listen to students when I am a TA or instructor

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q6. Listen to presentations at seminars or conferences

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do **you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)**

Speaking Skills in English

Q7. Speak during group or partner conversations in class

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q8. Speak to the professor in class

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q9. Speak to other students outside of class, such as in a study group

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q10. Speak to students when I am a TA or instructor

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q11. Speak to present in class

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Reading Skills in English

Q12. Read textbooks in my field

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q13. Read research articles in journals

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q14. Read online, such as blogs and social media in my field of study

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q15. Read students' papers when I am a TA or instructor

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q16. Read lecture slides and other materials in class

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q17. Read emails from my professors or from my students

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Writing Skills in English

Q18. Take lecture notes

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q19. Take notes from textbooks or journal articles

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q20. Write term papers, essays, or other written assignments for class

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q21. Write research articles for journals

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q22. Write emails to my professors or to my students

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q23. Write lecture slides and other instructional materials when I am a TA or instructor

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Other skills in English

Q24. Understand my professors' and advisors' directions

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q25. Understand forms, policies, and instructions on various UML websites (e.g., SIS, NOW)

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q26. Understand hidden meanings when people are not direct about something they say or write

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q27. Understand jokes, puns, and cultural references

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q28. Accurately understand and use vocabulary specific to my field

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q29. Accurately understand and use English vocabulary in general

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q30. Fluently pronounce English

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Q31. Understand English pronunciation

How much do you need this skill? (0=not at all, 100=all the time)

How confident do you feel with this skill? (0=not confident at all, 100=extremely confident)

Open-ended questions

Q32. Is there a language skill you struggle with that we did not ask about? If so, please describe.

Q33. How has being an International Student impacted your experience at the university, especially in terms of your experiences using English?

Q34. What kind of English language services would you like to have the university provide to international students?

Q35. Do you have anything else to share about your experience as an international student at the university?

Demographic questions

Q36. What is your country of origin?

Q37. What is/are your primary language(s), or the language(s) you have spoken from early childhood?

Q38. What race and/or ethnicity are you?

Q39. How many months or years have you been in the United States?

Q40. What is your field of study?

Q41. At what level are you studying?

Q42. If you would like to participate in a focus group interview about this same topic, please enter your name and university email here.

Q43. If you would like to be entered into a raffle to win one of twenty $10 Amazon gift cards, please enter your name and university email here.