

Transcription of Scene 2: Moving from Assumptions to Allyship

Voiceover: Scene 2: Moving from Assumptions to Allyship. Our next scene, “Moving from Assumptions to Allyship” also explores assumptions, but this time with a focus on assumptions that tutors may have about multilingual writers. Elizarni first enters the writing center through the client record system—a record that actually says “Elizarni, No First Name.” Eli confuses Don in some ways and challenges quite a few stereotypes, even through the topic of the paper they discuss. Watch how Don moves from stranger to ally as he learns about Eli. He’s able to work through his assumptions to establish a rapport and have a productive session.

D: *[[looking at laptop but looks up when Eli walks in wearing Muslim dress, including a hijab]]* *[[Don stands]]* Oh, hi, hi. I’m Don.

E: *[[They shake hands]]* I’m Eli.

D: Eli.

E: Yes.

D: Ok. I, I was just looking at your intake...*[[stammers a bit but is looking directly at her]]* I wasn’t sure how...is Eli short for?

E: Elizarni.

D: Elizarni.

E: Yeah. That’s good.

D: Am I saying that okay?

E: Yeah, yeah.

D: But I’m going to call you Eli. Is that ok? I’ve got a daughter named Ellie, by the way, so I like the name.

E: Oh, that’s nice. Just call me Eli.

D: I’m a little confused though, Eli. On the reservation form, you only have Elizarni there; you don’t have, like, a first and last name. Is that your first name or is that your last name?

E: Ahhh, it's my last name actually. That's only my full name. Everybody confuse it. So, because I don't have my first name, I don't know what to, what is my first name and last name. So, I only have one name.

D: So, you only have one name.

E: That's why the university system, they put it No First Name, Elizarni. No First Name.

D: So, under First, they say No First Name and that's because there really is no first name.

E: Right. Yeah, yeah.

D: That's pretty interesting. Is that pretty common back in...?

E: Indonesia.

D: Indonesia. Yeah.

E: We have mostly first, some has last name, but some don't. It's pretty common there in Indonesia.

D: It goes both ways.

E: Right.

D: Interesting, yeah. Can you tell me what you're, what you're working on, what you're studying?

E: Actually, I'm majoring in Educational Leadership. This is my fourth year PhD programs. So now I'm finalizing my dissertation proposal.

D: Okay.

E: So, I'm writing about womens in Aceh.

D: Right.

E: Aceh is one of the province of Indonesia.

D: Okay.

E: It's located in western part of Indonesia.

D: Okay. I, I don't know much about Indonesia. But tell me about Aceh [[pronounces it Eh-chay]].

E: Aht-jeh [[corrects his pronunciation]]

D: Eh-chay.

E: Aht-jeh [[corrects his pronunciation again]]

D: I'm doing my best. I'm sorry.

E: That's okay.

D: Okay.

E: Ahtjeh is...did you remember tsunami in 2004?

D: Oh yeah, I remember that.

E: That's where Aceh is.

D: Wow. Were you around when that happened?

E: Yeah. But I survived luckily.

D: Yeah! No doubt! Well, I'm glad you're here today! [[both of them laugh]]

E: Thank you.

D: Okay, so tell me about...what are you writing about?

E: Actually, my research is about female leadership in Aceh, how women's activists not forget their strategies during the war, and after the wars what strategies have they used to advocate for women's rights and also for the rights of civil society, during the depressing conditions.

D: Right, right.

E: And also, when the peace process in place, how their strategies change, y'know, over time.

D: So, what the women were doing *during* the war and then what the women were doing *after* the war?

E: Yeah, good comparison.

D: Yeah.

E: Because, you know, this research is, the aim of this research is to counteract the idea that Muslim women's as the passive victims, while in fact, the case of Aceh is telling, is not telling that, because women in Aceh have very active agent in the society, fighting for the war, fighting for the need of
[[Don interrupts and says]]

D: Fighting **in** the war? Like carrying guns? [[Don pretends he is holding a gun]] Like *fighting*, fighting?

E: Yeah, they join the gun, they join the battle.

D: Wow!

E: In the separatist movement, to protect their right.

D: I, I'm not trying to be like...okay I don't want to sound too ignorant but it's a little surprising for me because, you know, my idea of Islamic women aren't like the ones that carry guns.

E: Yeah, uh huh.

D: Like you know, I mean, all I know is what I see on TV

E: Yeah. Right, right.

D: Or read or what, you know. So, I'm not used to the idea of Islamic women carrying guns. It just seems really odd to me.

E: Yeah, it's commons, you know. That's why this research is to counteract the narrative about, especially bring by the media, how women, especially Muslim womens, are being oppressed by the patriarchy, while in fact, in this case, telling it different, so I want to bring this knowledge into the society so they understand what our womens are doing differently in different countries.

D: So, you're talking about the leadership then, and how leadership changes in peacetime as in war time, and how women's leadership styles may be different from men.

E: Yeah yeah. Right, that's right.

D: Wow, that's really interesting. I think...you know, just given the fact that what I knew was totally different from your reality shows me how important your research can be. I think it sounds really good!

E: Thank you.

D: So, you're getting ready to put this proposal together for your committee so that they approve your dissertation.

E: Yeah, I plan to defend by next semester.

D: Oh, wonderful.

E: So that's why I working hard now to put it all...

D: Great, great. So, what I'm gonna~what you'd like for me to do today is kind of help organize ideas, and deal with organization, and what your primary argument is, and how to arrange all that?

E: Right, right.

D: Yeah, I'm happy to do all that.

E: Yeah, and I'm working on some grammar issues.

D: Oh. Oh yeah, I'm okay with that. Really, you know. Because you're here to share your expertise. And working in a different language is hard enough. I know I couldn't do it. I have deep respect for people who are working in a foreign language.

E: Thank you.

D: Yeah, very good. Okay, so let's get started. This is basically your ideas.

E: This one is my introduction, so I wrote a lot about this but I don't know is about the connection, so I want to ask to see whether this paragraph connects or not.

D: Okay, sure, okay, so this is your proposal?

E: Yes, uh-huh.

D: Can I just look at it with you for a second?

E: Yeah, sure.

D: Wow, so we've had a pretty good start on this today.

E: Okay, thank you.

D: I-I'm really excited about your project! I'm sorry if I was a little awkward because, y'know, when you first came in, I didn't know if you had one name or two names. *[[Eli laughs]]* or if I was going to say it right. And I-I have deep respect for you, and I really like your research.

E: Thank you.

D: I hope you'll come back and see me.

E: Yes, I will. Next week, probably?

D: That'd be great.

E: You have appointments to schedule next week? *[[Eli stands]]*

D: Your stuff is interesting. I want to see what you come up with.

E: And you helped me a lot today. I'm so-helpful. *[[They shake hands]]*

D: Well, good. It's been a pleasure. Come back and see me, okay?

[[Reflections]]

Voiceover: In their reflections, Eli and Don both reflect on how they've responded to problematic assumptions.

D: In order to make some points in this scene, we were doing some kind of play-acting.... In real-life, I think I'm a little more sensitive about people's names and clothing. So the real importance that I

would try to pass on to other people who are still learning to be tutors of multi-language clients is to just show respect. You know, if you are surprised by something, you don't have to be afraid to say you're surprised by something. It's better to admit it and then to have an open dialogue about it, as long as it's done in a respectful way. Respect's a two-way street. So, if someone defies the way you normally think about or how you expect someone to be, that's a good thing, that's a growing moment, it's a learning moment. So, I **love** working with multi-language clients because I learn so much. It's broadened my life. That's the whole reason we do this; we're not just here to teach; we're here to learn. I joke all the time that I get paid to learn. It's a great gig!

E: Yeah. There are many assumptions at first when I come to the US, you know; it's not only from me, but also from both sides, from the society here, and from...we are the newcomers to the United States. You know, one of the assumptions is, I think, that when, for example, like me, when we wear hijab, we cannot be funny like, be funny like here. We also do like social, doing some American cultures, like Halloweens, but we still maintains our identity as a Muslim. It doesn't mean when we wear hijab we cannot be, like, socialized with some people, so that's kind of idea because it's about all stereotyping, right, stereotypes? So, I like to be sometimes visiting classes to talk to American student, especially, what it is to be a Muslim woman, so they just not only hear it from media or TV, or something else, but they can learn directly from me. So ask questions like, *[[to Don]]* you said before, open dialogues is a very good word. So, I like to share, you know, my experience. From there, we can build, both the sides can build reconciliation or something, you know? And also, as I work with women's issues back home, with women's groups, I one time invited by my friends to visit women's church in Appalachians. I forget which part, is close to West Virginia, close to Parkersburg, I think. So, we were visiting them and then they would come us very happily and then they share experience and we share experience, you know? We don't talk about religions, but we talk about womens in commons, a woman as a sister from global.... So I think open dialogues is very important to challenge that very negative assumption from one group, not only Muslim, but also American itself, so from that we can build understanding, respect, and tolerance.