

Challenge or Opportunity? Language Choices for Framing and Perceiving Reality

As an illustration of how metaphors and beliefs shape understandings of teaching English language learners, consider the following terms often used to describe language use and ELL students:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| • Bi-/multilingual | • Strength | • Potential |
| • Challenge | • Home language | • Problem |
| • Contributors | • Learner | • Proficient |
| • Double the work | • Limited | • Second language |
| • Fluent | • Monolingual | • Surprise |

Which terms do you see as positive, negative, or neutral?

Look at Figure 1.1. Is this how you classified the terms? Are there other terms you might add?

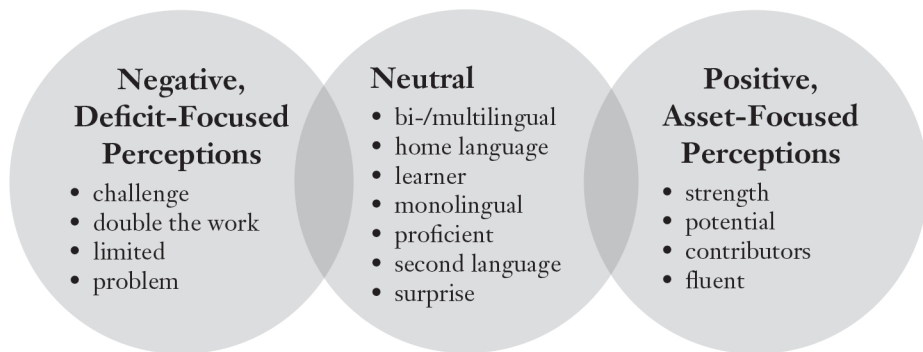


Figure 1.1. Perceptions of ELL students and language understandings.

Keep these terms in mind as you continue reading as I suggest why and how metaphors matter.