

# BLOCK 4.

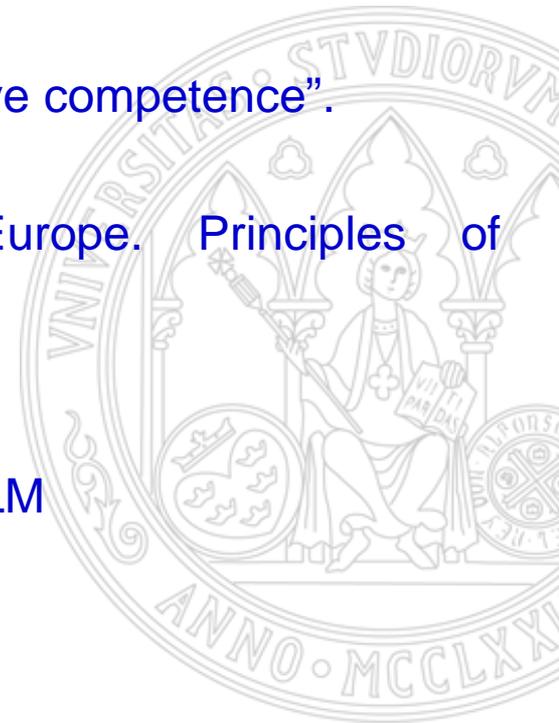
## The past meets the present: Language teaching methods in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries

### Sub-block 4.3. Communicative approaches

#### Unit 4.3.2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

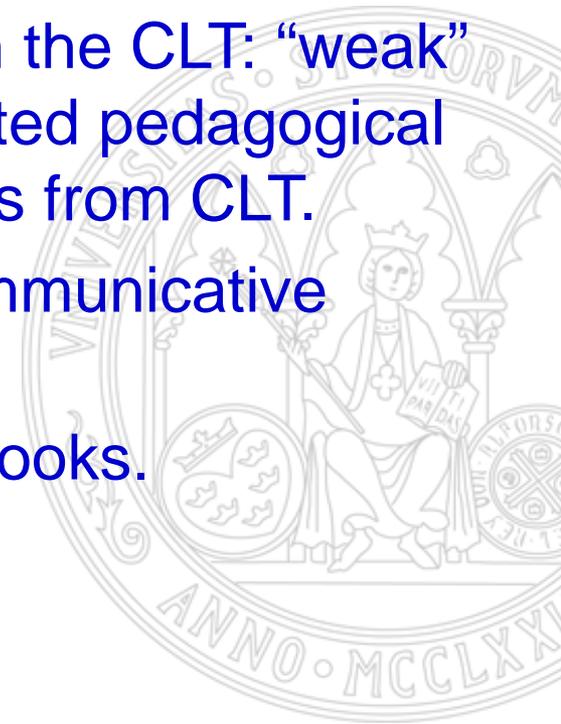
# Outline

1. Objectives of this unit
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3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT
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  - 3.2. Origins:
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    - 3.2.2. Linguistic factors. The notion of “communicative competence”.
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  - 3.3. Phases of CLT (Richards, 2005)
  - 3.4. Weak and strong versions of CLT (Howatt, 1984)
  - 3.5. A recap of CLT principles and comparison against ALM
4. Analysis of the components of CLT
5. Critical assessment of CLT



# 1. Objectives of this unit

1. Learn about the nature of the different factors implied in the emergence of CLT.
2. Report on the fundamentals of CLT.
3. Describe the various forms that are seen in the CLT: “weak” and “strong” versions (Howatt, 1984). Related pedagogical implications: types of activities and spin-offs from CLT.
4. Describe and analyse the new kinds of communicative activities.
5. Analyse the application of CLT in real textbooks.



# 2. Goal of CLT

To attain *communicative competence*



# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.1. Approach or method?

- ✓ “The problem with communicative language teaching (CLT) is that the term has always meant a multitude of different things to different people” (Harmer, 2003: 289).
- ✓ *CLT: a generalized ‘umbrella’ term to describe learning sequences which aim to improve the students’ ability to communicate in contrast to teaching which is aimed more at learning bits of language just because they exist –without focusing on their use in communication. (Harmer, 2007: 70).*
- ✓ *CLT: [...] an umbrella term that describes a change in thinking about the goals and processes of interpretations of how this might be realized in practice. Key to all strands of CLT, however, is the move from teaching language as individual linguistic structures to teaching people how to use language effectively when communicating, in effect a move from teaching linguistic competence to communicative competence.*  
(Hall, 2011: 93).

# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.1. Approach or method?

- *Both American and British proponents now see it [CLT] as an approach (and not a method) that aims to a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching; b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication.*

(Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 155)

- *CLT is best considered an approach rather than a method. It refers to a diverse set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language and learning and that can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures.*

(Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 172)

- However, there seems to be another tendency, which sees CLT as a method as such and not (just) as an approach, given that its spin-offs (TBLT, CLIL especially) are more and more becoming independent products from the original mother approach (CLT). In any event, all of them share a communicative view of language, which is their main similarity.

# 3. Historical background and rationale behind

## 3.2. Origins

- ✓ Origins of CLT: Changes in the British language teaching tradition from the 1960s (Howatt, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 2001)

### 3.2.1. Different disciplines involved in the origins of CLT

- American sociolinguistics (Dell Hymes, John Gumperz, William Labov)
- British and American philosophy (John Austin and John Searle)
- SLA research (Stephen Krashen, Michael Long, Merrill Swain)
- British discourse linguistics (John M. Sinclair, Malcom Coulthard)
- British functional linguistics (John R. Firth, Michael Halliday)
- **British language teaching specialists (Council of Europe, Christopher Brumfit, Christopher Candlin, Keith Johnson, Keith Morrow, Henry Widdowson, David Wilkins)**

# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.2. Origins

### 3.2.2. Linguistic factors. The notion of “communicative competence”

Several concomitant factors leading to the configuration of the new approach to language:

1. Influence of philosophy: *How to do Things with Words* (Austin, 1962), expanded by Searle. Speech acts and ultimate development of pragmatics.
  - Candlin, C. N. (1976). *Communicative Language Teaching and the debt to pragmatics*. In C. Rameh (Ed.), *Georgetown University Roundtable 1976*. (pp. 237-246). Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
  - Widdowson (1978). *Teaching Language as Communication*. Communicative acts underlying the ability to use language for different purposes. Discursive view of language. *Use and usage*. Noticeable influence on language teaching.
2. Work on sociolinguistics. Hymes (1971, 1972):
  - “Communicative competence”: knowledge of appropriate, effective, correct language behaviour to attain different communicative goals. Social nature of language.
  - Adaptations of a pedagogical nature of “communicative competence”: Canale & Swain (1980, 1981; Canale (1983, 1984), Bachman (1991) and Bachman & Palmer (1996), Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell (1997).
3. British functional linguistics (Firth, 1957; Halliday, 1973) → N-F syllabuses (Wilkins, 1976) and the Threshold Level.
4. British discourse linguistics (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975)

# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.2. Origins

### 3.2.2. Linguistic factors: N-F syllabuses; communicative competence

❑ Canale & Swain (1980, 1981), Canale (1983, 1984)

▪ **Linguistic competence:**

vocabulary, grammar, semantics and phonology. Creating and understanding literal meanings.

▪ **Discourse competence:**

mastery of rules that determine ways in which forms and meanings are combined to achieve a meaningful unity of spoken or written texts. Cohesion and coherence (e.g., linking ideas in written texts, creating and maintaining turns in spoken turns, opening conversations and closing them).

▪ **Sociolinguistic competence:**

knowledge of rules and conventions which underlie the appropriate comprehension and language use in different sociolinguistic and sociocultural contexts.

▪ **Strategic competence:**

knowledge of strategies that communicators employ to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication, and include such strategies as paraphrase, circumlocution, repetition, reluctance, avoidance of words, structures or themes, guessing, changes of register and style, modifications of messages, etc.

*Can you spot any possible missing competence referring to a different content from that of the four competencies above?*



# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.2. Origins

### 3.2.2. Linguistic factors. The notion of “communicative competence”

- ❑ Canale & Swain’s definition of *communicative competence* for language teaching was expanded by Bachman (1990) and Bachman & Palmer (1996):
  - Organisational knowledge: grammatical and textual knowledge
  - Pragmatic knowledge: functional and sociolinguistic knowledge
  - Strategic knowledge: metacognitive strategies enabling productive and receptive use of language.
- ❑ Other refinements: Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell (1997).
- ❑ The most influential definition of communicative competence for pedagogical purposes is Canale & Swain’s (1980).

# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.2. Origins

### 3.2.3. SLA factors

#### ✓ Major influence of SLA on CLT:

##### ❑ Interlanguage (Selinker, 1972).

- Developing language system or transitional competence.
- Not to be considered as defective if compared against native competence.
- Performance as indicative of underlying acquisition processes and strategies.

##### ❑ Error-analysis (Corder, 1971, 1973, 1981).

- Mistakes –related to *performance* – and errors –related to *competence*.
- Learner errors are not just due to L1 interference but reveal underlying acquisition processes and strategies.
- Pedagogical implications: Learners need the freedom to build language for themselves, even if it contains ‘mistakes’.

# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.2. Origins

### 3.2.3. SLA factors

- ✓ Later North-America SLA studies emphasised the *communicative* nature of language acquisition. This SLA research is compatible with the pedagogical principles of CLT though it is not directed at supporting CLT (see section 3.2.4):

1) Krashen's "Input Hypothesis":  $i + 1$  (Krashen, 1981, 1982)

2) Swain's "Output Hypothesis" (1985, 1995, 2005)

3) Long's "Interaction Hypothesis". Importance of interaction, output and input. Roots in the early 1980s though major impulse in the 1990s. (Gass & Selinker, 2008; Long, 1983, 1996; Mackey & Abbuhl, 2005).



Unit 4.3.3

# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.2. Origins

### 3.2.3. Pedagogical factors: The Council of Europe.

Principles of communicative methodology (Morrow, 1981).

✓ Council of Europe. The Threshold Level and N-F syllabuses. Key influence on the development of CLT programs and textbooks in Europe.

✓ **Principles of communicative methodology (Morrow, 1981: 62-63)**

Principle 1. *Know what you are doing, and why.*

Principle 2. *The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.*

**Principle 3. *The processes are as important as the forms:***

- **information gap** (one participant has information that the other needs; there is a communicative gap which needs to be filled in)
- **choice** (of both what to say, and how to say it)
- **feedback** (in terms of successful achievement of task)



Section 4

Principle 4. *To learn it, do it* (learners must be actively involved).

Principle 5. *Mistakes are not always a mistake* (do not correct everything).

*Can you see the relationship between these principles and the linguistic and SLA factors indicated before?*



# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.3. Phases of CLT (Richards, 2005)

### Classic communicative language teaching (1970s to 1990s).

Principles (Richards, 2005: 13):

1. *Make real communication the focus of language learning.*
2. *Provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know.*
3. *Be tolerant of learners' errors as they indicate that the learner is building up his or her communicative competence.*
4. *Provide opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency [major emphasis is on fluency, though].*
5. *Link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together, since they usually occur so in the real world.*
6. *Let students induce or discover grammar rules.*

From drills that demanded accurate repetition and memorisation of sentences and grammatical patterns → activities that required learners to negotiate meaning and to interact meaningfully.

# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.3. Phases of CLT (Richards, 2005)

### Current communicative language teaching (late 1990s to the present)

#### ✓ Assumptions of current CLT (Richards, 2005: 22-23):

1. *Second language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication.*
2. *Effective classroom learning tasks and exercises provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, expand their language resources, notice how language is used, and take part in meaningful interpersonal exchange.*
3. *Meaningful communication results from students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting, and engaging.*
4. *Communication is a holistic process that often calls upon the use of several language skills or modalities.*

# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.3. Phases of CLT (Richards, 2005)

### Current communicative language teaching (late 1990s to the present)

Assumptions of current CLT (Richards, 2005: 22-23):

5. *Language learning is facilitated both by activities that involve inductive or discovery learning of underlying rules of language use and organization, as well as by those involving language analysis and reflection.*
6. *Language learning is a gradual process that involves creative use of language, and trial and error. Although errors are a normal product of learning, the ultimate goal of learning is to be able to use the new language both accurately and fluently.*
7. *Learners develop their own routes to language learning, progress at different rates, and have different needs and motivations for language learning.*
8. *Successful language learning involves the use of effective learning and communication strategies.*
9. *The role of the teacher in the language classroom is that of a facilitator, who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect on language use and language learning.*
10. *The classroom is a community where learners learn through collaboration and sharing.*

# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.3. Phases of CLT (Richards, 2005)

### Current communicative language teaching (late 1990s to the present)

Latest trend of CLT in the FLT literature:

The teaching shift by the CLT paradigm has resulted in the following suggestions or “essentials for successful language teaching” (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010; Jacobs & Farrell, 2003):

1. Learner autonomy
2. Social nature of learning
3. Curricular integration
4. Focus on meaning
5. Diversity
6. Thinking skills
7. Alternative assessment
8. Teachers as co-learners



# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.4. Weak and strong CLT versions (Howatt, 1984)

Howatt (1984: 279) distinguished two versions of CLT which have stood the test of time:

1) Weak version:

“learning to use English”

2) Strong version:

“using English to learn it”



*Which version do you think has been the most widely applied or successful in language classrooms and textbooks?*



# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.4. Weak and strong CLT versions (Howatt, 1984)

Howatt (1984) distinguished two versions of CLT which have stood the test of time:

### 1) Weak version: “learning to use English”

- ✓ Related to the *analytic dimension of learning in CLT*, more exploited in Europe (Littlewood, 2011: 548):
  - *Instruction (main focus: form + meaning)*
  - *Conscious learning and practice*
  - *Increasing automaticity of correct language*
- ✓ Littlewood’s (1981) classical typology of communicative activities is located within the weak version.
- ✓ He proposed a teaching sequencing from pre-communicative to communicative activities.



# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.4. Weak and strong CLT versions (Howatt, 1984)

Howatt (1984) distinguished two versions of CLT which have stood the test of time:

1) Weak version: “learning to use English”

- Littlewood’s (1981) typology of communicative activities

Pre-communicative activities	Communicative activities
Structural exercises (e.g. drills, question-and-answer exercises...)	Functional communicative activities (discovering missing information, discovering differences, reconstructing story-sequences, etc.)
Quasi-communicative exercises (cued dialogues, roleplays, etc.)	Social interactional activities (e.g. simulation and roleplay)



# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.4. Weak and strong CLT versions (Howatt, 1984)

Howatt (1984) distinguished two versions of CLT which have stood the test of time:

### 1) Weak version: “learning to use English”

- Littlewood’s (1981) classical typology of communicative activities:
  - From a learning perspective, learning progresses from controlled processes to automatic processes.
  - In pedagogical terms, this means progression from focus on accuracy to focus on fluency through practice.
  - This makes language teaching compatible with skill-learning theory (Criado, 2010, 2012; DeKeyser & Criado, 2013a, 2013b; Johnson, 1996, 2008).



*Sections 6.1 and 6.4 in Block 6*

*Does this controlled-to-automatic processing remind you of the learning theory behind other methods?*

### 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

#### 3.4. Weak and strong CLT versions (Howatt, 1984)

Howatt (1984) distinguished two versions of CLT which have stood the test of time:

2) Strong version: “using English to learn it” (Howatt, 1984: 279)

- ✓ Related to the *experiential dimension of learning in CLT* (Littlewood, 2011: 548), more exploited in the USA:
  - *Communication (main focus: meaning + message)*
  - *Subconscious learning and integration*
  - *Increasing correctness of spontaneous language*
- ✓ L2 learning arises from meaningful use in the classroom and it will happen automatically as long as the student interacts with other students in the proper way (Cook, 2008: 251).
- ✓ Related to what Cook (2008: 250) labels as “a laissez-faire attitude”. Students should learn without interference from the teacher and in ways over which he/she has not control. Any activity is justified on the grounds of allowing the students to test their hypotheses, which pedagogically speaking means getting students talking with a focus on fluency and disregarding accuracy.
- ✓ Found in CLT’s spin-offs: TBLT, CLIL, Lexical Approach; compatible with Krashen’s Natural Approach and his “Acquisition” concept
- ✓ Revealed as ineffective for accurate command of the target language (for a review, see Spada & Lightbown, 2008)



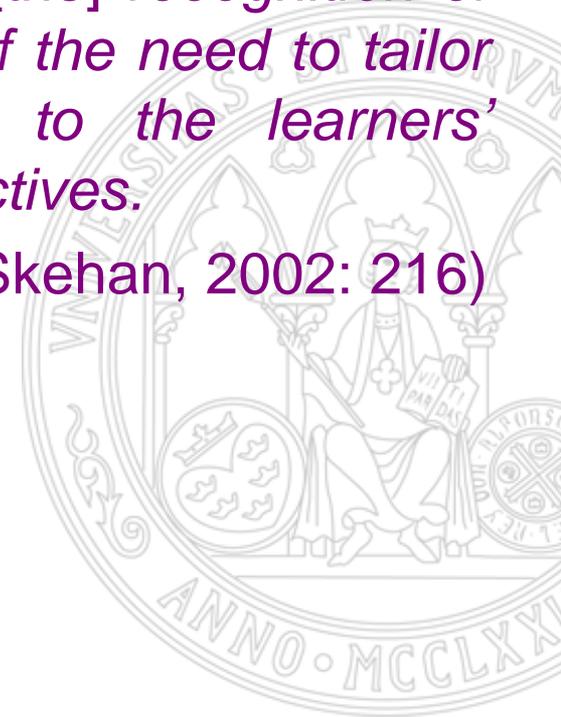
introduction of focus on form and language awareness in classroom practice.

### 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

#### 3.4. Weak and strong CLT versions (Howatt, 1984)

*The tension between analytical and experiential approaches to CLT may be gradually resolving itself through [the] recognition of their complementarity and, at the same time, of the need to tailor solutions for particular CLT contexts both to the learners' characteristics and to their given language objectives.*

(Wesche & Skehan, 2002: 216)



# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.5. A recap of CLT principles and comparison against ALM

1) As a recap from all the previous sections, we propose the following list of principles of CLT:

- *Learners learn language through using it to communicate.*
- *Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.*
- *Fluency is an important dimension of communication.*
- *Communication involves the integration of different language skills.*
- *Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.*

(Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 172)

# 3. Historical background and rationale behind CLT

## 3.5. A recap of CLT principles and comparison against ALM

2) Comparing ALM and CLT (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983: 91-93):  
(available in Sub-block 4.3 in the Resources section of SAKAI)



# 4. Analysis of the components of CLT

## Axis 1. The Why. Underlying principles and beliefs

- ❑ Theory of language (nature of language, including approach to culture)
  - “Communicative competence” (Hymes, 1971, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980 and elsewhere).
  - Language competence includes the four skills.
  - Language communication consists of transmitting meanings (messages). Forms then are subordinated to meaning.
  - Culture is the everyday lifestyle of people who use the language. Certain aspects are important because they contribute to communication; non-verbal behaviour, for example (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011: 125).

# 4. Analysis of the components of CLT

## Axis 1. The Why. Underlying principles and beliefs

- ❑ Theory of learning (learning principles)
  - Not a view of language of learning as such (Cook, 2008; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).
  - CLT is historically linked to interlanguage studies.
  - Strong version of CLT: compatible with Krashen's acquisition hypothesis (1982) and Long's interaction hypothesis (1983, 1996).
  - Weak version of CLT: compatible with skill-learning theory (Anderson, 2010, and elsewhere).



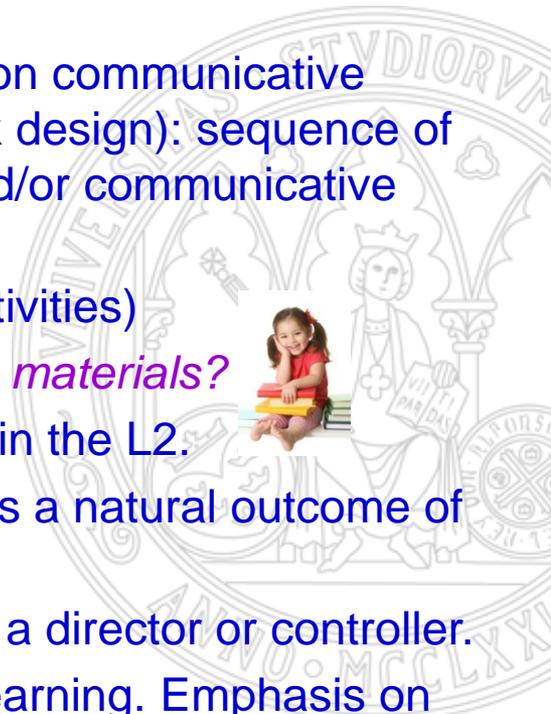
*Sections 6.1 and 6.4  
in Block 6*

# 4. Analysis of the components of CLT

## Axis 1. The Why. Underlying principles and beliefs

### □ Theory of teaching (pedagogical principles)

- All teaching should be directed at promoting communication: interaction and negotiation of meaning.
- Teaching should emphasise fluency over accuracy and work on the four skills.
- Information-gap principle.
- Theoretical rejection of mechanical, drill practice. Emphasis on communicative practice. In practical terms (classroom teaching and textbook design): sequence of activities going from meaningful and communicative drills and/or communicative activities.
- Emphasis on collaborative learning (pair- and group-work activities)
- Authentic materials as much as possible. *What are authentic materials?*
- Limited use of the L1 –not to be used during communication in the L2.
- Errors of form are tolerated during fluency-based activities, as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills.
- 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.



# 4. Analysis of the components of CLT

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

- ❑ Emphasised language: functions over forms. Suprasegmental level emphasised too. Cohesion and coherence.
- ❑ Emphasised skills: all of them from the beginning.
- ❑ Several possible types of syllabuses. Examples (from Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 164; adapted from Yalden, 1983. See full references in Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 174-177)

1) *Structures plus functions (Wilkins, 1976)*

2) *Functional spiral around a structural core (Brumfit, 1980)*

3) *Structural, functional, instrumental (Allen, 1980)*

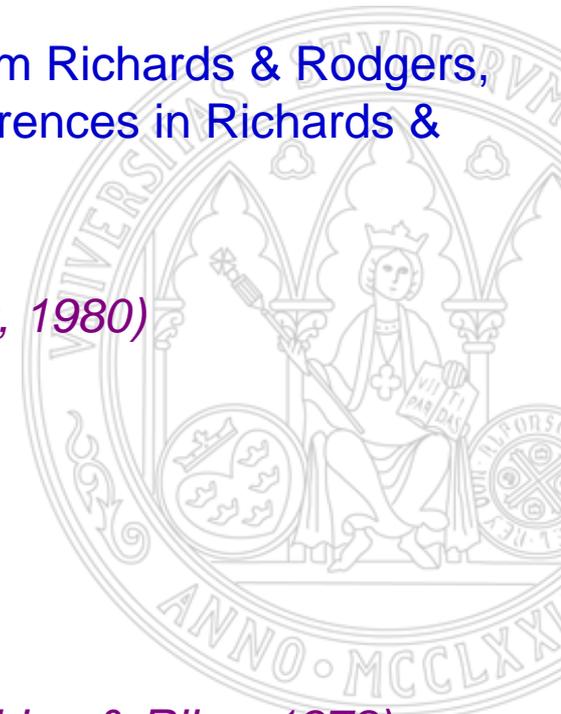
4) *Functional (Jupp & Hodlin, 1985)*

5) *Notional (Wilkins, 1976)*

6) *Interactional (Widdowson, 1979)*

7) *Task-based (Prabhu, 1987)*

8) *Learner-generated (Candlin, 1976; Henner-Stanchina & Riley, 1978)*



# 4. Analysis of the components of CLT

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

### □ Activities:

- All types of activities that are communicatively focused
- Emphasis on pair- and group-work activities
- A wide array of activities. The most distinctive ones are as follows:
  - Information gap activities and derived activities (Richards, 2005)
  - Roleplays
  - Simulations
  - Problem-solving tasks.

*See Sánchez (2004) for a wide typology of communicative activities arranged in different groups: organisational stages of lessons, skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation*



# 4. Analysis of the components of CLT

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

## ☐ Activities

### Information-gap activities:



*Third principle of Communicative Methodology (1981).  
(Section 3.2.3)*

Example (Richards, 2005: 18)

*Students are divided into A-B pairs. The teacher has copied two sets of pictures. One set (for A students) contains a picture of a group of people. The other set (for B students) contains a similar picture but it contains a number of slight differences from the A-picture. Students must sit back to back and ask questions to try to find out how many differences there are between the two pictures.*

# 5. Analysis of the components of CLT

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

## ☐ Activities

### Roleplay:

*In language teaching drama-like classroom activities in which students take the **roles** of different participants in a situation and act out what might typically happen in that situation. For example, to practise how to express complaints and apologies in a foreign language, students might have to role-play situations in which a customer in a shop returns a faulty article to a salesperson.*

(Richards & Schmidt, 2010: 501. Emphasis in the original)

Roleplays are very similar to **simulations**. The difference is that in simulations the learners react as themselves, but the group role, situation and task they are given is an imaginary one (Harmer, 2007)

# 5. Analysis of the components of CLT

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

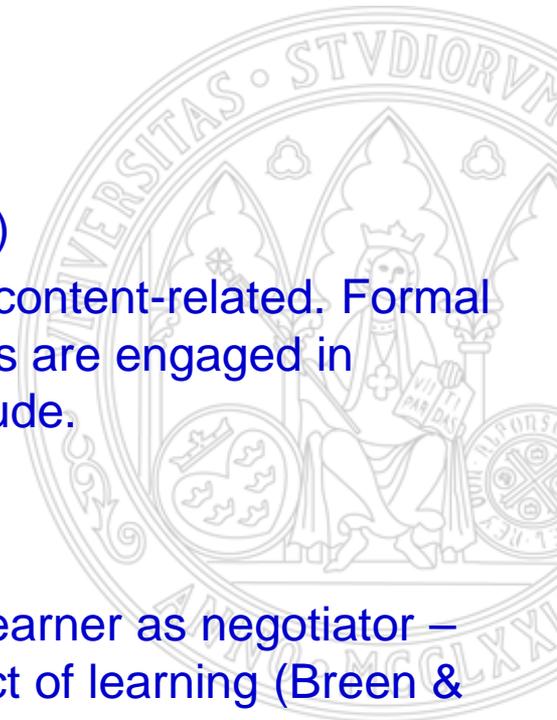
## Roles of teachers

### Very active:

- a) Organiser and facilitator of communication between him/her and the students and between students.
- b) Needs analyst (Richards & Rodgers, 2001)
- c) Counsellor (Richards & Rodgers, 2001)
- d) Group process manager (Richards & Rodgers, 2001)
- e) Provider of two types of error correction: formal and content-related. Formal errors not encouraged to be corrected whilst students are engaged in communication. Later correction in a supportive attitude.

## Roles of students

- a) Communicators.
- b) Involved with their learning experience: Role of the learner as negotiator – between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning (Breen & Candlin, 1980: 110)



# 5. Analysis of the components of CLT

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

## □ Roles of instructional materials

A way of influencing the quality of classroom interaction and language use (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 168). These authors distinguish the following main types of instructional communicative materials:

- a) Text-based materials, whether aural or written. The texts can actually be used as a stimulus for tasks.
- b) Task-based materials (information-gap activities, games, simulations, role-plays...)
- c) *Realia*. This includes authentic materials, either language-based *realia* (signs, newspapers, advertisements, etc.) or graphic and visual sources for the construction of activities (maps, charts, pictures, etc.)

# 5. Critical assessment of CLT



*Can you think of any advantages of CLT, if compared against the Structurally based Methods?*



# 5. Critical assessment of CLT

## □ Positive aspects:

1. Turned the teaching object from an incomplete view of language to a comprehensive view of language as it really is: a tool of communication.
2. Forced teachers to understand what is involved in communication –much more than grammar and vocabulary- and to be trained accordingly.
3. Triggered the creation of much wider and varied activity typology than in other methods.
4. The variety implied in teaching procedures is in principle a source of motivation for both teachers and students.
5. Emphasises authenticity of language and thus prepares learners for the real communicative tasks outside the classroom.
6. Despite the negative criticisms stated in the next slide, “its conception of language as communicative competence strikes a chord with many teachers and applied linguists, even if the process for achieving this is at times potentially problematic” (Hall, 2011: 95)

# 5. Critical assessment of CLT

## ❑ Negative aspects:

- 1) In the strong version of CLT, fluency might be over-emphasised at the expense of accuracy (Brumfit, 1984).
- 2) In the strong version of CLT, an over-emphasis on the exchange of messages may lead to the trivialization of learning (Hall, 2011).
- 3) The jump from teacher-centred classes to student-centred classes is not universally acceptable (Cook, 2008)
- 4) Limited to certain types of students: extrovert (Cook, 2008)
- 5) Lacked the straightforward practicality of the ALM classes (Cook, 2008): teachers are given general but not precise guidelines on lesson planning; they have to be creative

# 5. Critical assessment of CLT

## ❑ Negative aspects:

6) Underlying applications of CLT have revealed several wrong assumptions:

1. *Assume and insist that CLT is the whole and complete solution to language learning.*
2. *Assume that no other method could be any good.*
3. *Ignore people's own views of who they are and what they want.*
4. *Neglect and ignore all aspects of the local context as being irrelevant.*  
(Bax, 2003: 280).

7) Derived from Bax's (2003) remark: CLT is not appropriate for all cultures and contexts. Language teaching should take into account the context of such teaching: learner variables (age, motivation, learning goals), instructional conditions (setting and teaching tradition, including roles of teachers and students; infrastructure available, etc.).

This view is the leading motto in Postmethod pedagogy.



Sub-block 4.6



*Do you agree? Why? Why not?*

# 5. Critical assessment of CLT

## ❑ Negative aspects:

- ✓ Indeed, several authors are taking pains to introduce a context-sensitive feature in the definition of CLT (Littlewood, 2011; Richards, 2005; Savignon, 2002).
- ✓ Savignon (2002: 22) explicitly states what CLT **is not** (contrary to early conceptions):
  1. CLT does not favour face-to-face oral communication. “Classroom work in groups or pairs should not, however, be considered an essential feature and may well be inappropriate in some contexts”.
  2. CLT does not need to dismiss activities from previous methods.
  3. CLT does not exclude a focus on form: metalinguistic awareness or knowledge of rules of syntax, discourse, and social appropriateness.

# 5. Critical assessment of CLT

## □ Influence of CLT on FLT:

*In keeping with the notion of context of situation, CLT is properly seen as an approach, grounded in a theory of intercultural communicative competence, that can be used to develop materials and methods appropriate to a given context of learning.*

(Savignon, 2002: 22)

# 5. Critical assessment of CLT

## □ Influence of CLT on FLT:

Immense!

- Spin-offs: TBLT, Lexical Approach, CLIL...
- Emphasis on learner autonomy and responsibility of the learner in his/her own learning.
- The current views on the weak version of CLT have paved the way to the definition of the *integrative method* and are contributing to fostering the debate on the *Post-method era*.



Sub-block 4.6

