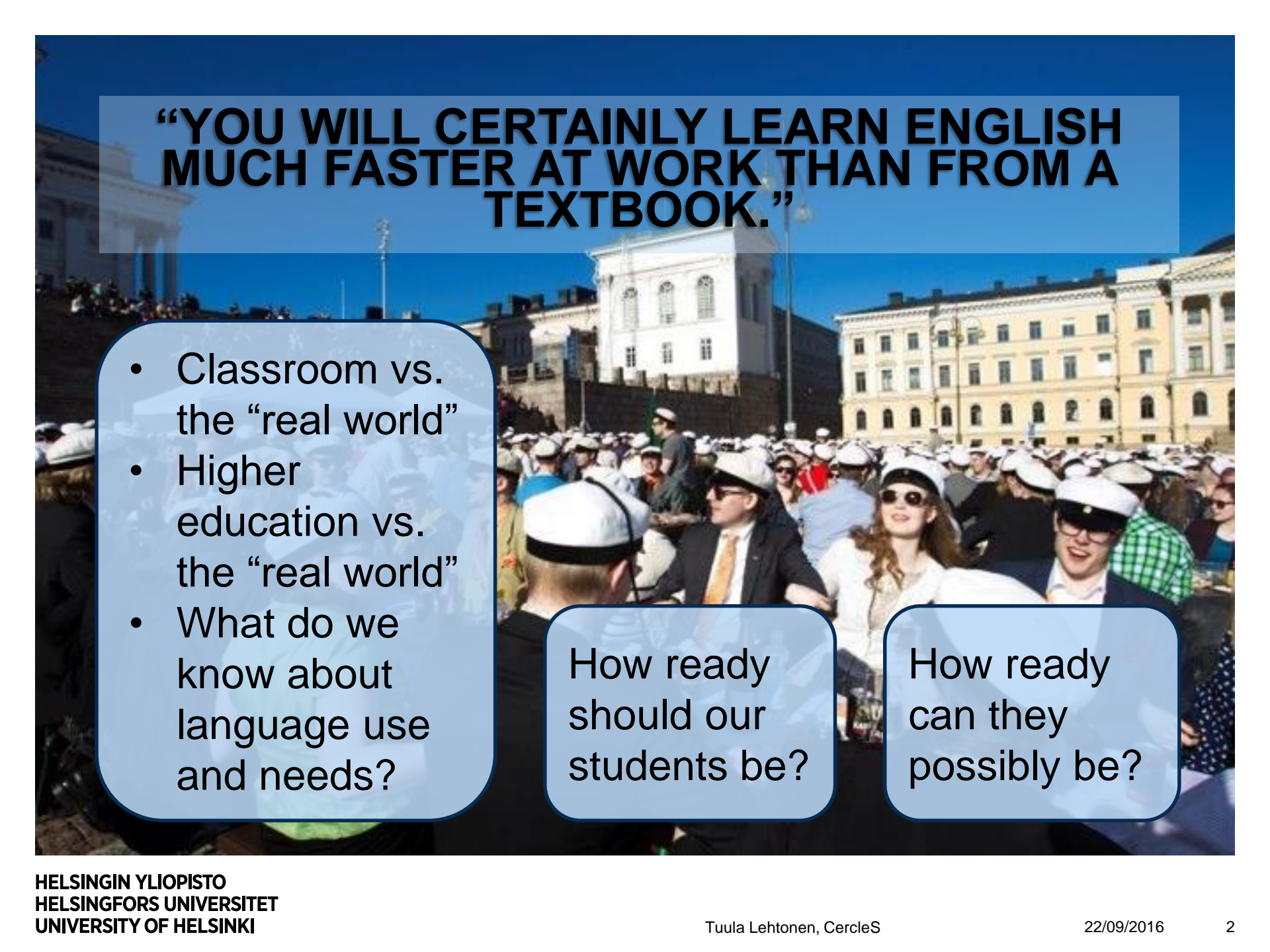




**“YOU WILL CERTAINLY  
LEARN ENGLISH MUCH  
FASTER AT WORK THAN  
FROM A TEXTBOOK.”**

Law students as trainees learning English beyond the  
language classroom



**“YOU WILL CERTAINLY LEARN ENGLISH  
MUCH FASTER AT WORK THAN FROM A  
TEXTBOOK.”**

- Classroom vs. the “real world”
- Higher education vs. the “real world”
- What do we know about language use and needs?

How ready should our students be?

How ready can they possibly be?

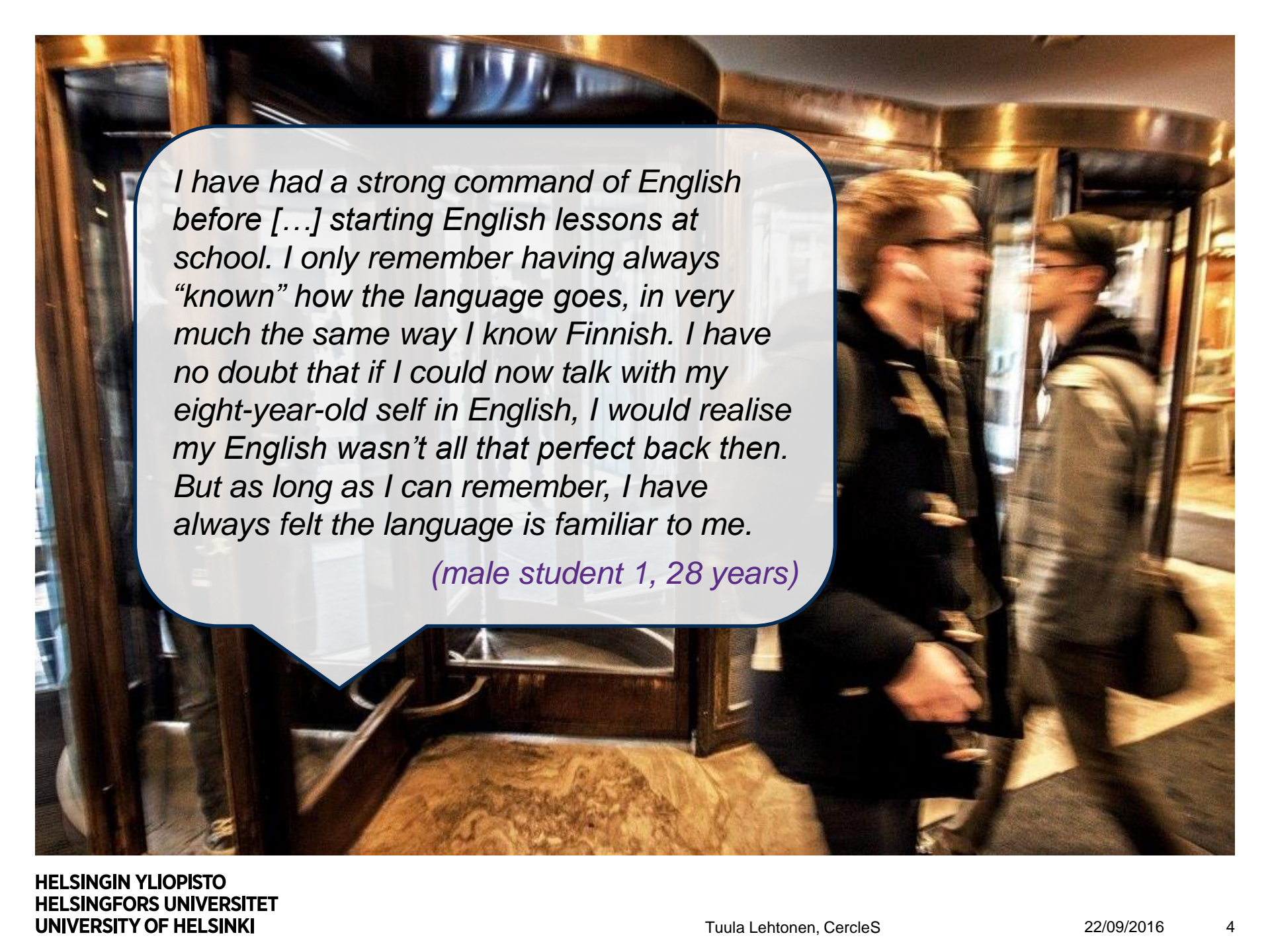


# LAW STUDENTS AS TRAINEES LEARNING ENGLISH BEYOND THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

- 152 Master's in law students as trainees/interns
- Student portfolios collected in 6.5 years
- Students fulfilling a degree requirement
- Student generation whose...

“motivation for learning English is likely to be qualitatively different in many ways from learning other second or foreign languages, as English increasingly becomes viewed as a basic educational skill to be developed from primary level alongside literacy and numeracy”

(Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 72)



*I have had a strong command of English before [...] starting English lessons at school. I only remember having always “known” how the language goes, in very much the same way I know Finnish. I have no doubt that if I could now talk with my eight-year-old self in English, I would realise my English wasn’t all that perfect back then. But as long as I can remember, I have always felt the language is familiar to me.*

*(male student 1, 28 years)*



# PORTFOLIOS REVEAL THAT

- The law office as a workplace enhances the language learning of interns
- The learning at work happens independent of language teaching institutions
- Prior learning necessary to do well at work
- Interns use language in context that acts as a scaffold
- Bilingual (trilingual?) reality

**Location**

**Formality**

**Pedagogy**

**Locus of control**



**LANGUAGE LEARNING BEYOND THE  
LANGUAGE CLASSROOM – BENSON'S  
FOUR ELEMENTS (2011)**

## Open-ended tasks:

translating,  
searching for and summarizing  
information,  
taking notes,  
passing on information,  
writing different documents,  
taking part in teleconferencing  
and videoconferencing, and  
making phone calls

## Working on one's own and with others in two/three languages:

Team work

Feedback

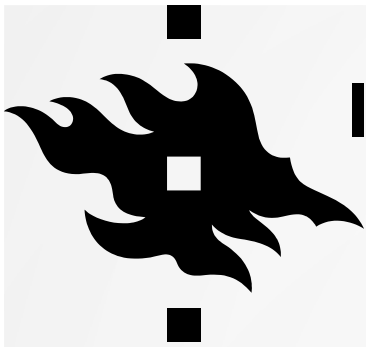
Tasks done at request

Projects

**Location**

**LAW OFFICE**

# INFORMAL WITH HINTS OF FORMALITY



## Formality

“essentially refers to the degree to which learning is independent of organized courses leading to formal qualifications”

(Benson, 2011, p.10)

*A recount of the past week is quite representative. ... These teleconferences have been in English. I have also **exchanged a large number of emails** on the issue with the client and other advisors they are using, all in English. Once a draft of the submission was completed, it was **translated** into English for the client's review. Before the draft was sent to the client, **I once more reviewed the draft** [...]. At the time of writing this essay, we have scheduled **another teleconference** for tomorrow, when the client and their advisors are set to **give us feedback** on the draft.*

*(male student 1, 28 years)*

- Even if the Language Centre were not to give credits, learning would happen





# SELF-INSTRUCTION AND NATURALISTIC

## Pedagogy

“In self-instruction, **specially designed** books or television and radio broadcasts take on the role of classroom instructor and there is a strong intention to learn on the part of the learner, while in naturalistic learning, there is no instruction or specially designed materials and, in principle, no intention to learn”

(Benson, 2011, p. 11)

*I have never taken courses in legal English. [...] The skills that I have today I have mainly acquired through trying to learn as much as I can from every single document that I have had in my hands. [...] Some of the learning obviously has had to happen through trial and error – good thing at a law firm virtually no one ever works on a case alone but in teams who check each other's writings.*

*(female student 5, 26 years)*



## STUDENT IN CHARGE, BUT AS PART OF A LARGER CONTEXT

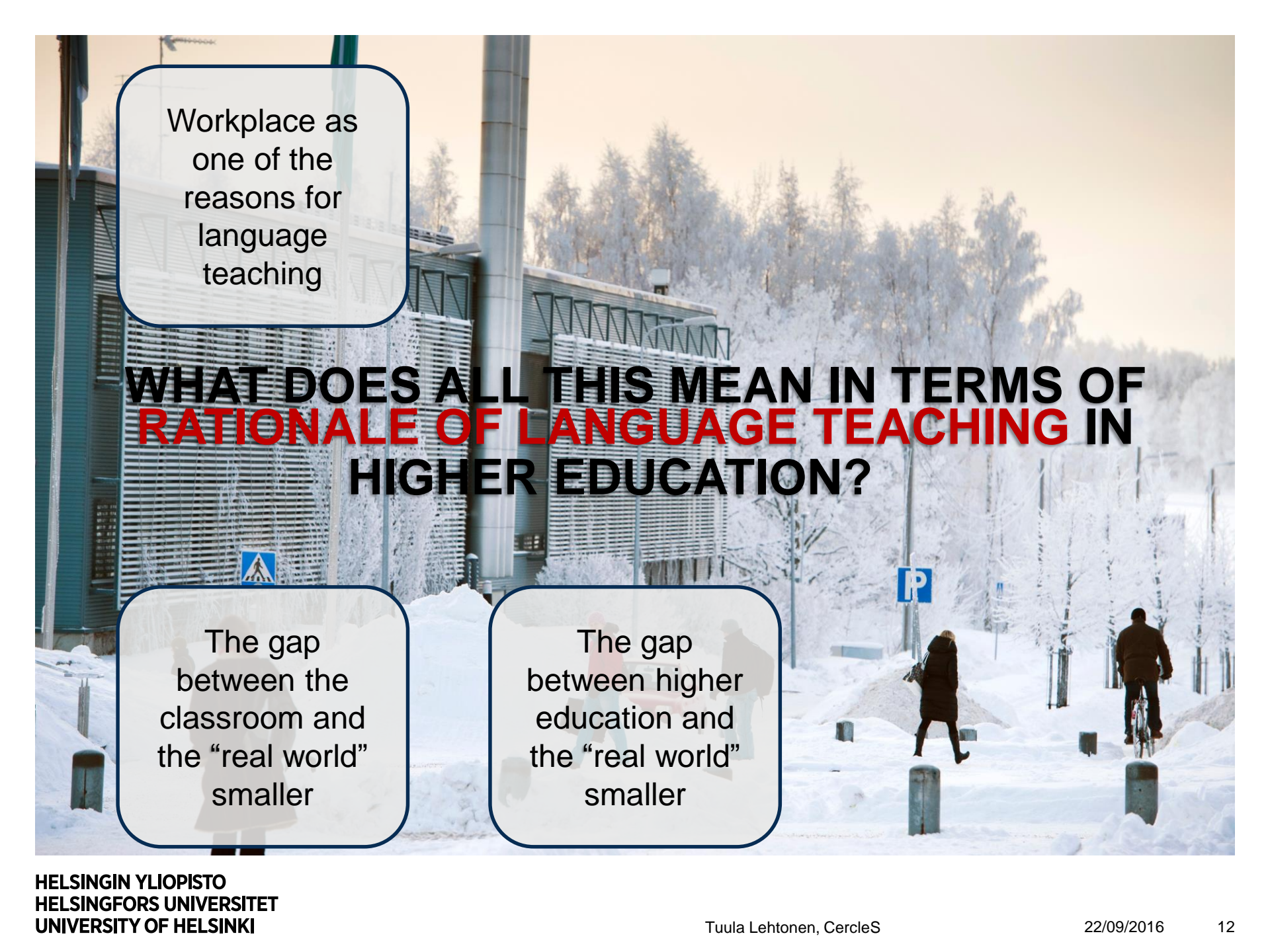
Locus of control

*Firstly, I learn self-directed when I read (and notice new phrases and ways to express things), write (and check unfamiliar words from the dictionary), listen (and hear how a word is pronounced by a native) and speak (because practice makes perfect). I would say this makes half of the learning. The other half comes from the feedback and correcting my errors.*

*(female student 7, 27 years)*



**HOW READY ARE THE STUDENTS?  
HOW READY CAN THEY POSSIBLY BE?**

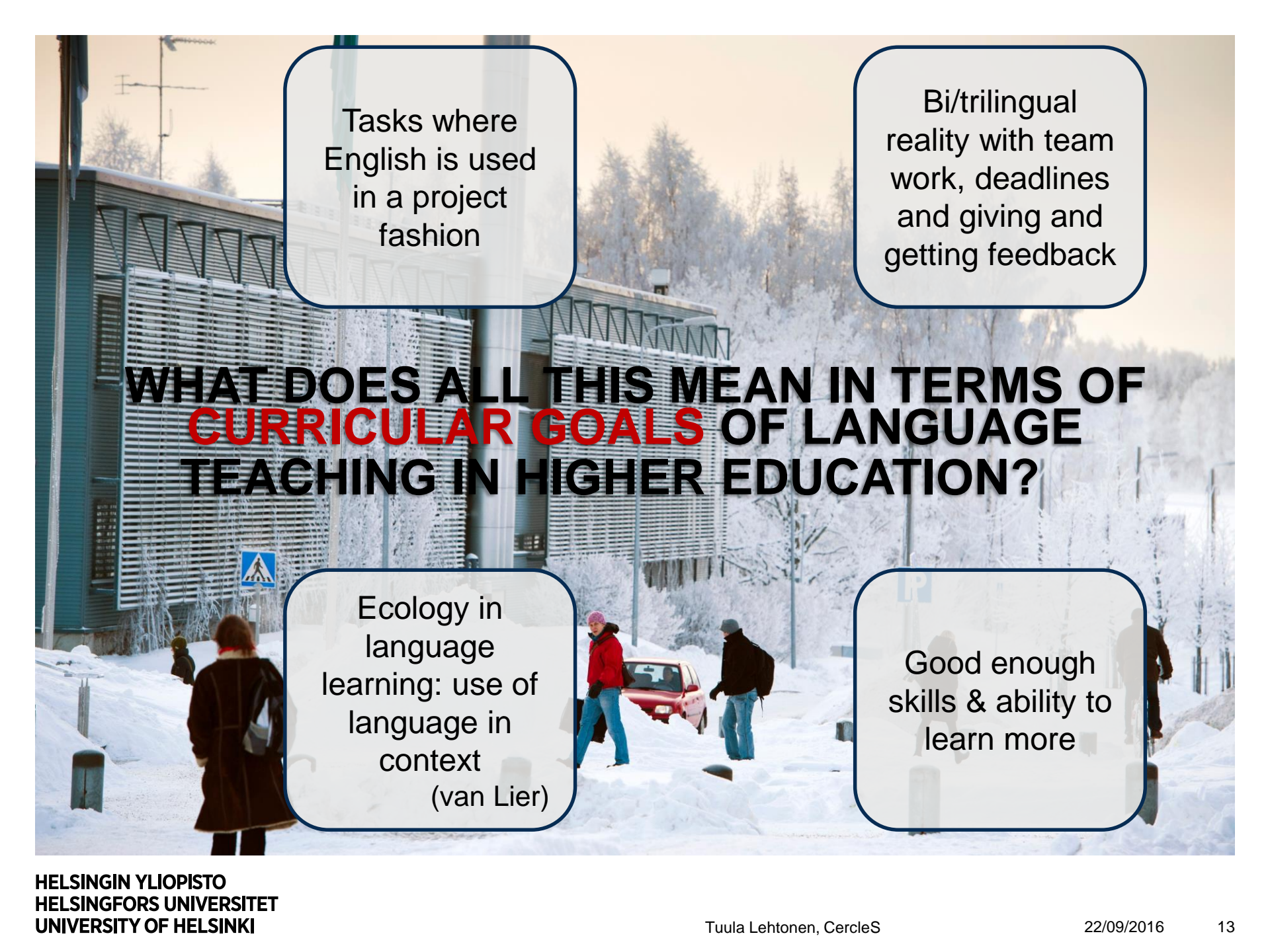


Workplace as  
one of the  
reasons for  
language  
teaching

# WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN IN TERMS OF **RATIONALE OF LANGUAGE TEACHING** IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

The gap  
between the  
classroom and  
the “real world”  
smaller

The gap  
between higher  
education and  
the “real world”  
smaller

A photograph of a snowy street scene. In the foreground, a person in a dark coat and backpack walks away from the camera. In the middle ground, a red car is partially buried in snow, with two people walking past it. The background shows a modern building with a grid-like facade and snow-covered trees under a bright sky.

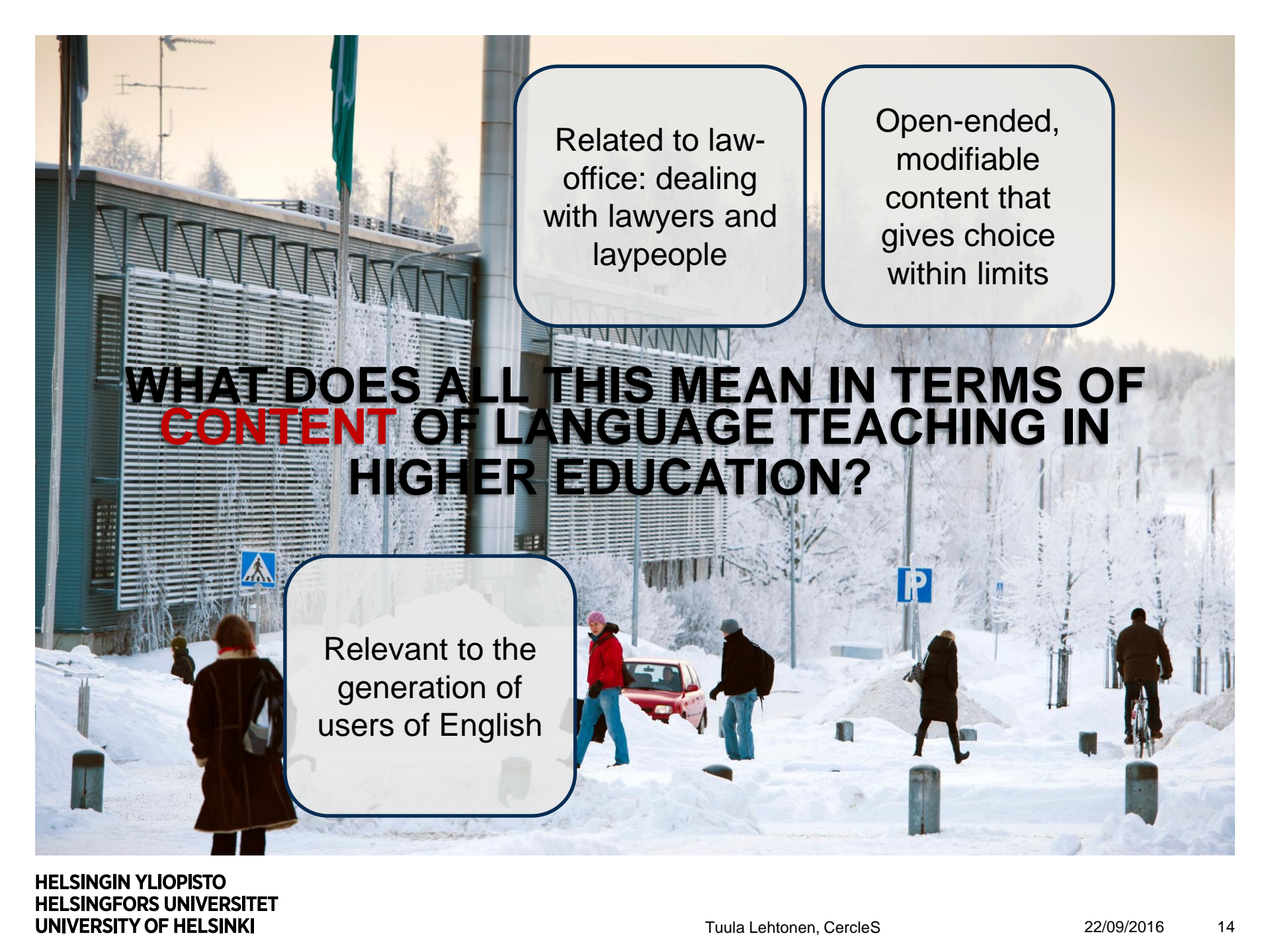
Tasks where  
English is used  
in a project  
fashion

Bi/trilingual  
reality with team  
work, deadlines  
and giving and  
getting feedback

## WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN IN TERMS OF **CURRICULAR GOALS** OF LANGUAGE TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

Ecology in  
language  
learning: use of  
language in  
context  
(van Lier)

Good enough  
skills & ability to  
learn more

A photograph of a snowy street scene. In the foreground, a person in a dark coat and backpack is walking away from the camera. In the middle ground, several other people are walking through the snow. A red car is partially visible. In the background, there is a modern building with a grid-like facade and a blue 'P' parking sign. The sky is overcast.

Related to law-office: dealing with lawyers and laypeople

Open-ended, modifiable content that gives choice within limits

## WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN IN TERMS OF **CONTENT** OF LANGUAGE TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

Relevant to the generation of users of English



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