

The *Toisto* method: Speech and repetition as a means of implicit grammar learning

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Abstract

Language learning is one of the key predictors of how well immigrants will integrate into a new society. In many European countries, the resources reserved for language education have proved insufficient as people fleeing the war in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria have entered Europe. This situation has called for ways of mobilising volunteer workers to help newcomers in a coordinated manner. In Finland, a method called *Toisto* has been developed to enable volunteers with little or no teaching experience to teach the basics of Finnish to newcomers. From the pedagogical and linguistic point of view, *Toisto* derives from a usage-based notion of language, according to which the spoken modality in general, and modelling-based instruction in particular, can be used to teach grammar without the explicit formulation or explanation of rules. In addition, *Toisto* aims to compensate for the written language bias very much present in the L2 context in the Finnish education system. In this paper, we outline the theoretical grounding and basic characteristics of the *Toisto* method. We map the ways in which a usage-based notion of language motivates a communicative, oral language pedagogy, and provide some initial evidence of the feasibility of the method. Finally, we discuss the implications of the *Toisto* method for adult language education.

Keywords: usage-based theory, volunteer, construction, communicative language learning, language education

1 Introduction

This paper discusses *Toisto*, an accessible, volunteering-based method of L2 teaching that has been developed to enable language learning when institutional language training is either insufficient or non-existent. The *Toisto* method is based on three commonly acknowledged pedagogical principles. First, orality is the primary mode of everyday communication, and as an initial method for newcomers, *Toisto* is focused only on oral communication. The second principle concerns the social atmosphere of the learning situation. Due to the particular focus group, special attention is paid to reducing learner anxiety and maintaining psycho-social security. Third, the learning sessions simulate everyday schemata and include frequently used linguistic constructions in the form of patterns that are repeated together and individually during each lesson.

The main ideas behind *Toisto* – namely that phrases in additional languages are often learned by imitating linguistic models aloud, and that a jovial learning atmosphere accounts for learning – are commonly accepted by language learning researchers as fundamentals of learning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson 2011), regardless of the researchers' theoretical view of language being a primarily innate versus socially acquired feature. However, teaching adult language learners is largely based on explicit grammar instruction and rule-based teaching. Textbooks often guide classroom activities, as foreign-language lessons tend to be teacher-led and the learners' own production is not readily the focus of the classroom interaction (Pitkänen-Huhta 2003). The dialogues in English as a foreign language textbooks, which have been researched more widely than any other language-learning materials, have proved artificial and grammar-focused, and are often criticised for their lack of authenticity (Wong 2002; Gilmore 2011). Parallel criticism about a lack of functionality is also relevant regarding Finnish as a second language textbooks, and discussion on the issue has been ongoing at least from the 1990s (Lauranto et al. 1993; Schot-Saikku 1993; Lauranto 1995a; Aalto 1998) until the present decade (Kela 2010; Tanner 2012). Although the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR 2001) set communicative competence as a key goal in adult language learning, and although oral skills have accordingly become more important in language curricula, communicative teaching and learning practices were not automatically implemented in language classrooms (Harjanne 2006; Harjanne & Tella 2011; Ruohotie-Lyhty

2011), and nor have communicative tendencies become mainstream in learning materials.

Before the CEFR was published, a continuum of Finnish language teaching materials existed which presented everyday Finnish and the systematic repetition of colloquial phrases as the gateway to mastering language usage. The “direct method” (see Larsen-Freeman & Anderson 2011: 25–34) gained a foothold in teaching Finnish when Olli Nuutinen published his textbook *Suomea suomeksi*, ‘Finnish in Finnish’ (1977), but it relied on formal language. A more speech-based and, in this sense, functional line emerged starting from Eila Hämäläinen’s phrase-based textbook *Aletaan*, ‘Let’s start’ (1988), which included an introduction to communicative language teaching and an outline of synchronic Finnish grammar. The suggestopedic two-volume *Suomi-tytön kieli*, ‘The language of Finland’, by Helinä Koivisto was published in 1990, but the circulation remained small. Yrjö Lauranto’s textbook series entitled *Elämän suolaa*, ‘Salt of life’ 1 and 2 (Lauranto 1995b, with several reprints), gained more users, with texts that progressed from use to analysis. The systematicity of the “from use to analysis” method was explained in detail in the teacher’s book (Lauranto 1996), while the theoretical principles can be found in Lauranto et al. (1993), and Lauranto (1997). Books exemplifying how to practise authenticity in the Finnish as a foreign language classroom were also published, such as Kirsti Siitonen’s *Auringonvalo – elämää suomalaisessa kylässä*, ‘Sunlight – life in a Finnish village’ (1990).

Although the CEFR served to make communicative teaching practices more widely known, mainstream Finnish textbooks remained formalistic and the dialogues artificial (see Tanner 2012: 181–187 on the reasons for this). Aalto et al. (2009) provide academic reasons for functionalism in language teaching, and each of their three-volume textbooks for secondary school (Tukia et al. 2007–2009) is accompanied by a detailed teacher’s book, showing how to include an analysis of grammatical structures alongside functionalist teaching. In addition, authentic spoken dialogues have been incorporated into materials for nurses and doctors learning professional Finnish (Kela et al. 2010; Kela 2010 on the process).

The aforementioned continuum of phrase-based textbooks for learning Finnish serves to outline the tradition which gave rise to *Toisto*, namely the direct method, communicative teaching, a suggestopedic atmosphere, and authenticity in schemata. The need for communicative teaching is increasing due to migration throughout Europe, since a growing number of newcomers are not familiar with the Latin script, and many have academic

skills at a basic level. In this situation, language learning must commence before metalinguistic knowledge is acquired, or it must be followed through without metalinguistic tools.

This paper will provide a basic introduction to the *Toisto* method and its theoretical grounding. To this end, we will describe the material and methodological characteristics of a typical *Toisto* session and how the method derives from the concept of freely combinable, independent sessions. Most importantly, however, the paper will analyse the manner in which *Toisto* as a communicative method enacts and confirms certain facets of a usage-based notion of language and language-learning, by raising the question about the implicit learning of the morphosyntactic structures of the Finnish language. Hence, despite its practical emphasis, the paper includes a theoretical discussion on the relationship between implicit versus explicit language acquisition and usage-based versus rule-based L2 methodology.

2 *Toisto*: conceptual grounding

The *Toisto* method is a communicative approach based on freely combinable, 45–60 minute small-group sessions at a basic level, in which certain frequently occurring phrases and mini-dialogues depicting everyday situations are learned based on speech, listening and printable visual aids. Generally speaking, the method is usage-oriented in that it strives for a minimal gap between in-class practice and out-of-class application of what has been learned. As described in the introduction, *Toisto* can be identified as part of the long discussion about whether teaching the basics of Finnish grammar should rely on implicit learning and be phrase-based, or lean more on explicit learning and be rule-based. In this chapter, we turn our attention to the international debate about usage-based language acquisition. The frame of reference for our analysis stems from cognitive/construction linguistics, as we see the nature of language itself as a socio-cognitive semiotic system (e.g. Barlow & Kemmer 2000; Langacker 2000; 2008; Bybee 2006; 2008; Goldberg & Casenhiser 2008; Lieven & Tomasello 2008).

2.1 Usage-based vs. rule-based learning

A theory of language and language learning is usage-based inasmuch as it does not build on a strong innatist hypothesis, wherein exposure to

linguistic input activates and specifies an innate language module or a comparable cognitive device responsible for linguistic generation (N. Ellis & Robinson 2008: 4–8). In positive terms, a usage-based theory assumes that language is learned through actual interaction primarily by cognition-general learning mechanisms; moreover, if there are neuro-cognitive precursors of language that somehow precede actual language learning, these relate primarily to the particular sensitivity to verbal communication rather than to the architectural features of language (e.g. mode of syntactic processing). Self-defined “usage-based” theories, however, specify the notion by positing more explicit models of how language and linguistic structures are constituted and shaped by use (see e.g. Langacker 2000; Bybee 2006: 724–730; N. Ellis 2008: 382–396; Lieven & Tomasello 2008: 170–171). Rather than being mutually inconsistent, various usage-based models are distinguishable relative to their different analytical foci. For instance, Langacker’s (1987) *Cognitive Grammar* is a usage-based model of a full-fledged grammatical system, whereas Bybee (1985) and Tomasello (2003) concentrate particularly on language acquisition and evolution, respectively.

The usage-based conception of grammar reaches further back in history than linguistics as a discipline, as its roots sprout from the tradition of rhetoric. However, usage-basedness was acknowledged as a relevant principle for linguistic modelling notably through M. A. K. Halliday’s work in the 1970s (1978). The present article takes up the discussion pertaining to cognitive linguistics and the psycholinguistics of language acquisition; in both cases language is approached in close relation to its internalisation, namely the kind of cognitive processes that account for possessing a language. The elements that are internalised are the linguistic units belonging to a language. These units, in turn, are usually depicted as symbolic pairings of meaning and form which, insofar as the unit is properly learned, involve all the relevant information needed for their use. The relationship between usage and internalisation is typically analysed as a cyclical process whereby conventional linguistic units are contextually extended, which in turn results in the internalisation of semantic extensions.

This formulation also underlines the central semantic motivation of usage-based theories, which stems from a particular non-modular or weakly modular notion of cognition (as does the depiction of language vis-à-vis cognition-general capabilities). Insofar as language is learned as a categorisation of actual usage events, it is learned in a manner that is

uniform for lexical and grammatical units (Achard 2008: 440–441; Goldberg & Casenhiser 2008: 204–206). Thus, various construction-based models, which are naturally grouped under the rubric of usage-based models, explicitly consider, say, nouns and syntactic categories as comparable in terms of their gross conceptual features. For instance, the Finnish utterances *bussi* ('bus') and *menen bussilla kouluun* ('I go to school by bus') are both analysable as elaborations of accordingly internalised schemata. The latter of these two schemata consists of a syntactically complex structure, where the constituents with their mutual relations are internalised as inherent symbolic components of the schema.

From a usage-based perspective, then, learning grammar (morphosyntactic units) is a process driven by meaning and schematisation. As first and second language acquisition are assumed to resemble each other in this respect, usage-based models of grammar suggest a methodology for teaching that favours modelling structures with rich input of specific expressions at the expense of the explicit description of grammatical rules. The existing applications of usage-based models to L2 teaching also point to the feasibility of deriving methodology from the usage-based notion of language acquisition in general and emphasising the role of input in particular (Hämäläinen 1988; Lauranto 1997; Tukia et al. 2007; Verspoor & Nguyen 2015).

The mechanisms of linguistic categorisation and acquisition postulated by usage-based accounts are not only structured along the singular dimension of schematicity, however. Internalisation from use is characterised by a complex interplay of multiple dimensions, some of which relate to the scope of use for a particular structure (e.g. frequency and schematicity), while others relate to the experiential salience of referents and conceptualised states of affairs (e.g. prototypicality). It follows that a usage-based notion of language acquisition or the resulting conceptual structure should not be interpreted simplistically. A usage-based account of language duly attributes learning not just to use per se but to use in experiential contexts that serve to elaborate the semantic import of linguistic expressions and, consequently, their internalisations. One implication for language learning yet to be spelled out is the role of intentionality. There is substantial behavioural evidence from small infants that linguistic capabilities are grounded in motor, perceptual, and affective pre-linguistic intersubjectivity, namely the child's ability to detect and identify with conspecifics as sentient beings (e.g. Stern 1971; 1977; 1985; Meltzoff & Moore 1977; 1994; 1997; Trevarthen 1979; 1980; Trevarthen

& Aitken 2001; Astington 2006; Gallagher & Hutto 2008; de Bruin & de Haan 2012;). This pre-linguistic intersubjectivity, in turn, has implications for a usage-based notion of language in that its symbolic units are derived from experienced linguistic-intentional acts, that is, other people's expressions that are primarily apprehended as expressions of a particular subjective state (Möttönen 2016). It is therefore suggested here that a usage-based notion of language implies socio-cognitive, experiential semantics as an inherent part of learning grammar during first language acquisition, a position similar to that adopted by Tomasello (2003).

In and of itself, this general implication of a usage-based model does not translate into a particular pedagogical standpoint, but simply points to the importance of experientially rich interactions for language acquisition in infants. What needs to be considered as a separate matter are the provisions set by adults as the subjects of second language learning.

2.2 The (partial) analogy of L1 and L2 learning

To some extent, second language learning is analogous to learning one's first language, as the experientialist principle outlined above is an evident part of all human interaction. It is thus reasonable to consider the *extent* to which L2 learning in adults can be explained by processes already manifest in infants learning their first language.

As stated, the pre-linguistic phase of an infant's first language learning is characterised by motor intersubjectivity, shown in body orientation, gestures and eye contact. Even before the symbolic function is comprehended, infants are apparently able to follow the turn-taking sections in adult conversation and even participate in the dialogues with well-timed babbling and eye contact (Lieven et al. 2003; Liukkonen & Kunnari 2012). According to Lave & Wenger (1991), newcomers start becoming part of communities of practice through legitimate peripheral participation. In other words, actual verbal participation in L2 conversation is preceded by peripheral participation through nonverbal means such as joining in by using gestures, eye orientation or simple one-syllable interjections. Hence, the phase of peripheral participation in L2 learning can in fact be seen as parallel to the pre-linguistic phase in L1 learning. Peripheral participation, in turn, can be analysed as a stage that paves the way for the learning of multi-word constructions and situational schemata, which are the basic units of all grammatical and communicative skills, both in children's first language acquisition (Kauppinen 1998; Lieven et al.

2003; Lieven & Tomasello 2008) and the learning of additional languages (Wong Fillmore 1979; Pawley & Syder 1983; N. Ellis 1996; 2012; Wood 2015).

The analogy and perceived similarity between L1 and L2 learning has been explored by Lily Wong Fillmore's (1979) classic study, which remains a credible articulation of the interplay between the social and the cognitive factors in language learning. The value of Wong Fillmore's contribution is underlined by the fact that the actual "social turn" in second language acquisition research took place only fifteen years later (van Lier 1994; Lantolf 1996; Firth & Wagner 1997). Wong Fillmore analysed how five Spanish-speaking newcomers of around six years of age learned English in a naturalistic setting from their L1 English peers. The participants were observed in a playroom, longitudinally for one year.

Wong Fillmore reported how the children's learning was manifested in turn through social and cognitive strategies. When it came to the social strategies (S1–S3), the children strove to be active participants in the community, while the cognitive strategies (C1–C5) were displayed as attempts to produce situationally relevant verbal constructs. The following list is an extract from Wong Fillmore's book (1979: 209):

Cognitive and social strategies

S1 Join a group and act as if you understand what's going on, even if you don't.

C1 Assume that what people are saying is directly relevant to the situation at hand, or to what they or you are experiencing. Metastrategy: Guess!

S2 Give the impression – with a few well-chosen words – that you can speak the language.

C2 Get some expressions you understand, and start talking.

C3 Look for recurring parts in the formulas you know.

C4 Make the most of what you've got.

C5 Work on big things first; save the details for later.

S3 Count on your friends for help.

Wong Fillmore's contribution to the social-cognitive discussion is an interplay view that still seems relevant today. Apart from recognising the impact of the social factor in L2 learning as being of equal importance to the cognitive or "linguistic" factor, just as the two factors are of equal value in initial L1 learning, Wong Fillmore's research contributed to another crucial point that is comparable with the L1 learning process, namely the idea of "formulas" as units of language learning. According to the third and fourth items in the list (S2, C2), if the learner was silent for too long a period, the first social strategy "act as if you understand" would be ruined.

Therefore, the participants implemented the C2 strategy by choosing formulated, non-segmented expressions that had been learned by heart (e.g. *Lookit. Wait a minute. Lemme see. Gimme. Let's go. I don't care. I dunno.*), through which they legitimised their participation in social interaction. Sooner or later the children started to generate new functional phrases by segmenting and recreating the old phrases (C3). When "Nora" was able to say *I wanna play wi' dese* and *I don't wanna do dese*, she subsequently formed the new sentences *I don't wanna play wi' dese* and *I wanna do dese*. The formulas were made into abstractions with fillable slots: *I wanna X/X=VP* and *I don't wanna X/X=VP*, namely slots (X) that could be filled with verbal phrases (VP) bit by bit, or formulas learned by heart that would abstract into a linguistic network that also allows the construction of creative expressions (Wong Fillmore 1979). This type of formula-based description of L2 learning is similar to many depictions of L1 learning, such as Hungarian (MacWhinney 1974), Finnish (Kauppinen 1998), or a general review of a child's L1 acquisition (Lieven & Tomasello 2008).

The extent of the analogy between adult L2 learning and children's L1 learning is an open question. The majority of the existing research on adult L2 learning is restricted to course-setting and methodology based on written materials, and there is little knowledge on how adults learn informally based on spoken interaction in natural settings. In what follows, we will compare L1 learning in children and L2 learning in adults in relation to two cognitive factors: metacognition and linguistic units relevant for language processing.

The various accounts of metacognition, namely the reflective and operative meta-consciousness of thinking and decision-making, can be aligned relative to the extent to which metacognition is evoked to explain language learning. In principle, metacognitive awareness can be considered the central facet of learning or categorically epiphenomenal; accordingly, a particular model can ground learning either in explicit or implicit cognitive processes. Note that the distinction between explicit and implicit learning should not be confused with the distinction between socio-constructivist and nativist notions of language learning: in other words, the same pedagogical activity, whether relying on a functional or rule-based approach, can yield either of the two theoretical perspectives.¹

¹ Explicit and implicit notions of language learning have, in fact, been operationalised by language-pedagogical methods prior to modern theoretical accounts thereof. "Extreme" examples of the explicit, metacognition-based approach and implicit,

It has been suggested that adults also acquire language primarily through implicit learning, by learning constructs and phrases by heart. Krashen & Scarcella (1978) argue for “prefabricated routines” in L2 acquisition. In other words, L2 learning relies on the gradual, largely implicit entrenchment of patterns, formulas and constructions in use. Krashen (1981; 1982) has developed this line of thought into the so-called Input Hypothesis or Monitor Model, the basic characteristic of which is a heavy emphasis on linguistic input as the basis of language learning. The distinctive feature of Krashen’s approach is the conviction that explicit knowledge about language and grammar are strictly irrelevant for linguistic skills. For instance, we may feel that linguistic explanations of the Finnish conjugation system help us to master its use and semiotic import; however, actual learning happens regardless of this felt connection by being exposed to, and involved in, the use of conjugated verb forms.

Rod Ellis (2009: 20–23; see also Spoelman 2013: 153–155) calls the implicit approach a “non-interface” position, as it denies a functional relationship between implicit knowhow and explicit meta-knowledge in the learning process. A variation of the non-interface position exemplified by Hulstijn (2002) states that the explicit discussion of grammatical and other language features, rather than contributing to the formation of implicit skills, comprises a parallel and distinct activity. In contrast, an approach with a strong emphasis on explicit learning is called a “strong interface” position (*ibid.*), whereby such an approach assumes a flow of information from explicit knowledge to implicit knowhow. A “weak interface” position, as described by Rod Ellis (2009), considers explicit knowledge beneficial in the secondary, indirect sense, where it supports the implicit detection and entrenchment of linguistic features in linguistic input. Ellis (*ibid.*) suggests that the incorporation of explicit linguistic knowledge promotes learning in that it allows a comparison between the features of the target language and those of one’s native language.

Although implicit vs. explicit and nativist vs. socio-constructivist make two mutually independent distinctions, the discussion has conflated these issues from time to time. For instance, Krashen’s position has been considered nativist and, hence, untenable from a socio-constructivist point of view (see Dunn & Lantolf 1998). On the other hand, the notion of strictly implicit language learning (e.g. Krashen & Terrel 1983) has been

non-metacognitive approach are provided by the classical Grammar-Translation method and Direct Method, respectively (Richards & Rodgers 2014).

considered by some socio-constructivists as too extreme to be realistic (Swain & Lapkin 1995; R. Ellis 2009). It can be said, however, that the notion of implicit adult grammar learning remains significant, particularly in approaches based on construction grammar and cognitive L2 pedagogy, where “the presentation of the ‘rule’ of a construction can never substitute for the presentation of actually occurring instances of that rule” (Achard 2008: 434–435, 440).

Another way of comparing language learning in children and in adults is to consider the linguistic units most relevant for processing. As stated in §2.1, there is converging evidence on children learning a language based on constructions (e.g. Lieven & Tomasello 2008). Whether promoted by explicit description or implicit modelling, adult learners seem to rely on similar, construction- or formula-based learning rather than deriving expressions from abstract rules (on frequency effects, see Bybee 2008: 223–225; associative learning N. Ellis 2008: 386; constructions over morphology and skewed input Goldberg & Casenhiser 2008: 204–208). As early as 1983, Pawley and Syder suggested that formulas form the basis of fluent and idiomatic language use.

A similar conclusion has been drawn by Biber (2006), who compares the syntactic tendencies of different academic fields. For instance, certain formulaic noun phrases typical of technical and sociological studies are clearly rarer among the humanities, where, in turn, language shares more features with prose. At the bare minimum, this is proof of the existence of implicit formulaic learning for L2 speakers. Similarly, Myles & Cordier (2017) suggest that native speakers learn new genres via conventional lexical clusters. Finally, formulaic learning seems to be scale-free to an extent, in that formulas may include one-morpheme constructs while many languages incorporate full formulaic sentences (see Schmitt & Carter 2004: 4).

To sum up our discussion, it seems safe to say that adult L2 learning resembles L1 learning among children to an indefinite extent in that it does incorporate implicit, formula-based learning. Given the strong normative attitude towards language teaching, held both by teachers and students, it is difficult to assess the extent to which teaching could or should be geared towards the emulation of learning in naturalistic settings. It is nonetheless clear that implicit learning does occur in adults and that the selected teaching method should maximise the time that is reserved for modelling and producing the target language. This view gains at least anecdotal support from the use of songs – a prime example of formulaic input – in

teaching a secondary language (Wood 2015; Alisaari 2016). Implicitness in learning is not a goal in itself, however, and it is obvious that adult learners benefit from analytical tools at some point (see R. Ellis 2009: 15–16). Among other usage-based methods, *Toisto* strives to enable collecting experiential “data” for analysis first, rather than starting to analyse a linguistic construct that is still hypothetical for the learner.

3 *Toisto*: the basics

In this section, we will provide a basic introduction to the *Toisto* method’s linguistic-pedagogical background and to the actual implementation of the method, respectively. We will concentrate on the practical needs and pedagogical principles that motivated the development of the method, as well as describing a basic session.

3.1 Methodological and pragmatic background

Academic linguistic practice has been criticised for its written language bias (Linell 1982), but this bias is also characteristic of much of L2 teaching and the study thereof (Piirainen-Marsh 1994; Kristiansen 1998; Säljö 2000; Harjanne 2006; Kormos 2006; Luukka et al. 2008; Dufva et al. 2011; Richards & Rodgers 2014). The prestige attached to writing skills is demonstrated in the manner in which written materials and assignments tend to dominate teaching and learning more as the language learners advance (Harjanne & Tella 2011). The written language bias is not just typical of the pedagogical practices maintained by teachers but also directs the expectations of the language learners in terms of what a regular language class should be like (Skinnari 2012). As a consequence, particular determination from the teacher is called for in order to avoid excessive reliance on written materials.

The aforementioned reliance on written materials can be defined as a practical tendency that is counter-productive vis-à-vis the needs of learners. The tendency is particularly harmful when one is learning a language of a distinctive prosodic nature or where communicative skills are taught with limited resources. The *Toisto* method is designed to provide a solution to this kind of challenge. *Toisto* was developed to facilitate elementary L2 learning in the context of the refugee crisis confronting Europe and the EU between 2015 and 2016. In 2015, over 1,255,600 refugees arrived in EU countries to seek asylum, mainly fleeing the war in Syria, Iraq and

Afghanistan; 32,150 sought asylum in Finland, where the number of asylum seekers was 822% more than in 2014 (Eurostat 2016). The majority were accommodated in immigration detention centres where the resources reserved for language education were either extremely limited or non-existent. The aim of *Toisto* was to provide open access (Toisto 2015–18) to simple pedagogical tools and materials designed for volunteers working at the detention centres so that they could teach practical, directly relevant elementary language skills based on speech, listening and interaction. The development of the method was informed simultaneously by two perspectives:

- i. *Pedagogical*: How to provide language teaching that makes maximally efficient use of limited resources and is maximally relevant for the language learners?
- ii. *Practical*: What kind of integral combination of method and materials would be most efficiently distributed among volunteers with no pedagogical training?

These perspectives were considered vis-à-vis the constant uncertainty and unpredictable changes that asylum seekers in Finland and other parts of Europe experience in their daily lives. The result was a method that relies on small-group sessions of similar structure, including scripts and printable materials, and which can be taught/attended in whatever order. Accordingly, the method would be non-cumulative (in the basic form of the method none of the sessions require previous learning) and non-hierarchical (there is no course structure with general, controlled learning aims), so that language learners can attend a session whenever it is convenient for them. At the same time, *Toisto* would not only be an instrument for teaching but also for organising teaching: complete scripts and printable materials would make it possible to arrange a session wherever volunteers and language learners could meet.

For an individual *Toisto* session, this means that categorically no explicit teaching of grammar (e.g. compositional rules or morphological paradigms) is involved. In positive terms, the teacher's verbal input consists almost entirely of the same lexical and phrasal expressions that the participants are supposed to learn. Accordingly, the activities in each session consist of listening, repeating and applying words and phrases that the volunteers model (rather than instruct) in conjunction with the use of visual aids and mime. The vocabulary and phrases are limited to one theme per session, based on what is considered directly relevant for the learners'

daily lives (for details, see the *Toisto* handbook by Huilla & Lankinen 2018.)

Selecting the content for *Toisto* sessions is the result of team-work: the ideas have been collected from asylum seekers themselves, workers in detention centres, volunteers, Finnish language teachers, and students. The *Toisto* team has maintained the idea of daily schemata and everyday vocabulary that is needed for survival in Finland. Most themes are ostensibly similar to conventional textbooks, such as buying food, asking for directions, and introducing oneself, but there are also sessions whose cultural complexity only came to light via authentic contact with learners and voluntary workers: the absence of tobacco shops made a session on buying cigarettes necessary, the cultural concept of a free library was unfamiliar to newcomers (prompting the inclusion of two library sessions), and there is also a session orientating learners to a shopping mall, to mention some of the results on which interaction with the target group is based. At the same time, the variety of syntactic structures for each session is kept to a minimum. The typical structural inventory of a *Toisto* session consists of a question and a response, with the latter varying from one occurrence to another by changing a lexical element while the syntactic structure remains the same. Different patterns of repetition and mini-dialogues (question/answer pairs) are performed by the small group so that each participant has approximately the same number of opportunities to speak and interact.

In the absence of overt instruction (meta-language) and a cumulative, hierarchical course structure, it is self-evident that the learning aims are, in a sense, implicit and undefined for the individual learner. The very sufficiency of such a modelling-based approach suggests, however, that adult language learners are on average quick to infer implied practices and learning objectives. Indeed, different learner-oriented methodologies have proved their efficacy for language-learning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson 2011; Richards & Rodgers 2014). One of the guiding assumptions of the *Toisto* method is that, in a relatively restricted setting with repetitive activities, it is both feasible and rewarding to emphasise the initiative of the student in elementary language learning as well. In particular, it is beneficial to promote naturally occurring, namely implicit, analogy-based learning by providing an unusually rich concentration of a certain structure type, while focusing on speech at the same time. As will be seen in the following sub-section, the practical elements of *Toisto* aim to minimise the social hierarchy of the small group setting, which is also supported by the

avoidance of overt instruction. At the same time, the method provides a comforting and organised context for practising a language domain which is typically considered most threatening to one's social status, that is, the production of speech in a foreign language.

The purpose of each session is to provide learners with productive clause types and vocabulary that can be combined with ease to cope in typical everyday situations. Learners engage in as much repetition as possible, so that they have a firm, first-person motor and perceptual grasp of how to produce an utterance, but also how to vary the utterance by lexical means. Consequently, when confronted with a real-life communicative need, the learner may produce expressions that are not only understandable but also syntactically and prosodically well formed.

3.2 What is a *Toisto* session like?

There are a total of 32 ready-made *Toisto* sessions available on the *Toisto* webpage, 18 of which are basic sessions with no requirements for pre-existing skills (Toisto 2015–18). The remaining 14 sessions exhibit minimal progression and therefore require the participants to have participated in some basic sessions. A *Toisto* session lasts about 45–60 minutes and is carried out by two volunteers² with a group of approximately 10 language learners. The group sits in a circle formation, with the leading volunteer (L) sitting among the group and another volunteer, the so-called speaking dictionary (SD), standing. Each session consists of simple oral drills on vocabulary and phrases. Drills are carried out by the group members in turn; during a round, each learner produces a word or utterance based on a prompt given by the teacher or the previous speaker. Repetition at the group level is used as often as possible.

L's task is to model and illustrate vocabulary and to run the session by initiating rounds of drills. Vocabulary and phrases are illustrated by repetition in conjunction with gestures and visual aids. L chooses a picture, says the corresponding word, and gestures to the group (flexing both arms in an inviting manner) that they should repeat. A drill is then initiated whereby L turns to the person next to him/her and exemplifies the task in question. This could be, for instance, a memory game entailing selecting a picture card and producing the correct word. After exemplifying the task, L

² Each session, however, can be adjusted so that it can be carried out by a single volunteer.

gestures to the first learner that he/she should pass the turn to the next person in the circle. SD moves around the circle so that he/she is standing diagonally behind the speaker who has the turn. SD does not interfere with the progress of the round; should a learner have difficulty with a particular expression, he/she can give SD a sign (a tap on SD's extended hand) to model the expression.

The materials for each session, including a model video, manuscript/instruction sheet, printable visual materials and a vocabulary sheet can be obtained from the *Toisto* webpage. The manuscript consists of a chronological description of the session as well as lists of expressions (types) and materials used in the session. The structure of a *Toisto* session is simple and consistent from one session to another, so that a volunteer can facilitate a session based on the materials alone.

A typical session is structured as follows:

1. Greeting and introduction
2. Objectives
3. Modelling vocabulary
4. Modelling the 'speaking dictionary'
5. Modelling a dialogue or a vocabulary drill
6. Exercise round
7. Variation
8. Variation II
9. Ending: vocabulary sheets handed to the participants, thank-yous & goodbyes.

Sequences 1–5 and 9 are included in each session. The number of different exercises in steps 6–8 may vary from one session to another, and some variations may be added or omitted based on the situation or the group's needs.

Let us take a closer look at one example session, *012 Minun käsi on kipeä*, 'My arm/hand is sore'. In the session, L models the vocabulary by indicating parts of the body and repeating them with the group. After modelling the vocabulary, L and SD model how to get help from the SD. L selects a picture card showing a part of the body and says the word. L tries to do the same with another picture, but fails, simultaneously expressing confusion with facial expressions and gestures. SD reacts to L's difficulty, moves towards her, and extends her hand to L. L then touches SD's hand and SD says the correct word.

Modelling SD in session 012 is directly followed a vocabulary drill. L selects yet another picture card and says the word. After this, she gives one picture card to each learner, who say their words accordingly. Each learner

says the word to the group as a whole, with the turn-taking facilitated by L's attention (gaze and bodily orientation) and SD's change of position.

Before going on to practise the dialogue, L and SD model one more word: the adjective *kipeä* 'sore', which, as a predicative in a copula sentence, is a common way to express pain in Finnish. L shows and touches a part of her arm/hand, moans and gestures as if in intense pain. L then says the word *kipeä* while simultaneously holding a card with the word on it, and SD gestures to the group to repeat. After this, L and SD model the dialogue and get the group to practise the phrases needed for it. SD selects a card from the deck, and shows it to the group, while L holds a card or item that represents a doctor (e.g. a stethoscope). L asks SD *mikä hätänä* 'what's wrong' and SD replies by touching her hand and saying *minun käsi on kipeä* 'my hand is sore'. Gestures are made for the group to repeat both the question and the answer, after which the dialogue can be repeated for different parts of the body: each student is given a picture card after which L asks each one of them individually *mikä hätänä* 'what's wrong'.

After a few repetitions of questions and answers, the learners are given new picture cards. Once again, L asks a learner *mikä hätänä* 'what's wrong', but now each question/answer pair gets repeated by the learner with her partner. L gives the stethoscope card to the learner she has just had the discussion with and the *kipeä* card to the learner's partner. L asks the learner with the *kipeä* card the same *mikä hätänä* question, and after receiving the answer gestures that the pair should repeat the dialogue independently. After a successful attempt (SD has moved next to the pair to assist if needed), L gets the group to repeat the answer to the question. Then the turn is passed. The first learner who has the role of the doctor gives the stethoscope card to her partner, who then turns to present the question to the learner next to her.

Multiple rounds of the dialogue ensue, after which the exercise can easily be varied, for instance by giving each student two picture cards. In another variation, L introduces the word *lapsi* 'child' with the aid of another picture card. Then the group conducts the original dialogue exercise with the phrase *minun lapsi on kipeä* 'my child is ill' and different variations.

The overall structure of the *Toisto* session illustrated above is readily generalisable to basic and non-basic sessions alike. Most importantly, the consistent structure makes *Toisto* sessions and their speech-based approach accessible and allows learners to pick up the pragmatic frame quickly, which in turn allows for concentration on the detection and use of the key

expressions. Inasmuch as the development of *Toisto* has succeeded in meeting it aims, the existing sessions should constitute a flexible and comprehensive inventory, wherein the choice can be made with minimal preparation and according to learners' current needs and interests.

4 Constructional scope of *Toisto*

In the previous sections, we have established the conceptual basis of the *Toisto* method and described the structure of a *Toisto* session. The next question is what and how participants are learning when they take part in sessions. In this section, we outline the scope of syntactic features exemplified in *Toisto* sessions and discuss the advantages of *Toisto* as a complementary pedagogical tool for language teaching.

Each *Toisto* session is designed to provide participants with skills that allow them to have a mini-dialogue (typically an adjacency pair consisting of a question and an answer). This aspect is directly motivated by the criterion that a *Toisto* session should be instantly relevant for actual interactional settings that the participants encounter outside the classroom. Hence, the existing *Toisto* sessions focus on common interactional topics.

Below are the various constructions that are found in *Toisto* sessions, grouped into different Tables (1–4) according to their gross syntactic features. In each Table, the constructions are then categorised according to their primary semantic function. The manner of exposition is chosen to underline the functional range of each construction. In addition, the Tables are divided into two columns, which include the (possible) interrogative forms on the left and declarative forms (the latter usually in indicative) on the right. For simplicity, the latter are denoted by the term “construction”. It should be noted that the interrogative on the left column may not always represent the construction it is meant to elicit. Frequency and information about the specific sessions in which each construction is featured have been omitted: typically, a specific construction features prominently in one session and is possibly re-applied in another 1-level session.

Table 1 consists of various copular constructions included in *Toisto* sessions. These constructions illustrate the neat semantic variation between constructions that hardly differ at the structural level.

Table 1: Copular constructions

Interrogative	Construction
a. Identificational	
<i>Kuka sinä ole-t?</i> who you be-2SG 'Who are you?'	minä ole-n [NAME] I be-1SG [name] 'I am [...].'
<i>Kuka hän on?</i> who (s)he be.3SG 'Who is (s)he?'	hän on [NAME] PN3SG be.3SG [name] '(s)he is [...].'
<i>mikä numero on [COLOUR] [TOBACCO BRAND]</i> <i>Mikä numero on punainen mallu?</i> what number be.3SG red mallu 'What number is the red Marlboro?'	se on [NUMERAL] <i>Se on kolkytkaks.</i> it be.3SG thirty-two 'It is thirty-two.'
b. Specificational	
<i>Kuka hän on?</i> who (s)he be.3SG 'Who is (s)he?'	hän on minun [RELATIVE] <i>Hän on minu-n äiti.</i> (s)he be.3SG I-GEN mother 'She is my mother.'
<i>Mi-tä tuo on?</i> what-PRT that be.3SG 'What is that?'	se on [FOODSTUFF+PRT] <i>Se on kala-a.</i> it be.3SG fish-PRT 'It is fish.'

c. Predicational

<i>On-ko</i>	<i>kaikki</i>	<i>ok?</i>	<i>On.</i>	/	<i>Ei</i>	<i>ole.</i>
be.3SG-Q	everything	ok	be.3SG		NEG.3SG	be.CNG
'Is everything alright?'			'Yes.' 'No.'			
<i>Mi-ltä</i>	<i>sinu-sta</i>	<i>tuntu-u?</i>	<i>minä</i>	<i>olen</i>	[ADJECTIVE]	
what-ABL	PN2SG-ELA	feel-3SG	<i>Minä</i>	<i>ole-n</i>	<i>vihainen.</i>	
'How do you feel?'			I	be-1SG	angry	
			'I am angry.'			
			<i>minun</i>	[PART OF THE BODY]		<i>on kipeä</i>
			<i>Minu-n</i>	<i>käsi</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>kipeä.</i>
			I-GEN	hand	be.3SG	sore
			'My hand is sore.'			
<i>oletko</i>	[ADJECTIVE]		<i>Ole-n.</i>	/	<i>En</i>	<i>ole.</i>
<i>Ole-t-ko</i>	<i>vihainen?</i>		be-1SG		NEG.1SG	be.CNG
be-2SG-Q	angry		'I am.' 'I am not.'			
'Are you angry?'						

d. Other

<i>Paljon-ko</i>	<i>kello</i>	<i>on?</i>	<i>kello on</i>	[NUMERAL]
much-Q	clock	be.3SG	<i>Kello on</i>	<i>viisi.</i>
'What time is it?'			clock be.3SG	five
			'It is five o'clock.'	

Syntactically, most of the copular constructions included here exhibit the same subject-verb-predicative structure. At the same time, the meanings of complete constructions vary subtly yet notably along with those of the subjects and predicates. We distinguish between three different semantic functions – identificational, specificational and predicational, following Higgins' (1979) taxonomy. The differences between these functions are hardly explicable by native speakers; yet it seems inevitable that they are part of the use of the copular constructions, for example in denoting the difference between identification and attribution: 'I am Maria' and 'I am happy' cannot be conflated unless the predicative phrases of these clauses are not properly grasped. The same argument is applicable to the existential clauses and other adverbial-initial clauses listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Adverbial-initial clauses

Interrogative			Construction		
a. Existential					
mitä	[ROOM+INE]	on	[ROOM+INE]	on	[FURNITURE]
<i>Mi-tä</i>	<i>olohuonee-ssa</i>	<i>on?</i>	<i>Olohuonee-ssa</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>sohva.</i>
what-PRT	living.room-INE	be.3SG	living.room-INE	be-3SG	sofa
‘What is in the living room?’			‘There is a sofa in the living room.’		
b. Meteorological					
<i>Millainen</i>	<i>sää</i>	<i>on?</i>	[WEEKDAY+ESS]	[METEOROLOGICALVERB]	
what.kind.of	weather	be.3SG	<i>Maanantai-na</i>	<i>sata-a</i>	<i>ve-ttä.</i>
What is the weather like?			Monday-ESS	rain-3SG	water-PRT
			‘It’s going to rain on Monday.’		
			[SEASON+ADE]	[METEOROLOGICAL VERB]	
			<i>Kesä-llä</i>	<i>paista-a</i>	<i>aurinko.</i>
			summer-ADE	shine-3SG	sun
			‘The sun shines in the summer.’		
c. Habitive					
			minulla	on	[ILLNESS]
			<i>Minu-lla</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>yskä.</i>
			I-ADE	be.3SG	cough
			‘I have a cough.’		
			<i>Minu-lla</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>ystävä.</i>
			I-ADE	be.3SG	friend
			‘I have the friend.’		
onko	ystävällä	[ADJECTIVE]	ystävä-llä	on	[ADJECTIVE]
		[GARMENT]			[GARMENT]
<i>On-ko</i>	<i>ystävä-llä</i>	<i>sininen</i>	<i>Ystävä-llä</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>keltainen</i>
be.3SG-Q	friend-ADE	blue	friend-ADE	be.3SG	yellow
		shirt			cap
‘Does your friend have a blue shirt?’			‘My friend has a yellow cap.’		
kenellä	on	[ARTEFACT]	minulla	on	[ADJECTIVE]
<i>Kene-llä</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>puhelin?</i>	<i>Minu-lla</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>hyvä</i>
who-ADE	be.3SG	phone	I-ADE	be.3SG	good
					phone
‘Who has a phone?’			‘I have a good phone.’		
d. Adverb-initial passive constructions					
mitä	[ROOM+INE]	tehdään	ROOM+INE]	[VERB+PASS]	
<i>Mi-tä</i>	<i>keittiö-ssä</i>	<i>tehdä-än?</i>	<i>Keittiö-ssä</i>	<i>laite-taan</i>	<i>ruoka-a.</i>
what-PRT	kitchen-INE	do-PASS	kitchen-INE	make-PASS	food-PRT
‘What do you do in the kitchen?’			‘You make food in the kitchen.’		

The existential, passive, meteorological and habitive constructions listed here exhibit more structural variation than the copular constructions in Table 1. Yet they all share the feature of a clause-initial adverbial phrase that includes one of the Finnish non-directional locatives. The functions of these adverbials are spatial, temporal and habitive, respectively. As such, the most concrete uses of basic locatives are illustrated.

Table 3 illustrates the locative constructions included in the *Toisto* sessions.

Table 3: Locative constructions

Interrogative	Construction
a. Locative	
<i>Mis-sä sinä ole-t?</i> where-INE you be-2SG 'Where are you?'	minä olen [PLACE+INE/ADE] <i>Minä ole-n tori-lla.</i> I be-1SG market-ADE 'I am at the market.'
missä [SUPERMARKET SECTION/ SHOP] on	se on [SECTION+PRT/GEN] [POSTP] <i>Se on maito-hylly-n taka-na.</i>
<i>Mis-sä pullonpalautus on?</i> where-INE bottle.return be.3SG 'Where is the reverse vending machine?'	it be.3SG milk-shelf-GEN behind-ESS 'It is behind the milk shelf.'
	se on [ORDINAL+INE] [FLOOR+INE] <i>Se on toise-ssa kerrokse-ssa.</i> it be.3SG second-INE floor-INE 'It is on the second floor.'
b. Dynamic locative	
menee-kö tämä bussi [PLACENAME +ALL/ILL]	tämä bussi menee [PLACENAME +ALL/ILL]
<i>Menee-kö tämä bussi Tamperee-lle?</i> go.3SG-Q this bus Tampere-ALL 'Does this bus go to Tampere?'	<i>Tämä bussi mene-e Oulu-un.</i> this bus go-3SG Oulu-ILL 'This bus goes to Oulu.'
<i>Mi-llä sinä mene-t?</i> what-ADE you go-2SG 'How are you going to get there?'	minä menen [VEHICLE+ADE] <i>Minä mene-n bussi-lla.</i> I go-1SG bus-ADE 'I'm going by bus.'

Mi-hin sinä mene-t?
 what-ILL you go-2SG
 ‘Where are you going?’

minä menen [PLACE+ALL/ILL]
Minä mene-n kauppa-an.
 I go-1SG store-ILL
 ‘I am going to the store.’

minä menen [PLACE+ALL/ILL]
 [VEHICLE+ADE]
Minä mene-n kauppa-an bussi-lla.
 I go-1SG store-ILL bus-ADE
 ‘I go to the store by bus.’

(Imperative)

Tule tänne! | *Mene tuonne!*
 come.IMP here.LAT go.IMP there.LAT
 ‘Come here!’ ‘Go there!’

Joo minä tule-n. | *Joo minä mene-n*
 yeah I come-1SG yeah I go-1SG
 ‘Yeah I’m coming.’ ‘Yeah I’m going.’

Käänny vasemmalle! | *Käänny oikealle!*
 turn.IMP left-ALL turn.IMP right-ALL
 ‘Turn left!’ ‘Turn right!’

The locative constructions have been divided into sub-groups relative to their stativity (*olla* ‘to be’) and dynamicity (*mennä* ‘to go’, *tulla* ‘to come’, *kääntyä* ‘to turn’). In addition, the typical locative imperatives have been listed as a separate group. With regard to the constructions discussed above, the locative constructions here have two important additional elements: the locative use of *olla* ‘be’ is introduced, and directional illative (‘into’) and allative (‘onto’) are presented in conjunction with locations and travel. In addition, the adessive case is used in an instrumental meaning with different vehicles.

Despite the obvious internal variation, the constructions in Tables 1–3 constitute formally (and in the case of locative constructions also thematically) cohesive wholes. It can be argued that the constructions are in many cases related closely enough that they serve to specify and ground each other. For instance, habitive uses of the adessive in the cases of *ystävä-llä on keltainen lippis* ‘the friend has a yellow cap’ and *minu-lla on flunssa* ‘I have the flu’ are quite likely to yield association (and build on similar association found in many languages) between concrete habitive meaning (possession) and being ill. Cognitive aspects aside, this association, in turn, may support grasping and acquiring novel uses of habitive constructions.

The existing *Toisto* sessions, however, include a significant number of constructions with only distant or abstract commonalities. It is worth noting that only four examples of clear cases of simple transitive clauses are found. These are listed in Table 4, along with some other two-argument constructions and idiomatic phrases. The constructions based on transitive verbs are listed first: (a) *puhua* ‘to speak’, (b) *saada* ‘to have’ (in the meaning of ‘to receive’), (c) *syödä* ‘to eat’ and (d) *haluta* ‘to want’. The fourth row includes the verb *pitää* ‘to like’, which has an infinitival argument: *minä tykkään tanssi-a* ‘I like to dance’. Some Finnish verbs (including *haluta*) can have both nominal and infinitival arguments, but this type of variation is not demonstrated in the *Toisto* sessions. The second to last row includes the construction based on the verb *maksaa* ‘to cost’, which has a numeric phrase as its second argument. Finally, the last category in the Table involves distinct constructions that are either only weakly productive or lack some characteristics of a clause (e.g. a finite verb).

Table 4: Other constructions

Interrogative	Construction
a. To speak	
<i>Mi-tä sinä puhu-t?</i> what-PRT you speak-2SG ‘What language do you speak?’	minä puhun [LANGUAGE+PRT] <i>Minä puhu-n suome-a.</i> I speak-1SG Finnish-PRT ‘I speak Finnish.’
b. Can I have / to eat	
<i>saanko [NUM] [FOOD+PRT/GEN]</i> <i>Saanko kaksi leipä-ä?</i> get-Q two loaves-PRT ‘Can I have two loaves?’	minä [EAT/DRINK] [NUM] [FOOD+PRT/GEN] <i>Minä syö-n yhde-n omena-n.</i> I eat-1SG one-GEN apple-GEN ‘I eat one apple.’
c. To want	
<i>Mi-tä sinä halua-t?</i> what-PRT you want-2SG ‘What do you want?’	minä haluan [FOODSTUFF+PRT] <i>Minä halua-n pitsa-a.</i> I want-1SG pizza-PRT ‘I want some pizza.’
d. To like	
<i>tykkäätkö sinä [VERB+INF]</i> <i>Tykkää-t-kö sinä tanssi-a?</i> like-2SG-Q you dance-INF ‘Do you like to dance?’	minä tykkään [VERB+INF] <i>Minä tykkää-n tanssi-a.</i> I like-1SG dance-INF ‘I like to dance.’
	minä en tykkää [INFINITIVE] <i>Minä en tykkää tanssi-a.</i> I NEG like.CNG dance-INF ‘I don’t like to dance.’

e. To cost

mitä	[GARMENT]	maksaa	se	maksaa	[NUM]	euroa
<i>Mi-tä</i>	<i>huppari</i>	<i>maksa-a?</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>maksa-a</i>	<i>kymmenen</i>	<i>euro-a.</i>
what-PRT	hoodie	cost-1SG	it	cost-3SG	ten	euro-PRT
‘What does the hoodie cost?’			‘It costs ten euros.’			

f. Idiomatic

Mitä kuuluu? / *Ihan hyvää.* / *Ei niin hyvää* / *Huonoa.*
 ‘How is it going?’ | ‘Quite alright.’ | ‘Not so good.’ | ‘Bad.’

ottaisin [NUM] [FOODSTUFF+PRT]
Otta-isi-n kaksi leipä-ä.
 take-COND-1SG two loaves-PRT
 ‘I’d take two loaves.’

Seuraava asiakas. | Yks punainen Mallu.
 ‘Next customer.’ | ‘One red Marlboro.’

yksi lippu [PLACENAME+ILL/ALL], kiitos
Yksi lippu Tamperee-lle, kiitos.
 one ticket Tampere-ALL please
 ‘One ticket to Tampere, please.’

yksi [PLACENAME+GEN] lippu, kiitos
Yksi Tamperee-n lippu, kiitos.
 one Tampere-GEN ticket, please
 ‘One ticket to Tampere, please.’

The constructions listed here nonetheless exemplify frequent Finnish transitive verbs in some of their typical uses and introduce the main object types: genitive (*syön omena-n* ‘I eat [one] apple’) and partitive (*haluan pitsa-a* ‘I want [some] pizza’), with their respective total and partial meanings. In addition, the constructions involve a considerable amount of repetitive practice in terms of elaboration of these object types. For instance, session 1.10b, which presents the construction *haluta* ‘to want’, includes both a vocabulary drill with nominative food terms, followed by systematic formation and repetition of partitive objects derived from the same terms. The object types are thus represented as direct corollaries of certain construal types, rather than formal properties of the vocabulary. Finally, the majority of so-called idiomatic constructions also require lexical and grammatical elaboration from the speaker: for instance, the combination of numerals and partitive complements and directional complements for *lippu* (here: ‘public transport ticket’).

To sum up, the constructions included in *Toisto* sessions and listed above cover a substantial number of Finnish syntactic clause types, while restricting the variation for each construction to a few examples. For the majority of constructions and sessions, the elaboration is systematically restricted to a particular argument and its possible modifier (e.g. an adjective) and the selection is limited to a particular set of options. Grammatically, the elaboration can only involve one combination of a lexical entry and a grammatical marker, the latter of which is introduced as an integral part of the construction. In addition to orality and repetition, this restricted type of elaboration-cum-selection is a recurrent and typical feature of the *Toisto* method.

5 Discussion

The sections above have outlined the theoretical and practical motivations that have informed the development of *Toisto*, as well as the chief characteristics of the method. *Toisto* stands in the tradition of various methods that underline orality, communication and the learner's active participation in L2 learning: the direct method, communicative teaching, a suggestopedic orientation, and authenticity. From a grammatical perspective, the method derives from a usage-based, constructionist view of linguistic learning and aims to utilise the same learning mechanisms that are at play in L1 acquisition. In practice, this means avoiding the explication of linguistic generalisations. In positive terms, generalisations become the responsibility of the L2 learners, yet they are facilitated with a generous amount of repetition. We argue that the method is indeed in line with the theoretical notion of language and language acquisition that it derives from. In addition, there is initial anecdotal evidence of the efficacy of *Toisto* as a primary means of teaching elementary communicative skills to language learners. It thus seems that the implicit approach to teaching grammar does work to an extent: L2 learners are able to acquire productive grammatical constructions simultaneously with vocabulary that is used to elaborate these constructions (see Huilla & Lankinen 2018).

In §4, we have detailed the constructional scope of *Toisto* sessions; what we have not yet addressed is the form of learning these constructions promote. By and large, a *Toisto session* embodies a minimalist construction-based practice in that fully elaborated constructions are used with only one or two varying lexemes in a particular elaboration site. In many cases, the elaboration with a particular word involves integration

with a grammatical marker. A simple example is provided by the construction where a nominative noun phrase serves as a plea: *lippu* [PLACE NAME + ALL/ILL] = *lippu Tampereelle* ‘one ticket to Tampere’. At the bare minimum, the repetition of such a construction with constantly varying elaborations (place names) will entrench the overall bi-partite structure of constants (*lippu*, allative or illative marker) and variable (place name) as a sufficient communicative act in a particular context. As the place names involved in the exercise are learned first in the nominative, the directional locative added is likely to be associated with it being a DESTINATION. Far from being exhaustive in terms of the meanings of these locatives, this property is entrenched both as a part of the semantic potential of the case as well as the conventional meaning of this particular construction type. Consequently, the language learner will complete the session equipped with the ability to construct novel destinations simply by finding new place names to elaborate the construction with. Obviously, this translates into the ability to learn grammar as meaningful units, in keeping with the basic tenet of Cognitive Grammar (see e.g. Langacker 2008: 18–26) and other usage-based theories.

We thus argue that *Toisto* does promote the learning of grammar implicitly due to the combination of salient everyday contexts and restricted elaborative effort, whereby language learners are instructed by means of modelling. As we have stated, the implicit learning of grammar is not regarded as an aim per se, but it is seen as a necessary first step for learning Finnish, and a learner-centred solution for the initial phases of learning. Metaphorically speaking, *Toisto* means providing food before eating utensils: a hungry person would prefer to receive the food first, and consider the utensils and etiquette later.

The idea of progressing from use to analysis is not new in Finnish as a second language teaching (see Lauranto 1997), but obviously it needs rediscovering. Although the teaching of Finnish has a relatively long tradition of functional materials and methods (see §1), it still seems that teaching oral skills and relying on speech as the primary means of training lack cultural grounding. Närvänen’s study (2017) cites *Toisto* volunteers who report the Finnish-only principle as being difficult to carry out. This is striking as the implementation of the principle with the help of the Speaking Dictionary is instructed with numerous examples thanks to the *Toisto* materials. Moreover, recent classroom studies indicate that L2 teaching is still very much oriented towards written materials and skills (e.g. Harjanne & Tella 2011).

At the same time, the global increase in work-related immigration and recurrent refugee crises have already resulted in changes to the way in which integration and education for immigrants are organised. One tangible change in the Finnish context is the shift of focus in language teaching from academic interests to facilitation of everyday encounters and interaction between newcomers and natives. In addition to the quickly expanded grass-roots activities to help refugees, the official documentation (e.g. CEFR 2001) and national curricula (e.g. *National core curriculum for integration training for adult migrants 2012*) also explicitly emphasise the communicative facet in language education and skills. In Finland, the national language test for immigrants applying for citizenship (the *YKI* test) places significant emphasis on spoken skills and functional writing (Tarnanen & Mäntylä 2006). Although these institutional changes have not yet been directly translated into pedagogical practice, they nonetheless signal an attitudinal change vis-à-vis language teaching.

Against the backdrop of these global challenges and institutional changes, it seems even more urgent to recognise the significant points of convergence between usage-based, cognitive and construction-linguistic theories of language and socio-constructivist theories of learning. Communication and active participation in intersubjective settings constitute the basic mode of learning, and this holds true for language learning as well. In addition, the communicative approach to language teaching is motivated by behavioural evidence on the non-modularity of language, language learning and linguistic subdomains. Spoken communication even seems to promote writing fluency, whereas conversation demonstrably develops L2 learners' grasp of linguistic structures (see §2.2). For a teacher of newcomers, the ability to teach spoken language through oral methodology remains the key.

Abbreviations

ADE	Adessive
CNG	Connegative
ELA	Elative
ESS	Essive
ILL	Illative
INE	Inessive
LAT	Lative
PRT	Partitive

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