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Task-Based Language Teaching: Challenging Emphases

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Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) represents a modern approach to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Combining TBLT with socio-culturalism and socio-constructivism helps us create a new kind of synthesis. Via TBLT, FL teaching methodology may profit from novel knowledge creation mechanisms of the two metaphors (acquisition and participation). It is also worth considering how TBLT can be implemented in foreign language teaching in which only a few lessons a week are available. We suggest that TBLT may be represented by cooperative schema-based and elaboration tasks, i.e., communicative tasks.

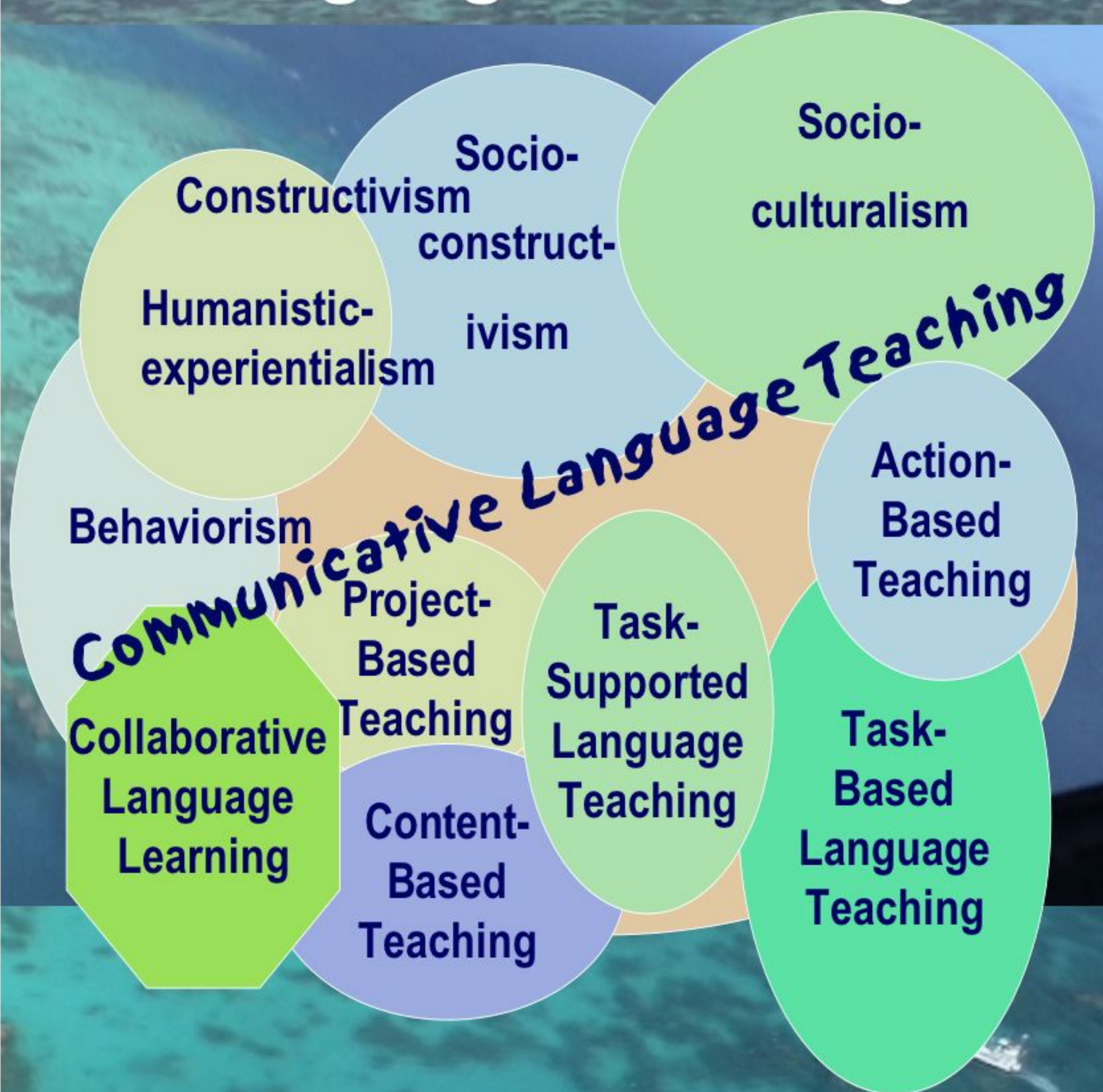
TBLT—A Holistic View on Language Learning?

	<i>Acquisition metaphor</i>	<i>Participation metaphor</i>
<i>Learning</i> 	Inner processing	Participation in social interactive communication
<i>Interaction</i> 	Relates to learning in an indirect way	Relates to learning in a direct way
<i>Knowing</i> 	Independent evidence, e.g. post-test	Participation in social interactive communication
<i>Reasons for failure</i> 	E.g. inappropriate learning strategies	E.g. marginalization or insufficient support from a mentor

(Partly based on Donato, 2000; expanded and modified)

Acquisition and participation metaphors are complementary—cognitive, social and affective dimensions of language learning intertwine with each other and are all crucial.

Different Ways to and Current Approaches of Communicative Language Teaching



**New Key
Concepts**

TBLT



Affordance

- ✓ **Affordance can be seen as an alternative approach to the holistic view on language, teaching–studying–learning in FL and interaction embedded in them.**
- ✓ **“Affordances ... are important for learning because it is only by being able to perceive affordances that an organism is able to navigate its way around the environment successfully”**
(Segalowitz, 2001, 15).
- ✓ **Affordance includes the central idea of communicative transcultural language teaching**
(Harjanne & Tella, 2007; Tella & Harjanne, in press).

Scaffolding

- ✓ **Both a design feature and an interactional process**
- ✓ **Pedagogical scaffolding — continuity, contextual support, intersubjectivity, contingency, handover/takeover, flow**
(van Lier, 2007)
- ✓ **Successful scaffolding can also arise in the interaction between the students**
(e.g. Harjanne, 2006).



TBLT—Challenges

- ✓ Is TBLT a real and major step onwards (a quantum leap) within Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or is it just one of the current approaches or one way of seeing Content-Based Teaching, Immersion, Action-Based Teaching or, for that matter, Collaborative Learning?
- ✓ **In what ways and to what extent would it be possible to implement TBLT in a 'regular' foreign language classroom with 2–3 lessons per week only?**
- ✓ **How could we bring in our FL teaching more authentic TBLT?**
- ✓ **TO WHAT EXTENT SHOULD TBLT BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN AUTHORIZING NEW TEXTBOOKS?**
- ✓ *Is TBLT strong (or flexible) enough to cover the whole Teaching–Studying–Learning (TSL) process?*

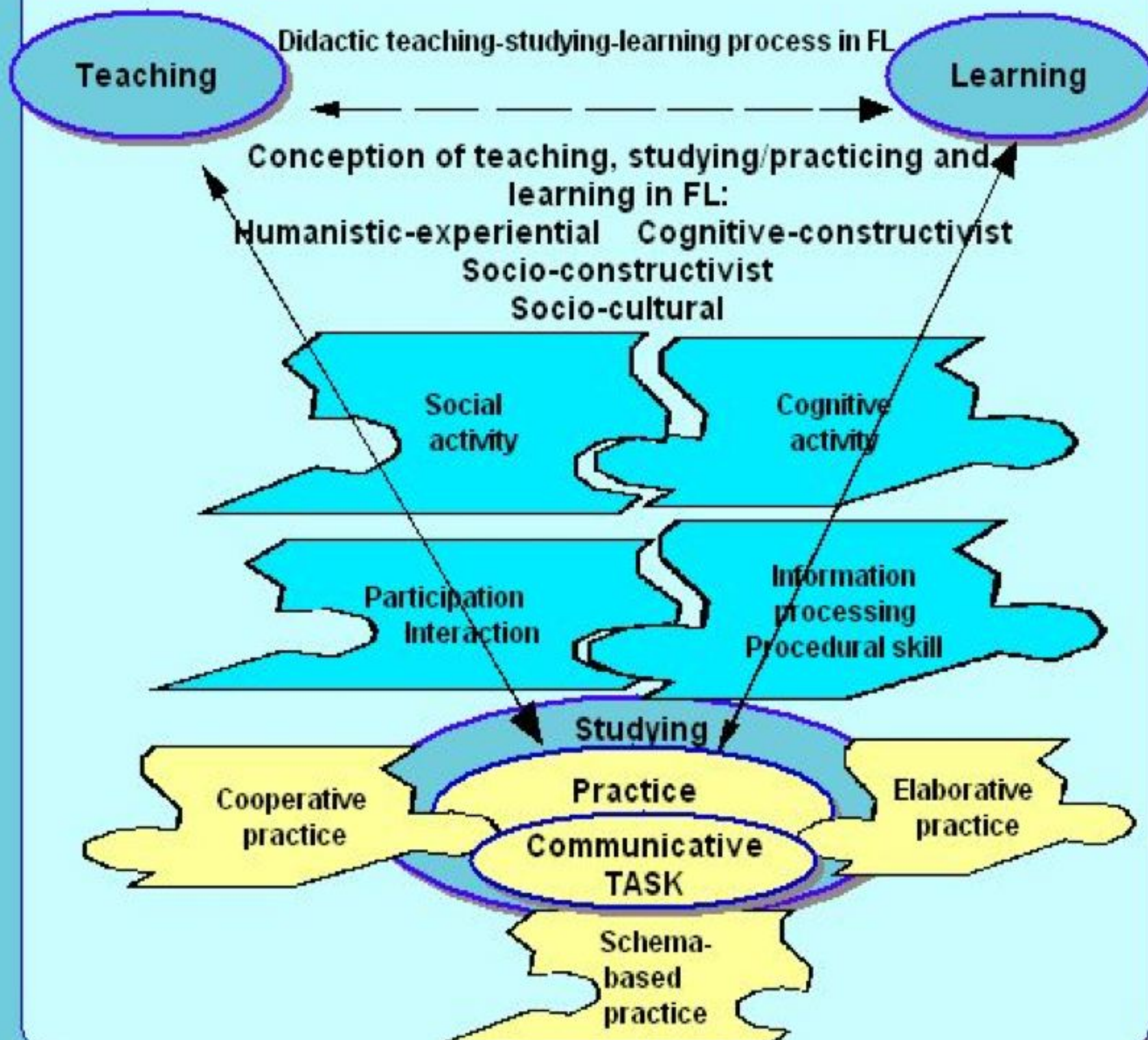
A Task as a Crucial Part of Communicative Oral Practice within the Teaching–Studying–Learning Process

(Based on Harjanne, 2006)



COMMUNICATION
Communicative oral proficiency

Communicative language teaching



A Communicative Task

- ✓ is the core unit of designing and implementing teaching.
- ✓ is used to organize language courses.



- ✓ The focus of a communicative task is on successful communication and thus on meaning.






- ✓ Both authentic and pedagogic tasks are communicative when they require understanding, negotiation of meaning and expressing thoughts to reach the communicative goal

(CEFR, 2001, 158).



A Communicative Task

 Task	Exercise
 Orientation Linguistic skills develop through participation in communication	Linguistic skills are a prerequisite for learning of communicative skills
 Focus A pragmatic communicative meaning	A linguistic form and a semantic meaning

(Based on Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2000; 2003)

- ✓ **Task-as-Design:** The structure and the content of a communicative task cannot alone determine the activity of a student.
- ✓ **Task-as-Activity:** The activity of a student is determined by his/her socio-culturally originated motives and goals and the socio-cultural context.
(E.g., Roebuck, 2000)



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