Metalinguistic training – concepts, strategies and eTutor exemplars
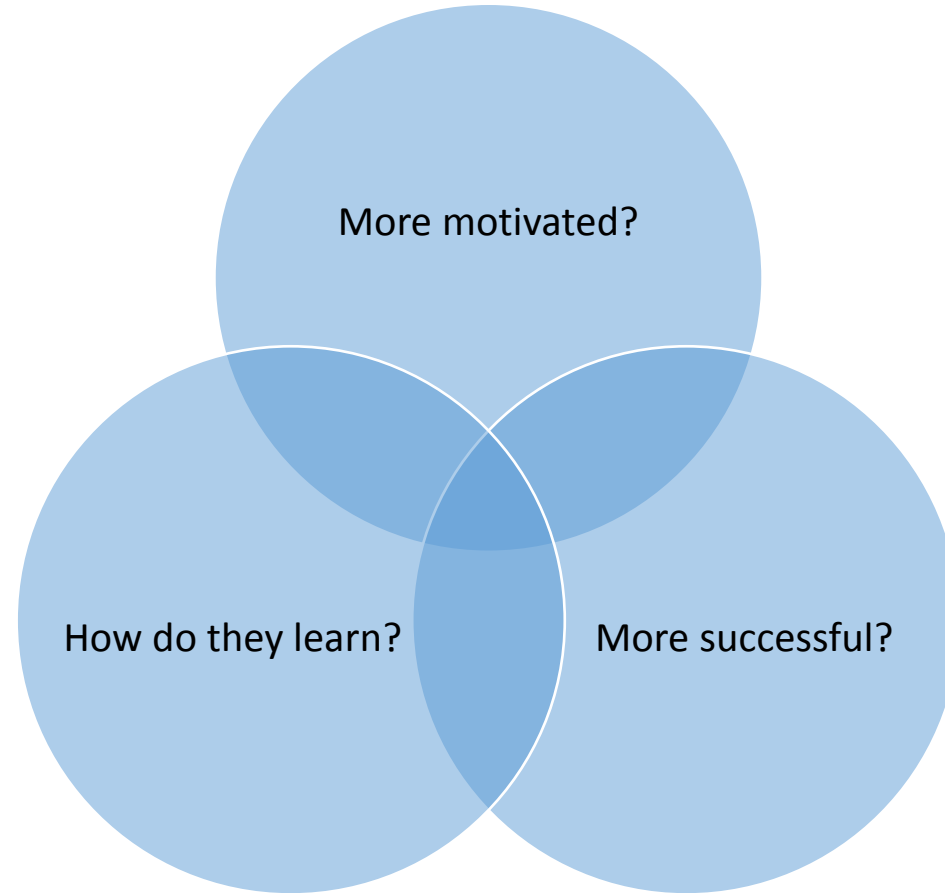
Dr Paul Sze, CUHK

June 14, 2014

Metalinguistic Awareness Training: Why?

More motivated?

How do they learn?

More successful?

Vignettes of Metalinguistic Analysis in action

…

A question to Paul from a former student ...

Recently I ordered something from Amazon. I received a message in the email saying: "Your Amazon.com order of '____' has shipped!" I would think if it should have been "has been shipped". Acceptable?
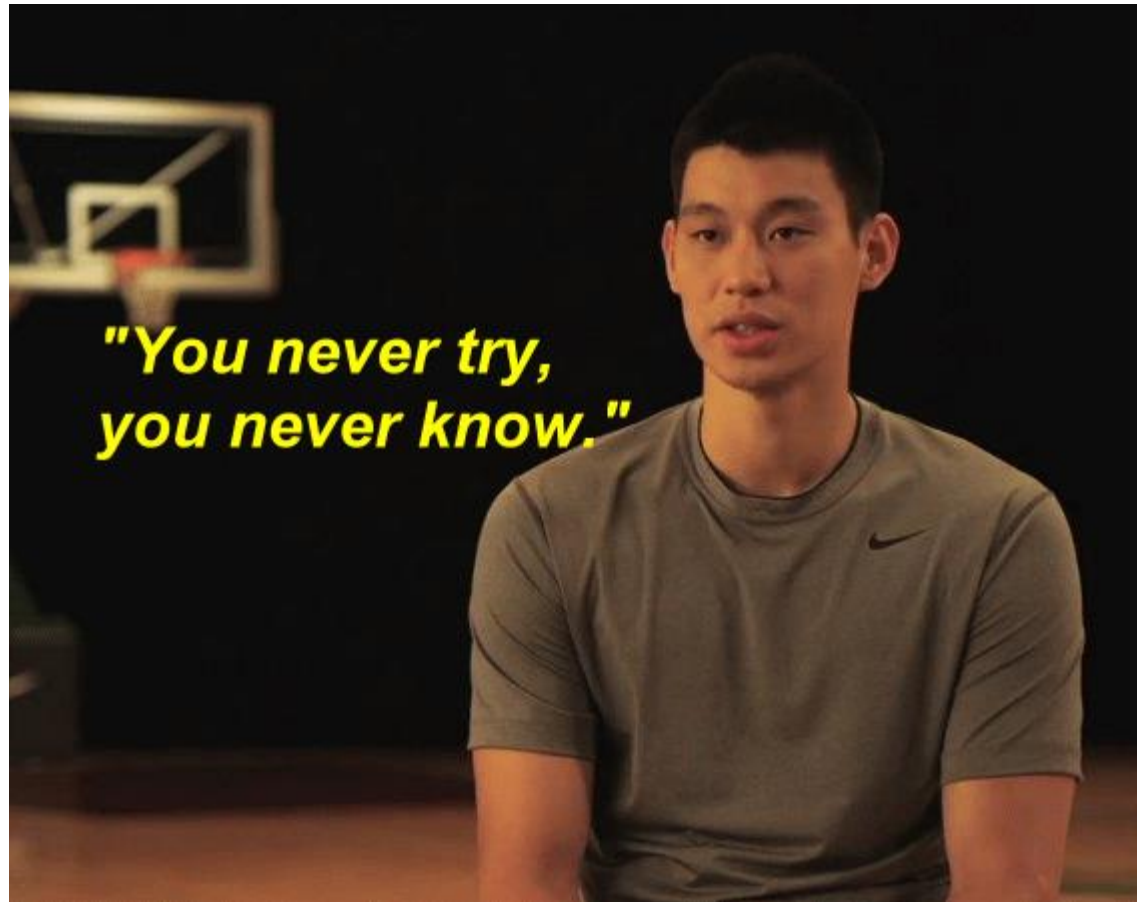
Another former student …

10 hours ago · Edited

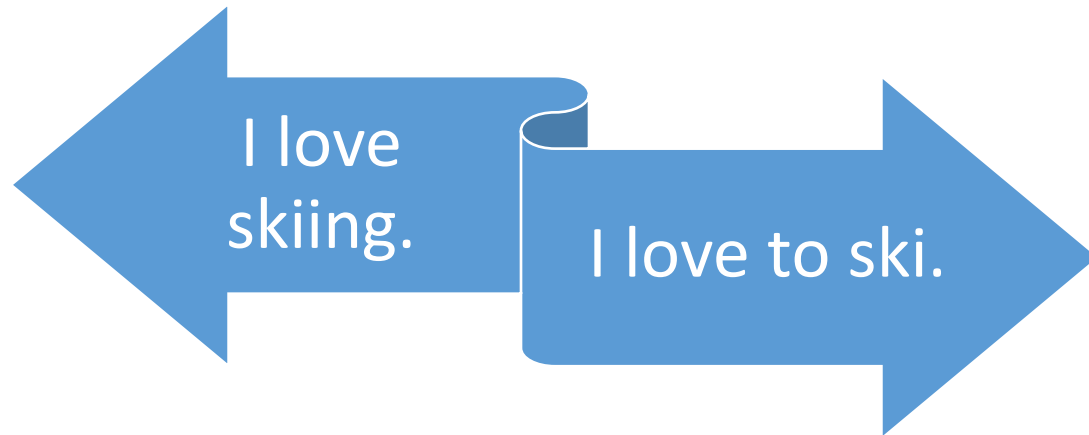落咗堂, 好隨意抽咗1個小男生問書.
「同學A, "love" 後面應該用 gerund定 to-infinitive?」
「下?? (完全冇聽書) "love" 後面應該跟 "U" 囉…」

前途無限, 咁細個已經咁識氹女仔. — 😃 feeling amused.

What did Jeremy Lin mean?

Metalinguistic awareness is NOT

I love skiing.

I love to ski.

- the same as explicit knowledge of grammar rules
- Just about grammar, but also:
  - Vocabulary
  - Discourse
  - Language in use
  - Communicative intent
  - Language in society
  - ….

Ronald Carter on Language Awareness

- *"... the development in learners of an enhanced <u>consciousness</u> of and <u>sensitivity</u> to the <u>forms</u> and <u>functions</u> of language."*

KEY CONCEPTS IN ELT

Language awareness

Ronald Carter

Language awareness refers to the development in learners of an enhanced consciousness of and sensitivity to the forms and functions of language. The approach has been developed in contexts of both second and foreign language learning, and in mother-tongue language education, where the term 'knowledge about language' has sometimes been preferred.

The concept of language awareness is not new. van Essen (1997) points

Why 'metalinguistic awareness'?

小心碰頭
Beware of your head

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站在二十一世紀□□路口的大學教育
University Education at Crossroad of 21st Century

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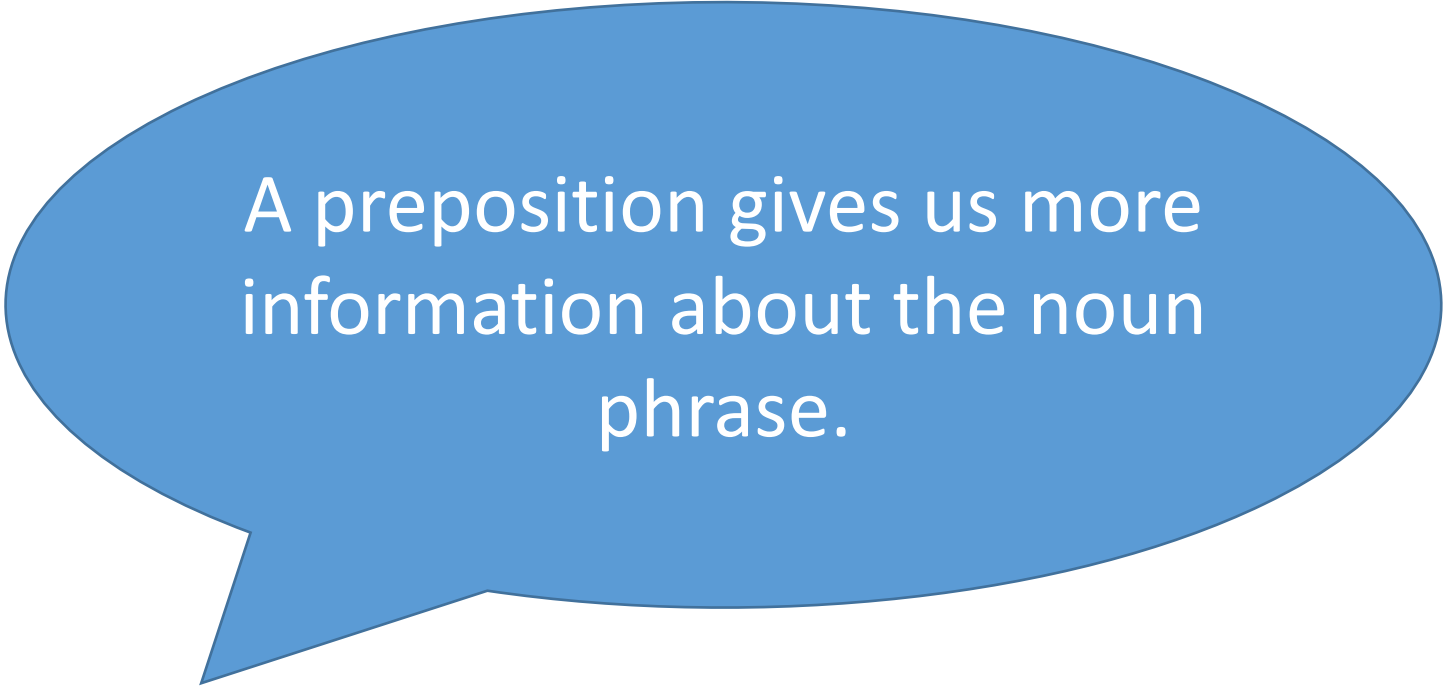

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Limitations of Direct/Explicit Grammar Explanation

Must vs Mustn't

'Must' means it is something good ... something we can do. 'Mustn't' means it's something bad ... something we can't do.

TEACHER A

Preposition

A preposition gives us more information about the noun phrase.

TEACHER B

Past Continuous tense vs Simple Past tense

We use the Simple Past tense for a short action. We use the Past Continuous tense for a long action. So short action – Simple Past; long action – Past Continuous.

TEACHER C

a/an vs *the*

The first time we mention something, we use 'a' or 'an'. The second time we mention it, we use 'the'.

TEACHER D

Metalinguistic Awareness Training –Why ?

- At secondary level, many language items cannot be generalized as simple rules.

- Secondary students need and like cognitive challenge.

- Input will only become intake when students are engaged.

- Metalinguistically-aware students will constantly be *picking up* features of the TL on their own.

- Metalinguistic-aware students are motivated learners who are eager to *explore* language on their own.

Examples of Metalinguistic Awareness Activities – For Teachers
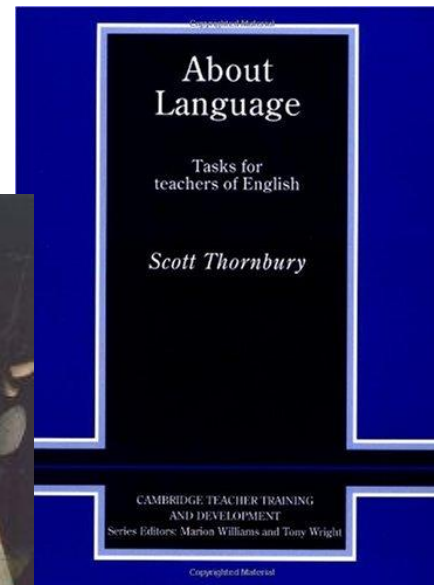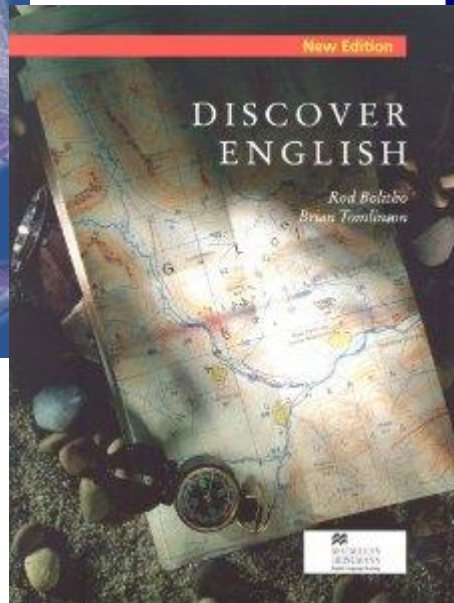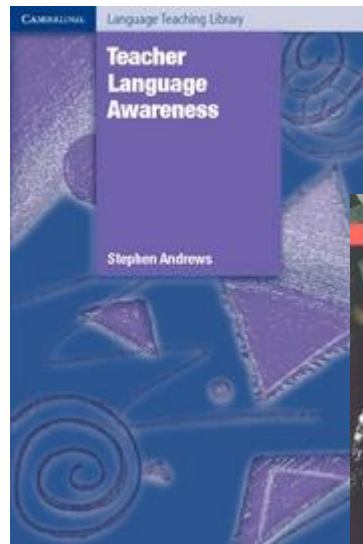
Example 1

9 Present perfect Now can you do this exercise?

Here are some rules for the use of the Present Perfect (Simple and Progressive). Some of them are good rules; some of them are wrong. Which are the good ones?

1. We can use the Present Perfect when we are talking about things which are still happening now.
2. We cannot use the Present Perfect when we are talking about a finished action.
3. We cannot use the Present Perfect when we give the time of a finished action.
4. We use the Present Perfect for actions which happened recently, and the Simple Past for actions which happened longer ago.
5. We often use the Present Perfect to give news.
6. We often use the Present Perfect to talk about experience.

Example 2

5   Future time

A   In many grammars and coursebooks, the future is dealt with as a tense, formed by *shall/will* + infinitive. It is often known as the **pure future**. Which of the following examples could be described as **pure future**? What do *shall* or *will* add to the meaning in the other examples?

1 Don't worry! I'll help you with your homework.
2 My brother *will* talk with his mouth full.
3 Pass the mustard, will you?
4 Shall I open the door for you?
5 I'll see you at the party tonight.
6 Shall we go for a drink?
7 Trespassers will be prosecuted.
8 Boys will be boys.
9 Do you think Liverpool will win on Saturday?
10 You shall do as I tell you!
11 Summer will soon be over.

Bolitho & Tomlinson, 1995.

Example 3

Grammaring: Task Sheet 6

1 **Compare these two dialogues. What features of the second dialogue make it more formal than the first? What differences in the speakers or situation would explain this?**

Dialogue 1

Anyone fancy a coffee?

Sure, if you're getting one.

Got any small change?

Here.

Ta. Tomorrow it's on me.

No worries.

Milk? Sugar?

Black, two sugars.

Something to eat?

Get us a chocolate bar, will you?

OK. Back in a sec.

Dialogue 2

Would anyone like a hot drink?

Well, I wouldn't mind a coffee, if it's no trouble.

Not at all. You wouldn't happen to have a fifty pence coin, would you?

I think I just might. Here you are.

Thank you. I'll pay you back.

Please, I wouldn't hear of it.

Would you like milk and sugar?

I'll have it black, with two spoonfuls of sugar, if that's possible.

Can I get you something to eat?

Well, a chocolate bar would be nice, if they have any.

Certainly. I'll be back shortly.

2 **Change this informal dialogue into a more formal one. In what kinds of situation would**

Thornbury, 2001

Metalinguistic Awareness Activities for Students

Examples

Example 1

- *Work with your partner. Put the 8 words into 2 columns. Then explain your thinking to the class.*

- Bagel, fruit, bread, sausage, tart, banana, meat, dessert,

Example 2

What does the word 'concerned' really mean?

How should it be used in a sentence?

Example 3

Count nouns vs non-count nouns

Example 4

-ed Adjectives vs –ing Adjectives

INTERESTING VS INTERESTED

MARCH 5, 2014

WHAT HAPPENED TO ANDREW?

TASK 1: SEQUENCE 7 SENTENCES IN RIGHT ORDER TO RE-TELL THE STORY.

HTTP://ZH-CN.PADLET.COM/WALL/6MW59KIAF5

WHAT KIND OF WORD ARE THEY?

WHEN I WOKE UP, I FELT <u>CONFUSED</u>.

I WAS REALLY <u>SCARED</u> NOW.

28

TASK 2: WHICH WORDS CAN BE PUT IN THE SLOT?

ANDREW FELT _____.

(SOCRATIVE-STUDENT: ROOM 705594)

Study these sentence pairs.

Why is that (A) and (B) are correct, but (C) is wrong?

Confused vs Confusing

- A. Andrew felt <u>confused</u>. He did not know what to do

- B. The situation was quite <u>confusing</u>. Andrew did not know what to do.

- C. Andrew felt confusing. He did not know what to do.

Bored vs Boring

- A. Sam has read the story 5 times. He is getting <u>bored.</u>

- B. The book is <u>boring</u>. The children don't like it.

- C. Same has read the story 5 times. He is getting <u>boring.</u>

Interested vs Interesting

- The story is so <u>interesting</u> that the students want to read it again and again.
- The teacher told the story in a lively way. The students became <u>interested.</u>

- C. The story is so <u>interested</u> that the students want to read it gain and again.

Excited vs Exciting

- The trip to Disneyland was <u>exciting</u>. Alex tried many rides.

- Alex's father will take him to Disneyland. He is feeling <u>excited.</u>

- The trip to Disneyland was <u>excited</u>. Alex tried many rides.

Metalinguistic Awareness Activities

provide Ss with language samples for students to think about, compare, analyse, etc., with a view to guiding them to gain a deeper understanding of the language issue in question.

From Awareness to Autonomous Exploration

Select Language ▼

Translator disclaimer

Language awareness and the autonomous language learner

Preview

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This paper offers a language-awareness perspective on the concept of autonomy in second language learning. The introductory section distinguishes between two kinds of language awareness and elaborates a working definition of learner autonomy. The second section looks at child development and the role played by both kinds of language awareness in first language acquisition. It considers in turn the importance of context in developmental learning, the role played by the growth of metalinguistic knowledge in first-language acquisition, and the impact of literacy on first language development. The third section is concerned with the role played by both kinds of language awareness in second language pedagogy. It begins by reflecting on the shortcomings of the grammar-translation approach, then suggests reasons for the relative failure of the so-called communicative approach, and ends by proposing a reassessment of the role of writing in second language learning.

Little (1997) on language awareness and the autonomous learner

- Only autonomous learners, who take responsibility for, and charge of, their learning will achieve a high level of proficiency in the target language;

- Language awareness training helps to nurture autonomous learners;

- The question is: Pedagogically, how?

- (Writing may be a useful activity for language awareness training.)

Language Development Strategies

- develop thinking skills
- develop reference skills
- develop information skills
- plan, manage and evaluate own learning
- develop self-motivation
- work with others

From 2007 Secondary Curriculum

Writing ePlatform

Writing ePlatform

The Writing ePlatform is a set of tools that assist students with their writing, allowing them to take a discovery-based approach to their learning of accurate and fluent English.

*Writing e*Platform

The ePlatform should:

(1) assist with constructing the lexico-grammatical and discoursal/rhetorical knowledge of the target language and the skills required to access and apply that language;

(2) encourage reflection and metacognition, where students are encouraged in independent learning and self-confidence; and

*e*Lab interface

Writing ePlatform
- Developed by EDB and HKUST

e Lab

Logout

Demo   About   Guide

Choose your writing topic: [ ] Useful words for your writing.

Choose the language area(s) you want to check: Language Area Filter

Choose your English level: Basic   Intermediate   Advanced

Check   Submit

Your Writing   Word Tag   Vocab-Profile

Please enter your writing below: Save

Total Word Count: 0   Reference Links: Word Neighbors; Google Books; Google Fight; Just The Word

*e*Tutor
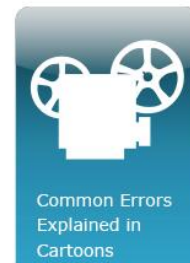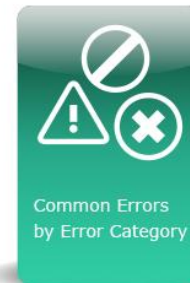
*e*Tutor

- **Based on Real errors made by HK students;**
- **Links to language investigation resources;**
- **Metalinguistic awareness tasks may be done as homework – Flipped Teaching? , or in class (teacher-computer; computer lab; iPads)**
- **eTutor Resources > how to make the best use of the resources > your creativity**

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