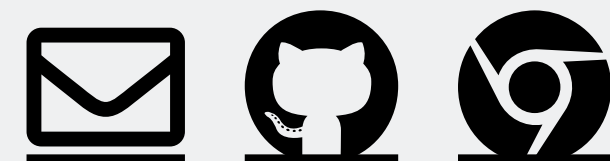# Second Language Acquisition

LG 376 — Semester 2, 2021 (Jan-May 2022)

CLASS 2: DEFINING SLA

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This presentation is based in part on Lourdes Ortega's lecture for an Interdisciplinary Cognitive Science 701 class in 2016

Outline

- Quick recap

- Defining SLA

- Defining success in L2A

- APA practice

- Looking ahead: Week 3
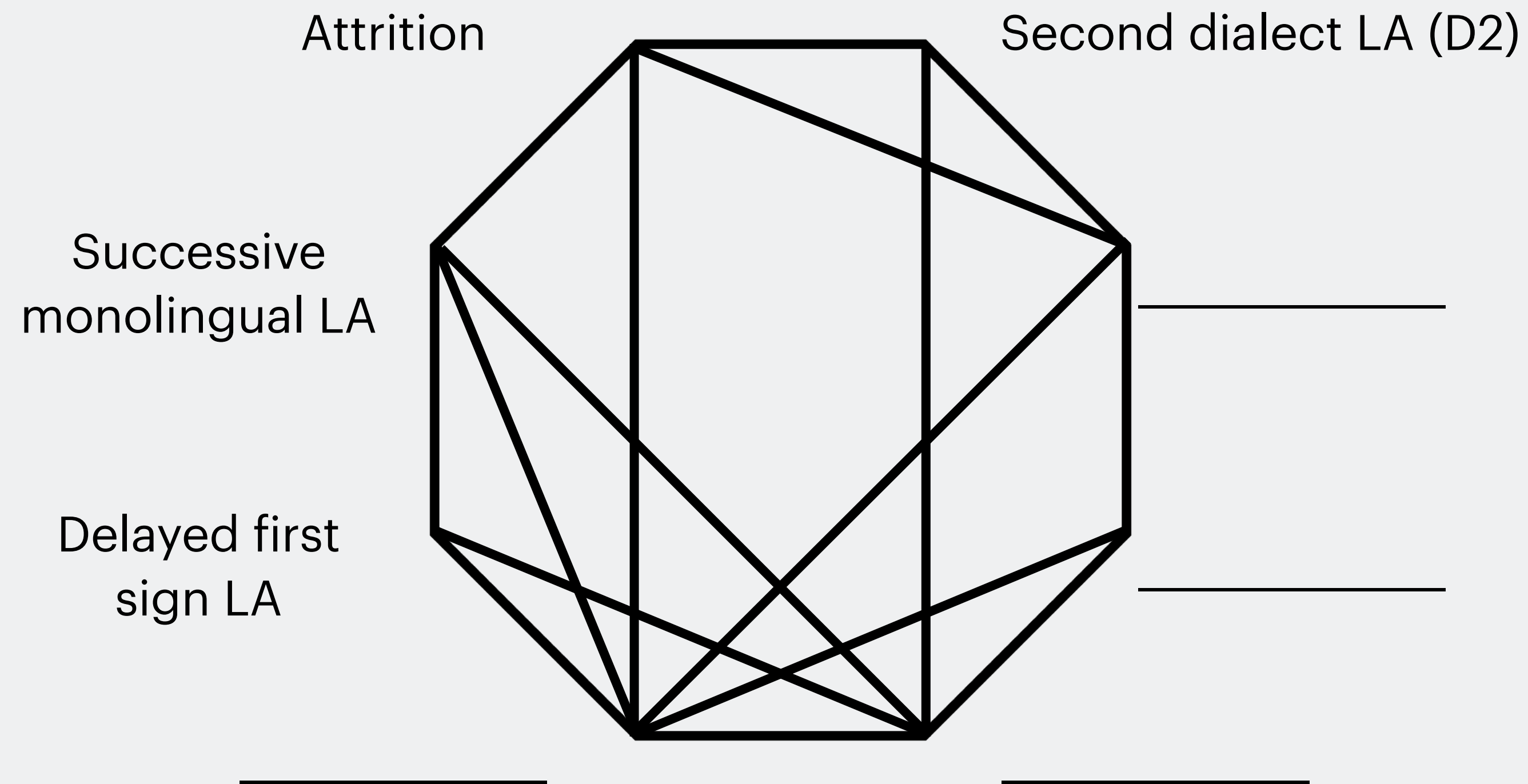
Quick recap

SLA: Our first definition

Whole-class

Complete the blanks:

the scholarly field that investigates human _____ to learn _____ other than _____ in late _____, _____, and _____

SLA: Our first definition

Whole-class

Attrition

Second dialect LA (D2)

Successive
monolingual LA

Delayed first
sign LA

Source: Ortega (2013). *Language Learning*

What is SLA, really?

Situating SLA within language sciences

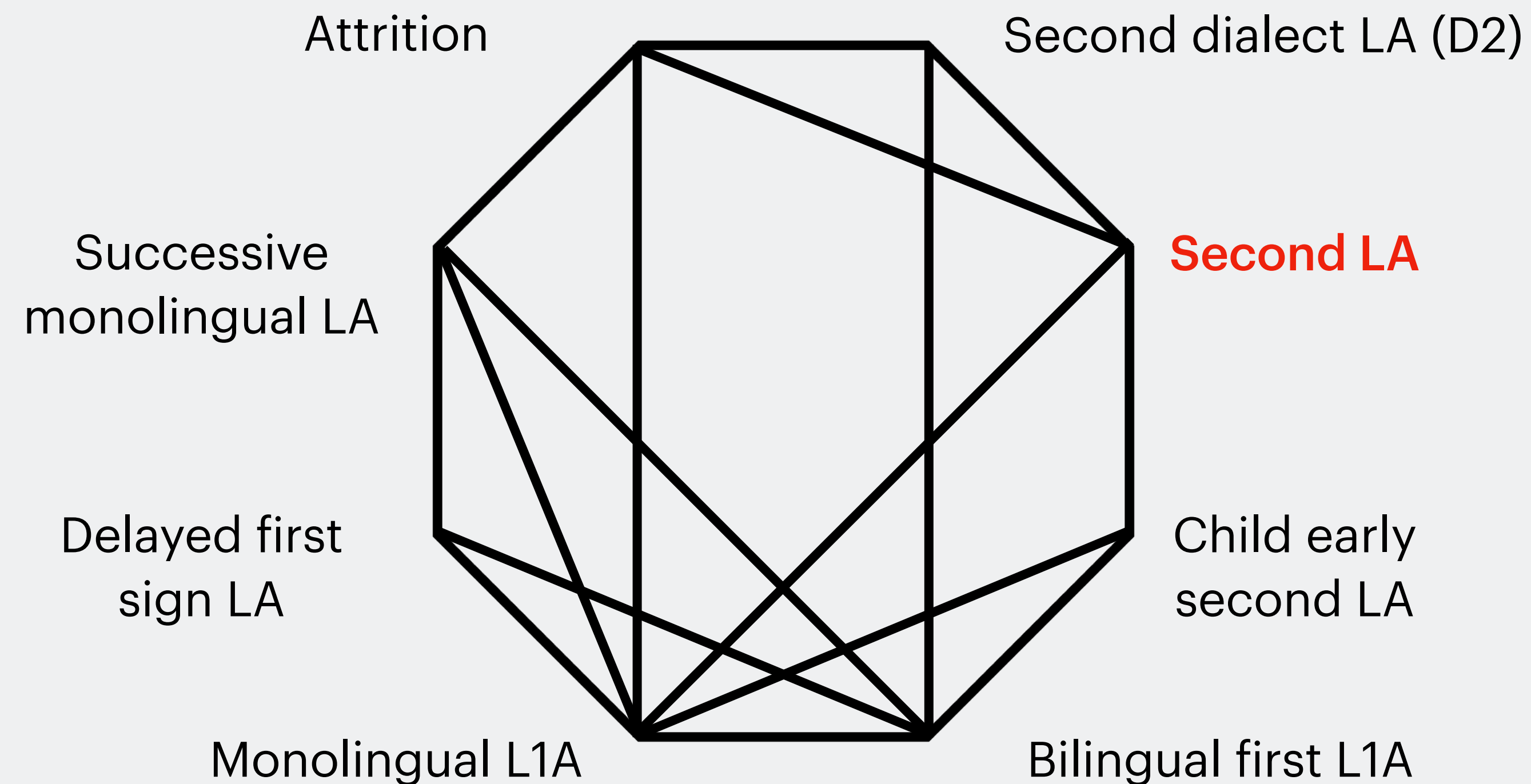**Two defining parameters** across types of LA:

Timing of learning
—————————————
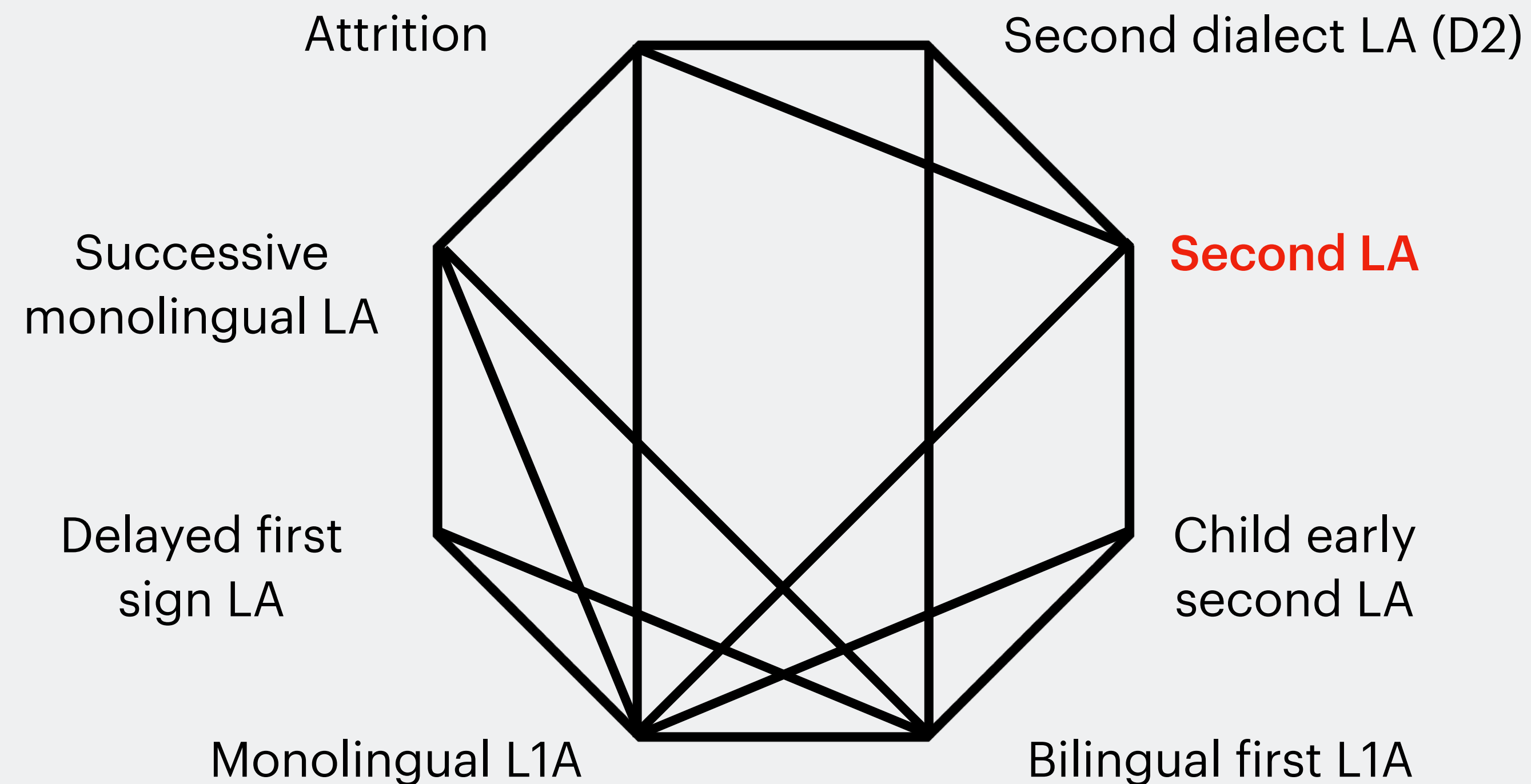from birth, early, or late

Number of languages
—————————————
1 (mono) or more (bi/multi)

Question: How does SLA fit into this bigger picture?

Situating SLA within language sciences

Attrition

Second dialect LA (D2)

Successive
monolingual LA

Second LA

Delayed first
sign LA

Child early
second LA

Monolingual L1A

Bilingual first L1A

Source: Ortega (2013). *Language Learning*

Situating SLA within language sciences

Attrition

Second dialect LA (D2)

Successive
monolingual LA

Second LA

Delayed first
sign LA

Child early
second LA

Monolingual L1A

Bilingual first L1A

Source: Ortega (2013). *Language Learning*

Lesson #1

- **L2A** is no different from other kinds/types of LA

  - L2 is not "more (or less) special"

  - L2 is not "more (or less) difficult" (or challenging, etc.)*

  - L2 may be learned across lifespan

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* **L2A** may be challenging, so does any other types of LA

Explaining language

Description (D), **Evolution (E)**, and **Acquisition (A)**

- D: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse, pragmatics, etc.

- E: origins, or phylogenesis

  - from animal communication?

  - fundamentally different capability?

- A: development, or ontogenesis

The three As: L1A, Bilingualism, and L2A

L1A (or child language acquisition): well-defined stages between 0 and 6 yrs

- 0–1:   phonology, turn-taking, one-word production

- 1–2:   two-words, vocabulary explosion

- 2–3:   syntax & morphology

- 3–6:   subtle pragmatics & syntax

- 6 up: fewer common patterns, more diversity

The three As: L1A, **Bilingualism**, and L2A

B (or M) LA: more-or-less simultaneous acquisition of 2+ languages during early childhood

- BFLA: two first languages (La and Lα)

- ESLA: early L2 acquisition (child L2 acquisition)

Source: De Houwer (2020). Early bilingualism

The three As: L1A, **Bilingualism**, and L2A

B (or M) LA: developmental 'milestones' similar to monolingual children

- 0–1:   phonology, babbling, one-word utterances

- 1–2:   two-word (or longer) utterances ("no eat" "daddy door")

- 2 up: basic syntax (sentences with correct word order in L)

Uneven development across languages **is common**:

- Some or all aspects of one L may be better (child speaking that L only)

Source: De Houwer (2020). Early bilingualism

The three As: L1A, Bilingualism, and L2A

SLA: learning language once first language(s) have become established

- Can overlap with B, but SLA focuses on
  - ‣ late starts & early stages (mostly speaking)
  - ‣ learning process rather than product (use)
  - ‣ the language actively being learned

Source: De Houwer (2020). Early bilingualism

Some terms...

Whole-class

Additional language   Heritage contexts

Second language   Mother tongue   SL contexts   Instructed

First language   L2A   FL contexts   Learning   L2 speakers

L2 users   L2   L1   Ln   Acquisition

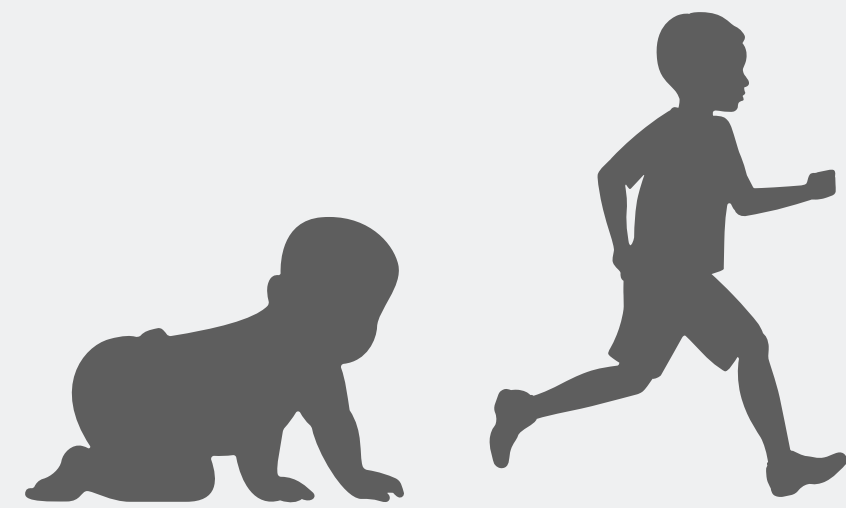SLA   L2 learners   Naturalistic

Some terms...

Defining success in L2A

Defining success in L2A

Whole-class

Questions:

- How do we define success in L2A? What does it mean to be "successful"?
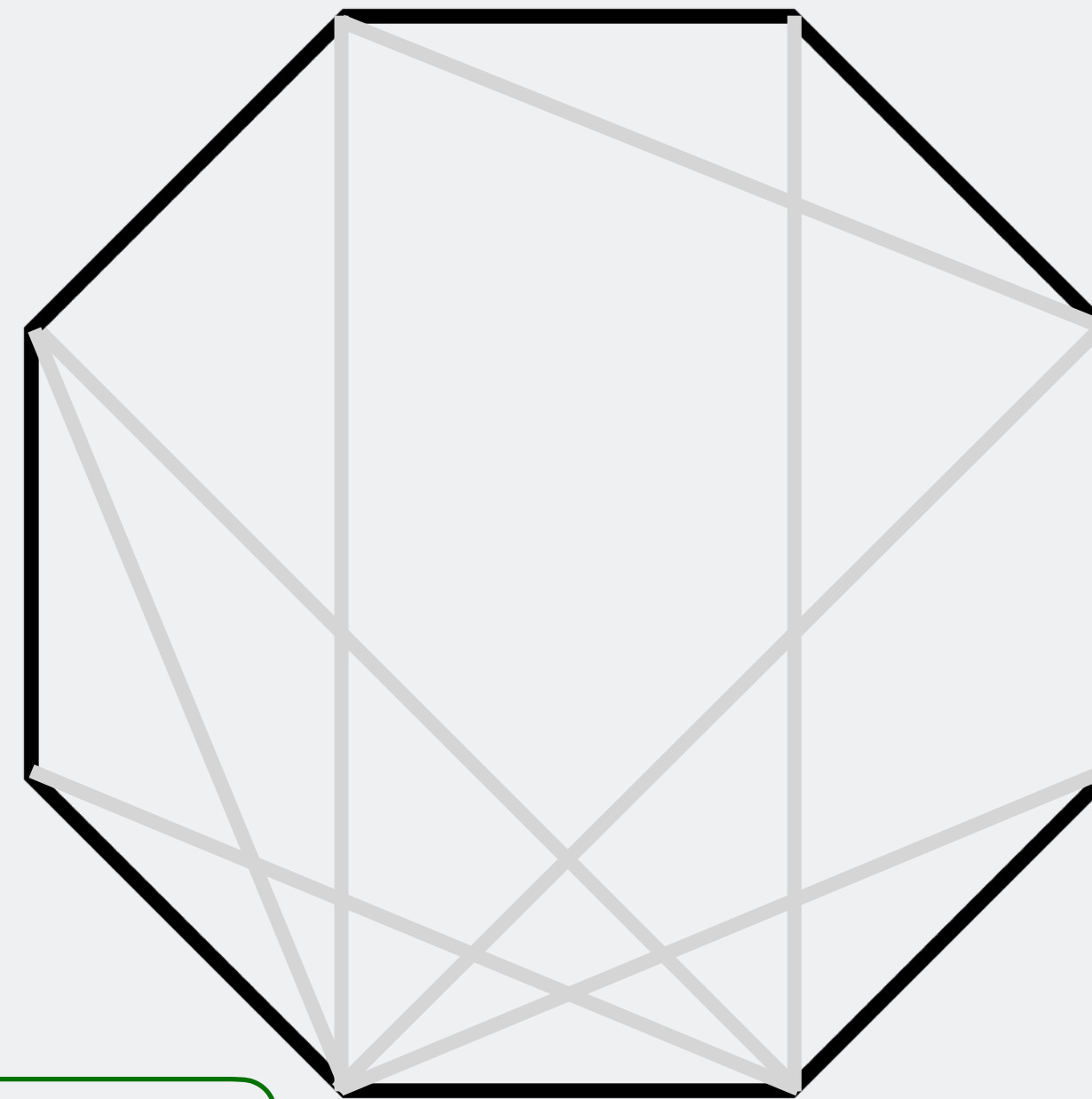
- Who do we compare L2 users to or against?

Defining success in L2A

Adult L2A

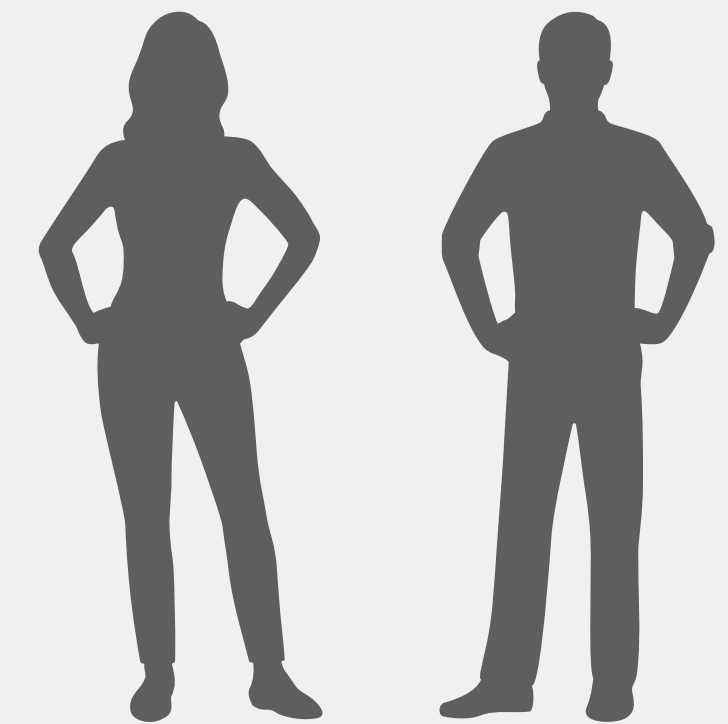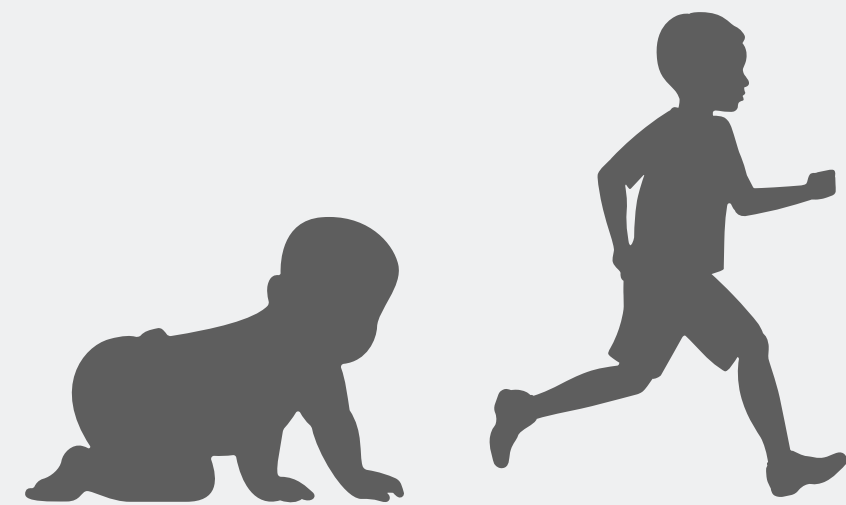Bilingual

Late

Early

Monolingual

Child L1A

Defining success in L2A

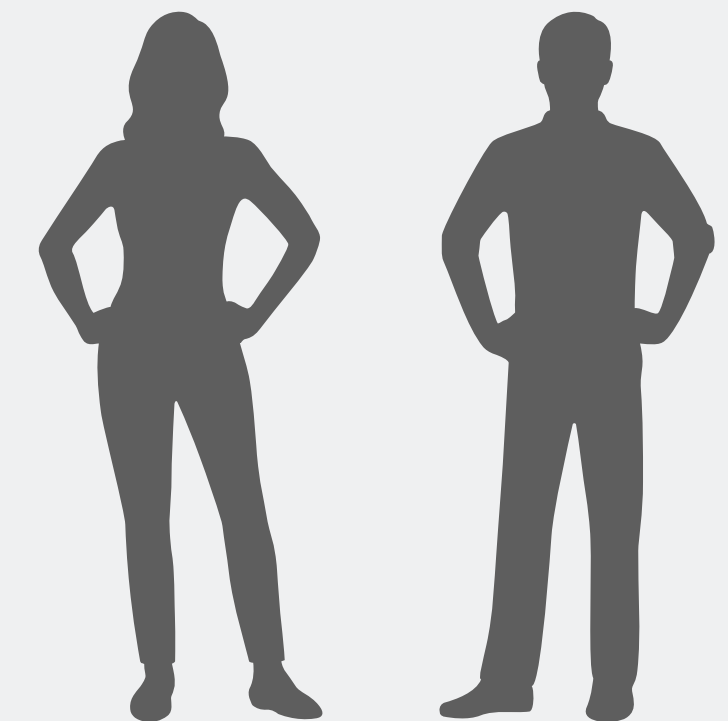Single-language competencies during early childhood

≠

Multiple-language competencies later in life

Adult L2A

Bilingual

Late

Early

Monolingual

Child L1A

Defining success in L2A
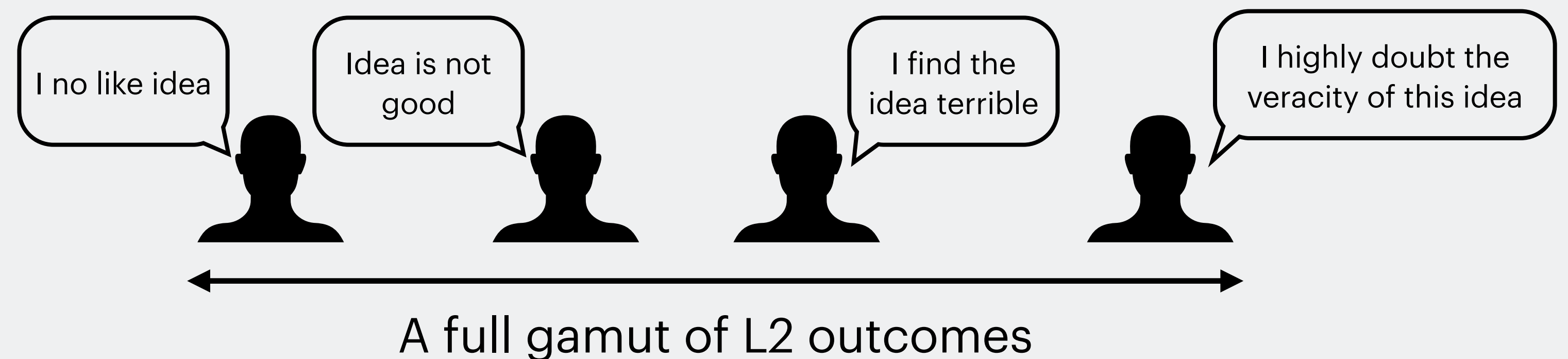
a monolingual native speaker bias

- Tacit assumptions

  - L2 systems are a deficient, incomplete version of L1 systems (a target deviation perspective, Klein [1998]).

  - L2 learning is always hindered by cognitive & maturational constraints.

Lesson #2

- Be mindful of the monolingual native speaker bias

  - as you read empirical research in linguistics and SLA

  - as you talk about L2 learning (or reflect on your own learning journey)

  - As you teach an SL or FL

Defining success in L2A

- L2 learning outcomes are variable:

  - beginning, intermediate, advanced, near-native/native-like*

- Variability is evident in all types of multiple-language acquisition!

  - (and also monolingual acquisition [see Dąbrowska, 2015)

I no like idea

Idea is not good

I find the idea terrible

I highly doubt the veracity of this idea
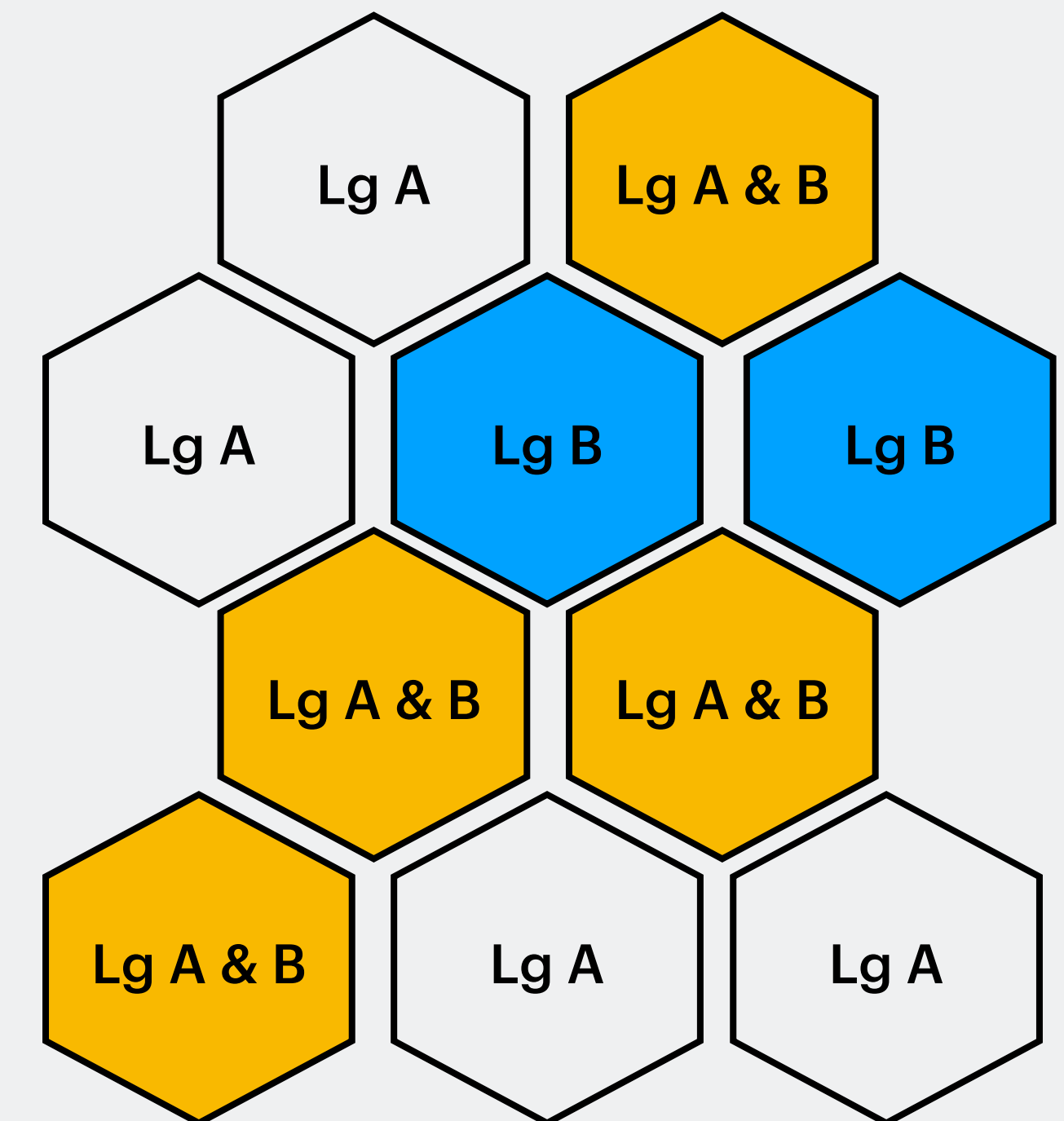
A full gamut of L2 outcomes

Defining success in L2A

- In (from-birth) native bilingualism, linguistic success is not always 100%

  - **Unbalanced bilingualism** is expected and normal

Complementarity Principle (Grosjean, 2008, p. 23)
_____
Languages mapped differently across domains of life
and social networks

Lg A	Lg A & B

Lg A   Lg B   Lg B

Lg A & B   Lg A & B

Lg A & B   Lg A   Lg A

Here's a wrap...

- L2A is one of the many types of LA

  - It is neither "special" nor "deficient"

- Are what L2 users know and do similar to what bilinguals know and do?

  - Beware of monolingual native speaker bias

- Multiple-language acquisition is variable

  - So is monolingual L1 acquisition....

APA practice

APA references

Worksheet 2: Individual

Next week...

- **Topic**: Age

  - What is critical period hypothesis?

  - Are children better than adults: Question of rate & attainment

- **Readings**:

  - USLA (2.1, 2.3, 2.4)

  - Ioup et al. (1994) → I will model a study synopsis based on this article

    - Skim, just to get a general sense

    - Sec. 2.2 in USLA is a summary of Ioup et al. (1994)

References

Dąbrowska, E. (2015). Individual differences in grammatical knowledge. In E. Dąbrowska & D. Divjak (Eds.), *Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics* (pp. 650–668). De Gruyter Mouton.

De Houwer, A. (2020). Early bilingualism. In C.A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The concise encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 405–413). Wiley Blackwell.

Grosjean, F. (2008). *Studying Bilinguals*. Oxford University Press.

Klein, W. (1998). The contribution of second language acquisition research. *Language Learning, 48*, 527–550.

Ortega, L. (2013). SLA for the 21st century: Disciplinary progress, transdisciplinary relevance, and the bi/multilingual turn. *Language Learning, 63*, 1–24.