

Classroom Activities in CLT

Practical activities

1. Mechanical practice
2. Meaningful practice
3. Communicative practice

(Richards, 2005)

Mechanical practice

A controlled practice activity which students can successfully carry out without necessarily understanding the language they are using

e.g. repetition drills, substitution drills

Meaningful practice

An activity where language control is still provided but where students are required to make meaningful choices when carrying out practice

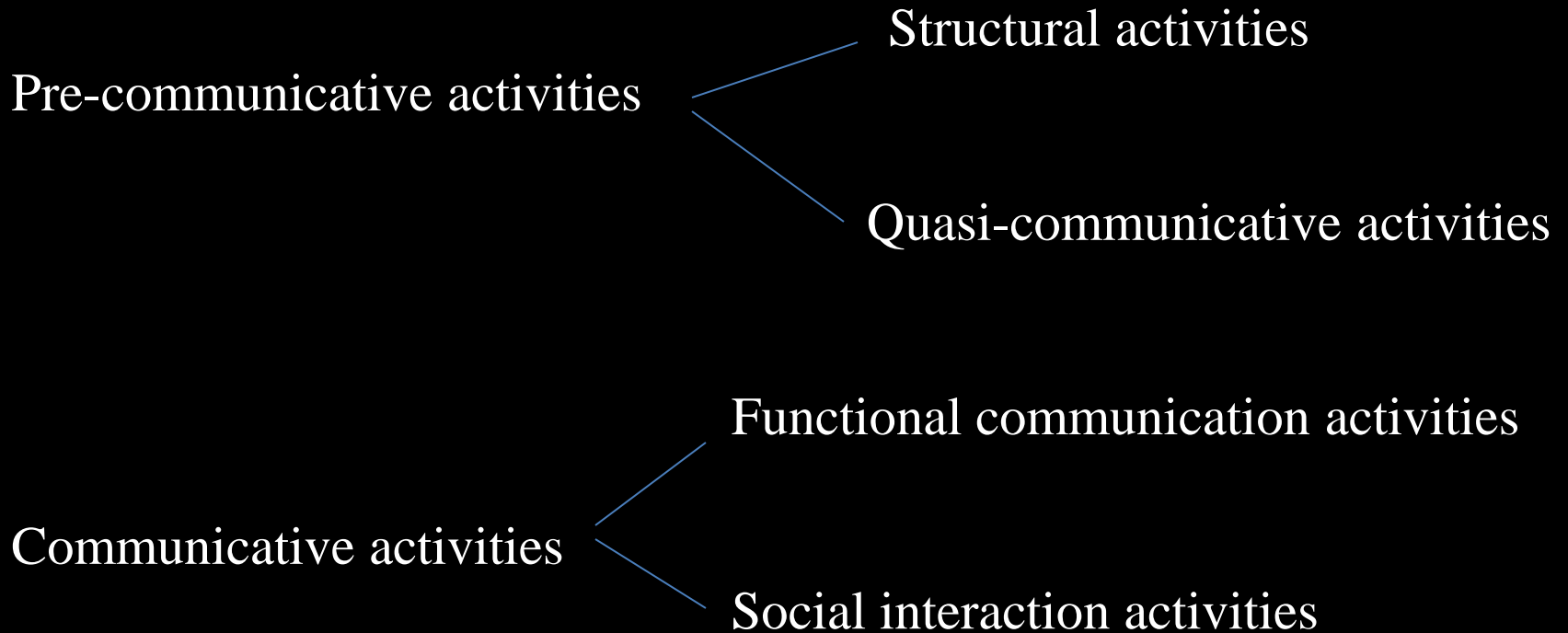
e.g. Given a street map, students are asked questions (e.g. Where is the book shop?, Where is the cafe?)

Communicative practice

Activities where practice in using language within a real communicative context is the focus, where real information is exchanged, and where the language used is not totally predicatable.

e.g. Students might have to draw a map of their neighbourhood and answer questions about the location of different palces in their neighbourhood.

Communicative Methodological Framework (Littlewood, 1981:86)



Pre-communicative activities

- Aim: to give the learners fluent control over linguistic forms, so the learners will produce language which is acceptable
- Function: to prepare the learner for later communication.
- The teacher may begin the teaching with a communicative activity
- Pre-communicative activities: drills, question-and-answer practice

Communicative activities

- Aims: (a) to provide ‘whole-task practice’, (b) to improve motivation, (c) to allow natural learning, and (d) to create a context which supports learning
- Functional communication activities: comparing sets of pictures and noting similarities and differences, following directions, discovering missing features in a map or picture
- Social interaction activities: conversation and discussion sessions, dialogues and role plays, simulations, debates

The roles of teachers and learners in the classroom activities

- Learners are expected to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning
- Teachers play roles as facilitator and monitor

The push for authenticity

Clarke & Silbertstein (in Richards, 2005):

‘Classroom activities should parallel the ‘real world’ as closely as possible. Since language is a tool of communication, methods, and materials should concentrate on the message and not the medium. The purposes of reading should be the same in class as they are in real life’.