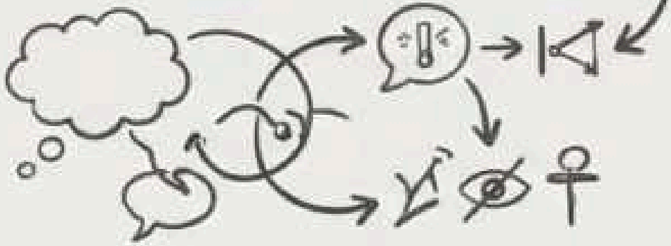
Language: The system of symbols through which culture is passed.

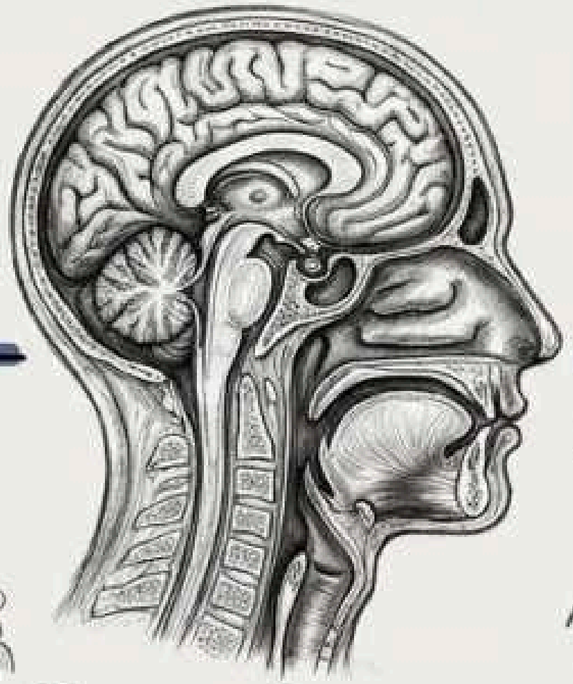
¶ 2.1

Biological Uniqueness
(What makes it special?)

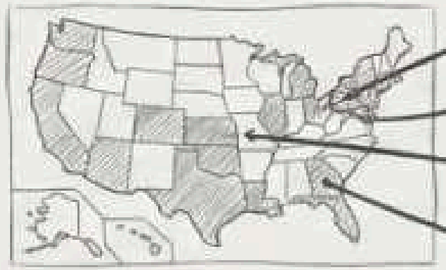


Cognitive Shaping
(Does it shape thought?)





Societal Variation
(How does speech vary?)



- Dialects
- Accents
- Codeswitching
- Jargons

Ecological Disappearance
(Why are they vanishing?)



- Globalization
- Digital Dominance
- Cultural Assimilation

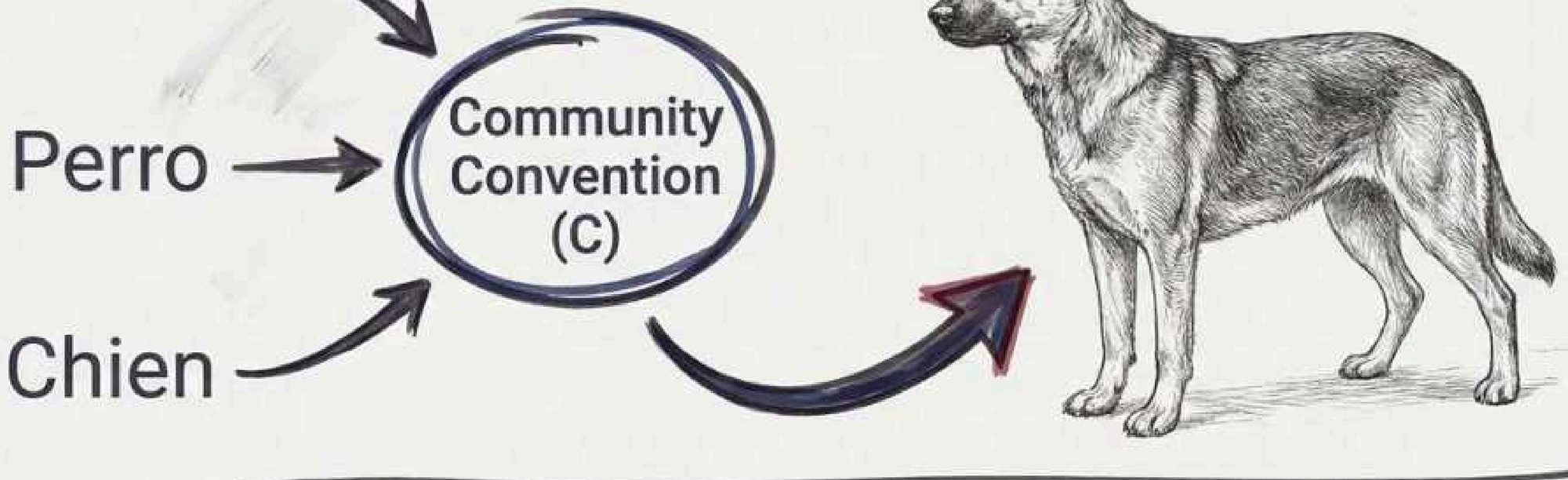
¶2.2

Sound (S) ⇏ Meaning (M)

Dog

Perro

Chien

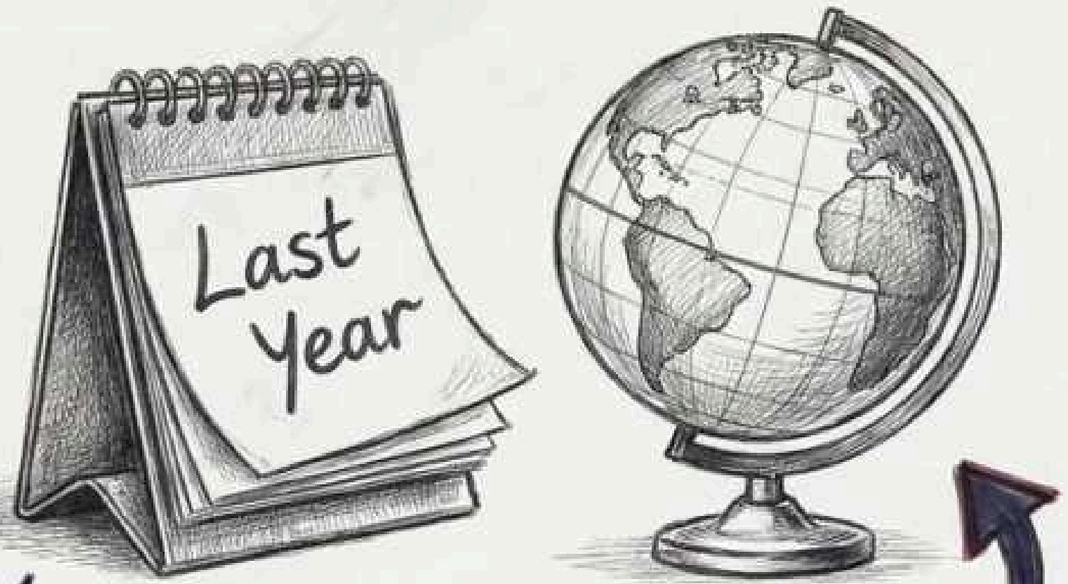


Symbols are arbitrary. There is nothing about the sound that fits the animal. The link between sound and meaning is a convention that a community agrees upon and children learn.

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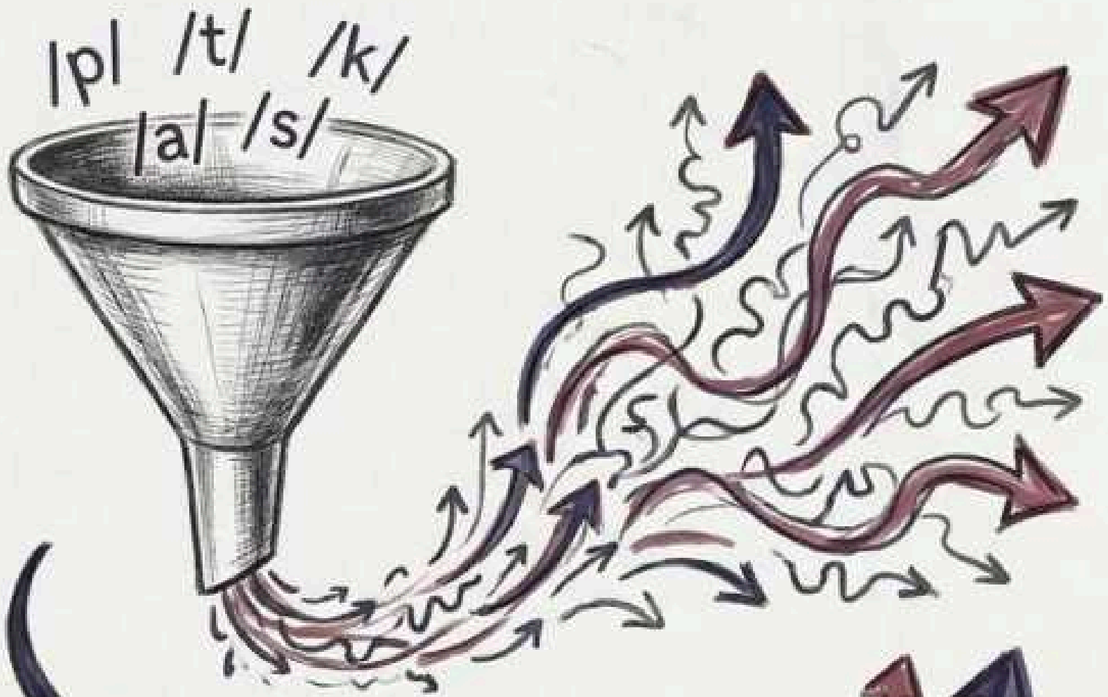
¶2.3

Communication > (Here + Now)



Talking about things
that are absent.

$\sum$(Limited Sounds) = ∞ (New Sentences)

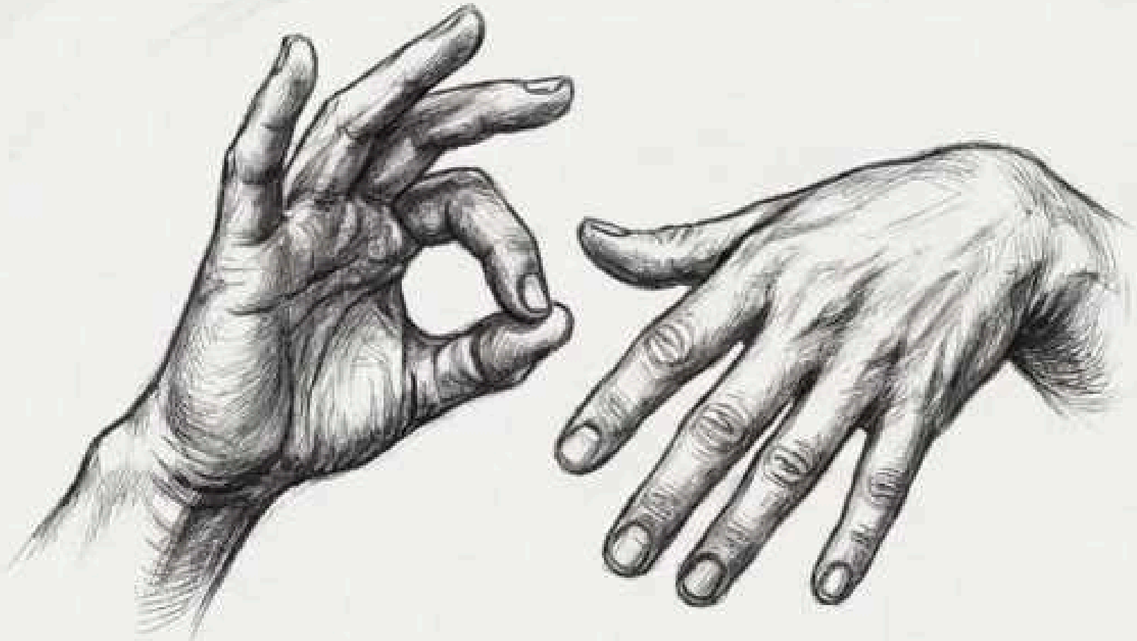


Unlimited combinations
from a limited set.

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Innate Capacity: Children pick up their first language without formal lessons. Within a few years, humans can spontaneously create fully complex language systems.

¶ 2.4



Nicaragua, 1980s

Isolated deaf children → Brought together in new schools → Spontaneous creation of full sign language

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Linguistic anthropologists study speech in society. Everyone commands several ways of speaking.

¶ 2.5

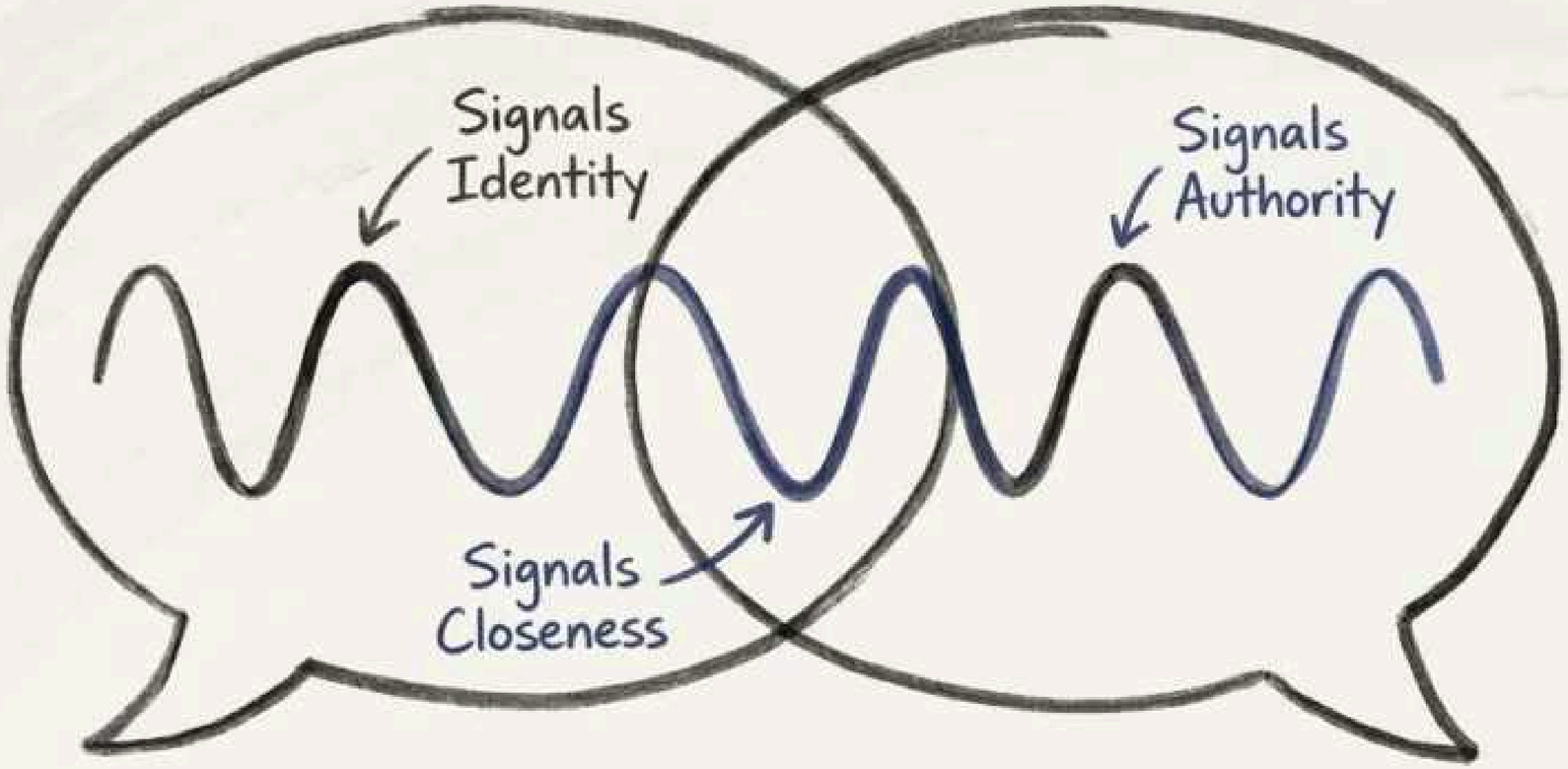
One speaker possesses multiple varieties

Dialect →	Defined by the User Region, Class, Age
Register →	Defined by the Setting Friend vs. Judge

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Code-Switching

¶2.6

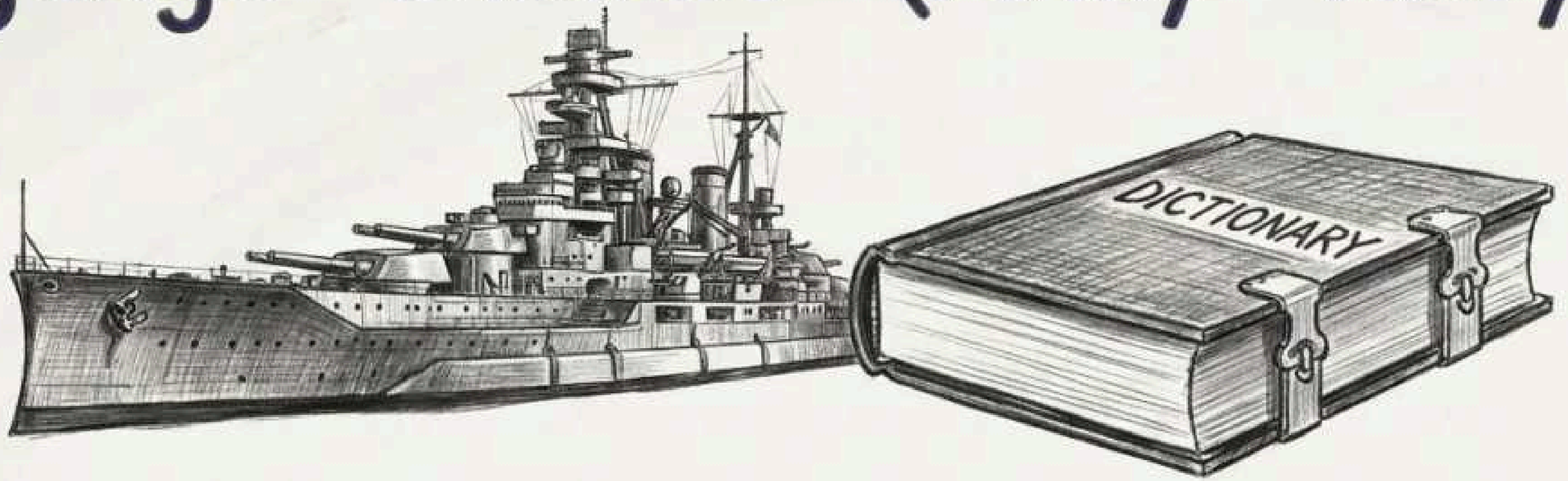


Follows precise community rules that members know without being able to state them.

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¶2.7

Language = Dialect + (Army + Navy)



The distinction is a political judgment. Standard varieties are usually the speech of powerful groups; speakers of other varieties are unfairly judged as uneducated.

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¶2.8

Speech Acts

Utterance = Action



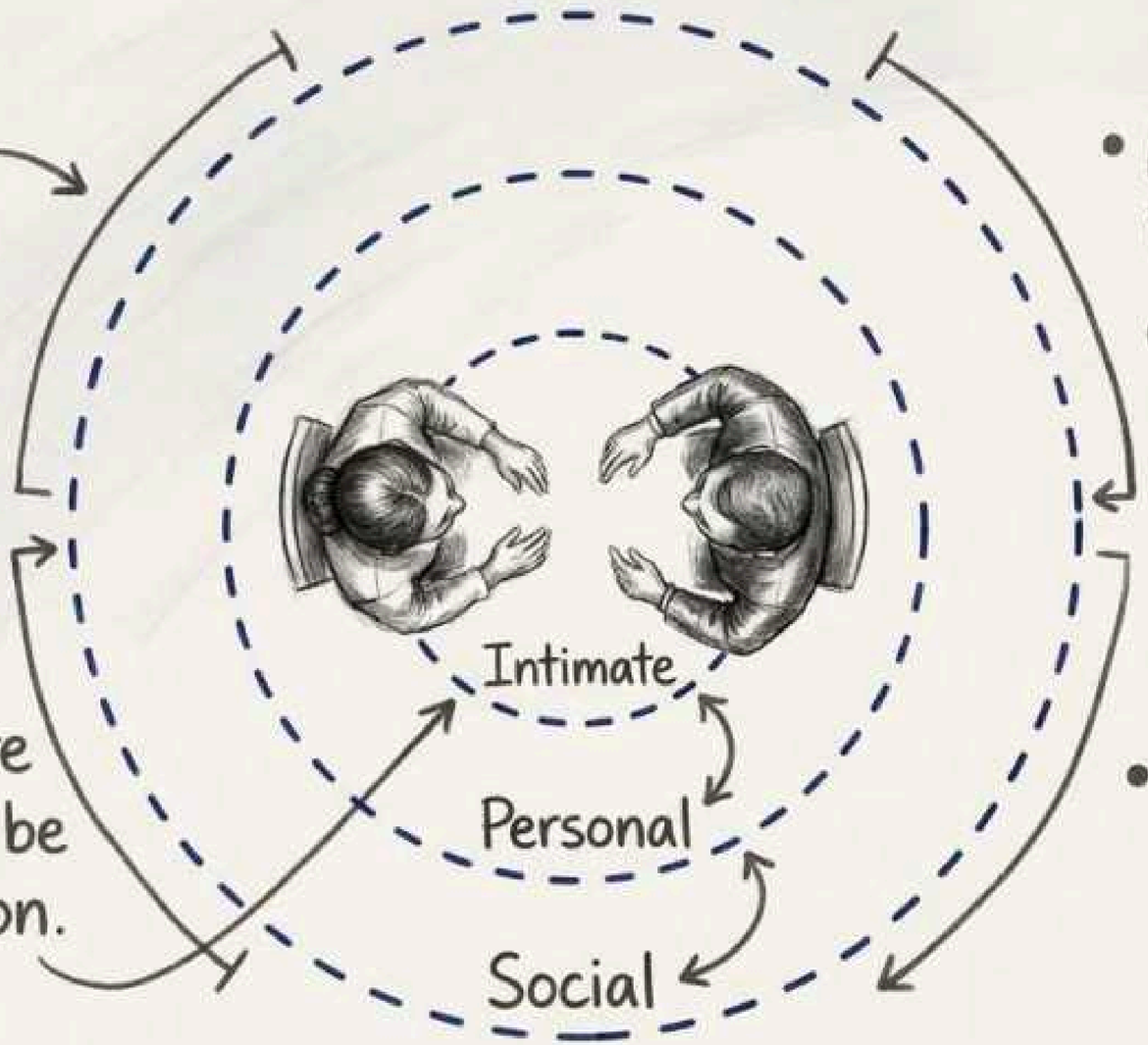
The Performative Side of Language: Words don't just describe the world. They create promises, insults, and bonds.

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¶ 2.9

Proxemics & Silent Communication

- Edward Hall: Conversational distance varies by culture.



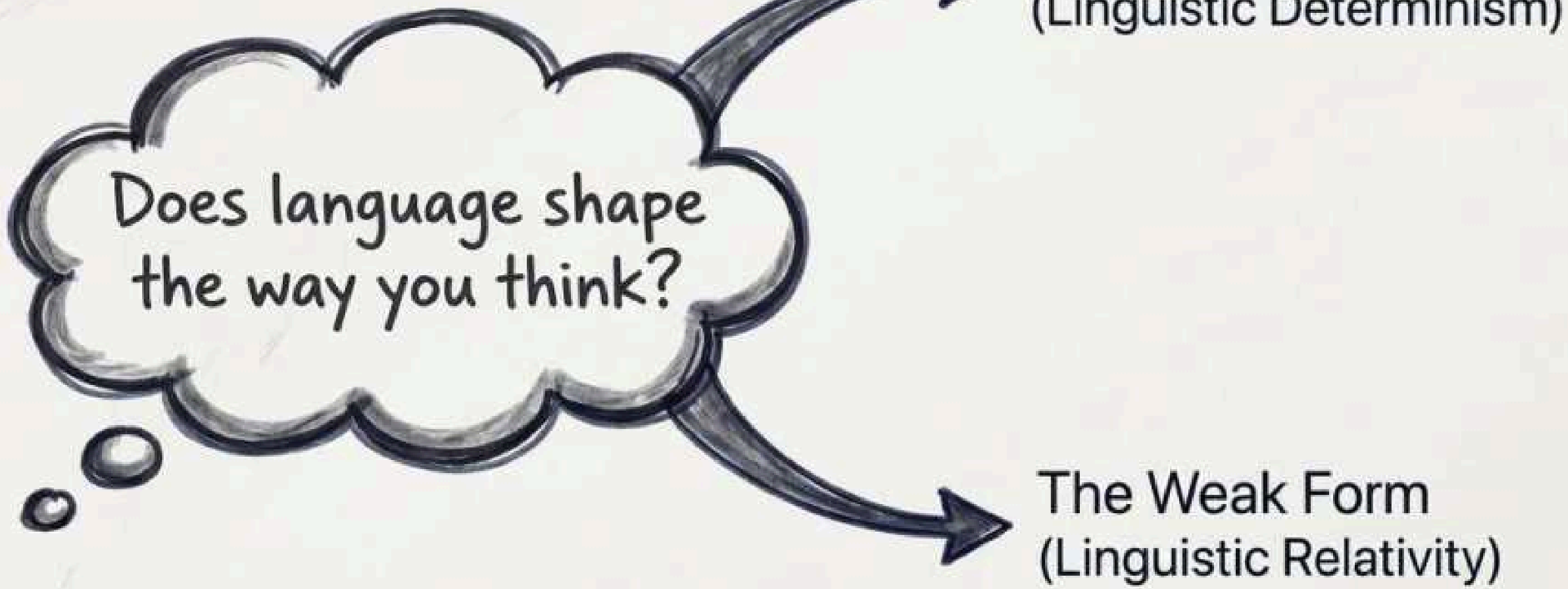
- Much communication is gesture, posture, and facial expression.

- A friendly gesture in one place may be a facial expression.

- A friendly gesture in one place may be rude elsewhere.

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¶ 2.10



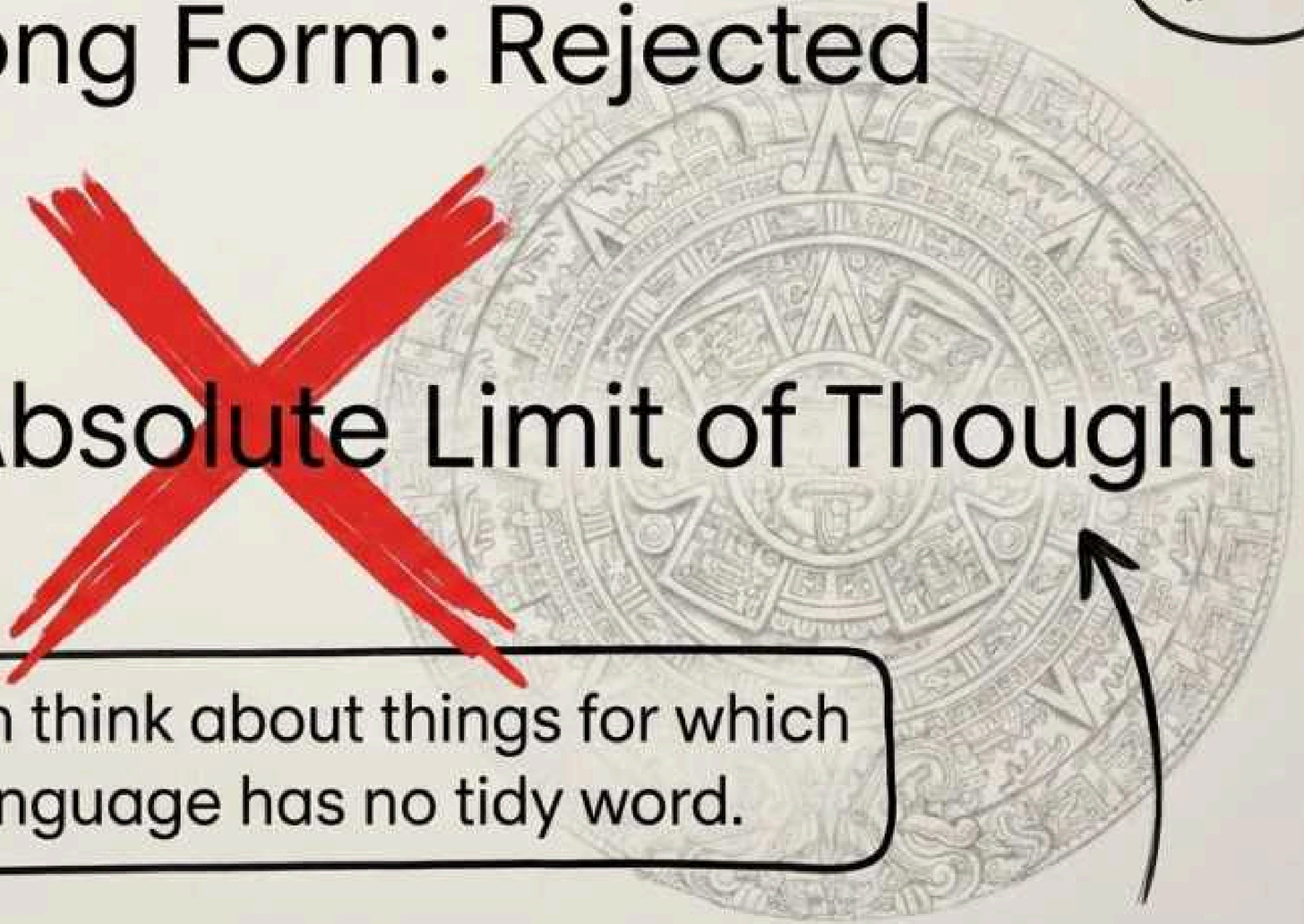
The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis:

Two distinct forms that met very different scientific fates.

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¶ 2.11

The Strong Form: Rejected



Language = Absolute Limit of Thought

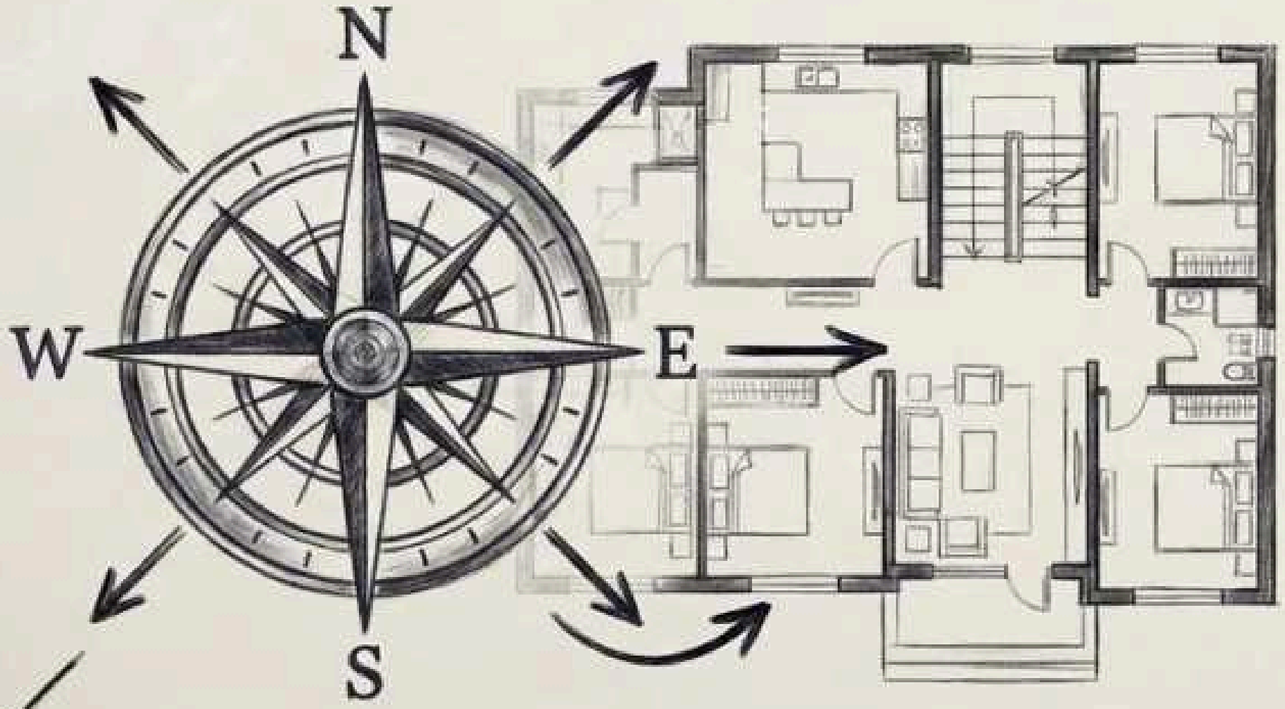
People can think about things for which their language has no tidy word.

Whorf claimed Hopi had no concept of time. Researcher Ekkehart → Malotki proved Hopi possesses plenty of time expressions.

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¶ 2.12

The Weak Form: Habits of Attention & Memory





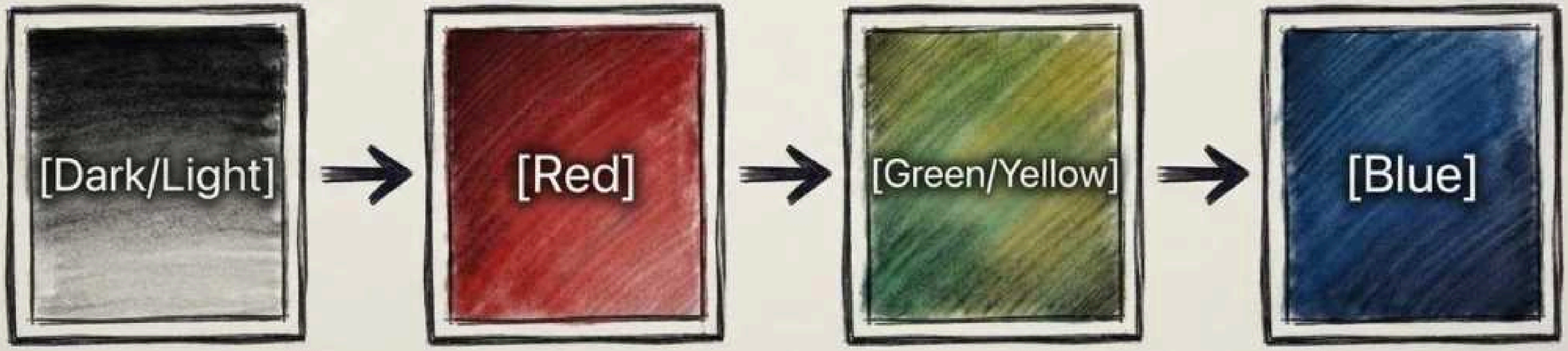
Speakers of Guugu Yimithirr use absolute compass directions (North/South) instead of relative ones (Left/Right).

They keep track of their bearings with striking accuracy, even indoors.

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¶ 2.13

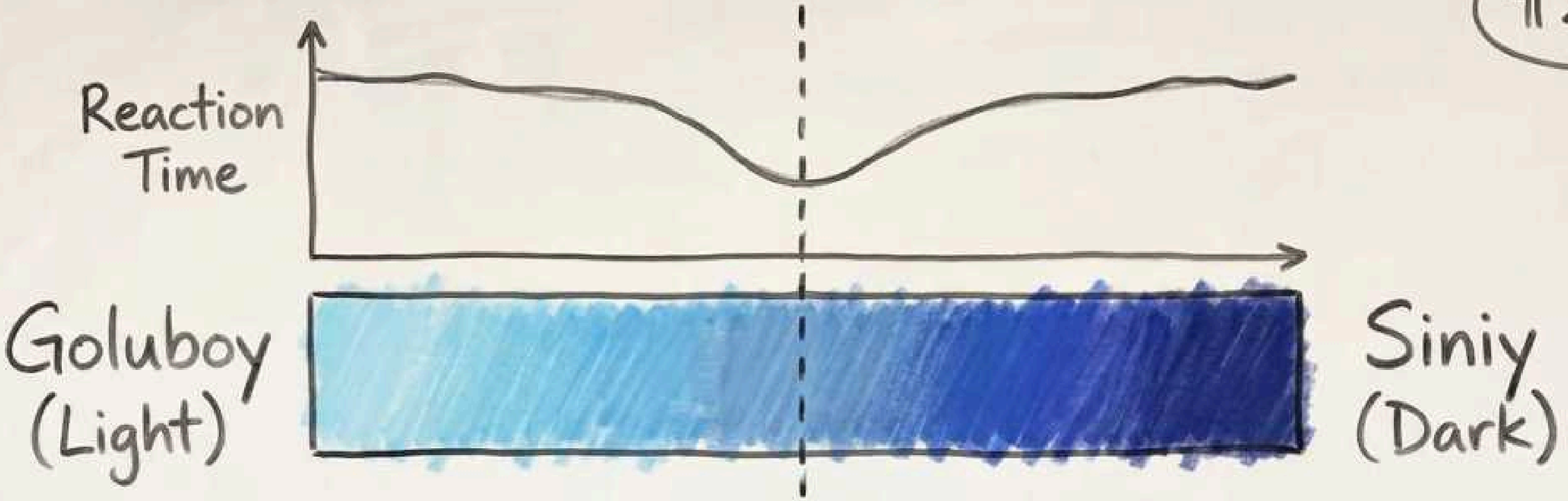
Berlin & Kay (1969): The Evolution of Color Terms



Perception is universal, yet naming is shaped by culture and need.
Languages add basic color terms in a roughly fixed, predictable order.
Languages add basic color terms in a roughly fixed, predictable order.

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¶ 2.14



Russian speakers tell apart shades across this specific lexical boundary slightly faster than English speakers.

The effects are small and contested.

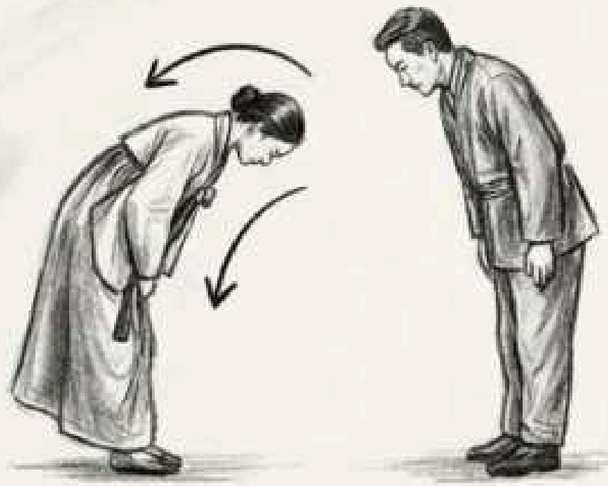
Language is a modest influence, not a prison.

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¶ 2.15

Sentence = Syntax + Social Reality

Japanese / Korean



Marking respect & status

How do you know?



I saw it

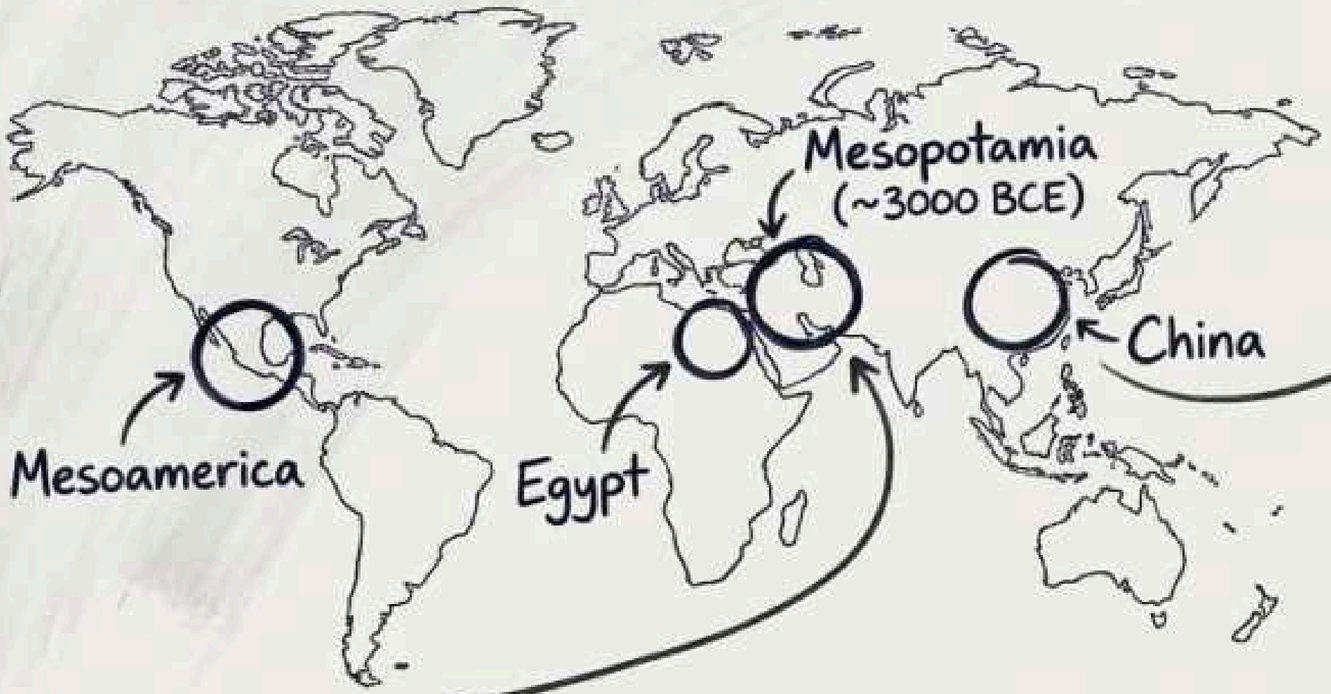
I heard about it

Evidentiality

Grammar writes social life into every sentence, requiring speakers to mark respect, status, or the source of their knowledge.

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¶2.16



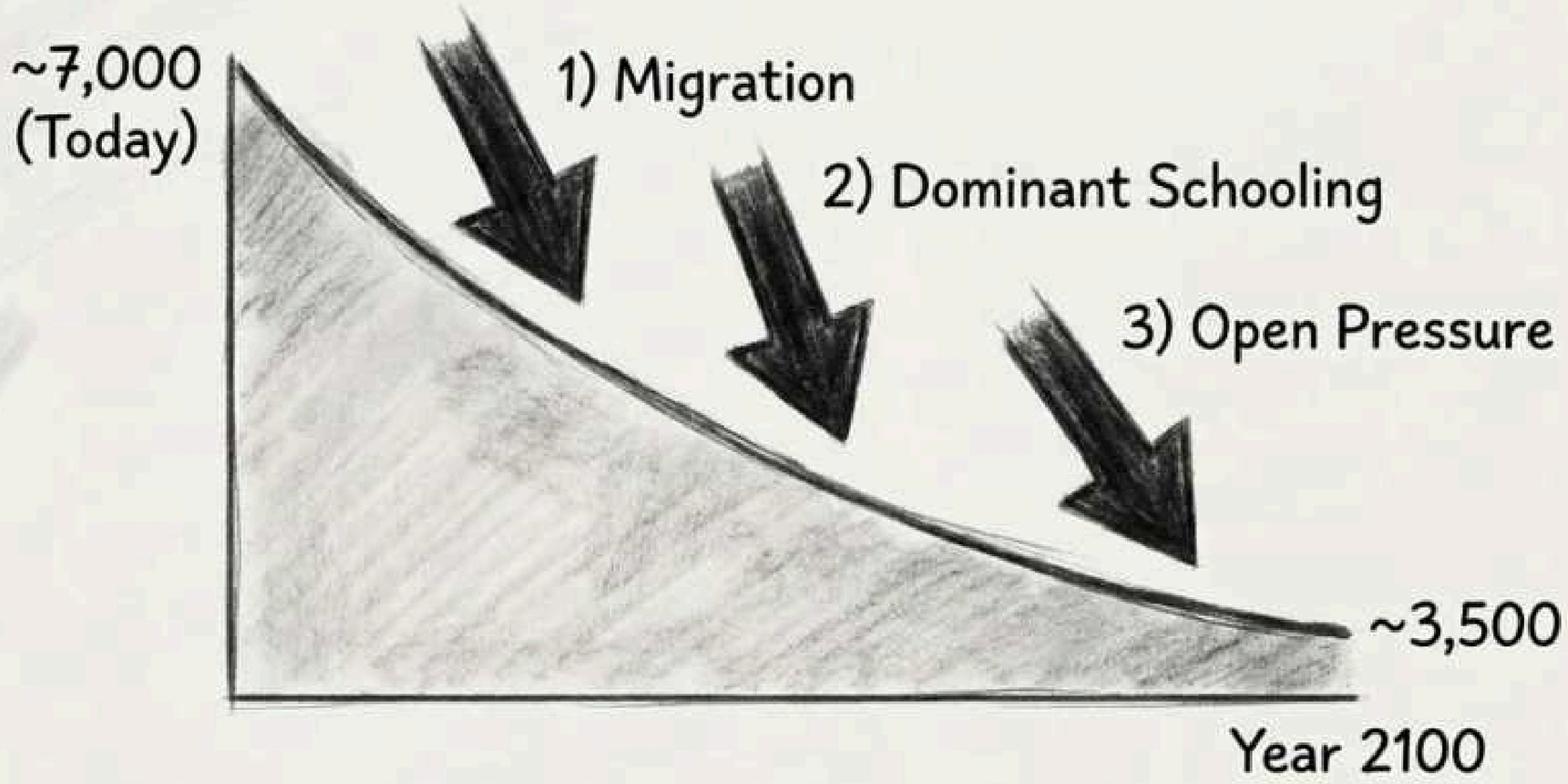


- **Written Word:**
  - Arose independently multiple times.
  - Lets knowledge outlast memory and travel across distance.
  - Often serves power (tax records, royal decrees).
- **Oral Tradition:**
  - Many languages have never been written, relying entirely on oral traditions to carry their rich histories.

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¶ 2.17

The Mathematics of Language Loss

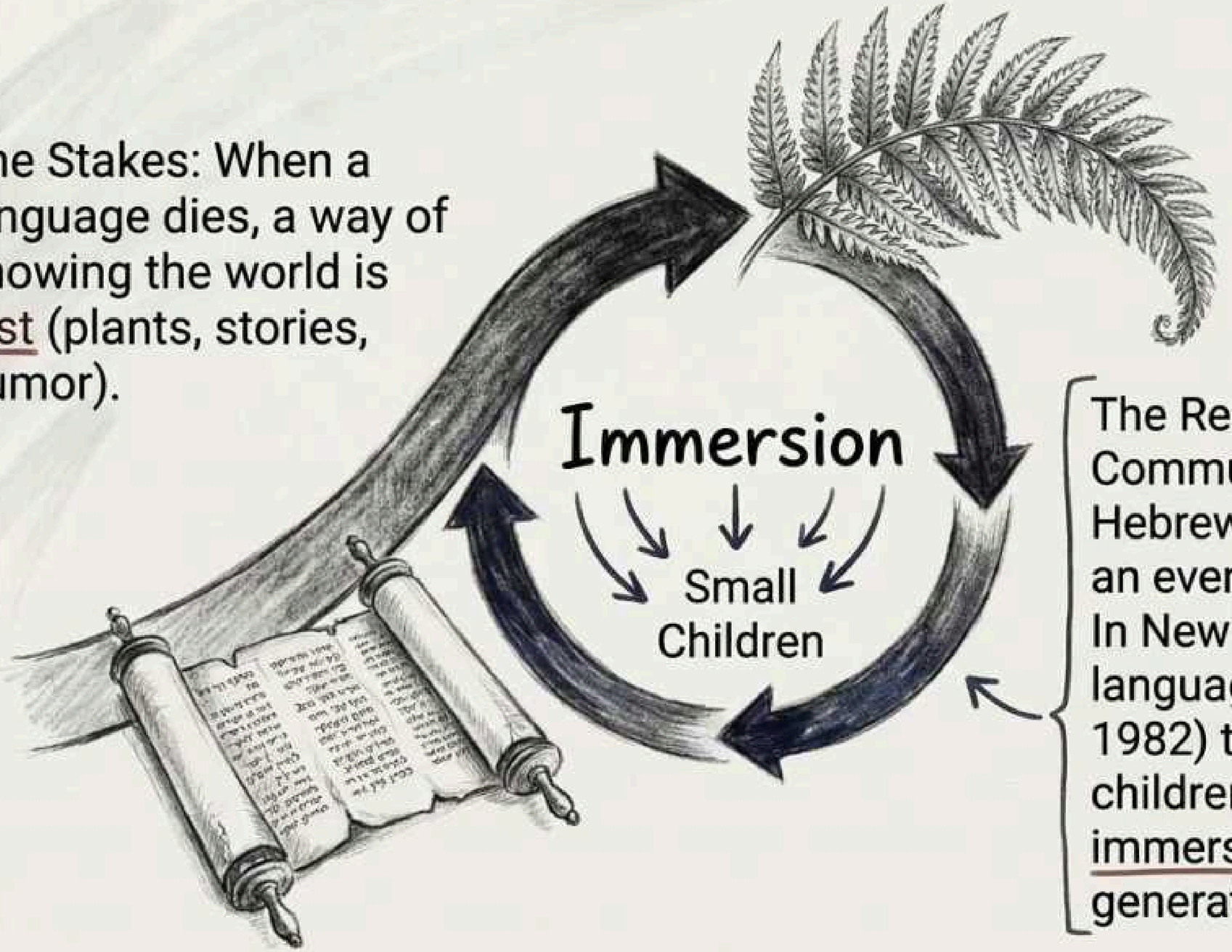


Languages vanish when children stop learning them. Linguists warn that half of all human languages may disappear by the end of this century.

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¶2.18

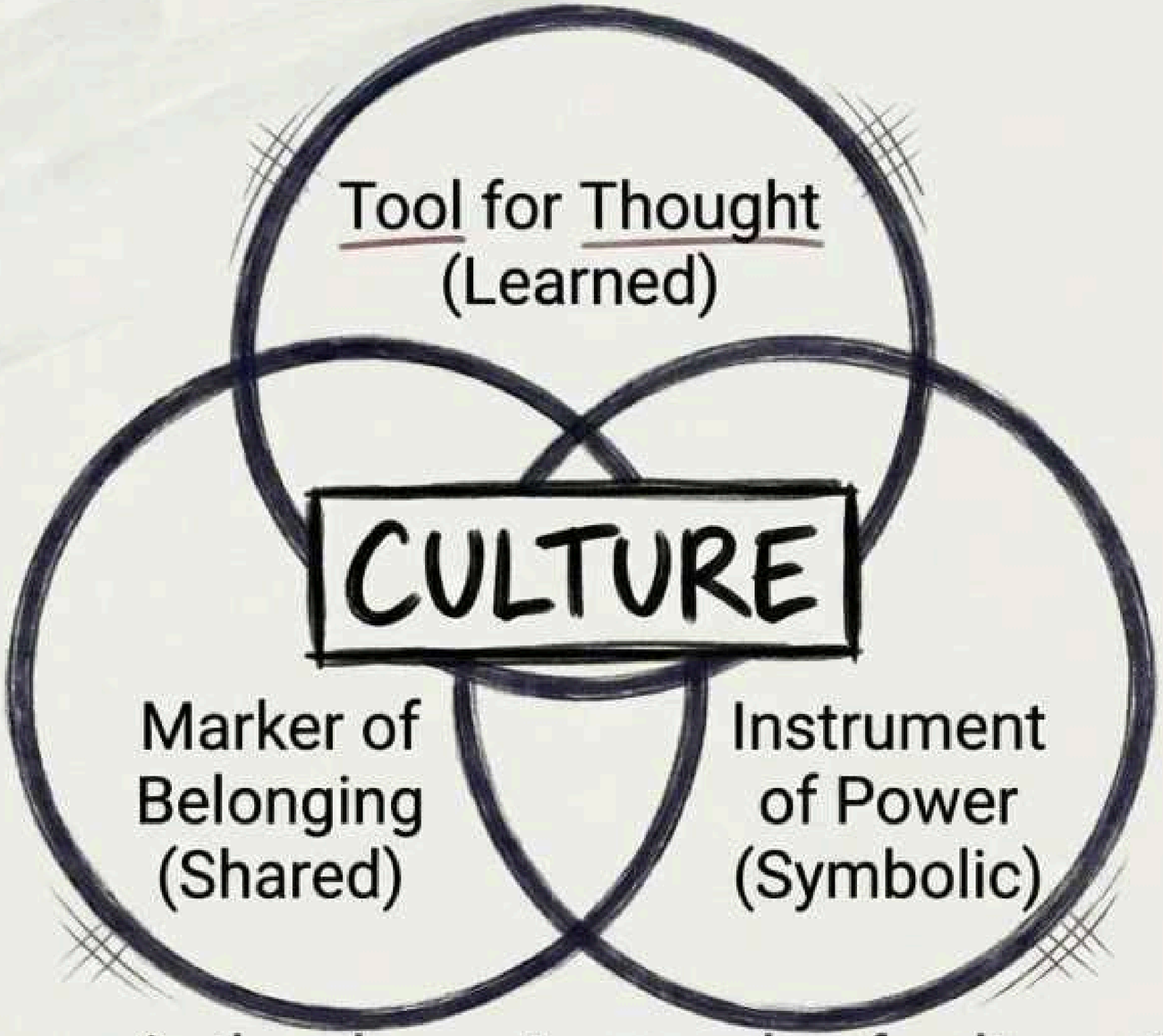
The Stakes: When a language dies, a way of knowing the world is lost (plants, stories, humor).



The Resistance: Communities fight back. Hebrew was revived as an everyday language. In New Zealand, Maori language nests (begun in 1982) teach small children through total immersion, growing a new generation of speakers.

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¶ 2.19



Language is the clearest example of culture at work.

Next Lecture: From what we say hat we say to
to what we produce (Economy)

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