

From Communicative Competence to Cognitive Competence

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Topics of my talk

- Communicative & Cognitive Competence \Rightarrow
(Cognitive+Communicative Grammar)
- Influence of Council of Europe publications – CEFR
- Pedagogical applications of C+C view of language

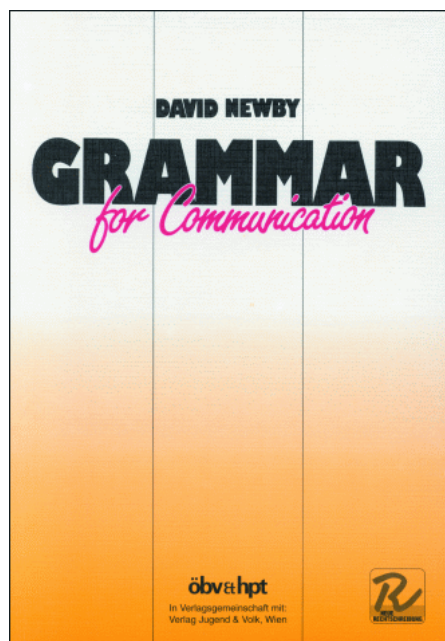
Do we need theory?

‘Theory is when we know everything but nothing works. Practice is when everything works but no one knows why. We have combined theory and practice: nothing works and no one knows why!’

- Maley (1991: 23)

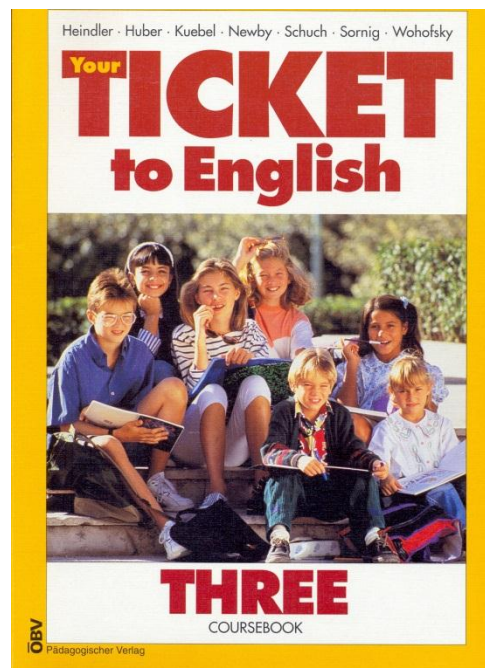
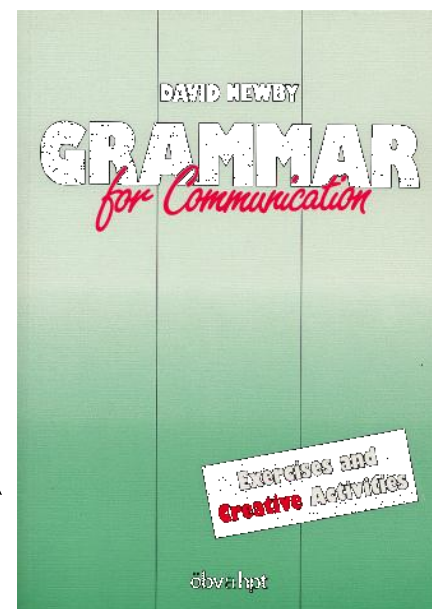
‘No pedagogical decision can be made in the absence of a learning theory.’

- Achard (2004: 176)



A Cognitive+Communicative Theory of Pedagogical Grammar

UNI
GRAZ



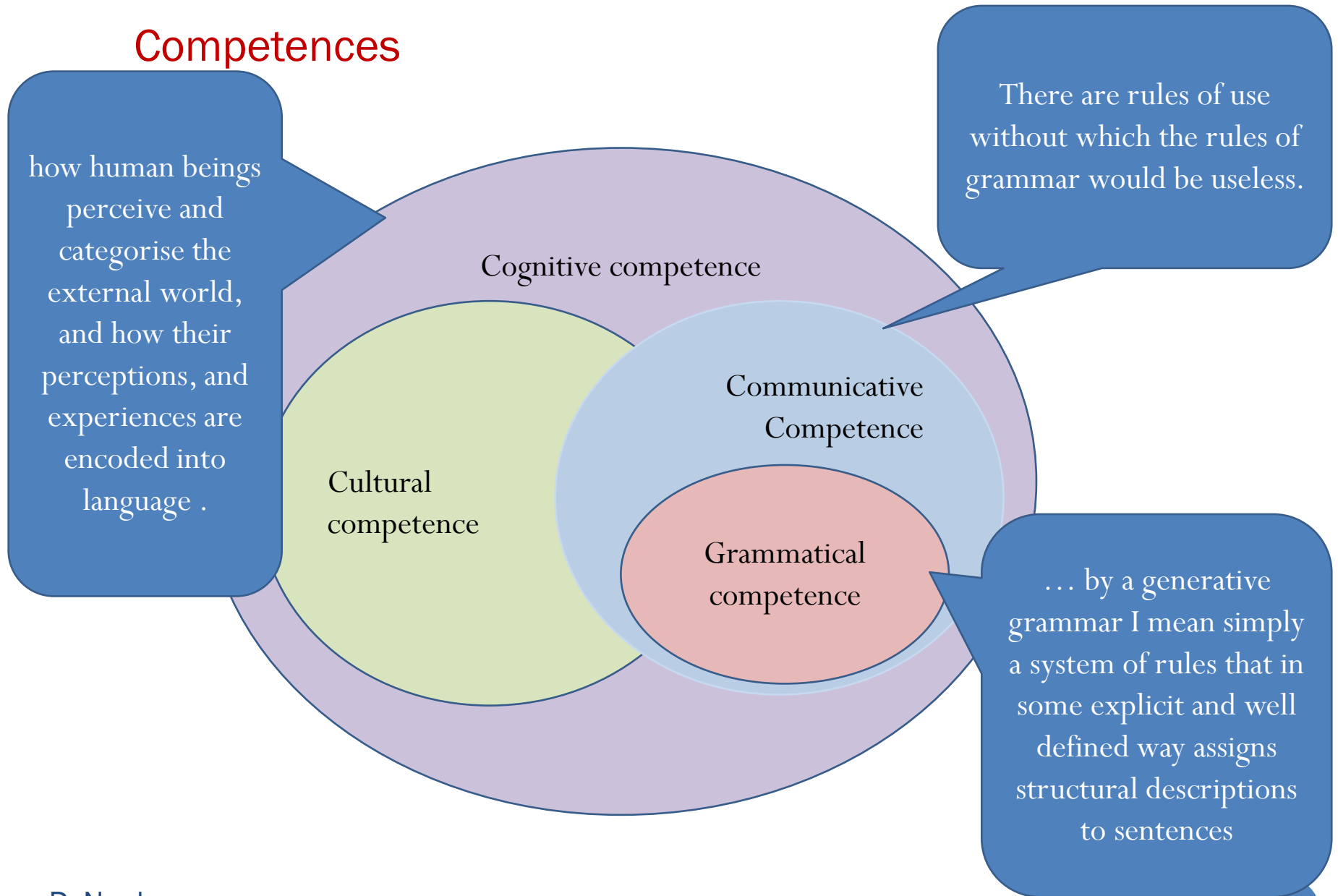
Competences



‘Competences are the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to **perform actions**’ (CEFR p.9)

Halliday (1978: 38) refers to a ‘**behaviour potential**’

Competences



Competences in the CEFR



All the categories used here [in the CEFR] are intended to characterise areas and types of competences internalised by a social agent, i.e. **internal representations, mechanisms and capacities**, the **cognitive existence** of which can be considered to account for observable behaviour and performance.

(CEFR p.14)

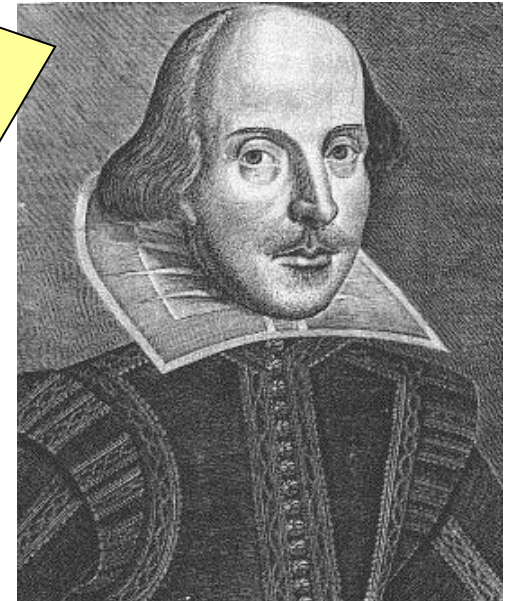
5 Grammar Problems

1. Anti-grammar prejudices and psychological baggage
2. Stranglehold of traditional approaches to grammar teaching
3. Lack of ‘communicative grammar’ approaches
4. AL: Dominance of ‘acquisitionist’ views
5. AL: ‘Form-focused’ label

Grammar problems

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'Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm in erecting a grammar school; ... It will be proved to thy face that thou has men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear.'



Grammar problems

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2. Stranglehold of **traditional** approaches to grammar teaching
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‘Seven bad reasons for teaching grammar and two good ones’.

Michael Swan (2002). In Richards and Renandya’s *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practices*

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Notional grammar – the *Threshold Level*

<i>Category</i>	<i>Example</i>
logical necessity	Casavecchia must be in Italy.
obligation	You must stay here until I return.
ability	All young Swedes can speak English.
permissibility	Parking is allowed from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m.

**I teach
communicatively,
but I teach
grammar too ...**



Communicative grammar

‘The integration of grammar in communicative models currently constitutes one of the hardest pedagogical challenges foreign-language teachers face’.

Achard (2004: 165)

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Acquisition-based grammar

- Mitchell & Myles (1998: 61) ‘a major impetus for second language acquisition research was then [i.e. in the 1970s] **the discovery that L1 and L2 were similar in many ways.**’
- Birdsong (2004: 83) ‘[i]n the most general terms, L2A theory tackles the question of the **resemblance of L2A to L1A**’.

Cognitive vs. Nativist/Mentalist views of learning

‘there is **no autonomous**, special-purpose “language acquisition device” that is responsible for language acquisition’.

Littlemore (2009: 1)

‘constructivists **deny any innate linguistic universals**’.

N. Ellis (2002: 36)

‘there is **no need for a specialised “language acquisition device”** that pre-encodes “innate” knowledge about the general rules that all languages obey.’

Goswami (2008: 386-387)

UG \Rightarrow Cognitive processes

‘Constructivists are unhappy with nativist explanations (...) because the uniqueness hypothesis has **no process explanation**.’

‘Without (...) a process explanation, innatist theories are left with a **“and here a miracle occurs”** step in the argumentation.’

N. Ellis (2001: 37)

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As Taylor (2008: 41) says, this is ‘a highly impoverished understanding of what constitutes grammar’.

An Event in the External World = External reality

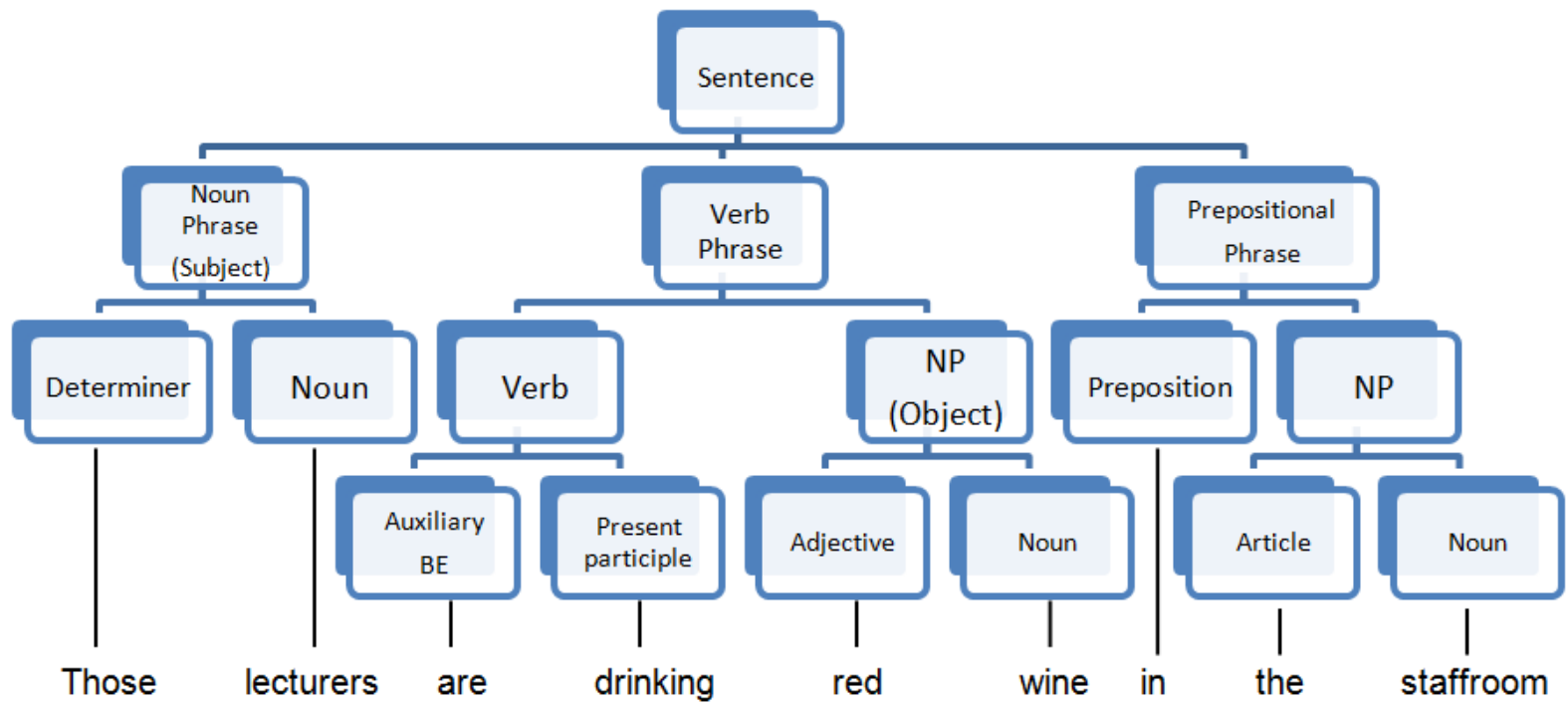


Utterance



Those lecturers are
drinking red wine in
the staffroom!





Communicative Event



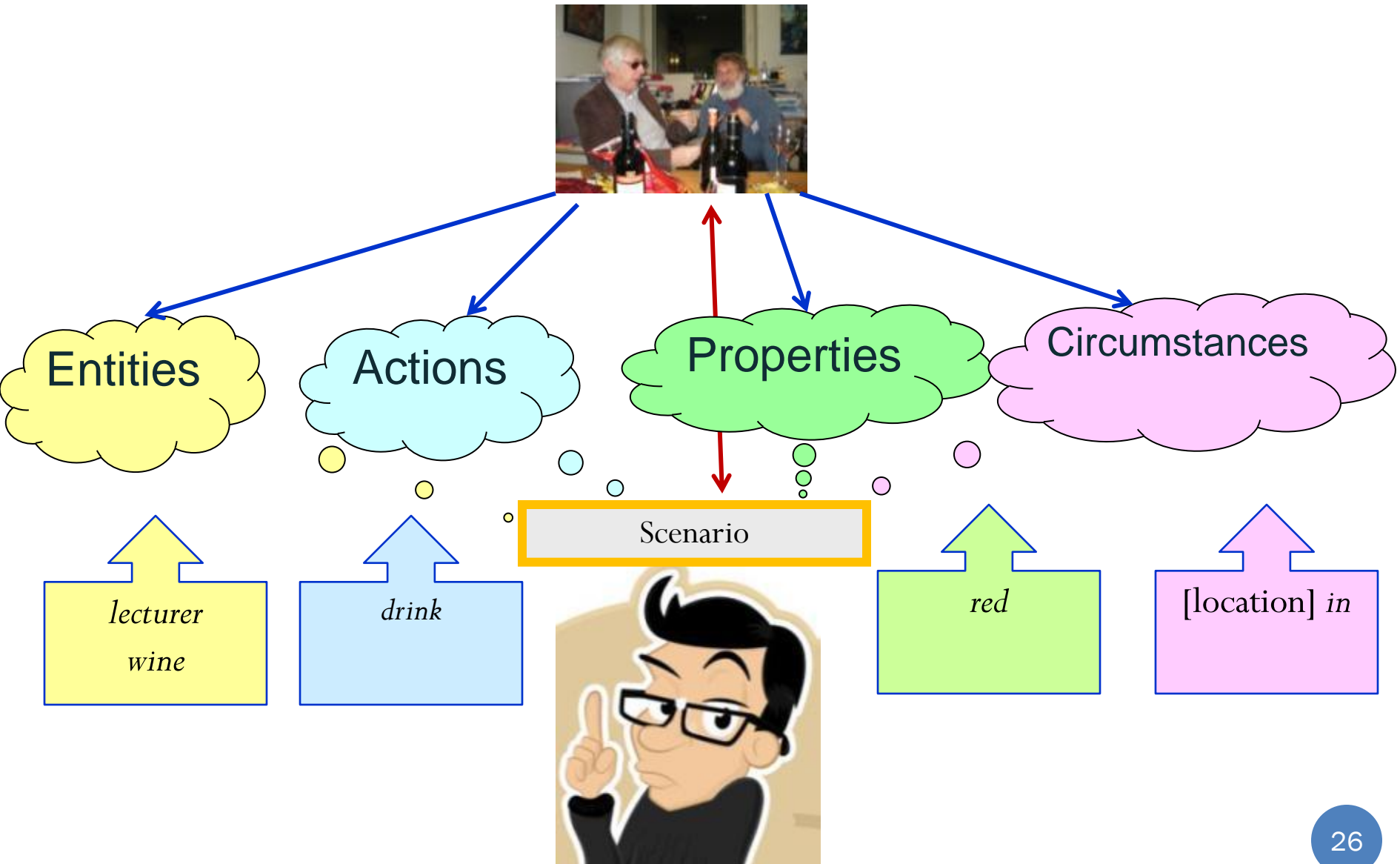
The speaker's
perceptions of an
event

Disapproval

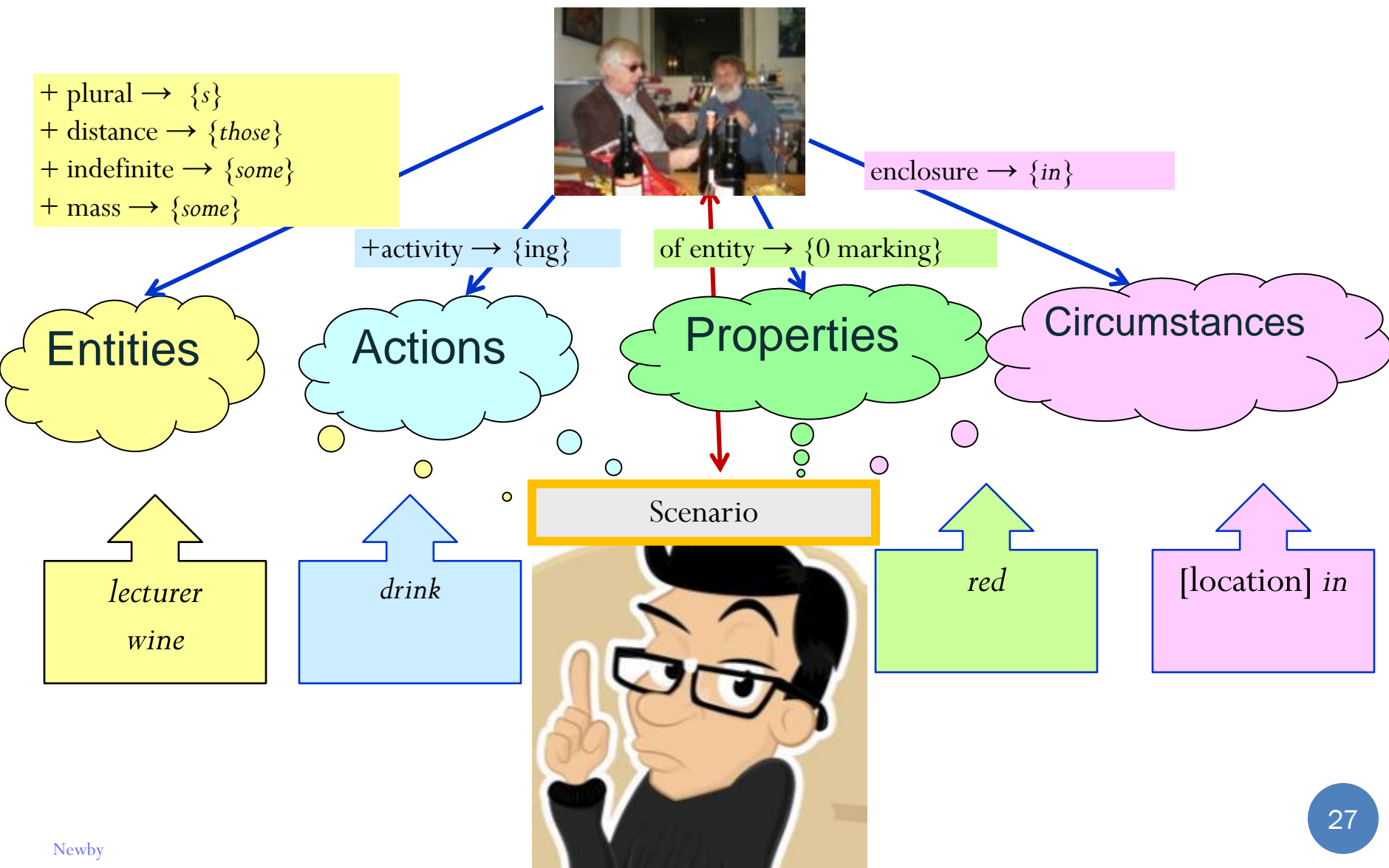
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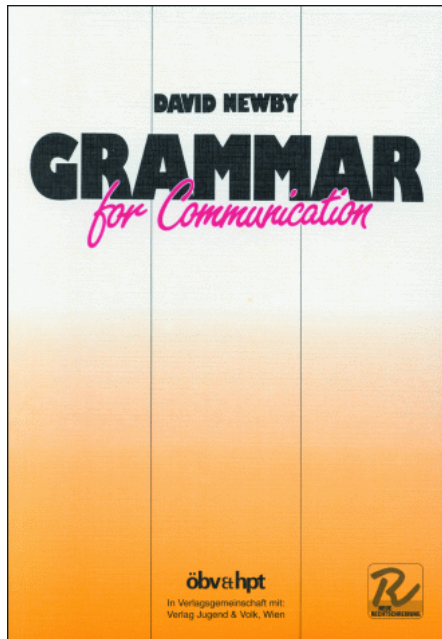


Constructing Internal Reality - scenario



Grammaticalisation – semantic perceptions





Die Grammatik ist ein wichtiger Bestandteil der Kommunikation zwischen den Menschen. Wenn wir beim Sprechen auf sie verzichten würden, wäre es unmöglich, einander zu verstehen. Das wird sofort klar, wenn man sich ein paar „grammatiklose“ Wörter ansieht. Zum Beispiel:

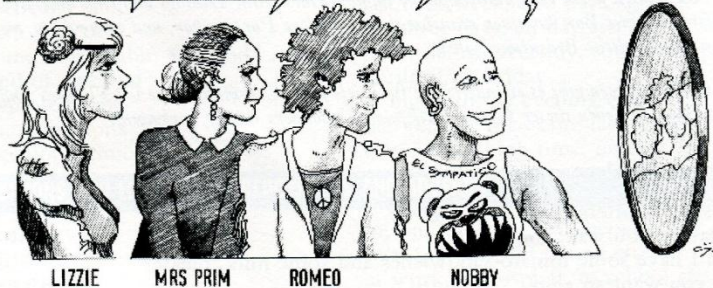
STRANGE – WEAR – CLOTHES – PERSON

Wir wissen zwar, dass es ungefähr um folgendes geht:

EINEN MENSCHEN	= PERSON
EINEN GEGENSTAND	= CLOTHES
EINE HANDLUNG	= WEAR
EINE EIGENSCHAFT	= STRANGE

Die Wörter allein ergeben aber keinen Sinn. Dazu brauchen wir mehr Informationen. Wie könnte man diese Wörter in einen sinnvollen Zusammenhang bringen?

That person is wearing very strange clothes !



Jetzt ist alles klar! Durch die Grammatik, die dazugekommen ist, verstehen wir genau, was gemeint ist. Welche Informationen die grammatikalischen Wörter und Silben geliefert haben, steht in der folgenden Tabelle.

Information	Grammatik
wer gemeint ist wann etwas stattfindet Art der Handlung eines oder mehr wie (seltsam)	that (person) is (wearing) (is wear)ing (clothe)s very (strange)



In diesem Buch werden meine Schüler/-innen und ich erklären, welche Informationen die englische Grammatik vermittelt. Wir wünschen euch beim Lernen viel Erfolg und gute Unterhaltung.

WOZU BRAUCHT MAN (ENGLISCHE) GRAMMATIK?



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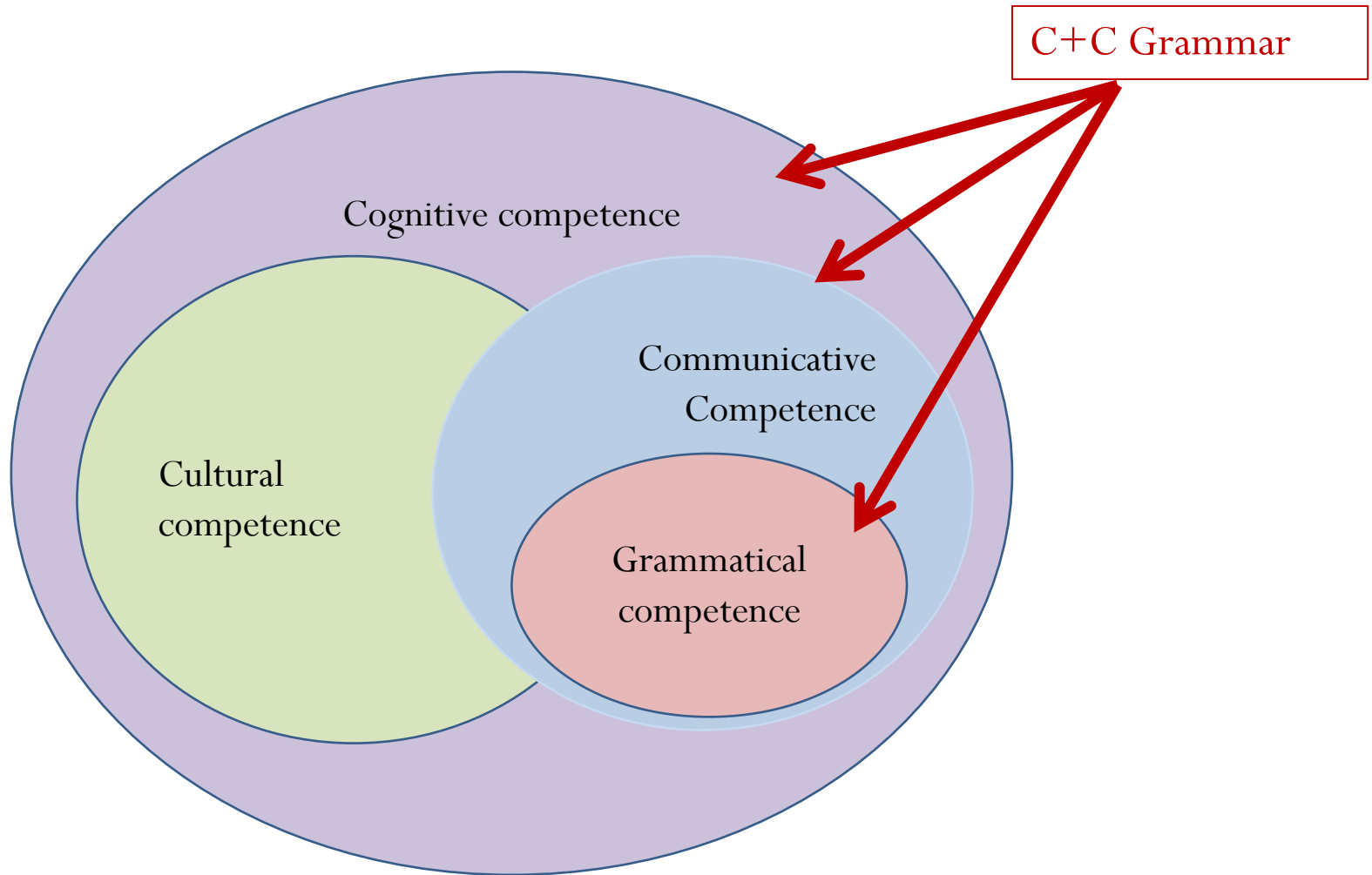


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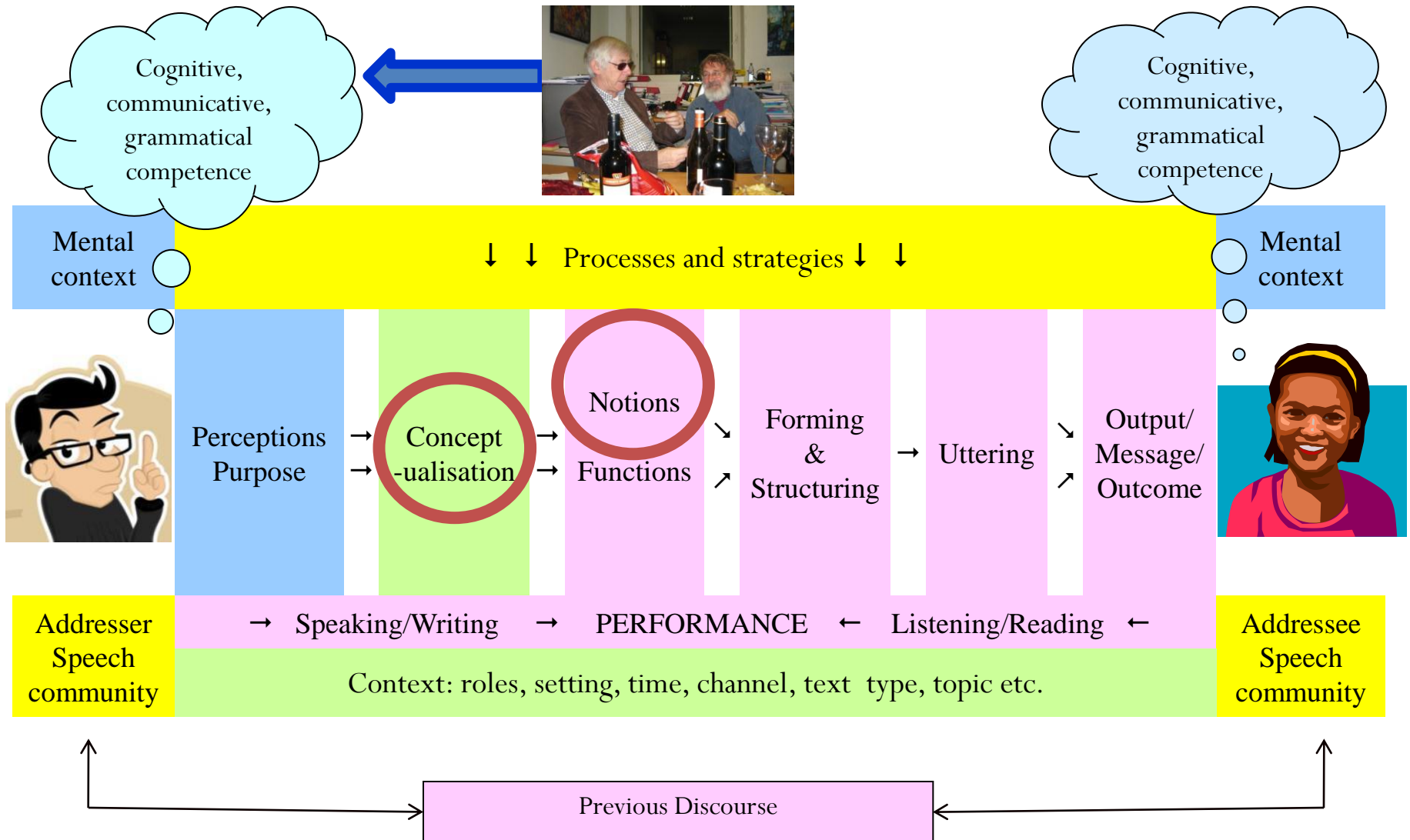
A white t-shirt is centered on a white background. The text 'Grammar is marked perceptions!' is printed in a red, serif font across the chest area of the shirt.

Grammar is
marked
perceptions!

Competences



Communication Model/speech event



Communicative/speech event

A **communicative/speech event** can be defined as a particular instance when people **exchange speech** or as a single **unit of communication**.

Langacker uses a similar term, ‘**usage-event**’, which he defines as ‘[a]n actual **instance of language use**, in all its complexity and specificity’.(2008: 220)

The term ‘communicative event’
occurs 11 times in the *CEFR*.



Cognitive+Communicative Grammar

speaker → context → purpose → lexical/grammatical notions → form

Cognitive+Communicative Grammar

↓ Communicative = modelling the flow of communication ↓

speaker → context → purpose → lexical/grammatical notions → form

Cognitive+Communicative Grammar

↓ Communicative = modelling the flow of communication ↓

speaker → context → purpose → lexical/grammatical notions → form

↑ Cognitive = processing of each stage by the human mind ↑

C+C – Common European Framework of Reference

The **action-based** approach therefore also takes into account the **cognitive**, **emotional** and **volitional** resources.

(CEFR, p.9)



Sources of theory for Cognitive+Communicative Grammar

Communicative

- Theories of ‘communicative competence’ – Hymes, Halliday, Canale & Swain etc.
- Communicative/notional-functional theories of language – applied linguists (Wilkins, Widdowson etc. etc.)
- Common European Framework of Reference

Cognitive

- Cognitive Linguistics – Langacker, Radden & Dirven, Tomasello etc.
- Cognitive learning theory – Achard, Skehan, N. Ellis, Littlemore, Robinson etc.
- (Cognitive neuroscience)

Cognitive linguistics

- language is not an **autonomous** cognitive faculty
- grammar is **conceptualization**
- knowledge of language emerges from language **use**

Croft and Cruse (2004: 1)

Communicative approach

Richards & Rodgers (2001: 161):

- Language is a system for the **expression of meaning**
- The **primary function** of language is for **interaction** and **communication**.
- The structure of language reflects its **functional and communicative uses**.

Cognitive linguistics

“I take it as self-evident that **meaning** is a **cognitive phenomenon** and must eventually be analyzed as such. Cognitive grammar therefore equates meaning with **conceptualization**.” (Langacker 1987: 5)

“An essential aspect of cognition is the ability to **categorize**: to judge that a particular thing is or is not an instance of a particular category. (...) without categorization, memory is virtually useless. Thus an account of the organism's **ability to categorize** transcends linguistic theory. It is central to all of cognitive psychology.” (Jackendoff 1983: 77)

Conceptualisation

Conceptualisation – meaning-related categories through which ideas and thoughts are filtered and converted into language . i.e. encoded or decoded

- a) **Grammatical notions**
- b) **Schematic knowledge** or **constructs**

‘Teach him to think for himself? Oh, my god, teach him rather to think like other people!’



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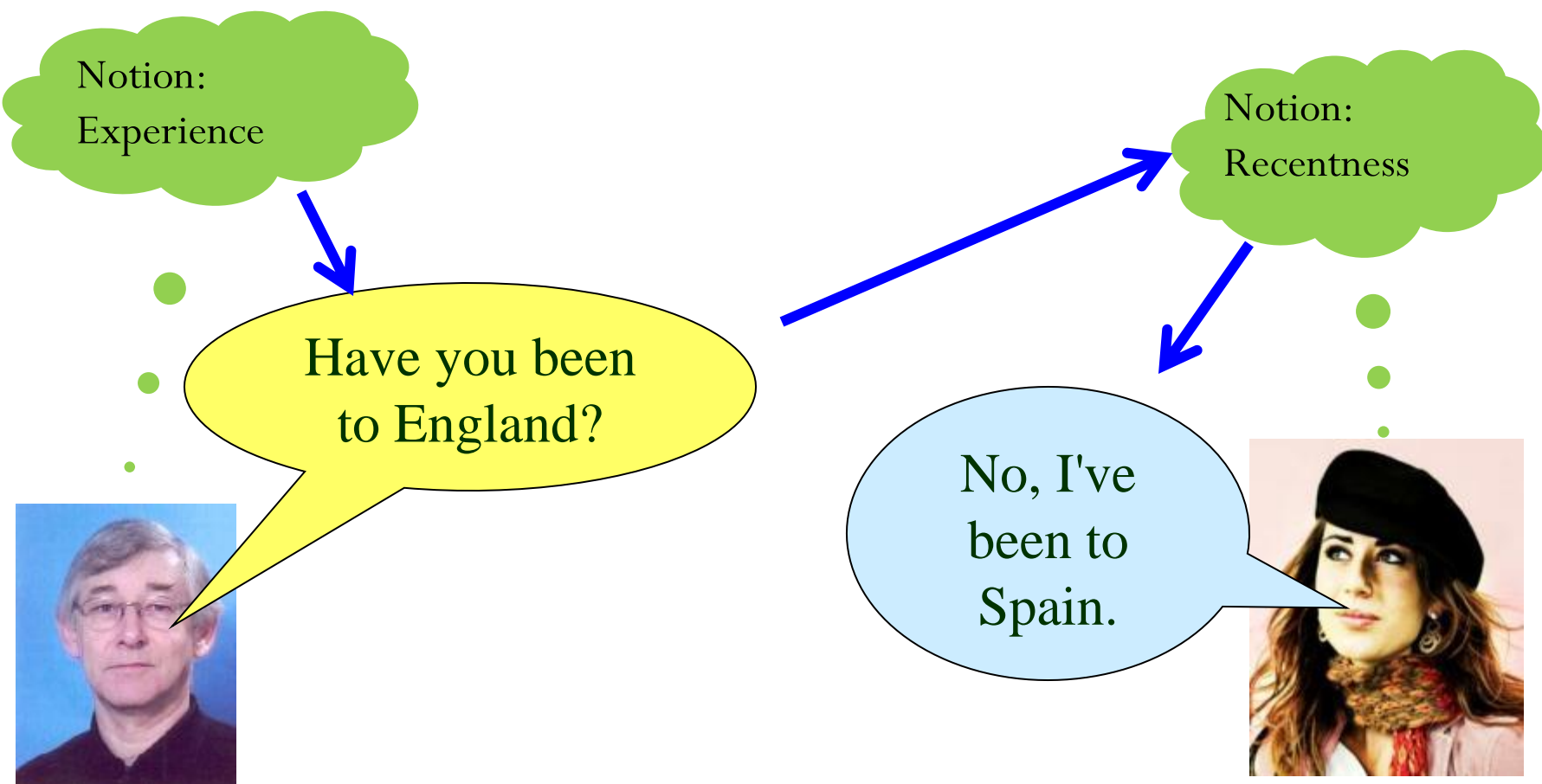
- a) **Grammatical notions** - a grammatical concept stored in a speaker's mind (grammaticicon) encoded into a grammatical form

⇒ **Grammatical Competence**

- a) Schematic knowledge or constructs – non-linguistic knowledge, experiences, associations etc. that language users apply when encoding and decoding or interpreting language

⇒ **Cognitive Competence**

Notional grammar



What are
you doing?

I'm eating
my lunch

?



Hypotheses of Notional Grammar

1. Notions represent the **primary semantico-grammatical unit** of encoding and decoding. Human beings express and comprehend notions.
2. Notions are **psycholinguistically real**. They represent concepts stored in the 'mental grammaticon' and utilised in the process of grammaticalisation.
3. A notion is an **autonomous semantic concept**. Different notions, even if encoded into the same form, express psychologically separate and distinct grammatical concepts.
4. There is a **systematic relationship** between notion and form. A notion is always encoded into the same form.

Traditional grammar rules: present perfect progressive

‘the present perfect progressive looks at the continuing situation itself; the present perfect simple says that something is completed’

I’ve been reading your book: I’m enjoying it.

I’ve read your book. (= I’ve finished it.)

How English Works (Swan and Walter, 1997: 160)

One of Swan’s ‘[d]esign criteria for pedagogic language rules’ is
‘rules must be true’.

(1994: 45)

The evidence – Charlotte 1

Charlotte: Papa, I've been writing a book.

Rev. Brontë: Have you, my dear?

Charlotte: 'Yes, and I want you to read it.

Rev. Brontë I am afraid it will try my eyes too much.

Charlotte: But it is not in manuscript: it is printed.

Elizabeth Gaskell in her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, (1975: 325)

(Discussed in Newby 2012, 'Cognitive+Communicative Grammar in Teacher Education')

The evidence – Charlotte 2

Scenario



I've been feeding the ducks

Recentness

Activity

present perfect progressive – activities and events

- Child: I've been feeding the ducks (activity)
- Farmer: I've fed the ducks (event)

78 PRESENT PERFECT PROGRESSIVE

B. RECENT ACTIVITIES/*Was man gerade getan hat*

A: You look very happy. What **have** you **been doing**?

B: I've **been watching** a Charlie Chaplin film on television.

A: You lucky thing! I've **been doing** my homework.



Ich will erzählen, was ich gerade oder in letzter Zeit getan habe. Die Tätigkeit steht im Vordergrund meiner Gedanken. Es kann eine einmalige oder wiederholte Handlung sein.

Common verbs (activities): play, rain, sing, watch

einmalig: You look very hot. **Have** you **been running**?

Look! It's **been snowing**!

wiederholt: I need a holiday. I've **been working** very hard recently.

Our car needs a service. It's **been using** a lot of petrol.

Thoughts and feelings: want, hope, think, expect

nur wiederholt: I'm glad you've come. I've **been wanting** to talk to you.

I must go to the doctor. I've **been having** a lot of headaches.

78 PRESENT PERFECT PROGRESSIVE



Zu den zwei Bedeutungen des Present Perfect Simple "Duration" und "Recent events" gibt es jeweils eine "____ing"-Form.

A. DURATION OF AN ACTIVITY/*Dauer einer Tätigkeit*

A: Just where have you been? I've **been standing** here for hours!

B: I've **been waiting** in front of the bank since two o'clock!

A: Why do you never listen to me? You stupid . . .

B: Be nice to me! I've **been looking** forward to seeing you all day!



Ich will sagen, wie lange ich etwas schon tue oder wie lange etwas schon geschieht.

Die Tätigkeit/Handlung kann eine einmalige oder eine wiederholte sein:

einmalig: I've **been playing** the piano for an hour. Can I stop?

wiederholt: She's **been playing** the piano since she was six.

No wonder she's so good!

Common verbs (activities): play, do, watch, live, sing, eat

Notions for Self-Assessment

- ✓ I can express an *intention* using 'going to'.
- ✓ I can make *predictions* about the future using 'will' etc.
- ✓ I can talk about my *experiences* using the *present perfect*.
- ✓ I can talk about *recent activities* using the *present perfect progressive*.

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Cognitive categories in the CEFR (examples)



The CEFR refers to

- the **mental context** (p.50) of the speaker
- **cognitive processes** - ‘chains of events, neurological and physiological, involved in the production and reception of speech and writing’ (p.10)
- **schemata** - scripts, frames

Conventionalised schemata categories

- Shared by a ‘cognitive community’
- 3 categories
 1. Perspective
 2. Situational frames
 3. Scripts

The rule – Charlotte's evidence

Scenario



Frame: Coming home, arriving back



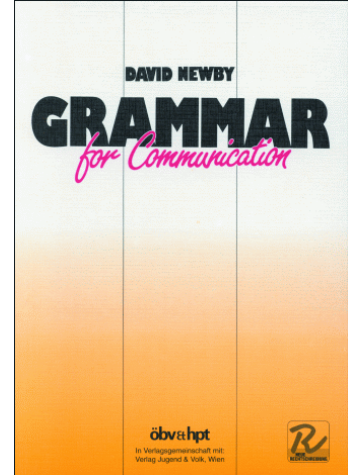
I've been feeding the ducks

Recentness

Activity

Situational frames

- **situational frame**: a commonly occurring situational framework which constrains and triggers linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour.
- A **grammatical frame** is a frequently occurring **scenario** in which **specific grammatical notions** tend to be encoded.



Frames: Grammar for Communication

“Communicative uses”:

Coming home.

A: Hi, Amy! Have you had a nice day?

B: Not bad. I've been shopping with dad. What about you?

A: I've been doing the gardening. It was really relaxing.

Announcing news on TV or radio.

‘The Queen has been visiting the British Museum.’

‘People from all over Britain have been enjoying the hot weather.’

(p89)

Schemata



- Framing “selecting mental set, activating schemata, setting up expectations” (CEFR, p72)
- ‘schemata can free the learner to deal with other aspects of performance, or assist in anticipating text content and organisation’ (CEFR p.160).

Grammatical scripts

A **script** can be defined as a remembered framework of conventional sequences of behaviour, thoughts or language

Scripts - examples

- **Changes and results (present perfect) → Past events (past tense)**
- A: You *have changed* your pullover.
- B: Yes, the other one *was* dirty.
- **Intention → Prediction → Decision exercise 152)**
- A: *I'm going to* go for a walk.
- B: But it's raining, you *will* get wet.
- A: Well, in that case, I *ll* stay at home.

CG-inspired grammatical instruction fills up a pedagogical gap for two reasons.

First, it allows the instructor to **teach grammar in the communicative way**.

Secondly, it provides a **theoretical frame** for the **design of pedagogical activities**.

Achard (2004: 171)

C+CG: Principles for teachers

1. The **meaningfulness** of grammar must be in the foreground
2. Specify grammatical **objectives** through **notions**
3. Make notions explicit by **systematic labelling**
4. Avoid invalid, and therefore **unhelpful rules**
5. Teach grammar in **context**
6. Teach grammar through **co-text** (e.g. lexical collocations)
7. Let pupils apply **schemata**
8. Focus on **use** of language

Traditional grammar practices: reported speech

Indirect speech is formed by making certain changes to direct speech:

present tense ➡ past tense

past tense ➡ past perfect

will ➡ would

I ➡ he/she

here ➡ there

tomorrow ➡ the day before

Traditional grammar practices: reported speech

DN – direct speech: *‘I won’t be here tomorrow’*

How would report this at the end of my lecture?

I told you at the beginning of my lecture that ...

1. ... *he wouldn’t be there the next day*
2. ... *I wouldn’t be here tomorrow but I will.*

Traditional grammar practices: reported speech

How would traditional grammar rules explain the following?

1. What are you doing here? I thought you were ill.
2. You didn't tell me that you had got married.
3. Martin Stegu told me that my lecture could last for three hours.

Traditional grammar practices: reported speech

DN: I won't be here tomorrow

How would I report this at the end of my lecture?

I told at the beginning of my lecture that ...

~~1. ... he wouldn't be there the next day~~

2. ... I wouldn't be here tomorrow but I will.

Reporting as a process

What really happens

- **egocentric grounding** – my present perspective context
- **working memory** ⇔ semantic impression
- **scenario** → salient and relevant information: refer to myself, location, time
- **displacement** → think back to past → *would*

‘indirect speech’ follows other grammar rules

1. When I saw John, he was going to school.
2. When I saw John, he said he was going to school.
3. When I saw John, I could see that he was going to school.
4. When I saw John, I knew that he was going to school.