Throughout the book, Cognitive Linguistics and Second Language Learning: Theoretical Basics and Experimental Evidence, written by Andrea Tyler, the author operates under four goals, as she courses through the material within. These four goals can be summed up into the following: (1) An explanation and succinct elaboration of the Cognitive Linguistics theory as a whole; (2) Provision of recent second language acquisition (L2) research supporting the veracity of the tools Cognitive Linguistics provides for L2 understanding, development, and application; (3) Insights from instruction experiments conducted indicating the effectiveness of Cognitive Linguistic theoretical tools applied to language instruction, compared to traditional teaching methods; (4) Demonstration of the accessibility of the Cognitive Linguistic framework for researchers, theorists, and teachers, alike.

As Tyler explains the Cognitive Linguistics framework and the tools it provides to L2 researchers and teachers of second language learners, she elaborates on five main tools derived from Cognitive Linguistic theory. These five tools or domains of inquiry and understanding are the following: construal, metaphor, categorization, embodiment, and the usage-based paradigm. Throughout her book, Tyler discusses these five tools (although she does bring up a few related others) in depth, as they are understood and defined by Cognitive Linguistic theory as a whole. She also explains how these tools can help us better understand language structure and composition, as well as, how researchers and teachers can use these tools to improve L2 instruction and learning.

As Tyler discusses several instructional studies which apply Cognitive Linguistic tools to explain the behavior of different forms of English modals, prepositions, and clause constructions, she points out the greater success students experience with these methods compared to traditional methods. The studies she shares throughout the book all suggest a greater overall understanding and retention rate of the concepts taught using a Cognitive Linguistics approach, compared to traditional approaches.

One domain with which Tyler explains the semantic underpinnings and suggests other ways to understand the gradience of categorizations from prototypical meaning to peripheral meanings, are the English modal verbs. She offers ideas for more effective teaching strategies and materials for better learner understanding and correct usage of modal verbs.

For example, Tyler explains a non-traditional way of understanding the difference between *can* and *may*, as in “You can bake a cake,” versus, “You may bake a cake.” *Can* evokes the conceptualization of a being that has power to achieve a desired goal. Blocking the path to successful achievement of a goal is a schematic obstacle, whether internal or external to the being. *Can* evokes the being’s ability to break or move through the obstacle. *May* evokes two forces or beings, whereas one has power/authority and the other is under the domain of the one with power. *May* evokes the being desiring to achieve a desired goal, and the one with authority grants the interlocutor permission to achieve that goal.

Tyler elaborates several studies which implement a Cognitive Linguistic explanation of
English modals in teaching L2 students, in comparison to L2 students taught with traditional methods. She indicates that the results and findings of these studies suggest that students learn the meanings and correct usage of these modals when taught using a Cognitive Linguistic perspective.

I felt thrilled in choosing to read this book due to its alignment with my research and self-studies of interest: applying Cognitive Linguistic tools to pedagogical grammar. I have a passion about applying these tools to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of second language teaching and learning materials and strategies. Before reading this book, I was unaware of the several experimental studies discussed in this book, which suggest the overall effectiveness of Cognitive Linguistic approaches in teaching grammar compared to traditional methods. The mere fact of reading and becoming aware of these studies and their findings, both by way of this book and the many works referenced to within, in tandem to attending one of Tyler’s lectures on the findings from her instructional study of teaching English modals, were fuel to the fire, motivating me to further prepare and study, and to move into a direction enabling me to contribute to this particular field of research and application.

Near the end of her book, Tyler encourages L2 specialists to consider better understanding the language they work with, as a first step to finding tools which more effectively aid the second language learning process. She suggests that more research is needed and more theories within Cognitive Linguistics need to be explored for potential insights and applications to L2 acquisition strategies. She also points to the studies she discussed in previous chapters as evidence for the effectiveness and superiority of the Cognitive Linguistic L2 teaching strategies compared to traditional methods.