

Depicting Grammatical Categories in Theoretical Linguistics and Language Education

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**U N I K A S S E L
V E R S I T Ä T**

Plenary talk

Puzzles, hoaxes, and competent performance

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Regardless of theoretical affiliation, most of us could probably agree on descriptive challenges and puzzles that will keep generations of linguists of any persuasion busy: the identification of cross-linguistic similarities and differences, the determinants, paths, and outcomes of various acquisition and attrition scenarios, types and causes of language change, specific language impairments, language processing, to name but a few. The good news is that we can nowadays pursue these questions with increasingly sophisticated experimental methods and corpus technologies. We have also liberated ourselves from past myths, such as the Eskimo vocabulary hoax and similar fantasies, and we are getting better at shaking off the regularly recurring scare of bilingualism as a social and political hazard or threat to children's cognitive or linguistic development. Also, many of us have managed to let go of fictions like the perfect native speaker, the perfectly balanced bilingual or the orthodoxy of total language separation. In the ideal case, we manage to inspire students with our excitement about the world being a gigantic language lab and about the brain's talent for juggling multiple codes.

My contribution aims at showing what can be gained in terms of stimulating interest in linguistic detail on all descriptive levels, from phonetics to discourse organization, by looking at bilingual performance. The talk focuses on forms and functions of language contact phenomena and the linguistic resourcefulness of bilinguals of different ages and acquisition history (simultaneous bilinguals, heritage speakers of German, adult first-generation German immigrants in the U.S.). The manner in which bilingual children go beyond what individual grammars offer at specific times, and the way in which bilingual adults "suspend" their coexisting grammars reveal considerable competence in performance, including superb monitoring skills. Also, there is an educational linguistic point to be made within the context of the LiDi conference: language mixing and the rise of linguistic hybridity is a sensitive topic for bilingual individuals and their families and, apart from questions of transfer, unknown territory for many teachers. And even though they may have begun to encourage translanguaging, i.e. code-switching, as a problem-solving strategy, they may not yet fully appreciate its potential as a rich source of data for classroom discussions.

Program

How to teach the English present perfect in Southern Germany? – A semantic approach

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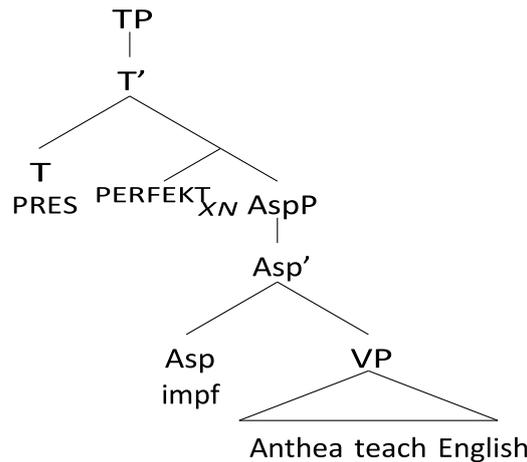
“*I never knew you were the someone waiting for me*” – a lyric from British singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran. According to the signal word approach which is used in grammar lessons on the present perfect in German schools, this sentence should be judged ungrammatical. The simple past should be replaced with the present perfect. A sentence like *I lived in New York for 6 years* should be rejected for the same reason.

The problem

The acquisition of the English present perfect poses a notorious challenge for German-speaking students (Swan, 2001; Fuchs et al., 2016, 297ff). Given the parallel morphological make-up of the perfect in English and German, this might seem astonishing. The difference lies, however, in the overall semantic contribution of the perfect, which is not overtly addressed in school grammars. Another problematic factor is the signal word approach: the occurrence of certain adverbials like *already*, *just* or *for*-adverbials is supposed to signal the presence of the present perfect. Even though this approach is reasonable at elementary level, it should be abandoned at more advanced levels. Firstly, only around 30% of native present perfect uses co-occur with temporal adverbials (Werner, 2014, p. 136). Secondly, there is a considerable difference between American and British English, where it is grammatical in AE to use the ‘signal words’ with the simple past, as in *I just saw that./Josh already went to the beach*. (cf. Davydova, 2011, p. 53).

Background

The best-known and most adequate formal semantic approach to the English present perfect is the extended-now analysis (McCoard, 1978; Iatridou et al., 2001; Beck & Gergel, 2014). A perfect operator that scopes over viewpoint aspect and sits below the tense projection contributes a time interval that extends backwards from the local evaluation time (in the case of the present perfect, from the speech time). The eventuality expressed by the past participle is included in or includes this extended-now interval, depending on viewpoint aspect. The necessary ingredients are illustrated in (1)-(4). The truth conditions for the sentence *Anthea has been teaching English* are given in (5).

- (1) 
- (2) $[[\text{PRES}]] = [\lambda p_{\langle i,t \rangle}. \exists t_{\langle i \rangle} [t = t_c \ \& \ p(t)]]$, where t_c is the speech time
- (3) $[[\text{PERFEKT}_{XN}]] = [\lambda p_{\langle i,t \rangle}. [\lambda t_{\langle i \rangle}. \exists t' [XN(t',t) \ \& \ p(t')]]]$, where $XN(t',t)$ iff t is a final subinterval of t'
- (4) $[[\text{imperfective}]] = [\lambda p_{\langle v,t \rangle}. [\lambda t_{\langle i \rangle}. \exists e [t \subset \tau(e) \ \& \ p(e)]]]$
- (5) $\exists t [t = t_c \ \& \ \exists t' [XN(t',t) \ \& \ \exists e [t' \subset \tau(e) \ \& \ \text{Anthea-teach-English} (e)]]]$

With regards to the German Perfekt, there is currently no consensus on the correct formal semantic analysis (e.g. Reichenbach, 1947; von Stechow, 1999; Klein, 2000; Rathert, 2004; Rothstein, 2010). Braun (in preparation) thus suggests to focus on dialectal variation and develops a semantics for the Upper German Perfekt. Given the fact that the German dialects stem from an earlier version of German and that in Upper German, the synthetic Präteritum was lost in the Early New High German period, it is reasonable to assume that the Upper German Perfekt only expresses an anteriority relation and behaves like an analytical Präteritum. Evidence is provided in (6), which stems from fieldwork data on Swabian (Braun, in preparation). The Swabian Perfekt is unacceptable in universal contexts (in which English speakers would use the present perfect):

- (6) Context: Marc befindet sich gerade im Krankenhaus und er ist schon seit längerer Zeit dort.
- a. #Marc **ist** jetzt 3 Wochen lang im Krankenhaus **gewesen**.
 Marc is now 3 weeks long in.the hospital be.pst.ptcp.
 ‘Marc has been in the hospital for 3 weeks.
- b. Comment by informant: “Nein, das geht nicht. Dann wäre er eigentlich wieder zuhause. Eigentlich müsste es heißen *Dr Marc laid jetzt scho seit 3 Woche im Krängehaus*.”

In Upper German, the Perfekt can thus be modelled as an operator that heads the TP head, with the lexical entry provided in (7-a). The truth conditions for (6-a) are provided in (7-d). The Upper German Perfekt comes with a cessation implicature (like the Präteritum) which explains the unacceptability of (6-a) in a universal context.

- (7) a. $[[\text{PERFEKT}_{Past}]] = [\lambda p_{\langle i,t \rangle}. [\lambda t_{\langle i \rangle}. \exists t' [t' < t \ \& \ p(t')]]]$
 b. $[[3 \text{ Wochen lang}]] = [\lambda p_{\langle i,t \rangle}. [\lambda t_{\langle i \rangle}. 3 \text{ weeks long} (t) \ \& \ \forall t'' [t'' \subseteq t \rightarrow p(t'')]]]$
 c. $[[\text{imperfective}_{states}]] = [\lambda p_{\langle v,t \rangle}. [\lambda t_{\langle i \rangle}. \exists s [t \circ \tau(s) \ \& \ p(s)]]]$, if p is stative
 d. $\exists t' [t' < t^* \ \& \ 3 \text{ weeks long} (t') \ \& \ \forall t'' \subseteq t' \rightarrow \exists s [\tau(s) \circ t'' \ \& \ s \text{ is a state of Marc being in the hospital}]]]$

Possible solution

In our talk, we will show how the above mentioned formal grammar notions can be implemented in English grammar lessons in (Upper) German schools. In particular, we will present

teaching suggestions and report the results of a short grammar unit taught to a B2 level English class. In this grammar unit, learners of English are encouraged to approach language in a scientific way. The apparent similarity between the English present perfect and the Upper German Perfekt are addressed in a contrastive manner, which includes the investigation of minimal pairs as in (8).

- (8) a. Carter and his wife have been married for 73 years.
b. Karl und seine Frau sind 73 Jahre lang verheiratet gewesen.

In an inductive, hands-on approach, the students are invited to produce and explain more German data. To explain the English data, a student-friendly version of the extended-now analysis is presented. The students then apply this analysis to more English examples, which renders the signal word approach redundant. The goal of the grammar unit is to develop linguistic thinking and methodology skills as well as to deepen the understanding of the English present perfect.

To sum up, the application of linguistic theory can help improve language skills of advanced learners. In particular, we illustrate how linguistic analyses and perspectives (Reichenbachian tense system, XN-analysis) do not complicate grammar teaching but rather pose an innovative solution to well-known acquisition problems.

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Learning and unlearning aspectual features through a Cognitive Linguistics-inspired pedagogy

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Borbala Samu, University for Foreigners of Perugia

In this paper we report two Cognitive Linguistics-inspired pedagogical interventions that proved (or might prove) useful in teaching a rather complex and neglected category in Language Teaching, i.e. the Aspect (Schmiedtová/Flecken 2008). Cognitively grounding any pedagogical grammar, i.e. helping learners recognize, understand and internalize the cognitive mechanisms that govern L2 grammar, has been proven to be particularly effective when L1 and L2 constructions differ in terms of temporal and aspectual features, or in the encoding of motion events and illocutionary force intensity (cf., *inter alia*, Hijazo-Gascón/Llopiz-García 2019; Roche/Suñer 2016; Tyler/Ortega 2018). Moreover, when dealing with complex form-meaning pairings such as periphrases, collocations, idioms and phrasal verbs, a more explicit pedagogical intervention aimed at revealing and actively discovering and practicing the meanings and functions mapped onto such constructions may be needed, as it is often difficult for learners to notice and therefore integrate them in their interlanguage (cf. Wolter/Yamashita 2018). Furthermore, L1-L2 formal similarities associated with functional differences may exacerbate these difficulties, leading learners to see non-existing functional parallels. A Cognitive Linguistics-based pedagogy can be optimal in such cases because: 1) it recognizes the usefulness of cross-linguistic comparisons in L2 teaching, but does not limit it to a simple contrastive analysis: in fact, it recognizes the lingua-cultural value of language variation, and acknowledges the importance of integrating into pedagogical practice a reflection on how different languages may use different cognitive mechanisms – and not only structures – to construct similar meanings; 2) consequently, it helps learners recognize and understand the cognitive mechanisms and rules of the L2 and also of their L1, which they may not necessarily be aware of, and 3) it simplifies the cognitive complexity of some linguistic mechanisms recurring to diagrams, drawings and animations which are aimed at making more transparent and learnable the relevant aspects of the conceptual motivation of grammar. The introduction of such techniques into the L2 classroom is useful to reduce the inner complexity and the apparent arbitrariness of some grammar rules and make the potential L1-L2 discrepancies explicit and cognizable (cf. Della Putta 2015; Roche/Suñer 2016).

The first application of Cognitive Linguistics to grammar teaching that we propose is dedicated to the choice, in (L2) Italian, of whether to use perfect or imperfect, namely the so-called *passato prossimo* and *imperfetto*; this choice constitutes a major source of erroneous use for advanced and less advanced learners of Italian and other Romance languages alike (Brisard 2010; Doiz 2013). The differences in the use of *passato prossimo* vs *imperfetto* are particularly difficult for many learners of Italian to comprehend, and the two tenses are often used inappropriately in several contexts, which may be a result of competing or conflicting L1 and L2 construal patterns. The deviant use of the target grammatical forms may also be a consequence of the representation chosen for the tense and aspect system in current pedagogical grammars and traditional instructional materials employed in L2 teaching, which generally provide oversimplified rules and information, creating a rather simplistic view of the target structure: in (L2) Italian grammar books and textbooks, tense and aspect forms are mainly categorized and described on the basis of formal rather than meaning-oriented characteristics. Moreover, it appears that the descriptions are fairly eclectic and they are not linked with a coherent and systematic linguistic theory. Therefore, the Cognitive Linguistics-oriented proposal related to the explana-

tion of the choice of *passato prossimo* vs *imperfetto* focuses on the presentation, through pictorial illustration and physical activation, of the reasons that give life to those structures, connected to their contexts of use. The aim is to allow learners to recognize the possibility to construct the same situation in different ways and to understand how these uses are based on differences in perspective of representation. It also intends to emphasize the active role of the speaker in the process of constructing meaning, with the purpose of increasing linguistic awareness on in the L2 learner (Samu 2020).

The second application of Cognitive Linguistics that we propose deals with a complex relationship that exists between two aspectual periphrases of Spanish and Italian, i.e. *estar/stare* + gerund (i.e. “to stay” + gerund). The Spanish periphrasis *estar* + gerund is formally similar to the Italian *stare* + gerund but has a wider range of aspectual values (it can express durativity, in addition to progressivity) and is compatible with more tenses (perfectives, in addition to imperfectives, see Squartini 1998). As an effect of transfer, L1-Spanish learners of L2 Italian often use *stare* + gerund to express durativity and combine it with perfective tenses, thus producing incorrect utterances like **Sono stato studiando* (Bailini 2016). A previous acquisitional study (Della Putta/Strik Lievers 2020) revealed that input exposure, intensity of L2 use, and non-focused instruction are not sufficient to pre-empt this transfer phenomenon, and thus unlearn the erroneous uses of the Italian periphrasis by L1-Spanish students.

We therefore opted for a teaching intervention that aimed at helping Spanish-speaking students of Italian unlearn the erroneous overextension of the aspectual values of *estar* + gerund to *stare* + gerund: we designed a 6 weeks intervention that was integrated in a classical functional syllabus. Over the 6 weeks, the students had the chance to visualize through pictures and diagrams the subtle aspectual differences of the two periphrases, and to try their correct activation via transcodification exercises (picture → language and vice versa), focused correction and contrastive reflections about how the two structures work in Italian and Spanish.

Pre/post/delayed-post tests (timed grammatical judgments) were conducted, and they showed that the results of the experimental group were significantly better than the ones of a control group, where no Cognitive Linguistic inspired teaching intervention took place.

Resorting to the main tenets of Cognitive Linguistics seems a viable possibility to teach the category of Aspect. In light of our proposal and data, we wish to discuss this possibility and illustrate how it can be effectively integrated in L2 teaching activities and programs.

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Linguistic theory and teacher training

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The goal of language education at schools at all levels (including kindergarten) should be a proficient, self-confident use of language in different contexts. This includes at least the abilities to choose situation appropriate lexical items, syntactic structures, means of text cohesion, language variety, text type, elements of ensuring the comprehension of the conversation partner, and spelling for written texts. In general, all these choices are made unconsciously. Only in moments of doubt or in special situations is a consciously made decision necessary. So far so good for children and pupils who learn these choices no matter what. However, what about the others, probably the major part? How much explicit linguistic knowledge do they need to be linguistically successful? Moreover, what kind of linguistic knowledge or theory is useful for pupils to accomplish the given purpose of language education? And what about the theoretical linguistic knowledge of kindergarteners and school teachers: what kind of theoretical background in linguistics should they have in order to be able to support their mentees to reach the goal?

We have to strictly differentiate between linguistic topics that are taught explicitly at schools, and language education in general. A work-oriented teacher-training program has to distinguish clearly between these two aspects. The aim of a fruitful linguistic teacher-training program cannot be that students leave university with a sample of grammar worksheets for their own language teaching. Instead, teacher trainees have to know (at least):

- how to analyse their own language use and how to verbalize the results,
- how to diagnose the language use of pupils,
- how to better the language use and to verbalize good or better language use target group specific,
- how to promote language awareness,
- how to analyse and how to act in a multilingual classroom situation,
- how to train to create a distance to a competence like language (esp. for L1),
- how to choose relevant explicit linguistic knowledge (and for which target group), how to speak about linguistics, and linguists, and theories about language.

Against this background, the aim of this talk is to explore the connection between theoretical linguistics and language teaching for so-called L1 German classes in multilingual classrooms. The leading research question is how we can and should deal with language and linguistics in educational contexts by distinguishing learners and teachers. Based on examples, I would like to show the need of different linguistic knowledge of teacher trainees and pupils: (1) for language use, (2) for language awareness, and (3) for explicit linguistic knowledge, and show the lacking empirical evidence. What is certain is that we need to rethink topics in grammar classes at school, and consequently, teacher training at universities. Time is precious in (language) education; therefore, we should concentrate on the important aspects, instead of on the curriculum.

Discourse grammar, discourse coherence and discourse relations: Evidence from editing-based tasks for language teaching

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This paper argues for grammar not to be conceptualized as sentence or construction grammar, but rather as discourse grammar. Functional discourse grammar does not only address the well-formedness of clauses and sentences, and of their constitutive parts, but also the semantics and pragmatics of their connectedness, as captured by the concept of discourse relations (or coherence / rhetorical relations). Discourse relations are described as logical relations between two discourse segments, i.e. complex linguistic units with propositional content and illocutionary force of their own (cf. Asher and Lascarides 2003; Fetzer 2018). The linguistic realization of discourse relations can be done in more or less typical ways. The generalized concept of discourse grammar may undergo genre-specific particularizations; it serves as a blueprint that guides participants in producing and interpreting discourse.

Functional approaches to grammar (e.g., Givón 1993, Halliday & Matthiessen 2014) – and to the teaching of grammar – are pragmatic in nature, investigating the questions of how language functions in context, what semantic roles grammatical constituents may have in discourse, how participants construe discourse coherence, and how cohesive devices are utilized in the construal of discourse coherence. Discourse relations connect discourse units and contribute to the construal of discourse coherence. They may be realized non-overtly if encoded in coherence strands, that is topical (dis)continuity, referential (dis)continuity, action (dis)continuity, aspectual /temporal /lexical coherence. They may be realized overtly if signalled with discourse connectives, meta-discursive comments and pragmatic word order, and they may be multiply cued if they are both signalled and encoded. To obtain insights into their linguistic realization, an experimental setting was designed in which monads and dyads performed an editing task for the genres of commentary and narrative. They were provided with skeleton-like argumentative and narrative source texts, and asked to edit them and turn them into well-formed argumentative or narrative texts; they were allowed to add any linguistic material which they considered necessary, but not to change the sequential organization of the skeleton texts. The dyadic data are supplemented with metadata of the dyads negotiating appropriate linguistic realization during the editing process as well as with keystroke protocols recording any revisions, deletions and corrections made in the unfolding writing process.

The results of the analysis of our editing-based task for the linguistic realization of discourse relations across argumentative and narrative genres as well as across monadic and dyadic production formats suggest that the more and less typical ways of realizing discourse relations in context are constrained by their semantics as operationalized with their defining conditions and particularized features (Fetzer 2017). For contrastive discourse relations, the defining condition is semantic dissimilarity between two discourse units, and the particularized features are topical and / or referential and / or action discontinuity as well as antonymic lexical coherence relations and discontinuity in aspectual and temporal coherence, as exemplified with the following extract:

- (1) 2. **In the past**, London was a dowdy place of tea-houses and stale rock cakes,
3. **but now** it's much more exciting.

Contrastive discourse relations are signalled overtly throughout the data (i.e. across genres and across production formats). Participants not only added contrastive discourse connectives (e.g.

but), but also embellished the degree of contrastiveness with temporal and local adverbials. Our metadata show that the signalling of contrastive discourse relations is consistently made manifest (by means of adverbials and/or contrastive discourse connectives) right from the start of the editing process. Participants thus seem to have a common understanding of how much additional linguistic material is both necessary and sufficient in order to signal discourse relations as contrastive. This can be accounted for in terms of the participants' knowledge of discourse grammar, which guides the participants in constructing well-formed discourse and, thus, in achieving their communicative goals.

The defining condition for continuative discourse relations is a common topic and their particularized features are topical and / or referential and / or action continuity as well as non-antonymic lexical coherence relations and continuity in aspectual and temporal coherence, as exemplified in (2):

- (2) 13. Foreign language learning at British schools has been in decline
 14. *and* the number of universities offering degrees in modern language has plummeted

Continuative discourse relations are signalled overtly to varying degrees across genres and across production formats, ranging from 40.6 % to 78.5 % (see Fetzer 2018: 29). The analysis of the metadata reveals that if they are overtly signalled (e.g. by means of discourse connectives such as *and*), continuative discourse relations overall tend to be made explicit only at a later stage in the editing process (even more so in the argumentative data), generally after a more lengthy negotiation of well-formedness. This can be explained by the overlap between different types of continuative discourse relations in terms of defining conditions and particularized features, which requires the participants to (re-)negotiate their interpretation of how the flow of discourse is to proceed, and thus how (not) to signal continuative discourse relations, based on their knowledge of discourse grammar.

Editing-based tasks provide us with valuable tools for the teaching of discursive competence in both first and second (or third) languages, while at the same time allowing for the investigation of clause- and construction-based grammaticality.

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Simple versus progressive: Is there a way out?

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Most English grammar books and textbooks tell us that the “present simple” is used to denote habits or routines and all other “uses” are classified as exceptions or restricted to some verbs which seem to resist the “progressive” – e.g. *agree*, *apologize* etc. On the other hand, the “present progressive” or “present continuous” is said to be used to denote “actions” taking place right now. This quick and rough presentation summarizes what seems to be taught here and there, the problem being that everyday English does not follow these rules. Here are a few examples:

- (1) a. Your time starts ... now ! (TV show, *The Chase* on ITV1)
- b. And Dan goes away 8 thousand pounds better off ! (*Who wants to be a millionaire*)
- c. You disgust me!
- d. David, my heart bleeds!
- e. So we mourn today with Her Majesty the Queen, we offer our condolences to her and to all her family. (Boris Johnson, April 9th 2021 – Death of Prince Philip)
- f. Xmas falls on a Saturday this year. (*is falling)
- g. A report shows hundreds of thousands of marine animals are dying every year after being accidentally caught in fishing nets. (*Sky News*, Nov. 19th 2020)
- h. The British are eating 100lb of sugar a week in junk food, sweets and canned drinks, scientists have warned. (*The Daily Mail*, April 13th 2002)
- i. By buying our cotton products you are helping us improve cotton farming globally. (Marks and Spencers)
- j. Xmas is coming early this year. (*comes early)

The few – authentic – examples mentioned above are not exceptions and yet they resist the rules. What is at stake here needs looking into. What is at stake is not only aspect based analyses but also the fact that everyday utterances are analysed at a surface structure level – Chomsky opposed “surface structure” and “deep structure”. Sentences in the Present simple and in the Present progressive/continuous differ a lot more than what is generally taught. Most of the time books will oppose what follows:

- (2) a. He drinks tea.
- b. He is drinking tea.

and underline “drinks” and the one hand and “is drinking” on the other as if drink were used as the conjugated verb in both cases. Such presentations are misleading for if in a. the verb is indeed “drink” it is not in b. where “be” is:

- (3) a. He **drinks** tea.
- b. He **is** drinking tea.

or even

- (4) He **is** ING[drink-tea].

for “drink” is not used as verb when bearing *-ing*.

Each of these two sentences is used with totally different meanings and both can be used to either denote present time or habits. Using the theoretical framework known as “Meta-operational grammar” we propose to tackle the opposition between “simple” and “progressive” in a different perspective so as to show how “tenses” should be taught to account for *all* sentences and do away with the rule and exceptions approach which seems to prevail.

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<http://cle.ens-lyon.fr/anglais/se-former/les-precis-et-le-workbook/precis-de-grammaire>

A clear case?! On the depiction and conceptualization of the German case system in grammar teaching

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Our talk will focus on presenting a theory-driven, systematic approach to teaching the German case system in grammar lessons at school. Our approach aims on a linguistically based depiction and conceptualization which is based on current findings on case theory and the first and second language acquisition of case, what makes it suitable for children with German as a first and second language as well. We argue that (psycho)linguistic findings provide important implications on the didactic modeling of case which has not yet been taken into account in current pedagogical approaches of grammar teaching in schools.

The acquisition of explicit knowledge about the German case system is one important goal of grammar teaching in schools (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2004). In the German educational standards for primary schools for example, the knowledge about and the use of basic linguistic terms, including *case* and *sentence parts* like subject and objects, are named as competences to be acquired until the end of class 4 (ibid.). The way in which the case system is taught in current approaches has, however, been criticized from a scientific point of view for years (cf. Granzow-Emden, 2014; Schöenberg, 2010). For example, *case* is only discussed implicitly in combination with *sentence parts*; grammatical units like nominal or prepositional phrases are almost never a part of grammar teaching. Besides, it is also problematic that sentence parts are traditionally taught using a method that makes it nearly impossible to acquire an appropriate knowledge about the case system: the so called “questioning method” (ibid.). With this method, sentence parts should be identified by using specific question words like *wer (who)* or *was (what)* for the subject or *wem (whom)* for the dative object, and so forth. However, this method incorrectly equates the grammatical categories *case* and *sentence part*. Furthermore, due to its linguistic vagueness, this method often leads to incorrect analysis results. In addition, it is also unsuitable for students who need language support, e.g. students who grow up bilingually, as it requires language skills these students often haven’t acquired yet. Essential linguistic aspects of the case system, for example models of case theory (cf. Woolford, 2006), or current findings on the acquisition of case marking in first and second language acquisition, are so far not taken into account in several depictions and conceptualizations in schools – although they share great potential for grammar teaching.

In our talk, we’ll specify this potential and, based on this, present a theory-driven, systematic approach to grammar teaching which is built on basic linguistic research about the German case system, the case theory by Woolford (2006) and findings on the acquisition of case in monolingual and bilingual children.

The German language distinguishes between four cases: nominative, accusative, dative and genitive. Case is mainly assigned to verbs and prepositions and is used to identify the grammatical relations of subject, direct object, indirect object and attribute. In German, case is marked with grammatical morphemes in determiners, pronouns, adjectives, prepositions and (rarely) also nouns. Linguistic forms and functions often coincide (*case syncretism*). For example, not only case but also gender and number are marked on the determiner. Only definite masculine determiners differentiate all four cases in their morphological form, in feminine nominative and accusative as well as genitive and dative are identical in form, in neuter nominative and accusative.

In Woolford's theory (2006), three types of case are distinguished: *structural*, *lexical* and *inherent* case. Structural case is predictable for a certain structural configuration and includes the subject in the nominative (e.g. *Der Hund bellt*; *The dog barks*) and the direct object in the accusative (e.g. *Sie sieht den Hund*; *she sees the dog*). Lexical case is an idiosyncratic case which is lexically selected and licensed by specific lexical heads (e.g. verbs and prepositions). As an inherent case, Woolford (2006) classifies datives in indirect objects of ditransitive verbs (e.g. *Sie gibt dem Hund einen Knochen*; *She gives the dog a bone*). This inherent case is licensed differently than lexical cases and is more rule-based and thus more predictable.

The cases distinguished by Woolford (2006) go along with different challenges in language acquisition for monolingual and bilingual children. Various studies on the acquisition of case – with children acquiring German as a first or second language – show that the nominative case is acquired before the accusative case which is acquired before the dative case (cf. Bast, 2003; Clahsen, 1984; Lemmer, 2018; Scherger, 2015; Tracy, 1986; Ulrich et al., 2016); furthermore, prepositional phrases in the dative seem to be easier for children than datives in objects of (di)transitive verbs. Based on the model of Woolford (2006), a well predictable acquisition path can be documented: structural cases are acquired before lexical cases and these before inherent cases.

On the basis of this (psycho)linguistic research, four fundamental implications can be derived that should be taken into account in depictions and conceptualizations:

- (1) Because the linguistic functions of case are complex and often intransparent, the starting point for dealing with case should be visible changes of morphological forms and the units that trigger these changes, namely verbs and prepositions.
- (2) Due to the fact that linguistic forms and functions often coincide, teachers should start focusing on specific case bearing elements such as definite masculine determiners, because in these determiners all four cases differentiate in their morphological form.
- (3) The distinction between structural, lexical and inherent case is helpful for lesson planning in the field of grammar, for example, because lexical cases should be taught systematically for second language learners, e.g. through vocabulary training.
- (4) The facts that a) case is acquired very late in first and second language acquisition and that b) there are predictable acquisition steps should be taken into account, especially when it comes to decisions about curricula and the progression in grammar teaching.

In our presentation, we'll specify these implications and, as a consequence, present our approach for grammar teaching in detail. Our considerations on learning goals, progression and teaching methodology will be discussed and concrete teaching materials will be put up for discussion.

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(Reflexively) marked and unmarked anticausatives in German grammars

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(Anti-)causative alternation exhibits a variation in argument structure patterns: verbs can be used either as transitive (causative) or as intransitive (anticausative, inchoative) (see 1-3 the alternation with the English verb and its counterpart in German) (cf. Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995; Schäfer 2008; Alexiadou et al. 2015):

- (1) a. John opens the door. (causative)
b. The door opens. (anticausative)

In German, verbs undergoing the causative alternation can appear: (i) as morphologically unmarked, (*unmarked anticausatives*) in their transitive and their intransitive use (cf. 2a,b):

- (2) a. Hans zerbrach das Fenster. (causative)
b. Das Fenster zerbrach. (unmarked anticausative)

(ii) as (reflexively) *marked anticausatives*, when they obligatory co-occur with the reflexive pronoun ‘sich’ in the anticausative variation (cf. 3a,b) (Schäfer 2007, 2008, inter alia).

- (3) a. Hans öffnet die Tür. (causative)
b. Die Tür öffnet sich. ((reflexively) marked anticausative))

The meaning of the two alternations is related: the object of the transitive and the subject of the intransitive variant bear the same thematic role (theme), while the external argument (agent or causer) in the transitive variant is missing in the intransitive one (cf. 4a,b).

- (4) a. Hans^{AGENT} zerbrach das Fenster.^{THEME} (causative)
b. Das Fenster^{THEME} zerbrach. (unmarked anticausative)

According to the traditional syntactic analysis, anticausative verbs are assumed to be unaccusatives (Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995; Reinhart 2002). The traditional semantic analysis of such verbs involves the predicates ‘cause’ for the causative alternation (cf. 5a) and ‘become’ for the anticausative/inchoative alternation (cf. 5b) (Dowty 2019; Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995).

- (5) a. [x CAUSE [BECOME [y <state>]]] (causative)
b. [BECOME [y <state>]] (anticausative)

The focus of the present study is the representation of the (reflexively) marked and unmarked anticausatives in linguistic and didactic German grammars. After analyzing the treatment of these constructions in these grammars, as well as in the information system *grammis*¹ and in an online grammar *deutschplus.net*², it is concluded that there is inadequate information on the (reflexively) marked and unmarked anticausatives. This talk outlines why a valency and an argument structure approach should be combined, hoping that it will positively influence the compilation of future grammars.

¹ The information system (online: <https://grammis.ids-mannheim.de/>) is based on “Grammatik der deutschen Sprache” (Zifonun et al. 1997).

² https://www.deutschplus.net/pages/ohne_Modalverb (accessed 29.11.21). The grammar is in a pilot phase.

The study attempts to explore the following questions: (a) How is the causative vs. anticausative alternation in German grammars represented? (b) Do German grammars contain sufficient information of the phenomenon under investigation? (c) What kind of properties (morphological, syntactic, semantic) do these grammars provide? (d) Are the examples used in grammars taken from a corpus of current German or are they invented? First, a survey was taken of the unmarked anticausatives in German grammars i.e., DUDEN (2016), Wahrig (2002), Helbig & Buscha (2005), Zifonun et al. (1997). From this, it is concluded that information on these constructions is scarce, while the terminology is confusing. Then, the study surveys five (reflexively) marked anticausatives and five unmarked anticausatives that are high frequency verbs in the list of words (Wortliste) Goethe-Zertifikat B1 (2016) conceived by the Goethe-Institute and ÖSD for foreign students of B1 level in two grammars, namely in DUDEN (2016), Wahrig (2002), and in one online German grammar, i.e., *deutschplus.net* as well as in the information system *grammis* (s. 6). The five (reflexively) marked anticausatives and the five unmarked unaccusatives are the following:

(6) (Reflexively) marked anticausatives: *(sich) ändern, (sich) bewegen, (sich) drehen, (sich) öffnen, (sich) verändern.*

Unmarked anticausatives: *kochen, sinken, trocknen, ab-/zunehmen, brechen.*

The talk introduces an account for (reflexively) marked and unmarked anticausatives for uses in particular those that might be possible to L1 and L2 learners. The proposed approach contains different levels relating syntactic and semantic information to each other (cf. Sioupi 2019, 2021a). Crucial is that the following are listed independently: (a) argument structure (argument variables), (b) valency-based approaches of argument structure (Herbst 1992; 2011), (c) semantic (theta-) roles (the semantic relations between a verb and its arguments), (d) syntactic level (case plays an important role in German), (e) grammatical functions (subject, object etc.), (f) formally semantic decomposition of the constructions (Dowty 1979). The proposed approach will equip students and teachers with an up-to-date scientific model (s. Stefanowitsch 2011).

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Learning the English present perfect: Nature and extent of L1 German influence

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The use of present perfect by L1 speakers of German has been widely explored, yet the precise nature and extent of the cross-linguistic influence (CLI) on its acquisition and use is largely understudied. The fact that the German *Perfekt* is structurally similar to the English present perfect tense (PP), on the one hand, predicts an early mastery of PP by German learners of English. On the other hand, since the *Perfekt* overlaps with the English simple past tense (SP) in function, an overuse of PP, especially in the form of its non-target like suppliance in contexts where SP is expected in English, may arise. Contrary to these predictions, however, recent research has shown that PP tends to be underused by learners with this particular language combination, especially in early stages of learning (e.g., Fuchs et al. 2016: 322).

Several key issues might contribute to this underuse: First, PP is considered a “more complex category” than SP or present tense (Davydova 2011: 88). Moreover, contexts in which the *Perfekt* is used in German may require either SP or PP in English (König and Gast 2018). These are likely to limit the potential of positive transfer and impede the learning process further, possibly aggravated by another competing source of transfer from the German *Präteritum* that bears formal and functional similarity to English SP (e.g., *sie wein-te* vs. *she cri-ed*). Altogether, such uncertainty about the form and function of PP might lead to its avoidance. It should also be noted that most research in this direction has so far followed corpus-based approaches and focused on frequencies of PP use while “contexts of usage ... have been largely ignored” (Werner et al. 2021: 42). A systematic investigation of potential CLI effects due to structural similarity and functional overlap between the German *Perfekt* and PP in English, however, calls for experimental approaches that tap corresponding L1 representations. Furthermore, a precise understanding of the extent of PP use requires elicitation techniques that enable (i) a direct comparison of both licit and illicit uses of PP by the same learners as well as (ii) a pertinent analysis of the learners’ behavior in a wide range of contexts in which PP contrasts with SP.

Here, we have conducted an experimental study that investigated whether the use of PP and the extent of potential CLI effects therein are modulated by the various functions of PP as well as by the contexts in which competing L1 representations are activated. L1 German university students of English ($n=24$), who had received in-class instruction on PP prior to the experiment, completed two cloze tests. The first one tapped the different uses of PP and SP in English, closely mirroring a large array of temporal/aspectual uses of these constructions that were explicitly covered in their coursebook and during instruction (e.g., recent events, repetitive, resultative actions, etc.). The second cloze test aimed to investigate potential priming effects in the use of PP vs. SP by the structurally similar German *Perfekt* vs. *Präteritum* constructions in a task that mimicked a translanguaging exchange with successively occurring turns in German and English between two interlocutors. In the English part of the exchange, participants were required to supply the correct tense of given infinitive verbs, which were translational equivalents of the verbs previously presented in the German turn. In the match condition, the correct tense was structurally similar to the tense prompted by the German turn (i.e., *Präteritum*-SP or *Perfekt*-PP). In the mismatch condition, however, the German prompt and the correct answer were structurally different (i.e., *Präteritum*-PP or *Perfekt*-SP). These contexts were expected to induce facilitative and inhibitory priming effects, respectively.

Preliminary results show significantly lower accuracy rates in the use of PP as opposed to SP in the English cloze task, especially in the semantic category of *recent events*. Furthermore, in the structural priming task, 70% of all errors occurred in the mismatch condition. Out of those, only 36% occurred in the *Perfekt*-SP context while 64% were observed in the *Präteritum*-PP context. Closer analysis revealed that, while inhibitory priming in the *Perfekt*-SP context (i.e., incorrectly using PP in lieu of the expected SP) accounted for the majority of errors (76%), the *Präteritum*-PP context was more likely to induce other types of errors unrelated to priming (62%). In the match condition, however, no significant difference between the two contexts emerged.

We take these results to suggest that the various functions of PP may not be fully acquired even by future English teachers, which goes along with the widely reported tendency to underuse PP by German learners of English (e.g., Li 2019: 152). At the same time, our results go beyond a mere PP underuse: A primed *Perfekt* strongly activates PP as past tense reference in English due to their structural similarity and may consequently even inhibit the correct suppliance of SP. In fact, the *Perfekt* is more likely to induce CLI effects than the *Präteritum* since the latter does not impose strong inhibitory priming effects on PP. While both the *Perfekt* and *Präteritum* are facilitatory in the match condition, the positive priming effect of *Perfekt* is indeed much stronger than the *Präteritum* since PP, despite being highly problematic, induces nearly identical error rates as SP in that condition. This suggests that corpus approaches focusing on the sheer frequencies of PP vs. SP use need to be complemented with experimental data to account for the nature and dynamics of PP reference in SLA.

We will regard the conditions and extent of possible transfer from German *Perfekt* to English PP in detail and point out practical implications of our findings for English language teaching, touching upon the impact of, for example, self-regulation and metalinguistic awareness.

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Different types of grammatical description affect foreign language learning differently depending on proficiency and context

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Cognitive Grammar (CG) depicts linguistic structures as diagrams of underlying image schemas that capture form-meaning correspondences at a high level of description. On the other hand, CG recognizes that linguistic structures emerge from language use and are often stored at lexical item-specific levels. Structures are then described as fuzzy categories surrounding low-level lexical prototypes. Applied linguists have successfully adopted CG diagrams as metalinguistic instructions for foreign language teaching (e.g. De Knop and Rycker 2008), yet little is currently known about the effects of lower-level grammatical descriptions on foreign language learning and in general about influencing contextual factors and the role of individual differences.

The objective of the current study was to investigate the effects of different types of metalinguistic input on foreign language learners and compare the effects across different contexts. Two groups of Chinese learners of German were recruited and received metalinguistic instructions about case variation following German two-way prepositions. Prepositions of this type occur with either accusative or dative case depending on meaning and context, for example, the preposition *auf* ('on') in example (1).

- (1) a. Ich stelle den Reis **auf den** Tisch.
 I place the rice **on the-ACC** table
 "I place the rice onto the table."
 b. Der Reis steht **auf dem** Tisch.
 The rice is-placed **on the-DAT** table
 "The rice is on the table."

In a written paper-and-pencil decision task, the participants had to choose the correct case of the two-way prepositions in different semantic, syntactic, and usage contexts.

Inferential statistical analyses of their choices indicated that in general image schema diagrams were better clues to case than lexical prototypes. More precisely diagrams improved responses significantly across different levels of proficiency, whereas lexical prototypes were only effective at higher proficiency levels. The effects varied across different contexts. Diagrams were more effective in contexts of spatial than nonspatial meaning and with prepositional adverbials rather than objects. In contrast, lexical prototypes were indifferent to the meaning of the context but worked better with prepositional objects compared to adverbials. Independent of metalinguistic input participants were more sensitive to dative than to accusative collocations.

The results have implications not only for foreign language teaching but also for theories of nonnative representation of linguistic structures and the interaction of different types of knowledge at the explicit-implicit acquisition interface. Contrary to widely practiced teaching approaches that favor communicative and inductive learning, the current study highlights the role and importance of metalinguistic knowledge and awareness in foreign language learning. Apparently foreign language learners are able to transfer grammatical descriptions to their

learning tasks and in particular benefit from nonlinguistic, imagistic input. Concerning acquisition processes, different types of grammatical descriptions may have different effects on the allocation of attention across the input stream and as a consequence affect intake and the emergence and memory representation of linguistic structures.

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Benefiting from insights of grammar theories in pedagogical approaches

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1. The context

In educational structures with tuition in Hungarian, Hungarian is a core subject of the compulsory school curriculum. It goes by the name of *Communication in Hungarian as a mother tongue* in the first two years and *Hungarian language and literature* starting with grade III.

The Romanian education system has witnessed a transition towards a competency-based curriculum starting in 2013 for primary education, followed in 2017 for secondary education. In the new Curriculum, focus on grammar is shifted to focus on language use, the starting point being the speaker's linguistic experience in familiar communication situations. The aim is to further develop the implicit competence by using a variety of forms, patterns, and structures, while avoiding (more precisely: postponing) the explicit analysis of the notions and functions that come into play in language use. In this context both literature and linguistic education should be subordinated to the central purpose of developing the pupils' text understanding and production skills.

In spite of these changes, there still is a huge gap between the approach of the new curriculum (and the course books and teaching aids interpreting it) on the one hand, and traditional classroom practice, on the other hand. This gap is both a methodological one (including approaches, teaching and learning methods, assessment and evaluation methods, etc.) and a professional one (the results of modern linguistics and related disciplines have not until now had much impact on language education in schools). Grammar here practically means taxonomies of 'descriptive' linguistics taught for the main purpose of 'analysing' sentences and word forms, and what is taught as "knowledge about language" contains many inadequacies and is often incoherent. Furthermore, as László Kálmán puts it (characterizing the comparatively similar situation in Hungary): "The most important problem with the linguistic background of traditional school grammars is that they embody a fundamentally wrong view of language: they make as if language was a conventionally regulated system like legal codes or orthography, the rules of which are not to be discovered but learned. So linguistic structure for them is not a scientific problem but a normative system that may change over time but is something people obey (if they speak "correctly") rather than spontaneously follow. (...) As a rule, each topic is introduced by "defining" the central concepts (the quotes are intended to express that very often the explanations are unsatisfactory), then briefly illustrated, then imprinted on the children through exercises." (Kálmán 2008: 3-4.)

2. Approaching language education through linguistic lens

In the academic year 2008/2009 with a group of MA students of the Hungarian and General Linguistics Department of Babeş-Bolyai University (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), we started out searching for new paths in language education to help the group members' own teaching practice. Although there seemed to be no chance for our work to have a greater impact on education (12 years ago it did not seem like linguistic departments in general could have a say in linguistic education), after almost a decade of work, unexpectedly, some of our results were incorporated into the new curriculum for Hungarian as a mother tongue (grades III-VIII). This came with the burden of integrating our results in textbooks for language *and* literature. The 3 course books published so far by our workgroup (targeting grades V, VI and VII, respectively) were backed up by teacher training workshops and two volumes meant to fill the gap in terms of teacher

guides and resource bank. These provide the linguistic background necessary for the interpretation of the curriculum and it is also a support resource facilitating work with our textbooks.

In these resources, conceived in a constructive pedagogic paradigm the structured system of the explicit knowledge about language and linguistics has been replaced by a rich linguistic environment, in the context of which we offer structured experiencing and experimenting with the relevant language facts. We decided to adopt no single model or approach to language, partly to avoid the suggestion that there is a unique possible framework for properly analysing linguistic phenomena. In search for consensual facts in linguistics, we kept our focus on empirically available form-function pairs, and tried to replace the profoundly prescriptive (cf. Kádár 2020) keynote of previous textbooks with a problem-oriented approach to linguistic phenomena.

3. Two examples

In my talk, the problems raised by attempts to ‘translate’ the results, insights and key concepts of theoretical linguistics into educational settings will be illustrated by two examples. One is related to the concept of *focus* (3.1), the other to the concept of *valency* (3.2). In the first case I would like to reflect on the problematic aspects of adapting notions from different theories to classroom needs, while through the second example I plan to present a tool for visualizing grammatical concepts and relations that could otherwise be too abstract for a given age group.

3.1 Students (i.e., prospective teachers) at our Department get familiarized with the notion of focus in the context of generative accounts of Hungarian (a discourse configurational language). It is introduced as an immediately preverbal empty slot that may be filled by various constituents bearing the main stress of the sentence, and having a contrastive interpretation (expressing exhaustive identification from among a set of alternatives).

In our view, in a competency-based framework there could be two reasons for introducing linguistic concepts for the age group 10-14: (a) to contribute to the development of ‘sensitivity’ to different aspects of communication such as speaker intention, the influence of context on the selection of verbal and non-verbal elements, the role of certain linguistic forms and structural features of texts in communication, etc.; and (b) to enhance children’s chance to see the linguistic solutions and patterns featured by their native language as a particular implementation of the possible choices a language can make, thus helping them with their second language and other foreign languages they learn. So, is the concept of focus of use for these ends? If yes, in what way/to what extent? What are the main problems we face?

3.2 The second example was chosen in order to illustrate a visual tool in modelling native speakers’ knowledge regarding the linguistically salient aspects of the structure of events and ways of mapping these to sentence structure. The tool (a puzzle model) can be used to reflect on the aspects of our linguistic competence regarding the distinction between arguments and adjuncts of a predicate, thematic roles, the morphological realisation of a predicate-argument relation, or constituent structure. Here also, discussion and reflection are organized with a focus on enhancing text interpretation and production skills, with a constant eye on facilitating the comparison of languages.

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Teaching form in the action-oriented classroom: Can-do!

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This paper explores the operationalization of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001) in the foreign language classroom. More specifically, it points to the contribution usage-based linguistics (henceforth: UBL – see for instance Langacker, 2001; Niemeier, 2008; Niemeier & Reif, 2008; Pawlak & Bielak, 2011; Kravchenko, 2012; Kermer, 2016), could make in relating the CEFR's action-oriented pedagogy with its criterial features, i.e., “certain linguistic properties that are characteristic and indicative of L2 proficiency at each level” (Hawkins & Filipović, 2012, p. 5). The paper ends with some practical suggestions for a more effective approach to integrating UBL in the action-based classroom and considers broader implications for applied linguistics.

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Inquiry-based grammar teaching on generative grounds

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In school practices, grammar is often taught as prescriptive rules and deductive learning-by-heart activities (Berry 2015). This can often leave the student to be quite inactive in the learning process, and it may also lead to the transmission of a normative conceptualisation of grammar, as something that needs to be memorized rather than understood and inquired.

In this talk, we explore the didactic potential of a generative approach to grammar (Brøseth and Nygård 2019). Our intention is not to advocate a full-fledged generative system in basic education, but rather to point out certain traits within this theory of grammar which, in our opinion, could serve as a useful platform for grammar teaching in school, with an overall goal of moving towards an exploratory, inductive and inquiry-based approach to language and grammar. Through selected empirical examples we discuss possibilities as well as limitations with applying this framework in a pedagogical context (see e.g. Brøseth 2016, Nygård 2021).

First, a fundamental thesis in generative grammar is that all humans are hard wired to learn grammar, and that all L1 users have extended unconscious grammar competence. Implying a scaffolding perspective (Hoy 2016) it should be possible and useful to build upon this competence in teaching situations, using the students' own linguistic intuitions as a tool. The overall goal in generative frameworks is not "learning the rule correctly", but rather to seek generalisations and explanations of linguistic phenomena, i.e. a scientific approach to grammar.

Second, in a generative approach, language structure can be visualised and analysed in a model that is *fixed* – in that word order can be predicted from a limited number of syntactic frames, and that word order variation can be accounted for by one fixed structure type. The model is also *unitary*, in that phrase structure and sentence structure can be accounted for by the same analytical model. The unity across phrases and sentences, and the limited number of frames, which can account for numerous occurrences of sentences, make the model manageable to teach. The visualisation can, per se, also be helpful for the students' learning (Boström og Josefsson 2006). Last, the model is *flexible* – meaning that it can be adjusted to different levels of analytic complexity, school levels and the level of each student. It is also suitable for contrastive analyses.

We will argue that a generative approach can help students realize that grammar is structurally hierarchical, not linear – an insight that they notoriously seem to struggle with. The simplified hierarchical and visual models can help students appreciate generalised grammatical patterns which are similar across examples and to understand the interplay between syntax (form) and semantics (meaning), which are considered the most crucial concepts in modern linguistics (van Rijt and Coppen 2017), through for instance grammaticality judgments and examples displaying structural ambiguity.

We propose that these perspectives will facilitate contrastive work across language subjects, that it can model inquiry-based teaching and help depth-learning, taking the pupils own linguistic competence as an outset and making them experience how to analyse linguistic data employing a scientific method.

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What can a corpus do for foreign language teaching?

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Learner corpus research has a long tradition in second and/or foreign language acquisition (S/FLA), showing that corpus frequencies and central notions of S/FLA are correlated (Ellis, 2002). This has enhanced awareness of the significant role of empirical evidence, especially, in language learning. However, the knowledge obtained from it still has few impacts on language teaching today (Granger 2009, Römer 2009).

Language teachers usually resort to corpus-informed materials such as dictionaries, grammar, and textbooks available on the market. Nevertheless, language tasks using corpus-based resources are scarce and not very well explored by teachers. Moreover, as Mindt (1996) points out, the use of grammatical structures in L2 textbooks differs a lot from the use of these structures by L1 speakers.

Over the past few decades, there was an increasing interest by researchers in applying the findings of corpus-based research to language teaching, because “with the corpus-based approach to language pedagogy, the traditional “three Ps” (Presentation, Practice and Production) approach to teaching may not be entirely suitable. Instead, the more exploratory approach of “three Is” (Illustration, Interaction and Induction) may be more appropriate, where “illustration” means looking at real data, “interaction” means discussing and sharing opinions and observations, and “induction” means making one’s own rule for a particular feature” (McEnery & Xiao, 2011: 370). Learners working with corpora can observe data from native speakers or other L2 learners and compare it with their productions. Doing that they increase their awareness concerning their systematic errors and the overuse of certain words (either lexical or functional) (Granger 2002).

The goal of this talk is to show how a corpus-driven approach to Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PFL) teaching can benefit learners, since they will acquire some language-specific categories of the foreign language because they are engaged in exploring aspects both of the native language and of L2 productions on the basis of authentic content. In particular, we will first consider data from a corpus of PFL/L2 (COPLE2) (Mendes et al., 2016), which encompasses written and spoken data produced by foreign learners of Portuguese at the University of Lisbon. The texts are digitalized, transcribed, described in terms of metadata and tagged with error annotation. This corpus will enable us to identify general errors in the learning of Portuguese L2, building a descriptive typology of errors of different L1 speakers learning PFL/L2 (such as gender agreement (1), copulative constructions (2), relative clauses (3), among others). This analysis highlights the main difficulties of these learners and is a starting point for teachers to devise teaching resources, which, as we suggest in specific for relative clauses, may also be driven by written and spoken native language corpora (specifically, by the Reference Corpus of Contemporary Portuguese – CRPC –, which contains 309.8M words of written texts and 1.6M words of spoken recordings and transcriptions).

- (1) *Este cidade*_[target: esta cidade] *é muito pequeno*_[target: pequena] *mas há muito pessoas moram lá.*
(zh074CVMTD)
this.MASC city.FEM be very small.MASC but have many people live there
'This is a very small city, but lots of people live there.'

- (2) A praia ___[target: e] fantástica, ondas ___[target: são] boas e pessoas ___[target: são] alegres e simpáticas. (zh001CVMTD)
 the beach fantastic waves good and people cheerful and nice
 ‘The beach is great, the waves are good, and the people are cheerful and nice.’
- (3) *Este cidade é muito pequeno mas há muito pessoas ___[target: que] moram lá.* (zh074CVMTD)
 this city be very small but have many people THAT live there
 ‘This is a very small city, but lots of people live there.’

In this sense, and assuming that what textbooks present is not always what the L1 corpora show, and which is the input of FL/L2 learners, it is our aim to present a set of activities that work as a pathway of metalinguistic awareness, with a view to solving the main problems found in the written productions of the learner corpus.

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Setting the base for an “acquisitionally informed pedagogy”

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Tense and aspect are categories of linguistic expression that are among the most prominent areas dealt with in grammar lessons of today’s modern language class (Bardovi-Harlig 2000: 1; Hinger 2016: 47). While we have abundant knowledge on how these categories can be defined from a linguistic perspective (Binnick 2012: 3), far less is known on how they are acquired (Bardovi-Harlig 2000: 1). This means that even though depending on the language one can count on numerous depictions of different notions verbal forms can express, for many languages we still lack a full picture of how and when these notions can be processed and produced by language learners (Ortega 2014: 177).

Thus, as the verbal system presents itself as the ideal testing ground for the manifold of linguistic theories (Ayoun 2015: vii), research findings in this area have not fully found their way into the language classroom and not yet led to the flourishing of an “acquisitionally informed pedagogy” (Bardovi-Harlig 2000: 1; Ayoun 2013: 155).

Departing from the idea that is it impossible for instruction to alter natural acquisitional routes, implying that not everything can be acquired at any stage of development but only those structures that are psycholinguistically speaking one stage ahead (cf. Pienemann’s Teachability Hypothesis Pienemann 1998: 13), in the presentation I will focus on the acquisition of the French verbal system in an instructional setting and a specific learner year. By highlighting some relevant findings, it will be shown how empirical results can help to decide which notions explored by theoretical linguistics should find their way into foreign language grammar instruction at a given moment.

Results of the study point to the systematic production of the *passé composé* in the respective contexts by 128 out of 140 Austrian pupils in their second learning year, when they are confronted with a writing task at A2 level. However, when examining contexts in which *imparfait* would be required, it can be observed that only 28 of them do produce this structure systematically. Furthermore, what can be noted in this respect is the high rate at which the pupils use *passé-composé* forms in contexts that would require *imparfait* (in contexts requiring *imparfait*: on average 42% *passé composé*-forms, 22% *imparfait*-forms, 33% *présent*-forms, 3% other forms). As it might be known, in its narrative function the French *imparfait* carries an aspectual value that indicates that a certain action has not reached its final state at a given moment in the past and can thus be considered imperfective (Grevisse and Goosse 2016: 1188; Riegel et al. 2018: 543). Contrastingly, the French *passé composé*, holding the aspectual value of being perfective, departs from the stance that a given action has been completed in the past (Grevisse and Goosse 2016: 1191). Since the opposition *présent* (rate of suppliance on average 99%) vs. *passé composé* (rate of suppliance on average 88%) is systematically established in almost all written productions, results indicate that learners in their second learning year are generally able to process the grammatical notion of tense. However, the oversuppliance of the perfective *passé composé* in imperfective contexts (notably also stative verbs), suggests that at the given stage this form might figure as “default marker of Past tense” (Salaberry 2002: 408), not yet seized in its aspectual value.

Hence, one might argue that it seems unwise to make the mastery of the past's aspectual distinctions a standard on which to measure learners in their second learner year. Even more so one might also question the fact that many school books approbated for the second year of French language classes (Luner and Berchotteau 2017: 14; Runge et al. 2017: 57) explicitly elaborate on those aspectual dimensions that are not properly mastered even among immersion students at far more advanced levels (Kihlstedt 2015: 78–79). Instead, research in second language acquisition could make the case for an “acquisitionally informed pedagogy” (Bardovi-Harlig 2000: 1), a pedagogy that draws upon the learner's current state of linguistic development and engages with those linguistic notions that could possibly be acquired in this very context.

Empirical research in instructed second language acquisition might therefore not only be of help when it comes to setting realistic targets but also in the evaluation of teaching material. Even more so it might contribute to overcoming the very frustration created when theoretical linguistic notions (often too complex for the learner to be processed at a given moment) are to find their way into the foreign language classroom.

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Getting to the comparative: Standards of comparison, scales, and antonyms in the classroom

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After the end of German elementary school students should be familiar with the category of adjectives and the levels of comparison (positive, comparative, superlative) (Kultusministerkonferenz 2004). We illustrate how the semantic notion of gradability and the related notions of standard of comparison, scale, and antonyms can be used to experiment with language and to arrive at the competent use of comparative structures.

Ordering and comparing entities is a basic component of human cognition. Natural languages reflect this cognitive ability with syntactic categories that express gradable concepts, for example so-called ‘gradable’ adjectives (Kennedy 2006). An adjective is gradable if it can occur in comparative constructions, as illustrated in example (1), and if it can be combined with degree modifiers, as in example (2).

- (1) The pot is **bigger than** the pan.
- (2) The pot is **too / very dirty**.

Gradability is often used as a criterion to distinguish adjectives from other word classes such as nouns and verbs (e.g., Dixon 2004) – also in pedagogical approaches for the identification of word categories in secondary school (Schönenberg 2020). We argue that the ability to apply this criterion requires a morphological as well as semantic understanding of comparison. This knowledge can help students to reflect why forms such as *big-bigger-biggest* are uncontroversial, while there is room for discussion on *yellow-yellower-yellowest* or *dead-deader-deadest*, for which the comparative is morphologically possible but semantically less felicitous. In the following, we first introduce formal semantic properties of gradable adjectives and then we illustrate how they can be implemented in the classroom.

In semantic theory, gradable adjectives are usually analyzed as denoting relations between entities and degrees (Cresswell 1976), that is gradable adjectives do not denote properties on their own. To evaluate whether an entity is big, a **standard of comparison** must be determined (Kennedy 2007). This standard relates to the adjective’s **scale**, i.e., the set of degrees that is totally ordered with respect to some dimension (e.g., HEIGHT) (Kennedy & McNally 2005). The scales of adjectives such as *clean*, *dirty*, *wet*, *dry*, *full*, *empty* are (partially) closed; hence, they have an endpoint. This endpoint can serve as the standard: minimum standard adjectives (e.g., *dirty*, *wet*) describe a minimal, i.e. non-zero, degree of the respective property. In the case of *dirty*, that would be some degree of dirtiness. In contrast, maximum standard adjectives (e.g., *clean*, *dry*) describe a maximal degree of the respective property. In the case of *clean*, that would be a maximal degree of cleanliness, i.e., no amount of dirt. The scales of adjectives such as *big*, *small*, *long*, *short*, *fast*, *slow* are open; hence, they have no endpoint. Therefore, the standard must be determined relative to the context: the judgement of an entity as being big depends on the class of entities it belongs to and how it compares to the entities in this class – the so-called comparison class (Klein 1980). The type of scale also affects the relation between **antonyms**. For open scale antonyms, the negation of one form does not entail the assertion of the other (Kennedy 2006).

- (3) The cake is not small. \nRightarrow The cake is big.

That is to say the standard for *big* and *small* need not be identical (Kennedy 2007; Kennedy & McNally 2005). Therefore, an entity may exceed the standard for smallness without meeting the standard for bigness: there may be entities that count as neither *big* nor *small*. In contrast, closed scale adjectives license the inference ‘not ADJECTIVE \Rightarrow antonym of ADJECTIVE’ (see (4)). According to Kennedy (2007), this follows because *dirty* imposes a minimum standard and *clean* imposes a maximum standard. Consequently, an entity without a minimal degree of dirtiness has a maximal degree of cleanliness.

(4) The plate is not dirty. \Rightarrow The plate is clean.

In comparative constructions the degree to which another one is compared provides the standard. In (1) the pan’s size serves as the standard of comparison. However, it is not entailed that the pot or the pan is big. In contrast, *The pot is dirtier than the pan* entails that the pot is dirty, whereas *The pot is cleaner than the pan* entails that the pan is not clean. Acquisition studies found that children as young as age 3 interpret closed scale and open scale adjectives differently (Syrett et al. 2010; Weicker & Schulz 2020a; Weicker & Schulz 2020b) and that they understand comparative structures (Gotowski & Syrett 2020). At the same age, they produce first comparative structures, but these may differ from the adult target. However, only around age 6 children use a greater variety of comparative structures (Gathercole 2009; Hohaus et al. 2014).

Therefore, we argue that the meaning of gradable adjectives and comparison is a case in point to reflect on the form and function of adjectives and comparative structures in school (Granzow-Emden 2014). We propose the following practical implementation for 4th grade: The starting point are open scale adjectives. In a first phase, students order entities, categorize them according to properties and label these categories with antonymous adjectives. The adjective *tall* is a meaningful initiation because size is a dimension children are familiar with and which they should know from math class. At the outset, students are asked to line up according to their size. The teacher can begin with the smallest or tallest student and asks the class for each student whether the respective student is tall. The students for which the class agreed on ‘yes’ create the set of tall students and can be labelled as such. Then, the teacher could ask the students how the remaining students could be labelled. Likely, they come up with the antonym *short*. Next, the question round is repeated with *short*. For some students the class likely agrees that the answer is ‘yes’, but they may disagree on some students, which may fit neither to the set of tall students nor to the set of short students. For now, these ‘borderline cases’ could be their own set.

In Phase 2, students reflect about the comparison class by discussing the question how the sets of tall and short students and the ‘borderline cases’ may change if additional entities (e.g., adults, babies) are included. This reflection illustrates that *tall* and *short* are relative rather than absolute properties.

In Phase 3, the different levels of comparison are introduced. The class is asked to compare students. The teacher can begin with a student from the set of short students and with one from the set of tall students. These can be labelled with the antonyms *short* and *tall*, respectively. However, if two students within the set of tall students are compared, using the antonyms may not be a proper description; hence, to be more precise the comparative form is used. The students can make two observations: first, both the comparatives *shorter* and *taller* can be used to compare students within the set of short and within the set of tall students, i.e., being taller or shorter does not entail being tall or short, respectively. And second, that these forms can be used to compare students across sets. This setup can also be used to introduce the superlative.

A similar approach is conceivable for closed scale antonyms such as *dirty* and *clean*. Objects or pictures of objects with different amounts of dirt (e.g., shirts with dirty spots) could be presented. Children may detect differences regarding the categorization of objects as being clean and dirty compared to being tall and short and the (ir)relevance of the comparison class. Moreover, they can detect differences regarding the comparative. Although it has the same form, it is more restricted: within the set of clean objects no comparison is possible because only maximally clean objects are included in this set. Additional restrictions can be observed by applying this procedure to other adjectives such as color terms. Imagine there are objects with different shades of yellow and blue objects with different shades of blue. If the yellow objects constitute one category and the blue objects another one, it becomes obvious that color terms do not have antonyms. Further, although comparative forms such as *yellower* are possible, this form can be applied only to objects in the set of yellow things, but not to the set of blue things or to make comparisons across sets.

In summary, we showed that notions from semantic theory can be adapted to the school context. This way, the morphological forms expressing the different levels of comparison receive a semantic motivation and help children to reflect about possible, impossible and controversial forms.

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