Various Cognitive Semantic Insights on Preposition and Pedagogical Applications

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Lindstromberg starts off exploring three different views of word meaning: first, words have a single general meaning (Ruhl, 1989), second, words have no meaning and third, words have a number of related meanings (Lakoff, 1987). The author introduces a new approach, the prototype theory, to teaching prepositions and directional adverbs, keeping a balance between the evasive generality of Ruhl’s insight and the concern of the collocationalists with unrelated specificities. The main argument of the prototype theory is that prepositions have a relatively small number of related literal meanings that contain a prototypical meaning, and the prototypical meaning is extended by a metaphor to create another relatively small set of related meanings. Based on the theory, the article later suggests how to apply this approach to real teaching with the lexicographic application and sets of specific learning points on the preposition on. The learning points consist of a syllabus of senses of on and some methodological ideas, such as: using icons, elucidating meaning by comparing how semantically-related prepositions may differ in meaning, liking later-taught senses with previously learned ones, and explaining metaphorical extensions. The aim of the article is to suggest how teachers and material writers can guide learners to make more sense of unfamiliarly used prepositions. Thus, reaching a cohesive understanding of the literal and metaphorical uses of prepositions.

The article is quite straightforward and easy to understand. As it explicitly displays the pedagogical application, the article will be a practical resource serving as a lesson guideline for both novice teachers, like TESOL students, and experienced teachers with a traditional teaching background. Particularly, the schematic pictures in the article will become powerful and innovative assets for material developers. In the poster session, it was obvious that many of us in
class were impressed by the new approach of representing metaphorical uses with the pictures. Although it doesn’t articulate how well the prototype theory fits the rest of prepositions besides on, it shows a good place for teachers to start.


Muller initiates the study from an interest in the role and scope of frequency-based learning and its relationship to second language learners’ performance. Since he believes that the semantic obscurity of prepositions appears to be a main attribute to constrain L2 learners’ acquisition of all their meaning, he limits his focus to examining the role of input frequency in the acquisition of the non-central meanings of prepositions. Specifically, this study attempts to examine the degree to which second language learners’ interlanguage depend on collocation knowledge, instead of knowledge of the semantic and/or grammatical patterns. He observes the performance of 90 advanced adult English learners (30 Chinese native speakers, 30 Korean native speakers, and 30 Spanish native speakers) on a fill-in-the blanks test. The key instrument is a 36-item prepositions test: 18 items are used as a distractors and 18 items, utilizing nine preposition senses as an experimental target. The targeted items consist of pairs which share the same meaning, but differ in terms of frequency (high vs. low). The result of the experiment shows that all three groups demonstrate greater performance on a preposition meaning when it is embedded within a higher-frequency WCO (word co-occurrence), in comparison to the same preposition when it is embedded in a lower-frequency WCO. This result summarizes that even fairly advanced English learners are heavily dependent on their collocational knowledge to make up for their lack of understating the more subtle semantic knowledge when acquiring some non-central senses of
prepositions. Additionally, the article resonates with the claims of the several previous research that highlights the role of collocations in promoting fluency, but the collusion of the article extends to confirm that frequency-based learning from exemplars may play a key role in the semantically ambiguous form, such as English prepositions.

The part where the experimental data is analyzed is not be clear to me, primarily because I am not familiar with statistics, but the main message is clear. The article is useful since the idea embedded in the assessment for the experiment is applicable to real teaching contexts when teachers evaluate students in both diagnostic and post tests. By accurately comprehending the difference between collocational knowledge and semantically based knowledge, teachers will be able to arrange their lesson plans in an attempt to narrow any gap between these knowledges and, therefore, focus on the troubled area efficiently. Also, the article is a reminder of how essential the teacher’s role is to encourage learners to get into the habit of exposing themselves to a wide range of contexts outside of the classroom, as well as to provide stable learning inside the classroom. The problem with the article is that the study has randomly chosen sets of preposition senses, and it cannot sufficiently make any general claims regarding learners' comprehensive performance with English prepositions.


Kidd and Cameron-Faulkner study densely sampled corpora from one child's (Brian’s) verbal interactions with his mother in order to investigate children’s acquisition of multiple senses of the preposition *with*. The first objective of the article is to test two opposing predictions, the monosemy approach and the polysemy approach, regarding children’s early language
demonstrations and their ensuing acquisitions of prepositions. While the former predicts that Brian will use a unitary meaning of *with* by abstracting core features from the beginning of his productions, the latter predicts that children will acquire each separate sense of *with*, which will emerge on a different developmental schedule. The second objective is to examine the types of contextual information available to Brian in his maternal input, through a developmental analysis of the constructions he used with and a semantic analysis of the verbs with which *with* co-occurs. The rationale for the need of these additional analyses comes from the pretheoretical observation that senses can be distinguished on the basis of usage pattern and linguistic contexts (Taylor, 2003). The results of the analyses show that Brian first acquired the senses that were most frequent in the input (accompaniment, attribute, and instrument) and applied an initial one-to-one form-meaning image to *with* that is translated as the spatial properties of the preposition-proximity (co-location). This is similar to what is known about children’s early learning: children avoid applying multiple meanings to a single phonological form. Later, he acquired less common senses taking a longer time on a different schedule. According to the analyses of the input data, the three senses of *with* each occur in their own prototypical constructions (NP-V-NP-with-NP or/and NP-V-with-NP), and the verb semantics within a construction further control the potential interpretation of *with*. The analyses of Brain’s overgeneralization errors, together with the input analyses, confirms that once Brian was comfortable with extracting a core feature of *with*, he was able to expand his knowledge of the individual senses on the basis of the constructions and verb types with which *with* co-occurred. The article concludes that neither the monosemy, nor the multiple meanings approach can fully explain the data, but a combination of children’s early word learning principles and children’s ability to infer different senses of an ambiguous word when stable contextual clues are available can explain the preposition acquisition of children.
Thus, these inputs will relieve many of the potential problems the ambiguity of *with* could pose to the child.

The article is reasonably difficult to comprehend, but it gets easier when you read through to the end. I presumably knew the different process of language learning between NSs and NNSs, but I chose this article, hoping to find some applicable points to SLA, especially with preposition acquisition. It is particularly useful for ESL teachers who teach young children grammar. It helps with understanding each stage of learning in terms of the sequence of cognitive development. Likewise, in 484 course, I constantly experienced and shared the different ways of perceiving acquisition and learning by interacting with the teammates in English F1 and Chinese F1 background.


Cuypere, Wellems, and Cuypere start this research under the belief that some present-day accounts of the semantics of words, both lexical and function words, appear to be largely corresponding to Lock’s polysemy view on linguistic meaning. Faced with the current trend towards moderate polysemy in a number of recent publications, as well as with some misunderstandings about the monosemy approach, this paper attempts to explore the boundaries of polysemy. This endeavor leads to an in-depth investigation into some of the problems with historical cognitive approaches towards semantic variation by examining the two major, yet disparate views: Locke’s problem and Leibniz’ alternative solution to Locke’s claim. Leibniz maintains that one should at least try to reduce all instantiations to a determinate number of meanings, ideally to a single unitary
meaning. To examine the nature of polysemy, the focus of the article shifts from a radical view on polysemy to a more moderate one, more specifically, Tyler and Evans’s criteria to postulate a list of 15 distinct senses of the preposition *over*. The first criteria is that a difference in meaning needs to correspond to a distinct sense if a non-spatial element can add a new, unpredictable semantic aspect to the central sense. The second criteria is that there must be instances of the sense that are context-independent. With that cognitive model, Tyler and Evans conclude that *over* is a polysemous word with a fixed number of distinct senses, while suggesting to reduce polysemy by drawing a clearer distinction between a distinct sense and a context dependent use of an item. However, the article argues their analysis is still biased towards polysemy, because ‘covering instance’ of *over* is not a distinct sense of the preposition, but rather a context dependent that can be explained through a combination of the central sense and non-linguistic aspects (encyclopedic knowledge, pragmatics, and inference). Moreover, the article finds their claim to be seriously flawed because their work is based on semantic reasoning which derives from the cognitive embodiment postulate. On the embodied view on cognition, language is determined by the relation between our bodies and the projected world, as it is represented in the human conceptual system. As a result, depending on whether one perceives a scene from a focal perspective or disfocal perspective, one can interpret the relation between trajectory and landmark as two distinct senses of the preposition, which is otherwise identical in the linguistic conceptualization. This view can lead to assuming unnecessary polsemy. They propose to call Tyler and Evans’s reasoning the ‘iconicity of embodied meaning’. Finally, the article offers that the monosemy approach might be profitably applied to the meaning of *over* and asserts that a distinction should be made between lexical meanings, which are semantically self-contained, and instrumental meanings, which rely on combinations with lexical meanings.
The article is challenging for me to comprehend because of its affluent use of academic terminology and the extensive review on previous work. Fortunately, supplementary comments across the paper reinforce understanding. It would be useful for TESOL students who are new to the field of cognitive semantics since the polysemy approach, ranging from its radical view to its moderate vies, is illuminated under the close questioning.


In contrast to grammar presented through isolated sentences, rule articulation and teacher oriented teaching, the article proposes Holistic Grammar Through Socratic Questioning (HGSQ) as an eclectic approach in the sense that it integrates concepts from both formalists and naturalists in teaching grammar. HGSQ is defined as grammar inductively learned through critical intensive reading of discourse-level text. The text should be a minimum of two paragraphs long as a piece of prose explaining a point of view. In other words, HGSQ is basically grammar lesson in reading and writing while using Socratic questioning, which involves higher order critical thinking questions in order to help learners find the answers themselves through their own discovery and enlightenment, rather than simply accepting the teachers’ thought process. The four major elements of critical thinking are analysis, synthesis, application and self-assessment. By pedagogical considerations based on her long experience in teaching, Koshi believes that this approach will address the needs of intermediate and advanced level adults (post pubescent) who are literate in their first language and need grammatically and stylistically acceptable performance for academic and career success. The article introduces the theoretical considerations of the approach first, and later, it outlines a specific set of 10 steps for teaching a two-hour class that takes consideration into the theoretical framework. It advises that
in all these steps, students may or may not get accurate outcome since learning by discovery may involve confusion and frustration, but peer students and teachers should be able to support each other at each step to resolve any confusion. On the teachers’ part, answering students’ questions with counter-questions is believed to be crucial to facilitate the discovery process.

I know this article is irrelevant with the theme of this project, except the tie with grammar teaching, but as a stereotypical learner in a rule-dominating, teacher-fronted class, I feel obligated to attempt to integrate this spirit into the theme. I truly believe that this approach will play a key role to help teachers and students see grammar in the three dimensions of form, meaning, and use exactly the way we have tried in 484 course through sharing, discussion, evaluation and application. I believe that I need to bend heavily on the conscious awareness approach as much as I was exposed to the nonconscious learning context, in order to be a well-balanced teacher-to-be. That might be a precarious idea, but I do think that the newly shaped teaching beliefs need practice and time to be embodied in real teaching. In accordance with my faith, the article is very valuable for teachers who want to break the traditional teaching style and who, lacking classroom management skills, want to know how to facilitate classroom discussion without domination and who didn’t have this type of previous learning experience. Also, material writers, teacher trainers, and program designers should benefit from this reading. However, I don’t agree with Koshi’s pedagogical consideration in which intermediate and advanced level adult learners would benefit from HGSQ approach the most. It truly depends on individual teaching contexts. We might find it operational in beginning level classes, but confront some resistance from students in advanced level classes.

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Using prepositions accurately is one of the notoriously challenging tasks for ESL/EFL learners, but it appears to be more challenging to know how to teach prepositions more effectively. Reflecting from learning in both ESL and EFL settings, I have rarely seen helpful and logically consistent grammar textbooks or teaching methods that teach prepositions, though many teaching materials may have good representations on some core grammar points. I became more inquisitive about some potential, underlying reasons. With that in mind, as I was leafing through several articles, I discovered that the way we conceptualize prepositions, or the way we, wittingly or unwittingly, perceive the meaning of prepositions would dominantly affect our real teaching and learning. These cognitive variations might be related to the forementioned issues. It really makes sense that our book, The Grammar Book, takes a clear stance on polysemous perspective and successfully pulls out feasible teaching suggestions on the meaning of prepositions. I wonder how each cognitive perspective on sematic interpretation of prepositions has influenced different teaching contexts and which cognitive approach should best fit designing the most practical and effective teaching method. The articles that I chose are intertwined through examining how preposition acquisition occurs on the basis of different cognitive insights and then suggesting plausible teaching approaches, indirectly or directly. Each article represents one of the cognitive insights and attempts to prove their claims through conducting a research experiment, corpus data, or comparing them with previous research. Lindstromberg’s article represents pedagogical usefulness of polysemous insights, being a foundation of the meaning part in TGB. In contrast, Gucht, Willems, and Cuypere make a counter-argument that the alleged distinct senses of prepositions are only utterance meanings of entire phrases and clauses in favor of the monosemy approach. Another perspective, the collocational approach, is supported in Muller’s and Kidd and Cameron-Faulkner’s articles by
each emphasizing the role of frequency-based learning and/or input-based learning. Finally, Koshi, a little off the topic, provides appropriate techniques to raise grammar awareness where learning and acquisition can meet. Linderstrombeg and Koshi are the ones who explicitly develop and propose practical pedagogical application in details.

I believe that the first step to finding the most practical and effective teaching method would be to ruminate my previous learning contexts, matching them up with cognitive semantic insights distributed in the five articles. Among many reasons of why prepositions are tricky to learn and teach, the commonly acceptable reason, maybe more on the learners’ part, is attributed to the ambiguity of their meaning. Thus, it was perfectly understandable when Muller argues that even advanced learners use collocational knowledge in place of semantic knowledge and then suggests that frequency-based learning may be an effective pedagogical way. Upon reading the terminology, collocational knowledge, I was automatically reminded of the English education in Korea and possibly other Asian countries. Although Korean English education may not completely depend on the frequency-based learning, some of its learning performances seem to coincide with the conclusion of the article regarding the positive role of collocations. Both sides agree that frequency-based learning would promote fluency, particularly helping learners rapidly gain accuracy in semantically complex areas. Reflecting my learning experience in the 1990s, we were briefly taught that each preposition had a unitary meaning when first time the basic locative or spatial concepts of prepositions were introduced for the first time. But after that, most of our time was dedicated to learning prepositions narrow context by narrow context, often phrase by phrase and later memorizing them on an ever growing list. In other words, prepositions were introduced from the monosemy perspective in the beginning, and later that semantic system was suddenly ignored because of the overwhelming numbers of seemingly exceptional senses of
preposition. The real sentimentality in the Korean education circle was “the better you are at memorizing the collocational phases, the higher score you get”. This was how they conceptualized the successful learning outcomes. This pedagogical approach only suggested that the semantics of prepositions are too complicated and unsystematic to learn and only left students the burden of rote learning and a heavy dependence on collocational knowledge. As a result, the students failed to expand their own horizon to see any pattern or make any potential logical connection among collocational knowledge. It was exactly the case as Koshi puts, “…are taught though noncognitive, mechanically driven activities”. So it is not strange that I am highly skeptical of the effectiveness of collocational knowledge and frequency-based learning.

Interestingly, I found some similarity between the Korean students’ preposition learning process and Brian’s preposition acquisition in Kidd and Cameron-Faulkner’s article. They both initially apply a restricted one-to-one form-meaning approach and are sensitive to the frequency of linguistic form. Also, the monosemy approach couldn’t fully explain their linguistic representations in the later learning stage; instead, their performance heavily depended on their respective input. The differences were that Brian was a native speaking child with the successful acquisition of prepositions while the Korean students were none native middle school speakers with relatively negative results. I think what really causes such a gap in learning output is the quantity and quality of the inputs from their respective learning environment. I believe that the scope of NSs’ collocational knowledge seems to be far wider, and the distinction between their collocational knowledge and semantic knowledge is a lot hazier than those of NNSs’. That is, NSs would likely learn their collocational knowledge in a loose, open, and ready-to-develop fashion, while NNSs tend to settle with inflexible, closed fixation. As a result, when Brian reached the next developmental stage, he was able to cultivate abilities to categorize the contextual properties
of each sense’s use. I imagine that his linguistic transition would be much more natural and accepting through more diverse and context-enriching input, hence moving toward the acquisition process. In contrast, NNSs, without stable and contextualized input, would go through far longer process and could possibly lead to discontinuity of learning in some cases. For instance, if NNSs stumble upon a slightly different version of a piece of collocation knowledge, it often acts as a heresy of the original form or a piece of totally new information that NNSs feel obligated to memorize. I have seen many ESL students feeling short-changed or frustrated when this happened. Also, collocational knowledge in spoken language might not correspond to written language, other genres, or registry.

The contrast between NNSs and NSs above was a gentle reminder that F1 acquisition cannot always be uniformly applied to SLA, but it guides me to a pedagogical direction to start with and to the questions: how can teachers help learners to develop the abilities that Brian had? How can teachers close the logical gap between native-speaking input and non-native speaking input? If the learning success is considered NSs’ natural acquisition, NSSs need to be provided with additional pedagogical instruction and support. I think Lindstromberg’s polysemy approach would sufficiently solve the issue here. The following learning experience that I had in the U.S. encapsulates how students from various learning backgrounds transformed their previous learning experience into a fundamentally different pedagogical application. In ESL class, after we had gone through some “core” grammar topics, selected by the instructor, the instructor asked for our participation in choosing more topics for the rest of the semester. The first one that came out in an agreed manner was prepositions. What surprised us was that we thought we were quite confident with the use of prepositions, but we had more serious practical issues compared to other grammar topics. Now, I understand that false confidence for proficiency appear to derive
from our comforting collocational knowledge. However, as we went into detail, our collocational knowledge hardly explained the ambiguity of prepositions. When the instructor showed us a video clip and asked us to portray some scenes, we had a really hard time to find the preposition/prepositional phrase that perfectly summarize the scenes. We could have gotten the meaning crossed by using other grammar structures and context clues. Shockingly, we did not have a clear image of prepositions, even in spatial relations with a few of the relatively less frequently used prepositions. To clarify the core meaning of the troubled prepositions, the teacher drew pictures on the board and demonstrated some movements. Her way of presenting the pictures was somewhat different from those we would have seen many times in grammar class or something that comes out if you search prepositions in Google Image. Many of us had authentic “a-ha” moments, especially when the teacher repeatedly demonstrated the meaning of a preposition in various and enriching contexts with pictures, gestures, and verbal explanation and when the teacher clarified meaning by contrasting how semantically-related prepositions may differ in meaning. I realized that the equation of preposition teaching with using icons and pictures may not always bring out a satisfying result. The use of icons for teaching prepositions has been very popular, but how you present them to students is a lot more important. This, again, reminds me of the link between Brian’s stable linguistic environment and his abilities to infer the meaning of each sense in the later stage.

The next challenge for us was, as Kidd and Cameron-Faulkner briefly mention, that multiple one-to-many form-function mappings create potential problems for NSs, to establish relationships of a more abstract nature by extending the meaning of prepositions beyond expressing only a literal meaning. As we learned that we didn’t have to rely on collocational knowledge, we showered the teacher with chains of questions. Most of us understood the
existence of distinct senses of prepositions, but were intimidated by its specificity. One problem was that English prepositions do not always match up well to ESL learners’ F1, particularly in their spatial meaning. The other problem was that we used to learn spatial and temporal uses separately from each other. The implication from the previous learning was that the temporal prepositions can only be used with certain words and phrases, while spatial prepositions can be more flexible in their use. But the meaning of the whole phrase is changed when it occurs. With these two major problems combined, we began questioning the alleged collocational expressions. To me, it was a turning point when the teacher explained that maybe Americans treated months like a container (as in in May), while considering days something on the calendar (as in on Monday). I have forgotten the exact wording, but I was able to picture more metaphorical extensions by myself and appreciate the fundamentally different mentality of Americans. Later, while listening to the poster session on preposition in 484 course and looking into Lindstromberg’s article for the final project, I was impressed by how some of the pictures that represent even metaphorical senses make a huge difference in class. At the same time, I was disappointed when finding out that the article was published in 1996, but the dictionaries, course materials, or methods for ESL learners have not changed or improved, as far as I know, in terms of a more systematic portrayal of the semantic consistency. I can easily imagine how many of my ESL classmates would benefit from the icons that show how the prototype meaning holds throughout its metaphorical extensions.

While many textbooks suggest that anchoring the meaning of prepositions in spatial relationship is the first step to helping students learn to deal with more abstract and metaphorical meanings, I deeply agree with Lindstromberg’s point that there is no natural or necessary order of learning. I believe that it can be more beneficial for all levels to leave some wiggle room to
learn to treat prepositions more open endedly, rather than giving them a frozen definition of prepositions. However, we should definitely use good reasoning to evaluate the individual learning context.

I am now confused about the cognitive rationale behind my ESL teacher’s lessons. While I was in her class and I have been articulating the experience into words for this final project, I have almost concluded that the teacher was based on the polysemy perspective. Although the teacher didn’t have to deduce any claim in any linguistic or cognitive manner to us, it was obvious that her presentation was close to the prototype theory. However, now that the class is over, I have reflected on it. I am fluctuating between the teacher using the polysemy and monosemy perspective. Back then, I didn’t probe to see if the teacher and I were on the same semantic reasoning page, but now that I have studied the different cognitive insights and can label them according to their features, I have started wondering what was happening in my mind and if the transition from polysemy to monosemy was the teacher’s ultimate goal. Were the distinct senses of an individual preposition stored in my semantic memory? Did I recognize that context dependent uses of words do not need to be stored in my memory? Did I subconsciously want to simplify the complexity of language-specific grounds? Did I apply different semantic insights to each preposition? To this confusion, the most likely answer is discussed in Gucht, Willems, and Cuypere’s article. According to them, prepositions only have instrumental meanings which are bound to be more abstract than lexical meanings, and instrumental meanings depend on the combination with other lexical meanings. In line with the theory, on that day, I think I managed to extract common features from the different uses and abstract a monosemous sense over these different uses. Then, was the teacher approaching prepositions in the monosemy view from the
beginning? Honestly, I am baffled. I can’t speak for the rest of the class, but the monosemy approach somewhat wrapped up years of prepositions learning and took me to another level.

As I was introduced the new cognitive perspective with four articles, every view seemed to make sense in some way, but didn’t make sense in others. All the experimental data and research results sounded academically convincing and trustworthy, but deep down there was always a nagging question, “With these theories and suggested applications, how are you going to present to your students in Korea?” “How are you going to bring this whole package to their level?” I have teaching materials and supporting theories in my hand, but what I really need is a real, tangible tool in which to teach prepositions, or more idealistically a tool in which to talk with students about prepositions and walk them through all the cognitive variants, if necessary. For that reason, Koshi’s Socratic questioning approach comes in at the right time. I strongly feel as a teacher -to-be in Korea, without this strategy, any of the cognitive approaches and pedagogical applications mentioned won’t be completed.

I had the greatest learning experience that exactly matched with HGSQ. It was only two months of learning, but it transformed my attitude toward language. Transforming is not an exaggeration. By the time the program was over, my English proficiency, in terms of knowledge, may have been nearly the same as it was two months ago, but I felt that something was activated. Something urged me to push myself to actually use the bits of knowledge that I had unconsciously accumulated. We’ve learned the power of the functional items, such as punctuations, articles, and prepositions, through analyzing and discussing the exemplar sentences in discourse. The discussion was not one of the usual artificial and cliché activities that are frequently used in ESL classroom which often end up in awkward silence. Instead, it was a real thought-provoking and pushing- to- your- limit exercise. We didn’t only learn grammar. We
learned how to learn grammar and the language. For the first week or so, I was intimidated by the whole new learning style, but for the remainder of the class, I found myself enjoying the experience of inductive learning, sensing it as a challenge, not a threat because of the teacher’s incredible ability to elicit raw knowledge from us and to segue them into a useful lesson. We were no longer shy about our raw knowledge and became passionate to refine it through thinking out loud. I feel blessed to have such a powerful and indelible imprint on my language learning, but surprisingly, not everyone can benefit from that kind of Socratic questioning learning. A few students asked the teacher to teach idiomatic expressions in an overt way, just like other typical ESL teachers would do. What’s more problematic was that the students, out of habit, waited for the answer when the teacher wanted us to think. The students became insecure with the persistent instability of learning adaptation. I felt a hint of frustration and tension between the teacher and students, respectively. The teacher continued to give extra effort to get the students to change their tune toward the new learning style. At the end of the program, most of us were ready to think voluntarily and come up with our own reaction to any topic. We had the ownership of our learning. I guarantee the students who might not understand his intention do appreciate it now.

I have experienced all the cognitive approaches in my previous learning without knowing the linguistic terms. I had to take whatever was available in front of me at the time of each learning period. Each pedagogical application appeared to somehow meet the environmental demand that I faced. Going back to my initial query, what would be the best cognitive approach to elicit the most effective pedagogical method? I have no definite answer to that. The bottom line is that we should use all the conflicting theories as a reference not only for expanding your teaching knowledge but also for a tool to better understand the mentality of our students across the world. Teachers do not need to lean toward a particular perspective and insist on one way of the
pedagogical application suggested. Rather, we shift among various pedagogical applications in our hands while reading the class on the spot. It is a teacher’s duty to make a classroom a more accessible and thought-provoking place so as to make your student from French-speaking culture to feel free to share her conflicts like “I walked in the rain. vs J'ai marché sous la pluie / (under the rain)”, although she does correctly use the expression out of collocational knowledge. It is our job to open up a door to every student by taking our students from wherever they currently are to the next level. If our students come from a learning background that heavily depended on collocational knowledge, we will enlighten them to find an underlying pattern. If they are at a level where they can only see a literal sense in prepositions, we will introduce extended senses and, together, make a connection in a relatable manner. There won’t be a shortcut; it will take constant negotiations as well as the direct instruction on the both teachers and students part. Most importantly, the greatest success in teaching with this new ‘tossed salad’ approach will take place when the Socratic Questioning inspires our students to continue to do the self-discovery process outside of ESL world. We hope when they alone encounter unexpected, pattern-less senses of prepositions, they know what to do or at least where to start. As a result, they will be able to solidify and upgrade their interlanguage system even along with the evolution of the language itself. Therefore, our students will be true life-time, independent learners equipped with self-operating tools. This is what we should aim for. This is why we want to take a closer look at polysemy, monosemy, collocational perspectives, and other theories and why we, as teachers, want to persist in doing the whole process of discovery by ourselves, just like we want our students to do the same.
Reference


