

Why understanding conceptual knowledge matters for teaching foreign languages

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NeuroELT Maxims

“Cognition is context dependent”

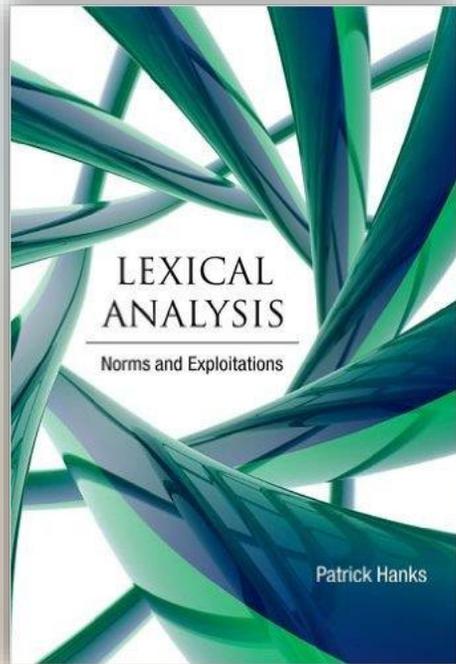
“The labeling of concepts is a double-edged sword”

Discussion

How do you teach word meanings to your students?

What problems do you encounter?

Theory of Norms and Exploitations



Words have meaning
potential

Word meanings are events,
not entities

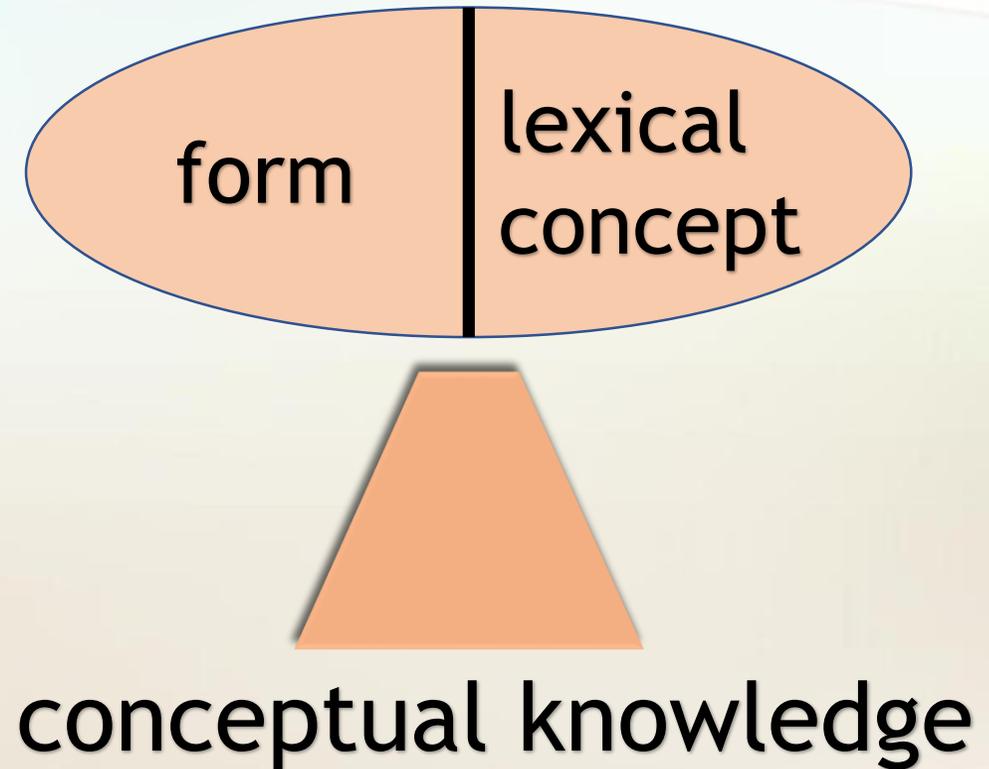
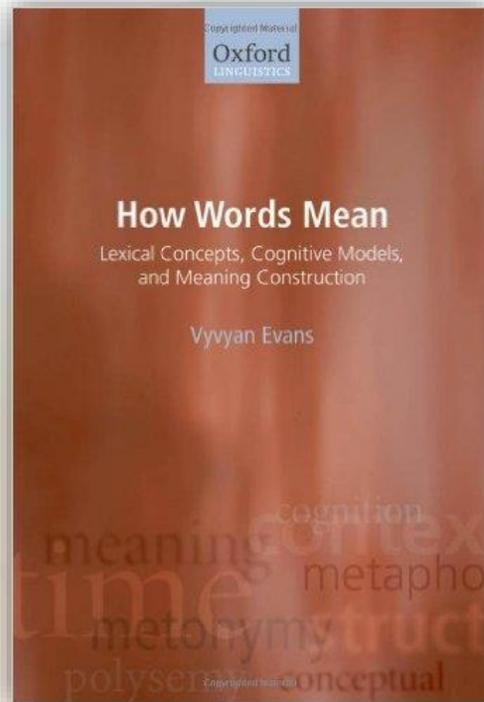


Discussion

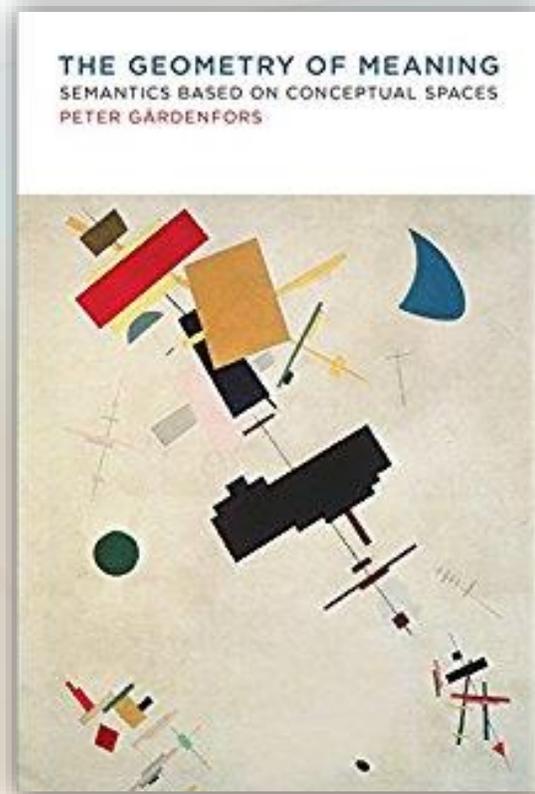
Do you use any methods to give your students richer knowledge of words?

What and why? **or** Why not?

How the mental lexicon is related to conceptual knowledge



Conceptual Spaces

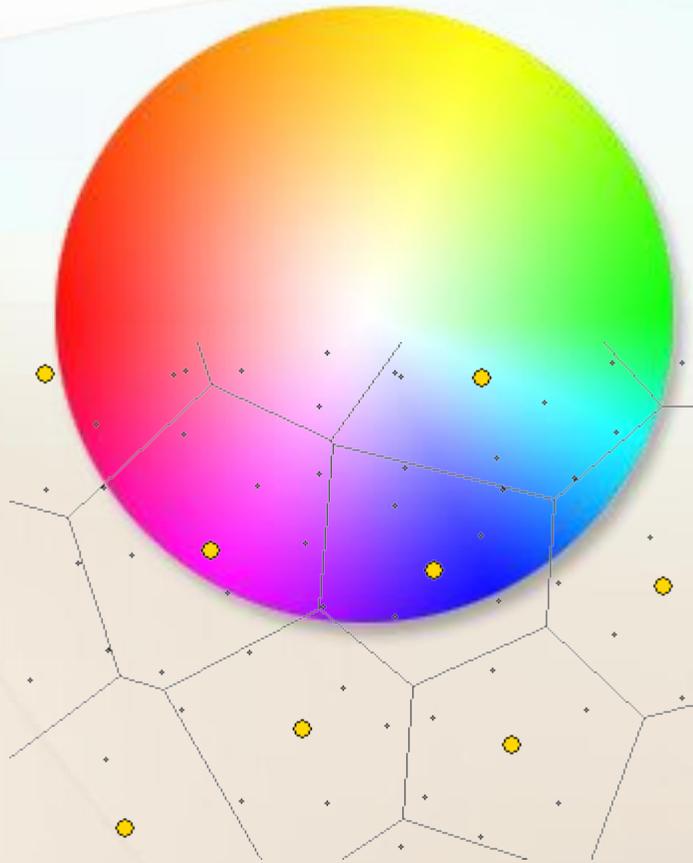


Concepts can be represented as regions

Instances are points within a region

Object and event regions span multiple domains

Conceptual Spaces



Concepts can be represented as regions

Instances are points within a region

Objects and event regions span multiple domains





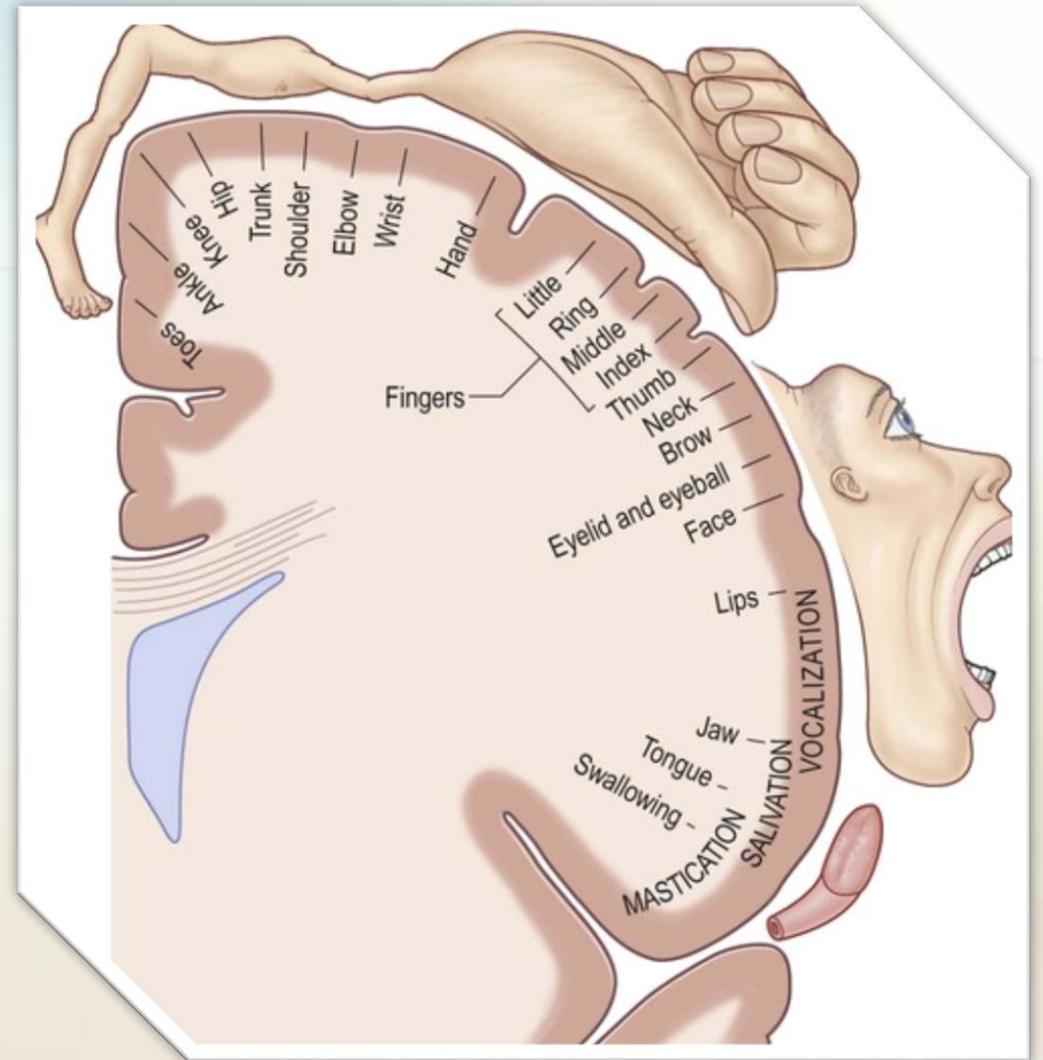


Embodied cognition



Higher level cognition is grounded in the brain's various modality-specific motor-perceptual areas, and in the body, and the socio-environment.

The body map in the primary motor cortex



Hauk, Johnsrude & Pulvermuller, 2004.

Somatotopic representation of action words in human motor and premotor cortex.



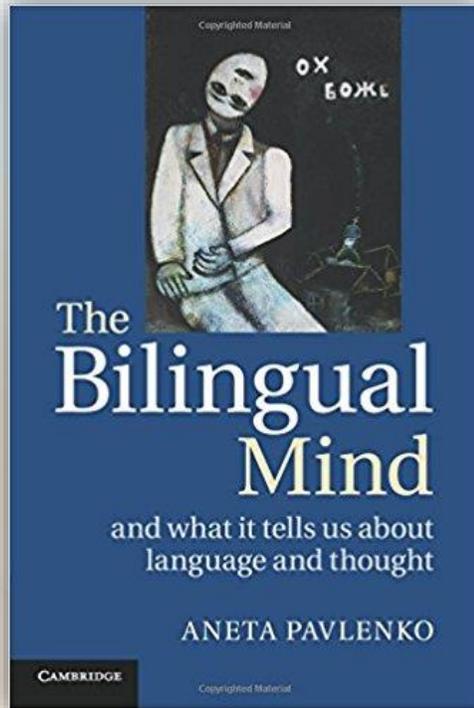
Glenberg and Kaschak, 2002. Grounding language in action.

Discussion

How often do you ask your students to “see” the sentence they are reading, and do you think this could be a useful thing to do?

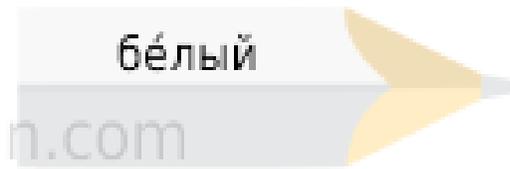
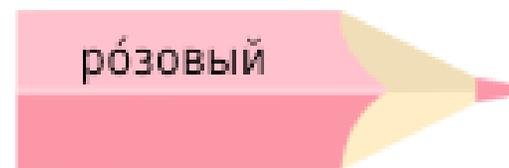
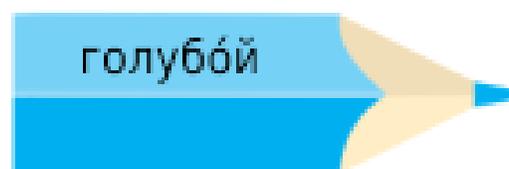
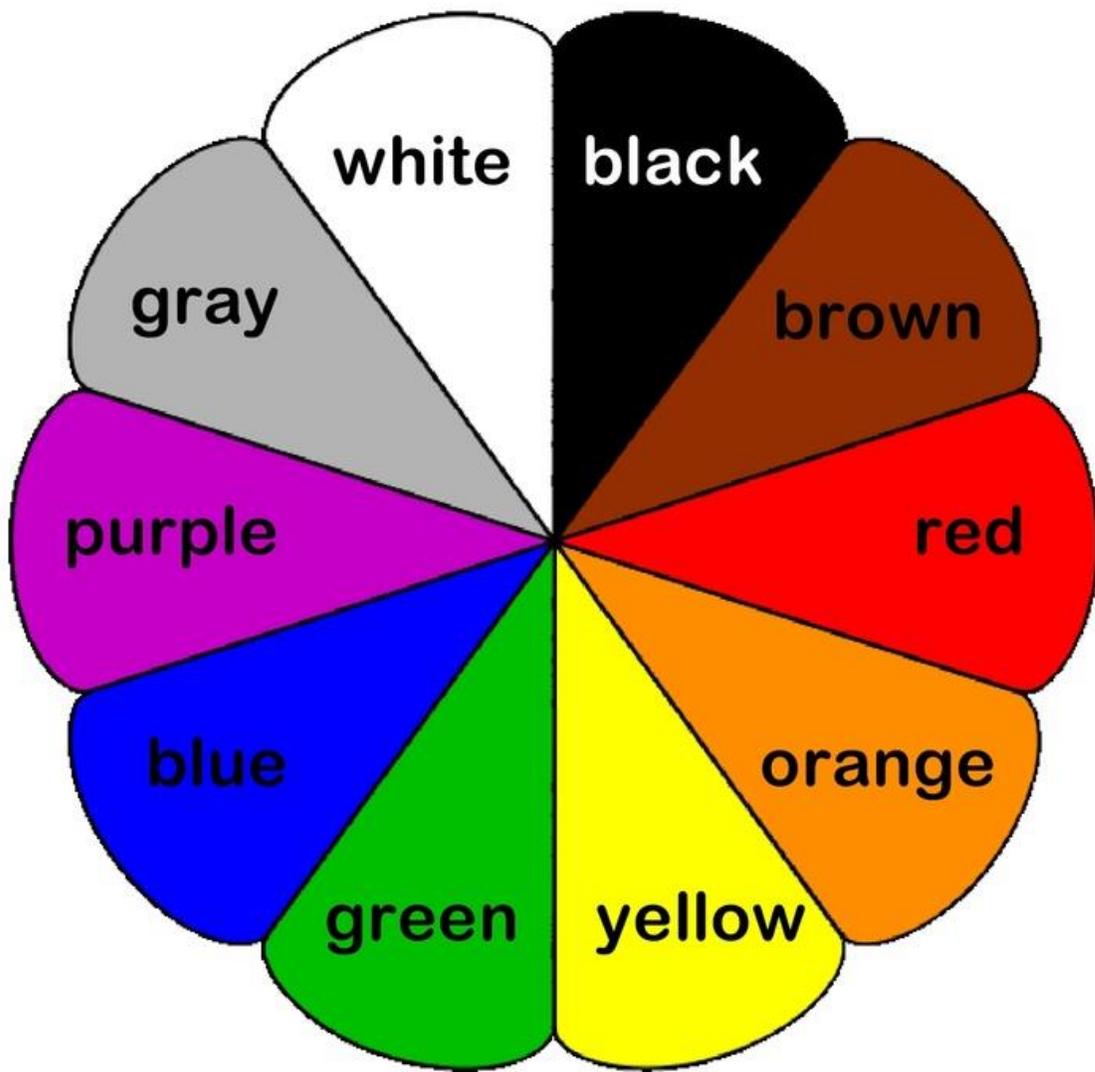
Does classroom learning encourage students to imagine, and does it matter?

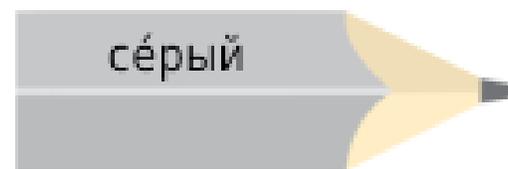
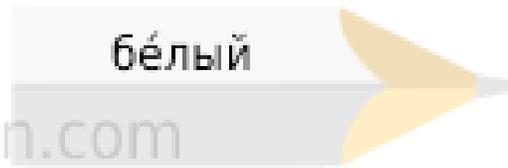
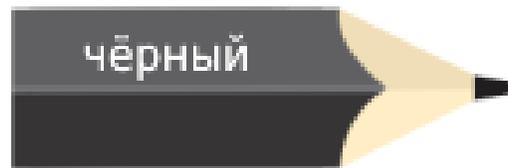
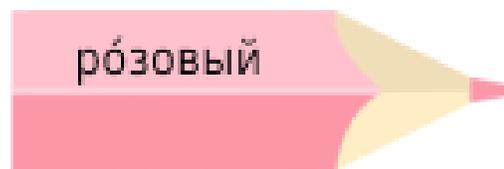
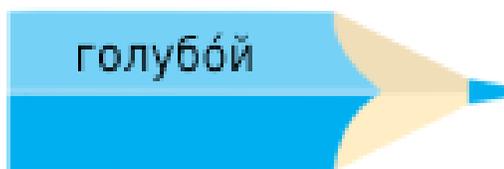
Language and thought



Our language makes us
think our subjective
categories are objective

COLOR WHEEL





“L1 English speakers learning L2 Russian in the FL classroom, where words are used in the absence of their referents, fail to acquire the distinction between sinij and goluboj”

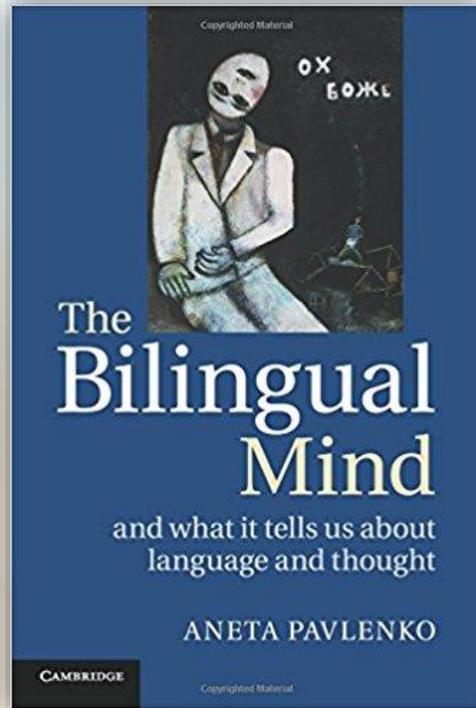
Pavlenko, 2014

Discussion

Can you think of an instance when students' lack of understanding may have been conceptual, not linguistic?

How could you explain any conceptual differences of English language users and do you think this would help your students?

Language and thought



If our language doesn't have a word for something, do we have the concept?

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