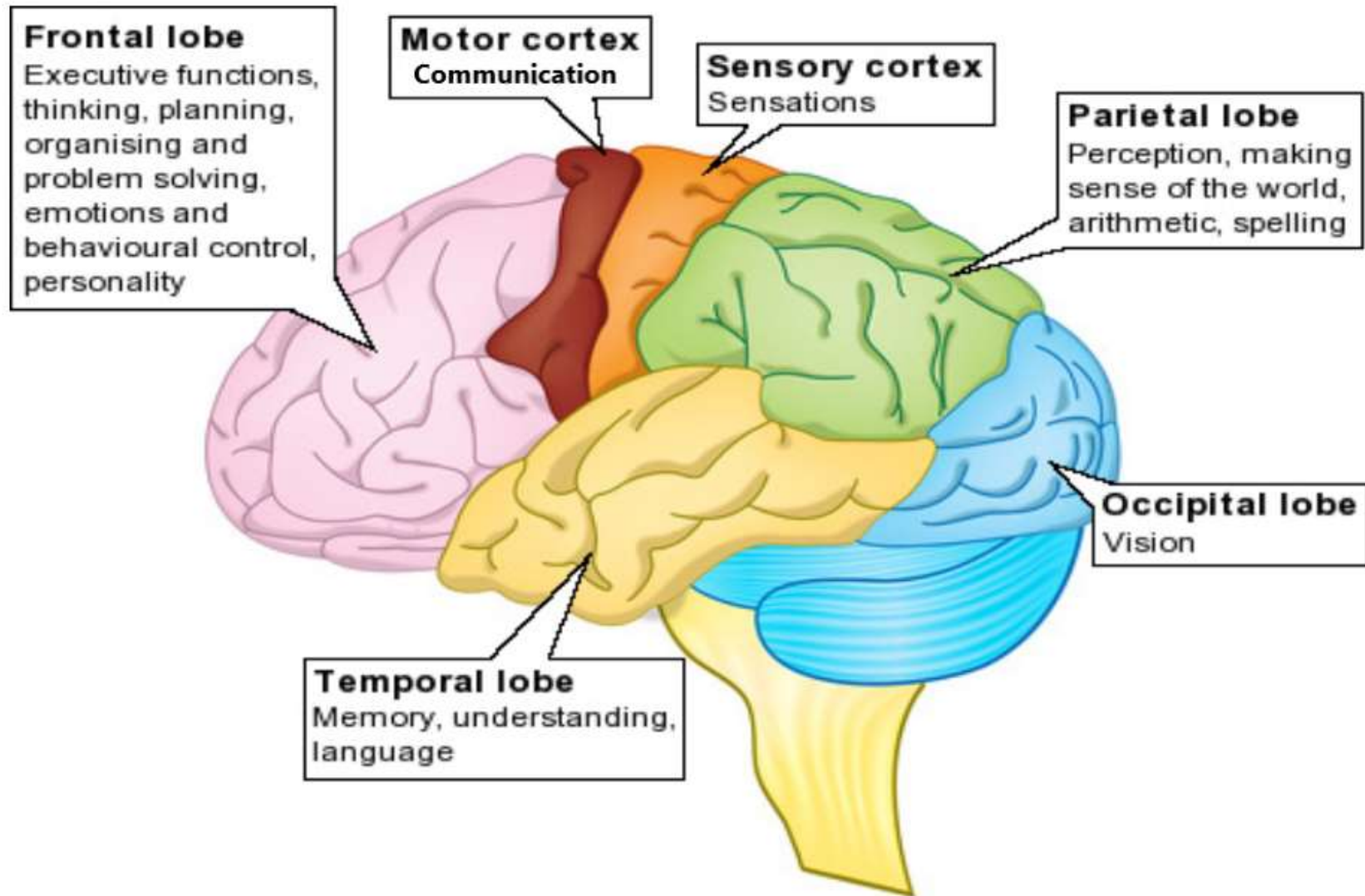
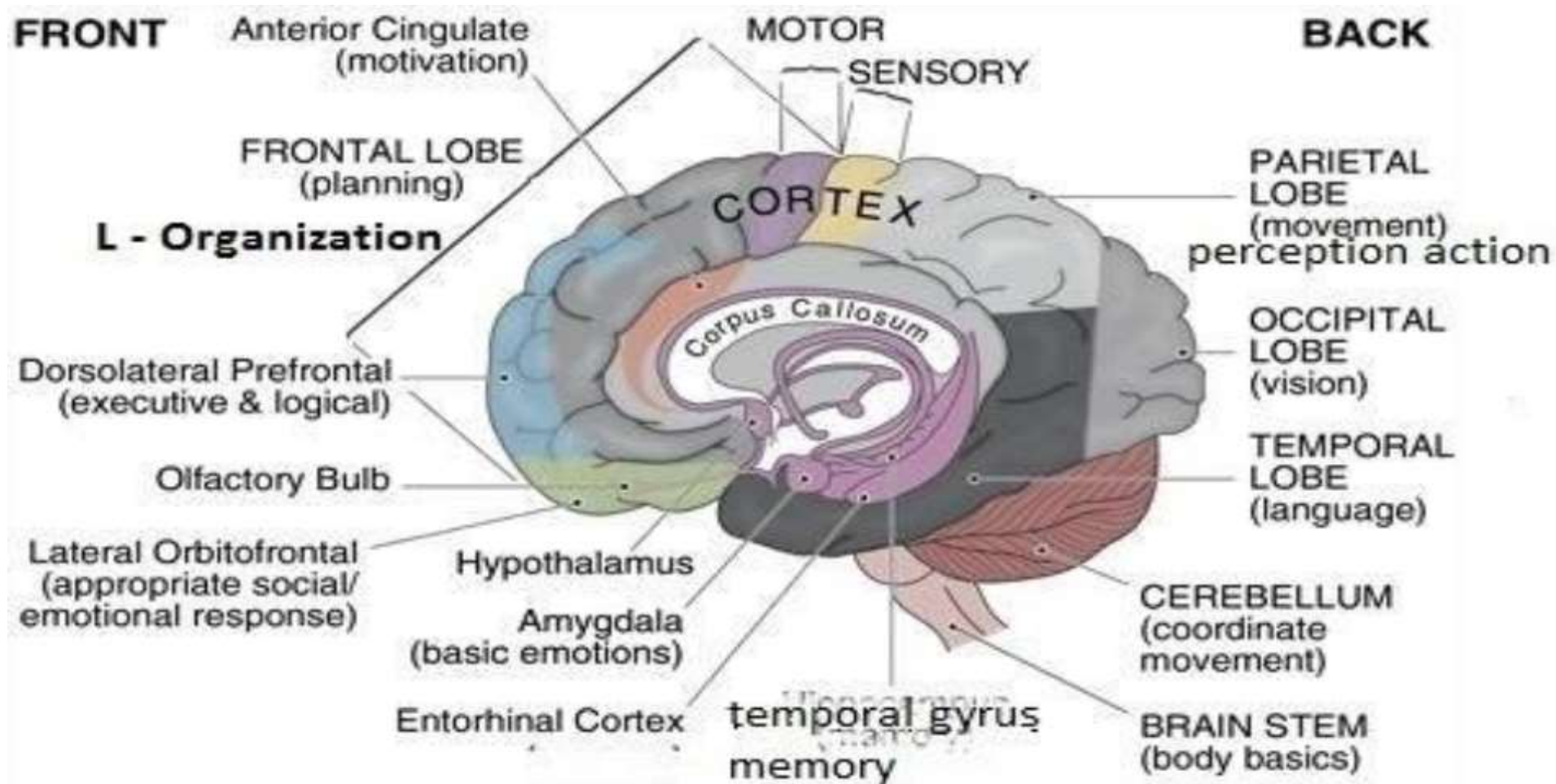


# Cognitive Pragmatics

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# What is Cognitive Pragmatics?

It is a branch of pragmatics that focuses on understanding the cognitive processes that underlie the use and interpretation of language in communication. It studies how individuals comprehend meaning, infer speaker intentions, and navigate social interactions by drawing on mental processes such as attention, memory, inference, and theory of mind.

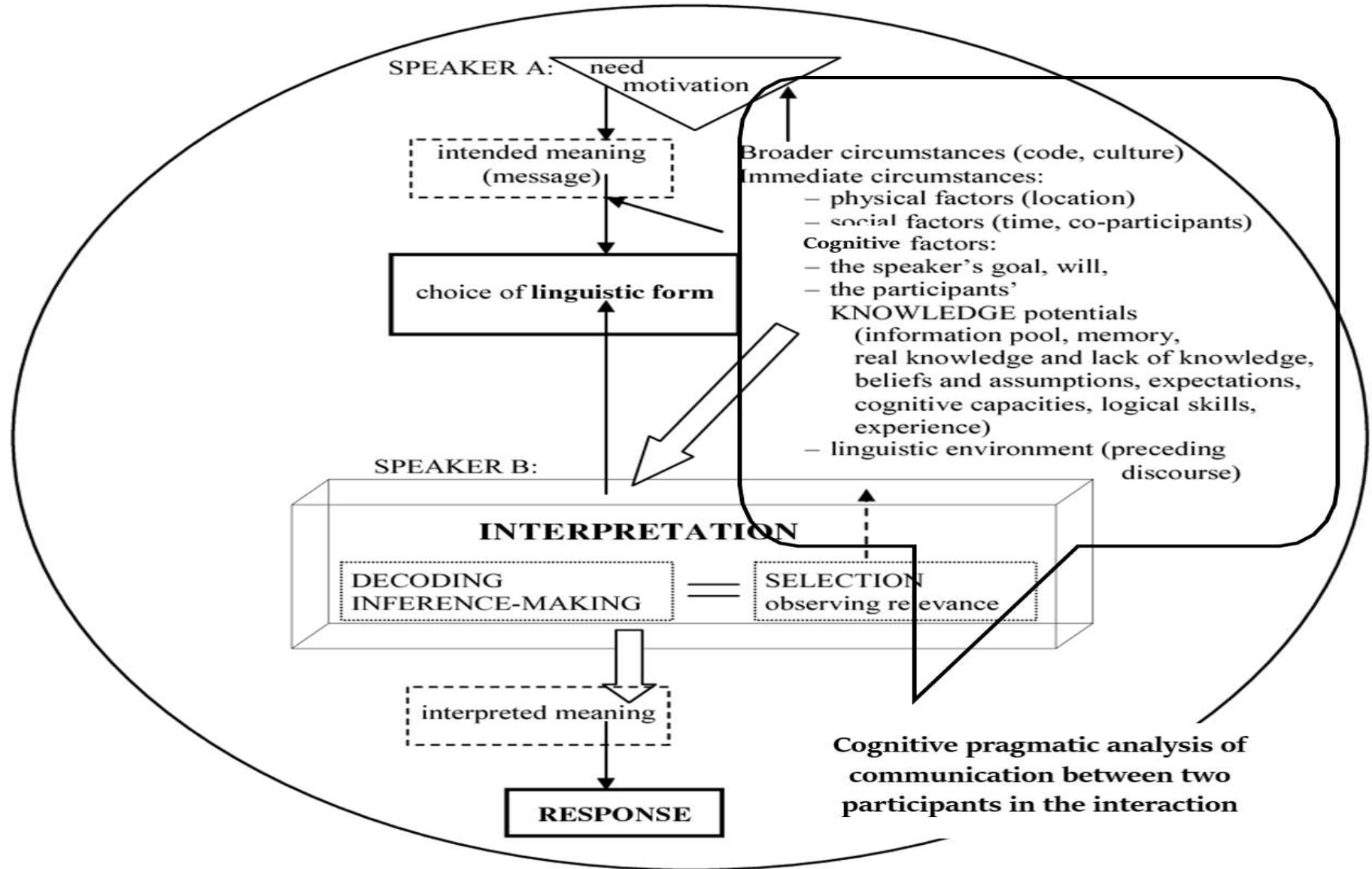
### **Definition of Cognitive Pragmatics**

Cognitive Pragmatics is a field that examines the mental processes underlying human communication. It emphasizes that communication is a cooperative activity where participants intentionally construct shared meanings, requiring a mutual understanding of each other's mental states.

### **Founder of Cognitive Pragmatics**

The discipline of Cognitive Pragmatics was developed by Italian psychiatrist, neuroscientist, and linguist Bruno G. Bara. His work integrates insights from cognitive science and neuroscience to explore how communication functions as a collaborative activity.

## CONTEXT



### Year of Establishment

Bruno G. Bara's seminal work, *Cognitive Pragmatics: The Mental Processes of Communication*, was published in 2010, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the cognitive mechanisms that facilitate effective communication.



### Key Concepts of Cognitive Pragmatics:

1. **Cooperation:** Building upon Grice's principles, the theory asserts that effective communication relies on the collaborative efforts of all participants, each contributing to the construction of meaning.
2. **Sharedness:** Successful communication necessitates that all actors share certain mental states, enabling them to comprehend both standard and non-standard communicative acts, such as deception, irony, and figurative language.
3. **Communicative Intention:** The theory highlights the importance of recognizing and understanding the intentions behind communicative acts, facilitated by the human capacity for recursive mind-reading (Theory of Mind).

## **Applications and Implications:**

Bara's framework has been applied across various domains

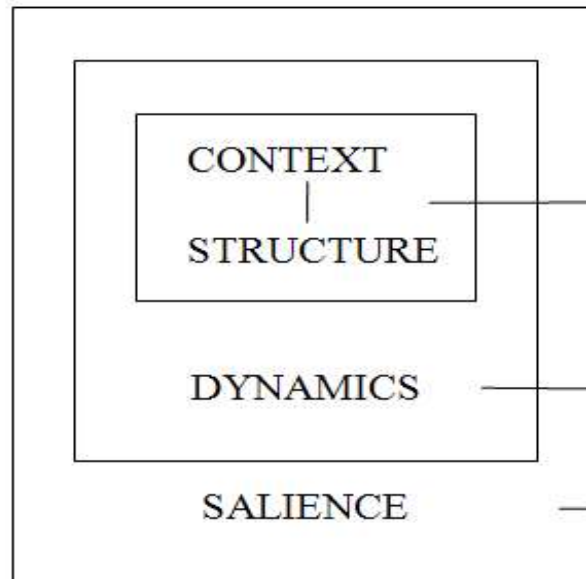
- **Developmental Studies:** Examining how communicative competence emerges from infancy to adulthood.
- **Clinical Research:** Investigating communication impairments resulting from brain injuries or neurological conditions like Alzheimer's disease.
- **Neuroscientific Correlations:** Identifying neural correlates associated with different communicative processes.

What are the Key Aspects of Cognitive Pragmatics?

# 1. Contextual Interpretation:

Cognitive pragmatics examines how people use context to interpret language. Often, meaning goes beyond the literal interpretation of words, and listeners must rely on contextual clues, shared knowledge, and speaker intentions to fully grasp the message.

- **Shared knowledge**
- **Clues**
- **Intentions**



**Interpretation**

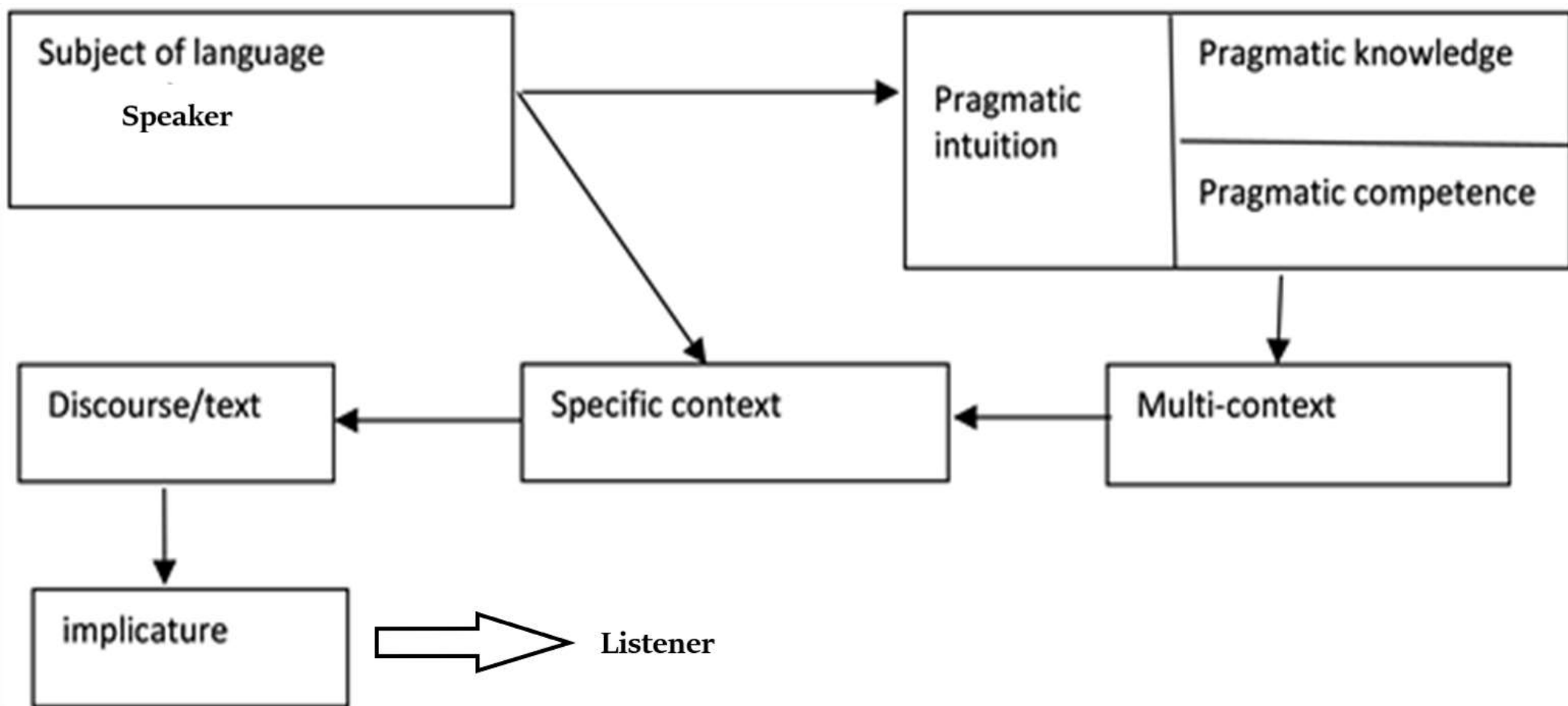
**Time and space**

**Participants in  
the interaction**

meaningful  
functioning

## 2. Inference-Making:

Cognitive pragmatics deals with how individuals make inferences to understand what is meant, especially when the speaker's words are not explicit. It looks at how listeners use reasoning to fill in gaps, interpret indirect speech acts, or understand ambiguous statements.



### 3. Grice's Implicature:

A core concept in cognitive pragmatics is H.P. Grice's idea of implicature, where a speaker's intended meaning is not directly stated but implied. The listener must infer this meaning based on shared knowledge and expectations.



## What is communicated

explicature

- *conventional implicature*
- *generalised implicature*
- *short-circuited implicature*
- *metaphor/metonymy*
- *what is said*

implicature

- *particularised implicature*
- *generalised implicature?*

### 3. Theory of Mind and Intentions:

- a. **Theory of Mind:** A key component of cognitive pragmatics is the ability to understand and interpret others' mental states—what they know, believe, want, or intend. This ability is referred to as theory of mind, and it is essential for understanding speaker intentions
- b. **Intentions:** Cognitive pragmatics studies how listeners infer the speaker's intentions and how speakers craft their messages to align with what they think the listener knows or expects. Successful communication relies on this mutual understanding.

## 4. Cognitive Efficiency

The theory suggests that individuals interpret language based on its relevance to the current context, aiming to process information in a way that requires the least effort while gaining the most useful meaning.

**Verbal Abilities:**  
Stores of Acquired Knowledge

**Thinking Abilities**

**Cognitive Efficiency**

**Facilitator-Inhibitors**

**COGNITIVE  
PERFORMANCE**

```
graph LR; A[Verbal Abilities: Stores of Acquired Knowledge] --> D[COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE]; B[Thinking Abilities] --> D; C[Cognitive Efficiency] --> D; E[Facilitator-Inhibitors] --> D;
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## 5. Metaphor Processing

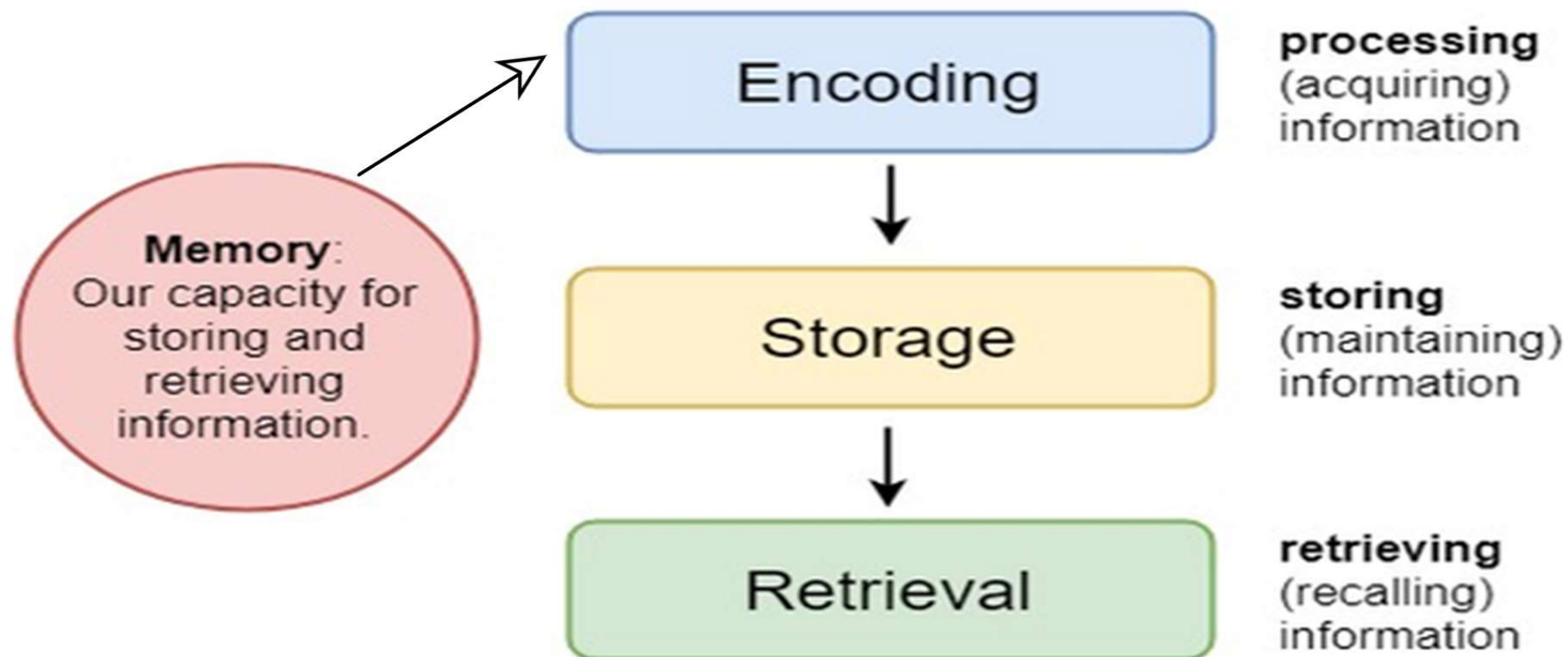
When encountering a metaphor like “Time is money,” cognitive pragmatics examines how individuals interpret this metaphorical meaning by connecting the abstract concept of time with the more concrete concept of money, using cognitive mechanisms like analogy and conceptual mapping.

## 5. Irony and Sarcasm

Irony and sarcasm are examples of non-literal language that require complex inferencing skills. Listeners must recognize a discrepancy between the literal and intended meaning. Cognitive pragmatics explores how listeners detect and interpret these discrepancies using contextual cues and shared knowledge.

## 8. Memory in Communication

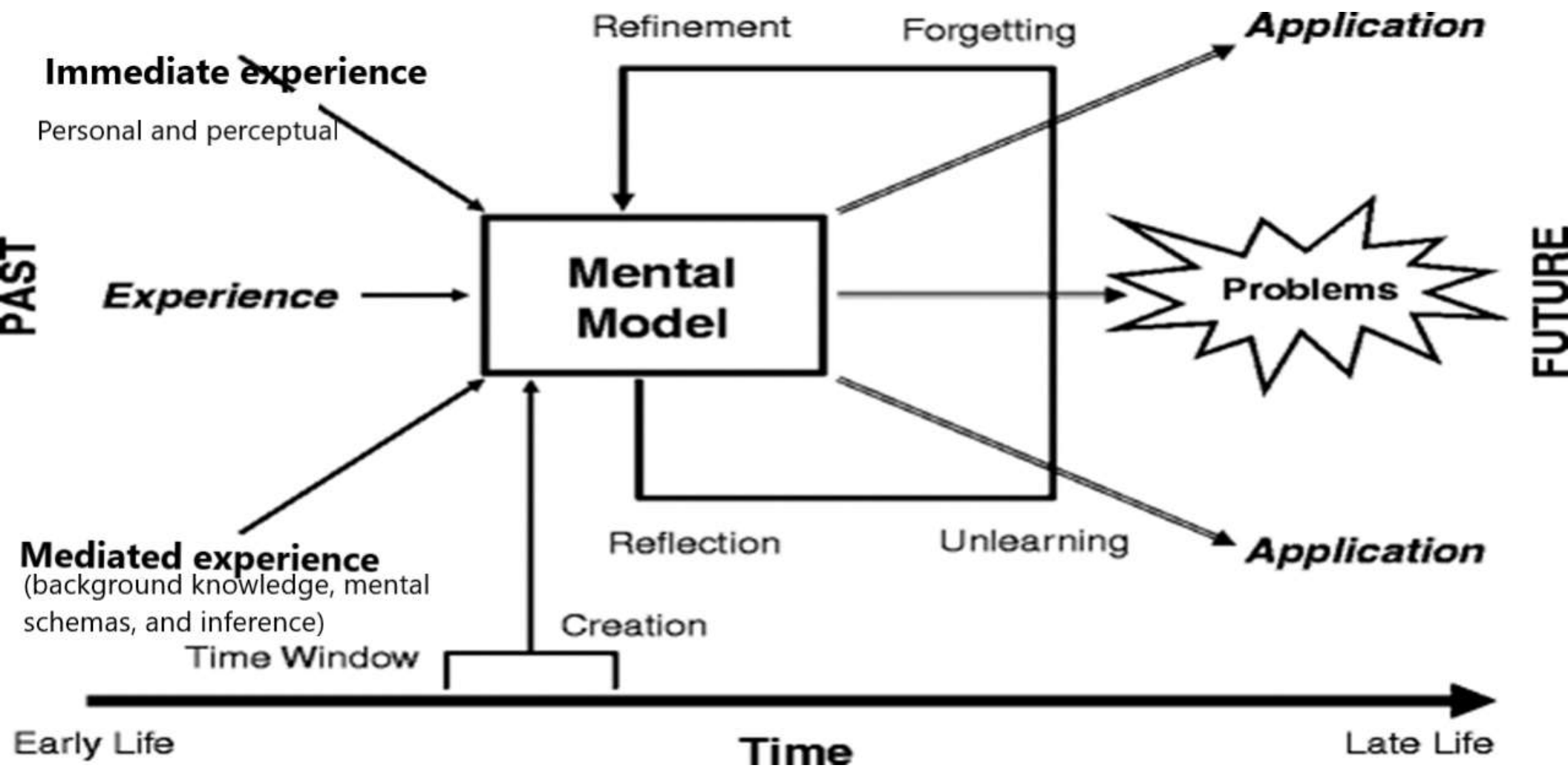
Cognitive pragmatics considers how memory influences language processing. Listeners use memory to recall previous interactions, world knowledge, and personal experiences to interpret language in context.

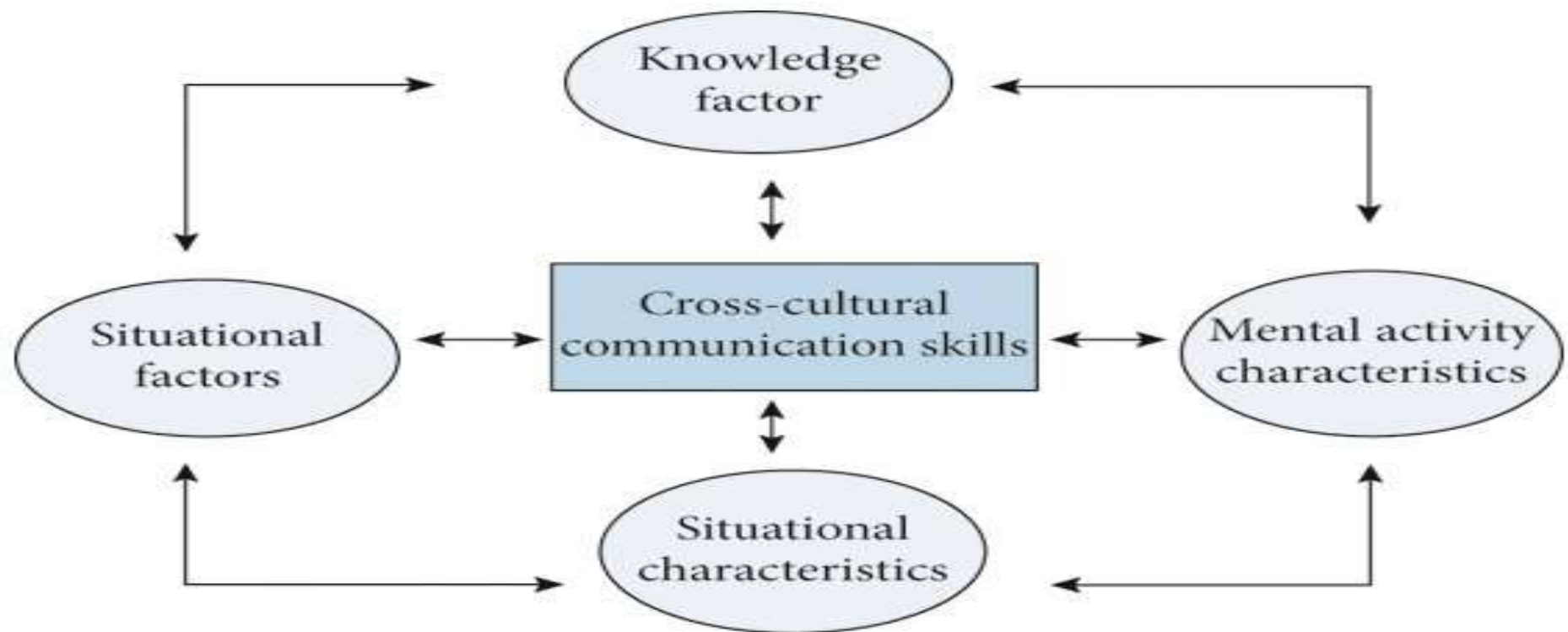




## 9. Mental Models

People build mental models of situations or conversations to help them interpret and respond to language. These models involve remembering key details about the speaker, the topic, and the setting to provide relevant responses.

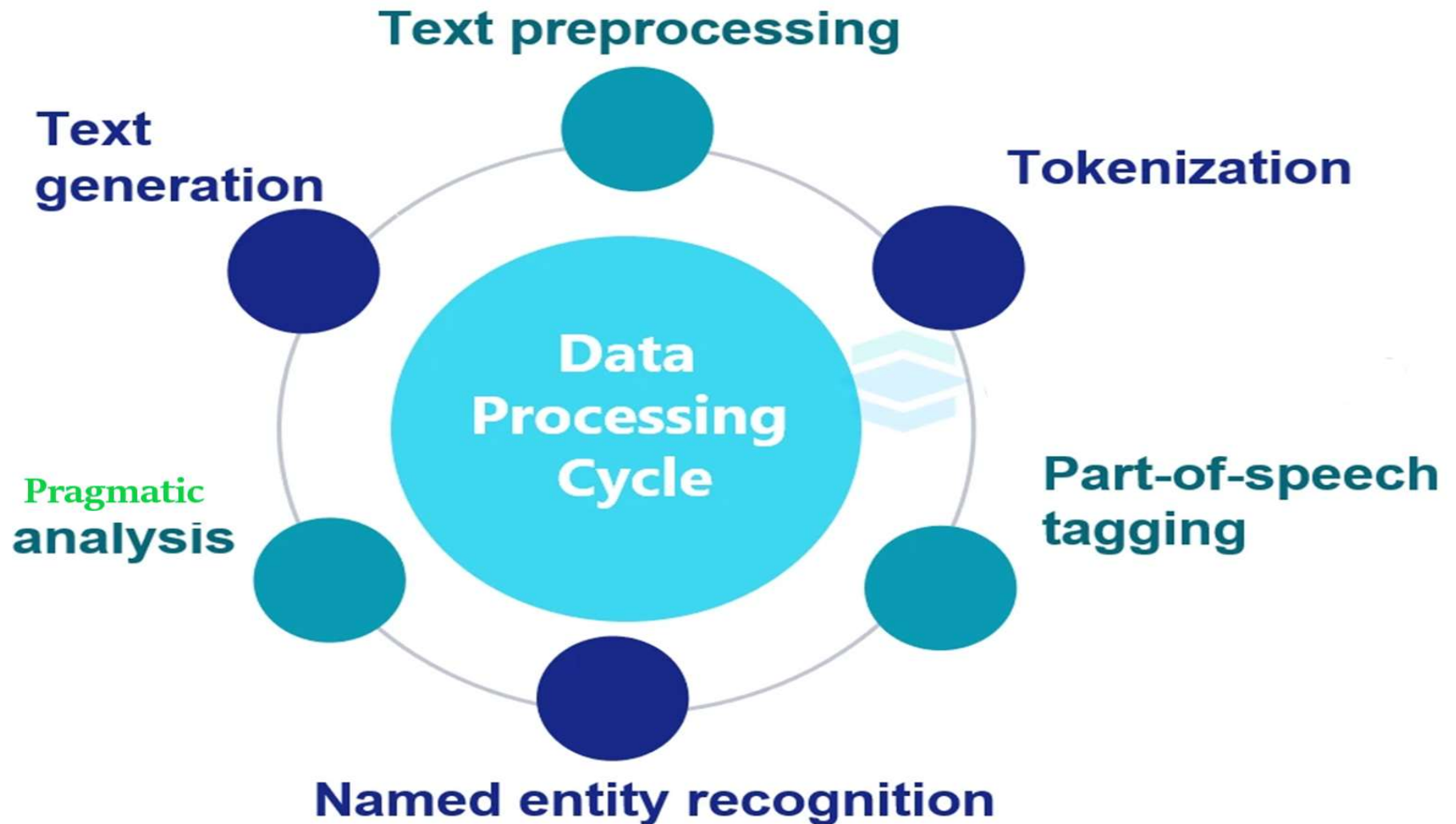




### 3. Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing:

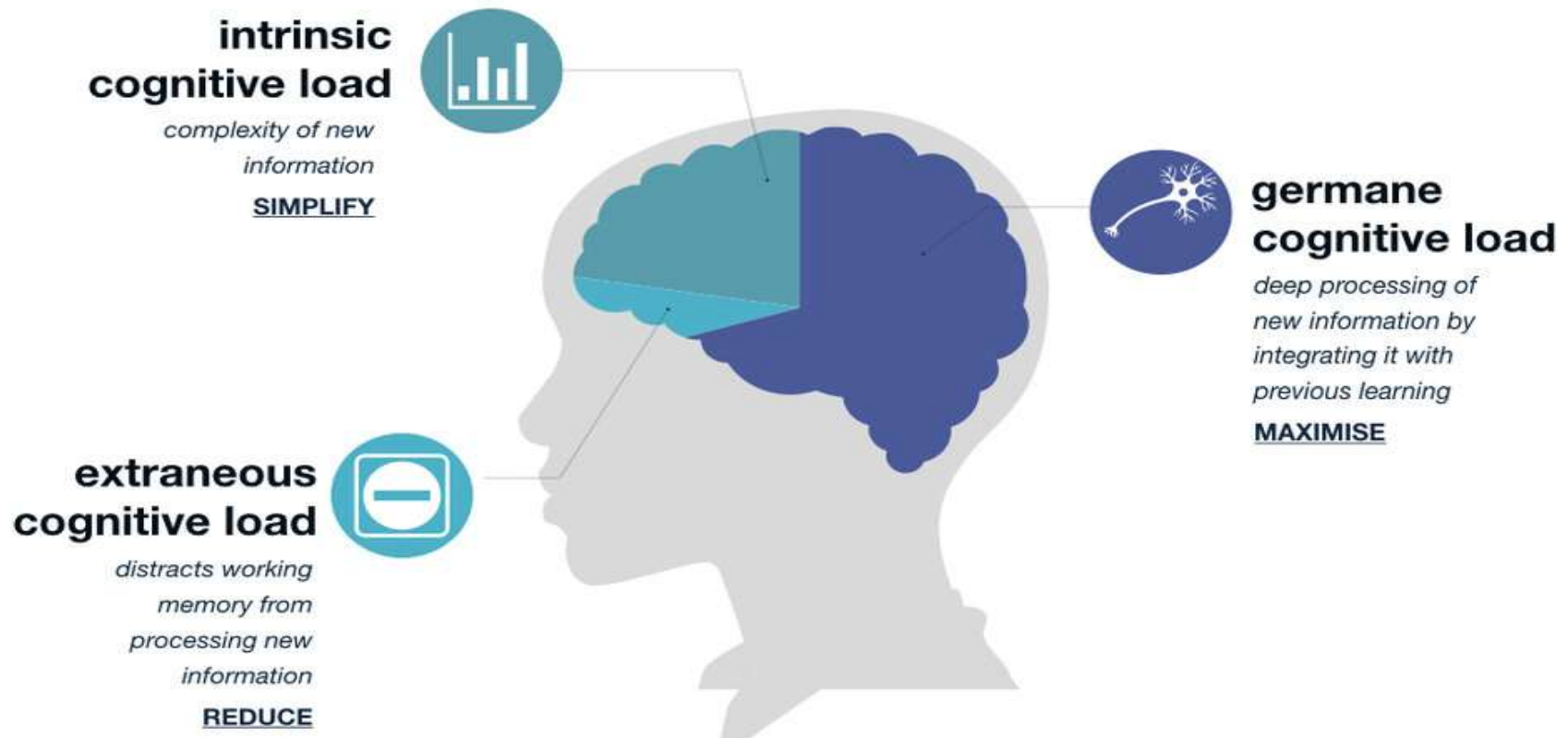
In AI and machine learning, cognitive pragmatics helps improve how virtual assistants and chatbots understand user intent and generate contextually appropriate responses.

# Natural Language Processing in AI



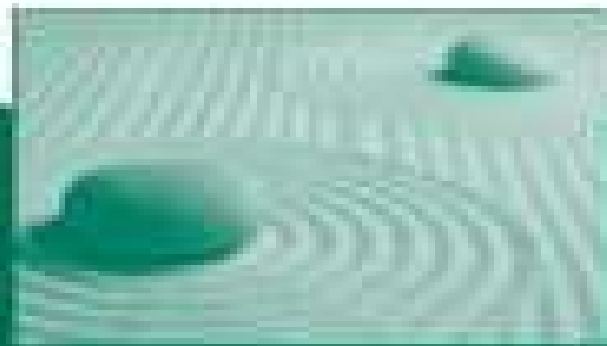
# cognitive load

mcdreeamiemusings.com @mcdreeamie



# Cognitive Pragmatics

The Mental Processes of Communication



Walter C. Rieber  
University of California, Los Angeles  
1997

# Pragmatic Meaning and Cognition

Sophia Marmaridou

p  
&  
b

John Benjamins Publishing Company