

# METAPHORICAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH CAPTIONED IMAGES: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

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M<sup>a</sup> del Mar Suárez Vilagran

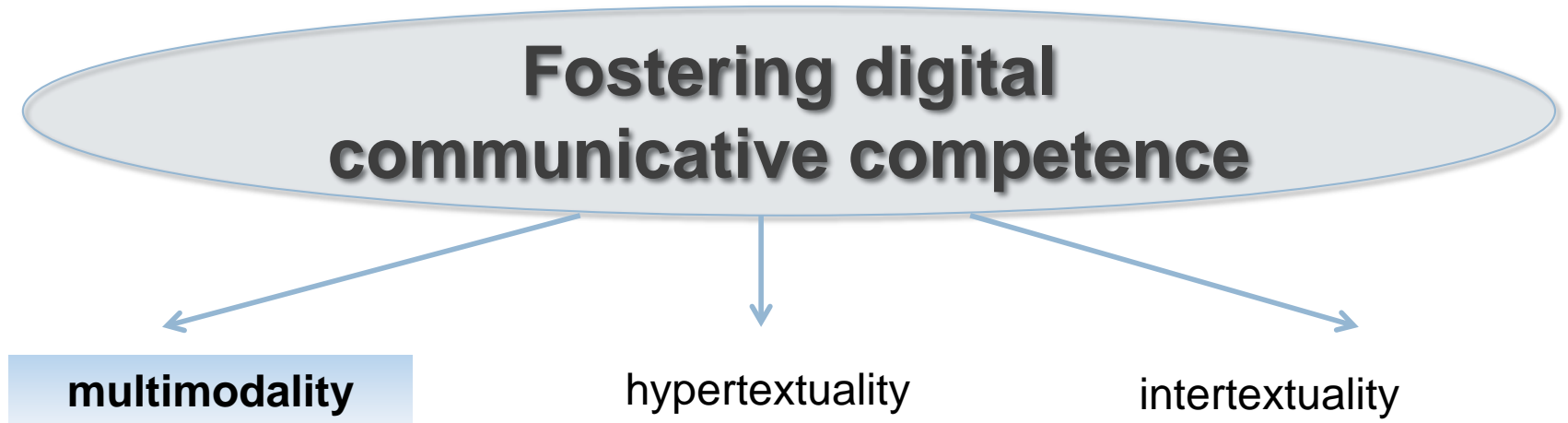


UNIVERSITAT DE  
BARCELONA



# Aims & Theoretical Motivation

Writing online: multimodal discourse



**Methodological implications in FL teaching**

(Shetzer & Warshauer 2000; Cassany 2002, 2010; Royce 2002; Kaltenbacher 2004; Jewit 2005)

# Aims & Theoretical Motivation

University and innovation: virtual learning environments



Open source portfolios  
*[mah-hah-rah; verb]: to think, thinking, thought*



## eportfolio

collect, reflect on and share your achievements and development online, in a space you control



## networking

create online communities and social network through Groups, Blogs and Forums



## open source

built on open source and open principles. Interoperate out of the box with Moodle

**DiDOL**

header



columns



My English portfolio | My Firts English View | Learning English | The last view

## My Firts English View

This is my first English view.

In this view you can see a picture of me in London, a video of my room, the first linguistic snapshot and checklists


**WELCOM AND BIENVENUE !!!**

Hi and welcome to my English first view. 😊

This portfolio is an assignment for the English subject.

In this view you can see a picture of me in London, a video of my room, the first linguistic snapshot and checklists

**Travel to LONDON :D So amazing!!**



**My room , My world**



**Linguistic snapshot**

I'm very excited to start university because I've completed recently a two-years Audiovisual Production course and, after selectivity, I'm here to learn more about this world. So I think that I have more background than people who come directly from Batxillerac because I have already did things related with audiovisual field, like cameras, short films or tv programs. So I think that I have a strong position here. Also I have been related with the music world for almost all my life because I have been singing in a choir since 1999.

On the other side, I believe that my English is my main weakness because I know myself that my English level isn't sufficient as required. That's why I hope to learn enough English because I need that to work in this world. Nowadays, knowing English is very important.

I will study English outside university to improve my English level and pass this successfully course. Also once a week I'll meet with my cousin, who knows English better than me, to speak with him in a more informal way.

Sincerely, I have never liked the English subject because I have never known how to speak English properly, but now it's time to change and learn it. I would like to say "I can communicate with everybody in English fluently".

**All Checklists**

Banich\_Am...-1.1.doc  
379 (KB) | Thursday, 19 January 2012 | Details

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View format



# Objectives

Ability to acquire digital communicative competence (DCC) in digital environments

1. How the multimodal potential of discourse making in Mahara is exploited.
2. Reflecting on the process of learning English as a FL through words and image.

# Theoretical Framework

- ❑ Multimodal discourse → syncretism (Kress, Van Leeuwen, 2010; Bateman, 2008; Hippala, 2015)
  
  - ❑ Syntax, semantics (denotative vs. connotative), multimodal semiotics (Nöth, 2001)
  
  - ❑ Building one's identity as an EFL learner through images
    - ❑ motivation
    - ❑ language learning and use experiences
    - ❑ sociocultural environment
- (Prabhu, 1995; Ellis, 2001)

# Theoretical Background

## Fostering digital communicative competence

**multimodality**

hypertextuality

intertextuality

### Layout

- Number of columns
- Size of elements relative to others

### Modes interconnection

- Colors
- Typography
- **Metaphors through captioned images**
- Etc.

# Compositional meaning: informative value

old  
information

new  
information



# Compositional meaning: informative value

## Ideal world

General info

The essence

## Real world

Specific info

Realistic, practical

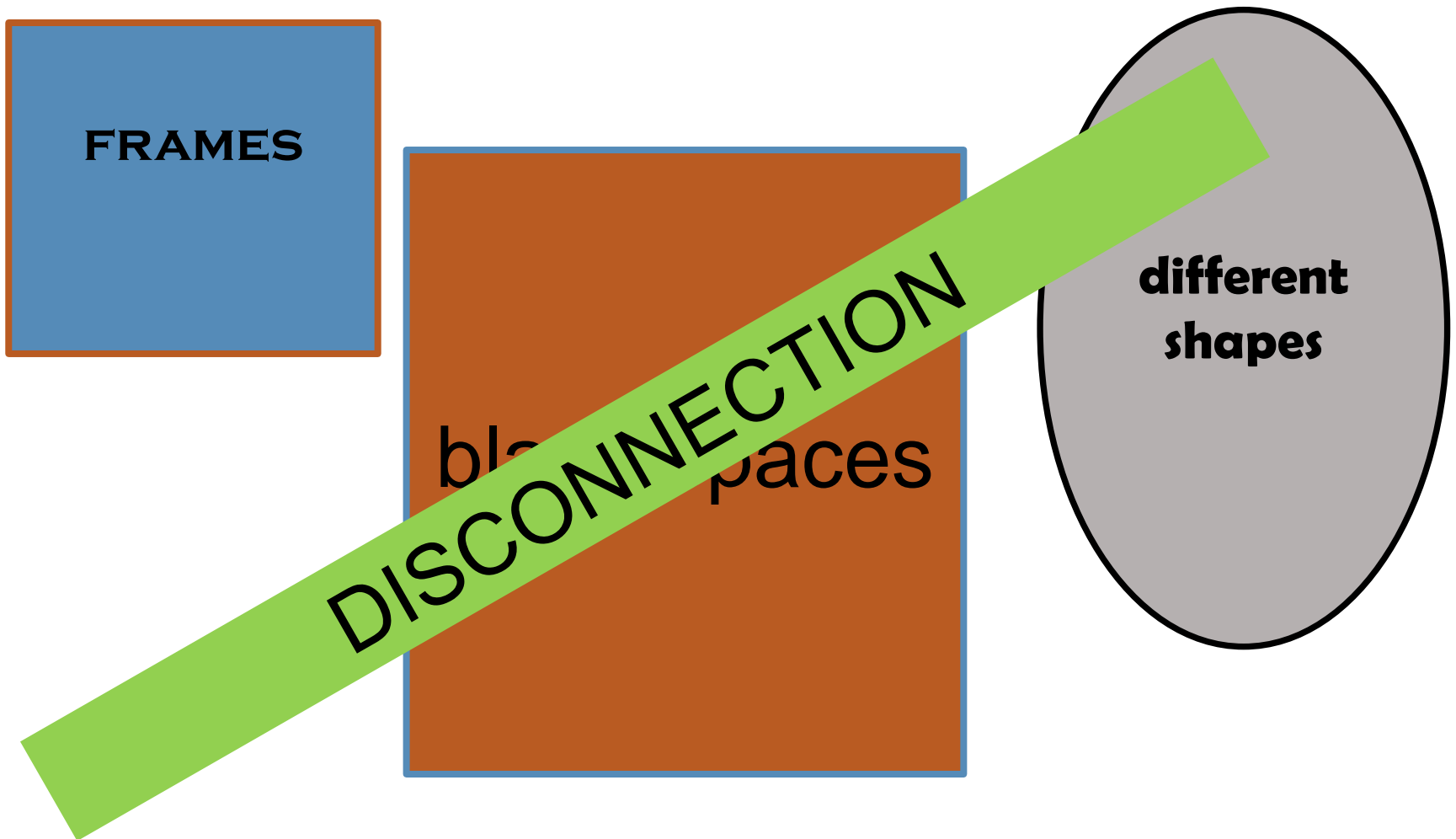
# Compositional meaning: informative value

Secondary  
info

Core info

Secondary  
info

# Compositional meaning: informative value



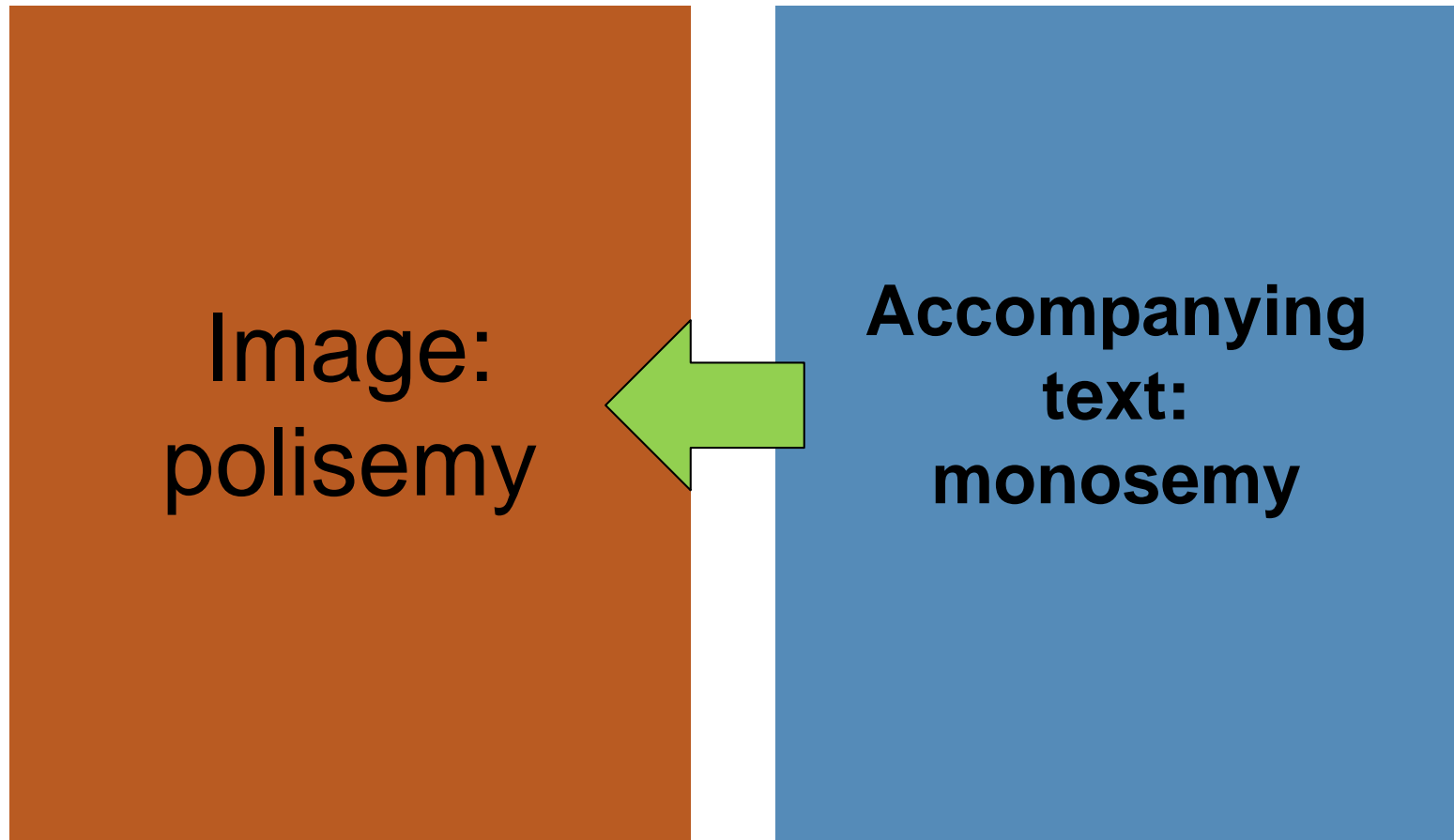
# Compositional meaning: salience

tertiary  
info

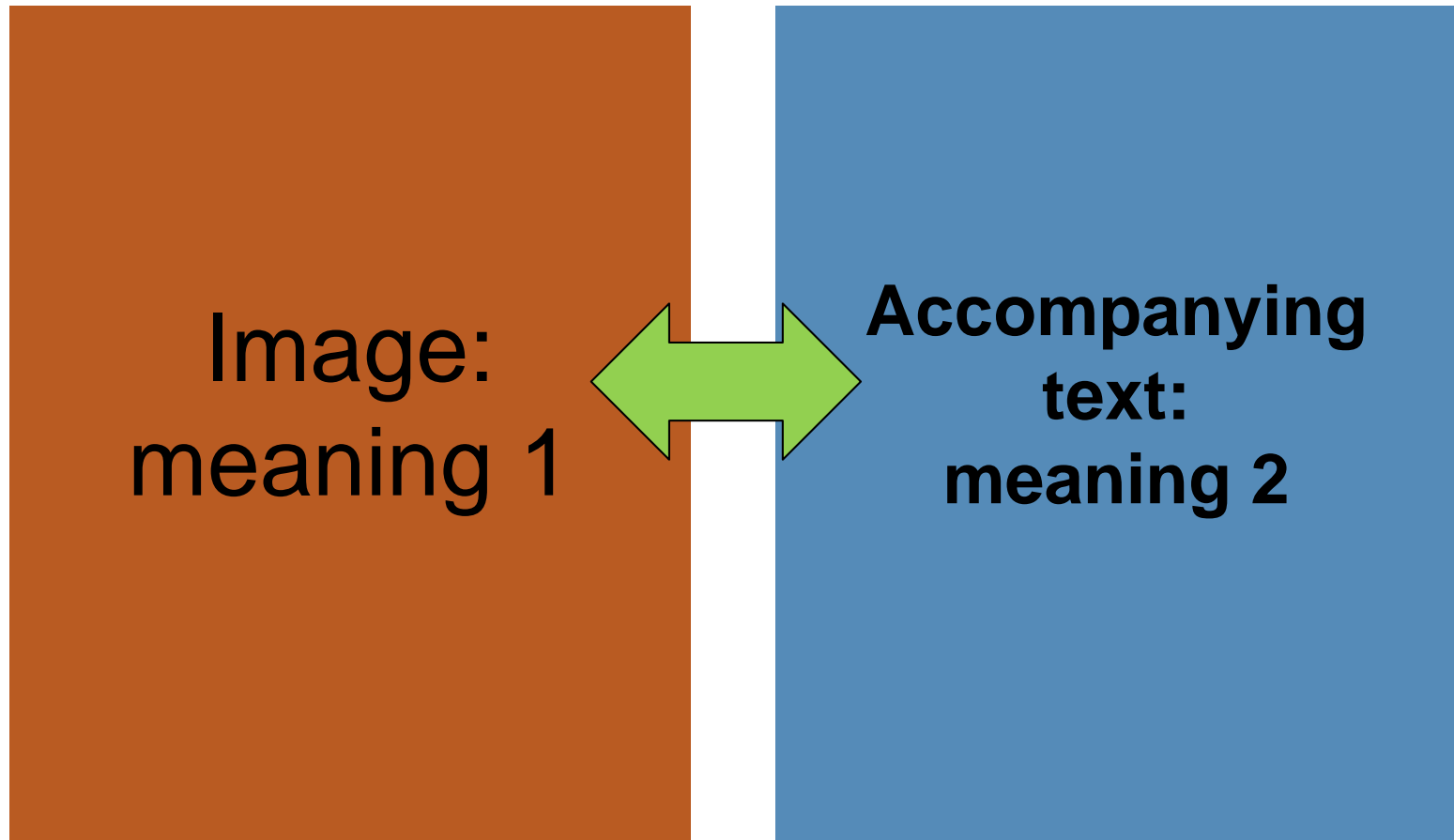
Bigger size  
Color / tones

**Secondary  
info**

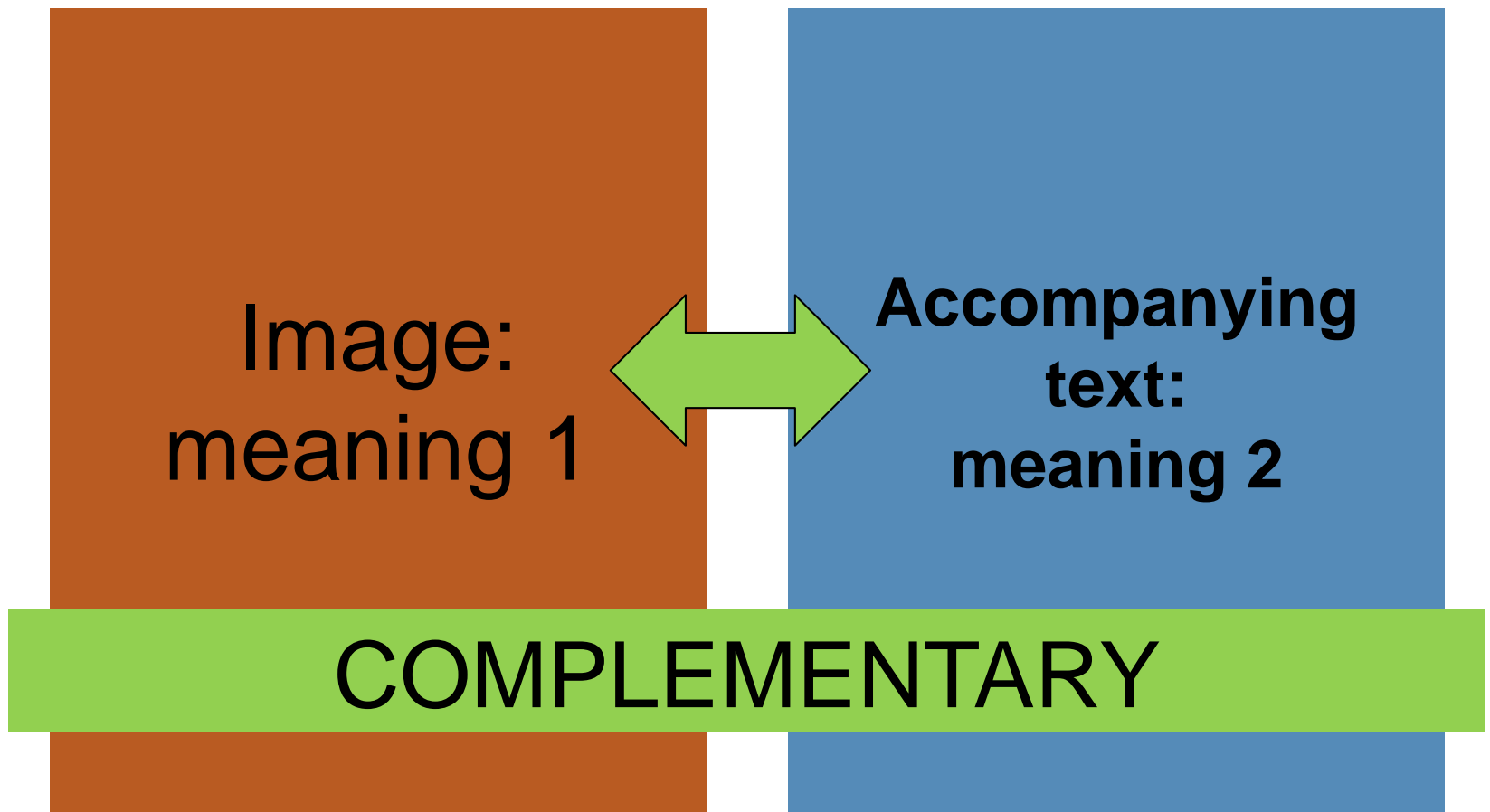
# Interaction verbal and visual language: **anchoring**



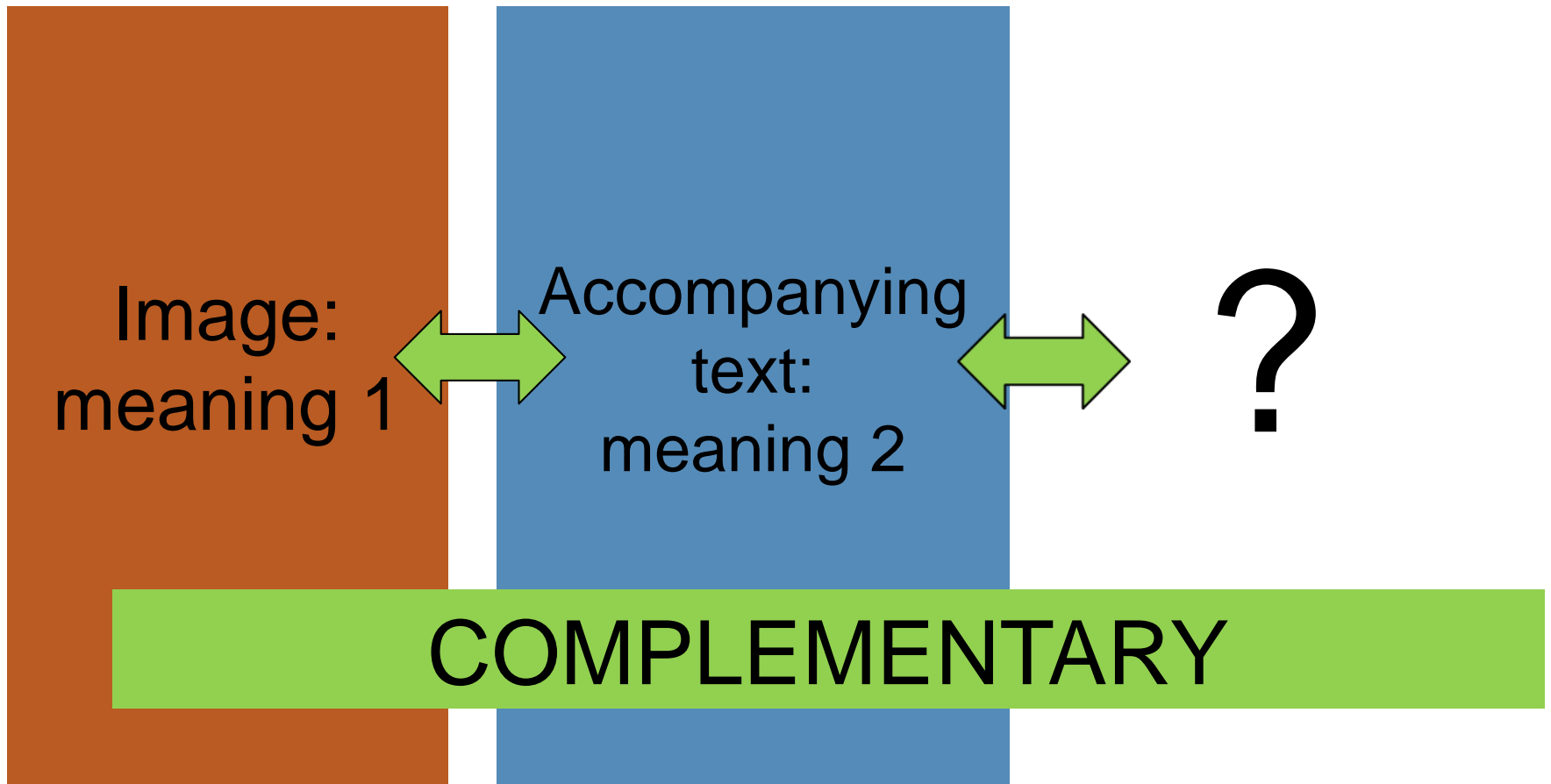
# Interaction verbal and visual language: **relay**



# Interaction verbal and visual language: **relay**

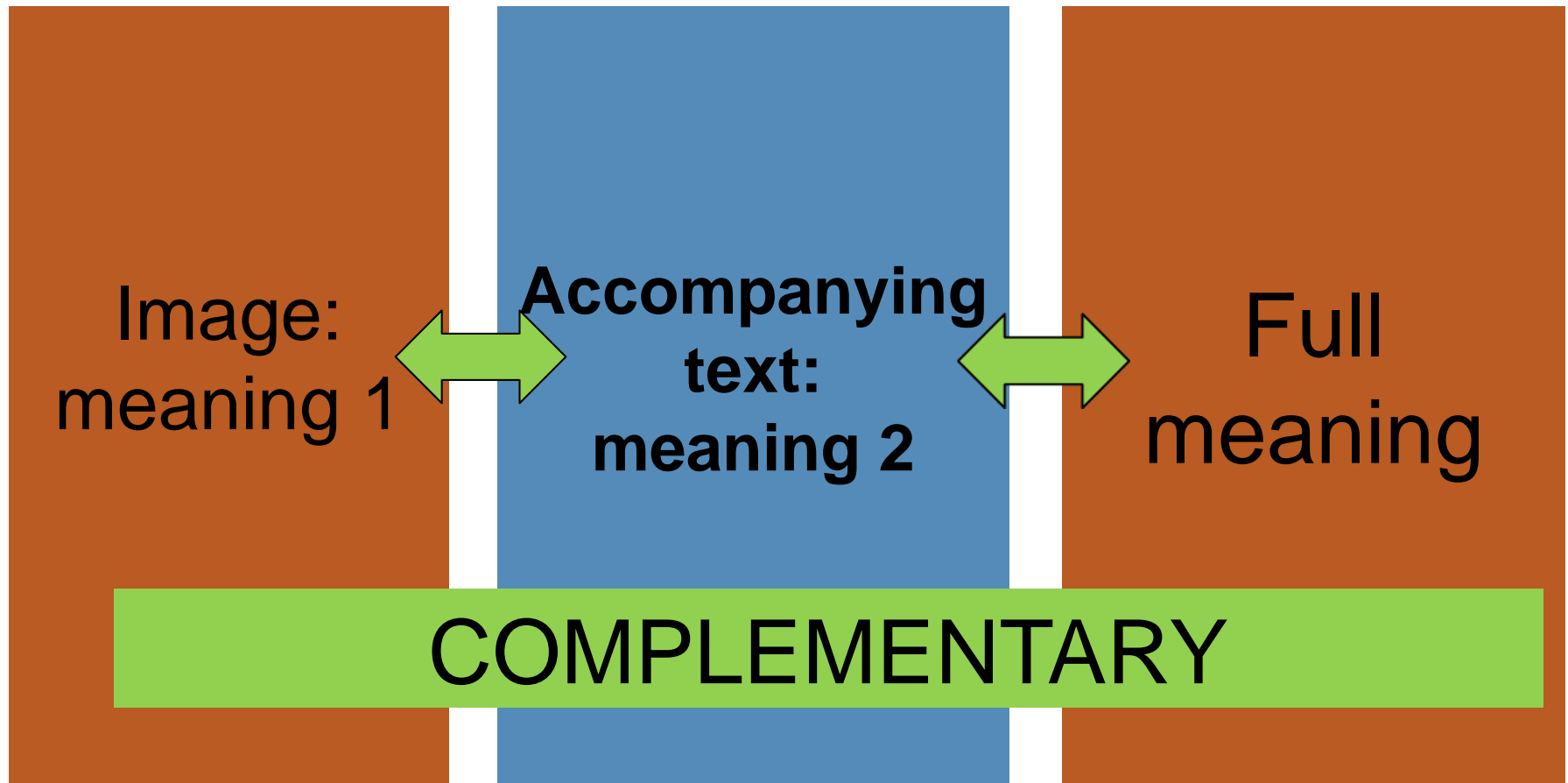


# Interaction verbal and visual language: **intrigue**





# Interaction verbal and visual language: **intrigue**



Interaction verbal and visual  
language: **identification**

Image



Text

Interaction verbal and visual  
language: **narration**



Image

“3 days later”

# Metaphors: Theoretical Framework

*“Ideation is essentially the formation of a mental image, a conceptual model or a theory, about some phenomenon. The image one forms is typically a metaphorical or analogical extension of some other image arising from one's experience of some other phenomenon, or a response to someone else's image of the same phenomenon.”*

(Prabhu, 1995: 60)

# Metaphors: Theoretical Framework

## Ideation:

- ❑ Dynamic process (thoughts, reflection)
- ❑ Influenced by personal experiences

According to Ellis (2001), metaphors reflect (learners') **belief systems** and **channel and constrain thought**.

# Metaphors: Theoretical Framework

Learners metaphors (Ellis 2001, 2002 – N=6):

N	Journey	Puzzle / Problem-solving	Suffering	Struggling	(Hard) work
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3		✓	✓		✓
4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Total	<b>61</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>

# Metaphors: Theoretical Framework

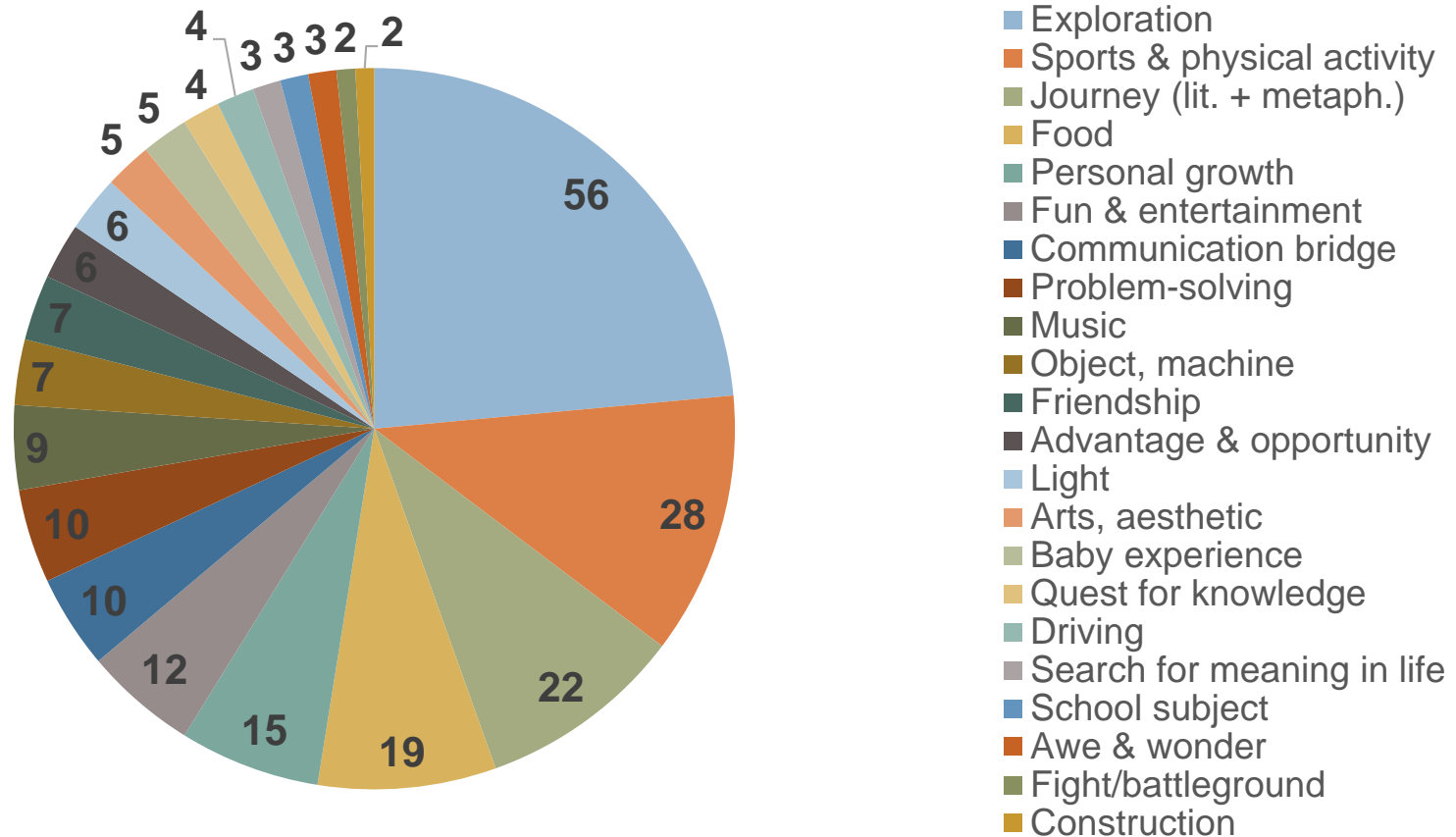
Learners metaphors (Ellis 2001, 2002 – N=6):

Central notions of learners' diaries (UK – German FL)

- ❑ Painful experience, various kinds of suffering
- ❑ Requiring long-term effort to overcome problems
- ❑ Task requiring considerable intellectual activity

# Metaphors: Theoretical Framework

- Images and metaphors in order of frequency (Farjami, 2014 – N= 200, 229 metaphors – Iran - EFL)





# Methodology

- 26 freshman students of Media Studies
- Between 18-21 years of age
- Presumably interested in audiovisual communication
- Different types of motivation towards English learning
- First time doing an English portfolio
- Proficiency level between A2 and C1 according to the Oxford Placement Test

# Instrument



Open source eportfolios

*[mah-hah-rah; verb]: to think, thinking, thought*



## eportfolio

collect, reflect on and share your achievements and development online, in a space you control



## networking

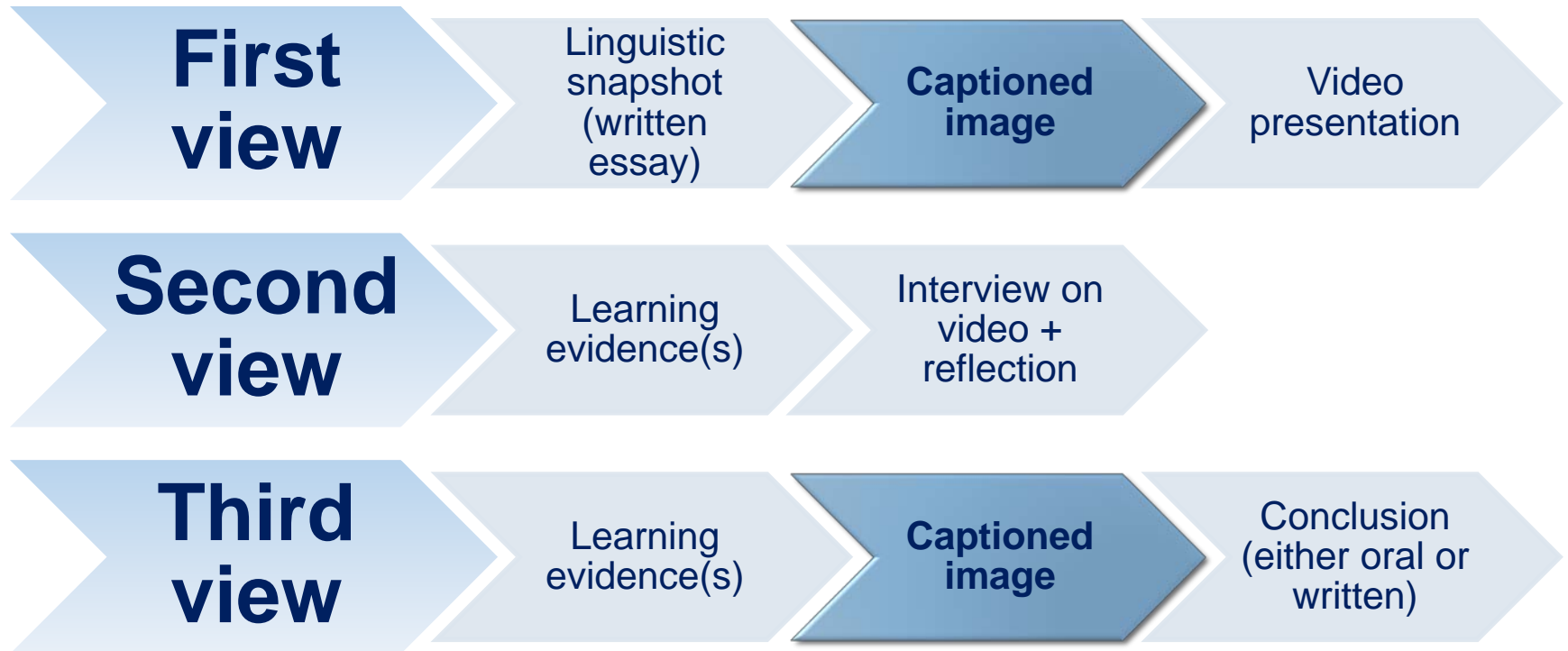
create online communities and social network through Groups, Blogs and Forums



## open source

built on open source and open principles. Interoperate out of the box with Moodle

# Portfolio design



# 1<sup>st</sup> View Sample

My English progress : 1st view

My progress in English

My final reflexions towards...

## 1st view

### My room my world



### My checklists



[all\\_checklists.pdf](#)

203.4KB | Monday, 17 October 2011 | [Details](#)

### Linguistic Snapshot

First of all, I'm scared because I can see there are some important items in the checklist that I can't do or I can do them but with some difficulty, like understanding the idiomatic language either spoken or read. On the one hand, I think that my weaknesses in English are speaking and listening to it, because they are things that I haven't practice in high school. On the other hand, my strong points are read and write in English.

My expectations are improve my spoken English, have more fluency when speaking and train my ears to listen to English either in formal or informal contexts.

Moreover, I would like to achieve my objectives, watching some TV series in English, listening to music and trying to understand what songs are about, and finally, to improve my speaking, I'm going to conversation classes three hours a week.

Finally, I would like to conclude by saying that I like English, that's the reason why I have done two or three summer courses to improve my English and I met an English boy two or three years ago, with whom I talk by chance on Facebook chat.

### My relationship with English



### Picture's explanation

First of all, I've chosen this picture because I like it very much. As you can see, it is an Islamic door taken in Morocco and it describes my feelings towards English.

English is the language that humanity has chosen in order to understand everybody; therefore, English opens the world's door and this is the objective of my English learning.

# Image task instructions

## 1 Picture: My relation with English so far

Upload a picture or write/copy-paste its url in a Word document (make sure it has a Creative Commons License or choose a picture you took yourself) that describes your feelings towards English. Remember everything explained about Copyright issues (images protected with such rights are **not** to be used). Upload as well a short text in which you justify your choice of image, following the points below:

- why you have chosen this picture
- how this picture reflects your feelings towards English, i.e. the metaphor behind the picture

## 2

Upload a picture or just write/copy-paste its url in a Word document (make sure it has a Creative Commons License or choose a picture you took yourself and then protect it with a CC license too) that describes your feelings towards learning English. That is, the picture should match the statement "**For me, learning English is like...**". This time we are NOT TO use pictures with Copyright issues. Upload as well a short text in which you justify your choice, following the points below:

- why you have chosen this picture
- how this picture reflects **your feelings towards learning English at the end of the course**, i.e. the **metaphor** behind the picture

If your feelings towards English haven't changed since the beginning of the course, you might want to use the same image. However, you will have to justify your choice anyway.

Do not forget to add the link or url of the picture or the website you took the picture from following the academic conventions and to add to it the same Creative Commons License complying with the owner's wish. If the picture is yours, you should also protect it with a CC license.

# Procedure

- Students receive three training sessions on multimodal syncretism, hypertextuality and meaning-making through images, including visual metaphors related to FL learning, at the beginning of the course.
- Students are shown just a few captioned images as examples from previous years.
- Students are encouraged to express their feelings towards English metaphorically to aim at the highest grade, as shown in the rubric provided, that is, avoiding stereotyped audiovisual elements.

# Rubric

## Grade:

Audiovisual mode: citing sources and meaning

<b>Sources: copyright and Creative Commons</b>	Audiovisual elements used without citing the source <i>0 points</i>	Little rigor citing the sources of the audiovisual elements. <i>1 points</i>	Sources of the audiovisual elements cited. <i>2 points</i>	Sources of the audiovisual elements cited, stating the type of license (CC or Copyright) <i>3 points</i>	
<b>Meaning</b>	The audiovisual components are irrelevant or inadequate for the global meaning of the view. <i>0 points</i>	Stereotyped audiovisual components used. <i>1 points</i>	Original audiovisual metaphors used, departing from stereotyped audiovisual elements. <i>2 points</i>	Audiovisual metaphors used creatively, with a great impact used and with communicative efficiency. <i>3 points</i>	

Metalinguistic & metacognitive reflection > view linking with learning process:

excellent ▼

# Results

## Location of compulsory static images

4	5
6	4
2	9

13	11	7
1		2
4	8	6

2	15
2	5
1	2

7	2
2	1
1	5

2		5
3	2	4



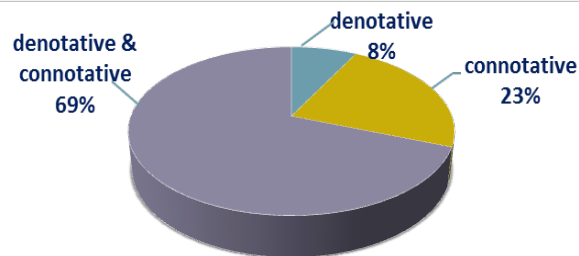
# Results

## Images in relation to text

**Objective related to meaning-making through different synchronous modes:**

To explore the students' use of the potential of representation and communication of each mode beyond literal meaning.

### Representation of meaning

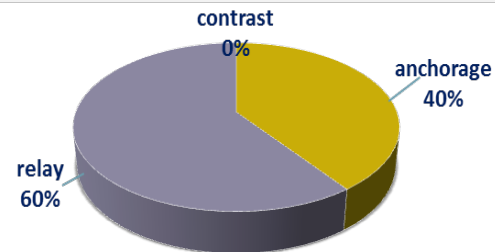


**Denotative** ≈ redundant, obvious

**Connotative** ≈ complementary

**Denotative & connotative:** caption includes both

### Discursive function



**Anchorage:** polysemic image; text narrows the meaning of the image

**Relay:** the meaning in text and image are complementary

**Contrast:** discrepancy, contradiction

# Results

## Metaphors

**Themes emerging from learners' captioned images and metaphors about their relationship with EFL in order of frequency (categories adapted from Farjami, 2014).**

**Many concepts and captioned images include both affect and cognition dimensions and some can be included in more than one category as they deal with more than one theme.**

# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Journey (literal) - 7

Times Square



## Picture description

I have chosen this picture because it is from the trip where I used the English most often. This trip means so much to me because it was special.

This picture was taken by me in Times Square in New York. And I want learn more English to use it the next time I go there.

Me and London



## My Relation With English

I chose this picture because I love it. This one reminds me the beginning of my relationship with my boyfriend 8 months ago. We made a weekend trip to London and it was amazing! I like travelling and he also, so we decided to go to London. I have been to London three times but in this time was everything different. Maybe it was because I started to falling in love to him.

# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Music - 6



I've done this picture with Photoshop because this music group, THE WHO,

always stays with me everywhere I'm going. They are an English group and I

think that it's a good way to explain what English means to me in my life. I

don't know why, but I'm in love with all their songs.

# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Communication bridge - 6



## There's no place like London

The picture and the color modification was made by myself as I did it for uploading it on Facebook. Nevertheless, I think that depicts one of my truly passions, in which English is involved: **London**. My dream is to end up living there and that's why I feel like learning English these last years. Although I like learning new languages, London gives English a huge importance for me, because there you need a good level of this language. About the sentence "There's no place like London", I have taken it from the **Sweeney Todd** musical. It is one of the first songs of the story. The character who sings in is a sailor who sees London for the first time. So when I think about "English", what comes to my mind aren't classes, exams, grammar, or vocabulary. **It's the possibility of living in a wonderful city.**

## Picture my relation with English so far



I have chosen this photo because it was taken in my trip last summer. I was in Scarborough studying English for one month. The girls on the left are my two English sisters, Emily and Alice, and the other one is Alice's friend.

This photo reflects what one month of my life was like while living abroad. It was so special and incredible to be with an English family and participate in their tradition and festivities. Therefore, this picture makes me remember how English was important for me those days, because that was the only way I could communicate with them and I could learn and improve my English.

# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Fight/Effort/Sufferer - 3

Insecurities and Fears



I have chosen this photograph because it reminds me how I feel towards English.

I like English and enjoy it a lot but **I am pretty unconfident when I have to use it in some aspects of my life** (tourism, answering a question, asking for something...). I don't believe in my own capacities. I work very hard but **I'm scared to make a fool of myself** and do something wrong. I am very self-demanding, I want to do everything right and have everything under control but when you are learning a language, it is not possible until you master it.

TIGHT THE BELT



READY? GO!

I have chosen this picture, taken by myself, because it represents perfectly my relationship with English. This language is something that remains me baggy, like the jeans of the picture.



# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Journey (metaphorical) - 3

## My relation with English



Walter D'Amico Robert D'Amico

I choose this picture because the composition is very beautiful. I really like this intense red of the earth that graduate towards the blue sky and in the middle the grey route till the infinite that divides the picture in two. I feel that this picture reflects my relationship with English because since ever I thought that learning this language it would be a long way. And I was right. It's a long way that I want and must walk as far away as I can.

## My relation with English so far

This picture was taken by me three weeks ago, in **New York**, where I spent my last days of holidays before starting university.

The main reason why I've chosen this picture is because I like it (I love the city, the skyscrapers...). But I've chosen it too because I think it perfectly reflects my feelings towards English. It's a **metaphor**: I'm at the bottom of the skyscraper, on the floor, but as I begin to learn more and more English, **I'm getting closer to the top** of it (so my goal is reaching the top of the building, someday).

I have to add that this skyscraper is the **Rockefeller Center**.



# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

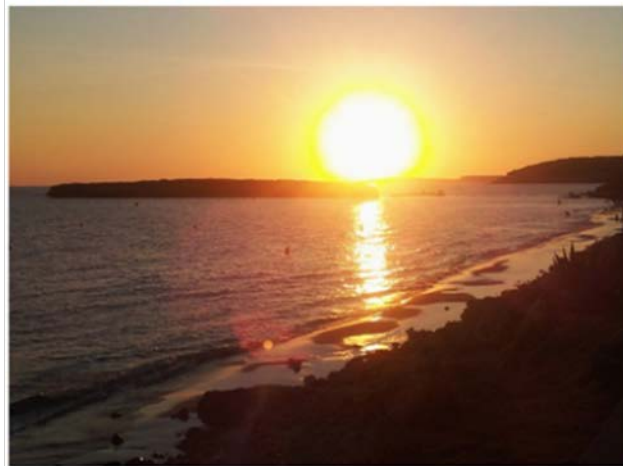
- Friendship and emotional satisfaction – 3

My relation with English so far



I had chosen these picture because my friends are in it. In fact, I took these one, because the guy that appears on the center line is one of my best friends and during these week he left to London for a long time. The facts that are in common between the image and the English language is that, we might go to London to visit him. These way we can exchange experiences and friend ship.

Menorca's sunset



This is a picture of the beach in which the ice cream shop I worked in is located and also my town's beach, so it reminds me of those times when I used to make English friends in there and the perfect summers on the island.



# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Problem-solving - 2

My relation with English so far



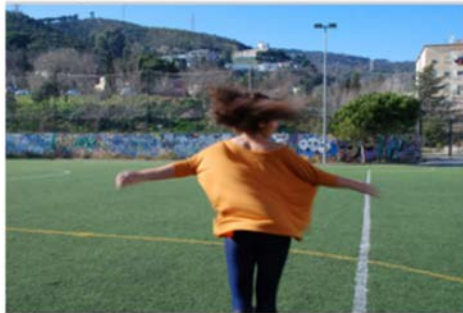
*"Humanity takes itself too seriously. It is the world's original sin.  
If the cave-man had known how to laugh, history would have been different."*

I've chosen this picture because it symbolizes my goal for this year, something that I've always wanted to do but I've never had the time. It will be a challenge for me, because I think it will be difficult for me to understand it, but I will be very pleased if I can finish it successfully.

# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Advantages and opportunities - 2

## Move yourself to learn



## My relation with English

I have chosen this photograph because life is like a roulette, it is always spinning and you don't know where and when it will stop. In my opinion, learning anything in your life gives you a lot of opportunities in the future. English will give me a lot of chances too.



## There's no place like London

The picture and the color modification was made by myself as I did it for uploading it on **Facebook**. Nevertheless, I think that depicts one of my truly passions, in which English is involved: **London**. My dream is to end up living there and that's why I feel like learning English these last years. Although I like learning new languages, London gives English a huge importance for me, because there you need a good level of this language. About the sentence "There's no place like London", I have taken it from the **Sweeney Todd** musical. It is one of the first songs of the story. The character who sings in is a sailor who sees London for the first time. So when I think about "English", what comes to my mind aren't classes, exams, grammar, or vocabulary. **It's the possibility of living in a wonderful city.**

# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Personal growth / Identity renewal - 1

## Picture: my relation with English so far (I)

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I've chosen this photo because I appear in it with my friends from Dublin. This picture was taken in the Phoenix Park.

This photo represents the happiness and the peace of the place and my life when I was living there.

For me, English is Ireland, because I used to hate English until I went there and I realized that learning another language was a really good thing for me. You can understand everybody over the world because almost everybody knows English, so you can meet some people from other countries. That's a lovely thing to learn about their cultures and their lifestyle.



# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Fun and entertainment - 1

Australian landscape



**Photo description**

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This landscape is amazing and reminds me of my awesome English experience in Australia, that's why I chose it. In addition the light is like hope to learn during this course.

# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Search for meaning in life - 1



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## My Relation with English

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This is a photo of my last concert with my band, The Warfarins. I think that this pic express perfectly my relationship with English. There, I was singing one of our new songs called "Last Song of Babel", that tells a story of a broken heart that miss his girl. Yeah, the story is not much elaborate, but it was written with love. In my life, English help me to escape of the routine, to express my feelings and be myself. I think that music and English saved me more than one time, So this language is very important to me.

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# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Film - 1



This picture is from the film "Breakfast at Tiffany's". It's one of my favorite films and I love to see it in the original language, the English. It's important to me to understand this language, because the real way to enjoy a film is in its original version. So in part this image describes my feelings towards English and also a philosophy with which I identify.

# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

- Construction work - 1



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Well, I took this picture when I was on holidays a couple of months ago. I have chosen it because when I was in place that I reached interior harmony. I could isolate myself from the daily routine and I had an opportunity to focus myself on my feelings.

Like I mentioned in my last essay, for me, English is essential to be successful in our lives. But for this, we have to work hard. This photo represents for me an aim that I must reach. I need to build a "bridge" (the road) day by day, every other minute, to achieve my goals. And once our aims are achieved, we shouldn't stop there! We must look for a new goal and reach it too.

# Results 1<sup>st</sup> View

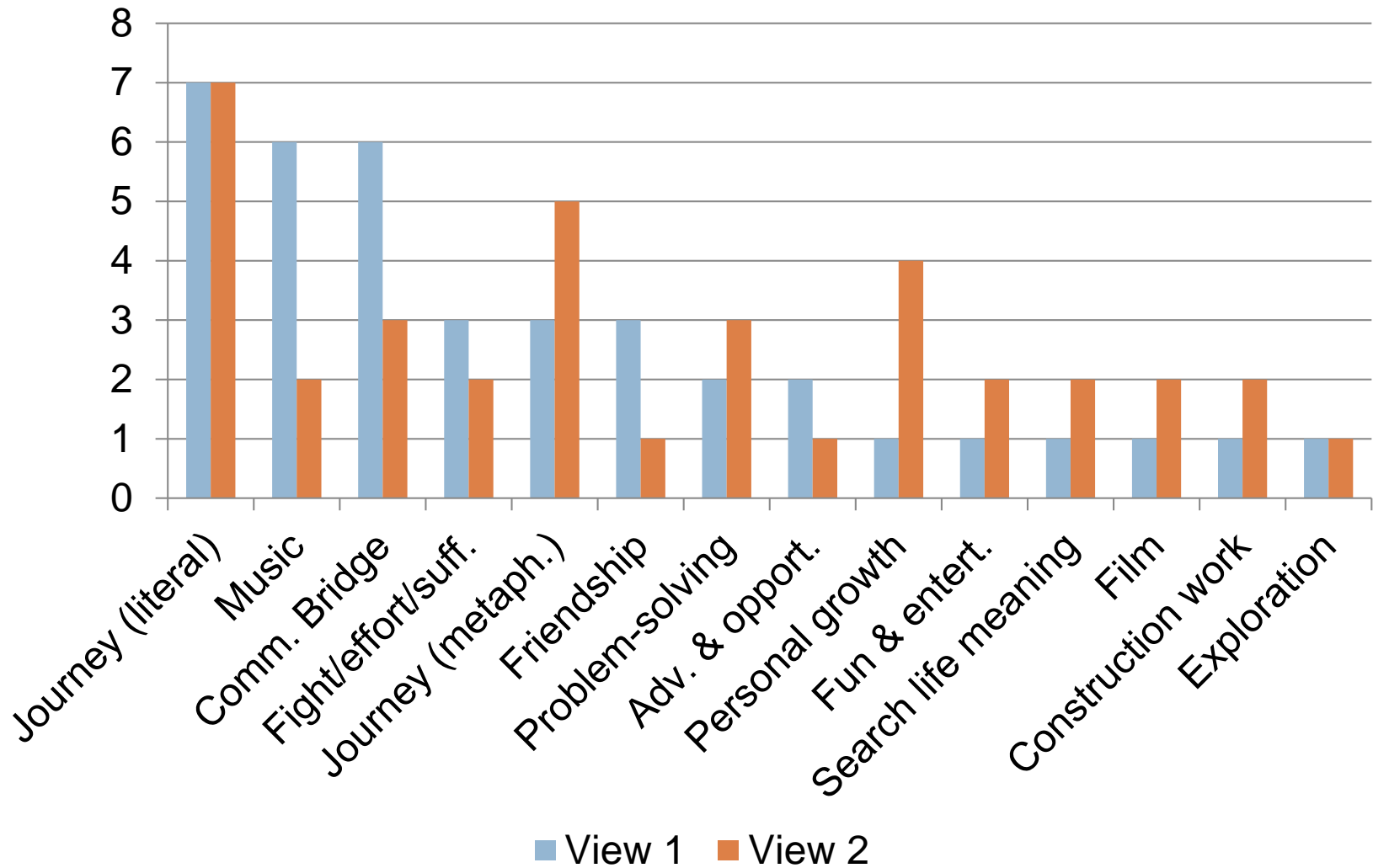
- Exploration - 1



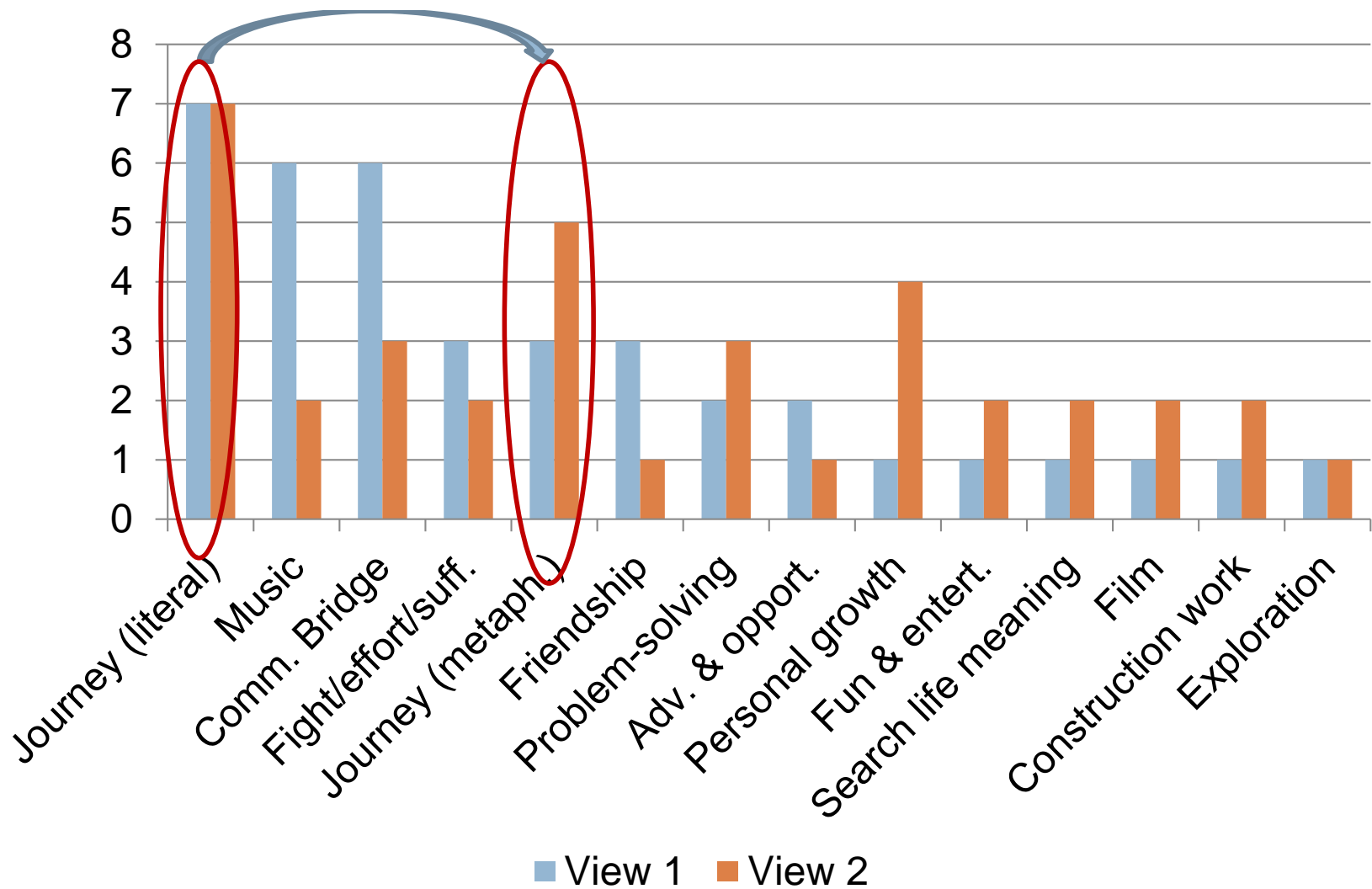
I have chosen this picture of mine because I feel much respect for the English. This language is still unfamiliar for me and my reason or theory for that is that we feel respect for something unfamiliar or unknown. I'm not afraid of it but there is an distance between English and me.



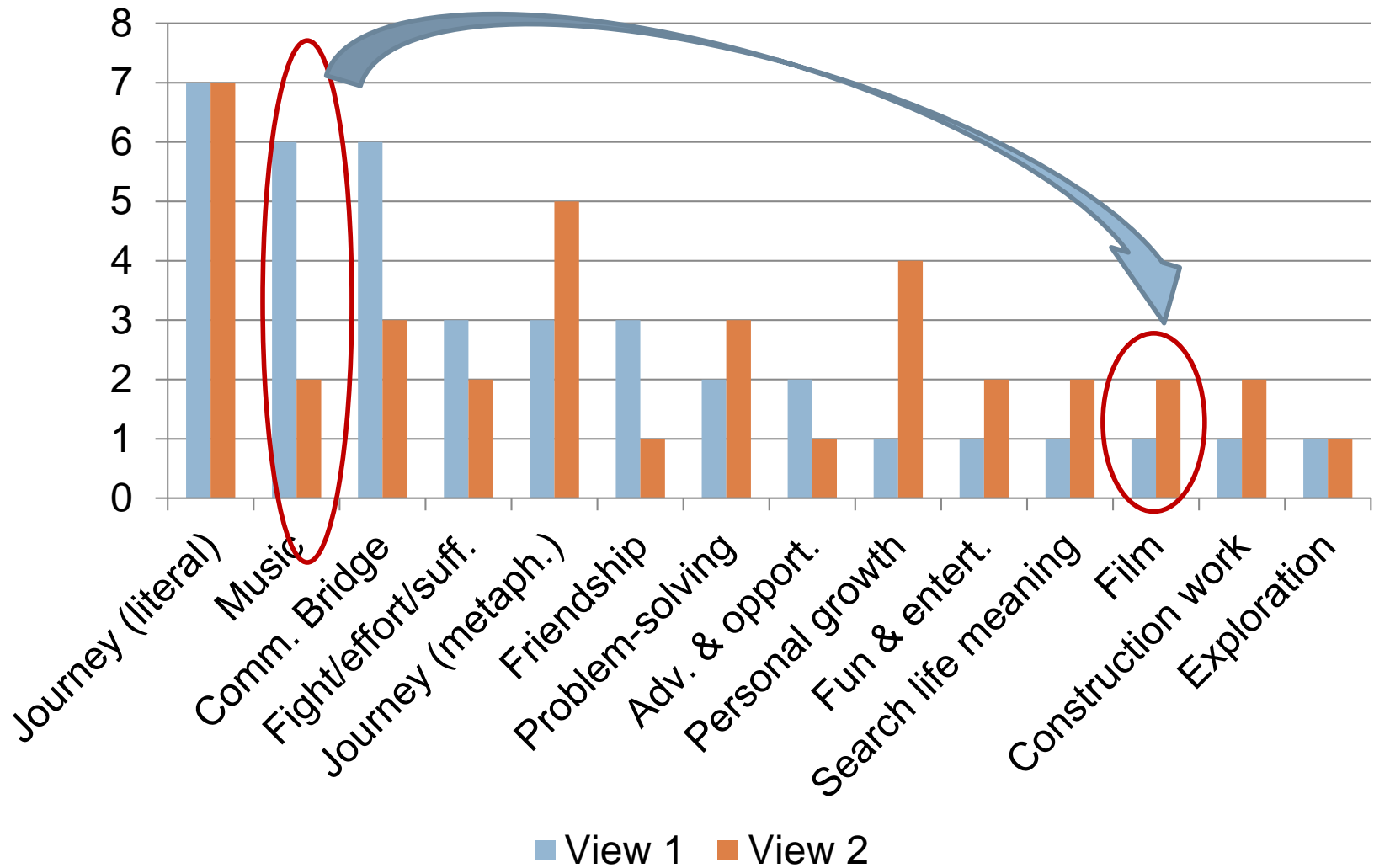
# Results: Metaphors 1<sup>st</sup> vs 2<sup>nd</sup> View



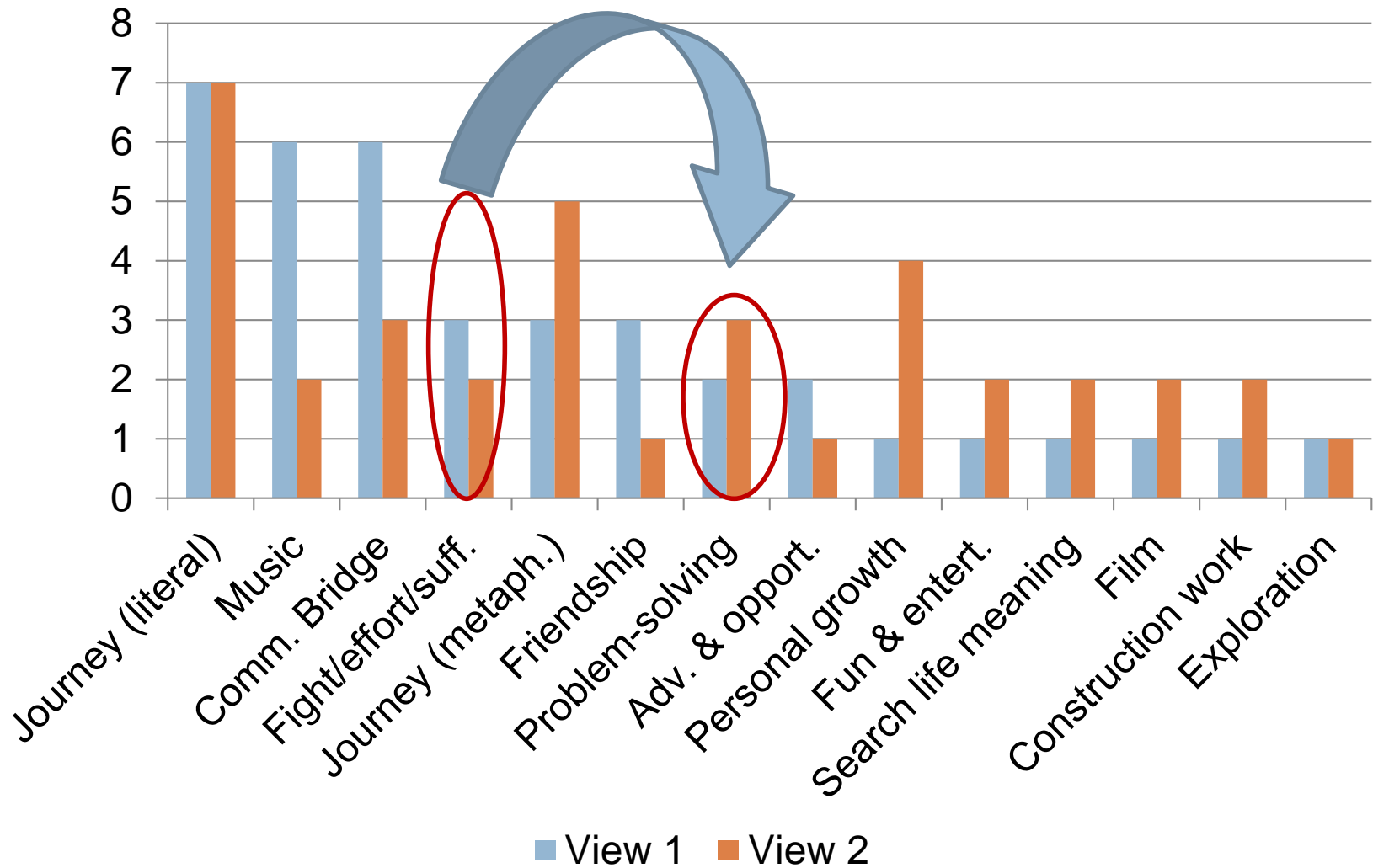
# Results: Metaphors 1<sup>st</sup> vs 2<sup>nd</sup> View



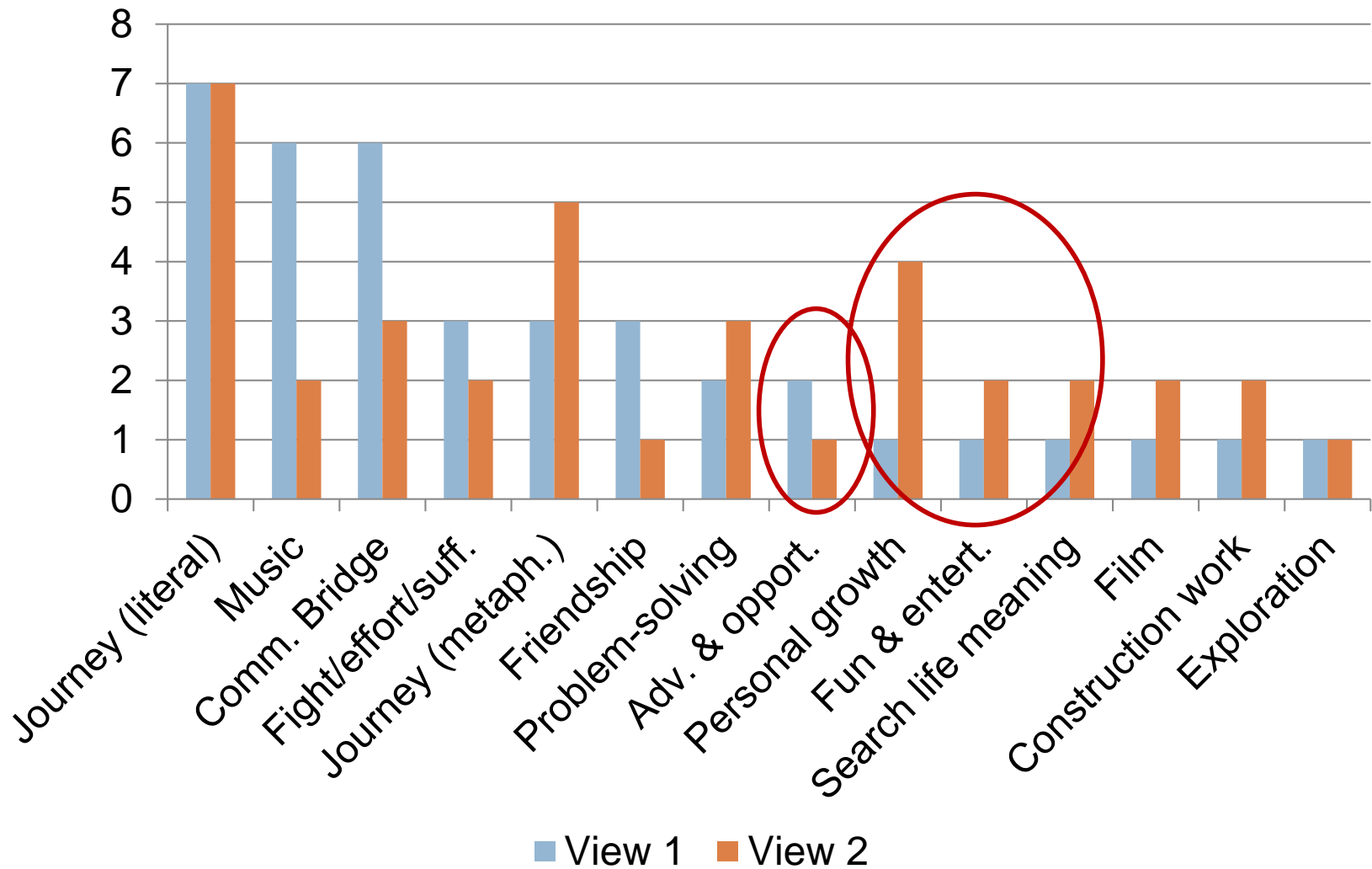
# Results: Metaphors 1<sup>st</sup> vs 2<sup>nd</sup> View



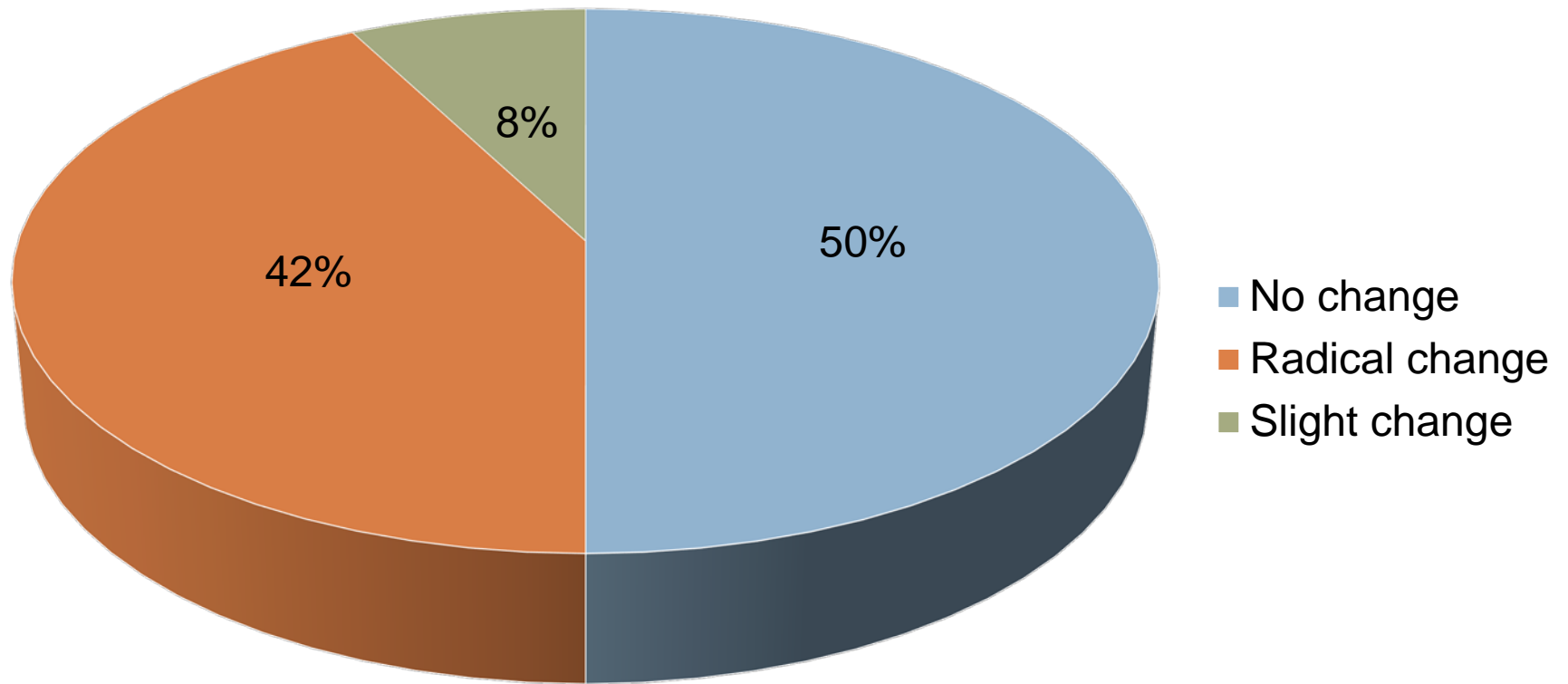
# Results: Metaphors 1<sup>st</sup> vs 2<sup>nd</sup> View



# Results: Metaphors 1<sup>st</sup> vs 2<sup>nd</sup> View



# Results: Change of metaphors overtime



# Discussion & FL Teaching Implications

- Useful task to raise awareness of one's motivations, attitudes, and possible fears towards EFL learning.
- Metaphors become more such as time goes by.
- Results show more specific/personal exemplifications/ explanations in the second image.
- Difficulty in expressing oneself metaphorically and need to resort to descriptive, denotative, redundant language.
- Captions extremely helpful to understand metaphors and cover further LL aspects → same image, different meaning

# Discussion & FL Teaching Implications

- Metaphors seem to be both culture- and FL- bound: Farjami (2014) (Iran - English) vs Ellis (2001, 2002) (UK – German) vs present results (Spain – English)
- Only 50% change their view on EFL learning experience through metaphors (constraint) → Change in ideations, not so much in beliefs (more time needed?)
- Portfolios as a useful tool for reflection and meeting learners' needs while hopefully enjoying one's FL learning experience and making it meaningful.



OBRIGADA!  
THANK YOU!

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[mmsuarez@ub.edu](mailto:mmsuarez@ub.edu)