

**MORE THAN WORDS CAN
SAY: DECOLONISING
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
TERMINOLOGY**

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Consider the role of language in occupational therapy thinking and practice
- Explore how language represents and expresses culture
- Identify problems arising when occupational therapy terms are translated from English into other languages
- Share experiences of working on occupational therapy terminology across multiple languages
- Develop a deeper understanding of your own relationship with the language of occupational therapy
- Reflect on new ways of occupational therapy thinking in transcultural contexts

FORMAT OF WORKSHOP

- Introduction to the topic
- Introduction to Jennifer's terminology work
- Introduction to Teresa's terminology work
- Individual practical exercise
- Small group exercise
- Large group feedback and discussion

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY THINKING AND LANGUAGE

- Occupational therapy thinking is primarily conveyed in English; through textbooks, journal articles and international conference presentations
- Translating this thinking into other languages involves deconstructing the meaning behind an English term, making sense of it within another sociocultural context, and reconstructing the meaning using another language
- This challenging process is compounded by the difficulties English speaking occupational therapists have in reaching agreement on the meanings of key terms

DEFINITIONS

Language is a system of human communication using words, written and spoken, and particular ways of combining them

Professional language is the specialized vocabulary of a discipline, sometimes called professional terminology

(Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 2002)

DECOLONISING OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LANGUAGE

Decolonization is a process by which colonies become independent of the colonizing country

(Encyclopaedia Britannica)

This is not just a political process; to achieve true decolonisation we must learn to **decolonise our minds**. This essentially means that we must stop thinking like our oppressor and thereby stop trying to fit a round peg in a square hole.

(Sovereign Union of First Nations and Peoples in Australia)



WORDS AND CONCEPTS

The basic building blocks of language are words, and words represent concepts

A **concept** is an idea of a class of objects or a general notion

A **definition** is an explanation of a concept or formal explanation of the meaning of a word or phrase

(Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 2002)

ENOTHE TERMINOLOGY PROJECT

In 2001, the European Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education (ENOTHE) formed a working group to:

- select and define key occupational therapy terms
- organise the translation of the definitions into all the main European languages

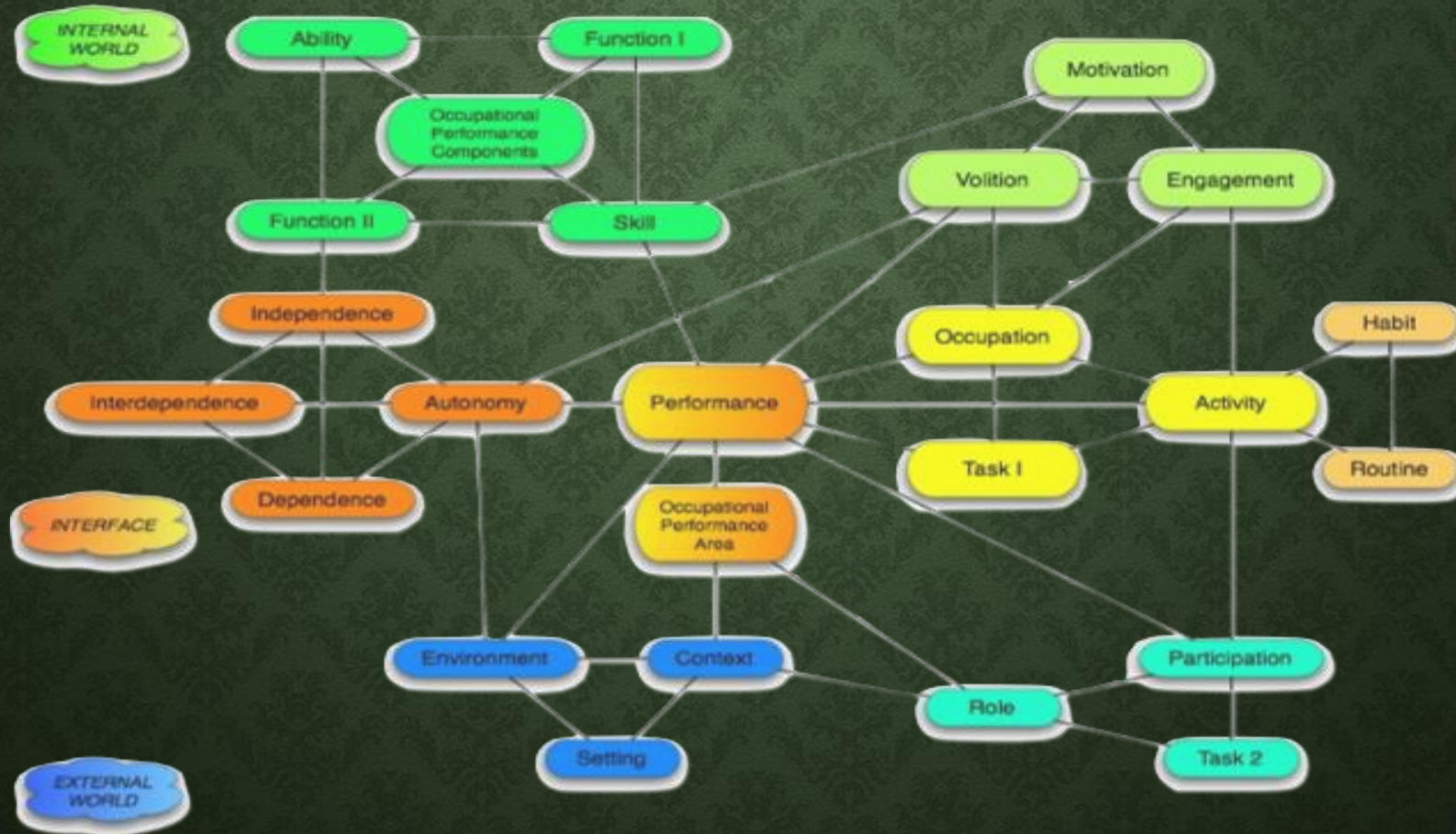
ENOTHE TERMINOLOGY WORKING GROUP

- Represented six European languages: English, Flemish, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish
- Developed a method for producing definitions of key occupational therapy terms
- Developed a protocol for translating each definition into other languages

CONSENSUS DEFINITIONS

- Based on existing definitions of key terms from the occupational therapy literature
- In accordance with the meanings of the majority of the original definitions
- Agreed on by everyone in the working group
- All work together because the relationships have been clarified

EUROPEAN CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (ECFOT)



ECFOT

A **conceptual framework** is a structure made up of concepts displayed together in a way that shows how they relate to each other

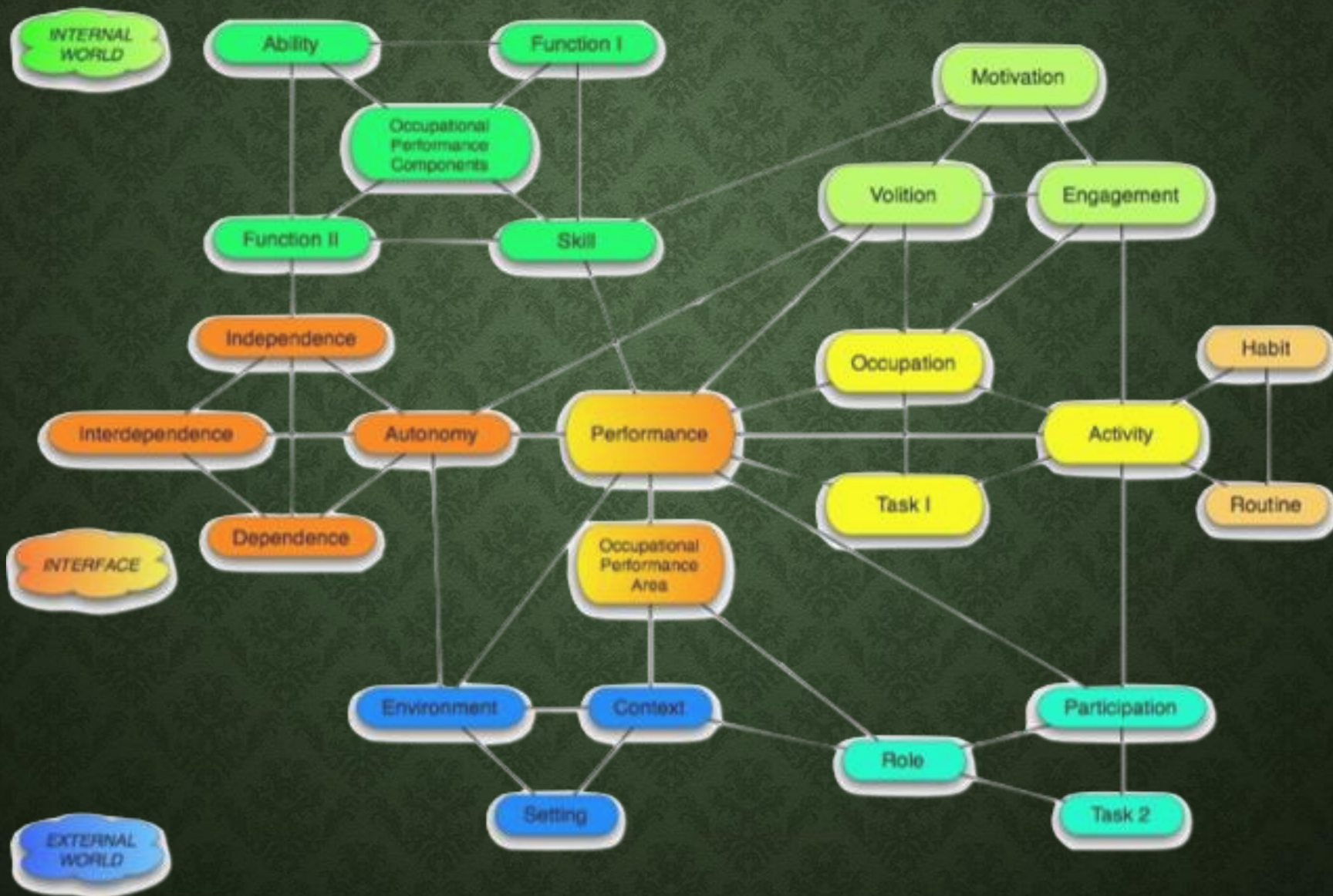
The **ECFOT** provides a web of concepts that describe and explain how a person experiences occupation: it is a descriptive theory of occupational therapy

A **theory** is a conceptual system or framework that is used to organise knowledge and to understand or shape reality (Creek and Lougher 2008)

Complexity theory was used to organise the conceptual framework

COMPLEXITY THEORY

- Acknowledges that some systems, such as social groups and neural networks, are made up of multiple components that interact both with each other and with the environment
- Complex systems have the capacity to self-organise their internal structure in response to environmental influences, so that the relationships and interactions between the components of the system shift and change
- Complex systems cannot be fully understood simply by examining the components in isolation: complexity results from the interaction between the components of a system and is manifested at the level of the system itself
- Complex systems evolve in a non-linear way



INTERNAL WORLD

PERSONAL REQUISITES FOR ACTION:

Ability
Occ. performance components
Function I
Function II
Skill

ENERGY SOURCE FOR ACTION:

Motivation
Volition
Engagement

INTERFACE

BOUNDARIES TO ACTION:

Independence
Interdependence
Dependence
Autonomy

ACTION:

Performance
Occupational
performance areas

FORMS OF ACTION:

Occupation
Activity
Task I

STRUCTURING ACTION:

Habit
Routine

PLACE FOR ACTION:

Context
Environment
Setting

SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR ACTION:

Role
Participation
Task II

EXTERNAL WORLD



UCT TERMINOLOGY WORKSHOP

- Three dominant languages of the region: **Xhosa**, **English** and **Afrikaans**
- Group carried out a critique of the conceptual framework
- Impossibility of translating **English concepts** into Xhosa
- Essential to explore concepts of time, space and place in the African world
- Develop a **fourth world** to represent the worldview of a Xhosa speaker
- **Additional concepts** to be identified by Xhosa speakers and defined in Xhosa
- Present the conceptual framework without any lines between clusters and concepts; the connections will be different for each person and each circumstance

3. INTRODUCTION TO TERESA'S TERMINOLOGY WORK

INTRODUCTION

- In Mainland China
 - misconception of occupational therapy
 - barriers in linguistic and cultural translations of OT concepts
 - the quality of OT services and development of the profession have been affected
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate theories are urgently needed.

APPROACH

- **A recontextualization approach was used by**
 - **deconstructing the meaning of English terms and concepts**
 - **making sense of them within Chinese culture**
 - **reconstructing the concepts in Chinese language and thinking**

E.G., TO RECONTEXTUALIZE THE TERMINOLOGY “OCCUPATION”

(1) deconstructed the meaning of the
concept of “occupation”

- reviewed the history and original concepts of OT
- reflected on the practice experiences in Canada, Hong Kong, and China

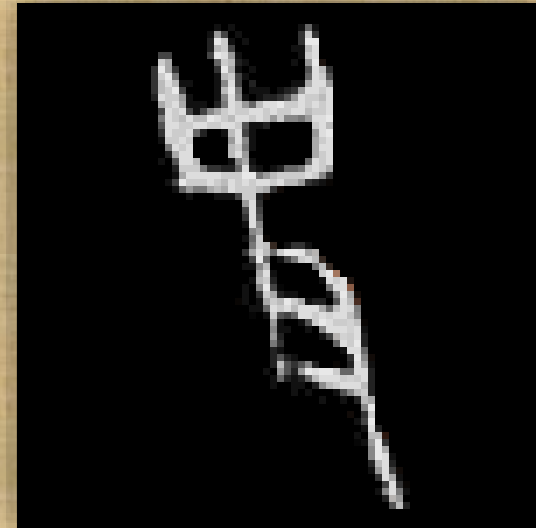


E.G., TO RECONTEXTUALIZE THE TERMINOLOGY “OCCUPATION”

(1) deconstructed the meaning of the concept of “occupation”

(2) made sense of the term
“occupation” in Chinese

- 事, pronounced as *shi*
- Oracle Bone Script, 1200 BC



- A hand (bottom) is holding a hunting tool (top)
- The character symbolizes hunting. It also means “doing things.”

E.G., TO RECONTEXTUALIZE THE TERM “OCCUPATION”

(1) deconstructed the meaning of the concept of “occupation”

(2) made sense of the term “occupation” in written Chinese

(3) reconstructed the concept of “occupation” in traditional Chinese culture



1200 BC
Oracle Bone Script



now

The character 事 (*shì*) nowadays has extended to mean “doing all kinds of things in life”.

HUANG-TU OCCUPATION STUDY

A study that aims to develop professional reasoning written in Chinese for use by occupational therapists in China

1) Recontextualize the terminologies

- Each professional terminology, e.g., occupation, occupational performance, etc.

2) Reconceptualize the thinking

- Traditional Chinese thinking, the Confucius thinking

HUANG-TU OCCUPATION STUDY

- Huang (黃) means “yellow”
- Tu (土) means “land”
- Chinese civilization was established along the *Yellow River*. Huang-Tu, the Yellow Land, symbolizes the root of Chinese culture.

4. INDIVIDUAL PRACTICAL EXERCISE

INDIVIDUAL PRACTICAL EXERCISE (10 MIN)

- You will find a piece of paper and printed OT terminologies on each table.
- On the top of the paper, write down the terminology. Think how you usually use the terminology in English.
- Use your own language or a language other than English to make sense of the terminology in your culture.
- Draw a diagram in the middle to show a story, a scenario, an object, a person, or a combination of them. The diagram is a display of the meaning in your own language and culture.
- Write at the bottom a word or a phrase in your language to describe the drawing.

5. SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

- Form five groups based on the five terminologies. Find your own group and sit together.

occupation

independent

Occupation
performance

function

environment

SMALL GROUP EXERCISE (30 MIN)

- In each group, you will take turn to share your drawing. Explain the meaning of the terminology when you use it in your own language and culture.

6. LARGE GROUP FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION

LARGE GROUP FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION (5 MIN EACH GROUP)

- Each group will put your drawings together.
- Organize the drawings in a way to tell a story of your group discussion.