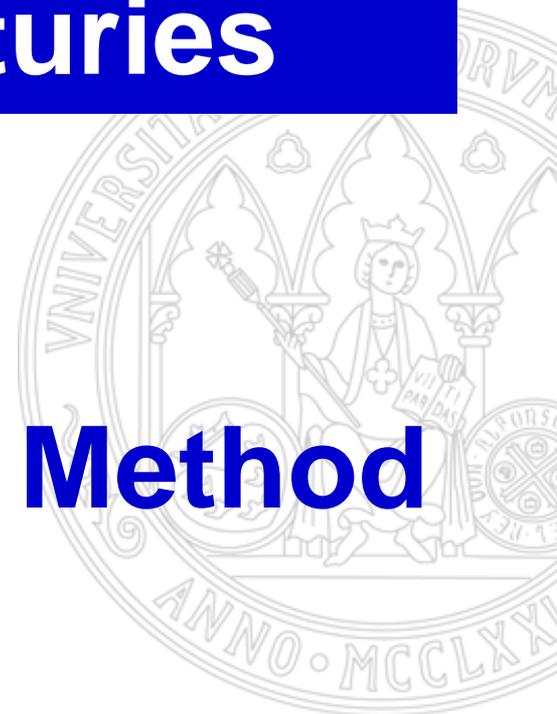


BLOCK 4.

The past meets the present: Language teaching methods in the 20th and 21st centuries

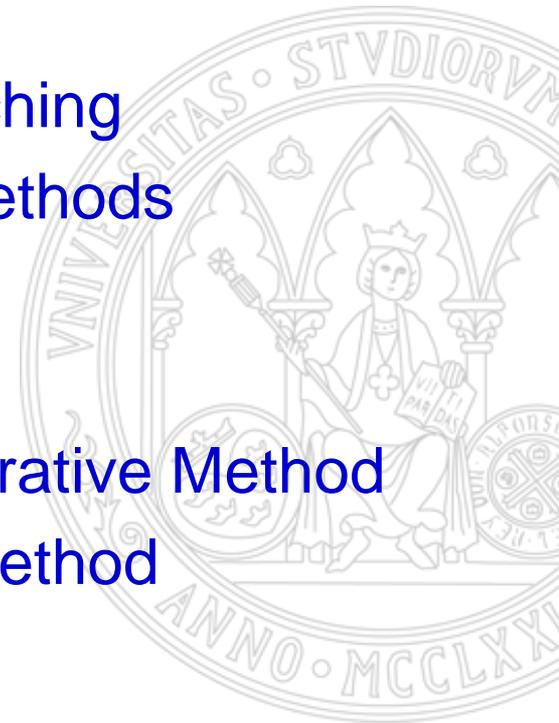
Sub-block 4.5.

Towards an Integrative Method



Outline

1. Objectives of this unit
2. Goal of the Integrative Method
3. Historical background and rationale behind the Integrative Method
 - 3.1. The complexity of learning and teaching
 - 3.2. Limitations of language teaching methods
 - 3.3. Eclecticism vs. integration
 - 3.4. From CLT to an integrative method
4. Analysis of the components of the Integrative Method
5. Critical assessment of the Integrative Method



1. Objectives of this unit

1. Report on the reality and scope of language teaching methods.
2. Analyse the inherent limitations in every method.
3. Understand the rationale for an integrative method in FLT: to cater for the complexity of the learning and teaching process.
4. Describe the components of the Integrative Method and their pedagogical applications.

2. Goal of the Integrative Method

To attain *communicative competence*



3. Historical background and rationale behind the Integrative Method

3.1. The complexity of learning and teaching

1. Recent research on the brain from Cognitive Sciences highlights that second language learning is highly complex and needs deeper study (DeKeyser, 2009; Hulstijn, 2002, 2007; Morgan-Short & Ullman, 2011; Morgan-Short *et al.*, 2012; Paradis, 2009; Ullman, 2012, etc.).
2. Language teaching methods have typically been biased and conditioned by pre-set theories and beliefs for the concept of language, language learning and language teaching (e.g. prevalence of grammar; learning by repetition alone, etc.).
3. Beliefs on learning or teaching have hardly been tested at an empirical level, if at all. Experimental studies on learning/teaching are difficult to control as there are too many variables at stake. Example: *The Pennsylvania Project* (Smith, 1970) in the USA.



Unit 1.2

3. Historical background and rationale behind the Integrative Method

3.1. The complexity of learning and teaching

3. *The Pennsylvania Project* (Smith, 1970) in the USA.

- ❑ Set up to empirically compare the efficiency on learning of three methods: the TLM (G-T grounded on cognitive code learning theory), ALM (“Functional Skills” Method; FSM) and the “Functional skills with grammar” method.
- ❑ The results were “personally traumatic” for the staff involved (Smith, 1970: 271), who believed in the superiority of the ALM. At the end of the first year of the study, the researchers concluded that the traditional method (TLM) was the same as or superior to the audio-lingual methods (FSM, FSG).
- ❑ The conclusions showed that methods are well defined in theory, but when it comes to their application in real classrooms there exist too many intervening variables and different teacher implementations that deviate from the theoretical specifications of such methods.

3. Historical background and rationale behind the Integrative Method

3.1. The complexity of learning and teaching

4. Intrinsic factors to language learning

Learner variables: age, sex, aptitude and multiple intelligences, affective factors (anxiety, attitudes and motivation), personality traits

5. Extrinsic factors or context variables

- ❑ Second or foreign language contexts

- ❑ School and community factors: climate, ethnic composition of community, school size

- ❑ Classroom factors: class size, textbooks and materials

- ❑ Teacher-dependent factors:

- Personal factors: social class, age, sex, teaching skills, intelligence, motivations, personality traits
- Training experiences: centre attended, training program features, practice-teaching experiences

- ❑ Learner's family environment

3. Historical background and rationale behind the Integrative Method

3.2. Limitations of language teaching methods

- ✓ All language teaching methods have been limited...
 - ❑ By their underlying language, learning and pedagogical theories, whether explicitly stated or not.
 - ❑ By the lack of supporting experimental studies aimed at scientifically testing their efficacy.
 - ❑ For example:
 - G-T: overemphasised the role of grammar, translation and deductive assumptions in language learning
 - DM: distorted the similarities between L1 and L2 learning, assuming that adult L2 learning was comparable to L1 learning
 - ALM and the remaining structurally based methods were biased by their approach to language system –structures – and to language learning – behaviorism
 - Humanistic methods overemphasised affective values at the expense of cognitive factors

3. Historical background and rationale behind the Integrative Method

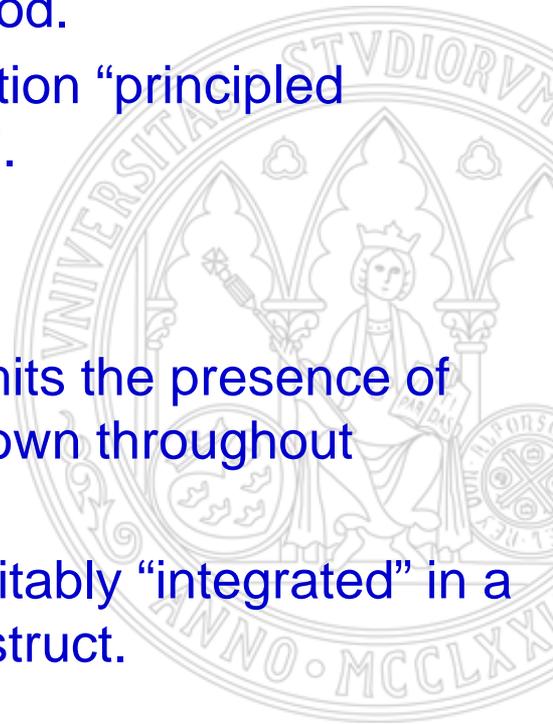
3.3. Eclecticism vs. Integration.

✓ Eclecticism:

- ❑ An eclectic method draws on different elements from different methods in a non-systematic way.
- ❑ The result is a non-homogeneous, arbitrary method.
- ❑ Hence, several authors (e.g. Dörnyei, 2005) mention “principled eclecticism”, which is the essence of “integration”.

✓ Integration:

- ❑ The Integrative Method is not exclusive, as it admits the presence of all those elements whose efficiency has been shown throughout history.
- ❑ In the Integrative Method, all the elements are suitably “integrated” in a coherent and homogeneous methodological construct.
(Sánchez, 2009)



3. Historical background and rationale behind the Integrative Method

3.4. From CLT to an integrative method

From Sánchez (2009).

- ✓ The Integrative Method complies with many principles from CLT, since it considers the following elements:
 - 1) The communicative nature of language.
 - 2) The importance of message/content transmission.
 - 3) The fact that there are two main characters in the language classroom: the teacher and the students. We cannot neglect the latter if we search for more efficiency in teaching.
 - 4) There is not a single learning style: students have their own learning styles and language learning will be more effective if these are taken into account.

3. Historical background and rationale behind the Integrative Method

3.4. From CLT to an integrative method

- ✓ In addition, the Integrative Method considers the following elements in teaching:
 - 1) Grammar is very important for an adequate and orderly transmission of meaning. Forms constitute the skeleton through which message is conveyed. Therefore, grammar forms do not have to be neglected in language teaching.
 - 2) The context is necessary to fully understand a message.
 - 3) Communication is exercised not only in speaking but also in the remaining skills.
 - 4) If learning styles are different, the typology of activities should be comprehensive enough so as to ensure variety and suitability for such learning styles.
 - 5) Cognitive and affective factors are very important in learning.

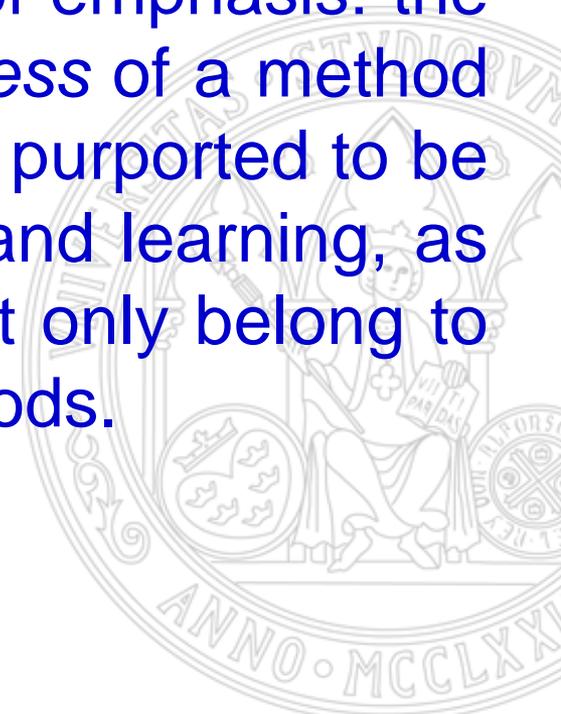


Which CLT version do you think that the Integrative Method in principle supports?

3. Historical background and rationale behind the Integrative Method

3.4. From CLT to an integrative method

The difference between the weak version of CLT (Howatt, 1984) and the Integrative Method is one of emphasis: the Integrative Method highlights the *uniqueness* of a method that coherently integrates all the elements purported to be reasonably positive for efficient teaching and learning, as well as the fact that such elements do not only belong to CLT but to previous approaches and methods.



4. Analysis of the components of the Integrative Method

[Most of the contents of this section are taken from chapter 11 in Sánchez (2009)]

Axis 1. The Why. Underlying principles and beliefs

- Theory of language (nature of language, including approach to culture)
 - “Communicative competence”



Unit 4.3.2

- Grammar or linguistic forms are essential to guarantee reliable and accurate conveyance of messages.
- Language competence includes the four skills.
- Communication takes place within a social context.
- Language is a reflection of the L2 culture. This reflection is manifested in a lot of nuances: rhythm, intonation, word length, the order of words in sentences, the meaning and concepts of words, connotations, etc.

4. Analysis of the components of the Integrative Method

Axis 1. The Why. Underlying principles and beliefs

- Theory of learning (learning principles)
 - Learning depends on cognitive, affective, biologically-determined and social factors, whether consciously or unconsciously sparked.
 - Learning draws on explicit and implicit cognitive mechanisms, as well as on deductive and inductive mechanisms.
 - Learning is an active process which requires the active collaboration of the individual, who must become responsible and autonomous.

4. Analysis of the components of the Integrative Method

Axis 1. The Why. Underlying principles and beliefs

□ Theory of teaching (pedagogical principles)

- Instruction should encourage learning, a phenomenon aided by cognitive processes. Hence the importance of repetition, formal and skill practice and of any other technique that may contribute to this end.
- The L1 system acts as a filter of all the levels of the L2 system in such a way that learners should make the most of it, whilst possible interferences should be detected and eliminated.
- The teacher becomes an organiser and provider, rather than a director or controller.
- Students are communicators and responsible for their own learning. Emphasis on learner autonomy.
- Errors are to be tolerated but their consolidation should be avoided, especially if they negatively interfere with meaning transmission.



How do we call the consolidation of errors?

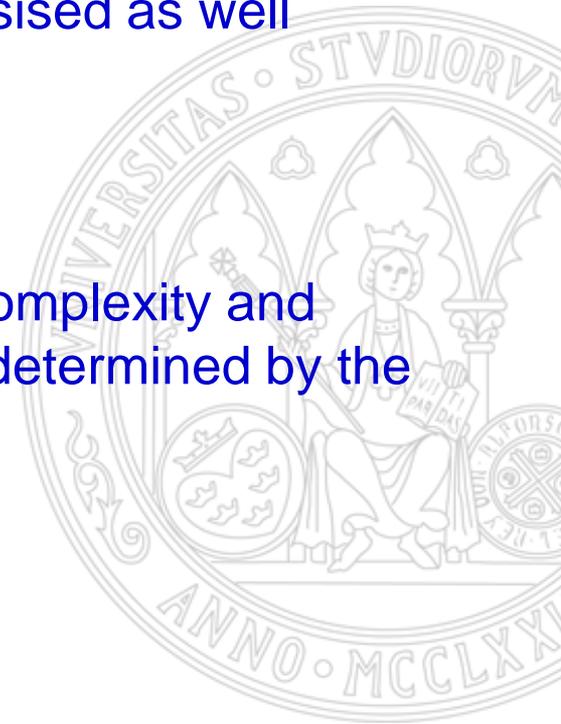


Block 6

4. Analysis of the components of the Integrative Method

Axis 2. The What. Objectives of teaching. Syllabus specifications

- ❑ Emphasised language areas: all (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation). Supra-segmental level emphasised as well (discourse, text). Coherence and cohesion.
- ❑ Emphasised language skills: all.
- ❑ Communicative syllabuses.
- ❑ Criteria for arrangement of formal elements: complexity and pertinence to the communicative process (as determined by the students' needs).



4. Analysis of the components of the Integrative Method

Axis 3. The How. Activities through which the selected content is transmitted to the students and other procedural aspects

□ Activities

- Activities should ultimately aim at the attainment of communicative objectives.
- For that purpose, activities should first pursue the attainment of linguistic elements or the forms that will become the vehicle of transmission of messages.
- Activities should be varied, motivating and may draw on any type of aid, preferably authentic: drawings, films, *realia*, etc.
- Careful syllabus considerations should be taken into account in the design of activities.
- The *what* (or learning content) is as important as the *how* (or pedagogical procedure) in the design and implementation of activities.

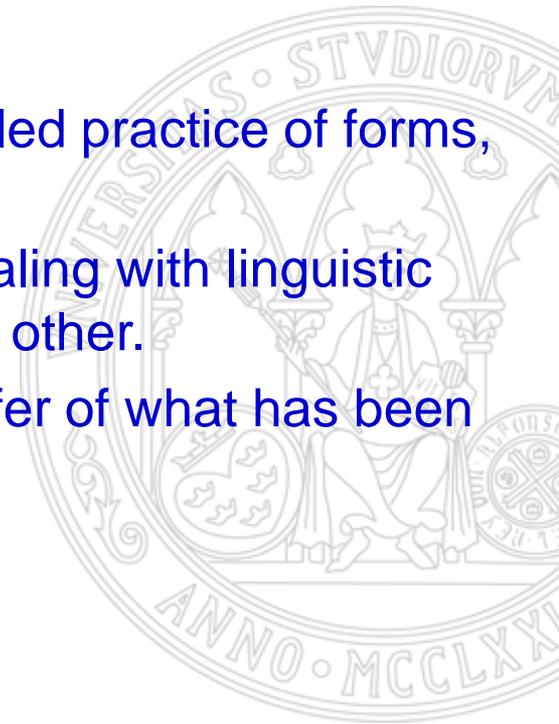
4. Analysis of the components of the Integrative Method

Axis 3. The How. Activities through which the selected content is transmitted to the students and other procedural aspects

☐ Activities

▪ Types of activities:

- a) Exposure-based activities.
- b) Cognitive activities (explanation and controlled practice of forms, which allow for translation if necessary).
- c) Oral and written practice activities, both dealing with linguistic elements on the one hand and skills, on the other.
- d) Interactive activities which involve the transfer of what has been learned to comparable situations.



4. Analysis of the components of the Integrative Method

Axis 3. The How. Activities through which the selected content is transmitted to the students and other procedural aspects

☐ Activities

▪ Criteria for an integrated language lesson (Nunan, 2004: 130-131)

- a) Authenticity
- b) Task continuity
- c) Real-world focus
- d) Language focus
- e) Learning focus
- f) Language practice
- g) Problem solving

☐ Activity sequencing reflecting the “FLT contemporary materials version of the PPP” (Criado, 2010, 2013)



Block 6



4. Analysis of the components of the Integrative Method

Axis 3. The How. Activities through which the selected content is transmitted to the students and other procedural aspects

- Roles of teachers

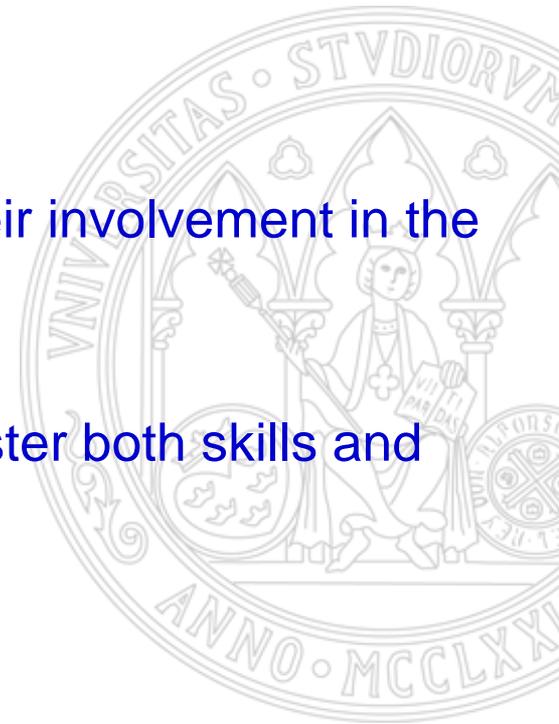
Very similar to those of CLT.

- Roles of learners

Active, autonomous and responsible learners. Their involvement in the learning process is essential.

- Roles of instructional materials

Very similar to those of CLT. Should be used to foster both skills and linguistic forms.



5. Critical assessment of the Integrative Method



Can you think of any advantages and disadvantages of the Integrative Method?



5. Critical assessment of the Integrative Method

□ Positive aspects:

Takes a comprehensive and holistic view to language teaching and learning, thus (ideally) enhancing the efficiency of both processes



5. Critical assessment of the Integrative Method

□ Negative aspects:

- 1) It is difficult to overcome the current trend(s) in language teaching methodology (TBLT and CLIL, for example).
- 2) Well-trained teachers are needed.
- 3) A wide array of activities and materials is required



5. Critical assessment of the Integrative Method

□ Influence of the Integrative Method on FLT:

1. Has contributed to re-establish the balance between the emphasis on form and the emphasis on content.
2. Has contributed to make researchers and teachers wary about non-experimentally tested theoretical tenets and fashionable slogans.
3. Has favoured a multidisciplinary approach to language teaching (use of all resources and means available from different methods and which have been shown to be reasonably positive –at least, from an intuitive pedagogical perspective).

