

**COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH AND SOCIAL ACTION-ORIENTED APPROACH,  
TWO GENETICALLY OPPOSED AND COMPLEMENTARY  
METHODOLOGICAL ORGANISMS**

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**List of abbreviations used in this text**

**CA:** Communicative Approach

**IA:** Intercultural Approach

**CEFR:** Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

**FFL:** French as Foreign Language

**L1:** Language 1, source language (e.g., French in a Japanese course for French speakers)

**L2:** Language 2, target language (Japanese, in the example above)

**SAOA:** Social Action-Oriented Approach (« perspective actionnelle », in the french version of the CEFRL)

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## Disclaimer

At the origin of this text is a resumption of my oral conference at the XIVth colloquium of the Association of Teachers of Japanese in France (AEJF, Rennes, April 18-19, 2013).

The first title has been changed, and the text has been extensively revised to take into account my later reflections. I propose here to develop the genetic metaphor used for the first time in an intervention made one month later, on May 31, 2013, during a pedagogical day at the Alliance Française de Lima (see in the final bibliography PUREN 2013h), as well as the idea, announced in the title, a double relationship of opposition-complementarity to be established between the Communicative Approach (henceforth referred to as "CA"), on the one hand, and on the other hand a Social Action-Oriented Approach (henceforth referred to as "SAOA") whose practical elaboration seems to me to be well advanced.

In order to lighten this text, I have also removed the concrete examples I gave in my lecture: they can be found in my many articles available online, whose references I give here, which will also allow readers to extend their reading if they wish<sup>1</sup>.

## Introduction

Some didacticians, both French and foreign, consider that there is no rupture, but continuity, in CA and SAOA. This is the case, for example, of J.L.M. TRIM - one of the creators of the *Threshold Levels* who, in the early 1970s, launched CA in Europe. He wrote in the *User's Guide* (ed. 2001) to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (henceforth referred to as "CEFRL"):

*An action-orientation has marked the Council of Europe approach since the early 1970s, regarding language learning as preparation for the active use of the language for communication.* (p. 13)

Indeed, the competency descriptors of the CEFRL scales are entirely designed, for the first levels A1-A2-B1, on the CA mode: they describe the ability to manage communication situations of daily life by carrying out the relevant speech acts and notions in an adequate manner. Here are a few examples, taken from the "Common Reference Levels: self-assessment grid" (Table 2, p. 26):

<b>A1 Spoken Production</b>	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and the people I know.
<b>A2 Listening</b>	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.
<b>B1 Speaking - Taking part in a conversation</b>	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).

Nevertheless, the CEFRL also announces a new social reference situation - the multilingual and multicultural society - and two new reference "acting"<sup>2</sup>, i.e. no longer just communicating with

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<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the theoretical foundations have yet to be found, even though the sources already exist, in particular action linguistics ("linguistique actionnelle"), project pedagogy, and all the other components of what Jean-Pierre BOUTINET calls, in the title of his reference work (2001), "the anthropology of the projet".

<sup>2</sup> I have borrowed this noun ("acting", "l'agir", in French) from philosophy to cover in the most abstract way possible all the concepts used in the didactics of languages-cultures to designate what is voluntarily done to teach and learn: activity, action, task, exercise... See the reorganization I have proposed of the whole of the "Champ sémantique de l'agir": [www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/013/](http://www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/013/).

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foreigners passing through, but (1) living and (2) working on a long-term basis with people partially or entirely of different languages and cultures, which form the basis of two new didactic orientations<sup>3</sup>. One of these orientations, which primarily concerns "living together", appeared already in the early 1990s, and its very diverse forms of implementation are often referred to as "didactics of plurilingualism"<sup>4</sup>; the other orientation, which primarily concerns "working together", is SAOA, whose implementation in textbooks for French as foreign language (FFL) began ten years ago now, a few years after the publication of the CEFRL<sup>5</sup>.

CEFRL authors write in their initial "Notes for the user":

*One thing should be made clear right away. We have NOT set out to tell practitioners what to do, or how to do it. We are raising questions, not answering them. It is not the function of the Common European Framework to lay down the objectives that users should pursue or the methods they should employ.*

*This does not mean that the Council of Europe is indifferent to these issues. Indeed, a great deal of thought and work has been put into the principles and practice of language learning, teaching and assessment over the years by colleagues in our member countries working together in the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Projects.*

What is just as clear as their assertion in the first three sentences of the above quote is that the principles and practice they then refer to in the last sentence are clearly those of CA. As a result, the least that can be said is that their position is not clear, particularly that of J.L.M TRIM, co-author of this document and author of the first version, in 1997, of his *User's Guide* (cf. the passage quoted earlier in this *Guide*).

*In any case, there is nothing in the CEFRL about the theoretical elaboration of SAOA and its concrete implementation in textbooks and classrooms, so that the only question that really arose in the early 2000s was whether one decided to construct this SAOA as a simple extension of CA or as a break with it.*

For my part, since the publication of the CEFRL in 2001<sup>6</sup>, I have been actively involved in the development of an SAOA that is as opposed to CA as possible, not because one would be better than the other in absolute terms and should replace it (applying an "optimization-substitution" paradigm), but to provide teachers with *additional* means to develop more diverse teaching materials, so as to increase their ability to adapt to the diversity of audiences, objectives and

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<sup>3</sup> I use the term "orientation" (didactic) when the new social situation of reference and the new social objectives of reference (linguistic and cultural) have just emerged, and the process of "didactic reconfiguration" will consequently have to begin, leading to the elaboration of a new "didactic configuration" (on this expression, see note 10, *infra* p. 4). "Orientation" is the new conception of teaching-learning that the new configuration will try to organize.

<sup>4</sup> See BEACCO Jean-Claude, BYRAM Michael, CAVALLI Marisa *et al.*, *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*, , Council of Europe, August 2016, 166 p., <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/language-policy/guide-for-the-development-and-implementation-of-curricula-for-plurilingual-and-intercultural-education>. Appendix 5 pp. 154-162, presents in a table a list of "Learning methods and activities [...] which may help to implement plurilingual and intercultural education".

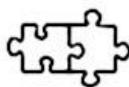
<sup>5</sup> The symbolic date that I retain for my part is 2004, the year of publication of the first textbook (of FFL) claiming both the task-based approach and SAOA, *Rond-Point 1 (A1-A2)*, Barcelona: Difusión-Maison des Langues.

<sup>6</sup> I then wrote an article, published in 2002, in which I already described what I thought should be the specificities of the new SAOA compared to the previous methodologies, including the communicative approach. See Puren 2002b.

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teaching-learning environments (applying the opposite paradigm of "fit-addition")<sup>7</sup>: SAOA must be an *addition to AC*, not a *replacement for* it, since (good) communication between actors is essential for effective joint action.

Hence the meaning of the title of my text: CA and SAOA are to be understood in a way that is both opposed *and* complementary, or, more precisely, in an *opposed way because they are meant to be complementary*.<sup>8</sup> The image I would gladly use to visualize this strategy is that of two puzzle pieces, which can only fit together perfectly because the "lines" of their assembly faces, their "tracing", are the exact opposite of each other:



We will see in Chapter 3 that this adjustment does, however, require some modification to the "features" of CA.

## 1. The "DNA" of the Communicative Approach

CA was built in Europe in the early 1970s as part of a political project to make it easier for Europeans to move from one country to another. This is why the social situation of reference for this approach (the one for which it was proposed to prepare learners) was the tourist trip; and its reference acting (the action for which it was proposed to prepare them) was the linguistic interaction (which is *speaking with the other*), an interaction described linguistically by a "notional-functional grammar", i.e. in terms of notions related to daily life and speech acts (which are an *acting on the other*).<sup>9</sup>

This can be seen, for example, in the preface written by J.L.M TRIM for the first English version of this publication (EK J.A. van, 1975):

*Nevertheless, by far the largest single group of learners, everywhere, consists of people who want to prepare themselves, in a general way, to be able to communicate socially on straightforward everyday matters with people from other countries who come their way, and to be able to get around and lead a reasonably normal social life when they visit another country. This is not simply a matter of buying bread and milk and toothpaste and getting*

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<sup>7</sup> On these two paradigms, see the conclusion of my article, pp. 8-9. On the necessary diversity of methodological orientations, see, in my article cited above PUREN 2008e, the entire chapter 4, pp. 10-14.

<sup>8</sup> The idea that the complexity of reality - here the teaching-learning of languages-cultures - can only be managed by approaches that are both opposed and complementary, is one of the main ideas of what Edgard Morin calls precisely "complex epistemology". See his *Introduction to Complex Thinking* (1990). Moreover, I have shown that all the methods (in the sense of a minimum unit of methodological coherence) that have emerged in the course of the evolution of the didactics of languages-cultures are classified in opposite pairs: see « Tableau des oppositions méthodologiques fondamentales » (Table of fundamental methodological oppositions), [www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/008/](http://www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/008/).

<sup>9</sup> For a general presentation of the didactic evolution of "didactic configurations" based on the successive modifications of the social situation and the social action of reference, see "Historical evolution of didactic configurations", [www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/029/](http://www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/029/). I borrow the metaphor of "configuration" from the expression "computer configuration", which designates a computer whose components have been chosen in such a way as to work together in an optimal way for the type of work that its user proposes to do. The different "methodological constructions" - I group under this generic concept what is sometimes called a "methodology" (e.g. "audiovisual methodology"), an "approach" (e.g. "communicative approach") or a "perspective" (e.g. "perspective") - are all different. The other necessary elements, in particular a cognitive model (a description of the mental mechanisms of learning a foreign language), a linguistic model (a description of the foreign language and its functioning mechanisms) and a pedagogical model (a description of the modes of teaching-learning relationships and learning activities considered most effective), are then carried out by borrowing from current events.) To remain consistent with the metaphor of "genes", I have, in the title of this article, called these constructions "organisms", but they are indeed the same objects.

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*repairs carried out to a car. People want to be able to make contact with each other as people, to exchange information and opinion, talk about experiences, likes and dislikes, to explore our similarities and differences, the unity in diversity of our complicated and crowded continent. (TRIM J.L.M. 1975, p. 102)*

The fundamental characteristics of CA - its "DNA", the set of its genes - are thus originally determined by this situation and this reference social acting, which are the tourist trip and the management of its communicative issues through language interaction.

In the table below, I present these different genes, their definition, and some corresponding "genetic markers" that can be found in communication textbooks:

<b>GENETIC ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH</b>		
<b>GENES <sup>10</sup></b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>GENETIC MARKERS (MANUALS)</b>
<b>1. the inchoative</b>	The action is considered at its beginning.	- Support dialogs always start at the beginning. <sup>11</sup> - Students learn how to greet someone and then say goodbye for the first time. <sup>12</sup>
<b>2. the perfective</b>	The action ends completely.	- Dialogues always end at the end. <sup>13</sup>
<b>3. the punctual</b>	The action lasts a short time.	- In dialogues, it is always the same people in the same place talking about the same topic of conversation in the same limited time. - The characters rent a hotel room much more often than an apartment. They never buy an apartment or house.
<b>4. the individual</b>	The exchange is between one person and another.	The reference group for the activities is the minimum group for interaction: the group of two; the interaction is in fact inter-individual.
<b>5. the language specialist</b>	The action taken into account is limited to language interaction, to "speech acts".	Preferred communication situations are those of everyday life, where communicative issues are considered to be understandable by learners regardless of their culture. Foreign culture is only taken into account in communication in its linguistic, "sociolinguistic" dimension. <sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> I borrow linguistic concepts to designate some of these CA genes, and, as we will see, the opposite genes of SAOA: *inchoative* verbs are verbs that mark in themselves (*i.e.* include in their semantics) the beginning of the action (e.g. "to fall asleep", "to understand"); they are opposed to durative verbs (also called *progressive*), which inscribe the action in the duration (e.g. "to sleep", "to think"). *Perfective* verbs are verbs that imply in themselves the end of the action (e.g. "to discover", "to go out"), whereas *imperfective verbs* express an action that can continue (e.g. "to seek", "to visit"). Thus, if we want to reverse what we call the verbal "aspects" of these verbs, we must, in English, use, for example, verbal periphrases: "to be falling asleep", "to continue not to understand" (durative aspect); "to begin to visit", "to start to think" (inchoative aspect).

<sup>11</sup> This characteristic of the communicative dialogues in textbooks may seem natural, but it is only the case in passing encounters. With people with whom you live or work permanently, on the other hand, conversations are usually part of a previous "djà dit" (you rarely start a really "new" dialogue), and you can allow yourself to interrupt them without ending them, because you can resume them later.

<sup>12</sup> But how do you behave when you come across the same colleague in your company for the second, third, fourth time of the day?... It depends on the culture, but in no culture, no doubt, it happens exactly the same as the first time.

<sup>13</sup> See note 12 above.

<sup>14</sup> Hence the addition of pages specifically dedicated to foreign culture only at the end of the didactic units of the communicative textbooks, after the exercises of reuse of the language contents.

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At least in the early stages of CA development, the Intercultural Approach (henceforth referred to as "IA") was designed to serve it: using the concept of "configuration" (cf. If one uses the concept of "configuration" (see *supra* note 9), one would say that IA came to be "configured" with respect to Communicative Approach (henceforth referred to as "CA"); if one uses the puzzle metaphor, one would say that the "features" or "layout" of the IA were designed to fit those of CA; if one uses the genetic metaphor, one would say that the IA inherited the genes of CA. The idea of an IA at the service of SAOA is still clearly found in a book published in 2002 by the Council of Europe:

*Intercultural competence implies an increase in the internal capacity to process information, so that communication between people from different cultures is facilitated and improved.* (GRIMA CAMILLERI A., p. 58)

The following passage from one of the French intercultural specialists, Geneviève ZARATE, provides a good corpus of analysis of IA genes:

*The exercise of civilization cannot be reduced to the study of documents, or the comprehension of texts. This minimal definition is only operational in a strictly academic framework. What is proposed is to set up skills that will make it possible to resolve the dysfunctions inherent in situations where the individual becomes involved in a lived relationship with the stranger and thus discovers aspects of his identity that he has not yet had the opportunity to explore; his quality as a stranger that is returned to him by the gaze of the other, the particularisms of his practices that had hitherto appeared to him as indisputable evidence.* (1993)

The table below presents the results of this analysis:

GENETIC ANALYSIS OF THE INTERCULTURAL APPROACH (IA)	
Genes	Markers
The inchoatif	-not yet -hitherto
The inchoatif, perfective and puntual	-set up -resolve -discovers
The individual/inter-individual	-the individual -a stranger -the other

The analysis clearly shows the filiation link between IA and CA (we find the same genes, except of course for the language gene), a filiation that IA specialists cannot deny, even if they have subsequently developed IA autonomously, enriching its genetic heritage by borrowing from extra-didactic disciplines - particularly anthropology and sociology - and by borrowing directly from the Anglo-Saxon current of *intercultural studies*.

## 2. The "DNA" of the Social Action-Oriented Approach

The *CEFRL* is part of a political project that takes into account the pursuit of European integration and what it implies: it is no longer simply a question of preparing Europeans to meet foreigners (in this case Europeans from other countries) on a one-off basis during tourist trips, but, in the increasingly multilingual and multicultural societies of today's Europe, to prepare them to **live with others over time** - hence the emergence of the notion of "plurilingual and pluricultural

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competence" in this document -, and to **act with others over time**<sup>15</sup> - hence the emergence of SAOA in this same document.

It is this new social situation of reference and this new acting with others - I call this latter "coaction" to distinguish it from communicative "interaction" - that will transmit their "genes" to SAOA:

<b>Genetic analysis of the social action-oriented approach</b>		
<b>Genes of the CA</b>	<b>Genes of SAOA</b>	<b>In the personal, public and educational fields and professional, most of the actions that we realize...</b>
the inchoatif	<b>the repetitive</b>	... are repeated more or less identically throughout the day, the week, the months or even the years;
the punctual	<b>the durative</b>	... are of a certain duration, or at least are part of the duration;
the perfective	<b>the imperfective</b>	... are not completely finished (they are always subject to being resumed and/or extended later on);
the individual/inter-individual	<b>the collective</b>	... are carried out collectively, or at least taking into account the actions of others <sup>16</sup> ;
the linguistic	<b>the linguistic and the cultural</b>	... inseparably combine the language dimension and the cultural dimension.

We can see, to take up the image of the puzzle, that between SAOA and CA the genes are "reversed", and this is what allows us to conceive, between the two methodological organisms, a strong relationship assured by features that are both opposite and complementary.

### 3. The specific "features" of the Social Action-Oriented Approach

For this chapter, I have chosen the two-column table format. In the left-hand column, I present the different specific "features" of SAOA as opposed to CA. Opposite, in the right-hand column, I present the ideas that lead us to also consider the two methodologies in a necessary relationship of complementarity. This will require, however, rectifying some of the "features" of CA as it has been elaborated until now in the work of its promoters and in the communicative textbooks, where it has been elaborated in an autonomous and self-sufficient manner.

<i>3.1. A new relationship between class-society and external society</i>	<i>Plural relations between class-companies and external company, between shares and tasks</i>
In CA, there is no homology between the two societies: we want to train learners, who share the same mother tongue in their class-society, to communicate later on in the foreign language with foreigners in the foreign society. Hence the systematic use, in this methodology, of simulation, in which learners are asked to act as if they were not in the classroom, but abroad; as if they were not	My readers will want to refer to the model I have proposed to describe all the possible ways of relating these two pairs of elements (class-society and external society, actions and tasks), a model entitled "Intersections between learning acting ("tasks") and usage acting ("actions")" <sup>18</sup> ;

<sup>15</sup> This action with others corresponds to work in the "professional domain", but also to work in the "educational domain", to use the categories of the *CEFRL*, which distinguishes as fields of action the public, personal and professional domains: the challenge for a class is indeed to succeed in effectively carrying out a joint teaching-learning action. This action with others also corresponds to "acting as a citizen" in the "public domain": the challenge here is to "make society" together.

<sup>16</sup> In SAOA, it is the way of communicating that must adapt, and if it must adapt to others, it is primarily as part of the communication situation.

<sup>18</sup>[www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/025/](http://www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/025/).

<p>among themselves, but with foreigners; or even as if they were not themselves, but foreigners. This is why simulation is indispensable in this methodology.</p> <p>In SAOA, on the contrary, there is a relationship of natural homology between the two societies: like the external society in which one wants to train learners to act socially, the class-society is a multilingual (there is at least the L1 and L2)<sup>17</sup> and multicultural (there is at least the teaching culture and the learning culture) micro-society where the learners and the teacher must act together in the most effective way, so that there is the best possible learning.</p>	<p>At the end of the commentary on this model, I present the areas of intersection between these two pairs of elements with respect to CA and SAOA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>In the communicative approach, the preferred area is C (the simulation of actions, in the form of the presentation of a sketch or role-play by the students themselves), with support being reduced (at least in the textbooks that systematize this approach) to the strict minimum, whether in terms of preparation (a1), support (a2) or rehearsal (a3).</i></li> <li>- <i>In the pedagogy of the project and the social-oriented approach, the privileged area is B and D, the other areas being mobilized according to the needs of the learners and the requirements of the project.</i></li> </ul> <p>The educational purpose of training a social actor naturally leads to actions that I will call, for want of a better term, "serious". But on the one hand simulation is a very serious training tool (cf. flight simulators for pilot training, and more generally all simulation activities in professional training), and on the other hand there is no reason to do without creative or playful simulations (which can also be very "serious" in the sense that they are meant to be effective: cf. for example, <i>serious games</i>), so as to vary the forms of action in class and to call on all possible "learning instances" among learners.<sup>19</sup> The interest of the projects - the most successful form of implementing SAOA, cf. <i>infra</i> point 3.2 - is that they can be designed in such a way as to mobilize all the areas of intersection between these pairs of elements, including the one favored by SAOA.</p>
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<p>3.2. <i>A new reference learning acting, social acting</i></p>	<p><i>Communicational acting at the service of social action</i></p>
<p>In all the methodologies that have followed one another for a century and a half in France, the same relationship of maximum homology has always been applied between the reference use acting and the of reference learning acting. In other words, the task (learning acting, in the classroom) has always been what most <i>closely resembled the</i> action for which we wanted to prepare students (use acting, in external society)<sup>20</sup>. Thus, in CA, we want to train learners to communicate with others in a foreign language, and for this we make them do exactly the same thing: communicate with each other in a foreign language in the classroom.</p>	<p>Whether for social actions limited in time and space in the classroom, or for real projects that are longer and open to external society, the collective dimension, privileged in SAOA, will inevitably require intense communication between learners. On this point, too, there is complementarity between CA and SAOA, from the moment when - and this is where the "trait" of CA must be modified to adapt to that of SAOA, like the two inverse tracings of the two pieces to be assembled in a Lego game:</p> <p>1) communication is no longer conceived both as a means and an objective, but only as a means at the service of action: it is therefore difficult to imagine</p>

<sup>17</sup> In a Japanese language course in a French school or university, for example, the L1 (or "source language") is French, the L2 (or "target language") is Japanese.

<sup>19</sup> The teacher, in order to stimulate learning, can "appeal" to the learners (hence the legal metaphor of "instance"... ) to Reason, Imitation, Memorization, Emotion, Reaction, Action, or Impregnation. (cf. "Instances cognitives d'enseignement-apprentissage. Modèle 'RIMERA I'", [www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/017/](http://www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/017/)).

<sup>20</sup> On this terminology, see "Le champ sémantique de l'agir en didactique des langues-cultures", [www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/013/](http://www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/013/).

<p>The same relationship of homology makes the "pedagogical project" (the one we hear in France when we speak of "project pedagogy") the reference activity of SAOA, an activity consisting of both actions (the project is real, it is a real project) and tasks (the project is also an opportunity to work on the content and the language and cultural skills necessary to carry out the project).<sup>21</sup></p>	<p>that a didactic unit ends with a phase of simple communication, as when each group informs the whole class of what it has achieved separately (a terminal device very frequent in communicative textbooks).</p> <p>2) the communication activity can no longer be the only, or the only privileged one, among all the information management activities that a responsible and efficient social actor must carry out (see below point 3.3);</p> <p>3) work in groups of two, without being excluded, can no longer be the preferred form of class work (see point 3.5 below).</p> <p>The interest of SAOA in its "strong" version, which calls for project pedagogy<sup>22</sup>, is that pedagogical projects function as "methodological integrators", in other words that they allow the implementation of all the approaches that the history of language and culture didactics has bequeathed to us: see the example of the project designed by a Guatemalan teacher for his FFL students, which I present in my 2006(e) article, p. 12 and p. 17.</p>
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<p><i>3.3. A new conception of language competence, "information competence".</i></p>	<p><i>Communicative competence, essential component informational competence</i></p>
<p>On this informational competence, I refer my readers to my 2009(c) article, which is entirely devoted to it. The implementation of SAOA leads us to move, in terms of objectives, from communicative competence to "informational competence", which I define as the <i>ability to act on and through information as a social actor</i>. A sequence in SAOA is characterized in particular by the fact that learners are asked to perform operations :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pre-communicative: defining their information needs, searching for it, selecting, evaluating and prioritizing it; deciding to whom, when it will be transmitted and for what purpose, ... ;</li> <li>- and post-communication: evaluate the relevance of the information transmitted, the timing and the recipient; decide whether to delete the information, or to keep it because it could be useful later to oneself or to others, and then decide whether to keep it as is or to update it periodically, ... This is what we call "information management", which a social actor must, in today's societies, have a good command of (we speak in French of "maîtrise de l'information").</li> </ul>	<p>Although communication activity is now only one of the information management activities in SAOA it is clear that it will remain the most important in most language classes, especially :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- because in order to act well together, we must communicate well with each other;</li> <li>- because the classroom must remain a privileged place and time for the practice of the oral language, the main means of learning it. Pre- and post-communication activities, when carried out collectively in small groups, are natural opportunities for authentic communication in the classroom, as are exchanges on the design, implementation and evaluation of projects.</li> </ul>

<sup>21</sup> On project pedagogy in SOAO, see PUREN 2013f.

<sup>22</sup> This version is incompatible with the manuals. See my proposal for a "Grille d'analyse des différents types actuels de mise en œuvre de l'agir dans les manuels de langues » (Grid for the analysis of the different current types of implementation of acting in language textbooks, [www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/050/](http://www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/050/)).

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<p>3.4. A new primary component of cultural competence, the "co-cultural" component</p>	<p><i>The intercultural component, essential component cultural competence".</i></p>
<p>CA, which concerns the teaching-learning of the - language, is accompanied by a specific approach to the teaching-learning of the culture. This is the so-called "intercultural" approach, the two cultures worked in contact being the cultures of the two societies present in the classroom: that of the learners, and that of the country/countries whose language they are learning.</p> <p>The specific cultural approach to SAOA is different: it is an approach that I call "co-cultural", with the main focus naturally on common cultures of action in the different fields: In the educational field, this co-culture is, for example, the so-called "school culture" or, in the classroom, the teaching-learning community to be developed together; in the public field, it is, for example, the "citizen culture", in the professional field, the "professional culture" or the "corporate culture".<sup>23</sup> The fact that there is a homology between the class-society and the external society in the SAOA makes it possible to envisage that the foreign language classroom is also an environment where learners are trained, through the learning culture, to the culture of action outside the classroom: the professional culture, for example, in the case of a course such as FSP (French for Specific Purposes), to foreign students in French schools of engineering, business, medicine, etc. or the university culture, in the case of FUF (French for University Purposes, type of course, to foreign students who are preparing to follow or who have begun to follow a university course in France.<sup>24</sup></p>	<p>Even if SAOA involves working on a specific component of cultural competence - the "co-cultural" component - the other components remain relevant, among them the intercultural component: even if one has been living and working in a multicultural environment for a long time, there are always times when phenomena of intercultural contact can occur: on the one hand because one has never finished "discovering" other cultures completely, on the other hand because, quite legitimately, one has retained elements of one's own culture that are different from those of other cultures.</p> <p>However, in order to reflect the "culture of action" in the textbooks, a significant change must be made to the structure of the didactic unit, and that is that the culture must be worked on within the unit <i>before the</i> proposed action is carried out or completed.<sup>25</sup></p> <p>The peculiarity of SAOA is that it works for culture, as it does for methodologies, as an "integrator". This is how I present this idea in my 2010 conference(e):</p> <p><i>The social action-oriented approach implies the implementation between teacher and learners, for their collective teaching-learning in the classroom space, of the totality of the components of cultural competence ("professional culture").</i></p> <p><i>In order for them to act as teaching-learning social actors in the classroom, learners and teachers must be able to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- communicate (intercultural component);</li> <li>- cohabit (pluricultural component);</li> <li>- co-act (co-cultural component);</li> </ul> <p><i>This also implies from them to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- know each other well (metacultural component);</li> <li>- share common values beyond the different cultures involved (transcultural component).</li> </ul> <p>(p. 13)</p>

<p>3.5. A new educational challenge: collective autonomy</p>	<p><i>The different forms of classroom activity</i></p>
<p>Learner autonomy was certainly a central theme in CA, but it was thought of within the framework of</p>	<p>Training for individual autonomy remains, of course, an essential issue for the language-culture class,</p>

<sup>23</sup> See PUREN 2010e (this is a lecture I gave that year in Osaka, where I take the example of a FFL course in Japan), and PUREN 2011j. Or, if one prefers to listen to a lecture on the same theme and follow the visuals, PUREN 2001f.

<sup>24</sup> I have been trying (without much success so far...) to spread this idea for already 15 years: see PUREN 1998g, Chapter II, "Formation professionnelle et apprentissage des langues (Vocational Training and Language Learning), pp. 9-16.

<sup>25</sup> For an example of implementation in a textbook, see point 5, "De l'interculturel au co-culturel" (From intercultural to co-cultural) in the Foreword of the manual *Original Version* (3 & 4), [www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/031/](http://www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/031/), and the reproduction of a didactic unit from this collection (Unit 7 of Level 4) at :

[www.christianpuren.com/mes-travaux-liste-et-liens/2012j/](http://www.christianpuren.com/mes-travaux-liste-et-liens/2012j/).

<p>this methodology, <i>i.e.</i> in terms of the individual and language modes.</p> <p>In SAOA, the challenge is to train learners not only for individual autonomy, but also for collective autonomy, both at the level of work groups and the whole class, both in language and culture of social action.</p> <p>With regard to the design of the didactic sequences or units, SAOA leads to a reversal of the approach that had hitherto permeated all methodologies, and which ranged from more directivity (in the initial work on the basic texts or dialogues and in the grammatical and lexical exercises) to more autonomy (in the final situations of "free reuse", where learners were invited to reuse for themselves the language forms previously introduced and worked on in class).</p> <p>In project pedagogy, on the contrary, learners must be as free as possible at the beginning, in the project design phase, so that they really appropriate it; the teacher can then intervene in a more directive way, as a specialist in the foreign language and responsible for its teaching, to make the students work on the language content that he knows they need to succeed in their project. <sup>26</sup></p>	<p>both in terms of education - a citizen is responsible and supportive but retains his or her own critical awareness - and in terms of language and cultural training: once the course is completed and the class group dissolved, it is indeed each learner who must leave with his or her own skills, even if these include skills for living harmoniously and working effectively with others.</p> <p>This is why terminal certifications are about individuals as such. With at least one notable exception, that of phase 3, oral interaction, of level 2 of the Certificate of Competence in Languages of Higher Education), a phase presented as follows on the official website (<a href="http://www.certification-cles.fr">www.certification-cles.fr</a>, link "Quelles épreuves?"): "Evaluation in pairs during which both candidates must take on the roles provided to them and which put them in a negotiating situation that will have to evolve to reach a decision acceptable to both parties."</p> <p>This is another point where the "feature" of SAOA needs to be changed: the evaluation of social action training, such as that proposed by SAOA, must necessarily include an assessment of competence to work with others, not just communicate with others. This implies organizing communicative activities centered not only on the effectiveness of communication, but on the effectiveness of collective work and individual contributions to that effectiveness.</p> <p>On the other hand, the CA reference group - the group of two - has a structural advantage over larger groups (including of course the class group), which is to allow in class the maximum multiplication of language interactions. It is therefore not a question of eliminating it in the implementation of SAOA, but of adjusting it in relation to the activity of the class group. For example, we are not going to start by working in pairs to reflect on a final task that must be collective, as is often the case in communicative textbooks; but a project always implies a distribution of tasks, and this can be an opportunity to systematically implement activities in pairs.</p>
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<p>3.6. New L1 ("source language") functions</p>	<p><i>Maintaining the Direct Paradigm as the Dominant Paradigm</i></p>
<p>In CA, the natural tendency was to exclude the source language as much as possible, since the goal was to get learners to communicate as often as possible in the classroom in the foreign language.</p> <p>In SAOA, the source language acquires new functions, since the aim is also to train students to</p>	<p>Even if the direct paradigm<sup>28</sup> has been relativized by the constructivist paradigm over the last three decades<sup>29</sup>, it is still dominant in language didactics: it is still considered that one learns an L2 mainly by practicing it, whether in comprehension, expression, or interaction.</p>

<sup>26</sup> To go further on this theme, one can consult PUREN 2010f and PUREN 2011h.

<sup>28</sup> One learns to speak an L2 by making an effort from the start to think and speak in L2, thus avoiding the mental translation L1 L2→.

<sup>29</sup> One learns a foreign language by progressively constructing in the space of contact between one's L1 and L2, by trial and error, one's "interlanguage" (or "intermediate grammar"), consisting of the set of rules for the functioning of the L2 that one will spontaneously use at a given moment in one's learning.

<p>act socially not only in their classroom society but also, where possible, in their own external society (e.g., in the case of a FFL course in Japan).<sup>27</sup></p>	<p>Since the teaching-learning time in language classes is very limited, the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom is considered to have a high "cost" (that of the corresponding time not used for L2 practice). This does not mean that we are going to prohibit ourselves from using the L1 in the classroom; it means that we are going to use it as a teacher, and have it used by learners only at specific moments and for specific activities where we will consider that the cost-benefit relationship is to the advantage of the L1: we consider that we gain more by using it than what we otherwise lose. In school didactics in France, for example, it is generally considered that a good understanding of language mechanisms by learners is important enough for conceptualization activities to be carried out in the L1. In the implementation of SAOA, new functions of L1 use appear, which may lead the teacher to "target" and "dose" his or her use in a slightly different way from the communicative approach.</p>
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## Conclusion

The few "genetic manipulations" that I propose here to carry out on CA are not new: in all methodologies, one can observe "genetic mutations" compared to previous methodologies, carried out in a more or less conscious and more or less explicit way. Here are three examples:

- After an initial period of rejection, the direct methodology resumed the translation exercise, but no longer assigning to it the function of training in the rules of grammar, as in the "grammatical theme" of the traditional methodology, but the function of controlling an understanding worked on in L2.<sup>30</sup>
- French textbooks for foreign language teaching continued in the 80-90s to use structural exercises, but as intensive training exercises integrated into the standard procedure (after conceptualization and application exercises, therefore), and not, as originally, as behaviourist exercises for automating language models.<sup>31</sup>
- CA has taken over the use of authentic documents from the previous active methodology, but has modified this unique exercise to make different exercises adapted to work on each of the language activities (written and oral comprehension, written and oral expression, interaction).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> On the three new functions provided by the source language in SAOA (in addition to the 10 already known), see the document "Fonctions de la traduction en didactique des langues-cultures", [www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/033/](http://www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/033/). If we also want to take into account the objective of living together in a multilingual society, another function of translation is essential, this time in the service of "mediation".

<sup>30</sup> See, in my *Histoire des méthodologies de l'enseignement des langues* (1st ed. 1988, 3rd ed. 2013), in Chapter 2.2.1, "La méthode directe", point *b*: "La traduction comme procédure de contrôle de la compréhension linguistique" (Translation as a procedure for checking linguistic comprehension), p. 82, [www.christianpuren.com/mes-travaux-liste-et-liens/1988a/](http://www.christianpuren.com/mes-travaux-liste-et-liens/1988a/), 2013 edition.

<sup>31</sup> See in the Working Library of my site the documents 009 ("Procédure standard de l'enseignement scolaire de la grammaire", [www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/009/](http://www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/009/)) and 010 ("Les quatre procédures historiques de l'enseignement de la grammaire", [www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/010/](http://www.christianpuren.com/bibliothèque-de-travail/010/)).

<sup>32</sup> We thus move from a "logique document" (document logic) to a "logique support" (support logic). See PUREN 2012j, chap. 4. "Les cinq logiques documentaires actuellement disponibles" (The five documentary logics currently available), p. 27.

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One of the possible alternatives to eclecticism, in which reduced and isolated elements of different methodologies are combined and articulated with each other in a more or less reasoned way - with the risks that this may entail, especially when it comes to the initial training of teachers - is perhaps to be built from the idea suggested here, that of modifying the set of available methodologies so that they can be made to cohabit harmoniously with each other, and work together for better learning. This would, after all, be nothing more than an application of the principles of the pluricultural approach and SOAO to the management of teaching-learning modes .

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