MINIMAL ENGLISH AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL

WORKSHOP
ATESOL ACT
FRIDAY 6 MAY 2016
OVERVIEW

• Introduction
• Minimal English
• Cultural Scripts and Explications
• Classroom Applications
• Further Resources
• VALUES
• ATTITUDES
• INTERACTIONAL NORMS
• “it’s powerful, and it isn’t addressed, it’s like the elephant in the room, in a way... Now I’m more aware of it, I’ll make an effort”

• “...you can’t really explain to people why it’s like that in Australia because I’m not really sure why.”

• “And yeah, so as a teacher I struggle with explaining some of it sometimes and in easier terms to understand.”
## Students Concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of times mentioned</th>
<th>Percentage of themes mentioned in 28 surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making friends</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language problems</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian mannerisms</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public services</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting with people</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• “We don’t know how to talk politely, we talk our way, but it’s not best way”
• “Don’t know what people are expecting, we don’t know what’s right and wrong.”
• “[cultural scripts] give me some idea about how people might think about some things” – Fajr (Egypt)

• “I see other students, they need to know this [cultural scripts]. They behave not good in class. But it’s difficult for them, because their beliefs so different.” – Chun (Laos)

• “I knew that some cultures think differently, but I didn’t know that people might understand the same words differently” – Fajr (Egypt)

• “Australians are very gentle, if someone was talking like this to me, I would take it lightly, not serious. Now, I will think it is more serious.” – Amit (Bangladesh)

• “I know something bad and something good if you tell me this is something bad then I understand that” – Enam (Sudan)
WHY USE MINIMAL ENGLISH?

• Clarity
• Universality
• Translatability
• Structured approach
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSM SEMANTIC PRIMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I<del>ME, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING</del>THING, PEOPLE, BODY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIND, PARTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIS, THE SAME, OTHER~ELSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONE, TWO, SOME, ALL, MUCH<del>MANY, LITTLE</del>FEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOD, BAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIG, SMALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNOW, THINK, WANT, DON’T WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAY, WORDS, TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO, HAPPEN, MOVE, TOUCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE (SOMEBEFORE), THERE IS, BE (SOMEONE)’S, HAVE, BE (SOMEONE/ SOMETHING)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVE, DIE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHEN~TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHERE~PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERY, MORE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIKE<del>WAY</del>AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substantives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relational substantives</td>
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<tr>
<td>determiners</td>
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<tr>
<td>qualifiers</td>
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<tr>
<td>evaluators</td>
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<tr>
<td>descriptors</td>
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<tr>
<td>mental predicates</td>
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<tr>
<td>speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actions, events, movement, contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>location, existence, possession, specification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>life and death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logical concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensifier, augmentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>similarity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## MOLECULES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Parts</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Topological</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Biological</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Actions and Activities</th>
<th>Manner</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HANDS, MOUTH, EYES, HEAD, EARS, NOSE, FACE, LEGS, TEETH, FINGERS</td>
<td>CHILDREN, MEN, WOMEN, MOTHER, FATHER, WIFE, HUSBAND, BE BORN, <strong>NAME</strong></td>
<td>LONG, ROUND, FLAT, HARD, SOFT, STRAIGHT, SHARP, SMOOTH, HEAVY, SWEET</td>
<td>TOP, BOTTOM, END, FRONT, BACK</td>
<td>SKY, GROUND, SUN, FIRE, WATER, DAY, NIGHT</td>
<td>GROW (IN THE GROUND)</td>
<td>WOOD, STONE</td>
<td>HOLD, MAKE, KILL, PLAY, LAUGH, SING, <strong>EAT, DRINK, SLEEP, SIT, LIE, BUY, DRAW, READ, WRITE</strong></td>
<td>QUICKLY, SLOWLY</td>
<td>GOD, MONEY, BOOK, COLOUR, LANGUAGE, NUMBER, MUSIC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE MOVIE WAS...

- Interesting
- Fantastic
- Amazing
- Wonderful
- Great
- Terrific
- Inspiring
- Exciting
- Moving
- Brilliant
- Impressive
- Compelling
Great: I think about it like this: “this is something very good, not many things are like this.” When I think like this, I feel something very good because of it.

Awesome: I think about it like this: “this is something very good. People can think like this: ‘it can’t be like this’.“ When I think like this, I feel something very good because of it.

Wonderful: I think about it like this: “this is something very good. People can feel something very good if they know about this.“ When I think like this, I feel something very good because of it.
CULTURAL SCRIPTS

- Addresses beliefs, values, assumptions and ways of interacting
People (in China) think like this:

When a person feels something, it is not good if other people can know this when they see this person’s face.
A Chinese cultural script for concealing displays of ‘feeling good’

People think like this:

When a person feels something very good because something very good happens to this person

It is not good if other people can know this when they see this person’s face
A Chinese cultural script for concealing displays of ‘feeling bad’

People think like this:

When a person feels something very bad because something very bad happens to this person

It is not good if other people can know this when they see this person’s face
Hán yang
(concealing emotion)

concealing displays of 'feeling good'

concealing displays of 'feeling bad'
AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

*personal autonomy*

[people think like this:]

when someone does something, it is good if this someone can think like this:

"I am doing this because I want to do it"
AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

*Freedom of expression:*

[people think like this:]

if I think something about something I can say: “I think about it like this”
everyone can do this
Everyone has the right to say what they want

[people think like this:]

when someone says to me about something: “I think about it like this”

if I don’t think the same

I can say to this person: “I don’t think the same”
Personal Autonomy

Freedom of expression

Everyone has the right to say what they want

Expressing opinions

- not forcing your opinion
- softening disagreement with partial agreement
- not criticizing others opinions
SOFTENING DISAGREEMENT WITH PARTIAL AGREEMENT

softening disagreement with partial agreement

[people think like this:]

when I want to say to another person about something:

“I don’t think the same [as you]”

it is good to say something like this at the same time:

“I think the same [as you] about some of these things
I don’t think the same [as you] about all these things”
THE ADAPTATIONS - INTENTION

[D] when I want to say to someone something like this:

“I know what you think about this, I don’t think the same”

[E] it can be bad if I say it like this:

“I don’t think the same”

[F] it can be good if I say it like this:

“I think the same as you about some of these things I don’t think the same as you about all of these things”
THE ADAPTATIONS - INTERPRETATION

[G] when someone says to me something like this:

“I think the same about some of these things (X), I don’t think the same about all of these things (X)”

[H] I can know that they want to say something like this:

“I don’t think the same about X”

[I] I can know that they say it like this because they don’t want me to feel something bad
THE ADAPTATIONS - INTERACTION

Person A says: “I think about X like this”

Person B says: “I think the same about some of X
I don’t think the same about all of X”

[Person B thinks: “I don’t think the same about X”]
Great: I think about it like this: “this is something very good, not many things are like this.” When I think like this, I feel something very good because of it.

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RESOURCE IN DEVELOPMENT
LAUREN’S PHD PROJECT
THANK YOU