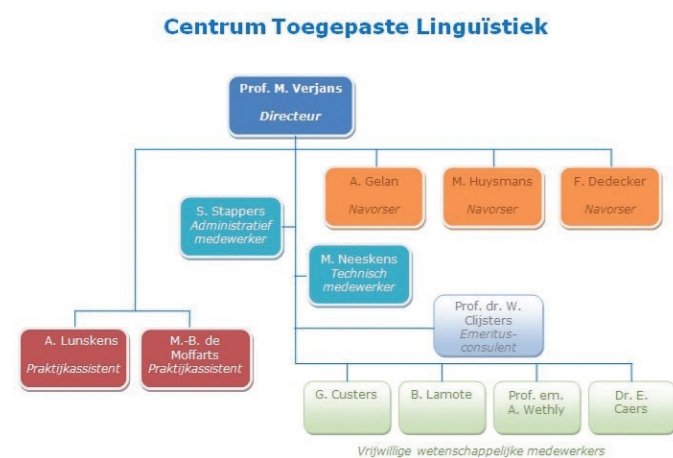


## SITUATION

In 2006, the Centre of Applied Linguistics (CTL) became Hasselt University's first association-wide research institute.

CTL research brings together a number of cross-disciplinary competencies: (socio)linguists specialised in Romance, Germanic, African and classical languages; economists; didacticians and educationalists; computer scientists; etc.

Research projects tend to be carried out on the basis of international collaboration projects between universities and the business world. This complementarity leads to sound, multidisciplinary research. The accent lies on empirical research, mainly supported by Flemish, Federal and European funding.



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**CTL**  
**Centre of Applied Linguistics 2011**

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## PREFACE

The Centre of Applied Linguistics is a fairly small entity within the Hasselt University, best known for its output in regard to positive sciences and technology. But the specific and multi-disciplinary character of CTL's research, its expertise, its success in attracting contract funding for projects in networks, both in and outside Europe, indicates that the institute is being invited to take part in collaborations with increasing frequency.

In 2010, CTL attracted new international partners, including universities and colleges as well as corporate organisations. In addition, more than 3,000 people were willing to collaborate on empirical research. This is strong proof that the R&D institute's research activities are recognised, thanks in part to the immediate applicability of the results.

CTL is only too pleased to place its know-how and experience at your disposal to help find solutions to social problems, particularly with regard to linguistic and cultural differences, as well as semi-autonomous blended learning.

My sincerest thanks go to the financers who have shown confidence in our institution. In particular, my thanks go the European Commission, especially INTERREG, and to the province of Limburg.

Prof. Martine Verjans  
CTL Director





## HIGHLIGHTS 2010

### The 2 INTERREG IVA projects in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine Euregiotook shape in 2010.

The **INTERcCOM** project collected representative data - partly quantitative, partly qualitative - through a survey of 3,347 respondents, including entrepreneurs from across Europe. With this, we managed to map the 5 cultures of the regions making up the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, and their interdependence, and to compare this against Polish and Turkish culture. We also drew up detailed lists of contrastive language errors that cause misunderstandings, have a stigmatising effect or come over as disturbing to native speakers. We did this by comparing the languages of the EMR, namely Dutch, French and German, and also by comparing Turkish and Polish against each of these 3 languages. The information thus gathered will lead to international publications within the coming years. At the same time, these data are being used to develop language and culture e-learning modules in a semi-autonomous blended learning setting. In this way, CTL, along with its association partner PHL, and with ULg, Hogeschool Zuyd, CommArt Int. n.v., RWTH and St Leonhard Aachen, is attempting not only to make the Euregio attractive, but to make it even stronger economically.

In 2010, the **LinguaCluster** project led to qualitative data collected through interviews with 'hands-on' experts on language needs in Limburg business life. The project also explored how non-formal activities can support language learning (virtual and real class gatherings, drama and choir weekend, football tournament, etc.). It created an instrument for raising language awareness, even among the very youngest, imbued with the Meuse-Rhine storytelling tradition. A first series of contrastive language exercises for semi-autonomous learning was developed for implementation in the virtual learning environment (VLE) which CTL had already initiated in 2010. This unique VLE will enable an exploration of innovative new paths for semi-autonomous language learning. In the years to come, it will grow to become the biggest Euregional e-meeting forum.

### New e-modules for semi-autonomous blended learning

In 2010, CTL took pride in receiving an excellent assessment by the European Commission of the 9 **Lingu@Com** language-culture modules, the result of the **TST-ID** (EU – Life Long Learning Program) project, for which the institute served as promoter and international coordinator.

With the financial support of the EU program, Transfer of Innovation (Leonardo da Vinci - LLP), it was possible, in association with the universities of Vienna (AT), Cluj-Napoca (RO) and Hamburg (DE), to extend the Plurilingua series to 34 contrastive e-modules for business executives. In total, the following languages and cultures are now offered in combination: German, English, French, Dutch, Polish and Romanian.

These new realisations were added to the product range offered by CommArt Int., a CTL-Hasselt University spin-off ([www.commart.be](http://www.commart.be)).

## RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

The first assumption of CTL's research is that an excellent command of a (foreign) language is an absolute requirement, but not enough to communicate effectively and efficiently on an international level. This is because miscommunication is often due to cultural differences. CTL largely researches geographical cultural characteristics and their effects on communication.

The second assumption is that the results of fundamental research should always have a socially relevant field of application. Important stakeholders include companies that operate on an international level on the one hand, and students, who need to prepare thoroughly for the international labour market, on the other. To meet the needs of both target groups, CTL is also looking for the most efficient way to learn to communicate in another language, while taking another culture into account.



### Domains:

- study of communication needs and problems and of the effects of linguistic and cultural differences on verbal and non-verbal communication, especially with regard to business populations, whether these are sector- and/or job-related or not
- study of the effectiveness and efficiency of (foreign) language education and the didactic methods used, looking in particular at ICT in support of semi-autonomous blended learning

## VALORISATION

Therefore, on the basis of its research results, CTL often develops e-learning modules. These modules are valorised at the international level via CommArt International N.V., a CTL-Hasselt University spin-off ([www.commart.be](http://www.commart.be)), in association, if needs be, with specialised international partners.

The research is also valorised through publications in specialist international journals and participation in international congresses.

**For more info (project descriptions - partners - publications - job openings): [www.uhasselt.be/CTL-en](http://www.uhasselt.be/CTL-en)**

## SERVICES

If companies wish to optimise their international communication, both CTL and CommArt International can be of help. A few examples: identification of communication needs, development of e-learning modules to suit the company, training the trainers (semi-autonomous blended learning) and guiding e-product developers (with the help of Lingu@Tor Author, the multimedia electronic authoring system developed in-house).

CTL also carries out government contracts in the framework of ICT in support of (language) education, calibration of curricula to the Common European Framework of Reference for Modern Languages (CEFR), etc.

## EDUCATION - RESEARCH LINK

Important stakeholders of CTL are companies, both at home and abroad, where most Business Economics graduates start their careers.

It goes without saying that the e-learning modules, the content of which is based on non-native intercultural communication profiles for various business functions, and which is methodologically developed for semi-autonomous blended learning, are therefore implemented in the language courses of the Business Economics curriculum.

Students also learn to work out a conceptual model based on international research on cultural differences. They then apply this to specific business communication situations.

The full professors (ZAP), linked to CTL, also supervise master's theses at the Faculty of Business Economics.

