

NATIONAL CONGRESS ENGLISH



**TASK ENGAGEMENT
IN
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

LINDA GIJSEN

**SENIOR RESEARCHER – TEACHER EDUCATOR – TEACHER OF ENGLISH
HU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

MARCH 22ND, 2024

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THE ALL-INCLUSIVE ENGLISH CLASSROOM?

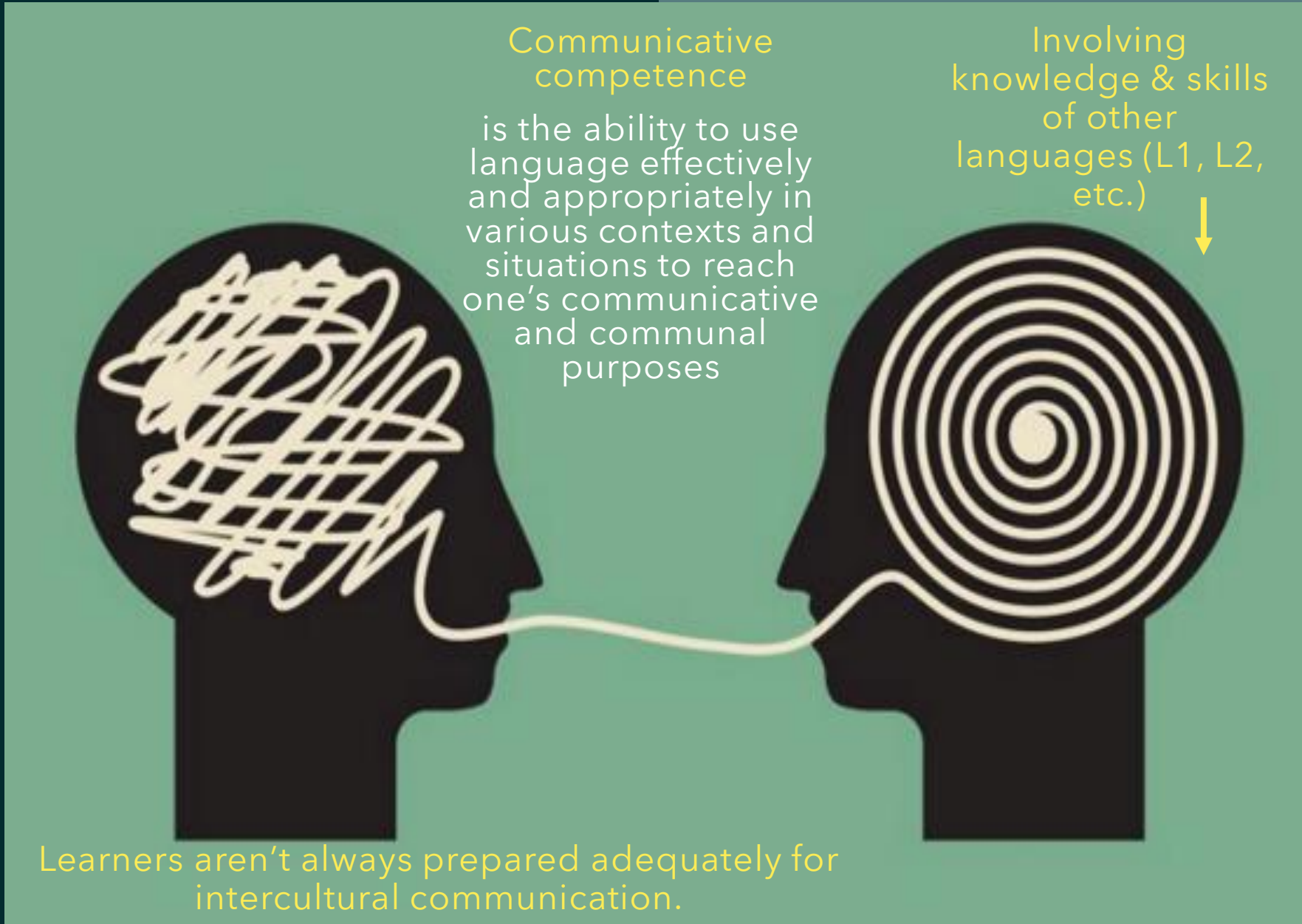
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**A LANGUAGE THAT IS ADOPTED
AS A COMMON LANGUAGE
BETWEEN SPEAKERS WHOSE
NATIVE LANGUAGES ARE
DIFFERENT**

“Just as Latin steamrolled its way across Europe 2,000 years ago, crushing dozens of other languages, English has become the lingua franca of our times” (Morrison, 2002, p. 7).

Being able to participate successfully in intercultural communicative encounters in English with people from diverse linguacultural contexts is viewed as offering opportunities for personal growth and professional advancement.





(new) GOAL in English language classes is to facilitate authentic communicative encounters in which learners:

- learn to interact with peers with different mother tongues in the target language;
- develop their intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

But how do we do this?

How do we bring 'real' 'users' of English - to practice with - to our classrooms?



IN THIS TALK, I'M GOING TO

I

Set the scene for the WHY behind contemporary English Language Teaching (ELT)

II

Shed light on the communicative turn in ELT

III

Discuss the nature and challenges of lingua franca (LF) communication

IV

Introduce virtual pedagogical lingua franca (PLF) communication to enhance task engagement in the ELT classroom

THE COMMUNICATIVE TURN

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) introduced during the 1970s

Shift from teaching the language (repertoire) to teaching how to use the language for purposes of communication in social contexts.

As speaking is the vehicle through which learners build relationships and develop their competences, oral communication is at the heart of this approach.

CLT emphasizes communication as both the **goal** and the **means** of teaching and learning.

Activities guided by this approach aim at practising the **type of communication** that is **meaningful in the real world**.



WHAT LED UP TO THE COMMUNICATIVE TURN?

Chomsky (1965)

Grammatical competence refers to a set of grammatical rules that represent speakers' unconscious grammatical rule knowledge and helps them to distinguish grammatical from ungrammatical sentences.

Grammatical performance refers to the actual production of sentences.

Chomsky introduced his linguistic theory in reference to the "ideal speaker-listener" (p. 3) who has perfect knowledge of the language and applies it flawlessly under all kinds of unforeseen conditions.

NATIVE SPEAKER

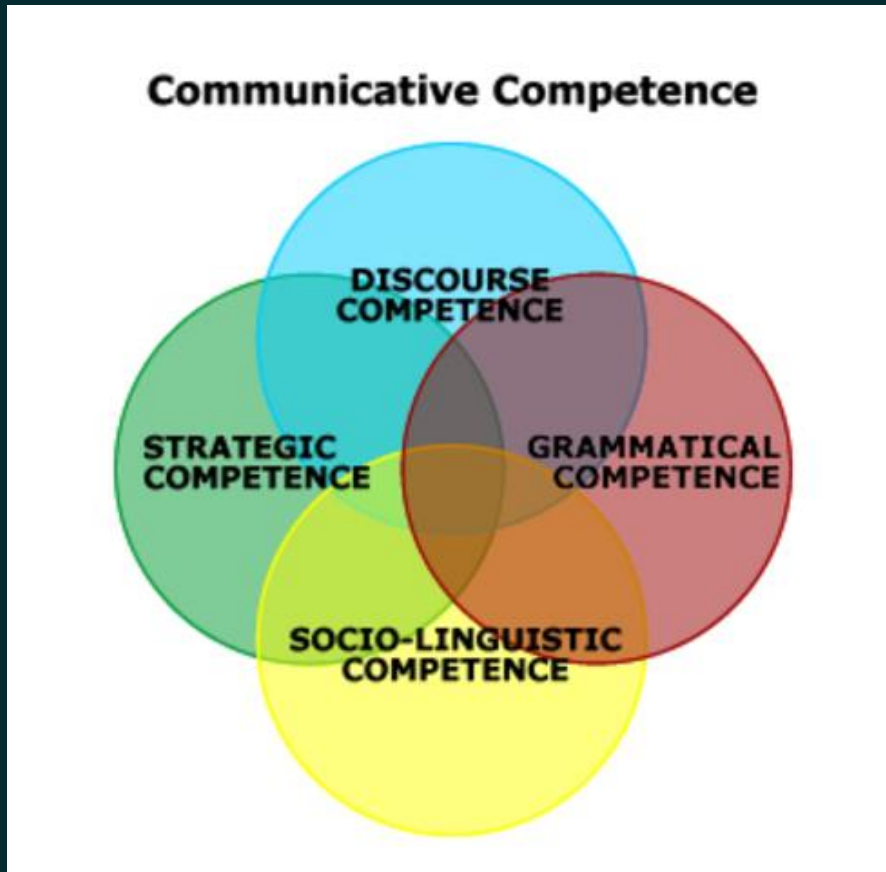
WHAT LED UP TO THE COMMUNICATIVE TURN?

Hymes (1972) was one of the first to criticize the idea of having an ideal speaker-listener as the reference point for a model of competence.

He argued for a conceptualisation of competence that considers how **real speakers of a language** communicate.

Having knowledge of the various aspects of a language and the rules for putting them together into well-formed sentences is not enough **to perform or use language in an appropriate manner in different communities**.

THE COMMUNICATIVE TURN



(CANALE & SWAIN, 1980;
CANALE 1983)

Canale and Swain's focus was on a pedagogical model that could be used for developing a communication-oriented curriculum for foreign language learning.

They used **the native speaker as the reference point for language students**:

"Knowledge of what **a native speaker** is likely to say in a given context is to us a crucial component of second language students' competence to understand second language communication and to express themselves in a native-like way." (1980, p. 16).

THE COMMUNICATIVE TURN



Kramersch (1993) argued that all learners have the right to use the language they are learning for their own purposes, implying that reaching for native speaker competence is not necessarily the desired learning objective.

Kasper (1995) added that it was more important to develop an 'intercultural style and tact' to overcome differences than accepting the norm of the native speaker.

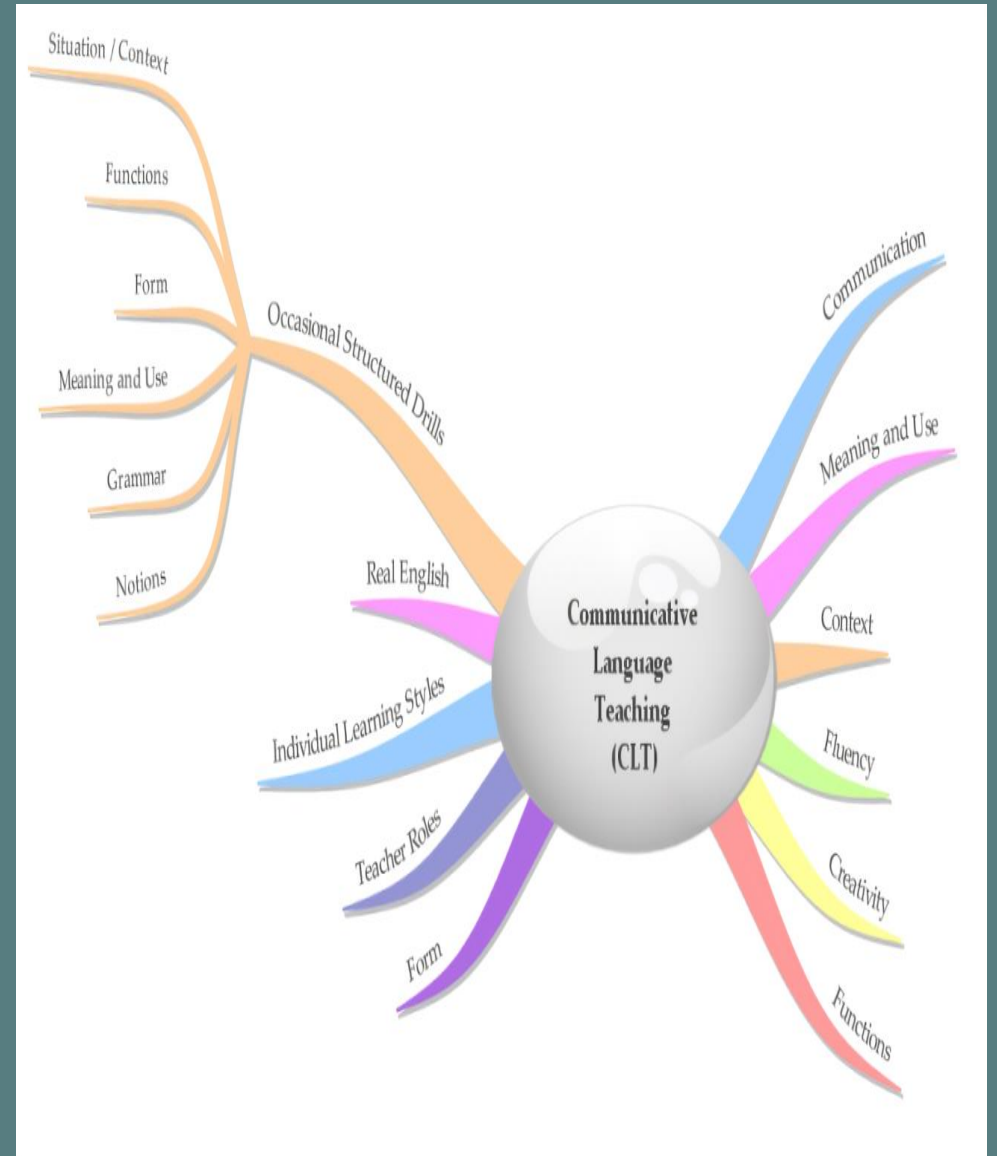
Byram (1997) introduced his concept of **intercultural communicative competence** as a new type of competence that reflects the ability to communicate and interact across linguistic and cultural borders appropriately and efficiently.

Fundamental to CLT are

- learner autonomy
- communicative collaboration
- authenticity

They derive from conditions that enable people to be successful in real communication beyond school.

The principles of CLT are difficult to be put in practice in an 'acquisition-poor' environments where there is little exposure to authentic foreign language communication.



VIRTUAL EXCHANGE



WHAT IS VIRTUAL EXCHANGE?

“The engagement of groups of learners in online intercultural interactions and collaboration projects with partners from other cultural contexts or geographical locations as an integrated part of their educational programmes” (O’Dowd, 2018, p. 1).

It offers **solutions for overcoming the limitations of the physical language classroom** by enabling authentic collaborative communicative interaction in English between learners of different linguacultural backgrounds through online communicative tasks.



3h weekly schedule

Monday + ...

8:30 am - Language arts



8:30 am - Language arts



9:30 am - Snack time



10 am - Math



11 am - Lunch and recess



8:30 am - Music



8:30 am - Music




9:30 am - Snack time



10 am - Gym



11 am - Lunch and recess



BIG BLUE BUTTON

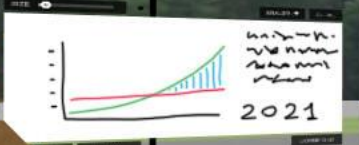
GOOGLE MEET, MS TEAMS, SKYPE, ZOOM, ...



3D VIRTUAL WORLD: FRAMEVR



SECOND LIFE, OPEN SIM, ...





**STRATEGIES FOR
MEANINGFUL VIRTUAL
EXCHANGE: WHAT
COMES AFTER HELLO?**

THE NATURE AND STRENGTH OF LINGUA FRANCA COMMUNICATION

Lingua franca (LF) communication takes place very naturally to facilitate one's communicative partner(s) understanding, express finer shades of meaning or assert one's cultural identity.

ELF-oriented pedagogical models move from a traditional ELT focus on form according to a native speaker standard model to the awareness of English as a communicative medium that is used among people "for whom English is the communicative medium of choice and often the only option" (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 7).

BUT...how can teachers enable their students to develop their ELF competence?



**ENGLISH AS A
PEDAGOGICAL
LINGUA FRANCA (PLF)**
(KOHN, 2020; GIJSEN, 2021)

In a PLF context, students engage in real intercultural communication in a pedagogically mentored context (i.e. guided by the teacher).

This condition:

“makes pupils feel in the same boat with their peers which enables them to lower their communication apprehension, focus on the communicative task and develop non-native speaker confidence” (Kohn, 2016, p. 293).



**PLF IS PEDAGOGICALLY
SCAFFOLDED LINGUA FRANCA
COMMUNICATION**

TASK ENGAGEMENT IN VIRTUAL PLF COMMUNICATION (GIJSEN, 2021)



Primary school pupils (grade7)

Secondary school pupils
(VMBO-T 3, H2, V5)

Teacher education
(Master Year 1, VD)

Collaboration in pairs with German and Spanish schools/pupils, **English was used as the PLF.**

Environment:

- Padlet
- BigBlueButton/MS Teams
- OpenSim (3D Virtual World)

Support tools:

- Google Translate
- Drawing programmes

TASK ENGAGEMENT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM



Three types of conversation tasks

1. Getting-to-know-each-other tasks
2. Discussion tasks varying from (soft) intercultural topics (e.g. food and local holidays) to more complex global issue (e.g. waste avoidance, the power of social media), and everything in between.
3. Co-creation tasks, for instance in teacher education student teachers codesigned tasks for their own learners.

Pre- & post tasks (in class) were used to pedagogically mentor learners.



A MEANS AND FOCUS MODEL (GIJSEN, 2021)

THE THREE DIMENSIONS (MEANS) OF TASK ENGAGEMENT



Constitutes of **what learners do** (their **behaviour**), **what learners think** (their **cognition**) and **how learners feel** (their **attitude**) when realising a task.

These 'qualities' of task engagement were studied in an integrated fashion through the lens of specific task aspects.

THE FOCUS OF TASK ENGAGEMENT SEVEN TASK PARAMETERS



- Task management
- Topic & Content
- Language
- Modality
- Communicative participation
- Partner orientation
- Task appropriation

TASK ENGAGEMENT IN VIRTUAL PLF COMMUNICATION



How did learners engage with English language tasks in the context of virtual PLF exchanges?

Learners engage in different ways.

Six **patterns of task engagement**; learners have different language learning needs and wishes.

The importance of **shared learning goals**.

WHAT DOES THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUAL PLF IMPLY FOR ELT PEDAGOGY?



- Choose technology you are familiar with.
- Make sure you have a clear idea of your learners' language learning needs and wishes?
- Establish shared language learning goals.
- Focus on authentic tasks.
- Offer pedagogical mentoring in pre- and post-tasks. Here you can put a focus-on-forms.
- Make sure that tasks have a collaborative element (information-gap, reasoning gap, etc.)

ETWINNING IN YOUR CLASSROOM



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PLATFORM (EUROPA.EU)**

NATIVE SPEAKER NO LONGER
AS
REFERENCE POINT

EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

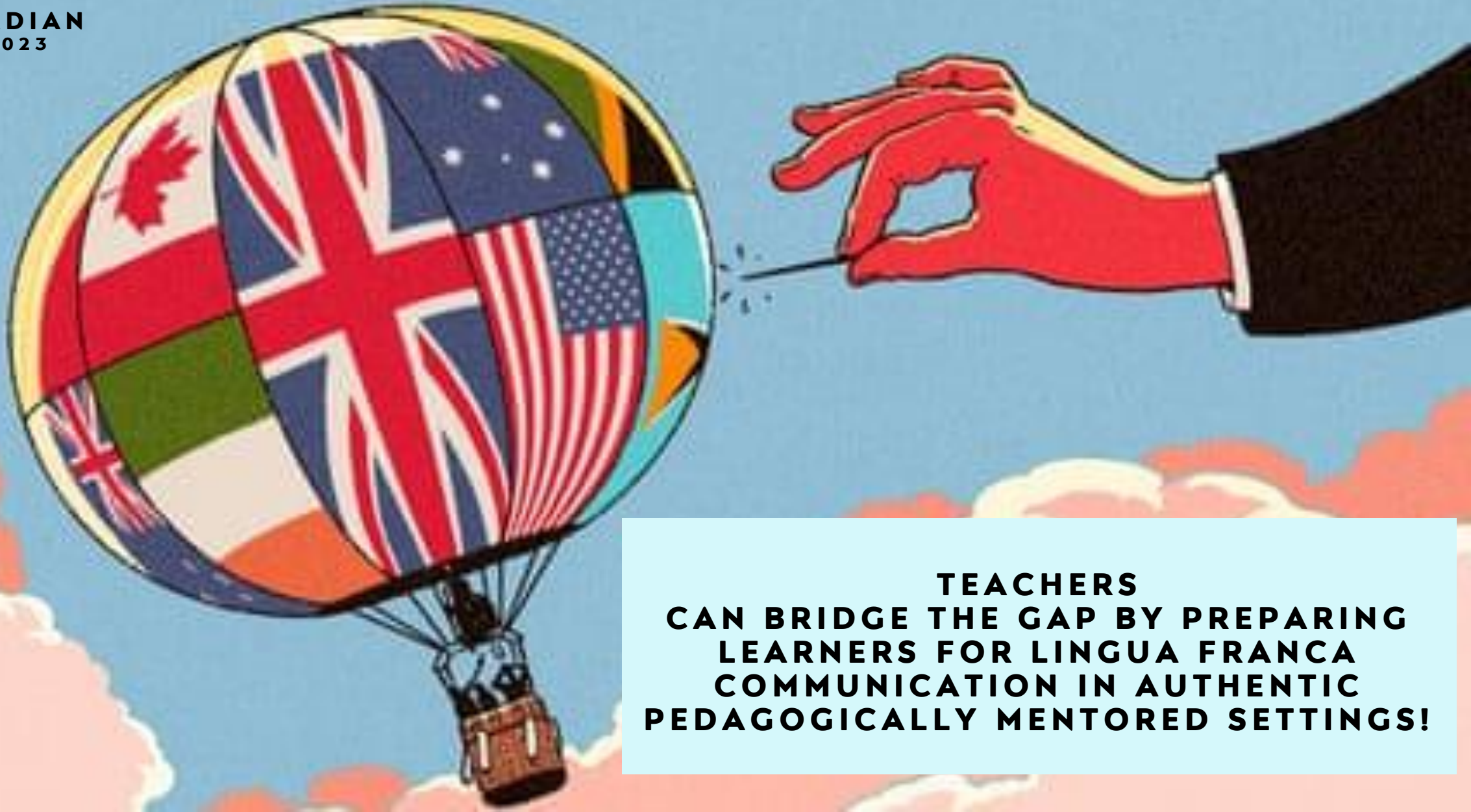
The **Common European Framework of Reference** (2001) has a companion volume (2018) with new descriptors that include **online interaction** and **collaborative learning** as key issues in modern day language learning and teaching contexts.

The authors describe contemporary language learners as **social agents** who use language in a social world while being in charge of their own language learning process:

“The methodological message of the CEFR is that language learning should be directed towards enabling students to act in real-life situations, expressing themselves and accomplishing tasks of different natures” (pp. 26-27).

TIME TO CURB ITS POWER? LINGUISTIC INJUSTICE?

THE GUARDIAN
DECEMBER 2023



**TEACHERS
CAN BRIDGE THE GAP BY PREPARING
LEARNERS FOR LINGUA FRANCA
COMMUNICATION IN AUTHENTIC
PEDAGOGICALLY MENTORED SETTINGS!**



Linda.gijsen@hu.nl

Instituut Archimedes, Lerarenopleiding HU
Lectoraat Meertaligheid & Onderwijs

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