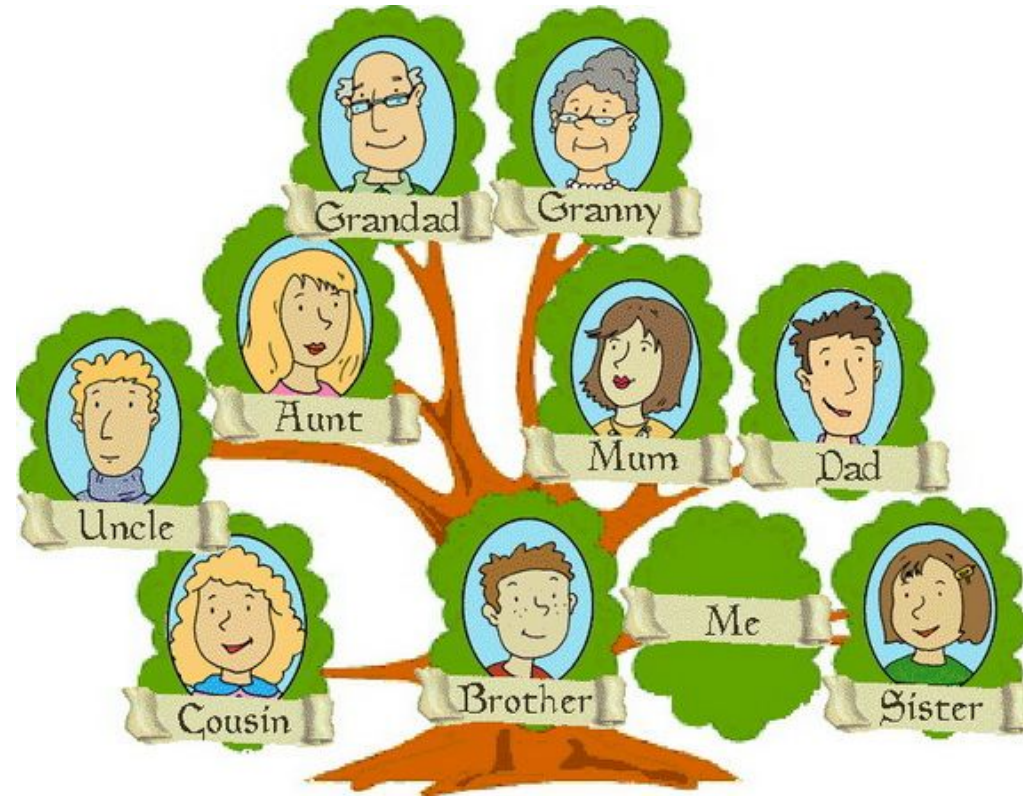


Acquisition of Grammar: A Multi- language task

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Traditional thinking

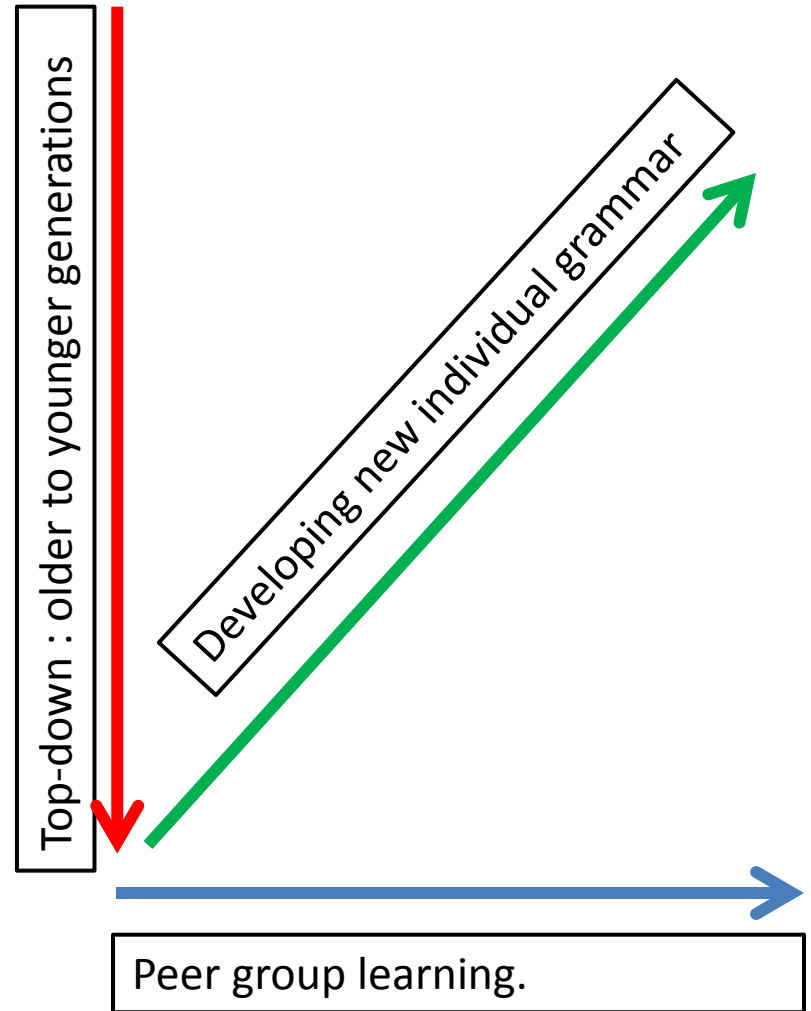
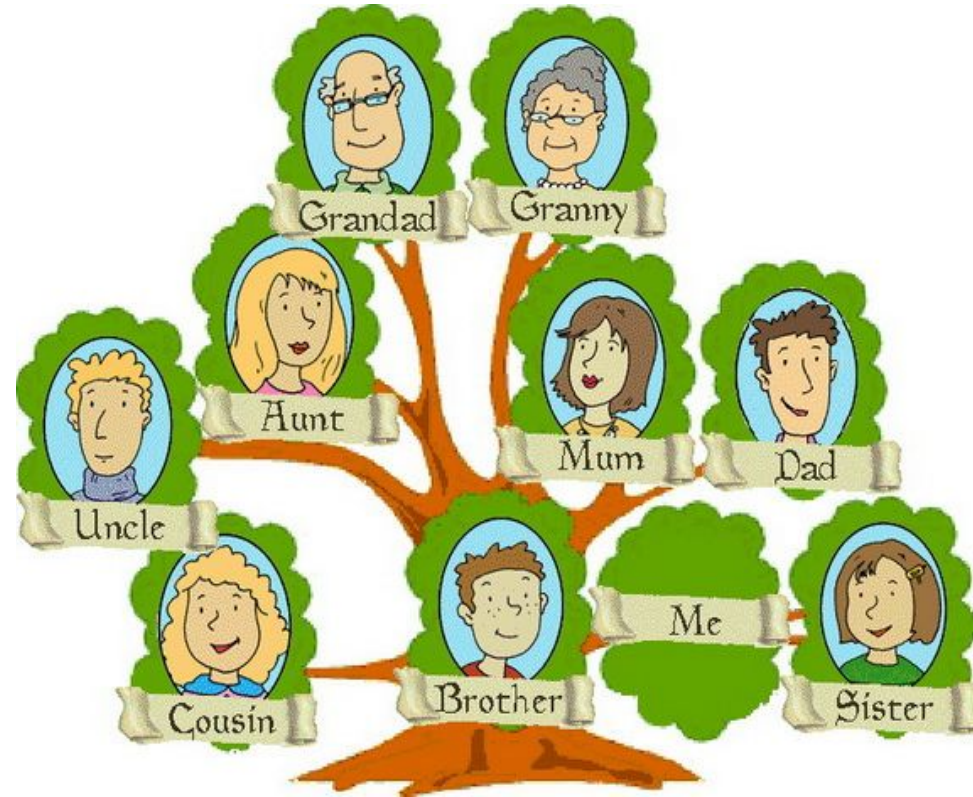


Acquisition is monolingual and vertical
(top-down)



Acquisition is perfect, education helps
children become perfect learners.

The reality



Lesson 1

- Personal experience guarantees that each individual develops a unique linguistic competence.
- School system must acknowledge that even though pupils may share linguistic conventions, they might be operating on different internal systems.

Lesson 2

- Given our linguistic repertoires, it must be the case that learners are gifted in managing more than one system: *children are multi-language machines.*
- Schooling must capitalize on the multi-language capacity of children.

Multi-language schooling in a global world



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Multiethnicity as an advantage in linguistic discovery and learning

What about *de* vs. *het* in such a group?

Features	Common	Neuter
singular, definite	de mooie man	het mooie boek
plural, definite	de mooie mannen	de mooie boeken
plural, indefinite	mooie mannen	mooie boeken
singular, indefinite	een mooie man	een mooi boek

Gender is only visible in definite!

An article playground

- **Moroccan Arabic:**

unmarked forms → indefinite

marked forms → definite or generic/abstract

(10) ...*rtakəb ʒarima* ‘he committed a crime’ (Youssi, 1992, p. 144)

l-ħlib ‘the milk’

hada waħəd r-raʒəl ma-ʕəndu-š l-wlad, ʕəndu yir l-mra ‘there’s this man who doesn’t have children, he just has a wife’ (Brustad, 2000, p. 36)

- **Turkish**

Specific direct objects → accusative case marking. Without accusative marking, objects gets a non-specific reading.

Turkish:

a. Bugün *bir avukat-t* gör-üyor-um
today one lawyer-ACC see-PROG-1SG
'I am seeing a (particular) lawyer today.'

Bugün *bir avukat* gör-üyor-um
today one lawyer see-PROG-1SG
'I am seeing a lawyer today (some lawyer or other).'

The 9 marking strategies in Farsi

	Spoken	Written
Indefinite	<p><i>1) Quantifiers</i> Ex. Ye(k) mærd A man</p> <p><i>2) Quantifier and -i (indefinite marker)</i> Ex. Ye(k) mærdi A man-i A man</p> <p><i>3) Quantifier and -e (indefinite marker)</i> Ex. Ye(k) mærde A man-e A man</p>	<p><i>1) Quantifiers</i> Ex. Yek mærd A man</p> <p><i>2) -i (indefinite marker) (existential quantifier)</i> Ex. Mærdi Man-i A man</p>
Definite	<p><i>1) '-e' (Definite marker suffix)</i> Ex. Mærde Man-e The man</p> <p><i>2) -o/ro as the spoken forms of object marker 'ra'</i> Ex. Filmo didi? Film-o SEE-Past-2SG? Did you see the film? Ex. Seda ro shenidi? Noise ro HEAR-2SG? Did you hear the noise?</p>	<p><i>1) Demonstratives</i> Ex. In/an mærd This/that man</p> <p><i>2) Object marker 'ra'</i> Ex. Ketab ra biavær. Book ra BRING-IMP. Bring the book.</p>

Table 1: General rules of definiteness/ indefiniteness in spoken and written Farsi

Sranan

- Bare NPs and marked NPs can all be indefinite or definite.

Yu mu tapu **a** fensre noso **a** alen o wai kon inisei.

You need to shut the window or else the rain will blow in.

A teki **wan** nefe dan a koti **a** meti nanga en.

He took a knife and cut the meat with it.

- **Papiamento**

Bare NPs in some contexts and marked NPs are interpreted as definite or indefinite

E homber a bai na e kas.

The man went to the house

Un buki

- **Somali**

Extremely complicated: only a definite marker but no indefinite marker

nin-**ka**

man-DET.M

‘the man’

na’ag-**ta**

woman-DET.F

‘the woman’

- Mandarin Chinese

Bare NPs

gǒu xǐhuān gǔtóu
 dog like bones

‘Dogs like bones.’ [cmn]

wǒ kàijiàn gǒu
 I SG see dog

‘I saw a/the dog.’ [cmn]

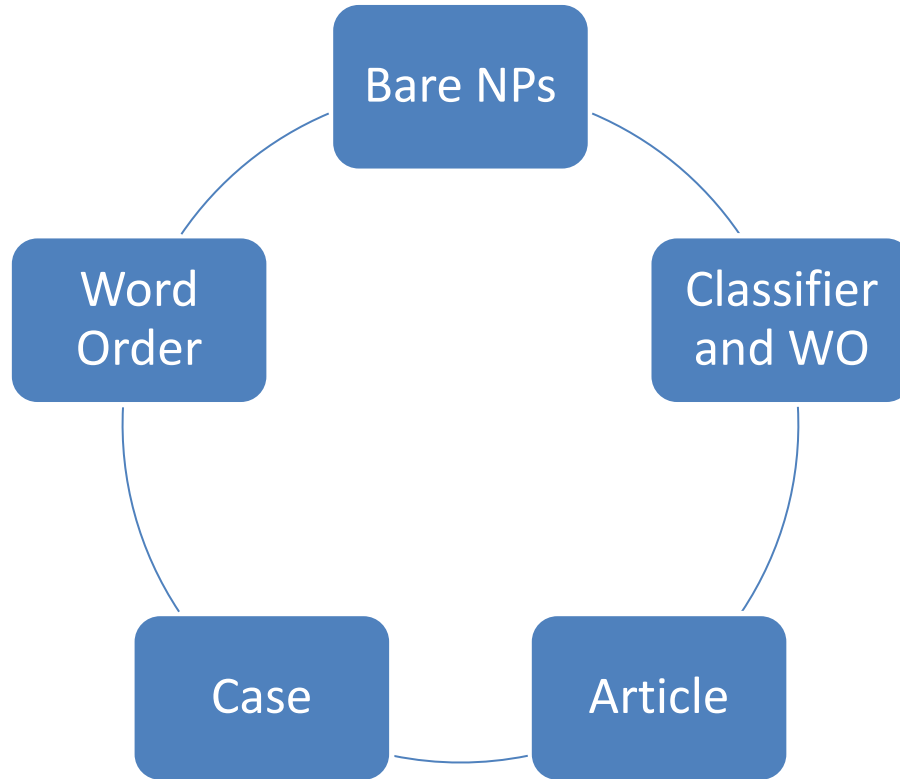
我 看 见 一 只 狗

Table 2: Definiteness

type	Mandarin	Cantonese
DEM-CL-N		definite
NUME-CL-N		indefinite
CL-N	indefinite	(in)definite
N	(in)definite	indefinite

Generally nouns in subject positions are interpreted as definite.

Marking strategies



Encoding strategies for definiteness opposition

	Definite Det	Indefinite Det	Bare NPs	Case	Word order
Moroccan	+	-	+	-	?
Turkish	-	-	+	+	+
Farsi	+	+	?	?	?
Sranan	+	+	+	-	-
Papiamentu	+	+	+	-	-
Somali	+	-	?	?	-
Mandarin C	-	-	+	-	+
Dutch	+	-	+	-	-

Lesson 3 and conclusion

- Systems that look very different on the surface appear to share some core properties.
- Schooling may benefit in making pupils aware of these *differences and similarities*.