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UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL  
DE MINAS GERAIS



C A P E S

# RESEARCHING METAPHORS IN NARRATIVES ABOUT FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

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MACQUARIE  
University  
SYDNEY - AUSTRALIA

**1. THE COGNITIVE THEORY OF METAPHOR**

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**2. THE RESEARCH ON METAPHORS IN  
NARRATIVES**

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**3. SOME OF MY STUDIES**

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**4. EMERGING ISSUES**

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**5. FUTURE RESEARCH TRENDS**

# HELLO!

**I am Ronaldo Gomes Jr.**

I am a professor at the School of Languages at UFMG, Brazil.

I am interested in

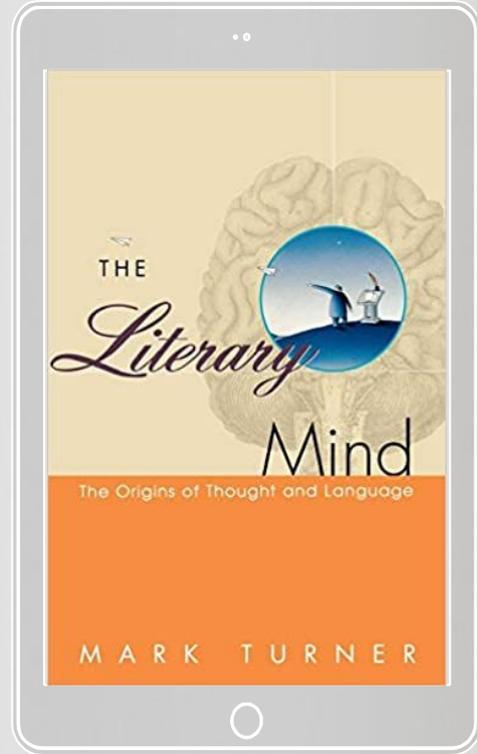
- ◆ Metaphors of Foreign Language Learning;
- ◆ Learning affordances of digital technologies;
- ◆ Out-of-school learning;
- ◆ Digital Design.



**1.**

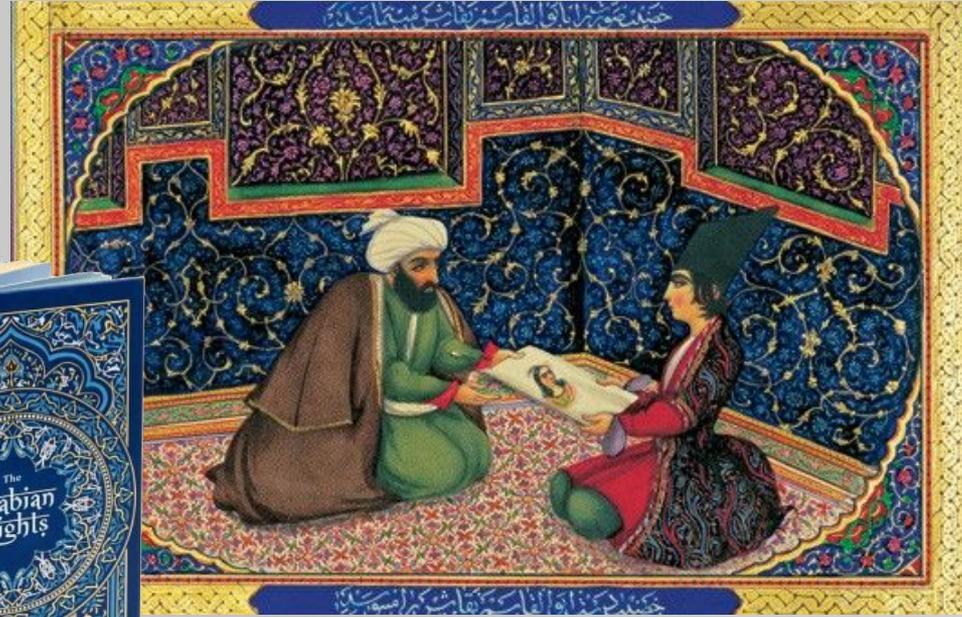
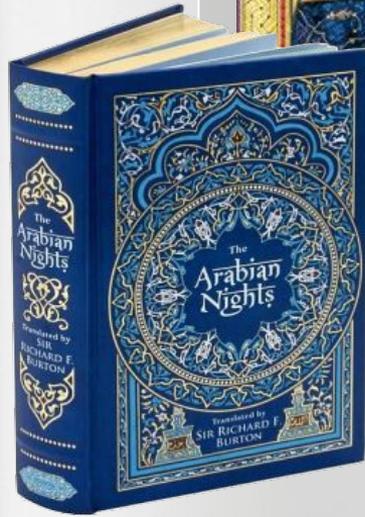
**THE COGNITIVE**   
**THEORY OF METAPHOR**

# WE HAVE A LITERARY MIND



**“** *the literary mind is not a separate kind of mind, it is our mind. The literary mind is the fundamental mind.*

(Turner, 1996:1)



**““** *It is our chief means of looking into the future, of predicting, of planning, and of explaining.*

(Turner, 1996:4)

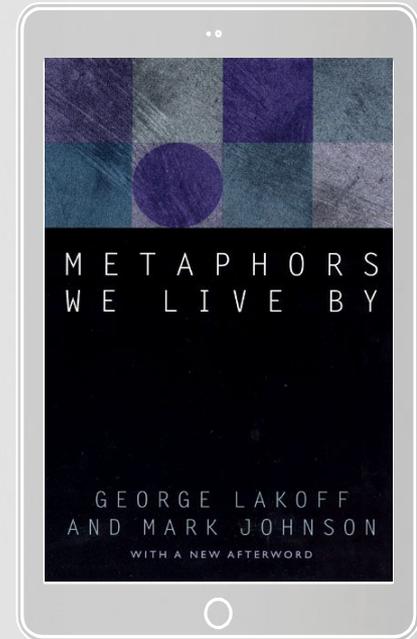
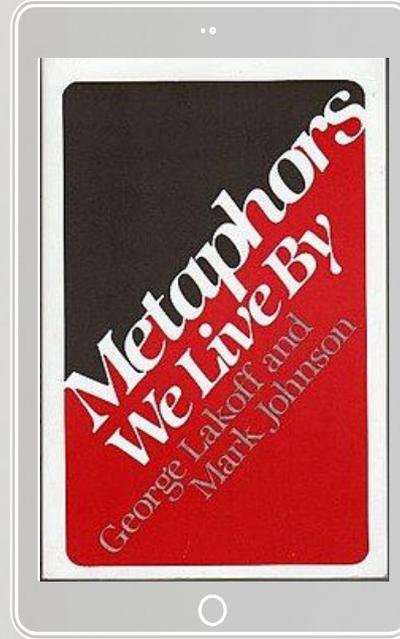
“ *The story I have offered reverses the view that language is built up from the sober to the exotic, that out of syntactic phrase structures one builds up language, that out of language one builds up narrative, that out of narrative, literary narrative is born as a special performance, and that out of literary narrative comes parable... It works the other way around... Story precedes grammar... Parable is the root of the human mind.*

(Turner, 1996:4)

## COGNITIVE TURN

Lakoff & Johnson (1980)

- ◆ Theory that goes way back;
- ◆ Not merely an ornament in language, but a **conceptual tool for (re) constructing and creating reality.**



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***"defending an argument"***

***"a cold personality"***

***"exploding with anger"***

***"a step-by-step process"***

***"building a theory"***

***"digesting an idea"***

***"fire in someone's eyes"***

***"people passing away"***

***"foundering relationship"***

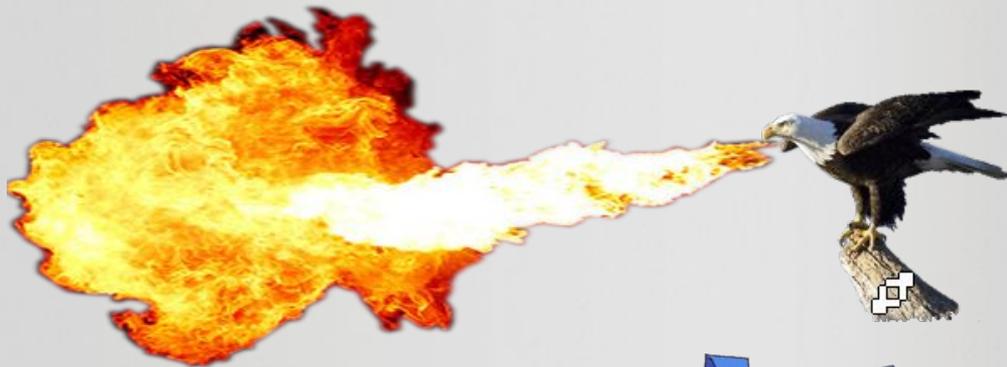
***"wandering aimlessly in life"***

# CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

*"understanding one domain of experience (that is typically abstract) in terms of another (that is typically concrete)."*

*"a systematic set of correspondences between two domains of experience."*

(KÖVECSES, 2020)



THAT IS ILLOGICAL...  
AND IT MAKES ME  
**VERY ANGRY!**



# MAPPING

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## SOURCE

THE CAUSE OF FIRE

CAUSING THE FIRE

THE THING ON FIRE

THE FIRE

INTENSITY OF FIRE

## TARGET

THE CAUSE OF ANGER

CAUSING THE ANGER

THE PERSON

THE ANGER

INTENSITY OF ANGER

**2.**

**THE RESEARCH ON  
METAPHORS IN  
NARRATIVES**



## AFTER THE COGNITIVE TURN

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- ◆ **everyday communicative situations, language in use:**
  - politics (Lakoff, 1991);
  - advertising (Forceville, 2002);
  - sports (Semino; Maschi, 1996);
  - music (Schröder 2012, 2014);
  
- ◆ **methods:**
  - multimodality (Forceville; Urios-Aparisi 2009)
  - corpora (Deignan 2005).

**““** *Metaphors enable the connection of information about a familiar concept to another familiar concept, leading to a new understanding where the process of comparison between the two concepts acts as generators for new meaning.*

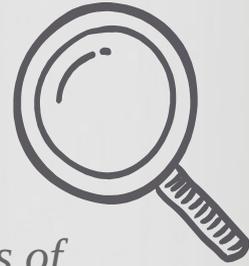
(JENSEN, 2006: 40)

## METAPHOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

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- ◆ Language as a reliable vehicle for collaboration between researcher and participants that broadens interpretations and understandings about education (Clandinin & Connely, 2000);
- ◆ Metaphors indicate what teachers think about teaching and guide their practices in the classroom (Clandinin, 1986).

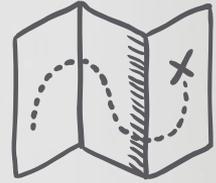
# METAPHORS



*Analyzing the metaphors that emerge from the stories of learners and teachers enables us to understand **what** and **how** they think.*

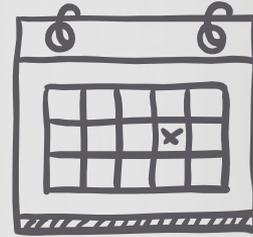
*Investigating the stories they tell, we can understand:*

- ◆ *the other stories in which they are projected;*
- ◆ *the metaphors that guide learning and teaching; and*
- ◆ *the domains that are used in these conceptualizations.*



# IN RETROSPECT

*Metaphor Research in  
Narratives of Foreign Language Learning and Teaching*



# The 1990s

*Demonstration of how revealing metaphors are and how they can assist the education of foreign language teachers.*

*Deductive reasoning*

# Metaphors We Work By (Thornbury, 1991)

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- ◆ Japanese class, in service English teachers;
- ◆ Highlight of comments;
- ◆ Metaphors: second-language acquisition theories, classroom as a moving object; and learning as computational and mechanical processes.
- ◆ language as SUBSTANCE and OBJECT that we can lose, process, and manipulate.
- ◆ Stimulating the production of metaphors and the subsequent reflection must be incorporated into teacher education.

# Metaphors We Teach and Learn By (Block, 1992)

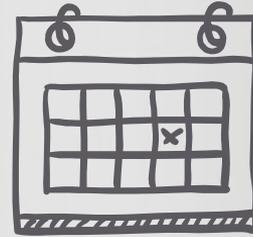
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- ◆ Students and teachers at a Spanish language institute.
- ◆ Oral interviews;
- ◆ **TEACHERS:** THE TEACHER IS A CONTRACTED PROFESSIONAL; SUPPORTING FATHER. THE LEARNER IS AN ACTIVE CLIENT.
- ◆ **LEARNERS:** THE TEACHER IS A CONTRACTED PROFESSIONAL, INVESTIGATOR, GOD, DEDICATED PROFESSIONAL, FRIEND and LAW AGENT.
- ◆ Importance of metaphorical analysis to investigate how similar or distinct the agendas of learners and teachers are.

# From metaphor to metalanguage (Swales, 1994)

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- ◆ Visual narratives (drawings);
- ◆ Perceptions of English students at a language center in Dubai;
- ◆ Conceptualizations of language involving nature, life in the local territory, family, and the empowerment provided by education;
- ◆ Metaphors indicate perceptions about education that are culturally constructed. Analysis should consider the participants' points of view.



# The 2000s

*The impacts of (digital) technology on how we create meaning in narratives.*

## METAPHORS 2.0

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- ◆ Situated discourse and emic perspective gradually gain space;
- ◆ Metaphor generation processes are more explicit and contextualized;
- ◆ Detailing of the communicative and discursive situations that involve the narrative;
- ◆ Consideration of other forms of narrative, such as oral, visual, digital, multimedia and multimodal narratives;
- ◆ Studies start to be more reflective. Narrative is not only conceived as an instrument of investigation, but as a reflective and formative exercise.

## NEXT STEPS

- ◆ Breen (2001): learners' metaphors in theories of acquisition;
- ◆ Ellis (2001), metaphorical constructions present in learners' diaries;
- ◆ Oxford (2001): conceptualizations of learners about their teachers;
- ◆ Farrel (2006): metaphorical analysis of in service English teachers' beliefs;
- ◆ Sullivan (2010): metaphors of unequal power relations between natives and non-natives;
- ◆ Kalaja, Dufvan & Alanen (2013); Kalaja (2015): metaphorical descriptions in visual narratives as revealing the conceptions, representations and beliefs;
- ◆ Chik (2018): learners' visual and multimedia narratives to explore their beliefs and foreign language learning practices, as well as the visual metaphors used in hand-made drawings and digital texts.



**3.** 

# **SOME OF MY STUDIES**

## **METAPHORIZED IDENTITIES (Gomes Junior, 2015)**

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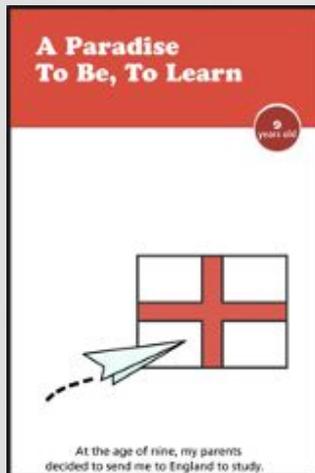
- ◆ Norton and Toohey (2002) already signaled that the future for identity research would be to develop the understanding of learners as socially constructed and also as embodied, semiotic and emotional beings who identify, resist identification and act in their social worlds;
- ◆ Learner is seen as a sociocultural construct influenced by his social, embodied, sensory-motor and identity experiences;
- ◆ Metaphorical analysis to outline and analyze identity profiles;
- ◆ How learners conceptualize themselves in Multimodal Language Learning Histories

# THE LEARNER IS A TRAVELER



## *Kindergarten*

My journey of learning English started since I was four. Compared to other children, it was a late start. Since most of them started off one or two years earlier. As my family moved to Indonesia for work, I studied in an International School at Jakarta. To be honest, I could not recall much on how my kindergarten teacher taught me English.



At the age of nine, my parents decided to send me to England to study.

# THE LEARNER IS A TRAVELER



TRAVELING  
BY  
FOREIGN WORDS

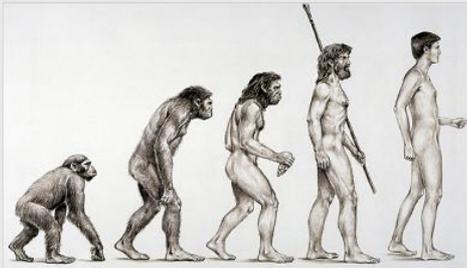
HOME ABOUT DRAFT

*My English learning history  
goes back a long way...*



# THE LEARNER IS A TRAVELER

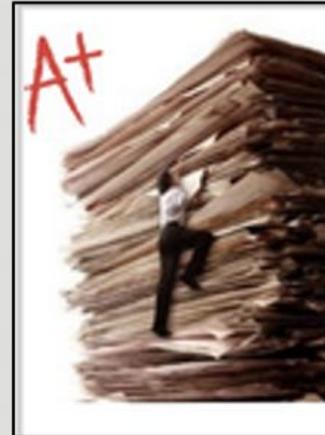
My evolution of English



- Stage 1: Dryopithecus - Kindergarten
- Stage 2: Ramapithecus - Elementary
- Stage 3: Early homo sapiens - Secondary
- Stage 4: Cro-magnon man - Form 6-7
- Stage 5: Modern homo sapiens - University



# THE LEARNER IS A CLIMBER



# THE LEARNER IS A GAMBLER



**HOWEVER, could I win the game? Spin the wheel!**  
(click the Spin Button)



**Spin !!**

# THE LEARNER IS A BABY



*What Did I Do in Order to Improve my English?*



# THE LEARNER IS AN ANIMAL



I consider myself as a culture vulture.



**““** *Metaphors that learners use to conceptualize themselves and give us linguistic evidence of how identity constructions occur cognitively.*

(Gomes Junior, 2015: 168)

# LEARNING ENGLISH IS A JOURNEY (Paiva & Gomes Junior, 2016)

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- ◆ AN ARGUMENT IS A JOURNEY (LAKOFF & JOHNSON, 1985)
- ◆ Project AMFALE: <http://www.veramenezes.com/amfale.htm>
- ◆ ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IS A JOURNEY  
*... my efforts on the English learning path were huge.*
- ◆ ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING DEFINES A PATH  
*... I decided to study Literature at the University, because, for me, it would be the only way to have good, pleasant, and, above all, free education.*
- ◆ THE PATH TO LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS A SURFACE  
*So, I decided to take the arduous path of learning a foreign language having the classroom as its only environment to practice and some few colleagues to interact with.*

## LEARNING ENGLISH IS A JOURNEY (Paiva & Gomes Junior, 2016)

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- ◆ Search for metaphors:

PT: (alcançar, caminho, caminhar, chegar, comecei, começo guia, ir, obstáculos, partida, passaporte, passo, percorrer, percurso, prosseguir, rota, volta)

EN: (back, departure, go, guide, move, moving, obstacle, passport, return, route, start, started, steps, walk, way)

# IMAGE-SCHEMA

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## SOURCE

*So I looked for someone who was already studying in fifth grade or sixth grade to teach me at least one word in English, and "RABBIT" was my passport to a new world.*

## PATH

*In second year we had some problems with teacher changes and strikes, but I was still determined ... yes, even with that Present Perfect crossing my way. I couldn't understand that at all!*

## GOAL

*I am grateful for the persistence of my mother, because thanks to her I was able to conquer new horizons and get to "where I arrived".*

## **JOURNEY**

passport  
ways  
steps  
obstacles  
coming back  
going  
arriving

## **LEARNING**

initial motivation  
strategies  
actions  
difficulties  
reliving experiences  
seeking experiences  
ending a stage / starting another

## **IMAGES TELLING STORIES**

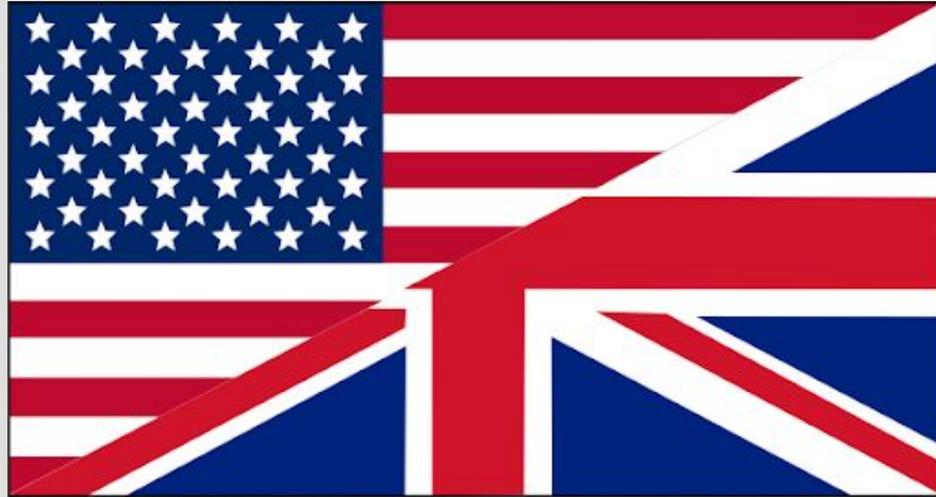
### **(Paiva & Gomes Junior, 2019)**

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- ◆ Possibilities of using digitally produced multimedia language learning histories to learn about the experiences of learning English;
- ◆ Group of 43 English undergraduates;
- ◆ The metaphors and metonymies used in describing the learning process were identified in the pool of multimodal data and classified systematically within an adaptation of Kalantzis and Cope's (2012) framework for design analysis; the Grammar of Visual Design (Kress and van Leeuwen (2006); and theories of visual metaphor and metonymies.



- ◆ It is usually metonymically represented by the American Flag or Union Jack



- ◆ The main visual metaphors portray the mind as a container and learning English as a game or a journey.



## RESEARCHING METAPHORS IN NARRATIVES AT UFMG

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- ◆ CHALLENGE (Gomes Junior 2015);
- ◆ CONSTRUCTION (Gomes Junior 2015; Ferreira 2016);
- ◆ DISCOVERY (Silva, 2016);
- ◆ FINANCE (Gomes Junior, 2015; Silva, 2016);
- ◆ GROWTH (Silva 2016; Silva 2017; Paiva; Gomes Junior 2019);
- ◆ GAME (Gomes Junior 2015; Silva 2016; Paiva; Gomes Junior 2019);
- ◆ TRANSACTION (Silva 2017);
- ◆ LOVE (Gomes Junior 2015); and
- ◆ WAR (Gomes Junior 2015).

**4.**

**EMERGING ISSUES**



## RESEARCHING METAPHORS IN NARRATIVES HELPS TO

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- ◆ explore concepts and views on language, teaching and learning;
- ◆ understand cultural models;
- ◆ access interests and motivations to teach and learn;
- ◆ understand the relationship between theory and practice in the classroom;
- ◆ access perspectives and views on the classroom, learning styles, and teaching methods;
- ◆ find out the needs of the individuals involved in the process;
- ◆ investigate beliefs, perceptions and conceptualizations;
- ◆ understand the (re)construction of identities;
- ◆ reveal both individual and social important aspects;
- ◆ evaluate the role of different media and semiotic modes in the construction of meaning;
- ◆ investigate the process in an inductive and indirect way.

**5.**

**FUTURE RESEARCH**

**TRENDS** 

## WE NEED TO...

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- ◆ consider the potential of multimodality in the construction of meaning in narratives;
- ◆ access and register narratives with the use and integration of multiple media and semiotic modes;
- ◆ consider the way we narrate in our day-to-day (simultaneously using speech, gestures, facial expressions, intonation, writing, icons, emojis, memes, GIFs, colors, etc.);
- ◆ understand how relations of power and issues about gender, class and race act in the process of teaching and learning (foreign) languages.

