

**Cognitive grammar meets  
task-based language  
teaching**

**Susanne Niemeier  
University Koblenz-Landau (Germany)**

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## Introduction

- dislike of grammar (learners and teachers)
- bad reputation of grammar
- boring grammar lessons
- decontextualized exercises
- grammar not seen as 'communicative'
- grammar presented as unconnected to meaning

## Introduction

### **Hypothesis:**

Embedding a meaningful approach to grammar (CG) in a communicative teaching approach (TBLT) can lead to a more positive attitude towards grammar - and ultimately to communicative grammar learning



## Task-based language teaching: Basic tenets

- developed from communicative language teaching
- learner-centred and not only communication-centred
- meaning-based
- focus on oral language, less on written language
- useful for real-world communication
- focus on topically structured communication, i.e., use of ‘tasks’
- no pre-determined outcome
- learners’ individuality, interests and creativity should be respected
- learners should be allowed to act in a self-determined way
  
- no agreement on the definition of ‘task’



## Task-based language teaching: Basic tenets

- tasks do not focus on didacticized communication, but are “activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose” (Willis 1996: 23)
  - Ellis (2003: 5 f.): “a task is a workplan that requires the learner to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome (...). A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance (...) to the way language is used in the real world.”
- linguistic correctness / ‘grammar’ **not** mentioned in most definitions
- the best known framework for TBLT: Willis‘ task cycle



## Task-based language teaching: The role of grammar

- researchers with a background in communicative language teaching (e.g., Nunan 1998) rather assume that grammar develops on its own during communicative activities
- others (e.g., Willis 1996) admit that there has to be some room for grammar but that communicative meaning needs to be the primary focus
- Ellis (2003) and Robinson (2011) allocate a somewhat more important place to grammar but do not see it as playing a key role either
- Ellis (2003) differentiates between the learners' incidental receptive attention and their productive explicit attention to a grammatical topic - his primary concern is with the first type



## Task-based language teaching: The role of grammar

- for gaining the learners' explicit attention to grammar, Ellis suggests to give them examples of correct and incorrect language and – as a task - have them discuss these examples
  - Eckerth (2008) recommends form-focused 'consciousness-raising tasks'
    - directed at explicit learning
    - the grammar topic builds the focus of the lesson
- all of these approaches separate the communicative topic from the grammatical topic
- however, just noticing a grammatical phenomenon is not enough - learners should actually **produce** the new structure in a grammatically, pragmatically and socioculturally adequate way



## Task-based language teaching: The role of grammar

- the communicative topic and the grammatical topic are equally important and should stand side-by-side and interact with each other throughout the complete task
  - this presupposes the choice of a suitable communicative topic and an adequate task design
  - the communicative topic should be a situation in which the chosen structure is used naturally by native speakers
- TBLT allows to promote grammar acquisition within a communicative setting (TBGT, see Niemeier 2017)

# Task-based language teaching: Task cycle

Willis' task-cycle (1996):

## 1. Pre-task

- introduction of the communicative topic
- useful vocabulary and phrases are reactivated
- learners should speak as much as possible
- task instructions are given



# Task-based language teaching: Task cycle

Modified TGBT task cycle (Niemeier 2017):

## 1. Pre-task

- introduction of the communicative topic
  - useful vocabulary and phrases are reactivated
  - learners should speak as much as possible
  - task instructions are given
- 
- the teacher uses the new grammatical structure as frequently as possible while introducing the communicative topic
  - the learners are not yet expected to use the new structure

# Task-based language teaching: Task cycle

Willis' task cycle (1996):

## **2. Task phase**

- 3 steps: the task itself, the planning of the task reports and the reports
- task: learner - learner interaction (pair work or group work), teacher does not interfere
- planning: learners work on the language they will use for their reports
- reports: learners report on their results in front of the whole class



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  - task: learner - learner interaction (pair work or group work), teacher does not interfere
  - planning: learners work on the language they will use for their reports
  - reports: learners report on their results in front of the whole class
- 
- learners use the new structure during their interaction and especially when formulating their reports
  - this can be facilitated by clear instructions and a worksheet with relevant example sentences



## Task-based language teaching: Task cycle

Willis' task cycle (1996):

### **3. Language focus**

- two phases: 'analysis' and 'practice'
- analysis: meant for practising new words, phrases and patterns "outside the context of a communicative activity" (Willis & Willis 2007: 114)
- practice: pronunciation exercises, work on problems that came up during the lesson etc.

# Task-based language teaching: Task cycle

Modified TGBT task cycle (Niemeier 2017):

## 3. Language focus

- two phases: 'analysis' and 'practice'
- analysis: meant for practising new words, phrases and patterns, "outside the context of a communicative activity" (Willis & Willis 2007: 114)
- practice: pronunciation exercises, work on problems that came up during the lesson etc.
  
- stays within the context of the communicative topic
- example sentences come from the learners' own reports on their task outcome
- learners try to find out the meaning and the form of the new structure on their own, guided by the teacher
- practice: transfer to another communicative topic or another lexical category

## Task-based language teaching: Task cycle

Summing up, in TGBT

- (1) the **pre-task** sets the stage for the communicative topic and makes the learners (subconsciously and passively) familiar with the new grammatical phenomenon
- (2) the **task** stays within the communicative topic but demands the learners' active use of the new grammatical structure
- (3) the **language focus** also stays within the communicative topic and acquaints the learners in a structured and inductive way with form and meaning of the new structure



## Cognitive grammar: Basic tenets

- belongs to the field of cognitive linguistics (CL), which came up in the late 1970s in the US
- at the beginning, the most prominent fields of research were conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff), force dynamics (Talmy), and cognitive grammar (CG) - especially Langacker's version
- CL “sees language as an instrument for organizing, processing and conveying information – as something primarily semantic, in other words” (Geeraerts 2006: 3)
- human language reflects people's experiences within a given culture – therefore, linguistic explanations are frequently inseparably intertwined with these experiences, be they physical or sociocultural
- CG aims at investigating “the ways in which people structure their experiences through language” (Niemeier 2013: 11)



## Cognitive grammar: Basic tenets

- CG focuses on a **semantic approach to grammar** - grammar is seen as meaningful, just in a more abstract way than lexis
- the notion of '**embodiment**' is important, in language as well as in thought → people conceptualize their surroundings according to their embodied knowledge
- CG believes in a **lexis-grammar continuum**, not in a strict separation of these two areas
- the same organizational principles apply for lexis as they do for grammar, e.g., metaphorization, the notion of boundedness vs. unboundedness, embodiment etc.
- an important notion in CG is **categorization**
- every category has a **prototype** as its best example
- categories and prototypes are frequently culture-related and exist in lexis as well as in grammar



## Cognitive grammar: Basic tenets

- CG claims that speakers always have the choice between different **construals**, i.e., different ways of grammatically structuring an utterance
- a different construal entails a different speaker perspective  
→ speakers' conceptualizations are inherently subjective
- example: active voice vs. passive voice - *Mary hit Peter* vs. *Peter was hit (by Mary)*
  - active voice: the agent is important
  - passive voice: the patient is important – the agent is of minor importance and can even be omitted  
→ this can be imagined as placing a spotlight on the most important participant in the situation described. The move from the active voice to the passive voice includes moving the spotlight – showing what is of importance for the speaker.



# Cognitive grammar: Pedagogical applications

- mostly qualitative research
- lack of empirical research under controlled conditions
- research on a number of topics:
  - articles (e.g., Król-Markefka 2010; Verspoor & Huong 2008)
  - case (e.g., Gradel 2016; Liamkina 2008)
  - conditionals (e.g., Jacobsen 2016)
  - manner-of-motion verbs (e.g., Holme 2009; Lindstromberg & Boers 2005)
  - modal auxiliaries (e.g., El Bouz 2016; Tyler, Mueller & Ho 2010)
  - passive voice (e.g., Bielak, Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak 2013)
  - phrasal verbs (e.g., Boers 2000; Kövecses & Szabó 1996; Kohl-Dietrich et al. 2016; Kurtyka 2001; Rudzka-Ostyn 2003; Yasuda 2010)
  - polysemous verbs (e.g., Csábi 2004; Beréndi, Csábi & Kövecses 2008)
  - prepositions (e.g., Almuoseb 2016; Lindstromberg 2010; Matula 2007; Tyler & Evans 2003, 2004; Tyler, Mueller & Ho 2011)
  - tense and aspect (e.g., Bielak & Pawlak 2011; Kermer 2016; Reif 2012; Tian 2015)



## Bringing cognitive grammar and TBLT together

- CG sees grammar as **meaningful** – what is meaningful can be explained
  - the **explanatory power** of CG allows instructors to offer understandable explanations to their learners
  - teachers are provided with explanations for learner questions which they previously had to answer with “this is an exception - learn it by heart”
- CG sees grammar as **contextually dependent** - focus on the learners' communicative needs, which ties in well with a focus on communication (such as in TBLT)
- in a traditional view of grammar teaching, learners have to follow rules – in a CG view, learners become co-creators of meaning
- CG does not believe in rigid rules – instead: focus on **prototypical vs. non-prototypical instances** of a grammatical structure
- non-prototypical instances are not arbitrary but motivated - they are explainable via the prototype



## Bringing cognitive grammar and TBLT together

- in contrast to traditional grammar explanations, most CG grammar explanations can be **visualized** easily and can thus address different learner types
- cf. Paivio's **double coding** hypothesis (cf. Clark & Paivio 1991) → learners remember better when the content is presented in two (or more) different ways, e.g., verbally and visually
- both CG and TBLT are **usage-based** → they prioritize a contextualised, quasi-authentic usage of language
- the conceptual tools and explanations rooted in CG can help learners to discover how the foreign language works

# Bringing cognitive grammar and TBLT together

Summing up:

- both TBLT and CG focus primarily on meaning and meaningful language use
  - a task is all about its solution / results → in TBGT, the use of the targeted grammar phenomenon is mandatory in order to reach a solution / result (contributing to the overall meaning)
- **teaching grammar becomes teaching (schematic) meaning**

CHALLENGE: current teachers' and learners' dormant theories about grammar and grammar teaching

→ **'grammar' needs to be re-thought**

# Case study 1: Aspect

Structure: progressive vs. non-progressive aspect

Steps when planning a TBGT lesson:

1. analyse the grammatical phenomenon thoroughly (meaning and form)
2. reduce the grammatical topic didactically with the target audience in mind
3. find a communicative situation in which the grammar topic is regularly used by native speakers of the target language
4. plan a task (pair work or group work)
5. organise a structured way of presenting the grammar phenomenon during the language focus (using sentences from the learners' reports)
6. (plan a transfer of the new structure to another word field or to another topic)



# Case study 1: Aspect

## Step 1: Analyse the grammatical phenomenon

- aspect mistakes: most frequent mistakes for German learners of English
  - aspect is optional in German and is indicated in various lexical ways
- EFL textbooks do not use the term *aspect* but subsume it under *tense* (e.g., ‘present progressive tense’, ‘past progressive tense’, etc.) – which is wrong from a CG point of view
  - tense takes an external view of the temporal structure of a situation, whereas aspect relates to the internal temporal structure of a situation
- aspect allows speakers to present situations from different viewpoints
- it characterizes a situation as either bounded (complete with its beginning and its end) or unbounded (in progress)
- only the progressive aspect is marked on the verb (-*ing*), the non-progressive aspect is not grammatically marked (default choice)
- the meaning of the progressive aspect is to change the prototypical inherent boundaries of situations

# Case study 1: Aspect

## Step 1: Analyse the grammatical phenomenon

CG differentiates between lexical and grammatical aspect

### Lexical aspect:

- meaning-based: inherently unbounded verbs vs. inherently bounded verbs
- inherently unbounded situations / states, e.g., *live, know, resemble* etc.
  - internally homogeneous
  - not susceptible to change
  - not expected to come to an end
- inherently bounded situations / processes, e.g., *write, build, walk* etc.
  - internally heterogeneous, i.e., consist of many stages
  - susceptible to change → allow an internal development
  - expected to come to an end at some point in the not too distant future



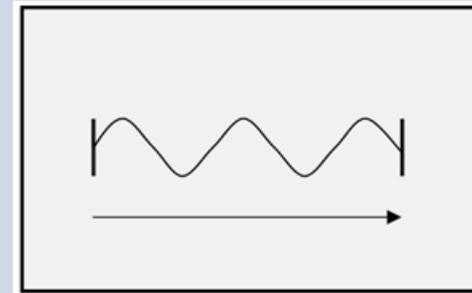
# Case study 1: Aspect

## Step 1: Analyse the grammatical phenomenon

### Grammatical aspect (form: *-ing*)

- interacts with lexical aspect by offering the speaker a way to construe an idealised situation in different ways
- has a different effect on bounded and on unbounded situations → the so-called “cross-wise aspectual contrast” (Radden & Dirven 2007: 177 ff.)
- with prototypically bounded situations (such as *He built a snowman*)
  - takes away the conceptual boundaries (→ *He was building a snowman*)
  - the beginning is defocused and the end point has not yet been reached
  - the speaker zooms into the situation and just focuses on its middle part
- with prototypically unbounded situations (such as *He is an idiot*)
  - imposes implicit conceptual boundaries (→ *He is being an idiot*)
  - the situation is no longer seen as a lasting state but rather as a temporary state
  - an upcoming change is implied

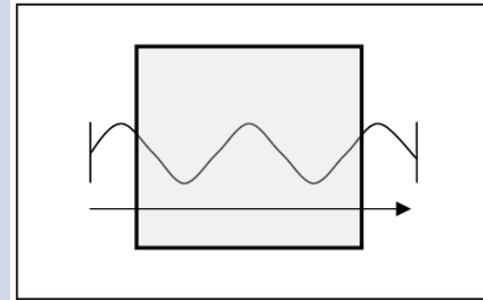
## Process with non-progressive aspect



*I made a snowman.* (BNC: KPA 3270)

⇒ maximal viewing frame: the process is viewed in its entirety, as a bounded whole (boundedness)

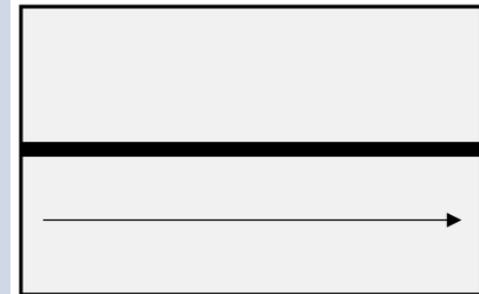
## Process with progressive aspect



*“I need your help”, he said slowly, putting the finishing touches to the snowman he **was building** for his sister. (BNC: EVG 660)*

⇒ restricted viewing frame: we “zoom in” on the process and defocus its boundaries, i.e., view it as ongoing (unboundedness)

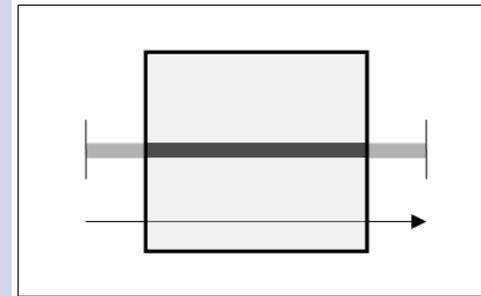
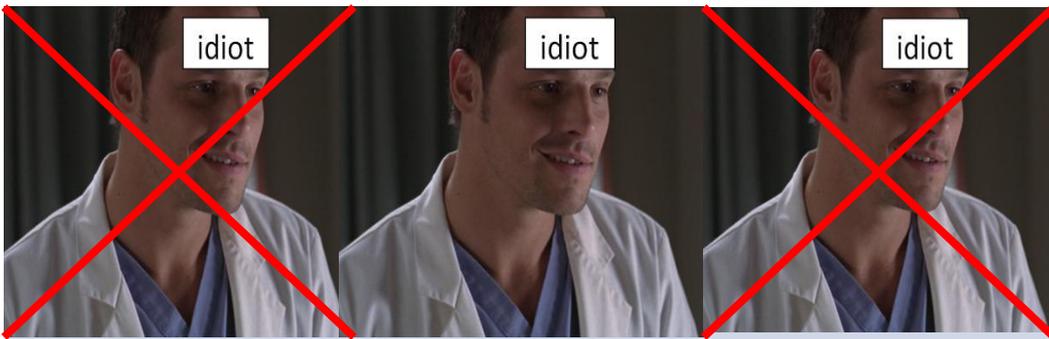
## State with non-progressive aspect



*Congratulations! You are not an idiot!* (Grey's Anatomy, Series 2)

⇒ maximal viewing frame: the state is seen as permanent  
(unboundedness)

## State with progressive aspect



*Except when you're **being** an idiot. (Grey's Anatomy, Series 2)*

⇒ restricted viewing frame: the state is construed as a temporary situation (boundedness)



# Case study 1: Aspect

## Step 2: Reduce the grammatical topic didactically

- an introduction of the progressive should exclusively focus on its prototypical use for bounded situations
- learning target: a basic distinction between the use of the progressive vs. the use of the non-progressive for bounded situations
- non-progressive bounded situations in the present tense cannot refer to events in the present time, as the situation and the utterance would need to coincide temporally (e.g., *I read a book* does not refer to a present act of reading, but to a habit, such as *Whenever I find some time, I read a book*)
- therefore, when the topic is introduced with the present tense, **habitual situations are contrasted with ongoing situations**
- for the past, this problem is inexistent – bounded situations in the past can be contrasted with ongoing situations in the past



# Case study 1: Aspect

## Step 2: Reduce the grammatical topic didactically

- the metaphor “zooming in” is easy to visualize, either by a lens (cf. Niemeier & Reif 2008) or by a keyhole (cf. Niemeier 2008) or by using a video
- the notion of ‘boundaries’ is also easy to visualize
- it is important to stress from the very beginning that aspect is not a “tense” but refers to the **internal development of a situation** (and not to time, which is external to a situation)
- aspect can be used with the past or with the past perfect etc. in exactly the same way as it is used for the present, so it only needs to be understood once
- the learners are to understand that the use of the progressive always signals a zooming-in into a current action while defocusing its boundaries



# Case study 1: Aspect

## Step 3: Find a communicative situation

- ideal candidates: motion verbs
  - motion can be habitual and motion can be ongoing (cf. *Peter (always) walks to work* vs. *(Just now,) Peter is walking to the bus stop*)
- communicative topic: the learners' regular schedules vs. their current activities
- neither the term *ongoing* nor the term *continuous* should be used, as the notion of ongoingness is cancelled for the progressive with inherently unbounded situations (to be introduced in a follow-up lesson)
- instead, the terms *boundaries* vs. *no boundaries* are recommended
- the contrast between an unbounded current situation (progressive) and a habit/hobby (non-progressive) should become obvious



# Case study 1: Aspect

## Step 4: Plan a task

- the **pre-task** introduces the communicative topic: hobbies and leisure time activities
- the teacher limps into the classroom, tells the learners something like “*I ride my horse four times a week and yesterday I fell off the horse*”, then shows the learners a picture/slide by saying “*Look here, I am riding my horse*” and asks the learners who of them rides as well. The learners are then asked whether they ride regularly, on which days they ride etc., which is then extended to other sports and hobbies. If possible, the teacher should have brought pictures/slides showing somebody who performs these other leisure time activities and comment on the pictures by saying “*Look, this person here is playing/doing XXX*”.
- the **task** is done in group work. Each group receives a sheet with pictures displaying common sports and hobbies. Above the pictures, there is an example sentence, e.g., “*The girl **is listening** to music*” next to a picture of a girl with headphones. Under every picture, there is an empty line which the learners have to fill in for seven of the pictures.



# Case study 1: Aspect

## Step 4: Plan a task

- on a second worksheet, a timetable with seven columns (labelled with the days of the week) is displayed
- after the learners have identified the hobbies in the pictures, they fill in the weekday columns with their own favourite leisure time activities, the pictures serving as suggestions
- everybody fills in two pastimes together with their names and a time, e.g., “*Tuesday 2 o’clock: Peter walks the dog*” or “*Saturday 12 o’clock: Andrea plays tennis*”
- for the **report**, every learner prepares a pantomime of one of their leisure activities within his/her group for the other groups to guess. A pantomime involves double coding → the words and the grammatical construction used are coded together with the movements performed.
- each group performs their pantomimes, introduced by the teacher’s question “*What is X doing?*” and the learners’ guesses will also contain the progressive



# Case study 1: Aspect

Step 5: Organise a structured way of presenting the grammar phenomenon

- for the **language focus**, two charts with the headers “right now” and “regularly” have been prepared on the board
- three sentences from the pantomime solutions are entered under “right now”
- the learners are asked who performs these actions on a regular basis. They can consult their schedules on the second worksheet and enter the appropriate sentences under “regularly”.
- the learners are asked to spot the differences in form between the sentences in the two columns (e.g., the *-ing* ending for the progressive). The different headers should point the learners towards the meaning difference as well.
- the teacher should guide the learners towards discovering that the non-progressive signals complete actions (beginning and end included), whereas the progressive zooms into the middle phase of an action

# Case study 2: Verb complementation

Structure: verb complementation

Steps when planning a TBGT lesson:

1. analyse the grammatical phenomenon thoroughly (meaning and form)
2. reduce the grammatical topic didactically with the target audience in mind
3. find a communicative situation in which the grammar topic is regularly used by native speakers of the target language
4. plan a task (pair work or group work)
5. organise a structured way of presenting the grammar phenomenon during the language focus (using sentences from the learners' reports)
6. (plan a transfer of the new structure to another word field or to another topic)



# Case study 2: Verb complementation

## Step 1: Analyse the grammatical phenomenon

- refers to the construction of complex sentences involving more than one situation
- when complementizers are used to connect two situations, then the conceptual and grammatical links between them are quite strong because a complement clause is fully integrated into a main clause
- complementation is the tightest conceptual link between two clauses (cf. Radden & Dirven 2007: 55)
- not fully explained in any EFL textbook in Germany, as the different complementizers are never related to each other
  - the system of meaning underlying complementation constructions is largely unknown to learners (and teachers alike)



# Case study 2: Verb complementation

## Step 1: Analyse the grammatical phenomenon

English has eight complementizers, the four most frequent ones being

- **bare infinitive**, e.g., *I saw him open the door*
  - **to-infinitive**, e.g., *I told him to open the door*
  - **gerund**, e.g., *I have never been good at opening doors smoothly*
  - **that-clause**, e.g., *I know that he opened the door*
- grammatical constructions reflect the meaning of an utterance, in this case the meaning of iconicity
  - the distance between the two verbs involved in a complex sentence mirrors the degree of influence that the first verb has on the second verb



# Case study 2: Verb complementation

## Step 1: Analyse the grammatical phenomenon

**Bare infinitive**, e.g., *I saw him open the door*

- ‘zero-complementizer’, does not add any lexical material
- two simultaneous situations
- very high degree of conceptual integration
- the complement clause is not grounded in its own right, i.e., has no tense of its own

**To-infinitive**, e.g., *I told him to open the door*

- two consecutive situations
- the speaker’s influence / control is weaker than for the bare infinitive
- weaker degree of conceptual integration
- the insertion of ‘to’ creates some conceptual distance, cf. the meaning of goal-directedness of the preposition *to*
- the complement clause is not grounded in its own right, i.e., has no tense of its own



# Case study 2: Verb complementation

## Step 1: Analyse the grammatical phenomenon

**Gerund**, e.g., *I have never been good at opening doors smoothly*

- refers to a generalized, atemporal situation
- has an iterative construal as well as a factive one
- the conceptual integration is weaker than for the two previous types → two temporally undefined situations interact with each other
- the use of the *-ing* morpheme indicates unboundedness

**That-clause**, e.g., *I know that he opened the door*

- the complement clause states a fact and the main clause states that this fact is mentally processed by the speaker → mental representation
- weakest form of conceptual integration – the two situations exist independently of each other and the complement clause is finite
- more linguistic material is used (*that* and tense) – showing conceptual distancing



# Case study 2: Verb complementation

## Step 2: Reduce the grammatical topic didactically

- it is not reasonable to introduce the four complementizers separately, as their meanings only become evident when they are contrasted with each other
- therefore, a sequence of five lessons is useful, one for each complementizer and the final one devoted to contrasting their meanings
- learning target: a first introduction to the conceptual and grammatical differences between the four complementizers → enables the learners to formulate complex utterances
- only prototypical examples are used
- visualizations are included as mnemotechnical help



# Case study 2: Verb complementation

## Step 3: Find a communicative situation

- as there is no communicative situation in which the grammatical construction has to be used by necessity, the framework of creative writing is used
- in the four initial lessons, stories are discussed and visualized by the learners
- in the final lesson, the learners produce their own stories



# Case study 2: Verb complementation

## Step 4: Plan a task

- in the four initial lessons, stories are discussed with the learners during the **pre-task** phases
- **task:** the learners are asked to visualize some of the events from the story in group work – the description of these events has to contain the complementizer that is in focus, such as
  - *I saw him open the door. / Mary heard the ambulance arrive.*
  - *I told him to leave. / Mary begged Peter to hurry up.*
  - *I've never been good at closing doors smoothly. / Mary enjoys ordering Peter around.*
  - *I know that he closed the door. / Mary is telling everybody that Peter betrayed her.*
- negotiating their visualizations lets the learners process the underlying meaning of each complementizer more deeply
- in their **reports**, the learners present and explain their visualizations
- whereas visualization is easy for the bare infinitive, it gets more difficult with the other complementizers, so that the teacher should have prepared visualizations as well in case the learners did not manage to adequately illustrate the complementizers

# Case study 2: Verb complementation

## Step 4: Plan a task

- the terms used to describe the complementizers:
  - simultaneous situations (bare infinitive)
  - follow-up situations (*to*-infinitive)
  - generalised situations (gerund)
  - mental contact situations (*that*-clause)
- the first illustration consists of one picture, the second one of two pictures, the third one of three pictures and the fourth one of four pictures
- an integration continuum can be developed throughout the four initial lessons:



- the increasing number of pictures shows the integration continuum in an iconic way → the two situations are inseparably related for the bare infinitive, somewhat less related for the *to*-infinitive, even less for the gerund and least related for the *that*-clause

# Visualization for the bare infinitive

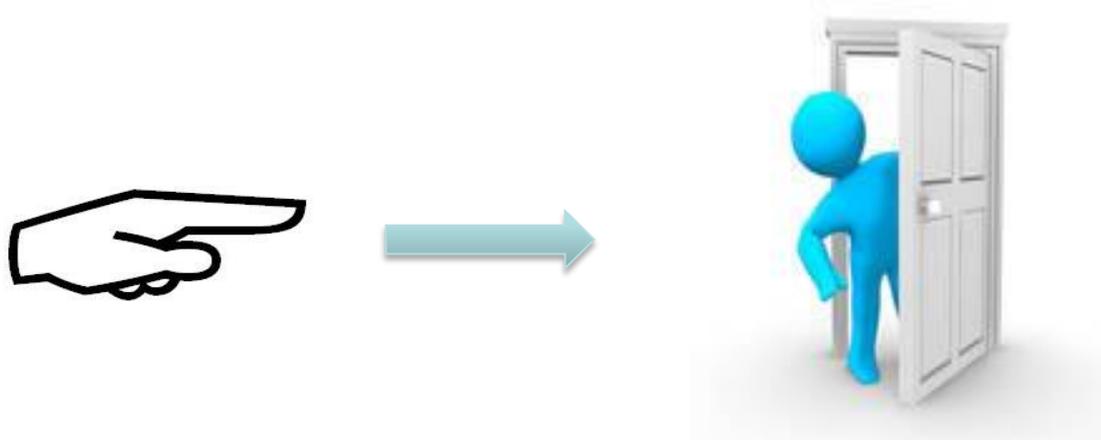
One single picture, as only one single highly integrated simultaneous situation is referred to:



*I saw him open the door.*

## Visualization for the *to*-infinitive

Two pictures, as two consecutive situations are referred to



*I told him to open the door.*

## Visualization for the gerund

Three pictures are used, symbolizing the generalised atemporal condition and signifying multiple iterations (past – present – presumably future)

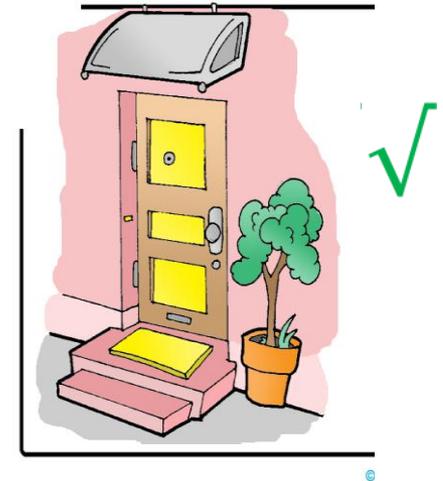
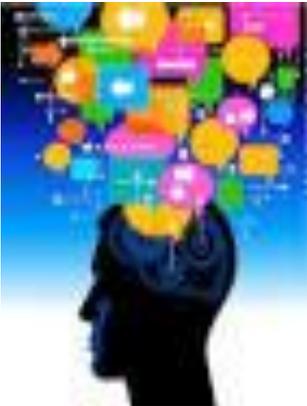


*I've never been good at opening the door smoothly.*

## Visualization for the *that*-clause

Four pictures are used to account for the weakest amount of integration

- picture 1: the experiencer's knowledge
- picture 2: a fact
- picture 3: a thought bubble filled with the concept of this fact (mental contact between conceptualizer and fact)
- picture 4: the final conclusion (the door is closed)



*I know that he closed the door.*



# Case study 2: Verb complementation

## Step 4: Plan a task

- in the final lesson, the contrast between the four complementizers is in focus and – with the help of the visualizations - they are compared to each other
- the teacher tells the learners the dramatized beginning of a ‘criminal’ story while using the four complementizers very frequently, then the learners get together in groups and each group receives an envelope with 20 snippets with basic events (e.g., *avoid*, *enjoy*, *help*, *love*, *order*, *think*, etc.) which all have to be used at least once in the story ending they have to write
- the learners have to use each type of verb complementation at least three times
- for the report, the learners take turns in reading out their stories
- if a complementizer is used incorrectly, the teacher can point to the illustration in question and ask the learner when exactly the events in question happened, how they are temporally related or which type of situation is described



## Case study 2: Verb complementation

Step 5: Organise a structured way of presenting the grammar phenomenon

- for the language focus, the board shows four rectangles, each of which has one complementizer as its header
- the learners fill each rectangle with two sentences from their reports
- the learners describe the relation between the two clauses for each type, ideally using the keywords 'simultaneous situation', 'follow-up situation', 'generalized situation' and 'mental contact situation', which are then added to the rectangles
- the iconicity effects of the different conceptualizers, i.e., the conceptual and the grammatical distances involved, are pointed out



# Conclusion

- ✓ grammar can be explained and taught quite differently than has been done traditionally
- ✓ the task-based approach lends itself well to an integration of grammar without losing sight of its original communicative focus
- ✓ cognitive grammar with its explanatory potential allows learners to understand how the foreign language works and why it works this way instead of making them memorise rules (and exceptions)
- ✓ grammar is not taught (and learned) for grammar's sake but contributes to the meanings of the learners' utterances
- ✓ grammar is never an end in itself, it always has the ultimate aim of facilitating communication
- ✓ grammar teaching can indeed be motivating and interesting, in contrast to what many learners (and teachers) have experienced so far

**TRY IT OUT!**

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**Thank you very much for your  
attention!**

**[niemeier@uni-koblenz.de](mailto:niemeier@uni-koblenz.de)**