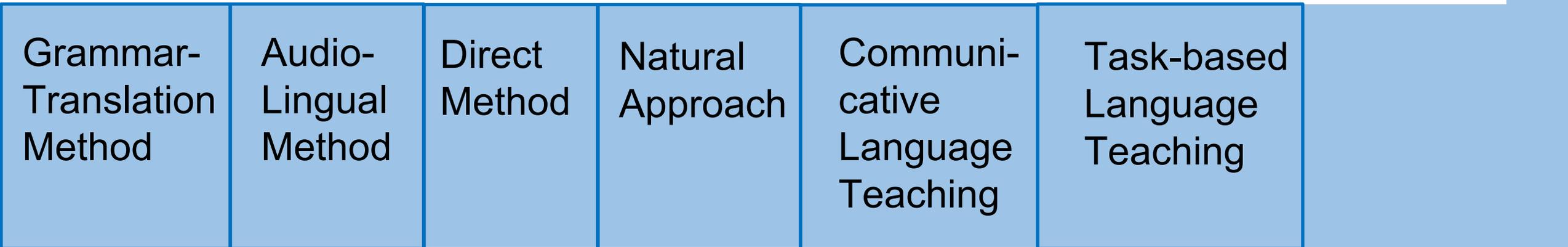


# Peer Learning in L1 and L2: Teaching Foreign Language with Concept-Based Language Instruction (C-BLI)

Amy Snyder Ohta, PhD  
University of Washington

2021 Chicago Language Symposium  
DePaul University

# A brief march through foreign language learning time...



How do these relate to....

Oral skills?

Listening?

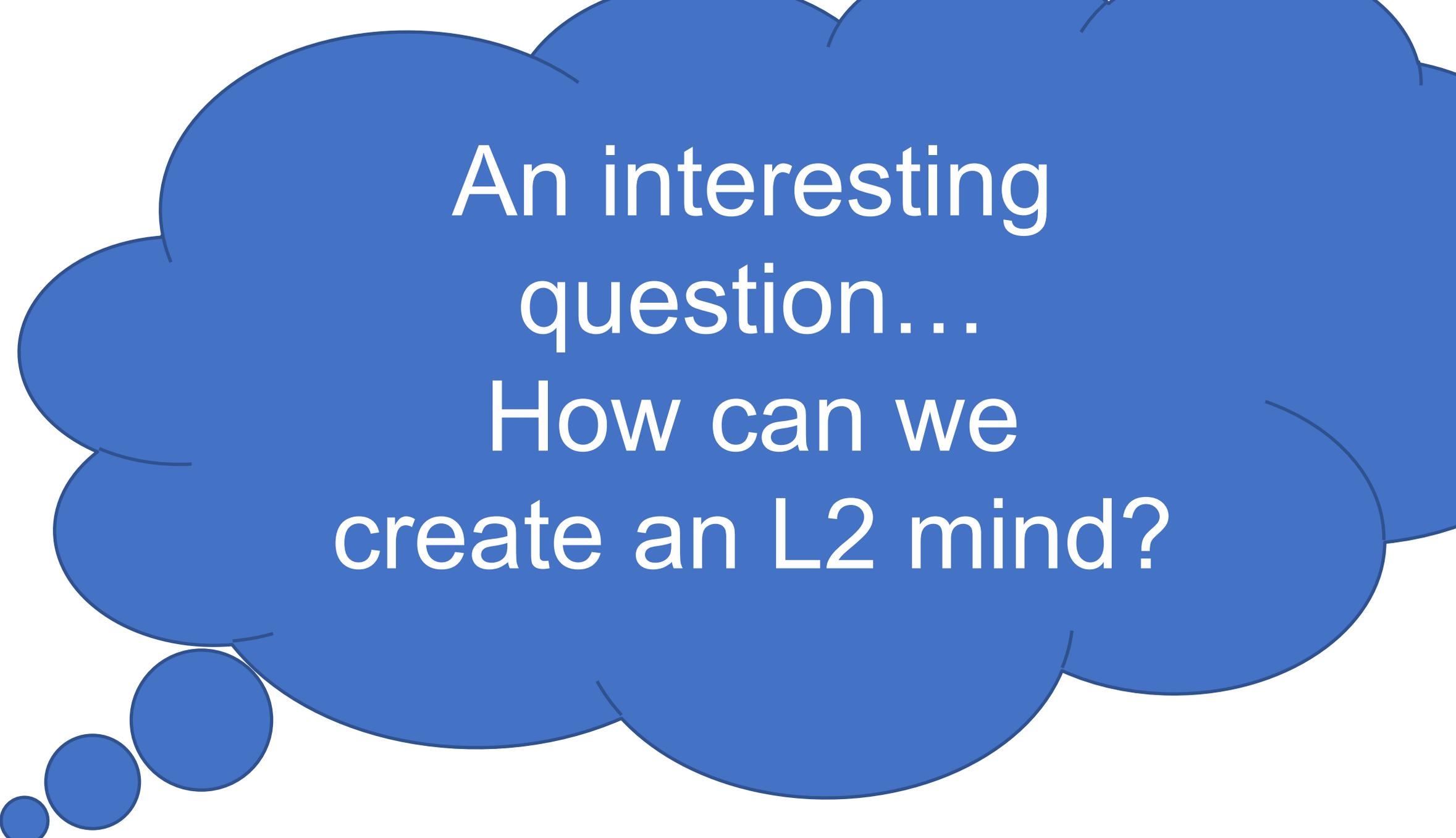
Writing?

Reading?

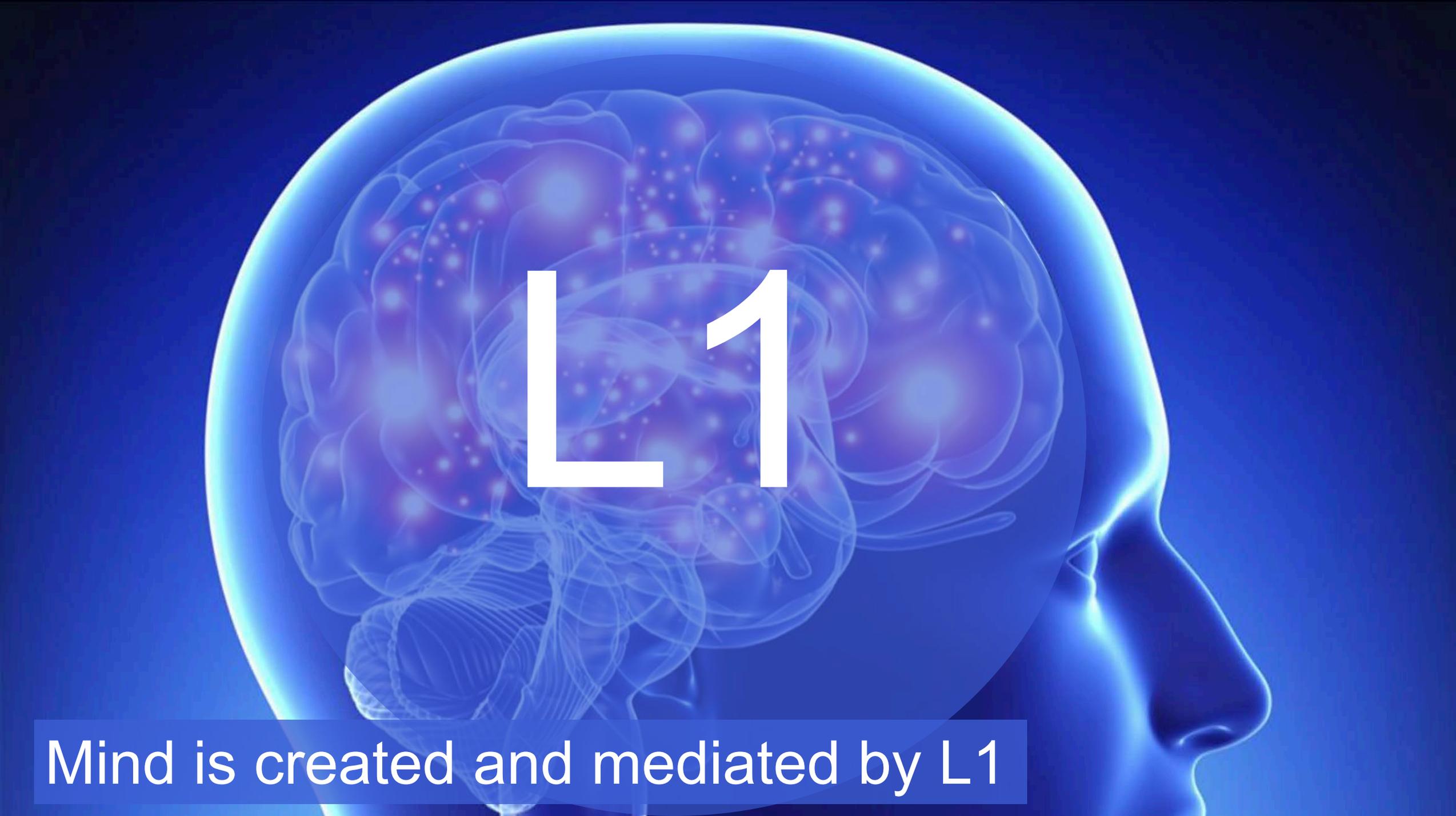
Pragmatics?

Communicative competence?

Proficiency?



An interesting  
question...  
How can we  
create an L2 mind?



L1

Mind is created and mediated by L1



L2?



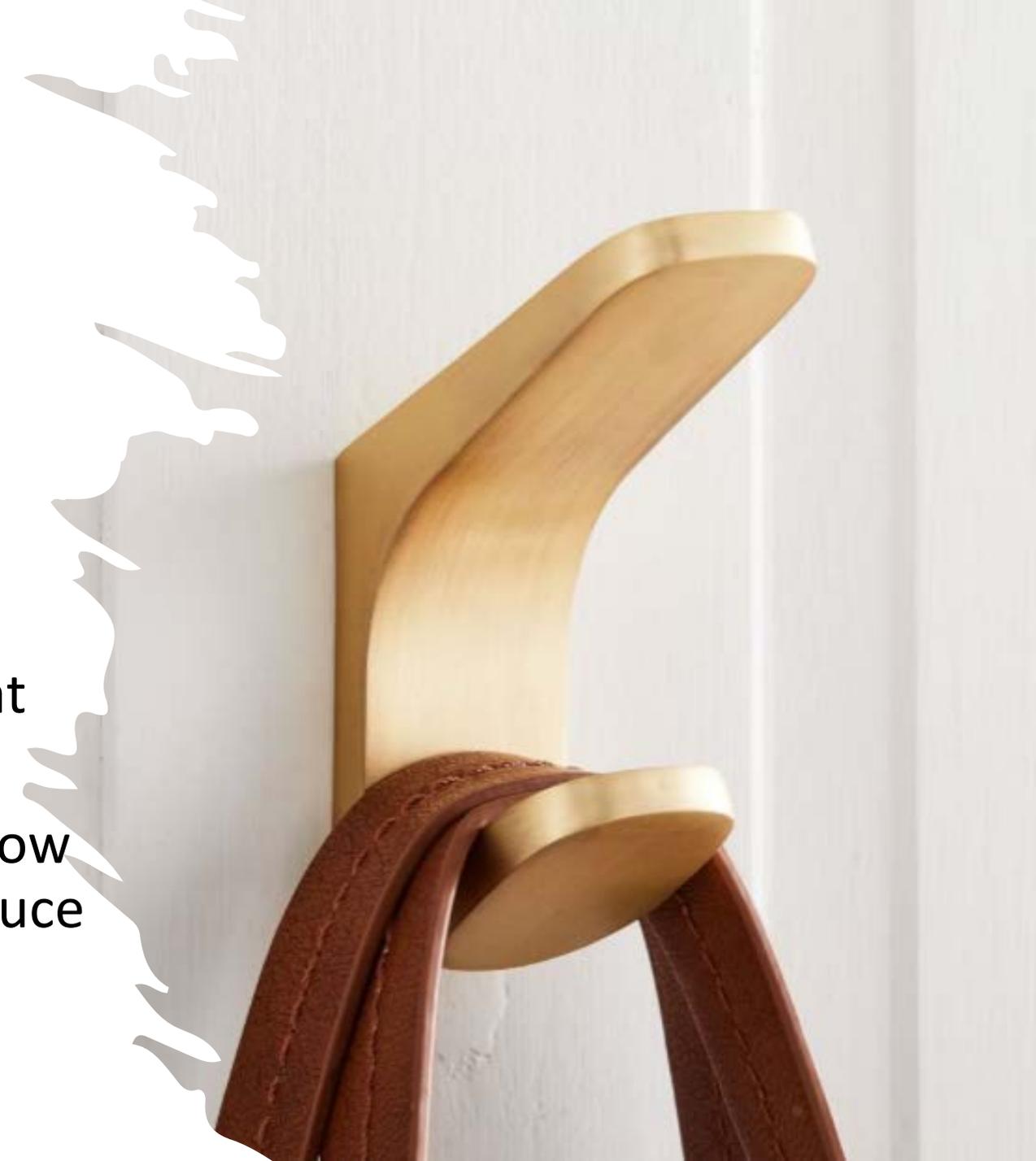
Re-mediate  
the  
mind





# Concept-Based Language Instruction (C-BLI)

- Build a framework on which to “hang” L2 concepts
- Use L1 as a L2-building tool
- Utilize peer collaboration in L1, at first, then L2
- New conceptual structures to allow learners to build L2 on L2, to reduce reliance on L1



# Concept-Based Language Instruction (C-BLI)

- Explicit instructional approach
- Explanation + internalization exercises, plentiful practice
- Process-based approach
- Generous toward learner errors as an integral part of process and product
- Functional, editable, language is the goal



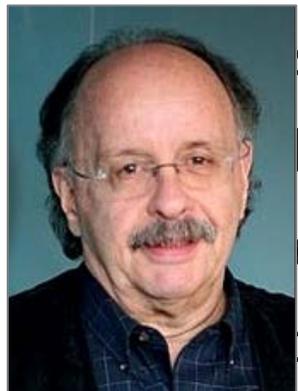
# C-BLI is...

- Grounded in neo-Vygotskyan Sociocultural Theory
- “Learning leads development” (Vygotsky 1978)
- Developed by Gal’perin (1992)
- Concepts as pedagogical units
- Plan instruction to richly incorporate mediation to promote development



# Selected recent studies

- Overview of Wolf & Poehner 2011
- French *ne*: van Marck 2011
- French *ne* constructions: Buesch 2015



English: Mariani, Masari & Behr

English phrasal verbs: White 2006

Learning Spanish: Merueta & Lantolf 2010



Genre-based instruction: Fernández & Donato 2006

Chinese: Zhang 2017

Teacher training: Williams, Abad, & Guerreruela-Azar 2017

Japanese pragmatics: Ohta 2017



Masuda & Ohta

# Selected recent studies

- Overviews: Lantolf & Poehner 2014, Lantolf, Xi & Minakova 2020
- French *tu/vous* & *ne*: van Compernelle 2011
- French prepositions: Buescher & Strauss 2015
- Tense/Aspect in English: Harun, Massari & Behak 2014
- English phrasal verbs: White 2012
- Teaching Spanish: Negueruela & Lantolf 2006
- Sarcasm in English: Kim & Lantolf 2018
- Genre-based Italian instruction: Fernández & Donato 2020
- Chinese: Zhang & Zhang 2017
- Teacher training: Williams, Abraham & Negueruela-Azarola 2013
- Japanese pragmatics & grammar: Ohta 2017; Masuda & Ohta (in press)

Concept-Based Pedagogical Design  
(adapted from Gal'perin 1992)

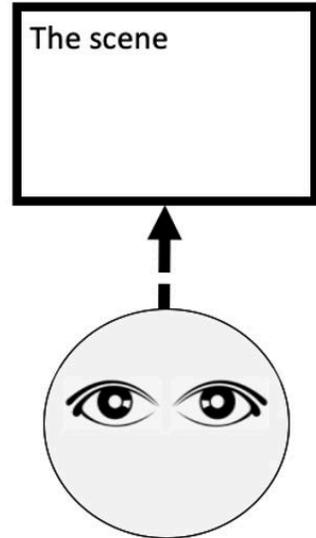
P.IA. GAL'PERIN

**Stage-by-Stage Formation  
as a Method of Psychological  
Investigation**

# Concept-Based Pedagogical Design Process (adapted from Gal'perin 1992)

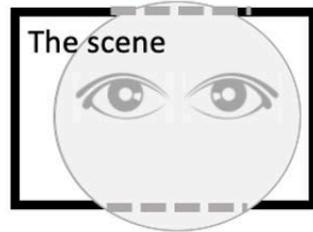
- **Research** the concept to be taught. (To get accurate L2 concepts, use the results of meaning-based linguistics research)
- **Understand** students' current concepts: This is the *orienting basis of action* (OBA)
- **Materialize** the concept in a new *schema for orienting basis of action*—SCOBA
- **Design** interactive lecture and tasks to promote internalization of the concept, moving from social & material, to internal and conceptual. In this design, **move** from L1 (explanation, internalization exercises) to L2 (language practice)

Objective Construal



Masuda & Ohta 2021

Subjective Construal



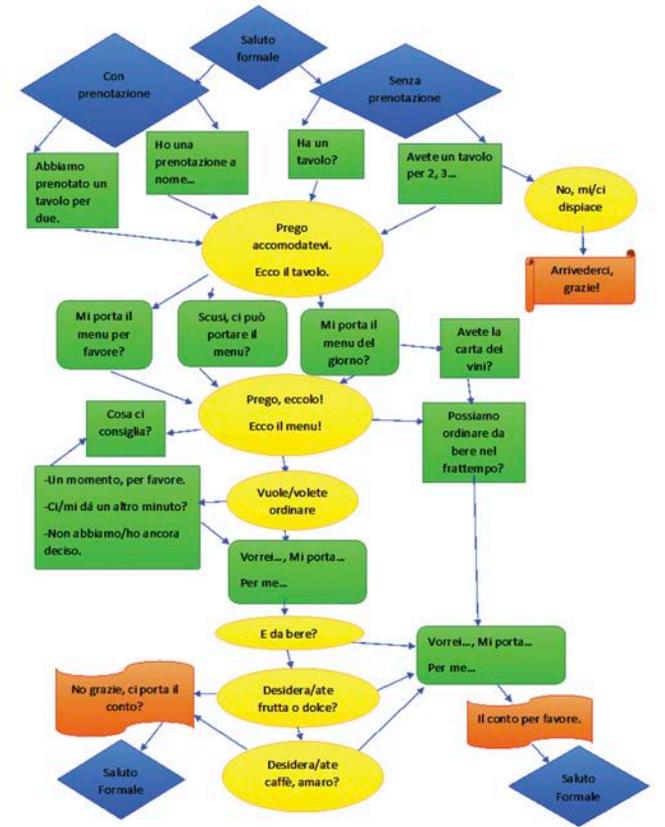
Ohta 2017

More fixed  
↓  
Less fixed

	+ DISCIPLINED	+ SPONTANEOUS
Relationship	high status interlocutor	same or lower status
	older interlocutor	younger interlocutor
	low intimacy	high intimacy
desire distance	0-----0-----0-----0-----0	desire closeness
Setting	institutional or professional	personal
	public	private
Moment-by-moment activity & utterance	low task-orientation	high task-orientation
	scripted	unscripted
	on-stage, acting in role	off-stage
	low inward focus	high inward focus
discourse factors: quotation, narrative style, foregrounding/backgrounding ...		

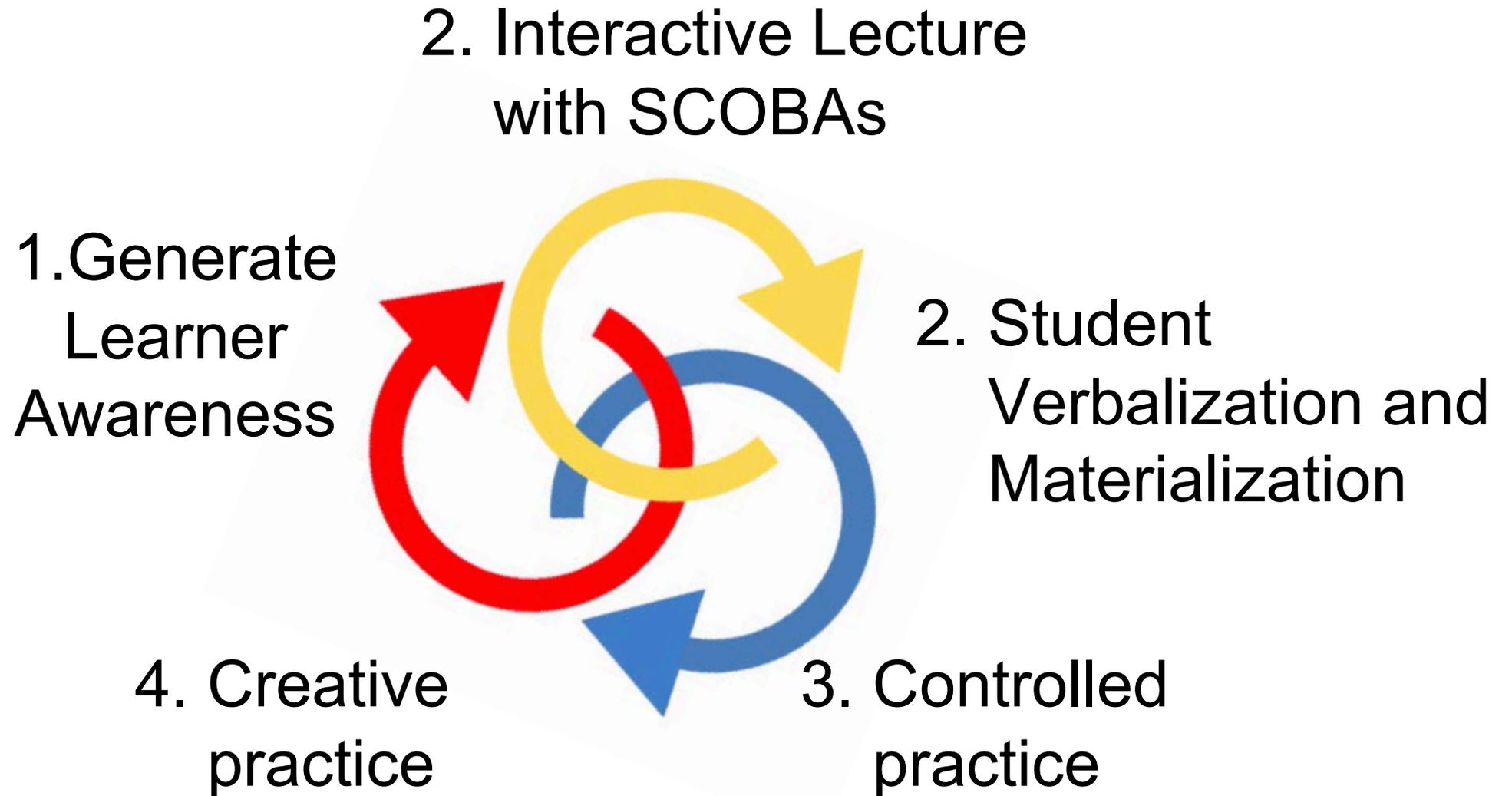
When these shift, style also shifts

Fernandez & Donato 2020

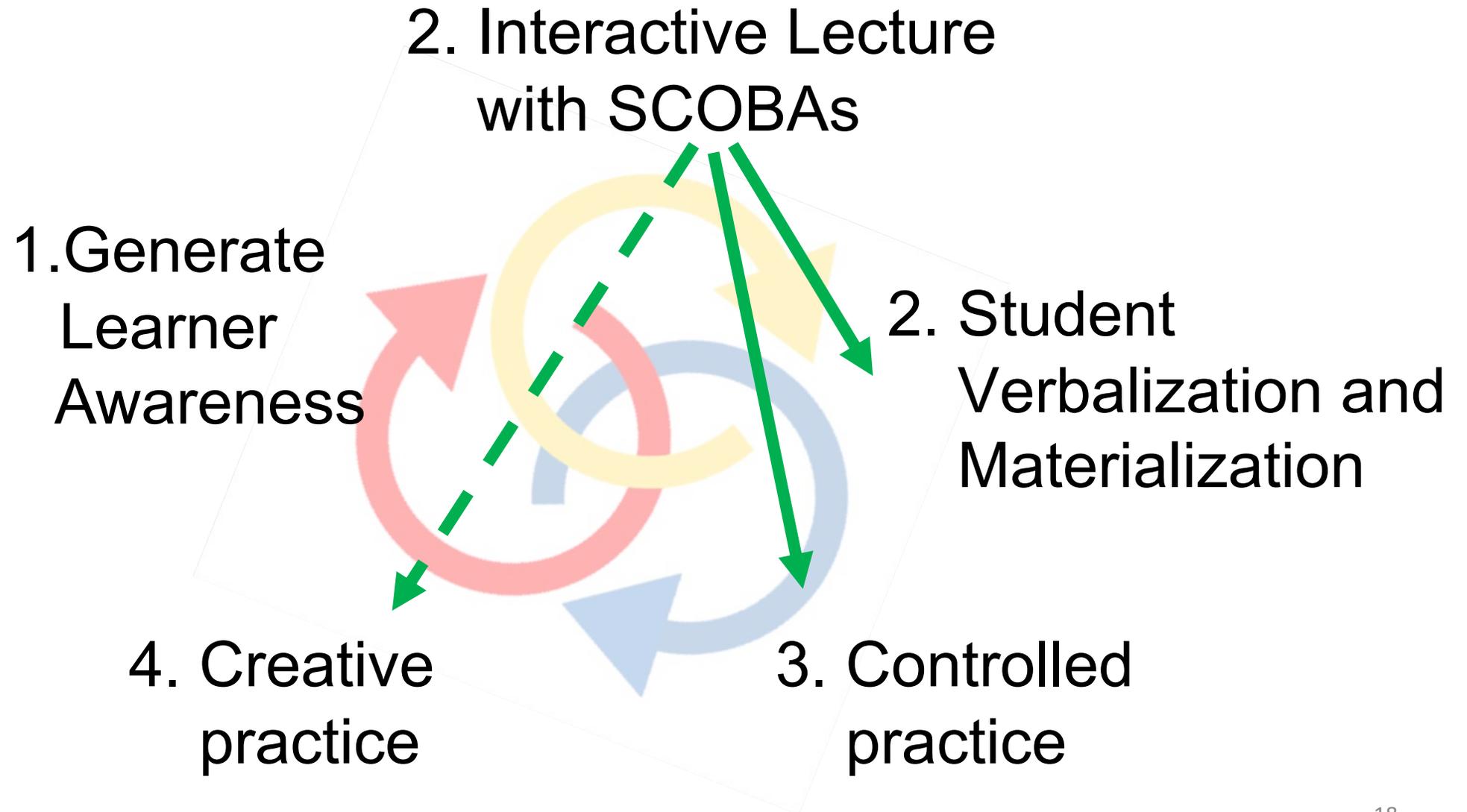


# SCOBAs are...

# C-BLI Instructional Process



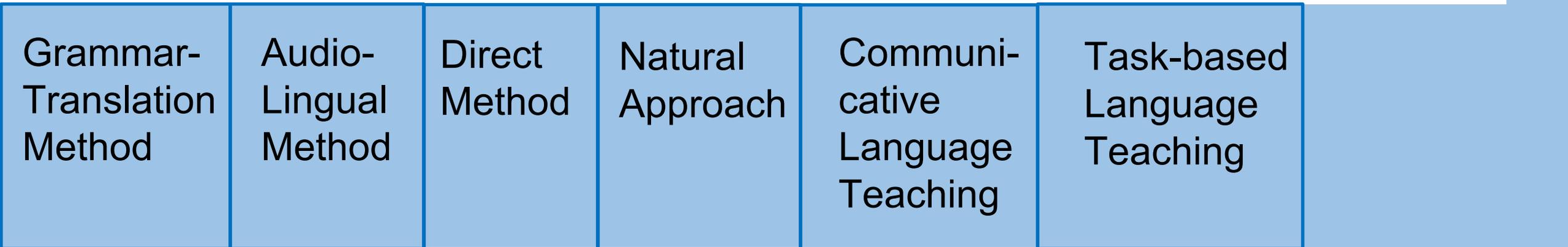
# C-BLI Instructional Process





But ...  
aren't we  
supposed to  
avoid L1?

# A brief march through foreign language learning time...



How do these relate to....

Oral skills?

Listening?

Writing?

Reading?

Pragmatics?

Communicative competence?

Proficiency?

# Functions of English in pair work (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year university JFL students), Ohta 2001

Language-related	Task-related	Other
word-search	task management	private speech
vocabulary substitution	visual	praise
repair		acknowledgement
translation		content-related comment
language question		self-evaluation
explanation		other conversation
spelling		
confirmation request		

# L1 for L2 Concept Development: Research on “Languaging”

- Language is a psychological tool
- L1 is a *mediational tool* for L2 learning
- Language does not only express thoughts, but works to develop them (Vygotsky 1997)
- Languaging in L1 includes paraphrasing, analysing, integrating, elaborating and hypothesizing about concepts (Swain, Lapkin, Knouzi, Suzuki & Brooks, 2009)

Let's try part of a C-BLI  
unit together!

Notions of self in Japanese  
grammar, and verbs meaning  
"give"

Let's look at my steps as a  
teacher in making this unit



# 1. Researched the concept

- a) "The self" in Japanese grammar  
(Wetzel 1994, Hasegawa & Hirose 2005)
- b) Verbs meaning "give" in Japanese  
(Pizziconi 2006)



2. Considered the students  
Orienting Basis of Action (OBA)

- a) "SELF" means "oneself"
- b) "Give" means transferring an item from one person to another



3, 4, 5:

- Materialized concepts (created SCOBAs)
- Designed tasks
- Focus for this demonstration is on L1 use for verbalization (Quite abbreviated, due to time constraints)
- These are brand-new, innovative materials that I have never used with students



Ready,



Set,



Go!

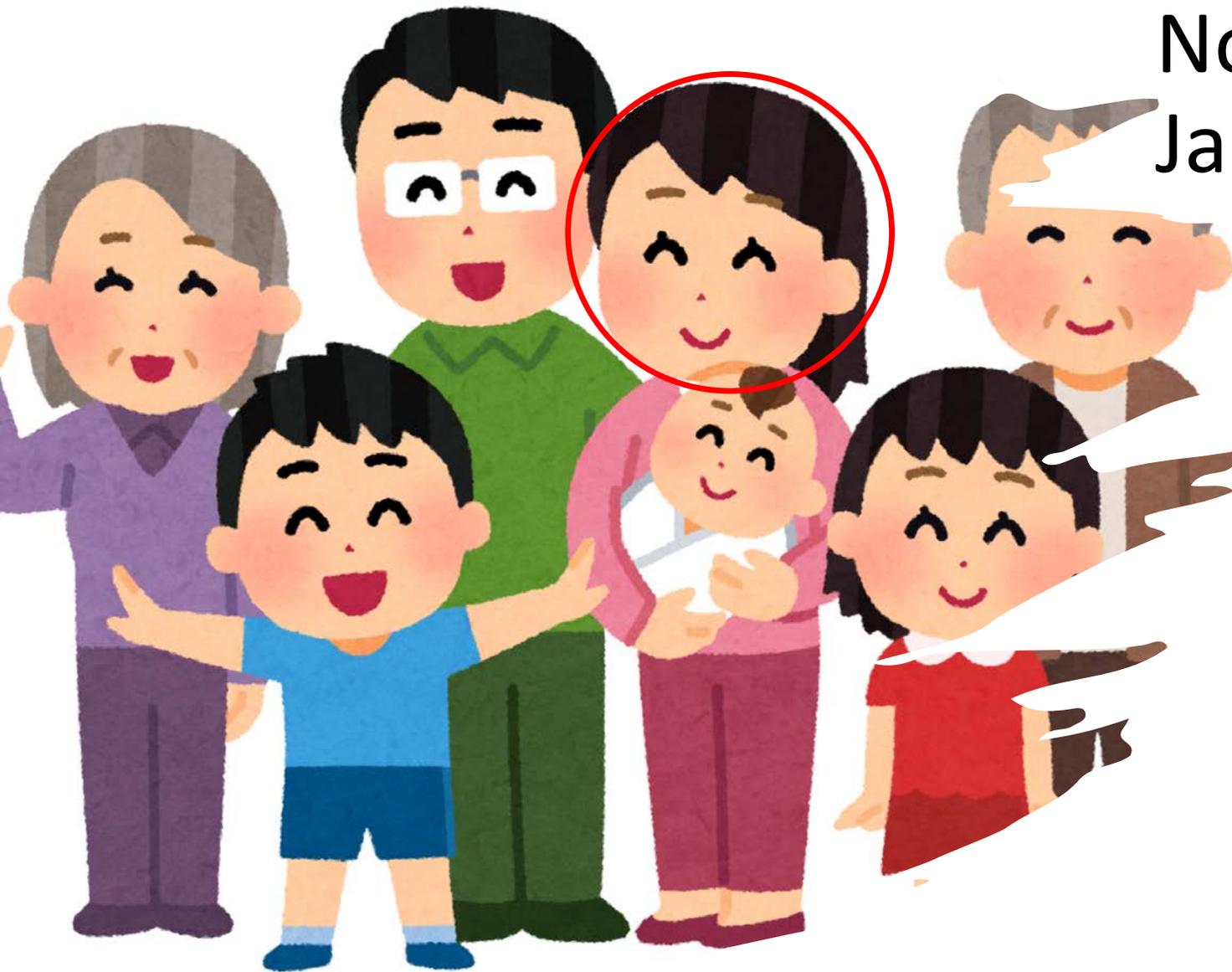


# Notions of “self” in Japanese



For grammatical purposes, self can be “just me” or can include family, friends, or co-workers

The word for this variable “self” in Japanese is “UCHI”



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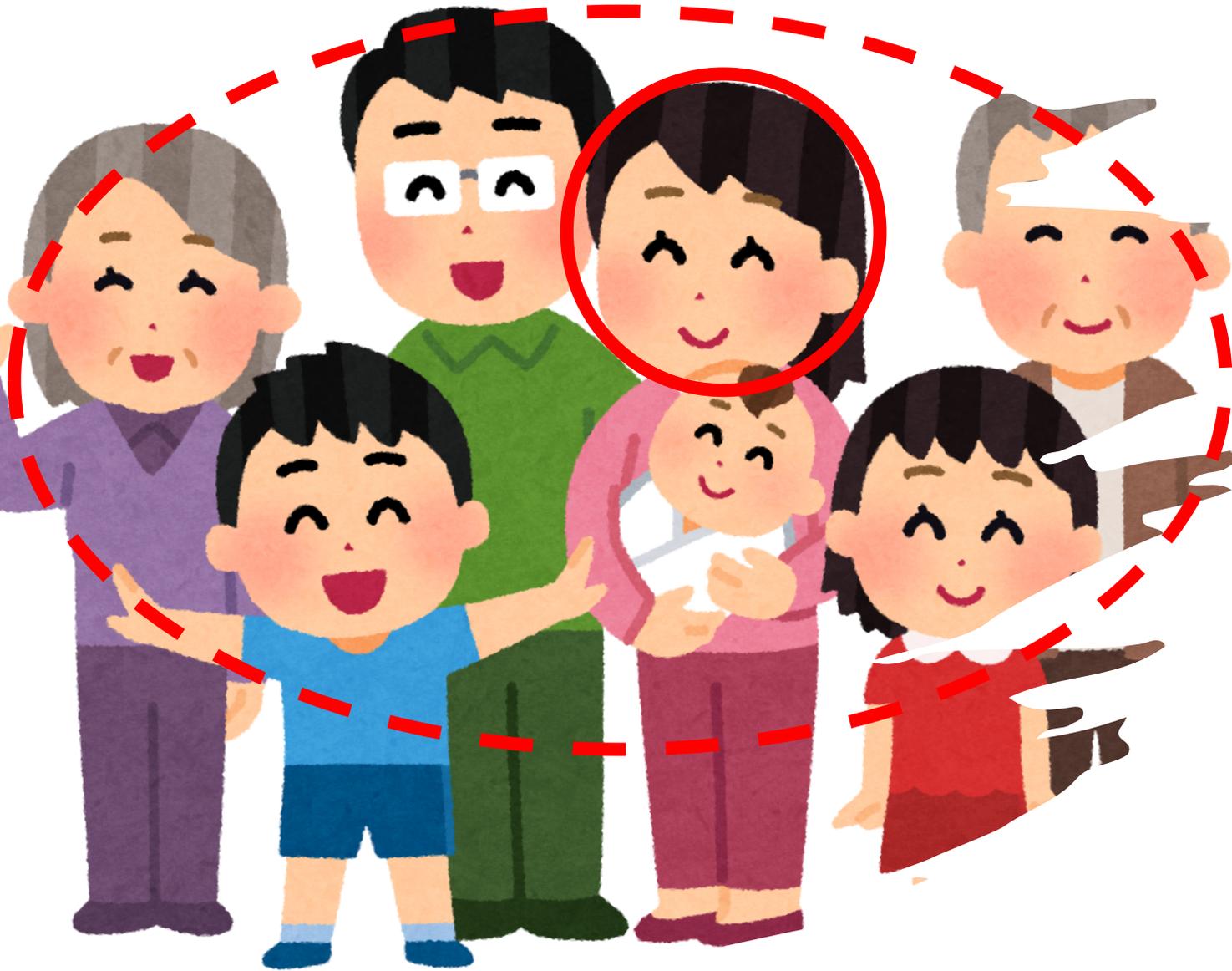
The word for this variable “self” in Japanese is “UCHI”



## Notions of “self” in Japanese

For grammatical purposes, self can be “just me” or can include family, friends, or co-workers

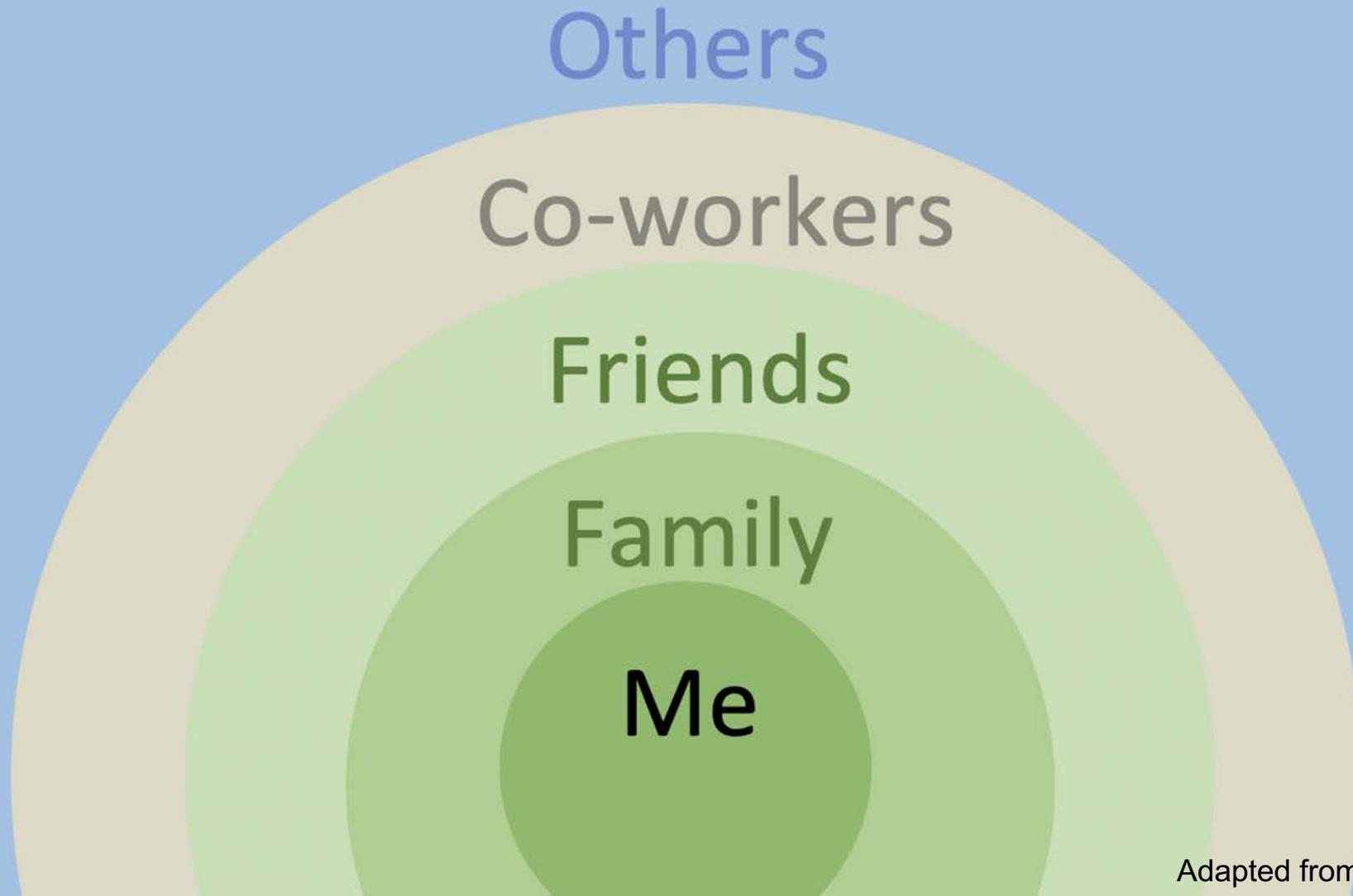
The word for this variable “self” in Japanese is “UCHI”



UCHI is “self” that includes an “absolute self” and can expand to include others.

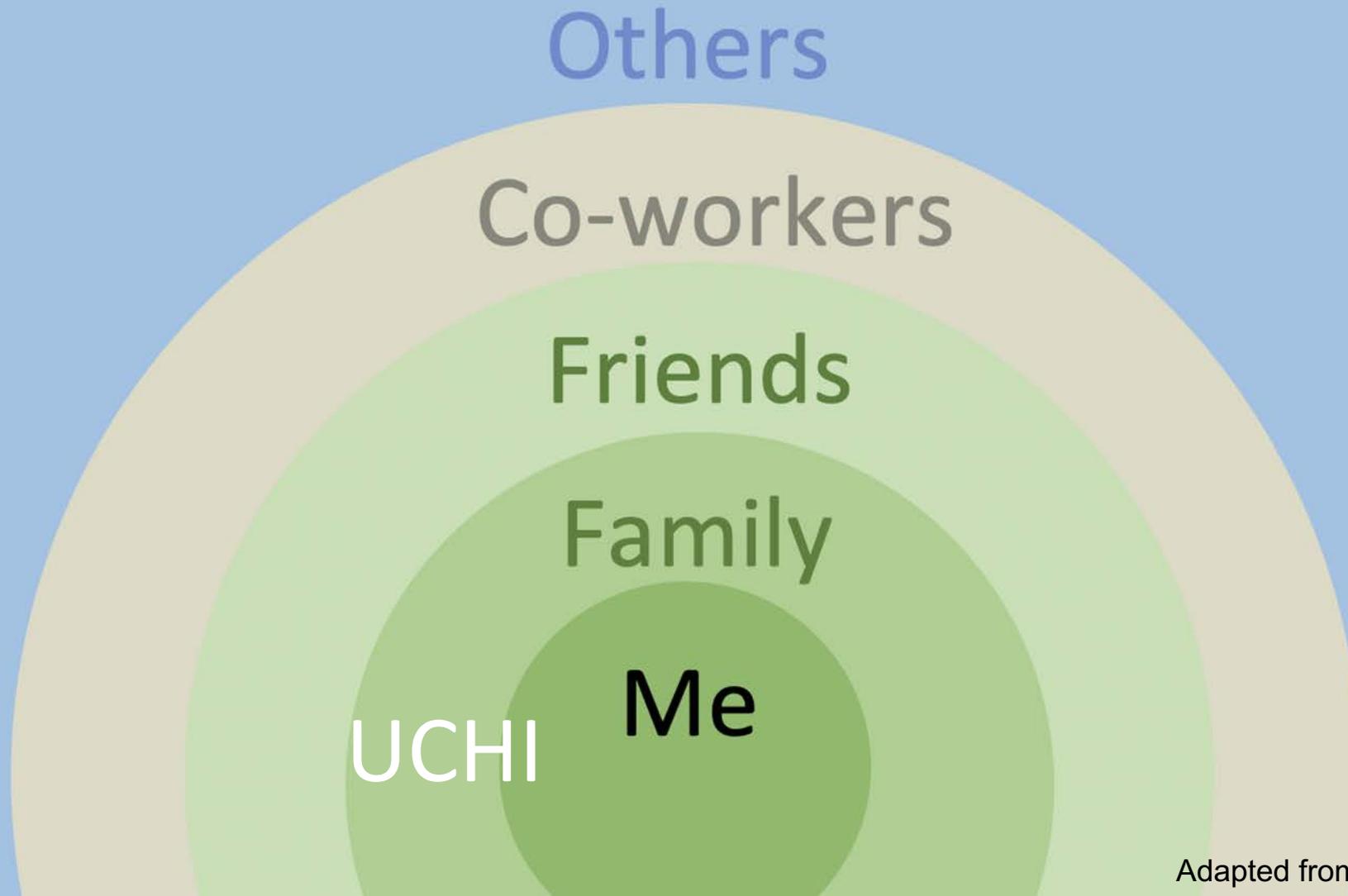
This concept is realized in Japanese grammar.

# Who am I in the world?



# Absolute self and extended self in Japanese

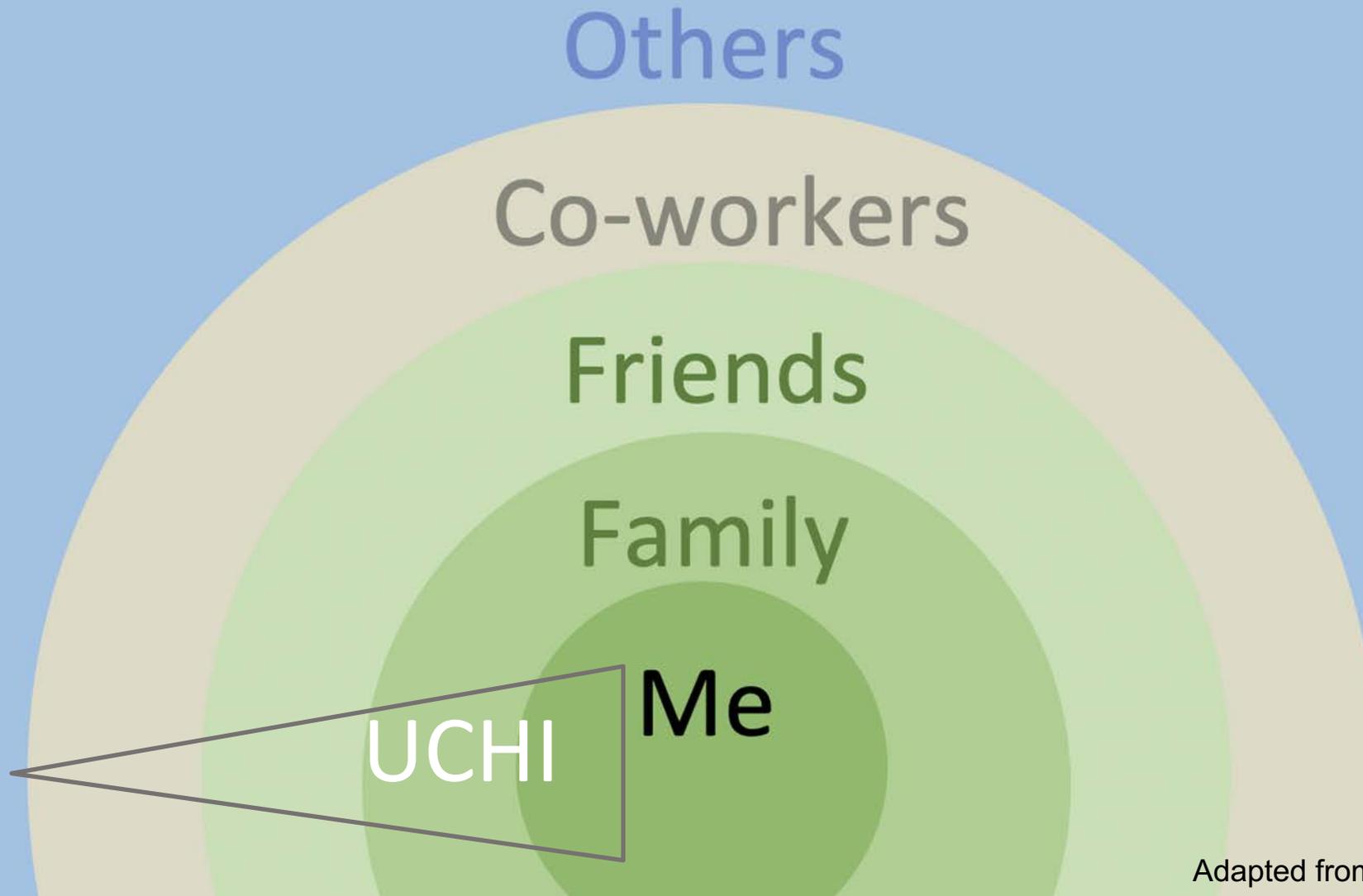
SCOBA 1



Adapted from Masuda & Ohta 2021

# Absolute self and extended self in Japanese

SCOBA 1



Adapted from Masuda & Ohta 2021

# Pair work: Understanding the concept of UCHI

To have access to the task slide:

Option 1: Screenshot

Option 2: Link

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tWavh96ByWbtFejbYHyor-P2bY2Hujyc/view?usp=sharing>

# Absolute self and extended self in Japanese

SCOBA 1

Directions: In your group...

Work together, sentence by sentence. For each sentence:

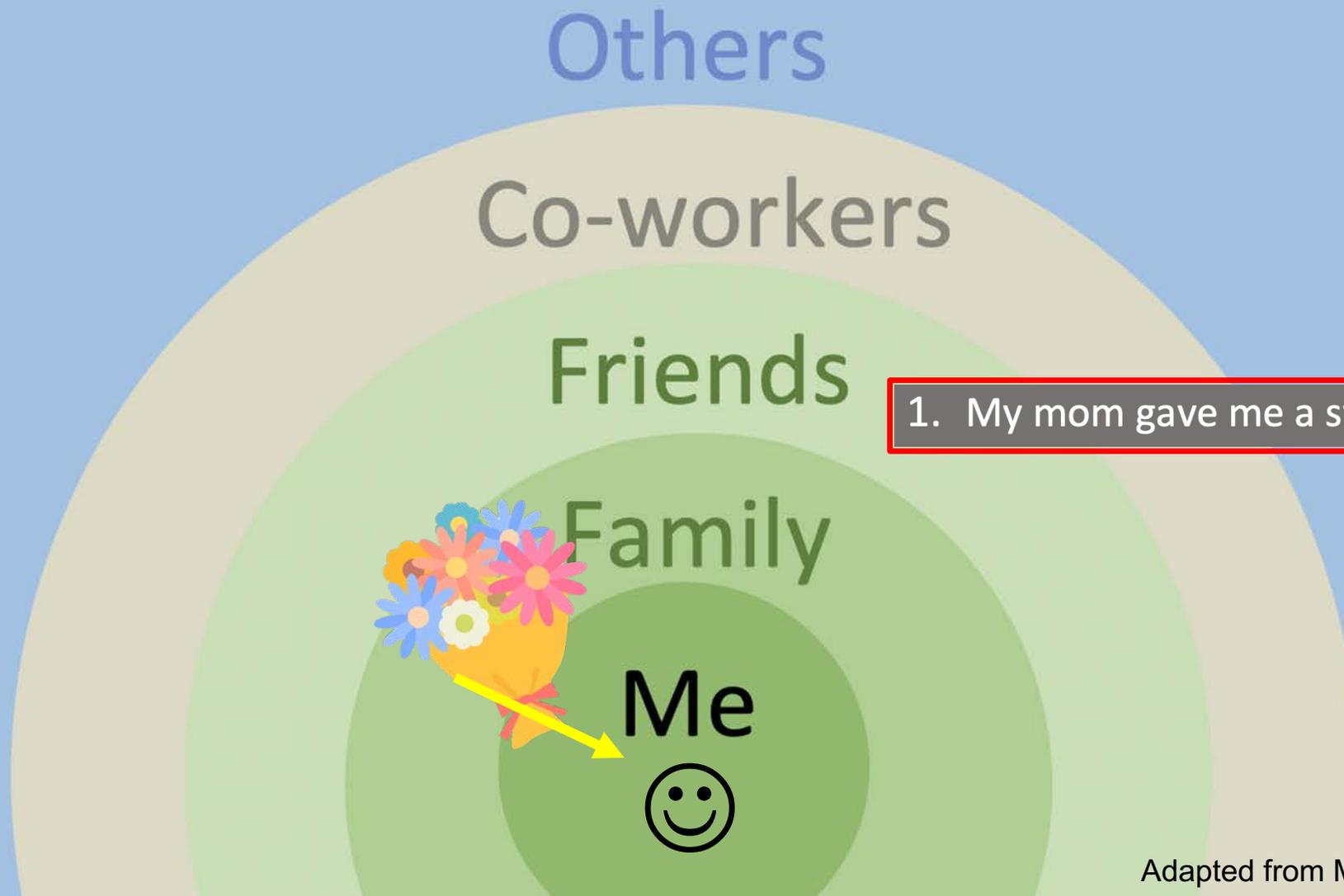
- Locate the giver on the SCOBA.
- Using your finger, trace on the SCOBA to the location of the receiver.
- If your finger moves toward the center, then your destination is “uchi.”
- If the line you trace with your finger moves away from the center, then the destination is not “uchi.”
- If the line is horizontal, then “uchi” probably isn’t present in the sentence. In a situation if you strongly identify with the recipient (empathy), that person may “uchi.” Discuss.

UCHI Me

Others  
Co-workers  
Friends  
Family

1. My mom gave me a sweater.
2. I gave the neighbor some vegetables.
3. The neighbor gave us a recipe.
4. The client gave my colleague the report.
5. Keiko gave the students pencils.
6. My mom gave my sister a flute.

# “Give” with direction toward UCHI

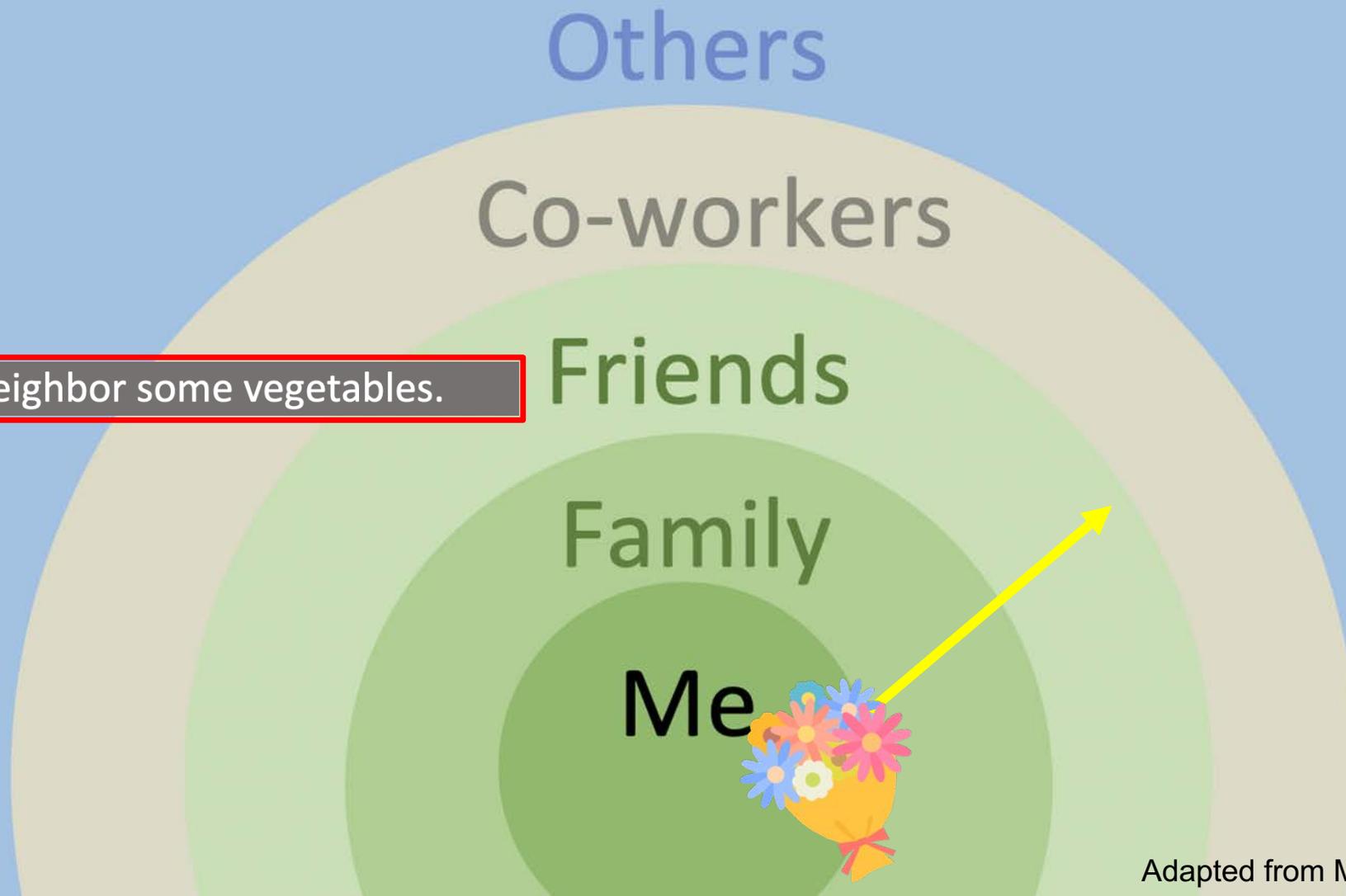


1. My mom gave me a sweater.

# “Give” with direction away from UCHI

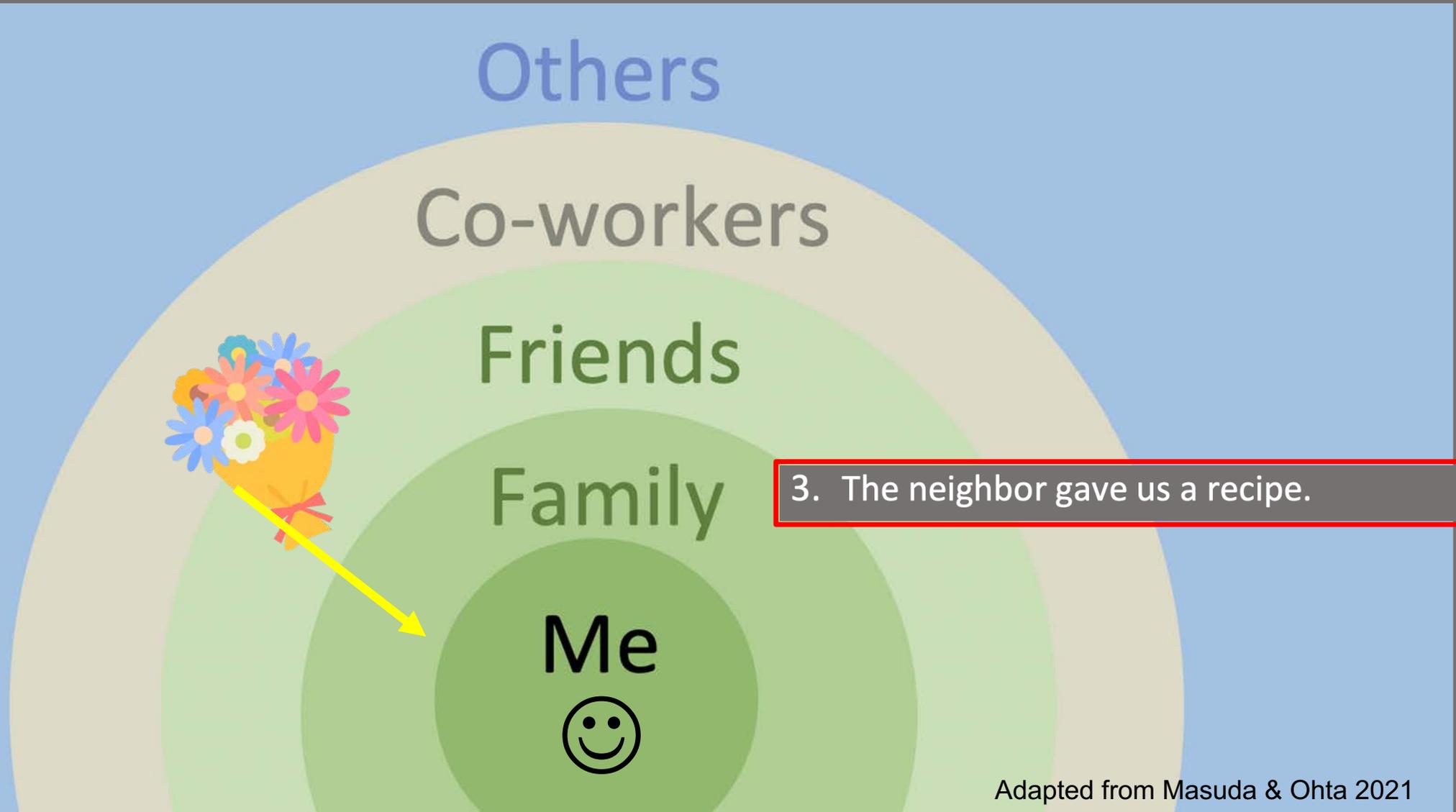
# SCOBA 2

2. I gave the neighbor some vegetables.



# “Give” with direction toward UCHI

SCOBA 3



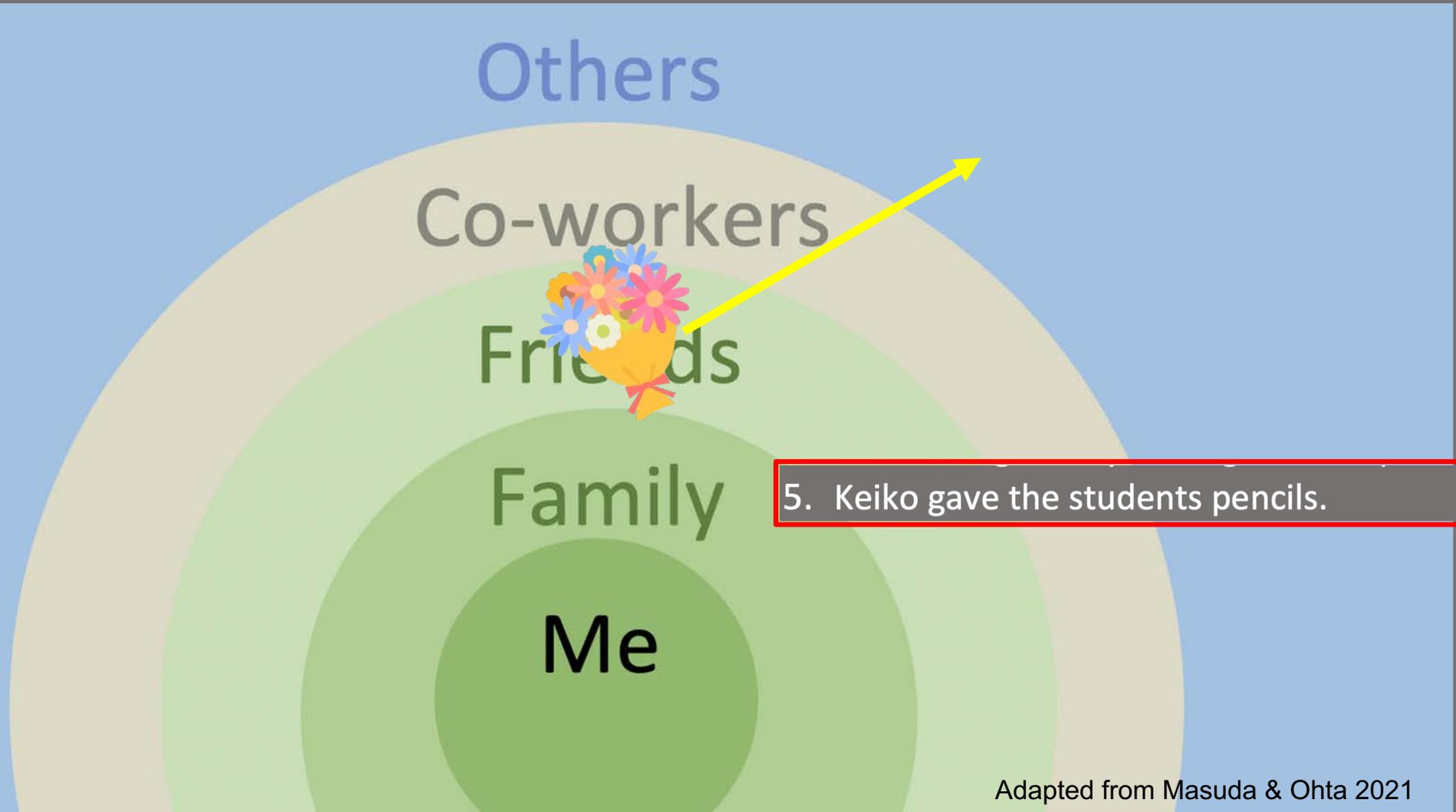
# “Give” with direction toward UCHI

SCOBA 3



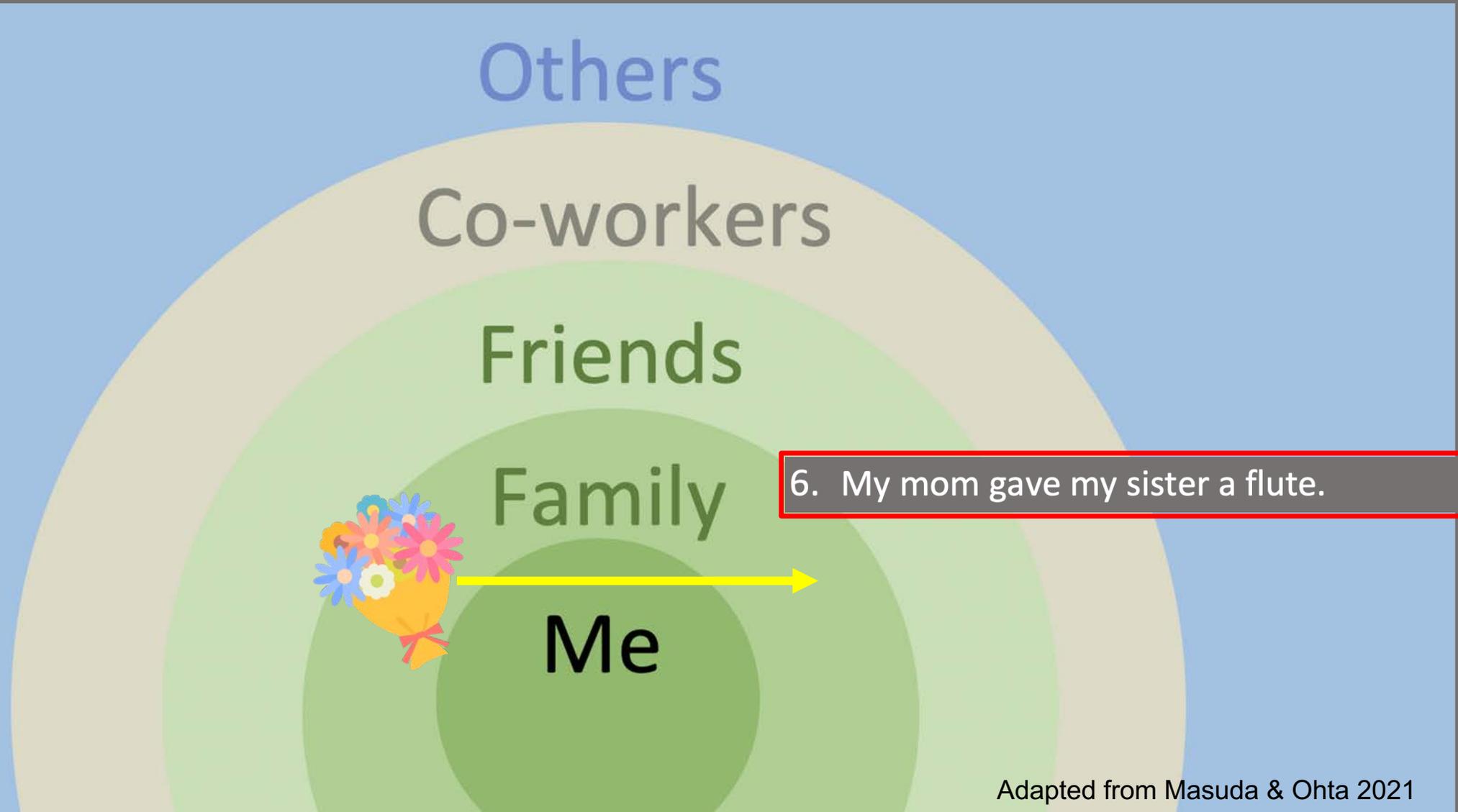
“Give” with direction away from UCHI,  
or not toward UCHI

SCOBA 2



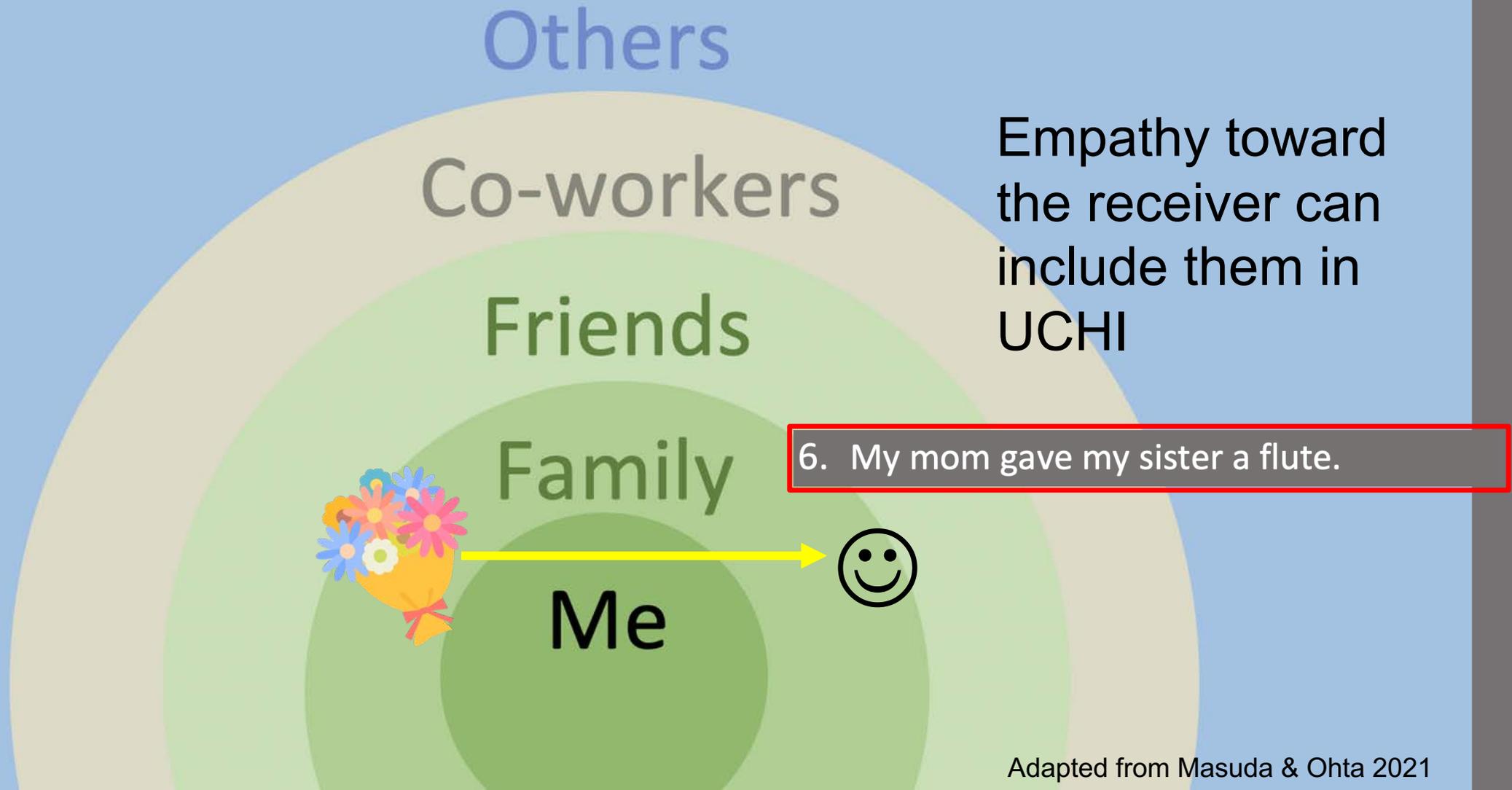
“Give” with direction away from UCHI,  
or not toward UCHI

SCOBA 3



# “Give” with direction toward UCHI

## SCOBA 3



# Why does this matter?

Japanese has two verbs that mean “give”

*Ageru* is used when the direction of giving is away from uchi, or not related to uchi.

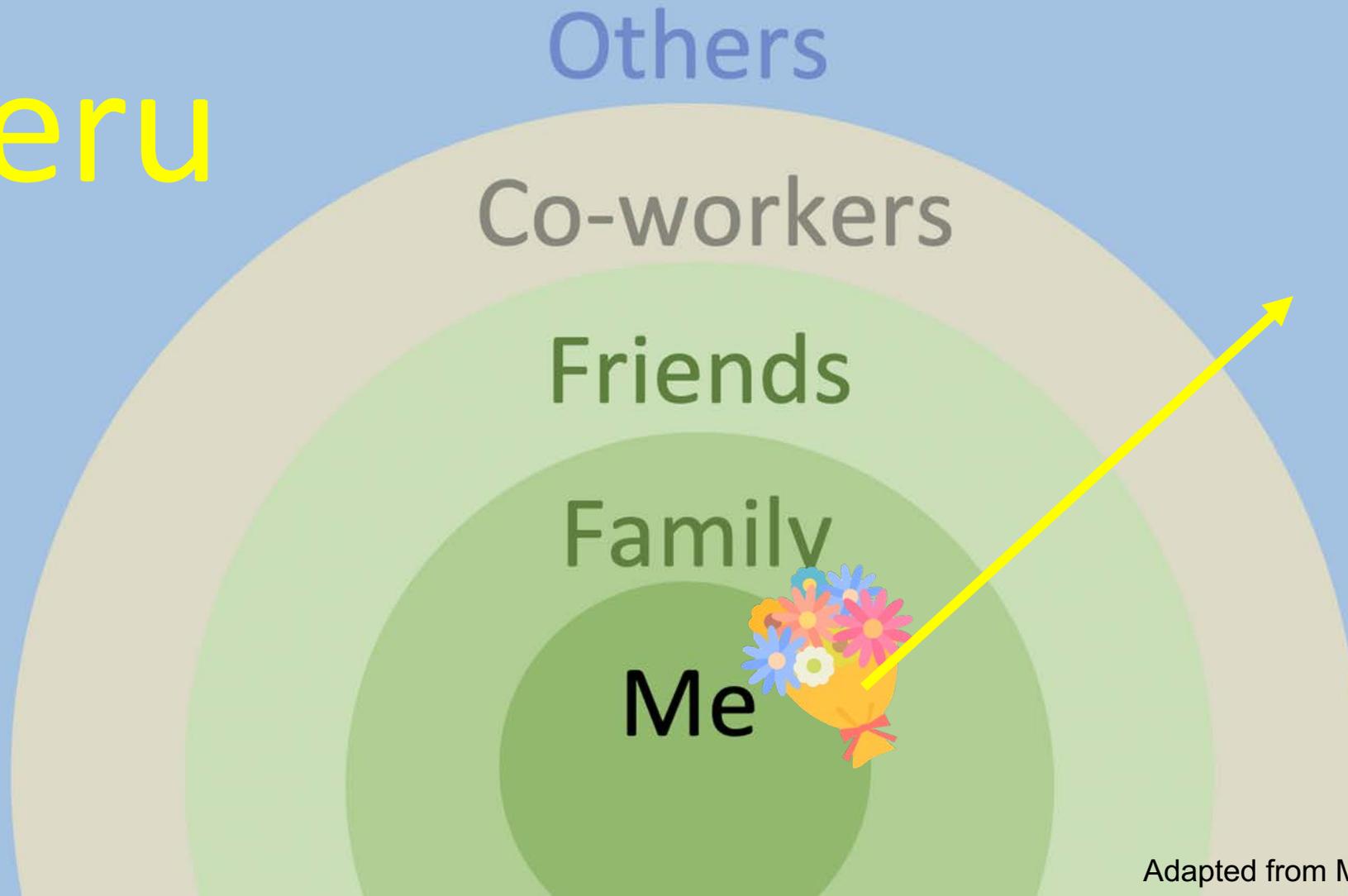
*Kureru* is used when the direction of giving *toward* uchi  
(kureru)

Both of these verbs mean “give”

“Give” with direction away from UCHI

SCOBA 2

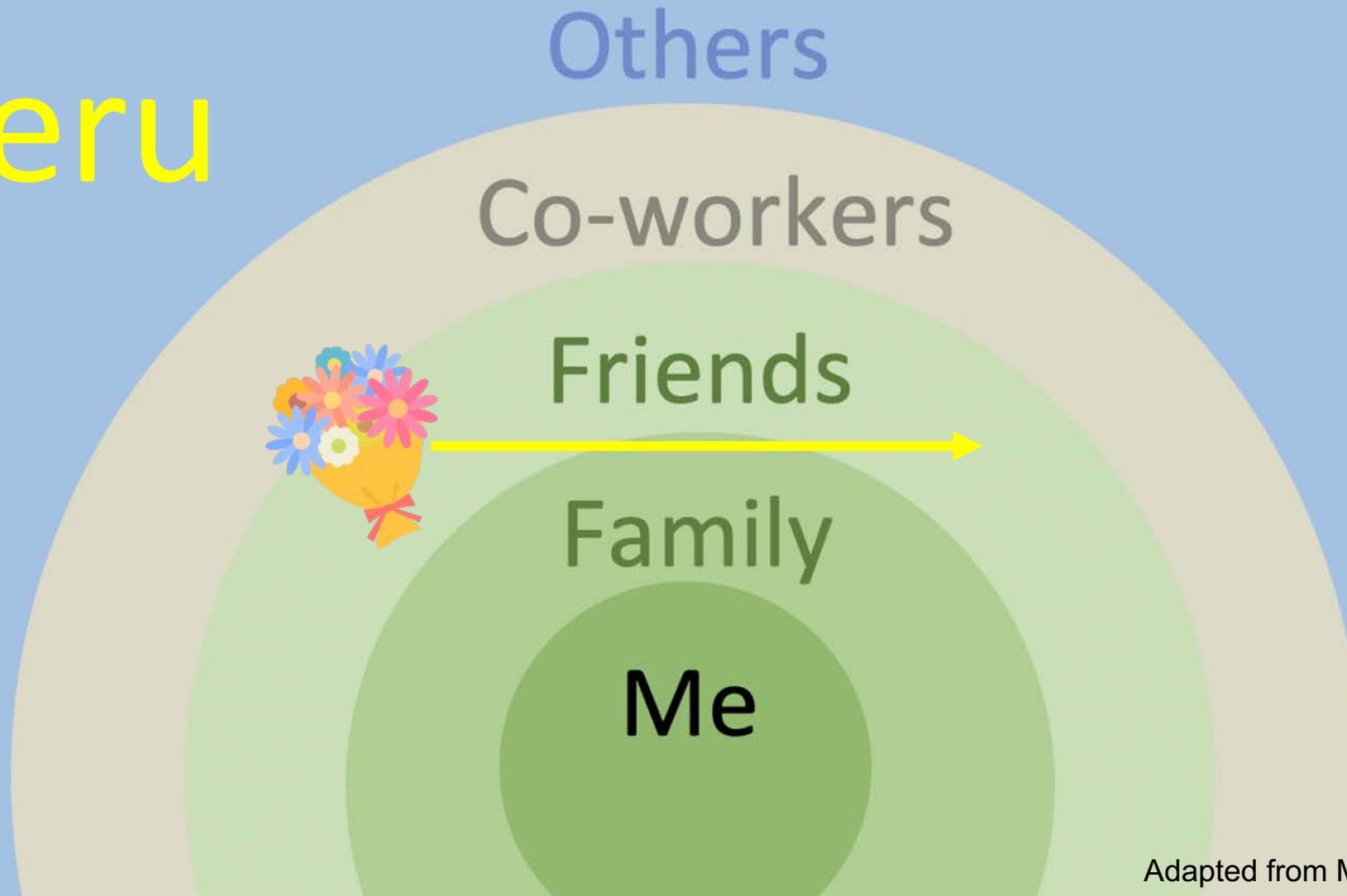
ageru



“Give” with direction away from UCHI,  
or not related to uchi

SCOBA 2

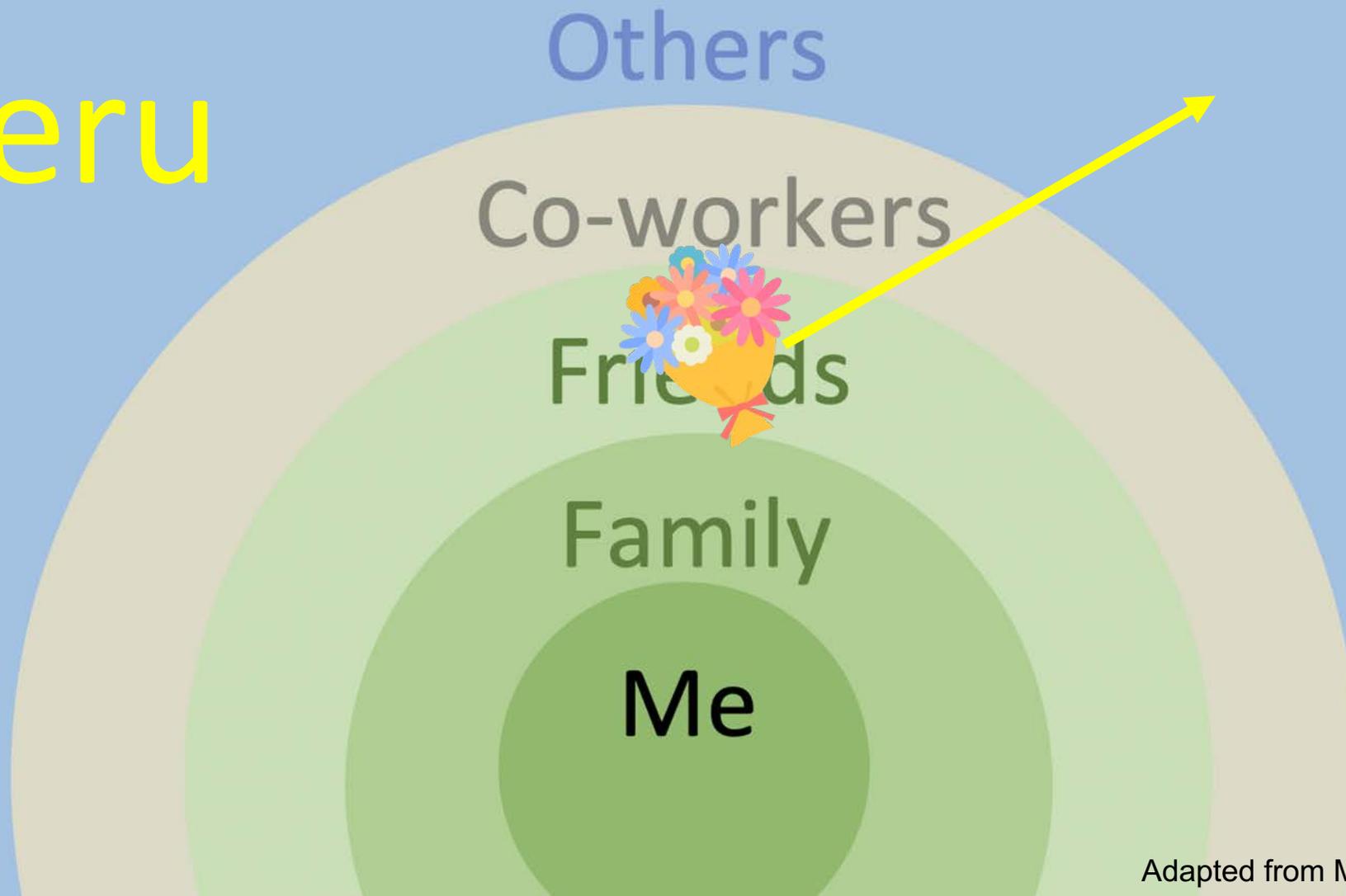
ageru



“Give” with direction away from UCHI,  
or not toward UCHI

SCOBA 2

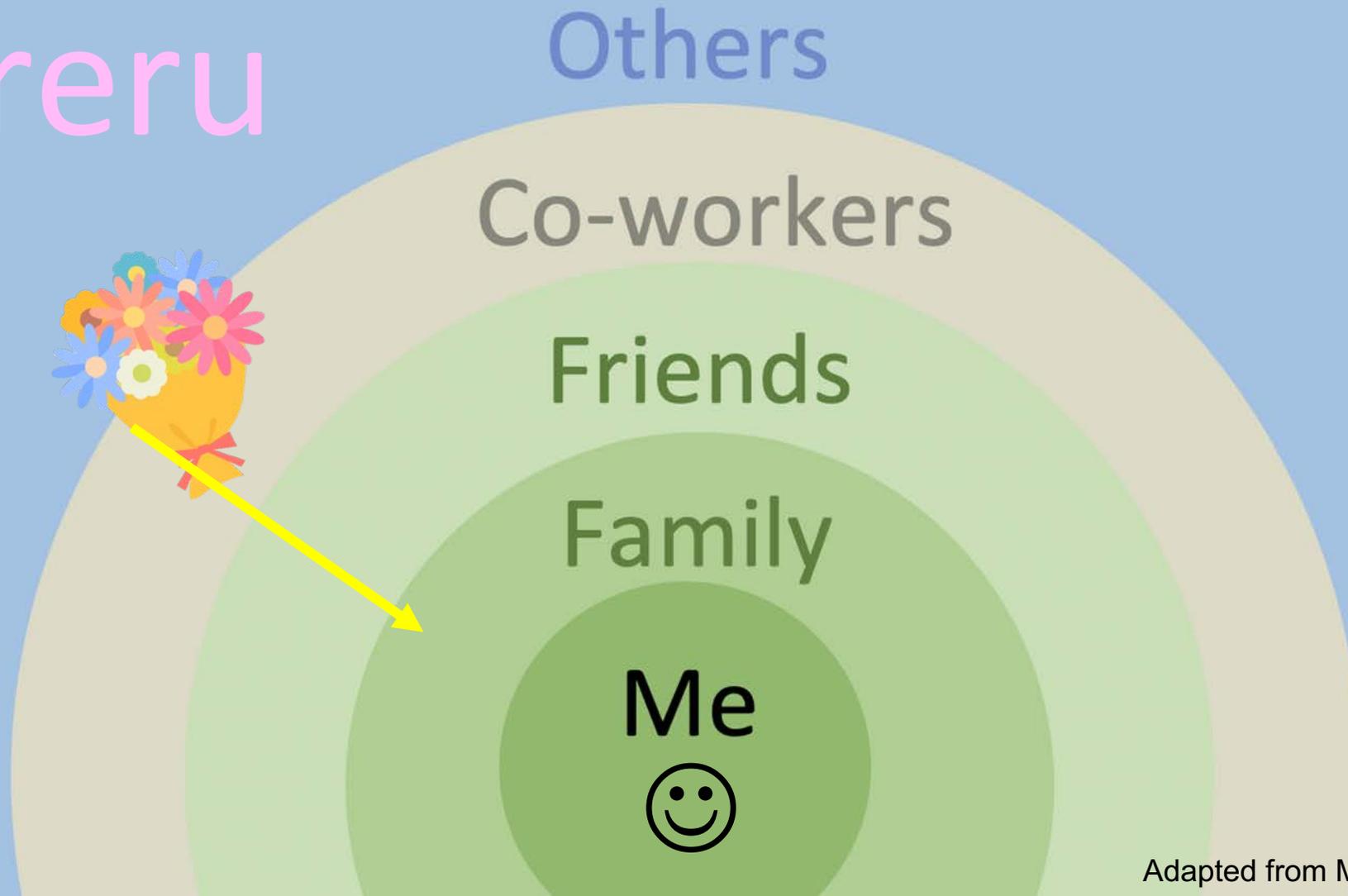
ageru



# “Give” with direction toward UCHI

SCOBA 3

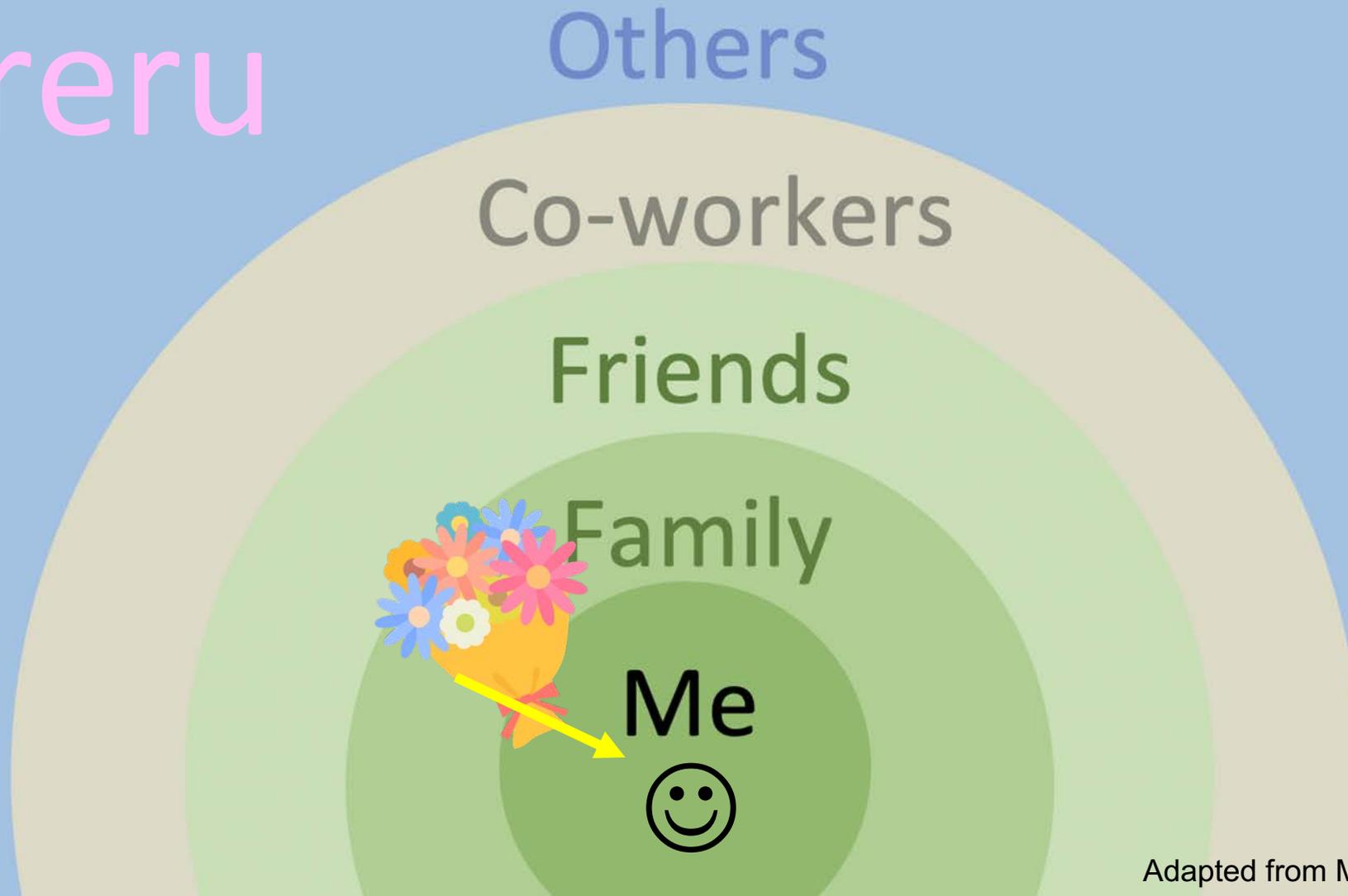
kureru



# “Give” with direction toward UCHI

SCOBA 3

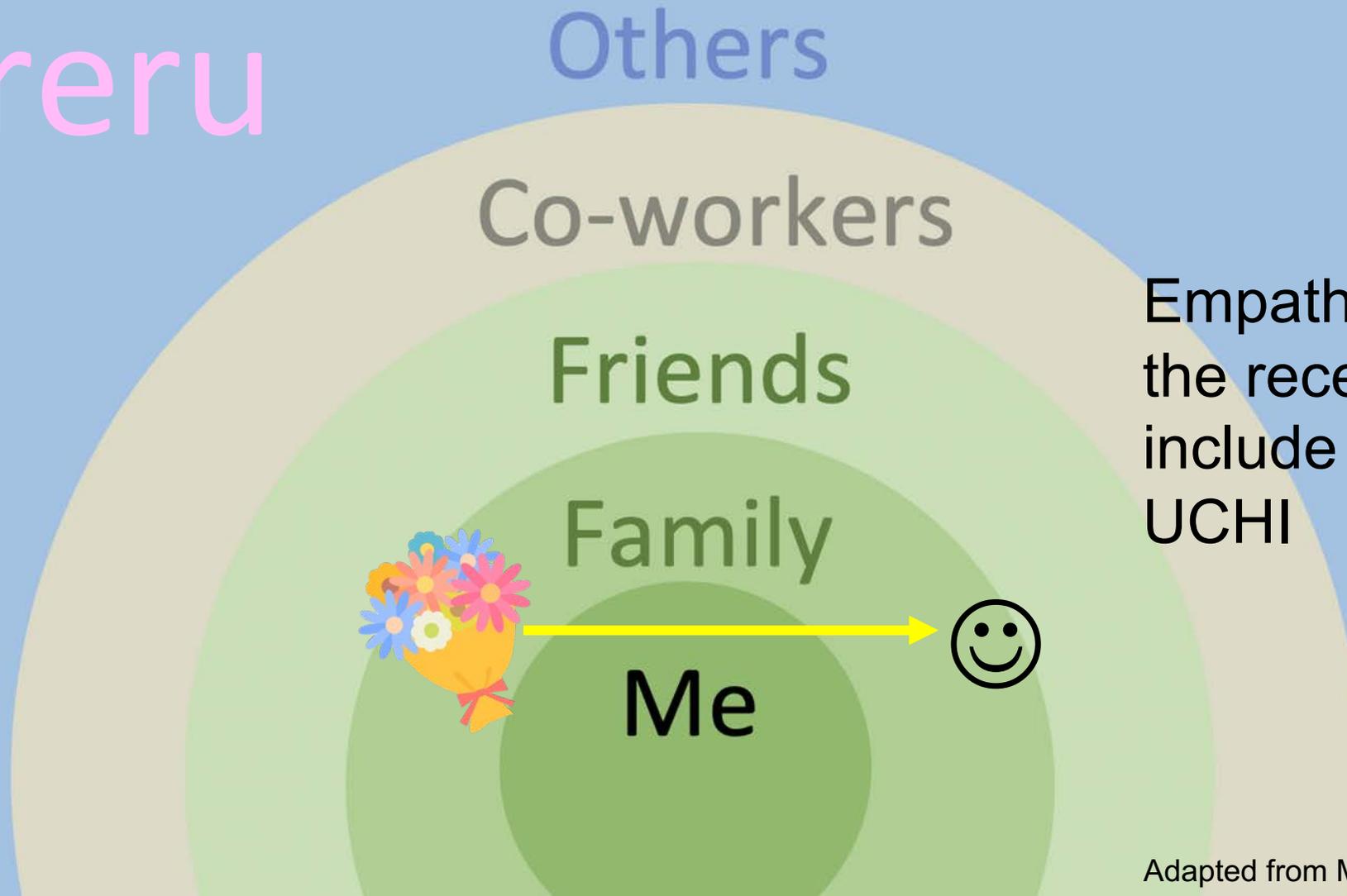
kureru



# “Give” with direction toward UCHI

SCOBA 3

kureru



Empathy toward the receiver can include them in UCHI

Pair work 2: Selecting *ageru* or *kureru*

To have access to the task slide:

Option 1: Screenshot

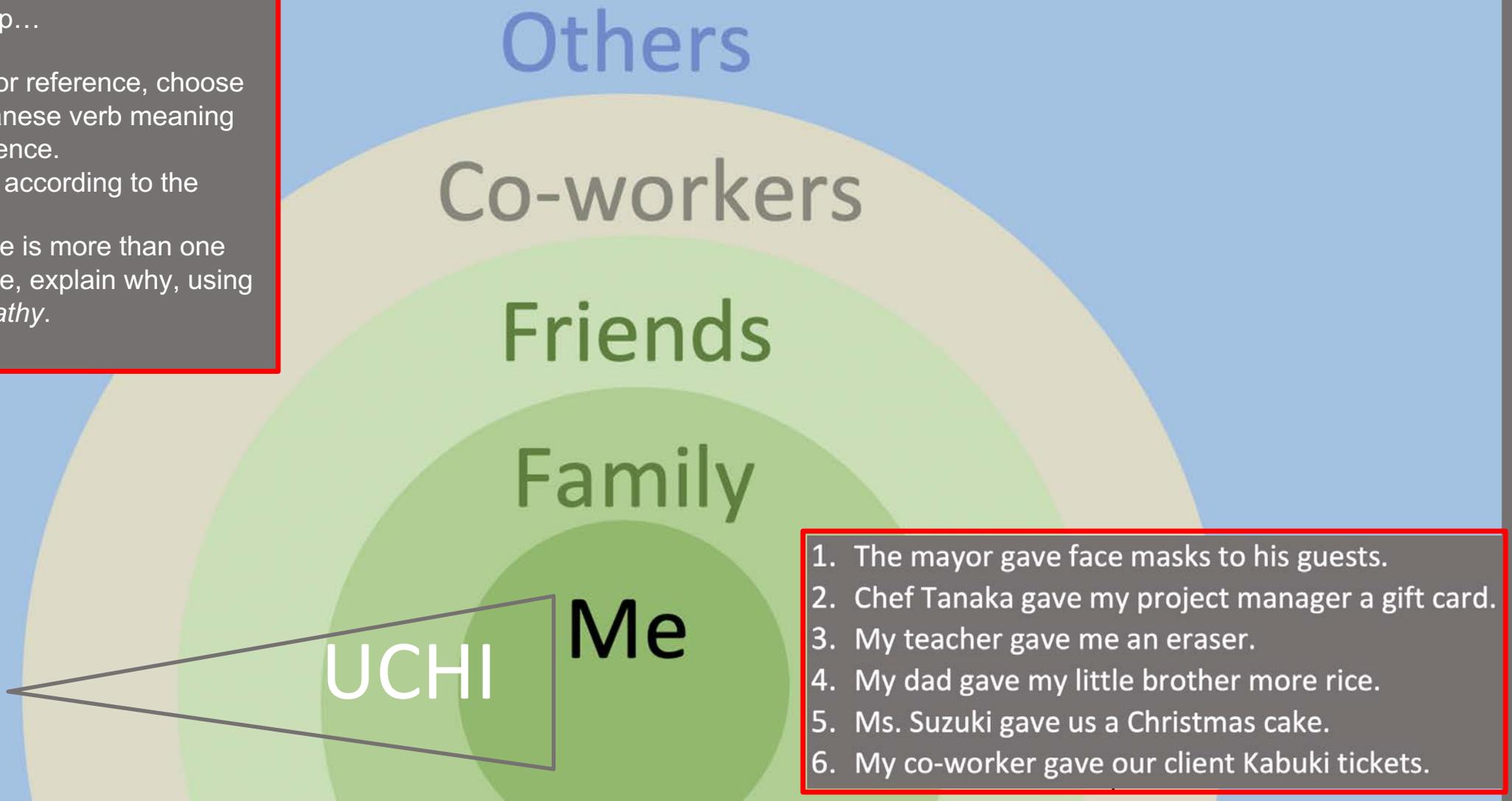
Option 2: Link

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YCx0ryjjw8N7XEA-LKIPWvg6TT03F-Sx/view?usp=sharing>

# *Ageru* (away from or neutral to *uchi*) or *Kureru* (toward *uchi*)

Directions: In your group...

- Using the SCOBA for reference, choose an appropriate Japanese verb meaning “give” for each sentence.
- Explain your choice according to the SCOBA.
- If you think that there is more than one option for a sentence, explain why, using the concept of *empathy*.



1. The mayor gave face masks to his guests.
2. Chef Tanaka gave my project manager a gift card.
3. My teacher gave me an eraser.
4. My dad gave my little brother more rice.
5. Ms. Suzuki gave us a Christmas cake.
6. My co-worker gave our client Kabuki tickets.

That's the end of our sample C-LBI lesson.

What's next?

Internalization exercises  
(homework), such as...

- Re-explaining the SCOBA (monologue)
- Applying the SCOBA
- Creating one's own SCOBA

Classes taught in L2 with lots of L2 practice, moving from more to less supported types of practice.

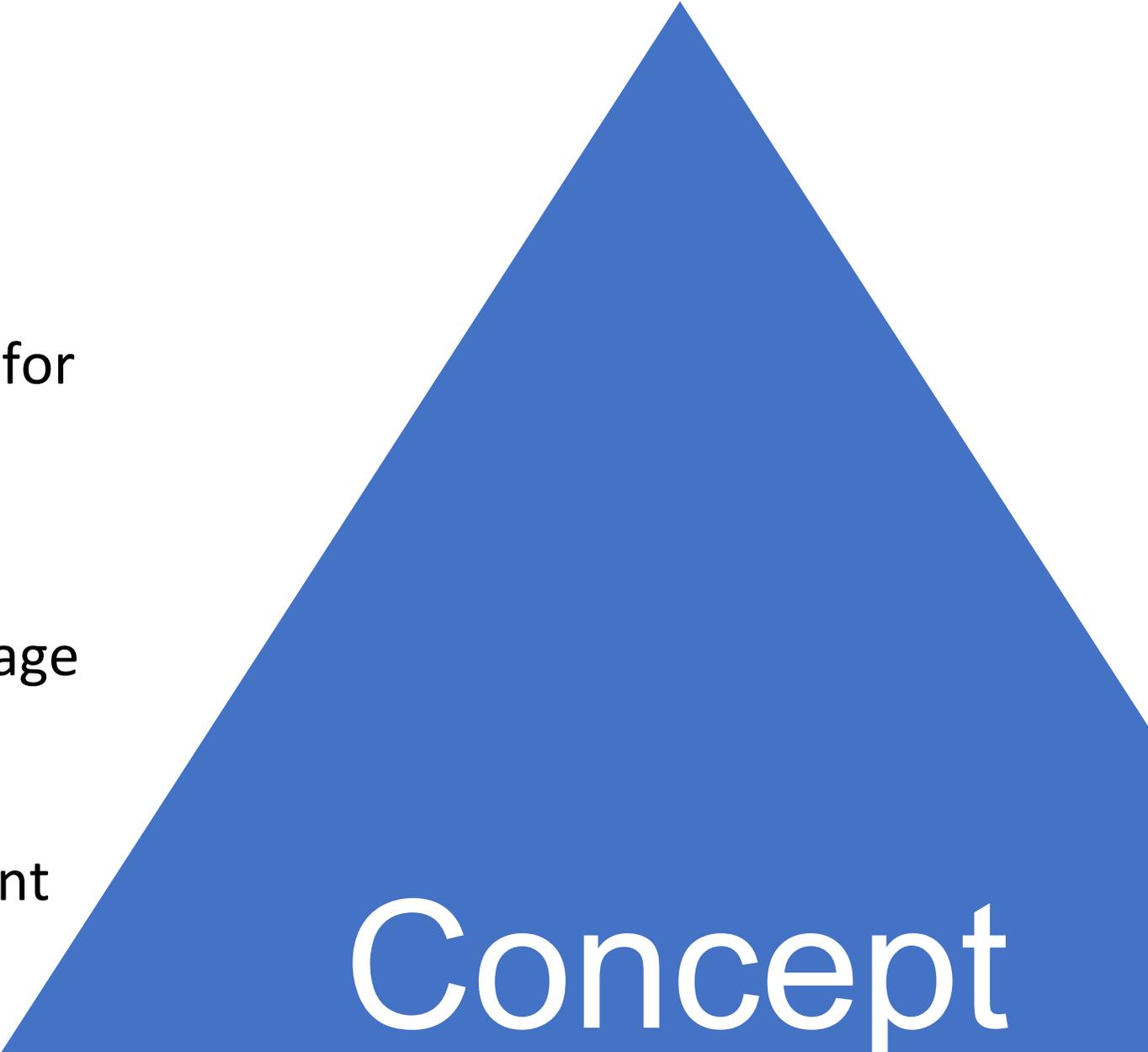


# Why teach conceptually? The case of “uchi”

- Verbs “give” are conventionally taught as selected based on direction of movement toward or away from the absolute self
- Students commonly mix up “kureru” with the notion “receive,” even through advanced levels
- Teaching “uchi” first may pave the way to understanding different perspectives underlying Japanese verbs meaning “give”
- The notion “uchi” is also necessary for more advanced grammar related to honorifics, that incorporate notions of social distance
- The flexibility in the notion of “uchi” is needed to understand the grammatical notion of “self” in other grammar structures

# Results of C-BLI

- Learning leads development
- Concept provides foundation for L2 development
- Assessing L2 development involves looking at both conceptual growth and language growth, not just the latter.
- As proficiency grows, use of concept becomes more evident in language use



Concept

How can  
this  
apply to  
me?



# Getting started with C-BLI

- What concepts underlie the grammar, pragmatics, and L2 situations you are teaching?
- Where do the rigid rules taught in foreign language classes trip students up?
  - Over-generalized rules that don't describe how target natives use the language (Japanese example): Use “-masu” form to be polite
  - Problems caused by direct translation of L1 concepts into L2
- What is hard for your students?

ご清聴  
ありがとうございました



Thank  
you for  
listening



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