

USAGE-BASED LINGUISTICS MEETS PEDAGOGICAL GRAMMAR

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Kate Parry

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1. Usage-based view of language...



Ontologies of language:

Ortega (2018a)

essentialist

[=noun]

non-essentialist

[=gerund]

SLA (all the way until the late 1990s), essentialist language ontology

language has an objective reality, is separable from communication, and resides in the mind

explicitly Chomskyan

Language is a system made of subsystems:
sounds>words>sentences>....
captured in grammar books, dictionaries, corpora

implicitly Saussurean

The disciplinary goal is to understand language development

and we all know what 'language' is: knowledge + ability to use it

essentialist ontologies

imagine language as self-contained and explained by:

{grammar books
+ dictionaries +
corpora}

complete,
finish line

“educated standard,”
whatever language
practices of the
educated elites

Ontologies of language:

non-essentialist

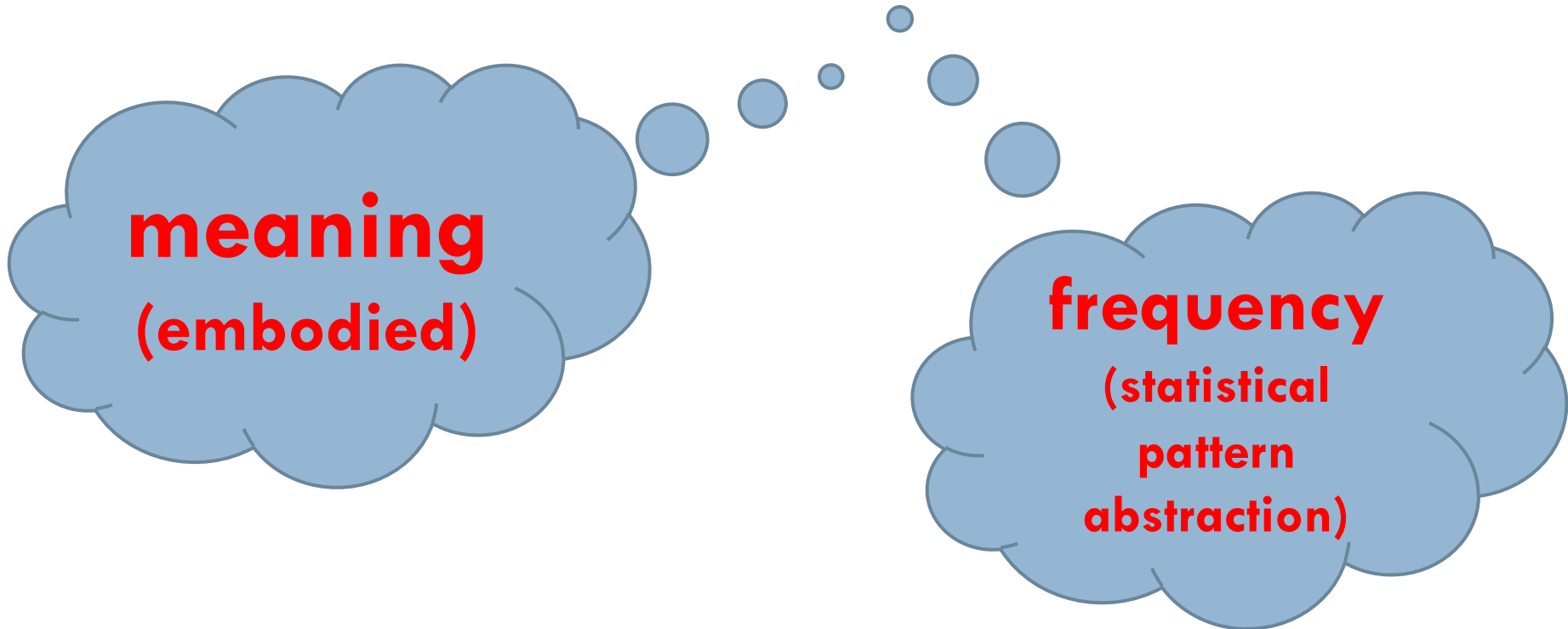
[=gerund]

meaning is [...] not [...] something a word “has” but is something that a word “does” [...] meaning in situ always involves a process of creation. This process is not sequestered inside of heads but is enacted through a wide range of embodied activities of which what-is-in-the-head is just a part. (Smotrova & Lantolf, 2013, p. 413)

language does not reside in grammars, dictionaries, corpora, or minds, ready for use... it is a **recurrent emergent social accomplishment of meaning making where the material and symbolic meet**



- **Grammar is not an “out there” system**
- **It’s inseparable from the users and the usage events**



“Usage-based” Linguistics

(.....one language.....)



Tomasello, Goldberg, Bybee, Langacker, Hopper

“usage-based” SLA

Emergentism – N. Ellis

Complexity – Larsen-Freeman

Dynamic Systems – De Bot, Lowie, Verspoor

Cognitive Linguistics – Tyler, Cadierno

Constructionism – Eskildsen



CA-for-SLA



**Gabi Kasper, Johannes Wagner, Simona Pekarek Doehler,
Tony Liddicoat, Rod Gardner...**



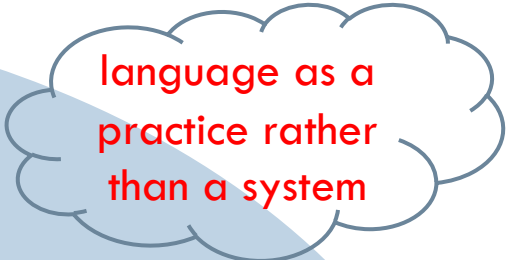
The Douglas Fir Group (2016)



In the pic, left-to-right:
*Byrnes, N. Ellis, Norton, Larsen-Freeman, Lantolf, Atkinson,
Schumann, Hall, Ortega, Negueruela, Tarone, Duff*
(Not shown: *Swain, Doran, K. Johnson*)

“language learning” =
“negotiate social and linguistic action in
the face of minimal common ground
and maximal semiotic demands”


The Douglas Fir Group (2016, p. 23)



language as a
practice rather
than a system

“language learning” =
“negotiate social and linguistic action in
the face of minimal common ground
and maximal semiotic demands”


The Douglas Fir Group (2016, p. 23)



unpredictability
in a complex
dynamic world

“language learning” =
“negotiate social and linguistic action in
the face of minimal common ground
and maximal semiotic demands”

The Douglas Fir Group (2016, p. 23)



never just
“language”

“language learning” = ○
“negotiate social and linguistic action in
the face of minimal common ground
and maximal semiotic demands” ○

The Douglas Fir Group (2016, p. 23)

Elinor Ochs (2012) “Experiencing Language”:

Language is a process

Language is performance

Language is social action

Language is indexical

Language is phenomenological

Language is *“a primal activity of self-creation”*

“meaning is [always] evolving over interactional time as an interpretive experience” (p. 154)

2. What about teaching grammar (where it is still taught)?





+ Usage-based

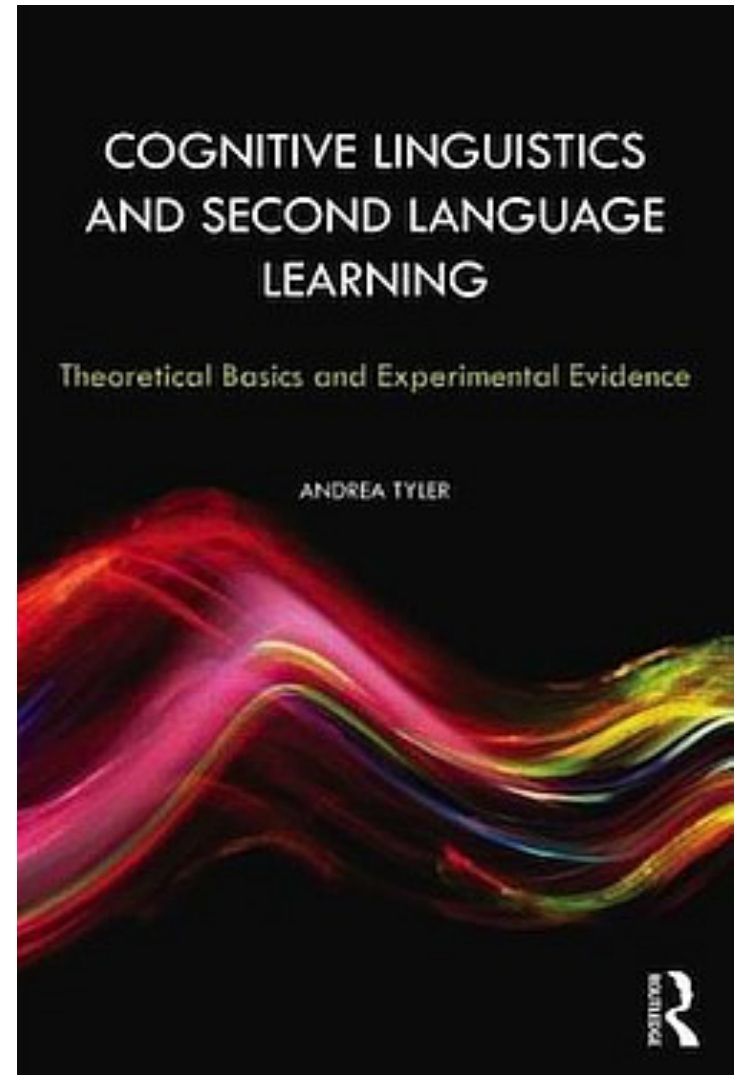
(including **Constructionist** and
Cognitive Linguistic)

insights

**are sources of inspiration for
L2 instruction**



Tyler (2012)

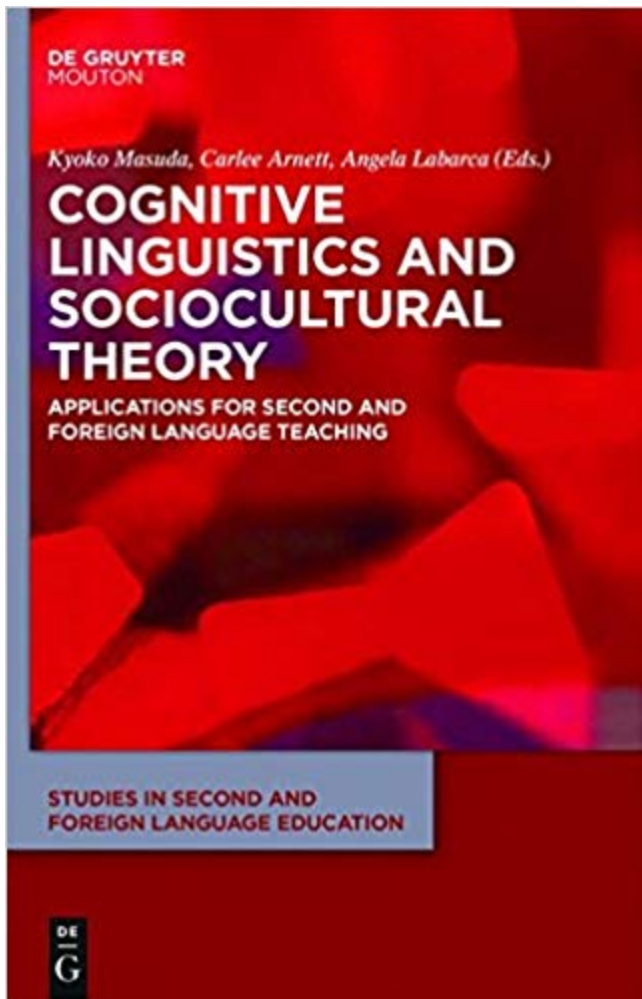




Reyes Llopis-García, Columbia University



Llopis-García, Real Espinosa, &
Ruiz Campillo (2012)



Masuda, Arnett, & Labarca (2015)

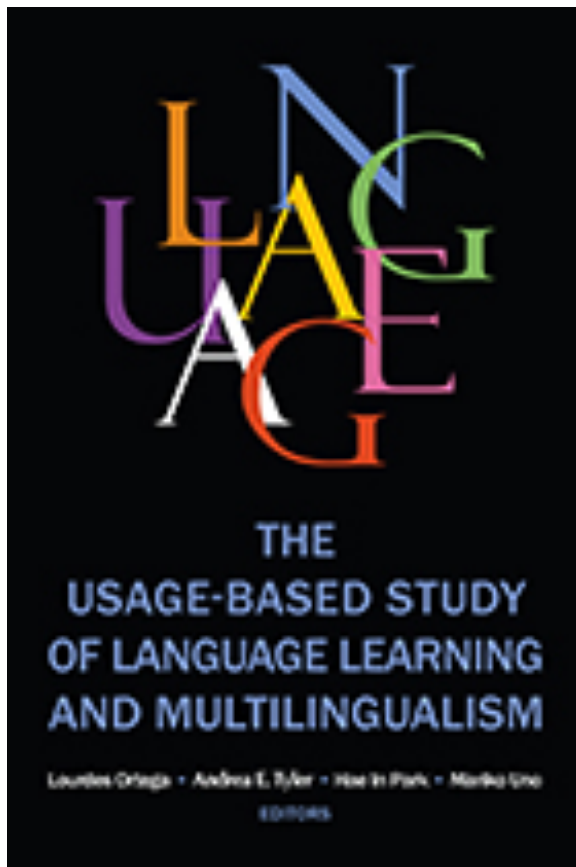


De Knop & Gilquin (2016)

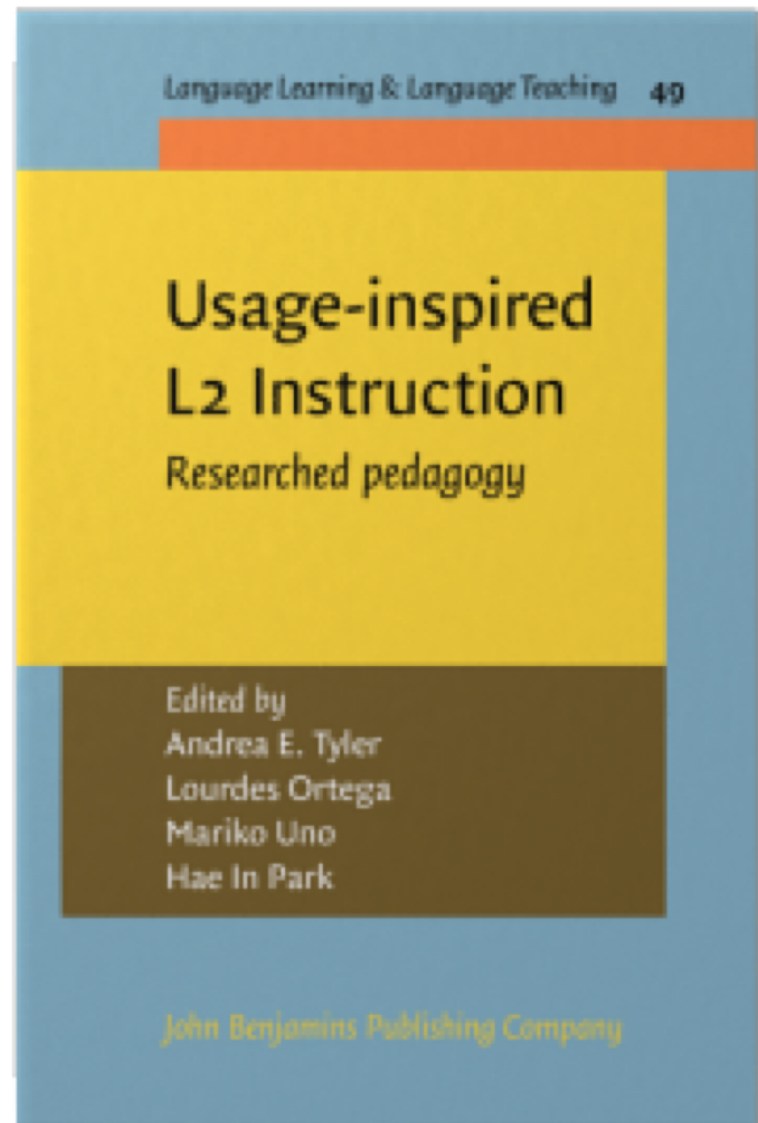


Ibarretxe-Antuñano, I., Cadierno, T., & Castañeda Castro, A.
(Eds.). (2019). *Lingüística cognitiva y español LE/L2*. London:
Routledge.





Ortega, Tyler, Park, & Uno (2016)



Tyler, Ortega, Uno, & Park (2018)

Ortega (2005, 2013, 2014, 2018a, 2018b, 2019)

+ Rethink

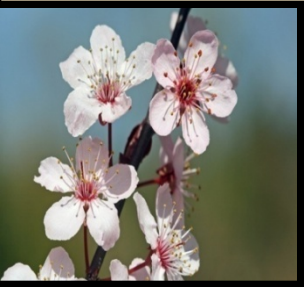
**“language learning
success”**

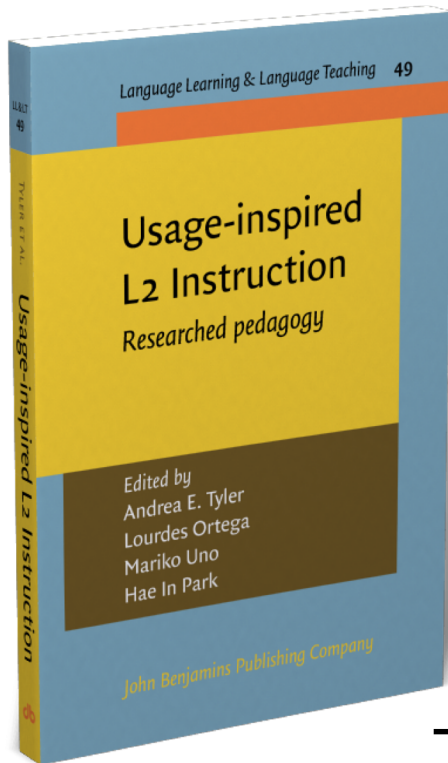
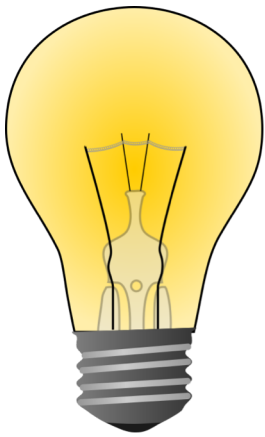
Usage-
based
linguistics

Bilingual
turn

Social justice
turn

3. The ideal balance of form and meaning...





Meaningfulness: Whatever language is taught... (e.g., grammar, lexis, discourse), it is taught **in the service of broader meaning making and communication ... [it] likely includes teaching polysemy, metaphor, and/or physically and visually grounded meaning.**

Tyler & Ortega (2018)

Teaching meaning in grammar: examples of usage-inspired instruction

What languages do you teach?

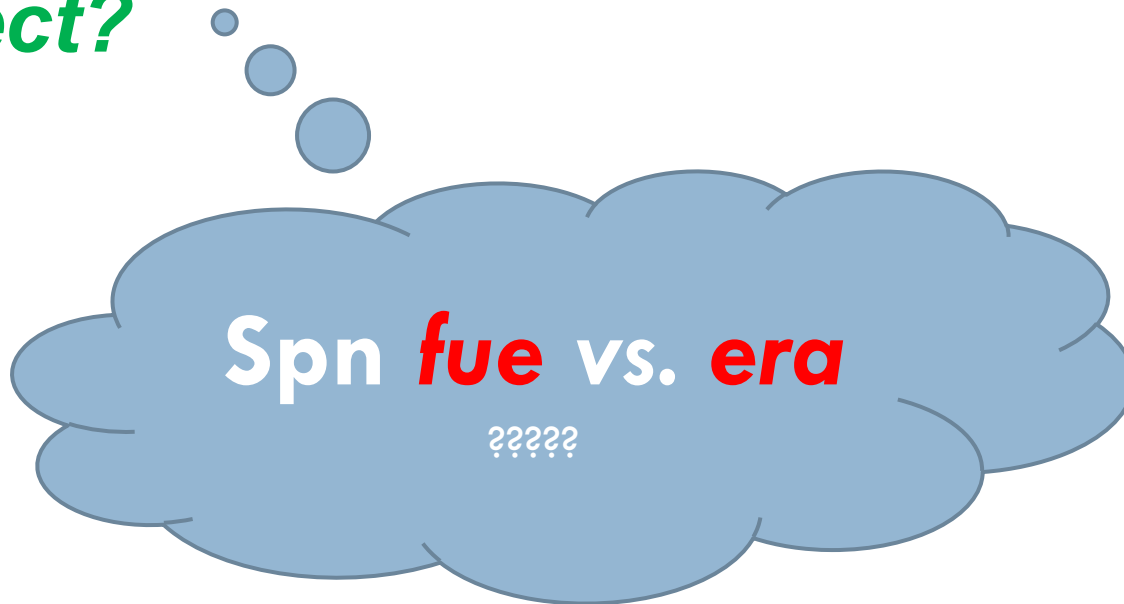
Spanish English
Japanese Arabic
Others?



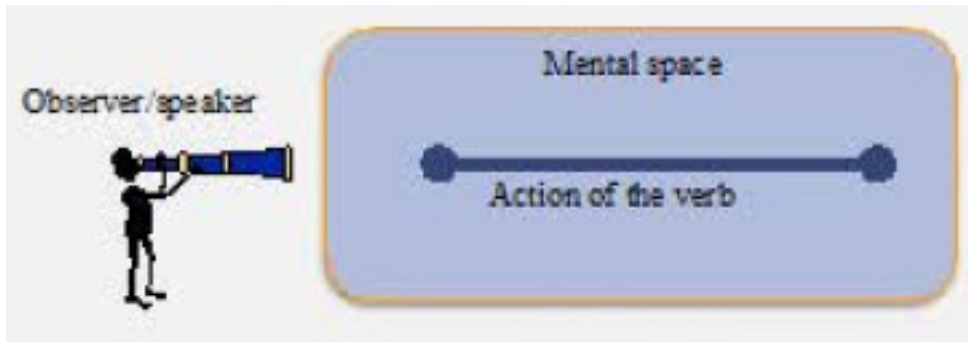
Spanish example

Alonso Aparicio & Llopis-García (2019):
based on Cognitive Linguistics, e.g., Langacker's (1991)

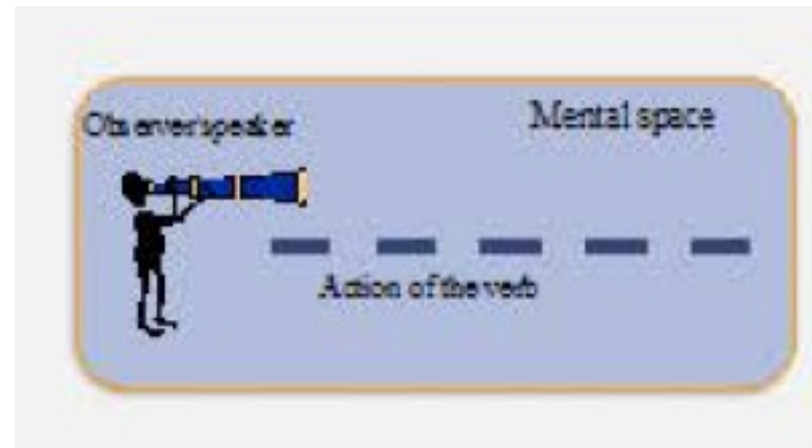
*How can students understand the
difference between the preterit and the
imperfect?*



CL group (N=45), traditional group (N=41), control group (N=45)



Spanish preterit: *Fue estupendo!*



Spanish imperfect: *Era estupendo!*

Japanese example

Masuda & Labarca (2018)

following Cognitive Linguists, e.g., Tyler & Evans (2003)

How can students understand the many meanings of locative particles?





ni or *de* = “in”

So when use which?

umi-ni kame-ga iru.

sea-LOC turtle-NOM is

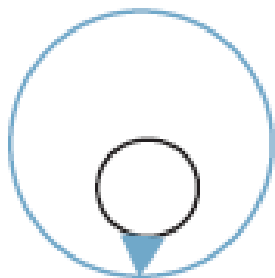
‘A turtle is in the sea.’

umi-de kame-ga oyoide-iru.

sea-LOC turtle-NOM swim-being

‘A turtle is swimming in the sea.’

existential = *ni*

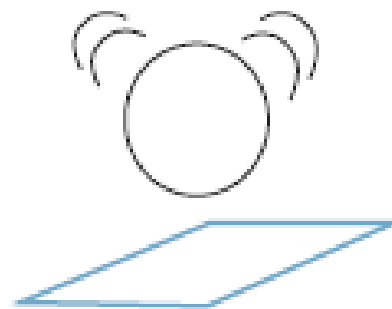


umi-ni kame-ga iru.

sea-LOC turtle-NOM is

'A turtle is in the sea.'

place for activity = *de*



umi-de kame-ga oyoide-iru.

sea-LOC turtle-NOM swim-being

'A turtle is swimming in the sea.'

Arabic example

Zaki (2017),

Using corpus in the Arabic classroom to discover the use of words in authentic contexts

*How does Arabic use **ʿidda** (“several of”) and **muḥẓam** (“most of”)?*



Look up the word **ʕidda** in the corpus and find out **the top ten words used after**.

→ what follows ʕidda is an indefinite plural noun (and muʕzam is followed by a plural noun, which is different)...

word after	occurences
العربية	1,222
الانجليزية	226
الفرنسية	115
الإنجليزية	86
التي	66
الأجنبية	39
في	33
الصينية	28
العبرية	27
القومية	27
الروسية	26
المصرية	25
التركية	24
الاجنبية	22
القطبية	16

Data Driven Learning (DLL):

Boulton & Cobb's (2017) meta-analysis of 64 studies: great effectiveness

$d = 0.95$, control/experimental comparisons
 $d = 1.50$, pre/posttest designs

English example



Sachiko Yasuda (2010)
Kobe University, Japan

**Just 10 minutes
making students
aware of metaphorical
bases for phrasal verb
meanings can help!**

11 orientational metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

matching Prt meaning up, down, into, out, off

1. MORE VISIBLE/ACCESSIBLE IS UP (open up, show up)
2. COMPLETION IS UP (dry up, use up)
3. LOWERING/DECREASING IS DOWN (break down, calm down)
4. DEFEATING/SUPPRESSING IS DOWN (knock down, turn down)
5. CHANGING IS INTO (burst into, turn into)
6. INVOLVING/MEETING IS INTO (enter into, run into)
7. OUT IS REMOVING/EXCLUDING (rule out, leave out)
8. OUT IS SEARCHING/FINDING (figure out, make out)
9. OFF IS DEPARTURE/SEPARATION (get off, take off)
10. OFF IS STOPPING/CANCELLING (call off, pay off)
11. OFF IS PREVENTION/PROTECTION (keep off)

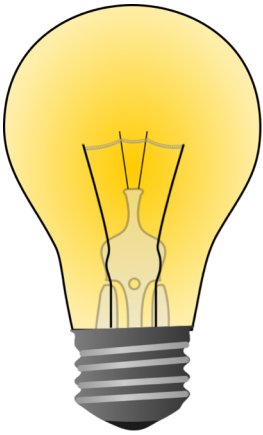


Helen Zhao & Fenfen Le (2016) The Chinese University of Hong Kong

It is a combination of **meaning**
and **frequency** that makes some
phrasal verbs more difficult
than others

	HIGH frequency	LOW frequency
Literal meaning	<i>settle down</i> <i>take out</i> <i>cover up</i> <i>lay down</i> <i>step up</i> <i>hold up</i> <i>beat up</i> <i>cut back</i> <i>give away</i> <i>hand over</i>	<i>charge up</i> <i>clear out</i> <i>pump up</i> <i>check over</i> <i>cut up</i> <i>lock out</i> <i>count out</i> <i>ring in</i> <i>think up</i> <i>seal off</i>
Figurative meaning	<i>look up</i> <i>pass out</i> <i>bring about</i> <i>lay off</i> <i>pull off</i> <i>blow up</i> <i>make up</i> <i>knock out</i> <i>set off</i> <i>throw up</i>	<i>knock off</i> <i>live down</i> <i>make over</i> <i>ride out</i> <i>strike up</i> <i>chew out</i> <i>pass off</i> <i>tell off</i> <i>brush up</i> <i>patch up</i>

Most difficult,
regardless of
proficiency



OK, so, learning grammar is about learning to mean, and frequency matters, yes...

... but is making meaning enough for good grammar teaching?

**+ rethink teaching
grammar for
“language learning
success”**

The diagram features a large white thought bubble with a blue outline at the top center. Inside this bubble is the text '+ rethink teaching grammar for “language learning success”'. The words 'rethink teaching' and 'success' are in red, while 'grammar for' and '“language learning”' are in green. Below the main bubble are four smaller blue circles of varying sizes, connected by a thin blue line. To the left of the main bubble is a blue cloud containing the text 'bilingual turn'. To the right is another blue cloud containing the text 'social justice turn'. Both clouds have a blue outline and a textured blue fill.

**bilingual
turn**

**social justice
turn**

Ortega (2013, 2014, 2018a, 2018b, 2019)

4. Support linguistic confidence and harmonious bilingualism while teaching grammar



What is
linguistic
confidence vs.
insecurity ... ?

are you bilingual?



Grosjean (2008, p. 224)

many bilinguals ... have a tendency to evaluate their language competencies as inadequate. Some criticize their mastery of language skills, others strive their hardest to reach monolingual norms, others still hide their knowledge of their “weaker” language, and most simply do not perceive themselves as being bilingual even though they use two (or more) languages regularly

What is
harmonious vs.
conflictive
bilingualism... ?

Some children and their families will experience their bilingualism harmoniously (=as stress-free), others conflictively (=as a life burden) (De Houwer, 2015)



Harmonious bilingualism (free from stress, as not a life burden)



**9 year-old heritage Portuguese speaker in Germany:
“Draw yourself speaking the languages you know”
(Melo-Pfeifer & Schmidt, 2012)**

Conflictive bilingualism (as a burden that erodes well-being)



Drawn by 10 year old: Portugal vs. Germany, family vs. loneliness

Portuguese & German flags, sun, sky, my family, sea water, rain & lightning

**And what do
language
ideologies have to
do with it all... ?**

language ideologies
are central to any
project of language
learning...

Subtirelu (2014)

willingness to communicate



Subtirelu (2014):

Some students: → in the face of difficult communication, they blamed it **100%** on their nonnativeness, their **not-so-good English**

lingua franca ideology

Other students: → in the face of difficult communication, they blamed it **50%-50%** on the **not-so-helpful interlocutor (native or not!)**

Who's better off?

**What about the
language ideologies of
teachers ...?**

please react to the
following statements:



In your opinion... “loanwords” are...

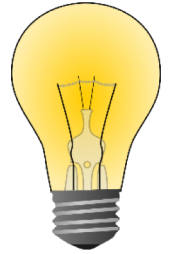
- (a) something that enriches the lexicon of a language
- (b) a necessary evil
- (c) a threat that can and should be combatted

low or high on linguistic
purism/prescriptivism?

5, 5, (a)



teachers can instill linguistic insecurity in their students with implicit messages:



Excerpt 8:

Discussing the word *rubia* (blonde) from a story

1 Teacher: ¿Qué quiere decir *rubia*? (*What does rubia mean?*)

2 Students: [no answer]

3 Teacher: *Guëra*. Nosotros generalmente decimos *guëra*, pero la palabra correcta es *rubia*.
(*Blondie [colloquial]. We usually say blondie, but the correct word is blonde.*)

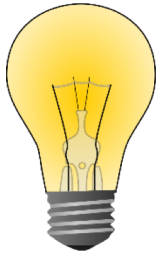
(Sayer, 2013, p. 82)



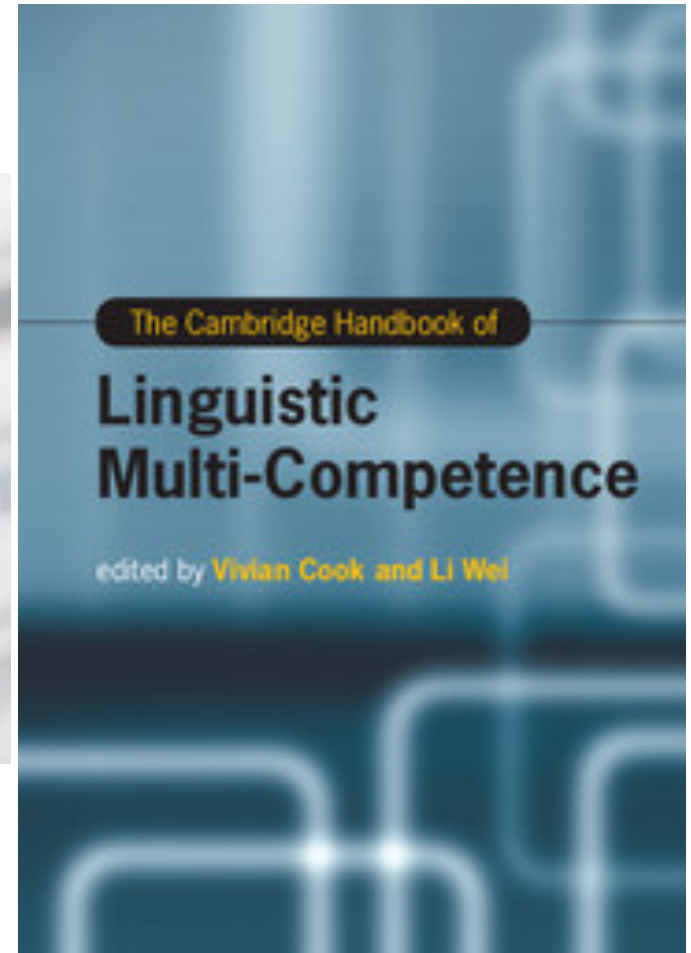
?????

Bi/multilinguals are not monolinguals...

So, let's not treat them as if they were!



Cook & Li Wei (2016)



**Does social justice
have a place in
grammar teaching
too... ?**

... there are **systemic-
structural forces** stacking
the deck against certain
groups more than others

race/ethnicity

**class/occupation/
wealth**

But is it about
language...?

religion

sex

language

age

sexual orientation

Who is a legitimate speaker of a language?

Someone who not only sounds it, but also looks
it!

(the –isms are inescapable)

Their looks learning Mandarin abroad

(from one of my graduate students, a teacher of Mandarin, shared with permission):

In China -- my students say -- during study abroad they receive two completely different reactions based on the foreign physical appearance. If they look really “foreign,” the locals are shocked that they can speak fluent Chinese. If they are Asian Americans, the locals think their Chinese is bad. So the Asian American students have to explain to the locals that their families are from China, Korea, or Japan but that

The foreign looking students take advantage of their “lao wai” identity (it means foreigner in Chinese, it is not a bad word) and are able to interact with different kinds of Chinese people, and they master a lot of street colloquial Chinese. The Asian looking students learn very polite forms of apology and bargain words. (Because when they go shopping, people usually give better offers to the Asian looking students.)

As a teacher, I've always wanted to know: How would my students' social culture, and self-identity, and self-presentation in China shape their Mandarin Chinese outcomes? It's very interesting to look at the outcomes in this light.

Mixed-race and learning Mandarin
(Santiago, 2015, undergraduate student paper at GU):

I interviewed a mixed-race peer who is both Jamaican and Chinese to examine her experiences. Although she is only half black, she explained that she is socially perceived to be only black (not mixed-race, and certainly not Chinese). She grew up in a household in New York that heavily emphasized Chinese education and she self-identifies as proficient in Chinese and fluent in English.

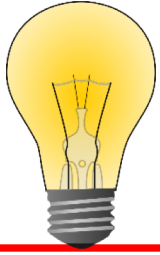
“My brother and I were the only black kids my Chinese Saturday school had ever seen... I remember getting teased by some of my classmates when I didn’t know how to say some things ... they thought I was only black, because my Jamaican mother would usually pick me up from school. There was one day when my Chinese father came to pick me up and they were shocked...the teasing was a little better after that day.”

Who is a legitimate speaker of a language?

Someone who not only sounds it, but also looks
it!

(the –isms are inescapable)

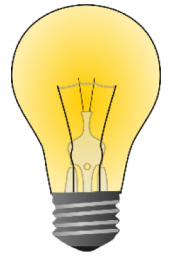
Others talk to us depending on how we sound
and look!



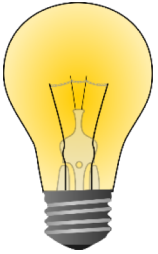
?????

Recognize that language learning is always inequitable:

Many multilinguals **in marginalized communities** are constantly at risk of experiencing their multilingualism as a burden rather than a fact of life...



... all along while other multilinguals **with more privilege** are able to experience it as a (romanticized and commodified) gift that adds to their privilege.



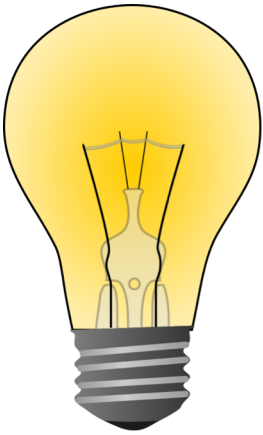
Watch out for implicit messages that instill linguistic insecurity

**Multilingual learning is fraught with
vulnerabilities and inequities...**

**So, we can't leave out of our grammar
teaching linguistic confidence in
support of harmonious bilingualism!**

5. Role of authentic materials in usage-based thinking





... in usage-based linguistics, meanings are **social and personal, physical and material**, built on **linguistic and nonlinguistic** resources

EFL college student in Japan, Sampson (2012, p. 331):

“*Do you want something to drink?*” is like a textbook, it’s not *me*. But ‘*Want something to drink?*’ is like *I’m* actually saying it. That’s like my image now. Like ... it’s me.



Successful meaning
making is feeling **our**
languages “are” us

Kyle learned a lot of Indonesian while studying abroad and living with a family (DuFon, 2006):

vocabulary pedas = 'spicy', asin = 'salty'

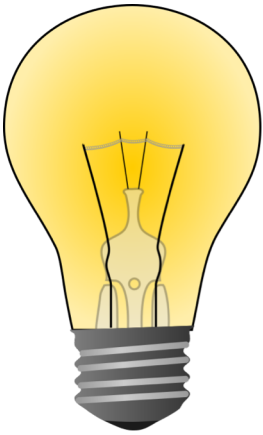
speech acts enak = 'delicious', hambar 'tasteless'

and even more:

“My eating behavior has changed. Now I eat a lot in the morning, plus my eating etiquette has changed. Things that taste good taste really good. I kind of look at the food differently, with more respect” (p. 117)



And learning a language
will **change us in more
than just linguistic ways**
(language is embodied)



If we only teach with **sanitized materials** (simplified, sentence level, invented or scripted language)...

... .. we strip **meaning** (social, personal, physical, material, linguistic, nonlinguistic) out of the grammar

“ordering a meal”

type of establishment: fast food

social roles:

counter worker & customer



“ordering a meal”

What about **social goals & framing**

Kraut (2018)

my allergies?

“expressing anxiety”

the movie I need to be at after this?

“imploring someone to hurry”

**how come am I charged extra for the
ketchup!**

“articulating disapproval”

Eventually, this is
what a **C2 / Superior**
proficiency should be
able to do... right???

But how will student learn “the” language in all its complexity, if they do not experience **authentic language** while learning in the classroom?

necessary if the language is also all around them **outside**: because they need to make sense of the “messy” language they encounter constantly

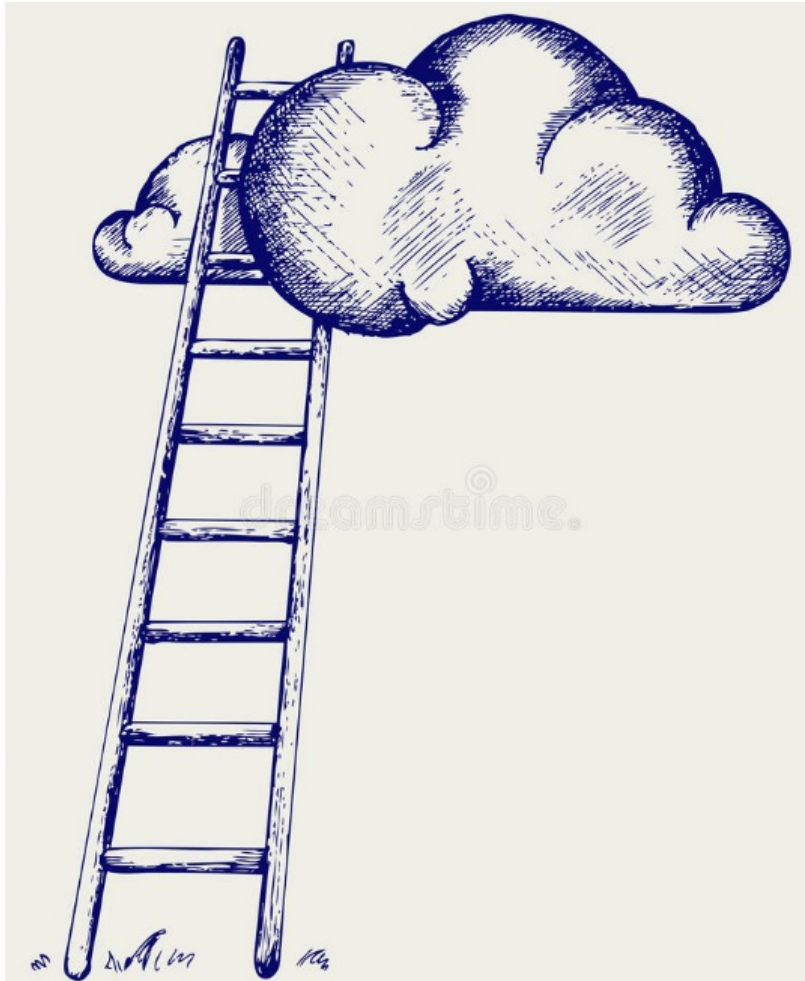
necessary if access to the language is almost only **in the classroom**: so they encounter opportunities to learn from “real” language

**6. We must rethink
models (the native
speaker!)**



native speakers

as models??



“**native speaker**” =

~~One
language~~

By birth

“**non-native speaker**” =

Not by
birth

~~Multiple
languages~~

child

Early



adult

Late

Monolingual



Bilingual

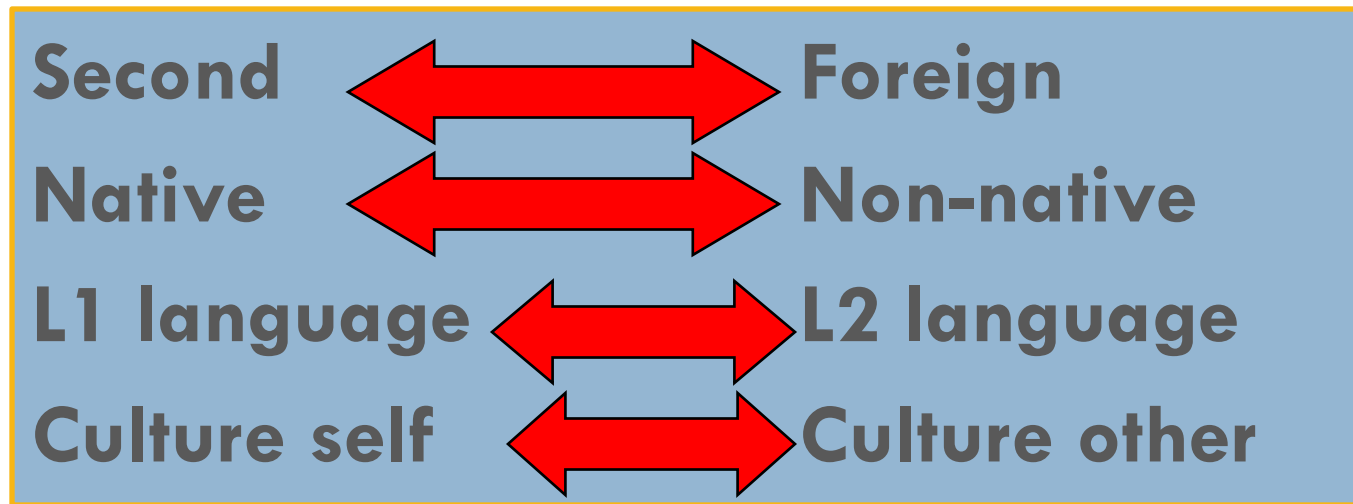


Native speaker



Nonnative speaker

Plus, in this world and age, we need to go beyond binaries:



**Nobody remembers them for being nonnative writers,
but for being seminal writers**

Joseph Conrad

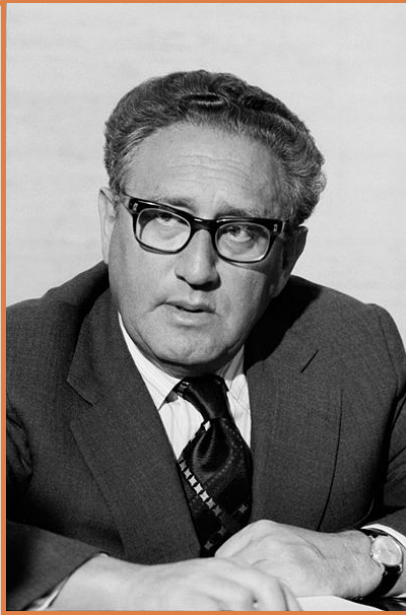


Franz Kafka



**Nobody remembers them for being nonnative politicians,
but for being “(in)famous” US politicians**

Henry Kissinger



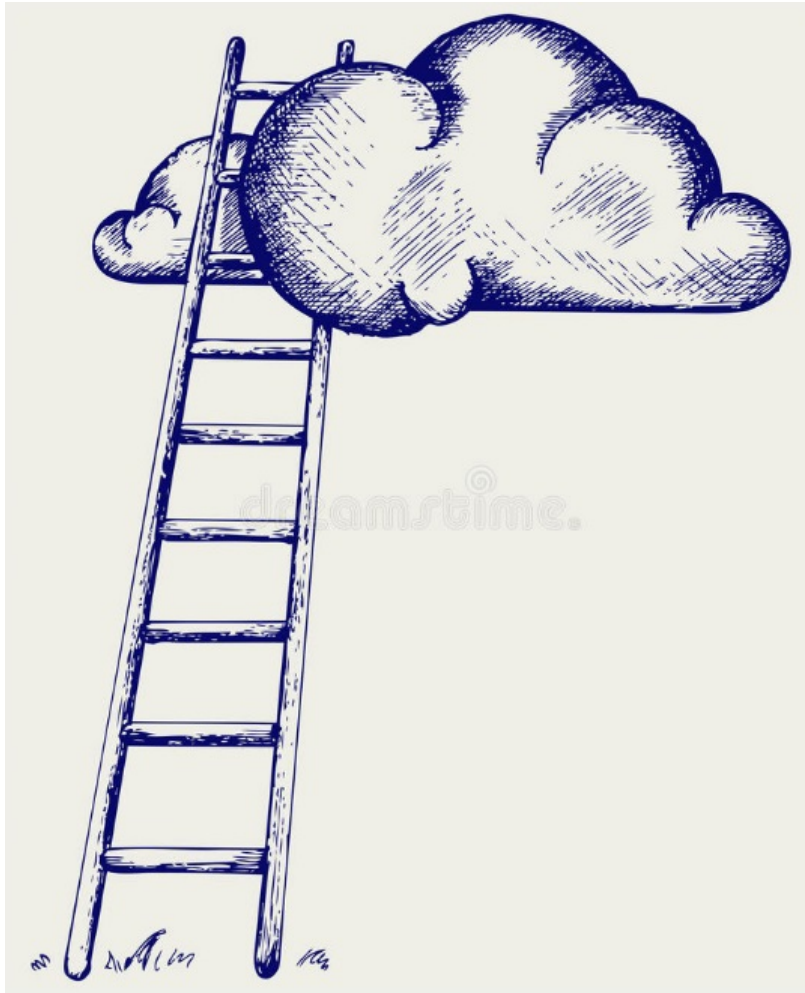
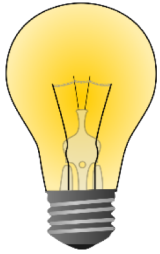
Arnold Schwarzenegger

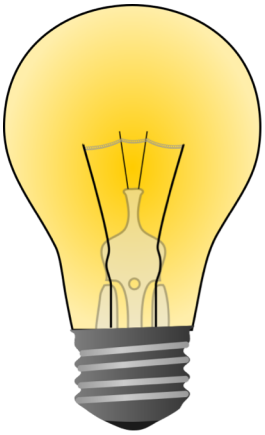


**People's language competencies
are a lot more complex and
dynamic than
dichotomous nativeness thinking
can allow us to imagine!**

Combat at all costs learning a language = felt to be a ladder to...

monolingual (native, educated) **speaker perfection**





If teachers/students hold the ideal of a native speaker as the model, they are doomed...

... because bilinguals can never be two monolinguals in one!

Cook & Li Wei (2016)

**So, what does adult
multilingual or
“nonnative” success
look like... ?**

confident & harmonious



**Elizabeth Ellis (2013):
TESOL teachers in Australia
who were experienced
language learners themselves**

Elizabeth Ellis (2013):

view of “success” and “failure” as natural, and a matter of degree

dispassionately [“in quiet, unemotional terms”, in a

realistic attitude towards time and effort investments

and predictable, having gathered language

confidence that success is perfectly possible

perception of themselves as learners. They also

positive language learner identity that is not dependent on failure or success

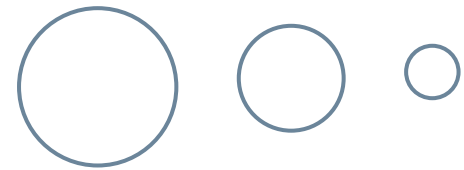
learning is entirely possible”

7. In conclusion



***some insights from
usage-based
linguistics point at
some principles for
the teaching of
grammar***

**usage-based
definition of
“multilingual”
= a **user** of
multiple
languages**



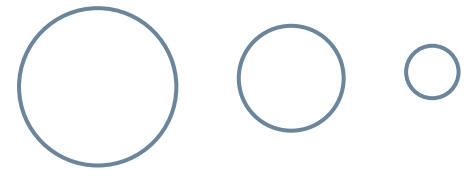
not necessarily from birth

not “nativelike” or “passing” for a NS

**not even perfectly equally proficient in the
languages**

**simply: functionally able to use more
than one language for one’s own
purposes in life**

**not two
monolinguals
in one...**



a whole-person bilingual



**Language learners frequently
experience **oppression...****

**being positioned by others as
a novice, a foreigner, an
outside member, or a
nonnative speaker**

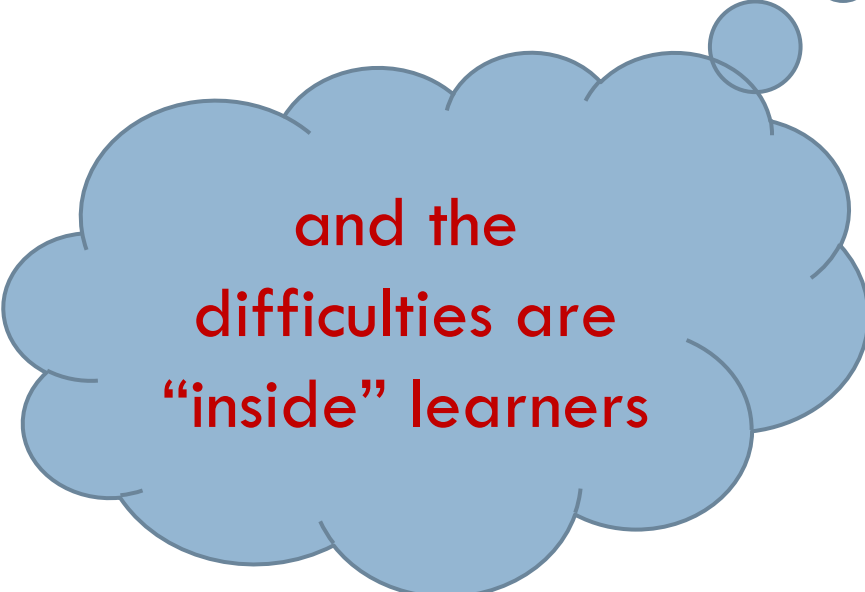
**being told their language is
not good enough**

**being promised language
will open all doors in life**

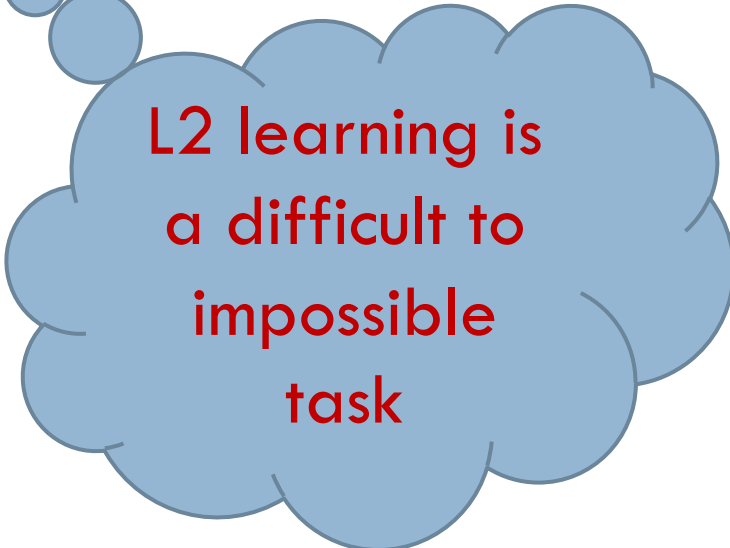
being racialized

Be vigilant against deficit orientations:

Minimize elements in your teaching of grammar that set up **deficit assumptions**

A blue thought bubble with a black outline, containing text. It is connected to the main text by a series of smaller blue circles of decreasing size.

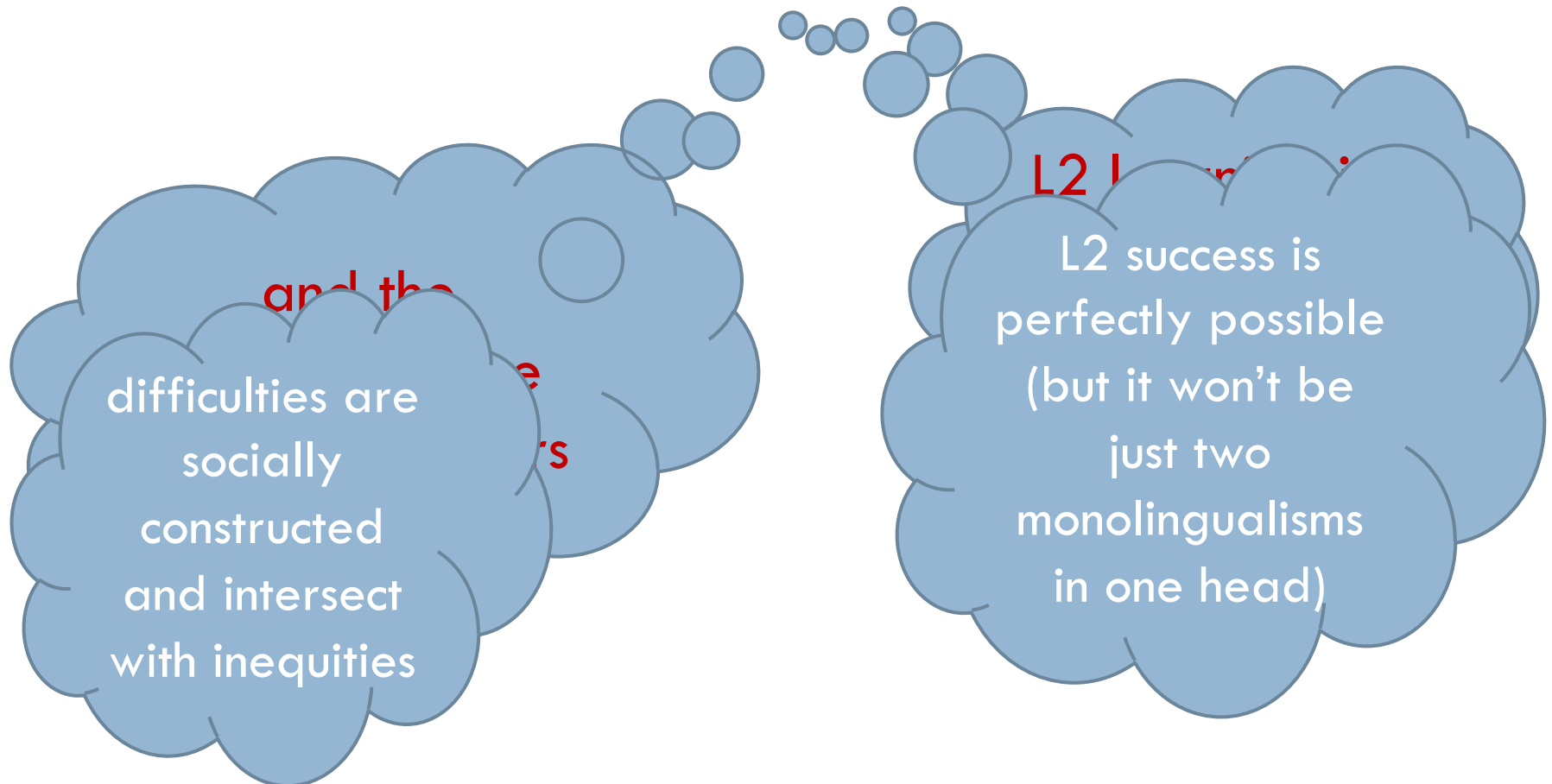
and the difficulties are “inside” learners

A blue thought bubble with a black outline, containing text. It is connected to the main text by a series of smaller blue circles of decreasing size.

L2 learning is a difficult to impossible task

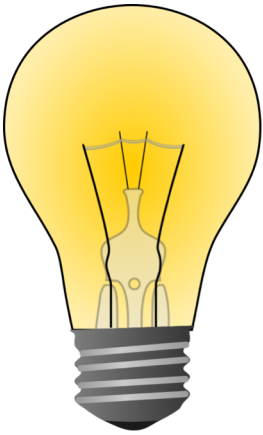
Be vigilant against deficit orientations:

**these assumptions are incongruent
with a usage-based stance!**



difficulties are
socially
constructed
and intersect
with inequities

L2 success is
perfectly possible
(but it won't be
just two
monolingualisms
in one head)



Build your students' **linguistic confidence...**

so they want to keep learning and using the language, and they are proud of who they are in all their languages


form & meaning:

- ❖ **keep meaning at the center of grammar**

Support linguistic confidence and harmonious bilingualism:

- ❖ **expose students to authentic, rich materials**
- ❖ **help them question nativespeakerism**
- ❖ **help them develop multilingual notions of success**

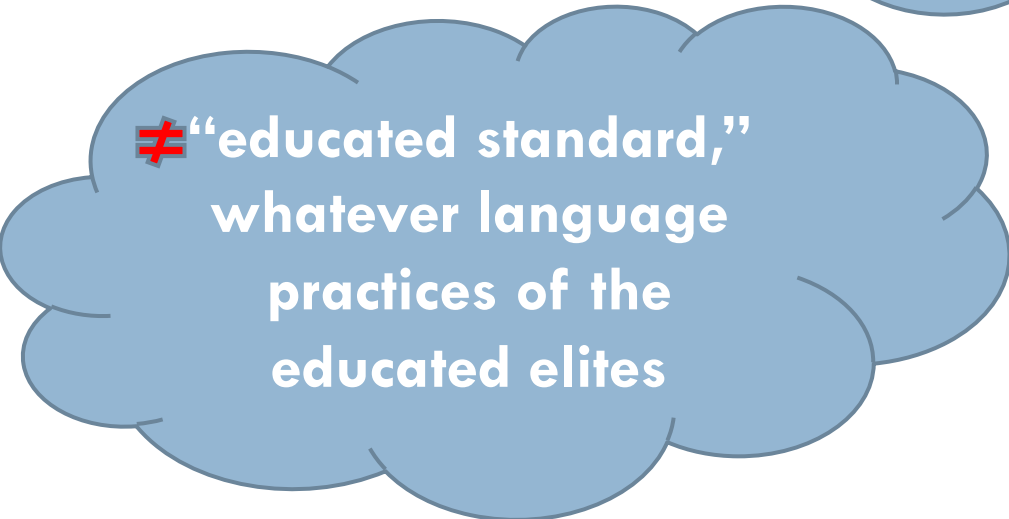
If language is usage-driven and emergent, then:



≠ {grammar books
+ dictionaries +
corpora}



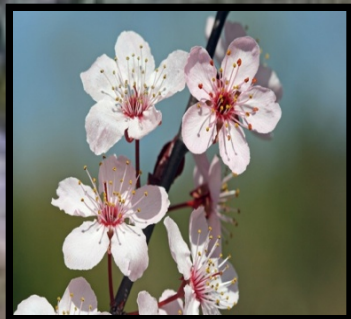
≠ complete,
≠ finish line



≠ “educated standard,”
whatever language
practices of the
educated elites

inspiration for pedagogical grammar must
come
where the action is:

usage



Thank You

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