COUNCIL CONSEIL
OF EUROPE DE L'EUROPE

REFERENCE LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS
FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LANGUAGES (RLD)

DRAFT GUIDE FOR THE PRODUCTION OF RLD

VERSION 2
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REFERENCE LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS
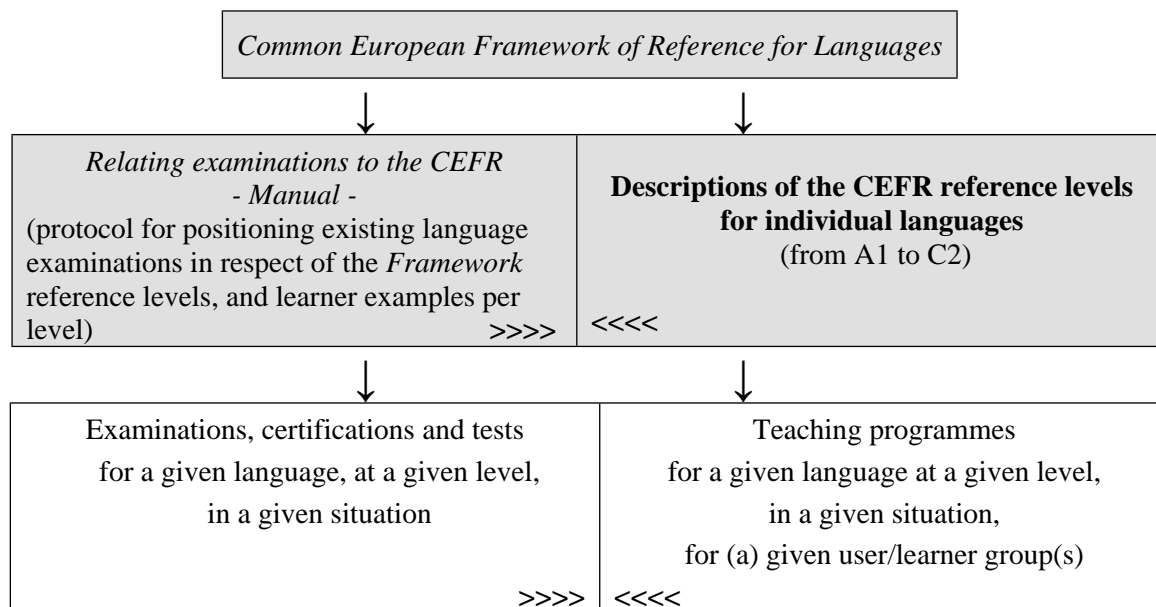# FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LANGUAGES (RLD)

Draft Guide

The individual language reference level descriptions of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Learning, teaching, assessment*[1] (CEFR) follow on from the *Threshold levels* series, putting that experience to good use, but differing from the *Threshold levels* in that they hinge directly on the CEFR.. Their purpose is to specify the levels of the CEFR (which were developed independently of any specific language) for a given national or regional language.

These descriptions should share certain features:

- because the description of each level for each language emanates from the same document: the CEFR;

- because, together with the CEFR, the *Manual* (for relating language examinations to the levels of the CEFR) and the videos/CD-Roms giving samples of levels for the setting of certification tests), these descriptions are one of the **anchor points** proposed by the Council of Europe's Language Policy Division for the development of language programmes that are consistent with one another, from one language to another and also with the common tools which already exist;

- because their convergence alone can give them credibility and make it worth people's while to use them. It is unrealistic to imagine that the development of these reference descriptions, which select and distribute a certain verbal material by level of competence, can be based solely on "scientific" procedures: their audience will also depend on the consensus they are able to generate among the professionals concerned, especially as the *Framework* leaves decision makers the responsibility of specifying the morpho-syntactic material[2].

The purpose of this document is to identify these shared features.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	

Relating examinations to the CEFR - Manual - (protocol for positioning existing language examinations in respect of the *Framework* reference levels, and learner examples per level) >>>>	**Descriptions of the CEFR reference levels for individual languages** (from A1 to C2) <<<<

Examinations, certifications and tests for a given language, at a given level, in a given situation >>>>	Teaching programmes for a given language at a given level, in a given situation, for (a) given user/learner group(s) <<<<

Relationship between Council of Europe reference instruments for language teaching/learning.

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[1] Council of Europe, 2001, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[2] See user box on page 115 of the English edition.

1. Features common to the reference level descriptions of the CEFR for individual national or regional languages

The main purpose of these instruments is, for a given language, to describe or transpose the *Framework* descriptors that characterise the competences of users/learners (at a given level) in terms of linguistic material specific to that language and considered necessary for the implementation of those competences. This specification will always be an interpretation of the CEFR descriptors, combined with the corresponding linguistic material (making it possible to effect acts of discourse, general notions, specific notions, etc).

1.1. Common general principles

The descriptions obey the following general principles:

- Each reference level description or set of reference level descriptions for a given language implements solutions and makes choices adapted to the language concerned.

- Each set of reference level descriptions may take advantage of descriptions already developed for other languages, but not by simply translating the inventories used for another language.

- Each reference level description specifies what its function is and what it is not, in order to prevent misuse (eg: *This description of level A1 is not a teaching programme*). In particular, authors should be aware that they are contributing to setting a standard for use of the language, whether they like it or not, and that this is an important responsibility.

- Each set of reference level descriptions for a given language is aimed at those in charge of designing curricula. It should be made clear whether the descriptions are also meant for specific users (teachers, for example) and whether they were prepared with particular learner groups in mind (eg young children, temporary residents, adults in professional situations, the teaching of other disciplines in the language concerned, migrants, etc).

- For each reference level description the coherence between the different component inventories should be verified, in particular between acts of discourse (which may be statements) and "grammatical" inventories, between acts of discourse and specific notions (eg inviting someone to do something and the leisure word list), between grammatical inventories and inventories of general notions, etc. The purpose of this coherency is to facilitate consultation and partial data extraction, and it demonstrates the complementarity of the inventories: the sections of the descriptions are interlinked (using references, for example), it being possible for the same form to be classified in several different inventories.

- Each reference level description provides for means of adjusting the proposed inventories with time (as the language changes, for example).

- Each reference level description states what is considered as an open inventory (adaptable to certain teaching situations) and what is not (open lists; figures, etc).

- Authors should appreciate that the descriptions are meant to serve as a starting point for the preparation of teaching programmes for the language concerned.

- They take readers and users into account, in particular by using an explicit terminology; it is the authors' task to find the appropriate form of interaction with the users.

- All the reference level descriptions for a given language adopt the same grammatical terminology for all their component sections.

1.2. Common features

Reference level descriptions for a given language have the following features in common:

- Each description for each language refers to a level of the *Framework* and its descriptors: it provides an inventory of the linguistic material necessary to implement the competences thus defined and explains the choice of forms. It is called: *Reference level description [A1, A2,...] for [name of language concerned].*

- Each description for a given reference level contains all the linguistic material identified in the descriptions for the levels below it, and only those levels: B2, for example, includes everything contained in levels B1, A2 and A1).

- Each reference level description for each language is given the same structure (and the same internal numbering), for easy identification and electronic indexing (eg 3 always refers to the section on "Functions" and its component parts, whatever the level described).

- Each description specifies which inventories of forms are considered to be open (ie where the content is indicative), which are closed (the inventory is considered final and not subject to change), and which are necessary or optional. Inventories may be necessary and open, for example: a particular sub-category - lexical, say - is considered necessary but its content is adaptable to different teaching situations (names of foods are needed in A1, for example, but the list is not final).

Minimum **common features**

- As far as possible the descriptions for different languages should have at least the following features in common:

    1. they should be developed using the CEFR descriptors in particular (as well as those of the *European language Portfolios* models) or other descriptors and explain exactly how to pass from the descriptors to the inventories of forms;

    2. a description of the approach(es) used to establish the inventories of forms (survey, for example);

    3. indications as to whether the proposed forms should be known for reception only or also for production;

    4. inventories of the linguistic realisations of general notions, acts of discourse and specific notions / lexical elements and morpho-syntactic elements considered characteristic of this level[3].

Optional or desirable features

- The descriptions may include other common features, such as:

    1. an inventory of the communication fields and situations concerned;

    2. an inventory of text forms (types of discourse, for example) expected at this level, with a distinction between reception and production

    3. a description or examples of the types of discourse concerned (eg predictable oral exchange patterns)

    4. an inventory of the basic cultural and intercultural knowledge and competences concerned.

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[3] On the definitions of morphology, morpho-phonology and syntax, see the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) p. 114 and 115.

- It is preferable that the descriptions include:

  1. an inventory of the phonetic and intonation skills it is considered necessary to command at this level;

  2. an inventory of the graphic forms it is considered necessary to command at this level;

  3. an inventory of the type of cultural and intercultural knowledge and competences it is considered necessary to command at this level;

  4. an inventory of the learning and self-learning strategies considered characteristic of this level

  5. a general index, particularly to make possible the consultation of the paper version of these documents.

2. Methodology

In order to give these reference level descriptions for individual languages a degree of scientific status and a social audience compatible with their aim:

- depending on the resources available for each language, the descriptions are elaborated on the basis of:

  1. inventories of statistical frequency, including oral usage;
  2. the perusal of large bodies of (not necessarily literary) texts;
  3. knowledge considered as established in relation to the acquisition of the language concerned, in the "natural" and institutional environments, possibly in the form of acquisition sequences;
  4. learners' productions, particularly language data produced in evaluation situations (body of language examinations);
  5. the approaches and concepts used to analyse discourse (including conversation analysis);
  6. established knowledge concerning spontaneous oral usages and their social variations;
  7. the intuitive and reflexive command of the language possessed by knowledgeable and highly competent informers.

- As far as possible the descriptions are prepared by a single team, possibly comprising sub-teams specialised in one level or another; if the work is not all done by the same team, there must be close co-operation between the teams, to guarantee coherency.

- As far as possible the teams should include specialists in:
  1. linguistics, sociolinguistics, speech analysis, lexicology, etc;
  2. didactics of languages and cultures;
  3. assessment and certification of language skills;
  4. automatic processing of language or information technology.

- The coherently linked development of several reference level descriptions should be programmed by the education authorities (ministry, university, etc) behind the initiative. It is possible to start with level A1 and work up to C2, or to start with B2 then go on to A1, then to A2 and B1, to work only on levels A1 to B2 initially, and so on.

- The production of these reference level descriptions must have official support or backing of a political and scientific nature (Ministry of Education, Foreign Affairs, specialised scientific Institute, etc) to guarantee their legitimacy and dissemination in the education sector.

- Account must be taken of the means of dissemination of the descriptions from the outset (particularly if electronic formats are envisaged). This may be assigned to a single publisher, who will guarantee their publication at least in print. Publication on the Internet has the added advantage of permitting a specialised audience to play an active part in the preparation and subsequent development of the reference level descriptions.

Further material and other, more detailed technical suggestions for preparing inventories are appended.

It should be remembered that producing descriptions of the CEFR reference levels, language by language and level by level, is not an end in itself. The purpose of the descriptions is to bring transparency to the aims pursued in teaching and certification, as this guarantees fairness and comparability in language teaching in Europe. These descriptions are designed essentially, after and like the *Framework*, to help build a variety of teaching programmes that contribute to the plurilingual education of Europeans, which is a condition and a practical form of democratic citizenship.

APPENDICES

I. Speech acts

Principles

- Where possible the teams responsible for developing reference level descriptions for specific languages should consult each other about the possibility of adopting a common minimum classification of the forms selected.

- The typology and internal classification of the speech acts (or functions) remain unchanged from one level to another for the same language, the denomination of the same act remains unchanged.

- A brief note explains the ethno-linguistic characteristics of certain acts considered unfamiliar to the learners or difficult to master.

- The same principles for classifying the forms within each speech act are identified. Their use depends on the needs of each language: classification in formal categories (noun, verb, etc), by level of language, by intensity, etc.

- The inventories of the forms used for the acts concerned include "ordinary" spontaneous oral usages.

- The inventories select realisations as independent of context as possible, as each act may, in a given communication situation, be effected by an open set of forms (- *The telephone!* (= request to do) – *I'm in the shower* (= refusal), but: *I'm in the shower* is not an expression of refusal in all circumstances).

- They do not exclude interjections or sentence words (which may also be classified in the inventories of general of specific notions or even in grammatical lists).

- These inventories, which will be the only phrastic ones in the reference level descriptions, comprise indications of intonation and/or are available in recorded form.

- All the speech acts are described at all levels (except perhaps certain ones at level A1), to provide learners with verbal resources, however minimal, to express themselves in all circumstances.

- The speech acts are illustrated by examples where necessary.

November 2005

Examples of classification of speech acts

Inventory of functions in *Vantage Level*	Sommaire des fonctions du niveau B2 pour le français (chapitre 3)[4]
1. Imparting and seeking information 1.1. identifying and specifying 1.2. stating and reporting (describing, narrating) 1.3. correcting 1.4. asking 1.5. answering questions	**3.1. Interagir à propos d'informations** 3.1.1. Identifier 3.1.2. Affirmer 3.1.3. Décrire 3.1.4. Raconter 3.1.5. S'informer 3.1.6. Confirmer, démentir 3.1.7. Rectifier 3.1.8. Répondre à une demande d'information
2. Expressing and finding out attitudes 2.1. attitudes to matters of fact 2.2. expressing knowledge, memory, belief 2.3. expressing modality 2.4. expressing and enquiring about volition expressing moral attitudes	**3.2. Interagir à propos d'opinions ou de positions** 3.2.1. Exprimer son point de vue 3.2.2. Exprimer son accord 3.2.3. Exprimer un désaccord 3.2.4. Exprimer son approbation 3.2.5. Exprimer sa désapprobation 3.2.6. Protester 3.2.7. Dire que l'on sait 3.2.8. Exprimer son ignorance 3.2.9. Exprimer le fait de se souvenir 3.2.10. Exprimer le fait d'avoir oublié 3.2.11. Rappeler quelque chose à quelqu'un 3.2.12. Exprimer des degrés de certitude 3.2.13. Exprimer sa capacité de faire quelque chose 3.2.14; Exprimer son désir (de faire) quelque chose 3.2.15. Exprimer son intention de faire quelque chose 3.2.16. Exprimer l'obligation, l'interdit 3.2.17. Exprimer une norme morale ou sociale 3.2.18. Accuser, s'accuser, avouer 3.2.19. Rejeter une accusation 3.2.20. S'excuser
3. Deciding on and managing course of action 3.1. suggesting a joint course of action (involving both speaker and addressee) 3.2. agreeing to a suggestion 3.3. requesting someone to do something 3.4. responding to a request 3.5. offering assistance 3.6. giving advice 3.7. giving warnings 3.8. giving encouragement 3.9. asking permission 3.10. granting permission 3.11. refusing or withholding permission	**3.4. Interagir à propos d'activités ou d'actions** 3.4.1. Demander à quelqu'un qu'il fasse quelque chose 3.4.2. Répondre à une demande 3.4.3. Proposer à quelqu'un qu'il fasse quelque chose 3.4.4. Proposer à quelqu'un de faire quelque chose ensemble 3.4.5. Proposer à quelqu'un de faire quelque chose à sa place ou pour lui, de l'aider 3.4.6. Proposer à quelqu'un de lui donner, offrir, prêter quelque chose 3.4.8. Conseiller 3.4.9. Mettre en garde

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[4] Summary of level B2 functions for French (chapter 3)

3.12. prohibiting someone from doing something 3.13. offering to do something for someone 3.14. offering somebody something 3.15. inviting someone to do something 3.16. declining an offer or invitation, enquiring whether an offer or invitation is accepted	3.4.10. Encourager 3.4.11 Demander une autorisation, un accord 3.4.12. Donner une autorisation 3.4.13. Refuser 3.4.14. Interdire 3.4.15. Contester une interdiction 3.4.16. Menacer 3.4.17. Promettre 3.4.18. Reprocher
	3.3. Interagir à propos d'émotions ou de sentiments 3.3.1. Exprimer le plaisir, la joie, le bonheur 3.3.2. Exprimer la tristesse, l'abattement 3.3.3. Interroger sur la joie ou la tristesse 3.3.4. Consoler, encourager, réconforter 3.3.5. Exprimer sa sympathie 3.3.6. Exprimer son espoir 3.3.7. Exprimer sa déception 3.3.8. Exprimer sa peur, son inquiétude, son angoisse 3.3.9. Rassurer 3.3.10. Exprimer son soulagement 3.3.11. Exprimer la souffrance physique 3.3.12. Exprimer le fait d'aimer, d'apprécier quelque chose ou quelqu'un 3.3.13. Exprimer le fait de ne pas aimer 3.3.14. Exprimer la préférence 3.3.15. Exprimer sa satisfaction 3.3.16. Exprimer l'insatisfaction, se plaindre 3.3.17. Interroger sur la satisfaction ou l'insatisfaction 3.3.18. Exprimer sa colère, sa mauvaise humeur 3.3.19. Réagir à la colère ou la mauvaise humeur d'autrui 3.3.20. Insulter 3.3.21. Proférer des jurons 3.3.22. Exprimer son intérêt pour quelque chose 3.3.23. Exprimer son intérêt pour ce que dit quelqu'un 3.3.24. Exprimer sa surprise 3.3.25. Exprimer le fait de ne pas être surpris 3.3.26. Exprimer son indifférence 3.3.27. Exprimer sa gratitude, sa reconnaissance, remercier
4. Socialising 4.1. attracting attention 4.2. greeting people 4.3. replying to a greeting 4.4. terms of endearment 4.5. making introductions 4.6. making someone welcome 4.7. at a meal 4.8. proposing a toast	**3.5 Interagir dans les rituels sociaux** 3.5.1. S'excuser 3.5.2. Attirer l'attention 3.5.3. Saluer 3.5.4 Répondre à une salutation 3.5.5. Présenter quelqu'un 3.5.6. Se présenter 3.5.7. Répondre à une présentation 3.5.8. Accueillir quelqu'un

4.9. congratulating someone 4.10. good wishes taking leave	3.5.9. Porter un toast, trinquer 3.5.10. Féliciter 3.5.11. Présenter ses condoléances 3.5.12. Adresser un souhait à quelqu'un 3.5.13. Prendre congé
5. Structuring discourse 5.1. opening 5.2. introducing a theme 5.3. expressing an opinion 5.4. enumerating 5.5. exemplifying 5.6. emphasising 5.7. defining 5.8. summarising 5.9. changing the theme 5.10. asking someone to pass a new theme 5.11. asking someone's opinion 5.12. showing that one is following a person's discourse 5.13. interrupting, asking for the floor 5.14. objecting / protesting 5.15. asking someone to be silent 5.16. indicating a wish to continue 5.17. encouraging someone to continue 5.18. indicating that one is coming to an end 5.19. closing 5.20. using the telephone 5.21. letters	**3.6 Structurer son propos** 3.6.1. annoncer un plan, un développement 3.6.2. Introduire une histoire, un récit, une anecdote 3.6.3. Introduire une information 3.6.4 Introduire un thème, un sujet 3.6.5 Développer un thème, un sujet 3.6.6. Souligner, mettre en évidence 3.6.7. Faire une transition 3.6.8. Proposer un nouveau thème, un nouveau sujet 3.6.9. Rejeter un thème, un sujet 3.6.10. Ouvrir une digression 3.6.11 Fermer une digression 3.6.12. Revenir sur un thème, un sujet déjà abordé 3.6.13. Donner un exemple 3.6.14. Rapporter des propos 3.6.15. Citer 3.6.16. Résumer 3.6.17. Se corriger, se reprendre 3.6.18. Chercher un mot ou une phrase 3.6.19. Remplacer un mot oublié ou inconnu 3.6.20. Demander de l'aide à propos d'un mot, d'une expression 3.6.21; Conclure son propos 3.6.22. Commencer un courrier 3.6.23. Conclure un courrier
6. Assuring and repairing communication 6.1. signalling non-understanding 6.2. asking for repetition 6.3. asking for confirmation 6.4. asking for definition or clarification 6.5. asking someone to spell something 6.6. asking for something to be written down 6.7. expressing ignorance of the word or expression required 6.8. appealing for assistance in finding an expression 6.9. filling hesitation pauses while looking for a forgotten word or phrase 6.10. substituting for a forgotten noun or name 6.11. asking someone to speak more slowly 6.12. what to do if the interlocutor does not understand 6.13. asking if you have been understood	**3.7 Structurer l'interaction verbale** 3.7.1. Commencer une conversation 3.7.2. Prendre la parole au cours d'une conversation 3.7.3. demander la parole 3.7.4. Reprendre la parole après avoir été interrompu 3.7.5. Empêcher quelqu'un de parler 3.7.6 S'assurer que son interlocuteur a bien compris 3.7.7. S'assurer de bien comprendre son interlocuteur

November 2005

II.   General notions and "grammar"

General notions

- Reference level descriptions present inventories of forms (mainly lexical) realising general notions. These are used to express semantic universals such as quantity, quality, space, time, etc.

- This linguistic material is organised according to the same categories from one language to another

- These descriptions also include specific semantic traits which may differ from one language to another.

- These inventories are inter-related with those of the "grammar" section, where other means of expressing the same notions are listed (for example: time), and the lexical/specific notions section (particularly for general notions which are not universal: see above).

Structure of the inventories of general notions for French (Level B2)	
4.1. **Existence** 4.1.1. presence, absence 4.1.2. availability 4.1.3 quality 4.1.4. occurrence, non-occurrence 4.1.5. certainty, probability	

4.2. **Quantity**
 	
4.2.1. numbers
4.2.2. relative quantity
4.2.3. measurements
    4.2.3.1. general measurements
    4.2.3.2. size
    4.2.3.3. dimension
    4.2.3.4. distance
    4.2.3.5. speed
    4.2.3.6. weight
    4.2.3.7. area
    4.2.3.8. volume, capacity
    4.2.3.9. temperature	

4.3. **Space** 4.3.1. location 4.3.2. absolute position 4.3.3. relative position 4.3.4. distance 4.3.5. movement 4.3.6. orientation, direction	
4.4. **Time** 4.4.1. divisions of time 4.4.2. location in time: present, past, future (see also *4.4.1. divisions of time*)	

4.4.2.1. present
4.4.2.2. past
4.4.2.3. future
4.4.3. aspects of passing time
    4.4.3.1. simultaneity
    4.4.3.2. anteriority
    4.4.3.3. posteriority
    4.4.3.4. commencement
    4.4.3.5. completion
    4.4.3.6. recent completion
    4.4.3.7. continuation
    4.4.3.8. repetition
    4.4.3.9. duration
    4.4.3.10. frequency
    4.4.3.11. permanence and change	

4.5. Qualities of things and people
 	
4.5.1. physical qualities
    4.5.1.1. forms and figures
    4.5.1.2. dimensions
    4.5.1.3. consistency, resistance
    4.5.1.4. humidity
    4.5.1.5. matter
    4.5.1.6. visibility, sight
    4.5.1.7. audibility, hearing
    4.5.1.8. taste
    4.5.1.9. smell
    4.5.1.10. colour
    4.5.1.11. age, seniority
4.5.2. qualitative appreciation
    4.5.2.1. global
    4.5.2.2. acceptability, suitability
    4.5.2.3. conformity
    4.5.2.4. success
    4.5.2.5. usefulness
    4.5.2.6. capacity, competence
    4.5.2.7. importance
    4.5.2.8. normality
    4.5.2.9. eventuality	

4.6. Logical relationships
 	
4.6.1. conjunction
4.6.2 disjunction
4.6.3. opposition, concession
4.6.4. comparison
    4.6.4.1. similarity, difference
    4.6.4.2. equality, inferiority, superiority
4.6.5. inclusion, exclusion
4.6.6. cause, consequence
4.6.7. finality
4.6.8. condition	

For the classification of general notions selected for the French language, note that section 5 is that comprising general but specific traits (humidity, resistance), while the other sections (existence, quantity, space, time, "logical" relationships) are of a universal nature.

"Grammar"

- The section often called **grammar** (morphology, morpho-phonology, syntax in the *Framework*) is made up of inventories of forms and structures considered to characterise communication at this or that level specified by the *Framework.*

- These inventories serve no explanatory or philological/historical purpose: they describe competences, not the language.

- They take into consideration utterances other than those attested in writing.

- They use the same classification for all levels.

- They use the same terminology for all the sections which compose them, from one reference description to another, for the same language.

- They are based on available scientific/academic descriptions.

- An effort should be made to use the same terminology in reference level descriptions for languages which are historically, formally and/or structurally related

- These inventories may use descriptive categories based on different theoretical viewpoints. If they do, they should explain the choices made.

- They take into account combination phenomena (at syntagm level) and the locutional aspects of the language, in relation with the general and specific notions (in particular for C levels).

- As far as possible they distinguish what must be acquired to a highly automatic level, what must be acquired partially, what must be recognisable and interpretable from what it is advisable to teach in a systematic manner, wherever reflexive and analytical teachings are considered appropriate and effective.

IV Specific notions

- The inventories of the reference level descriptions use a typology and/or a minimum internal classification thereof common to all languages (by lexical field and sub-field)?

- The inventories of specific notions are not dictionaries. They only indicate meanings or formal characteristics (such as gender) as and when necessary

- The inventories of specific notions include international words (particularly at the A levels).

- The inventories of specific notions include transparent words (eg. Pan-Roman, pan-Slavonic, etc, of learned Greek and Latin origin).

- The inventories of specific notions comprise a number of elements which are comparable from one language to another at the same level.

- These inventories comprise open lists (names of numbers, colours, foods) once a certain level is reached (A2, for example).

- These inventories comprise items of regional usage when levels are reached for which the *Framework* specifies this competence.

Specific reference level descriptions describing only a regional variety are possible. They follow the same procedures and share the same common features as reference level descriptions for the standard language.

November 2005