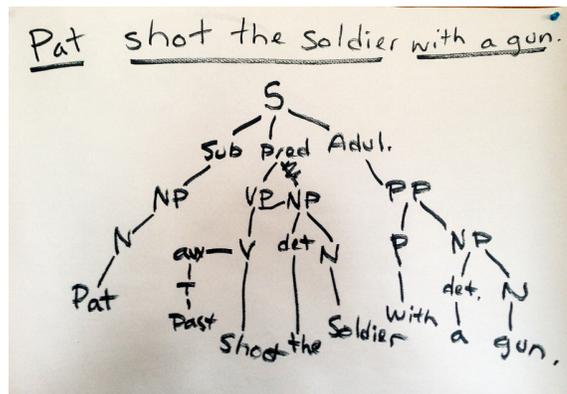


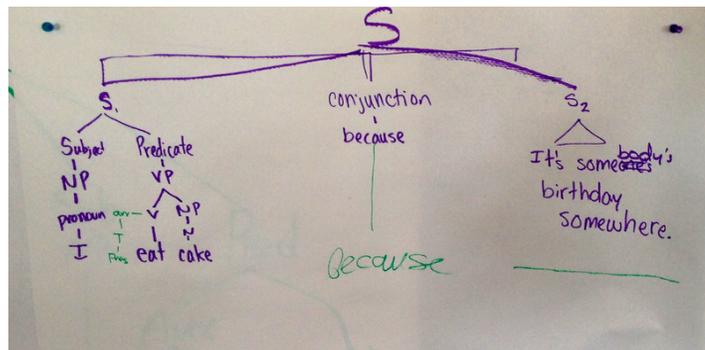
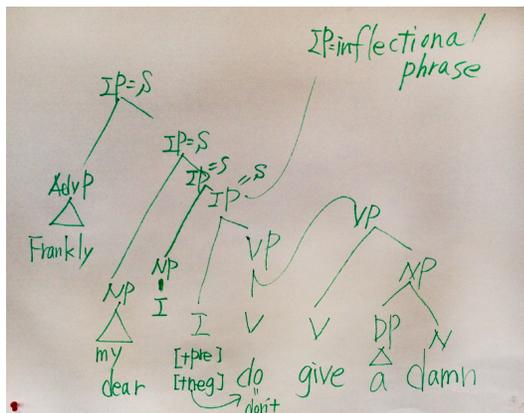
Grammar Reflection

France Menk EAL Elka Todeva MAT 47

Our introduction to grammar trees initially overwhelmed me.- “diagramming sentences” is the label I had learned to call them, wayyy back in “grammar school. “ E.g., I found the idea that one noun is considered a *noun phrase*, jarring. When I looked at the trees, I was stymied.



Here is where I started to learn linguistic vocabulary.



So the top down / bottom up class experiences were

insufficient for you as you were still working on the metalanguage your peers got in LALP – for you all this was too much to digest at once, it seems, right?

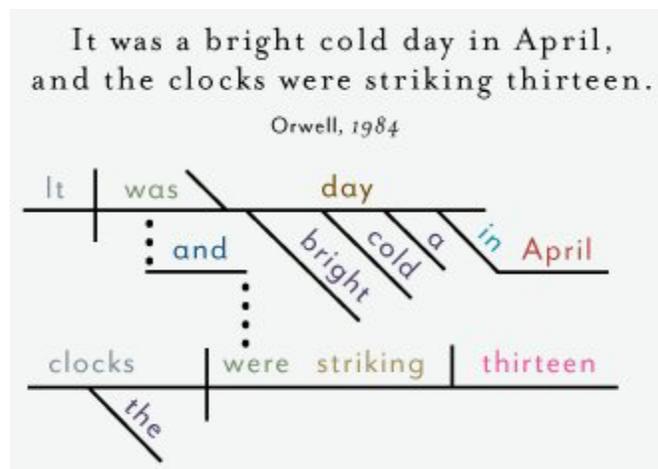
I bought the book, *Sister Bernadette's Barking Dog: The Quirky History and Lost Art of Diagramming Sentences*, because the title and appearance looked intriguing and I thought it

would help me understand the process. The concept of diagramming as an illustration of sentence structure to clarify its correct formation, seems laborious and counterproductive to the flow and force of our best writing. I totally agree with you; this is the reason why we directed most of our EAL energy into understanding the logic of English and why and where learners find this logic challenging / baffling.

With the introduction of English syntax to the L2, I do see how the visual might be helpful to students who have a keen sense of spacial relationships. For the student whose grasp of syntax is competent enough to write well, it seems an exercise “*for the sake of.*” *Same with MAT students; even the ones that master the art of treeing (never beyond pretty simple sentences) never experience much transfer of learning for the language classroom.*

23 Sentence Diagrams That Show The Brilliance Of Famous Novels' Opening Lines, CHRISTINA STERBENZ, FEB. 26, 2014, 1:52 PM. “In their magna opera, famous authors have written some of the most beautiful and well-known lines in literature. Elements like word order, vocabulary, and grammatical construction give these sentences their power.

To demonstrate this*, [Pop Chat Lab](#) diagrammed some famous novels' first lines. If a staunch logophile taught your seventh grade English class, you probably saw similar images. Depending on the part of speech and function within the sentence, each word sits on a different line in a different color.”



* How do diagrams illustrate the beauty of language? In some cases, the diagrams as drawings are themselves beautiful, but to me they visually interrupt the flow of the syntax.

Again we are in agreement here.

Referencing the FMU circle, I can see how trees portray a clear analysis of form. Use lies along the branches, but where can meaning be formularized? Even use is not fully captured and reflected - things like register, etc Yes, literal meaning is shown by the syntax presented in the tree. But meaning is so much more than that. I doubt I will use trees in my teaching. I will certainly let students know that they exist, and may use a very simplified form using triangles, but, at the moment, I see no advantage to incorporating them in the pursuit of their writing well.

The good news is that we have so many alternative tools that we can use from Chinese boxes to IC analysis.

@ What strategies will you use in teaching grammar?

Articles: Your drawing of a scene using articles and prepositions to position objects, showed me a wonderfully clear road to understanding the teaching of this often confusing grammar point.

E.g., a bench, on the ground; a boy on the bench....where is the boy?, et al.

It is important to keep the pattern / switch constant. Here's the actual "transcript"

Draw a ... tree.

Draw a dog under the tree.

Draw a ... fence.

Draw a boy behind the fence.

Draw a ... bench.

Draw **a** basket on **the** bench.

Draw **a** ... pond.

Draw **a** duck in **the** pond.

Draw **an** ... elephant.

Draw **a** bird over **the** elephant.

Draw **a** ... bush.

Draw **a** ball next to **the** bush.

Draw **a** ... cloud.

Draw **a** rainbow over **the** cloud.

Metalanguage: I like the idea of introducing it when the student is capable of understanding, I found it incredibly helpful in my own understanding of Spanish and French grammar, even in the early stages of acquisition, because I had been familiar enough with it in English. It seems a way to scaffold grammar if it is shown not as a rigid framework, but as background knowledge: a ground bass in a jazz quartet. :))

also, it develops learner autonomy – students can use dictionaries and understand what a particular entry means, e.g. careful. “enjoy” is a transitive verb in English, thus it is not okay to say “I am enjoying very much”

Syntax: Here is where I see the usefulness of Kuhn’s principle. Because we have no case endings, because we use prepositions in lieu of them, it is easy to show how word order should **not** be, and how important it affects meaning. **E.g.**, (the trite): The boy bit the dog...

Phrasal verbs: My sense of using these is as a game. The rhythm and humor implicit in them can intuitively convey a sense of the flexibility of English, and how confusing to the L2’s

attempt to find predictability. Our class exercise in **creating illustrations** enhanced our learning. Using TPR and illustrating grammar points: drawings, video, etc., opens a way toward their embodiment. True. The situational approach seems to work well too – things are contained / manageable and also the students get a sense of accomplishment, e.g. Ph. Verbs at the library / checking out of a hotel, etc

@ How is this course changing your cognitive or affective stance toward grammar?

I really can't say I note a change in my stance, as i have always enjoyed the ins and outs of grammar. I play with it in my poetry, and am always looking for ways to express my intent as **elegantly as possible**. I *can* say that I am becoming more knowledgeable about the terminology and, based on our class exercises, how I might teach it.

@ What aspects of grammar do you believe are core for learners and what ideas do you have for assisting learners in these areas?

Students need to *own* grammar. I.e., they need to be responsible for their own understanding. Their feelings about grammar are important. Ask them how they feel about a point of grammar and then to think about why they like it or not. It is a route to understanding. Grammar usage in English might be what they were taught to avoid in their L1. This creates a barrier to their learning. They are fighting deeply ingrained viewpoints. Have them think of **how they would construct the same sentence in their L1**. Do not ask for a direct translation, but for an expression of the same thought. They will see why they find it difficult to internalize the English construction. By helping them see what they are fighting, they will be able to release these constraints and open themselves up to a true understanding of English grammar. I found this

a good way to internalize grammar points in Spanish and French. Yes, I agree that judicial use of cross-linguistic comparisons help

@ What connections can you make between this EAL course and other courses you've taken in the MAT program?

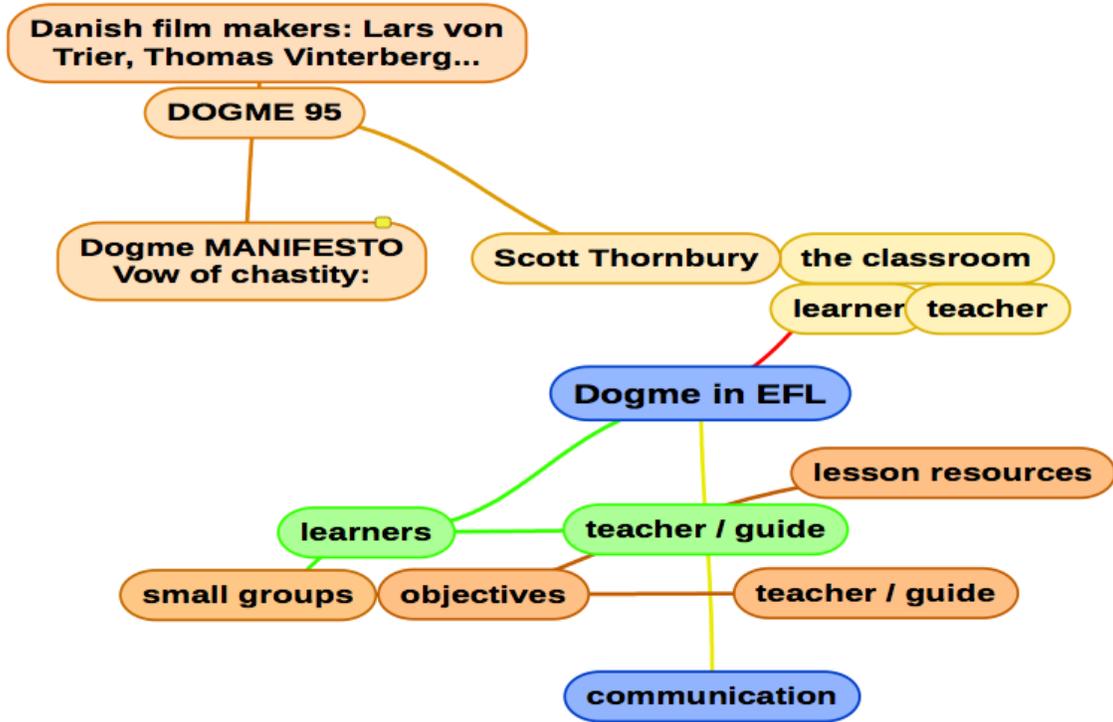
SLA's coverage of historical timelines of linguists' thinking, research, and rationale an open door to visions of possibilities for language learning students. My understanding the sources of language learning thought makes it easier for me to distill elements from them that seem reasonable. The following link to Dana Fulcher's video shows technemes I am most drawn to. <https://youtu.be/aVCoc-YFqt8>

[short & sweet summery of such key principles.](#)

Approaches gave me explicit, experiential knowledge with which I can help students acquire language. This class gave me tangible grounding in technique.

Suggestopedia and Dogme have an openness to learning and teaching that most engages the learner's culture and personality. Through these particular approaches, I have gained confidence to creatively involve my students with each other and with their L1 culture as they travel toward English language communication competency. These two courses seem to be most directly connected to EAL. One can insert aspects of grammar points in such a variety of ways within their structures that the learners can feel respected and acknowledged in their language learning struggles. More often than not, there is so much prior knowledge to tap into,

Adaptation of Scott Thornbury's interpretation of Dogme in language teaching



Drawing for Suggestopedia approach to language learning, showing transitions between L1 and L2.

